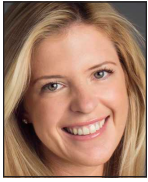


# Pressured to have another

**Dear Annie:** My son just turned 6 months old, and he is my entire world. I love him to pieces, and I love being a mom more than I thought was possible. I also work full time as a science teacher and softball coach at the local middle school. When I get home, I am beyond tired.

## DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.

My husband and I live very close to where we grew up — we are from the same town but didn't meet till after college — and our families are close by. This is super helpful when it comes to last-minute baby-sitting needs, hand-me-down toys and just being around supportive people. But being this close to our families is creating an issue.

Lately, my mother-in-law won't stop asking me when I'm going to get pregnant again. When I say that we're in no rush, she asks pointed questions. For example, "Don't you love being a mom?" "Don't you want your son to grow up with siblings?" Of course I do! And I do want more children, but Annie, I'm so drained all the time. And I didn't know the strain that a baby would

put on my relationship with my husband. I'm barely holding on as is, and I want to take the time to enjoy being with my son. How do I get my mother-in-law to back off without offending her? I don't want to have another fight. But I'm not ready for another kid, either. — *Tired in Tulsa*

**Dear Tired:** Your mother-in-law's pointed questions are best met with a soft — but clear — response. You might say something like, "I am overjoyed by how excited you are to be a grandma. Thank you so much for the help you've given your son and me. We definitely want siblings, but I'm not nearly ready to think about that yet. When I am ready, I promise you'll be the first to know."

If she continues scanning the sky for storks and giving you the third degree, enlist your husband for support. He can get away with being more blunt. After all, he is her baby boy.

**Dear Annie:** You advised someone ("Sudden Loss for Words in TN") how to discuss a recent death, a suicide, with

someone who misses the decedent greatly. I can tell you what I did and how it turned out.

In the early 1960s, the mother of a chum died suddenly of a condition that was very seldom fatal. Her widower, son and daughters were shattered, but they coped, being all strong people. I was about 20 years old and knew the woman only tangentially, but I wrote a letter of condolence. I stressed that I remembered my chum's mother and would for the rest of my life. Last month, I had a rare visit from my friend, who is now a hale septuagenarian like me. He remembered my letter and my vow to remember his mother and said that he had felt comforted by the simple fact that I remembered her.

Of course, I have many family members to remember now, as well as more than a few chums, but I, too, am strong, and I cope.

I think you might advise your correspondent in Tennessee to report that she remembers the absent friend and will do so steadfastly. That declaration might encourage the grieving family members who hear it. Dead people who are remembered are still with us, in a way.

## TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** Feel scattered? Think of it as a prolonged state of brainstorming. You're searching for one small new thing to add to your life to brighten your mood and enhance the impression you make on the world.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** Some of the good questions have answers. But most of them just hang their, ripe, overhead and will continue to do so for many lifetimes, scenting the air with their sweetness, drawing our imaginations up and up and up.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** Give yourself a wide margin for error. You won't need it, but this will keep you at the low stress level that allows for maximum poise and charisma to spare. You'll like whom this attracts.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** Laughter usually bonds people, but be aware that it can also alienate people. Not everyone has your stellar sense of humor, especially when it comes to kidding that's a little too close for home. Sensitivity required.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** From Hitchcock to Shakespeare, the best storytellers know to leave the most intense scenes off the stage and let the audience fill in the blanks with imagination. You'll benefit from doing the same. Say nothing. Let them fill in the blanks.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** The social technology that is supposed to facilitate human connection often has the opposite effect, drawing us into a social fantasy while we ignore those who actually exist at an arm's length. Don't let it happen to you and yours.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Greatness and inner strength go hand in hand. You develop it the same way you do physical strength —

by doing hard things over and over. It's why you choose to stick to this job until it's done.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** The animals have an effect on you, and you'll be more keenly aware of this. Whether you care for an animal or just admire the natural world, you'll be enriched by other lifeforms today.

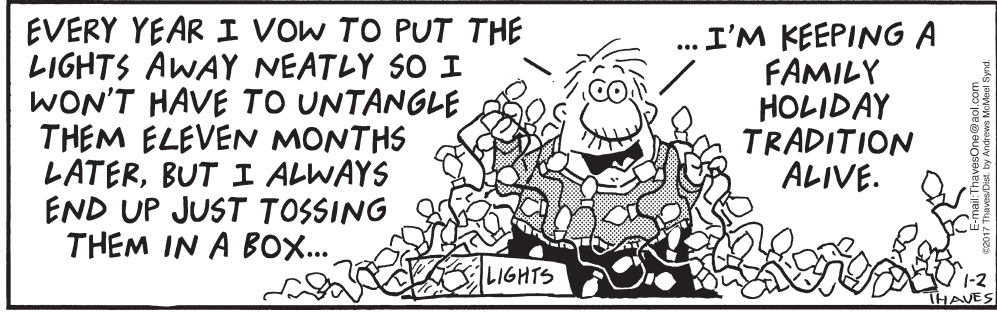
**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Being in control of a small part of your environment will make you feel in control of your whole world. To extend the idea, what you do for your body, you'll do for your life.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** When it comes to "getting over it," there's no time limit. Take as long as you need. Just know that until you're "over it," it will be hard to get "on with it," so it's in your own best interest not to wallow.

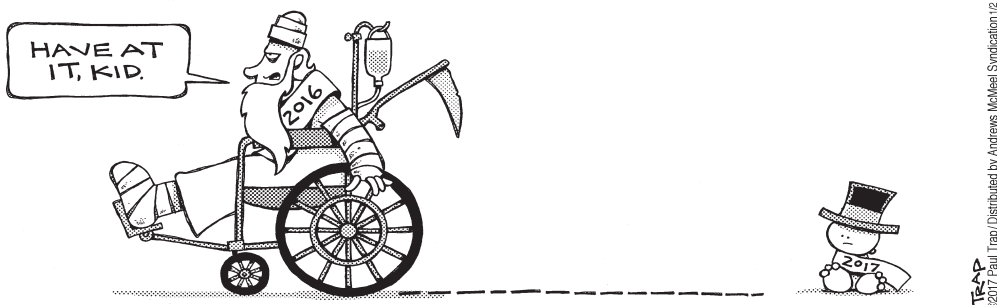
**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** The concept of one person not being good enough for another person is truly false. There are better matches and worse matches, but no one is inherently better than anyone else. **PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Life doesn't usually offer closure in any kind of neat form. Endings often aren't. And even when they are, they can be so long and drawn out, you might as well say "so long" instead of "goodbye."

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 3).** There will be a role reversal at the top of your solar return that will help you finally claim a property, obtain a title or change a habit. The early-year action will center on a youthful presence in your life. Windfalls come in March and July. Too many opinions come at you in August; stand strong in just one: yours. Libra and Pisces adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 20, 5, 33 and 19.

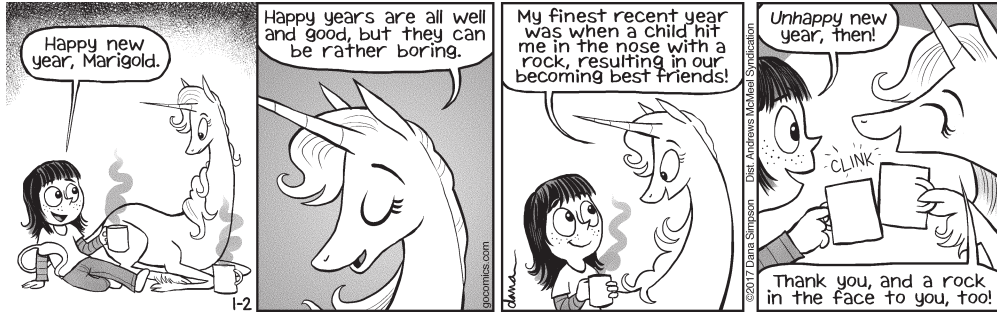
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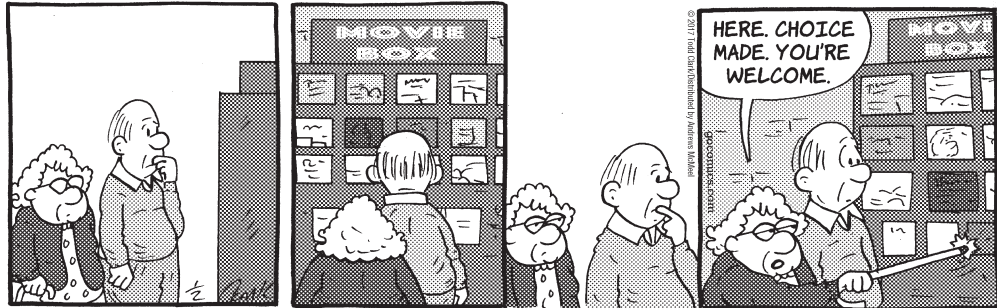
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## PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



## LOLA



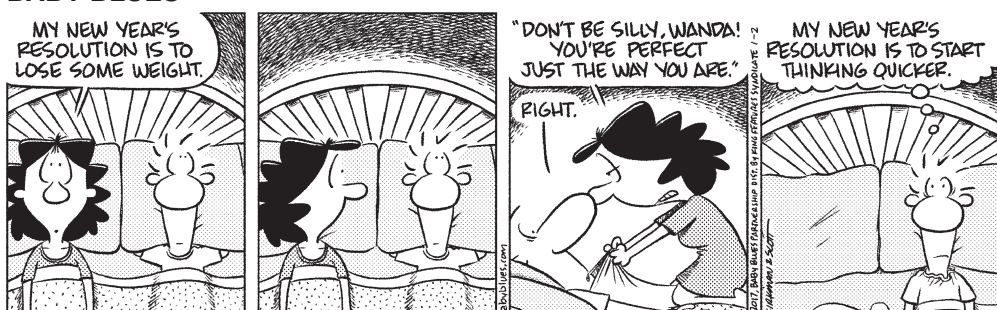
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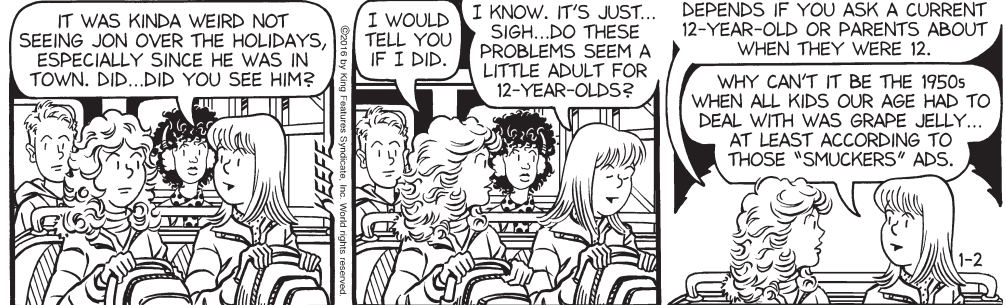
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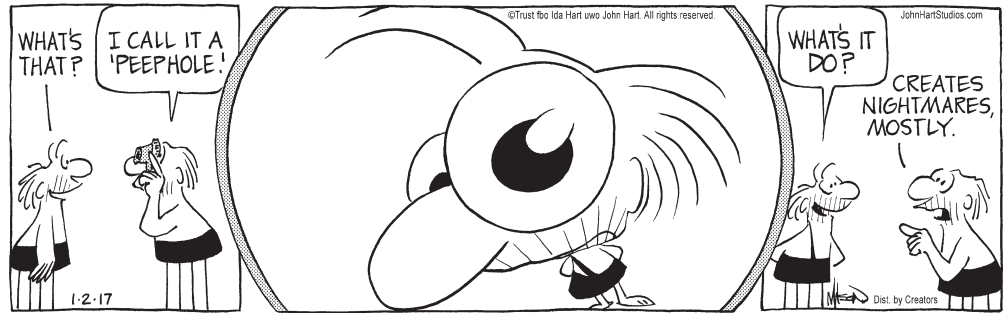
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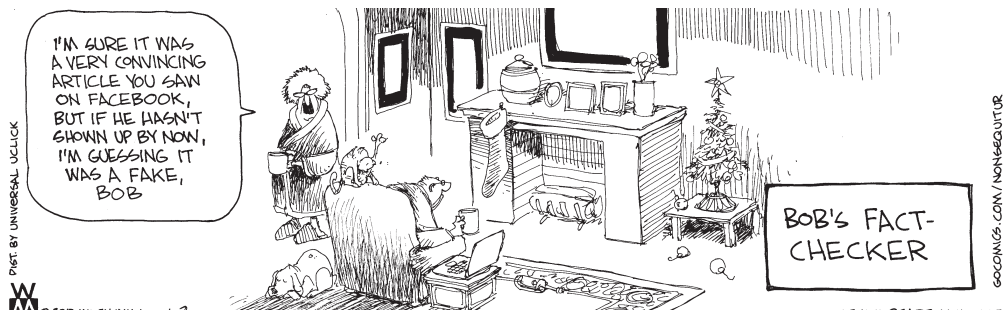
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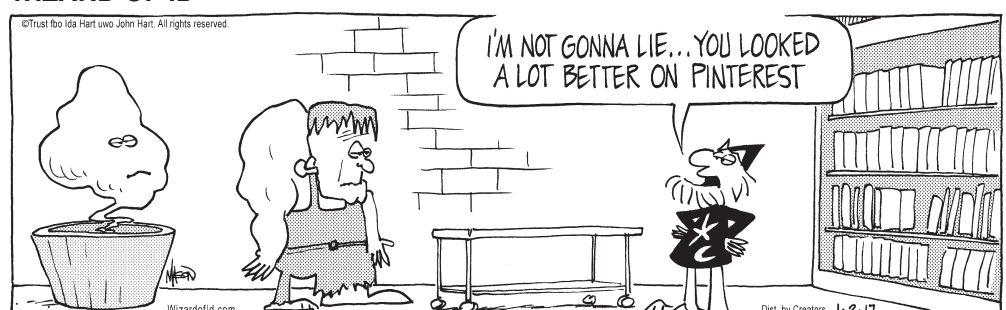
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## NON SEQUITUR



## WIZARD OF ID



## ROSE IS ROSE

