



C
S I L V E R
N
E
M
A

A Community Theatre in Gananoque

By Emma Taylor

For the past three years, if you wanted to watch a movie on the big screen, you had to head to either Kingston or Brockville. That all changed when Hoagies, Movies & Games opened their new Silver Cinema in March 2013, in Gananoque.

Located at 345 Herbert Street, the store and cinema is owned by Jamie Peterson and his partner, Kate Davis. Staff members Sam Roughley and Pete Rae also help keep things running smoothly.

You could say movies are in Jamie Peterson's blood. He got into the movie business when he was only seven years old, after his parents bought the Picton drive-in.

"I spent summers at the drive-in and I learned to scoop popcorn before I could tie my shoes, and thread the projector before I could drive a car," he said.

When he was 16 he started working at the Boulevard Cinema, managed by his father Paul Peterson, which was located at 175 St. Lawrence Street in Gananoque. Dave and Diana Remington owned it at the time and his father bought the business from them a couple of years later. When Jamie eventually took over the business from his father he gave it a new name.

The quest to build a cinema at the new Herbert Street location started 3 1/2 years ago, when they had to relocate from the waterfront location. The building needed upgrades that just weren't possible, so the search for a suitable space began.

"We knew the demand for a cinema around town was there and it was something we were committed to make happen" said Peterson. They also needed to find a space that had the ceiling height requirement; at least 20 feet to accommodate the 10 foot screen and graduated seating.

"We wanted to have that big theatre feel, even if it was a 'smaller' big theatre venue," said Davis. Ms. Davis started working at the Napanee movie theatre, being run by Jamie's father and sister Hollie, when she was still in High School.

The couple have been together for 13 years and in business together for 6 of those years. They have been quite successful.

"One of our mottos is 'it's not high stakes its cheese steaks.' We take this seriously but we try to have fun and remember we're making hoagies, renting movies and helping people have a good time," said Peterson.

The DVD rentals that had existed at the waterfront location were carried over and an expanded hot food menu was introduced; options that worked well with the rental business, as well as the cinema.

The addition of used furniture and goods in the warehouse side has proven very popular and helped generate income while the cinema was being developed. Luckily, Peterson's dad, who had been running thrift stores, had leftover stock when he closed shop. "We decide to put some stuff out on the floor, and it stuck. People really enjoy the idea of donating to the theatre. They come in and say 'this came out of our cottage and you might get some money for it,'" said Davis.

Peterson said since a lot of the items are donated it has allowed them to give back to the community and help out those in need. "If someone has had a house fire or something, we will try and help them out if we can," he said.

Davis said she feels people love movies partly because it gives them the opportunity to immerse themselves in things they might not have the chance to experience otherwise. She is very eclectic in her movie tastes; modern musicals, classics, drama, comedies, documentaries, sci-fi, and fantasy are among some of her favourites.

"I like to see people, even imagined people, deal with their lives and challenges," she said.

Peterson's favourite movies are action-adventure and fantasy. He likes a good story with lots of special effects, something that really carries you away. He feels movies are about sharing stories.

Watching a movie on your own is fun but being at the theatre with other people is a way to connect. When everyone cracks up at something at the same time it somehow



makes it more special." Peterson said.

The process of building the cinema was a long one, and Peterson admits that they had no clue what they were doing. Eastern Engineering from Brockville drew up the blueprints, electrical work was done by Rivard Electric and Glad Plumbing took care of the plumbing in the new barrier free and accessible bathrooms. Peterson and Davis did most of the grunt work themselves including drywall, painting and countless other tasks.

"I think the most construction I had done up to that point was putting up a couple of sheets of drywall and painting. It certainly took a lot more work than we ever anticipated when we set out," said Peterson.

Their landlord, Harrie Tieken, an experienced boat builder, volunteered to help plan the space and was an invaluable resource.

"He believed in what having a theatre in town would mean and he really wanted to see it happen. We really wouldn't have been able to do it without him," said Peterson.

The town was also very supportive of the venture and worked with them on rezoning and looking into grant money that was available. It ended up that the grant money wasn't needed but they may be approaching the town for help locating grants when they have to upgrade to digital. This is coming very quickly to all theatres.

The 60-seat cinema officially opened during March break of 2013 but there is some finishing work and improvements left to do.

Recently cup holders were installed on all the seats by public demand. The space is impressive and decorated in an Art Nouveau style, reminiscent of cinemas of the past.

"We are trying to give people what they want. The good news is, they're coming back, again and again. That's all you can ask for," said Davis. The cinema only has one screen, so they try to do split times to offer family oriented movies during matinees and weekends, so to accommodate movies for adults and teens for the later shows. "We usually keep a movie for a week. Sometimes if the movie is popular it will stay for two weeks. We want to bring in as many movies as possible," said Davis.

If you are looking for a sweet deal on tickets, look no further; tickets are six dollars for matinees, eight dollars for adults and six dollars for kids and seniors. Tuesday is cheap night and all tickets are four dollars a person. Wednesday, with every adult ticket purchased, receive a free small popcorn and drink.

"We're really happy the community was so patient with us; there were lots of eager people, waiting with bated breath for the re-opening," said Davis.

The store is open from noon until 9 pm during the week and later on weekends to accommodate the 9 pm show time. Nightly show times are 5 and 7 pm, Friday & Saturday 9 pm, Saturday & Sunday (and any holidays or P.A. days) 1 and 3 pm., so why not see a movie tonight? [LH](#)