

Perspectives

Little-known addictions equally destructive

(CPS)—After graduating near the top of his high school class, Derek Koeller entered West Virginia University in 1990 with high hopes and expectations.

"I was planning on getting my degree in secondary education," Koeller, of Morgantown, W.V., said. "I wanted to teach high school history."

Seven years later, Koeller is about to fulfill that dream. It's just happening later than he expected.

"I lost about three years of my life," Koeller said. "I almost threw it all away because I couldn't stop betting on games."

Koeller's addiction to gambling led him down a path of poverty and depression. Once a student full of potential, Koeller said he quickly became a slave to the scoreboard. Like many college students, his penchant for gambling cost him much more than a portion of his weekly paycheck.

"Schools have programs for drug and alcohol abusers, but what about those juniors and seniors who've lost all their money by betting on football games?" said Art Mambra, a former guidance counselor at the University of Northern Iowa. "It wasn't a huge number, but when these students would come in to talk to me, they would be at the end of their rope."

Koeller said it took less than 20 months before he hit rock bot-

tom. By April of his sophomore year, he had bet on his final game.

"I dropped all my classes, lost my job, and didn't have a goddamn dime," Koeller said.

"There were people calling my dorm room at all hours of the night, my roommate was always pissed at me, and my friends pretty much left me to die."

Although Koeller admits he's being a bit dramatic, he said his

going to pay off your \$500 debt, so they stay away."

For Koeller, that debt reached \$11,000, a high price for a full-time student and part-time telemarketer. For others, the price tag is much higher.

"I've talked to students who owe \$40,000," said Robert Shaw, a counselor for Gamblers Anonymous and a former gambler himself. "These kids get into some-

thing they can't handle. They have no idea how big this is."

Although no certain estimates are available, betting tabs in Las Vegas are said to easily top a billion dollars each year. Factor in the numerous office pools and bets between relatives and friends, and that number skyrockets.

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"It's not something we're tack-

ling right now, but it is definitely on our agenda," said Deanna Smith, spokesperson for the NCAA. "Considering what happened this past football season (the gambling scandal involving Boston College football players), we need to keep the outside influences away from the athletes."

Several BC players admitted they bet on college games throughout the season—in itself a violation of NCAA rules. The real trouble began when Boston newspapers reported that BC players were betting on their own games, and getting pressure from local bookies to cover the spread.

BC athletic director Chet Gladchuk said he is not taking the situation lightly.

"We'll be setting up programs for our players," Gladchuk said. "And hopefully, the rest of the student body will participate, too."

BC junior James Hennigan said the football team scandal was a wake-up call for him. "I was spending about \$100 a week on football bets," he said. "I saw what was happening there, and it made me think. You never know where something like this is going to lead. I figured I'd get out while I still could."

Henry Lesieur, an Illinois State University criminal justice professor with a specialization in gam-

bling, says schools need to treat betting like any other addiction.

"When parents send their kids off to school, they can't imagine their son or daughter betting away their checkbook on some basketball game, but it happens," Lesieur said.

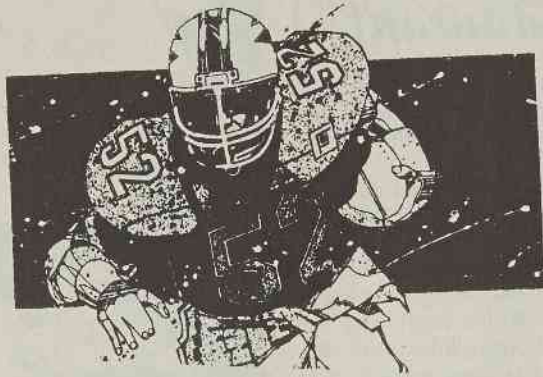
Lesieur did a study on gambling in schools in five states. He found that 85 percent of college students gambled at least once in their lives, while 25 percent said they bet on a regular basis.

While Lesieur said schools need to set up programs to help students with all addictions, he also said parents need to be aware of their child's lifestyle by getting involved with their academic and social careers.

Or, as in Koeller's case, get left behind.

"I can't say I'm out of the woods yet," Koeller said. "I don't bet anymore, but I can't look at the paper without checking out the betting lines. I see something like Houston favored over New York by 12 points, and I'm like, 'No way that's going to happen. Make a phone call—time to make some money.'"

But Koeller said he resists the urge. "I don't ever want to be in such a vulnerable position again," he said. "I'm not going to make the climb a second time. The first time took too much work."



friends distanced themselves from him once they saw what was happening, despite the fact that many still bet on games themselves.

"Gambling isn't a friend-in-need addiction," Koeller said. "It's not like pot or alcohol where you do what you can to get your friend to a treatment center. People avoid you because they think it's going to cost them money. No one's

thing they can't handle. They have no idea how big this is."

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Mr. Whipple: The most hated



Dave Barry
columnist

tired of the endlessly escalating, extremely confusing war of the pain relievers. At one time, years ago, there was just aspirin, which was basically for headaches. Now, there are dozens of products, every single one of which seems to be telling you that not only is it more effective than the other ones, but also the other ones could cause a variety of harmful side effects such as death. It seems safer to just live with the headache.

Many survey respondents were especially scornful of the commercials suggesting that you can undergo an actual surgical procedure, such as a Cesarean section, and the only pain medication you'd need afterward is Tylenol. As Gwen Marshall put it: "If my doctor had given me Tylenol and expected me to be pain-free and happy, I'd have jumped off that lovely table that holds your legs

woman in the Special K commercials got to be thin and shapely by eating Special K. Patricia Gualdoni wrote: "I have eaten enough Special K cereal to sink a battleship, and I look a lot more like a battleship than the woman in the ad did."

People are also skeptical of the Denorex shampoo commercials. "How do we know that the tingling sensation isn't battery acid eating through your scalp?" asked Alyssa Church.

Here are just a few of the other views expressed by the thousands of readers who responded to the survey:

Andy Elliott wrote: "I hate radio ads that say, 'Our prices are so low, we can't say them on the radio!' Why? Will people start bleeding from the ears if they hear these prices?"

Michael Howard wrote: "I live near Seattle and there is one channel that runs commercials approximately every five minutes advertising the fact that they have a helicopter. Can you believe it? A helicopter!"

A.J. VanHorn theorized that "the increase in suicides among young people is due to the beer commercial showing a bunch of rednecks in a beat-up pickup swigging beer from cans and telling everyone 'It don't git no better 'n this.'"

Kathy Walden objected to "Wal-Mart commercials that shamelessly try to portray all Wal-Mart customers as poor, uneducated, rural, and concerned primarily with reproducing themselves. Of course, this is true, but still..."

There were many, many more strong comments, but I'm out of space.

So I'm going to close with a statement penned by a reader identifying himself as "Flat Foot Sam," who I believe spoke for millions of consumers when he wrote these words:

"I'd like to buy the world a Coke,"
"And spray it out my nose."

ing quantities of fluids. People also cannot fathom why this fluid is always blue.

As Carla and Bill Chandler put it: "If anyone around here starts secreting anything blue, the last thing we're going to worry about is how absorbent their pad is."

People do not wish to hear any more about incontinence. Rich Klinzman wrote: "I have often fantasized about sneaking up behind June Allyson, blowing up a

"If my doctor had given me Tylenol and expected me to be pain-free and happy, I'd have grabbed the 12-inch scalpel out of his hand and held it to his throat until I got morphine, lots of it."

--consumer Gwen Marshall

paper bag, and slamming my fist into it, just to see how absorbent those adult diapers really are."

People also do not wish to see actors pretending to be mothers and daughters talking about very personal feminine matters as though they were discussing the weather.

Richard J. O'Neil, expressing a common sentiment, wrote: "If I was a woman, I would walk on my lips through a sewage plant before I would share this kind of information with any living soul. Let alone my mother."

People do wish to see extreme close-ups of other people chewing.

People are also getting mighty

ten feet apart, grabbed the 12-inch scalpel out of his hand and held it to his throat until I got morphine, lots of it."

Another type of advertising that people detest is the Mystery Commercial, in which there is no earthly way to tell what product is being advertised.

These commercials usually consist of many apparently random images flashing rapidly past on the screen, and then, at the end, you see a Nike swoosh, or the IBM logo, or Mr. Whipple.

People are sick and tired of seeing actors pretend to be deeply emotionally attached to their breakfast cereals. People also frankly do not believe that the

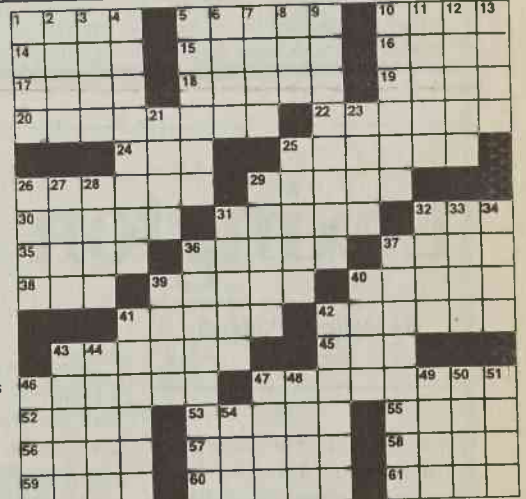
THE Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Ride a wave
- 5 Scrub
- 10 McEntire of music
- 14 Edible spread
- 15 Old Greek thinker
- 16 Arab VIP
- 17 Nullify
- 18 — free delivery
- 19 Conifer
- 20 Bakery items
- 22 Gives way
- 24 Crude dwelling
- 25 Pomes
- 26 Be against
- 29 Traverse
- 30 Haggard or Oberon
- 31 Actress Thomas
- 32 Evil
- 35 Like a desert
- 36 Tropical eel
- 37 Ice cream —
- 38 Opp. of pos.
- 39 Like many animals
- 40 List of candidates
- 41 Domineering
- 42 Full-page illustrations
- 43 Robber at sea
- 45 Your and my
- 46 City in the Philippines
- 47 First
- 52 Watched
- 53 Calls
- 55 City in Alaska
- 56 Dried out
- 57 A+ or B-, e.g.
- 58 Blissful place
- 59 Hardens
- 60 Fish
- 61 Watch over

DOWN

- 1 Bouillon
- 2 Arm bone
- 3 Ohio players
- 4 Secure standing
- 5 Fairy
- 6 Hint
- 7 Items for rowers
- 8 Actress Hagen



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ANSWERS

- 9 Short and fat
- 10 Repulses
- 11 Zola
- 12 Ties
- 13 War god
- 21 Trick
- 23 — fact
- 25 Dress in finery
- 26 Arabian gulf
- 27 Father: Fr.
- 28 Straitlaced one
- 29 Tote
- 31 Code name
- 32 Vessel
- 33 Poker stake
- 34 Poor grades
- 36 Wild horses
- 37 Musical instrument
- 39 Young equine
- 40 Hit hard
- 41 "Seven — for Seven Brothers"
- 42 Balanced
- 43 Check recipient
- 44 Sluggish
- 46 Quantity of food
- 47 — Khayyam
- 48 Perform again
- 49 Protuberance
- 50 — corner
- 51 Furnish
- 54 Curved line

