

# Casino Collectible News

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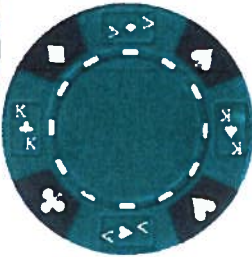
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A 501(c)(3) educational organization  
with the mission of preserving gaming history.

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## Casino Collectible News

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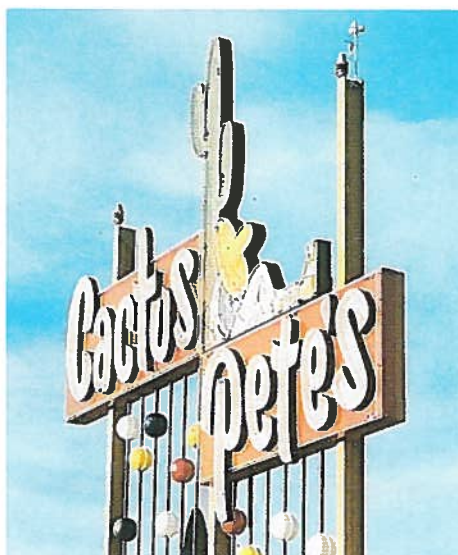


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- When you place a one inch or two inch ad for more than one issue, you may make changes in that ad for each issue. Try to get the changes to us well before the deadline of each issue.
- When ordering items from one of our advertisers, let them know 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:

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## Rates

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**Doug Smith**  
President

## President's Letter

Wow, the past several months have flown by and we are already looking towards convention 2013.

The BOD has been busy the past several months with lots of activity. We are aggressively looking to lock in future convention dates and provide us with a home for at least the next several years. In addition the BOD is looking to fill a few key positions within the club and we will be discussing this with many people over the coming months.

I was proud to be part of a team including Belinda Hixon and Al Whiting that displayed at the 2012 ANA National Money Show in Dallas, October 18th thru the 20th. We handed out magazines and applications along

with show fliers to everyone we could. Our table which featured colorful European plaques, vintage Vegas chips and Antique Crest & seals and Ivories really stood out among the hundreds of other dealer tables.

I really think this kind of event is great exposure for the CC&GTCC and hopefully we can continue to display at the ANA shows throughout the country.

I have been falling behind in my duties of posting BOD decisions and I have a ton of stuff still to share from our past 2 BOD meetings. Look for posts on the Club Board [www.ccgccc.com](http://www.ccgccc.com) soon as I hope to start making announcements shortly about our most recent club activity and decisions.

Another thing to watch for on the club board are the "Favorite Of The Week" posts as well as the "What Kind of chips can I collect?" posts. There are tons of great chips and information being posted weekly and unless your visiting regularly, your really missing out.

I couldn't end a Presidents report without giving my gratitude once again to the many volunteers that make our organization what it is. It is hard to express in words how much each of you and what you do, mean to the club. All I can say from the bottom of my heart is... THANK YOU ALL !!!!!

Doug "Cigarman" Smith  
LM-3209-147

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## New Members

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Member #	Last Name	First Name	State	City	Reference
8482	Bernard	Rod A.	NV	Henderson	Club Website
8483	Apisa	Ken	NV	Las Vegas	Club Website
8484	Foster	Sharon	CA	El Cajon	Club Website
8485	Cuyler	Robert	TX	San Antonio	Sheldon Smith
8486	Samano, Jr.	Philip	OH	Westlake	Club Website
8487	Sandstrom	Curtis	NV	Las Vegas	Club Website
8488	Soden	Steve	OR	Portland	Former Member
8489	Fortunato	Jon	NY	Orangeburg	Paul Bender
8490	Bitters	Melodie	NV	Las Vegas	Hughes & Meister
8491	Agrillo	Ronald	HI	Lahaina	James Campiglia
8492	Gajewski	Charles	NY	Depew	Club Website
8493	Johnston	James	IN	Fort Wayne	Paul Bachtel
8494	Purin	Dennis	WA	Oak Harbor	Alan Borenstein
8495	Spurlock	Berle	CA	Thousand Oaks	Club Website

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



# Call for Hall of Fame Recommendations for 2013



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, 2013, 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           | Allan Myers              |
| Archie A. Black          | Janice O'Neal (deceased) |
| Carey Burke              | Charles T. Rodgers       |
| Harvey Fuller (deceased) | Eric S. Rosenblum        |
| Howard Herz              | Douglas Saito            |
| Belinda Hixon            | 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           |

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



# Of Literary Note

by the club Librarian, John K. Kallman

P.O. Box 122

Sartell, MN 56377

librarian@ccgtcc.com

Edward B Hoffman donated the following items:

- *Quarterly Club Magazine* – 35 copies (to be given away at the next convention)
- *11th Annual Bruce Landau Memorial Auction*
- *11th Annual Convention brochure*
- *Coast to Coast Casino News* – 4 copies

After arriving home from the convention this year, I basically went nowhere other than the post office and grocery store for a good 3 months. But nice weather and a coin show in Sioux Falls found me on the road mid-September. The coin show was not that much to talk about, but I did manage to stop at two casinos on the way there and two more on the way home. The poker rooms provided me with the following additions to the club's library:

- *Poker Player* (Volume 16, Number 6)
- *Bluff Magazine* (September 2012)
- *Midwest Gaming & Travel* (Vol. 17, Issue 6 – August/September 2012)

Not all reference material consists of listing of collectibles, but rather basic information to help you with your collection. One such reference is *Read and Write Chinese: A Simplified Guide to The Chinese Characters*, by Rita Mei-Wah Choy. To be honest, there is nothing simply about the Chinese language; or most of the other languages used in the Far East. Having lived and taken both Korean and Japanese; both of these use a fair amount of Chinese characters in the written form from newspapers to books. Many of the simpler characters such as top, bottom, left, right, front, back, gold and silver I know from collecting coins from these countries and sheer repetition of seeing them over and over again in the associated reference material for these collectibles. In addition to the strange arrangements of lines that form the characters; there are at least 3 distinct styles to form the characters; at least two different dialects; and of course, and single character can have more than one meaning, depending on how it is used in speech. While this book will not solve all of your problems in trying to discern these characters when found on a casino collectible; it can be very useful towards that end.

*Chinese-American Tokens from The Pacific Coast* by Jerry F. Schimmel is much more a listing of items from this part of the world, including gaming items such as chips and Keno cards. However, the introduction is quite useful for a basic explanation of some of the difficulties in dealing with Chinese characters. While there are many non-gaming related items also listed, by looking at these items, you can often figure out what the characters on an otherwise unlisted gaming item might be.

Both of these works were donated by Richard "Dick" Staeffler. Also donated by Dick:

- *Chip Rack, 10th Edition*
- *Chip Rack, 10th Edition, Part II*
- *The Gaming Table, 3rd Edition*
- *Kregg's Guide to the records of The United States Playing Card Company*
- *Howdy's Guide to Hunt & Company Monogrammed Gaming Checks & Chips*

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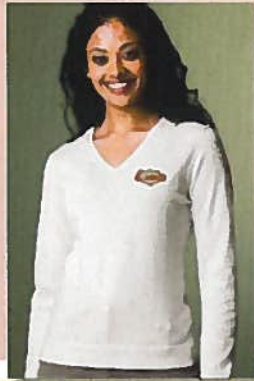
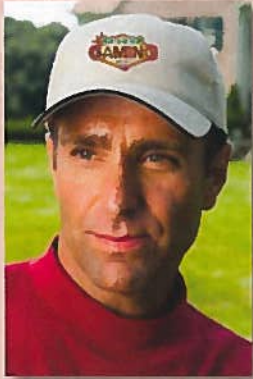
# Museum of Gaming History

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



*Dedicated to the preservation and education of Gaming History*

## ***Visit The Museum of Gaming History LogoWear Shop!***



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.



## **Visit the Greg Susong Digital Media Center!**



### ***at the Museum of Gaming History***

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)**





# Trinkets



What is it about a small casino item that gets some collectors blood pumping? Perhaps it harkens back to the first time we pulled out a small worthless hunk of plastic (or metal to some of us older collectors) from a package of Cracker Jack at our first baseball game. Whatever the case

may be, trinkets from casinos are popular, fun and sometimes mysterious items that strike a chord with many collectors.







# Bets!

By Todd Barrett #LM-5068-91





Trinkets are very difficult to define. Similar to how United States Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart remarked that he didn't know how to define pornography, but he knows it when he sees it. Trinkets are the same way. Some items from casinos are very easily categorized, chips, tokens, dice, cards, matchbooks slot cards, etc. Trinkets are... well, everything else!

Some of the trinkets shown in this article are easy to determine what purpose they served, others are a bit mysterious. We'll start with some of the most common type of trinkets, the "Good For" tokens. While they come in many shapes, sizes and colors, they serve the basic purpose of being exchanged for something from the casino or club. All trinkets shown in this article (except for the Everything Else section) are shown at full size.

## Good for Tokens



Trade tokens have been around (and collected) for years. Below is an example of an early trade token from a club in Reno, Nevada. The transition from clubs to the bars inside casinos was an easy one to make.





**THE FRONTIER CLUB**

Carson City Nevada

**BE OUR GUEST FOR A FREE DRINK**

The hunt to obtain drink tokens is often a journey in itself. While tokens from large casinos and clubs in Las Vegas or Reno are relatively easy; it is the smaller more difficult to reach clubs that make for truly rare pieces. This token good for "ONE DRAFT" is from the tiny Linda's Wabuska Bar in Wabuska, NV.

LINDA'S WABUSKA BAR

GOOD FOR ONE DRAFT

BE OUR GUEST  
GOOD FOR ONE DRINK  
AT OUR BAR

BARNEY'S  
ON HI-WAY 50  
SOUTH SHORE  
LAKE TAHOE

RIVERSIDE HOTEL & CASINO  
RENO

CORNER BAR  
HAVE ONE ON US  
SHOW ROOM

NEW CHINA CLUB  
LAKE ST. REHO

RENO QUEEN  
A DRINK ON HER  
TODAY

GOOD FOR ONE FREE DRINK  
BLACK VELVET  
Canadian WHISKY  
STOCKMAN'S  
FALLON, NEVADA

TAHOE'S WORLD FAMOUS GLASS CRUTCH

GOOD FOR ONE DRINK  
LAKE TAHOE SO. SHORE

OLD CATHAY CLUB  
222 LAKE ST. REHO NEV.

SPARKIE SAYS  
HAVE ONE ON ME

GOLD CLUB

REDEEMABLE AT  
HARRAH'S Club  
RENO / LAKE TAHOE

SOURDOUGH CLUB  
RENO  
B.W. COMMERCIAL

GOOD FOR 2 DRINKS  
COCKTAILS  
POKER  
BRING A FRIEND

BANK CLUB  
FALLON NEV

GOOD FOR ONE DRINK  
AT OUR BAR

FOR A DRINK  
HARRAH'S CLUB BAR

BIG NICKEL  
RENDEZVOUS  
HOTEL & CASINO

FREE DRINK

HOLIDAY  
in Reno

EDDIE KOON  
LAKE TAHOE

ONE DRINK





While trade tokens come in many different shapes, sometimes all is not what it seems. The token for a free drink at the Stateline Country Club in Lake Tahoe, NV shown below seemed like a strange shape for a token. It wasn't until an intact swizzle stick with the same token on top was found that we realized the token was simply snapped off.

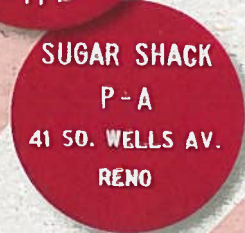


Almost anything can and has been offered on "Good For" tokens as witnessed below.



# Rain Checks

While many of the "Good For" tokens are given out as an incentive to bring the customer back to the club. There is also a group of "Good For" tokens that add the tag line "Rain Check." I believe these may be given out when the owner or a patron buys a round of drinks for the house. If some patrons either have a full drink in front of them, or are leaving the club, the bar tender would give them the a "Rain Check - Good For" token as the drink is already paid for. The customer could then redeem it at his convenience.

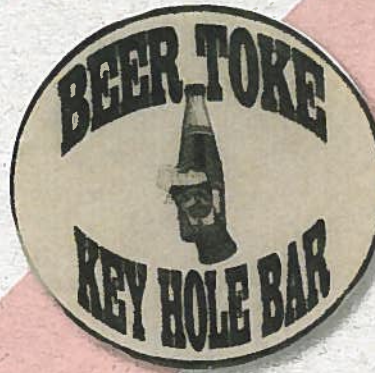


# Token Materials

One of the most interesting things about trinkets is that they can be made of anything. They do not need to pass through gaming control, and are at the discretion of the casino or club owner.



Cardboard



Paper chips



One of the most interesting drink tokens that I have come across is this one from Carver's Bar in Carvers, NV. This handmade token is two piece of glass held together with leading similar to what is used in stained glass artwork.



Individually hand made tokens from "Shrinky Dink" material.



# Free Play Tokens

How bout some cash! Another very popular form of casino trade tokens is cash in the form of change for slot machines or free spins on promotional slot machines.







*This rare token for one play on the "Moon Rocket" or 21 Table is from Jim Kelly's Nugget in Reno, NV. The above postcard shows the fantastic "Moon Rocket" slot machine. At least it appears to be a slot machine. While it does not have the traditional slot machine appearance, it does have a slot arm, and plenty of dials to captivate the player.*

Sometimes trinkets are just that, trinkets. They don't appear to have any sort of offer or promotion. They just seem to be cheap give away's that are meant to be taken home and kept as a simple souvenir.





# Jackpot Points

The precursor to the modern day "slot club" run by most casinos, was jackpot points. After you hit a "jackpot" on a slot machine, a change attendant would come by to pay you off. The attendant would also give you a chip for a certain amount of points redeemable at the gift shop or jackpot claim store. Of course the only way to get the points was to hit a winning jackpot. So unlike today's clubs where you get points for all monies played, back then if you lost at the slots, you walked a way a loser. Still think "they don't make them like they used to?"



Another jackpot point trinket would be the jackpot coupon tickets sometimes given out rather than tokens.





# Key Fobs

Key fobs or luggage tags were also popular giveaways that create great exposure for the casinos and clubs.







Many of the key fobs appear with monogrammed initials. This was a popular giveaway to patrons in the downtown Las Vegas casinos.



BONUS BINGO CATCH IT!

SILVER NUGGET

2140 N. LAS VEGAS BLVD.

4	16	34	52	67
7	30	41	49	62
15	17	FREE	46	64
2	22	42	60	75
1	19	43	47	61



# Everything Else

Being that advertising trinkets are not regulated by gaming control, anything goes. Whatever the casino or club manager thought might be effective marketing tools was given a go. That included everything from paper clips, to combs, to toothpicks, to Panti-hose and even emery boards! Items on this page are sized to fit the layout and not shown at actual size.

- 300 GENEROUS SLOT MACHINES
- TWENTY ONE CRAPS
- ROULETTE
- '25,000 KENO
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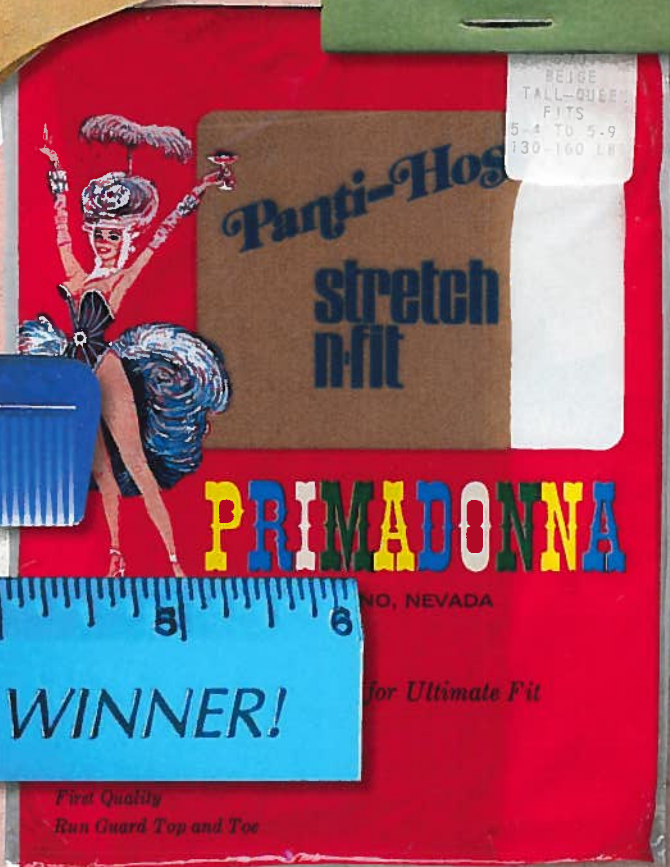

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Thanks to Martin Kenney, Pam Goertler and Doug Saito for the use of their images and help with completing this article.



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# THE ADVENTURES OF FELIX THE CAT



*Reprinted with permission of  
Douglas Saito/Chip Chat  
Issue #11 - October, 1997*

Herb Caen, San Francisco's greatest newspaper columnist, now-deceased, once wrote a story about a sailor, with \$50,000 that he had won in crap games aboard various ships, disembarking in San Francisco and quickly hailing a taxi. The cabbie was stunned to hear that his passenger wanted to be driven to his home state of Iowa. But when the sailor flashed the cash, the cabbie flashed a smile, and off they went. They got as far eastward as Lovelock, NV. Where they stopped. At a place the cabbie remembers as Felix's. The cabbie got coffee. The sailor got into a crap game. Three hours later the sailor was broke. The cabbie got stiffed. And a place called Felix's in Lovelock, NV managed to eke out a mere \$50,000 profit for the night.



*At left: Up until 1943, the occupant of 205 Main Street in Lovelock was a small gaming establishment called the Delta Club as seen in this 1940's postcard...and for those who purchased crest and seal Delta Club chips from Chip Chat, those same chips could just as easily have originated from this Delta Club as the one in Stockton, CA. ...the Delta Club was owned by Virgil T. Smith, who later on would own the Pershing Hotel, also located in Lovelock.*

*At right: Seen in this postcard, Felix "The Cat" Turillas has taken over the location of the Delta Club and has opened up his Big Meadow Club. Eventually, Felix would purchase the corner location of the Greyhound bus depot in order to make room for the Big Meadow Hotel.*

In 1996, I received a letter from Robin Moore, a Northern Nevada chip collector, who had gladly responded to my queries about gaming places in Lovelock, most especially places owned by Felix Turillas. Herewith is an excerpt of that letter:

- Though too young to be in there, I remember Felix's great back bar and ornate crap table; there were "real" cowboys, "real" Indians, Bascos (an affectionate term for people of Basque origin), miners, truckers, winners, losers, tourists, you name it. There was hard likker, gambling - it was all pretty exciting for a couple of California teenagers who were up in Lovelock on a weekend camping trip. In fact, it got so exciting one boozy night, that after we lost everything in our wallets, we asked "Patsy", Felix's ever-friendly 21 dealer, if we could pawn some of our possessions to Felix in order to keep playing. That night we lost our .22 rifles, one cast-iron skillet and a couple of Coleman lanterns to Patsy. Bless his soul, I think Patsy had the will and the "way." -



## ...SO THE STORY BEGINS ABOUT FELIX TURILLAS

From 1950's tourists to 1970 gaming authorities, from locals in Lovelock, NV to chip collectors world-wide, Felix "the Cat" Turillas is a classic one to remember. Certainly his days as a casino owner will live in infamy with two of this three gaming establishments being closed by Mr. Fahrenheit, and the third being shut down by gaming officials.

Today, Felix is in his eighties, a resident of Reno (as of the writing of this article in October, 1997), retired and beset with age-old old-age maladies - gray to white hair, aching bones and a memory that's slowly fading. And, as each brain cell of recollection disappears from Felix's memory, chip historian types are left with less and less of his first-hand knowledge and remembrances when he owned the Big Meadow Club, the Big Meadow Hotel, the Bank Club, Felix's Hofbrau, all in Lovelock, and Felix's Hotel in Winnemucca.

Phil Jensen was one of the fortunate few to have at least one chip from all of Felix's known gaming establishments. Phil knew Felix, and one day in the 1970's, Phil and a friend acquired the last remaining chips from Felix's Bank Club. When the chips were handed over, they were accompanied by a remark made by Felix: "That's it, fellas, you'll see no more of Felix's Bank Club chips."

To this day, Felix's Bank Club chips and chips issued by Felix in arrow-dies are some of the most sought-after chips; ask Felix today about those same chips and his answer is the same thrice-over response: "They're all gone, all gone, all gone."



One of the rarest of Felix Turillas' chips - a \$25.00 Felix's, arrow-die, brown, hot-stamped, that came from Phil Jensen's chip collection.

There are plenty of ponderable probabilities when it comes to providing background info on this highly coveted chip. It was probably the first Nevada chip to be imprinted with the location of two cities. It was most probably the first chip issued by Felix Turillas wherein the image of Felix The Cat appears. It's not probably, but most definitely, one of the three most highly sought-after Nevada arrow dies.

If anything, this arrow-die has plenty of mystique. What it truly is, or what it was used for, may never be answered. But one thing it is not: It is not a chip that could have possibly been intended for use in Felix's Bank Club, as listed in the Chip Rack. Because the only two places that Felix Turillas owned and operated concurrently in both cities was Felix's Hotel and Casino in Winnemucca, 1955-1958, and Felix's Big Meadow Club in Lovelock, 1953-1960.



*At Left: In this 1970 photo taken by Phil Jensen, what remains of Felix Turillas' gaming establishments in Lovelock are the exterior walls of the Big Meadow Hotel and the Big Meadow Club after a fire ravaged both establishments in 1963.*

*At Right: Besides the famous Felix The Cat logo, Felix Turillas had the image of a bow-legged cowboy imprinted on matchbook covers, menus and placemats at the Big Meadow Hotel, which was open, according to the ad-copy on the matchbook cover, twenty-five hours a day (matchbook courtesy of Don Lueders Collection).*



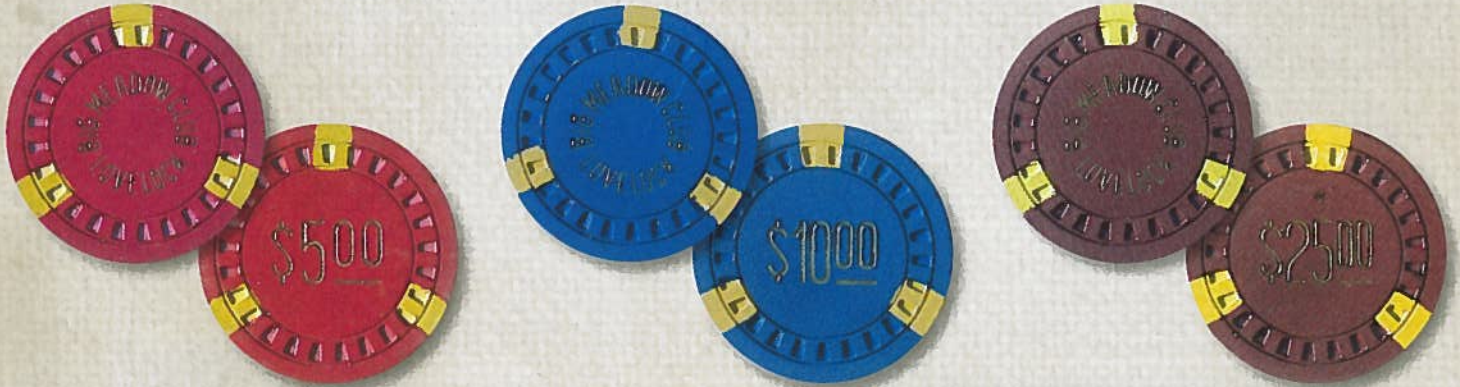


Perhaps the most unique among the first issues from Felix's Big Meadow Club is the chip seen at left - a wave mold chip, yellow, nondenomination. Its existence is not only rare, but the mold itself is a Nevada rarity - only a handful of Nevada gaming establishments ever issued a chip in the wave mold. Although it lacks a denomination, it's highly doubtful that it was used as a roulette or "wheel" check because the Big Meadow Club was only licensed for one table game - blackjack. It's my belief that this is the only known, confirmed nondenomination Nevada chip to be given a "designated" denomination on a blackjack table, to be used either as a dollar, or two-bit, or even a ten-cent denomination.

## OTHER EARLY BIG MEADOW CLUB CHIPS

The Big Meadow Club certainly wasn't big enough to have two or three blackjack tables within its dark confines, it was just too small a place to need more than five thousand chips total. Of special fascination, however, is not the now-confirmed fact that Felix's ten-dollar chip was one of the few known ten-dollar chips to be used on a blackjack table in Nevada - *it's the fact that all three denominations in the following auction lots have the same number, size and color of edge inserts - three yellow.*

Imagine the number of poor souls, soused on Hamm's and Oly's, betting dark-red \$25.00 chips, thinking they were dark-brown \$5.00 chips...after all, they both have the same color inserts, and you wouldn't really be able to tell how much you were betting unless you turned the chip over and looked for the denomination. If you think there wasn't any chance of confusing one denomination for another in a smoke-filled, dimly lit bar-room setting, then you're also the type who doesn't believe that a cat has nine lives.



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No. 4421  
Issued  
10/1/62

**GAMING LICENSE**

N<sup>o</sup> 6251

Amount \$153.00

BIG MEADOW HOTEL, - FELIX TURILLAS, having paid to the License Collector of Pershing County the sum of ONE HUNDRED FIFTY THREE & NO/100 Dollars is hereby licensed to conduct or operate the following gambling games or devices, namely:

1 - CRAP GAME      5c Mach.;      10c Mach.;      25c Mach.;      50c Mach.;      \$1.00 Mach.

Located in BAR - 215 MAIN STREET, CITY OF LOVELOCK,

for period ending DECEMBER 31, 1962, in conformity with and subject to the provisions of the law.

Henry Anderson      D. H. Berger  
County Treasurer      County Auditor

Lovelock, Nevada, OCTOBER 1, 1962

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By Sam Higgins      W. L. Pae  
Deputy      Sheriff Pershing County

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\$1.00 Big Meadow Hotel/Lovelock, NV. Horseshoes mold, yellow with three blue edge inserts, inlay depicts Felix The Cat with chef's hat, inlay colors are red and black.

Today we know that Felix Turillas had only one crap table in the Big Meadow Hotel, a fact corroborated by eye-witnesses and doubly affirmed by what's stated on Felix's gaming license. What we don't know is how many of these horseshoe mold chips were originally ordered (then again, how many would you have to order to run one crap game?), nor do we know how many were burned to a crisp as they

(Gaming License courtesy of Phil Jensen)



lay stacked on the crap table the day the Big Meadow Hotel was ablaze.

Today, there's more that you should know about these Felix The Cat chips... without Phil Jensen, perhaps none of these chips would have ever been made available to chip collectors. After the fire, Phil not only obtained Felix Turillas' gaming licenses, but he also managed to acquire the last surviving Big Meadow Hotel chips that had been stored in Felix's fireproof safe.

Today, these \$1.00 Big Meadow Hotels aren't chips as much as they are mementoes of a casino owner that lots of losers would love to forget; of a Lovelock, NV that once had wild table games, of a Nevada era when gambling with the house was the only game in town.

---

## ...AND NOW FOR THE LAST MEOW...

Whenever you see a chip being sold with a Felix The Cat logo, always stop, always look, and always read the damn thing. Because the letters you're looking for are the ones that spell out the words Felix's **Bank Club**, which spells rarity...if you're to believe my deep-throat source who swears that Nevada gaming authorities closed down the Bank Club, confiscated the chips and eventually destroyed them all.

That darn cat was a famous comic-book character of the 1950's, famous enough that the reproduction rights most certainly are held by some corporate entity, and for which Felix Turillas probably paid nil for the rights to reproduce in adulterated fashion on two different club chips. Ever since Felix The Man put Felix The Cat on his Big Meadow Hotel **and** Bank Club chips, most third-grade reading level chip collectors overlook the rare one because they think they already have one Felix The Cat chip in their collection... and as sure as cat's purr, the one they have is always from the Big Meadow Hotel.

So for those who have trouble reading words composed of more than four letters, here's a primer on what you should know about **any** Felix's Bank Club chip: See the cat with the hat. See the Bank with the Club. Go to bank. Go get cash. Bid on chip. Chip is used. Chip is worn. Chip is rare.



*This current photo shows how some things don't change even over a twenty-year span when the Nevada Gaming Control Board shut down Felix's Bank Club in 1977. The building's still there, erected over the original corner location of Felix's Big Meadow Hotel, with windows boarded up and doors padlocked forever. (This article was originally written in 1997, Felix's building has since been torn down)*





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# The 2012 OTY Awards contest opens shortly!

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

Inside this issue of the award winning Casino Collectibles News you will find an Official Nomination Form for the 2012 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 2012. 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 as a candidate for the OTY Awards.

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 2012 Awards will be marking the Club's 23th year of COTY and TOTY competitions, our 13th year of the SSOTY competition and our 11th year for CKOTY honors. I am both honored and pleased to be serving as the COTY, TOTY, SSOTY and CKOTY Awards Competitions Chairman, along with my son, Casey, 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, 2013 and February 01, 2013 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 1st Class postage (.45 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. 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 . However, if you take advantage of this method, you must 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) January 31, 2013.

Judging will be open to any and all CC&GTCC, Inc. members in good standing. The March-April-May issue of the Club's Award winning magazine will include a full-color presentation of all the Nominees, along with a mail-in ballot. These ballots must be returned via the postal system and must be postmarked on or before a date to-be-determined and announced later. However, voting may also be conducted via email, the details of which will be announced later.

## *The fine print*

All nominee candidates must have been issued, for use, for the first time, during the calendar year of 2012. Various members of the CC&GTCC may be called upon to verify this criteria for chips and tokens. The Officers of the Silver Striker's Club shall be called upon to verify this criteria for Silver Strikes. The Officers of the Slot Card and Room Key Club shall be called upon to verify this criteria 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 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 \$300 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 . 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 2012 OTY candidates. There are four locations to visit:

<http://www.thechipgallery.com/gallery2012?dir=COTY>  
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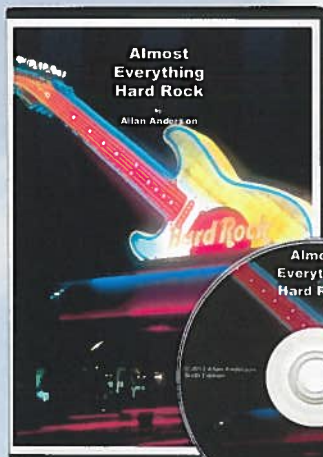
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## Website

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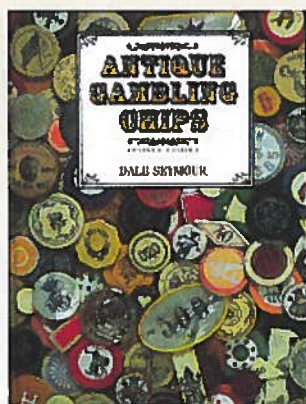
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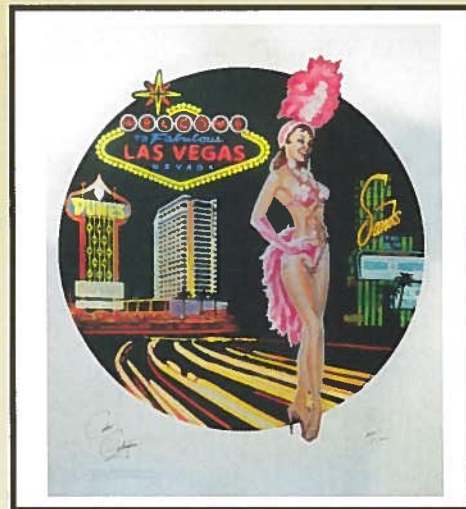
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# Jackpot, Nevada

By Tony Van Hook

In the spirit of the old west, gambling followed the boom towns, silver strikes, gold strikes and copper strikes. Gambling followed the wealth. Jackpot was unique; gambling was the boom and the wealth. Long before Jackpot had a name, it had a reputation. Jackpot was born a gambling town and remains so to this day.





**D**uring a trip to Jackpot, Nevada in October 1991, Harvey Fuller made a small note in his journal—a tidbit of information given to him by Carl Hayden. Harvey wrote, “The Horse Shu has always been cowboy oriented as there are several large ranches in the vicinity. Old timers say that there was once a corral in front of the casino where the cowboy customers could leave their horses, and a small livery stable barn in back. For a several days stay the cowboys often slept in the hay loft.” While researching Jackpot, Nevada I discovered the “Horse Shu Newsy News,” written by Don French in 1955 and published in the *Idaho Times*. One paragraph states, “The Horse Shu Club is busy now, building a huge corral to house deer, antelope, horses, jack asses and some pugilists who always seem to enjoy a good scrap.” Thirty-five years later, the story has changed; fact has merged with fiction and much of the truth has been lost. Don French didn’t give two hoots about the cowboys. He built a roadside attraction, common along stretches of lonely highway during the fifties. He gave the tourists just one more reason to stop at the Horse Shu.

When Don French and Peter “Pete” Piersanti arrived, there was nothing but wide open space divided by an asphalt strip called Highway 93.

The federal government had banned gambling nationwide in December 1953 so a few enterprising folks looked for the nearest point across the Idaho state line into Nevada where legal gambling was still allowed. Don French was the first to do so. Just 500

yards into Nevada, he moved his now-illegal Idaho slot operation. Construction of the new Horse Shu was nearly completed by mid-February 1954. The main building was only 56 x 70 feet and would have a café, bar and casino. Water came from a well and power from diesel generators. The Horse Shu opened on March 18, 1954.

Don French was bold, a brash promoter and his intentions were clear: Horse Shu, Nevada was going to be on the map. It would not remain unknown for long. The first mention of Horse Shu, Nevada is found printed in the *Twin Falls Times* on March 19, 1954. The grand opening ad reads, “Welcome to the Horse Shu Club, Horse Shu, Nevada.” By June 1954 the Horse Shu Club had forty-fifty slot machines operating and was in the process of constructing thirty motel rooms. The Horse Shu was an enormous success—one million dollars had been given in prizes by October 30, 1955 and Don celebrated with a giant party. Everyone was invited.

By mid-June 1954 there were three other applications for gaming licenses in

**WE GOT OUR LICENSE**  
**Horse Shu**  
**CLUB**  
**HORSE SHU, NEVADA**  
 40 Minutes South of Magic Valley on Highway 93


**GRAND**  
**OPENING**  
**MARCH 19 FRIDAY**





**Horse Shu  
NEWSY  
NEWS**

Published Every Sunday



Last week, on Mother's Day, Don French served 350 mothers a free Mother's Day dinner of baked Virginia ham. Everybody had a real bang-up good time.

The Horse Shu Club is busy now, building a huge corral to house deer, antelope, horses, Jack asses and some of the pugilists who always seem to enjoy a good scrap.

Tuesday is Country Store night again and we'll be loaded with Free bags of groceries that will be given away every 10 minutes; Free keg beer, Free dutch lunches. This is a night that everyone has a good time. And as a special added attraction for our big Tuesday night dain's, we're going to give away "JUNE and ANNABELLE" . . . two live Porker Pigs. Come on out Sunday or Mohnday and see 'em. But be sure to be out Tuesday night, you might get to let June and Annabelle ride home with you.

Thursday Don French will give another automobile away free. Sunday we'll have another famous '49er dinner . . . a complete dinner with all the trimmin's for only forty-nine cents.

We're building another addition to the Horse Shu Club now in order to give you folks more room to play and have fun. We are planning bigger and better events for the summer and we hope you'll keep our Horse Shu Newsy News a must on your Sunday reading list. For each Sunday we'll give you a complete roundup of what will be happening at the Horse Shu Club.

Sincerely,

*Don French*

*Date of the "Newsy News" - Idaho Times.*

this new wide open area. Hugh Duncan of Carson City applied for a license for a proposed casino to be named Bordertown, and Herbert and Eunice Kime for the Pair-O-Dice Inn. Both were going to be located near the Horse Shu Club. Peter Piersanti of Idaho applied for a license in the name of Cactus Pete's Inn, about 10 miles south at Mineral Springs.

On July 2, 1954, Herbert and Eunice Kime and Peter Piersanti were approved for slots only. Unfortunately, Hugh Duncan was denied because the construction of his building was less than 1/3 complete. It is not clear if construction ever started on Bordertown or not. No license was ever issued, and nothing else was ever written about it.

The Pair-O-Dice Inn opened August 18, 1954 just 400 feet south



*An early matchbook from the Horse Shu Club showing the town of Horseshu, Nevada.*

of the Horse Shu Club. Very little information exists in regards to this property. Carl Hayden, in an interview with Harvey Fuller in 1991, described it as a "White Frame special looking Building" located south of the Horse Shu, midway between the general store and the edge of Highway 93. Carl Hayden was Cactus Pete's P.R. guy and general manager for many years. The Pair-O-Dice Inn offered entertainment nightly and featured "dining, dancing and gaming."

**"BRANDING PARTY"**  
THURSDAY, NOV. 4th

**STOCKMEN**—Bring your branding irons and slap your brand on our new Corral Room. Buffet Supper - Dancing - Entertainment.

**PAIR - O - DICE INN**  
HI-WAY 93  
NEAR IDAHO - NEVADA LINE





Peter Piersanti was granted a gaming license in Mineral Springs, Nevada under the name of Cactus Pete's Inn on July 2, 1954. Advertising in the 1954 *Twin Falls* newspaper also references Cactus Pete's Desert Inn and Cactus Pete's Desert Lodge. Peter Piersanti was losing business to the new Horse Shu Club due to

its close proximity to the Idaho state line and in 1956 made the decision to move a little north. Construction began on a new facility directly across the street from the Horse Shu Club sometime in 1956. It opened on October 1, 1956 under the name Cactus Pete's.

Gambling was nothing new to this isolated part of northern Nevada; it had been going on in Contact, Nevada and Mineral Springs, Nevada since the early

1940s and probably earlier. King's Mercantile in Contact had slots as did Thousand Springs Trading Post. Mineral Hot Springs had a non-restricted gaming license for four slot machines, two crap tables and two blackjack tables. A little farther north, a gas station named Riverside Service also had slot machines. Gaming licenses were not hard to come by during the '40s and early '50s but that was changing. Don French and the success of the new Horse Shu Club had focused the attention of powerful business interests in

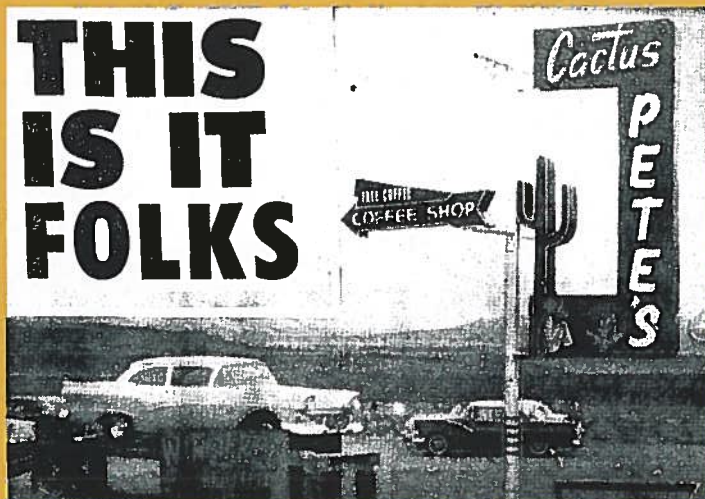
**For "A Night of Happiness"**  
**Come South of The**  
**Border . . . where the folks**  
**all come to play!**

NOW STARRING  
**JOY STEWART**  
 —San Francisco's Joyful Dancing Darling—  
**SEE HER TONIGHT**

You will agree that English Girls really are  
 As Alluring . . . As Talented . . . As Primitively  
 Beautiful as any you have ever seen or ever  
 will see.

**CACTUS PETE'S**  
**DESERT INN**  
 South of the Border -- Hi-Way 93

*Idaho Times - Oct. 5, 1954.*



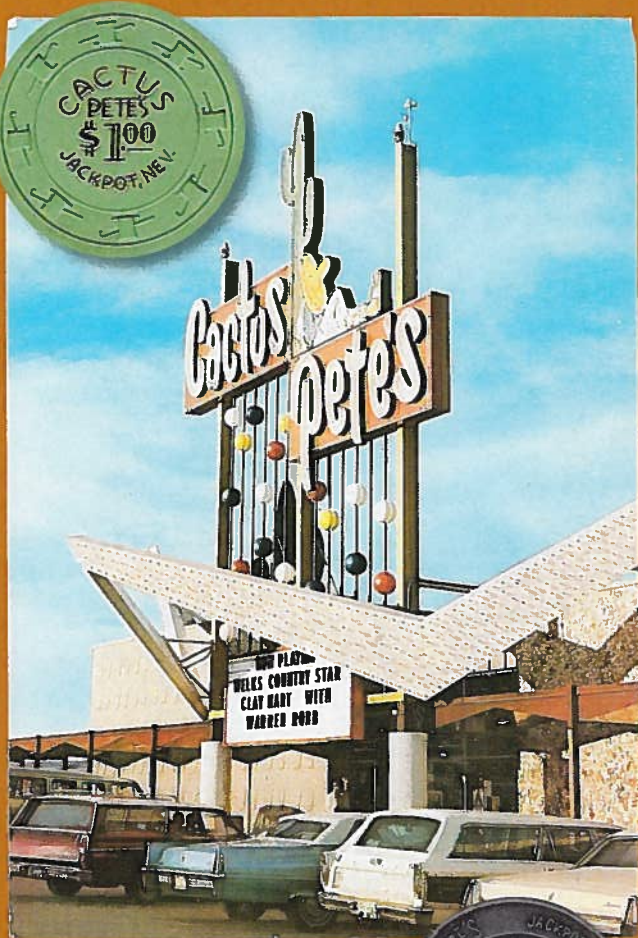
*Date of the ad - Newspaper.*



*Any chip that uses the name "Jackpot, Nev." would have to been made after August, 1959 when that name became official. Cactus Pete's released the above plain mold roulette chips and the \$1.00 and \$5.00 Christy Jones Hat and Cane Mold chips shown below in late 1959's or the early 1960's. They also introduced a line of \$1.00 chips with the names of some of the owners and casino hosts at Cactus Pete's, similar to the Thunderbird series from Las Vegas.*

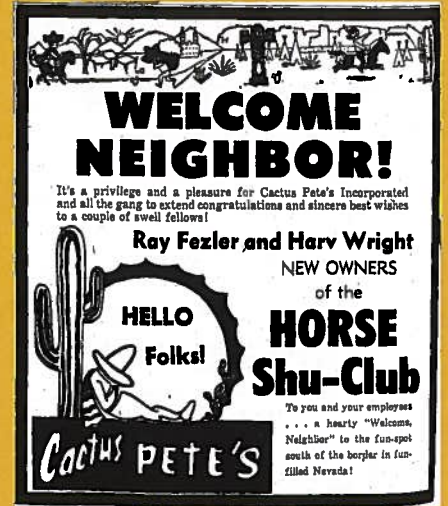






Twin Falls, Idaho as well as the casino operators in Elko, Nevada. These powerful interests lobbied the newly formed Gaming Control Board to stop issuing gaming licenses so close to the Idaho border. The pressure continued and between 1955 and 1959 it was difficult to get a slot license and all but impossible to obtain a non-restricted gaming license.

After several applications and denials for a non-restricted gaming license, Don French had had enough. In December 1956 he sold the Horse Shu Club to Harvey Wright and Ray Fezler for \$250,000. Don took his profits and headed south to Las Vegas where he could get the license he desired.



*Idaho Times - Dec. 4, 1956.*

In October 1957, Idaho contractors Fay and August Dohrmann and Paul Barton won a "recommendation of approval" from the Gaming Control Board for a new club on the Idaho state line. Named for the highway that runs through this yet un-named town, it would be called Club 93. With a proposed investment of \$45,000, the three Idaho businessmen would be licensed for thirty-two slot machines. Club 93 opened quietly on November 1, 1957.

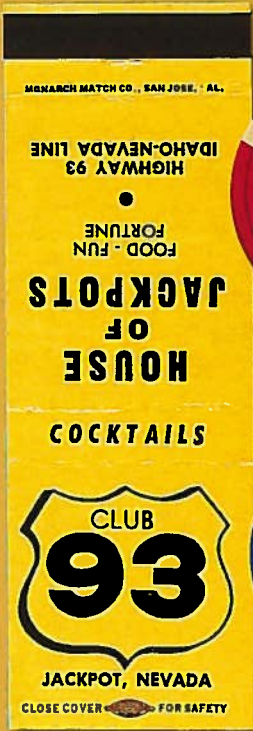
By early 1958 this new community was booming. In addition to the 250+ slot machines, each casino had many other forms of entertainment and giveaways. Club 93 had balloon drops with prizes inside the balloons as well as their Wheel of Fortune. The Horse Shu had a wheelbarrow of silver dollars and the lucky winner could keep as many silver dollars as they could take in two short seconds. One lady managed to get 131 silver dollars, a record. Cactus Pete's gave away eight new cars to lucky winners between February 1957 and March 1958. Electricity had yet to reach this



*This 4th issue DieCar mold Cactus Pete's chip is rather rare. The Official U.S. Casino Chip Price Guide mentions that employees were in charge of destroying these chips. This might be the only one known.*







community and was still supplied by the clubs' own generators. What's a thriving boomtown without a name? In March of 1958, owners



of the Horse Shu Club petitioned the Elko County Commissioners to have the new community named Horse Shu, Nevada.

In May 1958, under protest from Pete Piersanti, owner of Cactus Pete's, the commission approved the name Horse Shu, Nevada. The following month, June 7, 1958, the commission retracted the name and came up with their new official designation: Unincorporated Township Number One--a name no one liked and even fewer wanted. This was an issue that would not go away, and was finally resolved on April 8, 1959 when the commissioners agreed with the club owners to name it Jackpot, Nevada.

Between 1954 and 1959 several different names were used in advertising. Matchbooks, ashtrays, drink tokens and even newspaper ads used various names. Contact, Nevada was the most common for practical reasons: it was a real town and, more importantly, housed the only post office. Horse Shu, Nevada was used mainly for public relations reasons. Many local newspaper ads, as well as promotional advertising, simply used the phrase "Idaho-Nevada Stateline." As a collector, I find the early advertising more interesting and much harder to come by. I don't really like to use the word "rare," but in this instance it certainly applies. I doubt you will ever find "Unincorporated Town Number One" on anything. It might have looked good in the bottom of an ashtray shortened to "Un-Inc. #1" but, to my knowledge, nothing like that has ever been found.

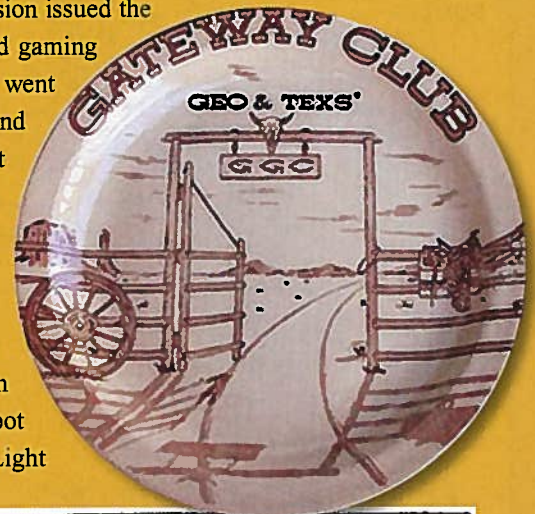
In March 1959 George Cannon, former owner of the Gateway Club in Lake Tahoe and his partner, a Idaho businessman by the

name Charles "Tex" McNeil, applied for a gaming license. The application was for forty slots at George & Tex's Gateway Club. George Cannon applied and was denied several times. George had a questionable background; apparently he had the ability to count cards and was banned from several casinos due to his uncanny ability to win more often than not. He did appeal and was recommended for approval in June 1959 by the Gaming Board. In September 1959 the newly formed Gaming Commission overruled that decision. No license for George. Charles McNeil reapplied on his own merit and was granted a restricted gaming license in October 1959. Tex's Gateway Club opened in December 1959.

The conflict over unlimited gaming on the Idaho state line was finally coming to an end. In October 1959 the newly formed Gaming Commission issued the first non-restricted gaming license there. It went to Ray Fezler and Harvey Wright at the Horse Shu Club. In a *Nevada State Journal* headline dated April 20, 1960 it says in bold print, "Jackpot Given Green Light



Idaho Times - Oct. 30, 1959





For Dice, Cards, Roulette.” The year 1960 brought a new era to Jackpot, Nevada. The old hand-cranked phone system was replaced, a \$100,000 power sub-station went online, and Jackpot finally had its own electricity. In compliance with gaming policy, a sheriff was hired to make sure no one took advantage of the new non-restricted gaming. A much needed benefit came with the official naming of the city: a post office.

Diamond Jim’s opened for the first time on June 10, 1960; the building wasn’t new or even built on site. It had been built originally as a twenty unit dormitory for Kennecott Copper north of Ely, Nevada. In order to transport the building, it was divided into two sections and trucked to Jackpot and reassembled on a new

foundation directly across the street from Club 93. It’s still there today and is probably the oldest structure in Jackpot. Diamond Jim’s was doomed from the start, as problems with two of four partners resulted in financial difficulty from the very beginning. Diamond Jim’s was shut down by the Sheriff’s Department on January 11, 1961. According to the Sheriff, it was closed to protect the assets on behalf of several creditors.

Ray and Ruth Fezler opened the Stardust Casino on June 30, 1961. No expense had been spared on the construction. The sign was seven stories tall, with thirty-four ultra-modern motel units and parking for 200 cars. This was Ray’s showpiece—thirty-five slot machines, as well as live table games, sat upon carpet shipped from the east coast. There was a unique feature as well: a fireplace without a chimney. The smoke was transmitted under the floor and outside. Opening day was advertised as “a magic resort of, fun, frolic, good food and entertainment.” This entire new splendor was built just south of the

# GRAND OPENING

**FRIDAY**      **SATURDAY**      **SUNDAY**  
 June 10      June 11      June 12

## JACKPOT HEADQUARTERS

**FRIDAY**    **FREE Champagne** 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
**FREE ORCHIDS** for The Ladies  
**FREE GIFTS** for The Gents

**SEAFOOD BUFFET . . . All you can eat for only \$2.00**  
 5:00 P.M. TO 9:00 P.M.

Friday - Saturday - Sunday  
**FREE PRIZES**  
and  
**DOUBLE SURPRISES**  
"Round the Clock"  
Nothing to Buy!

The Greatest  
Hawaiian  
Show  
on Earth

Diamond Jim's

**CASINO**  
**SALOON**  
**GOOD FOOD**

**"YOUR BEST BET"**  
 Jackpot, Nevada

THE GEM OF NEVADA

*Idaho Times - June 10, 1960.*

Ray and Ruth's

## STARDUST

JACKPOT, NEVADA  
KENO LIMIT IS POSTED

54

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40

WE PAY ON TICKET PLAYED BY CUSTOMER EACH GAME

41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80

WINNING TICKETS WILL BE PAID FOR EACH KENO GAME





Horse Shu where the Pair-O-Dice Inn once stood.

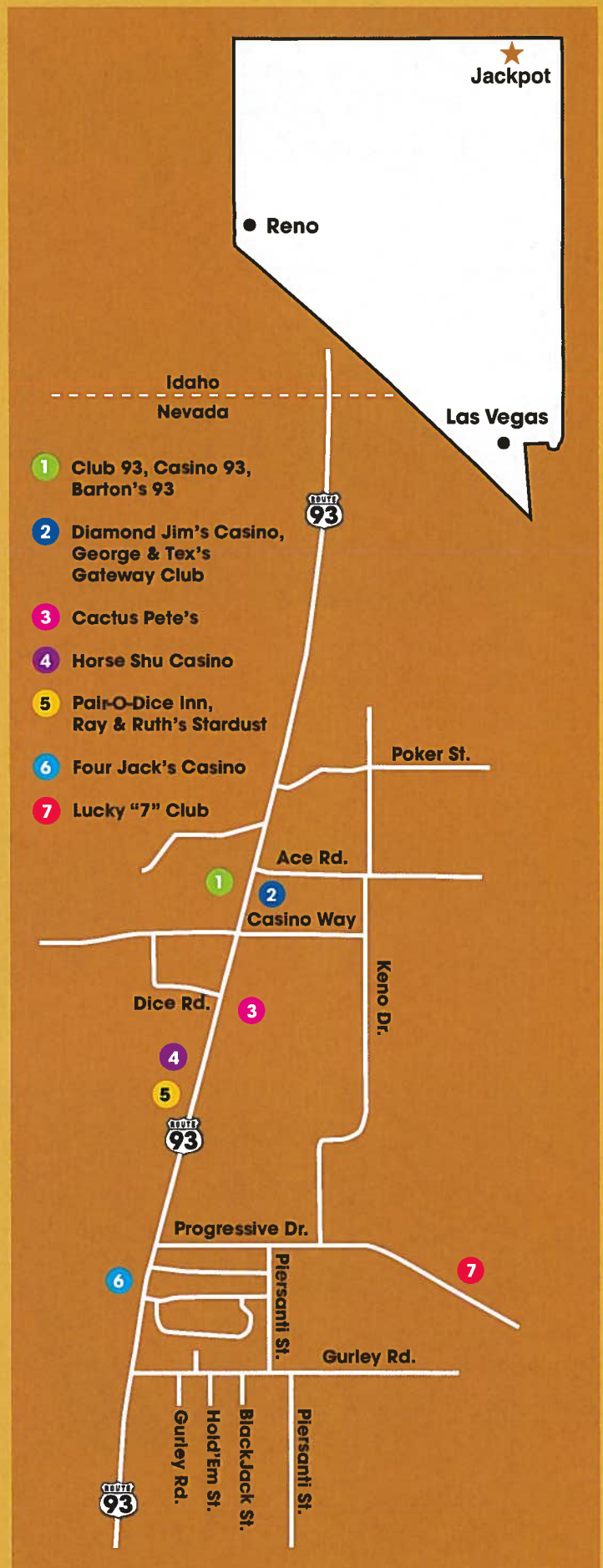
Jack Sutherland applied for a slot permit for seven slot machines for a Lucky 7 Club in 1963. Due to his failure at the Stardust and his proceeding bankruptcy, the Gaming Commission promptly denied his request. The Lucky 7 Club did open in 1963, providing entertainment, food and drink. After several changes in ownership, it ceased to exist sometime in 1968.



*Twin Fall Times - July 19, 1967.*

Jackpot's boom was over by the mid-1960s. Cactus Pete's had bought the Horse Shu in 1964, assuming the dominant position in Jackpot gaming. The Pair-O-Dice was long gone, Tex's Gateway Club had burned to the ground in 1961, and Ray & Ruth's Stardust struggled after the death of Ray Fezler, closing in 1963. Diamond Jim's failed after three different ownerships and closed for the last time in 1968. Thomas Barton acquired 100% ownership of Club 93 in 1970 and changed the name to Barton's Casino 93 and, for all intents and purposes, the Horse Shu Club had become little Cactus Pete's. Casino 93 and the Horse Shu basically remained the same--stuck in the 70's--while Cactus Pete's continued to grow, becoming Jackpot's only modern mega-resort.

Herbert Kime, owner of the Pair-O-Dice Inn, wrote a letter to the editor, published in the Nevada State Journal on May 23, 1958. He said that everyone thinks Jackpot sprang up from the wilderness because with the exception of a few old timers who remembered, history had been forgotten. Even the historians fail to mention what was there before. Jackpot was not the first town in northern Nevada along the Idaho border. Fifty years prior, at the turn of the century, a small town called Twin Springs occupied that very spot. Like many towns of the past, it dried up and blew away, soon forgotten. Mr. Kime reminded me that we do not create history; instead, we are the history and we are the keepers of history. Every story we hear is history passed along and every item in our collection is a piece of history. Some of it is known and some may be a complete mystery. If we are curious, we seek answers, separating fact from fiction. We are the caretakers, the keepers of history. Share your stories, share your knowledge and share what you collect.





# Jackpot Casinos

**Cactus Pete's Inn - Mineral Springs, Nevada.**  
 Opened July 2, 1954.



Peter Piersanti was granted a gaming license in Mineral Springs, Nevada under the name of Cactus Pete's Inn.



**IN PERSON  
 FOR ONE WEEK**

Starting Thurs., Aug. 19

**CURLEY HOGG and GENE RIVERS**

"The Neighborhood Boys" presenting the kind of western music you're sure to like

Curley Hogg was selected by Billboard Magazine as "MR. BANJO" of 1952"

**EXOTIC BUBBLE DANCER**

from Dallas, Texas

—Plenty of Room for Dancing—

Good Food -- Cocktails -- Entertainment

**CACTUS PETE'S  
 DESERT LODGE**

On Highway 93 — "South of the Border"

**Cactus Pete's Inn - Jackpot, Nevada.**  
 Opened October 1, 1956.



Peter Piersanti, Bud Gurley and Dale Wildman were granted a gaming license under the name of Cactus Pete's Inc.





Club 93 - Jackpot, Nevada.  
 Opened on November 1, 1957.



Club 93 was started by Fay and August Dohrmann and Paul Barton. The partnership was short-lived. On March 24, 1958, the Gaming Commission issued a license to Ray Fezler, Harvey Wright and Paul Barton. Partnership between the Wrights and the Bartons lasted until April 2, 1971. Paul "Lavelle" Barton changed the name to Barton's Casino 93.

Roulette began in 1967 with the purchase of a used roulette table. Tom Barton purchased the table at auction from the Riverside Casino in Reno when they went out of business. The first roulette chips were ordered shortly thereafter, sometime in 1967 or early 1968. Those chips were in continuous use until November 2000 when the Gaming Commission insisted on a table designation.

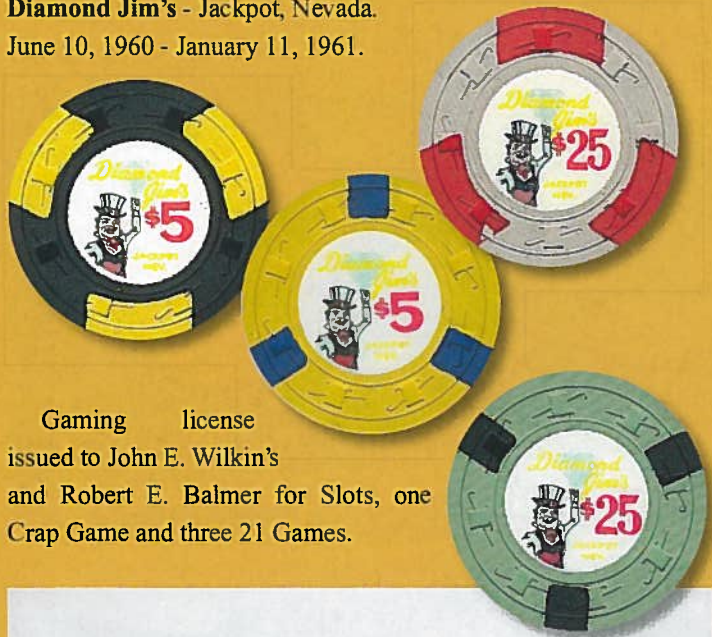


*The gray \$1.00 chip pictured above is suspected to be a prototype sample with a simple pasted on inlay. The yellow "Non-Negotiable" chip on the right is unlisted in pricing guides, and thought to be used as a tournament chip.*

*This black \$1 chip was used by employed skills at the Crap table to stimulate play. According to Richard Hartman, General Manager of Barton's Club 93 only 40 of these chips were ordered in 1966, very few got out to the public.*



**Diamond Jim's - Jackpot, Nevada.**  
June 10, 1960 - January 11, 1961.



Gaming license issued to John E. Wilkin's and Robert E. Balmer for Slots, one Crap Game and three 21 Games.



Top photo of Diamond Jim's in 1963 courtesy of Northeastern Nevada Historical Society and Museum. Bottom photo taken in 2009 courtesy of Roadsidepictures.

**Diamond Jim's - Jackpot, Nevada.**  
November 6, 1964 - July 1965.

Gaming license issued to F.E. Garth at 82%, Clinton Holland Sr. at 13% and Philip Sherwood at 5%. The license was for 50 Slot machines & four table games.



*Grand Opening*  
**FRIDAY, SATURDAY and SUNDAY!**  
OF THE ALL NEW  
*"Gem of the Desert"*  
**Diamond Jim's**  
IN JACKPOT, NEV.

**FREE CHAMPAGNE**  
and Hors d'Oeuvres  
in the BAR

**Free Prize Drawings!**  
ALL DAY, FRI., SAT., SUNDAY!  
NOTHING TO BUY . . . JUST REGISTER AT  
**DIAMOND JIM'S**

**BONUS PRIZES**  
and  
**Surprises**

We Serve  
**The Finest Beef**  
**That Money Can Buy!**  
. . . and we will strive to serve  
the finest steaks in Jackpot—like  
Shrimp, Chicken and Chops—  
prime rib served the way you  
like it—EVERY EVENING!  
INDIVIDUAL COAVES OF  
HOME MADE BREAD . . .  
A Specialty At  
Diamond Jim's!

fabulous  
entertainment  
featuring the  
**Betty Rydell Trio**  
and **THE MC'S** (Lead) ★ MILLER (Cover) ★ MAIN  
★ CARROLL (Chair) ★ CRANE

Your Congenial Host . . . Clint Holland  
at the *"Gem of the Desert . . ."*

**Diamond Jim's Casino**  
IN JACKPOT, NEVADA

*Idaho Times - November 6, 1964.*



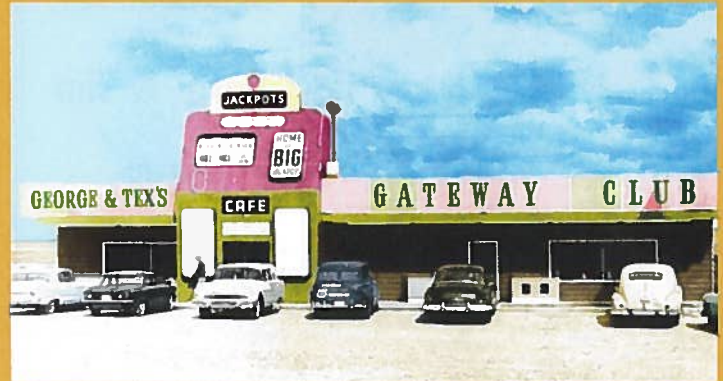
**Diamond Jim's** - Jackpot, Nevada.  
December 1, 1967 - 1969.

John Bermensolo—Slots only. Featured exotic dancing, food and drinks. Club 93 bought the property sometime in 1969 and rented it out for private parties. Diamond Jim's ceased to exist early in 1970 and became a warehouse used by Club 93 for storage. That's what it is today.

*Idaho Times - May 5, 1967.*

**George & Tex's Gateway Club** - Jackpot, Nevada.  
December 1959 – September 10, 1960.

The club was located north of Cactus Pete's and was built by George Cannon, owner of the Gateway Club in Lake Tahoe, and his partner, Tex O'Neill of Idaho Falls. Tex O'Neil was granted a restricted gaming license in October 1959. In the early morning of September 10, 1960 the Gateway Club caught fire; the 100 foot structure was totally destroyed within an hour. Defective wiring was determined as the cause of the blaze.



*Photo from the Janice O'Neal Collection.*

**Horse Shu Club** - Jackpot, Nevada.  
Opened on March 18, 1954.

Don French, Theda French, and Walter Oros were granted a gaming license in March 1954. It was a restricted license for slots only. The Horse Shu Club went through several changes in ownership between 1954 and 1964, when it was purchased by Cactus Pete's.

**Four Jacks** - Jackpot, Nevada.  
Opened 1986 (Slots only).



*Photo courtesy of Roadsidepictures.*



*This very early and very rare Horse Shu Club ashtray shows the town listed as Contact, Nevada.*



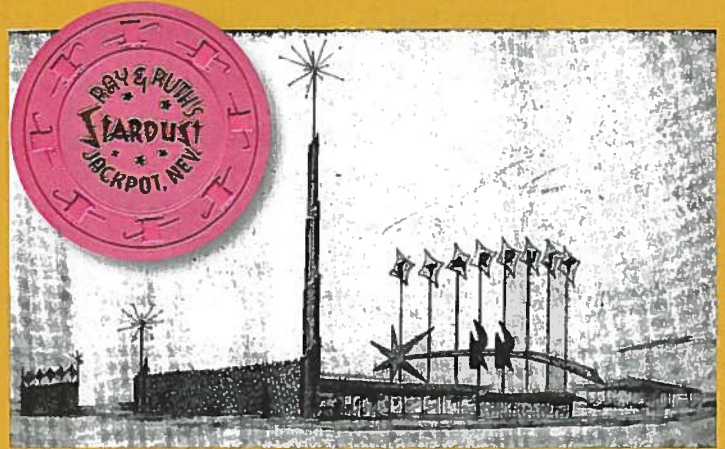
**Lucky "7" Club** - Jackpot, Nevada.  
Opened 1963. Closed 1968.

Herman Schwartz was licensed for seven slot machines in October 1963. Richard Hartman, general manager of Barton's Casino 93, remembers the Lucky 7 Club. He says that it had a few slot machines and was located west of Progressive Street, well back from the highway.

**SPEND  
NEW YEAR'S  
EVE  
AT THE  
LUCKY 7  
CLUB  
IN JACKPOT, NEV.  
WITH  
Betty & Jim  
LIVE  
Entertainment**

**Stardust** - Jackpot, Nevada.  
Opened June 30, 1961. Closed February 20, 1963.

Known as Ray & Ruth's Stardust Club, it was the dream of Ray Fezler, but a short lived dream. In February 1962 Ray died of a heart attack; within a year the Stardust was gone as well. Jack Sutherland and Anna and Yandell Dorsey stepped in and attempted to keep the Stardust going. The Stardust license was suspended in March 1963 for non-payment of gaming taxes and fees.



*Artist Rendering of the Stardust from 1961.*

**Pair-O-Dice** - Jackpot, Nevada.  
Opened August 18, 1954. Closed July 1, 1957.

Herb and Cassie Kime offered "Entertainment Nightly, Dancing From 9 'Til Exhausted! Seven Nights A Week Only!" so the Grand Opening ad from the *Idaho Times* on August 18, 1954 says.

**GRAND  
Opening**

★



**PAIR-O-DICE  
INN**

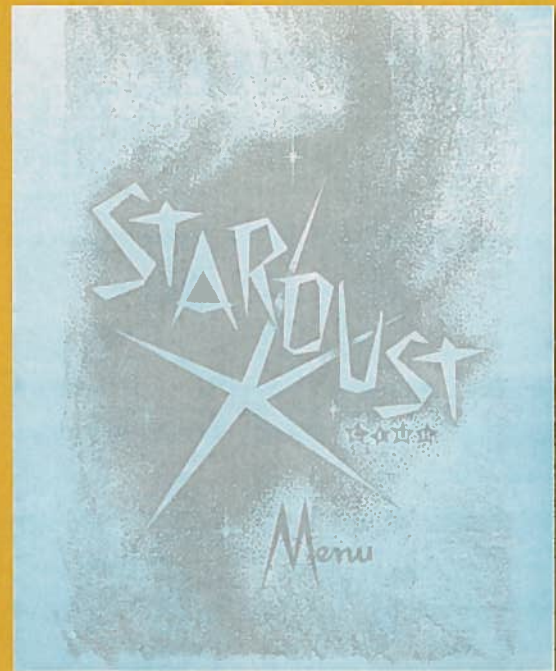
**FRIDAY, AUGUST 20**

HIGHWAY 93—JUST ACROSS NEVADA LINE  
400 Feet South of Famous Horse-Shu Club

**ENTERTAINMENT NIGHTLY**

DANCING FROM 9 'TIL EXHAUSTED!  
SEVEN NIGHTS A WEEK ONLY!

*Where Idaho and Nevada Meet—FOR FUN!*



*A rare menu from Ray & Ruth's Stardust.*

Special thanks to James Campiglia, Mark Englebretson, Andy Hughes, Ricky Pushkin, Martin Kenney and Doug Deems for the use of their images in this article. Also, a special thanks to Richard Hartman, General Manager of Barton's Club 93, for his help in assembling the facts for this article.





*The top photo of an abandoned Diamond Jim's Casino was taken in 2010 by CC&GTCC club member Scott Jaske. Scott passed away in January of 2012. Scott was a sergeant in the Chicago Police department and was an avid photographer. He spent much of his vacation time traveling the United States taking photos of open and closed casinos. The above photo is of Scott in front of the same Diamond Jim's Casino.*



# GRAB SOME POPCORN!

By Pam Goertler #R-3432

My husband and I really enjoy old Nevada. We enjoy reading books and articles and hearing stories about the way Las Vegas used to be, before the days of corporations and mega-resorts. When we're on vacation, we spend most of our time in downtown "old town" Las Vegas. While downtown has been remodeled, refurbished and redecorated, it hasn't been razed. Most of the casinos are still in the original buildings that were constructed in the 1930's through the 1960's, and you can still get a feel for the way it was. For example, there's some stairs in the back of the Horseshoe, near the newsstand. Go up those stairs and you're in the old Apache Hotel. Look around and you will find some leaded glass windows that may have been there when it was the Apache. Go back downstairs, to the bar near the front of the Horseshoe and look up, you'll see a carved light fixture that looks like King Neptune. King Neptune in a casino? It's alleged that the light fixture came from Tony Cornero's SS Rex gambling ship. The SS Rex in Las Vegas was named after Cornero's offshore gambling ship, and we were told from two different sources, that the light fixture came from that ship.

Another way to get glimpses of old Nevada (and not-so-old Nevada) is by watching movies! Hundreds of movies have been partially or completely filmed in Nevada. About a year ago a magazine published a list of their picks for the top 20 movies with old Las Vegas scenes. We were able to find some of those movies and others with Nevada scenes, in flea markets and on eBay. I thought it would be fun to tell you about a few of them.







**Las Vegas Nights (1941):** A light musical comedy that features Tommy Dorsey, his trumpet and his orchestra. There's six or seven musical numbers in the movie, one of which features a young Frank Sinatra singing "I'll Never Smile Again," in his first movie appearance. Also look for Buddy Rich, on the drums.

The movie stars Constance Moore, Virginia Dale, Lillian Cornell and Bert Wheeler as vaudevillians that inherit a dilapidated old building in Las Vegas. They decide to fix up the property and open a small club. Shyster lawyer Hank Ladd represents the group, and he represents a land developer who wants to buy the property...mostly, though, he represents himself. Norma (Constance Moore) gets romantically involved with the land developer's son, but neither of them knows that his father wants the property. Add a mule, a few pigeons, and some casino shots and you end up with a movie that's fun to watch. I'd give the movie 3.5 stars. ★★☆☆

*For those who love old Vegas and gambling:* This movie is a peek at Las Vegas before there was a strip. The movie was released in 1941, the same year that the El Rancho Vegas opened as the first resort on Highway 91, later known as the Strip. During the opening credits you'll get glimpses of many old casino signs including the Apache Casino, Boulder Club, Northern Club and the original Las Vegas Club. The opening scene is a group of singing cowboys riding down Fremont Street past the Northern Club, Las Vegas Club,

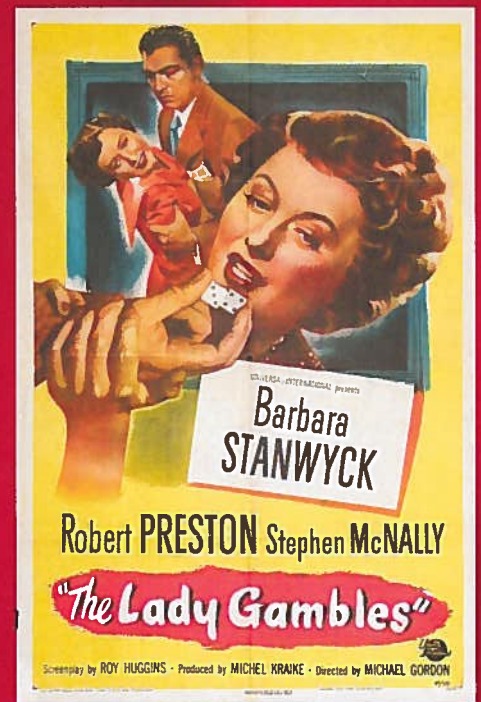
White Spot Café, Frontier Club and Oasis Café. Much of the movie, including a lot of the gambling scenes, takes place at the (fictitious) Nevada Club. One scene has a lot of chips tumbling into a hat, the chips appear to be generic. There are slot machines on the sidewalk, in the lawyer's waiting room and in his inner office! There's a short montage of gambling scenes featuring the wheel of fortune, craps and chuck-a-luck, interspersed with signs that include one for the Kiva Casino. I'd give the Vegas/gambling scenes 4.5 chips.



**The Lady Gambles (1949):** Gambling in a back alley with loaded dice, then getting beaten into unconsciousness, how did Joan Boothe (Barbara Stanwyck) get into this position? To answer that, the movie takes us back a year or so...

Joan's husband, David (Robert Preston), writes for a newspaper and she accompanies him to Las Vegas while he writes a story about Boulder Dam. She used to write for a magazine and thinks it would be fun to write a story about gambling. Joan is spotted taking pictures, and is escorted to the casino manager's office. After he's convinced that the pictures won't be used for blackmail, the manager gives her "house chips" to gamble with and permission to continue taking pictures. When she tells her husband about it, she tells him that "gambling is exciting!" From there it's a short trip to the dark side of gambling... the addiction. In order to gamble, she "borrows" her husband's expense account money, she pawns her camera, and she lies to her husband about what she's done during the day... anything to keep him from knowing that she's gambling.

In one scene, Joan is having lunch with her sister, at the Pelican. The casino manager sits down with them and tells Joan that he'd like her to play in a poker game and that he'll stake her. Her response to him is my favorite line in the movie: "I find that I don't care for gambling much. It's noisy and confusing and just a little...dirty." A proper lady's attitude toward gambling in the 1940's. I'm sure! 4 stars. ★★☆☆





*For those who love old Vegas and gambling:* Many of the scenes are filmed at the “Pelican”, which is easily recognizable as the Flamingo. Most of the gambling scenes seem to be at the Flamingo and maybe the Boulder Club. There are scenes with craps, roulette, poker and horse racing. The only chips that I recognized were generic comet chips. There were shots of the Silver Dollar, Santa Anita Turf Club, Boulder Club, Monte Carlo, Golden Nugget, Frontier Club, El Dorado, and more. 4.5 chips.



**HELDORADO (1946):** Starring Roy Rogers (“King of the cowboys”) and Trigger (“The smartest horse in the movies”), featuring George “Gabby” Hayes, Dale Evans, and Bob Nolan and The Sons of the Pioneers.

The mob was laundering money in Vegas and it was up to Roy to take care of the problem. Dale wants to help but, in typical old-Hollywood fashion, has to be rescued a few times. This is a “standard” Roy Rogers cowboy film...there’s a lot of riding, the good guys always win, and the horse gets higher billing than the heroine!!!

Is it just coincidence that the film was released the same year that Ben “Bugsy” Siegel opened the Flamingo? Notice that the name of the movie is spelled “Heldorado”, while the annual May celebration is named “Helldorado”. The censors wouldn’t allow the second “L” in the name of the movie, though there are signs, posters and banners in several scenes with the correct spelling. 3 stars. ★★ ★

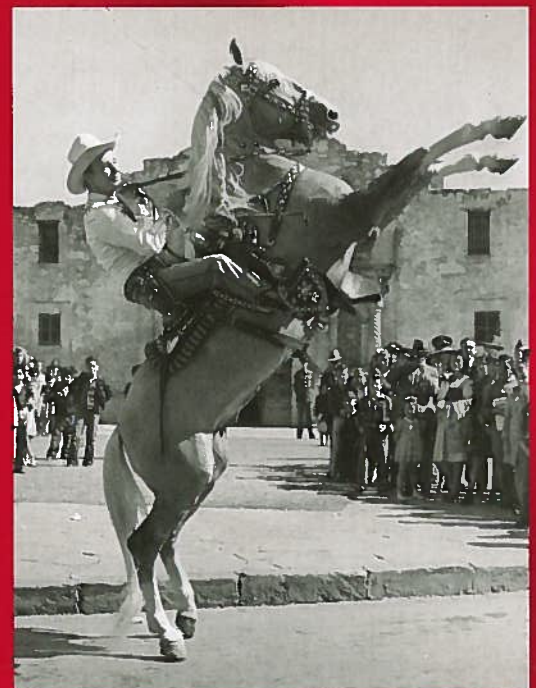
*For those who love old Vegas and gambling:* Helldorado was an annual event in Las Vegas from 1934 until 1997. It featured the Helldorado Village, a rodeo, 3 parades, a Kangaroo Court, beard contests, and other frontier fun. Part of the movie was filmed during the 1946 Helldorado days, and shows scenes from the parades as they go down Fremont Street. There’s glimpses of the SS Rex, the Apache Bar, El Portal Theater, Wolfson Jeweler, Overland Café, Pioneer Club, The Monte Carlo, Boulder Club, Frontier Club “Roulette-

Ladies Welcome”, Bank of Nevada, the original Las Vegas Club, and several other businesses.

Quite a bit of the movie was filmed at the Last Frontier and the Western Village, including scenes around the pool and in the 21 Club casino. There was one shot, by the roulette wheel, which showed stacks of generic “comet” chips. The movie also included shots of Boulder Dam. The Vegas/gambling scenes get 4.5 chips.



Note: In 2005, for their Centennial celebration, Las Vegas brought back a scaled back version of Helldorado Days. There was a small “Helldorado Village” constructed downtown, the Kangaroo Court found the mayor guilty of not wearing a Helldorado button and tossed him in the pokey, and there was a parade that lasted several hours. My husband and I were fortunate to be in town and participate in the celebration, though we only lasted for about the first two hours of the parade, as the temperatures were hotter than helldorado!



*Roy on his trusted horse “Trigger.”*



**The Las Vegas Hillbillys (1966):** The name and description of this movie suckered me in. "In the backwoods of Tennessee, country singer Woody Weatherby receives word that he has inherited a casino in Las Vegas." Sounds fun...right? I mean, I loved the Beverly Hillbillies when I was a kid.

If I liked country music, I might say something like "corny but cute". Personally, though, I don't care much for country music...soooo...the movie didn't have much of a plot, and I fast forwarded through several country songs, including some sung by Ferlin Husky, Sonny James, Connie Smith, Bill Anderson and Del Reeves. The most interesting thing about this movie was seeing "sex goddesses" Mamie Van Doren and Jayne Mansfield playing roles as intelligent blondes. I can only give the movie 1 star ★

**For those who love old Vegas and gambling:** Don't let the name of the movie fool you. There was one shot (stock footage?), that lasted maybe 30 seconds, of the strip. Other than that, the gambling scenes were all at the "Golden Circle Casino" which was probably constructed on a movie lot. There was one shot of some chips, but I didn't try to zoom in on them because I didn't want to prolong the agony. A very disappointing .5 chip.

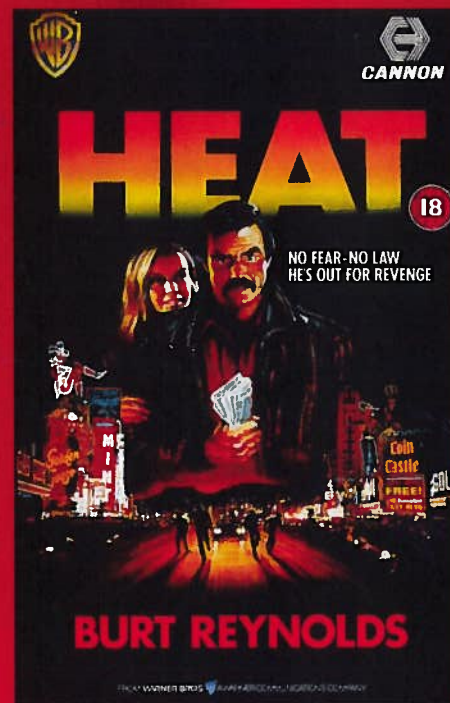


**Heat (1987):** Nick (Burt Reynolds) is a bodyguard with a dream, he wants to live in Venice, Italy. Meanwhile he lives and works in Las Vegas, in an office that is shared with an attorney.

A friend of Nick's, a hooker, is brutalized and beaten. He tracks down the John, a spoiled rich kid with "connections" and helps his friend exact her revenge. Of course the John then goes after Nick.

A rather wimpy young man hires Nick to guard him while he gambles. Nick doesn't really understand this, as the man is playing for small stakes. Eventually it comes out that the man has problems with his self-esteem. He's hoping that Nick will teach him to fight, and to feel like a man. Good action, and Reynolds puts on a good performance, but the ending is awful and ruins an otherwise good idea for a plot. 2.5 stars ★★½

**For those who love old Vegas and gambling:** I don't know if the whole movie was filmed in Vegas. If it was, there were a lot of shots of streets, alleys and neighborhoods that the tourists rarely saw. There's also several shots of the strip. A lot of the gambling takes place in the old Aladdin, using chips that appear to be Aladdin chips. 2 chips.







**The Joker is Wild (1957):** Stars Frank Sinatra (Joe E. Lewis), Eddie Albert (Austin Mack), Beverly Garland (Cassie Mack), Mitzi Gaynor (Martha Stewart), Jeanne Crain (Letty Page) and Jackie Coogan (Swiftly Morgan). Based on the book by Art Cohn.

The movie starts out in Chicago, in the 1920's. Accompanied by his pianist Austin Mack, Joe E. Lewis is singing at the Club 777, a speakeasy owned by Georgie Parker. Joe receives an offer from the owner of the classier Valencia Nightclub, and since his contract at the 777 is up, he accepts the offer. Georgie has a problem with that, because he knows that people are coming in to see Joe. Georgie and one of his henchmen try to explain to Joe that his contract isn't up until Georgie says it's up. Joe won't listen and, with a worried Austin Mack at his side, he opens at the Valencia. In spite of more threats and a black funeral wreath arriving in his dressing room, opening night goes smoothly. Life is good. Joe is contacted by a music producer, and makes a record.

One morning, while Joe is listening to his record, there's a knock on his door. It's Georgie's goons, and they aren't talking any more. A few minutes later, they leave Joe for dead. Miraculously, though his skull is fractured and his vocal chords are cut, Joe is still alive. One of the most dramatic scenes in the movie occurs when Joe wakes up in the hospital, and realizes what happened. Unable to speak, Joe claws at his bandages and beats his head against the wall, while emitting noises that are barely recognizable as human. The faithful Austin, still at his side, manages to prevent him from injuring himself further.

After Joe is released from the hospital, he disappears for several years. Eventually Austin and Swiftly locate him in New York. Embarrassed to admit that he's a pie-in-the-face member of a vaudevillian troupe, he tells them that he's still a singer. Thinking that Joe just needs a break, Austin tells Joe's story to Sophie Tucker, his current employer. At a charity function, where they're both performing, Sophie goes on stage with Joe, tells the audience his story, and asks Joe to sing. Austin plays the intro to "All the Way", Joe sings a few words then stops. Standing on stage in front of hundreds of people, still wearing the costume from his act and unable to sing, Joe mutters "Maybe those guys in Chicago weren't gangsters, maybe they were music critics". A concerned Austin begins to play again. Joe waves him off, with the comment "You might as well forget it, Austin, I can't even talk in that note." After a moment of silence, the audience begins to chuckle. That was the beginning of Joe's evolution into a career as a nightclub comedian.

Joe E. Lewis was born on January 12, 1902, and died on June 4, 1971. The movie follows his life from the 1920's to around 1948-1950. It covers his dependence on alcohol, his brief marriage to actress Martha Stewart (not the domestic diva), and of course his career. I'll give it 4.5 stars. ★★★★★

*For those who love old Vegas and gambling:* Joe E. Lewis spent a lot of time in Las Vegas. He was a regular at the El Rancho Vegas in the 1950's. Unfortunately, the movie ended before that period in his life. There's about 10 minutes near the end of the movie that takes place in an anonymous Las Vegas casino. His wife comes in to surprise him and, when he won't leave the craps table for her, she begs him for a divorce. There are no shots of Las Vegas and no casino signage. Joe is holding a handful of chips, but I couldn't make out what they looked like. 1 chip.



SEE YOU AT  
 "SPLASHBAR" 2012

**Brian "Mr. Splashbar" Cashman**  
**LM-1121-157MA CCCC-06**



**Las Vegas Shakedown (1955):** Stars Dennis O’Keefe (Joe Barnes), Thomas Gomez (Al “Gimpy” Sirago), Colleen Gray (Julie Rae), Charles Winninger (Ernest/Ernie Raff), Elizabeth Patterson (Mary Raff), Mary Beth Hughes (Mrs. Mabel Dooley)

It was Joe Barnes’ testimony, at the Kefauver hearings, that put Al “Gimpy” Sirago away for income tax evasion. Gimpy did his time at Alcatraz, much of it in solitary confinement. During his confinement, Gimpy plotted how he would force Joe, the active partner in the group that owned the El Rancho Vegas, to sell him the ERV for 2 cents on the dollar. He would then force Joe to sign a paper saying that the rest of the ownership of the ERV was transferred to Gimpy as payment of a gambling debt. Once Gimpy owned the ERV, he and his henchmen would kill Joe.

Meanwhile schoolteacher Julie Rae headed to Las Vegas, to the El Rancho Vegas, to research a book on gambling. Her book was intended to show that, mathematically, the house has a slight edge so, in the long run, the gambler can’t win. She reminds Joe of someone he used to know...someone who’s now happily married, and that keeps Joe’s attention. Julie likes to tell Joe how prim and proper she is but, at the end of one day’s acquaintance she’s quite happy to hear him utter the words “As my wife, you’ll have to own lots of pretty clothes.”

Ernest and Mary Raff, an older couple from small-town Nebraska, are having a daring adventure at the El Rancho Vegas. He is the head of the bank, and it would cause a scandal if anyone in their hometown knew that they’d gone to “gasp!” Las Vegas! Even more daring, Ernie tells Mary that he’s never gambled before, but he’s going to now. After all “...we’ve set up trust funds for our children, and for their children. We’ve given a lot of money to charity, and we’ll continue to give. We’ve got money set aside, and there’ll be more, so what difference will it make if I lose a few thousand dollars?” Mary pats his arm, and tells him to go ahead. Several hours later he’s up \$10,000. Mary calls home, only to discover that the bank examiner was at his bank, and discovered a shortage in the books. Ernest assures Mary that everything will be fine, there’s probably just an error in the books and it will be found. Just the same, they should head for home. Mary is still concerned, what if an employee did embezzle from the bank, and Ernie shows up with \$10,000 that he can’t explain? Ernie agrees that could cause a problem, so decides that a few more hours won’t matter...he’ll just gamble the money away. Of course, a few hours later he’s up \$15,000.

Another guest at the El Rancho Vegas is Mrs. Mabel Dooley. She stopped at the ERV with \$3000, on her way home to Utah. She and her husband will be using the money to put a down payment on a lunch wagon. She gambles away \$2000, and begs Joe to help her. He suggests that she take the \$1000 that she still has, and go home. She says he doesn’t understand, she’s had a gambling problem before and it almost destroyed their marriage. Again, Joe tells her to go home. Instead, she heads for the bar, and from there to the roulette table.

This movie is a good one to watch while you’re doing something else. You don’t have to pay close attention to keep up with the story lines, and nothing happens that will keep you glued to the t.v. while your dinner burns on the stove, or you forget that you let the dog out in the rain. I’ll give it 2.5 stars ★★½

*For those who love old Vegas and gambling:* The entire movie was filmed at El Rancho Vegas, which I thought was pretty cool. There were several shots of the outside and the signage. There were several gambling scenes shot in the casino, but I couldn’t make out any chips. Unfortunately, there were no shots of any of the other casinos in town, inside or out. I’ll give it 2.5 chips.





# What Kind of Chips Can I Collect?



By Erik Dauplaise #R-8053



## Part One



If you are new to the casino chip collecting hobby or an avid collector looking to expand your collection you have many great choices when deciding what to collect.

This is the first of three articles that will cover many of your chip collecting options.





In the Summer of 1991 I went to Atlantic City and collected my first chip. For eighteen years I kept collecting without knowing about any other collectors. Then in the Autumn of 2009 I learned about and joined the CC&GTCC. Soon I discovered the variety of chips I could collect and I decided that when I went to my first convention I would do an exhibit showcasing the world that had unfolded before my eyes.

I went to my first convention in June of 2012 and displayed about 75 chips showing some collecting options. After I returned home I decided to transform my exhibit into electronic media to be shared with the CC&GTCC, especially new members. I continue tweaking this collection by replacing chips or adding new ones not in my original display. The collection is now more than 100 chips

## Denominations/Number

Collecting by chip denomination or number is very common so we'll start here. The most common fractional chips are .25 and .50. You will have no problem finding chips with the denominations 1, 2.50, 5, 25 and 100. And denominations over 100 are not hard to find either. Chips that share numbers with coin/paper currency (.20, 2, 10, 20 and 50) exist plus lots of values in-between.

I have seen most numbers 1-99 on roulette chips and almost every number 1-100 on lammers or on counters. If your lucky number is between 1-100 then you have chips to collect!

**Fractional monetary units:** In the "good ole-days" when you could buy a burger and a soda for a dime (ask somebody in his/her 80's or 90's) small fractional chips like 5¢, 10¢ & 25¢ were plentiful. But as time passed minimum bets increased so now even 50¢ chips are being used less and less in many US casinos. You will not find many chips with 1¢, 30¢, 40¢, 60¢, 70¢ or 75¢ denominations.



€ 1/2  
Casino Bandal  
France

Actually this is a .5 chip but it says 1/2 so this is the smallest printed denomination chip I know. Some other European casinos also use €1/2.



1¢  
Artichoke's Poker  
Palace  
Carson City, NV

This is a gambler training chip. It allowed gamblers to learn a new game without risking lots of money. There are not many 1¢ chips. Artichoke's Poker Palace is closed. By collecting chips or other memorabilia from closed casinos we are preserving gaming history.



5¢  
Desser House  
Salton City, CA

According to "The Gaming Table" this casino was open from 1970-1977.



10¢  
Puyallup Tribe  
Bingo Palace  
Tacoma, WA



This chip has the word ANTE on it so I am guessing this was used for poker.



12 1/2¢  
The Avalon  
Emeryville, CA

This is an unusual denomination for a chip; maybe the 1/2 payoff portion for blackjack on a 25¢ bet? According to "The Gaming Table" this casino closed in 1972 so I guess that is a possible explanation.





**12½¢**  
**The Avalon**  
**Emeryville, CA**



This is an unusual denomination for a chip; maybe the ½ payoff portion for blackjack on a 25¢ bet? According to "The Gaming Table" this casino closed in 1972 so I guess that is a possible explanation.



**30¢**  
**PI**  
**Unknown**



UFC = unidentified flying chip – nobody knows where they come from.



**20¢**  
**Maxamillion**  
**Casino Cruises**  
**Key West, FL**

According to "The Gaming Table" this day cruise casino operated from 1997-1999. Maybe another ante chip?



**40¢**  
**Wrest Point**  
**Tasmania, Australia**

Wikipedia: The Wrest Point Hotel Casino was Australia's first legal casino, opening in the suburb of Sandy Bay in Hobart, Tasmania, on 10 February 1973.



**25¢**  
**Joker's Wild**  
**Henderson, NV**

The ¼ and ½ monetary units are the most common fractional denominations.



**€ 0,5**  
**Casino de Lloret**  
**Spain**

A plastic European Jeton (zhe-ton) and common fractional denomination.



**60¢**  
**Holiday**  
**Reno, NV**

This chip is used for purchasing a single keno ticket.





**70¢**  
**Union Plaza**  
**Las Vegas, NV**

Another keno chip.



**75¢**  
**Star City**  
**Sydney, Australia**

I believe this chip is used for ante at a poker table.



**€1,25**  
**Grand Casino**  
**Barcelona, Spain**

A different plastic was used for this Jeton than the €0,50 example. I do not know how this denomination is used but I would guess it is a drop chip (see \$4.00).



**\$1.50**  
**Top of the Vine**  
**Lebrec, CA**

This PMSC (plastic molded slug core) chip is also a drop chip.

## Monetary units or numbers 1 to 25

This range is where many collectors focus their attention. Casino table games are well stocked with \$1, \$2.50 (blackjack), \$5 and \$25 dollar chips making these denominations the collecting sweet spot. many chips with 1¢, 30¢, 40¢, 60¢, 70¢ or 75¢ denominations.

**Limited Editions:** Some casinos (Las Vegas' Palms, Hard Rock and Four Queens in particular) create several limited edition \$5.00 and/or \$25.00 chips every year just for collectors. An run of LE chips may be as few as 25 and sometimes more than 5,000. These chips are made for holidays, anniversaries, musicians, comedians, etc. A chip costs about \$1.00 to make and they sell them at a 500%-2,500% mark-up! Limited edition \$1.00, \$2.50, \$10.00, \$20.00 and \$100 chips exist and new ones are made but not as frequently as \$5.00 and \$25.00 chips.



**\$2.00**  
**The Casino at the**  
**Radisson Poker**  
**Aruba**

Collecting chips from the Caribbean Islands is fun especially if you travel to each location to get your chips!



**\$2.50**  
**Playboy Casino**  
**Atlantic City, NJ**

I think coin in center (CIC) chips are very cool. The \$2.50 denomination chip (aka snapper) is used to pay the ½ portion for blackjack on a \$5.00 bet.

Many different items with the Playboy Bunny logo are collected by people all over the world.



**\$1.00**  
**Caesars**  
**Indiana Riverboat**

This chip is from a riverboat casino. Many riverboat casinos are paddle boats that sail on the Mississippi river and its tributaries.





**\$3.00**  
**Mohegan Sun**  
**Indian/Tribal Casino**  
**Uncasville, CT**

Per my sister-in-law (a cashier supervisor at Mohegan Sun) this chip was originally used at the tables for wagering when the casino first opened and had lower table limits. When the limits were raised they moved these chips to the poker room for games with small/big blinds of \$3.00/\$6.00



**\$4.00**  
**The Hard Rock**  
**Las Vegas, NV**

This is a drop chip used at the Hard Rock Poker Room. The casino takes (rakes) a portion of every pot and “drops” it into the till. Many different items from the Hard Rock Cafes and casinos are collected by people all over the world.



**\$3.33**  
**www.oldvegaschips.com**  
**Pete & Chantal Rizzo**  
**Las Vegas, NV**

A clever combination of Halloween, coupon, unique denomination and limited edition all in one chip.



**\$5.00**  
**Celebrity Cruises**  
**Cruise Ship**

A wet chip = cruise ship (salt water vessel) chip. Not to be confused with a riverboat (fresh water/river) chip.



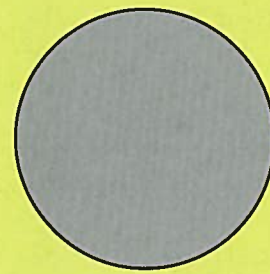
**\$3.50**  
**The Garage**  
**Home Set**

While this chip comes from a home set and not a licensed casino, there is also a \$3.50 chip from the Top of the Vine Casino as well (see \$1.50 above).



**6D**  
**Home set**  
**United Kingdom?**  
**Pre-Decimal Day**  
**(1971) chip**

This is not really a 6 unit denomination but a 6 pence (pennies) or 1/2 a shilling (which was 1/20 of a pound “£”). I wanted something other than another roulette chip. I do not know of any existing \$6.00 casino chips.



**\$3.60**  
**Sahara Tahoe**  
**Lake Tahoe, NV**

This somewhat rare Keno chip is beyond my price range (\$200+). I could not even find a picture/scan of this one.



**\$7.00**  
**Palms**  
**Las Vegas, NV**

According to Gene Trimble this chip was not designed for use at the tables (it could be used to place a bet) but as souvenir/advertisement. I know of the four Palms \$7.00 chips & two \$7.00 silver strikes from Harrah's Tahoe.





**\$7.50**  
**The Opera House**  
**North Las Vegas, NV**

Instead of getting a \$5.00 chip with a \$2.50 snapper for a blackjack (on a \$5.00 bet) you would get this single \$7.50 chip. Although it seems like a good idea, not many casinos used this denomination.



**\$11.00**  
**Fitzgeralds**  
**Reno, NV**

This unique denomination chip was used to payout 11 to 1 on a table game called Red Dog Poker (a variation of acey-duecey/in-between). The payout was made when the same ranked card was dealt three times in a row in a single hand.



**\$8.00**  
**Reno Hilton**  
**Reno, NV**

According to Gene Trimble \$8.00 "Chinese Year of the [animal]" chips are not designed for use at the tables (they can be used to place a bet) but as good luck charms. The number 8 is considered lucky for the Chinese.

Unlike the \$7.00 chips a collector can find lots of different \$8.00 and other denomination (\$1.00, \$5.00, \$25.00) "Year of the [animal]" chips.



**12**  
**Hilton**  
**Atlantic City, NJ**

This Atlantic City roulette chip seems to be made in a similar style to a Jeton. The number 12 is the last sought after numbered chip to be used on a clock face. I do not know of any \$12.00 chips.



**IX (\$9.00)**  
**Caesars**  
**Atlantic City, NJ**

Several different Roman themed casinos (most notably Caesars) have used Roman numerals on their roulette chips. I do not know of any \$9.00 casino chips.



**12.50FR**  
**Casino Ruhl**  
**Nice, France**

This is an unusual denomination for a chip; maybe the 1/2 payoff portion for blackjack on a 25FR bet?



**\$10.00**  
**Four Queens**  
**Las Vegas, NV**

From the CC&GTCC website: a Silver Strike is a prize token housed in a round two-piece hard transparent plastic case that is dispensed from a slot machine in lieu of coins or redeemable tokens.

Halloween is one the most popular limited edition/holiday chips and silver strikes.



**15**  
**Home Set**  
**Unknown**

A gaming or gambling counter.





**\$20.00**  
**The Dunes**  
**Las Vegas, NV**

This oversized chip (44mm diameter instead of 39mm) was used specifically on Baccarat tables. I am told that Baccarat chips are larger because the table is very wide and the older security cameras saw the larger chips better.

Because it is \$20.00 instead of \$25.00 it makes paying the 5% commission easy: a \$1.00 chip (see paper currency notes below).



**\$25.00**  
**Pussy Cat A-Go Go**  
**Bill Borland**  
**Commemorative**  
**Chip**

From the CC&GTCC website: Bill Borland was one of the first chip dealers, and used to produce a catalog he called the "Blue Book of Casino Chips." Borland worked with Atlantic Standard Molding to produce a line of Commemorative chips from closed casinos. These chips were never meant to deceive collectors, although this has happened over the years due to inadequate or incorrect descriptions in on-line auctions and through unscrupulous dealers.

*I do not know of any \$13.00 – \$19.00 and \$21.00 – \$24.00 chips or any use they might be to a casino*



**30**  
**Casino Club Union**  
**Melo, Uruguay**

I wanted to put this plaque in my exhibit/collection for both its shape and unique denomination but I could not find one to purchase. Image from Virgil Foss.



**\$40.00**  
**Circus Circus**  
**Las Vegas, NV**

This 41mm diameter paper (card stock?) chip looks like it was punched out from a sheet. Because it is for tickets my guess would be it was used for carnival rides or games.



**50**  
**Lammer**

Lammers per Gene Trimble: Pit people put them on gaming tables when they remove chips. Designates they owe the table. Poker uses them when they fill table banks.



**60**  
**Engdahl Casino**  
**Sverige, Sweden**

The casino was founded by Matthias Engdahl and operated for over 20 years in Sweden until Cherry Casinos acquired it in 2004. The scroll mold chips were manufactured by a Spanish gambling supply house named Hispania Casino Equipment S.L. (information from eBay).

## Monetary units or numbers 26 to 100

The primary chips in this range are 50 and 100. There are unusual denominations between 26-100, mostly in units of 10 or ending with a 5. Chips celebrating casino or event anniversaries (usually ending in 0 or 5) are also a collecting option.





**\$75.00**  
**Bally's**  
**Las Vegas, NV**

A commemorative token celebrating their 75th anniversary.



**250**  
**Casino Taoro**  
**Spain**

This is a very unusual denomination for a chip. Image from eBay.



**\$80.00**  
**Union Plaza**  
**Las Vegas, NV**



Union Plaza had two \$80.00 chips for Pan Tournaments, different H&C molds. The images are from the Chip Guide.



**\$300.00**  
**Four Queens**  
**Las Vegas, NV**



A common denomination for Silver Strikes but not for chips.



**\$100.00**  
**Holiday Casino**  
**Cruises**  
**Florida**

It's a chip. It's a token. Is it confused? No, it's both, it's a choken.



**500**  
**E. Ch de C**  
**Argentina (possibly)**



**200 FR**  
**Casino Deauville**  
**Calvados, France**



A plastic chip/plaque.

Chips can be canceled/voided in several ways: driller, notched, hot stamp canceled. This chip has been drilled.





**\$1,000.00**  
**Red Dragon**  
**Movie Prop**



**\$5,000.00**  
**Jillian's**  
**Boston, MA**

Actual movie props or reproductions exist for several movies: the James Bond series, Casino and Rush Hour (this chip) are just a few.

In states that do not have legalized gambling some entertainment businesses offer non-money gambling or poker leagues/games. You pay an entry fee and win prizes instead of money.



**\$2,000.00**  
**Butane Lighter**



**\$7,500.00**  
**Lammer**



These type of lammers indicate the amount of chips that have been removed from a table tray during a table credit slip transaction, or an amount of chips that has been given to a customer for wagering on credit prior to completion of a credit instrument (marker). When the customer requested a marker for the remainder of his credit line, the pit boss put a 5,000 lammer on the blackjack table and the dealer cut out \$5,000 in chips to give the player.



These unique butane lighters come in several denominations including \$25.00, \$100.00, \$500.00, \$1,000.00 and \$5,000.00. Collecting chips in these high denominations can be very costly; but, these lighters can easily be found in the on-line auction world.





**10,000**  
**Casinos Municipales**  
**Montevideo, Uruguay**

Plaques for very high denominations are not very common in U.S. casinos. South American and European casinos use plaques more frequently for their higher denominations. They are usually easier to find and cheaper than the few U.S. plaques that exist.



**\$25,000**  
**Zombies Home Set**

Zombies want to eat your brains... and play poker too!



**\$1,000,000.00**  
**Souvenir**

A cheap souvenir available at many casino gift shops.

Despite my searching I have not been able to find out why the most common U.S. casino chip denominations are \$1.00, \$5.00, \$25.00, \$100.00 yet U.S. paper currency is printed in denominations of \$1.00, \$5.00, \$10.00, \$20.00, \$50.00, \$100.00. I understand the reason for reducing the number of chips in a rack from six to four (save space, simplicity) but how did the \$25 become the standard? Seems to me that \$20 would have made more sense. Many Card rooms (especially those in California) use \$20.00 chips as standard rather than \$25.00. If anyone knows the answer I would love to hear it.

In part 2 we will look at different chip shapes, materials and molds.

**Christine and Sheldon Smith**  
*of*  
**ONENEVADADOLLAR,**

**our eBay user ID,**  
**take this opportunity to thank all of**  
**the people who have purchased casino**  
**memorabilia from us.**



**Watch for our future sales on eBay and**  
**elsewhere. What a great hobby!**

*-Thank You!*



DISASTER AT

# MGM Grand

By Todd Barrett #LM-5068-91

On November 21, 1980, a fire broke out in the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas, killing 85 people. The tragedy remains the worst disaster in Nevada history, and the third-worst hotel fire in modern U.S. history.

*Photo courtesy of the Las Vegas News Bureau*



## The MGM Grand Hotel and Casino

When opened on December 23, 1973 the 26 story, 2,084 hotel room MGM Grand Hotel and Casino was the largest hotel in the world. The hotel was built on the southeast corner of Flamingo Rd. and Las Vegas Blvd., South. But, getting the \$106 million MGM open on this corner was quite a journey.

In 1963, the Three Coins Motel was located on the same corner. This small hotel enjoyed moderate success in its location, taking in overflow guests from the Flamingo Hotel and Casino located just across Flamingo Road and the Dunes Hotel and Casino located just across Las Vegas Blvd. In July of 1967, the Bonanza Hotel and Casino opened just south of the Three Coins Motel. This busy intersection caught the eye of casino mogul Kirk Kerkorian who had opened his International Hotel and Casino in July of 1969. Kerkorian had big plans for the property; but, he needed to deal with the Three Coins Motel and the Bonanza.

In 1970, Kerkorian (who at the time owned MGM Movie Studios) was able to purchase the Bonanza, but there were disputes about where the property line was and who owned what land



*The MGM fire occurred at one of the busiest intersections in the world at the time. Home to the MGM Grand, the Dunes, Caesars Palace, the Flamingo and Barbary Coast, which acted as a command post for rescue operations that November Day.*



MARTIN STERN JR., A.I.A.  
ARCHITECT & ASSOCIATES



*Photo courtesy of UNLV Special Collections.*



beneath and around the Bonanza. In the end, Kerkorian wound up with the land where the now-closed Three Coins Motel had sat. Kerkorian built his newest mega-resort on the land right next to the still-open, but struggling, Bonanza Hotel. Kerkorian would later purchase the Bonanza and the land it sat on to expand the MGM.

When the MGM was opened, it set the new standard for size and luxury in Las Vegas, and was considered to have made the biggest impact on Las Vegas until the Mirage Hotel and Casino opened in 1989. The MGM immediately turned the intersection of Flamingo Rd. and Las Vegas Blvd., South into one of the busiest in the world. Currently, Bally's Hotel and Casino is operating in the building that once was the MGM.

## The Construction

While the MGM was the newest and most anticipated hotel and casino in Las Vegas during the 1970's, there were questions about whether the newest building was "state-of-the-art." Fire-sprinklers were not installed in the hotel, and only certain areas of the casino level had fire-sprinklers.

The fire marshal put pressure on the owners to install fire sprinklers, but he met resistance from the MGM executives. MGM even received a recommendation letter from one of their own consultants that indicated, "The liability of all the un-sprinklered areas in this building should be a concern to your corporation." Despite this, MGM decided against installing sprinklers.

The cost of sprinkler installation was estimated at \$192,000, and the MGM owners petitioned the Clark County Building Department to decide that the fire-sprinkler requirements didn't apply to the hotel and casino. MGM executives reasoned that, because the hotel and casino were open and busy 24 hours a day, any fire would be quickly recognized and put out by employees. They thought there was no portion of the building that was left unmonitored and, therefore, there was no need for fire sprinklers in all sections of the building. In the end, the Building Department agreed with the MGM executives and granted them their permit. The Building Department finally decided that any area that was not occupied 24 hours a day would be required to have fire sprinklers.

## The Fire

Employees and witnesses, interviewed after the fire by Clark County Fire Department investigators, and by Clark County District Attorney's Office, reported smelling smoke and seeing a haze in the Deli and the surrounding areas on the main casino level for days before the fire on Friday, November 21, 1980. The Investigation Report on the MGM Grand Hotel Fire, prepared by the National Fire Protection Association of January 15, 1982 reveals the following about the day of the fire:

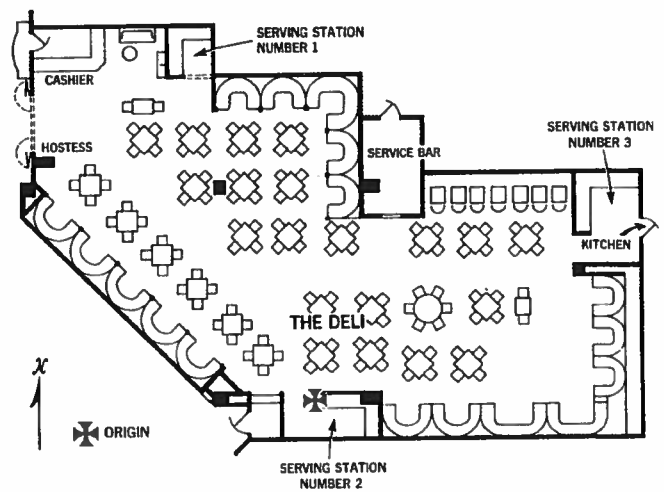
*The head hostess of the Orleans Coffee House, the Deli and the Dealer's Lounge closed the Deli at*

*approximately 1:10 A.M. and checked it again at 2:30 A.M. before going off duty. She did not smell any smoke or notice anything unusual. Another employee was in each serving station of the Deli before five and six A.M. and "didn't see a thing."*

*The first observations of actual fire, however, consistently placed the fire in the Deli, specifically in the area of the serving station on the south wall of the Deli. An employee of the Orleans Coffee House was in the Deli and she noticed blue sparks coming out of the Keno board, followed shortly by black smoke. She went to the kitchen and told the assistant chef about the fire, then went to tell her boss who was sitting at the counter. Neither employee of the Orleans Coffee House saw smoke coming from the Deli area and then observed the south wall of the Deli burst into flame. She left the area immediately.*

*A chef was cooking bacon on the broiler when a waitress told him there was a fire in the Deli. The chef went into the Deli and observed flames accompanied by black smoke extending approximately two feet all around the Keno board. He immediately went to the telephone and notified the operator that there was a bad fire in the Deli. He then grabbed a fire hose and was about to use it on the fire when someone told him not to put water on an electrical fire. The chef then dropped the hose. The lights went out in the kitchen Deli area but the chef saw that the fire was getting out of control and advised his fellow workers to get out of the kitchen. They exited through a smoke-filled hallway to an exit door."*

According to the final report from the Clark County Fire Department, the fire started just after 7:00 AM in the pastry



*The Deli floor plan.*



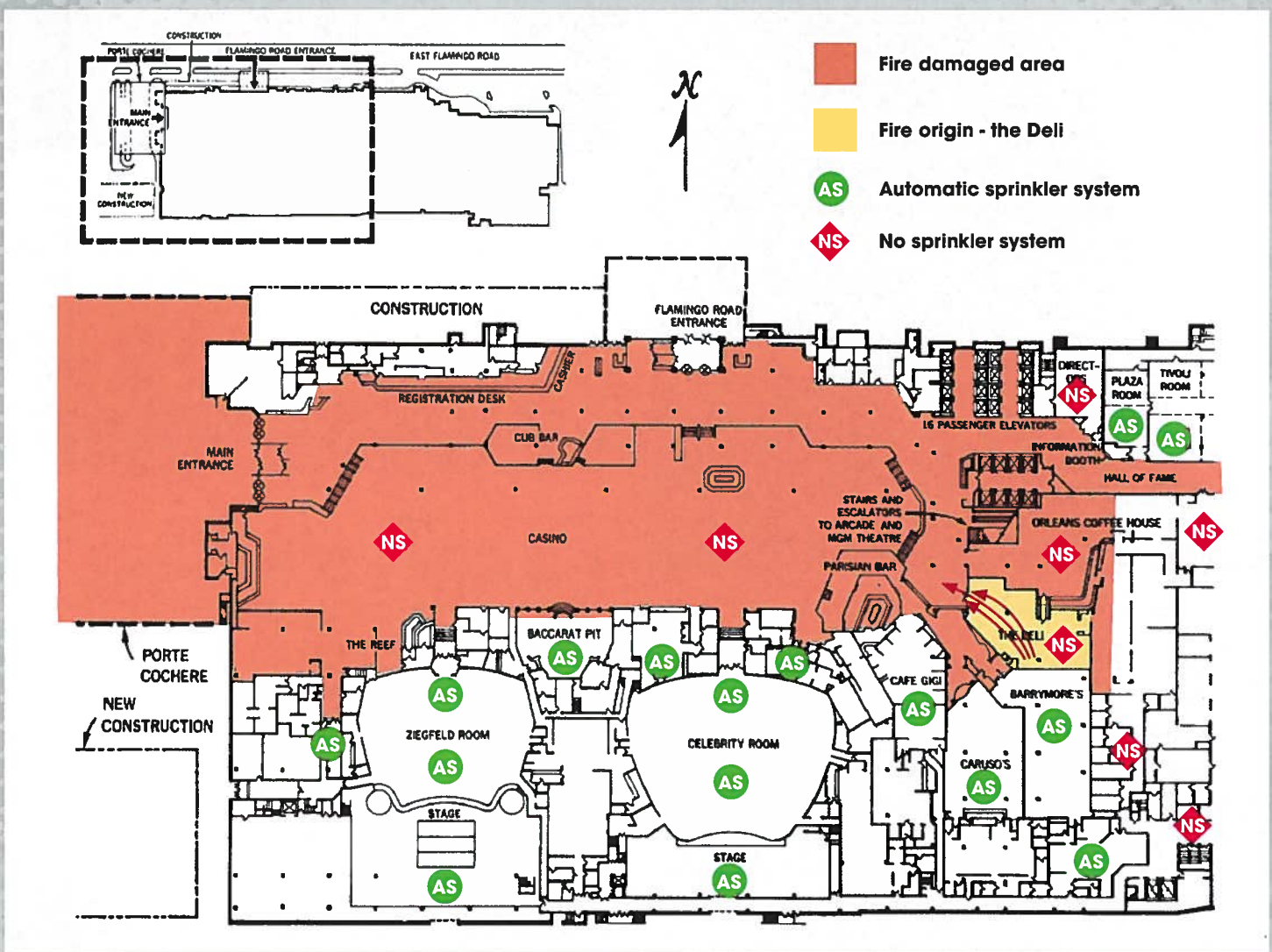
display case inside the Deli. Wires that supplied the electricity to the display case were not properly covered with conduit material. This left the wires exposed and may have caused sparking inside the walls. The fire inside the walls superheated all the surrounding materials until fire “flashed over” and exploded through the ceiling and into the Deli seating area. Flashover is when there is an excessive buildup of heat and gasses from the fire itself, and all surrounding combustible materials are heated to their ignition temperature, simultaneous ignition occurs, and the area becomes fully involved in fire.

The fire quickly spread through the Deli consuming all combustible materials. The shape of the Deli funneled the flames and heat toward the entrance. It quickly exited the Deli and surged into the main floor of the casino. At this point, the fire was moving at a rate of 15 feet per second. Because the fire was so powerful

and moving at such a rapid rate, it was described by many as a “fireball.”

As the fireball traveled rapidly through the casino, there was little time to do anything but flee. Bobby Combs a Blackjack dealer at MGM during the fire was interviewed by the Department of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms after the fire. Combs stated:

*...at approximately 7:00 a.m. on November 21, 1980, he was dealing Blackjack in the casino when he heard a commotion and saw people running in and about the end of the Casino near the Coffee Shop. At first, Combs thought it was a fight until someone yelled “Fire!” At this time, he saw dense black smoke entering the Casino area from the area of the Coffee Shop. Combs’ Pitboss told all dealers to put a “lid” on the games.*



Casino level layout showing the fire damaged areas. Notice how the fire is stopped in the areas with sprinkler protection. MGM Executives decided that any area that was “24 Hour” would not need sprinklers. They assumed that any fires in those areas would be quickly put out by employees. The Deli, the origin of the fire, was open 24 hours a day when the MGM opened, so sprinklers were not installed. A few years before the fire, the Deli changed it’s schedule and closed down at midnight, re-opening at 8:00 AM. Sprinklers were never installed in the Deli which was no longer open 24 hours a day.



Combs reported that by the time he had reached under the table, located and placed the glass lid over the chip tray, he looked up to see bright red flames reaching half way to the ceiling, rolling down the slop area located at the end of the Casino adjacent to the coffee shop. Combs stated he hesitated only a short time and then headed for the casino exit. Before he reached the door, the Casino's lights were completely blacked out by the smoke and Combs stated that for an instant he didn't think he would make it to the doors.

The Clark County Fire Department was the first to arrive at the scene at 7:19 AM, just four minutes after the first call for help from a operator at the MGM. The first responders to arrive quickly



Photo courtesy of the Las Vegas News Bureau.

called for back-up as the flames were already visible through out the casino. By 7:24 AM, the fire breached the front doors of the main entrance and flames fully involved the porte cochere. By 8:00 AM, the casino was completely engulfed in flames. The firemen battled the casino blaze for another 30 minutes until the fire was finally under control at 8:30 AM. But, the flames in the casino were only the immediate danger. The hotel was now beginning to fill up with deadly smoke and carbon monoxide.

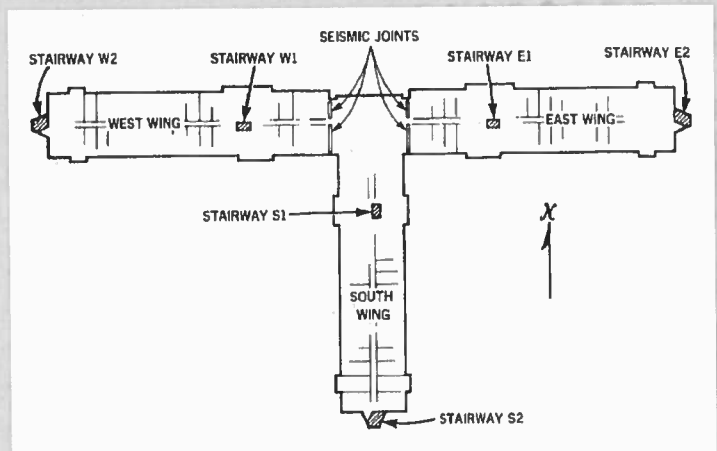
## The Smoke

There were approximately 5,000 people (hotel guests and MGM employees combined) in the MGM at the time of the fire. Many exited the building without help; but, others weren't so lucky. Several factors combined to make an already bad situation even



Photo courtesy of the Las Vegas News Bureau.

worse. The MGM was built with seismic joints that ran vertically along the wings of the hotel. These empty voids were intended to prevent excessive vibrations from travelling through the entire building in the case of an earthquake. However, these voids acted as perfect avenues [or conduits] for smoke to travel to the upper levels of the hotel. This is where much of the smoke was captured and recirculated back down to hotel corridors by the HVAC system.



This schematic show the placement of the seismic joints. These joints along with the stairwells were all contributors to bringing the smoke to the upper floors of the hotel.

The stairways, elevator shafts and air conditioning supply ducts also acted as points of updraft for the deadly smoke. Because of the speed by which the fire overtook the employees at the casino





*Photo courtesy of UNLV Special Collections.*

level, no alarms or warnings were triggered. Therefore, hotel guests had little or no knowledge of the impending disaster. Some of the hotel guests were only notified of the danger by hearing the running of other guests in the hallways outside their rooms. When they opened the door to check out the commotion, they saw thick black smoke rolling throughout the halls.

While some guests were able to evacuate via the emergency stairwells, those on floors 20 through 25 found the corridors and stairwells choked with thick black smoke. Those who were awake and aware of the danger went back to their rooms and blocked all points of entry for the smoke with towels and blankets. Some guests who saw the smoke and worried that they would be asphyxiated in their rooms, broke out windows to get fresh air. But, this created a suction that drew air from inside the hotel room and corridors to the now open windows. The suction also brought smoke and carbon monoxide with it. As long as the guests kept their heads outside the windows to breathe the fresh air, they were OK. But, many guests were found dead of asphyxiation, sitting in front of windows that were only open 2" (a safety stop did not allow the window to open any further). The small opening in the window

provided a suction to bring the smoke and carbon monoxide into the room, but did not have enough space to vent the deadly gas and they were overcome sitting just in front of the open window.

There were several guests who were overcome with carbon monoxide while sleeping and died in their beds. Others were sitting in chairs or laying on the floor, perhaps overcome before they knew anything was wrong. Investigators who inspected the deaths after the fire noticed that there were no smoke or soot marks on the walls as might be expected in a smoky fire. At the MGM, the smoke was carried up into the HVAC units and scrubbed clean of soot, and then returned to the corridors as invisible and odorless carbon monoxide and the guests never knew of the impending danger.

## **The Rescue**

While fire fighters were working to knock down the fires in the casino level, the upper floors were filling with smoke. Guests on the upper floors tried going down stairwells, but were turned back by the smoke. By 7:30 AM the police and fire rescue units started seeing upper floor guests hanging out of windows they had broken out waving bed sheets and towels for help. But, rescue workers





*The Las Vegas Convention Center was turned into a shelter and triage center for the victims of the MGM fire.  
Photo courtesy of the Las Vegas News Bureau.*

were hampered by the fact that their ladders only reached up to the 9th floor.

Some 300 guests managed to get up to the roof where they were awaiting help. The first rescue helicopter, a Las Vegas Metro Police unit, arrived on the scene at 8:00 AM. The pilot immediately called for all available helicopters to assist with the rescue. By 8:30 AM, 20 helicopters were on the scene, including nine from the United States Air Force from Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas. The helicopters plucked guests off the roof and from balconies of the upper floors one by one.

By 10:00 AM, all stairways were cleared of smoke and debris and firefighters managed to get all remaining guests evacuated from the hotel. During this evacuation process, rescue workers began to see the victims lying dead in the hallways, stairways and in their rooms. The gravity of the situation was becoming all too clear. Although the firefighters knocked down an extremely hot and intense fire in little more than 90 minutes, the deadly smoke took only minutes to travel throughout the hotel.

The MGM fire killed 85 people and sent over 650 to the hospital, including guests, employees and 14 firefighters. All of this took place in just under three hours. Of the 85 victims: 79 deaths were due to smoke inhalation and carbon monoxide; three

victims died from burns and smoke inhalation; only one died from burns; and, one died because of a massive skull fracture caused when this victim jumped or fell from the upper floor balcony. One death was from Myocarditis and this victim died weeks later in a Texas hospital.

In the first 24 hours, 14 firefighters were hospitalized. An estimated 300 firefighters and rescue personnel experienced symptoms of smoke inhalation and carbon monoxide, but did not receive treatment. At least 10 firefighters experienced psychological problems.

## **The Investigation**

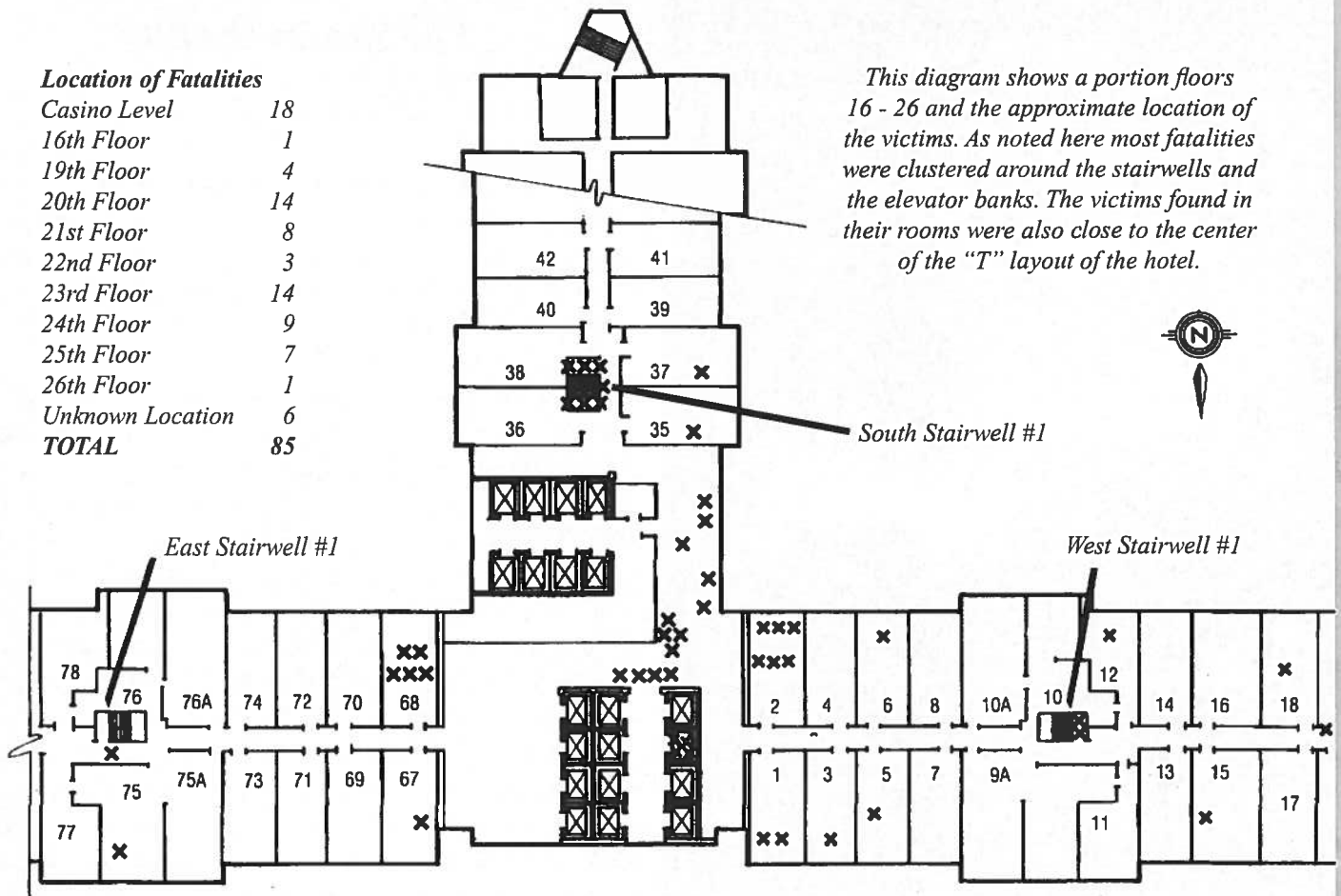
The National Fire Protection Association's 1981 investigation report on the MGM Grand Hotel Fire stated, "The County Office of Building and Safety had primary responsibility for code enforcement during the construction phase of projects. The Fire Department did not have any building code enforcing authority. Reportedly, a system of on-site resident inspectors was used for the code enforcement procedure during the building process. These inspectors were hired by the Clark county Office of Building and Safety which, in turn, was reimbursed by the Hotel." The NFPA's investigation concluded, "With sprinklers, it would have been a



**Location of Fatalities**

Casino Level	18
16th Floor	1
19th Floor	4
20th Floor	14
21st Floor	8
22nd Floor	3
23rd Floor	14
24th Floor	9
25th Floor	7
26th Floor	1
Unknown Location	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>85</b>

*This diagram shows a portion floors 16 - 26 and the approximate location of the victims. As noted here most fatalities were clustered around the stairwells and the elevator banks. The victims found in their rooms were also close to the center of the "T" layout of the hotel.*



one- or two-sprinkler fire, and we would never have heard about it.”

As with many large scale tragedies, the MGM fire was caused by several small problems combined together to create a major disaster. A wire at the point of fire origin was not insulated and was improperly grounded. No fire alarm ever sounded. The stairwells that were crucial escape routes filled with smoke. The laundry chutes failed to seal and defects existed in the HVAC systems. Seismic seams designed to prevent an earthquake disaster acted as smoke chambers. And, sprinklers were not in place at the point of origin of the fire. All contributed to the catastrophe.

**The Cost**

Beside the obvious loss of 85 lives and the 650 or more injured, there were over 1,000 lawsuits filed against several different companies. Money from all the companies went into a \$223 million settlement fund, including \$105 million from the MGM.

To get the full economical impact, certain other costs must be included: the estimated \$300 million reconstruction cost; the hundreds of millions of dollars of business interruptions; and, the hundreds of millions of dollars of lost revenues from gaming and tourism that all the businesses in the Southern Nevada community endured for many years afterwards Billions of dollars were lost as

a direct result of a decision to save \$192,000 by not installing fire-sprinkler protection throughout the building.

**The Response**

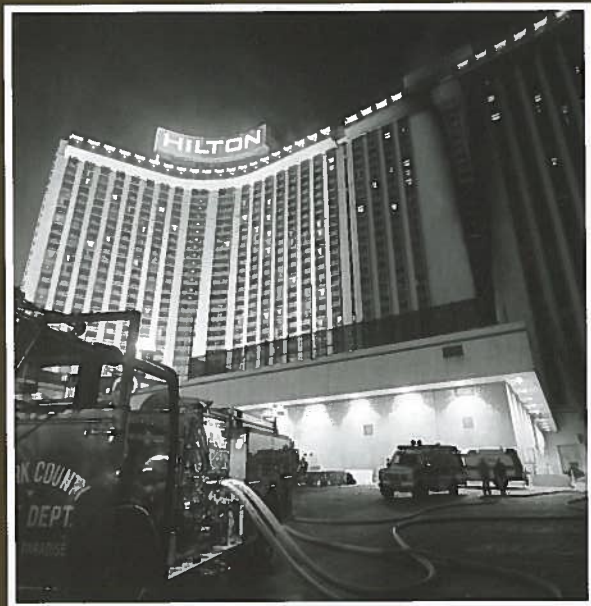
Not more than three months after the fire, Nevada revised its building and fire codes resulting in the most stringent fire-sprinkler and life-safety requirements in the country. All hotels taller than 55 feet were then required to be retrofitted with fire-sprinkler systems, and all future buildings three or more stories high were required to have fire-sprinkler systems.

The MGM was remodeled, and upgraded with a state of the art fire sprinklers and an automatic fire alarm system. It re-opened in July of 1981, just eight months after the fatal fire. The MGM also opened a new hotel tower that same year. The new tower was under construction when the November 1980 fire broke out.

In 1985 the property was sold to Bally Entertainment Corporation for \$594 million and the name was changed to Bally's. The casino and the hotel towers in which the fire broke out still stand today. The MGM Grand moved south down the strip to the corner of Tropicana Ave and Las Vegas Blvd., South.



## The Strange



On Feb. 10, 1981, just three months after the deadly fire at the MGM Grand, another high profile fire broke out at the Las Vegas Hilton. Strangely, The Las Vegas Hilton, originally named the International Hotel, was owned by Kirk Kerkorian. Kerkorian sold the International Hotel in 1970 to finance his dream project, the MGM.

The fire which occurred while the hotel was being retrofitted with sprinklers due to regulations imposed after the MGM fire. Eight hotel guests died in the fire, but the number could have been higher. Firefighters and police used what they learned from the MGM fire to keep the death toll down. They told guests to stay in their rooms and not try and go out in the hallways or stairwells.

The fire was determined to be arson and was set by 23 year old Philip Cline. Cline, an employee of the Hilton at the time, received eight life sentences in prison without parole. But the story took a strange turn when authorities started to take a closer look at Cline. It turns out that Cline was also an employee at the MGM before the fire. Even more damning, he was placed at the MGM the day of the fire. Cline said he was meeting a friend and was never charged with anything to do with the MGM fire. But there are still some who have doubts that the MGM fire was purely accidental.

*Photo courtesy of the Las Vegas News Bureau.*

## The Eye in the Sky

In the final report on the fire by the Chief of the Clark County Fire Department, several employees and witness were interviewed about the details of that day. The following interview was of Louis Miranti a loss prevention employee at the MGM. He was on duty at the time of the fire. Louis was in the "Eye in the Sky" or the interstitial space between the casino level and the start of the hotel floors. He gives a particularly terrifying and chilling detail of his encounter with the fire.

*"My name is Louis Miranti, I work at MGM, My address is (removed), At 6:00 o'clock or 6:20 on the morning of the fire, Friday, I was working in the eye in the sky and at approximately 6:20 AM I was standing in the sky over Pit #1 which is the main pit in the "21" games. The pit is approximately across from the casino cage, the opposite end of the casino. I was down there checking the game between 6:20 or 6:25 and approximately a quarter to 7:00 or ten minutes to 7:00 I noticed nothing unusual in the casino.*

*I headed back to my office which was towards the front of the casino on the north side, northwest side of the casino corner. I went up the two doors that leads me to the executive elevators going to the third floor. I went up the elevator to the third floor, went to my office which was between the public relations office and the auditing office. That's the door to the eye. I looked into the eye and it was about almost five minutes to seven, no smoke, I smelled nothing, saw nothing unusual. I stayed up on the third floor elevation, went into my office which is the extreme west end of the eye in the sky. I sat down to make my hourly report.*

*Approximately five or ten minutes after seven I heard crackling noises and I didn't think that was too unusual because they weren't too loud and at that hour in the morning we usually get maintenance men up sometime to clean up or vacuum the floors and, ah, so when I heard the noises I was figuring well, in another minute or two, Security always brings them up, he'll come in and check with me, and that's it. Well, five more minutes went by and the crackling sounds got worse. In fact, the noise was so unusual, me being up there for so many years, I knew every sound. That sound was so unusual that I says I'd better take a look. And, ah, it felt like, it sounded like a crackling sound of a very intense fire. That's the way it sounded. I went out of my office, I went over to the landing, the stairwell, and I looked into the sky (the glass that looks down on the casino) and before I went down the steps I could see oh, approximately 300 feet or more, that is, if you want to pinpoint it, from the west end of that sky I would be looking a little bit beyond east of the casino cages, which would bring me somewhere maybe 100, 150 feet from the casino cages so you are looking at maybe 100 feet west of the Deli and the Coffee Shop's door. I was west, maybe I could see 100 feet west of that, those doors, and I saw this billow of smoke, like a tidal wave coming towards me. Ah, just a*



flash came to my mind, it's coming too fast, you'd better run. So I just turned around instead of going to the office to pick up anything, I knew it was coming that fast. I just opened the door and ran out of the sky, shut the door behind me. I thought maybe I could slow it up. I didn't see any flame, all I saw was smoke, so I thought I'd slow up the smoke.

Well, I ran to the hallway leading back to the executive offices and the executive elevators. The elevator wasn't there so I ran down the steps. I got down to the bottom of the steps and there's a double doors there that go into the casino in the area of the front desk, between the front desk and the bell captain's desk. I saw through the glass at all the smoke, and it was almost to the glass, but I looked out and saw it already took over the front end, but I felt the heat and I knew if I opened those doors, unconsciously I knew, that if I opened the doors I'd never make it to the front door because it was already enveloped. But the heat of that smoke that I felt through the doors. I knew that I had to get out of there and I ran back up the stairs. And when I got to the top landing of the stairs I found that the hallway that I came out of, that leads from the auditing department was full of smoke already. In other words, that smoke followed me out of that, in that hallway.

I found that I couldn't go back down the stairs. The elevator was out. The only thing left for me to do was to break the windows, the glass doors rather, that led into the executive offices. I broke those doors with my shoulder, ran through the executive offices, broke the two double doors on the other end, the back end, of the executive offices. The only thing I think that saved my life is I knew there was an exit in the auditing office, so I had to make a decision either to go straight towards the computer room or turn left by the toilet and go around the toilet and go into that side. And I decided to take that route because of the fear that there may be some locked doors if I went straight. I made the right decision, because when I got to auditing, those doors I had to push them open and I ran through auditing and at the end of that room which, where the big safe is, is maybe 100 feet, I found this door that I knew was there. I opened it and it was full of smoke. But I looked behind me and I saw the smoke was chasing me there too and I knew I couldn't go back.

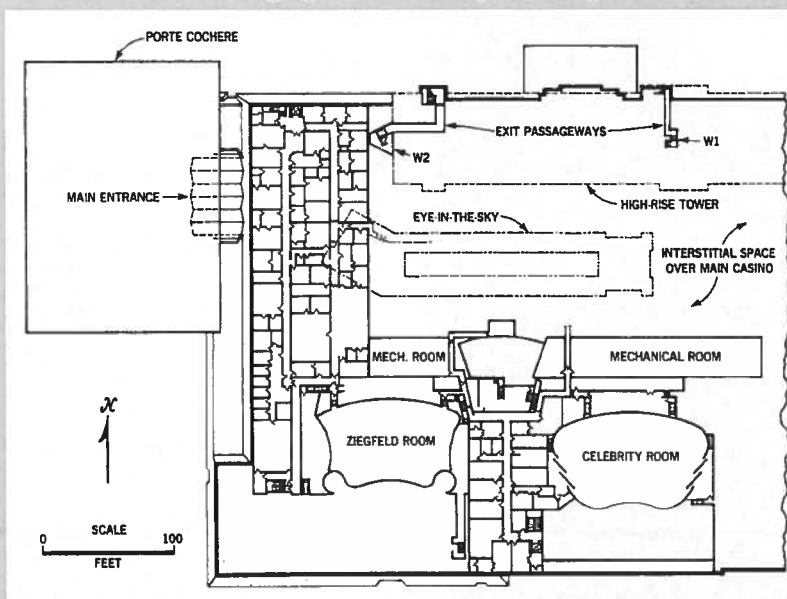
So I held that door open and I looked down at the floor and I see two brand new Turkish towels. I picked them up, put them in my face and went to the closest, that I thought would be the closest exit. I looked in that hallway, I shut my eyes and

I felt the doors, I felt the first one and it was locked. The second one was open. I got in there, stepped down, I ran my foot up and down to see if it was concrete. It was. I knew I had the right door. I grabbed for a rail and I went down three, I think three flights of stairs. I got to the base of the stairway, I opened my eyes and I saw pitch black. My eyes started burning. I closed them and I said I better take one more shot and I'll yell for help. I took the towel off of my face and I took in all the smoke and I was able to holler for help and I heard a voice about maybe 200 feet to my right. The voice says, come this way. And I said you'd better keep talking because I can't hear you, I mean I could hear you but I can't see you. You'd better keep talking. And then I covered my mouth and I seem to have taken in too much smoke at that point. I headed for that direction, I headed towards the voice, I got maybe 100, 150 feet, maybe 125 feet and I knew that was the last breath I could take in that towel, because the towel was saturated. I took the breath and I figured I'd drop to the ground and maybe I could pick up some air on the ground and crawl to the guy. But I seemed to maybe lose consciousness at that time and I had my hand out in front of me trying to protect myself while I was running that I wouldn't hit anything and I felt someone grab my hand and pull me out.

The next thing I knew was the security guard was pulling on my left hand, pulling the towels away from my mouth because I probably was in shock and I wouldn't let go and he was pulling that off of me and saying, "Breathe fresh air, breathe fresh air" and he pulled the towels away from me and he brought me to. And we were outside the big sliding doors, the delivery doors on the south end of the, southwest end of the building behind the Hallelujah Hollywood stage where they make deliveries for scenery. And he had me out those doors. I was just lucky that he came in to take a look around to see if there was anybody else in there and I happened to catch him at that moment. He brought me outside. Then a car picked me up and took me around the building to the Flamingo side where I told him my car was parked and he took me to the fire department and

the fire department gave me some air, saved my life. I got in my car and went straight to Sunrise Hospital, stayed there about 28 hours and Dr. Venger released me. And that's it."

Louis' report is a transcript of his oral statement, so it is at times a bit hard to follow, but the terror of his ordeal certainly comes through.





## The Chips



The above chips were the 6th issue MGM chips in play at the time of the 1980 fire. With the fast moving and extensively devastating fire, many chips in play were destroyed. The below chips are examples of that.



While there are several examples of individually damaged chips, there are also cases of stacks of chips being fused together by the heat as shown below.



Thank you to Alex Cilento and Mike Christensen for the use of their images of chips in this article.



Photo courtesy of UNLV Special Collections.

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# 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.ccgctcc.com](http://www.ccgctcc.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.



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

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## Reference Center

Welcome to the CC&GTCC Reference Center! Here you will find useful information on the hobby of casino chip and gaming token collecting.

**Casino Collectible News** - A publication of the Casino Chip & Gaming Token Collectors Club  
This official club magazine is a must-read for every casino collectible enthusiast.

### For The Beginner

- [CCGTCC Mentoring Program](#) - Help others or find help for yourself!
- [2007 Buyer's Guide to Casino Collectibles](#) - Be an informed collector!
- [2005 Buyer's Guide to Casino Collectibles](#) - Be an informed collector!
- [Ask The Expert!](#) - a list of CC&GTCC members who have volunteered to answer your questions.
- [Chip Conditions](#) - an official list of CC&GTCC sanctioned terminology used to describe chip condition.
- [Glossary](#) - an extensive list of the terminology used in our hobby - a "Chiptionary", if you will.
- [Chip FAQ](#) - a huge list of Frequently Asked Questions regarding our hobby.
- [Chipology 101](#) - a great intro-to-chipping seminar presented at the national convention.
- [Cleaning Chips](#) - a good primer on cleaning casino chips.
- [Mold Designs](#) - Robert Eisenstadt's mold design project.
  
- [2011 Club Auction](#) - Catalog, Terms and Conditions & Current High Bids.

### Detailed Reference

- [Illegals & Manufacturer Records](#) - a huge compilation of chip manufacturer records.
- [Fakes/Fantasy/Counterfeits](#) - a large list of fake, fantasy, and counterfeit chips - includes pictures.
- [Brass Core](#) - a thorough presentation of the brass core controversy.
- [Fraternal Order of Eagles](#) - Aeries listed numerically
- [Cancelled Chips](#) - Nevada Casino Chips Known To Exist Cancelled

### Books, Magazine Articles, etc.

- [Club Library](#) - a list of club reference material that you can check-out and use.
- [Gaming In Atlantic City](#) - by Steve Piccolo
- [Playboy Cheques, Chips & Tokens](#) - by Tom Stroh
- [Knapp on Books](#) - A series of book reviews by Michael Knapp
- [The Flamingo Capri Revisited](#) - by Mike Quinlivan
- [Casino Chip and Token News](#) - Back issues

The Education section of the CC&GTCC web site offers valuable information on chip collecting, whether you're new to the hobby or have been collecting for years.

In this section you will find reference material about fakes and counterfeits, cancelled chips, brass core chips and much more. *Ask The Expert* gives you access to over 50 collectors who can answer any question about collecting. Each collector is an expert in a particular field. Whether it's casino chips, tokens, silver strikes, ashtrays, dice or collecting by state, country or casino, you can find help here.

Check out the club library for books or search for articles on the *Casino Collectible News* web site. Other publications and articles are also free to download.

<http://www.ccgcc.com>





# Selling off my collection Of Chips-Tokens and Silver Strikes Over 20,000 Chips for sale

I have one of the  
largest collection  
from these states  
**Colorado**  
**Mississippi**  
**Atlantic City**

**Gary Rohloff**  
garyro@mtc.net  
**715-693-5734**  
**www.rollyschips.com**

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## Also lots of Chips from these states

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Wisconsin  
Minnesota  
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South Dakota  
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Illinois  
Michigan  
Indiana

Missouri  
Dead Wood, S.D.  
Nevada -  
over 8,000 chips  
New Mexico  
Arizona  
Kansas  
California

Arkansas  
Louisiana  
Montana  
Caribbean  
Canada  
Cruise Ships  
Many Misc.

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**My website is: [www.rollyschips.com](http://www.rollyschips.com)**

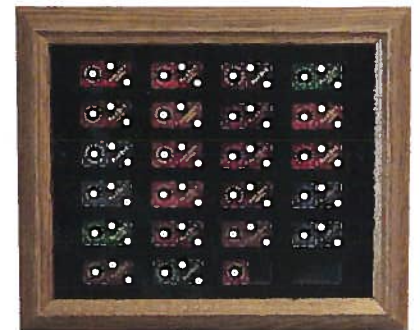
Note: Not everything on yet, will take some time to get everything on.  
Please keep checking back. I'm entering things as fast as I can.

*Thank You, Gary*



*If you Collect it . . . We Can FRAME It!*

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