

CARICATURIST DRAWS CROWD WITH LAUGHTER

Artist Relies on Humor —Without Malice

BY CHARLES SCHWANITZ
(Pictures on page 1)

Lenn Redman, a lanky and easygoing 6 footer, hits it off with people by making fun of them. He's a caricaturist.

"Americans have a good sense of humor," says Redman thoughtfully. "Thank God."

The artist, who lives at 816 Cornelia av., has drawn some 100,000 caricatures during his 20 year career. His "victims" range from Bing Crosby and Hedy Lamarr to Sid Caesar and Boris Karioff.

Do people ever get sore when they take a gander at a Redman caricature of themselves?

"Not one in a thousand," says Redman, grinning. "And," he adds, "you might think women would resent a caricature more than men do. But you'd be wrong there. They take it just as good naturedly."

No Malice in Good One

Redman can prove his point by at least one example. He once caricatured a girl at a party. She laughed—and subsequently got to be Mrs. Redman.

"The point about a good caricature," Redman says, "is that there's no malice in it. The art of caricaturing is to exaggerate the truth without distorting it."

He says he does his best caricatures when he's just met his subject and can be completely objective. Once he gets to know somebody—and like or dislike him—it's harder to caricature him.

"A good caricature can be more revealing than the mirror," Redman points out, "since it stresses those features of the individual's face which set him apart from others."

Best subjects for caricatures are persons who have marked facial characteristics that make them stand out from the crowd, Redman says.

Three Ingredients

What makes humor—particularly in caricatures—funny?

Redman admits that's a tough one to put a finger on. But, he says, one is pretty safe in assuming that the higher forms of humor have three main ingredients—"exaggerated truthfulness," deflation of false dignity, and a touch of sadness.

"First of all," Redman explains, "you've got to distinguish between primitive slapstick humor and a higher form of humor."

"The slapstick kind of humor is tinged with malice," Redman remarks. "It laughs

at somebody else's misfortune."

"By contrast," he says, "in higher forms of humor, the victim laughs at himself, or at his own misfortunes and mistakes. Caricature is an example."

Learns in Art Shows

In the higher forms of humor, Redman thinks, emotions that tend to annoy you are turned into laughter and made harmless. All good humorists, including caricaturists, are basically serious persons, he stresses.

Redman served his apprenticeship as caricaturist during the depression at the Grant park outdoor art shows. He charged 25 cents a caricature.

"I was real proud the first day," he recalls. "I came home with 6 bucks." He was just out of Senn High school then.

After going to various art schools—including the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts and the American Academy of Arts—Redman spent some years in Hollywood, working as animal cartoonist for Walt Disney, Warner Brothers, and Universal Studios.

Invited to England

Now Redman specializes in quick caricatures at charity affairs and conventions. He finishes a drawing about every 45 seconds. But if he works from photographs, it may take him 15 to 30 minutes to finish a caricature.

His latest assignment—in October—will take him over to England, where he was invited to draw caricatures at a London brewers convention.

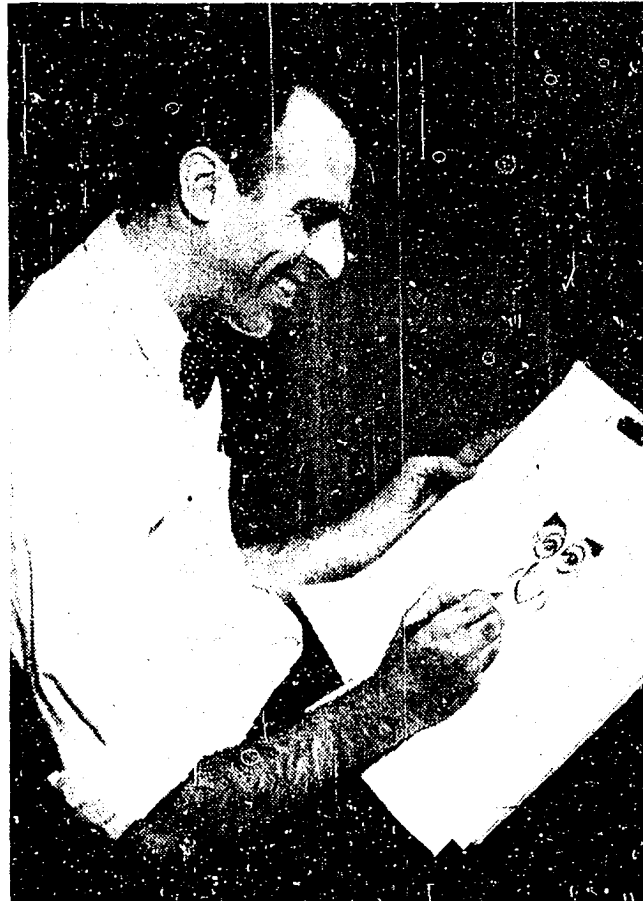
Redman's hobby?

It's experimenting with abstract oil paintings by utilizing a specialized technique—that of caricaturing.

Artist in 15 Minute Lesson Demonstrates How Caricature Is Born



Eyes are most expressive part of face and that's why Caricaturist Len Redman, 816 Cornelia av., starts his caricature of Adlai Stevenson by sketching them in. (Story on page 4)



Next step in caricaturing mobile features of titular Democratic party head is to fill in nose and cheeks. Redman picked Stevenson as subject because he has mobile features that lend themselves to caricature. (TRIBUNE Photos by Russell V. Hamm)



Caricature is almost finished as artist strengthens facial lines and heightens expression around eyes. Caricature takes from 15 to 30 minutes to complete.



Redman puts finishing touches to shoulders. Some faces—those with sharp, clearly defined lines—lend themselves especially to caricature, artist says.



Smiling broadly, Redman holds up finished caricature. Artist was asked to choose public figure to demonstrate genesis of a caricature.



Here is one of photos Redman used to work from. Photograph was useful to "get feel" of upper part of Stevenson's face, Redman said.



Here's another photograph artist used. It helped particularly in sketching Stevenson's smile.