

Drive-in Movies -- No Cars Needed - July 17th, 2003 Edition

Drive-in



Story By Ralph Stewart

A big white screen cuts through the midnight-blue darkness, like a searchlight illuminating your imagination and transporting you back to childhood days. Seeing heroes, villains, fears, and fantasies projected at us under the stars leaves us somehow more vulnerable to the present and more open to the possibilities of the future. The drive-in gives us the means to dream and take in the sensations of our world even as we watch.

Some genres seem particularly suited to the outdoor theater. Tales of extra-terrestrials, mutant creatures, supernatural realms, and things that go bump in the night creep closer to our souls once the walls are lifted away.

This month, Richard Paradise and the Martha's Vineyard Film Society present four features in a revival of an American classic — the drive-in movie. The crucial difference here is that you don't need a car.

Sitting on the lawn of Featherstone in Oak Bluffs, the experience combines a drive-in and a picnic. Families stretch out on blankets beneath a canopy of trees as crickets and peepers provide nature's chorus.

Last week, Vineyard filmgoers got a chance to step back in time as they watched a film ahead of its time. "The Day the Earth Stood Still" opened the festival and leveled a cautionary, critical eye at our society's predisposition toward violence, prejudice, and paranoia that still rings true today. The 1951 film stars Michael Rennie, Robert Wise, and the Vineyard's own Patricia Neal.

Don Siegal's 1956 classic, "The Invasion of the Body Snatchers," a chilling and unsettling allegory of cold war politics, and suburban malaise starring Kevin McCarthy, cast an eerie glow last night.

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If drive-in movies are not a part of your past, you have a chance to catch up. Featherstone will host two more sci-fi classics on Wednesday, July 23 and July 30. Just bring a blanket or chair, and bug spray.

On July 23 the feature will be the 50's thriller "Forbidden Planet." and on July 30, the last drive-in movie of the season will be "When Worlds Collide."

The drive-in movies are the brain child of Richard Paradise of the Silver Screen Society. Cronig's Market is sponsoring the event. The 12' X 10' screen was built by carpenter David Marshall. Lycra fabric was stretched across the frame to create the white screen.

Rod Wells of West Tisbury donated the use of his Sony LCD digital projector. The crisp, well-modulated sound comes courtesy of John Rogers who provided the amplifier and speakers.

Don't miss the last two shows on July 23 and 30, at 8:30 pm. Tickets are \$5 per person, \$3.50 for students and seniors, or \$12 per carload (no hiding in the trunk).