

POWER's bid to get Region's stand on Acton landfill proposal fails

Acton Hills Weekend - Sat. August 10, 1991 Page 9

By STUART JOHNSTON

Regional councillors seem to be dragging their feet when it comes to taking a firm stand on Reclamation Systems Inc.'s bid to landfill the Acton Quarry.

POWER's Doug Young urged councillors Wednesday to expand their legal rights to restrict or control waste disposal operations before Environment Minister Ruth

Grier grants an official hearing into the proposal.

Young argued the Region should "broaden its existing legislation" on landfill operations to send a "clear message" to the Province that Halton and its northerly residents do not want the landfill site. He added Halton Hills Council has already told the Province it is against the proposal.

Although several councillors

supported Young's suggestions, they deferred the matter until next Wednesday after Halton's solicitor Mark Meneray cautioned them that a negative stand at this point may prejudice an environment hearing.

Meneray added Halton is only "a minor player" in the environmental process, believing any resolution from council "will be premature."

Although the Region does have

"final consent" on landfilling operations, Meneray noted, it cannot reject a proposal before it is reviewed by the Ministry of Environment.

"We must work in conjunction with the Environmental Approvals Act...Council must be careful not to make a decision on consent without first having all of the information," Meneray said. "Only then are we in a position to approve consent."

However, that didn't sit well with Young, who questioned why Halton cannot take a firm stand "to protect its natural resource — water."

Young argued that if RSI's proposal was accepted, if leachate began leaking from the landfill 15 years from now, it would cost the municipality \$225 million (1991 dollars) to replace the water.

"Today we have a real opportunity to do something — I'd like to say water is a resource, and you have to start to focus and consider seriously to guard and protect it," Young said.

"In essence, what may happen to the leachate in 2006, this Region is where the buck stops. It is the Region's responsibility to supply water to the community, and at the end of the day where does it get the

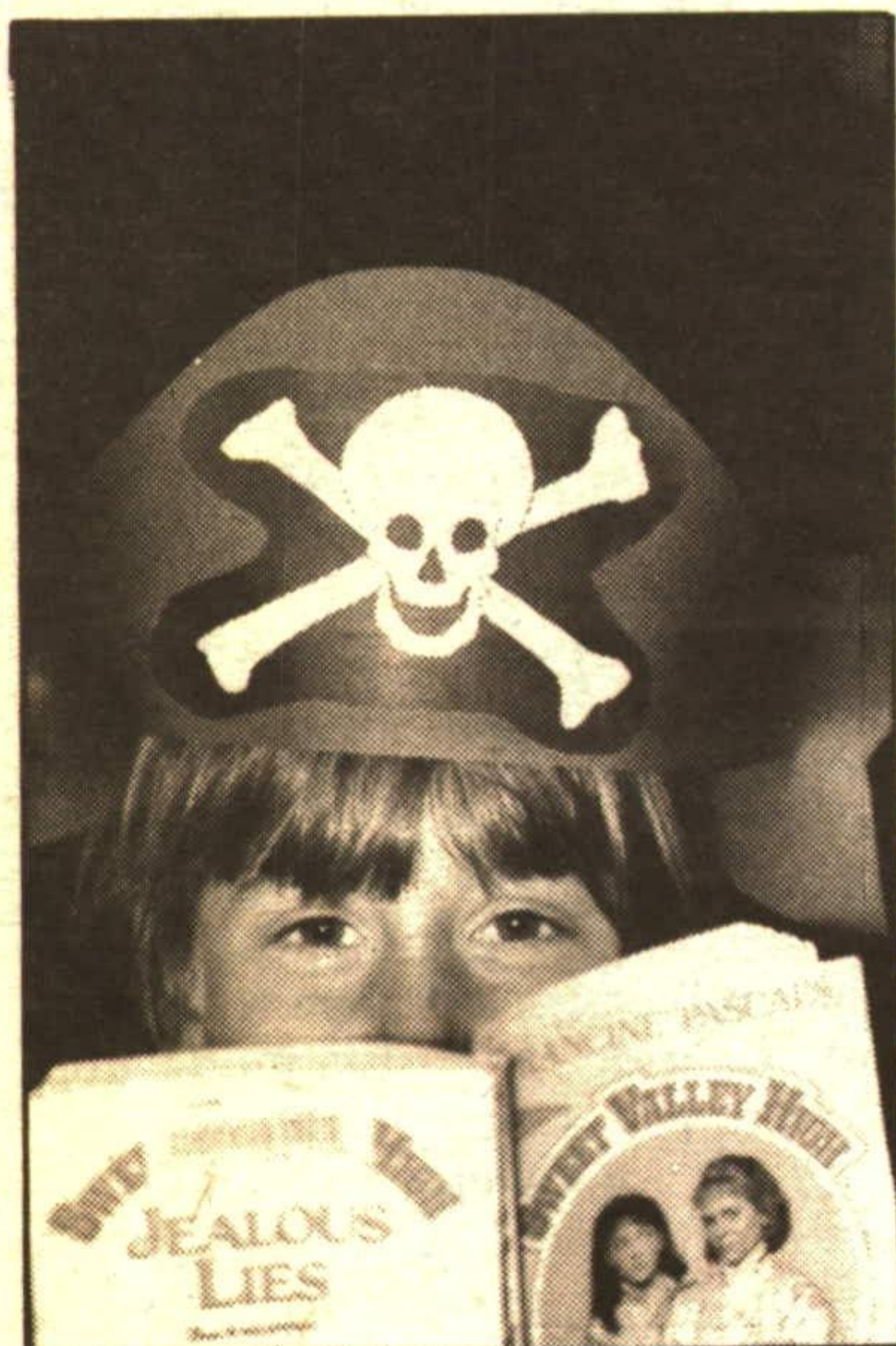
money? The taxpayers. So they have the right to bring this issue forward, and you have the power to do something today."

He reminded councillors RSI's proposal is being reviewed by Grier, who is expected to make a decision within the next few weeks over whether it should go to a public hearing.

Both POWER and the Town of Halton Hills are against a hearing because of the tremendous cost and time involved, Young added.

Chairman Pete Pomeroy recalled that Halton had already rejected the Acton Quarry as a potential regional landfill site, and wondered why they can't use that as a basis for rejecting RSI's proposal.

"It's about time we officially objected to this," Burlington councillor Pat McLaughlin added. "We must be able to say the dangers for landfilling in Acton are too great, but if private companies want to spend \$120 million to prove otherwise, let them cough up the money. I don't know why we can't say that...I'm upset that we're not making a decision. There must be something we can do to say, 'we don't want this, period.' I guess we're trying to be too cautious."



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Photos by BARB STEPHENS



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Dr. John W. Pond

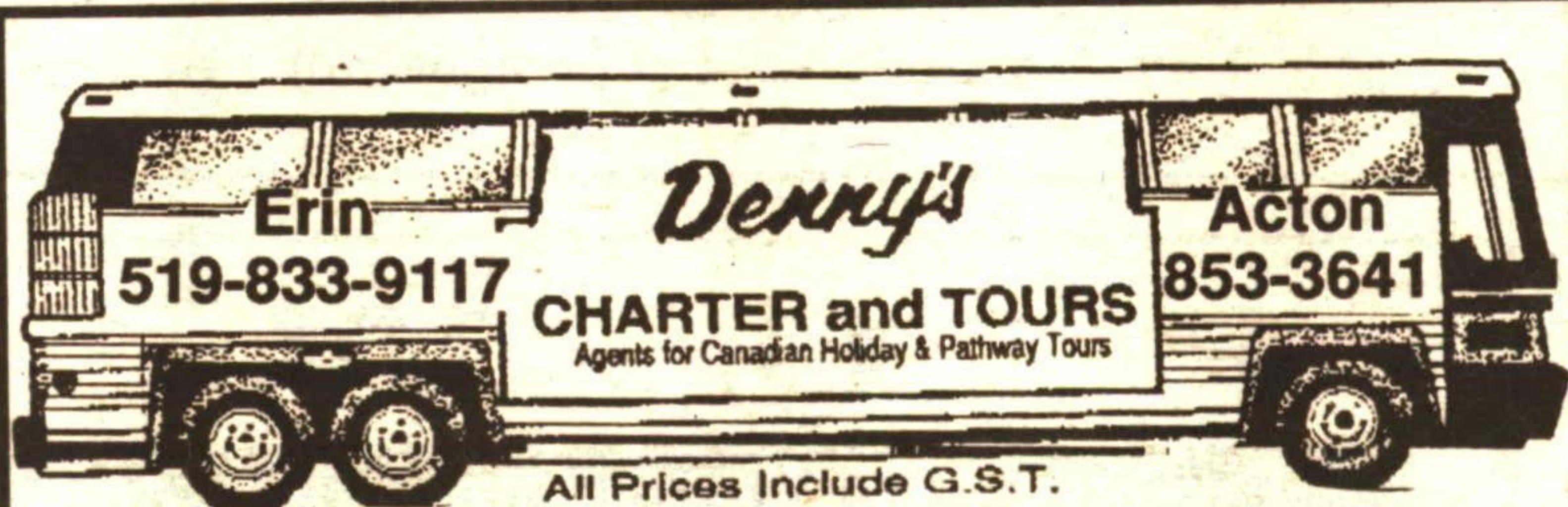
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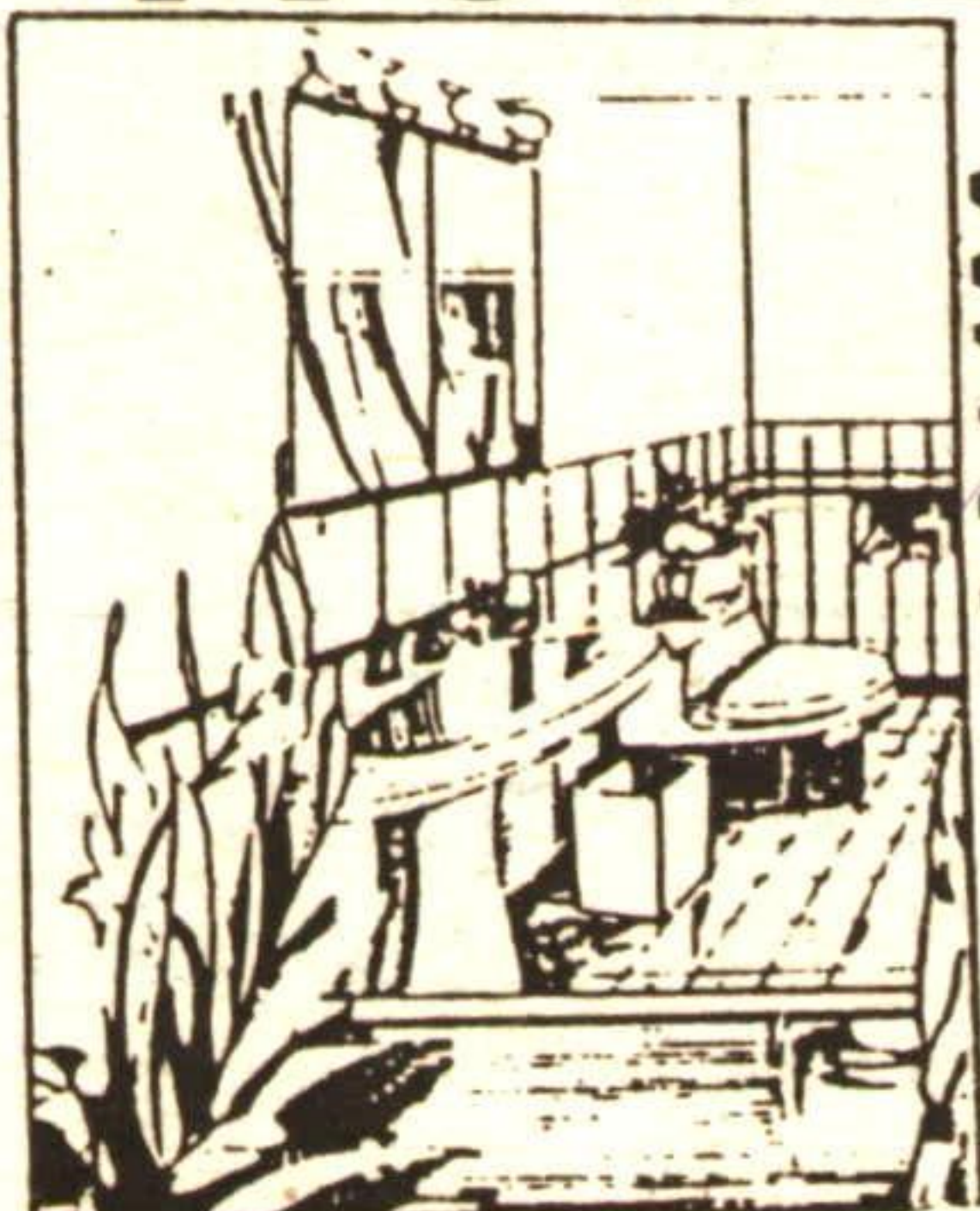


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