

How to find the right words

Dear Annie: In the past year, we have been told that two members of our family are gay. One of them is transgender. At the time we were told, most of us were speechless. I did say, "I wish you happy, lovely days ahead." But how would everyone want us to respond? What would someone who recently came out as gay or transgender like to hear? We love them, and wish we had the right words.

Can one of your readers help us out? We don't want to say anything inappropriate. — *Sincerely Want to Know in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania*

Dear Wilkes-Barre: We think you handled this exactly right. Your response was supportive without being intrusive. But we also assume that, like anyone else, LGBT people have individual preferences for how others respond to the news. And we are certain they will let us know whether they have any additional suggestions.

Dear Annie: I just had to write and give input regarding your response to "My Brother's Keeper." She said her brother is dying of cancer and is in a nursing home, but they force him to wear diapers and discourage him from getting up to use the bathroom. She wanted her brother to maintain his dignity, but the staff was con-

Annie's Mailbox

Creators Syndicate Inc.

Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



cerned about his falling. While your response was fine, it did not specifically answer her question, "Is there anything I can do?" The answer to that is a resounding "Yes!"

I am a nurse with almost 40 years of experience. I have worked in nursing homes and hospice, and have taught nursing students and staff about how to respond to such concerns. First, "Keeper" was absolutely correct in bringing this issue to the night nurse. However, when she did not receive a satisfactory response, she should have taken her concern further up to the director of nursing or even the administrator.

All nursing homes are mandated to adhere to certain standards intended to protect the residents. It is NOT acceptable to rely on adult diapers instead of providing each resident with ways to meet their basic care needs every two hours. "Keeper" can also call the 800-

number in her state to register a complaint. The number is usually provided in the nursing home admission papers and, by law, should be posted within the facility. If she cannot find it, she should ask.

The administrator or director of nursing is going to want to reach a win-win result, not only because it is the right thing to do, but also if "Keeper" complains to the state, it opens the door for a full-blown survey in which other, possibly worse, things may be discovered, leading to financial implications and the threat of closure.

Please let "My Brother's Keeper," as well as other family members with loved ones in such facilities, know that she is right to be concerned and there is a way in which to address her concern. — *Advocating Nurse Melissa*

Dear Melissa: Thank you so much for your comprehensive response. Every care facility should have posted the names, addresses and phone numbers of reporting agencies such as the State Survey Agency, State Licensure Office, State Ombudsman Program, Protection and Advocacy Network and Medicare Fraud Control Unit. We also recommend concerned family members contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman in their area for help.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The feuding parties will work out their differences in the court of their own making. You'll help with the negotiations and, due to your impartial approach, will strike an agreement with relative ease.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). "Value" is a tricky word, loaded with the emotional baggage you've tied to it. Good news: Today you've all the cutting devices you need to detach from the meanings that keep you from giving a higher value to your work.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Update: Your fantasy life is still contained in your head, and it's not going anywhere without your permission. So be bold in your imaginings! Stellar ideas are born of wild, impossible fantasies.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). A steadfast and inflexible authority will be represented in today's dealings. Upon closer examination, maybe the powers that be are not as rigid as they first seem.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Here's a beautiful dynamic: You ask for help and help is given. The assistance will so closely mirror the thing you asked for that you'll be inspired to ask more specifically the next time.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). In this theater game, you're an actor, pretending the stakes are very high for you. They aren't. Your great powers of empathy and imagination allow you to play it as such and make the scene all the more convincing.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). As the thing you are passionate about takes over your being, the "usual" things might suffer neglect. You need those "usual" things! They might fall to the wayside if you're not care-

ful. Do be careful!

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Be careful not to get into such a pattern of handling everything yourself that you either forget or refuse to enlist help. Let the others contribute. They'll love you for it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). For as long as you've been alive, the day you were wanting to come to pass — well, it has passed. However far in the future it was, it came. Use inevitability to your advantage. Plan, and commit to the future. It's real.

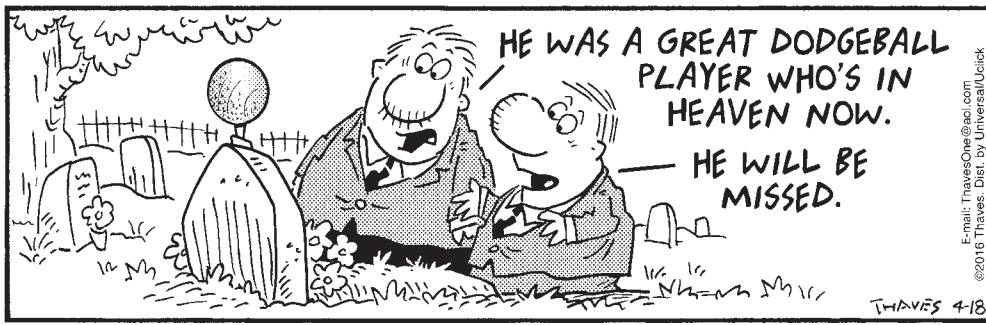
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). There's a lot of confidence that comes with knowing what you are and are not capable of. It doesn't matter what goes in the second category; some of it is going to be wrong.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll receive what you desire, and possibly even in the schedule of your desiring, which, of those two things, is the bigger deal. Timing is everything. When it's going in your favor, don't ask questions; just act.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You'll enjoy what you do for money — which is something to celebrate in and of itself. You and your work are a perfect fit at the moment. You know this because of all the fun you'll have today.

TUESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (April 19). Like a drummer settling into his favorite beat, this year you hit your groove! Through June, everything will click along, rock-steady and solid. July brings the breakout vacation. August represents a merging of families. The money that comes in September is best invested in your education. Aquarius and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 33, 6, 14 and 22.

FRANK AND ERNEST



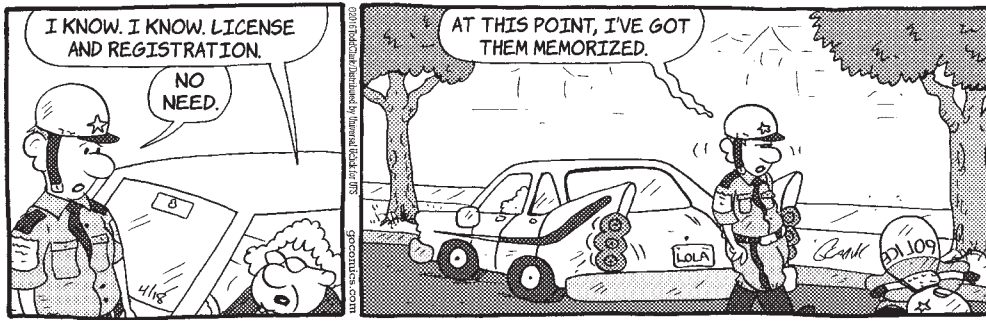
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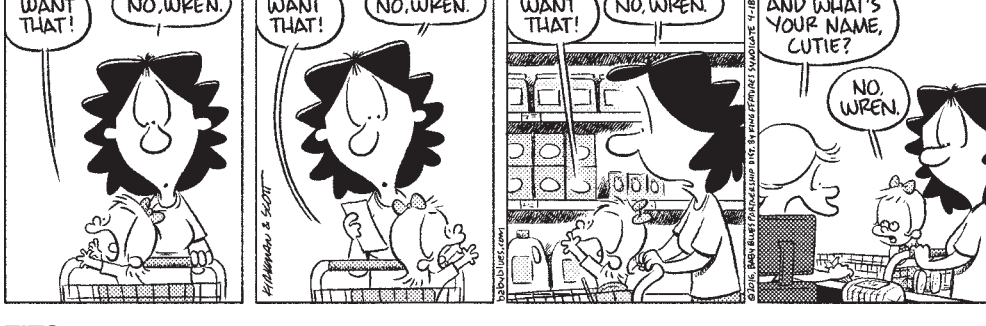
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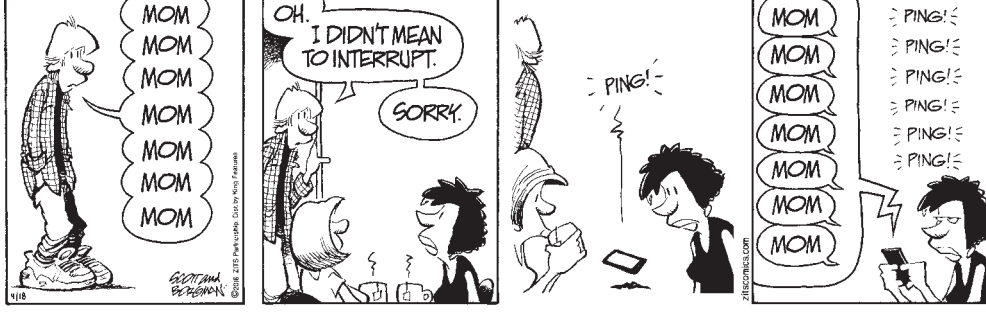
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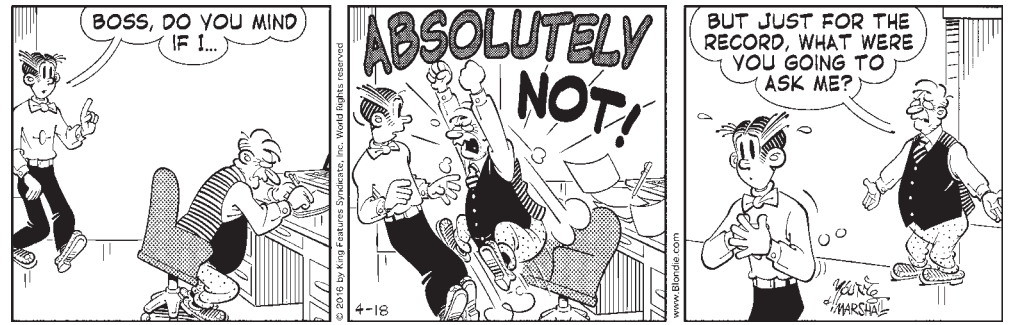
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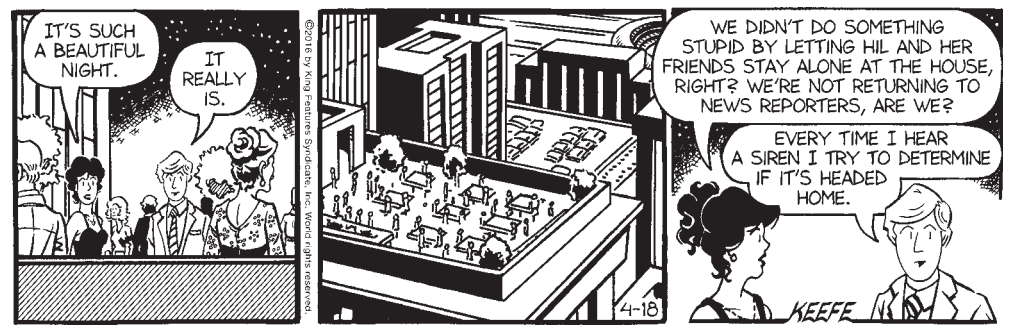
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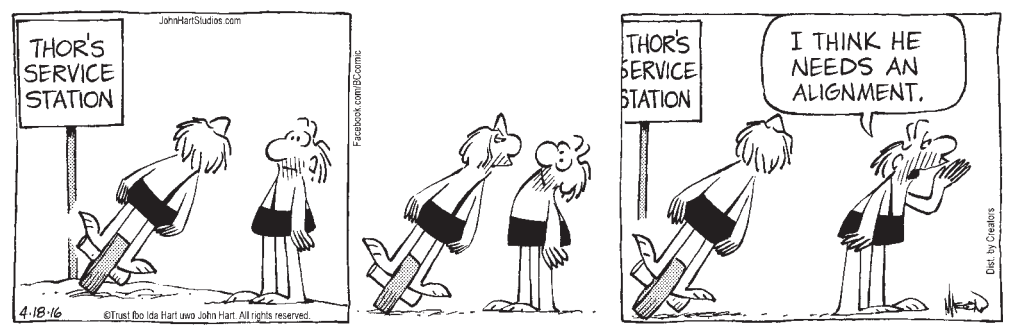
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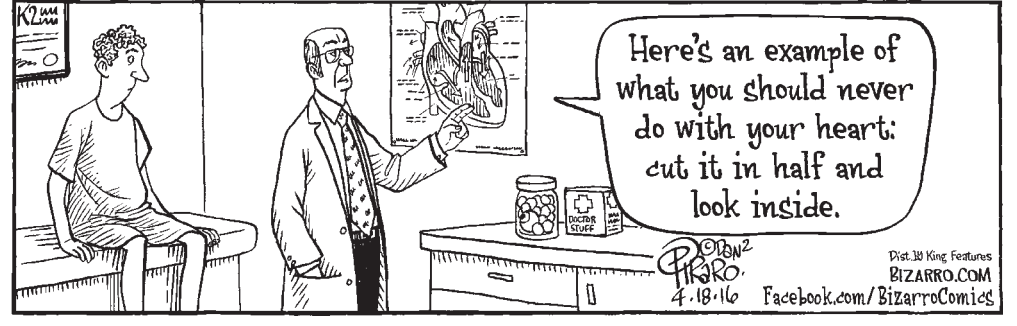
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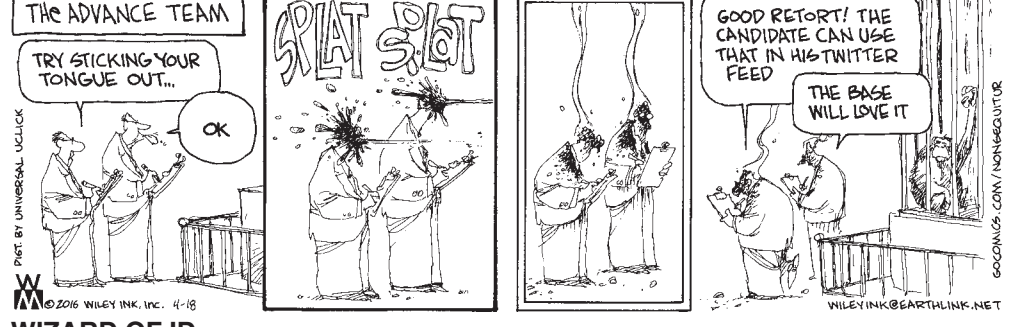
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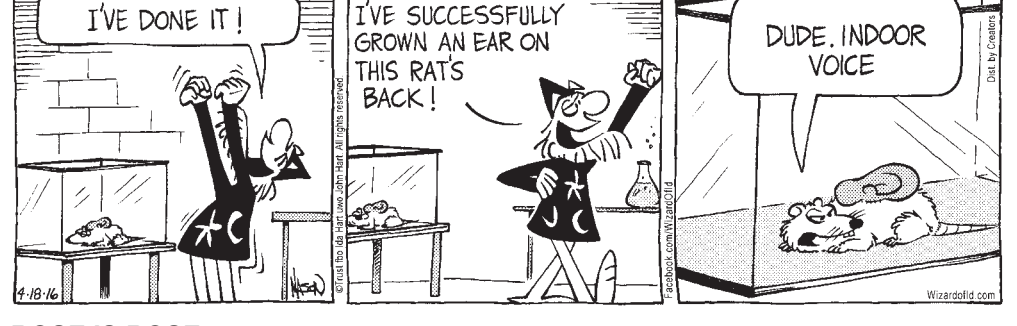
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