

Parents worry about son

Dear Annie: We have three children, ages 29, 27 and 23. The youngest is a senior at a Midwestern university. We had our children rather late in life; I'm 66, and my wife is 60. We have been fortunate and been able to provide a nice life for all of them.

We have had issues with the youngest for 10 years, mostly centered on drugs. He saw several counselors, but he would snow all of them to the point that they would feel sorry for him. It got so bad we sent him to military school in his junior year of high school (which all of us, including him, agree saved his life).

Though he is much better than he was, he still continues to use pot daily. He and I vehemently disagree over the harmfulness/value of pot, its addictiveness, its long-term effects and his reasons for using it. He says pot helps him unwind and handle stress. I'm not sure he really knows what stress is.

When he comes home on school breaks, he knows better than to smoke in the house, but he always finds an excuse to leave

the house at least once a day. I am afraid he is ruining his life. He has one more semester left and needs to realize the importance of starting a career and dedicating a large portion of his energy to it versus partying all the time. He has no desire to change his activities. What can we do? — *At Our Wits' End*

Dear Wits: As counterintuitive as it sounds, the sooner you let go the sooner he'll realize for himself that it's time to stop partying. The more vocal you are in trying to change your son the more he'll stay the same. That said, when he's at your home, he should respect your rules. No bringing marijuana into the house.

Dear Annie: Your mailbox must be overflowing with rebuttals from those of us familiar with addiction. I have not had a drop of alcohol for over 40 years, graduated from the Rutgers Center of Alcohol Studies and worked in the field of addiction.

The letter from "Concerned Parents" states that their son was addicted to pain meds after surgery. It was probably drugs, not

alcohol, but he claims it is the reason for his alcohol addiction.

The parents write that they are letting the son's addiction ruin their social life because they do not serve alcohol to guests in the home to protect him from temptation. That is naive and unrealistic. After all, there are bars on every block and alcohol in most homes.

The parents need education and should attend Al-Anon meetings to understand that recovery from alcohol abuse requires not changes in others' lives but changes in the addict's life.

It is the son's responsibility to control his own priorities, life choices and sobriety. Alcoholics Anonymous can offer help for him. — *Someone Who Knows Better*

Dear Someone: Thank you for your letter. My intention was not to hold the parents totally responsible for their son's sobriety but to encourage them to provide the best conditions for him. However, I realized I missed the mark. They shouldn't revolve their lives around his addiction. I second your Al-Anon recommendation, and I encourage any readers in similar situations to learn more at <http://www.al-anon.org>.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
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TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). History is more art than science. Like magnetic audiotape, memories get a little more corrupted every time they are recalled. As for today's story, expect that its emotional truth might be different from its factual truth.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The gurus suggest that the path to enlightenment involves the elimination of opinion. That would be taking it to extremes today, though you might temper your opinions with a fair dose of open-mindedness.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You're a hard worker, and you'll play even harder if you can find the time to do it. If you can't, then make the time. Because it's what you do during off hours that will have the most impact.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You'll dig in your heels today. You set your own groove and you'll move when you're ready. Even when you feel the hand of fate at your back, you won't budge. No one, not even destiny, can rush you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). People who are never wrong are universally suspected, and no one likes a know-it-all. It's why you go the route of curiosity and experimentation and possess a cavalier attitude about correctness in general today. It's simply more fun that way.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Like an actor who is cast in an unlikely role, you have some stretching to do. Is this an honor, a challenge or a pain? Likely all three will fit in somehow before the show is over.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Go on and argue for your side. You'll be respected for having an opinion — and a spine. Keep it good-natured and light and no one will be offended, even if they disagree.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). "Fake it till you make it" is one approach. Then there's the one where you're at peace with being out of your element. A little lost, you're confident you'll work it out and the others will want to help you do that.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You don't need to get more things done. You need to get important things done. What's going to feed the bottom line? What's going to matter most at the end of the day? What's going to make you smile?

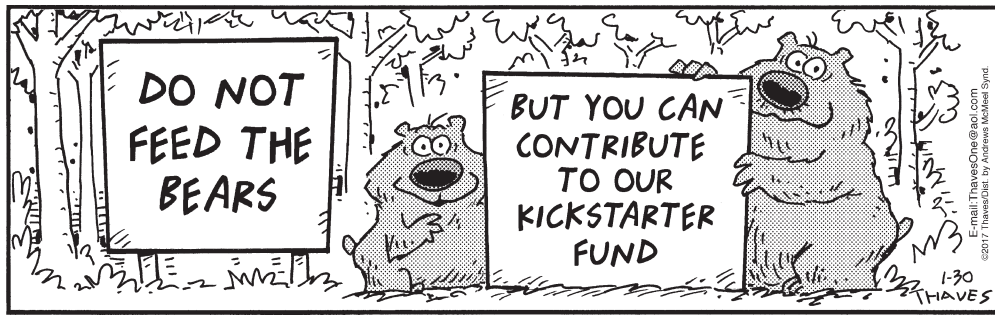
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Like the goat that is your symbol, you're willing to climb over the obstacles in your path. If you have to do that every time you pass, though, you'll waste a lot of energy. Remove the obstacles instead. Clear the road.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The competition for your attention today is rather fierce. So many offers will be made to you — mostly trivial and best passed up. But one offer will be interesting, possibly even vital. Your instincts will help you discern.

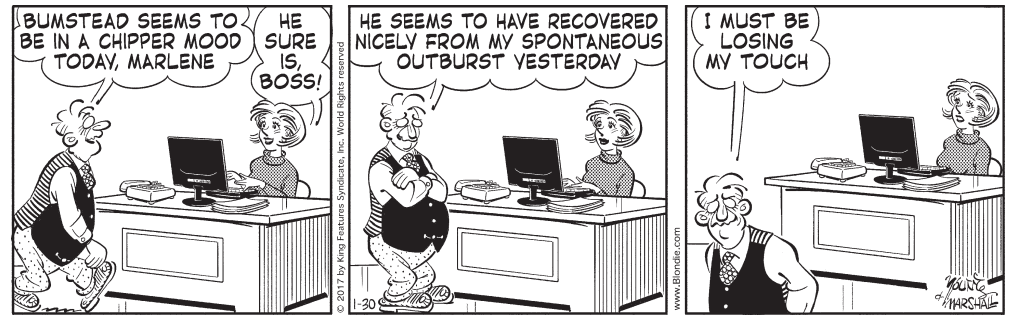
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Don't do it because it's a "good opportunity." You could fritter away your energy trying to take advantage of all the "good opportunities." Unless this one deeply inspires you, it's not good enough.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 31). Your communication skills and style evolve to a new high this year, and this touches all you do in a favorable way. Clear and patient relating will pull people close to you. You'll stash extra money in March until a worthy investment comes along that will allow you to double it. June expands your family. Leo and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 7, 30, 5, 28 and 44.

FRANK AND ERNEST



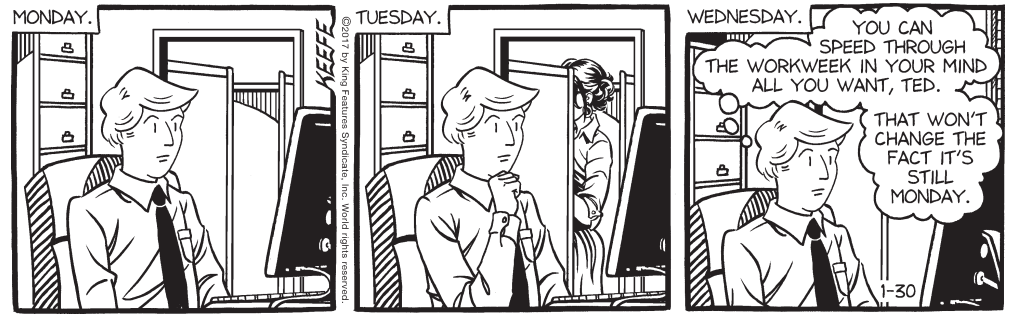
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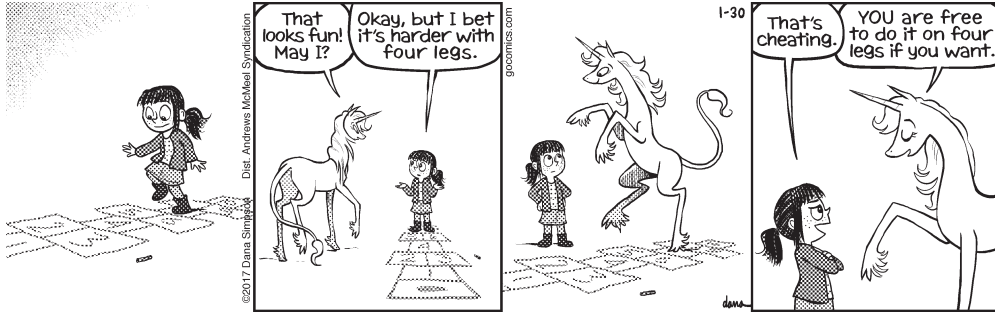
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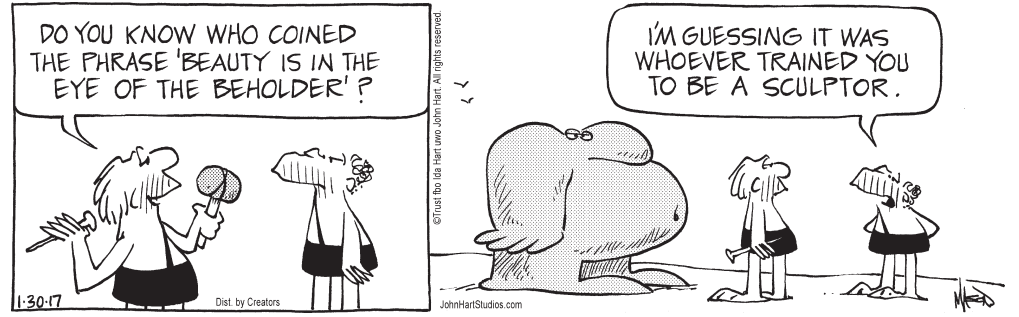
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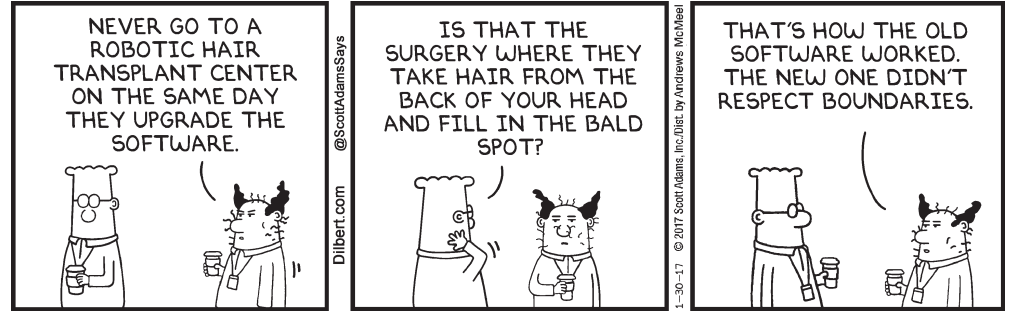
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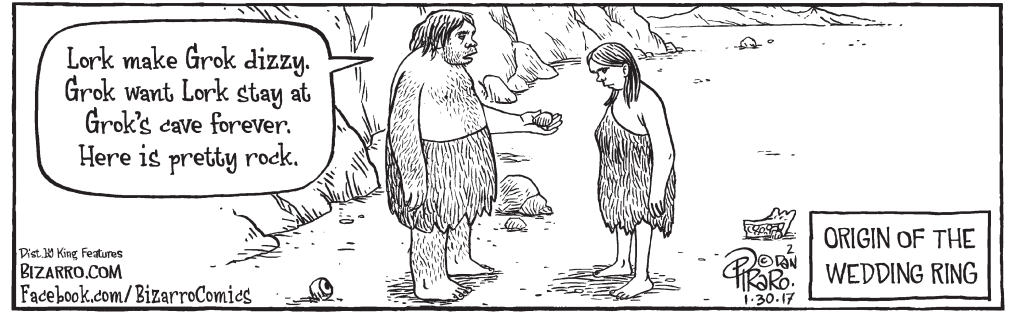
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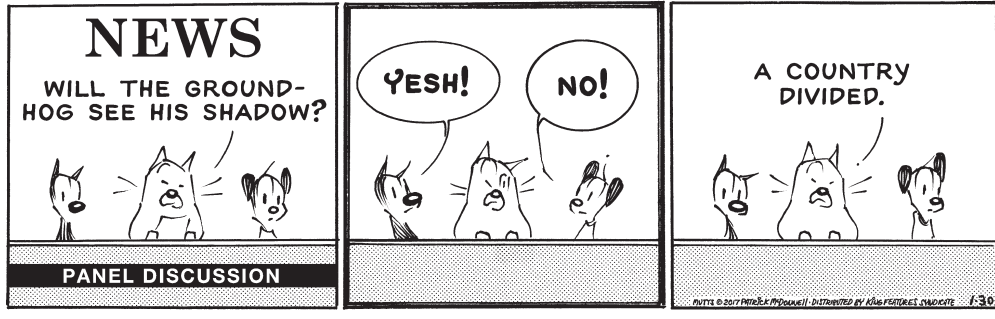
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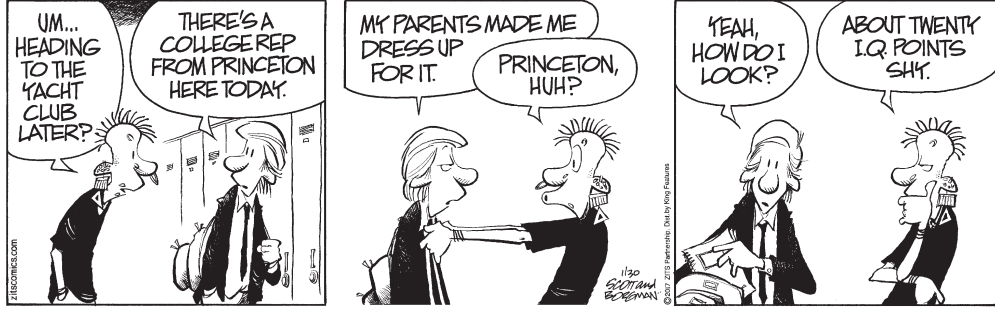
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