

Ventnor's Twin: the reel deal

**Movie house could face closure
More local patrons needed**

By SUSAN DECOTEAU-FERRIER

VENTNOR — Gone are the days when an afternoon at the movies was an affordable source of family entertainment. Or are they? The Ventnor Twin Theatre is a rare and welcome exception.

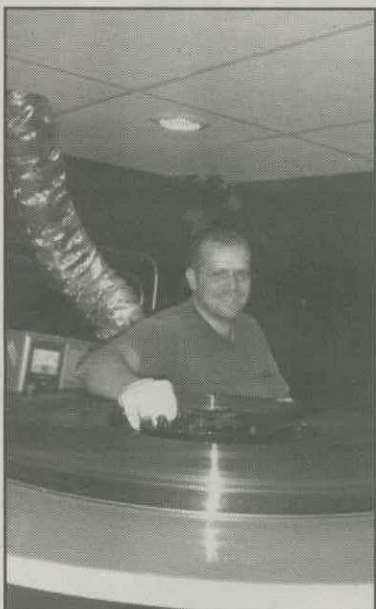
In this day of giant multiplex theatres, the Ventnor Twin offers quality, first run movies with Dolby sound at a reasonable price. However, because of high film rental fees and the costs involved in operating a first-run cinema, the theater may not be able to hang on.

According to theatre owner, John Berezowski, "we're struggling." Continuing on he contends, "as far as product, service and pricing... we're the best theatre out there."

Adding to the theater's plight is its location inside the city's redevelopment zone.

On the upside, Berezowski reports having a very "loyal clientele...it's often the same people here week after week." This may be because as a privately owned and primarily volunteer-operated theater, the Ventnor is able to provide patrons with services not found at a multiplex.

Since many of the Ventnor's regulars are seniors, this extra care is critical. "We're here to help people to their seats if they need it," says Berezowski. Unlike the larger multi-screen theatres, where



The Ventnor Twin Theater

Matinees - \$3
Before 6 p.m. - \$5
Evening showing - \$7.50, seniors - \$5

Large popcorn - \$4.50, large soda - \$3.00, both with unlimited refills

Theater owner John Berezowski wants to keep first run movies in Ventnor but he can't do it without the support of regular moviegoers.

Photo by Susan Ferrier

frequently the movie ends and there is no one around, there is always someone at the Ventnor to hold the door, take feedback (both good or bad), assist patrons, and on some occasions drive them home.

Adding another personal touch, when the movie is over theatergoers can expect someone, usually Berezowski himself, in the lobby with a bowl of mints. "Literally and figuratively, it leaves a good taste in your mouth," says Berezowski.

Of course, seniors are not the only people who benefit at the Ventnor. Despite a tight budget, the movie house offers families a place to go where they can enjoy quality entertainment at a reasonable price. Berezowski reports, "tickets and concessions for a family of four costs around \$50." Considerably less than the off-shore cinema complexes. Moreover, because the

Ventnor is a first-run theater there is no waiting weeks or sometimes months until the major theaters finish showing the film. Parents can take the children the weekend the movie is released.

If you are looking for a real bargain hold off for the Wednesday matinee. In addition to costing only \$3, patrons can purchase the Senior and Not So Senior Special, a promotional size popcorn and soda for \$2.

The Ventnor is more than just a movie house. It truly provides a service to the community, which is why Berezowski sees the need to preserve it. Profits are not his primary concern. If this theater closes, the area suffers a tremendous loss, because there are many people on the island who according to Berezowski, "If they do not get to the Ventnor, they do not get anywhere else."

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