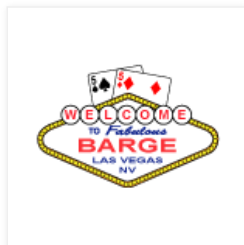




Ramblings by Chuck Weinstock

Sunday, August 10, 2014

The Story of BARGE 2006



BARGE is an acronym for the Big August Rec.Gamling Excursion, an annual meeting of folks interested in poker and gambling, many of whom met originally on the usenet discussion group rec.gambling.

2006 was the twelfth year that I co-organized BARGE. It was also the hardest. Due to organizational issues at Binion's, BARGE 2005 had been held elsewhere for only the second time since 1995. The Plaza was the host hotel that year. It was also the only BARGE I missed since I started attending in 1993 and organizing in 2005. (My wife, Barb, had back surgery and I could not make the trip.)

Trouble at the Plaza

2006 was to be a repeat of 2005, with the Plaza anxious to host us again -- until they weren't. BARGE 2006 was scheduled to run from August 15 to August 20 of that year (two weeks later than usual.) On July 20 (less than four weeks before BARGE) the Plaza realized that -- horrors -- we were accepting sponsorship money from Paradise Poker and PokerStars. They knew this from the previous year and also had a letter from the Nevada Gambling Control Board (or some such) okaying the arrangement. Nevertheless, they canceled us unceremoniously. Panic ensued, but Nolan Dalla quickly came to the rescue by putting us in touch with the folks who ran the poker room at Caesars Palace and we soon had negotiated a deal, signed catering contracts, etc. We announced this to the BARGE community on July 27 (less than three weeks before BARGE.)

Trouble at Caesars, Resurrection and then Trouble at the Palms

On August 3 (well under two weeks before BARGE) Caesars decided that sponsorship didn't work for them either and canceled our contract. I prepared a cancellation notice to be sent to the attendees (see below) but before I sent it Andy Hughes put us in touch with Gene Trimble at the Palms who quickly agreed to host BARGE 2006 (but squeezed us for a lot of money to do so.) That too fell through.

The Venetian Saves BARGE 2006

Then Dan Goldman suggested that we talk with Kathy Raymond at the Venetian and on August 10th (five days before BARGE) we were able to announce that BARGE 2006 would be hosted at the Venetian. As a condition of holding BARGE at the Venetian we had to give back the sponsorship money. We arranged with members of the community to cover the shortfall and I wrote checks returning the funds to Paradise Poker and PokerStars intending to send them after BARGE. I also quickly reserved a suite (the Venetian is all suites) and agreed to share it with Peter because it was much more expensive than the usual BARGE room. We then held our breaths until BARGE 2006, till then the best, but hardest to organize, BARGE evah finally got underway.

Epilogue

It was all smooth sailing from there. Well not exactly. On the Wednesday of BARGE (August 16) the Venetian's VP of Complaiance called me to her office deep in the back of the Venetian to explain about the sponsorship money and to confirm that we were returning it. I showed her the checks I was about to send. This was almost not good enough for her. She finally agreed to let BARGE continue, but I had to promise to send her copies of the canceled checks when they arrived. I was pestered about this for weeks after BARGE. The

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Paradise check finally cleared a month after BARGE and the PokerStars one not until late October.

The BARGE Cancelation Notice

Dear fellow BARGERS:

Due to various misunderstandings by the gaming commission and the host casinos we are having tremendous difficulty scheduling any of the 2006 BARGE tournaments. We are still trying to figure out exactly what happened but it revolves around the current dot com controversy and also recent actions taken by the US Department of Justice. A lot of organizations are spooked including both the Plaza and Caesars Palace who has changed its mind about hosting us. We're currently talking with the Palms and it looks promising, but then so did Caesars a week ago. We should know one way or the other in a few days.

In the meantime, since you are still allowed to have fun in Las Vegas as long as you are not a dot com. if the Palms falls through we assume most of you will want to attend an ad hoc BARGE centered mostly around the unofficial events such as the craps crawl, the non-smoker, the wedding, the sushi outing, karaoke, etc. There are also a myriad of poker tournaments occurring every day all around town and with some coordination, we can more or less take some of them over. We'd appreciate your ideas of what to do and how to coordinate.

We still intend to hold the banquet somewhere at 7pm on Saturday evening for those of you who signed up. The speaker will be Phil Gordon, and the cost of the banquet, beyond the \$10 fee paid, is being picked up by our friends at PokerStars.net. The exact nature of the banquet is not known at this time, but if you require a vegetarian option please contact Chuck Weinstock by Saturday, August 12.

Hotel rates at both the Plaza and Caesars Palace will continue to be honored. We are not sure about the availability of hotel rooms at the Palms.

We're sorry and frustrated about all the uncertainty, but there is little that we can do about it at the moment. Watch the barge and barge-announce mailing lists for additional details as we have them.

Chuck and Peter

Posted by [Unknown](#) at [11:46AM](#)

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