

# ARTS

## Venture into novel writing out-of-this-world experience

Zajac earns CBC Book Club nomination for his sci-fi social satire, *Major Karnage*

By Steve LeBlanc  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Gord Zajac needed an awfully long time to complete his first novel. But once he did, validation for it quickly followed suit.

A lifelong storyteller who readily admits how difficult the process can be, the rural Miltonian offers no hesitancy when divulging how long it took for *Major Karnage* to go from its original concept to the book store shelves.

"About 15 years. It took a long time to figure out what this book was supposed to be. I kept having these nuggets of ideas here and there," recalled the 37-year-old, a graduate of Sheridan College's media arts program who's worked for such storytelling outfits as the Cartoon Network and YTV. "It was hard to pin down the tone."

Just a few months after its release, the 334-page tale — put out by ChiZine Publications and aptly characterized as a sci-fi social satire — earned a nomination for Best Character by the CBC's Book Club Awards.

### Major validation

For a writer seemingly filled with as much self-doubt as passion for his gift, this accolade — which came in February — was more than a little gratifying.

"Once the book finally came out it was neat to see it in the book stores, but also kind of frightening. Now people could read it and give their opinions; it wasn't just in my head anymore. So yeah, it (nomination) felt great."

Set 20 years after 'The War,' Zajac's debut

novel centres around a now 'retired' Major John Karnage, who along with his few surviving comrades is deemed unfit to live in a now happy-happy-joy-joy society of peace and tranquility. Locked up in an insane asylum, Karnage soon discovers a new threat is coming from beyond the stars.

Struggling to adapt to a world he no longer recognizes and mount a defence, the grizzled major has an equally daunting task — averting the inner landmine failsafe device designed to curb his violent tendencies.

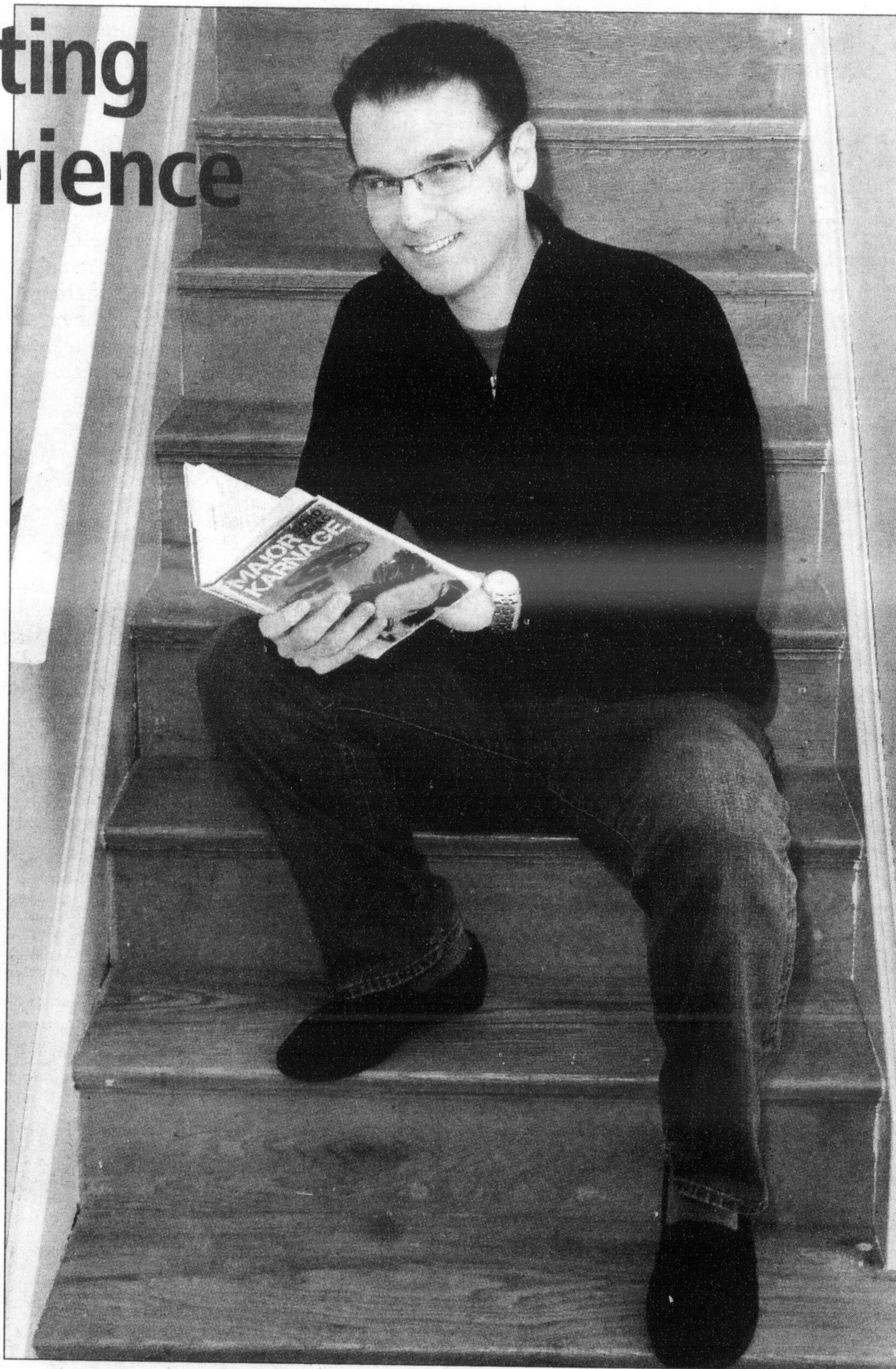
### Plenty of twists and turns

Along the way there's plenty of action and dark humour, as fanatical cults, cartoon cats and alien squidbugs enter the picture — offering more than enough components for one wild ride.

Said Zajac, "On the one hand it's a satire, but at the same time you want the characters to be taken seriously. Yes, you want it to be funny, but not so much that the humour undermines the situation. One review described it as being a roller coaster with short climbs and long descents. I think that's nice. I think it has a wider demographic than I would have expected. I'd say it's the type of book that would appeal to people who don't really read much. It's got a stickiness to it and is a fun ride."

Zajac's 'Bookies' nomination comes roughly 20 years after another major validation of his literary talents. Looking back to his time at Milton District High School, the recently-minted novelist recalls a memorable conservation he had with drama and English teacher Laurie Graham.

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**NOW READ THIS:** Lifelong writer Gord Zajac checks out a copy of his first novel, *Major Karnage*.

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REAL ESTATE

**Diane Wolstenholme**

Ext 212

dianew@

miltoncanadianchampion.com

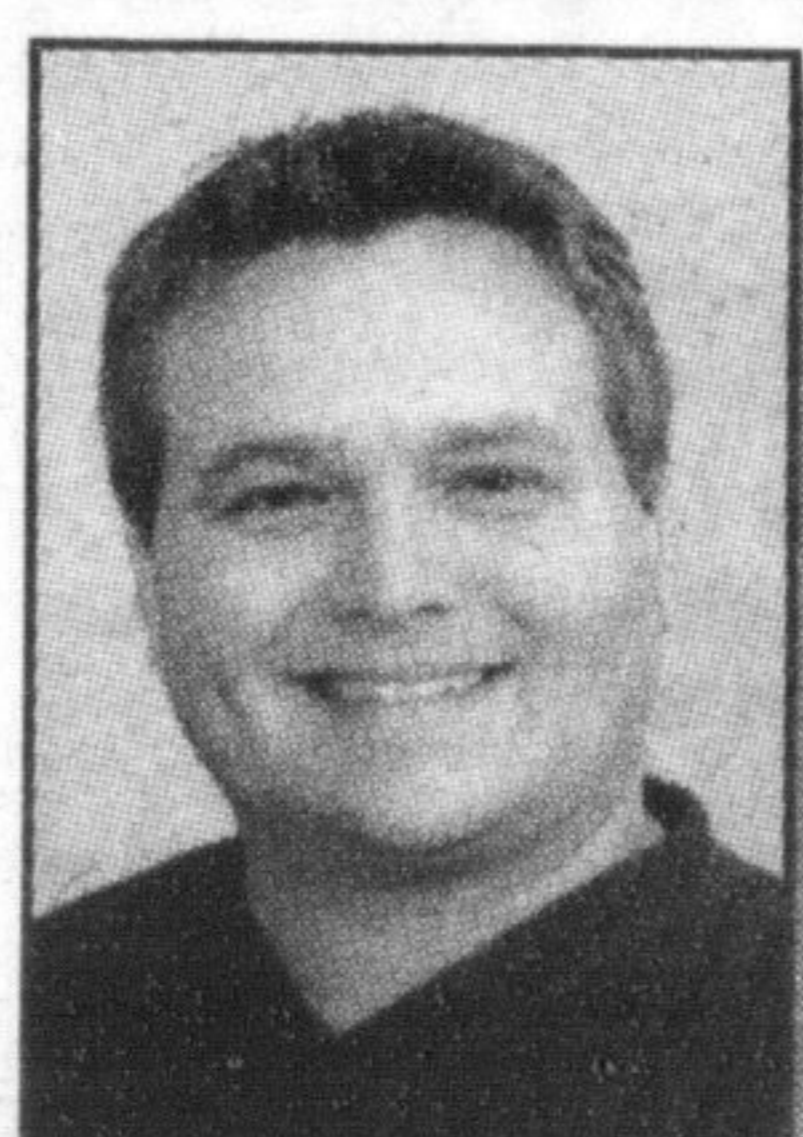


**Lori Frechette**

Ext 218

lfrechette@

miltoncanadianchampion.com



**Sean Miller**

Ext 213

smiller@

miltoncanadianchampion.com

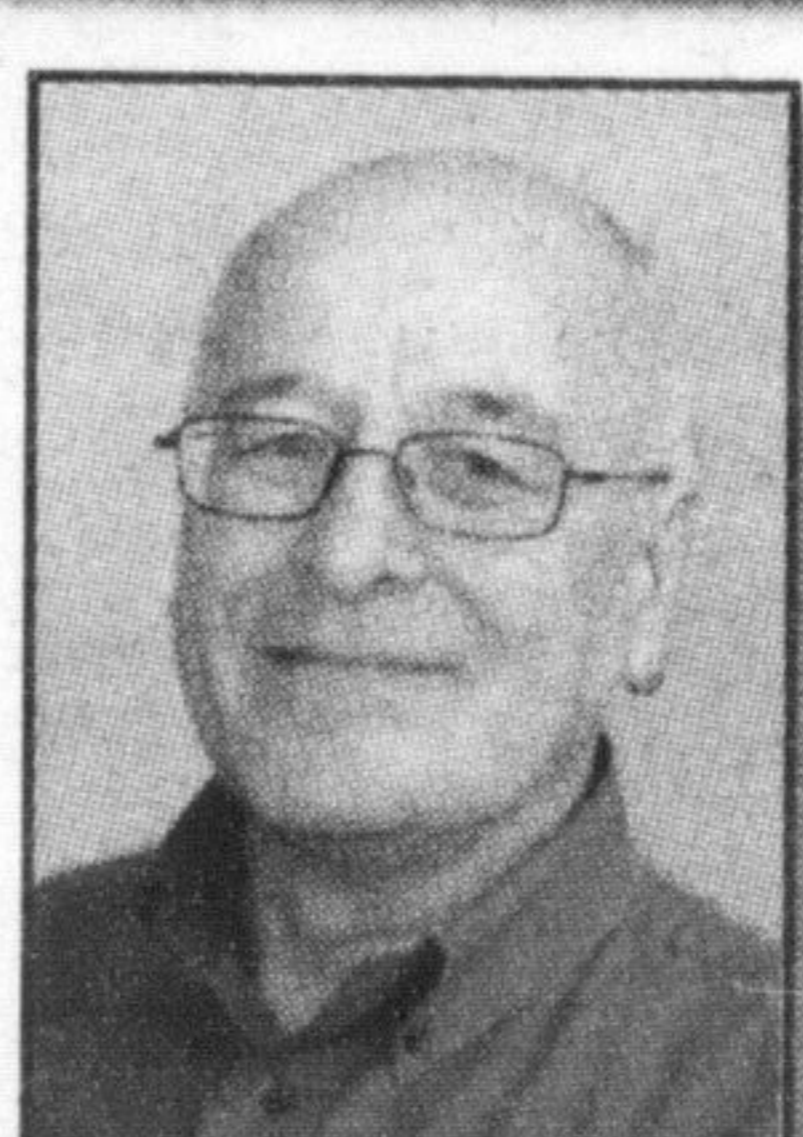


**Colleen Gorman**

Ext 211

cgorman@

miltoncanadianchampion.com

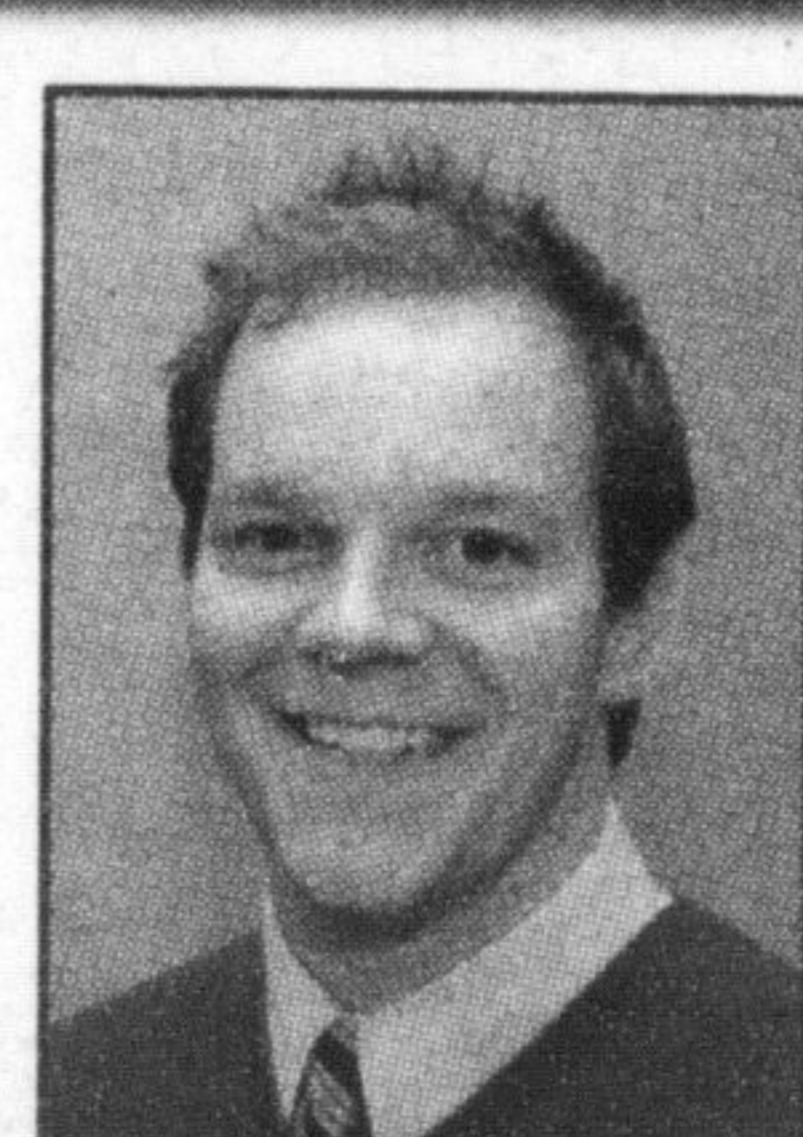


**Clem Scholtz**

Ext 214

cscholtz@

miltoncanadianchampion.com



**Richard McFeeters**

Ext 252

mcfeters@

miltoncanadianchampion.com



**Fiona Duke**

Ext 217

fduke@

miltoncanadianchampion.com

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