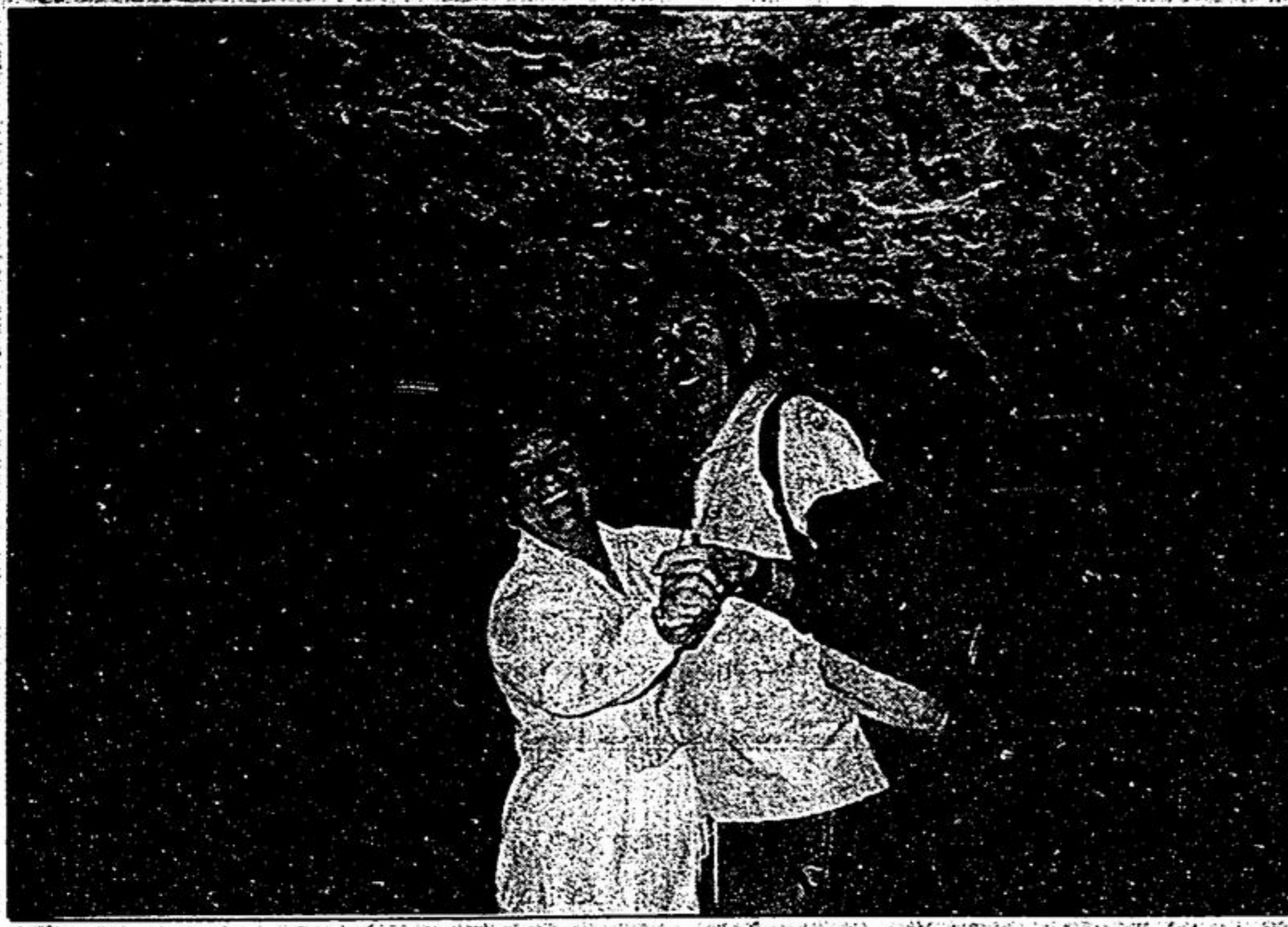


Family bicycles through Holland



Largest wine barrel

George Dufton and his wife Diane dance on the largest wine barrel in the world during their trip to Europe in August. The dance floor is in the wine cellar of Heidelberg Castle in West Germany. They also toured Holland by bicycle.

By BRUCE STAPLEY
When George Dufton and his family went into training earlier this year, riding their bicycles 20 kilometres or more every day, they weren't just gearing up for your everyday cycling challenge. What, George, his wife Diane and their 13-year-old son Chad were preparing themselves for was a five-day, 300-kilometre bike tour of Holland in August, the highlight of their three-week European holiday.

The Duftons had become excited about the idea of cycling through Holland two years ago when they took a three-week bus tour from London, England to Rome. "Holland was so clean," recalls George of his earliest impressions of the country. "We got some information on Dutch cycling tours from the Dutch travel bureau in Toronto. It took us about a year to piece it all together."

The Winlane Drive, Stouffville family flew to Amsterdam on July 23. After two days looking at Rembrandts and Van Gogh originals in the Rijksmuseum, it was onto Brussels, where they saw the site of the battle of Waterloo.

They headed to Germany, spending ten days driving upstream beside the Rhine River

in a rented car. "We went from castle to castle," says George. "Each one has its own legend of how it came to be, and of its inhabitants."

And then it was off to Holland for their bike tour. "We chose the Postilion Hotels Bicycle Tour. Each day, we would get up, have breakfast in the hotel, and then set out for the next hotel."

A picnic lunch was packed for them, and their luggage was transferred daily from hotel to hotel.

They were delighted when they found that there was a big flower show being held at Cannenburg Castle, outside Zwolle, while they were there. "It was just gorgeous," George enthused.

They cycled past windmills, and caught first hand glimpses of the Dutch people and their lifestyle. "One of the things that was really fascinating was that whenever there is a prominent event in someone's life, the person's friends and neighbors all get together and decorate the house. There was a couple getting married, and there were banners on the house, along with effigies of the couple."

The route led them through some fierce hills, and George admits that, despite their training, they were forced to get off their bikes and push them on occasion.

There was a cultural mix of people in their cycling group, and George maintains that the camaraderie was a big part of the tour.

Just getting to meet the people along the way was a lot of fun," says George. "There were 46 people in the tour, from England and Scotland, 10 from Germany, and we were the only Canadians. All the others were Dutch." Communicating became a bit of a problem at times, but, according to George, that contributed to the overall fun. "I have high school French, and a little German. I can read a menu in both languages."

The group would cover anywhere from 50 to 70 kilometres a day, and were always well received by the Dutch people wherever they went. George admits to being fortunate in that the sweltering temperatures experienced back home this summer were not present in Holland.

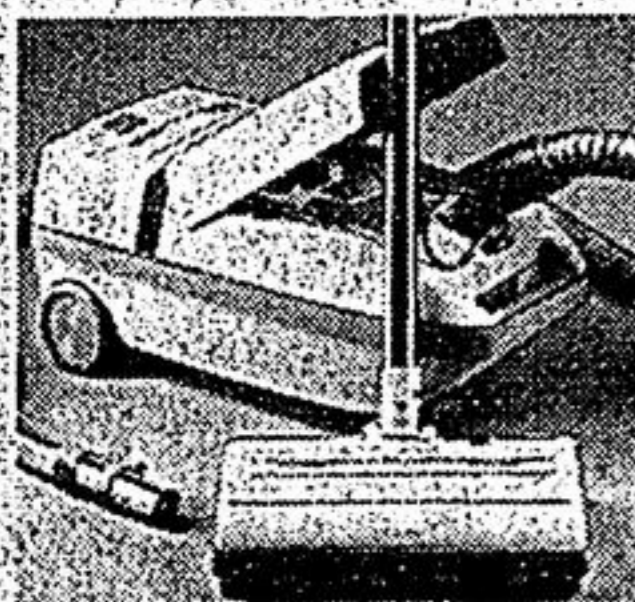
George insists he's sold on the idea of bike tours as a means of really getting to see a foreign destination. "It was just great, and it was a good deal. And it was good for us, because it may be the last time we can all take a holiday together, now that Chad is getting older."

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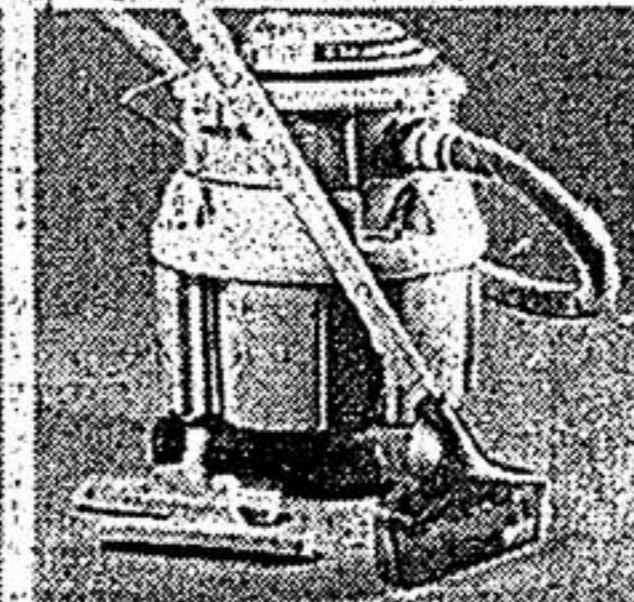
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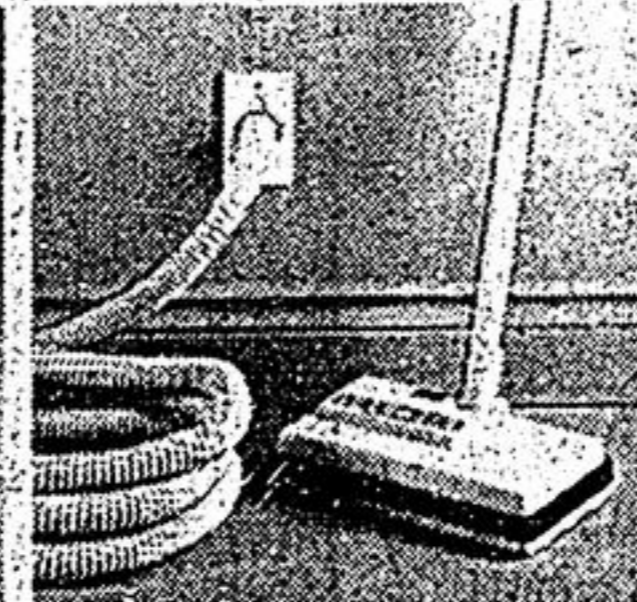
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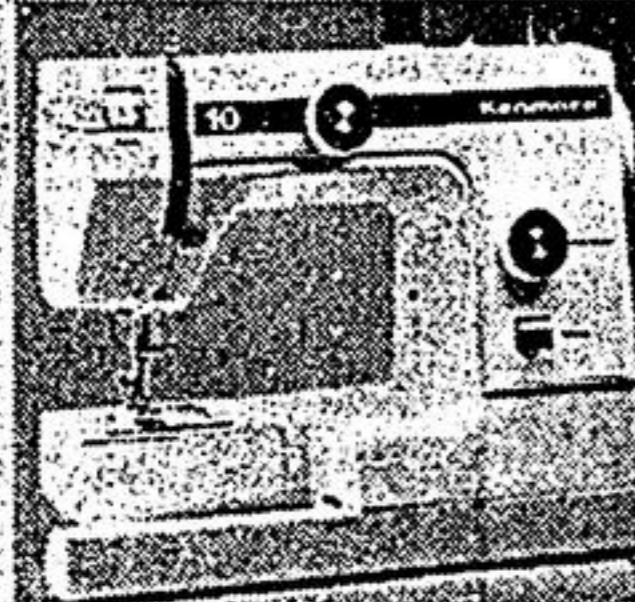
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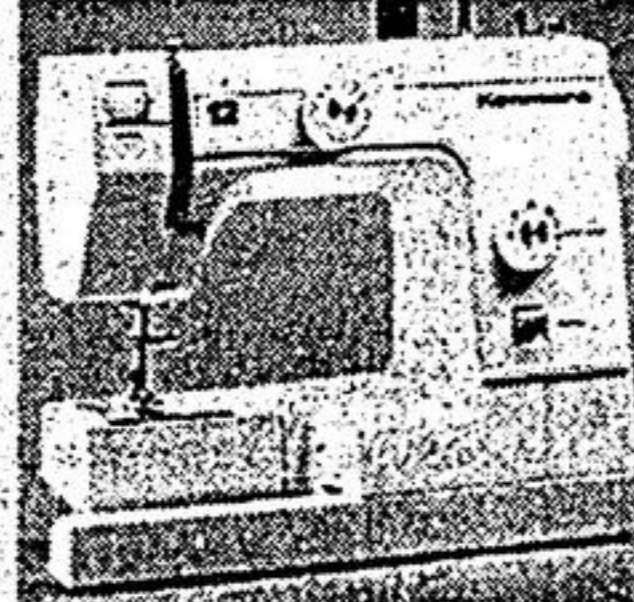
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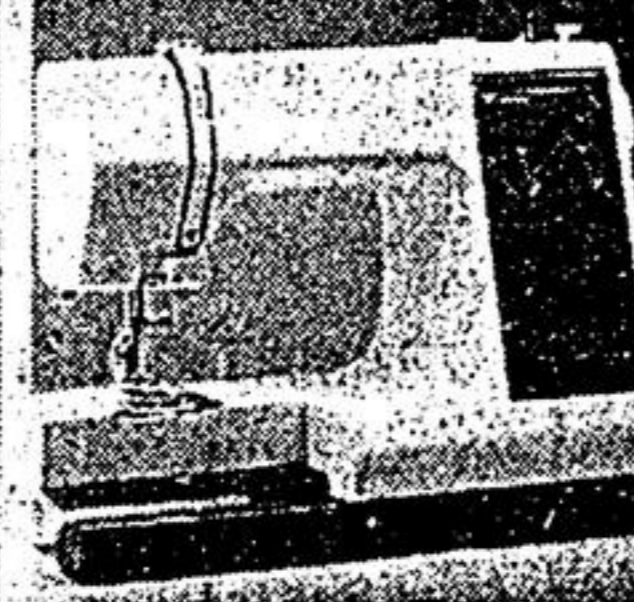
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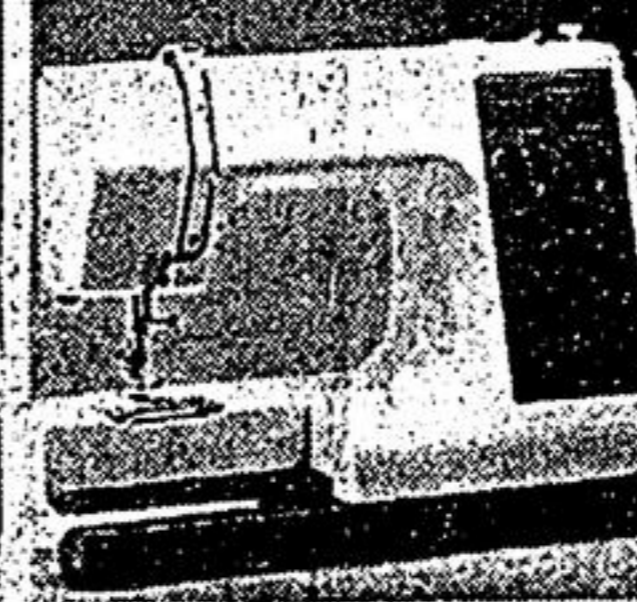
349⁹⁹ Without trade-in
Reg. 419.99
319⁹⁹ With trade-in
Kenmore 10-stitch sewing machine. Convertible. #81261. Reg. prices stated are Sears prices.



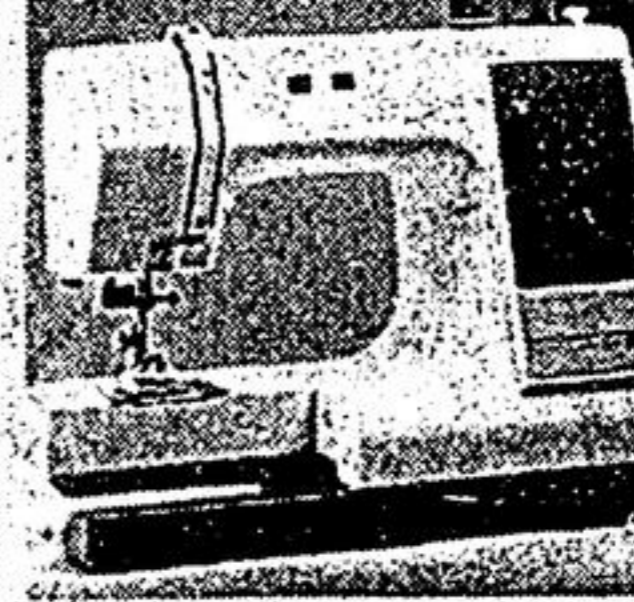
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