

Sis forces dad into poverty

Dear Annie: After my mother died 10 years ago, Dad asked his four daughters what to do with the small cabin he owned upstate. Three of us told him to sell it. My oldest sister, "Charlene," however, asked if she could use it as a vacation home. She said she would help pay the property taxes and make sure it was taken care of, in exchange for exclusive use and enjoyment of the property. Dad agreed.

Well, Charlene rarely paid the taxes and did not take care of the property at all. Dad retired three years ago, and told Charlene he needed to sell the place. In response, she placed two mechanics liens against it, stating that she'd put thousands of dollars of "work" into the cabin and that Dad had promised her the deed. Neither of these things is true and she has no documentation to support her claims.

When we finally gained access to the house, there were holes in the floor and the roof was falling off. We took pictures of the damage. There was a hearing and a dismissal, then an appeal and more liens and more hearings and more appeals. We thought it was over last year, but we just received another summons to appear before a different judge. Meanwhile, we

Annie's Mailbox

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cannot sell the cabin until this is resolved.

My father is a fair man who had planned to split his estate equally between his daughters. Since this lawsuit started, he has disowned Charlene and now lives in near poverty due to all of the legal fees. This is so hurtful. Dad supported Charlene, paid for her college education and two weddings. Now she is killing him one lawsuit at a time, all because she is so greedy. How can we protect him? — *Sisters*

Dear Sisters: As long as Charlene keeps filing new lawsuits, your father is stuck. She, too, is incurring legal fees, but may believe Dad will give up first. If the cabin is worth substantially more than the liens, it might be possible for Dad to get a clean title and sell it, as long as money is left in escrow to pay for litigation. (Talk to Dad's attorney.)

But we hope you will report Charlene for elder abuse, because forcing Dad into poverty fits the bill. Contact Adult Protective Services in Dad's area, or call the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116.

Dear Annie: I am responding to "Fed Up Sister," whose younger brother only contacts her to brag about how much money he has, how great his kids are, etc. She's ready to cut off ties.

I grew up with a friend like that. He alienated everyone with his bragging, and as the years progressed, I became one of the very few he could still call a friend. It takes great effort to listen to a person who is so insecure, but it is extremely generous to continue. I know my friend isn't likely to change. He may mellow for brief periods, but his lack of confidence will take over eventually.

Please tell "Fed Up" not to try to force her brother to be someone else. She should take him in the smallest doses she can, and chuckle to herself later about his insecurities. — *S.*

Dear S.: We agree that she should try to take him in "small doses," and maintain the relationship in a way that doesn't make her resentful. Thanks.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You can see the event in your review mirror, but to understand how the events are connected, the view from an airplane is better. Distance plus altitude equals a very helpful perspective.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). A relationship will keep you guessing. One minute you'll be enthralled, the next you'll be baffled; then comes a heated exchange, either between you and the other person or between you and your heart.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). It's good to give. It's even better to give knowing that the favor will never be returned. Best of all will be an anonymous gift: That's the kind that will have the farthest reaching and most impactful repercussions.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). It's the usual question on everyone's mind today: "What's in it for me?" Don't make your sales pitch or request until you can answer that one in a multitude of ways.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). This afternoon features a steady stream of distractions, including but not limited to: phone calls, emails, enticing offers of every kind. Get at least three quantifiable tasks accomplished by lunch.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your current interests overlap, and your future goals could, too. Keep talking. While it's still too early to make or receive a solid offer, it's fun to let the possibilities dance between you for a while.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Any learning process that's worthwhile will have its frustrations to overcome. If it were easy, everyone would be doing it. And remember, people pay a hefty price for the things that not everyone can do.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). This principle

will apply: People in love prefer hanging out to going out. They want the one-on-one time and enjoy the concentrated personal attention that goes hand-in-hand with a less-stimulating environment.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). There's a reason someone annoys you so easily, and it has to do with history; unresolved past wrongs; and protection against future wrongs. Avoid, prepare, defend ... or irritation could turn into something much worse.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). If you're more interested in the possibilities than the reality, that says something about the reality. Get up. Get out — and go! A change of venue will be a far faster solution than trying to fix what's wrong with where you are.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). When the way you want to be shown respect differs from how a partner wants to show you respect, the remedy is in clear, kind and concise communication. There's no need for drama or even emotion. Just state your preferences.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). There's peace on the relationship front. A troublesome friendship irons out. Couples strike mutually satisfying compromises. Neighbors let old differences go.

FRIDAY'S BIRTHDAY (May 13). The next three months will feature the kind of fun spontaneity to spark up new relationships, pop you out of a rut and keep the money train on an exciting track. Late August brings an important deal. September brings the chance for a new position. If popular vote is the way, you'll certainly win. Your elders will teach you in November. Sagittarius and Aries adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 39, 2, 27 and 11.

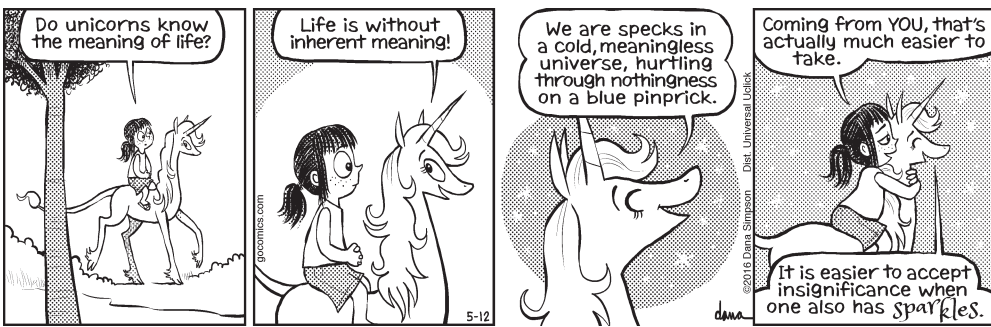
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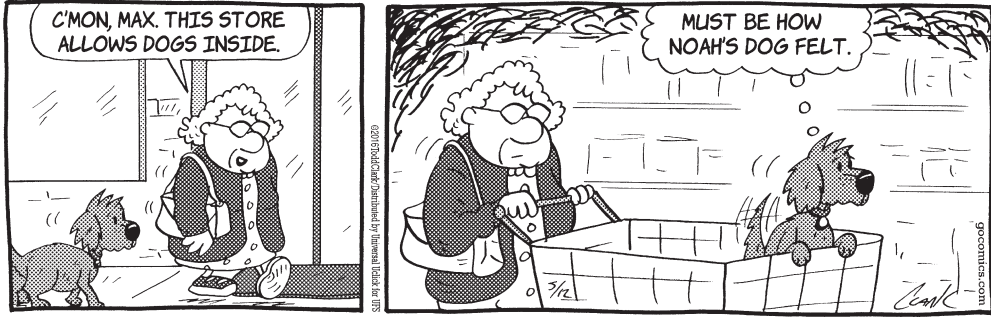
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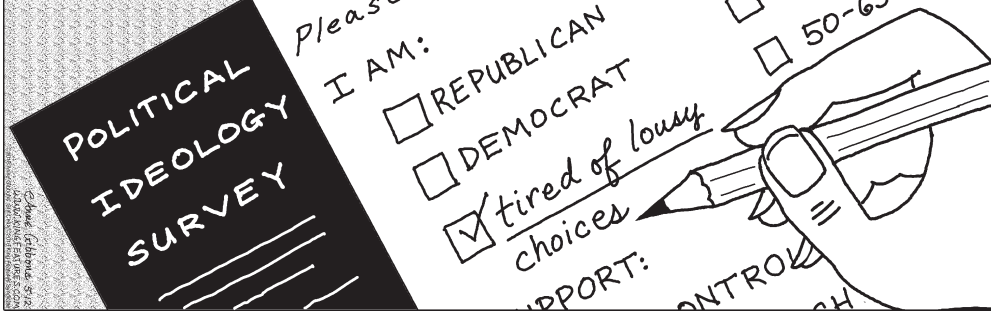
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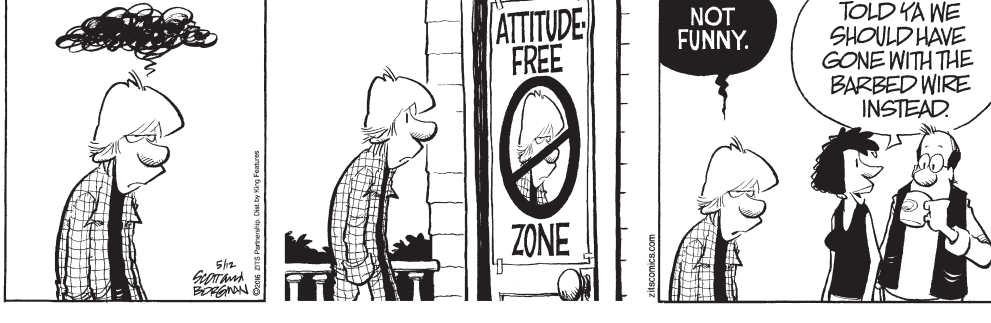
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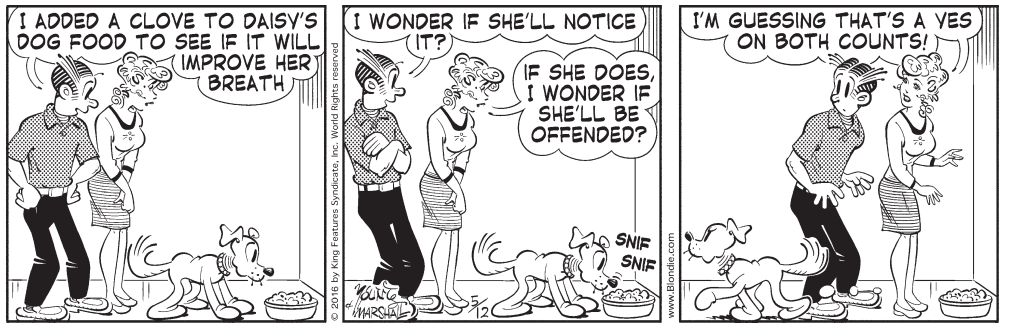
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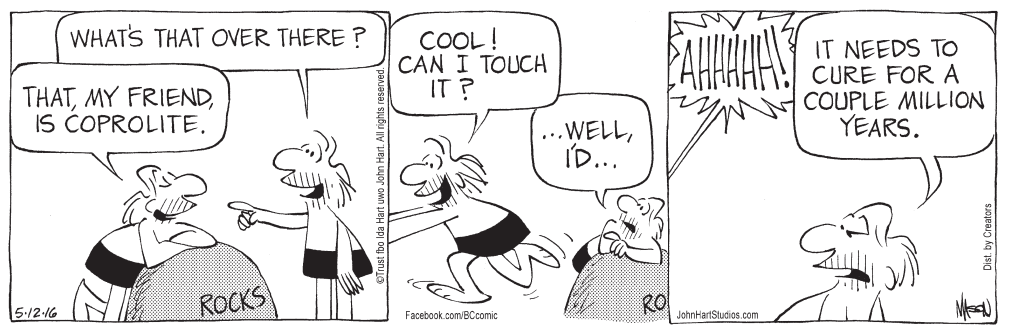
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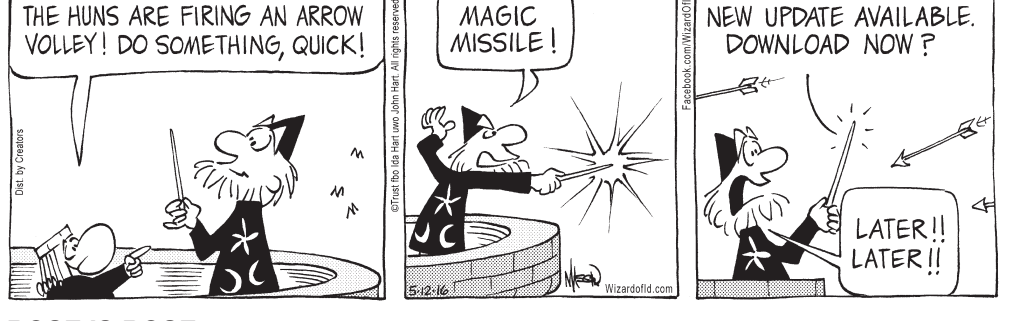
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