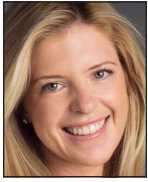


Siblings are not much help

Dear Annie: I am 63, and I help daily with my 94-year-old mother, who lives by herself. I run errands, and I keep her yard nice. I have a brother and sister who live out of state. They come back to visit from time to time. When they do visit, they expect me to entertain them. I feel that because they are staying with her, it is my time to take a break. They don't seem to realize the pressures I go through every day, when I wonder whether she will answer the door or I will find her on the floor.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Am I being unreasonable in wanting to be able to "escape" mentally and physically for a couple of days whenever it is convenient for them to "escape" their out-of-state lives and visit? I'd like to be able to visit my children and maybe travel a little bit. They not only try to make me feel guilty but also put my mom up to calling me on their behalf. — *Needing a Break in Pensacola*

Dear Needing a Break: It is absolutely reasonable — and smart — that you want some time alone and away from the stresses of care-

taking. To properly take care of anyone, you first need to take care of yourself. If your batteries are constantly drained, they'll eventually be past the point of recharging. Look into hiring some professional help to supplement your own care of your mother. Many insurances, including Medicare and Medicaid, include some form of hospice coverage. Visit <https://hospicefoundation.org>.

As for your siblings, how they want to treat your mother is their choice. Though you can't force them to spend more time with her, you can stick up for yourself and ask them to stop shifting blame onto you. You are a wonderful daughter. Don't let them make you think otherwise because of their own selfish motives.

Dear Annie: I can no longer take this digital world.

I cannot program my new dishwasher to a one-hour setting instead of letting it run for two hours; my old dishwasher ran with nothing but a push of the start button. I cannot get an ice cube from my new refrigerator. It's like an

algebra problem. I used to get ice cubes from my old refrigerator by opening the freezer door and grabbing the ice cube tray. New refrigerators do not come equipped with ice cube trays.

My old TV set used to turn on with the click of a single button on the remote. My new TV requires three or four clicks before the picture turns on. I used to play a tape by simply pushing "play" and turned it off by pushing "off." I am still trying to learn the steps that one has to go through to turn off a DVR. This is the reason mental problems are on the rise for people over 80. — *Digital Victim*

Dear Digital Victim: I feel your pain. I hate having to use two remotes and a considerable amount of brainpower just to turn on the nightly news. But look at it this way: These technological challenges, although frustrating, are working your brain. Cognitive psychologists have found that learning new skills helps to ward off dementia by strengthening connections between different areas of the brain.

That said, you don't have to drive yourself crazy figuring things out on your own. Ask a store associate for help next time you're buying such a product.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Stop overthinking. Make a move. Whether a move is wrong or right, it tells you what the next move should be. This will stop you from going in circles in your head and will get you going on a straight line instead.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You're being marketed to all of the time by those who would like you to choose their products or services. Market to yourself. It works. Surround yourself with symbols and messages about what you want yourself to choose.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Fear is energy that can be directed in a positive way, but that's not how it's used very often. To direct your fear well, keep reminding yourself of what it is you want to achieve, and breathe toward that aim.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Long blocks of focused, uninterrupted concentration are necessary to accomplish anything worthwhile. There is something (or more likely someone) preventing you from having time to focus — a situation that must be remedied.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Risking rejection is no fun (even for extroverts) but it must be faced in the name of progress. Go where the opportunities are and make friends. If you don't know where they are, go where you think they are.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). As the mountain cradles the lake, your earth-sign nature will hold a water-sign individual very dear. These are the Pisces, Scorpio and Cancer people, and they could really use someone with your reliability.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Sometimes you wonder if you're too brave for your own good. You've been known to jump into the spotlight unprepared, but that's better than missing out. After all, opportunities usually don't wait around until you're ready for them.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The people who have the best perspective about the job will be the ones who have done it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). As it is with anything, what you pay attention to loves you back. When you give attention to your deeper feelings and the subconscious layers of yourself, too, you start feeling more resoundingly fulfilled.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The tools used to create will be a focus, but don't be fooled; the tools do not make the creation. Creativity is in the head and heart. Fancy, expensive tools can actually work against the art.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Customs matter — but not really. Following the right movements in the correct order will show respect when you don't yet have the other person's.

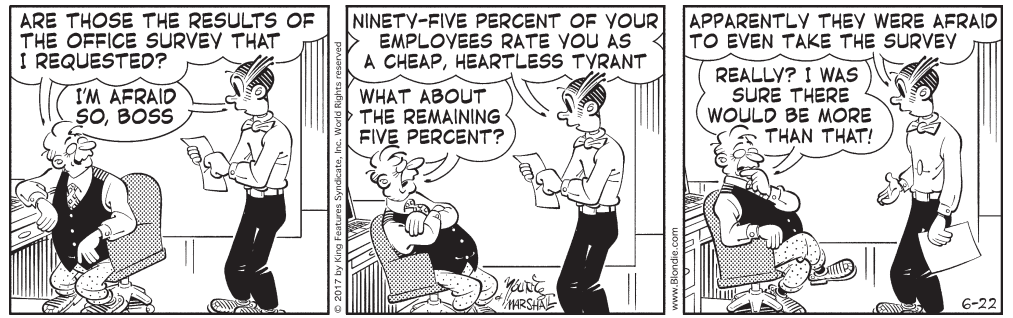
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You sense you're being flattered. That doesn't mean the compliments aren't true; it just means your flatterer is smart enough to grease the gears.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (June 23). You'll thrive in many kinds of relationships this year. You'll have an easy give-and-take with some. For others it's a give and give, and this will teach you and grow your heart, too. You'll be repaid in July.

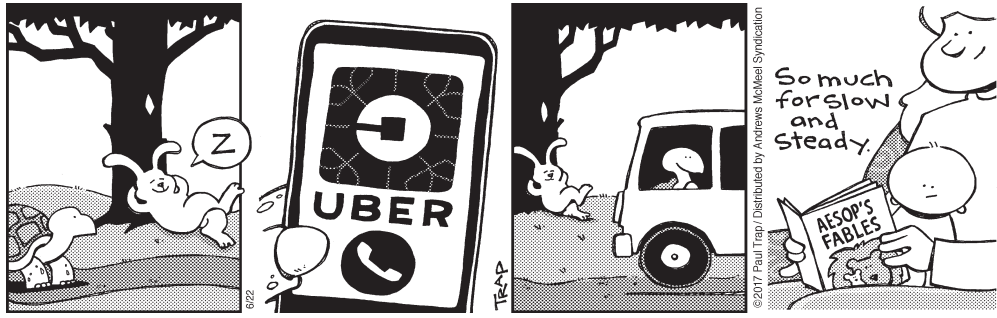
FRANK AND ERNEST



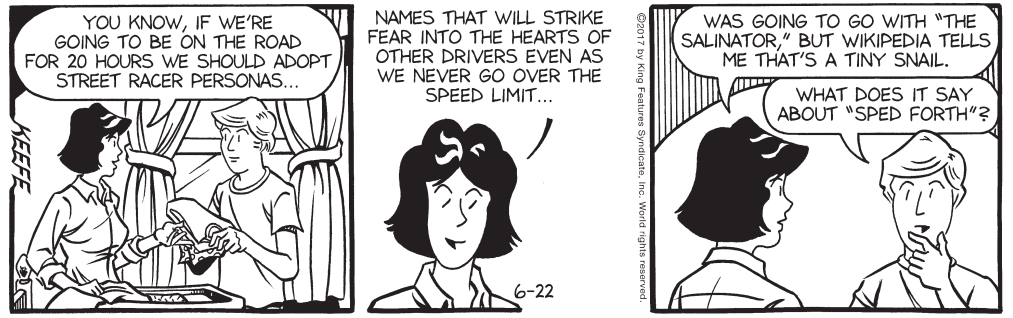
BLONDIE



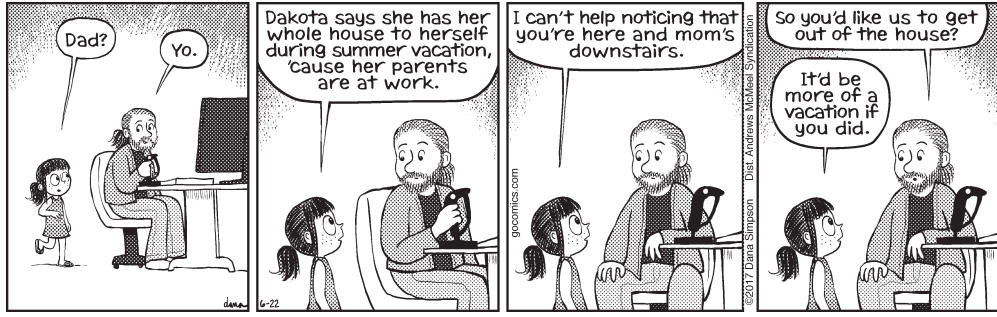
THATABABY



SALLY FORTH



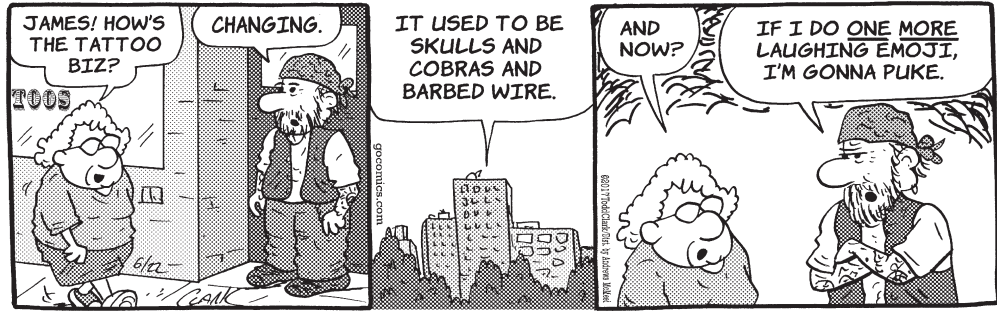
PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



B.C.



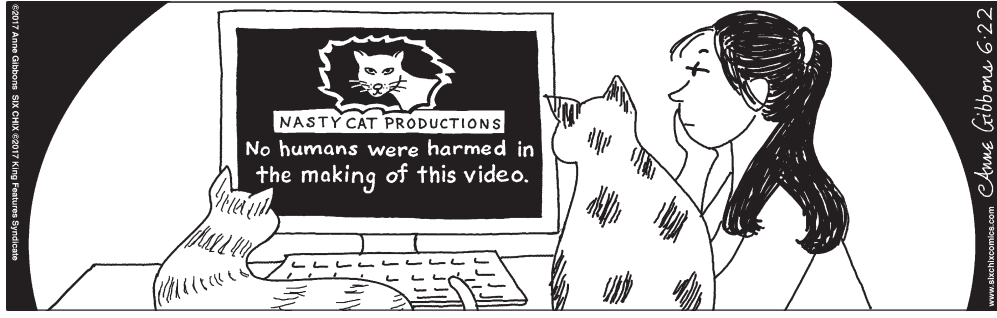
LOLA



DILBERT



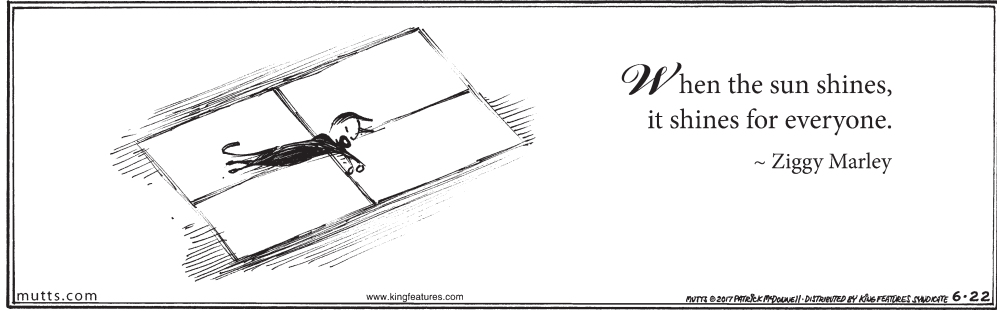
SIX CHIX



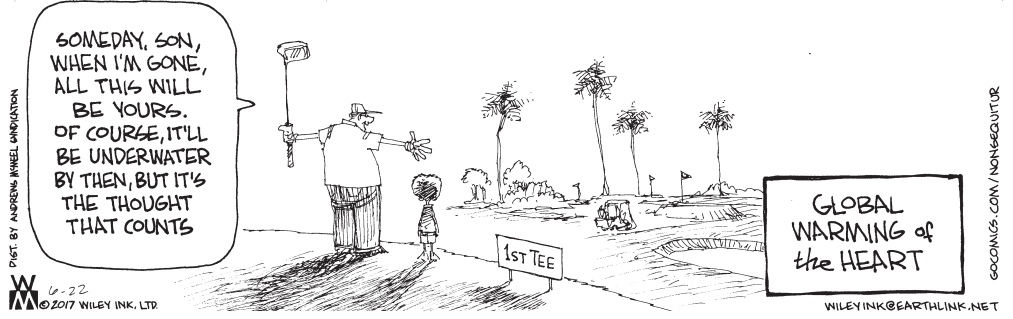
BIZARRO



MUTTS



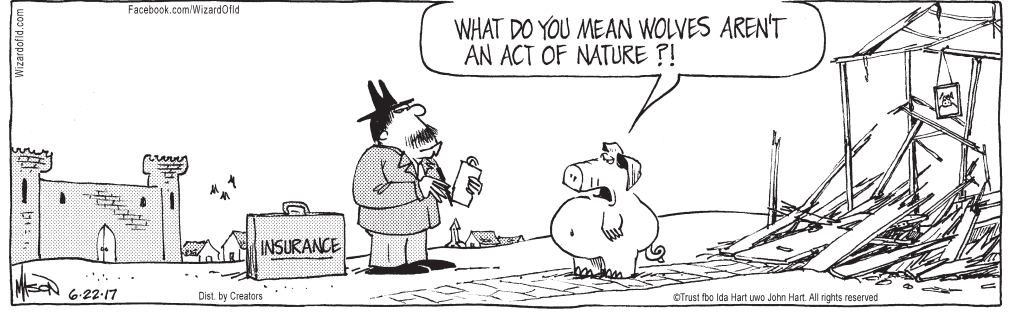
NON SEQUITUR



BABY BLUES



WIZARD OF ID



ZITS

