

Sunday, 21 September 2014

Rangoon Wilson

Publicity agents made up wild stories. Stars invented their own past. Who was to know otherwise?

Anyone remotely familiar with the Jack Benny show can name his jolly long-time announcer. And fans are pretty much aware that Don Wilson was raised in Denver, Colorado, that he worked in radio there and a singing career took him to the San Francisco Bay area, thence to Los Angeles. But that isn't what's contained in one amazing biography published by the *New York Sun* (motto: "If you see it in the *Sun*, it's true") as Wilson was starting to gain some fame.

The story was in the paper's radio and television section of January 13, 1934 (yes, there was television then). Wilson wasn't on the Benny show yet. He was an NBC staff announcer who had specialised in sports on the West Coast before moving to New York City. His biography in the *Sun* is bogus and you have to wonder if someone was playing a joke. The biography in the story for Ken Carpenter, best known as Bing Crosby's announcer on The Kraft Music Hall and other shows, is accurate, as least off the top of my head. There's no byline on the story, so I suspect it was by a *Sun* staffer rewriting an NBC publicity handout.



TWO MEN PRAISED FOR WORK AT GAME

Announcers at Rose Bowl Little Known in East.

Two men, both experts in their field but practically unknown in the East, acted as sports announcers at the Stanford-Columbia game in the Rose Bowl at Pasadena on New Year's Day, and although working under conditions as severe as observers ever encountered, thrill the nation with the accuracy and completeness of their description. Their work brought praise as fulsome as that which the press and public gave to the winning team from Morningside Heights. Yet because both announcers were Westerners few of the millions who listened to their unruffled explanation of plays knew more about them than their names. Kenneth Carpenter and Don Wilson were the pair who were assigned to the year's greatest football spectacle. Wilson was brought East for several gridiron games last fall, but Carpenter, being a member of a Los Angeles station, had limited his circle of admirers to the West Coast.

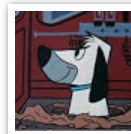
Into Radio by Accident.

Kenneth Carpenter, 33 years of age, was born in Avon, Ill., the son of a Universalist minister. After graduation from Lombard College in liberal arts he was, successively, a copy writer for a department store and advertising agency. His introduction to radio was accidental. He approached an auto agency owner, Earle C. Anthony, who also controlled several West Coast stations, with a plan for automobile advertising, and instead more of a prank than anything else was tried out as an announcer. He met every requirement and immediately concentrated his interest on radio. He is now chief announcer at KFI and specializes in the descriptions of sports besides assuming duties in the continuity and production departments. He is married and the father of one child.

Born In Rangoon.

Don Wilson, the other announcer, was born in Rangoon, India, but spent his boyhood in California and on an Oregon ranch. At 15 he ran away from home and in three months traveled 15,000 miles with a company of Chautauqua entertainers. Tiring of this life he returned home and later matriculated at the University of Redlands, where he acquired eleven letters in various sports. A season with an oil company was followed by

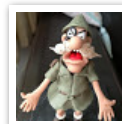
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Peter Gray's Comics and Art



Spencer Jordan's amazing work... we are hoping artists like Ian

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...

1 hour ago

Fernando Liera Blog Cartoons



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

safety measures. - ©2020 fernandollercartoons.com

3 hours ago

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..."

5 hours ago

Termite Terrace headlines



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

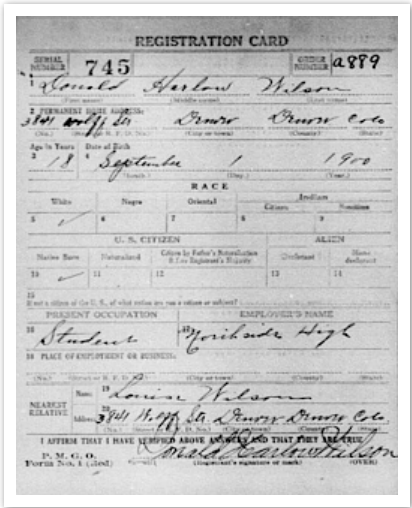
looking around. Bosko apparently had a comic book and I'm wondering if any of you know of

twenty-five games of professional football. In 1928 he joined KPO, San Francisco as a continuity writer, but he couldn't keep away from the gridiron. As assistant to the regular sports announcer, Wilson was given the job of keeping the windows of the field booth clean. One day when the regular announcer failed to show up, Wilson found himself in lone charge of the microphone. From that day to the present Don Wilson has followed the pigskin East, West, North and South, always adding to his reputation for knowledge of the game and for his uncanny ability to supply, a smooth, placid but nevertheless thrilling description of plays and players.

I suspect the closest Don Wilson ever got to Rangoon was when he drove past some Burma Shave signs. Wilson was born in Lincoln, Nebraska to Lincoln and Charlotte Louise (Hatch) Wilson. His father was a druggist. The family was in Denver by the time Don was ten and that's where he went to school and then into radio.

While we're talking about Wilson facts and fancies, I was always curious whether his middle name really was "Harlow" or if that was something the Benny writers invented. If you've had the same question, take a look at Donsey's World War One draft file card. That should settle the question.

Wilson took over the announcing chores for the Benny show when it changed sponsors from Chevrolet to General Tire in April 1934; Alois Havrilla didn't move with the change of sponsors and Wilson won an audition. He remained with Jack through his television series that ended in 1965. Jack's later TV specials used off-screen announcers (I believe Bill Baldwin was one), but Wilson made cameo appearances. We'll have a more accurate newspaper feature on him here next week.



Posted by [Yowp](#) at 07:35




Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

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Preview


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additional covers you could share! ...
14 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

**The World of Knight**




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

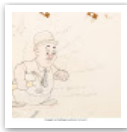
**Yowp**



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 -




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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