



**TOURNAMENT CHAMPS:** Rockwood FC Boys Elite team won the U14 Players Paradise tournament last Tuesday. The boys won all four games with no goals scored on keeper Eric Murison. The scores were 4-0, 3-0, 7-0, and 2-0. A fantastic team effort by all, and just two days after attending the first day of the Buffalo Sahlen Series tournament where they tied one game and won the other two. - Submitted photo

## SPORTS TALK

### The other Canadian hockey win

The attention of hockey fans across Halton Hills and Canada this past week has been on the triumph of the Canadian team against the Swedes in the final game of the World Junior Hockey Championships held in Buffalo. The game ended 3-1 in what many would regard as a “home game” for the Canadians given the proximity of the venue to the US/Canada border.

Also gaining a lot of attention was the inexplicable action of the 19-year-old, Swedish captain Lias Andersson during the medal presentation ceremony when he threw his silver medal into the stands. The New York Rangers prospect has been an integral part of the Swedish hockey development program for almost five years now, and while his disappointment at losing yet another final is understandable, words like “unsportsmanlike” and “entitled” have trailed his rather strange outburst.

Away from the spotlight and drama, the Canadian men’s hockey team won the 91st edition of the Spengler Cup in Davos, Switzerland. They defeated the Swiss team by three goals to nothing, to claim a

By **Michael Oke**

third straight win for Canada in this annual competition. While this competition is probably not as popular here, it is one of the biggest sporting events in Switzerland and is often cited as the oldest invitational ice hockey tournaments in the world—having started in 1923.

For Hockey Canada, the Spengler Cup provided the ideal tournament to assist coaching staff evaluate players in competition before making the final selection for the Winter Games in South Korea.

With the notable absence of the NHL stars, the 2018 Olympic hockey tournament provides a rare opportunity for hockey players in the AHL, NCAA and those currently plying their trade in Europe to represent their country and win medals.

So, the year has started with two significant championship victories for Canada, is this an indication of what the New Year holds?

As a side note, The Buffalo Bills and Carolina Panthers got knocked out of contention in the NFL Wildcard games, so there goes one of my Super Bowl wishes for 2018.

## JUST A THOUGHT

### The forgotten and the ignored

Ah, January is here again: cold and bleak, with mailboxes full of bills and long commutes in the dark. It is the time of year when just a view of sunshine can truly warm your soul and escaping seems only one step better than hibernation. Many of us sit, under blankets aplenty, transfixed on the media—be it this new-fangled social stuff or good ol’ fashioned T.V.—awaiting each new development in the daily soap, “Trump-topia,” or longing for the next person booted out of this year’s “Survivor: #Me-Too island.” Yet, all joking aside, while it goes without saying that political figures should be taken to task for their choices and the abused deserve social justice, our convictions run a little thin when talking about those abused by the neglect of our broken health and social care systems. It is as though our awareness follows only the glamorous, and we plead ignorance to the people who need our collective voices most. And who, you ask, needs our support in this harsh and isolating month? Well, the millions struggling on the Autism Spectrum—and their caregivers—seem like a pretty good start.

Watching moms, like Halifax’s Carly Sutherland, plead for help for their kids via news conferences should make all our blood boil. Sutherland’s son Callum is severely autistic, with violent outbursts as his only means of dealing with the world around him. He can’t attend school, and as of December can’t stay in a formal institutional setting but for the sake of his safety and family—he can’t stay home either. There is nowhere for this boy to go. There is no help. There is no plan. And there is no outrage from us. For many on the spectrum, it is a struggle to surmount the overload of sensory



By **Trish Bell**

information coming into their brains. It can cause confusion, anger, even pain, and what’s worse, for many it is yet another stumbling block. Imagine it: trapped in a strange, almost foreign world every day, where you don’t understand the customs, can’t understand the language, and feel every little sensory input—sights, sounds, smells, even the way your clothes touch your skin—all with such intensity it actually hurts and makes you lash out at yourself and those who care most. You have no other way to express your needs or pains to those who are trying to help you, and it doesn’t seem to matter anyway because they can’t seem to help you. Now imagine being that child’s mother or father. Cruel, isn’t it? So, I wonder, why we brag about a health care system that leaves a child like this—or their family—with no supports, no resources and no hope for the future? Not outraged yet. Current numbers are merely estimates, but it appears that one in every 68 Canadian children fall somewhere upon the spectrum, the prevalence of which has made it the most commonly diagnosed neurological disorder in Canada. Still, prevalent or not, each individual diagnosed on this Spectrum is just that—an individual—and it is incomprehensible to imagine daily life for these individuals and their families, families that watch helplessly while pleading for help that never comes. Canada has no national plan, instead choosing to focus on recreational marijuana laws instead of struggling kids. In Ontario, the recent

announcement of \$333 million dollars over five years is a pathetic start as it merely throws money at the problem but ties it up in overwhelming bureaucracy and endless red tape. By the time these kids are diagnosed, on average at two years, they are on a limited time waitlist that often runs out by their fifth birthday. Then it is onto another waitlist for services that seem vaguely outlined at best. The program here seems to be on a never-ending reboot, changing the rules so often that it remains difficult to navigate. What’s more, this unorganized system continues to have gaping holes; resources and support services necessary for simple quality of life, let alone, improvements fall through those gaping holes, and those that don’t remain so expensive they are out of reach. What’s worse, those millions promised aren’t much compared to the estimated costs of autism: caregiver support time weighs in at staggering \$5.5 million higher than the average child’s needs, while the care itself can add another \$4.7 million—clearly beyond almost all Canadian family incomes. Gee, I can’t imagine why moms are pleading their cases on T.V. And what do we do? Ignore it. Waitlists continue to swell. Schools continue to struggle. Programs and resources continue to backlog. And each individual and their family becomes a statistic of how not to solve the problem. Moms like Ms. Sutherland are being beaten and broken—by both their child and the system that fails them, and that by proxy, means by us too. Perhaps, when we all look up from our popular ‘cause of the week’ we’ll see these kids and their families, still waiting, and realize that these individuals deserve to be championed too.

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