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BROCK'S BANTER: Heir Conditioning

By Brock Weir

There seems to be a tradition here every time the Prince of Wales is set to return to Canada.
Inevitably, the chorus that vocalizes for just such occasions come out to perform, and their refrain is often the same: he's stodgy, he's not popular, he doesn't connect with young Canadians and, alarmingly for anyone who knows a lick about our constitution, why doesn't he step aside for William and Kate?
During such times of visits to any parts of our country or, indeed, whenever Prince Charles or a member of his family is in the news cycle ? whether it is his parents, the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, his sons William and Harry, or his daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law-to-be, or grandchildren ? these choristers are trotted out to receive their requisite airtime, and boy do they get it!
For those who haven't seen these people in action, it might seem like an attractive argument but, for those of us who have been on the ground, the evidence just isn't there.
This past weekend, I was thinking about last year's Canada 150 Commemorations.
On June 30, the eve of Canada Day and the ultimate centrepiece of a national celebration that felt like it came in like a lion and went out like a lamb, I was on the ground in Wellington, a small but lovely community in Prince Edward County.
Prince Charles and his wife, the Duchess of Cornwall, were due in the rural village for a visit to the local Farmers' Market, part of a day of activities in the Prince Edward County/Bay of Quinte area.
It might not sound like the most exciting of events, particularly as it was a particularly rainy morning and beach umbrellas emblazoned with the Canada 150 logo were the day's hottest commodity at the local Home Hardware.
And yet, there was a buzz in the air.
An estimated 200 metres of the main thoroughfare had been prepared for the occasion. About half of this was cordoned off to traffic, but the entire length was bordered by crowd barriers outlining the general vicinity in which Charles and Camilla would be visiting.
Despite the rain, this entire length of street was dotted with a solid line of people.
The rain continued, and so did the flood of humanity.
Before long, the rain broke and, under the suddenly blazing sun, the crowds were four or five deep along almost the entire length of the route.
You might think that certain demographic trends would have been evident in this crowd; perhaps an audience which skewed largely WASP-y, or a crowd of Boomers or older adults who were born just a little bit ahead of the Boomer curve. If you thought that, you would be wrong. Well, perhaps aside from a woman who, from head to toe, was dressed as Queen Victoria.
People young and old, regardless of background, took the time to come out that day. Their reasons might not have been universal ? some might have wanted to see their future king in action, for some there might have been a little bit of stardust ? but it seemed everyone who had the chance to meet and shake hands with Prince Charles that day, and he must have pressed the flesh of a good 400 ? 500 people, seemed to be enthralled and left with a lasting positive impression, even if they were left with just a few words.
I was thinking about this on Sunday during an event I attend every year marking Accession Day, the anniversary of the Queen's Accession to the Throne, following the death of her father, King George VI, on February 6, 1952.
Each year at this event, which is hosted by the Monarchist League of Canada in Toronto, there is often a set theme bolstered by a guest speaker who delivers. This year, however, there were two themes: the Crown's relationship with Canada's Indigenous peoples and the Prince's Charities Canada.
Words on the Prince's Charities Canada were delivered by a young man named Andreas who served as an intern at the charity over 2017.
His time with the organization was as varied as getting word out about the organization itself during the heat of Charles and Camilla's Canada 150 Tour to getting ?down and dirty? in ankle-deep mud shearing sheep highlighting the Prince's Charities efforts to stimulate the wool business.
These facets of the Prince's Charities were evident after the couple left Wellington and people had the opportunity to get into the Farmers' Market. Each of the vendors seemed to have a connection to one of the areas on which the Prince of Wales focuses through his charitable endeavours and these themes can be found at just about every Farmers' Market I've had the pleasure to visit.
The Prince's Charities Canada has programs in place to promote responsible business through the Prince's Canadian Responsible Business Network which increases employment opportunities for youth in underserved communities, programs that provide entrepreneurial opportunities for Canada's veterans, and initiatives providing the wherewithal for businesses shift towards

sustainability.
There is also an educational component for Canadians of all ages, including initiatives to support the revitalization of our Indigenous languages, ensuring traditional art forms ?endure and evolve,? facilitating the development of young leaders making positive changes in their communities, and so forth.
Aurora has been a recipient of the Prince of Wales Prize for Municipal Leadership, one program which is among the organization's varied initiatives that look at Canada's ?built heritage? while efforts towards global sustainability include the aforementioned Campaign for Wool, the Pollinator Project highlighting ?the crucial role bees play in our ecosystem? and the Prince of Wales Prizes for Sustainable Forestry.
In my view, each of these programs feel the pulse of so many causes close to the hearts of Canadians, but the work of the organization ? and indeed opportunities to participate and get involved ? are sadly flying under the radar.
The remarkable 66th anniversary of the Queen's reign this week seems like the perfect opportunity to highlight this work and the efforts the Prince and everyone involved in the organization are doing to support so many stitches of the Canadian tapestry.
?Working with the veterans was really powerful,? said Andreas. ?We heard a lot about the issues the veterans were having and how government policies aren't working. The veterans I was helping had been on four or five tours in the Middle East and that changes people. With the sacrifice that is made, I think the [Prince's Charities Canada] is helping them to move forward because they need a future, they deserve one. They [need this support from] this country they have already given so much to.
?Canadians know Charles and I think most Canadians really appreciate him and they should get to know him better. I think he will be a really great king for Canada, if the work of the PCC (Prince's Charities Canada) is any indication.?
To see for yourself, take a look at www.princescharities.ca.