

Spouse expects to be driven on demand

Adapted from an online discussion.

Dear Carolyn: My spouse and I are in our early 70s, married 25 years and living in a large suburban area.

She stopped driving six months ago because of bad eyesight.

I volunteer delivering meals and at the animal shelter and serve on a county commission. I also take classes at the gym three days a week. These activities give purpose and meaning to my life in retirement.

Spouse is an introvert and doesn't want to do these things with me. Spouse doesn't understand why I have so many friends, has no friends and thinks people don't need them — they're too much trouble.

Now she wants me to quit all my activities to be available to drive her to appointments and errands. Spouse does NOT have any other chronic illness except poor eyesight. Spends the day playing video games and watching TV.

I've said I'm available all day Mondays and before noon other days. But my spouse says she needs rides at other times. And that my schedule is too complicated.

Spouse refuses to take taxis when I'm not available, saying they're too expensive. Spouse has \$10 million in investments. (We married in our late 40s and kept our finances separate.) I think spouse is being ridiculous and said she should spend the \$20,000 she got for selling her car on taxi rides.

Tell Me About It

Carolyn Hax



She says that's a waste when I could and should be doing it.

Spouse says I'm being a bad spouse not to quit activities to care for her. She doesn't need assisted living care, she just wants free taxi service.

Suggestions for how I should navigate this? — Frustrated Spouse

Frustrated Spouse: You are navigating this. Your response is appropriate, so stick to it: Be available at the times you said, and keep your activity schedule intact.

Spouse is the one failing to navigate; that doesn't put you on the hook to change unless you want to. Firmly decline to be controlled. (Was spouse always like this? It's not okay.)

No doubt some of spouse's maladaptive decisions trace to fear and loneliness. It would be compassionate to note that, to say you sense she isn't comfortable in a taxi — older, alone, compromised vision, it fits. If so, then together you can figure out a taxi alternative; a regular car service or hired driver, for example, or your local council on aging are two places to start. She spends, learns your schedule or stays home.

Say out loud, too, that you hear she wants companionship and will gladly make more plans

with her. But not at the cost of your friendships just because she chooses not to have any of her own.

If she persists in calling you a bad spouse for this, then don't fight it. Agree: "Yep, bad spouse. This is who I am and what I am offering you: rides wherever you need for at least half of every day. And a schedule with variety because that's what keeps me happy. Remember, we're different, which brought us together."

The "large suburban area" might need rethinking. They can be car-dependent and age-hostile.

Otherwise, be loving and kind and hold fast. You're entitled to be yourself, for one. Plus, the mental and physical health benefits you get from circulating will benefit your spouse, whereas if you rot at home out of guilt, then you soon won't be much good to either of you.

Also: Watch for signs of decline besides the eyesight. Whether that's behind her impulse to isolate or her isolation is causing decline, or both, this has the whoosh of a hastening downward slide.

Re: Spouse: I think that spouse is very lonely and probably not as much of a loner as the letter writer thinks. I bet it's also very scary to have vision problems and to depend on other people for stuff. Although this person sounds very demanding, I can actually see why they'd want their spouse to help them with these things, and

feel like the rides are a red herring for other issues.

— Anonymous

Anonymous: I don't doubt that. But is admitting vulnerability so unthinkable that attacking a spouse is okay? How much control, stubbornness, finger-pointing, bad-mouthing, penny-hoarding and nonuse of one's words is excused?

We know nothing of the couple's relationship till now. But I'm thinking neurologist, geriatric social worker or psychotherapist for this "other issue" — not the letter writer quitting a by-no-means excessively active life.

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Register

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- Computer shortcut
- Specialized market
- Earthy color
- Needed a massage
- Make rugs
- Chin cover
- Take it easy
- Donkey sound
- Ref's decision
- Early shepherd
- Boxing great
- Yarns
- Irritate
- Deal maker
- Sees coming
- Scary shout
- Opposed to
- Shocked sound
- Deep mud
- Contented sound
- Invited
- Keyed up
- Suspicious
- Enjoyed avidly
- Hardly wordy
- Despises

DOWN

- Do a yard job
- Star pitcher
- Jazz saxophone great
- Whoop it up
- Metal sources
- Collar
- Lettuce variety
- Jazz saxophone great
- Mother of Ares
- Water whirl
- Skin art, for short

PACS	CANAPE
ALOT	ARABIA
LONE	REGENT
OUTLASTS	
ELI	HACKS
ASSAM	ATONE
SIT	NET
ATEAM	SAGES
PEDRO	ALE
	OUTCASTS
IMMUNE	STOP
TOASTS	KERI
SOREST	ADEN

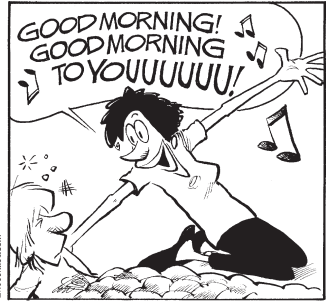
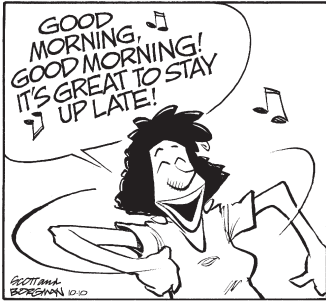
Yesterday's answer

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 18 Seaside setting | 30 Pointer director |
| 19 Baseball's Rodriguez | 33 "Barbie" Gerwig |
| 21 Fluffy wraps | 34 Fountain order |
| 23 Church group | 35 "Got it" |
| 24 Son of Seth | 37 Provo's state |
| 25 Telegraph period | 39 Color |
| 27 Coverings for teeth | 41 Take to court |
| | 42 Short records, for short |

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11						12			
13						14			
		15			16		17		
18	19				20	21			
22				23				24	25
26			27			28			
29					30			31	
		32					33		
34	35				36	37			
38				39		40		41	42
43						44			
45						46			

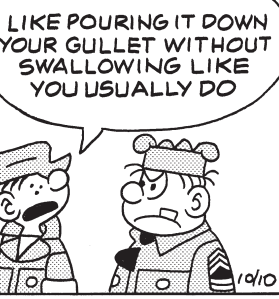
10-10

ZITS



by Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman

BEETLE BAILEY



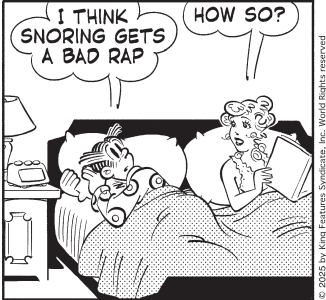
by Mort Walker

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



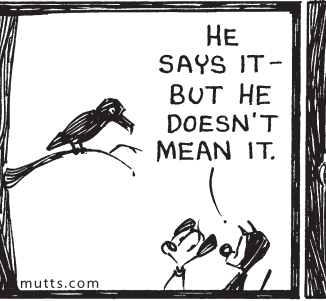
by Chris Browne

BLONDIE



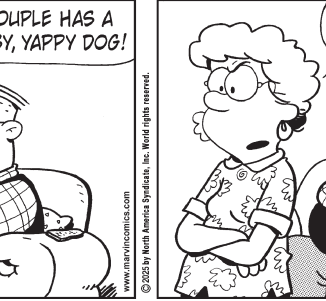
by Young and Drake

MUTTS



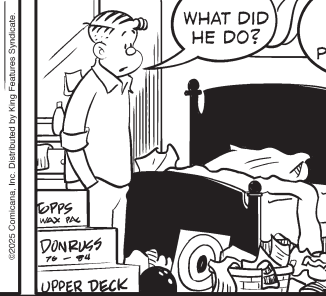
by Patrick McDonnell

MARVIN



by Tom Armstrong

HI AND LOIS



by Chance Browne

CRYPTOQUOTES

THS VMKT LHM

MKAD, THS'BO

ZHNNK ROKJ

GANX NXO ISR

NHH. NXKN'Q K

VKMN HL AN.

-- RODFOJ

GKQXADZNHD

Yesterday's Cryptoquote:
A day without a friend is like a pot without a single drop of honey left inside.
-- A.A. Milne, "Winnie-the-Pooh"

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THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane

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SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

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

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Answer to previous puzzle

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

Difficulty: ★★★

10/9

Difficulty: ★★★★★

10/10