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PEOPLE

'Sailor Man' has it all

*Book launched
in historic
Moodie home*

By Jack Evans

The Intelligencer

Just when many people suspected Canadian fiction literature was dead, or at least dying, along comes Belleville author Leo Simpson's fourth novel (not counting a fifth book of short stories) *Sailor Man*.

This book has a cast of colorful characters worthy of the international stage, a story line which bears the stamp of inspired Irish imagination and wit and enough erotica and violence to sate today's audiences.

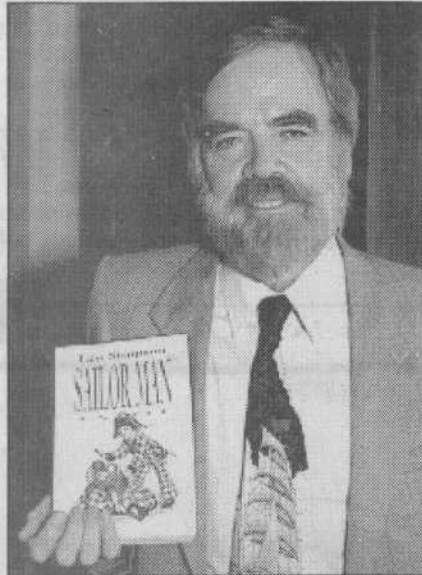
The book was formally launched in recent days with a gala invitational gathering in the historically famous Susanna Moodie Cottage on Sinclair Street where Simpson has been residing for some years and where the book was written.

The gathering included friends, associates, fellow city and area authors and city and area literati who had a chance to meet Simpson and representatives of the publisher, Porcupine's Quill of Erin and purchase advance copies of the novel.

Sailor Man, with its boudoir grappings and flights of fancy, is a far cry from the genteel reflections and historic recountings of the late Susanna Moodie.

The illustrated cover gives a strong hint of the novel's origins, says Simpson; line drawings of the famous Italian medieval puppet theatre characters Harlequin and Columbine (a loose equivalent to the English puppet characters Punch and Judy.)

Harlequin, in this book, is reincarnated in the person of Jack, who



Intelligencer photo by Jack Evans

Leo Simpson holds a copy of his book *Sailor Man*, which was unveiled recently in the famed Susanna Moodie house on Sinclair Street in Belleville.

fancies himself as a 19th century sailor recanting verses of Blow the

Man Down and speaking in quaint, seafaring language at times. He's also invisible at times, a professional lover, a do-or-die hero, and a problem-solver for almost everyone but himself.

With no apology to far flung readers who will probably revel simply in the intriguing characters and gripping action, Simpson peppers his plot with numerous contemporary and local references from the factories of Belleville, to the farms of Queensborough, finally coming to dwell in a mythical, monolithic complex in Toronto called "The Sutton."

Just about anything can happen in Jack's colorful life, from true love with his earth-mother-type Columbine to wresting to the death with his mortal enemy, Elmo Apse.

Born at Limerick, Ireland, Simpson's other novels are: *Arkwright*, *The Peacock Papers*, and *Kowalski's Last Chance*.

A public launch of the book is set for Thursday, May 16 at 7 p.m. in the Belleville Library Gallery when Simpson will be in attendance to give selected readings from the novel.