

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 [gameovervlts](http://www.gameovervlts.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.

Ethics and morality

I've often wondered why so many of today's people are afraid of the word 'morality'. Do they fear that our freedom will be curtailed if we all accepted certain values? I've always believed that no community – small or as large as a nation – can maintain

itself without a shared system of values, and I was reminded of that this week when an Edmonton Journal item spoke of ethics and morality. Written by Peter Bowal, a law professor at the U of C, it gives some answers that we can also apply to government promoted gambling. Find it at

<http://www.canada.com/edmontonjournal/news/ideas/story.html?id=766bf1d5-2bc4-4012-89d4-3390e32449b7>.

The first – and perhaps most visible - result of gambling is that it produces huge amounts of money for our provincial governments. Often the good use of that money becomes an excuse for legalizing gambling. It so happens that, in the past week, the 11/18 Toronto Star had an item about a five-year old autistic boy whose life is benefiting from funds raised by charity casinos.

The next visible result of gambling is negative: the 11/14 Times Colonist expresses this in its 'gambling binge brings crime wave' item. It speaks of a crime explosion at casinos and "community gaming centres." 'Crime - especially organized crime - on the increase.' The next negative result is far less visible, and for many of us it puts the morality issue into the picture: 'Addictions. Suicides. Families destroyed', the article states. Even if offering gambling to our citizens is ethical, is it still responsible once we know of and see the non-repairable misery gambling causes to many individuals? An item in the 11/17 Windsor Star puts even more doubts on the profitability of legalized gambling. 'Casinos may be liable for gambling addicts losses', it says. A new study shows that under the current state of the law Ontario and its gaming venues owe a duty of care to problem gamblers. Wouldn't that end gambling's 'revenues' and the excuses that were used to legalize it?

Johannes DeViet.

Online Gambling

'Prosecutors have charged 27 people in connection with a billion-dollar-a-year Internet sports gambling ring, including men identified by authorities as a professional baseball scout and a high-stakes poker player' is the opening paragraph of a very important 11/15 U.S.A. article.

The next day an article on the CasinoGamblingWeb.com claims that the online gambling ring bust that a Florida Police Commissioner calls the 'largest illegal gambling operation ever encountered', has nothing to do with the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act. This jibes a bit with an 11/16 Globe and Mail AP item reporting that US gamblers hope the political shift that showed up in the recent election will help to overturn the ban on Internet gambling.

Sports gamblers and Youth

A new Web site, established by a recovering addict who began to gamble when he was 18 years old, is to be found at www.gamtalk4teens.org Here's a quote from the 11/11 CP article announcing this news: "Gambling is just nonsense. . .it's not the way to entertain yourself, it's not the way to make money, it's just a stupid, stupid thing."

The poker craze

In 'Televised poker filled hockey void' - an article in the 11/14 Hamilton Spectator - prof. Marvin Ryder of the McMaster University explains how poker became a television item. We quote: "Cable networks were left scrambling for winter sporting events and filled broadcast time with televised poker. Televised poker drew up to three times the audience of the NHL and established tournament, casino, online and home poker as a North American "phenomenon". The trick was showing everybody's hand and each hand becomes a mini drama." We then read that the World Series of Poker this past year drew 37,000 applicants willing to pay \$10,000 US each to play!

In two other newspaper items, we see that our local media are still encouraging this craze. The 11/17 Niagara Falls Review not only writes that a local participant won a \$1.7M pot, it also gives particulars on how he managed to do that, and we find in the 11/18 Calgary Sun an article announcing that it will give poker-lovers a chance to put skills to the test during a month-long poker contest in the Calgary Sun.

British Columbia

'Numbers show crime on the decline' is the title of an 11/10 item in the Vernon Morning Star. Compare that to the gambling-related crime waves reported above in casino cities!

'No more harness racing at Sandown' says the 11/17 Times Colonist. The Great Canadian

Gaming Corporation's effort to put the track on life support of slot machines failed when on September 18 the North Saanich Council said no to its rezoning for slots application. 'This past summer's season at Sandown was shortened to 10 days, from 24 the previous year as attendance dwindled', the paper writes.

Alberta

'Customers who take their chances at the Palace Casino could end up with their pictures on a website set up by striking workers', warns the 11/18 Edmonton Journal. The Union local involved has set up an online site at www.casinoscabs.ca to identify gamblers and workers who cross the picket line. It includes a link for problem gamblers, we're told.

On the same day the Edmonton Sun reports that premier hopeful Dave Hancock says he wants to get VLTs out of neighbourhood bars, calling it 'the worst tax', paid by those who can least afford it. He wants them limited to casinos and resorts. The next day's Sun has a quote from a bar man who oversees six of those machines: "They make us a lot of money. They're also great for the economy."

Manitoba

The Manitoba Lotteries Corp. had a \$146.2M windfall for the first six months in 2006, up \$6.4M from the same period last year. 'Cig-free casinos recover richly', reports the 11/16 Winnipeg Sun.

Ontario

'Queen's Univ. now offers a continuing ed course on Gambling and Risk, which examines the pros and cons of gambling - everything from mathematical finance, the economics of gambling to the psychology of risk-taking. This course may just cure of gambling for good' is a paragraph from an article in the 11/13 Toronto Star.

'Casinos suffer with smoking ban' is an AP item that we found in the 11/16 Windsor Star. It originated in Las Vegas and reports that experts say that smoking bans are snuffing out casino revenue, but more marketing and investment can lure customers back, according to what was said in a conference. 'Since the province of Ontario imposed a smoking ban in public places in May, casinos along the border with the United States have suffered a revenue drop of 10 per cent to more than 20 per cent, said Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. vice-president Karl Gagesch', the article writes. When we look at what Manitoba reports (see above) and compare that with the rebellious noise in Quebec (see below), we wonder if many other factors are being overlooked. In Ontario, the time lost in crossing the border, our high dollar, and the still ongoing construction at the Windsor casino may be partly responsible, while in Quebec the fact that many gamblers in the bars there may have three addictions (smoking plus gambling and drinking) may be part of the problem.

'A melee at the Dragon Fly Bar at the Fallsview Casino sent one employee to the hospital with a fractured jaw' is a line in the 11/13 Niagara Falls Review. Since the opening of the bar, the paper reports, police have had to respond to a number of calls of disturbances, assaults and trespass complaints. This time one man was charged with assault, and three others for trespassing and breaching the peace.

Three days later this paper announces the second-annual gluttony-fest. It will take place on 11/18 and is called 'Casino Niagara's Eat Your Face Off contest'.

That any type of gambling tends to attract criminals is confirmed in a Hamilton Spectator 11/18 item headed 'Raffle ticket scam warning'. It tells that two men were trying to find customers for a non-existing charity raffle.

Quebec

In the past week, five Gazette articles dealt with the smoking ban in bars. The matter was taken to court (11/13) and the 11/15 states the outcome is expected today.

One item in the 11/15 Gazette calls the smoking ban 'a winner'. It writes that one in five smokers - 20% - quit smoking since the ban began. Now there's fresh air in the bars!

The coalition EmJeu will be holding a major bilingual press conference within the next 2 weeks to denounce the government plan to build four privately owned "entertainment

centres", three of which will be attached to racetracks, and the fourth at Mont Tremblant which has no racetrack. All this with no results of the impact study, which will be released in January.

There is also a question of the coincidence that Senator Jean Lapointe introduced Bill 211 to put all VLTs into casinos and racetracks, and the fact that the owner of Attractions Hippiques, the organization that has purchased the racetracks, is Senator Paul Massicotte.

Atlantic Provinces

'Atlantic Lottery Corporation is investigating several complaints from customers who are worried they may have been defrauded of lottery winnings by retailers', is a line in a CBC 11/14 item. It received calls after a CBC report of irregularities in Ontario and the USA.

Nova Scotia

The 11/15 Halifax Herald writes that the ALC is looking into the complaints about four retailers. Two of those are in Nova Scotia, it says.

Prince Edward Island

'Study recommends fewer VLTs' is an 11/14 CBC News broadcast. We quote: 'The study surveyed 1,000 adults in the spring of 2005. It shows Islanders love to gamble: 82 per cent do it in some form. Lotteries and charitable gambling are the most popular, but the study says VLT players are about 38 times as likely to become problem gamblers, and that between 800 and 2,400 adults fall into the categories of being at risk or already being a problem gambler. Health Minister Chester Gillan told CBC News the government is not rethinking its decision to add a building full of VLTs since the study was completed.'

Last August the racino at the Charlottetown Driving Park opened with 225 VLTs, and it added 30 slot machines this spring. Although the study states there needs to be more said about the dangers of gambling addiction through the media and through materials that target social assistance and employment insurance recipients, and it also

recommends legislation and tougher enforcement to prevent young people from gambling, there are no plans for new legislation.

Please contact us if you want more information on items in this letter or on their sources.