

I don't know how to start this, I've never done this before. But when it comes to supporting Salem Cinema, I have no choice. My name is Paul Pastoor. I work at the Oregon State Hospital of 11+ years. My father is medically disabled. And because of this, I have to live with him and support him. I say that to tell you I've made sacrifices. I live a pretty no frills, disciplined, structured life to ensure he's safe and taken care of.

But, one of my absolute joys in life is watching movies. My earliest memories are watching movies with my parents. And more importantly, going to the movies. Seeing movies in a dark room, with a comfortable chair, quality sound system, and on a big screen is food for the soul. It's a magical experience that I wish I was better with words so I could describe it.

This joy of movies has turned into something more cherished and special as life has gotten harder. And this last year I've gotten a glimpse at what my life will be without Salem Cinema if it does not get help, and that rattled me more than I care admit. Salem Cinema was introduced to me by my mother back when it was at a previous location. And to this day the care they have for the movie experience, for their patrons, is second to none. It feels carefully curated. It feels warm. It's not a disposable experience like so much of life can be in this world that gets faster every day.

I feel such a strong sense of community when I go to Salem Cinema. It feels so singularly Salem to me. I've laughed, cried, been stirred up, angered, even inspired when walking out of their building. I've regularly had meaningful conversations with complete strangers after movies. I've introduced and shared the experience with family and friends.

With so many businesses closing in these last 12-14 months it's no surprise that local independently run businesses, restaurants, and anything dealing with art and culture are first up on the chopping block. Just recently, iconic California theater the 'Cinerama Dome' announced after a year of being closed down, it will not be able to open its doors again. It had been open 58 years.

I find no coincidence that the Academy Awards/Oscars are this weekend. Nominated films that I didn't watch through streaming. Because I hoped and prayed that maybe we'd be in a good enough position with Covid-19 that at some point Salem Cinema would be able to open their doors. Open their doors and have the films I waited to see on the big screen. And they did! But I cannot go because I'm making a sacrifice for my at risk father as cases once again surge in Oregon.

I won't mince words, I'm begging you to help them. Please be the example people look up to as decision makers like yourselves try to rebuild this country. Please show them that music, movies, theatre, dance, art, and community really mean something. Thank you so much for your time.