

# Do I have to shave to play?

Dear Annie: My niece, "Becky," is getting married next month, and according to my younger brother "John," I can't attend the wedding because I have a beard.

Personally, I think I look like Hemingway. I am a food writer and photojournalist. My barber always says, "Don't shave! You look good with your beard."

My family has about 40 members, and if I started shaving off my beard for each one, I would never wear a beard again. I am also known for my beard and have a travel and food blog named after it.

My niece invited me by formal invitation, and I replied affirmatively. So, do I shave the beard and feast with my big Italian family? Or do I not shave and spend the day home alone as in the past?

— Graybeard  
Dear Graybeard: It sounds as if you're the gray sheep of the family. So be it. You don't need to shear your wool for anyone. Your niece invited you — all of you, including your beard — and

you said yes. Go to the wedding. Eat and dance, and look out for clippers.

Dear Annie: This is in response to "Perception vs. Truth," the woman who wrote about her husband's flying into a jealous rage because she danced with another man.

I am afraid that when you wrote "everyone makes mistakes," the woman may have taken that to imply that she was the one who'd made a mistake. Please clarify that. (As a victim of controlling behavior, she is probably conditioned by the controller to see problems as being her fault.)

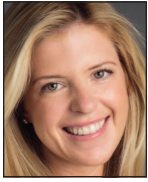
What experienced domestic violence professionals say about rages like the one she described is this: These rages are always about control. Even when jealousy is communicated in a more reasonable manner, it is about control. It's an easy and effective way to control someone without accepting any responsibility at all for being controlling. It puts all the responsibility on the victim to behave in the way the controller defines as OK.

She accepted that responsibility when she vowed, "Of course, I will no longer dance with anyone else." From the viewpoint of the abuser, that means "mission accomplished." Control in place. To accept that responsibility (never dancing with anyone else) acknowledges that the problem here is her dancing with someone else, as opposed to being that her husband is using unfair methods to control her. It sets up a precedent. Rages work to control her behavior.

I believe she should try to continue dancing with others, assuming she's in an environment where casual exchanging of partners is the norm. — Domestic Violence Advocate

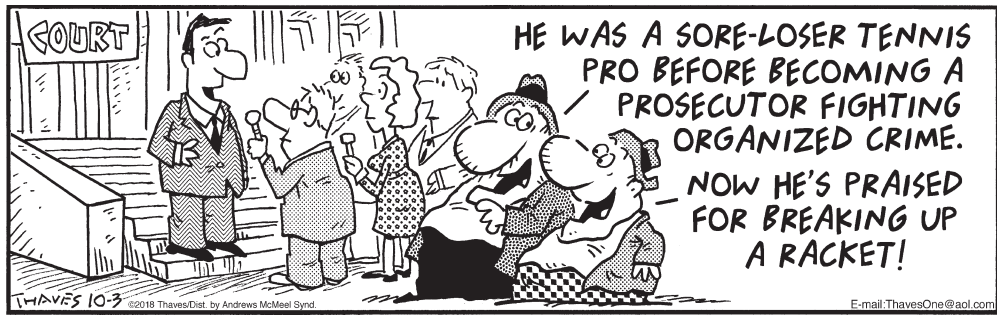
Dear Domestic Violence Advocate: The line about how everyone makes mistakes was unclear, and I appreciate your bringing that to my attention. That was meant to be about her husband, as the letter writer was not at all in the wrong. Thank you for your advocacy on behalf of victims and survivors of domestic violence. I'd like to take this opportunity to publish the number for The National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-7233.

## DEAR ANNIE

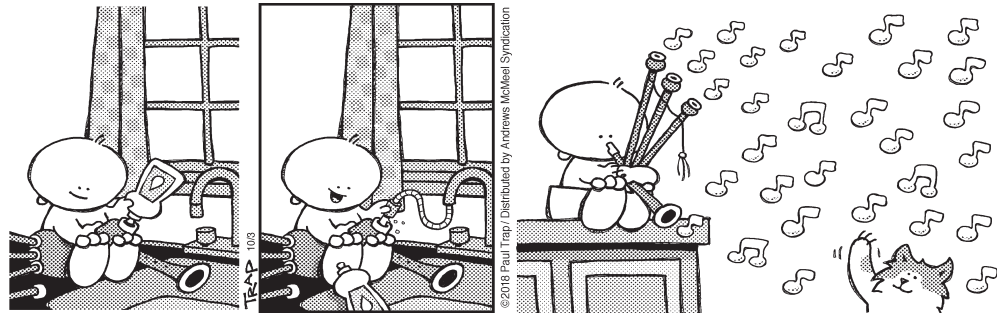


Annie Lane  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.

## FRANK AND ERNEST



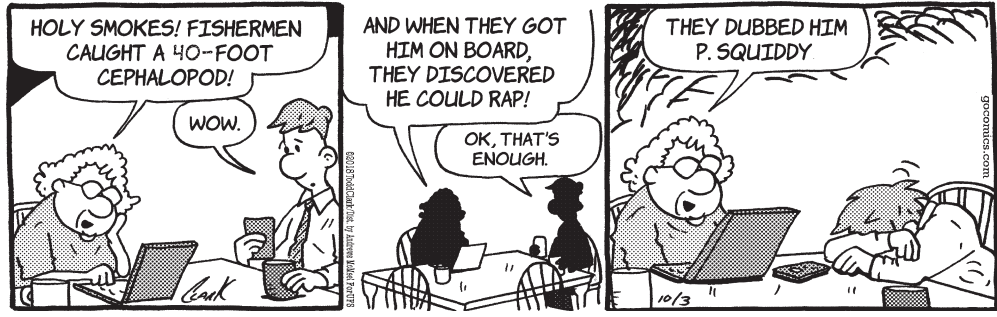
## THATABABY



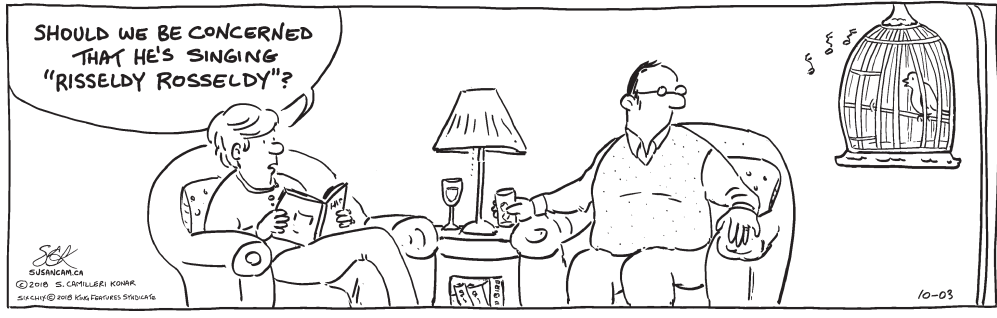
## PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



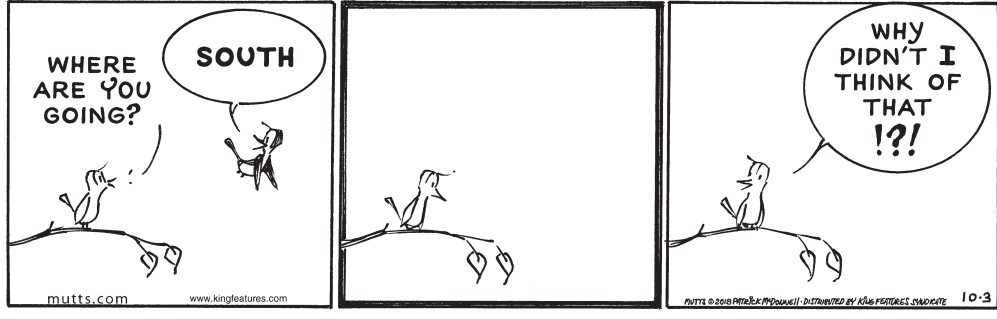
## LOLA



## SIX CHIX



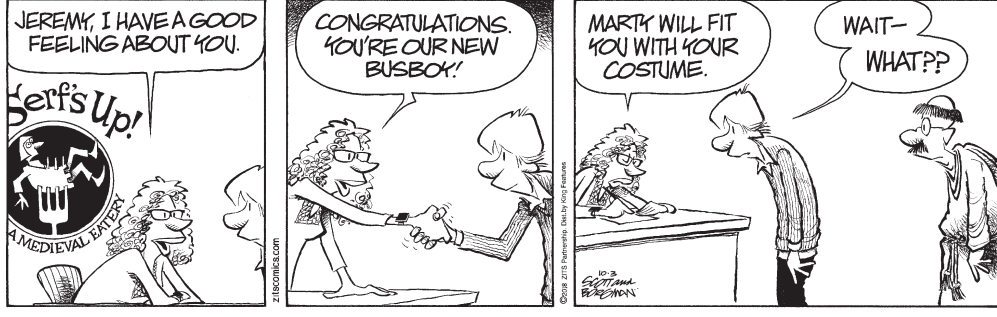
## MUTTS



## BABY BLUES



## ZITS



## TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** If we thought it happened a certain way and it happened another way instead, that will matter very little today. What matters is what works. Do what works even if it doesn't make sense.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** Your giving nature is obvious, but what's not so obvious is that the one who most needs it today is you. Be generous to yourself. If you're not, the rest will be robbed of your generosity, too.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** The voice of higher morality gets fainter every time it goes unheeded. Strong people do what's right even when they don't feel like it and it becomes easier and easier for them to do so with every repetition of the right thing.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** Self-image is so tricky, and much deeper than an opinion you have about your mirror reflection. Others see you in a more favorable light than you see yourself today. If only you could know your own beauty.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Strangers rarely sing together. That's why it's so powerful when it happens — a reinforcement of our shared humanity. No other creature has on earth has a voice so complex. Enjoy yours today. It will be your signature.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Avoid accidentally giving your power away, for instance by letting someone else handle what you really should be handling yourself. Or by asking for permission when you don't need it.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** There once existed a sense of neighborliness that has been since replaced with aggressive anonymity. Meeting strangers is important to your sense of community and overall trust in society.

Where can you go for this to happen?

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** There's a psychological effect going on in your life and it's creating a certain result. The question is not whether or not beliefs make a difference. They clearly do. The question is how can you make this work for you?

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** The ideas that won't let go of you? Share them. They matter. They may seem random, personal, too whimsical to likely connect with many of the types of people you know ... share them anyway. They matter.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** When you pursue your own enjoyment, your friends will get some, too. This may come in the form of a game, or some intellectually stimulating entertainment.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Your heart speaks a language that sometimes you can translate, and sometimes you can't. All will not be revealed in time, but at least you can appreciate a good mystery.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** While attempting to make a personal connection, don't forget that one of the most attractive qualities a person can have is the ability to make other people feel attractive.

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Oct. 4).** One of your great pleasures this solar return will be in connecting the people you know with one another and watching what comes of it — often a blessing that returns full circle back to you. More highlights include a secret you're honored to know before others, and a very lucrative way to apply your education. Scorpio and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 38, 22, 12, 2.

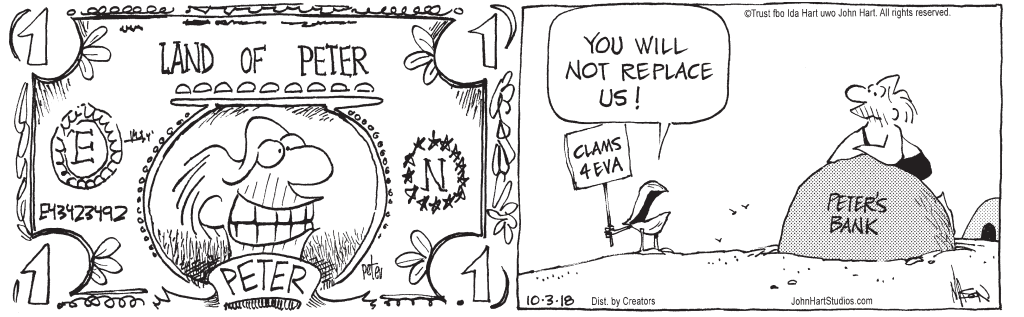
## BLONDIE



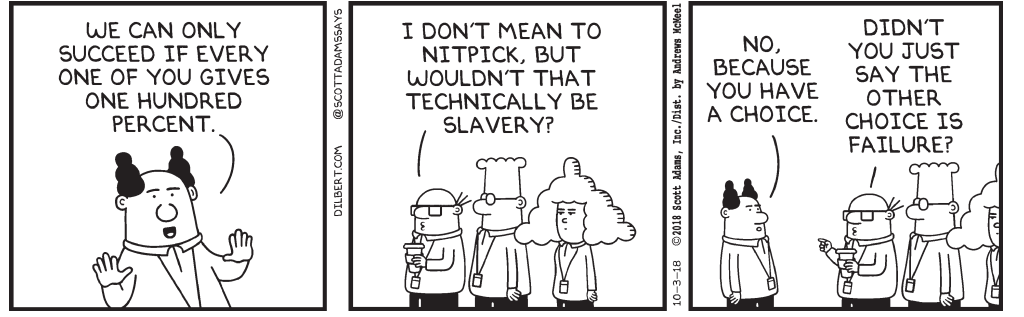
## SALLY FORTH



## B.C.



## DILBERT



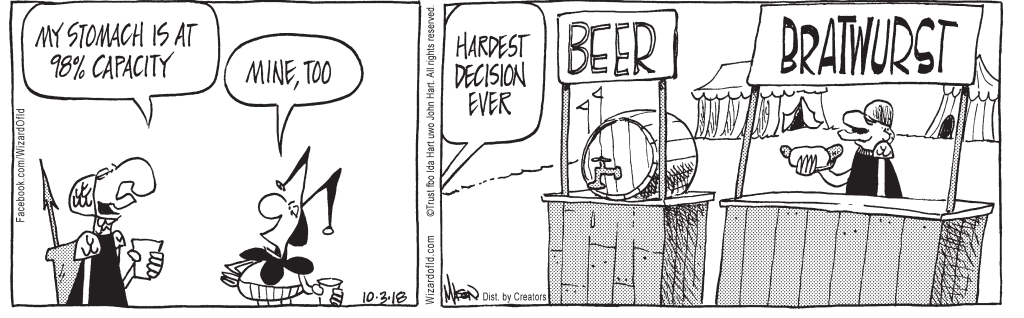
## BIZARRO



## NON SEQUITUR



## WIZARD OF ID



## ROSE IS ROSE

