

# Tree dispute with neighbors

Dear Annie: Our next-door neighbors, the "Johnsons," must hate trees. Our neighborhood is full of beautiful mature trees. When the Johnsons purchased their home, they immediately cut down every tree in their yard. Last year, they complained about some branches that hung over their property line and a few that were over their house — not touching their house, however.

**DEAR ANNIE**



Annie Lane  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.

Our city code says we are not required to trim them. But being good neighbors, we contracted a licensed tree trimmer. He asked to park his ladder truck in said neighbors' driveway, which he said would reduce the bill by 50 percent. We told him to knock on the door and ask them before starting.

The tree trimmer showed up and was working, when Mr. Johnson came out and said he had to move the truck because it had been on his driveway too long. The project was halted. No branches were weak or damaged in the first place,

meaning they really didn't need to be cut down anyway.

Fast-forward one month. Mr. Johnson again complains about our tree. We told him that we did have it trimmed and that we had used up our tree trimming budget for that year. His response was that he knows we have more money than that.

Fast-forward a few more months. We have dogwood trees in the corner of our yard and found they were stuffed full of twigs, branches and string.

My husband cleaned it out. Forty-five minutes later, the entire Johnson family (mom, dad and two boys) was on our front step. Mrs. Johnson said her 9-year-old son was so sad that his fort had been taken down.

What should we do here? I'm voting for a fence, but we like all the wildlife that frequents our neighborhood. —  
*Midwestern Nana*

Dear Midwestern: I'd like for you to tell this family to go climb a tree, but you do have

to live next to them for the next who-knows-how-many years, so it's best to stay somewhat amicable. It sounds as if they've an overgrown sense of entitlement. The best way to nip that in the bud is to respond with strength — not by bullying them but by refusing to acquiesce to unreasonable demands or apologize for things that are not your fault. Explain that you only hired a tree trimmer in the first place because you wanted to be neighborly — emphasizing that in fact, the city code doesn't require you to trim them and that you won't be doing so.

As for the issue of their children climbing your trees: If one of them were to fall and get injured, you might be legally liable — and something tells me the Johnsons would have no qualms about suing. Tell the parents not to allow the children in your yard. If it keeps happening anyway, a fence may be necessary. Consult the laws in your state, and look into styles that would permit wildlife but not wild children to pass through, such as thinly spaced iron bars.

## TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** You'll sharpen your disputing skills, speak up and counter the positions you don't agree with. Your primary opposition will be a voice in your head that needs to be set straight.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** Tension of any kind is an impediment to creativity, productivity and social ease. Avoid it, diffuse it, or flee it entirely. It may be easiest to wish everyone well and start new in a fresh environment.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** You typically think of cleaning and reorganizing as a means to an end, but actually it's an involving, interesting and even enjoyable process in and of itself today. Simple, inexpensive improvements bring joy.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** You'll make a change gradually, as moderation fits your personality. An approach that's too strict only inspires you to rebel against your own authority.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** The Japanese proverb says, "Fall seven times; get up eight." But no one will keep you from lying there for a moment of recovery to ponder and process what just happened.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** You take pride in holding up your end of every bargain. But it may benefit all involved in the current circumstance to renegotiate the agreement. This time, give yourself more breathing room.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Your good manners attract luck. You'd be surprised how many forget to add the "Please" and "Thank you" when addressing clerks, waiters, family and angels. (Even angels appreciate being graciously addressed!)

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Today you are like a universal remote control. You fit into almost any situation and are effective in your ability to influence the scene with the appropriate button pushing.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** You'll make tough demands of yourself, but as long as they are in line with what you enjoy you'll be successful. On the other hand, you have zero tolerance for tedium, so don't even put those tasks on the schedule.

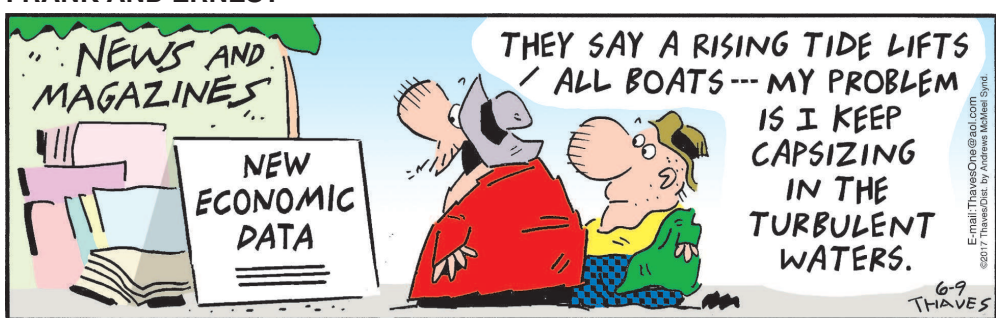
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** It will be easier for you to influence people you have an affinity for. It's as though people can sense your true feelings. Find something to love about those you need to sway.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Maybe you think of a certain form of entertainment as "mindless," and yet there's something compelling about it that resonates with you. There's a benefit to exploring it further that offers valuable insights into your own psyche.

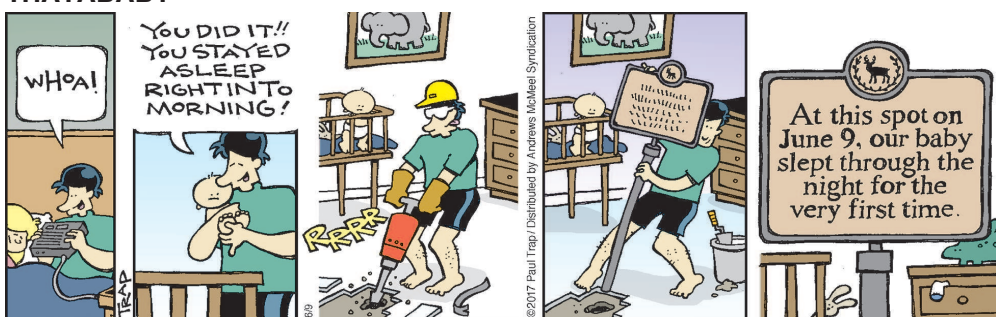
**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** There are those who make a hobby out of attracting trouble. You've an expanded capacity for empathy, and yet there's a point at which you're not doing people favors by permitting them to be their weakest selves.

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (June 10).** Success starts with a dream. Wings of imagination will ultimately lift you toward improvement in many areas of your life at once. Polish and shine a talent when the right teacher comes in August. Doors will open wide for you after you circulate your resume in September. Family celebrates with you, big-time, in December. Libra and Taurus adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 34, 10, 28 and 37.

### FRANK AND ERNEST



### THATABABY



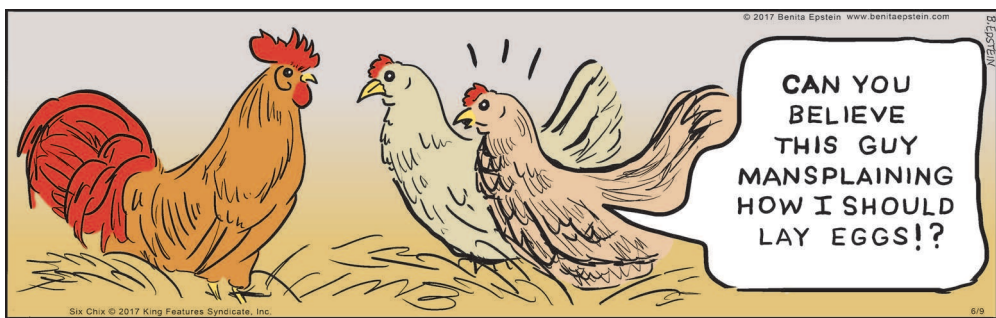
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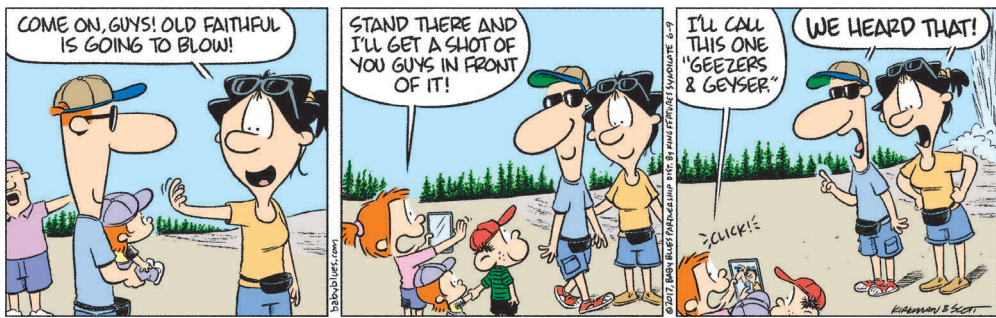
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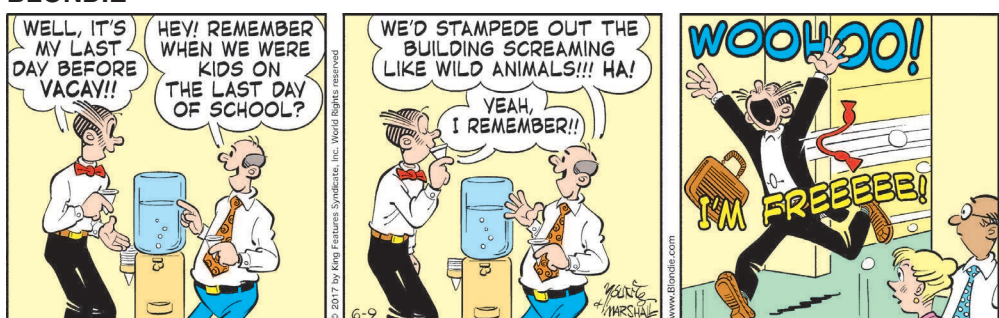
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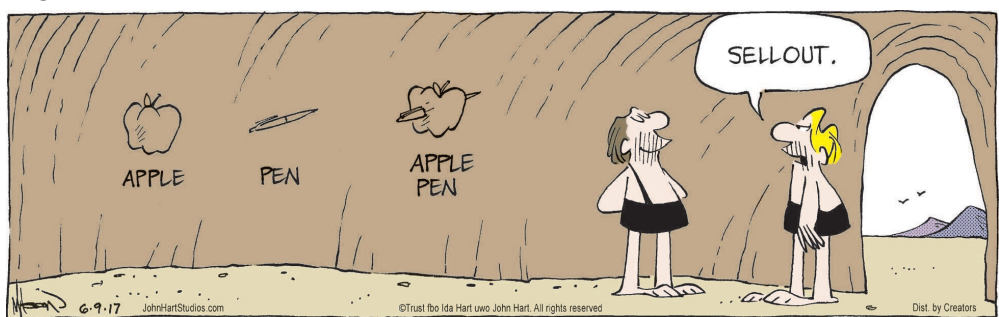
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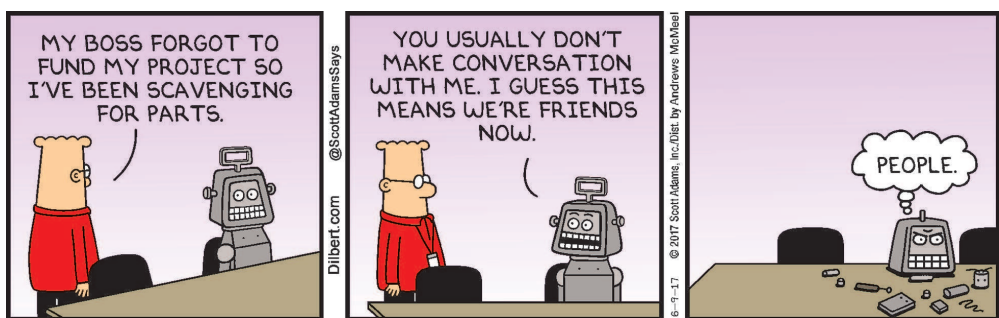
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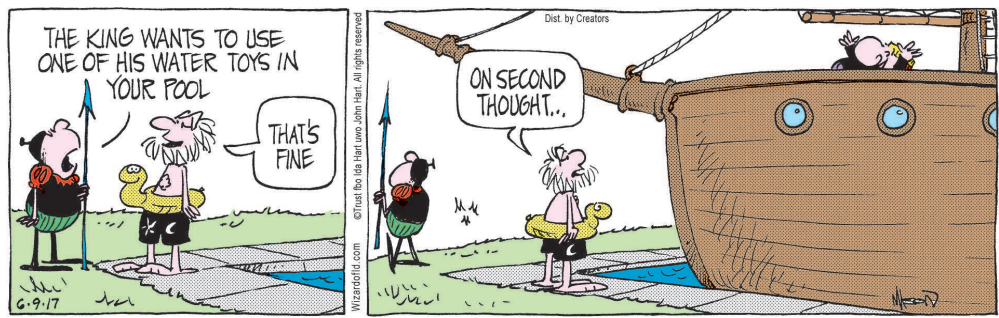
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### NON SEQUITUR



### WIZARD OF ID



### ROSE IS ROSE

