ADVICE

Son confides to mom about grandmother's abusive behavior

Dear Abby
Abigail Van Buren

DEAR ABBY: I am reaching out as a single mother grappling with a serious heart-lung condition. My son's father abandoned us when I was pregnant, and I haven't heard from him in more than a decade. Thankfully, my parents have been supportive co-parents during the years when my health made things incredibly challenging.

I have always encouraged my son to express his feelings and have assured him that his emotions are valid. We share a strong bond, and he feels comfortable discussing anything with me. Recently, he confided that he feels unsafe at his grandparents' house, where he spends two nights a week. He revealed that his grandmother is verbally abusive and critical -- laughing at him when he makes mistakes, calling him a "loser," making sneering comments and speaking poorly of me when they are alone, even though she's pleasant to my face.

My mother's behavior is deeply troubling. My son is scared to have me confront her because he's worried he will be punished for sharing his experiences. In any other scenario, I would tell my mother that until she chooses to not abuse, he won't be staying over. However, we have a mediated agreement that allows for those two overnights a week. I fear my mother could manipulate the situation and lie to the courts to maintain this arrangement. What should I do?

-- HOPELESS AND OVERWHELMED IN OREGON

DEAR HOPELESS: Something has gone wrong with the arrangement you have with your mother. Any extreme change in behavior is troubling, and if her change of behavior is recent, she may need to be medically evaluated. What you need to do now is discuss this sorry situation with an attorney who may be able to challenge the custody agreement and protect your son from your mother's abuse.

DEAR ABBY: My son "Scot" recently remarried. I wasn't involved in any of the preparations. I was also not acknowledged at the wedding and felt like just another guest. My son decided to change his last name without informing me about it. When I asked why, he said he had no claim to the name even though he has a brother and children with that last name.

Am I wrong for feeling I've been punched in the heart for not being involved in this decision? The hurt is real.

-- MOM WHO DOESN'T MATTER

DEAR MOM: With this new marriage, Scot is starting over, and the name change may be his way of creating a new beginning. Obviously, you and your son are not close enough that he confides in you, or he might have spoken to you about his decision and explained it beyond feeling he had "no claim" to the name he, his brother and his children were raised with. Scot's decision was a personal one. Whatever his reason, it has nothing to do with you, and it should not be regarded as a "punch in the heart." (A flip of the stomach, perhaps, but in no way related to you.)

HOUSEHOLD ADVICE

Enjoying flowers in the present

Hints from Heloise
Heloise

Dear Heloise: First, I'd like to say that I enjoy reading your hints each day. Here is a novel idea my late mother once said to me: "Why don't you give me flowers now when I can enjoy them, not when I am dead and cannot?" I find it rather sound advice. What say you? Thank you.

-- Daniel D., via email

Daniel, I agree, and I think many of my readers do as well. Thank you for writing in.

-- Heloise

COLD WATER FOR BLOOD

Dear Heloise: I, like many other senior citizens, take aspirin and blood thinners and suffer from occasional pop-up skin bleeds that get on my pants, shirts or shorts. As soon as I notice the blood, I soak the garment in cold water and gently rub the affected area, and the stain is gone after soaking for 5-10 minutes.

I read your column in the San Antonio Express-News.

-- Pete S., in San Antonio

Pete, so many times, I've warned readers about washing blood stains in cold water because hot water will set the stain. Thank you for this reminder.

-- Heloise

A WATER WARNING

Dear Heloise: Warn folks that if they have to turn off their water for an extended period of time, they need to turn off the water heater, water softeners, recirculation pumps, and any other water-related devices to prevent damage or burnout.

-- Frank A., via email

DIRTY DISHES

Dear Heloise: I'm a longtime reader of your column, and it has been helpful and entertaining for over 50 years. I'm now doing the reading in the Daily Sun, in Ocklawaha, Florida. Recently, we replaced our dishwasher, and a tip in the handbook was to turn on the hot water before starting the washer, which makes sense.

Turns out, I was not happy with the washing results of the new washer; there was a film on the glasses, coffee cups, plasticware, and inside of the dishwasher. After blaming the dishwasher, I started thinking about this problem and made a decision not to use rinse aid. I now use one soap pod in the bottom of the washer and one in the pod dispenser.

The fantastic result was sparkling dishes and glasses, as well as a clean interior. Happy days!

-- Dennis S., in Ocklawaha, Fla.

SUDOKU

Here's How It Works: Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle.

		9		3				6
	5							2
			1	5	9			4
		5	4					
3	2							
		1		6			3	
				1	2			
	1	8	6		5			
						8		9

Level: Advanced

5	6	2	3	7	4	8	1	9
7	1	8	6	9	5	4	2	3
9	3	4	8	1	2	5	6	7
4	9	1	5	6	7	2	3	8
3	2	7	9	8	1	6	4	5
6	8	5	4	2	3	9	7	1
2	7	6	1	5	9	3	8	4
8	5	3	7	4	6	1	9	2
1	4	9	2	3	8	7	5	6

CROSSWORD

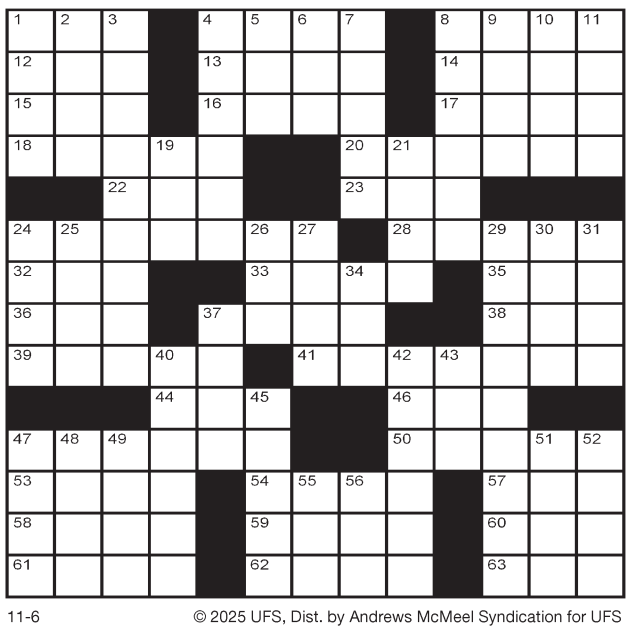
NEA Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS
1 Sing with closed lips
4 Peat —
8 — avis
12 Whichever
13 Thought
14 Panache
15 "— about time!"
16 State near Mont. (2 wds.)
17 Penny
18 Water lily
20 Ousts
22 — — manner of speaking
23 Blushing
24 Made unclean
28 Untamed
32 "Exodus" hero
33 Tabletop extender
35 Stage of life
36 Cravat
37 Distort
38 Container for wine
39 Turn out (2 wds.)
41 Thought to be
44 — Grande
46 Web address
47 Condescends
50 Go furtively
53 Vaulted church area
54 Legal tender
57 Mine's output
58 Bridle strap
59 — vera
60 Shark feature
61 Exam
62 Peel
63 "Jack Sprat could eat no — ..."

DOWN
1 Frozen rain
2 "Do — others ..."
3 Utterly baffled
4 Prayer book
5 Unmatched
6 Watery expanse
7 — falcon
8 Move back
9 Actor — Guinness
10 Harangue
11 Picnic pests
19 College, to an Aussie
21 Actor — Goldblum
24 Sticky fruit
25 Actress — Moriarty
26 Wapiti
27 "Doe, a — ..."
29 Say quickly (2 wds.)
30 Chills and fever
31 Allow to use
34 Fear
37 Twirl
40 Pressing
42 Shoved
43 Coffee-filled vessel
45 Entertainment award
47 Flit
48 Fencing weapon
49 Egyptian goddess
51 Soprano's song
52 Superman's alter ego
55 — Pasha
56 "Favorite —"

Answer to Previous Puzzle

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



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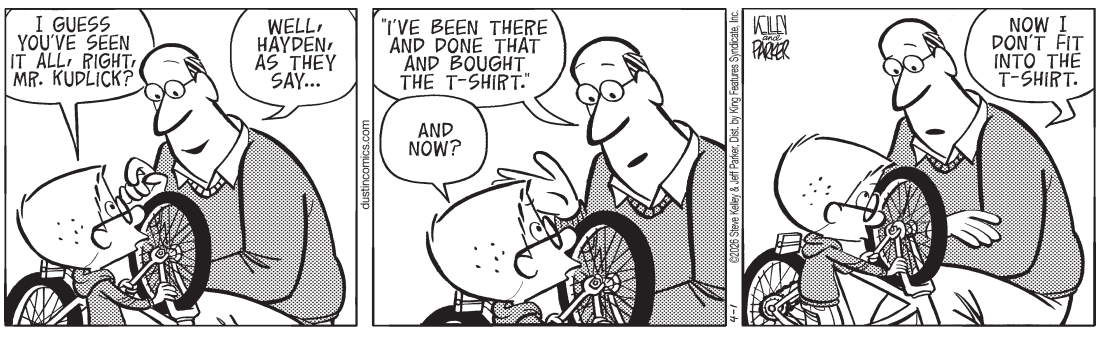
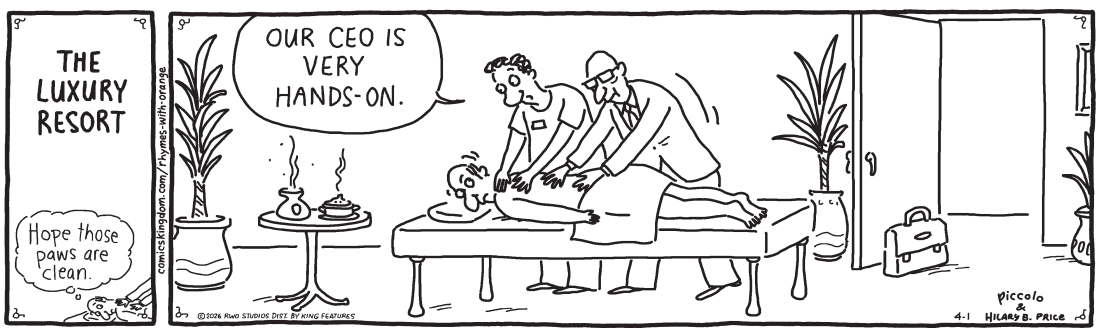
DUSTIN

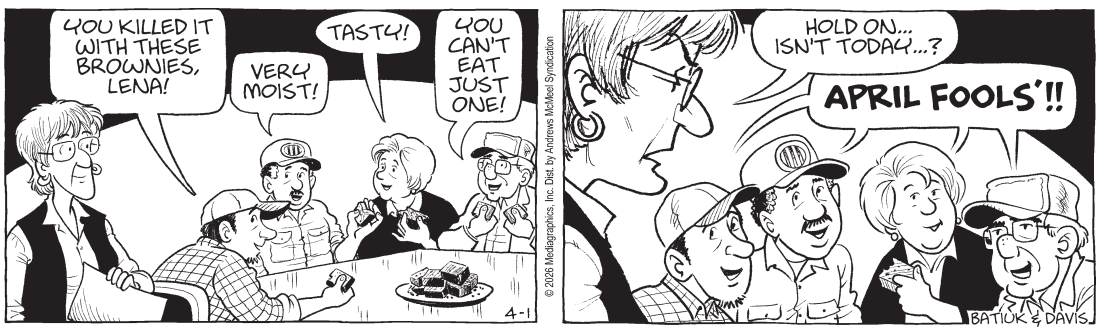


BABY BLUES

RHYMES WITH ORANGE

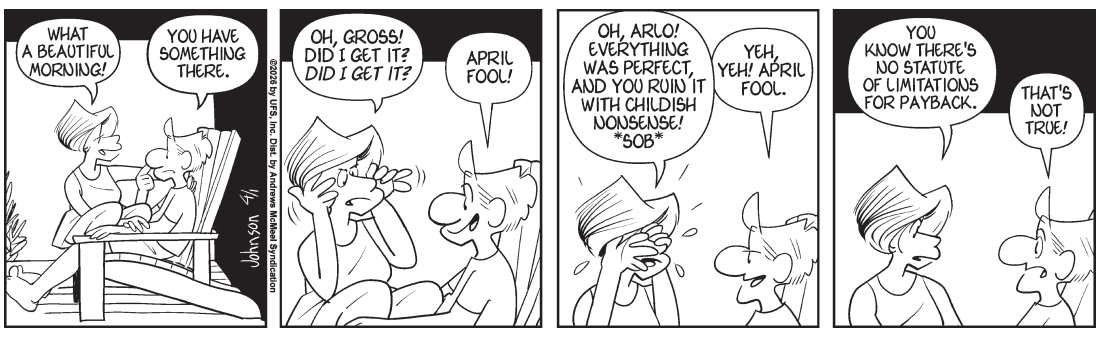


CRANKSHAFT

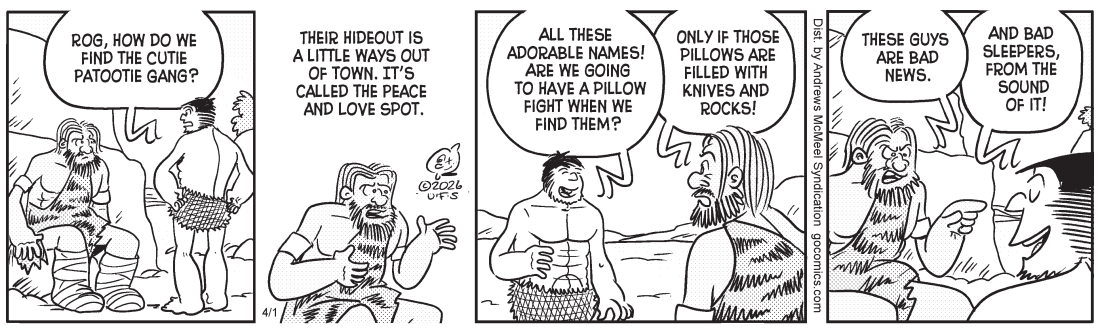


ZITS

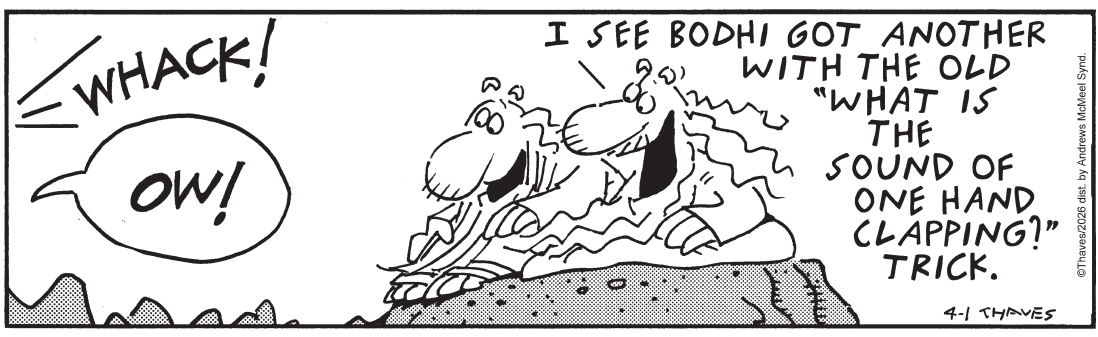
ARLO AND JANIS



ALLEY OOP



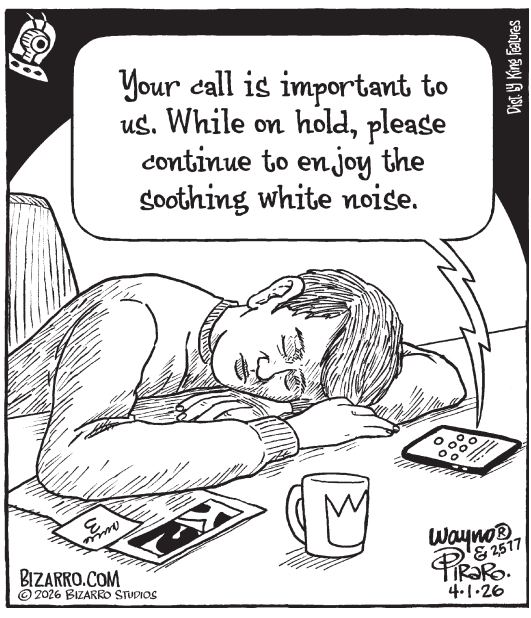
FRANK & ERNEST



HERMAN

"You call yourself 'early man'? You're three hours late!"

BIZARRO



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