

Blyden-Taylor returns to roots

By IRENE GENTLE

A former Milton star will shine here again this weekend courtesy of Milton's first ever locally hosted Three Choir Festival Concert.

The dazzling conductor and director of the Toronto Orpheus Choir Brainerd Blyden-Taylor will make his appearance Sunday Mar. 8 at St. Paul's United Church for the event.

The 3 p.m. show will feature up to 100 young singers between the ages of 8-16 from the Milton Children's Chorus (MCC), Halton Hills Children's Chorus and the St. Mary's Children's Choir from near London.

As guest conductor Mr. Blyden-Taylor will also be in town Saturday for an all-day workshop with the kids and their music directors.

The trip will bring back memories for Mr. Blyden-Taylor, who is best known to many locals as the former director of the Milton Choristers.

The event will be a stroll down memory lane for MCC music director Audrey Mead as well. That's because Ms Mead was one of those singers under Mr. Blyden-Taylor's direction here in the 1980s.

"He's just one of the best leading Canadian choral directors and he has quite a flamboyant and fiery style," said Ms Mead. "He's exciting. He brought so much imagination to the music. He brought it alive."

Ms Mead was a teenager in those heady days of the Milton Choristers and she soon gave it up to do the things that other teens deemed more important. Still, she never lost sight of Mr. Blyden-Taylor, tracking his stellar rise through the ranks of Canadian music.

Mr. Blyden-Taylor was born in Trinidad and has spent the last 24 years here, making his name one of the best known in North America for his teaching and guest conducting skills. He's especially admired for his almost magical ability to musically inspire children.

In fact, the larger than life conductor is seen as one of those rare individuals able to marry razzle-dazzle with solid musical substance.

Ms Mead herself returned to music and when she became music director of the MCC, it was only a matter of time before she gave her old mentor a call.

"He has the experience and knowledge when it comes to spirituals and I wanted the kids to experience what I had," said Ms Mead.

As a mother and president of the parent volunteers for MCC, Sandra Kenzie is also happy for the chance to rub shoulders with Mr. Blyden-Taylor.

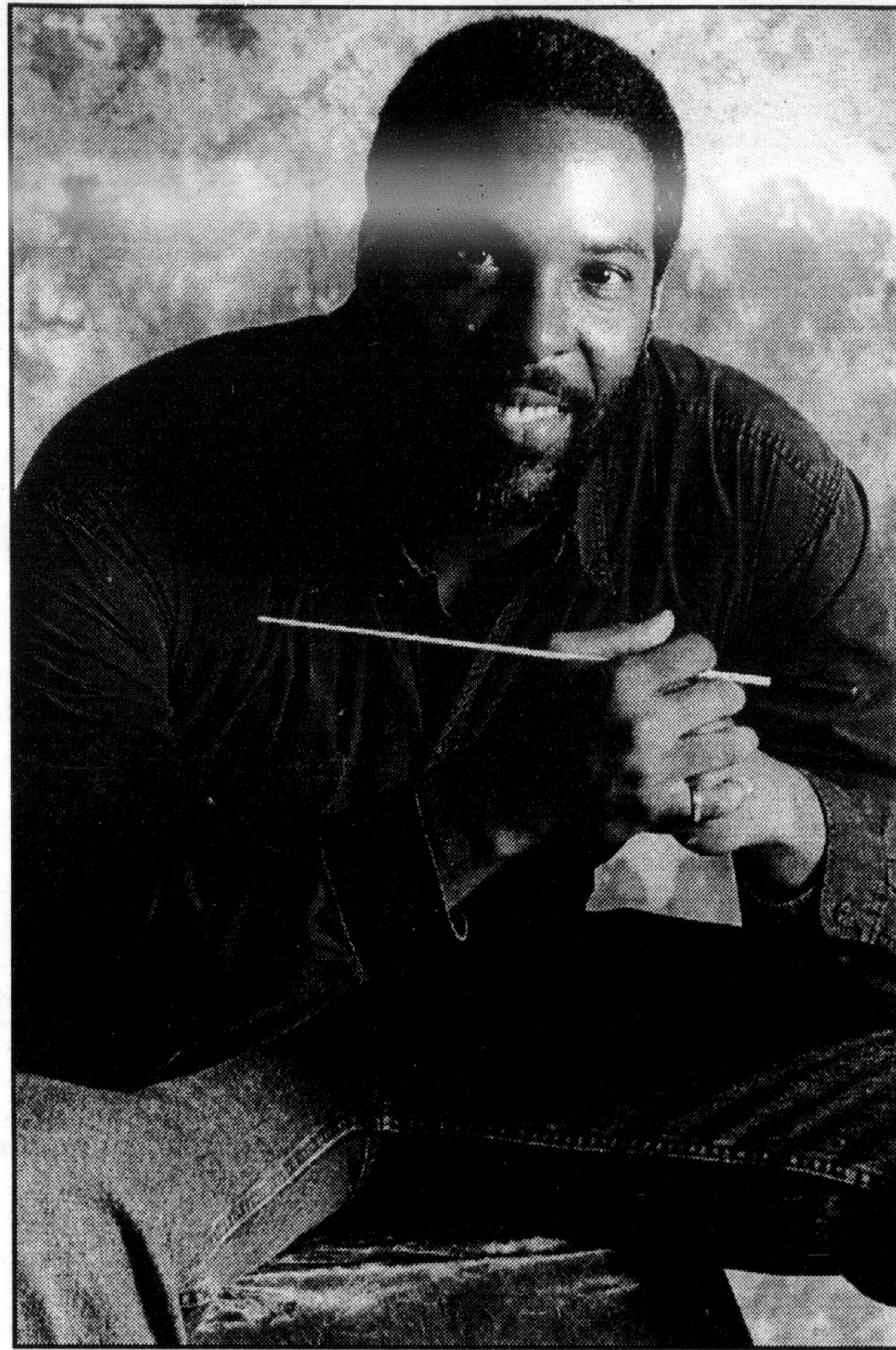
"I've seen him before and he's just amazing. There's something in his personality that kids are just mesmerized by," said Ms Kenzie. "He really brings the best out in them."

The three-choir format is recognized by it's audience as one that makes for some resounding music. It's also good for the kids.

"They learn a lot just by being able to be with such a large group," said Ms Kenzie. "They really learn to sing out and project."

Tickets for the event are \$10 adult, \$8 seniors/students. Children under 12 are free.

For tickets, call 878-9937.



Former Milton conductor Brainerd Blyden-Taylor will direct 100 young singers in Sunday's Three Choir Festival Concert at St. Paul's United Church.

Halton board drops a grievance against teachers over strike

By TIM WHITNELL

Special to The Champion

The new Halton District School Board continues to reverse decisions made by the former board.

On a night when the current 10 trustees agreed to defer the closure of two Burlington elementary schools, as ordered by the old school board, the new representatives also tossed out another contentious decision of the old board at a recent meeting.

A grievance filed by the former 18-person board against Halton's teachers, for any costs to the board associated with last fall's two-week teachers' strike over Bill 160, was withdrawn by current trustees in an 8-2 vote.

Michael Ellis, the Burlington trustee who introduced the motion, said he didn't like the idea of a grievance for a number of reasons.

"We were the only board in Ontario to launch a grievance against teachers (the Hamilton and Wentworth boards withdrew similar attempts). If we want to mend fences, let's get rid of this grievance," he said.

"The logic behind a grievance was to cover the board for costs incurred during the strike. But after you take savings from (not paying) teachers' salaries, and even with the daycare expenses



Al Tanner

paid to parents, the board did not have any costs," said Mr. Ellis.

Halton board business superintendent Wayne McNally said the board is about \$1.8 million to the good on the difference between teacher salary savings and paying daycare expenses to parents (14,000 of about 20,000 families received a reimbursement).

The best news, said Mr. McNally, is the Ministry of Education has told Halton to consider the excess money as revenue for 1997. That reduces the board's '97 deficit to about \$3 million.

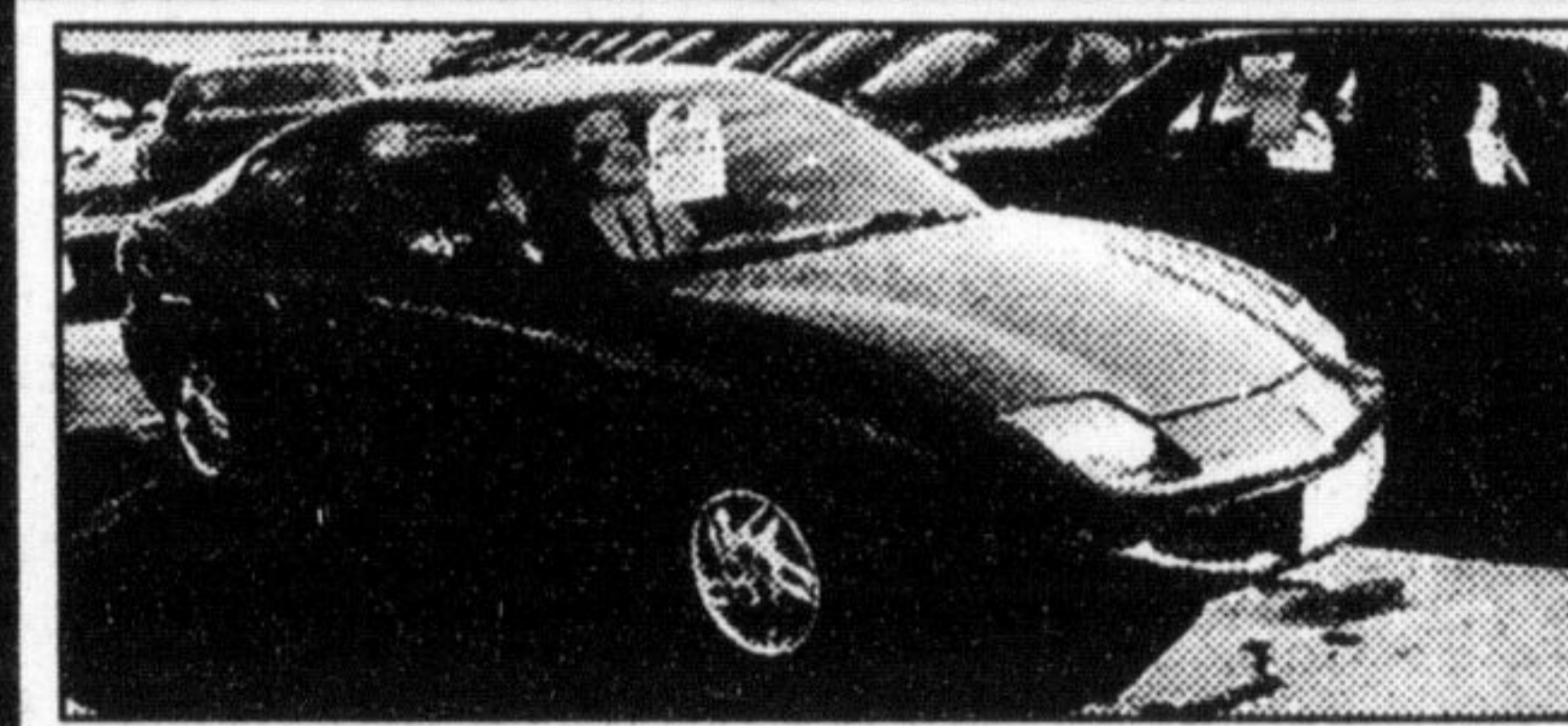
Mr. Ellis said the whole grievance affair was ill-conceived.

"I thought it was terrible that we

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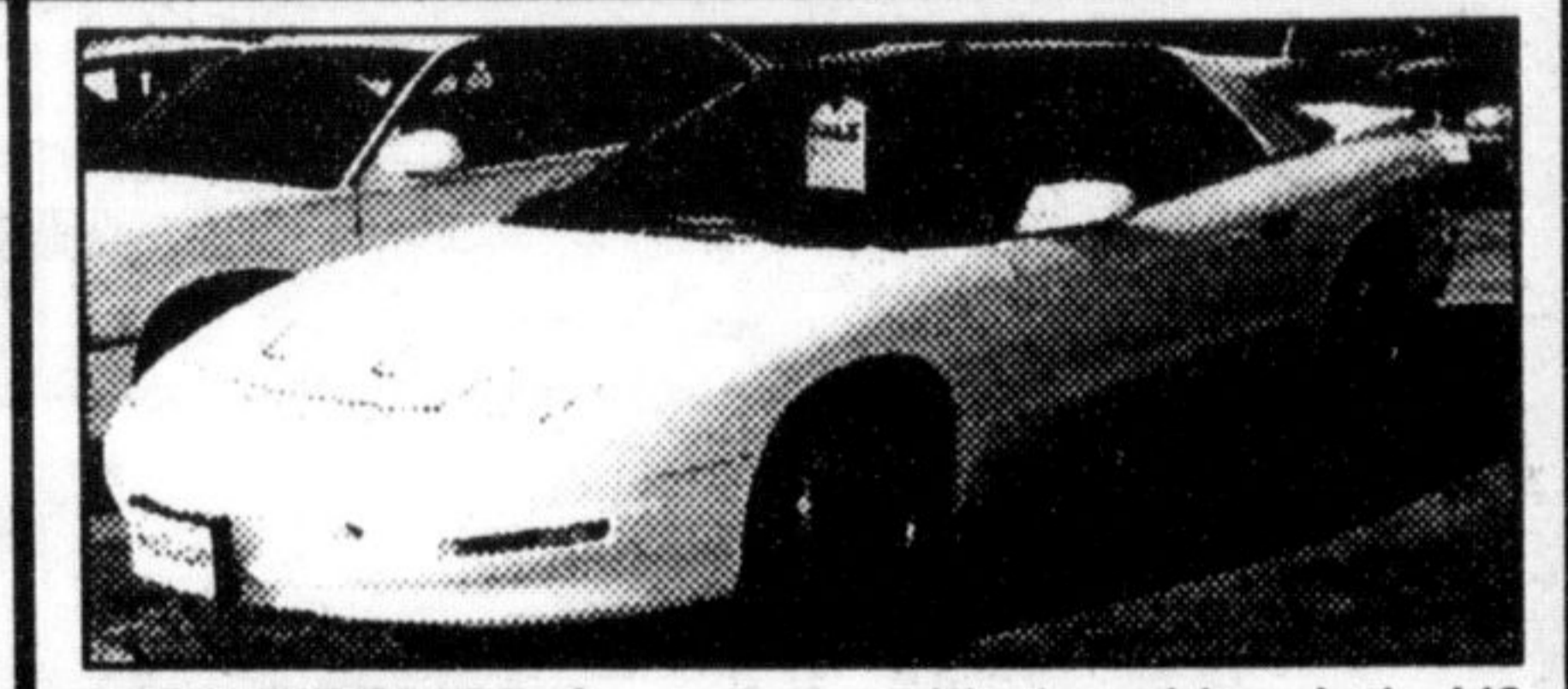
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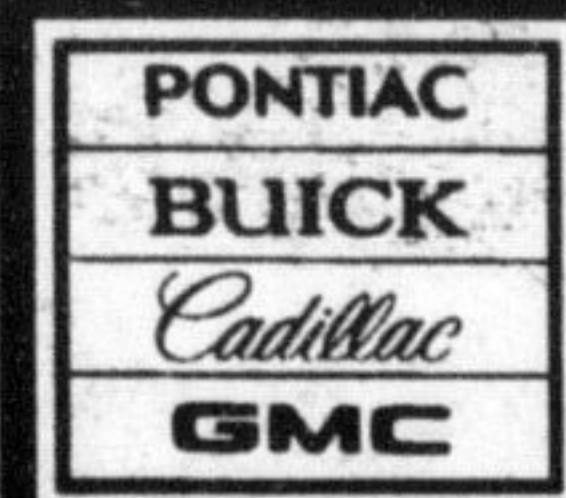
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