

Merit Badge Jewelry



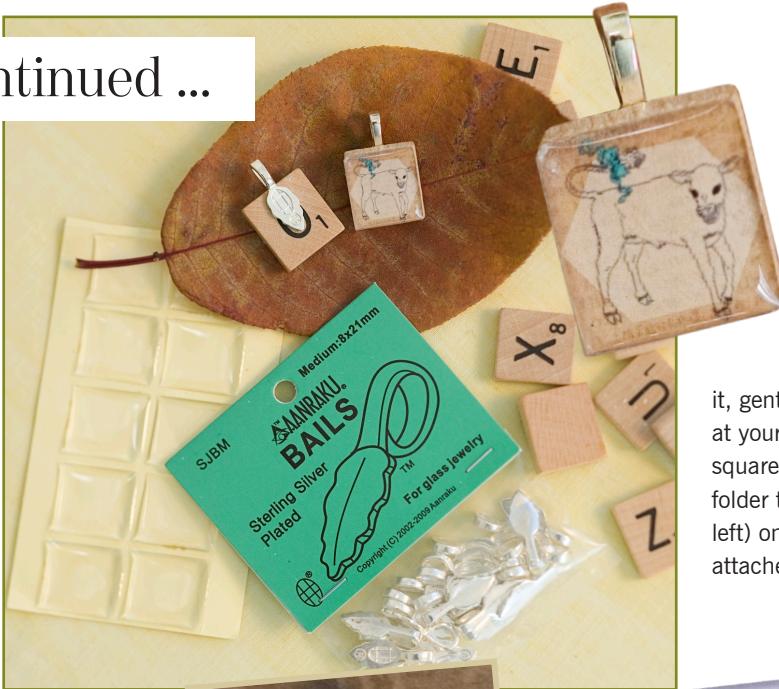
Farmgirl sisters and their children have earned over 10,886 merit badges to date (see a complete list of our Merit Badge Awardees at FarmgirlSisterhood.org). Not only are their meritorious accomplishments given public accolades here in the *Sister Issue* and on our chatroom, but they're also given a link to a printable 4-inch badge specific to every accomplishment. (Some farmgirls have even earned the "sharpshooter" designation for earning more than 200 badges!) Typically printed on muslin and then stitched to jackets or shoulder bags, made into wall hangings, or sometimes quilts, I'm thinking there might be other sisters, like me, who want to turn their badge insignias into necklaces, bracelets, chest medals, ring or earring signets, or even aglets and stampede straps!

Here's how I did it. Using a few basic jewelry tools, the Internet, and a visit to my local craft store, I took my badges (that arrive in an e-mail when earned/approved) and sized them down. You can size your badges yourself using this step-by-step process, or take your jpeg files to your local copy shop and have them do it for you. If you have other ideas on how you like to resize and color your badges, feel free to share your ideas on our **Farmgirl Connection™ Chatroom**.

1. Download your jpeg badge file, right-click (PC) or command-click (Mac) the image, then choose "Save Picture As..." or "Save Image As..." Save them to your computer somewhere you can find them again (like the desktop).
2. My design team knew how to color them on the computer using Paint or Photoshop, but when left to my own devices, colored pencils worked just fine. I left many of mine black and white, aiming for that vintage, somewhat industrial, frugal, farmish look.
3. Open Microsoft Word.
4. Click "Insert," "Picture," "From File," and select the badge image to insert.
5. Select one of the corners of the badge image. Using Word's rulers for size reference (under toolbars), resize your badge the desired amount by clicking, holding, and dragging.
6. If you make a mistake while resizing, simply hit the "Reset Picture" button on the picture editing toolbar and start over ("View," "Toolbars," "Picture").
7. To make a circle cutting template around your badge you will need to again select "View," "Toolbars," "Drawing." Select the oval shape, and while holding your shift key down, drag until the circle is the correct size for your badge.
8. Click the paint bucket on the drawing toolbar while your circle is selected, and click "no fill" to make your badge visible through the circle.
9. Print and enjoy!



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For Scrabble tiles, I found the best quality and most reliable gear on [Etsy](#). First, I brushed the paper badge with a thin layer of matte-finish Mod Podge to seal the paper, then I let it dry. You will use Mod Podge for all of these jewelry crafting projects; it works as both a glue and a sealer. Next I cut out my paper badge insignia and brushed the blank side of the Scrabble tile with Mod Podge and placed the paper badge onto it, gently working out any air bubbles with my bone folder (find at your local craft store.) After it dried, I placed a self-adhesive square epoxy dome on top of the badge insignia and used a bone folder to remove the air bubbles. Next, I glued a metal bail (see left) on the lettered side using a 24-hour clear epoxy. Finally, I attached it to my chain necklace using a jump ring.

Bone Folder



For smaller, round bezel cups (my favorite), I turned to scrapbooking supplies for the most economical source. Idea-ology™ "Type Charms" (the stickers that come in the package look like typewriter keys, but I used my badge insignias instead) are sold in packages of 16 that include self-adhesive round epoxy domes that insert into each cup and sell for around \$8 (50¢ each). Available at [Michael's](#) or [online here](#).

I think the 1/2" diameter size of this charm is good because of the price and availability. Soon, we'll all be charming! (You can go a more expensive route using bezel cups made from sterling silver and filled with liquid clear casting epoxy. You can [purchase supplies here](#), or [Google](#) "sterling bezel cups".)

Sterling Silver Bezel Cup



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Look to **Jill Schwartz** for a line of jewelry embellishments for adding non-badge charms to your necklace. I used a variety of charms from her line, as well as Industrial Chic, Lost & Found, Pearls & Pumps, Bella Boho, Forged, Blue Moon, and Black Lace. If you haven't discovered the jewelry aisle in your local craft store yet, head on out. There may be other lines or new lines available online or in stores near you.

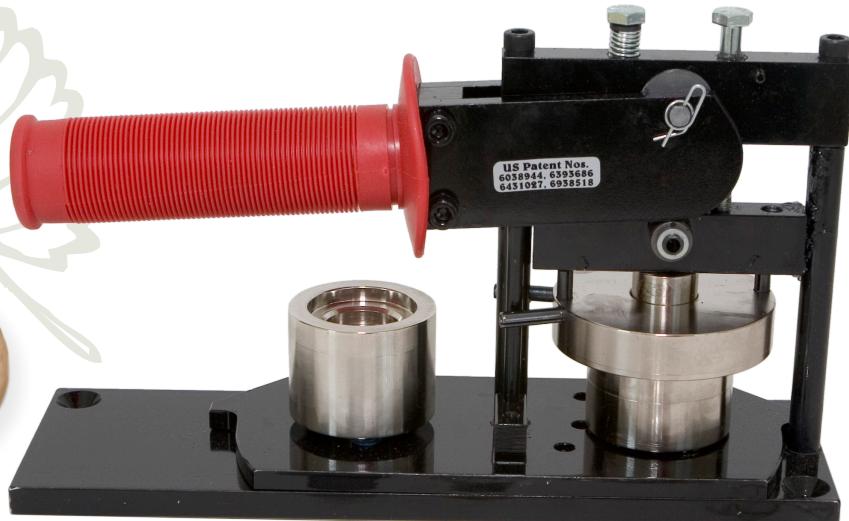


Picking through the above lines of jewelry makings, I also Mod Podged my badge insignias onto any flat surface I could find, adjusting the size accordingly. I even used a locket from the Industrial Chic line for my main hexagonal Sisterhood Badge (inside are photos of my grandchildren). Note the cool safety pins you can buy that don't have the bottom double curl.



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Or buy a button-making machine.



Industrial Chic's ring blank didn't come with a self-adhesive resin dome, so I picked up some EasyCast to make my own. First, I followed the Mod Podge steps and gave the badge an extra coat to protect it from losing color and let it dry. I chose a well-ventilated area and covered the surface I was working on with wax paper. Next, I put on gloves and eye protection. Following the EasyCast instructions that come with the kit, I mixed my EasyCast and poured it into a squeezable condiment bottle with a spout (like a mustard container). I put the ring upright in a vice and gently squeezed the EasyCast onto my "bee kind to mother earth" badge that was nestled inside. (If you don't have a vise, you could use a bowl of uncooked rice or make jigs out of foam-core board or styrofoam.) Lastly, I covered the ring with a box while the EasyCast was hardening to protect it and followed the EasyCast instructions for proper clean up.

