

Blacksmith shop could be hot with tourists

By IRENE GENTLE

The Champion

The historic Waldie Blacksmith shop just got even more historic.

Though the dilapidated James Street structure was widely believed to be built in 1865, further research showed part of it was in existence as early as 1821.

First to suspect this was Tom Murison, who

inspected it as part of a restoration campaign by the Milton Historical Society (MHS).

"Your first response on the inside is this timber-frame structure is a very, very early building," he told Town council Monday in an update of the restoration work. "My first question is how do we know this is 1865, because the building appears to be much older."

A comparison of timber found in the building with datable trees revealed he was right.

"The date that came back from the oldest part of the building was 1821," said Mr. Murison. "And 1821 to 1826 are among the earliest buildings to survive, either intact or in pieces."

So far, the Waldie Blacksmith shop is intact. But a full \$7,000 from the \$12,000 raised by the MHS for this project has been sunk into just keeping the building upright for another year.

"We felt very glad it didn't fall down last winter," said Gail Richardson of MHS.

A front addition to the older portion of the building, was built in 1870.

But today the posts carrying the shop, which rests

on watery clay soil, have rotted, said Mr. Murison.

"You're left with a very tenuous structure," he said. "This building has gone beyond its life span. It's hanging on by its fingernails."

Restoring the building to its former glory could cost in excess of \$200,000. Currently, the MHS is fundraising for the project.

Repairs will likely be done in stages, with the shop eventually operating as a museum.

Today, the building houses a treasure trove of artifacts, including antique horse stocks.

"The manufacturer of the horse stocks went out of business in 1910 when the plant burned down," Mr. Murison said. "Only one other set is known to be in existence."

Because of the rarity of the pieces inside, the Waldie shop could become an educational and tourist draw for Milton.

"It contains all the original artifacts. They've been there since 1865, some of the pieces," said Mr. Murison.

The MHS holds a 99 year lease on the property.

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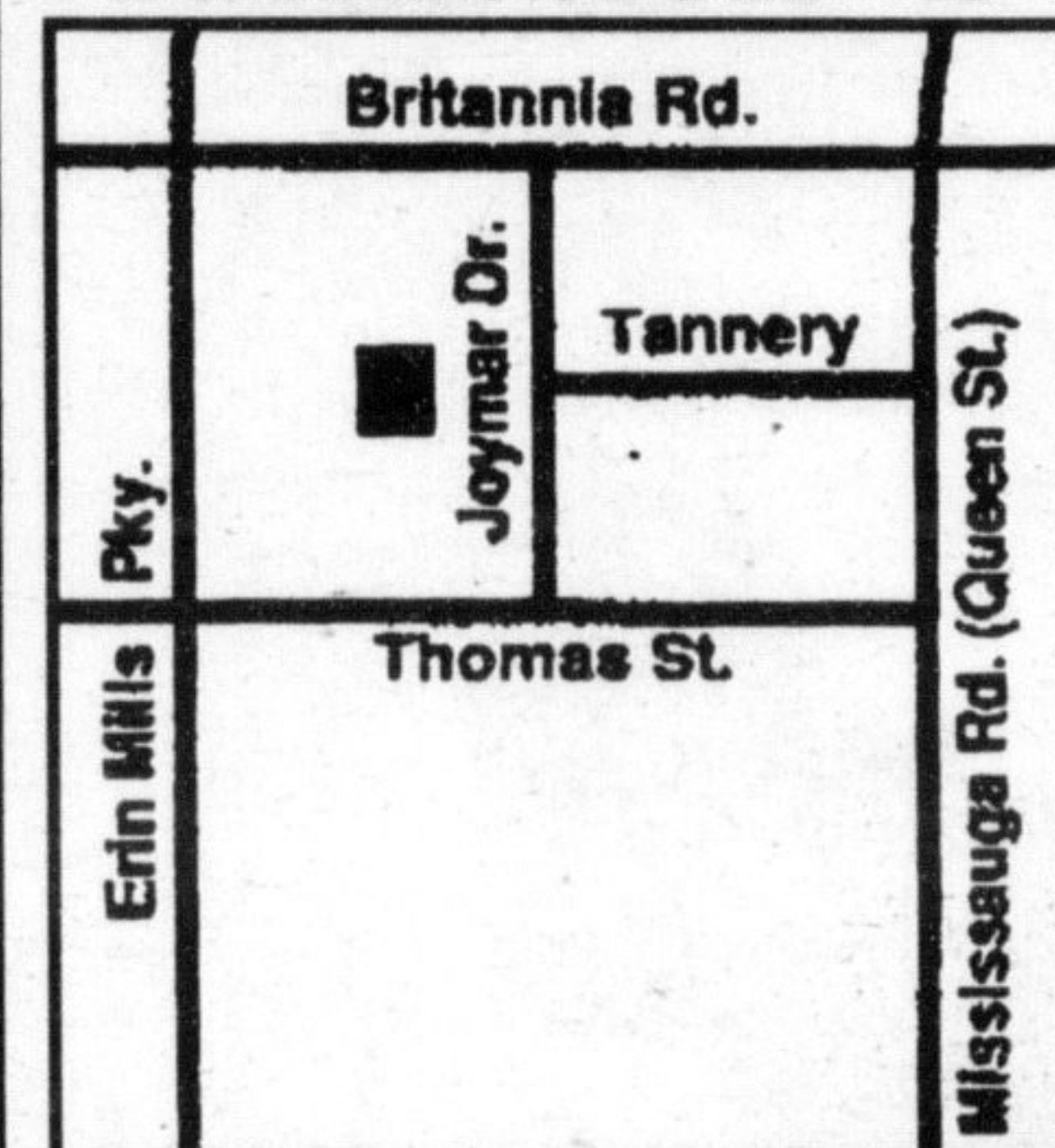
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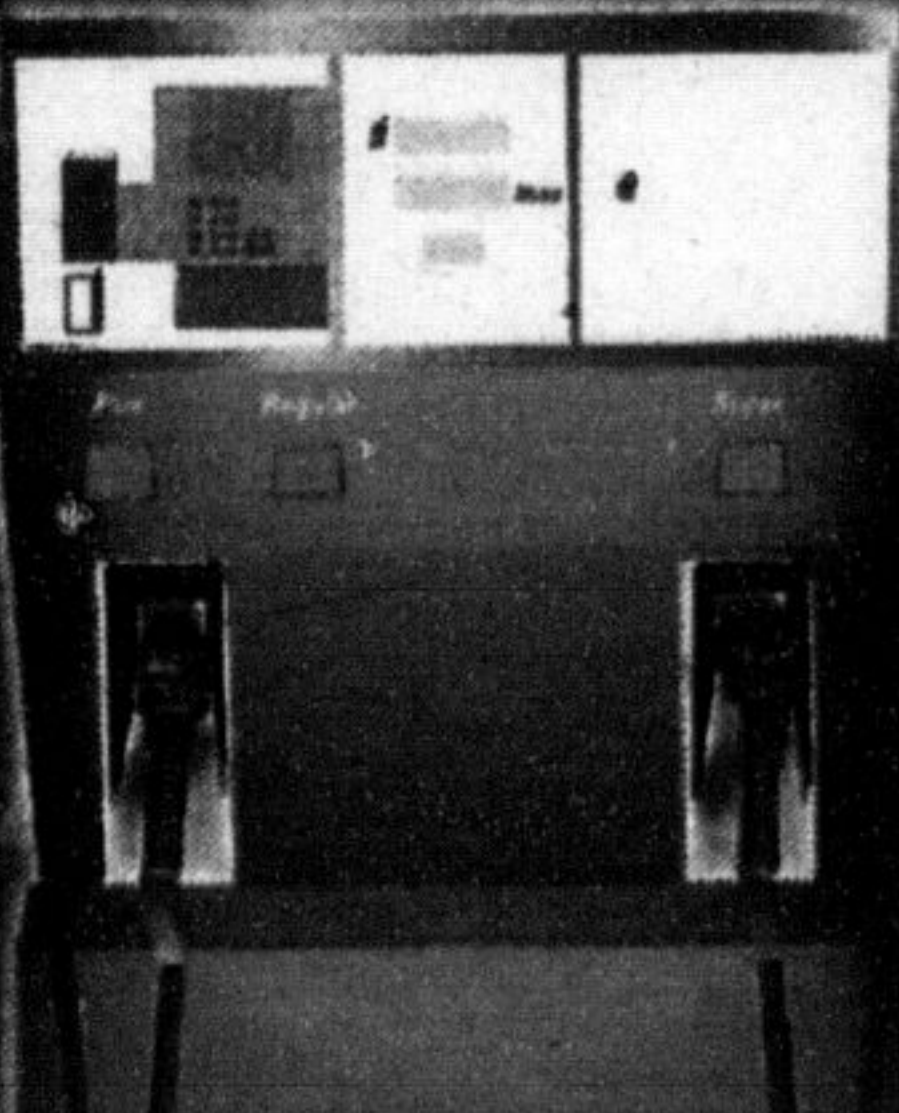
People interested in understanding the problems regarding the operations of the Community Care Access Centres (CCAC) in Ontario are invited to attend one of two information seminars.

The seminars are held this Saturday and next Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Admission is free. There are a number of topics on both days including the ABC's of CCACs, Community Nursing in Hamilton-Wentworth, the Cost of Care and Quality of Care.

"Incidentally, it is not in any way an attack on the CCACs board members or staff. They are working very very hard, but the culture of the Harris government is one that doesn't offer fulsome community care," Mr. Babb said.

Mr. Babb said he hopes that people attending the seminar will learn something about CCACs. The seminars will take place at the Burlington Baptist Church, 2225 New St. For details call 681-0242.

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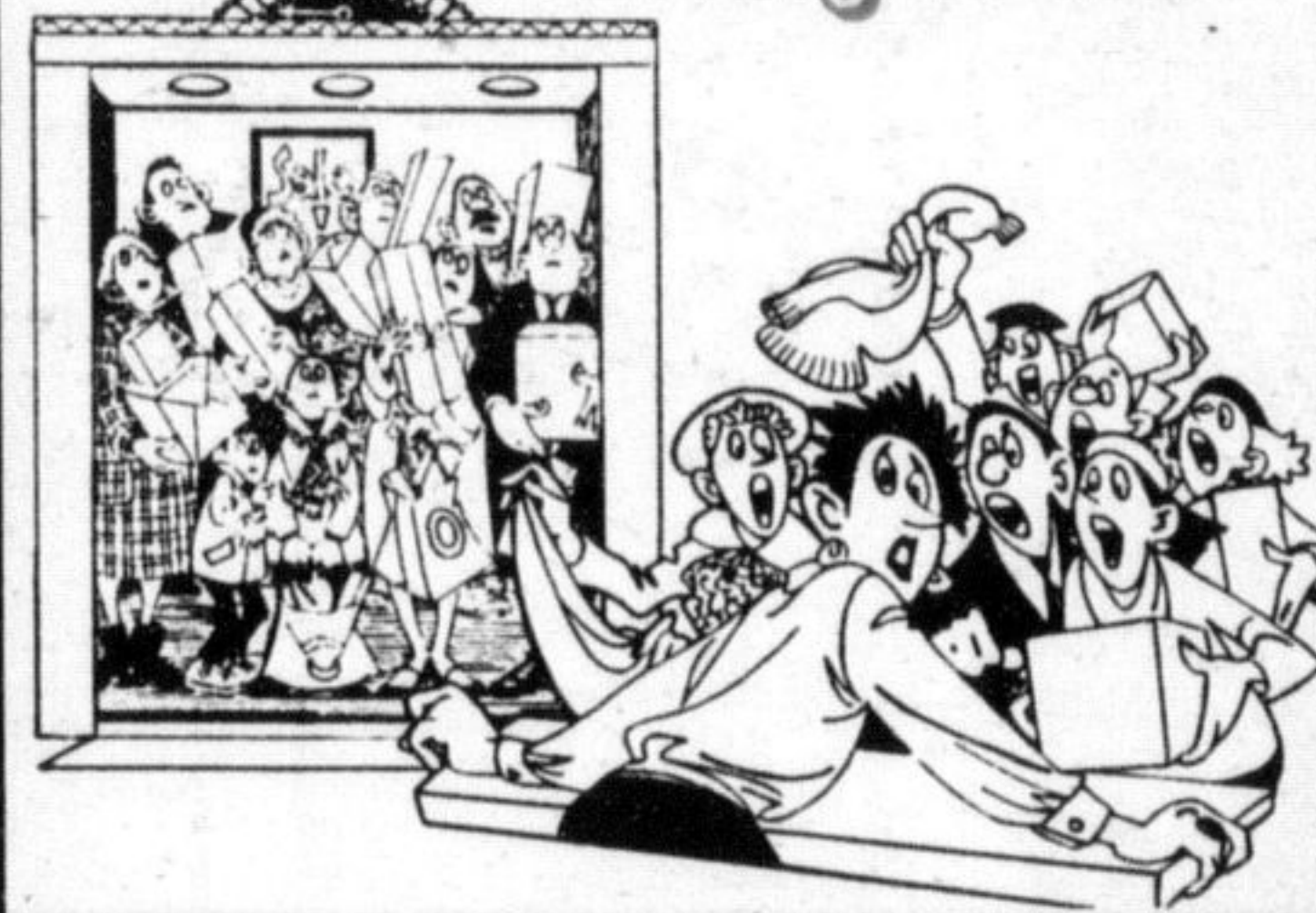
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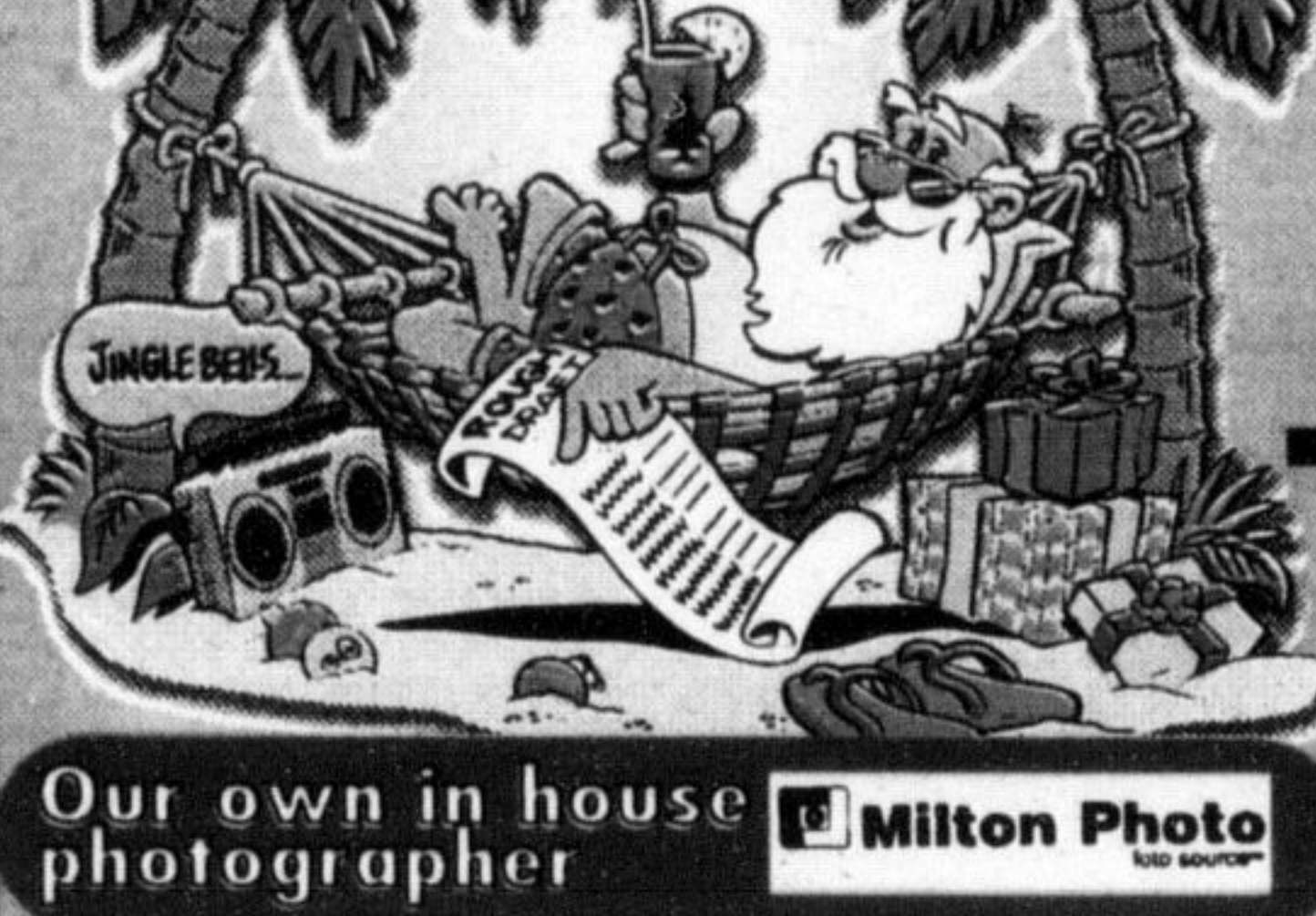


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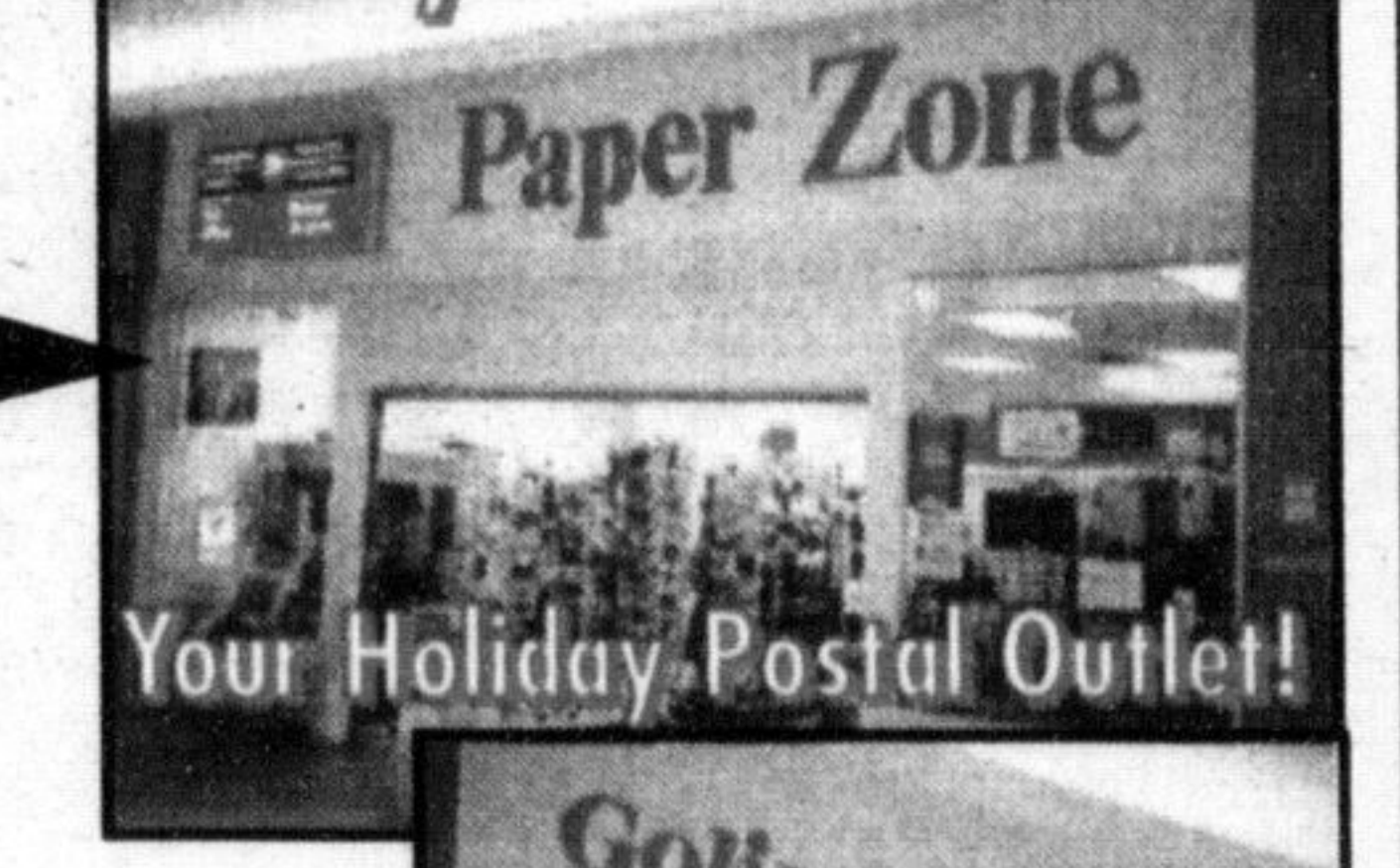
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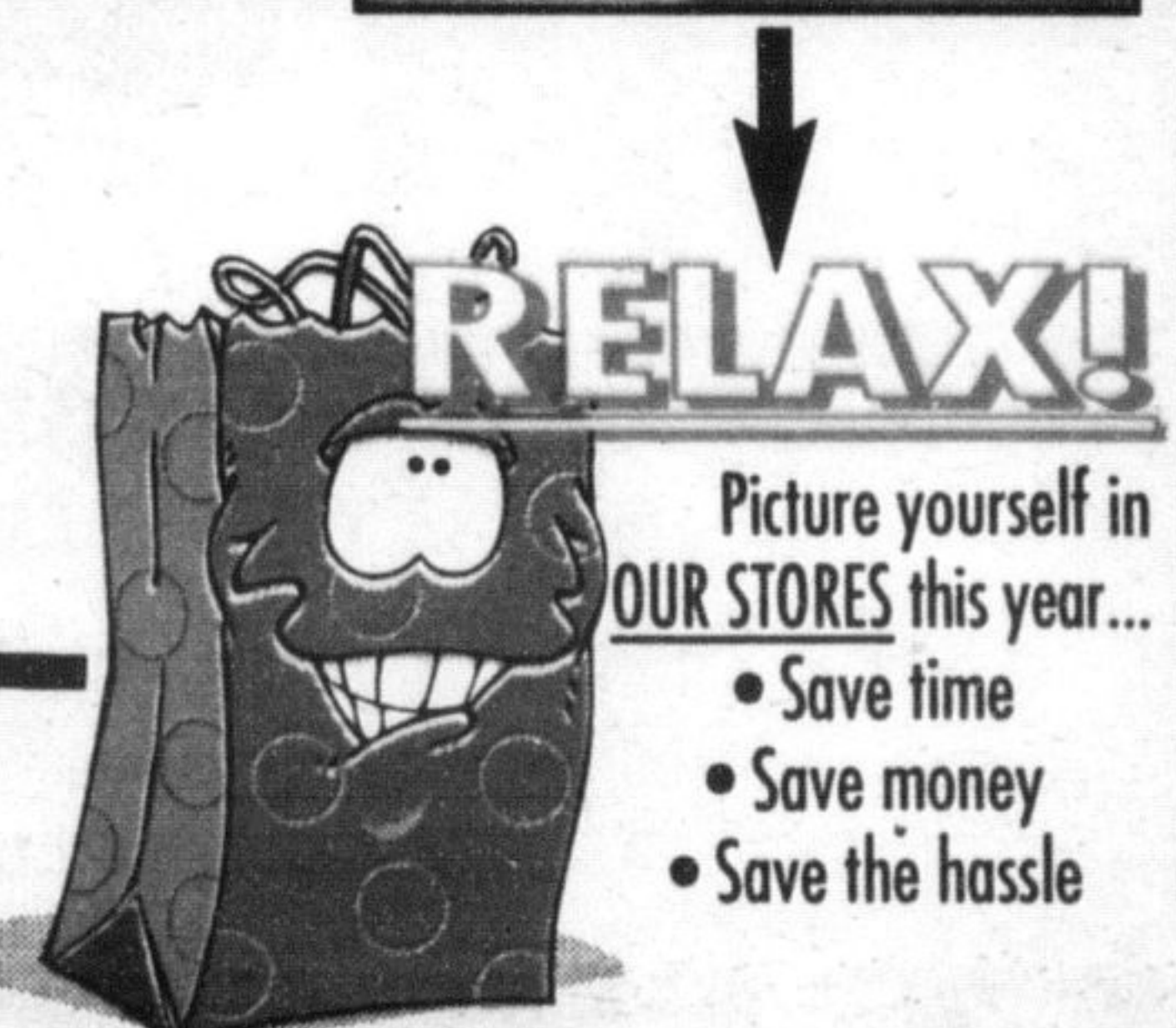
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