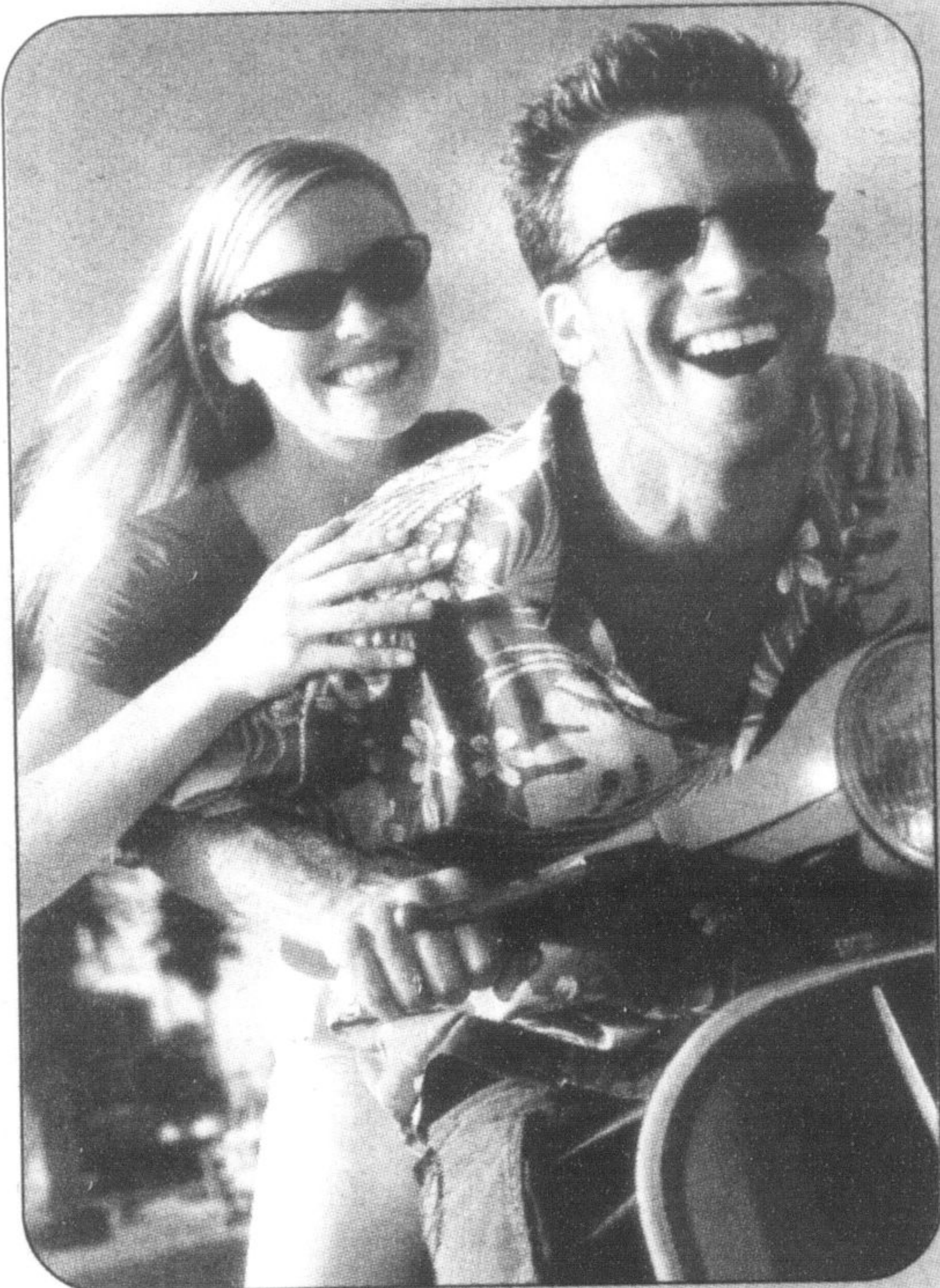


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## Dr. Nosal says information 'reassuring' in sludge issue

By **RICHARD VIVIAN**  
*The Champion*

The practice of spreading human waste as fertilizer on farmland needs further study, but information collected to date is "rather reassuring," says Halton's medical officer of health.

"I can't sit here today and say the risk (to human health) is zero. I believe it is very, very minimal. I'll be the first to admit all the definitive evidence isn't there and further studies are required on this issue," Dr. Bob Nosal said, responding to recent calls by the Canadian Infectious Disease Society (CIDS) for a moratorium on the practice.

"Clearly, if I or any of my colleges across the province had any information that said the evidence clearly said this was a health hazard, we'd be issuing orders to stop the practice."

Last week, Dr. Coleman

Rotstein, infection specialist and head of the CIDS, called on municipalities to stop spreading treated human waste on farmland because of concern the sludge (also called biosolids) may contaminate livestock, water sources and crops.

Until there's clear evidence the practice is safe, the spreading must be stopped on lands within 10 km of populated areas, he said.

But stopping the practice all together raises a number of other concerns, commented Dr. Nosal. If the sewage isn't treated and spread on farmland, it would have to be put into a landfill or burned — either of which could also carry health concerns, he said.

"The reality is, what are you going to do with all of it (biosolids)? We're not talking about a small amount, we're talking about tonnes and tonnes of biosolids that are produced," said the medical officer of health. "There's going to be pros and cons for all the options."

Under the Region's Biosolid Recycling Program — which has been operating for 22 years — solid sewage waste is separated from its liquid accompaniment and treated. The sewage is then sent to a digestion chamber and heated for 12 to 14 days to remove much of the pathogens contained in the waste.

Both the fields and biosolid are tested prior to spreading and must meet Ministry of the Environment and Energy standards.

"There are extensive regulations and procedures out there," said Dr. Nosal. "Those standards are good standards. They err on the side of caution."

Last year, after a review of all existing literature on the issue of biosolids, the Water Environment Association of Ontario — of which Dr. Nosal sat on the steering committee — recommended to various levels of government and other stakeholders that more studies be conducted.

## Woman injures ankle in fall

An Etobicoke woman is recovering from an ankle injury after falling four to six feet down a crevasse at Kelso Conservation Area Wednesday.

The woman, in her late 20s, was walking through the wooded trails with her boyfriend at about 3 p.m. when she fell, according to the Milton Fire Department.

Three firefighters used rope to lower themselves down 25 feet to the woman.

They then splinted her leg before taking her in a basket to safety.

She was taken by ambulance to Milton District Hospital.



David Patchell-Evans  
Founder & CEO  
GoodLife Fitness

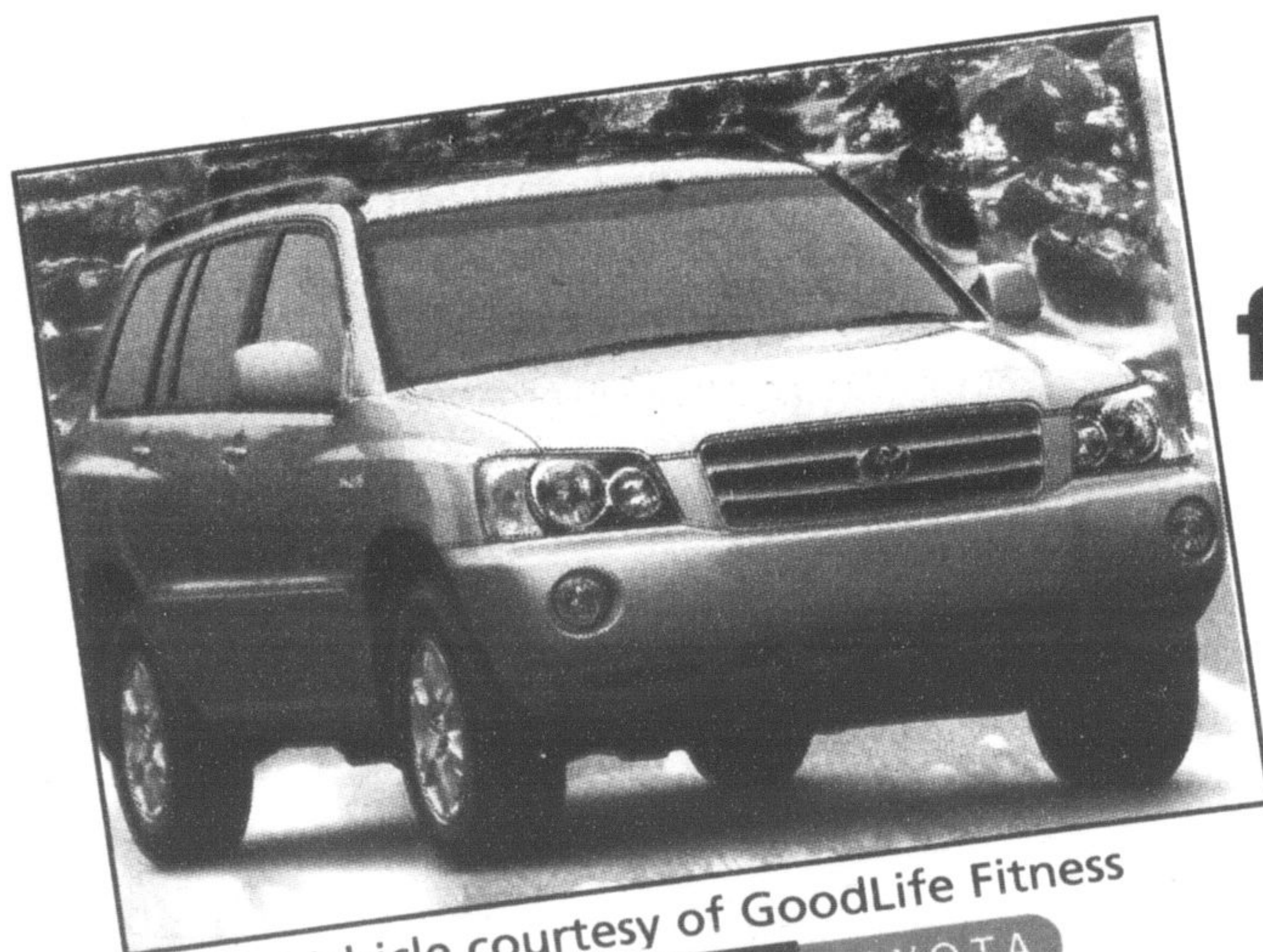
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