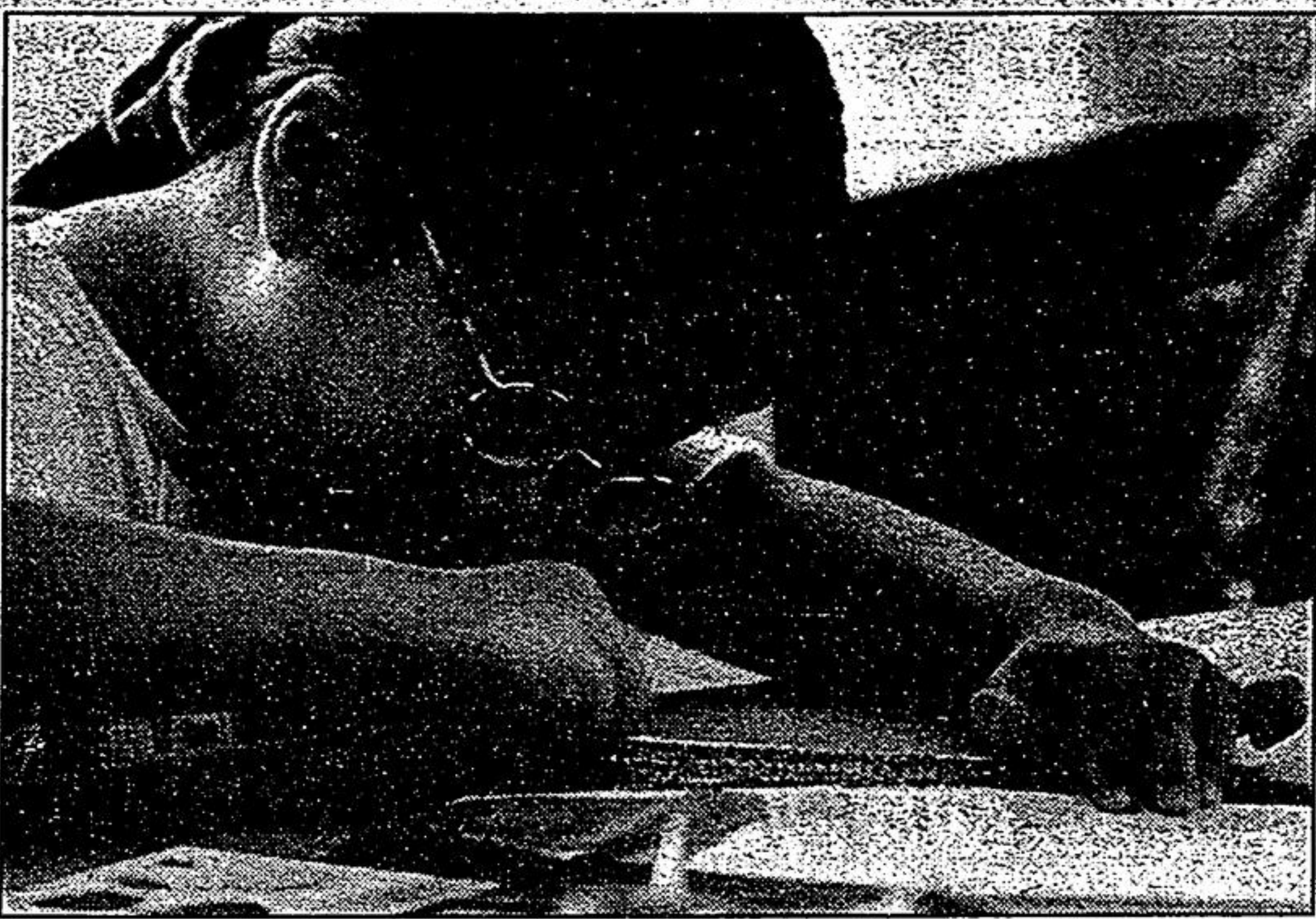


ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



STAFF PHOTOS/STEVE SOMERVILLE

SUMMER ARTISANS

Top photo: Karen Pun concentrates on her masterpiece, using paint and charcoal, during summer art camp at the Frederick Horsman Varley Art Gallery in Markham. Above: Art instructor Margaret Grandison grabs Lesley Sherban's finger through a hole in a flowerpot she's painting, at the Razzle Dazzle Your Room art class held at the Stouffville train station recently. Children painted articles they can use to brighten their rooms, such as picture frames and chairs.

Area artists put up their feet

BY JULIE CASPERSEN STAFF WRITER

Artists all over the area have been benched.

Altogether, 50 wooden milking benches have been sent out to the art community and are due back in September. Painters, sculptors, potters and iron workers are sitting down on the job, enhancing the benches which will be auctioned off to benefit Markham's cultural venues.

"Each one will be really unique," promised Barb Smith, artistic director of the Frederick Horsman Varley Art Gallery.

"The idea is to give the benches in the raw, and bring them back as works of art."

Smith said Tuesday that so far, one artist has returned a finished bench, after carving it into a three-dimensional puzzle.

Each bench was hand crafted by Mike Riley of Shepherd's Cottage in Dickson Hill. This local business offers its customers furniture that tells a story, such as the memory bench that contains the name of a bride and groom and the date they were married, and the lovers' footstool with the names or initials of a couple carved across the top.

For the fundraiser, Riley modeled the auction pieces after his rustic bench, although he said each one is different in size, type of wood and shape, with bark remaining on a few.

Riley supplied maple, birch and a few oak benches that stand between 14 and 17 inches tall. The wood was dried without the usual care taken to flatten it, in order to give the it a chance to warp. "They're not cookie-cutter," Riley

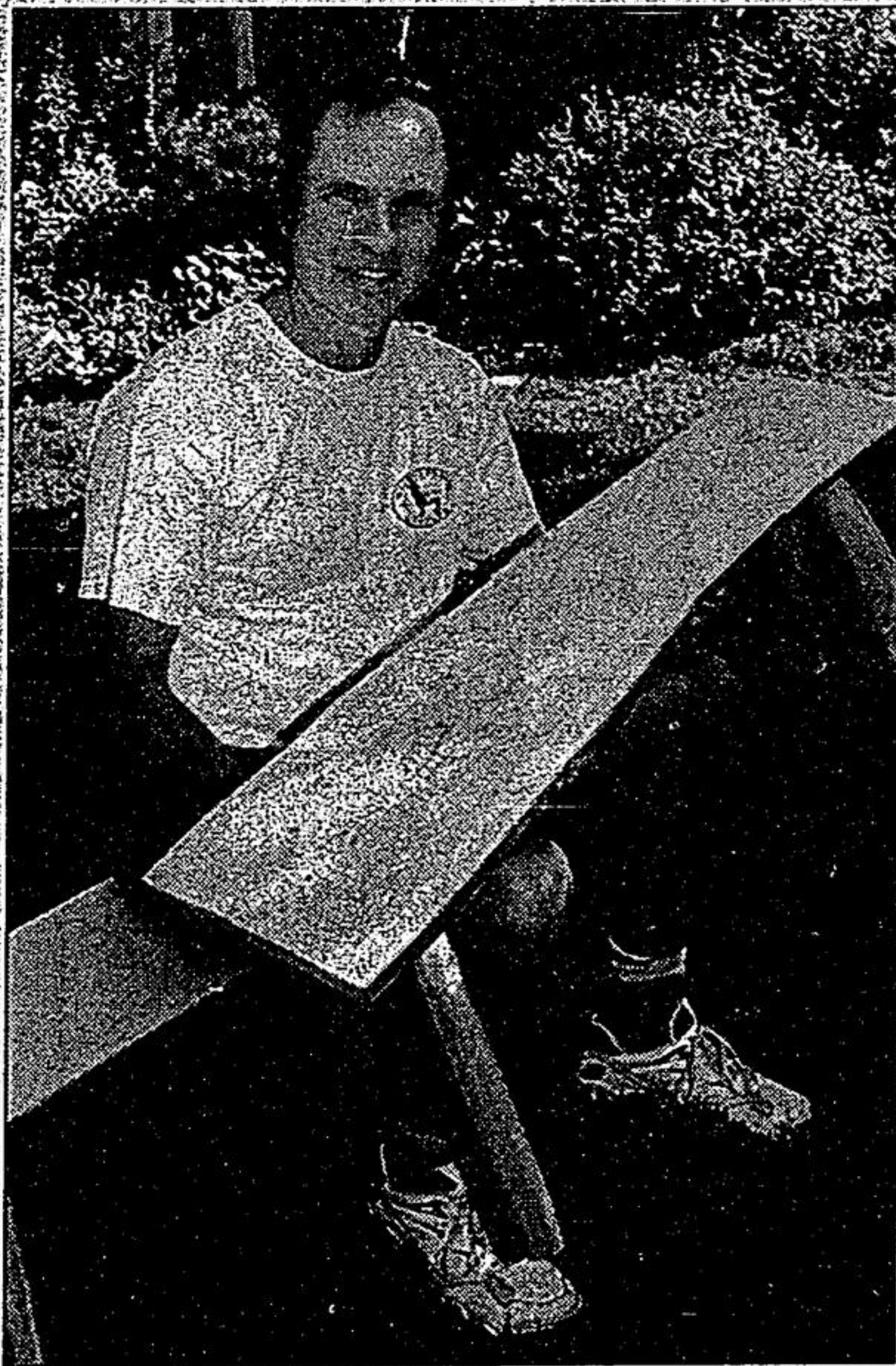
said.

In addition to raising money, the Benchmark project is aimed at raising the profiles of the gallery, Markham Museum, and Markham Theatre.

Once the benches have been transformed into artworks, they'll be on display at the three venues.

Then, on Oct. 28, the benches will be put on the block. For an \$8 admission fee, the public is invited to attend a gala evening at the Markham Civic Centre where the benches will be sold at a silent auction.

Smith explained that the winning bidders can choose which cultural venue their money will support. And people who don't walk away with a beautified bench can take home a memento: a poster featuring all the benches will be available for \$20.



At left, Mike Riley takes a seat on one of his hand-made benches while holding another in front of his Dickson Hill home, which is also the base for his business, Shepherd's Cottage. Above, the 50 benches are laid out on Riley's lawn prior to being given over to artists for decoration. The benches will eventually be sold, benefitting Markham's cultural venues.

STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Local actor scores on stage in hockey-bashing comedy

Hockey is a four-letter word. At least it is to a group of female anti-hockey terrorists who call themselves The Penalty Killers.

Local residents can follow the group's adventures in a play now running at Toronto's Tarragon Theatre.

Markham actor Kathryn Winning plays the role of Heather, the leader of the group of six hockey haters.

"She said the play is send-up of Canada's national game and the strong emotions, positive and negative, that surround it.

"We're getting huge audiences and it's very, very funny," said Winning.

"We had two curtain calls after

the first performance.

Written by Neil Fleming, the romantic comedy tells the story of the group's attempts to reclaim Saturday night from hockey for romance and family life.

"There's lots of political references, and it's very contemporary," said Winning.

They talk about Mike Harris,



KATHRYN WINNING Actress killing penalties in comedy

and Doug Gilmour and Don Cherry. It's hilarious.

The one-hour play is a production of the Evening Swan and Vagabond Knight Companies, and is part of the Summer Works Theatre Festival in Toronto. It is directed by Jennifer Parr.

Also starring in the production are Christopher Kevill, Martin Lapierre, Rahnuma Panthaky, Dana Forbes and Jane Watson.

The Penalty Killers continues tonight, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, at the Tarragon Main Space Theatre, 30 Bridgeman St., Toronto.

Tickets are \$8 at the door. Call 416-532-4188 for more information.

Bandersnatch presents Freefall

A local theatre company presents Freefall this weekend at the Ford Centre in North York.

Bandersnatch, a dance and theatre collective, takes over the Ford's studio theatre stage on Friday and Saturday.

The play tells a contemporary Adam and Eve story through dance, music, song and spoken word.

A number of graduates of Unionville High School's Arts York program are involved in the production.

Local actors are Mike Smith and Sara McCully, the dancers are

Ashley Winning, Camila Matamoris and choreographer Melissa D'Agostino.

Freefall is directed by Allison Leyton-Brown, with text by Rachel Rosen. Music is by Robin Everhart and Michael Unger.

Performances are Friday at 8 p.m. and Saturday at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. For ticket information, call 416-733-9388.

CLARIFICATION

A photo caption in the Aug. 6 edition mistakenly listed the members of the Elite Danceworx troupe as girls.

In fact, both boys and girls are members of the group.