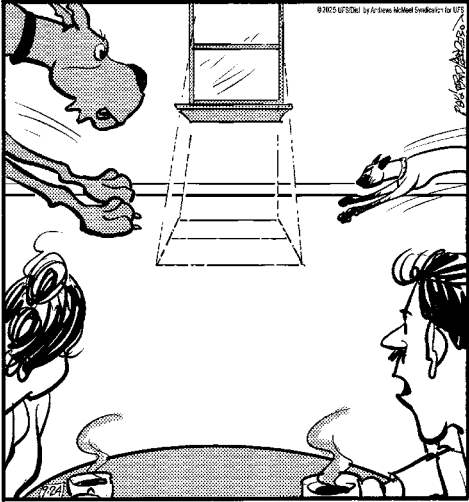


COMICS

MARMADUKE



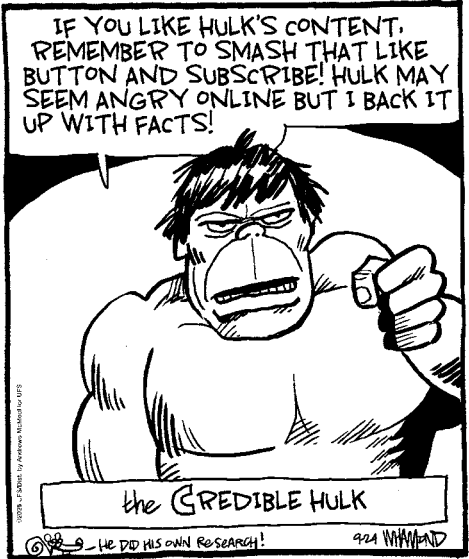
“And the morning race to claim the sunspot is on.”

HERMAN



“Are you trying to tell me that baby on the rug is not me?”

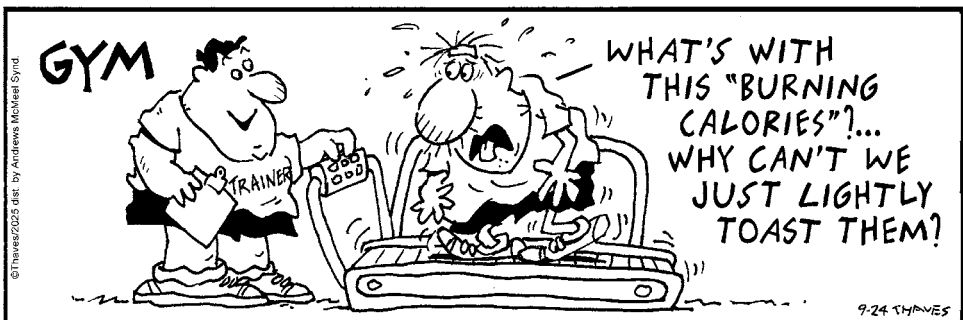
REALITY CHECK



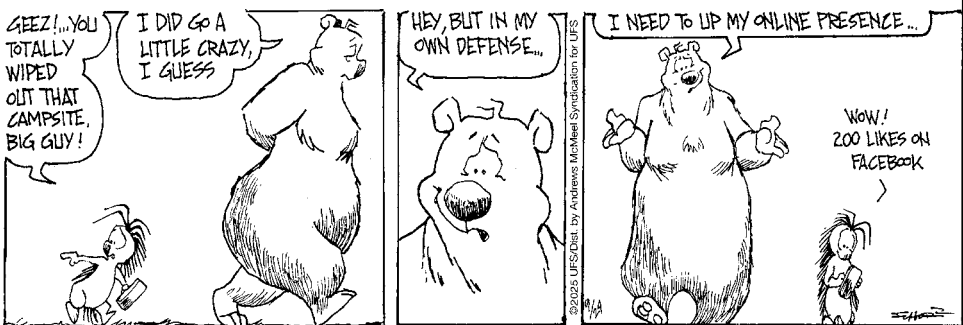
MODERATELY CONFUSED



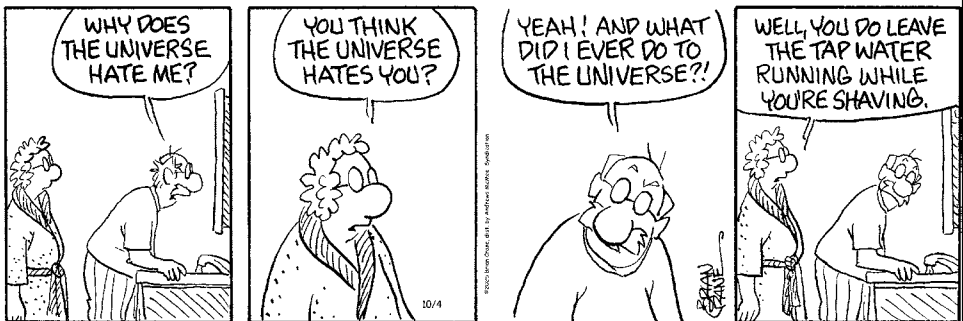
FRANK & ERNEST



THE GRIZZWELLS



PICKLES



BLONDIE



BORN LOSER



HI AND LOIS



CRABGRASS



No Closure, No Invitation

Dear Annie: My supervisor and I worked closely together for more than 30 years. Over that time, he became more than a boss; he was a friend. Even after he and his wife retired to Florida, he kept in touch, calling every week or two to check in with a handful of us from the old office. When he was back in town visiting two of his children, he often came to our house for the holidays. A small group of us even made it a tradition to go out for pizza once a year.

When his wife texted to tell me he had passed away after a short illness, I was stunned. She explained she was not up to talking and that services would be private, held at the family's convenience. There was no obituary, only a mention that there might be a memorial mass at some point.

I was shocked at how deeply his death affected me. I have written notes to each of his children and sent his wife a commemorative frame with their photo and a poem. It has now been two months, and I have heard nothing in return. Social media shows that the family spent much of the summer at their home on the shore.

I do not want to intrude on their grief or reach out if it would be unwelcome. At the same time, I feel lost without any closure. Do you have any advice on how I might move forward when the family seems unwilling to include me in their



ANNIE LANE
Dear Annie

mourning? -- Sadly No Closure
Dear Sadly: Grief does not follow rules, and neither do grieving families. They may be overwhelmed, private or simply coping in their own way. Their silence is not a reflection of your friendship or the kindness you showed.

You honored your supervisor beautifully with notes, a thoughtful gift and your memories. Now the healthiest step is to find your own closure. Share stories with the co-workers who knew him, light a candle, write him a letter or attend a mass when one is announced.

You do not need permission to grieve. Let the love and respect you carried for him be your farewell.

Dear Annie: My daughter and I were recently left out of my niece's wedding in Bentonville, Arkansas. Relatives came from Memphis and Birmingham, yet we were not invited. When I asked why, my brother-in-law gave the odd excuse that he "didn't want anyone eating in his car on the highway." Needless to say, that doesn't explain why we were

excluded from the celebration. I feel hurt and confused. Family members travel back and forth to different events every year, but somehow, we were left out this time. How can I address this slight? And more importantly, how do I prevent something like this from happening again? -- Left Out

Dear Left Out: Being left off a wedding list hurts, especially when the excuse is as thin as "no eating in the car." That is not a reason; it is a brush-off. Do not waste energy chasing explanations that will never satisfy you. If the relationship matters, let them know you and your daughter were hurt and that you want to be included in the future. Say it once, calmly, and then step back. If the pattern continues, the best choice may be to invest your time with the people who are glad to have you at the table and will save you a slice of cake.

"How Can I Forgive My Cheating Partner?" is out now! Annie Lane's second anthology -- featuring favorite columns on marriage, infidelity, communication and reconciliation -- is available as a paperback and e-book. Visit <http://www.creatorspublishing.com> for more information. Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com.

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ASTROGRAPH BY EUGENIA LAST

Keep your thoughts, plans and secrets to yourself, and you'll prosper this year. There is too much to lose if you trust the wrong people or organizations. Protect your home, your rights and your possessions. Walk away from joint ventures, shared expenses and making changes that lack substance or hinge on someone else.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) -- How you engage with issues that matter to you will have an impact. Stand tall and refuse to let anyone or anything get between you and what's important to you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) -- Be careful. Acting on your anger will cost you. Be prepared for the consequences if you decide to engage in a conflict with a friend, neighbor or family member.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) -- Money is within reach if you put in the effort. Use your experience and knowledge to convince others to take a chance on you. Stick to what you know and do best, and your confidence will carry you forward.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) -- It's up to you to create opportunities. If you snooze, you'll lose, so put on your best attire and attend an event. Be sure to verify facts before sharing information.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) -- Figure out a budget and map out a plan that makes your home and lifestyle more appealing. Look for something that will appease those who may stand between you and your heart's desires.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) -- Review

your options and consider how you want to proceed. Take responsibility for your happiness and prioritize your needs. A commitment will prove to be lucrative.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) -- Stifle your fiery, combative rhetoric if you want to accomplish what you set out to do. Choose your words wisely and strive to live up to your promises.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) -- Pay attention to how you look and feel. Trust your instincts, not what someone else tries to talk you into doing. Implement home improvements that will make your life easier.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) -- Get the ball rolling. Utilize your intelligence and connections to develop a plan, and implement change based on your findings. Follow your heart, and don't look back.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) -- Get out and do something that motivates you to look and do your best. Be willing to compromise if it will help you complete tasks on time. A new look or a little pampering can rejuvenate you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) -- Stay alert. Problems at home will mount if you let your emotions and ego get in the way. Taking on someone else's burden isn't required; kindness and advice are sufficient.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) -- Be careful what you agree to; certain things will not be as described. It's best to stay in control of whatever changes are heading your way instead of letting someone else decide for you.

- ACROSS**
- 1 Coxcomb
 - 4 Manner of walking
 - 8 Conspire
 - 12 "The Gilded —"
 - 13 "— of Green Gables"
 - 14 The Eternal City
 - 15 Nest-egg letters
 - 16 Wild cat
 - 17 Paradise
 - 18 Right-hand page
 - 20 Acquiescence
 - 22 Corn spike
 - 23 Fanatic
 - 24 Chains
 - 28 Cover girl
 - 32 Student at Yale
 - 33 Lhasa —
 - 35 Unlock, in verse
 - 36 Scot's cap
 - 37 "Go away!"
- DOWN**
- 1 Impartial
 - 2 Shrek, for example
 - 3 Postwar period
 - 4 In abundance
 - 5 Every
 - 6 Hotel
 - 7 Lone Star State denizen
 - 8 Quickly, in music
 - 9 Ore deposit
 - 10 Portent
 - 11 Big top
 - 19 Make lace
 - 21 Japanese sport
 - 24 Goat's milk cheese
 - 25 Israel's airline
 - 26 "Go, team!"
 - 27 See
 - 29 Dwelling in miniature
 - 30 Fencing sword
 - 31 Heavy metal
 - 34 Old French coin
 - 37 "Right away!"
 - 40 Not yet revealed
 - 42 Mid-May honoree
 - 43 Scary yell
 - 45 Events in hockey
 - 47 Cheerful
 - 48 Terry garment
 - 49 Gothic arch
 - 51 Agent (Hyph.)
 - 52 Round of applause
 - 55 Cushion
 - 56 Actress — Gardner

Answer to this puzzle

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