

Toxic in-laws insult kids

Dear Annie: My in-laws have always caused problems, but things have escalated since my husband and I had children. They live 30 minutes away, but they refuse to visit. When our second child was born, they didn't come to my baby shower or to the hospital. When they finally visited, they didn't even look at the baby. They won't FaceTime to see the grandkids.

We told them we'd come to their home when the kids aren't napping, but they said if we couldn't spend the entire day, they aren't interested in seeing us at all. When we try to schedule a visit, they usually say they are "too busy." Yet when we do manage to see them, all they do is sit on the sofa and watch TV. They don't interact with the children. My in-laws take several luxury vacations every year, some lasting for three weeks. Somehow, they aren't too busy for that.

Meanwhile, they send us random texts berating us about not visiting more and that we don't do enough for them. Worse, when they see the kids, they insult them and make fun of their slow physical development and speech impediments. But they are little kids and progress takes time. I am angry and

Annie's Mailbox

Creators
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Kathy Mitchell
and
Marcy Sugar



make sure your husband backs you up on this.

Dear Annie: My boyfriend and I are discussing marriage. We have both been married previously. We already live together and have everything we need.

We would like to have a picnic or something and just surprise everyone with a wedding, so that no one feels obligated to bring gifts. Normally, when we have picnics with friends and family, we provide the main courses and everything else is potluck. Would that be acceptable in this situation? — *Wondering in Pennsylvania*

Dear Wondering: The idea of surprising your friends with an impromptu picnic wedding is a lovely idea. Just be sure that the people most important to you will make the date a priority and show up, and others won't be offended because a picnic seemed to be no big deal and they spent the day elsewhere.

But unless it is the custom among your friends to supply the wedding feast, we don't think it is appropriate to ask your guests to bring the food. If people offer, you can say it's not necessary. If they choose to bring something anyway, so be it. They will consider it a wedding gift.

hurt. I dread the upcoming holidays. My husband feels as I do, but these are his parents. The stress has caused a lot of problems in our otherwise happy marriage.

I am not yet 30 and cannot imagine spending the rest of my life like this. What can I do? — *Feeling Blue*

Dear Blue: No one should be permitted to make fun of your children's developmental issues. Period. Your in-laws sound both toxic and selfish. Couples with young children are allowed to set their schedules. We suggest you be unfailingly polite while you explain that, no, you cannot come visit now because the kids are napping (or in school or have other activities). When you can do a whole-day visit, offer to do so. But if the in-laws insult your kids, leave immediately. If they don't like it, too bad. And

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Good people around you do not want to trouble you and are too nice to let you know if something is wrong. So it's on you to check in and make sure all is well.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Some of the rules feel more like guidelines to you — others feel like mere suggestions. You'll find the most creative way to push the boundaries.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). There are intelligent people around you and — bonus — they are smart in the way you most appreciate. The feedback you'll receive is likely to be constructive and helpful.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You'll experience a win with your whole team. Celebrate as a group. Later, privately consider how you contributed. You deserve individual acknowledgement, even if it only comes from you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). It will take more than the usual effort to get your head in the right place to do your work. An inspiring Scorpio could help to motivate you, though nothing will motivate you more than needing a paycheck.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). People want to share with you. Though you may not need much of what they have to share, accept these gifts to keep the channel of abundance open and flowing.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Your fortune can change or solidify at any moment. There is power in each decision you make. Success depends on making the kinds of choices you'll want to build on.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You're not just a cog in the wheel of commerce,

you know. You're a part of nature. Wide-open spaces breathe fresh air into your thoughts and clear the cobwebs of your mind.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You can't relate to those who have become embittered by their trials. If anything, the troubles you have experienced have given you a more compassionate outlook.

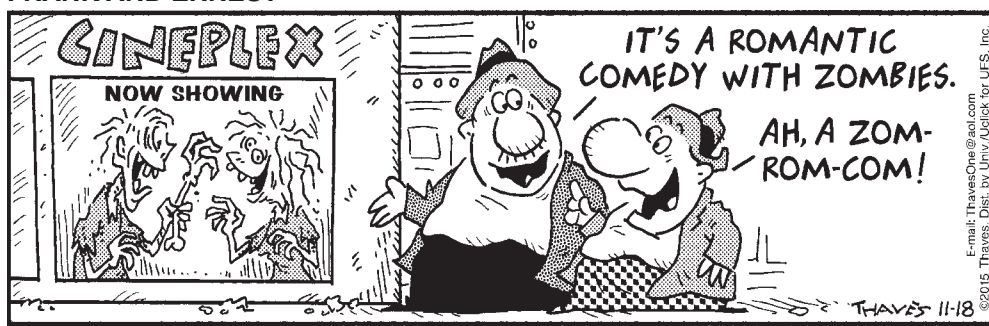
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Considering the amount of work they create for you, it might be hard for you to believe that people wish you well and want to help you. Remember, you're the one who chooses what to take on.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Those who are supposedly "in the know" will be eager to impart their knowledge on you. If the information is true and actionable, those who teach it should be living it, too. Are they?

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're thinking of making a change in your appearance. If you look the part, others might just assume it's who you are — and that includes you. The outer change will spark an inner transformation.

THURSDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Nov. 19). The happy truth is that what's important to do will also be fun as you head into this new era. Your personal life will blossom in December and you'll grow to accommodate the change. In February you'll re-connect with people from the past. You'll be favored in a trade. A conservative, long-term plan will pay off in 2016. Capricorn and Gemini adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 10, 36, 13, 29 and 4.

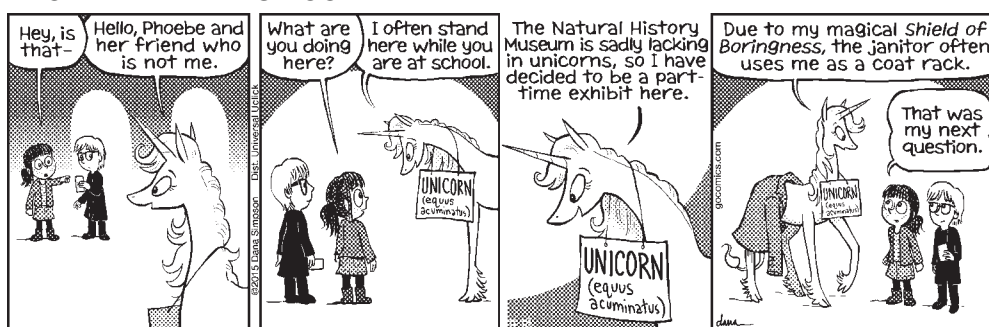
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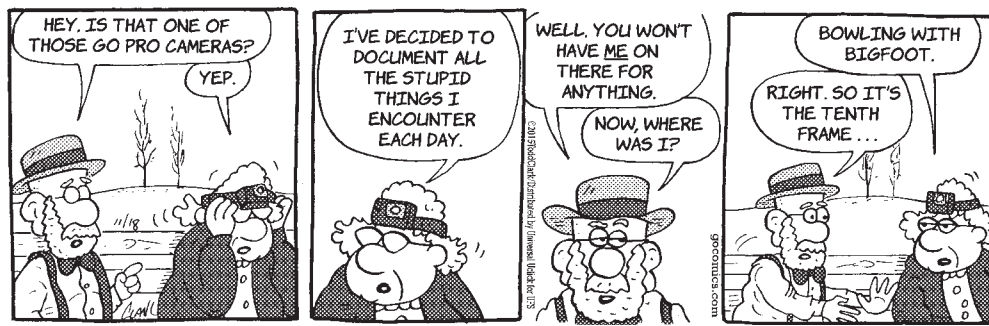
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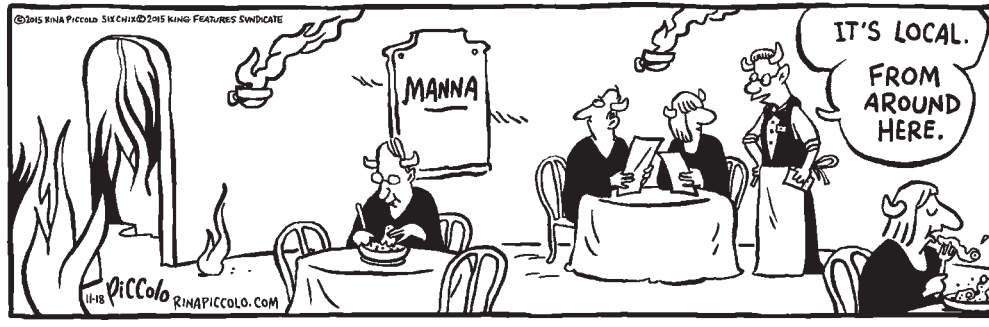
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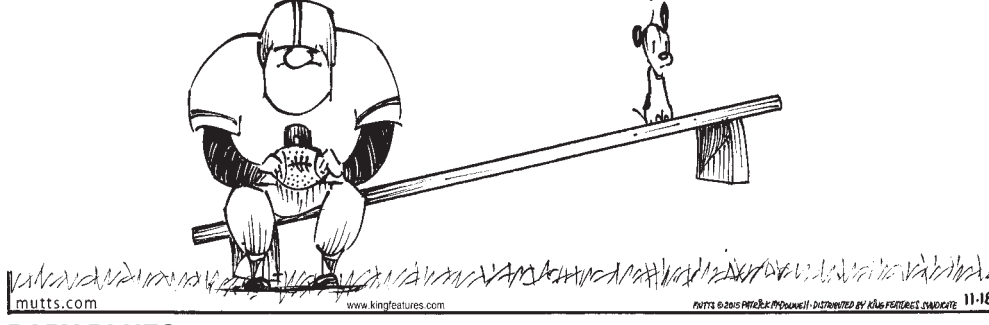
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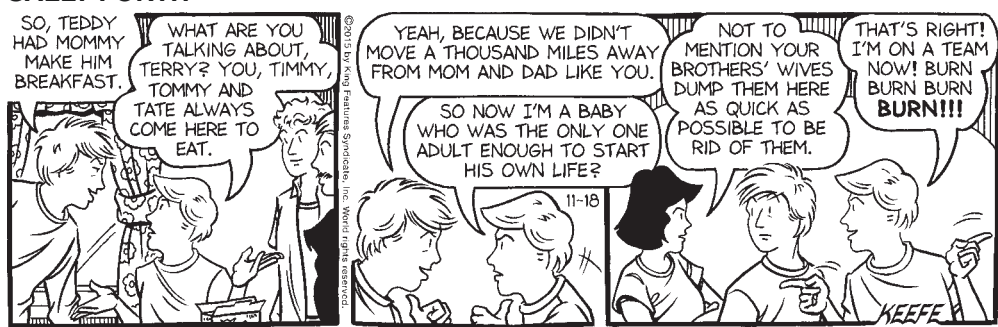
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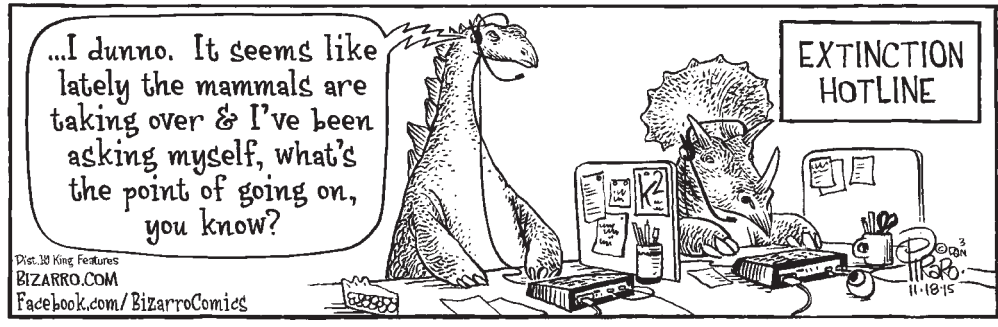
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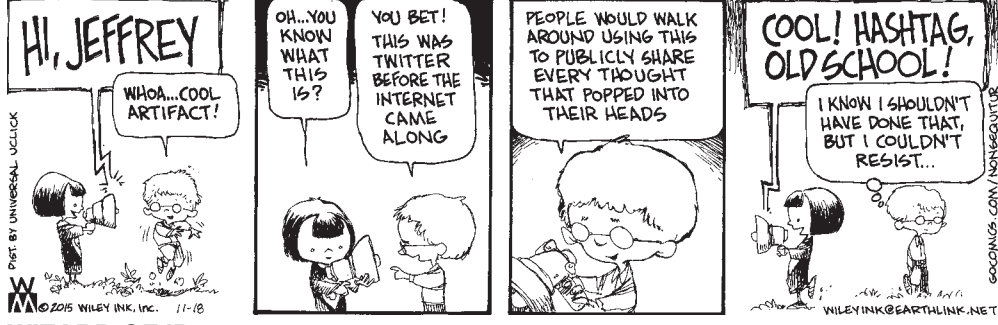
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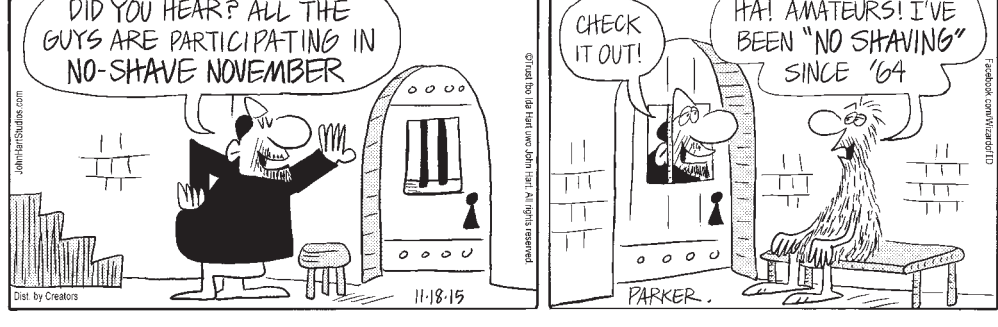
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