

## Second Time's the Charm for Summit

By Cathy Tyson



From left: Alan Cox, Tyler Whiteman, Ed Bachman, Bill Whiteman, Jay Long and Jim Manzi

Photo provided

Two years ago, a group of dads and one adult son set out to summit the mighty 14,410 feet of Mt. Rainier in Washington state, but were halted due to bad weather – a huge disappointment to all. This time, the brave hikers had sunshine on their side and made it all the way to the top of the fifth tallest mountain in the contiguous United States. “I’ve never been happier, it’s really a dream come true,” says senior member of the party, 69-year-old Lafayette resident Jim Manzi. “Everyone was proud of the accomplishment.”

Manzi was one of five gentlemen in their 50s and 60s who got to know each other when their respective kids were members of Lafayette Boy Scout troop 241. Many of the kids have moved on to jobs and families of their own, but the group of dedicated dads continues to trek all over

the area and socialize together. One of the former scouts, now 28-year-old Tyler Whiteman came along on the July trip; he achieved the rank of Eagle Scout.

It took three days to get from the base to the summit. The hearty hikers made it up a 5,000 foot elevation gain the first day and slept at rustic Muir Camp. They continued on the next day, bunking at High Camp, and in the wee hours of the third day, rose at midnight, strapped on a head lamp and hit the trail for the final push to the summit, arriving at the dramatic cauldron at 5:30 a.m. to watch the sunrise.

“Then the hard part started,” says Manzi explaining the long trip down is done in one shot, descending 9,000 feet to the parking lot. The friends had trained seriously for this expedition but were exhausted.

## Orindan Takes Honors at National High School Debate Championship

Submitted by Julie Fiero

Orinda resident and 2014 high school graduate of the College Preparatory School, Mollie Fiero finished as Fifth Speaker out of 404 competitors at the National Speech and Debate Association’s National Championship Tournament in Kansas City in June. Fiero, who began debating in seventh grade under the tutelage of Orinda Intermediate School teacher Terry Eubanks, debated for The College Preparatory School in Oakland, which fields a team focused on policy debate. Policy is the style of debate practiced at the university level. It is research intensive,

and features two-person teams that argue both sides of a single topic for the entire academic year, half the time for the affirmative; the other half for the negative. This year’s topic was “Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its economic engagement toward Cuba, Mexico or Venezuela.” Last year as a junior, Fiero earned a Ninth Speaker award at the same year-end tournament. Fiero, an incoming freshman at Emory University in the fall, also placed fifth at this year’s Tournament of Champions in Lexington, Ky., in April.

Mollie Fiero with her trophy

Photo provided

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## Troop 241 Eagle Scouts

Submitted by Truman Burns



From left: Colton Prescott, Christian Burns, Michael Goodwin, Raymond McTigue and Connor Green

Photo provided

Boy Scout Troop 241 of Lafayette announced that five Scouts have earned Eagle Rank. Christian Burns, Michael Goodwin, Connor Green, Raymond McTigue and Colton Prescott were honored at the Troop’s Eagle Court on Honor on May 24 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. Scoutmaster Leonard Bertolami presented the awards for the highest rank in Scouting. Now a senior at Acalanes High School, Burns’ Eagle Project involved renovating the front area at CATS, the after-school program at Lafayette Elementary School. Pavers and tan bark were installed for a play area, along with a sign using drought-resistant plants that spells out CATS. Goodwin,

who will be attending the University of California, Berkeley in the fall and playing Cal rugby, constructed a new chicken coop in the St. Perpetua School Garden of Learning. Green, who will be attending Napa Valley College in the fall, led Scouts that installed fencing, an irrigation system and jasmine along the south side of Hamlin Road in the St. Perpetua School area. McTigue, who will be a senior at Acalanes High School, designed and installed six bird houses at Lafayette Elementary School. Prescott, who will be a senior at the Bentley School, built a new garden for the Home Economics class at Stanley Middle School, along with backpack hangers outside the classroom.

## Local Boy Scouts Hike New Mexico Wilderness

Submitted by Dan Lyons



Back row, from left: Craig Stewart, Jack O’Melveny, Tucker Fife, Will Lyons, Brian O’Melveny, and Dan Lyons; front row: Soren Faulkner, Nicholas Kim, Griffin Ansel, Daniel (Ranger), Connor Stewart, Will Fehrstrom, and Thomas Boneysteel

Photo provided

A crew of teenage Scouts and their leaders went on a life-changing summer trek through the Sangre de Cristo Mountains at Philmont Scout Ranch in Cimarron, N.M. Philmont covers 214 square miles of vast wilderness with trails that climb from 6,500 feet to as high as 12,441 feet. During their trek the Scouts from Orinda’s Troop 237 hiked 55 miles over six days.

The group of Scouts and their advisors carried everything they needed to survive during the trek on their backs while hiking from camp to camp. They participated in back country programs along the way including roping, vintage black powder rifle shooting, branding and milking goats. “Shooting our hats with the black powder rifles was really fun,” according to Will Lyons, one of the Scouts using his hat for target practice.

The trek included a conservation project where the Scouts learned and participated in reducing and managing fuel for forest fires by cutting down and clearing dead trees. Along the trek, Scouts endured tough challenges including backpacking in bear and mountain lion territory, steep climbs and descents and afternoon thunderstorms.

“They may meet only one other group of Scouts on the trail in an entire day of hiking,” according to Backpacker Magazine. “Even in the most crowded destinations, each Scout group camps in isolation, out of sight and sound of all other groups.” The crew made what amounts to a Scouting pilgrimage with their trip to Philmont Scout Ranch, which is the Boy Scouts of America’s premier high adventure camp and the largest youth camp in the world serving nearly one million participants since 1938.

## Eagle Scout Earns Fourth Palm

Submitted by Sylvia Jorgensen



Tom Helsel

Photo provided

Tom Helsel is one of only three Boy Scouts to earn his fourth palm in the Aklan District over the last two years. Not only did he earn an additional 20 merit badges beyond what is required by Eagle but he has stayed active in his Troop for a year after earning Eagle. He recently led the new Scouts overnight and has been an outstanding example for the Troop’s younger Scouts. At a recent Court of Honor, he was

recognized by Scoutmaster Eric Jorgensen for his continued service to the Troop.

“Tom Helsel has received the bronze palm, the gold palm and the silver palm, he also has earned a fourth palm as he completed twice as many merit badges that is required for Eagle Scout,” said Jorgensen in an email. “Tom has been an extraordinary Scout who was a Senior Patrol Leader in our Troop, he

earned a gold cross at Wolfeboro for the Troop and has been an excellent mentor for many years for many younger Scouts. Tom transferred into our Troop from another Troop and was immediately welcomed and cherished for having such charisma with leading the Scouts his age and mentoring the Scouts younger than him. Everybody in the Troop, adult leaders included, looked up to Tom – literally we had to as he’s

a very tall young man, but we enjoyed his ability to bring the boys together and help them when they needed it. We will miss Tom in our Troop as he heads off to college and we wish him great successes in all of his future endeavors. Once an Eagle Scout, always an Eagle Scout! With Tom it was twice that as he was a Double Eagle.”