

Lifestyles

Historian's new book delves into town's past

By **RICHARD VIVIAN**
The Champion

Local historian Jim Dills is looking to breathe new life into Milton's past with 'Time Capsules 1890 - 1894', a collection of news stories.

The book — released last month — is a compilation of news events from the archives of The Champion and other area newspapers. It's based on the 'Time Capsules' column Mr. Dills compiles for the Friday edition of The Champion.

"People had indicated some interest in them (weekly columns) — people who have lived here for a long time and people who are new to the community," Mr. Dills said.

"Much has not been written about Milton's past, so when I had a chance, I decided I would do what I could to bring a little of it to people's attention."

In researching for the book, Mr. Dills systematically searched past newspapers looking for tidbits of information. As he reads, he stores the information in his computer — making it easier to compile the full story on big issues.

"They didn't play big news events like now. You have to search to find the little references that make it interesting," he explained.

"Most people find it (research) bor-

ing. I find it interesting. There are many things that old newspapers reveal to us about communication, transportation and all of those things that provide an interesting perspective on Milton's past."

Passion began at paper

Mr. Dills' passion for the past began during his time as publisher of The Champion from 1951 to 1978.

"Every time I would try to get a historical reference, all I would get would be, 'Somebody might remember something.' I guess the news training left me with a dissatisfaction of the inaccuracy of it all," he commented.

"At the time, I didn't have the time to do that sort of thing (in-depth history research)."

With the book complete, there's still a lot of history to be told. But whether or not further books are published depends greatly on how well this one sells.

"It's a realistic world we live in unfortunately," he laughed. "I keep researching — I'm in 1901 now. At one time I thought I'd be satisfied if I did the 1800s, but then I found there were still issues I'd like to know more about."

"If I make it to the 1930s, then I'll have done quite a bit."

'Time Capsules 1890 - 1894' can be found at Harris Stationery, Spice O'Life, Global Genealogy and Coles. The book costs \$7.50.

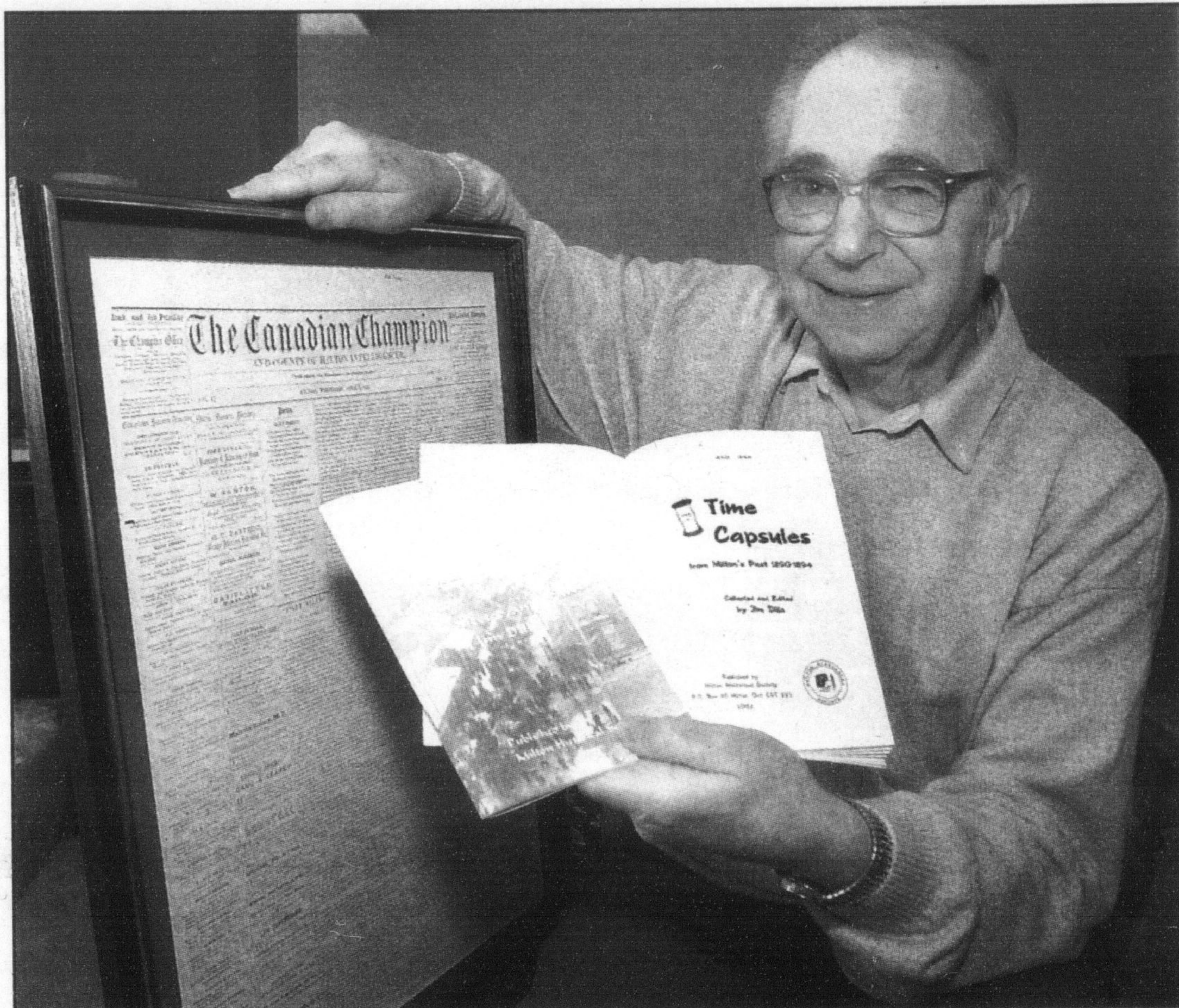


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Historian Jim Dills shows off an old copy of The Champion as well as his new book 'Time Capsules'.

Oh, what a terrible night on that lonely highway

What a night.

It started off okay as I drove to Barrie Sunday night to report on the midget AA team playing in the first game of the OMHA finals.

I was offered a seat on the team bus, but I had a stop to make on the way. Besides that, in my own car I could smoke and listen to what I wanted on the radio.

The game was good, plenty to write about, Milton won, and I got some information for a couple other stories. I figured I'd be up late because the stories were due the next morning, but that didn't bother me.

On the way back, with no warning, the lights

flashed on my gauges and my car shut down. It was finished for the night, and for good as it turned out.

I coasted into a V-shaped area between the on-ramp and the highway on the 407, exactly 18 km away from home.

I said the appropriate swear words, switched on the four-way flashers and then calmed down and figured out my next move.

I sat for a while hoping a miracle would happen quickly and a tow truck or police car would be right behind me. Since everybody now seems to have a cell phone, except me, I figured that maybe somebody would stop.



with **MURRAY TOWNSEND**

About the same time the freezing rain started. Lucky me.

If you've ever seen the way cars drive on the

On the loose

407 you know there aren't a lot of police cars around, and I thought maybe there wouldn't be many tow trucks either, especially if they had to pay toll charges.

Nobody was stopping or even slowing down so I figured I was on my own.

I got out of the car, with the freezing rain pelting me in the head, and made my way up the ramp to look for a telephone.

I saw a strip mall a fair distance away but that was all. I made my way to it and was relieved when I saw a big Pizza sign on the front of a store.

• see **SANITY** on page 15

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