

Editorial

Poor sports

When did carrying Canada's flag at the opening ceremonies of the Olympics undergo such a dramatic metamorphosis from national honour to personal burden?

This week's news that some of Canada's top prospects for podium finishes during next month's Winter Games in Turin, Italy have declined to be considered for the honour is, at best, disappointing and, at worst, unpatriotic behaviour.

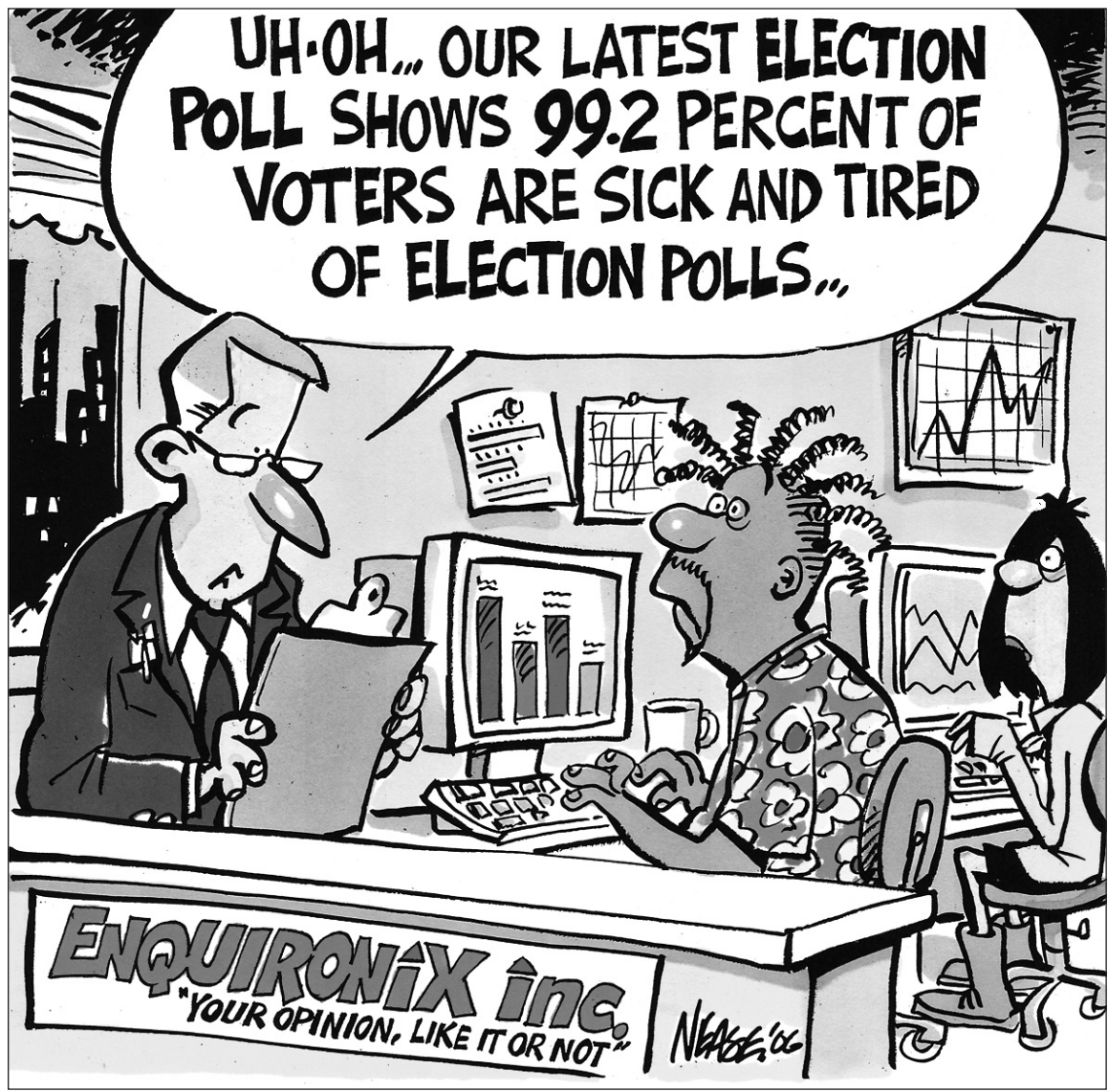
While few of us could possibly appreciate the magnitude of the pressure — both mental and physical — placed on the bodies and minds of our Olympic athletes, we question what has become of the heroic athlete who exudes national pride on the grandest of world stages?

Among those asking not to be considered for the role of flag bearer during the opening ceremonies on Feb. 10 are cross country skier Beckie Scott, speed skaters Clara Hughes and Cindy Klassen and 1998 Olympic champion bobsledder Pierre Lueders.

The suggestion that carrying our country's colours might somehow jeopardize an athlete's chance of emerging victorious in Turin is pure fiction. In the last six Winter Games, four of Canada's flag bearers have medalled; three of them for gold, the other for silver. In 1984, speed skater Gaetan Boucher carried our flag prior to earning two golds and a bronze in Sarajevo. Three of our last six Summer Games flag bearers managed to bring home a combined four medals — three golds and a silver.

We would hate to think the me-first attitude of too many of today's professional athletes has finally supplanted the competing for national pride attitude that once defined the Olympic spirit.

If these elite athletes want nothing to do with carrying their own country's flag in Turin, perhaps they can find something else to drape themselves in should they finally achieve their Olympic dream.



Letters to the editor...

There's nothing 'frightening' about CHP

Dear editor,

In your January 18 editorial, Tory Time, you mention three federal election candidates and apply several

labels to them, including, "positively frightening." The only two reasons for you to say that are either that you are using a scare tactic or you actually feel threatened.

Scare tactics are cheap shots and not necessary. I would rather that the voters be well informed of what each candidate stands for and make their own decision rather than be bullied into voting a certain way.

If you feel threatened, then why? What would you say if most voters actually voted for a "frightening" candidate — that also the voters are frightening? What an insult!

Mr. Wizniewski is the classic definition of an independent: in his own words, he doesn't want to play the "party game." So he's using his right to run as an independent candidate to be democratically elected. Is that frightening?

I've also met Mr. Bouteiller, who has done a fine job articulating his party's policy. I have not found him frightening at all, though I wouldn't vote for his party because I don't agree with their principles. Both the

Green and Christian Heritage parties are members of Fair Vote Canada, an organization that promotes a fairer system of democratic elections instead of the antiquated first-past-the-post system that now exists in only three countries of the world.

Mrs. Krusky stands for policies based on the principles that our great country was founded upon, stated in the preamble of the Constitution that Canada is founded upon the "supremacy of God and the rule of law." This heritage includes democratically elected government. She is very concerned that Canada is moving away from these principles and says that it was those principles that made our country prosperous, so we need to return to them. That's why I'm voting for her. I like politicians who have principles and lay these out on the table for all to see, rather than the populist parties who rule according to the current volatile public opinion, which makes them unpredictable and prone to allegations, true or false, that they have a hidden agenda.

Jeffrey Streutker, Georgetown

HHCSI says thanks

Dear editor,

The youth of Georgetown received excellent support at the launch of the campaign for a new youth resource centre in Georgetown.

Halton Hills Community Support and Information thanks Traditional Taste Bakery & Café, Terra Cotta Cookies, Al Ferri Orchards, Tim Hortons and Mr. Sub for their contributions to the lunch. Many thanks also to Pine Cone Studios, Sobey's Ltd., Loblaw's Supermarkets Ltd., Smitty's Family Restaurant, St George's Anglican Church, Circus Strategic Communications, Alexandra Trivan and Georgetown youth for their donated support.

"Build for Youth — be there for tomorrow." With the help of our sponsors, HHCSI has started the process of making this a reality in our Georgetown community.

Our most heartfelt thanks to all the people of Halton Hills who have responded to our Christmas Needs Program. The generosity of the Halton Hills community has brought many tears of joy. It is humbling, joyous and a privilege for all of us to experience this warmth of caring of this community for each other.

Joan Barham, Executive Director, HHCSI

Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor must include an address and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be edited.

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