

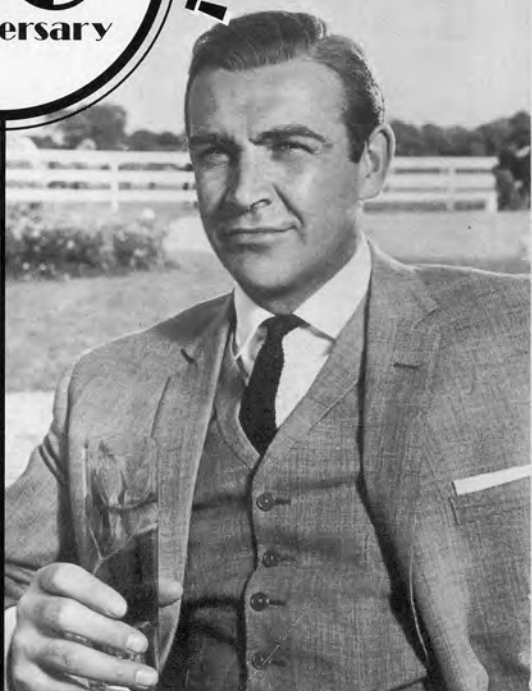


You Asked For It!

1912 - 2002

30th

Anniversary



presented by LaSalle Bank

FROM THE BOOTH

We may not have the biggest theatre in Chicago, but we've got the biggest lineup of motion pictures. 2002 opens with a 6-month thank you to all the loyal regulars who filled out our movie surveys. Where else can film buffs have a voice? For those who made suggestions in general terms (e.g., "more '30s dramas," "more adventure films"), I've used my own judgment to fill in the slots.

Certainly I would've preferred to book even more rare stuff, but if not for you, there would be no series at all. So, if someone who's here every week wants to see James Bond, I'll give him the best Bond ever—the way it was meant to be seen. As it is, I did work in some of my own requests. I received so many great suggestions that I wouldn't be surprised to see a "You Asked For It! Part II." As an aside, if anyone wants to see second features and series films—a Mr. Moto/Charlie Chan double feature?—just let the management know. Also, there was a request I held off on for one of the James Stewart/Anthony Mann Westerns, so could a Stewart *career* retrospective (in 35mm) be far off?

"You Asked For It!" will take you from *She's* Arctic to Tarzan's Africa, and from a temple of gold to a gold depository. All locations. All genres. From the romantic comedy *Trouble in Paradise* to *The Prisoner of Zenda* adventure. You'll see half-forgotten stars—and the most popular ones ever: Cagney & Bogart in *Angels With Dirty Faces*, Crawford and Gable in *Strange Cargo*, and Lugosi and Karloff in *The Invisible Ray*. This series reflects that balance between the neglected and the well-known. I hope you enjoy every one.

Matthew C. Hoffman

***SHE (1935)***

Irving Pichel, Lansing G. Holden

RKO (Merian C. Cooper)/102 min.

Serial: **FLASH GORDON'S TRIP TO MARS (1938)**

Chapter 1: "New Worlds to Conquer"

"...there are some books or magazines which try to belittle one of our heroes or idols. To what benefit? Does it make them more approachable? I doubt it. What it does do is confuse peoples' beliefs and aspirations... I wrote this book to make a point to all those people who might have an interest in knowing that there was one man who lived up to the ideals for which he stood. There was never a moment in all the years he was alive that he acted contrary to those principles that he taught me. He was the living example of all that he spoke."

— C. H. Scott, *Whatever Happened to Randolph Scott?*



H. R. Haggard's classic adventure novel had been filmed earlier, but never better than this timeless 1935 version. Though Pichel and architect Holden are the credited directors, the film was shaped more by producer Merian C. Cooper, who tried to replicate his *King Kong* success. Randolph Scott—Cooper had wanted the unavailable Joel McCrea—and Nigel Bruce are explorers who seek the gateway to immortality in the Arctic. In search of the Eternal Flame, they enter Kor and discover the most dangerous creature in the world: a woman. Stage actress Helen Gahagan, in her only film, portrays Hash-A-Mo-Tep. She Who Must Be Obeyed is the living embodiment of the evil Queen from *Snow White*, but she speaks the beautiful dialogue of Ruth Rose, and her longing, her belief in reincarnation helps put a strange, hypnotic hold on the viewer—a more cerebral action film that's exotic with fabulous Art Deco designs. With Helen Mack. Music by Max Steiner. **NOTE:** This is a longer version of what is currently available on DVD with reel 2 containing several minutes of rediscovered footage. The print is a LaSalle Theatre exclusive.

THE FOUR FEATHERS (1929)

Merian C. Cooper, Ernest B. Schoedsack,

Lothar Mendes

Paramount (David O. Selznick)/83 min.

Chapter 2: "The Living Dead"

"I thought David Selznick made a great mistake in putting in all that titling and those phoney scenes directed by Mendes. It was a much better picture when Monte and I left it, when I went to New York to go into aviation and Monte went off to make a picture in Sumatra. However, I was confident that the stuff Monte and I had shot would be sufficient to make it a success, and it was despite the fact it was the only 'silent' picture playing in New York when everything else was a 'talkie.'"

—Merian C. Cooper



Merian C. Cooper knew something about courage, having read A.E.W. Mason's *The Four Feathers* while in a Russian prison camp earlier in the decade. The second of five versions based on the book—and Cooper & Schoedsack's first foray into fictional filmmaking—is the story of four soldiers in the British Army. When Harry Feversham (Richard Arlen) resigns from the service before the campaign in Sudan, his friends (the underused William Powell, Clive Brook, and Theodore Von Eltz) present him with the symbolic white feathers of cowardice. Wife Fay Wray presents him with the fourth. His inhuman father (George Fawcett) would have him commit suicide, but this is not a film about giving up. Expected to be heroic, Feversham proves himself on his terms. Somewhat stilted, there is a great sequence where Arlen and Powell are almost sold into slavery and are later pursued by baboons and a 'cascade' of hippos, which they beat over the head with canoe oars! Made in the California desert with earlier African footage shot by Cooper & Schoedsack.

January 19



FIVE STAR FINAL (1931)

Mervyn LeRoy

Warner/89 min.

Chapter 3: "Queen of Magic"

"The author of the original play, Louis Weitzenkorn, was once the managing editor of the New York Evening Graphic, a wildly sensationalistic tabloid. He left in indignation and wrote the play. The character of Hinchcliffe supposedly resembled the publisher of the New York Mirror."

—Richard Bojarski & Kenneth Beals

More than escapist 'entertainment,' *Five Star Final* is an absorbing, brutal denunciation of yellow journalism. Edward G. Robinson is Randall, the editor of *The Gazette*, a city newspaper in danger of becoming staid and formal. To boost circulation he resurrects the two-decade-old Nancy Voorhees (Frances Starr) murder case. Randall sends out the best reporter for the story, the shameless "Reverend" Isopod (Boris Karloff). It's revealed that Nancy now has a daughter (Marian Marsh) engaged to the son (Anthony Bushell) of a wealthy family. A scandal would thus ruin their lives. *Five Star Final* is an indictment against the cowards who print sensationalism, and when LeRoy splits the screen with parallel action—the desperate mother on the candlestick phone pleading that the story not be printed—we share in the anguish. No amount of hand washing can cleanse Randall's soul. With Aline MacMahon as Miss Taylor, H.B. Warner as Michael Townsend, and George E. Stone and Ona Munson. Nominated for Best Picture. Remade in 1936 as *Two Against the World*.

January 26



THE BIG BROADCAST (1932)

Frank Tuttle

Paramount/87 min.

Chapter 4: "Ancient Enemies"

"He (Crosby) had first appeared on screen in 1930 in *King of Jazz* (Universal) as one of the Rhythm Boys trio, and subsequently in eight shorts... He had smash songs—'Please', composed by Bing with Roy Turk and Fred Ahlert, which became his theme song; and

two Rainger-Rubin numbers, 'Here Lies Love', 'Where The Blue Of The Night'—and a role requiring him just to be himself: a happy-go-lucky crooner and top name in a broadcasting station, with Stuart Erwin as his rival for the affections of Leila Hyams."

—John Douglas Eames

"Clear all stations for the big broadcast!" (For two years one of my regs has been asking, "You gonna play any Bing Crosby?" and then telling me, "Play a *Big Broadcast* movie!") So this one is dedicated to Phil.) For its nostalgia value we have a young Bingo crooning at a radio station alongside the likes of George Burns & Gracie Allen, the Mills Brothers, the Boswell Sisters, Kate Smith, and Cab Calloway. The film, strongly influenced by Rene Clair's cinematic style, was a success for capitalizing on the popularity of radio stars. "Listen in on the hilarious secrets and romances your radios never reveal!" Other songs include: "Hot Toddy," "Crazy People," and "Kicking the Gong Around." Screenplay by George Marion Jr., which was based on a Broadway play by William Ford Manley.

February 2

KONGO (1932)

William Cowen

MGM/85 min.

Chapter 5: "The Boomerang"



"The rest of the film is very ugly, with juju rituals and drugged orgies. When Flint's Portuguese mistress, Tula (Lupe Velez), lies to him, he threatens to wrap a wire around her tongue. She has already been sleeping with every male on the compound; even Flint's pet ape 'Kong' hops on her regularly. Despite its grimness, *Kongo* was a success." —Mark A. Vieira

A remake of Tod Browning's twisted but fascinating *West of Zanzibar* (1928). Walter Huston, who had starred in the Broadway play, reprises his role of Flint. He's a scarred demon with dead legs, a ruler of a jungle empire who has spent 18 years of his life devoted to revenge. He plans to degrade and ultimately kill the love child of his wife's lover (C. Henry Gordon). Once a woman of purity, Ann (Virginia Bruce) is now held captive in Flint's den of iniquity. There's little chance of salvation, for no one passes through the gloom of Flint's juju circle. Conrad Nagel is the Siamese twin medic—patient one day, doctor another. (I don't know what's funnier—Huston with that skull atop his head or Nagel's interpretation of a dope fiend chewing on one too many Byang roots.) Though it lacks the surprise, the pacing, and the important exposition of the original, this lurid tale is nevertheless something to behold. (Even if it had been a scene-for-scene remake, there's no replacing Lon Chaney.) With Lupe Velez as the glistening Tula.

February 9

TROUBLE IN PARADISE (1932)

Ernst Lubitsch

Paramount/83 min.

Chapter 6: "Tree-Men of Mars"



"*Trouble in Paradise* is perhaps Lubitsch's clearest statement yet on the tenuous nature of romantic relationships, and on the necessity of variation and some gentle mutual deceit to stave off lethargy and boredom. It's a dazzling Mobius strip of erotic allusion, genial irony and degage visual lyricism and elegance. There's self-consciousness in the characters—their arch sophistication is always poised on the precipice of parody, yet never quite tumbles in—but there is no self-righteousness. Gaston may be cheerfully amoral, but he never mocks the pretensions and the vanities of the rich while he's stealing from them, because what he really wants is to live like them." —Scott Eyman

"As for pure style, I think I have done nothing better or as good as *Trouble in Paradise*," said Ernst Lubitsch. Universally considered to be his masterpiece—one that should be screened more often. The nonchalant Gaston Monescu (Herbert Marshall), "the man who walked into the Bank of Constantinople and walked out with the Bank of Constantinople," and Lily Vautier (Miriam Hopkins) portray a couple of conniving lovers who plan to cheat a society widow (Kay Francis) out of her money. The situation is complicated when Gaston falls for this rich Parisienne. Filled with innuendo, visual wit, and the sophisticated touch. With Edward Everett Horton as Francois Filiba, Charles Ruggles, and C. Aubrey Smith. Written by Samson Raphaelson and Grover Jones, from a play by Laszlo Aladar. Art direction by Hans Dreier, who blended Bauhaus with Art Deco in the sets. (Lubitsch's direction makes *Jewel Robbery*, released several months earlier, look like costume jewelry, but the latter did have William Powell.)



THE MASK OF FU MANCHU (1932)

Charles Brabin

MGM/72 min.

Chapter 7: "The Prisoner of Mongo"

"Visually eloquent, the big sets (augmented in some instances by Warren Newcombe's fine matte paintings) are filled with gigantic gold idols. The museum is replete with dinosaur

skeletons, mummies, a pterodactyl and other impressive props, including a crocodile and the giant gorilla from Tarzan: the Ape Man. The sought-after tomb features two sets of ornately carved golden doors and the enthroned, jewel bedecked skeleton of the great Khan. Fantastic pseudo-scientific electrical equipment was supplied by Kenneth Strickfaden, who created the machinery for Universal's *Frankenstein* and *Flash Gordon* productions." —George E. Turner & Michael H. Price

MGM may not have been a horror factory, but when they made one they went all out. *Mask of Fu Manchu*, the best of the sub-genre "Yellow Peril" films, has Boris Karloff as the enigmatic and elusive villain of the Sax Rohmer novels. Fu Manchu seeks the contents of Genghis Khan's tomb; with the Mongol conqueror's sword and ceremonial mask he intends to rule the East and destroy the West. Out to thwart his plans in the name of the British government is Nayland Smith (portrayed by Lewis Stone), but can he survive the doctor's insidious torture garden? Excellent chinoiserie settings and costumes. With an exotic Myrna Loy (as the "insignificant," decadent daughter), Charles Starrett (Terry), Karen Morley, Jean Hersholt, and Lawrence Grant as Sir Barton (the man with the ringing in his ears). Art direction by Cedric Gibbons. Photographed by Tony Gaudio. (Director Brabin had replaced Charles Vidor.)



AIR MAIL (1932)

John Ford

Universal/83 min.

Chapter 8: "The Black Sapphire of Kalu"

"The sobriety of Ford's approach, depicting a small outpost surrounded by constant physical and moral danger, invests *Air Mail* with a German expressionist feeling of oppressive doom that helps redeem it from the clichés of the genre. Though hewing closely to his narrative line, Ford finds room for an occasional poetic touch (a downed flier dying in the snow as 'Silent Night' plays softly on the sound track) or a bit of

comedic commentary (watching Pat O'Brien performing daredevil stunts, one Indian mutters to another, 'Aviator—drunk')."

—Joseph McBride

In a genre that includes such films as *The Dawn Patrol* and *Ceiling Zero*, *Air Mail* is the least known. It's a rousing and, for the most part, realistic tribute to the Federal Air Service. Star Ralph Bellamy as Mike operates the Desert Airport with a small band of colorful pilots. After the demise of one airman in a haunting crash, relief pilot Duke Talbot (Pat O'Brien) swaggers in, showing what he's made of, showboating and flying through hangars. The amoral Duke is as brazen as they come—taking up with the tramp wife of Dizzy (Russell Hopton)—but when Mike goes down in the mountains, Duke makes a choice between women and flying. Co-written by Frank "Spig" Wead, this is a tighter, more balanced film than Ford's slapstick air saga *The Wings of Eagles*. With Gloria Stuart, Lillian Bond (Gloria's co-star from *The Old Dark House*), Slim Summerville, David Landau, Frank Albertson, and Leslie Fenton as the coward who *doesn't* get a second chance. Photographed by Karl Freund.

THE NARROW CORNER (1933)

Alfred E. Green

Warner/71 min.

Chapter 9: "Symbol of Death"



"During the last fortnight or so of shooting, we were obliged to work outdoors all night on a fine mock-up of a ship, on the Warner-First National back lot in Burbank. The nearly full-sized ship was built on huge rockers and had, on each side, enormous sets of tanks that could be filled in minutes by special fire hoses. On cue, they dumped the water onto a slide that sluiced it up and over the decks. The illusion of a storm was aided by great rows of overhead pipes that poured down rain that was blown by several large wind machines. These were actually airplane engines that propelled a small gale."

—Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.

Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. is Fred, a young man with a dark past anxious to get away from the British authorities in Sydney. Captain Nichols (Arthur Hohl), the belching idiot, is the man paid to take him out. They eventually hook up with a cynical doctor (Dudley Digges) before landing on a South Sea island. After swimming out to the beach, Fred meets an English girl, Louise (Patricia Ellis, who's unconcerned about his nudity). Things heat up even though she's engaged to Ralph Bellamy, the good-natured Dane representing the Danish Importing Co. This is a compact adaption of a famed Somerset Maugham novel that moves like lightning. The dialogue just crackles, and Digges is wonderful delivering Maugham's philosophy on life—"life is short/man is ridiculous." Doug is the counterpoint—the youthful idealist who knows there can be beauty and decency in life. The film is also filled with good characterizations from supporting players who are hilariously over-the-top. A terrific film. With Reginald Owen, Henry Kolker, and Sidney Toler. Remade as *Isle of Fury* (1936).

THE KISS BEFORE THE MIRROR (1933)

James Whale

Universal/67 min.

Chapter 10: "Incense of Forgetfulness"



"Whale put Karl Freund to the test on *The Kiss Before the Mirror*, calling at one point for a full 360-degree pan of the courtroom—as if to repudiate the ASC grievances of the previous summer. The challenge was to highlight Frank Morgan, Paul Lukas, and Nancy Carroll among the some 50 people who crowded the set. Freund had to spotlight the three stars while the actors and extras surrounding them remained frozen in place. He accomplished the pan without blurring, and the lighting, apart from the three leads, was uniform throughout."

—James Curtis

It began with a kiss... a kiss before the mirror. Frank Morgan plays Paul Held, an attorney who defends his friend Walter (Paul Lukas) for killing unfaithful wife Lucie (short-lived Gloria Stuart). Paul comes home and notices how strange his wife (Nancy Carroll) seems before the mirror (the visual motif). He reconstructs Walter's crime by following his own cheating wife! Almost as though womankind has a universal *modus operandi* for betraying and shattering love. An odd film that opens with a nice piece of irony—Stuart's cheerful walk through the Viennese woods on her way to her rendezvous with Walter Pidgeon, flowers and music all around. This stylish melodrama also has nice touches of humor—the reporters recording the "riot" with the fey sketch artist—and a good courtroom scene (but not as memorable as *One More River's*). With Jean Dixon as the free-thinking lady lawyer. Photographed by Karl Freund on many of the *Frankenstein* sets. Whale remade this in 1938 as *Wives Under Suspicion*.

March 16



GOLD DIGGERS OF 1933 (1933)

Mervyn LeRoy

Warner/96 min.

Chapter 11: "Human Bait"

Short: "Gold Diggers of 1933 Premiere"

"The Shadow Waltz' is the first of Berkeley's romantic roundelays, in which a waltz or similar melody would repeat ad infinitum as background for permutations of girls and camera angles. For this one Berkeley pushed for more and more odd shots, placing the camera sideways against a mirror to show dancers and their reflections gliding

from the top to bottom of the film frame instead of side to side. It also has the unforgettable neon violins, with visible extension cords, that were to prove near fatal when an earthquake hit the set on March 10, 1933."

— Richard Barrios

Even before *42nd Street's* release, production chief Darryl Zanuck and Warner Bros. were preparing this impressive follow-up. When Joan Blondell and her girls are put out of work, Ned Sparks shows up to interest them in a new show. Brad (Dick Powell), a blue blood songwriter incognito, supplies the money for it as well as the songs. The screwball plot in-between the Forgotten Melody Revue has brother Lawrence (Warren William) trying to stop Brad's marriage to Ruby Keeler, but Larry falls victim to the girls' con. The underrated Aline MacMahon (as Trixie) is the main instigator. (LeRoy knew how to bring out her talents.) Film opens immediately with Ginger Roger's capitalistic anthem "We're In the Money" and concludes with its antithesis—the socially-conscious "Remember My Forgotten Man" number performed by the always marvelous Blondell, embodying the spirit of the Depression. Another Busby Berkeley extravaganza. With Guy Kibbee as the family lawyer, and Etta Moten. A remake of 1929's *Gold Diggers of Broadway*.

March 23



HEAT LIGHTNING (1934)

Mervyn LeRoy

Warner/63 min.

Chapter 12: "Ming the Merciless"

"The cuts made in Mervyn LeRoy's Heat Lightning were not as hurtful to the film, which starred Aline MacMahon as a bitter auto mechanic trying to protect her young sister (Ann Dvorak) from men. She fails, and, as (Joseph) Breen pointed out, three seductions take

place in one film. Even with the eight cuts he required, the film was still effective."

— Mark A. Vieira

Olga (Aline MacMahon) and Myra (Ann Dvorak) are two sisters who operate a service station out in the oppressive Arizona desert. The relationship is strained, however. Olga represses her sister's social life the way she has repressed her own femininity. Their life is further complicated with the arrival of two crooks on the lam—George (Preston Foster) and jittery Jeff (Lyle Talbot). Faintly reminiscent of *The Petrified Forest* (1936), one half-expects Leslie Howard's Alan Squier to drift in with Foster a PG version of Duke Mantee. What it lacks in suspense it makes up for with solid performances by the leads and a strong sense of place. From a play by George Abbott and Leon Abrams. With Glenda Farrell, Frank McHugh, Ruth Donnelly, Jane Darwell, and Edgar Kennedy. Film was remade into *Highway West* (1941).

March 30

THE PRESIDENT VANISHES (1934)

"Wild Bill" Wellman

Paramount (Walter Wanger)/80 min.

Chapter 13: "The Miracle of Magic"



"These films (Star Witness, This Day and Age, Gabriel Over the White House, The President Vanishes) took the view that storm trooper tactics were not only advisable but necessary and that, even if the methods weren't in accord with the best traditions of Americanism, it didn't really matter because none of the gangsters were Americans anyway!"

— William K. Everson

This political fantasy was helmed by William A. Wellman, who could transform average material into surprisingly workable formulas. Arthur Byron portrays an isolationist President who is surrounded by profiteering vultures and warmongers. Then, on the eve of a declaration of war concerning the "European War," he just disappears. Propaganda turns the country upside down, but his inner circle—headed by secret service man Paul Kelly—are in on the mystery. (But if national security depends on grocery man Andy Devine, you figure we're doomed.) Edward Arnold is the Secretary of War who adds to the paranoia by enforcing a police state. And unionists—the greyshirts chanting "Union!"—are depicted as fanatics no better than fascists. A real curio that plays like a B movie. With Janet Beecher, Peggy Conklin, Sidney Blackmer, Osgood Perkins, Charley Grapewin and newcomer Rosalind Russell. The anonymous novel from which this is based is believed to have been written by detective writer Rex Stout.

April 6

THE CRUSADES (1935)

Cecil B. DeMille

Paramount/123 min.

Chapter 14: "A Beast At Bay"

Short: "Cecil B. DeMille Films" 1914-1936 outtakes



"Synonymous always with all that the name Cecil B. DeMille stands for in relation to mighty, colorful pageantry and spectacle, massive settings and accoutrements, it tells a story that will never die. It is the composite story of several of the early Crusades. It's an inspiring martial story, powerful, but humanly understandable, that transcends all racial or religious prejudices."

— The Motion Picture Herald, 1935

In order to evade a pledge of marriage to the Princess of France, Richard the Lionheart (Henry Wilcoxon) joins the first crusade against the Saracens of Asia. "Fearing no devil and praying to no God," Richard sails to Palestine with kings, peasants, and the wife he married to save his knights from starvation. Loretta Young is Berengaria, the Princess of Navarre who comes between England and France in their quest to defeat Saladin (Ian Keith), the sultan of Islam. A more restrained DeMille effort with a clean, decent love story that doesn't rely on titillation. Wilcoxon is well cast as the king who fights for the cross with no faith in it, but Young is the heart of the film and the peacemaker in the struggle. "Shall men fight because they travel different roads to Him?" With C. Aubrey Smith as the Hermit, Alan Hale as the minstrel, C. Henry Gordon as Philip the Second, and Katherine DeMille, Montagu Love, Joseph Schildkraut, Hobart Bosworth, and Ann Sheridan as a Christian girl. Photographed by Oscar-nominated Victor Milner.

April 13



THE PASSIONATE PLUMBER (1932)

Edward Sedgwick

MGM/73 min.

Chapter 15: "An Eye For An Eye"

Short: "She's Oil Mine" (1941),

Jules White (Buster Keaton)

"If they had known I was still essentially a slapstick comedian they would not have bought for me the sort of stories they did. These purchases included two Broadway farces: *Parlor, Bedroom, and Bath* and *Her Cardboard Lover*. In *Her Cardboard Lover* I was assigned the role played on the stage by Leslie Howard, an Englishman with gazelle eyes and manners to match. *M-G-M* renamed it *The Passionate Plumber*, which was nothing compared to the names the critics called our movie version."

—Buster Keaton

The first of three films in which Buster Keaton played opposite Mr. Subtlety Himself, Jimmy Durante. Elmer Tuttle (Keaton) is an American plumber working in Paris. When he's called to the home of socialite Irene Purcell, he's mistaken as her lover by her womanizing boyfriend Tony (Gilbert Roland). Elmer becomes her protector, eventually exposing Tony as the roué he truly is. Durante is the chauffeur McCracken who becomes Buster's second in the film's best scene—the pistol duel with Roland. At this stage, Keaton's career was going down the drain, but he was hampered by an indifferent regime at MGM and fatally paired like oil and water with Durante, who the company was more willing to support. Dialogue by script doctor Ralph Spence. With Mona Maris and Polly Moran. Based on a play by Jacques Deval, which was first made into a Marion Davies vehicle in 1928 and then remade in 1942—ending Norma Shearer's career.



THE MAN ON THE FLYING TRAPEZE (1935)

Clyde Bruckman

Paramount/65 min.

Cartoon: "The Man on the Flying Trapeze" (1934), Dave Fleischer (Popeye)

"W.C. Fields, like some reincarnation from the past, reminds us of a comic type who has weathered the test of the ages. There is something of the braggart soldier from Roman comedy, a strutting Capitano from the commedia dell'arte or Falstaff from Shakespeare's plays. But he has more than these facets. He becomes a bungling husband, harassed by his wife—a comic type that ranges from the classical Greek stage through the medieval tale, the restoration and Eighteenth century comedy, down to modern times."

—Donald W. McCaffrey

W.C. Fields was at the height of his popularity as the misanthrope everyone loves. (Has there ever been a more intolerant personality onscreen?) Muttering his way through life, Fields plays Ambrose Wolfinger, a memory expert who is constantly nagged by his wife (Kathleen Howard, his co-star from *It's a Gift*). The film's title is misleading, but Simon Louvish, the author of the Field's biography *Man on the Flying Trapeze*, says this dark satire is The Great Man's best film. Written by Charles Bogle (Fields) and Sam Hardy and directed by Keaton collaborator Clyde Bruckman. With Mary Brian (as the daughter), Grady Sutton, Vera Lewis, and Walter Brennan as one of the burglars down in the cellar.

April 20

TARZAN ESCAPES (1936)

Richard Thorpe

MGM/89 min.

Cartoon: "Jungle Jitters" (1938), I. Freleng



"Afraid that if released in its present form, *Capture* would be heavily criticized and alienate more people than it would attract, studio bosses ordered all gruesome scenes cut and replaced with re-takes. When director Jim McKay opposed the 'retreat-and-please-everyone' tactics, he was replaced by John Farrow... The producer, still unhappy with results, pulled Farrow out and gave the film to Richard Thorpe, who directed the rest of the MGM series."

—Gabe Essoe

As intriguing as the original version sounds, you'd be hard-pressed to find a Tarzan adventure more potent than this one. No studio better established the atmosphere of the Dark Continent than MGM, and this one throws in everything—marauding tribes, a crocodile of prehistoric dimension (re-used from *Tarzan and His Mate*), and about the weirdest bird you'll ever see (more than likely Johnny Eck of *Freaks*). Johnny Weissmuller, the only believable Tarzan, and Maureen O'Sullivan are visited by Jane's cousins, Erik (William Henry) and Rita (Benita Hume, the future Mrs. Ronald Colman). They wish to take Cousin Jane back to England to claim an inheritance. Captain Fry (John Buckler, a caddish-looking villain in the Warren William vein) is the unenlightened safari leader who has other ideas. A first-rate jungle thriller and a nice continuation of the Tarzan/Jane romance. With Herbert Mundin as Jiggs and E.E. Clive. (Some of the deleted footage involved head smashings by the Ganelonis, and a giant vampire bat—with a few pygmies thrown in—in the swamp sequence.)

April 27

THE INVISIBLE RAY (1936)

Lambert Hillyer

Universal/81 min.

Short: Bela Lugosi Interview (ca 1952)



"Boris Karloff was charming. He was such a good sport because they played a trick on him when we were on location. He went up some sort of a pole. Lunch was announced and they left him there!... Bela Lugosi was an awfully nice man, too, but a dreadful thing happened. I was walking to the set one day and this young woman said, 'Do you know where Mr. Lugosi is?' I said, 'I suppose he's on the set.' She said, 'I came to drive him home,' and I said, 'I'll tell him if I see him.' So I said to him, 'Your daughter has come to drive you home.' He said, 'That's my wife!' But he was charming, very quiet."

—Frances Drake

Karloff the Uncanny lights up the screen in this upscale B, his third teaming with Bela Lugosi. This early science fiction excursion came at the end of Universal's first cycle of golden age horror films. After giving his colleagues a tour in time in his Carpathian laboratory, Dr. Janos Rukh (Karloff) is invited by Dr. Benet (Lugosi) to find Radium X—a powerful element from space believed to have crashed in Africa. In Nigeria, while Lugosi performs astro-chemistry experiments on a "little creature," Karloff locates the meteor site but poisons himself with X. Paranoid, he uses his ray to destroy rather than to heal. A Foreward asks us, Who are we to say it's impossible? But forget the science—who believes Rukh's wife (Frances Drake) could fall for ineffectual Frank Lawton, the wimpy romantic lead? (Frances Drake had talent and class and was, for my money, the most beautiful actress to appear before a movie camera.) With Walter Kingsford and Beulah Bondi. Special effects by John P. Fulton with music by Franz Waxman.

May 4



NIGHT MUST FALL (1937)

Richard Thorpe

MGM/117 min.

Cartoon: "The Woods Are Full of Cuckoos" (1937), Frank Tashlin

Short: "Crime Without Passion" (1933)

rare outtake from opening sequence

"Night Must Fall, which shared certain thematic similarities with Love From a Stranger, another English stage-and-screen thriller of the same era, proved Louis B. Mayer wrong in that it met with positive and enthusiastic reactions from press and public alike. And, for Robert

Montgomery, nothing but praise, for his is truly a brilliant and subtle characterization totally removed from the drawing room hangabouts he'd so often played over the years at Metro."

— Jerry Vermilye

Oscar-nominated Robert Montgomery had insisted upon the role against Louis B. Mayer's instincts and showed why he was more than just a star in light romantic comedies. With cigarette dangling from mouth and thumbs hooked into pockets, he's Danny, a Welsh pageboy who lives in his own imagination. He plays up to Mrs. Bramson (Dame May Whitty), the nagging hypochondriac who torments her own niece (Rosalind Russell as the imprisoned princess terrified of the night and the unknown). More a character study than a mystery, it's easy to see how this was based on a play (by Emyln Williams). Thorpe was a second-rank director (later pulled from the *Wizard of Oz* shoot), so this is mostly theatre captured on film—without the Grand Guignol—though the woodland scenes are a nice cinematic touch. A disturbing film thanks to "Baby Face." (But let's not open that hatbox!) With Alan Marshal, Merle Tottenham, Kathleen Harrison, and E.E. Clive giving a tour of the murder scene to some schoolchildren. (Montgomery and Russell had starred in *Trouble For Two* the previous year.)

May 11



THE PRISONER OF ZENDA (1937)

John Cromwell

David O. Selznick/101 min.

Trailer: "Angels With Dirty Faces" (1938)

"If Lost Horizon is popularly—and truly—regarded as the finest example of Ronald Colman the realist-mystic, The Prisoner of Zenda, his second 1937 film, showcases Ronald

Colman the courtly, intrepid adventurer, living by a code of unselfish and essential integrity, fielding off all obstacles and adversaries with consummate grace and coursing serenely through all difficulties to a jauntily graceful denouement."

— Lawrence J. Quirk

While on a fishing trip in the Balkans, Major Rudolph Rassendyll (Ronald Colman) comes face to face with a relative, Ruritania's King Rudolph V, a remarkable look-alike. When the royal Rudolph is drugged by his half-brother Michael (Raymond Massey), the king's subjects (C. Aubrey Smith, David Niven) convince Rassendyll to fill in at the coronation. Though he falls in love with Princess Flavia (Madeleine Carroll), duty comes first when the true king is abducted by Michael's minion, Rupert of Hentzau (Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.). Alone, the play-actor must infiltrate Black Michael's castle and rescue Ruritania's sovereign. Classified as "Graustarkian," this fairy tale is based on Anthony Hope's 1894 novel, which inspired two silent films. The Selznick version, however, has remained unsurpassed with superb contributions from every department. The crown jewel of the entire series. With Mary Astor as Antoinette de Mauban. Photographed by James Wong Howe with music by Oscar-nominated Alfred Newman. (Uncredited director W.S. Van Dyke worked on the duel scenes.)

May 18

ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES (1938)

Michael Curtiz

Warner/97 min.

Short: James Cagney Interview (ca 1932)

"It was also the only time he was to work with the scene-stealing Dead End Kids. He tells of his first encounter with the gang: In one scene, Leo Gorcey kept ad-libbing phrases that broke continuity and distracted the other players. Jimmy had had enough, but he waited for the next take. When Gorcey interjected an ad-lib, Jimmy gave him a stiff-arm above the nose, snapping his head back sharply. 'Now listen,' he said, poking a finger into Gorcey's chest. 'We've got work to do, and there'll be no more of this g—damn nonsense. We're going to do it the way we were told to do it... understand?' Gorcey understood. It was a language familiar to him."

— Doug Warren

The quintessential gangster film about two boyhood friends from the slums who choose radically different paths in life. One is Rocky Sullivan (James Cagney in his prime), a gangster who thumbs his nose at the law and is idolized by the Dead End Kids. The other is Jerry Connolly (Pat O'Brien), now a priest who believes his boys can be saved, if not Rocky himself. Sullivan enters an uneasy partnership with crooked lawyer Humphrey Bogart and deals with rotten politicians; and all the while his stock rises in the eyes of the young. Cagney's a dynamo onscreen, as when he's refereeing the chaotic basketball game in the gym. *Angels* also contains one of the most powerful (and unambiguous) endings ever. A truly great film and a perfect example of the Warner Bros. house style. With Ann Sheridan as the pretty snappy-looking social worker, Billy Halop, Leo Gorcey, Huntz Hall, George Bancroft, and a dead-on impersonation of Cagney by young Frankie Burke. (Cagney was nominated for Best Actor, but Father Flanagan took home the Oscar.)



May 25

GUNGA DIN (1939)

George Stevens

RKO/117 min.

Short: "Movies Are Adventure" (1949)

"Our thirst was quenched by many beers, brought up to us by the prop man. Finally, Stevens announced over his mike that all was set and the scene must be shot then or the right degree of light would be gone for the day. Vic, by now tight as a tick with all inhibitions melted away, decided that as the beer had gone through him too quickly and none of us could leave our positions high up in this tower, there was no alternative to lessen his intense discomfort but to unbutton his uniform and relieve himself during the scene! Cary and I didn't know whether to laugh or be furious."

— Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.

Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Cary Grant, and Victor McLaglen are making the world safe in this, the most satisfying adventure pic to come out of Hollywood. When an English cavalry patrol at Tantrapur, India, gets wiped out, Sergeants Ballantine (Doug), Cutter (Cary) and McChesney (Vic) ride in and spend the rest of the movie gloriously fighting a murder cult. "How can we get a nice little war going?" Cutter asks, relishing the chance to take on a legion of thuggees. Director Stevens deftly balances insidious danger with energized fun. The close-up of glamorous Joan Fontaine charming Ballantine like a snake while the others look on disapprovingly says it all; the love stuff takes a fitting backseat to the more important themes of friendship and camaraderie. With Sam Jaffe as the regimental water boy dreaming of being a soldier, and Eduardo Ciannelli as ominous Guru. Story by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur, from Rudyard Kipling's poem. Score by Alfred Newman. Shot by Joseph H. August. (Howard Hawks had originally been tapped to direct.)



June 1



STRANGE CARGO (1940)

Frank Borzage

MGM/113 min.

Cartoon: "Believe It Or Else" (1939), Tex Avery

"Verne's discovery of a need for something outside of himself, though centrally at issue in his relationship with Cambreau and his spiritual system, leads him to a deeper love of and need for Julie. What is great about Strange Cargo is the interdependence of these two threads. Borzage's demand that his characters attain a spiritual awareness that

goes beyond an immediate love relationship to a sympathy with and need for the world around them marks a significant expansion of the director's concerns and a deepening of the beauty of his art."

— John Belton

With her acting—and his presence—Joan Crawford and Clark Gable were two of Hollywood's biggest heavyweights. This, their eighth, last, and most untypical teaming, is the story of several convicts who try to escape Devil's Island with the aid of a mysterious stranger, Cambreau (Ian Hunter, in a part first offered to Melvyn Douglas). Even in the most hellish places on earth, man is not alone. No doubt some cine-mah theorists will call what follows a heavy-handed lunacy, but this is a well-acted allegory about spiritual regeneration which is reminiscent of *Destination Unknown* (1933) and *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* (1935). *Strange Cargo* is remembered, if at all, for the byplay between Gable and a decidedly unglamorous Crawford; however, the film really belongs to the one with the final scene. A fascinating deviation from the usual packaged entertainments of the time. With Peter Lorre as Monsieur Pig, Paul Lukas as Hessler, Albert Dekker, and Eduardo Ciannelli. Based on Richard Sale's novel *Not Too Narrow, Not Too Deep*. Music by Franz Waxman.

June 8



ACTION IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC (1943)

Lloyd Bacon

Warner/127 min.

Cartoon: "Rumors" (1944), Chuck Jones (Private Snafu)

"When the action picks up as a submarine closes in on the ship, the tension increases considerably. In those scenes,

director Lloyd Bacon (with uncredited assistance from Byron Haskin and Raoul Walsh) and writers A.I. Bezzerides, W.R. Burnett, Guy Gilpatric, and John Howard Lawson, are remarkably innovative. Intercutting between the ship and the U-boat, they allow the German characters to speak German, without subtitles. The meaning and intention of the actions are made perfectly clear through inflection and the audience's familiarity with submarine movies."

— Mike Mayo

Humphrey Bogart and Raymond Massey take on the German navy in this exceptional WW II action film. Captain Steve Jarvis (Massey) and First Mate Joe Rossi (Bogart) are sailors in the Merchant Marine, traveling through dangerous waters with the kind of men who have faith in "God, President Roosevelt, and the Brooklyn Dodgers." When their ship is torpedoed, Jarvis swears revenge. His men get that chance when they sail in an international convoy to the Russian port Murmansk. The first hour is mostly setting up of characterization—Bogie shutting up the loudmouth in the Casino Club is a hoot—but the second hour is filled with awesome challenges from U-boat wolf packs to Luftwaffe attacks. Bogart's patriotic speech during the burial at sea is one of the quieter highlights. An intelligently done film that's a cut above your typical propaganda, though there are lines like: "That isn't a miracle. It's American seamanship." With bad-tempered Dane Clark, Alan Hale, Kane "Spy Smasher" Richmond (as Ensign Wright of the Navy gun crew), the unmistakable Ruth Gordon, and Julie Bishop (singing "Night and Day").

June 15

PALM BEACH STORY (1942)

Preston Sturges

Paramount/90 min.

Cartoon: "Crosby, Columbo and Vallee" (1932), Rudolf Ising



"'You'll get over it,' says the Wienie King about Gerry's trouble. 'You'll get over being young, too. Someday you'll wake up and find everything behind you. Gives you quite a turn.' But this remarkable and funny film has its own 'turn' to give—however delayed it may be in coming to us. Sturges calculates what he's really saying when he makes everything so free and painless. The tone is idyllic-sardonic. There is a slyness, even a wickedness, to the cheeriness: happy endings that remind us of the real endings—a pastoral with a kick to it."

— James Harvey

Preston Sturges' chaotic screwball comedy about marital relations. Tom Jeffers (Joel McCrea) is a provider who can't provide, and Claudette Colbert the Park Avenue wife who'd make a better sister. Gerry separates from Tom and heads to Palm Beach for a divorce. On the southbound train she becomes mascot to the "Ale & Quail Club" before hooking up with pompous millionaire John D. Hackensacker III (Rudy Vallee in a surprisingly good performance). "Snoodles" is the sort who goes through life writing things down but never adding them up. But when noble flop Tom shows up to reclaim his wife, he has to avoid the desirous clutches of Hackensacker's flighty sister (Mary Astor). Highlights include William Demarest skeet shooting in the dining car, and the cruel irony of Vallee singing "Good Night, Sweetheart" to Gerry. A brilliant script by Sturges with unforgettable (and rather generous) characters. With Robert Dudley as the Wienie King, and Sig Arno as Toto—a houseguest as unwelcome as Carlo in *My Man Godfrey*.

June 22

SHANE (1953)

George Stevens

Paramount/118 min.

Cartoon: "Bugs Bunny Rides Again" (1948), I. Freleng



"He used to say, 'John Wayne uses a six-gun like a guitar.' In Westerns, people would shoot people, and then they would get up and shoot back. He wanted, as he put it, to show what a single shell from a .45 can do to the human form."

— George Stevens, Jr. on his father

Sam Peckinpah called *Shane* the best Western ever made. Alan Ladd (in a role envisioned for Montgomery Clift) is the buckskin-clad white knight who comes to the aid of the Starretts, a family of homesteaders terrorized by a cattle baron and his brother. It's a family Western that's more mature than most adult shoot-em-ups with a rare reflection on the violence of gunplay. Far from being "overblown," Stevens' unpretentious direction brings detail and dimension to a story about being a man in the face of cowardice and fighting for what you believe in. Ladd's abilities as an actor were well-used here, as when he imparts his "strong and straight" advice to towheaded Little Joe (Brandon de Wilde). Career performances by all with Van Heflin as Joe Starrett, Jean Arthur (her last film) as Marian, Oscar-nominated Jack Palance as the hired gunslinger, and Elisha Cook, Jr. and Ben Johnson. Shot in 1951 and based on Jack Schaefer's novel. (John Wayne originally held the option on the story.) Oscar-winning photography by Loyal Griggs. (Look fast for the mobile home? driving by in the background when Shane first rides up after the director's credit; you won't see that on the DVD version.)

June 29



GOLDFINGER (1964)

Guy Hamilton

UA/Eon (Harry Saltzman, Albert R. Broccoli)/112 min.

Cartoon: "Fourteen Carrot Rabbit" (1952), I. Freleng

"Gert turned up on the set and said, 'How do you do, Mr. Hamilton. Very happy to meet you. It is a great pleasure to be in the picture.' When I asked him where he was staying, he said, 'How do you do, Mr. Hamilton. Very happy to meet you.' That's all he'd learnt. He had a coach and was learning by rote. He worked very hard but very, very slow. So I said, 'Gert, we've got to double the speed.' So he did that and

when Cubby and Harry saw the rushes they thought we were insane, even though they knew we were going to dub him."

— Guy Hamilton on German actor Gert Frobe

A gold-plated classic with style, class, and plenty of action. Auric Goldfinger (Gert Frobe), the greediest of tycoons, plans on cornering the gold market and blowing up the world economy by way of Fort Knox. Operation Grand Slam, he calls it. And there's only one man who can stop him—Sean Connery as James Bond—every feminist's worst nightmare. But 007'll have to duck Oddjob's hat trick and talk his way out of a laser castration in order to do it. "The hotter the danger, the cooler he takes it!" Production designer Ken Adams' "cathedral of gold" is remarkable, as are all facets of production. Easily the best of the legendary series. (Hamilton even makes golf look interesting!) With Honor Blackman as Miss Galore (the man-hating pilot who gets turned around by Bond's charm), Harold Sakata, Shirley Eaton, and Bernard Lee. Screenplay by Richard Maibaum and Paul Dehn. Based on Ian Fleming's novel. Edited by Peter Hunt with memorable score by John Barry.

July 6

OPERATION CROSSBOW (1965)

Michael Anderson

MGM/116 min.

Cartoon: "Operation: Rabbit" (1952), Chuck Jones

"It is a grandly engrossing and exciting melodrama of wartime espionage, done with stunning documentary touches in a tight, tense, heroic story line. And even though its terminal pyrotechnics may seem a bit far from the mood of the 'Glory of Easter' pageant and the vernal stage show that opened at the hall yesterday, it does end piously and quietly on a note of hope for the peaceful future of mankind."

— Bosley Crowther



Twenty years before leading "The A-Team," George Peppard was leading the great spy mission into Nazi Germany. Peppard plays John Curtis, an American captain who, along with a Dutchman (Tom Courtenay) and an Englishman (Jeremy Kemp), volunteers his services for the British government. Posing as technicians, the Allied agents must infiltrate a Nazi base with the intent of sabotaging the flying bomb operation. Before long, the American discovers the dreaded V.2. rocket—its target: New York City. But Curtis has a plan... The underground base looks like a Bond set piece, but the story is more authentic than the later 007 escapades thanks to an excellent screenplay by Richard Imrie (AKA Emeric Pressburger), Derry Quinn and Ray Rigby. Though set during WW II, it's a film that's disturbingly pertinent in our age of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. With Sophia Loren (the biggest star but the least relevant as the wife of the man Curtis is impersonating), John Mills, Paul Henreid, Richard Johnson, and Trevor Howard (the kind of skeptic who wouldn't believe in missile defense).



NEW WORLDS TO CONQUER



While the rest of the country awaits George Lucas' next *Star Wars* installment—another computer-generated toy commercial—I thought I'd offer up a 15 chapter response. *Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars* (1938) was the second Universal serial based on Alex Raymond's cartoon strip. Directed by Ford Beebe and Robert Hill, it starred Buster Crabbe as the title character. Athletic and strong, here was a man who could save the universe. Clarence Linden Crabbe (1907-1983) was a genuine hero—and only a *genuine* hero could bring down a stratosled with one shot from his revolver! He brought an earnestness to the role, making you forget the limitations of the special effects.

With him is Jean Rogers, now a brunette, as Dale Arden, screaming and fainting as before. Frank Shannon is Dr. Zarkov, the wise scientist and true friend to Dale and Flash. Donald Kerr is the likeable reporter Happy Hapgood. (With a name like that you know he's comedy relief.) Beatrice Roberts plays Azura, the Queen of Magic who forms an unholy alliance with the greatest of villains—Charles Middleton as Emperor Ming! (Middleton was just as ruthless that same year as Pa Stark in *Dick Tracy Returns*.) Also starring is Kane Richmond, himself one of the top three serial heroes, as the commander of the nitron squadron.

With the original release prints tinted in an eerie green, the chapterplay proved to be just as good, if not better, than *Flash Gordon* (1936). Who could forget the Clay People, or the music—recycled from movies like *The Bride of Frankenstein*. We'll be screening the best available print, which was not easy to find. It's an original but has the replaced *Space Soldiers' Trip to Mars* titles from King Features (which was done to prevent confusion with their 1950s TV series).



The Story Behind "You Asked For It!"



My attitude has always been if you can rent it at Blockbuster I'm not interested in playing it here. I've worked in some rarely screened titles, and those 'alternates' that didn't make it this time—Dorothy Arzner's *Wild Party* (1929), the superb *Penthouse* and *The Story of Temple Drake* (both 1933), 1934's *Mandalay*, 1935's *A Tale of Two Cities*, 1938's *Marie Antoinette* (a good dose of MGM glamour with Norma Shearer) and *Professor Beware* (with silent cinema's other great comedian, Harold Lloyd), 1940's *Green Hell*, and Jacques Tourneur's *Circle of Danger* (1951)—appear in the crystal ball. I list them as signs of things to come. Expect anything. Expect the best. The movie machine'll play a thousand and one delights. Many of you have picked up on the theatre's main strength—studio films rooted in story and style—and have offered worthy suggestions for future programs, such as a series profiling producers. (When you examine the genius of the studio system you have to note the collaboration involved, which goes beyond critic Andrew Sarris' authorship 'theories'.)

There were personal favorites I had to put aside for this series, such as 1932's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, but I did this to make room for pictures no one else will screen. Deciding what made the final cut wasn't always easy. For instance, Michael Anderson is no Michael Powell; with movies like *Doc Savage* and *Logan's Run* to his 'credit,' he's a director only in the sense that a woodpecker is a carpenter. Yet I took the excellent *Operation Crossbow* over Vincent Minnelli's *Home From the Hill*. As for the Buster Keaton selection, even if I had passed out free plungers I don't think *The Passionate Plumber* would've brought boffo biz to the card table box office, so I paired it up with a W.C. Fields classic... I had *Salty O'Rourke* penciled in at one time but pulled it in favor of a Western, and within the Ford and Hawks frontier, *Shane* is the underdog. Lastly, there was a request for a "WW II potboiler," but in mid-September I decided to go with an A-class production, one that best reflects the American spirit in the face of adversity. *Action in the North Atlantic* is the emotional core of the series.

With the exception of the regs, it has been my experience that folks tend to stay clear from what they don't know and come out in droves when they're told something is great. (You can keep Rudolph Valentino, James Dean and Marilyn Monroe.) But in this series, not even the "experts" have seen some of these, so it's up to you to drop by and discover them because there's no one else to tell you what you're missing.

Special thanks to my parents for their assistance, Katie in concessions, the PRPL gang, and to the greatest movie patrons in the Midwest. (I only use superlatives when I mean it.) Thank you one and all.



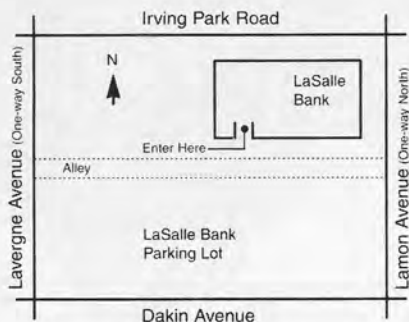


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