

Adult kids are not invited

Dear Annie: There is a couple that socializes with us and our friends. They constantly drop hints that their adult children (living at home) should be invited to our events. They say things like, "Becky would really enjoy coming to your house. She loves the way you cook." Sometimes they just show up at the door with their adult children and say, "I hope you don't mind."

How do you respond to such requests? And how do we prevent future occurrences? These people can be rather insistent. They seem to feel that we would be missing so much if their adult children didn't attend. — *Hostess in Louisiana*

Dear Hostess: These people want their children included in everything and have little consideration for their hosts. When they ask to bring Becky, it's perfectly OK to say, "I'm so sorry, but I can't accommodate her this time." If they say they won't attend without her, the response should be, "We'll miss you."

Showing up unexpectedly at the door is a more difficult issue. Since they do this frequently, you would be justified in turning them away, saying, "So sorry, but we didn't plan on an additional person. We'd be happy to host you and Becky

Annie's Mailbox

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another time." (We know someone who once sweetly and cheerfully directed an adult child to a playroom with 5-year-olds.) But you also can be gracious and accept that Becky will tag along whenever you invite this couple. Your choice is simply to invite them or not. If the constant tag-alongs are a major nuisance, you can stop including this couple and they will undoubtedly figure out why.

Dear Annie: Like "Fed Up Sister," my brother was also a braggart. From his teenage years on, he always tried to one-up everyone. He was the youngest of six and didn't realize that the rest of us compared notes about his stories. We felt the bragging must be important to him, so we never let on. He was always the life of the party and fun to be around. He went through three marriages, had five children and still his claims of grandeur continued. We

always believed that his bragging stemmed from not feeling as successful as his siblings.

When his last marriage dissolved, he didn't bounce back like he always had before. We received a call from the police one day that he had shot himself. He was dead at age 48. His life had been a series of stories about how great things were and how wonderfully he was doing. In reality, we learned that he was an insecure and lost person.

I wish we had been able to see through his stories to the insecurities underneath. But we loved him and didn't want to hurt his feelings. Maybe if we had called him on those stories, things might have different. We will never know. I want to tell "Fed Up" and everyone else in this position to just love your siblings while you can. You never know how long they will be here. — *Still Grieving Sister*

Dear Sister: You have given kind advice. Please stop blaming yourself for not doing enough for your brother. You knew he was insecure, but confronting him about the bragging may have pushed him away from you altogether. You were loving and tolerant, which is what siblings should be. Our deepest condolences.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Life is a bit like a reality cooking show. At some point, the timer rings and every chef has to throw up hands and back away from his or her creation. Keep smiling. Your attitude is part of the presentation.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The predicament is that you have more than you need, but it's not necessarily what you want. The answer is to put the word out. A trade or fortuitous sale will rock your world.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). In order to arrive at the next port together, someone has to be steering the boat at all times. It doesn't have to be the same person. You can and should switch off, consciously and carefully.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Your secret may be small and dull, but no one will know that as long as you keep it to yourself. So be elusive and pretend you have something juicy. They don't care what the mystery is; they just care that there is one.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). If your life were a physical space, you would want to fill it with something totally gorgeous or nothing at all. Strongly consider the latter now. Voids can be peaceful. Wide-open monochrome skies stretch like promises.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The struggles you've experienced in life are what allow you to have such compassion for those who are going through a hard time right now. Your willingness to listen without judgement is a rare gift.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Same story, different audience. You'll be fascinating to one person, funny to another and adorably vulnerable to the next. How you're received is out of your control. Give what you give and

see what happens.
SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Those who hear "yes" too often don't know what to do with the word "no." Some take it hard while others won't even accept it and will proceed as though it was never uttered. Stay firm in your answer, whatever it may be.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Protecting your joy is just as important as safeguarding your health and well-being. If it's getting in the way of your fun, deal with it swiftly. Swat it like the pest it is, metaphorically speaking, of course.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Formality has its place. Social patterns are reassuring. You'll build excellent rapport with someone as you display commonly accepted behaviors and a reliable sense of internal structure.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). There's a sense that the danger has passed, the awkwardness is over and everyone can breathe easy before getting back to what they were doing before the disruption.

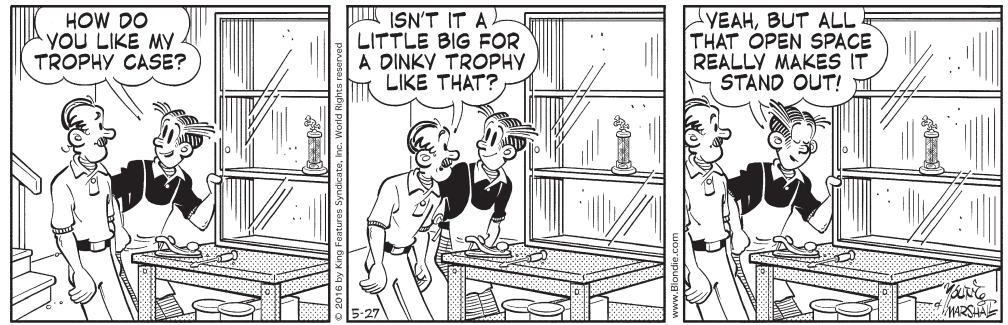
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Three will be the magic number that brings luck to you today. It will be the ideal number of meals to eat and items for your to-do list, and it will be the perfect head count for your dinner reservations as well.

SATURDAY'S BIRTHDAY (May 28). You'll go in to this year with the sense that everything is linked in purpose, whether or not that purpose is known. Your hope and optimism will attract angelic characters to you — truly affectionate and helpful souls who are committed to seeing you shine. August brings a big sale. The win goes to you in October. Pisces and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 3, 16, 38, 45 and 10.

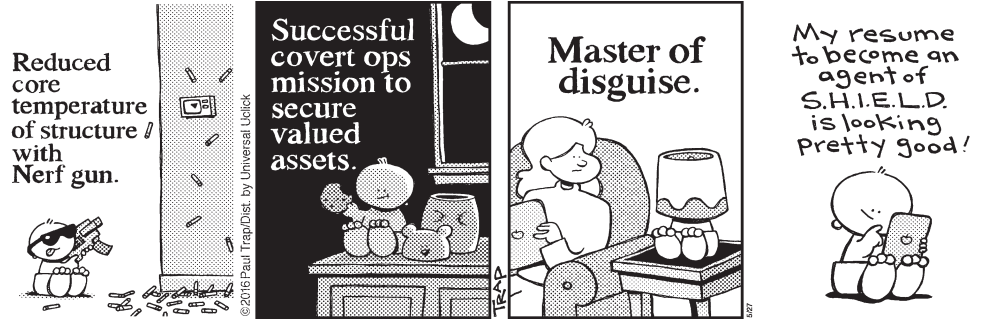
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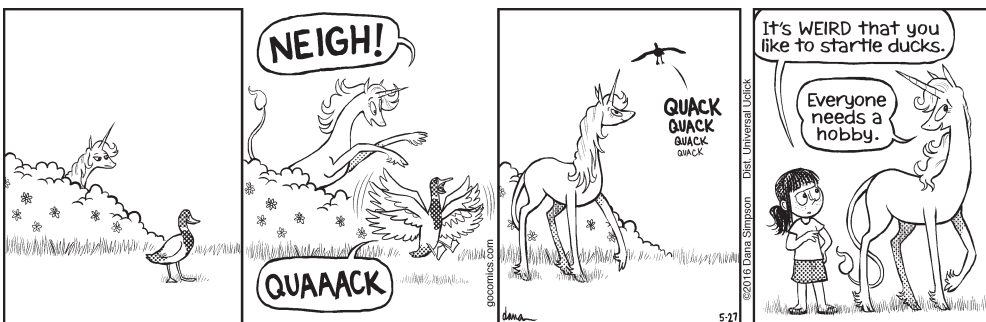
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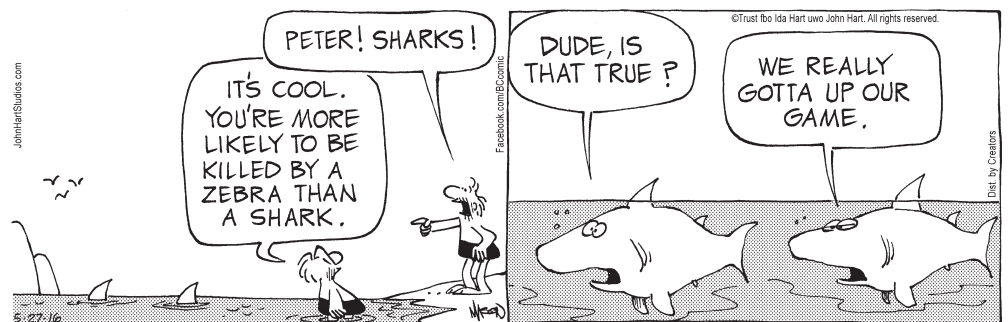
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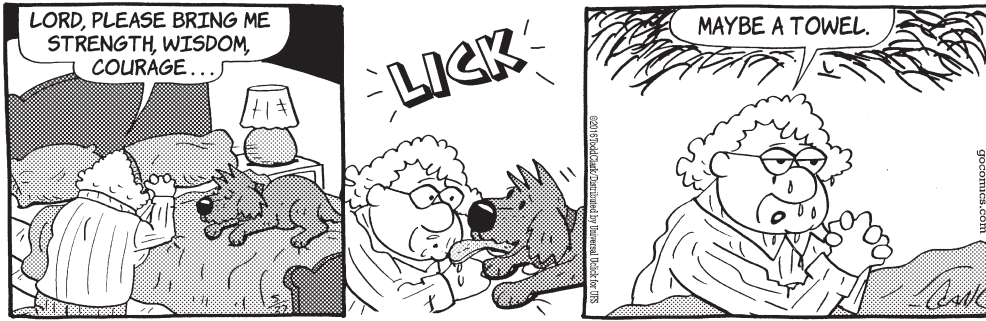
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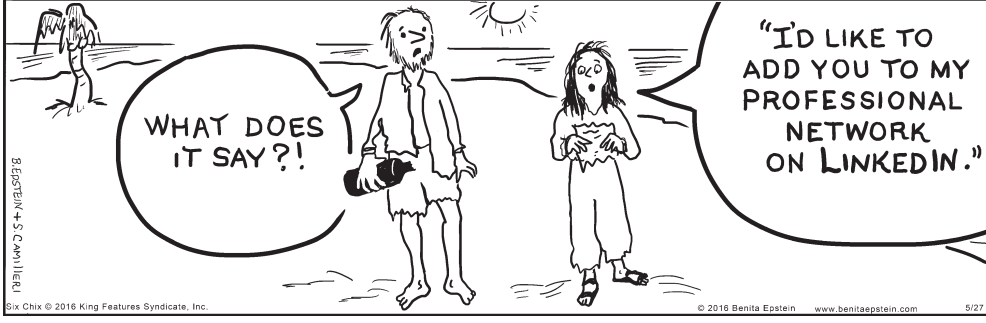
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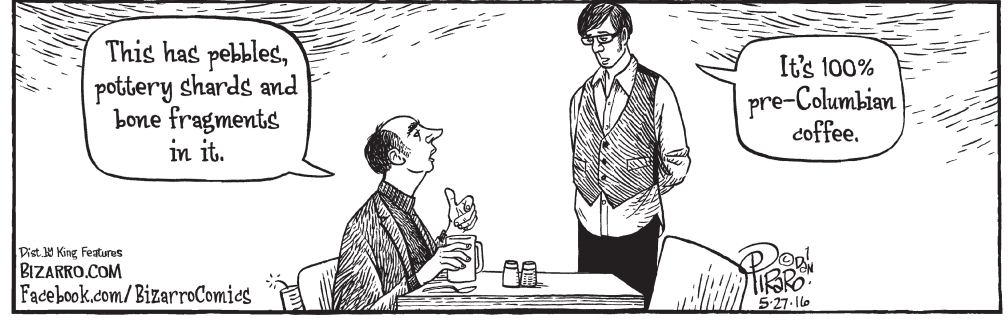
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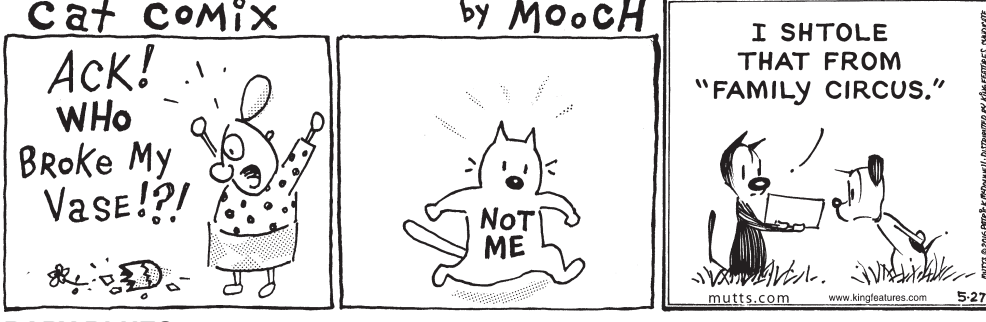
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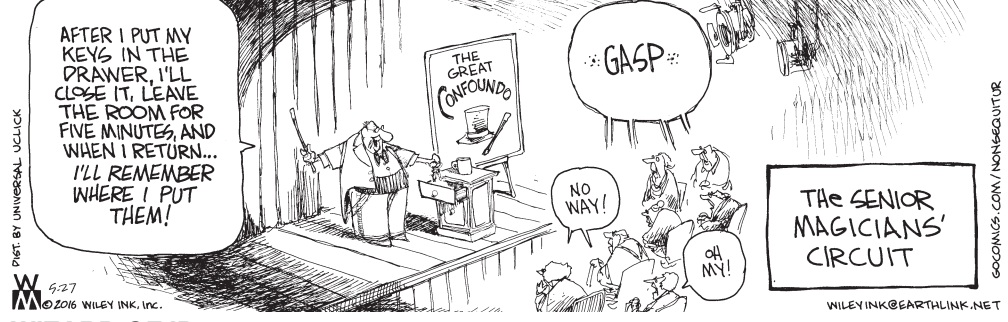
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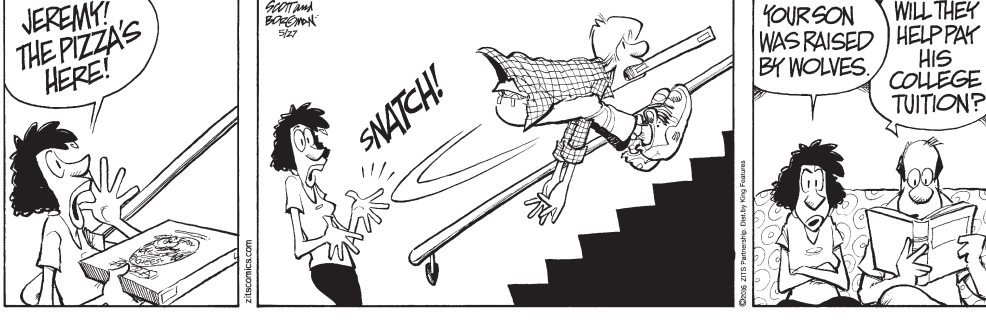
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