



Sunday, 20 January 2019

No Luckies, No Autobiography

Vancouver and Jack Benny seem to have met up every few years. In a way it was odd, because no Vancouver radio station broadcast Jack's show after he changed sponsors to American Tobacco.

At the tail end of the 1953-54 season, Jack made mention on one of his shows that he would be making a personal appearance during the summer break in several cities, including Vancouver. The Vancouver print media was quite happy to interview him about it. And on more than one occasion. The two major dailies sent columnists travel down to Portland, Oregon in advance of the Benny show in Vancouver to talk to him. The papers talked to Benny again when he arrived in Canada.

Jack Wasserman was the Sun's nightlife columnist for years. He enjoyed partaking of the city's nightlife, too, as did a number of newspaper reporters whose livers somehow survived the concept of "last call" being a mere suggestion to be ignored. Wasserman collapsed and died while in the middle of telling a joke at a roast in 1977. He was 50. Wedman was the Province's entertainment editor who concentrated on movies in later years. He died several years ago at age 94.

Both these stories are from July 2, 1954. (Note: the third Vancouver daily paper of the era is not on line to check on its coverage of Benny's 1954 stop).

COMIC APPEARS HERE WEDNESDAY

Jack Benny to Turn 40; It'll Be National Event

By JACK WASSERMAN

Sun Staff Reporter

PORTLAND, July 2.—Stop the presses. Hold the phone. Flash. Jack Benny is going to turn 40.

The bespectacled radio comic, who turned "39" into a million laughs, made the confession here in Portland where he is appearing with his variety review which opens in Vancouver Wednesday.

"I'll probably be 40 some time next year," he said amiably. "We'll make it a national event."

Although his writers will have to burn the midnight oil to get Benny over this chronological hump, the comedian has actually had plenty of experience in the birthday department. He's had 60 of them, the most recent a few months ago. But you couldn't tell it to look at him.

LOOKS YOUNG

Even without makeup, sitting across a gin rummy table (he massacred me) Benny looks like a man of possibly 45. No lines are visible, no crows-feet around his eyes. His blue eyes sparkle youthfully behind his horn-rimmed specs (when you play gin rummy with him, there's a different kind of sparkle).

During those three-score years Benny has covered a lot of ground, including Vancouver where he played the Orpheum circuit and met Mary Livingstone when she was a 12-year-old heckler.

Several years later, Jack claims, he had a date with Norah Bayes, but she was sick and so he went on a blind date with a gal who worked behind the hosiery counter of the May Company. Mary again, or as she was known then, Sayde Marks.

RELAXING HERE

The present trip into the Pacific Northwest is in the nature of relaxation for Benny, who has a winter ahead of him that includes his regular weekly radio shows and 16 television shows. Although none of his radio cast is with him, Mary will join Jack next week to visit relatives in Vancouver and Seattle.

For the tour Benny is still the radio character he's been making a household word since 1932, the perennial fall guy, the smart Alec, the guy who has trouble finding a girl friend.

Aiding and abetting this characterization is a high-powered supporting cast that includes Canadian star Gisele Mackenzie and Sammy Davis Jr., and four more acts who could all get by without Benny on the bill except that the star is so great himself.

Gisele, who, like Benny, once had visions of being a concert violinist, plays a pair of gag duets with the maestro

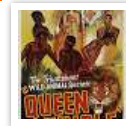
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Blogs to See

Rip Jagger's Dojo



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- "Queen of the Jungle" is a 1935 serial from Mascot

which takes footage from an even earlier silent film and tries to bond some new scenes. It's not reall...

11 hours ago

Cartoon Research

Disney Rareties - This week, two Disney oddities in Mark Kausler's film closet - one, a lost educational film from the 1940s, the other some rare behind the scenes footage ...

13 hours ago

News From ME

Sunday Evening - Convention's over. Now, we can concern ourselves with more important matters... like what kind of silly news stories is Trump going to create to divert attent...

14 hours ago

Fernando Llera Blog Cartoons



Longest living animals in Chapultepec's Zoo in need of special

care. - ©2019

fernandolleracartoons.com

1 day ago

Movies with Michael



Cowboy Church #19
- Hello my friends and welcome to another addition of

Cowboy Church. We start

that knock the customers off their seats. MORE THAN HUMOR

The violin incidentally is more than just a source of humor for the one-time Waukegan, Ill., wit who got thrown out of high school because he fiddled around so much, but who never became famous until he stopped playing and started talking.

He still practises several hours a day because its necessary "even to play lousy." In fact, he admits, sometimes when he sounds worst it's because he's trying to sound good.

"It's just like anything on a show. You don't start out to make mistakes. They happen easily enough without half trying."

CHANCE FEUD

The feud with Fred Allen also started by accident, with a chance wisecrack by Allen. Six months passed before the two comedians got together to discuss their publicity gold mine.

Unlike Bob Hope, who "is always on" and wisecracking all the time, Benny is a serious humorist. In casual conversation he talks about his golf (a 13 handicap but he usually only plays nine holes ("and sometimes I'm absolutely lousy"), or travelling, which he often does with guitar player Frankie Femley [sic], who is actually an existing person.

Before the show Benny is strictly a professional and, again unlike Hope, who hit Vancouver and played golf before arriving at show time, he carefully rehearses his cast on the pitfalls of each new theatre after going over the house himself.

WANTS GOOD SHOW

"All I try to do is to have a good show," he explains. "The important thing is not to stink."

That's been the idea ever since Benny first appeared as a guest on Ed Sullivan's radio show in 1932 and said

"Hello, folks, this is Jack Benny. There will be a slight pause for everyone to say 'Who cares?'"

Apparently somebody did, because a short time later Benny (born Benjamin Kubelsky) received an offer from a sponsor and the rest, the succession of sponsors, the fantastic price paid by CBS to get Benny to jump from NBC, where he had lifetime rights to the Sunday night 7-7:30 time, is history.

Although he likes television better than radio (right now, anyhow), Benny foresees some dangers in the new medium and quotes his close friend, George Burns (of Burns and Allen) on the subject.

CAN'T BE LOUSY

"The trouble with show business is that there's no place for a guy to be lousy.

"If an entertainer gets on television and has a bad night everyone sees it. In the old days on the circuit, when he played a split week between Calgary and Edmonton, you had time to improve before you got to Vancouver. Benny isn't worried about the show he's got with him this time, though. After opening in San Francisco, the troupe played to all-time record crowds in Dallas, Texas, before hitting the northwest.

Jack Benny Penny-Pinching Role Strictly For Radio, TV Audiences

By LES WEDMAN

PORTLAND—"Do you want a drink?" was the first thing Jack Benny asked after we shook hands.

He took his half-finished Scotch and soda from his lips and passed it over. "I don't want more," he explained. That sounds a bit like the penny-pincher who makes Dennis Day mow his lawn, pays his valet Rochester starvation wages and rides around in a broken-down Maxwell, though he has more money in an underground vault than Fort Knox has gold.

But Benny is no cheapskate away from radio microphones and TV cameras.

Courtesy of the comedian, who's coming to Vancouver next Wednesday to Saturday, I have a cigar (never smoked before), not much appetite (thanks to a lavish dinner for which he picked up the check) and a headache (from Scotch refills) to prove it.

LUXURY SUITE

There is further evidence. The man who supposedly stays in a subterranean cellar of a hotel when he's in New York greeted reporters in a two-bedroom, spare telephone next-to-the-toilet Governor's suite in the Multnomah Hotel.

He also put in a phone call from the drawing room to wife Mary Livingstone and he didn't even ask the operator to reverse the charges. "This is Jack Benny speaking. I want to talk to Mrs. Jack Benny in Beverly Hills," he began and it all sounded like a radio show, because the voice was so similar if deeper. He hung up. "The operator says it will be a minute but if I know Mary, she'll be talking to Claudette Colbert or Barbara Stanwyck. Don't ask me what they have to talk about so long, but they do. Only a minute, she says. Oops." The phone rang and it was Mary.

"Hello, baby," said Benny and before he rang off with a "good-bye, doll," he'd sung happy birthday to a nephew and talked to Mary's mother and father who were celebrating their wedding anniversary.

NO TOUPEE

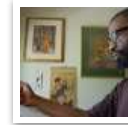
Benny's an average height. He wears horn-rimmed glasses, without which he's in a haze. He does not wear a toupee though there is a bald spot showing through the back. But he has enough hair on his chest and back to hook a bear rug.



our music selection off with The Sons of the Pioneers' 1947 recording of the go...
1 day ago



The World of Knight
SATURDAY AFTERNOON - Nice view. I actually drew it into a panel



today.
1 day ago



Termite Terrace headlines



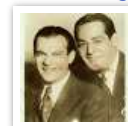
Animation Websites in the Archive #1 - The newest series!

These are some of the best websites on animation that are either unsung or just have been wiped out from the internet. Some of these si...

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Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog

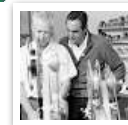


The Classic Comedy Rorschach Test - * In 13 years and 1072 posts, onl...

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Yowp



Fewer Drawings, More Gimmicks - Adult humour today isn't

what it was 60 years ago. Today, "adult" humour brings to mind a lot of sexual references and crudity. In other words, the stuff...

2 days 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 days 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.
2 weeks ago

He also is a serious comedian. He doesn't throw jokes around in any extroverted attempt to be funny. He talks sensibly and intelligently and sandwiches his humor, dry and clean, into the conversation.

"Comedians don't live a crazy kind of life," he explained. "They're always thinking," he said, referring to suggestions that he follow Bob Hope and Bmg Crosby and write the story of his life "as told to" someone.

NO AUTOBIOGRAPHY

"If could write a book, I'd really to write a book . . . a novel. Let someone else write the life of Jack Benny. I can't write."

His Columbia Broadcasting System radio press agent, Irving Fein, interrupted. "I thought you wrote Caine Mutiny?" he joked, "No," said Benny, without change of pace. "That was Herman Wouk. I wrote 'From Here to Eternity.' James Jones, that's my pen-name."

Benny remembers Vancouver as the spot where he first met Mary Livingstone. She was 12 and he couldn't have been much older because he said he will celebrate his fortieth birthday this year. He have himself away moments later when explained his first date with Mary, years later when she was behind the stocking counter at Macy's. [sic]

MEETS MARY

"I was supposed to go out with Nora Bayes but she was sick. So Mary's sister brought her along for a foursome," he'd said. Benny really is 60 though he doesn't look it despite his 22 years on radio and one on TV.

"No ulcers, either. If radio and TV haven't given me ulcers, food won't."

Mary Livingstone may come along to Vancouver to see an uncle, Harry Wagner, but she won't be in Benny's All-Star Revue at The Auditorium. And she'll only be on the radio "once in a while" next year.

Benny said "Mary wanted to quit years ago but I wouldn't let her. She hates acting for herself."

UNREQUESTED SOLO

Later at dinner, an organist played "Love in Bloom", for Benny. He didn't request it or the amateur joke-teller who bored guests silly.

"Mr. Benny didn't even smile," complained the fellow.

Getting into the harassed manner of his radio character, Benny charged "you said that was a true story. My writers told it to me 10 years ago."

He pointed with his cigar, the third he puffed on during the meal despite the the packs of free Lucky Strike cigarettes distributed around the table. Here's why: Benny never smokes Luckies—or cigarettes—of any kind.


Posted by [Yowp](#) at [07:36](#)

Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

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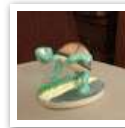

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Supervised By Fred Avery: Tex Avery's Warner Brothers Cartoons



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

Zozor ruine la réputation de sa famille (Zozor Ruins the Reputation of His Family) - After his move to the United States in 1912 Émile Cohl starting experimenting with putting the idiom of comic strips to the animated screen, being the firs...

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