



Sunday, 12 August 2012

Irving Fein

Who came up with the phrase "Quick as a flashlight"?

If you said Samuel Goldwyn, you'd be wrong. The answer is Samuel Goldwyn's assistant publicity man in the 1940s, Irving Fein. Fein admits he made up Goldwynisms because it would get Goldwyn's name into the papers, not that Goldwyn really needed much help.

Fein's best-known employers didn't help getting publicity, either. They were Jack Benny and George Burns. When each of them died, Fein was the one who gave the confirmation to the media.

Fein died last Friday morning at the age of 101.

Some super-agents don't mind being in the spotlight themselves. Here's an interview with Irving Fein in the *Wisconsin State Journal*, November 3, 1963. You'll notice how Fein's still in there punching for his client; he turns it from an interview about Irving Fein into an interview about Jack Benny. But we learn about Fein, too, though it doesn't mention he was hired by CBS in March 1950 to run a west coast promotion bureau and then put in charge of radio publicity on the coast in June 1952—all while still employed by Jack's company.

A 'Beatnik' of the 1920s Comes Home

By ELIZABETH GOULD

(State Journal Staff Writer)

"Guinea pigs," the campus called them irreverently.

"They were the beatniks of their era," Irving Fein, who was of them, says with a twinkle.

They were the students of Dr. Alexander Meiklejohn's famous experimental college which existed on the University of Wisconsin campus from 1926 to 1932. One hundred twenty male students— all of them intellectually superior, most of them determined individualists—lived and worked together in their own dormitory, studying Greek and Roman civilization the first year, American society the second, before they were absorbed into the university proper.

Set apart from the rest of the school as they were, they were regarded by many of their contemporaries as wild-eyed eccentrics.

Heads J and M Productions

There is nothing of the eccentric about Fein today. Lean and casually well-groomed, with a hearty laugh, an easy manner and a tolerant twinkle in his eye, he is the executive producer of the Jack Benny program and the president of J and M (for Jack and Mary) Productions. He now lives in Beverly Hills, Calif.

He came back to Madison last week for the first time since 1939 to visit his daughter Patricia who entered the University as a freshman this fall and is living in one of the new private dorms.

"It's like the Beverly Hilton," her father says, shaking his head. "Those kids don't need all that luxury."

His Room Shrinks

He himself paid a nostalgic visit to Adams hall to look at his old room there.

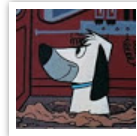
"I remembered it as about twice as large as it is," he grinned. "But the furniture's the same—same metal desk, same kind of bed.

"My friends advised me not to come back. You know Thomas Wolfe and 'You Can't Go Home Again.' But in spite of all the changes around here, a lot of it looks the same. And it still looks like a great school to me. It is a great school—one of the greatest in the county. [sic] I'm glad I sent my daughter here."

Fein, whose family home was in New York, went back there after leaving the university and got a job with Warner Bros, doing advertising and publicity. After being transferred to California, he worked for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and later for Columbia Pictures.

In 1947 he and Jack Benny founded a company which was sold to the Columbia Broadcasting System, and Fein became vice president of CBS in New York, in charge of advertising and promotion [in 1955].

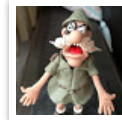
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Peter Gray's Comics and Art



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Knox...and families of these comic artists can see these gems... - made with fimo clay I had ago and its not very easy to do...
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Fernando Liera Blog Cartoons



Vehicle Verification Centers of Mexico City will reopen in August with COVID

safety measures. - ©2020 fernandolieracartoons.com
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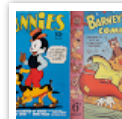
Movies with Michael



Cowboy Church #67 - Hello my friends and welcome back for another

service of cowboy church. Today's musical selection begins with Gene Autry singing "Dear Hearts and Gentle Pe...
8 hours ago

Termite Terrace headlines



Question for All You Cartoon Collectors! - OK so I've been doing some

looking around. Bosko apparently had a comic book and I'm wondering if any of you know of

The J and M Production Co. came into existence in 1956 and, besides the Benny show, has produced "Checkmate," the Marge and Gower Champion show, the Gisele MacKenzie show, and Wayne and Shuster's "Holiday Lodge."

The famous comedian who has built much of the humor of his programs around jokes about his own penuriousness, emerges as a warm, generous, and intensely loyal person, as Fein talks of him.

"A lot of people—and not just in the entertainment world—once they've made money, are inclined to forget their old friends. But not Jack. And a lot of stars, at the end of the season, will fire the whole crew of writers and start fresh next year. Not Benny. Two of his writers have been with him for 20 years, and the other two for 14 or 15.

They're still the new writers.

Raised \$3½ Million

"And did you know he's raised almost 3 ½ million dollars for charity as soloist with the big symphonies—most of it for their pension funds? He loves doing it. Of course, he's no Heifetz, but he's a pretty able musician, for all his clowning, and when Isaac Stern wants to raise some money, he calls on Jack. They charge \$100 a ticket, and that includes an invitation to a party for Jack afterward, so everyone has a chance to meet him."

Hartford, Conn., Fein said, was raising money for a new music school and was offered a \$400,000 contribution by the president of the Fuller Brush Co., on condition that the city could match that amount. A single concert, with Benny as soloist, raised \$438,000 in one night.

Concert in Milwaukee

Fein left Madison Tuesday to join Benny in in Pittsburgh, where he was to play a concert this week. Then come concerts in Minneapolis and Milwaukee, which will be the end of the concert appearances with the big city symphonies, although there are at least 500 requests from smaller communities.

"We'll do the Milwaukee concert Nov. 10," Fein said, "and we'll be out late at the party afterward, then up at 6:30 to catch a plane for Hollywood, and we'll rehearse that afternoon for a show that's on the next week. That Benny's remarkable. He'll be XX in February, but he acts and work like a 39-year-old fellow.

A sparkle came into the Fein eyes, as he thought of that next Sunday date in Milwaukee.

"Makes it kind of convenient," he laughed. "With Homecoming Nov. 9 (Saturday) in Madison."

After all, a man who has a daughter here at one of the greatest schools in the country should get back to visit when he can. Especially since he's proved to his own satisfaction that you can go home again.

Of Jack's wife, Mary Livingstone, Fein told the Archive of American Television: "she was a nice lady." The admiration wasn't mutual. Livingstone and her brother Hickey Marks were livid to learn a few weeks after signing a deal to write Jack's biography that Fein had already done the same thing. They refused to mention Fein in their book, despite the fact he had been Jack's personal manager for almost three decades and began working for him in 1947. And the actor who said "Yeeeeeeeees?" on Jack's show said "No" when it came liking Fein. Frank Nelson felt Fein wasn't quite honest in his version of the Benny biography and accused the J & M boss of shaving his paycheck to save money.

However, you can hear Fein's thoughts for yourself. The aforementioned Academy interview can be found [HERE](#). One click and you're there as quick as a flashlight.

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:19](#)



Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

1 comment:



J Lee 12 August 2012 at 08:20

The most successful agents -- business or public relations -- tend to have a myopic focus on their clients and their own well-being. And Fein having become Jack's agent at the ripe old age of 36, and at a time where Benny wasn't exactly struggling for fame or publicity, indicates someone who was particularly aggressive, so it's not a big shock he rubbed more than a few people the wrong way.

The CBS-MCA deal in 1948 which Fein was a part of did change the dynamics of how shows were sold to networks by setting up stars like Benny to be the owners of their own programs, and not just a contract employee of the sponsor. If nothing else, it also changed the dynamic of the first 30 years of television, making CBS the dominant network, where it had played second fiddle to NBC during radio's 20 years of supremacy.

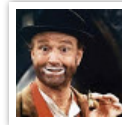
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additional covers you could share! ...

17 hours ago

Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog



Born on July 18, 1913 - Red Skelton - *Today's post commences

with the Guzzler's Gin routine ...

1 day ago

News From ME

Sorry... - As far as I know, I do not have any diseases. I just have too much to deal with right now so I won't be blogging much if at all. I'm postponing all the web...

2 days ago

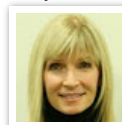
Cartoon Research

In His Own Words: H.T. Kalmus on Disney in Technicolor - Suspended Animation #276 Many references may be found regarding two-strip Technicolor. I have been guilty of discussing Walter Lantz's King of Jazz (1930)...

2 days ago

AFRTS Archive

Mary Turner 1985 - Mary Turner today Mary Turner really rocked the house.



Normally when any of the jocks got a reaction, it'd be split.

The ones that were really liked wou...

4 days ago

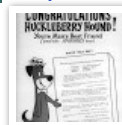
The World of Knight



TONIGHT, 11:54 PM. - COPYRIGHT 2020 BY MILTON KNIGHT

4 days ago

Yowp



Hanna-Barbera Birthday Did-You-Knows - 63 years ago today, some


forms were signed by George Sidney, Bill Hanna and Joe Barbera creating what eventually became the biggest TV cartoon operation i...

1 week ago

Supervised By Fred Avery: Tex Avery's Warner Brothers Cartoons

Wabbit Twouble: A Small Addendum to An Outstanding Podcast -

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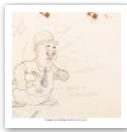
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Original animation drawing from Wabbit Twouble with color notations

for the ink and paint department. Release date: 12/20/41 Availability: Looney Tunes Gol...
3 weeks ago

Mark Kausler's CatBlog
The Lady and the Tiger - From the Cathy Hill Archive of Unpublished Comics comes "The Lady and the Tiger". This story was drawn before Cathy started the "Mad Raccoons" series. U...
4 weeks ago

What About Thad?
Cartoon Logic Podcast - And yet another distraction from this brick and mortar blog... I've entered the world of podcasting with renowned animation director and historian Bob Jaques...
10 months ago

 **Likely Looney, Mostly Merrie**
That's all, folks! - My posts have gotten thinner over the years. I'm aware of that. I've been hopeful for a long time, that I can remain active with blogging and sharing furth...
1 year ago

 **Dr. Grob's Animation Review**
The Flying Man - 'The Flying Man' is a very short absurdist film in which a man drops his coat to take a swim in mid air. Another man with a dog drops by, tries the same th...
2 days ago

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