

# THE INFORMATION BOOTH

Michael Knapp

Welcome to another installment of "The Information Booth." For those of you who are reading the column for the first time, it is here that we try to provide some information about unidentified chips (UFC's) submitted by members for identification and to answer questions about casino history, chip history, or related subjects.

As we always do, we'll begin with some answers to previous UFC questions. Also, we repeat our request for participation by club members. This column is only of value if you take time to write to your columnist with identifications of chips you recognize here in the column, and if you send *legible* photocopies (full size is a must; black and white is preferred) or samples of chips you'd like identified. Please don't assume that if you recognize a chip, someone else will. Don't assume that "everyone knows what that chip is." If you have information which may be of help to other members, please share it through this column.

You will notice that very few of the chips which appear in the column are simply photocopied. That's because many older chips do not have enough contrast to photocopy well, and if they will not photocopy once, they certainly will not photocopy a second time when the magazine is produced. As a result, we hand-illustrate most of the chips pictured here. It's a painstaking process, because we make every effort to make sure that each chip illustration is as close as possible to its original version. That way, recognition identification may be possible.

Please realize, though, that *if you cannot read what is printed on a chip clearly after you photocopy it, neither can your columnist, and illustrating it will be impossible.* In such a case, you may send the chip to us, *with return postage* if you would like the chip sent back to you after the illustration process is completed.

Also, please realize that if you recognize a chip published here as a UFC, you have information that other fellow collectors do not have. Please share it! That's the whole point of this column. What is common knowledge in one part of the country, or in one area of collecting is completely unknown to others. For those of you with answers or questions, please share your information by writing to us at P. O. Box 340345, Columbus, Ohio 43234.

Now for identifications of past UFC's:

**Q. 175:** The **Belgium Club** chip was identified some time ago, but Ernie Meador has sent us some detailed information that we thought would be of interest to other members as well.

We know from our previous identification that the Belgium Club was an illegal gaming club in Belgium, IL, located in Don's Tavern, which became Don's Tavern and Supper Club. But Ernie has sent us much more detail than we were able to provide before.

Don was Don Leverenz, and he established his tavern in the 1920's or 1930's. The Belgium Club, also known locally simply as "upstairs," was located above the tavern, and was the

most well-known of the Danville/Belgium area clubs. They existed because of the nearby Chanute Air Force Base and the numerous colleges and universities in the area.

Illegal clubs in the area, including Don's, were shut down after World War II as was the case in many areas of the country. Ernie believes that the club flourished until 1948 or so.

**Q. 724:** Janice O'Neal, our club historian, has spotted this chip, and has provided the elusive identification. The chip is rather rare, and few collectors have an example in their collections. This chip, which bears the initials **HIC**, is an original chip from what is now the Chip-In Casino in Harris, MI. Operated by Native Americans, the casino was originally located in nearby Hannahville. When the casino needed more space than was available, the Hannahville Indian Community (HIC) built the current Chip-In Casino in Harris, and converted the original casino to a bingo hall, which also still operates.

**Q. 754:** According to the records of the T.R. King Co., the **MBM** chip was made as an advertising chip for Five Star Vinyl Sales in Reseda, CA, in 1974.

**Q. 778:** The note I received from member Bud Quick was simply too funny not to share. I trust Bud will forgive me from quoting: "I can't see worth a damn. So I squint a lot. Anyway, when I looked at 778 I saw a perfect hairline and drew a face to match." Bud's conclusion? It's Elvis! Another sighting! And you read it first right here in *Casino Chip and Token News*, not in the *National Enquirer!*

**Q. 858:** Gene Grossblatt confirms that this **Sphinx** chip (misspelling and all!) is from the The Sphinx at 1410 East 4th Street, Reno, which operated from 1941-1943. Gene has four different colors of this chip in his collection, as well as another design from the same club, shown below as **858A**.

**Q. 866:** This **F Club** chip is from the Foster Club in Rio Vista, CA, an illegal game which operated in the 1950's. Gary Fitzgerald tells us that it was located in the basement of what is now Foster's Big Horn. There is no gambling there now.

Now for our new UFC's. As is our custom, we indicate those chips which bear a denomination on the reverse side with a \$ next to the chip.

**Q. 869:** The **Gran Casino, Las Palmas** is located on Margarita Island, which is part of Venezuela.

858A

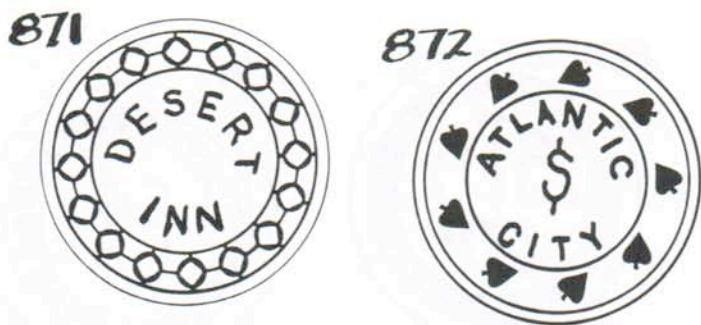
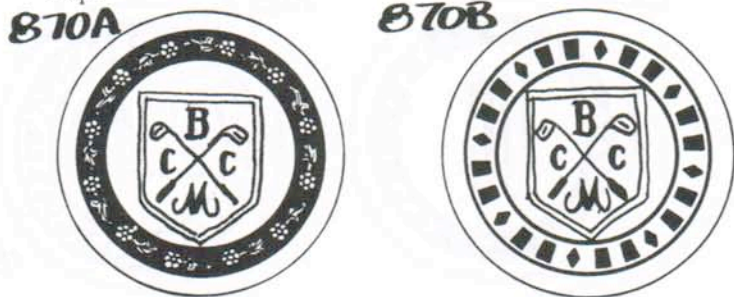


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**Q. 870A and 870B:** Both of these chips are believed to have originated at the Bryn Mawr Country Club, although we do not know where that is located.

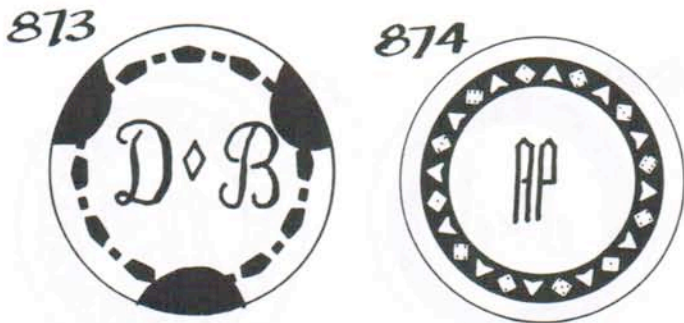
**Q. 871:** This chip is a puzzler. One is tempted to suggest that this is a new, previously undiscovered chip from the **Desert Inn** in Las Vegas. We doubt that, however, although it is possible that it was used as a roulette or poker chip at one time. We don't know whether there's a denomination on the reverse side, but we suspect there isn't, because the person who sent us the copy would have mentioned it. We know of no square-in-circle chips which have ever been used at the Desert Inn, Las Vegas, and it is unlikely that such a chip would have gone unnoticed. On the other hand, we know of no other "Desert Inns." Does someone recognize this chip?



**Q. 872:** Although this chip bears the legend "Atlantic City," it does not appear to be a chip used in any Atlantic City casino. Archie Black, who is the leading expert on Atlantic City chips, had never seen it before. Has anyone seen it before?

**Q. 873:** This **D-B** chip was used in a card room by Douglas and Brush in Antioch, CA in the 1960's.

**Q. 874:** Here's an unidentified arodie chip. We're tempted to suggest that it was made as a personal chip for club member/dealer Armin Pfaender, but he's denied it. Does anyone know the origin of this **AP** chip?

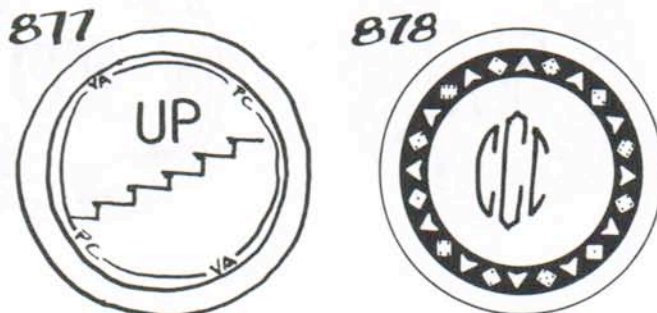
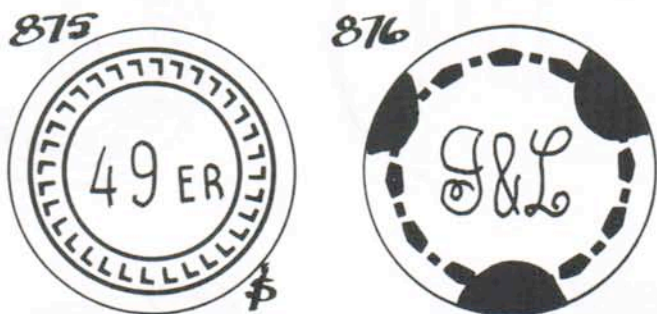


**Q. 875:** We believe that this **49ER** was a California club, because the L mold is virtually unknown elsewhere. Can someone tell us where the chip comes from?

**Q. 876:** **J & L** is from Rossi's Card Room, Lone Pine, CA.

**Q. 877:** Steve Alpert sent us this chip, which has been difficult to illustrate. The chip has small concentric circles radiating from the center, so that the chip appears to be like a phonograph record. (Those of you who know only about tapes and CD's will have to ask your parents what records were!) The initials **VA** and **PC** appear around the center of the chip, two times each. Steve suggests, and we agree, that this was probably a chip used in an illegal club called The Upstairs Club, or something similar. Does anyone recognize the chip?

**Q. 878:** Although the initials **CCC** fit, we do not believe that this chip was used in a Civilian Conservation Corps camp in the 1930's! Does anyone know its origin?



**Q. 879:** Ron Anderson sent us this illustration of a molded single-color European-style plaque. When Ron purchased the chip, he was told that it was from Russia, was used in a private club, "maybe" in the 1920's or 1930's. Riga, however, is in Latvia, not in Russia. This certainly seems to be a casino plaque, and "Casino Riga Plage" would translate from French as "Casino Riga Beach." Although Ron is aware of clubs which existed there, he was unaware of any gambling going on. Can someone tell us more about the history of this area?



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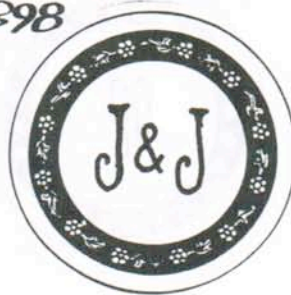
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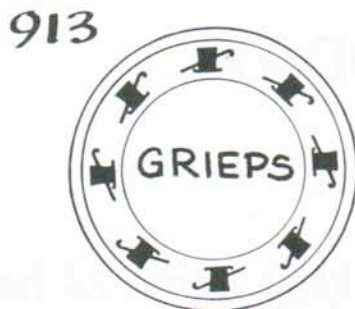
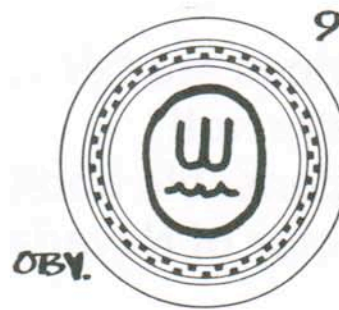
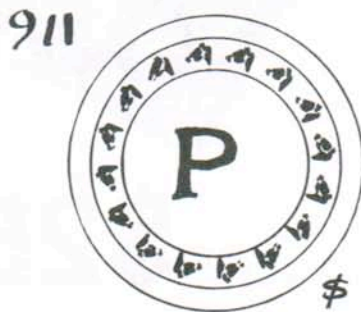
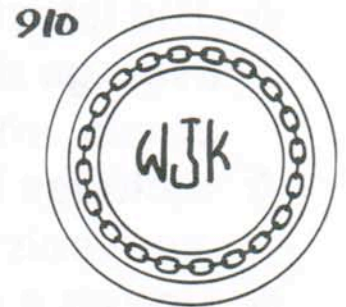
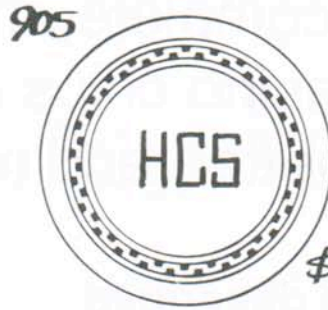
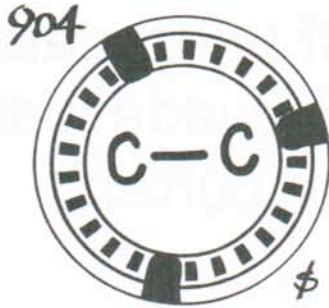
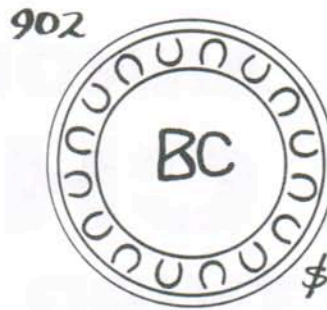
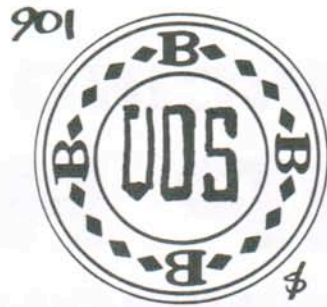
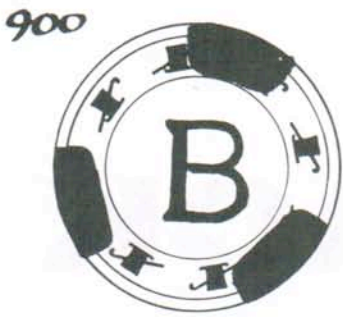


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Thanks to the following members who, in addition to those named in the column, contributed information or questions for this month's column: Archie Black, Robert Eisenstadt, Steve Goodrich, Peter Kowalick, John Moore, Allan Myers, Randy Peeler and Ernie Wheelden.