With tonight's program, we close down until mid-September. A schedule for the September-December programs will be mailed out around September 7th.

The Theodore Huff Memorial Film Society

May 16 1977

FLYING DEVILS (Rko Radio, 1933) Directed by Russell Birdwell; Executive Producer Marian C. Cooper; Associate Producer, David Lewis; Screenplay by Byron Morgan and Louis Stevens from an original story by Stevens; Camera, Nicholas Musuraca; Music, Max Steiner; Art Direction, Van Nest Polglase and Albert D'Agostino; 6 reels
With: Arline Judge, Bruce Cabot, Ralph Bellamy, Eric Linden, Cliff Edwards, June Brewster, Frank La Rue.

Aviation movies, in vogue anyway in the early 30's, enjoyed a special boom at Rko under the sponsorship of aviator-explorer Marian C. Cooper. "Flying Devils" is a minor production, seemingly strung together from ideas that sprang from or were unused in, the previous year's more ambitious "The Lost Squadron". It's quite forgettable, but enjoyable while it's on screen, its good aerial stuff backed up by well done special effects involving miniatures and black projection. The cast is a solid one too, with Arline Judge as lively as always, Russell Birdwell, who directed, was essentially a publicity man, and somewhat of a Howard Hughes type in methods and inclinations. He only made a handful of films, including a couple in the 50's, "The Come On" and "The Girl in the Kremlin". His big claim to fame were publicity campaigns built around bosoms, his grooming glory perhaps being his mid-50's campaign for Roberta Haynes. His ads, with spectacular cleavage shots of Miss Haynes, carried the logo: "Press Representation by Russell Birdwell, Roberta Haynes by God".

THE WHITE GORILLA (Louis Weiss Productions, 1945) Directed by Harry Fraser; Story by Monroe Talbot; Camera, Robert Cline; Sets, Thomas Connolly; A Fraser-Merrick Production; Supervised by George H. Merrick; Music, Lee Zahler; edited by Adrian Weiss; 6 reels
Starring Ray Corrigan, Lorraine Miller, and, quote, an all-star cast, uncredited consisting of Charles King, George Lewis, Francis Ford and, in the silent footage, Frank Merrill, Eulalie Jansen and Bobby Nelson. Guest Stas: Red Barber, The White Gorilla", initially intended as the Huff's swan-song presentation, will now serve as a stepping-stone to even more bizarre offerings, since our are continuing at least for another year. It isn't quite the nadir of the art of making movies out of nothing. The honors for that go perhaps to "Wolves of the Sea" (a feature) and "Queen of the Jungle" (a serial), both of which managed to create themselves out of old footage, and which raged the world without ever once leaving a cramped sound stage for their connecting shots. "Wolves of the Sea" was positively ingenious in many respects, even to employing Rondo Hatton so that footage from an old film of his could be back projected on to a new set, and he could walk off the old film and into the new, tearing the same dirty shirt, without a single splice. That film also disposed of its loose characters by having their ship sink, and using a reel of the Titanic going down from an old silent? "The White Gorilla" is somewhat above these standards, since it does occasionally venture beyond the cans of old footage and Thomas Connolly's impressive set (plural in the credits, but I only spotted one) to give us real trees and grass bushes in the genuine outdoors, though they hardly suggest the Black Continent that the narrator insists it is! Virtually all of the action is taken from a silent serial, "Tarilla of the Jungle", and the script" is positively ingenious in keeping the new actors from ever meeting the old - though they spy on them constantly through the underbrush, making this possibly the screen's first voyeuristic jungle adventure. The dialogue is a joy, as are the different "interpretations" given to the same tatty animal stock shots. And I won't spoil your fun by quoting any of the deathless lines. Lee Zahler, not quite as much at the bottom of the barrel as that other "composer" Frank Sannuci, but nevertheless well below the plimsol line, offers another formless barrage of agitato music. But the old footage is good, and this kind of film, backed by elaborate displays, did please a certain kind of audience and made money!! —JE-