

Sunday, 22 February 2015

## A Pair of Dolls

You don't hear about too many loving relationships in Hollywood, but Jack Benny and Mary Livingstone were occasionally public about theirs', judging by the number of newspaper stories over the years. The relationship must have been a real one—someone would have exposed it as phoney if it wasn't (especially those who later revealed they weren't all the wild about Mary).

Here's a full-page feature story from the *New York Post*, June 28, 1947. The photo to the right was one of several accompanying the *Post* story. Incidentally, that's the reporter's real name. He was born in the Waukegan suburb of Chicago on February 12, 1902 and died in New York on October 15, 1990.



### 'Doll' and—'Doll'

By WAMBLY BALD

The fabulously successful Jack Bennys are nothing if not simple.

Backstage at the Roxy Theatre, where Jack and his comic troupe recently drew laughs for a reported \$10,000 per week, he was explaining while puffing his long cigar:

"Mary and I live quietly in our Beverly Hills house. No big noisy parties, no night clubs. A pleasant evening at home for us is a game of gin rummy with a few very close friends. And then early to bed.

"Food? Oh, we go for good, plain food like chops or hamburgers. I'm not hard to please. My tastes are very simple."

The chops and hamburgers, though, are prepared by their expert cook. Other appurtenances of the simple Benny household include maid, butler, governess and swimming pool. While in New York they occupy a Sherry Netherlands tower suite.

Jack Benny, discarding his cigar and lighting a fresh one, then turned to his wife and fellow radio performer, Mary Livingstone. Blandly, he delivered this line to her:

"Isn't that so, Doll?"

"Why, of course, Doll," she answered. In the couple's 20 years of marriage, they've been calling each other "Doll," occasionally lapsing into "Babe." Then "Doll" (Mary) turned to the reporter:

"We lead very ordinary lives, really. Our favorite game is golf, shoots in the 80s."

In Beverly Hills, she added, Jack likes to hang around the house in bathrobe and slippers, and will often receive guests while he's dressed that way. They have a movie projector, and when their close friends — the Robert Taylors, the Gary Coopers or Burns and Allen drop over, a quiet evening of home movies is had by all. Sometimes they'll go to the fights or a night baseball game, or read.

"Oh," she said, stepping forward and giving him a hug, "he's the easiest person in the world to get along with. We have our arguments, of course, as all married couples do, but I always start them."

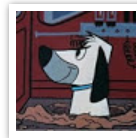
Here the visitor sailed in quickly. "Like what?" he asked.

"Well, for instance, I like to motor across country while Mary prefers riding the trains," Jack said. "Little things like that. Here, have a cigar."

Benny doesn't smoke much. Actually, he takes three or four puffs at a good cigar, chews it a while, then throws it away. Lately he has taken to sucking at a tobacco-less pipe so that he might cut down on his cigar-reflex habit. Both cigars and pipe seemed to be personality adjuncts or props, like the fiddle he used in his early vaudeville days.

That is not to say that Benny didn't have the equipment of a good musician. He freely admitted he had studied the violin for nine years, and that he once wanted above all else to become a famous concert violinist. But the

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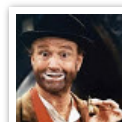
**Cowboy Church #67**  
- Hello my friends and welcome back for another service of cowboy church. Today's musical selection begins with Gene Autry singing "Dear Hearts and Gentle Pe..."  
1 hour ago

### 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 additional covers you could share! ...  
10 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

(f...  
1 day ago

### Fernando Llera Blog Cartoons



**'Cozy Bear' Group Tied to Hacks on Covid Vaccine Research.** - ©2020

fernandollera.com  
1 day ago

ready world of comedy drew him away from that goal.

At 53, Benny, who has been battling out radio comedy since 1932 (following a guest appearance on columnist Ed Sullivan's program), is still plugging realistically along, hammering away to stay on top. With his four gagmen, he has to hit the ball every week, hewing out humor for the millions, and it's very hard work, he said, without going into the mechanical details of it all.

"What I said about leading a simple life wasn't kidding," he confided, dropping his bland manner. "At home I don't try to be funny. I am a great audience, strictly a listener at home, and when we have guests who say or do funny things, I'm glad to laugh with them, not try to top them."

He took a puff at another cigar, looked absorbed, spoke in his mouthy drawl of his 13-year-old adopted daughter, Joan, and then said a word or two about his radio comedy technique:

"It's situation comedy. Radio audiences expect certain things from their comedians, and in my case it's situation built around character. I'm supposed to be a pinchpenny, with all the others picking on me.

"Well, to counteract that character in real life, I always overtup. And as to analysis of humor, I never went into that. I don't go in for any highbrow stuff, and as for political leanings, I am just not interested. If you want to know who my favorite humorist is—it's Stephen Leacock. His humor is marvelous."

Jack, who can look alternately bland and glum, used the word "marvelous" frequently. He said that Mary—she was flitting in and out of the dressing room was a "marvelous" critic of gags, even though she didn't participate in their shaping, that she was wrong only "once in a hundred times."

Also that she was a "marvelous" dress designer, "the best in the world," and knew that art so well that she could have been "a millionaire in no time if she followed it." She has a good eye for clothes, too, and helps Jack select his.

Mary, who had heard some of this, said emphatically that she appears with Jack on his radio program only because he's in it, that she never really cared for show business. She is a tall, slender, charming brunette, with a quick, eager manner. And she is so unaffected that she might readily be taken for any good helpmate wife, solely concerned with supporting her husband's role in life. She gets all jittery, she said, during and after each broadcast, whereas Jack remains calm.

Jack, raised in Waukegan, Ill., but born in Chicago (despite previous reports), is 5-feet-9, fair-looking, and his right eye is bluer than his left. His father was a Waukegan haberdasher.

Jack's climb from a young fiddler looking for a job follows a familiar pattern: vaudeville, then revues and the movies, and finally radio. During World War I he was in the Navy, spending most of his time entertaining with his violin. Soon after this he discovered that joking with audiences brought better response than actually playing the instrument.

Jack's first meeting with Mary dates to the time she was 12, and the Marx Brothers brought the young performer to her home in Vancouver. Some years later they met again in Los Angeles, where Jack was playing the Orpheum.

Right across the street was Mary, working as a May Co. stocking salesgirl; she kept leaving her post to call upon her old friend despite protestations of the floorwalker. A few dates led to their marriage in Waukegan on Jan. 14, 1927.

Both agree it wasn't love at first sight; it "just grew." In fact, just before the nuptials, Mary had another boy friend, and Jack telephoned her long distance: "You're too young to get married. Take the first train to Chicago and I'll explain!"

When she got there, he lost little time. His father helped him in his arguments for a marriage, and all the other prospective in-laws chimed right in. The couple have been happily together ever since, and it wasn't long before Jack encouraged Mary to work with him in show business.

"Jack is wonderful," said Mary, flinging her arms around him once more while the camera clicked. "Just think, we still call each other 'Doll' after 20 years:" "Doll is a marvelous person," announced the Waukegan Wit, finally breaking from the clinch and grinning.

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [06:58](#)



Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

No comments:

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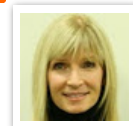
#### News From ME

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...  
3 days ago

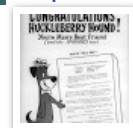
#### The World of Knight

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...  
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**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*

 **Peter Gray's Comics and Art**  
An early  
Tom Thug  
page for  
sale and  
other comic  
art by Lew  
Stringer go  
to link and ebay.. -  
<http://lewstringercomics.blogspot.com/2020/02/original-art-for-sale.html>  
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*5 months 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...  
*1 day ago*

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