

GORILLAS DON'T BLOG

THIS BLOG HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH GORILLAS (THOUGH I LOVE 'EM)...FELLOW BLOGGERS HAVE INSPIRED ME TO SHARE VINTAGE IMAGES OF DISNEYLAND FROM MY PERSONAL COLLECTION. BUT DON'T BE SURPRISED IF YOU SEE SOMETHING FROM A WORLD'S FAIR, KNOTT'S BERRY FARM, OR SOMEPLACE ELSE THAT IS COOL!

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2019

The Mouse Club

Today's "Anything Goes Saturday" post is a tribute to two friends of mine - Ed and Elaine Levin. Eddie passed away 10 years ago, and Elaine recently passed at the age of 92. I met them in the late 1980's at their wonderful Sherman Oaks shop, "Nickelodeon". The store was incredible! Eddie and Elaine collected and sold so much cool stuff! Vintage comic character merchandise (the best of the best); advertising items; phonographs and radios; posters; spinning tops and yo-yos (Eddie was a master at the yo-yo!); Beatles merch; and so much more. It was like heaven. Here's Ed and Elaine in front of the store.



Here's a portrait of them inside the shop. Man, this takes me back. After the store closed, I remained friends with the Levins, and went

ABOUT ME



 MAJOR PEPPERIDGE

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to their home many times. It was full of amazing artifacts too, and Elaine kept everything as neat as can be, it never looked cluttered. Their back bedroom had Ed's world-class collection of vintage Mickey Mouse toys, which was something to behold.



To make a long story short, Ed and Elaine started something called The Mouse Club back in 1976 - one of the first Disney fan clubs. And after a few rather informal meetings at their home, the Levins organized a Mouse Club convention at the Jolly Roger Inn for three days in 1983. Thanks to their passion and hard work, Eddie and Elaine got many Disney legends to show up, signing autographs and giving slide show presentations.

A few years back, Elaine allowed me to scan photos from her album of snapshots, and her daughter Lori gave me the "OK" to share some of those with you today.

I'm not sure where this first photo was taken; perhaps somewhere in the Jolly Roger Inn? As you can see, Frank Thomas and his good pal Ollie Johnston are there. Frank's wife Jeanette is in the red skirt, while the lady in green is Ollie's wife Marie.

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- C.K. Holliday & Town Square, September 1966
- Summer 1959 Gate Handout
- Red Returns, September 1969
- WDW Postcard Folder, Part 2
- Jungle Cruise Snoozers, September 1966
- Random Vintage Images
- Surrey and Streetcar, November 1958

The rest of these are definitely from the Mouse Club convention! Here's Bill Justice, sketching goofy for a grateful fan. Ed and Elaine were good friends with Bill, and he did many drawings for them over the years.



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There's Bob Clampett and Ward Kimball! Clampett was a legendary director of some of the wildest Warner Bros. cartoons, as well as the creator of "Beany and Cecil". And Ward Kimball... well, you know who he was! Like Bill Justice, Ward was very friendly with the Levins, and produced some wonderful artworks for them.



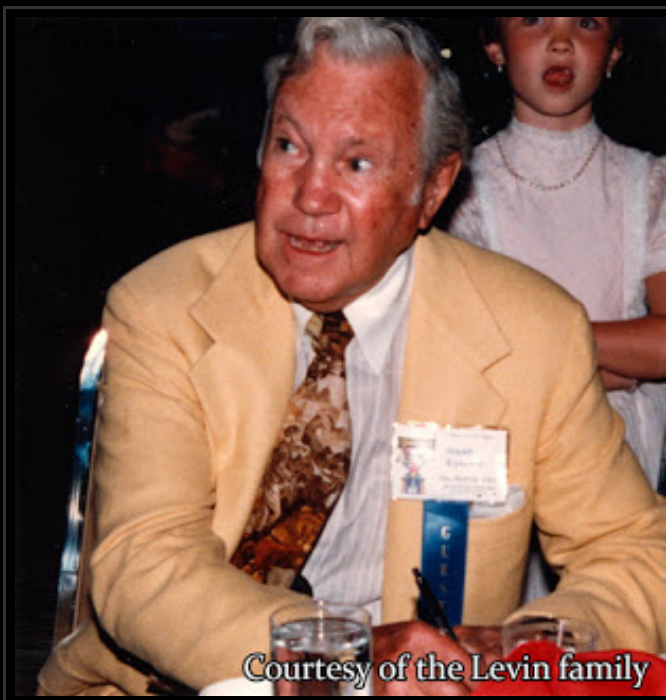
Here's Eddie, posing with Frank Thomas and Ward Kimball. Is everything OK, Ward?!



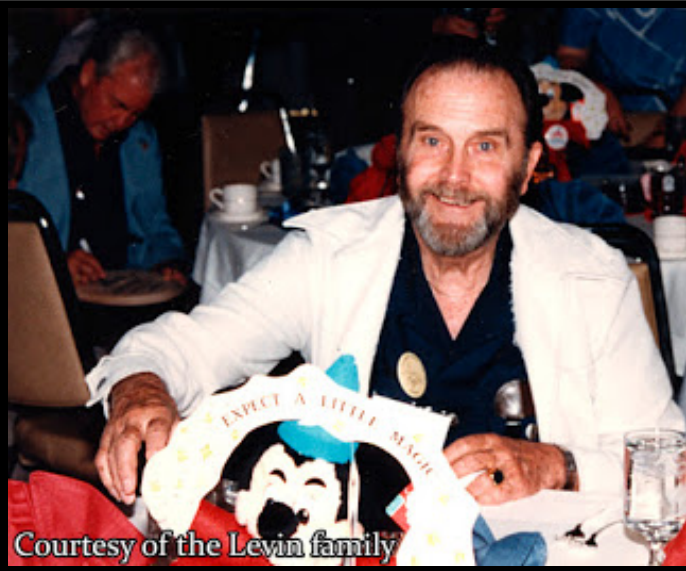
Clarence "Ducky" Nash (the voice of Donald Duck, of course) was there with his wife, he signed tons of autographs, and brought along a Donald Duck puppet so that he could entertain folks.



This is Herbie Ryman, creator of so much incredible conceptual art for Disneyland and other Disney parks. He famously spent a weekend at the studio with Walt, drawing a beautiful large map that was used to help Walt and Roy explain just exactly what this "Disneyland" thing was going to be.



Here's Ken Anderson, who Walt called his "Jack of all trades". He was a brilliant artist and art director who started at the studio in 1934, and was instrumental in the development many early rides at Disneyland.



And finally, here's a nice group portrait with Bob Clampett, Ward Kimball, Elaine, Ed, Frank Thomas, Ollie Johnston, and Clarence Nash. Elaine did not like this photo because she wasn't smiling, but... look at those legends!



I hope you have enjoyed today's photos! I'll post more if you are interested. Many thanks to the Levin family for allowing me to share these fantastic images.

POSTED BY MAJOR PEPPERIDGE AT 12:01 AM

12 COMMENTS:



Nanook said...

Major-

Wow - the Mouse Club and the Levins. That definitely takes me back. What a treasure trove of famous folk - including Bob Clampett and his 'infamous' toupee!

Thanks, Major.

12:09 AM



Scott Lane said...

Wow how cool! Yes more please.

3:59 AM



JC Shannon said...

It certainly is cool inside, wow, what a store that must have been. I wish I could have seen it. The who's who of Disney royalty all seem to be having a ball at the convention. If photos could talk, huh? In the photo of the shop, I spy about a hundred things I would love to add to my collection. Growing up I always had a Duncan Imperial Yo Yo in my room, and would attempt to do the tricks I had seen on TV. I am a huge Herb Ryman fan, his art is amazing. Please post more of these great scans.

Check out the Bank Americard Master Charge sign in the window. Thanks Major.

4:08 AM



TokyoMagic! said...

Major, I'm sorry to hear about your friend's recent passing. I wish I had known of her and her husband's store. It's looks absolutely incredible. When did it close? And I can't even imagine getting to see and meet that many incredibly talented artists, and all in one spot!

I need to go back and stare at that color photo of the shop again. So many neat items in that shot! I think I can see some Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck drinking straws, still in their original boxes. And are those matchbooks strung diagonally

across the upper right hand corner of the photo?

Thanks Major, for sharing these with us and thank you also to the Levin family, for allowing you to do so.

4:13 AM



K. Martinez said...

Major,

I think this is one of the best posts you've done on your blog. There is so much greatness in these photos from Elaine's album of snapshots. I can imagine that Ed and Elaine had a lot of wonderful and interesting stories to tell of their experiences and the people they met through running their business and starting The Mouse Club.

I'd absolutely love it if you shared more about your friends Ed and Elaine with us. Thank you.

Special thanks to Elaine's daughter Lori for giving you permission and allowing you to share these wonderful images with us.

5:40 AM



stu29573 said...

So many magic makers! I fear we'll never see a group like them again at Disney...

6:03 AM



Melissa said...

Wow!

Wowee!

Wowee-wow-wow!

What awesome folks! What an amazing shop! What great stories! It's so great you got to know the Levin's, and that you've shared all this with us.

Too many zoom-in details to go over, but special shout-outs to

the Mickey and Minnie handcar toy in front of Elaine in #2 and Jeanette's flowered sweater in #3.

6:06 AM



Chuck said...

No...words. More...please.

6:41 AM



Chuck said...

Okay, recovered somewhat. Still have the smelling salts nearby, just in case.

I just stumbled on a few 2014 Howard Lowery auction listings of items from the Levins' personal collection:

Ed's personal copy of *Disneyana*, signed by Bill Justice, Ward Kimball, Herb Ryman, and John Hench in 1985, which was sold at auction in 2014 by Howard Lowery.

A Ward Kimball drawing of Mickey & Donald.

Ed's copy of *Disney Animation: The Illusion of Life*, personally signed by Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston.

And a drawing of Ariel (the mermaid, not Sharon) by Glen Keane, inscribed to both Ed and Elaine.

Major, I'm so glad you had an opportunity to know the Levins, and that they were so generous with their time and passion to share not only with you but with others who shared an interest in not only Disney memorabilia but other classic collectibles. Thank you for sharing these photos, and a special thanks to Lori for allowing you to share them with the rest of us.

7:05 AM




Irene said...

I am just blown away! What an amazing story you have here.

So sorry to hear of the passing of Elaine. I have no doubt whatsoever that my brother visited their store back in the day as that was the kind of place he just loved. And those meetings! What fun that would have been. Yes, more please.

8:09 AM

 Major Pepperidge said...

Nanook, I might not have known about the Mouse Club if I didn't know Ed and Elaine. Sounds like you were aware of it? And yes, Bob Clampett's toupee is something to behold.

Scott Lane, no problem!

Jonathan, to my knowledge this was THE very first Disney fan convention, all thanks to Ed and Elaine's hard work and passion. Nowadays we have many Disneyana conventions (such as the huge D-23 events), and they can all trace their history back to the Mouse Club at the Jolly Roger Inn. As for yo-yos, Eddie was a master at them, as well as the bolo, he even participated in some of the earliest Renaissance Faires, demonstrating his talent.

TokyoMagic!, it was sad when Elaine passed, it felt like the end of an era for me. I don't remember the year that the store closed, but it might have been the early 90's (or late 80's). As fun as that photo of their shop is, it really doesn't show how amazing the whole place was. Everything the Levins liked, I liked!

K. Martinez, thanks! You are right, the Levins had endless stories about the people who came to their home (Michael Jackson, Jonathan Winters), and great recollections of finding amazing treasures all over the country. They'd go to the Rose Bowl swap meet long before the sun came up and would be leaving with the best stuff before mere mortals were even allowed to go in.

stu29573, yes, I was really amazed the first time Elaine showed me the photos of just who attended that Mouse Club convention.

Melissa, I'll have to share a photo of Eddie's prized Mickey Mouse collection, which really was incredible. I know that all of the GDB readers would have had their minds blown by the store.

Chuck, !!

Chuck, at Elaine's request, I actually took those items over to Howard's home for consignment. I have some photos of some other pieces of art as well that I will share in a future post. The drawing of Ariel is amazing because Eddie was on a plane and just happened to be seated next to Glen Keane. Glen was sketching (those guys are always drawing), and Eddie asked him if he was an animator. After my own grandparents passed away, I always got that "surrogate grandparent" vibe when visiting Ed and Elaine.

Irene, I wish we knew for sure that your brother had been to Nickelodeon, but he was a big Disney fan, so I think it's almost a guarantee. Don't you wish you could have been at that Mouse Club meeting??

8:26 AM

 Alonzo P Hawk said...

These are too awesome! Thanks so much for sharing these and the memories of the Levin's. For my two cents worth, never too many photos of the artists, imagineers, voice actors could be posted here.

Herb Ryman was one of my favorites and often goes under the Disney radar due to his quiet personality but his contributions are staggering.

Thanks again for sharing.

8:32 AM

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