

NO GAMBLING in Indiana

Indiana Coalition Against Legalized Gambling NEWSLETTER

Spring 2007

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THROUGH MY EYES

By Lorin Clemenz

"Once I was blind but now I can see," so go the words of a favorite hymn. But I struggle more and more with how I share what I see with those who do not see.

I have been very proud of The United Methodist Church for many of its concerns on social issues. Our statement about gambling leaves no room for supporting gambling.

Why then, do so many of our people say, "If the gamblers are foolish enough to waste their money, it's their problem. The money they lose goes to pay for our taxes is a definite plus for the rest of us."

A careful study of the Old Testament shows how the Israelites were to be concerned about the poor, the widow, the orphan, the foreigner and the powerless. Farmers were to leave part of the crop to feed these people. They were not to take advantage of the poor because the poor had no power. I would like to think that those instructions were followed, but we know the prophets spoke in God's name to chastise them for not following God's will or words.

We are all paying for the state taking advantage of those problem or pathological gamblers. We cannot blame legalized gambling just on the politicians. If we do not oppose these tactics for raising state revenues then we are to be counted in favor of them. Where do **we** stand? Where do **you** stand? What vision has God given to you?



Clemenz

TIME TO TAKE ACTION

With the end of the legislative season coming to a close, it's time to let Governor Mitch Daniels know that you oppose the expansion of legalized gambling in Indiana. Seven Indiana church executives delivered that message last month when they told the Governor face-to-face they opposed HB1835 and the expansion of legalized gambling in the form of slot machines at the state's two horse race tracks in Anderson and Shelbyville.

Here is the Governor's address and phone number.

Governor Mitch Daniels
State House, Room 206
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2797

Telephone 317-232-4567 or send e-mail through his Web site at: www.in.gov/gov/contact/index.html

BOOZE, BUTTS AND BETTING PREY ON YOUNG LIVES

Youth are the target of tobacco, drug, alcohol and gambling producers who know where their future lies. The National Center on Addiction and Abuse reports an increase in hundreds of thousands of students abusing prescription drugs, and intense or binge drinking becoming more common.

In March CNN devoted a lengthy program to the consequences of and covert use of legal prescription drugs today. An editorial in the Christian Science Monitor cites the U.S. surgeon general's warning of "a growing willingness by Americans to accept underage drinking as a youthful rite of passage, and one with dangerous consequences."

Alcohol, tobacco and gambling all have age restrictions but are easily violated if the adult culture tolerates their use and abuse. The surgeon general is particularly alarmed with alcohol as "the drug choice for teenagers." He estimates "11 million underage drinkers in the U.S. and more than 7 million 'binge' drinkers, 2 million considered heavy drinkers." He blames adult tolerance for some of the heavy use. The typical response of adults where alcohol is readily available in the home is, "I'm glad they're not using drugs!" But alcohol, nicotine, prescription drugs, and lottery machines are easily available. All are addictive, "diseases," according to medical authorities.

Besides adult tolerance, advertising presents a formidable challenge. After all, no teenager deliberately sets out to become addicted. Like the frog sitting in hot water on a stove, it feels good until the boiling sets in. "Between 2001 and 2005, alcohol companies spent \$4.7 billion on 1.4 million ads," according to Georgetown University. No one can pretend that these ads have no effect on teens. Asked to choose their favorite TV commercial in a 2005 study. Teens between 12 and 19 ranked beer commercials at the top. TV advertising for gambling always show youthful hilarity at the slots or tables. ...

The Monitor asks us to face a larger question, "Why do so many students feel the need to drink themselves into mental oblivion? What peer pressure or emptiness in their young lives prompts such behavior, especially considering the risks and dangers in drunk driving and academic failures?" ...

If lighting up, swigging down, or playing at gambling are cool, what is "un-cool"? If discipline against peer pressure and seductive advertising is the answer, then we are all involved in the present and future generations.

This commentary, which first appeared in March 28 issue The Northwest Indiana Times, was used by permission of the writer John Wolf, founder of ICALG.

ICALG

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WHO IS THE STATE GOING TO SUBSIDIZE?

Editor's note: The following commentary is an excerpt by Morton Marcus titled "Who is the state going to subsidize?" from the March 1 issue of The Northwest Indiana Times.

Last week I was walking on the State House grounds when I saw some folks with large green pins on their lapels. "What do those stand for? I asked.

"Small businesses need electronic gaming devices" one wearer told me.

"That's for bars," I commented. The reply I got was not friendly.

In the newspapers and on TV during the same week, there were features about horse breeders "needing" more state subsidies from slot machines at race tracks to "keep the industry alive."

Isn't this the lowest form of special pleading imaginable? Bar owners and horse breeders are not and should not be a protected class. Unless they claim innate inadequacies regarding their business acumen, why should they get help from the state?

Do we as a state have any legitimate reason to help? Just because they exist does not entitle them to special treatment.

If more gambling devices are warranted to raise revenue, then let's install them to benefit worthy causes. Instead of supporting more gaming devices to keep horse breeders in business and to raise the revenues of bar owners, let's use the funds to educate displaced workers in our state. We can subsidize child care for needy families. We could do any of a hundred things we are not doing because we don't have the money."

I don't like gambling because it redistributes wealth by chance. I have argued that the rewards in life should be based on merit. That, it seems to me, is at the heart of American economic ideology. When we have raffles and lotteries, we tell ourselves and our children that effort, good deeds, knowledge, good manners and even good looks are not important.

To use gambling to increase the revenues of the state is unfortunate. To use it to benefit small groups of people who have no legitimate claim to special treatment by the state is plain wrong.

SENATE ACTS ON CRACK-DOWN OF GAMBLING

According to the April 12 issue of *The Indianapolis Star*, the Indiana Senate wants to crack-down on illegal gambling. House Bill 1510, which was amended to take measures to crack-down, passed 38-11 on April 11.

Advocates said it would help eliminate illegal electronic gambling machines, including so-called Cherry Masters, thousands of which can be found in bars, gas stations, truck stops and even barns across Indiana.

The plan also could give a boost to a separate piece of legislation, House Bill 1835, that would allow slot machines at the state's two horse racing tracks. Under one plan being considered, 1,500 slot machines would be allowed at each track. Both the House and Senate have approved versions of that bill, and differences now must be negotiated.

Gov. Mitch Daniels has said he is opposed to the expansion of gambling in Indiana but has not said whether he plans to veto HB1835, the slot machine bill.

Among other measures, House Bill 1510 provides enough money for the state to hire 25 additional excise enforcement officers and allows the Gaming Commission to hire a special prosecutor to help handle gambling cases. The bill also would give authorities the ability to strip alcohol and tobacco permits from businesses that allow illegal gambling. Those establishments also could lose the right to sell lottery tickets.

Come to the Tri-State Area PROBLEM GAMBLING CONFERENCE WEDNESDAY, MAY 16

As a cooperative project, Gambling Recovery Ministries (GRM) and Community Mental Health Center, Inc., will co-host the training event "**Gambling and Gambling Disorders: What Concerned Professionals and Citizens Need to Know.**" The event will take place in Lawrenceburg, Indiana, at **Community Mental Health Center's facility next to Dearborn County Hospital on IN State Route 48.** This one-day conference begins at **9 a.m. (doors open at 8:30) and ends at 4:30 p.m.** Continental breakfast and lunch are included in the \$50 registration fee as well as educational materials and seven CEUs for the participants. (Please see attached brochure for CEU information.) This conference will be an outstanding opportunity to receive current and relevant information on problem gambling, treatment, support groups, and recovery issues.

The instructors are notable in the field of problem gambling treatment and recovery! Also, Gam-Anon Speakers share "real-life" and practical advice!

Curtis Barrett, Ph.D., ABPP, is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, School of Medicine, at the University of Louisville. Dr. Barrett, as a designated research qualified Cognitive Behavioral Therapy therapist, will include valuable insights within his presentation on disordered gambling behavior with regard to both treatment related topics and general information for non-therapists. A nationally known pioneer in the mental health field of problem gambling, Dr. Barrett brings together knowledge, research, and years of experience with groundbreaking lifestyle programs.

Margo Bristow, MA, is a Substance Abuse and Problem Gambling counselor and Adjunct Instructor at Triton College. She will share up-to-date information on her current work with teen gamblers in the Chicago area of Oak Park. As a counselor with twenty-five years of experience working with teenagers and their families, Bristow provides specialized attention to teen gambling behavior in school, home, and social settings. Her presentation will be particularly of interest to educators, other persons counseling and/or working with youth, and parents.

GRM and CMHC, Inc. are pleased to be able to bring this very relevant, professional continuing education event within commuting distance to the Tri-State area.** See the attached brochure for the registration form. Note that the registration deadline is May 9.

For more information, e-mail jjacobs@grmumc.org. For registration form, log on to <http://grmumc.org/conf07C.html>.

** GRM is an Advance Special of the South Indiana Conference of The United Methodist Church. Community Mental Health Center, Inc. is a five-countywide mental health agency in southeastern Indiana.

***The Dearborn Community Foundation, Inc. awarded Gambling Recovery Ministries \$5,839.12 from the City of Lawrenceburg Community Grant Program for this Conference and Helpline newspaper advertising.*