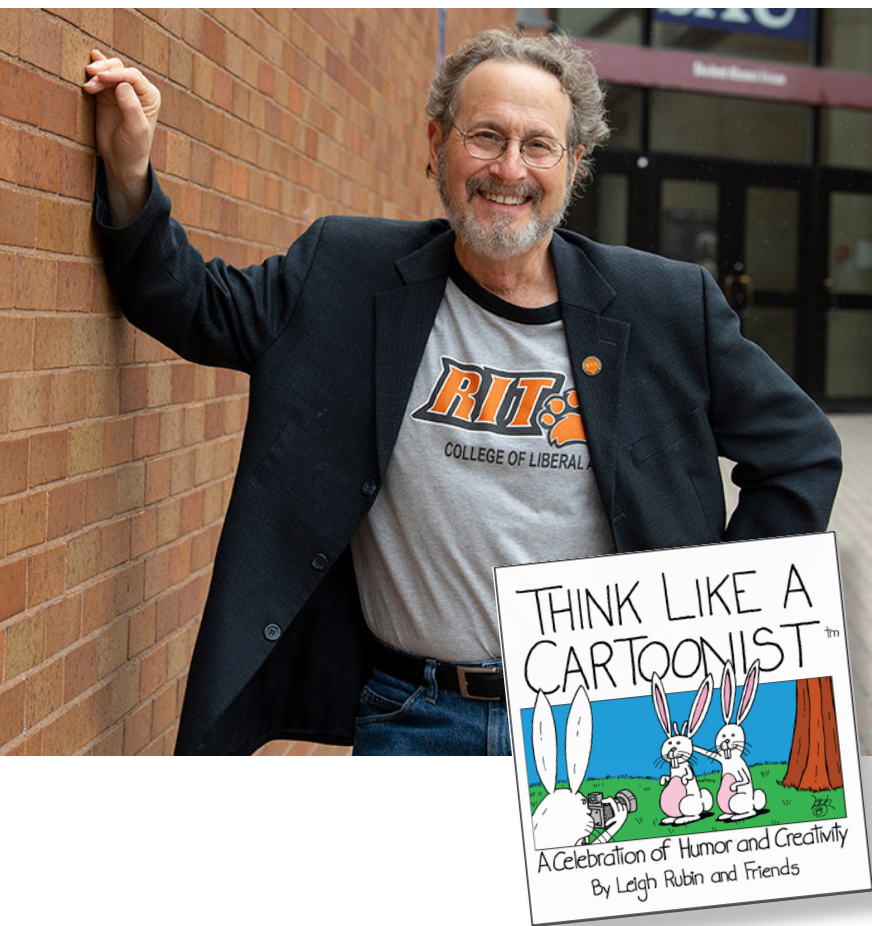


COMIC RELIEF

BY BRIAN SCHWARTZ



FOR LEIGH RUBIN NEARLY EVERY DAY BEGINS THE SAME, a ritual he's followed seven days a week for over forty years. It begins with a blank slate. There is only one thing he has to do today, and it could take him ten minutes or ten hours. Every day, hundreds of newspapers around the world depend on Rubin to deliver a cartoon for their publication. Rubin has a responsibility—it's on him and other cartoonists like him to provide a little comic relief to offset the often less funny headlines. It's creativity with a deadline.

To make a full-time career out of your creative endeavor requires hustle, persistence, and an abundance of unwavering determination. For Rubin, it began in the early 1980s when he published a book of musical notes called "Notable Quotes." It became the spark that led to a daily cartoon for his local newspaper, *The Antelope Valley Press*. The comic strip Rubes was first published on November 1st, 1984. While still working full-time, Rubin started to send out queries and cold-call newspaper editors. Rejections became the norm, but all it took was

one yes to keep the fire burning. Committed to self-syndication, it was through personal hard-work and determination that Rubin expanded the reach of Rubes to several other newspapers. Eventually, he was able to land a leading global agency, Creators Syndicate, to sell his work around the world. Rubes has been featured in films, books, newspapers, and advertising. While he's taken on freelance work now and then, his commitment to Rubes is unwavering.

"I've always been an entrepreneur at heart, constantly looking for ways to create and connect. I learned the importance of hustle and persistence in the early days of my career, and those principles have stayed with me."

What is Rubin's recipe for everlasting creativity? It's a combination of imagination, curiosity, persistence, collaboration, and discipline. It's the topic of his latest book, "Think Like a Cartoonist: A Celebration of Humor and Creativity." An anthology of essays from Rubin's closest colleagues along with his personal advice to other creatives, it's a peek into his creative process. Rubin's personal life is a testament to his belief in the transformative power of creativity. He credits his pursuits for bringing him joy and fulfillment, while also empowering him to connect with others and make a meaningful contribution to the world. Rather than view challenges as something to avoid, his experience is that setbacks become the source of innovation.

Rubin believes that creativity is the most significant force in life. He views creativity as essential to personal fulfillment and societal progress—allowing us to solve problems, connect with others, and express ourselves in unique ways.

Even after over forty years, Rubin's enthusiasm for his work is obvious. He has managed to sustain a passion that gives him a reason to get out of bed. Besides, he only has one thing to do today. **SLO LIFE**

You can learn more at rubescartoons.com and check out his latest Rubes on Instagram @RubesCartoons. Later this year, Rubin will be participating in the 40th annual Central Coast Writers' Conference on October 5th.