Leave the abuse behind

DEAR ANNIE

Annie Lane
Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Annie: When my youngest son graduates high school, I plan on leaving my husband.

My husband, "Bill," and I have two sons. My husband has refused to discipline either of them. He's always allowed the elder son (age 20) to curse me out and make my life a living hell, as well as bully his little brother. Bill has often been dismissive and verbally abusive toward me, too. Bill is a veritable saint to every other human yet talks very poorly about those who admire him. No one except for my sons and me knows what really goes on behind closed doors.

I've repeatedly told my elder son he has slowly killed my love for him over the years. I never dreamed I would be spoken to in such a vile manner. I have always taught him right from wrong, but his dad is the greater influence, it seems. I try not to speak to my son now unless he speaks to me first.

Right now, I have no funds, but around the time when my youngest son graduates, I will be able to draw my pension. As soon as I have my own funds, I plan to seek counseling — for myself and for my sons, if they will go. My husband does not believe in such "nonsense" as counseling and rarely allows me more than a few dollars for personal use.

Do old dogs ever learn new tricks? Do verbally abusive people ever change or even regret their actions? I feel that being away from both of them, even with a meager pension, will be better than the hell I feel stuck in. — *Waiting for May*

Dear Waiting for May: I am so sorry that you've been treated terribly by two people who should have treated you with love and respect. It's not uncommon for children of emotionally or physically abusive parents to repeat those behaviors as they grow up. I hope your son seeks help to purge the toxic behavior he's internalized.

To answer your question, it's possible for abusers to regret their actions and change — but victims can't count on it. I think you're wise to move out. It will be healthier not only for you but also for your other son, who should know that it's never too late to leave a bad situation.

Covertly speak to a lawyer soon so you can begin making your plans. Follow through on seeking counseling once you're able, and encourage your younger son to do the same.

Dear Annie: I never write commentaries, but I find myself furious about the letter from "Jane in Virginia," who feels that a return to royalty would be a good thing for American women.

I have an ancestor commemorated on Bunker Hill. My ancestors fought to free this country and make it a country where all men (and women) are created equal. Jane has apparently bought into Hollywood's sumptuous presentations in which the idle gentry live on huge estates while their commoner servants, who have nothing, scurry around waiting on them. Americans are not commoners; they are equals.

The good thing is that the writer can get on a plane any day and go to the United Kingdom, where her dream is already in place. In fact, I wish she would put her money where her mouth is and go. — *Stubborn Yankee*

Dear Stubborn Yankee: I meant only to entertain Jane's insight into many Americans' obsession with the British royal family. I regret not expressly stating that I don't endorse monarchy in the USA. I hope this clears that up.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Try on the motto, "Anything I can do, I can do better with friends," and see how it fits. Today's luck will be delivered as you reach out, especially with regards to a scenario you might usually try and handle on your own.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). One of the great social paradoxes: Everyone hates people who are universally liked. Better to be acknowledged by one person whose opinion you value than by hundreds you don't even know.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Someday, when you've an urgent request or some exciting news to share, you'll discover that your reach is extensive and your network is mighty fine. Why? Because of the goodwill you build on days like today.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Does it seem that the more you learn, the less you know? It's because learning makes you aware of the vastness of available and unavailable knowledge. The smartest among us are comfortable with the unknown.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Romance is a kind of enchantment. That doesn't necessarily mean it's unreal, but it's a spell, and like most spells, it can make the impossible happen. It can also be broken.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). When you casually connect with people just because you feel like it, you build bridges that extend from your world to theirs — bridges you'll be able to cross more or less whenever you want to.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). No matter how genius the plan is, if you don't follow it, it's worthless. So the plan doesn't have to be the "best" plan. It just has to be the stickiest one. The best plan is the one you'll actually follow.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your great days tend to follow a formula: your favorite people, an interesting turn of events and a stroke of luck. Today's efforts will help to set up a great day in your near future.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Perhaps the best way to destroy your enemies is to make them your friends. You disagree on many things; it's true. If you're looking for it, you'll also find that you agree on many things. Find the common ground.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The way you do something impossible is with a pretty simple equation. You do it in possible steps. Possibility multiplied by consistent effort over time equals impossible things done.

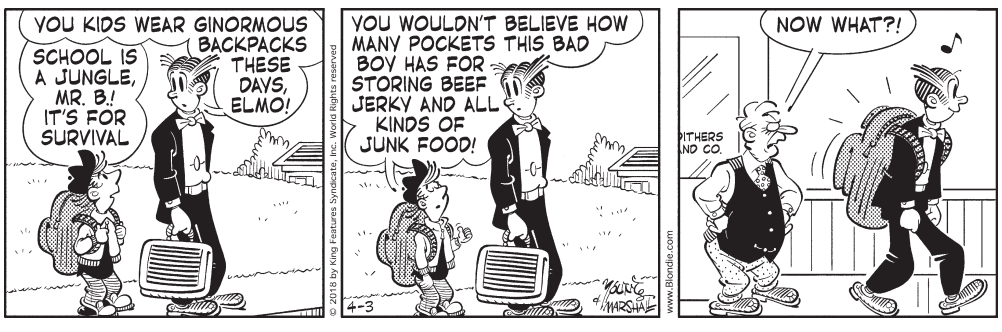
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Love isn't defined by a marriage certificate, the length of a relationship, or any single act. Similarly, learning isn't defined by a certificate, class hours logged or a test score. Learning is like love. It is as it does.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). In a weird way, you don't have to align yourself with like minds. Maybe they emit a kind of magnetic wave or something, because you seem to find them wherever you go today, and the alignment happens quite naturally.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (April 4). This solar return starts with a long-overdue solution. The missing part shows up; the strong area overtakes weakness; an imbalance of power is set right. Your new and improved routine will create a better lifestyle for you. A major purchase happens in August, and you'll be building on this through the rest of 2018. Libra and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 20, 44, 31 and 19.

FRANK AND ERNEST

BLONDIE



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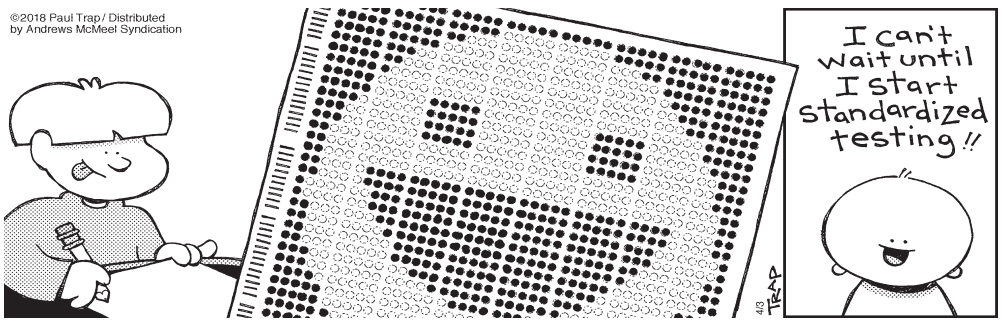

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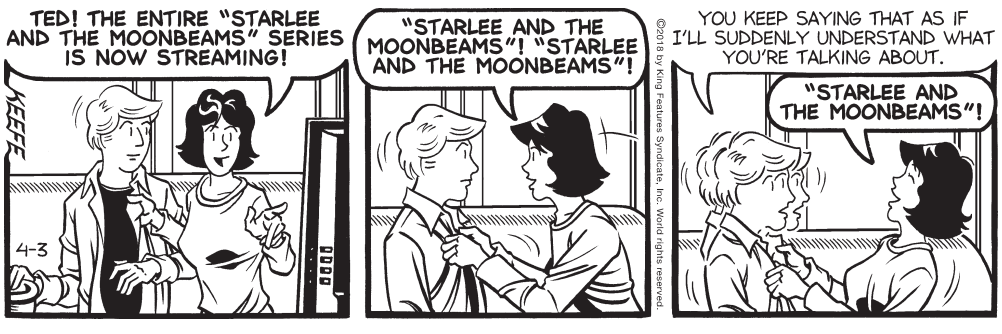
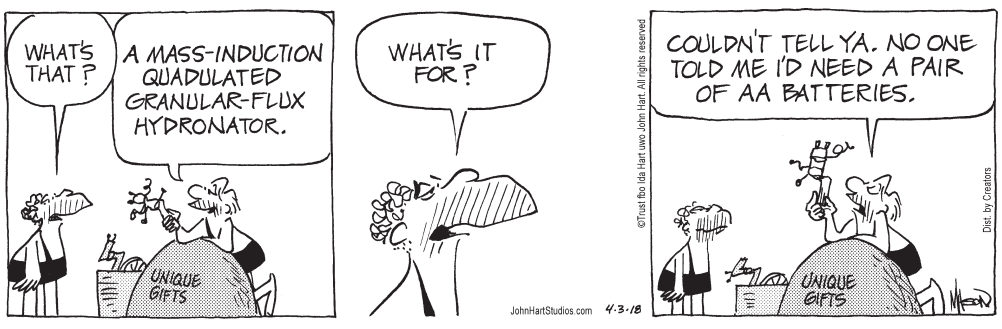


PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN

B.C.



LOLA

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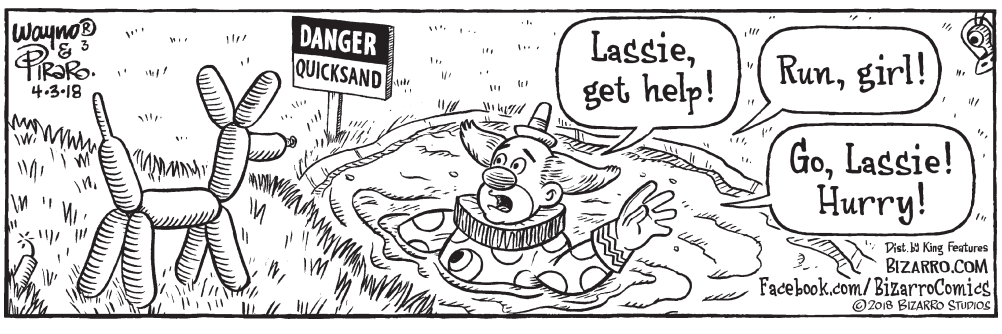
BIZARRO



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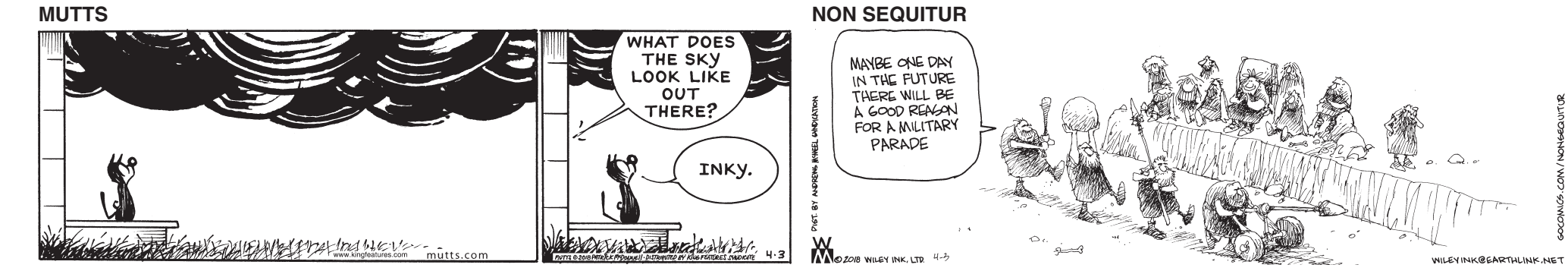
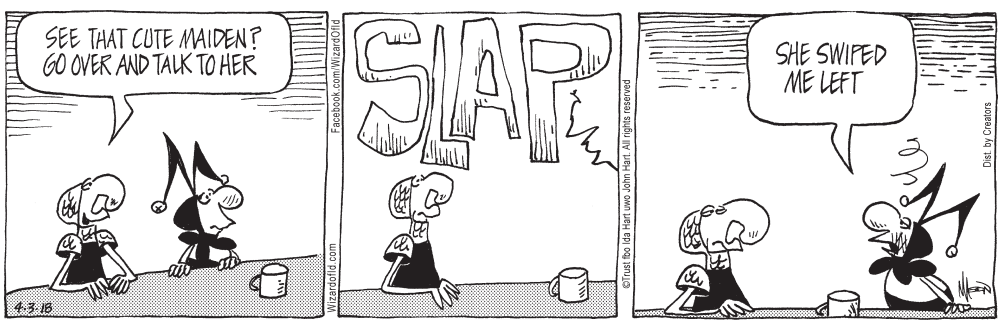


BABY BLUES

WIZARD OF ID



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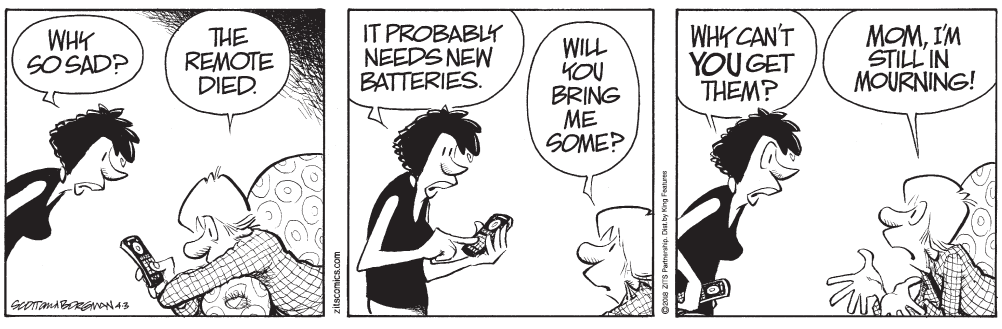
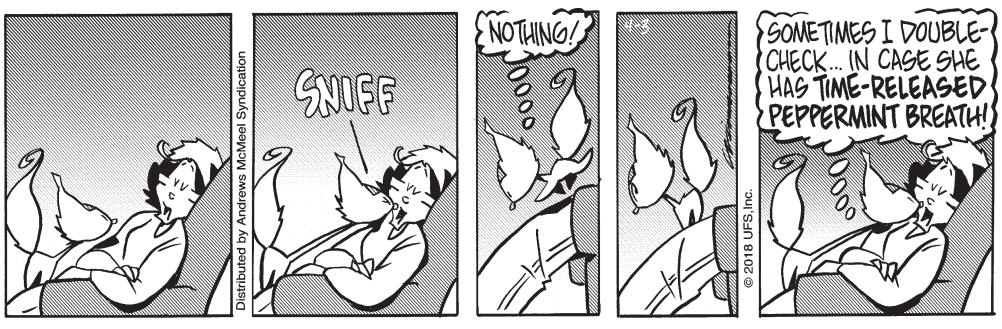
ROSE IS ROSE