

HULL'S
DRIVE-IN
DOUBLE
FEATURE

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When the sun goes down... "STARS" come out!

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Article Courtesy of www.HorrorDrive-In.com

Monday, September 10, 2007

In a small town in the Shenandoah Valley, there exists a community that resembles something out of the past.

Lexington is a beautiful town that is ripe with American History and it has some of the most gorgeous scenery I've ever seen. But most importantly, Lexington, Virginia is the home of Hull's Drive-In.

Take a glance at this site and you can see that drive-in theaters are one of my favorite things. I went to local ones hundreds of times when there were three of them here in Hampton, VA. But they closed down due to lack of interest and escalating real estate values. Though I hadn't been to one in ages before last year, I never lost my love of outdoor movies and I dedicated this site to them. Along with my love of all things horror. We went to a wonderful drive-in theater in Durham, NC a few times, but the owner passed away earlier this year and the future of that theater is in question.



This past weekend my family and I went to Staunton, VA for a combined trip. One reason was to see some dear friends of ours. Another was to visit Hull's Drive-In.

Hull's is a unique drive-in. It is the only non-profit, community-owned drive-in theater in the United States.

Hull's began its life in the year 1950. Right in the thick of America's drive-in mania. It was started by Mr. Waddey C. Watkins, who operated it until 1957, when Sebert Hull assumed ownership and changed the theater's name into the one it still has. Mr. Hull and his wife ran the drive-in successfully until he regretfully passed away in 1998. A neighboring business purchased the property, but was daunted by the high cost of improvements and repair that was necessary. The screen stayed dark, like so many others across the land. Until...



Eric and Elsie Sheffield, who loved the theater and the legacy of Sebert Hull, took action. They spearheaded a movement to resurrect Hull's Drive-In, and with the combined support of Lexington and other surrounding communities, formed a group called Hull's Angels. A group that I proudly am a member of.

Imagine it, brothers and sisters...a community bound together, giving their love, money and time to a cause that may seem insignificant to many. To the spirit of the drive-in theater.

Those that know about this spirit, know it in their bones. It's like something alive; something divine.

Good people together, with their kids and their cars. Enjoying a movie or two, under the majestic night sky. There's nothing like it, my friends, and if you haven't felt it, then you either haven't been to a drive-in or you've got ice water in your veins. We tried to cram a lot of activities into one day last Saturday, and we ended up getting to Hull's later than we hoped to.

It was just about dark when we arrived and by the time we were settled in, it was dark. I wanted to be there as early as possible, to really experience it and to get some better photos than we did. It's hard to imagine, especially in a town like Hampton...people there at that drive-in, *working*, for no pay. I'd say *working for free*, but that wouldn't be accurate. They are compensated all right, but it is with riches far more precious than gold. The rewards the volunteers at Hull's Drive-In get are greater than any other, with the exceptions of family and true love.

If I lived any nearer to Lexington, I'd be out there, every weekend. Working, helping out, doing what it took to keep the ship afloat. For isn't that what made America? People sacrificing in pursuit of their dreams?

The movies we saw were a slight disappointment. Underdog wasn't bad, for a family film, and I actually liked it. It's not the kind of film I'd cover in these pages, but it's good family fare. The other film was called Hot Rod, and I'll suffice to say that it is the worst movie I've ever seen. But that's okay...I go to the drive-in to see movies, yes, but there is a bigger picture and I'm not merely talking about that big screen. It's something that is lost, or nearly lost in America. And that's called community.



I mentioned Hull's Angels before and that I am a member. That means I am officially a part owner of the drive-in. I only wish I would be able to utilize it more and be able to get out there more than I'll be able to do. I do plan to make the trip several times each year. Some of you, my friends, have made generous offers to me in regards to this website. I've turned down money that was offered to me to help defray costs of keeping this surrogate drive-in up and running. I've gratefully declined each individual that asked me about it. But if there is anyone reading this that wishes to chip in a pittance to help, I ask you to become an Angel. A Hull's Angel. It costs a mere five bucks to join and you too can be a part owner of a drive-in theater. Your dream come true, eh?

The vast majority of those reading this will never get a chance to go to Hull's. And that's sad. It's a beautiful place. Think of it: A mountain setting, cool breezes blowing, people bustling all around and a movie much larger than life in front of you. It's like being in Heaven.

I've talked about the joys of the drive-in. In my life there has been one constant that has made going to outdoor movies so wonderful. I'm talking about friends. I've always gone with a group or with my family and it is that togetherness that makes it so magical. Thanks to my family and extra big thanks and love to my friends Matt and Deena Warner, who came with us (and put up with us) and made it so special.

