—Holocaust kids 'special'

## **Children offset suffering**

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wen as a child sensed there was omething evil about them. As she grew up, she learned de-pite a "conspiracy of silence" about r parents' terror-filled past in Hit-'s death camps in Poland. By the ne she was 8 she was aware that fore the war her father had three her children and another wife and mother had a first husband. felt I embodied those three r children and all the family that

"One of the recurring themes hat I saw is that many children parents, that somehow they have to survivors feel they need to whow make up for the suffering of their parents, that somew they have to make up for years and loved ones that ey lost," Minna Davis said.

lost," she recalled. "I rember feeling very sad and feeling mse of 'what can I do to make up

United Press International<br/>SKOKIE, III. — Minna Davis<br/>rever asked her father about the tat-<br/>wed numbers on his forearm, butDavis, now 32, is an adult services<br/>sworker at the Mayer Kaplan Jewish<br/>Community Center in Skokie, a<br/>Chicago suburb with about 7,000saying she always wanted to please<br/>her father. Another woman told of<br/>how she hurt her ankle as a child,<br/>and didn't want to worry herchildren encounter more resistance<br/>and family problems when they<br/>move away from home.<br/>"All you have to do is remember

Davis coordinates group support sessions for children of holocaust survivors. The program was started in June 1977, about the time the holocaust was getting renewed pu-blicity and a band of Chicago neo-Nazis announced plans, that were

holocaust survivors.

never carried out, to march in Sko-"One of the recurring themes that I saw is that many children of survivors feel they need to somehow make up for the suffering of their

make up for the years and loved ones that they lost," she said. "One of the ways this is played out by the children is a need to give their parents nachus (Yiddish for pleasure)." So many become over-

chievers or make decisions that please their parents as a priority to making decisions that would please

mother. Only after days of walking in pain did she find out she had a airline fracture

"I think all of us got the message from birth that we were extremely precious or special. So we thought we had to fulfill that

ideal," Davis said. held at the center indicated they lege, she said. were perfectionists and never satis-fied with their achievements, she said. Their desire to provide pleasure to their parents and to offset war losses was sometimes conscious, other times unconscious and usually "nonverbal," she said.

To some degree many holocaust survivors seem to "live through their children" more than other parents because their careers and aspirations were disrupted and often

ing themselves.

war experiences

the image of these people being lined up in the ghetto and wives, husbands and children being sepa-Many in the five support groups rated from each other never to be seen again and you get the mes-

sage," he said. Davis said children of survivors appeared to feel more guilt about their parents than other children. Several group members had con-templated suicide as adolescents and one attempted suicide in col-

"It all goes back to the statement, 'how can I hurt them after what they've been through.

Some group members said their parents never talked about their war experiences, Davis said, adding that she, herself, hadn't directly talked to her mother about her ex-

"All you have to do is remember the image of these people bebeing separated from each other

periences until she was grown and

Group sessions hold weekly meetsions

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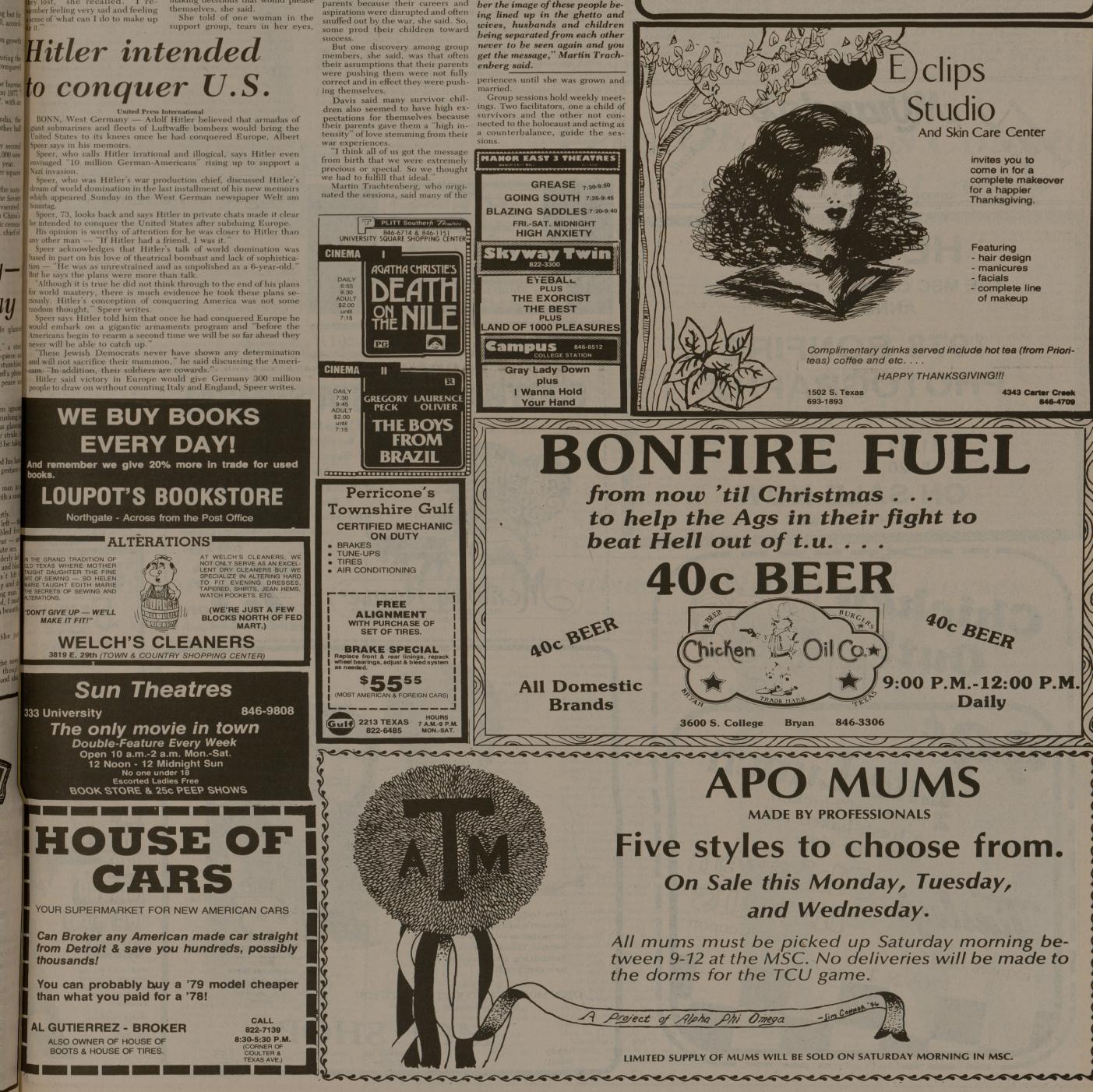
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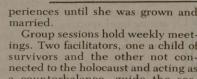
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