



INTELLIGENCER PHOTO BY HENRY BURY  
Mike Malachowski

The Oshawa native spent about 15 years in Toronto before moving here in 1996. He operated a restaurant with his sister, Nancy, in Toronto for three years, before deciding to develop a new business to recycle organic waste.

He ran the waste management company that serviced food processors, restaurants and grocery stores across Ontario. He sold his interest in the firm a decade later and opted to move to Picton "to enjoy life in a smaller city ... and where a real sense of history is still evident."

A bachelor, he purchased a home on Main Street in Picton in 1996. Malachowski's mom and two sisters also live in the Quinte area. A third sister lives in Kingston.

Malachowski opted to start a business in Belleville because of the larger urban population. His love of antiques, collectibles and older furniture convinced him to open Funken & Gruven in the

spring of 1998. He purchased the Bridge Street East building — formerly Locke optometrist — and has filled 2,000 square feet of retail space with a variety of antiques, used furnishings, decorative arts and accessories that he has collected from throughout this area.

He had good reason to choose an unusual name for the business.

"I wanted to convey that this was a shop where people can get a sense where they can find something unusual or unexpected ... a fun place to visit and shop."

Malachowski has since purchased the former Lipson's building on Front Street and sold it to Ken and Janet Harnden of Pinnacle Music Studios.

Malachowski also owns the former Bell Shirt building on Coleman Street, now home of St. Vincent de Paul thrift shop.

"It's an historic building and needs a lot of restoration. I've taken it on as a longterm project of mine," he said.

Malachowski joined the BBIA in 2000 and has chaired the beautification committee before becoming vice-chairman last year and chairman for 2005.

He has set some goals for the downtown.

"We would like to see some of our vacant lots developed into residential space for condo development and for seniors' residences. The key part of our vision is to create a residential neighbourhood as well as a commercial district."

As for the empty stores, Malachowski said it's only a matter of time until others realize the full potential the downtown has to offer. He would love to see them filled with such things as art galleries, antique shops and artisan studios.

"We will see our vacancy rate change dramatically. I know it's going to happen."

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