

Stepdad gives away the farm

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Annie: I am married to one of four siblings who dutifully took care of their aged parents until their mother died a few years ago. Daddy, in his mid-80s, met a bevy of women at his new upscale care facility and proposed marriage to one of them within two weeks. She turned him down, but a mutual friend accepted and she secretly married Daddy shortly thereafter.

The woman has two children, both in professional jobs, one of whom is an attorney. At first, we liked the stepmother, laughed a bit and everyone got along well. But 18 months later, Daddy died and we discovered that he had drafted a document leaving his estate, worth almost a million dollars, to her.

Now the stepmother will not answer any of our calls and hangs up if we somehow manage to get through. We certainly feel slighted, but this woman is our legal stepmother and we would, with civility, like to make our case to her to use some of that money to help with our children's college tuitions. How do we address her? — *Bombed in Birmingham*

Dear Bombed: Oh, my. We're certain our readers will come up with many names you can call her, none of which are printable. Your 80-something father-in-law signed over his estate to a woman he barely knew, they married in secret, and it lasted a short time. This

Annie's Mailbox

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Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



entire situation sounds fishy. You need a lawyer. Now.

Dear Annie: I had been living with "Rafe" for 10 years until we split up several months ago. Recently, he called to say that his brother had died. I wanted to attend the funeral, but Rafe said he didn't want me to be there because we weren't together anymore.

This made me upset and it hurt. Then he said his family probably wouldn't want me there, either. Since I knew his brother, I feel I should have shown up and paid respects. What difference does it make if we're together or not? I don't know how I'm supposed to feel now. I am sensitive and Rafe doesn't care that he hurts my feelings. — *Ex-Girlfriend*

Dear Ex: This isn't about you. It is about Rafe and his family. If they were uncomfortable having you at the funeral, it was right for you to stay away. It is natural that you wanted to pay your respects, but their feelings come first. It

would be very gracious of you to send a condolence card to Rafe and his family, expressing your sadness over their loss, and perhaps sharing a fond memory of Rafe's brother.

Dear Annie: I'd like to weigh in on servers calling people "Hon" or "Sweetheart."

I'm a widower in my late 60s. I agree almost entirely with those who dislike being called "Sweetie," by servers. But the fact is, I have never had a young male address me in any way I found offensive. However, it is a daily ritual for me with the young ladies.

I used to go to a coffee shop four times a week. About three years ago, as if someone flipped a switch, I began to be addressed as "Sweetie" or "Sweetheart." It came with a condescending tone, too. I heard them address older women the same way. I quit going there. I took my late wife's brother to our local steakhouse. The young hostess escorted us to the darkest corner and after we were seated, lit the table candle and said coyly, "This will make it more romantic for you guys."

Maybe these young females should get some sensitivity training before they are put into positions where they come into contact with the public. Just because we are over 60 doesn't mean we suddenly need coddling. — *Sonora, California*

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The way you become a powerful force in the world is very simple: Be yourself. Honor your joy. Get to know what makes you happy and keep doing that.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You're a leader, and you like to follow, too — it's how you learned effective leadership in the first place. This conundrum will show up in your life, and there will be moments when you're torn about whether to lead or fall in line.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Your social graces will be in top form today, and it's a good thing — this is what the world needs. You'll make it easy for people to get to know who you are and what you're about, and you'll share yourself in many ways.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). In order to speak well on a topic, you have to first understand it thoroughly. That's why you'll do so much research and listening today. You'd rather not have to correct yourself later.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Your dietary needs are changing with the physical demands of your life. With each meal you eat, ask yourself how you could make it better for yourself. Probably the answer is in fresh vegetables.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). There are life stressors that you can't do anything but laugh about. The key is to determine quickly which are the ones that you can't do anything about and consciously decide not to take them on.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). If you think your family is complicated and weird, just ask the person next to you to tell you a story about his family. There isn't a person on the planet who doesn't have weirdness in the family.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). There's something you want to put off, but the very fact that you feel that way about it means you probably shouldn't. Handle the hard stuff early in the day just to get it over with.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You are highly influential and may be able to convince an entire crowd of people to do something. This is, of course, most efficiently accomplished with social media.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You don't usually consciously decide how you want people to treat you, until they happen to mistreat you. Then you understand clearly where the boundary is, and you work to reinforce that boundary for the future.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll be a great showman today with a production that is truly magnificent. You don't even want credit. The artful aspect of it is that you dazzle them and make them feel as though they had a major part in it.

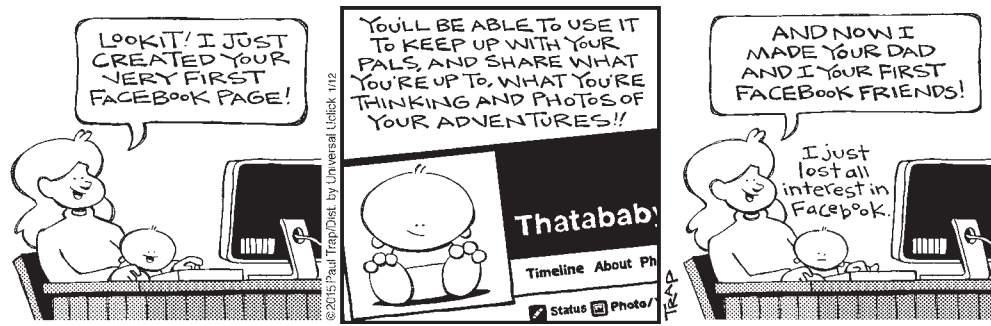
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Stress is among the most harmful of outside forces. Do what you can to make it easy on yourself. Reduce the tension. There are simple ways to dial down the pressure. Start by asking for help.

TUESDAYDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 13). Enterprising and courageous, you will do what you set out to do. Therefore, it's important to mentally try on different outcomes to sense which would be the most advantageous fit. March will bring colorful personalities to your world. June shows a shift in your professional goals. You will lead the pack in September. Pisces and Aries people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 30, 1, 22, 17 and 45.

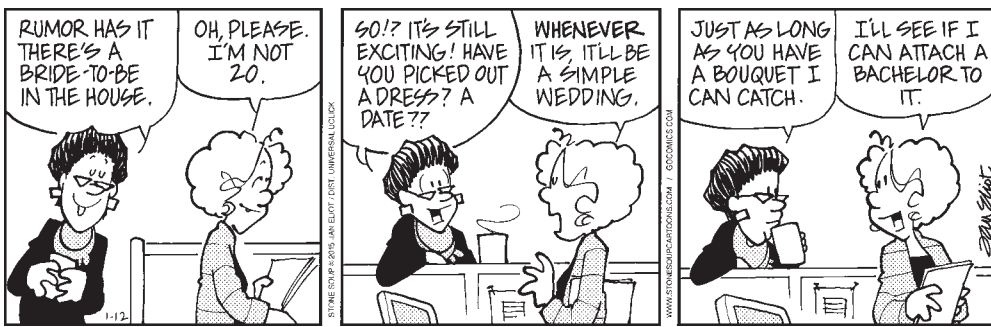
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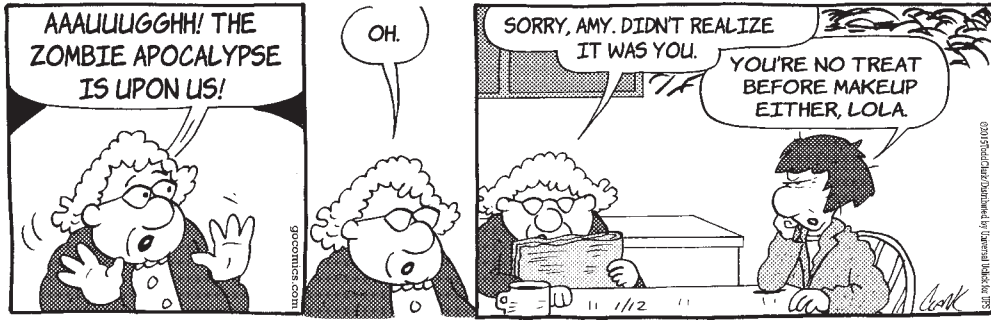
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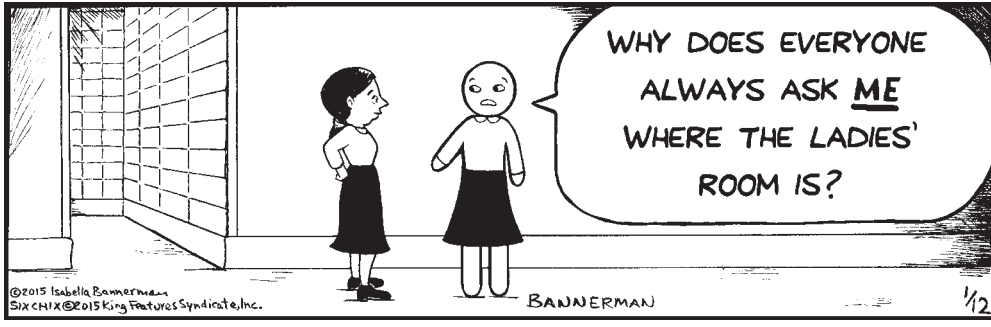
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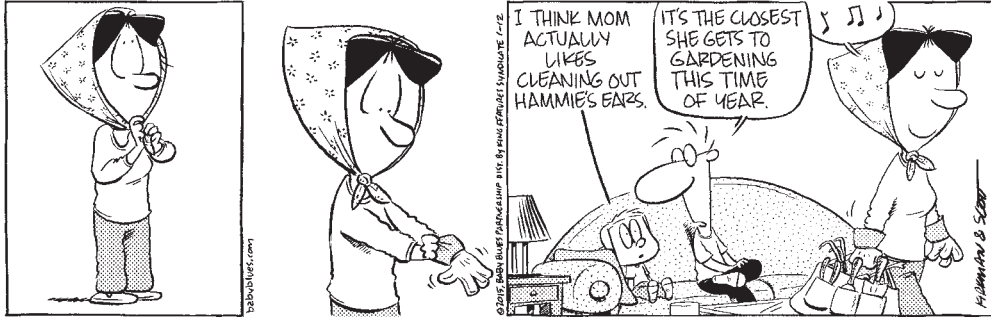
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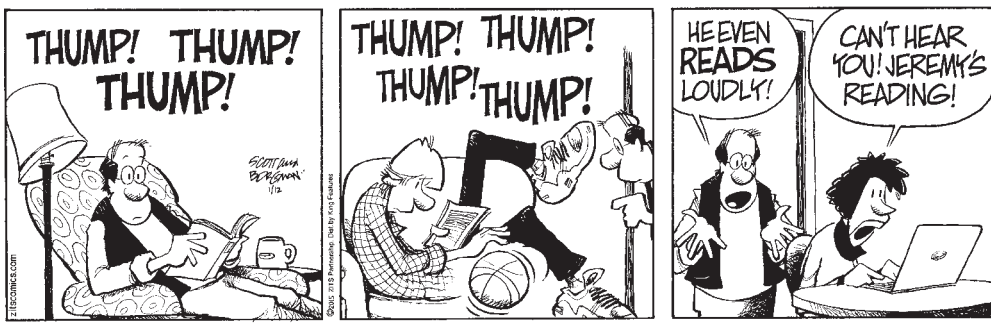
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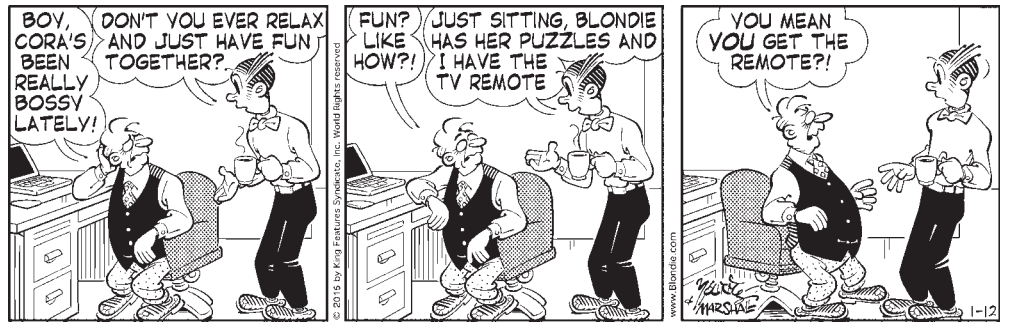
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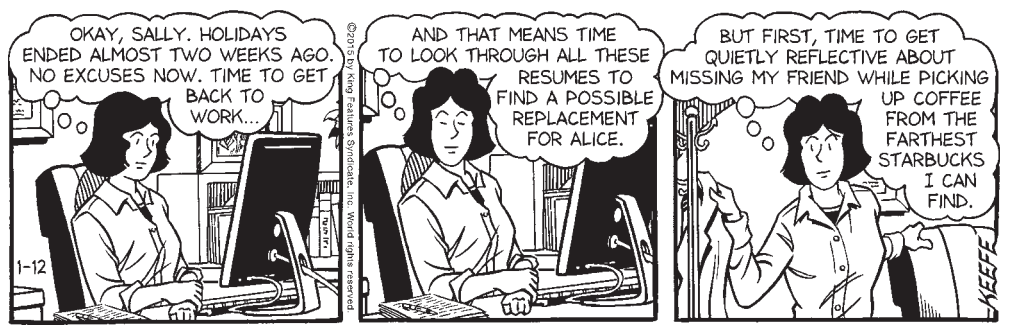
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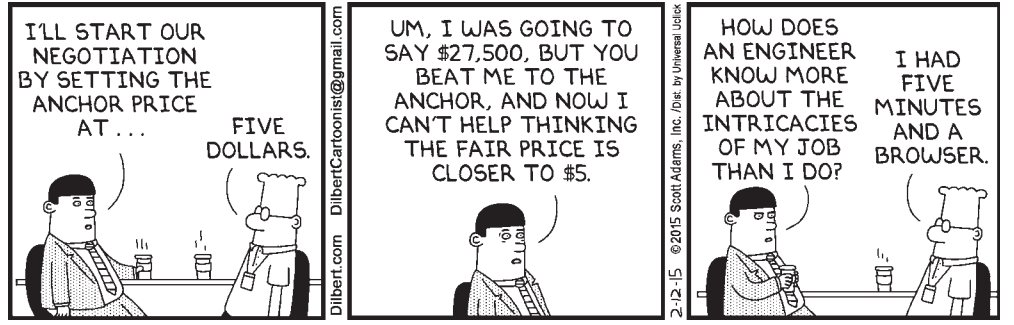
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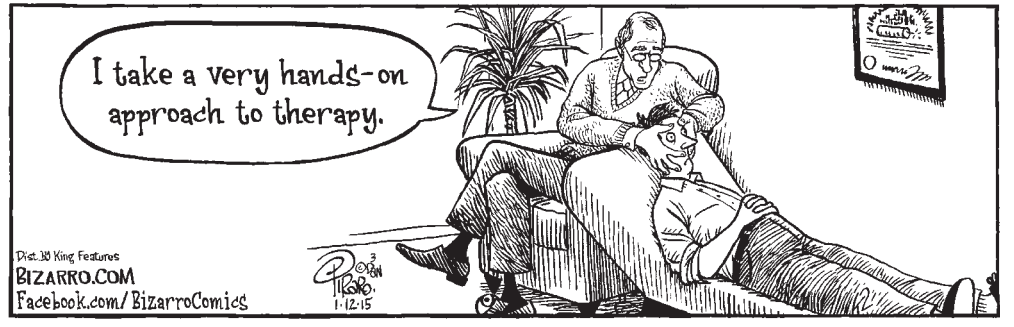
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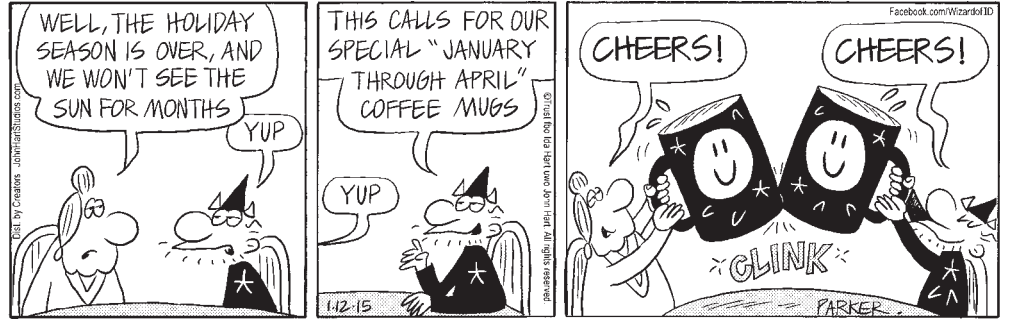
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