

Daughter fills role of servant

Dear Annie: For 10 years, my daughter has been in a relationship with a man from another culture. He is controlling, manipulative, arrogant and patronizing. He was raised with servants, nannies and drivers. Now my daughter fills those roles.

I limit visits to once a year because he never fails to make snide comments to me when he is sure my daughter cannot hear him. Once, I asked him what his intentions were toward my daughter, and he said never to question his authority.

After a recent visit, my daughter accused me of not being respectful and loving toward her partner. She said I am jealous of their wonderful life. This could not be further from the truth. I feel sorry for her. I don't know how she endures his daily criticisms and verbal abuse. She constantly sings his praises as a good provider and father to their child. I know she is ashamed that he has refused to marry her, but this is probably cultural. She will always remain his mistress but never be an equal.

When I visit, I am polite and civil and thank him for his hospitality, but I do not express any love toward him, nor will I. But I want to remain in my daughter's life and see my grandchild. I have kept quiet for years because I know it is my daughter's choice, but I will not pretend. My grandma always said, "If you can't say anything good about someone, don't

Annie's Mailbox

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say anything at all." Well, saying nothing does not seem to be working. — *Concerned Mother*

Dear Concerned: One of the hardest things for a parent is to watch your child make a huge mistake and not be able to do anything about it. Your daughter is unwilling to leave this relationship. You cannot be expected to show love toward this man. Being polite and civil and thanking him for his hospitality is more than enough. Be careful, however, not to let your disdain show through. Simply tell your daughter sweetly that you are trying your best and you are glad she is happy.

Dear Annie: I read with great interest your column about the PNC Christmas Price Index for "The Twelve Days of Christmas." However, no matter how I did the math, I couldn't come close to your grand total figure of \$116,273.06. This takes into account that I didn't know what the exact shipping total was. How did you do the math? — *DSH*

Dear DSH: We received several letters from folks who were confused by the math, so we will explain it, even at this late date. First of all, the total should be \$116,273.08. That last number was a typo on our end. But simply put, the gifts are cumulative. On the first day, she received one partridge in a pear tree. And the second day, she received two turtle-doves and another partridge in a pear tree. The third day, she received three French hens, another two turtle-doves and a third partridge, and so on. Done cumulatively, there are 364 gifts, and the total cost is \$116,273.08. At that point, we'd say the shipping is irrelevant. Here's the last word on the subject:

Dear Annie: I just want to say thanks for your Christmas column. I did not know that it is possible to purchase lords a-leaping. I really wouldn't know what to do with them, and at that price, I couldn't afford them anyway. But I truly did LOL when I read it, and for that, I thank you. (P.S. I always buy my swans locally. The prices are much better.) — *S.*

Dear S: Thanks for letting us know you enjoyed the column. We appreciate your lighthearted response.

Annie's Snippet (credit Martin Luther King Jr.): "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You're ready to go to the next level and the right tools will be key. Invest in the best materials you can afford. It will make all of the difference in how your work comes together.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Your success hinges on your decision to take on the challenge. Resolving to do something is half of the action itself. That's why it's worthwhile to deliberate on which resolutions are worthy of you.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). There's power in yielding. Instead of opposing the flow, give in and let it carry you, trusting the wisdom of natural forces. Besides, you're not really alone. Water signs will ride this one out with you.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You'll be attracted to that person who seems to have a secret. Maybe this secret is not one thing in particular, but a unique way of thinking, living and being.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). It's natural to question "How did I get here?" The "here" in question can seem so very far from where you started. The better question though is: "What now?"

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). While one person is busy in thought the other has already implemented a course of action and is learning from it. Put yourself in the second position — don't think about it, just try it.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Many of your adventures have started by choice but today's begins in fate. Your ability to recognize and act upon the opportunities in the moment makes for good fortune.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). When you are near the ones who are dearest to you, the smallest interactions can bring the biggest joy. When you can't be with dear ones, try and seek kindred spirits.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Don't be afraid of hard work, especially if there's a physical component to it. Sometimes before you get renewed you have to be soundly worn out.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). It is said that artists are merely channels for unseen creative forces. That may be true, but your version of said "channel" is so quirky and unique that even if the muses did most of the work, you'll get all of the credit.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). When you ask a question, that's the moment the other person will know that you don't know. When you don't ask, ignorance could go on forever. It's better to ask.

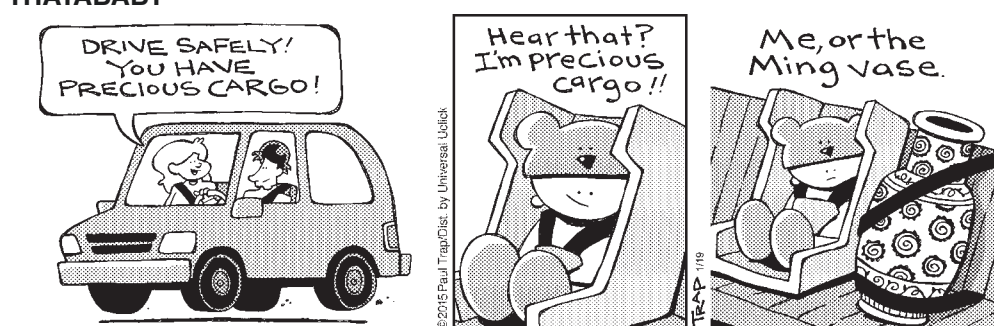
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Wind, rain, barometric pressure — of all the forces that can change the world, love is still the most powerful. Do not doubt that your small, loving interactions person-to-person will make a difference.

TUESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 20). Your dreams of the future are better than your history and with persistence you will get there. Be realistic with work and fanciful with love in February. Then, in March, reverse it. Negotiations favor you in April. June is your chance at an exotic trip, though you'll have to make it a top priority for it to really happen. Pisces and Libra adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 44, 49, 13, 29 and 16.

FRANK AND ERNEST



THATABABY



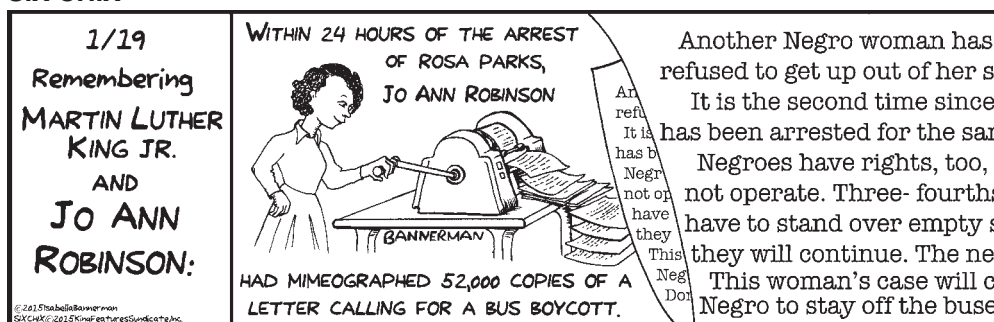
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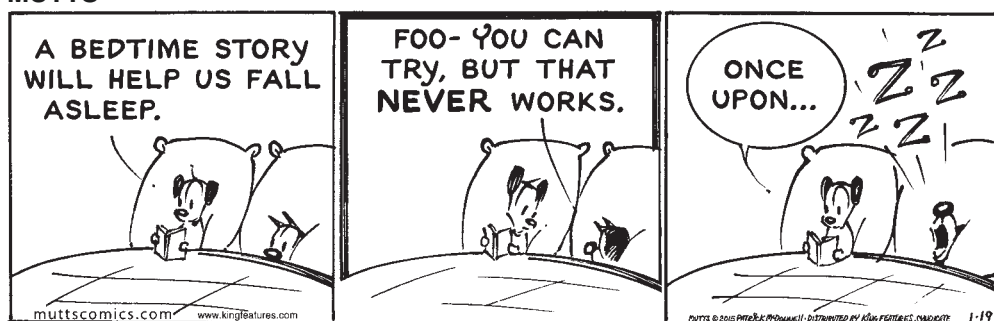
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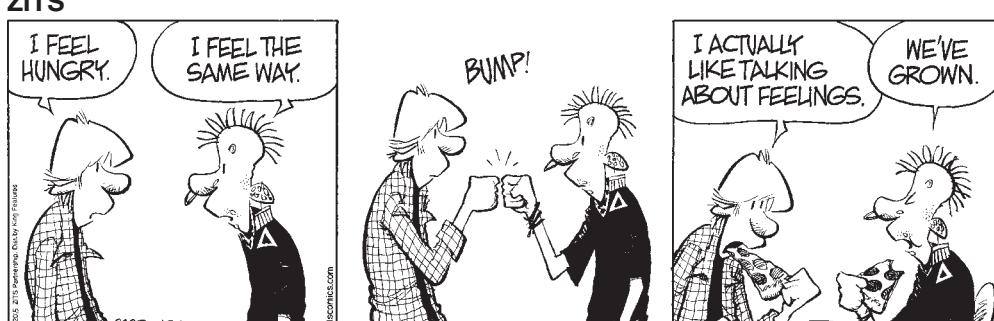
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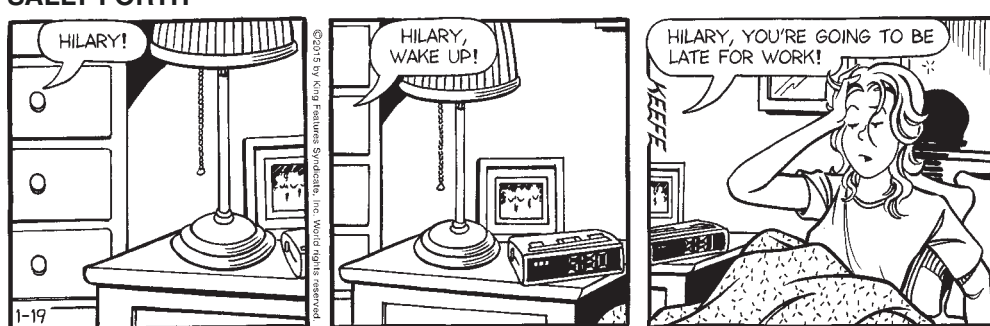
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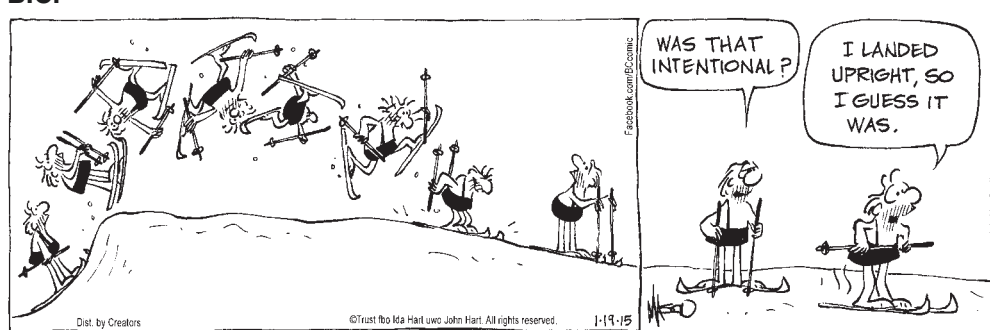
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