

My speedy granddaughter has already got me beat

My granddaughter is an Olympic sprinter. At least she looks that way to me.

She likes to have races with me, and she wins. That wouldn't be so terrible except that she's not even three years old yet.

Sometimes I'll try to grab her to slow her down as she whizzes by me, and although I haven't resorted to tripping her yet I'm not above it.

The final straw came when she gave me a head start, and obviously let me beat her. Then she says as if she's proud of me: "You won, Pop Pop!"

Thanks a lot kid. Two years ago when you were still crawling I would have whipped you.

The races were my idea in the first place, a stroke of genius from an idiot. What would happen was we would go for a walk, and then when we got to the furthest spot and turned around, she would say, "Uppy."

Uppy means you have to carry her, and you have to carry her because that's what she says you're going to do. But kids don't get lighter as they grow, and I'm not getting stronger, so that was becoming a more and more difficult chore.

So, I figured the best way to get from one place to another quickly without me having to carry her was a race. And it worked. Then she wanted to race all the time, but losing was becoming increasingly bothersome to me.

I wasn't going to take these defeats lying down, even though that's what I often needed to do at the end of them. I decided I would change my lifestyle and become more physically fit.

Instead of eating a whole pizza, I only ate three-quarters; I cut down from six snacks after



On the loose

with MURRAY TOWNSEND

dinner to five; and I considered using a tactic best known to Ben Johnson.

I was a good runner at one time. In high school I was one of the fastest kids in my grade. When I played fastball in my twenties I could steal bases with ease.

And I remember well my last major race in my thirties when playing slow-pitch.

We were between games in a tournament. Usually, that was easy time to kill as long as the beer tent was open. Some of our guys thought it was actually a beer tournament and that the baseball games were an inconvenience.

In this particular tournament in an earlier game, a fly ball was hit to the left fielder who just had to back up a few steps for the catch. He didn't really want to move, though, or couldn't. The ball landed 10 feet behind him and he was unable to go back and get it without falling several times. The guy gladly came out of the game and said he'd meet us back at the beer tent.

Anyway, we somehow managed to win our games and wouldn't you know it, we were in the

• see SHE'S on page B8

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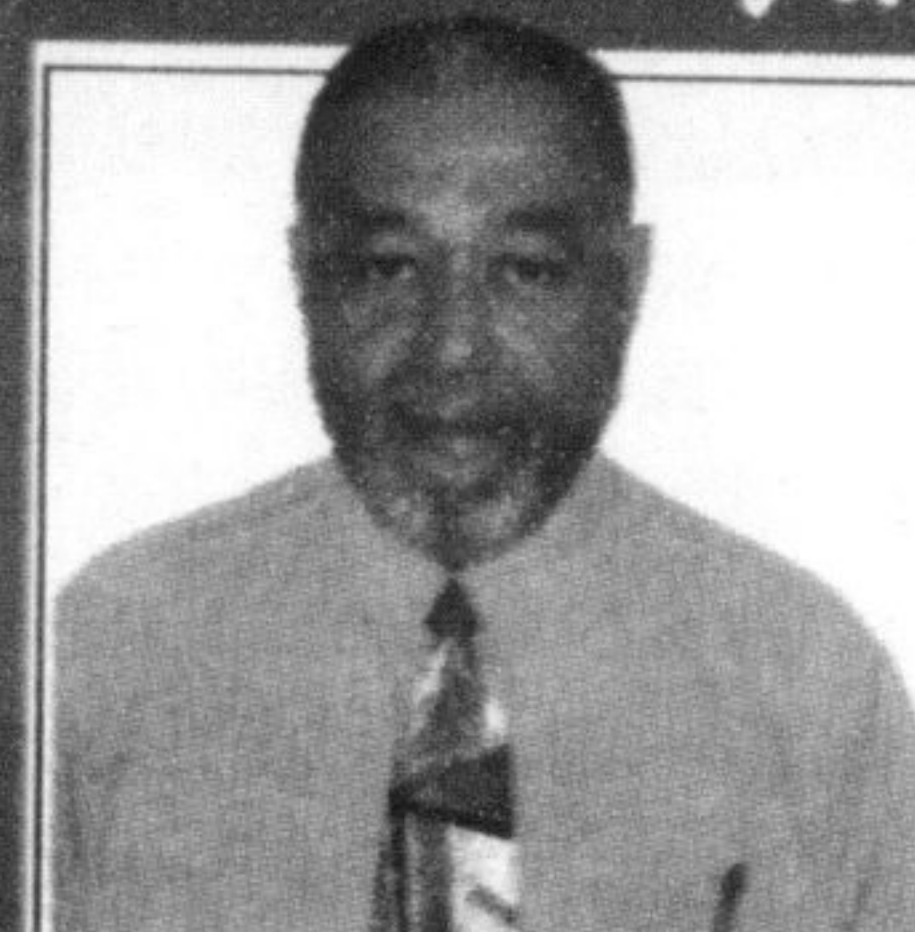


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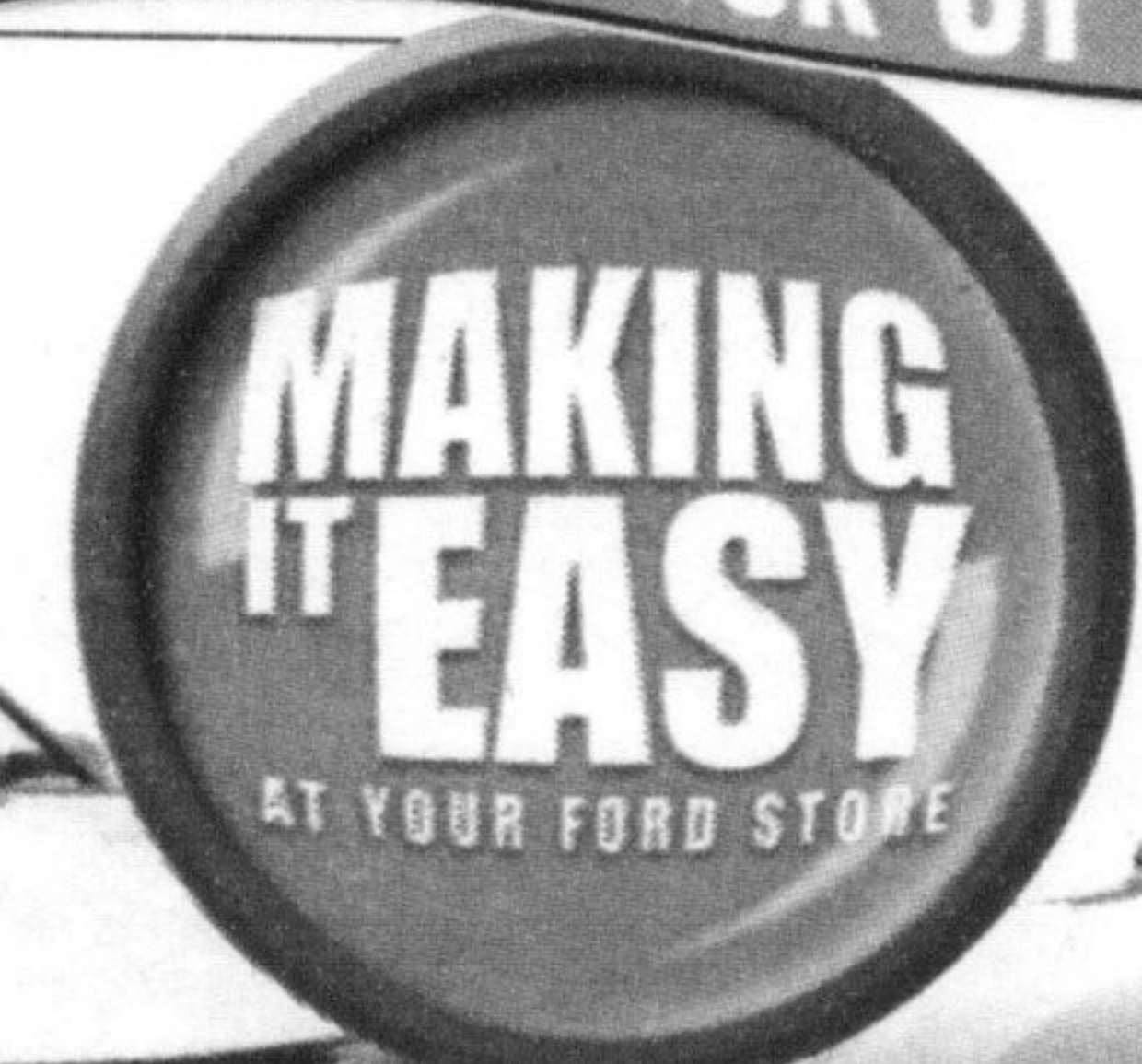
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