

Get screened for heart disease

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

Dear Annie: I have a family history of cardiovascular disease and lost my mom to a heart attack when she was only 32.

To be preventive about my own health, I had something called a vascular wellness screening: a check of my arteries for atherosclerosis, the plaque that builds up in our arteries as we age. The tests were easy, painless and held at a local church. I had some mild blockage in the arteries of my neck, but nothing serious at the time.

Two years later, my doctor recommended that I repeat the tests. This time, my left neck artery was significantly blocked. This signaled to my doctor that my heart arteries could be blocked, too, and tests showed that to be true. With my family history, there was no doubt that I was at high risk for heart attack and stroke, but I wouldn't have known without the screening.

I encourage people to get their arteries screened. Most people don't think about the health of their arteries or know the word "atherosclerosis," but getting these tests could help you know what is going on inside your body before something serious happens. Work with your doctor, and share your test results so that he or she can use them to help you stay

Annie's Mailbox

Creators Syndicate Inc.

Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



well for as long as possible. — *Joan P. in New Jersey*

Dear Joan P.: Thank you for this timely information. February is American Heart Month. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in this country. Those who have a family history of heart disease or stroke and feel that a screening would be beneficial should contact their doctor or any local hospital or university health center to set up an appointment. For more information on American Heart Month and how to maintain a healthy heart, check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at cdc.gov/Features/Heart-Month or the American Heart Association (heart.org).

Dear Annie: My wife's college roommate visited us for five days. She turned out to be the Visitor from Hell. Here's what happened:

She strongly recommended that we take her to a certain restaurant that serves great food. We took her three times, at her request, and guess who paid the bill. My wife prepared all the other meals, and our guest never once offered to take us out. In addition, she didn't even bring us a small hostess gift, which, although we didn't need one, would have been thoughtful and appreciated.

During her entire stay, this woman bragged nonstop about everything she has done and will do. She used my computer several times and had me print out one article after another for her personal use. I tried to be nice, but by the fifth day, I lost it, especially when she asked my wife to wash her dirty clothes.

Before leaving, this inconsiderate guest expressed the wish to return next year. My wife puts up with her eccentricities, but I can't. What do you suggest? — *Frustrated Husband*

Dear Frustrated: Unless your wife is willing to ask her friend to stay at a hotel for at least part of the visit, nothing will change. There's no reason you both have to put up with this guest. Let your wife enjoy a few days with her ex-roommate while you visit family or friends elsewhere, either for part or all of the time she's there.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). There's power in saying less. The more you know the less you need to show. And if you don't know, it's perfectly acceptable to admit that, step back and learn. Your wisdom will prevail.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You want to take the happy-go-lucky approach, but something is stopping you from the experience — a feeling or perhaps a memory that warns you not to let go completely.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You desire to use your idle time more productively. This will take planning. Perhaps a thick novel or an online course will change your life during what might otherwise have been television-watching hours.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Negative self-talk is nothing but a bad habit that you can change. The first thing to do is to stop identifying that voice as the real you. It's just an opinion of the moment, and you can choose a different one any time you'd like to.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). A professional development opens up a financial opportunity. Dive in and do the hard work. As you focus on your career, you give a relationship the breathing room it needs to grow.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You will be a serendipitous mentor for someone, delivering just the right message to lift that person to a new level of understanding. Even so, don't try too hard. Just say what you see as the truth, and you'll cause change.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). The daily task of growing your virtues and minimizing your vices does get old. Perhaps even goodness should be pursued in moderation. If you don't indulge your shadow side, at least have one dance with it.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The way to be noticed by that person you admire is to attach yourself to his or her top priorities and help make this accomplishment happen. Your admired someone will notice your value and in turn want to help you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The more connections you have the more leverage you have. It's a day for growing your network (either face-to-face or virtually) by doing more of what you're good at and telling people about it.

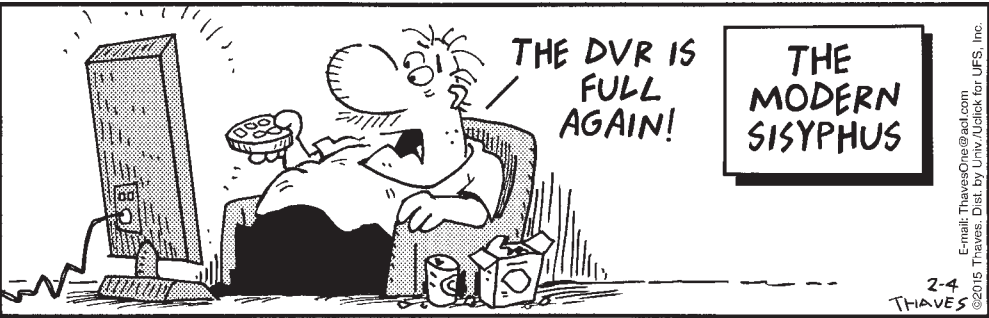
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). As you focus on one line of action, another that's occurring simultaneously is building. There will be a point in the near future when these stories converge to fantastic effect.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The idea that will help you make a leap in lifestyle is not a big one. Rather, it's a small change of attitude that will ripple out to create many changes at once.

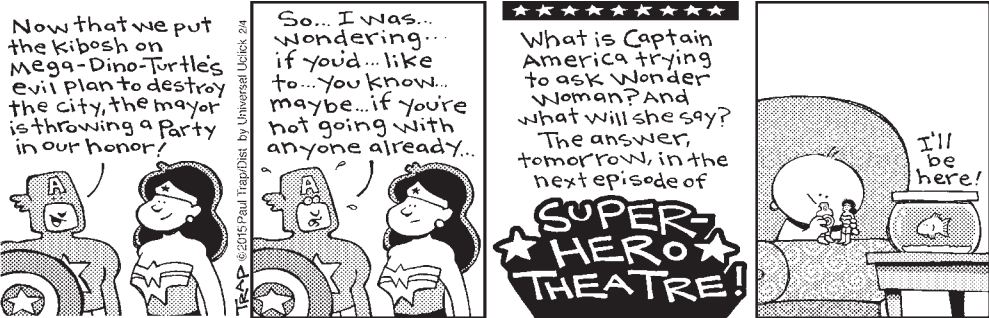
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You don't have to spend many hours with people to cast your spell. Often, just a few minutes is enough to gain a fan. Many will be drawn to your self-confidence, social style and special energy.

THURSDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 5). Celebrate big this year — you changed history just by being born. Sentence yourself to several hours (if not days) of "you time" this month — a smart way to replenish your mojo. There's a lucky break the second week of March. Impatience sets in in April, and you'll play the squeaky wheel that gets greased. Capricorn and Pisces people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 44, 28, 11 and 5.

FRANK AND ERNEST



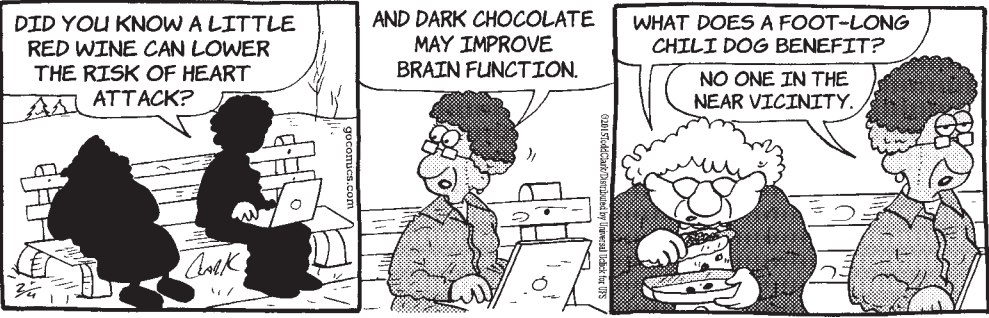
THATABABY



STONE SOUP



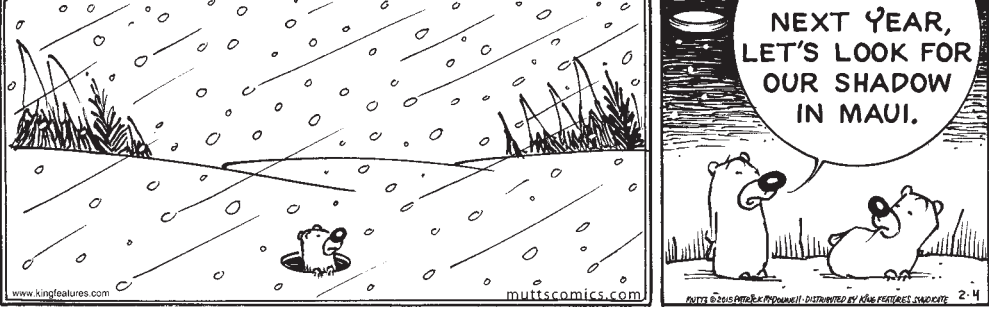
LOLA



SIX CHIX



MUTTS



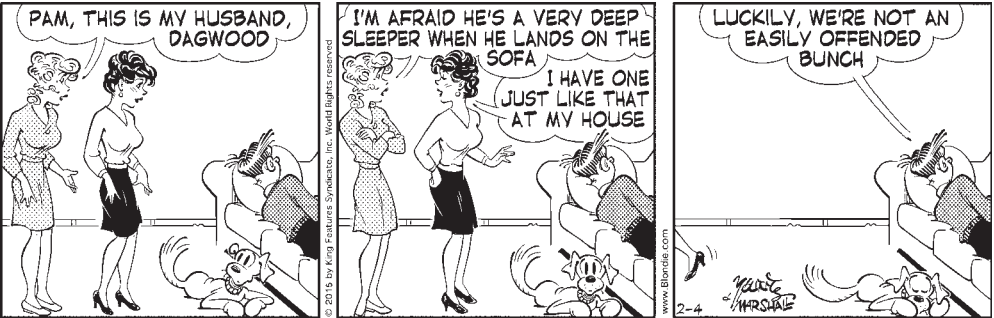
BABY BLUES



ZITS



BLONDIE



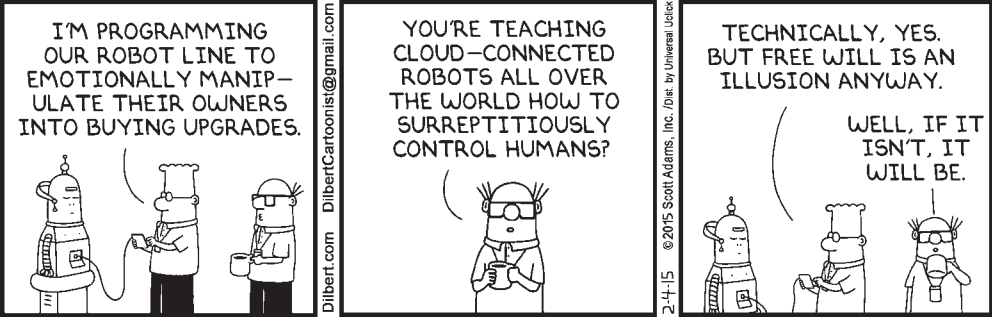
SALLY FORTH



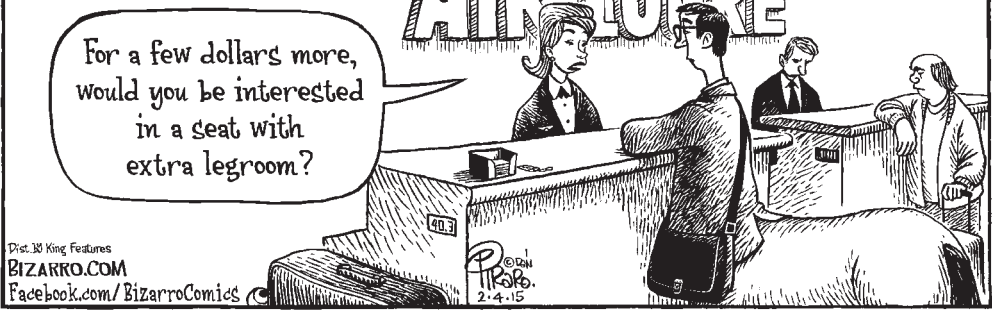
B.C.



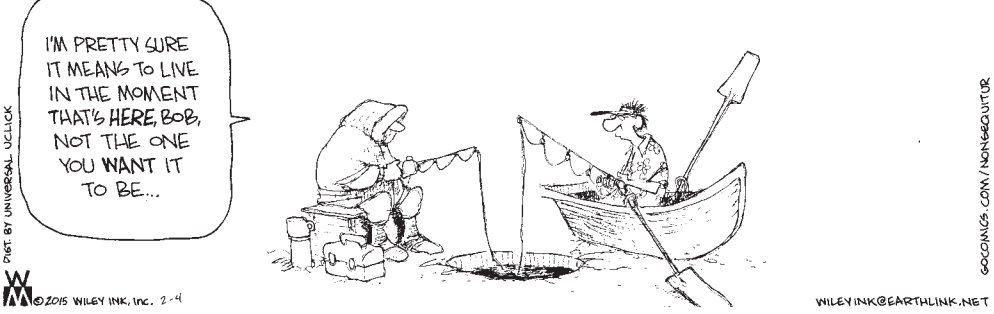
DILBERT



BIZARRO



NON SEQUITUR



WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

