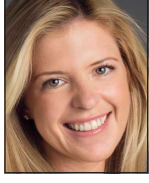


Situation that's not a comedy

Dear Annie: For the past two decades, my life has been an episode of the sitcom "Everybody Loves Raymond" on steroids.

My mother-in-law has made a wonderful grandmother, but she has constantly criticized my weight, my hairstyle, what I feed my children and how I dress and discipline them. She always does this out of earshot of her husband and son. I have kept my mouth shut to keep the peace, and I respect my dear father-in-law and husband too much to tell her off and cause a family rift.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Six months ago, she got a Facebook account for the first time. She wrote something rude about another family member, not knowing everyone could see it. We went over to show her how to remove it and explained that the whole world could see her inappropriate comment. She got defensive and called me hurtful names. I called her a troublemaker and walked out.

She hasn't spoken to me since, and neither has my father-in-law. He was not even there, so I can't imagine what she told him. My husband was there and knows I didn't do or say anything wrong and is not reach-

ing out to them because he knows his mother was wrong.

I tried writing my father-in-law a letter but got no response. His alienation hurts me more than anything because I can't believe he would go along with this. I know she will never apologize, but how do we rectify this if they continue to ignore phone calls, cards and letters? They are elderly, and I am afraid something will happen and my husband will live the rest of his life with regret over this. — *Daughter-in-Law in the Middle*

Dear DIL: The thing about sitcoms is that no matter how bad a family feud is, everything is neatly restored by the end of the 30-minute time slot, and the studio audience issues a collective "aww." If only.

Your husband has the biggest role here. Encourage him to set his (justified) anger aside and pay his parents a visit. No matter how big a drama queen she is, it will be hard for his mother to slam the door in the face of her baby boy. Once he's made amends, he can help smooth things over for you, too.

I'd also like to say that your husband and in-laws are lucky to have

you. You are a tolerant and caring person. Major props for holding the family together.

Dear Annie: The other day, you published a letter from "Senior in Connecticut," who is discomfited by public workers who call older patrons "honey" and other such terms.

If I may offer a view from the other side: Public servants, as we might be referred to, are often subjugated to these terms, as well. As a young woman in the public workforce, I am often subjected to older men calling me such names.

I have been told, as you offered, that it's more of a personal preference to be called by these names or not. As you can probably guess, it makes me incredibly uncomfortable. Just like "Senior in Connecticut," I interpret these names to be derogatory and demeaning, not flattering.

A good solution to both of our problems might be this: Don't call someone by one of these names unless you are sure that the person is comfortable with it. Asking certainly never hurts. And to those who are shaking their head and disagreeing, saying that it's "harmless": Is respecting someone else's wishes really that much of a burden on you? — *Disgruntled Public Worker*

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). There's so much on the agenda, and if you write it out and attack the items one by one you'll get through most of them on this incredibly productive, high-energy day.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). To be concerned about what an attractive person thinks of you is a trap. You are most attractive when you base your thoughts, feelings and motivations on your own self-respect.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You wouldn't readily categorize today's task as "fun," but since you have to do it anyway, you'd do well to try to find some novel aspect to it. While looking for something fresh here, you'll accidentally delight.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). It's becoming clearer that in order to effectively complete the job, you need the right tools. Timeliness is crucial now. Invest in the knowledge and resources you need to be successful.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You want to help your loved ones, and yet, if you do it all for them, you'll rob them of the pride of accomplishment. Settle back and watch a while. Only help when they're really and truly stuck.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). It's one of those days when you find it easy to appreciate your bountiful life. There's no reason to reach out for more because as you tend to what you have, more reaches out for you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You want to know what people are thinking, and you're not afraid to ask. What you learn will help you get yourself or your product aimed for maximum popularity.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The temptation exists to let hype replace action. Don't let the talk get ahead of you. Too much talk and you feel you've already done the thing. The task becomes boring in comparison to the talk.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Before you take it too seriously or accept it as the truth, think of social media as a performance, and one that most people deliver in the most flattering of theatrical lighting.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). There's something in this day that makes you nervous, and that, while uncomfortable, can be turned into a big plus for you. This is just the right level of challenge to strengthen your emotional resolve.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You want the new chapter to start, but it can't yet. These ideas haven't been explored to their natural conclusion. Go for closure. The others involved need it just as much as you do.

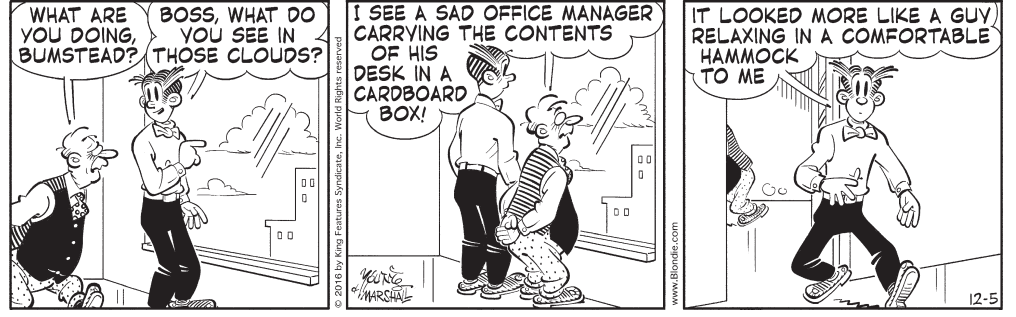
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The lasting impression won't be about what you wore or how you did your hair. The lasting impression is the one that causes the other person to feel. The deeper the feeling, the more indelible the impression.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 6). You'll enter an arena ripe with potential this year. The first decisions you make will set a tone and you could even be paid or friended based on the dynamics of the first few days. February brings a transformation; June brings travel. Joyful family events will serve as markers reminding you just how far you've come. Aries and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 8, 40, 3, 22 and 18.

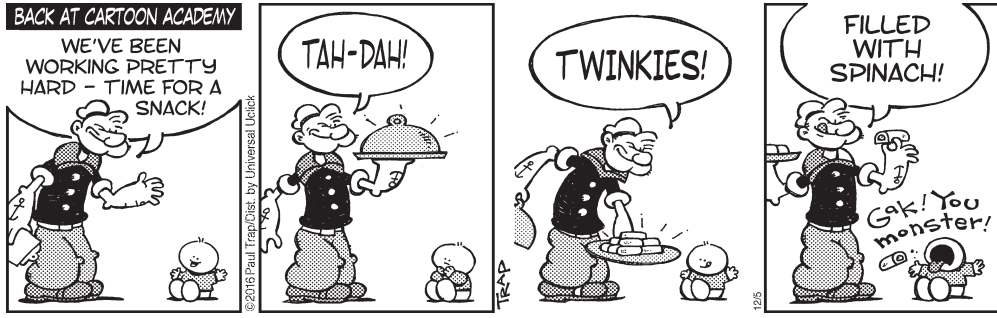
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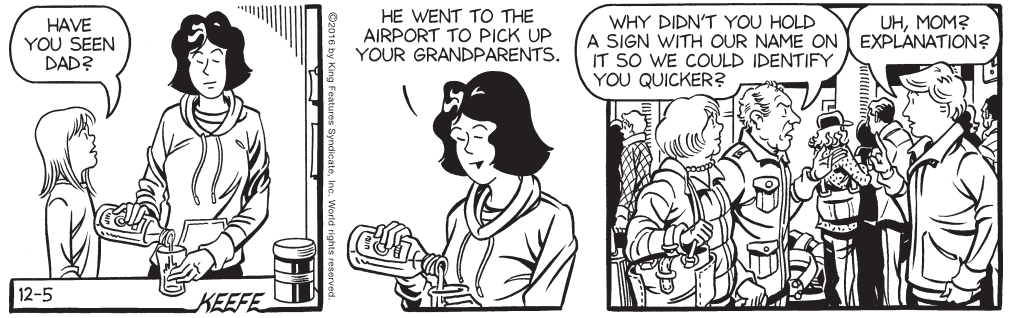
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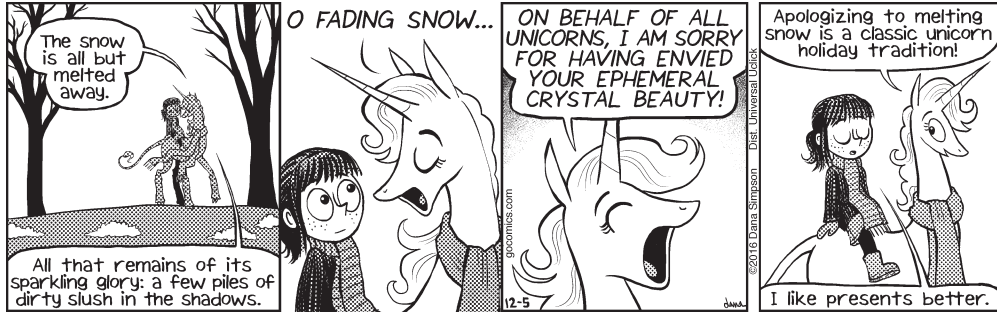
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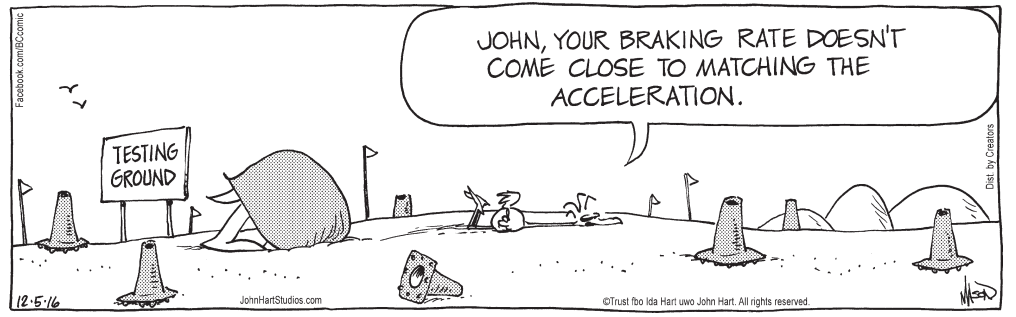
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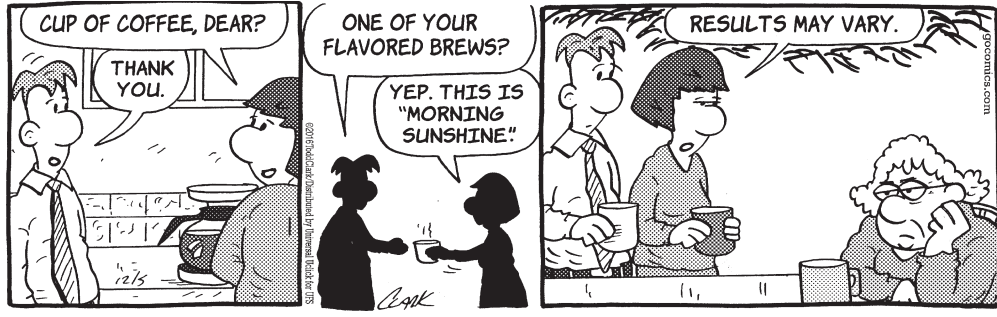
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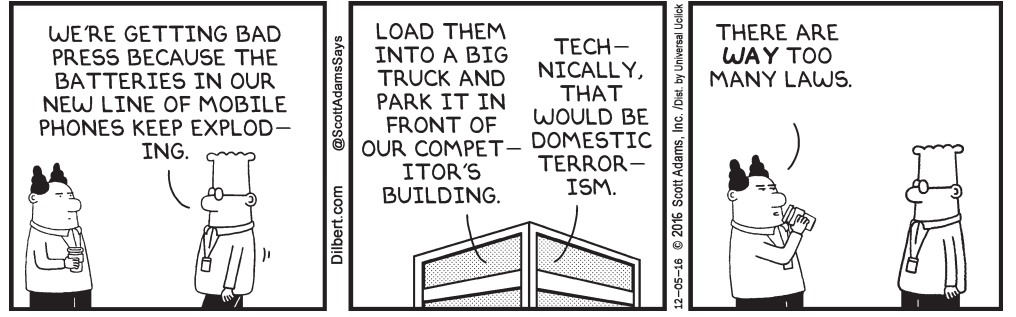
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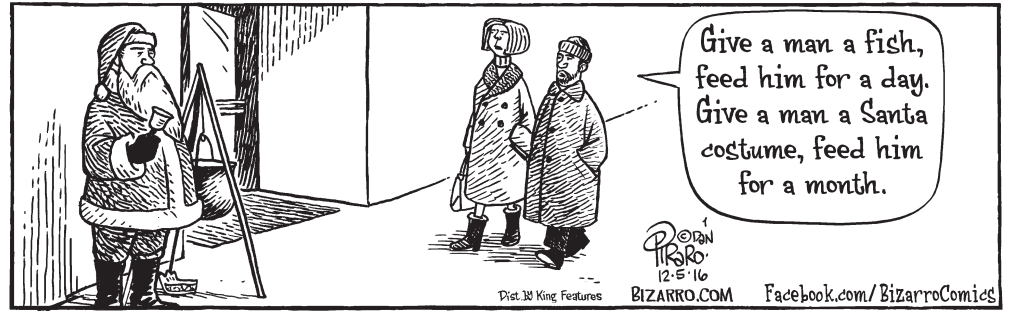
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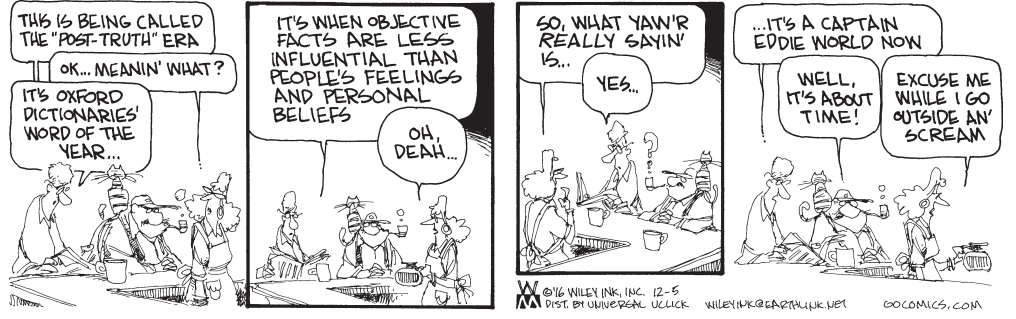
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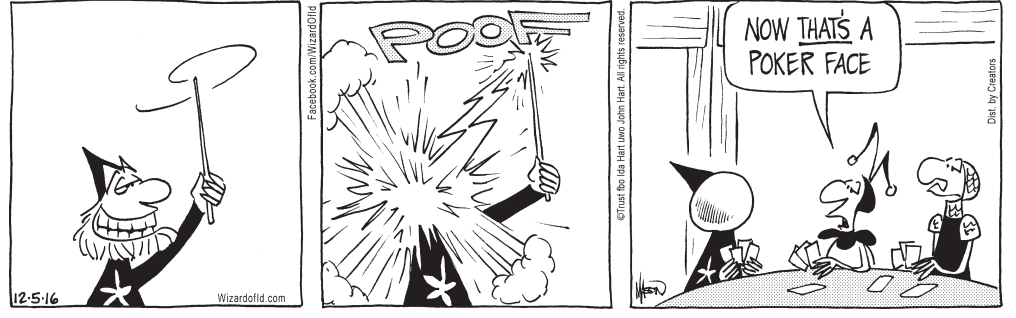
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