

Don't stereotype sororities

Dear Annie: I am in a sorority and proudly wear my Greek letters. However, when I go outside the campus, I receive a lot of negative feedback. People assume things about me that are not true, and this can be very hurtful. They think I haze, hang out promiscuously with frat boys, drink, do drugs and care only about getting a "Mrs." degree.

Let me tell you, this is not what Greek life is about. I, as well as a few of my sorority sisters and fraternity cousins, am on a full-ride scholarship and must maintain a 3.5 grade-point average or better. We take random drug tests to make sure our organization is clean. We have strict rules when it comes to being with members of the opposite sex, and we cannot be seen with alcohol.

My sorority is incredibly multicultural with several foreign students, one girl in a wheelchair, one with severe medical conditions and young women from all races and walks of life. We consider hazing to be domestic violence, and our philanthropy is domestic violence awareness. We raise thousands of dollars for abuse victims every semester. We pay for our badge, our shirts, our

Annie's Mailbox

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events, our formal dances, our recruitment expenses, our insurance and our dues, which are used for scholarships for deserving young women.

Greek life is not what the movies or media make it out to be. It teaches us valuable life lessons. We meet people we can rely on and forge bonds that last a lifetime. My sisters and I are strong women. — *Alpha Chi Omega in Texas*

Dear Texas: We agree that sororities get a bad rap. Movies and TV shows often portray even savvy sorority girls as angling solely for the right guy or the right clothes. This may make for good drama, but it simply isn't truthful. Sororities have always provided lifetime friendships, and these days, most sorority members do volunteer and charity work, as

well. They are filled with strong, smart women.

Dear Annie: I live in an area of the Midwest that has frequent tornado warnings. I have a weather radio, and I take the warnings seriously — especially when they announce a tornado warning for my county.

I have friends, however, who think that because the local tornado siren has not gone off that there is nothing to worry about. They say I am overreacting. It is my understanding that a tornado can touch down without warning and also that the tornadoes are harder to spot at night. Your thoughts? — *Rather Be Safe Than Sorry*

Dear Rather: We're with you. Tornadoes can develop so quickly that sometimes there isn't much warning. By the time a siren sounds, it might be too late to get to a safe place. When you hear that there is a tornado watch, it means you should be alert to the possibility of a funnel. If the county issues a tornado warning, it means a tornado has been sighted in the area and you should seek shelter. Anyone who wants more information about storm preparedness can check online at ready.gov/tornadoes.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You have a dry way of delivering humor. They won't all get you, but the ones who do will adore you even as your charm goes sailing over the heads of a less-astute audience.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). While it will be a joy to give in any way that is convenient, you will also go out of your way to give when it's not. This will probably be a pain, but it's the right thing to do and a testament to the depth of your generosity.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You accept scraps of attention when you deserve so much more. You deserve all manner of love — passionate, platonic, respectful, desiring, reverent, unconditional and beyond.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're slightly more sensitive and impressionable than you want to be this weekend. You'll have a much better time if you insulate yourself from chronic whiners and complainers.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You're getting closer to figuring out what you really want. Order it up like you're ordering a pizza, with great specificity. Why shouldn't life give you the toppings you crave?

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You've the wondrous imagination of a child. Use it to stretch your self-concept. Visualize yourself in various roles — a pilot, a parent, an inventor, an acrobat. What fits?

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Your mouth can't seem to form the words you think you should say. Maybe it's because your head and heart don't really agree. There's a way to be honest and cooperative at the same time.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Misery loves company, but it loves a nurse even more. Unless you're qualified to take care of that miserable person, keep walking. This weekend is too beautiful to spend in a downer situation.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Do not fear success. Celebrate any shred of evidence that things are going your way. Think of everything good as a sign of even better things to come.

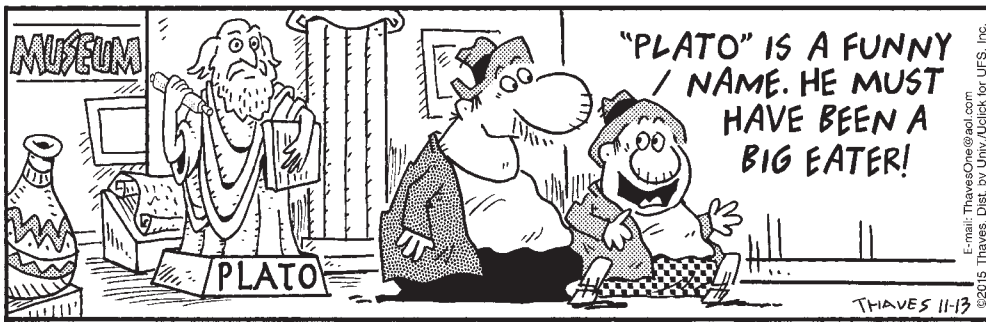
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). The first question that will pop into your mind might be "Why?" But the question that will make your day go better is "how," or, more specifically, "How can I make this work?"

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll find yourself in a situation you haven't prepared for, but that's fine because you're a brilliant improviser. You'll fly by the seat of your pants and wind up at the same destination as the ones who are flying first class.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). To avoid becoming enslaved by the very things that are supposed to be helping you, don't add anything to your life without testing it out first. This could be about technology, teachers, employees, services or possessions.

SATURDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Nov. 14). Your luck will be mysterious at the top of your solar return, and it will be difficult to tell the direction your fortunes are headed. Assume it's all for the best, and seek smiling companions. January and March are ripe moments for investment, especially in your own education. April will bring a wind-fall. Capricorn and Gemini adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 2, 29, 4, 15 and 19.

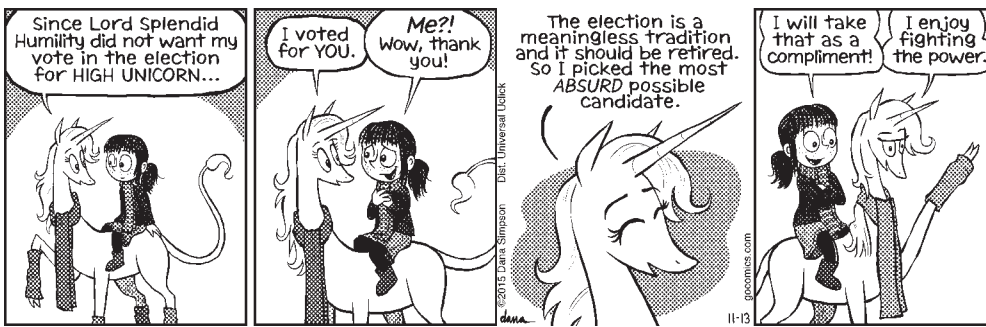
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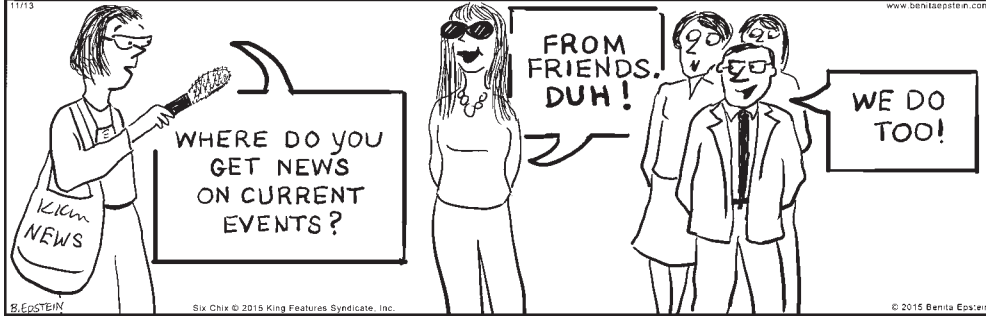
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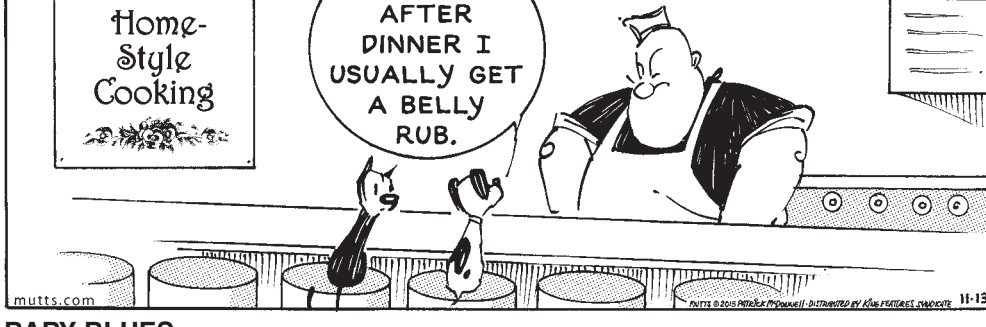
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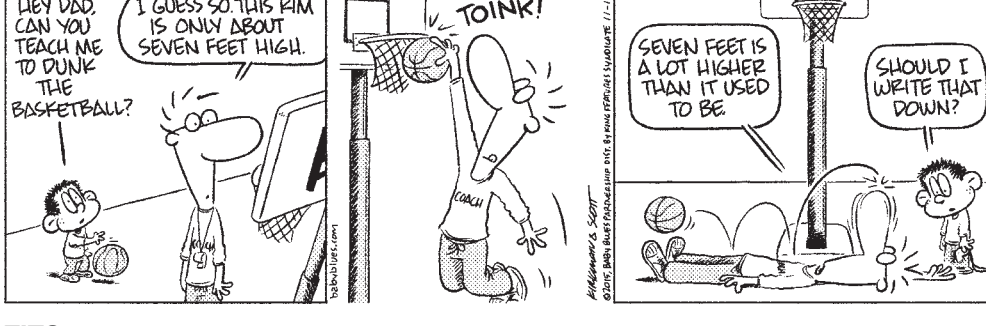
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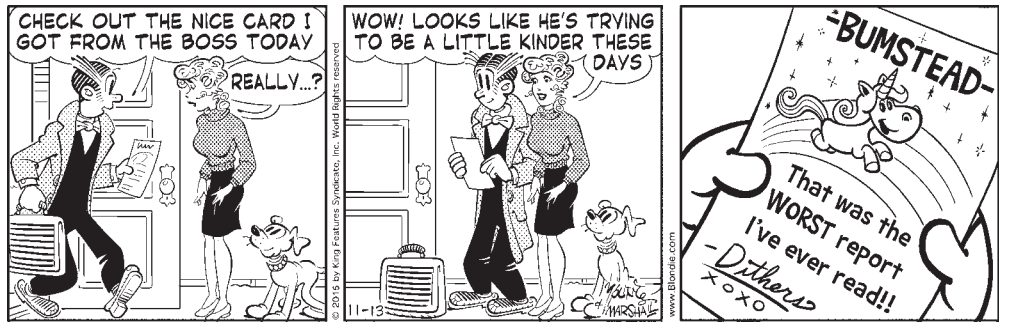
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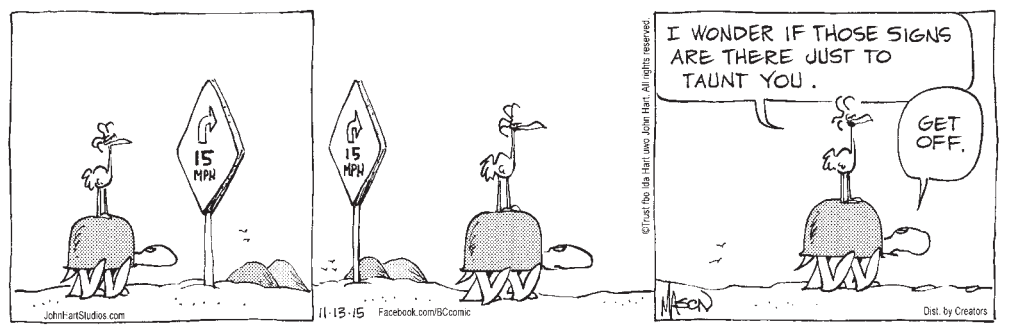
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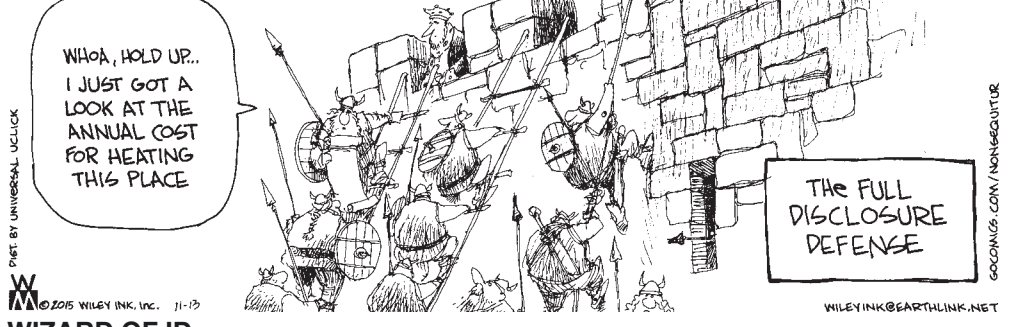
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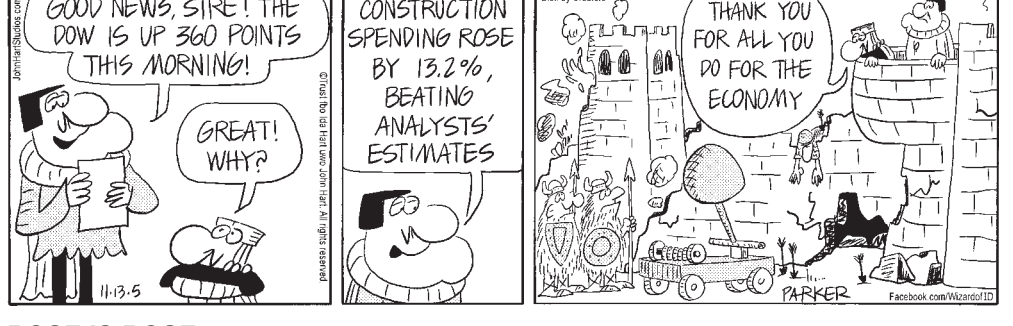
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