

# EXTRA EXTRA

**ATTENTION MEMBERS of the CCA**

Provided herein is a

## **SPECIAL REPORT**

from the

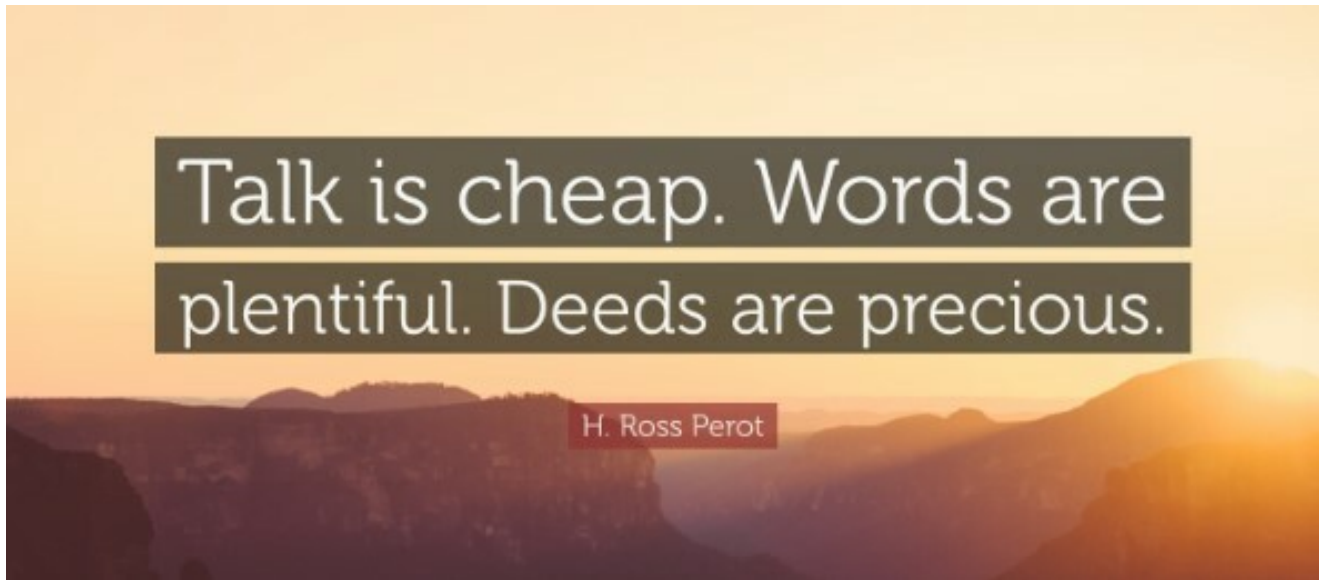
### **Membership Growth and Engagement Committee**



EXTRA EXTRA #11 March 2024

## Improving Membership: How the CCA is working to improve the Club and increase membership.

-By Bob Miksztal, on behalf of the Membership Growth and Engagement Committee



For several years there have been plentiful words around the State of the Hobby, the State of the Club and the State of our Membership. If you have been reading our magazine over the last few years you've seen the reports of declining membership in our Club, even while the casino collectibles hobby seems to be strong. In the Fall of 2023, the CCA Board of Directors appointed a committee led by former CCA President Doug Smith to help address declining membership.

The members are:

Doug Smith (HoF) Committee Chairman

Allan Anderson (HoF)

Ed Hertel (HoF)

Paul Schaffer

Doug Balduini

Bob Miksztal

Brad Smith

Len Cipkins

Roy Nelson (HoF)

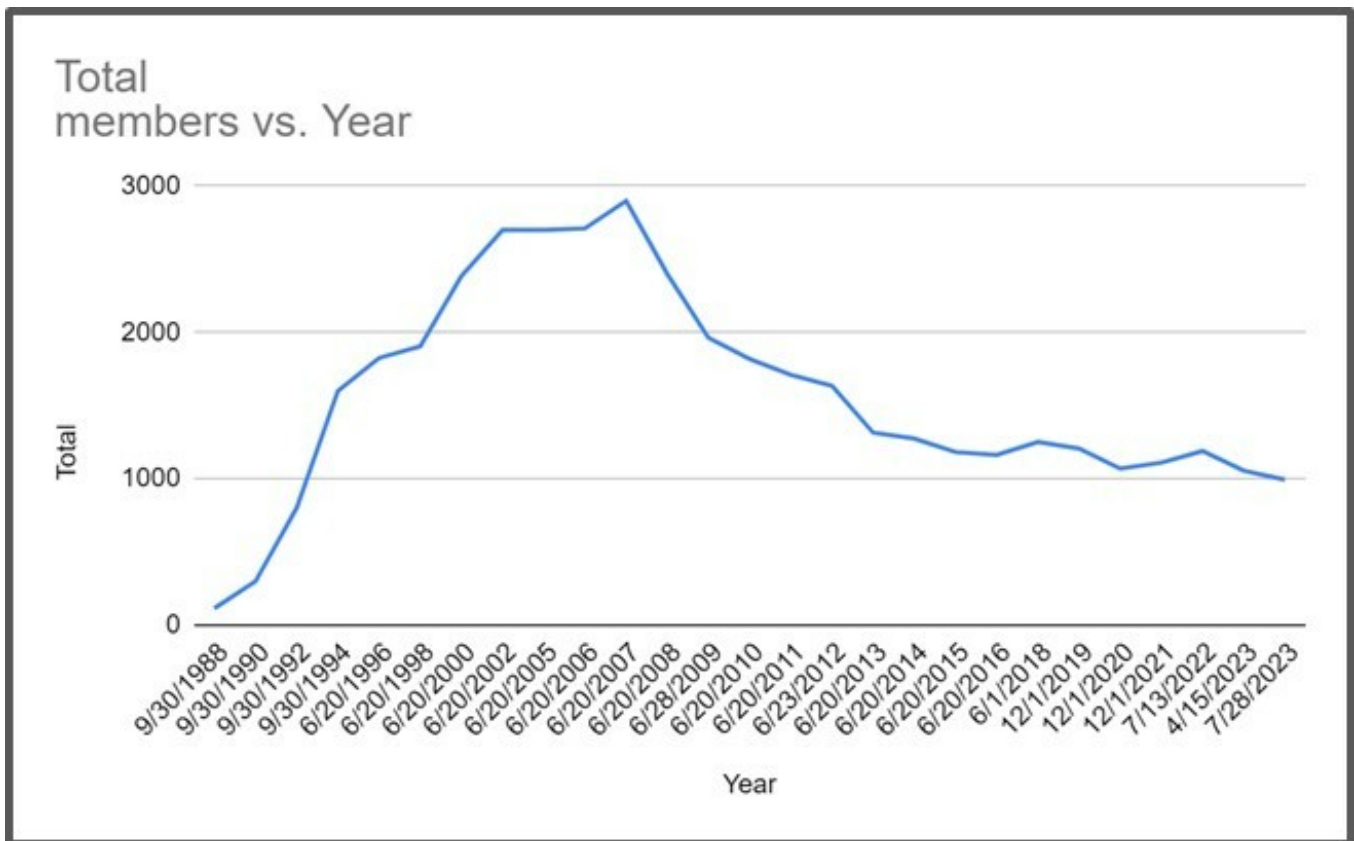
Rick Timmins

We met 10 times, each time for at least 2 hours and there was a lot of research and organization done offline. We generated over 90 specific ideas we had for improvement. The committee met with the CCA BOD a few weeks ago to discuss the first 15-20 topics and now has their approval to do what it takes to make 16 suggestions happen. The CCA BoD is 100% behind what we are trying to accomplish in an attempt to grow both the hobby and the Club.

Below is what we found and how the club is working to turn things around.

### Some background

While quarterly or annual reports can show a general decline in membership, it becomes even more dramatic when you zoom out and look at the big picture:



Source: CCGTCC magazines 1988-2023

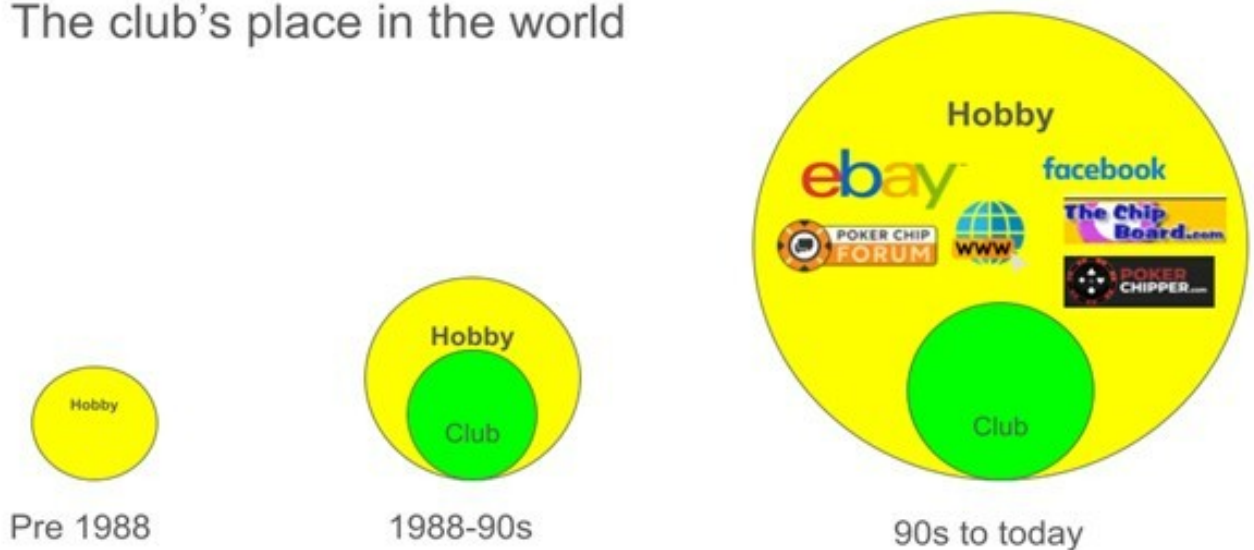
At the end of 2023 we were about one third the size we were in 2006. Why is that? Some reasons are larger than the hobby and the Club:

-Recession and inflation can make people question participating in the casino collectibles hobby. If there are higher priorities, money is spent elsewhere. For younger people especially, economic realities mean they have less money to spend on “fun” things.

-Generational priorities - as new generations mature, their priorities start dominating the world. While some say younger people are less ‘collecting oriented’, the truth is more subtle. They ‘collect’, but not in the way we more experienced people collect. They don’t necessarily have the same experiences driving the nostalgia of old gaming. Because there are so many ways to socialize today, they don’t always value the current ways of interacting with other collectors.

But there are also reasons that have to do with the Club and the hobby. First let’s look at the Club’s place within the hobby:

### The club’s place in the world



8

Before the Club was formed, in the late 1980s, there were individual collectors and some dealers organized to service them. From the late 1980s to the late 90s the Club played a huge part in the hobby. Since then while the Club has grown, ways to participate in the *hobby* have grown even faster.



Specifically:

-There are many ways of enjoying the hobby without joining the club (buying on eBay, connecting with others on TheChipBoard and Facebook groups, attending the annual CCA Convention/Show).

-Lots of resources of the Club (the basic ChipGuide, old Club magazines, etc.) are available even if you are not a member of the Club.

-Many non-members have never heard of the Club, don't really understand what it does and don't understand what the value is of joining.

-People who have joined recently don't get value and therefore don't renew. 66% of the people who joined the Club in the last 4 years have left.

For the Club to stay relevant we need to address recruiting new members, give members value for their money and give members a social experience with the Club.

## **Recruiting new members**

**You only get one chance to make a first impression.** And for many years our first impression was a web site that seemed to come straight from the dawn of the internet. For many veterans it didn't make a difference, but for prospective members it was a huge turn off. Have you ever walked into a store that was disorganized, messy, and obviously outdated? Did the experience make you want to go back?

The Club struggled for years with that website, but we are proud to say a new site was launched in 2023. While it is not perfect, it gives us a great platform to build on. We also launched a modern message board (forum) to help members communicate more easily. If you haven't seen them yet, take a look here and bookmark them now!



CCA Website



CCA Message/Forum

We have already had a couple of quick wins in adding to the on-line resources:

We created a MoGH Exhibits Page to centralize information about all of the current “Trail of the MoGH” displays (and encourage folks to go out and see them). We have also updated the website’s Lending Library page to point to an interactive catalog:



Trail of the MoGH Exhibits



Lending Library Catalog

On the web site we are soon launching a FAQ page for 'new collectors' - a single place we can send people that educates them on the hobby and makes a clear case for joining the Club.

**Getting the word out.** Actively promoting the Club and recruiting members was a spotty effort. A lot of it was by word of mouth. We are working on consistent messaging that can be both printed and distributed electronically talking about the Club and sending people to our new website.

We are also looking to "mine" the past, Annual Convention/Show walk-in registrations, to get the word out about this year's event and to remind people about our Club. Since last year we have completely revamped our Social Media plans and activities to tell the World about the CCA.

### **Value of being a member: Why join (or stay) in the Club?**

25 years ago, the answer was simple: It was the only place where you could meet other collectors, buy, and sell safely and get news and history on the hobby. Over time, all those reasons have weakened to varying degrees.

We are looking into the possibility of developing new benefits for being a Club member: Possibly expanding features of the MoGH's ChipGuide for members and maybe expanding the Club's website to have a members-only section(s). We already have a members-only section of the Club message/forum board.

### **A social experience**

You don't need a club to buy and sell chips...*if all you want to do is buy and sell chips*. People join a club to make social connections. The new Club message/forum board will help members more efficiently connect with each other. We plan to expand the ability of members to post their interests and meet up with other like-minded collectors.

We are also in the process of developing a plan for the Club to better communicate and interact with the membership. Right now, most of the communication is one-way (Club out to members) and

infrequent (monthly newsletters, quarterly magazines, annual business meetings). We are looking at having regular remote member meetings including Q&A or Ask Me Anything with the CCA Board.

We are also looking into developing a role, along the lines of a Communications Director, to answer member questions. Right now, there is no official place to ask the CCA Board, Club-related questions. And if they do get asked somewhere, there is no one, designated individual, who's official responsibility is to answer questions or direct the question to the appropriate CCA Board member, Chairman, or Director. We hope to change that.

The Club will also be looking to get feedback and suggestions from members. Lots of great ideas come up, get posted (usually on a non-CCA message board) and then disappear. We will be defining a place for members to make suggestions, and a process to consider them. We cannot promise we will do everything, but we will look at everything and respond to ideas.

We will be doing member surveys to see what is working to improve the Club. We will also be reaching out to non-renewing members to understand what we could have done better to provide value to them.

## **YOUR Opportunity**

All of this sounds great, how will it get done? While we have a lot of talented leadership, it's unrealistic to expect a volunteer-run club to be successful without a lot of participation. After all this is *your* Club and you have a role to play. Your help will make a difference.

We have been hampered by not having a structure around the work needed to move forward. The first request the Membership Recruitment & Retention Committee got approved was to have ongoing Committees (working groups). They are:

- Membership Growth and Engagement (this current one)



- Social Media (this currently exists: chair + 3 teams members)
- Technology (Web site, message/forum boards, etc.)
- Education - a Chair position already exists, but their only current responsibility is to get Annual Convention, Educational Seminar speakers. The committee will be expanding to include non-convention time education.

Each of these Committees will need people to help execute the specific ideas that have been generated and approved by the CCA BoD.

While we have asked for volunteers in the past, we haven't always been clear what we are looking for and how people can sign up. To address that we are currently creating a 'Volunteer Vacancies' page on the Club's website. You may have seen details included in recent CCA Newsletters, but to make them accessible and dynamic we are creating a permanent page on the web site.

As the Committees ramp up, they will be able to post what type of help they are looking for and whom to contact for more information. Everyone will try to be as specific as possible about approximating the time needed each month a volunteer will be needed to help.

On a personal note, I will say volunteering is a great way to meet and interact with a lot of people in the Club. I've had a lot of fun working with folks I had only ever read about, it's a great bunch of guys with a huge range of experiences, interests, and perspectives. It's increased my interest in the Club and the hobby.

## **In conclusion**

**The only constant is change.** While all things change, our love for the hobby remains. The Club was formed long ago by the legends of the collecting World who enjoyed the hobby and we all now enjoy the fruits of their labor. The history of gaming, the understanding of existing collectibles, discovery of unknown items, the connections we share - these are all the results of the contributions of volunteers in the CCA. With the changes we have made so far, the

improvements we are making soon and the continued contributions from volunteers, the CCA will be in a stronger position than ever to be an indispensable resource for casino collectors and to lead the hobby.

## VOLUNTEER VACANCIES!

Welcome to our new **Volunteer Vacancies Section**, which will become a regular feature here and on the Club's website.

The CCA is a wholly volunteer-run organization. As such it is inevitable that there are almost always volunteer vacancies in one or more areas.

Volunteers are the **backbone of the CCA**, looking after things as diverse as managing the Club's property, photography or mentoring new members, to name a few.

Volunteer positions can range from a couple of hours at the annual Convention and Show to a number of hours per week at home.

Some people are looking for new challenges after retirement or want to develop new skills. **There is something to suit everyone!**

Please take a look at the **vacancies** on the following pages and contact the relevant person to learn more if you are interested...

If you are interested in volunteering at the 2024 Convention, please contact Scot Parriott at:

[hkp4@icloud.com](mailto:hkp4@icloud.com) for more information.



## Do you have what it takes to be the new CCA Convention Chair?

A new Convention Chair(s) is needed from **2025**, although ideally any prospective volunteers would be available to shadow at **this year's show**.



This position reports to the BoD but has a large degree of **autonomy!** Logistical skills would be beneficial. The Chair is the primary contact with the hotel, suppliers and other relevant committee chairs.

Use your **unique ideas and creativity** to plan the show, sell the dealer tables and inspire the team to make this event more enjoyable every year.

The annual show at South Point brings together collectors and dealers from the US and the world to buy, sell and trade collectibles, learn and **have a great time!**

Contact Jim Steffner at [jimsteffner@mail.com](mailto:jimsteffner@mail.com) for more information.

## Fancy developing or honing your publishing skills? MAGAZINE CO-EDITOR NEEDED!

Steve Miller needs a new co-editor for the **Club's Award winning magazine and Convention Program!**

There are three ways in which this may work. Firstly, you could be a direct replacement for the retiring Robb McPherson, responsible for **2 magazine issues a year**.

It could also be someone to assist Steve in collecting content and organising the layout for all four issues, plus responsibility for the annual Convention Program. This option would give you the opportunity to learn how to use the provided software **over a period of time**.

Lastly you could be responsible for the Convention Program **only**, but this option assumes you already have the relevant knowledge base.

For more information, please contact Steve Miller at: [lvsteve1@gmail.com](mailto:lvsteve1@gmail.com).



## OTHER VACANCIES

### ELECTION CHAIR(S)

We are looking for an Election Chair or Chairs to replace Acting Chair Doug Smith once this year's election cycle is over. Responsibilities include calling for nominations, preparing ballot forms where necessary and tallying votes/announcing results.

Contact Doug Smith at [msmith310@aol.com](mailto:msmith310@aol.com) for more information.

### GREG SUSONG AWARD CHAIR

A volunteer is needed to handle the annual Greg Susong Award. Again this includes dealing with nominations, ballot and votes. The winner is announced at the annual convention but it is not essential that the Chair is present to make the award.

Contact Jim Follis at [jim@gamingore.com](mailto:jim@gamingore.com) for more information.

### GRAPHIC ARTIST

A graphic artist is required for occasional work including convention flyers, promotional items including chips, and possibly assistance with advertisements.

Contact David Spragg at [president@cctcc.com](mailto:president@cctcc.com) for more information.



These 3 vacancies are not particularly time consuming but will involve working to reasonably rigid timescales.