

The Summer Rituals Return In The Magic Of Movie Nights

by Kurt Woock

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When the jumbo screen at Infinity Park lights up, people gather around it like moths gathering around a light on a hot summer night. And for good reason. It's free, it's fun, and it's a timeless experience that people of every age enjoy. It's more than just something to do. *Monday Movie Madness*, now in its ninth year, is a sign of summer for thousands of Coloradans.

Linda Cassaday, deputy city manager for the City of Glendale, says she continues to be wowed by the reception *Monday Movie Madness* continues to get. One way organizers engage moviegoers is by opening up each year's movie selection to online suggestions and voting. This year, Cassaday says more people voted than in any other year.

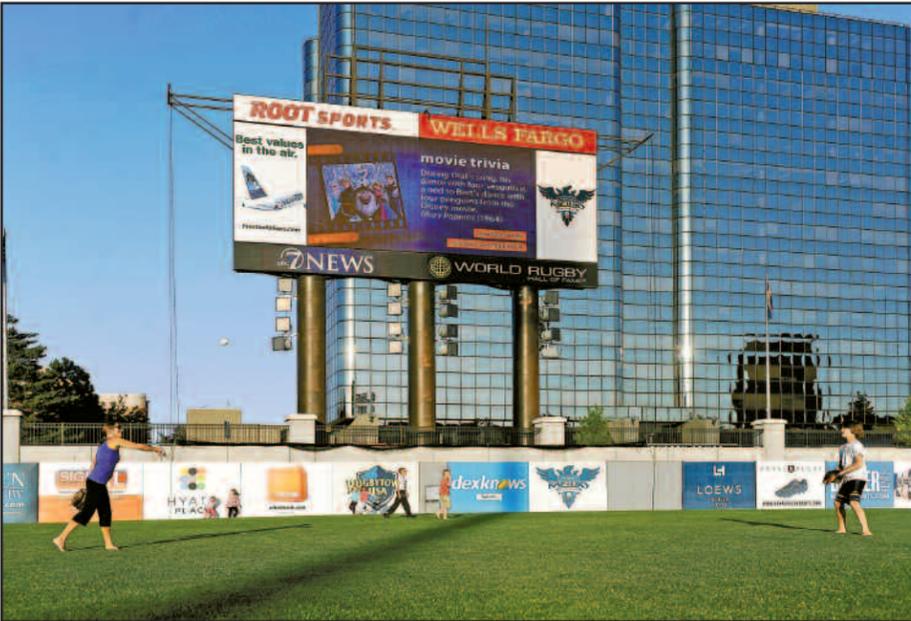
The crowd is not only growing — it's diverse. "I'm amazed when I walk in and

see who's coming in," she said. "It can range from families with babies in strollers to teens to couples who come in for a really cool date night." While the City of Glendale sponsors the event, Cassaday said people drive in from all over the Front Range to attend. "It's the new drive-in movie."

The lineup of mostly classics reflects the fact that *Monday Movie Madness* is a unique experience. It's not a movie theater, and it's not a film festival. These are all movies that are readily available on *Netflix* or cable, and most households probably have at least one on DVD. The word "movie" is in the event's name, but the movie itself is just a supporting act to the event itself. People come to feel the grass between their toes, to bring a picnic, to share a blanket with family, to feel the air become cool as the sun slips behind the mountains, to see the moon and stars shine



In *Monday Movie Madness*, people have found a place where time slows down for a few hours. Photos by Seth McConnell



Everyone, regardless of age, is free to be youthful, to smile and laugh at a scene as if they're seeing it for the first time at *Monday Movie Madness*.

as the stadium lights go down. Everyone, regardless of age, is free to be youthful, to smile and laugh at a scene as if they're seeing it for the first time, despite the fact they know every word. The event could very well have been named *Monday Movie Magic*.

This year kicked off in June with the latest *Star Wars* movie, *Star Wars – The Force Awakens*. July 11 will bring *Mamma Mia!* followed by the classic *The Goonies* on July 18. And the Robin Williams classic *Mrs. Doubtfire* plays on July 25. The season finale takes place on August 8 with another timeless Robin Williams' role, Disney's *Aladdin*.

The laid-back atmosphere can be traced to how easy it is to attend. Admission is free. Parking is free. Vendors are on site for those who prefer it, but people are welcome to bring their own food and beverages to the stadium (just no glass), making it an affordable way to have a memo-

orable evening.

Like late night ice cream cones, baseball games, and barbecues, *Monday Movie Madness* is becoming synonymous with summer. It's more than an event: It's a summer ritual that people enjoy going to time and again. Cassaday recalls how she at first didn't know whether such an event would take hold in a world filled with jam-packed schedules and short attention span. Perhaps *Monday Movie Madness* is succeeding not in spite of those things, but in response to them. In *Monday Movie Madness*, people have found a place where time slows down for a few hours.

"I just think that we've hit something in the culture with this idea," Cassaday said. "To sit on real grass in a real place and watch a movie on the jumbotron, to be able to let your kids run around and not worry about them: We're capturing the imagination."



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