



## Preventing Problem Gambling

### IN OLDER ADULTS

The Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling has recently launched a new workshop for older adults entitled “Making the Most of Your Leisure Time.” Presented by Jeannie Martin, a Geriatric Social Worker with more than 30 years of experience facilitating wellness and health education programs for older adults, the single-session workshop is offered to senior groups throughout the Commonwealth with the goal of preventing problem gambling among older adults.

According to Ms. Martin, “The workshop is a great way to get older adults thinking and talking about problem gambling. Drawn from concepts of positive aging, we ask participants what is meaningful to them and what they enjoy doing. We talk about time management and leisure activities, including gambling. We are not trying to prevent gambling. We are simply identifying the risk factors of problem gambling and providing tips for keeping risk under control and preventing problems.”

According to Jim Wuelfing, Prevention Director at the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling, “Older adults are at greater risk for developing gambling problems than the general population. Loneliness, boredom, dealing with the loss of loved ones, and the desire for an active social life, make gambling appealing to many older individuals. In addition, access to gambling has never been easier for the older population. Group sponsored trips to the casinos make gambling very convenient for those with otherwise limited mobility or access.”

The first workshop was held recently at Kit Clark Senior Center in Dorchester. It was so well received that the group has requested a second presentation for later this summer. Several other senior centers have also scheduled workshops including: Milton, Cambridge, Attleboro, Brookline, and Greenfield.

If your senior group is interested in scheduling “Making the Most of Your Leisure Time,” please contact Jeannie Martin at the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling at 617-426-4554 / [Jeanne@masscompulsivegambling.org](mailto:Jeanne@masscompulsivegambling.org).

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*Bait & Hook cast and crew*

*Bait & Hook actors celebrate the success of their first live performance at the Aging with Dignity Conference*



#### BAIT and HOOK

In collaboration with the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling’s prevention efforts, Elizabeth S. Ross, Activities Coordinator at Morville House in Boston, has created and directed a 45-minute dramatic presentation entitled “Bait And Hook: Problem Gambling In Older Adults.” The dramatic presentation highlights the unique issues surrounding problem gambling in the older adult population. The subject matter is presented from the viewpoints of three older adults, showcasing the beginnings of their gambling, their descents into addiction, the effects it has on their lives, and their transitions into recovery. The accompanying slideshow contains facts on problem gambling in older adults and reiterates key points of the presentation. The performance was first presented at the Aging with Dignity Conference at Holy Cross this June. The Council plans to bring the performance to other community based older adult programs as well. For more information, please contact Katie Warner, Prevention Assistant at the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling at 617-426-4554 / [Katie@masscompulsivegambling.org](mailto:Katie@masscompulsivegambling.org).

# COUNCIL OFFERS Youth and College PROGRAMS



Students at the North Brookfield Youth Center participate in a CAPS activity

## AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM Teaches Gambling Odds

The Council, in collaboration with the North Brookfield Youth Center, has developed an after school program for middle school and junior high school students. It has been piloted at the North Brookfield Youth Center and in a sixth grade classroom at North Brookfield Elementary School.

Building upon the research used in *Facing the Odds, the Mathematics of Gambling and Other Risks*, a curriculum for middle school students developed by Harvard Medical School's Division on Addictions and the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling, the Creative Activities for Probability and Statistics (CAPS) program is a 12-session, highly-interactive training curriculum that focuses primarily on the mathematical areas of statistics, probability, odds, number sense and critical thinking. Studies have indicated that an increased understanding of probability and statistics can have a positive impact on the prevention of problem gambling in youth. The CAPS program is a movement-oriented, hands-on approach to providing the knowledge and skills students need to attain critical thinking skills.

"Deal or No Deal" is one of the featured lessons; a take-off of the popular TV program, it illustrates probability and risk factors. Another example of the program is "Shoot and Score." During this activity, students shoot basketballs from three different spots to illustrate predictions, averages and odds. For more information about CAPS, please contact Jim Wuelfing, Prevention Director at the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling at 617-426-4554 / Jim@masscompulsivegambling.org.

## College Outreach Program

The Council kicked off the fourth installment of its College Outreach Program by holding two trainings for college personnel, both of which offered overviews of problem gambling issues on college and university campuses, and focused on policy and program development.

The first training was held in November at the Massachusetts Institute for Technology (MIT) in Cambridge. It drew representatives from MIT, Boston University, Harvard University and Wellesley College. The second training was held in February at Mount Holyoke College. Fourteen people were present, representing the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; Smith College; Hampshire College; Mount Holyoke College; and Keene State College (Keene, NH).

Council Prevention Director, Jim Wuelfing presented the latest research on college problem gambling as compiled by Ryan J. Martin, PhD, Thomas N. Cummings Research Fellow. Richard Fleming, a counselor in private practice and former Director of Alcohol and Drug Education at Springfield College and Robert Hynes, PhD, Assistant Dean for Student Support Services at Fitchburg State College were also featured speakers. The administrators had attended previous Council trainings, and in turn developed programs on their campuses with technical support from the Council. For more information, please contact Jim Wuelfing, Prevention Director at the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling at 617-426-4554 / Jim@masscompulsivegambling.org.

## Adolescent Gambling Materials available FREE OF CHARGE

Adolescents have one of the highest prevalence rates of problem gambling. In response to this, the Council has created several products to supplement its adolescent / college problem gambling prevention efforts. New materials include: a set of posters about high school student gambling, a set of posters about college student gambling, and college print public service announcements. In addition, over the past few years the Council has also developed a website ([www.financialfirststeps.org](http://www.financialfirststeps.org)) for parents who want to provide their young adult children with sound financial information, and by doing so help their kids to avoid gambling problems, and a workbook entitled *Real Life 101: Financial Tips for Graduating Students*. To request any of the materials, please contact Katie Warner, Prevention Assistant at the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling at 617-426-4554 / Katie@masscompulsivegambling.org. For large quantities of the workbook, you may also consider ordering materials directly from the Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse website at [www.maclclearinghouse.com](http://www.maclclearinghouse.com).

You tell him about your hot prom date.

You tell him about your new video game.

You even tell him about your goals for the future.

So when will you tell him you are worried about his gambling?

When it stops being a game... it's time for straight talk.

Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling  
800.426.1234



*Council volunteer Cesar Angomas distributes problem gambling information at a Latino Cultural Festival*

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

## to the Latino Community

The Council believes that one of the best ways to reach out to Latinos and African Americans is by developing relationships with individuals and organizations, and by participating in cultural events and festivities, thereby raising awareness at the community level. This year alone, the Council has been present at 10 events; offering literature and referrals for help, as well as answering questions about problem gambling programs and services to nearly 500 people. This summer, the Council is scheduled to participate in 6 more events: In July – *The Boston Puerto Rican Festival*, *The Boston Dominican Festival* and *Health Fair*, and *Hispanic Week* in Lawrence. In August – *The Festival de La Familia Hispana* in Holyoke, *The Festival Latino Americano* in Worcester and *The Puerto Rican Festival* in Springfield.

If you are involved with a local, community-based event, and would like the Council to distribute problem gambling educational materials free of charge, please contact Haner Hernandez, PhD, Assistant Director of Prevention and Programs at the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling at 617-426-4555 / haner@masscompulsivegambling.org.

## Spanish-Language GA MEETING

Mac M., the Public Relations Chair of Gamblers Anonymous (GA) has recently procured Spanish-language GA materials. He is eager to work with individuals who are interested in starting Spanish-language GA meetings. For more information, please contact Mac at macgapr@gmail.com.



## COUNCIL ANNOUNCES *New Receptionist*

The Council is pleased to announce Francia Peguero as its new Receptionist. When Francia was 13 she moved from the Dominican Republic to Boston. She

attended English High School in Jamaica Plain and Salem State College, where she studied Business Administration. She feels that her bi-lingual Spanish and English capabilities make her a good fit for the Council's receptionist position, as do her organizational, computer, and people skills. Francia resides in Roxbury with her partner and two young sons.

## PREVENTING

### *Latino and African American GAMBLING PROBLEMS*

*“Gambling is ingrained in the Latino culture. It may be a family’s tradition to raise roosters for cock fights. While it is not accepted or legal in most of the US, it is a way of life for many Latinos. Therefore trying to teach people about why this behavior may not be healthy and about how gambling can go from being a recreational activity to being a real problem with serious consequences can be a challenge – but one that I feel is important to take on for the well-being of our families and our communities,”* said Eneida Perez, a Latino Team Member with the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling.

# BUILDING THE CAPACITY

## *of Treatment Providers*

*“As a social worker, I have seen many Latinos struggling with gambling problems. Language and cultural barriers often prohibit these individuals from getting the help they need. I encourage all community organizations serving Latinos to learn about problem gambling and how it impacts both individuals and family members. As helping professionals, we can strengthen our communities by offering even more resources for help and supporting our neighbors in whatever challenges they may face,”* said Victor Ortiz at Youth Opportunities Upheld (Y.O.U.), Inc.

The Council is working to increase the number of problem gambling prevention and treatment providers in the Commonwealth who have multi-lingual capacity. By introducing the Massachusetts Problem Gambling Specialist (MAPGS) certificate program to organizations that serve Spanish-speaking clients, as well as by offering technical assistance to the groups, the Council is confident that more prevention practitioners and clinicians will become trained to prevent and treat gambling problems.

Thus far in FY09, the Council has presented its program to 74 people at the Hispanic Office of Planning & Evaluation (HOPE) in both Jamaica Plain and Springfield, Y.O.U., Inc. in Worcester, and the Henry Lee Willis Community Center in Worcester. One hundred percent of attendees rated the trainings as excellent or above average in their evaluation summaries.

If you are interested in attending or hosting a training, please contact Haner Hernandez, PhD, Assistant Director of Prevention and Programs at the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling at 617-426-4555 / haner@masscompulsivegambling.org.

## Congregation Assistance Program

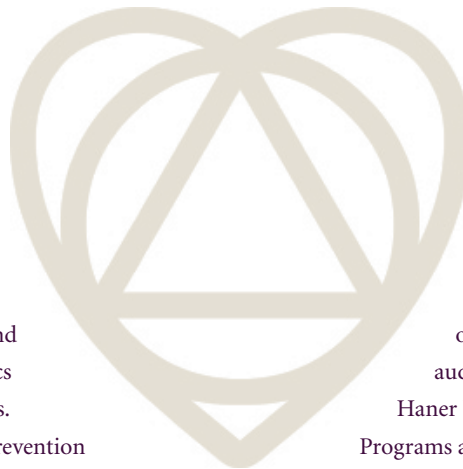
Faith communities have a unique ability and opportunity to assist both individuals and families suffering from addictions. For several years, the Council has collaborated with faith-based ministry teams through our Congregation Assistance program (CAP). The program assists in the development of a structured prevention and early intervention ministry. The Council helps congregations to create a core team of people trained to act as resources for the community on addiction and related issues.

Recently, the CAP curriculum was adapted and tailored to focus on the cultural characteristics of Latino and African American communities.

According to Council Assistant Director of Prevention and Programs, Haner Hernandez, PhD, “Faith is at the heart

of Latino and African American communities. Congregations are places that people go to connect with their homelands and to build social networks. Faith based groups have a long history of offering both guidance and support to neighborhoods by delivering human service programs. Because congregations already possess the human and spiritual resources to help, the CAP is a natural way for the Council to reach Latinos and African Americans with problem gambling messages.”

This spring, the Council translated the CAP curriculum both culturally and linguistically, and has offered six trainings to Latino and African American audiences thus far. For more information, please contact Haner Hernandez, PhD, Assistant Director of Prevention and Programs at the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling at 617-426-4555 haner@masscompulsivegambling.org.



# PROBLEM GAMBLING *in the* Asian American Community

## ESL LESSON PLAN

The Council, in collaboration with the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Coalition (BCNC), has developed a 60-minute lesson plan for English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers to use with their students.

The lesson plan introduces recent Asian immigrants and refugees to problem gambling by introducing warning signs, risk factors, and resources for help. The program offers a platform to start the discussion about problem gambling in Asian American communities.

On February 9, 2009, the Council provided a training for ESL teachers in Chinatown at the Asian American Civic Organization. Other trainings are planned for the future. For more information, please contact Chien-Chi Huang, Asian Community Program Manager at the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling at 617-426-4555 / [chienchi@masscompulsivegambling.org](mailto:chienchi@masscompulsivegambling.org).

## TUNG WAH GROUP *Visits Council*



*Chien-Chi Huang and Kathy Scanlan from the Council pictured with Elda Chan and Tracy Leung from the Tung Wah Group*

In March, the Council hosted a delegation from the Tung Wah Group (TWG), the largest hospital conglomerate in Hong Kong. Four members from the group's problem gambling unit visited the Council to present on their work with Chinese individuals experiencing problems with gambling. "What I found most intriguing was the striking similarities between the Tung Wah Group and the Mass. Council. From public perception of problem gambling, to funding and treatment challenges, our work is very much the same, and we are equally committed to helping people experiencing problems with gambling to get the help that they need," said Kathleen M. Scanlan, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling.

## BEATING THE ODDS

On Wednesday, March 25, 2009, the Institute for Asian American Studies presented a lecture entitled, "Beating the Odds: Addressing Problem Gambling in the Asian American Community" at the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

The lecture and panel discussion featured Dr. Timothy Fong, Co-Director of the Gambling Studies Program and Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at UCLA. He was joined by Chien-Chi Huang, Asian Community Program Manager at the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling, and Tram Tran, Vietnamese Community Liaison at the Boston Police Department.

According to Ms. Huang, "Regional surveys indicate that Asian Americans have a higher rate of problem gambling as compared to the general population. Recent immigrants are at especially high risk for gambling addiction. Facing language barriers and limited social venues, many turn to gambling to cope with stress or to seek excitement. To offer support and services, the Council increased its outreach efforts to targeted Chinese, Vietnamese and Cambodian communities in Massachusetts in 2006."

One of the resources provided by the Council is a confidential Helpline; offering referrals to people experiencing problems with gambling and their loved ones. Following are the Council's Asian Problem Gambling Helpline numbers: Chinese 1-857-363-3557, Vietnamese 1-857-383-3567 and Cambodian/Khmer 1-857-383-3577.

In addition, the Council's "Your First Step to Change" Self-Help Guidebooks are available in Chinese, Vietnamese and Cambodian / Khmer languages, and can be obtained by contacting Chien-Chi Huang, Asian Community Program Manager, at the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling at 617-426-4555 / [chienchi@masscompulsivegambling.org](mailto:chienchi@masscompulsivegambling.org).

## Council Works to Gain Support of Senate Bill 157

*“An act prohibiting the sale of lottery tickets on credit”*

Through its Helpline, the Council was made aware of problems surrounding the extension of credit to lottery customers. The Council understands that the practice is problematic for customers who may have no ability to repay their debts, as well as for store owners who are unable to collect money owed them.

Council Executive Director, Kathleen M. Scanlan, approached State Senator Michael W. Morrissey, Norfolk and Plymouth districts, and Chair of the Committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure with concerns about the issue, and he responded by introducing new legislation. Senate Bill 157, *“An act prohibiting the sale of lottery tickets on credit,”* was filed by Senator Morrissey and co-sponsored by Senators Stephen Brewer, James B. Eldridge, Sonia Chang-Diaz, Bruce Tarr, and Susan Tucker and Representatives Kay Kahn, John Keenan, Kathi-Anne Reinstein, Angelo Scaccia, and Brian Wallace. The bill states, “No person may sell a ticket or share if the only consideration given is a promise, in fact or in law, to make payment at a future time.”

According to Senator Morrissey, “It is already illegal for stores to sell lottery tickets to people paying with credit cards. The proposed measure helps to further protect people who have problems with gambling. Amending the language to prohibit store owners from extending personal lines of credit makes sense. It is good public policy, brought to our attention by the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling and I am pleased to offer my support.”

The bill is currently awaiting a vote.

## COUNCIL LOSES FUNDING FROM RACETRACKS FOR PROBLEM GAMBLING SERVICES

Since 1993 legislation has required that the four racetracks in Massachusetts contribute toward addressing gambling problems in the Commonwealth. However, due to declining revenues at the tracks, the \$130,000 that is ordinarily contributed annually by the tracks, was not available to the Council this fiscal year. The Council has been advised that the funds are not expected to be available in the fiscal year 2010 as well.

## PROBLEM GAMBLING LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Hats & Eyeglasses: A Family Love Affair with Gambling*

MARTHA FRANKEL, TARCHER PENGUIN, 2009

*Review written by Arthur Friedman, PhD, a good friend of the Council.*

Aptly titled, Martha Frankel’s book “Hats & Eyeglasses” accounts her own family’s “love affair” with gambling. After reading this memoir, it is unclear if the love affair has ended or will ever end, and I found myself confused by all the metaphorical symbolism in the book. Thankfully, she explains early on that “hats and eyeglasses is a term used to describe those times when you’re losing so bad that your ship is sinking, until all that’s left on the water’s surface are your hat and eyeglasses.”

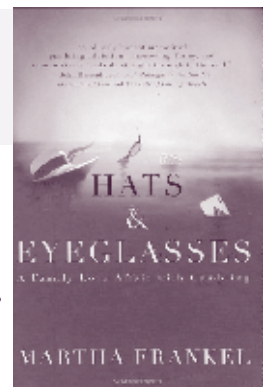
What adds significantly to the detailed description of her life, growing up surrounded by family members compulsively engaged in poker, race track and sports betting, are her vivid descriptions of her own gambling experiences, and in particular, her relationship to poker and online gambling. Frankel provides a window into the life of a female gambler, and includes the depths and plateaus of her own mostly excruciating experience.

While her memoir deserves great praise for its honest and often painful look at her life, Frankel’s experience often deviates from that of people in self-help and recovery models who are less able

(for a myriad of reasons) to reduce and regulate their “affair” with gambling.

In fact, for the majority of problem gamblers and the people who love them, they would be less likely to describe their experience with gambling as an “affair,” a characterization that attaches whimsy and romanticizes the experience. We would more likely describe our experience with gambling in the same metaphorical way as the “fatal attraction” of love affairs. Regardless, veiled behind the sanctity of the “memoir,” Frankel makes another important contribution to the mass media, and to the need to increase public awareness of problem gambling.

Problem gamblers reading the book may be seduced by Frankel’s poker playing tutorials, and detailed “how-to” win prescriptions. Some may actually find it useful that she continues to play poker every week in a controlled, seemingly more “social” environment, but the pain and suffering her relationship with gambling had on her life, the wasted time and potential, needs to be the “take-away” from her book. Problem gambling, especially in families where gambling is part of their culture, need to have “healthy adult relationships” with gambling and leave “love affairs” to consenting parties.



# Helpline 2.0

The Council recently welcomed two new Helpline Specialists. Bruce Tassone and Joan Gilmore share the job, and work together to bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position.



*Council Helpline Specialists Bruce Tassone and Joan Gilmore*

**BRUCE TASSONE,  
Helpline Specialist**

Bruce has been in recovery for compulsive gambling since 2004. His passion is to help others suffering with gambling problems by sharing his experience, strength and hope. Before joining the Council as a Helpline Specialist, Bruce worked for 20 years managing large construction projects and start-up medical businesses. He earned a BA in English from the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams.

**JOAN GILMORE, MSW, JD, Helpline Specialist**

Joan recently joined the Mass Council staff as a Helpline Specialist, bringing with her several years of experience working on a state-wide legal services helpline in New Hampshire. For 25 years, Joan worked with individuals and families as both a social worker, and as a lawyer in mental health, child welfare and legal settings. Joan earned her BA from Oberlin College in Ohio, a MSW from Waterloo Lutheran University in Canada, and a JD from the Antioch School of Law in Washington D.C.

The duo was recently interviewed about their experience, as well as their plans for the Helpline moving forward.

**Q. What interested you in the position?**

**Bruce** – I saw it as an opportunity to continue to help problem gamblers and their families to understand more about the disorder and get into recovery.

**Joan** – I believe in the Helpline process and in extending services to as many people as possible.

**Q. What skills do you feel help you to do this job?**

**Bruce** – Having spent five years in recovery for compulsive gambling, I feel that I understand what is happening with problem gamblers, and that I can provide help and advice.

**Joan** – I worked on a statewide Helpline for 11-years. My ability to interview and process information over the phone is a strength that I bring to the position.

**Q. What are your plans for the Helpline moving forward?**

**Bruce & Joan** – We need to use technology to move the Helpline into the 21st century. We're in the process of exploring non-conventional ways to reach out to people, including offering chat and IM services, getting involved in Web 2.0, and by finding other pertinent ways to help people where they are. In addition, we need to simplify our approach and make it easier for people to access our services, literature and information. We are potentially going to change the whole way that we help people. We are going to adapt.

**Q. What do you wish that people knew about the Helpline?**

**Bruce & Joan** – We want people to know that we care and we want to help.

*For more information, please contact Bruce Tassone or Joan Gilmore, Council Helpline Specialists at 617-426-4554  
bruce@masscompulsivegambling.org  
joan@masscompulsivegambling.org.*

## ADDICTION ADVOCACY TRAINING INITIATIVE

The Council lends its support to the Addiction Advocacy Training Initiative. The Massachusetts Alcohol and Other Drug Advocacy Leadership Training Institutes are co-sponsored by Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery and Mental Health and Substance Abuse Corporations of Massachusetts, Inc. The goal of the program is to recruit a broad range of interested people who will learn how to advocate for alcohol and other addiction issues, as well as learn strategies needed to take action to improve state funding for these programs over the next two years. Three regional trainings were offered in June in Springfield, Waltham and Beverly. *The Steering Committee acknowledges the support of Join Together and Charles Evans Hughes Foundation. The Institutes are funded by a grant from Reckitt Benckiser Pharmaceuticals.*

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The Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling is a private, non-profit health agency dedicated to reducing the social, financial and emotional costs of problem gambling. The Council provides prevention, information, education, advocacy, and referral services for problem gamblers, their loved ones, and the greater community.

*The Council is funded in part by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Public Health, Bureau of Substance Abuse Services.*

## Massachusetts Problem Gambling Treatment Centers

**Boston ASAP, Boston:** 617.482.5292

**Henry Lee Willis Community Center, Worcester:** 508.799.2934

**Lowell House, Inc., Lowell:** 978.459.8656

**Mt. Auburn Hospital Prevention & Recovery Center, Cambridge:** 617.499.5051

**Stanley Street Treatment & Resources, Inc., Fall River:** 508.679.5222

**Steppingstone, Inc., Fall River:** 508.674.2788 ext. 110

**Team Coordinating Agency, Inc., Haverhill:** 978.373.1181 ext. 42

## Resources

**Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling Helpline:** 800.426.1234

**Gamblers Anonymous MA Hotline:** 617.338.6020

**Bettors Anonymous:** 978.988.1777 or 781.662.5199

**Gam-Anon (family/friends):** 888.644.8482

**National Council on Problem Gambling Helpline:** 800.522.4700

**Division on Addictions, Cambridge Health Alliance, a teaching affiliate of Harvard Medical School:** 781.306.8600

## CONGRATULATIONS!

Council Helpline Specialist, Bruce Tassone and Council Communications Specialist, Margot Cahoon both recently welcomed new babies to their families.

Bruce and partner, Ameer Desjourdy welcomed Mackenzie Desjourdy Tassone on October 17, 2008. Mackie was born at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. She was 7 pounds, 4 ounces and 18 inches long.

Margot, her husband Shawn, and their son 4-year old Max, welcomed Jake Harold Cahoon on Sunday November 2, 2008. Jake was born at Cape Cod Hospital in Hyannis. He weighed 7 pounds, 5 ounces and was 21 inches long.

*The babies and their families are all doing well!*



**Mackie**



**Jake**

## WANTED! Your e-mail Address

In an effort to reduce paper waste, as well as conserve financial resources in challenging economic times, the Council has begun to send out more of its newsletters and other information via e-mail. If you are not receiving e-newsletters from the Council, please sign up today. It's easy. Simply visit [www.masscompulsivegambling.org/news/newsletters.php](http://www.masscompulsivegambling.org/news/newsletters.php) and type in your name and e-mail address.