

# 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, 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 color 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. 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 published. 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 and identification may be possible.

Please follow the following simple rules when submitting chips or copies for inclusion in "The Information Booth:

☞ If you have a chip that will not photocopy well, please send it, packed carefully. If you'd like me to

return it, please enclose return postage.

☞ Black and white photocopies only, please! Believe it or not, it's actually more difficult to work with color photocopies than with black and white, even though they look prettier when you copy them!

☞ No electronic scans, please! Scans are virtually impossible to work with, because they're almost never actual size. If you have a scanner, I know you like to show off the results, and electronic transmission is certainly faster and easier than (gasp!) taking pen in hand and writing a note, but please, *if you want your UFC to appear in this column, don't send me scans!*

☞ Legibility is the key: *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.

Also, please realize that if you recognize a chip published here as a UFC, you have information that your fellow collectors do not have. Please share. That's the whole point of this column. What is common knowledge in one area of collecting is completely unknown in 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.

As usual, we'll begin with some identifications of previously-published UFC's. The volume and issue number of the magazine where the chip first appeared is shown in parentheses so you can see the illustration if you wish.

**UFC 41 (2/3): Brook Club;** not a positive identification, but a possibility. See UFC 542, below.

**UFC 215 (4/1):** The correct identification for this L'A chip appeared in one of Howard Herz's recent Gaming Archaeology auction catalogs: **L'Aiglon Cafe**, Chicago, IL, 1930's. Clearly an illegal club.

**UFC 345 (4/3):** James Campiglia believes that this chip, showing the number **14 inside an ornate C**, was used in **Havana, Cuba**. It doesn't seem like a Cuban chip, however, and we're wondering if anyone can

confirm James' suspicions.

**UFC 384 (4/4):** Doc Finstuen tells us that this **WEN** chip was used at the **Bonita Club** in Kemah, TX. The initials stand for William E. Nelson, who owned the illegal club.

**UFC 542 (6/1):** This **Brook Club** chip has been identified by Bob Ginsburg and Mark and Myrna Lighterman in their Florida book as having been used at a Miami area club in Surfside, FL, in the 1920's and 1930's. Although the rim design of UFC 41 is different, the typeface of the hotstamping appears very similar, and we suspect that both chips are from the same club.

**UFC 911:** This **P** chip was previously included in The Information Booth as **UFC 464**. Still no identification, however!

**UFC 1118 (11/2):** **PJ's Table One** was used at **Riley's Lake House** in Saratoga Springs, NY, in the 1920's and 1930's. Ed Hertel tells us that PJ was Peter J. Sullivan, who owned Riley's, along with its Delmonico's Restaurant. Because there are also chips that say PJ's Table Two, we're assuming that there were two roulette tables at Riley's at this time, and that these were the chips used at the tables.

**UFC 1122 (11/2) and UFC 1147 (11/3):** Al Kleindeinst tells us that both these **Club Lake** chips were used at that illegal club at Blackfish Lake, AR, not in Hot Springs, AR. Blackfish Lake is located between Forest City and West Memphis.

**UFC 1131 (11/2):** Jim Myers tells us that **CC** was used at the **Court Club** in Jeffersonville, IN. In the 1920's and 1930's, Jeffersonville, which was across the Ohio River from Louisville, KY, had a number of illegal casinos. We've seen other styles of **CC** chips attributed to the Court Club.

Now for some new UFC's sent in by members for this issue. As always, I use a \$ next to the chip illustration to indicate that there is a denomination on the reverse side. If you see no \$ or other notation, you may safely assume that both sides of the chip are identical.

**UFC 1176:** It may not reproduce well, but this is a unicorn mold chip. Al Zaika thinks that perhaps the **OM** stands for Officers' Mess, and that the chip was used on a military base for Las Vegas nights.

**UFC 1177:** The **Silver Dollar** was an illegal casino in Phenix City, AL. In 1954, the National Guard was called to Phenix City and closed all illegal clubs, destroying the gaming equipment. Ted Brown's

"informant" suggests checking LIFE magazine for October 4, 1954 and September 26, 1955 for articles about illegal gambling in Phenix City.



**UFC 1178 and 1179:** These chips were found in an antique shop in Appleton, WI, according to member Sharon Pamperin. I don't know about any illegal clubs in Appleton, but I do know that it's the birthplace of one Erich Weiss, whom most of you have heard of as the great escape artist Harry Houdini!



**UFC 1180:** The **SP** on this old U. S. Playing Card Co. crest and seal chip stands for Southport Club, in Jefferson Parish, LA.

**UFC 1181:** Al Kleindeinst, who identified UFC 1180 for us, tells us that this **OD** crest and seal chip was used at O'Dwyer's, also in Jefferson Parish outside New Orleans, and one of the area's largest illegal casinos.



**UFC 1182-1185:** All four of these chips were used at the **Blue Light Inn** in Gretna, LA. The initials **HB** stand for Henry Boudreaux, who owned the casino.



**UFC 1186:** Member Jim Myers went on a fishing trip to Alaska and came back with (guess what?!) chips! This one was used at the **Glue Pot Casino** in Nome, AK, which burned down in the 1920's. The story Jim got was that the initials CN stand for owner Nick Cimion.

**UFC 1187-1189:** Although he doesn't know the club names, Jim found out that these three chips were used in illegal clubs in Anchorage, AK.



**UFC 1190:** One more from Alaska, this one from Fairbanks.

**UFC 1191:** This may be a previously-unknown chip from Las Vegas' **Silver Slipper** (1950-1988) or perhaps its earlier cousin located on Boulder Highway (1943-1950). Can anyone confirm which club this chip is from?



**UFC 1192:** Ted Brown believes that this is an example of the original issue of Binion's Horseshoe in Las Vegas (1951). Does someone know for sure?

**UFC 1193:** This may be an early issue of the Las Vegas Showboat, but we have our doubts. Again, can someone give us some solid information about this chip?



**UFC 1194:** The reverse of this chip is blank, never having been hotstamped. We suspect it's another souvenir-type chip, made for refrigerator magnets, keychains, and the like. Has anyone seen this chip before?

**UFC 1195:** This chip has been attributed to TX, AR, and LA. Can someone clear up the confusion?





In addition to the members whose names are mentioned specifically above, members James Campiglia, Bob Ginsburg, Ken Craig and Butch Reynolds also provided information or new UFC's for this issue's column.