

LETTER: Career in films started as a kid at Madison theater

- Mar 21, 2018

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Editor's note: The following letter concerns the 1925 movie theater at 14 Lincoln Place in Madison that has stood vacant since May 2017, and a concept plan by the owner, the Parsippany-based Saxum Real Estate, for demolition and redevelopment.

EDITOR: It's hard to graciously put into a few words the past 46 years of my experience in the film industry here in Utah and across the United States, but it has been extensive. Most importantly I have been involved with virtually every education institution in Utah involving their film programs and their students as a teacher, mentor and as a motion picture equipment rental institution.

I helped to start the Utah U.S. Film Festival in 1978 that after five years became the Sundance Film Festival. My company, Redman Movies and Stories, has provided support for the Sundance Institute June Filmmakers Lab for the past 35 years. Nineteen years ago I helped to start a world-class youth organization here in Salt Lake City, known as Spyhop, www.spyhop.org. I am a member of the curriculum boards of most all of the local universities' film programs going back the past 25 years.

My company, Redman Movies and Stories, has provided cameras, lights, cable, trucks, generators, dollies, cranes and more for the past 38 years for more than 200 films, 500 hour-long episodes of network TV series, hundreds of TV commercials, the 2002 Olympics, and much more -- from "The Shawshank Redemption" to "Napoleon Dynamite," from the "High School Musical" series of three films for Disney to lighting for the Disney mega-feature "John Carter," nine seasons of gear for "Touched By An Angel" for CBS, and five seasons of "Everwood" for WB TV. Currently in production for the Disney Channel is a TV series called "Andi Mack." We are also part-way through Season 1 of a TV series called "Yellowstone" for the new Paramount TV Network.

We have helped small films like "Sandlot" that have become classics. We have killed ourselves for blockbusters like "Con Air" and cut our arms off for "127 Hours." Needless to say there are a lot of stories in our history.

I personally have a history with the Madison Theater (now vacant at 14 Lincoln Place) and have always fondly remembered one special Saturday in fifth grade that my brother and I walked down to the theater from our home on Cross Gates to see a double feature including "Abbott and Costello meet Frankenstein" and "Mothra Versus Godzilla." The tickets were only 25 cents each for both films. Popcorn and drinks were extra, and I can remember the theater being fairly full of kids eating and making noise. It was a blast.

In a year or so I graduated to being a projectionist on Saturday morning over at the YMCA showing the weekly 16mm serials of "Flash Gordon" twice for a couple of different groups of kids. Only years later did I realize I had gotten the film bug.

I have begun to connect with several persons interested in seeing the theater have a chance to become an integral part of Madison's connection to its students and adults. I see a way forward to many connections with the arts, education, entrepreneurialism, entertainment and the like where the Madison Theater can become a central part of a more connected community.

I have spoken with Joe Falco, a classmate and football teammate, and have agreed to come visit and meet with the local persons and groups that seem most interested in becoming involved and offer my services as a consultant and/or contributor if there is interest. I have a lot of experience and am willing to cover the costs to fly one or two persons to Salt Lake City for a couple of days to see and experience the various organizations that I am involved with here first-hand if there is continuing interest. I'm awaiting any contacts at [\(801\) 978-9292](tel:8019789292).

As a side note my Dad was both a councilman and President of the Borough Council for a number of years from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s and was a stickler for financial responsibility for the borough, but he was also a lover and supporter of theatre. Hard work, good will and community commitment has been passed down through our family to me.

BRYAN CLIFTON

Redman Movies and Stories

[1075 South 700 West](#)

[Salt Lake City](#)

[Utah 84104](#)