

Crime Stoppers of Halton

Home ransacked

Halton Regional Police are investigating a break-in at a Twiss Road home.

On June 11, residents of the home left in the morning to go grocery shopping. While they were away, unknown culprits broke in through the rear door. The home was ransacked and the family's pets released, but were later found roaming in the area.

It's not known what was taken during the break-in.

If you have information that leads to an arrest in this or any other matter, call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS or check us out on the Web at www.linkstohalton.com.

Crime Stoppers teams up with Cogeco to catch cable thieves

By PAUL MITCHISON

Special to The Champion

Snitching on neighbours who steal cable just may earn you cash.

Crime Stoppers of Halton has announced plans to work with the cable industry to pay for anonymous information on cable cheats. It means those who call to report cable theft could be eligible for cash rewards, just like those who fin-

ger drug dealers and burglars.

Cable companies are particularly interested in catching "renegade installers," individuals who make a living from illegally hooking up consumers with "free" cable for a one-time fee.

Sgt. Lee-Ann Ansell, police co-ordinator of Crime Stoppers of Halton, said in a recent interview that Cogeco will refund Crime Stoppers the amount paid out for tips, plus more.

Sgt. Ansell said banks have a similar arrangement. "We're saying if you know someone who's stealing cable, call us and we'll pass it on and pay a reward if it's good information."

Cogeco Cable presented a \$10,000 cheque to Crime Stoppers at a recent conference in Collingwood as plans were announced to launch the partnership agreement.

Gerry Marshall, Cogeco vice-president of technical operations, sees the arrangement as mutually beneficial. "We can help the police whenever possible, and they can assist us in cutting down on cable theft."

Crime Stoppers has benefited from cable companies like Cogeco offering publicity, including helping to produce and air video re-enactments of unsolved crimes. Cogeco has also heavily promoted and assisted with Crime Stoppers fundraising efforts.

The partnership came as a result of discussions over a few months with Cogeco and the Ontario Association of Crime Stoppers, and if successful, it may be extended to new jurisdictions.

Cogeco will display the Crime Stoppers logo and TIPS number on its vehicles to promote the organization.

Cogeco's network management centre in Burlington has been designated the contact for police who have received tips. It's a high-tech facility that shows electronically when there's been any "ingress" into the system.

Sgt. Ansell said the crime of theft of telecommunications is one for which police work with cable firms. But it's virtually certain that someone who merely splits a hookup to add an extra television set in the bedroom will not be targeted.

Currently, she said, police tend only to charge when it involves hooking up to an outside cable box illegally, or if someone illegally splits his cable service with neighbours.

"This program just sort of makes it official, that when people phone us to say there's pirating of cable, we'll take the tip," she said.

"I think they're looking for the big fish, for instance a whole building that might be taking cable illegally."

Often, such investigations are technical and involve cable company officials. When satellite dish crimes are involved it's usually a matter for the RCMP.

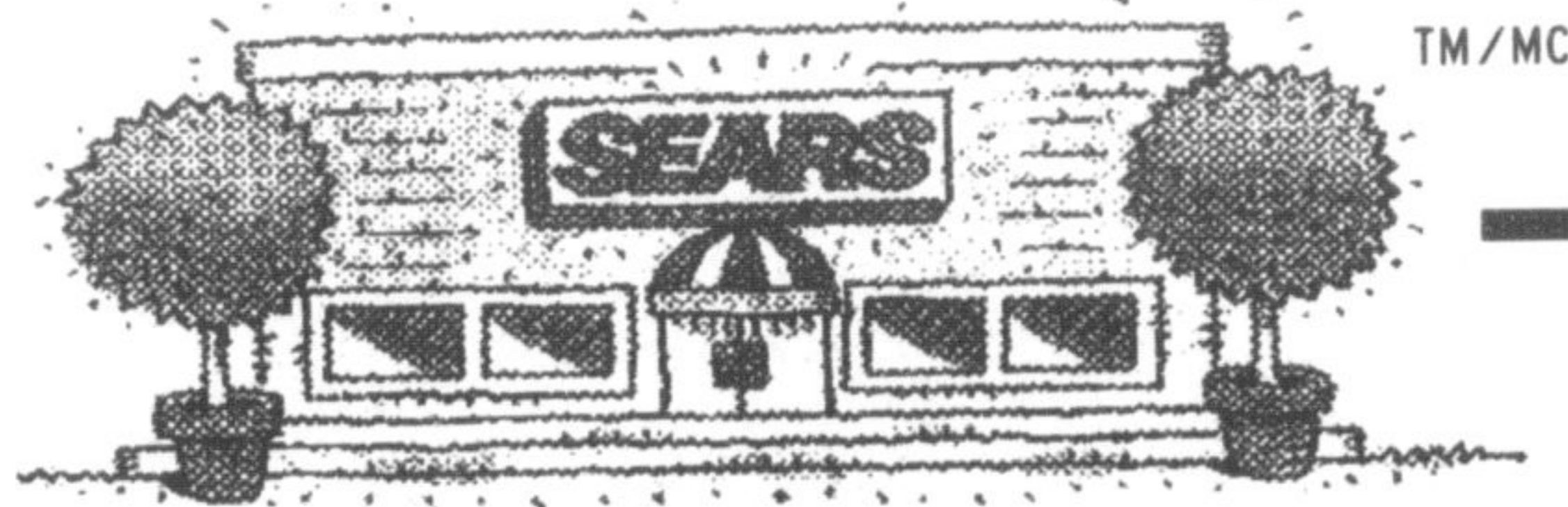
Maureen Tilson-Dyment, director of communications and programming for Cogeco, said the donation to Crime Stoppers represented support for a worthy community cause, and isn't tied to paying rewards for reporting on cable cheats. "The \$10,000 cheque was to be spent by Crime Stoppers in whatever manner they see fit."

It's estimated about \$400 million in fees aren't being collected because of illegal services received on satellite dishes.

Payne new co-ordinator

Due to the temporary re-assignment of Halton police Sgt. Lee-Ann Ansell, Acting Sgt. Peter Payne is the interim police co-ordinator for Crime Stoppers of Halton.

A 20-year veteran of the force, Sgt. Ansell stepped down from Crime Stoppers after she was charged with criminal harassment relating to an off-duty incident June 27.



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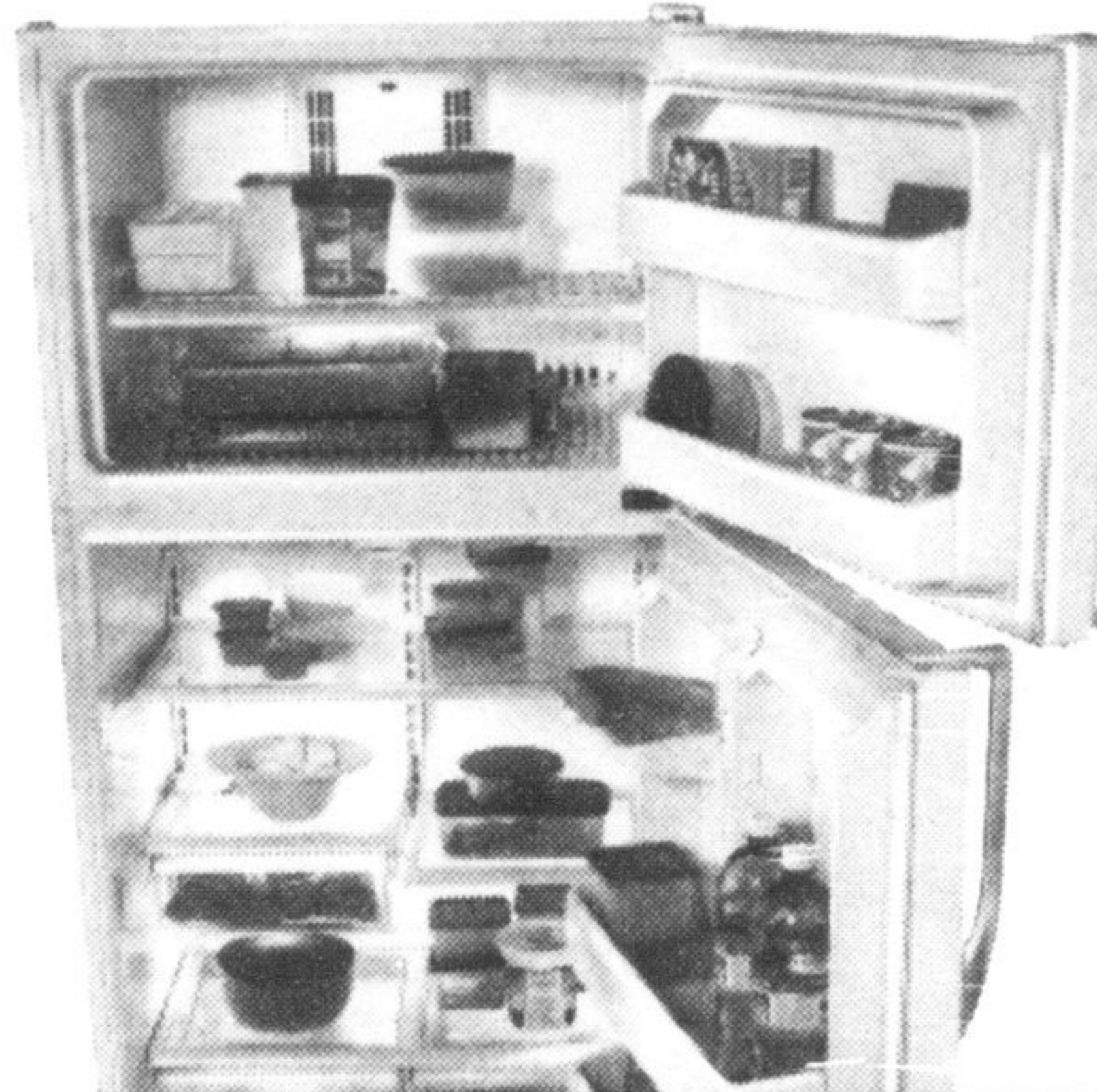
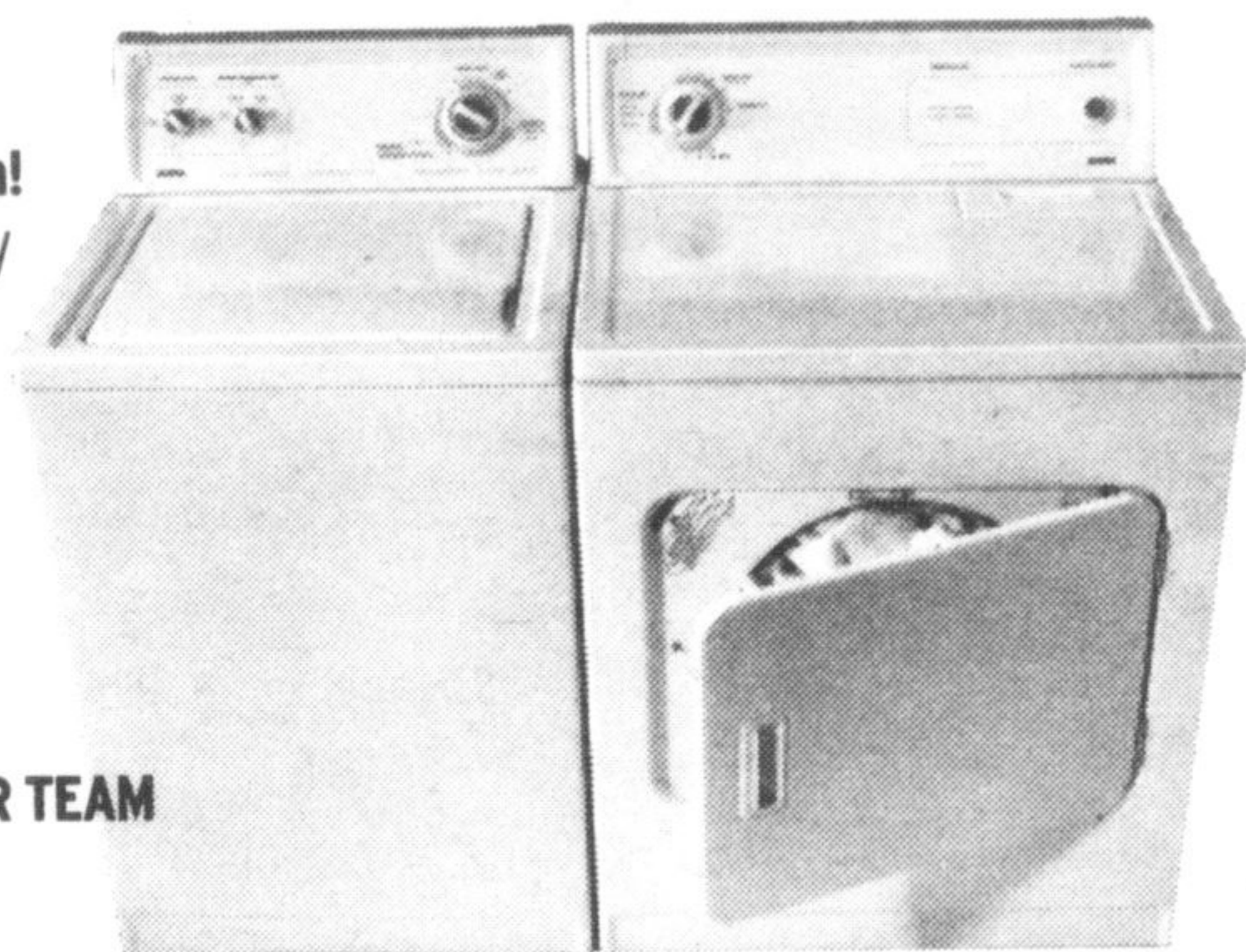
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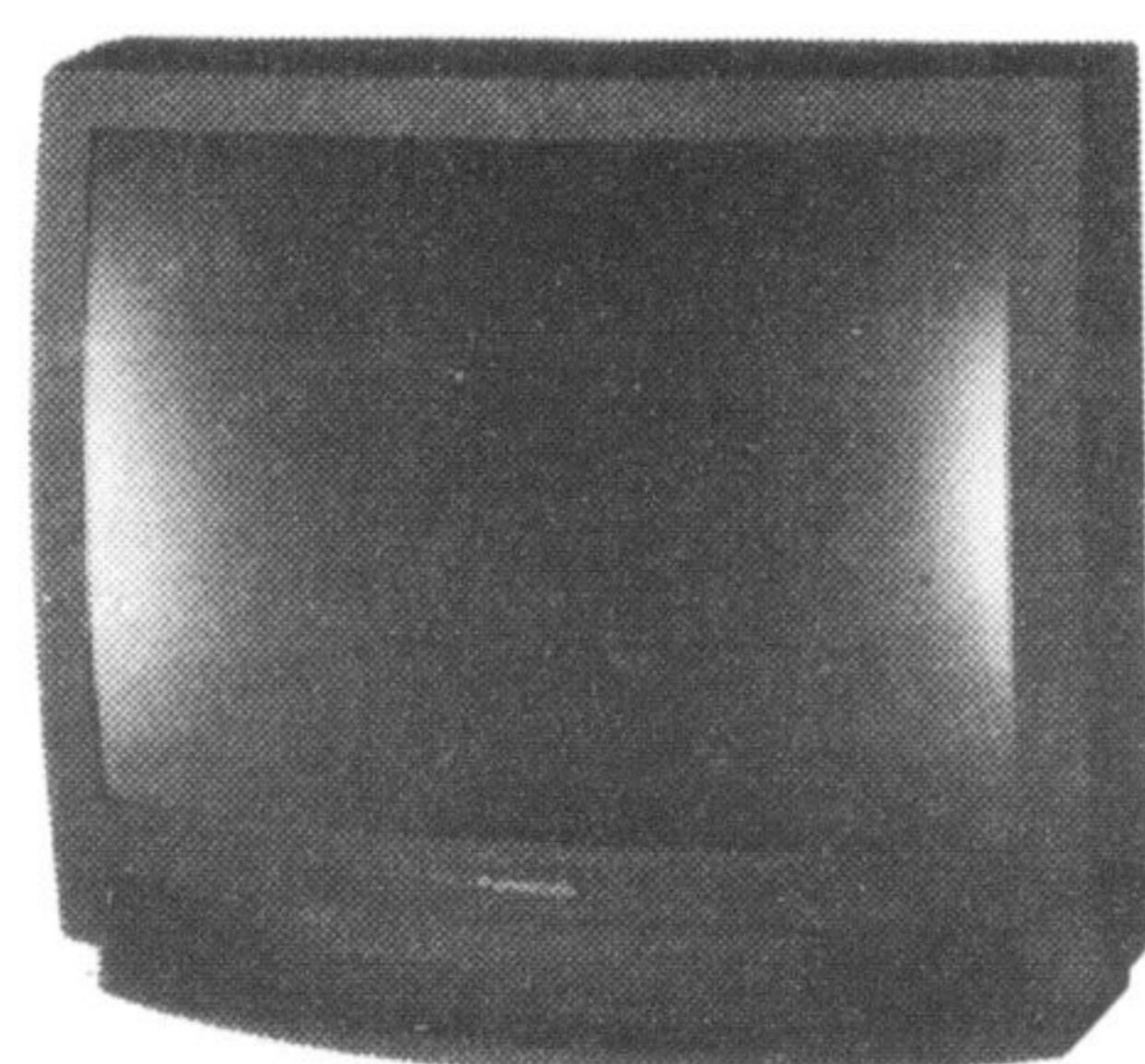


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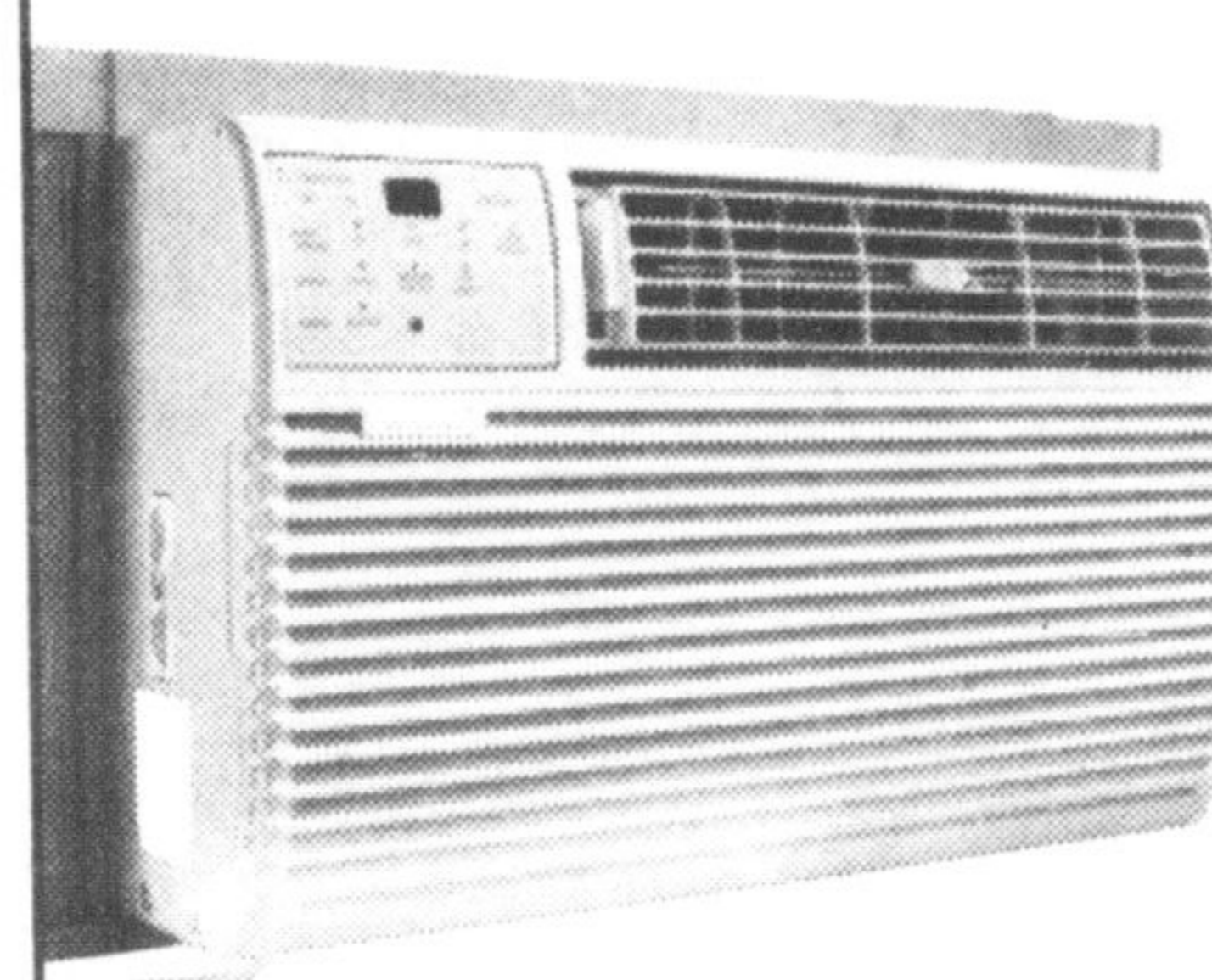


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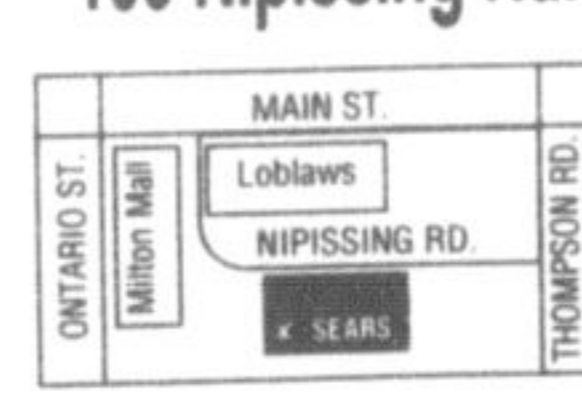
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