

## At Second City

# Rookie comic is 'high-energy performer'

By JULES XAVIER

Call it a blessing in disguise.

By day, Kevin Frankoff was a contented electronics salesman. At night he studied marketing at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute.

Somewhere along the line, however, he discovered his real niche in life — comedy.

The former Central Peel graduate is now a rookie performer with the Toronto-based Second City troupe, which is celebrating the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the original Chicago company with its revue, *It Came from Chicago*.

Frankoff appears in eight shows a week before more than 2,400 patrons at The Old Firehall in downtown Toronto.

Now living in Mississauga, the 28-year-old discovered his hidden talent after enrolling in a course called *So You Think You're Funny*. It explored improvisation and he took it only because he thought the material would improve his selling skills. And the marketing course he wanted was full.

After taking a Second City workshop at the recommendation of his instructor, Kevin had his first audition with Second City on the morning of his wedding day, last April.

"I was getting married at (Toronto's) City Hall

He gets plenty of support from his wife, Lynne, and daughter, Stacey. His hectic schedule often keeps them apart so he's made it a point to meet Lynne at a restaurant once she's finished her job teaching handicapped students.

"It's tough. We've had to compromise and (Lynne) encourages me," he said. "We really have to adjust our schedule to meet each other. I would meet her after work coming into the city and go out to eat.

"When we were putting the show together you're there 12 to 13 hours a day. We just saw each other on Sundays. Slept in the same bed



KEVIN FRANKOFF

and never saw each other. It was tough for three weeks."

Kevin, however, admits getting married helped him.

"It gave me stability to draw from when everything is going wild," he said.

on the Thursday," he recalled. "I had my audition . . . then left my honeymoon suite the next day (Friday) for a callback."

Quitting his job, Kevin expected to pay his dues in the farm system of Second City before getting promoted.

But that lasted about five months. His chance came when Second City needed a "high-energy performer."

"Staying is difficult; getting there is sometimes luck," he says. "Second City is the best place to learn how to write, improvise, and develop characters. And all of those skills, if you work at them, will make you successful in other entertainment.

"I never considered acting. I still don't consider myself an actor. So when people ask me what I do for a living I tell them that I'm a disc jockey. I like to leave it at that."

Kevin moved to Brampton in 1960. He spent the next two decades here before heading to Hamilton's McMaster University.

The former Brampton Junior A Excelsiors lacrosse and rep hockey player says he knew he had a sense of humor when he was younger, but wasn't a class clown as one might expect.

"I used to tell stories to my (three) sisters and make them laugh, but that was the extent of it."

He shrugs when asked how it feels getting on stage in front of 300 people each night.

"I've never feared getting up in front of crowds. I get psyched up, not nervous," he said with a sly grin on his face.