



Wednesday, 1 April 2015

## The Fred Allen Robot

Had the Jack Benny-Fred Allen "feud" been going on radio in 1934, the idea of a robotic Fred Allen would have been good for some gags. Additionally, the 1944 version of the real Allen would no doubt find a way to liken it to sponsors or NBC vice-presidents.

But there actually was a robot Fred Allen. It was on display at the 1934 World's Fair. Its fate today is unknown. Here's a story from the *Dobbs Ferry Register*, June 15, 1934. The photo accompanied the story.

### Wise-Cracking Robot With Human Expression Goes To World's Fair

New York—(Special) — Simulating human mannerisms, facial expressions and gestures, a mechanical man, the first in which these human traits have been attempted, is on its way to Chicago where it will have a prominent place at the new World's Fair.

The 1934 model mechanical man bears no resemblance to the stiff, machine-like robots of earlier vintages.

His speech has been vastly improved and he has been made to look like a human being. He talks, moves his head, smiles, shows his teeth, raises his eyebrows, rolls his eyes, and chuckles.

In endeavoring to build a mechanical man resembling a human being, the inventors obtained permission from Fred Allen, the radio comedian, to attempt to reproduce his head, facial expressions, and voice.

A corps of sculptors and electrical engineers worked nearly three months to complete the mechanical Fred Allen which was built by the Ivel Corporation of New York. The mechanical "brain" was supplied by K. D. Andrews, said to be the only robot builder in this country. The face which is made of a patented flexible rubber was designed by William Herrschaft, a sculptor.

The mechanical Fred Allen is the first comedian among robots for he wise-cracks and makes facial grimaces very much like the real Fred Allen. At the World's Fair he will perform continuously as a guest of the Bristol-Myers Company in their Ipana exhibit in the General Exhibits Building where he will be known as "The Ipanaman."



Posted by [Yowp](#) at [12:29](#)



Labels: [Fred Allen](#)

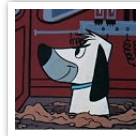
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### Old TV History



**May 1940 -**  
You couldn't blame David Sarnoff if he

mumbled some uncomplimentary comments at the F.C.C. in May of 1940. The Commission made two rulings, basically tell...

*1 day ago*

### Yowp



**Wilma -**  
Jean Vander Pyl didn't have a big name on

television when she was cast to play Wilma Flintstone in 1960. The others were a bit different. Bea Benaderet ap...

*3 weeks ago*

## Blogs to See

### News From ME

**Mushroom Soup Monday -**  
My "to do" list has enough items on it that I need to put up one of these soup cans that tells you not to expect much (if any) posting here today. A friend...

*1 hour ago*



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### [The Exposure Sheet](#)



Craig  
Kellman's  
Hanna  
Barbera  
Redesigns:  
[Old Faces,](#)

[New Looks](#) - Every famous cartoon character, from Mickey Mouse to Bugs Bunny, has been redesigned and reimagined many times over the decades, and the classic character...

*2 hours ago*

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### [Fernando Llera Cartoons](#)



Israeli army  
breaks  
Gaza Strip  
into two  
parts. -  
©2023

[fernandollera.com](#)

*2 hours ago*

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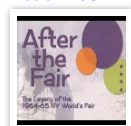
### [Cartoon Research](#)

[Two Must-Have Cartoon Collections](#) - David Gerstein was pivotal to both these projects - both are close to his heart: Disney Comics and Flip The Frog.

*9 hours ago*

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### [Termite Terrace headlines](#)



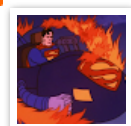
Today's  
Post: The  
1964  
World's Fair  
Documenta  
ry and other

[64 World's Fair stuff](#) - This documentary is quite good. Most of you have probably already seen it, but I'm sharing it here anyways. While I'm add it, why not share some ...

*22 hours ago*

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### [Movies with Michael](#)




The World's  
Greatest  
Super  
Friends:  
Lex Luthor  
Strikes


[Back \(1979\)](#) - A wonderful episode. In this episode, Lex Luthor escapes from prison by switching places with Lois Lane. After escaping he captures each of the Supe...

*23 hours ago*



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 **Pete Hale**




**My First Carl Barks -**  
I decided to become a cartoonist last year, so I started reading some old "animal" comic strips and books for study and enjoyment. I've already tried out...

*1 day ago*

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 **Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog**




**Tomorrow Afternoon at Niles: Silent Era Animation and Jerry Beck -**

*2 days ago*

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 **AFRTS Archive**



**Your audience awaits! -**  
Many of us saved a tape or acetate or two. There are a lot of people that would like to hear them again. The airchecks from AFN/AFKN/SCN etc usually t...

*2 days ago*

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**Mark Kausler's CatBlog**  
**Felix Vs. A Spy From Brigandia** - In these Felix strips from 4-24 to 5-7-32, Felix returns from the Moon, only to encounter a spy from the kingdom of Brigandia, who wants to steal all the p...

*1 week ago*

[Show All](#)

## Why Not Read...

[Cartoonerific](#)

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[Dr Grob's Animation Review](#)

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[Tex Avery at Warner Bros](#)

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[Format Films Roadrunners](#)

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