

Erasing the stain of alcohol

Dear Annie: My wife and I have been together for 30 years. The first 22 years of our marriage, I was drunk every weekend and some week-nights. I'm not proud of the things I did and said. I'm not happy about all the quality time I missed out on with our children, who are now grown and out of the house. But I can't undo what's been done, and dwelling on the shame only leads me to the dark place that makes me want to drink. So I try to focus on the positive. I thank the Lord for the second chance he's given me. I look to the future.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
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how much they hurt her. I've already felt horrible about it; I don't need her to remind me. I wish she would stop holding it against me. I messed up, but I'm trying to make it right.

I guess I'm not really sure what my question is, but I'm just looking for help erasing the stain alcohol has left on my marriage. Would appreciate your thoughts. — *Saved by Sobriety*

Dear Saved: Alcoholism is a family disease. It impacts every member of the household. Although you are recovering, your wife is not. Please encourage her to attend an Al-Anon meeting, where she can hear from others who have learned how to stop "waiting for the other shoe to drop." You might also both benefit from marriage counseling, which would offer a neutral space to air your feelings and move toward understanding. I commend you on your years of sobriety and wish you many more.

Dear Annie: This is in

response to "Still Interested" and anyone else who has the problem of having a wife who has lost interest in sex. As a wife of 40 years, I had the same problem after my hysterectomy and going through menopause. I couldn't tell my husband that it was very painful to have intercourse. I avoided any type of affection for this reason. I was too embarrassed to talk about something so personal.

I finally got up the nerve to tell my doctor. She said this is very common and prescribed a medicine to help. What a difference! I can't believe I went 15 years before I said anything. My husband is much happier. Please, women who are going through this: Talk to your husband and doctor. — *A Happy Wife*

Dear Happy: Thank you for opening up about your experience. It's yet another testament to the importance of communication in having a healthy sex life. If your letter encourages even one woman out there to talk to her doctor or open up to her husband, it's worth its word count in gold.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The current cosmic bent will help you realize the wondrous power of saying no, setting a boundary and enforcing a limit. Such a gesture will make love stronger and life simpler.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You'll take back your time from the digital bandits. You won't answer the phone just because it rings or act on every electronic impulse demanding attention. You'll enjoy a few distractions — distractions of your own choosing!

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Either your prayers will be answered, or that thing you do that's a little like praying will be linked to some interesting results. Tonight, hone social skills, including the art of making a powerful entrance and a smooth exit.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). For today, "Why?" is not the right question to ask. The question "How?" on the other hand, could change your life. It's also a lucky day for running into the exact people who know about the "how," and you should definitely take lots of notes.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You refuse to think of yourself as a victim of circumstance. There are alternatives to explore — hard to see when you're invested in one way of being, but they are there nonetheless. Decide to see them. You always have choices.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Sometimes all it takes is a simple decision to feel different. It's as though you're an actor and the director has just walked up to you and told you to play the scene confident, empowered and ready to make the next winning move.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). The potential for trouble lies in reacting to events in an emotional and unthinking way. Take a breath and be thoughtful

and deliberate in your response instead and you'll avoid the trouble altogether.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Embrace the paradise of imperfect circumstances. Right now, exactly as you are, you're good enough to do what you really want to do, to the best of your ability. Also, you'll never be more ready. Go!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). There are people you're not happy around and yet can't avoid altogether. When you have to deal with them, involve others. More people will dilute the power of one negative influence.

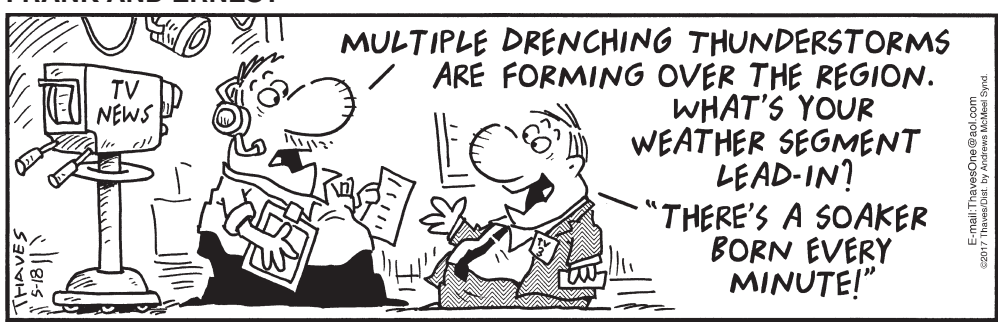
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). If you contradict someone, or even yourself, the energy of conflict will be ignited. This isn't necessary! Acknowledge the things you can't agree on. The validation may be all that's necessary to discharge the bad energy.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll be given gifts today, although they may be disguised as other things. Your definition of the term "gift" will be thereby expanded. Whether something is a gift or a bane is best determined over time.

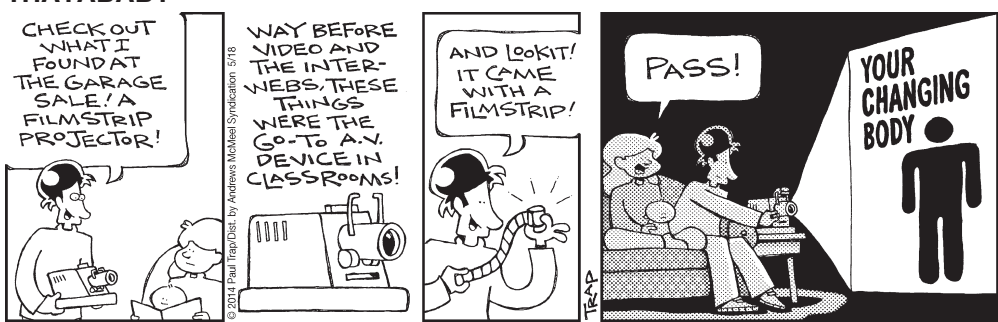
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You know what fun is to you. Stick with that today and the smiles keep coming, whereas subscribing to other people's idea of fun might actually make you feel irritated, uncomfortable or worse.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (May 19). You are very much your own person this year, and you'll be shedding old myths and definitions. The next 10 weeks will do wonders for your satisfaction at work and also for your social ties. July presents a fun challenge and the ideal teammate. November brings romantic proclamations. Save up through the colder months. Cancer and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 40, 2, 22 and 18.

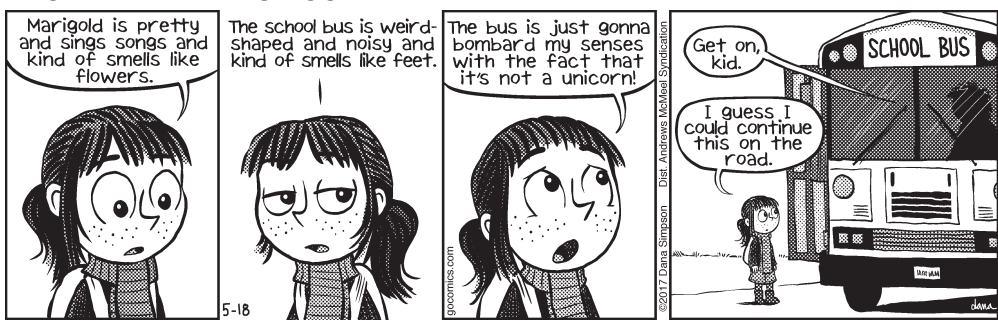
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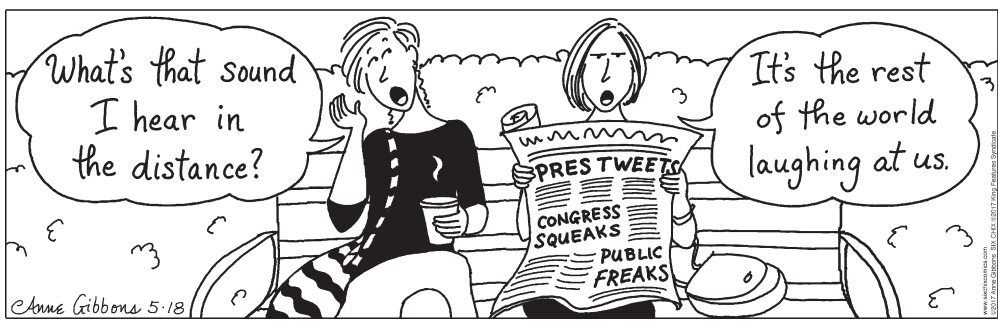
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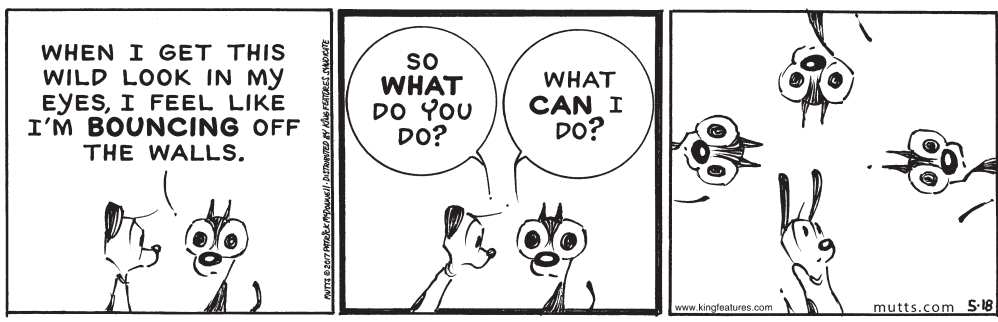
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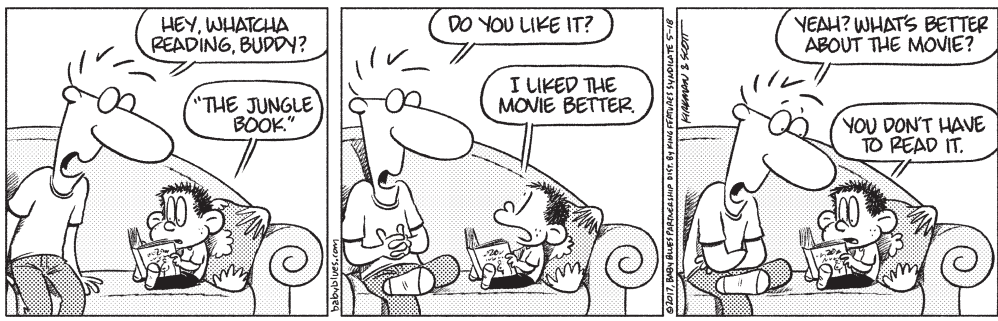
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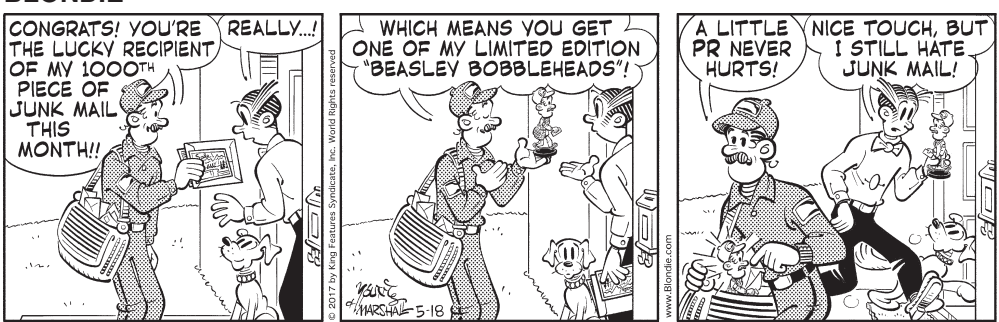
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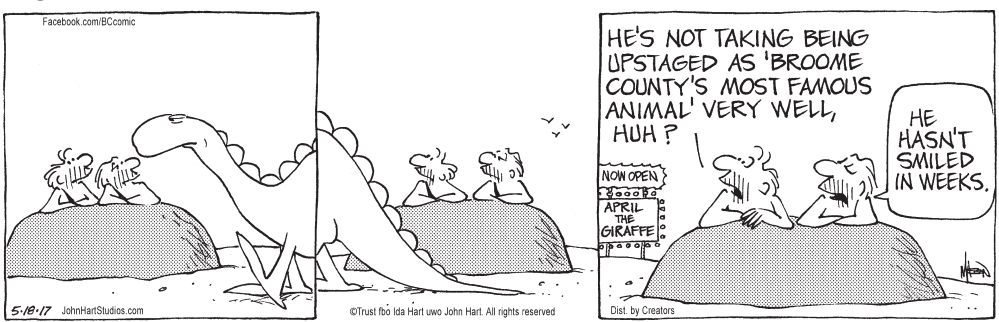
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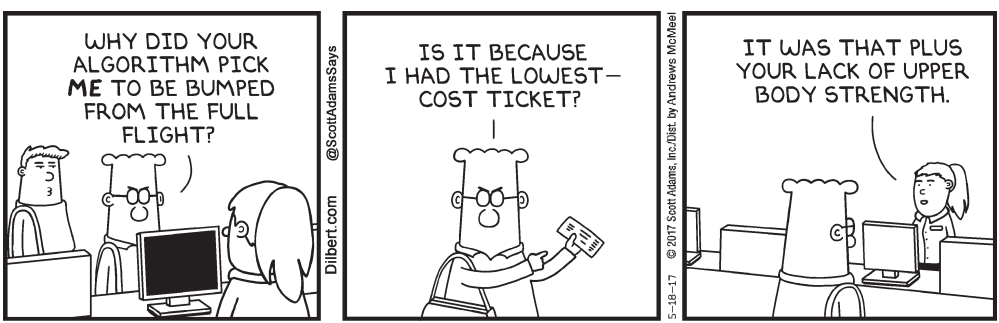
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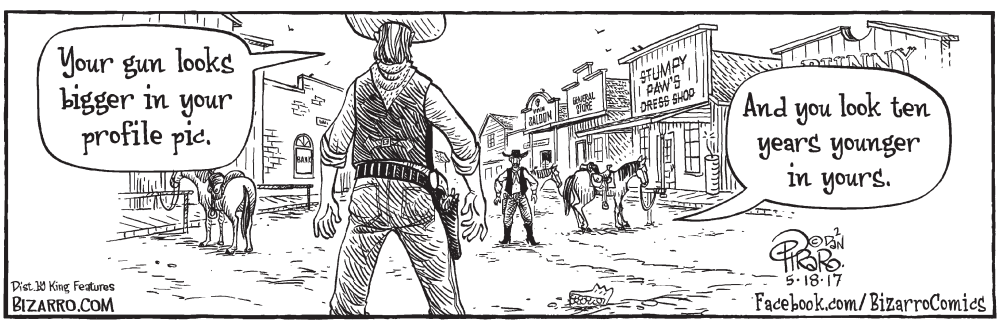
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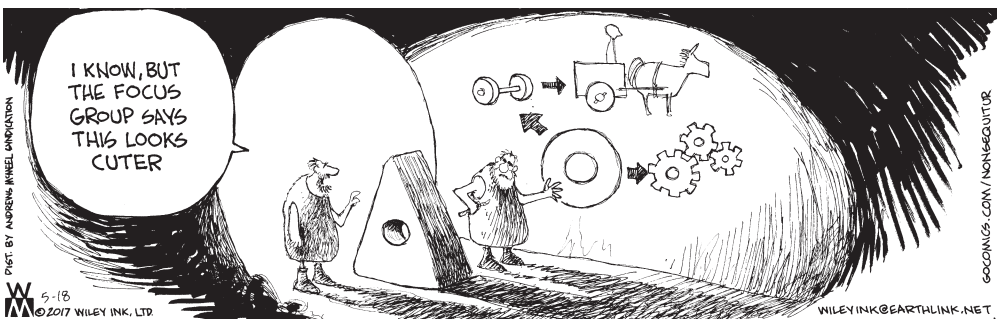
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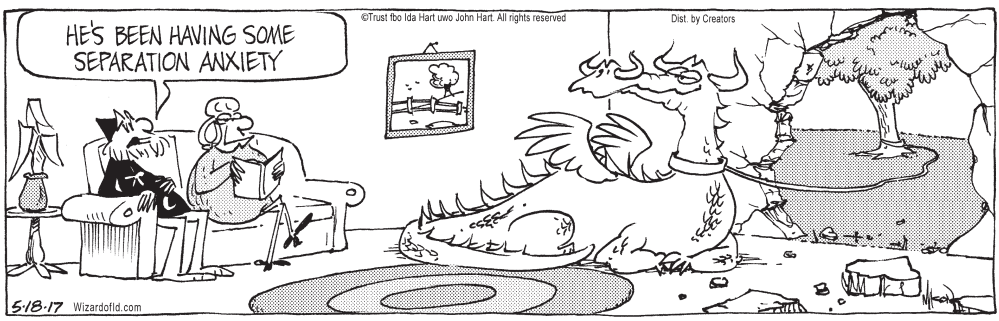
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