

Barrell learns appreciation for Cuban way of living

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grew beans on a small piece of land some distance from the apartment. Certain essential items are allocated by the government, others have to be bought or obtained through the barter system.

"Everyone is scratching each other's back. It works well for most people, but it's very difficult for a new guy who doesn't know anybody."

Barrell and his peers received an allocation of basic needs such as toothpaste, soap and sugar, while meals were supplied by their hosts. "You can't buy stuff, except with American dollars, and the selection is very limited."

As a result, he said, "Cubans are masters of resourcefulness. You can be happy or depressed, or just keep going. Everyone's picked up on this and lived with it. In Cuba, if you're making 50 cents an hour, you're really doing well."

His trip was an education in many senses, he said, giving him a handle on Spanish, developing his organizational and leadership skills and providing unique insights into the Cuban way of life.

"I also learned that pork comes from pigs and not from the A & P," he said, with a wry smile, recalling New Year's Eve, when he was designated to kill and prepare the pig for the big family celebration.

Barrell returned from Cuba in March and his experience there has led him to apply for a place in the International Development Program at the University of Toronto.

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ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

KIM KAVLUK



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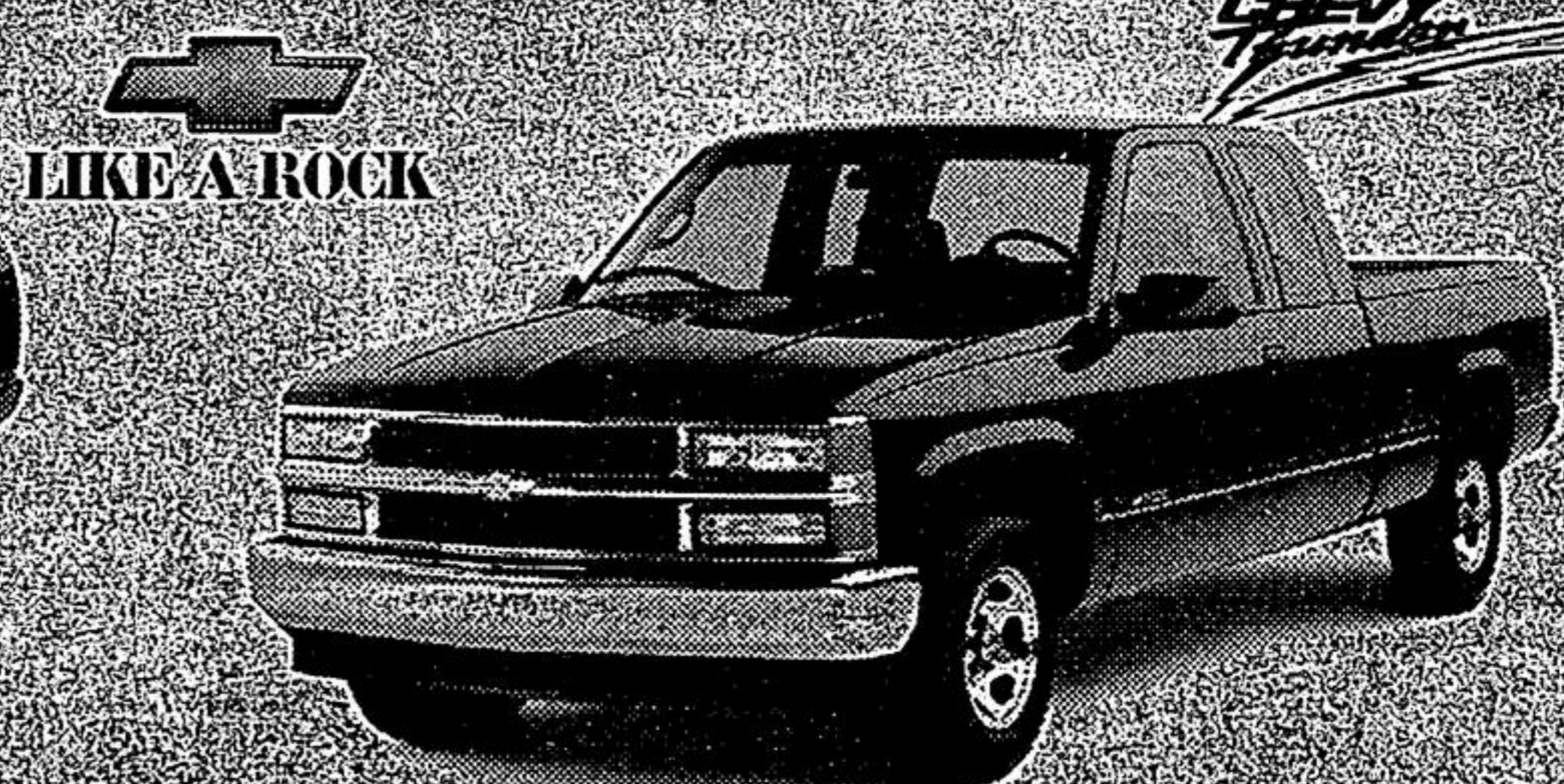
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