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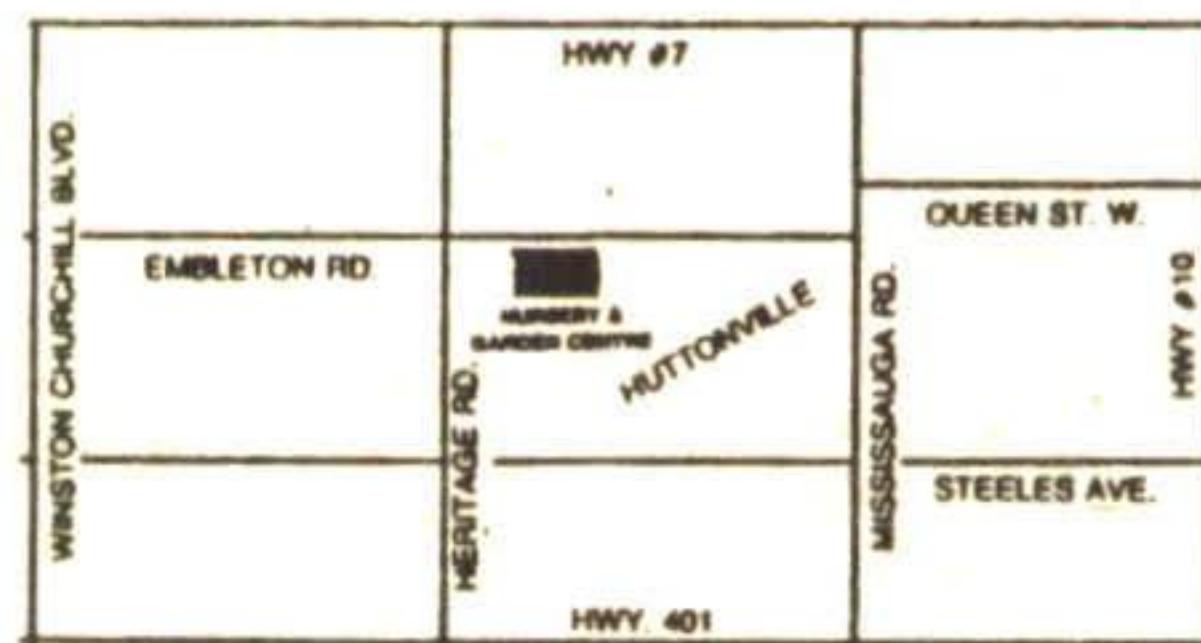
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Residents urge council to revamp dog laws

By **STUART JOHNSTON**

Staff writer

A small group of Georgetown residents are urging town officials to enforce stricter regulations on pet owners to prevent vicious dog attacks.

Jackie Bryant of Rexway Dr. complained of a "significant increase in the number of children being attacked by dogs" roaming her neighborhood.

"We feel that once an animal has attacked someone and the incident was serious enough to be reported to authorities, the owners should not have a choice as to whether or not the animal should be removed," she said.

However, she complained that police response time for such attacks is inadequate, suggesting that their "priorities need to be greatly reevaluated."

"While we are not condemning all animals, people need to assume a greater responsibility for the pet they choose in accordance to where they live," she added. "They must realize that a trained attack dog or one turned vicious through extreme

abuse or neglect does not belong in a residential area...Children are our future and it is the responsibility of all of us to protect them from unnecessary harm."

Bryant suggested that council, police and animal control authorities must work together and develop stricter controls over dogs and their owners.

"If the dogs bite once, they should not be allowed to bite again," she concluded.

While councillors were sympathetic to Bryant's concerns, they hesitated to suggest solutions to the problem until they know the legal ramifications first.

Instead, they asked the bylaw enforcement officer to review the situation, and return to council with a full report.

Councillor Rob Heaton believed that due to the "stress on the police system" and the rise of break-ins, many residents, especially in the rural areas, have purchased dogs to protect their homes and families.

He suggested a "mutual discussion" between dog owners and Bryant's group would be beneficial.

Parking fines could rise

Stiffer penalties for parking violations throughout the town are being recommended as a way of deterring against such offences.

Bylaw enforcement officer Bob Ustrzycki outlined to councillors earlier this week numerous changes to municipal parking regulations, most of which double the current fines of \$10 to \$20 for various offences.

Such infractions include double parking, parking on a sidewalk and stopping in a school bus zone.

Other changes include a significant jump from \$30 to \$100 for parking in a handicapped space, and an increase from \$15 to \$50 for parking in a fire route.

Most of the changes were agreeable to the councillors, but Rick Bonnette and Marilyn Serjeantson successfully lobbied to keep two of them the same.

Bonnette argued that a \$20 fine

for parking longer than three hours is too much in light of the problems experienced in some Georgetown and Acton neighborhoods, and asked that it be kept at \$10.

Serjeantson, on the other hand, seemed bewildered over the same type of increase for those who park on the wrong side of the road.

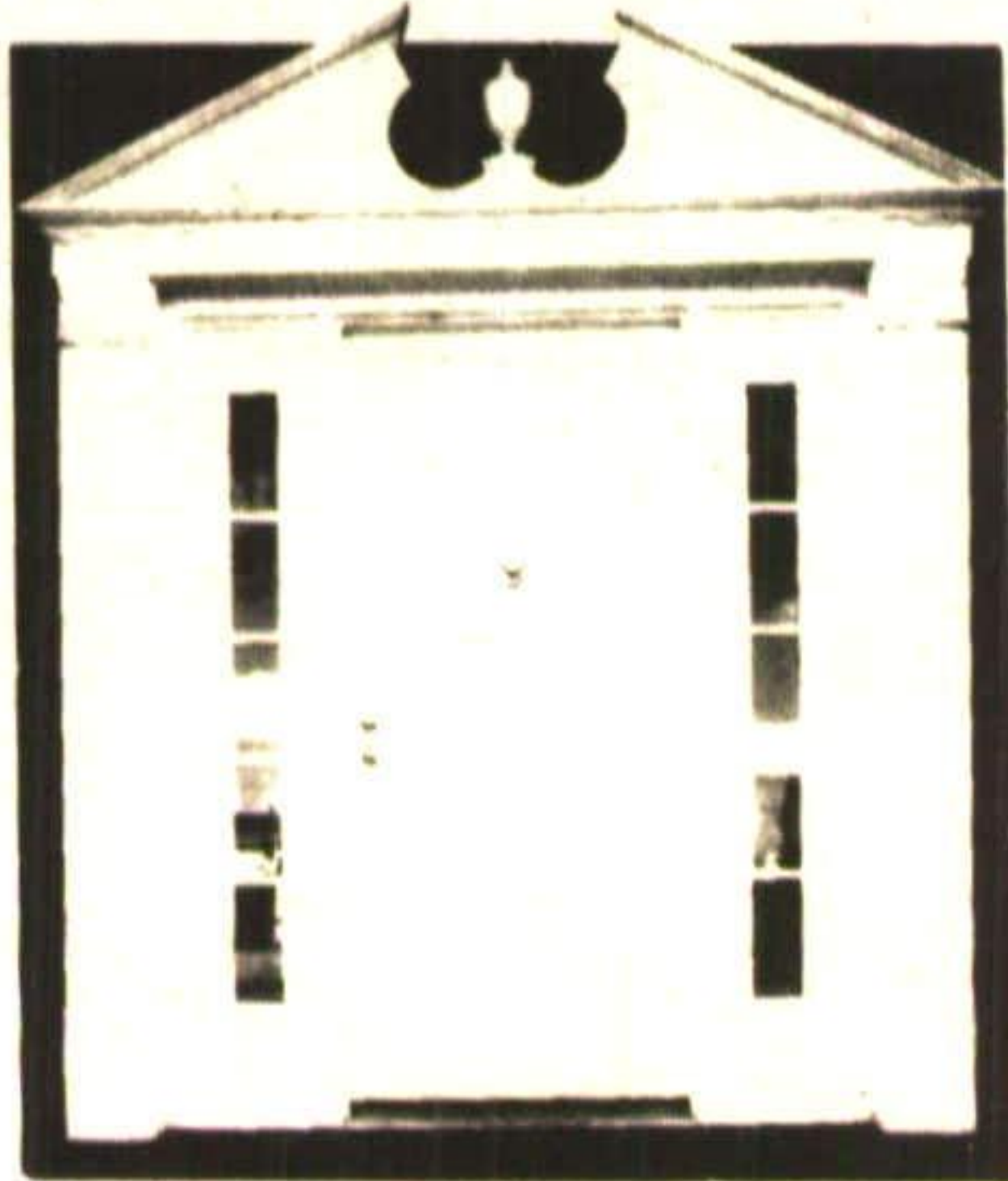
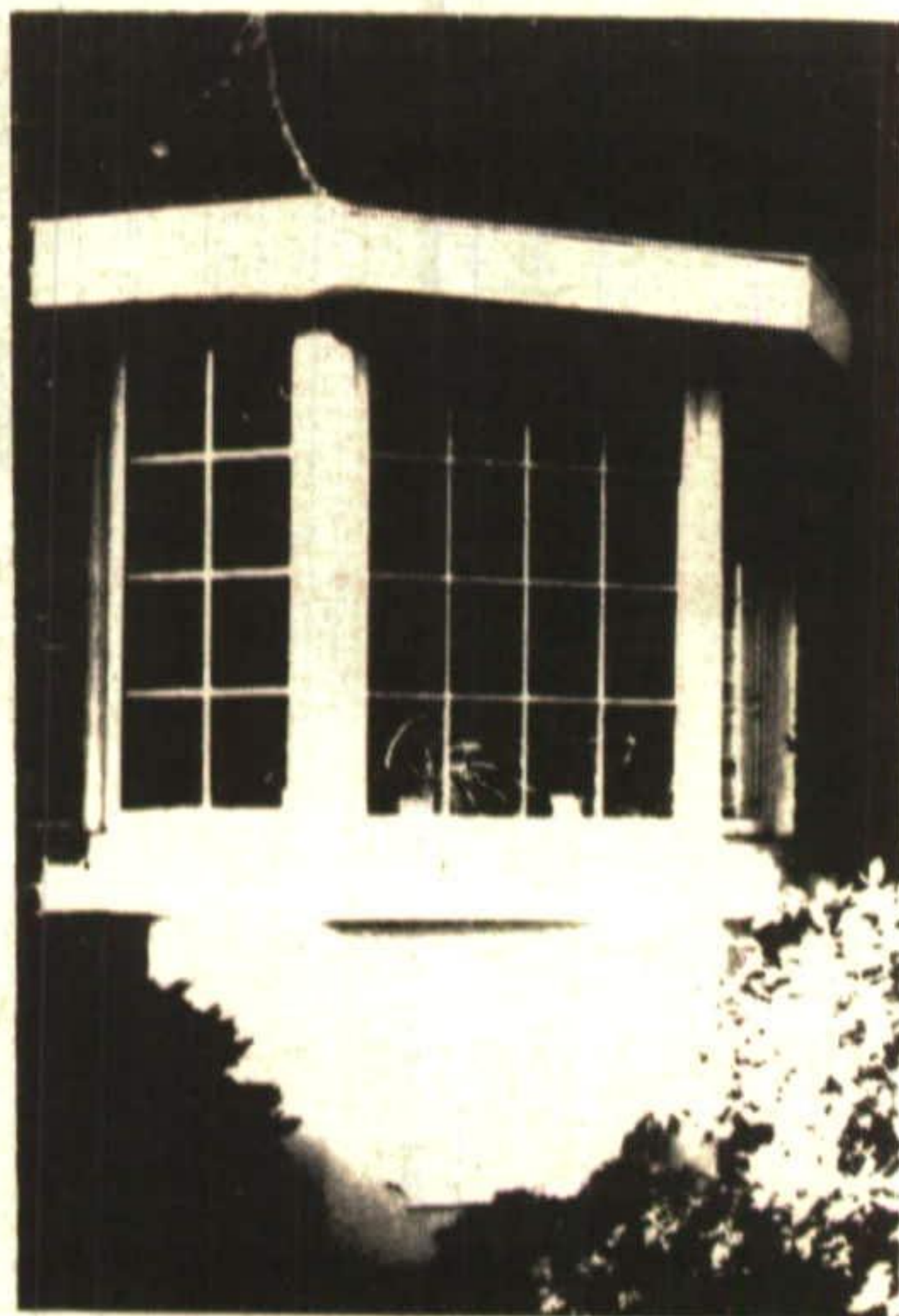
Despite Ustrzycki's argument that it's unsafe for motorists to travel the wrong way down a road, councillors granted Serjeantson's request.

However, councillor Bill Robson favored the increased fines. "We shouldn't nickel and dime this report — I suggest people not break the rules and then we wouldn't have to worry about all this," he said.

The changes to the fines must still be approved by the ministry of the attorney general, which Ustrzycki felt will take about four to six months.

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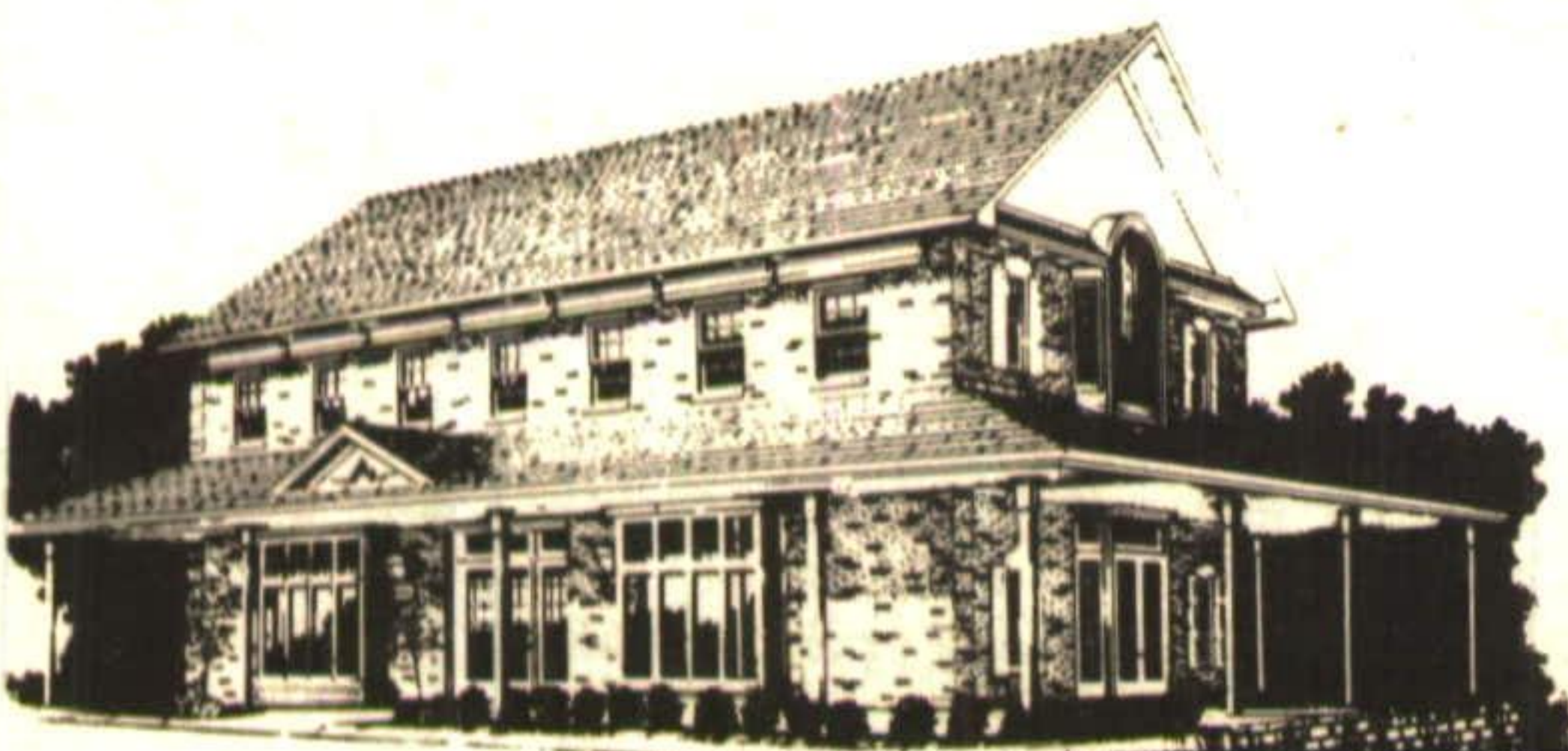


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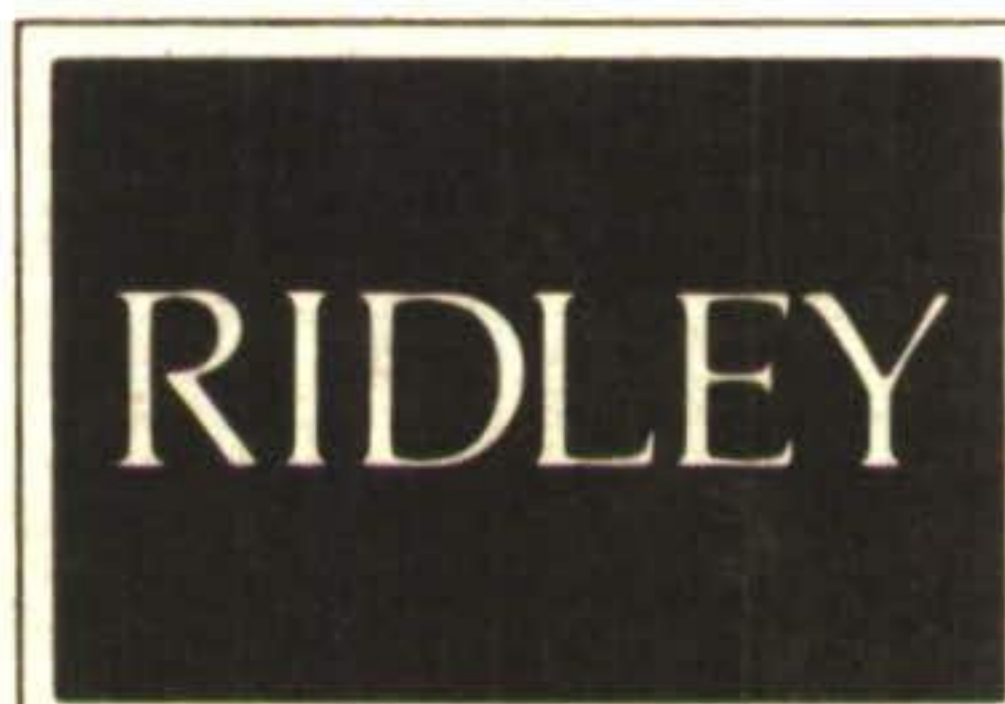


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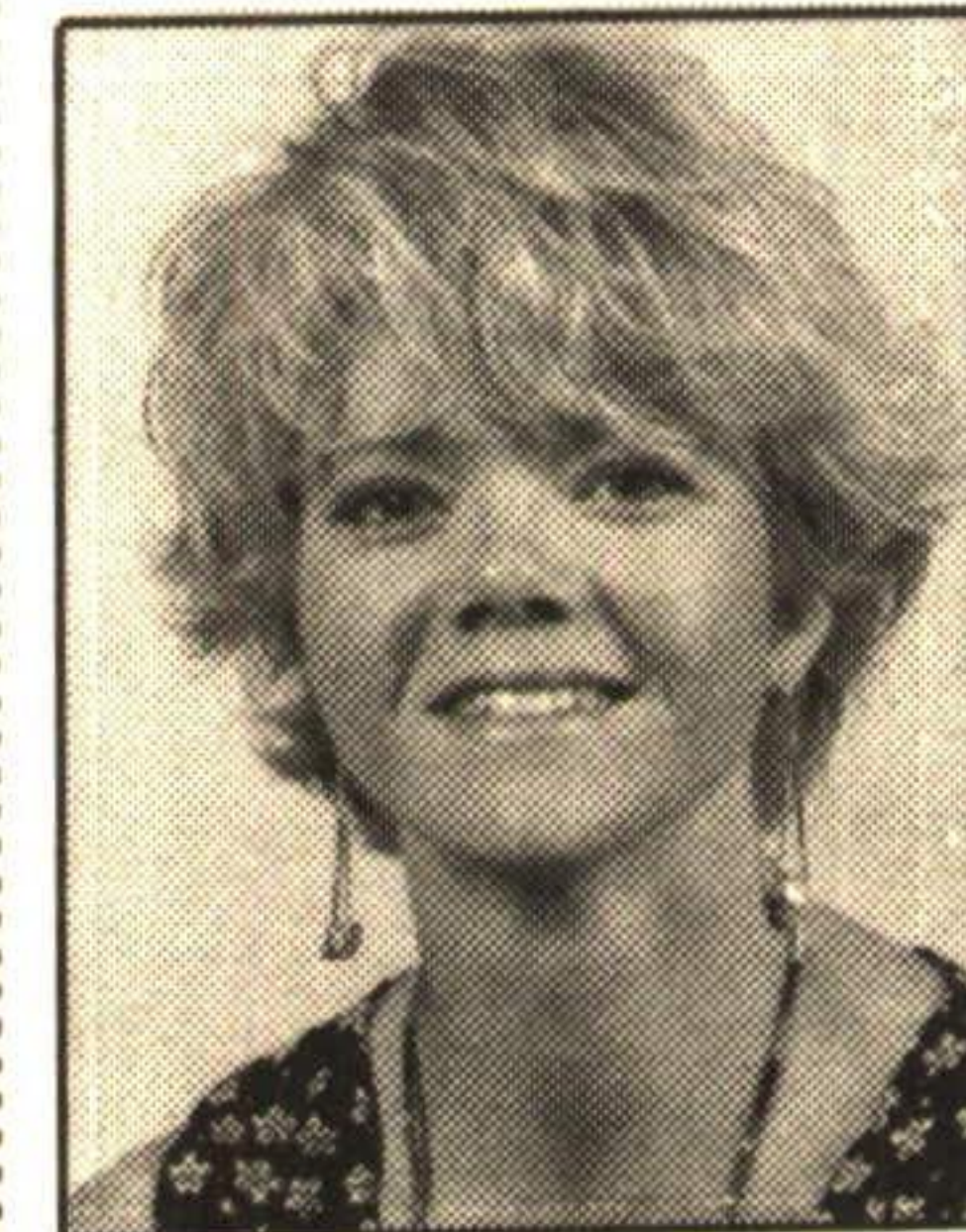


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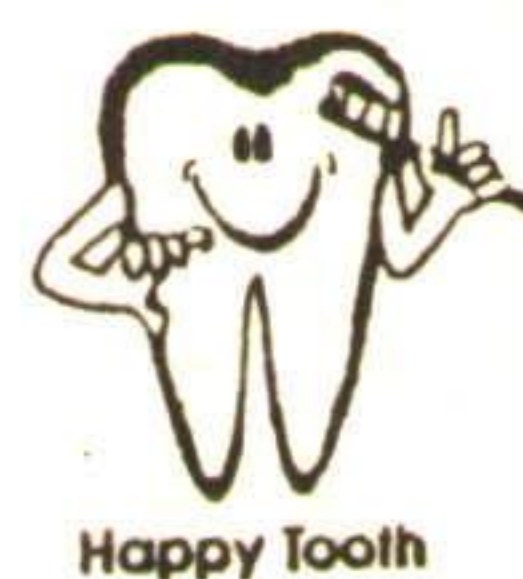
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