

# 'Laid off' teachers back in the classrooms

By **TIM WHITNELL**  
Special

With the new school year just underway, most of the Halton teachers who received layoff notices last spring are back in the classroom.

Six months ago, the Halton Board of Education shocked the public, not to mention its own employees, by announcing plans to lay off 1,501 people, more than one-third of them teachers.

The massive job-cutting by the board—a response to drastically reduced provincial government transfer funds— included the elimination of 380 secondary and 192 elementary school teaching positions in Halton Region.

Fewer than 10 per cent of those targeted for layoff have lost jobs as schools around Halton opened Sept. 3. All 192 elementary teachers, and all but 43 of the 380 secondary teachers, have been recalled.

A combination of retirements and collective bargaining agreement wording, concerning student/teacher

ratios, has resulted in the recall of most of the teachers. The 43 not-so-lucky ones in the secondary sector were mostly adult education instructors.

Adult education took a particularly hard hit in the Mike Harris government's austerity measures, though some of its instructors in Halton were able to 'bump' into a daytime teaching position at the secondary level due to their seniority, said Kathleen Carroll, president of the Halton chapter of the Ontario Secondary Schools Teachers Federation.

Carroll indicated that most of the 43 laid off teachers cannot expect to be recalled to full-time status.

Carroll said the gross miscalculation of layoffs was due to what she believes was an attempt by board administration to stray from the historical and contractual practice of establishing teacher numbers based on student enrolment and instead based it on dollar availability within a reduced financial framework.

The loss of 43 jobs means class sizes will be slightly larger on average and significantly larger for specific courses,

said Carroll.

Teaching contracts at both Halton's public and separate school boards expired recently and negotiations have begun. The talks will be crucial, especially for the public board as its 1996-97 budget was approved in the spring with just a slight mill rate increase based on the board's ability to get \$6 million in salary and benefit concessions from its teachers.

## Corrections

A story in the Sept. 4 issue of the Independent & Free Press incorrectly stated that all four local teaching contracts had expired. The Halton Roman Catholic Elementary Teachers and the Halton Roman Catholic School Board reached a two-year agreement in June that will carry them through to Aug. 31, 1998.

In the Sept. 11 edition an incorrect phone number was listed for the Georgetown Community Consultation Committee. The correct number is 878-5511 ext. 2111.

The Independent & Free Press regrets the errors.

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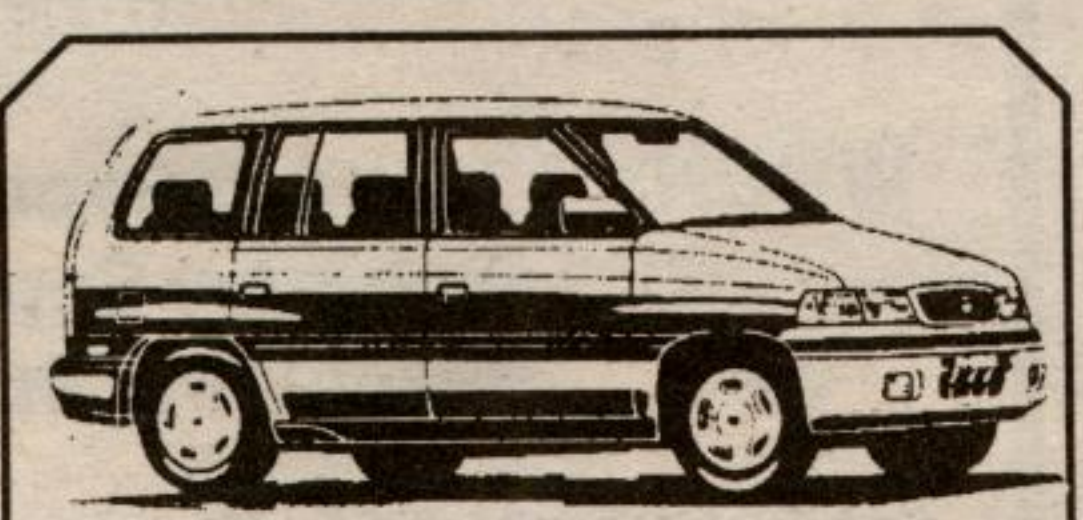
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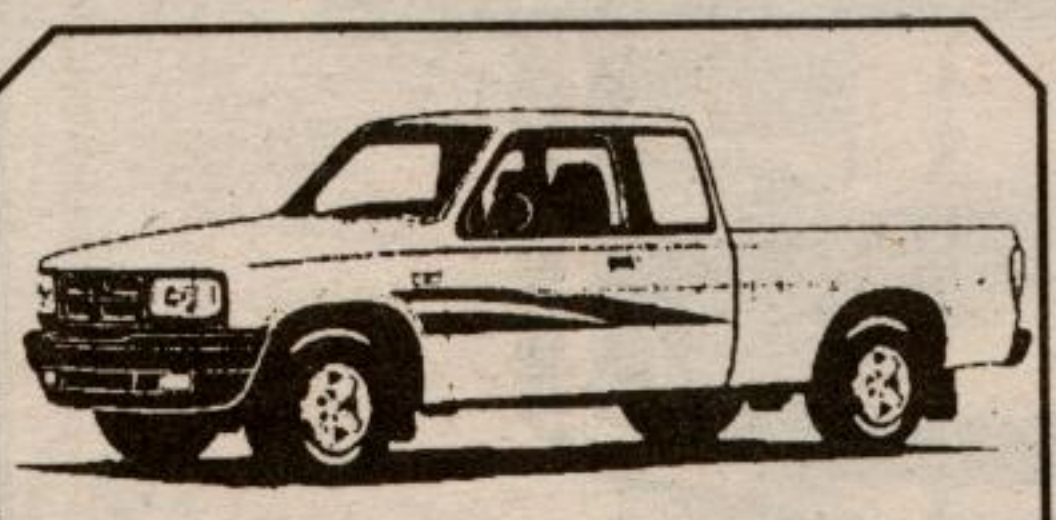
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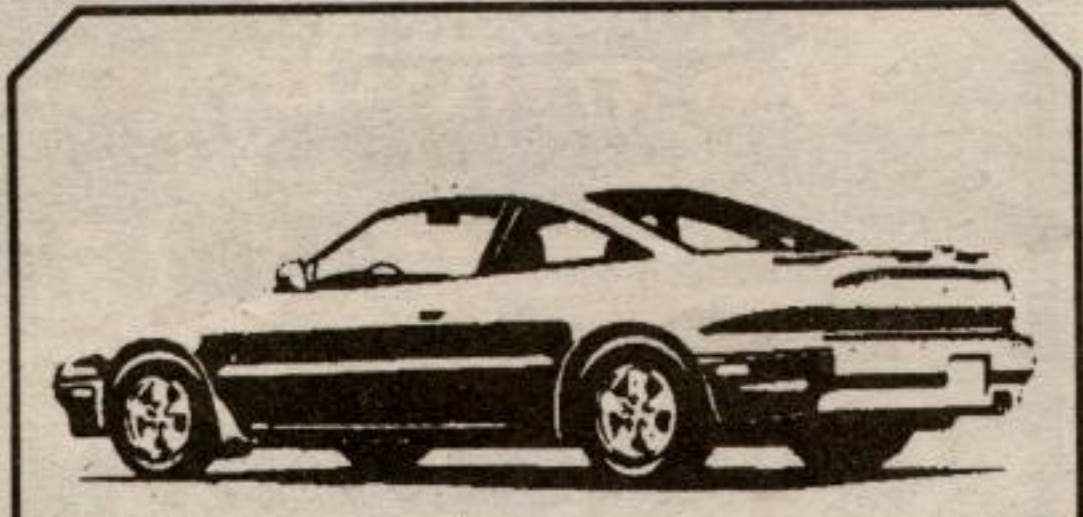
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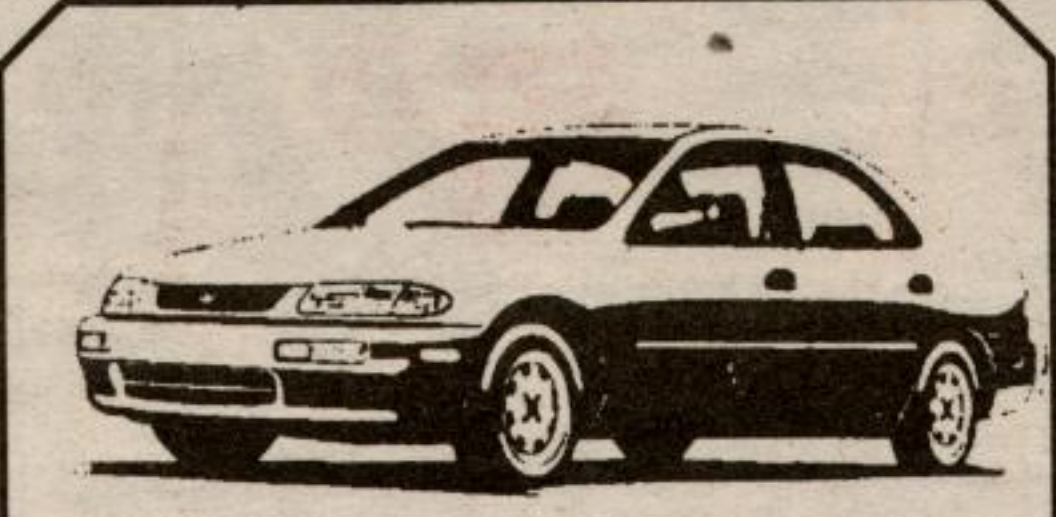
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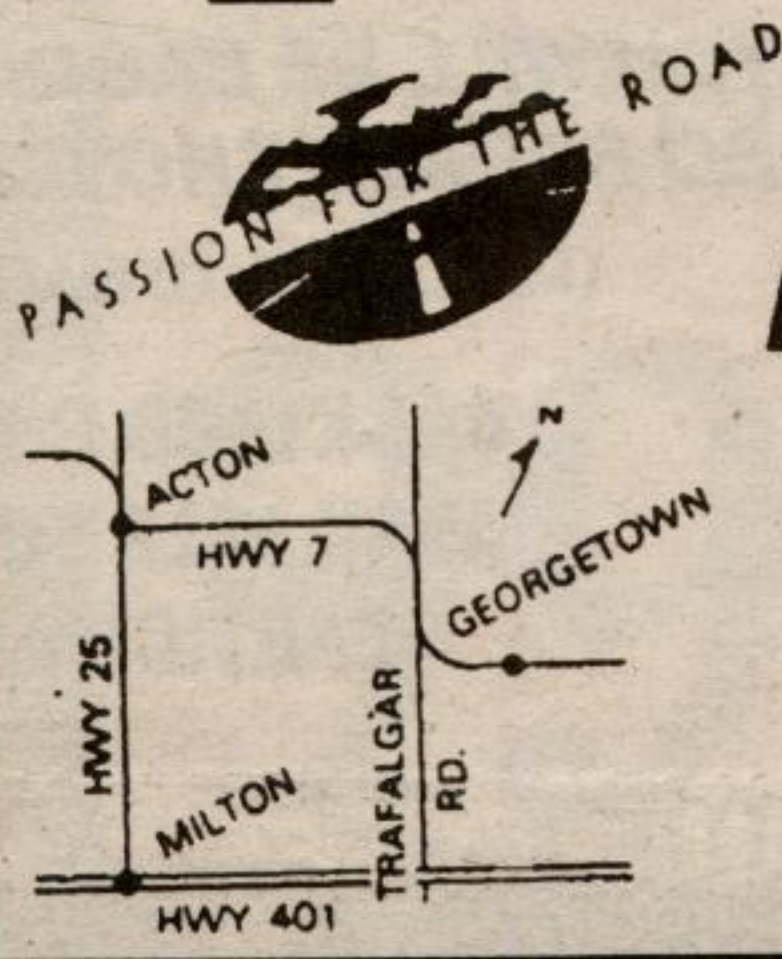


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