Have my academic talents been wasted?

DEAR ANNIE

ANNIE LANE
Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Annie: Without trying to sound arrogant, I am smarter than the average bear. Not quite a genius but certainly up there. I won all kinds of academic awards in school and hold three degrees.

But my problem is this: I am now 48, the mother of two children with special needs. I have spent most of my life being their caregiver (for which I do not blame them at all because they needed help and I'm their mother) and a full-time homemaker. I feel disappointed somehow, as though I wasted my talent. I don't know how to describe it. I feel as though I was given this talent and I didn't use it to the fullest.

Do I have a responsibility to use my gifts? Did I let myself and/or others down because I didn't? Do I need to set a goal for myself, and if so, what? — *Really Not Conceited*

Dear Really Not Conceited: No, you haven't let anyone down. You've raised two kids and made a loving home. So please stop beating yourself up for not having pursued all of your dreams yet. You are only 48 years young. There is still plenty of time. Many famous writers and artists got started after 40 — though this isn't about chasing after fame. It's about honoring the part of yourself that wants to shine more light onto the world. I can't tell you what your specific goal should be, as I don't know what's in your heart. But you should make it a priority to carve time out of your day for creativity, by journaling, drawing, taking a class — doing anything that nurtures the part of yourself that you feel heretofore has been underfed. You won't be satisfied until you do.

Dear Annie: I'd never had trouble with my eyesight until recently. My job involves staring at a computer screen for eight hours a day. That's a lot of blue light! My distance vision is still great, but my close-up vision is suffering. Would wearing prescription lenses while I work on the computer help? I want to be proactive about this so that I can prevent further loss of eyesight. — *Blindsided by Blue*

Dear Blindsided by Blue: You're wise to be vigilant about your vision. For many of us, good eyesight was one of those things we didn't know that we had until it was gone. First and foremost, you should see an optometrist. Generally, computer use causes myopia, or nearsightedness, so it's significant that you're experiencing farsightedness.

Aside from seeing an eye doctor, here are some tips: When you're working, be sure to look away from your monitor and at something in the distance for about 20 seconds and blink rapidly. Do this preferably every 10 minutes but at least every 20 minutes. There are web browser plug-ins that will remind you to take these breaks.

Keep your monitor at least 20 inches from your face.

Adjust the monitor brightness so it's close to the brightness of your surroundings.

Adjust the color temperature of your monitor so that it's warmer-toned, which will cause less strain.

Continue to pay attention to any changes in your vision. Your peepers are precious.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). People like to pretend that they make decisions out of logic, judiciousness and authority, when it is more often the case that they make decisions out of emotion and the justify those decisions by standards of reason.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). While you believe that people are inherently equal, we all have different strengths. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Every man I meet is in some way my superior." You'll humble yourself and pick up a new skill.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Negotiation is featured. The other person is not really your opponent. Where your terms align, accept it quickly, without wondering if you should go for more ground. This is a case of picking your battles.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Calm, rational people are very stabilizing to the emotional environment, but you need a few unpredictable personalities spouting mad notions and acting as a general wild cards, too. Otherwise, things get too boring.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). When you get tired you can either give in to drowsiness and go to sleep, or you can perk up by moving around, changing environments and invigorating yourself. The principle applies to any stagnant situation. You have choices.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The clearer you are in your purpose, the easier life gets. You know who you are, how to behave, what to do. People feel like they know straight away and as if by osmosis they get how they're supposed to treat you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). External validation can be like an addictive drug. Our brains love the rush and will train us to seek more acceptance from the same sources. Love and validate yourself, so circumstantial validation won't be the only form you get.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). There is no such thing as easy money. There are opportunities available though, and they all take an investment of work, money or something else. Consider your options carefully. If it sounds like a scam, it is.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Today you'll find that more people are self-involved than not. So when you meet someone who is paying attention to others, observing out of sheer curiosity and genuine interest, befriend that person.

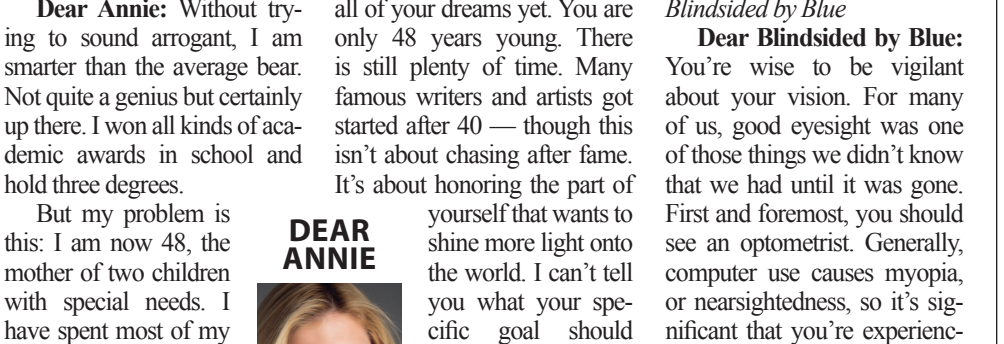
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You've a beautiful sense of poise going for you and you're able to execute your day with the sort of approach that makes others admire and deeply respect you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). It's a red flag when a person is attempting to eliminate the competition through negative press. This is a tactic for the insecure. Stick with positive people who strive to uplift others around them.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). If you're totally in the know, it might be something to keep for yourself until you get the lay of the land. As the Greek tragedian Aeschylus said, "It is a profitable thing, if one is wise, to seem foolish."

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 10). You're usually too busy serving others to worry about what might bring you delight. Their smiles are often enough. But new experiences, relationships and interests that arise in the months to come will teach you what you need in order to thrive as the most fantastic version of yourself. Libra and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 2, 14, 39, 15 and 22.

FRANK AND ERNEST



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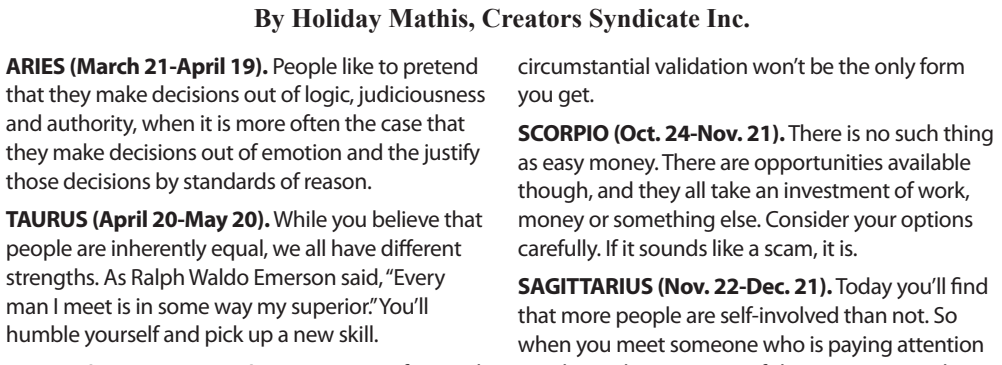

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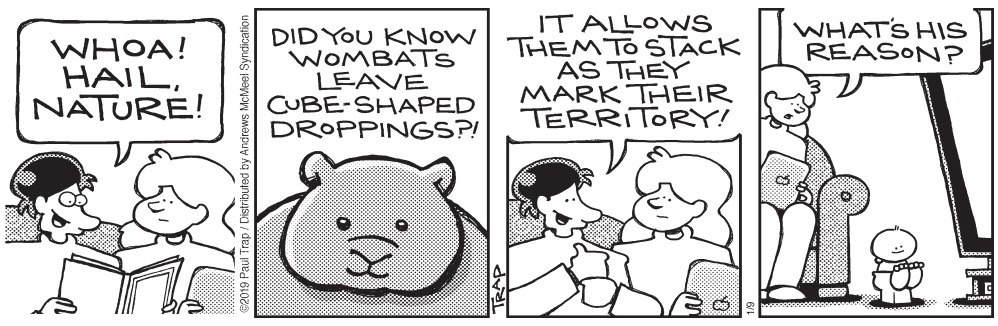

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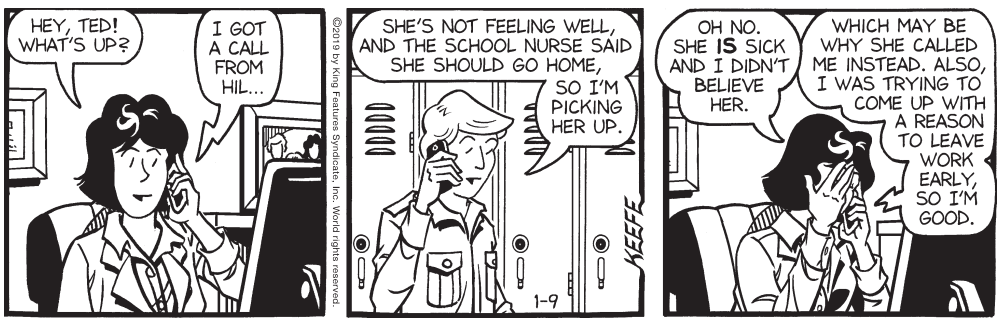

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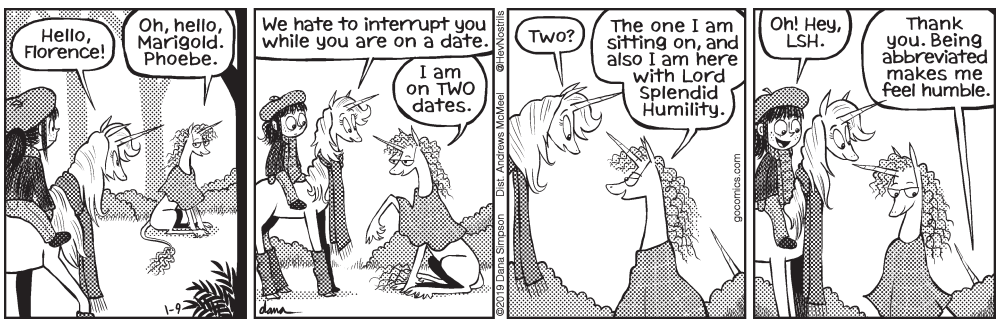

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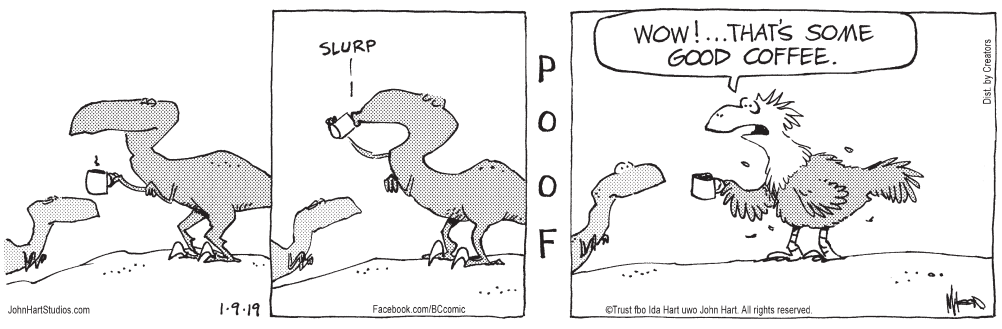

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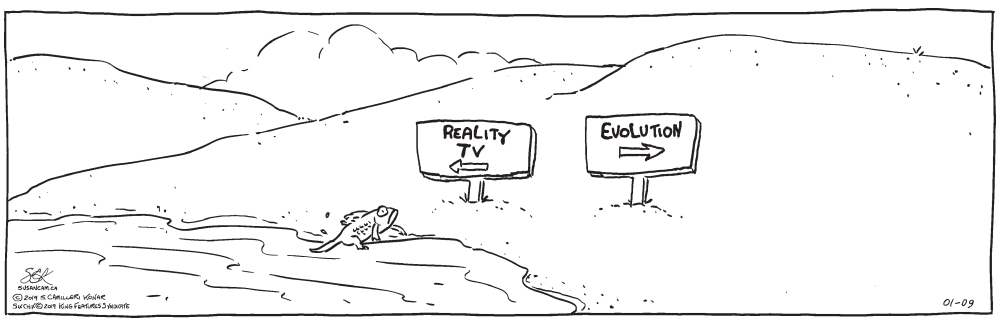

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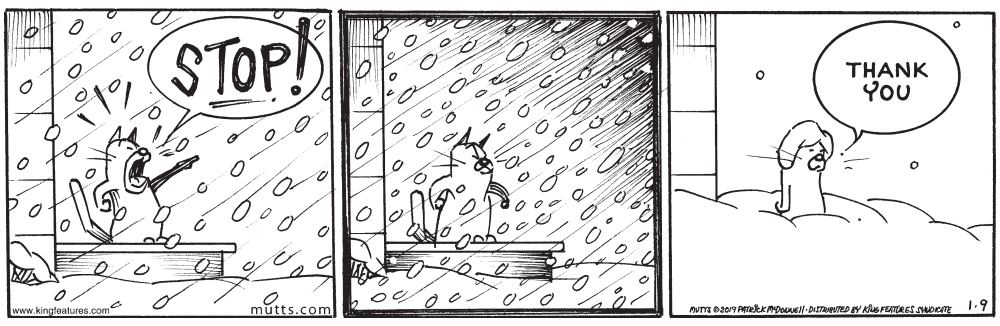

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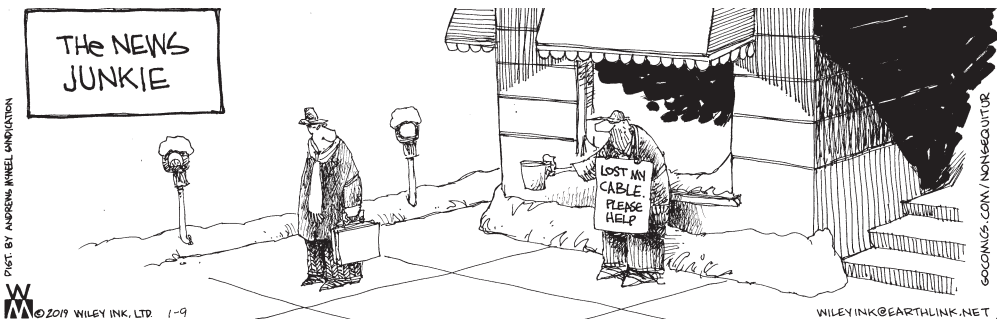

BABY BLUES

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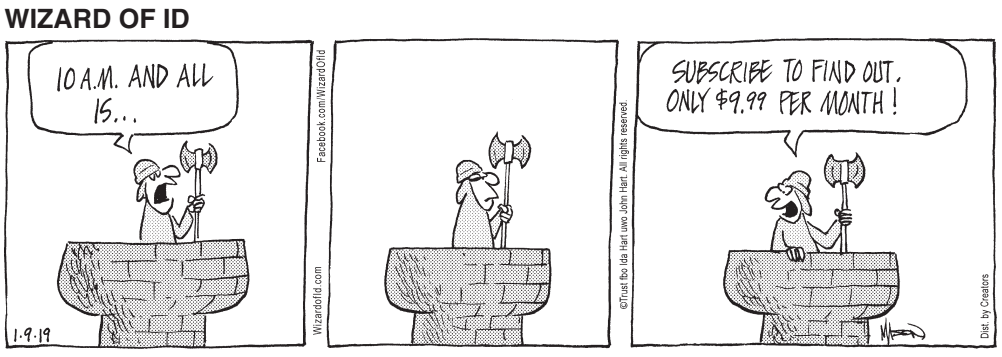

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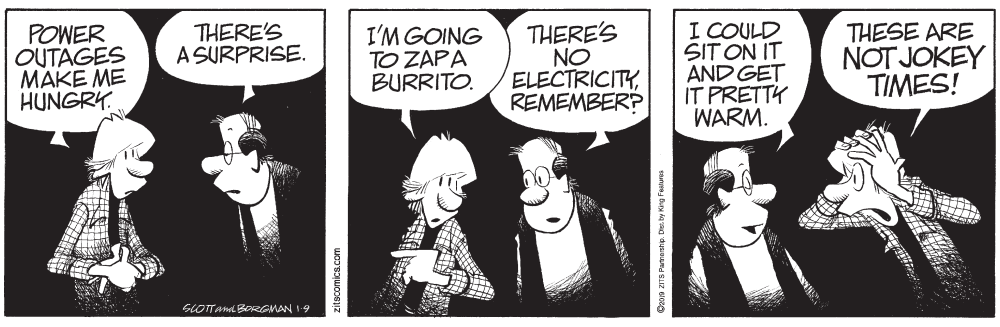
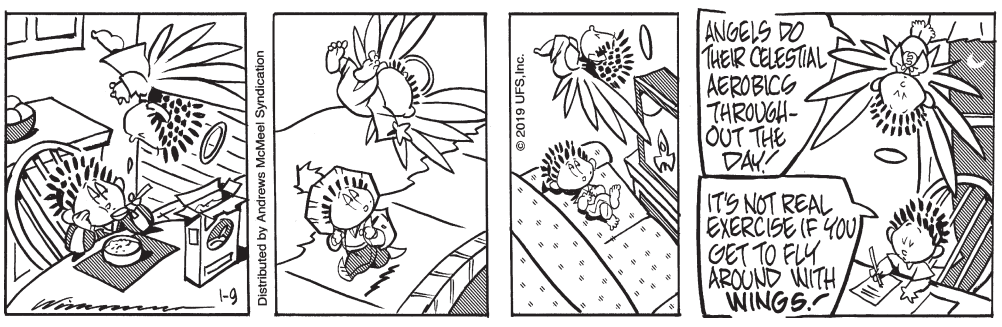
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