

Brother-in-law holds reigns

Dear Annie: I come from a very close Midwestern family. I have one sister, two brothers and great parents. Every other year, we would take a family trip to the lake. As we've gotten older, the tradition has stayed and grown to include new family members. We all meet up, bringing our spouses and kids. The problem herein lies with my elder sister and her husband.

When I first met my brother-in-law, he was so nice and friendly to our family. He is an Aussie, and we were charmed by him. He raved about how much he loved the great outdoors and looked forward to keeping up our family tradition. After they got married, everything changed. The first year, my sister and her new husband said they couldn't make the trip because of his work (even with two years' notice). The second time around, it was yet again because he had to work.

They just seem to make every excuse in the book not to go. I am the one whom she always calls to break the news. I can hear the real disappointment in her voice as she says they won't be making it yet again.

Since the wedding, we pretty much have never seen him and rarely have seen her. My brother-in-law never comes to any family func-

Dear Annie



By Annie Lane

Creators Syndicate Inc.

tions and makes no effort to have a relationship with my parents.

I've talked to my brothers about this, and they think that because our brother-in-law's parents live in Australia and he rarely gets to see them, he is jealous that our sister lives so close to her family. Is there anything that I can do to make him come around and want to come on our family trips? My elder sister was always the leader in our family, but now our fearless leader has turned into a cowardly black sheep.

— *Black Sheep's Sibling*
Dear Black Sheep's Sibling: It sounds as if your brother-in-law's true colors came out after the wedding, and they're sickening shades of green. He is consumed by envy. If he can't have family, then she can't have family. This certainly does not seem like a loving marriage.

Her husband sounds — let's put it kindly — less than perfect, but the real question is why your sister would allow this to go on. I would try talking to her one-on-one to see whether she can reach a compromise with her husband. Maybe propose that they start alternating years — spending vacation at the lake with you one year and in Australia the next. Also make an effort to reach out to your brother-in-law sometimes just to see how he's doing so he feels that he's important to you. If he would embrace your family, it might help him feel less homesick.

Dear Annie: In a recent column, you printed a letter from a man who didn't like the friends of a woman he started seeing recently. You said: "If you don't like this girl's friends, then my guess is that when you get to know her better, you won't like her."

Well, maybe, maybe not. The situation you describe may be an evolving process, and she may well change for the better or worse. It is a hard call at this point. I have seen some remarkable people evolve out of an environment of wacky friends because some significant other happens upon the scene and the person finally comes to her/his senses. And the wacky friends disappear. — *Don D.*

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You care enough to learn everything about your subject of interest, and that's just the attitude that will allow you to mesmerize the powers that be with your in-depth analysis and study.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You're like a radio station with a 24-hour request line. The stream of suggestions may be endless, but you're not obligated to honor any of these requests. Ultimately you'll play what you want to play.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You need more than the usual amount of rest now to recharge and heal the daily wear and tear that affects your body and mind. There's no need to feel guilty for sleeping in, napping or turning in early.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You feel where someone is coming from, and then stay one step ahead of the game. You're an expert at figuring out the motives of complicated characters.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). What you want will cause a rub with what someone else wants, and the power dynamic will be worked out in interesting ways. What happens will be as much about your will as it is about the politics of the situation.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You seldom make promises or pacts, but today there's something you might enjoy promising, and there's an equally enjoyable demand the other person would, in turn, request of you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Sincerity may not be the flashiest of qualities, but it's high on your list of attractive qualities in a loved one these days. Knowing whom you can trust and feeling the truth of that person's

affection will bring comfort and delight now.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Recognize your own strengths — not because you need a pat on the back or because the ego boost will feel good, but because the others are going to miss out on the best part of you if you don't know what that is.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You'll be accused of generosity, thoughtfulness, amazing selflessness. None of this rings true to you. You think of your loved ones all of the time; it only follows that you would want to spoil them.

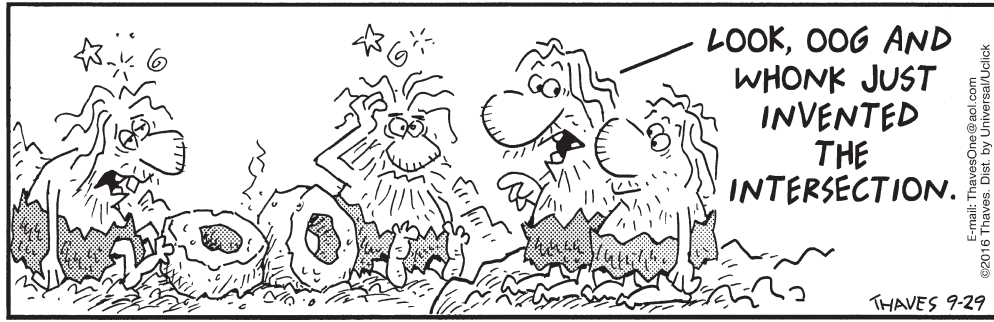
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Determination is a talent in and of itself, and today, it combines with another one of your talents, making you absolutely indomitable. Most will respect your top status without challenge.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). They trust you because you do as you say you will when it matters — and when it doesn't. Big and small matters get the same level of integrity from you. None of your words are too inconsequential to honor.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're excellent company because you take responsibility for and pay attention to all of the signals zinging back and forth between you, your environment and everyone within it.

FRIDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Sept. 30). It's a lucky year for saving up for big-ticket items or bucket-list experiences. Sources of income crop up as you tell more and more people about what you do. In October, you'll call a few key shots and be put in charge. Families come together in December. March and July will be the most adventurous. Scorpio and Taurus adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 27, 3, 38 and 45.

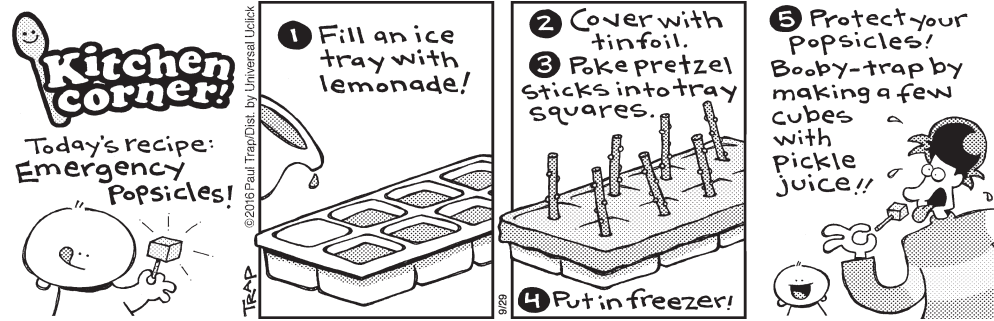
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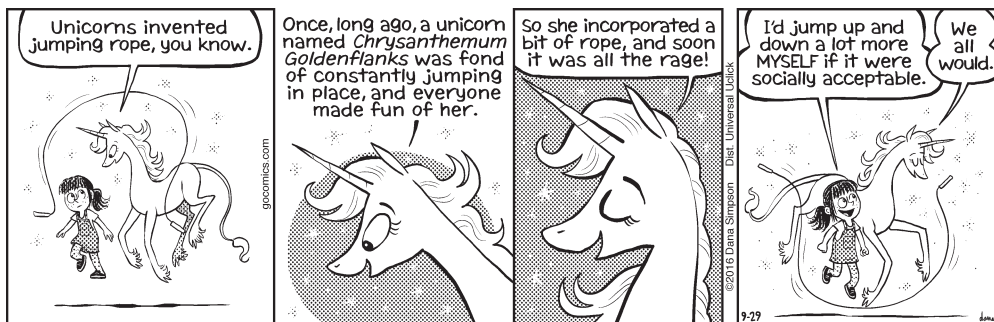
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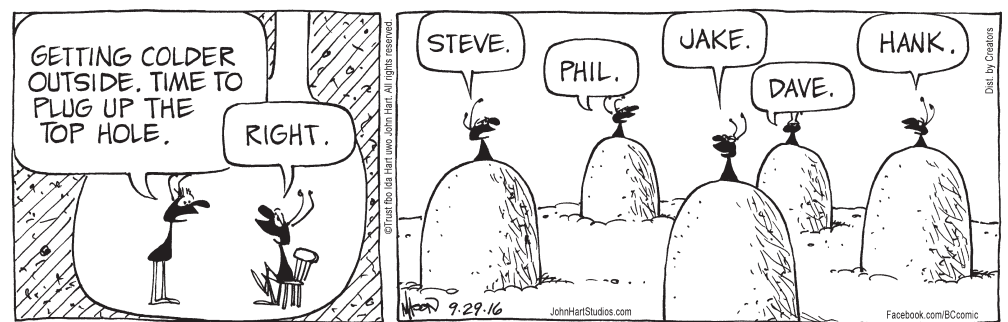
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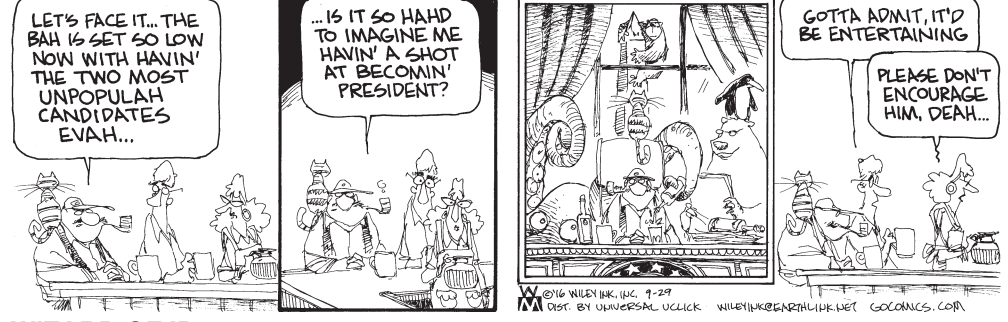
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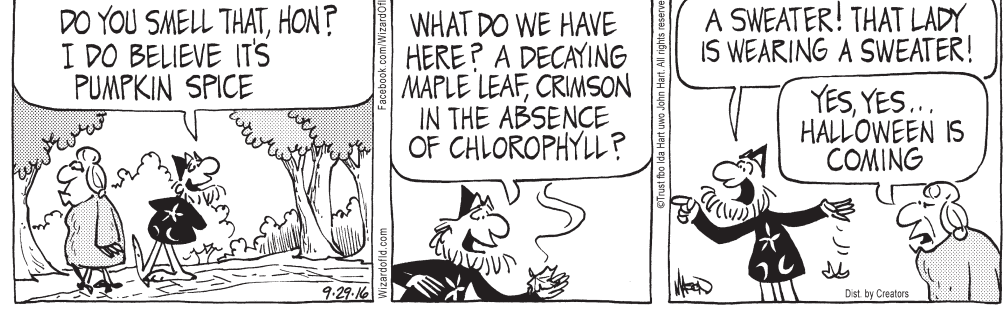
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