

Jackson Boy Scout earns all the merit badges

He's a certified Scuba diver, he's learned to fly an airplane, and he's backpacked more than a 100 miles in New Mexico, and he's not even 18 years old yet. He is Boy Scout Clay Wood, who just completed all of the Boy Scout merit badges. And he has two long green sashes, covered in 128 merit badge patches, to prove it.

Clay Wood is a member of the Boy Scouts of America Troop 5048 in Jackson, Ohio, which is a part of the Simon Kenton Council, headquartered in Columbus. It took Clay six years and thousands of hours to achieve this amazing feat.

"Clay is the most persistent Boy Scout I have ever seen," says Charles E. Bowman, Scoutmaster for Troop 5048. "I am thrilled to see him get all of the merit badges. I knew he could do it."

"In addition to getting of the merit badges, he has been a great leader in the troop, holding nearly every leadership position during his career as a Boy Scout and is very respected by all of the other boys in the troop," Bowman added.

The Quest To Get Them All

After completing 21 merit badges and a community service project, Clay earned the Eagle Scout rank in October, 2008. Since he received scouting's highest rank when he was just 15, Clay set his sights on earning all of the merit badges before he turned 18 years old. He was inspired by watching another Scout who had got all the merit badges being interviewed on a national news program.

Since he set his goal, he has been working non-stop. Surprisingly, there is no kind of award for this honor. The Boy Scouts of America organization doesn't keep track of the number of boys who do all the badges, but according to

www.MeritBadgeKnot.com, only 147 other Boy Scouts, in the past 100 years of scouting, have completed the task.

The 128 merit badges that Clay earned include all of the 126 current merit badges, plus two of the historical badges that were only available last year, during the 100th anniversary of Scouting.

A few of the badges could be completed in a day or two at a summer camp, some took a few weeks, but others take two or three months to finish. Each badge requires a counselor, an expert in that field, to make sure all the requirements are completed. However, living in southeastern Ohio made it difficult to find counselors. Clay and his parents, Mark and Deanna Wood, occasionally traveled all over the state of Ohio and to West Virginia to find counselors or camps where he could do what was necessary to earn certain badges.

"My favorite merit badge was definitely Scuba," said Clay. "Scuba was so much fun, but also probably the most difficult."

His second most favorite of the 128 badges was water skiing during the Water Sports merit badge. The easiest one was the Collections badge, for which he used his hobby of collecting pencils.

Clay's first merit badge was Leatherworking, which was earned during summer camp at Chief Logan Scout Reservation in 2005. His final merit badge was Lifesaving, which was also earned at Chief Logan on June 30, 2011. In order to get all of the badges, you must complete them before your 18th birthday, which is August 9th for Clay.

Awards & Accomplishments

After earning his Eagle, Clay has earned a total of 11 Eagle Palms (4 Bronze, 4 Gold and 3 Silver). He is a member of the



Clay Wood

Order of the Arrow (a national camping honor society) and has earned the following awards: 50-Miler Award, Snorkeling BSA, Scuba BSA, World Conservation Award, Fire'n Chit and the Totin' Chip. He has held many leadership positions, including Senior Patrol Leader in Troop 5048, sponsored by the Christ United Methodist Church in Jackson.

Clay was also the Senior Patrol Leader of Troop 1415 that attended the 2010 National Jamborees at Fort AP Hill, Virginia and in 2008, he was Crew Leader on a high adventure trip to Philmont Scout Ranch in Cimarron, New Mexico in 2009. Clay has attended BSA summer camp Chief Logan Reservation and Camp Friedlander and worked as a

nature staff member at Chief Logan last summer.

Headed For Sweden

In late July, Clay leaves for Rinkaby, Sweden for scouting's World Jamboree. He will join 40,000 other scouts from around the world for two weeks of activities and adventures.

Clay will be a senior at Jackson High School this fall where he has a 4.0 grade point average. He is a member of the Hi-Q team, yearbook staff, Hi-Y, Student Council, Youth In Government and enjoys participation in the science fairs. He is also in the symphonic and marching bands and has lettered in tennis and cross country.

After high school, Clay plans on attending college and majoring in aeronautical engineering.