



Photo by JON BLACKER

The double-decker bus has returned in celebration of The Dickens' 10th anniversary tonight and tomorrow. The Mill Street establishment was a laundromat before it became a restaurant and pub. Celebrating a little early are (from left to right): Sue Clarke, Doug Ranch, Rhonda Fabian, Linda Fabian, Peter Whittier, Patti Nowak and Nadine Cameron.

It's party time at the pub

By JANE MULLER

When customers can identify the brand of beer the restaurant's chef drinks, name a succession of owners and describe the original decor, they have to be "regulars".

The regulars at The Dickens will have a chance to prove their oft-boasted loyalty to the popular pub when its 10th anniversary is celebrated this weekend. A quiz has been created by a pair of long-time staff members to test the memories of those who've been there from the beginning.

According to the manager of the Mill Street pub, Rhonda Fabian, "99.9 per cent of the customers are regulars." People like the "Carlsberg couple", the man who orders Scotch and wah-wah and a host of others make up the crowd.

Many will recall the resurrected 'Pub Grub' menu, featuring 1980 prices, that will be offered tonight (Friday) and Saturday. Customers are encouraged to bring in memorabilia from the pub's first decade, and of course their stories will be welcome.

One of the quiz questions concerns the name of the longest-serving waitress on staff. She didn't want to be identified and give away the answer, but said she'd be

disappointed if those who complete the questionnaire don't know her.

A waitress there since the fall of 1980, she describes The Dickens as "a meeting place". She attributes the pub's popularity to "all the girls who work here."

"I've been there so long it's second nature. It's under my skin."

One face that won't be showing this weekend belongs to regular Fred Bakes. He'll be at the Super Bowl game, but was allowed to enter a contest that's running in conjunction with the anniversary. Photographs of staff members as babies must be correctly identified to win a weekend at Niagara-on-the-Lake.

With 16 baby faces to choose from it'll be tough, but when the father (Mr. Bakes) of one of the staff (Nadine) couldn't pick out his own daughter, one must wonder if there'll be a winner.

As a special anniversary feature, folk musician Mark Wilton of Pickering will be entertaining tonight and tomorrow night beginning at 9 p.m.

There will be a surprise for many of the regulars who join in the celebrations but Ms Fabian says they'll have to show up to know what it is. "I think we're going to be packed."



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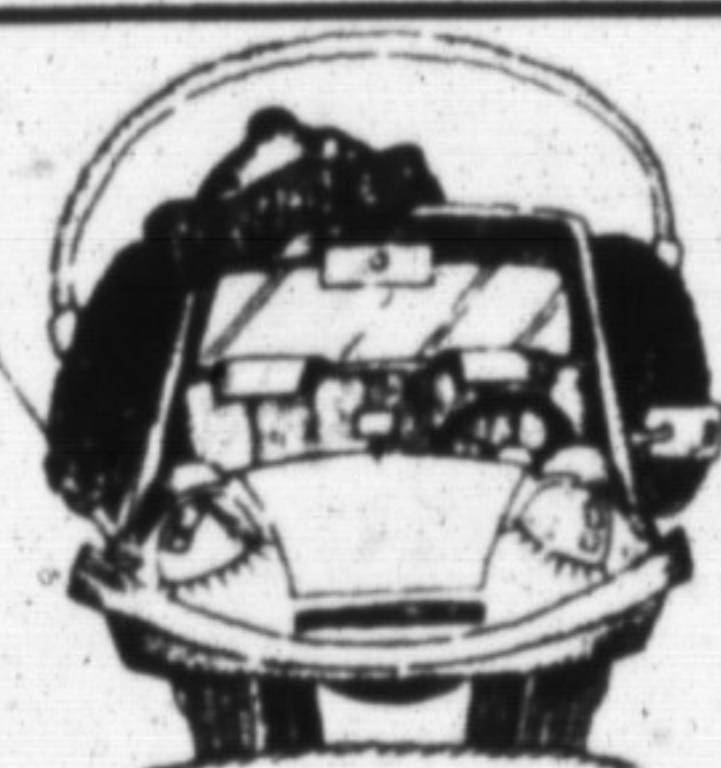


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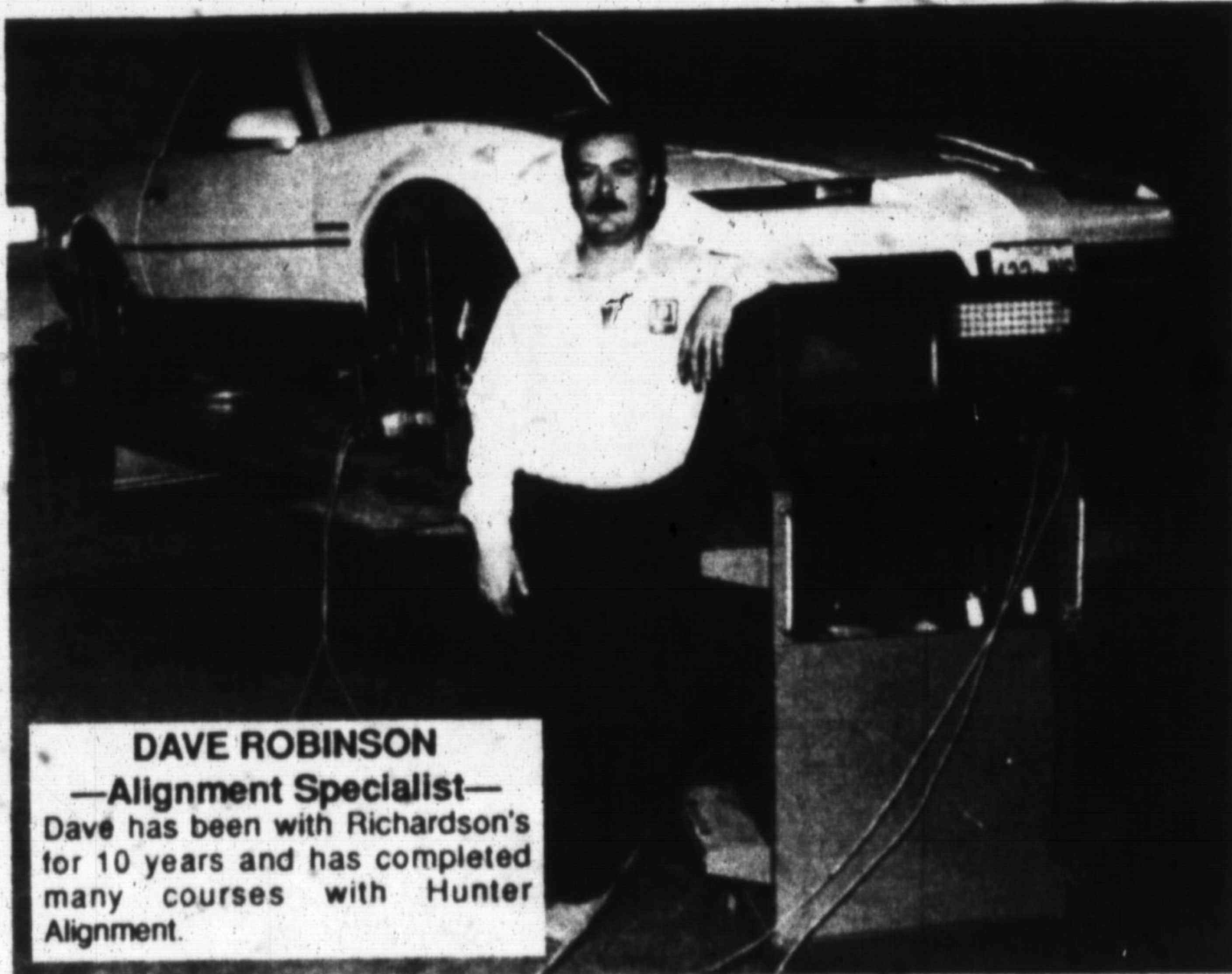
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