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Monday, March 31, 2008

Temporary sign

I've been a bit too busy playing to write the past few days, but I have oodles of notes and pictures and I'll be retro-posting when I get back, or at the airport if my laptop battery holds out. Meantime, have a look at what I could have won. The Megabucks jackpot is pretty high right now.

Posted by luckydonut in Las Vegas March 08 at 11:31

Friday, March 28, 2008

Hotel 3 of 4: Terrible's

The deal I had in the mail from Terrible's was for two hotel nights free with \$50 in free slot play for turning up. In fact, when we went to the players club to claim the free play we each got \$50 awarded. I still don't know why, but I'm not complaining. Nor am I complaining about the fun book coupon for a 125 coin bonus with quad 8s or 9s, which Claire managed to hit while we were running through the free play. Two attendants came along, took the coupon, discussed it among themselves and came to the conclusion that 125 x 25c was \$62.50. Miscalculations by casino staff are definitely +EV, even if a little grey ethically. The hotel room was very nice, in fact even without a mystery gift basket it still takes the lead as best hotel so far. All the rooms have been about the same size, but Terrible's was a little more modern. It had a flat screen TV - they call it high definition, but that's complete rubbish when you just get the regular channels shown in stretch-o-vision - and a coffee machine in the room. Another useful - and unexpected - little perk was free internet in the room. Compared this to a whopping \$13.99/day at Monte Carlo and \$10.99 at Harrah's Laughlin. The room even had as much of a view as you could possibly expect from a five-story, off-strip hotel. The picture is a bit streaky because I had to take it through the window mesh but you can see the clear view of the neck of the Hard Rock Hotel's big neon guitar. And a giant electronic billboard. My only complaint would be that the ice machine was about a mile from the room, down two floors and right on the opposite side of the hotel. In fact it was quicker to walk to the casino gift shop to buy some. If I believed Terrible's were pioneers in hotel design I might think that it's deliberate, but I really doubt they'd have gone to that much trouble for the sake of a 75c bag of ice.

Posted by luckydonut in Las Vegas March 08 at 11:30

Thursday, March 27, 2008

Royal family

Just when I was marvelling at Claire managing to hit three royal flushes in three days, she went one better. On Wednesday she hit four more royals. Before breakfast! Dutifully, here is the family album. Three are from multi-line 5c machines but there's another fully fledged \$1000 jackpot in there too. The biggie came from Edgewater which I think is becoming my favourite video poker joint. There's at least 8 full pay deuces wild machines (100.76% payback) with nice flat screens in slant-top cabinets, and they play at turbo speed. I was running at about 1200 hands per hour on this (and there's still room for improvement) which would be \$1500/hr coin-in leading to a theoretical \$11.40/hr profit. Then there's a further 0.15% cashback with the player's card (\$2.25) and 0.1% (\$1.50) comp. Not quite enough to go pro, but I did see one player sitting between two machines with an awesome wavy flappy action as he alternated between them one hand at a time. It's an honourable profession.

Posted by luckydonut in Las Vegas March 08 at 18:03

Hotel 2 of 4: Harrah's Laughlin

Driving through the desert is always so much duller than I remember - and in this regard I seem to have a particularly short memory. I'd already forgotten just how boring it was when we came to drive back from Laughlin to Vegas after staying out there just one night. This is a relatively short drive too, about an hour and a half on a good run. There's a few miles of twisty mountain road that make you wonder why they didn't just drill through the bugger, then about an hour of nothing but a straight line before you finally hit the freeway and civilisation is in sight. Actually, you can't beat the view of Las Vegas when you approach it in this direction. As you turn a corner, high up in the nether regions of Henderson, everything is visible right in front of you; the entire Strip from Mandalay Bay to the Stratosphere and the major downtown hotels all in view. One day I'll figure out a place to pull over and get a picture of it all. Harrah's Laughlin was a fine hotel room, and all the better for not costing a penny. I'd picked a room with a river view, and that did exactly what it said on the tin. We were a little early checking in but it didn't matter because I flashed the Diamond card and used the VIP desk. We got checked in and went to play and sample the buffet while the room was being prepared. Every day is brunch day at the buffet here, and so I managed to get eggs benedict and pepperoni pizza on the same plate. Yummy. At \$11.99 each it's a little pricey for Laughlin but it was so good we ate it twice and enjoyed the Diamond/Seven Stars seating area which also featured actual glassware. Very fancy. I'd like to have been able to compare it to the mighty \$2.99 breakfast buffet at Edgewater but that plan was foiled when we saw the queue was the entire length of the hallway - and back again. It's on the todo list for next time. We did get a cracking food comp was at River Palms though, a chicken club sandwich meal special (including fries and a drink) from just \$500 coin-in on a positive pay video poker machine. Menu price: \$8.75 - there aren't many slot machines that wouldn't make that one pay for itself, but on a +ev video poker game it's great. Theoretical win: \$3.80. The best freebie though was the stuff that someone must have broken into the room to leave for us. We returned at night to find a gift basket on the bed containing fruit, pretzel sticks and a chocolate truffle bar..... and there was a pack of freshly baked filled cookies. Food is usually an easy way to please me, but bringing cookies (which were gorgeous) to my room as a surprise bonus gets top marks. A+, would eat in bed again.

Posted by luckydonut in Las Vegas March 08 at 02:05

Wednesday, March 26, 2008

Grazie very much

My investment in achieving Total Rewards Diamond with Harrah's is already starting to pay for itself. I just had to flash the card at Venetian and instantly got an upgrade to their own Gold level. Oh, and the \$50 in slot play for upgraded members was a very nice bonus too. We'd only stopped in to get \$10 free play for Claire as a brand new member, but walked out with \$55 of their cash after playing it through. Gold is not the top tier of Club Grazie but it's enough to get access to their VIP lounge and it'll rack up slot points a little bit faster if I ever play video poker there. They do have 9/6 Jacks or Better at both Venetian and Palazzo, although even with the points multiplier it doesn't quite make a positive game. I'm hoping one other hidden benefit might be when playing poker if I make sure the card is in view when sitting down at a table. Anyone who is paying attention will clock me for the big gambler that I am, then all I need to do is make a big hand and the monies will flow even faster than usual. We crawled along the strip by foot on a free money run from Harrah's (\$5 bonus comp for 50 points earned) down to Sahara (\$50 in blackjack chips for a \$40 buy in) via a complimentary hot dog at Slot-a-fun. Casino Royale told us that we should have had room offers in the mail for this month, and it's nice to know we're still in the system but not much use when we've already booked places to stay. Oh and look, we're already in town too. But they explained because two of us are have qualified for mailers - usually a 2 or 3 night free stay - we can combine them and take 4 or 6 nights in the same room if we book at the same time. In fact, as the offers are one stay per month if we were ever able to time a trip over the end of one month and the start of the next we could take up to 8 or 12 nights free all in one go! This has to be the best hotel offer in town - to get into the comp system you only have to earn about \$10 cash back, which is about \$2000 coin-in. Play it through on 8/5 Bonus Poker at 99.2% payback and it costs a theoretical \$16 for the mailers, and I'm pretty sure it racked up at least \$10 in food comp as well as the \$10 cash back. They're virtually paying you to stay there before you get started!

Posted by luckydonut in Las Vegas March 08 at 16:46

Hotel 1 of 4: Monte Carlo

It looks like there's still some work to be done on the upper floors of Monte Carlo following the fire earlier in the year. But this really doesn't get in anyone's way, 36 floors up. It's the construction of the monstrosity that is CityCenter next door that's making life difficult. With sections of Frank Sinatra Drive closed off while they build, there's really no other route than to drive down the Strip to get to Monte Carlo. Which was fine in the early hours of the morning while I was getting up jet-lagged, but any later in the day and the traffic around there just gets horrendous. Not to mention the dozens of pedestrians at every set of lights that look at the red hand on the crossing sign through the blue drink in their dice-shaped glass and see some other god-knows-what symbol and colour pairing that apparently always means they should cross whenever they feel like it. There is also no access to the garage right now. The only place to park a car is a makeshift outdoor lot next to New York New York, and it's not even close to being big enough. When it takes 30 minutes of circling to get a spot on a Tuesday morning you know they're going to have major problems with this. I'm just glad I didn't try to spend a weekend there. So what about the hotel itself? First impressions go a long way, and unfortunately they weren't particularly good. We decided to valet park and hoped to get some assistance with our bags after a long flight, but the valet jumped straight into the car and waited for us to unload the bags and that was that. We juggled everything together and strolled past two bellmen rolling a cart back and forth between themselves on the way into the hotel, who eventually thought to ask if we needed any help with the luggage. I declined as politely as I could: "It's OK, we've done the hard bit now". The room (on floor 13, can you believe - how many hotels in Las Vegas even have that floor number?) was fine and did the job, but it was nothing special and felt like it was about due for some modernisation. Also, I blew the food credit that came with the room package on room service on the first night and that took well over an hour to arrive. Overall slightly disappointing. I guess I just expected a little more from a hotel I was actually paying for.

Posted by luckydonut in Las Vegas March 08 at 05:32

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

Annie Duke's hourly rate

As the USA flipped onto daylight savings time a few weeks ago and the UK don't put the clocks forward until next weekend, it's actually a 7 hour time difference right now rather than the usual 8, and I've felt a little less jet-lagged than usual. Even so, after an early start for a bunch of pre-breakfast gambling and a long walk along the Strip all the way down to Sahara I was ready to crash pretty early last night and ended up flipping TV channels in bed until I came across Deal or No Deal. The contestant, Mary Beth, was a self-proclaimed great poker player who had actually played in a live tournament one time and finished like 9th or something. However her interest in poker actually came into play in one of the offers she was made. In addition to \$138,000 in cash for her case, the banker added an extra special prize. Look, it's Annie Duke! We're reminded that this leading female player "won two million dollars in a televised poker tournament". But not that she only had to outlast nine other players - sucking out on most of them - to take down that freeroll. So, take the deal now and the offer also includes admission to some women-only poker seminar thing, but the really special part is that it would also include a whopping four hours of private poker tuition from the special star guest. Annie was really giving it the hard sell trying to get the contestant to take the deal, quoting impressive-sounding results from people she had mentored the past. She said she hardly ever gives personal lessons, so it's really a once-in-a-lifetime kind of thing. And a fast track to easy money, obviously. Her efforts made perfect sense when we found out the reason that there might be a shortage of takers for her private tuition. The value of this little package, Howie Mandel revealed, is \$25,000. Twenty five grand for four hours work. No deal, apparently.

Posted by luckydonut in Las Vegas March 08, Poker at 22:12

Royal variety performance

What better way is there to belatedly start a trip report than with a photo of a royal flush? Claire hit this beauty at Palms on Monday on the bank of Deuces Wild machines we've played so much in the past - and seen the progressive jackpot hit at least half a dozen times while playing there. So I'm sure this was overdue! Remarkably, another player also hit a royal flush at almost exactly the same time but Claire just got in there first. The jackpot meter showed \$1067.01 for hers (it's rounded up to the nearest quarter for the hand pay) and \$1000.56 for second place. Nice work indeed, and it's not even her only one. Make it three royals in three days... spades, clubs and hearts ticked off the bingo card - just diamonds to go. The one on the left came from a 10-line machine and the one on the right from a 50-line machine, so these weren't quite so difficult to hit but each was worth \$200 nonetheless. A royal flush always looks pretty, even if you do have to get quite close to the screen to actually see it.

Posted by luckydonut in Las Vegas March 08 at 02:44

Saturday, March 22, 2008

Vegas XVII: the heptadeca-quel?

We decided not to leave it to chance to find out whether BMI was going to fuck up the seat reservations again.Â Night-before check-in began at 7pm and we were there at 6:45. Even so, we were only the second group in line - with quite a few queueing up behind us before they started letting us through - and I thought for a minute I was going to have to produce a doctor's note to get an exit row. "Do you have neck or back problems?" he asked when I made the request.Â "No, I'm just quite tall", I replied. I don't know if this would have been enough on its own, but Claire lovingly added "and quite fat" and without any further ado we given window and aisle seats in row 28. I've actually lost nearly 20 pounds in weight and two belt holes since the start of the year.Â I think I'm ready for a Vegas-style burger...

Posted by luckydonut in Las Vegas March 08 at 23:10

Friday, March 21. 2008

Win when you're SNGing

Although I've been playing single table sit-and-go tournaments for as long as I've been playing online poker, I've never really played them in enough volume or taken them seriously enough to have a realistic idea of how well I could do. That is, until this month. After throwing away far too much money chasing a dream with EPT Steps on PokerStars - a series of single table tournaments that play with turbo blinds (in the lower levels, at least, the first time I got to Step 4 I was completely unprepared for the "normal" blind structure!) - I'd started to feel I was getting on OK with that format but never quite got lucky enough to parlay \$5.50 into a twenty grand seat package. There's no prizes in between worth speaking of, just odd dollars here and there, and although a poker trip to Warsaw would be nice - as well as a little bit scary - I wasn't going to go mad over it. So I thought I'd play a few more for, like, actual money. Turbos SNGs never last more than an hour, and often they're over in 30 minutes - even if you make the money. I soon realised that this speedy format should give me a chance to play enough tournaments to see a pattern emerge without having to stick with it for months and months - particularly once I became comfortable playing four at a time! Here, three weeks later and thanks to a spreadsheet I had to knock up in Excel as I couldn't work out how to get Poker Grapher to read my tournament results, is that pattern. I like the pictorial view much more than the dry output from Poker Tracker, which simply tells you how great you are through the medium of green numbers. So, yes, 425 is not a huge sample size but it's definitely a start and those early signs are looking good. The Two Plus Two forum FAQ speculates that a "very good player" could achieve a return on investment of 14% at this level, so I think I have every reason to be pleased with this performance. So what's my next step? Time for an enforced break now while I nip off to Vegas for a week or so (T-2!) but if I can carry on with these winning ways I'm going to need a plan to try to maximise the money I can make from these tournaments. The results above equate to a win rate of about \$8/hr in real terms (playing four tables and waiting for each set of four to complete before starting again), which is not to be sniffed at but it doesn't compare to most of the casino bonuses I've been playing lately, and even though poker is much more interesting than blackjack this probably isn't enough to keep me focused on playing intently for any longer than any of my previous poker fads have lasted. So should I consider moving up limits yet? Or perhaps try to play more tables at once at the same buy-in? Or maybe I should stick with what seems to be working but look to improve, nay perfect, my game using tools like Sit-and-Go Power Tools or SpadeICM? I'll have to have a good think about that over an all-you-can-eat buffet next week...

Posted by luckydonut in My Results at 23:02

Thursday, March 20, 2008

Harrington on cash cows

It's been on the cards (groan) for a while but finally Dan Harrington's latest books started to ship this week. Yes, books, plural. It's a simultaneous release of Harrington on Cash Games volumes 1 & 2. I mean, really, why even try to contain yourself to a single book when you can pad it out a bit by making up letters and colours for things that are mostly common sense, split it in two and charge double? In fact there's an increase in cover price too, each book is \$34.95 - up from \$29.95 for each of the three installments of Harrington on Hold'em. I guess the cost of producing (half) a book must have gone up that much in the past three years. The email I just got from Las Vegas Advisor trumpeted: Dan's back -- and this time he's talkin' cash games. Poker's most prolific author has released two more must-read books, these on the cash-game component of expert hold 'em poker play. Most prolific author? It's his second freaking book! OK, not many other poker authors have five different ISBNs to their name, but there's David Sklansky, Mason Malmuth and the late David Spanier, just off the top of my head. I had to check to be sure, but yes Mike Caro has written more than five and even Matthew Hilger has now written 3 actual, individual books with a fourth apparently on the way this year. At least with HOH he made us wait a while for Volume 2 to give a degree of credibility to the multi-volume ruse. He might actually have still been writing it. In this series, first we learn how to play the early stages of a tournament, and then we think about the later stages. It almost made sense. Volume 3 - coming somewhat out of the blue - was just a lovely added bonus. Now we have two volumes of HOCG coming out at the same time. Of course there's no obligation to invest in both books, you do have a choice, but the division between them is rather spurious. Volume 1 teaches pre-flop and flop play, whereas Volume 2 deals with play on the turn and river. Pardon me for asking, but why would I want a book that teaches me to play half a hand of poker? Even if I can choose which half...

Posted by luckydonut in Poker at 20:52

Sunday, March 16. 2008

Strike it

So you wait weeks for Sporting Index to do another promotion, and then two come along at once. It's back to back weekends of bet refunds, this time with losses up to £30 given back so you can try out their latest "why wouldn't it be random when nobody knows how it works anyway?" novelty game - Top, Middle or (you guessed it) Bottom. Would the real Michael Barrymore please stand up. And now, hopefully, I'm not the only one with that theme music stuck in my head. Dooo do-doo do-doo do-doo do-doo dooo. Do do de do. "The principal of this game", the instructions began - pushing my pedantry meter into overdrive after just two words: it's principle goddammit. What's that, you used the spell checker? Plstryharderthx. Shall we continue? ... "is very easy". Actually it's not very easy. It took me at least a dozen goes using play money to even start to understand what was going on, so I'll try my best to explain it but can't guarantee it'll be great. Picking top, middle or bottom reveals a symbol. You advance to the next column if you pick either a single arrow or you move across two columns with a double arrow. To get the maximum score you have to pick arrows all the way to the other side of the board and your current score is determined by the number shown at the top of that column. If you reveal a question mark you then have to pick one of four boxes. Three boxes contain your current score value and selecting one of these awards you that score and the game is over. The fourth box contains a green arrow and you move to the next column and continue. What is a Hot Spot? Not a good spot, of course. But in this game it's a red cross. Just different enough to avoid a lawsuit I expect. If you reveal a Hot Cross (not a good cross) the game ends with zero points no matter how far you got across the board. So far that actually sounds quite simple, but it's complicated no end by the fact that it's a spread betting game, and once you move across the board you are offered the opportunity to quit the game and take the new price offered, but that price is not going to be the same as your score because you haven't actually finished the game until you get all the way across or end it with a red cross or question mark. Very easy, yes? Assuming that you are at least 1-in-3 to hit some kind of arrow and proceed is one thing (all the games I played did reveal at least one arrow in every column) but knowing what advancing one step is worth versus how much you're risking to get there is a totally different matter. To be honest, I just didn't care enough about this game to work it out. If it wasn't for the £30 free bet I'd have been long gone. I guess there must be demand for this kind of thing among spread betting degenerates for whom there just isn't enough sport to bet on, but I don't see the appeal. First they have to get me to understand how the game works (in this case they didn't do a great job) and then they have to get me to trust it, and if it's not based on something that's random in real life that's usually tough. TV game shows are random? I think not, and nor does the chap from the video above if you check the comments on YouTube. Anyway, after a few play money games with the minimum stake, I noticed that if I hit a double arrow the first time or two single arrows I could then take the offer for a £1.50 profit, whereas a cross was a £2.00 loss. To avoid thinking any longer, this was good enough to start playing a few minimum bets to qualify for the refund - I needed ten bets at this level and finished up £7 down on the deal. So with a further £23 that could be refunded it was time for one larger bet to try to find a profit. This worked out at betting £1.15 per point, a maximum loss of £23 and a maximum win of £1160. Of course, I wasn't going anywhere near far enough across the board to win a grand and decided that a tenner profit or more would do. I went "middle" and got a green arrow. The game offered me £5.75 profit - not enough to get me back into profit overall so I would carry on, right after I took a screen grab. See that timer in the bottom right corner? 9 seconds it says. Well it took me a bit longer than that to paste and save the screenshot and while I was finishing up I heard a ding and some cheering from the other window. With my back turned, apparently I had gone "middle" again. Whether this is a random choice or just a repeat of my last selection I have no idea. Can't say I was pleased about it making the decision for me. Surely if it looks like I can't be bothered to play any more, it should hit the "take profit" button and cash me out rather than gambling it up on my behalf? And really, 15 seconds in total to act? Why? What damage, exactly, am I doing to your bottom line by not gambling any faster than that? Fortunately it was a winner, or I'd really be ranting about it. The new offer: £17.25, which just pushed me into enough profit to make my target. A total win of £10.25. Good game good game? No. A

Posted by luckydonut in My Results at 17:59

Wednesday, March 12, 2008

High kickin' dandy

I'm still not worthy enough to get a single free night at Harrah's cheapest hotel on the Las Vegas Strip, but they'll gladly fly me out to Laughlin for free and put me up for four nights. This offer came in an email today: If you would like to make a trip to Harrah's Laughlin, Nevada, please call or email me directly. Based on your Total Rewards card you qualify for two complimentary seats on any of the following flights and room. The flights listed below are direct charter flights to Harrah's Laughlin Nevada on Allegiant Airlines. From a guy named Ryan, whose email signature revealed him to be "Senior Executive Casino Host. 2 Days off: Sunday & Monday". He goes on to list 150 different flights over the next three months departing from various cities spread out across almost every state. If you're from Hawaii or Alaska you're out of luck but for mainland USA, from the major cities to the back of beyond, Harrah's have you covered. If there's a song about the city, it's definitely on the list: Chattanooga. Wichita. (Deep voice) Albuquerque. I'd never heard of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina but it has such a great name I want to go there now. So just one slight drawback, I have to already be in the USA to get the flight. I knew it had to be too good to be true. I guess there's no harm in suggesting a long haul charter from Manchester, or even asking him to get the private jet out for us, but I can't think that one day of intense play is going to be quite enough yet. Really it's just nice to see that my Diamond status is worth something decent, even if I can't use it.

Posted by luckydonut in Las Vegas at 19:45

Monday, March 10, 2008

Something beginning with "L"

I was sure I'd done a player-to-player transfer on Full Tilt before today, when I just sent a few bucks to Paul Sandells for a stake in his action in the WSOP Circuit event next month. But I'm sure I would have remembered this screen. I just don't get why this is useful. If you're going to give me some kind of verification that I entered the right username, what's the problem with telling me the full name of his city? This is what other poker sites do, if they even give any verification at all. I mean, really, anyone who is transferring real money to another player is going to make sure they have the right username and look back at what they've typed, not just hammer the keyboard randomly and hope it ends up in the right place. Are they? Is that actually this player's avatar displayed? How would I know unless (a) I'm sending money to someone I've actually played with before (which I'm not) and (b) I have your horrible cartoon monkey/gnome/dude with afro avatars switched on (which, for the sake of sanity, I don't). Sometimes you won't even be sure what city the other guy will have put on his account, but you'll know roughly - and this was the case with Paul. Even seeing London rather than Lisbon, Lima or Los Angeles here would give me a clue as to whether this is the right guy. That "L" really doesn't narrow it down much. Jeez, if you're worried about giving out too much personal information just show the name of the country he's from, or a little flag picture if you want to be super cool. You can already see any player's country at the poker table without even sitting down. That would be much more useful than making me play bloody I Spy whenever I want to send money.

Posted by luckydonut in Online Poker at 01:24

Sunday, March 9, 2008

I love this stuff

Some suckouts are just brilliant. Hopefully this is the turning point for me tonight after 8 straight out-of-the-money finishes in sit and go tournaments. I finished 3rd - it's a start. It was the first steal attempt I'd made in this tournament, and it all went badly wrong. I open-pushed ace-five from the button and got called immediately by pocket kings and then immediately afterwards by ace-queen suited. When the cards were turned over I said out loud, "Oh great, I can't win". Nobody was there to listen, or to remind me I actually had a 9% chance of taking it down. The flop brought hope in the form of a mighty gutshot draw. "Oh, I can now - with a two", I continued for the benefit of the audience at home. You don't always have to call it a deuce. And the sweetest turn card sealed the deal. Ship it.

Posted by luckydonut in Online Poker at 23:05

Saturday, March 8, 2008

Luck of the Irish football

The pictures in the spam got all screwed up, but the offer is still a good one...Been a while since I had one of these.Â Thanks, Al.Â Keep your head on...Play it right and it's a completely risk free Â£50 bet.Â You just have to pick a bet based on a fairly even matchup, with a limited downside and as few different possible outcomes as possible.Â That way you don't need a freak result to win big on a no-risk spread bet.The Win Index on a football game is usually a good candidate, and I've picked the glamour fixtureÂ Drogheda United vs Shamrock Rovers for this bet.Â I don't know anything about football these days, so an Irish game is as good as any.Â With three apparently strong favourites (Man Utd, Liverpool, Chelsea)Â playing in the English televised games this weekend, the market on this game is a better fit for this bet than any other.The Win Index awards 25 points for a win, 10 for a draw and nothing for a loss.Â By selling Drogheda at 15 for Â£5 per point, I lose exactly Â£50 (maximum value from this promotion) if they win the game.Â A draw wins me Â£25 (Â£5 x 5 points) and if Shamrock come out on top I win Â£75 (Â£5 x 15 points).It's all settled after one game, even with a draw, as both winning outcomes are good returns on a Â£50 free bet.I had to check to be sure, but yes - Shamrock Rovers do play in green.EDIT:Â Seventy five quid, tyvm.Â Shamrock Rovers won 1-0, thanks to an early goal from a dude named Murphy.

Posted by luckydonut in Random Thoughts at 10:03

Thursday, March 6, 2008

Show me boobs

I was marvelling in the summer at how a junk shop pretending to be a Las Vegas casino memorabilia store had managed to put a standard Hooters carrier bag up for sale as "vintage" gear and price it at \$7.50. But perhaps they saw something coming. The Review Journal has reported that breast-themed Hooters Hotel and Casino is to be sold and redeveloped. The property celebrated its 2nd birthday just last month. There's not a great deal I'll miss about the place, although I had discovered that Hooters was a good place to park when the major hotels on the South end of the strip were busy and limited to guests only. However the casino had no games that I'd bother going out of my way for and the couple of times I walked past the poker room there wasn't even a single game going on. I tried to get some value out of the slot club signup offer. The cuddly owl mascot in a Hooters T-shirt was almost as tempting as a free buffet or even cash, but only after I'd signed up did I realise you had to earn slot points on three consecutive days to get him. Free stuffed toy, or never having to come back here again... Turned out it really wasn't a tough decision. The downfall of Hooters is, presumably, because if you're looking for the thing guys want to see more than anything in the whole wide world (see one minute video below, if you really need it explaining..) you have quite a few options in Las Vegas. With so many strip clubs, topless shows, hot girls direct to your room and legal whorehouses just an hour away, do guys actually come to Sin City to eat chicken wings served by a girl in a tight t-shirt and orange hotpants - just like they can get back at home? Now, where can I get a beer sandwich?

Posted by luckydonut in Las Vegas at 10:51

Blog Export: The Lucky Donut, <http://www.luckydonut.com/blog/>

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

Only the good

I've finally heard the sad news that broke over the weekend about the death of game designer and writer Barron Vangor Toth. I was a devotee of Barron's weekly poker column on Gutshot.com. He wrote mostly about fixed-limit Hold'em and somehow managed to turn his accounts of probably the least dramatic poker game there is into a compelling read. He died from cancer aged 34. That's so sick.

Posted by luckydonut in Poker at 18:44

Sunday, March 2, 2008

Cards are in the air

It's T-21 and the traditional jumbo-playing-cards-above-the-fireplace countdown to my next Las Vegas trip has begun: Everything is finally booked now and it's going to be a bit of a jaunt - four hotels in 9 days! We start off at the charred remains of Monte Carlo for a pretty good \$69.95/night. With tax the total is \$152.50, but the package includes \$25 in food credit, \$10 in slot play and \$5 to spend at Starbucks. I'm sure it will all get used! Effectively that makes this stay just \$112.50 - a bargain for that resort, but it's still three times as much as we're paying for the rest of the trip. Six of the next seven nights don't cost a penny! On Day 3 we drive out to the Colorado River for a complimentary night at Harrah's Laughlin. We could spend as much time as possible here racking up Total Rewards credits on the video poker at Harrah's to try to extend that elusive Diamond status for another year. Or we could play a better game at almost any other casino in town. For days 4 and 5, we're back in Las Vegas at Terrible's. It's a better-than-free deal: they're giving me \$50 in free slot play just for showing up. In fact, I have a feeling that Mr Terrible has a complex about guests actually showing up. He charged a \$50 deposit to my card (for my complimentary room) when I booked, and apparently I'll get this back at check-out. So, if I actually turn up they give me \$50 to play through their machines. And if I'm still there two days later I get my \$50 deposit back. Really, the place isn't that bad. From day 6 we finally stay put for a few days. It's four nights at the Four Queens, three of them comped and one more for just \$35. Claire arranged this all over email, no credit card required even for the paid night. Apparently a little bit of video poker play goes a long way here still. She did get a second offer for three more nights in April, which is just too late for this trip. However the same mailer also has an offer another \$40 slot play for free though, which it looks like she will be able to claim on the morning of April 1st, just before we fly home. Lovely. So all in all, we have all 9 nights booked for a total cost of about \$190. But there's \$130 coming back in food credit and slot play! Not quite the totally free trip we were aiming for, but it's getting closer!

Posted by luckydonut in Las Vegas at 19:56