

## The Right Stuff

# Eagle Scout court of honor celebrates three Almaden boys

By Jeanne Carbone Lewis  
Staff Writer

Family, friends and community gathered last Friday night to celebrate three Almaden boys who have achieved a goal that only 5 percent of Boy Scouts achieve: the Eagle Scout rank.

“The Eagle Scout badge is the highest youth award that may be earned by the Boy Scout program,” said Scout Troop 200 Almaden Valley leader Tony Mazzucco. “It represents another step forward by the Scout towards the goal of developing citizenship, imparting character development and enhancing personal fitness. While the Eagle Scout is one of seven badges that the Scout earns, it is the highest honor that the Scout may achieve. This court of honor is for the purpose of presenting Eagle Scout badges to Josh LaPlante, Paul Teel\*, and Mikael Wincor.”

All three of the newly awarded Eagle Scouts hail from the Almaden area. And it was there that the boys found the need for their service projects.



*The Eagle Scouts of the hour. From left: Mikael Wincor, Paul Teel and Josh LaPlante.*

The Almaden Valley Post Office frontage on Crown Boulevard had been an eyesore for years. Josh LaPlante contacted the post office to gain approval. He then solicited donations of \$3,000 and help from Almaden Valley Community Association, Earthtech Landscaping Services and DuBridg Design. He then orchestrated the cleanup and with other scouts planted trees and drought-resistant foliage. The result was a lovely landscaped area deserving of the Almaden Valley.

“Scouting teaches you leadership, public speaking and I’ve done a lot of different things,” said the 16-year-old Leland High School junior La Plante. “Snowboarding, backpacking. You do things you may never do like how to fingerprint or how to shoot a rifle. And I look forward to helping other scouts with their service projects.”

Paul Teel lives in New Almaden and saw a blot on the landscape of the scenic area. The historic Hacienda Cemetery’s information kiosk was badly in need of repair. Teel, who has just graduated from Leland High School, contacted the California Pioneers of Santa Clara County who are the caretakers of the site and agreed to fund the project. Teel organized, planned and supervised the installation of a new kiosk with other scouts from Troop 200. The result is a fitting display for a notable area where miners and their families are buried from long ago.

“I wanted to do something that would improve the area,” said Teel. “Being in the Scouts is a fantastic experience. You see things you wouldn’t see, make new friends and help others.”

The ticket booth at Almaden Reservoir had seen much better days. So in stepped 16-year-old Mikael Wincor, who raised funds from his Almaden Valley Youth League soccer refereeing money in the amount of \$250. He then

planned and organized fellow scouts and family to help him build a new booth.

“The best thing about Scouts is working with people, being a leader and making friends,” said Wincor. “I’m looking forward to the national jamboree in England this summer celebrating the 100th anniversary of scouting.”

The Eagle Scout Court of Honor, held at the South Hills Community Church, was an opportunity for family, friends and fellow scouts to reminisce with the three honorees about the many experiences and friendships that grew over the years. And besides the Eagle Scout pin and certificate denoting the highest honor obtainable, there was another surprise.

“I’m so delighted to be here tonight,” said District 10 Councilmember Nancy Pyle, who presented a commendation from the city of San Jose to LaPlante, Teel and Wincor. “It’s not only a joyous occasion but an extremely important one. It tells us so much about not only the dedication of Eagle Scouts and who the person is becoming but their parents, their extended family and all of you who played a part as well. These young men are an inspiration who have the strength of their convictions.”

Pyle was one of many who congratulated LaPlante, Teel and Wincor on their achievements.

“As you grow from boys to men—be a leader,” said David LaPlante, Josh’s uncle. “We need more leaders. And have integrity.”

### **Boy Scout Mission Statement**

The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout oath and law.

### **Scout oath**

On my honor I will do my best  
To do my duty to God and my country  
and to obey the Scout law;  
To help other people at all times;  
To keep myself physically strong,  
mentally awake, and morally straight.

### **Scout law**

A Scout is:  
Trustworthy Obedient  
Loyal Cheerful  
Helpful Thrifty  
Friendly Brave  
Courteous Clean  
Kind Reverent

*\*Paul Teel is an Almaden Country School graduate.*