

# **Caribbean Casino Collectors Club Quarterly Newsletter**

**Volume 1, Issue 3  
Spring 2008**

## Casinos of the Caribbean

Antigua  
Aruba  
Bahamas  
Bonaire  
Cuba  
Curacao  
Dominican Republic  
Guadeloupe  
Haiti  
Martinique  
Puerto Rico  
St. Croix  
St. Kitts  
St. Maartin  
St. Vincent  
Suriname  
Trinidad and Tobago  
Turks and Caicos

# **Caribbean Casino News**

## **Casino Openings and Closings and new Chip Issues**

### **Caribbean Region**

- **Hilton Hotels** Forms Three Development Alliances To Build Up to 55 New Hotels in the Caribbean and Central America, Russia and in the U.K.

LONDON & BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. - June 4, 2007 - Hilton Hotels Corporation (NYSE:HLT) today announced that the company will form three major development alliances with the intention to introduce more than 15 new hotels in the Caribbean and Central America, 25 hotels in Russia and at least 15 hotels in the U.K. throughout the next five years.

HHC has agreed to work with Caribbean Property Group for development within Central America & the Caribbean; London & Regional Properties Limited in Russia; and Shiva Hotels Limited in the U.K. and Ireland. The three development alliances follow the partnership deals recently announced in India and China, which are expected to result in 100 new hotels in those markets throughout the next five to seven years.

"These important alliances will reinforce our position as the premier global hotel company and underscore our strategy to sign large deals with major investors to develop a significant number of hotels in key growth markets around the world," said Matthew J. Hart, president and chief operating officer, Hilton Hotels Corporation. "We are well on our way to achieving our stated goal of at least 1,000 hotels outside of North America over the next 10 years."

### **Caribbean & Central America**

Through a strategic alliance agreement with Caribbean Property Group (CPG), a New York-based, major property investment group, HHC will work actively with CPG to develop focused-service, franchised hotels within certain defined markets in Central America and the Caribbean. Initially, targeted markets include major cities and destinations in Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Panama, the Dominican Republic and Trinidad. CPG will receive certain preferred development rights in return for meeting certain goals and timetables.

"This agreement ideally supports our international development strategy to bolster the Hilton Family of Hotels presence in growing markets where our brands are either underrepresented or absent," said Tom Keltner, Chief Executive Officer - Americas & Global Brands, Hilton Hotels Corporation. "CPG is a well respected developer with invaluable insight in these markets, and we are confident that they will help us achieve these goals."

The company initially will focus on the Hilton Garden Inn brand, with plans to develop additional projects under the Hampton by Hilton and Homewood Suites by Hilton flags, eventually.

HHC began its business relationship with CPG with the recent signing of management

agreements for two existing full-service hotels in Costa Rica owned by a joint venture in which CPG holds an 85 percent ownership interest. Currently undergoing major renovations, the hotels will be re-branded and re-opened in the 2008 first quarter as the Hilton Papagayo and the Doubletree by Hilton Puntarenas, in Guanacaste and Puntarenas, Costa Rica, respectively.

"The region is ripe for focused service hotel development," said Barry Breeman, vice chairman, Caribbean Properties Group. "The economies have strengthened in the region over the past five years. Today, there is a good base of first-class, full-service hotels and resorts, but a very limited number of mid-market, focused service hotels, especially in the premium branded sector. In addition to these markets and this segment being significantly under served, we believe developing under the established Hilton Family of Hotels will give instant credibility to the projects. And as these projects succeed, we believe they will act as catalysts to help further strengthen local economies and development of other real estate classes."

- **Costa Rica** is a Central American country with its west coast on the Pacific and east coast on the Caribbean Sea. The same is true for **Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama**. These countries have casinos in the Caribbean, although they are not islands in the Caribbean. I plan to add these countries to the Caribbean ChipGuide as time allows.

### Aruba

### Antigua

### Bahamas

- Bahamas signs agreement with resort developers, Published on Saturday, February 2, 2008 in Caribbean NetNews.

NASSAU, Bahamas: Pledging the Bahamian government's "maximum cooperation" with Baha Mar, developers of the Cable Beach strip, Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham announced Thursday that a Supplemental Heads of Agreement between the Government and the developers has been signed, and that the Agreement will be both tabled and debated in the House of Assembly.

Ingraham made the statement at Cabinet Office, where the Government, Baha Mar and its partner **Harrah's Entertainment** signed the Agreement to develop a \$2.6 billion mixed use resort at Cable Beach.

Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham speaks following the signing of a Supplemental Heads of Agreement between The Bahamas Government, Baha Mar and its partner Harrah's Entertainment for the development of the Cable Beach strip. (BIS Photo/Kent Minnis). "We have just signed a Supplemental Agreement with Baha Mar with respect to their development on Cable Beach. The Agreement would be tabled in the House of Assembly and debated in the House of Assembly at an early date," the Prime Minister said, flanked by members of his Cabinet.

“There would be a debate because some of the transfers required Parliamentary approval,” he noted. “We will give Baha Mar, and Harrah’s and Starwood the maximum cooperation from the Government and its Public Utility Corporation’s point of view.”

The project, the Prime Minister added, calls for “an accelerated construction schedule,” adding that the government would do its utmost to accommodate the developers “as speedily and expeditiously as is humanly possible.”

The joint venture between Baha Mar JV Holding Ltd and Caesars Bahamas Investment Corporation, a subsidiary of Harrah’s Entertainment Inc. calls for the development of a mixed use, one-of-a-kind resort development project on Cable Beach.

President of Baha Mar Resorts Don Robinson said, “We are pleased that the way is clear to move forward on this project as we finalise documentation and proceed with The Bahamas Government and its people, along with our partners Harrah’s, to bring Nassau and the region a resort product the likes of which has never been done before, and will undoubtedly bring new opportunities, employment, and tourism growth to Nassau and The Bahamas.”

The \$2.6 billion resort to be located on a 1,000-acre site in Cable Beach will offer approximately 3,000 guest rooms. Harrah’s will operate a new Caesars Resort Hotel, with more than 1,000 guest rooms and a nearly 100,000-square ft. casino – the largest in the Caribbean.

In separate management agreements, the remaining guest rooms will include a collection of four hotel brands – a ‘W’ Baha Mar, St. Regis Baha Mar, Westin Baha Mar, and Sheraton Cable Beach Resort.

Baha Mar JV Holding Ltd and Caesars Bahamas Investment Corporation are set to finalise documents for completion of the joint venture, upon which construction will follow immediately.

## **Bermuda**

### **Curacao**

- Opening in July 2008. The brand new **Renaissance Curaçao Resort & Casino**, located in the historic capital city of Willemstad, will offer fun, color and entertainment for any traveler looking for the ambiance of authentic island charm combined with European sophistication. The contemporary 237 -room resort is nestled in the historic setting of the Rif Fort and offers the most exclusive shopping, dining, casino and nightlife on the island. In the midst of this uptown energy, the Renaissance Curaçao Resort & Casino offers oceanfront comfort true to the Caribbean, creating a blend of atmospheres for an unforgettable experience. Renaissance Curaçao is perfect for groups with 8,600 sq. feet of meeting space and special themed events throughout the resort. Both leisure and business travelers will find an unforgettable experience that is Uniquely Renaissance. Reported by John Glanfield.
- **Hyatt Regency Curaçao.** The ceremonial groundbreaking of the 350-room luxury Hyatt

Regency Curaçao took place on December 1, 2005, officially marking the start of construction of the Santa Barbara Plantation project. The 27-acre site overlooks the beautiful Spanish Water Bay, the famous Barbara Beach, and the Caribbean Sea and will also include a 30-slip marina, beach club, 52 vacation club units, 128 condominium homes, 106 residential lots, and 94 terrace homes. It will be the largest hotel on the island and the first large hotel to open since the Sonesta (which is now a Marriott) was completed in 1992. A remarkable fact is the use of Curacao marble that will be extracted from the “Tafelberg” overlooking the former Santa Barbara Plantation where the new hotel is taking shape. The Hyatt Regency is also planned to open late 2008. Reported by John Glanfield.

### **Dominican Republic**

- Dominican Republic - 28/12/2007. With a us\$ 20 million investment, A modern casino hotel to be opened in Santo Domingo Este. **Hotel Casino Aurora del Sol** will be inaugurated during the upcoming days in the council Santo Domingo Este, with an investment of us\$ 20 million, and will offer 350 direct employments, plus 1,500 indirect jobs.

This touristic project will be the first of its kind in the Eastern zone and will have a hotel with 46 rooms and four executive suites. Besides, it will have three conference halls available with room for 50 to 300 people and two restaurants. Other attractions will be the pool the gym, a spa, laundry, 24-hour room service and more. Aurora del Sol will feature a discotheque for 250 people in which several orchestras will perform, and a 2,000 sqm casino with parking space for 200 cars. This project will be in charge of a group of foreign investors with wide experience in the administration of hotels and casinos, which operate through DRG company. The casino will have 250 slots, 23 standard table games, a poker room and another VIP room with high-limits. As a novelty, it will offer its clients a modern player club which will operate with electronic cards instead of traditional tokens.



- **Majestic Colonial Punta Cana.** Even though this resort opened in December, 2005, it was unknown to the Caribbean ChipGuide until Mike recently Brady sent me the scans of these chips. Next door, a sister resort, the **Majestic Elegance** is scheduled to open later in 2008.

This brand new ocean front Resort, (open Dec. 2005) is located on shore of one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. The Majestic Colonial Punta Cana, is a spectacular 5 star all inclusive resort, perfectly integrated with the exuberant flora and fauna of the Dominican Republic, all harmonized with the gentle breeze of its incredible coast. This is without a

doubt, the perfect place to relax while enjoying a privileged surrounding, where you can also practice your favorite sports, taste exquisite gastronomy, go shopping, and dream with the spectacular shows played by the rhythms of the Caribbean.



### **Jamaica**

- Jamaica to consider legalizing casinos, 4/24/08, ogpaper.com.

Jamaica to consider legalizing casinos The government of Jamaica is fully backing the proposal to legalize gambling at casinos. Prime Minister Bruce Golding said he has allowed a group of investors to start planning the country's first casino, despite the increasing opposition from religious groups and organizations. Allowing casinos to be built on the island would benefit directly areas like health and schools, claims the Prime Minister and the Parliament is set to consider the proposals. "There are those who I know disagree with casino gambling. But the fact is that the horse bolted through the gate a long time ago with the granting of licenses for hundreds of gaming machines," Bruce Golding told the Jamaican Parliament on Tuesday, during a budget debate, announcing he had already given approval for moves to set up the first casino.

Slot machines, video poker and other gambling devices could be found at bars and hotels in Jamaica, but up until now organized casinos have not been legalized. But under the condition that an investor commit at least \$1.5 billion to a casino project, which should include a hotel with over 1,000 rooms, gambling at casinos would become a fact in Jamaica.

"We have always said that gambling, including casino gambling, is personally selfish, morally irresponsible and socially destructive," said the Reverend Peter Garth, head of the Jamaica Association of Evangelicals to Jamaica Observer newspaper, summarizing the stance of the religious organizations on the island towards casino licensing. "We believe that casinos will continue to create a framework for covetousness, promote laziness and incite crime and violence. We think it violates the principle of being good stewards, we feel that family life will be under greater threat we really believe it is going to encourage the wrong type of mentality," President of the Jamaica Council of Churches Carl Johnson added.

## Puerto Rico

- **Wyndham** to manage **Westin Rio Mar**. Monday, March 26 2007 @ 09:54 AM GMT. Wyndham Worldwide Corporation will invest in and manage the 600-room luxury Rio Mar Beach Golf Resort & Spa in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico, under the Wyndham brand and develop an adjacent 26-acre tract as a Wyndham Vacation Ownership timeshare resort.

Wyndham Hotel Management Inc. will operate the resort -- currently a Westin(R) -- under a 20-year agreement. The hotel will remain a Westin until May 10 when it will be reflagged as the Wyndham Rio Mar -- A Wyndham Grand Resort. Wyndham Vacation Ownership expects to develop and market luxury timeshare units on the adjacent tract over the next several years.

Wyndham Worldwide is purchasing a partial ownership interest in the resort, owned by Rio Mar Associates L.P. S.E., which is led by affiliates of Tishman Realty Corporation, one of the world's premier developers and asset managers of first-class hotel and resort properties. Tishman Realty affiliates originally developed and built the resort, which opened in 1996, and continue to co-own it.

The Wyndham Rio Mar is situated on 500 acres along a mile-long section of tropical beach adjacent to the Caribbean National Rain Forest of El Yunque and the Mameyes River. It features 48,000 square feet of function space; a 7,000- square-foot casino; two world-class, 18-hole golf courses; 7,000-square-foot spa and fitness center; 11 restaurants, lounges and entertainment venues; tennis center; water sports center; and two beach-front pools.

As a result of these transactions, Rio Mar Associates plans a multimillion-dollar redevelopment including a complete overhaul of the casino and an upgrade of the golf courses, hotel lobby and guest rooms. Each room will be equipped with signature brand elements designed by the acclaimed architecture firm Michael Graves & Associates.

The work will bolster capital improvements completed during the last two years including construction of the Mandara Spa and fitness center, guest room renovations, enhancement of the pool deck, improved access to the property's semiprivate beach and the addition of private cabanas. The property improvements and timeshare development are expected to expand employment on a long-term basis.

"We are proud to welcome the Wyndham Rio Mar to our collection of high- quality Wyndham properties," said Steven A. Rudnitsky, Wyndham Hotel Group president and chief executive officer, adding that the Wyndham Rio Mar represents the largest single addition to the brand since 2005.

Wyndham Worldwide will work closely with the government of Puerto Rico and the commonwealth's tourism officials to develop Rio Mar into a world-class destination that will "attract thousands of travelers to Rio Grande every year, introducing them to the island's true spirit of hospitality while sustaining high-quality, fulfilling jobs for several hundred area residents," Rudnitsky said.

Franz Hanning, Wyndham Vacation Ownership president and chief executive officer, said the development of timeshare facilities at Rio Mar during the next few years will create an "exciting, new destination for Wyndham timeshare owners in the highly popular Caribbean market.

"We are committed to expanding the Wyndham Vacation Ownership system of timeshare resorts throughout the world to provide our owners with the broadest choice of high-quality vacation opportunities in the most desirable and exciting locations, including this beautiful resort in Puerto Rico."

Rudnitsky added that the joint transactions demonstrate Wyndham Worldwide's ability to apply the combined resources of Wyndham Hotel Group and Wyndham Hotel Management with Wyndham Vacation Ownership to develop mixed-use projects "that more fully leverage the value of existing properties."

- Not exactly new news, but some new research on the **El San Juan**. I came across some old postcards from the **San Juan Intercontinental** hotel. There currently is an Intercontinental in San Juan, but it is the not same hotel. The current Intercontinental is located at 5961 Isla Verde Avenue in Carolina. It opened in 2000, it was formerly the Grand Beach Resort, and is right next door to the El San Juan which is at 6063 Isla Verde Avenue. So what does the El San Juan have to do with the old Intercontinental hotel. I did some research on the internet with Google and found this from Travel Writers' Magazine, in an article called "Saturday Night at the El San Juan" by Ron Bernthal.

"Now known as one of the grandest resorts in the Caribbean, the hotel was opened by Pan-American Airways in 1958, under Pan Am's trademark Inter-Continental hotel group. In those days, the area around San Juan's airport was underdeveloped and run-down, but with the introduction later that year of the first jet plane service from New York to Puerto Rico, the hotel's 300 rooms were soon filled with sun-starved tourists from the Northeast. San Juan quickly became a glamorous and exotic Caribbean destination, an inexpensive island where the lure of American culture, Spanish history, and warm Christmas weather attracted millions of visitors.

The property became the El San Juan Hotel & Casino three years later, and thrived during the economic boom of the 1960's. In the hotel's famous Tropicoro Club entertainers like Sammy Davis, Jr., Nat King Cole, Eddie Fisher., the Supremes, Johnny Mathis, and Paul Anka helped create an atmosphere similar to Las Vegas."

The postcards that follow are from the Intercontinental and the El San Juan and have almost the same view of the hotel from behind the pool.



Now the \$64,000 question. If the El San Juan was previously the San Juan Intercontinental, was there a casino in the Intercontinental and if so, where are the chips? I think I have a reasonable answer. There is a club in the El San Juan that has been there since its opening called the Tropicoro. There are also some Puerto Rican casino chips from a Tropicoro, about which little is known. George Davis, the author of The Obsolete Casino Chips of Puerto Rico - From the Albert Rollins Collection, indicates that "The Tropicoro Casino opened in 1949 in the El San Juan Hotel. It was succeeded in 1950 by the El San Juan casino." I think George has the right idea, but perhaps the dates are a little off. Now the clincher. The

known Tropicoro casino chips are all hot stamped small greek keys. They simply say “Tropicoro Casino”, the denomination, and the initials “S J I”. I contend that “S J I” stands for San Juan Intercontinental. That would mean thus: The San Juan Intercontinental opened in 1958 and the casino was called the Tropicoro. In 1960, this became the El San Juan Hotel and Casino.



**St. Croix**

**St. Kitts**

**St. Lucia**

**St. Maarten**

**Suriname**

**Trinidad and Tobago**

**Turks and Caicos**

## Caribbean TITOs

By: Jim Noll CCCC R-017

The 31 known TITOs from the Caribbean area have been added to the upcoming Ver. 2 of the TITO Collectors Catalog and to the Caribbean Chip Guide, thanks to the collectors who have helped reach that number, now it is time to identify more types and add them to both reference sources.

The casino collectors press recently stated that almost all of the casinos in Puerto Rico had converted to TITOs. Since to date we have TITOs listed from 10 Puerto Rico Casinos that should mean that we have about 10 more to find as Charles lists 20 open casinos in Puerto Rico. In addition several of the casinos that we have seen TITOs from share slot cards with other casinos and thus those casinos are good candidates to have TITOs now or soon to have TITOs.

I am reviewing the casino/hotel web sites for the other Caribbean locations and trying to determine if they use TITOs, To date I have identified 4 more locations that have or should have TITOs, including the Excelsior in Aruba, Atlantis World in Dominican Republic, Hilton Ponce in Puerto Rico and The Players Club in Turks & Caicos which issues slot and electronic table game pay out TITOs.

I would estimate that most casinos with 100 machines or more would be using TITOs, smaller places most likely not. Charles indicated in the CCG that about 115 casinos are open in the Caribbean area. I would guess that something like less than half of them would be big enough to have TITOs. Thus it would appear we have a lot of TITOs to find. As I do not travel to the Caribbean area I am going to ask those of you that do to add TITOs to your collecting interests during Caribbean trips.

Also since TITOs have been in use since 2000/2001 it is possible that some Caribbean Casinos that opened or upgraded their slots and then later closed between 2000/2001 and 2007 could have had TITOs. most likely in the 2004 to 2007 period. If such TITOs exist they will be very hard to find as it is unlikely many were saved.

The AWG people are soon to open the Dunes Casino in St. Maarten, when that happens all the AWG casinos most likely will get new design TITOs as they list all their casinos on the TITO backs. They have issued a slot card with the Dunes name on the back so the TITOs should follow.

Anyone with questions on TITOs and TITO collecting please feel free to contact me at  
jenca@pacbell.net.

# Collecting Puerto Rico Casino Chips

by Charles Kaplan, LM-2558-48

(Reprinted from Casino Chip and Token News)

Like many Caribbean islands, Puerto Rico is a popular warm weather vacation destination. Just a short flight from Miami, Puerto Rico offers many advantages over neighboring islands. As a United States territory, English is taught to all school children and is widely spoken, although Spanish is the native language. No need to bring your currency conversion calculator, the U. S. dollar is used here. You can also leave your passport at home, but bring your electrical devices because they will work here without adapters. The standard Caribbean island fare of turquoise blue waters, friendly locals, interesting sight seeing, fantastic dining and great night life are all found in Puerto Rico.



Puerto Rico is one of the largest islands in the Caribbean, about 110 miles long by 35 miles wide, but is the smallest in the Greater Antilles chain of islands that also includes Cuba, Jamaica and Hispanola (the home to Haiti and the Dominican Republic). In 1898, Puerto Rico was ceded to the United States in the treaty ending the Spanish-American War. Puerto Ricans became citizens of the United States in 1917, but do not vote for the President. On the other hand, they do not have to pay federal income taxes. There is ongoing debate over whether Puerto Rico should remain as a semiautonomous commonwealth of the United States, seek statehood or become an independent country. Sometimes the issue becomes a hot topic, but mostly Puerto Rico is a peaceful, quiet and safe place to vacation. Old San Juan, which was at one time not a safe place to visit after dark, is now becoming a hot spot. Located near the cruise

ship terminals, many passengers are extending their vacations by staying in Old San Juan a day or two before or after their cruise. Magnificent old brick buildings trimmed with wrought iron are being restored to house art galleries, fine dining establishments and upscale retailers. Today, Old San Juan is the place to be, before or after dark.

Where you have great resorts and good night life you will probably find casinos. And Puerto Rico has great night life, lots of vacationers, and the most casinos in the Caribbean. There are two distinct periods in the history of casino gambling in Puerto Rico, the unregulated era prior to 1948 and the government regulated period that followed. In the pre-regulated era, Puerto Rico, like Miami, Galveston, Newport, New Orleans and other well known areas, had many, perhaps 20 to 30, illegal casinos. They operated much the same way in Puerto Rico as elsewhere: there was public demand for casinos, there were some enterprising entrepreneurs willing to take on the odds, and there was (sometimes negotiated) tolerance from local officials. Information about these clandestine operations is scarce and is beyond the scope of this article. The most highly sought after chips from Puerto Rico are from the pre-regulated era and include beautiful ivory and crest and seal chips.



With casinos sprouting up around the Caribbean in the late 1940's, mostly in Cuba, then Governor of Puerto Rico, Luis Munoz Marin, sought to establish a legitimate gaming industry on the island. On August 15, 1948, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico legalized casino gaming. The Hilton Corporation was brought in by the government to build the first hotel with a licensed casino. John Scarne, the note gambling expert, was the consultant used to design casino operations. In 1949 the Caribe Hilton opened. The Caribe Hilton was the first Hilton hotel built outside of the mainland United States and it was the first Hilton Hotel with a casino.



Since then about 50 casinos have been in operation, with about 20 open today. With over 50 licensed casinos, over 50 years, you can just imagine how many different casino chips were in use, thousands. An interesting fact about chips from Puerto Rico is that many casinos used chips with denominations for roulette. To keep wagers separate for each gambler, different color and insert combinations were used. You will find some casinos having ten or more different \$1, \$5 and sometimes \$25 chips in use at the same time. Here are a few of the many different \$1 chips that were used on the roulette tables at the El San Juan casino.



The main tourist area of San Juan is Condado. That is where you will find many hotels and casinos, among them Condado Plaza, Marriott, Ambassador Plaza and Diamond Palace. But casinos are also found in other locations around San Juan - Isle Verde, Carolina, and Old San Juan, and in other tourists spots around the island, including Dorado, Fajardo, Mayaguez, Humacao, and Ponce.



There are two catalogs of the chips from Puerto Rico. In 1999, Archie Black, the first President of the Casino Chip and Gaming Tokens Collectors Club, published “Black’s Catalog of Puerto Rico Casino Chips”. This first attempt at documenting the chips of Puerto Rico is excellent. Pictures, text descriptions and a price guide of most of the known chips at the time are included. Archie has since issued revised editions in 2005 and 2007, a sure sign that interest in collecting Puerto Rico chips is on the rise. After several years of considerable effort, CC&GTCC member George Davis published the catalog of the “Albert Rollins’ Collection of Obsolete Casino Chips”. Al Rollins recently passed away and was a coin and casino chip dealer in Puerto Rico. He is responsible for most of the Puerto Rico chips that have found their way into our collections. Al’s collection was second to none and well worth the view. George Davis still has some copies for sale.

## The Casinos at 1309 Ashford Avenue, Condado Beach, San Juan

Ashford Avenue is just one block off the beach and is the main drag in the Condado section of San Juan. I would like to take you through the history of one casino, located at 1309 Ashford Avenue. Over the years, the casino took on several different names with ownership changes. Some of the chips used at this location are among the hardest to find from the island and some are quite common. The Sheraton Hotel and Casino was in operation from 10/3/1963 until 1978. There are many classic chips from this hotel. My favorite is the red \$1 chip hot stamped with the Sheraton wreath logo. The high denomination chips from the Sheraton are particularly scarce and in great demand, but even the lower denomination chips are also highly sought after.



After the Sheraton closed, the hotel and casino reopened in 11/1978 as the Dupont Plaza. A tragic fire on New Year's Eve 1986 took 97 lives and left 147 injured. The fire also led to the closure of the hotel/casino. Chips from this casino are scarce. Sometimes they are found warped from the exposure to heat or with burn marks.



Plans were in place to reopen the hotel and casino as the Palms after an extensive renovation. A rack of Bud Jones chips were ordered, but the casino was never to open as they failed to get a gaming license. And, much like the Jockey Club or Sunrise casinos in Las Vegas, chips from this never opened casino are available to collectors in plentiful supply.



Eventually the hotel and casino did reopen and is today known as the San Juan Marriott.



There is some good news and some bad news concerning chips from Puerto Rico. As in many gaming jurisdictions, there are no regulations controlling what happens to chips when they are no longer in use, either because the casino closed or because the chips were replaced with a new rack. So, sometimes the chips are destroyed and sometimes they are sold off with the furniture and fixtures. That means that there are many chips from Puerto Rico casinos that are available to collectors at very reasonable prices. One can assemble a collection of over one hundred obsolete chips from Puerto Rico for around a \$1 or \$2 each. Several years ago there was a flood of these, mostly Bud Jones, chips into the hobby. They can be found from the Condado Beach, Palms, Ramada, and Quality Inn casinos. Chips from some of these casinos were recently auctioned on eBay in large quantities for home poker games. On the other hand, there are many more exotic and beautiful Puerto Rico chips that are scarce and difficult, if not impossible, to find. After Nevada and Atlantic City, rare Puerto Rico chips consistently bring in the highest premiums.

I hope to continue with additional articles about the casinos and chips from other Puerto Rico casinos. If you have any suggestions, I can be contacted on-line at [chas@ckaplan.com](mailto:chas@ckaplan.com). You can also see pictures of Puerto Rico casinos, chips, tokens and other casino collectibles online at the Caribbean ChipGuide, [www.caribbeanchipguide.com](http://www.caribbeanchipguide.com).

## Caribbean Casino Collectors Club News

Soon it will be time to pack up your chips and head for the annual CCGTCC convention in Las Vegas. The convention will run from Wednesday June 18th through Saturday June 21st. There will be some pre-convention events, like the ever popular ChipBoard Get Together at the Palms Hotel on Tuesday night, and the eagerly anticipated Chip Chat auctions. This year will be a short convention for me. I generally come in the prior weekend and stay through Saturday. However this year, I have a competing event. I am the President of the Long Island System's User Group, an educational organization devoted to IBM Midrange (AS/400) computers. This year, for the first time, we are having a dinner cruise for our June meeting. It is also a retirement party for our long standing (20 year) secretary, so I have to be there. We meet on the 3rd Wednesday of the each month and this year our June meeting will fall on the 18th. It is an event that I cannot miss, so the next morning I will be getting the first flight out of NY and arrive at the convention by noon on Thursday. C'est la vie (that's life)!

Thursday will be a tough day, after settling in, Ralph Pollack and I will be making Caribbean related presentations at 3 p.m.. When that concludes, we will convene the first meeting of the Caribbean Chip Collectors Club in the same room, Royale 8. After a quick dinner it will be off to the Palms for the CCGTCC Poker Tourney. Quite a busy day for me.

### CCCC Meeting Agenda

- Election of Officers - President, VP, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership
- Club Organization - Charter, Bylaws, accounts, membership year, etc.
- Club Objectives - As a club, what should we be doing?
- Open discussion
- Trade session

If you are interested in running for office, please let me know. The election will proceed as follows:

- For each position, I will ask for candidates
- Each candidate will have the opportunity to address the Club
- A hand vote will be taken of those present, the winner being the individual with the most votes
- Candidates and voters must be members in good standing
- If you cannot attend and wish to be a candidate, please forward to me a short bio to be read for you at the meeting

Although this sounds very serious, it is meant to be fun. As a group, we will only have the opportunity to get together in large numbers once a year, it ought to be as enjoyable as possible. If you have any ideas for making this meeting as enjoyable as possible, please let me know.

Moving on to other topics. My life took an unexpected turn recently. The owner of our small business, my boss, died suddenly in early April. The family asked me to run the company. The owners poor health had the business in bad shape for some time. So, I am putting in extraordinary efforts to keep the business going and fix the many things that were broken. That means that I have less time for my recreational activities, like chipping. So, please bear with me as I try to get my life back in order.

### The Caribbean ChipGuide

The Caribbean ChipGuide, [www.caribbeanchipguide.com](http://www.caribbeanchipguide.com), is going strong with over 3,500 items now on-line and a healthy backlog to keep me going for some time. I am also working on enhancements to make it easier to find items and generate custom displays or catalogs. Those enhancements are on the back burner for now.

### Market Commentary

It is wonderful to see more and more Caribbean related articles and ads in the CCGTCC's Casino Chip and Token News publication. Prices for hard to find Caribbean chips have been sky rocketing on eBay. Just recently a Bahamas Paradise Island \$1 chip, hat and cane mold, light green with no inserts, sold for \$180. A similar chip, only beige in color, sold for \$88. Also from the Bahamas, a \$1 large Greek key chip from the New Bahamian Club sold on eBay for \$150. Rare chips from Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Bahamas, and other locations continue to bring in record prices as the selling prices of chips from many other locations are on the decline.

### Hordes and Discoveries

I am not sure if "horde" is the right term to use. It is not as if an individual was buying up all the chips from a location in order to make a horde. The hordes we are talking about are the discovery of a large number of chips that were acquired from closed casinos in the disposition of its assets. There are well known hordes, of mostly Bud Jones CIC chips, from several closed casinos in Puerto Rico. Recently a supplier of poker chips on the internet, Nevada Jacks, started selling chips for home poker games from several Caribbean casinos, including: Cerromar Beach, Dorado Beach, Wyndham Old San Juan and Ambassador Plaza in Puerto Rico; and the Palm Beach, Palace, Caribbean, and Americana from Aruba. I am also aware of a large number of chips from the Bonaire Casino. These are HCE mold chips with a beautiful picture of a sailfish. There are not enough chips to make home poker sets, but enough to supply collector needs. And who knows, maybe there a lot more out there some place. So far the owner of these chips has not been able to negotiate a deal to part with the horde, but is selling them one at a time on eBay.

So that's it for now, happy chipping.

*Charles Kaplan*

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