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4-15-2020

### Lovingston Cafe Creates Drive-In Theater

Nick Cropper

*Richmond Times-Dispatch*

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#### Recommended Citation

Cropper, Nick, "Lovingston Cafe Creates Drive-In Theater" (2020). *Covid-19 Archive: Documents*. 114.  
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LEE LUTHER JR. FOR THE NELSON COUNTY TIMES

The Simpson family watches vintage cartoons before the main feature at the LovingsonCafe in Nelson County.

## Nelson drive-in theater offers an escape for those stuck at home

BY NICK CROPPER

The News & Advance

Parked cut front of the Lovingson Cafe, Chad and April Simpson popped the trunk of their car and piled in the back along with their two sons, Hank and Colt.

They had just finished a quick bite to eat before settling in with a few blankets. The Simpsons and others sat in their cars on a recent Saturday to watch old cartoons and a movie at a drive-in theater outside the cafe, located off U.S. 29.

Tony Honeycutt, a co-owner of the Lovingson Cafe, said the idea to hold a drive-in theater took off after he and the other owners saw some other businesses were doing the same thing.

All three co-owners — Honeycutt, Tucker Graham and Victoria Bellflower — said they were happy to be able to give the people of Nelson something to do amid the closures caused by COVID-19.

“We saw the idea, we found that we already have the projector, we already have... at least the

basics to get it going. So we decided to go ahead and put it together and see if people were interested and turns out they were,” Graham said.

In addition to the showing held April 11, the Lovingson Cafe first started holding the drive-in theater the weekend before with showings that Friday and Saturday.

In order to maintain social distancing, families were required to stay in their vehicles.

That night, the Simpsons and other viewers watched cartoon shorts featuring Betty Boop and Woody the Woodpecker, among others, before the main feature, the 1947 western “Angel and the Badman” starring John Wayne.

Honeycutt noted the reason they could only show the old black-and-white pictures is because whatever the cafe showed needed to be in the public domain.

Despite the limitation, Honeycutt and the other owners said they wanted to provide the community with something to do and a way to stay sane while being stuck at home.

“It was something we could do for the community that was still safe to do. There’s not much else you can do right now and still maintain those safety protocols,” Honeycutt said. “They need to get out of the house and get some air and just at least pretend like they’ve got some normalcy for just an hour or two.”

The Simpsons have been keeping busy lately with different outdoor activities like hiking and fishing, but both Chad and April said they were excited to experience the drive-in theater with their sons.

“It’s just something to do, get the kids out of the house. The kids have never been to a drive-in theater. I’m 40 and the last one I went to was about 15 years ago,” Chad Simpson said.

The owners of the Lovingson Cafe are planning on doing another drive-in theater this weekend.

“We’re going to keep doing it as long as all this social distancing is still required. As long as people have a demand for it. When people stop wanting to do it, we’ll stop doing it,” Honeycutt said.