

Sunday, 18 October 2015

## Martha and Emily

One of the great luxuries of the Jack Benny radio show is, eventually, he and his writers developed so many secondary characters that he didn't need to have them on every week. He could bring them back once in a while so the show sounded fresh but familiar at the same time. Among the characters were two little old ladies named Emily and Martha. Benny made himself out to be a ladies man but these were the only ladies he could attract. The whole concept was funny. Their octogenarian status allowed the writers to come up with age jokes that didn't involve Benny himself. The concept was later developed on the Benny TV show as a fan club of little old ladies, usually from Pasadena (what the link is between that city and elderly women, especially as it predates Jan and Dean's song about one, is a cultural reference I don't get).

Two veteran actresses were picked for the roles. Gloria Gordon played Emily while Jane Morgan was Martha. Their first appearance was on November 3, 1946. They actually didn't appear very often together, only nine times, with eight of their routines broadcast during the 1940s. Besides the later "fan club" on the TV show, they were the inspiration behind a two-headed vulture (voiced by Julie Bennett) in the 1962 Bugs Bunny cartoon "Transylvania 6-5000."

Emily has a slight English accent, unintentionally, I suspect because Gordon was English. Morgan's voice should be recognisable to fans of situation comedy as she began a long tenure as landlady Mrs. Davis on *Our Miss Brooks* beginning in July 1948 (playing opposite Gordon's son, Gale). She also played a landlady on *My Friend Irma*, which debuted in April 1947, but was replaced by Gordon through the series' run on TV.

The two were profiled in *Radio Life*, a terrific publication for the Los Angeles area, on May 11, 1947.

### Delightfully Devoted

You've Heard Them as "Martha" and "Emily," Jack Benny's Elderly Admirers. Now Meet Jane Morgan and Gloria Gordon, Two Ladies With Illustrious Careers in the Theater

By Joan Buchanan

"OH, MARTHA, isn't that Jack Benny over there?"

"Yes, Emily—oh, isn't he handsome?"

Every time Jack Benny's car pulls to a stop for a Vine Street traffic light, listeners to his Sunday show wait for the foregoing dialogue. Yes, it's Jane Morgan and Gloria Gordon as "Martha" and "Emily," Jack's indefatigable fans, waiting for a glimpse of their "star."

Ever since this whimsical twosome first made an appearance on NBC's Benny show, we've promised ourselves that we'd look them up and find out if they really do feel that way about Jack Benny.

"Jack Benny is a dear," exclaimed Jane.

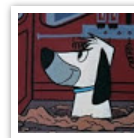
"He's a darling boy," added Gloria.

"So easy to work with," continued Jane.

"Absolutely pie," concluded Gloria.



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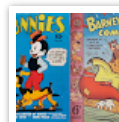


**Cowboy Church #67**  
- Hello my friends and welcome back for another

service of cowboy church. Today's musical selection begins with Gene Autry singing "Dear Hearts and Gentle Pe..."

35 minutes ago

### Termite Terrace headlines



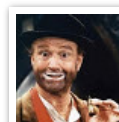
**Question for All You Cartoon Collectors!** - OK so I've been doing some

looking around. Bosko apparently had a comic book and I'm wondering if any of you know of additional covers you could share! ...

9 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...

23 hours ago

### Fernando Llera Blog Cartoons



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

fernandollercartoons.com

1 day ago

And that's their word on the subject. Both Jane and Gloria have been in radio for many years. Gloria started in 1928, "and worked for a year, my dear, without pay!" Jane entered soon after, or "whenever it was that there was no more theater."

Though neither Gloria nor Jane can recall working together before, they have been friends for years and their careers have paralleled one another's surprisingly. Both were born in England. Gloria calls herself an old Liverpuddlian, the name for those born in Liverpool. Jane's parents were Welsh and she admits that listening to "How Green Was My Valley" on "Lux" made her cry because it reminded her of her father. Both have been in this country for years, and Gloria proudly announced that she has voted in every election since becoming a citizen.

### Both Musical

Both studied music—Jane was a violin, piano and voice student, Gloria studied piano and voice. Both appeared in opera and musical comedy before switching to straight dramatics. Gloria's career encompassed tours that took her to every important European capital, and between them she and Jane have appeared with almost every great name in their lifetime. Jane was a Boston Opera Company star—"I've sung everything from 'Jack in the Beanstalk' to 'Carmen'," she added. In



addition to opera, the concert stage legitimate theater, resident stock, pictures and radio have claimed the talents of this pair, though never as a team until now. Both were working with the Henry Duffy players locally at the same time—but in different companies.

Jane and Gloria have both known the adulation that goes with being a great star. "The movie people get it nowadays," Jane said. "And they're welcome to it," added Gloria pleasantly.

"I remember being rushed through the crowd waiting for me at the stage door and across the street to my hotel. People shouted, 'Here she comes!' when I came out!" recalled Jane.

"And the Stage Door Johnnies!" continued Gloria. "They don't have anything like that now."

Both agreed that the old days were much more exciting and glamorous because the barrier between players and audience was much greater. "The illusion is gone now, and after all, show business is the business of illusion," Jane sighed. "They've let the audience in on all the secrets," said Gloria.

### Believe in Credits

According to both our stars, radio is full of such talented young people as to be almost amazing. "Many of these young people are stars, great stars," they told us. "And so often they don't even get name credit on a show. It's ridiculous. If you went into a theater and they didn't give you a program, you'd be indignant."

Both are ardent hobbyists. Jane calls her new granddaughter, Mary Jane, and her garden, her two main interests. "I love to get into the earth and dig," she laughed. "And I can't wear gardening gloves—I buy them, put them on, they fall off and the next time I dig in the garden I dig one up."

"You must have Virgo in your horoscope," commented Gloria. "Good at gardens."

Gloria is a specialist in horoscopes and tin ware. She's made horoscopes for all her friends, including Jane. Jane also informed us that Gloria makes beautiful ornaments in tin ware—a very difficult craft to work in. They both retain their interest in classical music and are avid listeners to the fine music programs. "And heaven help me, I keep a diary," laughed Gloria.

Gloria is mother of that fine radio actor, Gale Gordon, whom she terms a wonderful son and a wonderful actor. "I claim him as mine, too," smiled Jane. "He's so wonderful, I can't let Gloria have him all to herself." Gloria's daughter, a playwright, has just completed a play for coming presentation, "Half Past Twilight." The title is Gloria's contribution.

### Real Character Women

Getting back to radio, both actresses have appeared on practically every network show originating from Hollywood. Neither has any idea how she landed on the Benny show. In spite of the fact that both characterizations complement each other beautifully and fit into the show like little jewels, Jane and Gloria think that they were called for the parts "because there aren't really very many character women in radio."

"They are cute parts, aren't they?" smiled Jane. "We would love to dress for them."

"Long black dresses, little bonnets ..." visualized Gloria.

"Some people call us bobby-soxers," explained Jane, "but I don't see the characters that way at all. I think if I got that picture in my head, I'd give a wrong reading."

"We're bobby-longstockings," laughed Gloria.

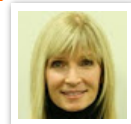
### News From ME

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

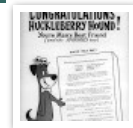
### The World of Knight

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...  
3 weeks ago

“I see the characters as two nice old ladies who happen to be crazy about Kack Benny instead of— oh—”  
“Francis X. Bushman?” suggested Gloria.  
“And isn’t Jack Benny a sweetheart?” Jane smiled.  
“Such a handsome boy, too,” winked Gloria.

Morgan died of a heart attack in Burbank on New Year's Day 1972 at the age of 91. Gordon died on November 23, 1962 at 81.

You can hear their debut on the Benny show by clicking on the arrow.

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:27](#)  
Labels: [Jack Benny](#)



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**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*

**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>  
[https://www.ebay.co.uk/sch/graphite47/m.html?\\_\\_nk=\\_\\_armrs=1&\\_img=&\\_from=](https://www.ebay.co.uk/sch/graphite47/m.html?__nk=__armrs=1&_img=&_from=)  
*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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