

Wife dreads repetitive storytelling Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Annie: It is a modern kind of problem to have such a long life expectancy. My husband and I are in our early 60s. His parents are in their early 90s. They still live independently and are fairly healthy. We often have family get-togethers with his parents, our children and our grandchildren.

My husband's father tells the same stories over and over. He completely monopolizes conversations and will interrupt a speaker and start telling his own tale from days long gone. His wife will sometimes say, "Dear, you've told this story before," and he will momentarily pause, but his brain is stuck on one track and he'll keep going. He is unable not to continue, complete with the same jokes and dramatic pauses that he has learned through repetition. We try to be polite and listen, but I see how my children's eyes glaze over and eventually, they find reasons to leave.

Here's the real problem: Over the past few years, I have seen my husband developing this same need to speak. Usually, he wants to make a point or he has some complaint. But he seems unable to just let it go. He also has started telling long stories, over and over,

Annie's Mailbox

Creators
Syndicate Inc.
Kathy Mitchell
and
Marcy Sugar



about his younger days. Yesterday, he ruined a family lunch by fighting about something minor that he absolutely could not let pass.

I don't want to spend years hearing the same stories and putting up with a husband who is unable to be silent and listen to others. My father-in-law is oblivious to others, and I can see that his son is headed the same way. What can be done? — L.

Dear L.: You're overlooking the possibility of an inherited neurological problem behind this tendency. It is not uncommon for some seniors to become repetitive and focus on their younger days. But the inability to drop an issue when asked, even when it causes family fights, has an element of compulsive behavior. Please talk to your husband about this when he is in a more reasonable mood.

Ask him to speak to his doctor about an evaluation, or better, go with him. But please work on your tolerance levels. Your husband isn't being annoying on purpose. Instead of allowing your frustration to boil over, try to understand how difficult it is for him to control himself, and then help others be understanding, as well.

Dear Annie: Has the definition of "fiance" changed? It used to mean one's intended spouse, one's betrothed, the person one has agreed to marry after an engagement period. Now, it seems to mean merely the person one is currently having sex with. Marriage no longer appears to be a necessary element of the word's meaning. Am I right about this? — Curious

Dear Curious: No. A fiance is still someone you intend to marry. However, the length of the engagement could be quite long - years - and in the meantime, some couples choose to live together. While there are a few optimistic folks who refer to themselves as a "fiance" even when they are not, in fact, engaged to be married, it doesn't change the meaning of the word. It only shows the expectations of the person using it.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Recent dramatic events might be fresh on your mind, but if they involve anything negative, especially someone treating you wrong, ditch the topic for something more cheerful.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Everyone has to agree before the project can really take off. Who hasn't given their consent yet? You thought you could go on without this, and you could, but awkwardly and without momentum.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The time you spend trying out different ways of doing things may seem to be a waste, but really it's not. You can only find a good system through trial. There will be a few errors before you find success.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're busy, but try to calm down, because the ones who threaten to use up your precious minutes actually have something important to say, and once you slow your roll, you'll hear it.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You'll experience a taste of a culture that is decidedly not for you. However, you can still appreciate how the others relate in spite of this. You can see why they need it. Your relationships are stronger through understanding.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Create a mental bubble around yourself to block out anyone who is trying to rush you, push you or change your natural rhythm in any way. Slow and deliberate action will take you far.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Instead of adapting to the environment, consider that the environment might be richer and better if you were to create your own niche inside of it. The environment actual-

ly needs you to be yourself.
SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). A switcheroo is featured. The path you thought would be such an exciting ride now feels like quicksand; whereas, the thing you were resistant to now seems buoyant, exciting and so right.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The question they always ask right before the exciting part of the plot is: What could go wrong? This question tips the audience that the ride is about to get bumpy. Also it's why you're white-knuckled for part of today.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). It doesn't take a very clever person to recognize a very clever person. However, when clever people do connect -- and you will today -- it is most satisfying to be validated at the deeper levels.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Question each option, but not endlessly. The best questions to ask are: Is it morally sound? Intriguing? So me? Am I likely to enjoy it enough to stick with it?

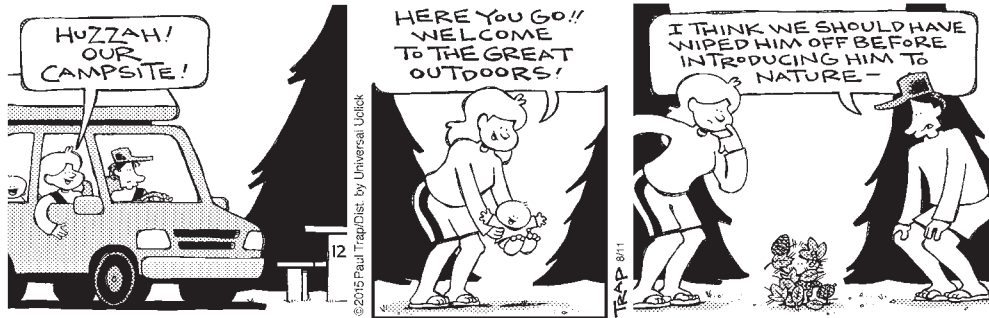
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The first thought bubble of the morning will keep haunting you all day long unless you take care of it. Depending on what this thought is, it could be a rather pleasant haunting.

WEDNESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Aug. 12). It's one of your more prolific years, and you will fill the world with your works. Your talent for attracting excellence will have you standing in the winner's circle. October travel will thrill you. November changes up your personal life, and your efforts to make your heart happy again will yield fulfilling results. Capricorn and Sagittarius people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 30, 14, 36 and 44.

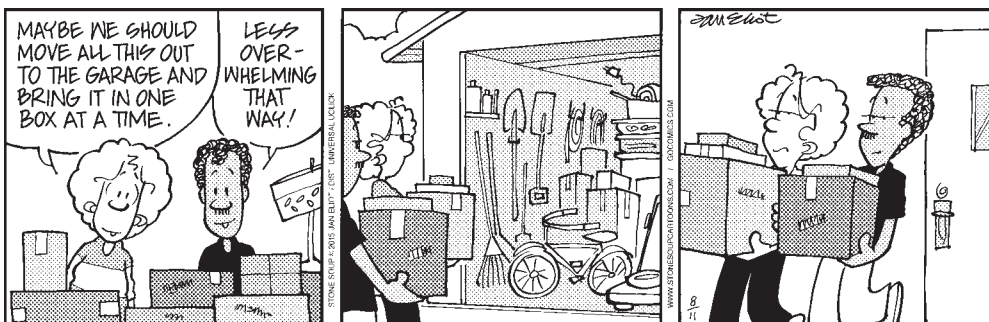
FRANK AND ERNEST



THATABABY



STONE SOUP



LOLA



SIX CHIX



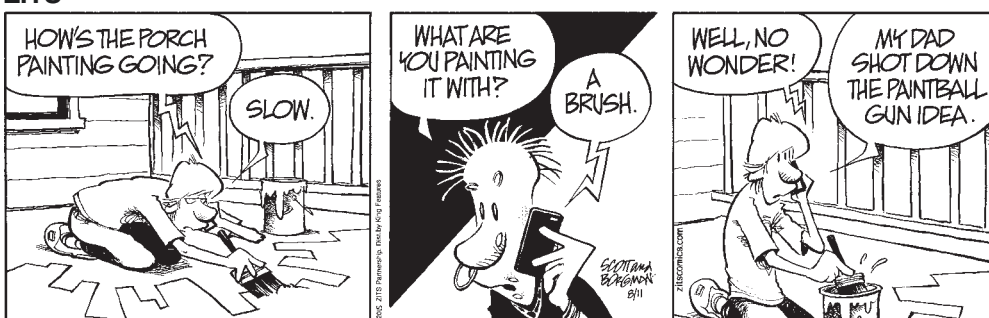
MUTTS



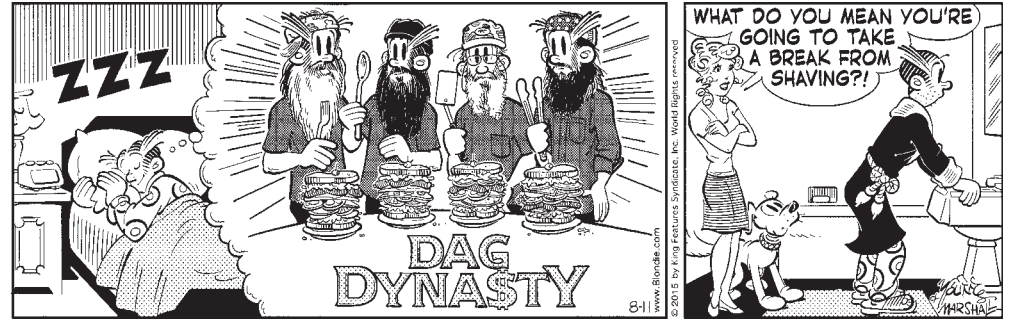
BABY BLUES



ZITS



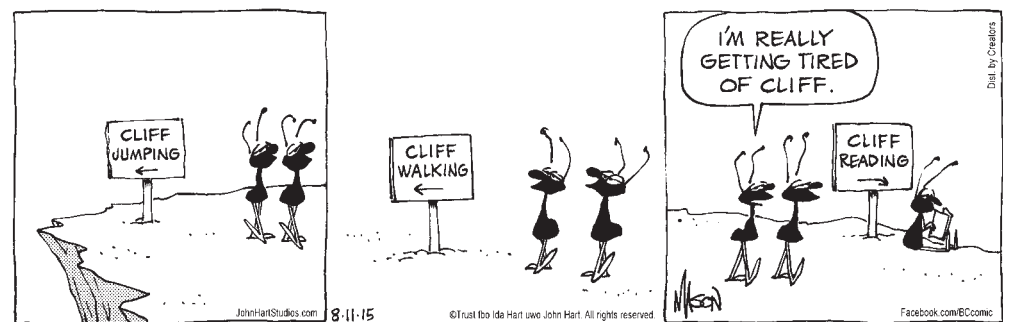
BLONDIE



SALLY FORTH



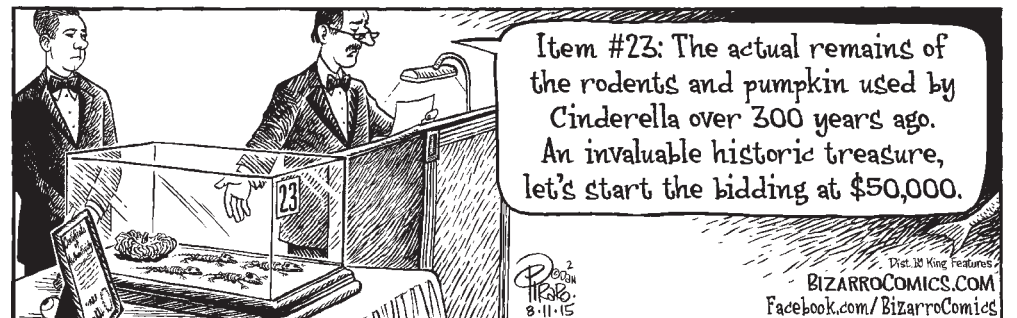
B.C.



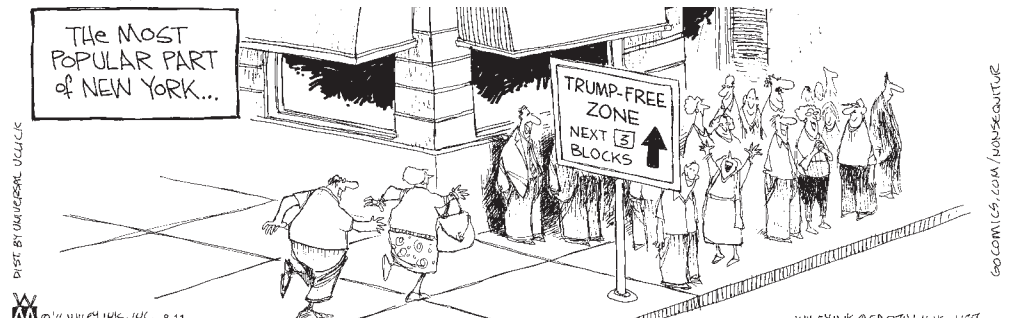
DILBERT



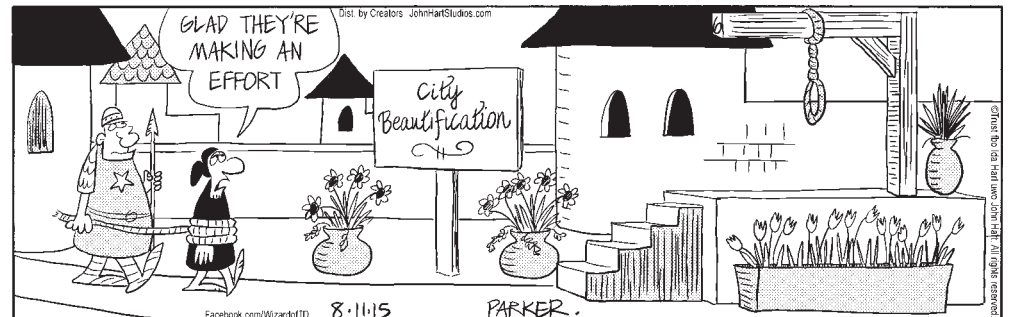
BIZARRO



NON SEQUITUR



WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

