

Weekender Entertainment



Weekender Movie Scene

Warning Sign better as thriller

By IAN BAILEY

WARNING SIGN: As food for thought, this science-oriented movie is pretty tasteless. It works better with the heart as a riveting thriller.

Warning Sign often sermonizes, a tendency that seems inevitable thanks to its topic—genetic engineering. As the movie begins, a genetics lab in northern California is contaminated by one of its experiments—a virus that produces the bloodlust of rabies without the foam at the mouth.

The lab is quickly quarantined by the army. Inside, the head of security (Kathleen Quinlan) has to cope with a legion of bloodthirsty, infected scientists. Outside the lab, her Sheriff husband (Sam Waterston) tries to make sense of the gobblygook spouted off by a military specialist (Yaphet Kotto) who talks from both sides of his mouth.

One side talks about how the contamination involves nothing more than a spilled yeast experiment, while the other side warns of a biohazard horror the likes of which the world has never seen.

As a movie about scientists, Warning Sign echoes an observation that Time magazine critic Richard Schickel offered in a recent article on movie scientists. Schickel described a shift from the movie scientist as a meddler in things man was never meant to touch (i.e. Frankenstein trying to create life) to a depiction of the scientist as the "creature of large and faceless government with its secretive ways and bland explanations."

This is the approach taken in Warning Sign's script (written by the film's director Hal Barwood and his partner, Matthew Robbins), but it's developed in such a folksy way that it seems simplistic. Warning Sign easily depicts scientists as hostages of their government bosses, but its sermons on the potential evil of their work never cuts deeper than the Waterston character's fear of germs, and the trite warnings of a scientific rebel played by co-star Jeffrey De Munn.

The film is much more effective when it works with the compelling premise of the trapped scientists. Director Robbins makes the most of the tense situation presented by the quarantine by juggling the plague's power and the pressures inside and outside the lab. **MARKVILLE (R) ** 1/2**

COMPROMISING POSITIONS: Good characterizations help this droll mystery about a suburban housewife (Susan Sarandon) who tries to find out who murdered her



Cal and Joanie (Sam Waterston and Kathleen Quinlan) are forced to restrain Fairchild (Jeffrey De Munn) when he is exposed to a gene-splitting accident which could turn him into a homicidal madman in Warning Sign. The science-fiction thriller is now playing at Markville.

dentist, a philandering cad who was involved in illicit pornography. Nicely directed in closed suburban settings by Frank (Monsignor) Perry. **(AA) ** 1/2**

FOLLOW THAT BIRD: A story adapted from the Sesame Street TV series. Saturday & Sunday matinees. **(F)**

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 badness and

succeeds in sinking lower than any other movie has this summer. **(F) ** 1/2**

OF THE DRAGON: A high-powered thriller about a New York police captain who sets out to break a Chinese crime gang for reasons that are more racist than legal. Although this violent film is engrossing, it lacks a perspective on the bigoted central character played by Mickey Rourke. Rourke's performance is convincing, but the movie never comes together to either explain or condemn him. **(R) Brutal Violence, Coarse Language ** 1/2**

THORNHILL SQUARE CREATOR: Peter O'Toole plays a scientist who tries to clone his dead wife. A comedy. **(AA)**

FUTURE KILL: A science fiction film. **(R)**

TEEN WOLF: This movie starts with a dubious idea; it's about a teenager played by Michael J. Fox who starts to change into a werewolf, but midway through it takes a satirical view on the premise in the way you would least expect. The results work quite well. Teen Wolf's attempts to turn the werewolf myth on its ear are aided by Fox's practised, frazzled performance. **(PG) *****

RATINGS
 **** — Excellent
 *** — Good
 ** — Fair
 * — Poor

Walk into the past

Street ready to open

By PAULA CROWELL
 Staff Reporter

Take a walk into the past along Main St. in Unionville next Saturday.

The Town of Markham and merchants on the street are celebrating the official opening of the new streetscape, and it won't be any ordinary ribbon-cutting type ceremony.

Terry Cowan, owner of Unionville House Restaurant is one of the many merchants involved in the festivities. He described the event as a celebration of what the street might have been like at the turn of the century.

That's part of the reason Unionville has attracted as many people as it has, he said. It has what people perceive to be the old-fashioned small-town atmosphere.

On the 28th we'll have horses clopping by, hay rides and horses pulling wagons. We're hoping it will be a really fun event.

The street will be decorated in the old style with Union Jack flags and banners hanging from wooden posts. Mr. Cowan stressed that the celebration is not a marketing strategy, but a celebration of the street itself.

We're celebrating the front of the Main St. We just happen to be occupying the buildings on that street, he said. The merchants and members of Mar-

kham Council will dress in period costume to add to the historic feeling of the event.

Activities such as a maypole dance and square dancing will take place throughout the weekend. The celebration kicks off Saturday 10 a.m. and runs until 6 p.m. Sunday hours will be from noon to 6 p.m.

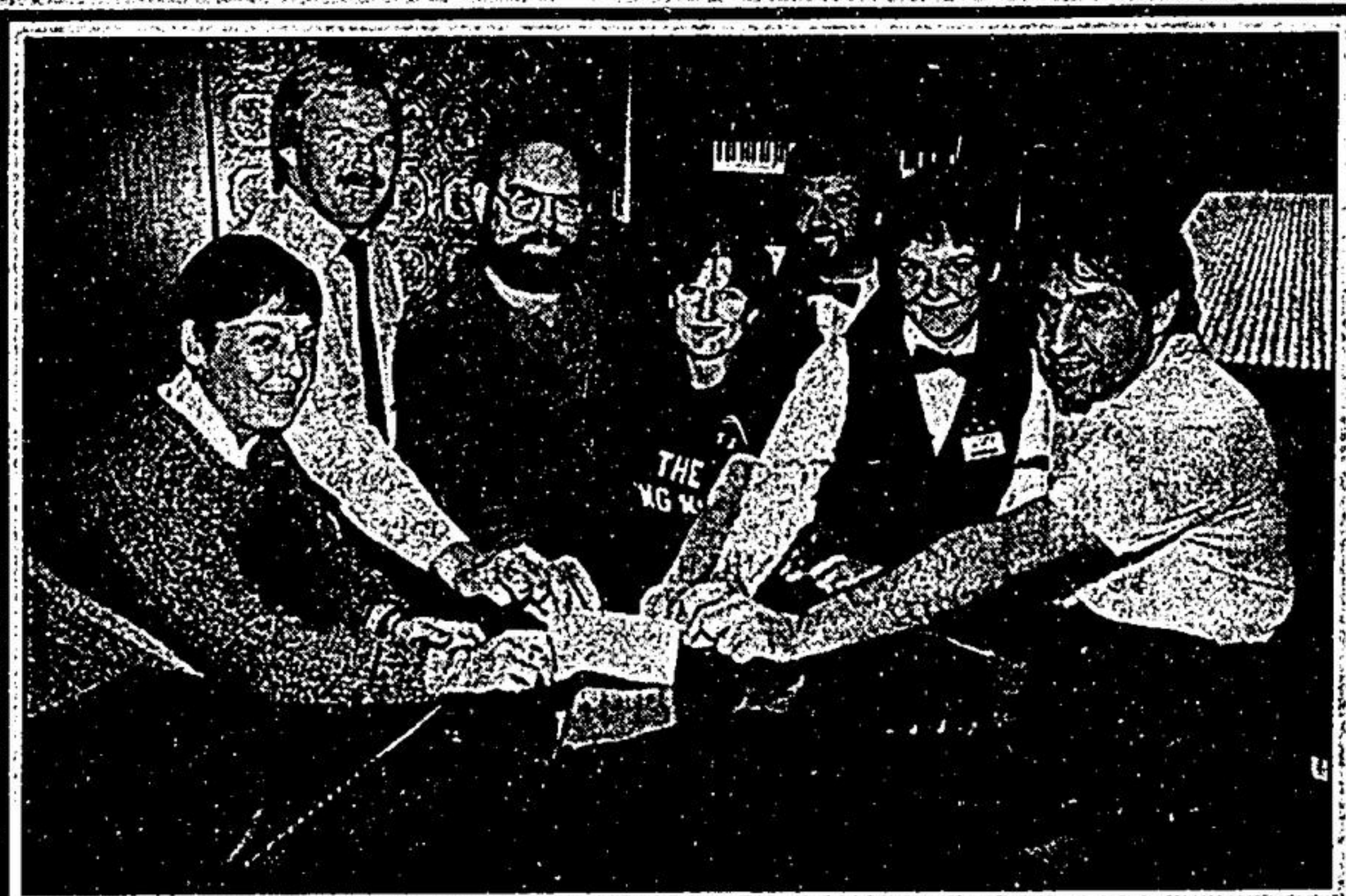
Entry forms will be available for a draw on a \$1,800 shopping spree on Main St. and a second prize of a weekend for two at the Ramada Renaissance Hotel.

The celebration gives official recognition to improvements made on the street during the summer. Among them, the street was repaved, interlocking stones were installed on the boulevard, a new sidewalk was made, telephone and hydro lines were buried, and plants and flowers have been placed all along both sides of the street.

The merchants plan to make the celebration an annual event.

Mr. Cowan said he expects the street to be an inspiration for other Ontario towns who wish to go old-date rather than update.

We fully expect in the next couple of years, we'll be a guide for other Main Streets that want to improve, he said referring to the street as the Hazelton Lanes of the north. (Hazelton Lanes is a traditional huddle of shops in the heart of Yorkville in downtown Toronto.)



A wing-ding

As the result of a recent wing-eating contest, the people at Father's Restaurant in Markham were able to turn over \$238,500 to the Markham Stouffville Hospital Fund recently. From left to right are Marie Grossi of Father's, David Potter of the Wing

and a Prayer team; Paul Charbonneau and Tracy Evans, both of the Wing Nuts team; Steve Debeau, bartender; Tracy Morgan, waitress; and Iggy Natoli, bartender.

— Sjberd-Witteveen