

## **A sense of jubilation**

B.C. monarchists can't help but be happy now that the Queen's Golden Jubilee is upon us

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VICTORIA - Bruce Hallsor opens his mail with a letter-opener engraved with the crest of a member of the Royal Family. On the wall of his office, facing his desk, is an oil portrait of a young Queen Elizabeth.



**Special to the Vancouver Sun**  
**Bruce Hallsor, chairman of the Victoria branch of the Monarchist League of Canada, loves the monarchy as a living connection to a thousand of years of history.**

Some of the benchmarks of his life include the Queen, whether as a boy marvelling at the image on Canadian coins with which he played, or as an undergraduate attending meetings of a campus club of the Royal Commonwealth Society, or on a first date with the woman who would be his wife, a Royal Ball attended by the Prince and Princess of Wales during Expo 86. "Pretty hard to follow up on that one," he says.

Hallsor, 34, loves the monarchy. Loves it as a living connection to a thousand years of history, loves it with the grateful passion of a man who believes he has been born under the greatest system of governance ever conceived.



**Carolyn Sadowska of Victoria makes her living portraying Queen Elizabeth.**

But he worries about its future. One by one, symbols of the monarchy have been replaced. The Crown has all but disappeared from government logos, replaced by stylized maple leaves. The word "Royal" has been blue-penciled in favour of generic names, as though the land and her peoples were merely another corporation undergoing rebranding.



**At a dinner aboard the Britannia in 1983, at the head table were (from left), Lily Schreyer, Gov.-Gen. Ed Schreyer, Audrey Bennett, B.C. Premier William Bennett, the Queen, Lt.-Gov. of B.C. Henry Bell-Irving and Nancy Bell-Irving, Prince Philip and Prime Minister Trudeau.**

Those responsible have not even the decency to explain their purpose.

"They attack the monarchy like phantoms," Hallsor complains.

To list these changes -- the lack of royal portraits at the post office, the removal of the crown from customs badges -- only makes them seem trivial. You have to consider them all at once, have to appreciate why the reasons behind the changes go unspoken, to fully appreciate the dimensions of the plot. There are bureaucrats and politicians, some sitting at the cabinet table, who want to replace the Crown with a republican system of government.

#### ADVERTISEMENT

"People need to stand up," Hallsor warns, "or we'll lose our heritage."

Hallsor, a downtown lawyer who is chairman of the Victoria branch of the Monarchist League of Canada, a group that claims 18,000 national members, is only too aware of how some regard the Royal Family. He does not follow the soap opera carried with such lusty but graceless detail in the newspapers, but his republican-spirited friends are only too willing to fill him in. So he

An advertisement for NBA Basketball. The background is purple with a large basketball graphic. The text reads "NBA BASKETBALL" in large white letters, with "SCORES, STORIES" in pink and "playoffs" in white. The NBA logo is in the bottom right corner. At the bottom, it says "FULL PLAYOFF COVERAGE AT CANADA.COM".

knows about the spoiled princess, the upstairs-downstairs shenanigans, the auricularly-endowed prince and his horsey-faced lover, the royal consort who cracks jokes about slitty-eyed Chinese -- and cares not a whit.

In Canada -- and particularly in Victoria, the city that bears a queen's name in what was once a remote corner of her empire -- he's not alone. One need only regard the crowds who appeared at Government House to sign condolence books on the death of the Queen Mother to appreciate the passion many feel for the Royal Family.

Victoria is said to be more British than Britain, a last outpost of old Blighty, where you can buy McVitie's at the grocers and order a pint of best bitter at the pub. Granted, the bagpipers and beefeaters and Ye Olde Shoppes are a tourist put-on in pursuit of Yankee greenbacks, but this city does have as many tea rooms as Starbucks and considers fish and chips two of the four major food groups. (Scones and Earl Grey tea round out the list.) The Blethering Place Tea Room serves roast beef and Yorkshire pudding and the Bengal Room at the Empress Hotel boasts a lovely curry.

It is also a city where monarchists are unabashed in their admiration, especially so on the occasion of Queen Elizabeth's Golden Jubilee. They toast the Queen at formal dinners, display their souvenir bric-a-brac, post their mail with a stamp of the Queen, should they be fortunate enough to find one at the post office.

The Monarchist League, whose activism in recent years has seemed limited to nothing more radical than a garden party, is actively seeking recruits this jubilee year to build up a war chest for battles to come.

Monarchists are the kinds of people who know etiquette demands that a letter to the Queen end with the final salutation: "I remain Your Majesty's faithful and devoted servant," that Princess Beatrice of York is fifth in the line of succession, and that the Parksville-Qualicum Brant Festival on Vancouver Island enjoys the royal patronage of the Duke of Edinburgh.

In Victoria they include Hallsor; the naturalist painter Robert Bateman of nearby Saltspring Island, who shares a birthday with Queen Victoria; sports reporter Cleve Dheensaw, who writes spirited defences of the monarchy for the Victoria Times Colonist; Chris Causton, the mayor of Oak Bay, the suburb said to be behind the Tweed Curtain, who opened this year's Little League baseball season with a flawless a cappella rendition of God Save the Queen; Ian Powell, the general manager of the Fairmont Empress Hotel; Lord Chatfield of Ditchling, the son of a Royal Navy admiral who was the son of a Royal Navy admiral; and, Carolyn Sadowska, a comedian who makes her living by donning long white gloves and speaking in a plummy accent. She calls her business "Laugh with Liz."

Sadowska has more reason than most to shout, "Long live the Queen." For 18 years, she has made a living portraying Queen Elizabeth at conventions and trade shows, performing before such clients as the Association of Corrosion Engineers and the Western Canada Roadbuilders.

On Sunday, she will appear at the Gatsby Mansion, a Victoria restaurant offering two seatings of a reproduced Coronation Dinner and on Tuesday she will be at the Royal London Wax Museum. Sadowska travels regularly, bringing a touch of royalty to events as far away as Boston, but the jubilee opportunities offer a one-time windfall -- during the past week alone she's flown to Calgary twice and traveled to Vancouver and Whistler for public appearances.

Sadowska, who was born in England, was just eight when Elizabeth ascended to the throne on the death of her father. She grew up outside Quebec City, a lone Protestant playmate for Catholic children who had been warned that friendship amounted to an eternity in the fiery pits of hell. She remembers a lonely childhood.

"I thought of the Queen as my spiritual lifeline," she says, "a connection to where I came from, a place where no one called me names or threw things at me."

Victoria is also home to a male-female duo of impersonators. She portrays Prince Albert, while he is Victoria, a queen's queen.

Impersonators are much in demand in Britain. One agency in East Molesey, Surrey, has a full roster of the Royal Family, including a Camilla Parker-Bowles lookalike (insert your joke here), three queens (all women), and a recently redundant Queen Mother.

Ian Powell, the 47-year-old general manager of the Empress, has had several brushes with royalty, once literally. He competed against Princess Anne in three-day combined eventing at a prestigious equestrian competition in Burghley, England; was once presented to the queen; and, memorably, was pressed into service as a valet for Prince Charles for a dinner at Government House in Edmonton in 1983.

"I brushed his coat and straightened his medals," recalled Powell, an expert in royal etiquette who was working for Edmonton's Hotel Macdonald at the time. "As he went into the receiving line, I raced around to the kitchen, so I was then his server."

Powell's hotel has played host to royals on several occasions. King George VI and Queen Elizabeth came to lunch in 1939, as did Princess Elizabeth in 1951. Princess Margaret was an overnight guest seven years later. The china in service in the tea room today matches the ornate pattern of the china used 63 years ago.

He believes those who criticize the cost of maintaining the Royal Family would be advised to consider all the benefits that accrue from the monarchy, sales of merchandise not the least among them.

"You don't have too many people collecting cups with George Bush's head on it," he notes.

Lord Chatfield, who is 85, is the grandson of an admiral who served in the Crimean War and the Ashanti Campaign of 1874 and the son of a distinguished admiral who had served as captain of the H.M.S. Medina during the tour of India of King George V and Queen Mary in 1911 and 1912. His father was First Sea Lord of the Admiralty when raised to the peerage as Baron Chatfield in 1937. Two years later, he was Minister for Coordination of Defence in Britain's War Cabinet of 1939.

While his father was in the cabinet in the dark early days of the war, the son came to Canada in 1940 as an aide-de-camp to the governor-general, the Earl of Athlone. Lord Chatfield succeeded his father on his death in 1967.

Lord Chatfield calls himself a great believer in the monarchy, although he knows many Canadians are indifferent to the Queen and her role.

"She works very hard," he said. "She's extremely knowledgeable. I think she's been a great help to her many prime ministers. They go to see her once a week and she knows all about what they're going to talk about, as she reads all the papers. She's always very charming."

Lord Chatfield eagerly anticipates the Queen's visit to Canada in October. He has yet had the chance to meet her, although he did once meet the Prince of Wales, who greeted him with a hardy, "Your father is who my Uncle Dickie is always talking about," Uncle Dickie being Lord Mountbatten.

Lord Chatfield's venerable ties to the Crown are in contrast to the methods used by the modern monarchist in trying to find recruits. The Monarchist League operates a Web site ([www.monarchist.ca](http://www.monarchist.ca)) and a toll-free number (1-800-I'M LOYAL). The Victoria branch will be handing out buttons to children at Jubilee events to be held on Canada Day.

For Hallsor, the jubilee offers a rare chance to combat what he sees as an insidious attempt to undermine the Crown's role.

"Our chief weapons are Her Majesty the Queen," he wrote in an April newsletter, "who continues to inspire us daily with Her devotion to service, and the natural bond that generations of Canadians have formed with Her, and the institution She represents."

He has known but one sovereign in his lifetime and remembers his grandfather speaking of being loyal to five. While he can be as romantic about the monarchy as the next young fogey, Hallsor is in particular a constitutional monarchist.

"When our prime minister bows to the Queen, he bows to all of us," he said. "He does not have absolute power."

He is wary of Deputy Prime Minister John Manley, whom he describes as "an avowed republican," while the Canadian Alliance, his own party, has "an undercurrent of republicans in its ranks."

The letter opener on his desk is engraved with the crest of Prince Michael of Kent, the Queen's cousin, whom he accompanied around Victoria during a visit in March.

The oil painting of a young Queen Elizabeth that graces the wall of his office was a gift from a volunteer in his unsuccessful campaign as an Alliance candidate in Victoria in the 2000 federal election. Hallsor was defeated by David Anderson of the Liberals, who also has a reputation as a monarchist.

"I think the beauty of the monarchy," Hallsor said, "is that the person at the top doesn't have the power to do anything bad to anyone."

"It's served us well for a very long time," says Powell.

"It's better than the alternative," says Sadowska.

"I certainly can't think of a better alternative," says Lord Chatfield.

How very, very Canadian.