

Depressed sis is hard to visit

Dear Annie: My sister-in-law is going through dialysis. She is able to do it in the comfort of her home with help of a nurse, so she can be close to her young kids. Her husband dotes on her. She isn't able to get out much, but she tries to see my in-laws for supper or coffee whenever possible. My husband and I make an effort to come over to say hi and be supportive, plus our kids love seeing their cousins.

The problem is, whenever I ask her how she is doing, she says something dark like, "I'm still alive, but why would any of you care?" Last week, she said she is going to get a motorcycle because she's going to die anyway. If you try to steer the conversation to something lighter, she drives it right back to her illness. I offered to help with her cleaning, and to read her a book while she is getting treatment and give her a foot massage. She told my mother-in-law that I was "showing off" and stopped speaking to me. My husband calls her an emotional vampire.

Annie, I have suffered from depression for years. I go to regular meetings with a peer group, take a good medication and have the full support of my husband. When I am around my sister-in-law, my own dark feelings go to a place

Annie's Mailbox

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that I don't like, and I once came home from seeing her and contemplated suicide. I also don't want my 12-year-old, who already shows signs of depression, to be near my sister-in-law.

My mother-in-law won't let me say anything to her about it. How do I handle this situation without breaking my mother-in-law's heart? — *Going Crazy*

Dear Going Crazy: Your sister-in-law is terribly depressed, as you know, and feels so sorry for herself that she cannot see beyond her own unhappiness. But you should not compromise your health in order to be supportive of someone else. Make your visits brief, and let your husband go without you when it gets too difficult. Don't try to cheer her up. She only wants to vent. And when she rebuffs your offers of help, ignore it. She is not capable of

appreciating the kindness of others. We also suggest you check out the National Kidney Foundation (kidney.org) for additional suggestions and insight.

Dear Annie: We have been married 58 years, are in our mid-80s and happy, reasonably healthy and financially secure. On birthdays and Christmas, we always give monetary gifts to the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Two of the grandchildren never acknowledge this with a "thank you" or even a phone call. I say, "It's time to close the bank." My husband says, "It doesn't matter, because we have the money, and they can use it."

To send or not to send — that is the question. We have decided to abide by your advice. — *The Bank of Grandpa and Grandma*

Dear Bank: You are certainly justified in stopping, but we say, give them the chance to learn: Tell the two reprobates directly that there will be no more gifts unless they let you know, via note, email, text or phone call, that they were received. Otherwise, you will assume they do not appreciate your generosity and you will stop. You'll feel better knowing that the final decision was theirs.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Sometimes you're tempted to slack on the whole "personal excellence" thing, but remember, this isn't just about you. You've had a profound impact on another person whether or not you realize it or get credit for it.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Something has shaken your confidence, but this is not who you really are. Get back to that hardness that's so you. Do the things that prove you're strong, in control and capable of whatever life throws at you.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You thought you were stuck in a situation, but now you realize that you've been stumbling around perfectly good exit doors and windows the whole time. Today you just might turn the knob.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Once in a while you may get lucky, but for the most part the same rules apply to you and everyone else in the carnival of life: You can't take the ride if you didn't buy the ticket.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You've been too self-sacrificing. Make your own wishes a priority, if only for the experiment of it. You could learn that loved ones are less supportive than you'd hoped. But it could also be the thing that makes your weekend great.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The job at hand is not beneath you, though you may want to give it another title just to reinforce the point. What you call things is very important, because it changes your attitude about what they are.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). More options aren't necessarily better. An overwhelming environment may make you feel closed and small. If that's the case, scratch it off and keep moving until you find the environment that inspires you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Fun starts with your preferences. Life doesn't have to fit your wish list in order to be a blast, but one or two standout features that light up your heart will go a long way toward making you smile.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Attention spans aren't what they used to be. Communicating in quantity isn't the answer and will, in fact, probably make things worse. Communicate with fewer, more specific and effective words.

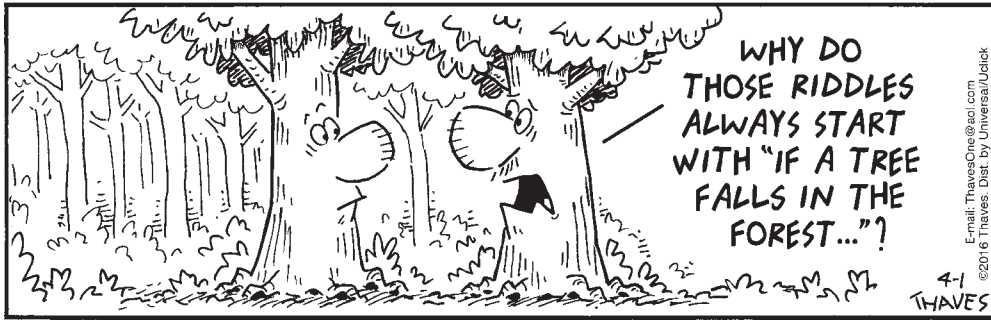
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Comparison takes all the fun out of the game. But maybe it's not a game. Maybe it's a war and you're dead serious about using the right attack. In that case, compare and contrast to your heart's content.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your praise goes straight to the hearts and minds of the praised. The qualities you admire in a person will blossom. If you're a leader, you'll get astounding results by focusing on what your followers are doing right.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Maybe what you're doing is just a hobby at this point, but it's going to lead to something different. You'll have responsibilities and possibly a paycheck that goes along with it. Pace yourself. Enjoy these carefree times.

SATURDAY'S BIRTHDAY (April 2). The tenderness you give others will be lavished on you in a more enthusiastic form as loved ones celebrate your many accomplishments this year. You know what it's like to be an outsider looking in, and that's why you'll take someone under your wing in May — the start of something life-changing. Expect money from a big sale in July. Cancer and Libra adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 8, 22, 12 and 30.

FRANK AND ERNEST



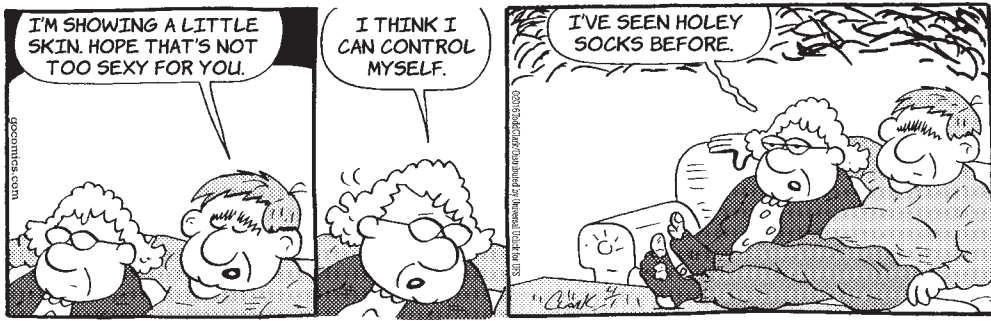
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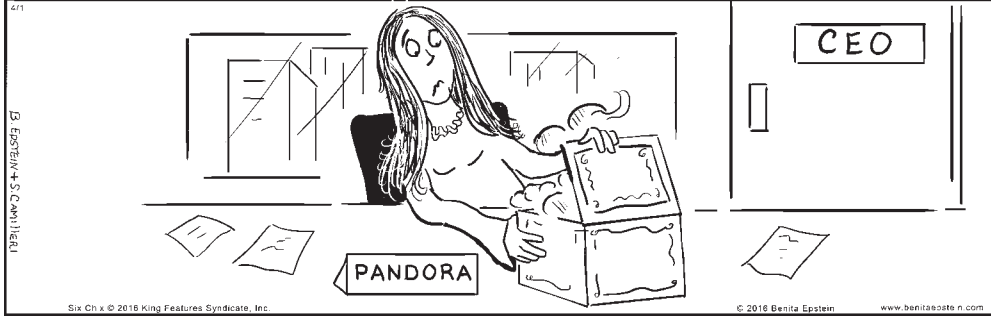
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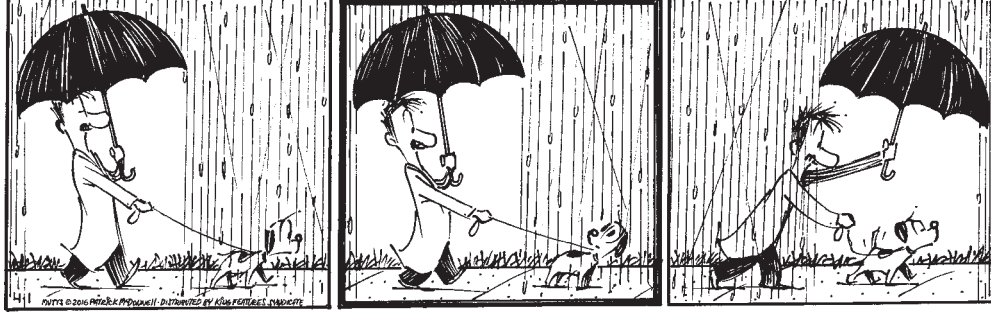
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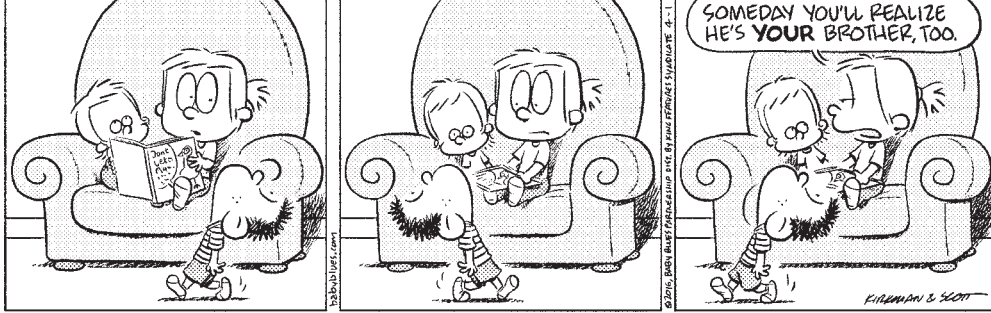
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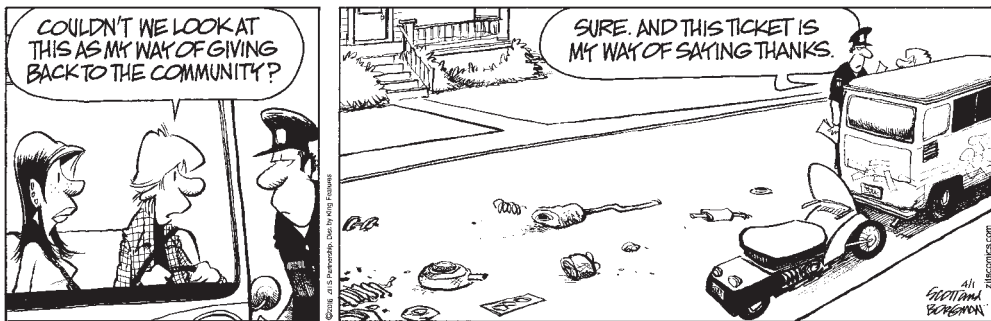
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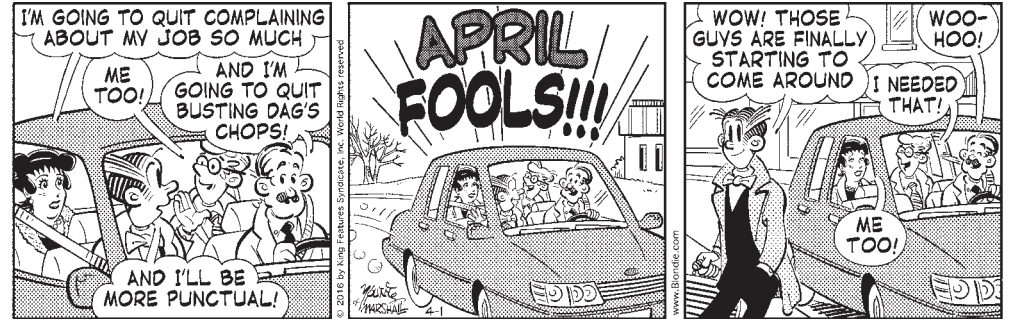
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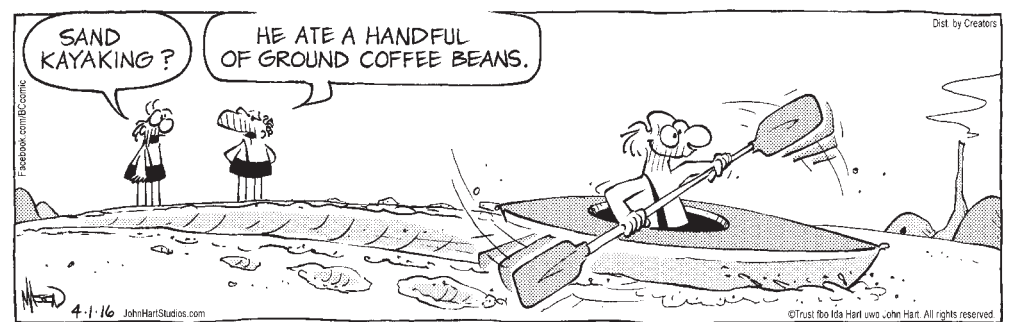
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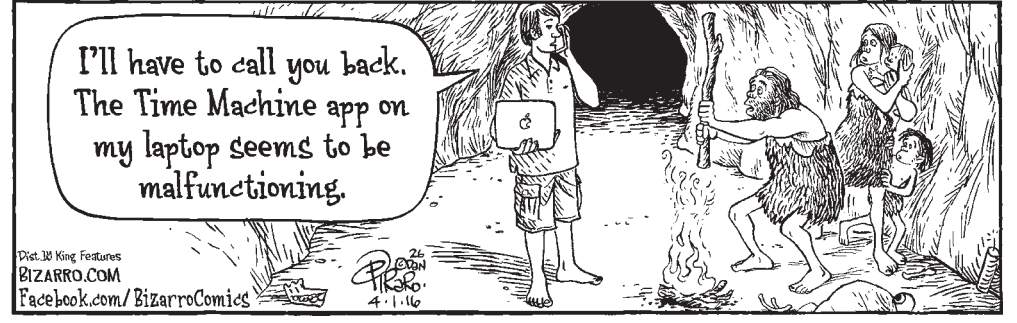
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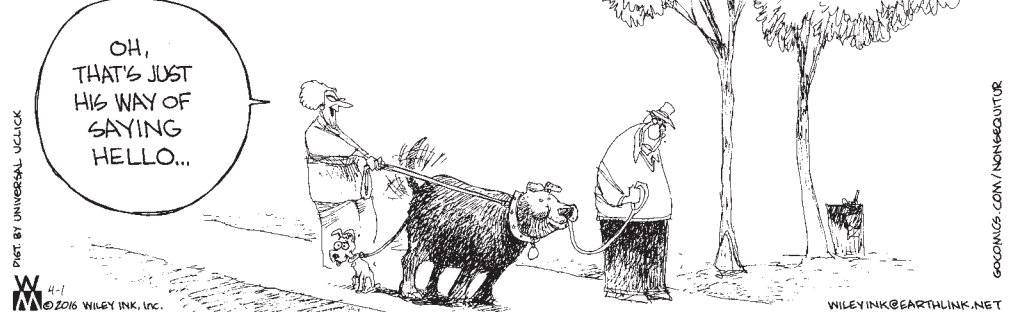
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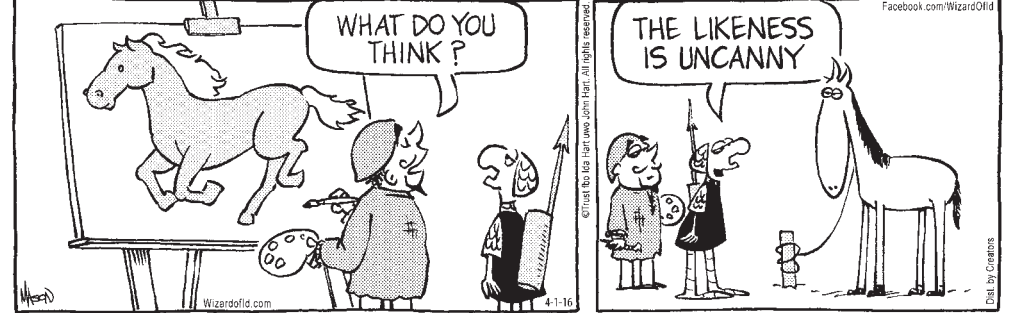
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ROSE IS ROSE

