Theodore Huff Memorial Film Society
Tuesday February 21st... in
the Marine Room, 5th floor,
Capitol Hotel, 8th Avenue and
31st St., at 7:30 p.m.

The Greatest All-Action Show in Town!

Program, in order of screening:

DICK GRACE

"The Flying Fool"

"Never Give a Sucker an Even Break" (extract)

"Hysterious Dr.萨VAN" (Episode ten)

"Riders of the Dawn" (extract)

"The Devil Horse" (extract)

"Ben Hur" (extract)

"The Charge of the Light Brigade" (extract)

Intermission: 9:00 p.m.

RICHARD TALMAGE "LET'S GO"

Recommended Reading in Connection with Tonight's Program:

Back issues of "Films in Review" will be on sale at 50c
each, containing the following articles:

STUNT MEN

THE SECOND UNIT DIRECTOR

WILLIAM K. HOWARD

YAKIMA CANUTT

REEVE EASON
"THE FLYING POOL" (1925) A Sunset Production presented by Anthony J. Xydias, directed by Frank S. Mattison, from the story "The Ace and the Queen" by Putnam Hoover. Art Director: Milton Fowler; photographed by Gus Bowers and Bert Longmecker.

The Cast: RICHARD GRACE; Wanda Hawley; Gaston Glass; Dick Sutherland; Mary Land; Dorothy Vernon; Mildred Morantes; Eddie Harris

Dick Grace is of course known primarily for his amazing stunt crashes in "Wings", "The Lost Squadron" and other aerial epics, and also as the writer of several books about his profession, fictional and otherwise. ("The Lost Squadron" was penned by Grace). However, apart from his aerial gymnastics, Dick was quite a stuntman on the ground too, as this film shows. "The Flying Pool", like so many films built around action stars, has a film no little plot which forms a peg on which to hang some truly astounding stunt sequences. The transfer in mid-air from one plane to another, fistic battles out on the wings, and acrobatics on trailing rope ladders - these were Dick's main forte, and they are given plenty of footage in this film. Another, more Fairbanksian episode, has Dick blithely rushing to his wedding by hopping from one speeding car to another. Despite his agility, Dick's looks and personality were rather tame, and he never quite convinces as a modern cavalier. But the stunts are put over with tremendous zest, and are grand fun. Another interesting aspect of "The Flying Pool" is that it is a real charlie - and when they made cheapies in the twenties, they shot out of doors just as much as possible. The result is that "The Flying Pool" is full of fascinating and nostalgic shots of busy city streets (presumably Los Angeles) of thirty years ago. In fact, it was one of these shots that enabled us to trace the date of the film (which is so obscure as to have escaped listing in any of the reference books, including the copyright catalogue) One street scene features an obvious first-run movie-house on which one can see part of the marquee, which reads "Monte Bell's "Lady of...." which of course must be "Lady of the Night", a 1925 Metro.

Nobody in support of Dick has much to do, although Wanda Hawley, a lovely little star, is as appealing as ever. Incidentally, we are just running the first two reels of this film as part of the program proper; the rest tends to be repetitious, and adds nothing but footage to our survey of the stunt men. However, for those members who do not have to catch trains and are interested in seeing the complete film, we will be running the concluding three reels at approx. 10.30., after the completion of the rest of the program.

"NEVER GIVE A SUCKER AN EVEN BREAK" (Extract) Universal, 1941. Directed by Edward Clune; 2nd unit director Ralph Ceder; photographed by Charles Van Enger; starring, and written by, J.C. Fields.

The hilarious final chase from this wholly Fieldsian opus still ranks as one of the best slapstick sequences that the talkie cinema has produced, and provides a welcome throwback to the days of Mack Sennett when comedy and action units were often one and the same. Staged at breakneck speed, it is a magnificent combination of thrills and comic invention. Credit for this goes to Ralph Ceder, who staged it, and to stuntman David Sharpe who can be seen, in various thin disguises, clambering over a fire engine, being knocked down by a car, and indulging in similar mayhem. Sharpe is undoubtedly the best all-round stuntman on the screen today, an experienced rider, battler and acrobat. He, with Jack Mahoney (not represented in today's program) are perhaps the two leading rivals to the one and only Dick Talmadge.


Republic, out of Mascot, has always turned out the fastest and slickest serial thrillers - and the directorial team of Whitney and English always turned out Republic's best. Their work was notable for its superior production value and rapid-fire cutting. This particular episode, not, we admit, one of their best, was selected as an example of the fistic doublings for the star by David Sharpe. The entire episode is really one long fight, with Sharpe taking it - and dishing it out - for all he's worth, with occasional close-ups of Robert Wilcox dusting himself off and smilingly modestly at his prowess!
"RIDERS OF THE DAWN"


Probably the finest stunt rider and horse-handler on the screen is Yakima Canutt, who starred in many silent westerns, switched to villainy and stunting with the coming of sound, and later specialized in handling the second units for action sequences in spectacles - "Man of Conquest", "Ivanhoe", "Helen of Troy" - as well as directing occasional "B" films. In this extract from the closing reel, Yakima doubles for Jack Randall in the time honored stagecoach stunt, hanging from the cross-bar between the hooves of the galloping horses. "Riders of the Dawn" was the first starring western of Jack Randall, one of the better singing cowboys (perhaps Dick Foran was the best - but Randall was still superior to the rest). Autry, Rogers, DeWe "Queen of All" and a former small-part player ("Follow the Fleet" etc.). He made a whole series of well above average "B" westerns for Ronogram, and was later killed at Universal, when he was thrown from a horse. He was the brother of Bob Livingston, likewise a western star, "Riders of the Dawn" shows how much production value could be crammed into even a small western, the climactic reel here being beautifully photographed and cut, a job that even John Ford needn't be ashamed of. Only in the rather clumsy intercutting of occasional stock-shots does the cheapness show through - but since these stock-shots are of particularly violent horse-falls, they further the ends of this program very nicely.

"THE DEVIL JUICE"


Since members are still commenting with some pleasure on "The Galloping Ghost", they need no introduction to Mascot serials. This was one of Mascot's best though we are showing only the climatic scene from episode one. Here, Yakima Canutt, doubling for Harry Carey, performs one of the most amazing horse-stunts ever seen on the screen, literally hanging from the horse's neck and fighting back while it rears, rolls and plunges in an effort to dislodge him.

"BEN HUR"


Since the society ran "Ben Hur" some two years ago and issued detailed notes at the time, we do not need to recap them here. Despite its immense size, it was a pretty dull film on the whole - except for the two mass action sequences, and specifically the famous chariot race which was directed by Reeves Eason and not by Niblo. Since the fame of this film rests primarily on this sequence, it is always a little disconcerting to find the credit being directed solely at Niblo! Eason was a master at staging vivid action, and a good director on fast "B" westerns; however, his talent outside the action field was limited, and his straight dramatics always fell a little flat. Thus he remained strictly an action and 2nd unit man. (Later in the year we shall be showing one of his interesting silent actioners, "His Last Race"). Flawlessly staged, spectacular to a degree not seen in American films outside of those of D.W. Griffith, and beautifully photographed, the chariot race is a classic example of the very real contributions made by the 2nd unit men.

"THE CROWN OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE"

Warner Bros., 1936. Directed by Michael Curtiz, 2nd Unit director Reeves Eason; produced by Hal Wallis, Asst. Producer Sam Bischoff; photographed by Sol Polito and Fred Jackman; music by Max Steiner; with Errol Flynn, Olivia de Haviland, Patrice Kn_WRAPPER: A logical follow-up to "Ben Hur"'s chariot race is this famous charge, again staged by aaron. The sweeping camera movements, the astonishing horse-falls, and the tumbles taken by horde of stuntmen, make this episode quite the best thing of its type that the sound cinema has offered. Certainly it makes subsequent charges and battles look quite pale by comparison! Assisting the sterling work of Eason in this case is some really brilliant editing, and some finely dramatic compositions - unobtrusively the contribution of that much under-rated director Michael Curtiz. Forget "White Christmas" and "The Scout from Oklahoma" and remember that he also did "Noah's Ark", "Cabin in the Cotton" and "The Breaking Point". 

"THE CROWN OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE"
Incidentally, the realism of the many tricky horse-falls in this film prompted protests from scores of humane societies all over the world, despite Warners' insistant assurances that the horses were perfectly happy in their work and went through their paces without mishap.


In the past, this society has espoused the cause of William K. Howard as one of the really under-rated directors, but prints of his really great films being unavailable, hasn't been able to do much about proving it! This film, one of three that Howard made with Talmadge, is, from a directorial standpoint, somewhat unremarkable. It moves nicely, features some good compositions, and injects a pleasant sense of fun into the proceedings, but it does not exactly indicate a great directorial talent lying dormant. In fact, it is one of the earliest Howard films, made before the standard trade biographies took note of Bill. (The film that they list as his first was actually his ninth!)

However, Talmadge is the show, and nothing else matters. The film consists merely of four long stunt sequences - chases, leaps, fights - strung together on a flimsy plot. None of it is taken too seriously, and even the villainy never sinks below such mild misdemeanors as embezzlement and rank robbery. When Dick isn't in action, there are some slow spots - but the knowledge that more acrobatics are on the way keeps the interest high. Talmadge's stunt work here is truly amazing, and there's no doubt that Doug Fairbanks was ever doubled by Dick will probably want to revise their thoughts after seeing this! It has been reliably confirmed that Dick did double for Doug in "The Mollycoddle", "Robin Hood", "The Mark of Zorro" - and probably in others. Doug was certainly a great acrobat too, and possessed a grace and charm that Dick did not. Incidentally, Fairbanks is not represented in tonight's compilation only because his work is too well-known to need a reminder; with limited playing time, the lesser-knowns - David Sharpe, Talmadge - deserved the limelight for a change. Talmadge continued his stunting epics right through the silent era (his best were for FBO) and on through the middle thirties, appearing also in a fine Universal serial, "Pirate Treasure". Now he directs tv films and occasional theatrical "picture" pictures - not, let it be said, of a very high standard, but if nothing else, they move! "Let's Go" appears to be the only silent Talmadge available at present, and we are very happy to be able to present it tonight, and show the greatest stunt star of them all at the height of his powers.

Program Notes & Enquiries: William R. Everson, Manhattan Towers Hotel, 2166 Broadway, New York City 23, NY.
Committee: Dorothy Lovell (Art Work); Edward Connors; Richard KRAFT

OUR NEXT PROGRAM: March 20th:
"WHITE SHADOWS IN THE SOUTH SEAS" is bought and paid for, the print partially owned by the society. Why the delay, we don't know - it has been provided by a normally reputable dealer who guarantees delivery in time for our March show. In view of past delays, we don't want to promise this, but we are hoping for the best! In any event, members will be notified well in advance as to whether or not it is being shown. If it does not arrive in time, the next show will consist of AN HOUR WITH HAROLD LLOYD - two of his best comedies from his peak Hal Roach period in the twenties - plus "THAT CERTAIN THING", a rare revival of Frank Capra's first film for Columbia (1928) starring Ralph Graves and Viola Dana.

Many members commented very favorably on the last show, and we were especially pleased to find so many converts to William S. Hart. Hint, too! There were several requests for more vintage Harts ( alas, not too many are available) and since the whole show proved so popular, we have arranged to repeat the theme in a month or two - WILLIAM S. HART IN SQUARE DEAL SANDERSON, and REN TIN TIN IN THE NIGHT OFF.

In passing: despite the many extracts in tonight's show, all of the material is being mounted on three reels, so there will be only two intermissions.

We hope you ALL spotted Franklyn Farnum, Ann Pollard and Jack Malhall in "The Man With the Golden Arm".

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IMPO TANT ANNOUNCEMENT -- CINEMA 16 plans a visit to Eastern House over the March 2-3 weekend. Films scheduled include THE CROWD, GRAND HOTEL, DIARY OF A LOST GIRL, THE PILGRIM, AS YOU DIS I FEEL ME and many others - Keaton, Von Sternberg, Garbo, Barrymore and others in a marathon session. Anne Vogel has kindly extended an invitation to all members of this society. If interested, please ring him right away and he will give you full details. No fee for attending - and as one of a party you'll get cheaper rail and hotel rates. Mr. Vogel must know how many plan to attend by February 20th; we apologize for the short notice, but pressure of work made these notes a little late. Eastern House is THE mecca for all film students, and we thoroughly recommend the trip.