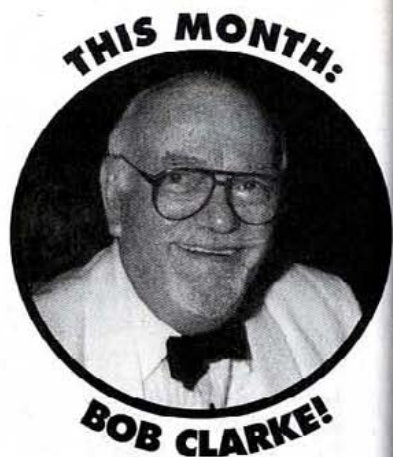


# MAD's IDIOT OF THE ISSUE!

## BOB CLARKE FAQs (Ferociously Awful Questions we asked Bob!)



**Q:** Who do you consider your influences?

**A:** Mother Nature, who gave me an insatiable desire to eat regularly, and the IRS, which had an insatiable desire to be paid regularly.

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**Q:** What is your favorite medium to work in?

**A:** I started with pen and ink, but the pens kept breaking, so I switched to brush and ink. When I work in color, I prefer watercolor. When Will Elder worked with me doing educational filmstrips, he introduced me to working in chicken fat, but I kept licking the brush and I put on too much weight!

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**Q:** What was the last movie you viewed or rented?

**A:** Since there are no movie theaters in Seaford, DE, the last movie I saw was *Shrek*, which I saw in Boca Raton during the Reuben Award weekend. I went with my niece, Patsy, who lives there.

**Q:** Who is your favorite non-MAD artist?

**A:** Are there any artists who are not mad? Of the ones who never did anything for MAD, I liked Edmond Dulac, followed by Rico Tomaso and Norman Rockwell.

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**Q:** Pick a MAD contributor and describe them in one word.

**A:** Paul Coker — adorable.

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**Q:** What was your favorite MAD trip?

**A:** The one to Japan — it's a beautiful country, and I met a Japanese manga, which is Japanese for cartoonist, named Fujio Akatsuka. Through an interpreter, he challenged Sergio and myself to a drinking contest — which consisted of a tour of about ten private clubs — where we drank Sentori Royale, a kind of Scotch whiskey, while being fed shrimp and other delicacies by beautiful Japanese girls. Each club had a guitar and a rhythm machine, so we played and sang a medley of songs. Sergio sang in Spanish, Fujio in Japanese, myself in English, German and Russian. Fujio did not speak English, Sergio and I did not speak Japanese, so we conversed in cartoons left on napkins. As we left one of the clubs, Sergio said to me that we had left a million dollars worth of art on the table!

**Q:** Who would you not want to be stranded on a desert island with?

**A:** Anyone who consistently ends sentences with a preposition. It is something up with which I cannot put!

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**Q:** What is your favorite MAD article that you read?

**A:** Probably the one on scuba diving ("A MAD Look at the Joys of Scuba Diving" from MAD #106) that was written underwater in Puerto Rico. Al Jaffee, Dick DeBartolo and myself were diving off the coast of Fajarta when we thought about ideas. When someone thought of something funny, a gigantic bubble came bursting forth and we all surfaced to discuss it further. The bubbles looked as though they had "ja-jas" inside them.

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**Q:** Was it strange to do parodies of ad campaigns that you had actually worked on?

**A:** Believe it or not, I don't recall actually working on any of my own ad campaigns. As a matter of fact, I don't recall actually working. Everything I did was too much fun to be called work!

Bob, at work while in the Army, and at play (right) while in Japan with Fujio Akatsuka and Sergio Aragones.





**Q:** Name some other magazines and advertisers you've drawn for.

**A:** In the army, I illustrated both the company and the division histories. Then I did illustrations for the *Seventh Army Special Service Gazette*. Finally, I landed a job on *Stars and Stripes*, the army newspaper, replacing, but not quite filling the shoes of (Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist) Bill Mauldin. In civilian life, I worked for *American Legion Magazine*, *Fortune*, *Discover* and many trade magazines. For Scholastic, I drew the books of *The Littles*; as art director, I did layouts and drawings for Lord Calvert, Nash Kelvinator, Krueger beer, Zippo lighters, Conoco, Olivetti and the Ad Council, plus the Can Manufacturers Institute. For another agency, I did storyboards for Bayer aspirin, Cheerios, Pepto Bismol, Arrid deodorant, Hellman's mayonnaise and many more. I created "Wally Walrus" for USI and Super Pyro antifreeze. "Mr. Blue Lake" for Blue Lake green beans and "Sparky" the fire dog for the Ad Council's home fire prevention campaign. "Mr. Blue Lake" and "Sparky" are still being used after more than 50 years!



Bob explains the "I don't swim in your toilet..." policy before giving a lesson.

**Q:** Tell us about your work with *Ripley's Believe It or Not*.

**A:** Since this was my first professional job at age 17, everything was overwhelming. My work consisted of drawing an occasional spot, such as a rutabaga in the shape of a poodle, or vice versa. I don't remember all the details. Ripley liked the way I drew jewels, so every time there was an illustration of royalty or wealth, I was called in. Most of the time I lettered the Spanish translation for South America. Where was Sergio when I needed him? Any other assignments were autographing books and sending greeting cards using Ripley's signature. Great training for a budding forger!

**Q:** Favorite midnight snack?

**A:** The only time I am awake at midnight is New Year's Eve, then I make a phoney champagne with a cheap Chablis and an Alka Seltzer tablet.



The MAD Zeppelin model that Bob designed — and quite possibly the only successfully completed one.

**Q:** You've drawn many MAD articles in the styles of other artists, including a great number of Spy Vs. Spy cartoons. Are you comfortable working in other's styles?

**A:** My experience as an art director taught me to copy styles of many artists. It was not feasible to hire a name artist to do layouts which were used to sell the client on an ad campaign. So all of us could do a reasonable facsimile of many artists. Personally, I'm most comfortable working in the nude!

**Q:** Who's the most famous person you've ever met?

**A:** Working as art director on Lord Calvert's "Men of Distinction" campaign, there are too many to select one. Yusof Karsh was the photographer and he was no slouch. There was one fellow that Bill Gaines was very impressed with, (serial actor) Buster Crabbe. He was an instructor I had recruited when I ran a scuba course for the explorer scout program. Buster wanted someplace to swim, so I made a deal with him. When we started the course, we asked the parents to come and meet the instructors. All the parents were nudging their offspring, saying "That's Buster Crabbe." The kids would say, "Who's Buster Crabbe? That's Bob Clarke from MAD magazine!" Buster overheard them and he came over to me and said "The times, they are a-changing!"

**Q:** Do you have any nicknames?

**A:** I'm sure that Nick (Meglin) has a few for me, but none he would ever call me to my face.

**Q:** When dealing with an unlimited salad bar — how many trips is "too many trips"?

**A:** None — when I'm paying to be served, I insist on being served. I resent being an unpaid waiter at a restaurant. Besides, if I ever tried serving myself, I'd probably trip and spill salad over some guy bigger than me!

**Q:** You often had multiple articles in the early issues of MAD — what was the most challenging job you ever did for MAD?

**A:** Without a doubt, it was the MAD Zeppelin model put-together piece for an annual. I designed, illustrated and wrote the instructions. I remember Bill saying as he wrote the check that it was the largest amount he had ever paid for a single contribution. It turned out to be a bigger challenge to those who actually tried to put it together!

**Q:** The biggest misconception about you is...

**A:** That I am Bobby Clarke, the legendary hockey player. I get more requests for his autograph and pictures with the team. Or, that I died several years ago. The last time I looked, I was neither of these.

**Q:** You consider yourself a gourmet — any tips on how to make an even tastier S'more?

**A:** I do not consider myself a gourmet — it's the people who won't ask me to dinner who think I'm a gourmet. However, I do know how to make a tastier S'more...simply eliminate the graham crackers, chocolate and marshmallow and replace them with pumpernickel, caviar and béarnaise sauce.

**Q:** If you weren't an artist, what would you be?

**A:** Unemployed!

**Q:** What's the biggest difference between New York and Delaware?

**A:** About 250 miles, and there's no sales tax.

**Q:** If you were conducting this interview, what question would you have asked yourself?

**A:** Who's going to sweep up all the names I've dropped?

## THE STATS:

First MAD article: Motorist Beware! (MAD #30, December 1956)

Number of MAD issues appeared in: 287

Number of MAD articles in this spotlight section: 10

**SALUD,  
BOB!**