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Reel classics: Local channel showing old movies that may have graced the screen at the Pines Theater

By BRITTONY LUND
The Lufkin Daily News

Monday, January 05, 2009

Once upon a time, people lined up to see only the finest movies at the Pines Theater in downtown Lufkin.

In honor of the restoration of the once fine theater and in memory of the movies that once filled its screen, Bill Cameron, Web site consultant for the city of Lufkin, began showing old movies on Channel 15 twice a day.



(ENLARGE)

Classic Movies at the Pines shows at 10:15 p.m. and 3 a.m. on Channel 15. Movies such as "Big Bluff," "Captain Calamity," "DOA," "The Green Glove," "Kansas Pacific" and "I Killed Wild Bill Hickok," may once have filled the silver screen at the Pines Theater.

"They are old movies that I thought were the kind of movies I thought would be shown in a small town movie theater," Cameron said.

Cameron recently discovered hundreds of old movies publicly available with no copyright on them. He also discovered the movies are in a computer file format he wouldn't have to convert.

"I thought it'd made sense to give public awareness to the Pines Theater," Cameron said. "Plus it's a service we can provide."

Ray Pike, who ran the theater for three months in the '80s showing family films like westerns and Disney movies, remembers the theater being the place to be in Lufkin in 1961 when he moved to the city.

"Those were some good old days," Pike said. "We had a lot of memories and a lot of fun."

One of Lufkin historian and contributing writer Margie Kirkland's most vivid memories of the theater happened at the age of 12 when "Gone with the Wind" first came out. She said the movie, about the Deep South before the Civil War, had been advertised and talked about much before it aired.

"When it showed my sister, mother and I were three of a line of people that went all the way down to Lufkin Avenue," Kirkland said. "At intermission there was not a dry eye in the house. It was so moving people never stopped talking about it."

Kirkland remembers she loved everything in the movie, even the bittersweet ending.

"Clark Gable was at his finest and Vivian Lee was absolutely beautiful," Kirkland said.

The Pines Theater, unlike previous theaters before it, its heyday did not show everyday movies like westerns or cowboy movies, but only the top movies of the time. Its spotlessly clean carpet, ushers and concession stand always struck Kirkland as first class.

"It was the hallmark for entertainment in Lufkin for years," Kirkland said.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s when the theater showed silent movies, the owner would hire its own musicians to play the piano during the show.

The city of Lufkin has set aside \$500,000 to begin restoration on the exterior of the building. A bid on the roofing is expected to be accepted at Tuesday night's City Council meeting. The city hopes to collect additional money for the project from local foundations.

"We want it to be an attraction, not an eyesore," said City Manager Paul Parker.

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By Ed

Jan 6, 2009 9:02 AM | [Link to this](#)

I went to the Pines Theater back in the 50's and enjoyed the good wholesome movies it showed. I wouldn't mind seeing some of them again. BUT at 10:15 pm and 3 am??? C'mon.

Ed

By chris

Jan 6, 2009 7:52 AM | [Link to this](#)

Reginald Denny? Wasn't he that long blonde-haired truck driver pulled from his vehicle and beaten during the L.A. riots?

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