

# Phactum

The Newsletter of the Philadelphia Association for Critical Thinking  
**January 2007**

editor: Ray Haupt

[www.phact.org](http://www.phact.org)

**The first PhACT lecture of 2007 will be on Saturday, January 20, at 2:00 PM, at Philadelphia Community College.** This meeting will have a quick recap by Eric Krieg, PhACT President, about failed legal efforts to shut down his skeptical web pages. But our main speaker is ACLU chapter board member, **Bill Ewing**, will speak on **Issues of Free Speech**.

Our constitution limits majority power with the bill of rights and 13th, 14th, 15th and 19th amendments. The American Civil Liberties Union is committed to preserving these rights, especially freedom of speech, freedom of the press, separation of church and state, equal protection under the law, right to due process and right to privacy. The ACLU was founded in 1920 is nonprofit and nonpartisan, has half a million members and handles around 6000 court cases yearly.

This lecture is free and open to the public. All are welcome. Bring a friend or better yet, bring two friends.



Your input to this newsletter is important and very much wanted. Original articles, letters, and book reviews are desired. We welcome criticism and suggestions for improving this newsletter and PhACT in general. Submitted items should have some general interest for Critical Thinkers but we certainly can relax that rule for member written poetry. We are not a political forum and therefore prefer not to get into factional party or sectarian debate, but we are not at all shy about presenting multiple points of view about more narrow issues such as Global Warming, malaria, Life on Mars, the Nature of God, and a Universe of other topics that might interest you and other Critical Thinkers. Later in this newsletter Dave Leiter urges all to read. I urge all to write. Send your thoughts, including denunciation of the editor, by e-mail: [phactpublicity@aol.com](mailto:phactpublicity@aol.com).

## The PhACT Council

Eric Krieg, President  
Bob Glickman, Secretary  
Ray Haupt, Treasurer  
Dr. David Cattell  
Dr. David Cragin  
Greg Lester  
Tom Napier  
Harry Rothwell  
Becky Strickland

*Phactum* is, in theory, printed 6 times a year and is the main propaganda organ for the Philadelphia Association for Critical Thinking.

If you are not a subscriber we invite you to become one by sending \$15 for a one year membership to PhACT, \$10 for students.

Send letters of rebuttal, ideas, short essays, poetry, opinion pieces, complaints, and lavish praise to Ray Haupt, Phactum editor, at [phactpublicity@aol.com](mailto:phactpublicity@aol.com).

# PHACT CALENDAR

**Saturday, January 20, 2007** - The Physics Department of Community College of Philadelphia will host a meeting of PhACT - at 2:00 PM, Community College of Philadelphia, 17th and Spring Garden Streets, West Building Room W2-48. American Civil Liberties Union chapter board member **Bill Ewing** will speak on **Issues of Free Speech**. Mr. Ewing is an attorney at Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott, LLC, a national law firm.

**Saturday, February 17, 2007** - Princeton University Professor Tom Delworth, a geophysicist, will speak on **Global Warming**.

**Saturday, March 17, 2007:** Dr. Paul A. Offit will discuss **Vaccine Safety: Science, Politics and the Media**. Dr. Offit is Chief, Division of Infectious Diseases, The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Professor of Pediatrics, Maurice R. Hilleman Professor of Vaccinology, The University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. Dr. Offit is an internationally known speaker. He recent wrote the book: "The Cutter Incident"

Free courses sponsored by **The Wagner Free Institute of Science**.

**Saturday, January 27, 2007**, beginning at 10:15 AM. **Earth & Life Through Time: Historical Geology**, Professor William Gallagher. University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 33rd and Spruce Streets. 10 Saturdays. From the Precambrian rocks and fossils through the Late Cenozoic ice ages, this course examines early life on earth.

**Monday, March 26, 2007**, beginning at 6:30 PM. **Botany Before, During, and After Linnaeus**, Professor Alfred E. Schuyler. Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 100 N. 20th Street (20th and Arch Streets). 6 Mondays and 1 Saturday. This course will discuss the relevance of Linnaeus's system of binomial nomenclature and the systems that he and later botanists devised to classify plants in hierarchical groups. **Preregistration required for this course. To preregister, call 215-763-6529, ext. 23.**

Wednesday, March 28, 2007, beginning at 6:30 PM. **Evolution and Society: The Social History of a Scientific Idea**, Professor Monique R. Scott. Independence Branch of the Free Library, 18 S. 7th Street (7th and Market Streets). 6 Mondays. This class explores the social impact of Darwinian evolution, from Darwin's impact on Victorian England to present day American politics surrounding human evolution.

**Sunday, February 11, 2007**—1:00 to 5:00 PM - **Darwin Day : Darwin and Evolution Teach In**. At the **University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology** Charles Robert Darwin, author of *On the Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*, was born February 12, 1809. Penn Museum joins a growing international celebration leading up to the 200th anniversary of his birth in 2009. On Sunday afternoon, Penn professors from a variety of disciplines will offer short talks in the galleries, focusing on what evolution means to their particular fields of study. Free. Information: 215/898-4890.

**University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology** presents **Amarna, Ancient Egypt's Place in the Sun**, a new exhibition that offers a rare look at the meteoric rise and fall of this unique royal city during one of Egypt's most intriguing times. The exhibition, the centerpiece of the Museum's event-filled "Year of Egypt runs through October 2007. Admission is free with museum admission, \$8 adults, \$5 seniors and students. Free Sunday afternoons until Memorial Day. For information: [www.museum.upenn.edu](http://www.museum.upenn.edu).

**Ongoing: The Philadelphia Paranormal Research & Investigative Group**. Seeking evidence of the existence of ghosts and spirits. 2nd Sunday each month at 6 PM. Essene Café & Market. 719 South Fourth Street, Philadelphia. More info: Richard Longo 215-200-5245, <http://ghosts.meetup.com/87/>.

**Ongoing: Freethought Society of Greater Philadelphia (FSGP)** and the **Humanist Association of Greater Philadelphia (HAGP)** co-sponsor a monthly book discussion club. The book club meets on the third Saturday of each month at 7:00 PM at Willow Grove Barnes & Noble, 102 Park Avenue, Willow Grove, Pennsylvania 19090. If you have any questions, please contact the book club moderator, Ian Thomas. Email: [ian.thomas101@gmail.com](mailto:ian.thomas101@gmail.com) Phone: (610) 368-5915 Cell: (610) 565-4530.

**Ongoing: The Wagner Free Institute of Science** offers an assortment of science lectures presented at the introductory college level by professors from various universities around Philadelphia. These courses are free and vary from a single night to an eight week course. See their website at <http://www.wagnerfreeinstitute.org/>.

The PhACT Calendar is open to members, and non-members too, who wish to announce meetings and events of other groups of which they are interested or affiliated. These events should be of some general interest to the Skeptical or Scientific community and should be within a reasonable radius of Philadelphia. Send submissions to the editor at [phactpublicity@aol.com](mailto:phactpublicity@aol.com). Keep the announcements brief. Space is limited and insertions will be made on a first come-first served basis after the needs of PhACT are accomplished.

## Letters

### Education accountability and funding in Philadelphia

Councilman Goode is right to question Mr. Vallas about dropouts. But it is parents who should be accountable.

We spend millions on parents and their children who don't attend school. Teachers spend unfathomable amounts of time on repeatedly unruly children while good ones and their families are underserved. It's time for that to change, but no politician has a plan that can reward families who prepare their children for success, while not punishing those who don't prepare their children for school and thus need extra attention.

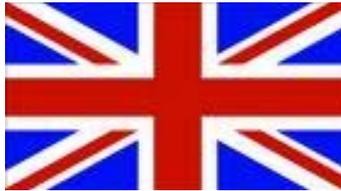
Enter the Individual College Account Plan. It works like this: At birth, \$5,000 is placed into a 401 (k)-type fund. If the child arrives at school reading-ready, the parents get \$2,000.

The rest stays in the fund until the child graduates from high school and attends college or trade school. Then, a percentage of the money, depending on grades, behavior and parental participation, is sent to the higher education facility the child attends.

If the child does not arrive at school ready to read, the \$5,000 goes directly to the school to provide the extra resources necessary to get the child reading at grade level. Some states determine future prison population based on how many children fail first-grade reading. The money we spend reducing this number is a far better investment than growing our prison population.

Keith Newman, *Philadelphia*

[Keith Newman is a member of PhACT and is a science teacher for the Philadelphia School District. The Councilman Goode he refers to is a member of City Council and Mr. Vallas is the Superintendent of Schools.](#)



## Various Ruminations

Collected/written by Ray Haupt, editor

### News from UK Sources

"It's about religious warfare. the way to win is to convert or kill" Frederick Clarkson of Talk2Action, a blog that analyzes the US religious right, on a Christian video game called Left Behind: Eternal Forces. Players command an army of God against the forces of the anti-Christ. An alliance of liberal groups has urged retailers to stop stocking the game. (from BBC online, Dec 14, 2006)

"There is just no evidence for intelligent design. It should be banned from science classes" Biologist Lewis Wolpert of University College London on news that 59 secondary schools in the UK are using unsolicited teaching materials sent to them by Creationist groups. Reported in the Guardian, London, late last year.

**And speaking of quackery** and mumbo jumbo, check out this item from the



January 3, 2007. It seems to be a clear case of death curing cancer.

### Family sue evangelist who claimed prayer would cure brother's cancer

A television evangelist accused of causing her brother's death by convincing him prayer alone would cure his cancer is being sued by relatives. A lawsuit claims Darlene Bishop persuaded Darrel 'Wayne' Perry to rely on prayer rather than radiation treatment and chemotherapy. She says in a book that Mr Perry was cured of his cancer, without mentioning that he died of it 18 months ago, it adds.

The lawsuit also accuses her of lying when she claims in the book that prayer cured her breast cancer. There is no evidence she ever had the disease, it says. Mrs Bishop, who is being sued by four of her brother's grownup children, is also accused of mismanaging his multi-million pound estate in another lawsuit.

Mr Perry's eldest son, Bryan, 36, said: " She's lying to people and exploiting my father for her own financial gain. "I put my faith in Darlene. We all did. We thought she was a holy, pure woman."

Darrel Perry, 55, who was a successful country music songwriter, was diagnosed with throat cancer in December 2002. He moved into Mrs Bishop's £1.5million mansion in Monroe, Ohio, where she is co-pastor of the Solid Rock Church with her husband Lawrence, to "recommit" his life to God.

Another son, Justin, 28, said: "Dad was lying in bed dying, and Darlene had him convinced that he was healed."

Mrs Bishop, whose television show, *Sisters*, is viewed by millions, says on her website that the allegations are "complete lies". She adds: "I encouraged my brother to listen to the doctors, but he refused surgery."

But in a sworn deposition responding to the lawsuits Mrs Bishop, who was once voted America's sexiest preacher, admits no doctor ever diagnosed the breast cancer she refers to in her book. She says she thought she had cancer in 1986 and that it was cured after she prayed to God to heal her.

### Coincidental or Spirit Guided?

This rather silly little item in New Zealand, a former member of the British Commonwealth, was reported in **SWIFT—The Weekly Newsletter of the JREF** - December 8, 2006.

### MODERN?

*New Zealand considers itself a modern country. From this next item, that's hard to believe. Apparently there's been much concern about a number of fatal car crashes on two of their major highways. Now, we might expect that administrators would try to ascertain what proper changes to make in the conditions and physical circumstances of these roadways, and provide better surveillance and enforcement of local laws; this is what modern countries do. Perhaps a budget was not available for such common-sense moves, since it was decided to turn to woo-woo techniques – which are much, much cheaper, though they don't work. That's something that NZ apparently hasn't yet discovered.*

*Last week, a special police convoy carrying Maori elders sprayed 10,000 liters of Waikato River water on the troubled highways "to free the spirits of crash victims." You see, Maori elders consider the combination of blessed river water and prayers to be a trigger for the release of the spirits of those trapped in the area by having suffered violent deaths on the roads. But the authorities were quick to say that this spell was for NZ citizens, and despite the fact that prayers were offered up during the spraying, they said that the exercise was non-religious and not just for Maori fatalities. Keep everyone happy...*

*The procedure, a "first for the country," as one politician proudly announced, has been declared "very successful," even though no period has passed in which any decline in accident rate – in fact, – could possibly have been logged. Maybe no accidents occurred during the spraying?*

*A local official assured concerned citizens that the 2½-hour exercise was cost-free, with people donating labor and resources. "Some people don't have an understanding why we are doing it," said another responsible authority. "They should find out more about Maori protocols before making comment... Anything that helps is worthwhile, isn't it?"*

*No, silly person, not if all it does is further superstition and ensure that officials get re-appointed or re-elected because they went along with nonsense to show that they're easy to manipulate. Is this a "faith-based initiative"? We Americans can tell you that it won't work...*

I thought it would be cool to forward that item to Dr. Raymond Richards who is a New Zealand critical thinker, has contributed an article to this newsletter (*Defrauding the Dying*, October 2006), and is professor of American History at Waikato University in Hamilton, New Zealand. I did so, and in reply Dr. Richards informed me that it just so happens that he had a letter published in the *Waikato Times* a week before, about that very bit of nonsense. I thought that to be a nifty little coincidence or perhaps the meddling of a friendly



lar. Dr. Richards' published letter follows.

*Sometimes I almost despair. Students can go to university to learn about science and rational thinking. Then the Waikato Times (December 4) reports that a police convoy carrying Maori elders used the Fire Service to spray 10,000 litres of blessed Waikato River water on SH1 and SH2 for 2 ½ hours to free the trapped spirits of crash victims. The Waikato road policing manager, Inspector Leo Tooman, reportedly voiced approval of this farce.*

*First, nonsense about a nonexistent taniwha diverted SH1 from its optimum route. Now, more superstition has again wasted resources and made our country a joke around the world on the internet. What is the use of New Zealand spending millions of taxpayers' dollars on a knowledge economy when mumbo-jumbo gets official sanction? At least educators can uphold standards by failing students whose thinking has not progressed from the Dark Ages.*

#### **Which brings us to the word "taniwha".**

An online dictionary search revealed nothing but Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia, did come through with an explanation.

"In Māori mythology, Taniwha are beings that live in deep pools in rivers, dark caves, or in the sea, especially in places with dangerous currents or deceptive breakers. Some can tunnel through the earth, uprooting trees in the process. Some taniwha are credited with creating harbours by carving out a channel to the ocean. Wellington's harbour, Te Whanganui-a-Tara, was reputedly carved out by two taniwha; the petrified remains of one of them turned into a hill overlooking the city. Other taniwha are said to have caused landslides beside lakes or rivers. At sea, taniwha often take the form of a whale or a large shark. In inland waters, they may still be of whale-like dimensions, but look more like a gecko or a tuatara, having a row of spines along the back. Other taniwha appear as a floating log, which behaves in a disconcerting way." The water spraying incident is not the first time that taniwha have interfered with the New Zealand highway system. Wikipedia went on to say: "Beliefs in the existence of a taniwha caused controversy in 2002 when Ngāti Naho, a Māori tribe from the Meremere district, successfully halted and eventually caused the redevelopment of part of the country's major highway, State Highway 1, to be rerouted in order to protect the abode of their legendary protector. This taniwha was said to have the appearance

of large white eel, and Ngāti Naho argued that it must not be removed but rather move on of its own accord; to remove the taniwha would be to invite trouble."

#### **Court enjoins cancer/AIDS quack.**

Get a load of this from Dr. Stephen Barrett's weekly Quackwatch newsletter from December 4, 2006.

A Tennessee Circuit Court judge has ordered Oludare Samuel Olomoshua and his Nigeria-based Wisdomite Spiripathology Healing and Music Mission to stop claiming that Olomoshua is a medical doctor, a Ph.D., and a cancer and HIV/AIDS specialist who can cure potentially fatal or terminal diseases. The judge also assessed \$38,000 in penalties and \$1,275 in attorneys' fees for failing to comply with a temporary injunction ordered last month.



**Chief of Staph**

Olomoshua, who represented himself as a "spiripathy scientist," claimed that diseases are "destructive spirits" and that God had sent him to stop them. His now-defunct Web site claimed that "Spiripathology Medicine give [sic] perfect cure guarantee to terrible diseases." In 2005, in addition to prayers, he marketed sprays, lotions, oils, and syrups such as "Anti Multiple Sclerosis." The state got involved after consumers complained that they had paid for Olomoshua's treatments but weren't healed.

#### **God's Annual Report to Reverend Pat Robertson**

Evangelical broadcaster Pat Robertson said on January 3rd that God has told him that a terrorist attack on the United States would cause a "mass killing" late in 2007.

"I'm not necessarily saying it's going to be nuclear," he said during his news-and-talk television show "The 700 Club" on the Christian Broadcasting Network. "The Lord didn't say nuclear. But I do believe it will be something like that." Robertson said God told him about the impending tragedy during a recent prayer retreat.

It is rumored, but not confirmed, that God also revealed unto Robertson that Shady Lady will win in the 5th race at Hialeah.

January 3rd had, coincidentally, a full moon.

## Shermer, Darwin, PhACT, and Me

By L. David Leiter

Along with many PhACT members and others, I attended Dr. Michael Shermer's October presentation at the Ethical Society in Philadelphia, essentially promoting his latest book, *Why Darwin Matters*. What did I think about it? Do you really care? Do you expect me to say that Shermer is just another hidebound, close-minded skeptic?

Fugedaboudid! I have no essential disagreement with Shermer's position on evolution, based on his excellent presentation (He's a really effective, charismatic speaker!). However, I'm afraid that the street person who sat directly in front (and happily, downwind) of me, and slept through almost the entire presentation, was only there for the post-address party goodies. Unfortunately, I couldn't stay for the party, and was thus unable to observe whether my skeptical suspicions about him were really true.

Nevertheless, I used the brief period I had available to me, between the conclusion of Shermer's address and my early departure, to good effect. I went up to the lectern as he packed up his notes, etc., while he simultaneously fielded some final questions from a few other attendees who preceded me. When my turn came, I introduced myself, complimented him on his presentation, and gave him some "stimulating literature" I had brought along for his information. It included my e-mail address for his response, which I was sure would follow. I told him it was included to allow him to "yell at me".

Shermer did not disappoint me, and we have since exchanged several civil e-mail messages. In the last one, mine to him, I promised to read *Why Darwin Matters*, and I have done so. It's a good, well-written book, and I highly recommend it to all PhACT members. Its arguments in favor of Darwinian evolution are well researched, well stated, and far more extensive than the very basic, "Darwin was right! No, he wasn't!" of science vs. fundamentalist Christianity.

In my earlier response to Shermer's first e-mail,

I told him that my personal reaction to his lecture was that he was "preaching to a member of the choir" (me). I've never had any problem accepting Darwinian evolution. The unfortunate problem, at least here in the U.S., is in convincing the Christian fundamentalists to stop trying to force their uninformed views on the rest of society. I don't think they will read *Why Darwin Matters*, but perhaps some influential jurists will.

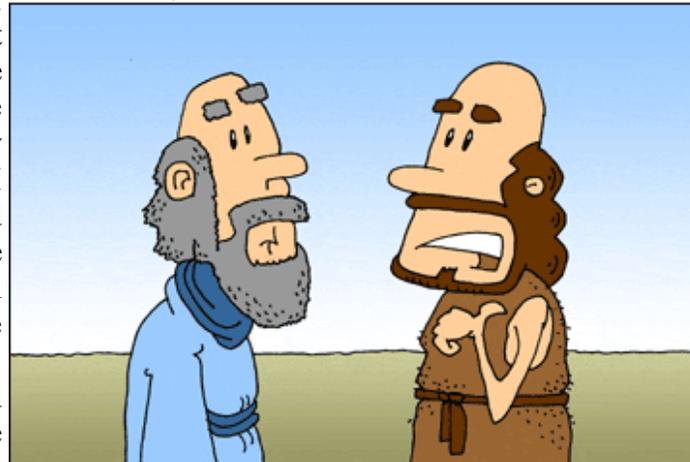
I trust that, eventually, the opposition to Darwin's magnificent insight, and to the subsequent science that supports it, will fade away. I am currently far more concerned about how the world will deter fundamentalist Muslims and their violent insistence on Islam being "the one true religion", and that all other philosophies must be destroyed. Hell, they can't even get along with their own Muslim brothers. In Iraq, it's as if the Lutherans were car-bombing the Baptists, and vice versa. Will people never learn?

By comparison, urging PhACTors to pay serious attention to the scientific evidence for human reincarnation, and all that it implies, is just a walk in the park. And convincing Shermer that ESP is still a valid topic for scientific research would also be nice (See "WHAT IS A SKEPTIC?" in *SKEPTIC* magazine). "Yo people", (PhACTors and Mike), even the late, great Carl Sagan was

willing to concede that both phenomena "deserve serious study" (see p.302 in *The Demon-Haunted World*). That book was published in 1995, and a whole lot of research on both phenomena has been published since then. I know it's hard to break out of your protective shells, but *read* people, *read!* And, you worry about the creationists! I worry about you!

L David Leiter is a long time associate of PhACT and describes himself as a "skeptic of skeptics". Dave is actively involved with the Society for Scientific Exploration (SSE) in the capacity of Associate Member Representative. Dave, a cat with nine lives, is a reincarnation enthusiast and was, in a recent but tragically short previous life, the factory tester for high voltage electric blankets.

REVERENDFUN.COM COPYRIGHT GCI, INC.



Thanks to Manuel Silva

09-02-2003

I SWITCHED CHURCHES ... NOW I'M JOHN THE EVANGELICAL

Copyright Gospel Communications International, Inc - www.reverendfun.com

## Confessions of A Compulsive Gambler

By Bill Kearney

My name is Bill Kearney; I am a former compulsive casino gambler who's been trying to educate the public on the pitfalls of what the Gaming Industry and an alarming number of our Government officials call a form of entertainment. My credentials are that I am a veteran, and a casualty, after the first assault of casino



Bugsy Siegel

gambling outside of Las Vegas. My story is of Atlantic City, and it's not unique. I'm just one of many who were courted by the casinos and fell in love with gambling and the "comped" treatment. Recreation and

what they call Entertainment turned to compulsion and the

loss of everything -- from family to business -- and the eventual realization that life didn't deal us a bad break; the casinos did.

Whenever I'm addressing the gaming industry's pimps on the morality of casino gambling the first question I ask is why they and their family members never participate in what they call a form of entertainment. Of course they throw out the freedom of choice scenario, but I'm not buying that and it won't be long before the rest of our free society will learn not only how this so-called entertainment industry operates but also how many of the pillars of our society sold them damaged goods. I'm not going to go into full detail of my own personal horror story, but what I have to offer you is my 20 years of expertise on what is known today as the Gaming Industry along with some ideas for safeguards that could help the next generation of casino gamblers from ending up like myself and others.

Before I go into the importance of why casinos and racinos should adapt to my safeguards I'd like to tell you a little bit about myself and the world of "gaming".

I was born and raised and still live in Philadelphia, "The City of Brotherly Love," and in case you haven't figured it out yet it's the largest city in the country to host the gaming industry. It is an industry that started in a desert over 60 years ago by gangsters, shysters, and con-men.

My Casino Gambling career started in the early

1980's in Atlantic City. I was 32 years old . . . by 33 I was a Compulsive Casino Gambling Degenerate. This form of entertainment cost me not only my business . . . but also my family. And I take full responsibility for my actions . . . no one held a gun to my head, at least no one I could see.

Today I work very hard as do many others trying to educate unaware and sometimes ignorant public, media, health, and government officials on how this so-called entertainment industry really works.

Back in 2004, the Chairman of the State Government Committee, Paul Clymer, invited me to give testimony at the Joint Public Hearings on gambling held at the Pennsylvania Convention Center in Philadelphia. It was on April 1st "April Fool's Day," and couldn't have picked a better day to discuss casino gambling.

That day, and knowing that the deck was stacked, I presented eight safeguards so that the next generation of gamblers, our children and grandchildren, who were born with a joystick in hand and who will now live a short distance from a casino, will be aware of the techniques that this

gaming industry uses to seduce their prey.

Since the gaming bill passed I've sent these safeguards to every one in the Pa. Senate, all the members of the Pa. House of Representatives, the seven members of the newly formed Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board, State Bank and Health Insurance regulators, and Governor Rendell. Over the years I've sent them to other casino states and to countries where the plague has spread. There is only one way of stopping the gaming predators from destroying families in Pennsylvania and throughout our country and that's by making them adapt to real safeguards.

My First safeguard: Let's stop calling this product entertainment, and start calling it what it really is, an investment. And those "Total Rewards" frequent-gambler cards that the casinos and racinos track their customers with, lets call them investment cards. And to avoid people from getting in over their heads how about we make those investment cards their license to gamble? And before the casinos and racinos issue their customers this license, how about pulling their credit reports to make sure they're not in any financial difficulties? People who are in bankruptcy, foreclosure, or late

**In 2004 the Pennsylvania Legislature legalized up to 61,000 slot machines at fourteen horse racing tracks and slot parlors throughout the state.**

with child-support payments should not be gambling for entertainment.

Second: No comps. More people got their casino and racino addiction from chasing the comps than from the actual gambling. From the bus people that the casino and racinos lure in with “slots dollars” and free buffets, who are mostly senior citizen's, to the “High Rollers,” that they chauffeur in limos and put up in penthouse suites. If the slot machines, table games, and spinning wheels are so good and entertaining then there should be no need to comp. If you take away the comps from this industry and they stop breeding.

Third: No Credit. Is there any other industry that can give out loans and not charge interest? Is it because their profit margin is so great, or is it because, in reality, what they're really giving you are casino chips, slot machine credits along with a very slim chance of winning. Last year this wonderful industry put over \$800 million of unpaid markers in collections.

Fourth: No casino chips, and no coin-less slot machines. This may be the casinos and racinos biggest edge! Take away the casino chips, and let's see how much money will be wagered then. Let's see what happens on weekends and holidays, when they have a captive audience, and raise the minimum bets on the tables. It's a whole different ballgame when you have to put up the cash. And if you think that the idea for the coin-less slots machines is so that the senior citizens won't have to carry all their winnings to the cashier cage, well think again. The only reason for the coin-less slots machines is to keep the overhead down and to keep the gambler at the slot machine. They don't want you to see your tray filled with coins; you just might cash-out and go home.

Fifth: No ATM machine and no cashing personal and government checks. You will see more people at those ATM machines than at the cashier's cage picking up

their winnings. And you know someone has a problem if they're cashing their Social Security or Welfare checks in a casino.

Sixth: No free alcoholic beverages at the casino and racinos. This is a no-brainer. Can you imagine how many lawsuits there would be if other financial institutions, like at your bank, insurance, mortgage, or stockbroker served free liquor while doing business? I'd like to know how many DUI's occurred, from a night out at

the casinos and racinos or how many alcoholics started up their addiction from those free drinks.

Seventh: No 24/7. When the casinos first opened in Atlantic City, the framers of the State Casino Control Act believed that it was necessary to permit compulsive gamblers time to step back from the tables. So they opened their doors at 10 A.M. and closed them at 4 A.M. on weekdays ... and 6 A.M. on weekends

and holidays. At that time they wanted to avoid, the wide-open atmosphere of Las Vegas, where continuous gambling is permitted. They said that they were worried about the potential harmful impact on compulsive gamblers and the possibility that Atlantic City would never become the family type resort that its leaders and the voters envisioned in 1976. The opposition back then argued that 24-hour gambling had to be permitted if the city was to become a full-fledged vacation resort instead of the destination for Day-Trippers. Today the casinos in Atlantic City are open 24/7. They still have the Day-Trippers and Atlantic City is far from being a full-fledged vacation resort. If you want to see pathological gambling in full bloom take a stroll through the casinos during those extra hours.

Eighth: A monthly statement. Of all my safeguards, this one I believe has a shot at life. And the reason I say this is because the gaming industry says that they work very hard to prevent their customers from getting in over their heads. Unfortunately there's no way of knowing if



Performance-Enhancing Thugs.

a customer has a gambling problem. I find that hard to believe since they know the color of your eyes and shoe size, but maybe I'm wrong, so here is what I am suggesting. Those "Total Reward Cards" allow casinos



*"Some men pride themselves on hunting deer, elk or other game. Herbert hunts down the Comps."*

and racinos to track the amount of money and time a person spent gambling. This is the information that is used to determine the value of comps given out. Since this kind of information already is being gathered, monthly statements can be produced. Sending monthly statements would not bar anyone from gambling, but it would enable gamblers and their family members to spot a gambling problem before it gets out of hand.

Whenever I bring up the idea for the gaming industry to issue monthly statements to their patrons, the feedback always goes like this: "Come on, they're never going to do that," and I say, stop and think of your reason for saying that. I know that my first seven safeguards don't have of a chance, but issuing monthly statements is doable. Let's give it a chance. And if you know why they don't, then you know what this Gaming Industry is all about.

Why wait until someone gets addicted? Those who crafted Pennsylvania's gambling bill say there are a number of provisions to address obsessive gambling and its related harms, and that the bill has the toughest

stance on gambling addiction. They say we can't address the social ills of gambling by making it illegal, we have to do our best to deal with the problems because gambling is here to stay in Pennsylvania. It's the will of the majority.

I'm not quite sure of what majority they're talking about, they must be referring to the will of Gov. Rendell, and the majority must be those Members of the House of Representatives who produced our gambling bill. I'm not aware of any referendum, nor any public debates on casino gambling coming to Pennsylvania. But that's okay, after all that majority tells us that casino gambling is simply a form of entertainment, something like going out for dinner and a show, or tickets to a sporting event. Now I don't agree with their analogy of casino gambling, but we do have one thing



in common, neither they nor I or our family members will participate in this form of entertainment.

In my hometown of Philadelphia this so-called entertainment will not be used and enjoyed by the residents of Rittenhouse Square, Society Hill, or the Mainline. No, it will be the residents of South, Southwest, West, North, and Northeast Philly. These are blue collar neighborhoods with a large population of people of color and where small business operators like, restaurants, grocery stores, cleaners, and service merchants operate mostly in cash; it's where the underground economy prevails. So when the two casinos consisting of 5000 slots in each, start sucking the Cash, Payroll, Social Security, Welfare Checks and Credit Card usage out of those communities we will see the ill effects. Things like bankruptcy, crime, suicides, and children

left without care and food will be more common because one or both of their parents will be gambling.

Like most of us who live in Philadelphia, I knew casinos were going to be a go when Gov. Rendell was our mayor, and some of us see great opportunity with casino gambling in our state, from construction of our gambling parlors, vendors servicing them, job opportunities and the high taxes on the projected three billion dollars that Pennsylvanians will lose filling our state coffers.

Up front, that sounds like a winner, but being an ex-compulsive casino gambler who has seen first-hand the impact on families when loved ones get in bed with this industry, the social and economic costs from the losers will outweigh any of those great opportunities financial opportunities to the state. And as far as I'm concerned what has been addressed so far, things like property tax relief, locations, and design of gaming facilities, licensing gaming operators, traffic congestions, and the shady land deals that have surfaced and the ones to come are obstacles that would have arisen if Disney Worlds were opening throughout our state. But casino gambling is a form of entertainment that brings a hindrance that you won't find in an amusement park and one that has to be addressed before the breeding starts.

So what safeguards did our casino gambling addiction enablers put in Pennsylvania's gambling bill that's going to prevent today's gamblers and our future generation of gamblers from becoming casino gambling junkies?

Those who produced our gambling bill insist there are a number of provisions to address compulsive gambling. Things like a limit on ready access to more

cash than a casino patron intends to wager and to not allow casino operators to accept credit cards in any manner that would allow customers to gamble on credit. Gamblers will not be able to use debit cards, and

there's going to be a limit on check cashing. There will be a limit on the number and placement of ATMs, and a limit on free alcoholic beverages. There's also a self-exclusion list for those who become addicted gamblers. And they're going to adapt to those "High Tech Safeguards" that gaming operators in other states provide in order to stop individuals from becoming compulsive gamblers. Things like pamphlets and posters to educate

about gambling addiction and signs posted with the 1-800 GAMBLER get help number on them. And a 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week hotline that provides crisis counseling. These "limits" and "provisions" along with the \$1.5 million a year budget that our own gaming bill sets aside to help gambling addicts addresses the obsessive gambling problem after

the fact.

So my question is, why wait until someone gets addicted? Let's make our multi-billion dollar gaming operators adapt to real safeguards. Things like not cashing checks, assuring that patrons don't gamble on credit in any manner, and taking away the ATMs. And what's with the free booze? No other industry can get away with that, and do we really need these joints open 24/7? Most of all, let's make our gambling halls mail out monthly statements that will show the amount of money and time spent gambling.

Hopefully by now you understand that the gaming industry depends on compulsive gambling and their patrons being unaware of their time and money expenditures, that's why there's no windows, clocks, receipts, or monthly statements.

Over the years, I've been told by many that there's no way that me or anyone else is going to make a difference on how this multi-billion dollar casino industry operates. Some say I'm brutal and over the top in my pursuit to educate unaware and sometimes ignorant public, media, health, and government officials on how this so-called entertainment industry really works, but what other choices do I have. To sit back, knowing what I know, and wait until the social ills that casino gambling commits against individuals and families would not be humane and is out of the question. .



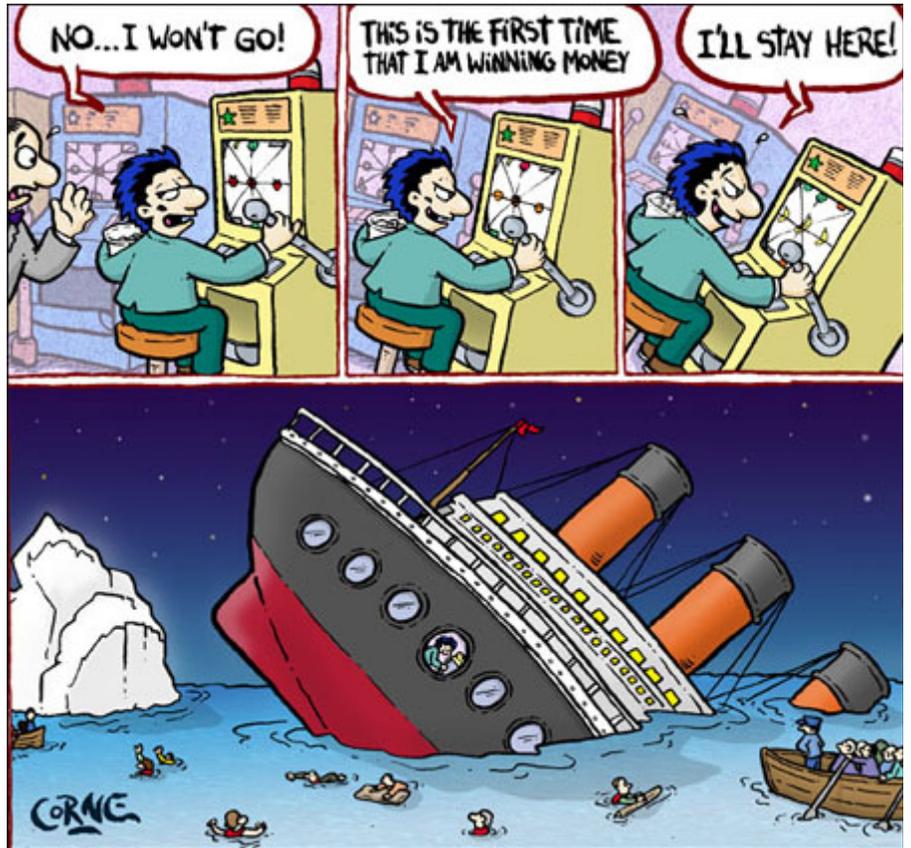
Adrian Fleming

Editors note: To learn more about Bill Kearney’s credentials on this subject go on line and look up Bill Kearney on gambling, or his book “Comped”, a work of fiction about the gambling industry. Mr. Kearney may be contacted by email at ianscottpress@hotmail.com. To purchase a copy of “Comped”, call 215-934-7933 or write to Ian Scott Press at 9261 A Jamison Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19115.

Ω Ω Ω

### Errattua

**Eric Hamil reports:** “The December *Phactum* reported incorrectly that the GOP was founded by "peace activist Cindy Sheehan and others." It was actually founded by Donna Sheehan and Paul Ref-fell. As far as I can tell, Cindy Sheehan has nothing to do with it.”



I support the aims of PhACT and would like to join/rejoin for the next year. The annual membership is \$15 and \$10 for students. I have enclosed a check payable to **PhACT**.

■ Mail checks to:  
 ■ PhACT  
 ■ 639 W. Ellet Street  
 ■ Philadelphia, PA 19119

Membership dues of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ enclosed to pay for \_\_\_\_\_ years of membership.

Donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ enclosed for (please indicate)

\_\_\_\_\_ additional support \_\_\_\_\_ a specific purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ E\_mail \_\_\_\_\_

## A Skeptic's Thought

It seems inconsistent with all human reason,  
That God in his infinite goodness and love—  
His wisdom, his power and mercy unending,  
Would quietly sit in his mansion above,  
While over the earth dire misfortune is pending,  
Dissension and discord are rife thru the land,  
Injustice prevails, and the innocent suffer,  
And fairest and loveliest, fall at Death's hand.  
Could he calmly sit, high on his throne in the sky  
While pain and distress to his children drew nigh?

- Colfax Burgoyne Harman,

### *Poems Of Sentiment*

Colfax Burgoyne Harman  
(Valley Falls, Kansas: Harman Publishing. 1905)  
Page 284

## PHACT

Phila. Assoc. for Critical Thinking  
639 W. Ellet Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19119

