

Controlling sis ruins parties

Dear Annie: We are a large group of middle-aged siblings with one sister who has little engagement outside the home. She is an empty nester who does not work, volunteer or have any regular friends.

Our problem occurs when it comes time for a family function. She wants to control the event to the point that we cannot enjoy it. The importance of these events to her self-worth is truly disturbing. We have regained some ground by politely initiating plans before she does, hosting events at our own homes or avoiding her during events if she's in one of her controlling moods.

Unfortunately, this loss of total control has brought out some mean-spiritedness in her. She will "sweetly" insult or command us in front of relatives, withhold information and find ways to demonstrate that the plans of others are "wrong."

We love our sister, and we know she needs help. The problem is getting worse, and she is turning Machiavellian on us. Any other ideas? — *Family Exercise in Futility*

Dear Family: Idle hands are the devil's workshop, especially when they're holding a smartphone. In this case, the "devil" is your sister's pathological need for control, which

Dear Annie



By **Annie Lane**

Creators Syndicate Inc.

she has allowed to consume her. Give her a chore so she feels like a part of the plan — something that will satisfy her need to feel needed without making a mess of the event.

You've taken many steps to try to help, and I commend your efforts. But at a certain point, you have to accept that you can't control the control freak.

Dear Annie: I am 62, and my only sibling died 16 years ago. My parents have been dead for years. Recently, I was told by a cousin that I have a half brother. My father got an employee pregnant, and now this boy is 50. His mother was married and let her husband think the son was his biological son. She and the husband are now in their 80s. No one knows the truth except the cousin, the mom and me.

I called the mother up, and she

was very belligerent. She pretty much admitted it's true. I told her I don't want to cause trouble for her husband. And I don't want to cause trouble for my half brother. The mom just shouted back that she doesn't care who I tell.

I had just called to see whether the family knows, but seeing as no one else does, I don't want to say anything. I plan on sticking to that, but there are times when I really wish I could connect with my brother. Do you think there will be a time when I wouldn't be selfish in trying to call him? Of course, he might hate the messenger. — *To Tell the Truth or Keep Quiet*

Dear Truth: It would be selfish to tell your half brother this world-shattering fact only because you're lonely. But there are other reasons for letting him know about his biological father. As he gets older, he might benefit from knowing your dad's medical history.

It sounds as if his mom is unable to think rationally about the situation. Perhaps you could enlist your cousin for help, as he or she seems to have more background on the situation.

Your half brother is 50 — old enough to decide for himself what to do with the information.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Care a little, but don't obsess. If you deliberate too closely over the details you'll totally miss the irresistible coolness and nonchalance that comes with having better things to do than worry about how to impress people.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Pay attention, because you're likely to observe something truly, subtly wondrous — something that you're uniquely qualified to understand and appreciate.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You are present to serve, help, nurture and promote others. One way to this end is through self-expression and creativity. Self-expression can seem like a narcissist's cry of "look at me," but the fact is, the world needs entertainment.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Impatience is rooted in the self-centered belief that one's own time frame is superior to all others. Avoid impatience today, as it will only sass and anger the universal spirit — she doesn't like to be rushed.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Most mistakes happen because of a lack of knowledge, though the answer is not always to learn more. We cannot possibly learn everything there is to know, therefore the answer is to admit that we don't and remain open.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). To watch his walk, see her smile, remember that charming moment, the funny remark, the way you laughed — these are the things that stand out in your mind and drive you to create more good times with a person.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Before you can effectively influence a person, look at his choices. Did she choose out of desire, or were there a lack of available options? What is real-

ly wanted? You'll be as persuasive as you are observant.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The will and the intention to connect with others is powerful. Sometimes it can, in and of itself, create magic. And when the sweetness of that intention is not enough to create magic, it (SET ITAL) is (END ITAL) the magic.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You've seen a lot of the world, so it's harder to surprise you. You'll be impressed by the one who can hold your attention by showing you something different and making you feel something new.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Intolerance is among the most dangerous and destructive evils. Just as small acts of kindness can go far toward creating havens on earth, small fights against intolerance can go far toward protecting these havens.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Someone in your circle needs help. Not everyone realizes this. You have such a way of stating things and rallying the troops. You'll gain the glad assistance of all for your cause.

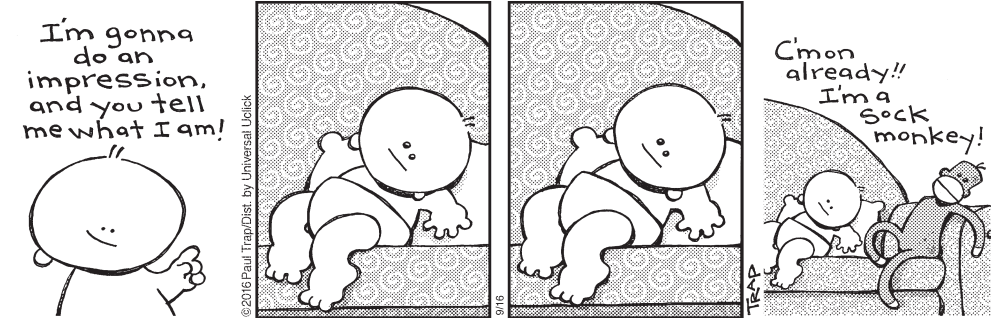
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). For motivation that verges on magical, make a date way into the future. The anticipation of this far-off event and the actions you'll take to get ready for it will change you in days and weeks to come.

SATURDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Sept. 17). You'll look back on this year with great pride. Your focus on a difficult and involved goal will be an advanced workout for your soul. You'll grow in power and discover new emotional and intellectual resources. As for the exciting love that begins its reign in March, all you have to do is show up and be yourself. Gemini and Pisces adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 40, 22, 2, 10 and 16.

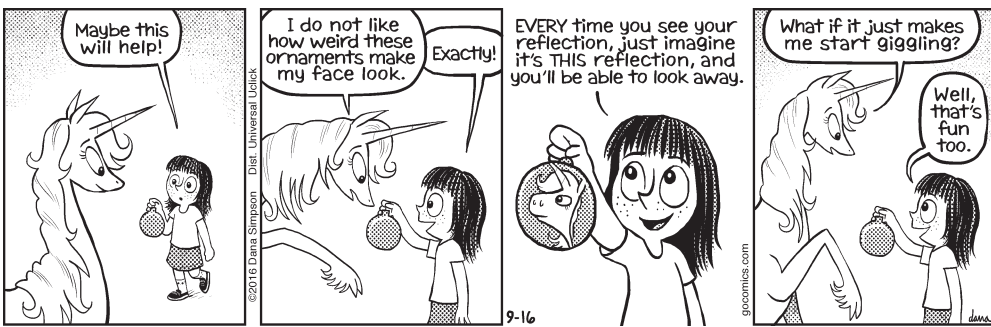
FRANK AND ERNEST



THATABABY



PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



LOLA



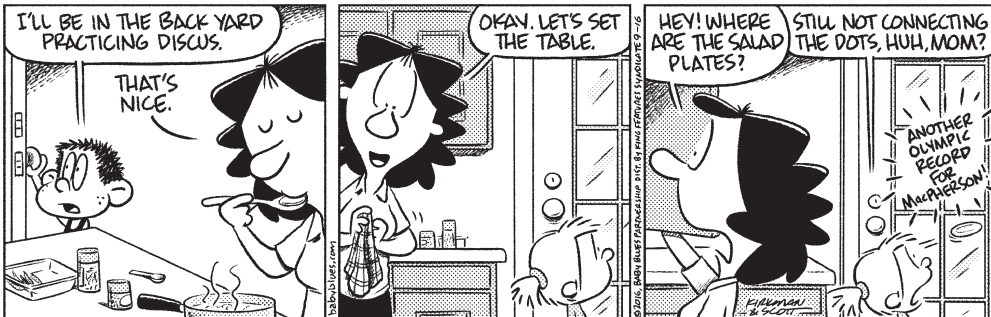
SIX CHIX



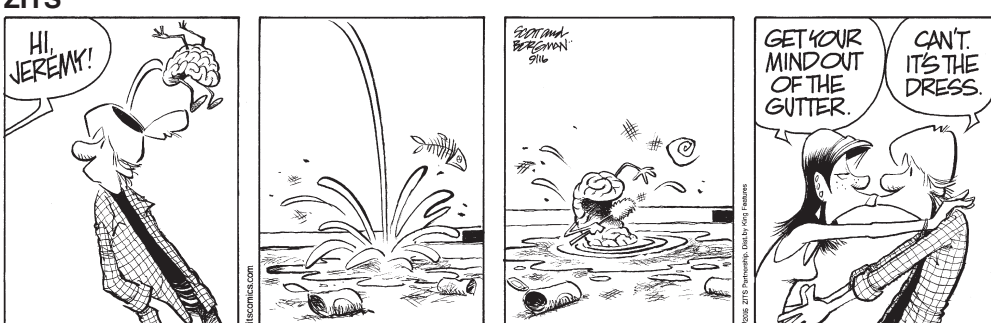
MUTTS



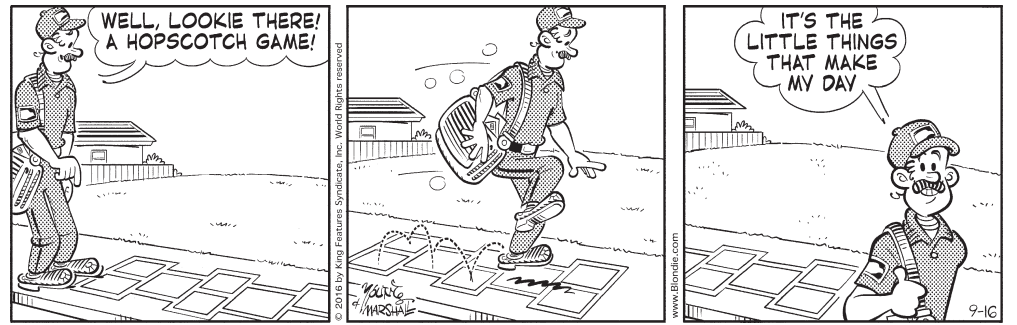
BABY BLUES



ZITS



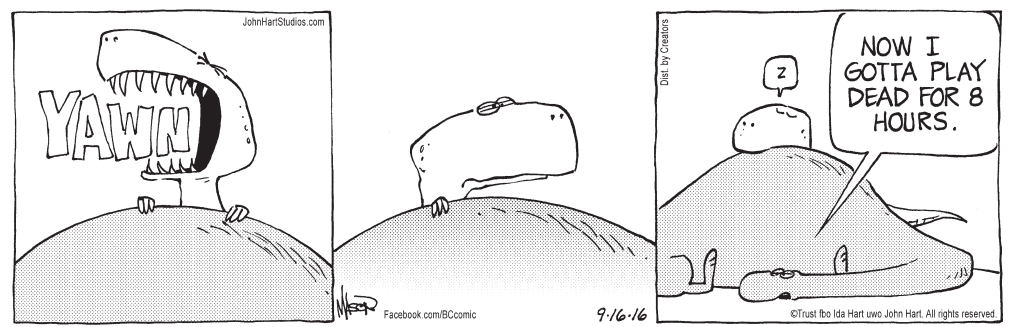
BLONDIE



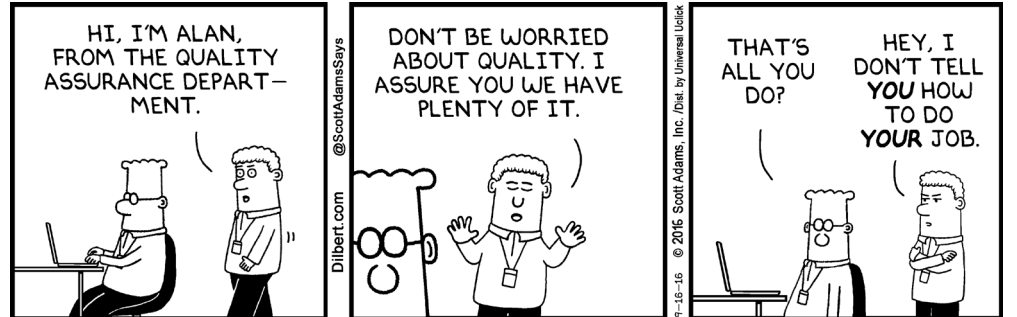
SALLY FORTH



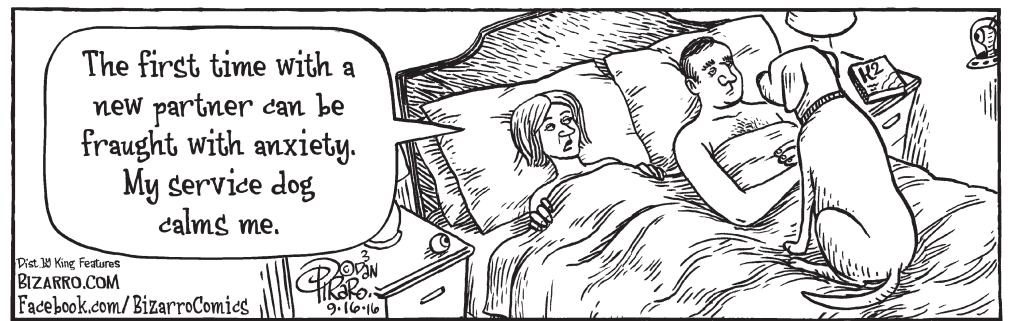
B.C.



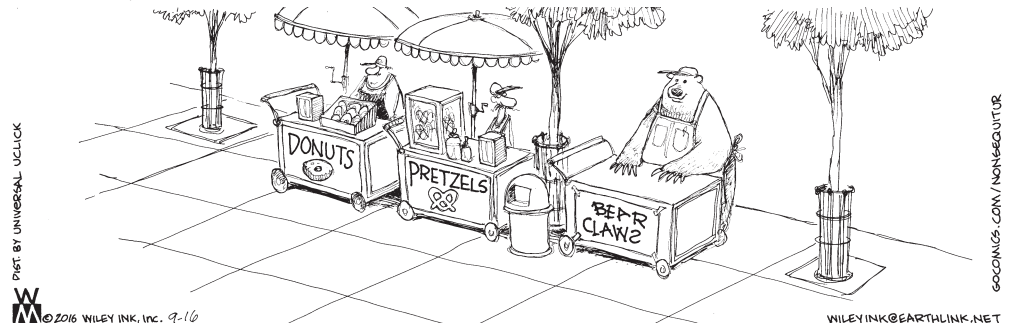
DILBERT



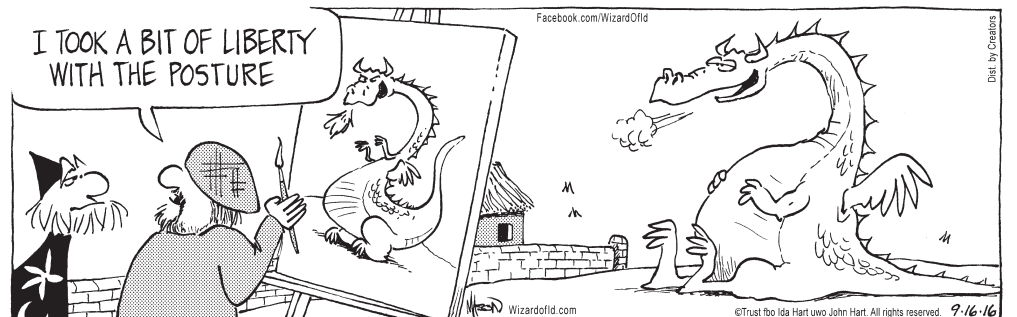
BIZARRO



NON SEQUITUR



WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

