

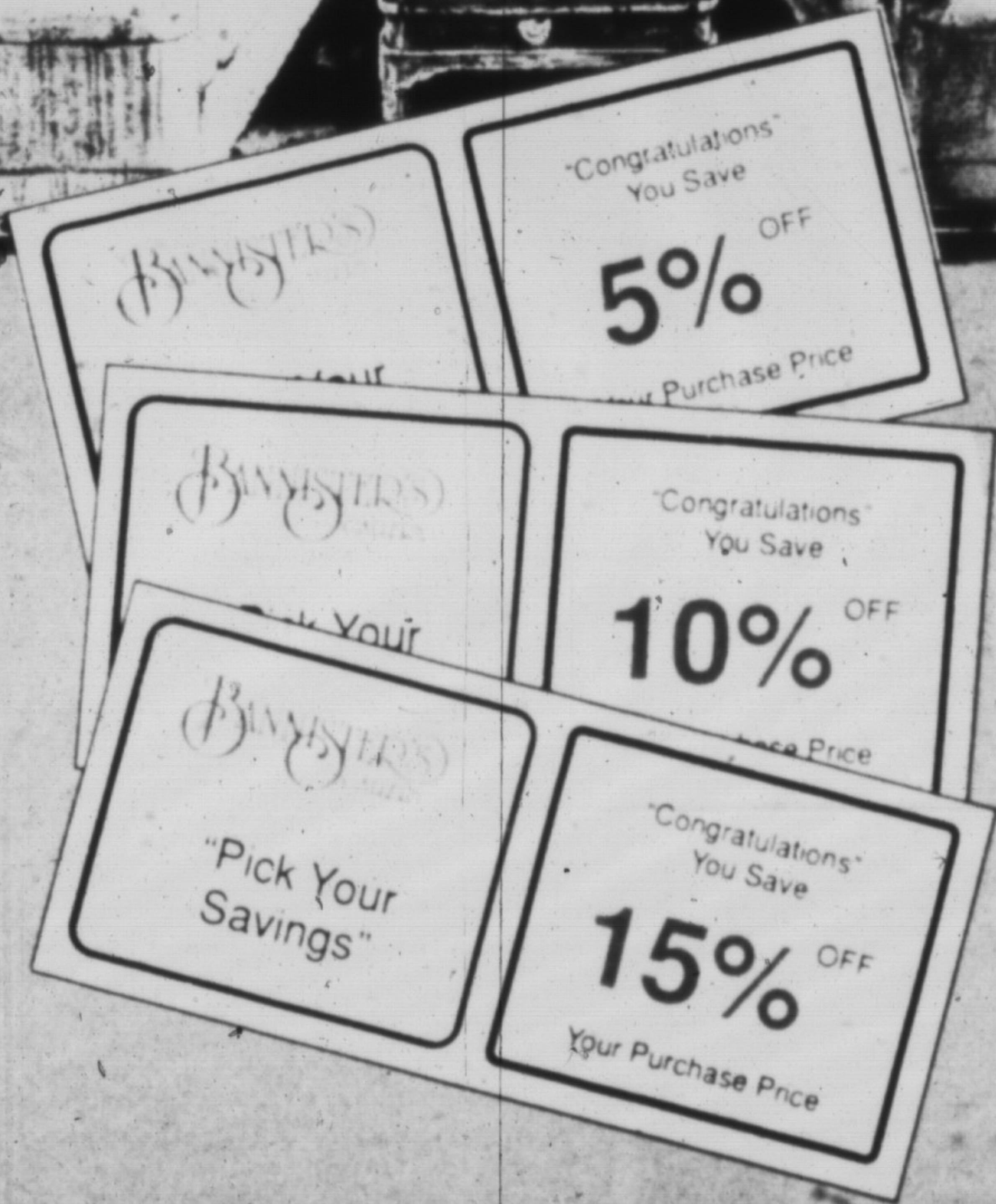
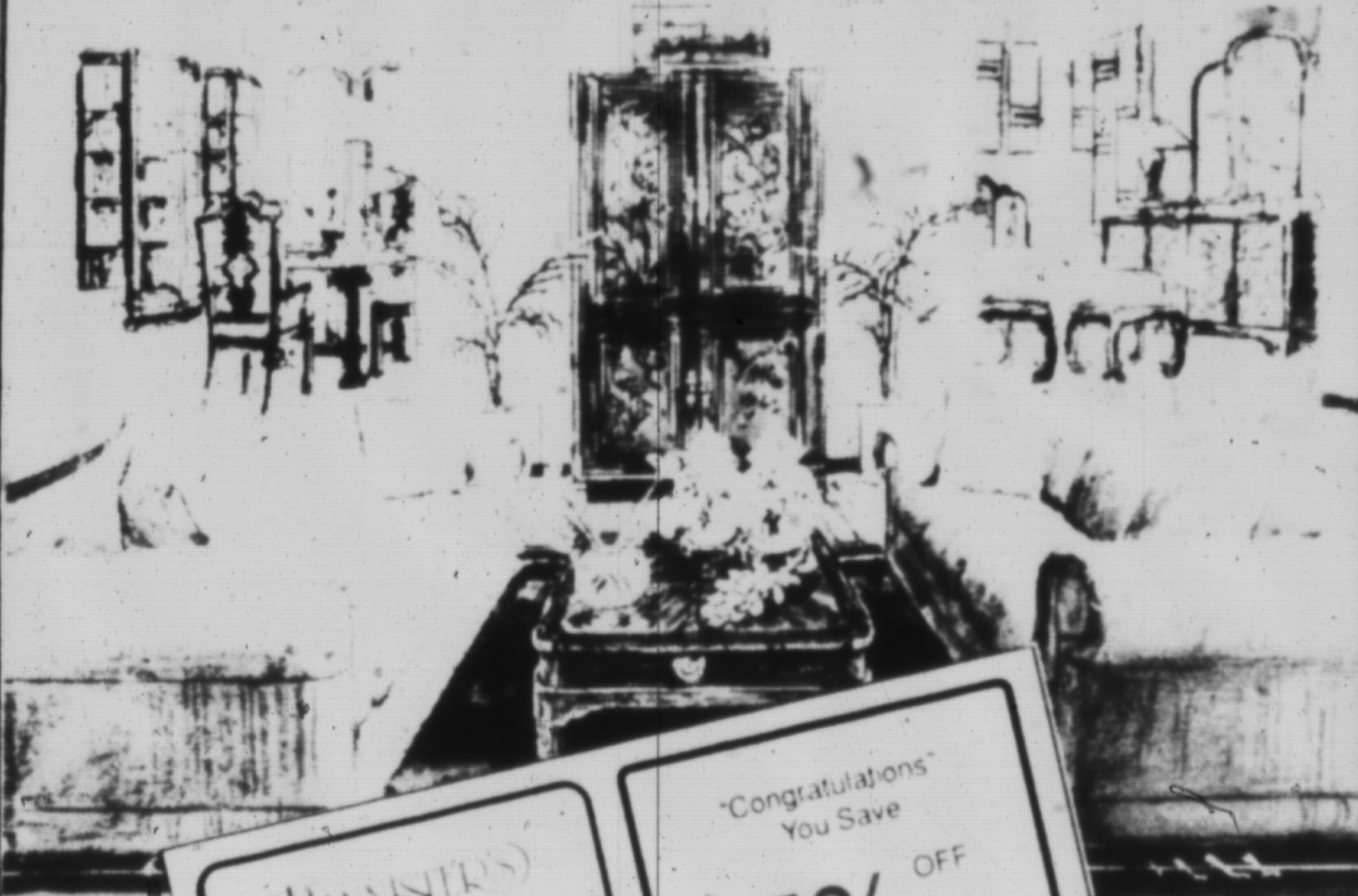
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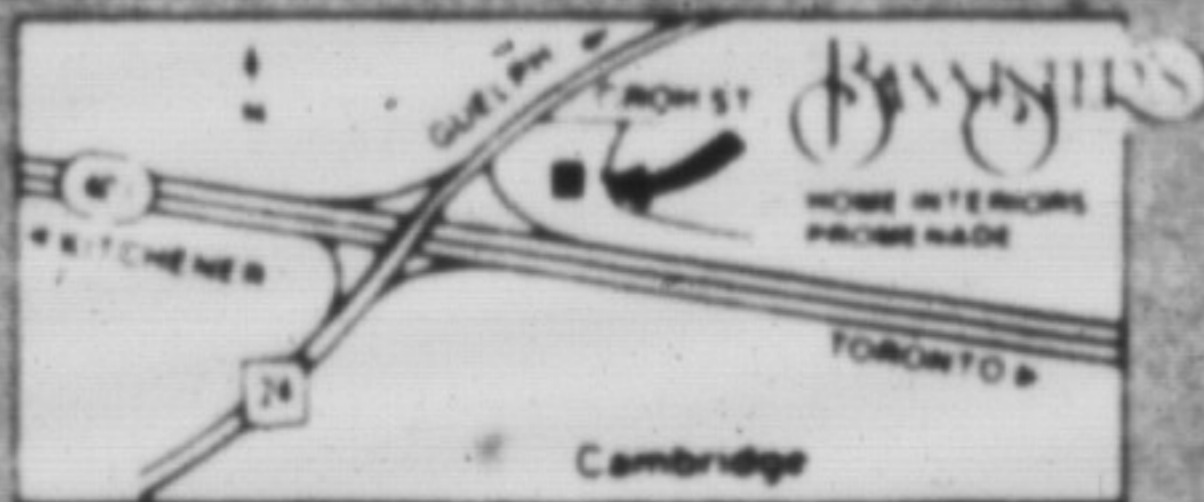
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Property damage, theft pace Halton's 3% crime increase

Crime in Halton Region increased almost three per cent last year, a recent police report says.

The most often reported crimes are theft under \$1,000 and property damage, which accounted for about 60 per cent of all reported crime in Halton region in 1987 and 1988.

There were 18,463 criminal acts reported to Halton police in 1988 including murder, sexual offences, robberies, thefts, drug violations and weapons offences.

Theft, break and enter and property damage are all committed often in Halton. The pattern is similar to the province as a whole, according to Paul Welsh of Halton Regional Police.

The 1988 numbers are comparable to the previous year. Assaults were up but domestic assaults were down.

Break and enters were up 14 per cent, which represents 231 more occurrences and vehicle theft was up 20 per cent, representing 97 more thefts than in 1987.

Lots of crime here

The incidence of crime in Milton, considering its population, is relatively high. Burlington, with four times the population has only about three times the crime. There were 151 reported assaults in Milton in 1988 while Burlington had only 343 assaults. The total crime incidence was 2,420 offences in Milton with Burlington at 7,496, again about three times the Milton figure.

"You could say that the rural area is more susceptible to crime because of its isolation. On the other standpoint the rural area probably has less reported crime by virtue of the fact that there is less population," said Sergeant Welsh.

Municipal parking offences increased dramatically, suggesting a crackdown by police. Approximately 16,000 more parking tickets were handed out, representing a 154 per cent increase from 1987.

"No it's not a matter of a crackdown, it's a matter of the use of by-law enforcement officers to give tickets," Sergeant Welsh said.

False alarms

There were 103,160 calls for service after traffic accidents in 1988. Also, there were 12,706 false alarms. Fatal accidents are up from 14 in 1987 to 22 in 1988, though accidents involving injuries are down. There has been no real change in the number of traffic injuries although the population has grown.

The RIDE program stopped 48,662 vehicles in 1988, an increase of almost 7,000 over the previous year. Warnings decreased from 4,476 to 3,256 and arrests decreased from 162 to 105. At the same time, charges for impaired driving increased by 10 to 101.

RIDE nets three charges for drinking

During the past week members of the Milton OPP charged three people with drinking and driving related offences. Nine 12-hour suspensions were issued and three individuals were charged with liquor violations.

Various RIDE programs were conducted in the area with 560 vehicles being checked.

Faster information

OPP has new number

The OPP have just started a central dispatch service of all of Niagara Region. The new number is 1-800-263-4242.

Detachments in Welland, Brantford, Simcoe, Norfolk, Cayuga, Niagara Falls and Milton all call through to the central dispatch in Burlington.

Information is now more readily available. The whole thing ties into our new radio communication system," said Milton Staff Sergeant Al Smouter.

The number is being advertised in newspapers and an insert is going into Bell Canada bills which should help increase public awareness.

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