

arts & entertainment

# Dreams led to first novel

Local writer Christopher Millin finds a niche in children's fantasy literature

by Matthew Hoekstra  
Staff Reporter

**T**hey come before 10 a.m. A vicious hyper monkey, a museum of human legs and a tomato-growing one-eyed giant.

All are a part of *The King of Arugula*, the first children's fantasy novel from Richmond writer Christopher Millin—a man who admittedly has a strange writer's quirk.

"I can't write after 10 in the morning," he says. "I just found that my creativity was at its peak in the mornings."

A series of dreams sparked the characters that formed the basis of *The Hole Stories* novel series.

*The King of Arugula*, the first of five books, begins with a man falling into a deep hole where he meets another man who tells the story of how he got there.

He recounts the quest of two young boys who set out to find the source of the magic tomato responsible for one of the boys' blindness.

Millin, 31, is also an editor of the children's magazine *Crow Toes Quarterly*, which is being distributed in small book stores across Canada. The third issue will be out in three weeks.

Millin began writing the books three years ago after spending an unsuccessful decade trying to get an adult fiction book published.

Instead he ended up with 70 rejection letters and the realization that children's literature was his forte.

**"It's very freeing in comparison to adult fiction, because you're not really bound by much. You can be as imaginative as you like."**

**—Christopher Millin**

"It's very freeing in comparison to adult fiction, because you're not really bound by much. You can be as imaginative as you like. As long as the story makes sense and ties up nicely, it's a fun thing to do," he said.

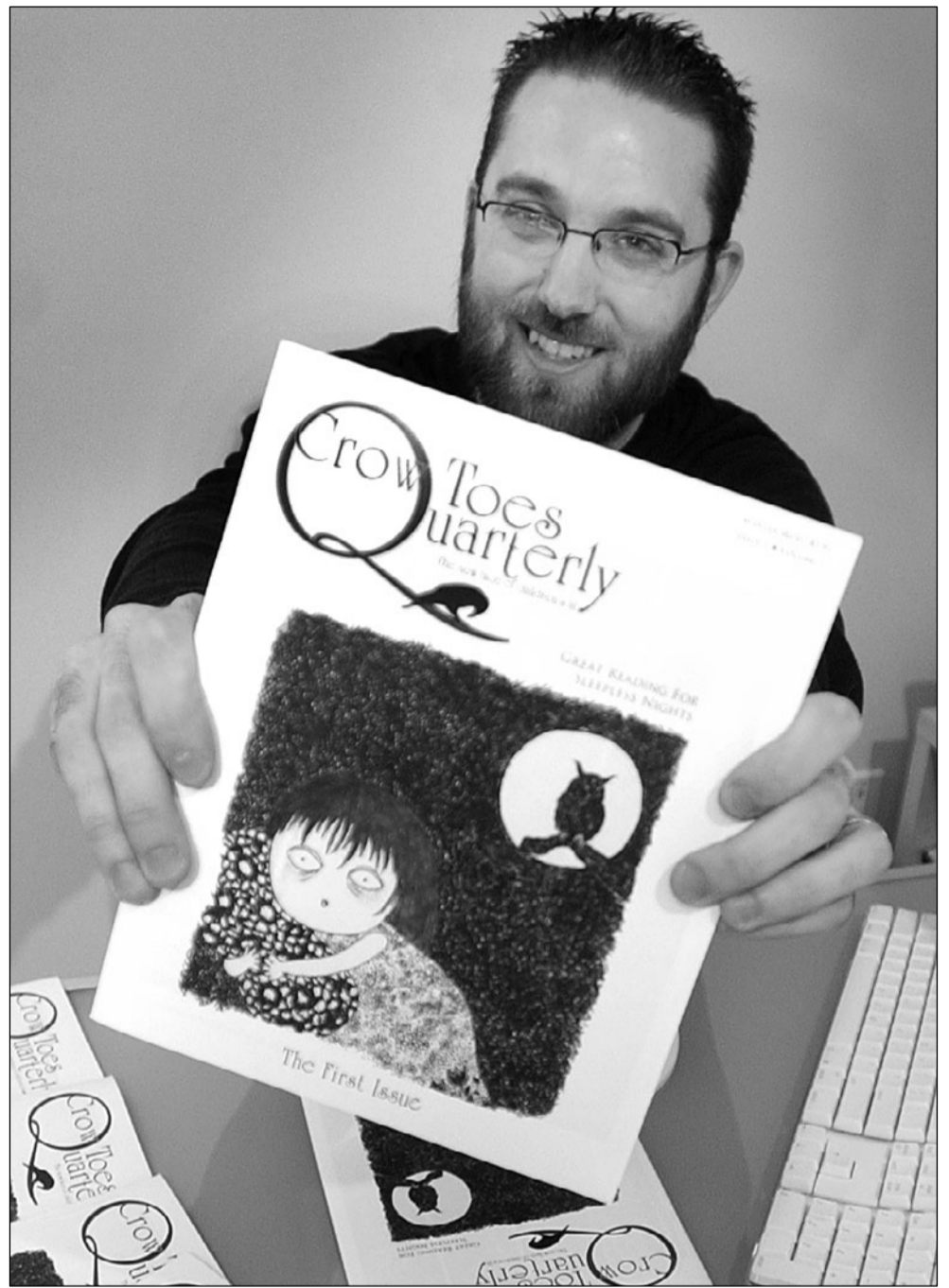
Millin found a publisher in Saskatchewan's Thistledown Press.

"Their first response was they usually don't publish children's literature like my story, but they were just so enthralled by the characters they wanted to see the whole manuscript."

They did, and to Millin's pleasant surprise, the company decided to publish his first book.

The story is darker and more imaginative than most novels aimed at readers aged nine to 12. It also has appeal among adults who are fans of children's literature in the same vein as books of Roald Dahl, J.R.R. Tolkien and J.K. Rowling.

● *The King of Arugula* (paperback, 208 pages, \$12.95), released in Canada May 30, is available in bookstores everywhere.



Mark Patrick photo

After launching a magazine earlier this year, Christopher Millin has now published his first book, *The King of Arugula*.

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