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Library chief taking her leave with fond memories of Milton

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
Special to The Champion

A SPECIAL CELEBRATION was held at the Milton Public Library Monday evening, as board members, staff and town officials collectively thanked Jane Watkins for nearly 12 years of service and dedication to the community.

The smiles, laughing and general good cheer at Monday's reception however, will likely be replaced by some tears and heavy hearts next month — when Ms Watkins, the chief librarian, heads west for a bright new career opportunity in British Columbia.

She will be moving to Richmond, B.C., where she'll take over as manager of public services for the city's entire library system. She will oversee operations for both the main branch and two smaller affiliate branches.

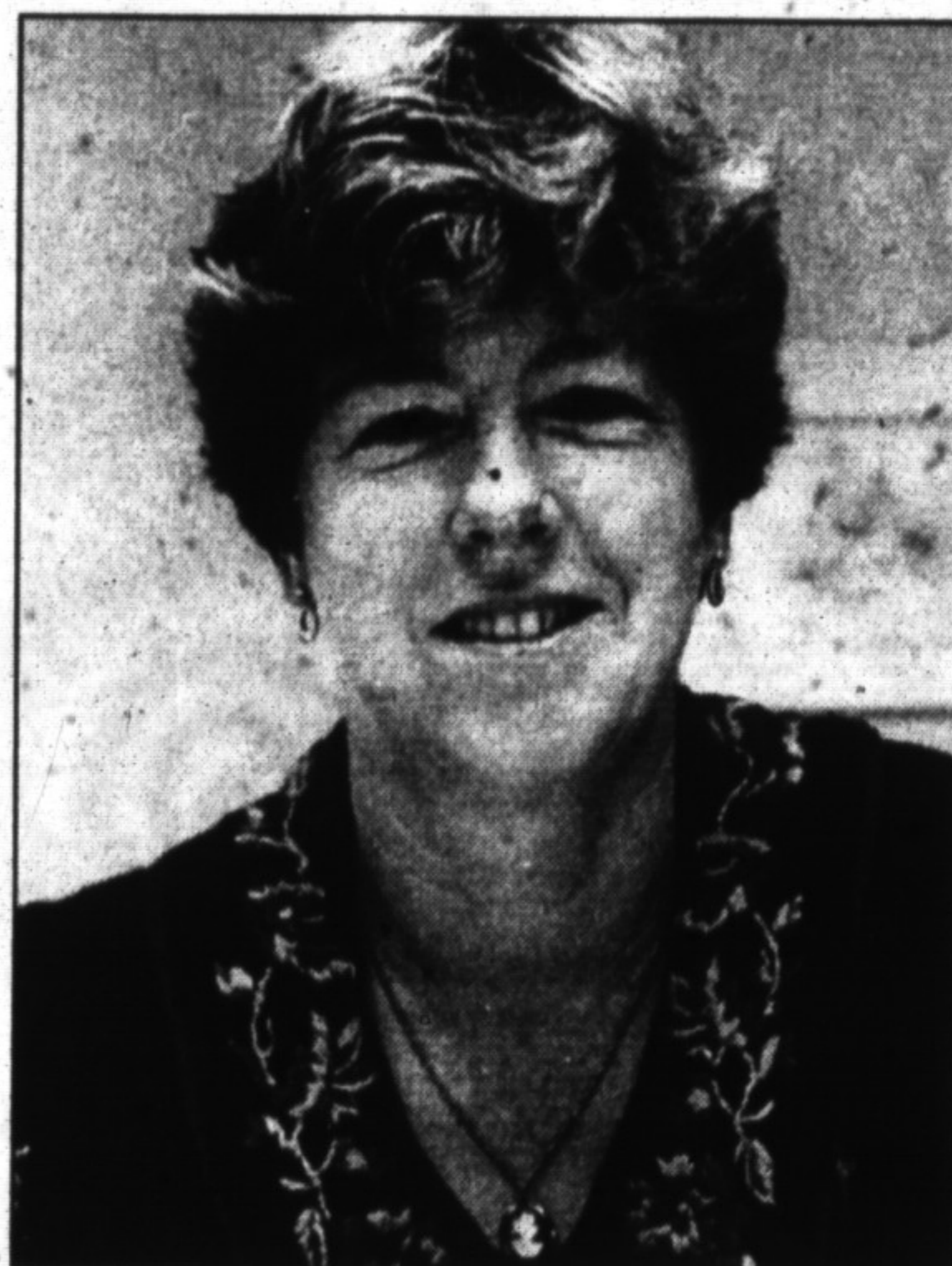
"I hate to leave Milton, but this (new position) is a life dream of mine that is too good to miss," said Ms Watkins. She will finish her service with the local library on Friday, Aug. 16, just a few weeks shy of 12 years in town.

Ms Watkins came over to Milton from the Brampton Public Library in 1984 and immediately focused her efforts on overall development and improvement of the library's services.

She started as the deputy chief librarian and then took over in 1988 from Jenny Amy.

While she has seen numerous changes and spearheaded many new projects and programs at the library, Ms Watkins said she is most proud of her — and the library board's — work on the community needs assessment plan.

With Ms Watkins at the helm, the library has been heavily involved in its planning process for several years now. The initiative was sparked in an effort to both provide top-flight service for today and prepare for Milton's expected growth down the road.



Jane Watkins

"We used to be departmentalized, but now we have an information desk that handles all requests. Everyone from children to adults can ask questions there," she said. "Our collection at one point was undersized as well, but now our plan to have at least three items per (topic) is complete.

"We also have an excellent children's program with Introduction to Reading, Playfulness with Language and Tales for Two (mom and child) classes available.

"Our overall goal has been to create a lifelong learning centre."

• see AFTER on page 5



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