

She wants help apologizing

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Annie: I have a close acquaintance who is a fitness instructor at the health club where I often work out. Two years ago, I saw her at a local peace parade and got very worked up over something she wrote on the signs she was wearing. I became so crazed over it that I forgot myself and said some awful things about her. I also stopped going to her workout classes for a month and deleted her Facebook pages. Then I found out her husband had had a stroke the day of the parade.

I realized how hideous my behavior had been. I returned to her workout class and intended to apologize profusely to her, but she wasn't there that day. When she finally came back, I told her I'd been praying for her and her husband.

Sometimes it seems she has forgiven me and everything is the same between us, but on other days, I'm not so sure. I apologized to her, in a general way, in a holiday greeting card, not mentioning the parade. I've lost countless hours of sleep crying from guilt, shame and regret. I've finally decided I have to do something. Please print this so she can see it and we can talk about it. — *Distraught*

Dear Distraught: Printing this in the paper and hoping she sees it

Annie's Mailbox

Creators Syndicate Inc.
Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



is a cop out. You need to put your spine in place and talk to her directly, no matter how hard it is. A semi-apology in a holiday greeting card doesn't count, and telling her you will pray for her is kind, but insufficient.

Ask your friend whether she is available for coffee, or find some other time when neither of you is rushed and you can speak privately. Here's what you say: "I know it's been a while, but I need to tell you how sorry I am for my behavior at the parade and afterward. I don't know what came over me. I value our friendship a great deal, and I am hoping you can forgive me." Whatever happens after that, at least you will know you truly tried to make it right.

Dear Annie: "Grandma" has every right to be concerned about her stepson's nearly 3-year-old child who barely speaks. She should

follow her instincts and strongly encourage that the girl be assessed by a speech therapist. The lack of expressive language could also be a sign of autism.

While the suggestions to spend more time interacting with the child are great, professional intervention might be necessary. It is deplorable that the pediatrician has not caught this, as early intervention can change the trajectory of a child's life.

As a special education teacher over the past 10 years, I've seen the terrible repercussions caused by the lack of early intervention and the overworked school systems that regularly miss identifying these needs. — *Concerned Special Ed Teacher*

Dear Teacher: Several readers pointed out that the lack of speech could be a sign of autism. Others told us that their kids didn't speak much at that age and turned out just fine. There's no way for us to know what's going on, but we absolutely concur that the child should be evaluated by a speech therapist to find out. Unfortunately, that is Dad's call, and he seems disinclined to do anything. If "Grandma" can take her, wonderful. If not, talking and reading to this little girl could be a godsend.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). There are some difficult things about life that don't get easier; they just get different. Try to get comfortable with the situation. This will have nothing to do with acquiring resources and everything to do with acceptance.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). There's so much entertainment in the playground of your mind that you may be content to stay in and enjoy your mental process. However, push yourself to go out — you'll have more fun.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Be careful how you lay out your opinions. When you describe things, you create an idea of them in the minds of others, and that will strongly influence what happens next.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). This isn't always the case, but in today's scenario, your tremendous expectations of people will contribute favorably to the outcome. You'll choose your associates well, and they will rise to the occasion you picture.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You have to own something before you can give it away. Today this is also true of happiness. Be happy in yourself first, and then you'll be able to make someone else happy.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Stop judging yourself so harshly. You may think it's keeping you to a higher standard, but it's not. Being mean inside your head won't help. Would you say those things to anyone else you love?

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Uncomfortable feelings are part of the survival instinct package you were given when you were born. Whatever you feel, hundreds of thousands of others are experiencing a

similar feeling right at this moment.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Filtered through the lens of negative thoughts, your environment won't look as chock-full of opportunity as it really is. Shake it off so you can see possibilities.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Looking busy is better than idleness on display; however, you prefer to actually do something useful. Useful activities create a circuit that brings the energy you expend right back to you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You can't do anything about your starting position today, but you can pick up from wherever that is and move consistently forward. Keep your eye on the destination.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The idea you abandoned many moons ago can still be revived. It was a good idea then, and the new twist you'll think of could make it even better. Brainstorm with a Libra or Leo.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Love isn't going to sneak up and surprise you today, but if you make an effort to create playful communication and a tender dynamic, you might be favorably impressed by what develops out of the effort.

THURSDAY'S BIRTHDAY (April 9). Get into the game. You'll be a contender in a highly competitive arena you never thought you'd be competing in. May brings triumph for your family. Relationships require more of your attention in June, and love intensifies as you explore shared interests (especially music) with someone. Aquarius and Pisces people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 44, 39, 17 and 42.

FRANK AND ERNEST



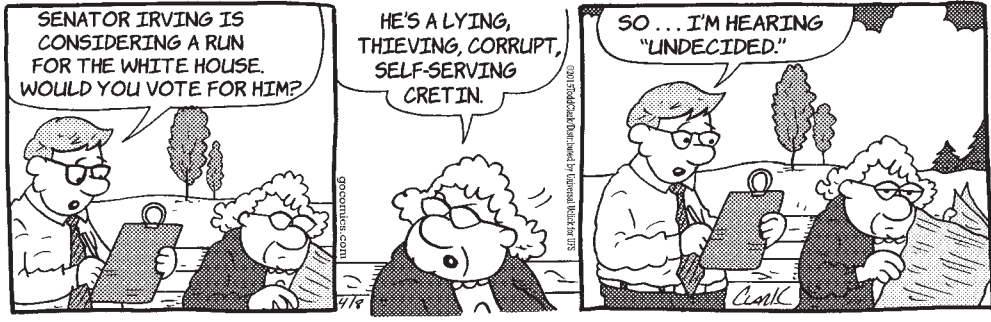
THATABABY



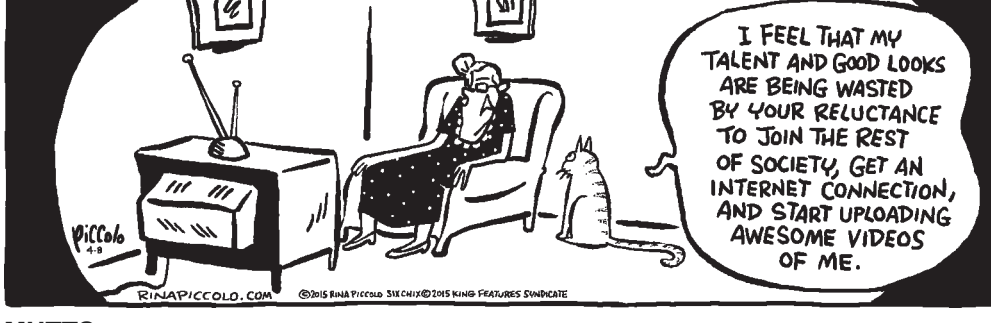
STONE SOUP



LOLA



SIX CHIX



MUTTS



BABY BLUES



ZITS



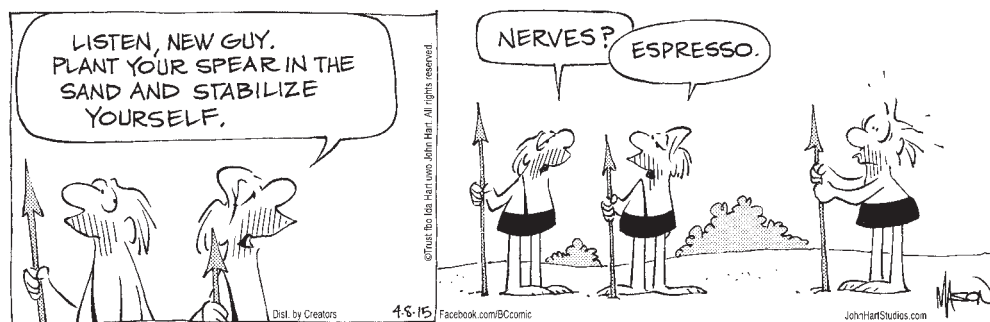
BLONDIE



SALLY FORTH



B.C.



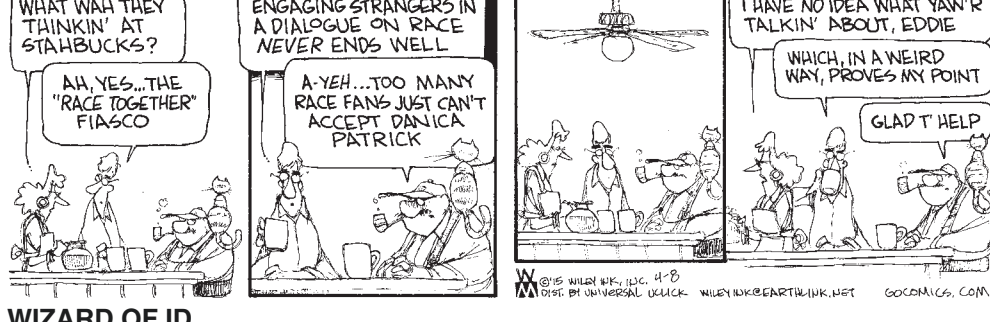
DILBERT



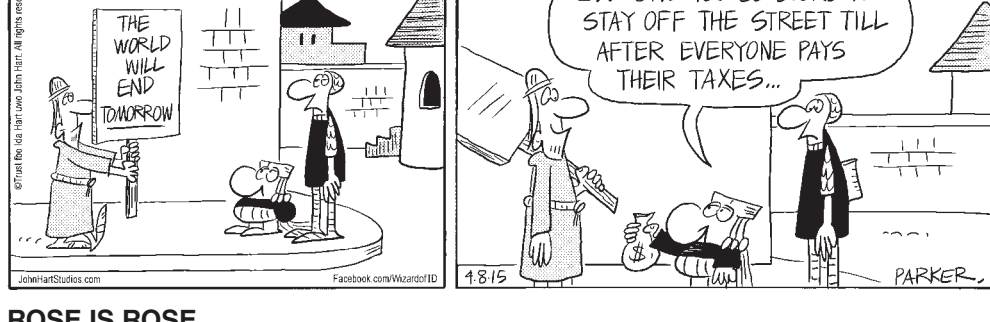
BIZARRO



NON SEQUITUR



WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

