

Storefronts fill up after election

BY DOUG HARRISON
The Acton Tanner

If nothing else, the recent provincial election allowed some downtown landlords to rent out their buildings to candidates and bide their time for interested tenants thereafter.

Jon Hurst, who owns the former Acton Photo Shop building, saw his building rented by Family Coalition Party candidate Alex McKee for a few weeks before that office closed due to a falling-out concerning a rent payment.

The maintenance manager at Eagle Ottawa has since inked a deal with Gene Clarke, owner of the Centre Ice card shop currently operating beside Al and Al's Red Brand Meats.

"I was born and raised in Acton and I don't like seeing empty stores downtown," Hurst says, adding Clarke will move in on July 15.

"It's a good-size building with a unique interior, including an engraved tin ceiling."

Hurst, who has owned the building for about 15 years, admits

watching stores open and close downtown the last few years has been disappointing. But he figures businesspeople are now looking to Acton's future development and realizing business potential is here.

"I'm looking forward to the economy doing an up-turn," the Actonite says confidently.

"It's like sitting at an amber light and you're not sure whether it's going to turn green or red. Hopefully with the change in government, it will turn green."

Halton North MPP-elect Ted Chudleigh used the H&R Block unit beside Acton Travel as his campaign office.

Steve Hartnagel, speaking on behalf of H&R Block, says that company will remain in the building, if only for two months of the year.

Liberal candidate Walt Elliott used the former Leathertown Fashions building on Mill Street as his campaign office. That office has now been leased to Rockwood's Debbie Feenstra, who will move her Rockwood Musicland store

here in late July.

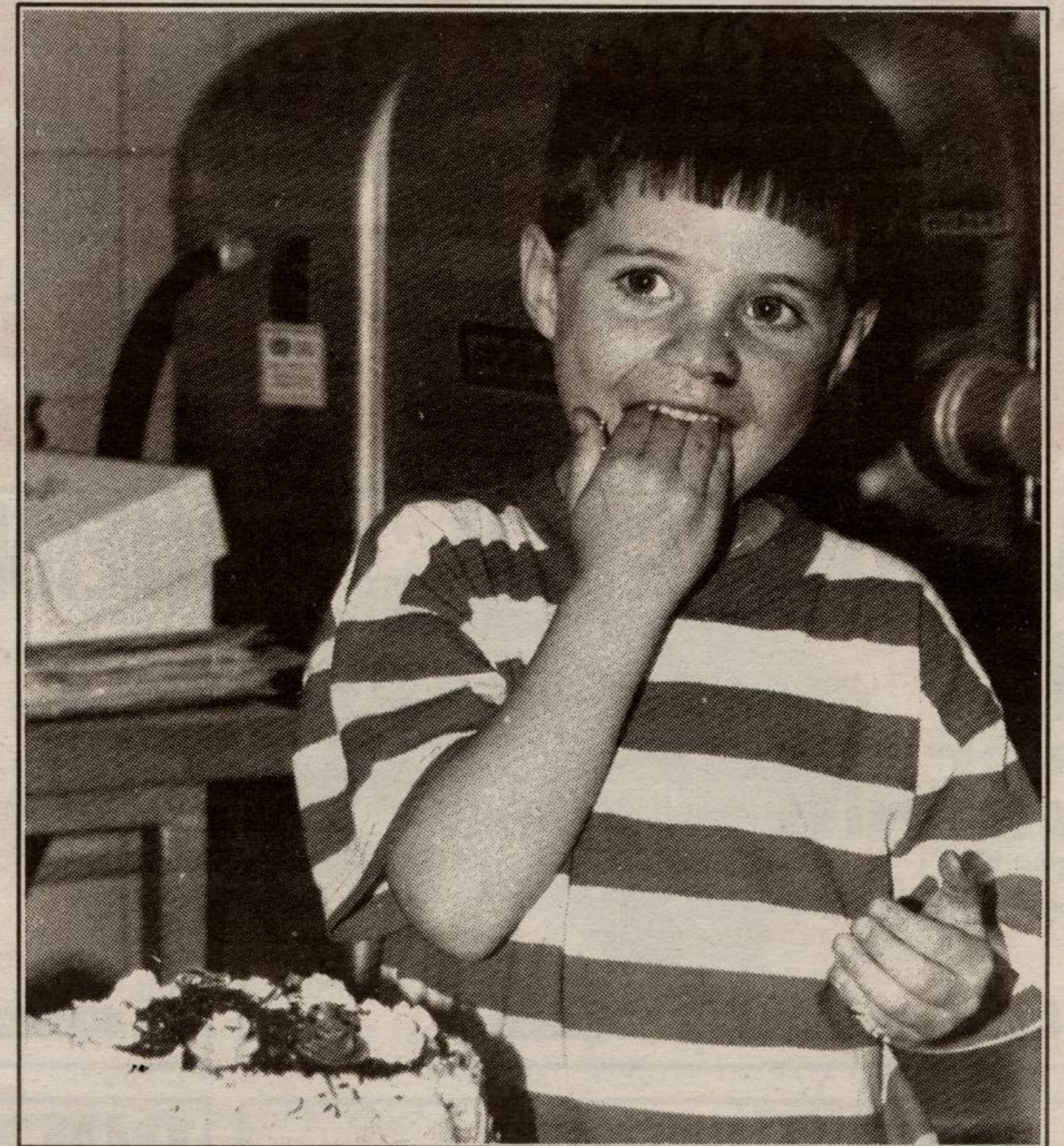
And Remax associate broker Gord Dawe says it looks like his vacant building, located at the corner of Mill and Willow streets, will be sold in the near future.

"I never considered vacant storefronts in Acton to be a major problem. I had five or six people interested in renting, but not buying," Dawe stated on Monday, adding the building needed to be sold for financial reasons.

He went on to mention that a restaurant or food service-type establishment will likely set up shop in the building, which has 48 work-orders to be done, such as installing covers on electrical boxes.

While Dawe agreed that a shoe or clothing store would be a nice fit, "if it's a viable project," he points out a restaurant would be owner-operated and give people more competition.

With the recent opening of Hoops, Pockets and More in the old FlightLine building and the soon-to-be opened Bedroxx restaurant-night club replacing The Meeting Place, an empty storefront may soon be a rarity in Acton's downtown.



FOR YOU, DAD! Matthew Caverley, 4, couldn't resist dipping into the sweet stuff while decorating a Father's Day cake for dad Clayton at Acton IGA last Monday. (Doug Harrison photo)

Rep 'paranoid' about more impact studies

A Town committee's request for more studies on a major Acton development proposal worries Councillor Rick Bonnette.

The Town's Environmental Advisory Committee (TEAC) reported that it could not assess the environmental impact of Blue Springs Golf Club's plans to build three clubhouses and 120 accommodation villas at the golf course.

"Who pays for the cost of these studies — the Town or the developer?" Bonnette asked at a recent Council meeting.

Bonnette noted that although the TEAC members who visited the site raised concerns about work

being done, it was outside the Blue Springs Environmental Sensitive Area, and that the Halton Region Conservation Authority has no concerns with the proposal.

Town Planning Director Bruce MacLean reminded Council that TEAC members have the right, as part of the development process, to request information.

MacLean said that, while TEAC had withdrawn a letter asking for studies on the Blue Springs proposal, a comment from the advisory committee was outstanding.

Bonnette was still uneasy. "I get paranoid when I hear about studies."

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Grunsky live!

Juno Award-winner Jack Grunsky will dazzle young and old alike at the Public Library's summer reading program kick-off on Wednesday, July 5.

Grunsky will sing hits from his four children's albums at the Acton Library at 2:30 pm that day. Phone 853-0301 for details.

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