

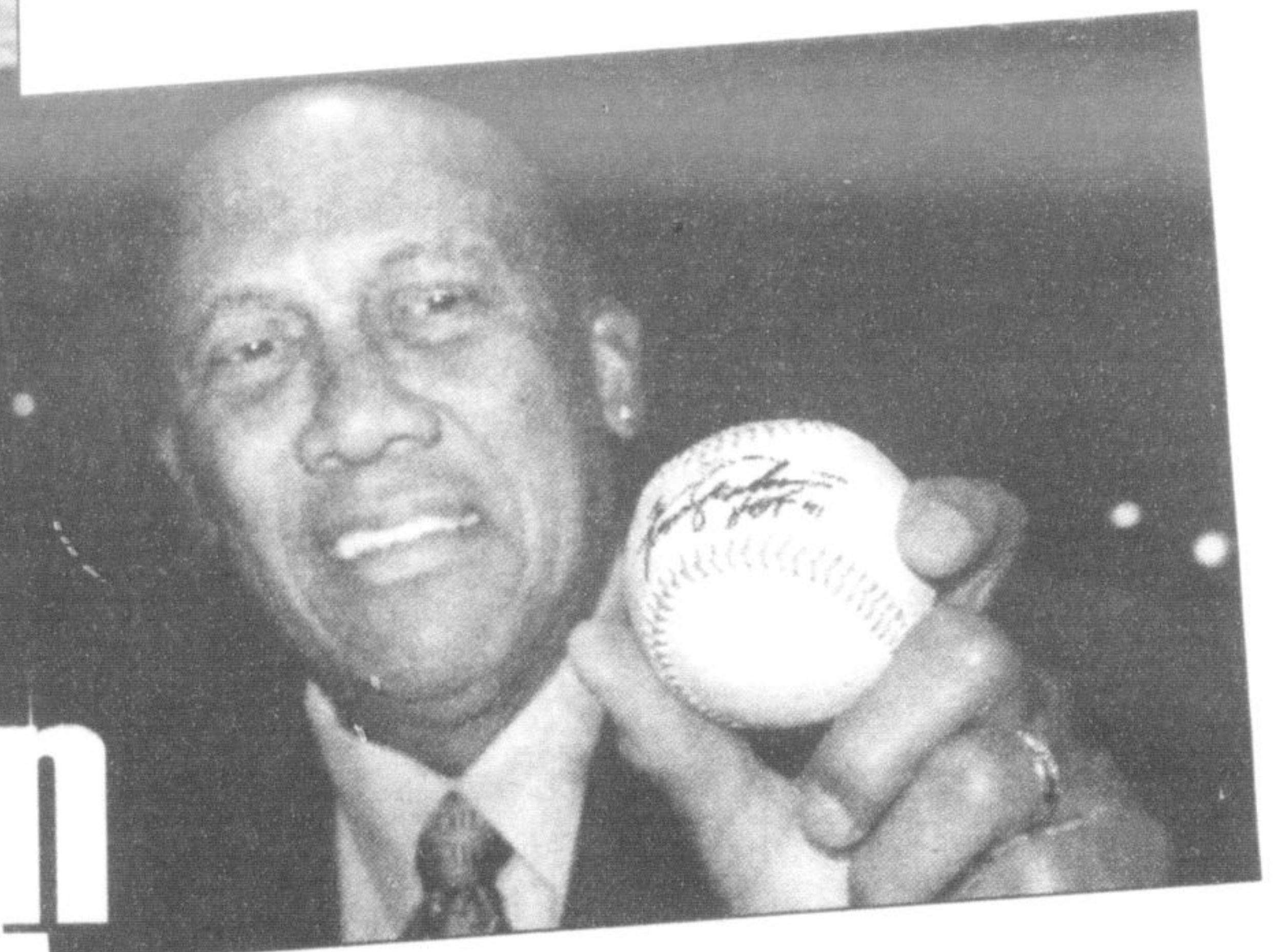
SPORTS

SPORTS EDITOR: STEVE LeBLANC e-mail sieblanc@miltoncanadianchampion.com



A SPORTING GOOD TIME: Clockwise from left, NHL Hall of Famers Jean Beliveau and Johnny Bower, Argos veteran linebacker Mike O'Shea and Canadian baseball icon Fergie Jenkins show some signed memorabilia prior to the dinner and auction.

GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION



Another major celebration

NHL Hall of Famers headline sports dinner

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

With an air of both humour and humility, Jean Beliveau had a very simple response when asked about his championship-rich career.

"I certainly came along at the right time," said the Montreal Canadiens' great and 17-time Stanley Cup winner (10 as player, seven as executive), who along with ex-Original Six rival Johnny Bower headlined Tuesday's Milton Chamber of Commerce Sports Celebrity Dinner and Auction. "I was very lucky."

With more than 500 goals and 1,200 total points over a near two-decade run, it's safe to

say the Habs were as fortunate to have the big centreman as he was to be part of their heyday.

"I don't think five (Stanley Cup wins) in a row will ever be done again... not with the players changing teams so much now," Beliveau told the *Champion* before the seventh annual event, which was emceed by Sportsnet Ontario's Evanka Osmak and drew a record 288 sports enthusiasts to Rattlesnake Point Golf Club. "That hurts the nucleus of your team."

Asked for his thoughts on fighting's place in hockey in light of the recent death of Whitby Dunlops' defenceman Don Sanderson, the Hall of Famer doesn't see it going away anytime soon.

"It's a part of the game, not that it was my style. I enjoyed scoring goals more (than fighting)," said the Canadiens' celebrated sniper, who maintained his commitment to the dinner/auction despite a medical scare over the holidays. "To me, the cross-checking from behind is a lot more dangerous. Something has to be done about that."

While sporting individual accolades that would be the envy of most NHLers past and present, Beliveau stressed that one thing about his illustrious career stands out above everything else — beyond regularly hoisting Lord Stanley's silver cup, that is.

"In 1961 when they elected me captain, and not even an alternate captain. To me that was such an honour. It was great just to be a member of the team."

Signing countless autographs over the

years, Beliveau said there have been a few unusual items mixed in with all the pucks, photographs and jerseys placed in front of him.

"It didn't happen too often, but sometimes a woman would ask me to autograph her, you know, brassiere."

Bower admitted to occasionally doing likewise, though added, "I don't know, maybe I shouldn't say that."

A regular visitor to Milton through his friendship with Justice of the Peace Mark Curtis, the 'China Wall' is no doubt best known as being between the pipes for the last Maple Leafs' Stanley Cup triumph in 1967. Four decades and counting later and he's still wondering when he'll have to part with that distinction.

• see GREAT on page A16

Tired of learning
Classical
Piano?

Introducing A New

Jazz Performance Program



Teri Parker
Bachelor of Music in Jazz
Performance
University of Toronto
Grade 10 Piano RCM
8 Years Experience

- Learn to Improvise
- Learn to Transcribe
- Learn to Read Lead Sheets
- Learn Jazz Harmony

All Styles: Jazz, Rock & Blues
Prepare for College or University Auditions

ACADEMY OF
MUSIC
Established 1982

555 Main St., Unit 7 (by Fabricland)
www.academy-of-music.ca
905-878-7090

Some Like It Hot!
HOT YOGA
(905) 631-5437
1160 Blair Rd. Burlington
\$10 Drop In Fee!
Your First Class is FREE!!
Child Care available During Daytime Classes
www.somelikeithot.ca