

Photo: JIM THOMAS

The Szuks family of Markham is now five since the adoption of their daughter Taralin. Taralin is from Korea. Other members of the family include father Alex, mother Barbara and sons Jonathan and Michael. The adoption process took two years to complete.

Former Stouffville family rejoices at daughter's arrival

By KATE GILDERDALE

"She's a dream come true," said Barbara Szuks of Taralin Marie, the beautiful, eight-month-old baby girl from Korea she and her family adopted last May.

The Szuks, who lived in Stouffville for three years before moving to Markham in 1987, waited a long time for Taralin, but her arrival proved their wait was worthwhile.

It took Barbara, husband Alex and sons Michael and Jonathan more than two years of applications, interviews and careful screening before Alex was able to travel to Korea to find the daughter who turned their dream into reality.

"It was something we had contemplated for years," Barbara notes. "It wasn't a snap decision."

Nevertheless, there were times when their determination wavered, she admits.

"Your life can change so much in 2½ years, and we did go through times of doubt," she says.

The emotional support they gave each other helped them overcome their uncertainties. "When one of us went through times of doubt, the other was supportive," she said.

The Szuks' first step in the adoption process was to contact Family and Children's Services of York Region in Newmarket, which arranged to do a home study through one of its social workers.

During the year-long study, the whole family was interviewed, both together and separately, before their application was forwarded to the adoption desk in Ottawa. It was held there for another year, pending requests from Korea for adoptive parents. "We picked Korea because we had both thought of it separately," Barbara explains. When she talked to Alex about adopting a baby from Korea, it turned out that he had been thinking the same thing.

"It was something we had to do," stresses Barbara. Strengthening their resolve was the fact that friends in Montreal had also adopted a baby from there. "Somehow that made it more real for us," she says.

Last March 15, the long-awaited news finally arrived.

"The phone rang while I was getting dinner. It was the social worker to tell me things were settled," she recalls. At the end of May, Alex travelled to Korea to collect the newest member of the Szuks' family.

"He said he really wanted to pick her up," Barbara says. "He and Taralin were very close right from the beginning."

Alex first picked Taralin out of the foster home, and later collected her from the hospital, which is run by private donations.

"We had to pay to get her. The money goes to support the hospital," Barbara explains.

Alex spent eight days in Korea before bringing his daughter home. When she arrived, "bonding was almost instant," Barbara said.

Having captivated her immediate family, Taralin set to work on relatives and friends.

"Our families were very supportive, they welcomed her into the family with open arms," Barbara said. "My aunt held her and kissed her and said, 'this baby feels like family.' We feel so blessed that she's here and she's healthy."

Friends, too, rallied around with gifts and boxes of clothing. "We received over 70 gifts; the support that people have given us emotionally and physically has been fantastic," she comments.

Michael, 10, and Jonathan, 6, have been equally enthusiastic and adore their little sister. "She gets so much attention and loving she never has to cry. Everyone is so in love with this baby," Barbara says proudly.

The social worker still visits the family and they go to court for the final adoption proceedings in January.

And as far as the family is concerned, it's just a formality because Taralin is already a complete part of their lives.

As Taralin crawls happily around the floor of her parents' home, it's hard to believe anybody could resist her. No wonder Barbara feels she's a dream come true.

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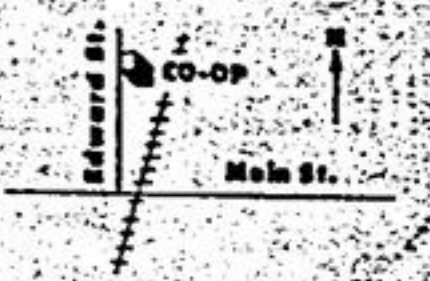
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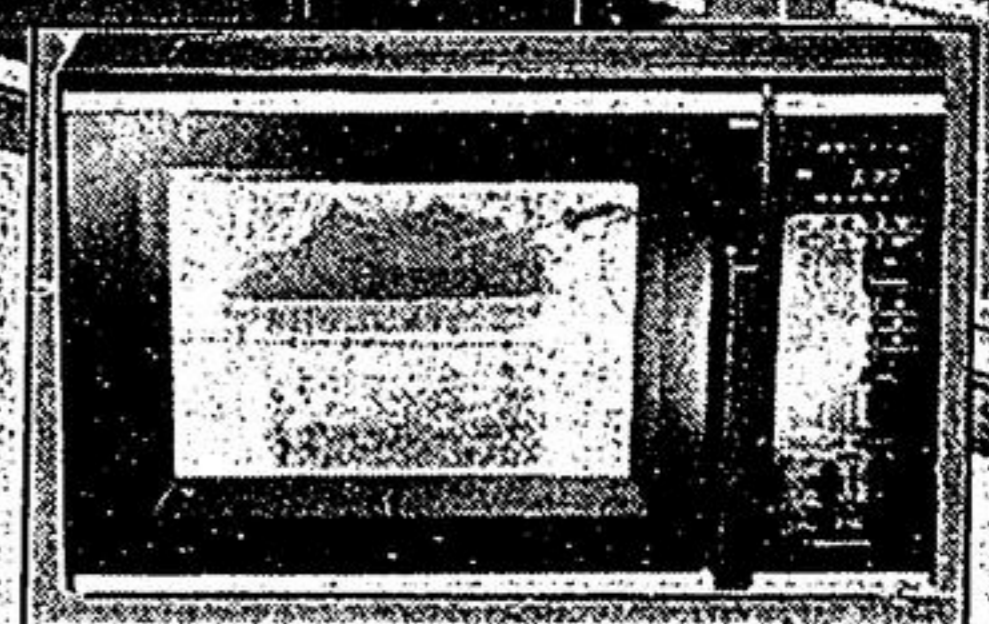
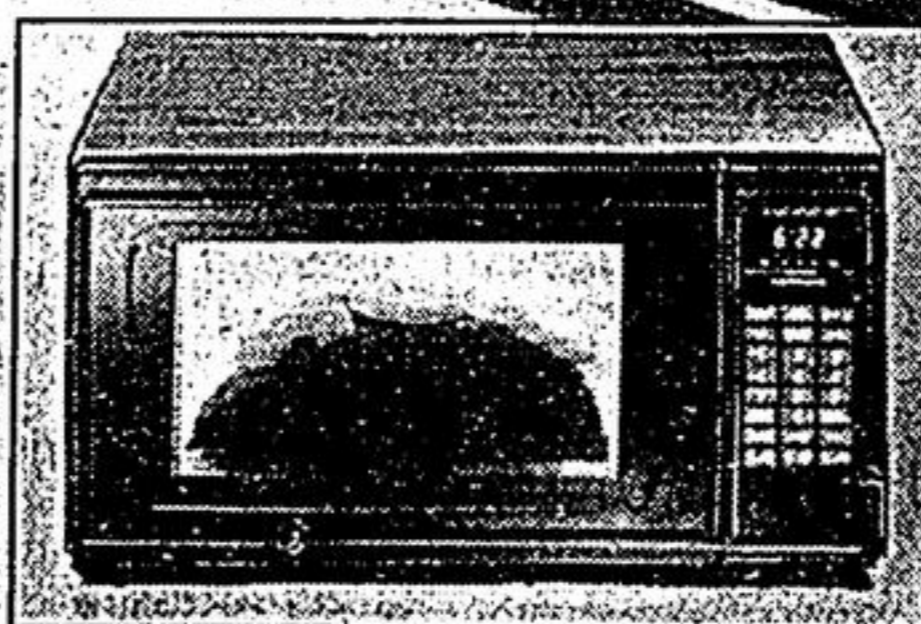
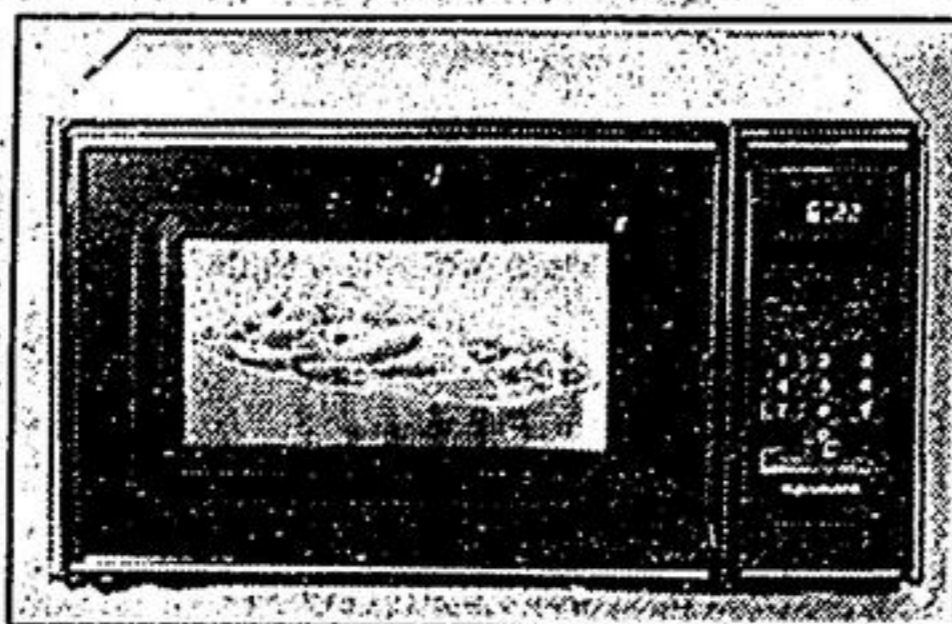
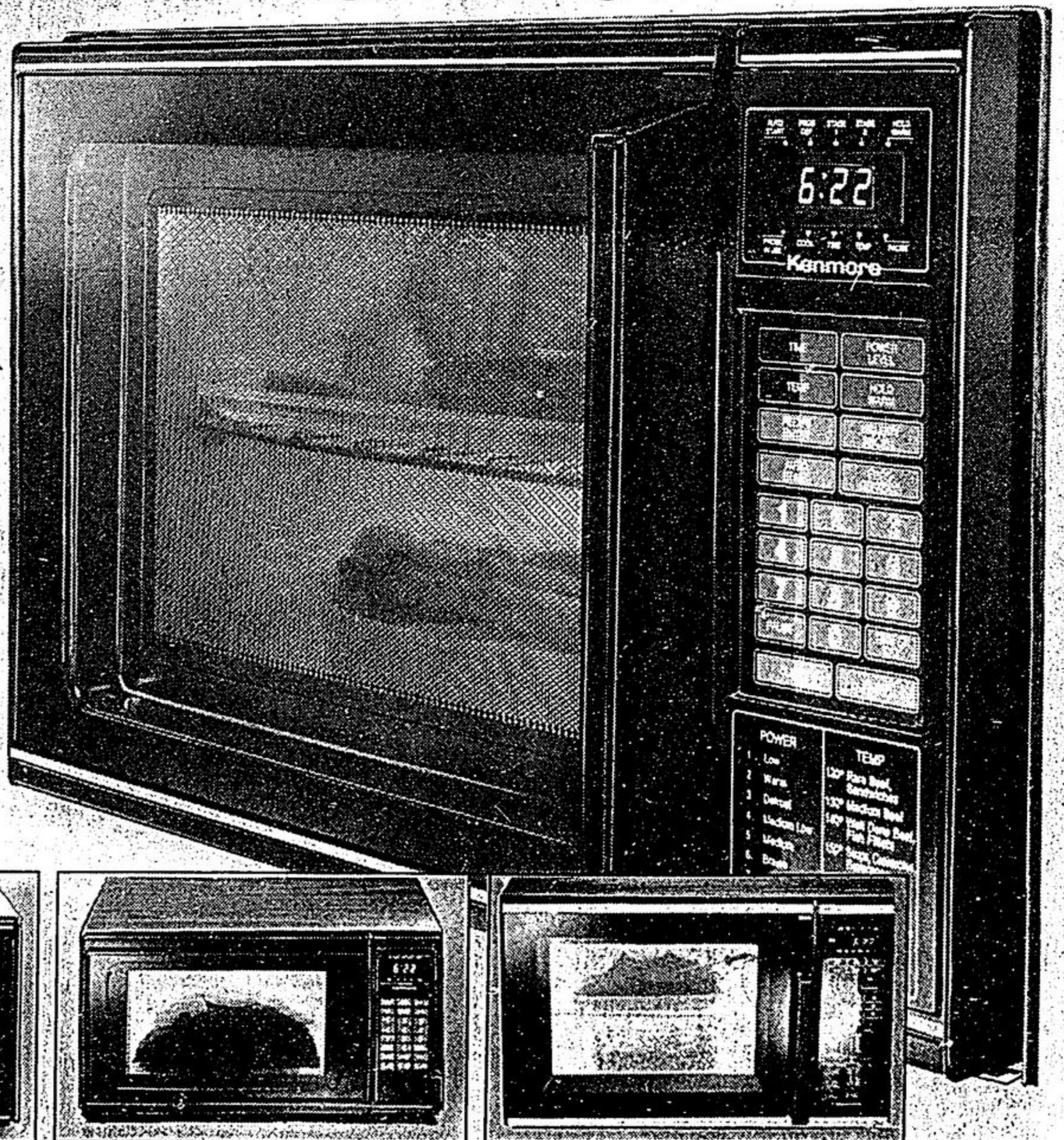
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