

## DOCUMENTARY DAYS: DRIVE-IN MOVIE MEMORIES

In the beginning, there was a New Jersey businessman who, it is said, wanted to be able to take his obese mother to the movies comfortably, and so he opened, in 1933, the world's first drive-in movie theater. Pretty soon, screens were going up in dirt fields nationwide, and by World War II, the drive-in was the favorite night out for American families. In the late '50s and '60s, the wholesome trade gave way to horny teens, and eventually working "hardtops" all but disappeared from the landscape, a rise and fall lovingly detailed in this anecdote-rich one-hour film. Director Kurt Kuenne, working with historians Don and Susan Sanders, mixes terrific old marketing reels ("It's Intermission time! See you at the Refreshment stand!") with on-camera remembrances from fans such as critic Leonard Maltin, as well as bona fide drive-in stars, including B-movie queen Beverly Garland. In an elegant touch, Kuenne sets their overlapping voices against still photos and news clips tracing the ever-changing history of a relatively brief phenomenon, albeit one the filmmakers claim is making a comeback. That's welcome news, although we city folk may have to hit the road to partake of the magic, since open land isn't exactly abundant in these parts. (*Sunset 5, Sat.-Mon., Aug. 31-Sept. 2, 10 a.m.; Monica 4-Plex, Sat.-Sun., Sept. 7-8, 11 a.m.; Playhouse 7, Sat.-Sun., Sept. 14-15, 11 a.m.; Fallbrook, Sat.-Sun., Sept. 21-22, 11 a.m.*)

—Chuck Wilson