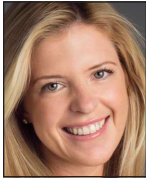


When HR is the problem

Dear Annie: We work in a small office with just over 20 employees. It has recently become common knowledge that the human resources manager, "Melissa," is sleeping with the principal in our firm, "Larry." Throughout her eight years with this private firm, the closed-door huddles were always viewed as suspect, but they were both married, and those of us naïve enough to assume the best hoped that it was professional. The timeline is fuzzy, but Melissa's divorce seemed to follow the beginning of the now three-year affair by about a year. Larry's divorce is not yet final.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Regardless, Melissa has never been seen as an effective HR representative. There are several reasons for that, but it's mainly because of her obvious familiarity with Larry. With the revelation of their affair, she's lost all remaining credibility in her role. Is there a standard of ethics for an HR department? It's a department of one, so where should we employees turn with an issue that clearly could not be handled by her with an unbiased, disentangled perspective? Their dirty laun-

dry is having an unnerving effect on everyone. — *Unrepresented*

Dear Unrepresented: Shame on these two for letting their dirty laundry stink up the whole office. They should know better. Melissa's job as the HR representative is to regulate fraternization, not engage in it. If there is anyone above or equal to Larry's ranking, anonymously report your concerns. If Larry doesn't recognize the error of his ways yet, he'll soon see the consequences unfold throughout the company. Such unsavory behavior is toxic to morale.

Dear Annie: I just read the letter from "Lonesome," the 52-year-old man who thinks it's too late for him. Just over a year ago, I was in the same kind of situation. My caregiving role was gone. I felt lonely and emotionally drained. I believed that no one would ever love me. I thought about suicide. Then I decided to make one last desperate attempt at happiness — but because everything I'd done in the past hadn't worked for me, I chose to do something different. Instead of focusing on being so sweet and kind that someone

would fall in love with me and rescue me from my dreadful, boring, dull existence, I would focus on rescuing myself. And I did.

Mr. Old Man at 52, stop waiting for someone else to make your life good. Get up and do something you enjoy, whatever you wanted to try in the past but didn't. Smile. Laugh when something strikes you as funny. Become someone you like.

You can meet a lot of people in your lifetime. Some will like you; some will not. From a woman's point of view, I can tell you with absolute assurance that the most attractive men are those who are interested in their own lives, because those men have lives worth living, with or without a mate. Such a man does not burden a woman with the task of making him happy.

I understand that after doing all that caring, you might feel hurt that no one is now caring for you in the same way. Give the care to yourself that you would give to a close friend if the friend needed you the way you need someone.

— *Been There*

Dear Been: I appreciate your self-empowered perspective. All your suggestions are great advice for anyone at any point in life.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Just because something looks cool doesn't make it cool — but it's half the battle. Your work's success hangs in the balance of a kind of seduction. Give equal weight to style and content for the win.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You'll be pleased by the logical and linear nature of today's challenges; a very satisfying and solvable puzzle lies before you. Each solution will be the first clue to the next problem.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). If you keep making allowances, you'll bankrupt the project, fall short of the goal or possibly not even move the needle at all. So don't give yourself any loopholes. Be strict.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You won't be able to keep yourself from fear. If you tell yourself to relax and calm down it will only make you more anxious. Invite the fear in. Make room for it; make friends with it. Fear will soon dissipate and lose its power.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The dancer believes that the soul is exposed in the dance. The artist believes it's in the lines; the writer reads it in words. Today, you'll see the soul revealed in daily life and gain deep insights into yourself and others.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The more you have to talk yourself into something, the stronger the likelihood is that it's a terrible, horrible, no-good idea. At best, it's a waste of time you could spend doing almost anything else, including napping.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You thought about it in a radical way back when you were new. Now that you're experienced, you understand the nuances and will hold a more

conservative viewpoint.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Reciprocity is a tenet you live by. If you won't be able to return a favor, you won't take anyone up on it in the first place. Just remember that you don't always have to give back the same thing, just something of equal value.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). What's unfair to one person is unfair to all. Standing up for another person's rights is standing up for your own. Those who lack empathy will prove to be, in the long run, unfortunate company.

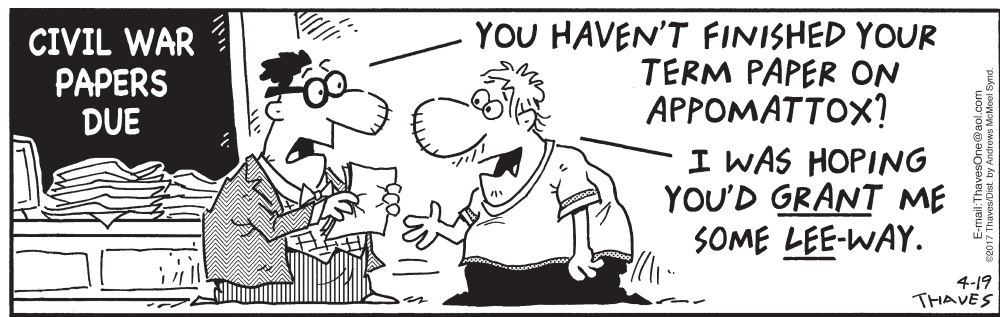
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Of your many dreaded dangers, very few are reasonable; even fewer are probable. Quite likely, the number of these fears that will come to anything is approximately zero.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You like to do good works anonymously. Charitable acts are humble acts. If it has to be publicized, it's more a matter of pride and identity-shaping than heart and generosity.

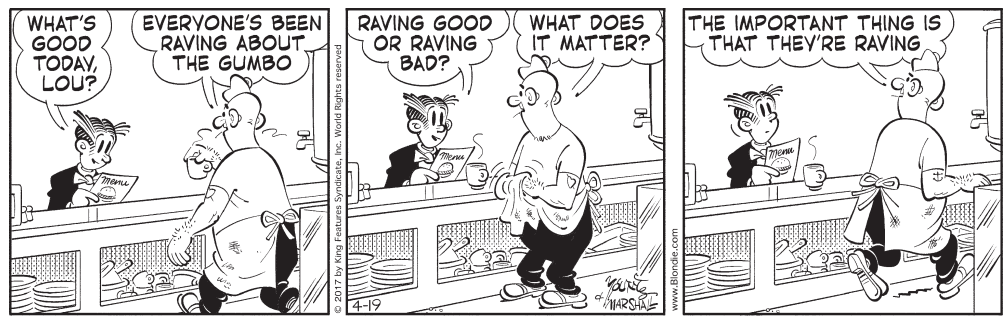
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). It does seem to be the case that, on certain days, your chances of winning the game are the same whether you play or not. However, that's not the point. Play. Winning isn't everything.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (April 20). You've a playful heart this solar journey, but you'll still get some serious business accomplished over the next 10 weeks. New people enter your personal life, and you'll participate in a lot of teamwork. There's a creative venture in July and travel in October. This is not a year for financial risk. Save instead. Cancer and Capricorn adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 13, 30, 25, 50 and 11.

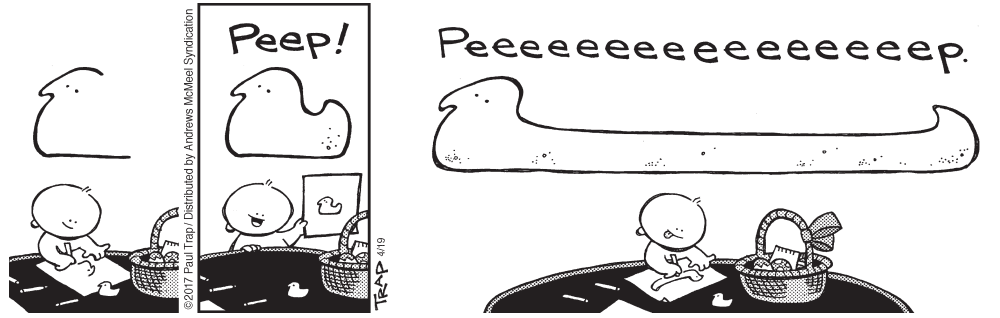
FRANK AND ERNEST



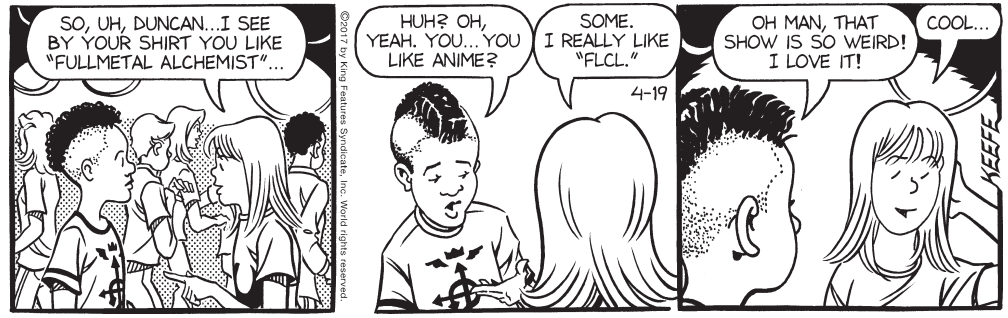
BLONDIE



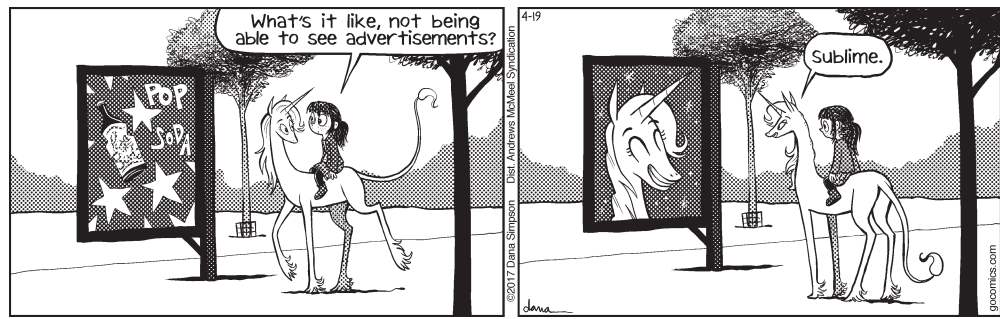
THATABABY



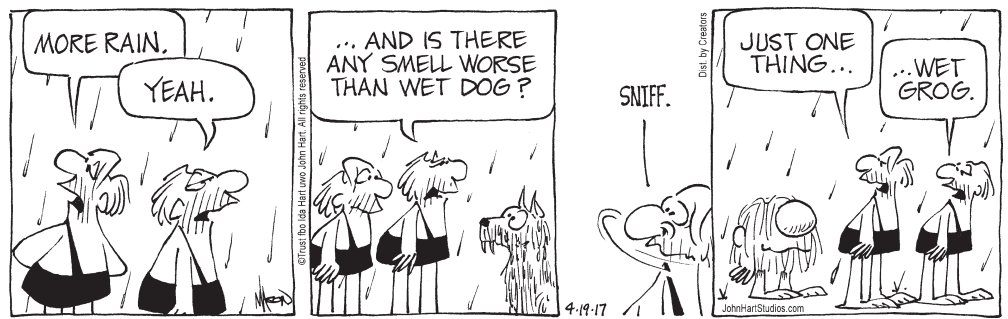
SALLY FORTH



PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



B.C.



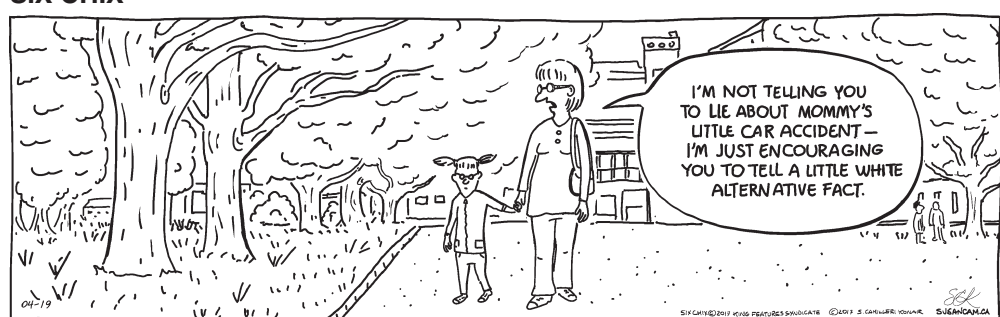
LOLA



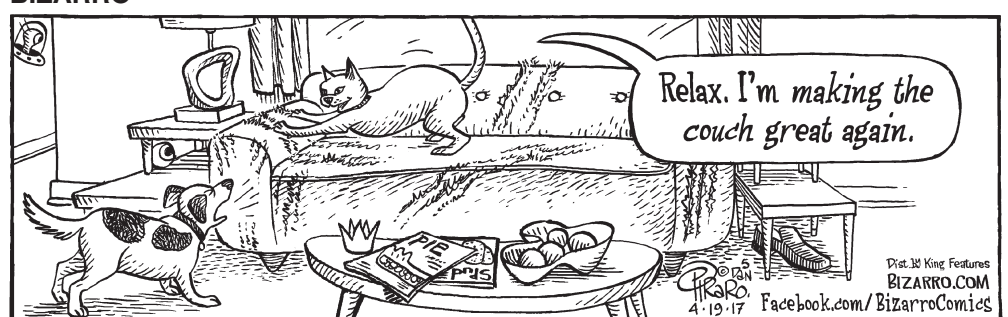
DILBERT



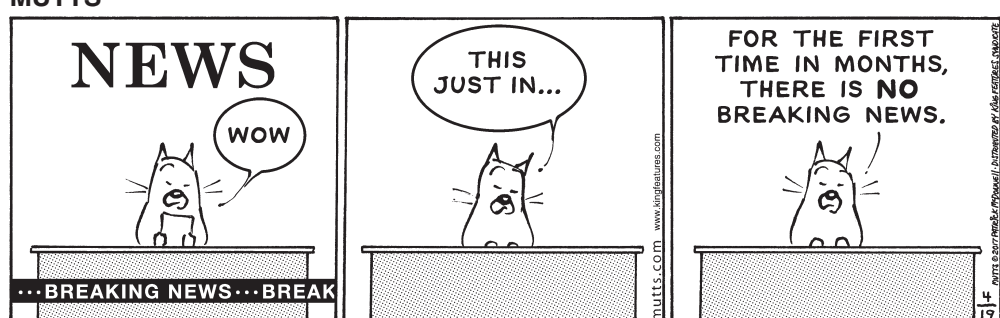
SIX CHIX



BIZARRO



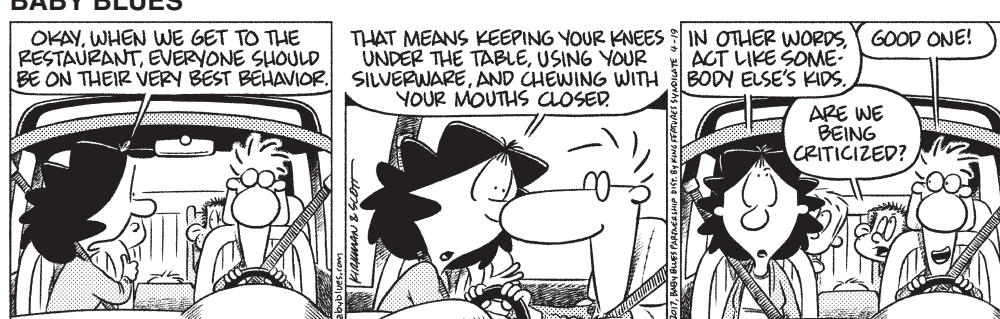
MUTTS



NON SEQUITUR



BABY BLUES



WIZARD OF ID



ZITS



ROSE IS ROSE

