

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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BISHOP HIGH GRADUATES, SEVEN EAGLE SCOUTS MAKE SCHOOL HISTORY

SANTA BARBARA, CALIF. – August 2009– Seven Bishop High School Graduates, Class of 2009, made school history just prior to commencement in June. A remarkable 25 percent of the men in Bishop’s graduating class achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, joining a fraternity of 2 million* Boy Scouts who have earned the rank since 1912. This is well above the national average of 5-percent * of all Boy Scouts who achieve the rank of Eagle, which is the highest rank attainable in the program.

The "Aims of Scouting" are moral strength and character development, citizenship training, and physical and mental fitness. To earn the Eagle Scout rank, a Boy Scout must fulfill requirements in the areas of leadership, service, and outdoor skills. Of the 120 merit badges available, 21 must be earned to qualify for Eagle rank and all provisions must be met prior to the age of 18. One of the last steps to Eagle rank is to plan, develop, and provide leadership to others in a service project helpful to a religious institution, school, or community. Progression to Eagle means that a Scout learns, is tested, reviewed and finally, recognized.



Top Row (L-R) Sam Verhasselt, David Pilkington, J. "Patrick" Burgess, Brendan O'Connell

Bottom Row (L-R) Michael Schlesselmann, Joe Yonke, Daniel Helkey

Those benefiting from these seven Eagle Scouts Projects include the Liberty Tree Memorial project at the Goleta Union School District, St. Vincent’s outreach programs in Santa Barbara and Los Angeles, the Goleta Valley Girls’ Softball Association, Casa Esperanza Shelter for the Homeless, Santa Barbara Catholic Charities Food Pantry, Bishop Garcia Diego High School’s student library and Storyteller Children’s Center for homeless and at risk children. In

seven separate ceremonies, before troop members, peers, family and friends; each Scout was recognized and presented with their Eagle Scout badge.

Members of Troop 105, sponsored by Knights of Columbus Council 5300 - St. Raphael Parish, include Sam Verhasselt, David Pilkington, J. "Patrick" Burgess, Michael Schlesselmann, Joe Yonke. Brendan O'Connell and Daniel Helkey are members of the oldest troop west of the Mississippi, Troop 1 of United Methodist.

These young men will attend the following College and Universities in the fall: Loyola Marymount University, UC Berkeley, George Washington University, UC San Diego, Santa Clara University, University of Oregon and Emmanuel College.

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* Per the BSA web site at <http://www.scouting.org/About/FactSheets/EagleScouts.aspx>