

Battered moms, kids visited by Santa from a saloon

Christmas loses its punch if you've had the snot beaten out of you.

While I've had my share of crosses to bear, I've never been a battered woman.

If a man laid a hand on me, he'd land in court faster than he could spit. But, that doesn't mean it couldn't happen. No woman is immune to violence.

Men who beat on women are gutless, repulsive, slime-like cockroaches. Still, it doesn't mean my viewpoint will keep me 100 per cent safe. I've just made a habit of keeping away from the type who'd be apt to beat the snot out of me. So far, it's worked.

This year, 450 women and children in York Region escaped abuse and found refuge at the Yellow Brick House in Aurora. The shelter for abused women and their children has been offering protection, housing, counseling and hope for 21 years. It's a seven-days-a-week, 24-hours-a-day service.

Santa is making a stop at Yellow Brick House at 37 Wellington St. Thanks to the kindness of Richmond Hill waitress Daniella Manuel, a fundraising drive is in full swing at Stagger Lee's Saloon in Richmond Hill. All proceeds will be donated to Yellow Brick House.

Manuel has issued a public appeal for such items as shampoo, cream rinse, hand soap, hand cream, tooth paste, tooth brushes, sanitary napkins, facial tissues, disposable razors, wash cloths, towels, mouth wash, dish soap and laundry soap. Children's toys are also being accepted.



Joan Ransberry

The donated items are being placed under the Christmas tree at Stagger Lee's. Items can be dropped off at the restaurant-bar at 160 York Blvd. in Richmond Hill.

As well, other gift items can be dropped off directly at the Yellow Brick House. Agency director Filomena

Williams is making up baskets for families who are about to leave the shelter. Williams explains that the families have been living at the shelter for six weeks.

The departing families have very little. They're making a fresh start. They have hope, they have the support of the staff and the good will of the community.

The Christmas baskets include food vouchers, toiletry items for the moms and children's toys and books.

The Yellow Brick House is a non profit organization, Williams pointed out.

The agency also owns an eight-unit apartment building which is occupied

by families who are not quite ready to strike out on their own after the six-week shelter stay. These families need extra counseling and they simply need more time.

"Yellow Brick House is a wonderful service," stressed Manuel. "The community has to care about the women and children. They're

going through so much."

Manuel is right. And, remember. The women who took their children by the hand and led them away from the pain and the fear are women of courage.

Let's help them celebrate Christmas. For more information on donations call (905) 727-0930.

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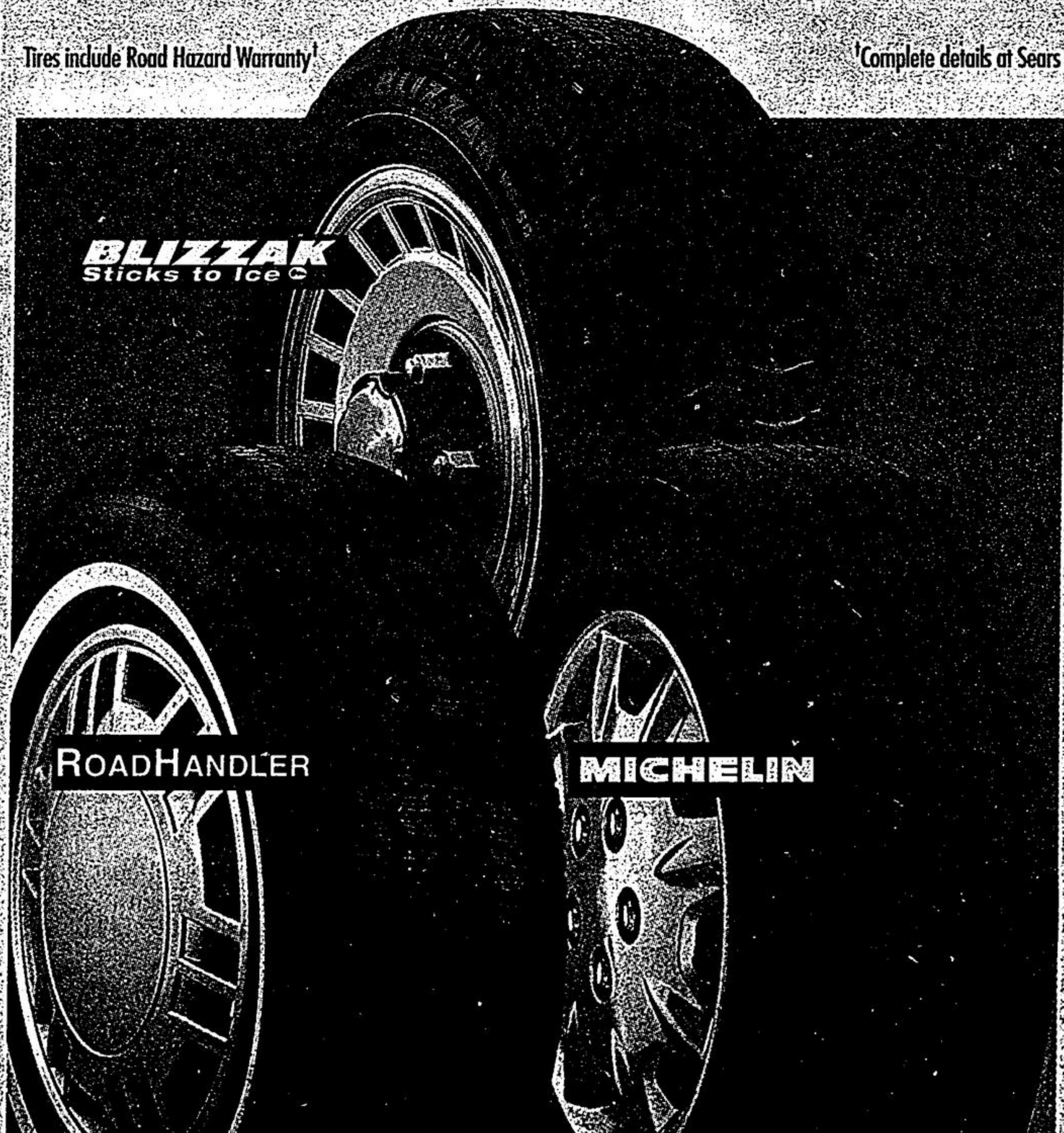
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