

Parents are in decline

Dear Annie. My octogenarian parents recently visited my family for two weeks. They stayed in our house for the duration of their stay. My three sons are all preteens and were very excited to spend time with their grandparents. My husband and I are always a bit more anxious to have them stay. My parents were present and financially supportive throughout my childhood but were emotionally disengaged.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Over the past few years, I've noticed that their speed has been slowing and their health has been declining. With this slowing, their presence has also become more disengaged. In fact, they generally spent the trip sitting in our family room watching the news. They would only occasionally leave the house, and even then, it was often just for a quick trip to the supermarket or to get lunch. They didn't join me for school drop-off, pickup, activities or sports games.

I am concerned about the physical and mental stability of my parents. Both of them worked as I was growing up in California. My father was a sales executive, and my mother was a teacher. They don't

appear to have many friends where they live in Arizona and seem to be hyper-fixated on 24-hour news channels. I think they both miss the interactions from an office job.

They also are fixated on the past and retelling old stories instead of talking about new experiences. They seem to be more confrontational and looking for arguments with people. (Too much cable news?) And they focus on minor health issues and have grown concerned that this is the end.

I'd like to have an intervention with my parents and encourage them to find hobbies or adult groups, but I'm not sure how to do this without hurting them. — *Searching for Senior Help*

Dear Searching for Senior Help: Strangers are just friends waiting to happen. Maybe they are uncomfortable approaching strangers or feel vulnerable. Encourage them to join local senior groups or a group for new residents. Anybody attending an outing sponsored by one of these social groups is looking for the exact same feeling: companionship. Your parents will meet

couples with whom they share interests and values and will be able to pull themselves out of their home and into activities. This will take their minds off the alarming vortex of cable news and give them more positive social interactions.

Dear Annie: Recently, you advised "Unexcused" to encourage the guy she's seeing, who chronically belches, to see a doctor to find out whether he has a medical condition. I would suggest that he first start taking one or two high-quality food enzymes, which break down a broad range of foods, right before each meal. The enzymes will help him digest his food, and the problem may disappear. If that doesn't work entirely, he might add one or two acidophilus capsules in the morning to help repopulate his stomach and upper intestine with good bacteria, which chlorinated water, alcohol and other things deplete. — *Longtime Enzymes and Probiotics User*

Dear Longtime Enzymes and Probiotics User: I looked into it after receiving your letter, and I see that probiotics are one of the most popular natural remedies for preventing acid reflux and for relieving its symptoms. Thank you for bringing that to my attention.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You don't even realize how well you're doing right now. You're so hard on yourself! Ease up some. If you drive yourself too hard, you'll burn out and lose interest in doing what it takes to make further improvements.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). There's a difference between having a standard that people agree upon and having an expectation of others that they may be entirely unaware of. One way leads to satisfaction, the other to disappointment.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Unconditional love is the rarer sort, but it does exist — inside you and inside others, too. If you knew unequivocally that you're loved for who you are and not for your effectiveness in the role you're playing, what would you do differently?

CANCER (June 22-July 22). It's true for stand-up comics, CEOs, teachers and, to some degree, everyone in the public eye: A good part of success is reading the room. You'll do this well. Your choice of conversational focus will be quite brilliant.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). On a pretty day, the sun and breeze seem to deliver happiness right to your heart. But if the weather won't cooperate, you'll be excellent at creating ideal internal weather today.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). There have been times in life when your hours were so characterized by a constant stream of low-grade stress that anxiety was practically a lifestyle. Your ability now to shrug it off and lighten up was hard-earned, so enjoy!

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). It has been suggested that intelligence and power seek their own increase — that the drive for expansion is built into the very nature of these qualities. It

will prove true in your life today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You'll take the best option. Knowing this, what can you do to give yourself more "best" options that also are in line with your higher ideals for yourself? How can you give yourself more chances to do the right thing?

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). However attractively you try to arrange yourself, the exterior is not what makes you beautiful. Kindness and compassion are the ingredients of your heart that cannot be contained. They shine through your skin.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). In some company, people are just happy when someone is talking to fill up the silent void of social awkwardness. But in socially adept circles, it's excellent listening that will win out.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Just as the great artist Michelangelo carved until he set the angel in the marble free, you will continue to chip away at your problem. Currently it's as featureless and immobile as a marble slab, but beauty is emerging.

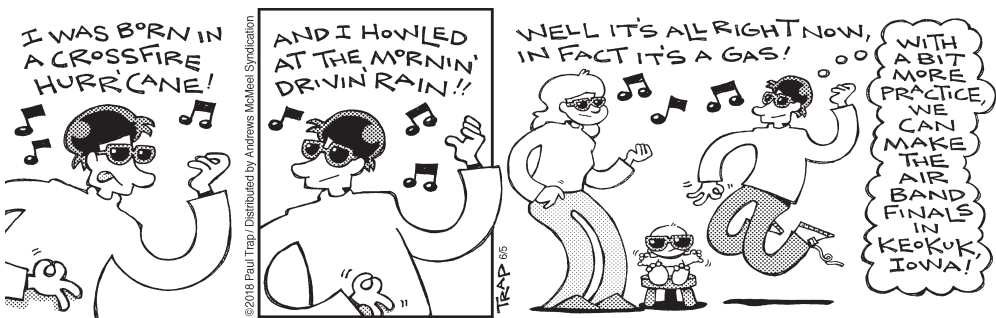
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Something central to your life lately will seem to drag on and on. Get comfortable with this. Maybe find a new distraction to help with the long slog? This will be worth it!

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (June 6). Family matters tie up happily, freeing you to tackle personal aims. Your fantasies will inspire you, but not as much as taking the next step will. Exciting momentum builds through the colder months. Get the inside scoop on the professional and social fronts. Success comes from acting on good information. Aquarius and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 15, 30.

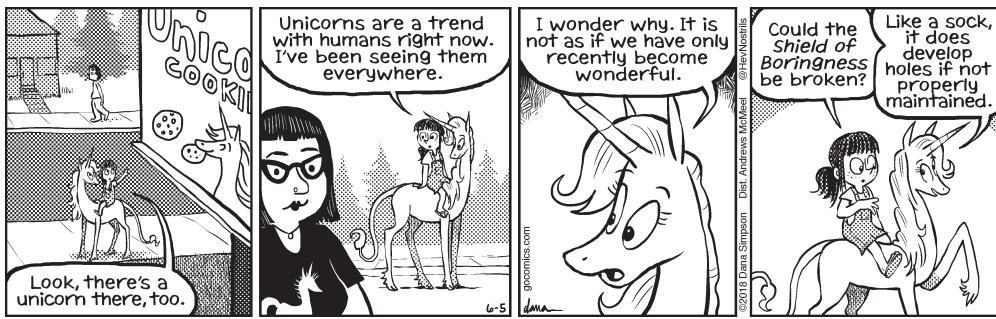
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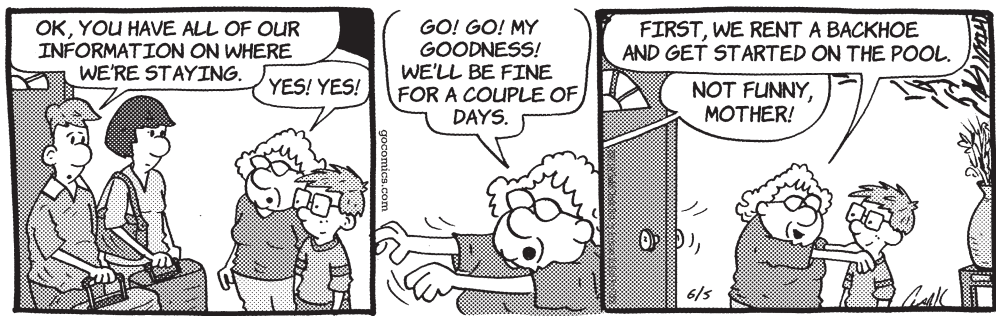
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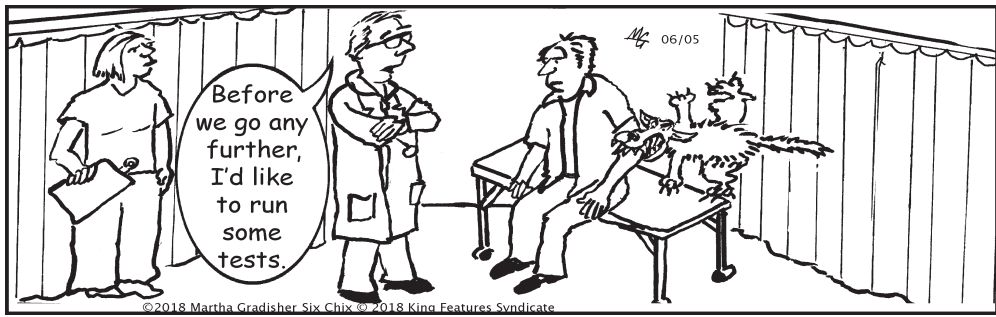
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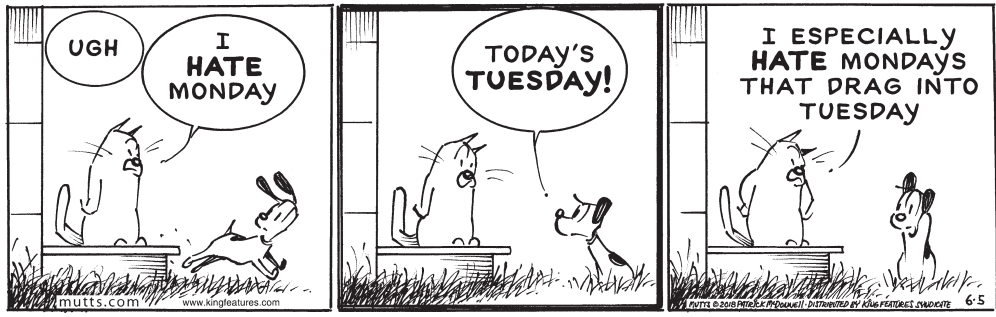
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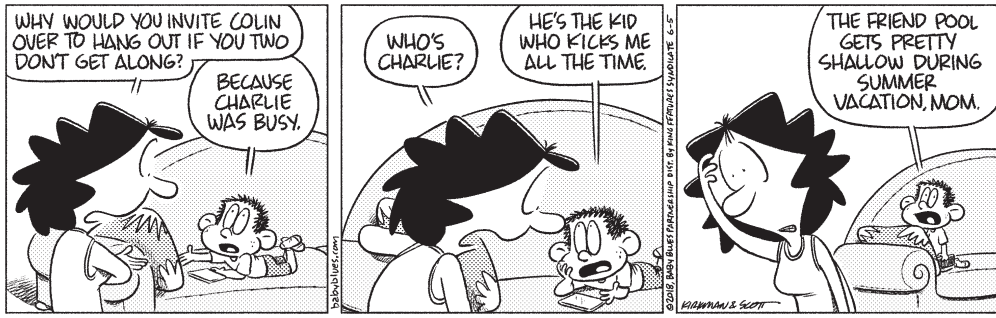
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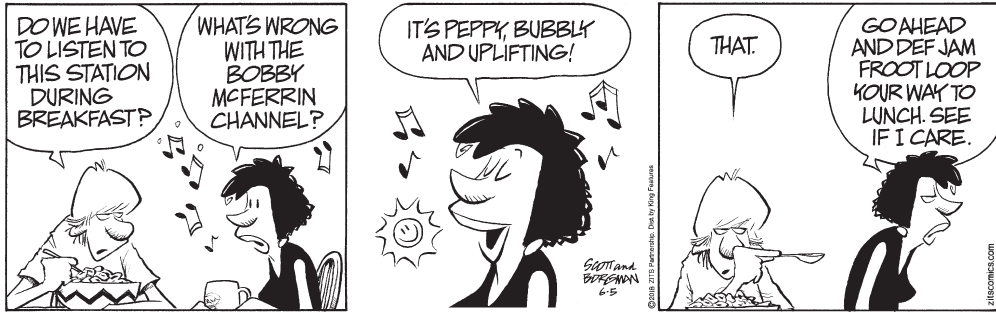
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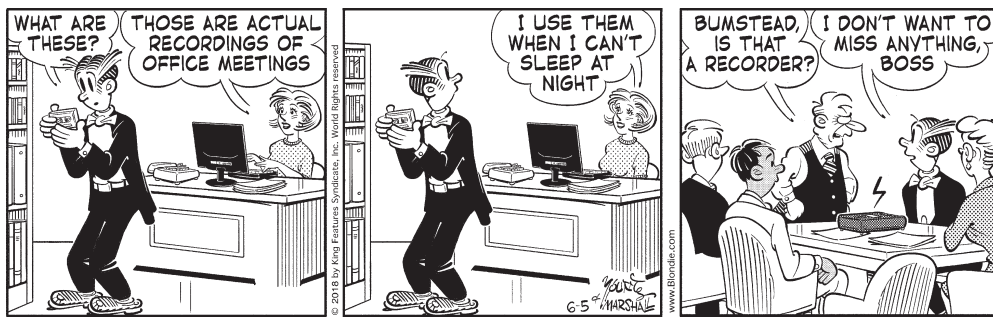
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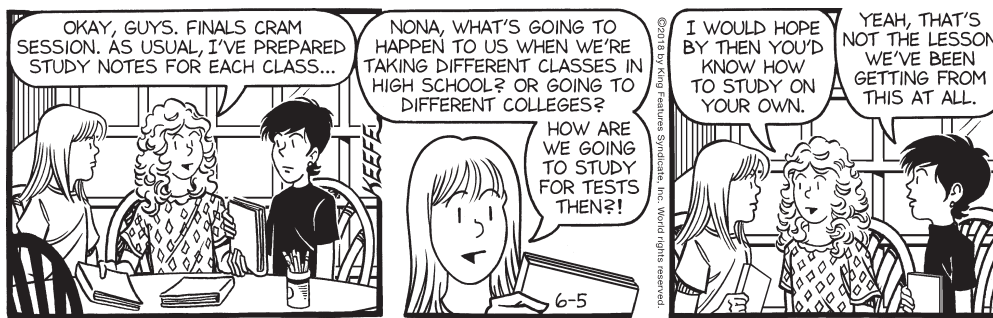
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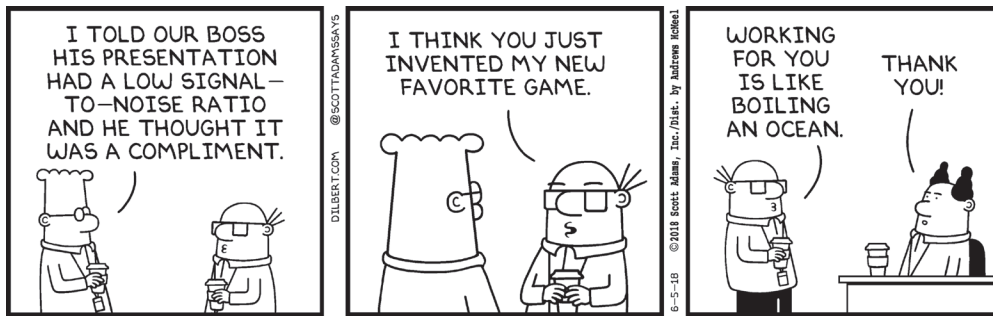
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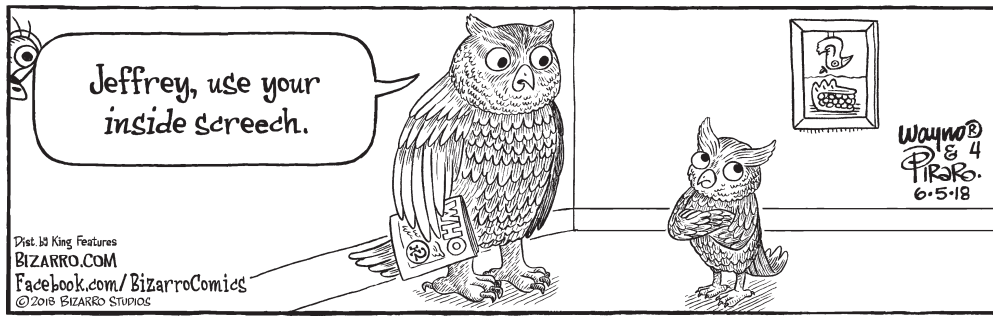
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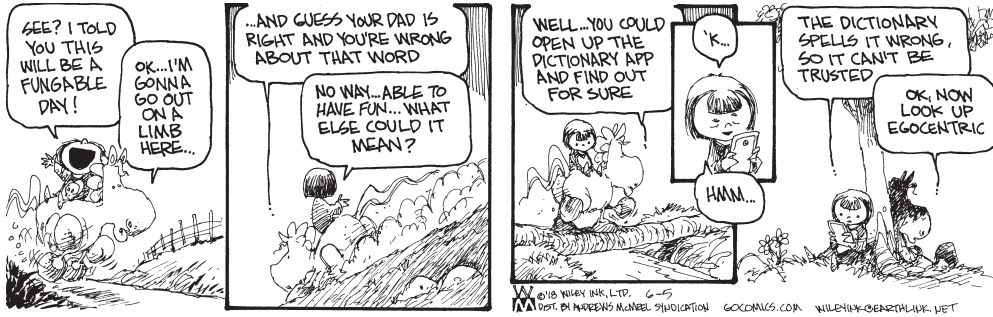
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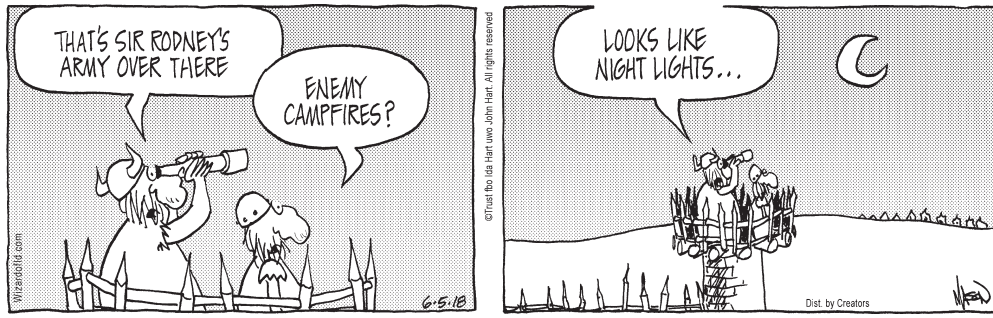
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