

Jell-O In The 1950s

by Lynne Belluscio

A few days ago, I received an email from the new Jell-O contact in Chicago, asking whether we would be able to supply materials for a 1950s exhibit about Jell-O at the Walmart Museum. I had a lot of questions and it seemed to take forever to get answers so today I Googled the Walmart Museum in Bentonville, Arkansas, and gave them a call.

I was put in contact with Peggy Hamilton who is putting together the exhibit in Walton's 5 and 10 cent store, located next to the Walmart Museum, and adjacent to the ice cream shop. As Peggy explained, there might not be anything more iconic to the 1950s than Jell-O. So I told her I'd send her a little bit about the 1950s and Jell-O.

As we talked, she was very interested in the advertising about Jell-O and ice cream so I promised to send along the ad showing cubed Jell-O on ice cream. I told her that the "Joys of Jell-O" cookbook didn't appear until 1961, but she thinks she will go into the early 60s. So here is the synopsis of what I sent her:

Jell-O in the 50s

Advertising:

Included cartoons by some of America's most famous cartoon

illustrators: Hank Ketcham known for Dennis the Menace; Berenstains of the Berenstain Bears; Syd Hoff; and others.

"National Jell-O Week" was a take off on the fad of declaring a national week for a myriad of things: National Jell-O Fruit to Boot Week; National Trim Your Torso Week; National Jell-O and Ice Cream Week; and a campaign to sprinkle dried Jell-O on cereal, pudding and ice cream and buttered toast. National Bellow for Jell-O Week.

The 1950s also saw the popular rewritten nursery rhymes of Little Miss Muffet; the Cow that Jumped Over the Moon; Rub and Dub Dub and Old King Cole.

The animal ads were so popular, that Jell-O issued these without the advertising text so folks could hang them on the walls for their kids. There are about 24 animal ads including the zebra which has Jell-O colored stripes; there is a gnu, giraffe, squirrel, flamingo, bear, turtle, bee, wild cat, lion, rabbit, and leopard. These are very colorful and have a little poem. These ads ran in the Saturday Evening Post and Life magazine. Part of the promotion included a small Sebastian figurine which was sent out to the Jell-O distributors reminding them of the advertising campaign.



It's National Jell-O-At-Its-Sundae-Best Week!

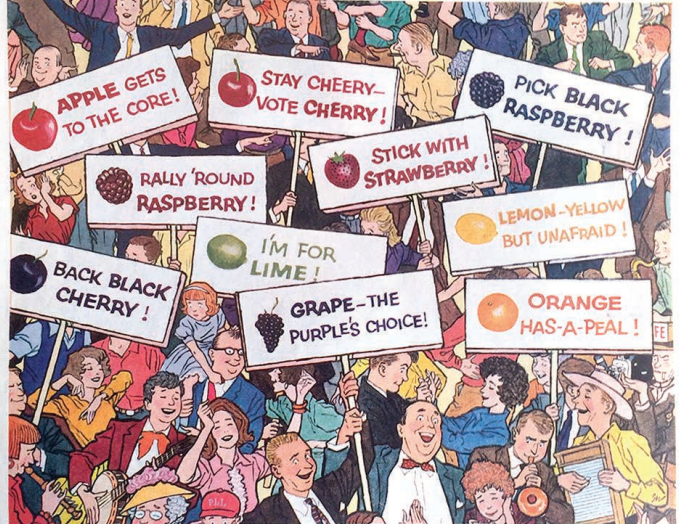
You could write a book about the way fruit-flavored Jell-O goes with the creamy-richness of ice cream. And there would be ten chapters... one for each delicious Jell-O flavor! Just spoon it on... the more Jell-O, the cooler. Try Jell-O at its sundae best tonight!



Don't let this week go by without JELL-O

NOTICE OF ELECTION

FOR THE OFFICE OF AMERICA'S FAVORITE JELLO FLAVOR



Election to be held Sept. 19 through Oct. 8 in grocery stores throughout the United States. No joke. You are automatically registered and eligible to vote if you can make an "X." So go to the polls in droves. Go in cars. Walk. But go and vote. Vote early; vote often for your favorite JELL-O flavor in the NATIONAL JELLO-ELECTION—September 19 through October 8.



The 1950s also included very colorful advertisements in magazines with recipes. For about eight years, Jell-O did not offer a recipe booklet, rather the recipes were included in the magazine ads. One of the most colorful was "Crown Jewel Dessert" which became known as "Broken Glass" and Stained Glass."

Slogans in the 1950s included "Now's the time for Jell-O"; "A Jell-O Salad makes the meal"; "Just for the fun of it - Jell-O tonight"; "It's National . . . Jell-O Week." Some of the spokespeople for Jell-O included Lucille Ball, Johnny Carson, and Roy Rogers.

There were four new flavors introduced in the 1950s: Introduces apple, black cherry, grape, and black raspberry.

I told Peggy that Walmart is very important to us here at the Jell-O Museum, ever since we started selling Jell-O two years ago. We wanted to have many different flavors available and I went from store to store looking

for the best price, since Tops Market prices were the highest. I ended up at Walmart which sells Jell-O for 74 cents. In fact I was at Walmart in Batavia on Saturday buying Jell-O - cranberry, watermelon and island pineapple. To be fair, Wegmans is only a couple of cents more, and I bought cherry lemondade, peach, orange, raspberry and grape at Wegmans in Brockport a few days ago.

So Jell-O history and the 1950s will be featured in the Walmart Museum later this year, and we are happy to help out.



Now's the time for



There's hardly a better way to lift the spirits than with a delicious, healthful Jell-O gelatin dessert. Savor it honor!

