



Dog n Suds first opened in the 1950s in Illinois. Muskegon County is home to the original last two of these vintage chains.

Revivin' the drive-in

At these spots, under the shadow of neon lights, a new generation can savor the original “fast food” experience.

BY TAI ALEXANDER

Like a scene out of a 1950s-era movie, Michigan drive-ins still serve up frosty mugs of foamy root beer along with juicy burgers and fries in red plastic baskets. Here, hungry patrons push aside their dietary restrictions and dig into fare as nostalgic as it is flavorful.

A&W is a drive-in dining pioneer, having opened its first restaurant in California in 1919; for a brief period during the 1980s, the company headquarters even operated in Michigan. Just miles from Lake Michigan's shoreline at the A&W on M-22 in Frankfort, order up a taste of this classic cuisine — from the “world-famous” All-American hot dogs, foot-long and Coney dogs to fish 'n' chips, chicken dinners and (of course) burgers paired with real draft root beer (frankfortaandw.com).

Originally built in 1943 as an A&W, **Eddie's Drive-in** in Harrison Township just east of Mt. Clemens is a timeless eatery. Celebrating the good old

days of cruising and curb service, roller-skating car hops still serve Big Ed Burgers, foot-long dogs and thick and creamy floats, while '50s music pumps out through overhead speakers. On weekend nights, antique cars and hot rods fill the parking lot, “American Graffiti”-style (eddiesdrivein.com).

A Midwest tradition, **Dog n Suds** first opened in the 1950s in Illinois. Locally, Muskegon County is home to two of these vintage chains — the last two original Dog n Suds in the state — both of which are owned by the Hosticka family. Bill and Karen purchased their first drive-in along the banks of the White River in Montague in 1965, just two years after it opened. Their son David took the reins in 1998 and later rebuilt the landmark. In 2006, he acquired a second location just 20 miles south in Norton Shores; after a painstaking restoration, that drive-in opened in October 2007 (dog-n-suds.com).

Just a handful of other drive-ins remain



in operation around the state. Among the more notable are Coldwater-based Allen's Root Beer Drive-In, Flushing A in Flushing, Traverse City-based Don's Drive-in and Monroe's Original in Monroe. ≈

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