



Parent Jan Wilson video tapes her eight-year-old son Christopher as part of a child identification program at Uxbridge Public School. — Chris Shanahan

Parents learn safeguards, hope they won't need them

Uxbridge Public School has entered the video age of child identification, but parents and school officials hope they'll never have to use their recently-recorded tapes.

In light of the increasing number of child abductions, the community's Block Parent group thought it'd be a good idea to have a video record of the school's student body.

The project was launched at the suggestion of block parent Jean Tomlinson, who learned of the idea from a radio feature about another community's video exploits.

In Uxbridge, parent volunteer Jan Wilson took a full week to film

about 600 students with equipment on loan from the Durham Board of Education.

The minute-long clips show the child's physical characteristics and also include vocal segments to capture speech patterns and other personal traits. They've been filed for easy access.

"The idea of the video is to get some of the mannerisms of the child," explained Mrs. Wilson, herself a block parent and member of the school's Parents' Club. "This is just another protective measure."

She stressed that parents and school officials naturally hope they'll never have to open the video

file. But if a child did go missing, such a tape could prove invaluable to a search effort.

Mrs. Wilson was impressed by how smoothly the taping went and said the all children were extremely co-operative.

"They understood why we were doing it," the mother added. And principals at other area schools have already expressed interest in the program.

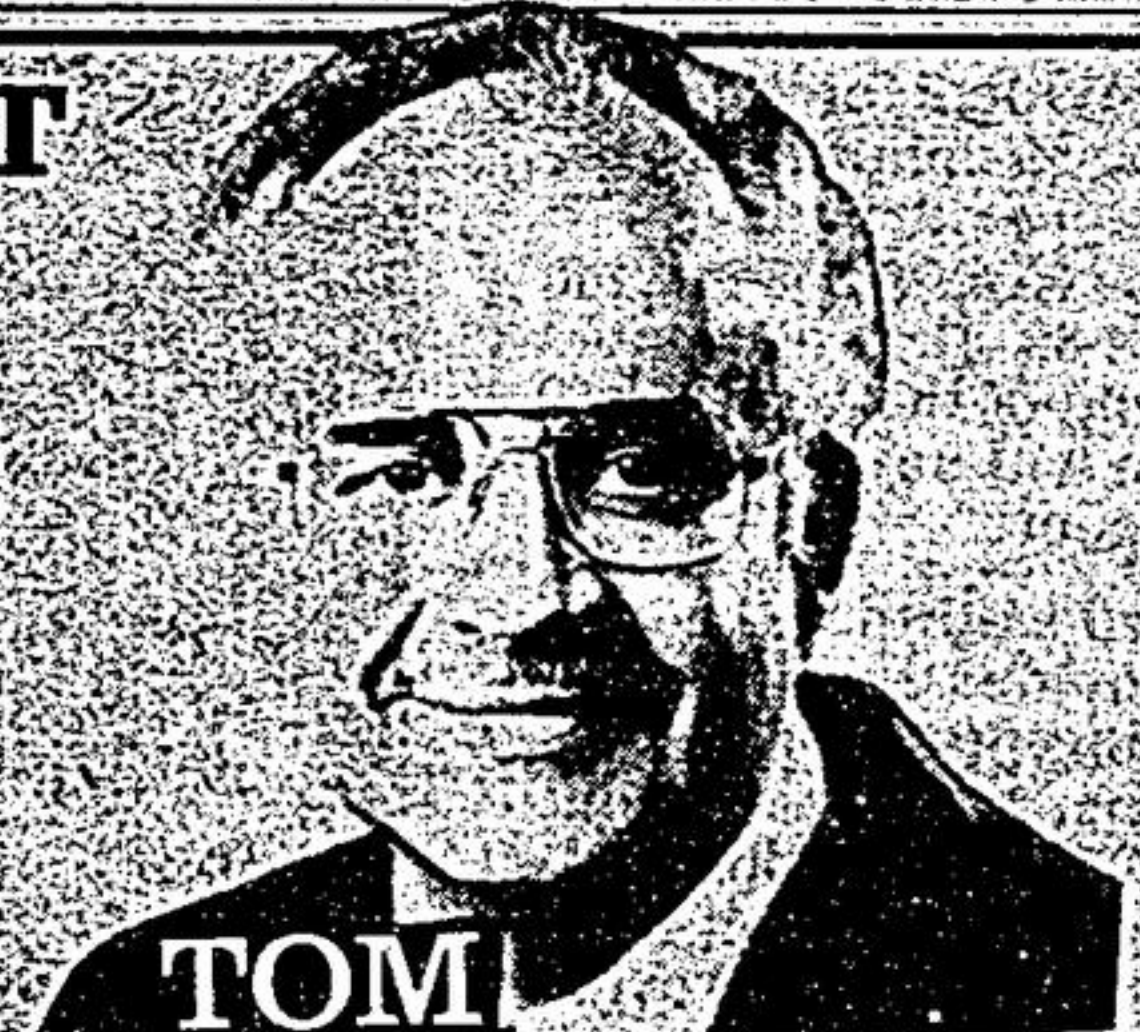
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