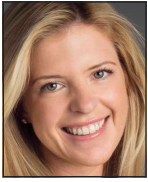


# Facing a tough deal breaker

**Dear Annie:** After a series of, let's just say, not-so-nice relationships, my best friend and old college roommate set me up with a girl from his hometown named "Stephanie." I've never believed in love at first sight, but this was pretty close. We hit it off and have a ton in common. A year and a half later and we're engaged. I'm excited to make Stephanie my wife.

## DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.

We decided to go to a premarriage retreat through our church. During the retreat, the leaders ask you all sorts of questions about your plans for the future. We were compatible on all the major answers — except for one. "How many children would you like to have?"

I wrote that one or two would be nice; she wrote five! When we went back into our room to discuss, she explained how she came from a small family and always dreamed of having a bigger family. Well, I came from a large family and never felt that I got enough attention, so I have always wanted to have just one child — two at the most. Is this problem a deal breaker for our relationship? — *Apprehensive*

**Dear Apprehensive:** Only you

can determine what your own personal deal breakers are, as they're different for everyone. But if you're at all willing to consider having more children, perhaps you and Stephanie could meet right in the middle and settle on having three.

And if you can diplomatically reach such an important agreement, you and Stephanie have the stuff of a strong partnership. Compromise and marriage go together like a horse and carriage — and that's a good thing. Two hearts and minds working together are better than one.

**Dear Annie:** I'm writing in response to the letter from "Feeling So Bad," who wrote about the death of her friend "Marie." She was angry that Marie's husband, "Bill," didn't provide updates about Marie's health or inform neighbors of her death.

I am sorry that "Feeling So Bad" lost her friend, but it appears that her only contact with Marie or Bill was by phone. I guess she never took over a casserole that Bill could have heated up for dinner. I guess she never stopped by and offered to stay with Marie so that Bill could get out of the house to run errands,

take a walk, go to a movie — anything to give him some relief from the constant and often overwhelming needs of his wife. Do you know that the stress of being a caretaker often results in the death of the caretaker before the patient? I feel sorry that "Feeling So Bad" was upset not to get a notice. I expect that Bill, as I did after my husband died of Alzheimer's disease, slept for 24 hours. When my husband died, I didn't care about getting out "notices" to so-called friends. I did call those I knew cared.

Sorry, but I'm not sympathetic. Instead of feeling bad, "Feeling So Bad" should feel guilty that she ignored the needs of her friend and hope that next time, she will find time to actually visit and provide assistance. — *Sad Experience*

**Dear Sad:** I'm sorry for the loss of your husband. And your letter is a good reminder that it's important to reach out to friends and family who are grieving, even if we feel awkward or unsure of what to say. However, it seems you're still holding on to a lot of anger toward people who weren't there for you. For your own sake, I would encourage you to try to forgive them. Let go of that anger so you're free to more fully embrace life.

## TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** You've a success story to share. Be discerning, though. Certain friends will be too jealous to be genuinely happy for you. It's obviously less than ideal, but the friendship will be stronger when you're sensitive to such quirks.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** You crave the joy that comes from letting go of control. The way to get exciting results is to set boundaries and then encourage your crew to go wild within those boundaries.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** You're thinking deeper and wider. Don't be surprised if the people around you do not see the same options that you see. You'll either show them the way or preserve a special route for yourself.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** This is not a zero-sum game. Your success will not come at the expense of anyone else. The cost will be paid by you and you alone. The rewards will go to you, too.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** You're not lost. You're just paying attention in a new way, which can be disorienting. Close observation can make the familiar seem unfamiliar. Take breaks. Observation takes energy. It's harder work than it seems.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Would happiness prevail if not for the current problem? No. The current problem itself is integral to happiness. You'll derive great satisfaction and pride from solving it.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** While it would be foolish to aim to make mistakes, it's equally silly to avoid and fear them. The wise do not aim to live without folly. There will be much to learn in a tidy little mess.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Trust your instincts. They are creative, accurate, attractive, compelling and healthy. Whoever told you that you couldn't trust your instincts was acting out of self-interest at the time.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** From Shakespeare to Disney, the dramatists agree that evil plans are most harmful to the one planning them. All you have to do is mind your own business and the drama will take care of itself.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** While it's cynical to think that people are being nice in hopes of future favors returned, it's not altogether wrong today, either. Luckily, the land of politics is one in which you're well versed.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Managing expectations will be a very important part of your day. If you can master this (mainly by under-promising and over-delivering), you'll wind up a hero.

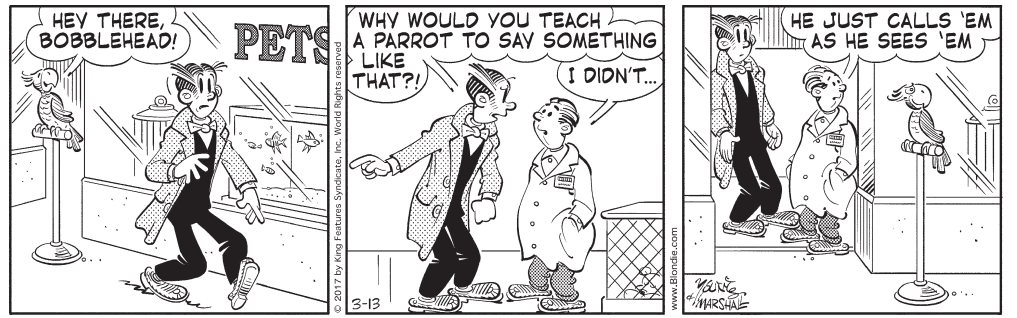
**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** If you downplay your accomplishments, you'll insinuate doubt in an otherwise neutral mind. If you praise yourself, it will only annoy. For today, you'll win socially by not discussing yourself at all.

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (March 14).** There's sunshine in your mind this year, and the cheerfulness you feel will touch lives in ways known and unknown to you. Get out of a competition in the early part of this solar return. Compete only with yourself. You'll accept an honor in May. Contracts favor you in July and October. You'll cash out in 2018. Gemini and Cancer adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 6, 10, 33, 28 and 45.

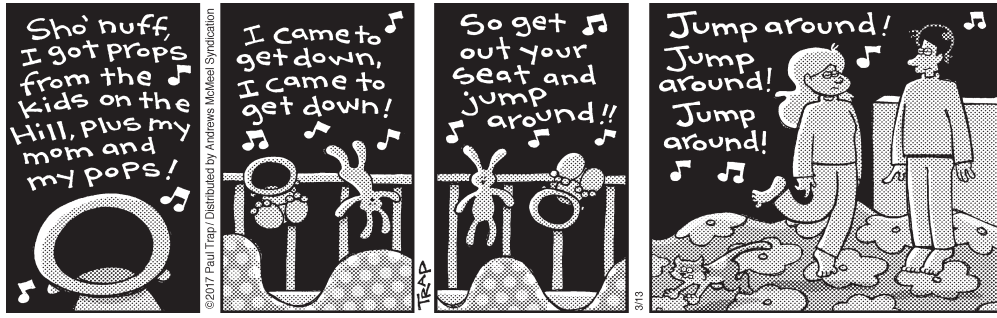
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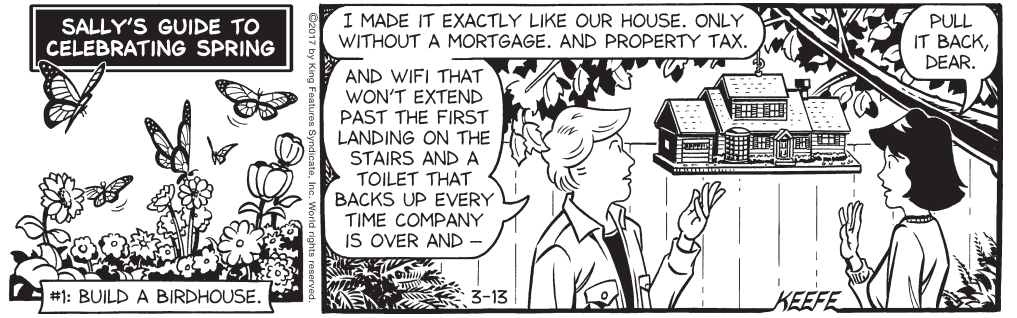
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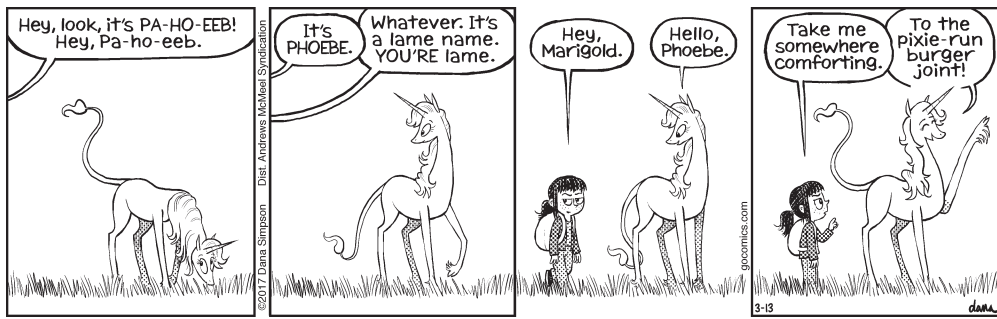
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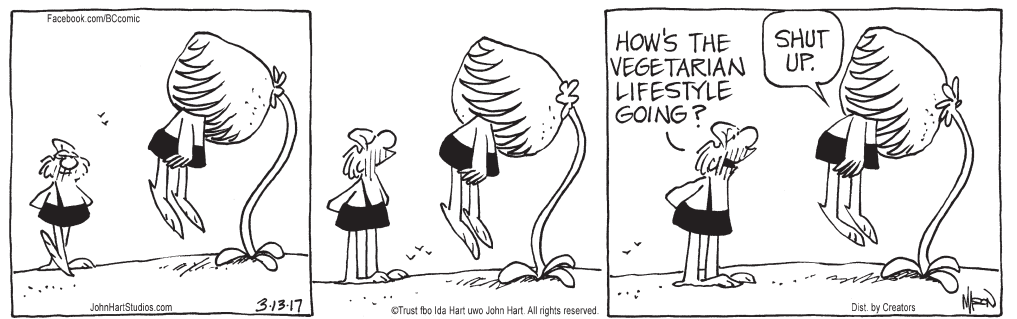
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## PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



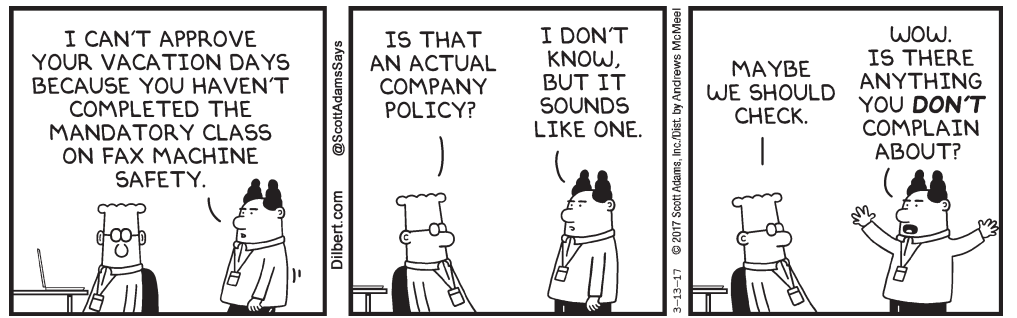
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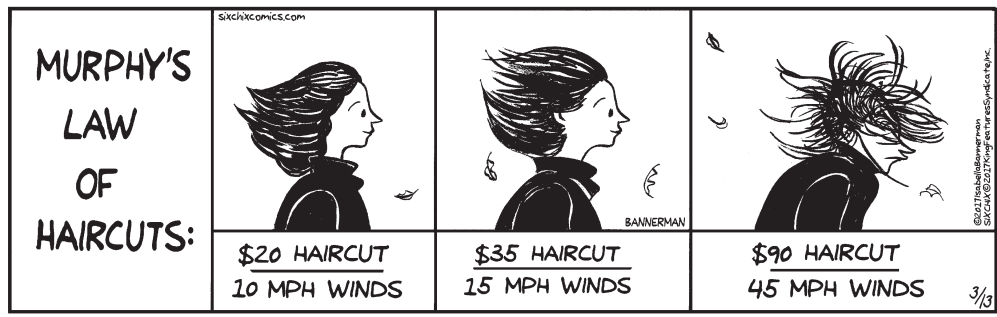
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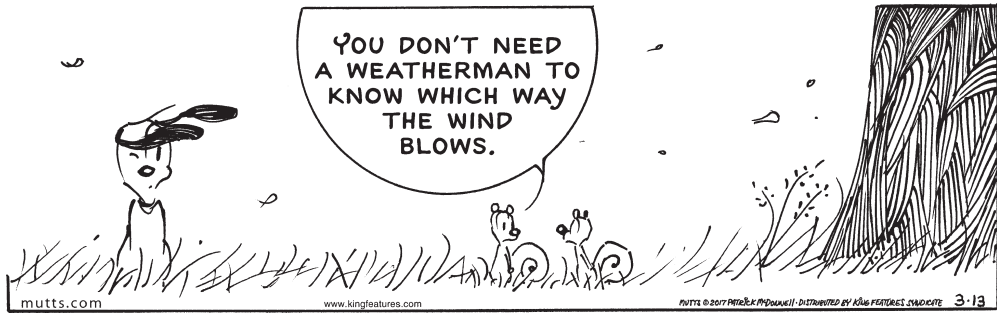
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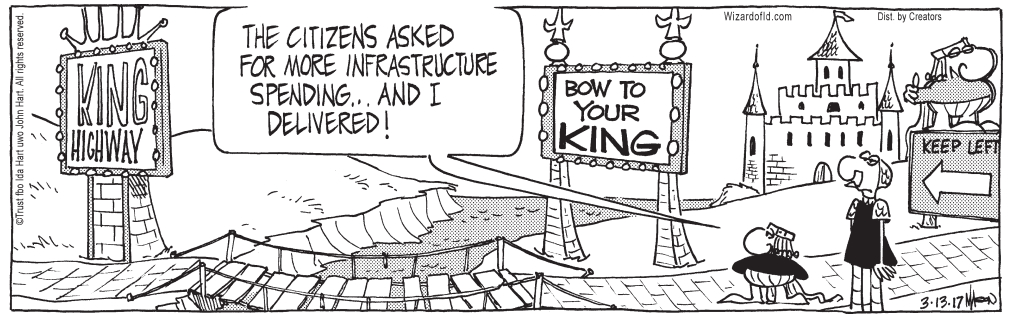
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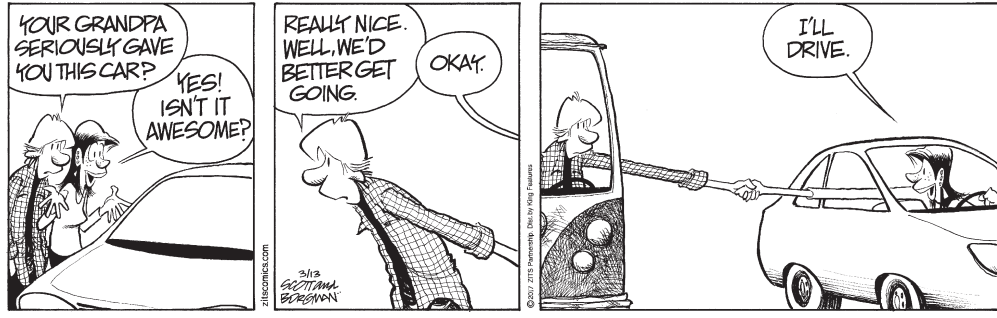
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## ROSE IS ROSE

