



CARD CULTURE

MONTHLY NEWS FROM THE EXPERTS AT 52 + JOKER PLAYING CARD CLUB | ISSUE 102 - JULY 2023



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GRAVELY & MILLER TOBACCO SETS & BICYCLE'S RIDER BACK

Lee Asher points out the similarities between these back designs.

MACHINE FOR CRACKING NUTS & PRESSING PLAYING CARDS

An American inventor invents a multi-purpose machine that brings pure joy.

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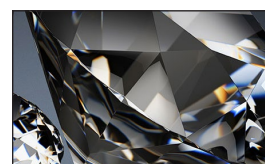
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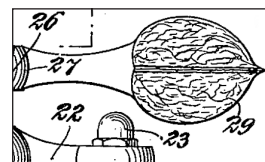


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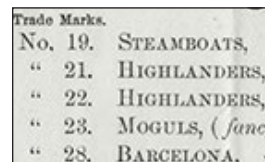


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52+J 
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PAPER EMPIRES Vol I

A Historical Journey of America's Early Playing Card Makers

JASON MCKINSTRY



Cut plug is a type of tobacco that is commonly used for chewing and pipe smoking. It is named for its unique preparation process, which involves cutting and pressing the tobacco leaves into dense, rectangular blocks or plugs.

Gravely & Miller Tobacco Cards - Bicycle Rider Back AN ENIGMATIC CONNECTION?

By Lee Asher | Editor-in-Chief

In design, connections are often found in the most unexpected places. The intricate web of influences and inspirations can span industries and periods, revealing fascinating insights into the creative process. Today, we delve into the mysterious relationship between the hard-to-find Gravely & Miller Tobacco cards and The Russell & Morgan Printing Co. renowned Bicycle brand Rider Back. Is it possible that these two iconic designs share a common origin? Let's explore the intriguing possibility.

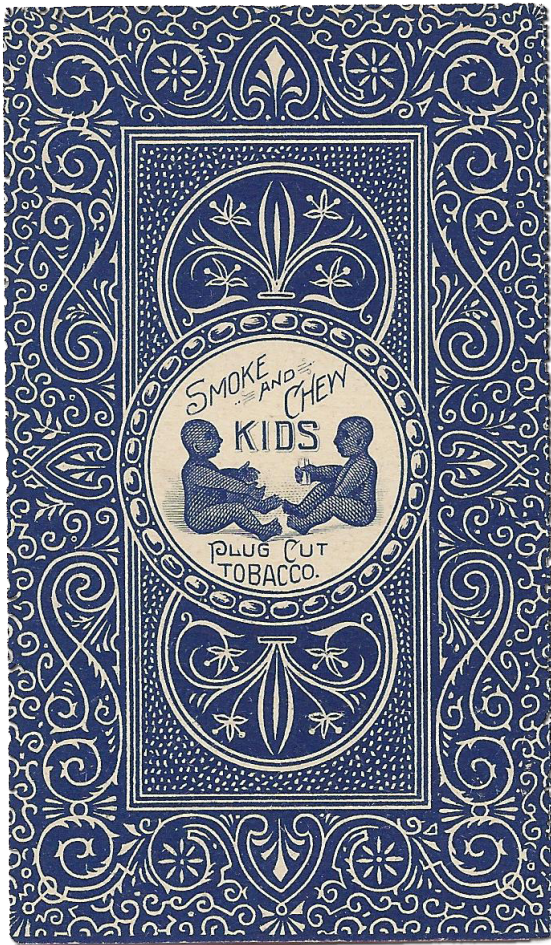
The Back Design Resemblance

Upon closely examining the Gravely & Miller tobacco backs found on the '*Kids Cut Plug*,' '*Snipe Cut Plug*,' and '*Red Boot Long Cut*,' a striking similarity to the Bicycle brand Rider Back design becomes apparent. Both exhibit a mesmerizing

symmetrical pattern, featuring intricate filigree, linework, and classic playing card motifs. The attention to detail in each design is a testament to the artistic sensibilities of their creators.

The Historical Clue

To shed light on this mysterious connection, we focus on 1887, when the Danville, Virginia company, and the Cincinnati company released their respective cards. During this era, The Russell & Morgan Printing Co. emerged as a prominent printing house known for its expertise in producing high-quality playing cards. It is conceivable that they played a significant role in shaping the designs of Gravely & Miller's iconic tobacco cards.



Seven Similarities Between These Two Designs:

1. Both designs feature an overall S-shaped filigree pattern. However, the cherubs, which were present in the Rider back shown on the bottom left, are absent in the Gravely design on the top.
2. The top and bottom of the designs include a spade shape positioned at the center. This spade is enclosed within a double outline and incorporates a central fan motif. The placement and elements of this spade shape remain unchanged in both designs.
3. The top and bottom of both cards showcases daisy wheels with eight petals each. While they vary in thickness, these daisy wheels are consistent in both designs.
4. Both designs have a square box at the center; three distinct lines define their boundaries.
5. The rectangles at the center of both designs are filled with numerous dots, which create a background pattern. This dotted pattern is a shared characteristic between the two designs.
6. Similar to the top and bottom spades, both designs have a middle spade in the center of the left and right side. This middle spade retains its double outline placement and central fan motif.
7. The central graphic in both designs consists of three intersecting circular shapes. A double outline encloses these circular shapes. This primary graphic is a common element in both designs.

Despite some minor variations, the two brand designs (circa 1887) exhibit remarkable similarities, highlighting their shared aesthetic and cohesive visual appeal.



Through Gravely Kids Plug Cut tobacco cards, exquisite artwork, attention to detail, and historical value, these cards provide a glimpse into a world long gone, inviting us to appreciate the tobacco industry's artistry, craftsmanship, and cultural significance.

A Possible Collaboration or Copy?

Considering the historical context, it is not entirely implausible to suggest that The Russell & Morgan Printing Co. might have been involved in creating both the Gravely & Miller tobacco sets and the Bicycle brand Rider Back design.

Their printing expertise and penchant for exquisite craftsmanship could have positioned them as the perfect partner for such creative endeavors.

While concrete evidence to substantiate this theory is non-existent, the uncanny resemblance between the two designs raises intriguing possibilities. Could the talented artisans at The Russell & Morgan Printing Co. have lent their artistic skills to both projects, infusing them with a shared aesthetic vision?

The parallel between the Gravely & Miller tobacco sets and the Bicycle brand Rider Back design is an intriguing discovery. Although the true nature of their relationship remains shrouded in mystery, the undeniable resemblance suggests a possible collaboration, potentially involving the esteemed Russell & Morgan Printing Co. Regardless of the historical truth, the enduring appeal of both designs serves as a testament to the artistic brilliance of their creators.

In this realm of artistic interconnectedness, the Gravely & Miller tobacco sets and the Bicycle brand Rider Back design find their place, forever linked by an aesthetic synergy that continues to captivate and inspire. ♦

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52 + JOKER MEMBERS RECEIVE NEXT TIER PRICING: J52NTP



Gabrielle Ione Hickmon was born in Ypsilanti, Michigan. A trained researcher and journalist, her work includes essays, coil-built ceramics, and ethnographic research.

HOW YOU PLAY SPADES IS HOW YOU PLAY LIFE

THE REAL DEAL: GABRIELLE HICKMON

By Rosemary Reid | Contributor

Some people who leave their mark in the playing card industry do so via multiple projects over a long career. Others become noteworthy through a single contribution that resonates deeply with playing card lovers worldwide. Today, we discover an artist from the latter category. Producing a meaningful deck of playing cards brings her to our radar, yet her artistry and career span many disciplines. Perhaps you'll recognize her name from March 2023's issue of the *Real Deal*? For her award-winning, ethnographic research project examining the game of Spades, which concluded

with producing a deck of cards, Gabrielle Ione Hickmon is the *Real Deal*.

Hickmon's work is deeply rooted in her personal life experience, and she has devoted energy and time to discovering as much of her family history as possible. Like for many Black Americans, finding out precisely when and from where in Africa her ancestors were enslaved and brought to America is impossible. Yet, her great, great, great grandparents helped found the town of Boyne City in Northern Michigan, where they owned a brickyard. Hickmon creates visual

Image from The Puddle's Instagram page of the printed deck *How You Play Spades Is How You Play Life*.



proof of her family's history and adds different Black experiences to historical narratives through her work as a ceramic artist. She also asks important questions: Where are the other stories of Black history in the USA from before [The Great Migration](#)? Considering the White legacies originating from the same period, why wasn't there sustained wealth for her family? And, what does it mean to be 'from' a place? She hopes to "*Inspire people to reflect on what it means for Black people in Western American history to have been there before the Great Migration and inspire people to look into their family histories themselves, because you can't know where you're going if you don't know where you've been and where you come from.*"

One quintessential childhood experience for Hickmon was watching the adults in her life play Spades. She was taught the rules before going to University, where she would develop her Spade-playing community, who she continues playing with at get-togethers today. As a trained and passionate writer, researcher, and journalist, it wasn't long before she wanted to dive deeper into the history of Spades, and understand its roots. Yet, to her surprise and disappointment, there was not a lot of information readily

available. Hickmon shares, "*The game itself is always being discussed on Black Twitter,*" but her search for historical details fell short.

She wanted answers to questions like: Where did Spades come from? How has it endured for so long? And, importantly, how might it hold space and make room for Black people in the future?

Often, visionaries can see and understand their unique potential contributions at a given moment. Prepared with a Master's in Social Sciences, Hickmon recognized, "*This [establishing a record of Spades] is something that doesn't exist, that needs to exist, and I have the ability to do it.*" The opportunity to merge her passion and interest in writing and telling Black stories with her academic training felt exciting. She pitched her big idea to The Puddle, a digital publication that communicates with visual essays, with whom she'd wanted to work with for some time. They accepted her proposal, and the project began.

Working closely with The Puddles' Matt Daniels, she created and designed a survey that would eventually collect information from



over 500 participants about their knowledge of and experience playing the game of Spades. Hickmon conducted the qualitative analysis of information herself (Daniels performed the quantitative analysis) and followed up via personal interviews with several survey participants to hear their in-depth experiences. Direct quotes from some of these interviews appear in the final piece.

After the analysis, the next phase of the project commenced; imagining and creating the best method for communicating the results. Hickmon shares, *“I didn’t want it to be a stereotypical essay with a couple of pictures. Spades is so vibrant, a standard Internet format wouldn’t do the story, or the game itself, justice.”* With this in mind, the team began writing and coding an interactive digital presentation of Hickmon’s research. Hickmon stepped into her role as Creative Director, Daniels worked on the design, and Jan Diehm, also from The Puddle, contributed illustrations. On phones and tablets, it scrolls vertically; on computers, horizontally. [Keep that in mind when you visit the project page.](#)

It wasn’t until after they began designing the final piece that they realized printing an entire deck of cards is an incredible way to make their data accessible! It’s a tactile and engaging archive that allows users to share data and history and play the game of Spades.

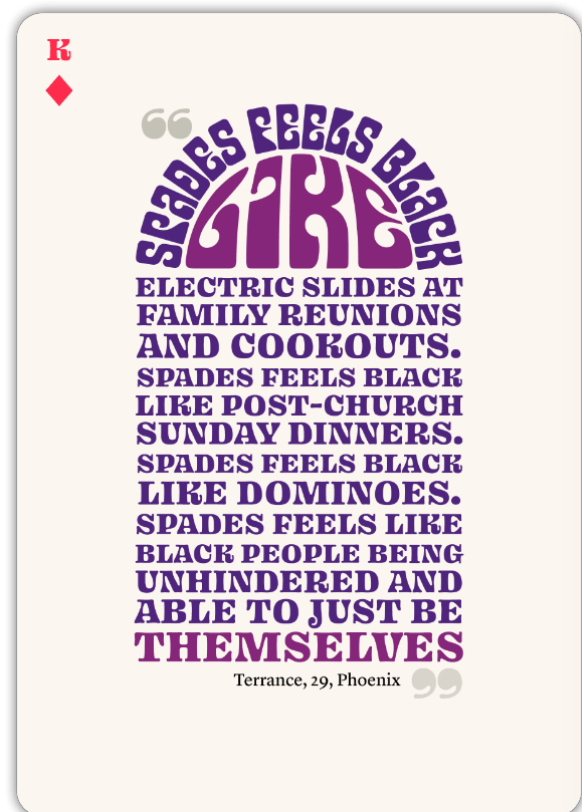
How You Play Spades Is How You Play Life got released to an incredible reception. It’s sold out two print runs, received [Honorable Mention for Best Data Visualization in NYU’s American Journalism Online](#), and received an [Information Is Beautiful Award](#). Knowing her mom and two uncles play Bid Whist with her deck of cards is a particular point of pride for Hickmon.

By sharing her data this way, Hickmon inspires fellow scholars to think outside the box of academic journal publishing, too. Scholars who have watched Hickmon’s project evolve ask themselves if journals are the best way to disseminate their information to

larger audiences, or if other options are worth exploring. Hickmon hopes to see this project in Black cultural institutions and archives worldwide. Bravo!

Discerning fans quickly picked up on collectors’ protocol, purchasing one deck to play with and one to keep in good condition as a collectible. Listening to Hickmon describe their behaviour with no previous knowledge of the collecting world was endearing and heartwarming. [You can watch and listen to her story on the PolicyViz podcast here.](#)

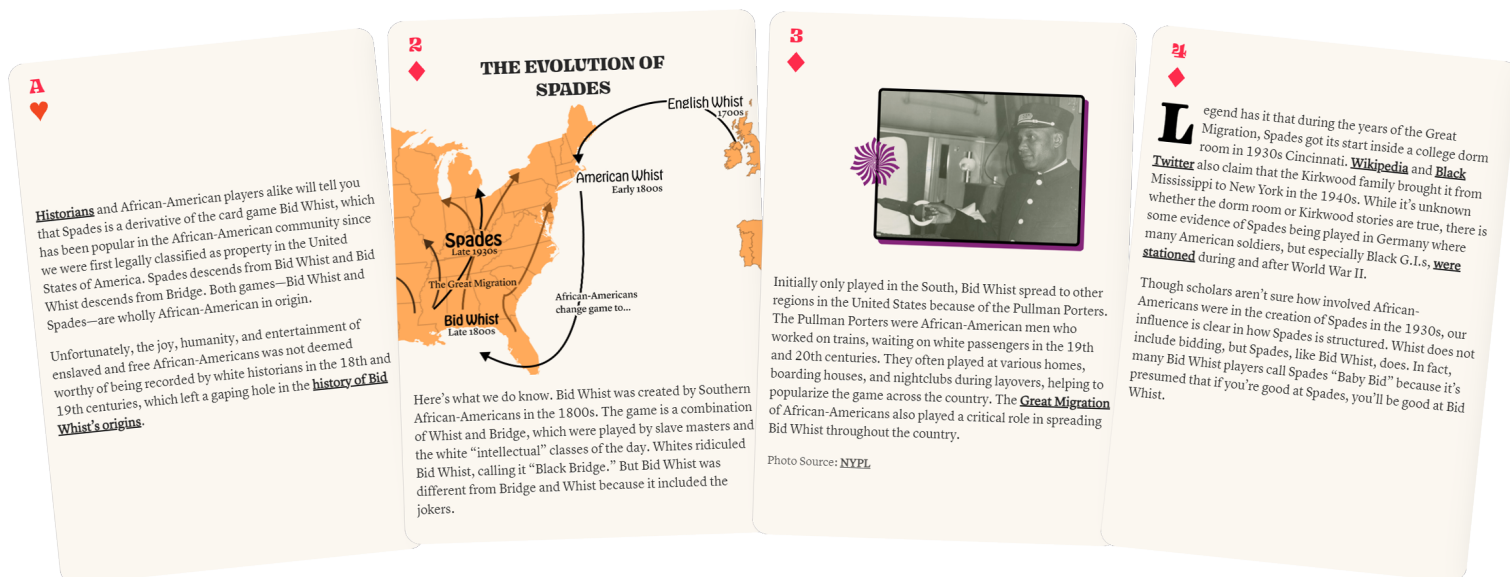
Based on Instagram photos of the cards, the digital essay differs from the physical deck. They are currently out of print, so regrettably, a direct personal comparison is impossible. Yet, the digital version offers in-depth details, enabling the communication of more information. For example, what appears on the physical Two of Spades, appears digitally on the king of hearts: *“For many, SPADES is quintessential to the African*



Hickmon showcases extensive ethnographic research on the game of Spades on this physical deck of cards, and on a freely accessible digital version, too.

Multi-disciplinary artist Gabrielle Ione Hickmon created *How You Play Spades Is How You Play Life* to communicate her results after completing the first comprehensive study on the history of the game of Spades. This unique deck features “Personal stories, data, charts and illustrations from surveys of 500 African-American Spades players woven through each card.”





Origins and development of games, including Spades, inform and fascinate history and game enthusiasts alike. Shown above is the narrative Hickmon has drawn from her research, displayed across four cards in the digital version of this special project.

American experience. It conjures up a particular feeling among those of us whose ancestors were enslaved, endured Jim Crow and segregation, and continue to fight for Black lives today." The digital Two of Spades shares more of an introduction to the entire project and hyperlinks to external sources where Spades gets mentioned over the years.

In both cases, Hickmon names Spades as a uniquely African-American game. She elaborates on this in the podcast shared above, explaining her decision to expressly state the game's roots as 'African-American' rather than, more generally, 'Black.' She explains, "*African-Americans are Black, though not all Black people are African-American. Given that Spades is a game which originates from folks who were enslaved, it's a different Black experience than someone whose ancestors were not enslaved.*"

Although it is now widely played by Black people, her research shows that most people who are Black but not African-American learned the game from their African-American friends. For this reason, she decided that making this narrowing distinction was accurate.

Further details about the history of Spades and Bid Whist get shared on the digital Ace of

Hearts, Two of Diamonds, Three of Diamonds, and Four of Diamonds. These will be of particular interest to any readers who feel passionately about card game history.

Honouring the cultural significance of the game of Spades via a deck of playing cards is a fantastic alternative to a book or essay. Besides being an excellent method of sharing researched information and filling in missed or intentionally forgotten pieces of history, the deck positively represents Black people and Black Culture on playing cards.

How You Play Spades Is How You Play Life deserves a space on the shelf of every playing card collector; Gabrielle Ione Hickmon is the *Real Deal*. ♦

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Card Art

5 STRAIGHT

By Greg Loschen | Contributor

This month's article features an art piece from the Kenneth Ludwig Gallery out of Chicago. The artwork is another origami configuration with cards woven together. However, it's different from many of the art styles we've covered in this column. It seems the only artist listed for the piece is Kenneth Ludwig Chicago.

Adorned with a regal flush on a meticulously woven origami background, it showcases elegance and creativity. The composition comprises approximately 75% playing cards, skillfully interlaced with 25% exposed canvas, resulting in a harmonious fusion of materials.

To preserve its splendor, the artwork is encased in a transparent acrylic casing, allowing you to appreciate every intricate detail. It is an exceptional representation of card art, commanding attention and admiration.

With a price tag of \$930, this awe-inspiring creation truly justifies its worth. The craftsmanship and artistry invested in "5 Straight" make it valuable to any discerning collector's repertoire. Its allure is undeniable, making it a captivating centerpiece that effortlessly enhances any space it graces. ♦



Which color reigns supreme in the captivating *5 Straight* artwork - the vibrant red or the striking blue?

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Top Ten List For Newcomers

CONSIDERING THE CONVENTION

By Joseph Zompetti | Contributor

The 52+Joker convention in 2016 was my first. While I am an avid collector, with several thousand decks in my collection, I have never attended a gathering of fellow collectors, until the Chicago event.

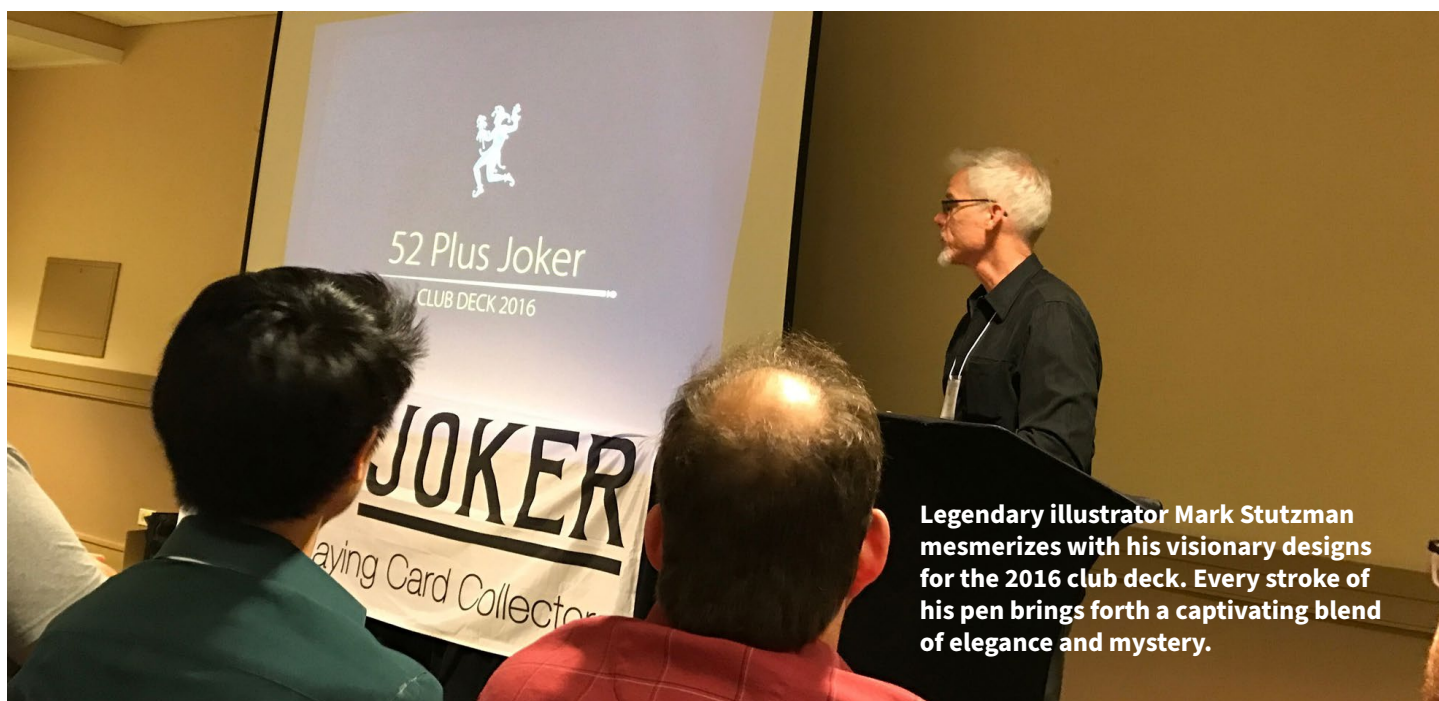
The convention was more than I could have imagined. In a moment, I will provide my “top 10 list” of things a newcomer should consider when attending the convention. But, one thing that isn’t really captured in my list is the pure energy and sense of being overwhelmed. There are so many decks of cards! And, everyone attending is as excited as I was! For a geek like me, it was sort of like coming home.

So ... if you are considering coming to the convention (which I hope you are), here are my top 10 things to consider. I was a little anxious as a newbie, and I didn’t quite know what to

expect. Fortunately, I had a friend in the magic community who was a member, so he helped prepare me. I hope this can do the same for you:

1. Attend the first reception.

I am also a professor, so I have attended many scholarly conferences. One of the things many academics do is they avoid the initial reception or gathering of a conference. Instead, they meet with friends or go sightseeing. For some reason, I did not follow this habit when attending the 52+Joker convention. And I am glad I did. Not only was there free hors d’oeuvres and adult beverages (although I’m not sure this is always the case), but I also met and talked to some really awesome, cool people. I met Lee Asher, the president of the organization, as well as Bill Kalush (president of the Expert Playing Card Company, pioneer for the Conjuring Arts Research Center, and consultant to magician



Legendary illustrator Mark Stutzman mesmerizes with his visionary designs for the 2016 club deck. Every stroke of his pen brings forth a captivating blend of elegance and mystery.

David Blaine), Mark Stutzman (amazing card designer and designer of all of the David Blaine decks), and I happened to stumble upon a few other ‘virgins’ of the convention, so we all bonded!

2. Bring any rarities that you would like to sell for one of the auctions.

There are at least 2 auctions at the convention (maybe 3). I didn’t quite understand the initial “auction” that was described and announced, but the other two were pretty cool. In the middle of the convention, there is an open-bid auction of items that are on display. This past year, many of the items were also publicized in the publication of the organization, so many of us already knew about them. Nevertheless, we could examine and inspect the items as they were displayed on tables. Then, the auction began. Very few items went unbid. Some went for very large sums. But, for newcomers with small wallets, I can attest that some items go for a pittance – because I was able to secure one! Then, there is the “silent auction” at the end of the convention. During the banquet at the end of the convention (which you simply **MUST** attend), many of the member place their wares on tables at the back of the room with a suggested opening bid. And then,

like any silent auction, other members may place their bids for the item as long as it exceed the suggested bid. At the end of the evening, if the item has a bid, the item sells, and the seller and buyer square the deal. The organization only asks for a 10% donation (from the seller), which is extremely reasonable. And, of course, you can provide anything you’d like in this auction. I bid for several items as well as put some on the market. Ultimately, I made \$40!

3. Bring other decks you’d like to sell.

The auctions are just one way of selling some of your items. Each attendee is given a table so that they can display their “goods.” Some people simply showcase their rare and cool items. But, most folks use their table as an opportunity to sell some of their decks. The decks may have price tags, but most owners/dealers are open to negotiation.

4. Ask questions about the club.

Okay, so enough about buying and selling. The club/organization is **MUCH** more than just the buying and selling of decks. The club is really about maintaining a network of like-minded folks who share similar interests. There



A captivating panel unites antique, vintage, modern, manufacturing, and speculators to explore the evolution of playing card collecting.

is, of course, the annual convention, then there is the website which has a ton of very useful information, and then there are the members who are also a reservoir of knowledge. Anything you'd like to know about cards, as well as collecting, are at your disposal. Just ask!

5. Ask questions about decks.

There is a ton of information about designers, playing card manufactures, and actual decks. While the club embraces the vintage, antique and modern collectors, there will undoubtedly be someone at the convention who knows something about what you are interested in. They also may very well be excited and enthused about the same things!

6. Bring a friend.

I brought my girlfriend, and I am very happy I did. Not only did she learn why I love collecting cards, but she made some good friends at the

same time! Everyone at the convention were extremely friendly, and they made my girlfriend and myself very welcome. Having someone to share my experience added a great deal to the overall weekend.

7. Make new friends.

While at the convention, you should reach out and expose yourself (appropriately and meaningfully!). I made contacts with folks that I otherwise wouldn't have. We exchanged business cards and email addresses. At the next convention, I know that there will be people who will know me and expect to see me. As with any club or organization, the idea of "feeling included" is a huge benefit. But, not only that, I made some friends for whom I can collaborate with my collecting and/or trade or sell my current decks with. In other words, the convention provides an atmosphere of collegiality that benefits everyone.

8. Scope out what others have brought to display and sell.

The open room includes tables of all of the members. A word of caution: There will be a TON OF CARDS!!! You will want to walk around the room several times to explore what everyone brought. Most of their cards will be for sale.

9. Don't buy everything you see immediately.

Pace yourself. Of course, if you see something you like, and you're worried that someone else might snag it, you should go ahead and talk to the member. However, you may see something else in the room you like more; or, it might be the last day of the convention, and the member may have dropped their price. Either way, you might consider waiting instead of buying everything immediately.

10. Bring money.

Speaking of buying – you should definitely bring extra cash. My friend warned me to bring \$100 more of whatever I was budgeting, and boy was he right! I could have spent a ton more than I did! Fortunately, I brought my (girl)friend who kept me in check. You might want to consider a similar mechanism to check your spending proclivity. Or, as the members might say, don't, and just bring your checkbook!

All-in-all, I firmly believe you will enjoy the convention. I know I did. I became an instant convert. [If you love cards, you'll love this convention.](#) And, perhaps more importantly, you'll love the members. They are incredibly friendly and helpful. They will help you and guide you and encourage you. You will be welcomed. ♦



Come to a 52 Plus Joker convention where collectors connect, bonds form, and treasures change hands.



2023 Convention Speaker Line-Up



ALEX CLAYS

Collecting Travel-Themed Backs

Embark on a visual journey with Clays as he examines rare and exotic decks with a travel theme, including the famed White Star line backs. Delve into the history, and learn the secrets behind these lovely collectibles.

Lecture time: Thurs, Oct. 12th @ 2:15 PM



EMILY SLEIGHTS52

Producing Playing Cards

Investigate the process with Emily that transforms simple paper into exquisite decks of playing cards. Gain insights into the creative challenges, intricate details, and artful direction behind every card.

Lecture time: Thurs, Oct 12th @ 3 PM



GREG LOSCHEN

Playing Card Art & Artists

Immerse yourself in Loschen's captivating lecture that unveils the extraordinary masterpieces crafted by skilled artists, transforming ordinary playing cards into stunning works of creativity and imagination.

Lecture time: Fri, Oct. 13th @ 1:30 PM

October 11th - 15th, 2023 (See you in Cleveland, OH!)



2023 Convention Speaker Line-Up



ROSEMARY REID

Real Deal Subjects

Reid's compelling lecture sheds light on underrepresented people in the playing card industry. She explores their rich offerings and the importance of diversity while celebrating often-overlooked voices.

Lecture time: Fri, Oct. 13th @ 2:15 PM



RORY RENNICK

Afro-Centric Playing Cards

Uncover the rich history and cultural significance behind beautifully designed cards, with Rennick offering a fresh perspective and celebrating the vibrant contributions of African-Americans to the world of cards.

Lecture time: Sat, Oct. 14th @ 2 PM



DR. PAUL BOSTOCK

Playing Cards As Investments?

Join Bostock for an extraordinary lecture on the captivating world of investing in playing cards. Explore the question: "Are playing cards a good asset?" and gain valuable insight into the intricacies of this financial endeavor.

Lecture time: Sat, Oct. 14th @ 2:45 PM

October 11th - 15th, 2023 (See you in Cleveland, OH!)



2023 Diamond Awards COMMITTEE OPENINGS

By Don Boyer | Contributor

Greetings, fellow card collectors! It's almost the close of the 2022-2023 eligibility period for the Diamond Awards! We're putting out a general call to all interested members - we need your assistance in selecting the balloted nominees for the general membership vote, which will commence from August 5th through August 20th.

Come join the Diamond Awards Committee!

Committee members are needed for only a brief period; our selection process begins July 18th and wraps up on July 25th. It's really quite simple: using Google Forms, you'll be asked to offer up your ideas for which artists did such outstanding work and which decks came out head and shoulders above the rest that you feel they should be on the ballot. At the close of the selection period, I will tally the choices given

to me by the committee and the ones with the most requests will become balloted nominees for their respective Diamond Award. Don't worry if your favorite deck doesn't wind up on the ballot - during the general membership voting, members are permitted to submit write-in candidates, subject to the eligibility requirements.

The most frequently heard question I get at conventions is "*Why wasn't [fill in your favorite deck or artist here] on the ballot?*" **It always has the same answer - because you didn't join the committee and recommend them for the ballot!** Make sure your favorites are in there, and join the Diamond Awards Committee. A recruiting email should arrive soon if it hasn't already - check your spam folder, and if you didn't get it by July 15th, please contact Lee Asher and mention it to him. ♦



WHAT'S IN YOUR CARAT CASE TODAY?

By Sherman Tsao | Contributor

PHARMACY ON MAIN PLAYING CARDS

With Pharmacy on Main, Meadowlark's 3rd deck, the team wanted to go back to their roots and pay homage to the old school small town pharmacies. The result is a beautifully designed deck with an ornate engraving style artwork, inspired by Vintage Pharmacy

The tuck box has the text 'Main Street Pharmacy – Meadowlark Decks' in a banner across the front with a large Meadowlark Pharmacy mortar and pestle below and an apothecary bottle above, all surrounded by ornate filigree. On the back of tuck is an image of the card back, which is a slightly modified version of the artwork from the front, mirrored for better playability.



ABOVE: Pharmacy on Main Playing Cards, designed by Russ Gray for Meadowlark Playing Cards and printed by Legends Playing Card Co. in a custom Carat X2 and a standard Carat X3 as well as custom tins by Carat Case Creations.

The beautiful custom courts are based on standard courts but the engraved art style and thematic modifications gives them a much more vintage and stylish feel. All of the Aces are elaborated, with the most spectacular being the AoS, which has a mortar and pestle with a meadowlark on each side inside a giant spade. The deck also includes two identical Jokers of a Pharmacist encircled by the text '*Meadowlark Pharmacy*' in ribbons.

In total, there are 5 versions of the Pharmacy on Main deck, 3 of which came in an embossed tin, reminiscent of the tins found in old pharmacies:

Classic – The tuck has black ink and hot copper foil on embossed white stock in an embossed white tin box. The cards front and back have a white background and copper metallic ink. 1,500 printed.

Premium – The tuck has black ink and hot copper foil on embossed green stock in an embossed green tin box. The front and back have a green background and copper metallic ink, but the backs also have copper foil. 1,000 printed.

Pharmacist – The tuck has black ink and hot copper foil on embossed white stock in an embossed white tin box. The front of the tuck box has the Pharmacist from the Jokers and the back has the Ace of Spades. The cards are the same as the Classic edition. 500 printed.

Supreme (non-gilded) – The tuck has white ink and hot copper foil on an embossed black stock. The card backs have green hot foil on a green background while the front has metallic copper ink on a white background.

Supreme (gilded) – The tuck has white ink and hot green foil on an embossed black stock. The cards are the same as the non-gilded Supreme version, but with green gilding. The Supreme decks were only sold in sets, with 500 sets printed.

Repost from [Sherman Tsao's Fantastic Instagram account](#). ♦

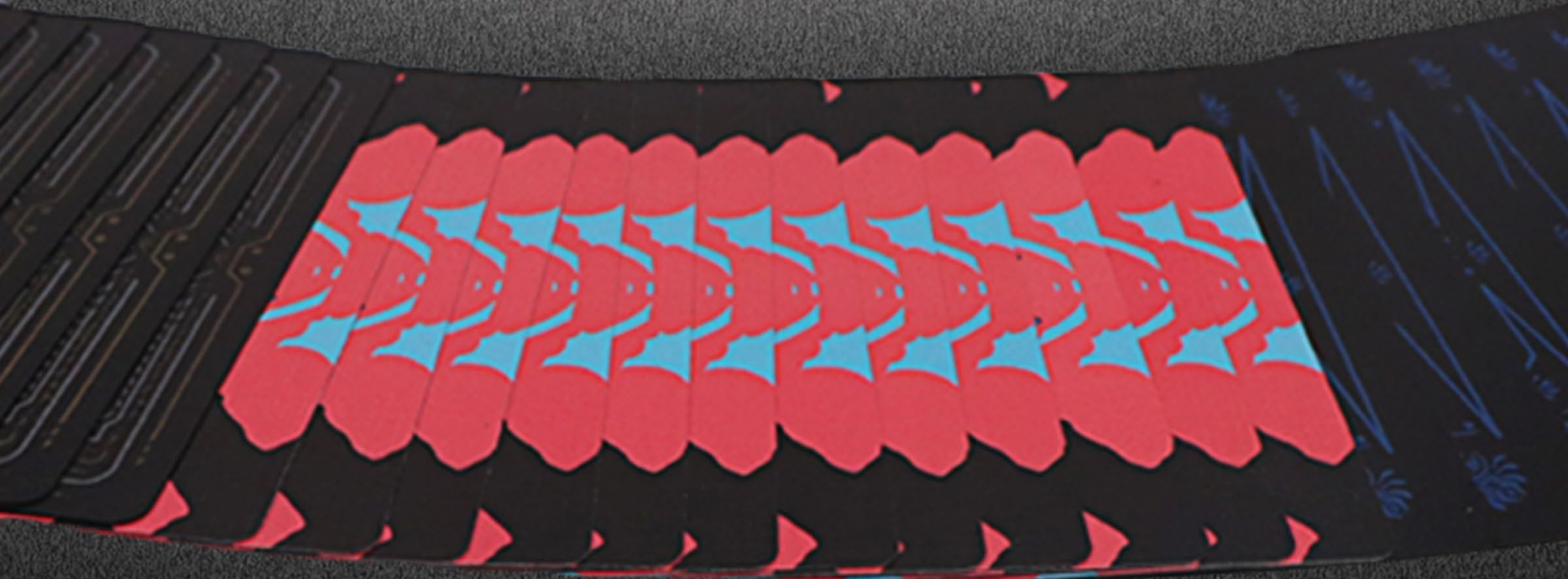


Pharmacy on Main Playing Cards, designed by Russ Gray for Meadowlark Playing Cards and printed by Legends Playing Card Co.

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By Alex Clays | Contributor





4834

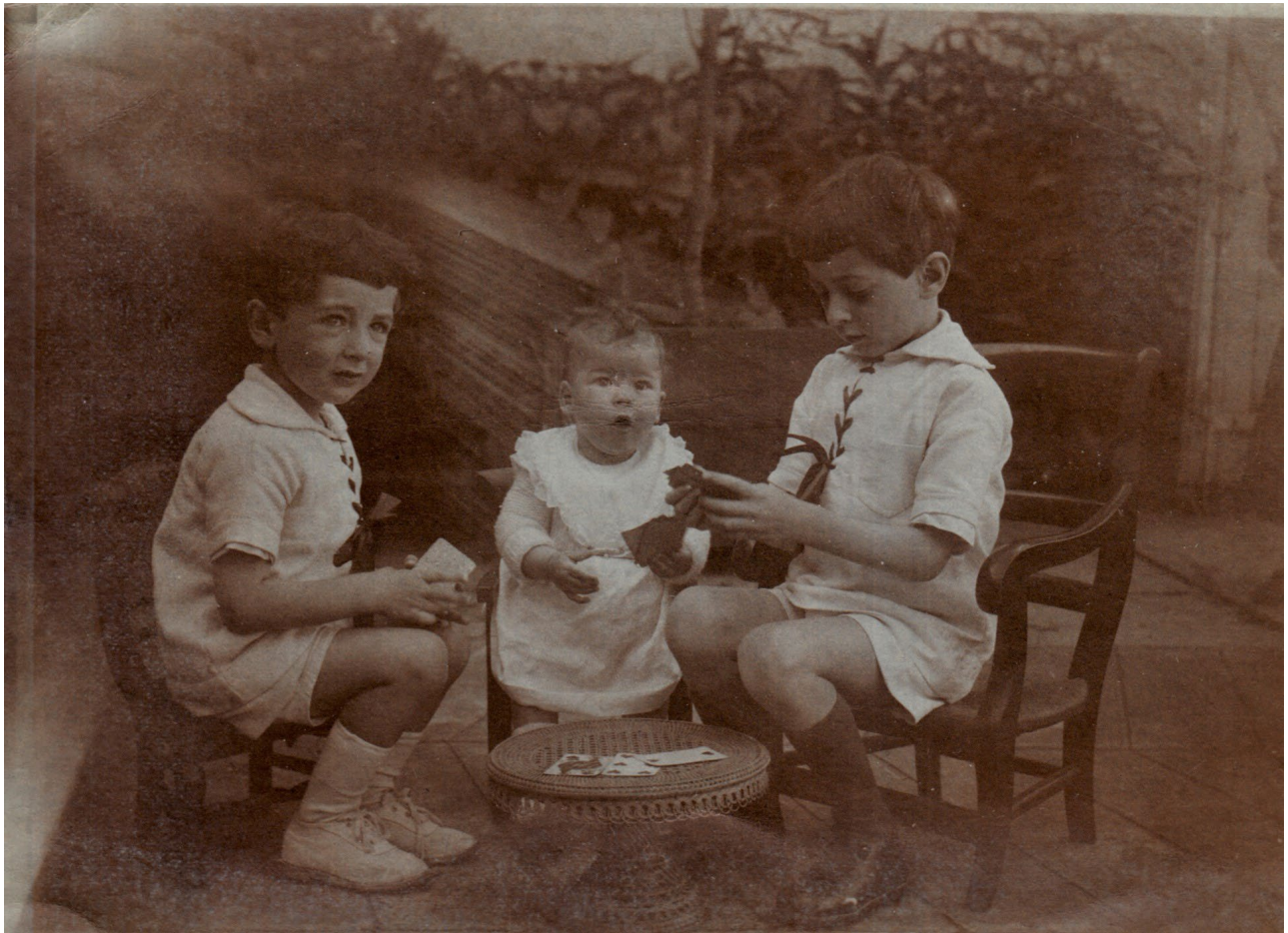
Heureuse Année

CIRCE











SATURDAY NIGHT IN CODY. WYOMING



COMBINATION NUT CRACKER & PLAYING CARD PRESS

by Lee Asher | Editor-in-Chief

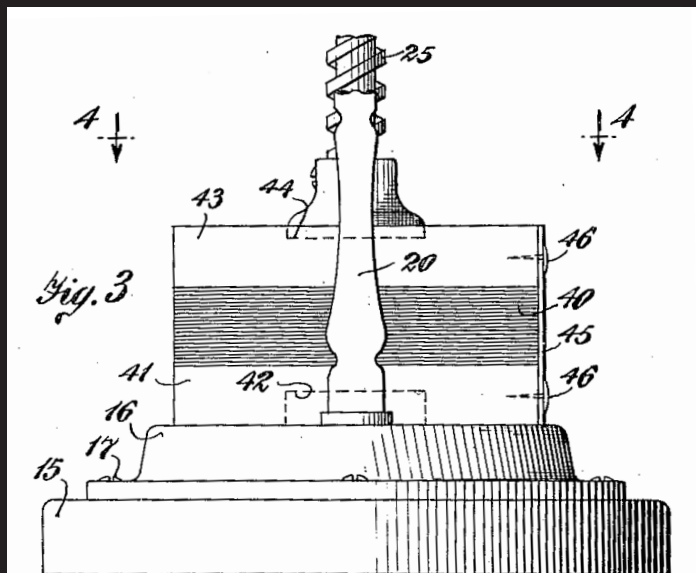
In May 1936, Fred Hildebrand, a resident of Cincinnati, Ohio, took a significant step by applying for a US patent.

He sought protection for his remarkable invention, the machine designed to crack thick walnut shells while clamping and straightening a deck of playing cards.

Hildebrand's primary goal was to develop a compact and efficient press that would be user-friendly and cost-effective to produce.

Not stopping there, he envisioned additional functionality for his specialized contraption by attaching auxiliary parts. Truly ingenious!

However, it appears that Hildebrand had to exercise patience as it took nearly a year for the United States Patent Office to fulfill his desires and grant him official patent rights. ♦



Hildebrand's creation was a one-of-a-kind machine designed to crack thick walnut shells effortlessly, all the while securely clamping and aligning a deck of playing cards.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

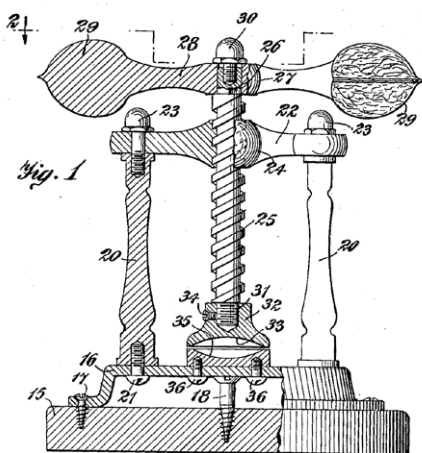
2,080,478

COMBINATION NUT CRACKER AND PLAYING
CARD PRESS

Fred Hildebrand, Cincinnati, Ohio

Application June 11, 1936, Serial No. 84,692

1 Claim. (Cl. 146-15)



APPLICATION PATENTED
ON May 18th, 1936
[PATENT NO. US2080478](#)
(Cincinnati, Ohio)

WITNESSES: None

INVENTOR.

FRED HILDEBRAND

BY

Marion A. King

ATTORNEY.

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By Paul Bostock | Contributor

Unearthed from [CLEAR THE DECKS - Vol. 31, No. 3, September 2017 \(pg. 6\)](#)

Recently Alex Clay's article about playing-card cartoons, in this issue of Clear The Decks, reminds me of another set of cards: "*Deakin's Political Playing Cards*", made in London from 1886. Like the first of Alex's cartoons, these are about Home Rule for the Irish and they also feature Charles Stewart Parnell as one of the characters shown.

Some of the other characters are very well known. The King of Spades shows the Liberal Prime Minister at the time, William Gladstone. Gladstone was certainly held in high regard, the caption "G.O.M." by his portrait stands for "*Grand Old Man*"! However, Gladstone's reforms were voted down in Parliament.

Lord Randolph Churchill was the direct descendant of the first Lord Marlborough and father of Winston. Lord Randolph briefly led

the House of Commons during the Home Rule era but resigned in 1886 after only 11 months. Winston Churchill, was to leave a larger impression on the world.

Joseph Chamberlain was a leading politician of the day but his arrogance and ruthlessness meant that he was not much liked. He went on to have the distinction of causing rifts in both the major political parties.

Our last two characters could scarcely be more different. Timothy Healy was born in rural southern Ireland, became interested in politics and was appointed as the first Governor General of the Irish Free State in 1922. ♦

[Click Here To READ THE FULL BOSTOCK ARTICLE found in Clear the Decks Vol. 31 No. #3.](#)

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[Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1869, by SAMUEL HART & Co., in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.]

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