



SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Bullseye for Barrie duo at nationals

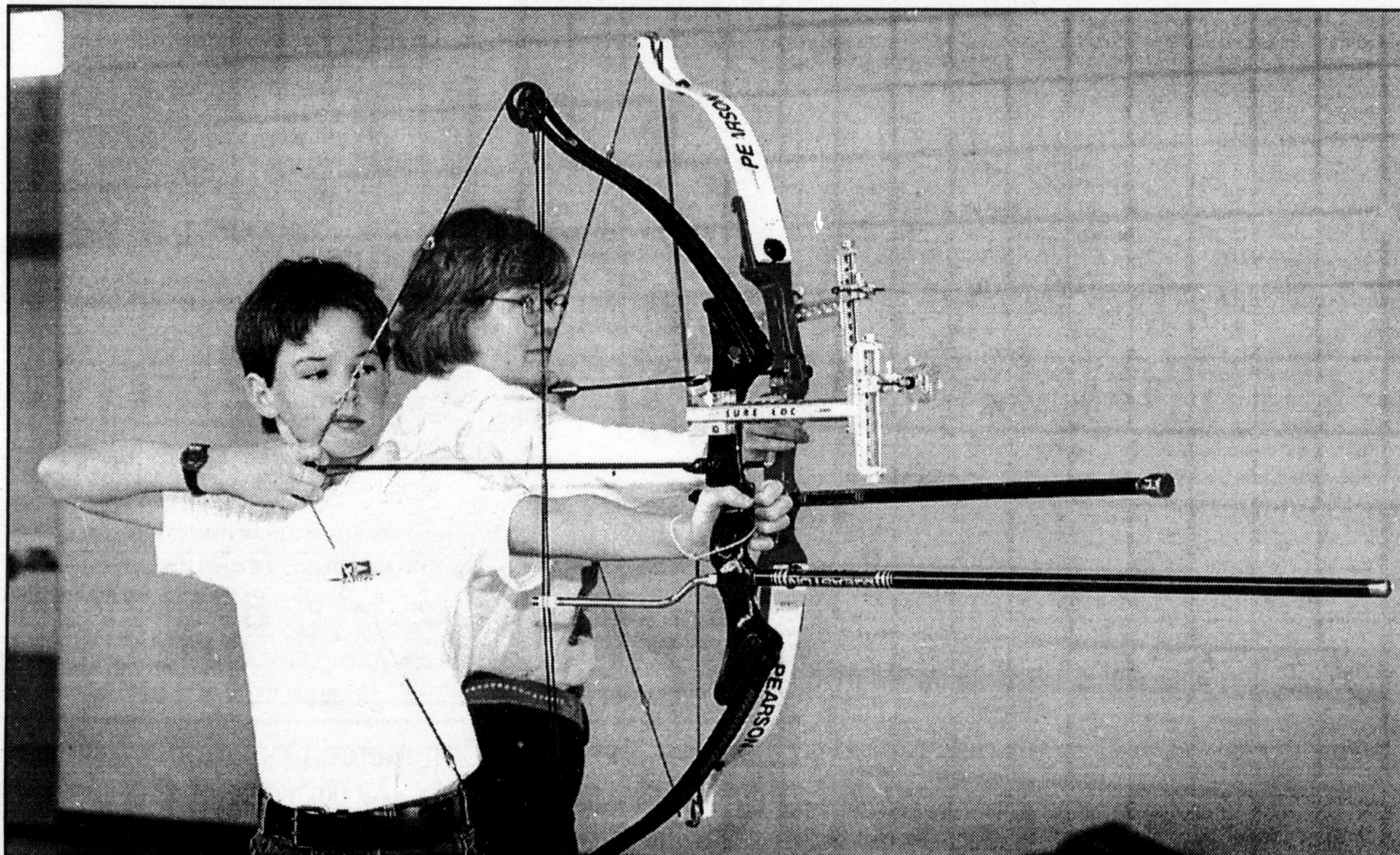


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Alex and Susan Barrie were right on target with national archery medals recently. This despite the fact the duo haven't been competing that long.

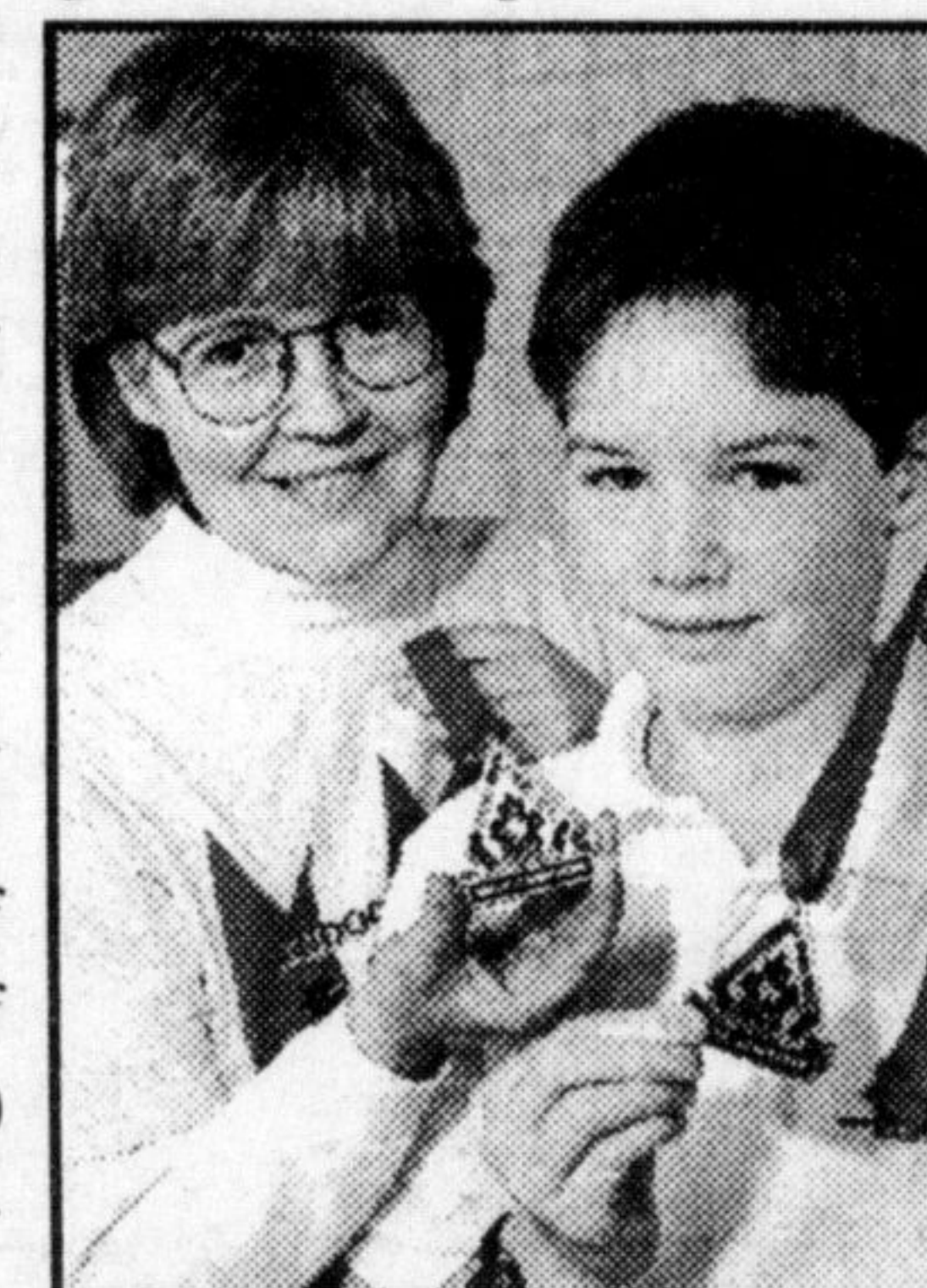
By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

Susan and Alex Barrie are straight shooters, and they've got the national medals to prove it.

The local mother and son duo each struck silver at the Canadian Indoor Archery Championships, held over the St. Valentine's Day weekend in Windsor.

After finishing fourth the previous two years, a third time out proved to be the charm for Alex, who amassed nearly three dozen direct hits and a two day point total of 550 — out of a possible 600 — in his pre-teen cub division.



The Barries brandish their medals.

"I got into a groove early and just held it," said the 12-year-old Brookville School student. "My focus was a lot better this time. It's a long competition and the trick is not to let anything distract you."

The young marksman doubled as coach for his mother, who was making her national debut and didn't exactly have high expectations going in.

She said, "I thought it might be a little premature for me to enter, but I had been doing well at regional tournaments and figured if I was going to be at the nationals anyway for Alex, I might as well compete."

Being able to draw on her son's advice and encouragement, she said, was greatly beneficial. This — plus a pretty accurate shot to boot — helped her earn an overall score of 545.

"I had just hoped to gain some experience. It came as a total shock after the first day to find out I was in third," recalled Susan.

Alex — whose long-range goal is to compete in the Olympics — was even more impressive at last summer's outdoor nationals at his home archery club in Caledon.

There he captured gold while setting four Canadian records for most direct hits, most individual day points (twice) and best overall score.

Not to shabby for someone who's been in the sport less than three years.

"You've really got to dedicate yourself to it," Alex said. "That, and have good coaching which we're fortunate to have at The Archers of Caledon."

Once Milton warms up, watch out

By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

The Merchants are often like a sports car on a cold winter morning. It may take a while for both to warm up but when their horsepower hits full stride, watch out.

Tuesday evening marked one of those occasions. After a scoreless period and a half, the defending league champs buried four goals in a little over six minutes on the way to a 5-0 whitewash of Hamilton in their best-of-five first round series opener at Memorial Arena.

Game one left plenty to be desired in terms of excitement, which wasn't exactly surprising with an ultra conservative Kilty Bees team that exhausts every bit of energy on simply backchecking and clearing their zone.

Still, an all-substance-and-no-style victory was favourable to the freewheeling yet highly sloppy and embarrassing 6-3 regular season-ending loss to Georgetown Saturday.

"That was a reality check for us, a reminder that we need to bear down and work hard no matter

who we're playing," said sophomore centre Mike Wheelihan, who picked up a pair of assists Tuesday.

Veteran Jeremy Wenzel registered his first ever playoff shutout with a competent 21-save performance.

His teammates' defence and discipline were completely in check — particularly the latter, with only a handful of minor infractions taken — and they didn't get discouraged by an initial scoring drought.

Added Wheelihan, "That's one of the keys to winning. If goals don't come early we've just got to stay focused and keep plugging away."

Milton got on the board at 9:42 of the second when defenceman Chris Bahen deposited a huge rebound past Steve McFarlane, whose superb glove work held the final tally to a respectable level.

Capitalizing on one of the Bees' more blatant breakdowns, the hometown boys cushioned their lead with three more goals in 1:56.

Lighting the lamp were captain Kevin

O'Flaherty, Geoff Schomogyi and Jamie Dubrick.

Rounding out the offence early in the third was gritty left winger Rob Meanchoff, who further demonstrated the local team's vast finishing power by stabbing in a goal-mouth scramble.

Defensively it was Matt Bannan, John Nadalin and Ken Robins who set the tone — making authoritative tie-ups and effectively screening out attackers.

Special teams play failed to be much of a factor in game one. The Merchants went 1-for-3 with the man advantage while Hamilton had two power-play chances, and each time were restricted to just a couple of outside shots.

Erin Jr. C goalie Mark Skinner played the role of back-up as Daniel Jacques was sidelined with the flu.

First-round play, which appears headed for a clean sweep, continued last night at Mountain Arena. Results were not available at press time.

If victorious, Milton can clinch the series tonight at home. Game time, as always, is 8 p.m.

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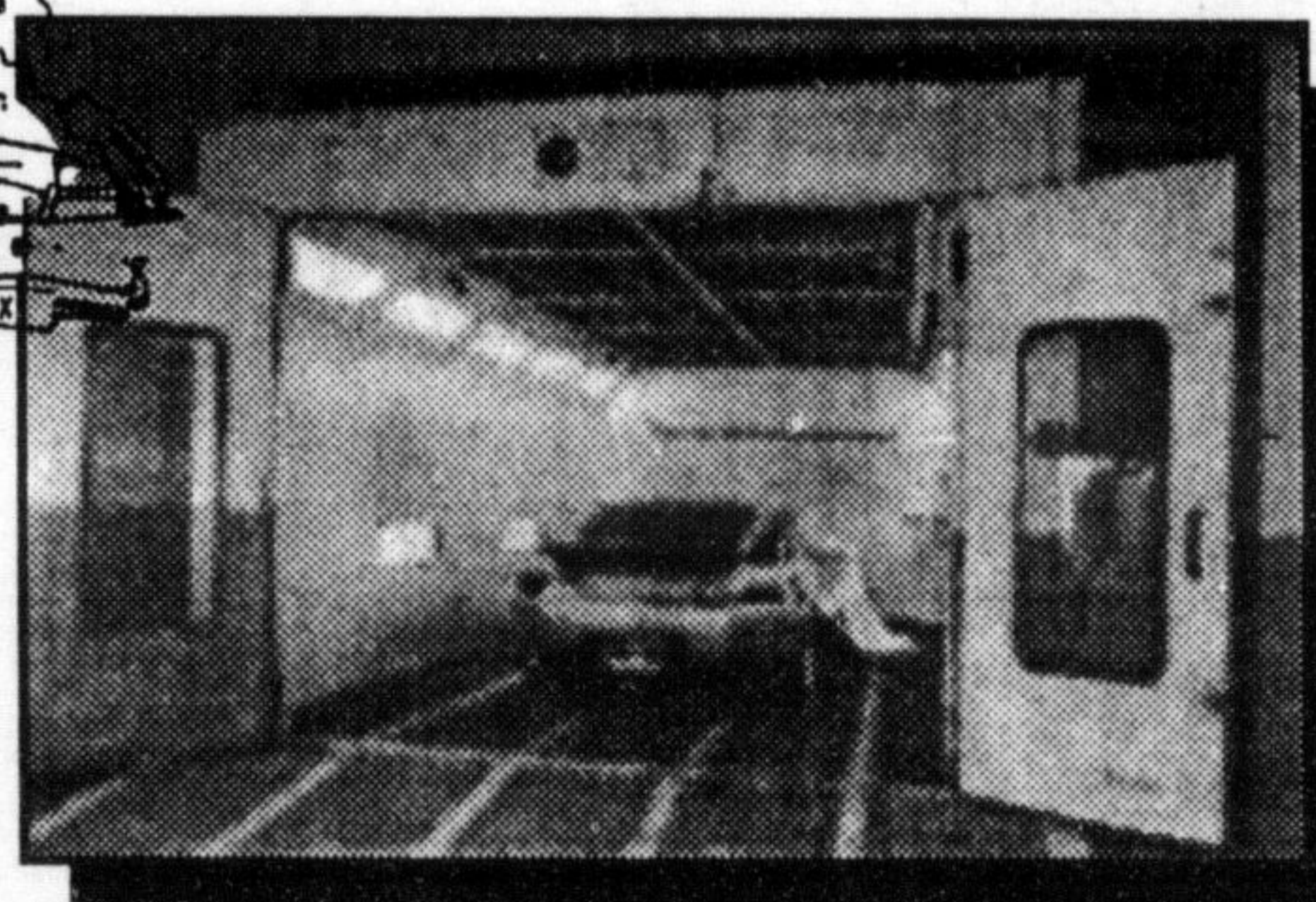
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