

You get no reference from me

Dear Annie: A couple of years ago, when I was starting a business, a friend put me in touch with her friend "Margaret," who had just started her own boutique marketing and public relations firm. I ended up hiring Margaret to help promote my new business. She was going to pitch articles about it to a few local publications (she was a part-time freelance writer), as well as some blogs, and she agreed to write copy for my website. All in all, I ended up paying her a few thousand dollars yet really had nothing to show for it. She never got any press for the business. She wrote a few hundred words of copy for my site. And she posted about the business on her own blog. I was disappointed but didn't want to bother confronting her about it. My business was doing well enough. I just decided I wouldn't work with her anymore.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Well, recently I got an email from Margaret. She wants to know whether she can use me as a reference for a potential client. I was pretty incredulous that she'd ask me for a reference after doing such a half-baked job for me. I don't want to be rude, but I really don't feel

comfortable serving as a reference. I'd hate for anyone else to be put in the same situation I was in. How do I handle this? — *Not Impressed*

Dear Not Impressed: You're already doing her a kindness by not saying yes and telling her would-be client the truth. So don't worry about being rude. Tell Margaret that you don't feel comfortable serving as a reference, and leave it at that. She may ask you what she could have done differently to better serve your needs. Be honest. If she ever wants to succeed in marketing, she should value customer feedback.

Dear Annie: I have never written to a column such as yours, but the letter from "Tormented and Distressed" — a high school senior who wrote in about past sexual abuse and her fear of male medical professionals — changed everything. I am a retired critical care nurse, and what she describes about alleged male nurses is both horrifying and not typical of the wonderful professionals I know.

I am so sorry about what happened to her at the hands of her mother's boyfriend. "Tormented

and Distressed" needs to address her fears about male medical professionals, because her own life may depend on it. We never know when a medical emergency will occur involving us. It may be a car crash. It may be an unexpected illness or allergic reaction. It may be nothing but a fall that results in an injury requiring emergency care. But the last thing one needs in any medical emergency is paranoia about the sex of the person or people caring for you. If you refuse care from a male doctor or nurse, he has to honor this, but your life may be in danger while waiting for a woman to care for you.

I empathize with "Tormented and Distressed." I was also terrified about having a male medical professional touching me — with my first breast exam, my first pelvic exam, etc. — but she will get past this. Most importantly, she needs to get past it before putting her own life in danger. — *Been There, Too*

Dear Been There, Too: You make a great point. This is yet another reason it's important for "Tormented and Distressed" to seek help in processing her past abuse. Thank you for sharing your professional insight and personal empathy.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Someone who has come to your emotional rescue in the past is now in need of a little attention. This won't be a "rescue" per se; rather, it will be the sort of nice acknowledgment that keeps a rescue situation at bay.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You can't exactly control everything you think. Your mind is like a great dragon, far more powerful than you, but you can ride on its back and steer it. It's likely to go where you tell it to.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You'll be attracted to the people who can do little things right, correctly assuming that this is a sign that they might do their best to get the big things right, too.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You'll be in the support position today, and the role will come as a nice break to you. "We can't all be heroes, because somebody has to sit on the curb and clap when they go by." — Will Rogers

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Look at the facts, references and all the evidence you can find, but don't base your decision solely on these things. Let your gut feeling weigh in. Evidence can be falsified. Your gut is less likely to be fooled than your mind.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You hear yourself differently depending on whom you talk to. That's why it's important to talk to many different types of people. People with different status levels, skills and cultures will help you understand.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). A core of self-appreciation will help you improve quickly. When you know, at a very basic level, that you're OK, you won't be defensive in the face of feedback. You'll take every note and build from it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Brilliant interactions are often less interactive. More contact means more tangles. Believe in people's abilities to solve their own problems, and let them know you're there to back them up if needed.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). All results will be the results of action. The one who takes action gets to change the landscape, define the story — indeed, to be the star of it. Even passivity can be active, with the right level of awareness.

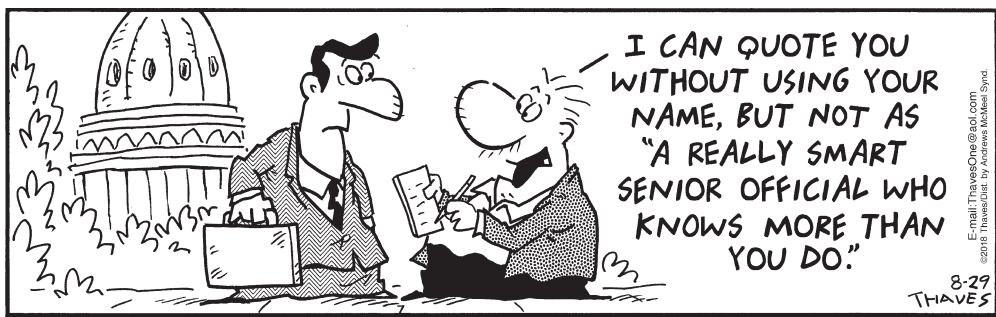
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Small things matter, but petty things don't. It's not the size that makes things trivial; it's the significance. Pay attention and you will understand the difference and avoid mixing into anything that would reduce you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You're inclined toward the big questions today, although this will be displayed in a very down-to-earth way. The big questions can be answered with simple acts of cleanliness, organization and kindness.

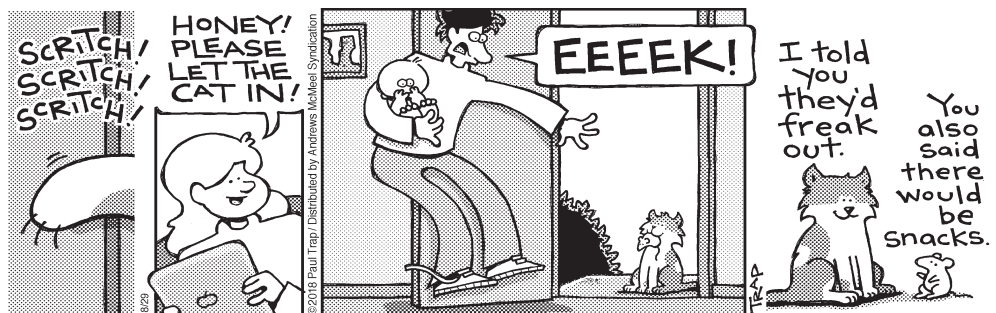
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You may make an innocuous and breezy comment, but others won't hear it that way. Some consider you the official word from above. Your position gives your words weight.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Aug. 30). There is something inside you that's as luminous as anything on the planet has ever been. Clear away anything that shades this secret. Go where people see you, and use your talents. The respect you've shown the authority figures in your life will pave the way for many lucrative opportunities in 2019. Pisces and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 2, 33, 38, 4 and 18.

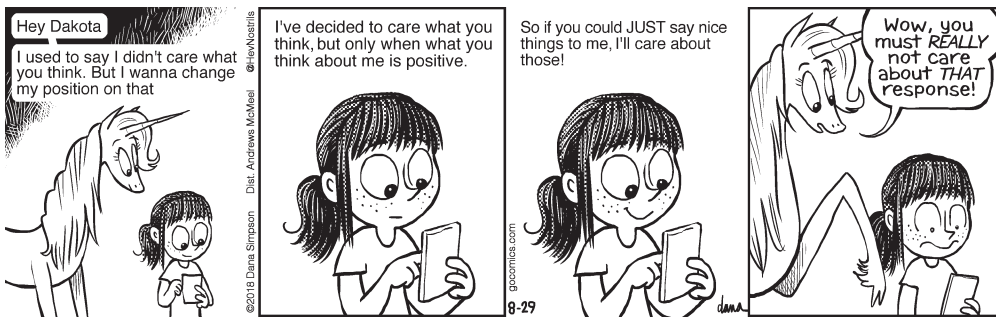
FRANK AND ERNEST



THATABABY



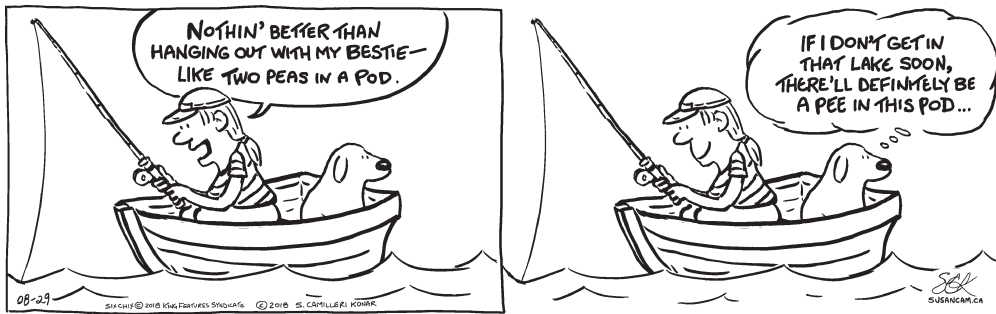
PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



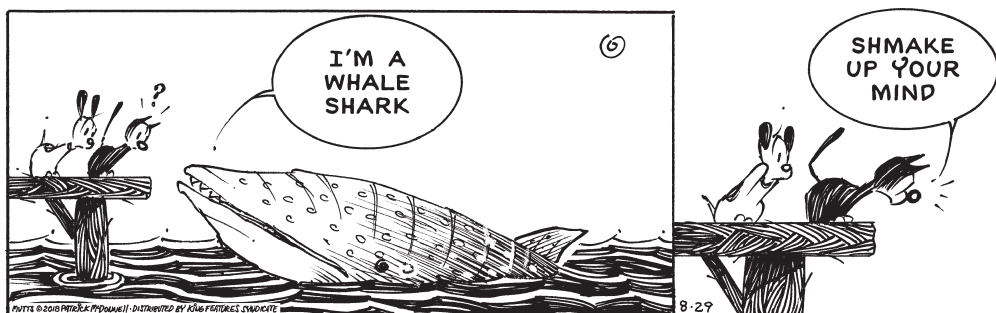
LOLA



SIX CHIX



MUTTS



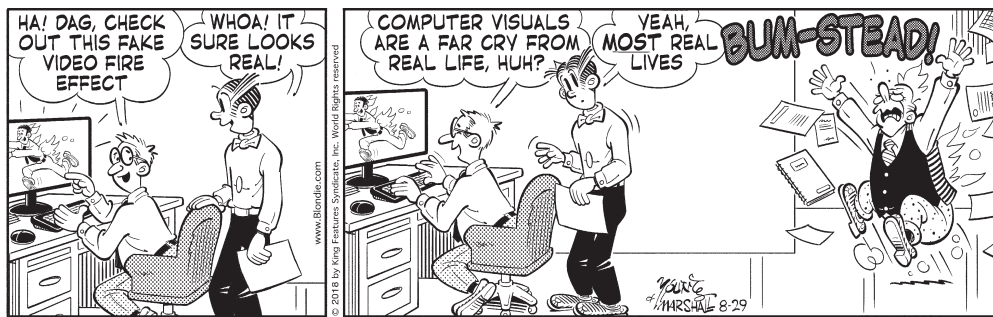
BABY BLUES



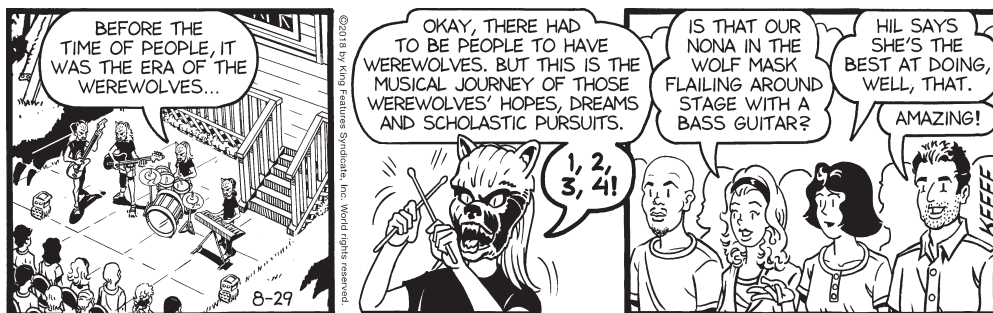
ZITS



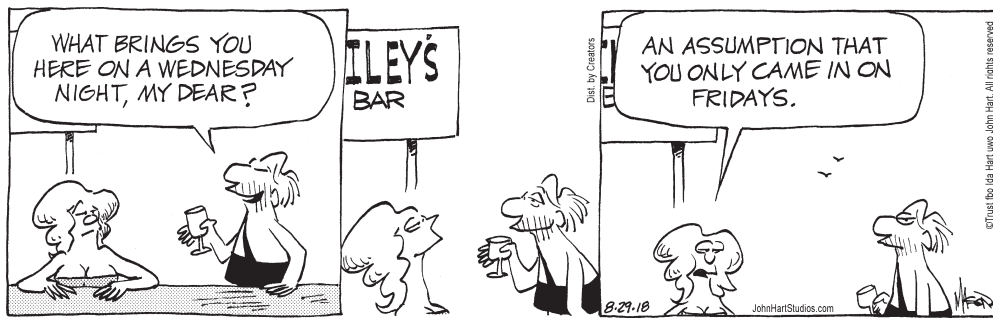
BLONDIE



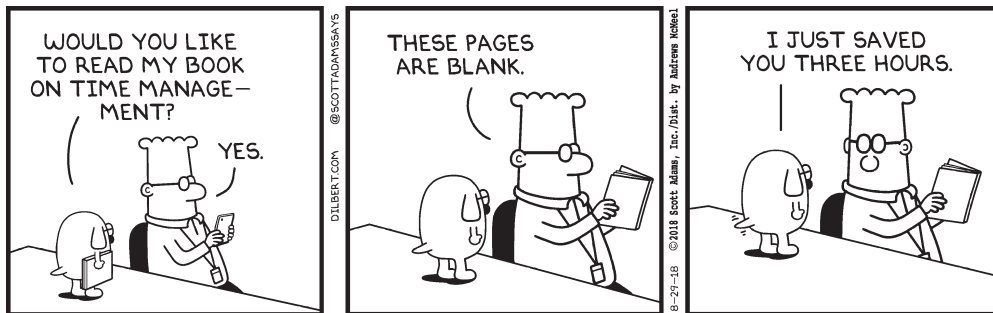
SALLY FORTH



B.C.



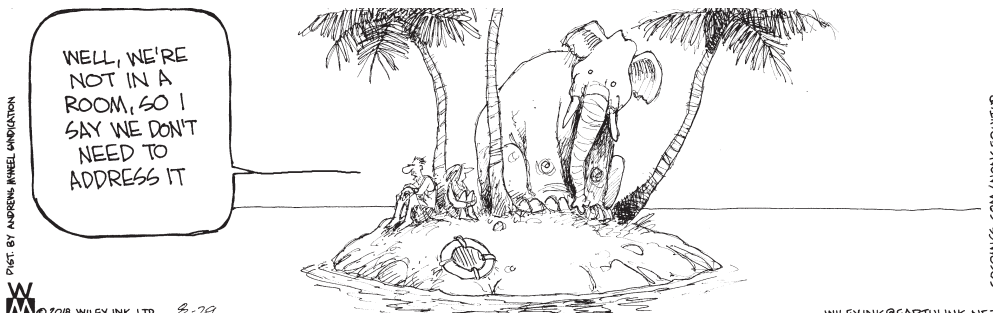
DILBERT



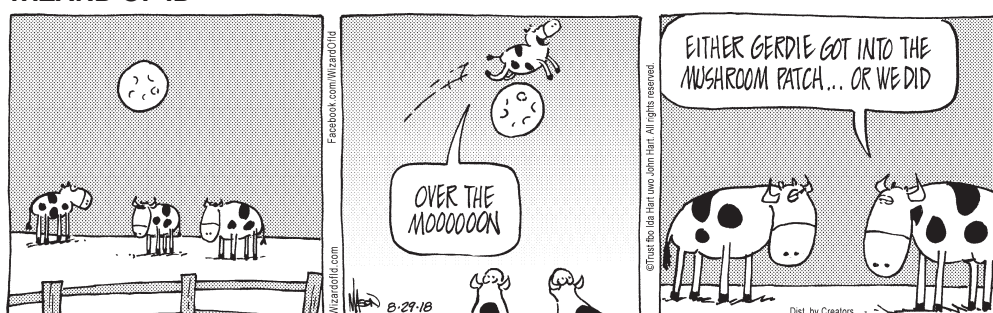
BIZARRO



NON SEQUITUR



WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

