



Sunday, 7 April 2013

Leaving Behind Radio

On May 22, 1955, Jack Benny signed off his radio show with "see you in the fall." But he didn't, at least on radio. It was Benny's final broadcast on the old medium.

People have wondered if Jack knew at the time it was his last radio show. I suspect not. The *New York Times*' Val Adams wrote the following story on April 25, 1955.

The American Tobacco Company, Jack Benny's radio sponsor for eleven years, will drop the comedian's radio show and continue his television program next fall.

It was learned yesterday that the company's option to renew the comedian's radio series had expired last Tuesday. The Columbia Broadcasting System, which has Mr. Benny under contract, immediately gave an option to another advertiser, whose option period reportedly expires today. The identity of the company was not revealed.

Whatever the outcome of network negotiations, CBS radio will continue Mr. Benny's program next season in the usual time period, 7 to 7:30 P. M. on Sundays. The program goes off for the summer after May 22.

Mr. Benny, who is visiting here, told yesterday of new plans for his radio series next fall. He said he might do "just a few new shows" and use repeat performances in other weeks.

The repeats, Mr. Benny said, would be selected from recordings of his broadcasts over the years. He added that they might presented under the title of "Best of Benny." This plan is an extension of the comedian's current radio pattern. Out of thirty-nine shows this season, twenty-six will be, new and thirteen repeats of former broadcasts.

As for his television schedule next season, Mr. Benny said: "It looks very much like my program will be seen on alternate Sundays from 7:30 to 8 P. M., the same as now. I'll do twenty shows during the season and about twelve will be live and eight on film. I have found this to be a very easy schedule and we have had a wonderful rating."

Mr. Benny's television program alternates on CBS with Ann Southern's [sic] "Private Secretary." Repeats of the latter show will fill the time period every Sunday during the summer.

No sooner did the last Benny radio broadcast air than CBS announced Jack's plans for television for the fall season. There would be more Benny on TV. Besides his bi-weekly show, the network proclaimed he would host six "Shower of Stars" broadcasts, and star in a play in one of them. All that and a radio workload would have been a bit much.

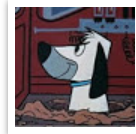
Finally, it was announced in August the radio show was finished.

Jack Benny to Quit Radio Show

HOLLYWOOD, Aug. 20 (AP)—After 23½ years on the air, comedian Jack Benny is quitting the weekly grind of live radio to concentrate on television. There is a possibility, he said yesterday, that the best of his old radio shows will be repeated on the air by recording this fall. He said it's a question of CBS reaching agreement with a sponsor on price. Benny will appear in a filmed television show every other week, starting in the fall. There will be in addition, he said, "I don't know how many" one-hour TV shows in which he'll either play parts in plays or be master of ceremonies for revues. His Sunday evening radio time will be given over next season to a 55-minute show starring Edgar Bergen, CBS announced.



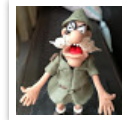
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Vehicle Verification Centers of Mexico City will reopen in August with COVID

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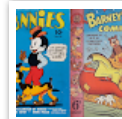
Movies with Michael



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..."
7 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

But the "Best of Benny" didn't air on CBS that fall. At 7 p.m. on Sundays, Larry LeSueur read a five-minute newscast (CBS had decided to get into the top-of-the-hour news business), followed by 55 minutes of Charlie McCarthy, Mortimer Snerd and their human straight man. Syndicated columnist Hal Humphrey laid the venerable radio show to rest.

Jack Benny's Show on Radio Dies Quietly

By HAL HUMPHREY

HOLLYWOOD, Oct. 25—People keep telling me that radio isn't dead but I think it's pertinent to mention that part of it died recently, and without even an obituary being written about the demise.

I'm referring to the late "Jack Benny Show" on CBS radio. It was born on "another network" (NBC) in 1932, and after 23 years it succumbed to a malady known as TV. The radio industry, of course, is trying to pretend it didn't happen.

Jack Benny knows it, though, and so do millions of radio listeners who tuned in early this month and found that Jack was no longer around on Sunday night.

None of his fans feel worse about it than Jack himself. Radio was the medium which made him one of the foremost comedy institutions in America, and after 23 years one doesn't kiss off an old friend without a twinge of sentiment and maybe a little heartbreak.

FIRST IN 1932

Jack first stepped before a radio microphone as a guest of Ed Sullivan early in 1932. He said, "Hello, folks! This is Jack Benny. Now there will be a slight pause for everyone to say 'Who cares?'"

After a few jokes in the inimitable Benny manner, it developed that quite a few people cared, including a soft drink manufacturer who auditioned the comedian and signed him to a contract a few weeks later. From then until now Jack never missed a season on radio and became identified at various times with many major product—breakfast foods, cars, tires, desserts and cigarets.

MARY STAYS ON

Jack brought several people along the road to fame with his radio show. Bandleader George Olson and Ethel Shutta were the first. A gal by the name of Mary Livingstone, who happened to be Jack's wife, played the part of a fan from Plainfield, N.J., on an early show. The response from listeners was so big, Jack brought her back and kept her.

Ted Weems, Frank Black, Don Bestor, Johnny Green and Phil Harris became some of the best known bandleaders in the country by being associated with the Benny show.

In 1936 Jack moved his show to Hollywood. A sketch on the first program from here had the entire cast on the train where Jack used a fellow by the name of Rochester (Eddie Anderson) to play a Pullman porter. He's been with Jack ever since.

The Benny radio show made tenor singers respectable and popular again with such names as Frank Parker, Kenny Baker, Dennis Day and Larry Stevens. And, because of Jack, who can forget Schlepperman (Sam Hearn) and Mr. Kitzel (Artie Auerback)?

ALWAYS THE STAR

But the star of the show always was Jack, the big but likeable boob who never passed 39, tighter than the hinges on his vault, and the butt of most of the jokes.

Although the 61-year-old comedian had too many TV commitments this season to do radio, he had hoped that CBS and his current sponsor would rebroadcast a series of his old shows from the tape recording—a sort of "Best of Benny" on radio.

Despite Jack's willingness to take practically nothing for these repeats himself, CBS Chief William Paley and the sponsor still weren't willing to pick up the tab on a residual fee for the rest of the cast.

So as a result the top-rated show on radio is no more, Bill Paley and his colleagues keep insisting that radio is not dead yet they just attended a funeral where they were the pallbearers.

Copyright, 1955, Mirror Enterprises Co.

A "Best of Benny" finally did air the following season, starting Sunday night, October 28th at seven (Larry LeSueur got the hour off), sponsored by State Farm Insurance. It lasted through June 22, 1958 and was replaced by "Frontier Gentleman," a dramatic shows surrounded on the networks by music and news—which turned out to be radio's future.

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:52](#)



Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

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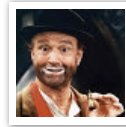


[J Lee](#) 7 April 2013 at 16:05

additional covers you could share! ...

16 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

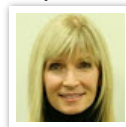
[Cartoon Research](#)

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

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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

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[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 -

Listening to the April 1955 Jack Benny radio episode posted on Kallman's Alley last week featuring Joseph Kearns as Ed the vault guard, it's clear the radio show wasn't simply an afterthought to television even in the final weeks of its final season.

In fact, for the 1954-55 season, there really were *three* different Jack Benny Programs -- the radio show, the live TV show (basically the radio show only dressed-up like a TV skit/variety show) and the filmed TV episodes, which took advantage of the medium to do things the live show didn't have the technical capabilities to pull off and which the radio show was unable to do as effectively visually (working with George Burns' McCadden Productions probably helped here -- McCadden would morph into Filmways in the 1960s, and were the leader in incongruous visual sight gags; even in 1954, the crew and Jack's writers were pulling off gags that justified using film for a limited number of episodes). Going in three different directions at once may explain why the Benny shows had six credited writers during the '54-'55 season.

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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

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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...
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- ▶ [2020](#) (216)
- ▶ [2019](#) (376)
- ▶ [2018](#) (379)
- ▶ [2017](#) (380)
- ▶ [2016](#) (396)
- ▶ [2015](#) (389)
- ▶ [2014](#) (390)
- ▼ [2013](#) (388)
 - ▶ [December](#) (31)
 - ▶ [November](#) (31)
 - ▶ [October](#) (34)
 - ▶ [September](#) (31)
 - ▶ [August](#) (33)

- [July \(33\)](#)
- [June \(34\)](#)
- [May \(33\)](#)
- ▼ [April \(30\)](#)
 - [Whoa, Camel](#)
 - [Smiling Exit](#)
 - [Before Jack Benny Sold
Canada Dry](#)
 - [Cartoonland 1929:
Mickey and Bonzo](#)
 - [Slap Happy Boo](#)
 - [Don't Lose Your Head](#)
 - [Quiet Man Gale Gordon](#)
 - [Pun of the Puny Express](#)
 - [Goldimouse Hammer
Bash](#)
 - [Frank Fontaine Became
Crazy](#)
 - [The Lost Cartoons of
MGM](#)
 - [Sally in Hollywoodland](#)
 - [Mysto the Magician
Dance](#)
 - [Korman's Clippings](#)
 - [A Few Dover Boys
Backgrounds](#)
 - [The Two Looks of Andy
Panda](#)
 - [Someone Had to Take on
Lucy](#)
 - [Walt, About Your Studio...](#)
 - [Ring-Em White](#)
 - [Casanova Cat and
Mouse](#)
 - [Whoopee For Agarn](#)
 - [Stop and Go Wolf](#)
 - [Croon Crazy](#)
 - [Leaving Behind Radio](#)
 - [Oscar-Winning Walt](#)
 - [Cuckoo Cat](#)
 - [The Horse's Mouth](#)
 - [Second Banana is Just
Fine](#)
 - [Slap Goes the Weasel](#)
 - [The Best of Tom and
Jerry](#)
- [March \(36\)](#)
- [February \(29\)](#)
- [January \(33\)](#)
- [2012 \(397\)](#)
- [2011 \(106\)](#)

Labels

[Aline Mosby](#) (17)

[Art Davis](#) (33)

[Bad Luck Blackie](#) (9)

[Bob and Ray](#) (10)

[Bob Clampett](#) (82)

[Bob McKimson](#) (59)

[Bob Thomas](#) (53)

[Chuck Jones](#) (142)

[Columbia](#) (33)

[Counterfeit Cat](#) (8)

[Cynthia Lowry](#) (26)

[Dick Thomas](#) (14)

[Don Patterson](#) (17)

[Earl Wilson](#) (6)

[Ersine Johnson](#) (37)

[Felix the Cat](#) (27)

[Film Daily](#) (50)

[Fleischer](#) (154)

[Frank Tashlin](#) (24)

[Fred Allen](#) (43)

[Fred Brunish](#) (11)

[Friz Freleng](#) (137)

[Gene Deitch](#) (18)

[George Pal](#) (10)

[Grant Simmons](#) (4)

[Hanna and Barbera unit](#) (99)

[Hanna-Barbera](#) (2)

[Harman-Ising](#) (61)

[Henry Morgan](#) (13)

[Irv Spence](#) (8)

[Jack Benny](#) (454)

[Jay Ward](#) (30)

[Jimmy Durante](#) (17)

[John Crosby](#) (84)

[John Sutherland](#) (28)

[Johnny Johnson](#) (27)

[Kenny Baker](#) (6)

[King-Size Canary](#) (8)

[Laugh-In](#) (11)

[Legend of Rockabye Point](#) (6)

[Little Rural Riding Hood](#) (7)

[Magical Maestro](#) (9)

[Maurice Noble](#) (12)

[Mel-O-Toons](#) (4)

[MGM](#) (553)

[Norm McCabe](#) (5)

[Pat Matthews](#) (10)

[Paul Julian](#) (13)

[Paul Terry](#) (2)

[Sara Berner](#) (5)

[Screwy Squirrel](#) (34)

[Spider-Man](#) (1)

- [Terrytoons](#) (84)
- [Tex Avery](#) (468)
- [Tom and Jerry Human](#) (29)
- [Tralfaz Sunday Theatre](#) (17)
- [Ub Iwerks](#) (80)
- [UPA](#) (57)
- [Van Beuren](#) (94)
- [Vernon Scott](#) (42)
- [Virginia MacPherson](#) (14)
- [Walt Disney](#) (145)
- [Walter Lantz](#) (241)
- [Warner Bros.](#) (586)
- [Who Killed Who](#) (10)

