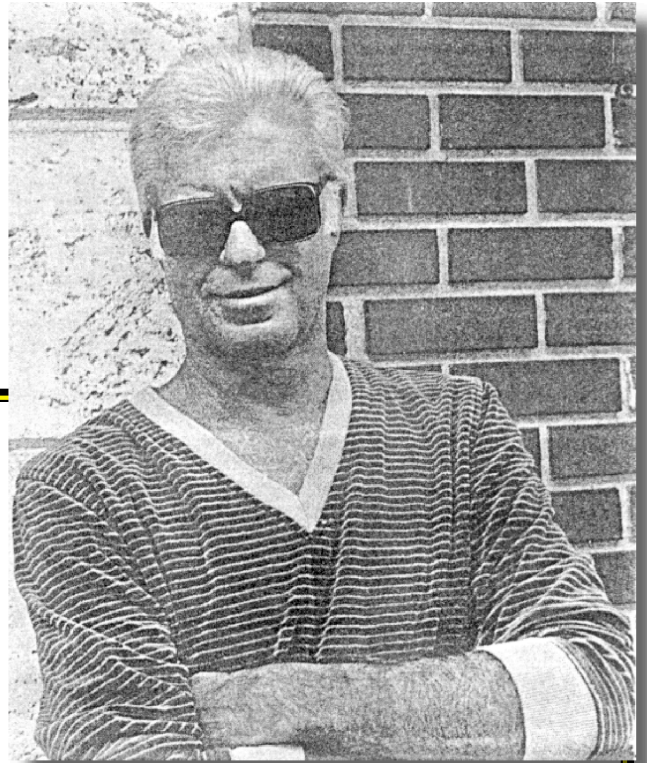


DON MARTIN (1931-2000)

Cartoonist/Writer,
Associate of
Oklahoma
Cartoonist
Jack Bender



Don Martin was best known as “Mad’s Maddest Artist.” His sick cartoons were featured in the humor magazine for 30 years and in reprint form in the magazine and paperbacks to this day.

He left the magazine in a dispute over ownership of his original art as well as reprint rights, joining the staff of Cracked magazine as well as developing a comic strip, “The Nutheads,” which he produced with the assistance of Tulsa cartoonist Jack Bender from 1989 through 1992. Bender also worked with Martin on some of the Cracked magazine pages as well as paperbacks, posters and comic books during that time.

His style made his readers laugh and wince for his lifetime. Martin’s hapless characters inhabited a topsy-turvy, Kafka-esque world in which a hotel guest complaining about cockroaches might discover that the desk clerk himself was a giant cockroach. His prototypical drawing was of a jug-eared, slack-jawed, knock-kneed and hinge-footed man impervious to all types of mayhem, even when he is tap-dancing over an open manhole and bouncing off a skyscraper beam.

After selling his first cartoon to Mad in 1956, Martin continued to draw for the magazine until 1987. His gags fit in well with the “sick” school of 1950s humor. Like latter-day Harold Lloyds, his characters named Fonebone and Captain Klutz were at odds with the modern world. Machinery was always the enemy, from power tools to steamrollers to things as simple as a paper-towel dispenser.

He elevated comic book sound effects to new heights. A squirting flower went “SHKLITZA.” Getting conked with a frying pan went ‘PWANG.’ His own vanity plate read “SHTOINK.”

Martin was born in Passaic, N.J. He studied at the Newark School of Fine Art and was graduated from the Pennsylvania Academy of Art in Philadelphia. He drew despite a degenerative eye condition for which he twice underwent corneal transplants. To pencil his last strips, he wore special contact lenses that caused great discomfort and still used a magnifying glass as well. He was legally blind.

DON MARTIN™...