
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

A BC item and a Nova Scotia article both state that a study regarding the socio-economic consequences of gambling is required. For years we've been looking at and

quoting from USA economists who have produced such studies and reached the conclusion that in the long run, when all indirect costs are included, gambling does harm in both fields. It now is more than time that some Canadian economists with the necessary qualifications look at these fields and deliver their reports.

Some articles that arrived late in the week have been set aside till next week. My lack of time and space made it impossible to do justice to them in this week. They deal mainly with the North West Territories and the people living there.

'Casinos hit by cigarette bans say they'll find ways to compensate', the title of an AP item in the 2/12 Toronto Sun, should cause us to keep our eyes wide open. 'Smoking bans are snuffing out casino revenue, but gambling experts hold out hope that more marketing and investment can lure customers back'. One example, mentioned in the article, is happening in Windsor. The smoking ban in Ontario caused a revenue drop of 10% to more than 20% in the province's casinos, an OLG vice-president told a gambling conference last month. "Short-term pain," he said when he was part of a panel discussion. "Long term, we think we're going to be okay." The province hopes a \$400M refurbishment plan for casinos along the border will help reverse the trend. "The overall plan there is to create different reasons for American customers to come over the border," he said.

British Columbia

'Social values issues overlooked in allowing slot machines to go in' is the title of a letter published in the 11/28 Vancouver Sun. Its author, Myles Ferrie, lives in Mission, and is opposed to allowing slots in its Boardwalk Gaming Centre.

The 11/28 Province has an item with the line 'An Abbotsford man has won \$600,000 in a Texas Hold'em poker tournament at Richmond's River Rock Casino.'

The 11/29 Globe and Mail tells us that Transit vehicles in BC may soon be adorned with advertisements advocating specific political causes alongside the current billboard-style ads imploring consumers to purchase lottery tickets or switch their wireless plans, and the National Post of that date carries a letter accusing politicians of gambling with the lives of addicts in connection with what's going on in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

'Study gives snapshot of casino gambling' is an item on 'GamblingWiz.com' dated 12/1. It causes us to wish that one of us had the expertise and time to look deeper into the matter.

The 12/2 Times Colonist's 'Developers court natives with casino' has the worrisome line: 'Langford Mayor Stew Young, local First Nations and Bear Mountain Resort developers are taking a gamble a First Nations casino will smooth the bumps on Skirt Mountain'.

Alberta

According to a recent item in the Calgary Herald, the newly elected premier Ed Stelmach has no official policy position on gambling in his platform. He believes that the current gaming rules are serving Albertans well and doesn't foresee any changes to gaming policy; he says gambling will go underground if it's restricted or prohibited, wants proper resources, awareness and education to deal with related social ills and will monitor addiction rates to ensure proper resources are there to deal with that.

'Natives get upper hand say casinos' is an article in the 11/27 National Post writing that the arrangements with the River Cree Casino and Resort (and with the Tsuu T'ina nation and the five other Alberta bands with new gaming palaces in development) has some Alberta hospitality operators furious, claiming that the province has created a fierce competitor for them with a gaming licence so advantageous that it might as well be a licence to print money.

The article also writes that crime and addiction are rampant in the Enoch reserve. But despite an aggressive pro-native hiring policy, only 200 residents have taken jobs at the River Cree Casino; there's room for 720, and it adds: There is no guarantee the enterprise will solve the rest of the Enoch's ills: U.S. native casinos have a record of leaving reserves worse off, with soaring rates of gambling addiction only complicating social problems. At Canada's Gambling Watch Network, we have never believed that casinos on reserves are a real solution to poverty, lack of employment and other social ills there.

Saskatchewan

In 'New gaming deal needed', an article in the 11/30 Star-Phoenix, we are told read that First Nation's leaders are threatening to scrap the gaming agreement with the province, saying government should not have jurisdiction in First Nations business. The next day's Leader-Post writes: 'scrapping the 2002 gaming agreement between the province and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) is not in the cards, says the minister responsible for the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority'. The agreement is only up for review, not termination.

Manitoba

'Police are looking for two men who robbed a bingo in Virden on Sunday' is a line in the 11/29 Winnipeg Sun. They escaped with a small amount of cash, despite being pursued by people from the hall.

Ontario

Sol Boxenbaum is interested in recruiting someone from the Toronto area, who has asked for self-exclusion but has been allowed back into the venues operated by the OLG. He's offering someone the opportunity to sue Ontario Lottery and Gaming. You will find his email address and telephone number in our Quebec section.

'Tier-two mobsters now have an opportunity to move up to the big leagues in the cocaine-trafficking business that has long been dominated by the Montrealers, mob experts say' is a sentence in an 11/27 item in the Toronto Star that makes us wonder why our police isn't able to keep the mob in check. The 11/30 issue calls us a national gambling watchdog group that's raising concerns over lottery scratch tickets still being sold to consumers after the top cash prizes have been won. That day's Calgary Sun and Online-Casinos.com have an item on the same subject in a CP article that's also based on a CBC 11/29 item.

'The estate for former track owner Tom Joy, who died in 2001, and current owner Tony Toldo Jr. have launched \$3.7 million in lawsuits against former raceway lawyer Doug Lawson, developer Al Fanelli and Arthur Barat, another Windsor lawyer' is a paragraph in the 11/28 Windsor Star, and 'Aid to track denied court hears' is the heading of a 12/2 article on the same subject. The 11/29 paper writes about the devastating consequences of the local smoking ban on charities that depend on bingo income, and the 12/01 Star says that members of a community services committee are hoping a survey of organizations that depend on Windsor's declining bingo industry will be able to convince the provincial government to provide emergency funding for the region. The same issue reports that the casino donated \$78,900 to 31 food banks and toy drives in Windsor and Essex County. This issue also contains these surprising paragraphs: 'In an unusual attempt to prevent addiction, thousands of gamblers who receive promotions from the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation will also get a letter from its chief executive officer warning about the risks and asking them to assess their habit'.

"It's an early-intervention strategy as opposed to waiting until everything has gone south and there is serious debt and relationships have fallen apart," said Rob Simpson, chief executive officer of the Ontario Problem Gambling Research Centre, which is conducting the experiment with the OLG.' The article also says that that 330,000 people in Ontario have a gambling problem and adds (what we've maintained for years) that gambling too much can lead to loss of control and unmanageable debt. What it doesn't say is that the very first casino or slots lounge visit can lead to all this misery and that the legalizing and normalizing of gambling caused many to participate in this pastime.

The 12/01 Brantford Expositor reports that the Ontario Trillium Foundation supplied \$574,000 of the losses of gamblers in grants to area groups, and the Niagara Falls Review of that date published a seven-page story about a poker player who quit school and is now a professional gambler and a multimillionaire. A day later this paper has an article written by the same author with the title: 'Are you an addict?' Its four pages recount how poker has developed lately and that the interest of the younger generation of gamblers has been the cause that the online industry was driven to massive new heights.

'Problem gambling rates high in region' is an item in the 12/02 London Free Press writing that studies show about 5% of adults in Ontario have a gambling problem, but that 7% of adults aged 18-24 admit they have a problem.

Quebec

Loto-Quebec's request to quash a class action lawsuit has been rejected by the Honourable Gratien Duchesne. The trial is scheduled to commence in early Spring 2007 instead of February 2007 as originally planned. Any further questions can be directed to Sol Boxenbaum by phone 514 486 6226 or by e-mail sol@vivaconsulting.com. He will respond to questions in either language.

The EmJeu Coalition is planning a major bilingual conference to express its views on the building of 4 "entertainment centres" - three at racetracks and one at Mont Tremblant - that will be owned and operated by a member of the Senate (which in Sol's view is a conflict of interest). The racetracks' sale has been approved despite the fact that there has been no public consultation, and the results of two impact studies will not be available till January or February 2007.

Nova Scotia

'Ombudsman downplays casino staff criticisms' is an item in the 11/29 Halifax Herald that seems a bit strange. A letter from the ombudsman's office dated September 21, says staff at Nova Scotia's two casinos lack training, and the province's regulations are not consistent with the rules in other parts of the country, but now the ombudsman describes the contents of that letter as "premature" because he has yet to complete a report on the subject. In the meantime Paul Burrell, a former problem gambler, who says he blew nearly \$500,000 at Casino Nova Scotia in Sydney between 2000 and 2003, says he plans to file a lawsuit against the province in a bid to get an apology and his money back. We'll do our best to keep our readers updated on the development of this case.

A line in the 12/01 Halifax Herald states: The province is again looking for someone to study gambling's social and economic impacts in Nova Scotia. This time, bidders have more than two months to get their bids ready. The deadline is Jan. 30. The department hopes the study will result in groundbreaking research into gambling and its effects. The study maximum cost is \$250,000', the article says.
