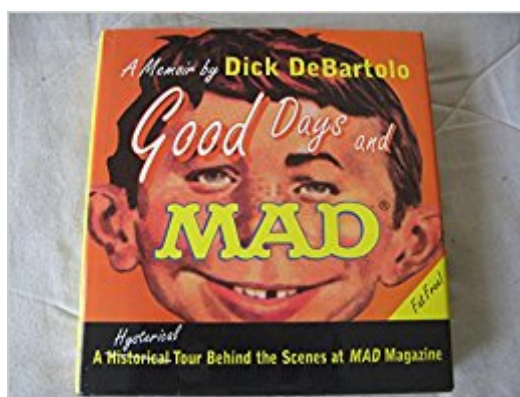


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# Good Days And Mad: A Hysterical Tour Behind The Scenes At Mad Magazine



## Synopsis

Capturing the zany atmosphere at Mad and paying tribute to its founder, a writer who has written for every issue tells the inside story of thirty years of America's craziest magazine. 40,000 first printing. Tour. IP.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

DeBartolo, a longtime MAD contributor, has written not a history but a collection of often amusing anecdotes that are mostly of the sophisticated/juvenile bent that characterizes one of America's most admirable humor institutions. Magazine founder William Gaines (who died in 1992) emerges as the superstar: he calculated contracts in odd percentages, replied to letters with comments in the margins, organized a staff trip to Haiti to beg MAD's sole Haitian subscriber to renew, got stuck near the top of a climb up the torch of the Statue of Liberty and ordered enormous quantities of food at restaurants "for the table." DeBartolo also tells of his own efforts and exploits during his 30 MAD years. Interspersed throughout are numerous "forewords" from MAD contributors-Annie Gaines, Michael Gelman, Al Jaffee et al. shanghaied into this project by the promise of front billing. Utter MADness. Illustrations. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

YA?DeBartolo worked, played, and dined around the world with William Gaines, founder and publisher of Mad magazine. In 1961 when he received his first paycheck (attached to an acceptance letter written on cardboard for a satire he submitted to the magazine), he began his zany relationship with surely one of the cleverest men in publishing. The author entertains by

sharing his and other peoples' fond memories and humorous insights into Gaines. Numerous photos and Mad illustrations accent the lively text, making this memoir hard to put down. This is a book that should appeal to anyone who enjoys the funny and Mad side of life. ?Linda Diane Townsend, West Potomac High School, Fairfax County, VACopyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I thought when this arrived that I had accidentally ordered a history of MAD I'd already read (which I now realize is the excellent "Completely Mad"). This is an insider's potpourri, written in the breezy MAD style. I learned more from "Completely Mad," which is more complete, but this filled in a lot of the details from the perspective of someone who was there. And what lovely zany details they were. This is DeBartolo's love letter to his absent friend, publisher William M. Gaines. There are a couple of delightful little excerpts, but it's basically DeBartolo and Gaines' relationship, told to you as if to a friend. It's not a history so much as a memoir. Made me want to go out and get the William M. Gaines biography.

The layout really looks like literal cut and paste with scissors and glue. This is a series of anecdotes about working at Mad, and samples of Mad art and articles and a lot of forwards all through the book from friends and coworkers. The size of the book almost makes it coffee table material and not something you can carry around with you to read. But I am always amazed at how things work out for some people getting amazing jobs. Living in New York certainly helps.

Granted I only paid 1 cent for this book, but it was worth twice the price!! Seriously, this is DeBartolo's homage to Bill Gaines. You can tell he really loved the guy and the insight into the Usual Gang of Idiots was priceless. Mad must have been a great place to work. You don't learn a whole lot about the artists since they freelanced and lived all over the country, but you learn a lot about the office, Gaines and DeBartolo. They're pretty much who you thought they were...

Honestly this isn't the best written book on earth that the 1 and 2 star reviews seem to have been expecting, but it is filled with tons of anecdotes from the MAD office that actually made me laugh out loud and share with friends and family. I don't look at this book as being bad because it has the occasional misspelling, I look at it as being years ahead of the news stories we see on the internet from Reuters and the Associated Press. This book is not meant for children, but it shouldn't be censored. Most of us do things that children shouldn't be exposed to. I read this book a couple of

years ago for the first time, and it reminded me of a more innocent time in America. The obvious example is William and Annie Gaines' wedding reception in the restaurant at the top of the north tower in the World Trade Center. Another was when William Gaines talked the Secret Service out of taking original MAD artwork that was printed in the magazine, based solely on him giving his word that it wouldn't be printed again. Good Days and Mad honestly made me mourn the loss of William Gaines. Dick DeBartolo wrote a testament for the love of his boss and job by describing Gaines' personality and the atmosphere he created from DeBartolo's point of view. This book is sincerely an entertaining page turner. I try to read this book and Frank Jacobs' The Mad World of William M. Gaines about once a year. I see Jacobs' book as part 1 and DeBartolo's book as part 2 of the William Gaines story.

After listening to Dick on Giz Whiz (TWiT) for a while and having read MAD many, many years ago, I gave this book a try. While the nature of the commentary includes many mentions of Bill Gaines (as mentioned in other reviews), this doesn't bother me. Bill Gaines and I were kindred spirits and I'm sure that he saw first in Dickie De the same thing I did. If you are interested in learning about Dick's life before his giz whiz period, this is a recommended read. Manual typewriters, Lucy the elephant, the great train ride ... can all be found in this engaging and not at all outdated memoir by someone's wit who did not need vulgarity to be deeply humorous or mildly offensive. I hope he's still autographing these!

As a child I used to save my paper-route money and buy MAD magazine and share it with my brother (or vice-versa at times). Many, many years later as an adult, I was very interested on how these guys could make this magazine so funny time after time and hear the 'real' stories told from adult to another. Some of the reviews of this book are undeserved and much too harsh in my opinion. The author shares experiences at MAD that left an impression on him and made MAD what it was and what it is. Those events also helped to define the author, his style and how he got to where he is today. This is what the book is about. To suggest the author should have censored stories is ridiculous. That defeats the purpose of the book. Why ask a question if you don't want to know the real answer, but instead some sugar-coated twist of the truth or omission? Ignorance is bliss, and other reviewers seem to punish the author for enlightening them and, by doing so, taking away some of their bliss. If I wanted to read a story like that, I'd of picked up a work of fiction. This story is real and the author is very humble when he shares his perspectives with us. This is not biography of Prince Charles complaining how tough life is with all these servants and money

around. It's a tale of a true journey of both discovery and growth told in a humorous fashion in a way only a MAD writer could write it. I don't think the book was written for children, although I could find nothing truly offensive about it. The complaint about an S&M photograph is just ridiculous. It's a picture of a closet with leather chaps and such meant as a joke. No one is wearing them. If you can't face reality you have no business buying this book, let alone being disappointed by it. For me, I couldn't stop turning the pages. It's funny, it's true and it does what its author intended for it to do. Answer all those questions I mentioned at the top of this review and why I purchased the book. How anyone could have expected anything different is beyond me. How anyone could suggest 'we don't talk about those things' is just poor advice. Closing your eyes or not talking about something does not change reality. To suggest the authors' stories are inappropriate is like telling a professional chef how to cook. If you don't like the food, don't eat there and complain about it, go somewhere else.

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