

When the going gets rough...

Dear Annie: I started dating this wonderful man. It was a perfect courtship, with the exception of some minor troubled-teen issues in his life — we both have teenagers — that he was working on but didn't tell me much about. We dated happily with no issues whatsoever for three months. Then one day, just after he took me to meet his entire family and told me how happy he was with me in his life, he texted me that there had been a huge blowup on the teen front and he might be MIA for a few weeks to deal with the issue. He wouldn't tell me what happened, other than that his son was getting kicked out of school. He also said there was some court issue, as well. I knew that his 17-year-old son had been in trouble with the law once already.

In his next text, he told me that he was sorry he had started our relationship and was not able to finish it. He said that he had to "put it on the back burner" and that I should not wait for him. I texted back that I couldn't believe he would break up with me via a

text. He said, "No, sweetie, it's not like that." He said he had much bigger issues to deal with.

I recently wrote him a loving letter, saying that I understand he is going through some issues and leaving the door open for him to return if he wants to. He texted me to say he hopes we can connect soon, but I don't feel any hope whatsoever.

Do you think this is normal for a man who seemed to be in love to just leave and break it off, not attempting to keep his partner in his life at all? If so, should I wait or hope for him to come back to me? — *Put on the Back Burner*

Dear Put on the Back Burner: It sounds as if the honeymoon is over. His true colors are shining through, and they don't look very bright. If you are planning to wait for this man, it's a pretty safe bet that you will be waiting a long time. Even if he does come back into your life, why would you want him?

Life is always going to have ups and downs, and what I am hearing from him is that during

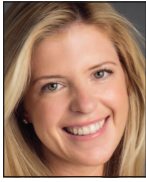
difficult times, he does not want to share them with you and would rather put you on the back burner. That's not how a healthy, loving, supportive relationship works.

Save your energy for a man who appreciates your love and wants to keep your relationship on the front burner during good times and bad. That is my hope for you.

Dear Annie: I was appalled reading the letter from "Help," the woman whose neighbor said he would be putting his dog's waste in a compost pile bordering her property. What a no-no from a nitwit. Anyone who uses compost knows you don't put cat or dog excrement in it. You wouldn't want it used on your veggies, nor would you want to touch it with your bare hands. The spread of cytomegalovirus, among other nasties, should be avoided. He was just being lazy or annoying. If it continues, the health department should also be notified. — *Veggie and Coffee Ground Compost Creator*

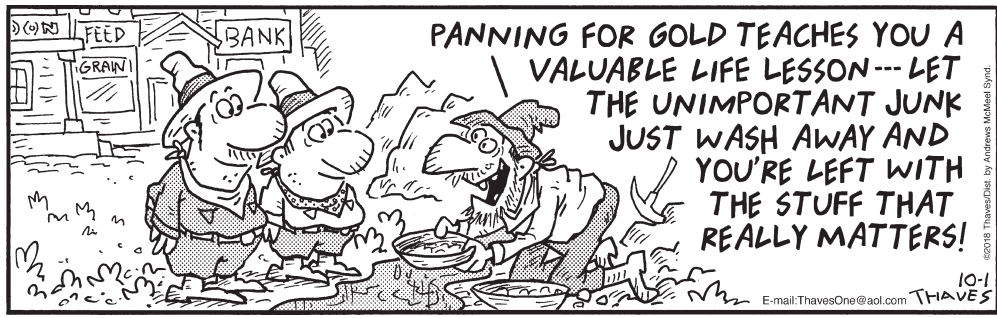
Dear Compost Creator: That takes the situation from disgusting to dangerous. I'm printing your letter in the service of public health.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

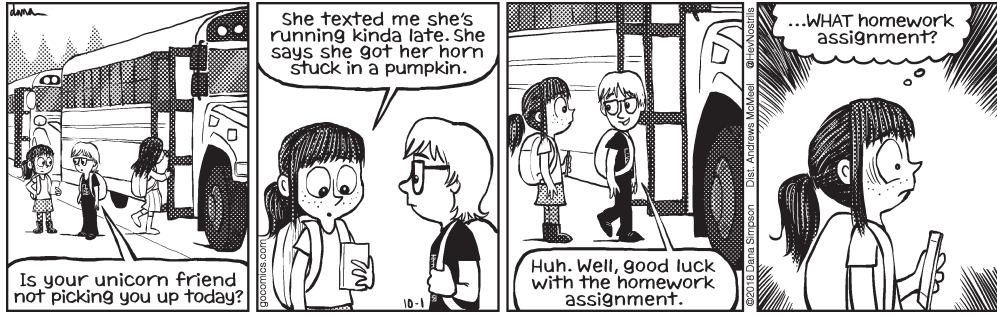
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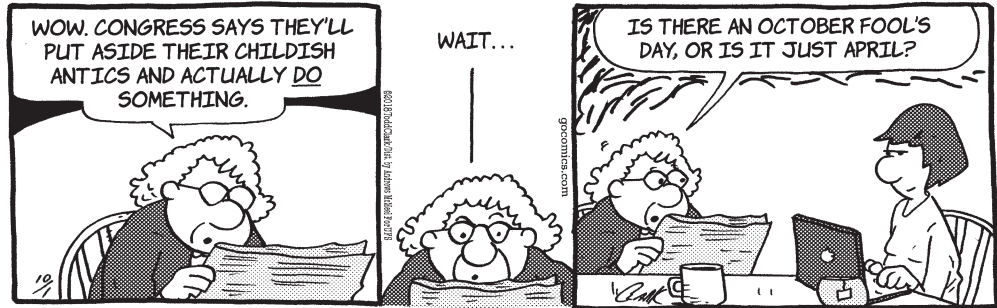
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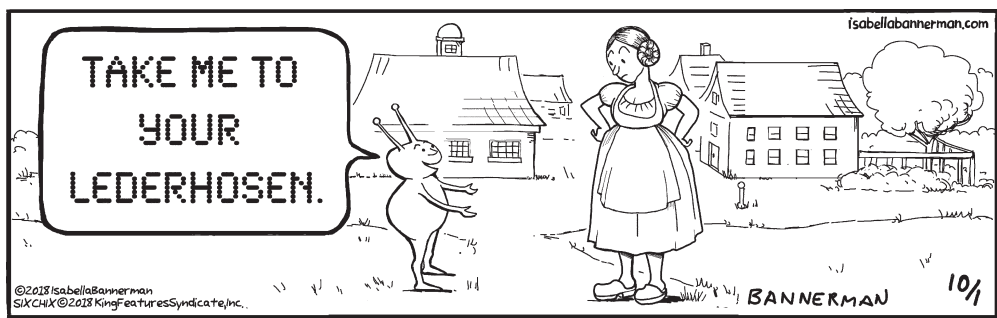
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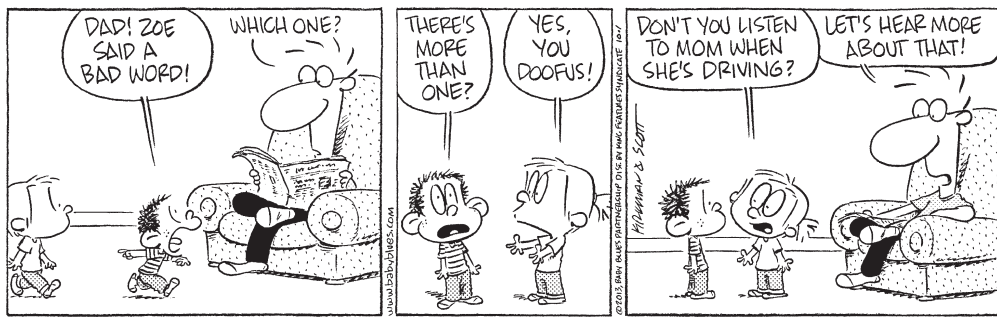
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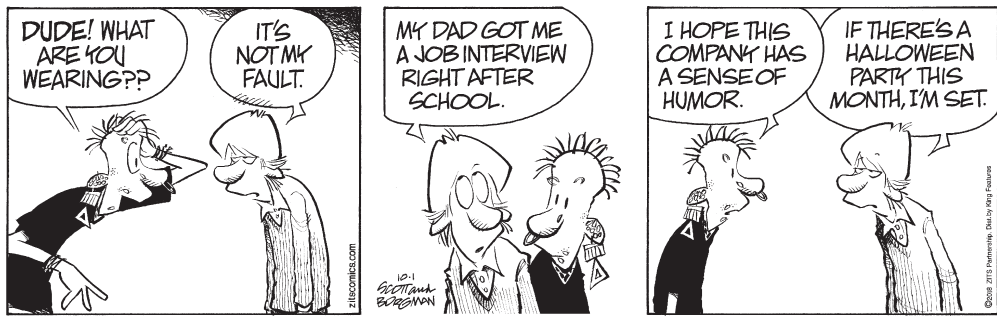
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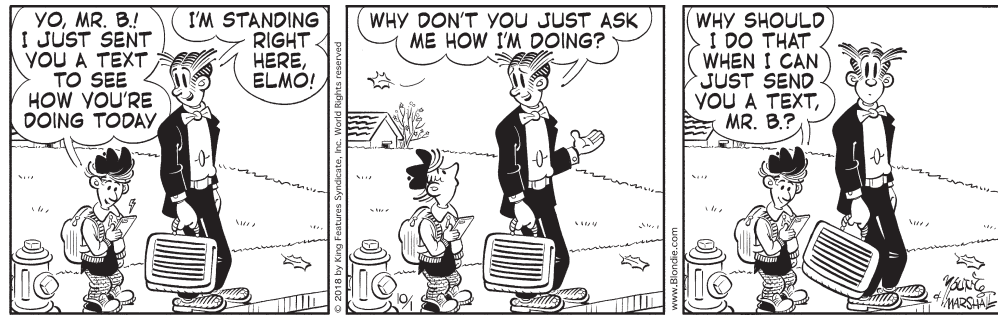
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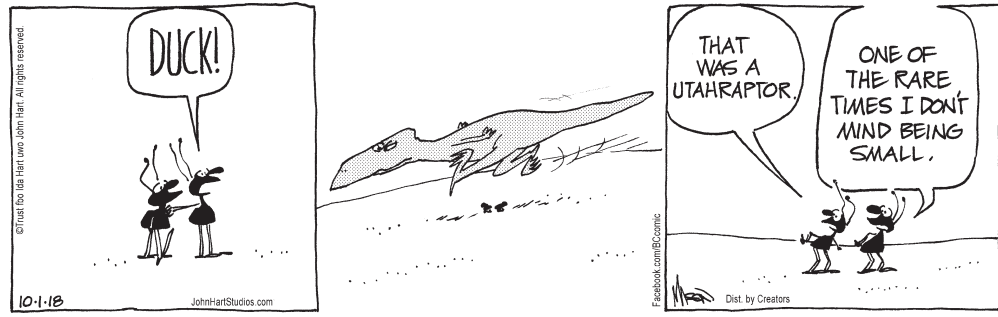
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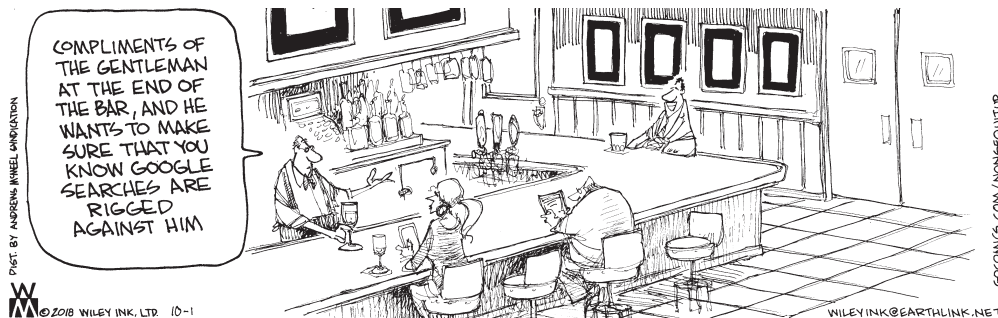
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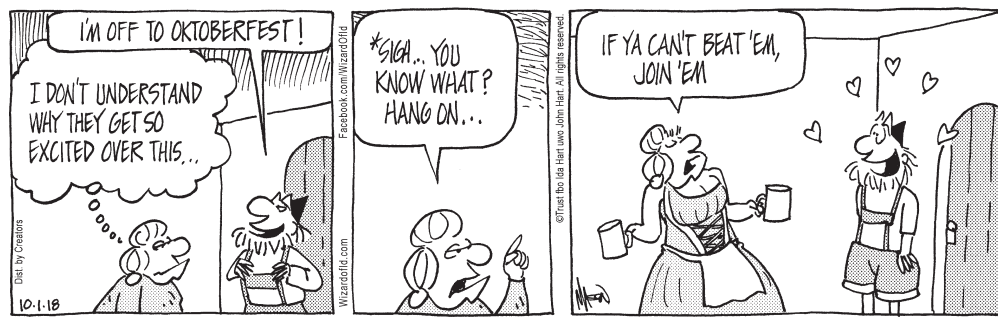
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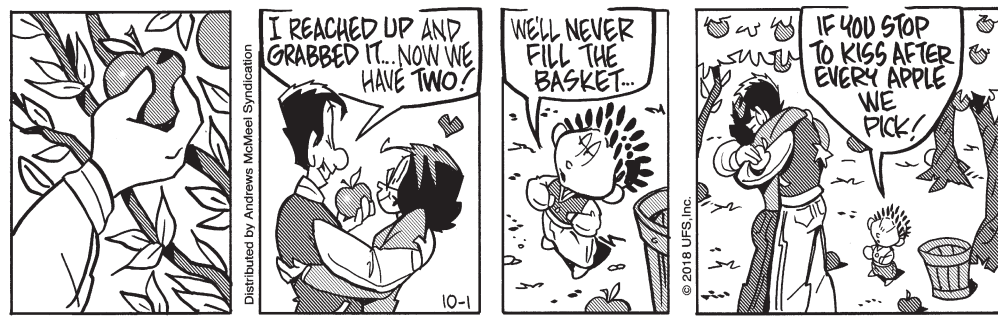
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WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE



TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You'll do a sort of mental training. You'll steer your thoughts in such a way that creates a peaceful state. It will be easy this time, and you'll be able to build on this positive experience later when circumstances make it harder.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The people you cherish will know it. They sense it in the tenderness of your eyes, the thoughtfulness of your words and the warmth of your being. You and your loved ones are rewarded equally in the exchange.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). To get faster at a thing takes training. Put yourself through the paces. Repeat the processes until you can do them more automatically, until the friction points wear smooth. Doing a thing well will be its own reward.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Thoughts will seem to bump up against one another, creating confusion and division within your own mind. Instead of taking on each clash as a battle to be sorted, get into some exercise and breathing. All will calm down.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You listen well. Do they? This matters today. Make it known that you have an expectation regarding the quality of attention you receive from others. You deserve this, and there's a classy way to do it.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). There's an effect you're going for -- a reaction you'd like to get from others. You're not even aware of it, until you realize that it's not happening. Take it as an opportunity to fulfill an elusive need.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Don't let it get complicated. It doesn't have to be. Kindness is the way. Kindness is the choice through which all the other choices will be made clear.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The task requires your emotional involvement. It requires you to relate to others, see it their way and lean into the unknown of interactions. A computer couldn't pull it off. The labor is a celebration of your humanity.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The cleanest, most direct and most effective way to get your goal is through sacrifice. It gets the unpleasantness out of the way upfront. It will be harder. But there's something instantly gratifying about doing hard things.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Capricorn is a sea goat who climbs mountains while remembering where he came from -- the sea. You'll be recognized in your community yet stay connected to your emotional and spiritual source.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Because you will accomplish what you believe you can, it will be very effective to spend more time visualizing your desired outcome and hyping yourself up.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're driven to become better at what you do. However, you're not ready to handle a lot of attention just yet. Play it low-key. Keep learning. Tonight features a moment of accidental good luck.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Oct. 2). You deserve to be appreciated by those who can, want to and need to have you in their lives. That's the shuffle of the next three months. You figure out how you fit in and what has to happen to make it more effectively so. You're going places together, which is why you need to choose your people very carefully. Aries and Taurus adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 44, 3, 20 and 16.