



Sunday, 2 October 2016

## Advice From Don Wilson

Don Wilson was an integral part of Jack Benny's cast (1938 photo to the right) and it's difficult to imagine Benny carrying on for years with Howard Claney or Alois Havrilla as his announcer; both had been with the show before Wilson.

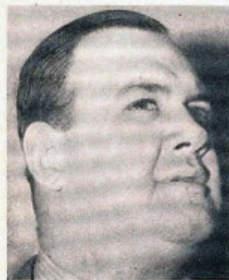
Wilson's hiring for the Benny show was as fortuitous as it was improbable. Wilson was a play-by-play football broadcaster who had started in radio as a singer with a trio. Those aren't exactly credentials for a comedy/variety show. But it proved to be a stroke of genius. Wilson and the rest of the cast interacted beautifully. And who better to sell food than a happy fat guy? Then when American Tobacco took over sponsorship and handed Wilson's commercial spots at the start and close of the show to a bevy of others, the writers found ways to keep Donzie as a relevant and vital part of the show.



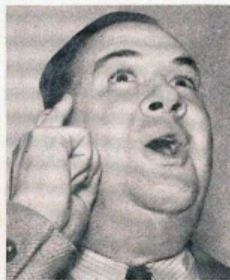
This is a sample of the homespun Jack Benny experienced when he returned to Hollywood after his recent trip to New York. So glad to see him back were (left to right): Eddie (Rochester) Anderson, Sam (Schlaggerman) Hearn, Don Wilson, Guest George Jessel, Mary Livingston, Jack, Andy Devine, Blanche Stewart, Kenny Baker.

Wilson was incredibly popular and, season after season, in market after market, topped listener polls for favourite announcer. He bested some greats. Harry Von Zell, Ken Carpenter and Harlow Wilcox were beautiful foils on their shows; Carpenter was a Wilson protégé at KFI while Von Zell was signed by Columbia to star in a series of shorts.

Here's an article about Don from *Radio Life*, a terrific Los Angeles-based publication, from March 30, 1947 (the photos accompanying this post are from elsewhere). Those of you familiar with his wife Lois Corbet from TV and radio may be puzzled by the reference to Marusia Rudunska. Before Lois, Wilson didn't have the best luck with wives. He divorced two of them; reading between the lines of stories at the time, one was left with the impression that Donzie hooked up with some drama queens. Wilson filed for divorce from Marusia in June 1949, citing cruelty. The divorce was granted on June 19, 1950. He married Lois four days later in Santa Barbara. Four days?! We'll avoid editorial comment.



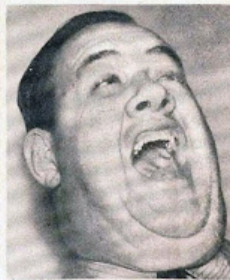
Jelly Announcer Don Wilson of the Benny show may rightfully claim all rights to belly-laugh honors



Don is on the verge of giving way to his impulse as his countenance tunes up and he toys with an idea



As idea forms, Don prepares to let loose fireworks, for with him big laughs from little smiles do grow



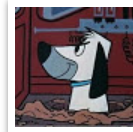
The famed Wilson mirthquake is on as he quivers—just like a big dish of Jell-O—from tiptoe to top hair

### Don Wilson

*They Call Him "Jovial, Genial, Chubby," but We Call Him a Distinguished Veteran Who's Seen Radio Change for the Better*

By Lillian Kramer

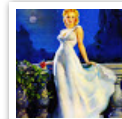
### About Me



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### Blogs to See

#### Rip Jagger's Dojo



[Very Good Girls!](#) - This month turned out to offer quite a

gaggle of a good looking dames. I thought I'd finish it out with the same. Here are some of my favorite examples ...  
8 hours ago

#### News From ME

[Gordon Bressack, R.I.P.](#) - Animation writer and playwright Gordon Bressack died today. This news... well, I was going to say it came as no shock to anyone aware of his massive health pr...  
10 hours ago

#### Movies with Michael



[Rereleasing "King of Jazz"](#) - I have a real fondness for the movie,\*

King of Jazz\* (1930). It is a one of a kind movie with lots of great music and an excellent cartoon segment from th...

14 hours ago

#### Cartoon Research

[Mickey Mouse in "Plight of the Bumblebee"](#) - The Plight of the Bumblebee was a nearly completed Mickey Mouse cartoon from 1951. Director Jack Kinney called it "The best Mickey never finished."

1 day ago

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

[Tomorrow Night: Cartoons in Brooklyn!](#) - \*Friday night at 389 Melrose Street in

DON WILSON, rotund winner of Radio Life's 1946-47 Distinguished Achievement Award for the Most Enjoyable Commercial, has been "at it" for twenty-four years now, and that's a long time. Don has seen radio change from a frail to a giant industry. When he started dabbling in radio back in 1924 they weren't as fussy about production, sound and timing as they are now.

"Before commercial radio, it didn't make much difference if we ran over a minute or two," Don recalls.

"As a matter of fact, if we didn't have anything to put on the air—or if someone failed to show up for a broadcast—the station just signed off for a while."

A bit more informal than things are today!

Don confesses there wasn't much money then in radio, "but it was a lot of fun and we learned as we went along".

Most people got into early radio because they were musically inclined, either instrumentally or vocally, since most radio programs consisted solely of music. Don started out as a singer over a Denver transmitter. It was several years before he took up sportscasting and then announcing.

Our chubby voice of experience says that announcers, along with technique, have changed for the better since those early days.

"Announcers today have finer diction and a much greater command of the language.

"They must have more than a good voice and a knowledge of pronunciation, however. They have to be able to project a 'selling' voice over the microphone and to have an acceptable radio personality at the same time", he points out.

According to Don, the radio microphone is the daddy of the lie detector.

"The mike is the greatest detector of insincerity, and by the same token it reflects honesty and sincerity in an announcer's voice", he claims.

### His Advice

Every week Don receives countless letters from would-be announcers seeking advice on how to succeed in radio. He answers them all:

"Be yourself. Don't try to mimic someone else. Your own personality is your greatest asset.

"Have an honest enthusiasm about the product you're selling and your voice will register successfully."

He certainly knows whereof he speaks. The Radio Life citation is the latest in a ten-year-long string of firsts in popularity polls which have picked him as favorite announcer.

Don has been with Jack Benny for thirteen years. Besides his Sunday stints for Benny, the Wilson verve also adds lift to Ginny Simms' Friday night airers, the Victor Borge-Benny Goodman show, and Kenny Baker's five-times-weekly early morning broadcasts.

Most of his fans write about his infectious laugh. Those background chuckles are not prop laughs. Don doesn't laugh at a joke because there's a paycheck in the shadows. He really enjoys a funny line and it's second nature for him to boom out with the hearty ho-hos.

After all those references to Don as a "Hemo Boy," comparisons to Mt. Wilson, and what not, the popular conception is a Don Wilson weighing in the neighborhood of 400 pounds, more or less.

Actually, Don weighs a trim 230—not bad for his six feet, two.

Ginny's warm-up shows make a lot over Don's avoirdupois. A make-believe storm at sea calls for a line like

"Make Wilson stay in the middle of the ship—it's listing!"

Pounds don't worry Don, and he claims he diets only when he's asleep. His favorite midnight snack is a bowl of graham crackers and milk.

Wilson is married to Marusia Rudunska, a refugee Polish countess and a very talented dress designer. A couple of weeks ago Marusia had her new spring opening in Beverly Hills. Hollywood stars and Beverly Hills society were well represented.

Ginny was one of the hostesses at the opening, which was emceed, as you might guess, by Don Wilson.

Marusia modeled her creations herself and caused quite a flurry.

Don is very proud of Marusia's success. He likes to talk about her workshop in downtown Los Angeles, about the clever things she does with fabrics, and about the gowns she whips up for Esther Williams and other stars. "They call her the Valentina of Beverly Hills", he says gleefully.

The Wilsons have just moved into a new apartment in Beverly Hills and are now in the happy throes of decorating. They used to live on a ranch in the Valley, but their busy careers made town living more to be desired.

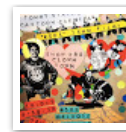
Besides his multitudinous radio assignments, Don finds time to be President of Acro-Speed, Incorporated, an automotive tune-up equipment plant located in Pasadena—and to be radio's number one gin-rummy addict.

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:04](#)

Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

No comments:

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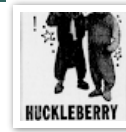


Brooklyn, NY, the final Cartoon Carnival screening of the summer

presents nearly two hours of early silent ...  
1 day ago



Yowp



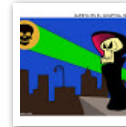
On the Road With Huckleberry - Take the idea of people dressed in

huge cartoon character costumes (like at Disneyland) with personal appearances (like the Lone Ranger or a TV kid's show...  
2 days ago



Fernando Llera Blog

Cartoons



Drug Supplies Are Dwindling Fast In Children's Hospitals. -

©2019  
fernandollercartoons.com  
3 days ago

### Mark Kausler's CatBlog

Close Up On The Eggs - Here's the third part of Cathy Hill's epic story: Racketty Ann and The Lost World! In pages 9 through 12, Racketty Ann continues her story (I love how the ...  
1 week ago

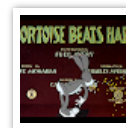


Supervised By Fred

Avery: Tex Avery's

Warner Brothers

Cartoons



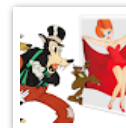
Tortoise Beats Hare: Protagonist Loses; Shreds Opening Credits -

Release date: 3/15/1941  
Available on Looney Tunes Golden Collection Vol. 2 (WHV DVD); Looney Tunes Platinum Collection, Vol. 2 (WHV BR) You may download a ...  
1 week ago



Termite Terrace


headlines



Top 10 in My Opinion - Little Red Riding Hood Cartoons - Today, I'll

be sharing what I believe are the ten greatest cartoons based on the fairy tale Little Red Riding Hood. But first... Honorable Mentions: 1. ...  
2 weeks ago

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 **The World of Knight AT PRESENT** - A new painting. \*\*\* Done with leftover paint at end of day. \*\*\* I found the opening of PSYCHIATRICKS a bit bare of human expressions, so I reworked ...  
2 weeks ago


 **Peter Gray's Comics and Art** New blog on my Art work...Original art...prints for sale petergrayart ist@gmail.com for prices etc... -  
<https://petergrayart.blogspot.com/> Will update it like I do on facebook.  
1 month ago

**What About Thad?**  
**Chris Reccardi Interviewed** - I don't want to start a practice of publishing an interview every time someone from Ren & Stimpy dies, but Chris Reccardi (1964-2019) was too important a f...  
3 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...  
7 months ago

**Kids, Eh?**  
**#1288: Bird Call** - #1288: Bird Call  
11 months ago

 **Cartoons, Model Sheets, & Stuff**  
 **Pete Hothead Model Sheets** - Here are a few model sheets from the first Pete Hothead short. Released in 1952 and directed former Tom & Jerry animator Pete Burness. Ted Parmelee was the...  
1 year ago

 **Dr. Grob's Animation Review**  
**Upside Down** - According to the titles this film is inspired by 'upside down poetry' by 15th century Indian poet Kabir.  
23 hours ago

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