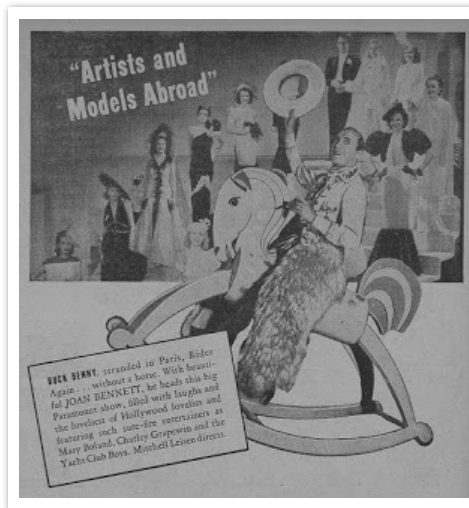


Sunday, 10 April 2016

## Jack Benny, 1939

Almost all the pieces of the Jack Benny show were in place by 1939. The last of his major cast members joined the show. Dennis Day had done a bit of radio work under his real name of Eugene McNulty in New York City. But when Kenny Baker jumped at the prospect of more money, more airtime, and not having to play an at-times clueless character, Benny looked and looked for someone. Day was introduced to audiences through his domineering mother, played by the great Verna Felton, but the pages of *Variety* reveal that wasn't Benny's first idea.

Despite fears the audience would be upset, it turned out to a stroke of brilliance. After returning from the war, Dennis evolved into an apt impressionist and dialectician and proved to be a better foil than Baker, whose career peaked with the Benny show. Hooking up with Jack gave Day a career. A movie deal quickly followed and after the war he appeared on his own radio and TV shows. He landed a record deal with RCA. He appeared on the Vegas strip. None of it would have happened if Kenny Baker didn't feel insulted by playing a cheerful silly man-boy.



The year started with Jack's distraction with a smuggling trial in New York, where he continually had to fly for court appearances. *Variety* didn't give it the coverage the wire services and New York papers did, as they revealed Benny's chastisement by the judge sentencing him, word for word. In essence, he was conned by someone claiming to have diplomatic immunity to carry Benny's newly-purchased jewellery into the U.S. so he would avoid paying duty. Benny pleaded no contest.

Professionally, Jack completed some movies and was working on another. In essence, Paramount Pictures decided Benny was only bankable if he played his radio character, so they plunked him in *Buck Benny Rides Again*, a title derived from a series of radio sketches (though the movie plot was dissimilar) and in a picture with Fred Allen, against whom he had been carrying on an audience-loving feud.

General Foods, for a second time, tried to wrest Jell-O away from his sponsorship table and give it to someone else in exchange for the rather drab Post Grape Nuts. The idea was thwarted. General Foods was not to be deterred and pulled it off during the war.

For all intents and purposes, Andy Devine ceased being a semi-regular on the show by the end of 1939.

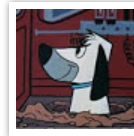
Jack continued his charity work and, surprising as it may seem, was one of the people involved with the radio actors trade union, which was ready to call a strike—which would have included his own show.

Here's *Variety*.

January 4, 1939.

Screen Guild show for Gulf Oil will make a Quick bid for dialer preference by triple starring the initialer next Sunday (8). In the upper bracket will be Jack Benny, Joan Crawford and Judy Garland. Reginald Gardiner is also in the cast of a musical revue being whipped up by Morrie Ryskind. Oscar Bradley has the music

## About Me



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## Blogs to See

### Movies with Michael

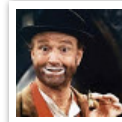


Some Cartoons For Saturday Morning #80 - Hello my friends

and welcome back for another selection of classic cartoons. Today's selection begins with one of the great Mickey, Donald and Goofy car...

5 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 (from Zieg...

6 hours ago

### Fernando Llera Blog Cartoons

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



20 hours 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

assignment for the series. Mitchell Leisen directs the show and Tom Lewis of Young & Rubicam produces. George Murphy was assigned by Screen Guild officers to emcee show. They took a vote. On the second show Jan. 15 will be Fred Astaire. Herbert Marshall, Loretta Young and Franklin Pangborn in a comedy with music. Script being supervised by Dwight Taylor.

#### January 5, 1939

JACK BENNY will need a faster chauffeur than Rochester to get around Sunday . . . after finishing his eastern broadcast for Jello at 4:30 p.m., he'll have to dash from the NBC studio at Sunset and Vine to the El Capitan theatre, where he costars on the Screen Guild program, which takes off at that hour . . . he's allowing himself six minutes to make the jump.

#### January 10, 1939

Bill Morrow and Eddie Beloin have hied to Arrowhead to cook up next Sunday's script for Jack Benny, the first time in years they've concocted the Jello laugh situations without the comic at their elbow. Benny is in New York to testify before the federal grand jury in the smuggling case which recently involved George Burns. He's due back in time for Saturday's rehearsal.

#### January 11, 1939

Jack Benny was indicted today on charges of transportation, possession and smuggling of \$2,100 worth of jewelry by a Federal Grand Jury. Actor pleaded not guilty. His bail was set at \$1,000. Albert N. Chaperau, who has pleaded guilty to another indictment charging him with smuggling gowns into this country, was indicted with Benny. George Burns and Mrs. Edgar J. Lauer, wife of a State Supreme Court justice, have pleaded guilty to charges linking them with Chaperau. Jack Benny aired east Monday (9) to testify Tuesday in New York before a federal grand jury in connection with a smuggling case. He said he was willing to cooperate with the authorities, but figures he won't be much help. Myrt Blum, his agent, accompanied, as did Loyd Wright, his attorney, Col. Bill Donovan represents Benny on the N. Y. end.

Chester La Roche, president of Young & Rubicam yesterday said that Jack Benny's indictment on a smuggling charge would have no effect on his radio contract with General Foods.

#### **SCREEN ACTORS GUILD**

With Jack Benny, Joan Crawford, George Murphy, Judy Garland, Oscar Bradley, Reginald Gardiner, Ralph Morgan, J. Frank Drake, John Conte.

Revue

30 Mins.

GOOD GULF GASOLINE

Sunday, 7:30 p.m.

WABC-CBS, New York

(Young & Rubicam)

Of two Hollywood programs which debuted within an hour of each other on CBS Sunday, Jan. 8, 1939, this one was the hit item of a one hit, one error score. Program led off as a bright, brisk, professionally keen challenger for important attention and large circulation. If succeeding installments with changing personalities each week can even come near the entertainment quality of the first broadcast, the circulation quantity seems assured.

What the program offers and the way it goes about things may, of course, add up to 'just another revue with guests stars.' But the finesse of adroit production and the Screen Guild's roster of names make that mean something.

Each week the director and writers will be of 'guest' character. Which is anybody's guess as to what they actually contribute. Probably more from the writers than the directors. Mitchell Leisen, of Paramount, and Sam Perrine and Irving Brecher were the scriveners for this air-billed one. In the background was Young & Rubicam's Tom Lewis and Austin Peterson.

Incidentally, apportioning the numerous credits is no small task on such a program. They were skilfully woven in. several of them as gags. Gulf for and agreeable as personalized by its head man, J. Frank Drake, who spoke his piece clearly and with no slush.

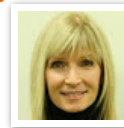
Jack Benny was in fine form for Gulf, but ironically off-form for his own Jello show that was just ahead. Usual comedy approach to the meeting of Benny and Crawford (with an interruption routine by Judy Garland), piled up giggles by the usual device of pin-pricking Benny's fatuous self-importance. Miss Crawford played straight with beaucoup authority to Benny's demonstration of his sex appeal.

Reginald Gardiner did his now-familiar train bit, swell for first hearing and a work of artistry even to accustomed hearers. Miss Garland whammed a couple of special numbers that revealed her range as stylist and entertainer. George Murphy, while not fully seasoned at the m.c. stuff, still merited the assignment and was a cute kid. Ralph Morgan, as president of the Guild, saluted Jean Hersholt (absent in N. Y.) as president of the Motion Picture Fond and introduced Gulf's man, Drake.

M. P. Fund gets \$10,000 weekly from sponsor. With orchestra (good) and production incidentals, plus agency fees, etc., it's \$15,000. A snappy show for the money. *Land.*

Animation #276 Many references may be found regarding two-strip Technicolor. I have been guilty of discussing Walter Lantz's King of Jazz (1930)...  
1 day 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

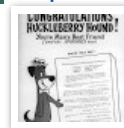
#### **The World of Knight**



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

3 days ago

#### **Yowp**

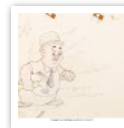


Hanna-Barbera Birthday Did-You-Knows - 63 years ago today, some

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 Twooble: A Small Addendum to An Outstanding Podcast -

Original animation drawing from Wabbit Twooble 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

#### **Termite Terrace headlines**

Porky's Hot Dog Intake - Western Publishing definitely isn't free of

'Bogus Frankfurter Mystery' is title of skit Jack Benny and his Jello troupe will do on Sunday's broadcast. Comedian plays the editor who directs his news sleuths to track down the guilty culprit.

#### January 12, 1939.

Albert N. Chaperau yesterday pleaded guilty in a federal court in New York to an indictment charging him and Jack Benny with smuggling \$2,131 worth of jewelry into New York. Benny pleaded not guilty Tuesday.

#### January 13, 1939.

It was reported in New York yesterday that Albert Chaperau, who pleaded guilty to a smuggling indictment in which he and Jack Benny were named, will testify against the radio comedian when latter comes to trial before a federal court in New York.

#### January 17, 1939.

Gracie Allen, George Burns, Jack Pearl and Kenny Baker were subpoenaed yesterday in New York to testify at trial of Jack Benny on smuggling charges. Trial date is (24).

#### January 18, 1939.

In handling the Jack Benny smuggling charges story, the New York dailies described him as 'Americas No. 2 radio comedian,' but without indicating how this rating was arrived at or who was first.

Newsmen evidently trying to show an acquaintance with the CAB reports. Raised curiosity in the reader's mind. [Chase & Sanborn show rates No. 1 on CAB].

San Francisco... Harris D. Connick, manager of the Golden Gate International Exposition, has signed contracts with Jack Benny, Eddie Cantor, Fred Allen, Fannie Brice and Sophie Tucker for appearances at the Fair. Each will appear twice daily for single week stretches in the open air pavilion.

'Umbrella Man,' current waltz hit which jumped from obscurity to the lead spot on the best seller lists in the space of several weeks, was written some seven months ago by Jimmy Cavanaugh, who did the lyrics, and Vincent Rose and Larry Stock. Kay Kyser introduced the tune for Harms, which first published it some time in September, and also recorded it. However, it was not until Kenny Baker did it on the Jack Benny program that it started to make any dent in the biz. Witmark admittedly had been sleeping on it until Kenny's vocal awakened interest. Following that event they got behind the tune and shoved it up to its current rating.

#### January 19, 1939.

Plans to immediately pull film stars from air programs if strike against commercial network broadcasting is ordered this weekend were completed last night at meeting of Coast members of national executive board of American Federation Radio Artists. Eddie Cantor, AFRA national prexy, presided at session held at headquarters of Screen Actors Guild. Members of national board present in addition to Cantor included Edward Arnold, Norman Field, national vice president; Jean Hersholt, Jimmy Wellington, Warren Hull, Georgia Fifiell and Carlton KaDell, president of Los Angeles chapter. Others attending were Kenneth Thomson, SAG executive secretary; I. B. Kornblum, AFRA attorney and acting business representative, George Arliss, Jack Benny and Dorothy Lamour, Laurence W. Beilenson, attorney for SAG and western counsel for AFRA.

In meantime attorneys for national sponsors were meeting with agency heads in New York in an effort to avert walkout of air performers. Strike ballots will be cast in New York today. Chicago and San Francisco chapters vote Friday and Los Angeles Saturday night. If walkout is approved it will then be up to national board when strike will be called.

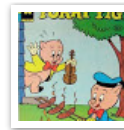
Spokesmen for agencies producing network shows yesterday could see no alternative but to drop off the air in the event of a general walkout by AFRA.

#### January 20, 1939.

Jack Benny, Mary Livingstone, Bob Hope and Bob Burns were names added to Hollywood's air gigantic that will touch off the March of Dimes continental parade Sunday on three nationwide networks for infantile paralysis funds. Show will go out from here between 8 and 9 p.m. on Mutual, Columbia and National Broadcasting chains.

#### January 25, 1939.

Rep. L. E. Brophey, of Minnesota's lower house, has thrust himself into the limelight with a proposal that the



cannibalism when it comes to comics featuring Porky Pig. These are

just some of the covers in which Porky is ei...

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?\\_\\_nkw=&\\_\\_arms=1&\\_ipg=&\\_fom=](https://www.ebay.co.uk/sch/graphite47/m.html?__nkw=&__arms=1&_ipg=&_fom=)

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

## Blog Archive

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- [2019](#) (376)
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  - [August](#) (33)

Federal Communications Commission suspend radio stars who have been indicted on criminal charges carrying a minimum penalty of one year imprisonment. House's Public Welfare Committee yesterday (23) approved this proposal which Brophey, who comes from this city, had introduced in the form of a resolution. Brophey declared that his measure was designed to prevail upon the FCC to bar those air celebs recently indicted on gem smuggling charges. What particularly burned him, said Brophey, was that at least one of the indicted names had belittled the criminal action.

Jack Benny and George Burns, of Burns and Allen, are the Minnesota legislator's obvious targets. Burns has pleaded guilty to the indictment, while Benny declares himself innocent and has elected to stand trial.

Radio strike... Los Angeles chapter okayed in advance any action taken by AFRA executive committee. Eddie Cantor, AFRA head, presided at Saturday night session at El Capitan theatre Emily Holt told attendees date for nation-wide strike against agencies would be fixed within 24 hours unless some agreement is reached, but expressed hope walkout would not be necessary.

Other speakers at meeting were Kenneth Thomson, Screen Actors' Guild executive secretary; Edward Arnold, J. W. Gillette, representing AFM; Ralph Morgan, SAG prexy; I. B. Kimblum, AFRA counsel.

Resolution to obey strike order was approved by unanimous rising vote. On stage with speakers were Jack Benny, Tyrone Power, James Wellington, Don Wilson, Dorothy Lamour, Boris Karloff, Conrad Nagel, Melvyn Douglas, Andy Devine and others.

#### February 1, 1939

Eddie Cantor and Kate Smith proved to be the top air favorites with 49,343 boys and girls between ages of six and 16 polled in the latest Children's Preference Study conducted by the Bays Athletic League of New York. The boys gave Cantor No. 1 place and the girls showed they like Miss Smith most. In last year's poll Joe Penner was No. 1 with the boys, while Cantor was the girls' ace choice. Four followups with the boys this year were Jack Benny. Penner, 'The Lone Ranger' and Edward G. Robinson. Charlie McCarthy was sixth.

In 1937 the poll gave the boys' next four preferences as Cantor, 'Ranger,' Benny and Bing Crosby. Four followups with the girls this year are Crosby, Cantor, Billy House and Penner. The 1937 poll showed the girls' next four best to be Benny. Crosby, Burns and Allen and Deanna Durbin, The poll this year made no mention of screen favorites.

Billy House's standing was deemed significant by radio trade. Also that only two programs picked by kids were daytimers, viz 'The Shadow' and 'Let's Pretend.'

Federal Judge William Bondy imposed a fine of \$8,000 and a suspended sentence of a year and a day on George (Nat) Burns yesterday (Tuesday) in Federal Court, N. Y. on the alleged smuggling indictment involving less than \$5,030 worth of diamond studded jewelry into the United States. Burns had already paid civil penalties amounting to \$9,770 in addition, it was disclosed. This brings his monetary penalties to \$17,770 on items totaling less than \$5,000 [\$4,885].

Judge Bondy suspended the prison sentence on a promise of good behavior, and Burns was put on probation for the duration of the term. He got 10 days in which to pay the fine.

Burns' plea for leniency, made through his attorney, Carl Newton, was based on the fact that the actor had cooperated with the Government investigation since its inception. Assistant United States Attorney Joseph Delaney had originally recommended a fine of \$12,000.

Comedian, it was announced, would be available as a witness in 'another' impending trial, growing out of the smuggling activities of Albert N. Chaperau, This was taken to mean the trial of Jack Benny, who comes up on like charges Feb. 14.

Burns arrived in New York yesterday (Tuesday) after the plane he boarded on the Coast was grounded in Chicago by snowstorms and forced his transfer to rails. He avoided interviews after the case was cleared.

#### February 2, 1939

Jack Benny-George Burns palship continues unchilled by fact latter will be government's principal witness in forthcoming trial of Benny on smuggling charges. Pair dined together yesterday in Paramount commissary, with friendly ribs interspersing food.

Threatened national radio strike appeared definitely staved off tonight, as American Federation Radio Artists and advertising agency committee representing sponsors started drafting an actual contract.

Committees came to enough common meeting ground at 7 a.m. today, to turn work over to legal representatives. Lawyers were closeted all day over legal entanglements and will continue sessions for several days.

Forthcoming contract involves so many twists that actual terms of settlement are vague until legal requirements can be cleared.

AFRA regards affair as victory, while sponsors are resigned to paying more for talent on commercial network broadcasting.

AFRA hopes for contract effective Friday (10), but all depends upon speed of lawyers. Mutual web is not sitting in on sessions.

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► June (32)

► May (34)

▼ April (34)

[Hugh and Rudy, Their Story](#)

[Claude's Nightmare](#)

[Oswald's Dark Horse](#)

[Have You Got a Couple of Penguins?](#)

[Ducking Out](#)

[Fox-Terror Backgrounds](#)

[Trafaz Sunday Theatre – The Clown Princes of Holl...](#)

[Niagara, Newton and Benny](#)

[Bringing Cartoons to Life](#)

[Throwing the Bull](#)

[No Wampum, Just Moths](#)

[TV Comedy Deserts New York](#)

[Slang Surprise](#)

[Hey, It's the Warner Bros. Shield!](#)

[Gas and Bag](#)

[Cartoons of 1954, Part 2](#)

[Whack a Dog](#)

[Mickey Mouse Helps the South Win](#)

[Mr. Warmth](#)

[A Changing Elephant](#)

[Mucho Mouse](#)

[Trafaz Sunday Theatre – What On Earth!](#)

[Jack Benny, 1939](#)

[How to Make an MGM Cartoon](#)

[Abner Walk Cycle](#)

[Fill 'Er Up](#)

[Constructing a Game Show](#)

[The Bat!](#)

[Missile Hits Its Cinemascope Target](#)

[Trafaz Sunday Theatre – Your Name Here](#)

[Dogs, Elephants and Don Wilson](#)

[Cartoons of 1954, Part 1](#)

[50% Boxer, 100% Stolen Gag](#)

[Is Porky Pig Under Attack?](#)

► March (36)



February 15, 1939

Jack Pearl, comedian, has been appearing before the grand jury in New York during the past week in the Albert N. Chapereau smuggling case. Attorney Louts Nizer, representing Pearl, told the U. S. attorneys that although not, directly or indirectly involved in the smuggling action, Pearl did meet Chapereau in Europe and that he was ready to testify regarding the impression Chapereau disseminated concerning himself. Government's case against Jack Benny was postponed by Federal Judge Knox in New York yesterday (Tues.) to March 6, on plea of Donovan, Leisure & Newton, counsel for the actor. Postponement will give him sufficient time in which to complete his current Par assignment and permit him to come to New York and stand trial.

Jack Benny yesterday spiked reports that he will change his plea to the government's smuggling charge and said that he will go to New York to contest the action when the case is called for trial.

February 23, 1939

Jack Benny will emcee banquet of Woman's Auxiliary of American Legion at Chicago annual convention Sept. 27.

February 24, 1939

Jack Benny guests on the Lum and Abner ailer Friday (3) to accept an honorary degree as 'Dr. of Fisticuffs.'

February 28, 1939

Mary Livingstone took her five-year-old daughter over to Paramount to see Jack Benny in action in 'Man About Town.' Seeing daddy in trapeze attire, youngster turned to mother in disgust. 'He certainly looks awfully silly,' she whispered, 'but don't tell him I said so!'

March 6, 1939

'Now we'll be able to get something done,' quipped Jack Benny when his gag writer. Bill Morrow, broke down and admitted he was married Tuesday night to Margret Wilkins, New York model. Fellow workers on the Jello program now feel that Morrow is not one to be trusted with confidences if he can't keep his own secret.

March 21, 1939

Jack Benny has re-signed Sam Hearn to contract for appearance on his Jello broadcasts starting April 2. Hearn, now out on personal appearances, is cancelling further bookings to return here. Deal handled by Leo Morrison.

March 28, 1939

New York, March 27. — Jack Benny will plead nolo contendere— no defense—when he goes on trial here next Monday in Federal court on charges of smuggling \$2,131 worth of jewelry into this country, according to the Daily News. Newspaper also reports that it has learned comedian will plead guilty if the plea is not accepted. Jack Benny asserted yesterday that his New York attorneys are handling the case and that he wouldn't say anything regarding the case without their permission.

April 4, 1939

Trial of Jack Benny on smuggling charges was postponed 24 hours when plane failed to arrive in time for comedian to face court.

April 5, 1939

Changing his plea from 'not guilty' on the smuggling charge against him, Jack Benny yesterday (Tues) was fined \$10,000 by Federal Judge Vincent L. Leibel in N. Y. and an additional sentence of a year and a day was suspended on condition the actor reports regularly to probation officers in Los Angeles. The comedian flies back to the Coast today (Wed.) to resume radio and picture commitments. His next for Paramount is 'The New Yorker.'

Benny expressed regret at having become carelessly involved in the situation and said he had 'no guilty knowledge of crime.' Value of the gems purchased by Benny and smuggled into the U. S. was \$2,131, on which approximately \$700 in duty was payable.

April 6, 1939

Rosa Weber, house maid, will collect about \$5,000 from Uncle Sam for turning over information which led to

► [February](#) (31)

► [January](#) (32)

► [2015](#) (389)

► [2014](#) (390)

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## Labels

[Aline Mosby](#) (17)

[Art Davis](#) (33)

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[Chuck Jones](#) (142)

[Columbia](#) (33)

[Counterfeit Cat](#) (8)

[Cynthia Lowry](#) (26)

[Dick Thomas](#) (14)

[Don Patterson](#) (17)

[Earl Wilson](#) (6)

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[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](#) (453)

[Jay Ward](#) (30)

[Jimmy Durante](#) (17)

[John Crosby](#) (84)

[John Sutherland](#) (28)

[Johnny Johnsen](#) (27)

[Kenny Baker](#) (6)

[King-Size Canary](#) (8)

[Laugh-In](#) (11)

[Legend of Rockabye Point](#) (6)

[Little Rural Riding Hood](#) (7)

[Magical Maestro](#) (9)

the indictment and conviction of several persons in the smuggling case in which Jack Benny drew a \$10,000 fine.

#### April 8, 1939

Washington, April 7.—Louis B. Mayer today was revealed by Uncle Sam as America's No. 1 wage earner for year 1937, when he drew down total of \$1,296,563, of which \$1,161,753 was contributed by Loews, Inc., and \$134,750 by Metro. No. 2 position went to J. Robert Rubin, another Loew's and Metro exec, who was paid \$641,753 for his services for same period.

Paramount Pay List: Jack Benny, actor, \$60,000. [By contrast, Paramount paid actress Franciska Gaal, who had been dropped from a proposed Benny film, \$82,958. Herbert Marshall, who filled in one a Benny radio show, made \$198,166 from RKO].

#### April 12, 1939

Jack Benny and his associates gave out a typical Jelloesque show Sunday, All of the standard tricks and the usual violent reflexes of the push-over Hollywood audience were noted. But it had little spontaneity. It would have been a good show for an ordinary comedian; it was an ordinary result for a good one.

Jack Benny has three more pictures to go with Paramount under his existing contract, at a reported \$125,000 per feature.

Completed and awaiting release, no date as yet being set is 'Man About Town,' production on which was interrupted, on various occasions by the gem-smuggling difficulties involving Benny.

#### April 18, 1939

Jack Benny will emcee Masquers salute to radio Thursday night, which Columbia's Pacific network broadcasts. Benny's writers, Bill Morrow and Ed Beloin, are collabing with Willie Collier on the script.

#### April 19, 1939

Kenny Baker's 'Poem for My Mother' used on the Jack Benny program last Sunday night is the product of Robert Sutherland, 12-year-old Buffalo schoolboy.

Warner Bros.-produced sustainer, 'Grouch Club,' sponsored for the first time coast-to-coast (General Mills' Kix breakfast load is the payer-offer), was importantly spotlighted as the newest comedy show on the air via WEA-F-NBC, hitting the east at 6:30 p.m, Sunday night (10), but somehow it all didn't come off. Starring Grouchmaster Jack Lescoulie, with Arthur Bryan and Leon Leonardi's band, it was hit 'n' miss. Show has been sustaining for almost a year now out of KFWB, the Warners' Hollywood station, from whence this commercial also emanates, and some of it has been condensed into WB shorts, but on its first commercial teeoff the effect was shy of the mark. Highlight was the sequence having to do with the 'free library' (which was one of the better WB shorts in this series), but in the main m.c. Jack Lescoulie sounded as if he'd been listening too assiduously to Jack Benny. Even his tone inflection tips that paid off, plus the style with the testy command, 'Play, Lombardi!', a la 'Play, Phil Harris!' The Grouchmaster also makes a crack about 'while you folks are timed in to this station waiting for Jack Benny to come on right after us.' [Lescoulie, who was later in the original cast of TV's *Today Show*, played Benny on Benny's own show on a 10th anniversary broadcast in 1941. He also did the Benny voice on several Warner Bros. cartoons].

#### April 21, 1939

AL MARTIN is compiling a collection of material written by the late Al Boasberg for screen and radio celebs under the title 'He Left Us Laughing.' Martin is authorized to collate the volume by Mrs. Roslyn Boasberg, writer's widow. Collection will include radio material scripted for Jack Benny, Burns and Allen, Eddie Cantor, Al Jolson, the Marx Brothers and a dozen other name personalities.

#### April 22, 1939

At Masquers radio party, Jack Benny proved master of the crowd's emotions by sobering them with a semi-serious reference to his recent run-in with the government after a convulsive quarter hour of quipping. He told of strolling out on the desert near Palm Springs when he accidently stepped on a rattler. The viper, curled to strike, fell back and slunk away after giving Benny a fast take, as if to say, 'Fella, you've had enough trouble.'

[Maurice Noble](#) (12)

[Mel-O-Toons](#) (4)

[MGM](#) (553)

[Norm McCabe](#) (5)

[Pat Matthews](#) (10)

[Paul Julian](#) (13)

[Paul Terry](#) (2)

[Sara Berner](#) (5)

[Screwly Squirrel](#) (34)

[Spider-Man](#) (1)

[Terrytoons](#) (84)

[Tex Avery](#) (468)

[Tom and Jerry Human](#) (29)

[Trafaz 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)



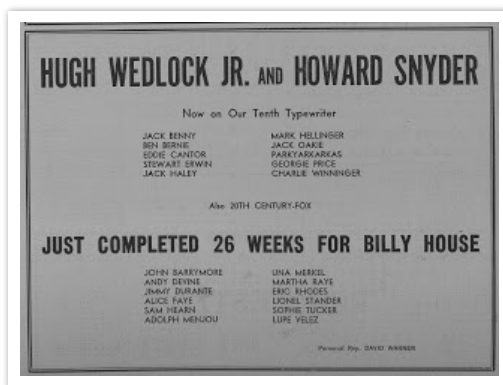
April 24, 1939

Kate Smith's new contract with General Foods, which becomes effective this fall, is for three years, and is non-cancellable. Similar pact prevails between Jack Benny and tin food processor. It reflects the sponsor's pleasure in the show's C.A.B. showing.

May 10, 1939

Ruthrauff & Ryan is shooting the Lever Bros, bankroll to lure to its Tuesday Night Party the cream of town's guest talent. Set for May 16 is Jack Benny, with other top names to follow.

Hugh Wedlock and Howard Snyder, former scripters for Benny, are pounding out the gags for the Dick Powell soap show.



May 20, 1939

CLARENCE ELDRIDGE, vice prex of Young & Rubicam, has returned to New York with reactions of Coast agency execs to the proposed plan to shift radio sponsorship of various General Foods products. Tentative plan is to shift Jack Benny from Jello to Grapenuts and Kate Smith to take over Jello. Several other GF-backed programs are also involved but setup is stalled pending action of Al Pearce's option. Understood Benny is not so hot for the switch. Decision is expected to be reached in New York next week.

May 24, 1939

Texaco was reported yesterday dickering with Al Pearce to replace the current Texaco Star Theatre. Pearce airs his last for Grapenuts in July. Texaco runs out its string after June 28 broadcast. Understood that the petrol show will bid for the current Pearce Monday night spot on NBC, preferring the milder opposition of Dupont's Cavalcade of America to Fred Allen's Town Hall, now bucking the Texaco hour show. Although action on the Texaco option was due last weekend no word has officially come from the east one way or the other. Local officials of the Buchanan agency have been especially non-committal.

With Pearce dropping out of the General Foods lineup, Jack Benny goes under Grapenuts sponsorship in the fall and Kate Smith switches to Jello. Daytime strip show is being auditioned for Calumet-Swansdown.

Priming some strong product for mid-summer release, of which the Jack Benny picture, 'Man About Town,' is expected to be the forerunner. Paramount will send off that film exploitationally with a gala broadcast June 25, tied in with Benny's Jello show. This will be the final of the current series for the program, and will be piped from Waukegan, Ill., the comedian's home town.

'Man About Town' will be pre released at the Broadway Par, but the film goes out in early July otherwise.

May 27, 1939

Jack Benny yesterday was set as emcee of Paramount sales convention banquet, which will be held June 10 at Ambassador.

Paramount has set the preem of 'Man About Town,' Jack Benny starrer, at Waukegan, Ill., June 25, home town of the player. Special train will take members of the cast and the entire radio troupe to the Illinois town. On the stage of the Genesee theatre he will present his last ainer prior to the summer layoff. Carl Krueger, Par studio advertising department, trains out tomorrow to meet Robert Gillham in Chicago to complete plans for the opening.

May 31, 1939

Proposal to switch products on various General Foods programs has been put on the ice for the time being. Meanwhile Al Pearce, on whose continuance the general shuffle depends, has had his contract for Grapenuts extended to July 31. He's on the NBC red WEAf link Monday nights (8-8:30).

Under the suggested rearrangement the plugging of Grapenuts was to go the Jack Benny program, while Kate Smith, who now has Swansdown Flour and Calumet Baking Powder, would do the praising of Jell-O.

June 7, 1939

Paramount's annual sales convention, convenes here tomorrow (Wed.) for four days at the Ambassador hotel, with upwards of 265 delegates in attendance. ...

Entire Cocoanut Grove has been taken over for the banquet Saturday night, with Jack Benny emceeing a floor show to be aired transcontinentally.

**Man About Town**  
(Comedy with Music)



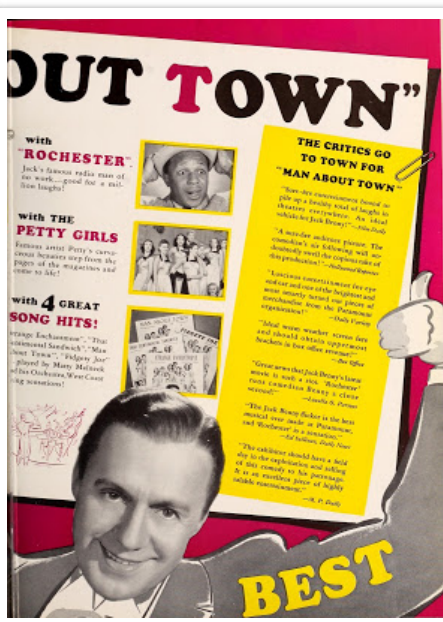
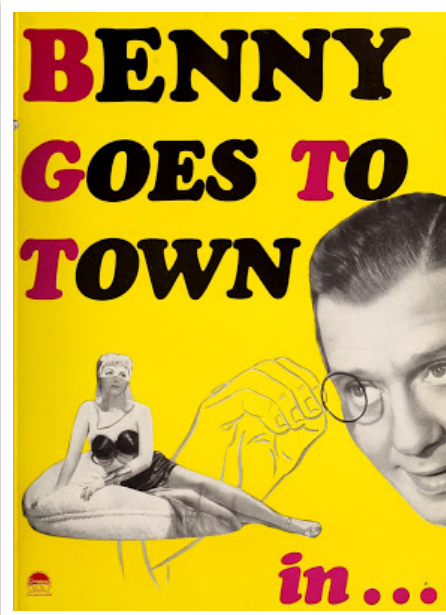
Paramount production. Stars Jack Benny. Dorothy Lamour and Edward Arnold. Supporting cast: Binnie Barnes, Monty Woolley, Isabel Jeans, Phil Harris, Betty Grable, E.E. Clive, Eddie Anderson, Merriel Abbott Dancers, Matty Malneck's orchestra and Pina Troupe. Directed by Mark Sandrich. Produced by Arthur Hornblow, Jr. Screen play by Morrie Ryskind, based on story by Morrie Ryskind, Allan Scott and Z. Myers. Photographed by Ted Tetzlaff. Art direction, Hans Dreier and Robert Usher. Edited by LeRoy Stone. Costumes, Edith Head. Musical director, Victor Young. Musical advisor, Troy Sanders. Musical numbers staged by LeRoy Prinz. Assistant director, Holly Morse. Songs by Matty Malneck, Frank Loesser and Frederick Hollander. Previewed June 7 at Paramount theatre. Running time: 82 mins.

Luscious entertainment for eye and ear and one of the brightest and most smartly turned out pieces of merchandise from the Paramount organization is this 'Man About Town.' It is the best and most natural Jack Benny vehicle in a long time, rich in production values, very funny in situation, dialog and amorous nonsense, and registering hit performances from Benny and his co-stars, Dorothy Lamour and Edward Arnold, and all down the line of support.

Screen play by Morrie Ryskind, with story collaboration by Allan Scott and Z. Myers, is sparkling and cleverly contrived, precisely tailored for Benny's radio and screen personality and ample enough to enlist the best talent of every principal. Benny is presented as an American theatrical impresario in England who crashes the aristocratic set with ludicrous and farcically dangerous results in his efforts to win Dorothy Lamour, his singing star, through jealousy stimulations. Involved in these cross maneuvers with the show girls and the wives of a pair of lord-lings are Edward Arnold and Monty Woolley, as the outraged husbands. Binnie Barnes and Isabel Jeans, the wives, Phil Harris, sweet on Miss Lamour, Betty Grable, a chorine, E. E. Clive, the sour-puss butler and Eddie Anderson (Rochester), who turns in two top flight comedy dances.

The fun is held to high pitch by the masterful direction of Mark Sandrich who keeps the romantic, musical and comic proceedings flowing with smooth precision and constant re-charging of interest in every phase. The Merriel Abbott Dancers, the Pina Troupe of acrobats, Matty Malneck's orchestra do their share in the lavish entertainment. The revue scenes, gorgeously staged, featuring the Petty girls, are beautifully decorative and alive with dance movement in novel routine. Musical embellishment is aptly supplied and of high order, the numbers staged by LeRoy Prinz. Songs by Matty Malneck and Frank Loesser, 'Fidgety Joe' and 'Strange Enchantment,' and 'Sentimental Sandwich' by Frederick Hollander and Loesser, are of hit calibre, sprightly and tunelessly romantic.

Arthur Hornblow, Jr.'s, production guidance smartly combines surefire divertissement for the connoisseur and the mob — a glamorous, healthy, scintillating, humorous and decorative show.





June 12, 1939.

Paramount sales convention delegates rubbed elbows with studio's rank and file Saturday night at Cocoonut Grove where 1,200 persons gathered about banquet tables marking close of distribution gathering. Stanton Griffis, Barney Balaban, Adolph Zukor, Y. Frank Freeman, William LeBaron, Neil Agnew, John Hicks Jr., and rest of company toppers attended.

CBS broadcast co-emceed by Jack Benny and Bob Hope and featuring lot's stellar personalities was among entertainment features. Later Anson Weeks presented his own show, including Veloz and Yolanda. Party ended shortly before 2 a.m. when sales delegates boarded special train for San Francisco.

HOW affixing a title tag to program won Paramount free time over Columbia's coast-to-coast net as well as shortwave pickup for South America and Europe Saturday night is one of more interesting sides to Par's sales convention banquet at Ambassador Saturday night. As Par's radio contact, Bob Hussey had sought to land gratis chain broadcast of party tendered delegates and studio crowd at Cocoonut Grove. Given thumbs down by NBC, Mutual and CBS in view of recent purchases of ether time by film companies for picture plugs, Hussey mulled idea that current year marks 50th anniversary of Thomas A. Edison's invention of motion picture camera. Using that as springboard, he returned to CBS and sold execs on idea of network joining with Par in commemorating semi-centennial of Menlo Park Wizard's discovery, with Irving Feis, former CBS producer turned Par writer, at helm. Result was show that hit lanes from 9 to 9:30, covering 115 stations in this country and Canada as well as stretching to S.A. and other side of Atlantic. Bangup entertainment was supplied with talent including Cecil B. DeMille, Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour, Tito Guizar and Linda Ware, with Jack Benny as emcee, and with Victor Young conducting Anson Weeks' ork. Hussey and Reis produced and directed bill.

June 19, 1939.

Cliff Lewis, Paramount's exploitation chief, working on the world premiere of 'Man About Town' at Waukegan, Ill., has posted billboards in every L station from Chicago to Milwaukee, and has rated a deluxe parlor car train from North State [?] Railroad to bring Jack Benny and his troupe from Chicago for five day celebration accompanying preem.

June 21, 1939.

'Buck Benny Rides Again' is the next Paramount starrer for Jack Benny, with Eddie (Rochester) Anderson in a featured role.

Mark Sandrich, producer-director of 'Man About Town,' will handle 'Buck,' first job under his new contract.

The timely (and financial) intercession of General Foods made it possible for Paramount to go through with its plans to give the natives of Waukegan, Ill., a double ceremonial for its favorite son, Jack Benny, June 25. When it got around that stadio would double-bill the event—a Jello broadcast and premiere of 'Man About Town'—in a theatre where paid admission was to be charged, Federal Communications Commission stepped in with a desist.

Just as Paramounters really started to worry, GF cleared their dilemma by announcing they would buy out the house for the night and give the Waukeganites a double bill, sans the usual tariff.

PARAMOUNT'S pre-preeming publicity in Waukegan, Ill., on 'Man About Town' (25), starring Jack Benny, has Illini town all het up. Anticipating 150,000 visitors for Celebrity Day celebration, Waukegan Police Chief he's asked help of (1) U.S. soldiers at Fort Sheridan, (2) U.S. sailors at Great Lakes Naval Station (Benny trained there), (3) State motorcycle patrolmen, (4) State militiamen, (5) Boy Scouts.

June 22, 1939.

Jack Benny yesterday arrived in Waukegan, Ill., his home town, together with other members of troupe of Paramount's 'Man About Town' which is to be premiered there (25).

Demand for tickets has been so heavy by invading visitors that premiere showing will be held in three theatres simultaneously — the Genesee, Academy and Rialto.

June 24, 1939.

JACK BENNY yesterday received his high school diploma at Waukegan, Ill., many, many years late . . . educators huddled and decided sheepskin should go to outstanding hometown boy despite fact he quit school in third year to take up fiddle . . . Benny is so elated with higher education accomplishment, he now proposes going after honors in fiddling Rimsky Korsakov's 'The Bee.' [Note: "The Bee" was by Franz Schubert. "The Flight of the Bumblebee" was by Korsakov].

June 26, 1939.

Waukegan, Ill., June 25.—This town had its biggest day today when an estimated 150,000 visitors swelled normal 33,000 population to witness world premiere of Paramount's 'Man About Town.' Screening of the Jack Benny picture last night in three houses and broadcasting of Benny's Jello program from stage of the Genesee theatre brought a five-day celebration for the 'local boy who made good' to an end.

Celebs on from Hollywood for the event, gave most of gathering yokels their first glimpse of Hollywood on the hoof during main street parades both tonight and last night. Preem had all the trappings of a West Coast first night.

Cost of premiere, approximately \$125,000 divided among General Foods, Paramount, National Broadcasting Co., and advertising concerns, was more than offset by benefits reaped by former companies in exploitation.

In addition to flimites gathered, nearly 250 newspaper men and women were brought on from around the country to record doings. Aiding Benny in person were Dorothy Lamour, Andy Devine and his wife, Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris and orchestra, Eddie 'Rochester' Anderson, Gertrude Niesen and Tony Martin. To issue order at the preem, Paramount solicited services of U.S. soldiers from Fort Sheridan, sailors from the Great Lakes Naval Training station, Illinois state police, national guardsmen, Chicago city police, in addition to local gendarmes and Boy Scouts. Total on duty today were 2,337 and crowd behaved perfectly.



Kenny Baker has been signed to an exclusive deal by Texaco for next season, for which he will reportedly be paid \$2,000 a week. His contract with Jello, which prohibited him from using his voice for anything but singing on the oil show, netted him \$500 weekly. His Texaco fee on the series closing Wednesday night was \$1,000 weekly.

Understood that Frank Parker may return to the Jack Benny troupe in his old vocal spot.

#### June 28, 1939.

Jack Benny's finale from Waukegan, Ill., his home town, was good dual showmanship for Paramount's 'Man About Town' film starring Benny and for Jello, his sponsor. Plus a good stopgap to break the jump from L. A. to N. Y. What's more, it was a brighter show than has been Benny's average in recent weeks. Getting the town's mayor to stooge that way for the Jello plug was just a shade overboard, so far as the dignity of that office is concerned. But considering the general hometown spirit it was acceptable, and probably won't get the Mayors Assn. of America too peeved.

Show ran nearly five minutes short, and the band interludes had to be stretched plenty.

#### June 29, 1939.

New York, June 28. — Paramount's 'Man About Town' opened today at Paramount theatre to biggest day's business since Washington's birthday, garnering approximately \$11,000. Jack Benny and Dorothy Lamour did two personals each, while Gene Krupa's band is fixed added attraction.

#### July 9, 1939.

Montreal — With a large number of the clergy of all denominations openly admitting that the Jack Benny and Charlie McCarthy programs are having a serious effect on Sunday evening service attendance, matter of changing the hours of worship here is currently under consideration.

Inter-denominational group conference of clergy and church officials is being arranged to determine unification in the proposal to push back the hour of Sunday night church services from 7 p.m. to 9, at least during the summer months. Number of churches here have gone ahead with the proposal without waiting for the round-table decision. Jello program and Chase & Sanborn hour are carried in Canada over the government network.

#### August 3, 1939.

Harry W. Conn, gag-writer, filed a \$65,500 breach of contract suit against Jack Benny yesterday in superior court. Conn contends he entered into a contract with Benny to write comedian's gags for 39 weeks in exchange for five per cent of Benny's earnings during such time as Benny used the material, but has received no compensation.

#### August 11, 1939.

Jack Benny will do m.c. chore at first annual dinner dance of the Beverly Hills lodge of B'nai Brith at Earl Carroll's (20). Special floor show is also being lined up for event.

#### August 12, 1939.

Auditions for tenor spot on Jack Benny Jello program having exhausted the home crop, understood several are coming on from New York to try out for the vocal turn, vacated by Kenny Baker, exclusive to Texaco next season.

#### August 18, 1939.

Fall radio status of Kenny Baker is shrouded in uncertainty with reports making the rounds that he may be back with Jack Benny, additional to his Texaco chore. Understood that his Texaco contract, which calls for his exclusive tenoring and acting, is undergoing legal scrutiny, looking to the possibility that he may also be available for the Jello series.

Agency's auditioning of successor to Baker for the Benny program failed to uncover any talent acceptable to the comedian. With half of the Texaco show to originate in New York with dramatics it is held likely that oiler may relax its hold on Baker for his exclusive services. Baker's contract with Texaco, executed before the dramatic half of the program was decided on, is said to call for \$2,000 a week. Under the new arrangement Baker would be confined to not more than two numbers as he shares the vocals with Frances Langford. Also to be crowded into the half hour would be the comedy antics of Ken Murray, and possibly Producer Ed Gardner's 'Archie,' with David Broekman, musical director, slated to do one production number each week.

#### August 19, 1939

Hollywood last night paid tribute to Gus Edwards, the Star Maker, on the 60th anniversary of his natal day at the Ambassador hotel. Turnout of around 500 toasted the discoverer of more than a score of stage stars, sang his songs and partook of his birthday cake, of such colossal size that it had to be wheeled in.

Eddie Cantor emceed the birthday party and called to the microphone for speeches eulogizing the evening's honor guest Governor Culbert Olson and Jack Benny. Weber and Fields were introduced as discoverers of Edwards.

Benny's quips topped an evening of good natured raillery. He said he was the only one there who wasn't discovered by Edwards, that he wasn't unearthed by Rudy Vallee or Major Bowes and that Sol Lesser was out of the question. When Cantor introduced him through the courtesy of Rochester he countered with 'Deanna Durbin didn't hurt you any, either.' Benny cracked that since Edwards started Cantor he should try to find him a job now. Benny kidded the absent Bing Crosby with 'he's the only tout I know that has an annuity' and added the only safe bet with him is that the stork will visit his home again.'

CBS broadcast 15 minutes of the festivities, with Victor Young batoning Stan Meyer's orchestra in selections composed by Edwards. Vocals were sung community style. Edwards danced across the speakers stand to prove that he has recovered completely from his recent illness.

#### August 24, 1939

Don Wilson, the Joe E. Brown and Jello shows announcer, doing a pic trick in Paramount's '\$1,000 a Touchdown,' has lost 30 pounds since acquiring San Fernando valley ranch and is having to lay in whole new wardrobe.

#### August 30, 1939

San Francisco... After months of dickering, deal has been finally set for Jack Benny, Mary Livingstone and Phil Harris' orch to play in Treasure Island's Temple Compound Labor Day weekend (2-4). Trio reported getting \$9,000 for the date, second to Edgar Bergen-Charlie McCarthy's \$10,000 booking recently for two days. Harris takes over Tuesday (5) for several weeks on his own. Shows are gratis.

#### September 6, 1939

There are some 750,000 front covers of Time mag, dated last week, with Jack Benny's photo, in color, thereon, that can be had for the asking. Instead, Time's editors played a very timely hunch and substituted Winston Churchill, also in color photo, as its No. 1 newsworthy feature, and wrote up the author-statesman in a manner that was a beautiful blend with events that followed fast and furiously over the weekend, when Neville Chamberlain appointed Churchill his First Lord of the Admiralty in Britain's newly created war cabinet. When Time's editors the week before last saw Hitler going berserk, they knew. Churchill would fast become hot stuff all over and, while the periodical usually has a couple of months covers in advance, Churchill was on what they call the 'vague list' until the trend of world politics suddenly catapulted him to the fore.

Co-managing editor Frank Norris says that the bugaboo of Time are sports figures who more often than not don't come through as brilliantly as hoped. Either that, or they get injured, or don't even participate. Most memorable was a promising three-year-old called Red Rain, back in 1935, who got the front cover and was scratched, not even running in the big race pointed for.

The Benny story was to tie in with resumption of radio advertising. He may yet be used, but the printed covers, due to the date thereon, are so much dead stock right now. The fall radio resume story, which was hung on Benny, was also scrapped.

Currently Time's companion publication, Life, which also must anticipate topical news events because going to press many days in advance, is in a dither on how to cope with the shifting war scenes.

#### September 7, 1939

San Francisco, Sept. 6. Labor Day weekend brought a crowd of 284,659 to the Golden Gate Exposition, with Jack Benny playing to s.r.o. during his six free performances in the Temple Compound.

Jose Iturbi, Albert Coates and Leopold Stokowski are booked to conduct the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra in a series of three concerts in the California Coliseum starting Wednesday (13). Miliza Korjus will appear as vocal soloist with Coates.



September 11, 1939

Program preferences are determined by income, according to the report released by the Cooperative Analysis of Broadcast. The bulletin shows that such programs as Cities Service Concert and Information Please appeal to the higher income levels while those in the lower income bracket prefer listening to Lum and Abner and Major Bowes.

During the winter of 1938-39, CAB says, average rating of all evening shows increased from eight and eighttenths percent to nine and three tenths percent, with evening shows rating 10 percent or higher increased from 39 to 44 over the previous winter. Number of daytime programs rating over five percent was almost doubled.

Ten leading programs for the winter, CAB says, are Chase and Sanborn, Jack Benny, Lux Radio Theatre, Kraft Music Hall, Major Bowes Amateur Hour, Town Hall Tonight, Burns and Allen, Good News, Rudy Vallee and Big Town.

September 20, 1939

Finding a sub for Kenny Baker, who hopped to the Texaco show with Ken Murray, is providing Jack Benny with plenty of call for an aspirin. Comic is doing a load of sizzling at his sponsor, General Foods, for letting Baker get away.

Not the least of his troubles on the Baker exit will be the flock of protesting letters which are anticipated.

Following Frank Parker's leave-taking a few years ago, Benny was flooded with letters from irate listeners who said they'd never tune him in again for 'firing' Parker. Inasmuch as Baker was built up on the show even more than Parker, Benny doesn't relish the new kickbacks when he takes to broadcasting again. As a result, he will in the future accept no more contracts except on a package-show basis. He wants complete control over the people in this company. Andy Devine, Rochester, and of course, Mary Livingstone, are now under his contract, but the rest of the cast is signed separately by the agency.

Baker is said to be getting \$2,000 a week on the Texaco show, a figure which Benny claims he would have matched from his own pocket had the singer been under a pact to him, or had he known full details of negotiations on the switch to the oil company show.

A twenty-one-year-old warbler has been tentatively accepted by Benny for the Baker spot. Current plan is not to announce his name until about the fourth week the Jell-o show is on the air, filling in the meantime with a variety of warblers who are definitely and comically bad. Public will be asked its opinion, with the radio audience finally 'discovering' the permanent replacement.

*May Air From Honolulu*

If proper steamer connections can be made, Benny hopes during the winter to do two broadcasts from Honolulu, taking his whole troupe with him. In the event transportation can't be arranged, the shows will shift from the Coast to Miami for part of the winter.

With the expiration of his present term next June, Benny will lay off for six months or a year. Part of the time will be consumed in making a Paramount film with his air-enemy, Fred Allen, and he'll vacation after that. Following the filming of 'Buck Benny Rides Again,' which will get under way in November, Benny will make no more pictures during the broadcast season.

Jell-O funster was in New York for a week, training out yesterday (Tuesday) for Chicago, where he will appear at the American Legion convention for four days and visit with his family for three more before returning to the Coast.

Jack Benny and Fred Allen, the well-cultivated enemies of the airlines, will get together in a film for Paramount next summer.

It was originally hoped to do the picture after Benny finishes his next film, "Buck Benny Rides Again." Jello comic will make no more pix during the broadcasting season.

September 27, 1939

Chester LaRoche, Young & Rubicam prez, flew out to the Coast Saturday (23) to be on band for the opening of the Screen Guild show the next day and the Jack Benny stanza this Sunday (1).

The LaRoche stand will be just for a week. [Note: Benny didn't broadcast on Oct. 1. The season debut was the 8th].

September 29, 1939

FOR reasons of accumulating publicity and ostensibly to sound out the public on the wisdom of his choice, successor to Kenny Baker on Jack Benny's new Jello series getting away Oct. 8 will go unnamed for the first four weeks. If he fills the niche satisfactorily he remains indefinitely in the stooge-warbler role. Lad around whom all the mystery will be veiled is Dennis Day, young NY law student, who has appeared with Leith Stevens orchestra on several CBS sustaining programs. Discovery of Day is credited to Mary Livingstone (Mrs. Benny) who made the recommendation after she heard him in the east. Four-week optional deal was then struck with Columbia Artists in NY and the mystery angle hit upon as a publicity cover-up for the loss of Baker, which is expected to bring a flood of uncomplimentary mail.

Harry Baldwin, who doubles between secretarizing for Jack Benny and making all those interruptions on his programs when comes a knock on the door, heckles Phil Harris on the final Coast Fitch Bandwagon program Sunday. Baldwin is the only secretary who carries an AFRA card.

Offices at Paramount where Jack Benny and his writers, Bill Morrow and Eddie Beloin, discuss gags and situations are being soundproofed to tone down vocal assault on workers in neighboring cubicles.

#### October 4, 1939

Chicago ... Bill Morrow in with Jack Benny for the Legion convention show.

The Jack Bennys readying to adopt another child, this time a boy.

#### October 5, 1939

Superior Court Judge Clarence M. Hanson signed an order yesterday staying proceedings in Harry Conn's \$65,500 suit against Jack Benny until arbitration, as called for in their contract. Conn is suing for money allegedly due him for writing services.

Jack Benny and his Jello crew take to the air Sunday for another 39-week stretch. Only change from last year is Dennis Day for Kenny Baker in the tenor-stooging role. Returners are Mary Livingstone, Rochester, Andy Devine, Phil Harris, Don Wilson and Harry Baldwin. Murray Bolen produces for Young & Rubicam, with Ted Hediger the NBC contact.

Script chores again fall to Bill Morrow and Ed Beloin. Program is heard on 86 NBC (red) stations, broadcasting for the east at 4 p.m. and slotted at 8:30 p.m. on the Coast repeat.

#### October 9, 1939

Jimmy McHugh and Frank Loesser will write the songs for the next untitled Jack Benny picture at Paramount. It will have six song numbers.

#### October 10, 1939

Eddie 'Rochester' Anderson signed a three-year exclusive radio contract with Jack Benny yesterday. MCA handled.

In his pre-broadcast audience warmup Sunday Jack Benny introduced Eddie Anderson (Rochester) as 'the guy who stole my last picture.'

#### October 11, 1939

##### JACK BENNY

with Mary Livingstone, Verna Felton, Rochester (Eddie Anderson), Phil Harris Orchestra, Don Wilson, Dennis Day

30 Mins.

##### JELL-O

Sunday, 7 p.m.

WEAF-NBC, New York)

(Young & Rubicam)

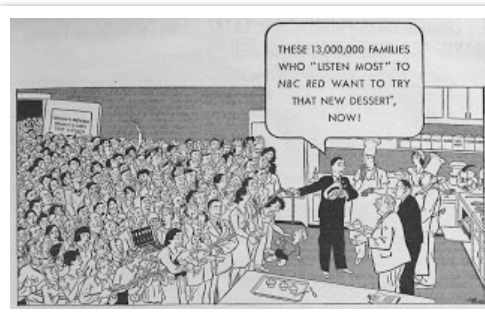
With every indication that he will continue to deserve and hold his top-of-the-pile rating, Jack Benny returned Sunday at the same time and for the same sponsor over 80 NBC stations. It was a bang-up, high-speed laugh-studded premiere, a tee-off to serve as a master-model for all radio comedians to study. What is notable about these

Jello stanzas is the amount of advance study and preparation, editing, tightening and timing that goes on the average, into the finished result.

A cute novelty beginning opened the program without a commercial, as if the microphone was eavesdropping upon Benny and Mary Livingstone and later Don Wilson and Phil Harris on their way to the program. Later the continuity skipped into the usual musical theme and J-E-L-L-O fanfare, which is the program's trademark. Kenny Baker having gone his way the new singer is an unknown tenor, Dennis Day (phoney name), who was introduced as guided by his mother, a triple-distilled blend of all the stage mamas of fact and fancy. The character, as played by Verna Felton, with timing as Benny's own, should shape up as a comedy gem. Day at the end slapped over 'Good Night, My Beautiful' in a classy way. Both as a singer and a comedy foil, the youngster should do okay for Benny.

Right name of singer is Eugene McNulty. He's reported well known to the song publishing fraternity around N. Y.

The situational cross-fire, gag comedy wrapped in characterization, remains as before the clue to how he does it. Each player is given a role and the recurring emphasis upon well-known idiosyncrasies underscores the laughs. After six years for Jello, the laugh pace is still terrific. *Land.*



October 18, 1939.

Kay Kyser's program next Wednesday (25) will come from a broadcasting set in his picture, 'That's Right, You're Wrong,' at the RKO studio. Regular ducat holders will be admitted.

Kyser guests with Jack Benny on his program Sunday (22) to swap quips end get in a plug for his picture.

October 24, 1939.

Jack Benny picture, 'Buck Benny Rides Again,' got the spurs at Paramount yesterday with star reporting work on two-month shooting schedule. Also working was Eddie (Rochester) Anderson, extras and bit players.

November 2, 1939.

Producer-Director Mark Sandrich today moves Paramount's 'Buck Benny Rides Again' troupe to Placerita Canyon to start Western shots. Making location trip will be Jack Benny, Andy Devine and other principals.

November 12, 1939.

Jack Benny's dream, while under gas in a dentist's chair was an interlude of fancy-tickling, imaginative nonsense Sunday night (12). In his opiate-inflamed stream-of-consciousness, the dentist crystallized as Dr. Fred Allen urging Benny to use Ipana toothpaste and then progressively going to ever-larger instruments. Another delightful Freudian touch had Benny hearing Don Wilson repeatedly announcing "This Is the Jello program starring Phil Harris."

November 14, 1939.

Producer-Director Mark Sandrich yesterday took Paramount's 'Buck Benny Rides Again' troupe to Victorville for chase sequences. Location unit, which includes Jack Benny and other principals, returns here Thursday morning.

November 24, 1939.

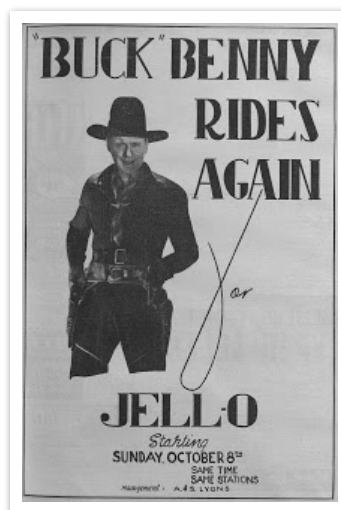
ROCHESTER is going to have to work with a polar bear in Paramount's 'Buck Benny Rides Again,' and will closely watch tests to be made of the animal next week to assure troupe that if is a docile and sympathetic critter. Bear is being trained in from Clinton, Conn. zoo to impersonate Carmichael, which Jack Benny uses in his radio program.

November 29, 1939.

C. E. Hooper survey of the week of Nov. 8-15 shows Jack Benny running ahead of the Chase & Sanborn coffee hour [Edgar Bergen-Charlie McCarthy] for the first time. Rating this checkup got Benny was 34.4%, whereas the C & S stanza drew 34.2%.

December 6, 1939.

Two radioites set for Paramount pictures are Barry Wood (Lucky Strike 'Hit Parade') and Dennis Day, Jack Benny's new tenor. Day is already in work with Benny on a film but a separate deal for him is virtually set.

December 9, 1939.

Fred Allen-Jack Benny ether feud is to be brought to screen by Paramount, with Allen and Benny playing real life roles and Mark Sandrich handling producer-director chore. Camera work is skeded to start in July. Allen yesterday gave nod after year of effort on Sandrich's part to induce him to be lensed with Benny. Sandrich recently made trip to New York in final effort to win him over. Walter Batchelor agency signed for Allen.

Feature will be Allen's third screen start, he previously having been seen in 'Thanks a Million' and 'Sally, Irene and Mary' for 20th-Fox. Sandrich starts preparations on yarn as soon as he completes 'Buck Benny Rides Again.'

December 12, 1939.

EFFECTS of absence is not limited to heart, as old axiom might lead one to believe, but reaches out to touch the pay-check as well. At least, that's what Fred Allen believes as he gazes at that Paramount contract he signed last week, which is understood to call for stipend of \$150,000 for co-starring with Jack Benny in one feature to be made next summer. Allen drew around \$50,000 per picture back in 1935-36 when he appeared in 'Thanks a Million' and 'Sally, Irene and Mary' for 20th-Fox. Par tried to coax Allen back for more than a year before getting his signature on pact, and offered price mounted with each bid for his services.

December 13, 1939.



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Edgar Bergen's new option with J. Walter Thompson for the Chase & Sanborn program will net him around \$6,000 a week even though the java show will have its running time cut in half starting Jan. 7. Understood another boost in 1941 will put him in the top coin bracket with Jack Benny. Bergen will do his customary two spots with Charlie McCarthy on the new half hour setup.

Jack Benny is planning to take his Jello troupe to Miami some time in February. If sponsor okays and picture commitments permit he will do two or three broadcasts from the Florida resort. Benny also is negotiating with Ezra Stone for a guest appearance before the Aldrich Family returns east.

December 14, 1939.

Top names from radio and pictures will appear on the Salvation Army Christmas Fund six-hour broad-cast on KNX Saturday night. Players will volunteer specialties for dialers who make contributions by phone or wire to the fund. Lum and Abner emcee the program, which airs from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m.

Among those who have promised to drop in and do a turn for the fund are James Roosevelt, Gene Autry, Al Pearce, Burns and Allen, Frank Parker, Ray Noble, Jack Benny, Andy Devine, Eddie (Rochester) Anderson, Don Ameche, Bob Hope, Ken Murray, Frances Langford, Barbara Stanwyck, Robert Taylor, Jean Parker, Penny Singleton, Arthur Lake, Benny Rubin, Arthur Treacher, Edith Fellows, Billy House, Fred MacMurray, Mary Healy, Fibber McGee and Molly, Eddie Cantor, Dick Powell, Joan Blondell, Ben Alexander, Hedda Hopper, Dennis Day, Mischa Auer, Bobby Breen, Morton Downey, and Roy Rogers.

Orchestras will be conducted by Lud Gluskin, Carl Hoff, Leith Stevens, Eddie Dunstedter, Bobby Sherwood, Ivan Dittmar and Phil Harris.

December 21, 1939.

Mary Martin gets the top femme spot in the untitled Jack Benny-Fred Allen comedy, scheduled for July production at Paramount.

Meanwhile, she is slated to star in 'Kiss the Boys Goodbye' if she completes her stage work in time.

December 27, 1939.

Jack Benny put across a whacking good show last Sunday night (24) over NBC red (WEAF). As usual for his pre-Christmas stanza, he did it in the form of a party at his home, with all the regulars on the program as guests. As a result, almost the entire 30 minutes was devoted to straight gags, most of which were aimed at Benny. It all struck an unusually high comedy standard and ended on a note of hilarious distraction, with Benny on the phone explaining to the director why he refuses to make that scheduled picture with Fred Allen, while his polar bear and ostrich fought it out in the living room, with Rochester trying to untangle 'em and the guests apparently taking the joint apart piece by piece. Commercials were neatly worked in, too, and were cut, like the Christmas turkey, to the bone.

Jack Benny Xmas-gifted his writers, Bill Morrow and Ed Beloin, with all rights to the title, 'Buck Benny Rides Again,' Understood Paramount will have to make a deal with the scribes for use of the handle in the picture starring Benny.

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Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:34](#)



Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

## 1 comment:

[It's So Hanna-Barberaesque](#) 10 April 2016 at 12:23

In the June 19th item, I believe the Chicago, North Shore and Milwaukee Railroad, an electric interurban colloquially known as "the North Shore Line," was implied.

Which DID serve Waukegan.

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