

Grown child worries parents

Dear Annie: Our only child is 30. "Delia" was diagnosed with serious mental issues as a teen, but with the help of a sensitive child psychologist and an excellent child psychiatrist, she did very well. But as soon as Delia turned 18, she aged out of the child psychiatrist's care. She only sees her new doctor when she needs to refill her prescriptions. He rarely adjusts dosages, and I suspect it's because she tells him everything is "fine."

But everything is not fine. Delia has held a couple of decent jobs, but after a few months, claims that she's bored and either quits or is fired. She now has a minimum wage job and is just getting by. She opens credit card accounts, but ignores the bills when they come. She has no employer-provided health insurance and won't sign up for the government version, so we cover her medical expenses.

We also help pay her rent, but her apartment is a wreck and she spends her time couch surfing until her friends toss her out. Her car is banged up from numerous fender benders and is full of trash. Her relationships start out OK, but she gets clingy and demanding, and pretty soon she is crying to my wife that her boyfriend dumped

Annie's Mailbox

Creators Syndicate Inc.

Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



her. She never takes responsibility for the breakups, so the pattern is repeated. She has had two abortions, claiming that she cannot tolerate birth control.

Intellectually, Delia is a smart woman, but just doesn't seem able to manage the basic functions of living. Without our help, we honestly believe she'd end up on the street. The strain is causing physical stress symptoms for my wife and me, and we worry what will happen when we are not around to pick up the pieces. There don't seem to be any support groups for parents in our situation. What can we do? — *Distraught Parents*

Dear Parents: You sound like loving and responsible parents, and this situation is heartbreaking. But there is support for you. Please contact the National Alliance on Mental Illness at nami.org

or their HelpLine at 1-800-950-6264. NAMI has a Family Support Group, as well as their Family-to-Family educational program that will help you develop coping skills. They also can make referrals and possibly find a doctor who will be a better match for Delia if she is willing to try.

Dear Annie: This is for "Older and Wiser, Now," who said that she was so terrified when a close friend was diagnosed with cancer that she avoided her.

I developed breast cancer at the age of 50. My sons and ex-husband were of no help, and two of my sisters did very little. My middle sister helped, along with my best friend, who was more of a sister than the others combined. They took care of me every day. I wouldn't be here if not for them. I want to tell everyone who is terrified: Don't be afraid to offer a hand. You'd be surprised how much it will be appreciated. — *Been There, Done That*

Dear Been There: Thank you for saying so. No matter how afraid, we hope each person can work up the courage to pick up the phone and ask, "How can I help?" or even, "I don't know what to say, but I want you to know I care about you."

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Tinker around with the problem. Turn it and shake it and poke at it to see what it's made of. This one doesn't need such a delicate touch; rather, it needs to be called out, opened up and examined fully.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Your tolerance of a person's behavior is exactly the thing that keeps the dynamic alive. If you don't want to tolerate it anymore, put your foot down and watch how quickly things turn around.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The one who knows more than you do on the subject will be mighty annoying indeed, especially if he or she seems to revel in this. It's something to keep in mind next time the positions are reversed.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Don't expect magic. Embrace a workmanlike aesthetic. Keep putting in the hours and cranking out the product. While you're extremely busy with this, magic just may alight on you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Stories have the power to change the world, so of course they have the power to change your afternoon. Give some thought to the way you're going to tell people about your life, because it will matter now quite a lot more than you think.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). If only people could just be very honestly themselves around you, you could all relax. Unfortunately, some are still afraid of your judgment. With more gentle encouragement you'll turn it around.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). It's not rocket science, just simple math. Play the game twice and you'll double your chances of winning. Keep playing it and you're bound to hit a jackpot sooner or later. The game in question

now is love.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You're like the seeker in the game. It's not your problem if the others haven't done their job. You agreed on a certain amount of time and now, ready or not, here you come.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Once you get your backup plan in place, you may find that you love it even more than the front-line plan. Because you're so prepared for anything to happen you'll go forward the confidence that attracts only the best.

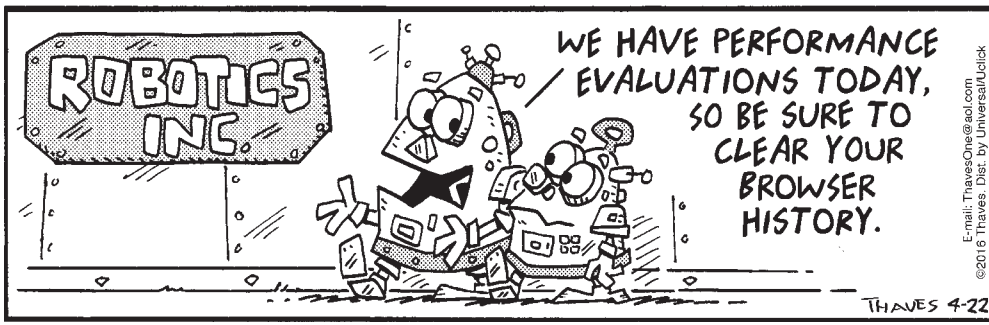
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). This day will require more than the usual amount of pleasure and leisure. Instead of taking moments for relaxation, make relaxation your prevalent attitude. You'll actually be more productive this way.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). This thing about getting through it all by the skin of your teeth — is it getting old yet? If you had a better plan and more preparation you wouldn't have to be in constant reaction mode. Make that happen!

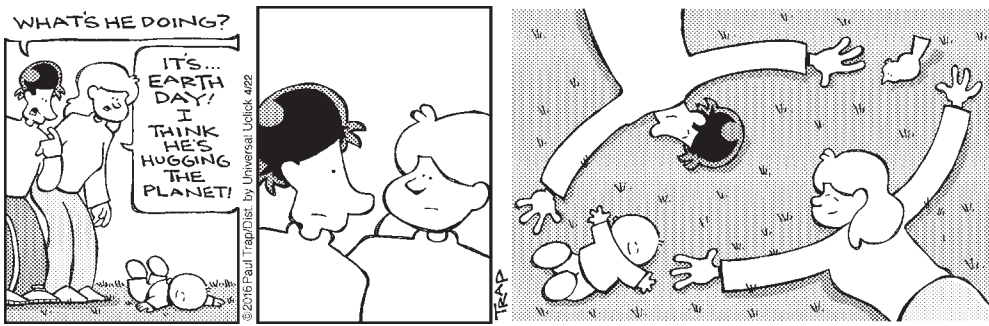
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Friendship is about more than discovering the other person. It's about discovering yourself through the interactions. The closer you get to a lovely someone, the better you'll know yourself.

SATURDAY'S BIRTHDAY (April 23). Your charisma is way up this year! Swept into the center of attention, you'll attract love and friendship in abundance. The good change that happens in your life between now and the end of June will give you the strength to change bad habits and turn around negative trends. An investment pays in October. Capricorn and Pisces adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 28, 22, 14 and 37.

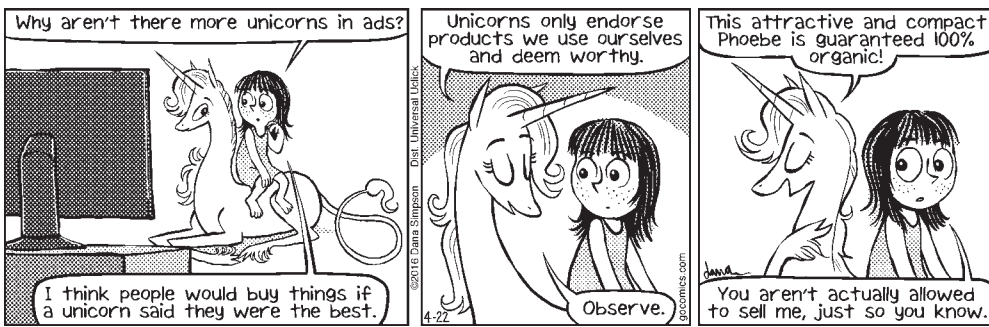
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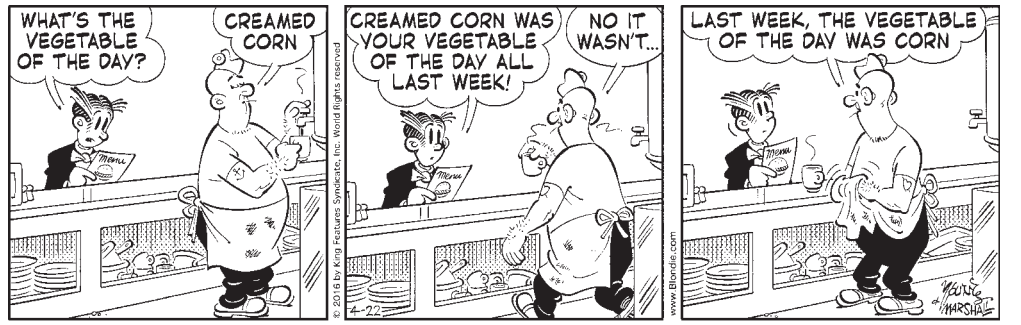
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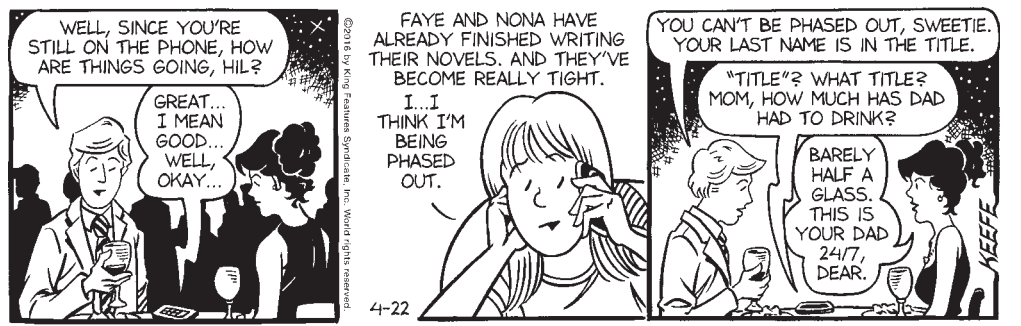
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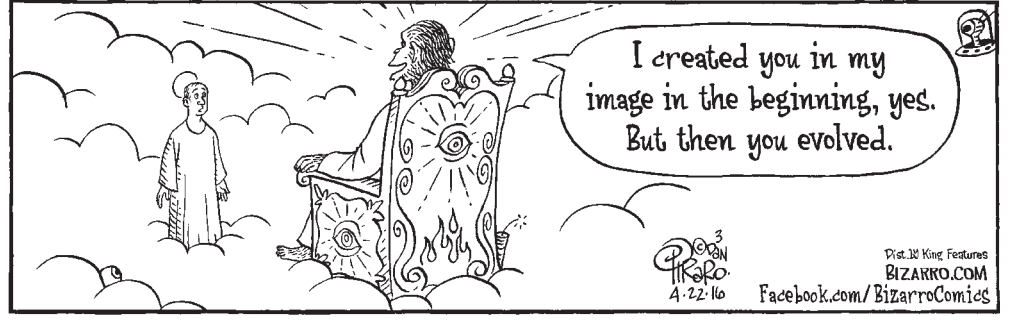
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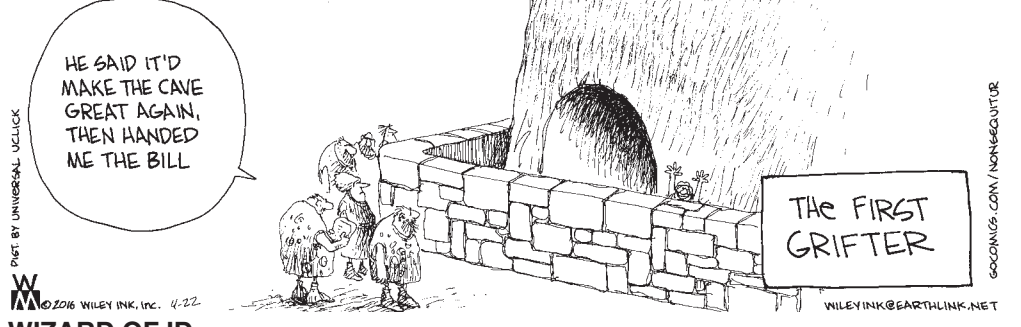
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