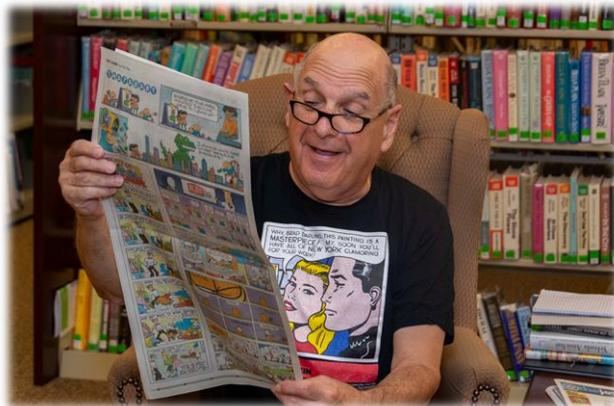


## **Friday Learning Series - *Jews in Cartoons: Usually Humorous, Often Insightful, Sometimes Inciteful***

Mark Kirchoff, Community Engagement and Education

Over the years Dr. Leonard Greenspoon, Klutznick Chair in Jewish Civilization at Creighton University, has amassed a humongous collection of more than 5,000 cartoons and comic strips. During the five Friday Learning Series sessions beginning September 6, he will share examples from his collection. Many of these will entertain. Some will infuriate. All will elicit comment and commentary from everyone in attendance. All sessions are open to the community free of charge and will be held in the Kripke Jewish Federation Library from 11:15 am to 12:00 pm.



For Week 1 (Sept. 6), the topic is **“The Jewish Family: Usually One Father, One Mother, Several Grandparents, Many Children.”** Dr. Greenspoon explains that even though we might not expect to see families identified as Jewish in mainstream comics, it actually happens quite often. The interactions between family members, both traditional and non-traditional, will probably ring true for most people who view them.

Week 2 (Sept. 13) looks specifically at how **“Jews Celebrate and Commemorate: At Home, in the Synagogue, Throughout the Community.”** “Comic strips cover everything from annual holidays like Passover, to life cycle events like Bar Mitzvahs and community observances like Holocaust Memorial services,” said Greenspoon. It will be fascinating to see which aspects of these celebrations and commemorations cartoonists highlight.

Week 3 (Sept. 20) goes beyond the Jewish family and community to illustrate how **“Jews and Non-Jews Interact: Opportunities for Learning, Teaching, and Interaction.”** As with the first two weeks, so here too cartoonists explore a variety of topics. But always sensitively and respectfully, even when they are being critical.

Week 4 (Sept. 27) presents a fascinating topic, **“Oy Gevalt: Yiddish Goes Mainstream in the Comic Strip.”** Over the years Greenspoon has been fascinated with how often Yiddish expressions pop up in cartoons, most often in the mouths or thoughts of non-Jews—sometimes even non-humans. As Greenspoon discovered, these cartoons are only one of the many areas in popular culture where Yiddish has become “Americanized” — think also about stand-up comics and television comedy series.

Week 5 (Oct. 4): Greenspoon laments that unfortunately, not all cartoonists are well-disposed or even fair to Jews and Judaism, a topic he uncovers in **“Antisemitism Rears Its Ugly Head: Anti-Jewish and Anti-Israeli Imagery at the National and International Levels.”** Some cartoonists have used their artistic freedom to launch ugly campaigns against individual Jews, Judaism as a religion, and Israel as a Jewish State. This class will be somber, but also necessary to round out the depictions of Jews in cartoons.



Dr. Greenspoon actively collected cartoons relating to Jews, Judaism, and the Bible for nearly two decades. No longer actively collecting, he recalls that in the early days it was literally cut-and-paste and then, through the generous assistance of his wife Ellie, mounting the cartoons and making slides out of them. Now, technology allows for everything to be done digitally. But Greenspoon doesn't think that these technological changes have necessarily had a major impact on the subject matter of the cartoons he has assembled.

Mark your calendars for September 6, 13, 20, 27 and October 4 to attend the Friday Learning Series. While each session will stand on its own, you really won't want to miss any of them. Bring a friend. Phone Mark Kirchoff at (402) 334-6463 or email [mkirchoff@jewishomaha.org](mailto:mkirchoff@jewishomaha.org) with questions.