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# Council turns down bid for pesticide bylaw

By Melanie Hennessey  
 CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

The third time wasn't a charm for Ward 4 Councillor Wendy Schau Monday night as council once again voted down her motion to have staff bring forward a bylaw that would restrict the cosmetic use of pesticides.

The 7-3 verdict means that council has ultimately decided to maintain the status quo for Milton when it comes to residents' ability to spray pesticides for beautification purposes.

Before making the decision though, councillors first heard from several local residents who strongly support such a bylaw and one citizen who was-

n't so wild about the idea.

Jim Steeves of Pesticide Alternatives for Milton got the ball rolling by asking the audience members if they're in favour of banning the cosmetic use of pesticides, with exemptions. The majority raised their hands.

He urged council to pass the suggested bylaw and indicated the estimated \$94,000 it would cost in 2008 to implement the bylaw would be money well spent.

"This seems like a small amount to pay to protect our citizens and the environment," he remarked.

Local residents Marnie Smith, Carol Gustafson and Amy Hunter, a doctor from Mississauga and Gillian Earle of the newly-formed Miltongreen joined Steeves' call for the pesticide rules.

And for the first time, the pesticide debate brought out a youth who also urged council to do something.

Michael Hajekerou, a 12-year-old local resident, shared an experience he had with pesticides while living in Mississauga.

He said he and his friends were playing near a field where pesticides had been sprayed, and the following afternoon they all got sick.

"I want you to pass this bylaw so no one else has to suffer," he said.

But local resident Philip Walker, who said he's worked with pesticides over the past 35 years, contended the bylaw is just the thin edge of the wedge.

"Get ready for pre-Mennonite life, because that's what we're aiming for," he said.

He questioned the enforceability of the bylaw and the estimated costs out-

lined in the staff report that went before council, pointing to other municipalities like Toronto, which budgeted \$450,000 for its pesticide bylaw when it was implemented in 2004.

Town Clerk Troy McHarg told him he stands by the facts he presented in the report.

A lengthy debate amongst council members ensued, with Schau starting things off with her motion directing staff to present a ban-with-exemptions style cosmetic pesticide bylaw to council for approval at a future meeting.

The motion went on to call for addressing the bylaw's related staffing impacts in the 2008 human resources plan and the public education/social marketing impacts in next year's budget package.

Schau has presented similar motions at two previous meetings, but neither was supported.

The Ward 4 councillor pointed out that while new things are being learned about pesticides, nothing seems to indicate that pesticides are safer than people think they are.

"If you believe that cosmetic pesticide use has a negative impact on the people of Milton, especially the children, then I urge you to vote in favour (of the motion)," she said.

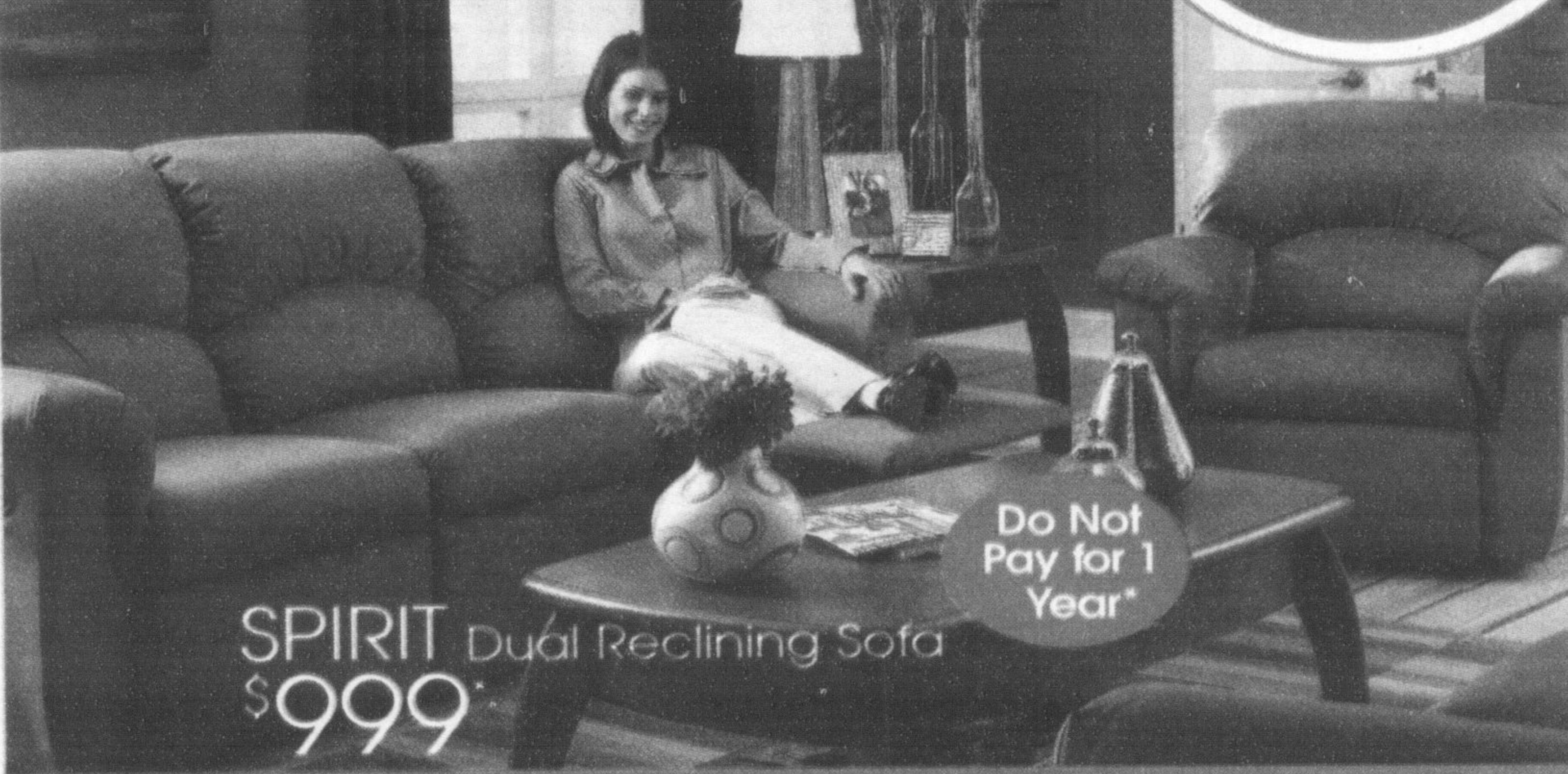
But once again, Schau's plea failed to sway the majority of her colleagues on council.

"I honestly believe it should be a provincial bylaw," said Ward 2 Councillor Mike Boughton.

Wards 1 and 3 Councillor Barry Lee said he agrees with Boughton, but took his notion one step further.

• see COUNCILLORS on page A13

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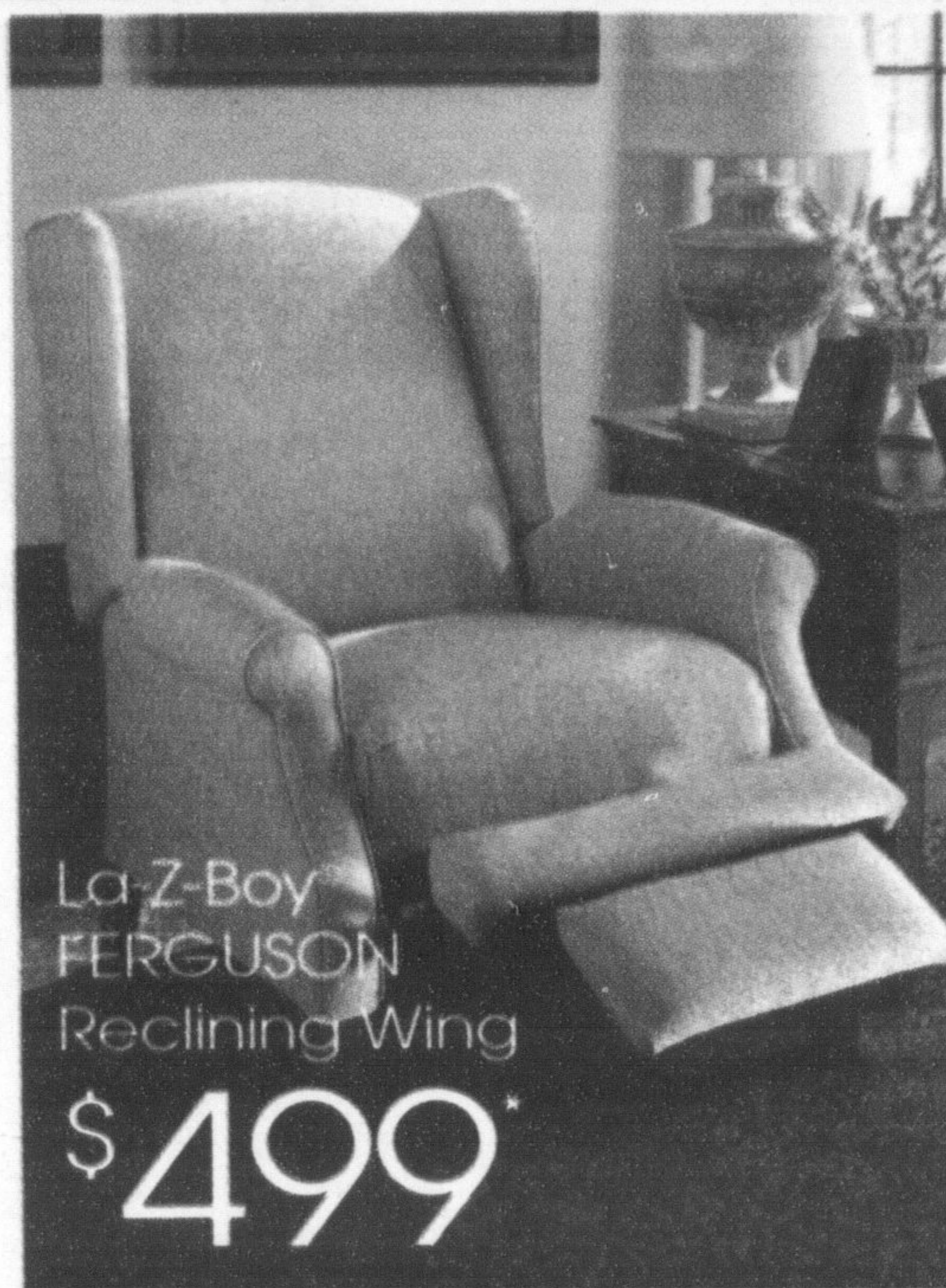
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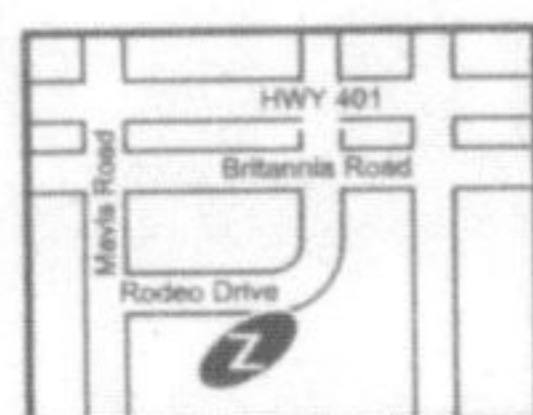
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