

The voice of Bugs Bunny made millions laugh

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Dear Ken: Whatever happened to the great Mel Blanc, the man who was the voice behind Bugs Bunny? Born Melvin Jerome Blank in San Francisco, “the man of a thousand voices,” died in 1989 in Los Angeles of emphysema and heart disease at age 81. The gifted voice actor first gained fame on radio’s “Jack Benny Program,” but it was as dozens of famous cartoon characters that America and the world came to know his talents. Among other animated characters, Blanc provided the voice for Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Elmer Fudd, Porky Pig, Tweety Bird, Yosemite Sam, Pepe Le Pew, Foghorn Leghorn, Speedy Gonzalez, Barney Rubble and Sylvester the Cat. The words at the top of Blanc’s tombstone read: “THAT’S ALL FOLKS.”

Dear Ken: What singer had the hit song “Yellow Polka Dot Bikini”? I can hear the song in my head but not remember who sang the song.

The tune is actually titled “Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini. It was sung by Brian Hyland and went to No. 1 in the summer of 1960. The female voice that recited “One, two, three, four/Tell the people what she wore” on the song belonged to Trudy Packer. Hyland only had two other Top-10 pop hits: “Sealed With a Kiss” and “Gypsy Woman.”

Dear Ken: Where is Nina Dobrev, who plays Elena and Katherine on “The Vampire Diaries,” from?

Born Nina Constantinova Dobreva in Sofia, Bulgaria, the actress, 22, grew up in Toronto, Canada, and speaks Bulgarian, French and English. She made several films and TV movies before getting the role of Mia Jones on “Degrassi: The Next Generation.” She has reportedly completed the film “The Killing Game” with Samuel L. Jackson for release later this year.

Dear Ken: Did Burt Reynolds ever play professional football?

Burton Leon Reynolds Jr., 75, went to Florida State University on a football scholarship in 1954 and became an all-star Southern Conference halfback. However, a knee injury in 1955 and then a debilitating car accident knocked him off the gridiron. Crossing from sports into acting, he won the 1956 Florida State Drama Award. His talent was strong enough that he was drafted by the Baltimore Colts but Reynolds did not play in the NFL. In 1977 he was inducted into the FSU Football Hall of Fame.

If you have a trivia question about actors, singers, movies, TV shows or pop culture, e-mail your query to Ken Beck at