

I'm sacrificing for my mom

Dear Annie: When my mom's husband died, we moved her from another state to an assisted living facility a few miles from our house.

We run errands for her, handle her bills and occasionally take her out for a meal, and we have her over one day every week for a home-cooked meal. After several years, she has never offered to buy us a meal, not even for a special occasion, such as a birthday or anniversary. There has been no acknowledgment of our new normal. She does say "thank you" for each task.

My mom's daughter, a half sibling of mine, lives in another state. She has never sent us a gift card for our efforts. Money is not a barrier for either of them; they are well-off. We feel that we would never treat a family caregiver this way. But are we expecting too much from Mom and my half sister? It's really the thought, not the money, that counts. — *Underappreciated*

Dear Underappreciated: I'm sure Mom treated you to many meals the first 18 years of your life. Think of this role reversal

as a chance to repay her. Perhaps she's not offered to chip in for any meals because she's on a limited income or living off savings.

Your half sister, though, really ought to step up more. Perhaps you could talk to her and express how much you would appreciate her help in caring for Mom. You shouldn't feel guilty for asking this. She's her mom, too, and she should want to help her.

Lastly, if you're simply seeking some acknowledgment that what you are doing is good and kind, let me say: It is. And deep down, your mom probably appreciates it more than words can say.

Dear Annie: Thank you for encouraging the young woman who wrote about living with her alcoholic father to connect with Alateen ("Sick and Afraid," July 15). It's a powerful program — one that has helped many young people and their families.

Seeing as the young woman also said she is connected to her church, I'd encourage her to talk with her pastor, her youth leader or some other responsible and caring

adult in the congregation. Alcoholism and other addictions and mental illnesses so often result in the isolation she is experiencing, and her faith community could be part of the web of support she needs.

A responsible faith leader — who can keep confidences — can be a good ally, both as a listening ear and as a resource person if the situation with her father escalates.

In addition, knowing what's going on in a family can help the pastor, youth leader or other responsible adult pay better attention, even without taking any kind of direct action. Finally, it can remind the faith leader to lift up in prayer, without naming specific individuals or families, everyone whose life is touched by addiction or mental illness.

Again, thank you for your care for the young woman and all who write to you — and especially for the good advice you offer them.

— *Rev. Talitha Arnold*

Dear Rev. Arnold: Thank you for your thoughtful letter. Because she mentioned her involvement with her church, I should have thought to recommend her faith leaders as an additional resource. That was a missed opportunity.

DEAR ANNIE

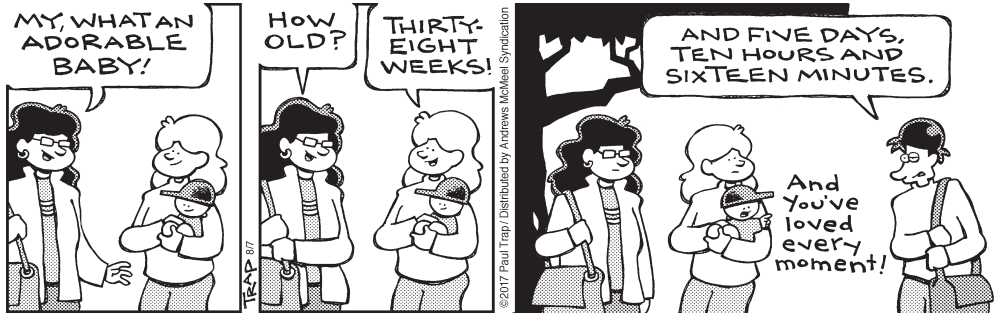


Annie Lane
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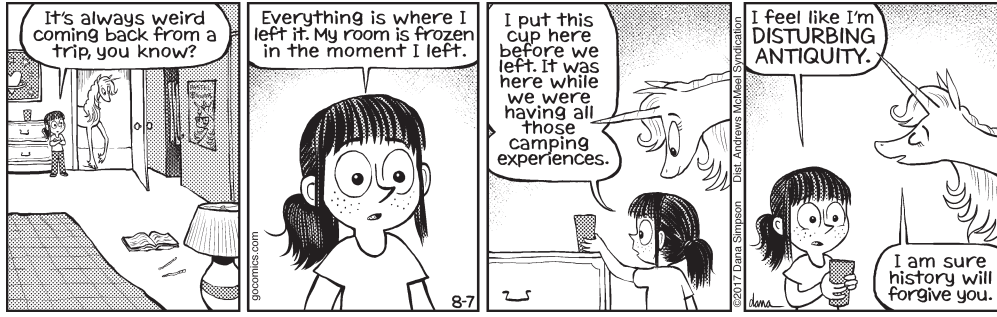
FRANK AND ERNEST



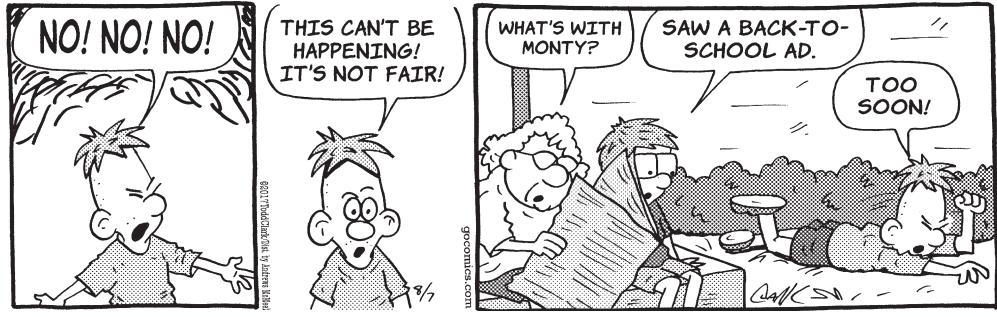
THATABABY



PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



LOLA



SIX CHIX



MUTTS



BABY BLUES



ZITS



TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). If "someday" hasn't come over the span of a year, it may not come ever. As you get rid of the things you're holding onto for "someday" you're also making room for fresh energy and interests.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Learning is faster than relearning. Children learn fast because they've a clean slate that doesn't need to be erased and overwritten. You'll pick up new subjects quickly but be slow to change the way you already do something.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). People have different tastes. What you make, do or present is not going to be everyone's cup of tea. Success occurs when you focus on offering what you believe in and are proud of, not what you think they'll want.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Doing it right once is a good start. Twice creates early momentum. Three times is the beginning of a pattern. For an action to be called successful, though, it must be able to be repeated time and again with predictable results.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You delight in entertaining others, if not in the formal sense then in the impulse you have to keep people guessing. It's a relationship skill (maybe even a public service) that keeps you creative and engaged.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You've a rather unreasonable agenda for yourself today, and that's no cause for worry or doubt. Unreasonable things get accomplished all of the time. Just be compassionate toward yourself as you push on.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Decisions are hard enough without the extra pressure of needing to be right all of the time. Before you enter a

situation, remember that it's OK to be wrong sometimes. You make better choices from a lighter mindset.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The very young soak up the positive, the pretty and the well-intentioned as if these things were gospel. Even their grievances are taken and absorbed from other sources. Maturity is a firsthand understanding of your likes and dislikes.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The way you think is beautiful. It's often accurate, organized and kind, but not always. Anyway, beauty has as much to do with quirks as it does consistencies.

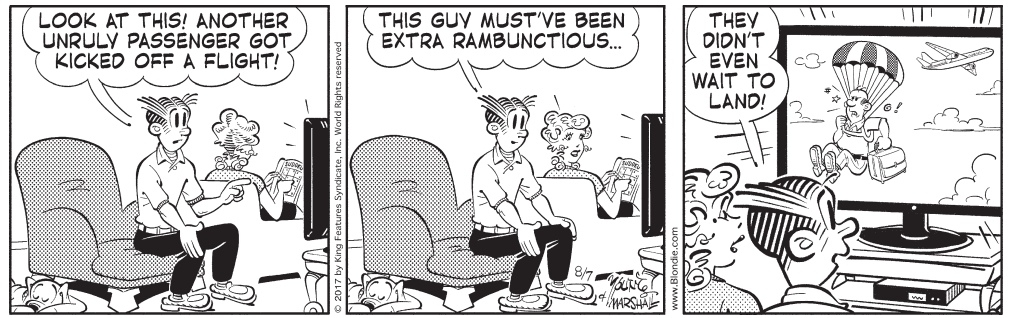
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Just about anyone can hear you when you talk. It's the one who hears you when you don't talk who deserves a special place in the pantheon of your personal life.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Hearts are heavy around you, but they'll become lighter once they vent a little. If you have to hear out a few complaints, consider it a help to society.

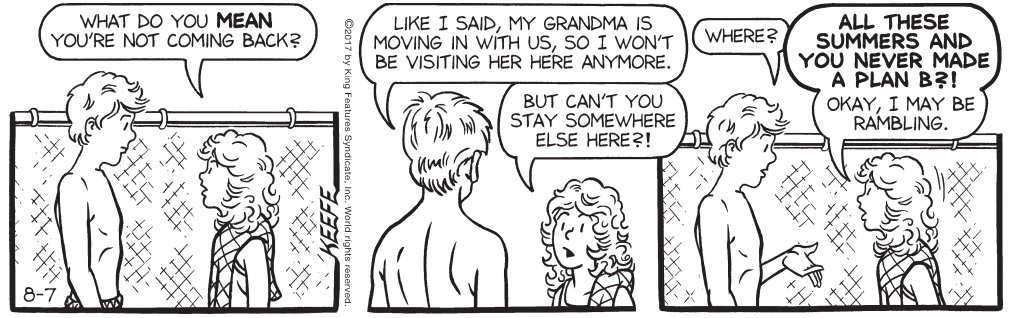
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Perhaps it doesn't look like much, but this is actually a pretty interesting crossroads you've come to. No pressure or anything, but one decision could change everything!

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Aug. 8). You've earned the promotion; enjoy the rise. Your need for greater independence will be fulfilled without struggle as past education gets a perfect application and old debts are repaid. The sweetness of loved ones makes October one of your favorite times. There's a move in February — a vitality infusion. Sagittarius and Aquarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 45, 21, 1 and 18.

BLONDIE



SALLY FORTH



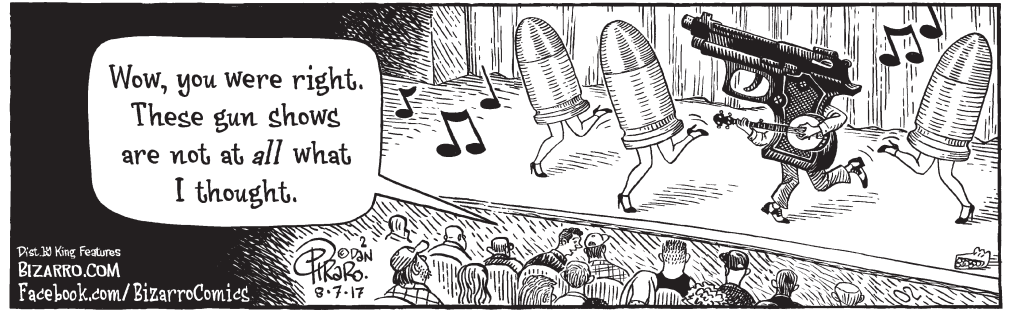
B.C.



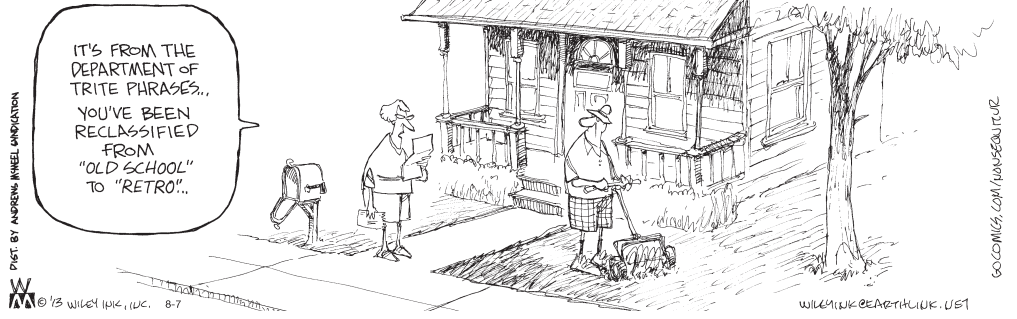
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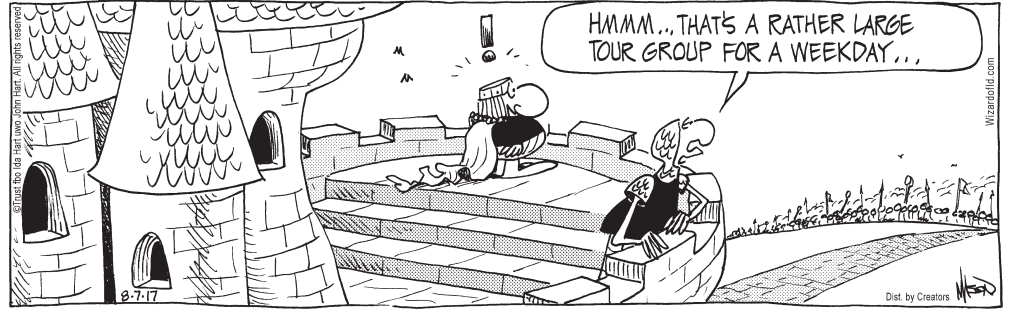
BIZARRO



NON SEQUITUR



WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

