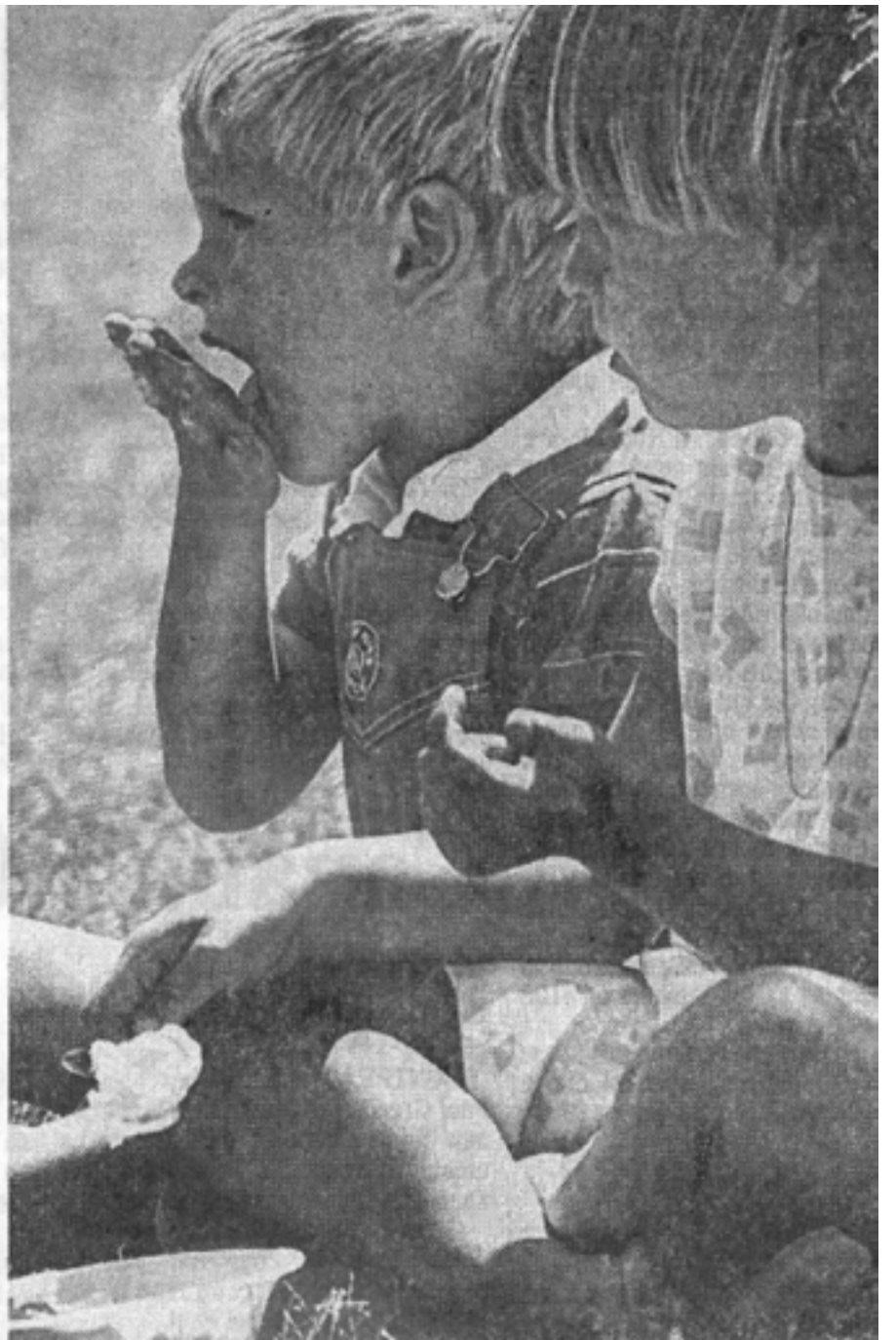




Star Photo/ Laura More
Greg Turner, 11, thinks LaSalle's eating festival is just the berries



Star Photo/ Grant Black
Joshua Belleperche, 4, and sister Gillian, 5, enjoyed berries

Festival 'Berried' in lots of Ice Cream

OK, so the strawberries weren't exactly home-grown. But dump a spoonful of those California red berries on a mound of vanilla ice cream, think 'Essex county' and you're all set.

Despite being about a week ahead of this year's local crop, the first-ever strawberry festival along LaSalle's Nautical Mile still managed to keep hundreds of local berry lovers happy.

"We're just about a week ahead," said one of the festival's organizers, Margaret Gignac, as she helped ladle strawberries and ice cream

When it became apparent Mother Nature wasn't going to co-operate in ripening local berries to edible stages, organizers were forced to look south.

By the time the two-day event ended Sunday, about 520 pints had been cleaned, cut and devoured. Most were smoothed down with 36 litres of vanilla ice cream.

"I eat strawberries until I get so many canker sores I can't get them in my lips," said Gignac.

The event, sponsored by Sandwich West Township and the LaSalle Business Improvement Association, included among other things, a downtown parade, strawberry jam-, jelly-, and pie-eating contests, a fishing derby and local arts and crafts.

The bottom line at the strawberry festival, of course, is any event is attended with strawberries in hand (or mouth).

"I would have been happy with just a big dish of strawberries," said Helen Mason as she perused some of the local handiwork on display.

"The ice cream helps," added Mason's companion, Delores Panasik. But both Windsor residents said they made the journey to LaSalle "expressly for the strawberries."



Star Photo/ Grant Black
The Border City Cloggers performed their fancy footwork at the strawberry festival on Saturday.