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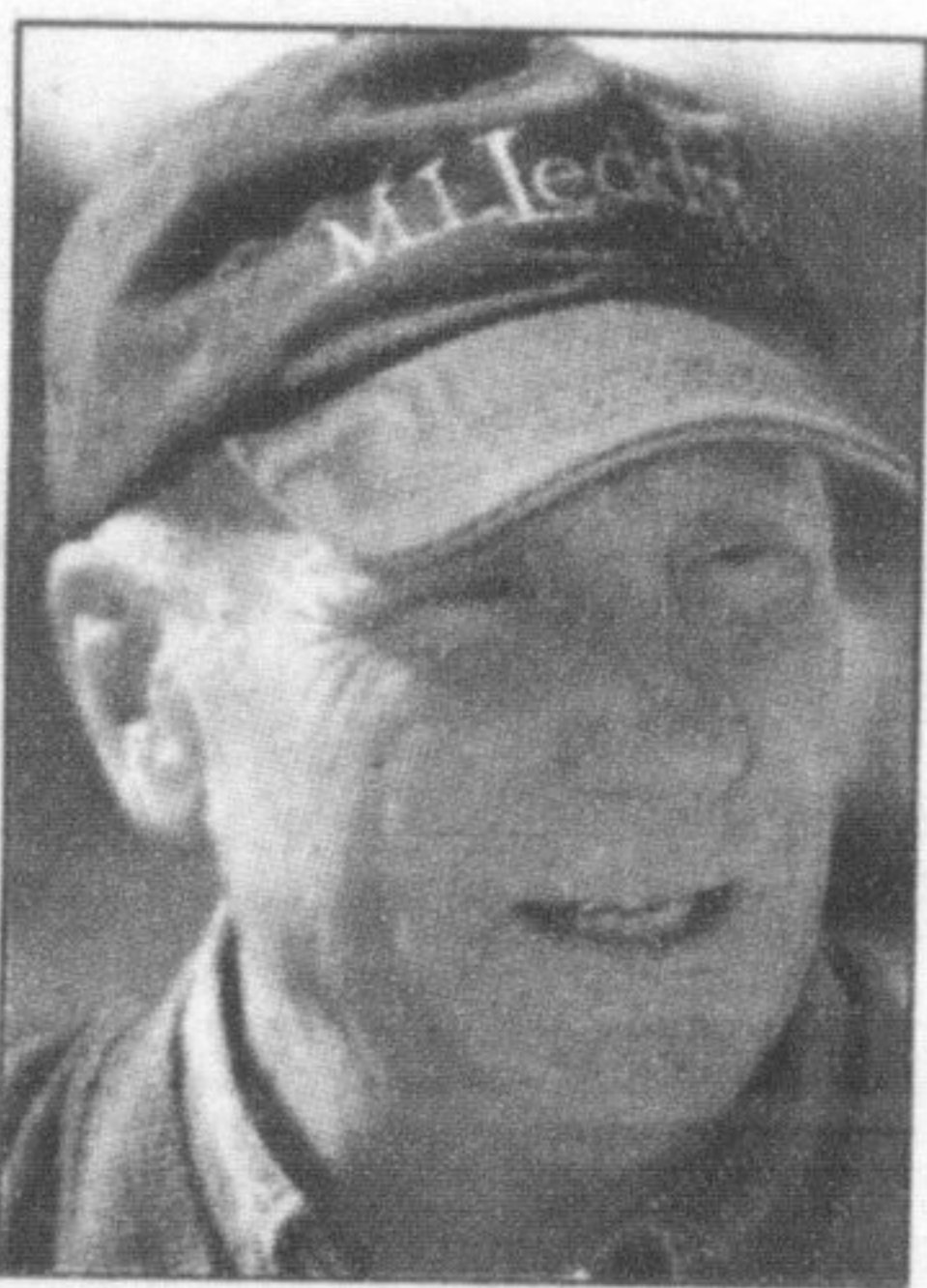
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## Former minister pleads guilty to gun charges

By Stephanie Hounsell  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

A former Ontario cabinet minister has pleaded guilty to firearms charges.

John Snobelen, 52, of Milton pleaded guilty to careless storage of a firearm and possession of a restricted weapon at Ontario Court of Justice on Steeles Avenue Tuesday morning. He was found not guilty of unauthorized possession of a firearm.



John Snobelen

The charges stem from a search at a Milton house January 9. Police seized a Colt .22-calibre semi-automatic pistol and ammunition.

Three days later, Snobelen turned himself in to police. He was later released.

Snobelen — who served as minister of education from 1995 to 1997 and also as a Mississauga MPP — looked poised as he sat by

himself at the back of the court room waiting for his matter to come up, and then later when he stood before the judge.

He was dressed in a navy suit and royal blue tie, his grey hair buzzed short.

An agreed statement of facts read by Crown attorney Anthony MacKinnon stated police were called in early January by Snobelen's estranged wife, who reported he had an unlicensed handgun with ammunition at his Nassagaweya/Esquesing Townline farmhouse.

They found the gun in the cold air return vent in the bathroom during their search of the house the next day.

Snobelen told police that the firearm came with property included in his purchase of an Oklahoma ranch in 2001.

When he moved back to Canada in 2003, his belongings — including the firearm — were packed by various individuals and trucked back. He didn't discover the pistol until he unpacked and he moved it first to a nightstand drawer and then among sweaters in a closet, the statement reads, adding he intended to dispose of it but didn't.

It was Snobelen's wife who relocated the gun to the bathroom vent where it was found by police, the statement reads.

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MICHAEL IVANIN / SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

**TAKING AIM:** Daniel Chadwick gets excited as he throws a ball into the basket during the United Way of Milton's 25th anniversary celebration at Chris Hadfield Park Sunday. See more coverage of the event on page B15.

## Fast action controls Roxul fire

By Stephanie Hounsell  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

The quick thinking of some employees coupled with an aggressive attack by firefighters helped avert a potentially disastrous situation Monday night at a local manufacturing plant.

The Milton Fire Department was called to Roxul on Harrop Drive at about 7:15 p.m. after receiving a call reporting a blaze.

"There was a fairly advanced fire in part of the office area," explained fire chief Larry Brassard.

Employees working the night shift were evacuated and for the next hour, crews worked to bring the blaze under control. After arriving, the initial crew called for back up and a total of about 30 firefighters and assorted vehicles

• see NO on page A8

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