

Sisters don't help with mom

Dear Annie: I am the youngest of three girls and have always been the black sheep of the family. I have two sisters who don't have kids, yet they constantly tell me I'm not a good mother or daughter.

I have always tried to be a good daughter, especially after Dad passed away. My sisters don't do much for our mom. One lives out of state, so I guess she thinks she doesn't have to do anything. The other sister calls Mom often, but doesn't bother to stop by and see her.

Mom is on a limited income. We all work full time and have husbands, but I'm the only one who buys her groceries and takes her places. I recently told my mother how I was feeling about my sisters, and she told me they will never change. And why should they? Mom refuses to ask for any help from the other two. She never asks me to take her shopping, but I know she needs food in her house. I also enjoy spending time with my mom. She's an awesome woman who worked hard and provided for her children.

I had once before disappeared from Mom's life because I was tired of putting up with this nonsense. I didn't speak to anyone for

Annie's Mailbox

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a year. But I realized my mother won't be here forever, and we've been attached at the hip ever since. Now I'm tired of the nonsense again. What am I supposed to do?

My sisters are perfectly aware of Mom's needs. I believe they are selfish. What's it going to take for them to wake up? I can't talk to either one of them because it just upsets me. But I can't go back and keep taking care of Mom all by myself. It gets expensive to do this every week with no help whatsoever. — *The Black Sheep*

Dear Sheep: You sound like a caring daughter, but you cannot force your sisters to be the same. If you were an only child, would you continue helping Mom? It might be less frustrating for you to think of yourself that way. However, you may be able

to get your sisters to contribute financially if it lets them off the hook otherwise. Calmly explain that Mom's income limits what she can buy at the grocery, and though you are happy to take her shopping and supplement her supplies, it is becoming too difficult. Ask how much they can contribute for these expenses. We hope they come through.

Dear Annie: I felt the need to respond to the letter from "Gary," wondering about appropriate dress for a funeral. I have attended more wakes and funerals than I can count, and I know what is considered "appropriate" attire.

My husband passed away suddenly six months ago. We are a quiet family and the attendance at his funeral was astounding and unexpected. We did not notice what color clothes people wore, their necklines, collars, hemlines, sneakers or boots. What I can say, unequivocally, is that I, along with our 14-year-old son and 12-year-old daughter couldn't have cared less what anyone had on. It only mattered that they came. — *Heartbroken in Connecticut*

Dear Heartbroken: Thank you for making it clear what is important. Our condolences.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). How would you feel if nothing changed about your situation — not in five years or 10 years or ever? If that thought is intolerable, you're now motivated to reach out and make a necessary adjustment.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The activities you've chosen for the day require a certain degree of hardiness. Bouncing back is as much a skill as not falling. There are rewards for stamina, though those rewards are mostly self-created.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Create a plan for what to do if the worst should happen. Doing this will help you to stop worrying. Once you stop worrying, you will loosen up, adopt a better attitude, have some fun and succeed.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). In matters of love, your judgment will be consistently stellar. You'll make the choices that bring you closer to the ones you want to be close to and distance you from potentially negative influences.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). What you do to make the environment more pleasant for yourself will improve things for others, too, so don't hesitate to speak up. Once you get the conversation rolling, everything will start to change.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). A raised eyebrow, a mysterious text, a finger point toward the horizon — it won't take much to stir the curiosity and capture the imagination of those around you. Once you have their attention, you'll do something useful with it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). A person sees a big dog and thinks "threat." Another person sees the same dog and thinks "friend." Either one could be right. Your advantage today will

be your ability to adjust to how others perceive things.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). An intellectual approach may be appropriate for the situation, but the wisest decisions get made when you also engage your emotions and let them weigh heavily into the equation.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). There's really no such thing as pointless chatter today. There is a world of knowledge inside of small talk. It takes careful listening to know the right questions to open up the treasure trove.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). If you've heard it a million times, that's because it bears repeating. Accept yourself for who you are, flaws and all. This helps you to accept other people. With increased tolerance, life gets easier for everyone.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The answers could be found in the attic of your mind, but climbing up there will be a lot of unnecessary trouble because the answers can also be found in your immediate environment. Slow down and look.

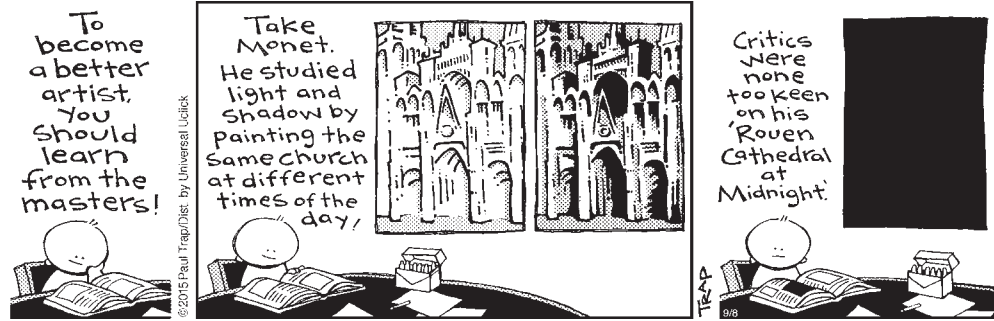
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Honesty and integrity are important in all of your relationships, especially the romantic ones. You'd like to know the real person and not the person the other person thinks you want to see.

WEDNESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Sept. 9). This year is one big talent show that invites you to perform over and over. The improvements to your environment this month will favorably affect relationships. It will be especially difficult to balance work and play when the year-end brings such a wonderful playmate. Money months are March, May and July. Pisces and Scorpio people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 40, 2, 22, 14 and 1.

FRANK AND ERNEST



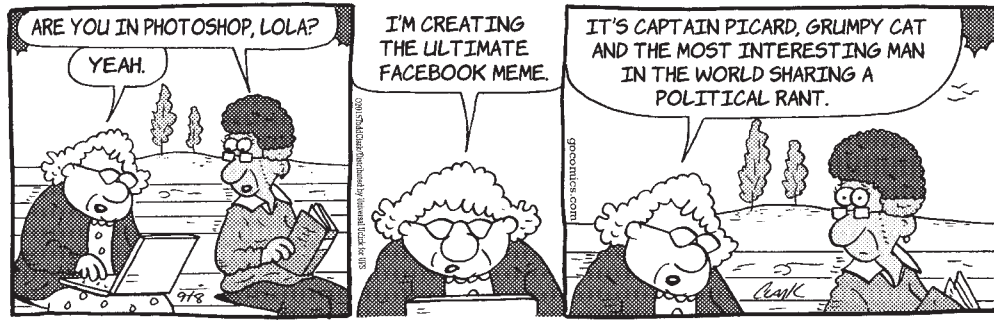
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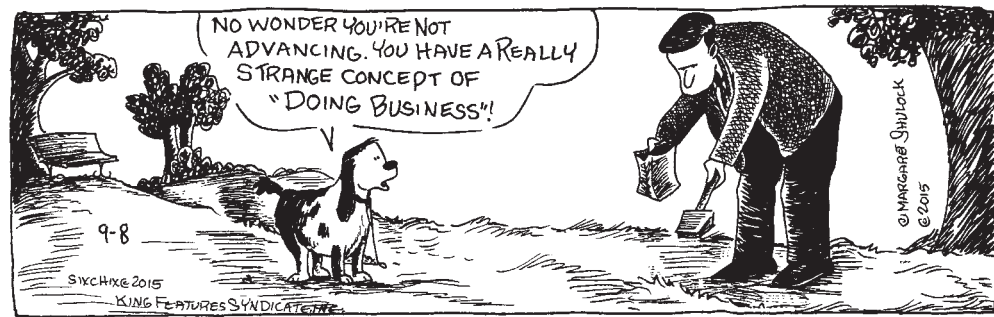
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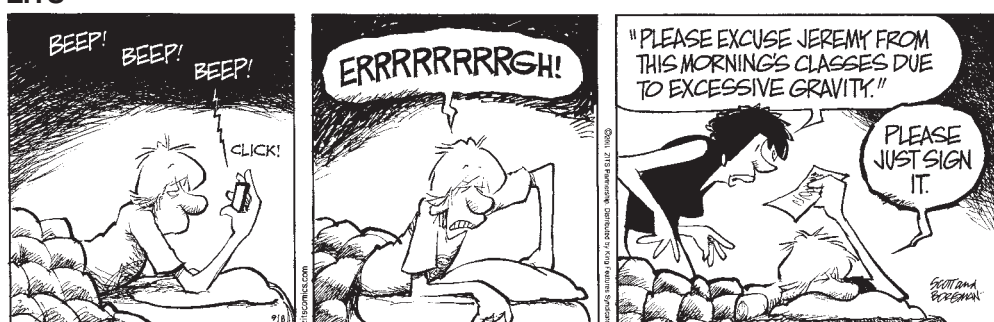
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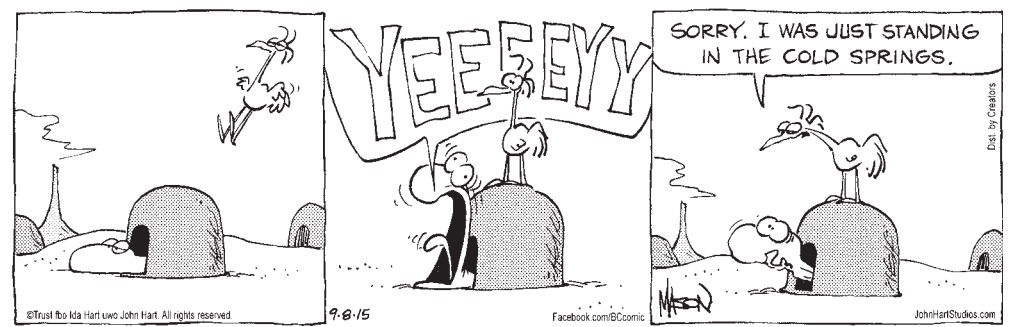
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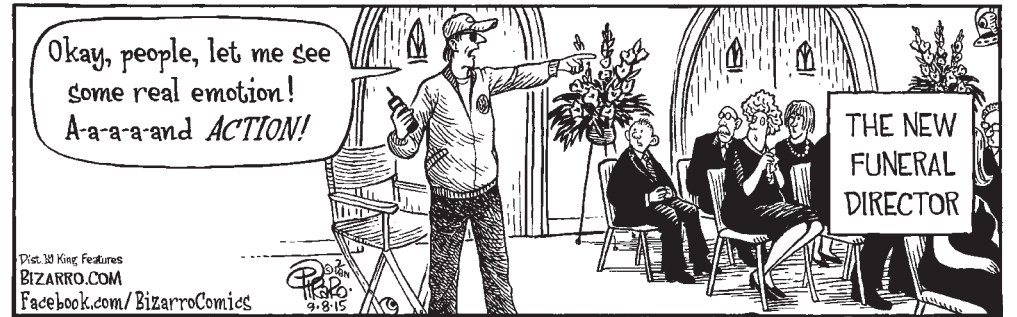
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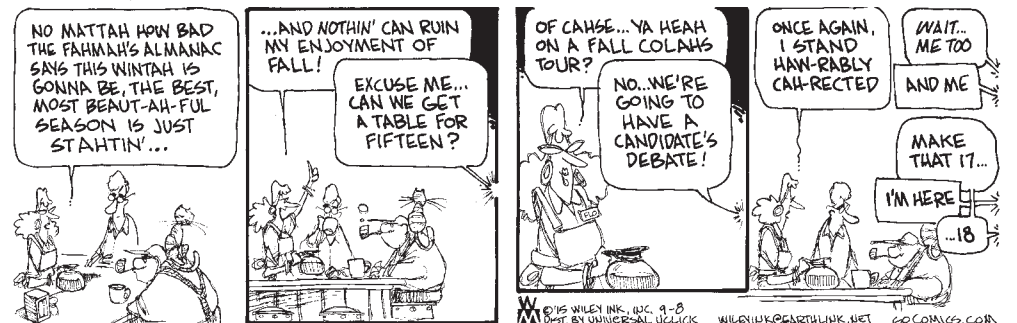
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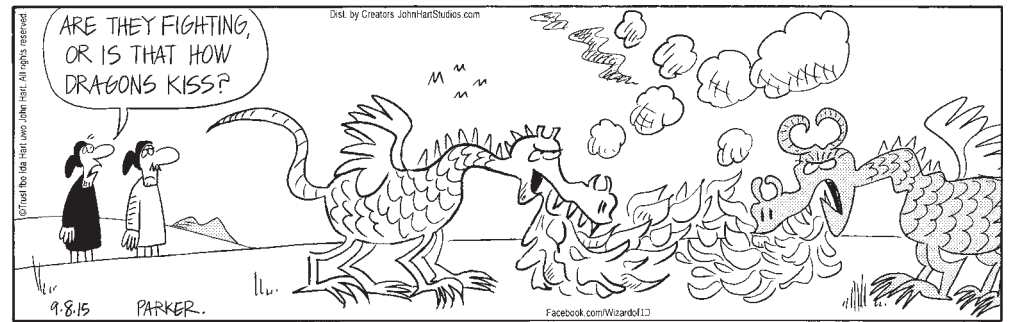
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