

Radio Advertising..... The Unusual, The Bizarre

"Sparkling..... uh, uh, sparkling, uh.....
what's the name?"

--- Harry Von Zell

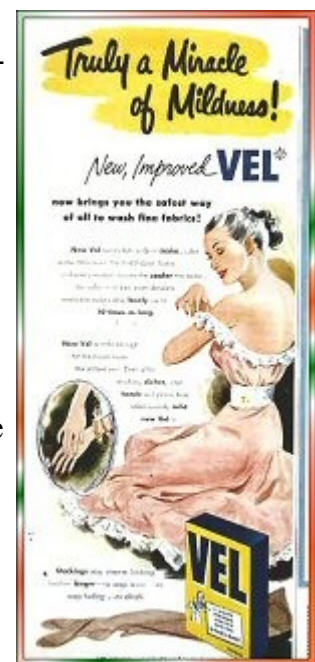
Lincoln, Me. (DG)---



With the title of this article, you might suspect more commercial bloopers. Not this time. These commercials went on the air without any misplaced or mispronounced words--- but there was still something a little out of the ordinary about them.

The first feature concerns the **Columbia Network** serial program **THE LIFE & LOVE OF DR. SUSAN**. The program was on the air for less than a year. Although the program was on the air for a short time, the way the commercials were presented would be considered unique. On other programs, the qualifications to become a topnotch radio announcer consisted of a good speaking voice and had to speak enthusiastically about the product he/she was selling. In order to become the announcer on the Dr. Susan program, he/she also had to display an exceptional singing voice for the musical commercials of the program's sponsor, **Lux Toilet Soap**. The announcing position on the program belonged to Frank Luther. He was qualified to do the job, because he was a famous radio singer during the 1930's. He used his musical talents in making the commercials for **Lux Toilet Soap** memorable.

Fred Allen's famous "**Eagle Show**" was a situation where announcer Harry Von Zell used some clever ad-libbing in his presentation for a commercial. With "**Mr. Ramshaw**" the eagle loose in the studio, there was considerable chaos. With the commotion going on, it was time for Von Zell to present the commercial for **Sal Hepatica**. Instead of the usual "**Smile Of Health**" type commercial **Sal Hepatica** was famous for, Von Zell and Allen used Mr. Ramshaw to ad-lib a humorous commercial. To start things off, Von Zell pretended to be upset with the eagle at large. He began the commercial without any problem, but when it was time to mention **Sal Hepatica**, he forgot the product's name. Allen tried to help him, but Von Zell couldn't come up with **Sal Hepatica**. He did remember all the good things the product did for the typical human--- but the product's name escaped him for the moment. With Von Zell's apparent memory lapse, Allen asked the studio audience to yell out the product the announcer was talking about. Von Zell's memory came back to him when he heard the studio audience yell out **Sal Hepatica**.



As you already know, *Lava* was famous on the radio for the deep voice "**singing**" "*L-A-V-A L-A-V-A!*" Whether or not it was considered a jingle is a matter for debate. If it was, it would be considered the shortest jingle. With that in mind, when it comes to the shortest jingle **using more than one word**, *Vel* was the definite winner.

Vel made history as *Colgate-Palmolive-Peet's* first synthetic detergent. It was tailor made for washing dishes, fine fabrics, and milking equipment on farms. It was so popular, *Vel* was made with the saving of money in mind. Each yellow *Vel* box held 25% more detergent than the competition. Although it was generous with the product content, *Vel* was stingy with its musical jingle--- which was another plus with those radio listeners who hated radio jingles. It consisted of only 3 words, "**It's Mar-VEL-ous..... V-E-L!**" The jingle was brief, to the point, and the listeners were returning to the program they were listening to.

With today's sports terminology, the word "**defense**" is pronounced differently from everyday life. As you already know, it's pronounced "**DEE-fense.**" If you noticed the *Vel* jingle closely, "**marvelous**" is pronounced in a different manner than what we're used to. It just so happens, the product's name consisted of the middle 3 letters. Since the product was named *Vel*, it made sense to split the word up into 3 syllables, and to accent the "**vel.**"

Listeners who tuned in to the *AMOS 'n ANDY SHOW* heard announcer Ken Carpenter talk about "*The New 1950 Rinso.*" It was the best *Rinso* ever made. It had 3 times the whiter washing action of any soap brand on the market. The laundry washed in *New 1950 Rinso* was whiter and brighter than when it was new. It was the product that puts sunshine in the wash (if only *Rinso* could do that for the weather).

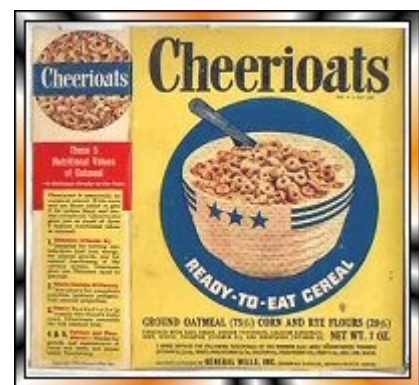
What I have written here doesn't sound much out of the ordinary, does it? There is definitely something unusual about the commercial. Carpenter described the *New 1950 Rinso* on a 1949 *AMOS 'n ANDY SHOW* broadcast! As he stated, the *New 1950 Rinso* was a year ahead. It's obvious that *Lever Brothers*, who made *Rinso*, wanted their product available to the public A.S.A.P. Personally, I don't blame *Lever Brothers* for getting the *New Rinso* out to the public--- but why not call it *New 1949 Rinso!*?

We all know about *Cheerios*, the famous ready to eat cereal. The tasty little "O's" have been a part of breakfast for many years. If you're not familiar how *Cheerios* began, this might surprise you (I admit, it surprised

me when I first learned how it).

On a 1944 broadcast of *VALIANT LADY*, I assumed announcer Dwight Weist said *Cheerios* sponsored the program. In reality, he didn't--- at least with that brand name! During the early 1940's, *Cheerios* was originally known as *Cheerioats*. It was also slightly different from the *Cheerios* we know of today. *Cheerioats* was the oat cereal that was also flavored with added corn and rye. It was the perfect breakfast for the "**Fighters On The Home Front.**"

Cheerioats got into some trouble with its name. The "oats" part of the name was closely associated with another company who was famous for its hot oatmeal cereal. *General Mills* simply dropped the "at" and renamed its product *Cheerios*. Despite the name change, *Cheerios* continued to be a popular breakfast cereal.



**Distinguished Committee of 17
Launches New Soap Discovery**

Mrs. James J. Davis, Mrs. Cecil B. deMille, Ethel Barrymore,
Anne Morgan, in group to judge new soap for fine fabrics

A TINY bead of soap, as large as a pinhead, yet it holds the water of 3000 longer water for silk stockings. Science proved this exactly as the every satisfaction of the Committee of 17, a group of distinguished women who met at the Ritz Hotel to give "the woman's viewpoint" on this revolutionary new soap that promises to spend itself, all previous conceptions of how little and how fabric should be washed.

Watch soap work its will!

Hand lotion, hair cream, cosmetics, the will of a distinguished cabinet member, ancient ancestry, artistic... women representative of every type of American leadership... the Committee of 17 found silk stockings and fine undergarments and handkerchiefs washed in entirely different kind of soap from fabric grades. These different textures, no longer were, should be washed in a soap that would dissolve instantly—wash in water at 60° F., and that soap completely.

Could such a soap be made? 500 experts told "no." And before the washing machine they found a revolutionary new soap, called "Palmolive Beads." They take great pride of soap that dissolved like a dash. Changed in water to liquid suds that without soap residue. And used every

PALMOLIVE BEADS
for washing fine fabrics. Large Box 10c

The Committee of 17
Mrs. James J. Davis
Mrs. Cecil B. deMille
Ethel Barrymore
Anne Morgan
Mrs. J. P. Morgan
Mrs. W. P. Wood
Mrs. G. B. DeLoach
Mrs. E. C. Tamm
Mrs. J. H. Easton
Mrs. J. M. McKim
Mrs. J. S. Gurnea
Mrs. J. W. Aldrich
Mrs. J. R. Thompson
Mrs. J. C. Hays
Mrs. J. G. Thompson
Mrs. J. H. Easton
Mrs. J. M. McKim
Mrs. J. S. Gurnea
Mrs. J. W. Aldrich
Mrs. J. R. Thompson
Mrs. J. C. Hays
Mrs. J. G. Thompson

Finally, this advertising promotion took place in 1931. The product in question was **Palmolive Beads**, a brand new bead soap for fine fabrics. It was made with the same palm and olive oils **Palmolive Soap** made famous during that time. *

In order to get the new product off the ground, it was tested with other soap brands for instant dissolving, speed rinsing, and for cleaning in cool water. To judge the test, "**The Committee of 17**" monitored the proceedings. The Committee of 17 consisted of 17 of America's most distinguished women of 1931. In a unanimous vote, all 17 members were impressed with **Palmolive Beads**. In a note of interest, one member of the Committee of 17 was Eleanor Roosevelt, who was listed in the enclosed ad as the wife of the governor of New York. Of course, she and her husband went on to bigger and better things the following year.

Since radio programs had their share of unusual and bizarre moments, it was only fair that radio advertising also had its share. We'll take a look at more unusual and bizarre radio commercials in future articles.

*- Author's note: I don't know conclusively if **Palmolive Beads** was a sponsor on **NBC(Red's) PALMOLIVE RADIO HOUR** in 1931, but I do know other **Palmolive** products were listed as the program's sponsors with **Palmolive Soap**. I'm going on the assumption that **Palmolive Beads** was also a sponsor of the program. Regardless if it was or not, this feature might prove to be interesting.