President’s Message: Looking Ahead

Irving Berlin, one of America’s most prodigious and famous songwriters, once said, “The toughest thing about success is that you’ve got to keep on being a success.” As NCPG looks ahead to 2007, we gladly shoulder the weight of our past successes and have already put in place a process to ensure NCPG’s continued success in 2007.

The process began last fall when NCPG Affiliates, Board members and NCPG Committees were asked to suggest goals and objectives for 2007. NCPG staff collated and summarized the suggestions and prepared a report on the progress achieved towards the 2006 NCPG goals. Then, in late October, the NCPG Executive Committee held a weekend meeting to write the 2007 NCPG goals, develop measurable objectives, estimate costs and develop a draft budget. During November and December, their draft document was further refined, as goal objectives were clarified and the proposed budget was further refined to accommodate updated financial information and projections. As a result, today, we are most pleased to provide you a draft of NCPG’s 2007 Goals (see pg. 13), that will be submitted to the NCPG Board of Directors for ratification at the February Midwinter Board of Director’s Meeting in Washington, DC.

Another planning project that NCPG has recently undertaken is the 2007 NCPG Calendar. This calendar will provide all NCPG members access to important NCPG dates and deadlines (i.e. awards, dues, nominations, etc.). The current draft of this calendar is found on page 14 of this newsletter and will also be regularly updated on the NCPG website.

As you review the 2007 NCPG Calendar, please note how NCPG will again host a Congressional Forum on Problem Gambling, to be held in conjunction with the NCPG Midwinter Board of Director’s Meeting in Washington, DC (February 9–10). Due to the success following last year’s first-ever Congressional Forum on Problem Gambling, the 2007 Forum will offer members of Congress an opportunity to increase their awareness and understanding of problem gambling issues. The 2007 Forum will also serve as the “kick off” event for a coordinated campaign to secure sponsors for the Comprehensive Public Awareness of Problem Gambling Act of 2007, which will provide $71 million over five years in grants for prevention, public awareness and treatment. If you are unable to attend the 2007 Forum and meet with your Congressional representatives in person, I would strongly encourage you to reach out to your Congressional representatives, asking their support of this important legislation.

Also in February 2007, the NCPG will formally present the 2007–2014 NCPG Strategic Plan at the Midwinter Board of Director’s meeting. The plan to be presented at that meeting (and available to all members and friends to download from the NCPG website on February 10, 2007) is the result of a process that NCPG began in 2004. In conjunction with Ruotolo Associates, the NCPG Strategic

Executive Director’s Letter: Advocacy and Action

The National Council was founded, and works best, as the national advocate for problem gamblers and their families. While there are many ways in which we fulfill this mission, I’d like to provide our members with a highlight of our efforts with two major groups: Federal government and industry associations.

Our efforts on the Federal level fall into two distinct but related avenues. The first is developing relationships with in the Federal health agency infrastructure. For example, we recently met with Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Acting Administrator Broderick and Dr. Westley Clark, Director of the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) to discuss the role of SAMHSA relative to problem gambling. Executive Committee member (and Association of Problem Gambling Service Administrators President) Tim Christensen was able to come in from Arizona to attend.

We reviewed SAMHSA’s involvement in problem gambling issues to date, including the development of the white paper on SSA roles in problem gambling in December of 2004, CSAT’s ongoing support of the Midwest Conference on problem gambling issues (which is combining with the NCPG national conference in June 2007), and the designation of Prairie Lands Addiction Technology Transfer Center as the lead on problem gambling issues. While we still have a ways to go before SAMHSA will become very active on...
Planning Committee dedicated many hours on this plan, which helps the NCPG look towards future successes in 2007–2014.

In March 2007, NCPG will host the 5th Annual Problem Gambling Awareness Week (March 5–11). The National Problem Gambling Awareness Week website (www.npgaw.org) has links to FREE downloads of over 50 posters, flyers, fact sheets and screening tools.

In June 2007, the NCPG Annual Membership and Board of Directors Meetings will be held at the Downtown Marriott in Kansas City, MO (June 7th), which will be immediately followed by the 21st NCPG Annual Conference on Problem Gambling Prevention, Treatment, Research and Recovery (June 8–10). Because this year’s annual conference is being held in conjunction with the annual conference of the North American Gaming Regulators Association (June 10–13) joint events and member discounts have been planned. Be sure to check the NCPG website for updated information on the conference.

Finally, as many of you are well aware, September 13, 2007 marks the 50th Anniversary of the founding of Gamblers Anonymous (GA). From a chance meeting of two men who shared a history of misery due to an obsession to gamble, grew regular meetings of an organization that held its first group meeting on Friday, September 13, 1957 in Los Angeles, CA. Since that time, the fellowship has grown steadily and groups are flourishing throughout the world.

Irvin Berlin was right about the difficulties of success. NCPG stands on the successful shoulders of the women and men of GA and we acknowledge and appreciate the tremendous impact their fellowship has had on the health and recovery of tens of thousands of gamblers. As NCPG looks forward in 2007, we invite you to continue to invite your support and efforts on behalf of problem gamblers and their families.

Sincerely,

Dennis P. McNeilly, SJ, PsyD

NCPG Executive Director Keith Whyte and Illinois Council on Problem Gambling (ICPG) Executive Director Alex Roseborough recently staffed a booth at the annual conference and tradeshow of the North American State and Provincial Lottery Association (NASPL) in Chicago, IL. NCPG Board members Don Feeney, Connie Jones and Alan Yandow stopped by as well.

Michelle Carnici from the World Lottery Association (WLA) presented their new Corporate Social Responsibility Standards at the meeting. WLA members “commit their vigilance in making responsible gaming an integral part of their daily operations, including activities involving employees, patrons, retailers and other stakeholders. This pledge of support includes the encouragement of research initiatives and striving to achieve an appropriate balance between revenue, entertainment and customer expectations.”

WLA is launching an ambitious plan to translate these principles into measurable and verifiable performance. Goto: http://www.world-lotteries.org/documents/WLAgamingprinciples_0206.pdf for more information. While many U.S. lotteries are not WLA members, and therefore not bound by these policies, we hope these principles will quickly become the responsible gaming standard for lotteries worldwide.

For the first time, two responsible gaming ads received Batchy Awards for outstanding advertising and business communication achievement. The Vermont Lottery received the Best TV Campaign Under $10,000 for the photo ad. This ad was donated to NCPG for our use and forms the basis of our TV PSA campaign during Problem Gambling Awareness Week.

The Massachusetts Lottery won a Batchy for Lose, the responsible gaming ad developed in conjunction with the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling.

Finally, during their business meeting at the conference, the NASPL Board of Directors voted to support this year’s National Problem Gambling Awareness Week. As a part of the motion, it was decided that NASPL would undertake four initiatives: 1) provide a reference to the week and a link to the official site of the Problem Gambling Awareness Week on the NASPL website; 2) feature a series of articles in Lottery Insights (the official NASPL magazine) focusing on the importance of not only playing responsibly, but also the importance of implementing a coordinated responsible gaming program throughout North America. NCPG will also be invited to contribute an article; 3) ask every lottery to consider airing spots that support responsible gaming during NPGAW, and urge every lottery to contact and work with the local/state problem gambling councils in your jurisdiction; and 4) utilize NPGAW posters and brochures.
By Keith Whyte, Executive Director

Periodically, I'll review new or interesting books on gambling issues. Of course, these reviews represent only my personal opinion, not official NCPG policy (see endnote). This issue I looked at three publications. They were decidedly a mixed bag.

**Roll the Bones: The History of Gambling**
by David Schwartz

I found “Roll the Bones” to be an extremely rewarding and important work. I am astounded at the depth of the research Schwartz has been able to pack into this book, but due to his fluid writing style it never gets bogged down in dry factoids. I believe that even those who have been in the field for many years will find numerous instances where they will exclaim to themselves “I never knew that…” as they read through the book. This volume is essential for anyone interested in learning about the broader context of gambling. It brings together the vast scope of this issue, including a great deal of information from around the world, and places it within a comprehensive yet easily digestible context. I am pleased to announce it is NCPG’s Book of the Year, given to all major NCPG donors. I would also recommend “Cutting the Wire” by the same author, which traces the past 200 years of anti-gambling legislation in the U.S. and examines the influences behind the passage of the Wire Act in 1961. For anyone who wants to understand the roots of the recent Congressional legislation on internet gambling, and the legal and policy confusion that still surrounds the issue today, this book provides an essential foundation.

**Compulsive Gambling: More Than Dreidle**
by Abraham Twerski

Arnie Wexler recommended “Compulsive Gambling: More Than Dreidle” to me, and I found it a fascinating discussion of gambling problems from a unique perspective. Dr. Twerski’s viewpoint is influenced by his experience as a rabbi, his training as a psychiatrist, and his strong endorsement of 12-step support groups. In fact, he states “I believe that recovery from any addiction requires a support group. Psychotherapy with a therapist familiar with the 12-step anonymous fellowship can be a valuable adjunct, but without a support group, I feel that therapy alone is inadequate.” This slim volume is loaded with stories, case studies, examples and advice, and is written for the layperson in an accessible, almost conversational tone. While the stories of addiction, loss, despair and recovery among gamblers and their loved ones will be familiar to many in the field, the additional discussion of the spiritual impacts and implications in the Jewish community is very enlightening.

**Gambling: Behavior, Theory, Research and Application**
by Ghezzi, Lyons, Dixon & Wilson

Finally, I reviewed “Gambling: Behavior Theory, Research and Application,” a book that uses the discipline of behavior analysis to examine gambling. The 12 chapters are divided into sections on theory, research and application with uneven results. I found several articles, in particular the *Near Miss Effect* by Ghezzi, Wilson & Porter, and *Rules Gamblers Play By—And Shouldn’t* by Wood and Clapham both interesting and fresh. Several others, including works on pathways, theories and CBT, were well written and informative but broke little new ground. Two articles focused on methodological issues and difficulties with gambling research seemed to me of limited general interest. The remainder I found even less helpful. For instance, chapter 6 contains almost 30 pages of line by line instructions and computer code for writing a slot machine simulation program on your PC. And maybe its my lack of training in behavioral analysis, but I found An *Applied Theoretical Cultural Analysis of Legalized Gambling in the United States* almost unintelligible. Sentences such as “This relatively new evolution is but one of a growing mosaic of damaging U.S. evolutions, each one capable of adding its own incremental quantum of social entropy to our chronically stressed socioculture.” were difficult to plow through. Overall, behavior analysis may be useful perspective for the study of gambling, but I found the quality and applicability of articles in this volume varied greatly.

An important note to readers: a review is an extremely subjective reaction to a book, greatly influenced by the reviewers own personal background, training and outlook. So, a little bit about my background: I’ve been involved in gaming and problem gambling issues for more than 10 years, and have over 14 years of public policy experience, that includes civil rights, human rights, healthcare, and immigration issues. I graduated from Hampden-Sydney College with a BA in History, a concentration in Asian Studies and a Certificate in International Relations. I also studied at Leiden University, the Netherlands.

The opinions expressed in this review are my own and do not represent the views of NCPG or its Board of Directors, nor are an express or implied endorsement of the book or its contents.

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**New Regulations for British Gambling Industry**

The British Gambling Commission launched its new conditions and codes in November 2006, which all operators in the gambling industry must follow if they want to run a gambling business in Britain next year. Set up in October 2005, the Commission’s remit is to regulate the gambling industry in the public interest.

The new regulations will be summed up in license conditions and codes for the industry, and for the first time the betting and remote gambling sectors will come under the regulator’s power. The Commission has powers to prosecute operators who fail to maintain standards and can impose unlimited fines on operators that breach their license conditions. For further information goto: www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk.
this issue, the discussion did lead to at least three positive outcomes: 1) Commitment for CSAT to print and make available the Problem Gambling Toolkit for Substance Abuse Professionals through the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI); 2) commitment to explore including information on National Problem Gambling Awareness Week (NPGAW) and problem gambling issues within SAMHSA’s Recovery Month material; and 3) a commitment to discuss with the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP), a possible role in coordinating or developing “practice guidelines” relative to gambling questions placed within youth risk/behavior surveys in the states.

Educating members of Congress about problem gambling and providing expert advice on this issue is our other major Federal priority. Our last major Federal advocacy effort was in the late 1990’s during the National Gambling Impact Study Commission (NGISC). As Paul Ashe notes in his Pioneers in the Field interview (see pg. 7), the NGISC ultimately adopted 34 of the 36 recommendations that were developed by the NCPG.

This year, we turned a new corner in our legislative efforts with the introduction of HR 6009, the Comprehensive Public Awareness of Problem Gambling Act. Developed by Representative Marty Meehan (D-MA), HR 6009 would provide (over five years) a total of $71 million in funding: $50 million for prevention and treatment, $20 million for research, and $1 million for public awareness programs. The funds would primarily be distributed via grants to state agencies and nonprofits. We worked closely with Meehan’s staff to draft the bill, and launched an effort to mobilize our members to build support for the bill. The initial results of this grassroots campaign were promising. Members were provided with templates, fact sheets and directions on how to identify and contact their representatives, and as a result seven additional co-sponsors were secured. As Dr. McNeilly mentions in his column, the bill will be reintroduced in February 2007, just before Problem Gambling Awareness Week.

We are organizing our annual Congressional Forum to educate Congressional staff and bring Board members to Washington so that they may visit their representatives. While we believe that the campaign to pass this bill will take several years, we also believe that it is one of the most important and potentially significant goals for the NCPG and for the problem gambling field.

The second major area of advocacy is our work with gaming industry trade associations. We reach out to these national groups to promote responsible gaming and encourage them to adopt policies that will raise standards for their members and their segment of the industry. For example, in October, the NCPG exhibited at the North American State and Provincial Lottery Association (NASPL) Conference in Chicago (pg. 2). The cost of the booth space is donated by NASPL each year, which allows us to attend and provides a significant opportunity to publicize our concerns about problem gambling as well as encouraging lotteries to develop responsible gaming solutions. Our booth provides an important symbolic presence, as well as an opportunity for industry executives and vendors to relate to problem gambling advocates on a personal level. The conference also provides good networking and membership opportunities, especially since many vendors are present. Our display map of the states, with Affiliate states prominently highlighted, provides an opportunity to refer attendees to their local resources. The conference also provides insight into current and future lottery products. Advocates and counselors must maintain familiarity with the industry sales and strategy in order to gauge the potential negative impacts and provide accurate information and education to clients.

In addition, during their business meeting at the conference, the NASPL Board of Directors voted to support this year’s National Problem Gambling Awareness Week. As a part of the motion, it was decided that NASPL would undertake four initiatives: 1) provide a reference to the week and a link to the official site of the Problem Gambling Awareness Week on the NASPL website; 2) feature a series of articles in Lottery Insights (the official NASPL magazine) focusing on the importance of not only playing responsibly, but also the importance of implementing a coordinated responsible gaming program throughout North America. NCPG will also be invited to contribute an article; 3) ask every lottery to consider airing spots that support responsible gaming during NPGAW, and urge every lottery to contact and work with the local/state problem gambling councils in your jurisdiction; and 4) utilize NPGAW posters and brochures. Our thanks to President Gerry Aubin and to Responsible Committee Chair (and NCPG Board member) Alan Yandow. Board member Don Fee- ney has been deeply involved in these issues as well, including serving on the WLA Corporate Social Responsibility Committee.

I would like to challenge the other industry associations—American Gaming Association (commercial casinos), National Indian Gaming Association (tribal gaming), National Thoroughbred Racing Association (parimutuels), North American Association of Fundraising Ticket Manufacturers (charitable gaming) here in the U.S., and industry groups abroad such as Interactive Gaming Council, e-Commerce, Gaming and Regulatory Association, Responsible Gaming Association and World Lottery Association to adopt similar resolutions and work with us to support the week. We are in discussion with a number of these and other organizations, such as the North American Gaming Regulators Association.

We hope that our advocacy efforts will benefit the entire field, and as always we welcome your support and suggestions as we move forward into a new year.

Happy Holidays!
Keith Whyte

National Newsletter Submissions
NCPG encourages submissions for the newsletter from their members. Min. Words: 150/Max. Words: 1,000. All requests must be submitted by February 16, 2007 for the next issue.

Send your submission to melissam@ncpgambling.org or via mail to: NCPG, Attn: Melissa Martin, 216 G Street, NE, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20002.

Questions? Contact Melissa at 202-547-9204 or melissam@ncpgambling.org.
For the man in the pinstriped suit, staring at the judge, staring at the clock, the next 106 minutes will determine the next four years. He is thin, a marathoner, with a short bowl haircut and a long nose. This morning, he said goodbye to his two children, bear-hugging them, just in case. Paul Theodore Del Vacchio, now 41, is a gambler. In Riverside County Superior Court, a psychologist testifies that Del Vacchio fed his impulse-control disorder with online wagering, not caring about the win or loss, just the high of the bet. This is why he stole half a million dollars from his employer, an Indian casino, Del Vacchio tells the judge. It was a compulsion. He needed to cover his losses.

His wife, Monica, 39, adds her own plea: “He has earned my love and my trust and my support.” Judge James T. Warren considers whether the defendant before him is an honorable man whose addiction made him stumble, or a schemer and crook. The judge’s face reveals nothing.

It started with $125. Del Vacchio blew it betting on five pro basketball games and quickly won it back. He was 16, working the cash register for $6.50 an hour at a grocery store in Carteret, N.J., a suburb of New York City. His first bookie was a store manager. At 18, he and a buddy were placing bets over the phone using code names such as Oscar or Dino. His mother wasn’t suspicious; Paul was an unassuming kid, preoccupied with sports, and so polite that his eighth-grade class named him most courteous.

But the boys were losing—big. When they tore through $13,400 in a week, their bookie—a short, robust man who changed the oil in Del Vacchio’s mother’s car—demanded they pay up. “I said, ‘What’s wrong with you, taking money from a kid?’” recalled Del Vacchio’s dad, a retired fire captain who shares the name and used to bet on football games and at casinos in Atlantic City, N.J. He helped his son wriggle out of paying. Del Vacchio’s parents, who have since divorced, steered him to Gamblers Anonymous. A member called, and the conversation with the gruff-sounding man terrified Del Vacchio. “He told me to never gamble again; he told me I’d only get worse,” Del Vacchio said in an interview this spring. “I didn’t realize how bad I was.” Del Vacchio fell back into gambling in bursts and in secret, almost always on sporting events. He began wagering online, even after the Del Vacchios moved to California in 2001, when he was hired as the controller at Pechanga Resort & Casino. At the tribal venture in Temecula, whose giant gambling floor clangs with slot machines, Del Vacchio supervised daily financial operations and some auditing. He told his dad that, someday, he wanted to run a sports book, where people bet on games.

The couple and their two children—Lauren, now 8, and Jonathan, 5—settled into a 2,700-square-foot stucco home, humbly furnished and tucked into a Murrieta subdivision whose streets are named after pines and palmetto trees. “They had two blond kids, girl and boy, house that should have had a white picket fence—their life was like a TV commercial,” said Monica’s younger sister, Jennifer Dolan, a social worker in Brick, N.J.

Except that Del Vacchio was $100,000 in the hole. Del Vacchio discovered a dodge. In March 2003, he was adjusting a customer’s account for a refund, and the computer asked him for a credit card number. He punched in his own, which transferred money from the casino’s reserve funds to his personal account instead of the customer’s. During the next two years, he pocketed between $6,000 and $24,000 a month, spreading the deposits among several credit cards. The total: $499,740.88.

He was as regimented in gambling as he was in training for a marathon. He’d arrive in his windowless, boxy office on Pechanga’s second floor about 8:15 a.m. and scan websites that tracked opening lines on sports events. Between 2 and 3 p.m., he’d wager on his office computer—at least six games, though that could shoot to 25 during basketball season.

At home, Del Vacchio balanced the checkbook and paid the bills. Monica tossed out without much thought the junk mail that advertised online betting sites. His last illicit deposit—the 494th—was Feb. 25, 2005. The next day, the dry cleaner rejected Monica’s ATM card. Wells Fargo Bank had red-flagged Del Vacchio’s account after the fraud department noticed that Pechanga funds had been transferred into it. Something smells, a bank official told casino managers, passing on the dates and amounts of questionable transactions. Casino officials compared the list with their records and—finding card numbers and transaction amounts changed in customer files—fired Del Vacchio.

He scribbled a four-page statement steeped in regret: “I am not sure if I will be able to look my family in the eyes. I have a disease and I need help.” He hadn’t placed a bet in days, but only because his bank cards were frozen. He trudged home to something much thornier: telling Monica. He took her to lunch at a TGI Friday’s in Temecula. Monica’s brother-in-law had often teased Del Vacchio that he must be embezzling money to afford their nice things, so Del Vacchio
Del Vacchio’s probation officer appeared to teeter in a report he filed in January, writing that he had leaned toward restitution alone but would recommend prison: Del Vacchio had ignored and concealed his gambling addiction for far too long.

Del Vacchio poured his thoughts into a blog, which he named Compulsive Gambler in Recovery. He interviewed for a job at a gambling help center in Las Vegas. If he was offered it, he wondered, could he take it? It would depend whether he was behind bars.

The kids noticed Dad wasn’t going to work, but they didn’t know he was headed to court. He’d drive them to school in sweats and dash home to don a suit before hearings. A month before his spring sentencing hearing, he struggled to tell them what would happen. He didn’t know. “My son was disinterested from the start; he is five years old and if it doesn’t have to do with superheroes or trucks he wants no part of it,” Del Vacchio wrote on his blog. “My daughter on the other hand was very different.” She asked questions: Do you get a bunk bed in prison? Do you get a roommate? Is it like a college dorm? Lauren wanted to know whether her dad would still take her trick-or-treating on Halloween. He was supposed to dress as Willy Wonka.

At the sentencing hearing, it takes four benches to seat Del Vacchio’s supporters. The psychologist, from a San Diego gambling-addiction center, asserts that Del Vacchio would not get the counseling he needs in prison. Her comments are stricken from the record at the prosecutor’s request. Smith, his sponsor, asks the judge for lenience, as do Del Vacchio’s mother and Monica.

Harton reiterates: “It’s a closely watched case. Everybody is going to find out what the sentence was, and it should send a message: If you run amok in a high-level position and steal half a million dollars, even if you try to fit into some mental category, you’re ... going to state prison.”

Del Vacchio tells the judge in an even tone that he is so, so sorry. Monica’s mother drapes her left arm around her daughter, whose ears have reddened and who covers her mouth in a near-gasp. The clock creeps forward 90 minutes. Del Vacchio, wedged between Pozza and the prosecutor, folds his hands. Only the air conditioner’s hum interrupts the silence—until Judge Warren speaks, foreshadowing the sentence he will hand down months later.

“There are a lot of people addicted to gambling who don’t steal anything. They get themselves in debt, sure. They may lose everything. They may lose their family. They may lose their house. They may lose their cars, but they don’t steal....

“We can’t let everybody who comes in here and wants to use an addiction, whether it be compulsive gambling, whether it be compulsive drinking, whether it be drug addiction, we can’t as a society let them utilize that as a method of getting out of their wrong acts. You know, it’s like my saying I’m addicted to beautiful women and fast cars, so I get to steal from the court’s trust account....

“He’s here because he’s a thief. He’s a thief. That’s the bottom line. He’s a thief. And he needs to acknowledge that, not use the gambling as a crutch. He let down his family. He let down his friends. He let down his employer. He let himself down. But the bottom line is he’s a thief, and he needs to be punished for being a thief.”

Four years.

Reprinted from Los Angeles Times, Page A1, November 1, 2006
Pioneers in the Field
Paul Ashe, J.D.

Each issue of the NCPG National News will feature an interview by Executive Director Keith Whyte with a pioneer in the problem gambling field. We hope these profiles will help capture the extraordinary depth of knowledge, compassion and volunteerism that characterizes those involved with the National Council on Problem Gambling. It is also important to reflect on our past and assess current activities in light of our history in order to best fulfill our mission as the national advocates for programs and services to assist problem gamblers and their families.

Paul is President and Co-Founder of the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling (FCCG), and former President of the National Council on Problem Gambling. He is an Attorney and Certified Public Accountant who has authored many articles on compulsive gambling and has served as a guest lecturer and expert witness in the media and court cases. Finally, he is the recipient of the NCPG’s Goldman Award in 2002 for lifetime achievement in the field.

Q: How did you get involved in problem gambling?
A: In the late 1970’s, I was involved in investment banking and law practice. The vice chair of the company committed suicide because of gambling losses. Bob Wagner was an associate of mine, and he was also one of the original sponsors of NCPG in 1972. Since I had personal experience with gambling, and the adverse consequences, he and I both got involved helping gamblers. During my early involvement I met Monsignor Dunne who has been a mentor to me over the past 20 years.

Q: How did you get involved with the National Council?
A: I joined NCPG in 1985 because I recognized there was a big need for services but there was little assistance available at the time. With the advent of the Florida Lottery I worked with Bob Wagner and Dr. Alida Glenn to found the Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling in 1988. Dr. Glenn had retired from the Brecksville V.A. by that time and was living and working in the V.A. Hospital in St. Petersburg, FL. I became Chair of Affiliate Committee in 1989 and was elected President in 1992. I served for eight years and was elected to an At-Large seat on the NCPG Board in 2000.

Q: How has the problem gambling field developed since you started?
A: Very slowly, but with the expansion of gambling I think the states and regulators have seen the need to address the problem gambling issue. One of the impediments to growth has been lack of sufficient funding. People can’t dedicate their career and work to a field that isn’t funded.

Q: What are some highlights of the last 10 years?
A: I think the biggest highlight was the participation of NCPG in the National Gambling Impact Study Commission. The NGISC ultimately adopted 34 of our 36 recommendations on problem gambling in their final report. We devoted a lot of time and energy to testifying and developing this information. Another significant positive change has been the development of state Affiliate chapters. When I became President there were eight Affiliates, and when I left there were 35. As gambling expanded nationwide in the 1990’s, we were able to offer affiliation to other states to build the nationwide network. We dedicated time to help establish councils, no matter how small the group or distant the state. But we also learned that there is only so much that we can do to help; the grassroots and local partners must have the dedication and energy to follow through.

Q: Where do you see the problem gambling field going?
A: I think it is just a matter of time before all states and the industry recognize the need for additional education, awareness and treatment funding. Although it is my belief that the industry doesn’t cause the problem, they do furnish the tools and opportunity for people to become addicted. It is good business and the right thing for them to do, to assist those in need. We also definitely need comparable help to what the states provide for drug and alcohol problems. I hope that it doesn’t take a legal or class action suit like in the tobacco industry before states and gaming companies realize that significant steps are necessary.

Q: Speaking of the legal issue, do you ever see NCPG as a party or plaintiff to such a suit?
A: No, but we should at least submit an amicus curiae (a friend of the Court) brief since we have a wealth of experts and information to make available. I see our more likely role in Federal and state legislation to fund services, such as Comprehensive Public Awareness of Problem Gambling Act in the last Congress that would have provided $71 million in grants over five years. I hope the states and gaming industry get their act together so that it doesn’t come down to litigation.

Adapted from the A&E Behind the Actors Studio Bernard Pivot questionnaire:

What is your favorite word? Positive
What is your least favorite word? Negative
What sound do you love? Contemporary music
What sound do you hate? Busy signal
What profession other than yours would you like to attempt? Athlete
What profession would you not like to participate in? Mortician
In each issue of the National News the National Council on Problem Gambling will provide an overview of the calls placed to the National Problem Gambling Helpline Network (800-522-4700) for the previous months along with a summary of the total calls received year to date.

The National Problem Gambling Helpline Network is a single nationwide point of access network comprised of 27 call centers, with several centers answering calls for multiple states. Each call center is staffed with professionals who are fully trained to deal with problem gambling calls including those in crisis situations.

Since January 2006, the National Helpline has received over 221,500 calls. The month of July still demonstrated the highest call volume

with more than 24,000 calls placed to the National Helpline; a 29 percent increase from July 2005. Overall there was also a 9 percent increase in calls volume from January through December 2006 in comparison to last year. In contrast with 2005, this quarter showed a 4 percent decrease in call volume.

The National Problem Gambling Helpline Network is a 24/7, 100% confidential resource that provides hope and help to problem gamblers and their loved ones. The helpline number (800-522-4700) can be dialed toll free anytime and anywhere in the United States as well as from various parts of Canada and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

We recently reviewed National Problem Gambling Helpline (800-522-4700) statistics, and between January 2000 and August 2006 we received 1.1 million calls! Calls grew nearly 100 percent between 2000 and 2005. We reached the one million call mark around the last week of March 2006. Based on this volume and historical trends, we project that the 2006 total alone will be 250,000 calls, for a January 2000–December 2006 grand total of 1.2 million. This year to date, just over 20,000 people call the Helpline number per month. Of course, every call is not a crisis call, and we hope to work with our partners at the local and state level to collect better data and reduce the number of misdialed or inappropriate calls. But we can take pride that more than a million people saw and dialed the number, which suggests that it is widely available throughout the U.S.

Calling all Knitters!

If you knit or crochet and would like to gather at the next NCPG conference in June 2007, email Denise Quirk at dquirkpgcreno@sbcglobal.net and let’s plan a networking gathering place in the hotel. We may even do a service project! Remember to bring wool to Kansas City and we’ll do some wool-gathering!
Update on FY 2006 NIH Gambling Research Grants

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)’s Dr. Jim Breiling recently posted a review of NIH funding of gambling research in the Federal 2006 fiscal year on the Gambling Issues International list. We wanted to reprint it here for our members who may not subscribe to the list.

“Components of the NIH initiated grant support for three research projects with a focus on or inclusion of a concern with problem and pathological gambling in the Federal 2006 fiscal year (October 1, 2005 thru September 30, 2006). This is a remarkable success rate given the meager number of grant applications submitted to NIH with a concern for gambling and the truly fierce competition for NIH awards that arises from the substantial increase in the total number of grant applications from the declining pool of dollars for grant awards.

The blurbs on the three Fiscal Year 2006 grants from NIH’s CRISP (available for all to use to search for funded research at http://crisp.cit.nih.gov/) are pasted below. The first two awards are focused on problem and pathological gambling and were funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). The third, funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), includes problem and pathological gambling as part of the project’s consideration of behavioral addictions.

Gambling investigators who are thinking about submitting a grant application for a NIH research award should discuss their research idea with NIH program staff and submit only if a program staff person determines that the proposal is within the domain of the institute for which (s)he works AND would be considered seriously if the application receives a high rating of merit in the scientific review process. Faced with an ever tighter financial situation, NIH institutes such as the NIMH are focusing funding on institute priorities, e.g., definitely see and seriously consider the NIMH articulation: http://www.nimh.nih.gov/strategic/strategicplanmenu.cfm.”

Grant Number: 1K23DA019522-01A1 was awarded to Dr. Tim Fong to study Impulsivity In Pathological Gambling. The goal of this project is to clarify which components of impulsivity are associated with pathological gambling. Non-treatment seeking, pathological gamblers and controls will be recruited from the community. Each participant will be administered a battery of tests that represent different operational definitions of impulsivity. Personality traits of impulsivity will be performed with the Barratt Impulsiveness Scale and the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire. Behavioral components of impulsivity will be tested through delay and probability discounting tasks. Finally, sensorimotor gating as measured through pre-pulse inhibition of acoustic startle will serve as a putative neurophysiological measure of impulsivity. Between-group comparisons on this battery of impulsivity tests will be made to clarify which components of impulsivity are associated with pathological gambling. Secondly, within-group analyses will be performed to correlate impulsivity to gambling severity. Lastly, an exploratory analysis of sub typing pathological gamblers by performances on tasks of impulsivity and types of gambling will be conducted. Tim’s project will conclude in 2011.

Dr. Richard LaBrie of the Cambridge Health Alliance was awarded grant Number: 1R03DA019705-01A2 for an Assessment of a Problem Gambling Self-Change Toolkit. The proposed research seeks support to conduct an evaluation of a newly developed problem gambling self- assessment/self-change intervention titled “Your First Step to Change.” One-hundred eight participants will be randomly assigned to one of three groups (i.e., toolkit, guided toolkit, delayed intervention) and participants’ changes in beliefs, behaviors, and behavioral intentions will be assessed over a three-month follow-up. The project will end in August 2008.

Finally, Debi LaPlante at Cambridge Health Alliance received a two-year NIMH grant (1R03MH075760-01A2) for a Treatment Outcome Analysis for Behavioral Addictions. The research will generate a critical analysis and research matrix for treatment outcome research related to several behaviorally expressed addictions (i.e., pathological gambling, excessive sexual behavior, compulsive shopping, and compulsive exercise). The proposed study will perform this analysis by using well developed meta-analytic search strategies and best practice analysis strategies; this study also will use a comprehensive quantitative measure of strength of evidence.

Congratulations to Tim, Richard and Debi, we look forward to hearing more about your work at upcoming conferences!

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Iowa Center Helps with School Curriculum

Following a recent public awareness presentation at a local high school, Eastern Iowa Center for Problem Gambling, Inc., (EICPG) staff was asked to participate in that school district’s implementation of problem/compulsive gambling curriculum. This will align with the school’s current curriculum, which includes substance abuse, drug abuse, and compulsive spending.

While working with this school, the EICPG staff came to the realization that compulsive gambling is a very serious issue and that it needs to be addressed, discussed, and explored by the students in their school district. EICPG staff have developed an excellent rapport with the school district and are excited about the development of the curriculum. EICPG’s staff continues to be a source of experience and information when working with the district and on current issues and concerns relative to internet, sports betting and popular poker games.

Further curriculum status updates will be provided as the development process continues. The district is hopeful to have this curriculum completed for the 2008 school year.
About this section: In order to go beyond the statistics and provide a more personal and individual picture of this issue, this section features the stories of individuals who have been affected by problem gambling, including problem gamblers and their family members, friends, colleagues and employers, treatment providers, advocates, and any others.

The NCPG office has been contacted by two very different individuals who raised the concept of using financial records as a means to minimize harm or prevent gambling problems. A proposal was introduced in Pennsylvania to require gambling operators to send monthly financial statements to every gambler. And a gambler and author in Texas recently released “Poker Planner Pro,” a money management tool. By providing detailed charts and graphs, this book shows poker players where they stand financially. “You can’t lie to yourself by tracking your results,” said Mike Tomas, President of P3 Enterprises. “You do not write multiple checks without balancing your checkbook, so the same should apply with playing poker. You should not play multiple sessions without balancing your poker bankroll. A large percentage of those players have no idea how much money they are actually spending over a selected period of time.” While the book is not designed specifically to prevent problem gambling, it may be that, as in the Pennsylvania proposal, providing accurate information may encourage responsible play, i.e., setting a limit and sticking to it. It is also possible that financial records could provide an early warning of a developing gambling problem.

It is important to note that financial records alone are not the sole solution or even a significant part of a comprehensive plan to address problem gambling. The concept raises a number of additional issues, including that tracking is done, by necessity, after the money is spent and the damage done, and thus can only hope to prevent future problems. Also, some have raised the concern that reminders of the amount lost gambling may prompt the problem gambler to keep chasing. Finally, self reports are only as reliable as the author, and maintaining accurate records is fraught with difficulty.

Original email December 2005:

My son, Ted, has a problem with internet gambling!!! About a year ago it started while he was away at college but we found out and got him into a Dr. to help him. After several meetings in Texas he told us that he wasn’t getting anything more out of

seeing this Dr. and he said that he was OK now. Everything was fine until about a month ago I caught him doing it again as he had overdrawn his bank account...had a good talk with him and thought that was that as he didn’t have a way to bet. He got his Mom’s credit card and done it again this week and we found out as it showed up on her account and now I know it is out of my hands and we need help. He lives at home and attends college and does OK but this problem needs professional help and I’m asking you to please put us in touch with someone here in Texas or surrounding towns. Any help would be great.

Update December 2006:

It has been nearly a year now that I wrote you for help...I just want to THANK you for all you did in making my son a new boy !!! He is doing real well and hasn’t had any problems in 10 months !!! Again THANKS and God bless you and wishing you & yours a very” Happy Holidays.”

P.S., Ted says “THANKS” for helping us with the first step in his recovery !!!!

Financial Records As Responsible Gaming Tools?

The NCPG office has been contacted by two very different individuals who raised the concept of using financial records as a means to minimize harm or prevent gambling problems. A proposal was introduced in Pennsylvania to require gambling operators to send monthly financial statements to every gambler. And a gambler and author in Texas recently released “Poker Planner Pro,” a money management tool. By providing detailed charts and graphs, this book shows poker players where they stand financially. “You can’t lie to yourself by tracking your results,” said Mike Tomas, President of P3 Enterprises. “You do not write multiple checks without balancing your checkbook, so the same should apply with playing poker. You should not play multiple sessions without balancing your poker bankroll. A large percentage of those players have no idea how much money they are actually spending over a selected period of time.” While the book is not designed specifically to prevent problem gambling, it may be that, as in the Pennsylvania proposal, providing accurate information may encourage responsible play, i.e., setting a limit and sticking to it. It is also possible that financial records could provide an early warning of a developing gambling problem.

Joint Membership: A Great Tool for Affiliates

How can you get Individual NCPG membership at less than half price? Join through your State Affiliate chapter. In 2003 we introduced the Joint Membership program in order to promote cooperation between NCPG and Affiliates, and to increase the value of membership to the individual, the Affiliate, and NCPG. Members of a state Affiliate will be able to become an Individual NCPG member—with all benefits—for more than 50 percent off the non-Affiliate rate. We hope this program will encourage more individuals in the field to join their state chapter—and through their Affiliate become a part of the National Council.

Standard NCPG Individual Membership is $75 per year. Included in this membership is a one year subscription to the NCPG Newsletter, membership certificate, bi-monthly subscription to Addiction Professional and discounts on literature and conferences. Affiliates are able to offer this membership at $35 per year, if purchased in conjunction with an Affiliate membership.

Individual memberships can still be purchased directly from NCPG at the standard rates. We understand that several Affiliates do not have individual memberships and are therefore unable to participate in the program.

Let applicants know that when joining your Affiliate as an individual member, they can add on $35 extra and become an Individual NCPG member as well. Not only do they save $40 on the membership outright, but the benefits they will are worth far more than $35.

Contact NCPG Administrative Assistant Melissa Martin with any questions concerning the Joint Membership program.
Membership / Supporter Form

The NCPG is the national advocate for programs and services to assist problem gamblers and their families

Name (Please Print Clearly or Type)

Company

Job Title

Address

City

State/Province

Zip/Postal

Phone

Fax

E-mail

Memberships

- Individual Member
  Includes full voting membership, the NCPG Newsletter, member certificate, bi-monthly subscription to Addiction Professional, discount on literature and conferences.
  
  ***Contact your local Affiliate for a discount on Individual Membership

- Individual Member Plus
  Includes all benefits of the Individual Member level, with the addition of a subscription to International Gambling Studies, a peer reviewed interdisciplinary journal in gambling studies.

- Corporate Member
  Includes full voting membership, NCPG Newsletter, membership plaque, Annual report. All employees are eligible for discounted member rate at National Conference.

  $75.00

  $100.00

  $5,000.00

Support Opportunities

- Supporter
  Receives NCPG Newsletter “National News” Only.

- Contributor
  Receives NCPG Newsletter, thanks in newsletter, framed certificate.

- Silver
  Receives NCPG Newsletter, thanks in newsletter, framed certificate, and Annual Report.

- Gold
  Receives all above as well as National Council’s “Book of the Year”.

- Platinum
  Receives all of above, with membership plaque.

  $25.00

  $250.00

  $500.00

  $1,000.00

  $2,500.00

  Total: __________

Today’s Date __________/________/________

Method of Payment: Circle one

Visa Master Card AMEX Check Money Order

Credit Card # ________________ Exp. Date ________________

Signature __________________________

NCPG is a non profit organization, Federal Tax ID # 51-0141872. Your contribution is tax deductible.

216 G Street NE, Suite 200 • Washington, DC 20002 • 202-547-9204 • 202-547-9206 Fax • ncpg@ncpgambling.org www.ncpgambling.org

Toll-Free Helpline (800) 522-4700 11
Present the

21st Annual Conference on Problem Gambling
Prevention, Treatment, Research and Recovery:
Improving Practice and Managing Consequences for Problem Gambling, Substance Abuse and Co-occurring Issues.

Corrected Date!!!

June 8-10, 2007
Kansas City Marriott Downtown
200 W. 12th Street
Kansas City, MO

Please check the Midwest Conference Web site (www.888betsoff.org/links/midwest_conference.shtm) or the NCPG Web site (www.ncpgambling.org) for all 2007 information.
Draft NCPG 2007 Goals

Core Purpose: To serve as the national advocate for programs and services to assist problem gamblers and their families.

Mission: To increase public awareness of pathological gambling, ensure the widespread availability of treatment for problem gamblers and their families, and to encourage research and programs for prevention and education.

1. Core Program Goal—To conduct the 2007 Annual Conference on Problem Gambling Prevention, Research, Treatment & Recovery.
   Objectives:
   A. To meet budgeted projections of $125,000 in net conference revenue. (July 2007)
   B. To increase the 2007 Annual Conference registration to 500 attendees. (July 2007)
   C. To conduct a feasibility study for NCPG support of regional gambling conferences, and to develop a policy to encourage regional conferences. (December 2007)

2. Core Program Goal—To conduct the 2007 National Problem Gambling Awareness Week, the national grassroots campaign to educate healthcare providers and raise public awareness about problem gambling.
   Objectives:
   A. To continue to seek financial support for NPGAW from a foundation. (March 2007)
   B. To increase to 10 sponsors and enlist the participation of 85 organizations across 40 states. (March 2007)
   C. To establish a comprehensive evaluation process of NPGAW in 2007 for the 2008 NPGAW. (December 2007)

3. Core Program Goal—To promote the National Helpline Number (800-522-4700) and Network, our single nationwide point of access to help for problem gambling.
   Objectives:
   A. To increase the number of data summaries collected from call centers on the Network to 20 call centers. (December 2007)
   B. To develop a white paper that weighs the advantages and disadvantages associated with a consolidation plan of the various toll free numbers into a single national number. (June 2007)

4. Core Program Goal—To increase public awareness of problem gambling by providing a comprehensive website that meets needs of consumers, counselors, media and the public, as well as distributing press releases of national interest.
   Objectives:
   A. To develop core informational templates for the NCPG website. (March 2007)
   B. To restructure those sections of the NCPG website made available to the public at large. (April 2007)
   C. To distribute a minimum of four press releases in 2007. (December 2007)

5. Program Goal—To administer the National Certified Gambling Counselor (NCGC) program.
   Objective:
   A. To conduct a review of the NCGC program and prepare recommendations for possible changes to the existing relationship between NCPG and the NCGC. (February 2007)

6. Program Goal—To gather the information on the problem gambling field nationally, through a survey of state problem gambling services.
   Objectives:
   A. To identify the parameters. (February 2007)
   B. To complete the data collection. (July 2007)
   C. To present a completed report to the public. (November 2007).

7. Program Goal—To improve management information systems to maximize efficiency and increase utility.
   Objectives:
   A. To integrate the association management programs of the NCPG central office onto the NCPG website (August 2007)
   B. To develop the capability to assign function codes to NCPG’s existing accounting system. (October 2007)

8. Program Goal—To advocate for Federal legislation to provide grants for prevention, treatment and research to increase capacity of state agencies and non-profit programs.
   Objectives:
   A. To continue to increase the number of in-person and written contacts made by the NCPG Central Office to members of Congress in 2007 for their support for new and existing federal problem gambling legislation (December 2007)
   B. To continue to identify and coordinate the number of in-person and written contacts made by the NCPG Affiliate Members to their members of Congress in 2007 for their support of new and existing federal problem gambling legislation.
   C. To participate in one Congressional hearing on new and existing federal problem gambling legislation.

9. Program Goal—To develop a national research agenda to guide Federal policymakers.
   Objective:
   A. To survey leading problem gambling researchers about the most prominent research needs in the problem gambling field, and to develop an agenda for NCPG to publish and promote. (August 2007)

10. Program Goal—To implement the Global Self-Exclusion Database to reduce barriers to self-exclusion for problem gamblers and minimize limitations of existing programs.
    Objective:
    A. To prepare a comprehensive legal review of the Global Self-Exclusion Database that will include suggestions to minimize NCPG’s liability under the program. (January 2007)
The data obtained in the National Comorbidity Survey – Replication from 10,000 respondents in the U.S. in the year 2000 on the current and lifetime occurrence of DSM disorders, including pathological gambling is at long last available for secondary analyses. The Interuniversity Consortium in Political and Social Research (ICPSR) has made the NCS-R dataset available at http://webapp.icpsr.umich.edu/cocoon/SAMHDA-STUDY/04438.xml. ICPSR will also provide training and support, including public use workshops and CIDI training, for researchers who wish to use this dataset. Go to http://www.hcp.med.harvard.edu/ncs/ncs_data.php for more information.

Save the Date!

13th Annual Conference
“Problem Gambling: A Community Problem”

Please join us as we explore the latest information on the dramatic increase of problem gambling in Florida communities and its subsequent impacts.

The conference will be held at the lovely Grosvenor Resort, a Walt Disney World Hotel on MAY 17TH & 18TH, 2007

More info coming soon or contact us at fccg@gamblinghelp.org

1-888-ADMIT IT
(1-888-236-4848)
Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling
Phase 1
January 11–12, 2007, 8:00-4:30pm
Please call Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling at 920-437-8888 for details.

Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc., in partnership with Broward Addiction Recovery Centers
Problem/Compulsive Gambling Training for Mental Health, Social Work, Addiction and Prevention Professionals
January 18, 2007, 8:00am–5:00pm
Location: Stephen R. Booher Bldg., 3275 NW 99th Way, Coral Springs, FL 33065
Please contact Mary Hutchinson at 407-865-6200 for details.

Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc., in partnership with Broward Addiction Recovery Centers
Problem/Compulsive Gambling Training for Mental Health, Social Work, Addiction and Prevention Professionals
January 19, 2007, 8:00am–5:00pm
Location: Stephen R. Booher Bldg., 3275 NW 99th Way, Coral Springs, FL 33065
Please contact Mary Hutchinson at 407-865-6200 for details.

Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc., in partnership with Springfield College
Problem/Compulsive Gambling Training for Mental Health, Social Work, Addiction and Prevention Professionals
February 5, 2007, 8:00am-5:00pm
Location: Springfield College, School of Human Services, 225 West Busch Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33611
Please contact Mary Hutchinson at 407-865-6200 for details.

Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc., in partnership with Broward Addiction Recovery Centers
Problem/Compulsive Gambling Training for Mental Health, Social Work, Addiction and Prevention Professionals
February 22, 2007, 8:00am–5:00pm
Location: Stephen R. Booher Bldg., 3275 NW 99th Way, Coral Springs, FL 33065
Please contact Mary Hutchinson at 407-865-6200 for details.

Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc., in partnership with Broward Addiction Recovery Centers
Problem/Compulsive Gambling Training for Mental Health, Social Work, Addiction and Prevention Professionals
February 23, 2007, 8:00am–5:00pm
Location: Stephen R. Booher Bldg., 3275 NW 99th Way, Coral Springs, FL 33065
Please contact Mary Hutchinson at 407-865-6200 for details.

Florida Council on Compulsive Gambling, Inc., in partnership with Springfield College
Problem/Compulsive Gambling Training for Mental Health, Social Work, Addiction and Prevention Professionals
February 6, 2007, 8:00am-5:00pm
Location: Springfield College, School of Human Services, 225 West Busch Boulevard, Tampa, FL 33611
Please contact Mary Hutchinson at 407-865-6200 for details.

To list your training schedule here, please send an e-mail to melissam@ncpgambling.org with complete details as far in advance as possible.
We’re Ready to Listen.

If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, give us a call.

The National Problem Gambling Helpline provides toll-free, confidential help 24 hours a day.

1-800-522-4700

www.npgaw.org

March 5–11, 2007

This is your week… if there’s something you want to see for 2007 TELL US!!! Any requests, suggestions or general feedback can be sent to npgaw@ncpgambling.org