

Another superintendent resigns from school board

By JASON MISNER

Special to The Champion

The Halton District School Board has lost its third senior staff person this year.

Brenda Kearney, the board's highly-regarded superintendent of special education for the past eight years, officially left the board Thursday. The Guelph native had been with the board for 33 years, starting out as a teacher at Milton District High School.

She worked her way up in various positions including school vice-principal and principal (E.C. Drury High School) before assuming the superintendent role in 1997.

As superintendent, Ms Kearney was responsible for guiding programs for the board's special needs students and securing provincial money to bring those programs to fruition. It's one of the more challenging positions since it is the only portfolio in which funding has to be applied for rather than having a bulk of money set aside by the Province as it does for transportation costs.

Ms Kearney told the Post, The Champion's sister newspaper, the decision to "resign to retire" was made about two weeks ago. She said she and her husband were sitting on the dock of their cottage on a Sunday when Ms Kearney said she turned to him and said, "I'm

tired."

The former superintendent said she's leaving due to a "personal family matter." The decision, an emotional Ms Kearney said, was "gut wrenching" and stressed she adored her job and those she worked with.

"All I'm going to say is I've loved my job and decided it was time to go, all things considered," she said. "I'm going to spend time with my family and then I have no idea — rest for a little bit.

"I would think somewhere, somehow, I will keep an iron in the fire."

On May 18, Dusty Papke left the board as director of education.

About two weeks later, it was announced Carla Kisko, the board's superintendent of business services, was leaving at the end of the year to assume a similar role with the Toronto District School Board.

Ms Kearney commended board staff for their diligent work and long working days.

"Fourteen-hour days to them are routine," she said, also taking a moment to praise teachers for their daily, selfless work.

Ms Kearney said she leaves the Halton public board feeling that one of her main accomplishments was her "passion for education and for the individual child.

"I hope I have made a differ-

ence."

Interim Director of Education Barry Finlay said he's upset to see Ms Kearney leave.

Mr. Finlay said she was highly skilled and will be taking with her "history and wisdom."

"She guided the evolution of special education," he said. "We're all sad to see Brenda leaving because of what she has brought to her role. We do have a huge gap to fill and it has yet to be determined when we are filling that gap."

Mr. Finlay said having three main senior staff leaving simultaneously is difficult to address.

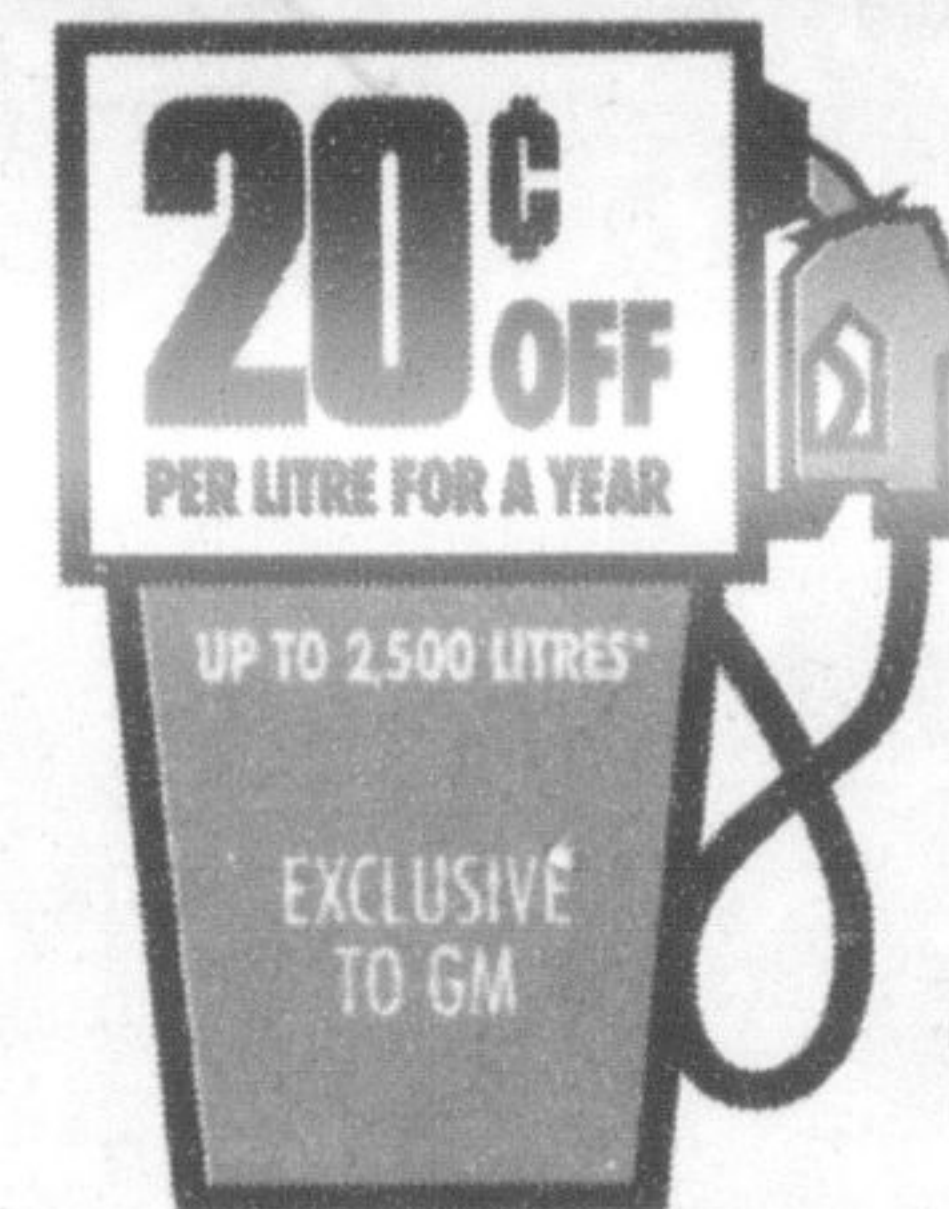
"Any time we have significant people leave an organization it creates somewhat a sense of instability until those positions are filled."

Neither Ms Kearney nor Mr. Finlay would comment if she will receive a severance package.

Ms Kearney earned \$128,647 last year.

Board Chair Paul Tate said he's "disappointed to hear her decision to leave, otherwise we wish her well. She's well known throughout the province and throughout Halton as well."

The new director of education will decide superintendent roles for special education and business services, Mr. Tate said. It's hoped, he said, the director's position would be filled by the end of July.

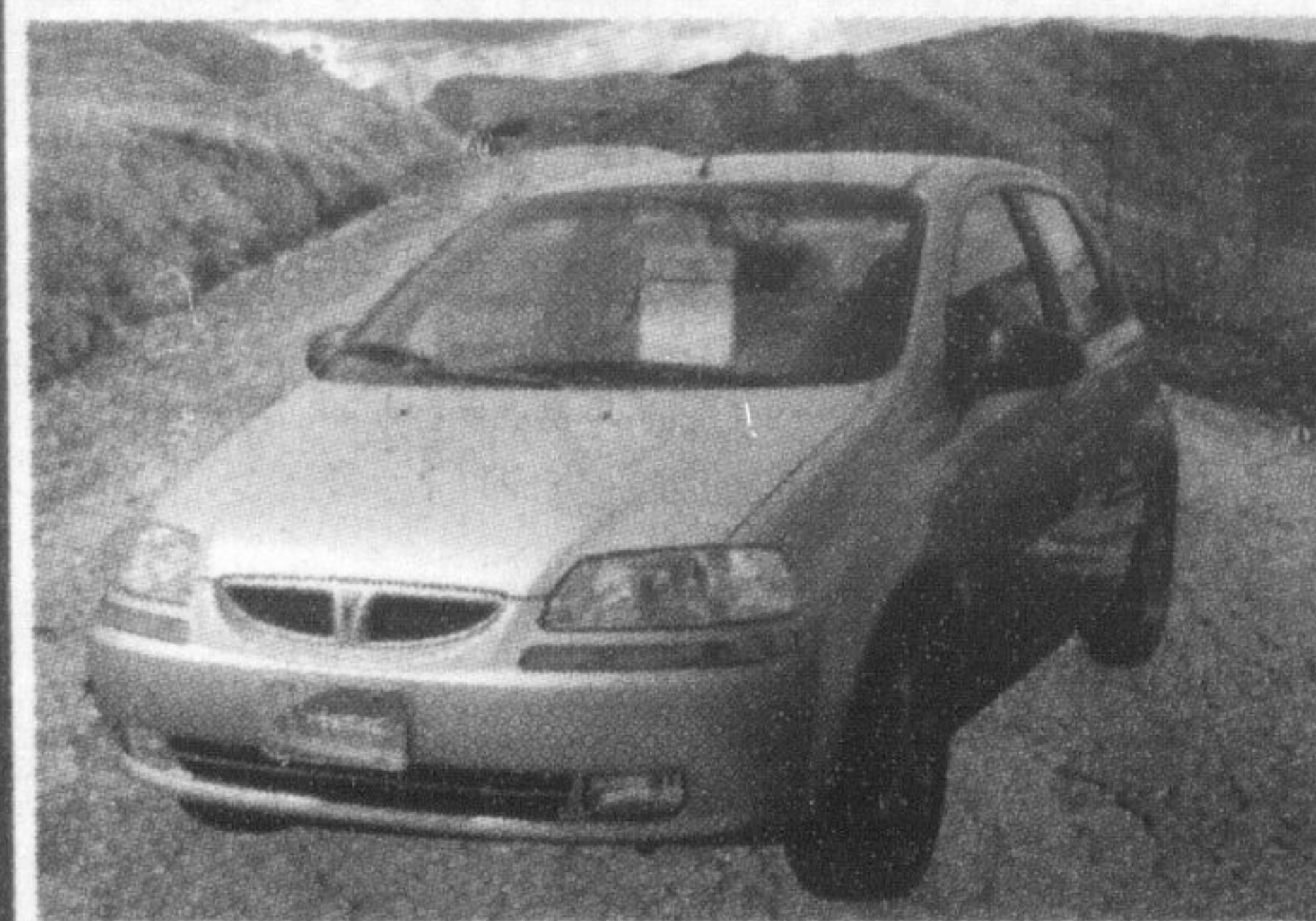


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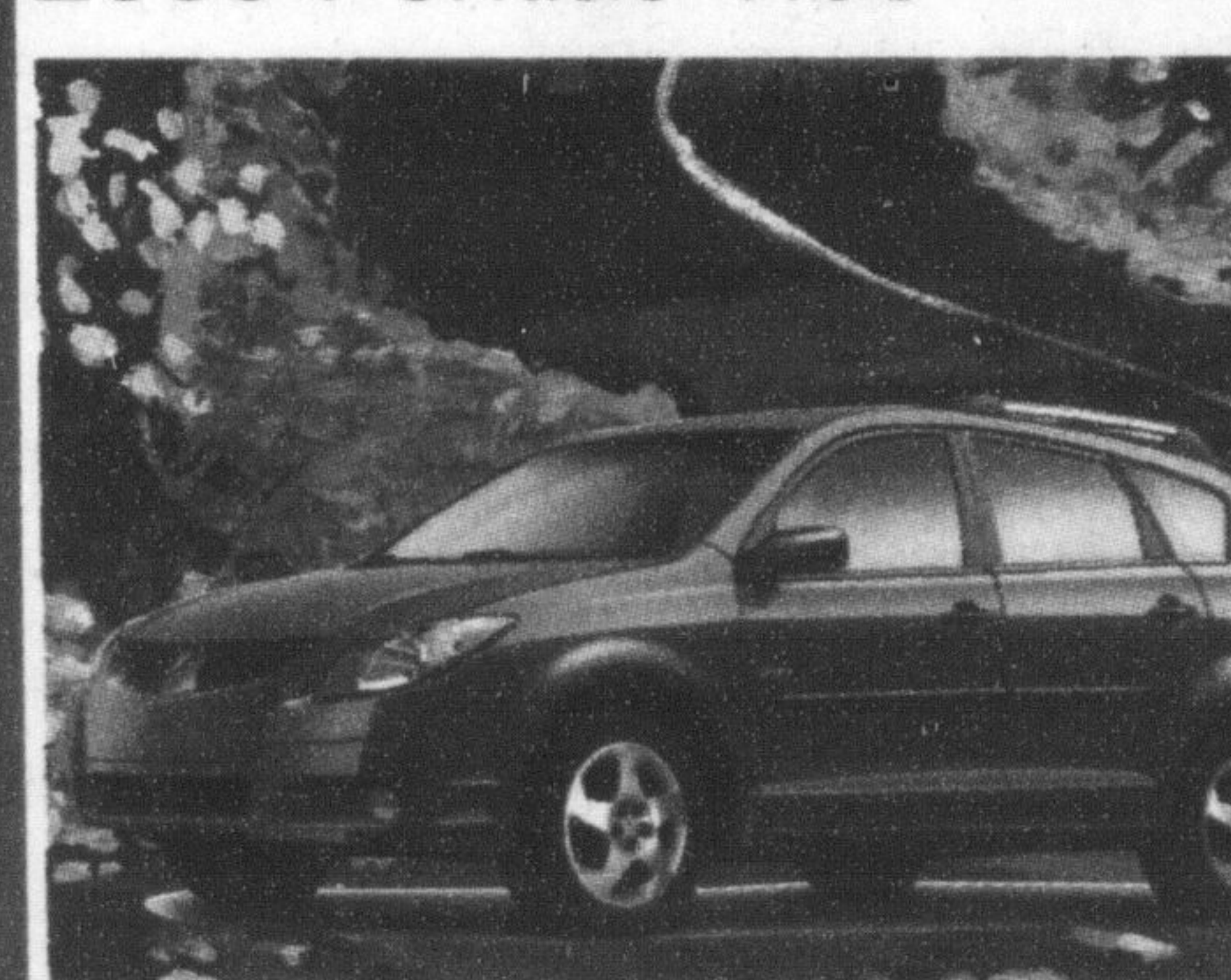
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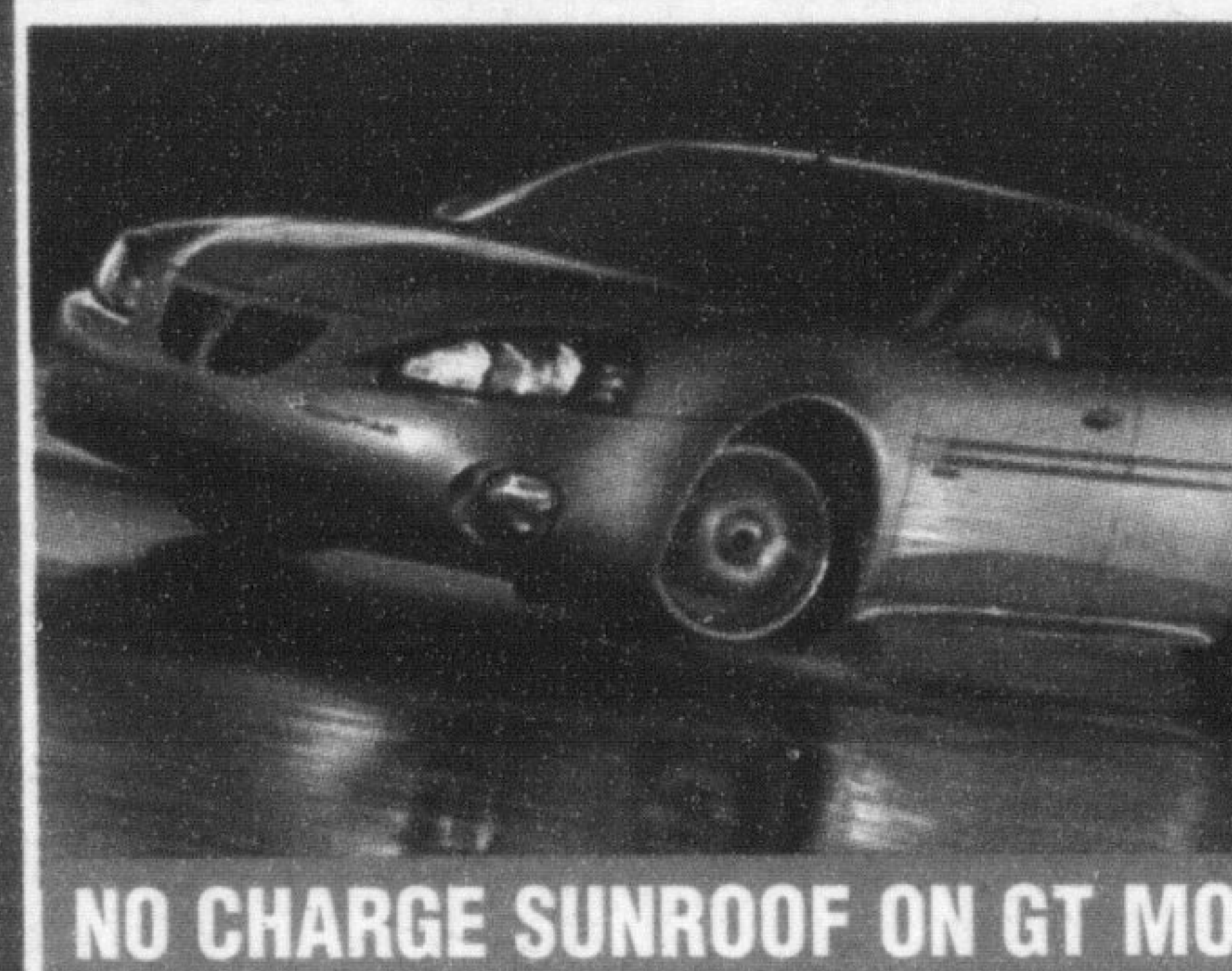
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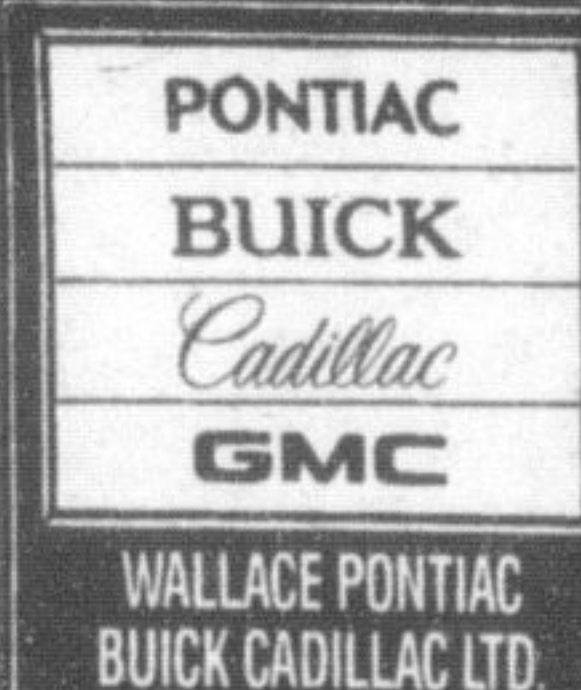
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