

Neighbor's smoke ruins sleep

Dear Annie: Recently, new neighbors moved in next door. They seem nice. The problem is, the husband smokes on their porch, which is on the side of their house and only a few yards from ours. It is close enough that we can smell cigarette smoke in our bedrooms, which are all on that side of the house.

My husband is highly allergic to cigarette smoke. While we respect the neighbor's right to smoke on his property, we don't appreciate the secondhand smoke in our home. We do not use air conditioning and often leave our windows open. Since the husband comes home late and smokes after we are asleep, we have been closing our windows as soon as we go to bed, which makes for unpleasant nights. We also have to close the windows on weekends when he lights up.

We don't want to create tension with the new neighbors, but we would like to be able to sleep with our windows open. Do we have a right to bring this up? And how can we handle it tactfully? — *Stuffy in the Suburbs*

Dear Stuffy: You can bring it up, but you can't demand a specific result. Your neighbor is entitled to smoke on his own property. All you

Annie's Mailbox

Creators
Syndicate Inc.
Kathy Mitchell
and
Marcy Sugar



can do is close your windows or install a fan that will blow the smoke away. But it is OK to approach your neighbor and ask politely whether he'd be willing to smoke in front of his house, so you can sleep with your windows open.

Dear Annie: This is in response to the letter from "Caught Between Two MILs," whose husband's mother resented that the stepmom, who lived closer, was allowed to babysit their child. Yes, it is wrong of the son's mother to be so jealous that she demanded her son and daughter-in-law stop letting the stepmother babysit. She is likely worried the stepmom will have a better relationship with her grandchild than she does.

Her demands are unreasonable, but she may be less anxious if the parents found a way to help her connect with her grandchild.

I have a friend whose grandchild lives several states away. Each night, she connects on Skype and reads her grandchild a bedtime story. It costs nothing and gives the grandchild and grandmother a way to bond at a distance.

Something like this might be helpful for "Caught's" mother-in-law, who is feeling so left out. — *Sympathetic in Idaho*

Dear Idaho: That is a wonderful suggestion. Thanks to technology, there are myriad ways to connect with grandchildren, allowing them to see your face, watch your expressions and enjoy some special one-on-one time. Grandma can connect on Skype, FaceTime or any of the other options, or upload a short video of Grandma singing a funny song and text it to the grandchild's parents. (Kids love videos.) These are not difficult things to do, no matter how technologically inept you think you are, and you can always ask the neighborhood teenager to help.

Dear Readers: Today is Family Day (casafamilyday.org). Studies show that children who eat dinner with their parents have a reduced risk of substance abuse. Please try to make meals a family event.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). And what's to be done about the contrast between who you want to be and who you are? That you can even see it is a favorable omen. It's this kind of humility that will take you all the way.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Very few appreciate what's readily available. Even fewer pursue what's not available at all. It's the range in the middle that inspires desire. Snuggle yourself into a sweet spot between sometimes and very rarely available.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Leaders allow themselves to be guided by what they like, their fantasies of an ideal world, their dreams of what could be, while the others allow themselves to be guided by what's likely to gain approval.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're deciding how great you want to be at something. You have some natural talent and some time to practice, but do you have a reason good enough to keep you motivated through the work?

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The world is a puzzle, and you are the missing piece. Do not underestimate how vital you are to the big picture. Apply yourself and watch it all come together all around you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). It irks you that in certain relationships, you're always the one who reaches out first. Don't take it personally. It's not that they don't love you — they adore you! This is just the pattern that's been set.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). It would be fun if everyone would behave according to your private script. They won't, but because you're an expert director, you'll make a masterpiece out of whatever "performances" you get.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You may not like how the day unwinds, but hang in there. Stay connected and keep working on the knotty problems. Without your skill, the others would be lost.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You do different things for different people, and perhaps you won't quite settle into the groove that is "so you" today. Just know that your top three roles in life don't begin to define the depths of you.

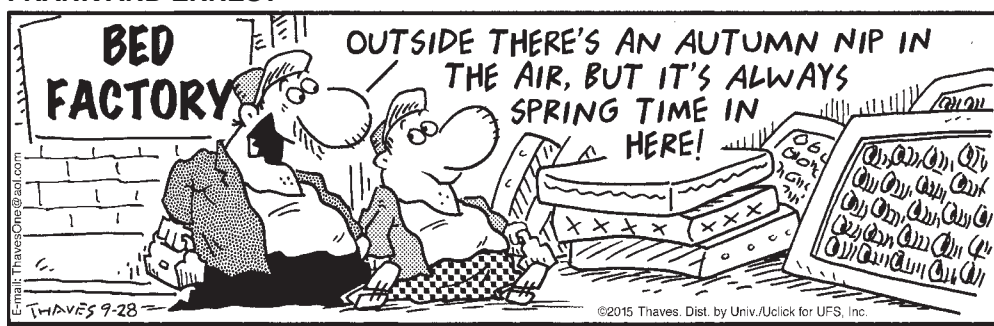
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Commitments come with responsibilities. Because you cherish your freedom, you're likely to say no to several offers in the weeks to come, starting with a decent one today.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Relationships need maintenance. A lunch date might seem inconvenient, but set it up anyway. Think of it as the periodical oil change that's necessary to keep the relationship running.

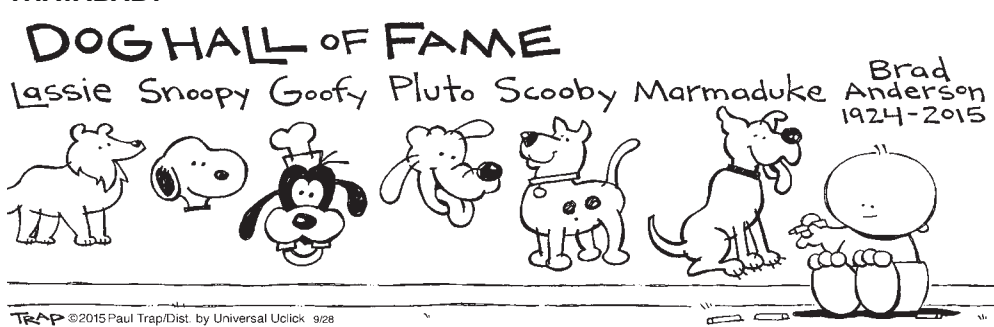
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Some people are just a lot harder to say no to than others. That's why you don't pick up the call. You know what will happen. Niceties lead to affinities, which lead to agreements — and there you are at "yes" again!

TUESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Sept. 29). A tranquil personal life will allow you creative exploration. Scintillating collaborations are featured in November, resulting in joyful production. Agreements made in January will serve you for years to come. Keep your output competitive and strong through December, and a bonus will be yours. Gemini and Sagittarius people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 10, 3, 33, 26 and 48.

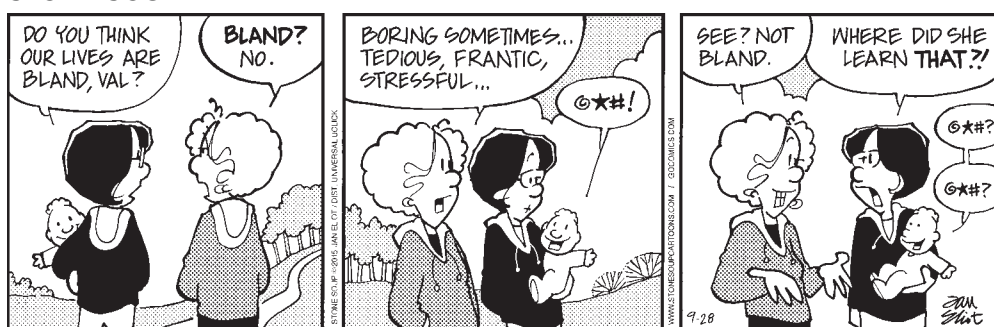
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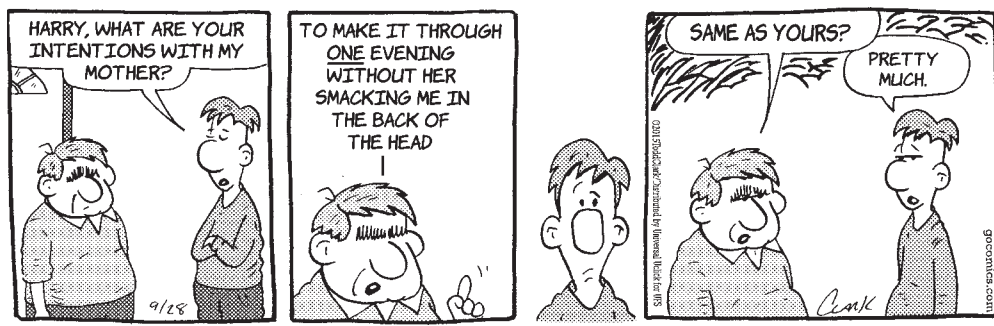
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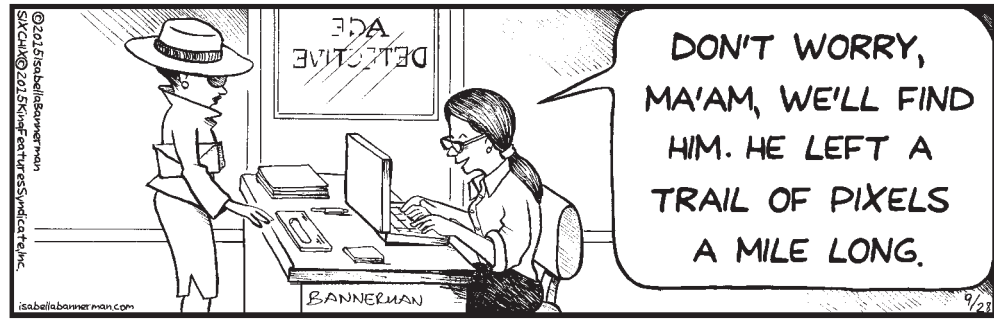
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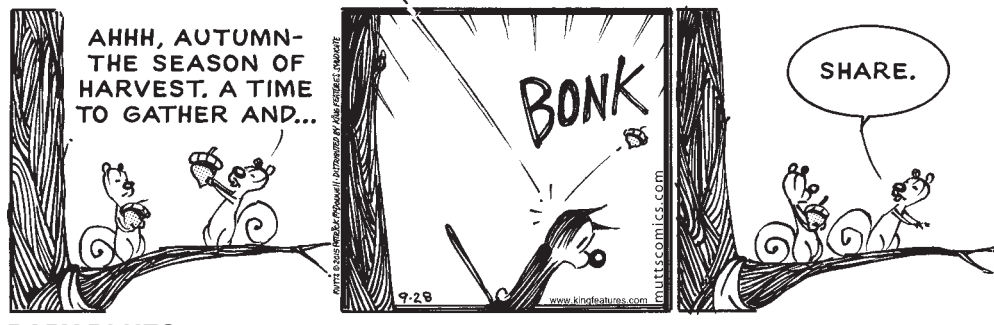
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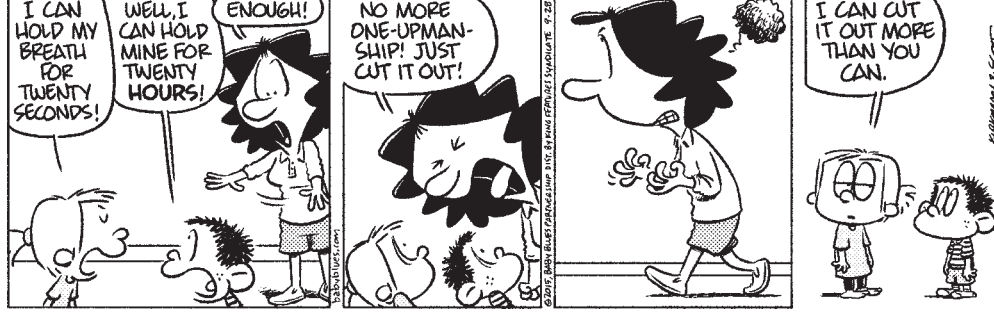
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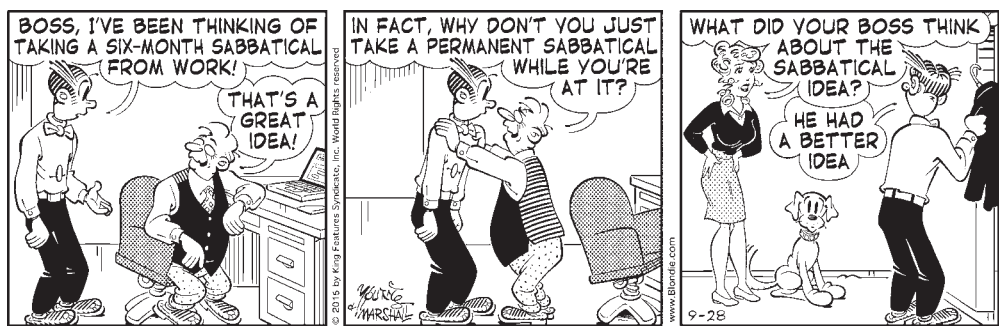
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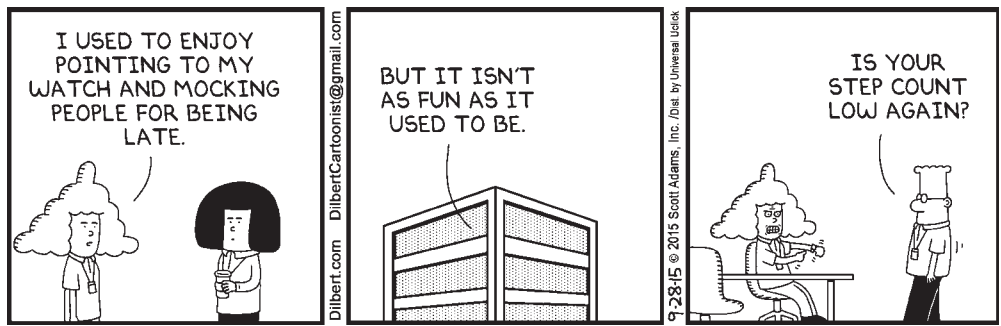
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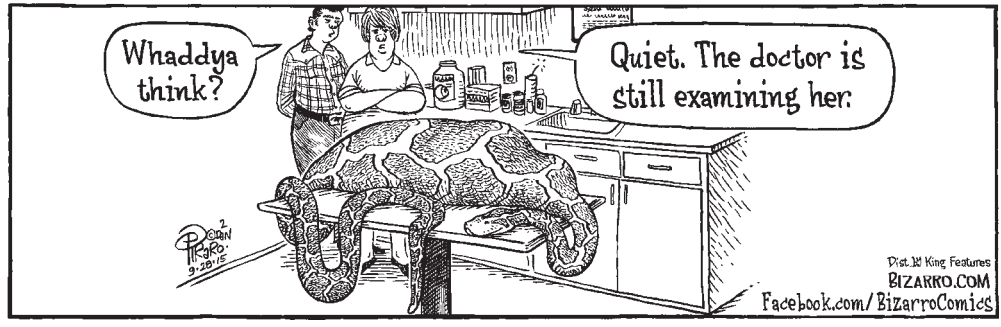
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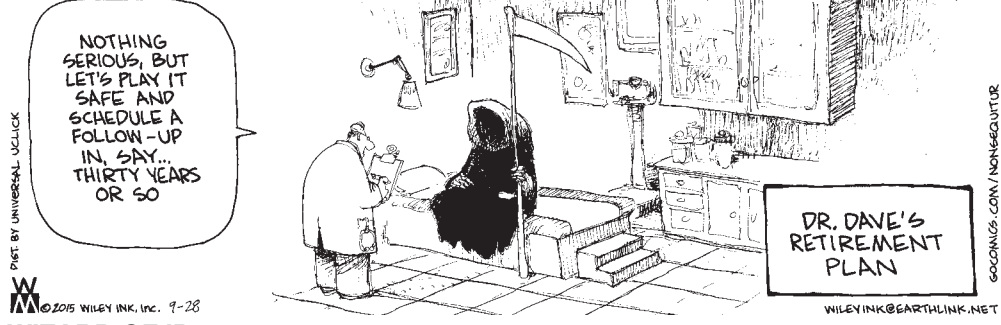
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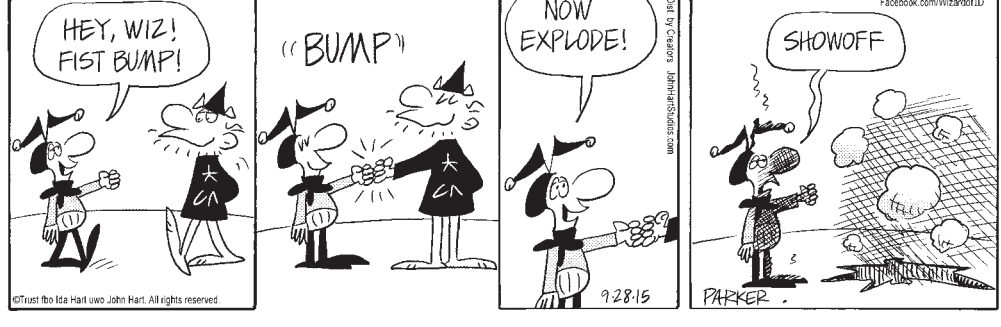
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