

A blue-collar wedding

Dear Annie: Two of my friends recently got married out in the countryside. Although the three-day weekend was sold as a "vacation in a cabin by the river," the bride and groom expected everyone to come to the venue and work nonstop for the entire weekend.

There were friends who drove across half the country with their families, only to spend hours upon hours decorating. Some worked themselves into complete exhaustion. The day before the wedding was spent in non-stop preparations the entire day. There was no food provided for the free "workers" or anything else of the sort.

The couple's disgruntled friends made plenty of comments about not having everything they needed to perform their assigned tasks and having to make due, and there was a general attitude of being overwhelmed and working too much.

I not only was annoyed with the amount of work and lack of thankfulness but also barely got to spend any quality time with my boyfriend, who hardly even knows the couple. He was asked to help with manual labor and would disappear with the father of the bride for hours on end.

Before we even parked our car the day of the wedding, my boyfriend was asked to help with parking all the other

Dear Annie



By Annie Lane

Creators Syndicate Inc.

wedding guests and disappeared for another four hours. The day was rushed and panicked. I was in the bridal party and had less than 30 minutes to get ready because of all the tasks. I didn't think my hair was more important than setting up a beverage station so the 120 guests had something to drink during the 81-degree outdoor wedding.

After the ceremony, while people were dancing, her father needed to take the borrowed tables and chairs back to the church. We were loading 120 chairs, heavy tables, etc., onto a truck. The bride was dancing 10 feet away and acted as if she couldn't see people working. We went with him to the church and were gone for nearly two hours. Upon our return, the bride asked me where I had been. I told her, and she said, "Well, you didn't have to do that!" But someone did have to do it, and I wasn't OK making my boyfriend

do all of that work without helping. After we returned, the bride kept asking us to dance and have fun. We went to bed and left early in the morning before we could be asked to do anything else. I am ready to sever the friendship.

Since when does having a country-style wedding make it OK to work your friends to death? How should we have handled this situation differently to save ourselves? This friend has started to contact me as if nothing happened. How do I respond without tainting the memory of her "special day"? — *Bride's Maid*

Dear Maid: Forced unpaid labor doesn't count as "something borrowed," and the fact that it's a couple's special day doesn't give them a free pass to act especially inconsiderately. One small chore would have been appropriate, but this situation crossed the line somewhere around the 40th car your boyfriend helped to park. The bride and groom weren't thoughtful, plain and simple.

That said, weddings can trigger acute bouts of myopia in otherwise well-adjusted people. If this was the first time these friends behaved this way, forgive — but don't forget. Next time, set boundaries early on, lest you be assembling a crib at the baby shower.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Sometimes you think things through, and other times it seems like the thoughts are thinking through you. A series of rapid-fire thoughts will lead to a profound revelation that changes everything.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The people from your past are important to you, even if they don't have a lot to do with where you're headed. You'll make efforts to keep in touch, not because you should, but because these contacts are part of who you are.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The task at hand is an awkward one. So, you're not the best at this. You don't have to be the best; all you have to be is (SET ITAL) your (END ITAL) best. You'll hit the pillow tonight knowing that you used this day to its full potential.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You'll act on the best idea that occurs to you in the moment. If you want better ideas to occur to you, don't worry; they will. It's a natural function of exposing yourself to such moments repeatedly.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Cheerlead and coach yourself. Tell yourself that you're a champion, a hero, you got this. There's no time to agonize over the situation, or even time to try and get it right. Just get it done.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Someone has wronged you in the past. If only it were enough that this person has apologized and wants your forgiveness. It still seems a little too easy, doesn't it? There's more that will occur before you'll be ready to let this one go.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Not everything in the relationship will add up neatly. It's a bit confusing, but so what? It's a wonderland! You're not supposed to understand those. If

you did, there would be nothing to wonder at.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You can't do A without tending to B, which relies on A being solidly in place. Your best bet is to recognize that this conundrum could go on forever unless you break out and find about 10 other options to try on.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Life leads you to do such funny, contradictory things, and then you'll laugh as though you were merely a witness to this. Of course, you have to deal with consequences that a witness wouldn't have to worry about.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The situation has the potential to leave you in a state not unlike that of a disgruntled teen, sighing and full of argument. Don't let it happen. The adult answers are the only ones that will work.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Objectively, you feel the situation won't bring out your best and the crowd won't be a good fit for you — and yet, inexplicably, you want to be included. The reasons are primal and hard to argue with.

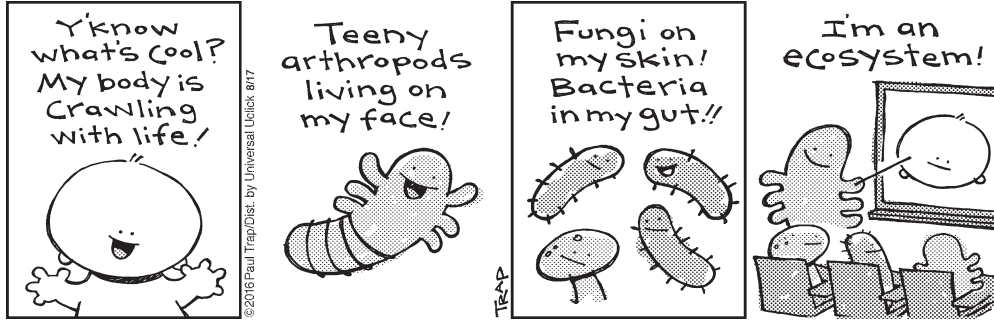
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Follow your curiosity and ask the meaningful questions. When you know a little about a person's past, this person's present status will delight you all the more.

THURSDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Aug. 18). You'll flex a new part of your personality this year, daring to disagree with the authorities in your life and opting for different modes of self-expression. You don't need permission to shine, but you'll get it anyway in November. February puts a new venture on the front burner. March will focus on a special relationship. Cancer and Aries adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 8, 10, 43, 20 and 11.

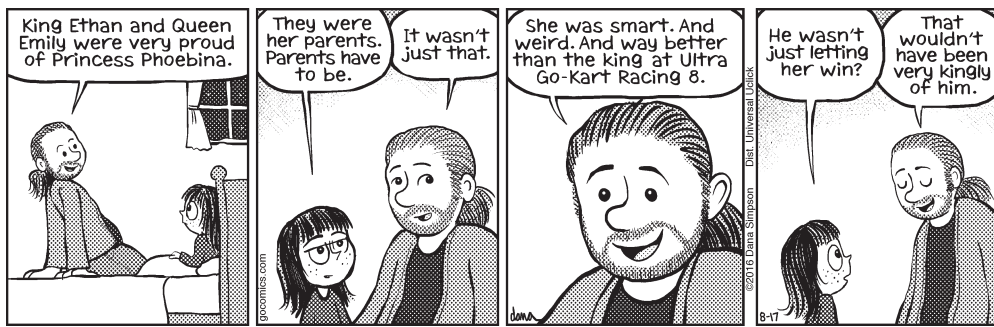
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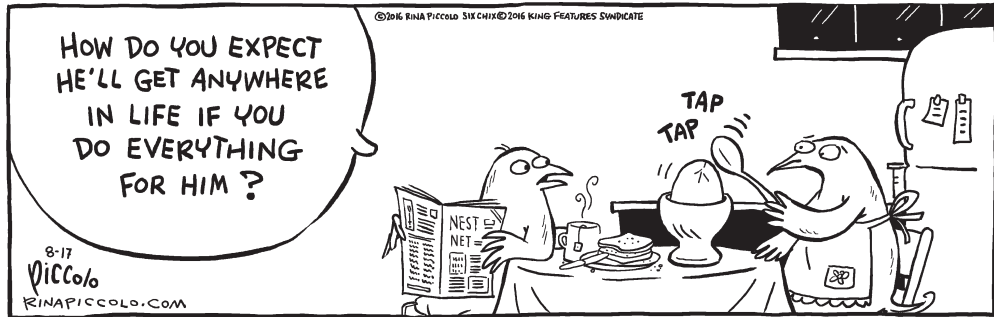
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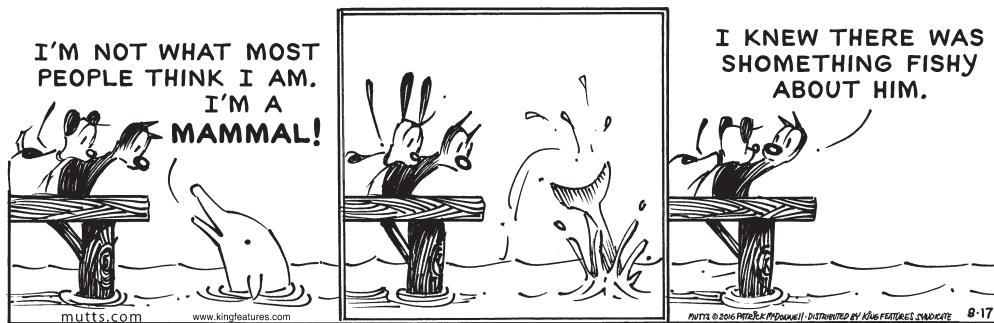
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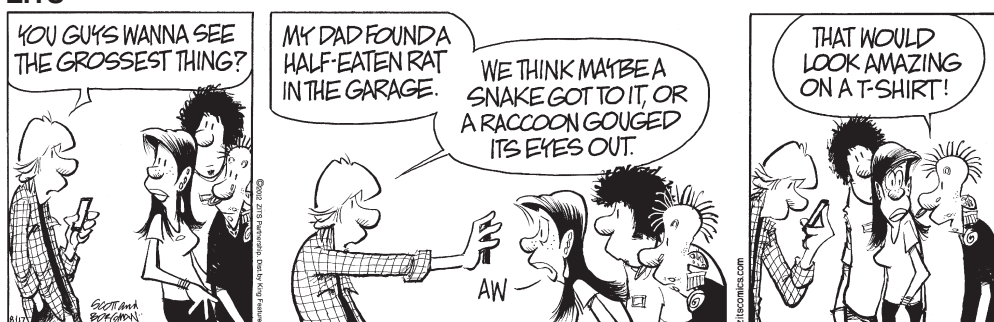
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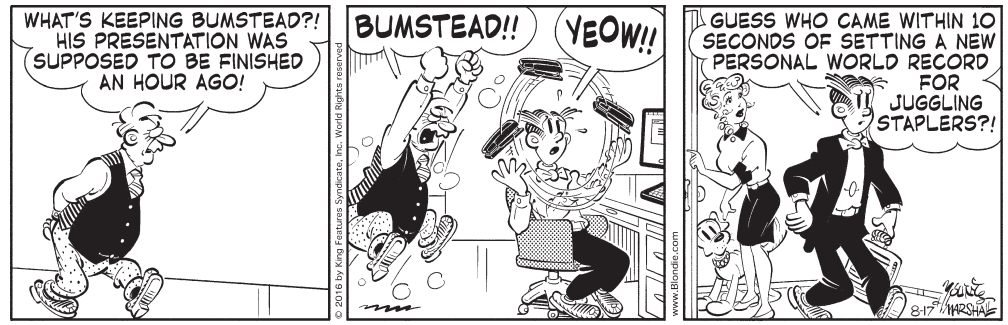
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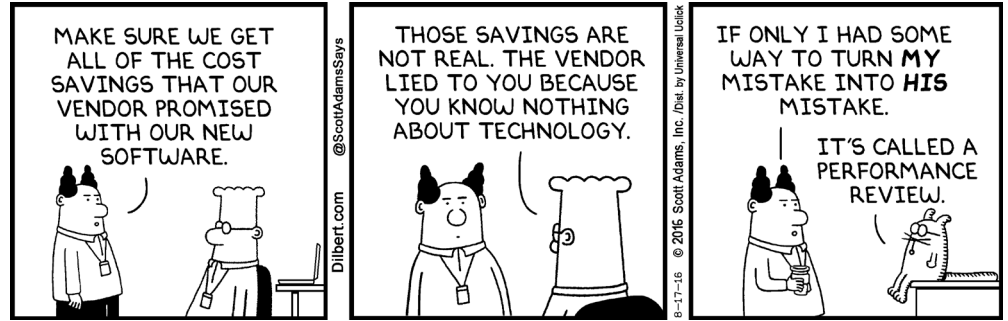
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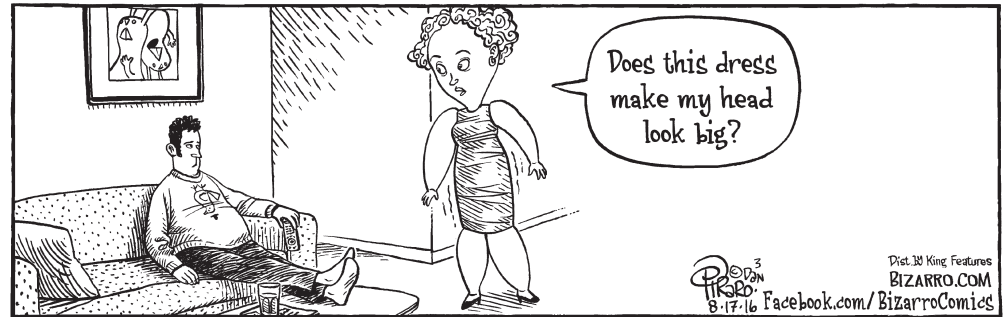
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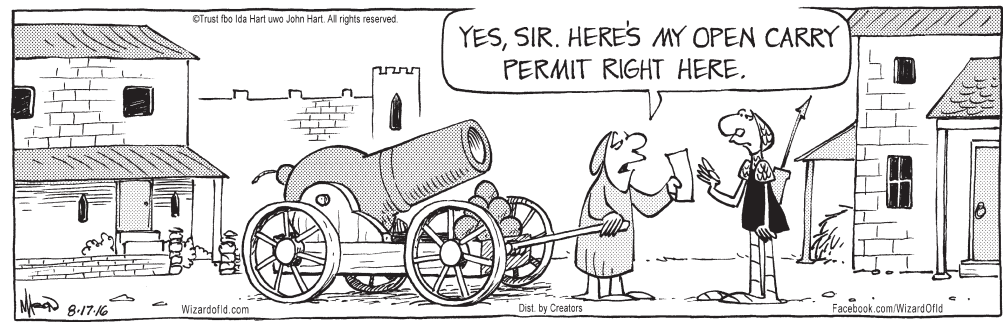
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