First of all, a word of apology for the somewhat crowded conditions at our last
showing. Frankly, we under-estimated the drawing power of "The Circus"; we were
showing it mainly for the benefit of those members that we knew hadn't seen it;
we felt (obviously incorrectly) that the film was familiar enough by now not to
be such "boxoffice" any more. (Not that we mind an occasional profit -- and Chaplin
helped to erase the red entries provoked by Clarence Brown at the previous show.)

In any event, it is apparent that for shows where we can expect an attendance in
excess of 40 people, our current quarters are a little small. Hence, as you will
see from these notes, "Mju" is being shown elsewhere this month. "The white Tiger",
in which terms of drawing power is about on the same level as "Smouldering Fires",
will be shown at our 57th Street location.

Possibly you may be wondering why we don't hold all of our shows in our "Mju"
location (no pun intended) - the Pilgrim Room, at the Manhattan Towers Hotel.
There are three good reasons. One, of course, is a question of economics - room
rental is higher, and that plus our printing, mailing and other overheads would
give us a budget way out of all proportion to the turnout for the average show.
Secondly, the 57th street room is more centrally located. And thirdly, there is
always the risk, screening in a hotel, that we'll run into our union projectionist
trouble again -- with a second unit operating in 57th Street, we always have a
safe refuge.

As you'll see from the notes, the start of our Western cycle has had to be postponed
once more -- in this case because "The White Tiger" will no longer be available to
us after February, and we want to make sure of playing it off before it disappears.
What we may do is devote the entire month of April to the western films, with a
show every week. Already lined up as one of the shows for March is "STATE'S
ATTORNEY" with John Barrymore, Helen Twelvetrees and Ralph Ince, in its first New
York showing for many years. The film (Rko, 1932) makes a very interesting
comparison with "Counselor at Law", made around the same time. It's great Barrymore,
good theatre and at least interesting cinema. But we'll be saying much more about
that at the appropriate time. Also lined up for early presentation are "SPORTING
LIFE" with Bert Lytell (and old friend George Siegmann), "TIGER ROSE" with Lenore
Ulrich, and "TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL" (1935), an interesting and spectacular
collaboration between British, German, French and American talents (Richard Dix, Wade Evans, George
Arliss, Walter Huston, Erne Mateu, Clarence Dixson, Kurt Schubert, etc.).

Program for Tuesday February 19th. 7:30, at the Manhattan Towers Hotel, Broadway and
76th Street, in the Pilgrim Room. (The Pilgrim Room is the first room you'll come to,
going up the stairs through the door to the left of the reception desk)

"LOOKING FOR SALLY" (Hal Roach, 1925, two reels) Starring Charlie Chase

This is our first Charlie Chase comedy in some time - and it's one of his recent
ones. One of its highlights is a delightful parody on the "Way of all Flesh" school of
Tennant's who make Charlie pranks as a devilish, and a Salvation Army type mission
tells the sad story of his downfall through drink.

"THE GOLDEN CLUMP" (Nordisk Films, 1927) Directed by A.W. Sandberg written by
Sandberg and Poul Krudsen; starring

GUSTAV HANSSON. One reel.

As a rule one-reel condensations of great films are far from satisfactory, and
certainly this one (from an 8-reel Scandinavian feature) is as frustrating as most
of its genre, but it is also one of the best from an editing standpoint that we have
seen. Certainly you feel that all the highlights are included, and the editor
does a remarkable job too in sustaining a coherent story-line. Although the full
feature was released in the U.S., no prints have apparently survived, and thus we
must be content with this much shortened version. Very Germanic, both in its story
(in the "Variety" tradition) and in its sets and decor, "The Golden Clown" seems to
have been an extremely powerful subject. Director A.W. Sandberg is relatively little
known here today, but it's interesting to note that in a recent article in "Variety"
on Nordisk's 50th anniversary celebrations, Sandberg was linked with Dreiser, Stiller
and Molander as one of the great directors of the silent Scandinavian cinema.
"LIZZIES OF THE FIELD" (Mack Sennett-Pathe, 1924) Directed by Eddie Cline; with Billy Bevan, Andy Clyde.

The Sennett's of the twenties were variable, but when he let his comics loose with a bunch of beatet old care, he usually came up with comedies that were just tremendous! "Lizzies of the Field" is a typical example - fast, insane, breathless, one crazy gag following another without a frame of wasted footage, and the bulk of the film being taken up with an all-out jalozy race in which those cars that aren't crashed or blown up earlier on wreck themselves completely in a frenzied, suicidal finish.

Most of it was shot on the Hollywood streets and in the surrounding hills; the film city must have presented quite a hazard for pedestrians in those days!

"NJU" (Germany, 1924) Directed by Paul Czinner; photography by Axel Graedtmajer and R. Kunts; script by Czinner from a play by Gisip Dymowski; produced by Rimax, 7 reels.

Starring ELIZABETH BERGER as NJU (Njura); Emil Jannings as the husband; Conrad Veidt as the Stranger; Maria Bard as the nurse; Nils Edwall as the child.

Paul Czinner's first film, and Berger's first important one, is seldom shown these days; if we are not mistaken, its last NY showing was some five years ago ... also by this society.

Kirk Bond, an authority on the German cinema, has written for us a fine analysis of the film, together with a listing of all of Czinner's films, and some fascinating material on the "mystery" film that Czinner and Negri made together in England. (The mystery is not in the plot content, but in what ever happened to the picture, since it seems not to have been released at all.) Mr. Bond's thesis runs to some length, and postage and printing considerations prevent our mailing it out in bulk to our entire membership. Copies will of course be available at the screening, and, as is our custom, will be mailed on request to anyone unable to attend. The following comments are brief extracts from Mr. Bond's notes:

"... the original play "NJU" by Dymowski appeared in Russia in 1908 ... and was written more or less under the influence of Chekhov. Called "An Everyday Tragedy", it is a simple, rather short picture of the tangled personal fortunes of three people, which ends with the suicide of the woman and the fact, fleeting suggestion that the stranger she has loved will shortly be involved with another woman.... the film has been, through the years, one of the classic examples of the German Kammerspiel films of the silent days. Kalbus, for instance, groups it with the other famous films, "Shattered", "Backstairs", "New Year's Eve", "The Street", "Harrassing Shadows" ..."

For Jannings and Veidt, the film has a certain significance in that ... at least after very early days ... this is the only film in which they actually played together. They are both in "Wagnerius", but in different stories. And I believe they are both in "Liebe Macht Blinde" ("Love Makes Us Blind") but either one or the other simply appears briefly as himself in a story of film studio life.

Originally "NJU" carried the subtitle "A Misunderstood Woman". It is remarkably faithful to the play both in incident and in spirit. The story ... was to be the prototype of later Czinner-Berger films. A success in Germany, it met with less success here. Satisfied with the title "Husbands and Lovers" and cut by about a half-reel, it played at the Cameo in New York for one week ....

Kirk Bond.

At the conclusion of "NJU", we will be showing a two-reeler produced by Herman and Max Weinberg in 1923, "The Knife Thrower". This is being screened for Mr. Weinberg and is not a part of the program proper, but need less to say everyone is welcome to stay to see it. It is an extremely interesting and ably-made subject, and, for the record, this will be the original version and not the slightly edited version as released by Warner Brothers at that time.

Program for Tuesday, February 26th, 800 West 57th Street at 7:30.

"THE ISURER" (Biograph, 1910) one reel; directed by D.W. Griffith; with George Nichols, Alfred Paget, Henry B. Walthall, Kate Bruce, Claire McDowell, Florence Barker, Grace Henderson, Tony O'Sullivan

"The Isurer" is a somewhat more superficial and melodramatic re-working of "A Corner in Wheat", made by Griffith a year earlier. (The banquet scene, by the way, is an exact copy of the similar scene in the earlier film. Because the ending is not too much in doubt, there is less of the cross-cutting than usual, and since it is the villain that is in danger, there is in any event less attempt to build suspense. It's a run-of-the-mill Griffith Biograph, quite powerfully done, but by no means up to the great man's top standards. The cast is fine - all the old familiar Biograph faces are there, and the banquet scene, as it was in "A Corner in Wheat", is a real "Who's Who" of 11 East 52nd Street.
"PAY DAY" (First National, 1922) Written and directed by Charles Chaplin; photographed by Rollie Totheroh; starring Charlie Chaplin with Phyllis Allen (the wife), Mack Swain (the foreman), Edna Purviance (his daughter); Sidney Chaplin (a friend, and owner of the food stand); Henry Bergman; Allan Garcia

Although the Museum of Modern Art ran this a year or so ago, their print was such a bad dupa that we have had several requests to show a good print — and, here it is. "Pay Day" was Chaplin's last two-reeler, and one that concerned itself more with comedy than pathos. Although it was considered fairly routine at the time, it was of no little influence — "Borrowing," through the years can be witnessed in films as far apart as the Capra-Langdon-Sennett "Saturday Afternoon," and Tati's "Mr. Hulot's Holiday." Technically, however, as Ted Huff points out in his Chaplin book, it was a noticeable advance...

"For the first time in a Chaplin film backlighting is used in the interiors... night scenes were photographed at night with the aid of rather skillful artificial lighting... the sets are designed with an almost stylized simplicity."

It's probably worth noting too that Sid Chaplin's lunch wagon is the same one used — also under Sid's patronage — in "A Dog's Life."

"OFFICER HAW" — chapter 9 of our Ben Wilson serial — next month will see the surprise (?) denouement!

"THE WHITE TIGER" (Universal, 1923) Written and directed by Tod Browning; starring PRISCILLA DEAN, Wallace Beery, Raymond Griffith. 7 reels.

For some reason silent Universals are very much of a rarity, so "The White Tiger" is quite a find. It is some time since we last saw it, and since our print has not yet arrived to refresh an aging memory, we won't be foolhardy enough to attempt a detailed reappraisal at this time. The film in universal, however, early Tod Browning — he had not yet gotten into his real forte (macabre horror, a la "London After Midnight" and "Dracula") but there were definite signs of what was on the way. Into what is basically a crime melodrama, Tod Browning injects several bizarre touches, and in many ways (both as concerns plot and mood) the film is very similar to his later success with Lon Chaney, "The Unholy Three."
The film has a lot of the Browning faults (rather steady, almost stagey movements) but also many of his virtues — principally the eloquence of pictorial style, and the fine sets.

Dean and Browning were quite a team at Universal in the early twenties — "The Virgin of Stamboul" was another top money-maker. (Oh for titles like that today — even in CinemaScope!) However, it's a little difficult to understand Dean's great popularity, as her rather hard features frequently make her seem quite unsympathetic. Nevertheless, she brought home the bacon for Universal many a time, and continued in movies through to the early thirties. She now lives in retirement in New Jersey.