

# **The Council Guide**

2012 Edition

**Introduction**

# The Council Guide

Available online at [www.TheCouncilGuide.com](http://www.TheCouncilGuide.com)

- Volume 1 – Council Shoulder Insignia, councils A-L**  
Including Red & White Strips (RWS), "Pre-CSPs", Council Shoulder Patches (CSPs), and Jamboree Shoulder Patches (JSPs)
- Volume 2 – Council Shoulder Insignia, councils M-Z**  
Including Red & White Strips (RWS), "Pre-CSPs", Council Shoulder Patches (CSPs), and Jamboree Shoulder Patches (JSPs)
- Volume 3 – Council Shoulder Insignia, names A-L**  
Including Community Strips (CMS), Military Base Strips (MBS), and State Strips
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- Volume 5 – Council Insignia, councils A-L**  
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Including District Patches and District Activity Patches

## OVERVIEW

*The Council Guide* attempts to catalog all Boy Scouts of America council and district insignia.

Although many users may choose to only collect selected council items, *The Council Guide* aims to record all council insignia in order to present a more complete picture of a council's issues. Furthermore, such a broad focus makes *The Council Guide* more than just another patch identification guide – *The Council Guide* is also a resource for individuals wishing to record and learn about the history of Scouting through its memorabilia.

## ORGANIZATION

Since *The Council Guide* includes a wide variety of issues, made in different shapes and sizes and for different purposes, it can be difficult to catalog these issues in a consistent way. However, the format developed to catalog Order of the Arrow insignia in *Blue Book* has been found to work as well as, or better than, any other format for such disparate items. Furthermore, the *Blue Book* style and methodology is already understood by most collectors. For these reasons, the cataloging system used in *The Council Guide* is similar to, but not identical to, *Blue Book* style for cataloging council and district insignia. For even novice collectors, the format of *The Council Guide* should be fairly self-explanatory and easy to use.

### *What is cataloged...*

Like its name suggests, *The Council Guide* lists council issues generally. Community and state strips are also included because their wear was authorized for members of a local council and they were sold through local council offices. District issues are also included because districts are subdivisions of a council.

### *...And what is not cataloged*

Insignia primarily identifying another entity (OA lodge issues, camp patches, troop insignia, etc.) generally does not get listed.

Sometimes it may be unclear whether an item should be listed or not. This is particularly true when an item bears the names of two entities. All shoulder patches bearing the name of a council are presumed to be council issues and are always listed, even if another entity is also named on them. For example, a shoulder patch that says "Bison Council" and "Eagle Lodge NOAC 2000" would get listed – even if it was designed, ordered, and sold through the OA lodge – because it is shoulder patch-shaped and bears the name of the council. Patches not shaped for wear on the shoulder may not always get listed. For example, a round patch that says "Bison Council" and "Camp Arrowhead" would not get listed as it appears to be a camp patch. A round patch that says "Bison Council" and "Camper" would get listed, even if Bison Council only has one summer camp, since it appears to be a council patch and not from

a specific camp. *The Council Guide* attempts to accurately and helpfully list insignia based both on its appearance and on its actual use or issuance, while still being mindful that another collector may not have any background knowledge about the insignia.

Finally, while it can be incredibly fun to collect all kinds of strange and unusual items from a council (or just ones that don't neatly fit in a three-ring binder), to make *The Council Guide* useful for the majority of collectors, some types of memorabilia had to be omitted from the catalog. Although the editors encourage you to collect what you want, the following types of items do not get listed in *The Council Guide*:

- Mugs, plates, and other tableware;
- Clothing such as T-shirts, hats, jackets, belts and belt buckles, etc.
- Hat pins and campaign buttons;
- Recognition pieces such as plaques, trophies, medals, and ribbons; and
- Functional items like carabiners, flashlights, Frisbees, etc.

## **FORMAT**

Due to the magnitude and scope of cataloging all council insignia, *The Council Guide* has been divided into separate volumes for ease of use. *The Council Guide* separates insignia into four broad categories, with two volumes dedicated to each: council shoulder insignia, designed/shaped for wear on the uniform sleeve (vol. 1 & 2); community shoulder insignia (vol. 3 & 4); all other council insignia (vol. 5 & 6); and all district insignia (vol. 7 & 8).

Insignia is listed under the issuing council or district. Councils and districts appear alphabetically in *The Council Guide*; in the case of councils with the same name, they are further ordered by council number. Every attempt has been made to spell, capitalize, and punctuate names correctly, and provide references pointing a user to the correct council in the event that the council name on a piece of insignia does not appear exactly the same way.

### **Council Identification**

An example of a council heading is as follows:

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#### **Adirondack Council (394)**

Headquarters: Saranac Lake, NY, then Plattsburgh, NY

Chartered: 1927

Changes: 1932 – absorbed territory of former Champlain Valley Council (395); 12/31/2005 – absorbed by Twin Rivers Council (364)

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The first line in the heading contains the council name and number. Councils were assigned a number by the National Office in 1923, so some councils that existed prior to that time did not have a number.

The second line in the heading contains the council's headquarter city. When a council's office moves to a different city, both cities will be listed, along with the dates the office was at each location (if known).

The third line in the heading contains the year the council received a local council charter from the National Office. If known, the date and month is also included. Early records can be scarce, and there was often time between when community leaders held a meeting and decided to establish a council and the time when the actual charter was received. Since *The Council Guide* is also a reference about a council's history, such reliable information can be included if known.

The fourth line in the heading contains information about major changes to a council's existence. While "merged" or "absorbed" may mean different things to different people, *The Council Guide* uses "absorbed" when one council absorbs another council's area but does not change its name or number. "Merged" is used when two councils merge, resulting in a new council name or number. Relatively minor changes to a council's service area, like the inclusion of an additional county, particularly in the early years when councils were expanding their territories, are typically not recorded in this line of the heading.

Much important information about a council's name, number, headquarter city, and charter dates was maintained in the regular course of business by the National Office. The National Office's records were not infallible, and some information is no longer available. The best compilation of the records of the National Office is the book *Councils of the BSA*, first published by Edward Morse and later by Patrick Geary. The information therein was used as the basis for the historical data in *The Council Guide*. When available, other reliable sources were used to supplement that information (see bibliography). Much exciting research still remains to be done on early council formation. While old council records or newsletters may have valuable new information, newspapers (often found on microfilm/microfiche in local libraries) can yield a wealth of information as they often contained reports on Scouting in a community, particularly in the early years of the BSA.

### Insignia Listing

Below the council heading is the listing of insignia, in the following format:

Issue & Variety	Border Color	Bkgrd Type Color	Name Color	FDL/BSA Color	Comments
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#### *Issue & Variety*

With the exception of community shoulder insignia, all issues are assigned a letter/number identifier. For example, "S3b". For council shoulder insignia, the main letter describes the amount of embroidery or type of construction:

- S = A fully embroidered patch
- T = A patch that is not fully embroidered
- B = A patch made with bullion embroidery

For all other council insignia, and all district insignia, the main letter describes the shape of the item:

A = Insignia shaped like an arrowhead

N = Insignia that is a neckerchief, neckerchief slide, or bolo tie

P = Insignia shaped like a slice of pie, or a large triangular shaped patch, for wear on a neckerchief

R = Insignia that is round

X = Insignia that is none of the above shapes (i.e. rectangular, irregular, etc.)

Some insignia may be assigned a special letter which precedes the main letter. For example, "HS1". The special letters used are:

e = Event issue. This special letter is only applied to non-shoulder patches made for an event, like a Camporee, Klondike Derby, Jamboree, etc. Sometimes a patch does not obviously indicate whether it is an event patch or not. Users should check both the event and non-event sections of a listing to properly identify an issue.

H = Historical issue. Historical issues include patches that bear the name of a Council which was nonextant at the time the patches were issued, and which were issued by the National Supply Division or a successor Council. Historical issues also include a Council's re-issues of its earlier insignia (or issues in the style of earlier insignia), usually for commemorative or fundraising purposes. Generally, historical issues are not intended for uniform wear.

Q = Council rejects. Sometimes patches are ordered by a council and rejected for one reason or another. Some rejected patches may still find their way into collections.

Y = A "catch-all" designation for patches that do not neatly fit into the standard listing. This designation applies to all samples and prototypes. This designation is also used when the provenance or issuance of an item is unknown or uncertain, so the item can be listed while research is pending. This designation may also be used for insignia appearing to be council issues, but which are not (e.g. camp patches, when the camp and council have the same name).

Z = Fake, fraudulent, bogus, unauthorized, phony, spoof, and other privately issued insignia.

After the main letter comes a number indicating an item's sequence of issuance. To the best of an editor's ability, issues are listed chronologically in *The Council Guide* and numbered sequentially by type. In the event that patches are issued concurrently, or it is unknown which patch was issued first, other features such as border color or purpose may be used to determine the listing order and numbering sequence.

\*A note on listing order and numbering sequence: The editors are aware that *The Council Guide* attempts to catalog many items of insignia which have never been catalogued before, and that other collectors may have

more experience with, and historical knowledge of, a particular council or district. Consequently, information received in the future may show that the listing order and numbering sequence of some listings is incorrect. For the 2013 and 2014 editions of *The Council Guide*, the listing order of issues may be revised, and the issues renumbered, if necessary to maintain the chronology. Thereafter, decimal numbers will be used as necessary to maintain the chronology. So for example, if a council's shoulder patch listing includes an "S5" and a shoulder patch that had been issued prior was unlisted, in the 2013 edition the omitted patch would be listed as the S5 and the other patch would be renumbered as S6. In the 2015 edition of *The Council Guide*, for example, the omitted patch would be listed as the S4.5 and the other patch would retain its designation as S5. While changing the numbering sequence may not be ideal for collectors in the short term, it is beneficial to collectors in the long term and is the only way to ensure the accuracy of the listings while still providing collectors with a reasonable time to contribute information.

There are a few councils which have allowed any unit or committee to embroider custom text (such as their name) on a shoulder patch, typically an anniversary patch. For example, Bison Council's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary CSP could have been ordered with "Troop 1" or "Troop 2" or "District Committee" etc. along the bottom of the patch. While these are indeed different issues because there is a change in wording on the patch, because of the sheer number of issues and the uncertainty of how many different issues actually exist, it quickly becomes unwieldy to properly assign them an issue number, even if decimal numbers are used. For this reason, these types of issues are listed under a single issue number which is representative of the issues with custom text.

Event patches are numbered sequentially by year. For example, "eR1965". When multiple event patches of the same shape are issued in a year, a hyphen and another number are added to distinguish the issues. For example, "eX1977-1" and "eX1977-2".

After the number a secondary letter may be added to distinguish between varieties of an issue. For example, "S11a" and "S11b". Varieties of an issue, regardless of when the varieties were made, or discovered by collectors, are listed together for ease of identification.

When do differences create a new issue and when do the differences merely result in a listed variety? Changes indicative of a new issue are:

- **Design.** When design elements are added, removed, or rearranged, a new issue results. In the case of missing design elements due to a threadbreak at the factory, this error in manufacture does not create a new issue.
- **Color.** When the color of a design element changes from one color to another (e.g. blue to black), a new issue results. There is no hard and fast rule to when changes within a color result in a new issue. Often, when there is a major change to the shade of a design element (e.g. dark blue to light blue) a new

issue results. Often, when there is a minor change to the shade of a design element (e.g. blue to light blue), a variety results, or, depending on how different the shades are and how many patches exist with slightly different shades, “MVE” may be applied to the issue.

- **Border.** A change from cut edge to rolled edge always creates a new issue.
- **Background Material.** When a design is made in both fully embroidered and non-fully embroidered versions, they are different issues. If the background material of a non-fully embroidered patch changes from felt to twill, for example, a new issue results.
- **Size.** At the time of manufacture, patches within a production run may have slight variations in size, or the size of design elements. Sometimes a reorder of patches will be a slightly different size than the previous order. For these reasons, it can be difficult to determine when variations in size should be catalogued as a new issue or variety. Generally, when there is a change of 5-10mm in the overall size of a patch, a variety results. Generally, when there is a change of >10mm in the overall size of a patch, a new issue results. With the design of a patch, when there is a 2mm or greater change in the height of lettering, a new issue usually results. For other design elements, a change in size of 4mm or greater usually results in a new issue. Of course, these guidelines apply most accurately to patches in mint condition. Washing and sewing often changes the size of a patch, thereby making measurements less reliable to determine issues and varieties.
- **Shape.** A change in shape from square to round, for example, obviously results in a new issue. Likewise, a shoulder patch with parallel sides is a different issue than one with non-parallel sides. If the difference in shape is due to squared vs. rounded corners (often a result of the merrowing process), a variety may result unless the change is very significant.
- **Manufacturing Style.** The way that embroidered patches are made usually gives them a certain “look”. For decades, nearly all patches used Swiss embroidery, where the machines embroidered one color at a time and regularly embroidered colors on top of other colors. A Swiss embroidered patch often looks thick, and layered. Now, many manufacturers use computer-directed (CD) machines. These machines embroider several colors at once, with little or no overlap of embroidery. A computer-directed patch therefore has a much flatter look, and because of the technology, the designs can be very detailed and precise. Another style of embroidery, sometimes found on patches made in the 1960’s and 1970’s is Asian (Taiwanese) embroidery. Although something of a misnomer as many computer-directed patches are also made in Asia, a patch with Asian embroidery often has lettering that is irregularly spaced or aligned. The font of the lettering, or the appearance of other design elements, may also have an “Asian” appearance. Lastly, some patches are made by hand, particularly those made for Scouts residing outside of the U.S., and will have a handmade appearance. When the design of a patch remains the same but is later produced with a different manufacturing style, a new issue results.



Changes that result in the listing of a different variety are:

- **Embroidery Direction.** When a design element is embroidered in different directions, varieties result. For example, a patch with a vertically embroidered sun is a different variety than the same patch with a horizontally embroidered sun. Likewise, when the embroidery of a fleur-de-lis changes from horizontal to multi-directional, a new variety results.
- **Twill Direction.** Two non-fully embroidered patches with twill backgrounds and identical designs will be different varieties if the rows of twill appear to go up to the viewer's left ("twill left") on one patch, and up to the viewer's right ("twill right") on the other patch. Patches whose twill does not appear to have a diagonal slant ("no twill") are a different variety than otherwise identical patches with diagonal twill.
- **Backing.** A change in backing from one type to another (e.g. cloth to plastic) will be recorded as a different variety, even if the fronts of the patches are identical. Among newer plastic backed patches, a change in the logos printed on the plastic back (e.g. from "Scout Stuff" to "BSA 2010") will result in the listing of different varieties.
- **Tags.** Tags are also called linking stitches, and are the single stitches between letters or design elements, or between letters/design elements and the border. Tags exist as a result of the manufacturer's machine embroidering several elements of the same color without slowing the production process by stopping to lift the needle and move it to another spot. Tags may appear at different places on different patches of the same issue and are often noted when they are the most easily described difference between the patches, especially when there are other small or hard to describe differences.

### *Border Color, Type*

The next column in the insignia listing is border color. An item's border color is usually abbreviated by a three letter code. See p. 11 for the Color Key.

The type of border is abbreviated as follows:

- C = Cut edge. Patches with a cut edge are given an embroidered border, and then the patches are separated from each other at the factory by cutting around the embroidered border.
- R = Rolled edge, also known as a merrowed edge. Patches with a rolled edge are cut apart from each other at the factory, then an embroidered border is applied which rolls over from the front to the back of the patch, concealing the cut edge. In the case of neckerchiefs, a rolled edge is one where the neckerchief fabric is folded under and sewn to finish the edge.
- P = Piped edge. Only neckerchiefs have a piped edge, which is a strip of fabric or ribbon sewn to the edge of the neckerchief.
- [blank] = None of the above. Insignia that are commonly listed with a blank in this category include felt patches, leather patches, and silkscreened patches without a finished border.

### *Background Color*

The next column in the insignia listing is background color. An item's background color is usually abbreviated by a three letter code. See p. 11 for the Color Key.

When a patch is not fully embroidered, the color of the twill or felt background material is recorded in this column. For fully embroidered patches, the color used for the majority of the background is recorded here. When no one color makes up the majority of the background, it is recorded as "M/C", for multicolored.

### *Name Color*

The next column in the insignia listing is name color. This column usually uses a three letter code to record the name of the council. See p. 11 for the Color Key. If the name is not spelled out but its initials appear, the color of those letters is recorded. In the case of district patches, the color of the district name, not the council name, is listed.

### *FDL/BSA Color*

The next column in the insignia listing is for the color of the fleur-de-lis ("fdl") or "BSA" that appears on many patches. The color of these symbols is usually abbreviated by a three letter code. See p. 11 for the Color Key.

Where both a fleur-de-lis and "BSA" appear on a patch, the fleur-de-lis color is recorded. When the color of "BSA" is recorded in this column, the term "BSA" appears in the adjacent "Comments" column to indicate to users of *The Council Guide* which symbol's color is recorded. In the event that no fleur-de-lis appears, and "BSA" does not appear on the patch, the color of the phrase "Boy Scouts of America", if spelled out, may be recorded. In this case, the term "BSA" would also appear in the adjacent "Comments" column.

### *Comments*

The final column in the insignia listing is for comments and notes to help collectors identify insignia. This may include the color of a particular design element, if necessary to distinguish one issue from another. It may also include the size, in millimeters, of a design element or the item overall. Measurements given are only a general guide, as the manufacturer's acceptable variation within a single order may be several millimeters from piece to piece.

When the text that appears on insignia is recorded, it will appear in quotation marks as it appears on the patch. When editors add information that is not apparent from the patch, it appears in parenthesis. So, "(FOS) 1999" would tell a user that the patch was made for the Friends of Scouting Campaign in 1999; the year appears on the patch but the terms "FOS" or "Friends of Scouting" do not appear on the patch. If a forward slash appears between quotation marks, the forward slash does not actually appear on the patch. Rather, the forward slash is used to indicate that the text on either side of it appears on the patch, but not continuously. For example, "1925 / 1975" indicates that both dates appear on the patch, but not side by side.

The “Comments” column is not meant to be exhaustive and often will not record every line of text that appears on a patch, only enough to identify a piece of insignia and help users distinguish it from other listings.

Some abbreviations and terms are frequently used in the “Comments” column:

#’d = numbered

100th = Insignia issued for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the BSA in 2010.

100pb = Insignia that has the BSA’s 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary plastic backing; the “BSA 2010” logo is printed on the plastic backing.

ANN = Anniversary. When a particular anniversary is commemorated, it may appear, for example, as “25<sup>th</sup> ANN”.

Beading = A thin embroidered border around a particular design element, of the same color as the design element.

BIC = Bicentennial. Unless otherwise clarified, this term is used for insignia issued for the USA’s Bicentennial in 1976.

cb = Cloth back.

CD = Computer-directed embroidery. This style of embroidery is flat and often allows for significant detail.

Creslon = A white, felt-like backing material.

DIAG = Diagonally stitched embroidery.

DJ = Diamond Jubilee. Insignia issued for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the BSA in 1985.

Emb. = Embroidered

fdl = Fleur-de-lis.

FOS = Friends of Scouting, a fundraising campaign of the BSA.

gb = Gauze back.

HORIZ = Horizontally stitched embroidery.

JAM = Jamboree. Usually listed with the year, for example, “JAM 1981”.

JLT = Junior Leader Training.

L = Left, as in the left side of the patch.

MULT = Embroidery that is done in multiple directions.

MVE = Minor variations exist. This term is often used when two or more patches appear different from each other but the variations are so minor as to be difficult to describe, especially without having the patches side-by-side. Patches with slightly different sized design elements may be termed “MVE”. “MVE” may also be used when several different shades of a color appear on different patches. For example, if multiple examples of a particular issue appear to have slightly different shades of light blue sky, it may be noted “MVE”. Similarly, an issue that can allegedly be found with, for example, “shiny” and “dull” thread colors may be listed as MVE.

NOAC = National Order of the Arrow Conference. Usually listed with the year, for example, “NOAC 1998”.

NT = No twill direction. This type of twill will not appear to have diagonal rows.

NYLT = National Youth Leadership Training.

pb = Plastic back. Other abbreviations may be used for specific types of plastic backing – see SSpb and 100pb.

R = Right, as in the right side of the patch.

SME = Sustaining Membership Enrollment, a fundraising campaign of the BSA.

S.R. = Scout Reservation.

SSC = Silkscreened.

SSpb = Insignia that has the BSA's "Scout Stuff" logo printed on the plastic backing.

SWISS = Swiss-style embroidery. This type of embroidery is often thick, with one or more colors being embroidered on top of other colors, creating a layered look.

Tag = A single stitch that connects letters or design elements to each other, or to the border. Tag patterns may help distinguish between different varieties of an issue.

TL = Twill left. When viewed from the front, the diagonal rows of twill appear to go up to the left of the patch.

TR = Twill right. When viewed from the front, the diagonal rows of twill appear to go up to the right of the patch.

Type 1 / Type 2 border = Both types of borders occur only on "Red & White" shoulder patches. On a Type 1 border, the threads were sewn at an angle to one another, giving the border a crosshatched appearance. On a Type 2 border, the threads were sewn parallel to one another.

un#’d = unnumbered

VERT = Vertically stitched embroidery.

Some information will not be found in the "Comments" section as it may change over time or be impossible to confirm with certainty. For these reasons, the purchase price or donation amount required to obtain a piece of insignia will not be recorded. Likewise, the quantity manufactured will also not be recorded.

Volumes 3 and 4, covering Community Strips (CMS), Military Base Strips (MBS), and State Strips, are arranged alphabetically due to the nature of the insignia. It is impossible to state with certainty, on a national level, which communities did or did not use a particular strip. However, an attempt has been made to identify all places where there are communities with names that appear on known insignia. Data was taken primarily from the U.S. Geological Survey's Geographic Names Information System, with secondary identification provided from Google and Wikipedia searches. Collectors will need to research their council's history and determine where units were chartered in order to most accurately determine which communities within their council's boundaries would have used a particular shoulder patch.

## **THE COUNCIL GUIDE COLOR KEY**

The colors of a piece of insignia can sometimes be difficult to accurately describe, and may be affected by fading, soiling, lighting conditions, and a viewer's subjective understanding of color shades. Manufacturers frequently have numerous shades of the same color thread available, and different shades may unintentionally result from the quality of the materials used during production. Despite these factors, the codes below were used to describe the insignia in *The Council Guide* as accurately and consistently as possible.

### Reds

LPK = light pink  
PNK = pink  
DPK = dark pink  
LRD = light red  
RED = red  
DRD = dark red

### Orange with Red

PCH = peach  
ROR = red orange  
COP = copper

### Oranges

YOR = yellow orange  
LOR = light orange  
ORG = orange  
DOR = dark orange

### Yellows

MAN = manila, buff, cream  
PYL = pale yellow  
LYL = light yellow  
YEL = yellow  
DYL = dark yellow, gold  
YGR = yellow green

### Greens

PGR = pale green, mint  
LGR = light green  
BGR = bright green, Kelly  
GRN = green  
DGR = dark green  
FGR = forest green

### Blue with Green

LTQ = light turquoise  
TRQ = turquoise  
BTQ = bright turquoise  
DTQ = dark turquoise

### Blues

PBL = pale blue, powder  
LBL = light blue, sky  
BBL = bright blue  
BLU = blue  
DBL = dark blue, royal  
NBL = navy blue

### Purple with Blue

LVI = light violet, lavender  
VIO = violet  
DVI = dark violet

### Purples

LPR = light purple  
BPR = bright purple  
PUR = purple  
DPR = dark purple  
MAR = maroon

### Browns

TAN = light olive brown, sand  
GBR = gray brown  
RBR = red brown  
LBR = light brown  
BRN = brown  
DBR = dark brown

### Green with Brown

KAK = khaki  
DKH = dark khaki  
LOL = light olive  
OLV = olive  
DOL = dark olive

### Gray scale

WHT = white  
PGY = pale gray  
LGY = light gray  
GRY = gray  
DGY = dark gray  
BLK = black

### Metallics

RMY = red mylar  
OMY = orange mylar  
GRM = green mylar  
BMY = blue mylar  
PMY = purple mylar  
TMY = tan mylar  
BRM = brown mylar  
WMY = white mylar  
GYM = gray mylar  
BKM = black mylar  
CMY = copper mylar  
SMY = silver mylar  
GMY = gold mylar

### Other

M/C = multicolored  
RWB = red, white, & blue  
BWR = blue, white, & red  
(used only for border colors,  
when viewed clockwise)  
GID = glow-in-the-dark  
L = leather

## **Contributors**

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