

# All-consuming video game

**Dear Annie:** I gave my 5-year-old son a PlayStation 4 for Christmas. He has since logged countless hours on his new favorite game, "The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim." I would have no problem with this, except he has played the game so much that he has mastered the made-up language and, whenever I try to talk about his newfound obsession, pretends that he can't understand me and that he can speak only the dragon language. He keeps running around the house in a loincloth trying to pickpocket his siblings and me. When he is discovered, he swats at us with whatever his sword is that day. We've been paddled with spatulas, wooden spoons, empty paper towel rolls and more. The most recent time I tried to take the system away, he ran into the woods and tried to call dragons out of the sky.

Annie, how do I remove such unnatural and annoying tendencies from my son? It has gone beyond cute, and it is now obnoxious. Any advice? —

**Worried Parent in New York**  
**Dear Worried:** Imaginative play is important, healthy and intellectually stimulating. (Just think how impressive it is that at 5, your son learned a whole new language.) But it's not so wonderful when he starts to imagine himself as the boss of you (with an army of dragons at his command, to wit). I would limit the amount of time that he is allowed to play the game, and I'd provide other outlets for his creativity, such as arts and crafts.

When his behavior becomes too much, talk to him and tell him to stop. Explain that no one likes to be hit with any instrument or have her pockets picked. Be firm, as children crave boundaries. Remember that you are in charge, not him.

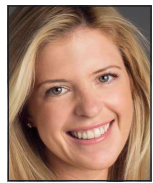
**Dear Annie:** I read the letter from "Stuck in a Rut" and wanted to offer another resource to him. Though he identified himself as having "a mild form of autism called Asperger's syndrome," that mild form and his lack of work history may be

enough to qualify him for services through his state vocational rehabilitation program. VR is a type of program that helps people with diagnosed disabilities gain employment. These programs have a variety of services that they provide at no cost, and the counselors who work in the programs are skilled at identifying and alleviating the barriers certain people have, whether it's their own impairment or a societal bias. The counselors focus on abilities and strengths and do amazing work helping people to achieve success in the professional world. I would really encourage "Stuck in a Rut" to explore that option in order to obtain employment that may be more in line with his strengths and abilities than his previous work of busing tables. — *Wishing You Well*

**Dear Wishing:** Thank you for this excellent practical tip. I've passed it along to "Stuck in a Rut," with the hope that it can get the ball rolling for him.

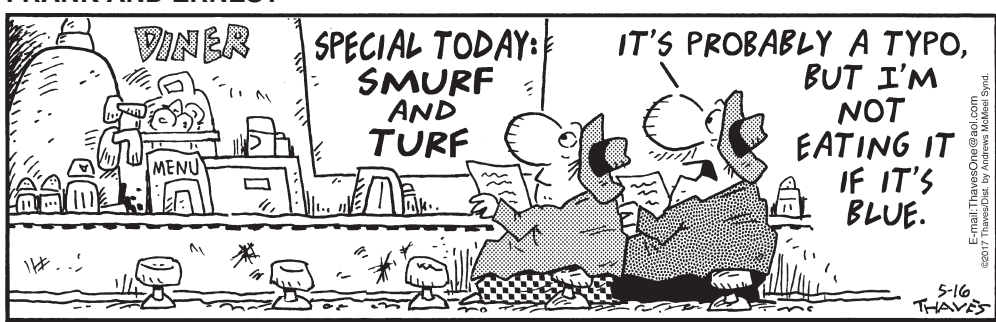
People looking for more information can check with their state's department of rehabilitation or comparable agency.

**DEAR ANNIE**

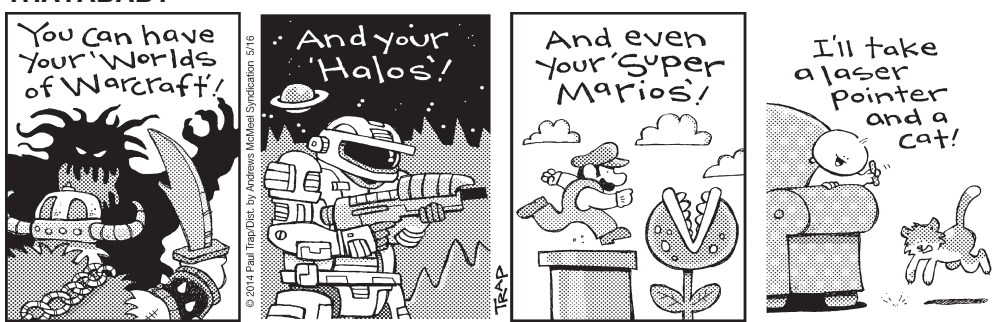


Annie Lane  
 Creators  
 Syndicate Inc.

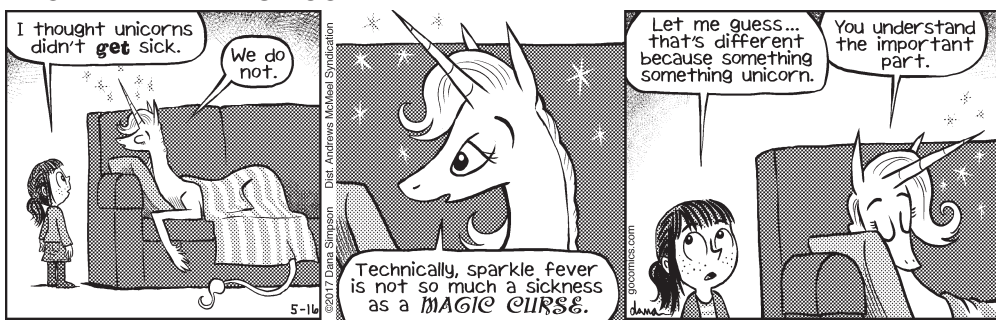
**FRANK AND ERNEST**



**THATABABY**



**PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN**



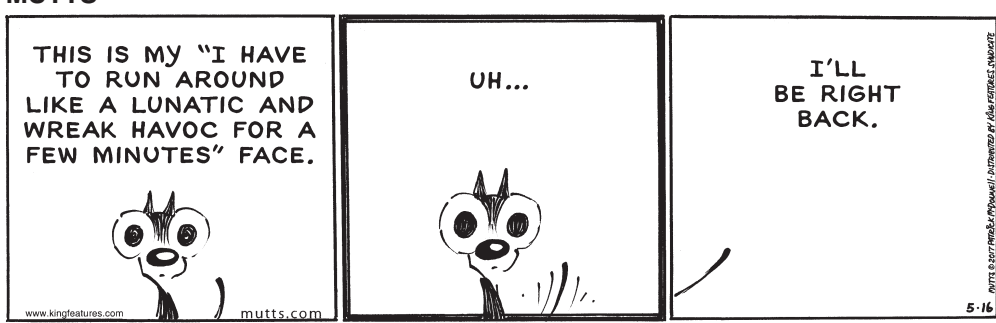
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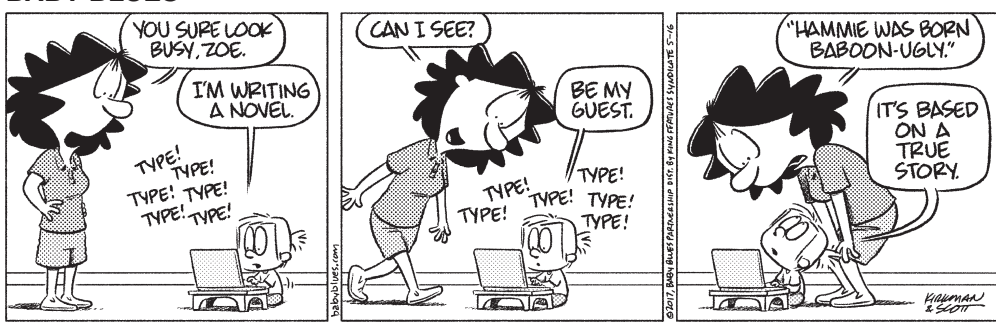
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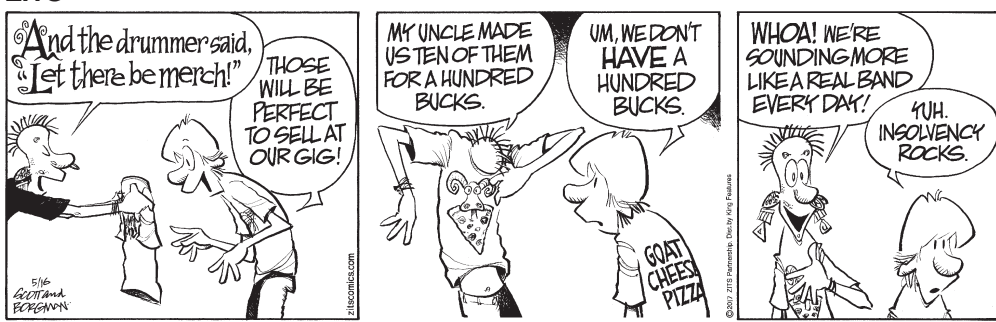
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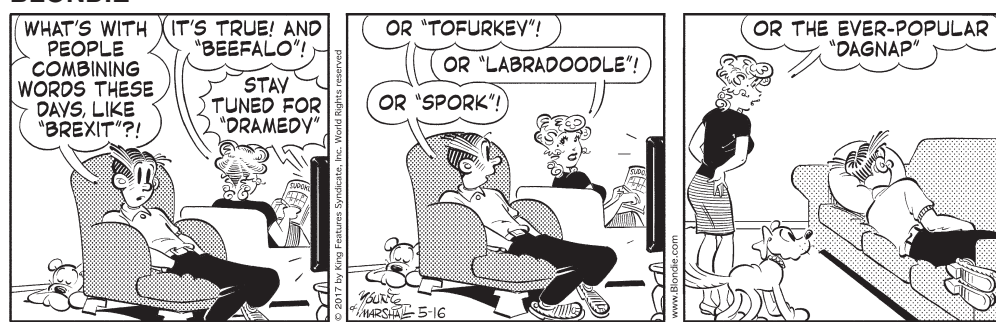
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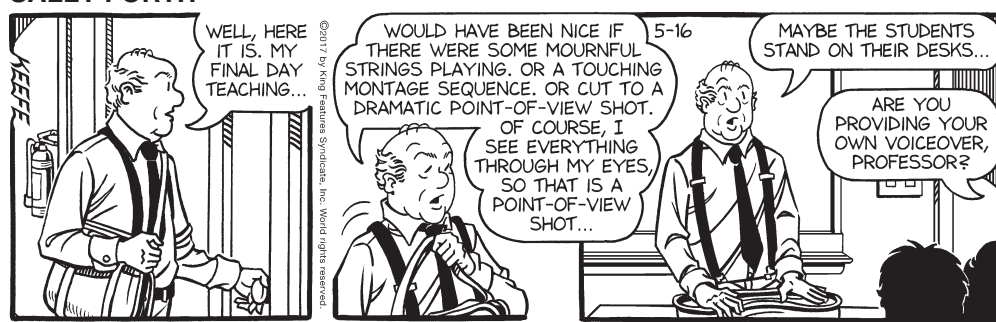
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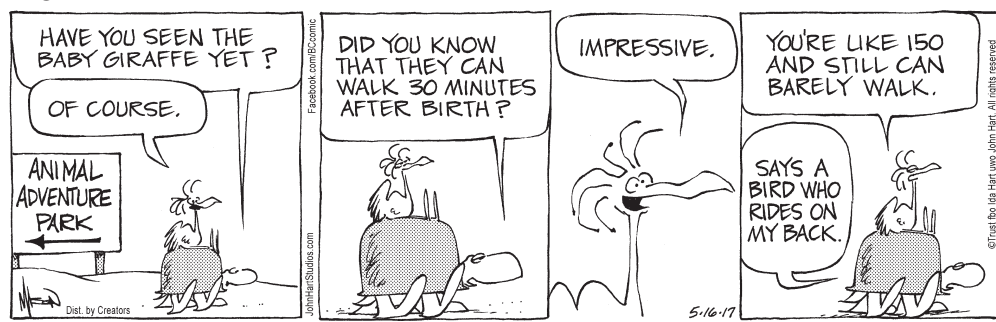
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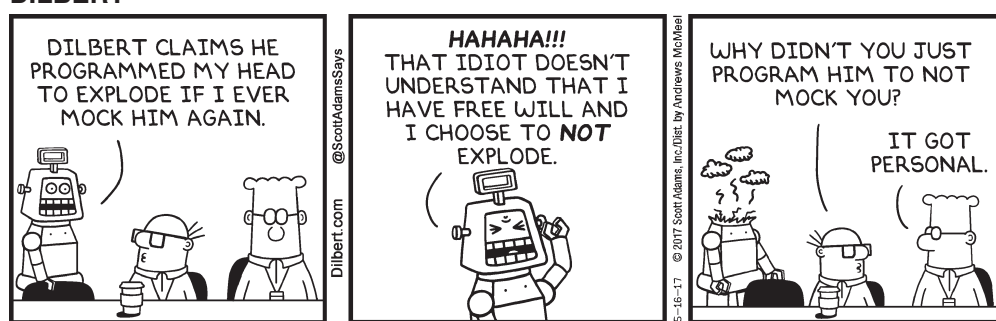
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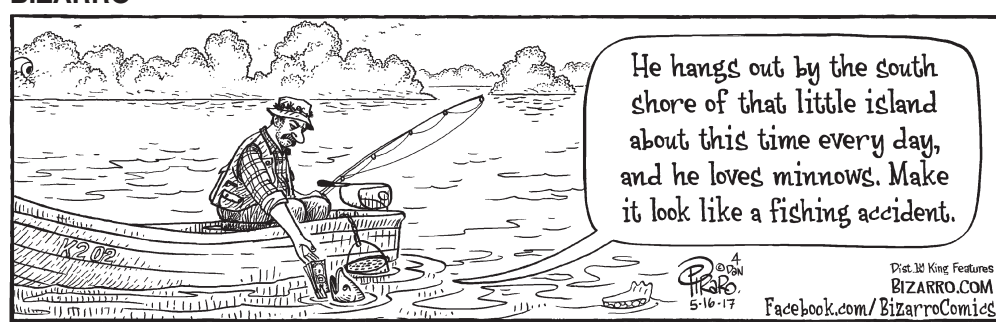
**B.C.**



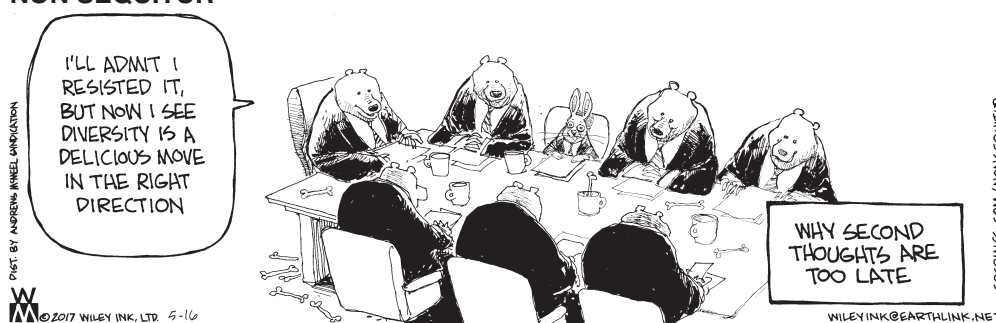
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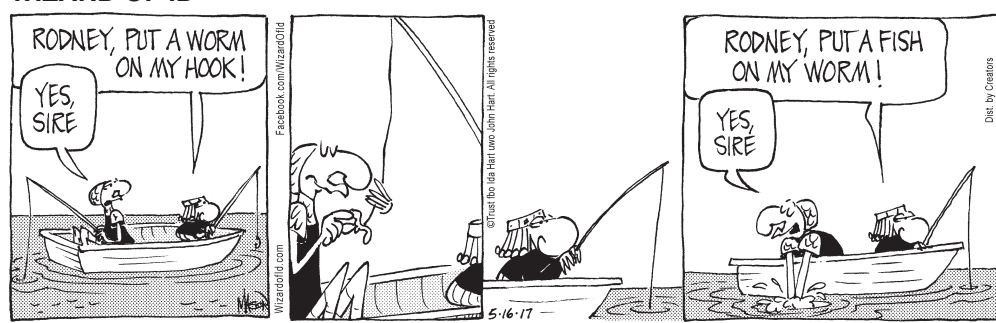
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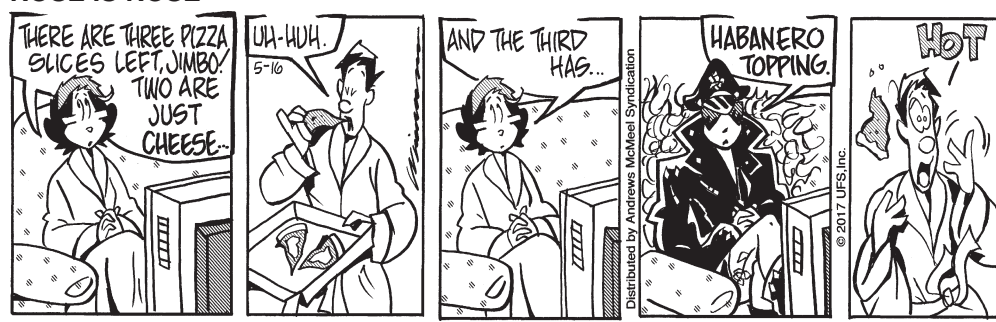
**NON SEQUITUR**



**WIZARD OF ID**



**ROSE IS ROSE**



**TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE**

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** It's uncomfortable not being in control. Of course, it's especially hard to let go and trust when you have reason to doubt the leader. Today it might even be grounds for taking over the leadership position.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** It's not an exaggeration to say that sometimes love matters to you as much as life itself. Therefore, you can't really overthink it. It's complex and mystical and completely worthy of all the thought you put into it.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** Productivity doesn't always manifest in the same way. If you can help another person behave better, kinder and with more awareness of the big picture, you've done more than your share.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** Do not underestimate the power of nonconformity. It can, in fact, change the world. As you customize your lifestyle to suit yourself instead of the social norms, new contours will emerge.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** You want to override bad memories by adding good ones. Bad memories tend to have more impact (a function of biology), so it will take quite a few more good ones to do the trick. It's a worthy use of your time and energy today.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Is love a serious illness? You may wonder this, because you feel physically terrible when your love suffers and absolutely high when your beloved is joyful and mutually enamored.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** You don't have to reach out, communicate better or be proactive in the least. You've done the work already. Now the path before you is being cleared. Trust and be ready to move forward.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** You'll enjoy making predictions and then waiting to be proven wrong or right. It doesn't matter either way, though, because this is about your creation, really. Whatever really happens, you will be the one who made it so.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** The difference between romantic love and platonic love can be a close call. Also, things can change along the way — creating new mixes, different chemistry and fresh experiences. Stay open to possibility.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** In your quest for truth, do not let yourself be diverted by what you wish to believe or by what you wish everyone believed. The only way to see what's really there is to do away with expectation.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Instead of concerning yourself with what's equitable. Though it makes sense to think in terms of equitable distribution of tasks, attention, money, etc., it just won't happen. Create something that works for both people.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** You're plenty smart enough; it's just that reason and logic are not going to lead you through the situation. Your instinct will get you there. All you have to do is listen and follow.

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (May 17).** You will create a contract for what you want to change in your life this year, and you'll find the inner drive and resources (including the right people) to help you make that happen. Distractions part. Mostly, your desired result will be front and center of your mind, which makes this one of the most productive years to date. Cancer and Capricorn adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 18, 9, 40, 13 and 20.