



Here's a reel cheap night out

Some wise shopping movie mongers have found a way around the rate hikes. They wait until the show airs at the first run theaters, shell out between \$1 and \$2 and settle themselves in the cozy velvet chairs in front of the big screen at second run movie houses.

By Diane Gale
staff writer

It used to be you shelled out "two bits" for two theater tickets and you'd still have enough money for a trip to the candy counter.

In the days before television and video cassette recorders, a 10-cent ticket bought you a double feature and cartoons in the theater.

Today, the price has gone up 5,000 percent to \$5 for one first run flick. If you go with a pal, tickets and munchies could easily run \$15 and forget about the second movie and cartoons. The real kicker is the commercial some theaters show at the start.

Don't despair. Some wise shopping movie mongers have found a way around the rate hikes. They wait until the show airs at the first run theaters, shell out between \$1 and \$2 and settle themselves in the cozy velvet chairs in front of the big screen at second run movie houses.

The catch is the wait. But that doesn't seem to bother area movie goers. Some film hounds, like Yvonne Varga of Ann Arbor, don't even notice the delay.

Varga, 19, is a self-proclaimed movie junkie, who takes in the show at Plymouth's Penn Theater. The old time theater house airs one movie and sells tickets for \$1.50.

"IT'S INEXPENSIVE and they show the latest

movies," Varga said.

Then there's those like Doug Somers of Plymouth Township, who see advantages in the wait: "It's convenient. I wait until I hear how the movie is. And it's cheaper."

Ann Warr of Plymouth Township recently was at the Penn with her two daughters.

"It's (the theater) small, friendly and it's something to do," she said. "And we always feel safe in Plymouth."

Second run theater owners' found they can pull in more cash with lower prices and bigger crowds.

That's the case with the Terrace Cinema 4 in Livonia. Ticket prices for each of the four theaters is \$1.

"This used to be full price and two theaters and it didn't do anything," said Julie Ferris, Terrace assistant manager.

Since the new owners switched to second run showings last summer sell-outs have been commonplace.

"I've had a lot of people say they'd just as soon wait," Ferris said.

Just how long you have to wait for the movie to hit the discount theaters depends on crowds at the first run theaters. The better the movie does there, the longer the time it takes until they show up at the second runs.

"The film company has a hold over the movie," said Lloyd Oliver, Penn projectionist/manager.

ger. "If you hit a (crowd) figure, you can keep it. If you don't, you can take the film out after one week."

ANNELYSE BEAMAN, 14, of Detroit was at the Tel-Ex Cinema 4 where tickets sell for \$1 at the Southfield movie house. Beaman sees second run movies to "save money for school shopping."

Philip Meliak of Westland dropped his daughter and her friend off at the Terrace recently. And when he looks for a movie he checks out the second run shows too.

"I won't pay \$4.50 or \$5.50; I wait until it comes here," he said.

Janine Kloc of Livonia sees an average of four movies a month. Standing outside the Terrace, Kloc said, she sees first and second run showings. Gayle Thompson of Ferndale also pays full-price to see first run shows, but recently attended a movie at the Tel-Ex to cut on costs.

"When I'm broke I come here," she said.

Larry and Mickey Flaher of Livonia said they like the "small" Penn, which seats 670 moviegoers. And "the price is right," he said.

"We won't pay that (full price) for a movie and we can afford it," Mickey said.

The discount at second run movie theaters usually applies to the ticket only.

And remember the change you used to spend for popcorn, pop and other delectables. It won't get you too far at today's candy counters.

It's convenient. I wait until I hear how the movie is. And it's cheaper.
—Doug Somers
moviegoer from Plymouth Township

A good New Year's resolution may be to head south

By Iris Sanderson Jones
contributing travel editor

There is nothing like a little snow to make a person think of travel. The questions have been coming in ever since the first flakes fell in early November. Most of them are from readers interested in sun, sand and sea. Some are planning ski trips. Other look forward to future trips to Europe.

Send us your travel questions. Send them to Iris Sanderson Jones, Street Scene, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia 48150.

Q: What's the least expensive time to travel south to the sun in Florida, Mexico or the Caribbean?

L.M., Canton

A: The sun season starts in November and runs through April or

early May depending on the destination. The highest season is from mid-December through New Year's Day and from mid-January into March.

One of the most overlooked possibilities for cost-conscious travelers is immediately after New Year's Day. I know, you are too tired, broke and worn out from Christmas to travel during the first two weeks of January. Well, think again. That is the very reason why those two weeks are slow times in the south.

Re-order your priorities. Enjoy Christmas but delay your Christmas gift, a week in the sun, until just after the holidays are over. You will be surprised at how much money you can save.

The second-best time would be just before or after high season, when the resorts are still geared for tourists but most of us are getting ready for Christmas or Easter, or looking towards the end-of-school season. Prices drop dramatically.

A third option, for the Caribbean but probably not for Florida, is to go in the summer. The weather isn't that much hotter. The reason that

our winter is high season in the islands is because our weather is cold. Their weather is great most of the year, but Americans tend to stay

home and enjoy their own environment during the summer.

Q: Have they cleaned up the hurricane mess in Texas, Cancun and Jamaica? I see good rates for those areas, but I don't want to go unless they are really ready for tourists.

M.A., Troy

A: You should hear Ken Treflik, Director of Resort Vacations for Travel Charter, on that subject! He maintains that Cancun is ready for tourists, but that tourists are not buying Cancun tours in their usual numbers because they don't know what to expect. Travel Charter delayed their Cancun schedule until they were satisfied with the cleanup; they started taking groups to Cancun Nov. 19.

That does not mean that everything is back the way it was last year, but that the destination is quite capable of giving you the sun/sea/

sand and resort pleasure you are looking for. There are still hotels that are closed for cleanup and repair, but they are the minority.

Most hotels, restaurants, shops and clubs are open for business. Some people say that the 60-day period since the hurricane has given Cancun facilities the opportunity to really restore their properties, some for the first time in 10 years!

Cancun was literally created out of the Mexican coastline by the Mexican government. According to Treflik, when the hurricane approached they turned off the water, gas and electricity, waited for the great winds to flail blowing out the windows of high-rise hotels and then turned it all on again. There was a lot of clean-up of course. Most of the palm trees were stripped bare and must be replaced. As far as I know, a Cuban fishing boat is still stuck in the sand beside one of the hotels.

