

Inside

CONTINUED FROM PAGE C10

a key element of the gambling discourse. One narrative is this: out-of-staters win, Mainers lose. For example, on the CasinosNo! Web site, number 10 of the top 10 reasons to reject Question 1 was worded this way: "Maine people lose. If Question One passes and a racetrack casino gets built in Washington County, someone might get rich, but it won't be the residents of that chronically depressed area."

While it is easy to characterize out-of-staters as foreigners, there is a second narrative at play: Southern Maine versus the "real" Maine. Guess which one is the foreigner?

Consider the following comment from Christine on the Bangor Daily News Web site, reacting to the vote: "Once again the way of life in Washington County is decided by those who do not live here... The people of Washington County showed overwhelming support for this, but I guess we are not capable of knowing what is best for us."

While it is technically inaccurate to describe any part of Maine as foreign from any other part, the sentiments expressed in Christine's comments are revealing. The use of "us" implies there is a "they." The phrase "those who do not live here" suggests there is distance, or separateness.

This narrative also implies an inappropriateness. For example, Toni of Dennyville also wrote on the Web site: "I feel the rest of the state should not have had a chance to vote on the casino, because the jobs would not affect them."

Pure can also be defined as "untainted with evil; innocent." If gambling is evil, then the mere presence of the state lottery gives Maine at least a trace of vice.

However, it is Maine's in-

nocence, or at least an image of innocence, which the expansion of gambling seems to threaten. On Oct. 28, the Sun Journal featured an editorial that stated, in part, that "the time for debating the merits of having gambling in Maine is over; it's now time for discussions on strategies to cope with its existence."

If it could only be that easy. "Coping with its existence" means stronger state regulation of the industry, as the editorial suggests. More forceful regulation of gambling implies it's a permanent, and legitimate, part of our landscape.

But do the majority of Mainers want it to be?

A racino in Washington County could have led to calls for more gambling in other economically challenged areas. Why say yes to Calais and no to Oxford County? And then what? Additional gambling sites would necessarily lead to more calls for stronger state regulation. Then we would have no choice but to acknowledge our "bargain with the devil," as some characterize legalized gambling. There goes our innocence.

When it comes to gambling, purity has trumped fairness, at least for now.

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