

Water workers strike causes traffic chaos

Halton Chair Joyce Savoline convened a rare special meeting of regional council Wednesday to apprise councillors of the situation with striking water workers.

Members of CUPE local 2620, representing 110 Halton public works employees, went on strike two weeks ago after a mediated settlement was turned down by members. The union has been without a contract since January, 1997.

"Our regional negotiating team is willing to go back to the table any time," said Savoline. "However, we are looking for any indication that the union is serious about re-opening talks. But let me be clear—the union's current demand of 3 per cent a year is not realistic."

Halton council met for more than two hours in closed session discussing the situation, options and continued operations of water and waste water plants.

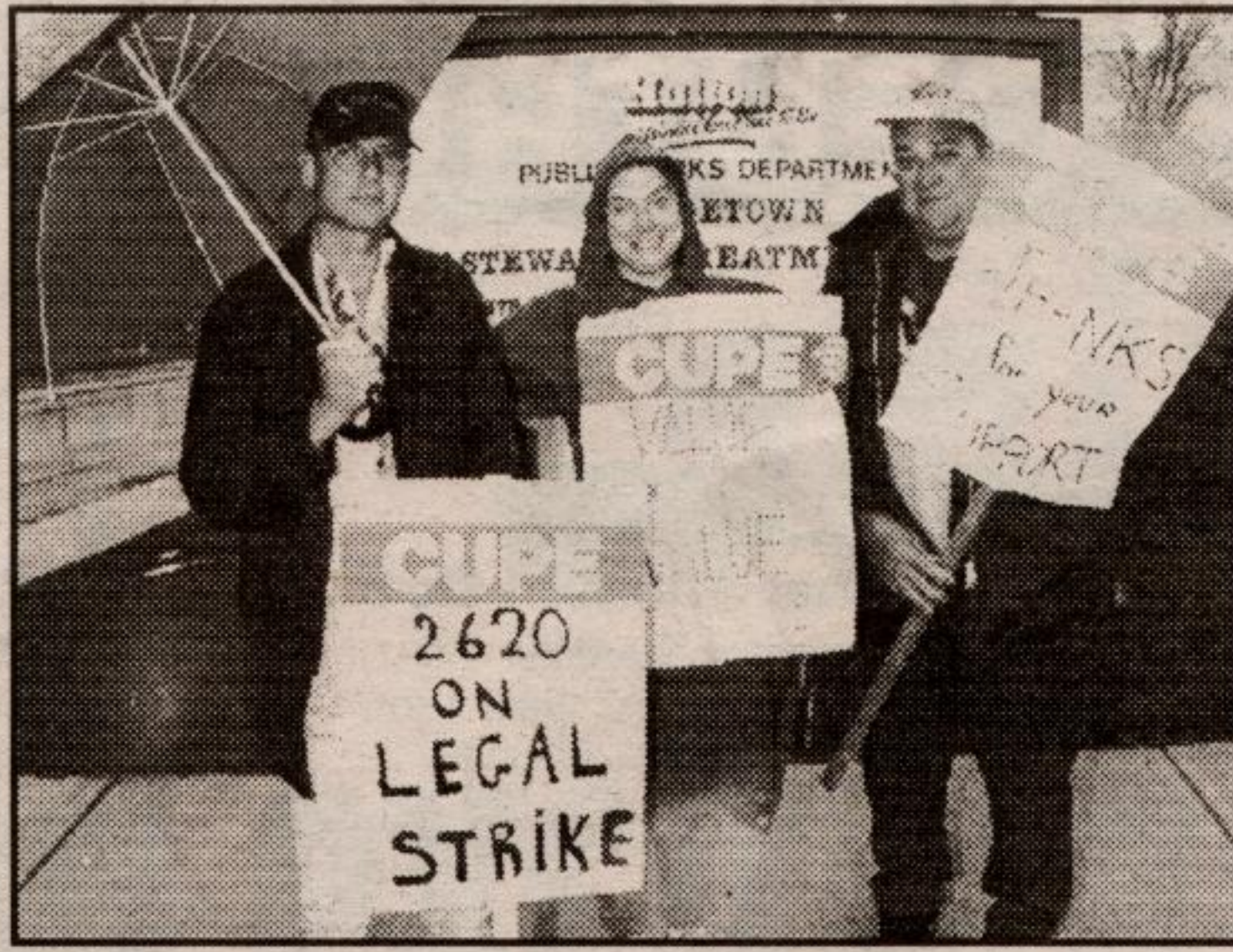
Barry Malmsten, Halton's chief administrative officer, said he did not want to negotiate with the union through the press and refused to provide any details of the discussion.

"We talked about the situation, operations, picket lines and what is required to get back to the negotiating table," Malmsten said. "We had a signed agreement but it was turned down by the membership. We need to know the issue. What is it that caused people to turn down the deal?"

Malmsten said council is faced with a dilemma in trying to be fair to workers but also take care of stressed taxpayers.

The CAO would not confirm the special council meeting was sparked by incidents of violence on the picket line and a huge backlog of traffic during the morning rush. Some staff were forced to wait more than an hour because of delays entering the Halton administration building property on Highway 25.

Since that time, protocols on the picket lines have been negotiated. Malmsten agreed union



CUPE Local 2620 members (from left) Glenn Castle, Jane Johnson and Doug Jarvie are among the many Halton region utility workers taking their turn at picket duty at the entrance to the local waste management plant on Mountainview Road South. Photo by Ted Brown

members have a right to hold information pickets and delay people coming into the area. He said the delays are to be no more than three minutes in duration and cars will not be allowed to be backed up onto the public highway.

Police were on point duty at the main entrance to the administration building during the morning rush after cars were backed up more than half a mile.

"That creates a traffic hazard. Safety is a major consideration," said Malmsten. "However the protocols negotiated are different for each site."

Picketers have held up trucks at Halton's landfill on Highway 25 near Britannia Road and at the sludge treatment centre. Malmsten said agreements have been struck which allow trucks into the sludge treatment centre because that facility must be kept operational or there might be "an environmental problem."

The CAO said the public is being served and there should be no concerns about water quality. He explained that a contingency plan is in place to operate essential functions.

Malmsten said further negotiations with a mediator from the labor relations board are being organized.

—By Brad Reaume, special

ANNIVERSARY SALE

All Custom BLINDS



10% OFF ANY OTHER CUSTOM ORDERS!
(Drapes and Upholstering)

Shop at Home Service

or come see us!

- Verticals
- Sheers
- Pleated Shades
- 'Cordless' Pleated Shades
- Mini/Micro Blinds
- Roller Shades
- Custom Drapery
- Custom Valances
- Custom Bedding

- Antique Furniture
- Household Furniture
- Foam Replacement
- Outdoor Furniture
- RV's
- Custom Boat Covers
- Slip Covers

Workroom/Showroom 29 Armstrong Ave. #4

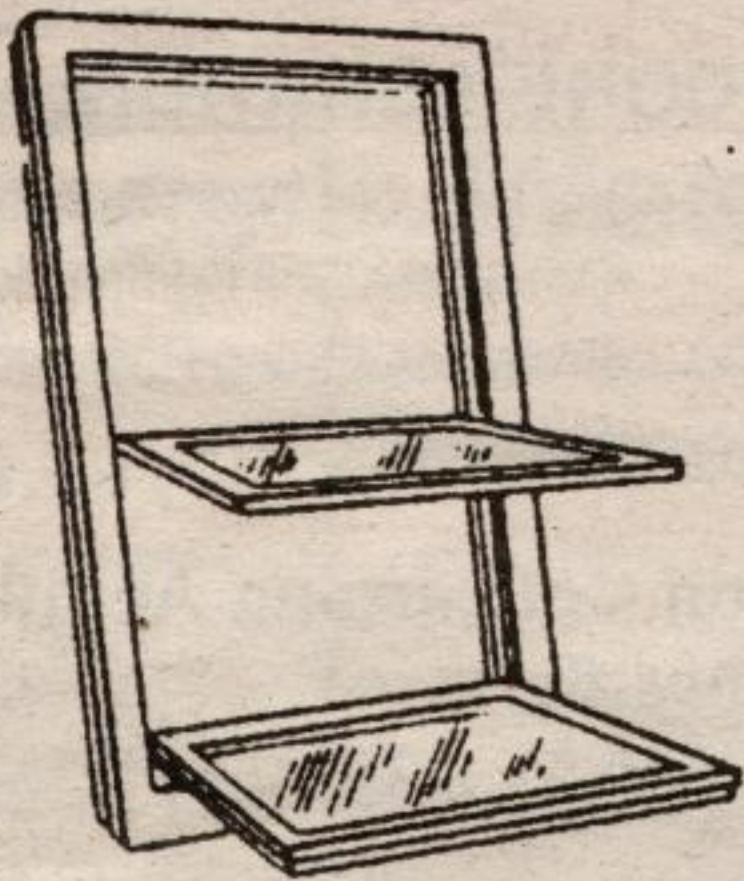
Cover Your Windows **873-1427**

Wayne's Upholstery Shop **877-3872**

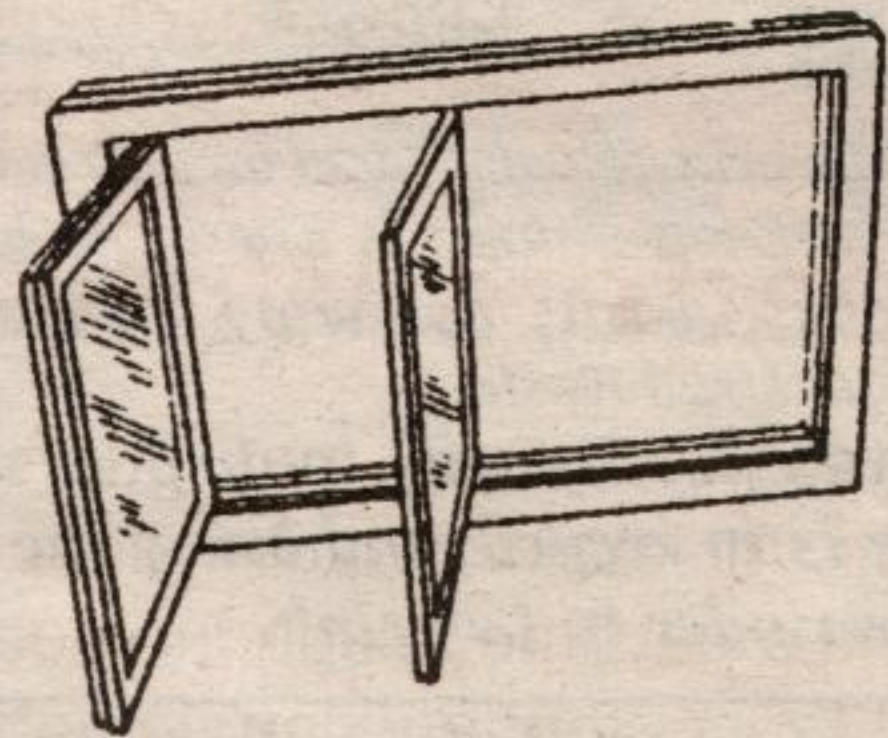
•Windows •Doors •Storm Doors •Mirrors

•Windows •Doors •Storm Doors •Mirrors

Bays and Bows



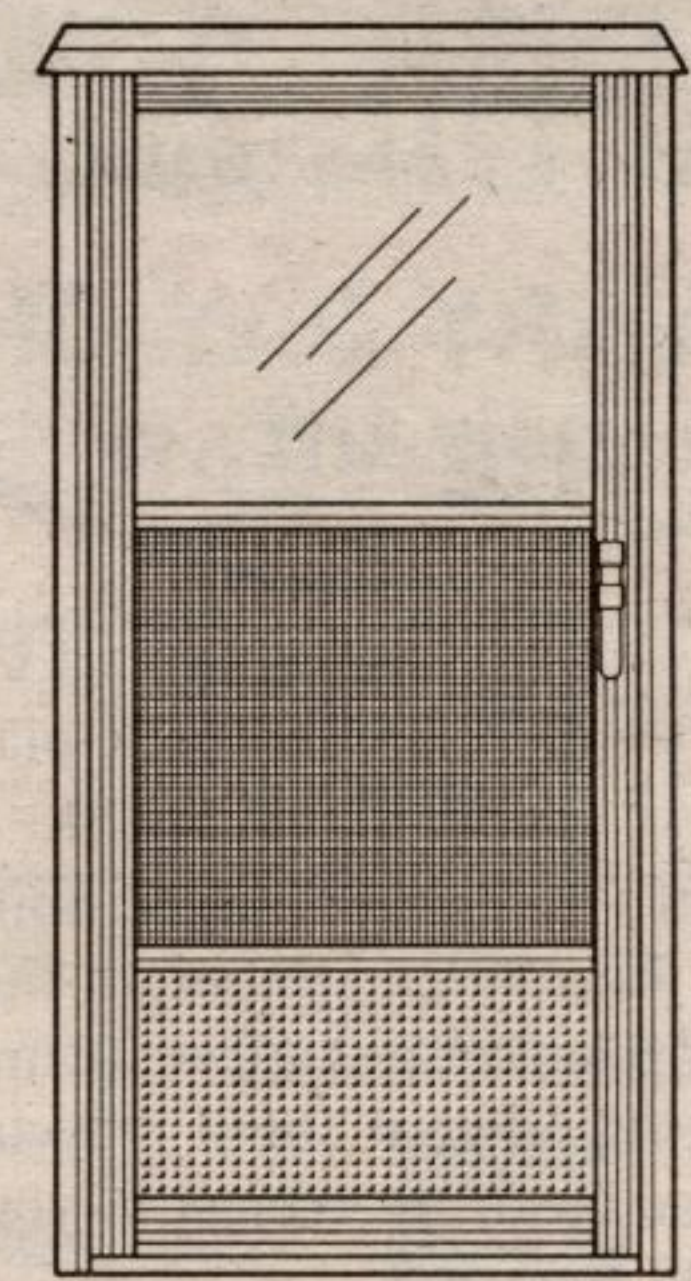
Tilt Double Hung



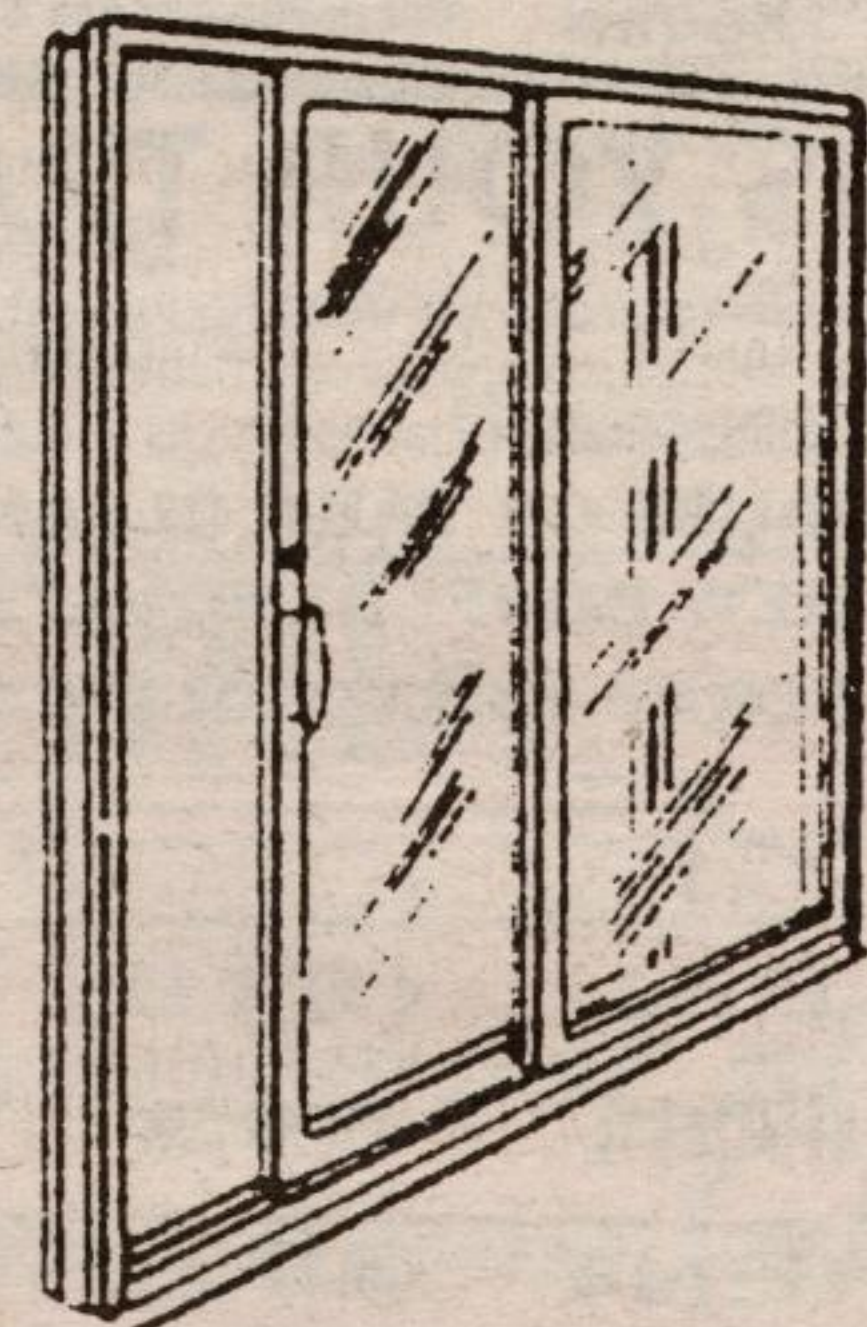
Horizontal Tilt Slider

STARR GLASS & MIRROR

REPLACEMENT WINDOWS
VINYL & ALUMINUM
INSULATED SEALED UNITS
STORM & PATIO DOORS
GENERAL GLASS REPAIRS
STORE FRONT - COMMERCIAL



Storm Doors



5 and 6 Foot Patio Doors

Call Rick

877-2189

5" Seamless Eavestrough B & R RENOVATIONS - 873-6053

•Windows •Doors •Storm Doors •Mirrors

•Windows •Doors •Storm Doors •Mirrors

•Windows •Doors •Storm Doors •Mirrors

•Windows •Doors •Storm Doors •Mirrors