

We won't take theft of wicker sitting down

If you should happen to see some stylish wicker porch furniture complete with comfy cushions going cheap at a yard sale in these parts, you'd better check it for temperature before poring over it too closely.

You might just burn your hands. Call it the great wicker porch furniture caper. Although for those of us who have been victimized, it's not very amusing. Stepping out onto the front porch to partake of the smells and sounds of yet another glorious spring morning recently, I found my buoyancy



From Where I Live

Bruce Stapley

buffeted upon noting our wicker chairs and love seat sitting naked. Their green floral cushions were gone, leaving this threesome resembling a couch after the kiddies have rendered it cushionless in their search for walls for a makeshift fort.

Obviously the work of mischievous

vandals, I thought. I must confess, however, that it did bring back memories of my early teen days with all the pranks we used to pull on neighbours not enamoured with our endless and noisy road hockey games played in front of their houses.

My wife Susan waxed absolutely indignant, sputtering out muffled expletives while theorizing on the complete lack of justification for having such a thieving boor as a member of an otherwise law abiding society. I cringed as she spelled out exactly what form of justice she would mete out if she were in a position to try and convict this low life felon. She even suggested we look into installing hidden cameras on the porch so as to be able to identify the culprit if we were to be hit again.

We checked up and down the street and searched the back yard in case the thug or thugs had wantonly cast our cushions hither or yon after perpetuating their brash deed. But to no avail.

The plot thickened the following day when, upon encountering my neighbour from across the street in the grocery store, she asked me if I had noticed anything abnormal the past few nights. I told her that yes, by golly, we had suffered the loss of our wicker porch furniture cushions and we were more than a little bit miffed. It turned out she had been victimized the same night, with not only her cushions but her entire wicker porch furniture set taken. Obviously these thieves had an eye for quality, for her set was specially made in British Columbia, whereas ours was a more modest Taiwanese import.

All of a sudden a case of petty theft had been elevated to outright robbery. I suddenly had

visions of cube vans combing neighbourhoods in the wee hours of the morning, with hooded thugs spying out porches adorned with wicker furniture. I wondered if it was time to form a wicker vigilante squad. No, too Southern United States, I decided. Instead, I resolved to scan yard sales and flea markets everywhere I go in search of wicker furniture whose pedigree can't be substantiated.

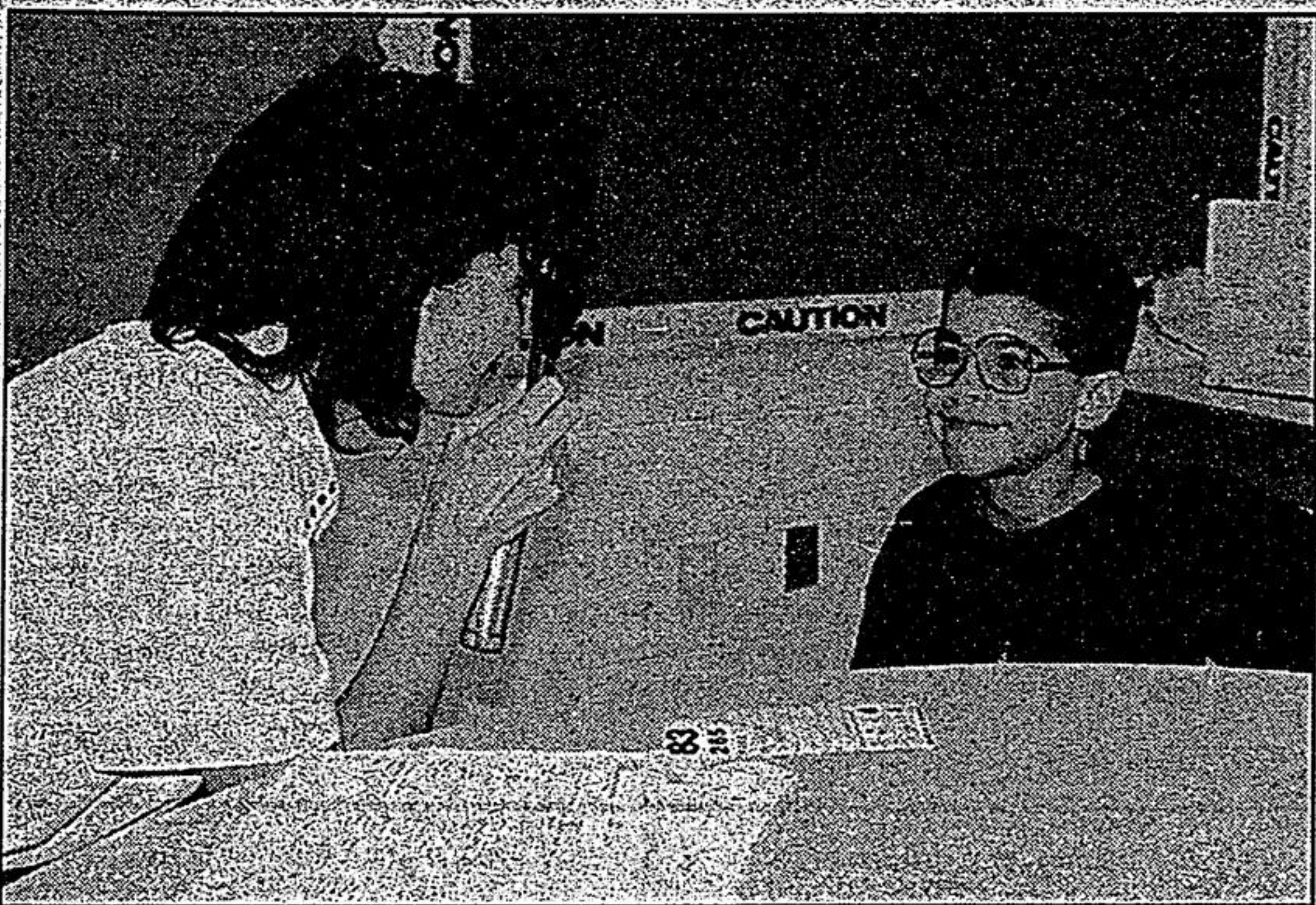
In the meantime, trying to replace our cushions has become an exercise in frustration. I started out by calling the department store that sold us our wicker set to see if they carried spare cushions.

Nothing doing, he said, suggesting I contact the chain's customer relations office. The man on the other end of the 1-800 number started out by telling me to call the store from which I had purchased the wicker. I sensed a wild goose chase coming on.

The guy eventually agreed to do some digging for me. He called me back an hour or so later with a list of wicker importers and trading companies I could contact in an effort to line up my replacement cushions. So far, my efforts have come to naught.

But I'm sure we'll eventually succeed in replacing our cushions in one form or another, and we will once again be able to sit out on a beautiful spring evening sipping tea in cushiony comfort.

But the next time some pilfering punk sets his sights on our porch, I plan to provide a surprise for him. Surely there must be a way to set a rat-trap underneath a wicker furniture cushion. Somehow, the idea seems fitting.



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