

Guests ruin summertime fun

Dear Annie: I live in a very small Montana town with a very short summer season. My friends and neighbors and I have been inundated with summer guests who have made our town and homes their summer vacation destination. Every year, our own summers have been ruined because of this guest influx. This puts a great strain on us financially, as well as physically. It gets worse every summer.

How does one politely tell these people to stay at a hotel and not expect us to feed them three meals a day, do their laundry and be their tour guide? I tried to let one set of friends know that I simply cannot accommodate them in my home, and now they no longer communicate with me. — *Sick of Summer Guests*

Dear Sick of Summer Guests: Summer is too short to spend stressed about houseguests, and life is too short to spend acquiescing to others out of guilt. What you said — that you simply cannot accommodate them — was perfectly adequate, and I'd encourage you to tell any other prospective visitors exactly the same thing. If "friends"

stop talking to you because you set boundaries, they're not friends; they're freeloaders. You're better off without them.

Dear Annie: I can heartily empathize with "Housebound Through No Fault of Our Own in Iowa," whose neighbors prevent her family from enjoying their own backyard.

When my partner and I were first married, we moved into an apartment. We are both readers and have never owned a TV or a stereo. Nonetheless, the woman who lived downstairs from us complained to the building manager about all the music coming from our apartment. When it wasn't the music (that we weren't playing), it was that we flushed the toilet at 10:30 p.m. or (my favorite) she heard "one shoe drop and waited up all night for the other one." Because of the neighbor's complaints, the landlord even threatened to evict us.

One long weekend, we were out of town. Minutes after returning home, we were told about the slew of complaints our neighbor had filed about how much noise we'd made over the weekend (even

though we were out of town). That was the final straw.

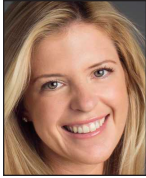
We contacted a lawyer, who wrote a letter to our neighbor clarifying that she was interfering with our "legal rights of domicile" and that if she persisted, we would be obliged to take further action.

After our downstairs neighbor complained to others in the building about our lawyer's letter, one by one all of the neighbors came to us to tell us their stories of how our downstairs neighbor had harassed them. Then, as a group, we complained to the landlord about her. Soon afterward, the woman downstairs moved out and left us all in peace.

We are not people who like the idea of going to a lawyer, but there are some people in this world who need that kind of response to behave appropriately. I would strongly recommend that "Housebound" consider taking that step. — *Justin F.*

Dear Justin F.: Of all the neighbor complaints I've heard, "I heard one shoe drop and waited up all night for the other one" takes the cake. No one should have to undergo the expense and inconvenience of moving because of a neighbor's unfair demands. Good on you for standing up to a bully.

DEAR ANNIE

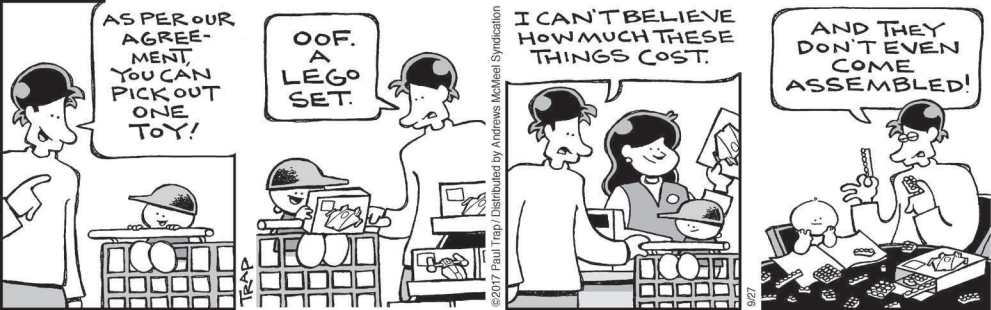


Annie Lane
Creators
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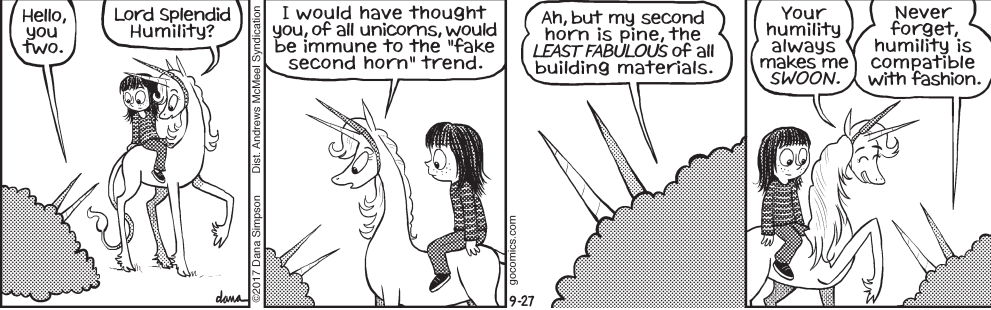
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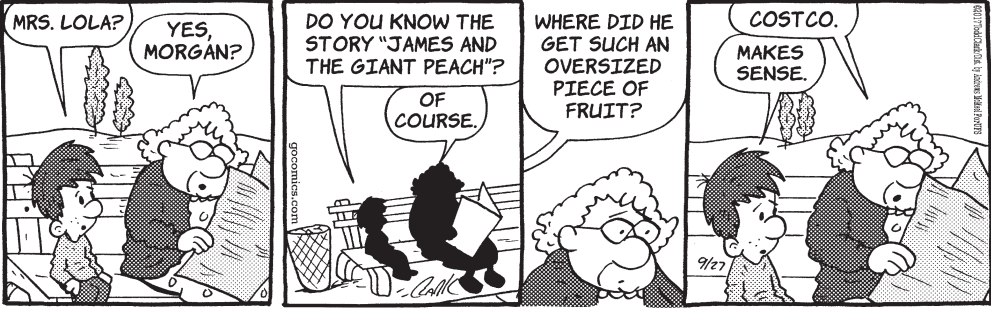
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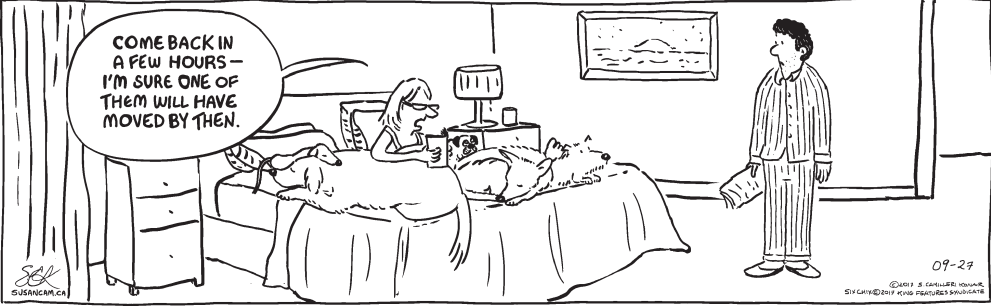
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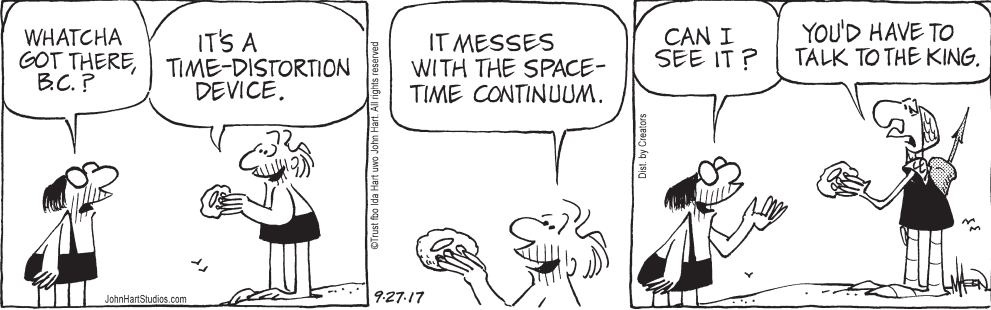
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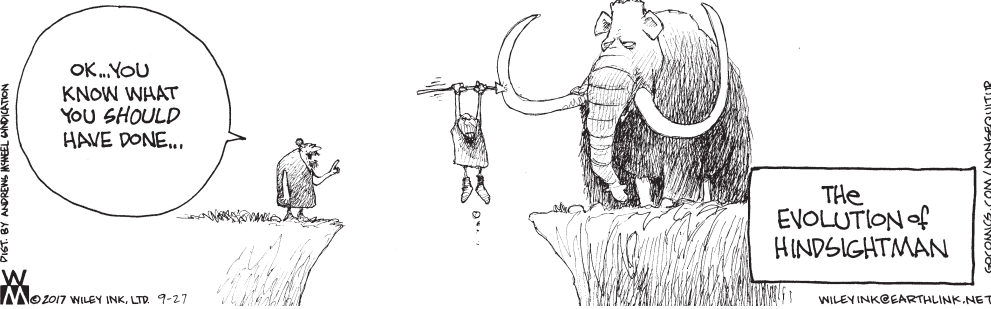
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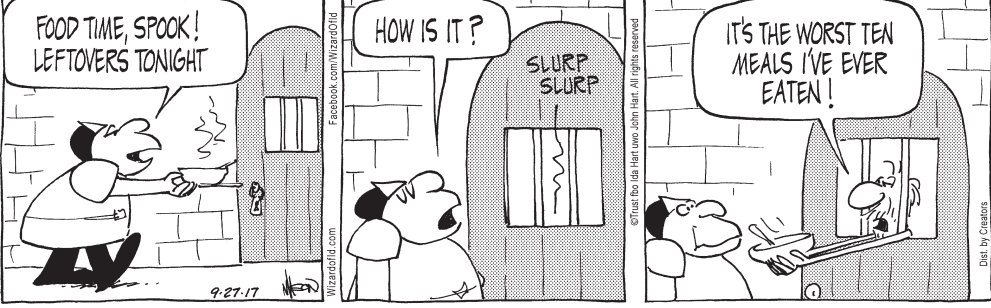
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