

# Just too many expectations

**Dear Annie:** After working my whole life, I am retiring in a couple of weeks. I've been looking forward to some downtime, sleeping in, time for myself and time to do the things I want to do, but a problem has appeared.

My husband wants me to take care of his 97-year-old semi-invalid father, who expects a full cooked breakfast every morning at 7 o'clock. On top of that, my son and his wife, who work different shifts, expect me to care for their screaming 2-year-old toddler and their new baby, who is due in a few weeks.

I hate to say "no" to my family, but what about me? What should I do? — *Distressed in Utah*

**Dear Distressed:** Don't think of it as saying "no" to your family. Think of it as finally saying "yes" to yourself.

Someone was taking care of your father-in-law until this point. Can that person continue to do so, at least in some capacity? Perhaps you could hire a part-time caregiver who could be

with him during the day. Surely, you and your husband can come up with a plan that doesn't require you to serve as 24/7 nurse and chef. The same goes for your son and his wife. They should not rely entirely on you for child care. Baby-sitting should be a favor, not a duty.

Though setting boundaries may lead to some conflict with family members in the short term, it will make for healthier, less resentful relations in the long term. Congrats on your retirement.

**Dear Annie:** I am a gay man in my late 20s, and I've found myself in a very confusing situation. I could use some advice. My best friend, a woman I've known for almost 15 years, and I are so close we're almost like siblings. I spend holidays with her family and take vacations with them. Her parents consider me one of their children. She has three elder siblings, a sister and two brothers. I am incredibly close to all of them, especially one of her brothers, "Bryan."

Bryan is like a brother to me. We tell each other we love each other. If he were gay, I would most likely be in a relationship with him. So compatible are we that his parents often joke that we would make the perfect couple.

However, my fraternal relationship with Bryan has always sort of had an undertone of his appreciating the fact that I find him attractive. It's not uncommon for him to take his shirt off and ask me whether I think his workouts are paying off. I know that this is quite common with other people, too; straight men often relish the idea that they are the object of desire for gay men. But recently, it's come to a weird apex.

Now, I should probably mention that he has a girlfriend whom he loves and is about to move in with. But I still have these complicated feelings. Is he just teasing me? Is he just joking?

I love him like a brother, but I would definitely be intimate with him if he wanted. I'm so confused. — *Confused*

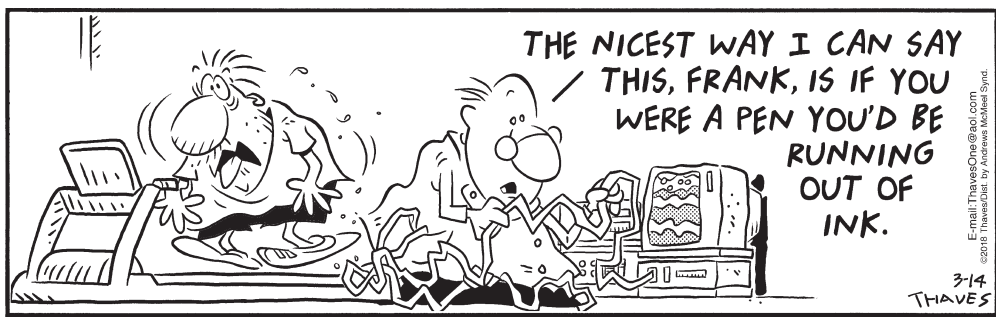
**Dear Confused:** I take it Bryan is confused, too. But that's no excuse for his selfish behavior.

**DEAR ANNIE**



Annie Lane  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.

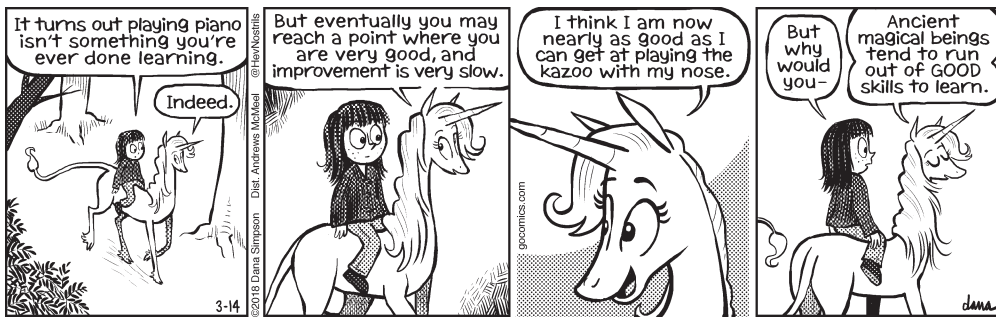
**FRANK AND ERNEST**



**THATABABY**



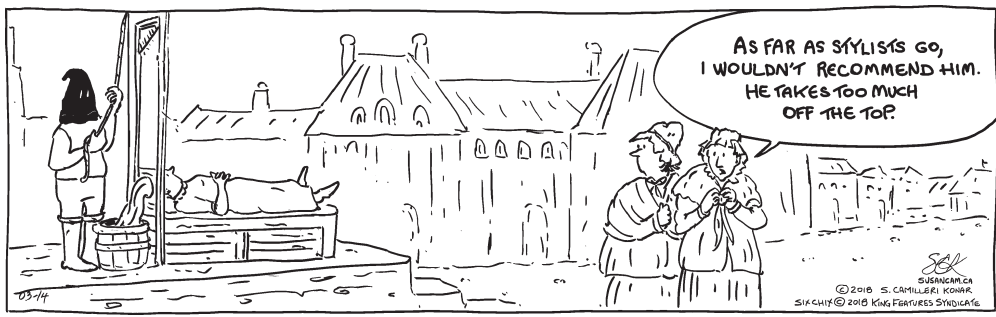
**PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN**



**LOLA**



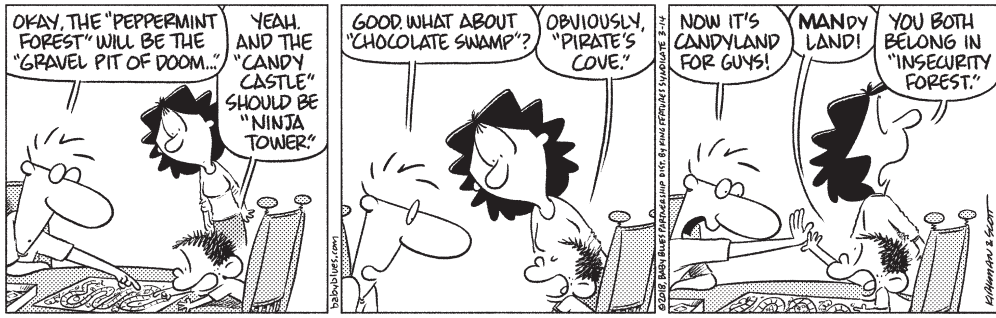
**SIX CHIX**



**MUTTS**



**BABY BLUES**



**ZITS**



**TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE**

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** The social scientists suggest that the most important (and telling) part of a conversation is the start of it. As the sign of beginnings, you get this intuitively and lead with the intention of making something positive happen.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** The less you own, the less you are owned. There was a time when these symbols meant much more to you; but now that they don't, the thing to do is to take the cash value.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** You'll be somewhat impervious to what others are reacting to. It's not that you're unfeeling; rather, you are protected by your broader point of view. Seeing the big picture minimizes the impact of circumstantial pettiness.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** One would think that extremely valuable things would be constantly guarded against theft, loss or damage, and yet it's not always so. People lose valuables all of the time. This is no time to take for granted what you hold dear.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Today's success secret is a no-brainer. You'll seek out and study those who live the way you want to live. Furthermore, though it won't happen overnight, eventually you will become one of them.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** You'll focus on what's good and ask the same of others. This will not be accomplished overtly, which would only be annoying. The positivity is an extension of how you are, your general personality and approach.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Deep down, you know what you want. Press yourself! It's a good thing to figure out early in the day, because you could waste a lot of time with vague actions. Have the confidence to be specific and direct.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** On the surface there's not a lot of difference between going with the flow and conforming like a chameleon. The difference is on the inside. Don't fool yourself. Make strategic compromises — external, not internal.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** You're a helper. Also, you've the experience to easily solve many problems. However, refrain from giving advice or solutions until and unless you are asked. No one likes to be told what they should be doing.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** Should you avoid or embrace conflict? Much depends on motive. If you're avoiding conflict to be liked, the plan will backfire. If you're avoiding it to be peaceful, the moral high ground will be your paradise.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Many believers in angels and spirit guides suggest that these ethereal entities communicate with us through feelings. Today it will seem that your intuition, or some extrasensory stimulus, is trying to tell you something.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Whether it seems to be going very right, or very wrong, you'll be cool with it. These things have a way of stabilizing. The midpoint is called that for a reason. Everything settles there eventually.

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (MARCH 15).** You're not required to answer every call, show up to every invite or react to every situation. Over the next three months you'll reinforce your power position and nudge out those who want to control your scene. Then everything starts coming together in June — financially, romantically and domestically. Aries and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 30, 2, 19 and 44.

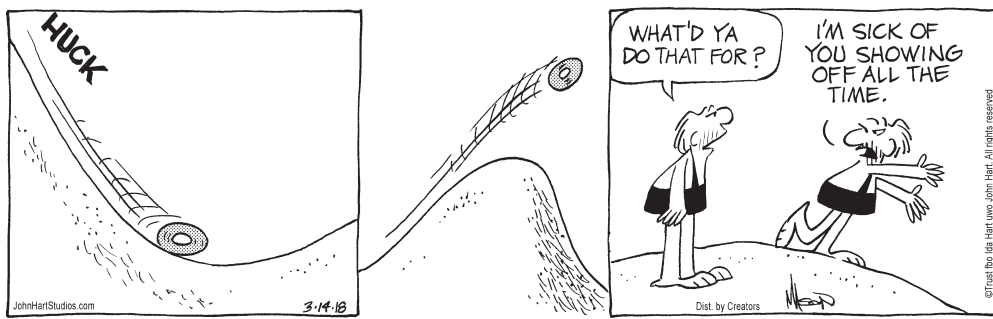
**BLONDIE**



**SALLY FORTH**



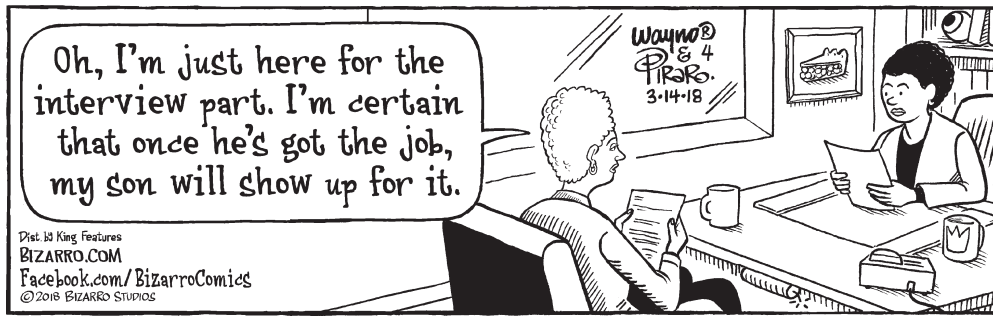
**B.C.**



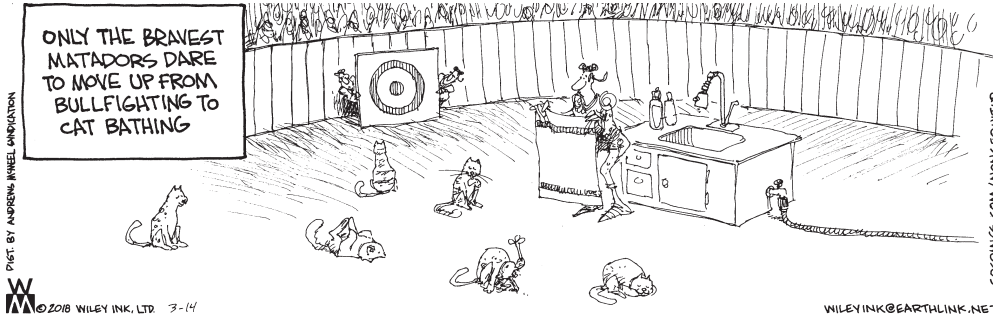
**DILBERT**



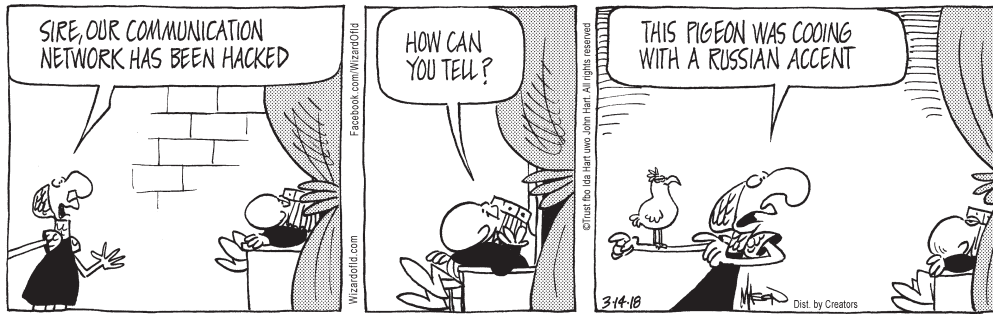
**BIZARRO**



**NON SEQUITUR**



**WIZARD OF ID**



**ROSE IS ROSE**

