

## **You are Canadian, Eh?**

**By Patricia Morgan MA CCC**

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You love being a Canadian, eh? Canadians are known to be friendly, patient, well mannered and some of our citizens have kindly, but accidentally, killed themselves so that Canada is the toaster death capital of the world. Yes, sir and madam. This writer read in some bizarre report that more people have killed themselves in Canada than anywhere else on the planet by sticking their fingers or a knife into their toaster.

Much of our Canadian identity is wrapped up in how different we are from the Americans. We have a love-hate relationship with the infiltration of Americanization into our dear Canada. "I love Dr. Laura on our radio waves: I hate Howard Stern on our radio waves." "I love TV with Oprah: I hate TV with Jerry Springer." "I love the American dollar coming north: I hate the G-8 summit in our sacred Kananaskis." "I love Florida oranges: I hate Hostess Twinkies." When it comes to food we can identify ourselves with maple syrup, Canadian bacon and Alberta beef. But then we could comfort ourselves that we typically don't keep a firearm under our pillow or in our car glove compartment.

Unlike the Yanks, who still use the royal foot and yardage measure, Canadians use the metric system while still clinging onto the Queen. Canadians are reveling in the fact that she's popular again after fifty years of hanging on—even through her family horribles years. We think we still have a universal health system, but we may soon learn differently. The French problem has died down as has talk of the death penalty.

Most of all, it seems, we identify ourselves with the great Canadian "eh?" It is tacked onto any statement to immediately turn it into a question. "Great staff at Denny's diner, eh?" This vowel has almost become a poetic Canadian art form. You can spot a fake Canadian struggling with its use. For example, "Pass the sugar, eh?" is very different than "You will marry me, eh?" Then there is the quaint Canadian question saturated in politeness; "Can I help you's?" It proves that Canadian restaurant servers want to genuinely serve the masses.

No consideration of Canadian identity would be complete without mention of a maple leaf that turned into a hockey team and Molson beer that turned into a patriotic rant. The Beaver, our most revered rodent, was turned into Beaver Lumber. Finally, we turned our loons into Loony coins and because our handbags and wallets weren't heavy enough we made them bigger and called them Toonies. Canadians could easily star in a Loony Toon cartoon. But then, Canadians pride themselves in not taking themselves too seriously, even being able to tolerate farces about our greatest leaders on television programs such as *The Royal Canadian Air Farce* and *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*.

For those Canadians still wondering about their identity, they can ask themselves the following:

Where do I live?

Do I tend to end my statements with “eh?”  
Are the messages on my cereal box printed with 2 languages?  
Do I talk about the weather as if it was important?  
Do I feel excited when I am told I will be paid in US dollars?  
Is my gun registered and kept in a locked cabinet?  
Have I been told that my homeland is the most desirable country in the world to live?  
Each fall do I check for warm boots and coat?  
Do I know that a Maple Leaf won't be found on the Prairie?  
Do I know that a snowmobile is not a summer leisure craft?  
Do I know that a Prime Minister is not a cut of beef?  
Do I know that CBC does not stand for Cute Broads Collective?  
When I am asked if I have lived in Canada all my life, do I answer, ‘Not yet?’”

Canadians are welcoming, kind and pay more than enough income tax. We Canuks have many reasons to feel proud, eh?

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