



Sunday, 1 December 2013

What's on Your Head

What was the first running gag on the Jack Benny show? The broken-down Maxwell? Jack being 39 years old? His underground vault? No, not any of those.

It was "hair."

The routine involved Jack saying "Hair. Hair! What's on your head?" and one of the stooges coming back with a wisecrack. It lasted from mid-1934 through mid-1935 before falling out of favour. However, hair remained an important part of the Benny comedy arsenal. Better make that "lack of it." For years, the Benny radio show included variations on the "Jack's toupee" gag which became so familiar, the word "toupee" didn't have to be uttered after a while; the audience knew exactly what was being talked about (and it was funnier that way).

Jack had real hair until the day he died, though it was, um, "enhanced," shall we say, for some of his movies. Regardless, he considered it a source of comedy, and not only on his radio show. Witness this column supposedly written by him that appeared in newspapers on May 18, 1935. The funny thing is I can picture him on stage doing this as a monologue.

The picture accompanying this post accompanied the column. Scarbo drew the caricatures. It seems to me we briefly talked about him in the early days of the blog.

By the way, the Benny show was still based out of New York when this 1935 column was written, but he was in Hollywood making, I think, "It's in the Air," released that October.

CLOSE-UP and COMEDY

By DAN THOMAS and GEORGE SCARBO

That bright new star you see over the Hollywood horizon is Jack Benny, the comedian, who has wowed them on Broadway for many years and now threatens to throw movie fans off their seats. To introduce him to you, it would be a good idea to have him tell you about himself. And so here he is, Jack Benny, "guest conductor" of the daily column of Hollywood News and Gossip.

BY JACK BENNY

After being on the air for a while, an actor, in my opinion, has to learn the other branches of show business all over again. For instance, when I was with Earl Carroll's Vanities or playing in the music halls (vaudeville to you—and me, too, for that matter). I would come to the theater at least an hour ahead of time and put on a nice grease paint makeup and a freshly pressed suit of clothes, and make myself generally presentable for the eye of the public.

But radio acting does not require this. On the radio you play to the ear and imagination, and most radio actors take advantage of this situation, and I don't mean by not washing their ears.

We let our appearance run down and our heels with them; we start to live a free and easy life, paying no attention to the top button of our shirt, or our cravat or maybe our waistcoat, and we make the barber wait till the second or third day to shave us.

Ah, it's the life, folks, but here's where the trouble comes in.

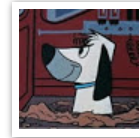
"What's on Your Head?"

You get an offer to make a picture. That's where the trouble starts. First you find that you are 10 pounds overweight and you start dieting. (You can't fool a closeup or your tailor.)

Then for the first time you find that you haven't as much hair as you used to have. Radio comedians get rid of hair quicker than sailors spend their pay checks.

In my case, I share my hair losses with my writer, Harry W. Conn. We both worry. He has been with me for three years and we have a standing bet of \$100—the first one who gets bald wins. So far, I'm three up on him. I haven't lost much hair, but anyway, it's hair that will never come back, and to a screen star each hair counts,

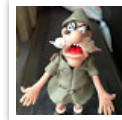
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[Knox...and families of these comic artists can see these gems...](#) - made with fimo clay I had ago and its not very easy to do...
2 hours ago

Fernando Liera Blog Cartoons



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

[safety measures.](#) - ©2020 fernandollera.com
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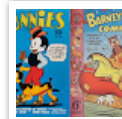
Movies with Michael



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..."
6 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

since a high forehead is an intellectual asset an actor can't afford.

Has Two Worries

I have also noticed in my screen test, which I saw yesterday, that I have a few wrinkles in my brow. I don't know whether to credit that to radio or golf. Both worry me, so perhaps they are combination radio and golf wrinkles—you know, the birdies I didn't get in golf, and the birds I did get on the radio.

Golf, by the way, is my main diversion, although it is a very expensive recreation. By this I don't mean the green and caddie fees. What I mean is the little wagering that goes on in the foursomes I have been playing with.

When I shoot a 90 my playmates shoot an 80; when I shoot an 84 they shoot 75.

They don't play any harder than they have to. They always give me a half stroke a hole to make me feel that I'm getting something, and I am, but I have a tender neck and I can't take it always.

They are all nice boys, but they have been cutting production costs so much I'm afraid—just afraid no accusations mind you—that they have been doing the same with their golf scores. The trouble is they don't cut mine, too.

Let's See the Picture

But, getting back to the picture business, I'm glad I'm in Hollywood to make a picture. I would be glad to be in Hollywood with out making a picture, but— who am I to argue?

After all what's Gable got that I haven't — no, I'm picking the wrong person. What's Montgomery got that I — ? No, I'd better leave him out of this, too.

But what's—? I think I'd better wait and see how the picture turns out.

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:43](#)



Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

1 comment:



bgrauman 1 December 2013 at 15:41

Would you like to bet that Harry Conn had a hand in writing this column, too?

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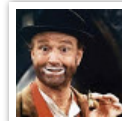
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additional covers you could share! ...

15 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...

1 day ago

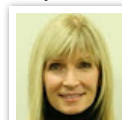
[Cartoon Research](#)

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

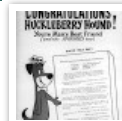
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TONIGHT, 11:54 PM. - COPYRIGHT 2020 BY MILTON KNIGHT

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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...

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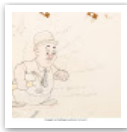
Wabbit Twouble: A Small Addendum to An Outstanding Podcast -

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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

Blog Archive

- ▶ 2020 (216)
- ▶ 2019 (376)
- ▶ 2018 (379)
- ▶ 2017 (380)
- ▶ 2016 (396)
- ▶ 2015 (389)
- ▶ 2014 (390)
- ▼ 2013 (388)
 - ▼ December (31)
 - Montage of the Match Girl
 - Double Your Stereotypes
 - Radio's Bottle Beater
 - They Talk For Cartoons

[Shearing Cattle](#)

[Gift Wrapped
Backgrounds](#)

[Christmas Comics of 100
Years Ago](#)

[Reflections of Christmas
Eve](#)

[The Reversible Wreath](#)

[Christmas Party-Pooper
Benny](#)

[Timberrrrr Santa](#)

[Arnold Stang](#)

[Consumer Propaganda
the Cartoon Way](#)

[Cartoons of 1938, Part 3](#)

[Fractured, Not Tangled](#)

[Hawley Says Drink It!](#)

[Mary on Jack](#)

[Music in the Animated
Cartoon](#)

[Spinning Woody](#)

[The Skeleton Violin](#)

[He's Worth \\$1,400 a
Word](#)

[Familiar Ending, Isn't it?](#)

[Today's Merrie Melodies
Hidden Staff
Reference](#)

[The Brief Tenor](#)

[Snow White on the Move](#)

[Milo in a Bottle](#)

[Next Event, Baseball](#)

[Making Fun of Radio](#)

[Kitten Smears](#)

[Smokey and the Boy
Backgrounds](#)

[What's on Your Head](#)

- [November](#) (31)
- [October](#) (34)
- [September](#) (31)
- [August](#) (33)
- [July](#) (33)
- [June](#) (34)
- [May](#) (33)
- [April](#) (30)
- [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)

[Erskine 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)

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