

# Tax tension

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the attention of residents who want good policing without an increase in taxes.

"The average guy and girl in the community, how do you get around the apathy so I don't have to go back to them next year and say 'because of your non-involvement, your taxes are going to go up?'" he asked.

Taxes have historically been a sore point between council and the police force.

Though councillors are in favor of a strong police service, they frequently balk at being asked to hike property taxes in order to get it.

In particular, they have questioned if a cop car could be driven through the holes in the police theory that officer hiring should follow a police-to-population ratio.

This year, the force is asking council to approve a \$45.92 million budget, up \$2.4 million from 1998.

That represents a 5.7 per cent increase in the budget, or a 4.6 per cent increase in the police services portion of a residential property tax bill for the owner of a \$185,000 home.

As Halton swells in population by up to three per cent a year, it has been argued that the police-to-people ratio model could conceivably lead to a doubling of the police budget every decade.

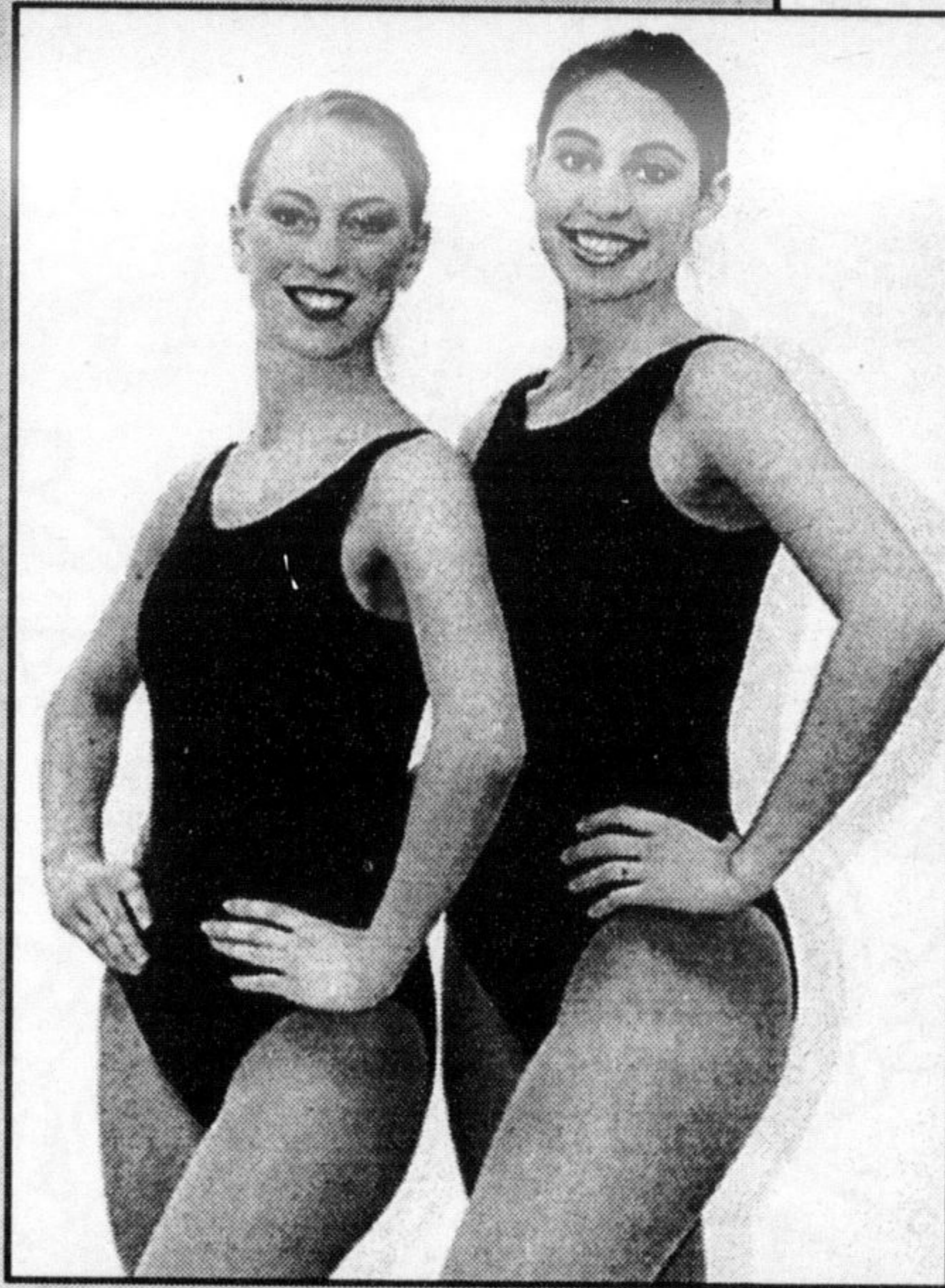
It is hoped the review will manage to settle the ongoing debate.

Halton Hills Mayor Marilyn Serjeantson asked for reassurance that all alternatives would be explored in the review.

"I think it's really important to see how we can do things differently regardless of any constraints present," she said. "Things change. If those things aren't identified, I don't think we're spending our money well."

All options, including part-time policing, should be analyzed, said Oakville Councillor Keith Bird.

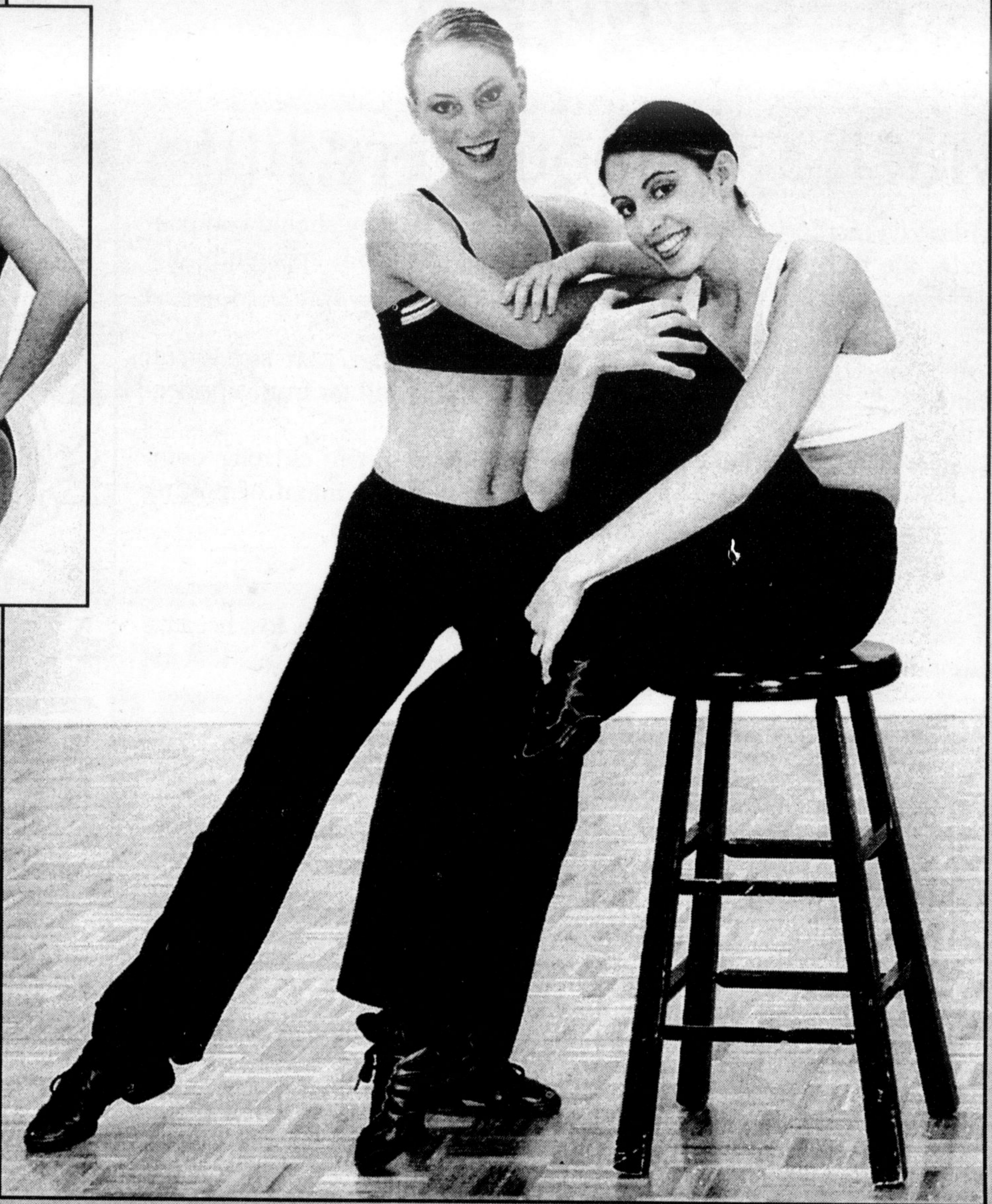
"You have a service now that basically has a 12-hour shift," he said. "Are there opportunities for part-time policing? If it's going to be meaningful, it has to be considered."



## Stepping out

The Dance Shoppe's Lindsay Lafleche (left) and Nadine Villa are busy rehearsing for the Miss Dance America Pageant, slated for next weekend in western New York.

Photos by GRAHAM PAINE



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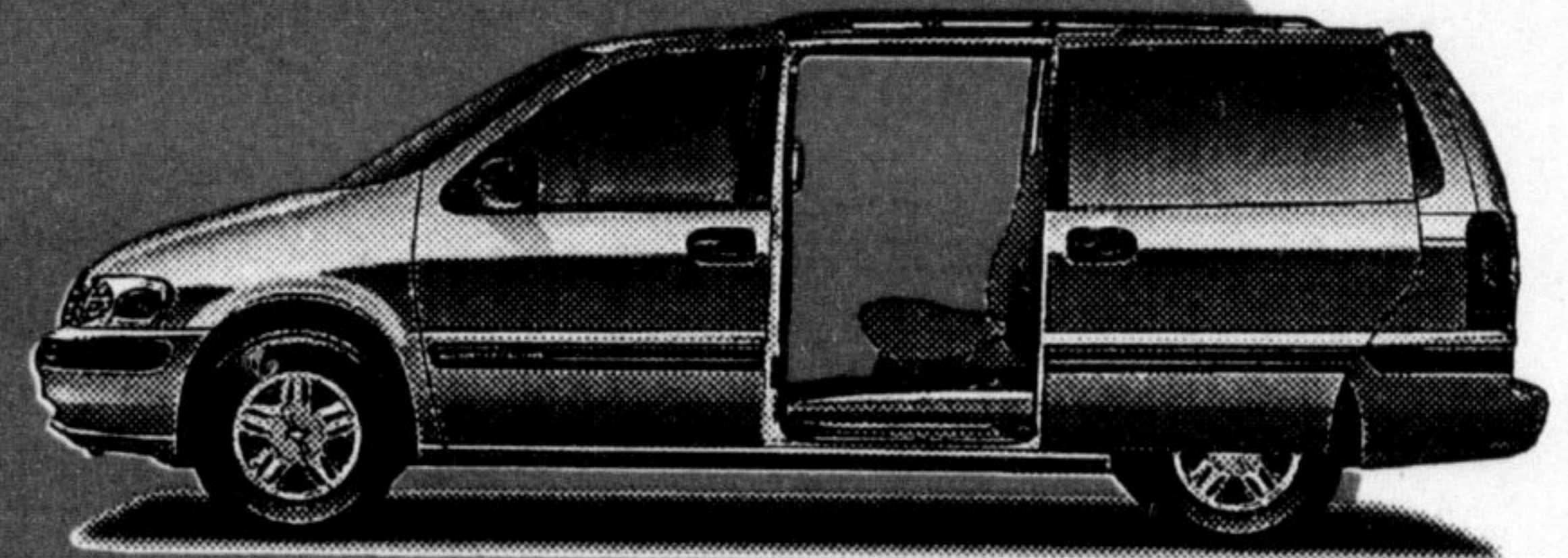


Cavalier Coupe

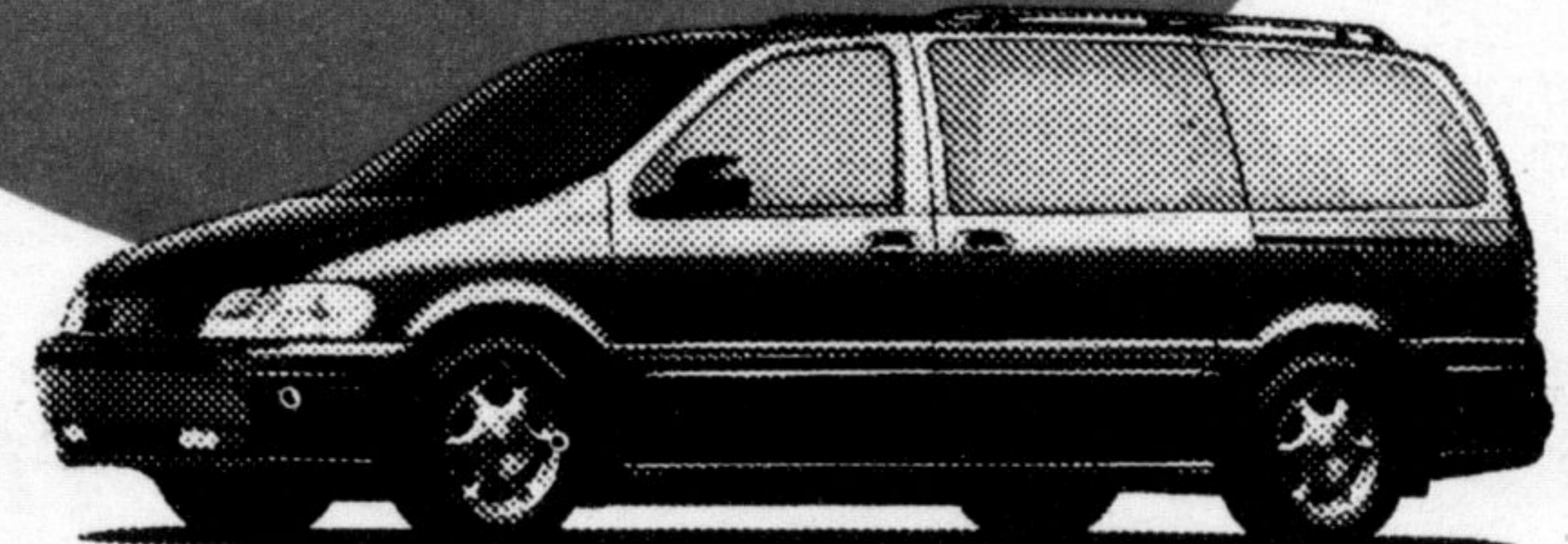


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