You Asked For It!

30th Anniversary

presented by LaSalle Bank

FROM THE BOOTH

Welcome to the conclusion of "You Asked For It!" On July 13 Radio Hall of Famer Chuck Schaden will drop by to reminisce about the "Memory Club." We'll be screening a comedy doubleheader on that night. (The bonus feature being one of Laurel & Hardy's finest films, but you won't find it listed in the newspaper.) And for the first time *ever*, 35mm comes to Saturday night. On October 5th we'll be showing a studio print of Frank Capra's masterpiece, *Lost Horizon*, as restored by the American Film Institute. With a big audience turnout, we hope to do more special presentations like this when the theatre returns to the 6-month themed programs. In this series we'll also have back-to-back screenings of *The Maltese Falcon*—both versions. Then for Halloween it's our second double feature, an eerie night of KARLOFF topped off by *Son of Frankenstein.*

You'll see how beautiful and pure a man's love for a woman can be during a simple walk in *Lost Horizon;* what "Kammenoi-Ostrow" could mean to a melancholy pianist in *The Walking Dead;* how a few inspiring words can carry a doomed man in *A Tale of Two Cities;* and what two candlesticks could mean to a former convict in *Les Miserables.* There are recurring themes as well as recurring actors. (How many times does Sir Cedric Hardwicke turn up, playing basically the same role?) There are also some real oddities in the series—casting anomalies like Errol Flynn in *The Green Light* and Gary Cooper in *The Fountainhead.* Through it all you'll see some of our best actors and actresses directed by men like Ford, Capra, Vidor, Mann… And it'll all end in a blaze of glory with Sam Peckinpah's *Ride the High Country.*

I've always viewed the LaSalle Theatre as a sort of refuge—showcasing films that are never screened to those that should be screened more often. When so many of today's films are geared to a pop culture audience trained by TV, when so many are filled with manufactured personalities in place of talented stars and artificial CGI effects in place of craftsmanship, this revival house has become a symbol of hope for the cinematically-deprived. With your continued support we hope to be here another 30 years.

Special thanks to Chuck Schaden for his contribution to this booklet. You can listen to him Saturday afternoons on "Those Were the Days" (1 to 5 p.m. on WDCB-FM 90.9). I would like to express my deep gratitude to Mr. George E. Schatz and the Ronald Colman Appreciation Society ("A Heritage to Cherish and Bequeath"). Also, a huge thank you to the family of regulars and new faces who have put this theatre back on top. And to those who keep it functioning: LaSalle Bank, Fred (for restoring the movie machine and taking us to 'the other side of the hill'), Katie in concessions, and my mother. "Don't know what I'd do without you, Ma."

Matthew C. Hoffman

With Special Guest Chuck Schaden

July 13

ALIBI IKE (1935)

Ray Enright
Warner/73 min.
BONUS FEATURE???

"Unfortunately, the publicity department at Warners kept building up my past as a baseball player until I was one of the all-time greats of baseball. I've been trying to live up to it ever since, although its foundation in fact was no more than an occasional season in the bush leagues and the invitations mentioned above—but never accepted—to join the majors. I have stood alongside some of the greatest ball players in the world and heard them say (about me) 'This fellow is a ballplayer.' Of course I don't know just how they meant that, what reading they gave it. Maybe they said 'This fellow is a ballplayer?'"
-- Joe E. Brown, Laughter is a Wonderful Thing

At least *this* Cub has an excuse! With baseball season in full swing I thought I'd leadoff with Joe E. Brown. The wide-mouthed Brown was one of Warners' star attractions in the 1930s, appearing in some low-budget comedies that were really fun. This was the third movie in his vintage 'baseball trilogy' following *Fireman Save My Child* (1932) and *Elmer the Great* (1933). All of which were directed by the studio's top contract directors. Brown, a natural athlete himself, plays Frank X. Farrell, a rookie hurler who crashes his way into spring training and immediately becomes a sensation. (He can swing the lumber too—in the good old days of baseball when pitchers could hit.) Ike's got an alibi for everything, but when the excuses pile up he loses his girl as well as the perfect record. He unknowingly gets involved with gamblers, but during a night game in Chicago(!) he proves he doesn't throw games. Olivia de Havilland (making her film debut as girlfriend Dolly) is nothing more than eye candy here, but who's complaining? Ruth Donnelly, Roscoe Karns, and William Frawley (as Cap) are also on the roster. Screenplay by William Wister Haines. Based on a Ring Lardner story.

July 20

WHERE EAST IS EAST

Tod Browning
MGM/75 min.
Short Film: THE LIGHT OF FAITH (1922),
Clarence Brown (45min.)

"Despite the accepted belief that the Chaney-Browning pictures were huge money-makers, only three of Chaney's top ten profit-earning M-G-M films were directed by Browning. Many film historians have wondered what caused Browning to produce such a poor movie. Browning biographer David J. Skal suggests that one reason might be related to Browning falling off the sobriety wagon after the death of his mother. He also speculates that whereas Chaney and Browning may have enjoyed a solid professional relationship, the two men did not appear to have a personal friendship away from the camera." *– Michael F. Blake*

The Tod Browning-Lon Chaney collaborations were some of the darkest and most distinct melodramas in silent cinema—films such as *The Unholy Three, The Unknown,* and *West of Zanzibar. Where East is East* was their final teaming and Chaney's second-to-last silent. Lon is Tiger Haynes, a facially-scarred animal trapper in Indochina. Against an exotic backdrop of plaintive melodies and perfumed breezes, he's been raising his playful, Eurasian daughter, Toyo (Lupe Velez). She falls in love with young Bobby (Lloyd Hughes), the son of Tiger's employer. Their happiness is short-lived, however, when Mme. De Silva (Estelle Taylor), Toyo's mesmerizing mother, enters the picture. Motivated by passion and revenge, she winds up seducing Bobby. Needless to say, there are plenty of classic Chaney reaction shots of him glaring and clenching his fists. In many ways the film encapsulates all the previous Browning themes culminating with the misogynistic unleashing of "Rangho." With Louis Stern and future Olympic swimming medalist Duke Kahanamoku as an animal trapper.

July 27

THE MALTESE FALCON (1931)

Roy Del Ruth
Warner/80 min.
Trailer: *The Maltese Falcon (1941)*

"Compared with the sophisticated Huston version, there was a certain melodramatic air about Del Ruth's treatment of the story, even though his settings were far more chic than the seedy environment in which Huston placed his detective. Still, both films called Spade Spade, and if Huston's version comes closer in spirit to the original, Del Ruth's admirable sense of style cannot be overlooked in the comparison." – Clive Hirschhorn

Known as *Woman of the World* during production and later retitled *Dangerous Female* when shown on television, this was the first film translation of Dashiell Hammett's novel. Inevitably, there will be comparisons to the Huston film (which followed this fairly closely), but honestly, there's not one element here equal to the '41 version. Nevertheless, it's a decent film on its own terms and is about as hard to find (on video) as the little black bird itself. Ricardo Cortez is nobody's idea of Sam Spade, playing the detective as a Valentino—giving the ladies the once-over when he's not lounging about filing his nails. Bebe Daniels is the dangerous dame with Una Merkel as Sam's secretary. Dudley Digges, lacking the immensity and obsessiveness of Sydney Greenstreet, portrays Casper Gutman. Overall the production is somewhat static but should be of interest to fans of the remake. Structurally, there are some key differences between the two. Del Ruth retains a 'strip' scene from the book involving Brigid, and the ending is nothing like "the stuff that dreams are made of." Also starring is Walter Long, Otto Matiesen, and Dwight Frye as quiet psychotic Wilmer.

August 3

THE MALTESE FALCON (1941)

John Huston
Warner/100 min.
Trailers: Humphrey Bogart films

"The Maltese Falcon was one of my happiest memories, a very nostalgic one, because for a few years we had a sort of stock company, an ensemble there at Warner Bros...In each one of those people... there is one quality in common, that is quite a hard quality to come by, it's something you can't teach, and that is to switch an audience from laughter to seriousness." – Peter Lorre

A genuine American classic and the best detective film ever made. Considered to be the first authentic film noir, this was also the movie that put Humphrey Bogart on top to stay. Bogie is the epitome of coolness and toughness as Sam Spade, the hard-boiled private eye with his own code of honor. Soon after taking on a new client, "Miss Wonderly" (Mary Astor), Sam's partner turns up dead. Things are not what they seem when Wonderly's story changes. There's something bigger at stake, and it all revolves around a jewel-encrusted falcon. Peter Lorre is the effete Joel Cairo, another devious character in the shadow of the Fat Man. Sydney Greenstreet, in the screen persona he would carry to his grave, is Gutman, the cordial villain. John Huston, making his directorial debut, wrote the screenplay and took most of the dialogue straight from Hammett's novel. (The last line, though, is Shakespeare's.) But no matter how many times you've seen it at smaller venues, *The Maltese Falcon* retains its ability to captivate. With Elisha Cook, Jr. (as the abnormal "gunsel"), Barton MacLane , Lee Patrick, Ward Bond, and Jerome Cowan. Photographed by Arthur Edeson. Music by Adolph Deutsch.

August 10

DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE (1931)

Rouben Mamoulian
Paramount/97 min.
Cartoon: "Bimbo's Initiation" (1931), Dave Fleischer

*"You know, we have to realize that art is a magic wand that touches stone and turns it into gold, metaphorically speaking. It turns everything into gold. Today, we touch everything and it turns to lead. It's ugly. We portray man wallowing in a gutter, full of foibles and sickness, falling short. They say life is like that, but it isn't true... We still have great people, spiritual people. We have great aspirations and ideals. You take Shakespeare. He always had b***s, he knew there was such a thing as conscience, such a thing as good. You've got to have both sides. I don't care how debased or how sordid your subject is, like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, you must portray the whole truth of life, not partial truth, because partial truth is worse than a lie." – Rouben Mamoulian*

To classic horror enthusiasts, no Best Actor Oscar shines more brightly than that of Fredric March's. Equally commendable is Mamoulian's innovative cinematic technique, making this *the* version of Robert Louis Stevenson's 1886 story. The conflict between the spiritual and the bestial in man is the film's theme, and in the strange case of Dr. Jekyll, the consequences of his actions lead to personal dissolution. Functioning within a repressive Victorian society, March's Jekyll is torn between the purity of his fiancée (Rose Hobart) and the blatant carnality embodied in saloon girl Miriam Hopkins. (Champagne Ivy is her name.) Drugs lead to a release of primitive man—photographed with colored filters and makeup—but when he loses control of his Hyde, the façade deteriorates. Mamoulian's forceful statement on the dichotomy of human nature becomes one of the most visually arresting pictures of the early sound period. With Holmes Herbert, Halliwell Hobbes (as Muriel's strait-laced father) and Edgar Norton. Photographed by Karl Struss. Art direction by Hans Dreier. (Remade by MGM in 1941, but stick with the John Barrymore silent for a comparison.)

August 17

THE BEAST OF THE CITY (1932)

Charles Brabin
MGM/87 min.
Short: "The Midnight Patrol" (1933), Lloyd French (Laurel & Hardy)

"Instead of the glorification of cowardly gangsters, we need the glorification of policemen who do their duty and give their lives in public protection." – President Hoover

A corker of a gangster drama in the mode of the Warner cycle, and being an MGM it has the advantage of Jean Harlow vamping the heck out of one fool after another. Walter Huston is Jim "Fighting Fitzpatrick," a precursor to Dirty Harry. Without sufficient evidence he drags in Belmonte (Jean Hersholt), the crime kingpin. It's a personal vendetta, but after getting sidetracked, Fitz eventually becomes Chief of Police. He's determined to clean up the city, throwing the yellow maggots into a giant cell. Little does he know his own brother (Wallace Ford) has been corrupted. Ed doesn't have the strength to go straight, especially after gun moll Harlow gives him a private dance. Written by W.R. Burnett, this is a vibrant story about an *honest* cop, Huston, which also shows the family life behind the badge. The ending is unforgettable. With Dorothy Peterson, Tully Marshall (as the shyster lawyer), J. Carrol Naish, and the always annoying Mickey Rooney.

August 24

THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME (1932)

Ernest B. Schoedsack, Irving Pichel
RKO (Merian C. Cooper)/63 min.
Short: "Forgotten Island" (1932)
Prod. Pat Dowling (Camera Adventures)

"I think of a film as though it were music. It must have a beginning, a middle and an end, and should build up to climaxes, then allow some rest, then build again. I believe in pace. If necessary I use a stopwatch on the actors." – Ernest B. Schoedsack

An extremely compact and well-crafted adventure film that wastes no time in its telling. After a shipwreck on an island reef, professional hunter Bob Rainsford (Joel McCrea) swims ashore and finds refuge in a jungle fortress. The owner, a Russian count named Zaroff (Leslie Banks in his film debut), has been entertaining other guests who have suffered the same fate as Rainsford—nervous Fay Wray and a drunken Robert Armstrong (reflecting Merian Cooper's own disdain for alcohol). But Zaroff, a fellow hunter, has other amusements besides piano playing… Would you like to see his trophy room? From the ominous opening credits to the relentless swamp chase, this dangerous game never lets up. It's the archetype of all the hunter vs. hunted films that would follow, including *A Game of Death* and *Run For the Sun*. Cooper & Schoedsack would follow this up with the greatest motion picture to come out of RKO—Production 601, shot simultaneously with *The Most Dangerous Game*. Based on the award-winning short story by Richard Connell. Music by pioneer Max Steiner. Art direction by Carroll Clark with glass paintings by Mario Larrinaga and Byron L. Crabbe.

August 31

PILGRIMAGE (1933)

John Ford
Fox/95 min.
Short: "Little Mother" (1929), Robert F. McGowan (Our Gang)

"Ford's blend of filmmaking styles in Pilgrimage is masterful and daring. Jim's literal suffocation in the Argonne Forest is metaphorically foreshadowed by the early sequences at the family farm in Three Cedars, Arkansas. Strongly echoing Murnau, as they did in the World War I movie Four Sons, Ford and his longtime cinematographer George Schneiderman use a painted sky and studio sets of misty, soft-focus fields and marshes to give Jim's life with his mother a feeling of stifling confinement. Then, when Hannah is coaxed into joining a boatload of other Gold Star Mothers to make a pilgrimage to their sons' graves in France, the film opens up like a flower."
– Joseph McBride

Film historian David Shepard actually called this Ford's masterpiece. Others have compared it with the best of Griffith. Stage actress Henrietta Crosman plays a domineering old mother who can't bear to see her son fall in love and leave her. Future director Norman Foster is Jim Jessop, the farm boy infatuated with Suzanne (Marian Nixon). Hannah Jessop refuses to accept this so enlists him in the World War of 1918. "I'd rather see him dead than married to that girl!" Tragedy tears the family apart. The film then concerns the mother's journey to redemption, which begins in the company of the Gold Star Mothers and ends at a gravesite in France. Though Ford had considered Mae Marsh in the role (from D.W. Griffith's silent days), Crosman would give what William K. Everson called "the finest character actress performance in any Ford film." Sudsy, but a must for Ford purists. With Heather Angel, Lucille La Verne (as Tilly), Charley Grapewin, and Francis Ford. Written with great care by Dudley Nichols, Philip Klein, and Barry Conners. Based on a story by I.A.R. Wylie.

September 7

PENTHOUSE (1933)

W.S. Van Dyke
MGM/90 min.
Cartoon: "Betty Boop's Penthouse" (1933), Dave Fleischer

"Accustomed to having scenes shot over and over again in her oriental parts, to get the proper mood, Myrna started acting and became dramatic in her work. Van Dyke stopped the cameras quickly. 'Ah, that's a lot of nonsense, Myrna. You don't have to act!' She was startled at his frankness, but he was so sure of himself he gave her confidence and she listened. 'If you will just be your own, natural, sweet self, you'll be a sensation.' His warm smile made her feel perfectly at ease, though the circumstances were quite shocking. 'This part,' he continued, 'calls for a typical American girl and you're certainly the type yourself, Myrna, and that's what I want.'" – Robert C. Cannom

An absolute gem ready for rediscovery—every bit as sophisticated a romance/light comedy with an air of mystery as *The Thin Man*, which was also directed by Van Dyke. Warner Baxter, as society lawyer Jackson Durant, is impossibly handsome and suave and perfectly complimented by a sensual Myrna Loy in their surprisingly frank but casual relationship for 1933. After freeing a racketeer, Tony (Nat Pendleton), Durant finds himself needed by his girl Sue (Martha Sleeper). Her new beau (Phillips Holmes) has been framed for murdering nightclub hostess Mimi, played by Mae Clarke. Durant is convinced the boy is innocent, so with the help of Mimi's alluring friend (Myrna Loy), he takes on the riffraff of society in search of the truth. The deco set design, in glorious black and white, is half the treat. And who wouldn't admire a film with a pick-up line like: "I've got some eggs at my place that are just longing to be scrambled by you." With the inimitable Charles Butterworth (as Durant's butler), C. Henry Gordon, and George E. Stone. From the Cosmopolitan Magazine story by Arthur Somers Roche.

September 14

LES MISERABLES (1935)

Richard Boleslawski
Twentieth Century/108 min.
Short: "Little Sinner" (1935), Gus Meins (Our Gang)

"The novel has been filmed several times—including a primitive, superficial silent and a three-hour French version of 1936, but none matched the intrinsic quality, or caught the true spirit, of the 1935 Hollywood version. The secret of its success, as seen today, was its intelligent selectivity of incident and its telling highlighting of the basic points Hugo was trying to make. Like Tolstoy, Hugo was a humanitarian greatly concerned with social reform, but unlike Tolstoy in his later period, Hugo never sacrificed entertainment value to preaching, and his 1862 novel, Les Miserables, became one of the world's best-loved classics." – Lawrence J. Quirk

Adapted from the Victor Hugo novel by writer W.P. Lipscomb, this is a condensed though artfully done film version. Fredric March, in an Oscar-worthy role (he was not nominated) is Jean Valjean—a man sentenced to ten years in the galleys for stealing a loaf of bread. After his release, this hardened convict is moved by an act of compassion on the part of Bishop Bienvenue (Sir Cedric Hardwicke). Renewed with the spirit to give rather than take, he sets out to change his life, even becoming mayor under the name of M. Madeleine. But through three phases of his life there is one part of his past he can't escape—the uncompromising law administrator Javert (Charles Laughton). "Regulations, good, bad or indifferent, must be carried out to the letter." Laughton is so good you can feel his thoughts and suspicions. The Oscar-nominated photography by Gregg Toland beautifully captures the theme of illumination. With Rochelle Hudson as Big Cosette, Marilyn Knowlden (Little Cosette), Frances Drake (the jealous and tragic Eponine), and John Beal as the law student pushing for prison reform. Also starring Jessie Ralph, Florence Eldridge, and John Carradine.

September 21

MAD LOVE (1935)

Karl Freund
MGM/70 min.
Short: "Marble Comes to Life" (ca 1927)

"Mad Love was a bit difficult... Director Karl Freund kept wanting to be the cinematographer at the same time—and Gregg Toland was a marvelous cameraman! He was such a dear little man, sort of slender, and he looked rather hunted when this wretched big fat man would say, 'Now, now, we'll do it this way!' You never knew who was directing. The producer was dying to, to tell you the truth, and of course, he had no idea of directing. Finally, I did say, 'Look here, we've got to have one director, because we're all going mad.' That Englishman, Colin Clive, would go to sleep. He'd pay no attention to anybody—it was too sweet! He didn't care who was directing, he didn't give a damn. He was such a good actor, he didn't need it, perhaps!" – Frances Drake

This adaption of Maurice Renard's *Les Mains d' Orlac* is one of the most macabre films from Hollywood's golden age of horror. Peter Lorre, in his American debut, portrays the bald Gogol, a doctor obsessed with the stunning Yvonne Orlac. Frances Drake (with those large hazel eyes) is Yvonne, an actress in the Grand Guignol Theatre des Horreurs. When her pianist husband (Colin Clive) is disfigured in a train accident, she seeks Gogol's help. To save Stephen's livelihood, Gogol grafts on the hands of a guillotined murderer, Rollo (Edward Brophy in an obvious reference to *Freaks*). As the doctor's desire intensifies, Yvonne's husband takes on the knife-throwing characteristics of the dead man. (Poetic justice that it's Dr. Frankenstein himself.) And as if Clive's visit with the whispering "Rollo" isn't bizarre enough, there was originally a scene depicting a head transplant in a laboratory! Written by Guy Endore, P.J. Wolfson, and John Balderston. (Frances Drake would soon be relegated to B films before leaving acting altogether a la Yvonne to be with her husband.)

September 28

SWING TIME (1936)

George Stevens
RKO/103 min.
Short: "Swingin' My Way to Heaven" (1942)
with the Radio Aces

"Writing in a professional magazine in 1936, Vernon Walker, chief of camera effects at RKO, says the shadow dance was filmed first—Astaire 'danced before a blank white screen, on which a Sun Arc projected a clear shadow.' This shadow image was then apparently tripled optically. 'Next, he did his foreground dancing under ordinary lighting, but before a blank screen.' Finally, the shadow shot and the foreground shot 'were combined by means of multiple optical printing.' Synchronizing the dancing 'was made easier by projecting the shadow-film onto a screen Astaire could watch while he did the foreground dancing.' The two-minute trick solo is presented in five shots in the film and, according to studio records, was shot in three days, one of which ran to midnight." – John Mueller

The very essence of the Astaire-Rogers collaborations which distills the high style of Hollywood into 100+ minutes of beauty, magic, and dancing perfection. A glorious illusion of tuxedos, Art Deco nightclubs, and class. (If only life could be like this.) The story is the standard Boy Meets Girl, Boy Loses Girl, Boy Gets Girl, but with the charm and elegance these two bring to the material, it works. Fred is "Lucky" Garnett, a dancer who puts gambling above show business. Though he's engaged to Betty Furness, Lucky leaves town in order to prove himself in the big city. With "Pop" (Victor Moore) on his *tails*, he hops a freight to New York. Practically penniless, Fred finds his lucky Penny in dance instructor Ginger. They make such a sparkling team they wind up performing at the Silver Sandal club. But Penny isn't too crazy about Fred's gambling—or his fiancée. George Metaxa plays the rival suitor, the haughty bandleader. The Dorothy Fields-Jerome Kern songs include "Pick Yourself Up," the Academy Award winning "The Way You Look Tonight," "Waltz in Swing Time," "A Fine Romance," the phenomenal "Bojangles of Harlem," and "Never Gonna Dance"—the film's original title. With Helen Broderick, Eric Blore, and in a bit part—Ralph "Dick Tracy" Byrd as the hotel clerk. Dance choreography by Hermes Pan.

October 5

LOST HORIZON (1937)

Frank Capra
Columbia/132 min.
(in 35mm)

"There seemed to be some indefinable quality, some unique combination of appearance, voice, quiet humor, or personal projection that made us pay, by the millions, to spend some time with him; not to be preached at or instructed by, but simply to be complimented by his example of what qualities the human species is capable, even the least of us. Perhaps this is the heritage that Colman offered: that it is most important to not only reveal what man is, but what man can be."
– George E. Schatz

Ronald Colman, in his best-known role, *is* Robert Conway, a visionary diplomat caught up in a world of revolution. With his high-strung brother (John Howard) and three others—Edward Everett Horton as the timid paleontologist, Thomas Mitchell (figuratively hiding behind a mask), and sickly Isabel Jewell—they escape the turbulent Baskul airport only to find themselves kidnapped. After a crash landing in the Tibetan mountains, they are led by a peaceful stranger into the valley of Shangri-La—a place, as James Hilton wrote, "touched with the mystery that lies at the core of all loveliness." But Frank Capra and writer Robert Riskin take Hilton's classic novel to another level, shaping the production into something more than just a movie. And with an actor who makes us feel good about life, *Lost Horizon* ultimately restores our belief in transcendent humanity. With lovely Jane Wyatt as Sondra Bizet, Oscar-nominated H.B. Warner as Chang, Sam Jaffe (the High Lama), and Margo. Photographed by Joseph Walker. Art direction by Academy Award-winning Stephen Goosson. Music by Dimitri Tiomkin.

October 12

THE GREEN LIGHT (1937)

Frank Borzage
Warner/85 min.
Short Film: You Can Change the World (1951), Leo McCarey, with Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Jack Benny, Loretta Young

"The public has always expected me to be a playboy, and a decent chap never lets his public down."
– Errol Flynn

How do you follow *Captain Blood* and *Charge of the Light Brigade?* With a medical drama, of course. Errol Flynn was always somewhat underrated as an actor; what he lacked in range he made up for with charisma. Though it's a bit of a stretch to picture him as a doctor, he does look interested in the role—one not requiring a sword. Yet he remains true to his "whiskey and heroics" mythos. As Dr. Newell Paige, he's an agnostic surgeon who takes the blame for medical malpractice. Margaret Lindsay (as a nurse) and Anita Louise are the women who love him, and Sir Cedric Hardwicke is the cathedral dean with the comforting words about forgiveness. He's never admonitory or sanctimonious, though. Dean Harcourt's character also symbolizes the conflict of religion vis-à-vis with science. Disillusioned by life, Paige eventually journeys to Montana, becoming a medical guinea pig before coming to understand his place in the world. With Walter Abel, Henry O'Neill, and Spring Byington. Based on the book by Lutheran minister Lloyd C. Douglas. (Director Borzage's career would end with 1959's *The Big Fisherman,* also based on a novel by Douglas.)

October 19

MARIE ANTOINETTE (1938)

W.S. Van Dyke
MGM/150 min.
Short: John Barrymore interview (ca 1941)

"The movie was the 160-minute culmination of years of effort by practically everybody at MGM, from Thalberg, who had scheduled it for Miss Shearer in 1933, to the thimble-and-thread girls in Wardrobe who put together 500 yards of white satin for Marie's Adrian-designed wedding gown, plus elaborate costumes for 151 other characters and hordes of extras. Cedric Gibbons' huge sets were dressed with equally staggering extravagance after props chief Edwin Willis had carried out a three-month ransack of antique shops in France." – John Douglas Eames

It's only fitting that the first lady of MGM should play the first lady of France, embodying the life of glamour within a decadent empire. Norma Shearer is Marie Antoinette of Austria, the future Queen of France. In her elegant hats and rococo gowns and giant hoop skirts, she's living a life of extravagance and pleasure. Her nemesis, Madame DuBarry (Gladys George), the Versailles courtesan, despises her, but Marie is not without friends—or lovers. Tyrone Power plays Axel de Fersen, a count who has always loved her from afar but knows he'd be in the way of her destiny. For making us care about a distant, fictionalized historical figure, Shearer deserved her Oscar nomination—her theatrics in keeping with the material. Robert Morley as Louis XVI is just as good as the unfortunate Dauphin in need of a push. Joseph Schildkraut is the menace of the palace court as the cousin who smiles too much, the Duke d'Orleans. The studio allotted a 1.8 million dollar budget for this pageant of satin and lace, and the money is there in every frame. (The grand ballroom is bigger than the real one.) With a declining John Barrymore, Anita Louise (Marie Antoinette in 1934's *Madame DuBarry*), Henry Stephenson, Albert Dekker and George Zucco. Written by Claudine West, Donald Ogden Stewart, and Ernest Vajda.

HALLOWEEN HORRORFEST

October 26

THE WALKING DEAD (1936)

Michael Curtiz
Warner/66 min.

"Yet this horror/gangster morality tale dares to be different by making Karloff's monster Heaven's avenging angel. The remarkable sensitivity of Karloff's bravura performance, the solid direction by Curtiz, and a script that insists on delivering more than expected all create one of the most surprising, moving, and truly spiritual horror movies of the time." – Gregory William Mank

Boris Karloff is the man who lived again in a film that combines Universal horror with Warner gangster drama. A group of racketeers headed by Loder (loud-mouthed Barton MacLane) and attorney Nolan (Ricardo Cortez) frame former convict John Ellman (Karloff) for the murder of a judge. Two witnesses (Warren Hull and Marguerite Churchill) know the truth but are too late to prevent Ellman's execution. Yet a doctor (Edmund "Kris Kringle" Gwenn) is able to revive him in a scene 'inspired' by *Frankenstein*. (Karloff's resemblance to the Monster in this scene is uncanny.) With a streak of white hair, Ellman proceeds to stalk after the crooks like an avenging angel. Rising above the ordinary, this genuinely suspenseful and moody film has something to say about capital punishment, a corrupt criminal justice system, and life after death. Karloff brings poignancy to the role—the film's only sympathetic character who wanders the cemetery at night in search of solitude. This would be Curtiz' last horror film for the studio and possibly his best. With Henry O'Neill and Joseph Sawyer. Photographed by Hal Mohr. Set design by the Polish-born Anton Grot.

SON OF FRANKENSTEIN (1939)

Rowland V. Lee
Universal/100 min.
Trailer: *Frankenstein* (1931)

"The director of such films as Zoo in Budapest (1933), The Count of Monte Cristo (1934), and The Three Musketeers (1935), was now one of Universal's major power figures, enjoying studio cart blanche almost to the degree that the now-humbled Whale had enjoyed during the Laemmle days. Recognizing the epic potential of Son of Frankenstein, the aggressive Lee managed to railroad the studio into doubling the budget. He also recruited Willis Cooper, creator of radio's Light's Out, to write the screenplay, assigned Frank Skinner to create a full musical score, engaged Jack Otterson to design the sets, and planned to shoot the film in full color. Best of all, he assembled a superb cast." – Gregory William Mank

The last of the great Frankenstein films starring KARLOFF—"Rising from the past to spread new terror." Wolf von Frankenstein (Basil Rathbone), the son of the late doctor, returns home to an inhospitable reception. The village of Frankenstein, it appears, is haunted, but it doesn't take a Sherlock to figure out it's more than ghosts. Soon Wolf meets the broken-necked "shepherd" Ygor (Bela Lugosi) and discovers an old terror lying dormant. Consumed by the monster mania, Wolf sets out to restore the comatosed Monster and vindicate his father. From the theatrics of Rathbone to the suspicions of Lionel Atwill (lending a hand as Inspector Krogh) to the possessiveness of Ygor, whose dialogue resonates with menace, *Son* has a collection of unforgettable performances. Though treated like a second feature when released on DVD, this magnificent sequel deserves as much recognition as its predecessors. With Josephine Hutchinson and Donnie Dunagan. German Expressionist set decorations by R.A. Gausman. Followed by the painfully inferior *Ghost of Frankenstein.*

★ ★ ★ DOUBLE FEATURE ★ ★ ★

(With 10 Minute Intermission)

November 2

BROTHER ORCHID (1940)

Lloyd Bacon
Warner/91 min.

"The transformation of tough-guy Edward G. Robinson from hard-boiled racketeer to endearing orchid-cultivating monk in Brother Orchid was one of the most joyful screen sights of the year, and one of the best spoofs on gangsterism to emerge from Hollywood."
– Clive Hirschhorn

Though not quite as funny as Bacon's *A Slight Case of Murder* (1938), I wanted to honor a request for Ann Sothern, whose comedic talents were not wasted here. Edward G. Robinson portrays Little John Sarto, a seemingly irreformable racketeer in search of "class." He leaves his mob behind and (in about three minutes) travels all over Europe. After five years he returns and realizes he's been ousted by #2 man Humphrey Bogart. With loyal girl Flo (Sothern), a real dim bulb, Sarto reorganizes but is eventually taken for a ride by Bogie's henchmen. Sarto manages to escape the world of crime only to collapse before a monastery in the woods. Suffice it to say, the ensuing turn of events is quite unexpected. The film opens as a gangster satire, but despite a comedic thread throughout, it ends up as serious drama. A rewarding film in more ways than one. With Ralph Bellamy (affecting a Western accent), Donald Crisp, Cecil Kellaway (in a straight role), Allen Jenkins, Morgan Conway, the ubiquitous Paul Guilfoyle, and cowboy star Tom Tyler in a small role. Story by Richard Connell. Music by Heinz Roemheld.

DILLINGER (1945)

Max Nosseck
Monogram (Frank and Maurice King)/70 min.

"The film still stands today as a blunt depiction of the classic Dillinger tale without the romanticizing that was added in later retellings. It moves at a quick pace with fine performances from the cast, and it set the tone for Tierney's initial film persona. This film was banned in Chicago for several years, and earned screenwriter Philip Yordan an Academy Award nomination. The script received the uncredited help of future movie showman William Castle..." – Glenn Horner

Lawrence Tierney (1919-2002) was always the bad boy you loved to hate. "My way or the highway" seemed to be this guy's motto in life. As Public Disgrace #1, he's a near-psychopathic gangster with no redeeming qualities—not the type of fella you'd want to sit down and have a beer with. In prison he meets up with Edmund Lowe and an all-star team of Hollywood hoods: Elisha Cook, Jr., Eduardo Ciannelli, and Marc Lawrence. Before his release from the stir, Tierney learns two valuable lessons in life: don't talk too much and never steal another man's potato. Shortly after he helps the rogues' gallery escape. With Lowe as the temporary ringleader, they go on a spree of bank robberies. (J.D. even proves to be a pretty handy woodcarver.) This was Tierney's first starring role and at times it shows—the mean look he gives Cook, and his tough talk delivery. There are plenty of rear projection shots and tons of stock footage (including a bank robbery 'stolen' from 1937's *You Only Live Once*), as well as some risible dialogue: "Mr. Dillinger, mah boat done turned into a gun!" Yet the film more than makes up for its rough edges and Poverty Row cheapness. Polish-born Nosseck's use of suggestive violence is particularly effective. With Anne Jeffreys as the Lady in Red. Music by Dimitri Tiomkin.

November 9

THE CROSS OF LORRAINE (1943)

Tay Garnett
MGM/90 min.
Short Film: Reunion (1946)

"Half a football team worked on the story, yet except for a foolish coda it is one of the most edged, well-characterized, and naturally cinematic scripts of the year." – James Agee

The government had requested that MGM make a film about the French Resistance during WWII; the result proved to be a war film with guts. From all walks of life men fight for France, men like Duprey (Jean-Pierre Aumont) and Victor (Gene Kelly, in what he considered to be one of his finest performances). They are captured and sent to a military prison in Germany. (If you thought Peter Lorre was sinister before, wait till you see him blowing smoke in a Nazi uniform.) Hume Cronyn is excellent as Duval, the interpreter collaborating with the Germans. Sir Cedric Hardwicke is Father Sebastian, trying to keep a semblance of humanity with horror all around. Despite being studio-bound with only one French actor, there is a rare realism at work, as in its depiction of violence. (Don't expect Kelly to be doing any dancing in a film where he gets his "enthusiasm" amputated.) There are even hints of Nazi perversity (i.e., the lieutenant with the women's apparel for his "wife"). Also of note, there is no insipid love story—not even a woman in a featured role. A great film by an overlooked director. With Joseph Calleia, Richard Whorf, Wallace Ford, and Jack Lambert. Based on a story called *A Thousand Shall Fall* by Hans Habe, a title Garnett had preferred.

November 16

SOMEWHERE IN THE NIGHT (1946)

Joseph L. Mankiewicz
Twentieth Century Fox/108 min.
Cartoon: "One Step Ahead of My Shadow" (1933), R. Ising

"Too long by about 20 minutes, it is still a model of its kind: literate, witty, evocative of its period, well knit in its plotting, and with a fascinating array of characters. If it had a detective hero... it would be one of the best of all detective movies. But, even with that technical shortcoming, it ranks with Murder My Sweet as the best and most representative of the 'film noire' thrillers of the forties." – William K. Everson

Joseph Mankiewicz's second film following *Dragonwyck* is one of the lesser-known film noirs of the period. John Hodiak is George Taylor, a war veteran who gets released from the hospital even though he's suffering from amnesia. (The naval doctor should've rethought that move.) In his search to find his identity, Taylor discovers clues concerning a dark past. Who is "Larry Cravat"? What does he know? The answers lie somewhere in the night. Though the plot becomes even more involved with logic in short supply, style can transcend story in the noir universe. Bosley Crowther wrote, amidst an indifferent review, that there was "a striking imitation of Hitchcock's hardgrained melodramatic style." With Lloyd Nolan, giving a notable performance as Detective Donald Kendall, Nancy Guild, Richard Conte, Josephine Hutchinson, Fritz Kortner (as the "cheap chiseler"), Whit Bissell and Jeff Corey. Written by Mankiewicz and Howard Dimsdale and based on the story *The Lonely Journey* by Marvin Borowsky. Photographed by Norbert Brodine.

November 23

THE FOUNTAINHEAD (1949)

King Vidor
Warner/114 min.
Short: "Reds in Hollywood" (1949) with Gary Cooper

"The Fountainhead can claim to represent the epitome of an architecturally significant film. The main character is an architect, there are a large number of inventive sets responding directly to contemporary architectural discourse, and the film presents a very specific, and much discussed, idea of the role of the architect in society." – Dietrich Neumann

Gary Cooper was at his best in movies like *Sergeant York* and *Pride of the Yankees,* but as architect Howard Roark (patterned after Frank Lloyd Wright) he's as stiff as his buildings. Nevertheless, this is one of the most visually interesting films in the series. All things great arise from the vision of one man, and Roark will not compromise with society. Better to go poor than to accept corporate mediocrity. Patricia Neal, a bit of a cold fish, is the architectural critic, and her scenes with Coop—they were lovers at the time—just exude sex appeal and are laced with Freudian images (i.e., the rock quarry sequence). Yet Roark's attributes of rugged individualism and artistic integrity are contradicted by his moral lapses. It's hard to sympathize with the selfish Roark after he blows up *his* housing project. John Doe he is not. Ayn Rand adapted the screenplay, so her theories of "objectiveness" remain unaltered and characters speak their minds. The supporting cast, particularly Raymond Massey (as newspaper tycoon Gail Wynand) and Robert Douglas (Ellsworth Toohey) is superb, as is the direction. With Kent Smith, Henry Hull, Ray Collins, Jerome Cowan *and* Jonathan Hale. Photographed by Robert Burks. Sets by Edward Carrere.

November 30

THE BULLFIGHTER AND THE LADY (1951)

Budd Boetticher
Republic (John Wayne)/124 min.
Cartoon: "I Eats My Spinach" (1933), Dave Fleischer

"It was the first day of filming. I usually like to start with a sensitive scene instead of the physical stuff. Now Bob Stack was the richest boy in Bel Air, but he couldn't get a job. He had no career until Bullfighter and the Lady. Well, he was standing on the porch doing a scene with a couple of other actors. Duke came around right in the middle of the first scene and grabbed Bob around the lapel and said, 'Jeeze, if you're gonna play the part, play it like a man!' Duke wanted him to play it like John Wayne, and the part didn't call for that. Well, Duke did that about five straight times..." – Budd Boetticher

Budd Boetticher (1916-2001) was known primarily for his B-budget Westerns with Randolph Scott and for his films about bullfighting. (He served as technical advisor on 1941's *Blood and Sand.*) *Bullfighter and the Lady* would be the first of three—the others being *The Magnificent Matador* and *Arruza.* Robert Stack stars as the rather bold John Regan, the blond-haired gringo who will turn into a legend in Mexico. He learns to become a torero, but understanding the Latin temperament of Anita (Joy Page) is just as hard. Gilbert Roland, giving a career performance, is Estrada, the country's most famous bullfighter who agrees to teach the young American. Roland is a gallant hero who is also wise in the ways of the bull. This is by far the definitive film on the subject, a sort of filmic how-to as well as a good drama. Boetticher brings an authority to the project, drawing from his own experiences the way Hemingway could on paper. We'll be screening the complete 124 minute version. Ole! With Katy Jurado (the wife with stature) and John Hubbard and Virginia Grey (Regan's two friends who unfortunately do not get thrown into the ring). Academy Award nomination for original story by Boetticher and Ray Nazarro. Music by Victor Young.

December 7

THE MAN FROM LARAMIE (1955)

Anthony Mann
Columbia/104 min.
Short: "The Heart of Jennie" (ca 1918) with Harold Lloyd

"In making the one with Stewart he wanted to further pursue the hero-as-avenger concept and perhaps summarize all that he and Stewart had accomplished in their previous westerns. With The Man From Laramie there is reason to believe that Mann succeeded. He had spoken for some time of doing a western version of King Lear, and Laramie would seem to be a bold step in that Shakespearean direction." – Tony Thomas

No other Western star approached James Stewart's range or depth as an actor. (He even did his own stunts.) This was the eighth film he made with Mann and his last Western with him. Stewart is Will Lockhart, a loner at heart who's on his way to Coronado, New Mexico. While working as a freighter, he's searching for the man (indirectly) responsible for his brother's death—a cavalryman killed in an Apache massacre. Out on the salt flats he gets a violent introduction to Dave (Alex Nicol), the spoiled brat son of a cattle baron, and Vic (Arthur Kennedy), the even-tempered foreman of the Barb Ranch. Donald Crisp plays the near-blind father who has built his cattle kingdom upon greed and killing. Vic loves him like a father and is supposed to love Dave as a brother but has a funny way of showing it. Will, meanwhile, becomes an unwanted man in town, but he's not leaving till the score is settled. *The Man From Laramie*'s intense and brutal action sequences are counterbalanced with somber, even meditative moments with Stewart that are not typically found in most Westerns of this period. There's a tone of solemnity that expands far beyond the site of his brother's death. With Cathy O'Donnell, Wallace Ford, and Aline MacMahon. Beautifully shot in color by Charles Lang. Written by Philip Yordan and Frank Burt.

December 14

THE HORSE SOLDIERS (1959)

John Ford
UA/Mirisch/119 min.
Short: "John Ford's Acting Family" (1961)

"Considering Ford's long-standing fascination with the subject... it is odd that The Horse Soldiers was Ford's first and only full-scale feature on the war. The Prisoner of Shark Island concerns the war's bitter aftermath, Judge Priest contains a magnificent Griffith-like flashback to Gettysburg, and The Civil War, Ford's segment of the 1962 Cinerama spectacle How the West Was Won, briefly but poetically depicts a farm boy's baptism of blood at the Battle of Shiloh. For the most part, the Yankees and Confederates who wander throughout Ford's films are living the war only in their memories. His longtime research assistant Katherine Cliffton admitted, 'I was waiting for his big Civil War picture.'" – Joseph McBride

John Ford's only film about the Civil War starring two war-horses of cinema: John Wayne and William Holden. The Duke is Col. John Marlowe, an irrational Union officer who has to lead the cavalry 300 miles into Confederate territory. Riding into history, their mission is to dismantle the railroad junction at Newton Station, which supplies the Rebel forces at Vicksburg. Holden is the medical doctor involved in a private war with Marlowe. "Look here, Colonel, I didn't ask to be assigned to this mission." Unjustly horsewhipped by Ford scholars, the film deserves better—but don't expect the past glory of the cavalry trilogy. Among its assets: Ford's usual knockabout humor is contained, the striking location photography in Louisiana and Mississippi by William Clothier, the use of music to say what the script cannot, and the inspired sequence depicting the march of Southern cadets. With newcomer Constance Towers as Southern belle Hannah "Ding-Dong" Hunter, Russell Simpson, Willis Bouchey (as the opportunistic politician-to-be), Strother Martin, Hank Worden, Ken Curtis and old-time cowboy hero Hoot Gibson, (though it would've been a nice touch if Col. Tim McCoy had appeared in a Ford cavalry picture).

December 21

A TALE OF TWO CITIES (1935)

Jack Conway
MGM (David O. Selznick))/128 min.
Cartoon: "A Tale of Two Kitties" (1942), Bob Clampett

"Colman without moustache reveals himself as a great actor, getting into the essence of Sidney Carton. Devoid of his star mannerisms, scorning to trade on stock matinee-idol Colmanisms, he underplays Carton, and though his role is not long, he keeps the audience thinking of him throughout… This, as one critic opined, was not Ronald Colman expertly playing Ronald Colman but a fine, sincere actor, with all the intrinsic humility of greatness, bringing one of Dickens' most complex, deeply human characters to life." – Lawrence J. Quirk

The definitive version of Charles Dickens' 1859 novel is a picture that resonates in the memory long after its images have faded. This is a love story set amidst the moral disorder of the French Revolution. It's also a story of family, friendship and faith. Ronald Colman portrays one of Dickens' most memorable characters, Sydney Carton, the disillusioned lawyer touched by the regenerative love of Lucie Manette (Elizabeth Allan). To him she is a symbol of innocence and hope, almost untouchable, but he loses her to Charles Darney (Donald Woods), the condemned enemy of the French Republic. Though he wasn't even nominated, this would be one of Colman's finest performances, revealing so much with just his eyes in the film's most inspiring moments. In the larger picture, A *Tale of Two Cities* shows that true change comes not through revolution—Madame de Farge (Blanche Yurka) and her citizens are as wicked as the aristocratic Marquis (Basil Rathbone) driving over a child—but by a change in spirit. The essence of the novel has been faithfully recaptured. Even supporting players such as Henry B. Walthall (Dr. Manette) and Edna May Oliver (Miss Pross) seemed to have stepped right from the pages. With Reginald Owen, H.B. Warner, and Isabel Jewell (the seamstress). Revolutionary sequences directed by Val Lewton and Jacques Tourneur. Nominated for Best Picture.

December 28

RIDE THE HIGH COUNTRY (1962)

Sam Peckinpah
MGM (Ricahrd E. Lyons)/94 min.
Short Film: "Never Again!" (1915) with Tom Mix

"Lyons thought I was a little more subtle than Randy and that it would be a little more deceptive if I would turn and double-cross him. But I told him that if I was going to make one more picture, I wasn't going to destroy my image with it. My image was Steve Judd. He's the guy, through his integrity, will get the job done." – Joel McCrea

A magnificent elegy to Western heroism respectfully directed by Sam Peckinpah. Randolph Scott and Joel McCrea star as two former lawmen at the turn of the century. Steve Judd (McCrea) gets a job as a bank guard who must transport gold from a mining camp. He brings in old friend Gil Westrum (Scott), a resentful, pragmatic man who intends to steal the gold with his young partner, Longtree (Ronald Starr). Gil feels as though the law owes it to him. Along the way they help a girl, Elsa (Mariette Hartley), escape her abusive father—only to save her again when she's married into the Hammond family, a clan of hillbilly brothers. Edgar Buchanan plays the drunken judge at the gaudy wedding in Kate's bordello. A film about memories and morality, it's an unforgettable work, mythic in scope. The final shootout remains an indelible image in Western movie lore. This would be Scott's last film… and no finer way to go out. With R.G. Armstrong as Elsa's Bible-quoting fanatic father (who's no match for McCrea's genuine code of ethics) and James Drury. Shot in the California Sierras by Lucien Ballard. Based on the story *Guns in the Afternoon* by N.B. Stone, Jr.

Thirty Years of Saturday Night Movies

We had been on the air since May, 1970 with our *Those Were The Days* program.

Our prime radio sponsor was North West Federal Savings and in 1971 we spoke to them about holding an event that would express appreciation to our listening audiences. We decided to have a "Nostalgia Night" of good old movie comedies starring Laurel and Hardy, Charlie Chase, Charlie Chaplin and others. The program was presented at the home office of North West Federal on West Irving Park Road on October 2, 1971. We invited listeners to attend the free program and we had a full house… about one hundred people turned out!

We scheduled a few other "Nostalgia Nights" (all held in the S&L's employees' basement lunch room) and then, on May 6, 1972 we began the "Memory Club" which met every Saturday at North West Federal and featured vintage and classic movies from the 1930s and 40s. Admission of one dollar was used to defray the cost of film rentals.

When NWF expanded its' main office in 1977, a 300 seat auditorium was added to the plans, primarily because of the success of the "Memory Club." This new facility, with a large screen and a full stage, permitted us to offer a greater variety of programming along with the vintage films that continued to be a mainstay of our Saturday night features.

We were now able to schedule a few wide-screen and CinemaScope films, some 3-D movies (complete with special glasses), and special events featuring such stars as Buster Crabbe, of the Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon movie serials; the Harmonicats musical group; singer-pianist Al Morgan; fan dancer Sally Rand with a program about the Chicago World's Fair, to remember just a few. And we would have at least one "Riverview Night of Nostalgia" every year, an event that began during the "basement years" at NWF and, we're happy to note, continues to this day in the LaSalle Theatre.

We're proud that we were able to start something that has become a tradition for over thirty years and pleased to see it continue to this day. Nothing compares with the experience of seeing a good old movie on a big screen in a comfortable theatre filled with folks who feel the same as we do.

Here's to many more years of good old Saturday night movies on Irving Park Road!

Chuck Schaden
Those Were The Days
WDCB 90.9 FM

Frank Capra's "Lost Horizon"
starring Ronald Colman

There is a rare fruition, a quality of distinctive elements blending together as rewardingly as with a vintage wine, that transforms FRANK CAPRA'S "LOST HORIZON" into that form of anticipation and deeper impact we sometimes experience with a beloved opera or symphony. Our newer DVD technology offers us the choice to skip to favored scenes or musical numbers, but we think you'll find that there is such an insistent procedural relationship, such inevitability of scene to scene, with their additional gifts of visual and aural beauty in this classic film that you'll not want one instant out of its flowing place.

Capra could not have fully known, as we are fortunate enough to appreciate in 2002, was how truly *timeless* Stephen Goosson's set designs for Shangri-La would prove to be, or that Dimitri Tiomkin's musical score lives as a multi-themed masterpiece that gives each scene its deserved distinction. What Capra *did* know was that there was only one actor to truly embody and represent the major role of Conway: RONALD COLMAN. Time has also revealed that Colman, beyond his enduring 3-decade handsome 'leading man' appeal and "Best Actor" nominations over an eighteen-year period, proved to be, in his personal life as well as his characterization in this film, as close to being a true Renaissance man as we may hope to find in the real world. His exceptional clarity and quality of speech could offer even ordinary sentences a poetic lift, but given the Capra-Robert Riskin script Colman enjoyed here, you might well find phrases and content both affecting and memorable.

There is a type of 'critic' who seem to delight in stealing and repetitively using the term "Capra-corn" with a ill-earned smugness, which hardly accurately describes the immigrant boy whose flowering and insistent intellect earned him a Degree in Engineering, whose bright comedic wit won a career writing scripts for silent films, and who not only served his United States during World War II directing the *"Why We Fight"* series of films, but carefully gathered a collection of beloved rare books worthy of a museum.

And if those same critics seem to dismiss Capra's LOST HORIZON as a "fantasy," they are correct only in one instance: the *extended-life-span* is contrary to Earth's environmental realities. But even here, the JAMES HILTON book and the CAPRA-RISKIN script cautions us: when Conway is offered this extended span of active life, he demures: *"It must have a point. I sometimes wonder if life itself has any."* This is hardly the substance of a mindless sugar-coated going-to-the-seashore escapism.

In all other respects this story is of the Earth, fully within the limits of our own humanly achievable. It does not depend, as would most "fantasies," upon *metaphysical, supernatural,* or *extraterrestrial* interventions. While we readily acknowledge that the very nature of Shangri-La demands an *exotic* location, this must be understood in the context of its time: the author of the 1933 novel (as, of course, would be the writers of its 1936 screenplay) was only too well aware of the threatening tentacles of Hitler's voracious Nazi intentions; therefore, Tibet seemed to provide a site not only excitingly remote and mysterious in which to place Shangri-La, but also so as the High Lama states: "We may expect no mercy, but we may faintly hope for neglect." It is here that we believe a most important distinction was made by the Capra-Riskin screenwriters: they changed the novel's "our" books and music, to "their" or the entire outer world's accumulated scientific and cultural knowledge, *not* as an 'elitist' Utopian society, but hoping only to act as a safe haven, a temporary repository, until a war-mad world could retrieve it if and when peace finally returned.

In a 2002 Earth, where not even Tibet remains removed from a satellite digital pinpoint, every local library with interlibrary and computer resources can provide a similar Shangri-La-like stunning wealth of knowledge to our individual selves! But in that 1933 and 1937 world, that fragile story depends upon our *believing* that Conway believes in Shangri-La and its humanitarian purposes, and, when we witness that Capra and Colman so obviously believe in its rewarding totality, you feel free to, as well!

George E. Schatz

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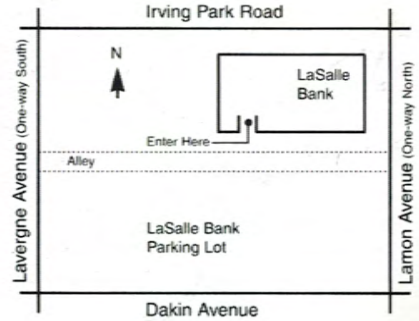

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