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January 26, 2004

## Casinos in the Catskills (2 Letters)

To the Editor:

With regard to the lack of progress on the building of casinos in the Catskills, there are a couple of other factors not cited in "Casino Deals Are Stalled by State, U.S. and Tribal Hurdles" (news article, Jan. 20).

Critical to the Iroquois is the lack of fiscal accountability for the three existing casinos in New York. We don't have access to the books, so most Iroquois have no clue as to how much casino money is being generated, allegedly on our behalf, or where it is being spent. Certainly the average Iroquois is no better off now than before the casinos.

Someone's getting rich, and it is not us.

Another factor in our resistance to the Catskills casinos is Gov. George E. Pataki's insistence that we must resolve our land claims in his favor before he will enter into a gambling compact. Yes, there are those among us who will eagerly trade land for casinos, but most Iroquois believe that we have fought for too long to preserve our ancestral territories just to trade it off for gold and silver trinkets.

You fooled us once and got Manhattan. That won't happen this time.

DOUG GEORGE-KANENTIIO

Oneida Castle, N.Y., Jan. 20, 2004

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To the Editor:

As a former Borscht Belt resort owner and native of Sullivan County, I take strong issue with the statement that "casinos would mean a return to the glory days of the Borscht Belt resorts, and then some" (news article, Jan. 20).

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It is an insult to the hundreds of former resort owner families to equate the glory days of the Borscht Belt with the possible establishment of gambling casinos in the area. The nearly 1,000 resorts, boarding houses, bungalow colonies, camps and tourist homes that existed in Sullivan County from the 1920's to the 1960's, for the first time in history, provided to the working-class people of New York State and beyond a luxury vacation at an affordable price.

In contrast to the resorts' history, to revive the county with casinos would be another way of snatching from the working class their hard-earned dollars and giving it to the so-called gambling interests.

**JOHN WEINER**

White Plains, Jan. 20, 2004