



Places to Trade and Mail Trading

The ISCA Getting Started Collecting Series

In many ways, trading patches is easier today than it has ever been before. There are lots of places and ways to trade. One place to trade is at summer camp. Some summer camps announce that patch trading will occur one evening, sometimes along with some other gathering. If your summer camp does not already have a time, ask the camp director to set a time and see who comes. If your camp has had a regular time for a number of years, patch trading at summer camp can be amazingly good! This can be a great place to pick up old local items. Patch trading also occurs sometimes at camporees. Like summer camp, if nothing is set up, don't be afraid to ask.

It depends on the lodge, but OA events such as Spring and Fall Fellowships are often good places to trade patches. Traders at events such as these are often mostly interested in local lodge, council, and event patches. They may also be interested in patches from the local region. Be sure to bring your duplicates when you go to these functions, but also be sure you have a safe place to lock them like a car trunk. Unfortunately, not all Scouts always follow the first point of the Scout Law, so it is best to keep your patches safe.

OA section conclaves are usually great places to trade. A conclave is a gathering of a number of nearby lodges (although in places like the West, "nearby" may mean many hundreds of miles away). Some lodges issue special patches just for conclaves, and collecting them is popular. This is often a great time to pick up older conclave patches and patches from the other lodges in your section.

The National Order of the Arrow Conference (NOAC) is held every two years, and it is one of the greatest places to trade patches. Many lodges issue special NOAC flaps, and collecting them is popular. At a NOAC, you can find almost everything Scouting. The other great national event for trading is the National Jamboree held every four years. Most councils issue special shoulder strips or JSPs (Jamboree Shoulder Patches) to contingent members. JSP trading is very popular at Jamborees as is trading OA, CSP, and other Scouting items. Be aware that at Jamborees and some other Scout events, trading between adults and boys is forbidden. Be sure to check the rules before you trade. Also be sure to attend all of the other events and just trade at the right times in the right places.

Sometimes, there will be a special event, just for trading called a Trade-O-Ree (TOR). Trade-o-rees are typically not BSA sponsored events. Instead, they are usually sponsored

by a local Scouter or group of Scouters so local Scouts and Scouters can get together to trade, talk, buy, sell, and have fun. Many TOR's draw people from hundreds of miles away. People even fly in to some of the larger ones. TOR's are great places to meet other traders in your region, pick up patches, or make a few dollars selling some extra duplicates. They are often in hotels, although they could be at a church, Scout Camp, or other meeting facility. You can find out about the TOR's in your area by looking at the ISCA web site <http://www.scouttrader.org/>. There are two really big TOR's, one immediately before NOAC and one during the Jamboree.

Sometimes, you can trade patches without going to any organized events. Just have your friends in the area meet somewhere and make sure everyone brings their patches.

Going to camps, OA events, conclaves, NOAC's, Jamborees, and TOR's are great fun. There is nothing quite like a face-to-face trade where you can both hold the patches in your hands before agreeing on a trade. However, even if you never see another Scout, you can still trade patches. Mail trading is very popular. Typically, you correspond with another trader via e-mail until you agree to a trade, then you mail the patches and inform the other trader when they arrive. If you send valuable patches you may want to insure them. Information on insurance is available online at <http://usps.gov> and at the post office. Be sure to send the patches well protected, not just thrown into a thin envelope. Also be sure to include proper postage. You can find traders who trade through the mail through the International Scout Collectors Association and PATCH-L.

-- Warren F. Kuhfeld