

# Weekender Entertainment



## Weekender Movie Scene

### Teen Wolf - there's a lesson here

By IAN BAILEY

**TEEN WOLF:** You just can't take a werewolf seriously anymore.

When the beasts have been featured in such recent movies as *The Howling* and *An American Werewolf in London*, they have been played for laughs first and horror second.

Now in *Teen Wolf*, the werewolf is used to teach a moral lesson about — of all things — being true to yourself.

This situation arises when Michael J. Fox (from *Family Ties*), playing the same kind of small town boy he played in this summer's *Back to the Future*, starts to change into a werewolf. The symptoms are obvious: sensitivity to dog whistles, sprouts of dark hair, lupine earlobes, and a hoarse snarl.

What isn't so obvious, however, is the direction the movie takes when Fox finally changes into a full blown wolf creature that looks surprisingly like Lon Chaney Jr. in the 1941 classic, *The Wolfman*. It seems that his dad (James Hampton) is also a werewolf (the trait is passed down the family bloodline like eye color or a shape of chin) and he sits down with his son to explain the canine facts of life, including the fact that, "with certain obvious exceptions, werewolves are people like everyone else."

Right. The script by Joseph Loeb and Matthew Weisman keeps pushing things further down an ever wilder satirical tilt to the point where Fox realizes that as a wolf-man he can play a great basketball game and is incredibly popular with his peers. He must then decide whether he's going to be a teenager or a werewolf and consider another of dad's homilies, "with great power comes great responsibility."

Coming so close to Fox's summer hit, the clever time travel adventure *Back to the Future*, *Teen Wolf* has all the scent of rip-off. But the satirical direction taken by its makers lets it stand on its own and makes this simple nonsense quite amusing. Its attempts to turn the werewolf myth upside down are aided by Fox's practiced air of beduddled panic. **THORNHILL SQUARE (PG) \*\*\***

#### THORNHILL SQUARE

**AMERICAN NINJA:** A martial arts adventure from the producers of *Missing in Action* and *Lifeforce*. (AA)

**VOLUNTEERS:** Not quite the satirical look at the Peace Corps that its makers

might have hoped for, but nonetheless a weird and amusing comic adventure featuring a re-teaming of Tom Hanks and John Candy, the stars of *Splash*. (AA) \*\*\*

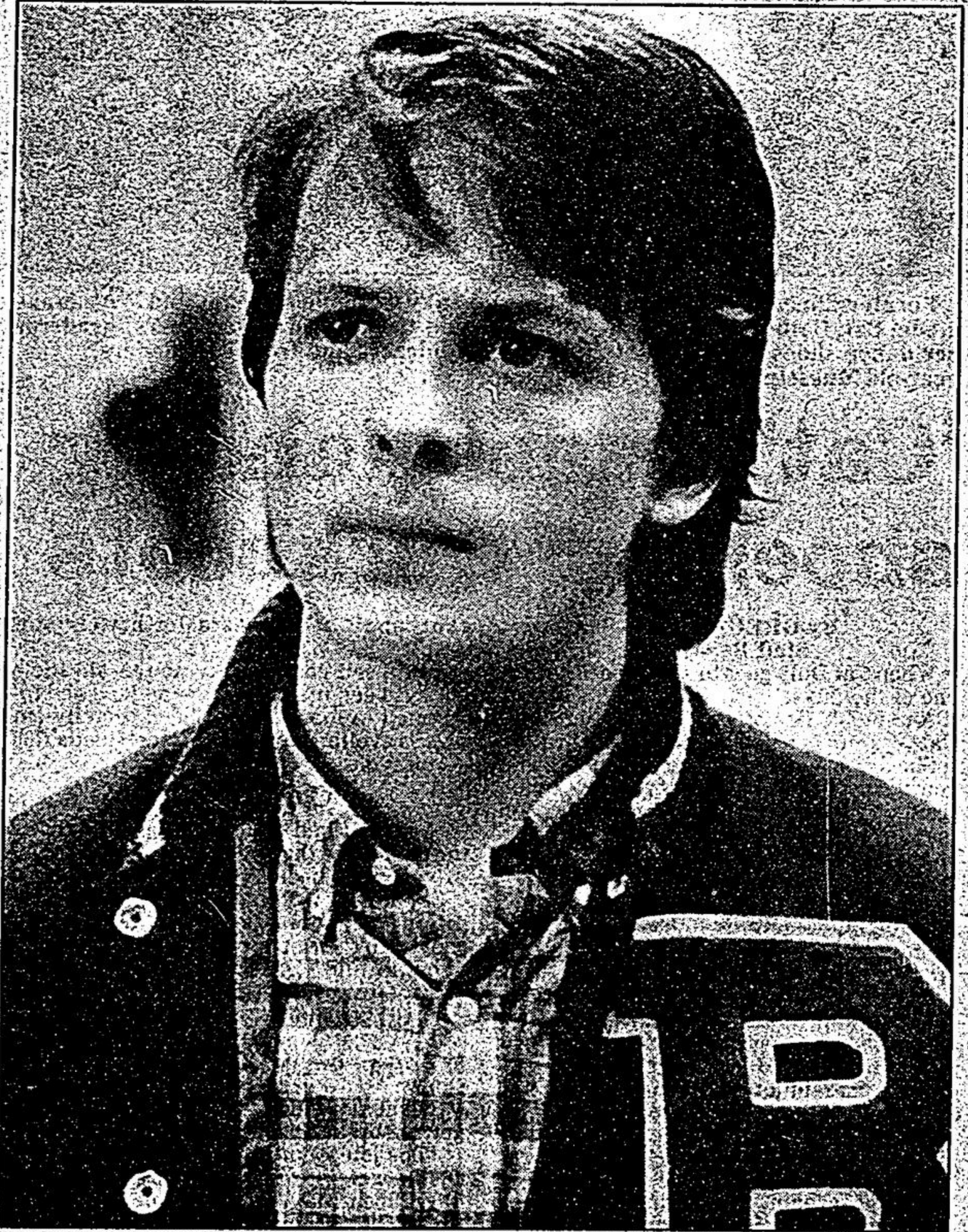
#### MARKVILLE

**COMPROMISING POSITIONS:** When originality is nowhere in sight in a movie's plot, you can still sometimes look to enjoy the dramatic detail that skilled performers bring to their characters. That's about all you can look for in this droll mystery which often seems like a made-for-TV movie done on the big screen. Susan Sarandon plays a suburban housewife who tries to find out who murdered her dentist, a philandering cad involved in illicit pornography. The plot offers all the twists of an episode of *Murder She Wrote* but the wide-eyed Sarandon is a beguiling lead and she is helped along by the sharp characterizations of co-stars Raul Julia, Anne DeSalvo and especially Judith Ivey as a sarcastic artist. Nicely directed in closed suburban settings by Frank (Monsignor) Perry. (AA) \*\*½

**GREMLINS:** A re-release of director Joe (Explorers) Dante's film from last summer. It's a clever blend of fantasy, horror and science fiction about a horde of voracious creatures who run amok in a small town. The movie was written by Chris Columbus, a Steven Spielberg protege, who has since written *The Goonies* and a third *Indiana Jones* movie. A *Gremlins* sequel is planned. (PG: Frightening Scenes) \*\*\* (Alternating with *Follow That Bird*.)

**PEE-WEE'S BIG ADVENTURE:** A pretty dumb movie wherein cult comedy star Pee-Wee Herman (Paul Reubens) sets out on a cross-country search for his stolen bicycle. Fans may enjoy Pee-Wee's peculiarities, but strangers to the character can expect a long, dull ordeal where laughter is an embarrassed reaction to a movie that sets out to plumb the depths of movie badness and succeeds in sinking lower than any other movie has this summer. (F) \*½

**YEAR OF THE DRAGON:** Imagine Archie Bunker without Meathead, Edith, Gloria or the Jeffersons to put his opinions in perspective. That's what this engrossing but uneven thriller from Michael (Heaven's Gate) Cimino is like. Mickey Rourke plays a belligerent, racist police captain who sets out to impose his own stamp of law and order on New York's Chinatown.



Scott Howard (Michael J. Fox) may look like an ordinary teenager, but appearances can be deceiving. He's a werewolf

in *Teen Wolf*, a satire on all other werewolf movies ever made.

### Music students take awards in competition

Students from the Carlaw Conservatory of Music brought home an armload of awards from music festivals in Ottawa and Flint, Michigan.

First, second and third prizes, 48 in all, were awarded to the students in the Ottawa competition. They claimed such categories as solo, duet, ensemble, band, rock band and showband.

Unionville's Mike Healey won the award for most promising student.

In July, 22 musicians travelled to the National Convention of the American Guild of Music in Flint. They totalled 44 firsts, 33 seconds and 15 third-place finishes.

Outstanding performers at this competition included: Bob Ernst who place third for best guitarist; Karen Sellery, classical guitar champion and Hany Boctor who was runner-up in the qualifications for electric guitar.

Other students who participated at one or both of the competitions include: Dan Baer, Kim Brinson, Fernando Marto, Blake Hewson, Peter Fusco, Wanda Fusco, Louisa Fusco, Andrea Chappelle, Debbie Haley, Richard Walker, Mark Prentice, Gary Hallam, Derek Sellery, Rosalind Peddie, Cathy Thorp, Bryan Hallam, Jamie Clark, Jason Killackey, David Debyl, Steve Hope, Sean Lynch, Yvonne Boyd, Kim Jones, Mike Healey, Dawna Ellis, Randy Ellis, Rita Sgro, Rose Sgro and Nancy Sgro.



CECIL O'NEAL  
New manager

### Manager awaits opening of new Markham Theatre

By PAULA CROWELL  
Staff Reporter

Now premiering, the manager of the Markham Theatre for the Performing Arts, Cecil O'Neal.

Mr. O'Neal has been a one-man show since January, drumming up bookings and promoting the auditorium before its opening Oct. 18.

"For the last few months I've been planning and preparing for the opening, co-ordinating the purchase of equipment and booking the initial program," he said.

Among the acts which are booked or are being pursued for the opening season are Moe Koffman and Friends in a jazz performance, the Neptune Theatre production of Don Messer's Jubilee and the Chamber Players of Toronto with guest artist Maureen Forrester.

Others include Karen Kain with a small group of dancers doing a classical ballet program and in February and children's favorites - Sharon, Lois and Bram.

The Rotary Clubs of Unionville and Markham are sponsoring some of the shows.

But besides the big-name acts, Mr. O'Neal stressed that community groups will play a big part in the theatre's schedule.

"In the first couple of months the theatre will be used by community

groups like the Markham Little Theatre, York Symphony Orchestra, Markham Concert Band and the Hilltop Musical Theatre from Richmond Hill," he said.

The theatre will hold 530 people including about 100 seats in the balcony and 24 box seats.

"It was specifically designed to accommodate all the performing arts disciplines."

Mr. O'Neal has experience in many disciplines of the acting field. He began his acting career 17 years ago in Chicago, then moved into directing. He later started the 'Victory Gardens' Theatre and ran it for 11 or 12 years.

Although he worked in Canada from time to time during his career, he didn't move here until 1979.

Before taking the position in Markham, Mr. O'Neal was the producer of the Stratford Festival for two years. He still maintains a home there while his wife, actress Susan Morgan, completes this season.

But while his home is in Stratford, his focus is on Markham Theatre and adding more bookings to the schedule.

"The more use of the theatre by the community, the better. It's the finest and best equipped facility of its size in the province and to have it not being used is just a wasted resource," he concluded.