
Canada's Gambling Watch Network's e-mailed Newsletter

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Our Central Contact and Spokesperson is Brian Yealland;

Phone 613-533-2186; fax 613-533-6519; email yealland@post.queensu.ca

Our Central e-mail contact/editor is Johannes DeViet; email jdeviet@bellnet.ca

Research: Bill Clark: billann.clark@sympatico.ca; phone 705-472-2312

We are not alone in our struggle against the continuing expansion of gambling in Canada. Going to <http://www.citizenvoice.ca> will give you more information on this group, while Game Planit reveals the truth about slots and other Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs). See how deceptive the machines can be from virtual reels to concealed odds. All things in the EGMs are designed to addict the player. Visit <http://www.gameplanit.com> for more.

Anyone who wants to join the class-action suit against Loto-Québec, or wanting to know more on that issue, will find a link on website www.vivaconsulting.com pointing the way.

Also: a group of activists in Nova Scotia established the Web site [gameovervlt.com](http://www.gameovervlt.com), it has many stories that show what pathological gambling does to individuals and their families.

Our Blueprint for action to reform Canadian gambling law, policies & practices into real public interest will be e-mailed to anyone who asks for it.

We're always open to Guest Editorials and Letters to the Editor. Placing an item doesn't mean that we agree with the opinion expressed. As a coalition of a variety of groups and people, our "party line" leaves room for differences of opinion, and we welcome them!

Help!

We are always looking for persons who have the time, the interest and the ability to help us finding news articles about gambling from coast to coast. We are doing our best to be a Canada-wide organization, but the fact that many newspapers (especially in Atlantic Canada!) restrict access to their site to subscribers makes it necessary to find activists in all provinces to make sure that items of importance are not missed. All that our activists need is a computer and access to the Internet. Do not be afraid of your own inexperience: in the 7 years of our existence, we have more than once helped new people to get started!

We should add here that Canada's Gambling Watch Network also needs financial help. For some seven years our expenses have been paid mainly from the pockets of generous activists, and a few years ago we began to try to get regular supporters. We will continue to look for subscribers to our Newsletter. The minimum membership is \$10 per year, the regular is \$20 annually, and any bigger amounts will be received with thanks. We cannot issue receipts that will be recognized by Canada's taxation system. How can we actively oppose gambling without being politically active? Send cheque or money order, payable to Canada's Gambling Watch Network, to our Treasurer, Art Tiesma, 308 Spruce Street, London, ON, N5W 4N5.

Due to the closing of our former Internet server, our Web site is presently inaccessible. Its contents are a part of our extensive archives, so it can be rebuilt. We are badly in need of a volunteer Web Master or Mistress with the ability and the willingness to do this.

General

When what is now 'Canada's Gambling Watch Network' started its work in Ontario, it had at least 14 groups and contacts in that province. It's a sad fact of today's life that

only one of these groups is still active. Its name is **Casino Watch** and it keeps an eye on the happenings in and around Ontario's Gananoque Charity casino. The group has a board, a bank account, regular meetings, does surveys and contacts us when we happen to miss a news item. We seldom hear from small groups in other provinces. It would be an ideal situation if our nation had many active groups like **Casino Watch**. We pay it and its members our compliments for their persistence and for the work they are doing!

Editorial

In my not very successful efforts to catch up with the back-up of items we missed when we had no Internet connection, I finally got to a 10/7 article in the Ottawa Citizen that is headed 'Misdirected' calls to Ontario's problem gambling hotline skyrocket'. It deals with gamblers dialling the helpline to find out the winning lottery numbers.

I disagree with the word 'Misdirected' used by the recipients of those calls. Why do they not realize that the callers are problem gamblers? Isn't anyone who buys a lottery ticket - while aware of the real odds of winning - a real problem gambler?

This fact causes me to make a suggestion: why do Ontario's Problem Gambling people not open help desks in places that have lottery booths? It would be ideal to locate those desks opposite the lottery booths. That would not only give counsellors the opportunity to talk to problem gamblers - or at least give them a beginners course in math - it would also give them an opportunity to meet and treat the many addicts to break-open and scratch tickets! Talk of catching them at the source!

These actions would also be a good start to counteract the annual half a billion dollars the OLGC – oops! I almost forgot that it spent several millions so it could drop the C! - the OLG spends on promoting and advertising gambling.

Johannes DeViet.

Online gambling

'Online gambling fuels addicts suicide conference told' is the heading of a serious 10/17 CBC news item reporting that an estimated 200 compulsive gamblers commit suicide in Canada every year, as reported by Terry Flynn, director of spiritual care at the Bellwood Health Services facility in Toronto.

British Columbia

'The B.C. Lottery Corp. says it has safeguards in place to prevent retailers from stealing customers' winning lottery tickets - a practice one news report suggests is rife in Ontario', writes the 10/26 Vancouver Sun in a CP article. Four days later this paper cites one story of an 82-year-old man who had purchased a winning ticket and was told by a store clerk that he had won a free ticket. The clerk then cashed in a winning ticket worth \$250,000.

'BC gamblers deserve ironclad proof that insiders are squeaky clean', the paper writes. The 11/3 Globe and Mail contained this paragraph in a CP article: 'Premier Gordon Campbell will use this weekend's B.C. Liberal party convention in Penticton to announce a province-wide ban covering smoking in all public places, Global TV reports.' Finally!

Alberta

'SMOKERS WIN BIG AT NEW CASINO', writes the 10/27 Edmonton Journal, 'While smoking has been legislated out of Edmonton casinos and bingo halls since July 2005 by the city's smoking bylaw, it is allowed in 30 per cent of the \$178-million River Cree casino, including one-quarter of the slots and an area around the poker

rooms because it is just west of the city limits and under the Enoch Band's, not the city's, jurisdiction.'

'Demand should dictate gambling's rate of growth' is a piece in the 11/1 Calgary Herald of a meeting in Medicine Hat, written by a reporter who sees gambling as entertainment. It's a good thing that most types of entertainment don't bring addictions and crime like gambling does!

Saskatchewan

The 11/3 Leader Post writes: 'Smoke-free casinos have been bad for business -- but not as bad as Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation officials originally thought'; the vice-president of corporate affairs has this news for us: casinos are bouncing back faster than expected.

Manitoba

The 10/30 Globe and Mail carries a CP item with the heading, 'Manitoba to appeal ruling against anti-smoking law'. The real issue -it could have implications across the country- is whether the province must treat white bar owners the same as their aboriginal colleagues. In August, a Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench ruled that exempting reserves from the smoking ban violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

'In Curbs but no ban', this paper states on 11/4: 'The federal Conservative government will take steps to reduce or eliminate smoking in public places on First Nations but will stop short of implementing a nationwide smoking ban to include reserves'.

'New game in town' is a news item in the 11/2 Winnipeg Sun reporting that in Headingley (just West of Winnipeg) a Native-run casino is to open with 40 VLTs and an indoor smoking area.

Ontario

The 10/11 Windsor Star writes: 'A bingo hall owner who says his industry is dying wants to replace them with Texas hold 'em poker parlours, despite a provincial moratorium on new gambling ventures.' A group of suffering charities is to approach the City council to promote this idea. The 10/17 Star reports that the City and the charities are seeking relief by asking the Province to provide short-term funding as cash from bingos dries up. That same issue reports on the improvements made to Windsor's casino. We remember that it needs slots revenue to feed hungry kids, and now provincial assistance, while millions are being spent on improving its casino. In the 11/3 Star, we read that the raceway and the estate of Tom Joy are suing three prominent people. The suit alleges that the defendants charged an interest rate of 134% when they provided the then desperate owner a \$500,000 loan.

In '70 charged as poker dens busted', the 10/13 Ottawa Citizen writes of a police raid on 4 local clubs, seizing gaming tables, chips, cards, furniture, electronics along with \$12,000 in cash, a small amount of marijuana and a prohibited weapon. Another item in the same issue tells of angry patrons who say that the poker establishments offer harmless fun.

The 10/17 Niagara Falls Review writes that its local curling club is replacing its leaking roof with the help of \$38,200 (lost by gamblers) and granted by the Trillium Foundation.

In that paper's 11/2, issue we read that those who would lead the city during the next four years would try to make it a year-round destination, providing year-round employment, enhance cultural experiences for residents and improve safety.

The 10/23 Sarnia Observer writes: 'After steady declines the past couple of years revenue from local slots and casino operations may be stabilizing, if recent quarterly

payments are any indication'. We then read that Sarnia's 5% share from Hiawatha Slots was \$478,822 between July and September and that Point Edward received \$543,069 for that period. On 10/28, this paper reports that Sarnia is asked to waive its bingo licence fees, and lose up to \$60,000 in revenue. We wonder: do city councils realize that bingo revenues have been declining ever since casinos and slots lounges sucked bingo players to their places?

In a 10/31, Toronto Star article on crime we found this paragraph: O'Neal, a 47-year-old librarian, was slain in 1988 by her husband Robert James Adamson, a psychotic gambler who police say killed for an inheritance to pay off debts. Adamson, convicted of second-degree murder, was charged before O'Neal's body was found.

In the 11/2 Toronto Star, we read that an abducted man - most likely a poker winner - walked "suffering from injuries," into a police station, and another piece in this issue on Canada's Sports Hall of Fame, the old threat of a possible hotel-casino came up once more, but in an 11/4 article on the same subject we read the words: 'a hotel, if built, would "absolutely not" contain a casino'.

A number of Ontario papers in late October and early November had items on the lottery scandal. All those that we found are filed in our extensive archives.

Quebec

The 11/4 Gazette has a story that should set people's hairs on end: by spending \$24M and adding 1,470 VLTs (programmed to cause addiction), Senator Paul Massicotte's private company Attractions Hippiques, with the approval of the Quebec government, will make efforts to revive the outdated and now slowly dying horseracing hobby. After writing this, I was told by Sol Boxenbaum – he speaks on an English language Montreal radio station (www.cjad.com) Tuesday through Saturday mornings 3:05 A.M. to 4:00 A.M. EST- that the Senator has agreed to move the Montreal hippodrome to Montreal's North Shore. In a

communicue, the senator says he is committed to investing \$280M over the next 5 years to re-launch the horse racing industry in Quebec. As part of the deal, Loto-Quebec will build gaming rooms inside the hippodromes, plus another in Mont Tremblant where gamblers will have access to video lottery terminals. It is a part of government's strategy to reduce the number of sites where VLTs are offered by 30%. They say it will make it more difficult for problem gamblers to get their fix.

Sol's reality check: The machines that have been removed from the bars number 800. They have been removed from bars that had less than five units each. They will continue to be in mini casinos disguised as bowling alleys, pool halls etc. Problem gamblers will have to go around the corner or across the street to find machines. In addition, a new type of venue will be established that will attract A) people from outlying areas that won't come into the city, B) people who don't go to bars, and C) people who will go to the new venues for the novelty. Some will become addicts. The Montreal Hippodrome, which now has 200 antiquated VLTs, will resurface from the ruins and move to the North Shore where it will house 1,100 newer, more addictive machines. They won't tell you this yet officially, but if you bet that the new location will be at the junction of highways 13 and 440, you will win. Furthermore, you can bet that it's only a matter of time before they start running shuttle service to herd the victims out there. And now you can stop wondering why the Metro line is being extended to the North Shore, Sol says.

If we had more space we could add a few lines about the politician's conflict of interest.

Nova Scotia

Nova Scotians buy 52 M break-open lottery tickets per year, but a former industry insider says that some retailers are perpetrating a "scam" on unwitting buyers, the 10/27 Halifax Herald writes. We're then told how the scam works. If we had more space and time we'd write about it. All we want to say now is that those tickets are highly addictive and that it is a shame that a government agency is selling them!
