

# Forgiving family members

**Dear Annie:** I am struggling with forgiveness. I am the father of a beautiful 15-year-old girl. On Mother's Day several years ago, she told me that she had been molested by my nephew, a boy I treated like a son. Unfortunately, this has completely torn our family apart. We went through the legal system, which was very frustrating, and he has pleaded and served his sentence.

What I am trying to do now is find forgiveness, but to this day, my nephew has denied that anything ever happened, and his mother has backed him up on this, as well. So I find myself struggling with forgiving both my nephew and my sister, especially because they have not sought my forgiveness or attempted any reconciliation to our family as a whole — which, if things were reversed, as a father, son, brother and uncle, I would feel obligated to do. I pray often for help. I know that forgiveness is not for them but for me, but this has been a struggle, to say the least. Thank you for your response. — *Trying to Forgive*

**Dear Trying:** I applaud your

wisdom. You're right; forgiveness is more for you than for them. What your nephew did was horrible, and it will take a long time for your anger to subside enough to make room for any forgiveness. Be patient with yourself.

Even having the intention or will to do something — that is progress in the right direction.

Also know that forgiving them doesn't mean you have to want to spend time with them. It's good to forgive in your heart, but it's important to maintain a healthy distance to protect yourself, especially if they are still denying what happened.

**Dear Annie:** I have a wonderful stepson and daughter-in-law. They are both social and attend most family events. Over the many years, they have been to our house for dinner more than 30 times and to other relatives' homes for dinner, as well. The problem is that they never ask to bring anything and never come with a gift of any kind. I have asked them before to bring what they want to drink, and they don't even do that. Our daughter-in-

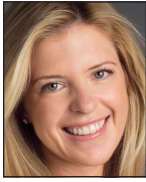
law says that because she didn't bring a dish, she will help with the dishes. Our other guests bring something and still help clean up. The problem has lately become exacerbated because they have a baby in tow and now don't help clean up, as they have to leave early to put the baby to bed.

How can I approach them without causing a rift and seeming like the ugly stepmom? My husband refuses to say anything. — *Tired of the Empty-Handed*

**Dear Tired:** Your husband's refusal to say anything hints that he doesn't think this sort of etiquette is really that important. It's no wonder his son never got the memo on how to be a good dinner guest.

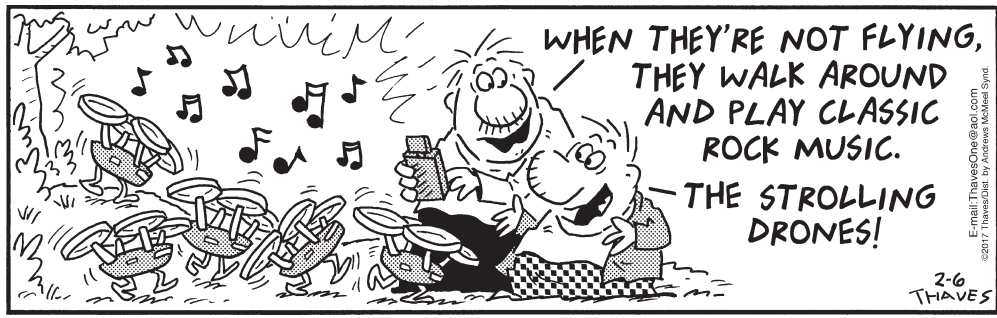
Next time you're hosting, give your stepson and daughter-in-law very specific instructions. Leave no wiggle room: "Please do me a favor and bring an appetizer." Putting it in those terms will make clear that the appetizer is not just for them and not just to be brought if they feel like it. It's for helping you, the hostess. You really shouldn't have to spell that sort of thing out, but as a mother figure, you'll be doing them a favor.

## DEAR ANNIE

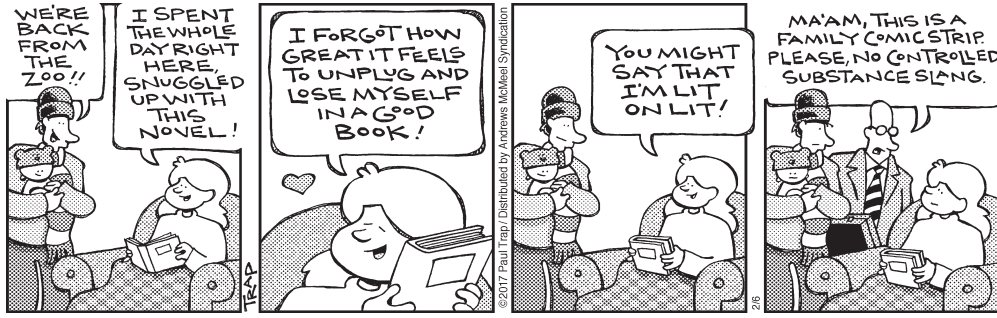


Annie Lane  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.

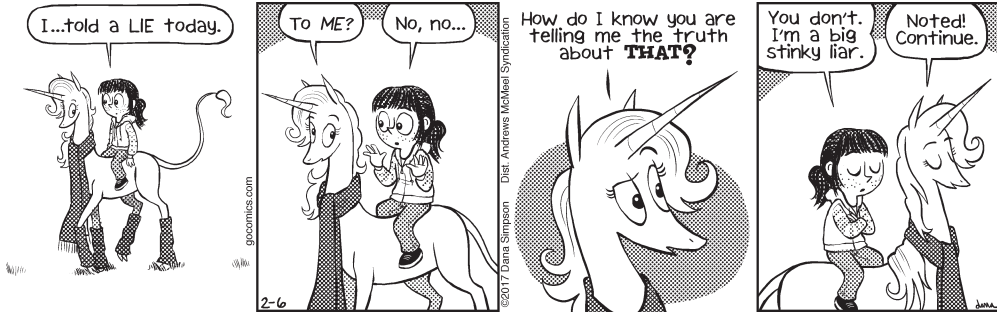
## FRANK AND ERNEST



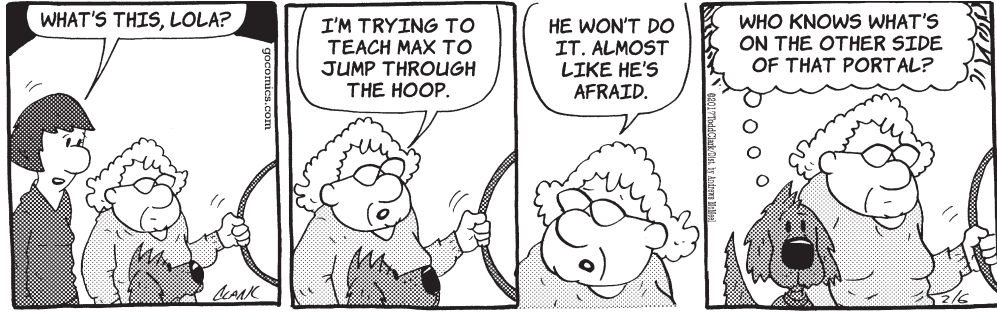
## THATABABY



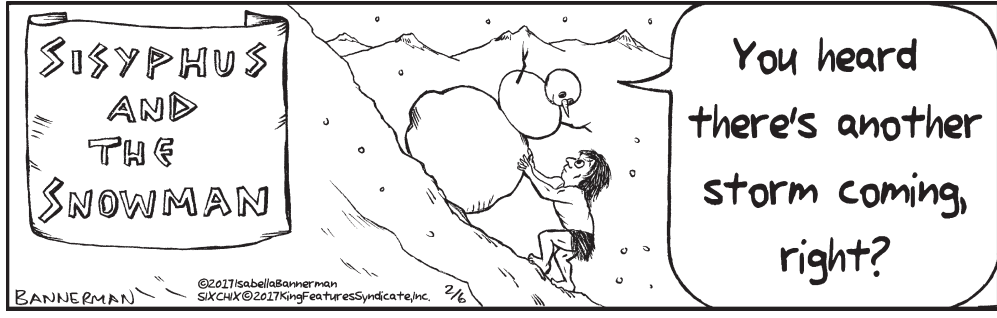
## PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



## LOLA



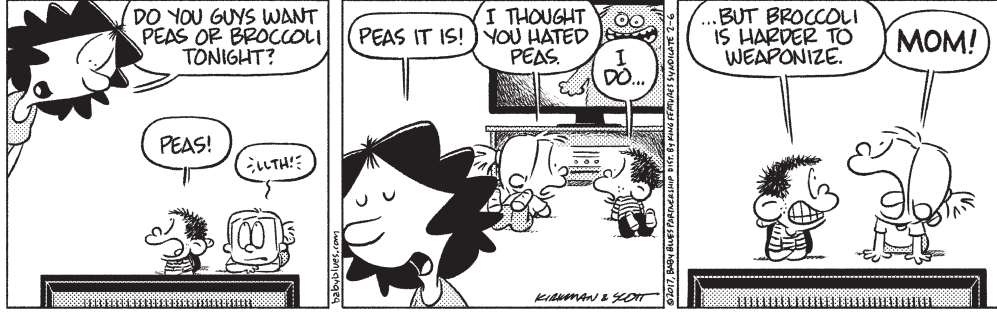
## SIX CHIX



## MUTTS



## BABY BLUES



## ZITS



## TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** Work under pressure, handle crises, impress your peers, be independent, stand out in a crowd — yes, that's one way to go. Or you can chill until you're quiet enough on the inside to see what needs to be done and why.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** You own a lot of items. Something about that will be today's main problem. You may find yourself in elimination mode. Instead of asking, "Will I use this someday?" ask, "Do I use it now? Does it work well? Do I love it?"

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** You're not entirely comfortable making people work for your respect and attention, but it happens that way sometimes. Though you're too compassionate to make them work too hard, some amount of effort is good for all.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** You may hear the words of contrition you have been waiting for, but how valuable is an apology really? Ultimately it will be deeds, not words, that bring a situation back into balance.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** The cat doesn't agonize about when, where and how to catch the mouse. It watches, alert, and when it feels an advantage it pounces. You benefit from going deeper into the feline nature of your sun-sign symbol. Be the cat.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** When you take a moment to watch the grace of a bird, the elegant pattern of leaves or the peaceful way the grass recognizes the wind, you are letting the nature spirits energize you.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Resist the temptation to get involved in the struggle. You may want to make things right, but this is not your battle. The combatant's interests are not your

interests. You grow stronger with every conflict you avoid.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** The greatest asset you have for making a contribution to the world is yourself. Follow the essential rule every skilled company owner understands: Protect the asset.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Conversations get increasingly interesting — not because of what is said, but because of what's in the pause. Silence will be the connective essence of words.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** May not today, but someday you'll regret settling for a poor quality of attention from the people around you. Stand up for yourself. If they don't show signs of respect, go where your input will be better appreciated.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** The day features a rather intricate game. You've a talent for strategy today. Plan several moves in advance. A temporary move backward will lead to a giant move forward.

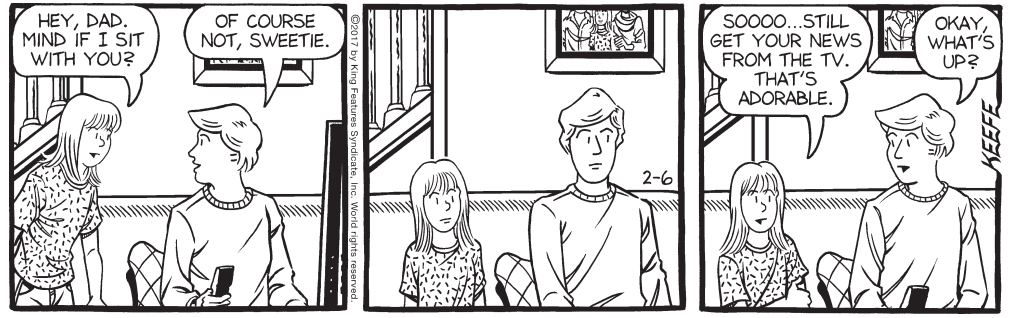
**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** You'll have success when you employ your instinct about what other people like. You're so adept at placing yourself in the hypothetical, seeing things how others might, empathizing — perhaps because you find the exercise enjoyable.

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 7).** You'll hear magic words this month. Your opinion of yourself isn't based on what others think, but it's nice to be awarded, which you will be — twice this year. March and June are your best financial months. The expansion that happens in September will help you make a difference in someone's life. Gemini and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 12, 18, 33 and 28.

## BLONDIE



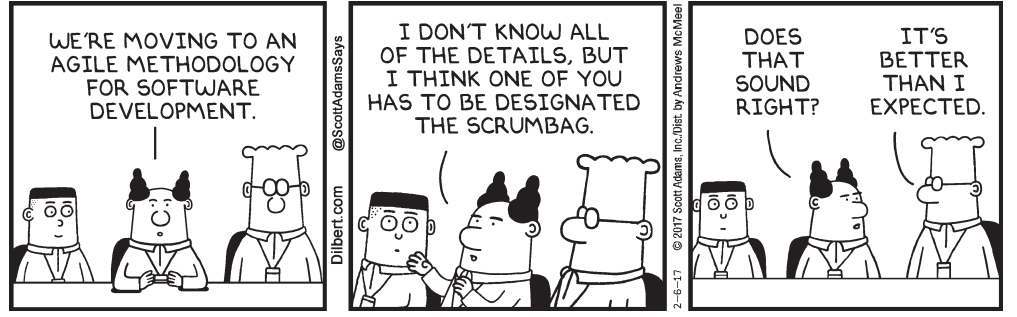
## SALLY FORTH



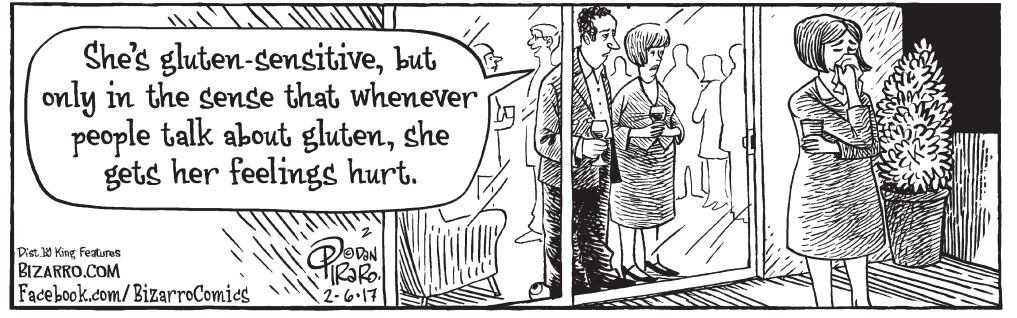
## B.C.



## DILBERT



## BIZARRO



## NON SEQUITUR



## WIZARD OF ID



## ROSE IS ROSE

