



BEHIND THE COUNTER on Sunday, Nakita Bose (above) put butter on a tub of popcorn at Sunflower Cinema. Before the movie started, volunteers Butch and Colleen Rittmann (below) changed the sign to advertise next week's film.

Movie theater needs support to stay open

With past-due sales tax owed the state, utilities bills piling up and low attendance, Oberlin's volunteer-run Sunflower Cinema needs some help to keep going.

The theater, which is open two days a weekend, is run by a board made up of Bev Reiter, Kala Bose, Duane Dorshorst, Butch Rittmann, Jan Badsky and Susan May.

Ms. Reiter said attendance has been down for about a year, with only around 20 people showing up at each screening.

Movies are shown 7 p.m. Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday each week. The theater usually closes for May and August, with busy schedules for graduation and fair. The movies are switched to 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday for the summer.

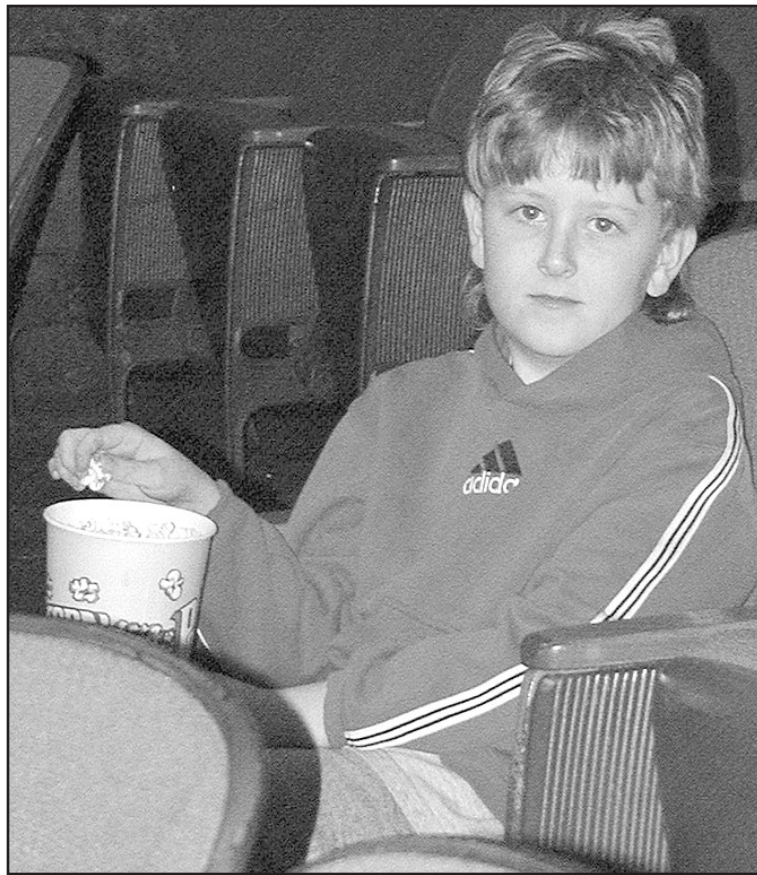
Organizations do make some donations, Mrs. Reiter said, and the city gives the theater a monthly stipend for utilities, but it doesn't get any tax money.

Sunflower Cinema has had to catch up on back sales tax incurred before this board took over, she said. The back sales tax started out at \$16,000, but it was prorated and some of the penalties were taken off.

The theater has been paying \$780 a month, said Mrs. Reiter, but next month is the last scheduled payment. After that, she said, she's not sure what the theater will owe.

The theater still has about \$3,000 worth of bills to be paid, though, including utilities for the building, and rental for movies, said Mrs. Reiter. She said she wasn't sure the total amount the theater needs, and right now, there aren't any fundraisers planned.

The board has a wish list, she



BEFORE THE MOVIE STARTED Sunday afternoon, Jacob Gee snacked on his popcorn at Oberlin's Sunflower Cinema.

said, including new seats and a new sign, which would be taken care of with a proposed new building. Mrs. Reiter said the Monday Evening Club, with the help of R&M Service Center, recently bought the theater a new Oreck vacuum cleaner.

Basically, said Mrs. Reiter, the theater needs a steady cash flow. More people coming to see the movies and support the operation would help, said Mrs. Bose.

The board has stuck to mostly family films, said Colleen Rittmann, so kids can come to the movies.

Next weekend, the theater has "27 Dresses" scheduled. "Coming-soon" movies include "The Bucket List," "Fool's Gold" and "Spiderwick Chronicles."

Mrs. Reiter said the theater board has lots of movie posters for sale. To buy one, contact one of the board members.



— Photos and story by Kimberly Davis