Is the dog or house to blame?

Dear Annie

By Annie Lane

Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Annie: My boyfriend and I recently moved in together. We were spending so many nights at each other's place that we decided it just made sense. We both gave up our studio apartments for a cute little house. It even has a yard, albeit a tiny one, which is great for my golden retriever.

That brings me to the reason I'm writing in: My boyfriend seems to be severely allergic to the dog. I'm stumped. I've had her for years, and in all the time my boyfriend spent at my old apartment, this was never a problem. I used to take her over to his place, too. We've lived at the new house for three months, and he's had a stuffy nose the entire time. His eyes get itchy and watery, too. His symptoms seem to disappear when he goes out. He'll only take antihistamines right before bed because they knock him out.

I love my man, but I also love my dog, and I don't want to give her up. What should I do? — *Dog Lover*

Dear Dog Lover: Don't be so quick to blame the dog! The culprit could be any number of things. You mentioned that your boyfriend's allergies only started acting up once you moved in to the new place. That tells me it's probably a household allergen that's causing his symptoms — perhaps mold or dust. His doctor can refer him to an allergist for testing.

Whatever the trigger ends up being, you both will most likely need to embrace your inner clean freaks. Vacuuming, dusting, washing linens and wiping down counters will help keep aggravating particles at bay. A great byproduct of this vigilance? A spankin'-clean house.

Dear Annie: I went to college in my hometown and was able to save some money by living at home. I sometimes wish I'd gotten the dorm experience, but mostly I am happy with my decision. It's always nice having Mom and Dad to take care of you. Plus, it helped me stay focused. Never partied too much.

In May, I finished my degree, and almost immediately, I was offered a job across the country. It's exactly the type of thing I want to be doing — graphic designing at an advertising agency and possibly art directing some projects, too. It's a well-known firm, and I like the company's portfolio. One of my professors used to work there and referred me for the position.

It's a great opportunity, to be sure, and I think the job sounds exciting, but it's so far away, and I don't want to leave my friends and family. I can't even imagine a life outside this town. Should I wait to find something local, or should I give up everything I know for a job? — *Scared to Leave the Nest*

Dear Scared: Let's try a thought experiment. Imagine yourself 10 years from now living in your hometown, having never left it. Are you happy? Comfortable? Restless? Feeling as if your career has already reached a plateau? Wondering what you missed out on?

For me, it would have been a little of all the above. I love my family, but if I had stayed in my hometown because it was safe, there would always have been a little voice in the back of my head asking, "What else?"

Your 20s are for taking risks, growing as a person and testing your limits. There will never be a better time to up and move across the country. If it doesn't work out, you can always come back. That's the beauty of home. Bon voyage, little birdie!

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Someone near you is lonelier than you know, but you can help. It won't take much. Children aren't the only ones who are fortified by social development efforts.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). There's a time and a place for self-scrutiny, but that's for another day. Right now, rest assured there is absolutely nothing to be gained from focusing on what you did wrong. Consider your successes and build on them.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The thing that will give you the most energy and motivation today will be something quite out of the ordinary. Travel off your usual path to sparkle up your mind's eye.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Your favorite people will be around, and you'll all have time to enjoy each other, too. This is the best combination! It doesn't happen smoothly like this all the time, and you will appreciate the moments. Tonight will get even better.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). It will feel as though things are really starting to happen for you. Whether or not you see the hard evidence for this now, there's a vision in your head that's starting to solidify in real time.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Like most socially successful people, you spend so much time effectively controlling and censoring yourself to cater to the company you're in that when you finally find yourself with a kindred spirit, it's an absolute party.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Once you work yourself into a good mood, it will prove to be so much more than a good mood; you will exist in an optimal state of being for a long stretch. Is this because of the exercise?

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). At certain times of the day your thoughts will be a whirlpool. Now, what's at the vortex of this swirl? If it's something wonderful, you might want to let yourself get dragged into it. If not, seek higher ground.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). It's easier to be organized when you don't have or want much, when the distractions are few and when your hours to work on what matters are many. It won't happen naturally, but how can you make it happen?

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). A few things will be accomplished piece by piece, but a lot of things will be finished with a system. Set it up so you can scale it up. If your life were a factory, what would that look like?

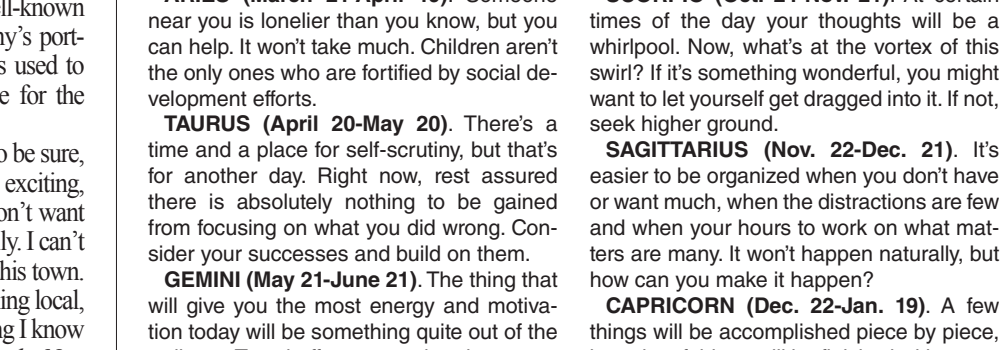
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your most sincere wish is for the people you love to find happiness, be at peace, and experience beauty — preferably, with you as a key component to the dynamic. If not, is this still your wish?

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Your inside world is a landscape, some of which is lovely, as you have cultivated with mental gardening; still, much of it is wild. There will be an opportunity to grab your weed whacker and go to town.

FRIDAY'S BIRTHDAY (July 22). Your solar return comes with a deep sense of flourishing. You'll watch and learn from the best over the next 10 weeks so that you can deliver a state-of-the-art product and reap the rewards of excellence. Family, love and music fill your year-end. A financial reorganization effort will help other areas of life. Capricorn and Aquarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 13, 39, 4, 26 and 11.

FRANK AND ERNEST

BLONDIE



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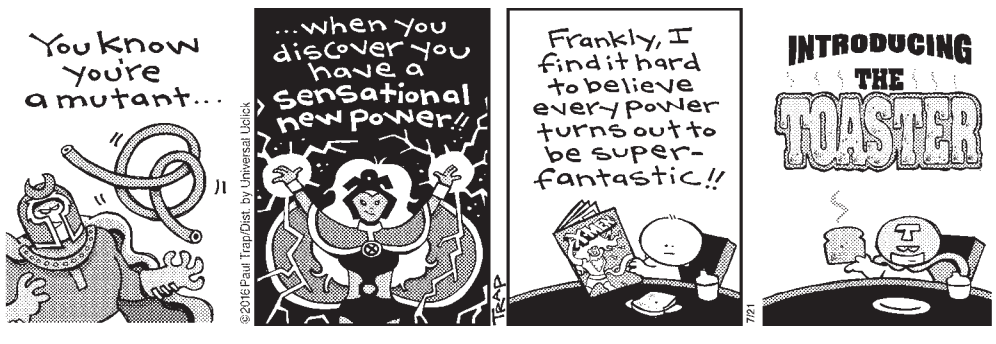
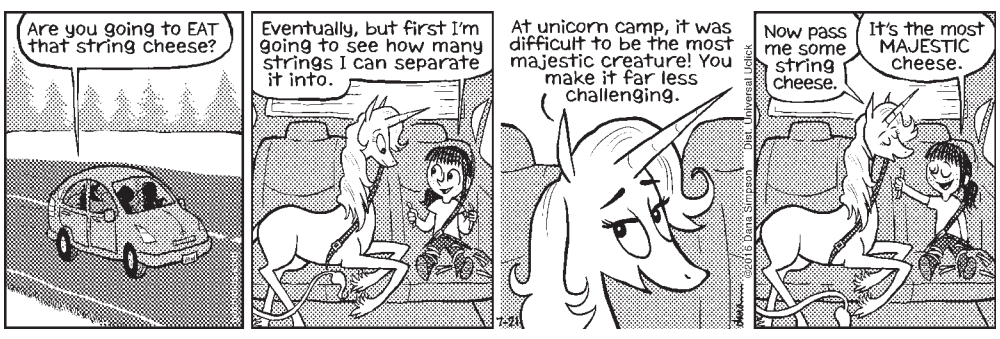


SALLY FORTH

PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



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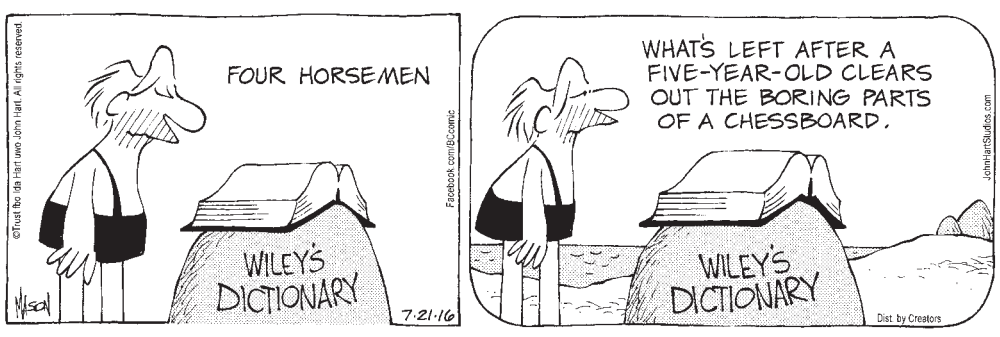

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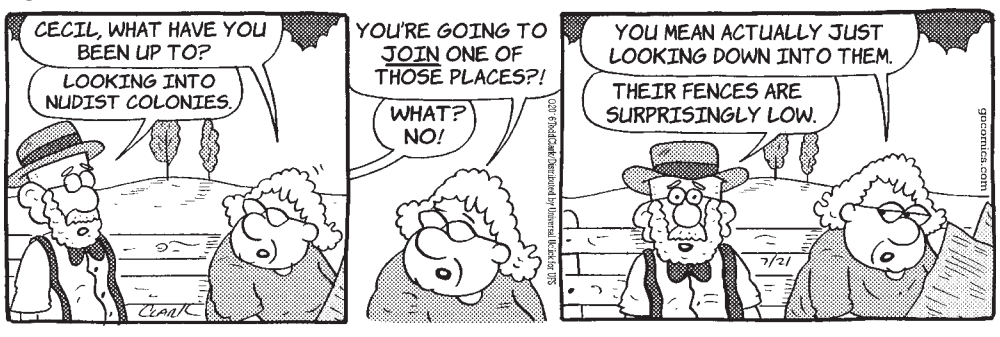

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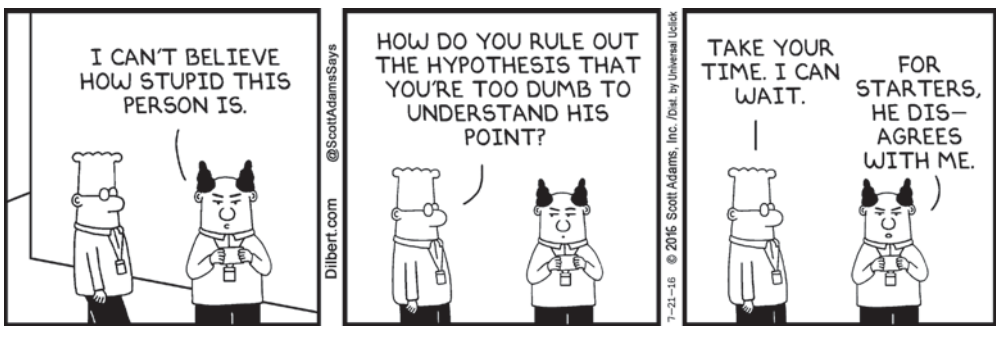

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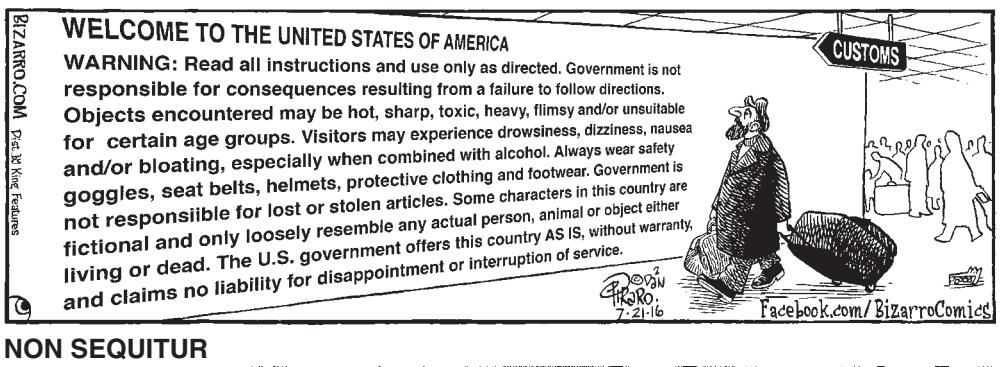

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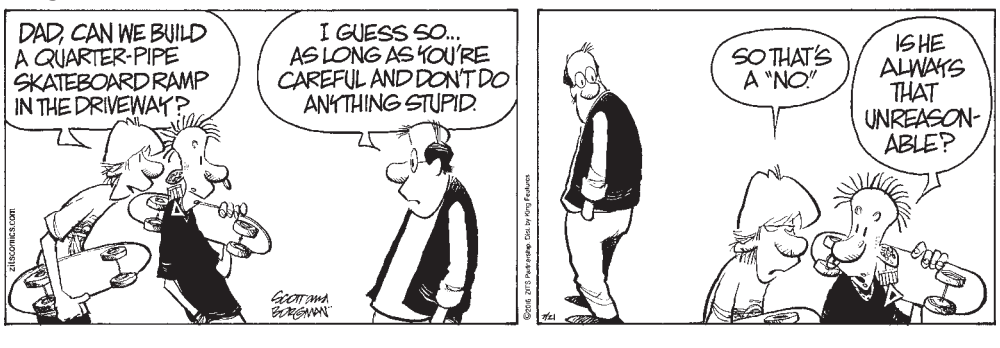
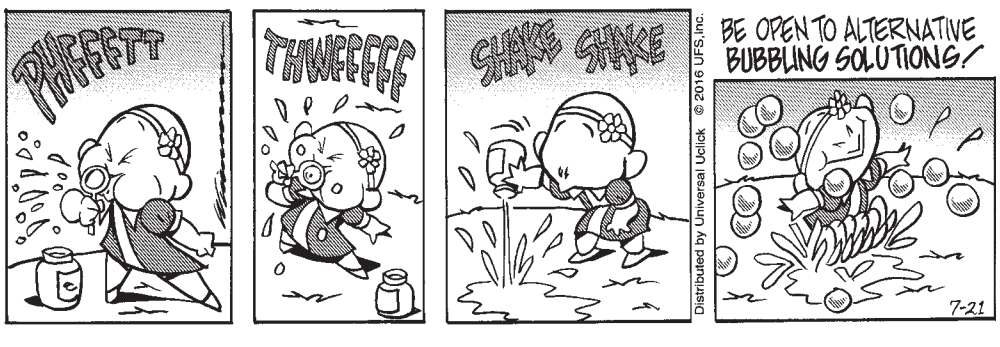
BABY BLUES

WIZARD OF ID

ZITS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