



MICAP RECAP

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Lead Article: Yet Another Casino? Editor's Note: Further Clarification by Congress

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Dear Members and Friends,

Your Editor stumbled upon the "Don'tBeAParty" website too late for our April MICAP-RECAP. It's too late for 2008 because graduation is over for most of our families. But I've filed it for the April, 2009, MICAP-RECAP. Meanwhile, I've given you a clue of its substance in a brief article by the same title.

Dr. Dan Ireland, of Alabama, is retiring at 78 years of age from the Alabama Council on Alcohol Problems. He has worked tirelessly for both the Alabama Council and The American Council on Alcohol Problems (ACAP). In his retirement, he plans to commit more time to family and ACAP. Because MICAP is a member organization of ACAP, his name and reputation have been known and appreciated for many years. We salute his ministry in Alabama and we are grateful that he will continue to be involved in ACAP. A Fall, 2008 meeting of ACAP will be held in Springfield, Illinois and MICAP representatives will be attending.

Our lead article entitled: "Yet Another Casino?" by Board Member, Rev. Dale E. Brown tells of some of the issues around casinos, in general, as well as tribal affairs and the long-standing contests of trying to put casinos in Romulus and Port Huron. In a sense, this has been upstaged by the good work of some of our representatives in Congress. So I have appended a brief note. You'll still want to read it! It's excellently written and will help you understand MICAP's position on Gambling.

I've included some information on quitting smoking which I've recently gleaned from a web site. You may want to pass this along to some of your friends who'd like to quit but find it difficult.

I hope your reading of this issue of MICAP-RECAP will be helpful to you as you live your ministry and seek to help our world to be a better place.

Sincerely,

Rev. W. J. (Bill) Amundsen, President, Board of Directors
Michigan Council on Alcohol Problems

YET ANOTHER CASINO?

By Rev. Dale E. Brown, Member
MICAP Board of Directors

Apparently the answer is “yes.” Reportage from the Battle Creek Enquirer recently, revealed that funding has been secured for construction to begin on what’s to be called Firekeepers Casino, in Emmett Township near this southern Michigan city. The project is to begin this Spring, 2008. The “planned casino resort is to have more than 3,000 gaming positions” (acc. to report). This facility is to be managed by the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi Indians; the final legal challenge was disposed of by the Federal government in July of 2007.

So—the steamroller of governmental sponsorship and public acceptance of legal gambling continues across the Michigan landscape. Despite former Michigan governor John Engler’s article (10/4/99), in the Traverse City Record Eagle claiming “Michigan has enough casinos,” efforts are repeatedly raised to establish more. But a stop may be put to the “steamroller.”

In this writer’s home county of St. Clair, the push for a casino in the international border city of Port Huron has been gaining considerable momentum. Given the quite terrible condition of the Michigan economy and particularly high unemployment in Port Huron and environs, the urge to regard casino-building as an attractive antidote, has been fairly high. Approval was given several years ago, in fact, by voters in Port Huron to develop a casino in or near the city. More recently, the U.S. House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee considered a Port Huron casino bill and voted overwhelmingly to send it to the full House. As reported in a Port Huron Times

Herald opinion piece (May 4, 2008), Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm and U.S. Senator Carl Levin have also made known their support for the bill, publicly. Yet there is powerful opposition—and not simply from those who dislike casinos (see more below).

In the same article, well-respected local free-lance writer Mike Connell enthuses: “Just so we’re clear, the casino means much more to Port Huron than a few hundred jobs and a resort

hotel. It could be the catalyst for a billion-dollar investment in a moribund downtown.”

The likelihood of a many-faceted economic benefit to an entire community is thus held out as the “plum” for justifying yet another casino establishment. But such confidence may not be well-founded. Certainly everyone would wish to see increased employment opportunities and a healthier economy. But the question as always is: “At what cost?” and not merely in dollar terms. Information gleaned from the Cape Cod, Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce regarding possible casino establishment there, concluded that it might well have a “crippling effect on tourism” (and this is something Port Huron is seeking to promote?! The Chamber utilized findings by the Massachusetts League of Women Voters, which stated: “Most studies over the past 10 years...show that rather than a financial boon, casinos are financial drains... bringing about higher tax rates, bankruptcy increases, more gambling addiction, higher divorce rates, and spousal and child abuse as social costs...” Another League member, Elaine Bono, offered her plainspoken view. She has moved to the Cape Cod area from Connecticut, where casino gambling was accepted in her community. Her observation: “The impact... is a spike in crime, drugs, prostitution, suicide, and domestic abuse... It’s an unsavory, unhealthy atmosphere... They (casino operators) are in the business of taking money away from people and the more you lose the better they treat you.”

How interesting! And how telling is a comment made by Mr. Frank Fahrenkopf, CEO of the American Gaming Association (AGA), in a recent debate (Oct., 2006). He and Tom Grey, immediate past field director of the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling, dealt with the issue of casino location, and Fahrenkopf is on record as saying that he “wouldn’t want a casino located in McLean, Virginia” (his home town). I wonder what that means? What is this “gaming mogul” nervous about?

On a website maintained by the National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling, (NCALG), several excellent reasons for communities to resist the casino are given, including this point about “job trading” which has been shown to quash more economic development, rather than stimulate it: “Most casinos attract

80% or more of their market from a 35-50 mile radius. Casinos absorb existing entertainment, restaurant, and hotel business, and deplete dollars available to other retail businesses. That destroys other jobs in the trade area and eliminates their sales, employment, and property tax contributions.”

Another resource to access, for good “anti-casino” information in this controversy is CACGEC—Citizens Against Casino Gambling in Erie County—and their website... <www.nocasinoerie.org.> There is a sharp article on this website entitled “Gambling Causes Economic Decline.” This group seeks to stop the gambling steamroller in the Buffalo, New York area.

Meanwhile, here in our own state the issue of casino development—for Port Huron at least—awaits full legislative approval, both in the U.S. House and the Senate. As the local newspaper puts it, “the odds of the bill passing remain long.” Representative John Conyers (Detroit) has fought it in his Congressional committee, and there is substantial rival casino opposition, not least of which is the MGM Mirage in Detroit, seeking to kill it. A proposal to put a casino in Romulus also faces considerable opposition...with the same “rivals.”

Well—OK. Regardless how it is done, MICAP supporters will want to continue to register strong opposition to any further casino development. Growth in the economic base of given communities, due to a casino’s presence, may well turn out to be illusory—and certainly can be shown to be causative of increased social costs.

MICAP’S seeming to stand with certain well-funded casino interests’ efforts to halt the genesis of still more of these money-devouring enterprises, in no way implies we are “on their side.” On the contrary, they are coming down on the side of this issue on which we stand.

Our concerns about the negative outcomes stemming from the encouragement of both personal and corporate greed (thru gambling) ...remain firmly in place. Any further casino development in Michigan—regardless of the supposed “economic benefit” and despite widespread public enthusiasm—is quite possibly headed for an unlooked-for bad ending. It’s something Battle Creek, or Port Huron, or Romulus doesn’t need. Nor does any other Michigan community.

EDITOR’S NOTES: CLARIFICATION BY CONGRESS

As this goes to print, the U.S. House of Representatives has spoken and by a vote of 298 to 121, the House rejected a plan for land swaps which would have given Native American casinos in Port Huron and Romulus.

Because those pushing for the Port Huron and Romulous Casinos continue to believe that casinos are lucrative money-makers for their communities which will provide jobs, our readership needs to continue to send anti-casino messages to the following elected officials:

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm, Governor

Michigan State Capitol Bldg,
Lansing, Michigan 48933

The Honorable Carl Levin, U. S. Senate

269 Russell Sen. Off. Bldg.,
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Hon. Debbie Stabenow, U. S. Senate,

133 Hart Sen. Off. Bldg.,
Washington, DC 20510

Thank You for your witness on this issue!
WJA

ANTI-CASINO CONTACT:

The National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling has an excellent one-page brochure entitled: LEGALIZED GAMBLING: The Inside Story. It can be downloaded and copied for free. They can also be contacted as follows:

100 Maryland Avenue NE, Room 311
Washington, DC, 20002
www.ncalg.org
Ph. 800.664.2680

UNDERAGE DRINKING?

In an effort to combat under-age drinking, an Ohio group called Drug Free Action Alliance has created a group of materials called

Don'tBeAParty to Teenage Drinking.

Down-loadable from their website which can be found at www.Don'tBeAParty.com is information about being held responsible if you serve youth in your home, even with their parents' consent. An Eaton County group has borrowed their information and updated it with Michigan Legal information at the web-site above. The by-line on their brochure says:

"When you allow teens to drink in your home, you are: *Civilly* Liable, *Criminally* Respon-sible, and *Morally* Accountable. Costs and penalties are listed for both adults and teens.

Please pass this information on to persons you know who allow their (or other) teens to drink in their home. Thank You.

QUIT SMOKING OPTIONS

According to the Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center (Univ. of Iowa), smoking is the single most important cause of cancer. BUT...

they indicate that (y)our risk of developing cancer is greatly reduced by quitting smoking.

What will follow in the next several MICAP-RECAPS are types of cessation aids for those desiring to quit. It must also be said that those persons most successful in quitting have used a combination of aids, including more than one of the following: "Cold Turkey," Nicotine-fading, Nicotine Gum, Nicotine Transdermal Patch, Nicotine Nasal Spray, Nicotine Lozenge, Nicotine Inhaler, Cigarette Filters, Zyban, and Chantix.

Nicotine Fading: When using this method, individuals reduce the nicotine level of cigarettes smoked by 30/60/90 % over a three week period and stop altogether during the fourth week. This method may help reduce the effects of nicotine withdrawal symptoms. The

Am. Lung Assoc. can provide a list of the nicotine levels of the various cigarette brands. This method is simple, self-managed and inexpensive, but requires a high level of motivation and adherence.

FUTURE MICAP MEETING DATES

Quarterly, the third Tuesday, from 12 Noon to 3:00 p.m. at Central United Methodist Church, Lansing, Michigan unless location is announced for elsewhere. Welcome!

August 19, 2008, (Our Next Meeting)

November 18, 2008,

February 17, 2009,

May 19, 2009 (Our Annual Meeting)

A NEW DVD ON USE AND ABUSE OF ALCOHOL IS BEING EDITED

Hopefully, this will be completed by the end of September, 2008. When completed, it will be available for Churches and Groups. Watch for it.

SPEAKERS?

The Board Chairperson and several other persons are available to speak in your local church or your community group when a mutually convenient time can be found. While not necessary, it is helpful to MICAP to receive remuneration for these services. Phone numbers are 517.323.2445, or 517.484.1770.

FINANCES?

Your Support, using the enclosed envelope, will be greatly appreciated and extend our ministry. Thank You. WJA