

Longtime film and animal fans now own the Cinema Theater

By: Diana Louise Carter February 1, 2018

It'll be déjà vu all over again for the grand re-opening of the [Cinema Theater](#) Friday, Feb. 2.

There will be old faces in new roles—longtime patrons Audrey Kramer and Alex Chernavsky are the new owners, who took over the business Jan. 5. (John Trickey still owns the building.)

And there'll be a cat. Again. And again. Kramer has already introduced 20-pound Bo, a white and marmalade adult cat, to some audience members. She expects he'll be roaming freely in the theater within a week, keeping up a long-time tradition at the Cinema of having a cat in residence. And, at some point, a kitten, Genny, will be meeting people, too.

The only movie playing on Friday, from the 3 p.m. matinee to the last show at 9 p.m., will be the 1993 comedy "Groundhog Day." That's the movie in which Bill Murray wakes up again and again on Feb. 2 to relive the entire day until he finally gets it right and gets the girl, Andie McDowell.

The repetitive nature of the love story is a fitting one for Kramer's and Chenavsky's new venture, as they made a weekly habit of coming to the Cinema for years, even as they lived in Wayne County. Both attended the movie theater for years before they met and married in a ceremony at the Cinema in 2009. He started coming in the 1980s—"Tootsie" was his first one at the Cinema—and she started around 1999.

"It felt like home, everyone knew your name, everyone was very friendly and they had a cat there," Kramer said. In fact, it pretty much *is* home now as the couple lives in the Swillburg neighborhood, a 30-second walk from the theater.

The cat was important as both husband and wife are fans of animals and work in animal rescue, too. Chernavsky won't say exactly how many cats they own, but noted that at one time they housed four blind cats.

Their love of animals led them to becoming vegans, which is the impetus behind one of the few changes they plan to institute: the snacks are going vegan. Many of the treats sold at the Cinema were already free of animal products, Kramer said, but they'll be swapping out Hershey bars for Ghiradelli or some other brand of chocolate that doesn't include milk. And they'll be selling vegan cookies.

Another change is that you'll finally be able to use a credit card at the Cinema.

The important stuff, however, remains the same. Jim Lewis, who has managed the theater for years, will still manage it.

"Jim has been there about 30 years and he knows everything. We love Jim and he's staying on. He's teaching us," Chernavsky said.

And prices—now \$5 for the double feature and \$3 for a single show—will remain at those reasonable levels as long as possible, Kramer said.

The grand reopening will feature two animal rescue groups offering cats for adoptions, and some non-concession treats. Chernavsky said it will provide a chance to converse with other customers who come loyally to the Cinema.

Kramer left her job as a janitor at [Lollypop Farm](#) to run the theater, where she will select the films and manage events they hope to hold there. Chernavsky continues to work in IT at Lollypop while taking on shifts selling concessions at the Cinema.

"I feel like I have two full-time jobs right now," Chernavsky said. "In the short-term, it's fine, it's fun and we're enjoying it."

[\(585\) 363-7275](mailto:dcarter@bridgetowermedia.com)