

# Speeches are meant to try parents!

I've just returned from photographing my umpteenth group of public speaking winners, and have come to a few conclusions.

It's not the students who suffer through speeches; it's their parents. Speeches in schools are one of those little annoyances all parents must endure every February; you know, sort of the thorn in the side that follows January VISA payments.

Having three kids in the system, I've decided the Halton Board of Education has included speeches in the school curriculum just to test parents.

It starts early in January. The kids come home from school looking for ideas to use as a speech topic. After we hear a dozen losers, they settle on one that is either too difficult to research, or one I'm sure would divulge more personal information about our family's private life than I want discussed in front of 30 students and teachers.

And so goes the battle. The topic is finally chosen, and the fun starts. Because I work with words in my job, my wife is sure I'm more qualified to help the kids than she. (I'm sure that's a cop-out, and tell her the only way for them to learn is to do it themselves.)

So they write their own speeches. I'm required to hear the same introduction the same way for at least 140 times. Is the speech long enough? Is it interesting?

Everyone knows it will never be long enough; always about 15 seconds short.

"Help me make it longer, Dad," they plead.

"It's always easy to make a speech longer," I say, "Just slow down in your delivery, and

## A TED BIT

By TED BROWN



stretch it out." Of course with that the next timed effort is 30 seconds shorter and panic starts to set in.

Okay, so we expound a bit on some sentences, and get the precious few seconds of length needed to make the grade.

Is it interesting? How can a parent who has heard that same litany at least 100 times, honestly pass judgement on the interest level of a speech? Of course it's interesting. It's so interesting I almost lost my place in the newspaper article I was reading.

The next step is writing out the cards. You know, those little recipe cards the kids write their entire speech on; then lose at least 17 times. Our kids have left them at home on the dining room table that many times in the month of February alone.

I am quite sure, over the years, the world's oil shortage has been created by parents driving cue cards to school after a panic-stricken call from the student.

I sympathize with parents of the students who make it to the finals. They have another round of listening to that same subject, over and over again for another week.

You know, it doesn't really have to be that difficult. The kids just lack imagination.

When I was in school, we delivered speeches every year and I discovered a terrific plan for dealing with that part of my

English credit.

I was in Grade 9 at the time and pleaded with my sister to lend me her speech. I recall it was on William Shakespeare.

It was a perfect speech. Shakespeare had been dead for years, so the speech never went out of date. And it always impressed English teachers that I would speak on the master of the English language.

The solution was simple; I simply spoke about Shakespeare — each and every year.

Well, the speeches in the north Halton schools are winding down now, and the finals run next week.

None of my kids made it to the finals, so I can rest easy knowing another year has come and gone, and the speeches are behind us — Until next year.

## Community grants

Halton Hills will be receiving grants to repair community centres in Georgetown and Norval.

The Georgetown Memorial Arena will receive \$3,333 for repairs and the Norval Community Centre will replace the roof with \$8,333 in government grants.

The Ontario Minister of Tourism and Recreation, Peter North toured the region and allocated grants totalling \$21 million province wide.

These grants are part of a phased announcement of capital grants and a second phase will be announced in the spring.

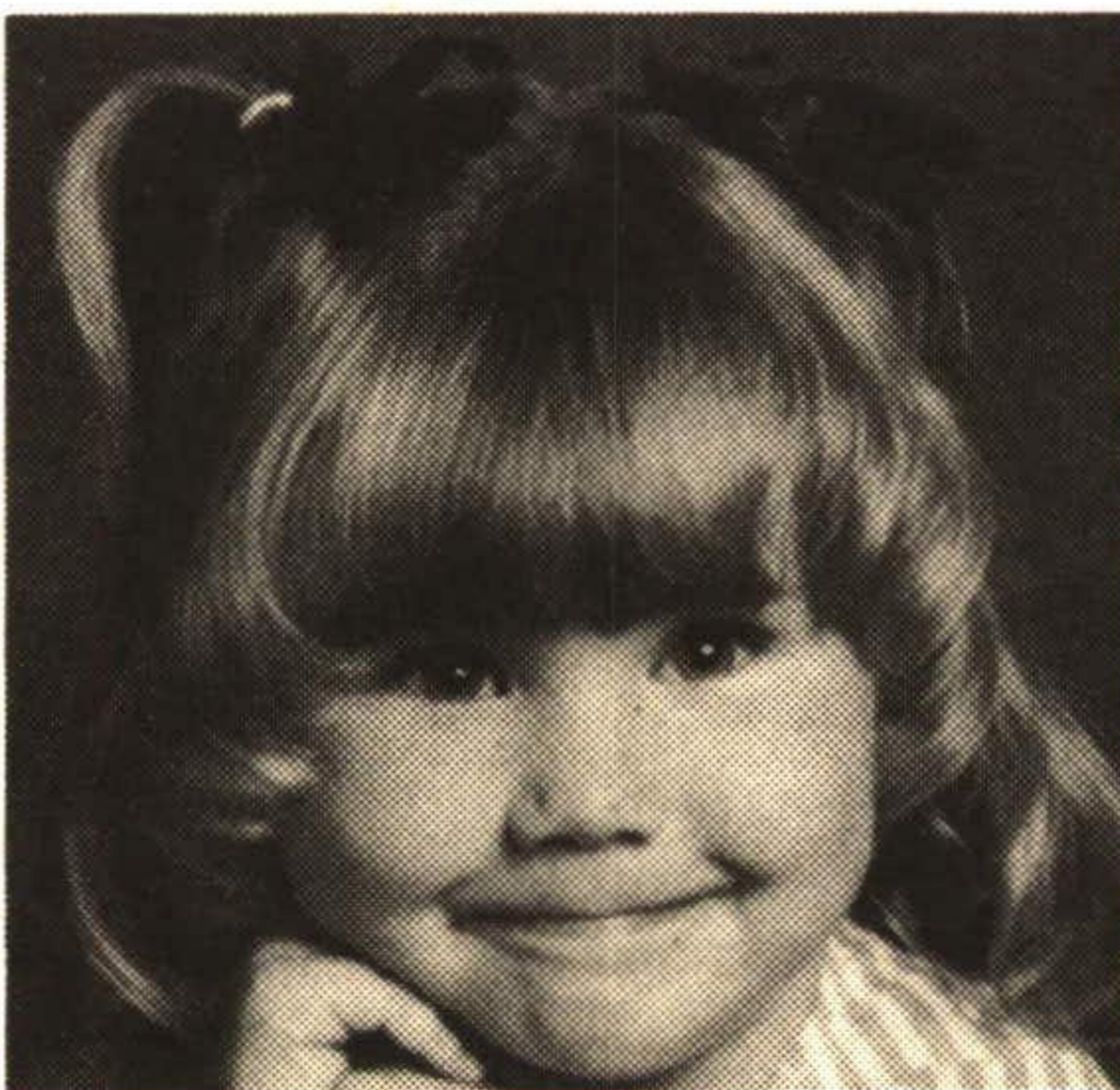
## Bridge winners

Winners in Monday's Georgetown Legion bridge were: Cora Fairbridge and Mike Lorusso, first; Harry Arbic and Jack Kaarsemaker, Pat and George Farrow, tied for second; and Karl Tobiasz and Rene March, third.

Page A7, on Wednesday, February 27/91 there was an error in the Georgetown Optical advertisement. The expiry date should have been March 2/91 and not March 6/91.

We are sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused Georgetown Optical and its customers.

## HAPPY 9TH BIRTHDAY TISHA!



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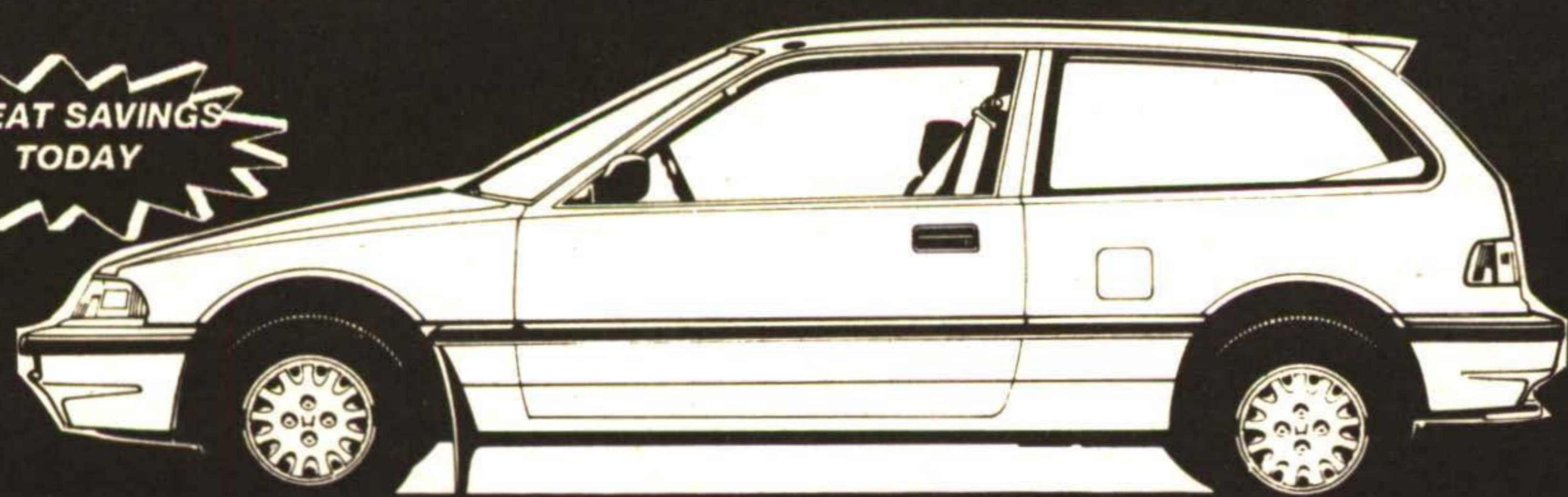
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