

Victoria lawyer stands on guard for the monarchy

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Two Elizabeths grace the office of Bruce Hallsor's office in downtown Victoria.

One is a portrait of the Queen as a young monarch; the other, a snapshot of Hallsor's 10-month-old daughter.

Add to those the letter opener on his desk, engraved with the crest of Prince Michael of Kent, the Queen's cousin, and it all seems too perfect for the young chairman of the Victoria branch of the Monarchist League of Canada.

Surely the evidence, and the fact we're huddled behind the tweed curtain of Victoria, all points to a Royal fanatic -- an anglophile so obsessed with all things regal that he named his first born after Her Majesty.

But, alas, Hallsor, a 34-year-old lawyer who volunteers his time to the League, has to let the facts get in the way of a good story.

"Her name is spelled with an 's,'" Hallsor says of his first and, so far, only child. "It's a family name."

The portrait? A gift from a volunteer in Hallsor's unsuccessful campaign as an Alliance candidate in the 2000 federal election.

The letter opener? Another gift, albeit from Prince Michael himself.

And Victoria? "It's just where the job (in law) was," says Hallsor, who grew up in Terrace.

"I'm not really the sort who likes to sit around drinking tea and reading Royal Magazine," says Hallsor, whose Canadian roots extend back to the United Empire Loyalists. "I am not a fan club for the House of Windsor."

Hallsor says he is nothing more than a proud Canadian who believes the monarchy "is a part of who we are."

He says he finds a kind of reassurance in the fact the Queen's portrait has adorned the walls of schools since the 1950's: "A symbolic reminder that we live in an orderly society."



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Bruce Hallsor believes the Queen is a "symbolic reminder that we live in an orderly society."

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John Aimers, the League's national chairman and founder, says Hallsor reflects exactly the "rediscovery" of the monarchy by Canadians 35 and under.

"He's showing an energy and ability to build an organization that represents all ages and backgrounds," Aimers says. "Victoria is one of our model branches."

Hallsor is not alone in his enthusiasm for the monarchy. He says the Monarchist League now has 18,000 members across Canada, 600 of them in the Greater Victoria region alone. Members -- all volunteers -- spend their time sponsoring such functions as teas, garden parties and fund-raising events for the organization.

A recent National Post/Global poll had 63 per cent of Canadians saying the "monarchy should maintain or strengthen its roll in Canada." That's as opposed to 30 per cent who "somewhat or strongly wish to make Canada a republic."

The scandals and Fleet Street gossip that have proved a royal pain for the Queen and her cohorts haven't shaken Hallsor's monarchist resolve.

Despite her more than one "annus horribilis," Queen Elizabeth still rules in Hallsor's heart.

"I don't think there is any monarch in history who has had the broad popularity she has had," Hallsor says. "Even people who are against the monarchy seem to have a great deal of respect for Her Majesty."

He treasures childhood memories of the Silver Jubilee visit in 1977, and admits he stayed up all night to watch Charles and Diana exchange vows.

More recently, he escorted Prince Michael to a series of events in Victoria, and is eagerly awaiting the Royal Visit, even though he won't be taking part in any official capacity.

"The monarchy is enjoyable," he says. "The pageantry is interesting but more than that it's a celebration. It's simply colorful and fun."