

Be kind to Walleye

We hear a lot about spawning beds for lake trout and rainbows, but few of us remember that other fishes such as walleye, need a suitable spawning area as well.

As my favourite fishing waters are those around Georgian Bay, I have been very concerned about the decline of the local walleye population in that area.

I have received a letter from the Parry Sound Resort Area Association dealing with this problem. Chairman of this committee is W. A. Davis, who, I have been told, is a biologist. This letter is directed to the Hon. Frank Miller, Minister of Natural Resources.

Wiped out

The problem is the Groundhog Walleye population, which, according to this letter has been almost wiped out by the local commercial fishermen.

The 'groundhog population', so named because of its location near Groundhog Island close to

Shawanaga Bay, is the main spawning area for a large part of Georgian Bay.

Walleye taken from north of Byng Inlet to as far south as Twin Island near Carling township probably use this spawning area.

There is a small spawning population in the Shawanaga River, but it is believed that those fish remain in the area all year round.

Big decline

In 1963 an estimate of the Groundhog population made by local biologists indicated that there were about 13,000 fish present during walleye spawning time. Within two years this population was reduced to about 700 fish.

The dramatic decline of the walleye population was directly attributed to commercial fishing on or near the spawning grounds.

The population of walleye remained very small over the years, less than 500 fish. In 1975 a strong-year class of fish increased it to about 2700 fish.



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Now get this. The local commercial fishermen were permitted a quota of 15,000 pounds of walleye from this spawning area during 1976. As the present fish averaged about 3.9 pounds in weight, the total quota was for about 3850 fish, about 1000 more fish than were present.

The fishermen were able to catch about 15,000 pounds of walleye in that year, and based on this information, was estimated at about 3000 fish. The whole population has then, at least theoretically, been wiped out again.

Lots of people

Where are the priorities? It surely can't be the money as the value of the netted fish did not exceed \$22,000 and the potential annual value to the local tourist industry is well over \$100,000. During 1976 alone, over

70,000 people visited the camps and lodges in the area.

Smallmouth bass are not legal prey for commercial fishing.

However there is such a thing as incidental catch which means fish taken by mistake.

Although reliable information cannot be obtained, it is estimated that over 2000 smallmouth bass have been taken from this one area. There is no estimation on pike or other fish, but I suspect their numbers are even higher.

Ban nets

The government has now been asked by the local camp operators to declare walleye and pike as gamefish, and ban fishing with nets in the spawning areas. I was told that a two-mile limit was proposed. Is this really too much to ask? Hopefully, Mr. Miller will listen to the operators and the sportsmen before it is too late for one of the best fishing waters in the world.

Pickeral are scarce

Pickeral are scarce in some Southern Ontario lakes but are by no means an endangered species.

That's the word from Ken Irizawa, executive director of the ministry of natural resources division of Fish and Wildlife.

"The fact is some lakes are no longer suitable for the production of pickeral, and this puts an entirely different slant on the matter," Irizawa said.

Restrictive legislation aimed primarily at reducing the pickeral harvest, will not, according to Irizawa, perpetuate species in unsuitable habitat where the limiting factors include:

Siltation, fluctuating water levels, deteriorating water quality, and dissolved oxygen deficiencies due to water enrichment.

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Sell it

Don't throw junk away

By Millie Stewart

Now is the time of the year when all of us get that clean up fever. It does us good and it certainly helps those full closets and overcrowded basements.

When you have accumulated all your 'junk', don't throw it out. The Oak Ridges and District Minor Hockey Association is having a spring auction and flea market on June 4. That gives you plenty of time to get busy.

They are looking for donations of clothing, appliances, antiques and what ever else you care to contribute. They will not accept cars.

A special feature of the day will be Canada's oldest auctioneer. There will be refreshments and treasures galore to be had. What you can't use,

may be just what someone else has been wanting.

Another feature of this auction is that if you have any items that will sell for over \$100, they can be sold for you by the auctioneer at a 15 per cent commission.

The numbers to call for pick up items are 773-4310 and 773-5056.

Time to register
There is still time to register for the Lions annual bike-a-thon to be held May 7.

This is your opportunity to get out the bike and give it a good work-out.

The registration will take place at Bond Lake Arena on April 30 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

All pledges received will go to charity, 50 per cent to the charity of the rider's choice and 50 per cent to the Lions charity of their choice.

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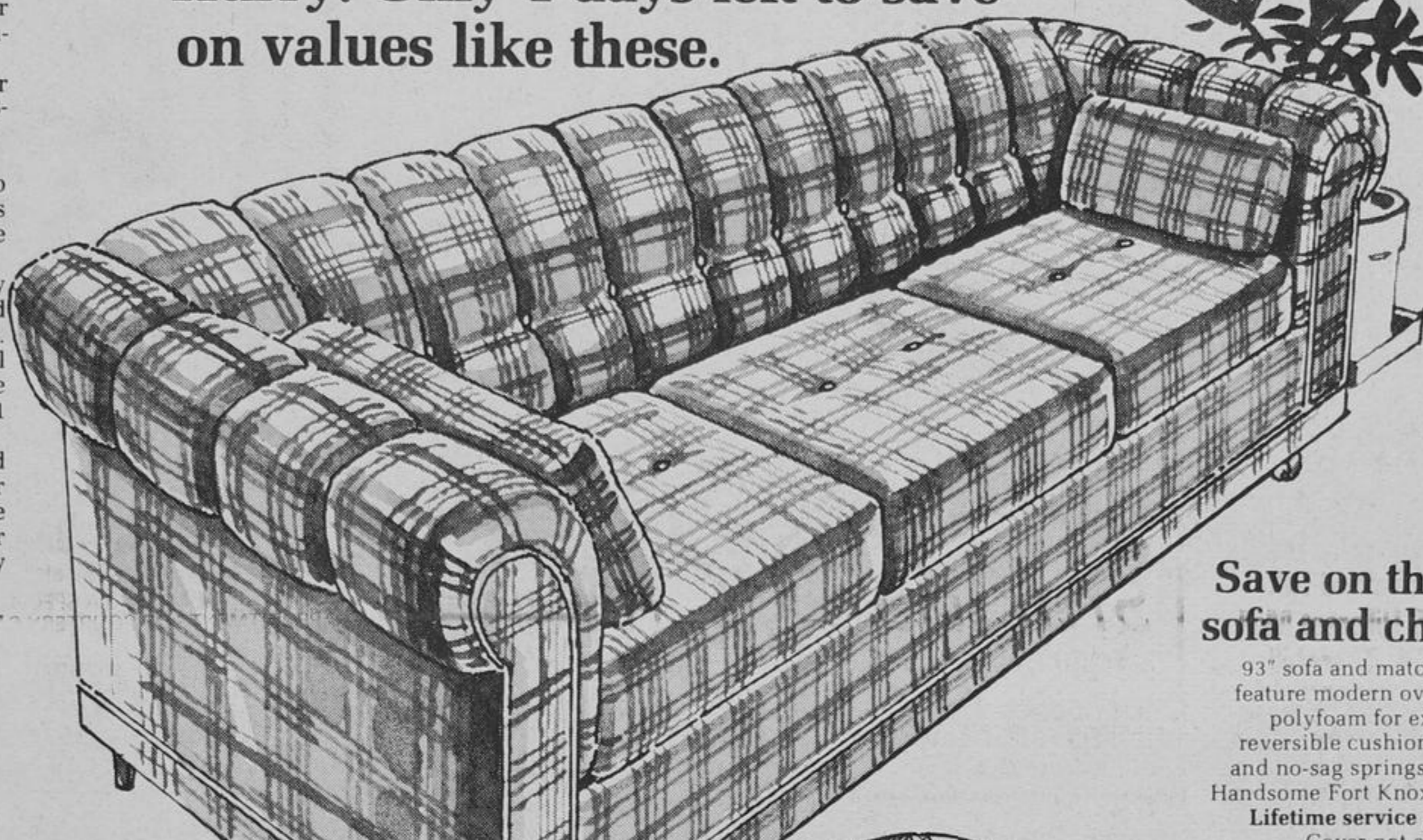
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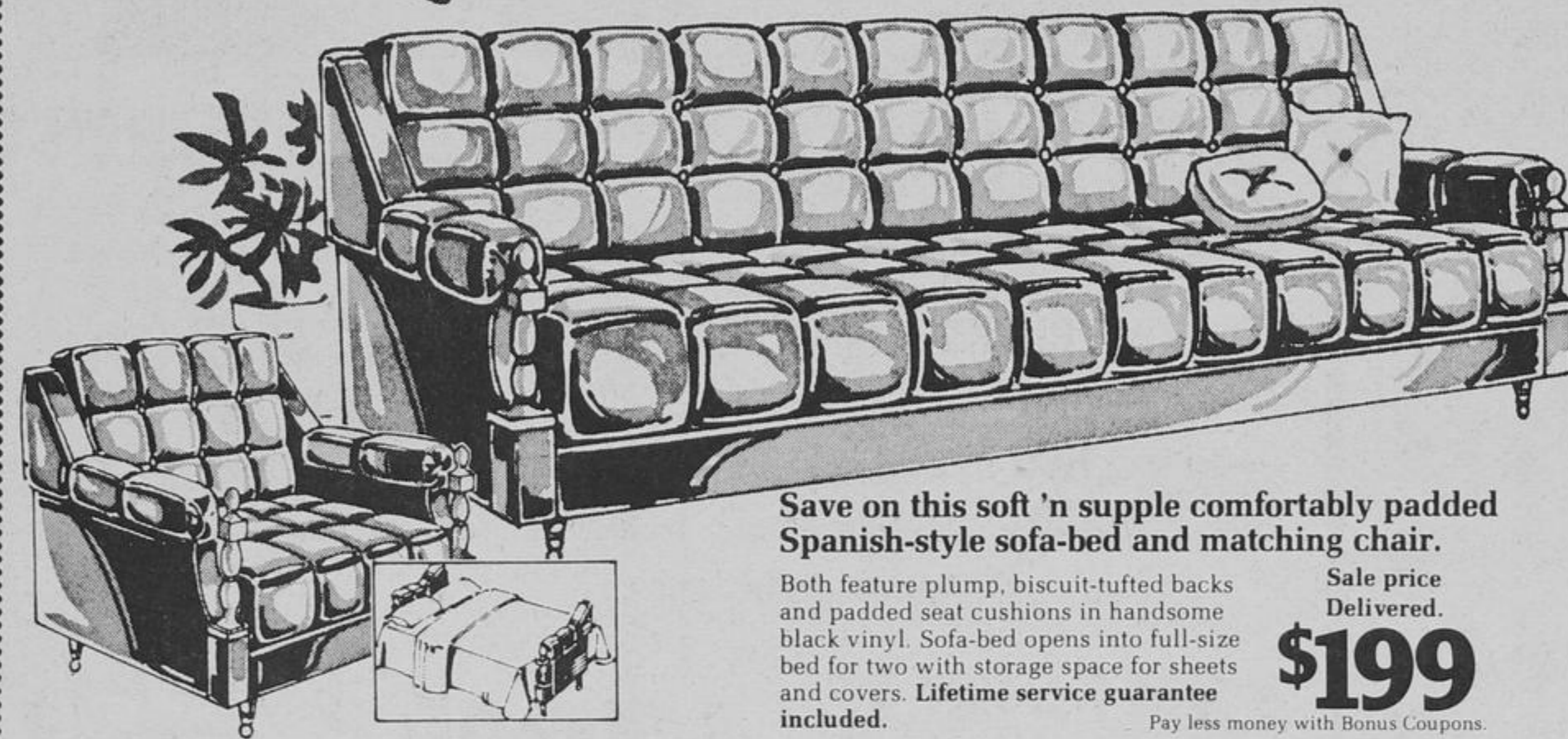


Add relaxing, country-casual charm to your home with this quality-crafted 86" Colonial-style sofa and matching chair.

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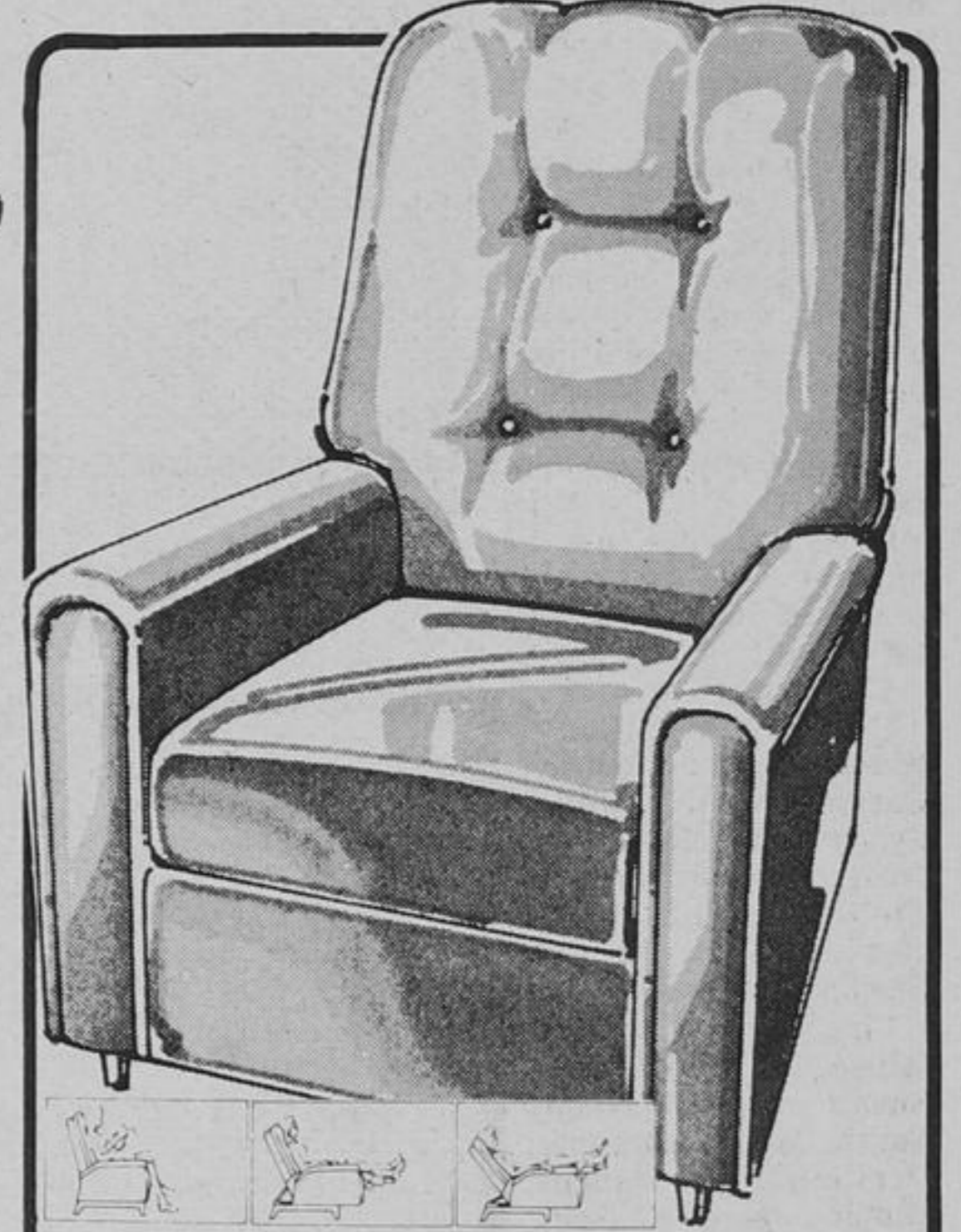


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