

**Canada's GAMBLING WATCH Network**  
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Our Web site <http://www.gamblingwatch.ca> tells you who we are and what our aims are.

You will also find some very useful links there and all our presentations.

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We are not alone in our struggle against the continuing expansion of gambling in Canada. Visiting <http://www.citizenvoice.ca> will give you more information on this group and 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> to find out more. Anyone who wants to join the class-action suit against Loto-Québec, or wanting to know more about it, will find a link on website [www.vivaconsulting.com](http://www.vivaconsulting.com) that points the way.

Our **Blueprint for action to reform Canadian gambling law, policies & practices into those that are in the public interest** is available on our Website. Its title shows up when you get there. Click on it and it will appear. Download it and spread it around or put it on your Web site. It is not copyrighted; we want everyone to see and read it.

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

Help needed: Many newspapers restrict access to their Web sites to subscribers. Why not help Gambling Watch by alerting us to gambling news and sending us articles you find?

**Have you or someone you know been affected by Electronic Gambling Machines (EGMs)?**  
If you have, we'd like to hear from you. These devices with addictive properties may go by any name: slots, video slots, video lottery terminals, etc., and are found across Canada. Most of them are owned/run/promoted by provincial governments. Also: are or were you part of a 'frequent player system' i.e. Ontario's 'Winners Circle'? If that is so, there is a record of your visits and of the time you spent 'playing' and in due time that record may become useful in a lawsuit. Phone or email us; we promise to respect your privacy.

**Guest editorial by Roger Horbay**

On January 20 '05, Economic Development & Trade Minister J. Cordiano announced a "New Gaming Strategy to Focus on a Sustainable Responsible Industry". This new strategy really focuses on diverting attention from the real and urgent issues involving gambling in Ontario. Nowhere does the strategy address urgent consumer protection issues; dangerous gambling products; the government's liability in the face of undeniable evidence of the addictive and deceptive nature of EGMs; questions about the legality of their gambling operations and EGMs; and the skyrocketing levels of harm caused by reckless gambling operations and years of uncontrolled gambling expansion. Nowhere does this strategy address the facts presented to the government in a recent report that showed the prevalence of problem gambling increased from 3.8% to 4.8% between 2001 & 2003 to over 453,000 Ontario adults now being harmed by gambling. That's an

increase of over 100,000 Ontario adults being harmed in just two years, not including the social cost and harm to innocent families and communities. Nowhere does this strategy address the increasing number of gambling related suicides that are presently being investigated by the Chief Coroner of Ontario. The report also totally ignored urgent warnings to the government to issue product and public health warnings about EGMs. Research & warnings that both the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Basrur and the Premier and his government have chosen to totally ignore. Rather than heeding warnings that the government must act now to curtail the massive social harm from their reckless gambling policies and practices, this new strategy is a shell game and a deliberate attempt to further mislead and deceive the public in order to “sustain” gambling revenues. This deception is unethical and further needlessly endangers the public by giving a false sense that the government is doing the best it can. This deception is also furthered by the silence or endorsement of this new strategy by problem gambling agencies that the government funds, without tender, that have an ethical obligation to watch out and speak out for the interests of innocent citizens. Ontario cannot “sustain” the levels of harm caused by the present levels of gambling. This “new strategy” is not “responsible”, it’s a scam fed by greed and corruption. The half million Ontario adults needlessly being harmed by gambling need to know the truth about who’s “responsible” for exploiting and harming them. The Federal Government needs to intervene now to rein-in this out-of-control and corrupt government. There needs to be a Royal Commission into Gambling in Canada to reveal the truth about such deceptive strategies. Governments have a duty-to-warn & protect its citizens not exploit them for profit, then blame the victims. Our entire political system and democracy has been degraded due to gambling induced corruption.

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#### **General**

This past week papers all over the globe announced that the new giant airbus launched by Virgin Atlantic is so spacious it can house a casino with blackjack and roulette, as well as gyms and 35 private double beds when that plane starts flying in about three years.

How will they be used? That’s our question when we read in the 1/18 Ottawa Citizen that ‘Smart gaming chips will keep tabs on gamblers’. Will gamblers be caught before getting into trouble or will the chips help gambling establishments to suck gamblers dry?

The Supreme Court of Canada has upheld a Saskatchewan law that bans the retail display of cigarettes in any store that allows minors on the premises, writes the 1/20 Globe and Mail. In the foreseeable future we hope to be able to report the same thing about lottery and other gambling ‘products’.

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#### **Cyber news**

‘Hedging his Net bet’ is a story in the 1/20 Ottawa Sun that shows how an entrepreneur in Canada uses the global gambling craze to build a financially successful cyber business. It is regrettable that this gambling-based enterprise seeks to draw '12 energetic, creative and reliable North American students -- not necessarily the greatest academic achievers -- to help run his new venture’.

[www.gambex.net](http://www.gambex.net) is a new ‘blog’ covering global gambling issues from a different angle.

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#### **Horse racing**

The 'Horse Wizard', a new wagering device that looks and sounds like a slot machine and was designed to lure new fans to tracks, gets a failing grade in the 1/21 Toronto Star. This 'brainchild of Frank Stronach' is a waste of devoted horseplayers' time, says the author of this article that deals with a racetrack in Maryland.

Driver René Poulin, originally from Quebec, was among the 17 people who pleaded not guilty to charges that they fixed a race at a New York track as part of a gambling ring. An 88-count indictment was issued after a federal investigation outlined a gambling scheme that processed more than \$200M (U.S.) in bets over four years. (1/19 Globe and Mail).

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### **British Columbia**

An article by Charlie Smith published in the 9/2'04 Georgia Straight and reported in our 9/6 issue, came back to us via a group of activists in Quebec. It's a touching 5-page tale of an addict, speaking up at the Vancouver council meeting where the mayor cast the vote that'll bring slots to Hastings Park. Click: <http://www.straight.com/content.cfm?id=4671> 'Destination casino gets needed regulatory approval', reports the 1/15 New Westminister Newsleader. The Lottery Board's 'go ahead' to Gateway's complex in Queensborough is to start construction on the \$140-million project that will consist of 600 slot machines, 60 gaming tables, a 300-seat restaurant, an interactive sports bar, and two apartment-hotel towers with 200 units each. It is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Instead of New Westminister's Royal Towers hotel/casino, Vancouver's Chinatown casino operations will be moved to Langley City, the 1/18 Advance says. The change isn't a big deal, said Gateway, which is building Langley's casino; the Mayor isn't concerned either. It will "not at all" affect the City project, Gateway's marketing manager said.

Coquitlam received \$1.6M for the last quarter of '04 as host of its Great Canadian casino. Since the casino relocated from Surrey in 2001, the city has collected \$19.3M. As the city receives 10% of the casino's 'earnings', this means that gamblers lost more than \$193M during that period. We cannot help thinking of the many ways in which that fortune could have been spent better! The city puts ¾ of its part of gamblers' losses in an infrastructure fund. The rest goes to a community capital account for local non-profit groups, the 1/19 Tri-City News writes. This same day, both the Vancouver Sun and the Surrey Now report that Surrey's council approved the sale of the Fraser Downs racetrack to the GCGC with the condition that the racetrack will be kept going. 'Future of racetrack slots in question' takes us to North Saanich where people are upset in the wake of the surprise deal to sell Sandown and ready to nullify last month's endorsement of slot machines at the racetrack. Only a request for a legal report on the possible liability if North Saanich backs out now kept the motion from passing, the 1/19 Times Colonist writes. The final decision will be taken after that report comes in.

Armed men forced 13 poker players to the floor of a Vancouver apartment, beat one, and then robbed them all. The apartment owner had answered a knock on the door about midnight, the 1/19 Edmonton Sun reports.

'Slots inject new life into racing' is a lengthy article in the 1/20 Vancouver Sun covering the dream that slots, rather than being the life-support of racing, will bring new life to it.

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### **Alberta**

The 'Horst Wessel Lied', a Nazi anthem accidentally selected as background music for a Canadian Legion lottery ad, caused so many complaints it was pulled the day it first aired on Alberta radio stations, the 1/19 Edmonton Journal and the Montreal Gazette report.

About lotteries: recently we read that lotteries also result in addictions. In the Lethbridge area, a lottery raising money to help finance an air ambulance service was launched by a lady who credits this service with saving her life and is thanking her lucky stars for that, the 1/20 Lethbridge Herald reports.

In 'Klein dismisses health benefits of smoking ban' the premier suggests that workers in environments where second hand smoke is present - such as casinos, bingo halls and bars - consider looking for a different job, the 1/20 Globe and Mail writes.

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#### **Saskatchewan**

A media report says the federal Indian Affairs minister will not intervene in a bylaw that allows smoking at a First Nations casino in the south-east, despite a province-wide ban on smoking in public places, the 1/18 Broadcast News reports; but items in the 1/20 Leader-Post and the StarPhoenix say that the provincial government should consider pulling the gaming licences of on-reserve casinos that don't abide by the province-wide smoking ban, according to the Saskatchewan Party leader.

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#### **Manitoba**

The Manitoba Tobacco Reduction Alliance (MANTRA) can see only one reason why the NDP government refuses to extend the "province-wide" smoking ban to First Nations – politics: the aboriginals tend to vote NDP, the 1/19 Winnipeg Sun writes in an article that predicts that this (really national) matter will eventually be decided by the courts.

A Winnipeg nurse stole more than \$30,000 in union funds in the years '95-'01 to feed her VLT addiction; she was secretary-treasurer of the nurses union local during that time. She was sentenced to two years supervised probation, must observe a nightly curfew and is to perform 200 hours of community service, the 1/20 Winnipeg Sun reports.

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#### **Ontario**

Faced with 34 news items for the province, we can only cover highlights. The 1/21 media published what the government called its 'gambling strategy' and our spokesperson, Brian Yealland, reacted promptly, expressing our disappointment with what was announced. If you didn't receive what he wrote, we'll email the piece to you at your request. Let's first say that we were not the only ones that were disappointed. In places like Nipissing, North Bay, Hamilton, Dryden, Brockville, Kincardine, where some had hoped to get permission to put up a gambling den, the 'no additional casinos or racetracks' must have been a blow. Two other places, Ajax and Belleville, must have felt relief: they will receive permission to put their racetracks on slot machine life support; they are a part of our disappointment. As I was wondering how I could possibly cover all this news, I received a guest editorial that expresses the thinking of many of us. Researchers can rest assured that all articles on what's happening in Canada are safely stored in our extensive archives for future use.

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#### **New Brunswick and Nova Scotia**

What I wrote about Ontario applies also to these two provinces: How can I cover in just a few sentences news and opinion contained in 24 articles? Let me thank those who keep us informed of what's occurring there. What I said above about our archives also goes for Atlantic Canada and our guest editorial applies just as much to the VLT problems and to the governments of the provinces here. Suicides failed to get those governments to do anything worthwhile about the problem. Will a hunger striker have more success? And will Nova Scotia's government spend \$100M to buy the two casinos?

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Editor's note: Not only had I covered BC and the Prairie provinces before I realized that it would take much time and space to do Ontario and the other provinces, I also lost time to a computer problem and received the guest editorial late. I hope to return to our normal format next week. Please contact us if you want more information about items in this letter or on their sources.

Regards to all, Johannes DeViet, Editor.