

This 'operation' didn't succeed

DOWNSVIEW — Theatre Passe Muraille's Operation Finger Pinky, staged at York University's Burton Auditorium recently, is a terrific example of the way art is fashioned on the back of some worthy cause and accepted solely on the basis of its sentiments.

theatre review

York University has been involved with the women's movement in a big way in the past year or so, and its four days of sessions on Women Working was kicked off by this same Theatre Passe Muraille offering. I can only assume that, having proselytized to the converted, it was accepted joyfully for its message of In Women, and its inability, its predictability, its tedium overlooked. There is no other explanation for the absence of word-of-mouth dismay that would have spared others from being subjected to it.

Throughout this century populist movements have, with varying degrees of success, bred attempts to dramatize their struggles. But the operative word here is dramatize. Operation Finger Pinky purports to do that for dehumanized, underpaid, ill-treated secretaries in offices all over, but instead it merely narrates a series of vignettes and vicissitudes. There is no dramatic core to this play for anything it wants to say to adhere to. Its basic premise, that starting a union is difficult, gets lost in a shuffle of buzzing buzzers, ringing bells and interminable games of musical desks.

Uncertain whether its funny or sad. It spends most of its time (a lot) and energy (very little) in being neither. Its few funny moments and its one or two valid points are disrupted by stretches of dully factual, preachy dialogue, semi-songs or innumerable exits and entrances. Any tempo or momentum it may have aimed at are destroyed time and time again.

It can't decide if its target is really women's rights or workers' rights so its buckshot is scattered. Its point is never made forcefully enough to convince any but the already convinced.

The cast of Charlotte Blunt, Jessica Booker, Diana Knight, Jeff Braunstein, Charles Irvine and Paul Kelman, all of whom are called on to play multiple parts, are an adequate group, though they have little chance to strut their stuff in this production. In fact, their successful attempts at verisimilitude offend — one feels one has been sitting in their ersatz office for hours for no pay at all, something not guaranteed to evoke sympathy for the merely underpaid.

Harsh words about a light-hearted look at a particular problem? Perhaps. But the other day I heard a young man on the radio remark that the late Nathan Cohen, until his death the Toronto Star's drama critic, had started the school of criticism that

knocks for the sake of knocking.

Critic cared Nathan Cohen was a fine critic who refused to countenance the less-than-excellent. He applied universal standards of judgment to everything he reviewed, and if his praise damned, it was

because he cared enough about the artistic life of his country to want it to succeed because it was good and not just because it was Canadian.

Has our drama, our art, our culture improved since Nathan Cohen's death, or have we lowered our standards? I'm inclined to think it's the latter. Operation Finger Pinky is a sad reminder of how far those standards have fallen, and the enthusiastic reception this tidbit has met with, an indication of how facilely we are willing to slake our thirst for in-

sight. The two people responsible for the writing of this supposedly straight-from-the-horse's-mouth proposition are Judy Steed and Gabriele Paddle. Forgive me, but there were times during the long, long two and a quarter hours it encompassed when I wondered if they'd been paddling at the wrong end of the steed.

Banford service held

GORMLEY — Services were held last week for William Hanes Banford, who died at his home here in his 89th year.

He had been a Gormley resident for more than 30 years and lived alone for the past 15 months after the death of his sister, Blanche Read.

Church 'slaves' for hire

GORMLEY — Members of the Youth Fellowship of Missionary Church will become slaves for four consecutive Saturdays, starting April 17.

The Slave Days, being held to raise money for missions projects, will allow area residents to buy their own workers for almost any job.

Among the possible services are house cleaning, window cleaning, yard and garden work and farm chores.

For more information, contact fellowship president Doug Elliott at 887-5303 or the church at 887-5846.

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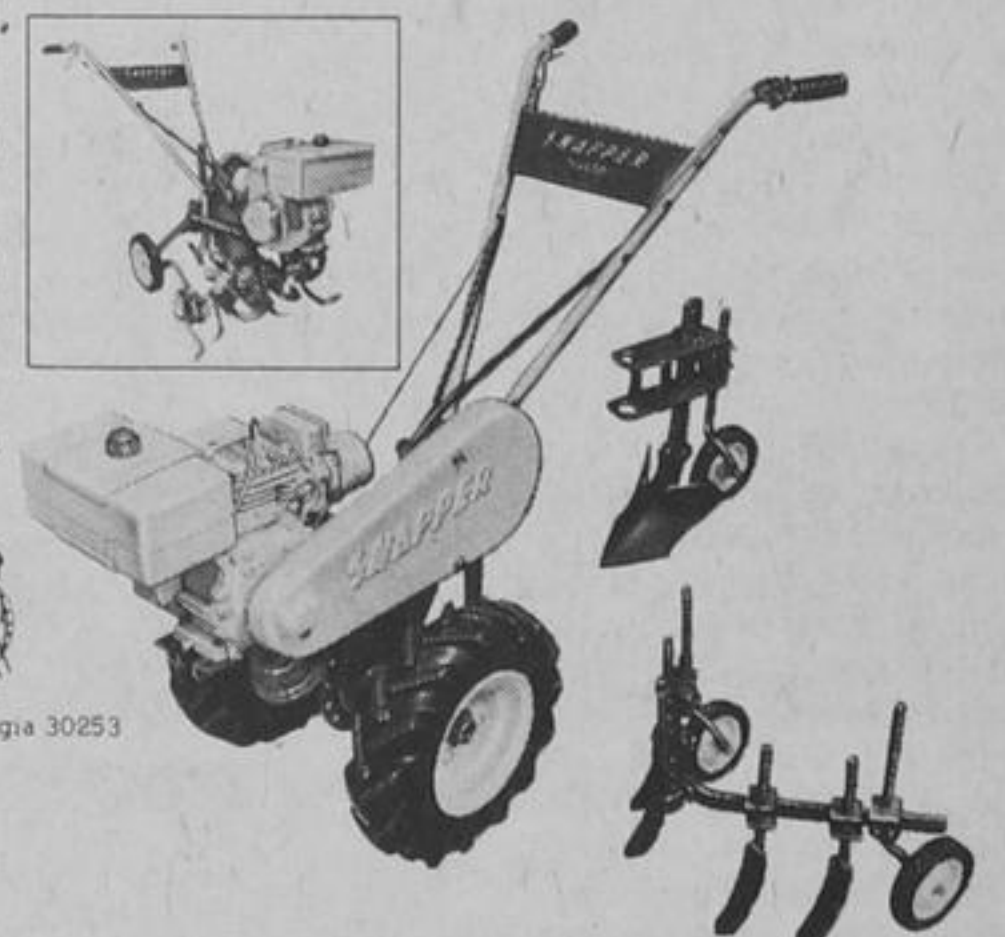
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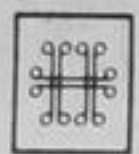
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WOODBIDGE AREA: There will be NO Garbage Collection on FRIDAY, April 16th and MONDAY, April 19th, 1976. Collection will take place on your next normal pick-up day.

THORNHILL AREA: There will be NO Garbage Collection on FRIDAY, APRIL 16TH, 1976. Collection will take place on the preceding THURSDAY, APRIL 15TH, 1976 at the usual time.

R. H. Kraft P. Eng. Town Engineer Town of Vaughan, Maple, Ontario.



THE TOWN OF MARKHAM PUBLIC HEARINGS

on the

NEW OFFICIAL PLAN OF THE TOWN OF MARKHAM, THE SECONDARY PLAN FOR MARKHAM-UNIONVILLE,

and the

SECONDARY PLAN FOR RISEBOROUGH (Milliken Mills)

Will be held on

- TUESDAY, April 20 at 8:00 p.m. THORNHILL COMMUNITY CENTRE, John St. and Bayview Avenue.
- WEDNESDAY, April 21 at 8:00 p.m. ST. PATRICK'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, Highway 7, opposite Robinson St., Markham
- THURSDAY, April 22 at 8:00 p.m. BERCY PUBLIC SCHOOL (MARK II), Carlton Road, Unionville
- MONDAY, April 26 at 8:00 p.m. COUNCIL CHAMBERS, Municipal Offices, Buttonville
- WEDNESDAY, April 28 at 8:00 p.m. COUNCIL CHAMBERS, Municipal Offices, Buttonville

The Planning Committee of the Town of Markham has not yet adopted the Plan and is seeking comments, suggestions and opinions from the residents, business persons and property owners in the Town before recommending a Plan to Town Council.

The Planning Committee invites you to attend the Public Hearings, to visit or telephone the official Plan Information Centre in the Municipal Offices at Buttonville, telephone 297-3567 and to make written submissions by May 17, 1976.

The complete text of the proposed plan is also available for study in the Information Centre or in the Town libraries and may also be purchased, price \$5.00, from the Information Centre. A free brochure summarizing and highlighting the Official Plan is available on request from the Information Centre.

R. W. Adams, Chairman Markham Planning Committee T. M. Januszewski, Planning Director.

G. R. D. Fryer, Fryer Planning Services Inc.

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