

# Difficulty for grandparents

**Dear Annie:** I am an outlaw! That is to say, I am the stepmother and stepgrandmother to my husband's children and grandchildren. I've been in this position for more than 15 years. For a long time, I was expected by my husband to

say nothing even remotely negative about one of his daughters-in-law, "Beth," and his son "Bill" — even in the privacy of our own home. I know that his family is to be his responsibility and mine is to be mine, so I have always done as he has asked, even though it has meant that I have suppressed a lot over 15 years.

All of that business with Beth and Bill came to a halt about two years ago, when Beth verbally attacked my husband in public in front of his grandchildren. She called him vile curse words while he stood there in shocked silence. What horrible atrocity had he committed to warrant such behavior? He had given one of the grandchildren an over-the-counter fiber supplement while we were baby-sitting.

As a repercussion for his actions, he was unable to see or talk to his grandchildren for a year. They communicate only through my hus-

band's ex-wife, Bill's mother, and do everything in their power to make it difficult for him to see his grandchildren. They live several hours away from us, which makes things difficult in and of itself. Frankly, we don't know what to do at this point.

We mainly just want to maintain contact with the grandchildren. My husband continues to try to use all forms of contact possible to remain in the grandchildren's lives, including sending birthday and holiday money to them.

Trying to grandparent these children has been a nightmare since day one because of Beth's need to control everything. Needless to say, I no longer let him pick up the grandkids alone. I can now give my opinion openly on the entire matter and can communicate with them should the occasion arise. I am tired of seeing my husband bullied, mistreated and disrespected. He is a great grandfather and husband. We are honest, hardworking, God-fearing people, and this should just not be happening.

Family counseling is out of the question because of the distance and lack of communication. Where

did we go wrong? Any other advice from you or others that might help us? — *Outlaw on the Loose*

**Dear Outlaw:** For an outlaw, you seem very much like an in-law. You say that family counseling is out of the question, but what about personal counseling? If you have 15 years of pent-up thoughts about your stepchildren and your stepgrandchildren, you should talk to someone about those feelings. Harboring negative feelings for that long is never good for anyone. In addition, it might help you to be more sympathetic to your husband's perspective regarding his children.

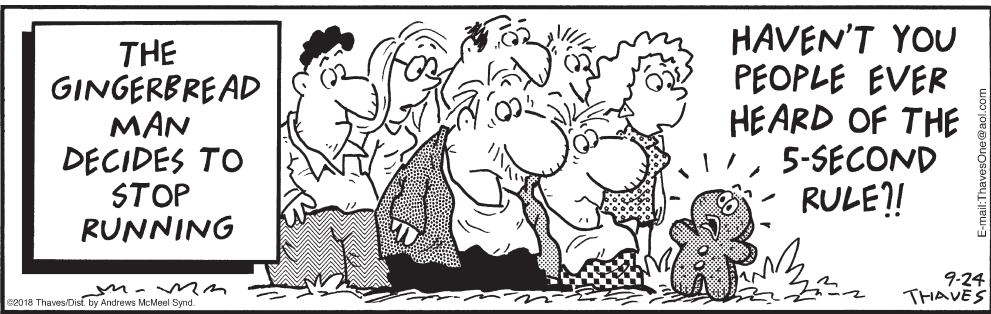
Although it may seem like a small thing, a grandparent — or a parent, for that matter — should not give children over-the-counter medication without consulting a pediatrician. You say that you no longer let your husband pick up the grandkids alone because you are sick of seeing him bullied and mistreated, but you have to ask yourself whether you are treating him like a child. I think the two of you could benefit from counseling and communication. Even if Bill and Beth don't come around, there is a good chance that your grandchildren will appreciate all your efforts when they get older. Keep trying.

## DEAR ANNIE

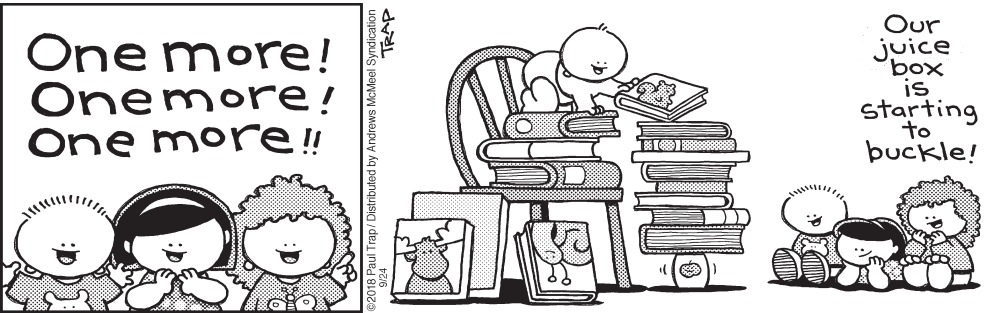


Annie Lane  
Creators  
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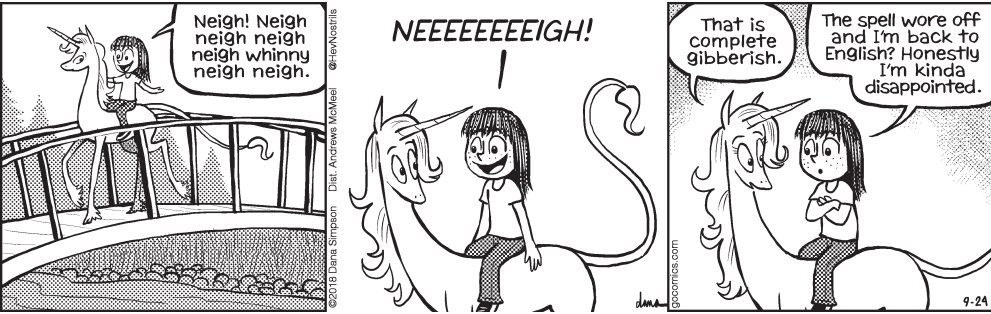
## FRANK AND ERNEST



## THATABABY



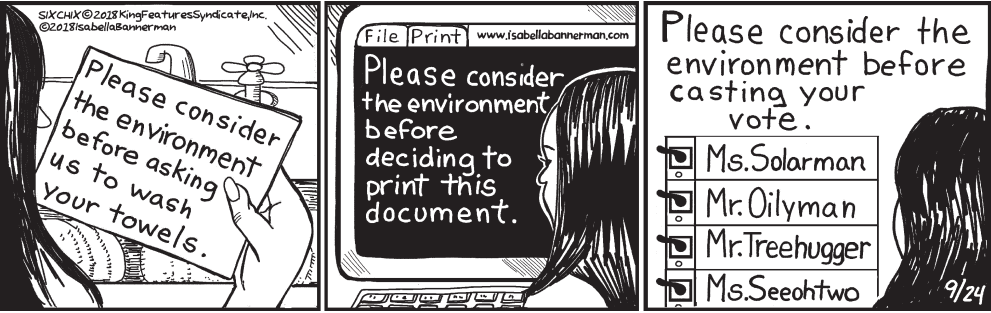
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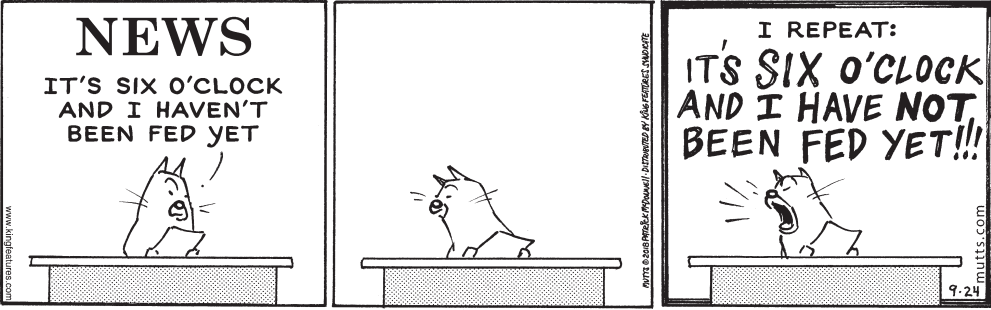
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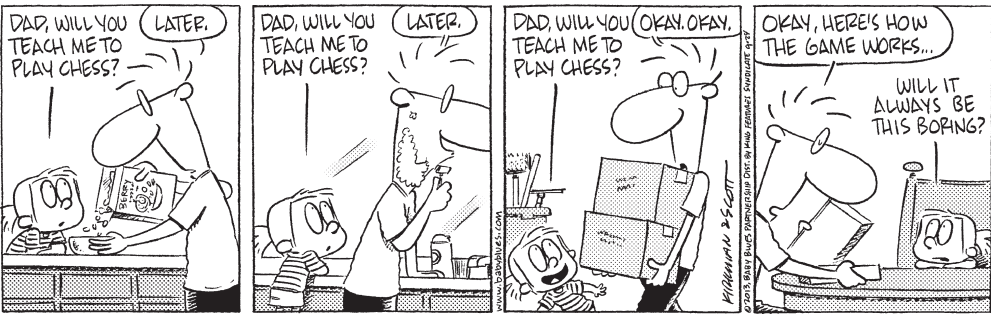
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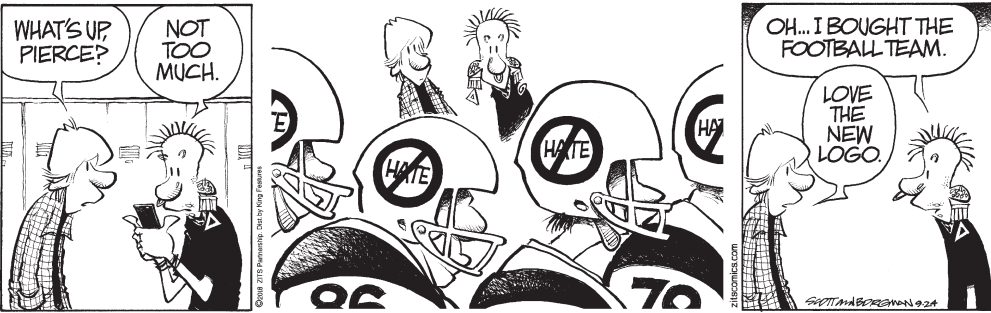
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## BABY BLUES



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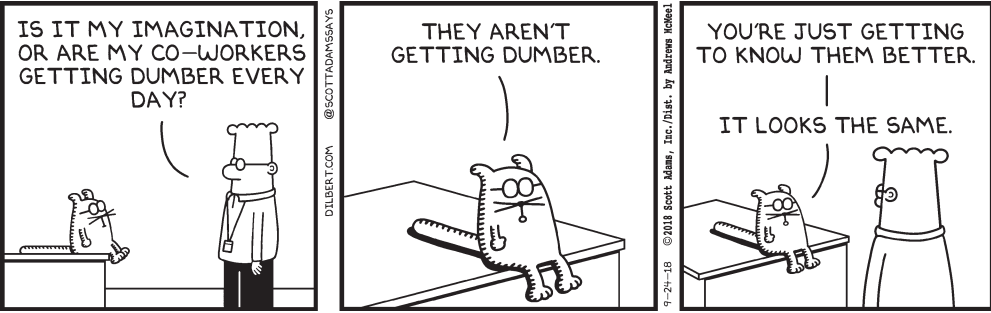
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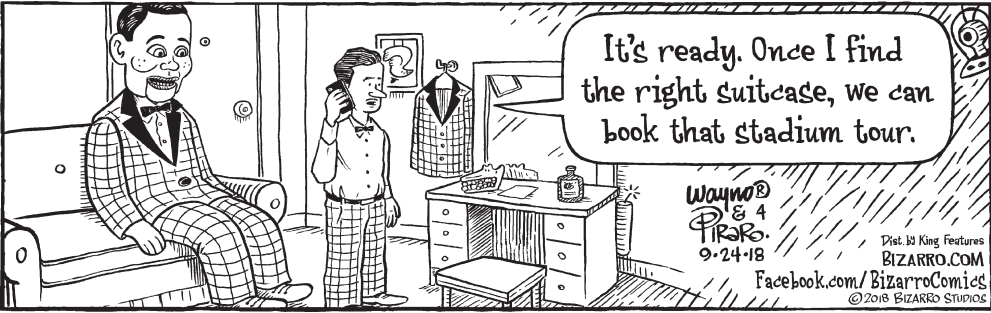
## B.C.



## DILBERT



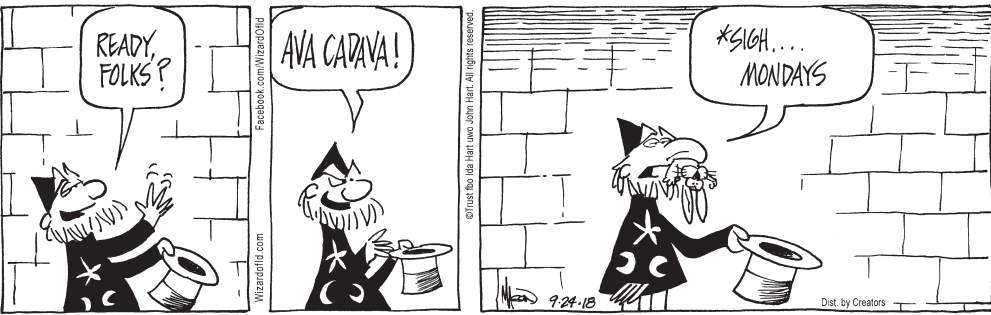
## BIZARRO



## NON SEQUITUR



## WIZARD OF ID



## ROSE IS ROSE

