I had already called two Frank Merrill without getting THE Frank Merrill I was trying to locate. I was about ready to give up as I dialed a third number.

"Hello" came a strong voice over the wire.

"Is this Frank Merrill?" I asked, "The Frank Merrill who starred in the Tarzan films several years ago?"

"This is he" was the reply.

I explained who I was and of my desire to meet the former screen Tarzan and was invited to do so the next day.

Frank Merrill, star of many screen dramas and two Tarzan films, was instrumental in my becoming a Burroughs fan. This was many years ago. I was eight years old and standing in front of a theatre admiring a large poster of Merrill as "Tarzan". The poster captured my imagination and I was not long in requesting the price for a ticket and permission to see the show from my father. I saw as many chapters of the serial as I could and soon learned that the wonderful adventures of Tarzan appeared in the Blue Book magazine as well as on the screen. It is my opinion that Merrill was the inspiration for artist Frank Hoban's illustrations of the Tarzan stories which appeared in Blue Book.

Today Frank Merrill lives in a neat bungalow in Los Angeles with his wife Elsie. He is a specialist on tropical fish and plants. The years have been kind to Merrill. He has a tall, straight figure with powerful muscles and only a touch of grey in his dark hair. He has kept himself in excellent condition by physical training. As he grasped my hand when I entered his home I felt some of the power that was stored in his sinews and thought here indeed was the personification of "Tarzan the Mighty.

"I want to get something straight right now," he said with a smile, "I never was a professional weight-lifter or a circus strong man!"

Many of the magazines when writing of the former screen Tarzans always mention Merrill as "a circus strong man" and Life magazine, in a recent article, stated that Merrill did not last long as Tarzan. This is not true. Frank Merrill is one of the most famous and popular Tarzans of all time and one of the very few to play the ape-man in more than one film. "Tarzan the Mighty" and "Tarzan the Tiger." Merrill's films rank with Weismuller's and Elmo Lincoln's in popularity.

"Weight-lifting is just a sideline, kind of a hobby with me," said Merrill. "I held championships in rope climbing, the roman rings and parallel bars.

Merrill was awarded 58 National, Metropolitan and Southern California championships for his remarkable feats and ability on the roman rings, bars and rope climbing as well as YMCA and City Championships. Perhaps Merrill himself is the cause of his weight-lifting hobby becoming so well known, since during his personal appearances with his Tarzan films he would hold a fifty-three pound weight in each hand and lie flat upon the stage with arms outstretched and feet together, then without lifting his feet from off the floor or moving any part of his body except his outstretched arms he would do a lateral raise causing the two weights to meet in the air above his chest and then bear their weights slowly back to their original position. Merrill offered a $50 reward to anyone who could duplicate the feat and, during his tour of hundreds of cities, out of the 2400 applicants who attempted to lift the weights in the same manner as Merrill only one succeeded in accomplishing it.

A friend of his once entered Merrill's photograph in a contest which was being held in England. One day Merrill received a phone call and was surprised to learn that he had won second place as "The World's Most Per-
Frank Merrill is one of the few actors who have portrayed the ape-man to be successful on the screen in other roles. Originally from New Jersey, he traveled to California and made a name for himself around Hollywood by doubling for famous stars in the more dangerous scenes. Merrill, himself, starred in no less than 16 screen melodramas and several stage plays even before he played Tarzan. "Perils of the Jungle," "Hollywood Reporter," and "Gentleman Roughneck" were just a few of the films, and as their titles suggest, they were the Doug Fairbanks-Dick Talmadge type adventure films with Merrill doing all his own stunts. At no time in his screen career did Merrill ever use a double including in the Tarzan films.

"During the filming of "Savages of the Sea," the screen star recalled, "I developed a severe case of barbers itch and was unable to shave, so to prevent production from being held up my beard was allowed to grow." The beard was a discomfiture to Merrill and, no doubt, to his leading lady for by the time the final scene was to be filmed he had quite a healthy beaver. "Since I was portraying a seaman of the sailing-ship days the beard was in character with the role."

His refusal to use a double caused Merrill to receive many a bump and bruise and doubtless a man of less courage would have been willing for a double to take over. For instance a scene in "Tarzan the Mighty" called for Merrill to rescue his leading lady from an alligator. Merrill dove from the tree tops in true Tarzan-like fashion to engage the gator in combat armed with a prop-knife. The knife however, was the only prop as the gator was real and very much alive, not at all like the familiar prop gator that has appeared in recent films. Everything was going fine with Merrill astride the alligator and the director was dreaming of quite an exciting show, but the gator managed to work the screen Tarzan down upon its tail, wherein lies the alligator strength, and it dealt Merrill a powerful blow across the stomach, knocking the wind and senses from him. "I had gone down for the second time before they managed to haul me from the water to safety," said the former jungle man.

Another time they were taking a scene showing Tarzan riding through the jungle upon the back of Tantor, the elephant, when suddenly Tantor stampeded. This was not in the script and Merrill saved himself from possible injury by leaping to the ground just as Tantor passed under low hanging tree limbs.

Frank Merrill was the first screen Tarzan to use the vine swinging technique... a technique which Merrill himself conceived and performed. One of his most daring vine swinging stunts was to leave one vine at the height of the swing and propel himself through the air to grasp another vine fifty-five feet away. The "vines," of course, being properly disguised ropes. When MGM started making the Tarzan films they had a showing of Merrill's "Tarzan" pictures to study his method of vine swinging and rope climbing. A method which the studio adapted but since they were unable to find anyone with Merrill's ability they were forced to hire the foremost aerial trapeze performer in the world, Alfredo Cardona, to perform the swings on trapeze bars which, although spectacular, were not as convincing as Merrill's form of jungle transportation.

During the filming of "Tarzan the Tiger" Merrill was to be shown swinging through the tree carrying Jane, in the person of Natalie Kingston. With his hand on a loop and attached to it was the rope on which the swing was to be made so he could insert his hand through it and make his grasp on the rope safer and enable him to bear the extra burden of Miss Kingston's weight. Merrill gave credit to Miss Kingston's courage for volunteering to make the swing with him. "I had one hand through the loop and the other around Miss Kingston's waist to carry her at my side," he said. "As we reached the full length of the swing the loop broke and we both fell to the ground twenty feet below. Lucky for us the ground was matted to make it appear like jungle growth and saved us from any serious injury."

Another Merrill-Tarzan first was the now famous "call" of the savage ape-man... that weird cry so familiar with the movie goers in connection with the Tarzan films; and an imitation of which can be heard echoing throughout the neighborhood for weeks after a Tarzan picture has been shown, voiced by the hundreds of young Tarzan fans all over the world. Frank Merrill was the first to give voice to that cry on the screen in "Tarzan the Tiger," the first Tarzan film to use sound.

I told Mr. Merrill of producer Sol Lesser's desire to star all the screen Tarzans in a film together and asked if he would be interested in appearing in such a film. "Yes, I would be interested," said the jungle man "if they would do the thing right." Although he admits he has never read a Tarzan story or saw a Weismuller film, anyone who has met Frank Merrill or remembers his portrayal of the ape-man must confess that Merrill has certainly captured the spirit of Edgar Rice Burroughs' famous character and will go down in screen history as a truly great Tarzan for having done the thing right."

Frank Merrill was indeed, and still is, TARZAN THE MIGHTY!

TARZAN FILM LEADS YUGOSLAV BOX OFFICE

Out of darkest Hollywood comes Tarzan's call—and Belgrade listens, rept. "Tarzan's Secret Treasure," one of the first United States films to be shown in Yugoslavia in almost a decade, has been playing to standees for over a month, says the Motion Picture Export Association. The picture is the first of 25 contracted for under an agreement between Marshal Tito and Eric Johnston, president of the
FRANK MERRILL, ex-screen Tarzan, Pictured above with just a few of the many championship medals he has won.

OLD TARZAN ROLE STILL BRINGS IN FAN MAIL

Bruce Bennett says he still attributes much of his fan mail to a 1934 film, "Tarzan and the Green Goddess," filmed largely in Guatemala.

In those days Bennett was Herman Brix (his true name). Several years ago he took the professional name of Bruce Bennett, and now he is appearing in "The Big Frame," at Universal-International, and "Without Honor" at United Artists.

Incidentally, the 1934 Tarzan film is being released to European exhibitors for the first time—but with the name Bruce Bennett, not Herman Brix, in the list of cast and credits.

TARZAN IS AGING

What’s the longest series in movie history? The Tarzan films, to be sure. They have been on the nation's screens for 34 years and have grossed close to $100,000,000. Ten actors have played the role of Tarzan on the screen in this country; the best known is Johnny Weissmuller, who appeared in 12 Tarzan pictures. There have also been one stage Tarzan, 2 radio Tarzans, 2 actors who have made Tarzan recordings, and 1 Chinese Tarzan, who made a film in Shanghai before the last war.

ITINERARY OF AUSTRALIAN WRESTLER "TARZAN" WHITE includes a fortnight’s visit to New Guinea at the end of the wrestling season.

The trip is to satisfy his lifelong ambition to see some real jungle and to win a bet from Edgar Rice Burroughs, author of the Tarzan books.

White became a Tarzan fan as a boy. That’s how he got his nickname.

He suffered something of a disillusionment in a conversation with Mr. Burroughs when he visited America. Burroughs confided that he had never been in Africa.

The nearest he came to it, he explained, was when he was sent to the South-west Pacific as a war correspondent for UP.

As a man who had written millions of words so vividly about the jungle, he was thought just the man to cover the war in New Guinea.

He was held up for two weeks while in Sidney, Australia waiting for his shirts to come back from a short-staffed laundry. He was very peevish about it because all the time he was waiting the Owen Stanley Ranges fighting was taking place.

He told White the Australian laundries would hold up his trip, too, but him a box of cigars that would be the case.

Johnny Weissmuller, more vocal than he was in the Tarzan series, portrays Jungle Jim in "The Lost Tribe." The second of the new jungle series about an equatorial superman who has more perilous adventures every 30 seconds than most of us have in 30 years. He battles tigers, sharks, crooks and what-have-you, swims twice the distance of the English Channel and emerges unwinded, dashes about as heroes should rescuing maidens from danger and even manages to enlist the help of a band of gorillas when the going gets too tough for one man battling twenty. Johnny devotes himself to the backbreaking, perspiration encouraging deeds with a heartiness that adds up to an hour of celluloid thrill and lots of fun for young and old alike.

Johnny seems to be giving the Tarzan films a run for their money—for the Jungle Jim series contain more action and wild animal scenes than has been seen in a Tarzan film since "Tarzan and the Huntress." Although the name "Tarzan" on a theatre marquee is enough to draw the crowds into the theatre, the productions must also contain wild animals and plenty of action if they are going to continue to enjoy the popularity they have for the past 34 years. Two more Jungle Jim pictures have been completed, "Mark of the Gorilla" and "Captive Girl," and after a tour with his own acrobatic show Weissmuller will make "Pigmy Island."

Incidentally, when Johnny reported for work on "Captive Girl" he weighed in at 199 pounds, exactly the same as he weighed in 1927 when he swam 100 meters in 51s, a record which still stands. Contrary to reports—Johnny was not replaced in the Tar-
zan series because he had become too fat. When his contract expired with Sol Lesser, the producer of the Tarzan films, Johnny wanted a percentage of the profits included in his new contract, but he and Lesser could not come to an agreement so Tarzan swung down out of the trees and landed in Jungle Jim's boots with a five-year contract and, what he wanted, a percentage of the profits.

'HIGHER EDUCATION' TEST AIMS TO TEACH GORILLAS TO TALK

The San Diego Zoo's three baby gorillas are subjects of studies in "higher education."

Dr. Robert M. Yerkes, professor emeritus of psychology at Yale University, arrived from New Haven, Ct., if he can teach the year-old apes to talk.

Yerkes' research has included efforts to teach chimpanzees, orangutans and other apes to use their vocal cords to make symbolic sounds similar to human speaking. But this is the first time he has ever worked with baby gorillas.

The infants, brought here several months ago, are among the few in captivity anywhere in the world. Yerkes said that he plans to spend several months in his experiments.

Linguist Finally Cracks Chimpanzee Vocabulary

Dr. Stanley Raus, the general secretary of the London Society of Linguists, can talk chimpanzee; he picked up chimpanzee by listening in at the zoo. Recently he announced that he would give a public display of his knowledge as soon as he brushes up on his chimpanzees' vowels and verbs. He claims that he already knows 200 words.

When the cynics ask him what good it is to talk chimp, he reminds them that it may come in handy to know how to say "move over" to a chimpanzee deep in the jungle when the atomic war comes.

While we are on the subject of whether apes can or can not talk it might be mentioned that a few years ago Dr. Henry Carpenter, of State College, Pa., made a study of an African monkey jungle and was so impressed by the defiant chatter of a band of apes snarling down at a trespassing "foreigner" that he made a recording of it. Later, when they were quiet feeding, he played the recording — and instantly they massed for battle.

"Tarmansani gree-eh por-talan, gogo eho eho," said Ekima in an interview today.

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The article by John Harwood, "The Unwritten Stories of E.R.B.," was indeed very interesting. You might tell Mr. Harwood, however, that Burroughs did follow up several of his mysterious passages. Remember in 'The Master Mind of Mars' where Ran Tharros told Ved' Voro that he was on the verge of producing rational human beings through the action of a group of rays upon a certain chemical combination? Only a small passage that was not elaborated on or referred to again in the story, yet Burroughs followed through on this 12 years later when he wrote "The Synthetic Men of Mars."

—Tom P. Alioto

I saw "Tarzan's Magic Fountain" and for a girl who lives in the jungle, Jane doesn't show much sense when she camps near an ant hill or stays in the revine when a storm comes up. In the books, especially "Tarzan the Terrible" and "Tarzan's Quest" she shows that her knowledge of junglecraft is much better than that.

—John Harwood

ED. The late Will Rogers once said: "If the movies want to advance, all they have to do is not get new stories but do the old ones as they were written." This especially is true of the Tarzan stories.

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BULLETINS

Johnny Weissmuller, recently honored by the Associated Press nationwide poll as the outstanding swimmer of the past fifty years, and selected by the Helms Athletic Foundation for its Hall of Fame trophy, will be the star in a screen version of his life story which is being prepared by Columbia Studios. Supporting Johnny will be the best swimmers in the land — including Larry (Buster) Crabbe and Eleanor Holm.

After wrapping himself around a tree on the Sun Valley ski slopes, Lex Barker ruefully quipped: "I'm always swinging on trees but I never expected one to swing on me."

Lex is going to England and Africa for the next Tarzan movie which will be filmed in Technicolor.

"Bomba On Panther Island," the second of the new series starring Johnny (Roy) Sheffield, has been released. Roy Rockwood, author of the stories, is better known as Edward Stratemeyer, creator of the Rover Boys.

"Tarzan and the Talking Gorillas," a new record album, has been released by TARZAN RECORDS, Hollywood, California. The title of the new Little Book, Whitman Pub., Co., is "Tarzan and the Journey of Terror."

Grosset & Dunlap have added two new titles to their new $1 reprint editions. They are; "Jungle Tales of Tarzan" and "Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar. They have new and attractive jackets by Monroe.
Harold R. Foster, creator of the weekly color page entitled "Prince Valiant—In the days of King Arthur," is a two-fisted artist who would rather fish and hunt, but finds time to draw an exciting "illustrated romance" about a young prince, the son of an exiled European king, who becomes a devoted follower of King Arthur.

For sheer artistry, "Prince Valiant" is one of the most consistently beautifully drawn features of its kind now appearing in newspapers. The page represents the work of an artist who believes there is just as much a field for beauty in art in the comic section as anywhere else.

There is much about Hal Foster that is wholesome and colorful. In fact, his early career in Canada would make an ideal scenario for a "wild west" movie thriller.

Skipping for a moment his early beginnings in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and his experience as a guide and gold prospector in western Canada—only to mention his brief career as a professional boxer—we find a young artist of average ability dissatisfied with his work in 1920, as compared with a year previous. He decided to leave Winnipeg and go to Chicago to learn more about art. He studied his chosen field at the Art Institute and the National Academy of Fine Art. While improving his artistic ability, he did commercial illustrating to provide a living for his wife and two sons.

In 1928 he was hired to do the first of the daily Tarzan series, "Tarzan of the Apes," which was first released on January 7, 1929. Later he was employed to do the weekly Tarzan adventure page. Because Hal Foster was able to do such outstanding art work on the Tarzan series, he received fan mail, complimenting him on his artistry. He found that readers of the comic sections were interested in attractive illustrations of their favorite comics or adventure pages. It was then that he conceived the idea of becoming the "D. W. Griffith of the comics." His ambition is to tell in pictures and script compelling stories of adventure and romance.

At this point in his career, the "Duck Rogers" and "Flash Gordon" type of adventure story was capturing the public's fancy. Mr. Foster went in the opposite direction and hit upon the idea of an historical story dealing with heroic legends of the period when knighthood was in flower.

He drew his first "Prince Valiant" page in 1934, but soon discovered that he was not sufficiently grounded in the history of that period. He junked the page and spent the next two years in studying the history of knighthood, costumes, arms, and manner of living. He haunted libraries for background material and spent many hours at the Field Museum in Chicago. He and his family moved to Topeka, Kansas in 1936, when he began to create "Prince Valiant" as a weekly feature.

Mr. Foster admits the beautiful princesses in his story may not be as glamorous as some of the heroines in other adventure strips. "What I sometimes lack in drawing I make up with a stolen phrase," he confided, in referring to the script that accompanies the illustrations.

A firm believer in good illustration as the foundation for a successful "comic" strip or page, Mr. Foster contends that comics, or "illustrated romances" as he terms his work, have a definite place in modern life. "People, today, are bombarded with printed matter of all kinds," he said, "and we have developed a sales resistance to all printed material and it is a great relief to look at a picture." It is this condition that has brought about the success of tabloid newspapers and picture magazines, he stated.

Hal Foster is an out-of-doors-man who looks forward to his periodical fishing and hunting trips with keen delight. "My work is a means to an end," he explained. "I go on the theory that we should get as much enjoyment as we can in this little toddle from the cradle to the grave."

Because of family financial difficulties, Foster left school at the age of 15. He had no further formal education, but his thirst for education has never been satisfied. He recalls that when he left school, his relatives said: "Poor Harold, he won't
Waddies, a strange tribe who masquerade in jungle growth and use poisonous blow guns to attack an enemy. The wily jungle lord beats them at their own game, and presently they cross an improvised bridge over a chasm. It is here Neil sprains his ankle. With Cheta he follows behind Tarzan and the safari.

The slave girls are brought to Zonia where the strange disease has originated. Kurd Hatfield plays the part of the Prince, whose father has just expired. As the slave girls are brought by Sengo, it is then the High Priest announces that they should pray for deliverance. He states the girls should be returned to their homes, and adds that the Prince's first-born has just been stricken. Sengo's ambition is realized, for he has the High Priest sentenced to death and he is to be the new High Priest.

Lola proves to be a wild cat and Sengo orders her whipped. Afterwards, Lola stabs him in the arm, and with Jane escapes to the queen's tomb. Sengo knows they are there and he orders them sealed in the crypt. The next morning Jane observes an opening at the top. She climbs up and through the opening observes Tarzan's party arriving. She calls to her mate and he hears just before the opening is sealed.

With the quickness of Ara the lightning he evades the guards that surround him and there ensues lively dancing for a while, but he ends up trapped in the queen's tomb. He releases Jane and Lola from the crypt, then calls to Tantor the elephant to batter down a wall of the tomb. Tarzan escapes only to run into Sengo, the new High Priest. Another lively fray ensues with Tarzan hurling Sengo into the lion's pit.

Meanwhile, the serum that had been lost by one of Tarzan's bearers, is found by Neil and Cheta, and they return it to Zonia, being just in time to save the new king's first born son from death.

Just at a point when things look dark for Tarzan as he battles with the Lionlans, the new king announces that hostilities cease, for Tarzan and his friends have proved saviors of his people.

* * * * * *

In this film Lex Barker, as the new Tarzan, seems like a human dynamo, moving with the speed and agility as Tarzan should act.

Announcement

Due to the high cost of the next issue of the Burroughs Bulletin, its distribution will be limited. Whether or not your name is on the BE mailing list, you positively must send a request for the next issue in order to receive it. This will be the large memorial issue. A post card will put you on the mailing list.

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