

Economist & Sun/Sun-Tribune

DIVERSIONS



Anne Brodie

On Movies

Costner, Allen shine in women's tale of rage

THE UPSIDE OF ANGER

Starring Joan Allen, Kevin Costner, Alicia Witt, Erika Christensen, Keri Russell and Evan Rachel Wood.

Now Playing

It's amazing to think this top notch story of a mother and her four daughters was written and directed by a man, Mike Binder.

Joan Allen plays Teri, a mother of four daughters, whose husband has apparently left her for Sweden and his Swedish secretary.

Teri lashes out bitterly at everyone who offers the tiniest defiance and that's plenty, considering her daughters, aged 15 to 22, are trying to carve their own way.

Teri nurses gin and tonics day and night as her daughters run the home, cook, clean and look after their school careers.

Everyone's cutting Teri slack because of the pain she's gone through and no one is harder on Teri than Teri.

Her prime method of managing is to throw hurtful barbs and out-yell everyone.

She sways around in a drunken haze that, sadly, does nothing to dull her shrewish tongue. So why do we care for her?

Her daughters have mixed feelings

See **COSTNER**, page 17.

MOTION PICTURE MAGIC

Forget blockbusters; movie clubs bring sophisticated fare to York Region

BY SIMONE JOSEPH
Staff Writer

Hundreds of people gather in Newmarket twice a month to defy Hollywood schlock.

Sick of the formulaic flick, the average and the dull, they turn to an artsy couple from East Gwillimbury for an escape from inane blockbusters.

Karen and Barry Dempster formed Southlake Cinemania Film Circuit four years ago out of a desire to provide funding for East Gwillimbury's libraries.

They teamed up with the Film Circuit, a grassroots project of the Toronto International Film Festival, which promotes and oversees screenings of Canadian and international independent films in communities across Canada and beyond.

Like many new projects, naysayers had negative previews.

"A lot of people thought: 'What market is there for independent films, for foreign films, up here?'" Mrs. Dempster said.

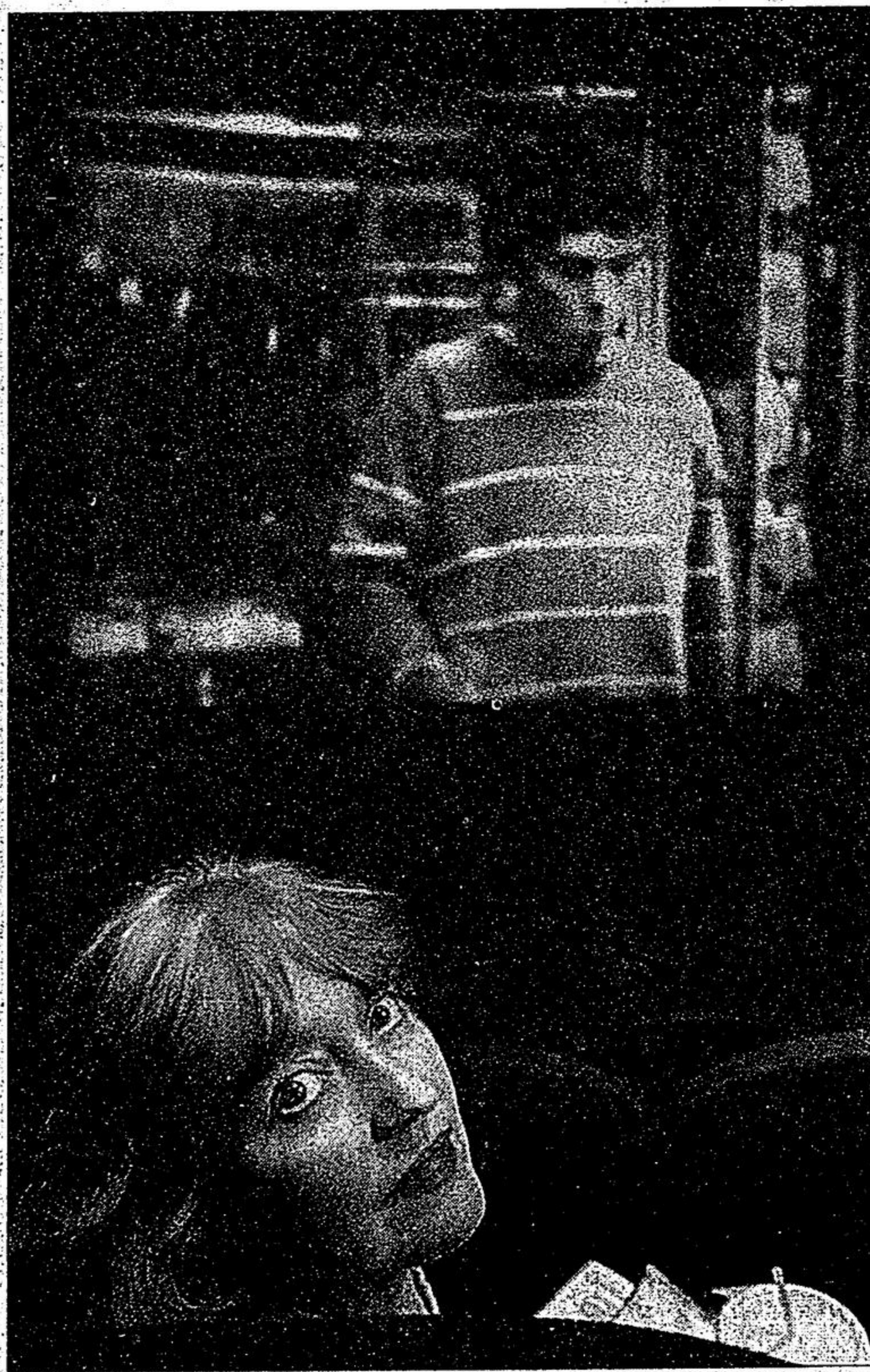
But the group's first screening, *Innocence*, sold out the 250-seat Silver City theatre.

Southlake Cinemania's events, with door prizes and introductions by Mr. Dempster (who Mrs. Dempster calls a movie encyclopedia), became so popular they were selling out a month early and leaving frustrated movie fans empty-handed. That's when the group took over two theatres.

So far, about \$25,000 has been raised for East Gwillimbury library literacy programs.

"We show films that would never make it north of Hwy. 7," Mrs. Dempster said. "Not your regular blockbuster films."

Southlake Cinemania is part of a growing interest in small



PHOTO/TOM BARNETT

Karen Dempster formed Southlake Cinemania with her husband, Barry. It's one of several movie clubs giving York residents alternatives to the usual theatre fare.

Canadian and independent movies.

More than 180 Canadian cities are part of the Film Circuit. Last year, close to 340,000 people attended Film Circuit screenings.

Attendance at these films has practically doubled every two years since it began in 1996, Film Circuit director and founder Cam Haynes said.

But he admits success of

screenings can be very much dependent on the hype the film received when first released.

Georgina's Reel Gems Film Circuit, a movie group operating out of Keswick's Gem Theatre, has found its attendance is often disappointing, especially with films that did not initially receive much promotion.

"We don't get a big crowd. I'm not sure why. Maybe it's because

of (not enough) advertising," committee member Maddy Martin said.

People are often not adventurous enough to see a movie they don't recognize, she said.

Newmarket, which has on average 500 people per screening, is in the top 10 per cent of cities in the Film Circuit, Mr. Haynes said.

Many groups take as long as two years to develop a market.

"(Eventually), people begin liking films regardless of whether they have heard of them," he said. "It's about trusting programming judgment. It takes awhile."

Despite sporadic attendance, some people are willing to drive more than a half hour not only for movies, but for the extras at Reel Gems Film Circuit, Ms. Martin said.

The group offers door prizes and post-movie treats that often relate to the movie. For the screening of *Chocolat*, for example, committee members handed out 300 strawberries dipped in chocolate on silver platters.

Some movies are tied into classes taught at Sutton District High School so the theatre would have busloads of students in attendance. Summer, when cottagers flock to Georgina, is traditionally the group's busy season.

The group began in 2001 after a screening of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Ms. Martin saw the movie at the Gem Theatre.

Afterward, the manager circulated a questionnaire asking who would be interested in starting a group to bring artistic films to the theatre.

Since then, the group has shown films such as *The Dish*, *The War Bride*, *Amelie* and *Gosford Park*.

Richmond Hill's arts and heritage section began regular screenings called The Reel Thing Mini Film Festival last year at Silver City Theatre in Richmond Hill. The town teamed up with the Film Circuit.

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