



Wednesday, 14 February 2018

Ruling Radio Roost

There weren't too many newspaper columnists who had bad things to say about Jack Benny. About the worst it got was John Crosby and a few others grumbling that Benny's shows had the same types of routines before admitting that's what the (very large) audience wanted.

Hearst columnist Jack O'Brian caught [Jack in 1952](#) when his TV career had become a success. He wrote a birthday piece about Jack, published by the International News Service on February 13, 1955. As this is Jack's birthday today, let's reprint it. You'll notice even columnists took advantage of Benny's "39" joke to add humour to their stories.

My thanks to Tim Lones for supplying the drawing for this post.

Benny 39?

By JACK O'BRIAN

NEW YORK (INS) Jack Benny, comic Valentine born Feb. 14, 1894, will be 39 tomorrow. We realise this may strike a discordant chronological note, but we don't argue with a man about his own age, and that's what Jack told us; he'll be 39 tomorrow.

What we can do something about is to divulge the fact that at the age of either 61 or 39, Jack Benny, born in Chicago, bred in Waukegan, star of vaudeville, the legitimate stage, movies, radio, television and several banks, observed his impending birthday by moving up to the top ten shows on television.

TOPS IN RADIO

The Jack Benny show still rules the radio roost, too, as it did 20 years ago. Jack has been in the light for 45 years; he was just 16 when he teamed his then authentically proficient fiddle with the pianistics of one Cora Salisbury, who played with him in the pit orchestra of the Barrison Theatre in Waukegan, at which point a star was born.

Jack had been playing violin in the Barrison for several years, in knee pants.

Cora Salisbury got homesick early in their partnership. When her father became ill, and dashed home to Waukegan. The team Benny & Woods followed, the latter a Chicago pianist.

Enlisting in the Navy at the start of the First World War, Jack was assigned to the Great Lakes Naval training station; became a sailor in greasepaint, raised money and spirits in "The Great Lakes Revue."

VITAL MILESTONE

This became an important milestone, for it established Jack as a man who could chatter engagingly on stage as well as fiddle.

From the first laugh, comedy became more important than violin. He had planned another musical act with Zez Confrey, legendary jazz pianist, as partner, but Zez got out of the Navy later than Jack, who by then had decided to go it as a "single."

START IN FILMS

When early talkies were hiring any vaudevillian able to speak in passable grammar, Jack starred in several films revues and did real well in them. Though he was getting big pay, he felt he was stagnating between pictures, and his guilt complex sent him back to the stage.



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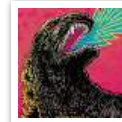


[Seeing The Gold Rush \(1925\) at the Old Town Music Hall - Last night I had](#)

the incredible pleasure of watching Charlie Chaplin's* The Gold Rush* (1925) at the Old Town Music Hall in El Segundo, CA. This is a movi...

42 seconds ago

Rip Jagger's Dojo



[Godzilla - The Criterion Era! - What a](#)

magnificent dilemma! In a few months The Criterion Collection folks will be issuing the Showa Godzilla movies. When I first heard they were going ...

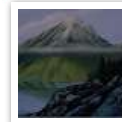
9 hours ago

News From ME

[This Evening...](#) - I'm going to get away from the TV where people argue and shoot each other. Instead, I'm going to go see a 93-year-old man sing and dance and maybe even tri...

13 hours ago

Yowp



[The House of the Seven Gargoyles - Dick Thomas](#)

pulled a huge workload at the Hanna-Barbera studio. He arrived in 1959 from Walt Disney (after almost two decades at Warner Bros.) to work on t...


1 day ago

In a couple of years a little gadget that poured entertainment into homes was in its infancy—radio. It was, as TV was to become later, a chance and a challenge for all in show, business. Jack took the chance and became the biggest name in radio comedy and remained at the top since. Television claimed him five years ago. His first hilarious phrase came after a long burst of applause from the premier audience, to which he mused: "I'd give a million dollars to know how I looked. He looked, and performed, just fine."

Neither O'Brian or Benny knew it at the time, but the radio roost was about to be torn down. Fewer people were listening, more and more Americans had television sets on at night. American Tobacco didn't see how it could bear the expense of the Benny show for the diminishing return it was getting from its advertising. The microphones were shut off for a final time on May 22nd. But Jack carried on in television, either on a series or in specials, up until he died. O'Brian was right. Benny "looked, and performed, just fine."

Posted by [Yowp](#) at [03:40](#)
Labels: [Jack Benny](#)


1 comment:

**Doz Hewson** 14 February 2018 at 19:34

If he were ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-FOUR YEARS OLD
If he were LIVING
Wonder what the hell he'd make of AMERICA, THE WORLD and THE UNIVERSE TODAY?

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**Fernando Llera Blog**
Cartoons





Female Senate members still earning less than their male counterpart

s. - ©2019

[fernandollera.com](#)

1 day ago

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




Tomorrow Night in Astoria: That Slapstick Show -

*Tomorrow


afternoon, That Slapstick Show celebrates its 5th anniversary show with a special screening of unseen American silent comedies from the Library...


1 day ago

**Cartoon Research**
Danny Kaye's Weavies

Walt Disney was always looking for opportunities to find additional work for his artists. One solution was supplying short animated segments for features ...

2 days ago


**Termite Terrace headlines**

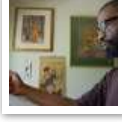


Popeye Cans the Spinach (Commercial Corner) -

Due to the Tom and Jerry hiatus, the monthly commercials are returning. This month we'll look at Popeye canning the spinach and advertising with other a...

1 week ago

**The World of Knight**



SATURDAY AFTERNOON - Nice view. I actually drew it into a panel


today.

2 weeks ago

Mark Kausler's CatBlog
Racketty Ann's Mystery Flight!

Here are pages 5 through eight of "Racketty Ann and the Lost World". There's delightful fantasy here as Racketty Ann and Bla Bla take a ride on the back o...

2 weeks ago

**Peter Gray's Comics and Art**

New blog on my Art work...Original art...prints for sale

<https://tralfaz.blogspot.com/2018/02/ruling-radio-roost.html>

2/6



petergrayartist@gmail.com for prices etc..

<https://petergrayart.blogspot.com/>

Will update it like I do on facebook.
4 weeks ago

Supervised By Fred Avery: Tex Avery's Warner Brothers Cartoons

Coming Soon To This Blog...



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...

2 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...

6 months ago

Kids, Eh?

[#1288: Bird Call](#) - [#1288: Bird Call](#)

10 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

[Cool World](#) - Cool World' looks like a poor man's version of 'Who Framed Roger Rabbit'. Sure, the film boasts Brad Pitt and Kim Basinger as leading actors, and it even f...

4 days ago

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