

# Drive-in movie makes comeback



Garden City residents are gearing up for a drive-in theater experience Saturday, using equipment obtained by Roxie Brandts. The movies, to be shown against an old hardware store building, are preceded by a 6 p.m. hog roast and a meeting of classic car enthusiasts.

**GARDEN CITY** - The last drive-in movie theater in the area closed up in the late '80s, the victim of the VCR.

The newest one opens up Saturday night in Garden City. Granted, it closes that same night, but if things go well, this quirky bit of night life in the otherwise quiet little town could become a regular summer event.

It starts with a hog roast, followed by a gathering of classic cars buffs and their vehicles. At sundown, organizers are going to hang an actual movie screen on the side of the former Crane's Hardware store, get the cars parked in the school parking lot and - pass the popcorn - create a makeshift drive-in.

**"Back in the '50s and '60s they showed movies on the side of buildings in small towns as a community event,"** said *Roxie Brandts*, owner of the cafe inside the building and organizer of Saturday night's event.

The lifelong Garden City resident decided last year that she'd like to revisit the old tradition. She said she has a tendency toward *nostalgia*, which also motivated her to renovate the old hardware store into a cafe, named appropriately enough **Formerly Crane's**.

"That's kind of what my little coffee shop is, a little get-together for people, a business but not really a business," she said. **"A local get-together."**

Last year, *Brandts* placed an ad in the newspaper explaining her idea and looking for equipment. She got

a response from a Mankato man who had one of those old screens that had been used for similar events in Granada.

Her church, Grace United Methodist in Vernon Center, donated the 36-millimeter projector.

*Brandts* hatched the idea with *Myra Jongbloedt*, a Garden City resident for 22 years.

"Between the two of us, we got a bunch of people to help us out," *Jongbloedt* said. They got a sound system rigged up through Karen and Duane Bergemann of Baroda Auction, and even got a retired principal to work the projector.

The next step was finding the films, and *Brandts* found some via the Internet. Premiering at the Garden City makeshift drive-in will be a film episode of "I Love Lucy," along with an Abbott and Costello short and a Popeye Cartoon.

The event begins at 6 p.m. with a hog roast at the Blue Earth County Fairgrounds. That costs six bucks, with the rest of the evening free.

*Jongbloedt* is a member of the *Auto Restorers Club*, which decided to have its monthly meeting at the event. The club consists of classic car enthusiasts, and anyone with a cool old car, or interest in them, is invited. That event **coincides with a CNN dart tournament at the Blue Earth County Fairgrounds as well.**

All of which should bring in a decent number of cars to the movie, which is free and open to the public. The more who show up, the better the chance of *Brandts* breaking out the screen and the project again.

"Just in summer months," she said, "kind of like a block party event." *Free Press ~ August 24, 2001*  
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