

An out of this world experience

Hadfield reflects on his space odyssey

By Julie Slack
 CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Listening to astronaut Chris Hadfield's first media conference after spending five months aboard the International Space Station (ISS) rivals the excitement a child would express after his first circus.

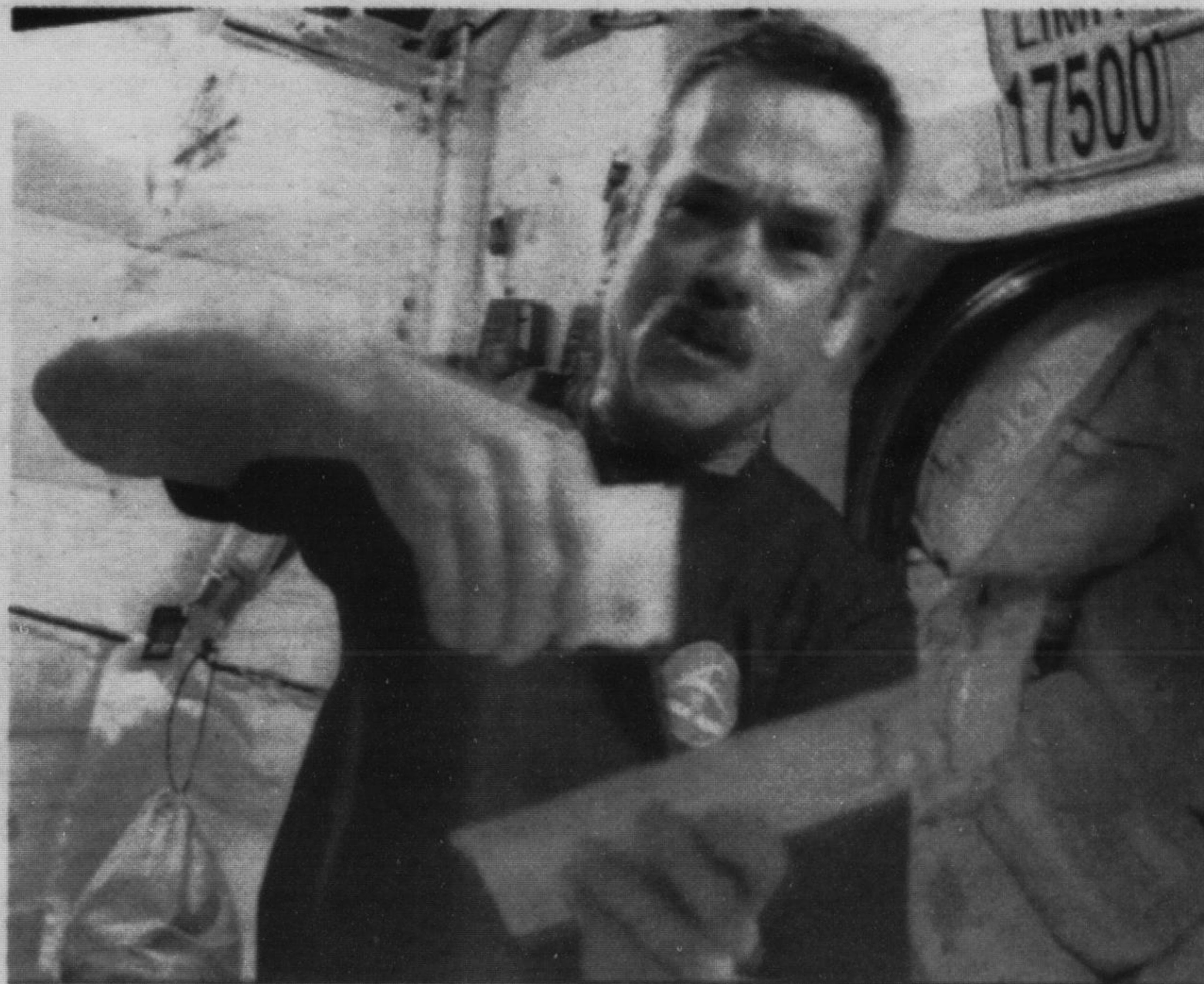
His enthusiasm over the space program and his experience as the first Canadian to command the ISS literally bubbles over.

The 53-year-old — raised in Milton, where his parents still reside — spoke with reporters Thursday morning via a Canadian Space Agency video feed (with *The Champion* listening in), the first news conference since he slammed back into earth with two other astronauts in Kazakhstan Monday night.

As is his usual practice, Hadfield spoke with great detail and thought, sharing things like how great it was to smell spring when the hatch was opened, after hurtling to the ground.

"Our spaceship worked beautifully," he said, about the re-entry. "We were ready to hit the earth and it's just like a car crash, just like we expected."

Noting he was the guy on the ceiling, and he



Astronaut and native Miltonian Chris Hadfield speaks with local air cadets last month during one of his many video link-ups while he was aboard the International Space Station.
 File photo by Graham Paine / Canadian Champion (Follow on Twitter @halton_photog)

and his fellow astronauts looked at each other then looked through the window where they saw "dirt and grass where space had been just moments before.

"The rescue people opened the hatch and you could smell the wind in the grass, you could smell spring, and grass and our charred spacecraft too.

"Because that's a fiery re-entry, and one by one we were plucked out."

Immediately gravity hit him and he realized it was difficult to speak and to move his lips. Many media questions dealt with Hadfield's Twitter presence (@Cmdr_Hadfield) — he's approaching nearly a million followers.

Hadfield said social media allowed him to

share the excitement of travelling in space with the world.

"It's just too good an experience to keep to yourself," he said, adding how much he welcomed the opportunity to speak with Canadian media to help him organize his experience in his head. "The experience of leaving earth is still so very new.

"I was trying to explain what it's like to fly in space and why we're doing it, so I resolved before launch that we need to share this experience with everyone."

The incredible accessibility of social media allowed him to do that.

"I'm in my 50s, I could leave that to the 20-somethings, but I realized it's impor-

Library to open earlier

The Milton Main Library will open a half hour earlier next month.

Doors at the 1010 Main St. E. location will open at 9:30 a.m., Monday through to Saturday, beginning June 3.

Library officials say the earlier hours will maximize the facility's use and enhance opportunities for programs and services. The new hours of operation are also consistent with similarly-sized main libraries in other communities.



Miltonian shares nightmare ordeal

Sonia Whyte-Croasdaile spent a horrific two months fighting painful skin burns after she was diagnosed with Stevens-Johnson Syndrome and Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis.


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