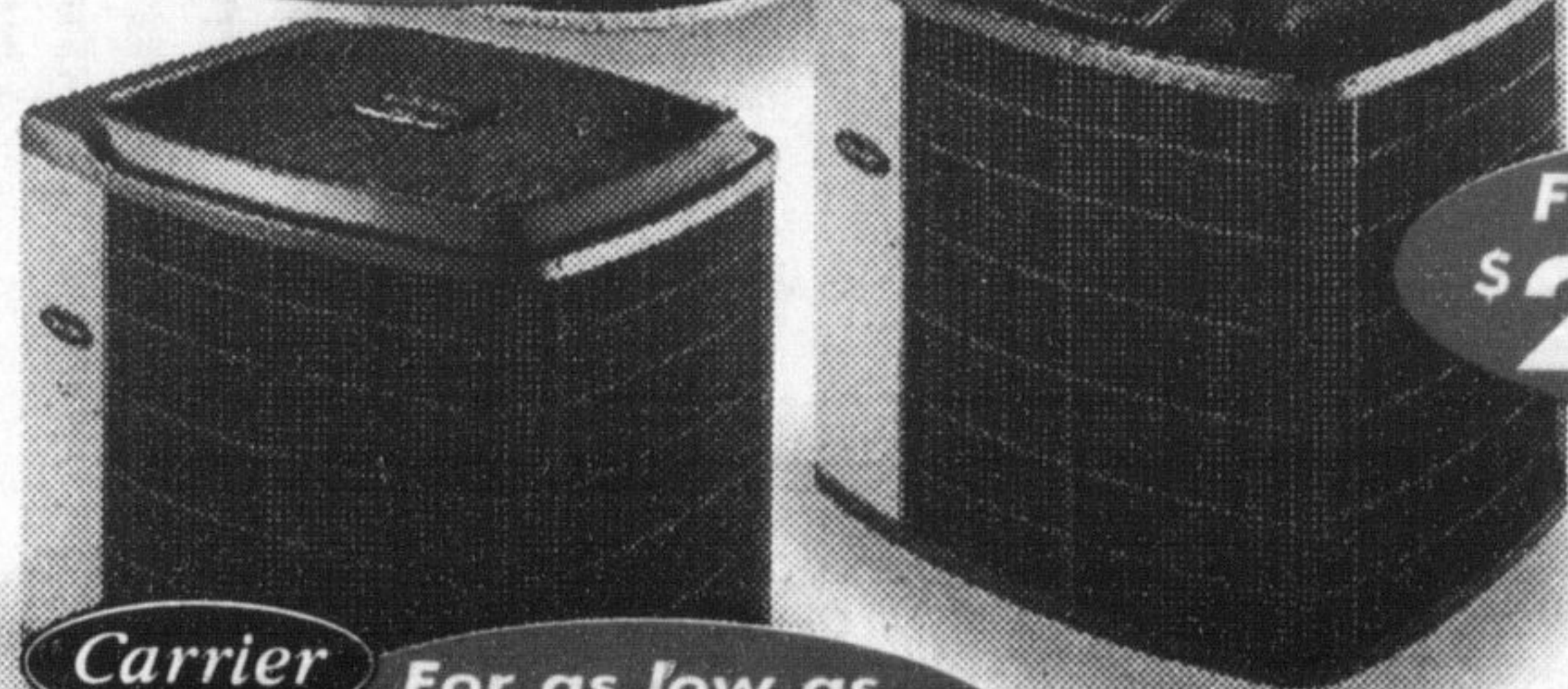


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## Residents oppose Victoria St. group home proposal

By RICHARD VIVIAN

The Champion

A group of Victoria Street residents have banded together to fight what they call a neighbourhood injustice.

Concerns developed this week when it was learned 25 Victoria St. will become a group home for troubled youth.

"We all feel sympathy for sexually abused children or children in trouble, but we also have immediate concerns for our own children. That is our main priority — the children within the neighbourhood," Victoria Street resident Rick Serafini told The Champion.

FGI (Family Guidance Inc.) representatives signed a purchase agreement with current homeowners, the Boote family.

The sale is scheduled to close today.

FGI operate group homes in Oakville, Oshawa, Brampton and Burlington.

According to a written statement from vice-president of residential services Lynda Parsons, the residence will house about eight youths, ranging from 10 to 16 years

of age. Youths at the residence will have been removed from unhealthy and/or abusive households. There will be 24-hour staffing at the facility.

Though physical safety of the neighbourhood is a concern for the residents' group, parents say they're most troubled by the possible influence group home residents could have on their children's behavior.

"I have six-year-old twins who are extremely impressionable," explained Rhonda Boxall, who's property neighbours the proposed group home.

### FGI used to opposition

Anxiety over group home developments is nothing new for FGI. In other instances neighbourhood concerns have diminished shortly after the home opens, Ms Parsons said.

"These children are very much like your own. They are more likely to be fearful than to cause fear or concern," Ms Parsons wrote.

"They have been abused and they are at a young age where it can have a great negative impact on their future lives if they do not receive proper treatment and care

for their emotional wounds.

"They need to know there are people in the world that will not harm them, and just getting a smile from a neighbour at a corner store and being accepted is part of the healing process."

The most pressing issue for the residents' group is the way in which the property was purchased. According to Lilian Boote, she was never told of the proposed use before signing the sale agreement. Had she known, she never would have agreed to the sale, she told The Champion.

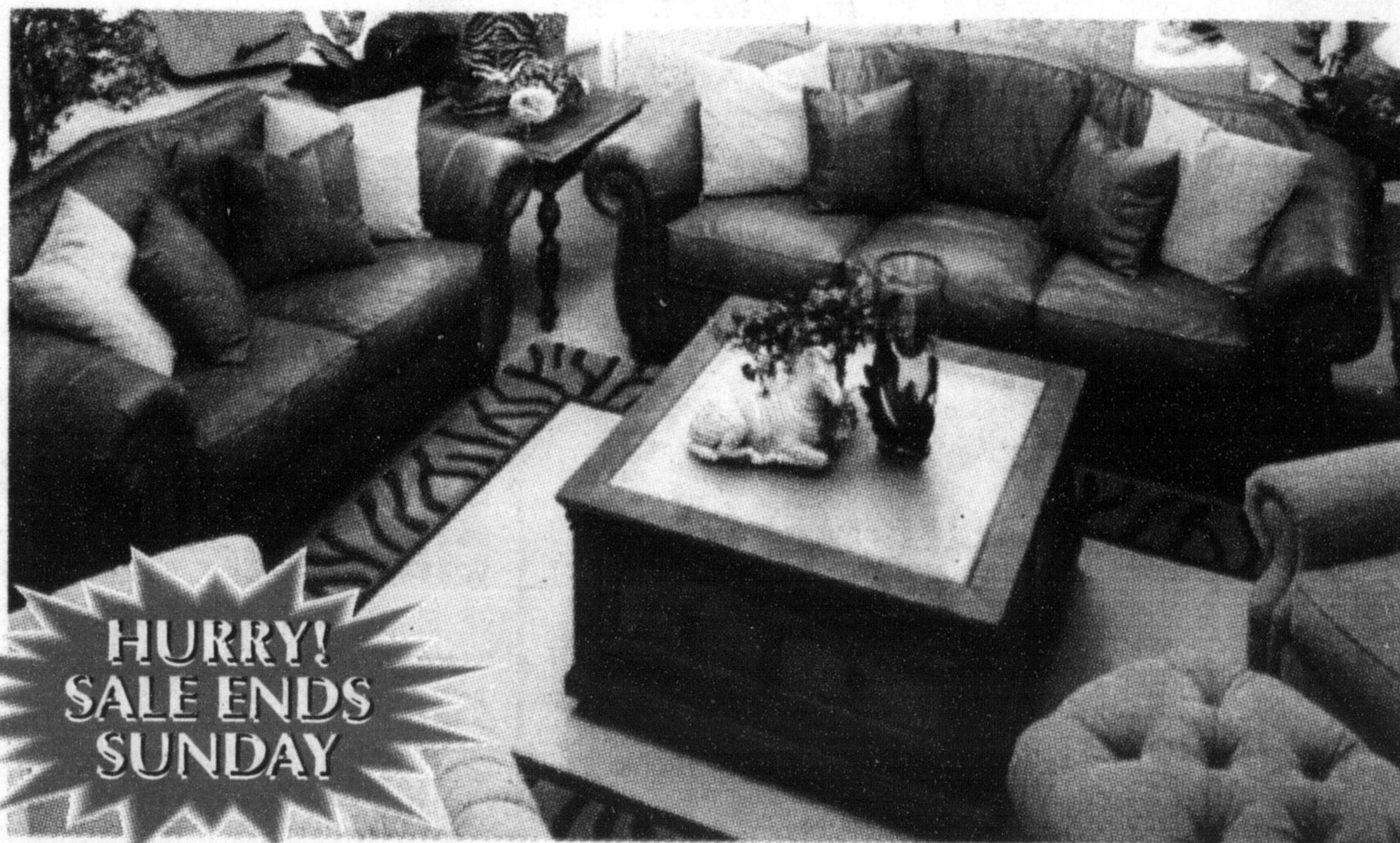
Ms Boote said she was unaware FGI was the purchaser until she was informed by a contractor who visited the house earlier this week. It was then that she learned her house was to become a group home for troubled youth.

Since a group home such as this would impact the entire neighbourhood, area residents wonder why they weren't consulted prior to the purchase agreement. Mr. Serafini said that simple act would have gone a long way to settle the tension.

"I think the way they purchased the home wasn't very open with  
• see GROUP on page 11

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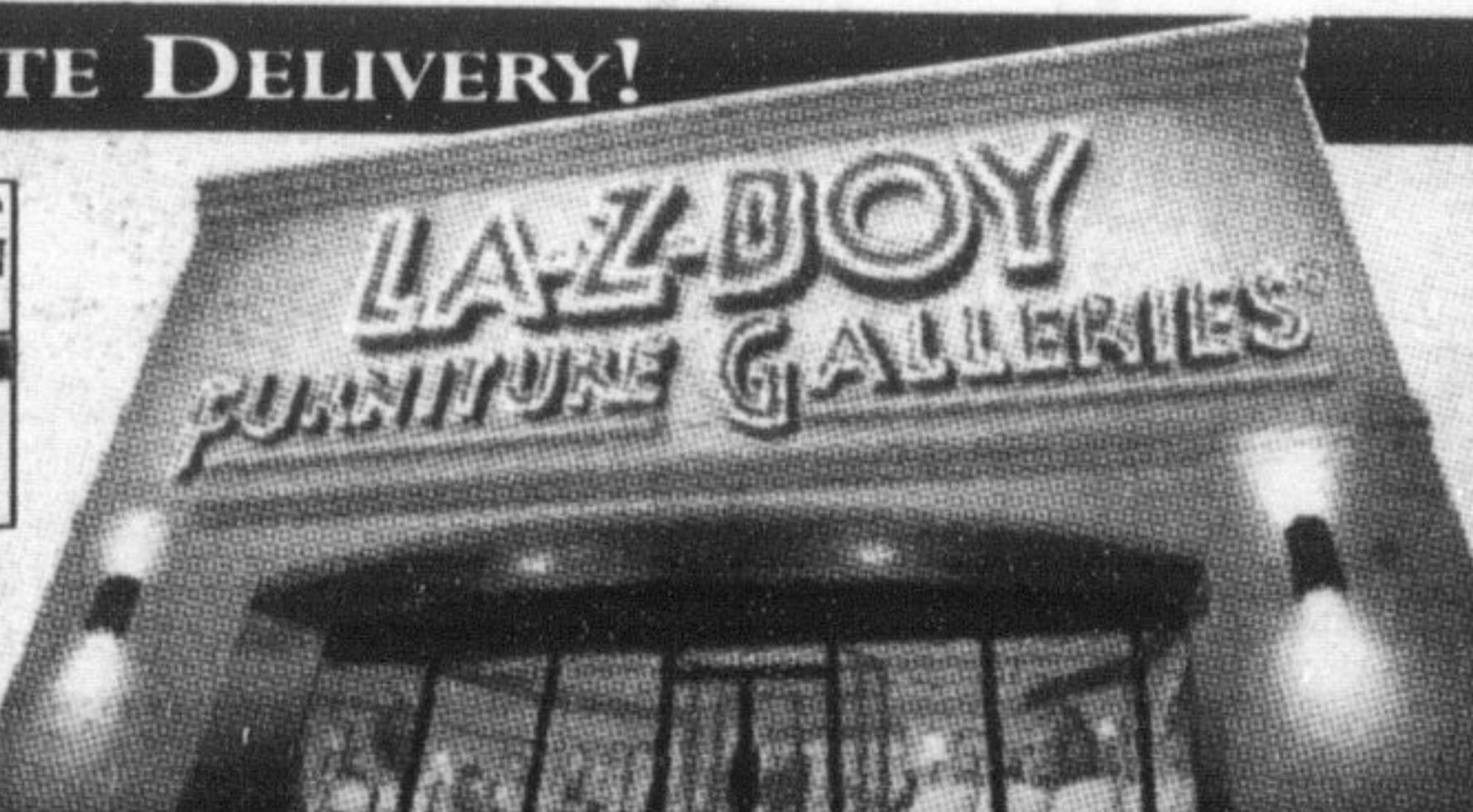
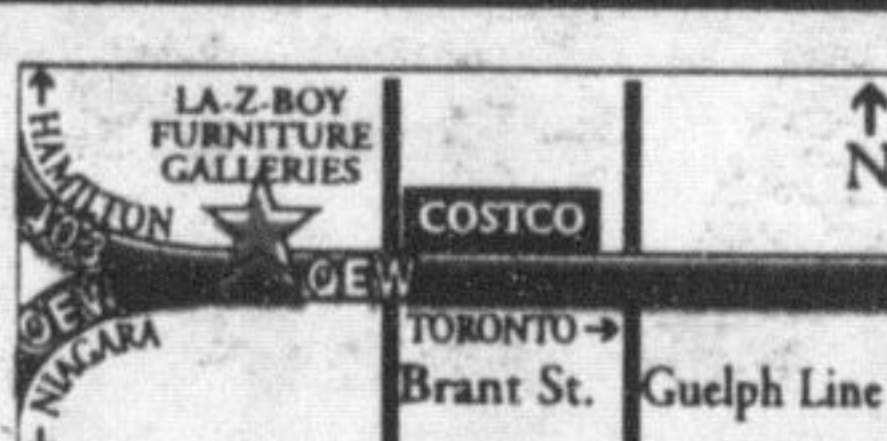
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#### Were You Found Guilty of a Drug Offence in Ontario Between 1988 and 2001?

Health Canada recently identified concerns with some Certificates of Analyst issued by one analyst in the Toronto Drug Analysis Service Laboratory. Certificates of Analyst are used to prove the nature of substances in drug prosecutions.

The Department of Justice Canada is taking steps to make people aware of this situation. Health Canada has reviewed the work of the analyst and has found problems with respect to 192 certificates regarding the nature of the substance and 13 certificates regarding the purity of the substance. The Department of Justice Canada will notify each accused found guilty of an offence to which one of these certificates relates.

If you have been found guilty in the province of Ontario of an offence pertaining to an illicit drug between June 1, 1988 and May 31, 2001, and want to find out if your Certificate of Analyst is one of those in question, you can access the following Web site: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/expo](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/expo). This site lists the numbers of all certificates prepared by this analyst. If you do not have Internet access, contact the Department of Justice Canada directly by phone (416) 973-0957 or by facsimile (416) 973-8253. Collect calls will be accepted.

#### If you believe you have been affected:

If you have followed these steps and determined your certificate was one of those prepared by the analyst, you may have a claim for relief, depending on the circumstances of your case. The following forms of relief may be available:

- an extension of time in which to file an appeal;
- an appeal to set aside the conviction and enter an acquittal or a stay of proceedings or order a new trial;
- a direction from the Minister of Justice for a new trial or appellate hearing under s.690 of the *Criminal Code*; and
- a pardon, repayment of any fine paid or release from custody, where appropriate.

You may wish to consult your lawyer to obtain advice on whether a remedy is available to you.

Those seeking a form of relief must complete a **NOTICE OF INTENDED APPLICATION** and may be required to provide an affidavit. This form is available on the Department of Justice Canada Web site (<http://canada.justice.gc.ca>) or by contacting the Department of Justice at the above numbers.

Canada