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O Canada, my eye

by BRIAN LOCKHART

They got little hands and little eyes. And they walk around Tellin' great big lies. They got little noses. And tiny little teeth. They wear platform shoes On their nasty little feet. Well, I don't want no short people. Don't want no short people. Don't want no short people ?round here.?

If you recognize those lyrics, you've been around for a while. They are from the 1977 song, Short People, by Randy Newman. It was a big hit at the time as a sort of novelty song, but it doesn't get airplay anymore. A lot of people were offended by the lyrics which implies that short people aren't good for anything.

If you actually listen to the entire song, however, it was song about prejudice and the writer just used height as an example. He could have used almost anything else where prejudice can be involved.

I'm not sure how people can be offended by a song. I've come up with a rather interesting way of avoiding offending songs. I tune the radio to a different station, turn the radio off, or in extreme cases, I don't put a CD of an offending song in the CD player, turn it on and listen to it.

Actually, I'm not offended by any music really. There are just some songs or styles of music I don't really like. Just like everyone else.

Our national anthem, O Canada, is one of those pieces of music I like and hate at the same time. When played properly by a band or orchestra, with an up-tempo beat, and performed by a professional singer who knows they are singing an anthem, not a pop song, it be an inspiring piece of music that instills national pride. When done improperly, it can be a horrendous drag of a song.

I've been to too many public events that begin with the singing of O Canada, and when a crowd of people suddenly find themselves trying to sing the anthem, it just does not work well.

Another problem with the anthem is people are just too offended by it.

Not people in general, it's usually some small group of people who have an issue with some of the words, and now a single word is involved.

I'm not sure how many times the lyrics to O Canada have changed. They changed a few lines a couple of decades ago, which changed the way we sung it when I was in school.

Then they changed the wording again just a couple of years ago because some people were offended by a single word.

Now it's in the news again.

A singer changed a single word, from ?our? to ?on? in the anthem's second line. I'm not sure why anyone would even pick up on this, but right away there were news stories about it and people saying, ?oh yes, we need to change that word.?

What's next? Change ?True North? because those of us that live farther south in the country are excluded?

Should we change ?strong and free' because everyone has a different definition of freedom?

How about we change the actual name of the anthem because ?O? in front of Canada makes no sense by being there? Is ?O? even a

word?

Shouldn't it be ?Hail Canada,? ?Salute to Canada,? or something similar?

Why don't we just make everyone happy and scrap the entire anthem and start over.

We could always revive ?The Maple Leaf Forever? and switch the lyrics so General Montcalm wins the battle at the Plains of Abraham. That might make Quebec happy, but unfortunately it would cause problems elsewhere.

Maybe we could have a new contest and have people submit lyrics.

In this day and age of just about everything being offensive, I think anyone entering a contest would be very limited in expressing their patriotism in verse.

To not offend anyone, the new anthem could only be something short and non-offensive like ?Happy Canada, we like this place. Please don't drink and drive.?

Even then, I'm sure the use of the word ?drink' would probably offend some kind of temperance movement group as they would say it encourages alcoholconsumption.

Or how about this? - Everyone who gets up in the morning looking for something to be offended by tries to get up in the morning with a positive attitude and looks for good in this world instead of the negative?

That will definitely improve your day and most likely your mental health.

Give it a try!