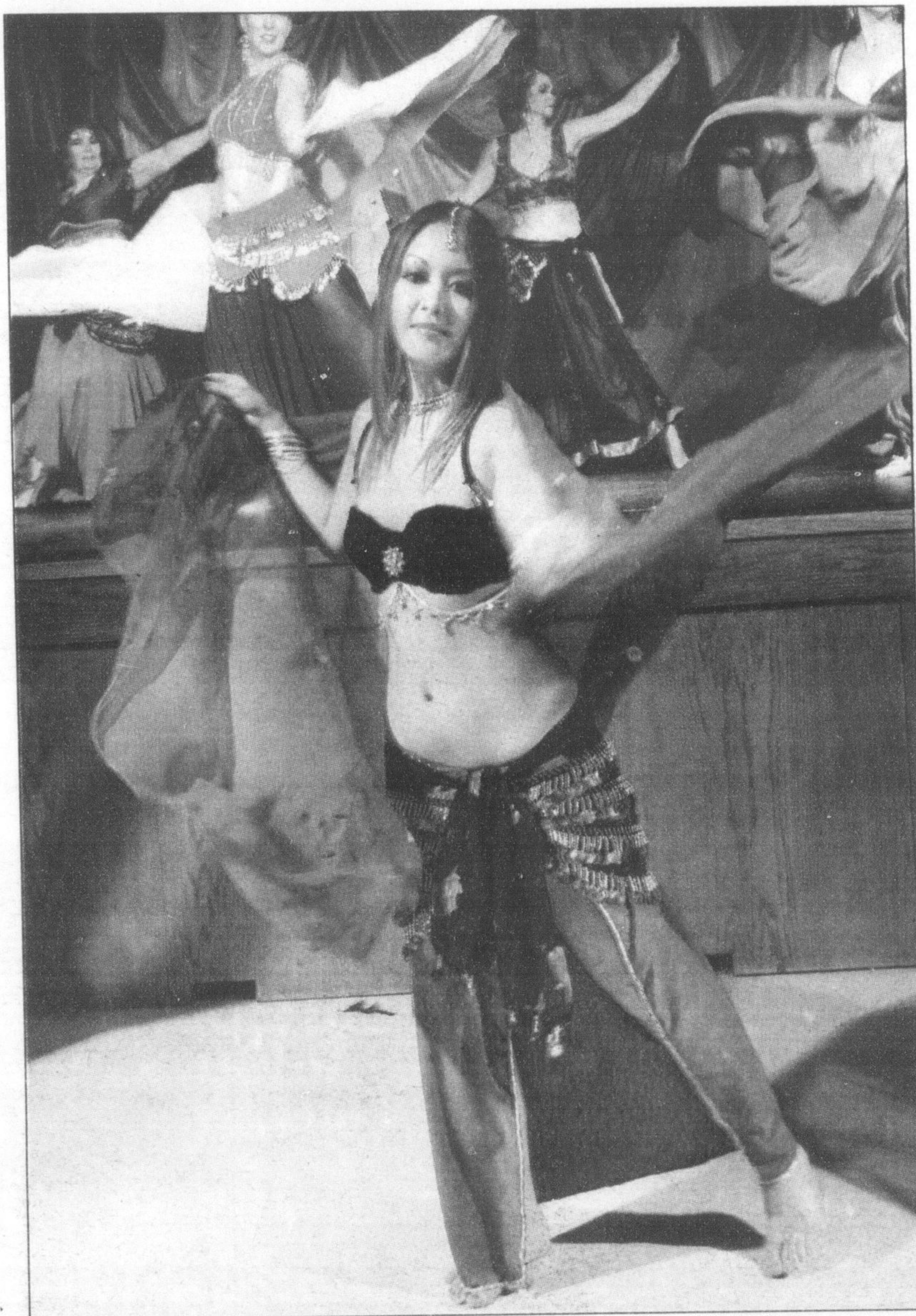


ARTS



ASHLEA WESSEL / SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

STRUTTING HER STUFF: Jennifer Morris gets up close and personal with the audience during Shelimah's School of Middle Eastern Arts' recent Rites of Spring performance at the Milton Seniors' Activity Centre.

New concert band ready to begin series of performances

Milton is poised to celebrate its 150th anniversary, and what better time for a newly-formed music group to begin introducing itself to the community.

That's exactly what the Milton Concert Band (MCB) plans to do over the next several weeks, with a series of performances to coincide with the town's milestone.

The ensemble began taking shape about nine months ago, when recently-arriving residents and long-time friends Angela Rozario and Cheryl Ciccarelli — having recognized the growing artistic community in Milton — decided to put a call out to see if there were any other area amateur musicians interested in performing together.

Their hopes were immediately met, and soon exceeded.

"It seemed like musicians were coming out of the woodwork," recalled Rozario, who serves as president of MCB, which plays a wide variety of music — from Broadway to Big Band, classical to contemporary. "People were really excited about the prospect of playing with a group again, of creating something special and of giving

back to this community in a way that uses their talents to their full potential.

"When we started this, we thought we'd be playing in one of our basements with a few others for company. Soon we were scrambling to accommodate over 30 musicians and having to put others on a waiting list. We've even been contacted by several string players that we'd love to work with in the future."

Great chemistry

Along with interest in the group quickly taking root, so too has cohesion between its near three-dozen members.

"It's fabulous that so many strangers can come together and mesh so well, both musically and socially," said tuba player Brad Yhard. "Everyone is working really hard and going out of their way to create something we can be proud of. I've played with several community bands over the years, and feel lucky to have found this group."

Now leading the group, composer and woodwind musician Joseph Resendes — who's performed in and around the GTA for over a decade — offers similar praise of the group's early efforts.

"I was really excited about the prospect of getting involved with a group who wanted to do something a little different here in Milton ... not just your average community band, but one that challenges both its members and its audience with a creative and unique repertoire, in a fun learning environment," said MCB's musical director, who also leads the St. Mary's Catholic Church Choir and works in the York University music department.

The local ensemble will kick off its three-part 'Summer Celebration' series next Saturday, June 9 at Milton's 150th anniversary street festival, where they'll scheduled for a 2 p.m. performance on the children's stage at the Victoria Park gazebo.

From there, MCB will help entertain visitors of the annual Milton District Hospital Strawberry Fair at Milton Fair Grounds Saturday, June 23 and hold their first official concert Thursday, July 26 at 8 p.m. at Victoria Park, a free event the group hopes to make a summer tradition.

Musicians interested in finding out more about MCB can call (416) 508-6106 or visit miltonconcertband@gmail.com.

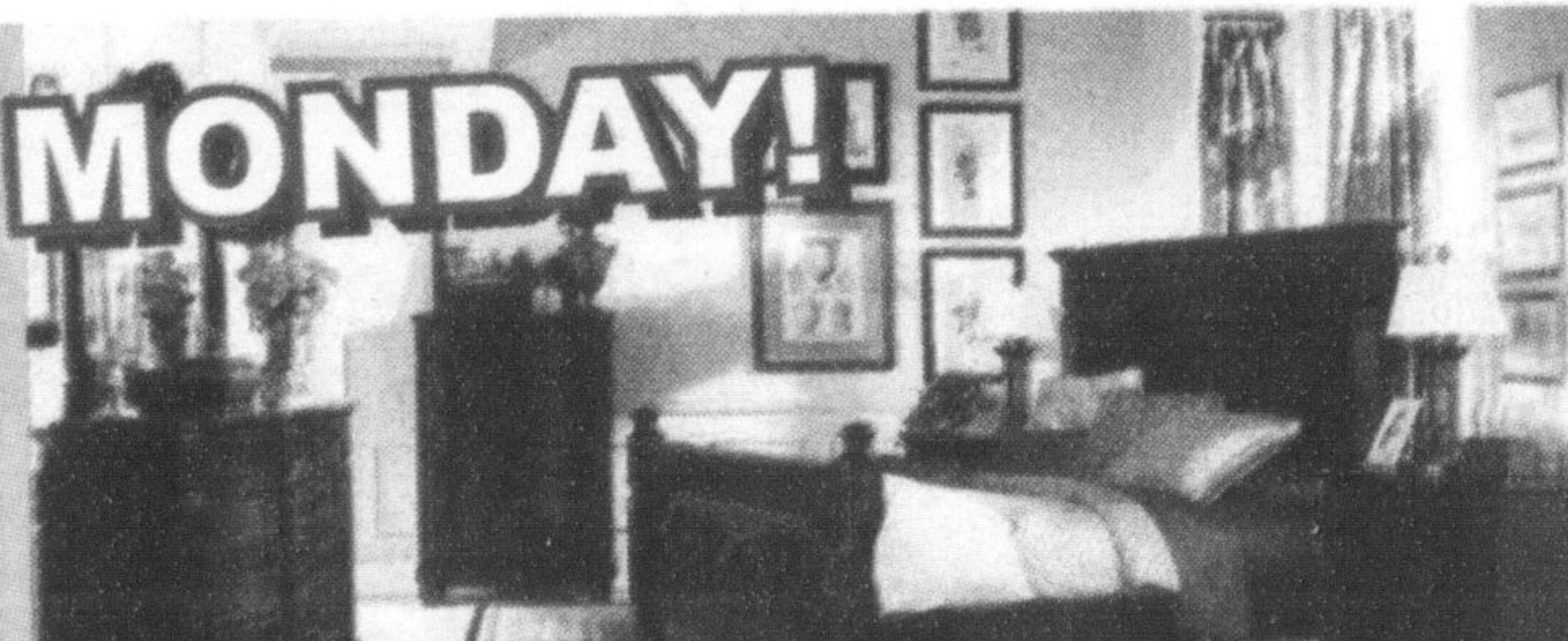
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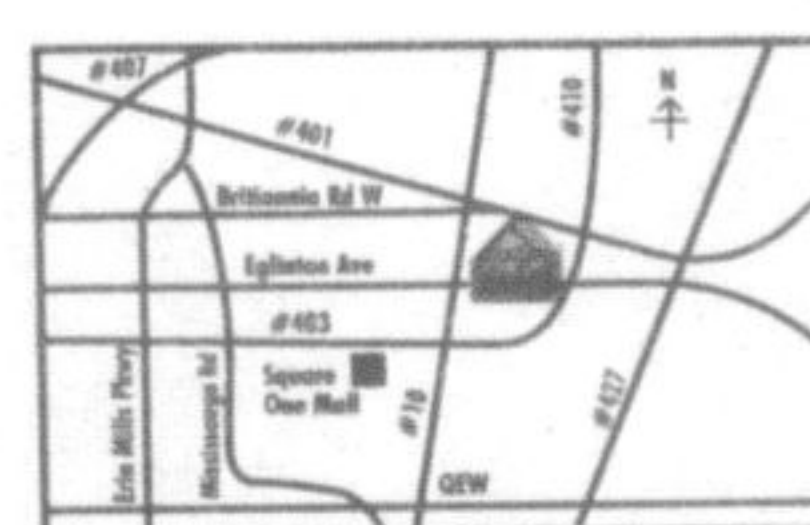
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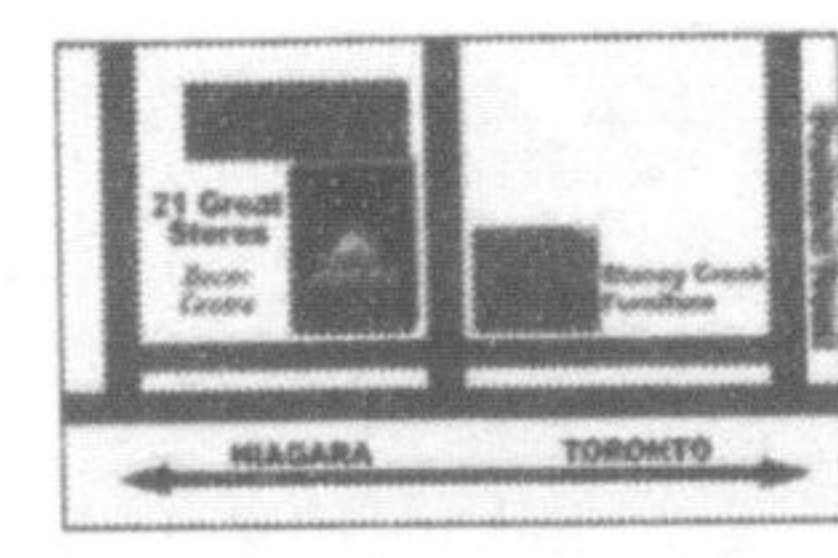


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