



CHAMPION READER!
Lynn Watson, 10, read 40 books this summer, putting her ahead of all the other members of the Readers of the Round Table summer reading program at the Acton public library. Her favourite book? *The Dead Life-guard*. Presenting Lynn with a prize was summer library staffer Christy Michalak. (Karen Wetmore photo)

How does your garden grow?

I remember the year we moved to Acton from the big T.O. I was thrilled to be moving into a house and out of a two-bedroom apartment. I was excited at the prospect of having a yard for the kids to play in, a town to call home, and especially at the thought of having my own washer and dryer.

No more finding my wet clothes on top of the dryer as some other tenant sneaked in ahead of me. No longer would I be a slave to laundry room hours – I could do the wash all night long if I wanted to, and I often did! And I didn't need a roll of quarters every time I turned around.

With the house came a garden and I watched with great anticipation, that first year, as buds emerged from the soil. I'd get quite excited when I could identify a plant:

"We've got tulips!" I'd cry.

"Those could be daisies!" I'd exclaim.

Many times I wished I'd paid more attention to my parents – both avid gardeners – when I was growing up.

I wanted a show-stopper garden, one full of blossoms from March 'til November. I wanted my yard to be the envy of the neighbourhood. Mostly I wanted to be sure it was weeds I was pulling and

not flowers.

I've read gardening books and magazines and have gleaned a little information over the years. But at best my garden is loaded with potential – I see what I hope to have one day and not what's actually there. Talk about your rose-coloured glasses!

Yes, some years my garden flourishes; some years not. This year not.

I'd like to blame it on the lousy spring we had. It may have been a while ago, but surely you remember the spring of '96 – otherwise known as the winter that wouldn't quit. One gardening book calls spring "a loud clap between winter and summer." Fairly accurate assessment I'd say.

With the threat of frost hanging on so long, I put off planting flowers and vegetables until I was certain I wouldn't be covering the garden with plastic every night.

That brought me to an early July planting.

The up side: I bought tomato plants dirt cheap. The



ACROSS THE FENCE

With Joanne Stevenson

down side: I had pretty much given up hope that I'd harvest even one tomato or carrot this year. Despite my best efforts – O.K., they were mediocre efforts I admit – my seeds weren't sprouting, my buds weren't budding...

How does my garden grow? Not very well, thank you.

Until two weeks ago.

Yes, a wonderful thing happened in my patch of earth – I went on vacation.

For two glorious weeks I read books, swam, water-skied, ate too much, and listened to the loons.

I gave home as little thought as possible, hoping only that it would still be there when I returned and that the bills in the mailbox wouldn't exceed the balance in my chequing account.

I don't know what went on in Acton when I was away, but whatever it was, it was good for my garden.

The tomato plants are tangled in each other, spilling over their cages. The carrots are at a size that clearly distinguishes them from weeds. The flower gardens are bursting with stems that need pruning and blossoms that need dead-heading.

And the grass, to coin a phrase, is as high as an elephant's eye.

I'm not suggesting things wouldn't have grown if we'd remained at home all summer. Careful attention has gotten results in the past.

Not that I needed one, but here's one more reason it's so good to get away. If the garden can thrive on neglect, well, I'm only too happy to oblige.

Phone line volunteers needed

Crisis Line volunteers are needed at the Halton Rape Crisis Centre.

Their role is to offer peer support and counselling on a 24-hour crisis line for survivors of sexual violence.

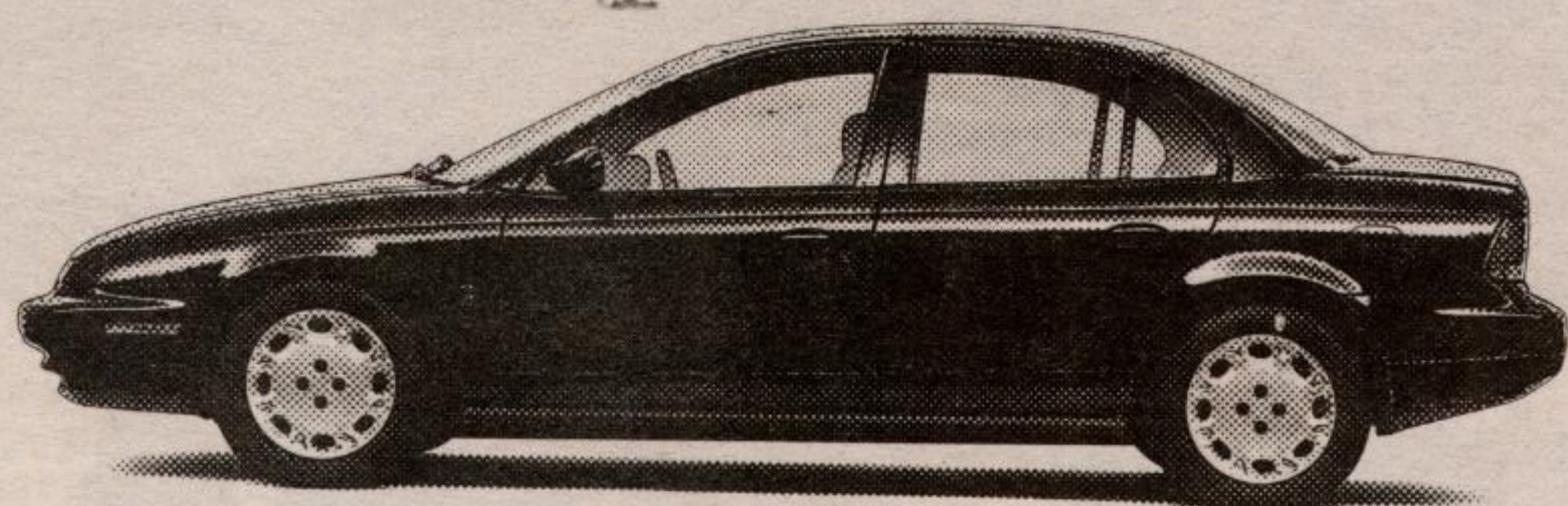
Volunteers must be willing to take four shifts per month.

A 12-week crisis intervention program will begin in September and enrolment is limited.

If interested, please call Shirlea at (905) 825-3622.

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Rehearsals begin Tuesday,
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4:30-5:15	Cherub Choir	age 4-6
6:00-7:00	Children's Chorus	age 7-10
7:00-8:00	Performance Choir	age 9-18
8:00-9:00	Youth Choir	age 11-18

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