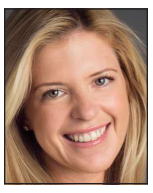
Smoking around a baby

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Annie: I love reading your column so much that I have decided to ask your opinion on a sensitive issue. I recently found out that I am expecting, which is exciting news! However, we have run into a situation with my mother-in-law, as she is a smoker. My husband has mentioned to her several times about quitting smoking and has gone as far as telling her she will not babysit this child if she continues to smoke. I do agree that I do not want my child around secondhand smoke, as it is dangerous to a baby's health, not to mention stinky. At this time, my mother-in-law has made no effort to quit the habit. My question is: Where do you draw the line? I don't want my child or mother-in-law to miss out on any time or memories together. — *Fume-Free*

Dear Fume-Free: The good news is that the pressure isn't on you here; it's on your mother-in-law. Her grandbaby or a cigarette — she has to decide which one she'd like to hold more often.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, secondhand smoke causes "numerous health problems in infants and children, including more frequent and severe asthma attacks, respiratory infections, ear infections, and sudden infant death syndrome." Studies have shown that secondhand smoke can linger in a house for hours, and there's a growing body of evidence to suggest that even tobacco residue on a smoker's hair and clothes can be harmful to children who are in close contact. Have your husband set some ground rules with his mother that take these factors into account. For example, no holding the baby for two hours after smoking. (This would most likely mean she couldn't baby-sit.)

He should also let her know that every cigarette takes about 11 minutes off her life — which could add up to hours, weeks and months she'd never see of her granddaughter's life. Perhaps the birth of your baby will be just the impetus she needs to kick this nasty habit once and for all.

Dear Annie: I am often bothered by what I perceive to be a lack of consideration in others.

One recent example was when several "friends" canceled plans made two months in advance because something better had come along, even though I had carefully juggled several family members' medical appointments to accept their invitation. Another was when a medical provider canceled my appointment at the last minute to go golfing, even though I live two hours away and had made staff aware I was using my last day of vacation to schedule this date and confirmed in advance.

Reading the responses you received regarding the woman who was criminally assaulted really got to me. None of us, as far as I can tell, has been the victim of such a harrowing and personal criminal sexual assault. Why the criticism of this poor woman for wanting to request a female nurse?

— *Leave People Alone*

Dear Leave People Alone: It is so frustrating when others are inconsiderate of our time — but we can only control ourselves.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You have expressed your affinity through giving gifts, and it's about time to do that again. With new relationships, be very careful not to set up a precedent that will be difficult to uphold later.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). It starts with a pang of envy, a lingering glance at a brochure or a full-body response to the lure of an image or idea ... and suddenly you're in the very earliest planning stages of an adventure.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). There's a trade — your energy for a feeling of acceptance, love or validation. Just know that the feeling won't last. It will always have to be earned again and again. So make sure your energy expenditure is really worth it.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). The cycle is so subtle, and yet it's spoiling your plans. It goes something like this: You have to do what you'd rather not; then the thing you do to calm and comfort yourself works against the larger goal.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Just like the plants, you get energy from your ruling luminary, the sun — the value of which should not be underestimated these days. Feeling sunshine rays on your skin will help your mood and your soul.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). It's not a one-size-fits-all kind of situation, and you won't be able to come up with a fix that pleases everyone, but try anyway. Efforts that don't land on anything will still lead to something.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Talk is cheap, and some will say anything to go to the next stage in the relationships with you and/or your money. Be careful now. Do your research. Check references. Ask for proof that people can do what they say they can do.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You'll be overcome with a desire to make things spotless and orderly. It's a sign that you're about to change again. This is a way of taking stock of (as well as honoring and appreciating) what you have.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You've a special charismatic energy with those in physical proximity. Whenever possible, go where you can lock eyes. You'll be even more effective when you can see and read the situation in person.

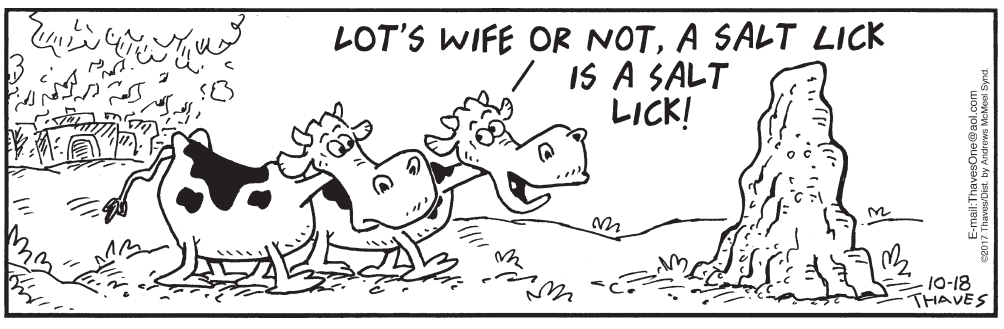
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). When you've lost some control of your internal situation it will help to take power over your external situation. Your emotional changes are quickly reflected in the world. It's not at all surprising to you when life defies the notions of cause and effect or space and time.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You're a quick study these days, and you only have to do a job once to get the gist and know if it is or isn't for you. The same goes for other interests, studies, hobbies, dates and locations.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The moral of today's story is that real life isn't a fable. You don't have to come up with a moral and probably shouldn't try, because everyone is going to take something different from it anyway. Live without judgment for a while.

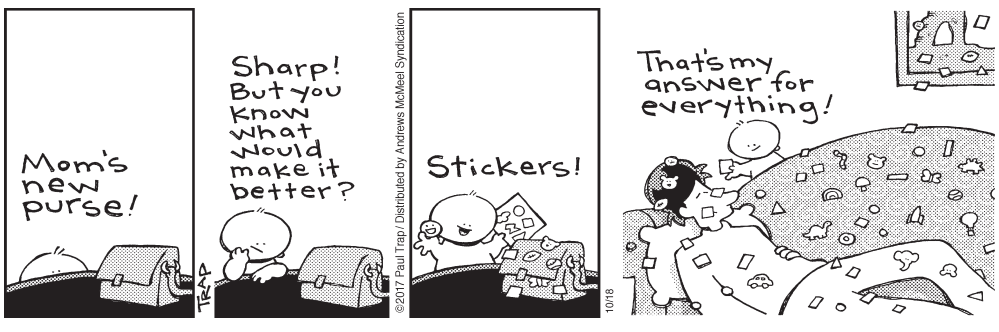
TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Oct. 19). A relationship flourishes and love inspires you. The way you express yourself is developing in magical and most effective ways. Amateur attempts will be very lucky for you at the start of 2018. The less you know, the more you'll do with pure intent and open mind. You'll get places that pros can't. Scorpio and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 14, 3, 38, 22 and 19.

FRANK AND ERNEST



BLONDIE

THATABABY



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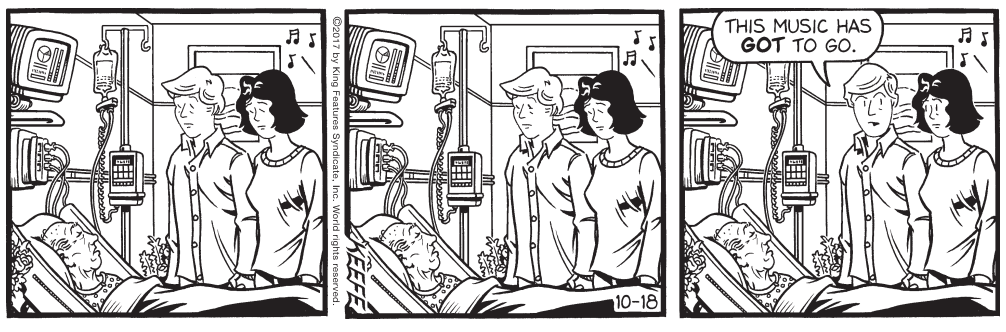
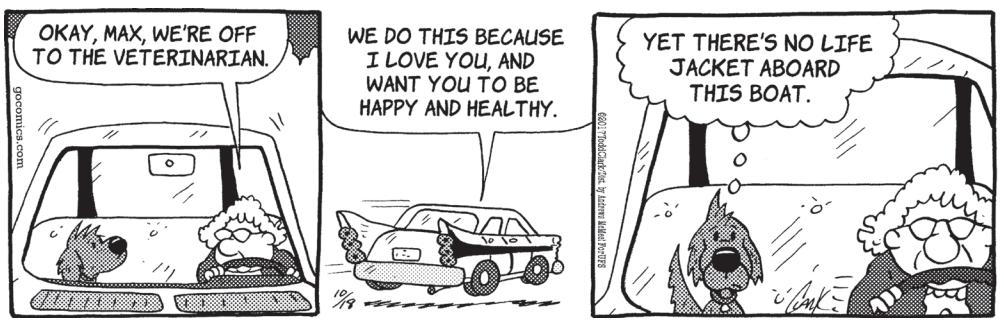


PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN

B.C.

LOLA



DILBERT

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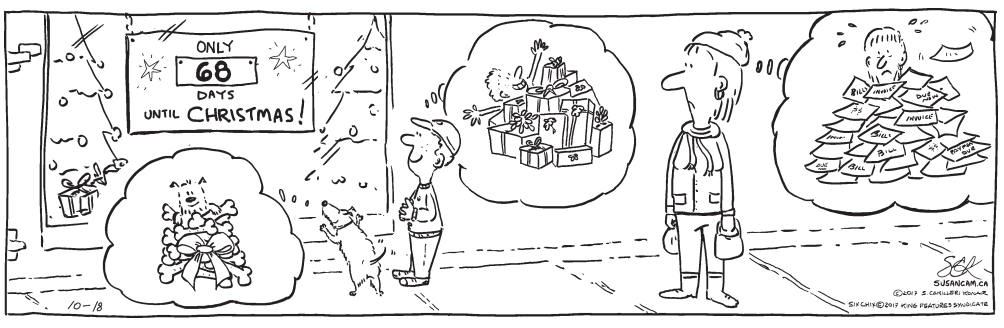
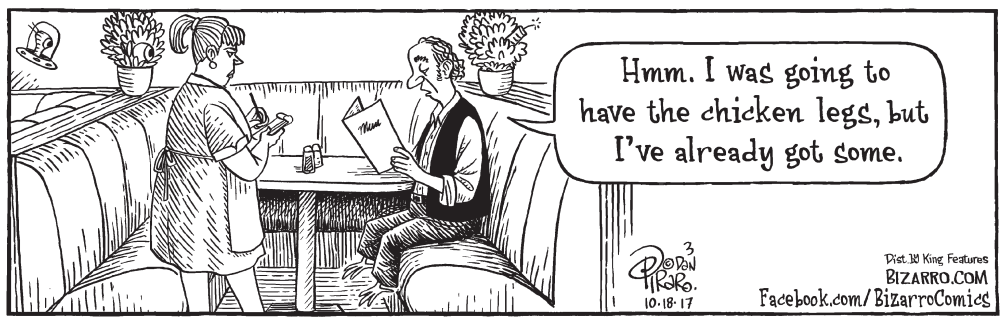


BIZARRO



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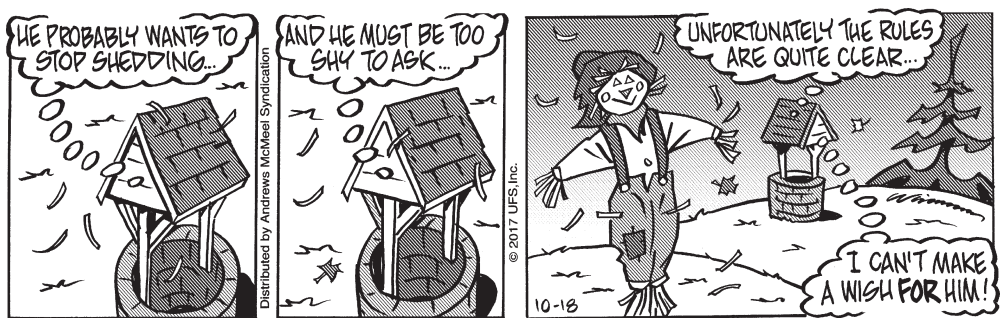
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