

CANFAN

GOES TO

FLORIDA



CANADIAN FANDOM

16th Year Of
Publication
October 1958
Number 37

October 15th, 1958
Islamorada, Florida

To those of you who are feeling the first pangs of winter up north this particular issue is dedicated. That's right, Canfan is coming to you via the sandy shores of Key West and as far as I know the warmest spot in the USA.

In this issue we have a long article covering the state of affairs in the motion picture industry today. I don't think I've read an article before that has been so loaded with speculation and all round good reporting than "Hollywood: Save the Flowers." Mr. Mayer appeared in person at the Stratford Film Festival this summer and gained a complete admiration from a Canadian audience, as well as other motion picture personalities that appeared on the same panel.

Also in this issue is a very enlightening article, "Sherlock Holmes in the 30's," which tells of the many varied films that featured The Master. The article was a group project, so there is no individual credit. But, I am indebted to Ken Beale for kindly sending it along to Canfan.

And to round out the issue a letter section with added comments. This is where I stick my neck out and in all probability somebody will chop my head off.

Many of you are well aware of the Dave Kyle - New York Three goings on. Canfan previously had the opportunity to publish the facts against Dave Kyle, sent in by the New York Three. We declined, stating that we had been a guest, as well as an admirer of the Kyle family.

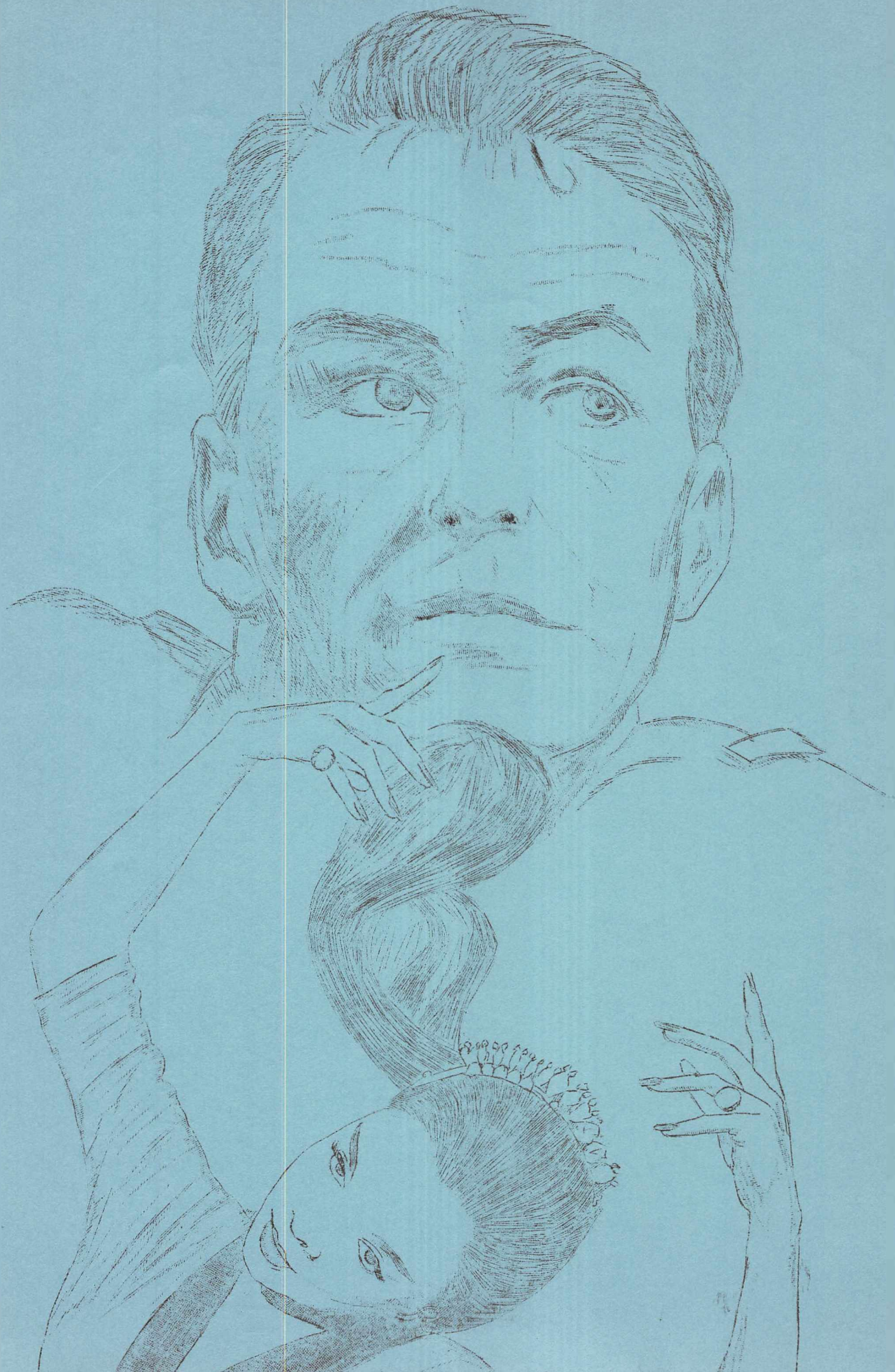
For the record we think the World Science-Fiction Society, Inc. is for the birds. It has been loud, it has spread the word before having a conclusive judgement either for or against Dave Kyle. From what I can gather the noise has been so loud and long that the average fan is completely disgusted with the whole operation. It would have been much better if the disgruntled individuals had quietly gone about their legal business and reached a conclusion, then the results.

There are many conclusions to be drawn from the above, but it is not proper that fans, fanzines, or individuals who live anywhere from a hundred to several thousands of miles away to be passing any "in the know" remarks about any phase of this disagreement.

I have been wanting to pass the above comment for quite some time, there now, I've done it.....WDG

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Hollywood: Save the **F**lowers





HOLLYWOOD ★ SAVE ★ THE ★ FLOWERS ★ BY ARTHUR MAYER

An Apocryphal story is going the rounds about a potential patron who called a movie theatre to inquire what hour the next show started. "When can you make it?" asked the manager. With similar, less than subtle jocularly, the usually staid Wall Street Journal opens a lengthy analysis of the prevalent box office woes with this gloomy comparison: "In the Hollywood movie, the lovely lass is about to fall off a cliff when the hero arrives in the nick of time. The movie industry is.....teetering on a cliff, with no certainty it will be saved." And with no pretense whatsoever of humor, or for that matter of accuracy, a recent CBS program on "Hollywood Around the World" announced: "Americans simply do not go to see movies---not even good ones."

On the contrary, "Around the World in Eighty Days" has in only 210 theatrical engagements already amassed box-office receipts of close to 32 million dollars. "The Ten Commandments" is well on its way to establishing an all time record of over 65 million dollars in worldwide film rentals. Of the nine most popular pictures ever made, all except "Gone With The Wind" have been produced since 1952. Currently, several films such as "The Bridge on the River Kwai," "Peyton Place," "Sayonara," "Old Yeller," "Raintree County," "Don't Go Near The Water," and "A Farewell To Arms" are doing business that would have been regarded as sensational in the movies' most opulent days. Give the public what it wants---don't ask me what it is---and it will not only go to the movies, but it will do so in unprecedented numbers. The former habit of regular weekly attendance, however, has disappeared with this growing selectivity, which should not be confused with growing maturity.

Approximately 75 million people went to American movie theatres

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weekly ten years ago. The commonly quoted figure of 90 million was a figment of a mad publicist's imagination, which by dint of repetition became accepted as a fact. Last year's attendance averaged 42,220,000 weekly. This constitutes a startling decline, even taking in consideration the increased admission prices, but nonetheless is more people than go to baseball games, listen to concerts, or own television sets.

Actually, a greater number of Americans are watching movies today than ever before in the fifty-three years that have elapsed since the first nickelodeon took in its first nickel. Unfortunately for the exhibitors and the producers, who still depend on theatre grosses for their groceries, not to mention their Mercedes', swimming pools, and other necessities of Hollywood life, the majority of film patrons are watching them while comfortably and inexpensively seated in their living rooms, rather than less comfortably and more expensively in theatre auditoriums. Sindlinger and Company, the leading authority on motion picture statistics, estimate that "the public is spending four times as many hours looking at old movies on television as it is in attending new ones in theatres."

Confronted by such pessimistic tidings from so reliable a source, it is scarcely surprising that a large percentage of the public is under the impression that Video is about to liquidate the motion picture industry. Personally, I do not think anything of this nature is going to happen. The next three years may well require that stiff Anglo-Saxon upper lip, to which the movies have so often paid tribute and so rarely displayed. Out of the ordeal, however, of fire and firing, the closing of theatres no longer necessary and of distribution offices (referred to in the industry as exchanges) that never were necessary; out of mergers, liquidations, and studios reduced in size and number, there will emerge a possibly less profitable, but surely healthier, saner, better organized film business than we have ever previously known.

Thanks to a survey prepared by the Opinion Research Corporation for the Motion Picture Association of America on the size and character of the movie audience, a prophet can rely less on intuition and more on information on this matter. The motion picture audience is overwhelmingly a youthful one. Seventy-two per cent of the admissions during the survey week were people under thirty years of age; 52 per cent were under twenty. Frequent moviegoing is concentrated in a comparatively minute segment of the population. Those who attend theatres once a week, or oftener, constitute only 15 per cent of the public. Possibly the most serious problem today confronting picture-makers is whether they will follow the course of least resistance, and seek primarily to retain and increase their hold on this small and largely immature group; or whether they will seek to broaden their appeal to a larger and more demanding segment of the public. In other words, will we have more pictures like "Baby Face Nelson" and "Jailhouse Rock" or like "Twelve Angry Men" and "Time Limit"?

In deciding whether to go to the movies, people are more influenced by the story than by the cast. Forty-five per cent ask: "What is the picture about?"; 18 per cent, "Who is in it?" and 20 per cent regard these two elements as equally important. Preferences for single and double features are evenly divided: 49 per cent want two regular features; 50 per cent of the public want one feature with short subjects. Fifty-four per cent of the public report that their attendance at movies has declined in recent years; 34 per cent go about as often

as formerly, and only 8 per cent attend more frequently. Of the 54 per cent who go less frequently, 22 per cent ascribe this to television; only 4 per cent complained of the cost, and only 3 per cent complained that "movies are not as good as they used to be".

Ten years ago, when the first faint rumbles of television began to disturb the air waves of the nation, movie magnates and minions alike pontificated that the American folk were gregarious by nature. They would never, never stay home for their entertainment. Ma wanted to get out of the house, to see and be seen. Pa needed company to really enjoy a belly laugh. Junior wished to hold hands with his girl friend in a darkened balcony, surrounded by his fellows, and not by an unsympathetic older generation. This lack of faith in the omnipotence of Home was as inaccurate as it was unpatriotic. In a comparatively brief period of time, 41,500,000 TV sets have been installed, and the housetops of the land disfigured with antennae, symbolic of the dawn of a new day---or at least of a new night. One television producer alone--Desilu--partially owned by Lucille Ball, purchased the two RKO studios, where once she had worked, and in 1957 produced more film footage than all of the five major motion-picture companies combined. Revue, an MCA subsidiary, has an annual production budget of \$70,000, 000. Republic Studio is now a hive of Video activity, turning out television subjects in greater quantity, and not much worse quality, than the fifty-two it formerly produced annually for theatrical showing.

It would be oversimplification to hold television wholly responsible for the decline in theatre attendance. The Opinion Research Survey, conducted during the summer of 1957, ascribes to TV a decrease of approximately 20 million theatre patrons weekly. What has happened to the other 30 million who might be expected with an increased population andprecedented national prosperity to be going to the movies? Parking fees, baby-sitters, obsolescent theatres are undoubtedly partially responsible for this lost audience. In addition, the current do-it-yourself movement--whether it consists of sailing a boat, building a hi-fi set, or painting a house--is undoubtedly a healthy social manifestation, but a very unhealthy one for motion-picture exhibitors.

But what really rocked, if it did not wreck the industry was the decisive victory of the Government in its anti-trust suit against the major companies. Movie-makers and exhibitors might have adjusted themselves to the consent decrees imposed by a triumphant Department of Justice on the prostrate tycoons, but not at the same time as they were meeting the first brunt of the Video onslaught. These twin disasters reacted upon each other in a manner reminiscent of the remark of the old lady who said: "It's too bad the 1929 Depression and unemployment both had to take place simultaneously".

Under the terms of the decrees, the major companies were compelled to divest themselves of their theatre holdings just when the theatres, big and small, circuit and independent, most urgently required their support. No longer were the producers under any economic obligation (and few producers worry unduly about moral obligations any more than exhibitors would have worried the situation been reversed) to protect the customers with whom they had done business for fifty years; nor were they under pressure because of their investment in a limited number of theatres to furnish a continuous flow of product to all theatres. As a consequence, the number of pictures released by the major companies collapsed from 654 in 1951 to 378 in 1957, an inadequate supply of film to maintain competitive houses with two or three

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changes of program weekly.

Simultaneously, the decrees abolished block booking, long a bugaboo of blockheaded reformers who were under the impression that, once pictures ceased to be sold in groups, the tawdry and trashy ones would automatically be eliminated. Nothing of the sort happened, as the titles of a few of the more successful Bs released in 1957 indicate: "Love Slaves of the Amazon," "I Was A Teenage Werewolf," "Nude Invaders," "The Viking Woman vs. The Sea Serpent," "Attack of the Crab Monsters," "The Curse of Frankenstein."

Once block booking was eliminated the emphasis turned to a different kind of block--the blockbusters. The industry concentrated its attention not on the intensely risky, but essential task of developing new writers, directors, and stars, but on buying successful books and plays, and reinforcing their box office appeal with celebrated names, regardless of the ravages of time and temperament. Inevitably, the price of stories, dramas, and top performers vaulted to Sputnik heights. This created the anomalous situation of a business whose production costs were increasing 50 per cent, while its receipts were declining close to the same degree.

Under our existing tax laws, however, the added remuneration paid to members of the talent guilds did not linger long in their bank accounts. They scarcely needed their agents or analysts to suggest that the loophole of capital gains made it expedient for them to cease to be a wage slave and to become entrepreneurs. As a consequence, in 1957 only 116 pictures were made by the major studios, as compared with 260 independently produced. Bing Crosby, Burt Lancaster, John Wayne, Gregory Peck are today not so much glamorous personalities as incorporated institutions. One of them--Frank Sinatra--reputedly croons an annual \$4,000,000 lullaby from his various entertainment enterprises.

Based on the great tradition of the pioneer independents--Goldwyn, Selznick, and Disney--a great deal of wishful thinking has been written about the advantages of independent production: its artistic freedom; its maturity; its courage to film controversial and experimental subjects. One might ask: What independents have had the hardihood to make films like Twentieth Century's "Grapes of Wrath," Warner's "Life of Emile Zola," Metro's "Fury," Paramount's "Lost Weekend," or Columbia's "From Here To Eternity"?

Actually, the present crop of independents, with few exceptions, have cut the umbilical cord that binds them to the major companies. They are dependent upon their former employers for financing and distribution. Before a camera can roll, their stories, casts, directors, and budgets must be approved by studio or home-office executives--frequently the same men who for many years have been making similar decisions, some right, some wrong, as to how to invest their companies money.

Moreover, from an industry point of view, independent production has one insuperable handicap. With a few exceptions like Hecht-Hill-Lancaster, who have grown to something approaching major company proportions, with plans for spending \$25,000,000 on their productions in 1958, independents cannot indulge in long-range planning. An immediate profit, rather than future welfare, is imperative for their continued existence. The type of starbuilding which marked Metro and Paramount in their halcyon days, with scouts scouring the countryside for promising youngsters, followed by years of careful training, casting, suitable story selection, and continuous rather than intermittent pub-

licity, has almost disappeared from the West Coast. The number of glamorous new film luminaries uncovered since the rise of the independent system is comparatively small, and partially responsible for the industry's present travail.

The younger generation is justifiably an angry one when elderly (at least, in their eyes) gentlemen, such as Gary Cooper or Clark Gable, are cast in the roles of irresistible young lovers. Among last year's most resounding flops were costly, promising productions such as "Spirit of St. Louis," with Jimmy Stewart; "Love in the Afternoon," with Gary Cooper and Audrey Hepburn; "The Pride and the Passion," with Cary Grant, Frank Sinatra, and Sophia Loren; "Designing Woman," with Gregory Peck and Lauren Bacall; "Desk Set," with Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn. On the other hand, popular young men of limited talents, fresh from radio and television, like Elvis Presley and Pat Boone, scored striking successes in insignificant minor pictures.

With mounting expenses and declining receipts, the bankers who now dictate the fiscal (and some of the production) policies of the leading companies were faced with the alternatives of cutting or entirely eliminating dividends, or selling or renting their old negatives to TV. With little hesitation, they proceeded to cut the throats of their ancient customers, not to mention their own, by disposing of over 8,000 features of pre-1948 vintage. These are now being given away nightly in a bowdlerized form, cut to conform to the time limitations of Video, and interspersed at regular intervals with the advertising spiels of their sponsors. For those of us who happen to be deeply attached to the cinematic masterpieces of the past, what has occurred is equivalent to slashing the Mona Lisa, while announcing that her enigmatic smile is due to her failure to use the correct dentifrice.

The blighting effect on the theatres of the TV showing of old movies became immediately apparent when, in the second half of 1957, the treasures of the past were first released on the air. Movie attendance, which had been creeping upward approximately 5 per cent from the previous year, plummeted close to 18 per cent. "If," predicts Sindlinger, "the national level of theatre receipts for the next nine months follows the trend of the past six months it would mean that the theatres will have a \$200 million annual loss in net gross, and production will have an annual loss of \$73 million in film rental."

The situation, however, is even more precarious than these figures indicate. At least 2,500 negatives made since 1948 still remain unsold. Reassuring statements from the presidents of the major film companies denying that they have any present intent of disposing of these properties are accepted in the industry with the mingled satisfaction and skepticism that customarily greets the official utterances of business and political potentates. Tom Pryor, The New York Time's West Coast correspondent, reports that "No one seriously believes the post-1948 pictures will not ultimately be playing the living-room circuit." Joe Hyams, the New York Herald Tribune's more trustful representative, headlines his front-page story "Hollywood Won't Sell Post-48 Films to TV." You pay your five cents to your newsdealer and you take your choice.

If the Marines land in time, they will consist of actors, authors, and directors who have reserved the rights to strike if they are not consulted before these additional negatives are sold down the TV river. The screen directors are demanding 25 per cent of their original salaries on any future sales, and their fellow-artists are not going to be

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bashful in presenting their claims. In other words, the cut may not be large enough to satisfy anybody, and the salvation of the industry may rest upon its cupidity rather than its sagacity. On the basis of forty years of business experience, I would not be inclined to sell cupidity short.

Over the heads of the embattled exhibitors hangs another Damoclean sword--toll TV. This is an ingenious, electronic device by which pictures can be sent over the air-waves in a distorted form, and only made intelligible by the use of a home decoder. Much as I should like to join in the current Donnybrook Fair concerning the questionable advantages and the unquestionable dangers of pay TV, this is a piece in which I should hold my peace. Suffice it to say that its adversaries are apparently so convinced that the public will rush to pay for what it now receives gratis that they are moving heaven and earth (as represented in Congress) to prevent the tests authorized by the FCC. Its proponents, on the other hand, are so dubious of its merits, outside of a substantial financial return to themselves, that they pretend it will ban commercial advertising and raise the cultural level of TV programing, both highly desirable objectives which there is not the slightest evidence that toll TV could or cares to achieve.

The early advent of toll TV, however, does not appear imminent. As Jack Gould of the New York Times points out: "There are enough problems, social, legal, technical, and economic, to keep the idea tied up for years."

To avoid these interminable delays, it has been proposed that films be carried by cable from a central location onto the home screen. This would require no approval from anyone, except the local authorities, and would have the substantial advantage over air transmission that it would not, even temporarily, pre-empt existing channels. An experiment in the use of wired TV has been conducted since last September in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. According to Senator William Langer of North Dakota, a staunch opponent of pay TV in any form, a postal card survey conducted by him indicates a majority of ten to one in Bartlesville against the project.

The plight of the movie theatres, even if they escape the Scylla of post 1948 films on TV and the Charybdis of toll TV, does not greatly concern the picture going public, except as it affects the nature of future films and the conditions under which they will be displayed. The industry has discovered that with the exception of gimmick films, fashioned for undemanding addicts of rock 'n' roll, science fiction, or horror, it can only successfully compete with TV through the magnitude of its screens, the costliness and care of its productions, and its unrivalled capacity to reproduce the supreme achievements of God and man.

The incredible success of pictures such as "The Ten Commandments," which cost \$13,000,000 to produce, and "Around the World in Eighty Days" is stimulating the production of more such pictures, far beyond the financial or physical potentialities of television. A hard-pressed MGM management, for example, is planning to gamble what remains of its once heavy bankroll on "Ben Hur." These super blockbusters, including "The Bridge on the River Kwai," are shown at high admission prices, with reserved seats, and only one or two shows a day.

Less colossal colossals, such for instance as "Farewell To Arms" or "Raintree County," are now charging admission prices ranging up to \$2.50. They retain the ancient industry device of continuous showing, while discarding the equally hallowed tradition of exclusive first-runs

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in the big downtown theatres. These obsolete de luxe palaces were carefully located by myopic men--myself included--where the traffic was thickest thirty years ago. Now, paralyzed by the growth of that traffic to unanticipated proportions, they have become white elephants.

As a consequence, picture distributors are beginning to ponder the example set by the department stores and discount houses in their invasion of the suburbs. In the New York area, for instance, important films of the future will, I am convinced, hold their premieres simultaneously in key theatres in all of the five boroughs, as well as in Newark, Westchester, and Long Island; and the same procedure will be followed in metropolitan centers all over the country.

In smaller communities first runs are already being played "day-and-date" between the old four-walled theatre on Main Street and the new outlying "drive-ins." Of these there are now 4,397 in the United States and the number continues to increase. They are no longer what Variety once called "passion pits with pix" but highly respectable family institutions doing a rushing business in hot dogs, pop, and pizza-pie. According to the Opinion Research Survey, 72 per cent of the public have been to a drive-in, 32 percent of them prefer a "hard-tip" theatre, 30 percent the drive-in, and 10 percent have no preference.

The pattern of saturation first-run showings will not apply to the pictures produced on specialized wide screen processes, such as Todd-AO and Cinerama. The number of such semi-third dimensional films will mount, and they will be shown in an increasing number of theatres, equipped exclusively for their proper projection, as well as for stereophonic sound, now sadly neglected in most theatres and unavailable on the home TV set. Todd-AO has "South Pacific" in release, and is negotiating with Sam Goldwyn for his forthcoming production of "Porgy and Bess." Cinerama will reluctantly discard its hitherto successful policy of gigantic travelogues and move into the field of fiction films. And there are other exciting new processes, like Cinemiracle, shortly to be unveiled.

Another form of specialized theatre which continues to flourish in the face of declining business is the so-called art house. Once disparagingly referred to as "sure-seaters," they now have long waiting queues when they play such less than artistic offerings as "And God Created Woman" (unless Brigitte Bardot is regarded as a work of art). Even, however, when they confine themselves to less aphrodisiac fare, with distinguished importations like "La Strada" and "Gervaise," they appeal to substantial audiences. Occasionally, American pictures such as "Lilli" or "Lust For Life" are booked into these theatres and demonstrate that Hollywood, when it cares to do so, can hold its own with France, Italy, or Japan on their own grounds. Unfortunately, there are no indications on the horizon of many pictures of this nature. United Artists, which financed and distributed the two best low-budget films of recent years, "Marty" and "Twelve Angry Men," evidences little interest at present in similar projects. There's more gold in them than blockbuster hills!

In 1930 there were 23,000 theatres in the United States. Today there remain 17,809 including the drive-ins, of which 6,000 are reportedly losing money. Unless conditions improve substantially, few of these marginal houses can hope to survive. If business grows worse, the fatalities will extend into a second group of approximately 8,000 theatres, which are now making a limited return on their investment. Some may regard these closings unconcernedly as the inexorable working

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of economic laws. To those of us, however, who are acquainted with the old showmen who have invested their lifetime savings and their years of experience in brick and mortar, each such situation represents a heartbreaking personal tragedy.

Regardless of the number of theatre closings, it is evident that existing conditions no longer warrant (if they ever did) the nationwide system of thirty-two exchanges maintained by each of the remaining seven major companies. Already, sales offices in some cities are being abandoned, and in others, consolidated shipping and receiving offices are being established.

Even more urgent than the curtailment in distribution facilities is the streamlining that will have to be effected in production. The days of the huge studios covering hundreds of acres, with thousands of high-salaried employees, are numbered. It costs Twentieth Century-Fox, for example, approximately \$1,000 a day just to operate the cars and trucks which transport people and properties around the lot. One hundred and seventy-six acres of the studios are about to be set aside to be converted into a dream city, with a modern business center, skyscrapers, apartment houses, and a 4,000 seat auditorium. The company will still not be hard-up for space; it has a 2,300 acre ranch in Malibu. Universal is considering, it is said a \$35,000,000 offer to sell Universal City for a housing development. Rumors are in circulation of a possible consolidation of the Metro and Warner lots, and the subsequent disposal of their surplus properties. Even if this deal is not consummated, some similar combinations are inevitable.

The pretentious film factories of the fat 1940's are no longer suitable for the needs of the slim 1950's. Only half as many pictures are being produced as formerly, and of these a substantial percentage are being made abroad. Already fifty-two pictures are scheduled for foreign production in 1958, and there will be more. The sun never sets on American cameras, frequently handled by an Englishman, with a Hungarian producer, a German director, a French author, and a cast consisting of a dozen different nationalities. Foreign productions were originally designed to convert blocked funds, representing the earnings of American pictures abroad, into good American dollars. They met with unanticipated success. Audiences enjoyed their authenticity and their exotic backgrounds, actors liked to travel, producers valued their lower labor costs. Aside from these considerations, foreign film production is bound to remain an important element in an industry which today realizes some 50 per cent of its income outside of the domestic market.

It is possible that even the economies outlined will still not be adequate to salvage some of the more vulnerable producers. At Loew's, long the top dog, or rather lion, of the industry, a desperate race is being run by its energetic new president to revitalize his disorganized empire before the bankers insist on liquidation, new management or a merger--maybe with the rejuvenated United Artists which, unhampered by a studio or heavy contractual obligations, is running rings around its less agile rivals. Other mergers are also under consideration. By 1962 there will not only be fewer studios, fewer exchanges, and fewer theatres, but also fewer major picture-making companies. There will also be fewer pictures. Some of them, as in the past, will be good, some will be bad. The percentage of good to bad should serve as a reasonably clear reflection of the conflicting forces in American life. AM

This article previously appeared in The Saturday Review and The Film Bulletin in the Spring of this year.....

SHERLOCK HOLMES IN THE 30's

by Anonymous (article sent in by Ken Beale) ZWL

It is not without significance that very nearly from the beginning of motion pictures Sherlock Holmes has enjoyed a wide and continuous cinematic audience; no decade of films remains without its portrayals of The Master, and presently Holmes' activities upon the television screen are much in evidence. In the wealth of Holmesian personifications across half a century, the years between 1930 and 1940 stand out with special prominence. They hosted a variety of presentations of the detective and his cases, many of which forsook the Gillette prototype, and ushered in an era beginning with the forties when - conversely - a single actor was accepted by millions as, for all intents, and purposes, being Sherlock Holmes. (Indeed, Mr. Basil Rathbone is reported as still trying, for almost understandable professional reasons, to escape the identification.) The thirties, also, received an enigmatic heritage from its preceding decade. The word "Sherlock" was in the twenties synonymous with detection, giving rise to several films - "Sherlock Sleuth," "Sherlock Jr.", etc. - burlesquing the efforts of such comics as Buster Keaton in adopting the methods of The Master. As well, the twenties saw two impressive legitimate portrayals of Holmes on the screen: that of John Barrymore and Clive Brook. Particular effort went into the making of the first film, a lavish Samuel Goldwyn release for 1922 based on the extra ordinarily successful William Gillette play (Gillette himself appeared in a screen version of Holmes in 1916, immediately after his third major American revival of the stage Sherlock Holmes). Clive Brook's "The Return of Sherlock Holmes," one of the most important of Paramount's releases for 1929, had as a setting an ocean liner peopled with Moriarty and Watson's grown daughter; it was the last Holmes film of the twenties.

The following year ushered in the thirties and, from England, a vital new concept of the Holmesian screen drama. Arthur Wontner was selected to portray the detective in a succession of films based on the Canon; this represents the first attempt to incorporate Holmes into the popular vogue of the "series" film. The initial film, "The Sleeping Cardinal," released here as "Sherlock Holmes' Fatal Hour," was well received; loosely based on "The Final Problem" and "The Adventure of the Empty House," It pitted the detective against an international counterfeiting organization headed by a Moriarty no one has ever seen; and who is unmasked by Holmes at the climax much in the style of a "Whodunit." Four further films were to feature Wontner, one for each succeeding year: "The Adventure of The Missing Rembrandt," "Sign of the Four," "The Valley of Fear" and "The Silver Blaze." The first and last included undercurrents of the Oriental enigmas popular during that day (opium dens, Limehouse, etc.); all of them were adapted - if freely - from the Canon ("The Missing Rembrandt"

Sherlock Holmes in the 30's

from "The Adventure of Charles Augustus Milverton"). Ian Fleming portrayed Dr. Watson, and mention must be made of Lyn Harding's impressive impersonation of a cunning, entrepreneurish Moriarty - strikingly different from the ghoulishly-made-up Gustav von Seyffertitz of the Barrymore film. As the Universal series was to do ten years later, this British series forced Moriarty into nearly every film (as in "The Silver Blaze" and - visibly at Birlstone Manor, rather than the unseen motivator - "The Valley of Fear"), but happily allowed him to be played by Harding throughout; U-I permitted almost every bogey-man in their stable (George Zucco, Lionel Atwill, Henry Daniell, etc.) his chance at the role, so that each film had its new Moriarty. A final word on the Wontners: many underwent the American baptism common to British imports of the thirties, so that "The Valley of Fear" (with its fine "American" flashbacks) sometimes turns up as "The Triumph of Sherlock Holmes" and "The Silver Blaze" as "Murder at the Baskervilles" - curiously, for it had nothing to do with the Hound.

Wontner was not the only Holmes to grace the British screen during the early thirties. In a happy display of enthusiasm two major English studios fashioned further Holmeses; Raymond Massey in "The Speckled Band" ('31) and Robert Rendel in "The Hound of the Baskervilles" ('32). Julia Stoner's dying scream opened the first-named film, which featured Athole Steward as Watson and Lyn Harding (Wontner's Moriarty) as Dr. Roylott, a role he created on the London stage in the successful play from which this film, also well-received, was largely taken. The second production marked the third appearance of the Baskerville Hound on the screen (previous unleashings: 1915, 1922); and the Edgar Wallace script promised fast paced thrills; it received, however, uniformly bad reviews. The youngish Mr. Rendel's Holmes was, to quote Variety (April 19th) "far from the prepossessing figure of fiction"; the hound seemed "the best actor in the lot," and even he "bounded over rocks and walls like a big good-natured mongrel rather than a ferocious man-eater." Fred Lloyd brought little color to the role of Watson.

The American film studios, while not as prolific as their British counterparts, far from neglected Holmes during the early thirties: 20th Century Fox released to Holmes fans in a single year, 1933. "A Study in Scarlet," the first, starred, curiously, a somewhat stout Reginald Owen with Warburton Gamble as Watson. The film has nothing to do with the story, and is sometimes titled "The Scarlet Ring"; it concerns the mysterious deaths of seven men who, years previously, had collaborated in the theft of a priceless Chinese jewel. The villainess is Anna May Wong, symbolizing Oriental mystery in the best Wallace-Rohmer tradition. Its mood is captured by this Herald Tribune (June 1) review: "The final scene at the lonely seashore villa is packed with thrills. For while Holmes and his detectives await in the foggy garden, one sees hidden panels moving, shadows across the wall, a girl's scream is heard and a dagger is raised over a shuddering form..." In the second Fox film, "Sherlock Holmes", Clive Brook has his second try at the role (the first being the '29 "Return") with, strangely but more seemingly, Reginald Owen reduced to Watson. The picture opens with Moriarty (Ernest Torrence) being sentenced to the hangman's noose in an elaborately mounted courtroom scene; in the next moment he has escaped and is arranging to import a Chicago racketeer to apply American gangster methods to London crime. Later he has Holmes unwittingly kill a Scotland Yard man (but of course Holmes is aware of the trap and

the death is only "staged"). Still later Holmes kills Moriarty in a duel. Despite its only too evident plot deficiencies, the film was well-received - as was "Study in Scarlet" - the critics especially lauding the "English atmosphere."

Any mention of Holmes in the thirties cannot ignore two German films made during this time: "Der Mann Der Sherlick Holmes War" and "Der Hund Von Baskervilles." Starring the European matinee idol Hans Albers, they strongly reflect the continued popularity of Holmes in Germany, despite the growing political tensions between that country and England.

Also to be included is the 1936 stage play, "Holmes of Baker Street," a poorish comedy by Basil Mitchell starring Helen Chandler as Shirley Holmes, daughter of the now retired detective, who captures - with the aid of her gruff and aged father (Cyril Scott) - the sinister White X gang. In 1937 the Federal Theatre Project of the WPA presented a four act marionette "Sherlock Holmes", closely adapted from "The Speckled Band" by Ruth Fenisong and Samuel Sayer.

From 1933 until nearly the end of the thirties Hollywood steered curiously clear of the Saga; one wonders if the depression was a factor. However, late in 1938, 20th Century Fox rediscovered Holmes' box-office potential and decided to embark on a spectacular retelling of "The Hound of the Baskervilles". The studio secured two prominent British actors for the Holmes and Watson roles; Basil Rathbone, raw-boned and precise, possessed physical and emotional similarities to The Master, and Nigel Bruce had symbolized in many films the "fixed point" of the Victorian English character. (Rathbone, a Hollywood veteran, portrayed Philo Vance eight years before; Bruce had just finished his role as W. S. Gilbert in the New York stage biography, "Knights of Song") Also, 20th Century Fox hit upon a startling innovation; it would set the tale in its original time - deliberately in "period." "The Hound of the Baskervilles" surrounded Rathbone and Bruce with such competent international players as Richard Greene, Wendy Barrie, Lionel Atwill and John Carridine; it spared no expense in creating London streets and ancestral manors, moors and mires (a reputed \$93,000 was spent on artificial ground-fog). The production, more than merely costly, was faithful to its source; it was also a smash success. The studio immediately rushed its stars into a remake of the Gillette play. "The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" emerged, in the latter part of 1939, considerably altered, but received very favorable reviews. Also in "period," it featured George Zucco as Moriarty and Ida Lupino. It was the last Holmes in the films of the thirties.

When he first accepted the role of Holmes, Rathbone made a singularly significant statement. Hesitant, he declared Holmes "an institution, particularly in England. Woe betide the man whose portrayal of this beloved character deviates too sharply from the original." In 1940 Universal obtained rights to the Canon and placed Rathbone and Bruce in a prolific but much below par series of Holmes films. While again modernized and often concerned with espionage and other war-time interests, the plots were supposed to be taken from the Sagas (a stipulation of the copyright-holder); they bore little resemblance. Created in the final year of the thirties, the identification of the visual Holmes with Basil Rathbone was to oversweep the forties, re-enforced by nearly a dozen films and an extensive radio series. But this is another decade, and, because each age conceives of its realities after its own fashion, it is also another Holmes.

THE MAELSTROM

HARRY B. WARNER
423 Summit Avenue
Hagerstown, Maryland
USA

A remarkably good issue and I liked immensely the trick that you used on the cover. You can eliminate all those dirty remarks about poor composition and learned remarks about chiaroscuro in one fell swoop this way, while giving a

better preview of the issue than the contents page or a quick leafing through normally provides.....Your Old Movie Bug continues to interest me much more than it should do in theory, since I've seen virtually none of the features that you write about, and have never even viewed a movie containing many of your favorites. So far, incidentally, I've done nothing about purchasing movie equipment, but I still think the time is coming. I compromised with my inability to decide whether or not to buy movie equipment back in the winter by purchasing a Contax. I'm currently engaged in making that pay for itself, and when that job is complete, probably some time around the end of this year. I'll undoubtedly try to do something about the moving picture angle of photography.....The Dick Elsberry article brought back pleasant memories, but I'm baffled about the title. You are normally too careful to let such a misspelling slip through accidentally, but I can find no pun in this particular version of the word, nor anything in the text to explain it, I strongly doubt certain statements that Elsberry makes, such as the remark that Deems Taylor and Stokowski listened to music for three weeks in order to decide on the contents of the Fantasia score. And I'm afraid that he missed altogether the point of the Dance of the Hours sequence: it is terribly babal music which grows even sillier when people dance to it, and Disney obviously was spoofing it. On the other hand, I was sorry that Disney took the Night on Bald Mountain seriously. It has never sounded to me like really straight-faced music that was intended to be frightening. It was originally written for an opera, in which it forms an intermezzo played while the hero dozes off in a nap, and contains in that form chorus and solo parts for voice. The opera is a comic one, all its supernatural elements get natural explanations, and I think that the intermezzo was intended to be as amusing as the rest of the opera. I should mention the opera's name after all that explaining: Sorochintsky Fair, or something similar, depending on what transliteration from the Russian that you prefer.....The Night That Science - Fiction Ended kept me until about two-thirds of the way through in suspense wondering whether it was fact or fiction. That shows how much I keep up on the latest news of atomic power progress. You're going to get Canfan banned from the United States if you keep saying that there's power in the atom. You might cause Standard Oil to start a stock market panic or prevent the Pentagon from cooking up another war scare over Middle East oil fields.....It was a good idea to reprint that Jules Verne information. I hadn't realized that he had written so much and I feel the urge to try to dig up that book about slavery, and to read one of the biographical works that have been written about him. I think that it's correct to believe that poor translations have caused some of the low esteem in which Verne is held today. It is also quite possible that more recent editions have been cutting the technical and descrip-

tive sections of his novels, to save space which would make them seem more like orthodox 19th century adventure yarns than they really are.I didn't hear that Keyhoe interview on television, so I shouldn't try to give an opinion about it. But when I read of the way in which he was cut off the air for a few seconds, I immediately suspected a publicity stunt cooked up between Keyhoe and the network, and I'll keep on suspecting it unless I get definite proof to the contrary. It's just the sort of thing that a couple of press agents would dream up to get a lot of newspaper publicity for a program that wouldn't otherwise be noticed by anyone except the viewers. I think I saw another flying saucer a while back, incidentally, which would make my second sighting of a UFO.....Dr. Keller's yarn brought back pleasant memories of the days when I thought he was the greatest story-teller in the world. My standards have changed a trifle, but it's still fun to see what stylistic feats he achieves with such simple means. I don't think that he's being very accurate when he repeats that old legend about the growth of hair after the death of the body. Last time I read a learned article on the topic, the explanation was that it's an illusion caused by receding of the skin in the day or two immediately following death. And I don't think it's correct to speak of a hair as being alive; the hair is supposed to be the inanimate thing that comes out of the living hair cell.....In short, another exceptionally fine issue. I hope that 47 Saguenay has a built-in mimeograph in every closet, staples attached to all the windows, and a pulpwood forest in the backyard from which you can get an unlimited supply of mimeograph paper on a do-it-yourself basis. And may the bathroom faucet gush forth mimeograph ink.....

As a postscript to Harry's remarks about the Great Mistake as well as other readers C. M. Moorhead has graciously sent along a letter received by him from CBS pertaining to the Armstrong Circle Theatre presentation about the UFO's and Major Keyhoe. What follows is self explanatory:

C B S T E L E V I S I O N
485 Madison Avenue, New York 22, New York - Plaza 1-2345

February 3, 1958

Mr. C. M. Moorhead
Bettsville, Ohio

Dear Moorhead:

This refers to your letter of January 24 regarding the ARMSTRONG CIRCLE THEATRE'S "UFO" program which was aired on the CBS Television Network, January 22.

This program had been carefully cleared for security reasons. Therefore, it was the responsibility of this network to insure performance in accordance with the predetermined security standards. Any indication that there would be a deviation might lead to statements that neither this network nor the individuals on the program were authorized to release. As a consequence, the public interest was served by the act taken by CBS in deleting the audio in Major Keyhoe's speech at a

The Maelstrom

point where he apparently was about to deviate from the script.

Attached is a copy of a signed statement by Major Keyhoe which is self-explanatory. I am sure that you are glad to know, therefore, that this matter was handled properly. Thank you for your interest in registering your opinion.

Sincerely,

(signed)
Herbert A. Carlborg
Director of Editing

Statement by Major Donald Keyhoe, USMC (Retired)

Due to a misunderstanding on my part about rules of approval on script changes, it was necessary for Armstrong Circle Theatre and CBS to interrupt a statement I was about to make on the Armstrong Circle Theatre presentation of "UFO, The Enigma of the Skies" over CBS Television on January 22. While I mentioned it to one or two persons connected with the program, I had not discussed it with the director or producer or any representative of CBS. Certain minor ad lib changes which I made had been allowed and on that basis I had assumed that the deleted statement would not be contrary to program rules. Since then I have been told that CBS Continuity has to approve extreme departures from scripts. Therefore, the producer and director had no alternative but to order audio cut-off since they had no idea of what I was about to say. I regret the misunderstanding and wish to make it plain that this was not an attempt at censorship by CBS or Armstrong Circle Theatre.....

.....And so dear readers you can draw your own conclusions. Plus the following line from C. M. Moorhead's accompanying letter, quote - "I never took much stock in the UFO except that it was interesting reading, but this reply from CBS has rather surprised me, especially its emphasis in two places on 'security'. If there is nothing to the UFO, why all this smoke of security?".....

DONALD FRANSON
6543 Babcock Avenue
North Hollywood
California, USA

I received the latest issue of Canfan with pleasure, and thanks a lot for also including the previous issue. I was thus able to enjoy Sam Moskowitz's scholarly article on Bradbury after having heard all the arguments about it pro and con. Now I will have to get "In Search of Wonder" to complete the debate in reverse.....Your magazine in my opinion is close to the ideal fanzine. It has something to suit every taste, and each article is very thorough. I've been trying to find in fanzines something to match the articles that were once prominent in Lowndes' old pulps, touching on every aspect of science fiction. Such articles as "The Works of Jules Verne" far surpass them.....

5 MOVIE - Drama

"Crimes of Dr. Mabuse." (French - German; 1934) A mad scientist, through hypnosis, has his doctor carry out his plan of terrorism with the intention of conquering the world. Fritz Lang, who directed the film, started it in Germany, but was forced to leave the country. A print was smuggled out to him, and he completed it in France. Dialog dubbed in English. Rudolf Klein-Rogge, Thomy Bourdelle, Jim Gerald.

PETTY KUJAWA
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South Bend 14,
Indiana, USA

Note the above clipping!! That was the late late late show on Chicago TV a few weeks ago!! After so heartily enjoying the Fritz Lang article in your 15th annish I was delighted to find this popping up on our television set.....This film was, of course, "The Last Will of Dr. Mabuse" ('32). And now that I think of it it was also one of the few German films I have ever seen. Anyway I was fascinated with it. Parts showed their age greatly but then every so often was a shot that was quite startling in its artistic photography--i.e. the part at the end when the gang was about to blow up all the public utilitiesThe scene where the mob (well, 3 or 4 of them) plus one of the frowsiest blondes since Barbara Pepper (I wonder if anyone besides me remembers good old Barbara??) were trapped by the intrepid inspector in that apartment was almost slap-stick low comedy. Also was more amused than frightened by the hero and heroine trapped with the bomb in the back room.....There, to me, has always been a sort of eerie macabre ugliness in most European films of that era--can't say if it was the sets or the lighting or the usually stark make-up on the actors--this film really had it.....Liked all symbolism of the glass objects on the desk and later in the cell of that one demented ex-policeman. And a little gem was the scene of the murder that took place when all those autos were stopping for a red light--nice camera work there.....One thing that would jolt an audience of today was Lang's technique of having the voices from the next scene come blaring in before the dissolve--or vice versa--it was always tripping me up during the show. Hope we'll be getting more of these--as I said was much amazed to find it in the first place.....The latest Canfan arrived and was deeply enjoyed as it always is. I was most grateful for the article on "Fantasia". Lately in some SF Round Robin letters we have been arguing over some scenes from that film--this article has been a god send!! I can now make my point with proof to back it up--Richard Elsberry has my gratitude!!.....The Great Mistake--well--thank you for your own added comment--I'm with you!! Moorhead got a bit too hot under the collar over it and sounded just as one way and inflexible as the people he was condemning.....Now I'm not about to buck Bob Hoch--admire him greatly and haven't the IQ to do it but may I please put in my two cents worth on this "King in New York" thing??.....I may be way off base but isn't there a darn good chance that some of Chaplin's profits from a U.S. showing would be sent by him to his beloved Communist party?? THAT is why I wouldn't care to buy a ticket. My only way to strike out against what I am definitely against is the economic way --thusly I try where ever possible NOT to purchase anything that might give aid and comfort to such as Battista, the apartied (apartheid?) section of South Africa, the late Senator Joe McCarthy, Gov. Faubus,

The Maelstrom

and any of those white Citizens Councils or Klu Klux Klans of our deep south.....Bloch made some excellent points--but I'm sure I can live my life thru without seeing that film.....

While Chaplin took a large part of his fortune out of the States, he still retains a large interest in United Artists, which is the only healthy operation in the movie industry today. I must admit that Chaplin's actions certainly do lead one to believe the worst, but as yet there has not been one shred of evidence to link him financially with any Communist projects. Others that have followed his career closely have felt that Chaplin was insulted by some brash statements and being quite proud clammed right up and did not defend himself. His silence only accentuated the original statements, until now they are an assumed fact by the general public when they cannot find a logical answer. People seem to overlook the fact that Chaplin's genius kept many of them working through hard times. A little known and never publicized fact is that all his early associates who never made the grade into the sound era have been receiving a weekly wage, in some cases, for over thirty years. Miss Edna Purviance who appeared as his leading lady in many many Chaplin films related this fact to me in a letter several years ago. This same great lady passed away in Hollywood about a year ago and you can be mighty sure of who took care of things financially....."A King in New York" has been doing quite a fabulous business. During our Canadian National Exhibition the audiences worked out about 5 to 1 for the Americans. Actually I think this is Chaplin's first sign of defense since he left the States and it would have been best if Charlie had forgot to make this one. Mind you there are moments when the Charlie of yesteryear do show, but these moments are all too few. The film has been taken for what it is worth by most Canadians, and there will be some of us that won't even understand it. In fact if I was the distributor I would rather reissue some of the early films and take my chances, but this is another line so I'll drop it.....If you are interested in another German film I highly recommend "The Devil's General" with Curt Jergens. This film is in current release and deserves wide distribution. The overlap in sound when a scene change comes up is apparent in this film. I would think what you noticed in "Dr. Mabuse" was a job of poor synchronizing in the conversion of sound to English. For a reason unknown to me this same sloppiness has shown up in many dubbed films in the past. I sometimes wonder if the time element and a releasing date is responsible. For example when we made a series of films for Canadian release, we also had to make a French dub version for the Province of Quebec. In this case the film was made in Canada, French dubbing in London, England, the color printing by Tri-Art in New York and then a mad shipping dash by Air Express, thru Customs, then Censorship and if we were lucky it arrived on the exact date originally set. This could be one reason for sloppy dubbing. And the other factor, the stupid character that set the theatre play date, and didn't take into account unforeseen circumstances.....WDG

DETROIT IN 53

THE CITY OF DETROIT, MICHIGAN, IN THE YEAR 1853.

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for a fannish good time, it's

DETROIT IN 59

SUPPORT THE GROUP THAT YOU KNOW WILL PRODUCE A GOOD CONVENTION

Here are 7 good reasons why fans all over the nation are supporting Detroit:

1. Detroit fandom intends to produce a financially sound convention. Experience gained in the past ten years of convention-going has shown us the pitfalls to be avoided. We produced a conference in '54 that was very successful. Since 1948 we have attended all national conventions and most major conferences. We have gained practical experience with each passing year.

2. Detroit fans are FANS, not professionals after gain or glory.

3. Give DETROIT a chance. We have never had a World Convention. Don't send the World-Con back to the same old sites time after time. Give a different group a chance to show what it can do.

4. Detroit will WORK for a convention. Over 800 letters and fanzines were mailed before June 1st. The fight has just begun; we expect to double this before September. Our advertising will appear in over 20 fanzines with a combined circulation of over 2,000 copies. When was the last time you saw anything from our competitors?

5. Detroit has the confidence of fans and professionals. We have over 160 cards and letters on file offering to support our convention. They know we can handle a convention; THERE SHOULD BE NO DOUBT IN YOUR MIND!

6. The MSFS is no Johnny-come-lately to fandom, having been in existence for better than twelve years. Most of our founding members are still with us, and some of them have even matured--George Young, who wore the first propellor beanie at the Torcon in 1948, now has a wife, two children, and the world's largest propellor beanie. Martin Alger, who originated the term "Bem" nearly twenty years ago, has accumulated ten-year-old automobiles, thirty-year-old magazines, and 100-year-old guns; despite these handicaps he attends meetings regularly.

Of course, not all of our members are ancient. Two of them are actually below twenty-one, and one of these kids has only been in fandom for five years. Her two children make her feel much older.

7. Detroit has made plans for a convention rather than vague promises. A questionnaire based on these plans is being circulated. You can help plan your own convention-- NOT have it shoved down your throat!

We hope that the above points have convinced you that Detroit is the only logical choice. If you are still undecided just watch the various fanzines-- our material is appearing every week.

Board of Directors of the Michigan Science-Fantasy Society: Fred Prophet, Howard Devore, Roger Sims, Dean McLaughlin, Mona Rhines, Bill Rickhardt, George Young, Mary Young, Jim Broderick.

hospitality is our byword!