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

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Our weekly Newsletter is intended to be a reminder to our nation's provincial rulers that not all Canadians see lotteries and gambling as ethical means to raise funds for those who are elected to govern us. We believe that using electronic devices that are purposely programmed to cause addiction by using fraudulent inducements through concealment or misrepresentation, are criminal offences and that those breaking the law in this way must be prosecuted.

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### Christmas wishes

On behalf of all of us involved in Canada's Gambling Watch Network, we wish all those who receive our weekly published Newsletter a merry Christmas and a happy 2007. In a recent phone call our former spokes person, Nancy Langille, (health problems forced her to give up her position) asked us to include her in these seasonal greetings to our friends, co-workers, supporters and readers.

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### Our next Newsletter

We will not be emailing our Newsletter next Monday. Our editor is taking off for a few days to be with his family and friends. If there's any important news, a Newsletter may be sent toward the end of the year 2006, but by the way things look now our next letter may be emailed at the earliest on January 2, 2007.

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### British Columbia

'Sacred cave healing ceremony not a blessing for developer' is the opening sentence of an article in the 12/12 Times Colonist. What the ceremony, held Sunday afternoon, means for the future of the cave (and the earlier mentioned casino there) is still up in the air we are told. Two days later this paper has a piece that mentions a destination casino, and on 12/16 it writes that 'B.C. aboriginal leaders are calling the negotiations to end a dispute at Bear Mountain Resort "completely flawed and dysfunctional." We expect to read more about this issue in the future.

'Lotto sellers score big wins' and 'lottery clerks win big and often' are articles in the 12/13 Vancouver Sun and the Times Colonist, reporting that lottery retailers in B.C. win major prizes at roughly six times the rate of the general public, according to internal Lottery Corp. documents obtained by The Sun. The next day's Times Colonist published a letter saying that the BCLC needs to protect gamblers, while the Sun printed a letter stating that lottery customers need proof that it's only the luck of the draw that ticket sellers win so much more than the general public. In the same issue, the Sun quotes a gambling expert who says that the integrity of the province's lottery system is at stake. Dr. Gary Smith of the University of Alberta says if lottery retailers in B.C. really are winning more prizes because they buy more tickets, they should be able to prove it.

A White Rock man, who mainly ripped off seniors with his \$47million profit-sharing ploy, has been handed an unprecedented fine of \$225,000, reports The 12/14 Province. He's paying this fine in instalments of \$75,000 annually. 'Using the names Canadian Lottery Buyers Association, International Monetary Funding, International

Lottery Commission and Transworld Lottery Commission, lottery schemes were mailed mainly to seniors in the U.S., Britain, Australia and New Zealand between 1995 and 2002', the paper writes.

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### **Alberta**

In 'Casino strike drags on', an item in the 12/11 Edmonton Sun, we're told that there's no end in sight for the strike at the Palace Casino, The two sides are 'canyons apart'. Workers walked off the job on Sept. 9 at the West Edmonton Mall casino. The union and the NDP last week accused Palace of allowing minors to gamble at the casino, and patrons to carry liquor outside the casino.

An article in the 12/11 Toronto Star, on the 'Downside of Alberta's boom', lists many of the province's troubles; the one that concerns us is mentioned in this paragraph: "Increasing stress levels of Albertans due to work demands and financial challenges are evidenced by increased rates of obesity, problem gambling and suicide," reports Pembina Institute, a Calgary-based think tank. Pembina researchers also note that Alberta ranks last among provinces in supporting assistance to welfare recipients.' Confirmation of this situation is found in a CBC News item of the next day with the title: 'Alberta gambling losses program not enough to cure addiction: expert'. The opening line of this article is: 'A treatment program aimed at managing their addiction rather than quitting can help problem gamblers cut their losses by hundreds of dollars a month, says a new report'. It's followed by this line: 'But health officials in north-central Alberta say it's tough finding enough people to sign up.' We, of Canada's Gambling Watch, know that many addicted gamblers live in denial and stay away from treatment, but we are also convinced that the idea of 'responsible gambling', propagated by gambling addicted governments, causing them to try to teach responsible gambling rather than abstention, generally is a flop. We know experts that agree with us!

The 12/13 Edmonton Sun has another story of a highly placed person in a trust position whose addiction to gambling caused him to steal. The former treasurer of the Edmonton branch of the Navy League cadets stole nearly \$120,000 from the volunteer organization to fuel his addiction, the article says. On January 11, he is scheduled to find out whether it will be jail or house arrest.

We always wonder whether or not gambling is involved when we read an item like the one: 'Stealing cash from vulnerable nursing home residents while posing as a caregiver or volunteer won't mean jail for a former city woman'. It appeared in the 12/15 Calgary Sun but did not mention what was done with the money that disappeared. Could the reporter not make that clear?

A group of city VLT owners is considering filing an injunction ahead of a smoking bylaw set to come into effect in the new year, says the 12/16 Calgary Sun. 'In October, city council fast-tracked a city-wide smoking ban forcing most facilities to butt out by Jan. 1, 2007, except for bars and restaurants with enclosed smoking rooms and licensed gaming facilities and bingos, which have a year's grace', it adds.

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### **Saskatchewan**

The article 'Gamble could prove costly' in the 12/11 Leader Post, says that the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations wants to scrap its current gaming agreement with the provincial government. The writer, in telling some stories about the agreement's past and the possible results of breaking it, obviously opposes the idea.

'VLTs fed theft at RCMP canteen', an item in that 12/12 paper, tells that a veteran canteen employee at the Regina RCMP Academy made hundreds of fraudulent transactions and stole more than \$187,000 to feed a VLT addiction, with police

officers all around him. He pleaded guilty to theft over \$5,000 and is expected to be sentenced later this month.

This 12/15 paper has two more stories of sizeable frauds without referring to gambling.

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### **Ontario**

In the 12/9 Niagara Falls Review, we're told that the OLG last year spent \$12M on Casino Niagara in an 'aggressive facelift', 'creating a facility with state-of-the-art HDTV screens for watching sporting events, a poker room and hosting events such as human foosball and "eat your face off" competitions'. The item also drew our attention to the fact that the two casinos in that city are open '7/24'. Isn't it more than time for today's environmentalists to take a look at this waste of energy? In the same issue, this paper has an article that tries to look back ten years and it also talks of people who aren't overly happy with Niagara's casinos. We also know persons who've not visited this city since it became a casino host. Another item, also in this issue, says that the city's casinos donated \$250,000 toward the construction of the MacBain Community Centre, the now one year-old Montrose Road facility, home to the YMCA, where toddlers with water-wings are splashing about in the leisure pool. 'Three prominent Windsorites being sued for allegedly charging criminally high interest on a loan to Windsor Raceway are the first in Canadian history to face such a lawsuit, the lawyer leading the charge against them said Monday', writes the 12/12 Windsor Star. We found at least one truth in this article: it says that the revenues of slots keep the racetrack afloat. The next day's Star contained more particulars about this lawsuit.

'Police have charged two Kitchener residents with forgery and fraud after a couple tried to cash counterfeit American Express traveller's cheques at the Brantford casino' is a line of a 12/13 item in the Brantford Expositor. They were arrested and now face charges of uttering a forged document and attempted fraud.

The 12/15 Windsor Star reports that a Chatham businessman wants to reopen a Windsor bingo hall, claiming that his approach to the area's ailing gaming industry is different and that he is hoping city council will accept his business proposal next week.

The 12/15 CasinoGamblingWeb.com, the 12/16 Globe and Mail and the Toronto Star of the same date report that, after the province completes its \$400 million makeover of the Windsor facility in early 2008, the casino will be called Caesars Windsor. Some of what we read in those three papers seems to create a contradiction and we suppose that in due time what's now unclear will be explained. We'll try to clarify the transaction in future Newsletters.

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### **Quebec**

The 12/12 Gazette writes that the Auditor General's report on the racetracks management highlights questionable spending and \$15M missing funds and that the provincial police is investigating. The next day this paper gives more particulars, adding that Senator Paul Massicotte is the owner of Attractions hippiques, the company that now owns the tracks.

On 12/14, this paper writes that the premier calls the case a scandal of which some people should be ashamed, and on 12/16 the Toronto Star in its article 'Taxpayers saddled with huge horseracing costs' calls horseracing 'a moribund industry'.

The 12/13 Gazette writes that the smoking ban is choking bingo halls, that charities are hurting, and that the halls need the right to have smoking sections.

'Anti-gambling coalition demands moratorium on VLTs' is a CBC News item reporting on the Emjeu coalition's Press Conference that stressed the need of that

moratorium till the province's public health authority has time to further study the impact on compulsive gambling of moving the VLTs from bars to horseracing tracks. Sol Boxenbaum, a gambling critic with Viva Consulting who supports the call for a VLT moratorium said "They remove machines from bars that were not truly profitable for them, and they move them into these buildings. By virtue of the fact that it's a novelty, they're in new locations, they're going to attract new customers."

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### **Prince Edward Island**

The addition of poker tables to the Charlottetown Driving Park Entertainment Centre could mean a reduction in the overall number of VLTs, writes the 12/11 Guardian; from 15 to 20 of those machines could be mothballed to make space in the gaming hall.

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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](http://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!

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### **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.

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Please contact us if you want more information on items mentioned in this letter.