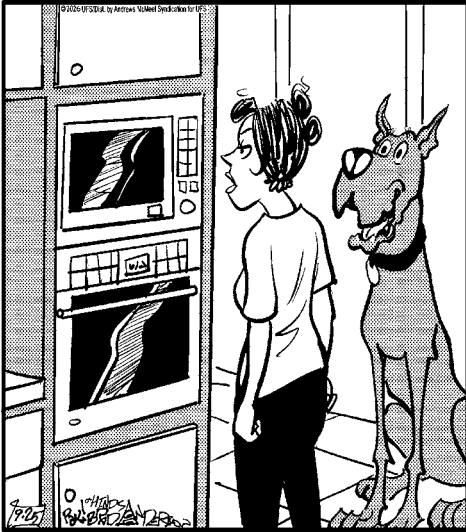


COMICS

MARMADUKE



HERMAN



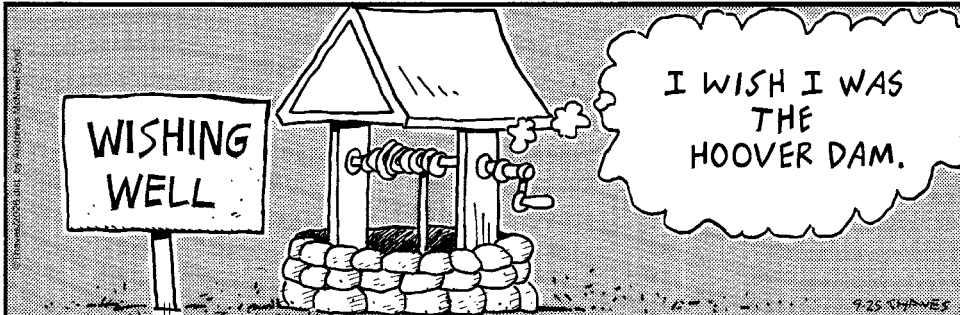
REALITY CHECK



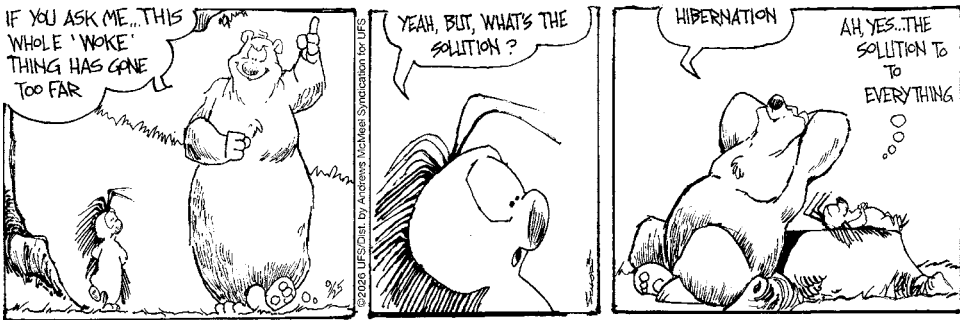
MODERATELY CONFUSED



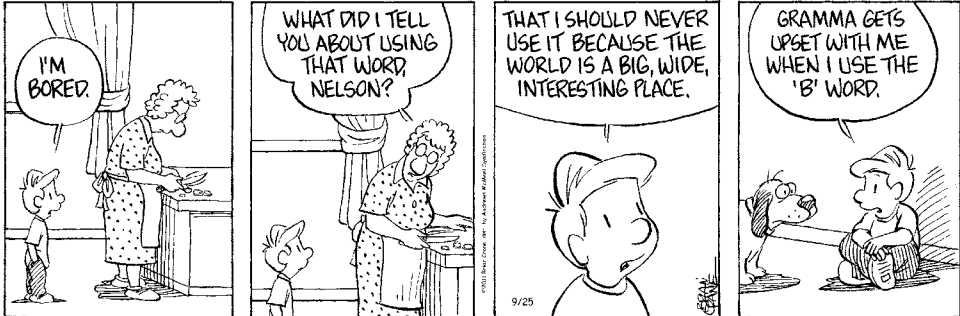
FRANK & ERNEST



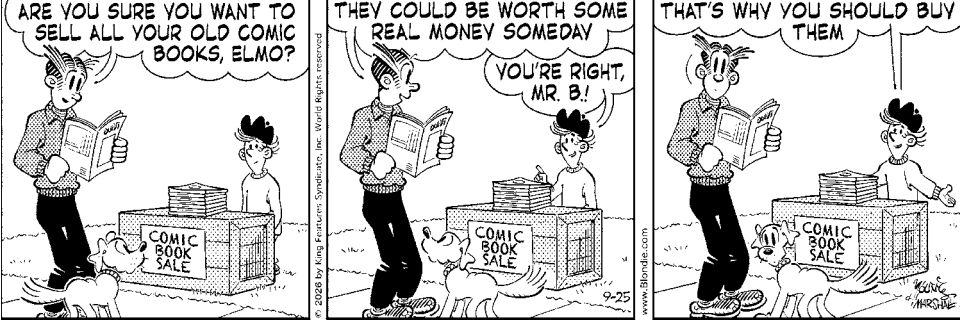
THE GRIZZWELLS



PICKLES



BLONDIE



BORN LOSER



HI AND LOIS



CRABGRASS



‘Retired’ Husband Puts Their Golden Years On Hold

Dear Annie: My husband retired last year after 40 years as an engineer, and we finally started planning the life we’d been talking about for decades: travel, hobbies, quality time together.

But three months after he retired, he accepted a series of offers for “small consulting projects.” He accepted without checking with me, and since then, it’s been a series of “just one more” promises. He finally left his full-time job, but he’s working as much as ever.

We’ve already had to postpone a trip because of his shifting availability, and I’m starting to wonder if he actually wants to retire at all. When I bring it up, he insists he’s doing it for extra spending money, but we don’t need it. I feel like I’m waiting for quality time with my husband that keeps getting rescheduled. -- Still Waiting

Dear Still Waiting: It sounds like your husband misses the feeling of being needed more than he misses the paycheck. Luckily, consulting gives him the freedom a full-time job never did.

He doesn’t need to stop working entirely for you both to be satisfied. Ask him to pencil your time in first, before the client’s. Block the trip dates, then let him fit projects around them instead of the reverse. A man who can set his own hours has no



ANNIE LANE

Dear Annie

excuse for missing out on quality time with his wife.

Dear Annie: I have a 75-year-old female friend. We live in different cities. For years, we’ve kept in touch, messaged daily, and sent gifts, candy and flowers for birthdays and Christmas, etc. I’m a widow, and she’s been encouraging and supportive. I value her friendship.

About a month ago, I messaged to inquire about her family. She didn’t reply. This week, I messaged asking about her elderly mother, her husband and her 6-month-old great-niece. To date, I haven’t heard back. It’s very unusual for her not to respond. I don’t want to be a bother or a nuisance, but she’s active on Facebook.

Should I try messaging her again or wait to give her a chance to get back in touch? I don’t want to embarrass her or make her uncomfortable if she doesn’t want to stay in touch with me for some reason or doesn’t want to verbalize her feelings. As far as I know, I haven’t done anything to

offend her in any way. -- Left Wondering

Dear Left Wondering: There could be any number of reasons she hasn’t responded. Maybe she’s distracted by family matters or struggling with a health issue. Or yes, she might be deliberately stepping away from the friendship. There’s no way to know for sure unless she tells you.

Reach out once more, but make it about her rather than her family, and try calling instead of texting. Tell her you’ve noticed she’s been quiet, you hope she’s OK and you’d love to hear from her. Then leave the ball in her court.

You’ve made it clear that you care and that the door is open. As hard as the uncertainty may be, the next move has to be hers.

“Out of Bounds: Estrangement, Boundaries and the Search for Forgiveness” is out now! Annie Lane’s third anthology is for anyone who has lived with anger, estrangement or the deep ache of being wronged -- because forgiveness isn’t for them. It’s for you. Visit <http://www.creatorspublishing.com> for more information. Follow Annie Lane on Instagram at @dearannieofficial. Send your questions for Annie Lane to dearannie@creators.com.

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ASTROGRAPH BY EUGENIA LAST

Happy Birthday: Live, learn and let go. Holding on to objects, people and lifestyles that no longer benefit you will hold you back. Broaden your scope, and consider what makes you feel content and happy about who you are and what you do. Don’t limit your chance to advance by waffling back and forth and accomplishing nothing. Seize the moment, choose a path and focus on what’s in front of you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) -- If you let your mind wander and your imagination take over, you’ll discover something about yourself that will help you be more decisive. Having an innovative outlook will help you try something new.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) -- Test your physical skills. Participate in events that offer a competitive edge. Your ability to rise and shine when challenged will help you go the extra mile.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) -- Sort through emotional differences so you can get on with your life. Whether it’s you alone having the problem or it’s with someone you spend time with, small steps will not suffice.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) -- Look for alternatives when faced with opposition. Arguing is misleading and a waste of valuable time. Do something physical, and what you accomplish will shadow any negativity you receive from outside influences.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) -- Go over your financial situation carefully and set a budget that will help you lower stress. Lower your overhead through smart living. Talk to experts and set up interviews.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) -- Taking a genuine approach to who you want to become

and what you enjoy most will help you align yourself with those heading down a similar path. Don’t shy away from an invitation to spend more time with someone.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) -- Taking a direct approach to whatever you desire is necessary if you want to finish what you start. Having too much information will lead to interference from those less likely to take a risk.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) -- Be aware of what’s unfolding around you. Prepare to move out of the way if risk comes into play. Too much of anything will cause problems. Avoid overspending or promising the impossible.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) -- Gravitate toward what and who interests you. A change will help you understand the logistics behind getting what you want. Take responsibility for yourself. Avoid physical or emotional risks.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) -- Take more time for people and pastimes you feel passionate about. Be honest with yourself and those you deal with regarding what you are able and willing to do to make your relationship and lifestyle more accommodating.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) -- Set a schedule that allows you to learn something new or upgrade your skills. Broadening your awareness and focusing on qualifications that ensure a better position will lift your spirits.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) -- Reach out and do something nice for someone, and the returns will far exceed your expectations. How you make others feel about themselves and their contributions will put you in a leadership position.

- ACROSS**
- 1 “The X-Files” org.
 - 4 Gaelic
 - 8 Dwayne’s cry
 - 12 — Vegas
 - 13 Conked out
 - 14 Broccoli —
 - 15 Reached a goal
 - 17 Playing cards
 - 18 Haunted house inhabitants
 - 19 Bumpkin
 - 21 Shoe part
 - 22 Rainy
 - 23 Throne
 - 26 Even score
 - 28 Filmmaker — Reiner
 - 31 Disreputable paper
 - 32 Gull relative
 - 33 Era
 - 34 Timetable abbr.
 - 35 Ignoble
 - 36 So-so grade
 - 37 Spelling contest
 - 38 Destiny
 - 39 Los Angeles baller
 - 41 Old French coin
 - 43 Favorite —
 - 44 Female horses
 - 46 Walk unsteadily
 - 50 Lipstick holder
 - 51 Hero in Greek myth
 - 53 “— Well That Ends Well”
 - 54 Hold sway
 - 55 Psychic’s gift
 - 56 Root veggie
 - 57 Adolescent
 - 58 Bashful
- DOWN**
- 1 Banner

Answer to this puzzle

A	H	S		N	E	E	L		L	E	E	B
B	E	E	E	T	U	R		S	T	T	V	
S	U	E	S	S	A	D		E	B	N	T	
E	T	D	D	O	L		S	E	R	W		
			N	O	S			U	C	E		
R	E	K	A	T		L	O	T		E	E	B
E	E	C	E			E	S	A	B		R	A
E	G	V			N	R	E	T		R	A	G
B	O	R		E	T	I		R	I	A	H	C
			T	E	W			E	O	T		
	L	E	K	O	A		S	T	S	O	H	G
S	E	C	A	V	E	D		N	I	A	V	A
A	B	E	R				E	D	E		S	T
A	R	A		B	R	A		S	E			F

- 2 Shower alternative
- 3 Analogy words
- 4 Newspaper worker
- 5 Wash
- 6 Observe
- 7 Whirlpool
- 8 Slow down
- 9 Speedway
- 10 Victim of Cain
- 11 “Indeed!”
- 16 Wine city in Italy
- 20 “A Prayer for — Meany”
- 23 Grouch
- 24 Rabbit
- 25 Pleasant
- 26 Schoolroom event
- 27 Wrath
- 29 Gothic arch
- 30 Stein contents
- 32 Chinese principle
- 35 Saddle
- 39 Untie
- 40 Common conjunctions
- 42 Wave top
- 43 Fashion
- 44 Beast of burden
- 45 Kind
- 47 Poor grades
- 48 Green with vegetation
- 49 See
- 50 Bar bill
- 52 Payable