

Trying to balance assets

Dear Annie: While my mother was still alive, she gave a substantial amount of money to my oldest son, "Rick." Everyone but Mother knew she was supporting his drug habit (which he has since overcome). When she died, her will gave equal amounts of money to both of my sons. My younger son, "Chris," was hurt by his grandmother's lopsided generosity to his brother, and it may be part of the reason my adult sons aren't close today.

Rick's father, my first husband, will be leaving him his entire estate, so he will be financially set. My current husband and I recently completed our will, leaving most of our assets to Chris.

Based upon what my mother did, I'm concerned that Rick will be hurt if he finds out that his stepfather and I didn't leave him an equal share. But I don't believe my husband is obligated to leave the same amount to his stepson as he does to his biological son. What do you think? — *Trying to Avoid Hurt Feelings*

Dear Trying: Did your husband help raise Rick? Can your assets be separated from your husband's so that his entire estate goes to Chris, but yours is split

Annie's Mailbox

Creators Syndicate Inc.

Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



in half? Would Rick be understanding if you discussed these issues in advance? Unequal bequests create problems because it appears that the parent loved one child more than the other. If you explain your reasoning, it's possible your sons will understand and not be surprised and hurt later.

Dear Annie: My oldest brother, "Richard," is fading from this world. I live 3,000 miles away and flew home to see him and say my goodbyes. Richard and I have always been close and have loved each other dearly. Now he is in a locked mental hospital and I don't know why.

Richard can have visitors only on weekends at certain times. The drive to the hospital is nearly three hours. My sister and I were allowed to go to his room for 20

minutes, but not by ourselves. His wife and two children were present the entire time. It was as if we had watchdogs sitting there making sure we had little contact. The next day, we were told at the desk that his wife said we are not permitted to see him. I think the wife's behavior is despicable.

We went to see the facility director and my sister called the caseworker and explained the situation. He agreed that this was patient abuse. The doctor was called, and he said we could see our brother.

Richard was in such good spirits and we laughed, hugged and kissed and told each other how much we loved each other. The purpose of this letter to let everyone know that even though you may have a spiteful sister-in-law or other family member, the law says no one can arbitrarily keep you from seeing your sibling.

God answered my prayers and my soul is at rest. — *Loving Sister*

Dear Sister: We are glad you were able to have a good visit with your brother, but sometimes there are restrictions on visitors for a reason. It is always a good idea to phone first and check.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Your sophisticated mind is capable of nailing all the day's challenges, including the challenge of appreciating one whose nature is very different from your own.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You have compassion for tourists because you know what it's like to be out of your element and lost. New places can seem overwhelming. Everyone needs a guide.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The need to please can be an asset or an illness. Today it's the latter, separating you from what it is you really want. You'll catch yourself doing too much to make someone happy. Stop and ask, "Why?"

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Life can be frustrating, especially when it revolves around technology, language, and other things you do not understand. That person who can translate will be worth their weight in gold today.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Your goal isn't unlike the goal of tech companies everywhere — you want others to have a positive user experience when interacting with you. This intention will lead to getting many of your needs fulfilled.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Like a hawk you'll use your keen vision and bird's-eye perspective to hunt for what you need. You can rest assured that getting what you want will keep the natural order in balance.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). This winding road is a test of faith. You can't see very far ahead of you. Each bend requires you to trust that there is more road on the other side, and that the road will eventually lead to your destination.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). When you witness desire, you subconsciously put yourself in the desiring person's place. You want that to pay off. If it pays off for another, it could pay off for you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You've come to a mental sticking point. To get unstuck, you'll need to do some jiggling and juggling. Move things around. Change your schedule. Alter the placement of your furniture.

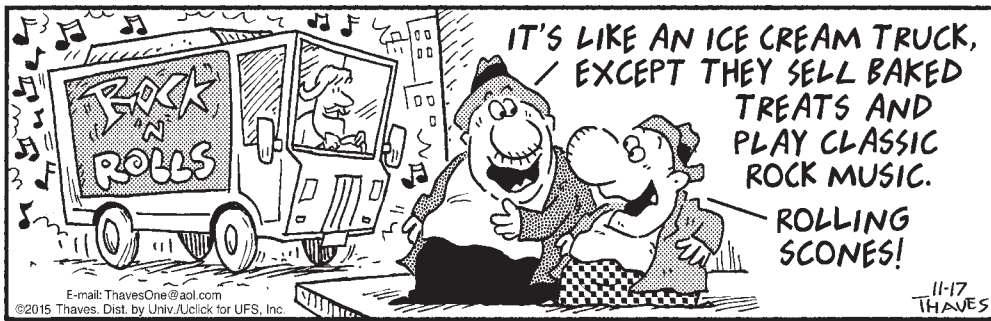
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Not all upgrades are improvements. Keep this in mind before you part with your cash. The ones who want you to make a purchase may be thinking more about their needs than your own.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). It would be tempting to surround yourself with "yes" people. So many want to agree with you now! Of course, your true friends are the ones who will support you when you're right and tell you when you're wrong.

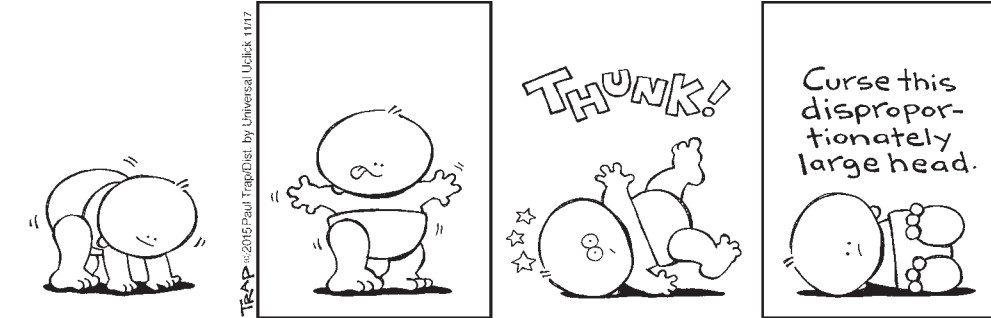
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). There are times when you tolerate, or perhaps even enjoy, a bit of excitement and drama in your personal life. But right now, you'll welcome the quiet tranquility of peaceful relationships.

WEDNESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Nov. 18). There will be some emotional fireworks over the next three weeks when something you have wanted for a long time finally comes to fruition. You'll like how this shakes out! December will shift your career focus. You'll make money in a new way through 2016. March and April show you on a spiritual quest. Virgo and Libra adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 3, 15, 22, 39 and 17.

FRANK AND ERNEST



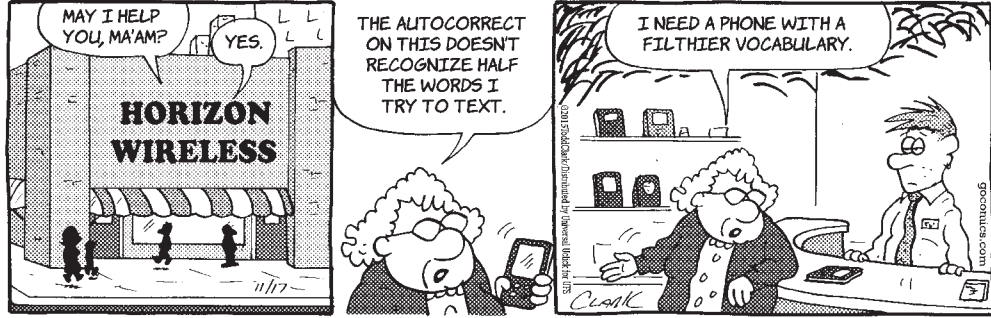
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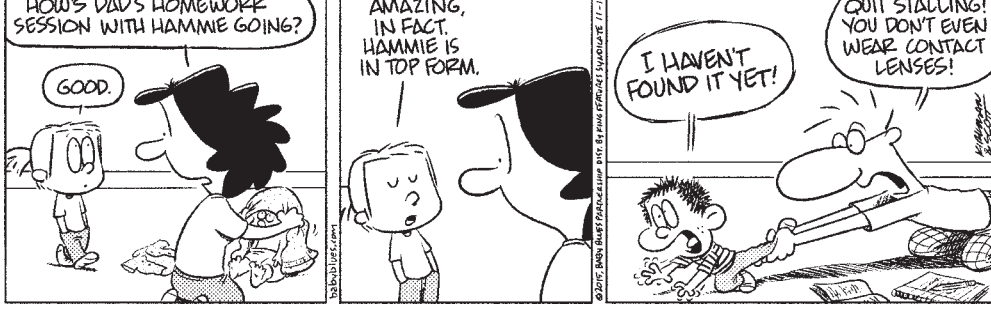
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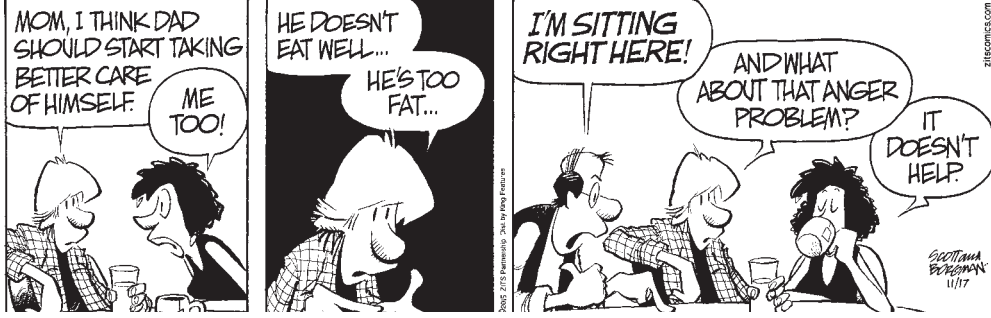
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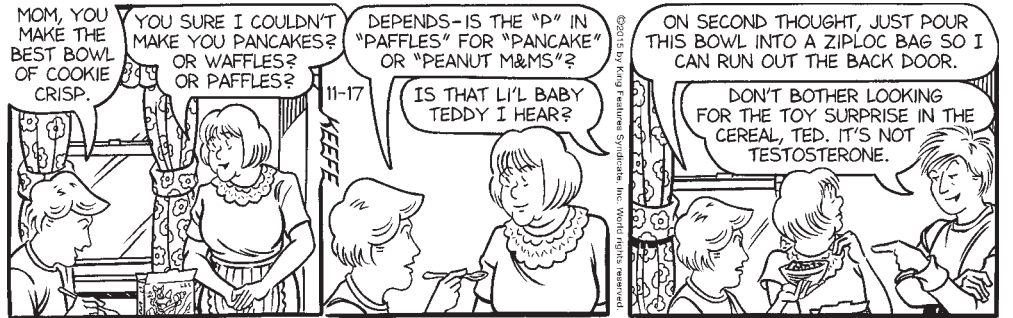
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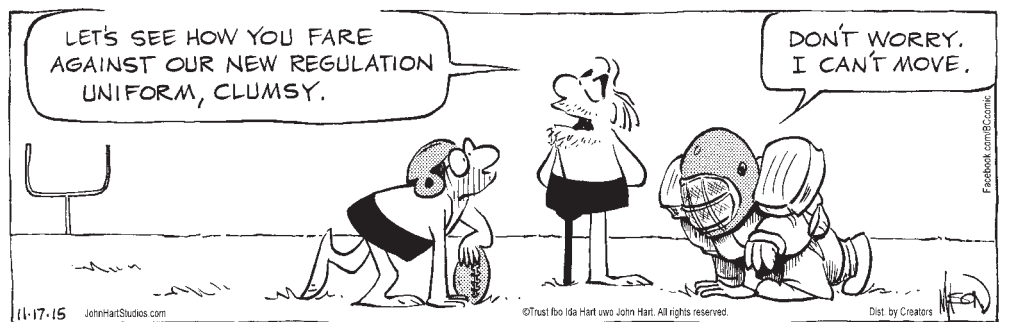
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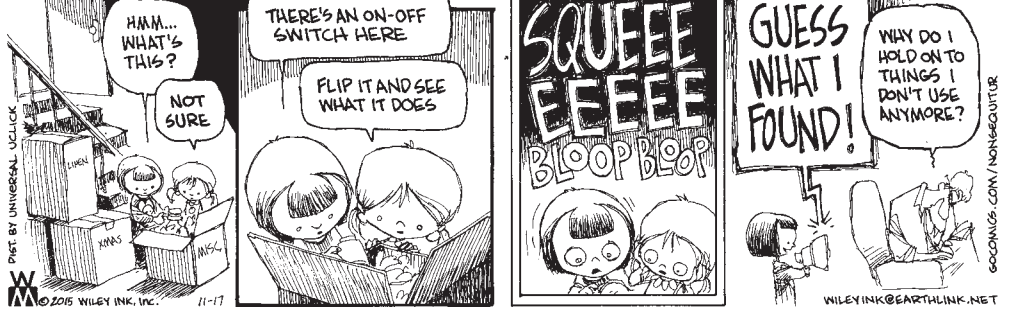
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