

# A less-than-ideal party

**Dear Annie:** For months, my husband was hinting that he was going to do something very special for my birthday. I assumed it might be a romantic dinner at my favorite restaurant in the city.

When the big day finally came, I put on my best dress and prepared for our memorable night. While we were driving, he began to look a little nervous. I asked him, "What is wrong, honey?" He said, "I just hope you like what we have planned."

We pulled up to a very casual restaurant. "Party of 20," he said to the hostess. "Wow, a surprise party!" I thought.

When I got to the table, I looked around. With the exception of two couples, all the people there were his friends. I put on a broad smile, but inside I was disappointed.

I ended up having a good time. When we got in the car, I asked him why my friends were not there. He explained that most of my friends were away that weekend at a college reunion. I couldn't help but wonder, if he knew a month in advance that my friends could not make it, why did he go through with the party anyway? — *It's My Party, and I'll Cry if I Want To*

**Dear It's My Party:** Hold those tears. Your husband planned a spe-

## Dear Annie



By Annie Lane

Creators Syndicate Inc.

cial dinner to celebrate you. True, he probably should have thought to rework the plan once he learned so many of your friends wouldn't be able to make it. But you need to concentrate on the full half of the glass. He acted out of love. Thank him for the dinner, and after some time passes, gently tell him that surprises just aren't your thing and to please leave the party planning to you.

**Dear Annie:** My very healthy and able 80-year-old mother has started to repeat herself. She was widowed two years ago, and at first I attributed it to stress and grief, but it's getting worse. She has gone for a cognitive functioning test and passed. She is considered above-average — so perhaps this repeating herself is just a part of aging.

My question is: What is kind etiquette? Do I just let her tell the story

again, or do I say I've heard this already? — *Concerned Daughter*

**Dear Concerned:** As Joan Didion once wrote, "we tell ourselves stories in order to live." For your mom, repeating these anecdotes is most likely a way to make sense and meaning of the past, to revisit lost loved ones and sort snapshots.

Continue to monitor her health and ensure there's no presence of dementia. If all is well, let her take you down the same stretches of memory lane. It's good exercise.

**Dear Annie:** I have noted that you failed to alert readers to the possibility that medication is causing negative behavior, particularly in the elderly. Most recently, "Sad Grandma" wrote that her husband had started bullying their grandson because of his long hair, despite the fact that Grandpa had long hair as a teenager and the grandson had been growing his hair for a long time. Grandma and her son need to investigate any medications that Grandpa may be taking, identify any other changes in behavior or physical ability, and talk with a doctor. Changing medications or dosage could be an easy solution, although such changes in behavior could also indicate a developing serious illness. — *Been There*

# Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** Ideas have value, even if they never come into fruition. Not all ideas should come to fruition anyhow. Some are best left in their ethereal form, from which they can still lead us to the next better idea.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** You don't agree with some aspects of a certain group's philosophy, and you never will. But there's likely enough beneficial stuff there to warrant your involvement. Be of service and reap the benefits of belonging.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** It's the little things. Who should pay the check? And if you have a feeling it's not going to be you, should you make a move anyway? Anticipate these kinds of details and make a game plan beforehand.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** There is a reason for the current distribution of power, but that doesn't mean it should stay this way. If you choose to challenge the old guard, expect resistance and know that these things won't be resolved in a day.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** No one likes to make mistakes, and repeat mistakes are particularly hard to take. Then again, after getting it wrong a few times, getting it right finally is spectacularly satisfying.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** There will be blips, interruptions, shuffling and reshuffling. What is temporarily uprooting will be fortuitous in the long-term. Detach. Flow with it. Remain unconcerned with the flotsam and jetsam.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Unfortunately, not everyone has developed the part of their brains that keeps them from saying aloud things that ought to be contained inside a head. When mistakes are made, you'll be the one to smooth it over.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Whatever your

project, you'll save yourself time and trouble by doing more research. The advice you seek will give you a good excuse to network, thus expanding your contacts and influence simultaneously.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** There will be a lot of busywork in the early part of the day, and as tedious as it may seem, each task can be counted as a step forward. Anyway, the evening fun will make a dim remembrance of all a.m. tasks.

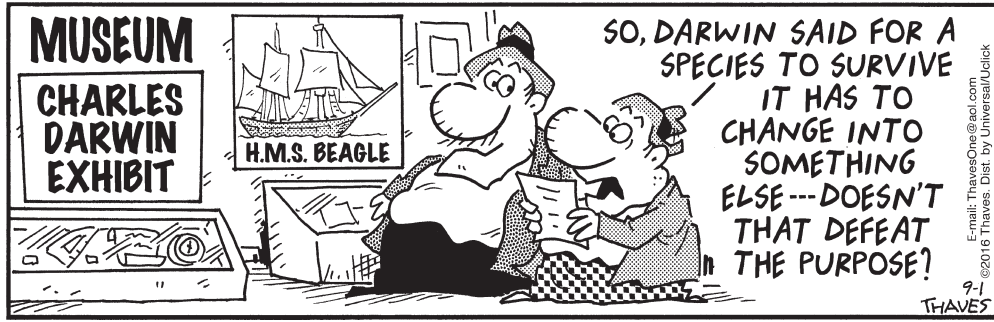
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** The loved one who mainly causes you irritation and exasperation really needs your patience and understanding now. This will require huge, nearly saintly amounts of self-control and emotional restraint, but you're up to it.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Your air-sign levity will help you mentally rise above the situation and then float backward in time, returning to a more childish view of the world. From this place, your problems will be met with more imaginative answers.

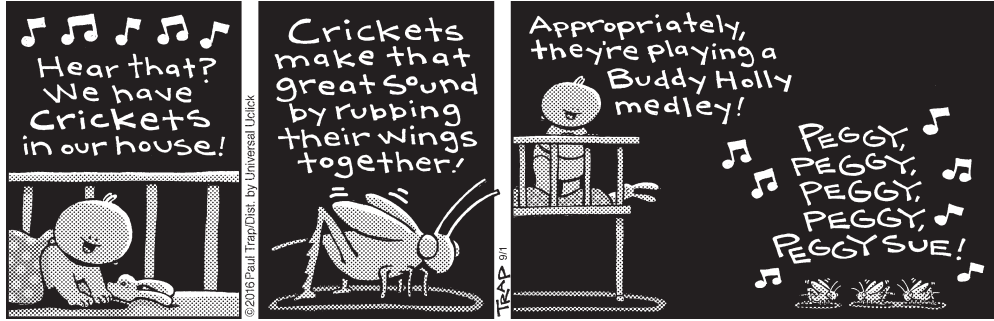
**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** You're not being asked to jump to the moon, though you are being asked to jump higher than you want to. No need to take offense; in all likelihood they are just ignorant of the current standards. Can't blame them for trying!

**FRIDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Sept. 2).** Your way has typically been to dream big and then work backward to construct a framework for building that dream. This year works in pretty much the opposite way. You'll start with a small, very cool interest and it will snowball into a venture that has a powerfully transformative influence on everything else you do. Libra and Pisces adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 13, 2, 28 and 41.

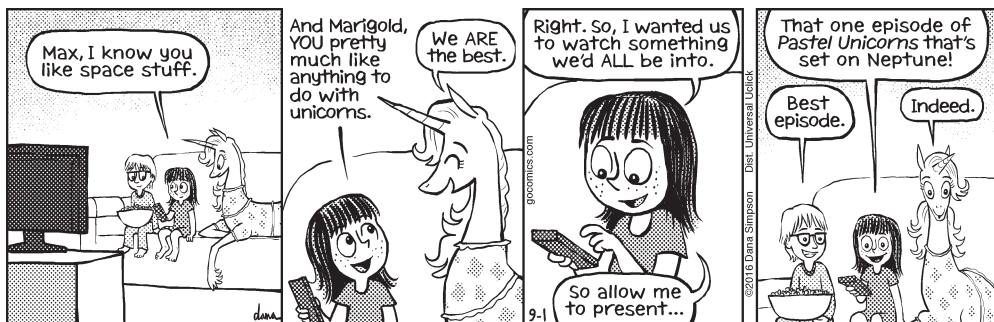
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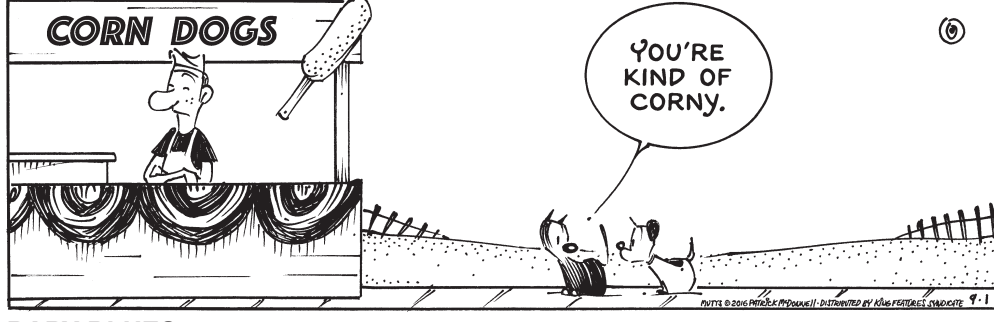
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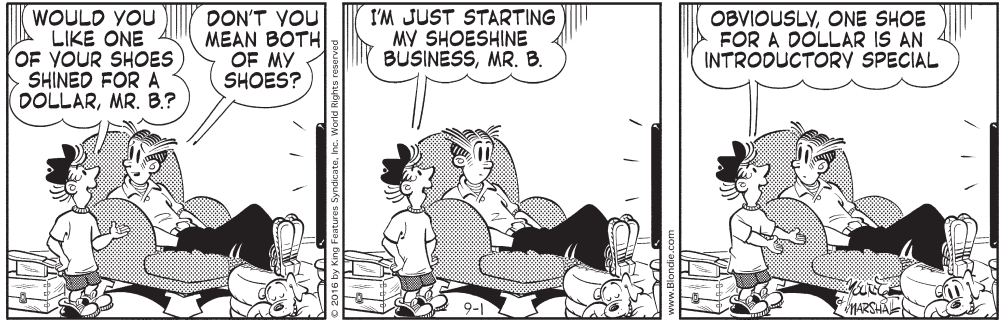
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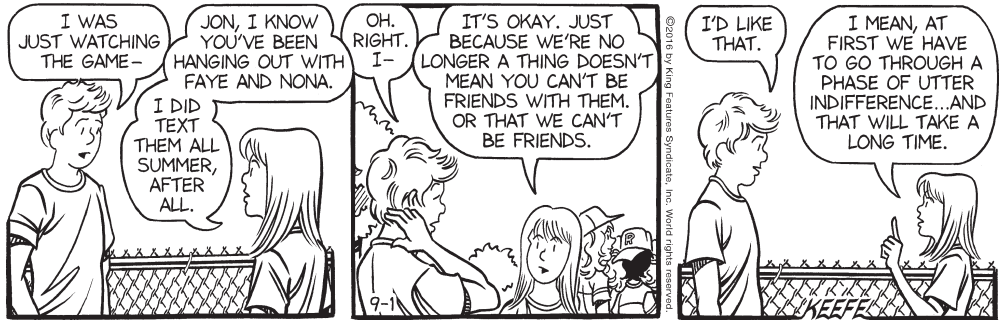
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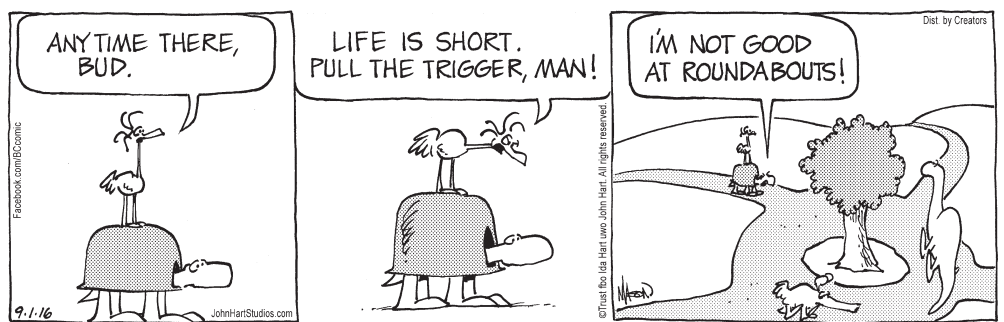
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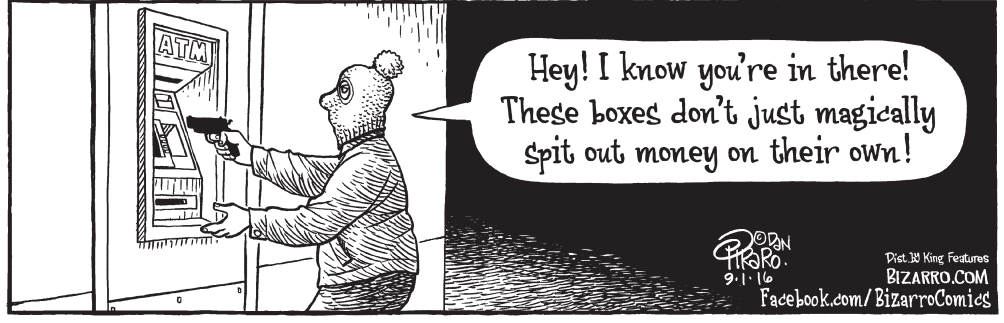
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