

Editorial

"Connected to your Community"

Go Canada

Arduous journeys on paths of blue, yellow, black, green, and red — fuelled by dreams of bronze, silver and gold.

These dreams take hold in the minds of the young... those untouched by too-often harsh realities that may limit dreams and those who still dream in colour.

They are young enough not to be daunted by a rocky road, setbacks, mishaps that leave them starting over.

They are determined, relentless. They have physical skill and stamina. They have talent — world-class talent — but it is honed and sculpted, molded by others who more than likely have been in their shoes.

They will not be put off. They are dedicated; rise to the challenge. They continue despite the odds. They believe in themselves even when the world is not watching. They hope. Without all this, they will not stand on the podium — recognized as the world's finest.

Should they take their place on that podium with their dream realized by the medal placed around their neck, their heart will swell with pride, but their thoughts will review their journey.

For eight Oakville athletes, the road to Rio has not necessarily been easy. It has been one most have dreamed they'd travel since they were young.

For local youths who dream of being an Olympian, look to Oakville's Olympians in Rio and find neighbours who had the same dream. Know it can happen.

Four-time Olympian Adam van Koeverden began paddling at age 13. Not viewed as a gifted athlete, his canoe club was a place to hang after school. Now, with gold, silver and bronze medals to his credit, thanks to what became a second home, van Koeverden is in Rio.

Olympic sailor Lee Parkhill's sailing instructor's application was tossed in the trash — in favour of seeing how far his talent could take him. He is in Rio.

Soccer player Diana Matheson was seen as diminutive, passed over for some team play as a youth. She kicked a bronze-medal goal a few years back. She is in Rio.

Melanie Hawtin has spina bifida, and began wheelchair racing at age five. She went on to the winner's circle only to be sidelined by surgery in 2012 and then made a comeback in wheelchair basketball. She is in Rio.

Dominique Bouchard moved a far bit as a youth but found inspiration in a coach. She is in Rio.

Sasha Boulton thought her career as a triathlete was ending until she continued as a guide for her Paralympic partner, Christine Robbins. They are in Rio.

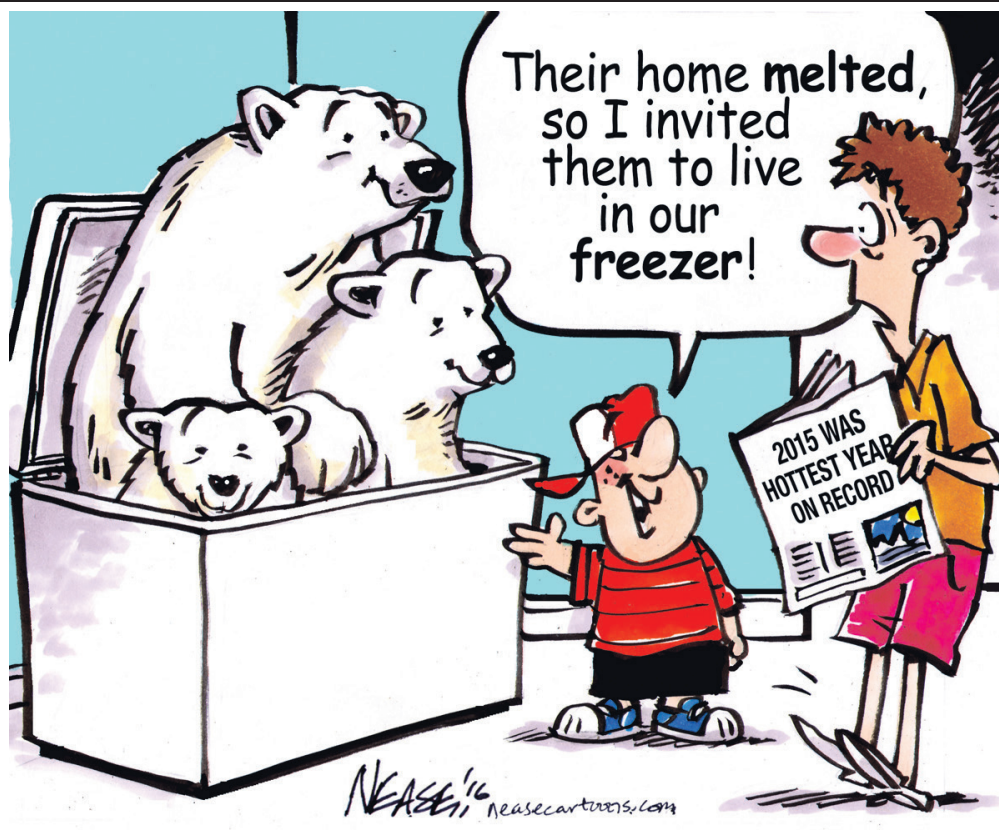
K.C. Fraser started paddling at age 14 — her mother wanted to keep her out of trouble. She is in Rio.

Swimmer Mack Darragh began playing basketball at age seven. He took up swimming to offset asthma. He predicted at age 11, he'd be an Olympic competitor. At age 13, he chose swimming over hoops. He is in Rio.

Our Oakville Olympians are now grown, their dreams intact and fuelled. We wish them well. They have our support. Most of all, while we will be proud should they stand on the podium in Rio, they should all know, we couldn't be more proud of them already.

They have made their dreams come true and they are already champions who inspire us. Go Canada!

The **Oakville Beaver** welcomes letters from its readers. Letters will be edited for clarity, length, legal considerations and grammar. In order to be published all letters must contain the name, address and phone number of the author. Letters should be addressed to: **The Editor, Oakville Beaver**, 5046 Mainway, Unit 2, Burlington ON L7L 5Z1 or via email to ablackburn@oakvillebeaver.com. The Beaver reserves the right to refuse to publish a letter.



Letter to the editor

Wading into the climate change debate

Re: *Climate change must be on our agenda, Oakville Beaver, July 29, 2016*

I'm sure Pam Damoff is an expert on climate change. She must be since she quotes no one in particular in her column of July 29 and that makes her a primary source.

But let's take a closer look. She uses the term climate change, which seems to be code for climate warming or possibly climate cooling; she doesn't, or is reluctant to use proper terms. We all know, or ought to, that the world's climate and temperatures have been changing for four billion years or so.

Let's start with greenhouse gas emissions; she is probably referring to carbon dioxide and we know CO2 is a naturally-occurring gas essential to plant and human life.

She might want to refer to research by professors Tom Segalstad and Nir Shaviv who very clearly show the relationships between climate and greenhouse gases. (My thanks to Lawrence Solomon for his references).

Damoff refers to the 2014 flooding in Burlington (a proxy for all the world, of course) and longer heat waves in other parts of Canada (dates not specified). Clearly, these were unsettling times for many Canadians, but surely Damoff knows the difference between climate and weather? Maybe Damoff should take a look at the 'hockey stick' or maybe the Al Gore fiasco wherein charts were upside down.

Hopefully, the truth of climate scenarios will be communicated at future town hall pep talks.

Ronald Rea, Oakville

Pud

by Steve Nease



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