

# 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 I try to provide some information about unidentified flying chips (UFC's) submitted by members for identification and to answer questions about casino history, chip history, or related subjects.

As I always do, I'll begin with some answers to previous UFC questions. Also, I repeat my request for participation by club members. This column is only of value if you take time to write to me 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, and please *do not send enlarged copies*) 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.

There are always far more unidentified chips than there are members who write to me with answers. The purpose of this column is to try to identify chips that our members ask about. If you'd like this column to continue, it's important to share your knowledge of chips that your fellow members may not know about. Come on, collectors, help!

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, I hand-illustrate most of the chips pictured here. It's a painstaking process, because I 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 that *if you cannot read what is printed on a chip clearly after you photocopy it for the column, neither can I, and illustrating it will be*

*impossible*. In such a case, you may send the chip to me, *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 me at: P. O. Box 340345, Columbus, Ohio 43234.

We begin with some identifications, and some error corrections. Apparently, after well over a thousand UFC's and a having written this column for more than eight years, I've become befuddled on occasion and actually published a chip I'd included in the column before.

**UFC 160**, for example (**GG**) was in this column recently as **UFC 991**. Unfortunately, it's still unidentified.

**UFC 853** also appeared as **UFC 1015**, but Doc Finstuen has provided us with the answer on this one: the **KD** stands for Kemah Den. Kemah, TX is near Galveston, and the Kemah Den was an illegal club there in the 1930's and 1940's.

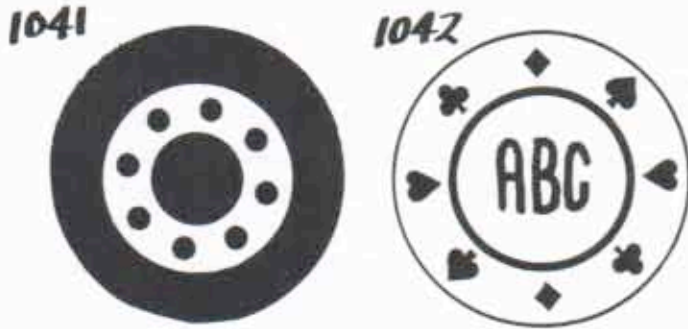
**UFC 962**, containing the initials **CB**, is from the Cocopah Casino/Bingo, an Indian casino in Yuma, AZ. Janice O'Neal, who probably has the most extensive record of Native American casinos in the hobby, was able to confirm the origin of the chip for us.

**UFC 1020**: the hotstamped **horsehead** chip with a denomination on the reverse was used in the Turf Athletic Club's Western Room in Galveston, TX.

**UFC 1028**, which contains the initials **MWR**, might be from TX as well. Gene Trimble tells us that it was found in Seguin, TX, and might be from Galveston, but he doesn't know of a specific club or location name.

We now move on to some new UFC's submitted by

our readers, some of which have partial identifications. **UFC 1041** is what is most often referred to as a poker chip. It is one of hundreds of designs produced by the U. S. Playing Card Co. in Cincinnati, OH when that company was manufacturing chips. The inlaid design consists of a diecut piece of heavy paper which is pressed into the chip during manufacture, then coated so the surface of the chip is completely smooth. While they were often used by casinos as roulette chips in different colors, they were also generally available for purchase for home games. Dale Seymour's *Antique Gambling Chips* identifies and gives catalog numbers to all known designs of this kind of poker chip, as well as others. This chip is identified as **CDK**. Although many of these chips were used in legal and illegal clubs, attributing them to any specific casino is impossible, because there's no way to distinguish a chip used in one casino or in a home game, from another.



**UFC 1042:** This is a **sample** chip manufactured by the Bud Jones Co., Las Vegas, NV. This kind of hotstamped chip is advertised and available from Bud Jones for home and personal sets.



**UFC 1043:** Bob Reed sent a copy of this chip, which he indicated is "from Mobile, AL." I'm not sure whether that means that he found the chip in Mobile, or that it is associated with a particular illegal club in Mobile. If it is associated with a specific club, we

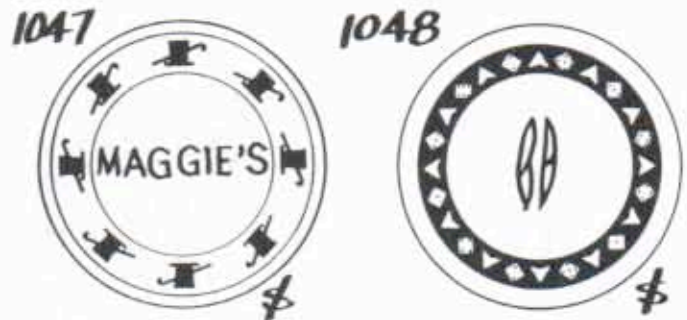
don't know the name of the club. I know of no illegal clubs in Mobile that would match the initials **BP**.

**UFC 1044:** We're told that the **Beaumont Club** was an illegal casino in Beaumont, TX.



**UFC 1045:** This chip, which carries only the letter **C** and a 25¢ denomination, reportedly was purchased after a fire at the Beverly Hills Country Club, the large, illegal casino in Southpoint, KY. There are similar chips in the same group that bear the letters **A** and **B**. Like **UFC 1041**, it's virtually impossible to attribute this kind of chip (which may well have been used as a roulette chip) to a specific casino, because no name, initials or other distinguishing identification appears on the chip.

**UFC 1046:** This 50¢ chip supposedly came from the Newport, KY area as well. Again, there really isn't a good way to attribute such a chip to a particular casino.



**UFC 1047:** **Maggie's** is, in all likelihood, a card room in California. Does anyone know anything about it?

**UFC 1048:** There were several denominations of this **BB** chip found near Galveston, TX, from 25¢ to \$100. Does one of our Texas members recognize the chip or know the club from which it came?

**UFC 1049:** Gene Trimble tells us that a group of these chips were found buried in a back yard near Steubenville, Ohio. At one time Steubenville had a

number of casinos, and the second edition of *The Gaming Table* will identify a number of them: Academy Billiard Parlor, Half Moon Nite Club, New York Club, Rex Cigar Store, and The Wheel. **Springtime Frolic** is not a club I've read about in my research, however. Does anyone recognize it?



**UFC 1050:** We don't know who **Pat Sullivan** is (was) but this chip appears to be a personal, business-card-type chip made for him. It seems very unlikely that it is a casino chip.



**UFC's 1051-1055:** We're told that all of these chips came from a collector in the Galveston, TX area, and may have been used in illegal clubs in the area. Does anyone recognize them?

This is a good opportunity to point out that chips, especially those from illegal clubs, are often found in areas completely unrelated to where they were used. Chips from northern Kentucky clubs, for example, have been found in groups in Florida and in the Las Vegas area. There's a very logical reason for this phenomenon.

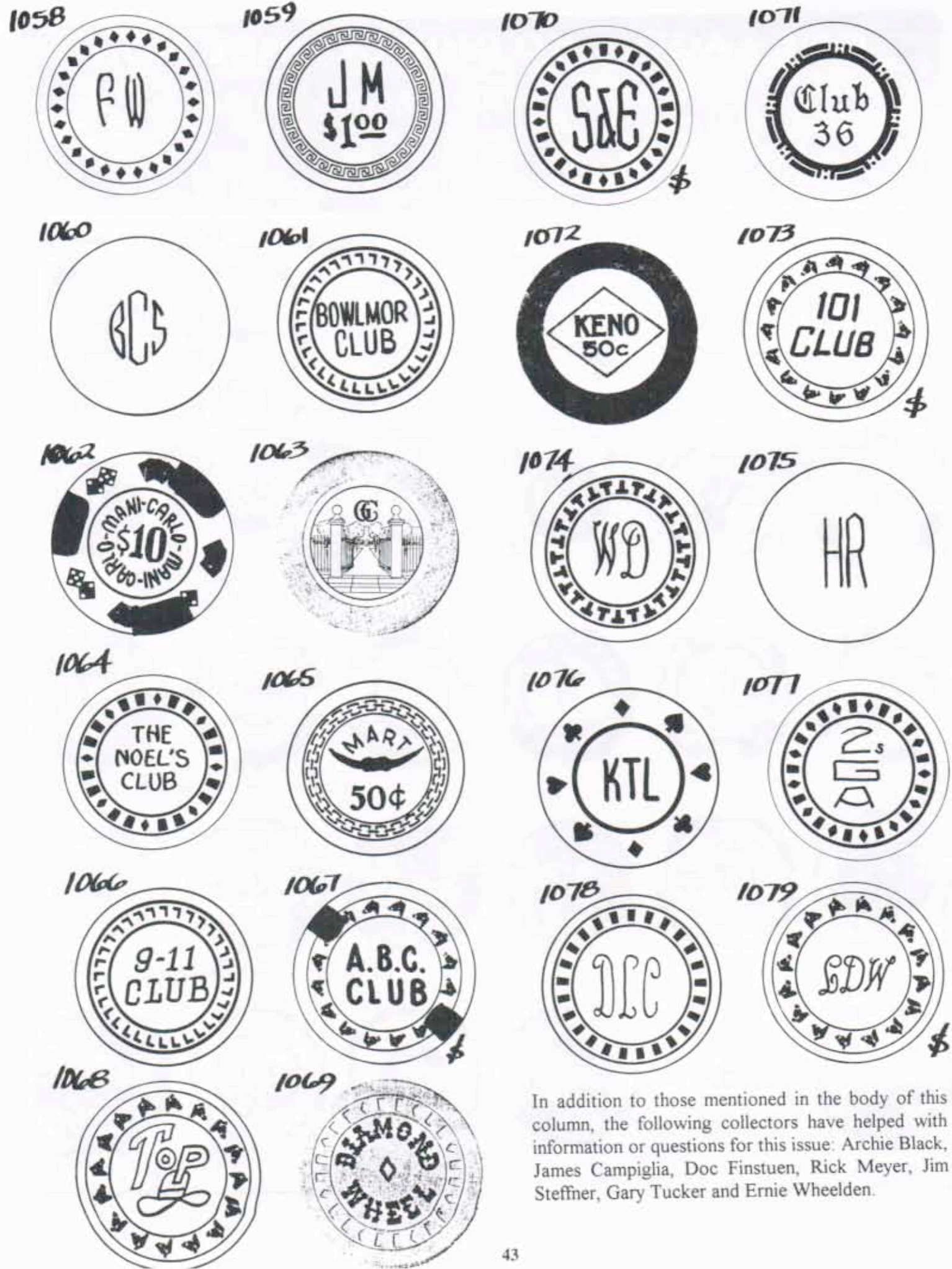
When the illegal clubs of Newport, Covington and Southpoint, KY were operating regularly in the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's, the operators of the clubs often went to Florida for the winter, because many of their regular customers went there to vacation. The northern clubs experienced a drop in attendance, and the operators often opened illegal gambling spots in the Miami/Ft. Lauderdale area to give their customers something to do while they were on vacation. Usually, the dealers from the KY clubs would go with the club operators to FL.

In the mid to late 1950's, when the KY clubs began closing for good, a number of the dealers, pit bosses and club operators headed west to NV, where they could find steadier and less stressful employment. Many brought chips with them from the old clubs they worked for.

The fact that a group of chips may be found somewhere does not necessarily indicate that the chips were actually used in that location. I, for example, have found chips from Hollywood's Clover Club with a group of chips used in an illegal casino in Toledo, OH. Likely there was an ownership or personnel connection between the two clubs, but that is undocumented.

The following chips are not identified. If you recognize and can authenticate any of them, please drop me a note!





In addition to those mentioned in the body of this column, the following collectors have helped with information or questions for this issue: Archie Black, James Campiglia, Doc Finstuen, Rick Meyer, Jim Steffner, Gary Tucker and Ernie Wheelden.