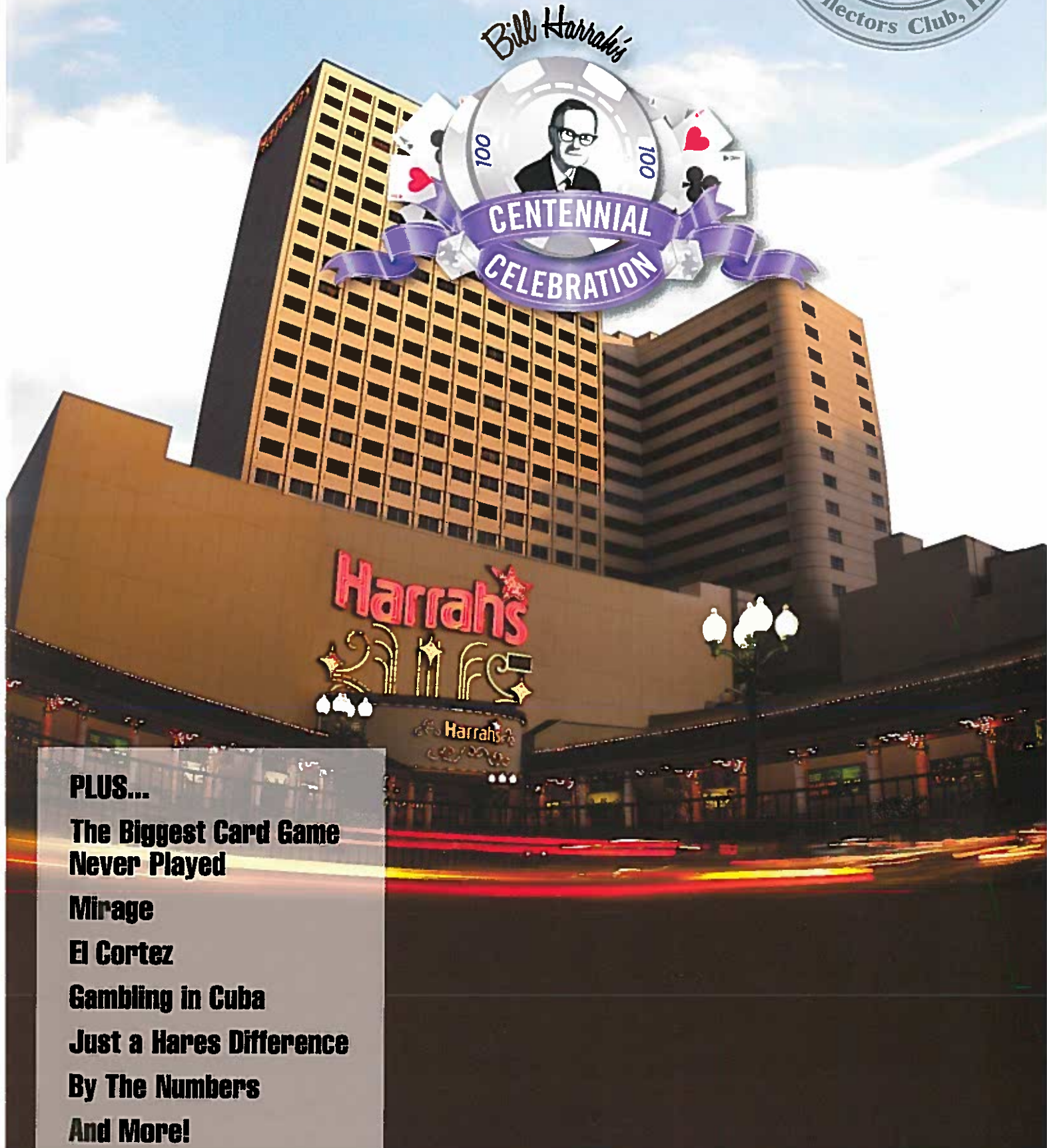


Volume 24 Number 4  
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# Casino Collectible News

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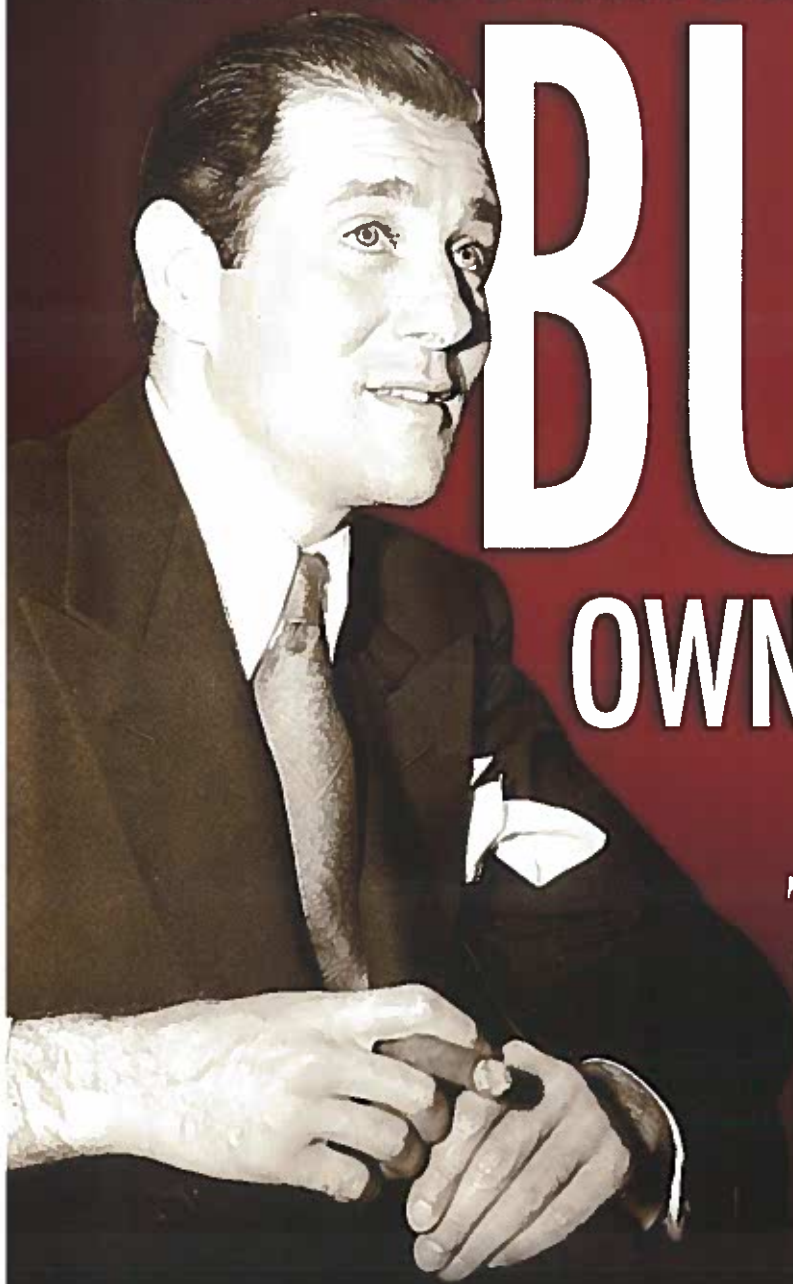
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## The Casino Chip and Gaming Token Collectors Club, Inc.

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Original articles are encouraged and are welcomed by the Editor. However, no assurance is implied that such material will be used or returned to the author. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the authors and do not represent those of The Casino Collectible News or the Editorial staff.

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- Tokens
- U.S.
- Foreign

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- Name and address
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I have enclosed my annual dues for:

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- One year Associate Member \$5.00
- First class postage - additional \$14.00
- International \$55.00 - includes first class postage

International mailings are at the first class rate.  
All other mailings are via 3rd class or bulk mail.

Annual dues will be renewable in the same quarter in which the membership application was processed. Check our address labels for your membership expiration dates. Mail your completed application with your check made payable to CC&GTCC to:

**CC&GTCC Membership Officer**  
**Steve Bedo**

1215 E. Dalton Ave.  
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# Casino Collectible News

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A Member of the American Numismatic Association (C-140538)



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**Cover Photo Courtesy  
Harrah's**

## American Numismatic Association Membership Application

Our club, CC&GTCC, is founded under the ANA, maybe you would like to join it too. It is the largest organization of coin collectors in the world.

Regular  Student  Junior  Senior  Associate

Present or former ANA number, if any \_\_\_\_\_

Mr.  Mrs  Ms.

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Country \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

ANA bylaws require the publication of each applicant's name and state.

Please check here  if you DO NOT want your name and address forwarded to the ANA representative in your area.

Please check here  if you would like your name provided to companies with offers we feel may interest you.

I herewith make application for membership in the American Numismatic association, subject to the Bylaws of said Association. I also agree to abide by the Code of Ethics adopted by the Association.

Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

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### Proposer

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Forward completed application to:

ANA

818 Cascade Ave., Colorado Springs, CO 80903-3279

Please contact us with any questions (800) 367-972

# Visit Us Online!

[www.CCGTCC.com](http://www.CCGTCC.com)



Visit the Membership Section to find all the information you need about our members as well as all the information you need to become a member. Find information about local clubs, visit the Hall of Fame and more.

Check out the Reference Center, where you will find useful information on the hobby of casino chip and gaming token collecting. There are articles for the beginning collector and detailed reference materials for the more experienced collector.

Log on to the club message board. Ask questions, get answers and meet other people interested in the same collectibles as you!



# See You There!

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## Please Note

- Do not send in ads that are folded. We recommend that you send in your ads by Priority Mail in a flat pack marked "DO NOT BEND". This will only cost you about \$4.95 and we will receive them in about two to three days.
- When you place a one inch or two inch ad for more than one issue, you may make changes in that ad for each issue. Try to get the changes to us well before the deadline of each issue.
- When ordering items from one of our advertisers, let them know what issue of the magazine in which you noticed their ad.
- All ad copy must be accompanied by payment made out to "The Casino Chips and Gaming Token Collectors Club, Inc." or CC&GTCC. No ad will run without payment

## Schedule of Publication and Ad Deadline Dates

Spring Issue  
Mailing Date: March  
Deadline for Ads: January 1st

Summer Issue  
Mailing Date: June  
Deadline for Ads: April 1st

Fall Issue  
Mailing Date: September  
Deadline for Ads: July 1st

Winter Issue  
Mailing Date: December  
Deadline for Ads: October 1st

## Moving?

Don't forget to let our Membership Officer know your new address. Contact:

Steve Bedo  
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Glendora, CA 91741

## Rates

Advertising rates for members are available by emailing the advertising manager at [advertising@ccgtcc.com](mailto:advertising@ccgtcc.com)

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Coupon is not good as a discount on any other ad. Must be used for one-inch ad, one time only.

Expires one year from date \_\_\_\_\_





**Doug Smith**  
President



**Allan Anderson**  
Editor

## President's Letter

It's hard to believe that four months have already passed since the convention.

The very first thing I would like to do is give a HUGE thanks to our new Convention Chairs, Mike and Corni Quinlivan for graciously accepting their new roles for 2012. I look forward to what they have planned and another Fantastic Convention for our 20th.

It has been a busy quarter for the BOD and tons of member suggestions have been discussed and many more will be discussed in the next few scheduled meetings.

While not all suggestions are achievable and the BOD may not agree completely on some, I can promise our members that every suggestion forwarded to a BOD member will be discussed by the board. Just because a suggestion is not adopted, it doesn't mean it shouldn't have been made and we welcome any and all suggestions to improve our club and our hobby.

Please look for the advertisement in this quarter's magazine for the 2012 Convention Raffle. The annual club raffle is an important fundraiser for the club and the proceeds allow us to keep convention and membership costs down and continue to support our club.

We appreciate all the donors and ticket purchases for past raffles and are looking forward to another great success in 2012.

For a full Presidents Report as well as Treasurers, Membership, MOGH and other committee reports, please visit the club website at [www.CCGTCC.com](http://www.CCGTCC.com) as all the standard reports are now posted online in order to free up additional magazine space.

Doug "Cigarman" Smith  
LM-3209-147

## Message from the Editor

I'm back to doing what I enjoyed doing for over 8 years. Putting out a quality publication along with Todd, and writing about the history and collectibles of one of the greatest hobbies on the planet.

One of the great things about this hobby is all the diverse things we collect and the history behind them. If you have stories on illegal gaming, gaming in Europe or other parts of the world including the United States we would love to publish them. If you collect tokens, silver strikes, slot cards or whatever, share what you love to collect.

In this issue are four inserts that all members are encouraged to fill out and return.

First is the Official Nomination form for Vice-President, Treasurer and Membership Officer. Deadline to cast your vote is January 14, 2012.

The second insert is the 2012 Hall of Fame recommendation form. If you feel someone is deserving of the club's highest honor, submit their name and return it by February 1, 2012.

The third insert is for the Greg Susong Memorial Award. It is given to the person that makes the greatest contribution to our hobby in the past year. The deadline to mail is January 23, 2012.

The last insert is the official 2011 OTY Nomination form. This is your chance to nominate your favorite chip, token, silver strike and slot card/room key. Mailing deadline is February 4, 2012.

To help make the magazine more self sufficient, please advertise. If you are interested in placing an ad, contact our advertising manager, Charlie Rodgers.

Allan Anderson  
R-2927



# New Members

Member #	Last Name	First Name	State	City	Reference
8345	Shenouda	Michael	PA	Breinigsville	Club Website
8346	Romanovich	Craig	PA	Pittsburgh	Club Website
8347	Willard	Christopher	CA	Los Angeles	Andy Hughes
8348	Burnett	John	NV	Henderson	Mike Robison
8349	Lerner	Jason	PA	Philadelphia	Andy Hughes
8350	Marzec	Michael	IL	Tinley Park	Andy Hughes
8351	Griffin	Daniel J.	IL	Moline	eBay
8352	Shea	Ronald	KY	Louisville	CT Rodgers
8352-A	Shea	Lynn	KY	Louisville	CT Rodgers
8355	Lindblad	David	MN	Cottage Grove	Andy Hughes
8356	Mariani	Ricky	NJ	Manasquan	Jerry Birl
8357	Doherty	Dennis	IL	Glenwood	Club Website
8358	Daley	Joe	FL	Holly Hill	Club Website
8359	Seeley	Len	CA	Placerville	Andy Hughes
8360	Taylor	Robert	OR	Grants Pass	Club Website
8361	Matthews	Derrell	TX	Conroe	Sheldon Smith
8362	O'Neill	Agustin	PR	Ponce	Rich Hodges
8363	Mendonca	C Frederico	Brazil	Rio De Janeiro	Andy Hughes
8364	Morand	Torrey	CA	Avalon	Club Website
8365	Franklin, Jr.	Robert V.	AL	Huntsville	Roosevelt Mosley
8366	Roemer	Michael	IN	Ft. Wayne	Andy Hughes
8367	Bonfitto	Jim	FL	Marco Island	Club Website
8368	McCracken	Justin	MD	Sykesville	Club Website

*If you are a new member & you don't see your name listed, it's because you did NOT chose the "Publish" option.*

 **NEW** 

***at the Museum of Gaming History***  
**Visit the Greg Susong Digital Media Center!**

The Greg Susong Digital Media Center is dedicated to Casino Chip and Gaming Token Collectors Club Hall of Fame member Greg Susong. Greg is one of those who brought the Internet to chip and token collecting. His website, The ChipGuide, was one of the first sites devoted entirely to chip and token collecting, and serves as a tremendous resource for collectors throughout the world. His work has been kindly donated to the Museum and will be continued to be updated at the Museum of Gaming History.

**Visit it today at**  
**[museumofgaminghistory.org](http://museumofgaminghistory.org)**

# Call for Hall of Fame Recommendations for 2012



Membership in the Casino Chip and Gaming Token Collectors Club's Hall of Fame is the Club's highest honor. Each year several members are considered for induction into the Hall of Fame, based on the recommendations of the Club's members.

Consideration is given to their contributions to the hobby as a whole, their contributions to the Club, their impact on the hobby and on the Club, and their exemplary integrity and adherence to the principles upon which the Club was founded. There have been one, two or three new members selected each year since the inauguration of the Hall of Fame in 1998. The names of the members of the Hall of Fame appear below.

The selection of honorees each year is made by the Hall of Fame Committee, which consists of all living members of the HoF. The input of the membership in the selection process is indispensable. The members of the HoF cannot know every member of the Club, nor have knowledge of the contributions to the Club and the hobby that may have been made by each member.

Enclosed with this issue of Casino Collectible News is a recommendation form which we urge you to complete and submit to us so that we may consider the contributions of those members who you believe deserve the Club's highest recognition. Please provide as much information as possible so that the Committee can give it full consideration. The form may be mailed as indicated on the form itself, or your recommendation may be sent to the committee by e-mail.

The deadline for submissions is February 1, 2012, and the final selections, if any, will be announced at the Club's annual convention in Las Vegas. Only members recommended in the current year will be considered by the Committee. It is therefore important to recommend a member you believe to be deserving, even though you may have done so in the past.

Please take the time to recommend those you feel should receive the Hall of Fame honor.

### *The members of the Hall of Fame, in alphabetical order:*

Allan Anderson	Janice O'Neal (deceased)
Archie A. Black	Charles T. Rodgers
Carey Burke	Eric S. Rosenblum
Harvey Fuller (deceased)	Douglas Saito
Howard Herz	Dale Seymour
Phil Jensen	Mike Skelton
Michael Knapp (Chairman)	Jim Steffner
Jim Kruse	Greg Susong (deceased)
Bruce Landau (deceased)	Wayne Thompson
Mark Lighterman	Gene Trimble
Robert Mera (deceased)	Ernie Wheelden
Allan Myers	

For biographies of the HoF members, please visit the Club website at [http://www.ccgcc.com/hall\\_of\\_fame.html](http://www.ccgcc.com/hall_of_fame.html)

Michael Knapp  
Hall of Fame Committee Chairman

# Museum of Gaming History

A Project of The Casino Chip & Gaming Token Collectors Club, Inc.



*Dedicated to the preservation and education of Gaming History*

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From casual polos to fashionable long sleeve button down shirts, all items are offered in approved colors and styles, as well as decorated with the Museum's logo. The Museum of Gaming History invites you to browse the store and we hope you enjoy your shopping experience. All proceeds from the sale of these garments goes to the Museum of Gaming History.

Visit the Museum of Gaming History at [www.themogh.org](http://www.themogh.org).

The on-line museum has many great features including "This Week in Gaming History", On line videos, plus, 1000's of photos and scans are being loaded.

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FAX: (505) 856-0810  
[ed.norris@comcast.net](mailto:ed.norris@comcast.net)  
CC&GTCC #5451

# Message from the Auction Chairman

David Spragg

Firstly I would like to welcome back Jay Sands as assistant Auction Chairman. Jay will be helping with the solicitation of lots and catalog preparation, as well as on the day of the auction itself.

The 2012 Bruce Landau Memorial Auction will once again be held during the convention, at the South Point Hotel & Casino, on Thursday 21st June 2012.

As before, there are no constraints on either the number of consignors or the number of lots they can consign, but that is subject to the terms listed below. I will be contacting all consignors from last year directly in due course but there is no need to wait for me to do so if you are ready to consign now.

I plan to maintain the same format as in 2011. The auction will again comprise approx 200 lots (including donated lots), of which a small number of the donated lots (probably 20) will be sold by silent auction in advance and on the first day of the convention. Bulky lots have caused us a problem in the past, in terms of the preparation of the auction & catalog, cost of return of unsold items, and the additional cost of shipping sold items. Consequently, I ask that consignors submit as many suitable single chip lots as possible, and I will only consider larger lots on their individual merit. If anyone has anything at all that they wish to donate, then in view of the fact the club gets the full proceeds, and there is a guaranteed sale, I will be more flexible over what will be accepted, and I reserve the right to combine donated lots together if appropriate. The club makes considerably more money from donated lots than the consignments, and being that is the purpose of the auction, I strongly urge anyone who is willing to donate chips to do so.

In order to try and reduce time and costs for both myself and the club, the following changes made in 2011 will be retained for 2012. The purpose of introducing minimum bids three years ago was twofold - firstly to try and improve the overall quality of auction lots and secondly to speed up the live auction itself. I appreciate that we are not in a sellers market at present and it is getting harder to secure the same quality of lots in the past. Therefore, bidding on ALL donated lots will start at just \$5. While I will retain the minimum bid of \$50 or above on any consigned item for the purposes of advance/proxy bidding, the auctioneer will have discretion to reduce that opening bid in the case of there being no bids, so please bear that in mind when consigning. Reserves may still be set for lots valued at \$500 and up. All other terms and conditions will remain unchanged and will be available to view in full on the club website or via email.

You may consign lots (subject to the standard 10% sellers commission, which will be waived in the event of a consignor buying back a lot – 10% buyers premium is still payable) and/or you can donate lots where the club retains the proceeds. This year several club members graciously donated some valuable lots which helped make the auction a great success and I would hope to see the same response again.

There will be no printed consignment form. Instead, I invite would be consignors to contact me (preferably by email) to determine suitability of lots. Please DO NOT SEND ANYTHING without contacting me first.

We will be at the Las Vegas Superbowl Chip show in early February, and can collect auction lots from vendors there. Those consignors attending the show that do not have email, please have any lots ready for us. If you are not attending the show and have lots to donate or consign, please don't wait to contact us, the earlier the better.

We plan to have the auction catalog available approx 6 weeks in advance (i.e. early May). It will also be made available on-line for anyone wishing to view, download or print as soon as it is completed. Consequently, the latest date that anyone can contact me to consign lots will be February 20th, 2012.

Please use [auction@cgtcc.com](mailto:auction@cgtcc.com) to contact me. If you need to contact me by snail mail, please write to:

David Spragg, 840 S Rancho Dr #4314, Las Vegas, NV 89106, or,

Jay Sands, 5371 Carmento Drive, Oak Park, CA 91377.

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## Update Your Club Listing On the Club Web Site

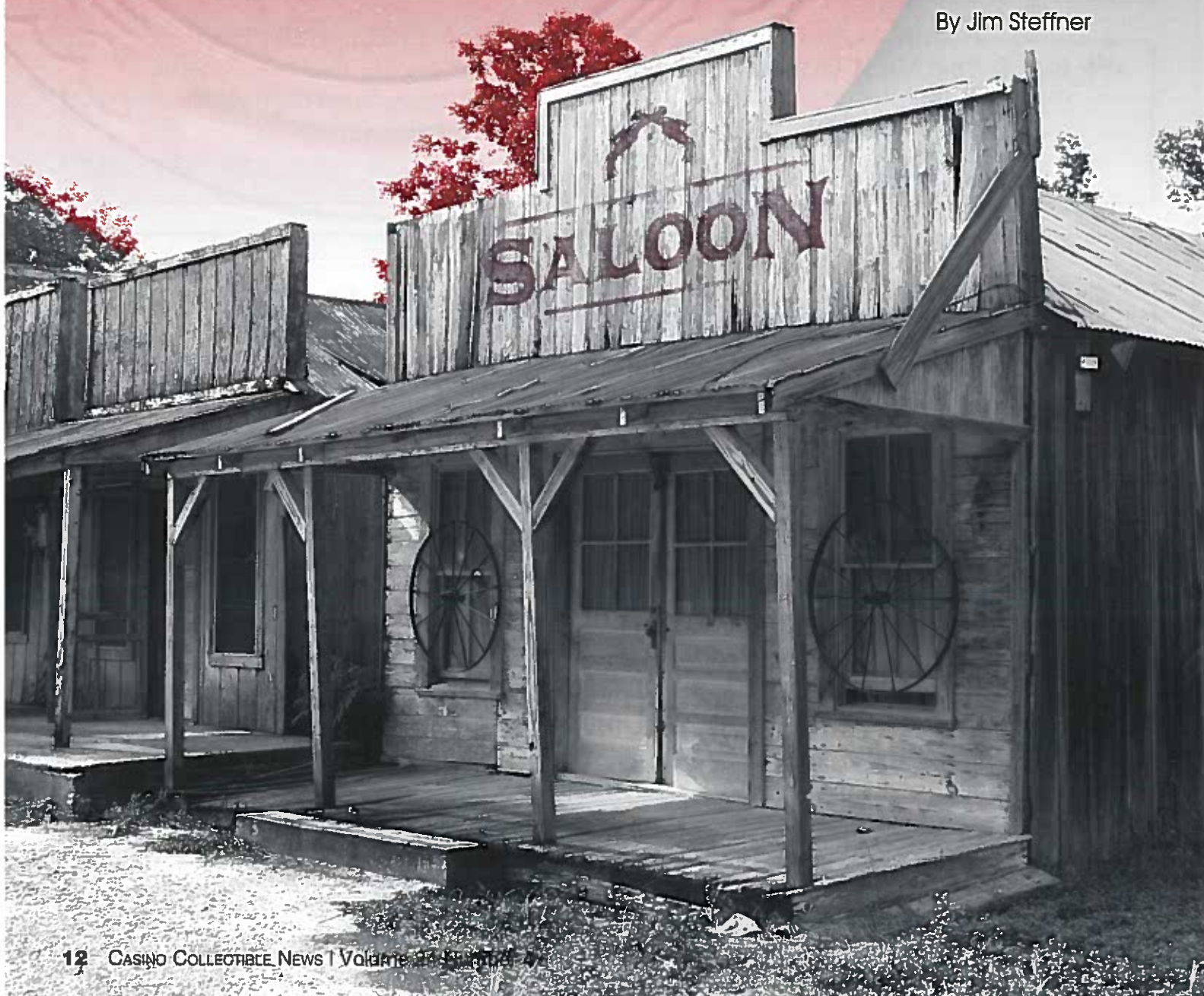
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**It's YOUR Listing...  
Make sure it's updated!**

# Mirage

By Jim Steffner



**F**

rom 1906 to 1910 Goldfield was the largest city in Nevada boasting a population in 1907 of over 20,000 people. As the gold played out so did the residents. The town soon became a shell of its former self. If you've never been to Goldfield, head North on US 95 out of Las Vegas thru Beatty about 180 miles and visit this old historic town. Check out the Goldfield Hotel, a large 3-story brick structure built during the town's heyday and presently being



*Goldfield Hotel*

renovated. Each year in mid-August the town celebrates its heritage with Goldfield Days. You can visit the old shops, the original firehouse filled with some old antique firefighting equipment, the historic courthouse, and of course the (haunted) Goldfield Hotel. The courthouse is near the site of the famous Nelson/Gans fight in 1906 where African American Joe Gans defeated Oscar M. "Battling" Nelson in the 42nd round.

And now for the rest of the story. For the past 4 or 5 years I have been attending Goldfield Days and while driving up US 95, I occasionally stop off at old abandoned town sites, ghost towns, and mining claims among other interesting and photographic locations. On the first drive in 2005 I noticed many dirt roads leading off the main highway, shaking across the desert and up into the mountains. I often wondered what lies at the other end. During the following years I did venture onto a few of these with my 4x4, as the roads are usually dirt, gravel, and small rock paths, not made for the family type vehicle. Some of these roads have taken me to old gold, silver, or lead mines, abandoned home sites, a marble processing plant, and sometimes it seems just to... nowhere.

One such path a few miles north of the town of Beatty near the entrance to Death Valley had always caught my attention. I just looked, wondered where it went, and drove on by. On my latest trip in August 2010 I decided to see what lies at the other end. The

fairly straight road was well worn, having seen a lot of traffic over the years. Heading east from US 95, I rumbled across the cattle guard just off the highway. These guards are made up of metal slats with space between. The free-range cattle, burros, and mountain goats will not walk across the metal. This way there can be a break in the highway barrier fence for vehicles while still prohibiting the wildlife from getting onto the highway. The slightly rough road headed across the desert in a gradual rise toward the mountain range about 5 miles distant.

Even with the 4x4, travel was still relatively slow and about 20 minutes later I was nearing the major uphill territory. The road ahead appeared to turn toward the left behind a small hill, when I noticed a small dust cloud behind that same hill. Just as I deduced that it was not a dust devil, two horses, one coal black and the other a light tan with brown markings on its front legs, appeared pulling an old buckboard. Being a fairly narrow road I pulled as far off as I could and returned their wave as they slowly rumbled by, the thin metal and wood spoke wheels leaving narrow tracks in the dirt. The thought that you don't often see two cowboys in a buckboard in these parts crossed my mind briefly, but was dismissed as I pulled back onto the road and continued. Over a small crest the road leveled out toward an interesting upturned mound of sedimentary rock formations. I made a turn to the right and up another slight rise. Cresting that rise I was confronted by two large wood posts, one on each side of the road and strung between them an old weathered piece of wood. Eyes straining against the sun, I could barely make out the print on the board - "Welcome to Mirage"- in faded white lettering.

As I drove under the sign and started a slight decline there spread out before me was a town. An old western looking town, just like you'd see in the movies with Wyatt Earp walking down the main street, rifle in hand. It had just one street, all dirt, with about 8 to 10 old, somewhat rickety wood buildings on each side. Loose slat wooden sidewalks, raised about 8 inches above the street, ran along in front of the buildings which had canopies jutting out over the sidewalks. In front of several of the buildings were hitching posts and at one particular building about 6 horses were tethered. Several people in old western clothing were walking along the sidewalks and a few others were seen crossing the street. "What is this place?" entered my mind and stayed there this time. All I could do was look and wonder what was going on. Maybe this was one of those old type tourist attractions, a movie set, or a ghost town that wasn't listed on the maps. I grabbed my camera and took several pictures of what I could see out the driver's window. No one seemed to take notice as I drove slowly down the street and parked about 20 feet from the 6 horses so as not to disturb them. My truck was the only vehicle in town.

Walking back toward the horses, I saw that they were in front of



a saloon. This was confirmed by the large word "Saloon" painted on a sign atop the canopy of the building. Good place to stop and ask questions as it appeared to be the only place with any sign of activity. The plank sidewalk creaked as I stepped up and stamped by feet to shed some of the dust on my shoes. Pushing aside the double swinging doors of the saloon I entered and quickly looked around, almost expecting to hear "Cut, it's a wrap" as if I had walked into a movie scene. But alas, there were no cameras and no lights.

To the left were several small plain wood tables about three foot square with weathered wood tops and 3 or 4 straight-back wood chairs at each. Several men in western attire were sitting at one of the tables talking and drinking. To the right just inside the door and up against the front wall was a short middle-aged man in a frock coat and a bowler hat sitting behind a small table. At first glance it looked like he was behind a FARO table and on second look I saw that it was a FARO table. Sure don't see those around much anymore. Also toward the right and to the back of the room were two more small tables, one being used by 4 men also in old western clothing and a fifth man wearing a neatly pressed white shirt with a short standup collar and the customary black arm garters of a card dealer. From the playing cards, chips, and cash on the table it appeared they were playing poker. It didn't appear that any of these "saloonites" even noticed I had stepped in.

Now being a chip collector, my first instinct was to check out the poker table to see if they were using chips with a name stamped into the surface. Indeed they were, red plain chips with what appeared to be just one word on the chip. I made a mental note to check this out before I leave, as the table was pretty active at the moment. Turning toward the back center of the room I saw a bar about 15 feet in length with a large mirror behind it. The barkeep, as you would expect in an old western town setting, was standing behind the bar drying a glass. He really looked the part; sure there aren't any movie cameras around? With his white apron, black mustache and greased down hair parted in the middle, he really fit right in. "What'll ya have friend" was heard next and I replied as to what he had. "Whiskey and sassbarrilla, and some homemade root beer the Misses just finished bottling", came his reply.

While the first choice may have helped the situation I settled on the root beer. I asked him what this town was called and his reply - "It's the town of 'Mirage' friend". Just ready to ask the next question I was distracted by several of the poker players getting up and leaving by way of the front door. Thinking the poker game might close up I headed quickly that way to see about getting some chips.

I approached the dealer and asked if I could buy a few of his poker chips explaining that I was a collector. "A collector", he said, "Only thing I ever collected was flies". Asking how much the chips were, he responded with "two bits". Asking for two chips, I pulled out a dollar bill and handed it over. He looked at the bill strangely

and handed it back saying that he'd never seen cash money that looked like that. OK then, I searched my pocket and came up with a few quarters. No luck here either, he didn't want to take them, "Don't look right son" he said. Only other cash I had was my old silver dollar from 1897 that I keep on my key chain. Sort of a good luck piece I've carried for years. When he spotted it, he said, "Now that's what I need" slipping two chips and two quarters across the table toward me.



While I worked to get the dollar piece out of its key chain holder I noticed the chips had "Mirage" stamped on them and that the quarters he gave me as change looked awfully old in style, but bright and shiny as if straight from the mint. I gave him the silver dollar, picked up the two chips and the two quarters and in trying to hastily put them in my pocket one of the quarters slipped from my fingers (oops), hit the edge of the table (plunk), dropped onto the

floor (clink) and with just two more small bounces (double clink) went right down a crack between the floorboards (silence). While I really contemplated on how to retrieve the quarter and looking around to see if anyone noticed how clumsy I had been, I noticed that the barkeeper was no longer behind the bar and the FARO dealer had left. For some reason my next thought was to just get out of there, things just don't seem right. I thanked the dealer, who was now the only other person in the room besides me, and I headed for the door. The town street had an eerie empty feeling. Looking both ways I did not see another living soul. The wind had picked up a bit and the air was tainted with dust. I walked back to my truck, took one last look around, and made a quick retreat out of town and back down the road. At least by this time I was feeling a bit more comfortable. I made a mental note to stop back here on the next trip. Turning back onto US 95 I resumed my trip to Goldfield with the rest of the day being a lot more normal.

About three weeks later on a Saturday morning in Las Vegas I was hitting some garage sales. At about the ninth stop I ran into a fellow chip collector. Morris and I talked for a while and I eventually got into the story of the stop at the town of "Mirage" I had made a few weeks earlier and the two very interesting chips I had picked up. He was very intrigued and wanted to go there as he collected small town Nevada chips. OK, I agreed, someday we'll take a ride up there. "No not some day, let's go today" he said. I didn't have any definite plans so we dropped off his little sports car and got into my 4x4 truck and headed North. As we drove I retold the story of how I found this town. He was really interested and





chompin' at the bit to get there. In no time at all we were slowing to enter Beatty, and drove by the old Burro Inn site, which has now been completely rebuilt as the Death Valley Inn. Stopping at the corner, Morris commented about the old Exchange Club, which is



now a hardware store. "Got some really nice chips from there a few years back", he said. We made a right turn and drove by the site of the next "New" casino for Beatty, the El Sueno, presently just an empty lot except for the sign that was put up a few years back. A



few miles further, around the bend, I started slowing down to make the turn onto the road to "Mirage".

It's a bit easier driving as I remembered some of the bad spots in the road and some soft sandy areas to stay clear of. By this time Morris was really getting edgy, nose near the windshield trying to see way ahead. Just a little farther I told him, around the corner and over the next rise. We crested the hill and I was about to mention the "Welcome to Mirage" sign when I quickly realized the sign was not there. Even more surprisingly, as we crested the hill, the town was not there. I mean gone, disappeared, everything, not a board left, no trace, just as if it never existed. I can't believe what I saw, or actually didn't see. All around us we saw only drab desert land. I drove to where I thought the spot was that I parked the first time and stopped. We both got out and just stared. Morris asked "Well, where are we?" I sense some skepticism on Morris's part but he says that he believes what I told him but can't offer any explanation either. We walked around a bit but didn't even see any marks in the dirt where a person had walked, a horse traveled, or a building had been.

I know I had the right road, even recognized several of the rocky landmarks. After some time I tell Morris that I have no idea what happened and we might as well head back. At least I can show him the chips, and even give him one for his collection. They were both in the ashtray next to my computer, not having had time to even scan them into the database and file away. It was a quieter ride back to Las Vegas, much quieter. Arriving at my house we headed inside and right to my office. I go to pick up the chips - they aren't there. The ashtray is empty. I know they were there this morning before I left. Morris is still looking puzzled but maybe the look is really "Are you sure you aren't making this up?" "Wait a minute" I said, "I have some pictures". I pulled out my camera turned it on and pressed the review button. I was greeted with 12 images of desert scrubland. No signs, no buildings, no town! Nothing.



This was really getting spooky. I got out the Nevada map and was showing Morris just where we were on our trip and what area the town was in. Jokingly Morris said, "Oh that explains it, we were on government land, the Nevada Test Site, and look, here is Area 51 just a little bit farther". I just returned a blank look and didn't really want to think about it anymore. Then Morris really gave me goosebumps. "At least it wasn't a total loss, I did find this nice shiny 1905 quarter in the dirt when we got out of the car out there." "Wonder where that came from?"



# *El Cortez* **HOTEL**

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## **70 Years of Vegas History**

By Mike Skelton



In November 2011, the El Cortez Hotel and Casino celebrates 70 years of continuous operation. One would imagine with that kind of longevity, there would be some interesting history attached to a gambling house in Las Vegas. From the early pioneers of the casino business, to the infamous, to a Las Vegas icon, the El Cortez has seen it all in those seven decades.

The year is 1941. Gasoline cost 18 cents a gallon, bread was 8 cents a loaf and new homes averaged \$4100.00. Franklin D. Roosevelt was beginning his 3rd term as President of the United States and Winston Churchill was Prime Minister of Great Britain. Germany had invaded or declared war on most of Europe. The United States had not yet "officially" entered World War II and was at the end of the Great Depression.

The population of the city of Las Vegas was just over 8600, the total population of Clark County was approximately 17,000 and the US Army Air Corps began development on a gunnery school that would later become Nellis Air Force Base. Thomas Hull had opened the first "resort" on Highway 91 (what is now known as "The Strip") named the El Rancho Vegas in April 1941

It was against this backdrop that John Kell Houssels, Sr., Marion Hicks and John Grayson began preparations to open the El Cortez Hotel and Casino in downtown Las Vegas in 1941. The El Cortez would open for business in November that year with 59 rooms and still operates at the same location today.

J. Kell Houssels, Sr. was one of the early pioneers in the casino business in Las Vegas. Born in 1895, he moved his family to Las Vegas in 1929 and bought an interest in a legal card room named the Smokehouse on Fremont Street and renamed it the Las Vegas Club. In 1931, the state of Nevada legalized casino gambling and Houssels was one of the first applicants to receive a casino license. He also held points in the Boulder Club downtown. Over the years, he would own an interest in and operate the Showboat Hotel/Casino and the Tropicana Hotel/Casino on the Strip. He remained Chief Executive of the Tropicana until that property was sold in early 1970s to Deil O. Gustafson.



*J. Kell Houssels, Sr*

He also invested in various other businesses over the years, including real estate and thoroughbred horses. One of his early land purchases, along with partners A.W. Ham and Guy McAfee, was a plot of land on the east side of Highway 91, across from the El Rancho Vegas.



In December of 1945, Houssels and the partners sold the El Cortez to a group of investors, that consisted of Moe Sedway, Dave Berman, Gus Greenbaum and Benjamin Siegel. The operation of the race wire in the casino was of the most interest to this group and the fact that gambling was legal.

As the Siegel Group turned its attention away from downtown towards Highway 91 and what would become the Flamingo Hotel, they asked Houssels to come back to the El Cortez and in early 1946, he and Ray Salmon, leased the casino from them. Shortly after this, Houssels sold that parcel of land he and his partners had acquired across from the El Rancho to Marion Hicks (one of the original owners of the El Cortez) and Clifford A. Jones, where they would build the Thunderbird Hotel and Casino that opened in 1948.

After taking over operation of the El Cortez, in May 1946, Houssels and Salmon announced a quarter million dollar expansion of the property that included a swimming pool and a four story wing of the hotel. Later in that same year Houssels acquired full ownership of the Las Vegas Club and Gus Greenbaum held an interest in race book. Houssels would sell the Las Vegas Club a short time later.

The story of the Flamingo and the demise of Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel are well documented, but the inter connections and associations of the early owners and operators of Las Vegas casinos is a fascinating study in the history of gambling. Within hours of Siegel's murder (some say before word got back to Vegas) in June of 1947, in Beverly Hills, CA, Gus Greenbaum, Moe Sedway and Dave Berman walked into the Flamingo and announced that they were now in charge of the property. No one argued with them.

In 1952, J. Kell Houssels, Sr. and a group of investors, including William Moore who built the Last Frontier and John Kell Houssels, Jr., returned to owning and operating the El Cortez. It was the same year in which the iconic neon arrow marquee and large rooftop signage was installed. The signage and arrow marquee remains in operation on the roof of the El Cortez to this day.

In the following years, Kell Sr. opened the Showboat Hotel with William Moore and Joe Kelly, invested in the Tropicana Hotel and Casino, along with son Kell, Jr. and eventually took over management of the Tropicana after the original operators were forced out due to proven connections to organized crime. Mobster



Photo courtesy Las Vegas News Bureau

Moe Sedway and Gus Greenbaum



Photo courtesy Las Vegas News Bureau



The El Cortez 1953

Frank Costello had been shot in New York and investigators found a slip of paper in his pocket that had what turned out to be the daily casino figures from the Tropicana written on it.

In 1963, J. Kell Houssels, Sr. sold the El Cortez to a man that would become a Vegas icon.

#### The Jackie Gaughan Era Begins

In 1963 John D. Gaughan (better known as Jackie) purchased the El Cortez Hotel and Casino from J. Kell Houssels and his partners for slightly more than \$4,000,000 and began a stewardship that would last over 40 years. Though the El Cortez would become Gaughan's center of operation over those 40 plus years, it was not his first foray into the gambling business. Not by a long shot.

Gaughan learned the book making trade in Omaha, Neb in 1930s at the Bell Gigar Store as a teenager and within a couple of years, owned the operation. He became acquainted with another local fellow bookmaker by the name of Edward Barrick. Gaughan and Barrick would partner together to operate a race and sports book named the Baseball Headquarters in Omaha.

Gaughan was attending Creighton University when he was drafted into the Army in 1942 and became part of the Army Air Corps that was stationed in Tonopah, NV. He made many visits to Las Vegas during his four years in Tonopah and would eventually acquire a 3% interest in the Boulder Club by the time of his discharge from the Army. He sold his interest in the Boulder Club a short time later, but had developed a friendship with a gentleman named J. Kell Houssels, Sr. in the process of that brief ownership stake.

Gaughan returned to Omaha after WWII had ended, went back to Creighton University to finish his degree and worked part time at the Stork Club in Council Bluffs, Iowa. One of the operators of the Stork Club was Chickie Berman, whose brother Dave had partnered with the Bugsy Siegel group in Las Vegas.

In 1951 Gaughan was given the opportunity to acquire "working points" in the operation at the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas. For his 2% ownership stake, he worked a shift as a casino floorman. His former partner Edward Barrick had acquired a 5.5% interest in the Flamingo. At this time the Flamingo operation was being run by Gus Greenbaum, Dave Berman and Willie Alderman. Gaughan would increase his interest in the Flamingo to 3% over the years and retained his stake in the operation until 1967. The principal operators of the Flamingo at this time were Morris Lansburgh,



Photo courtesy Las Vegas News Bureau

Jackie Gaughan in front of the El Cortez 1965

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**DOWNTOWN**

Samuel Cohen and Chester Simms. The operation was sold to a young entrepreneur name Kirk Kerkorian, who at the time was building the International Hotel on Paradise Road that would later become the Las Vegas Hilton.

Also in 1951, Gaughan partnered with Mel Exber and they acquired several struggling sports books. The next year, they bought the Saratoga, moved it two years later and named it the Derby Sports Book. They also opened another sports book, named it the Saratoga and would operate it until they sold it in 1959.



Photo courtesy Las Vegas News Bureau

The El Cortez 1966



In the mid 1950s Gaughan made a minor and short lived investment in Northern Nevada at the Tahoe Biltmore. The Tahoe Biltmore would eventually go bankrupt, but not before Gaughan had recouped his investment and had a meeting with a young man from Chicago who in later years would become one of his partners and majority owner of the El Cortez.

By the time Gaughan acquired the El Cortez, he and Exber had reopened the Las Vegas Club and thus began his run as the dominant casino man in downtown Las Vegas. Over the next 4 decades Gaughan would individually own or in partnership, casinos that included Club Bingo, the Plaza, the Gold Spike, the Western and the Nevada Hotel. He acquired acreage in the downtown area, motels and minor interests in other casinos like the Pioneer Club and the Showboat Hotel/Casino. In addition, in the mid 1970s he held over 100,000 shares of Golden Nugget



**EL CORTEZ**

stock when a young Steve Wynn was running the operation, held a seat on the Board of Directors of the Nugget and the Showboat. He invested in son Michael's first casino project, the Royal Inn on Convention Center Drive, just off the Strip.

With all those holdings, he began his days at the El Cortez and would walk Fremont Street each day checking on the operations of the joints he owned at the time and passing out his "fun books". He stressed value in food, drinks and a fair gamble. Many of the promotional pitches used by Vegas casinos over the years were started by Jackie Gaughan and can still be found today at the El Cortez.

The one major expansion to the El Cortez occurred in 1980 with the construction of Tower II that brought the room count up to 297. It remained the center piece of his casino holdings for the next 25 years and he would eventually move into the hotel to live full time.



Photo courtesy The El Cortez

Jackie Gaughan



Photo courtesy Las Vegas News Bureau

The El Cortez 1992

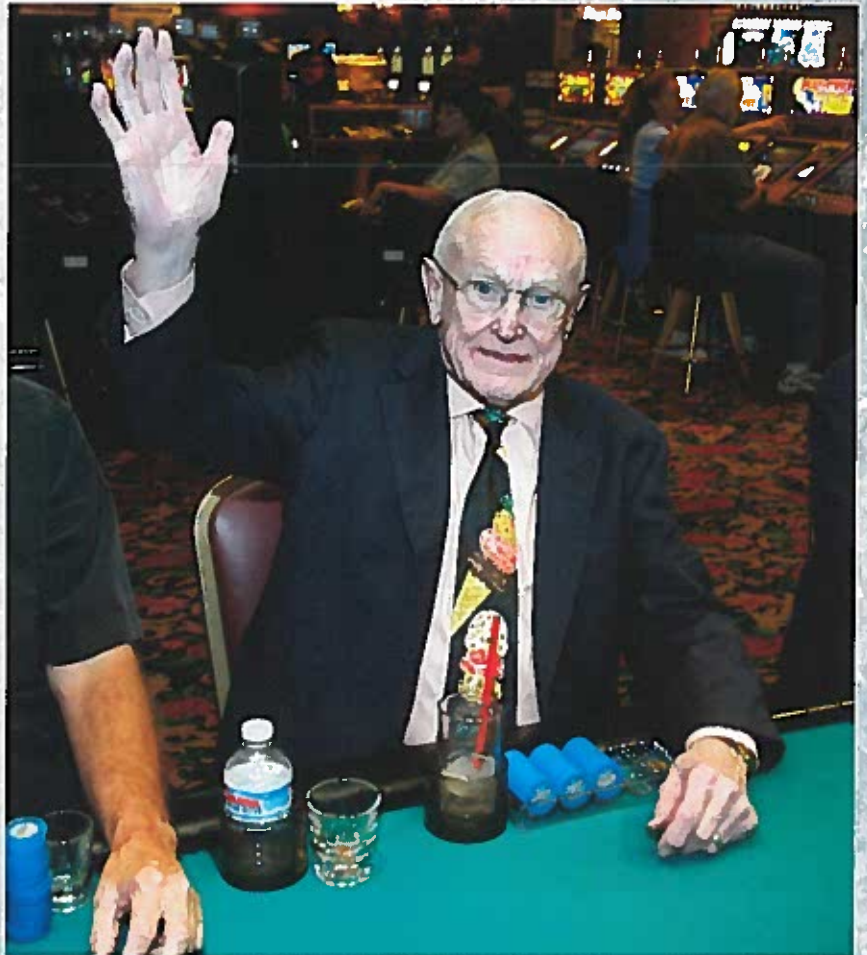
After nearly 60 years in the casino business in Las Vegas, Mr. Gaughan, now in his 80s, along with his family, made the decision to start divesting his holdings. In 2004, he sold most of his casinos, motels and land holdings downtown to Barrick Gaming. But he retained the El Cortez Hotel and Casino.

Many of the executives that had helped him expand his casino empire over the years returned to the El Cortez (or were already working there) to help run the day to day operations. In 2006, a major interior renovation takes place to brighten the interior of the building and the casino.

In 2008, Mr. Gaughan sold his stock in the El Cortez Hotel and Casino to IKE Gaming. He just celebrated his 91st birthday in October of 2011. He still lives at the hotel, plays poker almost daily and has lunch and/or dinner with members of the IKE Gaming team each day. You see, the IKE Gaming principals weren't some faceless corporation making a real estate play, but partners and executives that have been with Mr. Gaughan for over 30 years or more.

One of the most colorful stories concerning the El Cortez is the tale of "Fat Irish" Green. Over the years it's been said that Green was a bodyguard for Bugsy Siegel, held onto a suitcase full of cash (some versions of the story had the suitcase containing hundreds of thousands of dollars) for Siegel and after Siegel's death in 1947, turned the suitcase over to Siegel's former partners. As a reward for his actions, Green was given a free room at the El Cortez and how Jackie Gaughan found about that deal after he bought the El Cortez.

During research for this article, I was invited to dinner at the El Cortez by Alexandra Epstein, with the expectation of talking with her father Kenny and General Manager Mike Nolan about



*Photo courtesy Las Vegas News Bureau*

*Jackie Gaughan on his 88th birthday, 2008*

the history of the hotel and their years in the business. The three arrived at the agreed to time but they were not alone. With them was Mr. Jackie Gaughan himself, accompanied by Tony "Tony Wheels" Gurovsky

Of course one of the first questions asked at dinner was about Irish Green. Kenny Epstein responded with "Tell me what you've heard and then I'll tell the real story." After I repeated a version of the story noted above, Mr. Epstein replied "That's close. Green was really one of those "hang around" type guys, not so much a bodyguard. But Siegel trusted him and gave him a suitcase that contained what was probably closer to \$60,000 to hold for him." What the source of the money was no one was really sure.

After Siegel died in '47, Green did in fact take the suitcase to Siegel's former partners. They set him up with a free room at the El Cortez for as long as he wanted to stay. Shortly after he bought the hotel in 1963, Gaughan noticed that this guy had not paid rent in almost 15 years. He confronted Green about his unpaid hotel bill and was told "I never paid any rent and I don't have to pay any rent." Gaughan immediately called J. Kell Houssels, Sr. from whom he had bought



*Photo courtesy Las Vegas News Bureau*

*The El Cortez 2008*



the El Cortez to find out what was going on with this Green character. Houssels was at that time at the Tropicana and his response to Gaughan was "Sorry, he went with the deal." Frustrated, Gaughan called his friend Benny Binion at the Horseshoe to tell him the story and see if there was anything he could suggest. Apparently Binion already knew about it because his response was "I feed Irish for nothin'. You got to keep him at the hotel for nothin'."

According to Epstein, Green continued to live rent free at the El Cortez in one of the vintage rooms until his death.

### IKE Gaming

IKE Gaming took control of the El Cortez in May of 2008, but the principals have a long history with the legendary Jackie Gaughan, some of that history dates to the mid 1950s. IKE Gaming majority owner, Kenny Epstein (Irving Kenneth Epstein) first met Mr. Gaughan as a teenager in 1956 at the Tahoe Biltmore when Gaughan held an interest in that property. Kenny was there with his father, prominent Chicago bookmaker, Isadore "Ike" Epstein. When talking about that first encounter, Epstein said "Jackie took me on a two hour personal tour of the property. He was absolutely the nicest man I have ever met."

Kenny Epstein began his Vegas gaming career when Caesars Palace opened in 1966, as a baccarat floorman. In 1975, he became a casino executive and partner with Jackie Gaughan. In 1979, he partnered with Michael Gaughan, Frank Toti and others, to open the Barbary Coast Hotel and Casino, next to the Flamingo on the Vegas Strip. (Epstein is one of the four executives that appeared on the 25th Anniversary chips for the Barbary Coast. The photos on the chips were from opening night.)

Over the years, Epstein retained his stake in the downtown properties with Jackie Gaughan, Mel Exber and others and was already at the El Cortez in 2004 when Gaughan began selling off his other casino holdings.

Epstein is a true casino man that understands the house edge that the casino has in every game. In an interview about his monumental 2 year winning streak in the 1990s, legendary gambler Archie Karas, who had won an estimated \$18 million from the Horseshoe shooting dice and at one point had all of the \$5000 chips the Horseshoe had in inventory, was asked if Jack Binion ever sweated his action. Karas responded, "No he didn't, everyone else in town either wanted to limit my action or wouldn't take it at



Photo courtesy Las Vegas News Bureau

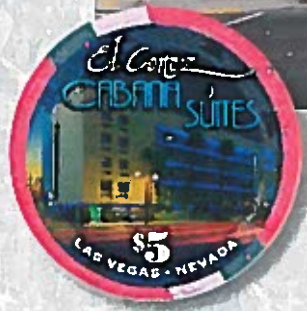
### The El Cortez Cabana Suites

all. Jack was the only one, other than Kenny Epstein, who didn't sweat the action." When asked about this, Epstein replied "What's to sweat? He was shooting dice! He was the biggest and best dice player I ever saw. He had no fear. He still occasionally comes into the El Cortez."

The General Manager of the El Cortez is Mike Nolan, also a stake holder in IKE Gaming. Nolan grew up in Las Vegas and first met Jackie Gaughan as an Eagle Scout during a luncheon at the El Cortez. He went to work on the Strip and when he turned 21, in 1978, he went to work for Gaughan downtown. He worked two weeks in the cage then Gaughan made him the slot manager at Club Bingo. Over the years he had held various positions at different Gaughan properties and returned to the El Cortez in 2004.

Today the El Cortez carries on the Gaughan philosophy of value, a fair gamble and personal customer service. The blackjack tables are single or double decks and blackjack still pays 3-2 and not the 6-5 that has become pervasive on the Strip. Nolan says there are no plans to change that. They also read all of the customer comment cards that are turned in each week in their staff meeting and they respond to them.

The El Cortez continues to pay homage to its historic past, but also is attracting a younger demographic with its most recent renovations and upgrades. In 2009 the new ownership group undertook a total renovation the old 100 room Ogden House Hotel (previously used as overflow rooms) into the 64 room El Cortez Cabanas, located directly across the street from the El Cortez. The Cabanas bring a contemporary, more upscale room offering to the property with its South Beach look, flat screen TVs and iPod docking stations. They help attract the younger crowd that come down later in the evening to visit the Fremont East entertainment district. The El Cortez is also involved in the revival of the downtown art scene as well, with the Emergency Arts Building.



In 2010, the El Cortez kept the upgrades and support of downtown coming with the announcement of their Design-a-Suite contest. Four Nevada-licensed design teams were chosen from 32 applicants to completely renovate one of four existing El Cortez suites on an original \$20,000 budget, which was raised slightly. The winner would get to renovate an additional six suites at the El Cortez. The teams had to buy at least 80% of their materials and furnishings from the World Market Center and Las Vegas Design Center in downtown Las Vegas. The winner was announced on February 3, 2011 at the unveiling of all four of the renovated suites. The winning design was “The Big Sleep” suite by Urban Design.

One of the youngest members of the IKE Gaming team is Kenny Epstein’s daughter Alexandra who came on board full time in 2008 after graduation from Columbia University as an art major.



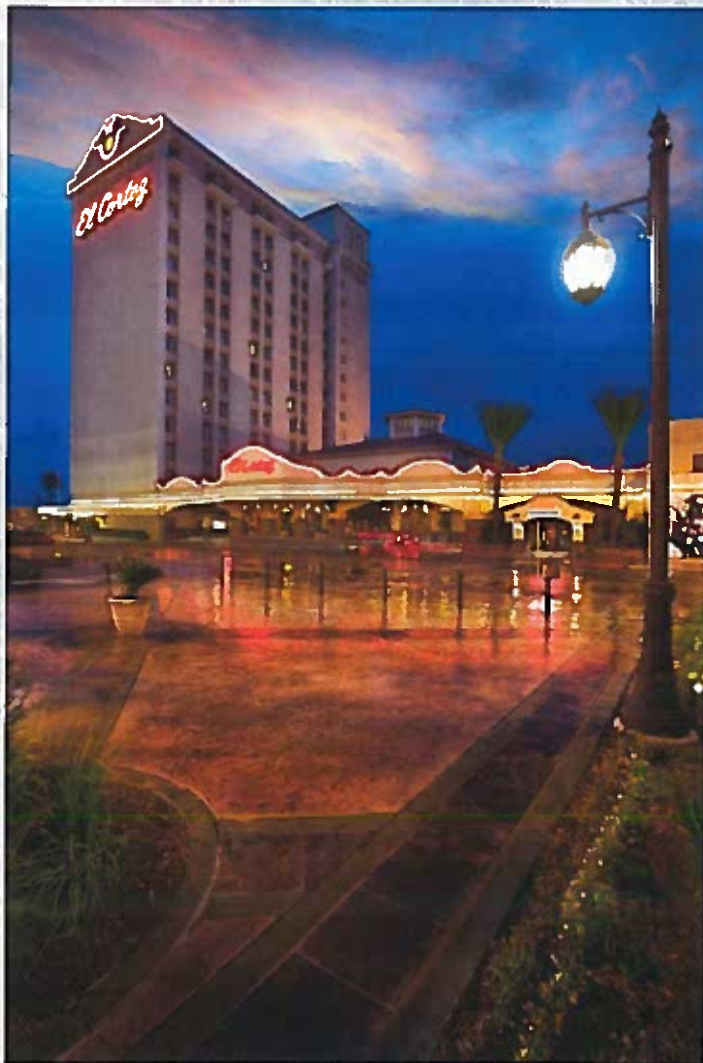
*Photo courtesy The El Cortez*  
*Alexandra Epstein*

Asked about her full time start at the El Cortez and working in the family business, Alexandra replied “I was brought on to the Cabana Suites project as “Project Coordinator.” I worked closely with the Architect, Designer, Contractor, and Construction Manager in the development stages and then directed the Hotel Manager with operations management

and created our website and online presence as we opened in May 2009. In reality, I ended up making the decisions on details ranging from amenities to the way the beds were made to what soaps/

snacks/towels/etc. would go into the rooms. The intent was to have a younger perspective and make it somewhat of a departure from the traditional El Cortez experience. Working in a family business, I have found, you get to experience many things much sooner than another job might allow. Working at the El Cortez, I really hit the ground running, and have been able to work in and with nearly all the departments at the hotel. On the flip side, the pressure is that much greater. Any success or failure you feel just that much more. Being able to contribute to the development of Fremont East and Downtown in such a crucial time in our city’s history has just been the icing on the cake of this experience.”

So after a very storied 70 year history, the El Cortez Hotel and Casino is staying true to its history, offering value, personal service and moving forward in revitalized downtown Las Vegas. As Mr. Gaughan has always said, “If it’s good for downtown, it’s good for the El Cortez.”



For more information on the El Cortez Hotel and Casino visit [www.elcortezhotelcasino.com](http://www.elcortezhotelcasino.com), follow them on Twitter or check out their Facebook page.

*Chip scans courtesy Greg Susong and Paul Hegge*



*Photo courtesy The El Cortez*  
*The Big Sleep Suite*

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# Of Literary Note

by the club Librarian, John K. Kallman

P.O. Box 122

Sartell, MN 56377

librarian@ccgtcc.com

Normally, I pick up copies of the DVD that the club produces at each year's convention the following year while attending the convention itself. This year, however, I was sent 2 copies soon after the close of the convention. So, if you missed this year's convention, or have never attended one, you might want to check one of these out to see what it is that you are missing.

Additional, the library has received the following items:

- Sheldon Smith donated 16 back issues of the club's award winning quarterly publication.
- Michael Knapp donated the following items:
  - The Book of Casino Room Keys by Jim Munding
  - A List of World's Gaming Tokens by Earl Donley
  - B & V Catalog of Nevada Gaming Tokens
  - Nevada Silver Premium Tokens, 1997 Price Guide by Marvin Weaver
  - An Illustrated Guide to the Casino Chips of American Riverboats 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Editions by Greg Susong
  - Chips and Checks of Australia and New Zealand by John Kallman and Ken Nestle
  - Cruise Ships and Their Casino Chips by Smith and Long
  - Nevada Casino Playing Card Guide by Steffner and O'Neal
  - Nevada Silver Strikes, Nevada Silver Strikes 2002; 2003 and Nevada Silver Strikes Volume 1 & 2 by Richard Anderson
  - Satan's Playground by Paul Vanderwood
  - TITO Update BB/CC by Jim Noll
- Dr. Allen Myers donated the following items:
  - The Chip Rack by Knapp, Myers, and Wheelden; Volume 2 Number 1; 4<sup>th</sup> Edition; 5<sup>th</sup> Edition (4 Copies); 7<sup>th</sup> Edition (2 Copies); 10<sup>th</sup> Edition (Part I and II);
  - The Chip Rack by Sands, Cipkins and Spragg, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition; 12 Edition; 13<sup>th</sup> Edition
  - The Gaming Table – 1<sup>st</sup> Edition (3 Copies); Revised Edition (3 Copies); 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (2 Copies) by Knapp, Myers and Wheelden
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  - Las Vegas Then and Now by Su Kim Chung
  - The Official U.S. Casino Price Guide by James Campiglia and Steve Wells; 1<sup>st</sup> Edition (2 Copies); 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition
  - Casinos – by Vendome Press
  - The Gamblers – by Time Life
  - Syndicate Wife by Hank Messick
  - Rock Island Auction (2004)
  - Antique Gambling Chips and Antique Gambling Chips Revised Edition (3 Copies) by Dale Seymour
  - California Stud by Madeline Combie
  - Casino Guide Post by Ken Schroeder
  - American Casino Guide – 2000
  - Ivory Gambling Chips by Dale Seymour
  - Old Poker Chips by Dale Seymour
  - Galveston – A Guide to Illegal Clubs and their Chips; 1<sup>st</sup>; 2<sup>nd</sup>; 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Editions by Ed Hertel
  - Illegal Chip Price Guide; 1999 and 2000 Edition by Ed Hertel
  - Quest for the Dead Man's Hand – The Assassination of Wild Bill Hickok with a Guide to the Casino Chips & Gaming Tokens of Deadwood, S.D. by Fiinstuen & Dimler
  - Delta Nights: N.O.L.A – New Orleans & Louisiana Parishes Illegal Gambling Clubs Checks & Chips by Finstuen, Kleindienst, Marshall & Marshall
  - Nevada Casino Chips from the Hollibaugh Collection (2 Copies) along with an untitled book continuing the above listings.
  - Casinos and their Ashtrays by Art Anderson
  - Casino Ashtrays, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition by Roxie & Gary Held
  - Harvey's Guide to Collecting Gaming Checks & Chips, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition by Howard Hertz
  - Casino Chips & Tokens of the Dutch Caribbean by Ralph P. Pollack
  - Casinos of the Dutch Caribbean by Ralph P. Pollack
  - The Casino Chips of Montana by Steve Goodrich
  - Casino Tokens of Monte Carlo by Thomas C. Day (ANA Reprint)
  - Guide to the Casinos & Chips of St. Maarten by Robert A. Ginsburg
  - Guide to the Chips & Casinos of Curacao by Robert A. Ginsburg

- United States Playing Card Company Record Guide by Howard W. Herz
- Hunt & Company Record Guide by Howard W. Herz
- Illustrated Guide to the Casino Chips of American Riverboats by Greg C. Susong
- Obsolete Casino Chips of Puerto Rico, from the Albert Rollins Collection by George T. Davis
- Directory of Licensed Gambling Establishments 0 1998, Volume 13
- Galveston – Island of Chance by Frank E. Chalfant
- Gambling in the Spa, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition by Wayne Threadgill
- Index of Nevada Gambling Establishments by Harvey J. Fuller, Edited by Howard W. Herz
- Chip Chat's Auction of Larry Markman's Collection of Las Vegas 25c Chips (Doug Saito)
- Chip Chat's Auction of Will Posthumus Collection of Louisiana Illegal's
- Chip Chat's Auction of Will Posthumus Collection of Lake Tahoe Chips
- Chip Chat's Auction of Bruce Landau Nevada Chips
- Chip Chat's Auction of LeRoy & Audrey Zaslawsky Las Vegas Casino Chips
- Chip Chat's Auction of Hank Boos Collection, Session 1, Session 2 (Reno Only) and Session 3 (Lake Tahoe & Nevada Small Town Only)
- Chip Chat's Spring 2004 Auction Catalog
- Chip Chat Issues: #2, #3 (2 copies) & Addendum, #4, #5 & Addendum, #6 & Addendum, #7 & Addendum, #8 & Addendum, #9 & Addendum, #10 & Addendum, #11 & Addendum; #12, and Addendum, #13, #14, #14, #16, #17, #18, #19, #21, #23, #24, #25, 26, #27, #28, #29, #30, #31, #32, #33, #34, #35, #36, #37, #38, #39, #40, #42, #45, #47
- Other items from Doug Saito: A Chip Chat with Clyde Barriner – A California Card Club Owner; Profiles of a Pioneer, The James L. Young Story; Collecting the Lowest of the Low Gives Me the Highest High – Part 3; Your Checks in the Mail
- The Lookout Journal, Monthly Newsletter on Gambling Establishments from Every State in the US, Volume 1, Number 1; January 2002
- Collector's Guide to Nevada Gaming Check's & Chips by Howard W. Herz and Kregg L. Herz
- Chips and Checks of Australia and New Zealand by Ken Nestle & John Kallman
- Illustrated Guide to Nevada Silver Strike Tokens, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition by Howard W. Herz & Kregg J. Herz
- Guide to the Casino Chips of Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, North and South Dakota by Luke Rapley
- Casino Chips of Washington State by Steve Goodrich
- Armin Pfaender Auctions: June 1998; August 1998; October 1998; December 1998; February 1999
- Coast to Coast's Casino News, Issues #56, #57, #59, #64, #67, #83, #84
- Nevada Magazine – Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Las Vegas
- Gaming Times, Volume 3, Issues 4; Volume 4, Issue 5 (2 Copies) & Issue 7
- Deal Magazine (For Casino Dealers), Oct 31, 1993
- Anthony Curtis' Las Vegas Advisor, July 2004
- Gaming Archaeology Auctions: #8; #9; #10; #11; #12; #13; #14; #15; #16; #17a; #17b; #18; #19; #20; #21; #22; #23; #24; #25; #26a; #27; #28; #29; #30; #31; #32.1; #33
- The Coin Company Gaming Token List: #4
- The Coin Company Gaming Check & Chips List: #5; #6
- The Coin Company Auctions: #2; #3; #4; #5; #6; #7
- I Want To Quit Winners by Harold S. Smith, Sr.
- Razzle Dazzle by Hank Messick
- Winner Takes All by Christina Binkley
- Storming Las Vegas by John Huddy
- Play The Devil; A History of Gambling in The United States from 1492 to 1950 by Henry Chafetz
- Complete Illustrated Guide to Gambling by Alan Wykes
- Adirondack Guide, 1948
- Club Magazines:
  - Volume 1 Issues #1, #2, & #4
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  - Volume 12 Issues #1 – #4
  - Volume 13 Issues #1 – #4
  - Volume 14 Issues #1 – #4
  - Volume 15 Issues #1 – #4
  - Volume 16 Issues #1 – #3
  - Volume 17 Issues #1 – #4
  - Volume 18 Issues #1 – #4
  - Volume 19 Issues #1 – #4
  - Volume 20 Issues #1 – #4
  - Volume 21 Issues #1 – #4
  - Volume 22 Issues #1, #2 & #4
  - Volume 23 Issues #1 – #4
  - Volume 24 Issues #1 & #2
- Club Auctions: 1993, 1996, 1997 (Black & White, Color), 1998 (Black & White, Color), 1999 (Black & White, Color), 2000 (2 Black & White, 1 Color), 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 (2 Black & White, 1 Color), 2006, 2007
- Gaming Chips & Plaques of the World by John Benedict

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I've only got about 500 items up right now, but I'm adding as fast as I can. Should have several thousand added in the next few months! Plus, it's not just new Vegas releases and LE's anymore. I have lots of house chips and NCV's, from all over the US, tokens, older *Chip Chat* issues, supplies and more!

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# Bill Harrah's



by Allan Anderson

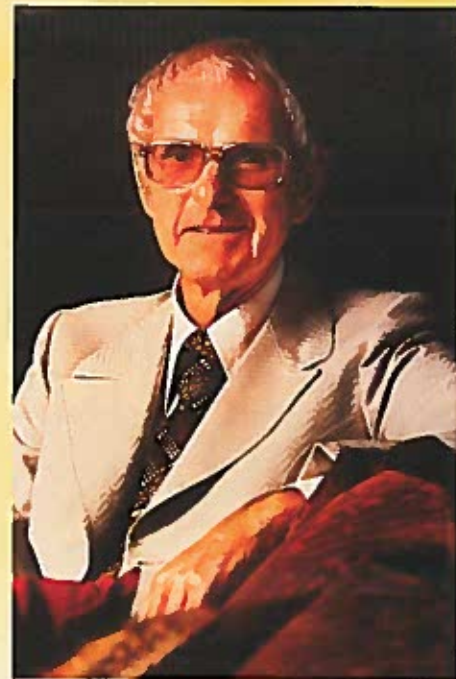
*Whereas, William F. Harrah was born 100 years ago on this date, September 2, 1911; and  
whereas, he was respected by industry peers as well as his loyal employees. He was a great innovator in Nevada gaming and was the first to put the biggest little city on the map as an entertainment hot spot; and  
whereas, Bill Harrah believed, "to be successful, you have to do things the best way." And successful he was. His lone bingo parlor, which opened in 1937, has become Caesars Entertainment, the largest gaming company in the world; and whereas, his well known, life-long, love affair with the automobile has given our city a wonderful museum; and  
whereas, a true visionary and pioneer, Bill Harrah is considered the father of Northern Nevada gaming and his legacy will forever be linked with Northern Nevada history.*

*Now, therefore, I, Robert A. Cashell, Sr., Mayor of the City of Reno, Nevada, do hereby proclaim Friday, September 2, 2011, as Bill Harrah Day.*

*In and for the City of Reno, Nevada, and encourage all citizens to give recognition and appreciation to Bill Harrah on this, what would have been his 100th birthday, and to his lasting legacy that will forever be linked to the great state of Nevada.*

*In witness whereof, I have set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Reno, Nevada, to be affixed this second day of September 2011.*

*Robert A. Cashell, Sr., Mayor City of Reno.*



*Photo courtesy Harrah's*

William Fisk Harrah was born on September 2, 1911 in South Pasadena, California. Although the Harrah family was not wealthy, they enjoyed the tenuous prosperity other middle-class families in Southern California had in those days. Bill's father John was a lawyer and an occasional politician, who served as mayor of Venice, California.





By the late 1920's, the Great Depression had begun. Bill was studying mechanical engineering at UCLA when his father, who had invested heavily in real estate, lost everything. Bill left college and went to work in the only business the family still owned, a large building on the famed Venice pier which housed a pool hall, a shooting gallery and a bingo-styled operation called the "Reno Game." It was the beginnings of his career in gaming.

As a pure game of chance, bingo was illegal in California, but games of skill, often based on bingo, were legal and very popular. The Reno, or Circle Game, as it became known was bingo with a twist. Players sat in a circle on one of 33 stools. In the middle of the table was a roll-down hopper connected to a flashboard. Players would buy cards from the dealer, then try to

roll a ball into the hopper in such a way that the flashboard would register a card of a suit and number that would match the cards the players had bought, filling in a four card sequence. The effects of the ball, once it reached the hopper were evidently random.

The Circle game was considered a game of skill because the player chose his cards from the dealer and rolled the ball down the board himself, the game was considered an exercise in skill and therefore perfectly legal. However, the levels of skill and chance were open to interpretation by the local district attorney, who had the power to close or open the game at will. The "on-again, off-again" legality of the game was only one aspect of the operation that bothered Bill. Another was his father's insistence on using

employees as players or "shills" to fill in each round. When a "shill" won the game, legitimate players were shut out of winning the pot. Pretty soon, players grew tired of competing against the house. Bill also found fault in the manner in which his father ran the establishment. He thought the stools the players sat on were cheap and uncomfortable among other things. Bill's father sold Bill the business for \$500 when Bill was 20. Immediately, the shills and stools were gone and the \$100-a-week game grew into a \$25,000 and then \$50,000 a year business in just three years.

The regular closings by law enforcement officials began to make Harrah look for greener pastures, one where he could run his business without all the hassles. One of his high school friend went to Reno and came back extolling the virtues of a place that kept the bars and games open all the time. So, Bill sold out and moved to Reno in 1937.

On October 30, 1937, Harrah opened his first club at 124 N. Center Street, in Reno, Nevada called Harrah's Club Bingo. It was a full block and a half from the Bank and Palace clubs that garnered the bulk of the play in Reno. His tiny parlor lasted only until November the 15th of that same year.



Photo courtesy UNLV Special Collections



Harrah's second tango (bingo) parlor was The Plaza Tango. It was located at 14 East Commercial Row. The second entrance was at 15 East Douglass Alley. Harrah's main competition was the Heart Tango Club. He eliminated this competition by buying the lease. He then closed the Plaza Tango Club and began operation of the Heart Tango Club, next to Harolds Club. When the lease expired in 1945, the property became part of Harolds Club.



Photo courtesy Harrah's

Harrah took over the lease on the Reno Club in 1942 from Japanese owners who were forced to sell their business due to World War II. It was operated as a bingo parlor until 1948 when the court ruled that the lease was null and void.

Harrah opened Harrah's Club in 1946 after leasing property from the Mint. In 1952 he purchased the property. Harrah's Club was licensed for a keno game, a faro bank, two roulette games, six 21 games, three crap tables, forty slot machines and a horse race book. In 1953 Harrah



purchased the former Frisco Club on North Center Street and opened it the following April as Harrah's Bingo Parlor. In November 1956 he acquired the Frontier Club next door to Harrah's and enlarged the club by taking down the wall. The expansion resulted in the licensing of ten more table games and 215 more slot machines.

Bill Harrah was known for his innovations. In 1957, he installed the first air curtain in Nevada, making the entrance more inviting in all kinds of weather. In 1962, Harrah's installed the first metered

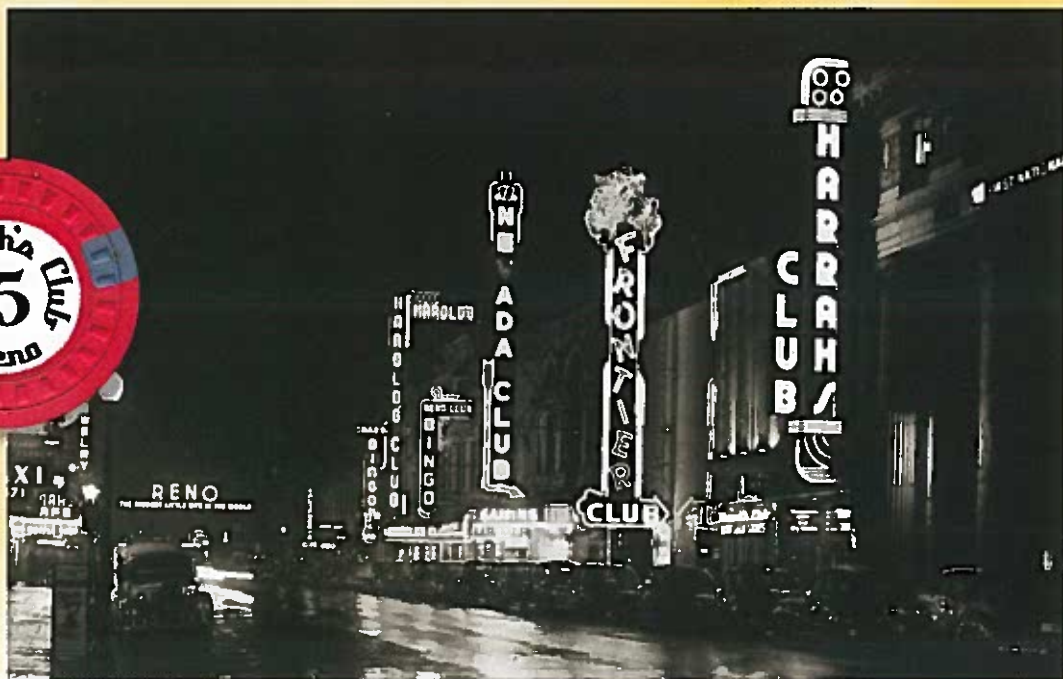


Photo Allan Anderson collection

The Town's Talking About


# HARRAH'S CLUB

IN RENO

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ONE OF THE NEWEST & FINEST CLUBS  
IN NEVADA STYLED FOR YOUR PLEASURE  
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210 N. VIRGINIA RENO 2-1984



In 1959, Harrah leased the Jacobs building which housed the Grand Hotel and Grand Café. The building extended from the corner of Second and Center Streets to Lincoln Alley, between the two Harrah's establishments. He also purchased the Grand Bar and Grand Café. In 1962, construction was started on the new Harrah's casino and restaurant on the corner of Second and Center streets. It opened in 1963 with 430 slot machines, three craps games, twelve 21 tables, one roulette table, one pari-mutuel wheel, and an eight station keno game.

In 1966, Harrah leased the Golden Hotel property and Harrah's Reno was expanded to include a 400 seat theatre-restaurant. Eddie Fisher opened the showroom on June 20th. Harrah's treatment of stars that appeared in his showrooms was legendary. He formed many life long friendships with people who appeared in his club. Stars such as Sammy Davis, Jr., Jim Nabors, Bill Cosby, Frank Sinatra, John Denver to name a few. Other facilities that opened

slot machines in the state. In 1964, they added computers to keep track of the jackpots. Harrah's was the first casino to use timers on the change lights. This timer triggered a flashing light that was a reminder that the guest had been waiting 20-30 seconds for change to play a slot machine. He also introduced bells and lights on slot machines and created the first "eye in the sky", a crawl space with one-way glass to monitor the activity in the casino. Harrah's was also the first casino to employ keno runners. This came about after a suggestion made by a blackjack dealer after a customer complained that they had to continually leave the blackjack table to go play keno.



Photo courtesy Harrah's

Sammy Davis Jr., Debbie Reynolds and Bob Hope



Photo Allan Anderson collection



that day were a coffee shop, a steak house, a theatre lounge and two bars including the blackout bar. 450 slot machines and twenty-four table games were also added.

In 1968, construction began on Harrah's hotel tower. It took place over the main casino without ever interrupting the games. The 24 story, 325 room hotel opened in 1969. In June 1975, Harrah's opened the Reno Sports Casino.

In March 1997, Harrah leased the Overland Hotel Casino and demolished it for temporary surface parking. In March 1978, Harrah's purchased the Riverside Hotel to trade with Pick Hobson for the Overland site.

In 1980 construction started on an additional 17 story, 240 room, hotel tower. Also in 1980, the Center Street casino opened which included a 235 seat cabaret, a skyway and a seven story parking garage.



Photo courtesy Harrah's

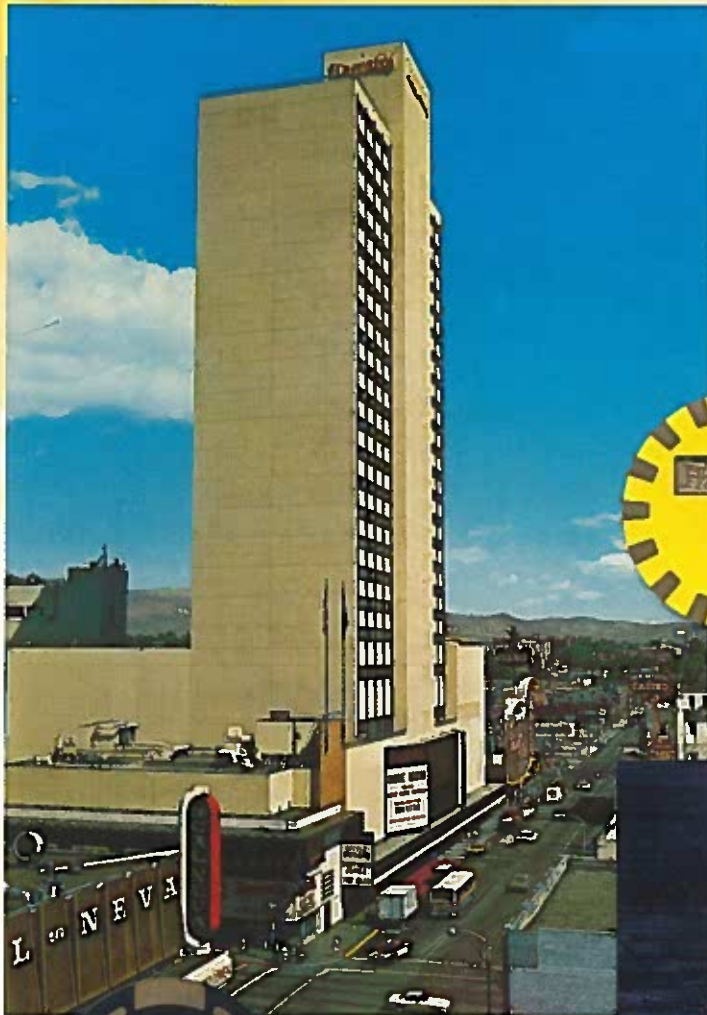


Photo Allan Anderson collection



Photo courtesy Harrah's

Harrah's Club in Reno was doing very well but Harrah couldn't understand why the small casinos at Lake Tahoe were getting so much action. He wanted to be a part of it.

In 1955 Harrah purchased the Gateway Club at Lake Tahoe, located on the lake side of Highway 50. After a lengthy renovation the old Gateway Club opened as Harrah's Lake Club on June 20th. The club displaced Dopey Norman's, a small club run by Norman Reinburg, and Tony's Club, another small property on the lake side of highway 50 run by Tony Grech and his manager, Rocky Basile.

In 1956 Harrah purchased the former Stateline Country Club on the other side of highway 50. After extensive remodeling he opened the former Stateline Country Club. In 1958 he purchased the Nevada Club for \$2 million, adjacent to the former Stateline Country Club, which gave Harrah the property he needed to construct Harrah's Tahoe. A couple smaller clubs, the Tahoe Palace and the Tahoe Plaza eventually became part of the new Harrah's casino property also. Now there were Harrah's casinos on each side of the highway.

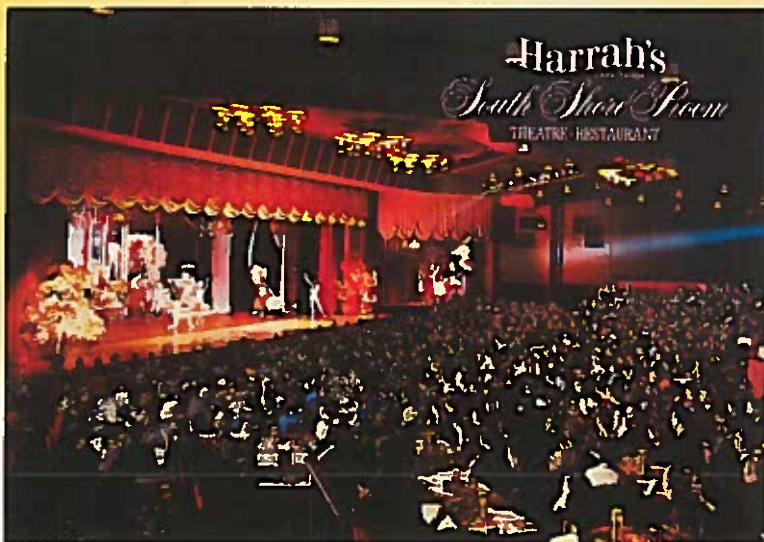


Photo courtesy Harrah's

In 1959 a \$3.5 million expansion was initiated at Harrah's Tahoe which included plans for the South Shore room, a theatre restaurant capable of seating 750 people. The South Shore room opened on December 22nd with Red Skelton headlining. In 2006, the South Shore Room underwent a multi-million dollar renovation. The project included a \$500,000 state-of-the-art sound system and a top to bottom renovation of the theater. The stage, which many performers have recognized for its efficient design, friendly feel and impeccable acoustics, was left relatively untouched — looking much like it did when the curtain first rose on Red Skelton on Dec. 21, 1959.



Photo courtesy Frank Steward



In March 1964, construction began on an 8,500 Sq. Ft. addition to the casino and cocktail bar. In 1971 construction began to expand the property again. In 1972 construction began on an 18 story, 250 room hotel tower which opened in November 1973. The second phase, which added 290 rooms, opened in 1976 giving Harrah's Tahoe 540 total rooms.

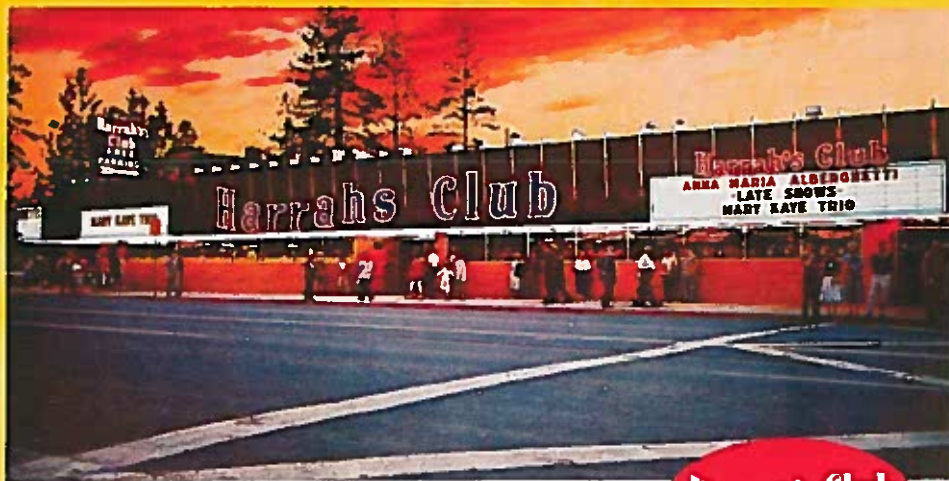
While Harvey Gross once had land Bill Harrah wanted, Gross later purchased Harrah's Lake Club for over \$5 million before expanding his own property with a 12-story high-rise, the competing casinos built an underground walkway so their guests could comfortably walk between the casinos during the snowy winter.

In 1979 Harrah's Tahoe was honored with a Mobil five-star rating and the American Automobile Association five-diamond rating the most prestigious ratings in the travel industry for hotels. At that time, only seven hotels in the U.S. were awarded both top ratings.

Instead of shutting down like other Lake Tahoe casinos after Labor Day, Bill Harrah and Bob Ring came up with the idea of a year-round vacation spot. Although the property did not have hotel rooms, there were a few motels that were amenable to the idea of

more winter business. When Bill Harrah decided to open the Lake Tahoe casino year round, he was told "People do not drive up to Lake Tahoe to gamble in the winter." So, Harrah agreed that people do not drive to Lake Tahoe, especially in the winter; therefore, he organized buses to bring people to the casino.

Harrah understood that the success of his business directly related to how well



Harrah's Club, Lake Tahoe, and Harrah's Stateline Country Club, are located on Highway 50 at Stateline, Nevada. You'll find this the brightest and most exciting part of Lake Tahoe, with three restaurants and big name entertainment. Open all year.



Postcard courtesy Frank Steward



he knew his guests. Following his philosophy of hiring the best and letting them work, he hired consultants like the Stanford Research Institute to learn about the demographics and psychographics of his clientele. He learned that his Lake Tahoe guests mostly came from middle- and lower-class Americans. In 1957, he commissioned a study entitled, "An Investigation of Factors Influencing Bus Scheduling" by Dr. Bertrand Klass and Dr. Harry V. Kincaid that described the people who used the buses to Lake Tahoe as "elderly, in a low occupation status, unmarried, a renter rather than a homeowner, and without a car". Therefore, to make his bus guests feel special they received a refund for their ticket and a free dinner. In addition, Harrah sent out his own snow plows to clear the roads so that the buses could come in. They started with three chartered buses from San Francisco, and soon got to about 40 or 50 a day from more



"I hit the jackpot at **Harrah's Club** Reno and Lake Tahoe"



*Photo courtesy Harrah's*

than two-dozen cities in Northern California. One Washington's Birthday, during the worst blizzard of the winter, 59 buses unloaded. Harrah's was the biggest user of Greyhound buses after the U.S. Army.



*Photo courtesy Harrah's*

Bill Harrah's love of the automobile started in 1948 when he bought a 1911 Maxwell and restored it. His collection became the world's largest numbering 1,400 automobiles at one point

with a majority on display in a Sparks, Nevada warehouse. The collection's research library was the largest and most complete library of it's kind and housed everything from technical manuals to the historical documents that go with such priceless cars. The collection opened to the public in 1962. After Holiday Corporation bought Harrah's they sold off most of the cars but after a public outcry they donated 175 cars, along with the research library, to the new National Automobile Museum in Reno. The museum was the result of efforts by Nevada citizens who formed a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. The museum opened in 1989.



*Photo courtesy Harrah's*

*The warehouse in Sparks that housed the automobile collection*



*Photo Allan Anderson*

*National Automobile Museum, Reno, Nevada*



*Commemorative Players Club Card*



Photo Allan Anderson

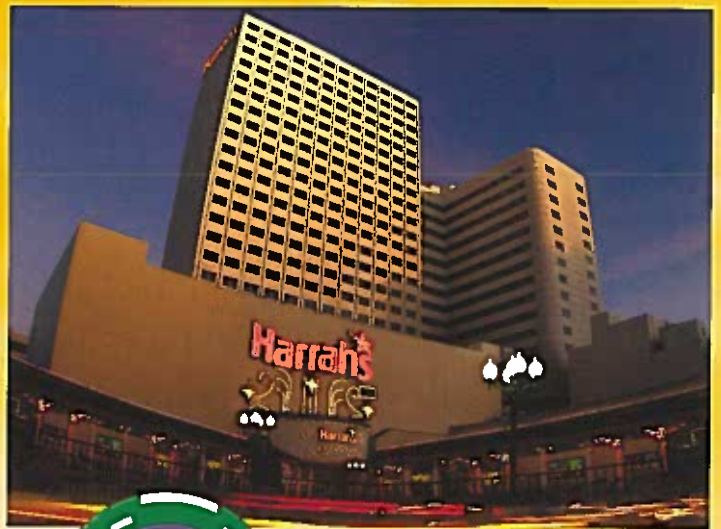
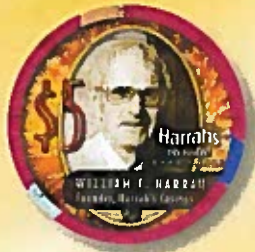


Photo courtesy Harrah's



Bill Harrah was meticulous in every detail of his operation. He delegated authority and sought the advice of others but he also demanded perfection. His two philosophies in life were: "Treat people like you would like to be treated yourself". And "Do the impossible, please everyone". He developed the best run casino of his time which was the result of careful planning and attention to detail.

Harrah never expected to open a casino in New Jersey, he called it gangster-ridden. He did think that there would be a Harrah's in Las Vegas someday even with his misgivings about that city. As for London, "they have such goofy laws i'd almost be ashamed to have a place there".

Bill Harrah was very influential in how the gaming industry operated in Nevada. He used his influence to create the Nevada Gaming Control Board in 1955, an organization used to regulate gaming in Nevada. In 1959, Harrah created an even stronger Gambling Commission to regulate the casinos in Nevada with the intent of ridding them of corruption and crime.

On October 27th, 1971, Harrah's went public at \$16 per share over the counter. The original offering was 450,000 shares. On April 24th 1972, Harrah's was listed on the American Stock Exchange. Additional offerings of 235,000 shares of common stock sold to the public on October 26th. The first stockholders meeting was held at Harrah's Reno, November 17th, 1972 with over 1,000 shareholders in attendance. On February 26th, 1973, Harrah's becomes the first purely gaming company to be listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

Harrah was married to six women, twice to one of them. His first marriage was to Thelma Batchelor from his hometown in Venice California. His longest marriage was to Scherry Teague a dealer at Harolds Club. This marriage lasted on and off for twenty

years. Harrahs also had short marriages to Bobbie Gentry, Mary Burger and Roxanna Carlson. In 1974 he married Verna Harrison and remained married until his death.

Bill Harrah died on June 30th 1978, two days after having surgery for an aortal aneurism. At the time of his death he owned the two most profitable casinos in Nevada; Harrah's Reno and Harrah's Tahoe.

After Bill Harrah's death, Harrah's and Holiday Corporation formed a joint venture company. A definite merger agreement was approved by the Boards of Directors of Harrah's and Holiday Corporation in September 1979. Shareholders approved a \$300 million merger agreement on February 28th, 1980, making Harrah's a wholly owned subsidiary of Holiday Corporation. Holiday Corporation purchased 40% interest in River Boat Casino Inc. prior to acquiring Harrah's. In 1983 Holiday Corporation obtained the remaining 60% interest in River Boat Casino, Inc., parent company of the Holiday Casino in Las Vegas. The purchase included the 32,000 sq. ft. Holiday Casino, the adjoining 1,000 room Holiday Inn Hotel and the adjacent Nob Hill Casino. Since then Harrah's has opened and closed many properties including Atlantic City, Laughlin, Joliet, New Orleans,, Kansas City, St. Louis to name a few. In June 2005, Harrah's Entertainment completed a \$9.3 billion acquisition of Caesars Entertainment, Inc. In 2010 Harrah's Entertainment changed it's name to Caesars Entertainment and operate casinos, hotels and golf courses under several different brands.

*Chip scans courtesy Larry Hollibaugh  
Matches courtesy Don Lueders & Frank Steward  
Ashtrays courtesy Charles Davis*



# Casino Collectible News



## Website

The Casino Collectible News website has archived articles from 1988, when it started out as a newsletter, through the years as The Casino Chip and Token News magazine to the current Casino Collectible News magazine. All PDF's are optimized for easy downloading. If you have any requests for articles contact Allan Anderson, GCN webmaster, at [adesign@sbcglobal.net](mailto:adesign@sbcglobal.net).

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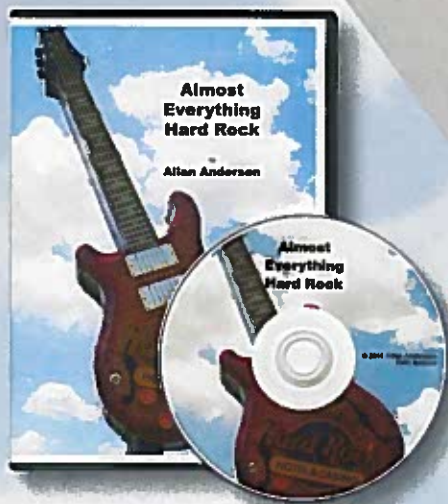
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# CC&GTCC RAFFLE

The CC&GTCC will be conducting another raffle at the June 2012 convention at the South Point Hotel, Spa & Casino in Las Vegas. We are looking for all types of donations of items to be included as part of the raffle—chips, dice, slot cards, strikes, tokens, postcards, matchbooks, ashtrays, swizzle sticks—ANY type of casino memorabilia that is in good condition that you'd like to have in YOUR collection. Thanks to the GREAT participation in the past from our wonderful club members in the way of ticket & raffle item donations,

this has been a success over the past several years both for the club AND for the lucky winners. Ticket costs are a single raffle ticket for a donation of \$10 or three raffle tickets for a \$25 donation. You do NOT need to be present at the convention to win and those not attending will have their winnings shipped to them (at no additional cost to the winner) after the convention closes. Ticket donations can be made via mail by sending your ticket donations (payable to the CC&GTCC) to:



Douglas Smith  
CC&GTCC President  
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This address above is also where you would send your donated items (chips, dice, slot cards, strikes, tokens, postcards, matchbooks, ashtrays, swizzle sticks—ANY type of casino memorabilia that is in good condition that you'd like to have in YOUR collection) for the raffle. Thanks for all of your past support and we look forward to your continuing support to once again make this year's raffle a SUCCESS!!

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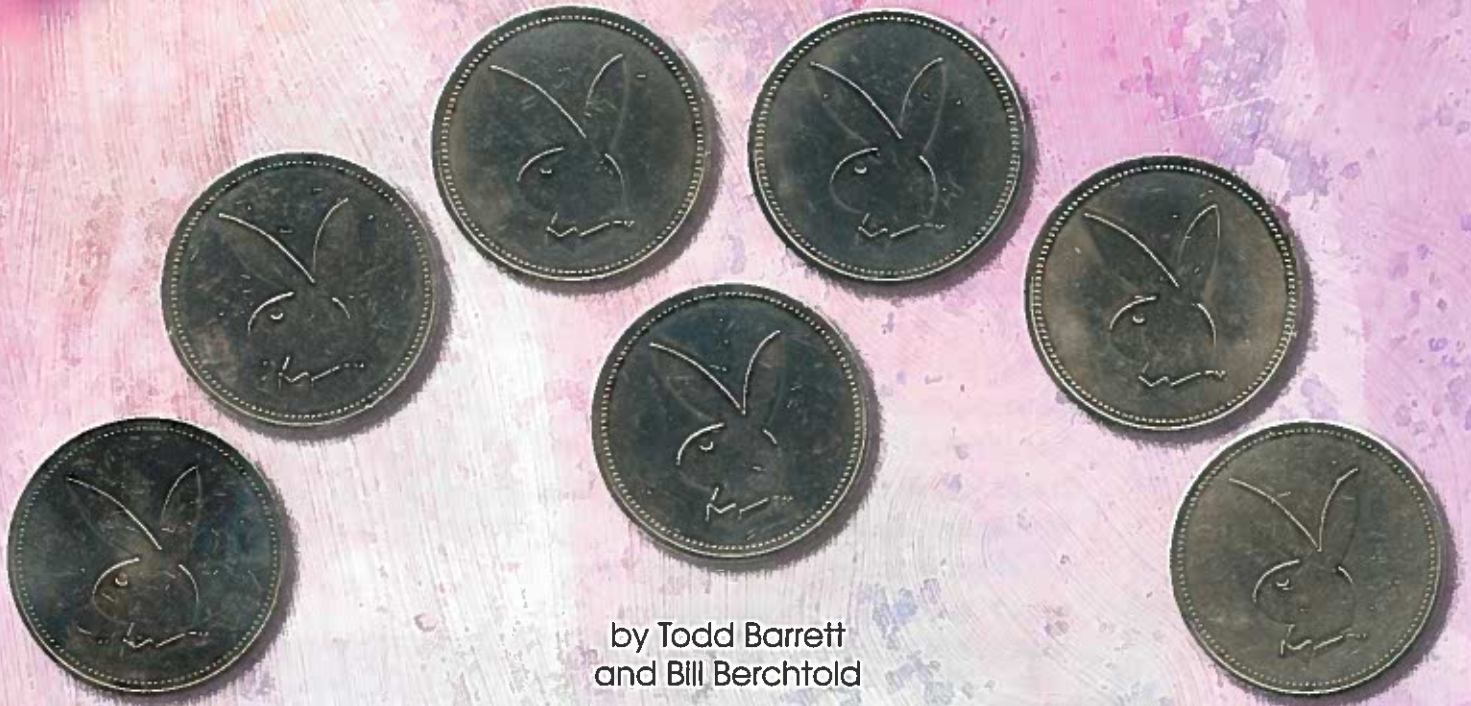
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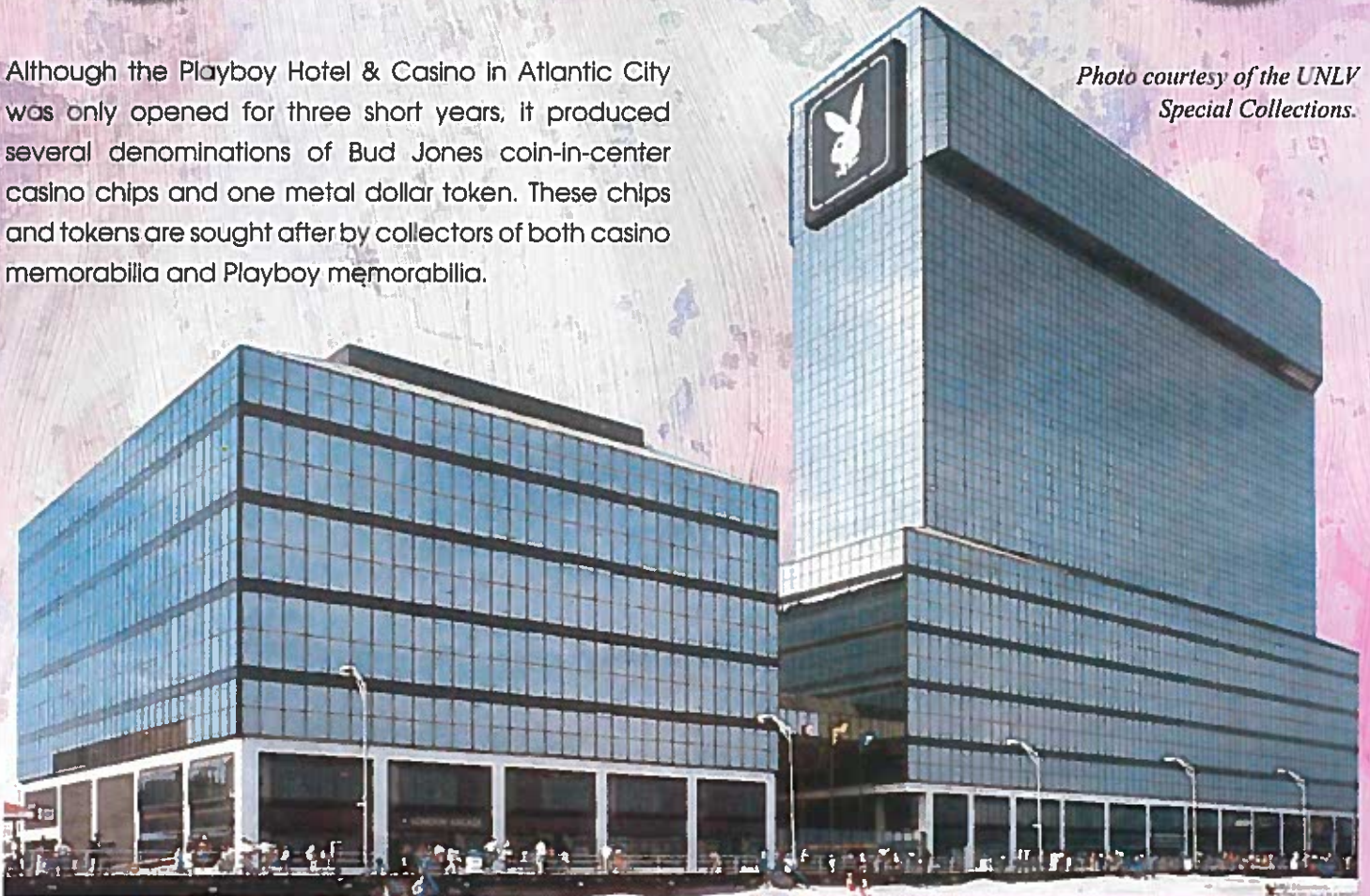
# Just a Hares Difference



by Todd Barrett  
and Bill Berchtold

Although the Playboy Hotel & Casino in Atlantic City was only opened for three short years, it produced several denominations of Bud Jones coin-in-center casino chips and one metal dollar token. These chips and tokens are sought after by collectors of both casino memorabilia and Playboy memorabilia.

*Photo courtesy of the UNLV  
Special Collections.*



In 2005 while sorting through Playboy chips and tokens that he had acquired in his collection, Bill Berchtold noticed several differences in the \$1.00 tokens. Berchtold collaborated with fellow chip collector Dr. Louis Alvarez; together Berchtold and Alvarez were able to determine seven distinct different styles in the \$1.00 tokens. It is uncertain as to whether these differences are the result of multiple coin vendors producing the coins or re-orders of the tokens all with slightly different artwork.

In defining some of the differences of the tokens, Berchtold uses the edge of the tokens which have six Playboy Bunny logos embossed along it.



The direction of which way the bunny-ear points on the edge of the coin is the first step in defining the style of the token. In the first four styles shown here, the six bunny-ear designs will point to the reverse (or tails) side. The second differentiating element between the tokens is the row of dots that run along the outer edge of the coin. Between the outer raised circumference rim edges and the inner circle of raised dots, there are 120 dots on both sides of all the token styles (except for the proof which is discussed later). In some cases, the row of dots is different on the front and the back of the token.



Side A  
Heads the Obverse  
Front Side

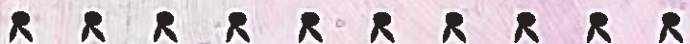


Side B  
Tails the Reverse  
Back Side

The following styles have the bunny-ear logos facing toward the reverse or tails side of the token:



Style #1 – This style has the largest space separation between the outer raised edges and the inner row of dots. It also has small-sized dots with wide spaces between the dots. Both the heads and the tails sides are the same style. Style #1 is also the only token in the group that is metal-aligned and not coin-aligned.



Style #2 – Here, the heads side has the largest space separation between the outer raised edges and the inner row of dots. It has medium-sized dots with medium-sized spaces between the dots. The tails side also has the largest space separation between the outer raised edges and the inner row of dots. It has small-sized dots with medium-sized spaces between the dots.



Styles with the bunny ear logos facing up toward the heads or front side of the token are:



Style #3 – This style has a medium-sized half-space separation between the outer raised edges and the inner row of dots on the heads side. It has large-sized dots with paper-thin sized spaces (a half-dot wide size) between the dots. The tails side has large half-spaced separations between the outer raised edges and the inner row of dots. It has small-sized dots with a space half the width of a dot between the dots.



Style #5 – This style has the smallest space separation between the outer raised edges and the inner row of dots on the heads side. It also has the smallest space between the dots. The tails side has the smallest space separation between the outer raised edges and the inner row of dots. It has medium-sized dots and the smallest space between them.



Style #4 - The heads side in this style has the smallest space separation between the outer raised edges and the inner row of dots. The large-sized dots have paper-thin-sized spaces between them. The tails side has the smallest space separation between the outer raised edges and the inner row of dots. The dots are medium-sized, with paper-thin sized spaces between the dots.



Style #6 – Here, the heads side has a medium half-space separation between the outer raised edges and the inner row of dots. It has large-sized dots with a space half the width of a dot between the dots. The tails side has large half-space separations between the outer raised edges and the inner row of dots. It has small-sized dots with a space half the width of a dot between the dots.



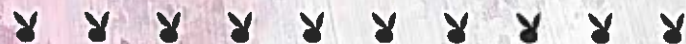


Style #7 – This style’s heads side has the largest space separation between the outer raised edges and the inner row of dots. It has small-sized dots with medium-sized spaces between the dots. The tails side also has the largest space separation between the outer raised edges and the inner row of dots. It, too, has small-sized dots with medium-sized spaces between the dots.

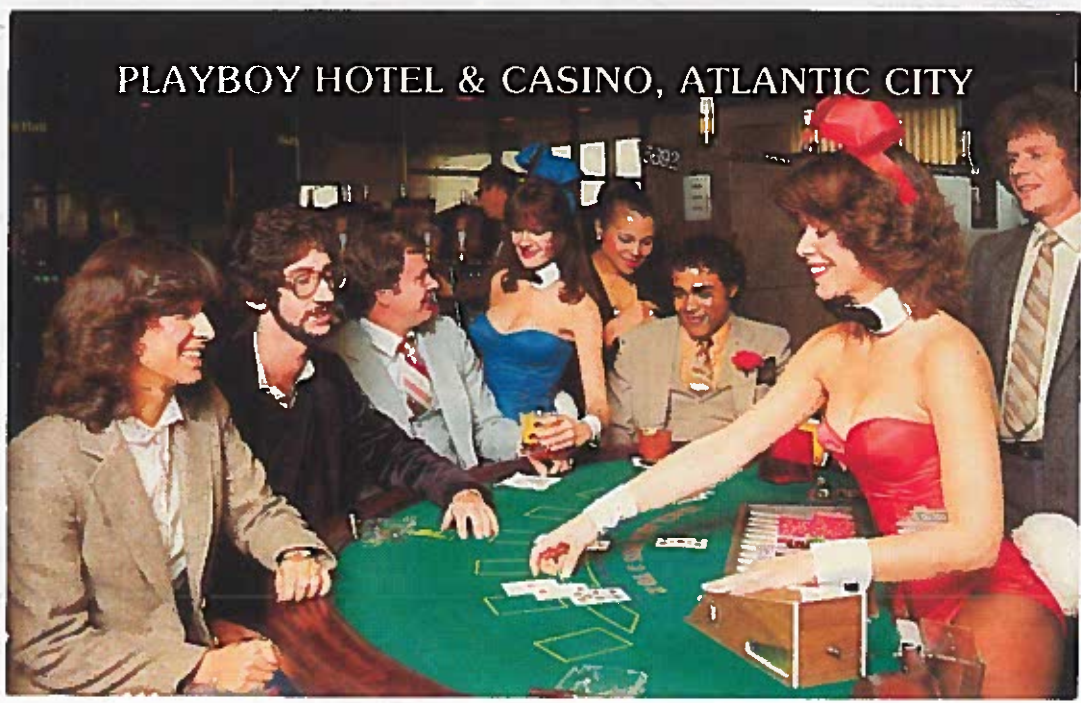
### Pure Image Mirror Proof



This Pure Image Mirror Proof is stamped “.999 F.S.” on the smooth coin edge. There are no bunny logos stamped on the edge. Apparently there are only five of this Playboy proof token known to exist.



Although the differences are slight, it should be noted that the styles of tokens are unique and should be noted as such in further publications dedicated to token collecting.



# Playboy Hotel and Casino Atlantic City Reunion 2009



On October 2nd and 3rd of 2009, a 25th Anniversary Reunion party was held for all former Atlantic City Playboy Hotel and Casino staff. The party was in celebration of the closing of the famous Atlantic City Casino and was held at a private mansion (known to some as the Playboy Mansion) located on the bay in Avalon, New Jersey. The party and it's proceeds were donated to the South Jersey AIDS Alliance. CC&GTCC club member Bill Berchtold (AKA "Silly Billy from Philly") attended the party and was able get plenty of photos to memorialize the event.



Bunny Helga (left) from Sweden Bestows the honor of "Bunny for the Night" to Linda Berchtold



"Silly Billy from Philly" with Bunny Renee Rodgers



“Silly Billy from Philly” provided a table of memorabilia from the Playboy Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City. It brought back lots of great memories with the former employees and guests as well.

A nice memorial was created for former employees who have passed on since the opening of the Playboy Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City.

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 Color:  
 A: 12 By Blue  
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# The Bridge



By John K. Kallman

For those members who travel to the club's annual convention via a motorized vehicle; depending upon your route, there are several ways to arrive in Las Vegas. From the south east, once one reached Kingman Arizona, you have to decide if you wish to continue north west; first to Bullhead City before reaching Laughlin.

From there, you continue until you reach the speed trap also known as Searchlight. There you must decide if you want to continue north, first to Henderson and then on to Las Vegas, or by hanging a Harry Reid left, drive over to Primm and then north to Jean and then Las Vegas.

The other choice used to be a twisting 2 lane road that followed the contours of the land until you reached Boulder Dam. There, traffic slowed even more what with the tourists either looking at the dam, the lake formed behind it, or an elusive free parking space. It was this last route that I took last year so if nothing else, I could once more make this journey knowing that for the 2011 convention that crossing the dam would no longer be an option. It also gave me a chance to look down river and up, up and up a little more to glimpse the bypass bridge then under construction.

I retraced most of that route this year, but the journey, for the most part, was more pleasant. The road was now 4 lanes and

many of the twists and turns have been straightened to some degree and the sharp rises and falls were likewise migrated to the degree possible. As I approached the bridge, I envisioned the sight looking back down, down, down at the dam and the lake behind it. Only to get to the bridge to find that the sides had been constructed so that one could NOT see over them. Additionally, there were no turn outs either to stop or take a look or picture. No doubt this was done to keep the traffic flowing, but to say that it was somewhat of a disappointment would be an understatement! The new route did take about 30 minutes off of a four day drive.

However, all was not lost as the first casino one comes to along this route is the very much laid back Hacienda. Single deck pitch blackjack for \$2 and a \$1 craps table are among other things one cannot find in the larger casino just down the road in Las Vegas. And in the gift shop among the various trinkets, candy bars and





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*Thank You, Gary*



# Knapp on Books

By Michael Knapp

This is the twenty-fifth in the series of columns reviewing books relevant to the chip collecting hobby, which began in 2003. Since then, more than 50 books have been reviewed in detail.

I have to have books in order to review them, so if you're an author, let me know by sending me an e-mail at [ChipProf@aol.com](mailto:ChipProf@aol.com) to arrange for a review copy. For readers of the column, if there are books you'd like to see reviewed in this column, please also drop me a note and I'll be glad to try to accommodate your request.

I try to review all books as they are published, and will fill in with books published some time ago, but which are still available from their authors or in bookstores.

As with all reviews, this column contains my opinions.



## **The Chip Rack: A price guide to the casino chips and checks of Nevada. 13<sup>th</sup> Edn., (2011)**

**by Jay Sands, David Sarles and David Spragg**

Since its first publication in 1993, The Chip Rack has been the foremost price guide and catalog for Nevada casino chips and checks. It's been the most complete, attempting to list all chips, whether house issues or limited editions or commemoratives, and its unique catalog numbering system has provided the hobby with a quick and easy reference to Nevada chips.

When it was first published, TCR contained fully descriptive listings in 58 pages. Over the years, the authors enlarged and expanded the book, and today's TCR consists of almost 400 pages.

The new authors received the Book of the Year award at the 2011 Club convention for their 12<sup>th</sup> Edition. The 13<sup>th</sup> Edition, released at this year's convention, continues with the wealth of information and guidance as did the previous editions.

The current edition continues the catalog numbering system as well as the letter code value guide, so users of previous books will find no difficulty in using the 13<sup>th</sup> Edition. The 2011 book contains descriptions and value information for some 32,000 Nevada chips, an increase of almost 3,000 chips from the previous edition.

Roulette chips continue to be listed as groups, with known colors noted, but without individual entries for each color of each chip. This saves significant space and indicates that, for the most part, one color is not more valuable than other colors of the same series.

Distinctions continue to be listed for long cane and short cane versions, spun and polished coin inlays, and the like. The variations are listed with letter suffixes with the same base number, rather than

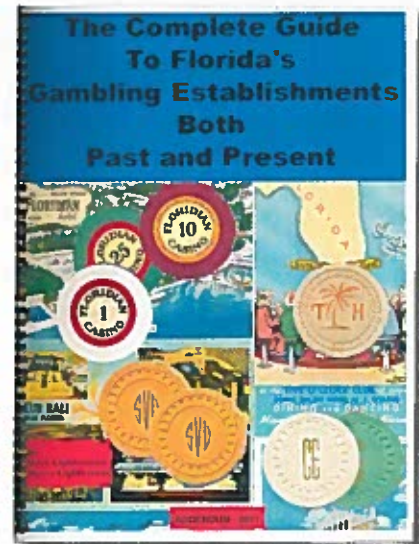
assigning a separate TCR number for each variation of what is essentially the same chip.

A separate section behind the regular casino issues is included for non-casino chips: dealer schools, advertising and promotional chips, and the like.

When used properly, TCR is an invaluable and essential work which belongs in the library of every Nevada chip collector. The book is available at [www.thechiprack.com/order.htm](http://www.thechiprack.com/order.htm).

## **The Complete Guide to Florida's Gambling Establishments Both Past and Present (2011)**

**by Mark Lighterman and Myrna Lighterman**



The landmark two-volume Florida book published by the Lightermans in 2007 has now been updated. Rather than republishing the entire two-volume work, however, the Lightermans have published an Addendum which can be purchased separately for those who already have the main work.

The Addendum contains full color full-size illustrations of chips and some tokens not included in the main edition, either



because they have been more recently discovered or issued after the publication of the 2007 book.

Beginning with illegal and unlicensed clubs, going to casino day cruises, race track card rooms, tribal casinos, fraternal organizations, advertising chips and roulettes each have their own sections.

Page numbering is a bit confusing at first, until the reader realizes that the pages are numbered as an addendum, not as a stand-alone book. The illegal and unlicensed club section, for example, is ten pages long – all page 287! 287-1 through 287-9 all contain illegal club chips.

The next section is the day cruise portion, the first page being 13-A, then 13-B, then 22-A, then 68-A, and, well, you get the idea. It makes sense if you have the original book!

Each illustrated chip is assigned its own catalog number based on the origin of the chip. For example, five chips from the Jacks or Better Casino (a day cruise) are shown: the \$1 through the \$100. The \$25 chip is identified as JOB004.025.

The original two-volume work was not a price guide, and did not include advice about values for the chips described and illustrated.

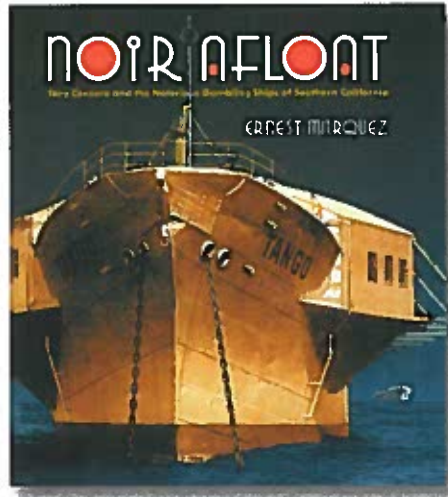
Shortly after its publication, however, the Lightermans created a separate checklist which could be used for inventory and want-list purposes, and which did contain a value guide. The Addendum has the checklist built in, in the back of the book, so it's easy to check off the chips in one's collection, and also to determine the value of those chips as well as the chips one wants to find.

My only criticism is that there is a lack of complete information in many cases. For example, the Jacks or Better Casino day cruise has no information about the ship's name or the port from which it sails. As a catalog, that kind of information should, in my view, be a minimum inclusion.

Still, for the Florida collector, the new Addendum, used in conjunction with the original two-volume set, is an absolute must.

Copies can be obtained by contacting Mark Lighterman at [mlighter@bellsouth.net](mailto:mlighter@bellsouth.net).

**Noir Afloat: Tony Cornero and the notorious gambling ships of Southern California (2011)**  
by Ernest Marquez



I recall about ten years ago at a CC&GTCC convention, being introduced to Ernest Marquez by Ernie Wheelden (who, by the way, is acknowledged in this book for his assistance in the author's obtaining gambling ship chips). At the time, Marquez showed us a scrapbook of sorts containing the material he was collecting in preparation for writing this book. He had amazing stuff – invitations, matchbooks, napkins, advertisements, all original exonomia pertaining to the famous gambling ships that operated off the coast of southern California in the 1930's.

Every year or so, I'd ask Ernie Wheelden whether he'd heard from Marquez again, and whether we'd ever see this book Marquez had threatened to publish.

Finally, we have the book, and it was well worth the wait. Very professionally done, well-written and beautifully laid out and produced, Noir Afloat is a fascinating and informative look at a legendary time and phenomenon.

Mr. Marquez has published at least three other books, all dealing with his home town of Santa Monica and with the port of Los Angeles.

For most of us, Tony Cornero is to California gambling ships what Ben Siegel is to the Flamingo Hotel. As we've seen through other books reviewed here, however, the Hollywood version of Siegel's brainstorm in the middle of an empty desert

resulting in Las Vegas' first plush, upper class casino hotel, is mythical, not truth.

In Noir Afloat, we find that the same is true of Cornero and the offshoot gambling ships – more myth than fact. Not that he wasn't involved – he certainly was; but he didn't invent the concept, and he wasn't around when it ended.

First we learn that "Tony Cornero" was not merely an alias for Anthony Stralla. In fact, Cornero was his birth name, but his father died when Tony was only five. He then assumed the last name of the man – Giacomo Stralla – his mother remarried. Cornero became "king of the rumrunners" during prohibition (1919-1933). He was a millionaire by the age of 25. His activities, however, led to his being caught, convicted and sentenced to serve two years in 1929.

When released from prison, Tony, along with his brothers Frank and Louis, opened the Meadows Club in Las Vegas. We know the story of the Meadows Club; in a couple of years, Tony had sold his interest, realizing that because of his conviction and prison time, he would never be licensed to run a casino in Nevada.

Cornero saw potential in the offshore California gambling ships, the first of which (Barge C-1) had opened in 1927. When he bought into the ownership group for the S. S. Tango in 1935, the Monte Carlo, Johanna Smith II and the S. S. Casino were already in operation off the coast at Long Beach. The original S. S. Johanna Smith, the Monfalcone, the Rose Isle and the William H. Harriman had all been in operation, some lasting only a few months before being forced to close.

In a classic gambling story, in 1938 Cornero had a management disagreement with his main partner, Clarence Blazier, and decided that joint management was not for him. He challenged Blazier to a single roll of the dice – winner take all. Cornero lost, and his estimated \$97,000 interest in the Tango went to Blazier.

Immediately, Cornero buys a fishing barge, once a 4-masted sailing schooner, cuts off the masts and superstructure, and outfits it as a fancy gambling ship, which he named the S. S. Rex.

In May of 1938, the Rex opens, anchored 3 ½ miles from the Santa Monica shoreline.

Local authorities in Santa Monica and Orange County, as well as California Attorney General Earl Warren (later governor, candidate for U. S. President, and finally U. S. Supreme Court Chief Justice) were all vehemently opposed to the offshore gambling industry, and tried to find ways to shut the ships down once and for all.

There began a protracted legal battle with many skirmishes and conflicting rulings, all dealing with the ultimate question whether international waters began 3 miles from the shoreline, or 3 miles out from a line drawn from the outermost projections of California into the ocean. The issue was significant because once beyond the “three mile limit,” neither California nor the United States had jurisdiction to prohibit gambling on the high seas in international waters. This is the same concept that enables today’s day cruises to operate.

Ultimately, the issue was decided in California’s favor, but the process and the battles make an entertaining story.

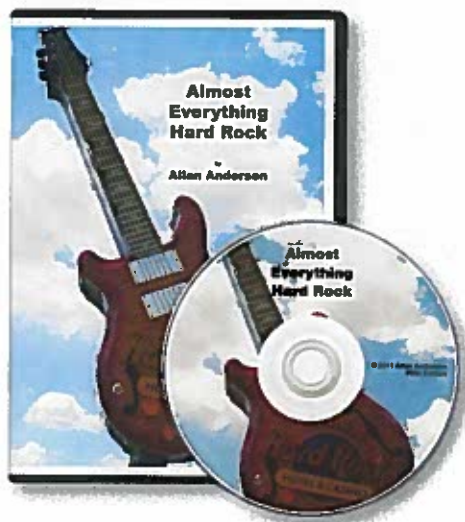
The S. S. Rex operated on and off (all ships were closed during the stormy winter season) for a year and a half, until 1939.

The S. S. Caliente (in which Cornero had no interest) operated from 1937 to 1938 and was renamed the S. S. Sho-Boat. After a few months it, too, was renamed as the Mount Baker, which lasted only for three months, and closed for good in 1939. Cornero made one more stab at the offshore gambling business, opening the S. S. Lux in 1946, but that, too, lasted only for six months, closing after it was raided, seized, and its gambling equipment destroyed, most of it thrown into the sea.

In all, there were 14 or 15 offshore gambling ships that operated from the late 1920’s to the mid-1940’s, most of them off the coast of Santa Monica or Long Beach. Marquez provides fascinating details of the ships themselves, their previous incarnations and their fates after use as gambling ships. The book is lavishly illustrated with photos (many of which I have not seen elsewhere), invitations, menus, matchbooks, water taxi cards, handbills and the like.

For anyone interested in the history of the offshore California gambling ships, *Noir Afloat* is a tremendous resource, and will be greatly enjoyed. It is available through bookstores and online at Amazon.com.

**Almost Everything Hard Rock  
5<sup>th</sup> Edn., (2011)  
by Allan Anderson**



Allan Anderson is Mr. Hard Rock. His first *Almost Everything Hard Rock* was published in 2007, and he has updated it four times since then. The latest edition, the fifth, is now on DVD rather than in printed format. More than 300 pages long, the electronic format makes both publishing and reading and searching far easier than what would have been a weighty and more expensive book, given the extensive use of color and graphics in Anderson’s work.

The DVD is organized into sections with an index so it’s easy to go to whatever area the reader wishes. There’s a separate introduction, a section on the history of the Hard Rock brand and its various enterprises, as well as the multiple ownerships into which it has evolved, an index of sections, and an index solely of casinos. Additionally, there’s a file consisting of the entire book, so it can be read cover to cover.

All files on the DVD are in PDF format, compatible with both IBM personal

computers and Apple products. The PDF reader is required, but for anyone who doesn’t already have it, it can be downloaded at no cost and is easy to use. The files can be downloaded to iPads as well.

Of greatest interest to most collectors will be the section on the Hard Rock Hotel in Las Vegas. Extensive information as well as lavishly illustrations, including all Hard Rock chips, their issue dates and mintages of chips is available here in one place. Even collectors who have concentrated on Hard Rock material – from chips to playing cards to silver strikes to room keys, slot cards, privacy signs, tokens and virtually anything else connected with the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino will find information and illustrations here that they may never have been familiar with.

The evolution of the Las Vegas hotel/casino can also be followed, with photos of now-closed venues within the hotel and newly-opened ones as well.

The same is true for non-Vegas hotels and casinos. The recently-opened casinos in Punta Cana and Albuquerque are included, as are the now-closed casinos in London and Manchester, England. Even the planned casinos in Hungary and Atlantic City are here as well.

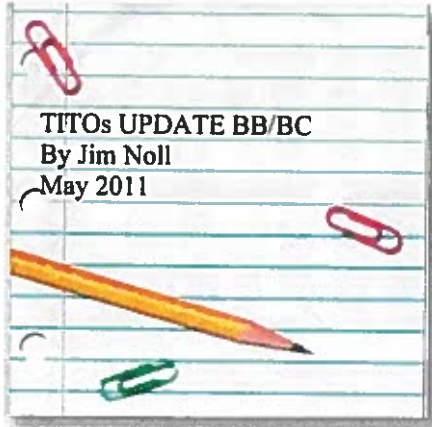
A total of 13 different casinos, hotels and cafes without casinos, and even the ill-fated theme park in Myrtle Beach, which lasted barely six months, all have their own sections in Allan’s book.

I can recall my own astonishment when the first edition of Anderson’s book came out, as I learned about the complex and often incomprehensible history of the Hard Rock brand and its various ownership groups.

For the dedicated Hard Rock collector, this kind of information is extremely interesting and valuable, and Allan’s put it all between the covers of a single book . . . or DVD case, as it were!

The DVD is available from Allan Anderson for \$35 plus \$4 shipping at [www.anderson-design.com/hardrockbook/html](http://www.anderson-design.com/hardrockbook/html) or by sending an email to [adesign@sbcglobal.net](mailto:adesign@sbcglobal.net).

**TITOs Update BB/BC (2011)**  
by Jim Noll



As with Jim Noll's original "book" on ticket-in-ticket-out receipts, the 2011 update is in CD format.

As the Lightermans have done in publishing an Addendum to their Florida book, Noll has published an update rather than republishing the entire work.

The format is essentially the same as the original TITO "book," except t h i s one includes only new material.

Each of the new 120 pages on the CD is a separate MS Word file, although as I recall Jim told me that he will provide them in PDF format as well, for those who cannot read MS Word files. Some pages have only

one new TITO addition, many have several.

There is a complete index included as well, listing each casino and page separately, so it's easy to find every addition to the "book."

This is a supplement to the definitive work for TITO collectors; a copy can be obtained by contacting Jim Noll at [jenca@pacbell.net](mailto:jenca@pacbell.net)

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# BY THE NUMBERS

By John K. Kallman

2011 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of legalized charitable gaming in North Dakota. At one time, I speculated that there were more North Dakota Casino Charity Casinos chips than California Card Room chips. While that may have been a bit of hyperbole, it may also be not that far off the mark. A recent visit to Devils Lake North Dakota to see an old time collection of chips from back when charity gaming was first authorized and a well placed contact in the North Dakota Attorney General's Office now helps lead credence to that earlier statement.

One thing for certain, I thoroughly enjoyed my visit looking at chips that were as mint fresh as the day that they hit the green felt some 30 years ago. On each 2 x 2 was noted the city, the facility where they were harvested, if no denomination was on the chip itself – what it's table value was, and when known, the dates that those chips were in play at that location. About as close to a magic chip time machine as you can get!

Charity Gaming was originally authorized in 1981. At that time, betting limits for black jack was \$2. This was later raised to first \$5 and later to \$25. While a few \$100 chips exist, these are only for those organizations with Paddle Wheel (a form of roulette), but these chips are not for betting purposes, but merely to aid in cashing in you non-denominated paddle wheel chips.

When charity gaming was first authorized, it seems that not only every charity under the sun obtained a gaming license, but it also seems that every bar, tavern, and honky-tonk as well hosted a game. Many of the early chips not only have the name of the charity emblazoned on them, but the location where the cards were being dealt as well. In some cases, different racks were used in different locations, something that is still practiced by some of the organizations. In other instances, different colored "dots" were added to the rack to help sort the chips out. Some examples:

Cerebral Palsy Association, which operated in Fargo between

1981 and 1987, was one of many organizations which placed the name of the establishment on their chips: Shown here are chips from the Townhouse Motel, Fargo; Gaslite Lounge, Fargo; and the Townhouse Motel, Grand Forks.



Cystic Fibrosis Foundation headquartered out of Fargo and now closed, used different colored chips with at least 2 different 50c chips, and 3 different \$1 chips at the same time while operating at the following locations:

- Flame Tavern, Fargo: April 29, 1983 - ?
- Howard's Lounge, Riverside: July 1983 - ?
- Qxbow Country Club, Fargo: Used for 4 days during North Dakota Golf Open, Sept 1982.
- Town Hall Bar, West Fargo: Aug 1981 - Dec 1982
- The Watering Hole, Wild Rice: March 1981 - ?
- Casbah Tavern Fargo: July 1981 - Sept 1981
- Edgewood Inn, Fargo, dates unknown



Cystic Fibrosis Association, unrelated to the above charity, and head-quartered out of Bismarck; employed the “dot” method on their chips:



The Flower mold chips were used at the Gaiety II in Mandan while the H&C chips were in use at the Bush Garden Tavern in nearby Bismarck.

Things, of course, are “different” now than 1981. There are now standardizing colors for both the chips as well as the inserts.

Gone are the locations of the games shown on the chips. But there are still plenty of chips to collect. As of August, 2011; there were over 290 authorized charities in some 960 plus locations throughout the state. A large number of these locations only form of gambling is pull tabs. A few are full line bingo halls. Presently, 99 different charities are dealing black jack at 260 locations. Many of the smaller organization only allow bets up to \$5; while those that do take the higher \$25 bet have removed the \$2 chips from the rack to make room for the higher denomination chip. So, if we estimated a minimum of four different denominations at each location (a 50c, \$1, \$2 and \$5 chip; or a 50c, \$1, \$5 and \$25 chip); this would give us 396 different chips currently on the tables. This does not take into account the different racks currently in use, or the existence of non-denominated paddle wheel chips. Presently,

I know that Public Prairie Broadcasting has at least 3 racks in play and even the much smaller Devils Lake Youth Activities has 2 different racks in play. I would estimate that of the 99 different charities, probably at least 20 to 30 also have paddle wheel. All combined, there are easily 500 different chips currently on the tables in North Dakota. With the organizations that are now long gone, and those that have lasted over the years and changed racks time and time again, there are easily 3,000 chips that were in play at one time or another. While this number is probably not quite as many chips in North Dakota as for the Card Rooms in California; there is still a sizeable number.

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# THE LIFE BLOOD OF A NATION

## FROM COLUMBUS TO CASTRO: GAMBLING IN CUBA

By Christopher Bolton

Christopher Columbus arrived in Cuba on October 24, 1492, thinking he had found the back door into the lucrative China trade. In the end, what he had discovered was an island 760 miles long and from 25 to 125 miles wide; Cuba is about the same size as the State of Pennsylvania. Following the subjugation of the native population it became the staging area for the Conquests of Mexico and Peru. For almost three centuries Cuba played host to gold-laden galleons arriving from Mexico on their way to Spain. The first Spanish settlers and conquistadors found they had a lot of time on their hands as they waited for passage to the mainland of The New World, so it was only a matter of time before cockfighting and card games became ways to pass the time.

Legend has it that Columbus brought the first fighting cocks with him on board the Santa María, Niña y Pinta. Whether this is true or not the *lidia de gallos* (cock fighting) was quickly introduced and in many cases, as new towns were being built, the cock fighting ring was set up before schools and sometimes even churches were erected.

Gambling was illegal during the Colonial period, but that didn't stop people from practicing the sport. It was a very simple matter to set up a table in a *fonda* or *posada* (small restaurants and inns) and card games such as El Monte, Brisca, 34 and 40 were among the most popular games played, along with dominoes and dice games. The card games used a Spanish *baraja* (deck) of 40 cards. Spanish barajas consist of four suits: *Espadas* (swords, representing the Nobility), *Oros* (gold coins, representing the Bourgeoisie or Traders), *Bastos* (clubs, representing the Hunters or Workers) and *Copas* (cups, representing the Clergy). There are no eights, nines or queens in the deck and the 1 or Ace is high card worth 11 points. The two is the low card, and numbers four through seven are worth no points. The three card is worth ten points, the ten (Jack) is worth two points, the 11 (Horse) is worth three points and the twelve (King) is worth four points. While confusing when compared to traditional American or English decks, the games were made even more complicated with "Cuban style" improvements over the games as played in Spain.

Excavations carried out at the 18th century Castillo San Severino in Matanzas (a colonial era fort and prison), about 45 miles west of Havana have dug up glass marbles, small discs (checkers?) and domino pieces made of polished bone. The glass marbles probably belonged to the children of the soldiers posted at

the fort, but the discs and dominoes strongly indicate that betting may have been carried out by the soldiers on duty there.

On April 21, 1812, the Spanish Crown established the Royal Lottery of the Always Loyal Island of Cuba (Cuba's official name). Lottery stores opened all day with the "laudable" goal of making sure that everybody had an opportunity to purchase tickets: night workers on their way home early in the morning, day workers in the early evening and even the burgeoning middle class during the daytime. A total of 10,000 tickets were issued for each drawing at a price of four pesos fuertes (silver pesos). Each ticket was subdivided into  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{8}$  parts to make it easier for the less well off to participate: a  $\frac{1}{8}$  piece of a ticket would cost 50 centavos and if the ticket were a winner the person would receive an eighth of the total prize money for that ticket. The government received 25% of the income as payment for administration fees and its "profit". The 75% remaining was distributed among 58 prizes as follows:

- 1 prize of 10,000 pesos
- 1 prize of 5,000 pesos
- 2 prizes of 2,000 pesos
- 4 prizes of 1,000 pesos
- 20 prizes of 200 pesos
- 30 prizes of 100 pesos

By 1874, the Lottery alone was contributing 3% of the island's GNP.

Gambling was so pervasive that even social events and community dances would have a table or two discreetly set up in the back for a game of El Monte or *Cubilete*, a dice game with many variations, where up to six dice are used. In one version the player would declare a possible hand, with the bettors making their wagers on whether he could make the hand. He would then shake the cup and tip the dice on the table, separating the useful numbers. He would then have a second opportunity to shake the useless dice and try to make the declared hand. If he made it he kept the wagers, if not, he had to pay out.

In 1834, Governor General Miguel Tacón calculated that out of the 100,000 inhabitants in Havana, 12,000 made their living off gambling. In 1844, Captain General of Cuba, Leopoldo O'Donnell perhaps best summed up the situation when he stated "*Con un tiple, un gallo y un naipe, están asegurados el gobierno y la paz en esta isla*" (A tippie, a fighting cock and a deck of cards are enough to ensure peace on this island).

In the 1870s, a game was introduced to the island that has stood the test of time: *charada*. The game was introduced by the Chinese and originally consisted of 36 numbers, each one represented by an animal, person or object. The banker would write a number down on a piece of paper and make a riddle, with the answer corresponding to one of the names on the chart below. The bettors would then try and guess the answer. The payoff was usually three to one. As the game developed, the number of objects and animals increased to 100. This in turn led to the most popular game played in Cuba, even today: *Bolita*, or in mafiaspeak, the Numbers Game. People would use their dreams, occurrences or events in their lives and interpret them from the numbers chart. Accordingly they would pick their numbers. The chart below describes the original 36 objects as they relate to their corresponding numbers.

Number	Spanish Name	English Equivalent
1	Caballo	Horse
2	Mariposa, Dinero	Butterfly, Money
3	Marinero, Niño Chiquito	Sailor, Small Child
4	Gato, Diente	Cat, Tooth
5	Monja, Mar	Nun, Sea
6	Jicotea	Turtle
7	Caracol	Snail
8	Muerto	Dead Person
9	Elefante, lengua	Elephant, Tongue
10	Pescado Grande	Large Fish
11	Gallo	Cock
12	Ramera	Whore
13	Pavo Real	Peacock
14	Cementerio, Tigre	Cemetery, Tiger
15	Perro, Niña Bonita	Dog, Pretty Girl
16	Toro	Bull
17	San Lázaro, Luna	Saint Lazarus, Moon
18	Pescado Chico	Small Fish
19	Lombriz, Bandera	Worm, Flag
20	Gato Fino	Pedigree Cat
21	Majá,	Snake
22	Sapo	Frog
23	Vapor	Steam
24	Paloma	Pigeon or Dove
25	Piedra Fina, Casa Nueva	Gem, New House
26	Anguila, Médico Nuevo	Eel, New Doctor
27	Avispa	Wasp
28	Chivo	Goat
29	Ratón	Mouse
30	Camarón	Shrimp
31	Venado	Deer
32	Cochino	Hog
33	Tiñosa	Buzzard
34	Mono	Monkey
35	Araña	Spider
36	Cachimba	Pipe

After the War of Independence, Cuba's freedom fighters asked General Brooke, the U.S.'s first governor, to ban cockfighting and bullfighting. He banned the former but not the latter. However this did not deter the practice. On June 1st, 1900, Colonel Leonard Wood banned cockfighting and the lottery. He did however allow betting on Jai Alai which was first introduced as Cesta Punta in 1898; on March 3, 1901 he inaugurated the Palacio de los Gritos (Palace of Screams) frontón at the corner of Concordia and Lucena streets. The season ran from October to June. On February 1st, 1909, cockfighting and the lottery were restarted.

### The Spanish Influence in Cuban Society

The growing number of Spanish residents in Cuba in the second half of the XIX century led to the creation of regional associations and mutual aid societies. These clubs were founded with political ends in mind but also organized social events such as dances,



games, banquets, and established hospitals and pharmacies for their compatriots of lesser means. There was a tendency for the émigrés to band together based on their birthplace in the Old World, with the largest groups being from the Galicia and Asturias provinces of Spain. The first Spanish associations were founded in 1869 with the Casino Español de la Habana. The Casino Español de Bayamo followed in 1871. The Centro Asturiano de la Habana was founded in 1886. The Colonia Española de Manzanillo, the Centro de la Colonia Española de Camagüey, the Casino Español de Santa Clara and the Colonia Española de Ranchuelo were established in 1899.

These formal associations are not to be confused with casinos, which in Spanish does not have exactly the same meaning as in English. The word casino (*Círculo* and *Club* are also used in this context) in Spanish means a place for relaxation. The Spanish casinos or *círculos* of the late XIX and early XX centuries were to a lesser degree reminiscent of the old tea salons of London, Paris and Madrid; they were social centers for people to go and have a coffee or something stronger, talk about politics and the local gossip, and, in Cuba gamble. The diverse qualities of Cuban casino chips clearly demonstrate the socio-economic levels of their clubs. There are many simple chips made of plastic materials, bakelite or bone with hand carved names, logos and denominations.

Racial discrimination also gave rise to clubs for blacks and mulattoes. The Sociedad Luz de Oriente on Heredia Street in Santiago de Cuba was founded in January 1899 as a club for

blacks, and changed its name to The Club Aponte in 1901. The Casino Cubano on Hartmann Street in Santiago de Cuba was founded in 1900 and was a club for very poor mulattoes. In the 1930s the Siglo XX was established in Guantanamo. While the clubs may have been low on the social ladder, many such as the Siglo XX had their own personalized chips. The smaller towns with the more formal Spanish Associations would also have chips of a more crude design due to the relatively low number of members and the cost of preparing the chips. It is worth noting that by the 1920s, Havana's Casino Español and the Centro Asturiano had over 20,000 members each. Indeed, as their membership grew, their buildings and installations were designed and constructed in the classical colonial style by foreign architects and engineers.



*Casino Cubano*



*Club Aponte*



*Sociedad Luz de Oriente*



*Siglo XX*

The larger Associations in Havana would have Crest and Seal chips or very high quality small key mold chips made in the U.S. by the USPS Company or others, with designs that matched the quality of the chips used in casinos and clubs of the United States. For a detailed look at the quality of the Cuban C&S chips visit Rich Hanover's spectacular website at [www.oldpokerchips.com](http://www.oldpokerchips.com). The Caribbean Chip Guide at [www.caribbeanchipguide.com](http://www.caribbeanchipguide.com) operated by Charles Kaplan and an anonymous army of chip enthusiasts offers a vast library of chips and photographs that go well beyond the illustrations in this article.

#### An Independent Cuba

Following a formal but conditioned "independence" in 1902, Cuba set about modernizing its island country. The period 1902 – 1919 saw modern hotel construction in Havana. The Gran Sevilla Hotel opened on March 22, 1908 as a four story building. In 1919, U.S. based Bowman Hotels purchased the hotel and the adjoining building, and in 1924, along with a new 10 story wing it became the Sevilla-Biltmore. The property was located at Calle Trocadero 55 between Prado and Zulueta.



The Oriental Park Race Track was built for H.T. "Curly" Brown (owner of the Arlington Park, Chicago racetrack) and was inaugurated on January 14, 1915. The racing season ran during the winter months from December to the end of April and was operated by the Havana-American Jockey Club of Cuba. The track was built by Charles Francis Flynn who was also the track's manager until 1919 when Curly Brown (owner of the New York Giants baseball team) was forced to divest himself of all gambling properties in the wake of the 1919 Black Sox scandal.

Brown sold the property to Charles Stoneham who in turn sold it to the 3 Cs' Compañía de Sports y Fomento del Turismo de la Habana in 1921. John McEntee Bowman, president of the Bowman-Biltmore Hotels Corp (Sevilla-Biltmore Hotel) and owner of Westchester Country Club in Rye, N.Y. served as president of the Havana-American Jockey Club. Besides being the site of some of world's best horseracing, the Oriental Park held Cuban professional baseball during the 1915-1916 seasons while Almendares Park was being built. The Jack Johnson-Jess Willard championship fight was also held there on April 5, 1916.

The Club Militar located in the Marianao district was inside the *Campamento de Columbia* and was built by the US military in 1898. In 1909 it became the Headquarters for Cuba's military and by 1915 the Club Militar (officers' social club) was established. It was located near the OPRT, Havana Country Club, Gran Casino and Havana Yacht Club. As a point of interest, Batista flew out of Camp Columbia at dawn on January 1, 1959. He commandeered 3 planes for his family, closest aides, luggage and a fortune in the millions.



ORIENTAL PARK RACE TRACK

QA4088

*Oriental Race Track*



25 - Club Militar. — Military Club.



*Club Militar*

The period 1914-1918 is known as the *Danza de los Millones* (Dance of the Millions (of pesos)) as the price of sugar increased due to WWI. This sudden influx of money brought about the idea of investing in infrastructure to promote tourism in Cuba. The leading proponents of this development were known as the 3 Cs: *Carlos Miguel de Cespedes*, *José Manuel Cortina* and *Carlos Manuel de la Cruz*. These very influential lawyers had close ties to the president of Cuba. Indeed, since 1910 they had twice unsuccessfully lobbied for legislation to build a casino with a 30 year operation franchise.

In early 1919, the 3 Cs promised to build the streets and plazas for the Marianao district in exchange for a casino franchise. Their persistence paid off when, on August 5 (or 8th), 1919, President Mario Menocal (elected in 1917) put into effect the *Comisión Nacional para el Fomento del Turismo* or Law for the Regulation of Pari Mutual Betting, which authorized gambling. This law authorized a gambling franchise to anybody investing two million pesos.

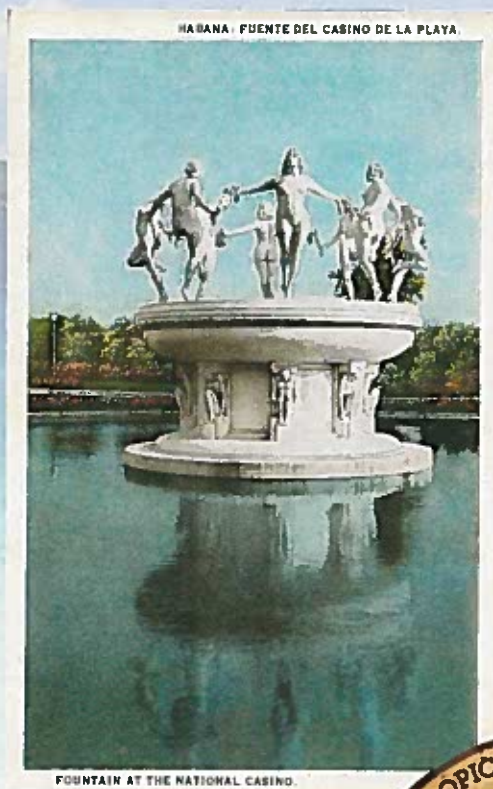
The *Gran Casino*, also known as the *Casino de la Playa*, the Oriental Park Race Track and the Havana Jockey Club located at the racetrack received licenses. Several luxurious cabarets were also built under the auspices of this law: the Sans Souci, Chateau Madrid and the Montmartre.

During 1920-21 sugar prices crashed, but the Volstead Act or 18th Amendment brought Prohibition to the U.S.A. The lack of legal liquor in the U.S. did not stop the rum runners, as rum from Guba flowed to Florida and then up the east coast. This clandestine distribution kept Cuba in the public's eye. The idea of legal liquor proved a powerful lure for tourists eager to whet their whistles and play at the tables.

The Gran Casino was located at Calle 120, between 11 and 11A in the Marianao district, roughly 10 miles outside Havana. Marianao was also undergoing development as an elite residential area, with many ex-pats signing up for large beachfront lots. The casino started out as a wooden building with stucco interiors and a slanted roof with cement tiles. However at the entrance to the casino, the *Danza de las Horas* (Dance of the Hours) or *Fuente de las Musas* fountain was erected by Aldo Gamba. This daring sculpture featured 8 naked ballerinas dancing around the edges of the fountain. In 1925 the 3 Cs leased the race track and the Gran Casino to John Bowman (owner of the Sevilla-Biltmore) for \$300,000 annual rent.



Gran Casino



FOUNTAIN AT THE NATIONAL CASINO.



GRAN CASINO NACIONAL, HAVANA, CUBA



### Gran Casino

Development in the area grew at such a pace that by the end of the 1930s there were almost 40 social and country clubs in the Havana area with the names Yacht or Nautical in them. Many of these clubs had private gaming rooms with elaborate gaming chips for the gentlemen members.

Bowman started renovations on the rundown Gran Casino in 1926. In 1927 he bought the properties outright from the 3 Cs. In 1929, the original building was demolished and totally rebuilt by Schultze and Weaver, giving it a classical appearance. The original fountain by Gamba was kept in place. Nearby at 120 and Ninth another building housing a casino and a Jai-Alai frontón was built and called the Casino de Verano. Around 1949 both casinos were acquired by Golf Club and demolished to expand the club's fairways.

Bowman also started work on the Havana Biltmore Yacht and Country Club. In 1927 the Oriental Park Race Track opened a room for gambling (mainly roulette). Meyer Lansky took control of the race track from 1937-1938.

The *Casino Deportivo de la Habana*, was located at Avenida 1a and Calle 8 in the Miramar District. This recreational center was built by Senator Alfredo Hornedo Suárez, also owner of the *El País* newspaper and the Hotel Rosita. The club opened in 1935 and was designed to be an alternative for non white and Jewish residents who were excluded from the elitist, WASP clubs such as

the Havana Yacht Club (Batista had been rejected due to his being a "mulatto" or dark skinned person, and this despite him having led the Sergeant's Revolt in 1933). This "poor man's club" was not exclusive and had no large sign up fee. As a point of interest *Salsa* dancing originated here in the 1950s where it was known locally as *Rueda de Casino*.

The showcase *Hotel Nacional de Cuba* was opened on December 30, 1930 at Calle 21 and O in Havana. McKim, Mead and White of New York designed and supervised the construction, which had begun in 1928. It took 8,000 workers to build the 457 rooms in what may be described as a mix of Spanish Moorish, Arab and classical Art Deco styles at a cost of four million dollars.



*Hotel Nacional de Cuba*

Meyer Lansky first arrived in Cuba in December 1933 and a few months later Amleto Battisti y Lora, Santos Trafficante Sr and Amadeo Barletta had set up shop, bringing in the dawn of the mob era. Amleto Battisti took over the Sevilla Biltmore in 1935. Battisti was also the leading numbers (*bolita*) man in Havana. In January 1937, a new decree had transferred the bulk of Cuba's gambling



operations from civil to military control. Revenues however did not live up to expectations. In an effort to boost income, Lou Smith a respected operator of several successful horse and dog tracks in New England was offered a contract at Oriental Park. In Lansky's words, Smith "had no idea how to run a casino" and so passed on the job of cleaning up the Track's two casinos to his friend Meyer Lansky. Over the following 15 years Lansky would make periodic visits to the island until

he set up residence in Havana in 1952.

The Tropicana was originally known as the *Beau Site*. This sprawling 360,000 square foot country estate, known locally as Villa Mina was located at Calle 72 and Avenida 45 in the Marianao district, a roughly 20 minute ride from downtown of Havana. The property belonged to the colorful, multi-faceted widow, Guillermina Pérez Chaumont (Mina) who rented it out as a nightclub to Victor de Correa; it opened on December 30, 1939. Sometime late in 1949 or early 1950, Martin Fox and associates Joe Biscoff aka Lefty Clark and General Roberto Fernández Miranda (Batista's brother in law) took over the property (after making Correa an offer he couldn't refuse) and set about revitalizing the club. The world famous Crystal Arch (Arcos de Cristal) was built by Max Borges-Recio and on March 15, 1952 the Tropicana reopened with an 80,000 square foot nightclub. In 1953 Fox paid 10,000 pesos for Aldo Gamba's timeless Ninfas Fountain which had graced the early Gran Casino and installed it at the club's entrance. The club's name came from a song written by Alfredo Brito

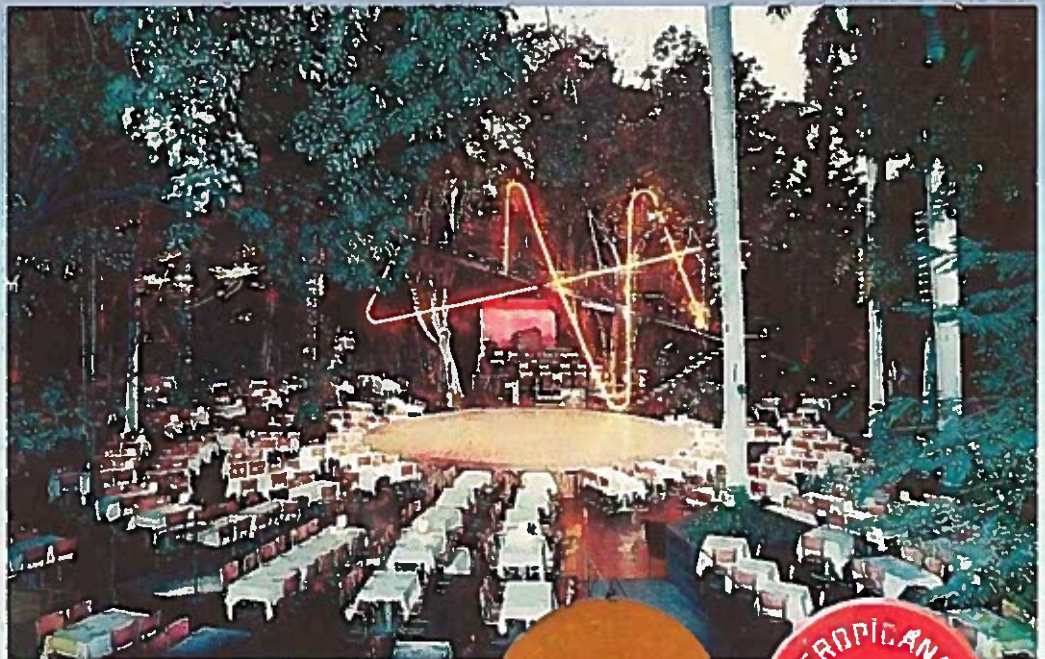
*"Tropicana, Diosa de Amor, eres tú, mi bien  
La que inspiró mi canción"*

Tropicana, Goddess of Love, you my dear  
Have inspired my song

With a seating capacity of 1,750 people and a minimum table drinks tab of \$4.50 per person, the club was a major success. Patrons who were short of funds could drink at the bar with no minimum. The gambling room was very conveniently located right off the entrance lobby, and in 1955 its chandeliered room had 10 roulette tables and 30 slot machines. An arrangement with Cubana Airlines brought tourists from Miami to the club for a night. This idea by Antonio Manero was called the Tropicana Special. It would leave Miami on Thursday evenings and return on Friday at 4:00a.m. The seventy dollar package included transportation, hotel, food and liquor as well as a floor show on the flight over. The plane had a modified seating plan with 46 seats to accommodate the flamboyant dancers and a piano.



*Miniature stage and arch at front of the passenger cabin on Cubana Airlines Tropicana Special*



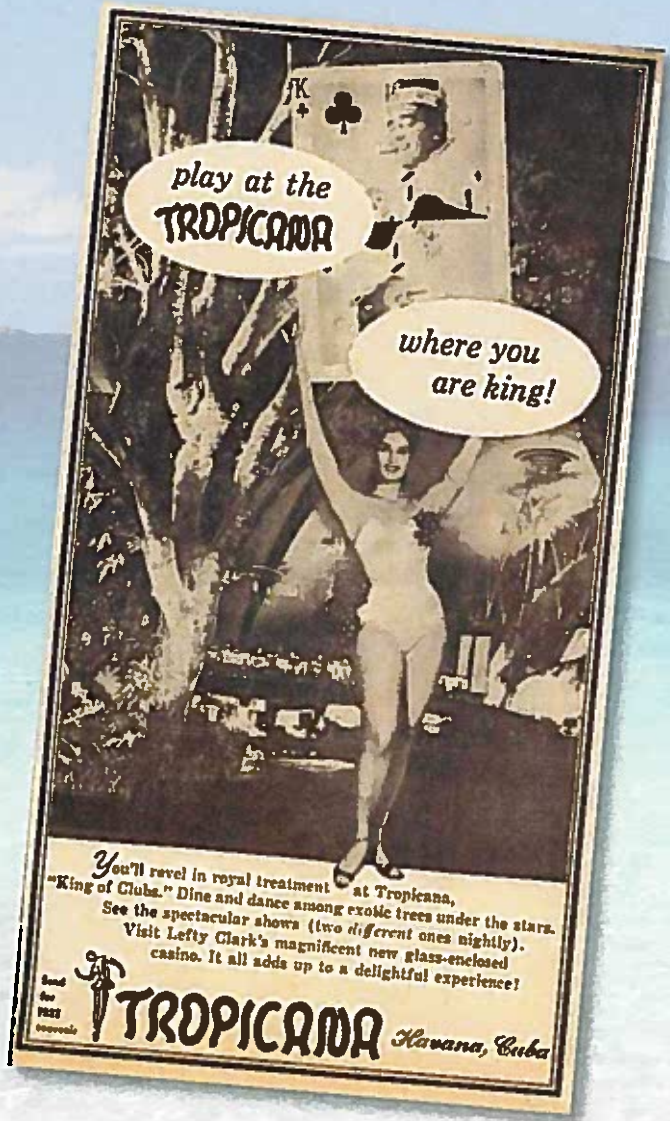
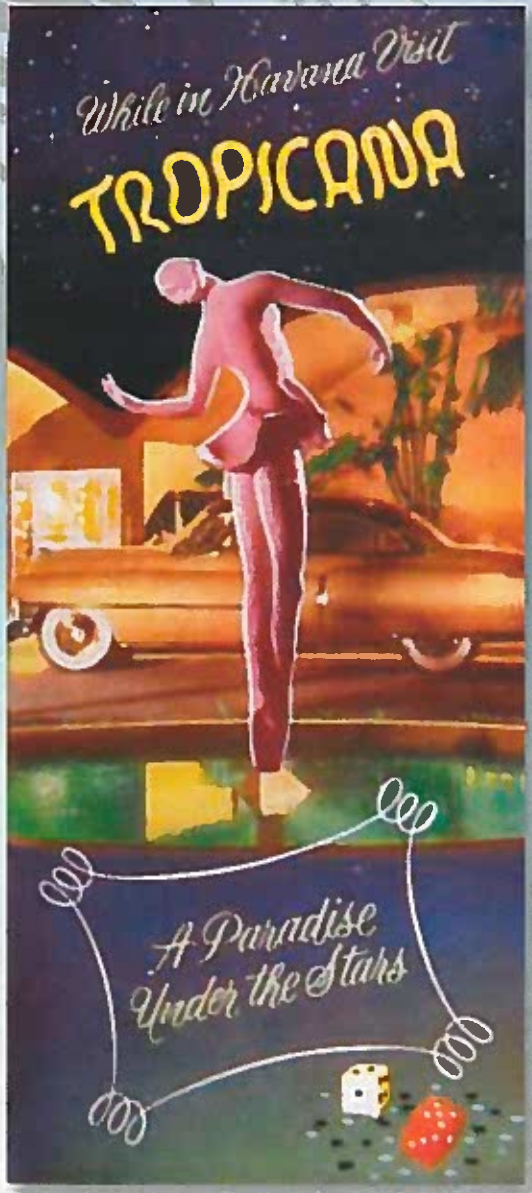
*Tropicana Nightclub*





*Tropicana*

*Chip scans courtesy Charles Kaplan and Rich Hanover*



Article continues in the next issue. Volume 25 No. 1

# THE OFFICIAL 2012 CC&GTCC CALENDAR!



This calendar is a club fund raiser which raises money by the sale of individual dates, banner ads and whole pages, and of course the final printed calendars.

If you missed out on this years calendar get ready to participate for 2013. Details will be available in future issues of the magazine.

For more information contact Steve Bedo at [membership@ccgtcc.com](mailto:membership@ccgtcc.com).

Special thanks to Todd Barrett at TBD Studios for his time in the design of this calendar and to Neal Silverman at LogoWear Shops for his time and the production of this calendar.

**Happy Holidays!**  
The end of the calendar year is a popular time for casinos to release limited edition chips with holiday themes. In the late 1990's and early 2000's many casinos produced "Happy Christmas" themed chips. But, with the advent of online casinos, casinos have taken to releasing chips with a "Happy Holidays" or a "Seasons Greetings" theme. Coincidentally, one of the first ever limited edition chips was produced in 1966 by the Sahara in Las Vegas for a private holiday party they hosted for World Airlines.



**BUTCH REYNOLDS R-3594**  
BUTCH REYNOLDS R-3594  
CALIFORNIA RARITIES  
CALIFORNIA RARITIES

# THE BIGGEST CARD GAME NEVER PLAYED

By Steve Fischer



In 1949, Nick the Greek went out to Las Vegas to meet with the legendary Benny Binion, owner of the Horseshoe Casino. As the story goes, “The Greek” was a notorious gambler who cleaned out all the big gamblers on the east coast with his high rolling action. He had a world-wide reputation as the highest of the high-rollers. His name was mentioned in newspaper stories since before the first World War!

He came to Las Vegas, and specifically to the Horseshoe, looking for high stakes poker. He approached Benny in his office at the Horseshoe Club. Benny’s office was a table in the corner of the restaurant on the second floor of the hotel – and Benny was accessible to nearly anyone who wanted to speak with him.

Nick walked up to Benny who was sitting by himself.

“How do you do, Mr. Binion?” said Nick. “I’d like to introduce myself. Nicholas Dandolos is my name, but many people call me “Nick the Greek.” Now, Nick the Greek is certainly a fine name, however at least one out of every two Greek men have a given name as Nicholas or Nick ... and Greek last names are sometimes so hard to pronounce, that most every Nick born in Greece is called Nick the Greek.”

“Mr. Binion”, Nick said, “I’d like for you to arrange the highest-stakes poker game in the world. A heads-up game with me against the best poker player you know. Absolutely no limit on betting! The sky will be the limit on the game”.

“More money than has ever been exchanged across a poker table, and we’ll play out in the open, where kibitzers can watch us day and night. It’ll be the largest game ever played. “What do you think, Benny?” asked Nick.

Benny Binion liked the idea. He knew that a spectacle like the biggest poker game of all time, if promoted correctly, could turn into the biggest publicity generator that Las Vegas had ever seen. And his Horseshoe Club would become the most famous gambling house in the United States, maybe in the world!

So, Benny told Nick that he liked the idea – and he knew just the man who’d play against the Greek; a Texas rounder that Benny had grown up with, possibly the best poker player currently alive, 35-year old Johnny Moss of Odessa, Texas.

Texas Rounders were men who played in high stakes poker games in the backrooms in small Texas towns. Of course, the games were illegal. The Texas Rounders played with cheats, thieves, and cross roaders. They played for cash – lots of cash. And getting robbed, well, it came with the territory. Men like Amarillo Slim and Sailor Roberts, T. J. Cloutier, Doyle Brunson and Crandall Addington knew that just winning at a poker game was only half the battle. Getting back to your hotel room or your car, and getting packed and out of town without being hijacked or arrested was the other half.



Benny knew that he would have to stake Johnny Moss in the game, and the game might run into the millions of dollars, but Benny could afford it. He also thought that Johnny Moss could beat Nick "The Greek" in straight up poker.

"Nick, I'll put together the game, but I want to have it played right near the front entrance to the Horseshoe. And the game will last until one of you quits – even if that's months from now," replied Benny.

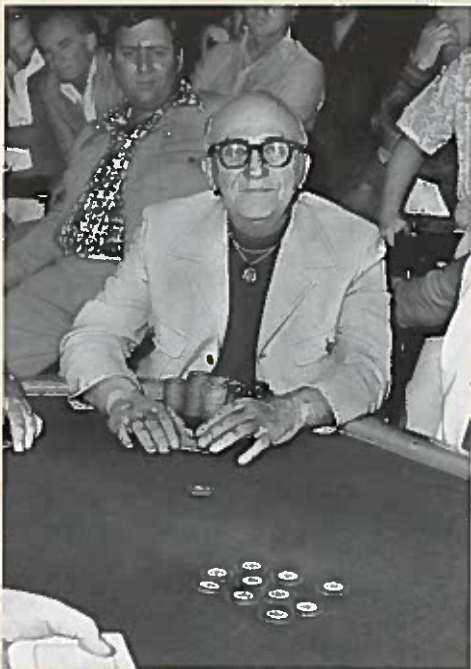
That very night, early in January, 1949, Benny Binion put Fred Merrill, a minor partner and old friend of Benny's, who came to Las Vegas from Texas with Benny and his family to work. Merrill was casino manager of the Las Vegas Club for two years in the mid-1940s. Benny told him to track down Johnny Moss. Merrill found him in the middle of a 3-day poker marathon over at the Elks Club in Ft. Worth, and told him to wait on the phone while he got Benny Binion who wanted to talk with him.

Benny laid out the whole thing for Johnny, with the promise he would back him in this game "up to a million dollars". After Benny's stake was repaid, winnings would be split 50/50. Moss was all for it. He'd never been to Las Vegas before and he never played against the Greek, plus having Benny Binion stake him, made his decision fairly easy.

Moss caught the first plane to Las Vegas, grabbed a cab to the Horseshoe Club over in Glitter Gulch, and sat down at the poker table across from Mr. Dandolos.

"A pleasure to meet you, Mr. Moss," said Nick, "I've heard a lot about you."

"And it's good to meet you likewise, Mr. Greek. I ain't had the pleasure of meeting you before, but I've heard you ain't that bad a poker player," replied Johnny.



*Photo courtesy Las Vegas News Bureau*  
*Johnny Moss, WSOP 1976*



*Photo courtesy Las Vegas News Bureau*  
*"Nick the Greek" and Jack Dempsey*

Nick Dandolos was 54 years old. He was a very educated man, twelve years of preparatory school in Greece and he earned an advanced degree in Greek History and Mythology from the legendary Greek Evangelical College in Smyrna, Crete.

Across the table from Nick was Johnny Moss, one of the world's most famous poker players before the World Series of Poker. Johnny got as far as not quite graduating high school or college, but at least he finished 4th grade. At 13 years old, the school district in Odessa decided he was just too damn old to stay in elementary school, and decided to let him go.

Johnny began working in card rooms around Odessa. He cleaned off tables and ashtrays, bringing drinks and sandwiches to the players, and watching intently, learned the game.

Learning how players cheated was one of the first things a gambler learns. If you couldn't spot when you were being cheated, you were in the wrong line of work. Johnny Moss learned poker the hard way. He watched and absorbed what he saw. He spoke to the back room players, asking advice, and he became one of the great poker players of all time.

Johnny Moss was quiet, calculating and distant. People who knew Johnny in the 1950s and 60s used to say that he had the eyes of a shark – they appeared dead.

And so, "The Biggest Game Never Played" finally began. It was early January 1949 when the first hand was dealt. The game continued for five months with short breaks for sleeping and eating.



*Fred Merrill and Benny Binion*

One of the advantages which Nick enjoyed was that he had the ability to play hour after hour without taking a bathroom break. Once a day during the marathon game, Nick would have one small meal brought to him at the table. Always the same thing, a cold chicken sandwich on white bread with lettuce and butter, a glass of fresh orange juice and a short whiskey.

Nick knew that his stamina was unusual; he could stay up for days at a time, and still be able to think clearly. He argued against Benny Binion's suggestion that both players take a 10-minute break every two hours. "Don't need it, don't want it," Nick said.

Nick Dandolos was a nice guy, but not during what he called his business hours. "No quarter asked, none given," was his rule. If he could stay at the table for 48 hours without a bathroom or food break, and his opponent couldn't, he'd take the advantage.

A 30-minute break every 6 hours was OK'd by both Moss and the Greek.

During that break, Moss would sit back in one of the chairs that were set up around the room, and close his eyes for a few moments. Nick, on the other hand, got in a good 30-minutes of action at a craps table. Then he walked over to where Moss was napping, shook him, and asked, "What are you doing Johnny? You're going to sleep your life away".

Nick and Johnny agreed to change the game often to keep it interesting. Binion provided dealers working 40 minutes on, 40 minutes off on 8 hour shifts.

The two of 'em, Johnny and Nick played all the known poker games ... Draw, 5-card Stud, 7-Card Stud, 7-card high-low, Ace-5 lowball, and 2-7 lowball, Big Injun and 7 and ½. Day after day, jaw-dropping amounts of money exchanged hands as large crowds gathered to watch the contest which Benny Binion had placed at the front of the Horseshoe, near the big bay window.

The excitement in downtown Las Vegas from January through May, 1949, was unprecedented. People were lined up day and night, sometimes 6 or 7 deep, to watch the two great poker warriors – the best poker players in the world, betting thousands and tens of thousands of dollars each hand. It was an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to watch history being made!

Some of the pots were going over \$100,000 – it was an amazing poker game to watch, and something that the spectators would share with their poker friends back home.

After watching the combatants for a while, most of the spectators would wander around the Horseshoe Casino. Slot machines were 10 cents and 25 cents, and table games accepted 10 cent bets. Twenty-One, Faro Bank, Keno, Klondike, Monte, Fan-Tan, Craps and Roulette all had a 10 cent minimum. Benny Binion was making a fortune on these smaller bettors. He was also making a fortune on the bigger bettors.

The heads-up marathon between Nick the Greek and Johnny Moss in 1949 pitted two very different players against each other. Nick was 57 years old in 1949. He'd cleaned out the biggest games and best players on the east coast and over in Europe. He'd won hundreds of thousands of dollars from gangsters like Arnold Rothstein, and sportsmen like Titanic Thompson, who was one of Nick's best friends for many years.

Nick played against the true hi-rollers of the 1920s, '30s and '40s. He'd played with "Bet a Million" Gates, King Farouk, Nicky Arnstein, Waxey Gordon, Diamond Jim Brady, Commodore Vanderbilt, Arnold Rothstein, the Aga Khan; Joe Kennedy, Ambassador to the Court of St. James, and the Duke of Windsor – played aboard John Jacob Astor's 140' yacht, off Cannes, and with his good friend, Titanic Thompson.

Nick was a big bettor... action all the time and he bought many of the hands he played. He raised at nearly every opportunity. Johnny Moss, on the other hand, was slow and calculating, quiet and patient.

The exact amount that Johnny Moss won during those five months in 1949 had been reported to be anywhere from 2 to 4 million dollars. In early May of 1949, Nicholas Andreas Dandolos, Nick the Greek, The Most Famous Professional Gambler in the world, rose from the table and uttered one of the classiest concessions in the annals of poker.

He stood, brushed himself off, shook Johnny Moss' hand, and said, "Mr. Moss, I have to let you go."

The story of the game usually stops there, with Nick slowly climbing the stairs, beaten and worn out. However, most history written about the World Series of Poker implies that Benny Binion was very happy with the outcome of the 6-month marathon.

This wonderful story has been retold hundreds of times in print, and is thought of as the genesis of the World Series of Poker.

Quite probably, however, the real genesis of the World Series of Poker came from Tom Moore and Vic Vickrey. Moore, a Texan, was part-owner of the Holiday Casino up in Reno.

Vic Vickrey was a gambling insider, one of those "larger-than-life" guys with the fabulous ideas. He was a much respected card room and casino manager along the Las Vegas Strip for many years.

In 1969, Moore and Vickrey sent invitations to the best known professional poker players they could think of. They invited these guys to Reno to attend the Texas Gambler's Reunion.

Sitting at the poker table up in Reno were Jimmy “The Greek” Snyder, Doyle Brunson, Amarillo Slim Preston, Minnesota Fats Wanderone, Johnny Moss, Puggy Pearson, and Benny Binion.

And Mr. Binion really liked the format of this type of tournament. He asked Moore and Vickery if the tournament they’d held was up for sale, or did they want to continue with it. Moore and Vickery told Benny that it was just a onetime thing and he could have the format for free if he wanted it.

Benny Binion thought that this heads-up format would continue to generate great interest in both the players and the spectators. In 1970, his son Jack Binion invited the seven best poker players in the world to the First World Series of Poker

As the first WSOP was not a “freeze-out”, the combatants were allowed to make re-buys to stay in the game. At the end of the game, each of the players was instructed to vote for the best player of the game. It was a tie! They all voted for themselves! So, Benny again passed voting slips out to the players, and said, “Besides yerself fellas’, who do you figure is the next best player here?”

Johnny Moss won. He was awarded a silver cup rather than a bracelet which wasn’t the prize until 1976.

The next year, Benny ran the World Series of Poker at the Horseshoe, along with his card room manager, Eric Drache. And the game was played “freeze-out”. All payers start with the same amount of chips, and once the chips were gone, so was the player. The participants involved in the 1971 World Series of Poker were Johnny Moss from Odessa; Doyle Brunson from Fisher County Texas; “Amarillo Slim” Preston from Amarillo; “Jolly” Roger Funsmith of Kansas City; Jack Strauss from Houston; Pug Pearson from Las Vegas; Addington Crandall from San Antonio and Jim Casella from Las Vegas.

Benny Binion never spoke about the game which folklore had put in his Horseshoe back in 1949. On the other hand, starting in about 1971, Johnny Moss spoke about it whenever possible.

Every time he was interviewed, he’d bring up the famous game in 1949 when he took Nick “The Greek” Dandolos for millions of dollars. Soon his story began appearing in print. Hundreds and hundreds of times, and nearly word-for-word exactly the way he described it.



Photo courtesy Las Vegas News Bureau  
Gus Greenbaum

Nick died six years before the story of the poker game appeared in print for the first time in a Las Vegas Poker Magazine, so he had no opportunity of refuting it, which Nick certainly would have done.

Benny on the other hand, heard about the game which he supposedly set up, and decided to ignore it. He never spoke of it, and when questioned about it his standard answer was, “well, my memory ain’t what it used to be.”

There are hundreds of times that the story of the famous game, “biggest poker game in the world” has appeared in print. Nearly every poker magazine refers to the game, and it is mentioned in many books. It’s a great story, starring three of the more colorful characters in the early days.

*But it wasn’t a fact; it was just an entertaining story. The game never really happened. It’s a good poker tale, but absolutely devoid of truth!*

– Steve Fischer

If there was such a game, it was given a news blackout in every single newspaper in the United States! Not just ignored by the Nevada newspapers, there was no mention of this game in any paper in any state during those four months. And neither J. Walter nor Steve Hannigan would have let a major news story like the Johnny Moss v Nick the Greek poker game go unnoticed.

Benny Binion’s oral history makes no mention at all of any such game. And Benny was really long-winded during this two-day recording of the “History of Las Vegas according to Benny Binion”.

Benny spoke of everything about his early years in Las Vegas – and absolutely nowhere in his long and fascinating history of Benny and Vegas is there a mention of a heads-up poker game, with or without Nick the Greek and Johnny Moss mentioned.

Now, there really was a poker game in 1949 which involved Nick the Greek and a very wealthy developer named Ray Ryan.

Both Las Vegas papers referred to it as a marathon game, and it did last almost two weeks. It was a heads-up poker game set up by a Vegas casino owner who figured the mileage he could get out of a game like that would be fantastic! It was great publicity which wouldn’t cost him or his Flamingo Hotel anything! The casino owner wasn’t Benny Binion; it was Gus Greenbaum, who was given the presidency of the Flamingo by the Chicago Outfit right after Bugsy was killed in June of 1947.

And in that game between Ray Ryan and Nick the Greek, Nick lost a fortune. The game lasted for 13 days of continuous play. At the end of Nick’s bankroll, he got up from the table, shook his opponent’s hand, and said,

“Mr. Ryan, it was a pleasure playing against you. However, I’ll have to let you go”.

Horseshoe Casino picture courtesy Pam Goertler

# Club Merchandise

**Convention Chips** – \$5.00 each  
 Set of 10 (including 2011) – \$30.00  
 Years Available –  
 95, 96, 01, 04, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10 & 2011



**Poker/Blackjack  
 Tournament Sets** – \$15.00  
 (2 or more sets \$12.00 each)  
 Years Available –  
 2004, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10 & 2011  
 (08, 09, 10 and 2011 sets are  
 4 chip commemorative sets)



**2010 Convention Pin** – \$5.00  
 Prior Year Pins Available 1997-2010 – \$3.00 each  
 Set of all 14 pins (including 2011) – \$25.00

**CC&GTCC Member Pin** – \$5.00

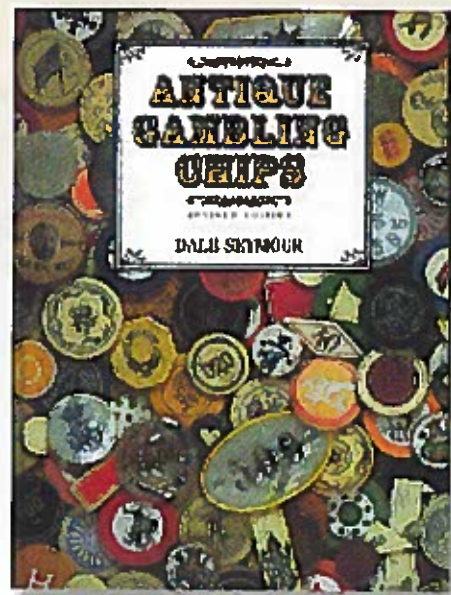


**CC&GTCC Playing Cards** – \$1.00/deck

**CC&GTCC Wooden Nickels  
 & Dollars** – \$1.00 (set of 1 each)

**CC&GTCC Totes** – \$5.00

**Dale Seymour's  
 "Antique Gambling Chips"  
 Hardback** – \$15.00



**Casino Chip & Token News Back Issues** – \$3.00 ea.  
 1993-2010 (Not all issues available & shipping cost varies depending  
 on quantity ordered—email request before ordering)

**CC&GTCC T-Shirt – \$15.00**

Sizes Med, Lrg, XL, XXL

**CC&GTCC Polo Shirt – \$25.00**

Colors-Red, Navy, Black, Cream, Grey

Sizes Sm to XXL

(Not all colors in all sizes, email to check)

**2011 Convention DVD – \$20.00**

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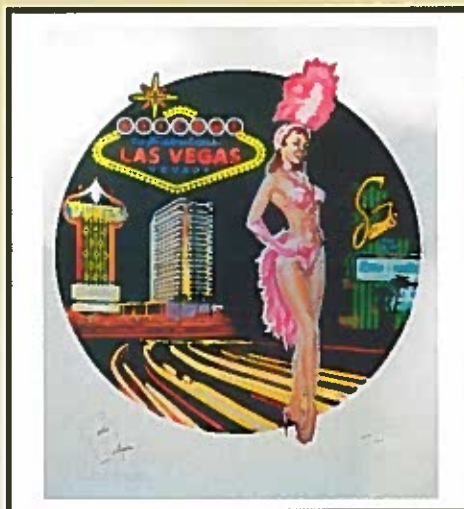
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***For more club apparel check out the 'On-line Club Shop' on the website [www.ccgcc.com](http://www.ccgcc.com).***

# The 2011 OTY Awards Contest Opens Shortly

By Jim Follis

That's right! It's time to Nominate!

Inside this issue of the award winning Casino Collectible News you will find an Official Nomination Form for the 2011 OTY Awards. Every Club member is encouraged to take a little time and reflect back on the fabulous array of chips, tokens strikes and cards issues by casinos worldwide during the calendar year of 2011. If any of them stand out in your mind, or take center-place in your collection, then perhaps you might want to recognize them by nominating them for a chance at winning an OTY Award.

Only as a CC&GTCC member are you entitled to participate in the Club's annual; Chip of the Year (COTY), Token of the Year (TOTY), Silver Strike of the Year (SSOTY) and Slot Card/Room Key of the Year (CKOTY) competitions, aka: The OTY's!

The 2011 Awards will be marking the Club's 22nd year of COTY and TOTY competitions, our 12th year of the SSOTY competition and our 10th year for CKOTY honors. I am both honored and pleased to be serving as the COTY, TOTY, SSOTY and CKOTY Awards Competitions Chairman for 2011, along with my son, Casey, as the Assistant OTY Chairman.

The rules for this year's competitions are pretty much the same as last year, and for our newer members (a very big Welcome to our newcomers) and as a refresher for our seasoned participants, I will go over the requirements once again.

Between January 1, 2012 and February 03, 2012 the Assistant OTY Chairman will be accepting nominations from any and all Club members in good standing. As a reminder to all Regular members, please be sure to make a copy (or copies) of the nomination form for the Associate Member(s) tied to your membership number, so that they too can participate.

Completed original nomination forms were designed to be folded, taped (stapling is acceptable, but the Post Office prefers tape), affixed with 1<sup>st</sup> Class postage (.39 cents) and then mailed. Providing that the insert is printed correctly, the mailing address will be pre-printed on the reverse of the form. However, completed forms (original forms or copies) may be sent in an envelope to the address that appears on the back of an original form. Postage will then be .44 cents.) That address is also re-printed below for your convenience. As we did last year we will accept nominations via email to [oty@ccgtcc.com](mailto:oty@ccgtcc.com). However, if you take advantage of this method, you will need to format your submission into the same headings as the Nomination Form **AND** you must include all of your nominations at one time. Please do not

make piece-meal submissions. If you do, then the most current submission form will replace, in total, any previously submitted form. Emailed submissions must be sent prior to midnight (PST) February 03, 2012.

All nominees must have been issued, for use, for the first time, during the calendar year of 2011. Various members of the CC&GTCC may be called upon to verify that nominees meet this criterion for chips and tokens. The Officers of the Silver Striker's Club shall be called upon to verify that this criterion is met for Silver Strikes. The Officers of the Slot Card and Room Key Club shall be called upon to verify that this criterion is met for slot cards/room keys.

Chip of the Year eligibility criteria: A chip must be issued by a casino. It must also serve a gaming purpose.

Token of the Year eligibility criteria: A token is one that is intended to be inserted into a slot machine for play. Excluded are coins (money), currency and tickets. The emphasis is on the minting of coins for slot machine play.

Silver Strike of the Year eligibility criteria: Simply stated, an eligible Silver Strike is a bi-metal coin made in follow-on to the Silver Strike Program of IGT. This includes \$200 strikes.

Slot Card/Room Key of the Year eligibility criteria:

- Slot Cards must be issued by a casino and are intended to track player action at a slot machine.
- Room Keys must be issued by an affiliated hotel/casino establishment. The key (looking like a plastic credit card) must be used to open a guest room.

Casey and I look forward to receiving your nominations shortly. We may be contacted via email: [oty@ccgtcc.com](mailto:oty@ccgtcc.com).

Lastly, for those who are Internet connected, be sure to visit the Un-Official OTY Viewing Sites, where you can view many of the potential 2011 OTY candidates. There are four locations to visit:

<http://www.thechipgallery.com/gallery2011?dir=COTY>  
<http://www.thechipgallery.com/gallery2011?dir=TOTY>  
<http://www.thechipgallery.com/gallery2011?dir=SSOTY>  
<http://www.thechipgallery.com/gallery2011?dir=CKOTY>

Jim Follis  
OTY Awards Competition Chairman

# CC&GTCC Mentoring Program

## **Introduction**

The program is offered free of charge and available to everyone. The Mentoring Program is specifically designed for new casino chip collectors offering a wealth of information and experience of our seasoned casino chip and memorabilia collectors.

Seasoned collectors have gone through many a trial and tribulation, learning as they go and learning from their mistakes over the years. Knowledge increases little by little over time as we absorb what we can from our interactions with other collectors and individual experiences. If one is going to learn from mistakes, isn't it always best to learn from someone else's mistakes?

Collecting has many forks in its windy road, and is filled with many potential unwise choices, but our experienced collectors will help guide the beginner down the path.

Quite often a new collector just happens to stumble onto a casino chip online message board or web site. They most likely have just a few chips, no price guides and no real idea of the best way to proceed with their new hobby. They often times have no idea how vast chip collecting is. That's where we come in!

- Find out which price guides are available.
- Find out which price guides should and shouldn't be used.
- Be able to ask questions about casino chips and casino related collectibles and find the answers.
- Find resources online and offline through our resource pages..
- Find out the best ways to increase your collection.
- Discover the many different collecting areas of casino memorabilia.
- Learn from the pros, what's valuable and what's not!

## **The Program**

Simply go to [www.ccgcc.com](http://www.ccgcc.com), click on the "EDUCATION" button to the top of the page. From there click on the "CC&GTCC Mentoring Program" link and a questionnaire/application will download to your computer, print out and complete the questionnaire/application and mail it to the address provided. The questions are designed to best identify your interests and to match you with a suitable mentor for your particular collecting interests.

**Initial Stage:** lasts for a period of 30 days. During this time, both parties will be encouraged to communicate back and forth through e-mails, and/or telephone. The mentee (new collector) will be open to ask any and all questions he may be interested in, and the mentor (experienced collector) will address the questions, giving advice and direction.

At the conclusion of the initial 30-day initial stage, the program chairman will contact both parties to see if both wish to continue. If both parties are pleased with how things are going, they may choose to continue for an additional 11 months. This short initial period is particularly good for beginners who just need a little help and direction while getting started.

Either the mentee or the mentor can conclude the relationship at anytime. This may need to be done because of unforeseen real life issues that may arise.

The program will continue for a maximum period of one year from the beginning of the initial active date, with a review after six months.

Mentoring Program Director, Terry Shaffer R-5645  
[terryshaffer@hotmail.com](mailto:terryshaffer@hotmail.com)

# Logo Usage Policy

The Club has certain logos and symbols which it must protect in order to protect its reputation in the collectibles community. No member is allowed to use the Club name, logo or symbol other than is approved by the by-laws or as otherwise specifically approved in writing by the Board of Directors.

- Only members in good standing may identify themselves as members of the Club
- Any member who identifies himself/herself as a member must affix or state their membership number so as not to confuse the public.
- “Identifies” includes advertising, announcements, business cards, internet websites, internet or live auctions, e-mails and any and all types of communication.
- Every member must make an effort not to confuse the public or lead the public to think that the member represents or speaks for the Club, other than those officers who actually do speak for the Club or those who have been authorized by the Board to speak for the Club.
- No event, show, auction or convention shall use the Club name, logo or symbol for any reason whatsoever unless it is an event, show, auction or convention run by the Club.
- The Board has approved a “Member’s Logo” which contains the member’s membership number. Only that logo may be used by members in their advertising, promotions, business cards, auctions, etc.
- Any other use of the Club name, logo or symbol must be submitted to the Board of Directors for their approval prior to such use.
- The entities formerly known as “Chapters” are prohibited from using the Club name, logo or symbol as representative of their organization

Example



Please contact the Secretary for a copy of the logo with your membership number on it.



# CC&GTCC Claims Form

Up until now, there has never been a uniform, standardized way of filing a Claim against another member for an alleged Code of Ethics violation. Claims have been filed over the years in formats ranging from hand written notes, typed 5-6 page letters to just an email saying "I want to file a claim against \_\_\_\_\_".

Most of the time the information provided to the Club is vague and/or incomplete. The Claims Director may spend more time gathering basic information that should have been provided in the first place, than on resolving the issue at hand.

This form provides all the basic information needed by the Club, in written form, first hand from the member filing the complaint.

The process will work as follows:

1. Fill out the form completely, sign and date it.
2. Forward it Vice-President Sheldon Smith.
3. V.P. Smith will make an initial determination on the Claim.
4. If further action or investigation is warranted, V.P. Smith will forward the form to the Claims Director to open a Claims Investigation.
5. The Claims Director will work to mutually resolve the matter between the parties or if that is not possible, make a recommendation to the Board of Directors for the appropriate action.
6. The Board will act on the recommendation and the final report of the Claims Director. The parties involved will be notified of the final decision of the Board by V.P. Smith.

If you find it necessary to file a Claim against a fellow Club member, please help us to resolve the matter as quickly as possible by using the Claims Form.

\*The form will be available on the Club website at [www.ccgccc.com](http://www.ccgccc.com) for you to download and print out. We are working on a program that will allow you to fill out the form online and send it electronically to V.P. Smith. We will notify the membership once this format is available.

## Reward Fund

Several years ago, the Club had a standing offer to help deter theft of member's collections. Somewhere along the way it was either dropped, forgotten or just faded into obscurity. The Board has voted to reintroduce the reward offer. We would like to thank Jim Reilly for his research and assistance with this project. The terms of the offer are similar to those used by the ANA. Please contact any member of the BOD for further information.

The Club offers a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of any person or persons charged with the theft of any part of a club member's collection.

The Club will pay a reward as follows:

- If the retail value of the stolen property is less than \$5,000, the reward is \$250
- If \$5000 to \$20,000, the reward is \$500
- If greater than \$20,000, the reward is \$1000.

The purpose of this reward offer is to increase the likelihood of apprehending and convicting those who steal from club members, as well as to increase the likelihood of recovering the stolen property. The reward offer, however, is not intended to reimburse any club member's loss. It is each member's responsibility to maintain insurance against losses of this kind.

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# Marlow Casino Chips

CC&GTCC Member R-6180

**The UK's leading casino chip and collectibles dealer providing a worldwide service**

Stocks include the following:

- Over 20,000 casino chips from around the world -house, limited edition, roulettes, fantasy, cruise ships, brothels. Current, old and obsolete
- Over 1,000 used casino craps dice in pairs and sticks
- Over 500 different packs of used casino playing cards
- Over 500 different silver strikes
- Hard Rock Cafe chips, pins, Zippos and other souvenirs
- A range of storage and display accessories

*Prices are always competitive and satisfaction is guaranteed.*

**For full information please visit our website now  
[www.marlowcasinochips.com](http://www.marlowcasinochips.com)**

**Read "Gene Trimble on Chips"**

**Research other articles and other references – all on our website**

**David Spragg**

38 Oak Tree Road, Marlow, Bucks SL7 3EE, United Kingdom

Email to [david.spragg@marlowcasinochips.com](mailto:david.spragg@marlowcasinochips.com)

We accept payments in US \$ and UK£, by check, money order credit card,  
Paypal, Nochex and Bidpay (no surcharges)

Cash can be sent by insured post. All goods are shipped to the US by priority airmail.

# HERITAGE

POLITICAL & AMERICANA AUCTION

SPRING 2012 | DALLAS | LIVE & ONLINE

Consign now and  
be our next

Big  
Winner!



1. Milton Prell's Aladdin: Extremely Rare First Series "Card Room Only" \$1.00 Chip  
**Sold for \$3,883**  
November 2010  
HA.com/6047\*47347
2. Sands \$5 "Cowgirl and Hourglass" Las Vegas Casino Chip, Ninth Issue, R-9, Circa Late 1950s  
**Sold for \$26,290**  
May 2010  
HA.com/6035\*47380
3. Sands \$5 Las Vegas Casino Chip, "A Place in the Sun," Fourth Issue, R-10, Circa 1954  
**Sold for \$3,585**  
May 2010  
HA.com/6035\*47377
4. Las Vegas Club \$5 Casino Chip, Ninth Issue, R-8, Circa 1950s  
**Sold for \$7,468**  
May 2010  
HA.com/6035\*47369

View all lots at [HA.com/Historical](http://HA.com/Historical)  
and bid in real time at [HERITAGELive.com](http://HERITAGELive.com)



For more information contact:  
Tom Slater - Director, Americana  
214-409-1441 • [TomS@HA.com](mailto:TomS@HA.com)

Free catalog and *The Collector's Handbook* (\$65 value) for new clients. Please submit auction invoices of \$1,000+ in this category, from any source. Include your contact information and mail to Heritage, fax 214-409-1425, email [catalogorders@HA.com](mailto:catalogorders@HA.com), or call 866-835-3243. For more details, go to [HA.com/FCO](http://HA.com/FCO).

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