



Sunday, 19 September 2021

## Jack Benny Fans Unite

The internet has improved things so much for people who like to share common interests. Just log on and read or chat. En masse.

Kids today don't know what it was like before everyone had access to the world in the palm of a hand (Old man shakes fist). You maybe got a newsletter or magazine in your mailbox (the kind where you pull out something that has a postage stamp on it). Maybe someone organised an annual convention if the group was interested enough.

An example is the International Jack Benny Fan Club. It still issues an old-fashioned newsletter. It has a web site where members and others can access a forum and leave posts. The forum is still there, but everyone seems to prefer communicating on Facebook, posting pictures, links to videos, asking questions and even hooking up with those connected to the show (Eddie Anderson's daughter drops by. So does Sammy the Drummer's daughter).

The Benny Club Facebook group has 5,500 plus members. Compare that to the story below. Laura Lee (under a different surname) still loves Jack and still runs the club after all this time. This story is 30 years old, appearing in newspapers on December 29, 1991.



### Laura Lee is 22 and crazy about Benny

By Murry Frymer

*Knight-Ridder Tribune News Writer*

PALO ALTO, Calif.—There is one fascinating facet of show business that, to me, has always been a curiosity. It's the fan club, the collection of fanatics who make the avid absorption of a show-biz star a major factor in their lives.

Is it a chance to shine through reflected glory? Is it an addiction?

Laura Lee was 5 years old when comedian Jack Benny died. She doesn't remember it as a cataclysmic event. But then, just five years later, she formed the Jack Benny Fan Club, and now, at 22. Laura Lee heads an organization that spans nine countries, from Egypt to Scotland, from Israel to Germany.

There are 300 card-carrying members, the youngest age 2 and the oldest 95. (The 2-year-old was coerced into joining by her parents, both members.) The oldest is George Burns, one of the first members, who joined because Jack Benny was his best friend.

What is more difficult to ascertain is why Laura Lee formed the Jack Benny Fan Club in the first place and why she devotes so much time to informing herself about the comedian.

Her answers to the question seem rather cryptic to anyone not so possessed.

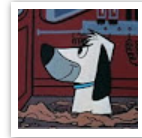
"WELL, I just enjoyed his style of humor. I didn't like slapstick comics, because I was always afraid they would hurt themselves. Jack Benny was not like that. Many of my friends liked Jack, too, and one of them encouraged me to start the club," Lee says in her office at Quintiles Pacific, a pharmaceutical company in Palo Alto, where she supervises shipping and receiving.

The friend "said it was better to light one candle than to sit around and curse the darkness."

Instead of cursing the darkness, Lee has sought out anyone and everyone connected with Benny—his one-time writers, co-stars, adopted daughter, friends. She knows enough about the man to fill a book. And she has done just that, a compilation on Benny's career that is now in the library at the Smithsonian Institution. It's called "39 Forever" and sells for a thrifty \$15.

New information about the comedian shows up in the bimonthly Jack Benny Times, a Xeroxed newsletter Lee


## About Me





[View my complete profile](#)

## Blogs to See

 **Cartoon Research**  
[Where There's Smoke \(Part 6\)](#) - The heat is on – again, as animated characters from all walks of toondom keep on their toes to avoid the ultimate in hotfoots. More action from the later ...  
 4 hours ago

 **News From ME**  
[Mark's 93/KHJ 1972 MixTape #40](#) - The musical group Hamilton, Joe Frank & Reynolds consisted of Dan Hamilton (lead vocals and guitar), Joe Frank Carollo (bass guitar) and Tom Reynolds (keyb...  
 5 hours ago

 **Movies with Michael**  
[Movie Review: Easter Sunday - Michael's Movie](#)  
 Grade: C An okay comedy. This movie very much feels like a feature length version of a sitcom episode. All the basic story points h...  
 7 hours ago

 **Fernando Llera Blog**  
**Cartoons**  
[Trump files motion over Mar-a-Lago search.](#) - ©2022 fernandolleracartoons.com  
 22 hours ago

 **Yowp**  
[Flintstones Daily Comics, Dec. 1961, Pt. 1](#) - There's a site which has posted the Monday-through-Saturday newspaper comic strips of The Flintstones. I wasn't going to post my copies because of that, bu...  
 3 days ago

writes and produces herself. Members reveal bits of trivia and ask for background.

The newsletter's Jack Benny Classified includes such items as: "Paul Pinch has Xeroxes of London Palladium programmes from three of Jack's appearances, which are available for trade." The address is in London. PETER TATCHELL, meanwhile, is trying to get dates of three ancient Benny TV shows, which he describes in detail.

And Phil Evans wants to know the name of the theater where Jack Benny performed on Oct. 15 and 27, 1927.

Evans already knows that the Frankie Trumbauer band was in the pit. Apparently, a new comic routine involving the band originated that night, and Evans, in his painstaking research, has found that it was repeated on the Lawrence Welk TV show of Oct. 23, 1962.

On such minutiae do fan clubs thrive.

Lee ran her club from her home in Ft. Wayne, Ind., until moving to Castro Valley, Calif., this year. Much of her Benny memorabilia is still back home in Indiana.



But the knowledge Lee carries around in her head is amazing. In fact, an actor named Eddie Carroll, who is planning a one-man stage show on Benny, recently met with Lee to learn more about the comic.

Lee knows innumerable facts and dates. For example, Benny's home address in Beverly Hills was 10231 Charing Cross, but the house was torn down by a buyer who built what Lee calls a mausoleum.

Lee claims to know intimate details but says, "In most cases I was sworn to secrecy. His friends made me promise never to tell, but still they wanted me to know."

How did the long-running age-39 joke begin? "On one show," Lee says, "Jack said he was 37, and when he had his next birthday on the show he said he was 38. The following year he turned 39. "They were going to have a big blowout the next year when he was going to turn 40, but Jack said no 39 was a funny number, and 40 wasn't. And anyway, it was funny to stay 39, because people made a big deal out of turning 40."

"Benny claimed Waukegan as his home town on the show, and he did grow up there," Lee says. "But Benny was actually born in Chicago.

"Actually" is a word you hear a lot when talking to Lee. She seems to actually know everything about Benny.

As, I suppose, do all the members. If you hurry, you can be a member before the annual memorial of Benny's death. Jack Benny died Dec. 26, 1974. He was born Feb. 14, 1894.

At his death, he was 39.

The bimonthly Jack Benny Times is available for a penurious \$6.39 a year from the Jack Benny Fan Club, 3561 Somerset Ave., Castro Valley, Calif. 94546.

I imagine the address is outdated. You can read the club on-line [at this address](#) or check out [the Facebook group](#). There are nice people there. I'll bet you all know of them know who Dreer Pooson is.

Posted by [Yowp](#) at 07:19



Labels: [Jack Benny](#)

## 3 comments:



**M. Mitchell Marmel** 19 September 2021 at 09:21

Yes, there are nice people there! :)

[Reply](#)

▼ [Replies](#)



**Yowp** 20 September 2021 at 07:10

Everyone has a good sense of humour. And they seem interested not only in Jack, but others surrounding him who had shows, such as Burns and Allen, Fred Allen, Phil Harris and even the Colmans, though all five of the shows aren't quite the same type of comedy. It's fortunate that Laura has spent a good deal of her time devoted to Jack's memory and his fans.

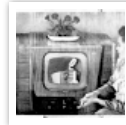
[Reply](#)

### [Way Too Damn Lazy To Write A Blog](#)

[The Golden Age Of Radio Cartoons](#) - \*Pondering the links between animated cartoons and the...

3 days ago

### [Old TV History](#)



[December 1945](#) - Santa Claus wasn't able to do it.

Anyone expecting Jolly Old St. Nick to bring them a nice, shiny, post-war television for Christmas in 1945 would be dis...

3 days ago

### [Pegbar Profiles](#)

[Pegbar Profile: Emery Hawkins \(Part 3\)](#) - \*Muriel Cigars spot, produced by Shamus Culhane's studio in New York.\* Upon his arrival out East, Hawkins found work in film and television ad production...

1 week ago

### [AFRTS Archive](#)

[File download](#) - So the good news is that I did receive a refund from our file host. Still no replies. I'll have to start over. So, do you know a file storage provider w...

2 weeks ago

### [Inbetweens: The Cult Classics of Animation](#)

[Throwing the Bull: Heckle and Jeckle in The Intruders](#) - Until the mid 40s, Fox had many issues with the Terrytoons Studio, and over the years complaints were regularly sent. Particularly, the lack of true s...

3 weeks ago

[Show All](#)

### [Dr. Grob's Animation Review](#)

[L'égoïste \(The Egotist\)](#) - The cinematic duo of Alain Gagnol and Jean-Loup Felicioli belong to France's most interesting animation film makers.

1 day ago

## Blog Archive

► [2022](#) (243)

▼ [2021](#) (380)

► [December](#) (32)

► [November](#) (30)

► [October](#) (32)

▼ [September](#) (32)

[Cake Landing](#)



**Hope** 19 September 2021 at 18:23

Nice article! Good find!

[Reply](#)



Enter comment

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)

[Serious Soupy](#)

[Headless Horse](#)

[Fudd Take](#)

[The Kid is Not My Son](#)

[Lantz, Columbia Studios,  
1940](#)

[Punching Out a Train](#)

[Detouring America  
Backgrounds](#)

[He Didn't Want to be a  
Yokel](#)

[The Soundtrack Laughs  
But We Don't](#)

[Challenging Sam to a  
Duel](#)

[Jack Benny Fans Unite](#)

[The Enemy Bacteria](#)

[Here's the Colonel](#)

[Changing Flip](#)

[Rango Was Wrongo](#)

[Norm Macdonald](#)

[You Know What? I Get  
the Girl at the End](#)

[Bat Overhead](#)

[Eddie Anderson on his  
Boss](#)

[The Search For Smith](#)

[B.S. \(Bull Slingshot\)](#)

[Art Metrano](#)

[Dancing Teeth](#)

[The Urchin With the Nose](#)

[Throwing the Bull in the  
Silent Film Days](#)

[Pull on a Bull](#)

[The Perspiring Palm](#)

[Afraid Not, Woody](#)

[The Sound of Distant  
Laughter](#)

[Miss Cud to the Rescue](#)

[The Happy Professor](#)

► [August](#) (33)

► [July](#) (34)

► [June](#) (30)

► [May](#) (34)

► [April](#) (30)

► [March](#) (31)

► [February](#) (29)

► [January](#) (33)

► [2020](#) (389)

► [2019](#) (376)

► [2018](#) (379)

- [2017](#) (380)
- [2016](#) (396)
- [2015](#) (389)
- [2014](#) (390)
- [2013](#) (388)
- [2012](#) (397)
- [2011](#) (106)

## Labels

- [Aline Mosby](#) (18)
- [Art Davis](#) (39)
- [Bad Luck Blackie](#) (11)
- [Bob and Ray](#) (15)
- [Bob Clampett](#) (104)
- [Bob McKimson](#) (75)
- [Bob Thomas](#) (61)
- [Chuck Jones](#) (169)
- [Columbia](#) (56)
- [Counterfeit Cat](#) (10)
- [Cynthia Lowry](#) (35)
- [Dick Thomas](#) (18)
- [Don Patterson](#) (19)
- [Drag-a-Long Droopy](#) (14)
- [Earl Wilson](#) (17)
- [Erskine Johnson](#) (43)
- [Felix the Cat](#) (32)
- [Film Daily](#) (50)
- [Fleischer](#) (191)
- [Frank Tashlin](#) (35)
- [Fred Allen](#) (51)
- [Fred Brunish](#) (11)
- [Friz Freleng](#) (174)
- [Gene Deitch](#) (21)
- [George Pal](#) (11)
- [Grant Simmons](#) (9)
- [Hanna and Barbera unit](#) (121)
- [Hanna-Barbera](#) (4)
- [Harman-Ising](#) (83)
- [Henry Morgan](#) (14)
- [Irv Spence](#) (12)
- [Jack Benny](#) (561)
- [Jay Ward](#) (34)
- [Jimmy Durante](#) (21)
- [John Crosby](#) (99)
- [John Sutherland](#) (37)
- [Johnny Johnsen](#) (37)
- [Kenny Baker](#) (6)
- [King-Size Canary](#) (9)
- [Laugh-In](#) (16)
- [Legend of Rockabye Point](#) (6)

- [Little Rural Riding Hood](#) (7)
- [Magical Maestro](#) (9)
- [Maurice Noble](#) (12)
- [Mel-O-Toons](#) (5)
- [MGM](#) (678)
- [Norm McCabe](#) (6)
- [Pat Matthews](#) (12)
- [Paul Julian](#) (15)
- [Sara Berner](#) (5)
- [Screwy Squirrel](#) (38)
- [Spider-Man](#) (1)
- [Terrytoons](#) (104)
- [Tex Avery](#) (584)
- [The Cat That Hated People](#) (10)
- [Toby the Pup](#) (3)
- [Tom and Jerry Human](#) (45)
- [Tralfaz Sunday Theatre](#) (19)
- [Ub Iwerks](#) (110)
- [UPA](#) (69)
- [Van Beuren](#) (123)
- [Vernon Scott](#) (51)
- [Virginia MacPherson](#) (14)
- [Walt Disney](#) (182)
- [Walter Lantz](#) (293)
- [Warner Bros.](#) (757)
- [Who Killed Who](#) (10)