

Meetings: Tuesday 12 Noon, combined Real-Virtual Meeting

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APRIL IS MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH MONTH

Happy Birthday

Happy Anniversary

UPCOMING SPEAKERS:

Apr 19: Video presentation "My Enemy, My Brother"	Apr 26:	May 3:
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OUR CLUB LAST WEEK'S MEETING

Mike Davies presided.

Speaker: Brad Ashton - The Job of a Laughtime



About Brad Ashton

Brad Ashton was born on August 10, 1931 in London, England. He is a British television comedy writer with his name on the credits of over 1,000 shows covering seven different countries. At the start of his career, he was the head writer for Groucho Marx and also wrote for Steve Allen and Orson Bean. Among the Canadians for whom he supplied comedy was Alan Young and Drew Carey. He has written four books about comedy: [How to Write Comedy](#), [The Funny Thing About Writing Comedy](#), [The Job of a Laughtime](#), and [Stand Up and Be Laughed At](#) (a book containing 4,000 gags for comedians and speech makers). He came to us from London, England via Zoom (although unfortunately for those who attended our Rotary meeting in person it was almost impossible for us to hear his talk, or for him to hear us as his audience, due to equipment difficulties).

He started his presentation with a couple of jokes:

Four men always got together each week to play poker for money, but never told their wives where they were going or what they were doing while they were gone. One night one of the men lost 8,000 British Pounds, and was so shocked that he had a heart attack and died. The remaining three drew straws to see who would have to break the sad news to his wife. The one with the short straw went to see the wife and told her that he had some bad news – that her husband had lost 8,000 Pounds gambling, to which she replied: "£8,000? He lost £8,000? He should drop dead !!" "He did", was his reply.

A man and his wife had been married for 10 years and had two beautiful daughters. The wife got pregnant for the third time, and gave birth to an ugly baby girl. "What happened", said the husband upon seeing his new child for the first time. "She's ugly! Did you sleep with another man?", he asked. "Not this time", she replied.

Brad Ashton related stories about the various comedians that he had written for or met, such as:

Benny Hill: Benny Hill did 39 one-hour shows which were released on television in 10 different countries. Everything he did on the TV show got big laughs, but every laugh was dubbed. Benny Hill was terrified to face a live audience, but was brilliant when he did his skits reacting as if he was front of a live audience. He made a lot of money for himself and for the television station, and when he died he had £10 million in the bank, and another £2 million hidden in various places in his residence.

John Cleese: Brad Ashton did not work for or actually meet John Cleese, but John Cleese was interviewed in his home for a television show, and it showed clearly on his desk a copy of Brad's book "How to Write Comedy". Brad said that 300 copies of his book were sold the next day. John Cleese wrote and appeared in 12 episodes of Fawlty Towers, with his real-life wife, Connie Booth, who also played his wife on the show.

The show was a smashing success, but Cleese and Booth separated after the 12th episode, and that was the reason for the end of the series. John Cleese also wrote and starred in the movie called "A Fish Called Wanda", for which he earned £52 million, and in the same year sold a company which he owned for £30 million, thereby making £82 million in one year. John Cleese married three other women (all four of his wives being Americans), and went broke in the divorce settlements. When asked why he married his fourth wife, he answered "temporary insanity", and when asked how she took it when he informed her that he was divorcing her, he said "in cash".

Drew Carey: When asked how he first got into show business, Drew Carey said he learned that he could earn \$100 for each joke that he wrote for a disc jockey, and that he got his material out of a book entitled "How to Write Comedy" by Brad Ashton.

Orson Welles: he made most of his money doing a magic act in Las Vegas for three months each year.

Jerry Lewis: Brad Ashton went to watch Jerry Lewis one time during a rehearsal for one of Lewis' shows, and Brad took a picture of him with his camera while sitting in the audience. Jerry Lewis stopped the rehearsal and took Brad's camera and threw it on the floor and smashed it, saying "nobody takes pictures of me without my permission".

Jack Benny: Jack had four gimmicks: (1) he never admitted to be older than 39 years (2) he played the violin badly [but was actually a virtuoso because you had to be that good to play that bad] (3) he pretended to have a toupee, and (4) his stinginess. [Jack said he was approached by a mugger who said "your money or your life". When Benny didn't say anything for a minute, the mugger said again "I said your money or your life; did you not hear me?" "I'm thinking about it", said Benny].

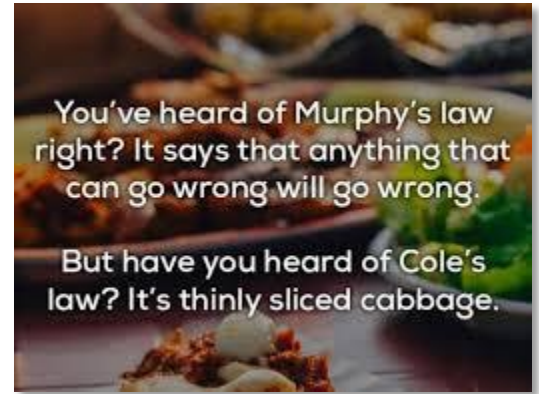
Rogers and Hammerstein: Brad Ashton wrote a comedy show which he called "Anna and the King of Siam", and was sued for thousands of pounds sterling (£) by Rogers and Hammerstein on the grounds that he had plagiarized their film "The King and I". So. Brad went out in a poor part of London and took pictures of "four little urchins" in the East End, and told the other side that if they continued with their lawsuit his for little kids would starve. This resulted in them settling for a small sum.

Groucho Marx: When Groucho Marx brought his show "You Bet Your Life" to England in 1965, Brad was the head writer. Groucho was known for his "ad libs", but it was part of Brad's contract that Brad must not let on that Groucho had a writer for his show.

Brad Ashton ended his talk with a final joke:

A girl went away on a cruise and when she came back, told her mom and dad that she had met a wonderful boy called Izzi, and she wanted to marry him. Her parents said that she was raised as a good Catholic girl, and they wouldn't allow her to marry a Jewish boy, and that she would have to talk him into becoming a Catholic if she wanted to go ahead with the wedding. After a few weeks the girl came back and told her parents, "I worked too hard in convincing him to become a Catholic. He now wants to become a priest".

No Quote for the day, but:



Submitted by Laurie Anderson