

Drinks release demon within

Dear Annie: My wife and I have been married for 12 years, and I absolutely love her and the kids. But at family events, she tends to get really drunk and mean. Usually, I end up taking the lumps, but sometimes it's someone else. I feel guilty when that happens, because I'm just happy that it isn't me.

Her family has a lot of issues, as does mine, and when we get together for events, she gets loud, obnoxious and downright ugly to whichever poor soul rubs her the wrong way first. She wakes up with a hangover, apologizes when she has to.

One example: Last weekend, her sister was in town, and my wife went to visit her. I stayed home because of work. She and her sister got into a fight that turned physical. She called me crying around midnight. I tried to talk her down, but it turned into her screaming at me.

My wife is the type who does not take kindly to suggestions, especially when she's intoxicated. A simple "maybe it's time to go to bed" will inevitably unleash a vicious monster that will scratch, tear and scream its way through anything that gets in its path.

How can I give her a "last call" when I see that something is about to happen? — *Concerned Husband*

Dear Annie



By **Annie Lane**

Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Concerned: That vicious monster you're dealing with is alcoholism.

Your wife needs to stop drinking. You should try talking to her about that when she's sober. But alcoholism is a disease that sustains itself through the mechanism of denial, and you should know that her path to recovery may be a long one.

Living with an alcoholic can leave you feeling desperate and frustrated to tears — and also profoundly lonely because you feel as if you have no one to talk to about it. I encourage you to consider attending a local Al-Anon Family Groups meeting. The meetings are free and anonymous, and they're open to anyone who is bothered by a loved one's drinking — so even if you don't think your wife an alcoholic, they're still for you. My heart goes

out to you, and I wish you the best.

Dear Annie: I live in an apartment complex, and my upstairs neighbors recently had a baby. I swear she is the loudest baby I've ever heard. I'm losing my mind from the lack of sleep. Why can't they keep her content? And why would anyone with a newborn live in an apartment anyway? Should I talk to them? — *Newborn Insomniac*

Dear Newborn: Sounds as if somebody needed to cry it out — and I don't mean the baby upstairs. Your crankiness is understandable, but I'm not sure what exactly you plan on saying to the parents: "Excuse me. Could you please ask your 3-month-old to try to keep it down? I've got a big presentation tomorrow."

The fact is that these new parents are very aware of how loud their baby is. They have front-row seats to that opera. No doubt they feel bad about keeping up their neighbors, but there's not much they can do.

What you can do, however, is invest in some tools to block out as much sound as possible. Invest in noise-canceling headphones, a white-noise machine or both.

Above all, try to be as empathetic as possible. Remember, you were once a baby, too.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). On the journey to new horizons, don't let negative thoughts sink your ship. Waterproof your mind against them using the leakproof qualities of laughter, levity, beauty, fun, excitement and starchy dreams.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). These are pretty straightforward times. When you do good, you'll feel good. If you do bad, you'll feel bad. There are no complications or intricacies beyond that to stop you from sailing happily forward.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Giving your best to a rather unglamorous project now will put you first in line later for a far more appealing project. You'll find that this current deal is more interesting than you might have suspected.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Everyone knows not to burn bridges, and yet when the territorial issues are war-like, and crossing is tantamount to invasion, some bridges really must be tactically burned.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Your heart is big, and it radiates a generosity of spirit that makes everyone around you feel important, loved and as beautiful as you behold them. For these reasons and more, you are so lovely.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The future will come soon enough. If you live there now, you'll ruin the surprise of it! Also, you'll miss the surprise of today, which is an opportunity nestled inside an emotional little vignette just waiting to be observed.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). If you want to know who the smartest people are around you today, they are the ones saying, "I don't know." Those who claim to know everything and are very sure about it will be the first to

eat crow later.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Those who pay no mind to the risks involved in an action are not as brave as the ones who consider the possible dangers and move forward anyway. Stay aware of what you might be getting into.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You're careful to make sure that others get credited for their contributions, but when it's your turn to hang your name on something, you don't care as much. Get the credit anyway. It will be important later.

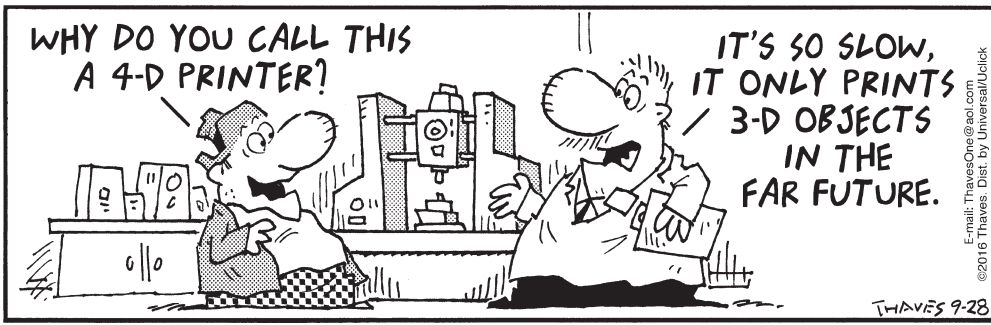
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The power players have no more talent than you have. The only difference right now is access to resources. So how can you get better access to more of what you need?

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'd trade places with your loved one if suffering of this kind were something that could be re-assigned. Alas, the best you can do in this regard is show up and hold this person's hand. You'll be great at that!

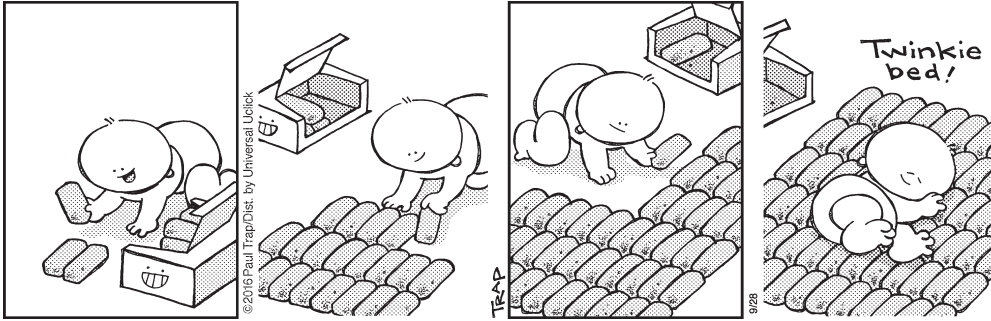
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Don't be swayed by immature and petty demands. Stay strong in your stance, or you'll train the world to pester you until you eventually cave to its requests.

THURSDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Sept. 29). You won't regret the money you spend on travel, as what you learn in different places will enrich you for years to come. It's not like you're searching for something in particular, but you'll find various treasures and spend November through February figuring out how to fit them into your full life. Aries and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 3, 14, 33, 28 and 10.

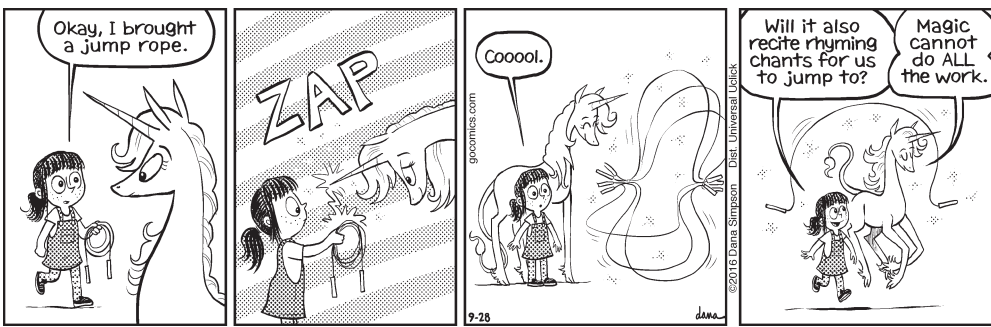
FRANK AND ERNEST



THATABABY



PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



LOLA



SIX CHIX



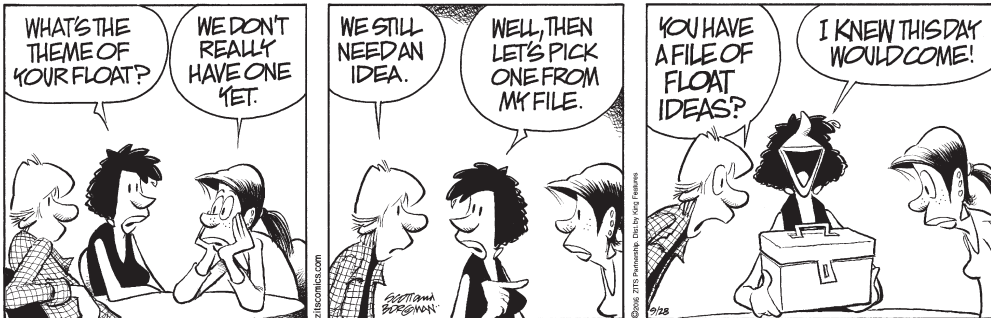
MUTTS



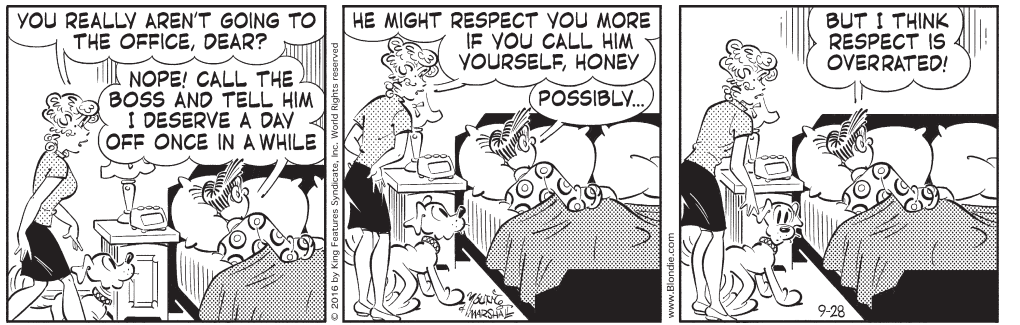
BABY BLUES



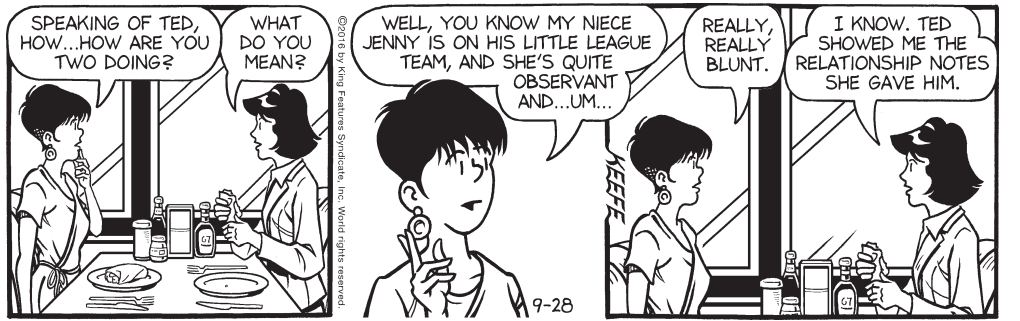
ZITS



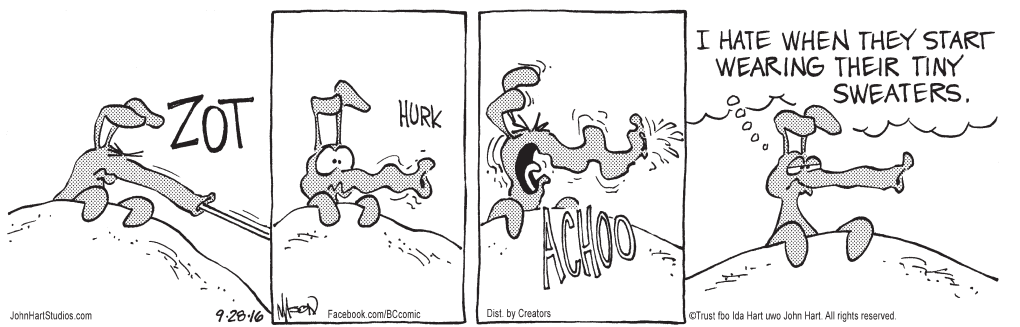
BLONDIE



SALLY FORTH



B.C.



DILBERT



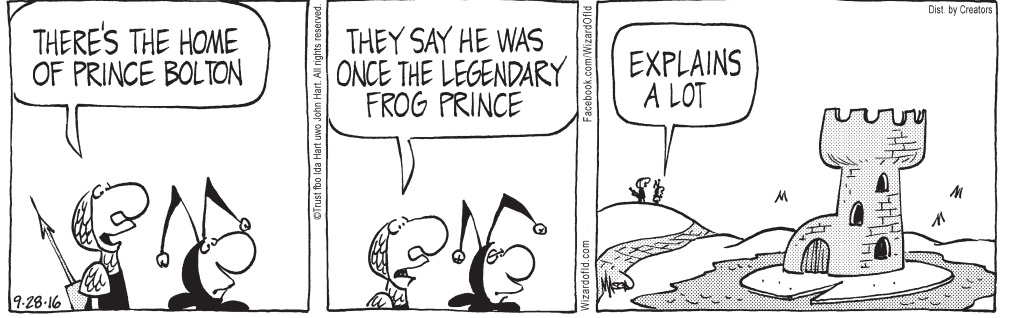
BIZARRO



NON SEQUITUR



WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

