

CLOSE TO HOME by John McPherson



Girlfriend's declines become sore point

Dear Abby: My girlfriend, “Ashley,” and I have been dating for three years. Every year I ask her to go on a trip with me to St. Louis where my parents live.

It’s a weekend trip my parents sponsor for our entire family, and it involves a Cardinals baseball game. Every year she refuses to go.

When she invites me on her family fishing trip to New Mexico, I go.

When I ask why she won’t do the same for my family trips, she makes excuses like she doesn’t want to get up early.

Most people in my family are early risers. Ashley is not. I tell her she can sleep as long as she likes; no one will care.

I believe there is something else that Ashley isn’t telling me. I have expressed my unhappiness about this, but it does no good. I am to the point of just ending this relationship.

I don’t understand her reluctance. I really want her to come with me and spend more time



JEANNE PHILLIPS
DEAR ABBY

with my family. What can I do? — *Mystified in the South*

Dear Mystified: Has Ashley met your family? If the answer is no, she may be afraid she won’t fit in or that they won’t like her for some reason. Unless you can get her to open up and tell you exactly why she won’t go, you will never be able to convince her.

Because this has become such a sore point, you need to tell your girlfriend that her inflexibility has become a deal-breaker. But if you do, you may have to be prepared to follow through.

Dear Abby: I have been married for eight years, and my husband is a wonderful spouse when it comes to almost everything. My complaint may seem shallow, but please hear me out.

A couple of years back, he started buying me potted plants rather than cut flowers because “you get more for your money.” He buys me plants three or four times a year, and after receiving the third one I asked him to please go back to cut flowers.

I neither like house plants nor do I want

something I must find a place for in our yard. Despite this, he continues to buy me potted plants every time. Each time he says he “forgot” I don’t want them.

I don’t want to seem ungrateful, but I am really frustrated. Today I received my 10th one. I suppose I seem like a jerk, but I really don’t understand why he keeps buying me the one thing I asked him not to buy. Your thoughts? — *Kathy in Washington*

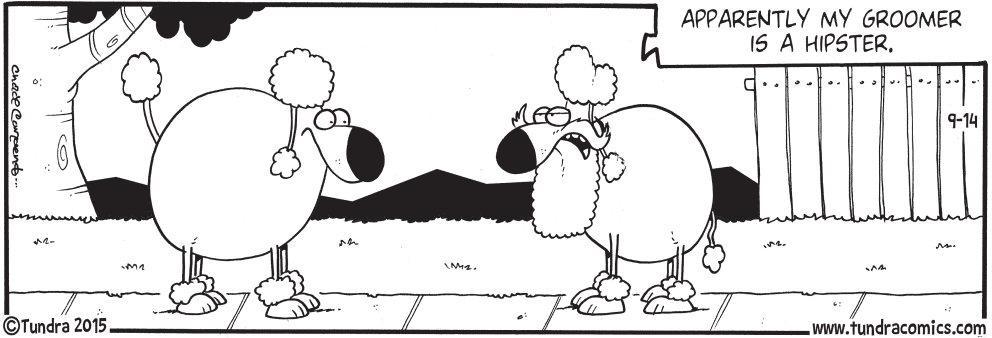
Dear Kathy: You appear to have married a man who is not only practical, but also unimaginative when it comes to gift-buying.

That he would continue to buy you something you have repeatedly told him you would prefer not to have seems the opposite of considerate to me. (On the other hand, many women would be glad that their spouse remembered any special occasion.)

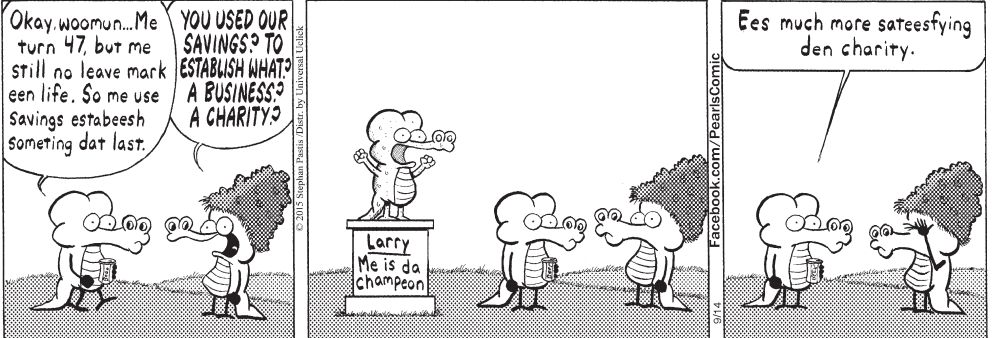
Suggestion: The next time it happens, put HIM in charge of watering, replanting and caring for the plant, and things may change.

Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

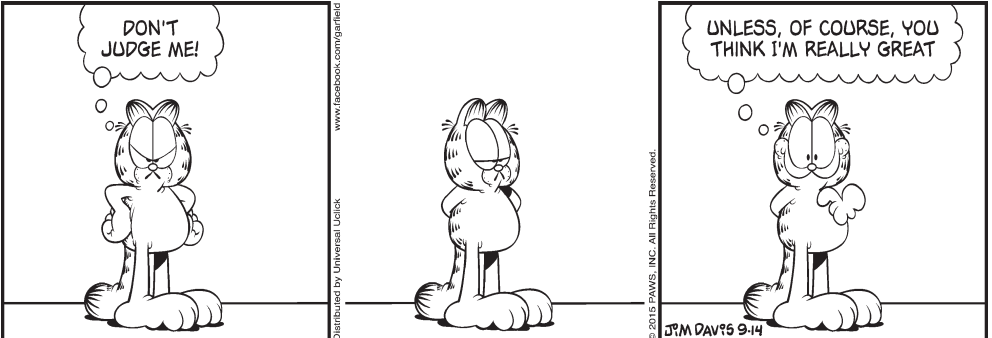
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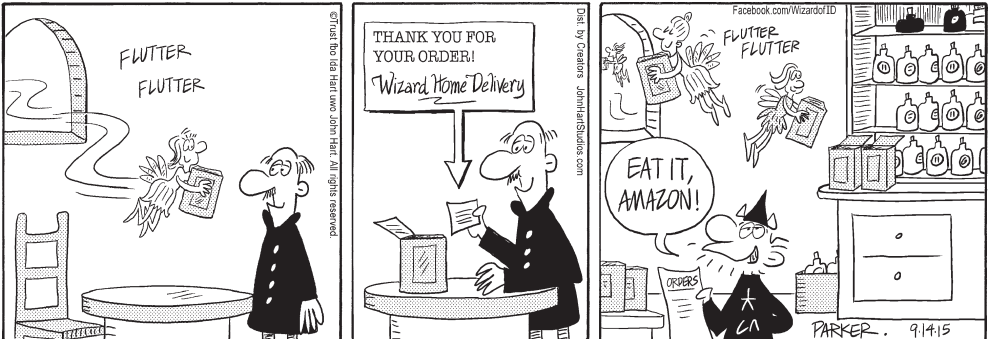
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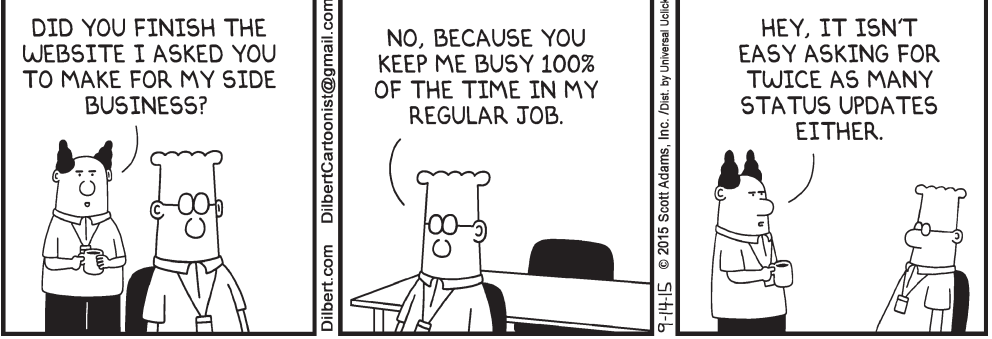
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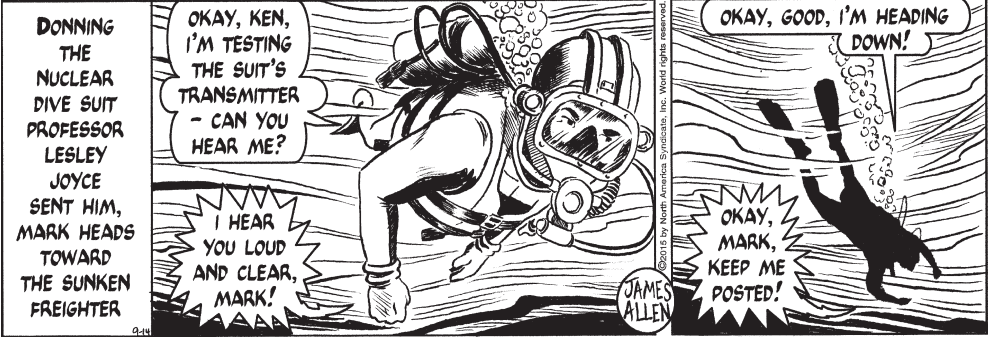
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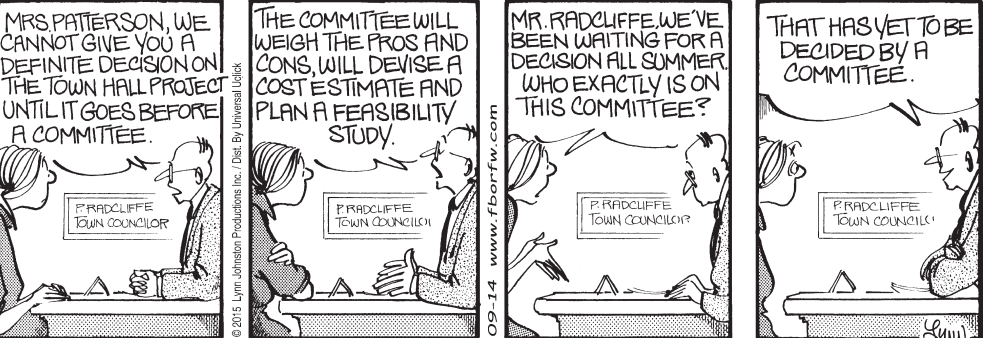
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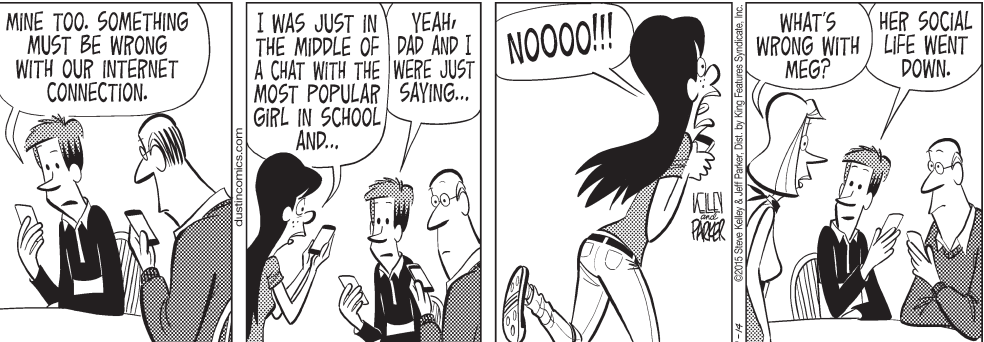
BABY BLUES by Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman



ZITS by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman



DUSTIN by Steve Kelley and Jeff Parker



Daily Horoscope

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The learning you’ve done will help the next group. If it is something you would want to teach, you’ll pass it down. If not, you’ll steer them away and keep them from wasting their time.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Is the lever connected? Is the knob doing anything? Are the controls working or not? This is the main question of the day, and the answer may surprise you, as things are not connected in expected ways.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Mercury is about to change, and so are you. Right now you’re gearing up. The workload is intense, and so is your energy. Start early. You’ll have the stamina to continue far into the evening.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Little niceties will have big repercussions, especially when they strike a personal note. Remember someone’s name, and that person will hold you in high regard.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). There are things you pay for in life without a specific sensation of having handed anything over. They feel, at least in the moment, free. But the cost of “free” usually catches up to us sooner or later.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The people who know you best know what your weakness is. The people who love you best will help

you avoid your weakness as they play to your strengths.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You’ll hear an interesting story. Did it really happen? How much does it matter now? These are the important questions, but not quite as important as the entertainment value of the story.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). When you take a strong stance on an issue, some will be confused, others will be dismayed, and then there are those who will rush to your side to form an alliance.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). A job is coming due that you don’t have a strong motivation to complete. You need to either bring more people into it, or increase the stakes with bigger rewards for finishing and consequences for not.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Today you can prevent hearing lies by letting others know that you’re fine with an array of answers and explanations. Bring down the barriers that might cause people to be dishonest.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You’d be surprised how many people share your (socially unacceptable) opinion. Maybe you shouldn’t say it out loud, but admitting it to yourself can be a huge relief.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You give what you give, and that’s good enough. Be confident in that — no excuses or apologies! The stronger you are in your stance the better others will understand and accept you.



HOLIDAY MATHIS