

# In-law tries to steal spotlight

**Dear Annie:** My daughter has been engaged for several months. Her invitations for the small, family-only wedding were handwritten and mailed six weeks before the event.

The wedding is in two weeks. Yesterday, my sister-in-law announced that she is giving my brother a surprise party on my daughter's wedding day, three hours after the ceremony begins. It's two weeks before his actual birthday. And it's not as though she planned it because we'd have a ton of relatives in town for the wedding. There are only two family members who don't live nearby, and they are only a couple of hours away. She could have scheduled this birthday party at any time.

This is the tackiest thing I've ever heard of. I don't even know how to pretend it's OK. I am just speechless. Your thoughts? — *Bride's Mother*

**Dear Susan:** We completely agree that your sister-in-law has done something both tacky and with underlying hostility. You don't have to pretend this is OK. It is not.

Would your husband speak to his sister-in-law about the party and ask that it be rescheduled? Is there any other person who can intercede and

## Annie's Mailbox

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Kathy Mitchell  
and  
Marcy Sugar



convince your sister-in-law that this reflects poorly on her? You also can tell her how unhappy and shocked you are by her decision to plan this party in a way that deliberately takes attention away from your daughter's big day. Especially when she didn't check with you first.

If she refuses to change her plans, we recommend you ignore what you can, and accept that your sister-in-law lacks class. Do your best to minimize your disappointment and any damage to your daughter and her groom. Put on a good face and make the best of the day. Please don't let anyone ruin it.

**Dear Annie:** I am a psychiatrist with 35 years of experience and would like to comment on the letter from "Worried Mom." Her ex-daughter-in-law, "Mandy," had multiple affairs, eventually abandoning her family and leaving town

for some man she met on the Internet. Now she is emailing family members, demanding money and threatening to sue for sole custody of the children.

In no way should the writer's family respond to Mandy's emails. She sounds like she is seriously mentally ill, and the truth is, psychiatry doesn't always work. People like "Mandy" are resistant to the meager therapies offered to people with severe pathology, and they get worse with age, as they are increasingly isolated, addicted, rejected, entrenched in their defenses, etc.

The only thing to do is nothing. There is no "rapprochement" with a deranged and desperate person. We don't like to advertise our failures, but I guarantee that most seasoned therapists would agree that people with the described pathology never get better. — *Portsmouth, N.H.*

**Dear Portsmouth:** Most children desperately wish for normal, stable parents. Even when they realize a parent is mentally ill and incapable of such normalcy, they still hope for some type of reconciliation, if only an acknowledgement that it won't get better. We appreciate your honesty about therapy's limitations.

# Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** Accept yourself as a work in progress. You will bond with others through your humanity, not through your perfection. You're so attractive when you let go of needing to do things right.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** You appreciate a friend who can keep a secret. You also appreciate a friend who can't keep a secret and gives you fair warning of this inability. Your discretion will be important to the day's events.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** You are the guardian of your joy. Don't let anyone take it from you, and especially don't let it slip through your fingers while you're paying attention to things other than it.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** The safe solutions might work, but where's the fun in that? You are extra-bold in your creativity now, which makes this the perfect time to come up with outlandish solutions to your problems.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Abraham Lincoln said, "When you have got an elephant by the hind leg and he's trying to run away, it's best to let him run." Recognize the things you have no control over and let them go.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Socializing takes effort, but force yourself to do it even though you don't feel like it now. You'll attract admirers. It's interesting the way people fall for you when you couldn't care less.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Try not to let that vivid and restless imagination of yours roam into dark places. Music, humor and exercise will be best to keep your mind reaching into the light.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Love is pay-

ing attention to who a person is and warmly accepting that. Wanting someone to be different is the opposite of love. If you are experiencing this kind of rejection trying to pass for love, it's important that you label it.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** The wish hasn't been granted yet, and already you feel thankful for it. Tonight, people feel they can be themselves around you. When you're relaxed and others are relaxed, the magic sets in.

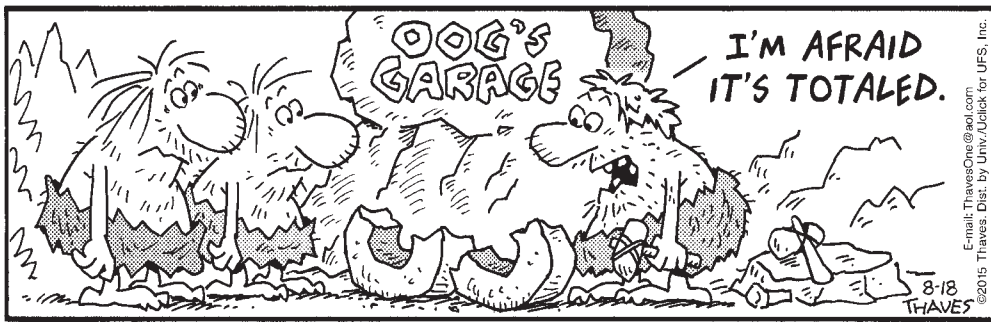
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** Your work needs more structure to it. With the right systems in place, you can succeed beyond your expectations. Sign up for a course or enlist the help of a tough coach or teacher.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** The things you want should match up with the things you're willing to do to get what you want. Look for the discrepancies and decide whether it might be time to adjust your goal.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** You weren't always this person, but the seeds were there and you grew them. You might be surprised at what seeds are in you now. Add water, and then stand back to see what happens.

**WEDNESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Aug. 19).** What you think will happen over the next three weeks will indeed, so hold tight to that optimism! The whole team is rooting for you in September (yes, even the jealous ones). Your heart is fulfilled by a loved one's actions in November. There's big work to be done to accomplish lifestyle changes in January. Pisces and Aries people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 24, 32, 35 and 18.

## FRANK AND ERNEST



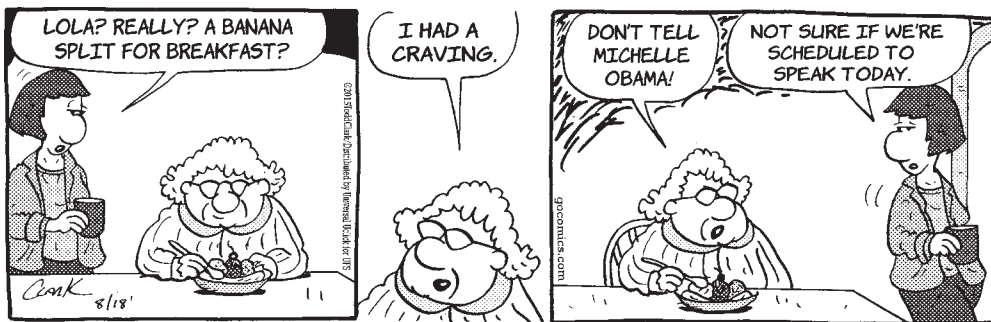
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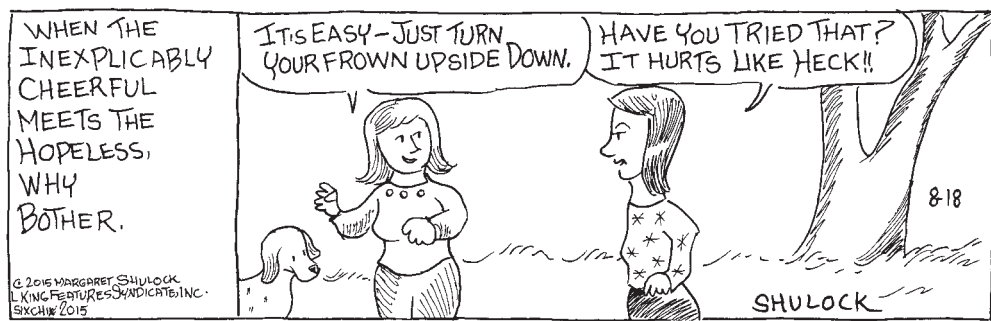
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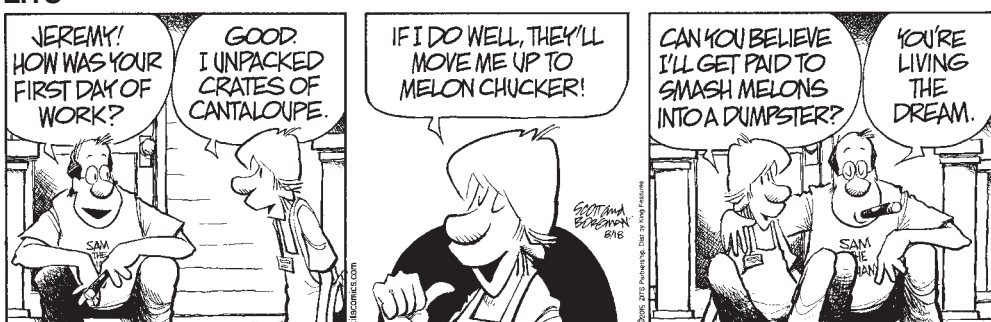
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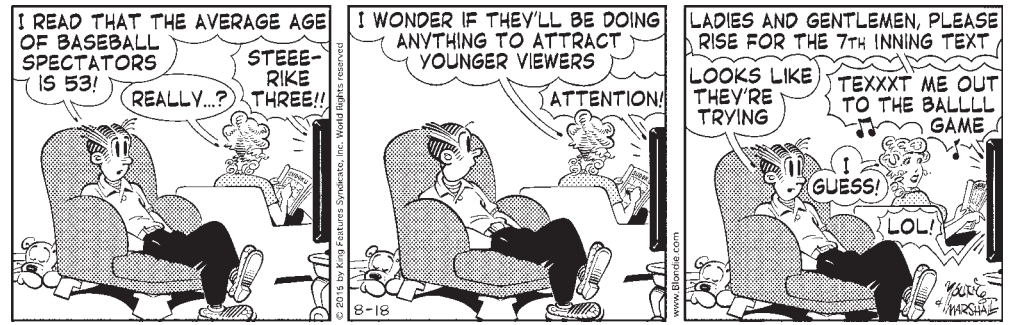
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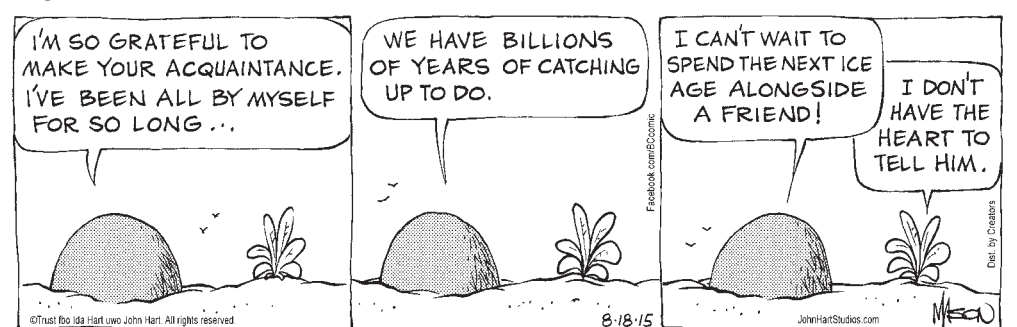
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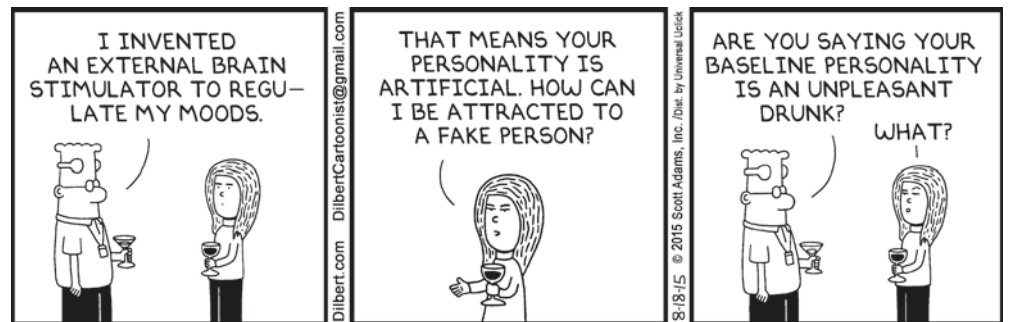
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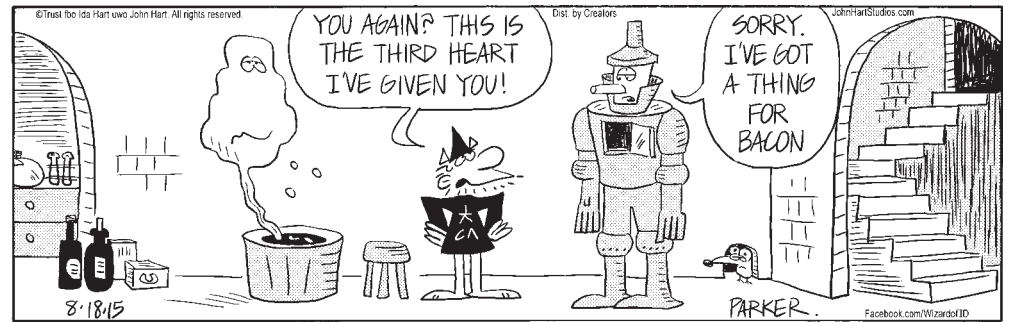
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## NON SEQUITUR



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## ROSE IS ROSE

