



# New prepaid credit cards remove barriers to youth online spending

By Rina Gupta, Ph.D. – International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors

Upon receiving their monthly credit card bill, many parents have noticed charges for online gambling expenses incurred by their adolescent children. Luckily, this usually only happens for the period of one billing cycle, at which point parents intervene. These teens often know their gambling stint

is a one-time deal; they know they will most likely get into trouble, but try it anyways.

In recent years, researchers, clinicians, and parents have been concerned about youth participation on online gambling and/or gaming sites. Research emanating from our centre has indicated that adolescents are much more likely to participate on the “practice sites” of the online casino venues because money is not required for participation. Our discussions with youth have taught us that many of them don’t gamble online simply because they do not have access to a credit card. The requirement of credit has often been perceived by researchers and clinicians as being a protective factor in a social climate where youths’ interest in the “sport” of poker has reached its highest levels yet.

However, these barriers have now been removed. Mastercard and Visa have recently announced new products available, offering a type of prepaid credit card that is available to anybody. Once activated, these prepaid credit cards can be used anywhere that Mastercard and Visa are accepted, including the Internet. As there is no application process, the cards cannot be traced to a user, which means any person, regardless of age, can go to a convenience store, buy a prepaid card, and use it to

access online gambling or video gaming venues.

Needless to say, this increased access to spending over the Internet is a matter of concern when it comes to adolescents. Many teens we have met in school-based prevention workshops have indicated to us that they wish they could have easier access to gambling online, because when they play on the practice sites, they tend to win money. It is the belief of many who access the practice sites that online gambling is a money-making venture for its users, and so it is only logical that they should want to play for real. This new spending option gives parents one more thing to look out for when it comes to the safety of their children.

Only time will tell the impact these prepaid credit cards will have on the online purchasing behaviours of youth. Not only do we need to be concerned about gambling and video gaming behaviours, but there exist a host of products and services (i.e., guns, pharmaceutical drugs, escorts, pornographic chat sites) that can be accessed online with the use of a credit card. The fact that there is one more barrier removed between youth and the adult temptations of the Internet is another compelling argument for universal vigilance when it comes to teens going online. ♦

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## Gambling here, there and everywhere: A commentary

By Jeffrey L. Derevensky, Ph.D. – International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors

There's trouble brewing everywhere. General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, Nortel and AIG, are just a few of the corporate giants deep in the red. Financial institutions are teetering on the verge of bankruptcy and governments are spending gazillions to bail them out.

While the casino industry once thought itself recession-proof, gambling revenues and gaming corporate stocks are down almost everywhere. Major casinos, which thought themselves invincible, are succumbing to the billion-dollar debt loads incurred during massive expansion around the globe. It doesn't help that the government in China has also curtailed its citizens from travelling to the gambling destination in Macau, or that Internet wagering has picked up much of the excess gaming revenues.

In an economic climate where everything is suddenly turned upside down, we find ourselves questioning what passes for common sense. Here's a short quiz:

Question: What do these jurisdictions have in common: Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Texas, New Brunswick, Florida, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Maryland, West Virginia, Ohio, South Dakota, Missouri and Hawaii?

Answer: They all have legislators and/or citizens that think gambling expansion and gambling revenues will be one of the principal cures for state/provincial budget shortfalls.

Here are some interesting headlines recently gathered from North American newspapers:

"Frank poised to unveil Internet gambling bill"

"Expanded gambling: It isn't just for the race tracks anymore"

"U.S. would reap billions taxing web gambling: Study"

"Rendell (Governor of Pennsylvania) aims to implement electronic gambling"

"New Hampshire residents choose casino gambling over taxes"

"City council urges mayor to move ahead on slots"

"Poll; Floridians want Seminole gambling pact, no tuition hike"

"New York on gambling to close budget gap"

*Legalized, regulated Internet gaming might not be too far off.*

In the next few years, we will witness an unprecedented expansion of gambling around the globe in an effort to bolster state and federal revenues severely impacted by the worldwide recession. Long gone will be the mega \$2 billion-plus casinos. These will be replaced by smaller casinos, more video lottery and electronic gaming machines in bars, and maybe even in convenience stores. Some legislators in Nevada have even discussed lowering the legal age to gamble from 21 to 18. And legalized, regulated Internet gaming might not be too far off.

Does it hurt that the new President of the United States is a poker

player? Likely not.

The Poker Players Alliance, over one million members strong and headed by Alfonse D'Amato, former Senator from New York State, has been a huge proponent of overturning the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act (UIGEA). Their contention, and that of most gamblers and gaming companies, revolves around players' rights. They argue that it is not only the citizen's right to play poker (as is done in some jurisdictions with poker rooms), but if the government were to regulate this form of gambling that it would offer greater protection for American players.

Representative Barney Frank, Chair of the House Financial Securities

Committee, a long proponent of overturning the UIGEA, is supported by a recently released PricewaterhouseCoopers report which suggests that by taxing Internet gambling, the federal government could raise as much as \$51.9 billion over the next 10 years. Interestingly, these estimates are based upon new data and represent a 30% increase from their former predictions of \$40 billion. While this amount may seem meagre next to the trillions of dollars currently being spent in Washington, rest assured that governors and state legislators will be searching for their



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fair share of any potential revenues.

How will gambling expansion be sold to the general population? First, it is questionable whether there will be any opposition to this change at all. Sure, there are those such as members of the Christian Coalition of America who are vehemently opposed to gambling. But the vast majority of people view gambling as a socially acceptable recreational activity and gamble responsibly. Second, faced with gambling expansion or increases in taxes, the problem presents itself as another no-brainer in the popular imagination – go for gambling! Actually, I believe the public would try almost anything in lieu of seeing increased taxes. Third, earmarking the money for good social causes – education, health, welfare, charities, etc. – tends to defray most popular concerns about the negative social impact of gambling.

So what's the downside? Some of my colleagues have argued that individuals become habituated when there is an oversaturation

of gambling, and will grow accustomed to it so much that it will almost blend in with the landscape (unless it proves to be particularly ostentatious). Others have argued that it will likely produce a growing number of problem and pathological gamblers.

In the face of a growing global economic disaster, the likes of which most of us have only read about in history books, and the

*I believe the public would try almost anything in lieu of increasing taxes.*

need for governments to generate revenues from somewhere, gambling expansion is inevitable. Some have even called this a form of voluntary taxation. And, while no one, including large corporations, likes to pay taxes, the revenues will continue to increase if costs can be minimized. The gaming suppliers have hit the jackpot.

I call upon legislators and the industry to help foster an atmosphere

of genuine corporate social responsibility. Establish appropriate levels of funding for research, treatment and prevention. Internet gaming operators, as has been done by bwin and Svenska Spel, have worked closely with researchers and clinicians to examine how they may offer a safer product. Many state and provincial lotteries have acted similarly, which will result in marginal costs. Even jurisdictions that have extensively funded

research, treatment, and prevention generally have larger advertising budgets. Working together can be a win-win situation.

The literature and our understanding of problem gambling during the past decade have continued to grow and help us better understand gambling behaviour. Still, much has to be learned. Together, through collaboration, we can continue the process. ♦

# Themes of addiction in the *Twilight* series

By Alissa Sklar, Ph.D. – International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors

One of the hottest trends to sweep teen and young adult fiction in the past few years has been the *Twilight* series of books by Stephanie Meyers. The four-part series (which also includes *New Moon*, *Eclipse* and *Breaking Dawn*) follows the seemingly impossible romance between high school senior Bella Swan and her teenage vampire boyfriend, Edward Cullen.

The extent to which the *Twilight* series (and movie of the same name, released in theatres this past January, and on DVD this month) has captured the imagination of tweens, teens and adults of all ages is not to be understated. Worldwide sales of the books top \$25 million, in 37 languages. The *Twilight* books held four of the slots in the top 10 spots for 2008, according to Nielson Bookscan. The fourth book, *Breaking Dawn* sold 1.3 million copies in the U.S. on the first day of its release in August 2008.

The main thrust of the series' appeal lies in the seemingly irresolvable conflict between the two main characters: how could a love affair between a normal teenage girl and a vampire ever turn out well? Bella is doomed to face either death or her own life of eternal damnation if her undead lover can't control his particular desires; Edward, by contrast, is tormented by his unrequitable love for the human Bella and his unbearable desire to consume her. The undercurrent of sexual tension is extremely high (though hidden between the lines, as this is, after all, young adult fiction), and the parallel themes of

blood and sexual lust are expertly woven together throughout the book and film.

While the subject of unrequited love has been the bread and butter of story-telling since time immemorial, and plots that turn on obsession and lust are equally commonplace, the *Twilight* series offers a particular riff on themes of addiction that should be of interest to anyone concerned with adolescent high-risk issues.

There are several ways in which addiction plays a part in these stories. The first, a mainstay of any romance, lies in the intensity of the love relationship between the characters. Depriving one

*The Twilight series offers a particular riff on themes of addiction that should be of interest to anyone concerned with adolescent high-risk issues.*

of the other's love leads to such severe withdrawal symptoms that suicide appears a viable option, à la Pyramus and Thisbe or Romeo and Juliet. This is, however, complicated in this series by the vampires' innate blood lust. An entirely different form of desire in its goal, it is nevertheless described (particularly in the first book) with the raw sensory input of a first heroin high. The vampires must kill in order to satisfy this omnipotent desire. Edward and his adoptive family, the Cullens, choose the moral option of a so-called 'vegetarian diet' – the only hunt and eat animals. This choice is made all the more admirable by the

maddening thirst experienced by the sight and scent of the humans they live with, an almost clinical resemblance to physiological addiction. For Edward, Bella's scent is the apotheosis of his experience. He is driven nearly to the point of madness by his desire to taste her blood and struggles throughout the series to control himself.

This struggle between the physiological desire to consume her as a vampire and his romantic love for her human person is a constant, though he develops as a moral character throughout the series, with a few notable hiccups along the way.

More of a concern is Bella's central character struggle. Initially, she is a sympathetic but fairly weak character. Her self-esteem is low enough that she willingly puts herself in mortal danger, and the choices she makes in the relationship are self-destructive, hinging entirely on Edward's nascent abilities of self-control. She willingly serves up her own life as a testament to her love. She blames herself for everything that goes wrong, which Edward finds simultaneously maddening (he wants desperately to protect her) and, unfortunately for the teen readers who will see her as a model, endearing.

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The second book, *New Moon*, is an interesting study of withdrawal. Deprived of her love, Bella is numb, detached, uncaring of her physical needs for food, sleep or exercise. She suffers academically, despite previously being a top student. She attempts life-threatening stunts, such as jumping off a cliff into the sea or riding recklessly on a motorcycle, for the momentary hallucination

together despite all obstacles, the compelling desire to maintain the love relationship even in the face of unhealthy, dysfunctional or even deadly outcome. Teens and young adults experimenting with the intensity of new emotions, physical experiences and sensations, as well as developmentally appropriate impulses towards risk-taking, would certainly find addiction to be an extremely resonant theme. After

not mounted here an argument against them. However, as researchers and treatment-providers in the field of adolescent high-risk issues, it is imperative to know how the discourse of addiction plays out in youth culture. Meyers' has a passionate readership among *Twilight* fans, and her books offer opportunities for opening up a dialogue with teens about these issues.

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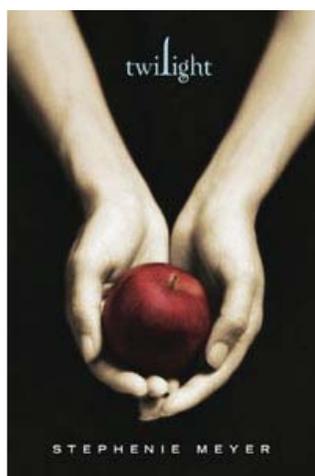
of nearness to Edward that she experiences. This withdrawal is resolved not by a successful overcoming of her obsession, but by his return in circumstances that place her in the hospital with serious injuries.

The trope of addiction is useful in any kind of romantic narrative, as it implies simultaneously the intensity of the connection between lovers, the compulsion to be constantly and totally

all, teens (especially in western cultures) have been taught about addiction in its various guises, seen its expression in all kinds of media, perhaps observed it in peers or felt its pull in themselves. They really get it, and the *Twilight* story uses it to great effect in its tale of the relationship between Bella and Edward.

The fact that these themes of addiction run so clearly and consistently through the books is

Beyond serving as points of entry for "teachable moments," though, there is concern that they also serve to normalize thinking about individual responsibility, self-control and especially for girls, self-esteem and self-advocacy in romantic relationships. Self-sacrifice in relationships, and the glamourization of addiction (which is presented as a validation of questionable choices because she loses control) is all too familiar in the real teenage girl world of dating abuse, binge drinking and drug abuse. One hopes that readers of *Twilight* find the critical detachment necessary to see these characters as extreme versions of real situations, through which they can safely explore these themes, rather than as models for themselves. ♦



# Heavy weigh-gering: gambling on weight loss

By Sarah Benmergui B.A. – International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors

Motivational speakers will have you believe that the safest bet is a bet on yourself; sounds like a sure thing, right? In gambling, it is rare that a bettor has any influence over the outcome, and often it is illegal for a person to wager money on an event in which they have a stake in the outcome, such as NCAA basketball (Burger and Lynham, 2007). But in the latest betting trend, “diet betting,” participants are doing just that: co-workers, friends, and family members are increasingly turning to betting as an incentive for weight loss. Instead of – or perhaps in addition to – healthy living, the goal becomes monetary. And instead of friends acting as support systems, they become competitors, and even saboteurs.

The trend of betting on weight loss may have recently grown in popularity due to reality television and the Internet, but the concept is not entirely new. A betting agency in the U.K., William Hill, has been involved in the lucrative endeavour of taking bets from individuals on their own weight loss since the early 1990s. Even when thousands of dollars are on the line, Burger and Lynham (2007) found that weight loss bettors failed 80% of the time.

The *New York Times* describes a bet between co-workers, where the winner began to look “skeletal,” and commented, “I didn’t even need to lose much weight, but when I saw everyone else, I thought, ‘I just won \$900!’”

Websites, such as StickK.com, help facilitate these bets, aiming to mo-

tivate people to meet their goals by having them sign contracts. If they do not achieve their goals, they lose money to the cause of their choice – a friend or competitor, a charity, or even an anti-charity (a cause that the individual does not want to support!)



Another website, Fatbet.net, was created specifically for competitive weight loss. Co-founder John Dirks uses the site’s tracking systems to maintain his weight, and admitted to *The Seattle Times*, “When I went ‘off-bet’ ... I regained 10 pounds.”

This example illustrates a major downside to engaging in weight loss betting, and focusing on money rather than lifestyle changes. Even when successful, this weight loss is a short-term fix. *The Biggest Loser* television program showcases astounding weight losses alongside strategic game play where participants compete to win \$250,000, and it is no shock that many competitors gain back significant amounts of weight following the show (Sullivan, 2009). Similarly, researchers from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and the Wharton School conducted a study investigating how financial incentives could affect weight loss. They found that in the groups that had financial incentives to lose weight, nearly 50% of participants met the weight loss goal of 16 pounds, as

opposed to the control group, where only approximately 11% of participants met their goal. Unfortunately, the researchers saw that “substantial amounts of weight were regained between the end of the weight loss phase and the follow-up 3 months later” (Volpp et. al., 2008).

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# iCasino? Teens can access gambling applications using the Apple iPhone

By Colin Campbell, B.Sc. – International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors

The new must-have item for adults and adolescents alike is the Apple iPhone. The iPhone, an Internet accessible cellphone that utilizes touch screen technology, is currently the best selling phone in the United States (Frommer, 2008). One popular feature of the iPhone is that users are able to download applications for their phone. These applications range from games to books and tip calculators, and are typically designed by companies or individuals other than Apple.

Included among the hundreds of available applications are many gambling games, including video poker, blackjack, slot machines, and dice games. Some of the descriptions for these applications on the Apple website offer a cause for concern. For instance, the description for the application “Play Cards” reads “Want to play five card stud but don’t know your poker hands? No problem: we teach you.” Another application, called “Addicting Dice Poker,” makes light of the addictive nature of gambling in their slogan: “Addicting Dice Poker is sure to get you hooked!” None of these games actually involve betting real money, but a curious youth could use these applications to learn how to gamble.

In addition to interactive gambling games, there are also applications on the iPhone that facilitate gambling. Examples of these applications include lottery number generators, poker hand guides, poker tips and

tricks, and a Texas Hold’em timer for use while playing with friends. One such application that gained notoriety in the news recently is the Blackjack Card Counter application. The application helps blackjack players keep a running count of the number of high cards compared to the number of low cards. This application can be used when the iPhone is in stealth mode, meaning

*This application can be used when the iPhone is in stealth mode, meaning that the screen appears blank but the user can still tap the screen in the appropriate places to keep the count going.*

that the screen appears blank but the user can still tap the screen in the appropriate place to keep a count going. Once the count is favourable to the player, the phone will vibrate, prompting the player to make a bet. Needless to say, devices that aid a player in counting cards are prohibited in casinos and individuals who are suspected of using their iPhone in this manner will be asked to leave. However, the developer of the application, Travis Yates, claims that he “developed the app so that people could practice card counting and use it with friends at home” (Moses, 2009).

Perhaps the most worrying iPhone feature is the “lotto tickets and results” application. This application allows users to purchase lot-

tery tickets from lotteries based in the United States, Canada, Europe, Brazil and Australia. The company that designed the application, Trillionario.com, offers subscriptions to a variety of lotteries. Once they get their payment, the company will purchase the lottery ticket for the individual, printing the user’s name on the back and e-mailing the subscriber the numbers. If a ticket hap-

pens to win, the company will help the subscriber to collect the prize, with the option of wins under \$600 being credited to the individual’s account. The application does not have an age verification feature for users, but a credit card is required in order to purchase a subscription, which limits most youths’ ability to participate in this activity, although anyone with access to a credit card would be able to subscribe to this activity.

The iPhone seems to be an unlikely gateway for youth gambling activities, and it is currently not as accessible for teens as a method of gambling as are computers with Internet access, partly due to its \$200+ price tag. However, the popularity and technological capabilities of cell-

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phones like the iPhone are increasing at a rapid pace. Companies such as Spin3 are developing gambling websites that are specifically designed for mobile phone users and take advantage of the iPhone's touch screen technology. Fortunately, there are currently measures in place on cellphones, including the iPhone, that allow parents to block certain features of their child's phone, including Internet access. American provider AT&T charges parents \$4.99 per month per line

for this feature. Unfortunately, parents who are unaware of the capabilities of cellphones may not even consider subscribing to this feature, or view it as too costly. Despite the drawback of having to pay for parental control options on the iPhone when there are free or lower cost alternatives for computers, parents need to be made aware of the potential risks involved with the iPhone and methods of controlling it before providing their children with one of these devices.

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## Multimedia contest results announced

The International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors at McGill University is pleased to announce that a group of Secondary IV and V students from Evergreen High School in Chandler, Quebec are the grand prize winners of the 2008 Multimedia Gambling Prevention Contest. A team from Bialik High School in Côte Saint-Luc, Quebec received honourable mention.

The winning team put together a thought-provoking montage of scenes of young people discussing their gambling-related problems, set to original music. The team members are Mike Bujold, Jerome Martin, Stephen Moynihan, Jessica Jalbert, and Sabrina Cormier. The team will receive a gift certificate worth \$500 to use towards purchases at an electronics store. The team that received honourable mention from Bialik High School featured Riva Bruck, Lisa Komlos, and Michal Friedman. Their production depicted the pain and suffering that can result from youth gambling problems. They will receive a \$150 gift certificate to use towards purchases at an electronics store. Both of the winning schools will also receive plaques celebrating their students' accomplishments.

Both winning productions are featured on our website, [www.youthgambling.com](http://www.youthgambling.com).

We congratulate our winners and thank all of the other entrants from across the province who participated in this contest to raise awareness about youth gambling problems. ♦

### Grand Prize Winner: Evergreen High School



Emily

# J'ai la maladie du jeu – la sortie publique de M. René Angélil suscite des inquiétudes

Par Isabelle Martin, Ph.D. – responsable du volet prévention au Centre international d'étude sur le jeu et les comportements à risque chez les jeunes

Le 19 février 2009, à la première page du *Journal de Montréal*, M. René Angélil, mari et agent de Céline Dion, avoue publiquement qu'il a « la maladie du jeu », probablement le secret le moins bien gardé au Québec, s'il en est un. Son aveu incitera-t-il d'autres joueurs problématiques ou pathologiques à faire de même et possiblement aller chercher de l'aide? Nous l'espérons.

Il nous apparaît crucial de revenir sur certains des éléments de cette déclaration.

*M. Angélil est à l'abri des soucis financiers. C'est possiblement ce qui explique le fait qu'il continue de jouer au poker.*

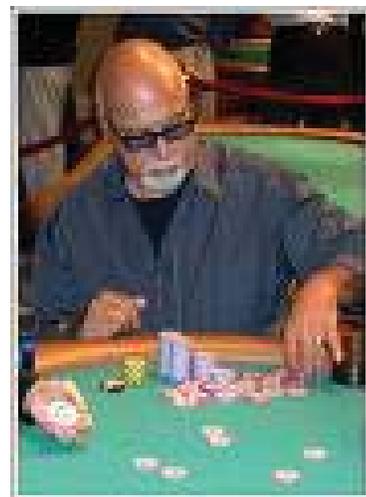
Premièrement, M. Angélil, contrairement à 99 % des autres joueurs pathologiques, n'a pas à faire face aux conséquences graves et désastreuses des difficultés financières. Dans la majorité des cas, ce sont les difficultés financières qui mènent les joueurs dans la spirale descendante des problèmes de jeu. D'abord, ils tentent de se refaire et, ce faisant, ils aggravent leur situation. Cette pression, qui crée beaucoup d'anxiété et de stress, en amène une certaine proportion à commettre des actes délinquants ou criminels pour financer leurs activités. Ce sont très souvent les difficultés financières qui amènent les joueurs au bord du gouffre : bris des relations familiales et sociales, pertes d'emplois, pertes des biens communs, et tentatives de suicide. M. Angélil est à l'abri de ces soucis. C'est possiblement ce qui explique le fait qu'il continue de jouer au poker, bien qu'il reconnaisse que sans son entourage, il n'arriverait pas à contrôler son comportement de jeu, étant incapable d'arrêter de jouer.

Deuxièmement, M. Angélil, qui possiblement ne peut savoir ce qu'est un problème de jeu pour un

citoyen moyen et quelles en sont les conséquences, invite les jeunes à ne jouer qu'au poker. Cette forme de jeu d'argent est, aux dires de M. Angélil, « un jeu dans lequel il y a de la stratégie et où l'on se bat contre soi-même et les autres, et non contre des machines ». Le poker, il est vrai, est un jeu qui comporte certaines stratégies. Mais il importe de rappeler que c'est d'abord et avant tout un jeu de cartes dont le résultat dépend aussi, en partie, du hasard particulièrement dans le cas des tournois où s'affrontent les meilleurs joueurs. À la table finale, le hasard influence le résultat : celui qui aura reçu les meilleures cartes aura une nette longueur d'avance sur ses adversaires.

Le poker est une forme de jeu d'argent à laquelle participe un nombre croissant de jeunes et d'adultes. Notre expérience auprès des jeunes et nos contacts réguliers avec eux nous permettent de voir l'attrait que le poker exerce sur eux. Plusieurs achètent le rêve que l'industrie du jeu tente de leur vendre : devenir riches et célèbres en s'amusant. De plus, plusieurs acteurs de cette très lucrative industrie dissocient le poker des autres jeux d'argent, en plus de le présenter fréquemment comme étant un sport, notamment en raison de la nature compétitive du jeu.

Malheureusement, on ne présente que les joueurs gagnants, ceux là même qui sont souvent commandités ou encore ceux qui étaient riches bien avant de s'intéresser au poker, comme M. Angélil ou M. Patrick Bruel.



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Les jeunes ne savent pas qu'il faut payer entre 10 000 \$ et 100 000 \$ pour s'inscrire aux tournois majeurs; que des dizaines de milliers de joueurs y participent; que moins de 1% vont repartir avec un gain.

*Les jeunes et les moins jeunes qui s'y initient croient, à tort, que le fait d'exercer un certain contrôle sur le jeu les met à l'abri des pertes et des problèmes de dépendance. Notre expérience clinique montre le contraire.*

Sa popularité croissante inquiète également les intervenants qui traitent les joueurs problématiques et ceux de la santé publique. Les jeunes et les moins jeunes qui s'y initient croient, à tort, que le fait d'exercer un certain contrôle sur le jeu les met à l'abri des pertes et des problèmes de dépendance. Notre expérience clinique montre le contraire.

Troisièmement, M. Angélil s'enorgueillit d'enseigner la « bonne façon » de jouer au poker à son fils de huit ans, dont l'intelligence serait supérieure à la moyenne. À cet égard, une abondante documentation scientifique montre que

plus les jeunes sont initiés tôt aux jeux d'argent, plus ils sont à risque de développer des problèmes de jeu. Chez la population générale, les jeunes sont, en moyenne, initiés aux jeux d'argent vers l'âge de 11 ans et demi, souvent par des membres de la famille (billets de loterie, jeux de cartes).

Aussi, les résultats d'études montrent que les joueurs pathologiques ont fréquemment été initiés aux jeux d'argent entre 9 et 10 ans, par des membres de leur famille eux-mêmes susceptibles d'être des joueurs réguliers. Les propos de M. Angélil en témoignent.

Nous sommes inquiets de la portée des déclarations de M. Angélil compte tenu de sa grande popularité et sa notoriété. Nous espérons que les adolescents et les adultes fascinés par le poker prendront en considération les particularités de la situation de M. Angélil et que les parents tenteront de retarder l'initiation de leur enfant à toute forme de jeu d'argent.

Pour cette raison, il nous apparaît nécessaire de :

- a) réitérer le fait que le poker est un jeu d'argent, et que ceux qui y jouent doivent demeurer vigilants;
- b) de rappeler aux adultes qu'il est conseiller de retarder le plus possible l'initiation des jeunes aux jeux d'argent;
- c) d'informer et de sensibiliser la population aux risques associés à la participation à toute forme de jeux d'argent, notamment pour les enfants et les adolescents. ♦

## U.S. lawmaker challenges federal ban on sports betting

In a move with important implications for the legalization of gambling in the U.S., a New Jersey lawmaker filed a challenge in March to a 17-year-old federal law prohibiting sports gambling in 46 states. Democrat Raymond J. Lesniak and a group of other plaintiffs dispute the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act of 1992, which limits legalized sports gambling to Delaware, Montana, Nevada and Oregon.

The lawsuit claims that the federal prohibition is unconstitutional because it excludes all other states from a potentially lucrative source of revenue. "How can the people of the state of New Jersey not have the right to do what the people of Nevada can do?" Lesniak asked a March 23rd news conference.

Joining Lesniak as plaintiffs are Interactive Media Entertainment & Gaming Inc., a Washington-based consultant for the electronic gaming industry, and a pair of

New Jersey horse-racing advocacy groups, the Thoroughbred Breeders Association of New Jersey and the Standardized Breeders & Owners Association of New Jersey.

This challenge to the 1992 law came a week after Delaware Governor Jack Markell proposed instituting in his state a limited form of sports betting known as "parlay cards," in which bettors try to correctly pick the winners of two sporting events. ♦

## Book review

# Casino State: Legalized gambling in Canada

*Edited by James F. Cosgrave and Thomas R. Klassen. (2009). University of Toronto Press, 256 pp/4 figures, 5 tables. ISBN: 978-0-8020-9688-3. Price: \$50 CDN.*

*Reviewed by Margot Nossal – International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors*

Common sense holds that “the house always wins,” but what happens when the house is run by the government? *Casino State: Legalized Gambling in Canada* addresses the current state of gambling in Canada, and how its legalization has resulted in a government monopoly on the industry, transforming gambling from a social vice to a prime source of provincial revenue. In collecting essays from scholars and professionals in various fields of study, the editors have compiled a comprehensive, interdisciplinary look at the controversial role of government as both regulator and beneficiary of the gambling industry.

Given the current economic climate in Canada and the world over, this book appears at a time when the incidence of gambling is likely to increase. Though disposable income for frivolous entertainment such as gambling might be reduced, many still find appealing the quick and lucrative return that gambling seems to offer. However, problems associated with gambling, including crime and pathological dependence, are potential complications of government policy that offers its citizens ample opportunity to engage in gambling activities. The selected authors present current and insightful essays, presenting the latest arguments in gambling legislation, analysis, and prevention theory. *Casino State* ultimately addresses the problems faced by the Canadian government and its citizens in an age where increasing state reliance on gambling funds coincides with emerging gambling-related social problems.

In introducing the book, the editors state their aim to foster dialogue among those concerned about the unprecedented growth of legalized gambling in Canada. As their contributors write from a broad range of expertise, the collection of essays is directed not only at those who are currently implicated in the gambling industry and its effects, but also at a wider base of anyone who might be invested in how Canada’s government funds are generated.

The book is divided into four parts, each containing two essays that focus on a particular aspect of the discussion about the legalization of gambling. Part One outlines the atmosphere of moralism that served as a precursor to the legalization of gambling in the country, and the shift in popular thought that was accompanied by new economic

needs and legislation. Cosgrave’s essay explores the emerging figure of citizen-consumer evoked by the creation of such a state. Part Two looks at the evolution of gambling policies in the Canadian legal system and their current implementation throughout the provinces, and also provides a comparative analysis to those in place in Australia. Pertinent to both these cases is the foresight, or lack thereof, to implement prevention and regulatory programs when introducing gambling opportunities on such a large scale. Part Three considers specific cases in existing gambling policy, and how government policy has influenced gambling control and expansion. Finally, Part Four looks towards social problems that arise as a result of widespread legalized gambling, including a discussion on crime rate and its relation to gambling venues. Derevensky contributes an essay concerning the incidence, prevention, and treatment of youth gambling problems within a generation of youth who will live their entire lives under a government that actively approves of and administers gambling opportunities.

A common point of concern addressed throughout the book is the paradoxical position of a government that both regulates and benefits from gambling revenue. In what seems to be a fairly straight-forward conflict of interests, the authors present a system of provincial governments that are dependent on funds generated from gambling activities.

While the different parts of the book draw on various subject areas for evidence, the editors have skilfully assembled a set of essays that conveys a unified message: legalized gambling in Canada seems to have made its way into the heart of both provincial revenue sources and popular entertainment, but the associated problems cannot longer be ignored. As a collection informed by diverse disciplines, this book is essential reading for everyone interested in gambling studies. From a legal perspective, including those interested in gambling legislation, regulation and policy creation, to a public health and safety perspective, including those concerned about gambling’s effects on crime and individual health, the book covers broad ground and provokes thought about the problems of legalized gambling in Canada. ♦

# *What effects could the NCAA's move into Canada have on sports wagering?*

*By Colin Campbell, B.Sc. – International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors*

Within the past year, two Canadian universities, the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University, have publicly expressed an interest in leaving Canadian Inter-university Sport (CIS) and joining the U.S.-based National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), with rumours of other Canadian universities investigating the possibility of joining as well. These schools, both based out of Vancouver, list a number of advantages to breaking ranks with their fellow Canadian univer-

*There are fears that Canadian schools playing in the NCAA will undermine the CIS and the level of competition between Canadian universities.*

sities and competing south of the border, including decreased travel costs and an increase in the level of competition.

After some investigation, it turns out there are some potential problems associated with Canadian universities joining the NCAA. For instance, there are some differences in the manner in which the two countries govern scholarships. Additionally, there are fears that Canadian schools playing in the NCAA will undermine the CIS and the level of competition between Canadian universities. Another issue that has not been publicly addressed by either the CIS or officials at either of the two universities proposing to move to the NCAA is what effect this change might have on sports wagering in Canada.

Gambling on NCAA events, especially Men's Division I football and basketball, is very popular in the United States. The Nevada sports books (the only state that has legalized sports books), took an estimated \$1.2 billion worth of bets on college football alone out of \$3 billion total in 2000 (Davies and Abram, 2001). In addition, the Division I men's basketball March Madness tournament takes in more than \$80 million a year on the legal Nevada sports books, second to only the

Super Bowl (Rockney and King, 2006). Many gamblers place college sports bets with bookies or on the Internet as well, both of which are illegal activities.

In Canada, individuals are able to place bets on sports with provincially-operated sports lotteries, including Pro-Line and Mise-o-jeu. In addition to professional sports, these lotteries also allow for wagering on NCAA Division I football and basketball. Currently, CIS events do not appear on sports lottery tickets in Canada, although it is possible to wager on some Canadian university sports events online, using the website Gambling411.ca.

Simon Fraser and UBCs' applications to join the NCAA are to enter Division II, with the possibility

of joining the larger, more prestigious Division I after a review in 2012. NCAA Division II sports are not commonly placed on Canadian sports lottery tickets due to the lack of national coverage and a lower level of competition. However, both Canadian schools have football and basketball teams, and it is speculated that UBC will attempt to gain entrance to Division I play, since their school size and number of teams would allow them to compete with other Division I teams. If UBC or SFU were to gain admission to Division I, or take advantage of NCAA regulations that allow for a school to field one Division I team while playing in Division II, it would be possible for Canadians to legally wager on UBC and SFU football or basketball games.

Another concern with Canadian teams joining the NCAA is the impact it would have on the student athletes. There have been numerous reported cases of game fixing and point shaving schemes by college athletes in the U.S., including scandals at schools such as Boston College, Arizona State, and Northwestern. Unlike professional athletes, student athletes are unpaid. Thus, gamblers and organized criminals can more easily tempt student athletes to throw games or shave points by providing generous compensation. Because of this threat on the integrity of the games being played, the NCAA has very strict rules that prohibit athletes from gambling on any NCAA event at the risk of

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Continued on page 12 >>>

suspension or a loss of the ability to compete in athletic competitions. Despite the possibility of losing their ability to compete, studies have found that approximately 25% of male student athletes gamble on college sports, and about 0.5% to 1.0% of athletes admit to accepting money from gamblers for playing poorly (Cullen and Latessa, 1996; NCAA, 2004).

Even if Canadian schools joining the NCAA does increase the level of gambling availability on college sports in Canada, at least the NCAA has strict rules and regulations regarding gambling. The CIS has no such rule in their by-laws, policies and procedures document, and a se-

ries of phone calls to athletics departments found that the Canadian universities surveyed had no policies in place to address gambling by their student-athletes (Sklar, 2009). Considering that it is possible to currently gamble on CIS sporting events, either online or through professional bookies, the CIS would be wise to adopt similar rules as the NCAA, or risk having a gambling scandal on their hands in the future.

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Alissa Sklar, Personal communication, January 29th, 2009 ◆

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## Public service advertisement: A fine line for Absolut's new campaign

This March, Absolut vodka launched an international campaign aimed at encouraging responsible drinking. Unlike many anti-drinking advertisements, Recognize the Moment has put a positive spin on a [tired] message; drinkers are encouraged to "say yes to drinking in a responsible way," simultaneously contributing to the task of selling a product and the mission to promote responsible drinking. Users of their new website can even text message themselves to "recognize the moment" when moderation should be considered. In a discussion about drinking in moderation, though, sometimes a blunt reminder is necessary. Alongside the arguably sub-par refrain, "Enjoy responsibly," is the more direct message: "If you have a drinking problem, seek professional help."

The company's new campaign has taken a decades-old message and delivered it in a new way, using modern media such as an interactive video website, Facebook tools and advertisements, and text message functions. In tapping these resources, the advertisers aim to target their message at a younger population, one in which excessive drinking is all too common. Tim Murphy, vice president for marketing at Absolut, addresses the need

to communicate with this cohort effectively, "talking to them almost like a friend, staying away from being too preachy." This angle at advertising, however, is not seen as favourable by everyone. George A. Hacker, director for the Alcohol Policies Project at the Center for Science in the Public Interest, argues that in being completely web-based, this campaign is directly targeted at young drinkers, grooming them to become Absolut consumers. However clever the responsible drinking message, it still is being disseminated by the world's second-largest alcoholic beverage conglomerate.

Whether Absolut's advertisers are capitalizing on youth technological culture to sell their product, or whether they are leveraging their iconic brand name to broadcast information about responsible drinking, the new Recognize the Moment campaign will undoubtedly surface on a television, computer, or cellphone near you.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/09/business/media/09adcol.html?\\_r=2&8dpc](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/09/business/media/09adcol.html?_r=2&8dpc)

<http://www.dfnionline.com/article/Absolut-launches-responsible-drinking-campaign-1858106.html> ◆

# Recent publications and presentations

## REFEREED PUBLICATIONS

Derevensky, J. (in press). School psychologists. In B. Kerr (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of giftedness, creativity and talent*. San Francisco: Sage Publications.

Derevensky, J. (in press). Substance Abuse. In B. Kerr (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of giftedness, creativity and talent*. San Francisco: Sage Publications.

Derevensky, J., Sklar, A., Gupta, R., & Messerlian, C. (in press). An empirical study examining the impact of gambling advertisements on adolescent gambling attitudes and behaviors. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*.

Gavriel-Fried, B., & Derevensky, J. (in press). The gestation and birth of the law prohibiting the sale of lottery tickets to Israeli minors (Amendment to the Penal Code): Some social policy issues. *International Gambling Studies*.

Faregh, N. & Leth-Steensen, C. (2009). Reflections on the Voluntary Self-Exclusion of Gamblers and the Law-Suits against Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation. *Journal of Gambling Studies*.

McBride, J. & Derevensky, J. (2009). Internet gambling behaviour in a sample of online gamblers. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 7, 149-167.

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Monaghan, S., Derevensky, J., & Sklar, A. (2008). Impact of gambling advertisements on children and adolescents: Policy recommendations to minimize harm. *International Gambling Studies*, 22, 252-274.

## BOOK CHAPTERS

Derevensky, J., Gupta, R., & Csiernik, R. (in press). Problem gambling: Current knowledge and clinical perspectives. In R. Csiernik & W. Rowe (Eds.). *Responding to the oppression of addiction: Canadian social work perspectives, Second edition*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Derevensky, J. (2009). Youth gambling: A Canadian perspective. In J.F. Cosgrave T.R. Klassen (Eds.) *Casino State: Legalized Gambling in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Derevensky, J. (2009). Preface. In G. Meyer, M. Griffiths & T. Hayer (Eds.). *Problem gambling in Europe - Extent and preventative efforts*. London: Springer Books.

Derevensky, J. (2008). Gambling behaviors and adolescent substance abuse disorders. In Y. Kaminer & O.G. Buckstein (Eds.). *Adolescent substance abuse: Psychiatric comorbidity and high risk behaviors*. New York: Haworth Press, 403-433.

## INVITED PRESENTATIONS

Derevensky, J., McBride, J., & Gupta, R. (2009). Internet gambling among youth: Lessons learned. Invited address presented at the Alberta Gambling Research Institute annual meeting, Banff, Alberta, March.

Gupta, R. (2009). Is it normal for my teenager to be gambling? Invited address, Live and Learn Lectures, University of Waterloo, March.

Gupta, R. (2009). A paradigm for the treatment of problem gambling in youth. Invited address to the WRAGGI, University of Waterloo, March.

McBride, J., & Derevensky, J. (2009). Exploring Internet Gambling Among College Students. Poster Presented at the McGill Student Colloquium on Health and Law, Connecting Ideas, Montreal, QC, February.

## UPCOMING PRESENTATIONS

Discovery 2009 conference on problem gambling hosted by the Responsible Gambling Council, Niagara Falls, Ontario, April.

Second International Symposium on Pathological Gambling and Other Impulse Control Disorders - Adolescence, Family & Society, sponsored by the National Association on Pathological Gambling and Other Impulse Control Disorders (ANJOTI, Brazil), Sao Paulo, Brazil, May.

National Council on Problem Gambling annual conference, Indianapolis, June. ♦

# News from the Centre...

## Dr. Neda Faregh joins Centre

We extend a hearty welcome to our new post-doctoral fellow, Dr. Neda Faregh. Neda did her Ph.D. studies at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, working with her doctoral supervisor, Dr. Craig Leth-Steensen.

For her doctoral thesis, Neda used a population health framework to develop a psychosocial model of Canadian gambling behaviour outcomes derived from risk and protective factors, based on a Canadian community health database. She developed models both for the general population and for latent classes that were formed based on individuals' proclivity towards distinct game types and frequency of play.

Since her arrival at the Centre, Neda has been involved with a project that attempts to synthesize the knowledge base of the impacts of gambling availability and accessibility on a community, as well as a project involving impulse control disorders and preventative measures. She is also organizing and facilitating a support group for parents and family members of adolescents and young adults with gambling disorders.

## Ph.D. Defense

Will Shead successfully defended his Ph.D. thesis entitled "Affect-Regulation Expectancies among Gamblers" on January 12, 2009. With the completion of his

doctoral dissertation, Will has completed all requirements for a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Calgary. He will be officially awarded his degree at a convocation ceremony on June 10, 2009.

His research supervisor was Dr. David Hodgins, who also supervised his Masters research. Oral defense committee members were Dr. Keith Dobson and Dr. Chris Sears of the Department of Psychology, Dr. Tim Welsh of the Faculty of Kinesiology, and Dr. Martin Zack from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto. The newly minted Dr. Shead's research has been accepted for publication in a future issue of *Journal of Gambling Studies*.

## Support group launched for families of problem gamblers

Family members of problem gamblers are invited to join a free support group organized by the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviours. This may include parents, spouses, or adult children of gamblers. Meetings will include a short presentation on the topic of disordered gambling and individual self-help, followed by a group discussion moderated by a trained counselor. Attendees may be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. For more information, email us at [info@youthgambling.com](mailto:info@youthgambling.com) or call 514-398-1391.

## What's your deal?

The Centre has recently established a discussion group on the popular social networking site Facebook. *What's your deal?* invites members to participate in various discussion topics on gambling and gambling related issues. We ask members to post their thoughts and opinions on gambling, and encourage them to post topics of their concerns as well.

The group is open to all Facebook members and will hopefully facilitate open and honest communication about gambling between adolescents and adults.

## Three writing awards

Congratulations to Senior Researcher Dr. Alissa Sklar for winning three separate gold awards for her writing at the 2009 Parenting Publications of America Editorial and Design Competition in February. The Association represents publications from across the United States, Canada and Australia, and the judging is handled by the prestigious University of Missouri Journalism Department. Dr. Sklar's winning articles included such diverse topics as non-suicidal self-injury, gardening with kids, and negotiating the hectic mornings of families with school-aged children. All three of these articles were published by Montreal Families Magazine.

## Two weddings

We are pleased to announce two weddings at our Centre in the past few months. Our co-director, Dr. Rina Gupta, wed her husband, Richard Louie, in a beautiful beach ceremony in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic on January 17th, 2009.



Research coordinator Amy Taylor wed Jonathan Morton on January 10th, 2009 at the Shaare Zion Congregation in Côte Saint-Luc, Québec.



We wish both couples many years of health and happiness together! ♦

## Upcoming Events

- **Responsible Gambling Council Discovery 2009 Conference**  
April 19 - 22, 2009 - Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada
- **Western Regional Problem Gambling Awareness Conference**  
May 1 - 2, 2009 - Vancouver, Washington, USA
- **2009 Massachusetts Conference on Gambling Problems**  
May 12, 2009 - Worcester, Massachusetts, USA
- **Nordic Conference on Problem Gambling, Treatment and Prevention**  
May 18 - 20, 2009 - Helsinki, Finland
- **14th International Conference on Gambling and Risk Taking**  
May 25 - 29, 2009 - Stateline, Nevada, USA
- **2009 Annual Conference North American Gambling Regulators Association**  
June 2 - 5, 2009 - Washington, D.C., USA
- **23rd National Conference on Problem Gambling Prevention, Treatment, Responsible Gaming, Research and Recovery**  
June 25 - 27, 2009 - Indianapolis, Indiana, USA
- **Gambling and Addictions Symposium 2009**  
September 3 - 4, 2009 - Montréal, Quebec, Canada
- **Gambling, Gender and Society International Research Conference**  
September 24, 2009 - Helsinki, Finland

## YGI Newsletter

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