

Hoarding hubby irks wife

Dear Annie: My husband is a good, dependable man, but he is a terrible hoarder. A number of years ago, we agreed on separate bedrooms, so he could be messy in private. When we bought our current home, it came with a garage and he was in seventh heaven. All of his "treasures," including things that had been in boxes for decades, would have a home. He would have the garage to himself, as well as the huge workroom in the basement. In return, I got the master bedroom, and the third bedroom would be for our books and household files.

Well, Annie, my book room is now a constant stash place for transient items and the downstairs workroom looks like an explosion went off. The garage is filled to the hilt with his stuff. I have one small shelf with gardening materials that I struggle to reach over all of the accumulation.

He never throws anything out, for fear he "might need it." This includes mail going back weeks, which he leaves on the dining room table until the stack topples over. Then I put the stack in a shopping bag and stash it beside his computer. Where it

Annie's Mailbox

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Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



stays for decades.

But the latest drama has me really irked. A few years ago, he bought a beautiful, expensive mattress, but claimed it made him sore. So he started buying one cheap air mattress after another. The original mattress ended up in my book room, so now I can't even reach the household files. He wants to put it in my bedroom, claiming I have two bedrooms to his one.

Am I being too inflexible and strict? I can't stand clutter, and I feel he is constantly encroaching. Every time I manage to create an empty shelf, he fills it.

How can I make this better? — *Drowning in Stuff*

Dear Drowning: Your husband will continue to encroach on any available space. He can't help himself. You've been

exceedingly tolerant, but everyone has limits. Please contact the International OCD Foundation (iocdf.org) for information on hoarding and how to help your husband. You can start by respectfully asking whether he will allow you to dispose of the mattress, since he will not be using it again and it is taking up a lot of space. Under no circumstances should you let it be stored in your bedroom.

Dear Annie: Your response to "Fearful" should have included advice to see her ophthalmologist for an eye exam. Her poor night vision may be due to developing cataracts, a common problem in older persons. Interocular lens replacements is a very short, safe procedure performed under local anesthesia. My surgery is scheduled, and I'm looking forward to once again driving at night. — *Montana*

Dear Montana: Several readers suggested that "Fearful" might enjoy driving at night once she has cataract surgery, if that should turn out to be the problem. It's a great suggestion, although she may have other reasons for not driving at night that are unconnected to her vision.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Boundaries are set for so many reasons — property, communication, fear, etc. There doesn't always need to be a reason to draw a line, and yet there is one now.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Your job will continue to be difficult if you don't ask for help. So ask for help. Many capable people surround you, all of whom are looking forward to being able to support you in some way.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Maybe "tree hugger" is a hippy stereotype, but there is real logic to wanting to wrap your arms around nature. The natural world connects people in a way that nothing else can. Get into it.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). It is good to be able to represent to yourself and others that you are not afraid, that you will make a difference and that you are completely able to stand up for your beliefs.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The one who challenges you isn't sure about your strength, but he or she will be soon. These are the kinds of tests that bring about your finest moments of personal fortitude.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The idea that "everything" could hinge on one thing is usually an overstatement. But today it rings true in some way. Your "everything" — that is, however you feel about yourself — becomes magnified. Take an inventory of your best attributes.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). The thing about it is that you don't know what you've got till it's gone. That is the way it goes in the song, and the way it goes in real life, too — for the clueless ones. Not you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You like to learn — need to, even — and learn you do. Today will bring you the entire scope of the lesson up front so that you can decide what to do with the fallout of this.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). A difference of views will occur — strengths and weaknesses will be pointed out. It's nothing that you don't know already; this is an ongoing argument. But past today it won't go on much longer.

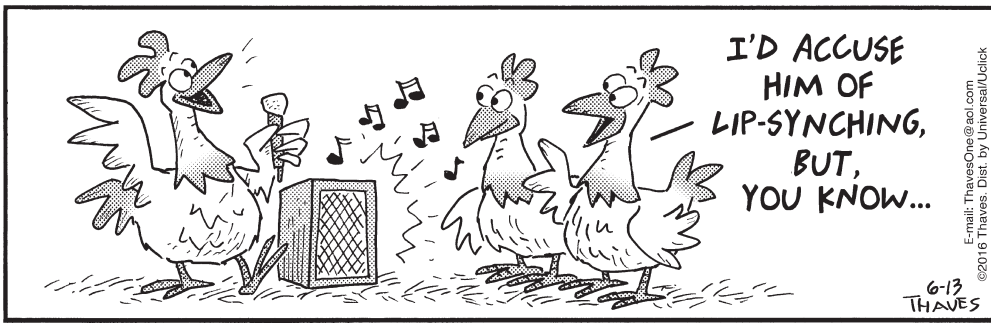
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The one who respects you has good reason. Now what do you think that reason might be? Investigate it. You're great. Why don't you know this about yourself already?

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your friend has been calling you, and you have been less available than usual. Circumstances — that's the long and short of it. But all of those situations will clear up very nearly.

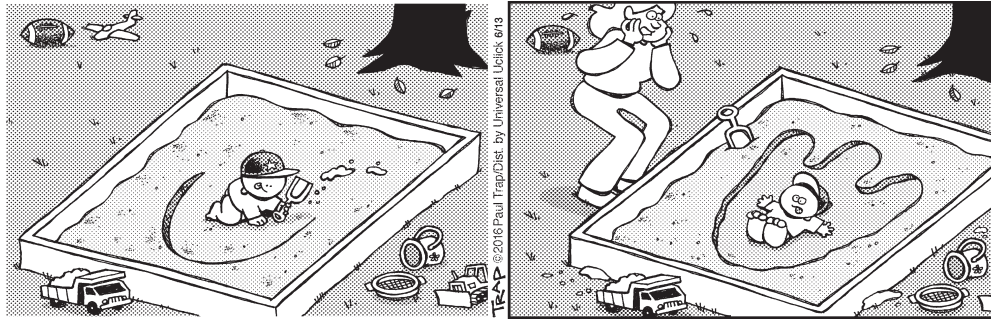
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). What is to be said for a person who can't deliver what you want? You can only have respect for the intention if it's followed up by action. Yours will be the first and the last move, so think it through very carefully.

TUESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (June 14). Family celebrates you, and an adventure with your kin will kick off this solar return. Next month produces an idea to run with. There will be two cash-out points, one in August and one at the end of September. Reinvest. It's worth your time and the best of your attention. November and February show you richer. Aries and Pisces adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 40, 33, 39 and 14.

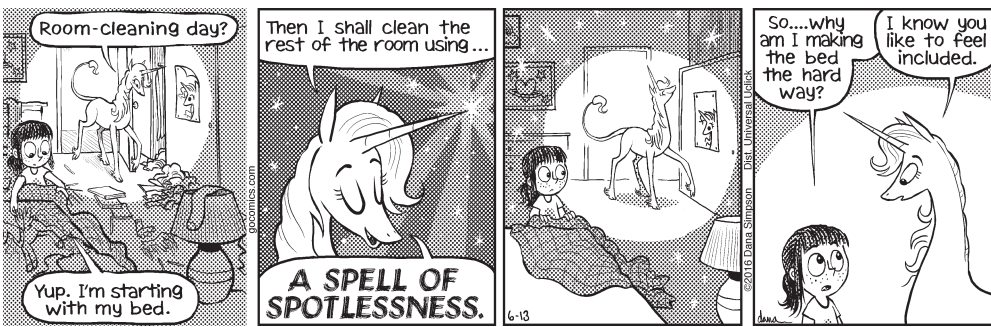
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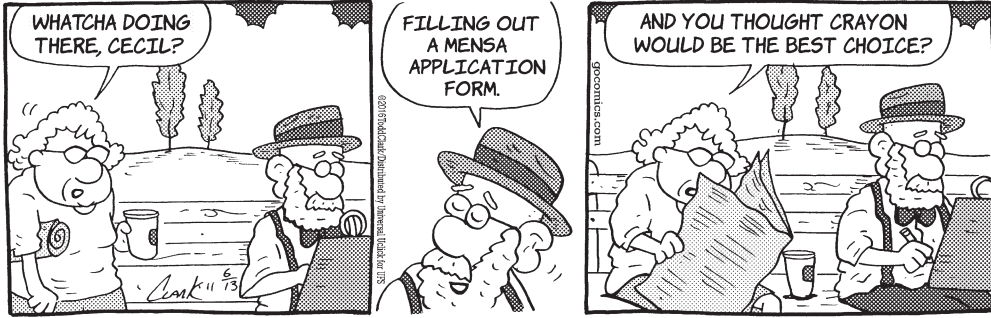
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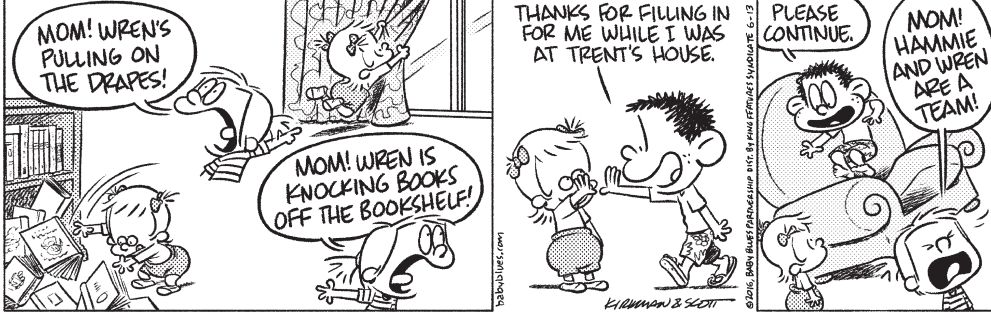
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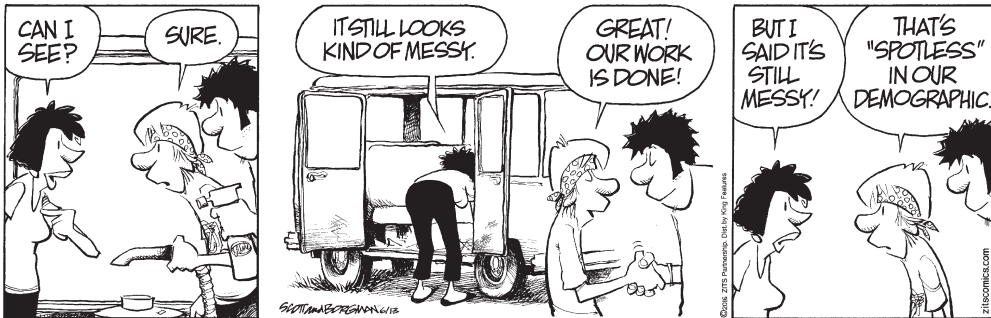
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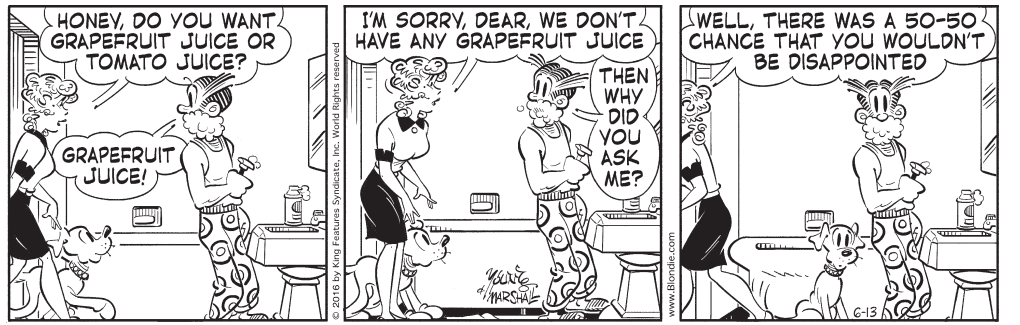
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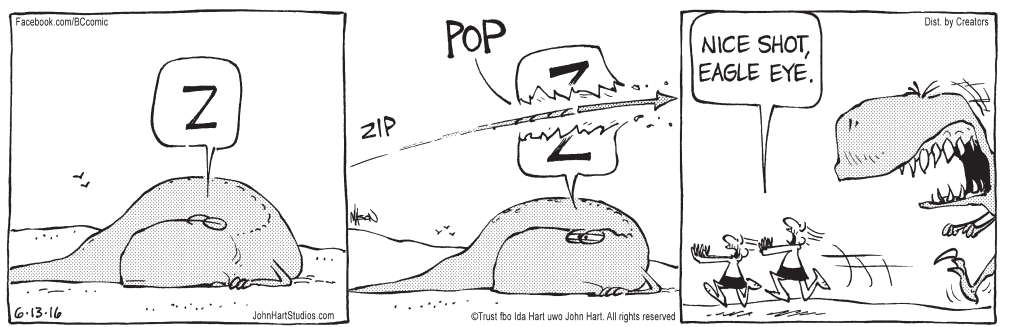
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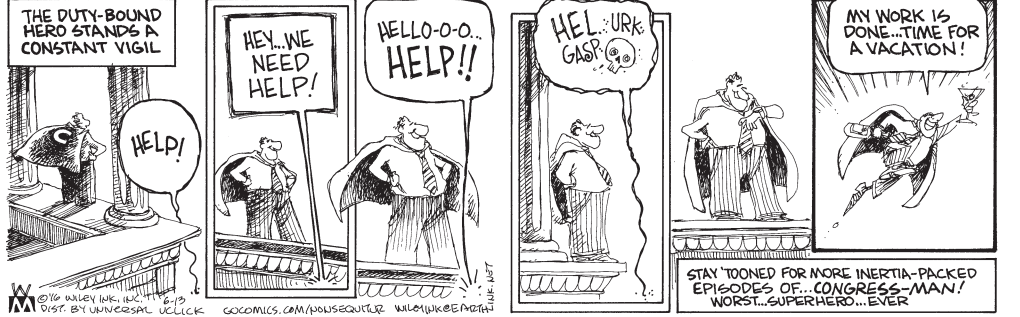
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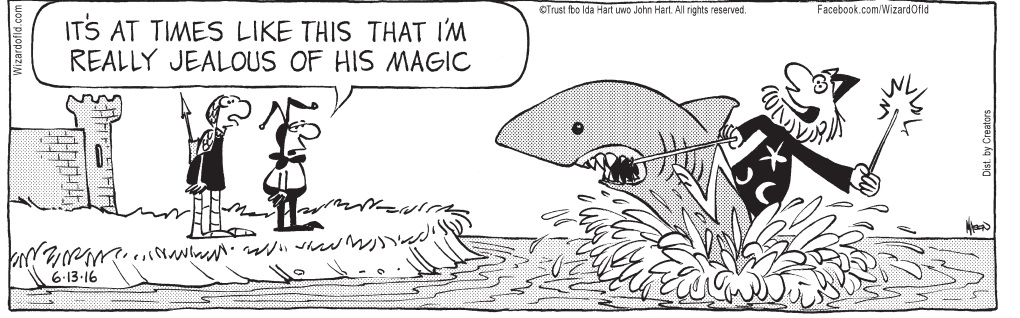
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