

CHUCK SCHADEN'S FEBRUARY, MARCH, 1981

NOSTALGIA NEWSLETTER

AND
RADIO
GUIDE

©



JACK BENNY AND MARY LIVINGSTONE brightened the radio airwaves together for nearly 20 years. Jack's first broadcast was on May 2, 1932. Mary joined the show soon afterward and was a regular on the air with her husband until the early 1950s. The couple met in Los Angeles in 1926 while she was working as a hosiery clerk for the May Company and Jack was in town on a vaudeville tour. His real name was Benjamin Kubelsky and hers was Sadie Marks. They were married on January 14, 1927 and lived happily ever after.

The DOUBLE LIFE of Mr. J. Benny

REPRINT from RADIO BEST Magazine, March, 1948

by Favius Friedman

The man who wanted to be Heifetz



A long time ago, when the Jack Benny of today was still little Benjamin Kubelsky, he was minding his father's haberdashery shop in Waukegan one evening when a stranger walked in and handed Benjamin some money. Kubelsky *pere*, seeing the cash in the register later, asked his offspring what he had sold. "Nothing," said his son. "He just gave me some money on his account."

"But what was his name?" insisted Mr. Kubelsky.

"I don't know," said Benjamin. "Gee whiz, Pop, do you have to have his name, too?"

Not long afterwards a customer came in and purchased some ties, handkerchiefs and shirts and departed without leaving any cash. "But it's all right," Benjamin told his father later, "he told me to charge it to his account. And this time I got his name."

"Name!" the old man screamed. "That fellow has no account in my store!"

Jack Benny, at 53, according to his intimates, is only a little less naive than the youthful Benjamin Kubelsky who could be flim-flammed so easily by a smooth-talking sharper. "Benny," said Ed Beloin, one of his former writers, "is probably the most unsophisticated man I know."

Yet Jack's radio self-portrait of a sport-jacketed, Beverly Hills Simon Legree, who makes Dennis Day mow his lawn as well as sing for his \$17.50 a week, is taken as pure gospel by the 25,000,000 peo-

ple who listen regularly to his Sunday night half-hour over NBC. Benny's mail still bristles with indignant letters demanding that he pay Rochester a living wage. (Rochester gets over \$1000 a week.) Even Mr. Whiskers once fell for the Benny myth, when the

WPB, a Government war-time agency, sent Jack a business-like letter requesting that he turn in his legendary Maxwell to the scrap drive.

Strangers still turn their heads when Jack lunches or dines in

Romanoff's or the Brown Derby, curious to see if he will leave either a nickel or a dime tip. Benny always overtips lavishly, both because that is his nature and because he is almost pathologically sensitive about his penny-squeezing "reputation."

The truth is, no one knows the real Jack Benny—no one, that is, outside of Jack himself, and he is only a shade more voluble than the late Calvin Coolidge. Millions of words have already been printed

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One of the secrets of their success is that Jack and his wife Mary have a lot of fun when they work together on the program.

The DOUBLE LIFE of Mr. J. Benny continued

about this man who is the highest-paid comedian in radio. His scrap book, if he kept one, would in sheer stacked-up wordage make the Sears, Roebuck catalog seem like something marked "Reading Time: 10 Seconds," yet Benny still remains one of the most elusive, paradoxical figures in show business.

Benny is a fabulous personality, not so much because of his stratospheric Hooper rating, or his individual brand of humor or because he virtually revolutionized the pattern of radio comedy. Jack is radio's most intriguing figure because he has for more than 15 years succeeded brilliantly at the business of manufacturing laughter when he himself is anything but a funny man.

To an observer watching Benny prepare his Sunday program, he looks for all the world like a harried, cautious Seventh Avenue garment manufacturer worrying about his next Spring's line.

There is nothing uncomplimentary in this. The creation of a Benny broadcast is an arduous, painful, seven-day-a-week task, worth every penny of the reported \$22,500 weekly check Jack gets from the American Tobacco Company. Benny's product comes from the sweat, toil and savvy of The

Ross himself, from a quartet of the highest-priced writers in radio and a superlative surrounding cast whose talents all mesh like the jewelled gears of a Naval Observatory chronometer. Jack's competitors — Fred Allen, Danny Kaye, George Burns and others — frankly admit that when it comes to judging comedy material, Benny tops them all.

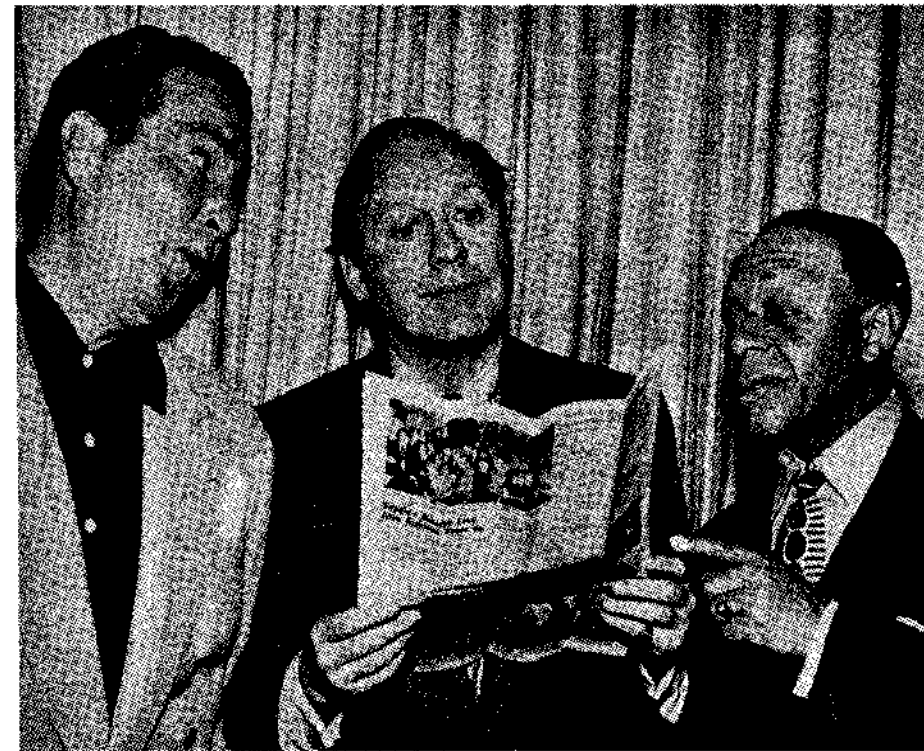
People, meeting Jack for the first time, stand around hopefully waiting for him to let loose with a barrage of boffolas. They go

away disappointed. Jack gives strangers a limp handshake, a shy, almost distant "Hello" and seems eager to evaporate the next moment. On the other hand, Jack can be the greatest audience in the world during rehearsals, howling with laughter, pounding the floor in glee over a line, while his cast sits there dead-pan.

And yet Benny, as George Burns says, "is the greatest editor of material in the business. He's got the knack of cutting out all the weak slush and keeping in only the strong punchy lines." Because he has made the creation of comedy such a serious business, Jack knows better than any other man in the world what will be funny on his program. "I can't always tell when a line is good," he admits, "but, brother, I can tell when it's lousy."

Despite all this, despite his stature as "Mr. Radio," his consistent standing among the top five on the air, his huge earnings, his talent as a star-maker, the kudos paid him by the public and the trade, Jack Benny is still the "unhappy fiddler." (Why must comedians always want to play "Hamlet"?) Oddly enough, Benny really believes that if he had listened to his father, and practiced more on the fiddle when he was a boy in Waukegan, he would be a fine violinist today. He honestly envies the great virtuosos like Heifetz, Isaac Stern and Szigeti. He still remembers that Heifetz once told him he had a rich tone and that he should have continued with his music. The pre-comedy Benny was actually a soulful fellow with a violin. Unfortunately, it didn't get him any place.

Even Jack realizes this in his less pre-occupied moments. As his wife, Mary Livingstone once told



Jack catches up on news with Phil Harris and Rochester.

him, "If you had kept up with your fiddle-playing, you would have lost all the humor of being a lousy violinist on your program." (Jack is actually quite proficient.) But he can never seem to forget that he was once a fiddle player. Being no noodle, despite the role he plays on the air, Jack has managed to sublimate his musical yearnings. He has turned his frustration into one of the most riotously funny routines among all the running gags on his program—the "Professor Le Blanc" situation in which Mel Blanc, as the "Professor," gives Jack violin lessons and forever ends up with his buck-fifty unpaid.

Occasionally, however, Jack will rebel against the fate that has made him the comedian with the longest run in radio among the

top funny men. He sets out to prove that he has other talents, only to wind up behind the personal eight-ball. Not long ago there was a party at Jack's \$250,000 Beverly Hills home, where expert pantaloons like Danny Kaye, George Burns and Georgie Jessel were panic-ing the guests, bouncing ad libs around like so many basket balls. After a couple of hours Jack turned restless. "Everybody gets laughs around here but me," he complained. "And in my own house."

Benny went upstairs, then came down again a short time later, made up like the corniest of gypsy fiddlers. He strolled among the guests, playing as schmaltzy an

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The DOUBLE LIFE of Mr. J. Benny continued

assortment of *tzardas* ever heard outside of the ineffable Rubinoff. Then he passed around a battered hat.

No one bothered to laugh.

Another time, at a Hollywood benefit for Greek War Relief, Benny, instead of his expected comedy turn, performed an elaborate concerto arrangement of "Love in Bloom." The surprised audience burst into applause, but Jack merely bowed to the conductor, bowed to the audience, then sauntered off the stage, his treasured violin under his arm.

The contradictions in the Benny personality show up in many ways. Take, for instance, his reputed inability to get off a fastie unless his scripting crew is running interference for him. True,

Benny is no rapier wit like Fred Allen or Henry Morgan. "Benny," said Harry Conn, his first writer, "couldn't even ad lib a belch at a Hungarian banquet." Yet Jack, when hurt or cornered, can dish it out as well as take it. Radio circles still chuckle over Jack's famed bout with Fred Allen, who had Benny hanging on the ropes with his ad libs. Jack stood it as long as he could, then said, plaintively, "You wouldn't dare do this to me if I had my writers with me."

On another occasion when Benny, Bob Hope, Fred Allen, Jimmy Durante and Jerry Colona were starring on a Christmas "Command Performance" for the Army, the photographer lined up the comedians for a series of pictures. Someone had to say something and

Hope started it with a crack about his profile. There was a pause and Durante yelled, "Hey, you ushers, stand erect and give this jernt a little class." Neither Benny nor Allen could think of anything to say. Allen started mugging and Jack jammed his hat on crosswise. "Well, at least I'll look funny," he quipped. Then Benny pulled a parking ticket out of his pocket. "I don't mind doing this show for free," he announced, "but who in heck is going to pay for this parking ticket?"

The delighted screams of the audience could have been heard all the way to Anaheim, Azusa and Cucamonga.

His studio audience, watching Jack do a warm-up before a broadcast, see Benny come out with all his own hair, see him tanned, genial and sassy-looking. He looks like a man with a million bucks in his pocket and a phone call from Lana Turner. "Welcome to the Lucky Strike Program," he says, then flips the ashes off his cigar.

But that incredible Benny poise is ersatz. Jack's "deliberately cultivated suavity," said a friend, "conceals an almost irrational terror of an audience. Nobody watching him realizes that he is trembling inside and that every line he speaks and every piece of business he does requires an effort of will power."

Even in the days when he was an unknown vaudevillian, happy to pick up a fast twenty-five dollars with a dog act, Benny had that magnificent poise. Once, Jack tried out a turn at the Academy of Music Theatre in New York—a vaudeville house not particularly noted for its polite treatment of entertainers who weren't too well known. Everything went—from boos to over-ripe tomatoes. As Jack came out on the stage with his violin under his arm and his routine "Hello, folks," opening, the Bronx cheers began. When Jack

got to the center of the stage the raspberries were deafening. But instead of going into his act, Benny kept on walking obliviously toward the other wing. Just as he reached the wing he turned and faced the customers. There was an ominous silence. "Goodbye, folks," he said. Then he strolled off the stage and out of the theatre.

To his cast—Dennis Day, Mary Livingstone, Rochester, Phil Harris, Don Wilson and the others—Benny is simply The Boss. He is no whip-cracker, but he demands and insists on perfection. Benny is his own producer. He rarely glances at the control booth for cues. He can get together with the sound man and patiently go over a sound effect—the clank of the chains in his "vault," for example—as many as 40 times, until his meticulous ear is happy. Jack himself labors over the hilarious rhymed commercials that his Sportsmen Quartet sings—incidentally, one of the freshest new routines to appear during the last twelve months. All of the painstaking Sunday-to-Sunday writing sessions are master-minded by Benny, though he may not contribute an original line of his own.

The Benny show has almost as many recurring situations and running gags on tap as the objects that fill Fibber McGee's closet. There's the broken-down Maxwell, the violin lessons, the Benny vault with its caretaker who never sees the light of day, the brash telephone operators, Mr. Kitzel and his "peekle-in-the-needle," the synthetic feud with Fred Allen, the Quartet and a packet of others. On the whole they pay off with laughs. But even so shrewd a judge of material as Benny will occasionally rely too much on strictly local references—things like his "Eastern - Columbia,

MORE →

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Could Dennis Day, Rochester, Phil Harris, Mary Livingstone, J. Benny, Don Wilson, and Mel Blanc be tuning in for Fred Allen?

THOSE WERE THE DAYS • WNIB- FM 97.1

SATURDAY AFTERNOONS • 1:00 UNTIL 5:00

February is Jack Benny Month!

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7th
JACK BENNY AND FRIENDS — I

CANADA DRY PROGRAM (5-2-32) It's Jack Benny's first show of his first radio series, featuring announcer Ed Thorgerson, George Olsen and his music, Ethel Shutta and Jack Benny, "suave comedian, dry humorist and master of ceremonies." Canada Dry Ginger Ale, NBC-BLUE. (9:50; 10:20; 8:05)

FRED ALLEN SHOW (6-9-46) Guest star Dennis Day appears with Fred and the Allen's Alley regulars: Portland Hoffa, Kenny Delmar, Parker Fennelly, Minerva Pious, Alan Read, DeMarco Sisters. Blue Bonnett Margarine, Tenderleaf Tea, NBC. (15:25; 13:24)

MAXWELL HOUSE COFFEE TIME (2-24-49) George Burns and Gracie Allen star with Bill Goodwin, Bea Benaderet, Joseph Kearns and announcer Toby Reed. A handwriting expert tells Gracie that George should become a surgeon. Maxwell House Coffee, NBC. (8:48; 6:39; 13:51)

INFORMATION PLEASE (10-17-41) Guest panelist Fred Allen joins moderator Clifton Fadiman and regular panelists John Kiernan, Franklin P. Adams and Oscar Levant in this literate quiz program. Milton Cross announces. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (14:40; 11:20)

EDDIE CANTOR SHOW (1-3-45) Eddie "Rochester" Anderson is special guest with Eddie and Harry Von Zell, Nora Martin, Leonard Seuss, Bert Gordon. Ipana-Trushay, NBC. (8:45; 8:50; 10:25)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (5-12-46) On Mother's Day, Jack and the gang play host

to The Quiz Kids from the Civic Opera House in Chicago. The Kids (Harvey Van Fishman, Joel Kupperman, Ruthie DuskIn, Richard Weischler) vie for honors against the cast of the Benny show. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (12:55; 14:55)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14th
JACK BENNY AND FRIENDS — II

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (12-6-42) Phil Harris, Dennis Day, Mary Livingstone, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Don Wilson. It's Phil's last appearance on the show as he and his band join the U.S. Merchant Marines. Grape Nut Flakes, NBC. (10:58; 9:15; 9:42)

PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (2-6-49) Mr. Scott, the sponsor (Gale Gordon) tells Phil to shape up his band. Elliott Lewis as Frankie Remley. Rexall, NBC. (9:55; 6:35; 12:50)

BOB HOPE SHOW (11-9-48) Guest Jack Benny joins Bob and Doris Day, Hy Averbach, Irene Ryan, Jack Kirkwood, Four Hits and a Miss, Les Brown and his Band of Renown. Bob and Jack offer a disc jockey sketch. Swan Soap, NBC. (7:44; 10:10; 11:37)

SUSPENSE (8-29-56) "Hold Up" starring Joe Kearns as a shop owner who stops a young robber by shooting him. Sustaining, CBS. (13:40; 9:51)

FRED ALLEN SHOW (6-8-47) Eddie "Rochester" Anderson joins the Allen regulars, looking for a radio job as Fred's summer replacement. Shefford Cheese, Tenderleaf Tea, NBC. (16:00; 13:00)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (2-14-43) Jack and the gang broadcast from Toronto, Canada, on Jack's birthday. Grape Nuts Flakes, NBC. (13:45; 7:18; 8:10)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21st
JACK BENNY AND FRIENDS — III

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (5-24-42) Don, Mary, Dennis, Phil, Rochester, and Andy Devine in a broadcast from Camp Kalan, California. Phil announces the birth of his baby daughter. Jell-O, NBC. (11:14; 10:22; 6:10)

DENNIS DAY SHOW (1949) Dennis stars in his own situation comedy show with Bea

THOSE WERE THE DAYS • WNIB- FM 97.1

SATURDAY AFTERNOONS • 1:00 UNTIL 5:00

Benaderet, John Brown and Verne Smith, announcer. Dennis gets a job selling radios. AFRR rebroadcast. (8:10; 7:00; 13:20)

AMOS 'N' ANDY (1940) Jack Benny and Rochester are guests as Amos 'n' Andy open an employment agency. Lightning brings Rochester in for a job . . . and Jack is looking for a valet. Rinso, NBC. (12:38; 10:06; 6:14)

JACK PAAR SHOW (7-9-49) First show in this summer replacement series for the Jack Benny Program. Cast includes Frank Nelson, Hans Conried, Jane Morgan, Jud Conlon Rhythmaires, Carol Richards. Sustaining, NBC. (11:45; 7:20; 12:10)

GLAMOUR MANOR (10-3-46) Kenny Baker stars with Sam Hearn as Schlepperman and Barbara Eiler as Barbara. Don Wilson is the announcer and guest is Jack Benny. Kenny and Schlepperman plan a vaudeville act. Crisco, Ivory Snow, ABC. (11:14; 7:03; 10:38)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (3-16-47) All the gang plus guests Andy Russell, Dick Haymes and Bing Crosby. The Sportsmen Quartet is missing and Don Wilson rounds up some substitute singers. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (13:41; 14:09)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28th
JACK BENNY AND FRIENDS — IV

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (5-19-44) An audition program for a new sponsor, Pall Mall Cigarettes. Guest Basil Rathbone joins Jack and Mary Livingstone, Phil Harris, Eddie "Rochester" Anderson. Jack repairs the sidewalk in front of his house. NBC Audition. (11:15; 13:05)

HALLS OF IVY (1-6-50) Premiere program in the series starring Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Colman as Dr. and Mrs. Todhunter Hall of Ivy College. Created by Don Quinn. A delightful scene-setting episode for the series. Willard Waterman, Ken Carpenter. Schlitz Beer, NBC. (13:40; 15:15)

TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT (11-8-42) An excerpt from the popular quiz program featuring contestant Jack Benny going for the \$64 question. Phil Baker is quizmaster. CBS. (7:49)

SUSPENSE (9-13-55) "A Story of Poison" stars Joe Kearns as a British doctor who poisons his wife. Auto-Lite, CBS. (14:17; 9:10)

BLUE RIBBON TOWN (1940s) Groucho Marx stars with Leo Gorcey, Ken Niles and guest Jack Benny. Everyone wants to get on Jack's

show. Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer, CBS. (8:05; 13:20; 8:10)

MEL BLANC SHOW (1-28-47) Mel and his girl plan to attend the Zebra's annual masquerade ball. Mary Jane Croft, Hans Conried, Joe Kearns, Alan Reed, The Sportsmen. Colgate Tooth Powder, CBS. (8:58; 15:18)

JACK BENNY PROGRAM (4-14-46) Guests Ronald and Benita Colman join Mary, Phil, Rochester, Dennis, Mel Blanc, Don Wilson. Jack's violin practice interferes with Ronnie's rehearsing. Lucky Strike Cigarettes, NBC. (11:00; 17:00)

SATURDAY, MARCH 7th

I LOVE ADVENTURE (4-25-48) starring Michael Rafetto as Jack Packard, Barton Yarborough as Doc Long and Tom Collins as Reggie York, members of the A-1 Detective Agency continuing their exploits in this series written and directed by Carlton E. Morse, creator of I Love A Mystery. All twelve programs in this 1948 summer series will be presented on "Those Were The Days" during March and April. Each 30-minute program contains a complete adventure. After the A-1 Detective Agency disbanded during WW II, Jack went into American intelligence; Doc became a fighter pilot and Reggie joined the Royal Air Force. The three comrades lost touch, until a strange message from the "Twenty-One Old Men of Gramercy Park" brought them together again for this series of adventures. International Incident Number 1: "The China Coast Incident." Sustaining, ABC. (13:42; 14:53)

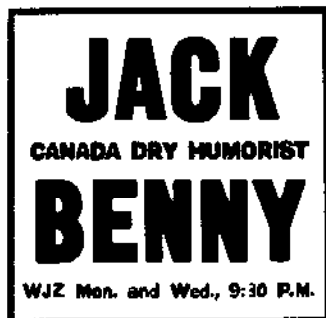
PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (1-16-49) with Elliott Lewis, Walter Tetley, Robert North, Frank Lovejoy. Phil learns that other bands have been invited to play at President Truman's Inaugural Ball. Rexall, NBC. (15:35; 12:35)

KRAFT MUSIC HALL (3-11-48) Al Jolson stars with Oscar Levant, Lou Bring and the Orchestra, announcer Ken Carpenter and guest Edward Everett Horton. Jolie sings "Four Leaf Clover," "Lisa," and "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows." Kraft, NBC. (9:50; 6:50; 12:10)

I LOVE ADVENTURE (5-2-48) "The Great Air Mail Robbery" is International Incident Number 2. Sustaining, ABC. (15:48; 13:30)

CHARLIE MC CARTHY SHOW (5-25-52) Edgar Bergen stars with Mortimer Snerd, Ray

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If you have a fondness for the "good old days" then you're invited to enjoy some nostalgic programs at North West Federal Savings Community Center, 4901 W. Irving Park Road, Chicago. There's plenty of free parking in the large lot on Dakin street at the rear of the NWF office or CTA transportation will take you to the door. Enter the Community Center thru the parking lot. Visitors who arrive by CTA should walk south along the side of the NWF building, then turn west to the entrance of the Center.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7th - 8 P.M.

SHALL WE DANCE (1937) Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers dance their way into our hearts in this musical romance filled with great songs by Gershwin: "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off," "They All Laughed," and "They Can't Take That Away From Me." Cast includes Edward Everett Horton, Eric Blore. (\$1.25)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14th - 8 P.M.

GEORGE WASHINGTON SLEPT HERE (1942) Jack Benny, Ann Sheridan, Charles Coburn, Harrie McDaniel, Percy Kilbride, Franklin Pangborn. Jack and Ann move from New York to a dilapidated house in the country. (\$1.25)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21st - 8 P.M.

WHEN COMEDY WAS KING (1960) Robert Youngston's fantastic look at film-making's most fantastic years: 1914-1928. A great treat for fans of Laurel and Hardy, Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Ben Turpin, Fatty Arbuckle, Wallace Beery, Gloria Swanson, the Keystone Kops, Charley Chase, Edgar Kennedy, the Mack Sennett Bathing Beauties, and many others. (\$1.25)

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28th - 8 P.M.

STAND UP AND CHEER (1934) Warner Baxter, Shirley Temple, Madge Evans, James Dunn, John Boles. A Depression-era film about a presidential commission set up to lighten the spirits of the country. Shirley steals the show singing, "Baby Take A Bow." (\$1.25)

SATURDAY, MARCH 7th - 8 P.M.

SINGING KID (1936) Al Jolson stars with Sybil Jason and Edward Everett Horton, Lyle Talbot, Allen Jenkins, the Yacht Club Boys, Cab Calloway and his orchestra, Winifred Shaw. A musical comedy star loses his voice and goes to the country for a rest. Music by E.Y. Harburg and Harold Arlen. (\$1.25)

SATURDAY, MARCH 14th - 8 P.M.

IRISH EYES ARE SMILING (1944) June Haver, Dick Haymes, Monty Woolley, Anthony Quinn, Maxie Rosenbloom, Veda Ann Borg. Colorful Technicolor musical comedy about the composer of many Irish tunes. (\$1.25)

FRIDAY, MARCH 20th - 8 P.M.

SATURDAY, MARCH 21st - 8 P.M.

SUNDAY, MARCH 22nd - 2 P.M.

THE PORTAGE PARK PLAYERS present a live production of **GODSPELL** on our stage. Based on the Gospel According to St. Matthew, GODSPELL features talented young performers from the community. A Chicago Park District production. (\$1.50)

SATURDAY, MARCH 28th - 8 P.M.

A SALUTE TO JOHNNY MERCER America's great composer and lyricist is celebrated in an evening's entertainment as pianist and singer **BILL SHELTON** presents highlights of the Mercer career and his most popular works. **PLUS: ON SCREEN: BLUES IN THE NIGHT (1941)** Priscilla Lane, Richard Whorf, Betty Field, Lloyd Nolan, Jack Carson, Elia Kazan, Wallace Ford in a nifty musical drama about a band splitting up, each member finding tragedy and disappointment on his own. Great score by Johnny Mercer includes "Blues in the Night" and "This Time the Dream's on Me." (\$1.25)

SUNDAY, MARCH 29th - 2 P.M.

THE GAY DIVORCEE (1934) Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers star with Alice Brady, Edward Everett Horton, Erik Rhodes, Betty Grable. Top notch Fred and Ginger musical with the plot not getting in the way of the great production numbers: "The Continental," "Night and Day," others. (\$1.25)

THOSE WERE THE DAYS • WNIB- FM 97.1 SATURDAY AFTERNOONS • 1:00 UNTIL 5:00

Noble and the Orchestra, and guests the Mills Brothers. Charlie tells the Wolf's side of the Little Red Riding Hood story. Coca Cola, CBS. (12:10; 10:48; 5:54)

RECOLLECTIONS AT 30 (6-11-56) This week we begin a 33-program series commemorating NBC's 30th anniversary of broadcasting in 1956. Originally heard on NBC's Monitor, these weekly half-hours featured announcer Ed Herlihy as host, culling the archives for sounds from the network's first 30 years. Program 1 features Graham McNamee describing the arrival of Charles Lindbergh at the Washington Navy Yard following his historic New York to Paris flight; the Cliquot Club Eskimos; Joe White, the Silver-Masked Tenor; George Olsen's Orchestra. Sustaining, NBC. (13:00; 8:20)

SATURDAY, MARCH 14th

I LOVE ADVENTURE (5-9-48) International Incident Number 3: "Devil's Sanctuary." Sustaining, ABC. (14:36; 14:29)

PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (1-23-49) Phil and his family are in Washington to attend Truman's Inaugural Ball and Frankie Remley doesn't have an invitation. Rexall, NBC. (14:00; 15:25)

DUFFY'S TAVERN (1-5-51) Ed Gardner stars as Archie, the Manager. Vincent Price is guest as Archie wants to change the Tavern into an exclusive club for actors, The Ham's Club. RCA Victor, Anacin, NBC. (10:30; 11:20; 7:45)

I LOVE ADVENTURE (5-16-48) International Incident Number 4: "The Pearl of Great Price." Sustaining, ABC. (13:48; 15:45)

LIFE OF RILEY (2-23-46) William Bendix stars as Chester A. Riley who has problems with his mother-in-law and his Lodge brothers. AFRS Rebroadcast. (14:20; 11:09)

RECOLLECTIONS AT 30 (6-20-56) Program 2: Maxwell House Showboat; Clara, Lu and Em; Fred Allen and Don McNeill; the Baer-Canera Fight; Information Please. Sustaining, NBC. (11:50; 13:50)

SATURDAY, MARCH 21st

I LOVE ADVENTURE (5-23-48) International Incident Number 5: "The Hundred-Million Dollar Manhunt." Sustaining, ABC. (15:17; 14:00)

PHIL HARRIS-ALICE FAYE SHOW (1-30-49)

Phil is asked to be the town's Fire Chief. Rexall, NBC. (9:00; 9:50; 10:30)

BOX THIRTEEN (1940s) "Damsel in Distress" stars Alan Ladd as Dan Holiday, author of mystery novels, seeking adventurous material for his books. Holiday investigates a kidnapping attempt. Syndicated. (12:35; 13:50)

I LOVE ADVENTURE (5-30-48) International Incident Number 6: "The Finishing School Kidnapping." Sustaining, ABC. (14:55; 14:21)

FIBBER MC GEE AND MOLLY (5-19-42) Jim and Marion Jordan star with Bill Thompson, Gale Gordon, Harlow Wilcox, the King's Men, Billy Mills and the Orchestra. Fibber's counting on the government providing a \$25,000 minimum wage. Johnson's Wax, NBC. (7:10; 12:45; 9:20)

RECOLLECTIONS AT 30 (6-27-56) Program 3: The NBC Minstrels; Easy Aces; Al Jolson and Slapsy Maxie Rosenbloom on the Shell Chateau; Major Edward Bowes and the Original Amateur Hour; Leslie Howard and his daughter in a sketch written by Sir James Barrie; opera star Rosa Ponselle. Sustaining, NBC. (11:40; 12:35)

SATURDAY, MARCH 28th

I LOVE ADVENTURE (6-6-48) International Incident Number 7: "But Grandma, What Big Teeth You Have." Sustaining, ABC. (13:25; 16:09)

PHILCO RADIO TIME (1-12-49) Bing Crosby stars with songwriter Johnny Mercer and singer Peggy Lee, John Scott Trotter and the Orchestra, Jud Conlon's Rhythmairs and announcer Ken Carpenter. Bing and Johnny offer an updated version of Mercer's "Small Fry." Philco, ABC. (11:45; 19:00)

THE THIRD MAN (1950) Orson Welles stars as Harry Lime, an international rogue. Based on the famous film, this series features Anton Karas' zither music in an episode entitled "The Third Woman." Syndicated. (12:05; 14:20)

I LOVE ADVENTURE (6-13-48) International Incident Number 8: "The Man with the Third Green Eye." Sustaining, ABC. (15:56; 13:49)

AMOS 'N' ANDY (1940s) Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll star. After Andy's girlfriend is insulted by a bully, Andy is afraid to defend her honor. AFRS rebroadcast. (10:55; 6:45; 7:35)

RECOLLECTIONS AT 30 (7-4-56) Program 4: Rudy Vallee; Clark and McCullough; Lum and Abner; Fred Allen and Portland Hoffa; 1936 band remote from San Francisco; Al Jolson. Sustaining, NBC. (9:30; 15:45)

The DOUBLE LIFE of Mr. J. Benny *continued*

broadway and Ninth" routines which at best ring hollowly on the ears of listeners away from Los Angeles.

It's been said of Jack that he lives on a diet of black coffee and fingernails. It's true that he just can't wait to start to work and begin worrying every day. Benny arises at six in the morning, goes out for a couple of rounds of golf, then is ready for work. He is always the first on hand for conferences and rehearsals. Ten minutes before the end of a luncheon break, Benny is back in the studio, hunched up in a corner studying his script. He fumbles nervously with his hair, clamps his teeth on an unlighted pipe, keeps fingering his tie. He is so concerned about the carefully-contrived spontaneity of his show that he keeps the side men in the Phil Harris band away from the final Sunday rehearsals. Jack wants the lines to be as fresh to them as to the audience.

All this is part of the perfection Benny strives for and usually achieves. Yet Jack's own bedroom at home, where he relaxes before he goes to sleep, has been described as "the worst mish-mash since the cyclone hit Lecompton, Kansas." Old scripts, recordings of broadcasts, books, magazines, newspapers and fan letters are piled high on every table and chair. In this cluttered room Benny the perfectionist finds a certain surcease from the strain. Here he wallows in mystery stories and listens to who-dun-its on the air—rarely to other comedians. "I know they're suffering, just the way I suffer," he once said. "If a gag of theirs doesn't get a laugh, I cringe."

Jack has been known to add \$1000 out of his own pocket to boost a guest fee for violinist Isaac Stern. His four writers who

have been with him five years—Sam Perrin, Milt Josefsberg, George Balzer and John Tackaberry—together earn around \$5,000 a week. Jack keeps Artie Auerbach, the "Mr. Kitzel" of his show, on salary all year round, though he may use him but three or four times a season. Recently, when Sara Berner and Bea Benadaret—"Gladys" and "Mabel," the telephone operators—were written out of two programs at the last moment, because the shows were overboard on time, both girls received their full fees just the same. One year Jack spent more than \$100,000 on line charges to put on his broadcasts from remote camps and hospitals. This was Jack's own money, spent without publicity. And when the troupe travels, Rochester stops in the same hotel with Jack and the rest of the cast, or Jack moves the troupe to a hotel where Rochester is welcome.

Yet Jack, abnormally sensitive as he is to the feelings of others, can sometimes reveal a curious naivete. Preoccupied with the problems of his own program,

Benny displays an odd surprise when he is confronted with the fact that there are also other programs on the air. Not long ago he used a couple of 12-year-old radio actors in the roles of "Steve" and "Joey," two neighborhood youngsters who, on the air, play football with Jack, fall for his tall stories and believe he is the superhero he claims to be. After a preliminary script reading, Jack told the boys they could leave, but to be back that afternoon at 2 for another rehearsal. After the boys had scurried out, John Tackaberry, one of Benny's writers, said, "Jack, I don't think that one kid will make it back on time today. He's got a 'conflict'."



Above, the Sportsmen, give out with "L-S-L-S-M-F-T."

"What do you mean?" asked Benny.

"Well," said Tackaberry, "that boy has a show of his own, you know."

"A show of his own?" repeated Jack. "Ohh."

Going into his record consecutive 16th year on NBC, Benny is still shrewdly playing to the listener in his living room at home, still using the narrative show with a framework of situations which he developed. Actually, Benny is the great revolutionist of radio. He was, as Fred Allen said, "the first comedian on the air to realize that you can get big laughs by ridiculing yourself, instead of your stooges."

Just where the once-skinny Waukegan kid who was born Benjamin Kubelsky got his superb

sense of timing, is unimportant. But not even the most lukewarm can deny that Benny has it. Jack seems able to get more laughs out of a pause, or a simple word like "Well," than other comedians out of a dozen pratfalls. Jack reads a line so that the very inflection makes it funny. He is "a masterly comedian who could wring a laugh out of an executor's report."

Benny is still the only radio artist who has a lifetime option on NBC's choice 7 o'clock spot on Sunday night. Niles Trammel, president of the network, gave Jack that option back in 1941, no matter who sponsored him in the future. And for the next three years, at least, Jack will be toting home around one thousand dollars a minute, just for being the very opposite of himself on the air.

HELLO, OUT THERE IN RADIO LAND! WE GET LETTERS

ELK GROVE VILLAGE — Your affection for the Cinnamon Bear is not singular! I grew up with him, too, and through the years, am known to my brothers and sisters, nieces, nephews, friends, as "C.B." I have been given many gifts, including a sweat shirt emblazoned with "I'M THE CINNAMON BEAR" which I wear to this day. I'm not the least bit embarrassed by all of this! I've related the story of The Cinnamon Bear at every opportunity. I was delighted to be able to purchase the tapes from the original radio program, and was astounded to find the coloring book — the same as I used when I entered the contest sponsored by Wieboldt's "Toyteria." Thank you for some lovely comments about some cherished memories and for continuing to broadcast the story. — **TONI SAVINO.**

CHICAGO — My sons are enjoying the Cinnamon Bear even more than I did 30 years ago. The program is great. Will pledge to listen every Saturday. Wish you were on more often. — **TED ZUDYK.**

GLEN ELLYN — I do a lot of sewing when you are on. I can remember the Cinnamon Bear on radio and then on TV, too. I always believe that Paddy O'Cinnamon is a girl. To me, she always was and always will be a girl! — **MARIAN MEIER.**

MT. PROSPECT — We enjoy the Cinnamon Bear. I have a cardboard silver star that goes on our tree every year. My mother sent for it from the original radio show many years ago. Now my children are enjoying it on your show. — **MRS. JOANNE COY.**

CHICAGO — I have a little boy who enjoys the Cinnamon Bear just as I did in the 40s. I remember getting the coloring book at Wieboldt's at 63rd and Green. — **HAROLD JOHNSON.**

CHICAGO — I, for one, couldn't wait to get through with school to come home and listen to the Cinnamon Bear. I'd park in front of the radio and a mental picture of the story would come to mind while listening. The final chapters would usually be on while we were decorating our Christmas tree. When they tried to put it on TV it wasn't the same because the TV couldn't put my mental images on. — **RICHARD J. KASEROW.**

CICERO — I received, this Christmas, a copy of "Don't Touch That Dial!" I would like to tell you and your listeners that this is a fascinating book. Fred MacDonald is a true author who puts his life into this book. Though I'm only 18 years old, I have learned a great deal about the history of radio that I never knew. I would recommend to your TWTD listeners that they pick up a copy of this book before they run out. — **RICHARD BILEK.**
(ED. NOTE — We agree with you, and further suggest that the best place to pick up a copy is at Metro-Golden-Memories!)

ELMHURST — Is there any chance, in the near future, of your programming some "Box 13" starring Alan Ladd and "The Adventures of Harry Lime" starring Orson Welles? We thoroughly enjoy your program and between tapings and periodic visits to Metro Golden Memories, I have accumulated about 50 programs, mostly mystery and adventure. — **DON MILITELLO.**

(ED. NOTE — No sooner said than done. Check the March listings for Alan and Orson)

DES PLAINES — I have been listening to your program for nine years now, ever since I was in high school (sometimes showing up late for class). You've kept my imagination alive with "The Dark," my spine tingling with "The Shadow," and my belly aching with Fibber McGee and Molly. Considering today's entertainment, those were the days, indeed... the good days. — **ROSEMARY AYERS.**

WILMETTE — I really enjoy listening every Saturday afternoon while I'm remodeling my 60 year old house. For almost three years now, the house has been hearing shows it heard when they were new! — **JOHN BEHN.**

CHICAGO — I am 14 years old and I go to Steinmetz High school. I remember you mentioned on one of your shows that you went to Steinmetz. If you want to tell me what teachers you had, I could see if they're still there and if they remember you. — **BRIAN JOHNSON.**

(ED. NOTE — Look for teachers with long grey beards and haggard expressions. If any are still around, chances are we had them and they'll remember us!)

LA PORTE, INDIANA — I've enjoyed your show now for almost a year. I'm only 16 so I'm sorry to say I don't remember the old shows first hand. My father, however, remembers them well. My mother was raised in Norway, so she didn't get to hear any radio during the war, but she said they never heard much American programming anyhow. She did say, though, that she listened to Don McNeil's Breakfast Club when she came over here. TWTD just went off the air 20 minutes ago and I'm listening to "Zephyr" now. I especially enjoyed Lionel Barrymore in "A Christmas Carol" and the Jack Benny shows and the Jimmy Durante tribute. — **ERIK ELLIS.**

CARPENTERSVILLE — I do my ironing as I listen, just as I did as a little girl helping my mom. Now, as then, it makes the ironing go by easier. — **MARGARET HUCKEY.**

CHICAGO — I really enjoy your program. It makes me remember the days when I was a child and my family sat around the radio for enjoyment. Those really were the days! — **LEOTA THORNE.**

CHICAGO — Sure do enjoy my Saturday afternoons. It beats TV because you're really funny when you get rolling. The funniest interview was with Buster Crabbe. Boy, I got that on tape. I laugh every time I play that thing. You must have been sweating during that one. — **JIM SMITH.**

(ED. NOTE: It was a memorable afternoon, that's for sure!)

MICHIGAN CITY, INDIANA — I, and probably a good many of your listeners, tape many of the shows and cut the program listings out (of the Nostalgia Newsletter), pasting them on the cassettes as labels. Printing the listings back to back means some of them cannot be used. As an example, the December-January issues contains fourteen pages, including both inside covers. The radio listings appear on pages 7, 8, 9 and 10. I suggest leaving pages 7 and 8 as they are, moving "Slips That Pass in the Mike" to pages 9 and 10 and the final two pages of listings to pages 11 and 12. This would permit reading the articles and the using of all the listings as labels. I don't think this would increase your costs and would be welcomed by many of your readers. What do you think? — **FRED STANDLEY.**

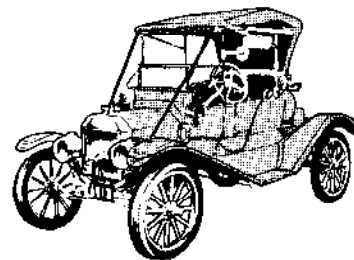
(ED. NOTE — We think it's a good idea and, as you can see, we've adopted it beginning with this issue. Of course, it does hurt to think that readers are cutting up the Newsletter. We thought for sure each copy would be a collector's item!)

Nostalgia Newsletter -15-

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NEW!

SUSPENSE

JACK BENNY

The Face is Familiar

This is a dramatic role for Jack. He gets involved with a couple of bank robbers, gives the teller of a bank a note requesting \$50,000 and escapes because he has the perfect face . . . no one ever recognizes it! With Sheldon Leonard and Hy Averbach. Sponsored by AutoLife 1/18/54.

SUSPENSE

VINCENT PRICE

The Name of the Beast

Vincent Price, an artist, is working on his masterpiece, which is called the "Name of the Beast." A blood-soaked ax-murderer is the one posing for the picture. Add a touch of lust, a dash of love, and a menacing model and you have . . . Suspense! Sponsored by Roma Wines 4/11/46.

THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE

Starring Harold Peary

Water Commissioner, Throckmorton P. Gildersleeve, opposes incumbent Mayor Twilliger in the upcoming election for Mayor. Gildy also tries to get his future mother-in-law on the next train out of town. Featuring Marjorie, Judge Hooker, Floyd Munson the barber, Mr. Peavey the druggist, and Leroy (Walter Tetley). An Armed Force broadcast, June 18, 1944.

THE GREAT GILDERSLEEVE

Starring Harold Peary

Lady Esther's Screen Guild Players presents the comedy, "Gildersleeve's Bad Day," supported by his well known cast of characters. Gildy is a juror in Judge Hooker's court hearing a bank robbery case. He unknowingly is given a \$1,000 bribe to free the bank robber. Gildersleeve finds himself in big trouble! Broadcast in the 1940's.

GET YOUR TAPES at any office of **NORTH WEST FEDERAL SAVINGS** or at the **METRO-GOLDEN-MEMORY SHOPS**. BY MAIL, send \$5.50 for each tape to **THE HALL CLOSET, BOX 421, MORTON GROVE, ILL. 60053**.