



CHILLY HIKE: The Senior Hiking Group enjoyed a chilly hike along the Bruce Trail on Friday morning, starting off on the Fourth Line by the old trucking place. - Submitted photo

SPORTS TALK

Focusing on concussions

I watched some of Thursday night's football last week. It was an interesting game between the Seattle Seahawks and Arizona Cardinals. Seattle won 22 to 16.

Anytime I get to watch football, the elephant in the room seems to be the C-word—Concussion. It has become a nightmare for athletes, sports administrators and franchise owners across all contact sports, and it doesn't seem to be going away.

While getting a universally accepted definition is difficult, a concussion can be explained as a common type of brain injury caused by trauma to the head and neck area. Symptoms may include temporary loss of consciousness, dizziness, fatigue, headaches just to name a few.

There has been increased focus on concussions recently due to its link to long term brain damage and very serious debilitating diseases like dementia, Alzheimer's Disease and Parkinson's Disease. Most people recall the iconic scenes in 1996 during the opening ceremony of the Olympics in Atlanta where the late Mohammed Ali—arguably the greatest boxer of all time—was tasked with lighting the Olympic torch. He was visibly shaking as a result of Parkinson's. The image of a once very active, talkative "super athlete" having uncontrollable tremors will forever

By
Michael Oke

be etched in the memories of many. The attention he received subsequently opened up conversations around concussion and its link to long term brain injury. Ali's disease was traced back to multiple concussions he suffered in his over 20-year boxing career, one estimate claims he received over 200,000 hits to the head and body over this period.

With the attention on concussion comes increased awareness and potential funding for research. These are long term and ongoing interventions. What should be done in the present to significantly reduce occurrences of concussion is where efforts need to be focused on.

At the moment, almost all public schools and sports governing bodies have some concussion protocol in place to address any head injury. This usually involves having a third party medical practitioner confirm if the student or player should be allowed to continue in a game when a concussion is suspected. Before now, athletes were expected to just "man up" and get on with it.

In the Seattle vs. Arizona game, the Seahawk's Quarterback Russell Wilson was temporarily withdrawn from the game following a collision in the third quarter for an independent evaluation before he was allowed to continue. Let's spread the word.

JUST A THOUGHT

Up the down ladder



By
Trish Bell

When was the last time you believed in something? Not superficially because you were supposed to think that way, I mean a conviction that goes through you, buries itself deep down into your soul. Perhaps it was your unwavering belief in Santa Claus when you were only three or four years old. Maybe you feel it as each rosary bead slides through your fingers during prayer. Or perchance you were awash in it when staring doubters down to prove you had what it takes. Have you ever had such persuasions?

Convictions of this nature are precious and rare. We talk about them like they are undeniable truths but the sheer fact is, faith cannot be truth. It remains intangible, unseen and unproven and for faith to work, it must endure untethered and questionable. For many, dogma is hopelessly entwined in the belief systems of our childhood; how we were raised and what we were taught casting shadows on our most sincere thoughts. Beliefs can be fundamental issues that tug deepest on our heartstrings—the right for a child to go to school, the respect and dignity of seniors, fair justice for all, health care that is compassionate. They can be institutions; faith in one's nation sustained those at war, while the beliefs of the masses on politics, social issues, economics, culture, and religion have helped distinguish us into the country we are today. Many align their identity and core values to religion and many more have dedicated themselves to that faith, which can do tremendous good as it provides them peace and encourages them to spread that sense of strength amongst others. Sadly, as with all other human realities, it ap-

pears faith too exists upon a pendulum; all great good will create the possibility for great evil. Our dogged beliefs can divide us and have led to some of the vilest moments in our collective human history. Still, for all the hot tempers and disagreements that our varying beliefs have created, man's ability to believe in something beyond himself is worthy of praise and recognition despite its inherit flaws. True it has lead us to war more often than any other cause, but it has also helped create some of our most precious moments personally, culturally and as a species. And while you may think belief isn't that important, it can well be argued that just the simple act of faith itself is crucial to the authentic human condition.

Yet, when one turns on the news, one can't help but feel overwhelmed by a lack of faith's impact. People obsessing about the differences in beliefs, taking every opportunity to demonstrate the truth of their convictions by highlighting the flaws in those who oppose them. Nowhere does this show more than in the nonstop continuous coverage of the Trump Presidency. We have become so wrapped up in this false, inflated version of reality that we are now losing ourselves, and our convictions in the process. We eagerly await news of Trump's next flub not realizing that we are simply polluting our collective conscious with anger and hate. We complain of his ego, unaware we are simply giving in to our own, transferring

our need to put others in their place so that we may justify our own ill choices. What does our fascination with Trump's failures say about us and our values? While we flood our newsfeeds with negativity, the question remains: how many other stories are we missing? How many good stories? This entire saga seems to be turning us into a society of condemnation where our faith has become flimsy. We go through the motions yet, at the first sign of resistance, we throw our hands up and claim disbelief. If our convictions are not part of who we are, why are we so desperate to hold onto them in others? Are they not worthy of our support even when we are the trespassers? What about believing in the good in others? Having patience? Being kind? When did society place more value on tearing people down instead of making them better? Somewhere, somehow, we have become a world society of negative faith. Religions and cultures struggling to topple each other. I don't need to celebrate your faith or culture just to respect it or you. I can honour my own beliefs and still allow you yours. We have become so caught up in the negative that we have allowed our own convictions to slip through our fingers. The Dali Lama said, "our buildings are now taller, but our tempers shorter; our freeways wider but our views narrowed; and while our incomes grow higher our morals sink lower." So, I ask again, is this who we really want to be? With Santa Claus rolling into town this weekend, perhaps it is the perfect time to ask ourselves, if this is this the magic of belief we want to pass along to the next generation?

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