

Barking about the neighbors

Dear Annie: I have never written you before. I pray dog owners choosing to use a bark collar will see themselves as their neighbors do.

Dog ownership in our neighborhood has risen tenfold in the past five years. We have chosen not to have a dog — but love them and frequently dog-sit for our friends and relatives. Here is the problem: incessant barking and extremely irresponsible, cruel dog-owning neighbors.

One neighbor leaves for work. His two dogs have a dog door and free access to the outside at any time. When the dogs decide for themselves to go out, the barking is constant for as long as the owner's shift lasts.

Two other neighbors have resorted to using bark collars that shock their dogs. This is absolutely inhumane. I can barely stand it to hear the dogs screaming in pain when those irresponsible owners hit the buzz button — at their random convenience. The inconsistency just makes it even more confusing for the dogs, I'm sure.

Owners, please stop using bark collars. You have deluded yourselves into thinking you are being consistent, that it is an effective means of training and that it doesn't hurt the dog.

Reconsider your need to own a dog if you do not have the time or means to devote to proper training

Dear Annie



By Annie Lane

Creators Syndicate Inc.

and adjust your life to your individual dog's needs and personality.

We live in a rural community with few resources, so options for reporting and taking action to address situations such as these are extremely limited. We have approached the offenders on several occasions — thus the rise of the bark collars, which was not our intention. — *Weary of the Cruelty*

Dear Weary: You're right; the shock collars are not only cruel but also ineffective. They may stop a dog from barking temporarily, but they do not address the root issues that cause excessive barking, such as stress and separation anxiety.

People who have to leave dogs alone all day while they work should consider hiring dog walkers to visit and tire them out during the day. Visit www.humanesociety.org for more tips on keeping animal companions happy.

Dear Annie: My wife and I have been married for 50 years. Since we first were married, we have shared a love of dogs — in particular, a love of golden retrievers. We have always had at least two golden in our house. We have a 1-year-old pup, named Tucker.

Our 12-year-old dog, Trixie, just passed away. Ten years ago, we would have picked up the phone and called the breeder immediately. But we are older now, and we feel that two large dogs would be a lot to manage.

The problem is with Tucker. He really misses having a companion. Since Trixie died, Tucker has been chewing furniture and barking incessantly for us to play with him. What should we do? — *Goldies*

Dear Goldies: I'm sorry for your loss. I'm sure Trixie is on the rainbow bridge with all of your other golden retrievers. Animals grieve, too, and it sounds as if Tucker is going through that. One way to help him get over the loss would be to get another dog, as dogs are pack animals. (They need not be of the same breed.)

Visit your local animal shelter, or look on Petfinder. Perhaps you could find a golden retriever mixed with a smaller breed. That way, you would be doing two acts of kindness in one — saving a homeless dog's life and giving Tucker a new friend.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). How have your choices, for better or worse, landed you here? It's the question you'll keep asking yourself. In order to make your next move you have to understand your last one.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You haven't a clue what's coming, and the surprise of that makes life interesting for you. A fantastic new circle of friends will celebrate your ideas and support your plans.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). In the same way that flowers can't recognize their own beauty and grizzly bears don't think of themselves as ferocious, you have this talent that's so close to you that you can't even see it.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). How will you control the wild energy? Never doubt that there's a way to tame and direct it to create huge beauty in the world. A Sagittarius or Aquarius will be your ally in this endeavor.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). It's more than a cliché: Everyone is busy. It's almost gotten to the point of being a contest — not a contest you'd want to win, though. Clear some space. Somehow, when you are less busy, you'll get more accomplished.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Someone is pressuring you to move before you are ready. Don't buy into that person's time frame; you have your own! That someone has a different sense of pacing doesn't make your pace wrong.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Needing to be the best can help you break records and push back limitations. It can also create the kind of tunnel vision that disables you to see the bigger picture. Be extra mindful

of the space and feelings of those around you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). It's not always easy to let go of the baggage. The current nugget of emotional dead weight you're trying to drop might require more work. Celebrate your small steps.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Brainstorm. You'll have a good sense, when all is said and done, what the best ideas really were. Allowing yourself that space to explore, well, that's crucial. The elements will fall in place and you'll do very well.

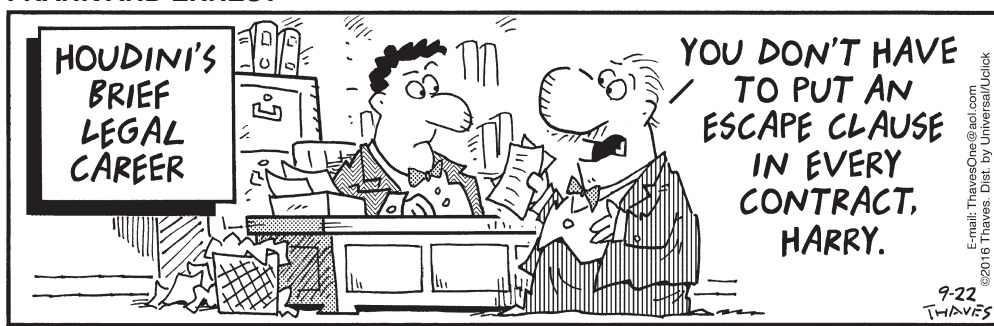
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). There's nothing quite so poignant as outgrowing your mentor, parent or teacher. This is what you're facing now — the bittersweet goodbye to your wide-eyed point of view.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You're trying to go back, and yet there is no "back." All your opinions are changing. What happened then will be colored by what you now know, which is a lot more and better.

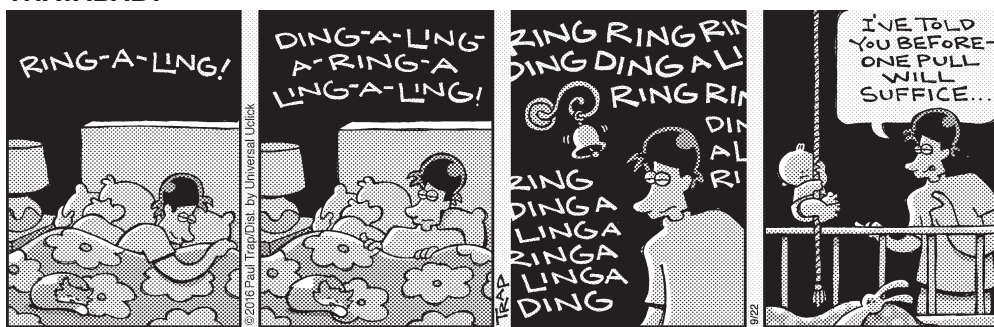
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). If a partner is looking for reasons your relationship won't work out, this is a sign that it won't — though not for the reasons they reach for. You're better than this. You'll be blessed when heavy baggage leaves your life.

FRIDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Sept. 23). It's a year of high ambition, and, remarkably, you'll match your aims. Whoever stimulates that dreamy side of your personality is a true godsend. You'll appreciate, give to and help the ones who support you, and in return you'll all be lifted high. January brings hot discussion and fast travel. Aquarius and Gemini adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 6, 44, 29 and 11.

FRANK AND ERNEST



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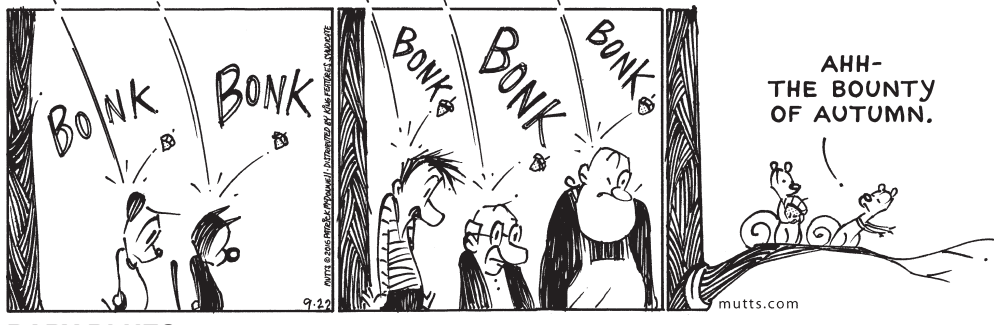
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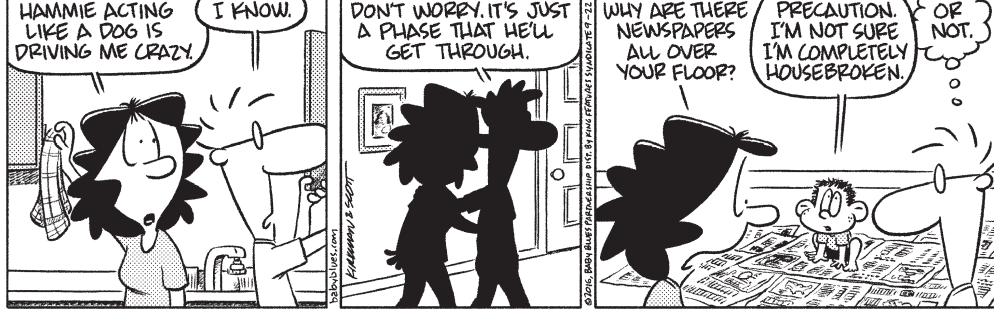
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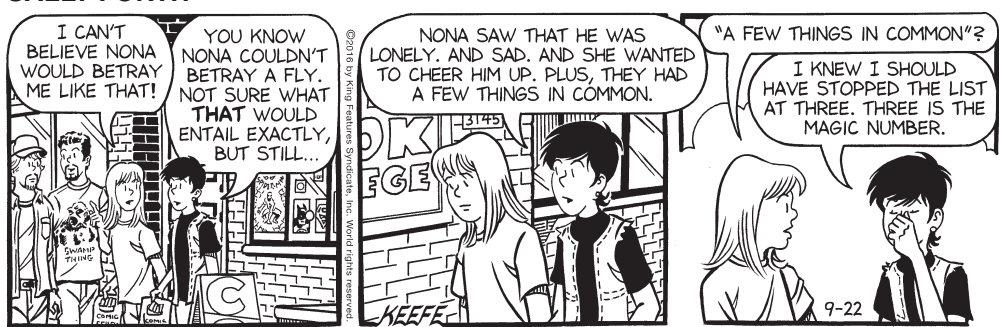
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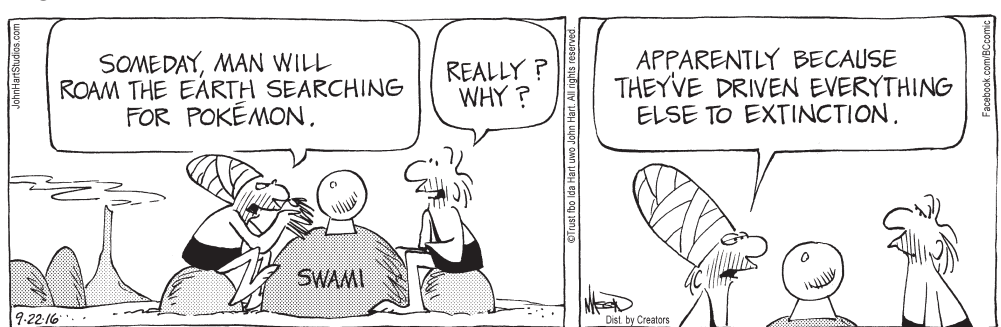
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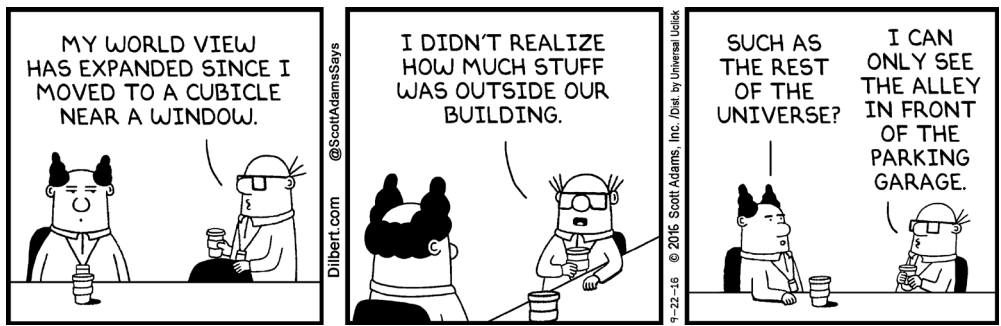
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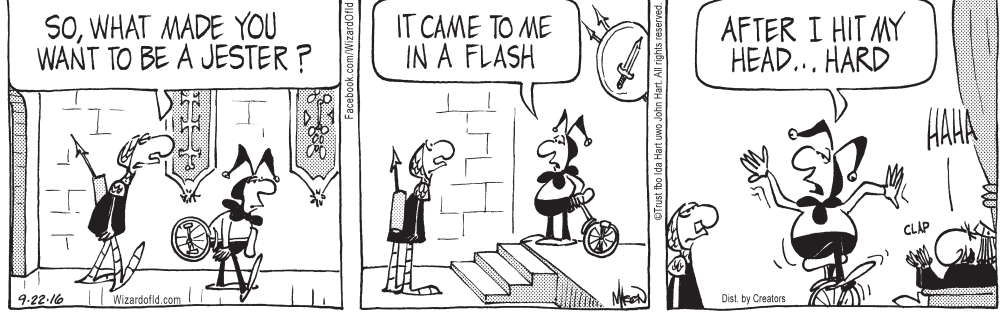
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