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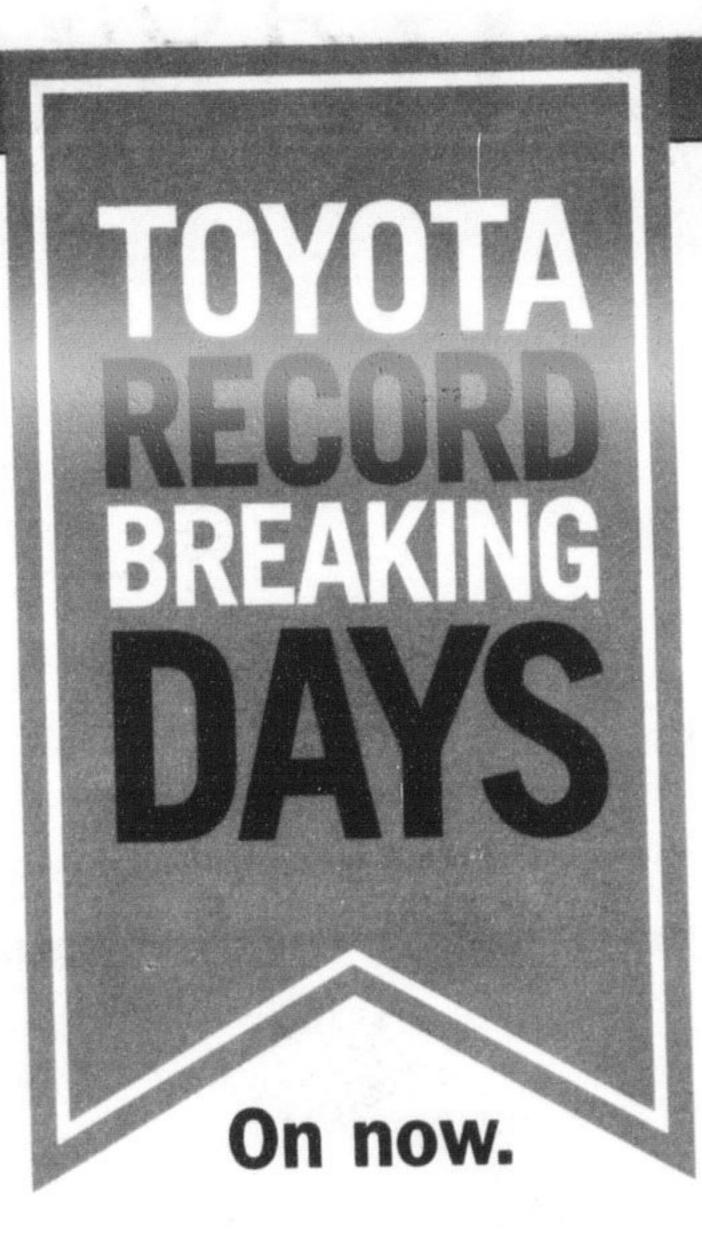
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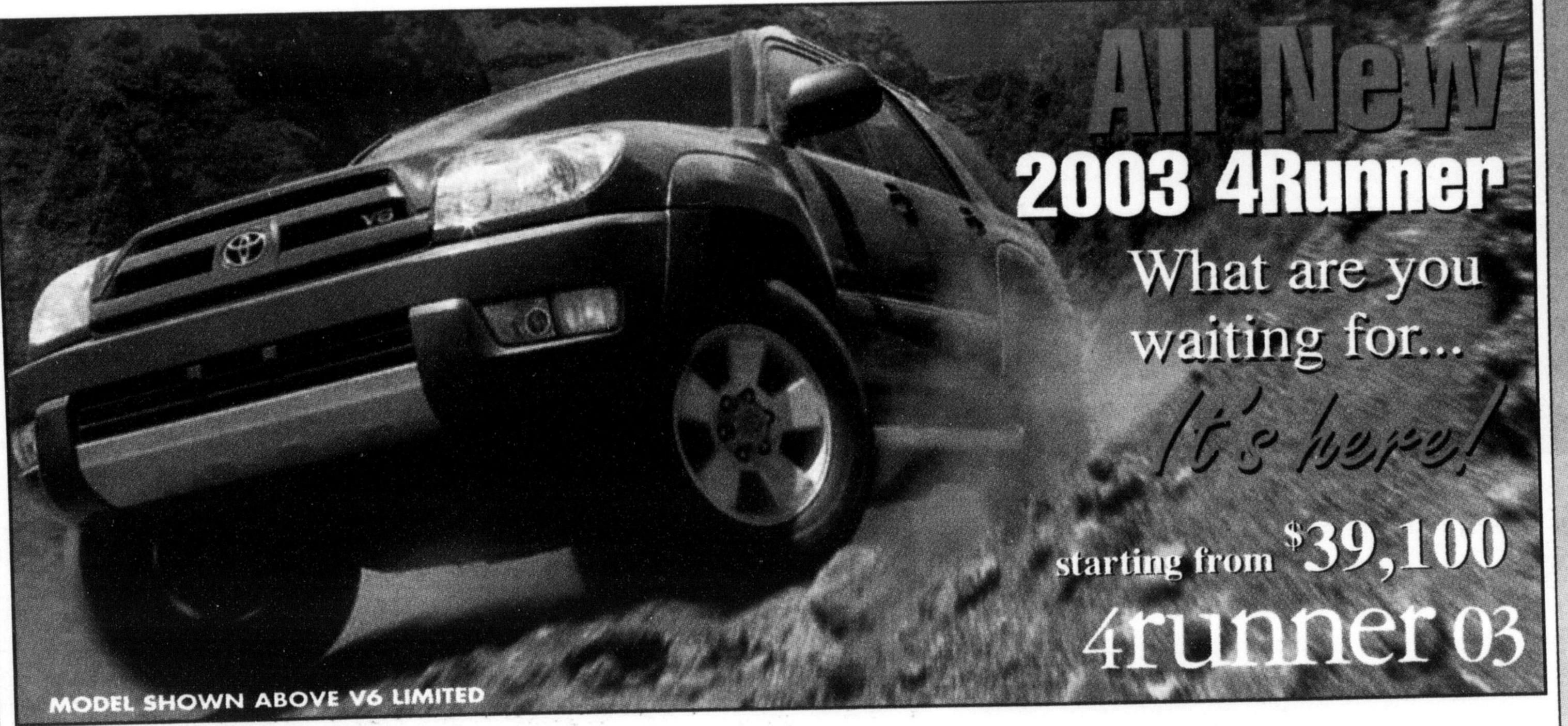
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Parents just want schools left alone

By FANNIE SUNSHINE

The Champion

The Halton District School Board's alternative proposals for designating students to other schools should Martin Street and Percy W. Merry schools close did little to comfort parents Tuesday night.

Some 60 parents came out to an open house at Milton District High School, organized by the board's School Closure/Consolidation Study Committee, to look at the options the committee has provided regarding the relocation of students upon closure.

Although the committee provided several options for each school, the majority of parents weren't satisfied with any of them

— except to remain put.

"I just don't want to sit and complain but I'm really shocked by the options," said Carol Doherty, whose daughter attends the French Immersion program at Martin Street. "I'm surprised there aren't a wider range of options. There is insufficient time to digest this. I don't feel the committee acted in good faith because the consultation process was too short."

The committee held two public meetings for each school earlier in the month to hear from delegates about the propose closure.

The Martin Street options include all students directed to Robert Baldwin School, French Immersion students directed to E.W. Foster School, Robert Baldwin School or J.M. Denyes School and English students directed to J.M. Denyes School and Robert Baldwin School.

The Percy W. Merry options include students directed to E.W. Foster School, Oakville schools River Oaks, Posts Corners and Munn's School or all students to Sam Sherratt School.

Emery Robidoux, whose son attends the French Immersion program at Martin Street, said he's still waiting for the board to explain why the school is slated for closure. "I'm still confused. And in consideration of all the development planned, most of it may not be until 2003, 2004 but then it will explode. I think the board is being short-sighted."

Currently, Martin Street is operating near capacity with 250 students, with 106 of those students bused in from outside the school's catchment area — mostly for the French Immersion program.

Percy W. Merry currently has 92 students enrolled, below the capacity of 220 students

Annette Page, who has two children attending Percy W. Merry, told The Champion she felt the school should be used as a holding facility until a new school is built. "But if I had to decide on an option, I would go with D because all the students would move together. I don't want my kids to attend an Oakville school."

Parents were able to take home comment forms to submit to the board stating their preferred option, should the schools close.

All forms must be submitted to the board by Monday in order for the committee to review the responses before making a recommendation to the board November 6.

A board decision on the fate of the two schools is expected November 20.