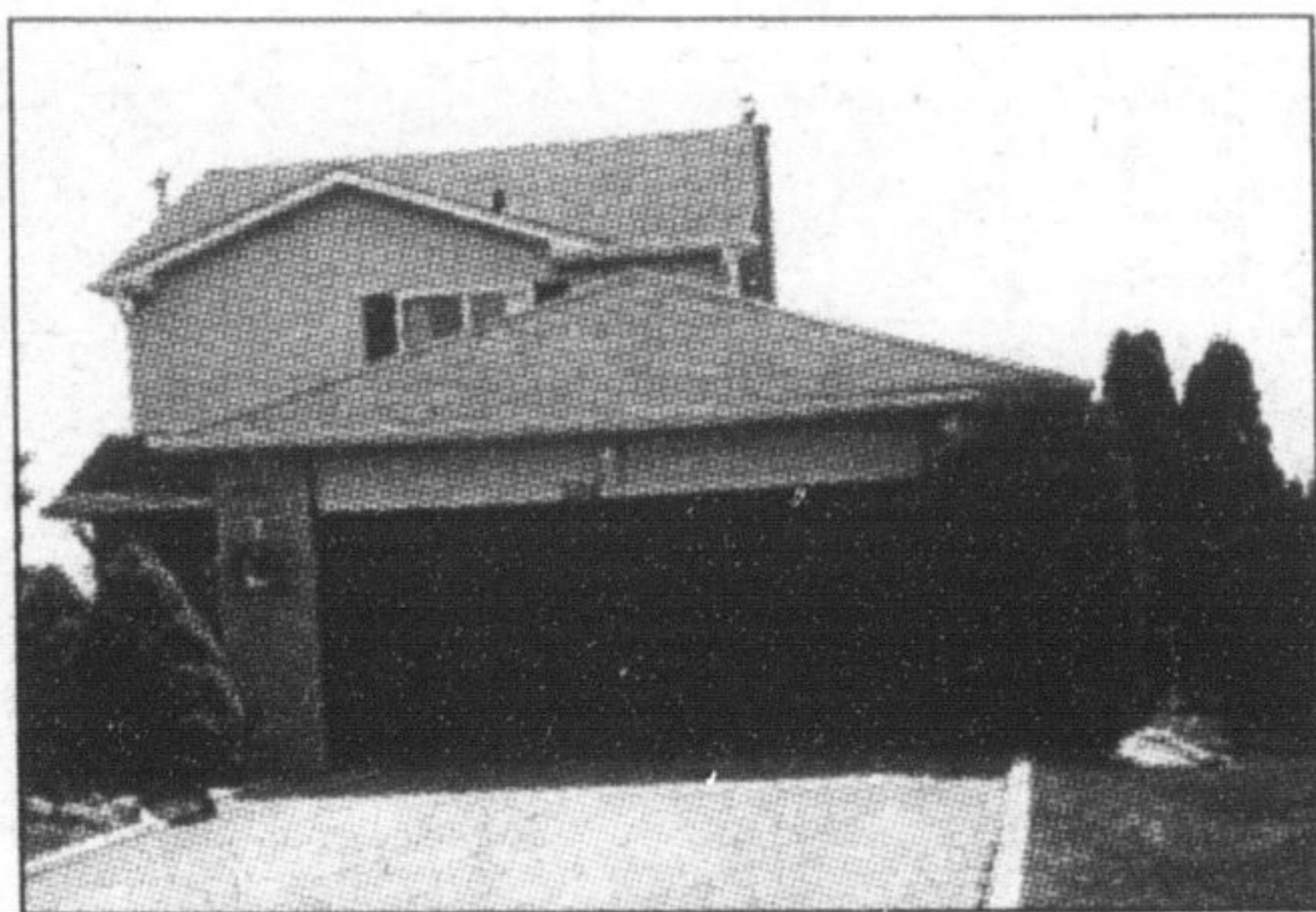


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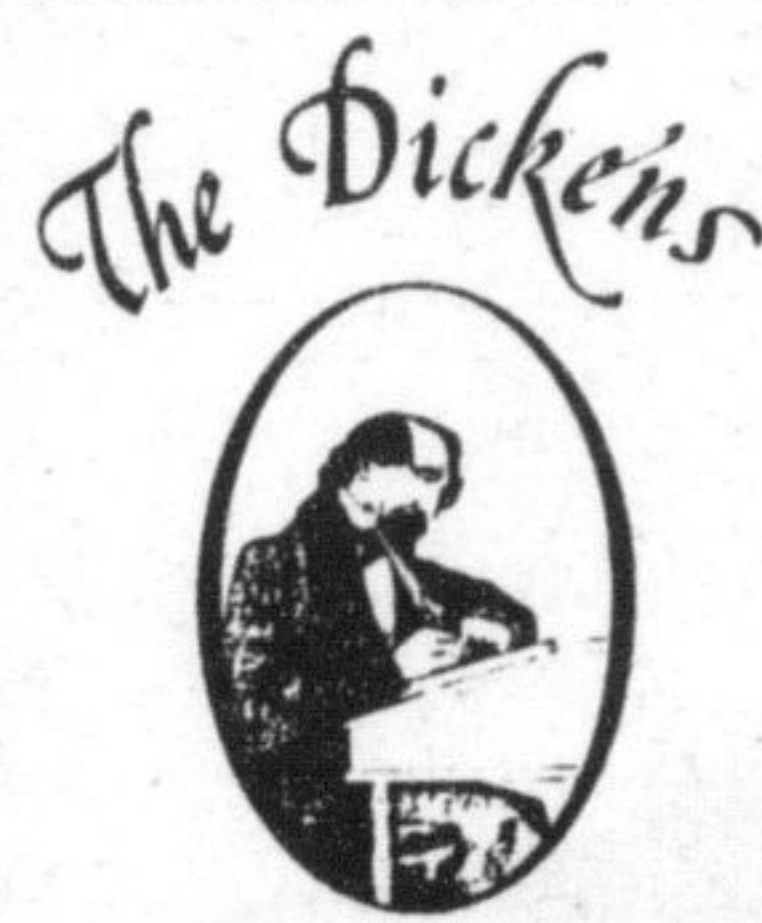
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Local author hopes for success with release of crime thriller

By FANNIE SUNSHINE

The Champion

Unlike most authors, David Wickes didn't start his writing career at a young age.

The former jet fighter pilot recently had his first novel, *Killing Time*, published. The book has been on the shelves at Chapter's book stores since January.

"As a teenager I wrote a sports column for a Montreal newspaper and I wrote for trade papers," the Moffat writer said. "I then took a fictional writing course that taught me how to write fiction properly. I retired early to write my novel."

'Killing Time', a fictional crime thriller, follows main character Jack Petersen on a search for Sharin Jensen, the daughter of a high profile politician. During his search, a series of murders occur. The killer was involved in a car accident and was presumed dead but no body was found.

"I started reading late in life," Mr. Wickes said. "It wasn't my lifelong dream to be a novelist. Now I thoroughly enjoy writing."

From his writing course, he came to understand the "rules" of fiction writing.

"You must know the beginning and ending of your story. Plot twists have to come 25 per cent through the book and again at 75 per cent through. I had the core characters in mind when I starting writing the book. I'm almost done the second book and I have the third one in my head. Jack Petersen will be the focal person in all of the books but you won't have to read them in any particular order."

When developing the characters, Mr. Wickes used character traits of people he knew but the characters weren't based on one sole person, he added.

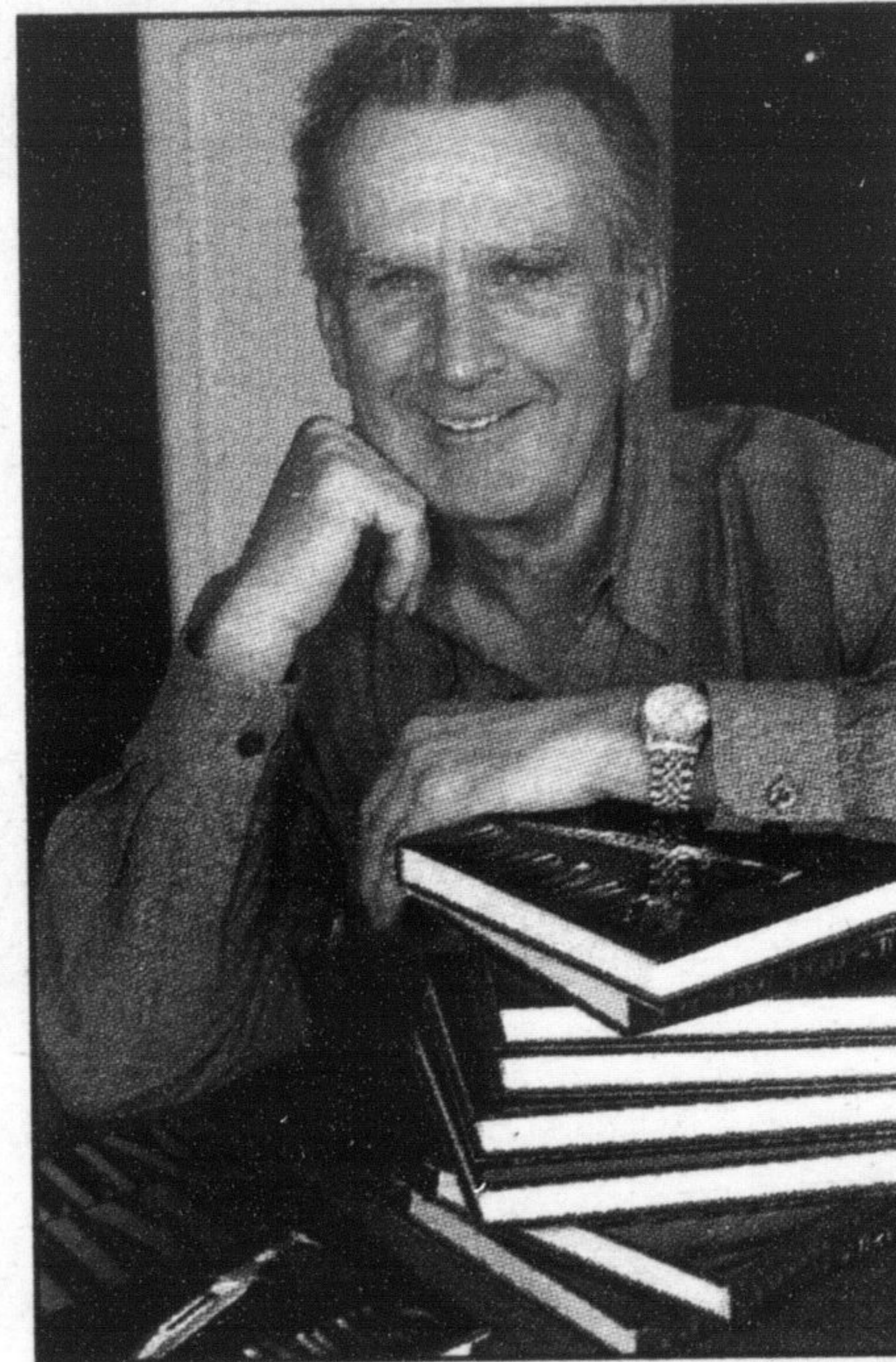


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Moffat's David Wickes retired early to write a novel.

"This book took 10 months of writing and four months of editing to complete," he said. "It was such a thrill to write and research the book. The second book I wrote at a faster pace — I was wiser. There were a number of times in the first novel where I wrote an idea and then had to research it. With the second book, I researched the idea first before I added it as part of the book."

It's too early to tell if the book is selling well because of the short time it's been on the market, Mr. Wickes said.

"I don't know if every Chapter's has the novel but the one in Kitchener/Waterloo does. I've done some readings and signings at the store but it's a little premature to

say how the book is doing."

When he saw his novel on display at the book store he felt "incredible."

"When it was finally completed I felt fantastic. I got to look at a printed copy of the book in November."

The book signings have helped sales since Mr. Wickes is a virtual no-name, he said.

"I'm a practical person. The fiction wall at Chapter's is huge. How is someone going to pick up David Wickes' *Killing Time*? That's why the signings have helped (with sales). People aren't going to be looking for next David Wickes novel yet."

Because the novel is filled with technical policing procedures, Mr. Wickes spent many hours with Minnesota police officers (the state where novel the takes place) to get a grasp on the technical lingo.

"I had to be very accurate with the police procedures," he said. "I had to write that part perfectly."

He said he's hoping his next novel, which has yet to be named, will be out for Christmas but doesn't know if it will make the publishing deadline.

"In order for a Christmas release I have to have the book ready to go by May and printed by August. So I think it will probably be out next spring or Christmas of 2002."

Mr. Wickes, who admires authors such as Ken Follett, John Girsham and Fredrick Forsythe, said he receives support from his wife and kids and his three German shepherds.

"I'm always thinking of story ideas. As soon as I think of something I write it down or put it into the computer immediately."

Mr. Wickes will sign copies of *Killing Time* at Coles bookstore at Milton Mall tomorrow from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Local dancers to compete in Las Vegas

Andrea Stockton of Dance Elite was chosen out of hundreds of dancers at the preliminary pageant of the I Love Dance competition to compete at the International Championships Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada in July.

The preliminary competition was held

May 5 in Niagara Falls, New York.

Ms Stockton, who has been at Dance Elite for 12 years, received a \$600 scholarship to attend the competition in Las Vegas.

Katie De Carie, another dancer from Dance Elite, will also be competing at the International Championships Convention.

I Love Dance has been presenting its dance festivals and conventions for 23 years. Young students of ballet, jazz, tap, variety arts and other dance forms are given the opportunity to have their work seen and evaluated by qualified, professional and celebrity dance judges.



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