

The WAGER, Vol. 6(22) - Did You Know...

May 30, 2001

Since its inception, the WAGER has reliably presented the latest research and information on a variety of topics associated with gambling. The tradition continues this week, with some interesting facts that might be overlooked in the everyday discourse on gambling and its connectedness to history, architecture, sport, fast food, electricity, and the family.

Did you know...*

...horse racing is one of the most ancient sports, originating in Central Asia among prehistoric nomadic tribesmen around 4500 B.C.?

...Madam de Montespan, second wife of Louis XIV, once lost four million francs in a half-hour at the gambling table?

...in eighteenth-century English gambling dens, there was an employee whose only job was to swallow dice if there was a police raid?

...the United States Government did not want workers building the Hoover Dam in Nevada to be distracted by gambling opportunities? As such, the Government built the town of Boulder City to house workers. Boulder City remains the only city in Nevada where gambling is illegal.

...horse racing was the first sport to have strict regulations against drug use?

...horse racing regulations state that no racehorse's name can contain more than eighteen letters. Names that are too long would be cumbersome on racing sheets?

...the only McDonald's restaurant in the world built on a horse racing course is in Hong Kong?

Source: <http://uselessknowledge.com>. The WAGER acknowledges GamCare News (Spring, p.10 2001 for leading us to uselessknowledge.com

As the trivia above reveals, gambling has a long and storied history. It is integrated into the fabric of societies around the world. An understanding and appreciation of this connectedness is vital as we continue to examine how gambling influences people, and how its historical presence shapes our contemporary notions of gambling as a harmless recreational activity, a vice, and a psychiatric disorder.

The WAGER is a public education project of the Division on Addictions at Harvard Medical

School. It is funded, in part, by the National Center for Responsible Gaming, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Addiction Technology Transfer Center of New England, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment.