A maple leaf makeover

With the beaver under threat from the polar bear as Canada's national animal, maybe it's time we take a look at replacing another traditional symbol of the maple leaf. Here are ideas for a better flag in this fantastic time of change.

Joel Rypdén

Let's get the polar bear and beaver thing out of the way first. We'll let them duke it out, and instead of keeping the impossibly-hard-to-draw maple leaf, we'll put the winning animal on the flag. Natural selection at its finest.

While Senator Nicole Eaton seems to think that a polar bear would make a great national animal, some us have grown particularly fond of the old back-touched redent that currently holds the honor. And only one way to settle this.

The arena needs to be huge—at least grand enough to keep the fight interesting. Ice floors, trees, bushes, streams and slopes will all be incorporated in order to keep the war even.

To appease the shifting winds of the animal rights activists, we won't let either of the animals die. We'll do it laser-targeted, with appropriately sized targets strapped to each wild competitor. In order to keep the brawl interesting, full-body contact will not be frowned upon and will score extra points.

After a duration that seems epic enough for polar-bear-beaver duel, we'll put the winner on our national flag as a symbol of our nation's legendary badass-ness. This won't solve the impossibly-hard-to-draw dilemma, but let me ask you this: Would you rather stab yourself with frustration after trying to draw a fearsome, heroic and mighty national-animal-warring, or a leaf?

Adrian Lahola-Chomak

My fellow Canadians, I believe that there is only one symbol significant enough to take the place of the maple leaf on our flag. No it's not a hockey stick or a bottle of maple syrup, it's the one man who, more than any other, has come to represent us as Canadians: Rick Mercer.

Unlike most TV personalities, Mercer is unquestionably Canadian down to his newest accent. While he doesn't always know exactly what he's getting into, he's more than willing to go. And be

You would be hard pressed to find another person, let alone television show host, with whom an entire country can feel so affectionate towards.

Some people call him the Canadian Jon Stewart, but he is so much more than that. He shows equal time highlighting events across the country and critiquing the government. He does it all with a sense of humour that never alienates—but still hits our funny bone hard.

His social commentary is a stroke in the vampire of Canadian politics, cutting through the posturing and getting down to the core of any issue he tackles.

The maple leaf has served us well over the past decades, but it's time to consider modernizing and should immortalize a man who has made all of us both laugh and question our government, often in the same breath.

Plus, how awesome would it be to have his big grin stare at us from our flag during hockey games?

Andrew Jeffrey

Around the world, flags are meant to symbolize something important for the country they represent. The Canadian flag does admirably with the maple leaf standing strong as a Canadian symbol even before the current flag was created. It sums up what our winters are like with the image of an object that will wither away and crumble into dust come autumn, and then completely disappear from sight once snow starts falling in winter.

Honestly, once you know this about Canada, you know what it's like to be once you visit. But why stop there when we can convey even further just how bitterly cold our winters are every year?

The basic way to symbolize what to expect from Canada would be to cut the red out of the flag. The bright, vibrant stripes on either side of the flag and the centered, red maple leaf should disappear just as these leaves do in the winter and replaced exactly the same way — with snow.

The Canadian flag should be pure white to create a beautiful pristine image of snowbanks to shining snowbanks.

Of course this white flag would never stand for surrender but would instead represent the bravery of each driver battling down the freeway in the middle of winter, or the adversity each young child faces when they have to walk to school through towering snowbanks reaching sometimes two feet tall.

To some it could even represent a blanket sheet of ice where we play our national winter sport, and the one thing that Canadians are constantly associated with no matter what season it is.

So many different interpretations for this blank slate of a flag would only create a connection with more Canadians to our new national symbol. We should embrace that with the highest of honors and show it to the world on our flag. As a warning.

Ravanne Lawday

I'll tell you what should replace the maple leaf: the image of two people shaking hands with the biggest smiles on their faces.

When I first met a friend — born, raised and living in the U.S. — it took a while for my "foreign" identity to come up. But when it did, he curiously asked me where I was from. Obviously, told him I'm from Canada. He then said, "Oh well, then we'll be sure to get along!"

Surprised, I asked him why and found out that apparently Canadians are always kind and polite. We both had a good laugh about this, because I was expecting him to say something about igloos or maple syrup.

I didn't think the stereotypes of politeness Canadians would be the most widespread stereotype. But as I made many more international friends over the years, I discovered that this rumour that we're the kindest people on the planet was greatly overblown.

So if we traded our maple leaf for a picture of people shaking hands, I don't think the international community would complain too much.

We're probably the only country that could get away with showing so much pride about how nice we are that we put it on our flag.

So instead of picking something else like a marijuana leaf, hockey stick, pencil to the idea that we're all hockey-crazed, drug-smoking, cold-loving eccentrics, let's try and perpetuate something on the positive side.