

Woman chased away niece, shunned neighbours' overtures

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hundreds of cat food tins spilled out on to the front lawn and the stench reached halfway down the driveway.

Her husband died 10 years ago and police believe she had been stockpiling garbage ever since.

Several cats fled the house when emergency personnel broke down the door, prompting a call to

the OSPCA in a bid to capture them.

York Det. Keith Freemantle said inspectors discovered at least 40 dead cats.

"Feces were halfway up the cages. It seems she'd put live cats inside the cages along with dead ones. There were rows and rows of cages, all of them filled with dead cats."

The OSPCA can't positively determine if the woman was running a cat mill.

"We suspect it was, because of the cages, but it's possible she was a cat hoarder," Mr. Pemberton said. "The lady is dead, so the question of possible charges is irrelevant. The cats are dead, so it's not a welfare issue for us."

Police are still trying to find relatives or people who knew the woman in her last

years.

Det. Freemantle said as a result of the story in Saturday's *Sun-Tribune* and *Markham Economist & Sun*, a Markham-area man claiming to be the nephew of the woman's late husband came forward.

"He said he had lost touch with her when his uncle died," he said.

Mrs. Dent was discovered lying motionless by the husband's niece, who would stop in periodically to drop off groceries and check on her.

But she was always chased away by Mrs. Dent, who refused to let her inside the house.

Neighbours backed her story, telling police Mrs. Dent was an eccentric who shunned friendly overtures and chased people off her property.



KATHLEEN GRIFFIN PHOTO

Litter-strewn yard of Kennedy Road home where 88-year-old woman was found dead. Dozens of dead cats were found in a shed this week.

"We considered a adult, she lived on her charge of neglect, but it own. It's a tough one." The niece declined comment Wednesday. "Not at this time," she said.

On a Classical Note

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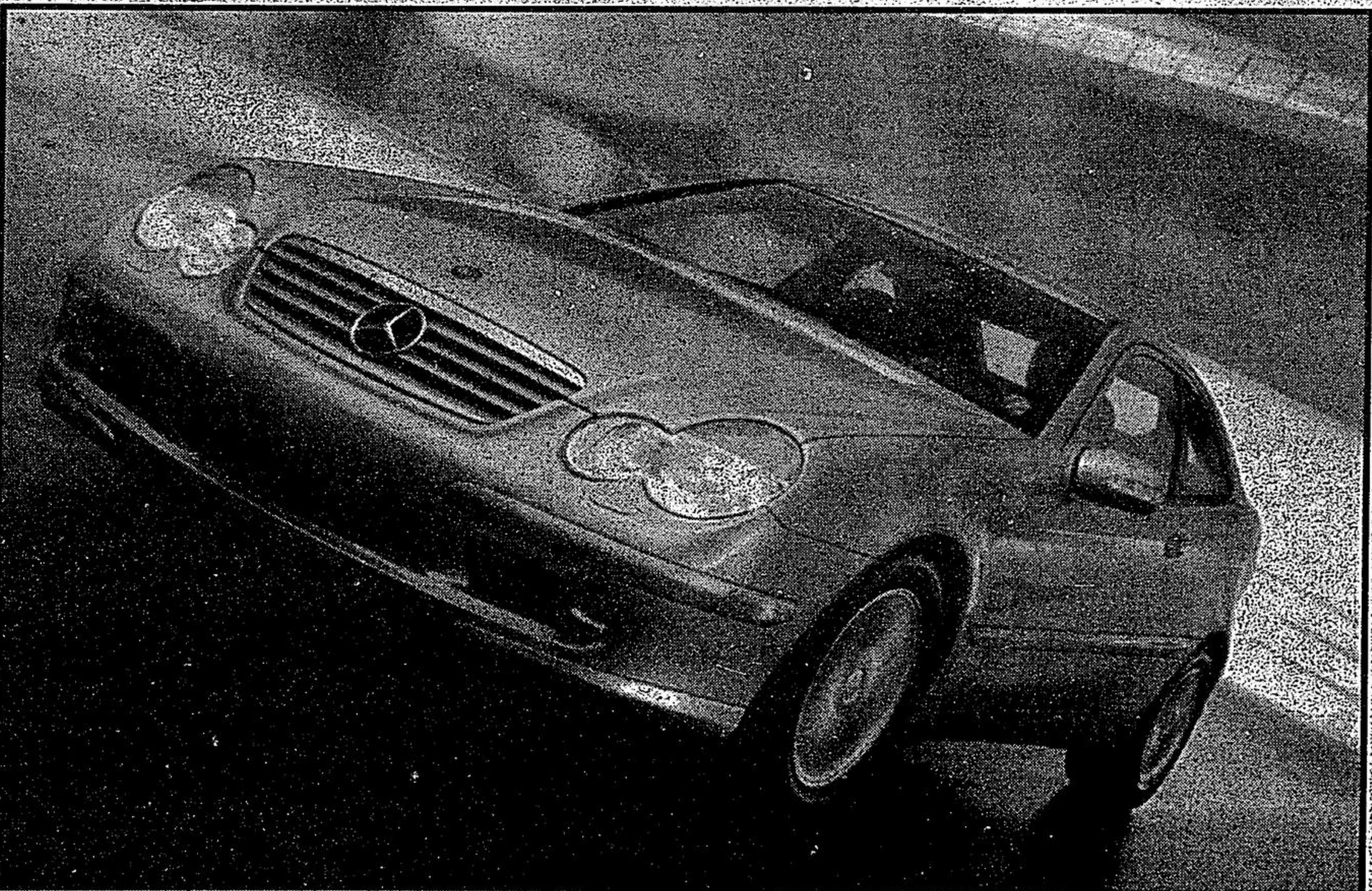
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"On a Classical Note" will feature two accomplished young musicians Josephine Chan and Aaron Brock.

The concert benefits The Latcham Gallery in Stouffville, a public art gallery founded in 1979 presenting exhibitions of original art in all media as well as classes, workshops and artist talks.

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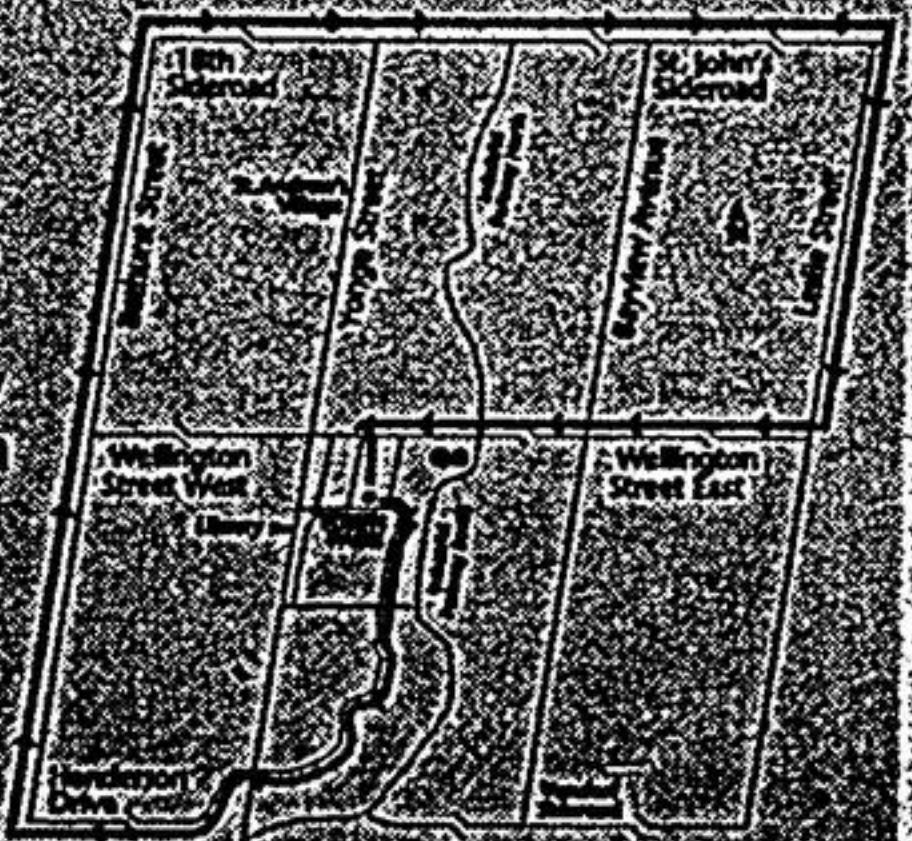
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