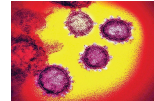




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Hathaway's Drive-In Theatre has two screens, showing four movies a night, Thursdays through Sundays during the summer. Now, screenings are held Friday through Sunday evenings.

NICOLAS DAVIDOFF - THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE

Now showing ...

Hathaway's Drive-In theater still a hot spot for movie lovers

Posted Thursday, August 15, 2019 6:33 am

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If you go ...

What: Hathaway's Drive-In Theatre

Where: 4762 NY Route 67, North Hoosick, N.Y.

By Nicolas Davidoff, The Berkshire Eagle

NORTH HOOSICK, N.Y. — When this millennial reporter was assigned a story about drive-ins, he didn't know they still existed.

But just across the New York border, Hathaway's Drive-In Theatre not only still lights up summer nights with new releases, but it's also one of the oldest drive-ins in New York state, according to Duane Greenawalt.

Cost: Adults (Age 12 and older): \$10; Children: \$5;
Children (Age 2 & Under): Free

Now showing: Friday through Sunday; Screen 1:
"Good Boys," "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood."
Screen 2: "The Art of Racing in the Rain," "The Lion
King (2019)"

Information: www.hathawaysdrive-in.com or call
318-374-8346. There is a minimum attendance
policy of 25 adult tickets sold; the drive-in may
cancel a showing at its own discretion.

"I'm the fourth owner," said Greenawalt. "Chase Hathaway was the original owner. I wasn't here, of course, but it opened in late April of 1948. It has never missed a season since then."

Greenawalt is originally from Fairfield, Conn., but he moved to Bennington, Vt., in 1992 with his family and purchased Hathaway's Drive-In in the spring of 2009. As of August 2018, there were 317 drive-in theaters in operation across the United States, according to the United Drive-in Theatre Owners Association. There were only three sites in Massachusetts, according to the data, and 28 in New York. Nearby Vermont is home to only four.

"I've always been interested in the movie industry," he said. "I actually have a son who is out in Los Angeles and he is starting up his film career. This place suddenly became available to buy; I had been

coming with my kids since they were really small — they just loved it. The previous owner was actually going to close it and shutter it up and so I went for it. My kids had grown up, they were already in high school, so I also thought it would be a great opportunity to run it as a family business. They're now all gone, making their own lives, and I'm happily stuck with the place."

Hathaway's Drive-In Theatre is open Thursday through Sunday starting at the end of April and running until the end of the summer season. Starting now, shows will be shown on weekends only. The box office for its two-screen double features opens at 7:30 p.m. and the second screening starts at around 10:30 p.m. — immediately following the first. The drive-in also boasts a restaurant and snack bar, which offers traditional movie items such as popcorn and candy, as well as hot food such as fish and chips and hand-cut fries. Visitors are required to purchase a \$5 permit if they wish to bring any of their own food and drinks onto the premises.

On a recent stormy Thursday evening, Disney's remake of "The Lion King" was playing. The clouds were just beginning to clear, revealing the sparsely populated scenic area that surrounds North Hoosick. The fiery orange sunset light reflected off of the drive-in's two enormous screens, which are made of a series of vertical thin metal beams. Greenawalt did not appreciate the beauty of the calm after the storm, however. Bad weather means bad business for a drive-in.

ARTICLE CONTINUES AFTER THESE ADS

"There are a lot of advantages that a drive-in has over an indoor theater," he said. "The main advantage is that people can have their own space, they don't want to be sitting next to someone they don't know or any other variety of reasons. A few other advantages are that people can smoke, they can bring their dog, they can bring their baby with them instead of leaving them at home and paying for a babysitter. So, there are a lot of reasons other than people just wanting to be out in the fresh air under the stars. There is nothing better than watching a movie outside on a warm summer night, sitting in your own chair, a big screen with tons of other people. The obvious downside is the weather — it's tough."

But Greenawalt insisted that when the weather is right, the drive-in is a local attraction.

"On a clear nice summer day, when a movie is premiering, we can get all the way to 700 people here," he said. "It's all about having the right combination of weather and movies."

The roped off parking spaces on the lawn facing one of the two screens were mostly empty the night this reporter visited. A dozen cars taxied into their favored viewing location as the sun set and the stars shined above. A couple of families came prepared, spreading blankets on the still-wet grass and reclining with their children resting on their lap. Others chose to remain in the comfort of their car, with some leaving the engine running and tuning into the show's FM 88.1 frequency and the rest tuning in with the rented portable radios available at the snack bar; so as to not drain their car's battery.

Darrel Holovach is a college student who has worked as the drive-in's manager for five consecutive summers.

"I always like when new people come, the experience always makes their eyes light up," Holovach said. "But what I enjoy the most is when people come and say they used to come here as kids. They'll bring their family with them and it's like a cycle with the older people coming back and their grandchildren coming for the first time."

Kay Toll, one of the audience members who was visiting Hathaway's for the first time, remembered how much she enjoyed going to drive-ins in her youth.

"When I was growing up, my parents would get my sister and me into our nightgowns and lambies," Toll said. "My father would get a bucket of popcorn and divide it into two smaller ones. I don't know how he got away with it. By the time we drove away, my siblings and I were all fast asleep."