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

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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!

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.

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.

Editor's notes

In the past week we saw another article talking about the need of an ethical culture. It was in the 12/7 Ottawa Citizen in reaction to the Ontario auditor general's report detailing the abuse of corporate credit cards, rules-breaking and sloppy reporting in

the management of hundreds of millions in tax dollars by the province's civil servants. The writer of the item sees an Ontario Accountability Act that will create an ethical culture, as a solution.

May I suggest that it would be better to go a step or two further back? I remember a time when parents taught their children certain basic rules of good behaviour and honesty, and when school-teachers stressed the need of obeying those rules. In that time all developed countries lived by those values and those who disregarded them were corrected.

In those days children were as playful as they are now, but we never saw them purposely destroying other people's properties as the papers are reporting now. I remember kicking a ball that by accident went through some neighbour's window, and one of my parents talking to those neighbours about getting it fixed.

A few days back I found on the net a 12-page article containing practically all Ontario's 2006 lottery news. It also contained these figures:

Sales FY 2002:	C\$2.11 Billion
Sales FY 2003:	C\$2.20 Billion
Sales FY 2004:	C\$2.27 Billion
Sales FY 2005:	C\$2.11 Billion

Every day I read in Newspapers about the plight of the homeless. Especially in provinces hit by harsh winter weather these people are in the news. I often wonder why there are so many of them. Is it one of the consequences of the many family breakdowns?

Looking at the lottery sales figures of one province I wonder what would happen if we had booths for donating money for shelters for the homeless instead of encouraging the greed of those who partake in lotteries. Would that work?

Every day I walk a few times past the near by's lottery booth and almost always I see people working on scratch tickets, despite the bad publicity those tickets received.

British Columbia

The 12/2 Times Colonist's item 'Developers court natives with casino' (we wrote about it last week) caused a number of negative reactions in that 12/5 paper. 'Casino shouldn't be traded for cave', one of them said; another stated: 'Don't trade cave for casino', and item 3 puts it in these words: 'Nothing sacred found in a casino', while another writer wondered if Canadians of non-native origin, from Langford or from elsewhere, need not apply for a job at that proposed casino. Two days later this paper writes that Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Minister Mike de Jong's last thing he wanted to talk about at a cabinet meeting was the half-baked idea of a native casino at the Bear Mountain development, proposed in talks on how to settle the sacred cave issue there. On that day the Vancouver Sun reports that Great Canadian Casinos' bid to serve alcohol on the gambling floor of its United Boulevard Coquitlam location has cleared a preliminary hurdle, as the city council approved the first reading and agreed to let the issue go to a public hearing.

Alberta

An article in the 12/8 Edmonton Journal conveys a Union leader's opinion that the ALGC is helping the casino to avoid negotiating a first contract by failing to crack down on the alleged violations of the casino's operating guidelines. An ALGC spokeswoman said the commission has not received any complaints about the casino from the general public, but the union has complained and those complaints are being investigated.

Saskatchewan

'VLT losses spurred man to robberies, court hears' is a story in the 12/7 Leader-Post about a 23-year-old man who committed two armed robberies, then turned himself in to police, and is now going to a federal penitentiary for the next two years and four months.

North West Territories

"The greatest problem facing the people of the Northwest Territories is addiction to substances such as alcohol, nicotine, marijuana and problem gambling. ... Improved economic opportunities as the result of oil, gas and mineral exploration have done little to decrease the incidence of addictions," is a paragraph found in a five-page article the 12/3 Toronto Star that got our interest because it also mentions problem gambling. The item tells the story of Dr. Jennifer Chalmers's heroic action against addictions in our country's far north and it came to us when we just had received the information (see our previous Newsletter) that U.S. native casinos have a record of leaving reserves worse off, with soaring rates of gambling addiction only complicating social problems. One day earlier the Toronto Star had published the article 'Dry' town just a myth' about the far north of Quebec that contained the line: 'At the centre of this apparent madness are communities besieged by alcohol, drugs and gambling with no idea how to control it.' Our efforts to find more about gambling in that item had no results. If any of the readers of our weekly Newsletter knows more about gambling in the far North, we'd like to hear about it.

Ontario

There's a weekly lottery in Ontario called PayDay. Here's how it works. For a \$2 ticket, you have a chance to win one of two prizes: \$1,000 a day for a year... a total benefit of \$365,000... or \$1,000 a week for life. But here's what the Lottery Corporation was not telling anyone. After the first prize was awarded (that's the \$365,000) they kept selling tickets without notifying the unwitting public; this made some people howl with outrage.

(Source: Michael Hlinka, CBC Business News).

'Gambling on prevention', a piece in the 11/28 Toronto Star, reports that the oxymoronic Responsible Gambling Council – it calls itself independent but is funded by the addicted-to-gambling-revenue Ontario government – will present its program 'Know the Score' to about 30 university and college campuses across the province this school year. Its aim is not to prevent gambling, but to prevent its many problems in a non-threatening and non-judgmental way.

'Literacy council loses bingo' is an item in the 12/5 Niagara Falls Review reporting that another charity depending on bingo revenue, is in financial trouble. We've read about this problem in other casino cities (Windsor Sarnia, etc.)

That paper's same issue reports that the British Methodist Episcopal Church in Niagara Falls has accepted a Trillium Foundation grant of \$63,000 over three years to hire an assistant and implement its Black Canadian history development program. We wonder: is the Church aware of the fact that Trillium money comes from the losses of gamblers?

The Review has a series of articles on Casino Niagara's 10th anniversary, starting on 12/5. The 12/6 item reports that both the staff and the gamblers celebrate this occasion, while another item on that day deals with the change of face and economy the casino has caused for the city.

Of special interest is the 12/8 article titled: 'Casino's negative impact less than expected.' We quote: 'A casino will attract crime. It will promote the moral decay of a community desperate for jobs. It will turn casual players into addicts. A dozen years ago, Judith Mac-Carthy was certain all those things would happen if the province

granted the city the right to open a glitzy new gaming centre in the heart of the tourist district. A decade after Casino Niagara opened its doors, MacCarthy says things might not be as bad as they seemed.' The Niagara Regional Police Staff Sgt. Mark Carter of the Casino Patrol Unit doesn't believe the opening of Casino Niagara led to a spike in reportable crime, the article writes. This causes us to wonder why the RCMP in B.C. says the exact opposite.

'The U.S. ambassador to Canada says the tourism industry won't suffer under a new American law requiring travellers to show passports before entering the U.S., writes the 12/7 Review. But the local tourism officials have a different opinion. They think it will have a drastic effect. Although the law won't become effective until early next year, its effect is already showing because many people think they already need passports now.

In the minutes of the latest meeting of Casino Watch we read that Gananoque casino's revenue for the third quarter of 2006 is down 15% from the same quarter in 2005.

'This is the fifth consecutive cheque that is less than that for the corresponding quarter of the previous year', the minutes report, and they add: not only that, but the rate of decrease is accelerating.

Another paragraph in those minutes reports that a student of the University of Lethbridge interviewed a resident of Gananoque by phone as part of a survey of people living within 200 km of Belleville, where the slot machines at the Quinte Exhibition and Raceway are planned to open in the summer of next year. A friend of us told us that she had the same kind of phone call and she added that since she was not willing to be interviewed at home and she had no computer, she would not be a part of the group interviewed. It seems that the Ontario Problem Gambling Research people are using Alberta students to do the work involved in the survey, and we wonder: is it proper for such a survey to exclude a certain group of people?

Newfoundland and Labrador

On November 25, 2005 a CBC News item reported that a first-ever study of gambling prevalence had found VLT players are significantly more at risk for addiction than other gamblers, and on March 23 it said that the government is ordering lottery officials to re-program VLTs by removing their stop buttons to make them less addictive.

Now the 12/6 CBC News states that the addictions consultant for the province says that removing the buttons has slowed down the speed of play and that this has led to a small drop in the number of players. Atlantic Lotto says that since staff started removing stop buttons in April, the number of people using VLTs in Newfoundland and Labrador has dropped by about 1.5%. The corporation - it is owned by the four Atlantic Canadian governments - expects VLT revenues in this province to drop by about \$6M during this fiscal year.

Nova Scotia

The 12/4 Amherst Daily News published a letter from a woman who works in the retail of selling and checking lottery tickets. She writes that workers make mistakes, but that, with all of the publicity of what was happening in Ontario, they have been taking a lot of slack from their customers as it is, and they've been doing as much as possible for their customers to feel safe when they bring their tickets to them.

'Problem gambling could be a factor in at least half the domestic violence cases reported to programs for abused women and abusive men in Cumberland County, and a group there is studying the correlation', writes the 12/7 Halifax Herald. Now the Cumberland County Transition House Association has a \$10,000 grant from the Nova Scotia Gaming Foundation to study the connection and design intervention programs.
