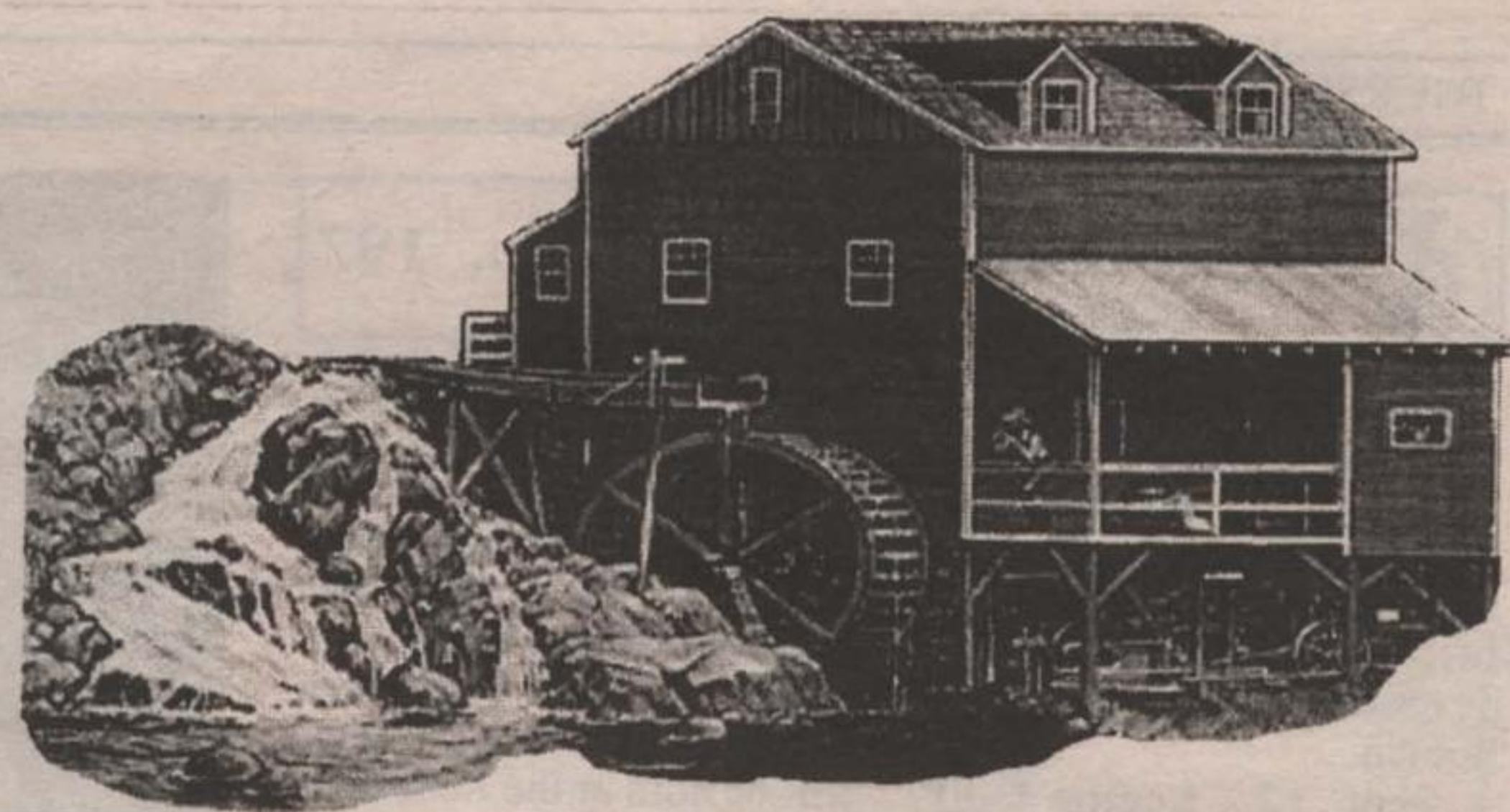


The Rockwood MILLER



ECLECTIC EVENT: The Subtonic Monks, shown here at the Harris woollen mills ruins in the Rockwood Conservation Area, will take the audience on a theatrical-musical journey into improvisation during the Spirit Valley Experience on September 20 at the conservation area. — Frances Niblock photo

Community play featured at Spirit Valley Experience

By FRANCES NIBLOCK
The Acton Tanner

African drummers, Celtic fiddlers, artisans, natural healing arts practitioners and a huge cast of actors will converge on the 150-year-old Harris woollen mill in the Rockwood Conservation Area on September 20 for the Spirit Valley Experience III - a unique festival of arts and nature.

As with past festivals, organizers have invited an eclectic mix of quirky entertainers and artists to the daylong festival. This year's visual arts display - Fusion '98 - features the work of many local artists, including Acton's Kim DeBruyn. Their work will be displayed on the walls of mill ruins and will be used as inspiration for what is billed as Jam Sandwich - artistic and performance responses to the art works and open stage. Musical guests include Rockwood's Alphorn Duo, a capella vocalist Honey Novick, the Subtonic Monks, solo saxophonist James Phelps and guitarist James Pybus.

The major focus of this year's festival is an Eramosa-Guelph community play called All Over The Map, written by former Eramosa politician and Eden Mills resident Dale Hamilton. The production, in conjunction with Everybody's Theatre Company and the West End Women's Institute, examines the forced marriage - amalgamation - of Eramosa, Guelph, Nichol and Pilkington Townships.

The prologue of the play

takes place in the mill ruins and then the audience hops on buses for a guided tour of the new township with theatrical and musical happenings en route. The cast, some of them on the buses and some at predetermined stops, are part of the "wedding party" which returns to the mills ruins for the final wedding ceremony.

Playwrite Hamilton said the production is a fully collaborative play.

"I think that the thing that sets this kind of theatre apart is that it is all-inclusive. Everybody who wants to be in it can and at last count we had 98 people in the cast and will adjust the script accordingly if more want to join," Hamilton explained last Tuesday at a media launch for the play and festival.

"We're using a wedding as an analogy and I assure you it's not a wedding without some hitches and second thoughts - much like the amalgamation forced on this area by the Harris government," Hamilton said, adding that they are taking a comedic look at the amalgamation, not a "heavy-handed political view."

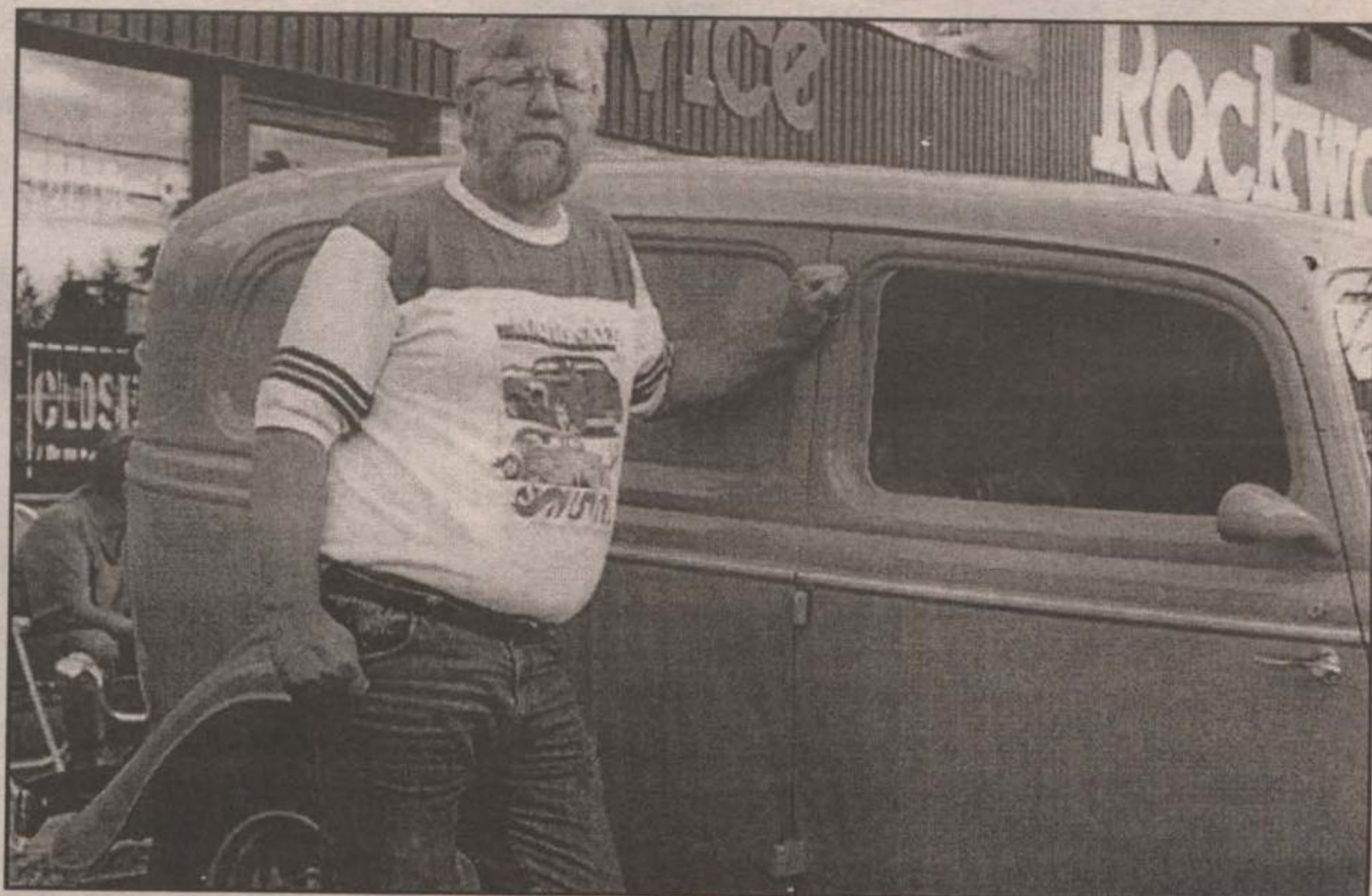
The "bride and groom" decide to take a pre-wedding tour before the ceremony and on the way they begin to argue about the amalgamation of the townships, the demolition of the Bowstring Bridge in Eden Mills and other local issues. Although the wedding does take place, Hamilton said things get very interesting when the minister asks if there's anyone who thinks the marriage shouldn't go ahead.

All Over The Map director Kim Renders, formerly of Acton, described the play as a huge undertaking and joked that when the stage manager calls for places some of the cast get in their cars and drive for half-an-hour.

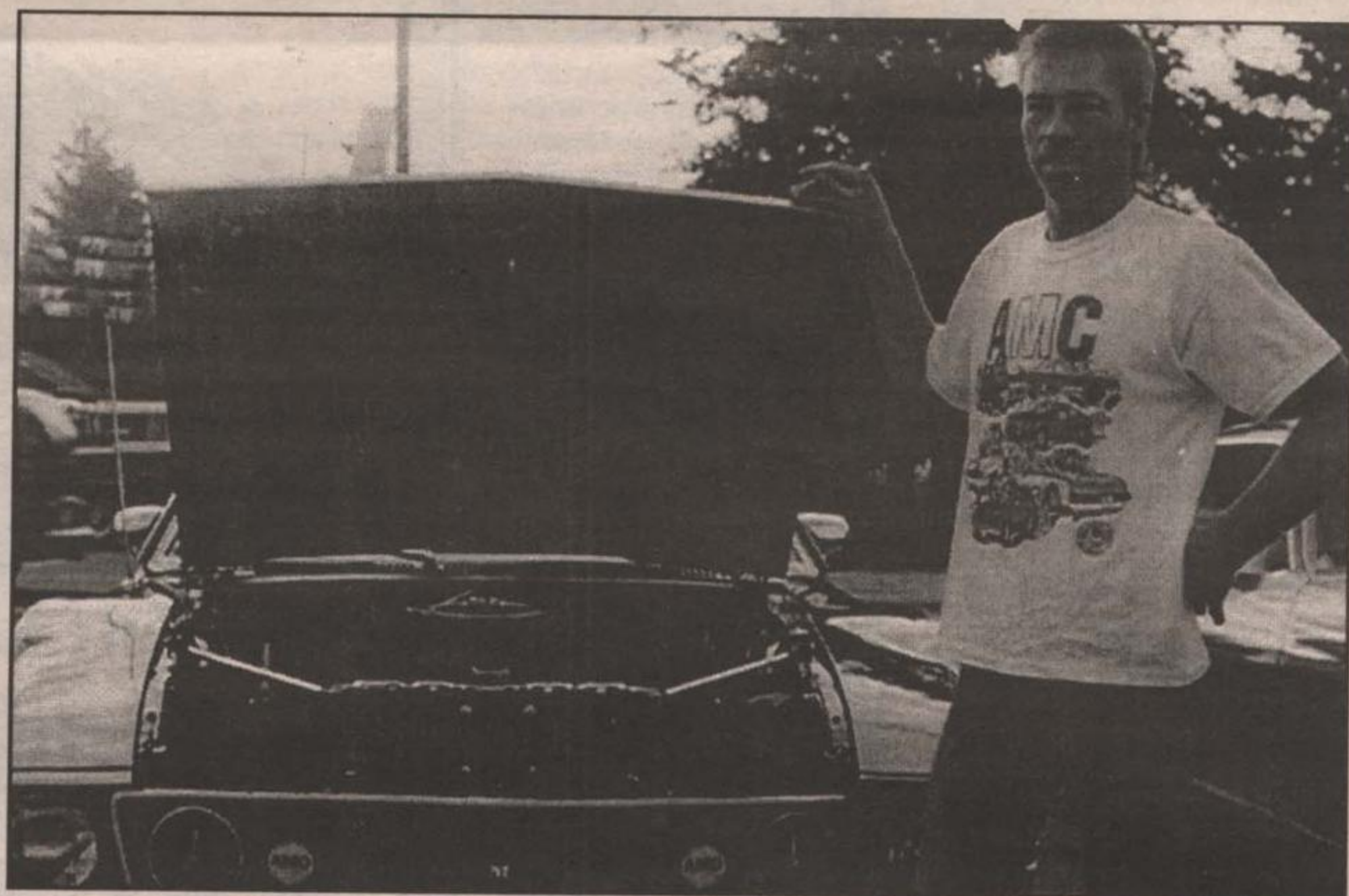
"If the point of a community play is to build community spirit, I firmly believe that this is already happening."

All Over The Map will be presented on September 19 and 20 at 2 p.m., during the Spirit Valley Experience on September 20, and again on September 26 and 27. For ticket information call 856-9999.

A Blast From the Past Rockwood Cruise Night



GREEN MACHINE: Hugh Brooks of Brooks Restoration, Guelph, showed his 1934 Ford sedan delivery truck at Rockwood's monthly cruise night.



EXTINCT SPECIES: Paul Price drove his 1973 AMX Javelin from Listowel for Saturday's cruise night in Rockwood. His licence plate reads XTNCT. — Angela Tyler photos



SPIRITED SINGING: Eramosa resident and playwright Dale Hamilton listens to the topical tunes of James Gordon who wrote many of the songs that will be featured in a community play called All Over The Map, which will be staged as part of the Spirit Valley Experience at the Rockwood Conservation Area next month. — Frances Niblock photo

We're Back!

The Rockwood Miller returns as part of *The New Tanner* this week!

Watch for more Rockwood and Eden Mills news and features in the coming weeks.

We hope The Miller will remain a part of your community newspaper, but we can't do it without your support. Call us with your news tips, upcoming events and of course your advertisements!

853-0051
or fax 853-0052