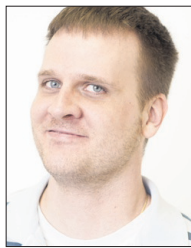


Why Canada needs to put Pam Anderson on the \$20 bill

James Culic
Columnist



The federal finance minister recently announced that he wants to redesign our nation's paper currency and have the new bills feature a prominent Canadian woman on it. That's all well and good but while people across the country are busy arguing over who that woman should be, they're missing the obvious answer: Pamela Anderson.

That's right, the blonde bombshell *Playboy* centrefold and *Baywatch* starlet is, objectively speaking, my top pick for the next woman to be featured on our money. Not only is Pam Anderson one of the most famous and recognizable Canadian women on the planet, she's also done a lot of good over the years.

From fighting for equal rights for women in developing countries to advocating for action on climate change, Anderson has been at the forefront of numerous cause célèbres, and through her activism work, she's affected real, positive change on a number of fronts.

For quite some time now, she's also been the public face of PETA and has helped bring attention to animal cruelty and all kinds of other hippie dippy free-the-whales type junk which the local Marineland Animal Defender Dudes (MADD) should be all warm and fuzzy about.

You might laugh, but Pam Anderson is infinitely more qualified to be on our money than virtually all the other Canadian women whose

names have been bandied about, including the popular Niagara selection: Laura Secord.

If there are two basic prerequisites for qualifying to be placed on a crisp new \$20 bill – being a woman and being Canadian – then Laura Secord only satisfies one of those conditions.

Laura Secord wasn't really Canadian. Secord was born south of the border in Massachusetts, making her a Yankee by birth. She was also born in 1775, a full 92 years before Canada even existed as a country. Further, Laura Secord was a staunch British loyalist and more than anything else, she would self identify as being of English descent. If you were to somehow ask Secord if she considered herself a true Canadian woman, first she would ask what the hell 'Canada' was and second, she would say absolutely not, and that her loyalty lies with the British crown.

Alright, so Secord is disqualified; then who else might Canadians consider our top

female for nomination for placement on our money? Well, if you remember about a decade ago, a massive country-wide voting thing from the CBC was produced: The Greatest Canadian Competition. Thousands upon thousands of votes were cast and eventually Canadians selected

a pretty predictable list of national heroes to populate the list. Unfortunately for our purposes, the list was completely dominated by men. The top 10 – which included names like Wayne Gretzky, Pierre Trudeau, David



Suzuki and Don Cherry – was entirely men. In fact, you have to go all the way down the list to number 18 to find the highest-ranked Canadian female, and even then the selection is rather embarrassing: Shania Twain.

Since she hasn't produced a decent song in like a decade, we can safely eliminate Shania from consideration, however, expanding the list all the way to the top 50 only nets us five more Canadian women, and once again, it's a pretty laughable selection: Nellie McClung (No. 25), Celine Dion

(No. 27), Laura Secord (No. 35), Avril Lavigne (No. 40) and finally – wait, seriously, Avril Lavigne, what the hell? – rounding out the list is Pam Anderson at No. 50.

We've already scratched off Laura Secord,

and Celine Dion and Avril Lavigne should also be disqualified for obvious reasons.

That does leave us with Nellie McClung who was a pioneering Canadian feminist and politician, but putting her on our money would be a major mistake since she also had a rather unfortunate dark side: she vociferously advocated for forced sterilization of anyone not deemed worthy of procreation.

Ostensibly, that leaves us with but one name left on the list: Pam Anderson.

We've already got one woman on our money, the Queen, who is the longest reigning monarch in our history, so why not add Pam Anderson and have longest reigning queen of cleavage on our money also?

Just think how fine Anderson is going to look splayed out in a seductive pose across the \$20 bill. I'd be proud to carry a few of those around in my wallet.

James Culic is Niagara this Week's reporter in the southern tier. Yell at him on Twitter @jamesculic or send him angry emails to jculic@niagarathisweek.com

“Pam Anderson is infinitely more qualified to be on our money than virtually all the other Canadian women whose names have been bandied about, including the Niagara selection: Laura Secord”



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OPINION

No, you're not going to be the next Kraft Hockeyville – and that's fine

All across the country, hopeless Canadians have been spamming their friends' Facebook and Twitter feeds with pleas to get behind the latest Kraft Hockeyville 2016 competition. In Niagara alone, eight separate municipalities all have submissions for the competition, and in a couple weeks the 10 finalists will be unveiled. The winning community gets to host an NHL pre-season match and scores a cool \$100,000 for arena upgrades.

From Lincoln to St. Catharines, down to Port Colborne and everywhere in between, Niagara's municipalities are all going nuts for this corporate shillfest. The collective population of Fort Erie won't shut up about this silly contest, and although I hate to be the Grinch [*Editor's note: that's a lie, he loves being a Grinch*] I've got bad news for them: you're not going to be the next Kraft Hockeyville winner.

As of writing this, there are 869 different communities all vying for the title of Kraft Hockeyville 2016 and for some reason, people in Fort Erie genuinely believe that they have a shot at winning. At a Town Hall meeting last week, one councillor proudly boasted that Fort Erie was "in the running to become the next Kraft Hockey Homeville." Note that while he butchered the name of the actual competition, the councillor did correctly remember the name of the massive corporate conglomer-

eration sponsoring the event; we'll circle back to that later.

People down there seem to think the fact that Kraft Foods founder James Kraft was born in Fort Erie will somehow help their chances, but they don't seem to understand that a proudly American company like Kraft has no interest in shining a spotlight on their shameful Canadian heritage. In fact, on the official biography page on Kraft's website, they don't even mention that he was born in Canada at all, instead focusing on a business he operated in Buffalo when he was young. You have to go to a separate Kraft Canada website to find the company even acknowledge the fact he was born here.

Not helping their odds any further, Fort Erie also entered competing bids from within its own borders; Crystal Beach has its own bid for its own arena, which is amusing if you know anything about the town's hysterically territorial population. Fort Erie is basically four towns stuck in a car together who won't stop arguing about which direction to drive; it's hilarious and I love it.

But anyways, back to Kraft Hockey Marketingville 2016 or whatever it's called; Niagara Falls and Welland and especially Wainfleet, none of you are going to win either.

The communities who win this contest are always the ones who included in their submission some kinda sappy video of little kids playing hockey, or some sob story about how a flood ruined the community arena and they need the money to fix the ice or whatever. Boo-hoo, cry me a river kids, and then freeze those tears and use them to fix your busted rink.

I clicked through all of Niagara's submissions and none of them had any fancy bells and whistles attached or any of the heart warming extras that might entice Kraft to swoop in with a whopping \$100,000. Big money. That's almost 0.07 per cent of the city of Niagara Falls' operating budget this year. Fort Erie is spending more than that on bike paths this year.

My point here is that \$100,000 is, in the grand scheme of things, not a lot of money to any of the municipalities involved, even the smaller ones. It's an even more embarrassingly small amount when you consider it comes from an exceptionally profitable, globe spanning, market dominating, mega corporation.

But hey, Kraft has it tough these days, the company's revenue was down 9 per cent last quarter... to a mere \$6.36 billion. For a company that can bank more than six billion in revenue every three

months, the \$100,000 for the Hockeyville competition isn't exactly hurting their corporate books. That's not to say the company is all bad; in 2014 the corporation donated more than \$430,000 to the Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada, and also directly donated over 150,000 pounds of food to food banks.

But that doesn't change the fact that as a billion dollar mega corporation – which just got bigger after a recent merger with Heinz to make it the fifth largest food company in the world – Kraft is, generally speaking, an evil corporation engaged in ceaseless and ruthless pursuit of money.

That's not specific to Kraft really; all big corporations are evil and want for nothing but profit. Kraft just happens to be particularly good at it, while also tricking regular Canadians into doing the corporation's promotional work for them once a year through the Hockeyville competition.

It's a stunning example of subversive advertising, and I'm surprised more people don't see it for what it really is. But whatever, I have the sudden urge to eat some Easy Mac and Jello-O and several other products from the fine folks at Kraft.

James Culic is Niagara this Week's reporter in the southern tier. Yell at him on Twitter @jamesculic or send him angry emails to jculic@niagarathisweek.com



James Culic

LETTERS

History repeats itself

I predict there will be an economic collapse by September 2017, one greater than the great depression.

I say this because the economy is headed in this direction. How in the world can a bankrupt country like the mighty USA, with \$20 trillion in debt, of which President Obama added \$10 trillion in just seven years, still have its greenbacks as the world's leading currency?

The U.S. Federal Reserve is distributing trillions of greenbacks into circulation, worthless piece of paper backed by thin air and massive debt obligations!

Remember the Weimar Republic and what happened when it mass-produced the German Mark. That led to WWII.

Charles Owen,
Welland

Column a refreshing bit of common sense

Re. The case for keeping Niagara College in Saudi Arabia, Column, Jan. 28:

Notwithstanding that James Culic acts as the class clown and is somewhat proud of that, he has this exactly bang on.

Students do not learn only from the course mate-

rial but also from the behaviours and attitudes of the teacher. Amazing hypocrisy from the Premier when, as a school trustee, she opined that government had no business in telling school boards how to behave. Niagara College and others are contributing in the finest Canadian traditions — lead by actions not words! I wonder if it's 1980 or 2016.

Both minor scribblers and Premier Wynne should give their heads a shake and come to a few sensible conclusions. Even a third grade arithmetic teacher imparts values and ethics unavoidably while teaching that 2+2=4. The males in Saudi classes, while not overtly being taught about our version of values, may pick up some sensitivity, none of which would present itself if Canada just backed out. What would these naysayers opine

about cutting off aid to some because they could not provide it to all?

If food supplies for a famine-stricken area were only available with peanut content, thereby denying those with allergies, these critics would cancel aid to all. Carry on Niagara and Algonquin colleges; do what you can to maintain our values as allowed under our host's laws. Don't bail out because everything is not approved by some thinking-challenged individuals.

As a former renegade school trustee, let's ask Wynne when she will outlaw the plethora of single sex schools in Ontario such as St. Michael's College School for boys or Lorretto College for girls.

Bert Dandy,
Niagara Falls

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Serendipitous faceplants and failed cattle heists lead to love

James Culic
Columnist



When opportunity knocks, you answer, because you never know behind which door lies the path to a long and happy marriage.

In the early 1600s, a man named William Scott was busted attempting to steal a herd of cattle from a wealthy Scottish baron, Gideon Murray. At the thief's trial, Gideon offered up two options: William could either be put to death by hanging, or he could marry the baron's famously ugly daughter, known throughout Scotland as Muckle-Mouthed Meg.

Upon seeing Meg in all her hideous glory, William made the obvious decision: he opted to be hanged. That is, right up until the moment the noose was fitted around his neck, at which point he had a sudden change of heart, and agreed to the marriage.

Despite their preposterous beginning, William and his unseemly bride enjoyed, by all accounts, a strong and lovely marriage. The couple were together for the remainder of their lives, and spawned five children.

See, sometimes love blossoms from the strangest places. For William, a failed cattle heist led to him being happily married. For me, it was a failed attempt to walk through a locked door.

On January 7, 2012, I went to an assignment for the newspaper. It was an event for the bicentennial of the War of 1812, and after it was over I left out the front entrance of Old Fort Erie, only to run smack into the glass doors because I had attempted to leave through the wrong door. I nervously looked around to see if anyone had noticed my embarrassing blunder, only to realize in horror that a beautiful girl standing near the entrance had likely witnessed my gaffe.

At that point, it also dawned on me that this stunningly gorgeous young lady was probably also the public relations contact for the event, with whom I had been emailing back and forth for the last few weeks while working on stories about the War of 1812.

I slunk over to her, praying she hadn't noticed me faceplant into the door like a bad Monty Python skit, and decided now was as good a time as any to introduce myself.

"Hi, I'm James from the newspaper," I stammered. "Are you Antonietta?"

She smiled, extended her hand, and the room seemed to brighten. "Yes, I am. Nice to meet you, James."

Five years and several superfluous articles about the War of 1812 later, and I'm now standing precariously close to the precipice of marriage. I've filed nearly 150 of these weekly columns for the newspaper, but this will be the very last I write as an unmarried man.

That also means it is the last article I write from the confines of my bachelor pad. Due to ... let's be kind and call it, Italian traditions - others might call it antiquated and absurd old world customs - me and my betrothed have never actually lived together. Premarital cohabitation was strictly forbidden, so it's not until after our wedding this weekend that we will actually move in together and continue our lives under one roof.

**"I always cry at weddings, especially my own."
- Humphrey Bogart**

In terms of major events, this is certainly the biggest change in my life as a grown man. I've never lived with a woman before, and as we started the process of combin-

ing our disparate lives into our new house, we've already stumbled across a few of my quirks, which my fiancée finds rather loathsome. When she first realized that I like to read in the bathroom, she was aghast. I've always kept a few books and, of course, the daily newspaper tucked neatly beside the throne, in order to enjoy some peaceful reading time in there.

My dad always did the same, which is where I guess I picked up the habit. Much to my surprise, I recently found out while talking to him that this very same issue was a major sticking point when he first married my mom.

Just like my fiancée, it turns out my own mother was equally confounded by the idea that someone might like to read in the bathroom. She learned to live with it though, just like (I hope) my own wife will.

Conversely, my fiancée does certain things that are just abjectly insane. For example, anytime she comes over to my house and cuts open a new bag of milk, she does so in a manner that drives me bonkers. When taking off the corner of the bag, she cuts off the smallest fraction mathematically possible, leaving a spout so small that it takes me an eternity to pour myself a tall glass of milk. I like to cut off a good two inches from the corner of the bag, so I can fill the glass instantly. She claims this makes it hard to properly control the exact amount of milk she wants to put in her tea. I say she just needs to put more milk in her tea; problem solved.

But despite my questionable reading habits, and her inability to operate a milk bag, I'm entirely sure that my fiancée and I will find a middle ground and do what Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie failed to - we'll remain a happily married couple for the rest of our lives.

What makes me so confident we'll succeed where Brangelina could not? It's simple: she's the most incredible woman I've ever met, and I'm smart enough to know that I've already won the bridal lottery, and there's nothing I'd ever do to screw that up. If that means compromising on the size of a milk bag opening, or putting one fewer book in the bathroom, c'est la vie.

So now, all that's left to do is head to the church on Saturday and walk down the aisle. I just hope I manage to walk through the correct door this time.

James Culic is Niagara this Week's reporter in the southern tier. Yell at him on Twitter @jamesculic or send him angry emails to jculic@niagarathisweek.com

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