

NOGAMBLING in Indiana

Indiana Coalition Against Legalized Gambling NEWSLETTER Summer 2006

Lorin Clemenz, Editor, 6337 Creekview Ln., Fishers IN 46038, 317-845-5655, lclemenz@sbcglobal.net

A word from Lorin Clemenz

Now is the time to be counted

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us; it is in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

These words are from Marianne Williamson's book *A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of A Course in Miracles*, Harper Collins, 1992.

Legalized gambling continues to ensnare many by the dream of instant wealth. Sadly, this includes more than just problem and pathological gamblers. We see politicians betraying the trust of the electorate and taking what they see as an easy way to fund programs and increase their own personal wealth. How often have you read of gamblers stealing from their own employers anywhere from a few thousand dollars to hundreds of thousands of dollars?

More often than we would like to admit, we read of gamblers abusing seniors or their own children through neglect.

We read of the increase of gambling among teenagers and college students. We are informed of some of these incurring debts of twenty and even thirty-thousand dollars. And now we are learning of the push for legalizing on-line gambling which can bring this menace into every home that has an online connection.

My question to each of us is what are we willing to do about it?

Do we quit without even trying or are we going to stand up and be heard and counted? Are we willing to let the bottom line be the determining figure for our State? Do we leave unchallenged a report that says the cost of gambling includes lawyer costs for divorce as the only cost for divorce caused primarily by gambling? Are we as the State of Indiana not to take into consideration the cost to individuals from other states coming to casinos in Indiana?

Could it be that the State of Indiana has lost concern for the addicted gambler because we, as a state, are addicted to



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gambling revenues? How does it feel to live in a state that promotes its own citizens into becoming losers?

Now is not the time to sit back and let the gambling interests proceed unopposed!

In the words of John Wolf, “We are in a war!” For me, this is a war I do not want to lose! I believe there are many individuals who are sitting on the fence on the issue of gambling. I also believe that with education about the cost and destructive nature of gambling many of these individuals will join the struggle against gambling. Are you one who is ready to be heard and counted? Now is the time to be counted.

Your ICALG Board is looking for committed individuals who want to be part of loosening the strangle hold gambling interests have on the State of Indiana.

If you would like to be considered for board membership, please send your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address to Lorin L. Clemenz, 6337 Creekview Ln., Fishers, IN 46038. The board meets every other month beginning in July, at the Indiana Interchurch Center, 1100 W. 42nd Street and Michigan Road in Indianapolis.

Know where your State Representative and Senator stand on the issue of gambling

With an election coming in November, we need to encourage voters to know the position of those running for representatives and senators on gambling and its expansion. It was reported that one representative stated he had not heard from his constituents on the gambling issue, and he said he wished he would.

If that is very widespread, then we have no one to blame but ourselves. If they opposed to gambling then let them know that you will support them.

If they support gambling, let them know your opposition and that you will inform others of their support for legalized gambling.

Do not wait until November, but find out now and then let us know as well. To find out the names of your representative and senator, log on to www.in.gov/legislative and click on “Whose Your Legislator?”

Your support is appreciated

If you know others, who would like to receive this publication, please send their names and addresses to Lorin Clemenz, 6337 Creekview Ln., Fishers, IN 46038.

If you wish to help support this publication, please send a check payable to the Indiana Coalition Against Legalized Gambling and mail it to the same name and address. Your help is greatly appreciated.

This newsletter is posted on www.inareaumc.org.

Thank you for your continued support of this ministry.

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Time to take fresh look at gambling among our teens

By John Wolf, retired minister living in Valparaiso, Ind.

It's time for parents to take a fresh look at the growing gambling culture among kids. Each year, after-prom parties are sponsored by parents to prevent alcohol abuse and unsafe travel. The entertainment is usually held away from school premises and is the responsibility of the junior class parents and their siblings.

Valparaiso High School after-prom has repeatedly included "casino gambling" in the offerings without paying attention to the cultural effect upon teenagers. As long as only prizes and no money transactions are involved, it is generally seen as harmless. Other schools have had blackjack, poker or roulette wheels to "keep the kids away from alcohol and drugs."

Unfortunately, another assault upon the overworked psyche of children has surfaced. The Harvard Medical School's Division on Addictions, and other schools, has seen gambling and youths as important research. A recent Harvard study reports, "70 percent to 80 percent of adolescents have gambled within the past year. Problem gambling is more prevalent in that age group than in the adult population."

It is no longer necessary for teens to sneak into casinos. They can stay at home and gamble on the Internet without revealing their age. The number of virtual gambling sites has tripled in the past five years. All one needs is a credit card.

Youths can join in the poker craze now promoted by secular media. Like alcohol and drugs, the problems emerge later, but they usually begin at the high school or college level or younger.

Scott Nedberg is remembered around Valparaiso as a promising baseball player. Tragically, Scott began his gambling in high school. His addiction progressed in college and after moving to Fort Wayne.

I was there when, in speaking to the Valparaiso Rotary Club, he looked members in the eye and confessed, "I stole from some of you (insurance premiums) to feed my gambling habit." Scott served time in prison and began trying to help compulsive gamblers. His problem started in high school.

Experts in gambling counseling tell us that the "surge" or "rush" of a gambler is similar, if not the same, as the high from any drug. Psychologist Lou Aymard in the *Baltimore Sun* reports that neuropsychological research about brain behavior correlations provides an enlightened perspective on how vulnerable youths are to thrills of gambling. Structures of the human brain are immature at birth. It takes about two decades for the brain to reach maturity... Childhood behavior is often mediated by midbrain structures that are emotionally based, thus leading to impulsive, thrill-seeking behaviors.

Children copy adult behavior and observe family poker games and betting of sports events. Planning moneyless casino events at the prom are not as innocent as they seem. Maybe the Valpo parents, who called this year's prom party "Havana Club," should remember that even the Communist dictator Fidel Castro, when he came to power, threw out the American-owned casinos for corrupting his people.

Billionaire says gambling not the answer to economic development or government deficits

Billionaire Warren Buffett, one of the "most respected American business leaders" according to *Forbes* magazine, strongly challenges the premise that gambling (it's not gaming)

is the answer to economic development or a solution to government deficits.

In leading the successful fight – Gambling With the Good Life – to keep casinos out of Nebraska, Buffett used the simile, "If a neighbor's Chihuahua dog fouls your lawn, would you bring in a St. Bernard? Gambling expansion is a St. Bernard."

Buffett says, "The state is preying on its citizen by encouraging them to do something dumb. The results are net losers. It would be the same as fighting drug addiction by selling needles to users."

Did you know?

Indiana led the nation in the number of personal bankruptcies filed in 2005, with 11 for every 1,000 residents filing. A long-term check of the U.S. Bankruptcy Court statistics showed the bankruptcy rate more than doubled in Indiana since 1996 the year the first boats set sail over the more modest increases of the previous decade.

An open letter to the Indiana Gaming Commission

By Walter H. Schultz, an ICALG Board Member

Situation: Gambling is at present legal in Indiana.

Problem: Many people are permitted (after multiple incentives) to lose large amounts of money well beyond their ability to pay based on their income and assets.

Solution: Establish well-defined, easily understood guidelines, which determines what is the role of the casinos, Indiana Gaming Commission and the State Legislature, to insure that the general public is protected by the enforcement of responsible gambling.

General Observations:

1. The role of government is to promote and protect the health and welfare of its citizens. Should those who choose to gamble at Indiana casinos be subject to a buyer beware or should there be a product liability like every other industry?
2. Should prevention of problem gambling be a top priority, or should we turn our heads, ignore and hope for large amounts of tax dollars to be put in the general fund?
3. Should promotions and giveaways be regulated? Should the amount and content of advertising be regulated? Do truth in advertising laws apply?
4. If 30 to 50 percent of gambling revenues derive from problem and pathological gamblers, can we reasonably expect the American Gaming Association's new booklet, *The House Advantage: A Guide to Understanding the Odds*, to be of any value without some penalties and oversight? Can self-regulation work?
5. Is what happens at the casino location stays at the casino, or do those actions have far reaching consequences?
6. Should gamblers be given monthly statements reflecting their activity? Should a Web site be established with access available only to the gambler?
7. Should we analyze those procedures used at other gambling locations worldwide to insure responsible gambling, improve and then adopt them? Will recent court actions be applicable in the United States?

The Gaming Commission and the State Legislature need to take action on this issue.

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For information from the National Coalition Against
Legalized Gambling, log on to www.ncalg.org.