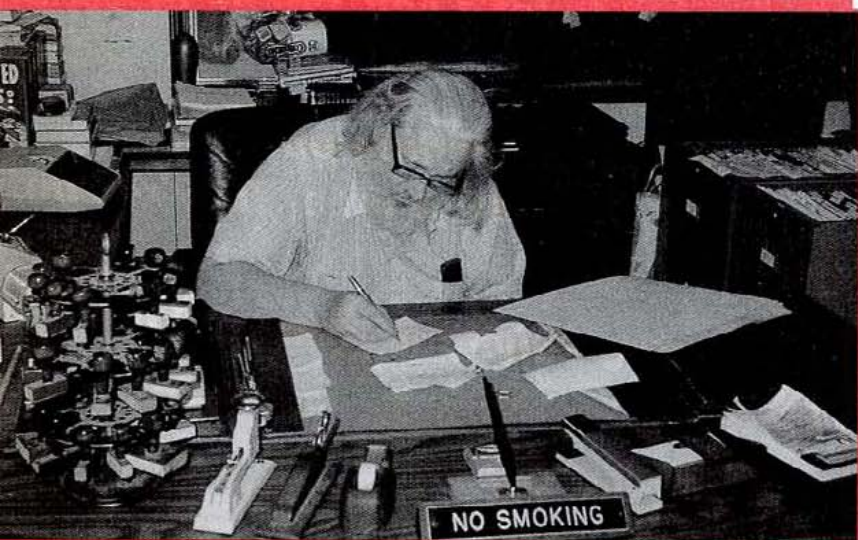




Gaines personally hand-wrote and signed every contributor's check.

It was Putnam who grew the giant avocado plant that became immortalized in MAD as Arthur. A few years later, he grew another plant, a leafy sprout of cannabis sativa, which he kept hidden behind a piece of cardboard. One day Feldstein saw the greenery, recognized it for what it was, and said strongly, "You want us to get arrested? Get that thing out of here." Putnam complied. He removed the plant from its pot, or vice versa, cured its leaves, and saw that it was disposed of in a non-wasteful manner.

Another time, a seven-foot-high filing cabinet in a wooded crate was delivered to the office. After the cabinet was removed, Putnam nailed the crate back together and left it standing outside the MAD offices. He marked the crate "Ace Zoo Supply," punched several small air-holes in the sides, and pasted on a detailed list of "Feeding Instructions." For many days, passersby from other offices on the floor would huddle around the crate, speculating as to what sort of creature was encased within.

Considering his freakiness, Putnam is remarkably untemperamental

and seldom outspoken, giving the impression of a timid, if offbeat, rabbit. When MAD moved uptown, Gaines and Feldstein decided who was going to work where. Putnam was upset that the art department would be enclosed in the only room without windows.

"So you'll have artificial light," Feldstein said.

Putnam thought for a moment, then said quietly, "Unless the art department has natural light, I

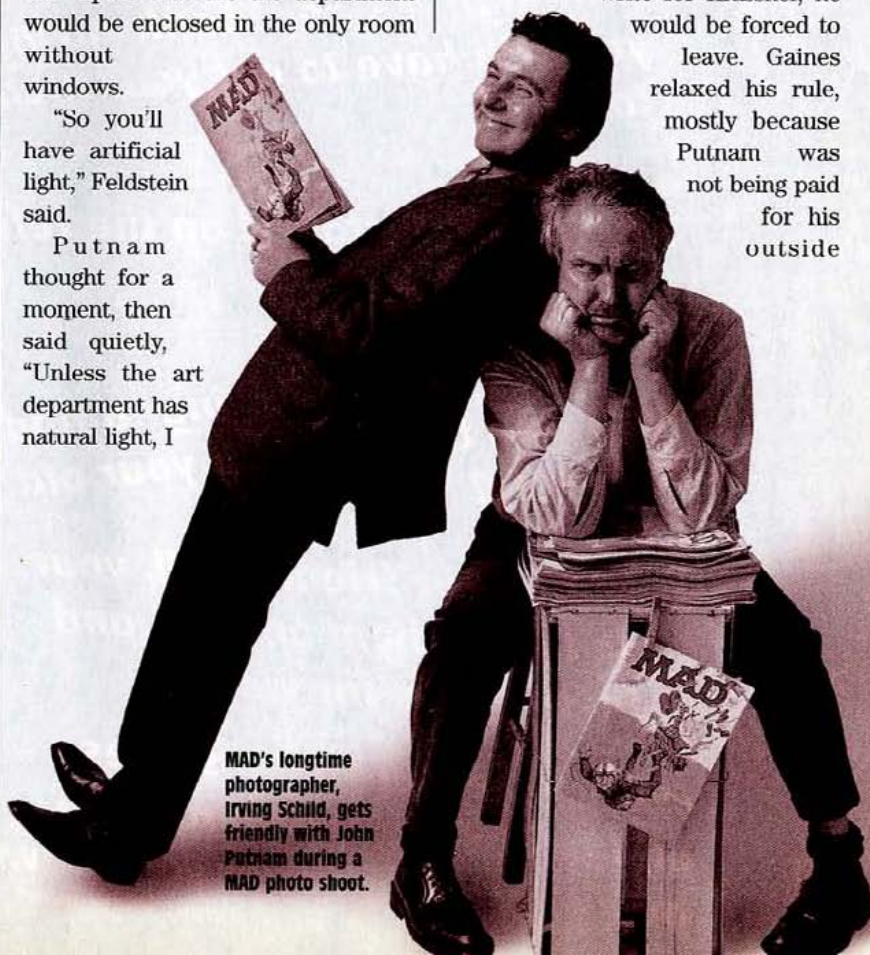
shall have to look for employment elsewhere."

Gaines and Feldstein were staggered. The office arrangement was restudied, and Putnam got his natural light.

During one period, Gaines decreed that none of the staff could moonlight. The edict troubled

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E. C. PUBLICATIONS, INC.

Putnam, who enjoyed turning out offbeat essays for *The Realist*, an iconoclastic pulp edited by friend Paul Krassner. Putnam announced that if he wasn't allowed to write for Krassner, he would be forced to leave. Gaines relaxed his rule, mostly because Putnam was not being paid for his outside



MAD's longtime photographer, Irving Schild, gets friendly with John Putnam during a MAD photo shoot.



FROM THE PERSONAL COLLECTION OF ANNIE GAINES

FROM THE PERSONAL COLLECTION OF LEONARD BERNSTEIN

writing. Feldstein sided with Putnam, seeing no conflict, although how Putnam could do any work for nothing was beyond him.

MAD articles, touching as they do every aspect of today's world, contain pictures of all sorts of specially printed matter. Thanks to Putnam's knowledge of typefaces, the magazine's versions of spoofed-up soap boxes, appliance warranties, movie logotypes and the rest are meticulous mirrors of the originals.

"John can simulate anything from The Racing Form to the Magna Carta," says Jerry DeFuccio. "I've seen him spend an entire afternoon duplicating the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval."

To my mind, Putnam's finest hour came early in his career. He had sent down a piece of copy in which the word "America" began on one line and ended on the next. The foreman at the typesetting plant sent the copy back to Putnam, explaining that there was a union rule forbidding the splitting of our nation's name. Putnam rewrote the copy and sent it back to the foreman, along with the following enclosure:

Don't Break America
(sung to the tune of "God Bless America")

Don't break America—
Land we extol;
Don't deface it; upper-case it;
Keep it pure, keep it clean, keep it whole;
In Bodoni, in Futura,
In Old English, in Cabell—
Don't break America—
Or we'll...raise...hell!



The most popular place at MAD is Nick Meglin's office, the chosen resting place for staffers, visiting freelancers, and, especially, Gaines. When the magazine moved to its present day confines, Meglin was given one of the smaller rooms. He

soon became aware that the room was not large enough to hold the people who were continually visiting him, so he appropriated the more spacious conference room, which had never been used for conferences anyway.

Gaines decided that Meglin

"It was Putnam who grew the giant avocado plant that became immortalized in MAD as Arthur."

moved into the conference room because it had a carpet and that Meglin considered a carpet a status symbol. This wasn't true, but for weeks Gaines made it his business to stand casually in Meglin's doorway and dribble coffee on the carpet.

the MAD field, it is Meglin whom they call to tell the good news.

Meglin searches for new writing talent for the magazine and reads all unsolicited material carefully. Four of MAD's veteran writers — Larry Siegel, Dick DeBartolo, Stan Hart, and Lou Silverstone — came into the fold as a result of Meglin's encouragement.

DeBartolo mailed in his first article with a

self-addressed envelope. About six weeks later, the envelope came back. DeBartolo, believing the piece had been rejected, threw the envelope in a drawer. A few days later, he opened the envelope to see if he had received, at least, a hand-



FROM THE PERSONAL COLLECTION OF NICK MEGLIN

It has been speculated that the body of Jimmy Hoffa, the Lost Ark of the Covenant and Atlantis were buried among the junk in Editor Nick Meglin's office.

Meglin would try not to notice, which wasn't too difficult because he usually was engrossed on the phone.

Meglin is constantly on the phone — very often on matters of business. He serves as a pipeline between the freelancers and Feldstein, and scarcely a week goes by without Meglin phoning each of them at least once. When a writer scores a coup outside

written rejection slip. The envelope was stuffed with cardboard, on which was attached a check. Written on the cardboard was a note "Ha! Thought you were getting your manuscript back, didn't you? Send us more. Nick Meglin."

Meglin laughs





while inhaling, giving the impression of a hyena with asthma. Beyond this, his most distinctive characteristic is a mania for sharing interests. For years he has been a rabid Notre Dame fan and has been known to sink into a state of depression following an Irish defeat. I am an equally rabid Nebraska rooter — it is my alma mater — and at first Meglin tried to ignore my enthusiasm. But, as I said, Meglin has this compulsion to share, and, solely because of my inter-



now owned by Meglin, who got them in exchange for a half-filled tool kit and several items of camera equipment, none of which

Gaines has any use for. Says Gaines, "I've always had this feeling that Nick has this attic full of junk you couldn't give away." Says Meglin, "Everything I get from Gaines is useless; it's just a matter of degree."

No one at MAD matches Meglin's gift for the fast gag. One afternoon, the



"Trigger," he said without blinking.

Jerry DeFuccio has been called MAD's token gentleman. Gaines took him once to a very important business conference involving MAD and one of its corporate owners. "Jerry didn't say a word the entire time," Gaines relates, "but his mere presence added class to the meeting."

A handsome, urbane bachelor of

Savoy ancestry, DeFuccio serves as the magazine's contact with the outside world. It is he who maintains correspondence with the magazine's readers, some of whom

are celebrities. A favorite penpal is Candice Bergen. DeFuccio had read that the actress was bereft on losing her Heinz pickle pin, which she valued for sentimental reasons. DeFuccio located one and mailed it to her. Miss Bergen, a long-time reader, thanked him, adding, "Without MAD, it would have been harder to survive a Republican upbringing."

DeFuccio has exchanged letters with, among others, Paul Newman, Joey Heatherton, Clint Eastwood, and David Janssen. When Gloria Orlando, who heads MAD's subscription department, received an

"Without MAD, it would have been harder to survive a Republican upbringing."

est, he began cheering for the Cornhuskers.

"I hate you, Frank," he once told me. "Because of you, I find myself rooting for a team I never cared about, have never followed, and have no logical reason to support."

Meglin is a sucker for a bargain and, as such, is constantly making trades, usually with Gaines, who lures him into ridiculous exchanges.

Before Gaines grew his beard, he owned a succession of six electric shavers, none of which performed satisfactorily. All are

staff gathered in his office to watch an 8 mm dirty movie, the leading character of which was a successful call girl. Midway through the film, Meglin's phone rang. He instantly picked up the receiver, extended it toward the girl on the screen, and said, "It's for you."

One night, Meglin, myself, and our wives were at the harness races. I suggested that we merge our bets in a show pool, but it was getting close to post time and Meglin hadn't made a selection. "Come on, Nick," I said, "what's a good show horse?"

Everybody into the pool: Jerry DeFuccio, Stan Hart, Lenny Brenner and George Woodbridge on a MAD trip.



order for a gift subscription to Spiro Agnew, she notified DeFuccio, who filed it away in his cross-indexed storehouse of salient MAD trivia. Some of his examples:

"Jon Voight came up to the office

in the hope that we might give him a page to draw. We didn't."

"When Jill St. John divorced Lance Reventlow, she got custody of their MAD subscription."

"After Eva Marie Saint saw herself

pictured in our version of *The Sandpiper*, she was so thrilled that she wrote she was buying a subscription. She said she was looking forward to seeing herself in future issues. Of course, she hasn't been pictured since."

"One of our first admirers was Bergen Evans, who edited *The Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage*. He cited the language in MAD to be 'particularly trenchant.'"

"Once we got a phone call from two guys who said they were high up in the phone company. It turned out they were telephone linemen and were calling us from the top of a pole."

"After we did a parody of a Scotch Tape ad, a man from Texcel Tape called and asked how to get MAD to do a take-off of a Texcel ad. I told him to just come up with an idiotic ad campaign. We'd do the rest."

Recently, DeFuccio



Boy, were we surprised!

Up to now, we've shared some of the funniest letters from "Mad Men" readers. Today, we're sharing a letter from a reader who wrote us: "I have an excellent idea how much fun the post office will be for the Mad Men who are 'Mad Men'!"

Mad Men are not responsible for the results of the "Mad Men" contest.



This Scotch Tape ad spoof prompted a call from a rival tape maker. Nick Meglin plays the thief.

announced he was getting married. No one believed it, because he had made the same announcement eight times previously. DeFuccio has never bought an engagement ring although he has given away his college dramatics pin, school ring, and other tokens of his esteem amounting to several thousand dollars.

In any given year, DeFuccio mails gifts to his girlfriends in quantities exceeding the Christmas card list of most families. To commemorate the MAD trip to the Orient, he brought back sixteen happi coats, at twenty dollars apiece, from the Tatsumara Silk Works in Kyoto. However, he underestimated the number of women in his life and had to order twenty more. In Copenhagen, he bought eighteen handmade Norwegian sweaters. He was so taken with the salesgirl that on returning to New York he airmailed her an Italian sweater from Lord and Taylor.

When MAD does a movie or TV satire, it is DeFuccio who digs up the photographs on which Mort



Lenny Brenner strangles Sergio Aragones. It was just a pose for the camera - this time.

FROM THE PERSONAL COLLECTION OF LEO BERNER

(I am sitting quietly in the art department, waiting to go into a script conference. Brenner turns around from his drawing board and sees me)

BRENNER: What are you doing here?

ME: Just sitting, waiting.

BRENNER: You writers are too pushy!

(End of conversation)

(A MAD trip. George Woodbridge stands in line, waiting to check into a hotel in San Juan)

BRENNER: You can't check into a double room.

WOODBRIDGE: Why not?

BRENNER: Because you're on Bill's sh**list! (He turns immediately and walks away)

(The last day of the MAD trip. we have been told to leave our suitcases in Gaines's room. I carry mine in and find myself facing Brenner)

ME: Is this where we leave our suitcases?

BRENNER: Not for you!

(Exit Brenner)

(The flight home. The plane is flying through an air pocket, roughing up everyone, including Brenner and his seatmate, Al Jaffee)

JAFFEE: This is certainly a bumpy flight.

BRENNER: Could you do better?

(End of conversation)

(At the coffee wagon in the hall outside the MAD office. Brenner stands behind a girl from a neighboring office)

GIRL: I think I'll have a Danish.

BRENNER: No Danish for you! You're too fat for Danish! (The girl is thereafter ignored)

I've never heard Brenner express an opinion about a MAD article. Nick Meglin claims this is because Brenner never reads anything in the magazine, even while working on it. Naturally, he refused to be interviewed for this book, but despite such disaffection he makes his presence felt through the day, especially through his inexplicable relationship with Gaines:

(Brenner stalks into Gaines's office)

BRENNER: You and your G**damn Cadillac!

(Exit Brenner)

The above, explains Meglin, is Brenner's way of saying good morning. Equally difficult to comprehend is the following boss-employee dialogue:

(Gaines walks into the art department)

BRENNER: What the hell do you want?

GAINES: I just came in to find a book.

BRENNER: Well, it's not here. Get the hell out!

(Exit Gaines humbly)



Drucker and Angelo Torres base their caricatures. In the early days, studios and networks refused to cooperate, believing that a MAD take-off could only downgrade a property. This didn't faze DeFuccio, who merely contacted one of the many young women he knew who worked on *Harper's Bazaar*, *Vogue*, and *McCall's*. The chosen miss would request the desired photos for her magazine and then send them on to DeFuccio.

Such subterfuge is no longer required. "Today, movie companies are delighted when MAD satirizes their films," he says. "So are the TV outfits. This is because the studios and networks are filled with people who grew up on MAD as teenagers."

Everyone was aware that John Putnam was overworked and needed an assistant. No one, however, was prepared for the young man who got the job. He was and is Leonard (The Beard) Brenner, who, as assistant art director, casts a strange, pugnacious, somewhat indescribable spell over the MAD office.

"We all live in fear of Brenner, not because he is

violent, which he isn't, but because of his pose of power, standing there like the iceberg that sank the Titanic," says Nick Meglin.

A compact, goateed fellow who in winter wears a woolly sweater and beret to match, Brenner is the master of the aggressive non sequitur, a kind of remark designed to throw its victim off-guard, leaving him incapable of making a coherent response. Some selected incidents that have prompted Brennerisms:

"One morning," Meglin recalls, "I saw Gaines come out of his office to get a drink of water. As he came out, he saw Brenner standing between him and the water cooler. Gaines turned around and went back into his office. The gamble was too great. Clearly, it was better to die of thirst than to risk passing Brenner in the hall."

MAD has a petty cash fund that staffers borrow from. Gaines permits this so long as any sum borrowed is returned within a few days. Brenner has often borrowed money from petty cash and has always returned it promptly — except for ten dollars that he has kept outstanding since 1964. Gaines, for reasons

known only to himself, prefers not to make an issue of it.

Knowing his employer's reliance on his rubber stamps

Lenny Brenner with a clarinet he didn't know how to play.



Not exactly the Hell's Angels: Gaines posing on a stationary motorcycle for a 1972 TV Guide parody.

and calendar, Brenner constantly threatens to destroy them. One day he hid the calendar. Gaines went bananas. He knew Brenner had no logical reason to hide the calendar — Brenner has no logical reason for almost everything he does — but it turned him into a supplicant. Gaines pleaded, even offered to buy the calendar back for \$1.27. Brenner let the suffering continue for an hour, then returned the calendar.

"Your Burgundies stink," he said and stalked out.

The men of MAD have gathered for many parties, but only once has there been a testimonial banquet. It took place in 1971 at Little Charlie's, and the person honored was Brenner. It was a surprise party and Brenner was duly surprised. He responded to the honor with appropriate behavior by sitting by himself at a table and speaking to no one until the dinner was over.

COMING UP NEXT

Gaines inherits his father's comics line in 1947. Against the advice of the old guard at E.C., he and Al Feldstein shock the establishment with their groundbreaking horror and crime comics.



ON THE PERSONAL COLLECTION
LEONARD BRENNER