New woman causes concern

DEAR ANNIE

Annie Lane
Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Annie: My brother-in-law, "Ted," and his wife decided to call it quits over the holidays after being together since high school (about 25 years). Their relationship was very strained and was more of a roommate situation than a marriage for at least 15 years, getting worse every year. His wife moved out of their house in February, and he immediately went on dating sites. About four months ago, he started seeing a woman he had met online. Before they even met, she was sending him racy photos and text messages. He is now completely hooked on her. He doesn't have any kids; she has four, from three different men. All the kids, at one point or another, have had issues with self-harm or depression. We've witnessed the mom giving one of her children alcohol.

She and Ted are already planning on moving in together. She lives about two hours from here. She won't be moving in until December, but she has asked whether the 16-year-old girl can move in with Ted now, before school starts, so she doesn't have to switch schools halfway through the year.

Am I being unreasonable because I don't want to support this? I think it's a huge mistake for the family to move in with my brother-in-law, but it's not my place to say. My biggest concern is that a 16-year-old girl would move in with a man whom her mother barely knows. My brother-in-law would never hurt her or touch her, but still it seems inappropriate. Am I reading too much into this? I don't even want him bringing her to my house without her mother. My husband is extremely upset with me for not being supportive of his brother's relationship but does see there is something wrong with a child's moving in without her mother. — *Extremely Concerned*

Dear Extremely Concerned: This situation is wonky every which way. If your husband can't see that, he's got his head in the sand. What concerns me the most is the well-being of all of this woman's children. It's devastating to hear that children are engaging in self-harm. It's disturbing that she was giving one of them alcohol. I encourage you to document and report any maltreatment to your local child protective services agency. To find the pertinent contact info for your state, visit https://www.childwelfare.gov, and click "Topics," "Responding to Child Abuse & Neglect" and "Reporting."

Dear Annie: We see and hear of so many folks struggling with addiction issues of all types, yet frequently, a major component is missing.

Many addicts have an undiagnosed and untreated mental health condition that is the cause of the addiction. Our son began using drugs as a teenager to treat his (undiagnosed at the time) bipolar disorder and thus stunted his brain growth/maturity. After several starts and stops in facilities and despite our own love and care, he died of a heroin overdose at age 26 (three years ago). His forever-17-year-old brain could not grasp the concept of constant treatment from the medical community, and he possibly would have lived out his life in the type of struggle described by "Sad Stepmom."

In addition to Al-Anon, I would like to suggest support groups from the National Alliance on Mental Illness as other resources to guide those struggling to understand another component of addiction. — *Mom in Louisville*

Dear Mom: I am so sorry for the loss of your son. You raise an important point, that addiction can be a symptom of mental illness. Thank you for mentioning NAMI. Readers who would like to learn more can visit https://www.nami.org.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Take heart and keep working. Your excellent efforts will eventually be seen, acknowledged and awarded, though perhaps not until you've reached a kind of critical mass on your own accord.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Typically, a thing you have no control over is not your problem. If it bothers you, the problem is the bothering and not the thing itself. The solution will be an understanding and a reckoning that happens in your mind.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). The time line feels more like a continuum now because when one thing ends, another picks up right where that left off. If you want to take a break and a breath, you'll have to willfully carve that out.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're the "wise" for whom "a word to" is usually sufficient. Today you're so tuned in that you don't even need the word. A slightly raised eyebrow is more than enough for you to get the info and react accordingly.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). There's so much you want to do with this weekend. But if you try to do everything, you'll end up doing nothing of note. Your ideal move is to pick one focus and do it well.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're a great friend. Your kind words and support will really make a difference to another person. Your luck will double when you offer the same sort of encouragement to yourself.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Take advantage of the astral magic offered today by acting as though you already have what you want. It will feel so fantastic to appreciate your great fortune that you will find it's actuality quite irrelevant.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The most difficult thing to prioritize — the thing that people overlook time and again — is the love they already have. Get this right and you'll be getting a lot right. In fact, everything else will fall into place.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Letting go of the need to control anyone but yourself will liberate your energy and put you in a more loving, receptive mode. The magic motto is, "To each his own."

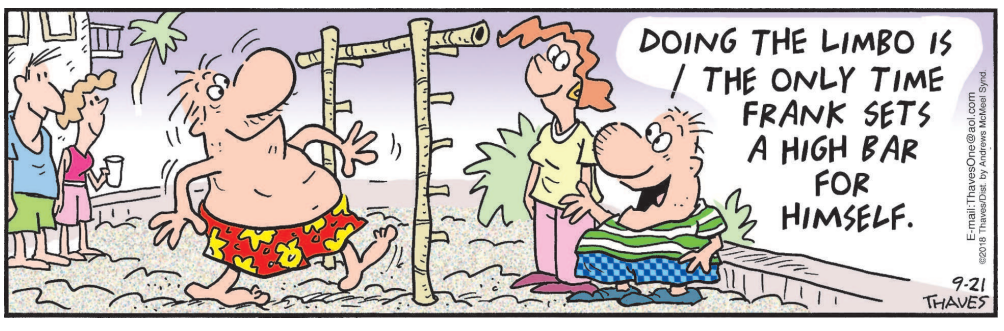
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Your big plans are getting even bigger, which, oddly enough, will have you focusing on dozens of very small but crucial details today. These are the efforts that practically guarantee an unforgettable experience.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). There are questions people can handle and then there are questions that are akin to opening Pandora's box. They overwhelm and create chaos that can't be put back. Think twice before you ask.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). There's a reasonable-sized cosmic shift happening and however you feel about what's going on, you're likely to feel differently about it tomorrow. So hold on and enjoy the roller coaster. Ride it out until the end.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Sept. 22). You'll be able to pour hundreds of hours into the thing that is your joy. More excitement this solar year will include: solving a mystery and later being rewarded for it, seeing the something you planted ages ago make a life-changing difference for a stranger, and finally hearing the loving words written on your heart. Aquarius and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 17, 42, 9 and 26.

FRANK AND ERNEST



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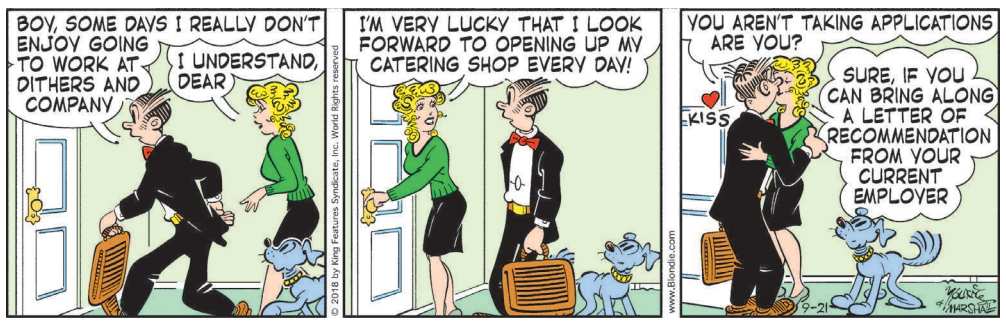

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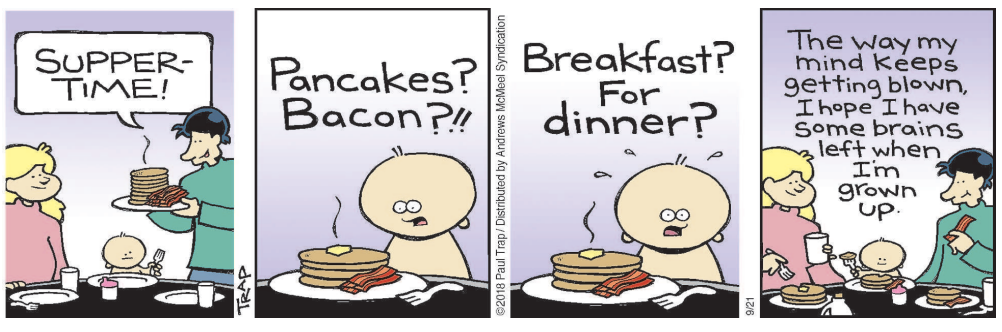

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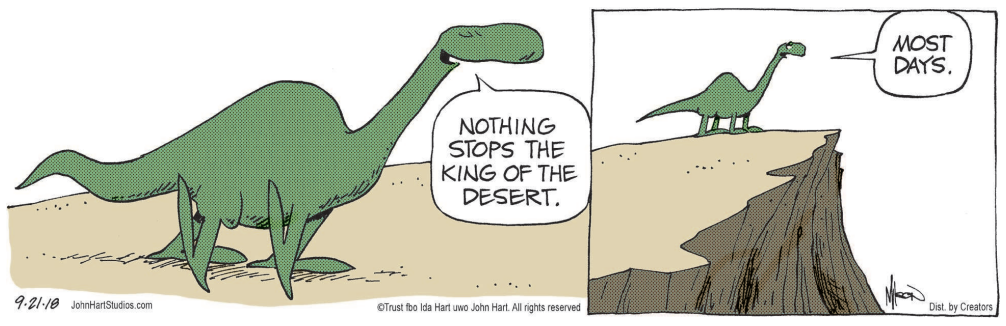

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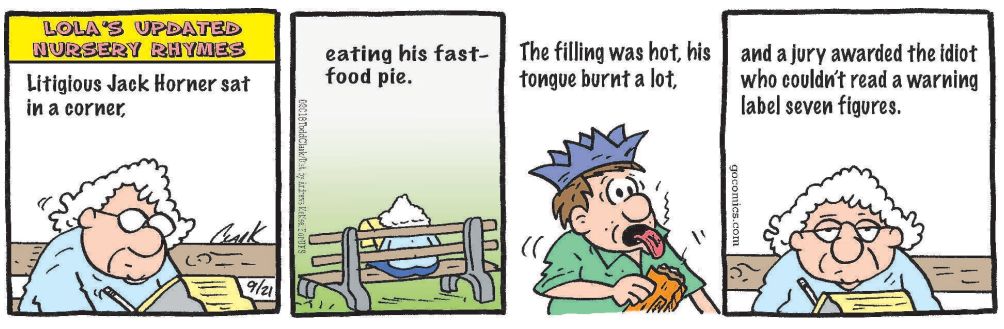

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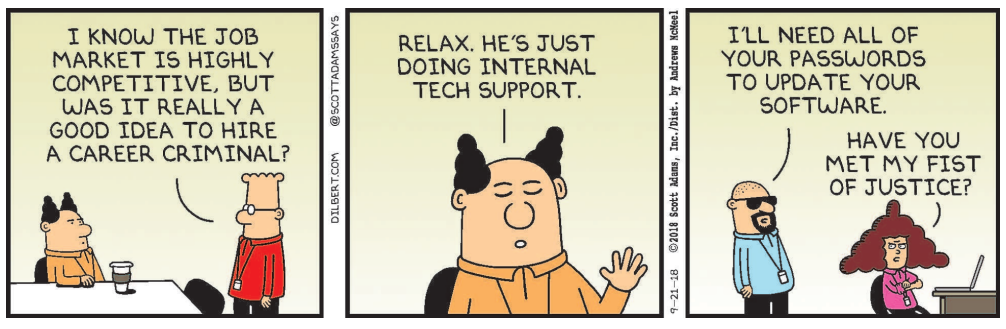

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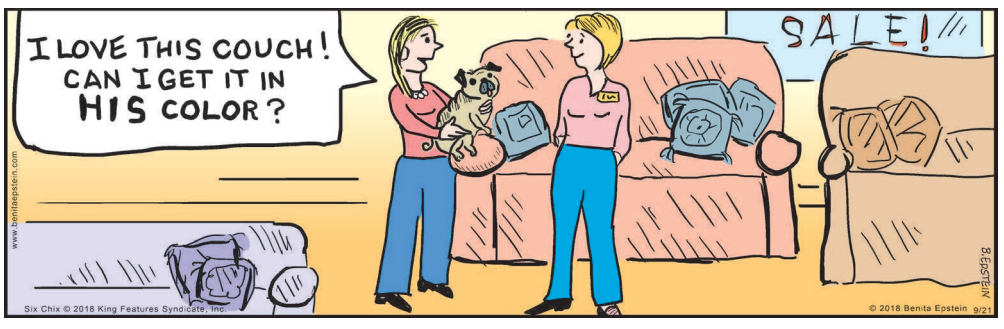

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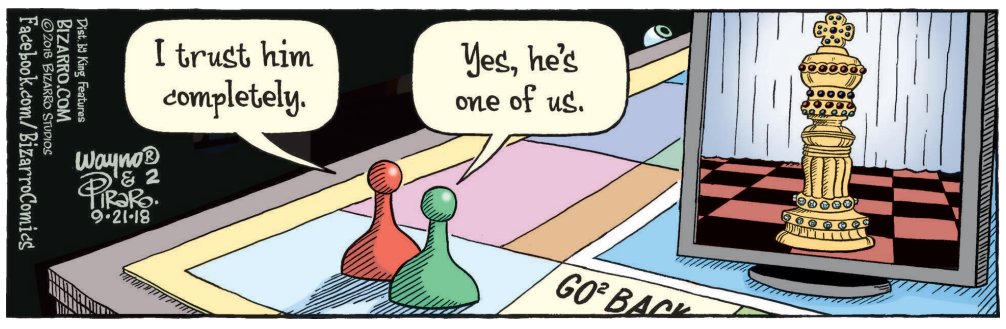

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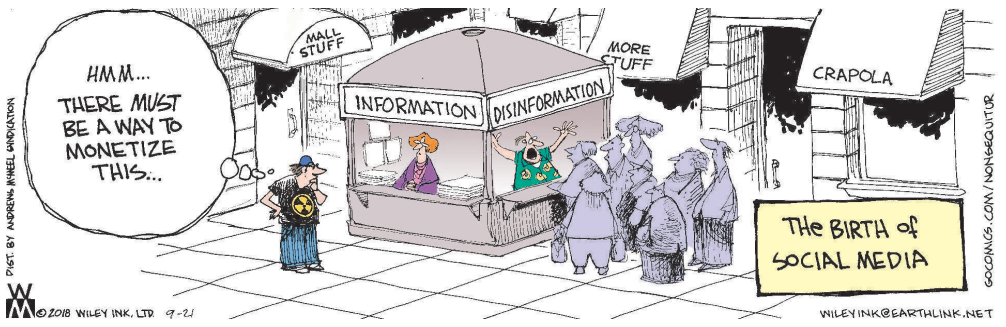
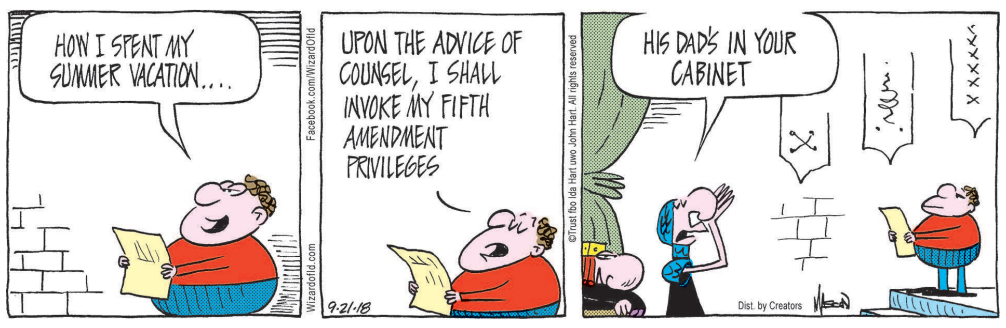


BABY BLUES

WIZARD OF ID



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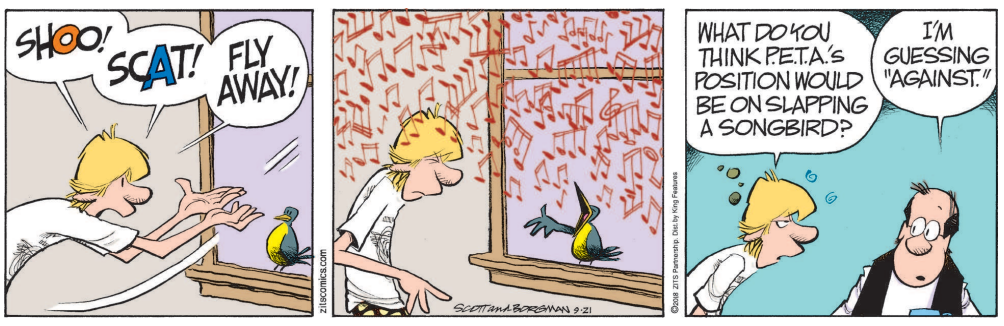
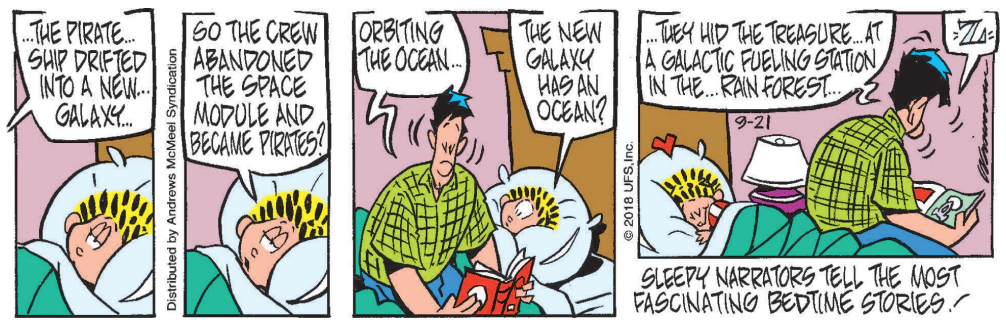
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