

The National Lampoon and the Comedy Insurgents Who Captured the Mainstream

Delve into the Captivating Saga of a Legendary Comedy Magazine

In the annals of American comedy, few publications have left such an enduring mark as the National Lampoon. For over two decades, this irreverent magazine pushed the boundaries of humor, skewering everything from politics to pop culture, and launching the careers of some of the greatest comedic talents of all time.

The National Lampoon's origins can be traced back to the late 1960s, when a group of young writers and editors at Harvard University launched a satirical newsletter called the *Harvard Lampoon*. Inspired by the success of underground publications like Mad Magazine and The Onion, they sought to create a comedic voice that would resonate with the counter-culture movement of the time.



That's Not Funny, That's Sick: The National Lampoon and the Comedy Insurgents Who Captured the

Mainstream by Ellin Stein

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

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In 1970, the Lampoon crew moved to New York City and rebranded themselves as the National Lampoon. Their first national issue, published in August of that year, quickly became a sensation, selling out its initial print run of 100,000 copies. The magazine's biting wit, absurdist humor, and outrageous illustrations struck a chord with readers who were hungry for an alternative to the bland and often formulaic comedy of the era.

Over the next several years, the National Lampoon became a cultural phenomenon. Its contributors, including Chevy Chase, John Belushi, Bill Murray, Gilda Radner, and Harold Ramis, went on to form the original cast of *Saturday Night Live*, arguably the most influential sketch comedy show in American history. The magazine also produced a string of classic films, including *National Lampoon's Animal House*, *Caddyshack*, and *National Lampoon's Vacation*, which cemented its status as a comedic powerhouse.

The National Lampoon's success was not without controversy. Its irreverent humor and frequent use of profanity and nudity drew the ire of critics, who accused the magazine of being vulgar and offensive. However, its supporters argued that the Lampoon was simply a reflection of the changing values of American society, and that its humor was essential for challenging the status quo.

By the early 1980s, the National Lampoon had begun to lose its momentum. The departure of its star performers, combined with financial troubles and legal battles, led to a decline in its quality. The magazine

ceased publication in 1989, but its legacy continued to live on through its numerous fans and alumni.

Today, the National Lampoon is remembered as one of the most important and influential comedy magazines of all time. Its irreverent humor, willingness to push boundaries, and unique style helped to shape the American comedic landscape for decades. The magazine's legacy continues to inspire new generations of comedians, who strive to carry on its tradition of laughter and satire.

The Impact of the National Lampoon

The National Lampoon had a profound impact on American comedy. Its irreverent humor and willingness to tackle controversial topics helped to break down barriers and open up new possibilities for comedic expression. The magazine's alumni went on to become some of the most successful comedians of their generation, and its films and television shows have become classics of the genre.

Here are just a few of the ways the National Lampoon changed American comedy:

- It helped to popularize satire as a form of comedy.
- It broke down taboos and paved the way for more risqué and controversial humor.
- It helped to launch the careers of some of the greatest comedic talents of all time.
- It created a new generation of comedy fans who were eager for more challenging and thought-provoking humor.

The National Lampoon's legacy continues to this day. Its irreverent humor and willingness to push boundaries continue to inspire new generations of comedians, and its films and television shows remain popular with audiences around the world.

The National Lampoon was a comedic force that changed the face of American humor. Its irreverent humor, willingness to push boundaries, and unique style helped to shape the comedic landscape for decades. The magazine's legacy continues to inspire new generations of comedians, who strive to carry on its tradition of laughter and satire.

For more information on the National Lampoon, please visit the following website:

National Lampoon



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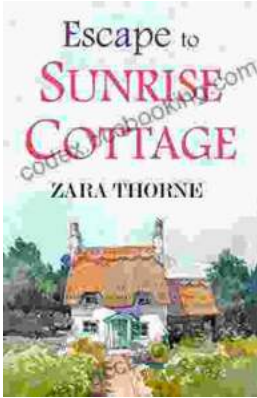
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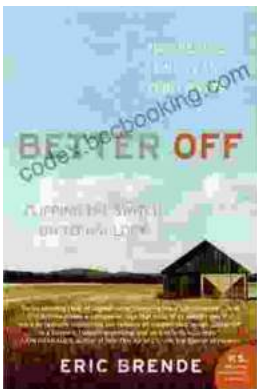
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