

# Azeem celebrates his unexpected life

BY ROGER VARLEY  
Staff Writer

Azeem Kayum is expecting as many as 450 guests to show up for his 21st birthday today. Not bad for a kid who wasn't expected to survive infancy.

Among the guests at the party at St. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Banquet Hall in Scarborough will be doctors from the Hospital for Sick Children, where Azeem spent the first year of his life in intensive care.

A birth injury caused the Markham youth to suffer severe respiratory problems and spinal cord damage. In his third year he suffered two heart attacks and was in a coma for two weeks. So severe was his condition that at one point his parents were planning his funeral.

But his indomitable spirit has helped him defy doctors' predictions and led to a new phase of his life.

He now is in the first year of a general arts course at Seneca College-York, with an eye to entering the broadcasting field.

Azeem, at home for study week, said he finds a much different atmosphere at

Seneca than was the case at Markville Secondary School.

"Meeting people is difficult," he said. "When I was in high school, I knew everyone. But I am making friends in my own classes."

Acknowledging that he has a learning disability, Azeem said he has to spend more time studying than a "normal" person "because it doesn't all stick in my memory."

"Sometimes, I'll stay up until one o'clock studying," he said. "I don't always get the marks I want, but I know I tried."

However, his mother Laila was proud to tell of her son's mid-term marks.

"He got 85 percent in broadcasting, 77 percent in English and he passed the computer course," she said. "He's enjoying his broadcasting very much. He's doing okay."

Azeem's mother said her son was advised to take a reduced workload when he registered at Seneca.

"It's one of the best decisions we have made," she said. "It reduces the stress of the workload and the travelling. He's enjoying it very much."



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

A birth injury meant Azeem Kayum wasn't supposed to survive infancy. But the Markham resident, now attending Seneca College, is preparing to celebrate his 21st birthday with a big party.

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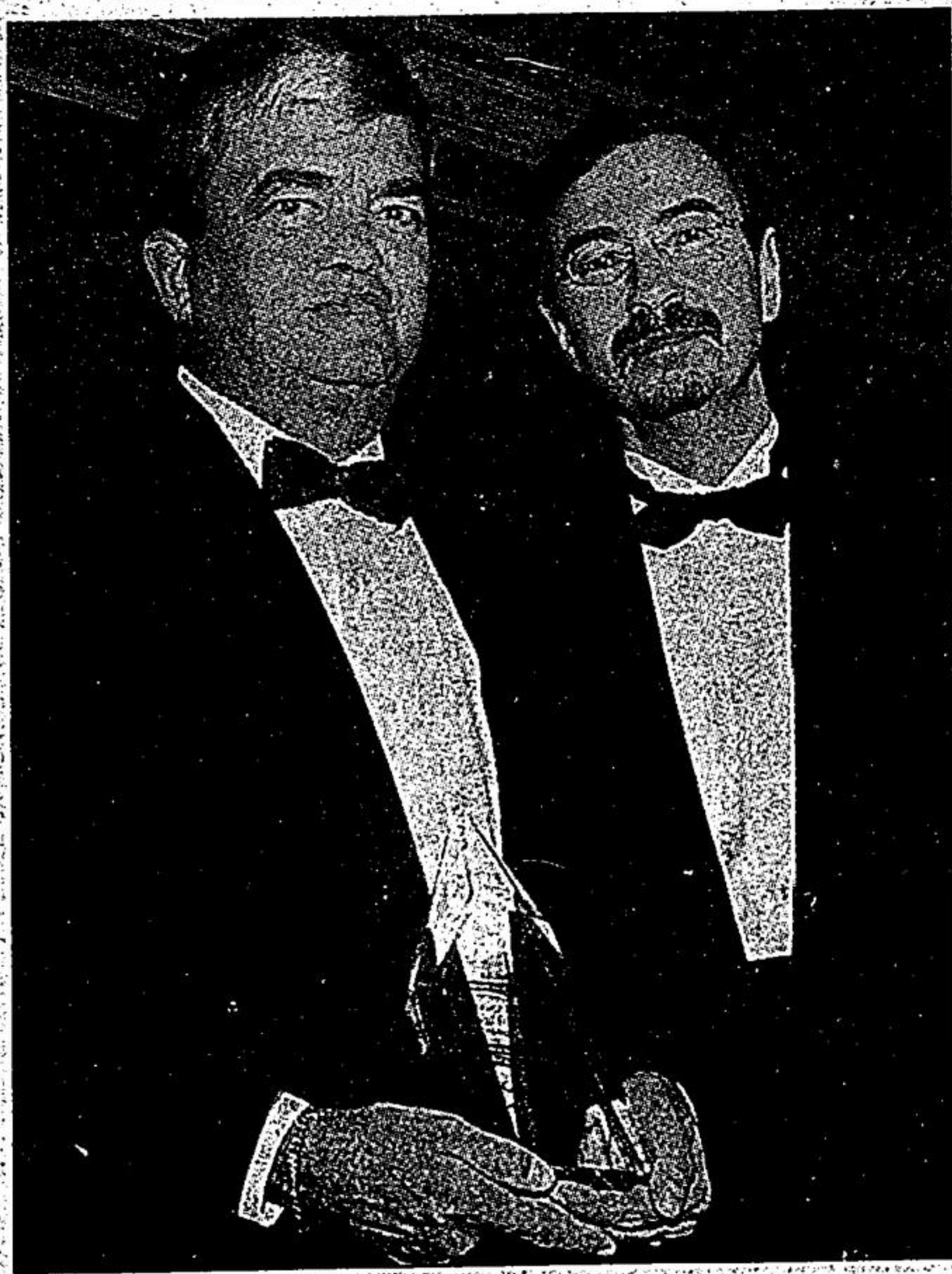
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## COSBURN EARNS HONOUR



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

The Markham Board of Trade handed out its annual Business Excellence Awards Thursday night at the Crystal Fountain banquet hall. Among the recipients was Mac Cosburn (left, with Board chairman Alan Drenfeld) whose company Cosburn Patterson Mather earned the high standards and working conditions award. Other winners were DMTI Spatial Inc., Acculogic Inc., FSA/International Access, Ross Dixon Financial Services, Metcalf Blainey & Burns, InSystems Technologies and Identacam. The Anthony Roman Award went to Cathy Chouinard of Chouinard Bros. Roofing.

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