

Mom-in-law makes life hard

Dear Annie: I've been married for 32 years to "Conrad," and we have two terrific adult sons. My mother-in-law will be 87 soon, and Conrad is her only child. I have never had a good relationship with her in spite of all my efforts. She chose not to attend our wedding reception because it was hosted by her late ex-husband's second wife. Instead, she told us that she stayed home, drank champagne and "cried all night." She has a long history of making snide remarks when nobody is there to witness them.

My husband and I are in Maui for a month. Prior to our departure, I provided a list (in a large font) of all contact information for family members, physicians, dentists, etc., and clipped it to a magnet on her refrigerator.

While we've been gone, her condo has developed a basement leak. My husband and I have been on the phone with her daily regarding insurance, repair work, etc. During one call, she commented that she had no one to phone while we were away. My husband reminded her that she can call our sons, who live nearby, and she replied, "No, your wife told me not to bother them."

Annie's Mailbox

Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



This was a complete lie. He told her that I would never say that, but she insisted that I had. My first reaction was to call her out on it, but I want my husband with me as a witness when I talk to her.

I want to be sure I am courteous when we see her. But how do I get her to stop lying? — *Annoyed DIL*

Dear Annoyed: If Mom is still looking to discredit you after 32 years, it isn't likely to change. We would also add that, as she gets older, some of this behavior may get worse. You and your husband need to politely, firmly and repeatedly correct Mom whenever she does this, so she knows she isn't fooling anyone. Write it down, if necessary, so that when you are vacationing, there is a record. Also inform other family members of any instructions

you have given Mom. You will be less aggravated knowing that others are aware of what's going on.

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "The Ones Left Behind," who said that she and her husband raised her three kids with no help from their birth father. Now that the kids are grown, the bio-dad is back in the picture and the kids are hungry for his attention. She feels they are leaving her in the dust.

I was like her children. At one point, I felt I needed to establish a relationship with my father so that I could be at peace. I did it for my own well-being and hoped my mother would understand, but she was upset and hurt. She took that anger to her grave. It saddens me to think about it.

Please tell "Left Behind" that a relationship with their father is probably very healing for her children. It has nothing to do with her. If she can joyfully support them in this effort, it would be the greatest gift she could give. — *Been There*

Dear Been: Thank you for presenting the other side. We hope "Left Behind" sees this and understands.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Body builders know that the way to get stronger is to lift more weight and do it for more repetitions. That's what you're up to these days: The more you try to do, the more you're able to do.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). In just this one day you could achieve many tasks, but you wisely home in on the single most important, heart-fortifying activity on the list and find profound satisfaction in sticking to that.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Those who laugh too much seem too eager to please, while those who laugh too little are repellent buzz-kills. You'll strike the perfect balance, seeing the humor but not always calling it out.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). To be interesting you have to be interested. You're both. In fact, you may want to pull back a tad: As you've probably noticed, you've hooked some amorous attention that may not be entirely appropriate to your current situation.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Don't let yourself become too overwhelmed by the long list of things you'd like to do, accomplish, experience and own. It's quality thoughts that make a quality life, and you can choose those at any moment.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You'll get to the bottom of the problem by sensing when there's more. Mostly this happens when you question people and they seem to be holding back. In most cases, a gentle nudge will be all it takes.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You don't need a four-leaf clover. Your luck is already packed inside your current life. For the most part, you know exactly what your good fortune is and how to use it, but you're overlooking something, too.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Sometimes you need a cynic, a critic or a realist. But not today. It doesn't matter what you're doing; positive thinking and optimism will bring solutions and success.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The only reason you're not achieving a desired outcome is that you still don't believe that it can be, should be and will be yours. Convince your head and your whole being will follow.

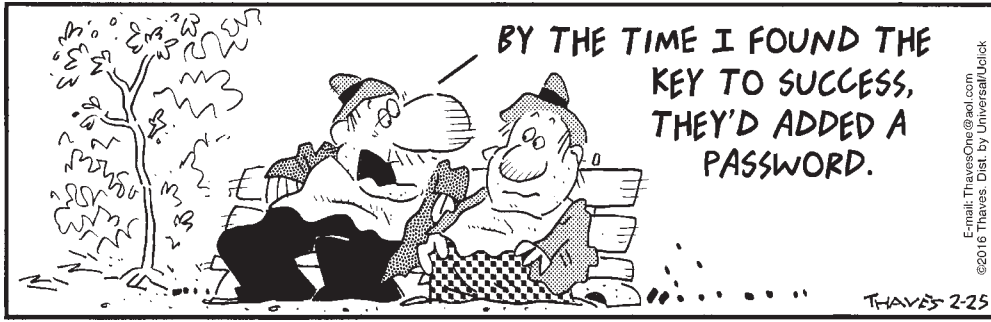
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Friends will want to visit. Family will want your time. Work will want your attention, too. You feel like blowing everything off just to be with one certain person — and it's not a bad idea!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You notice the various ways people choose to share themselves with you, and you point out what's special and different about each contribution. That's why they feel so spiritually "seen" around you.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You can't act effectively unless you understand the situation. For now, take the pressure to act off of yourself completely. What's important is that you learn and become so wise the correct action will flow naturally from you.

FRIDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 26). You've an eye for beauty, and you'll be surrounded by it this year. Before March is over you'll be unofficially in charge of a project that's even less official, which is officially the best position to be in! A loved one makes you proud in May. In July there will be money from an investment you made long ago. Sagittarius and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 40, 13, 28 and 15.

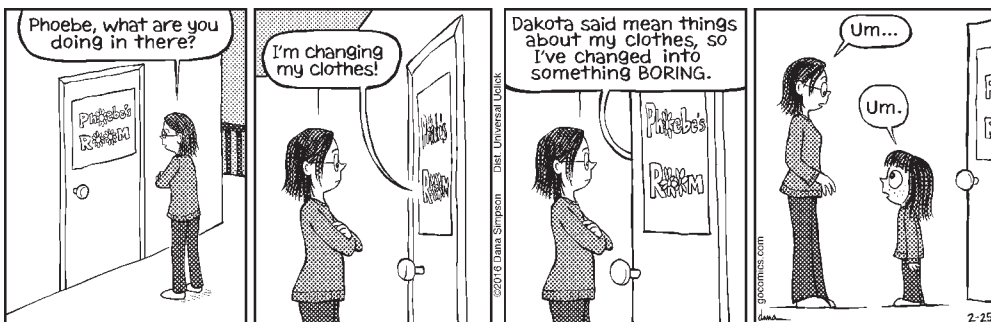
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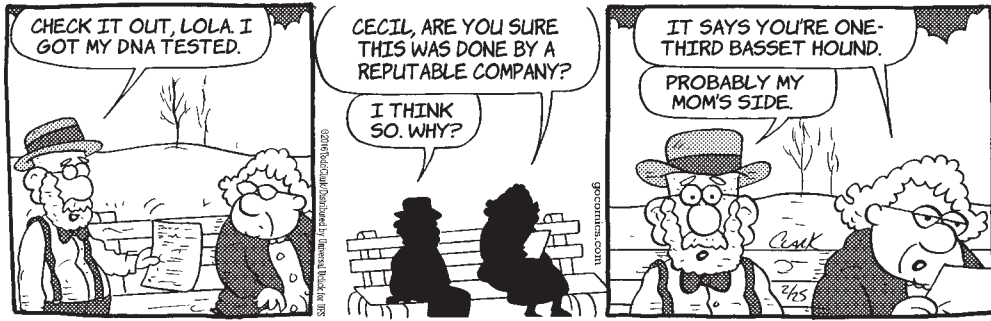
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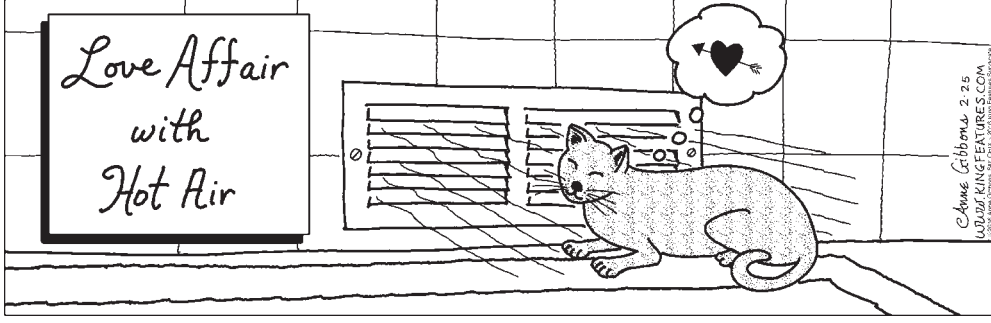
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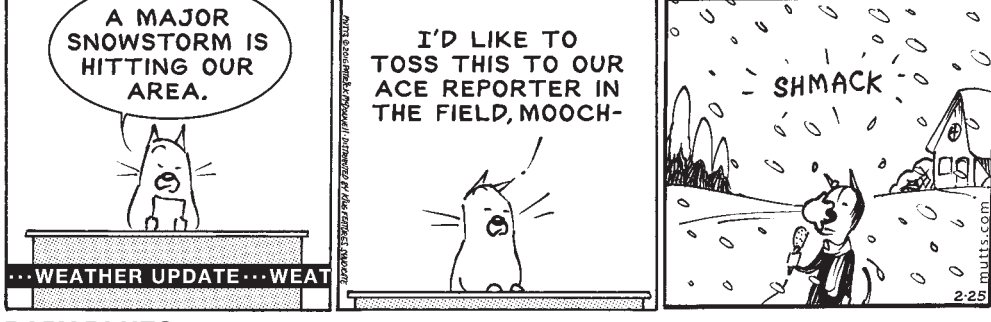
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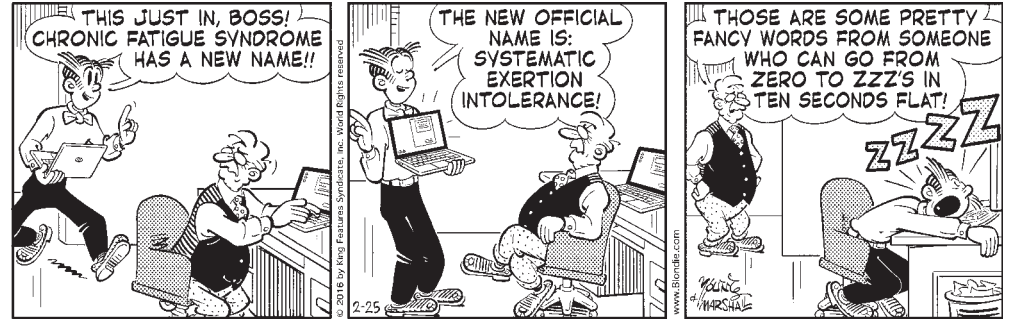
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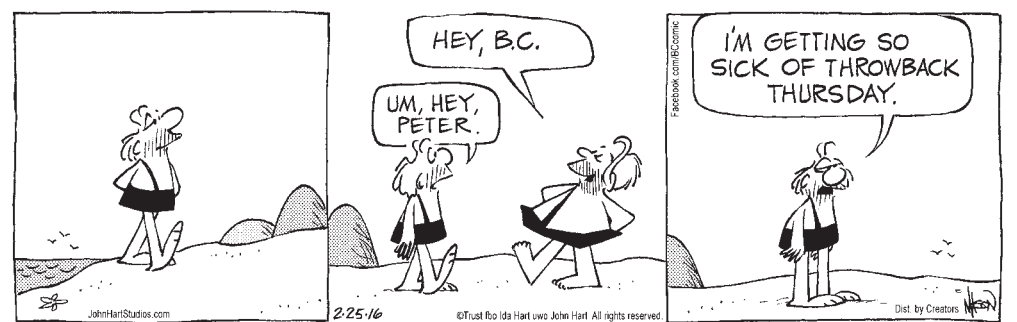
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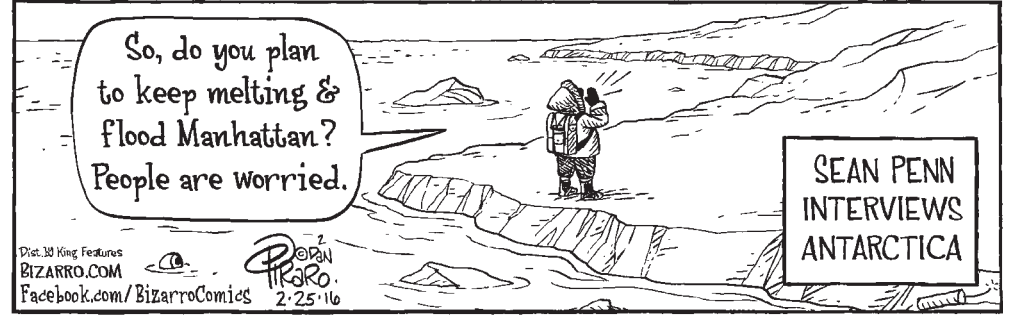
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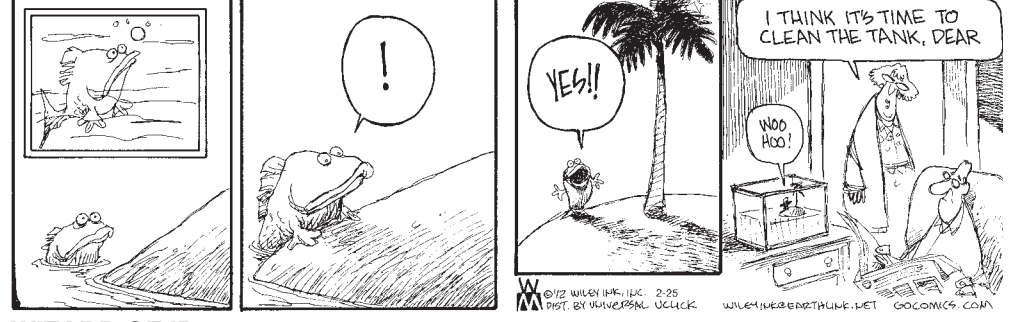
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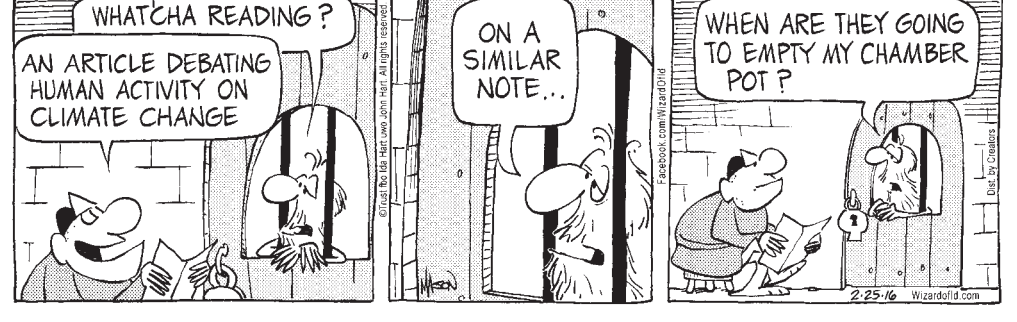
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