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Notes from editor (not for publication):



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Dummerston youth attains Eagle Scout honors

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####BEGIN SUBHED####

2 Only 4% of Boy Scouts make it to the highest rank.

3 Cameron Matthews, 15, is one of them.

####END SUBHED####

4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 Cameron Matthews, a 15-year-old from Dummerston
6 Center who just completed his sophomore year at Brattleboro
7 Union High School, has joined the 4% of Boy Scouts who have
8 achieved the highest rank of Eagle Scout.

9 Matthews was flanked by his parents, Rev. Shawn
10 Bracebridge and John Dunham, as he stood before family,
11 friends, and fellow Scouts from Scouting America Troop 405 to

12 receive his award at a Court of Honor ceremony at Dummerston
13 Congregational Church on June 7.

14 The requirements to earn that rank are formidable: You
15 have the hold the second-highest rank, Life Scout, for at least six
16 months. You have earn at least 21 merit badges covering skills
17 ranging from Camping and First Aid, to Citizenship and
18 Environmental Science, to Cooking and Personal Management.

19 You have to demonstrate leadership in your troop, and
20 leadership and organization skills to complete a service project.
21 And, after all of that, you have to complete a Board of Review.

22 Bracebridge — an Eagle Scout who now serves as
23 assistant scoutmaster of Troop 405 as well as pastor of
24 Dummerston Congregational Church — said Matthews spoke to
25 him about joining Scouting.

26 Matthews, who had been in Cub Scouts since third
27 grade, joined Troop 405 in March 2021, saying it would be
28 “something new that I might be interested in.”

29 He moved up the ranks quickly, earning his First Class
30 badge — the first step on the track toward Eagle Scout — by
31 November 2022. At that point, Matthews said that reaching Eagle
32 Scout status “was obtainable.”

33 The next two ranks, Star and Life, require a scout to
34 begin earning merit badges and filling leadership roles in the
35 troop as well as the community.

36 Matthews completed the requirements for Star Scout in
37 July 2023 and Life Scout in July 2024. He became Troop Guide
38 and earned 39 merit badges.

39 The next step was completing his service project.

40 He secured donations of building materials and guided
41 Scouts and friends in building a Peace and Justice “Little Library”
42 at the entrance of Dummerston Church, where patrons could take
43 and donate books.

44 He also led the building of a wooden cupboard for the
45 church’s community emergency food shelf.

46 Matthews said deacons at the church had wanted a Little
47 Library for years. It was initially stocked with books from the
48 parsonage and other donations.

49 "People will take a book about social justice and they'll
50 read it, and they'll either bring that book back or put another
51 social justice book in its place," he said. "It's being used, and so
52 books are going out, but there's also books coming in."

53 He said the motivation for the wooden food cupboard
54 came from seeing "just cardboard boxes" serve as the food shelf
55 near the front door of the church.

56 "It feels much more dignified going in there and taking
57 things out of the cabinet, rather than reaching into a cardboard
58 box," he said.

59 Proud moment

60 After completing his final Board of Review, Matthews
61 officially became an Eagle Scout on March 25. It became real on
62 June 7, when Troop 405 Assistant Scoutmaster Alycia Sanders
63 presented Bracebridge with the Eagle medal to pin onto
64 Matthews' uniform shirt. She handed Dunham the Eagle Scout
65 certificate to present to him.

66 "Becoming an Eagle is a great honor, and with this honor
67 comes great responsibility," said Sanders.

68 "It's amazing to see Cam go from being a scout that I
69 would teach to a scout that leads others," said Troop 405
70 Scoutmaster Keith Franklin. "Never stop being who you are."

71 Cameron hopes to live up to Franklin's admonition and
72 will remain active in Troop 405 as a youth leader.

73 He said he has made many good friendships in his years
74 of Scouting and learned many skills that he will use.

75 But, most importantly, he said he wants to be the kind of
76 leader that he looked up to when he began his journey to Eagle
77 six years ago.

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BIO/COATTAIL:

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