

How to break up with friends

Dear Annie: My wife and I met this new couple at a function, and they seemed really nice, so we exchanged information in hopes of meeting up again. We like meeting new couples and thought we'd see whether we have more in common. We have hung out with them a handful of times now but don't see any connection or really have much in common. They are always bringing up politics and their strong beliefs in a particular party, followed by negative comments about what the state of our country would be if the other party were to win the presidential election and all the doom and gloom we would be in for.

My husband and I have never been very political and don't find much interest in discussing it. We have a decently fun time with them, but my wife and I often talk about what else we could've done that evening or that day. The woman of the other couple texts my wife almost every Friday now to invite us out. We've said no a few times, but now we don't wish to meet up with them anymore because these political conversations are such a drag.

It feels as if we are trying to break up with this couple but they don't know it yet. We don't know what to do. — *Politics-Free Household*

Dear Annie



By **Annie Lane**

Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Politics-Free: Although these days it seems to be more of a faux pas to discuss "Game of Thrones" spoilers at the dinner table than politics and religion, there's a reason that those loaded topics have traditionally been off-limits. They're deeply personal, and talking about them tends to create hostile territory where friendship might have grown.

Politely tell the couple you respect that they are passionate about their beliefs but you don't feel comfortable talking politics. If they can't respect that, move on to new friends. You're under no obligation to spend time with this couple. After all, "doomed" or not, it's still a free country.

Dear Annie: I just want to get married. I've been dating my boyfriend for three years, but he hasn't warmed up to the idea of marriage. He says things like, "It's just a piece

of paper. And besides, half of marriages end in divorce." I was ecstatic when he recently expressed interest in moving in together. I think he sees this as the next step in determining whether we're compatible before perhaps popping the question.

The only thing standing in the way right now is the fact that my parents disapprove. I care about their opinion, of course, but it is my life and a decision I've made carefully. My mom has kind of gotten over it, but my dad refuses to acknowledge it and doesn't seem to care about how we're doing as a couple. All he cares about is how I am doing and how my job is. He also disapproves of my boyfriend's unemployment. It really makes my boyfriend uncomfortable, especially because those two have never really gotten along. What can I do to make my dad see that this man is my future husband? — *Shacking Up*

Dear Shacking: Reverse the U-Haul. Not because Dad disapproves but because moving in together wouldn't change your boyfriend's mind if he's already said he's indifferent about marriage. In fact, he'd have even less reason to take the next step.

Stay in your own places until the two of you make solid plans for your future.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The shepherd and the sheep have an interesting relationship. The sheep are known to drift to new horizons and greener pastures at will. The shepherd expects no loyalty, but understands the job: Corral and protect.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). What seems boring to you is riveting to another — not (SET ITAL) every (END ITAL) other, though. Being a winner with your crowd will depend on choosing your audience or censoring yourself.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You are driving yourself crazy trying to figure out the answer to a puzzle. Maybe this is about an upcoming occasion and how to celebrate it well, or maybe it's about a relationship in general. Whatever it is, the muses are with you.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Results might not come as fast as you want them to, but keep at it. Faith is a muscle that needs to be exercised just like the other muscles you have. In your love life, you'll receive the confirmation you've been wanting.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). This day echoes the biblical story of the prodigal son, i.e., the one who goes off and goes crazy seems to get the most and best attention — not you. Perhaps you should straight-out ask for your due.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The song insists that "only the lonely" know the way the singer is feeling tonight. However, people who are not lonely but are very empathetic (like you) know, too, and will help the situation.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Should emoji icons be used as punctuation? In the future, will this be the case? And if so, is this a

dumbing down or a smarming up? These and more questions will speak to the emotional intelligence of you and your generation.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Hopefully, you are still aware of the fun that is to be had under this sky. It's a lot. A lot more than you had yesterday, and a lot less than you'll have tomorrow if you play your cards right.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). A certain relationship will be on your mind all day. If this relationship had a soundtrack, what would that defining song be? The evening will bring a welcome change in mood.

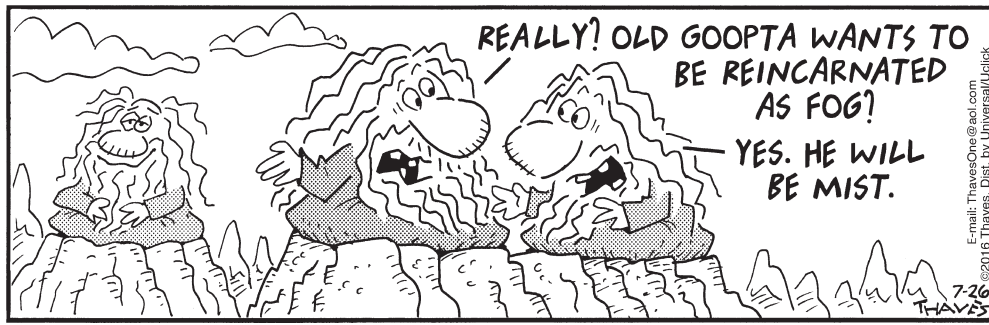
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Did you sleep better than you have in months? Are your stars finally aligning to the projection of your higher mind? No surprise: You're lightening up and straightening out at the same time.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You do your best work when you are emotionally distanced from a problem. Clear your head; get away. Humor heals! Give your brain a break. Seek comedy.

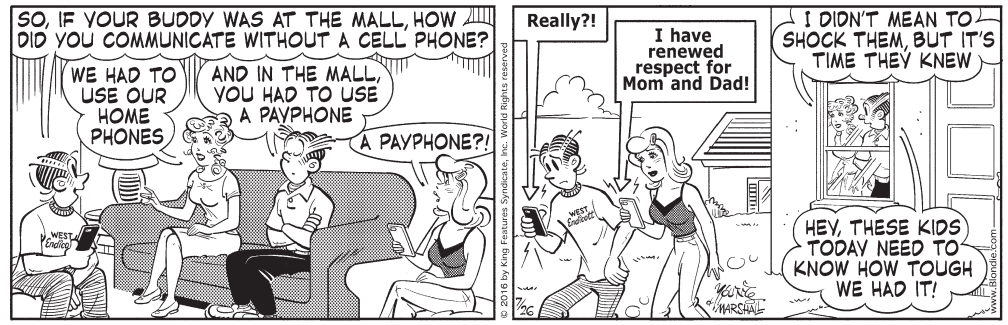
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Well, hey, might you say that the smarter a person is, the more engaged he or she is in what others might classify as "mundane"? This could explain today's simple fascination.

WEDNESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (July 27). You'll go into this year with clear goals and wind up with a completely different set of aims by the end of August because of all the inspiration you'll soak up over the next four weeks. Physically you're getting stronger, and in September you'll capture someone's fascination. October and February bring a windfall. Virgo and Aquarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 11, 32, 26, 5 and 47.

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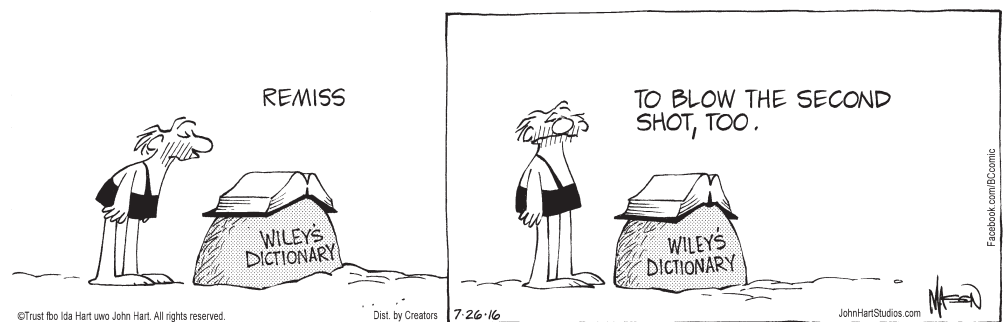
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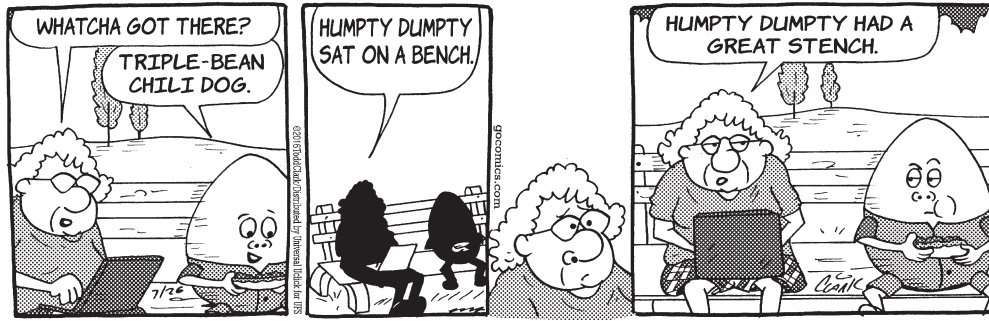
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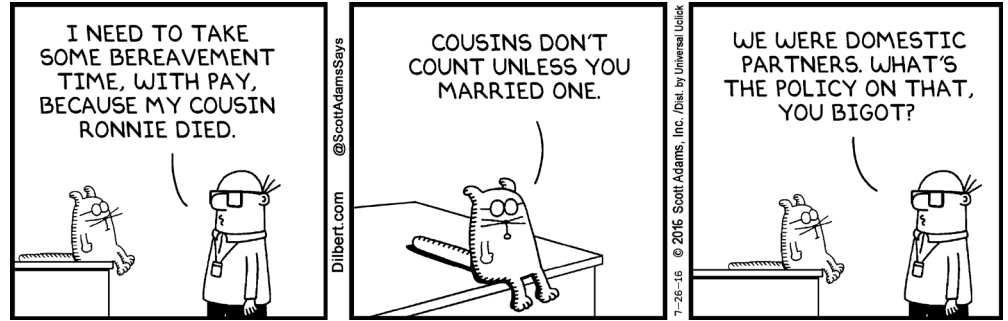
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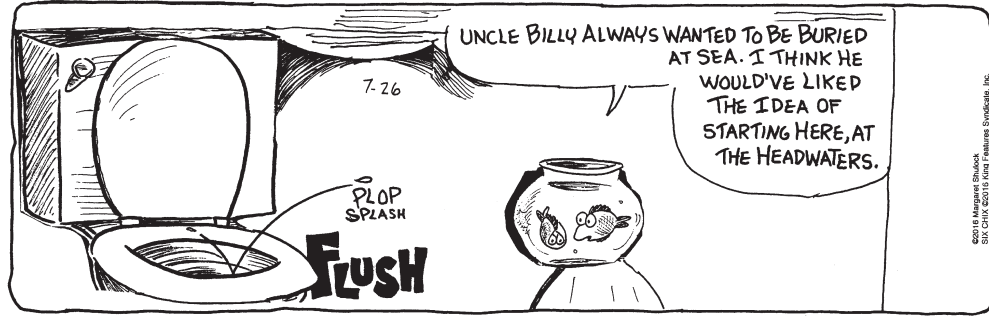
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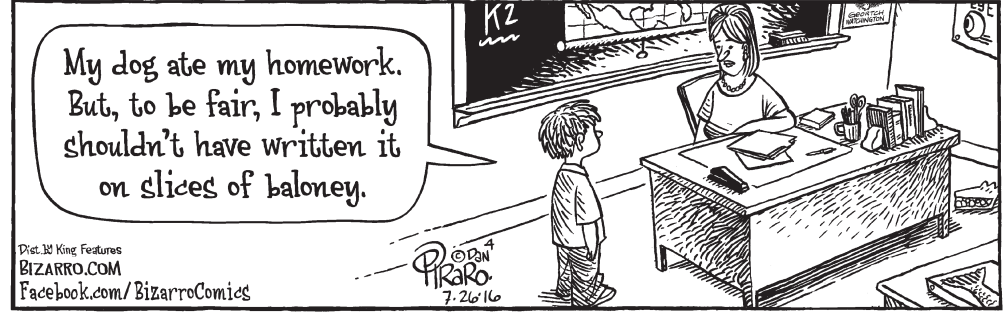
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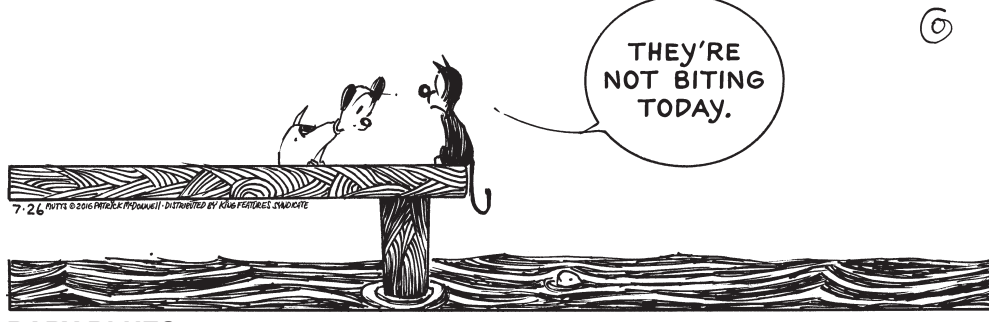
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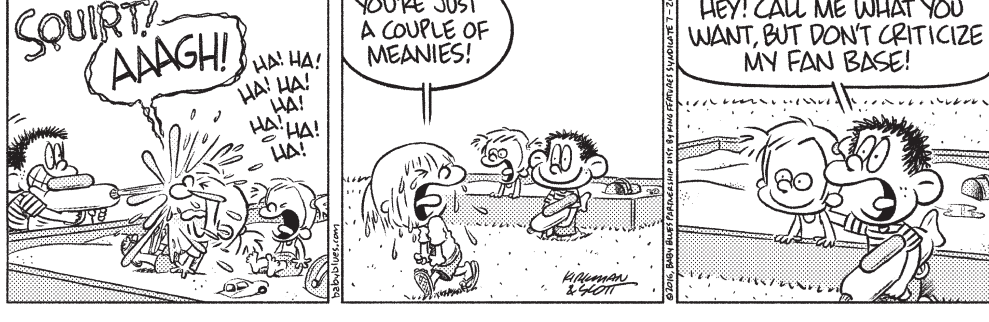
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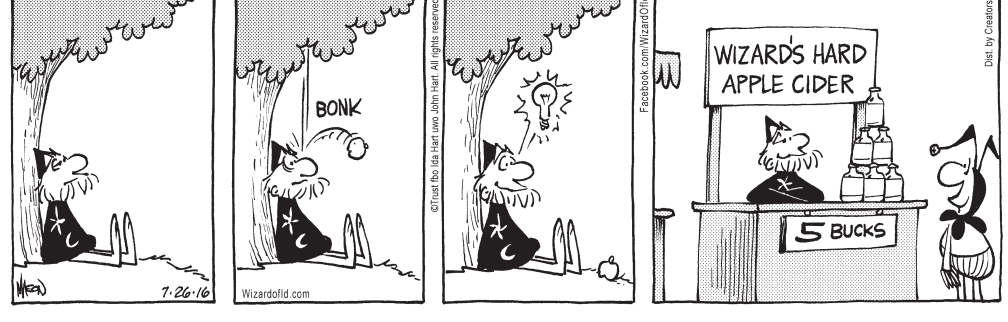
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