

MOVIE MAGIC ON TEXADA

Picture a row of excited children on the edge of their seats. All are filled with terror, wide-eyed, with breathing stopped. Suddenly, right in front of them onto the giant screen bursts the hideous Creature. A scream!!

This is just one of the thrilling movie events burned into the memory of many Texadans who were children here in the 1950's and 60's.

No one knows when or where the first "moving pictures" (silent, b&w) were shown in Texada's early 1900 boomtowns. Even though the Patricia Theatre opened in Powell River in 1913, there was little opportunity for families to easily leave the island. However by the 1950's when television arrived here, Texada's citizens were already familiar with the Hollywood fare.

In Blubber Bay Henry Davis showed movies in the community hall (former school) at the top of the hill. Kids from around the island would pile into the back of a pickup truck to catch the film.

People remember Rudy Lipus projecting movies onto the Gillies Bay Hall's enormous screen which covered the entire wall for that "Cinemascope" effect. Movie nights alternated each week with Teen Town gatherings.

In Van Anda Ben Creviston showed films in the old community hall (downhill from the PO) before it was demolished.

Joe Kempe then applied for the government licence to switch screenings to the Elk's Hall. He ordered 16mm reels from Vancouver distributors (Sovereign Films, MGM, 20th Century Fox) who charged \$15 per rental. An "Amusement Tax" and a "Hospital Construction and Aid" tax were added in. In 1947 the Dominion Bureau of Statistics (!) reported 1,885 paid admissions in Van Anda.

From the projection booth built above the entrance to the Elk's Hall Joe surveyed the Christmas movie crowd beneath. Wooden chairs set out like a show were filled with excited kids from all over the island. Joe delighted in handing out brown bags filled with candies and a Japanese orange - a real treat in those days. Children, filled with enchantment, headed home with their families.

"It was magical, really," recalls one long-time resident.

In this modern world of instant entertainment it is, perhaps, hard to comprehend just how much the people of Texada appreciated these movies



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