

**Our business section is published every second Friday. If you have a feature idea, call us at 878-2341.**

**Water woes continue**

**Bacteria shuts down Glen Eden water**

By IRENE GENTLE  
The Champion

Bacteria detected in the spring-fed water system at Glen Eden Ski Area forced its chalet to run on bottled water throughout the holiday season.

But a January 5 clearance from the Halton Regional Health Department (HRHD) means tap water is now flowing freely at the chalet, said Conservation Halton's director of conservation lands

Bob Burchett.

"We have full clearance from the health department," he said.

"We're delighted we've gone off the bottled water."

The trouble began when a random pre-Christmas water sample test revealed a slight elevation in the bacteria total coliform. That serves as a kind of warning signal for water systems.

While harmless in itself, the theory is if it can survive in the drinking water, so can other, more harmful bacteria types.

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**BOB BURCHETT**

A new chlorinating system was immediately installed at a cost of about \$1,500.

"We ripped the old chlorination system out and put a new one in," said Mr. Burchett.

But in order for the bottled water to be shelved, zero counts have to be found two days running.

"Once you have a negative test, you have to clear one test, then another 24 hours later," said Mr. Burchett.

"Well, with the holidays, the lab wasn't open."

When water samples were finally tested, the Hamilton lab mailed their results back to the ski area, causing a further delay.

Once they arrived, though, the results showed a zero bacteria count in four separate samples.

"You can't get better than that," said Mr. Burchett.

Water woes aren't new to the resort, he added, though public health has never been at risk.

"Historically there have been problems with the water pressure and the water quality," said Mr. Burchett.

"This was one mark over an acceptable level. I'd suspect that many of your readers with wells have counts well over what we've had."

The coliform count at Glen Eden wasn't alarming, but the HRHD is looking for no hint of the indicator bacteria, said Mr. Amalfa.

"Their counts were very low but we're looking for zero," he said.

"In the meantime they've been on alternate water supplies to protect the public."

"The counts are just indicators that there's a problem, said HRHD area manager Tony Amalfa.

"They're not indicators of an outbreak."

Continuous monitoring of park water sources is done internally, explained Mr. Burchett.

And random tests are also taken by the HRHD throughout the ski season.

A total coliform count of between zero and five is considered acceptable.

But when it soars to six, as it did recently at Glen Eden, an alternate water source must be provided to prevent a shut down of the facility.

"We have to consider who's at risk," said Mr. Amalfa. "Where we do see counts in public facilities, we deem the water to be unsafe until changes are made.

In Glen Eden's case, reaction was swift.

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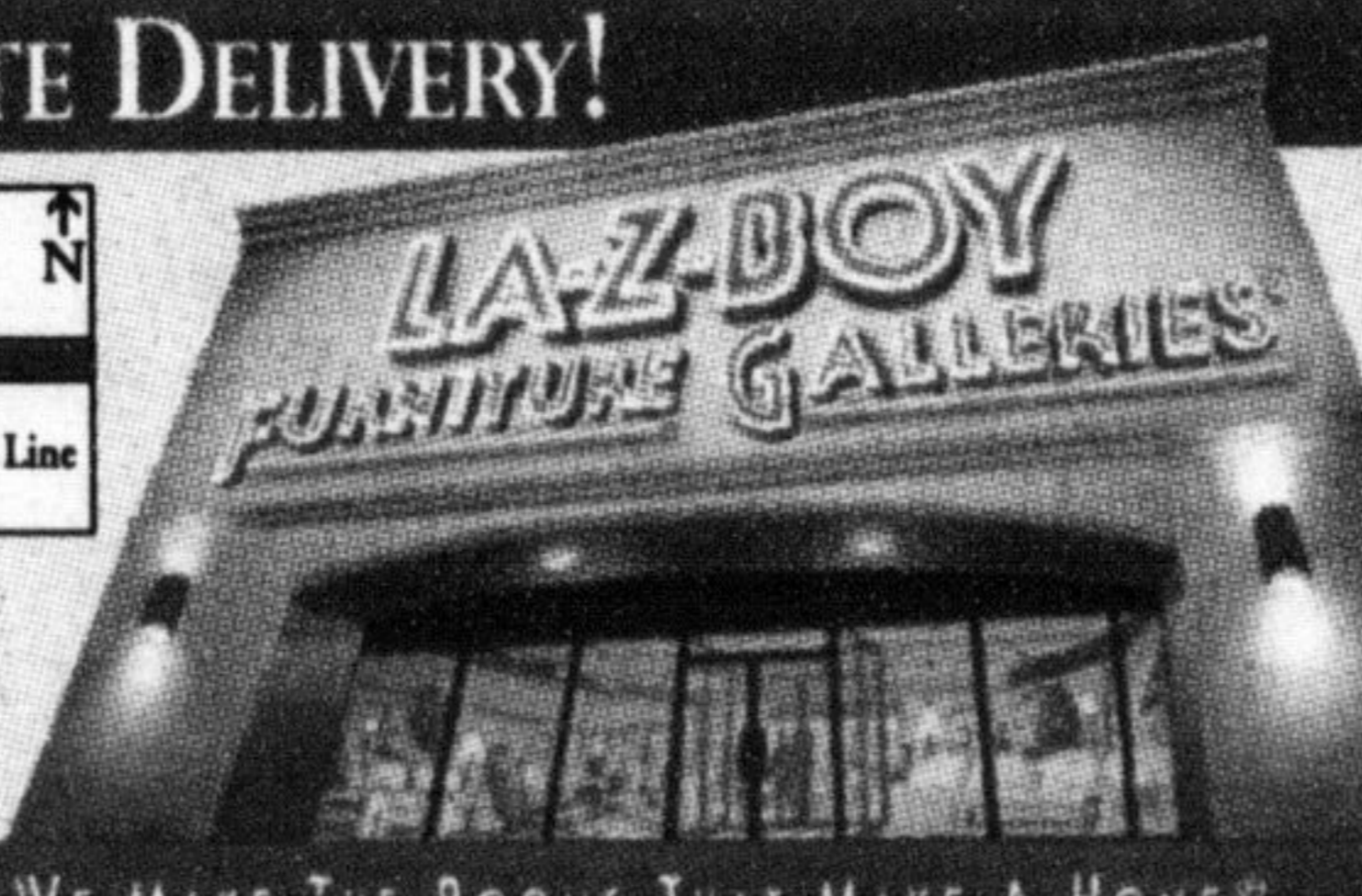
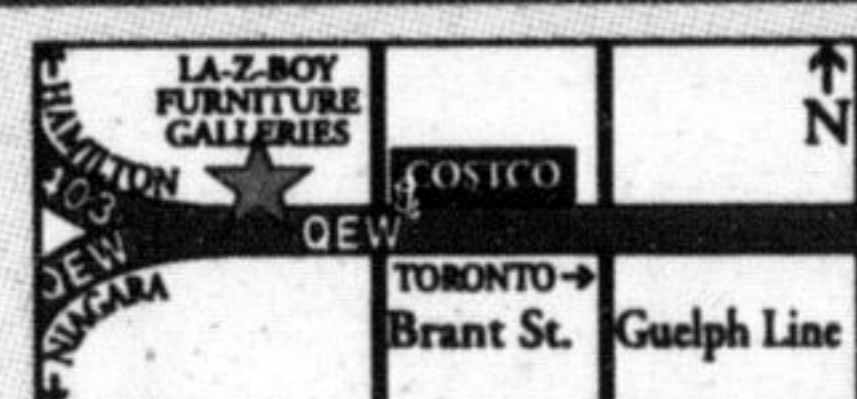
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