

Soccer-loving father makes one think about a little wager

Who needs Casino Rama? Especially when there are far more creative ways of gambling away income you've chosen to hold back from paying off the mortgage or your car loan.

Take, for instance, the English bloke who recently made a long term, long shot wager that his three month old son would score a goal for the Brits in the World Cup of Soccer at the age of 21. This guy stands to rake in a cool million in the unlikely event of his progeny coming up with the goods. The whole thing obviously stems from Dad's obsession with soccer. The kid must have accidentally hoofed a sponge soccer ball off the change table while trying to wriggle out of his pop's clumsy grip in mid-diaper change, giving the old man delusions of grandeur regarding his



From where I live

Bruce Stapley

son's date with destiny on the soccer pitch.

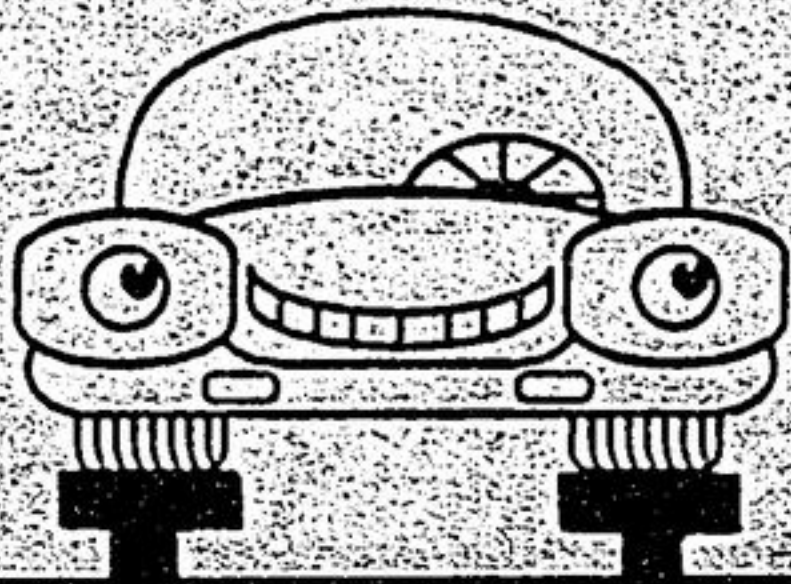
But it does give one pause to take stock of his or her fledgling offspring in this age where everybody's out to beat the system and thus guarantee themselves a retirement unaffected by the predicted demise of a seriously strained Canada Pension Plan. In assessing the hints of potential shown by our own seven-month-old

son, I'm beginning to see a marked propensity towards sumo wrestling. The doctor recently told us Griffin's in the 80th percentile in terms of size relative to other infants his age, and he's already fitting into the clothes his big brother wasn't able to wear until his first birthday. More than one person has commented on the lack of discernable lines showing where his arms and legs end and his ankles and wrists begin. We've caught him several times hoisting his teddy bear way above his head before letting the fluffy fellow plunge helplessly to the ground. He's already working on the strength and dexterity of his legs, and has shown himself to be quite nimble in curling up and shoving his toes in his mouth. He loves to grab hold of your

face, pull your hair, and grasp you in a head lock every time you make the mistake of invading his space in pursuit of a nuzzle. I bet Hulk Hogan displayed similar traits during his infancy! Now it's just a matter of setting up a long term bet with one of those Vegas bookies who give odds on everything from tonight's horse race right through next year's World Series.

As for our four year old son, it could be a little more difficult to identify a talent which might lend itself to a wager based upon future athletic ability. Up until now, Drew has resisted any attempts to mold him into an accomplished jock who might some day make his parents' retirement that much more comfortable. At the insistence of a friend

who is a noted baseball coach, I encouraged Drew to learn to throw left handed. After all, it's the south-paws who are always in short supply in the big leagues. As it turns out, I think Drew is ambidextrous - he throws erratically with both hands. He can't get the hang of holding a baseball bat, let alone swing it. Actually, he's proven himself to have an extremely limited attention span when it comes to things athletic, preferring to play with his Brio train set and his vehicles. However, he has recently taken to setting up his mom's old plastic chess set and asking us for a game. Who knows, if I play my pawns right, I might just be able to interest someone in giving me long odds on Drew's becoming the next Bobby Fisher!



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Focus on Business



Photo by Sjoerd Witteveen

Ville Papas, who owns Stouffville Furniture & Accessories with her husband George, thinks customer satisfaction has kept her businesses flourishing.

Customer satisfaction is important

Stouffville Furniture & Accessories custom-designs inventory for clients

Customer satisfaction is very important to Ville and George Papas owners of Stouffville Furniture & Accessories.

"We live in this small town too. Everywhere we go, we have to face our customers," says Ville. "Happy customers is viable business."

To keep her customers satisfied, Ville custom-designs her inventory, buying furniture her customers would want.

"We first started with different lines of quality furniture. We didn't know what people needed. We then upgraded our store by talking to customers to understand the styles and quality they want. When we bring in furniture we (ask) would we bring this into our house?"

The Papa and Mama team (as people in the industry call the couple) carries everything people need for their homes including drapery and blinds, lamps and shades, sofas and sofa beds, chairs, mattresses, beds, bedroom suites, bedding and more.

"We don't sell any seconds. We do not carry promotional lines that skimp on quality. Quality is very important."

What they do carry is middle and upper quality upholstery furniture including Decor

Rest.

When purchasing furniture from the store, people can choose from a variety of fabrics, she says.

The five-year-old store (three of which have been spent in Stouffville) is an authorized dealer of Lexington furniture.

The store also sells mattresses by Simmons, Restonic and Kingsdown.

When possible, the Papas try to purchase Canadian-made furniture and accessories.

People can also look at the store's catalogues, if they can't find what they are looking for in the showroom, says Ville.

As part of the service customers receive, the Papas

show their customers how to coordinate the look of their room.

They also deliver and set up the furniture, free of charge.

Ville says the success of their store is because of the people in Stouffville.

"You hear the odd story about people who don't support Stouffville businesses, but I think that is wrong. If it wasn't for the support of people in Stouffville we wouldn't have flourished."

"When you can't change the direction of the wind, adjust your sails. The CPP may not be there for you but your RRSP will be."

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