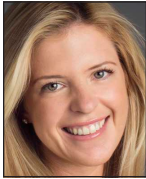


Happy with small-town life

Dear Annie: I currently live in a small town in rural Missouri. I grew up here, and my husband grew up here, and we plan on raising our own family here, as well. The only time I left was for college. I moved to St. Louis for four years and enjoyed the new adventures of big-city life, but I moved back home right after graduation. One of my best college girlfriends, "Jessica," who's also from here, recently moved back for family reasons after having stayed in the city for another five years.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Annie, my issue is that Jessica is always complaining to me about how boring our hometown is and how she can't wait to leave, and she draws out old college experiences to make me agree with her. I've tried telling her that though I did love being in a big city, I'm really a small-town person. However, she refuses to listen and keeps pressuring me to move back to St. Louis with her. Don't I miss the culture? The art? The restaurants? The job opportuni-

ties? Well, yes, sometimes. But I'm happy here. And I'm happy Jessica is here, too. When not complaining, she's an incredible friend. How do I keep my friendship without disregarding my town? — *Country Catie*

Dear Country Catie: It's time to remind your city-loving friend of the value of small-town humility. Be very clear with Jessica that though you appreciate and understand what she loves about a big city, you and your husband prefer the quiet of the country. Tell her that when she's not complaining, she's an incredible friend. In the end, she will appreciate your honesty. And perhaps it will cause her to pause and reflect on her current life, what's making her unhappy and what she could do to change it — as opposed to reminiscing about her glory days in college.

Dear Annie: A recent column of yours addressed people's making comments about a person's height. (The letter was from "Had It Up to Here.") Even more common is the prac-

tice of commenting on a person's body size, either positive or negative. It seems that many people are flattered when someone comments about weight loss. I, for one, am very uncomfortable when people make any comment about my body size. It seems that it is now also acceptable to say, "Oh, I see you put on a few pounds." When did we become a society that accepts such personal comments from people we barely know? And if a person does not want to receive such comments, what response could possibly be appropriate? — *Comments Too Personal*

Dear Comments Too Personal: I agree that commenting on a person's weight is never advisable, no matter how well-intentioned. Sometimes a sarcastic response ("Gee, thanks") is in order; sometimes it's better to just let such comments roll off your back and leave them behind you, where they belong.

But I'm printing this letter here as a PSA: Please don't comment on another person's weight loss or weight gain, height, shoe size, hair loss, etc. Zip it.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). A deal is on the table. The scope of this feels large — like it will bring you everything forever or nothing ever again. Try to calm down about it because it's not as drastic as it sounds. Anyway, it's too early to decide.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Maybe nothing is anyone's responsibility. Bickering over who should do something to help is petty, ugly and weak. Your philosophy: Those who got lucky and are doing OK should help those who didn't, period.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Your aim to increase the happiness and/or reduce the suffering of those around you will be fulfilled at little cost to yourself. You'll simply and naturally move toward the thing that feels better.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). As for the bad decision back there, it's time to forget it. Did you really have that much of a choice? Anyway, that's how it went and there's no benefit in thinking further into it. What's your plan today? That's what matters.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Socially skilled, you are punctual, you order fast and you get to the point. Making people wait is rude unless you can't help it, or unless you are artfully helping people anticipate what is to come to heighten their ultimate enjoyment.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You have something worth sharing, so do. Be crisp. Use as many words as you need to get the point across and no more. Be transparent. Hold nothing back. Make the other person's understanding your only desire.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). What's complicated isn't smarter; what's costlier isn't richer. Today's inaccessible things aren't worthwhile anyway.

So don't worry. You're not missing much by skipping the doors that are closed to you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your day will be inspired by love and guided by knowledge. Wanting anything beyond this is just greedy — but hey, that's a part of being human. Keep your joyful tone and much will be accomplished.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Life can't go according to plan if you have no plan. Maybe that will be a good thing today. There were some shortsighted aspects to your vision and that will be remedied once you get away from it a while.

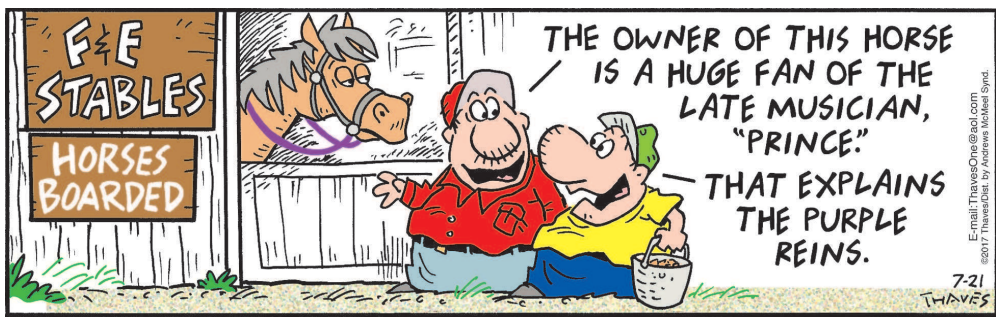
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Your life will be more of an inspiration than your words ever could be. So before you set out to inspire anyone, think about what would feel inspiring to you and do that.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). There's a chance that meaning inside the main event of the day is nonexistent until assigned. You'd be wise not to chase it or think too hard about it. Just name it and move forward.

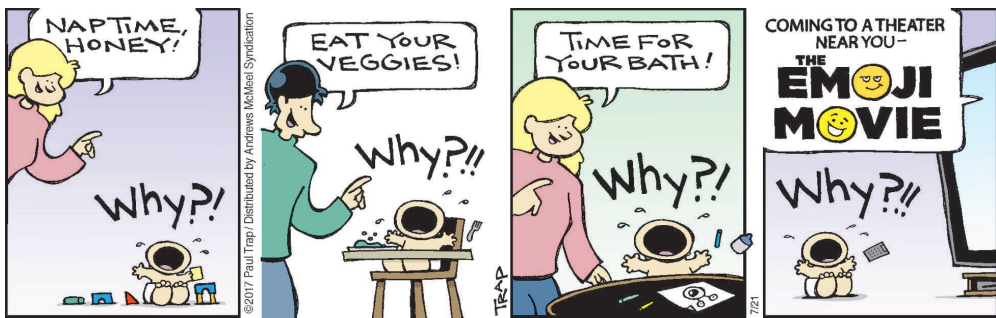
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Our brains already tend to build the narratives that we prefer to believe. What's going to happen when we can take it to the next level with memory implants? The science-fiction future will be today's creative playground.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (July 22). You want to be admired and supported, not envied and controlled. You'll get free of oppressive influences and shine in new ways this year. Your tendency will be to work very hard. Taking vacation days may actually prevent you from having to take sick days! November and March bring opportunity to deepen love. Scorpio and Capricorn adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 27, 1, 29 and 45.

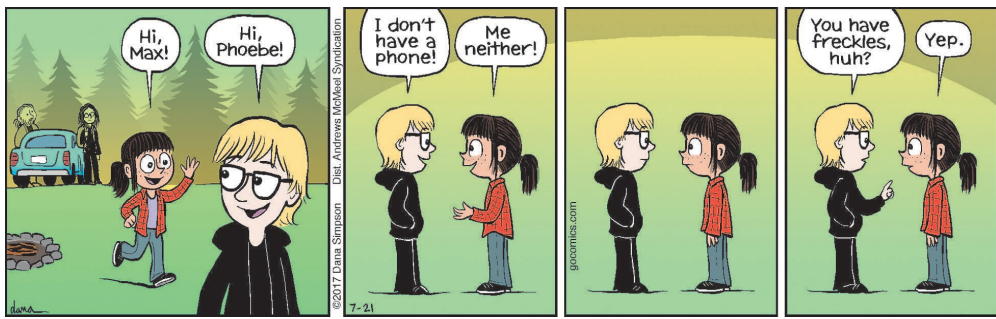
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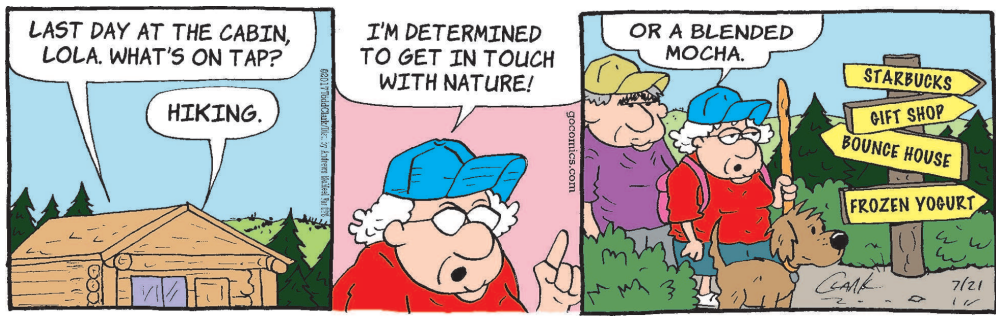
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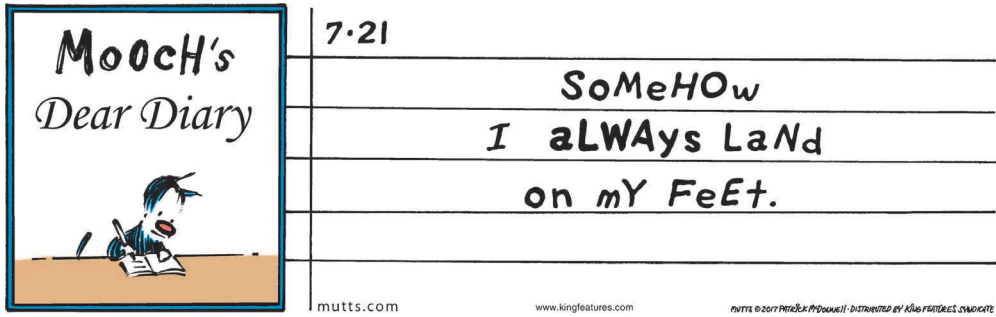
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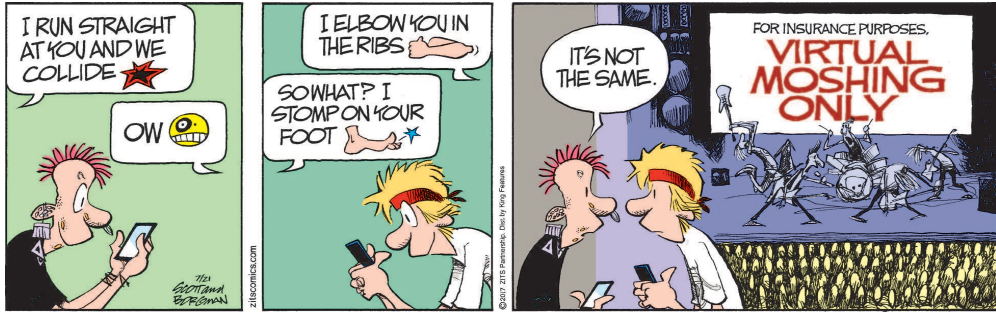
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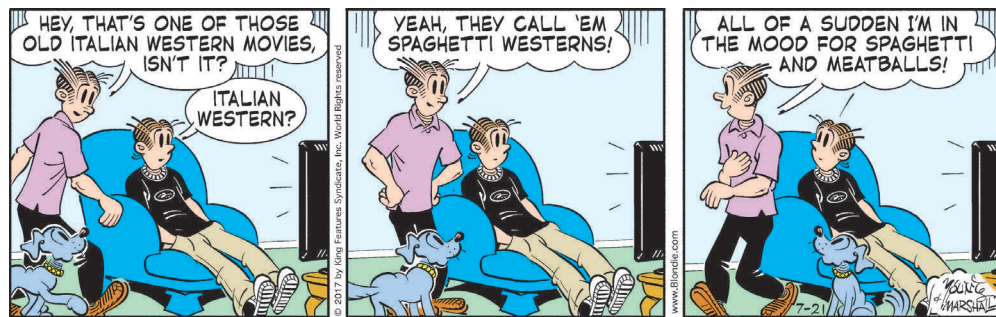
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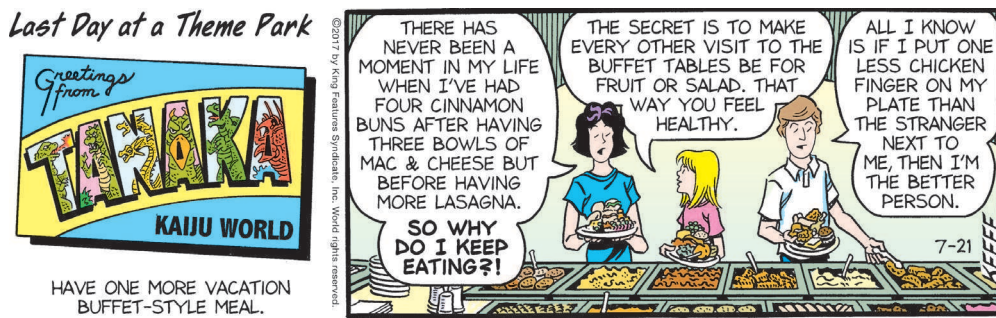
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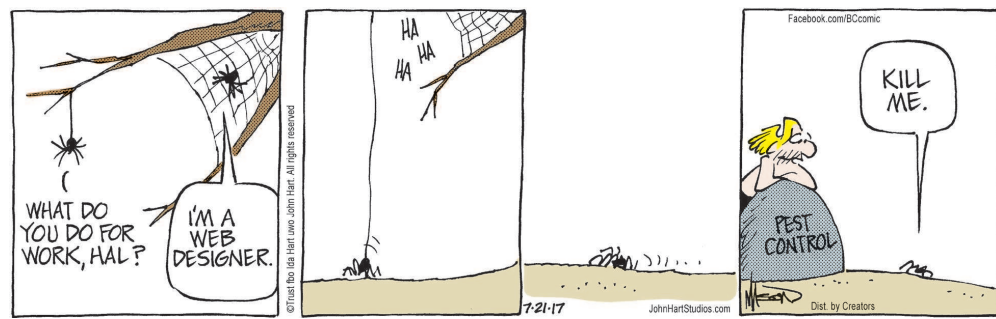
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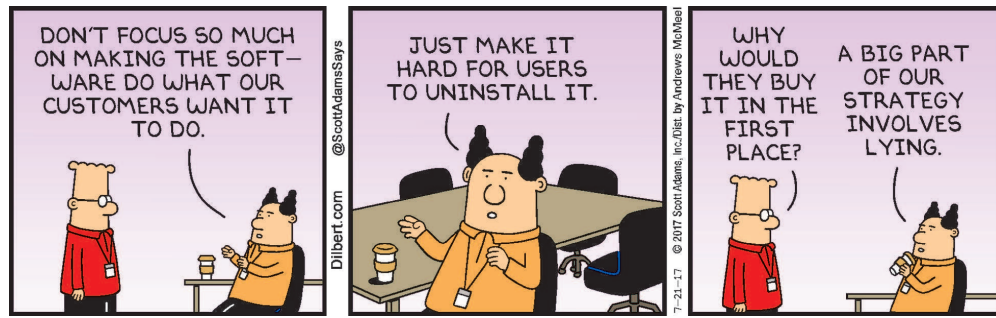
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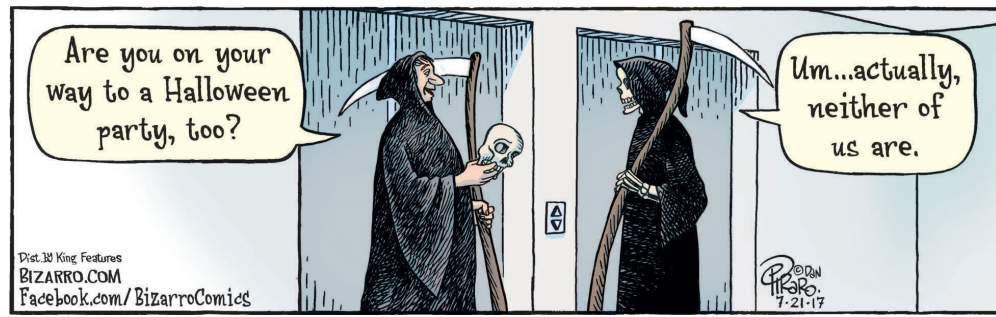
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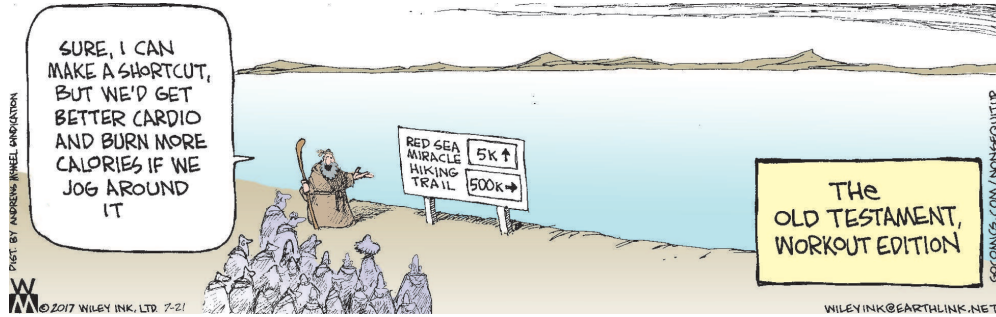
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