

# BUSINESS

## Not your same old grocery store

Supermarkets offer it all under one roof

BY ROY GREEN  
Staff Writer

If you've ever wondered why you don't often find supermarkets in shopping malls such as Upper Canada, Hillcrest and Markville, it's because today's supermarkets are themselves shopping malls, chock-full of stores selling everything from soup to ... never mind ... they sell everything.

When Loblaws opened a store in trendy Forest Hill last November, it built in a kosher section, an LCBO outlet, a Natural Value health shop and outlets for Bell World, Club Monaco, Movenpick, Take Me Marche and Moneysworth & Best shoe repair.

GoodLife Fitness Club opened an outlet in a new Loblaws store in west Toronto, signing up 450 members in the first month.

"From dry-cleaning and shoe repair to wine stores and tobacco shops, grocery stores are integrating all the services you more typically find in strip malls," said Richard Talbot of Thomas Consultants International.

"It's what I call main-street-in-a-box," said retail analyst John Winter. "In this format, you can buy all your weekly needs in one store and at a good price."

An early York Region entry into the world of superstores is Fortinos, a concrete and glass warehouse on Hwy. 7 in Woodbridge that is bigger than some small towns.

It features the Holy Smoke Fine Tobacconist, Colio Estate Wines, House of Flowers, Gourmet To Go, a sushi bar, Bag-a-Bagel, a pasta bar, a pharmacy with its own natural health section and large dispensary, Just Candles and a specialty coffee store called Bean Roast. There is also the International News shop,

carrying newspapers and magazines from around the world.

And don't forget the movie house — a 10-seat (stadium seating) mini-theatre with a giant TV showing Disney movies for kids — located smack in the middle of a large candy store.

Meanwhile, in Scarborough, the first Canadian U-Scan Express robots are in use at Dominion. Invented by a Montreal man, the U-Scan allows customers to scan in their own groceries and has been operating in more than 2,000 stores in the United States.

Just another step in the evolutionary chain of what we once called grocery stores.

The first 'supermarket', Big Bear, opened in 1932 in the vacant Durant Motor Car plant in New Jersey. "At about the same time," writes William Walsh in *The Rise & Decline of the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company*, "Michael Cullen opened a supermarket in Queen's County, New York. He soon followed with several additional supermarkets to become the first chain supermarket."

"King Kullen, as the chain was called, controlled all departments, including meats, produce and dairy, as well as dry groceries stacked in original cases on wooden platforms on the floor of vacated garages, factories or similar-sized facilities."

By 1938, A&P, which became the first supermarket in most cities in the U.S. and Canada, was operating more than 1,100 successful stores.

But the concept of one-stop shopping is dominated today by the Galen Weston empire, which now commands one of every three dollars spent by Canadians in supermarkets named Zehrs, Loblaws, Provigo, Your Independent Grocer, No-Frills, Valu-Mart, Fresh-Mart and Fortinos.

And now they're into banking,



STAFF PHOTOS/MIKE BARRETT

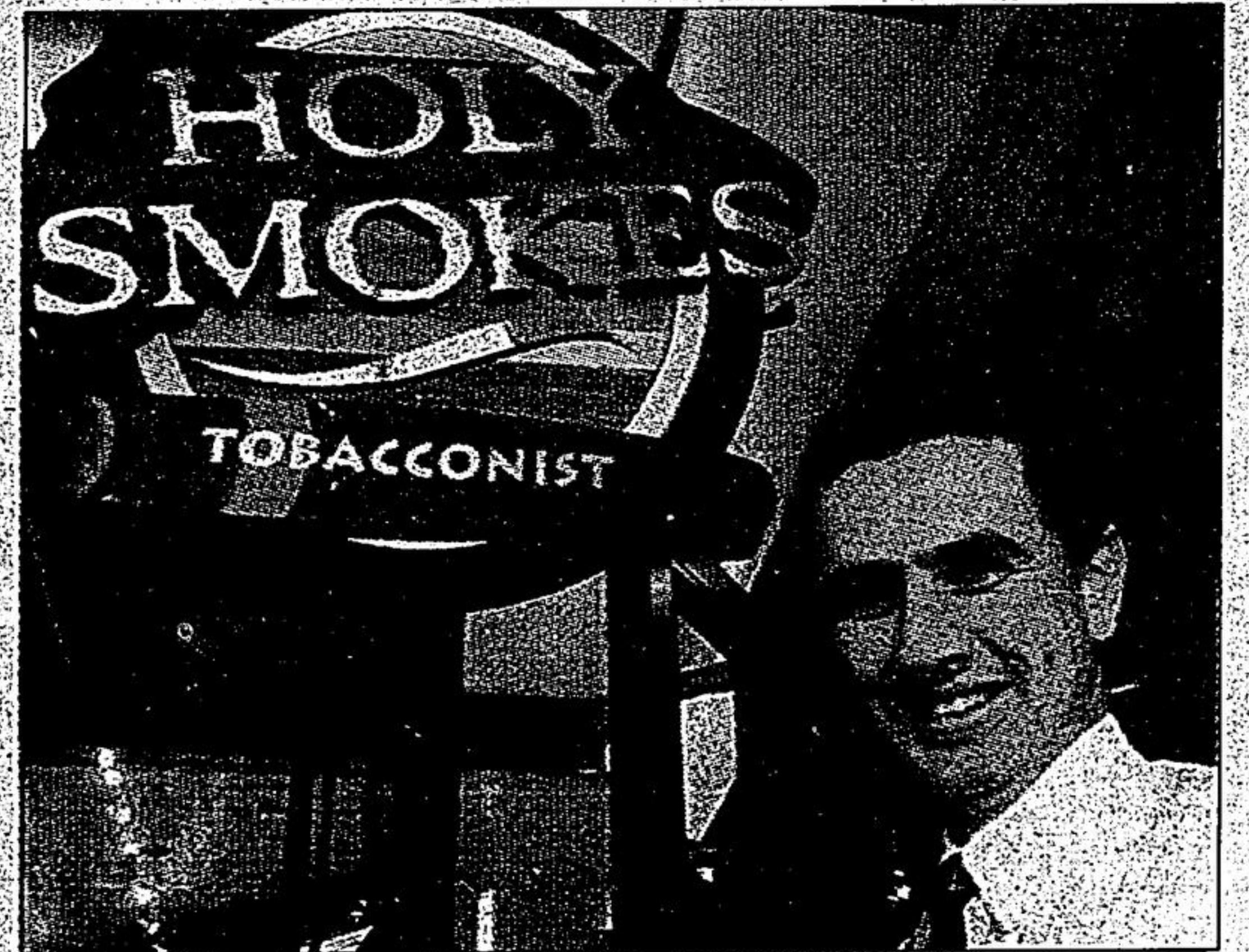
Modern-day supermarkets provide one-stop shopping. Richard Han, above, mans the Sushi Bar at Fortinos.

too.

Customers of President's Choice Financial are able to make bank deposits, pay bills, get loans and mortgages and open a bank account that combines savings and chequing with no fees, free cheques and interest based on Canadian Treasury Bill rates at in-store kiosks in 140 Weston-operated stores across Canada. CIBC is providing the services, but, unlike CIBC, President's Choice has eliminated all service charges.

"More than 300,000 customers have saved \$13.5 million in banking fees," said Margaret Jordan, customer associate at President's Choice Financial at Zehrs in Keswick.

See SHOPPING, page 24.



Store manager Frank Cuda outside the tobacco shop at the Fortinos supermarket on Hwy. 7 in Woodbridge.

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