

No one is calling her back

Dear Annie: I am in my mid-60s. I live in a small town, where I know lots of people but have only one friend I can count on. Another really good friend had to move out of state for her job. And another friend I have known for 35 years, but I get absolutely nothing in return. We only get together if I reach out to her. I'd like to cut her off, but I have no one to take her place.

My extended family members are not too far away, but they are too busy to make a phone call or send an email. I'm friendly with my husband's family members, but they never call or make any effort to keep us informed of family news. My husband has never helped in that regard because he doesn't keep in touch with them, either. He also makes no effort to get together with friends. I have a happy marriage but need more than my husband to keep me company.

Having no friends is a problem I have had my whole life. My family was rather dysfunctional, with a brother who was troubled and made it difficult for

all of us. My parents were preoccupied with him and expected the rest of us kids to take care of ourselves, and because there were no other kids in the neighborhood to befriend, I feel that I was unprepared to make friends. I could have been a better friend to people as I became an adult but didn't really get it at the time. I get along fairly well socially now, but there is no one I can call and say, "Hey, let's do something." I also worry about what would happen if my husband or I got sick. Whom would I call for support?

Facebook makes me sad because it appears that others my age are still enjoying a very active social life. Has our culture created an atmosphere in which no one cares, or is it just me? — *Nobody Calls*

Dear Nobody Calls: First off, there aren't any people who are having as good a time as they seem to be on Facebook. If looking at those posts is bringing you down, log off for a while. Second, the best way to get somebody to call is to call her first. I know; you have tried reaching

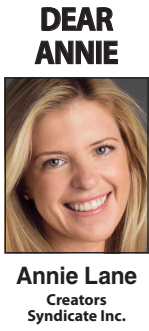
out. But keep trying.

Check out Meetup, a website designed to bring people together in real life over common interests. There's a group for everyone — amateur quantum physicists, alcohol-free adventurers, beer-drinking book-clubbers, puzzle enthusiasts, bridge players. The point is that you need to get out and try new things.

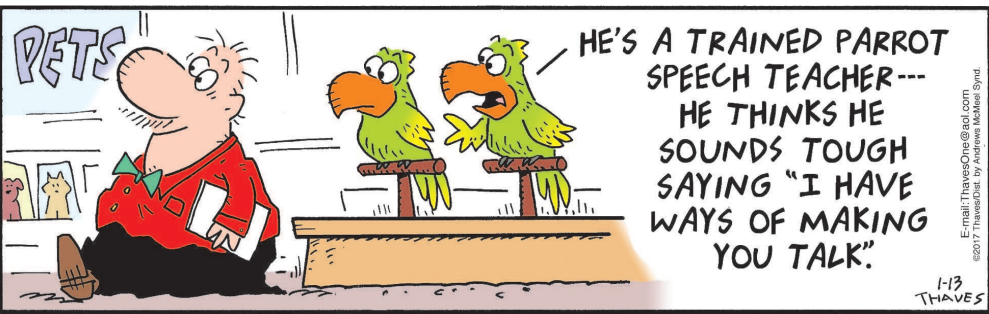
Dear Annie: Your advice to "Broken Living Room," missed the mark and may cause the breakup of a friendship.

Chairs are constructed to withstand years strain of overweight bottoms. If this friend was capable of getting to "Broken Living Room's" house and getting herself seated, her weight was not the cause of the chair's failure. The chair in question was either of poor quality or well on its way to failure before the friend sat in it.

"Broken Living Room" should replace the chair with a quality chair, or she should find a place to put her fragile chair where heavy friends won't use it. Then she should forget the incident and nurture her friendship. She shouldn't blame the friend. — *Overweight Chair-User*



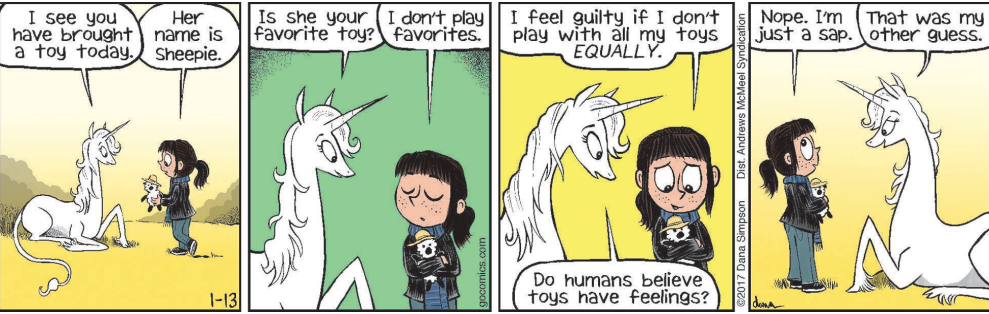
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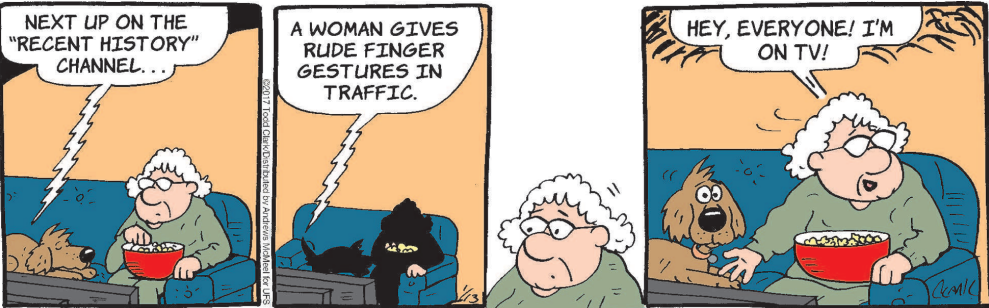
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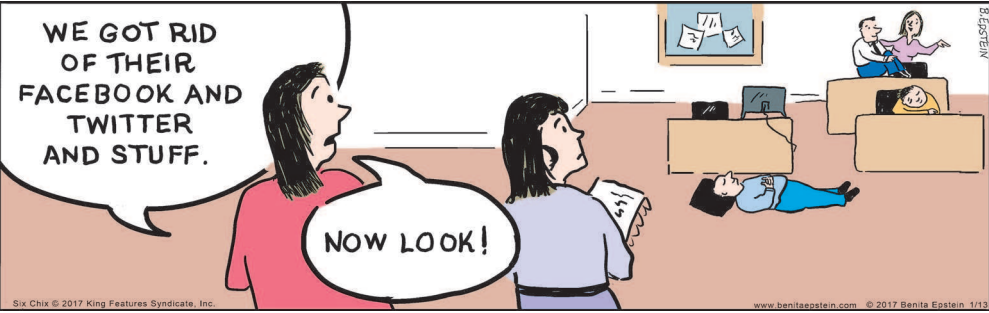
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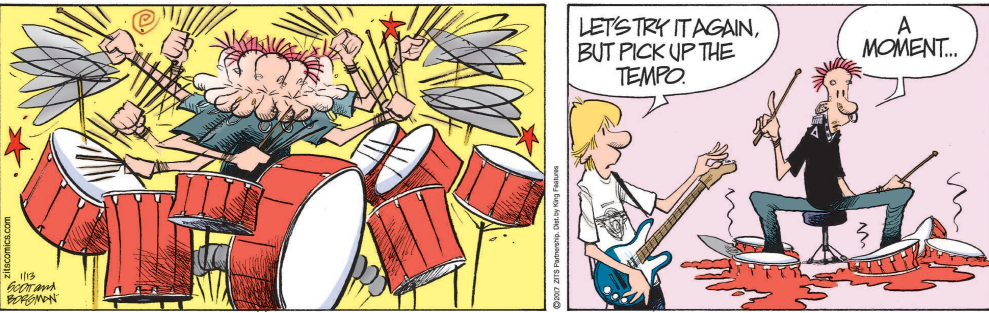
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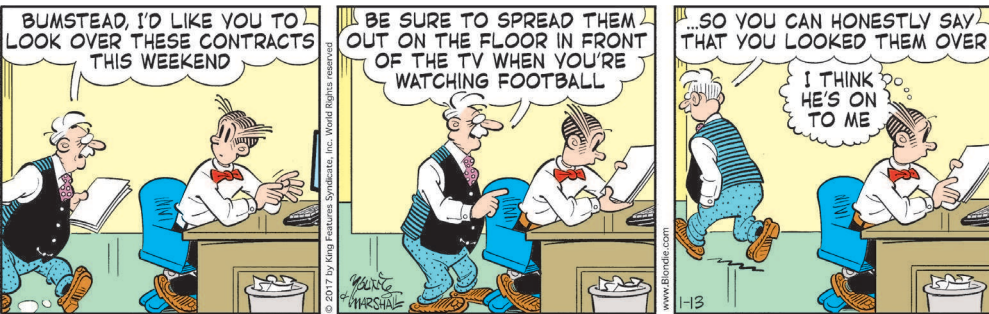
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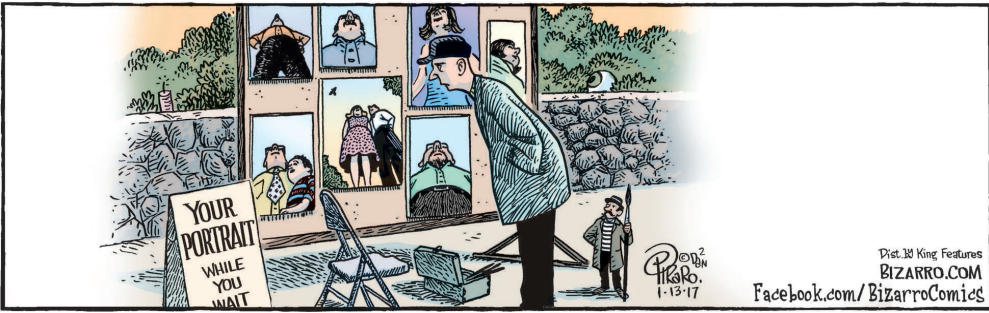
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