

Listeners Not Impressed With Radio Commercials

"*Rinso White, Rinso Bright.....* birdies sing it all day long---
Why blame that awful jingle on the birds?"

--- *Radio Listener*

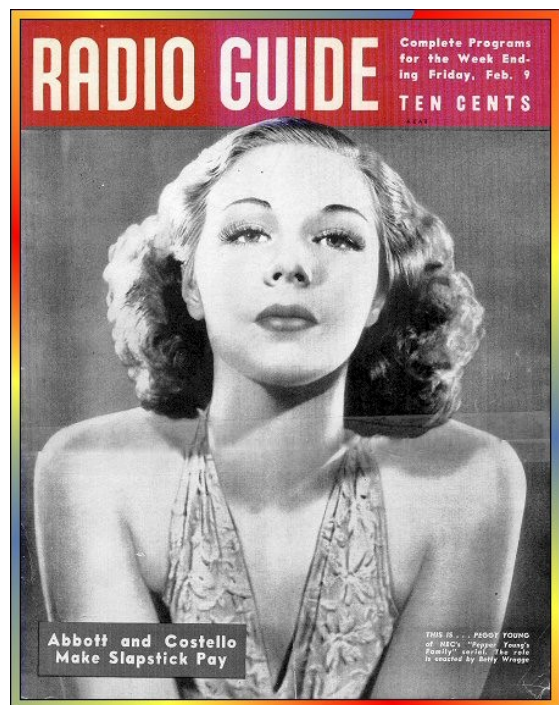
Lincoln, Me. (DG)---

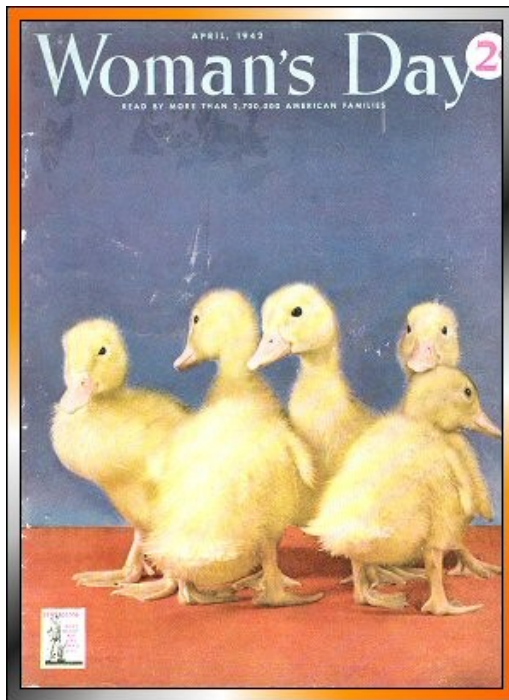
When direct advertising on radio was permitted, it was a boost for the sponsors of the radio programs. Now the announcers could try their best to persuade the listeners to buy the product during the commercials. While we know the sponsor liked the direct sell commercials, how did the radio listeners feel when they heard them? For the most part, they simply didn't share the same kind of warm affection as the sponsors did.

Radio Guide magazine (a.k.a. **Movie-Radio Guide**) was an excellent source on how the listeners felt concerning what they heard on the radio. Listeners weren't bashful in writing letters to the magazine to voice their opinions. It wasn't surprising to find some letters from disgruntled radio listeners on the subject of radio commercials.

The primary complaint of the listeners' discontent was the time allowed for the sponsor. To prove the point of too much advertising, a listener timed the actual story during a 15 minute daytime serial program. Out of the 15 minutes the program was allowed, there was about 9 minutes of the actual story. The other 6 minutes consisted of the program's opening and closing, to which the sponsor was usually mentioned--- and of course the commercials.

Another complaint was the type of product that was sponsored and the time of day it was heard. A listener wrote **Radio Guide** with the complaint as to why a laxative product had to be heard during an early morning radio program at breakfast time. The listener lost her appetite when she heard of the wonderful things the laxative did for the specific areas of the human body where a laxative was used. The word "**waste**" was also used in the commercial. When the word was used in association with a laxative, it could take away even the most robust appetite. The listener suggested if the laxative commercial had to be presented on the air, move it to another time in the day when it wasn't time to eat.





Woman's Day magazine conducted a poll on what radio commercials listeners liked and disliked the most. It wasn't surprising the response was overwhelming. Of the radio commercials the listeners hated the most, some of them are classic today. On the dubious list were commercials for *Duz*, *Ivory Soap*, *Super Suds*, *Rinso*, *Raleigh Cigarettes*, *Lifebuoy Health Soap*, *Cuticura Soap*, and all laxatives and deodorants.

Heading the unpopular list was *Lucky Strike*, who at the time sponsored *THE JACK BENNY PROGRAM* and *YOUR HIT PARADE*--- 2 of radio's most popular programs.

The source of their displeasure was the constant yelling of "LS/MFT", and the chant of the tobacco auctioneers, L.A. "Speed" Riggs of Gouldsboro, North Carolina and F. E. Boone of Lexington, Kentucky.

As if the *Lucky Strike* commercials on *THE JACK BENNY PROGRAM* were bad enough, the listeners sounded off their frustration at the program's closing commercial, *Herbert Tareyton Cigarettes*. The listeners heard the announcer

exclaim, "*Herbert Tareyton is back!*" The radio listeners wished ol' Herbie would go away!

The *Woman's Day* poll also mentioned some radio commercials the listeners didn't mind listening to. Their top pick was the "commercial" for *Johnson's Wax* on *FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY*. ■

During the halfway point of the program, announcer Harlow Wilcox came to the McGee home to talk with Fibber and Molly McGee. When he showed up, the listeners knew it was time for some words about *Johnson's Wax*--- although they didn't how and when Wilcox was going to do this. Much to Fibber's chagrin, "Waxy" (Wilcox's nickname) easily slid *Johnson's Wax* into the conversation.

The listeners liked this type of commercial, because Wilcox presented it while the program continued without interruption. These commercials were also filled with humorous comments. This type of commercial presentation was the best of all worlds for the radio listeners and the sponsor.

Overall, the radio listeners realized it was the sponsors that brought the programs to the airwaves--- and commercials simply went with the territory. In all honesty, their opinion on radio advertising is the same as our likes and dislikes of TV advertising today.

