

# Gambling: 'I don't know how to break the cycle'

Continued from Page 1A

reality. Unfortunately, the counselor said, problem gamblers face reality by thinking a big win will fix their shame and depression.

"And around it goes," Edwards said.

To break the cycle, problem gamblers must create barriers, develop a support system and seek treatment.

Edwards teaches coping skills, relapse prevention and tools to stop gambling. Her program also offers support with relationships, grief and financial stability.

### Limited resources

As the only support in Clatsop County, Edwards wants to add another group session to have sessions twice a week. Eventually, she would like to get a local Gambler's Anonymous meeting up and running.

With limited resources available, Jewell said, she attends Alcoholics Anonymous meetings to get extra help.

"It's the same struggles," she said.

During her second meeting with Edwards, Jewell asked for a referral to inpatient treatment. Last June, she checked into Bridgeway Recovery Services in Salem, a mental health and addictions treatment facility. She lived there for 43 days in a house with seven other adults.

She focused on other activities that make her happy, such as drawing and painting. She shared her art with the instructors at the recovery center.

"It was relieving to know that there are others who relate to this addiction," she said.

### Youth prevention

Looking back, Jewell said, she recalls gambling as a seem-

**'It really does happen to me where I get to the point where I want to give up. I feel bad about myself and guilty and really rotten. I beat myself up a lot from it.'**

**Christina Porter**  
She lost about \$8,000 gambling

ingly harmless part of growing up. As a kid, she remembers playing poker at friends' homes. They would often settle arguments by saying, "How much you want to bet?" She is seeing the same tendencies to gamble in the younger generation.

Clatsop County Commissioner Sarah Nebeker, who serves on the county's Human Services Advisory Council, said expanding youth under-

standing of gambling addiction should be a goal of the community.

"I'm very concerned about it," Nebeker said. "We have a whole generation of young people coming up that could be a whole new crop of addicts for gambling as these machines become more enticing and we depend on it for revenue."

A reason there is such a low number of people in treatment, Nebeker said, is because

the addiction is not discussed. Treatment providers call it the "hidden addiction."

"Until we have an open dialogue about all of these issues and speak freely about it, everyone is going to think it's just them," Nebeker said.

### Relapses

While easy availability and entertainment are some ways people get hooked, Porter said, gambling was an escape from her stress at home. Sitting at a video poker machine put her in a trance where she forgot about her troubles. However, every time she lost money, which was often, she got devastated to the point of turning suicidal.

"It really does happen to me where I get to the point where I want to give up," Porter said. "I feel bad about myself and guilty and really rotten. I beat myself up a lot from it."

Through treatment and the support of her friends and family, Porter is down to gambling once a week. She has not gambled since last Wednesday, which she hopes is her last day. "The group is helping. I used to gamble every day if I had money, even \$2," she said.

Jewell has struggled to abstain from gambling.

In December, she was one day shy of six months when she relapsed. Since the obsession came back, she lost \$1,600.

Despite all Jewell learned in treatment, she spent her lunch break Monday playing video poker at the Silver Salmon downtown. She said she put in \$20 and was up \$160 when she decided to keep playing. She left the restaurant down more than \$300, and was late returning to work.

"I don't know how to break the cycle," she said.

# Gearhart: Planning Commission has another public hearing set for April 14

Continued from Page 1A

systems, as Clatsop County Public Health Environmental Health Supervisor Mike McNickle provided an overview of the city's septic systems, cesspools and gravity waste-treatment systems.

Many septic tanks, particularly steel ones installed 40 or 50 years ago, are disintegrating, he said. Others are overloaded or inefficient.

Since Gearhart residents use groundwater as their drinking supply, more short-term rental visitors could play a role in the public's clean water supply, he said.

Tanks for two people should be pumped every five to seven years, McNickle said, and a family of four should pump every three to five years, depending on usage. Five loads of wash could put a home at 75 percent of the 275-gallon daily water-usage average.

### Homeowner limits

The number of bedrooms



Kerry Smith, Richard Owsley and Dianne Widdop at the Gearhart Planning Commission and City Council work session.

rather than the size of the bathroom determines a homeowner's limit, he added.

City Planner Carole Connell recommended a maximum of 10 people per short-term

rental stay, including people sleeping in tents or RVs on the property, because "those people use the facilities," she said. "It has to do with the water usage."

Septic inspection would be required and cesspools would be prohibited from licensing at transient rental properties, officials agreed.

In addition to septic mon-

itoring, officials addressed parking concerns, garbage pickup and emergency safety.

Adequate parking should be a consideration, commissioners suggested, and could

be limited to one car per rental bedroom.

Property owners could be required to provide sideyard garbage pickup and information about recycling for their guests.

Rules may mandate emergency go-bags and ensure a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration radio in case of tsunami and earthquake scenarios.

Commissioner Terry Graff urged an occupancy cap and minimum-length-stay requirement.

"If you're going to do something to control the rental problem, the only way you're going to do it is with an occupancy cap and minimum rental stays," Graff said.

"That's the most important reason we're here," Councilor Paulina Cockrum said.

The Planning Commission will continue meeting to develop short-term rental licensing guidelines, with a public hearing April 14.

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