

Teacher upset by graduation

Dear Annie: Graduation is coming up, and I don't know what to do. You see, most of the seniors aren't qualified to graduate at all. Some of them have been truant for half of the years they were here. At least 15 seniors were absent from class for their entire senior year, and at least 20 percent lack grade-level reading and writing skills. For some, college will be impossible.

Every year, we have "alumni" who return to school because they either graduated without necessary credentials or flunked out of college and need academic help. I never give passing grades to kids who don't show up to class, but if they perform some token service, the school graduates them anyway.

Should I go to this year's graduation ceremony? I haven't gone in two years, and when asked, I say why. Sometimes I worry that I appear unkind, because this is a low-income, troubled neighborhood and high school graduation means a lot to these families. I just don't like what I see as a deception because either the parents haven't made sure the kids go to school, or the school lies to the kids and tells them everything is fine. What do you suggest? — *Teacher*

Dear Teacher: There is only so



much you can do, and you are already doing it. We understand that you don't feel it is fair for kids to graduate when they haven't done the work, shown up for class or achieved the required standards. You are already giving these kids flunking grades. But unless the other teachers and the school administration are willing to hold them back, they will graduate anyway. And your school is not the only one that operates in this fashion.

While it serves no purpose for parents or kids to believe graduation will happen whether or not it's deserved, for some, the humiliation of not graduating doesn't spur them to achieve more. It makes them give up. Ask yourself what you hope to accomplish as an educator, and then seek the best way to achieve it.

Dear Annie: I have a friend who, after lots of medical assis-

tance, was finally able to get pregnant and have a little girl 18 months ago. Now, with further assistance, she is pregnant with twins.

It's exciting but expensive to give a baby shower. What is the proper etiquette? I really like her, and she was the matron of honor at my wedding three years ago. We worked together then and now have lunch once every month or so, but we are no longer super-close. — *Second Baby Shower?*

Dear Second: Are you asking whether you should host twice or attend twice? You are not obligated to do either, but it is especially onerous to host a second baby shower, so you are off the hook for that. Many women opt not to have second baby showers, because they already were provided with plenty of nice things that can be handed down to a second child. With twins, however, the need is greater, so a second shower is understandable. But it should not burden people who gave generously the first time. Guests should include only close family, very close friends and those who were not invited to the first baby shower. If you choose to attend a second shower, you might consider a token gift rather than a pricey item.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). There are many things out of your control, but if you take charge of one or two major things that are very much within your realm of influence, you'll create a different future than the one that's been handed to you.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Leonardo da Vinci wrote that "he who has access to the fountain does not go to the water-pot." You have fountain-level access to whatever you need to make a project fly. Use it. This is your moment.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You have someone powerful on your side, rooting for you to do whatever it takes for maximum vitality — and that someone is you. All success will spring from taking good care of yourself.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You can't fully enjoy yourself when you know others have been left out of the pleasure. You thrive on being helpful. The generous acts that you think will take your energy will actually renew it.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Your joy is in the creative process. If it doesn't turn out perfectly, that in no way robs you of the excitement that comes with making the effort. You may not have all the skills you need yet, but with each try, you're getting them.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Sometimes you do the things you need to do to be happy, and yet the happiness doesn't come. At least you have the satisfaction of knowing you've done enough to deserve it. That's something.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). In order to break out of the constraints, issues and problems of the day, you'll need a different view. Treat the day as if it were a coin you could

toss, catch and turnover on your hand to discover its flip side.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Account for what is right in relationships. Make a list of what you love about your current connections. Your focus on the positive will make it grow and overtake any negativity that's there.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). If there's not enough to do, you'll work slowly, take detours and, at the last minute, meet a deadline. If you have too much to do, you'll work quickly, take shortcuts and meet your deadline just as well.

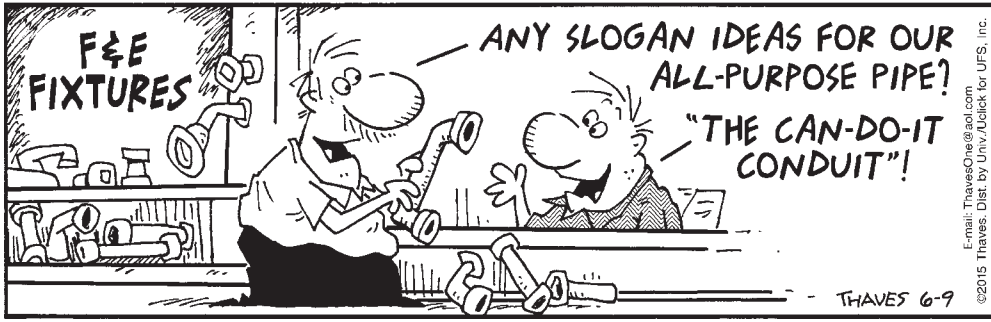
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Share your wisdom, and in all likelihood, no one will listen. It's not you; it's just the kind of day it is. However, if you share a kind word instead, your audience will be all ears.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Helping others sometimes means you get nothing back, not even the certainty that you did some good. Yet you keep helping. It's your nature to do so and your preferred way of living.

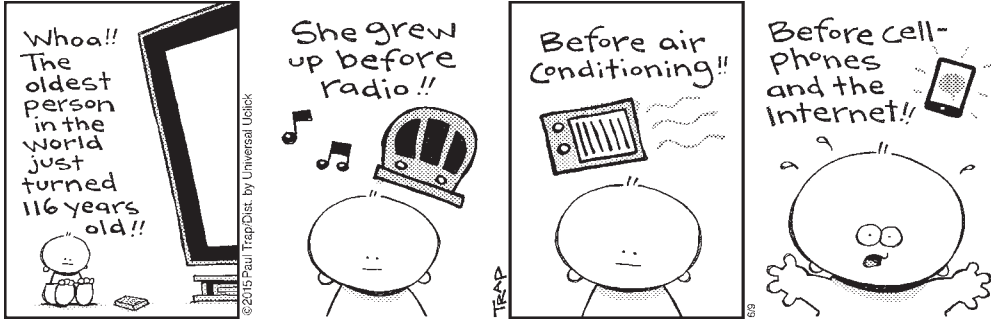
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Pare down your needs of others. You've grown to rely on someone, and it's interfering with your usual state of self-sufficiency. Take steps to regain your independence.

WEDNESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (June 10). You're like the ocean tides — over time, you'll beat a rocky shore into fine sand. Persistent efforts will change the landscape of your life. July brings declarations of love. Travel is best in July and October. People will give you the answer they think you want, so make it clear what you want and then hold them to it. Aries and Aquarius people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 3, 40, 11, 19 and 16.

FRANK AND ERNEST



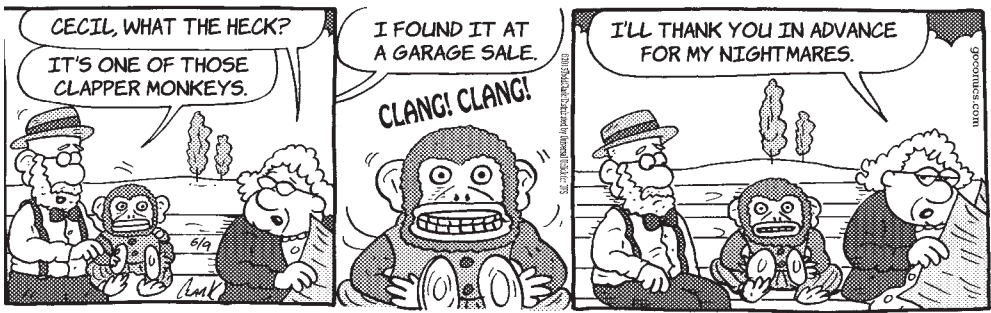
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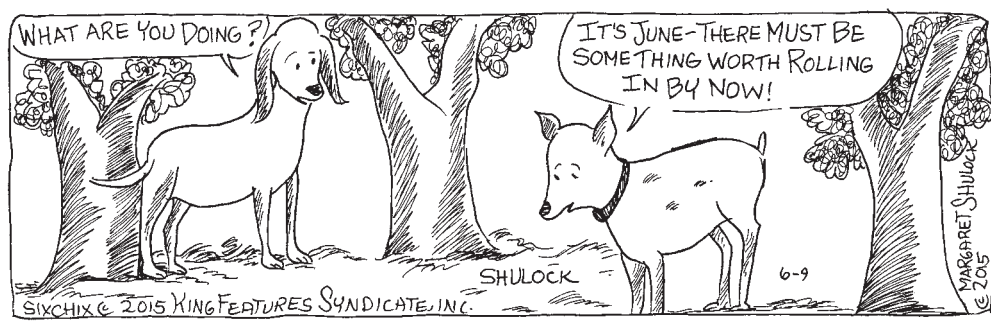
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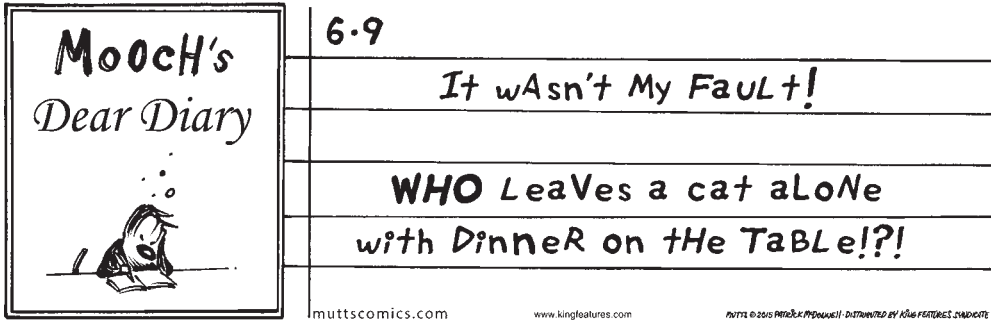
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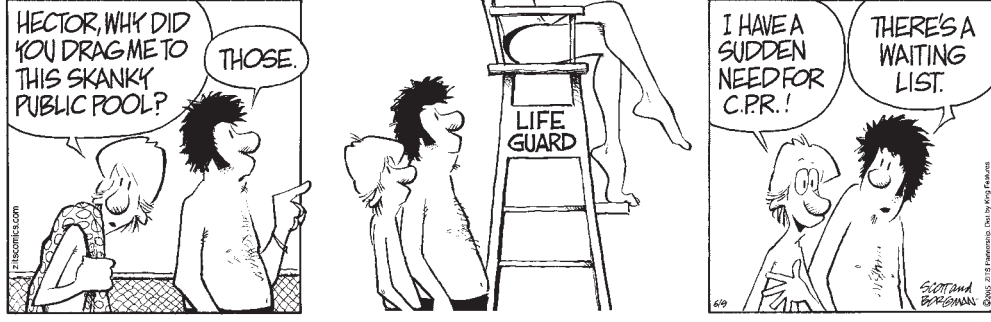
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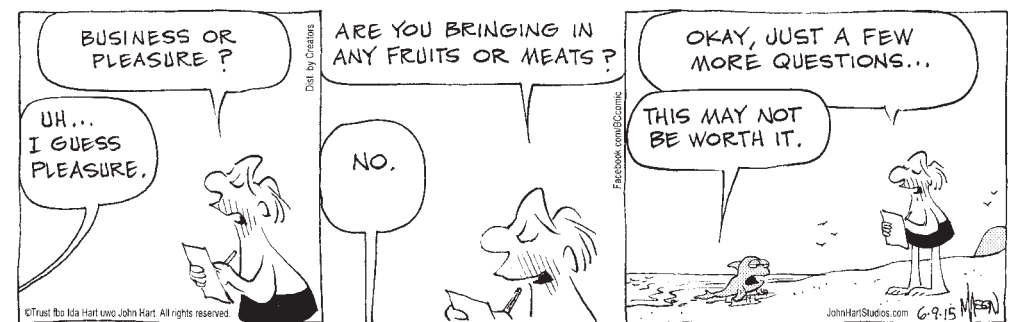
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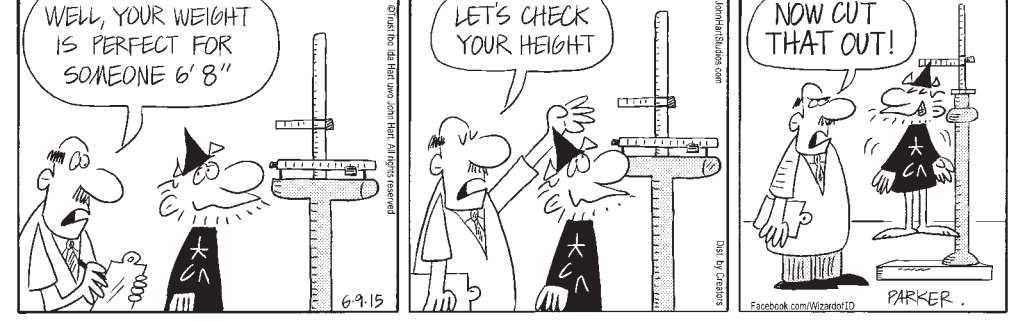
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