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Showing postings 1 - 17 of 17 in the thread: Capitol & Gem & Strand Theatre stories.....

Posting: Capitol & Gem & Strand Theatre stories....	Posting 1
Poster: Skipper Barrett	
Date: 6 April 2009 11:54 PM	
Hi all:	
As many of you know my pop Russ Barrett ran The Capitol Theatre (1943-1960) in its glory days. I grew up there practically. Thought it would be interesting for some people on TC forum to share some of their memories, stories, experiences while attending Wmtc's great old movie houses.	
I remember a movie called YOUNG MAN WITH A HORN was opening on a Wednesday and it starred Kirk Douglas (1950s). The new hire guy at the movie house who will remain nameless was placing the letters on the marquee at theatre to spell out title of movie and his English was not good. He placed and E on HORN so it came out HORE. My dad got a call at 3am at our house from Police Chief Bombria asking him "what in the hell kind of a movie do you have playing at The Capitol today? My dad and I went down to The Capitol rightaway and fixed the problem. The guy was was working for me dad that goofed went on in CT politics.	
Are you out there Whitey Sellers??	
Posting: Re: Capitol & Gem & Strand Theatre stories....	Posting 2
Poster: Robert Thompson	
Date: 8 April 2009 8:57 PM	
I have a of memories of the Capitol & Gem. Every year since I can remember I used to go to the matinee(?) the day before school started.As for the Strand Iwill never forget that place. Went there every Saturday afternoon for ages. I remember one Saturday my grandmother sent my uncle after me it was past 6PM & the movie was still going, however I think the movies back than ran continuously. Never forget Tuesday night, that was dish night.	
Posting: Re: Capitol & Gem & Strand Theatre stories....	Posting 3
Poster: Dick Donovan	
Date: 11 April 2009 10:24 AM	
Skipper-- i think you will appreciate the following. This past Xmas we spent with my daughter and family in Hong Kong. She has two kids ages 12 and 9. One afternoon we went to see a full-length animated kids movie--don't remember the name but it was like "Cars" in terms of quality, etc. The theater has two separate viewing sections--the regular like we see in the States and the other is totally awesome! Its a large room with about 15-20 large sofas that can sit 2 - 3 adults; overstuffed arm rests; swing up foot rests; and each of the armrests has an extended wood tray. About 15 minutes before the movie starts a hostess visits each one to take orders for hot dogs, FFs; soft drink, and 2 kinds of popcorn. All included in the admission and much as you want during the movie. Huge screen and all seats have uninterrupted viewing. Don't know if there is anything like this in US. Thought you would enjoy this giving your past and your Dad's with the Capital.	
Posting: Re: Capitol & Gem & Strand Theatre stories....	Posting 4
Poster: Steve Starger	
Date: 13 April 2009 9:00 AM	
Skipper nee of Willi,	
We both know vividly what our young lives were like in the late 40s and early 50s in Willimantic. Those theaters were at the center of our adolescent adventures, especially the Capitol . We grew up in the dark, largely. Too many memories to share here, but I'll go with Dr. Silkin's Asylum of Horrors, the annual stage show at the Capitol for Halloween. There was a lousy horror movie and then the "main event" -- a mad doctor cutting somebody up on a gurney on stage, and then the coup de grace: Frankenstein's monster patrolling the aisles of the theater in pitch blackness and kids tossing eggs at the stage and everyone else they could hit. I remember a technical glitch at one show where the lights stayed on, revealing a guy twirling handkerchiefs on a pole to simulate ghosts. What a hoot! I went home covered with eggs more than once. The smart thing to do was to sit under the balcony overhang as protection.	
Steve Starger, former bad boy of the Willi streets.	
Posting: Re: Capitol & Gem & Strand Theatre stories....	Posting 5
Poster: Fred Masterton	
Date: 13 April 2009 8:43 PM	
Does anyone else remember when "Admiral Jack" from channel 8 in New Haven appeared at the Capitol? It must have been in about 1965, and our mother apparently drew the short straw and had to take my brother and I. I don't remember what the movie was but I do remember "the Admiral". I doubt that his show would stand the test of time - other shows like "Lost in Space" are awful when I see them now, but I can always remember fondly.....	

Posting: Re: Capitol & Gem & Strand Theatre stories....
 Poster: Skipper Barrett
 Date: 16 April 2009 1:15 AM

Posting 6

Steve-O

Oh yeah...you have such great detailed recall, especially the name of Doc Silkini, who I had long forgotten. My pop had a picture in his office at The Capitol from one of those Silkini shows...he was being throttled by Frank-N-Stein. Wish I had it today. I remember the eggs too...and the stunt with the pole and hankies to simulate a ghostly figure..think it was doorman Conrad Dubois (remember this one?) who forgot to turn the house lites off during this bit.

I seem to recall a pasta dinner from IGs we served up one nite to some poor folks down by the tracks...crazy and mad stuff to look back at now.

The Capitol was a place where dreams were made...it was a place that Mel loved too where he got hours of pleasure from that dark cavernous cinema. And it too was an escape into celluloid dreams from those humid August dog days circa 1952 of Main St Willi. Anyone for a danish from Mario's?

"Oh wind lost ghost come back"

Little Shebah

Posting: Re: Capitol & Gem & Strand Theatre stories....
 Poster: Skipper Barrett
 Date: 16 April 2009 1:15 AM

Posting 7

Steve-O

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Posting: Re: Capitol & Gem & Strand Theatre stories....
 Poster: Steve Starger
 Date: 16 April 2009 1:00 PM

Posting 8

Skippy,

Yes, the memory banks won't stop haunting me! I also recall one Silkini show with "Gargantua," a guy in a gorilla suit. The legend was that someone set fire to him when he was in his suit out in the alley next to the theater. Is that true???

Unfortunately, I do remember the "spaghetti shower" we poured on poor, unsuspecting residents who lived under the theatre. How cruel that was! Kids today, indeed.

And yes, Mel loved the movies. He'd sit by himself on the far right of the right aisle of the Capitol, in the afternoon, where the theater was nearly empty, and find some moments of relative peace there. Everyone knew him and let him be and treated him with respect. There were some good people around back then, even though, as kids, we pretty much dissed everyone.

Remember the Myth of the Rainy Saturday Night.

Stevie

Posting: Re: Capitol & Gem & Strand Theatre stories....
 Poster: John Boudreau
 Date: 16 April 2009 10:16 PM

Posting 9

" Remember the Myth of the Rainy Saturday Night. "

Poetic ...

Posting: Re: Capitol & Gem & Strand Theatre stories....
 Poster: Skipper Barrett
 Date: 19 April 2009 11:50 AM

Posting 10

dick:

interesting story on your visit to HK...yes...it generates vision, recall of the old willi theatre we all knew on one way or another. it was a great place to visit to be transported to another time and place, often filled with adventure. i estimate i was there every single day from 1944 to 1960 and the memories i have there with my pop i treasure, as all in this forumover the years have come to see.

i wish the forum caretakers who took over since tom beardsley left would put back the capitol theatre pages here in TC as tom did...the theatre images, history, etc... were wonderful to review and reflect on.

i do not see of the the forum contributors like wm brainard (sp) here anymore. and john tormey has been out of pocket lately. or whitey sellers who was at the capitol working for my dad in 1943-44.

john:

'the myth of the rainy saturday night'...it can mean anything you want it to.

Posting: Re: Capitol & Gem & Strand Theatre stories... Posting 11
 Poster: Dick Donovan
 Date: 21 April 2009 7:04 AM

Skipper, the Capital was a great place to retreat to on rainy weekend day and for 18cents one could enjoy a double feature, news, maybe a cartoon, and coming attractions. And, a uniformed usher armed with a flashlight to guide you to a seat. Its difficult to describe what the Capital was like to others who never stepped inside to watch a movie there. My father told me a story that happened around 1918 or later. One summer, can't remember who, but decided to have the first outdoor movie at night. The location was about where the IG restaurant was. A fence was put up, benches and chairs were put put and the screen was placed in front. Just after the movie started, according to my father, he and some pals had gathered a basket of ripe tomatoes and started bombarding the viewers from the railroad track side of the lot. Movie stopped, people ran and yelled and the kids ran and were never caught. And, the outdoor movie never tried again.

Posting: Re: Capitol & Gem & Strand Theatre stories... Posting 12
 Poster: Steve Starger
 Date: 28 April 2009 3:25 PM

John and Skip,

The myth of the rainy Saturday night: Kerouac, of course, and yes it can mean anything. It probably meant something specific to Ti Jean, but who knows what? It's a sad vision from a supremely talented and supremely sad man.

Posting: Re: Capitol & Gem & Strand Theatre stories... Posting 13
 Poster: Skipper Barrett
 Date: 28 April 2009 11:49 PM

Steve:

I do not recall any performer in the GARGANTUA suit from the Doc Silkini shows being set aflame at The Capitol. But it is possible back then, as you well know chappy. It is very possible indeed.

Eye's be see' in youse ya knows B-foe too longe. Got me ticket for Wmtc and youse got the tix for me and the mrs for the WHS 59th 50th .Be check-inn soonz wits ya.

"I just downed 3 beers..and this half pint of vodka...I am feeling quite strange "

Poppy Wipinsnade

Posting: Re: Capitol & Gem & Strand Theatre stories... Posting 14
 Poster: John Boudreau
 Date: 30 April 2009 7:51 PM

Steve ...Speaking of rainy nights ...I always dug this written about Patsy Cline's voice/music ...

" In case one day we all forget what red neon looks like at the end of a dark street on a lonely rainy night . "

Posting: Re: Capitol & Gem & Strand Theatre stories... Posting 15
 Poster: Steve Starger
 Date: 1 May 2009 10:54 AM

John,

Yeah, that's Patsy to a T. Hank Williams too.

Posting: Re: Capitol & Gem & Strand Theatre stories... Posting 16
 Poster: Ada Kerachsky Albright
 Date: 15 May 2009 3:54 PM

For those of you who are Kerouac fans, here is an interesting article from the NYTimes:
<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/16/books/16kero.html?ref=books>

Posting: Re: Capitol & Gem & Strand Theatre stories....
Poster: Skipper Barrett
Date: 16 May 2009 8:05 PM

Posting 17

Kerouac lives.....

CB