

CH warns larviciding must be done carefully

Conservation Halton (CH) is urging municipalities to exercise caution when implementing pesticide programs to control mosquitoes that may carry West Nile virus.

This comes just a week after regional council passed a recommendation to larvicide — kill mosquitoes before they become adult insects — catch basins in north Halton.

"We recognize that West Nile virus is a serious health concern that is being dealt with by municipal health departments," said CH CAO Theresa Maguire-Garber. "However, it is just as important to consider the impact of West Nile virus control actions on the natural environment."

She said the Region has a responsibility to consider an approach that's balanced and science-based, and that will ensure clean streams and healthy forests, as well as help protect residents' health.

This, CH said, must be done carefully, with only site-specific

application of biological larvicide so only mosquito larvae are targeted, not other species associated with wetlands.

The Region's decision means as many as 7,000 catch basins in north Halton and a total of 35,000 across the region may be larvicided. The Region received approval for a larviciding permit from the Ministry of the Environment Tuesday. The Region will hire nine university students to check for larvae and a private company will drop the larvicide pellets.

CH said West Nile virus affects not only human health, but also impacts wildlife populations and, depending on the control methods used, natural wetlands.

Mosquito species found in wetlands are generally not the ones that carry the virus, CH spokespeople said, and the value of wetlands for water quality and wildlife habitat has long been recognized.

Culex mosquitoes, which are the most common carriers of West

Nile virus, have a limited flight range and this means the adults are generally found close to their hatching site. If a person is bitten by one of these mosquitoes, it likely hatched nearby. These mosquitoes usually breed in very sheltered, stagnant water and their larvae are most often found in tires, eavestroughs, rain barrels, bird-baths and other puddles that last for longer than a week, CH said.

So, a large degree of control can be achieved by eliminating the man-made breeding habitats for these mosquitoes and by localized application of larvicides, if required.

CH also argued that draining or filling in wetlands as a way to control mosquitoes isn't an ecologically sound way to remove potential breeding sites.

"Wetlands are important natural areas that support wildlife and improve water quality," a CH spokesperson said.

CH Chair Jean Williams said CH has just published a brochure to help raise awareness of the danger the environment may be in with certain control actions.

The brochure also includes helpful hints for residents to control mosquitoes near their homes.

For more information on the environmental aspect of West Nile virus or to receive a copy of the new brochure, call (905) 336-1158 or visit www.conservationhalton.on.ca.

MS Society selling carnations at mall

As part of MS Awareness Month in May, the Halton chapter of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada will sell carnations at Milton Mall today and Saturday.

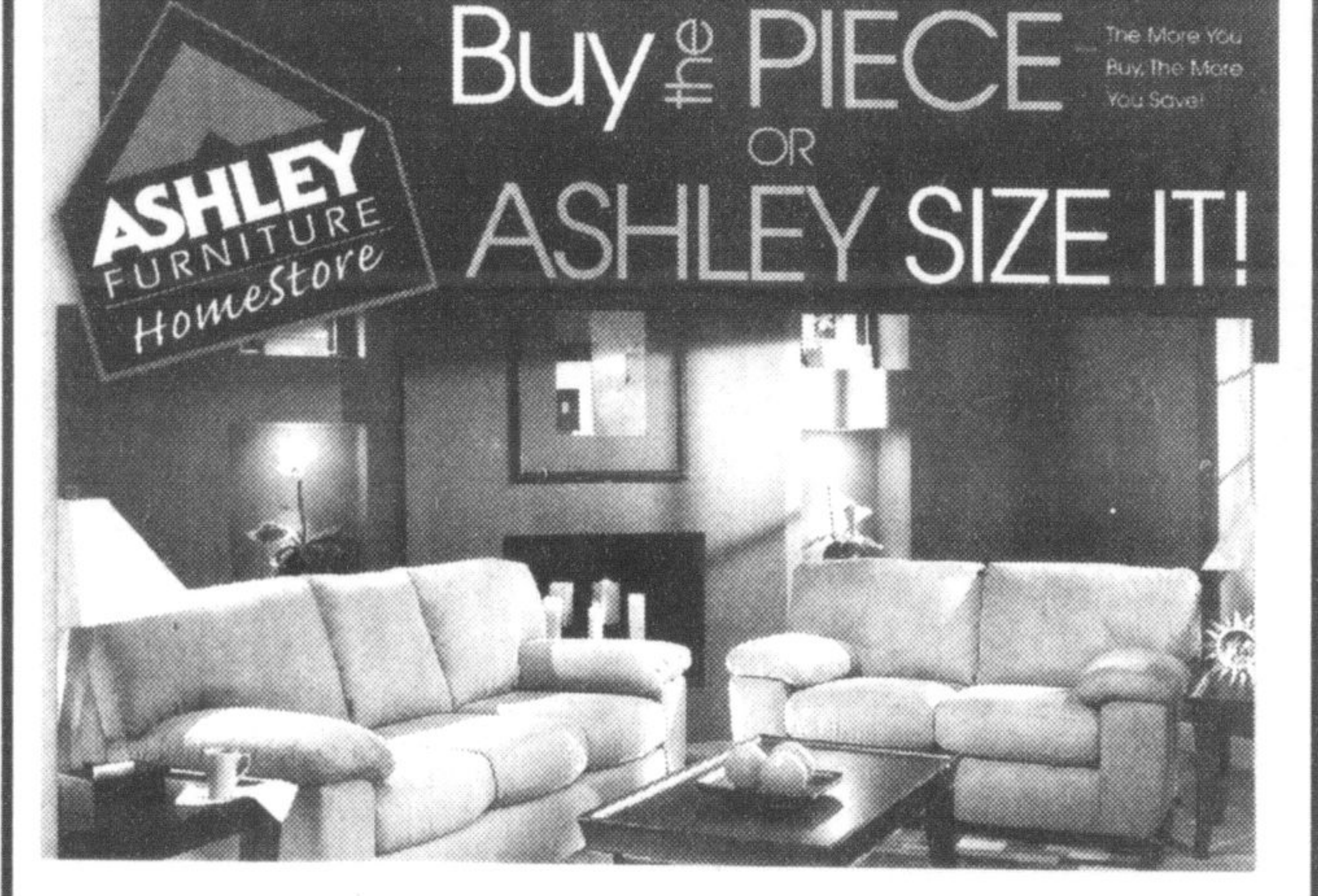
It will sell spring bouquets for \$10; mini-bouquets for \$6 or two for \$10; and four-inch potted carnations for \$5.

Since the late 1970s, the organization has marked May as MS Awareness Month. It coincided with the establishment of the MS Carnation Campaign on the Mother's Day weekend.

The campaign became a national fundraising program in 1976. The carnation was chosen because of its close connection to Mother's Day.

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COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE AND PRESENTATION REGARDING A TEMPORARY BOUNDARY CHANGE FOR E.C. DRURY HIGH SCHOOL

The Halton District School Board invites members of the public to attend an Open House and presentation regarding a proposed temporary boundary change affecting students residing in the Bristol survey (lands east of Thompson and north of Derry Road).

**Tuesday, May 20, 2003
W.I. Dick Public School
351 Highside Drive, Milton
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.**

This is an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions of staff and provide input regarding the development of the temporary boundary change.

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Halton District School Board

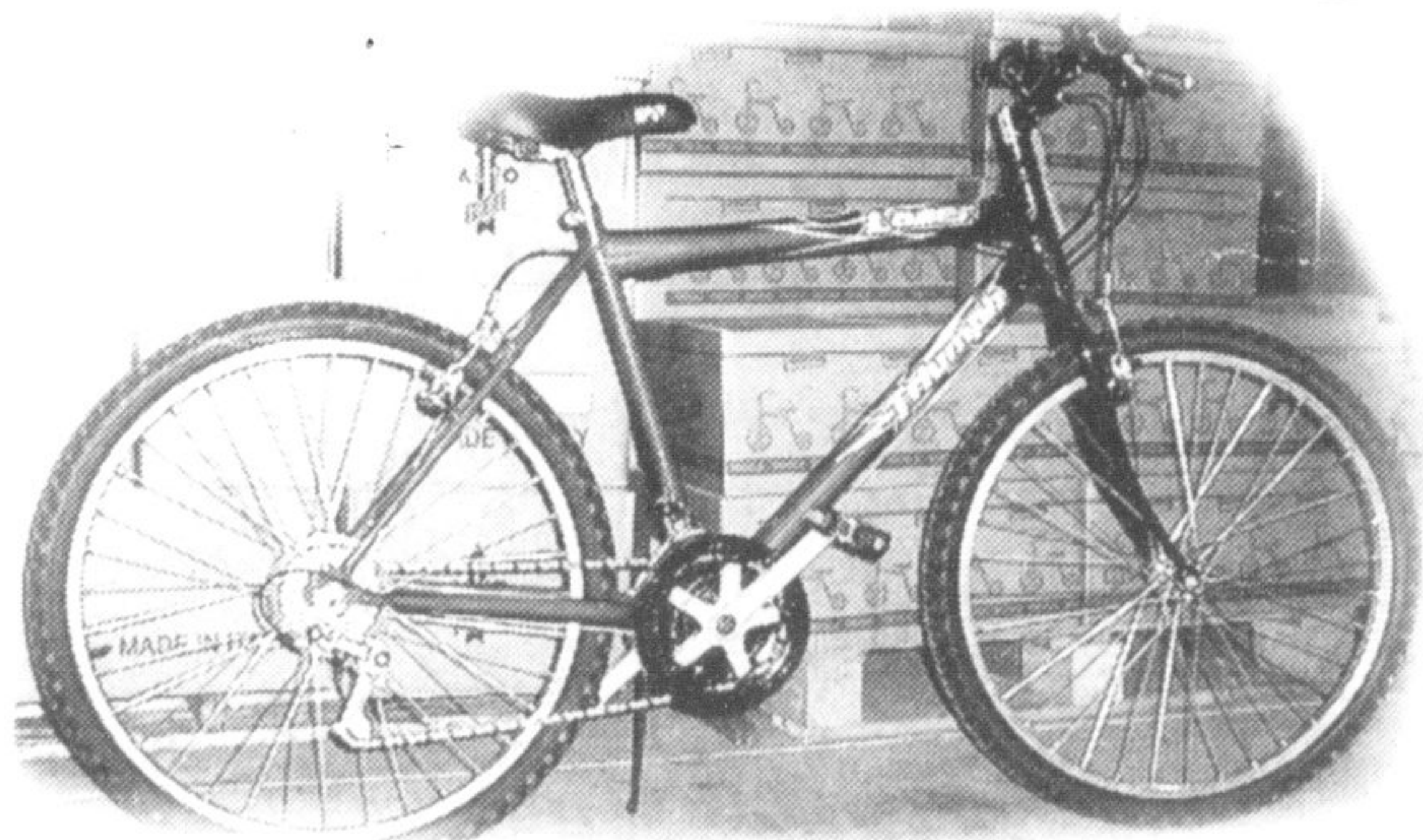
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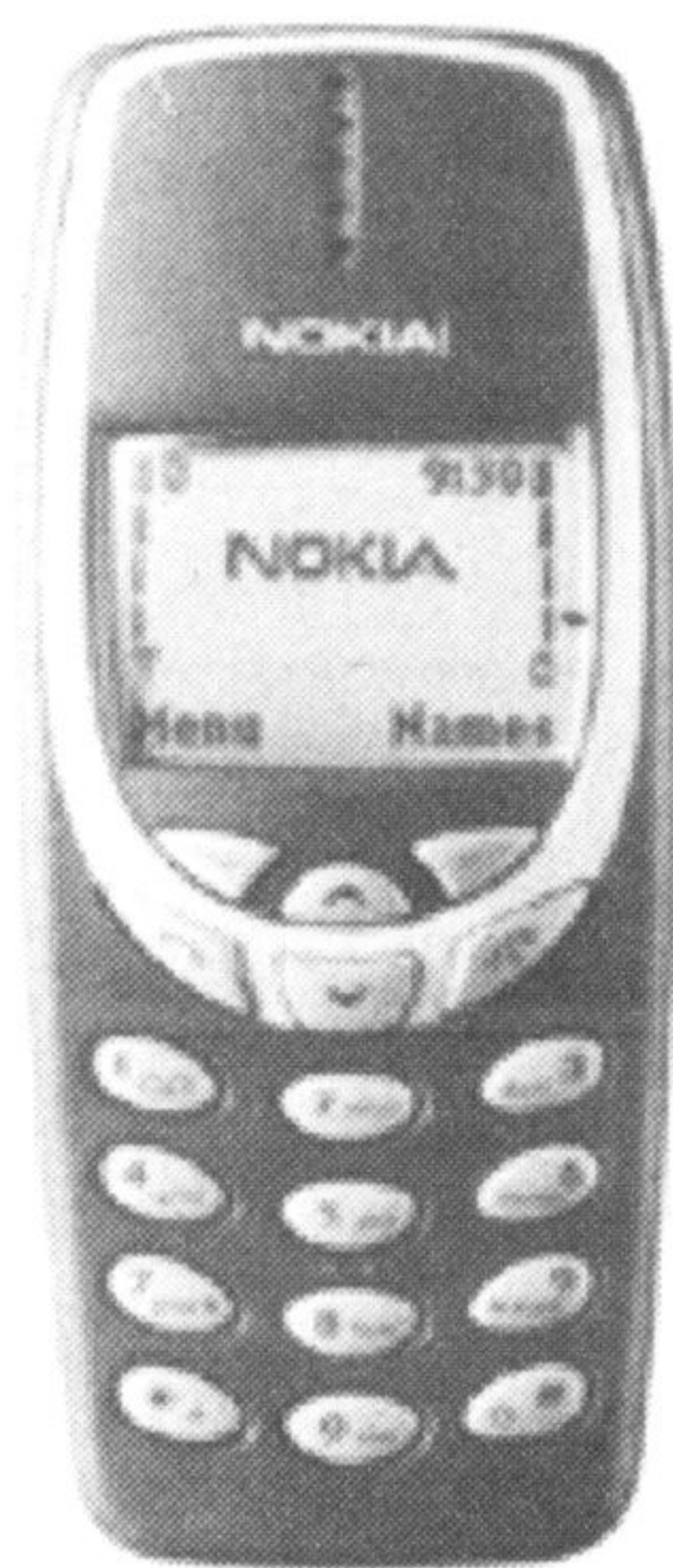


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