

New bill weird, if you can get your hands on one

Have you had your hands on any of the new \$20 bills lately?

Maybe I'm not getting out enough. Or my bank had a stockpile of the old cotton-paper bills, (plus I use my credit card a lot, trying to rack up points like I'm Steven Stamkos).

But I have only just recently got my hands on this new plastic money. It definitely feels weird.

Kind of like candy wrapper but sheer, like it could slip through my fingers, as money sometimes does.

Or like you might accidentally have two of them stuck together and end up grossly overpaying for your burger and fries combo. (Do you notice how a burger and fries at most places costs more than a burger, fries and sugar-laden drink? Talk about promoting obesity. Sounds like a job for New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg.)

I definitely prefer the feel of the old money, even if I see the central bank needs to shake things up to keep counterfeiters hard at work

— although I suppose if you're a forgery artist by trade, you welcome the challenge.



Bernie O'Neill

When you first go to pay for something with the new polymer \$20 (polymer sounds so high-tech), you worry the person at the checkout might look up and shout, "What? This money is plastic! Somebody call the cops!"

Lately I stand at the bank machine hoping the thermostat is turned up a little too high and a bunch of these plastic \$20s will get stuck together and instead of \$60 I'll get \$600 (a la Monopoly — bank error in your favour!).

But I'm sure Canadian banks would have an answer for that once it happened a few times, as in, "In an effort to improve customer service and for your convenience, you can no longer withdraw your money from our bank. Enjoy your day!"

In some ways I like how the U.S. tends to leave their bills the same, while ours always change.

I had read focus groups had all kinds of opinions about the new Canadian bills, including that they saw pornographic images.

But they had no such effect on me and, in fact, with that new image of the Queen right in the centre of the thing, glaring back at you, it looks and feels like a coupon for \$20 off at a hair salon.

One person's image that probably won't appear on our money any time soon, critics say, is Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, who intervened this week to stop a private lending institution from lowering its interest rates.

I do see that making sure our hot housing market, something we have a lot riding on in York Region, does not cool to the point of being as cold as the U.S. is key.

But there have to be other ways of preventing first-time buyers or those without the income, from getting their hands on too many borrowed \$20 bills.

To punish all of us who might benefit from lower rates, and dictate to private business how to act, seems over the top to me.

Then again, as you have gathered I am not a financial guru. A big windfall for me is cashing in my AirMiles points for those movie passes for two, which also get you two drinks and one bag of popcorn (a \$25 value!).

We recently used the passes to see the movie *Argo*, oft-criticized for under-reporting Canada's role in the Iran diplomats' rescue. My thought is it's our own fault no Canadian made the movie first.

Although we'd probably downplay Canada's role so the thing was a hit in U.S. theatres. Just another one of those weird things we do in Canada, eh.

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