

About skunks in suburbia

By Don Byers

Recently, I had lunch in downtown Toronto with a former business associate and long-time friend.



With Nancy Gordon

Dear God:

In 1970 I found pleasure in constructing a steam compressor for our sauna and greenhouse that I was building. The sauna was necessary in the treatment of cerebral palsy for my two sons. The greenhouse was my only recreation in an otherwise very busy life giving me great joy to be able to pick a fresh rose to give my wife on Christmas Day.

The possibility of an explosion never entered my mind. However, one night a deafening noise awakened me from my sleep. The house shook and every window shattered. Even the greenhouse glass disintegrated to powder and the garden tool wooden handles vanished. The compressor landed inches from my neighbor's garage. The effect of the explosion was as if a transport truck had rammed into their home causing all four walls to crack. The compressor created such havoc. Thank You, no one was killed.

My immediate reaction was to get downstairs where my sons were sleeping as quickly as possible to see if they were safe. After checking on the boys I realized I was standing in a pool of blood. My blood! One foot was cut so deeply it appeared to be nearly severed.

I had stepped on glass and didn't even know it, because I was trying so frantically to reach my sons. Had they been in greater danger they could not have escaped because of their cerebral palsy. Thank You, Lord, for protecting my sons.

Thank You, Lord, for being there when my wife needed You. She had to contend with a partially destroyed house, neighbors who were upset. As well, she had to look after Bruce and Duncan, our boys who were not capable of looking after themselves. On top of that she visited me frequently in hospital.

My foot, cut very deeply, wouldn't heal. Gangrene developed and had to be scraped away every two hours. If the foot didn't heal amputation was the only alternative. When it finally healed numerous skin grafts were attempted to fill a large hole in the sole of my foot.

However, You realized how important it was to the welfare of my family that I get well. Imagine my wife having to cope with three invalids!

A wise and gentle nurse realized that my skin for grafting stored in the refrigerator was viable for only a limited time. One evening she said we had a choice—to attempt a graft or waste the stored skin. I said: "What have we got to lose." So the nurse went to work. She placed the skin on my foot. With her skill and gentle hands she worked feverishly manipulating the skin, working for two hours to make sure all air pockets were removed and filled the deep hole.

That time the grafting was a success! I thank You Lord with all my heart.

Whenever she came to my room on her own or with doctors after that grafting I called her "Doctor". To think, You using her, had accomplished something which the doctor had attempted several times, and failed.

I thank You that my stay in the hospital was filled with happiness. The comradeship of the nurses, staff and the love shown by my wife gave me such strength! Thank You God for seeing us through this trying time which left us with few scars, a lot of memories and a greater love for You.

Our neighbors had a terrible fright on the night of the explosion. As You recall, after my recovery, I purchased supplies to build another steam compressor. Arriving home with piping I was confronted by a couple of our neighbors: "Russell, what are you doing with those pipes?" I replied: "I am building a new steam compressor as my boys need a sauna." They just turned and ran across the yard. I shouted: "Where are you going?" Their terse reply: "We're selling!"

This letter is written to share with everyone to let them know about Your love, guidance, healing and a sense of humor which You give to me each day. There are so many who don't know You yet, or Your love.

One of your children,
Russell Durling,
Markham, Ontario

These letters are shared with you for there are so many who don't know that God's love is an everyday experience. Please share with us and others what God has done for you. Write of your experience and send it to SHARING, P.O. Box 57, Acton, Ontario, L7J 2M2.

We had not met for many months, so there was a great deal of catching up to do. And we talked with the speed of professional auctioneers.

"Do you remember the time we worked all night developing six, full-color ads for Dominion Stores?"

"Yeah. And the account supervisor poked his head into my office next morning and laid us out with the line: 'You guys got my television commercials ready yet? Have to take them out to the client by 10 a.m.'"

"I'll never forget the expression on your face."

"Well, you sure couldn't print what you said to him."

"Didn't do much good—we still had to start from scratch."

"For sure. And we had the damn things finished by noon."

Patrons around us, in the fancy restaurant, must have wondered what we were laughing so uproariously about.

But looking back on the years spent in the advertising industry, most such disasters do have a funny side. It's about the only way to keep one's sanity.

As time wore on, we strayed from reminiscing about work experiences, and turned to other things.

Mert, and his wife Pat, live in a home in Etobicoke, which, over the years, they have turned into a veritable showplace.

But lately, they have been bugged by some most unwelcome visitors. Skunks and raccoons.

"You wouldn't believe it," said Mert. "The other night we were awakened about 3 a.m. by a loud CLUMP, CLUMP, CLUMP on the roof."

"Pat was certain somebody was up there. She was scared to death."

"Raccoons, that's what it is, raccoons," Mert reassured her. He was right. When he rushed outside, he was just in time to see the last ringed tail disappear over the peak of the roof.

The skunks are something else.

A family has moved in under the floor of the change-house, beside the swimming pool.

Following the wise course, Mert has decided to leave well enough alone, until the scented squatters leave next spring.

"Living where you do, Don, you must have a hell of a problem keeping animals out of the house."

"Not at all. On the mountain, all the critters have their own little dens in the woods. We don't bother them. They don't bother us."

But when we lived in Etobicoke, not far from Mert and Pat, such was not the case.

More about that another time.

The call of Canada's west

By Mel Robinson

In the early decades of this century many people in this area were quite well informed about conditions in the Canadian west. For many years people had been going from this area to the west which was considered a land of great opportunity. Those new westerners kept up their contacts with this area. Their families and their old friends and acquaintances were well informed about life and developments in their new surroundings. Letter writing was no lost art in those days.

In addition there were the visits made possible by the railways. Milton people went west to visit friends and relatives who in turn came back to town to visit them. In 1911, for instance, John Pough wintered in Milton with his daughter, Mrs. Hugh Campbell. He had lived in Milton in the 1860s before going west. At the age of 87 he found that few of his former friends in Milton were still alive. In the spring he was going back to Vancouver, a city in which he had great faith.

The sale of western real estate was promoted in this area because of its years of prosperity. In 1910 an agent set up quarters in the New Royal Hotel (163 Main St.) In The Champion he advertised lots for sale in Brandon. "Lots from \$100 to \$150. Terms 1/3 cash, 1/3 in nine months, balance in eighteen months. Lots close to Corporation."

Western farms were changing hands at low prices. Dr. S. Zimmerman who practised as a dentist in Milton in the winter and early spring returned to the West each year. In July 1913 he wrote to The Champion to say that around Biggar, Saskatchewan, the crops were looking splendid. There had been good rains following hot weather, and an early crop was expected.

In February 1911 he put an announcement in The Champion. "S. Zimmerman has several quarter sections (160 acres) in Saskatchewan for sale at \$10 per acre. They are in a district void of cyclones, hail, and drought, usually half covered by small timber, rest open prairie—Call and see plan."

Year after year the railways ran harvest excursions to the West, and Milton provided its share of the young workers. In 1913 there was a bumper crop in the West. During July and August the C.P.R. ran advertisements to advise of crop conditions and to announce the service it offered. It had been the same in 1912 when the railway advertised that 50,000 men would be needed to help in the harvest of "the greatest crop ever." The fare was \$10 from this area to Winnipeg and points east of Moose Jaw. Many of the young harvesters stayed in the West, others took a good look at conditions and resolved to return to live at a later date.

The Grand Trunk ran its excursions west via Chicago. There were Homeseekers' Excursions, Colonist Excursions, and Settlers' Excursions in addition to those for the harvest. One slogan used in railway advertising was "Give your son a farm." The Canadian Northern, the Grand Trunk, and the C.P.R. offered regular passenger train service to the west, of course, at all times of the year. The cost of a single or return trip was quite modest, even at regular rates. The Champion had local news items regularly of visitors to and from the prairie provinces, and British Columbia.

It was not only those who went to the west to become farmers or workers in the harvest who were attracted by opportunities to be found in the western

provinces. Busi Business and professional men were attracted too. In 1910 the Champion received a newsy letter from W. G. McKenzie, tailors, in Vernon B.C. He sent a copy of the Vernon News and his own enthusiastic description of the fruit farming opportunities in the Okanagan Valley. As a former member of the Milton Curling Club he was pleased to send along word that a curling rink was being built in Vernon.

On Wednesday June 28, 1911 people in town were shocked to learn that their mayor, owner of the Higginbotham Drug Co., had sold his business to F. B. Smith and that he was moving to Nelson, B.C. on the Saturday of that week. C.E. Hollinrake, Barrister, was also leaving town in a few weeks. His two daughters were moving to a new home in Toronto. He was going west to Moose Jaw where he intended to practise his profession.

With very little time to organize it, the leading men in town arranged a banquet and presentation at the Hotel McGibbon the following evening in honor of both of these men. Judge Gorham was chairman and there were brief, effective after dinner speeches. Each of them were presented with a fine club bag. J.W. Elliott, K.C., paid tribute to the careers of both of these men in town and to their contributions to the community over the years. They responded with brief, appropriate words of thanks. Rev. William Smythe responded to the toast to Canada and T.C. Livingston responded to the toast to Milton.

About a week later the Methodist Church held a farewell and presentation to the Hollinrakes. Mr. Hollinrake had attended the Sunday School as a boy and had been its superintendent for some years. His parents had come to town in 1860. Instead of Moose Jaw he settled in Saskatoon, which had already become a flourishing city of 30,000 people.

Holy day for Baha'is

On Sunday, Nov. 12 Baha'is in over 300 countries throughout the world will celebrate an important holy day. The date marks the anniversary of the birth of Baha'u'llah, the Prophet-founder of the Baha'i Faith.

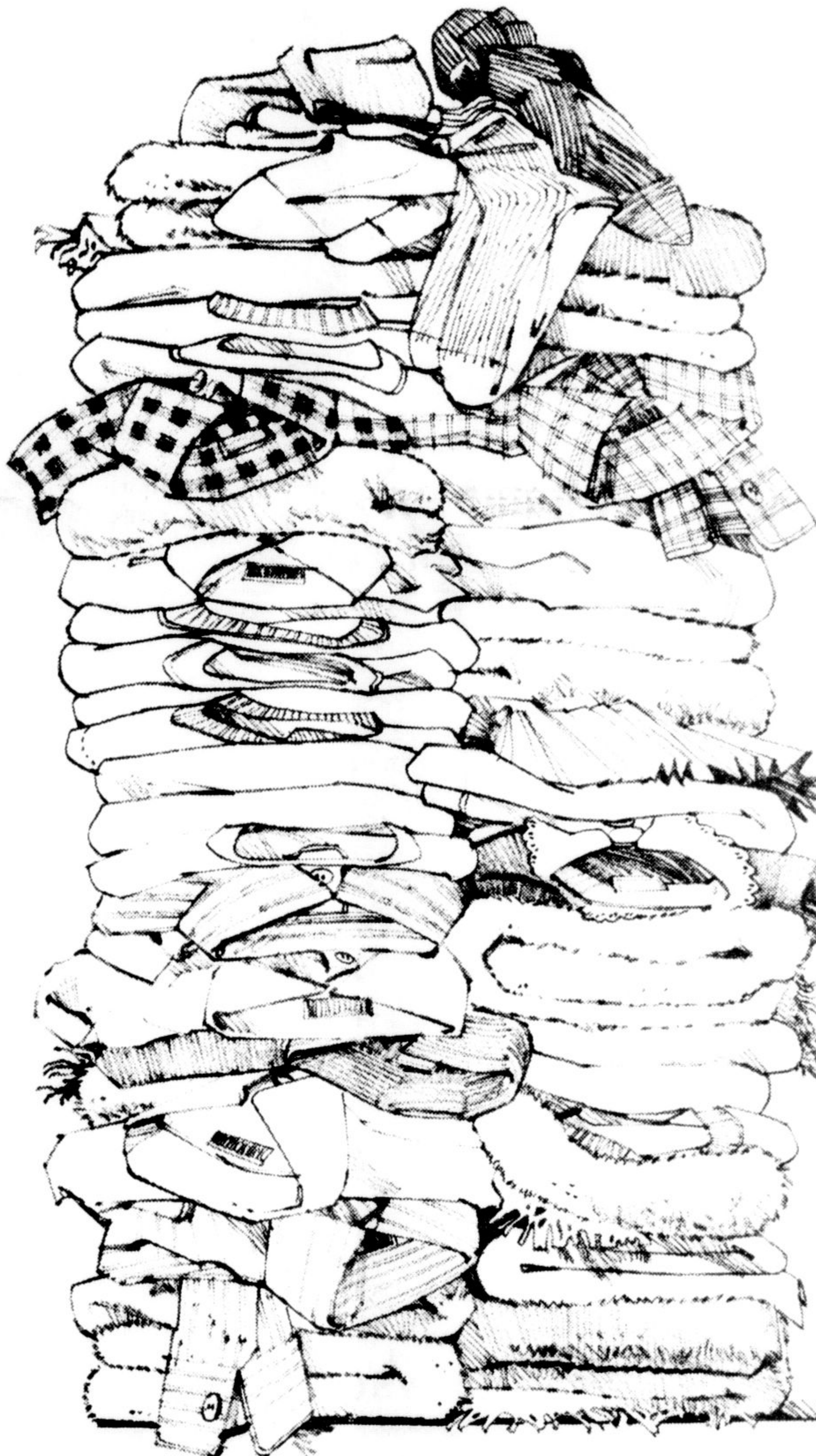
Baha'u'llah (translated meaning "The Glory of God") was born 161 years ago in Persia and despite a lifetime of persecution, torture, imprisonment and exile left a legacy for the spiritual and social guidance of the world which will endure for a millennium.

The Baha'is of Milton and their friends will celebrate this event with a pot luck dinner and an evening of fun and entertainment at the Boyne Community Centre.

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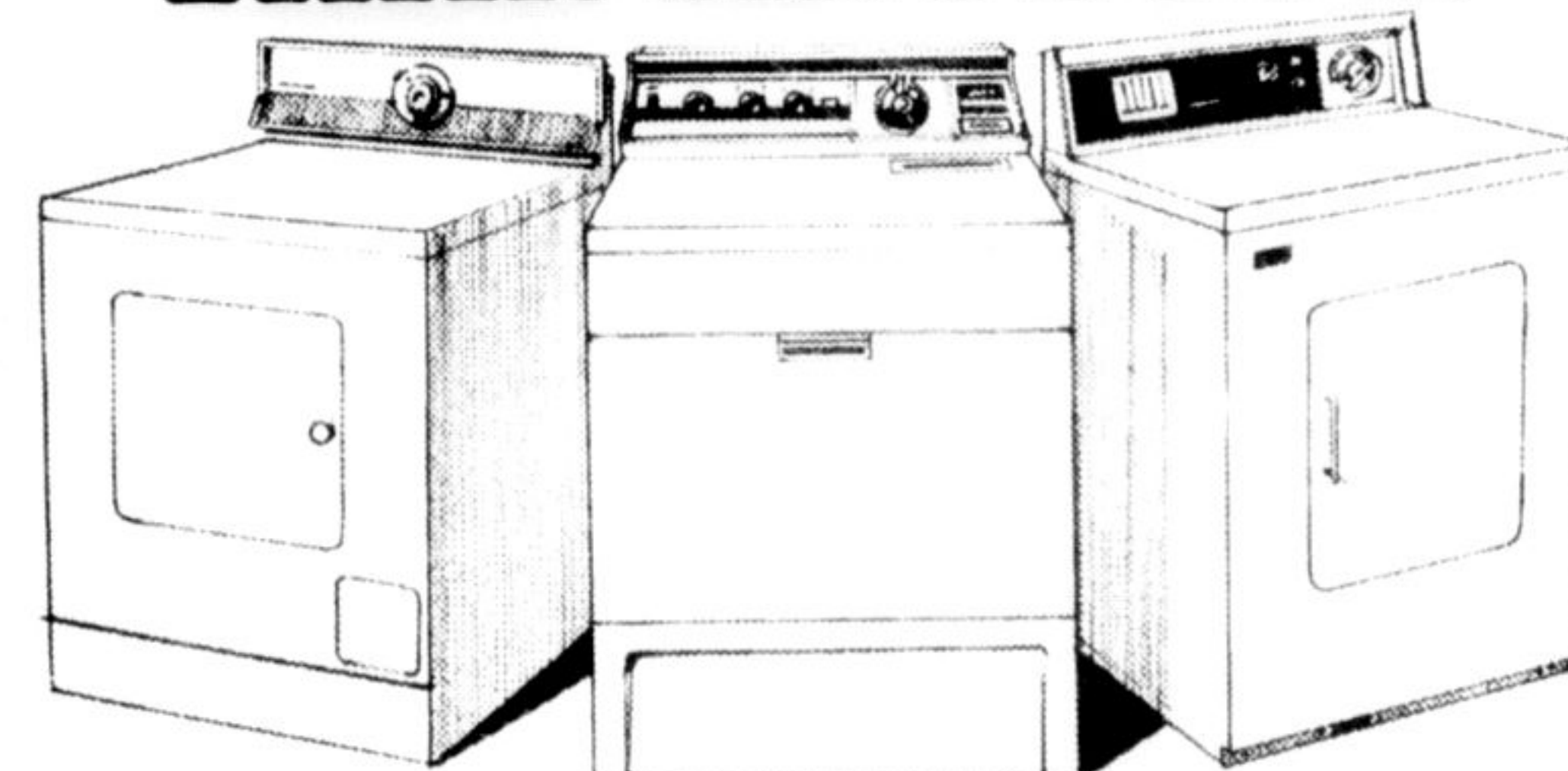
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