What to give to flight-risk?

Annie's Mailbox
Creators Syndicate Inc.
Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar

Dear Annie: Please help us with an upcoming dilemma. Our son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren all live in another state. We spend Christmas with them every other year.

In October, our daughter-in-law told our son she was leaving him, but would wait until after Christmas to tell the children so as not to upset them during the holidays. She has decided that she would rather run around with her single girlfriends from work, but right now, she still remains in the home they own. She has already said she does not want to take the kids and is leaving them with our son. She did the same thing five years ago, but then decided to return and our son let her back into their lives.

Our daughter-in-law knows that we are aware of their situation. How can we possibly give the same very generous Christmas gift to someone we know is walking out the door on Jan. 1? — *Stuck in the Middle*

Dear Stuck: You do not have to give your daughter-in-law the same gift you have in the past. You don't, in fact, have to be generous to anyone, and can decide only to give presents to the children. However, since Ms. Flighty has left before and returned, there is a good possibility she will do the same thing again. If so, will your stingier gift create a problem at that time?

We suggest you talk to your son about this. Ask him how he would like you to handle the situation, and then follow accordingly. Your daughter-in-law sounds immature and selfish. Be grateful that she prefers to leave the children with their more stable father.

Dear Annie: Two months ago, I became a grandmother for the first time. But I'm not allowed to see my grandchild nor is anyone in my family. Yet my son's father, who has not been in his life for more than 20 years, is apparently welcome to visit the baby any time.

This is causing a lot of fighting in my family. My other children are worried that I did something to upset my son and his wife. But believe me, I have done nothing to cause either of them to act this way. I am incredibly hurt and don't know what to do. — *Looking for Answers in Pennsylvania*

Dear Pennsylvania: These sad circumstances are only too common. We wish we had a magic potion to make family relationships smoother, more loving and more rational, but we don't. There could be old hurts that you are unaware of. Your son may be looking to include his father now that he is a father himself. Your ex-husband could be poisoning your son's mind with tales about you, or he could demand that you be excluded. Your daughter-in-law may simply not like you or someone else in the family. Unless you can speak to your son, you will not know. Please try to contact him, without judging or being angry, and ask what you can do to fix this. You might also enlist the help of any friend or family member still in their good graces to get to the bottom of it.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Something you thought you were through with still holds an electric charge. Maybe you're not as "over it" as you thought, but you're getting there. Wrap your head around it once more, and once more let it go.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Try not to confuse attachment with connection. Connection is mostly love. Attachment is mostly fear. Connection is magnetic. Attachment adheres by grasping.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). There's much to appreciate in a special relationship. For starters, you are somehow each able to grow in a direction that feels personally fulfilling without growing apart from one another.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). People-watching will be a source of entertainment and education for you. You've a talent for making accurate observations. You'll be able to apply this to your own life, too.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Sometimes you do wonder if you could be more content in a slightly different scenario than the one you're living out now. You'll get a peek into a world that makes you imagine different futures.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Time constraints bring stress and frustration. Do what you can to eliminate or ease them wherever possible. It's a good time to consciously decide to be socially flexible and generally easygoing.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Winston Churchill suggested, "The empires of the future are the empires of the mind." You are leaning toward a less materialistic definition of success these days.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You'll attract people who are spiritual like you. They may not share your religion (or lack of one) and they may not share your belief system, but they stargaze, just like you, in awe of something bigger.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The happy thoughts have energy. The unhappy thoughts, unfortunately, have more. Who notices them? That person is an empathetic soul who will make your life better.

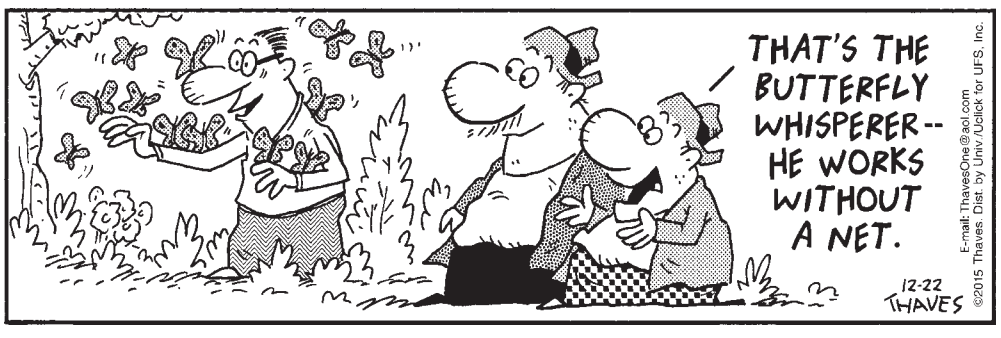
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). How you landed in your particular support circle is a story of the coming together of thousands of small decisions, circumstances and impulses. Today you'll just be glad for the way things panned out.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Conversation is inevitable. Be forewarned, this will only be as interesting as the questions you ask. Your best partners in this are Gemini, Libra and other Aquarians.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Being able to process difficult feelings is a skill that you were born with. That doesn't mean you can't improve upon the gift. Don't avoid or procrastinate the thing you know you need to experience.

WEDNESDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 23). The world is better because you were born. and this year you'll spend your energy and time proving that point. What you'll do with your psychic inheritance will be completely interesting to others and logical to you. February and August will be especially notable on the love-front. The main message: Don't hold back! Libra and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 49, 2, 25, 38 and 11.

FRANK AND ERNEST



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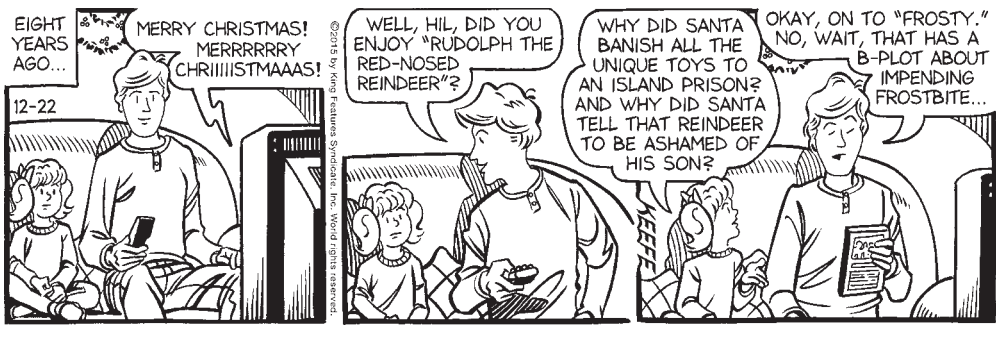

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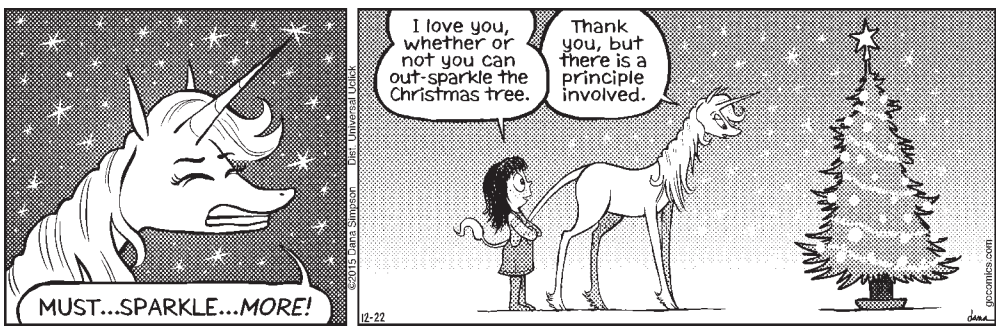

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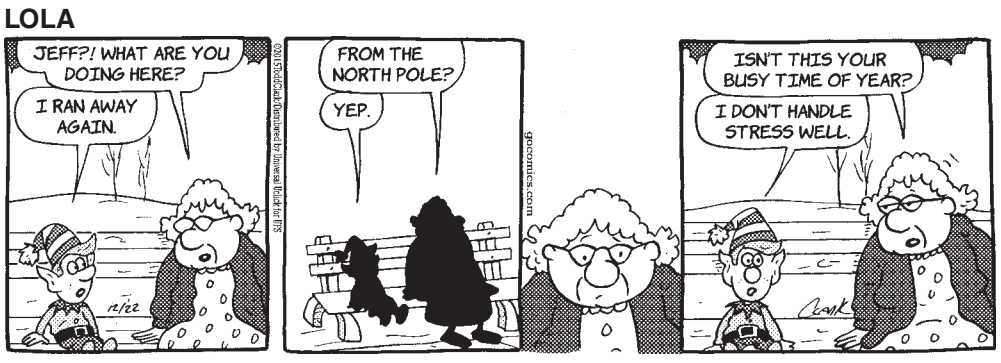

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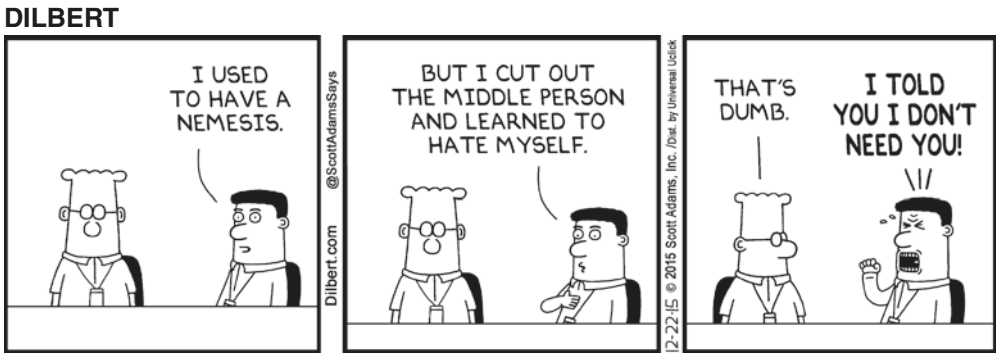

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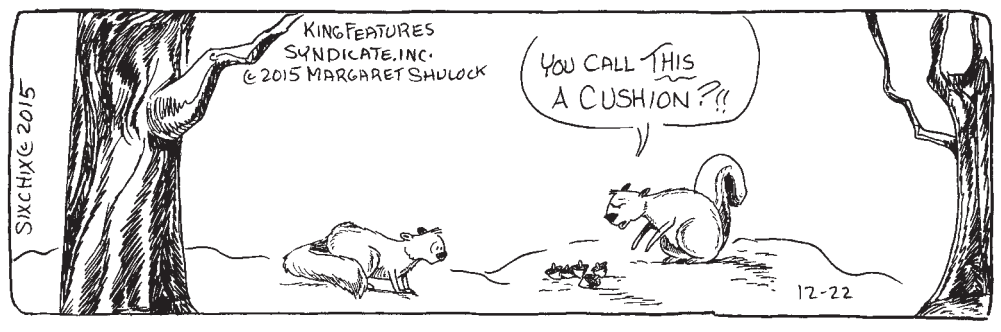

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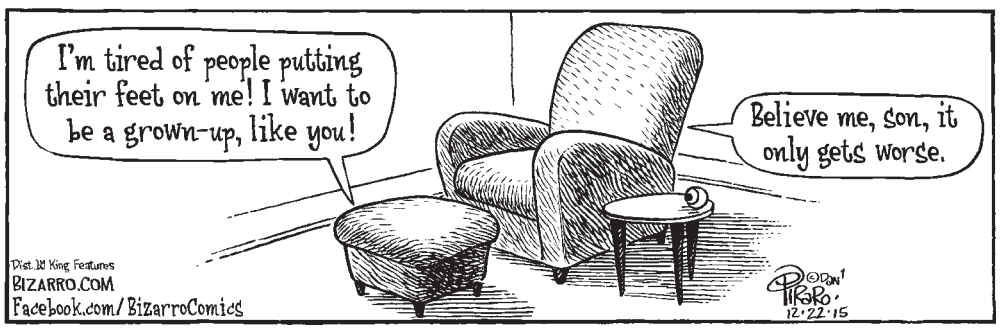

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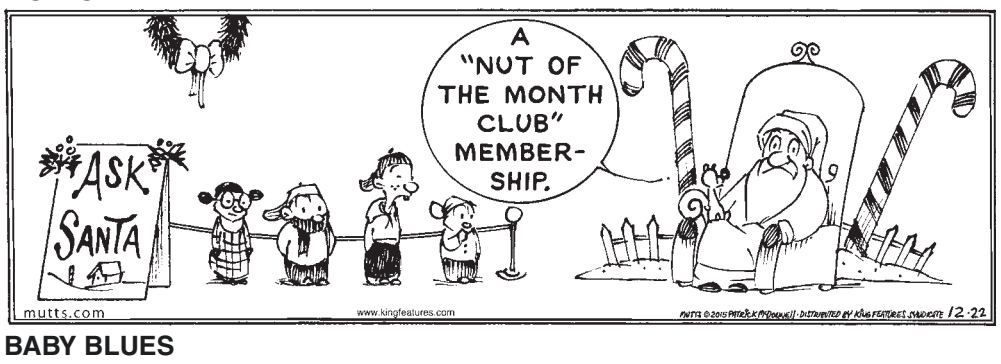

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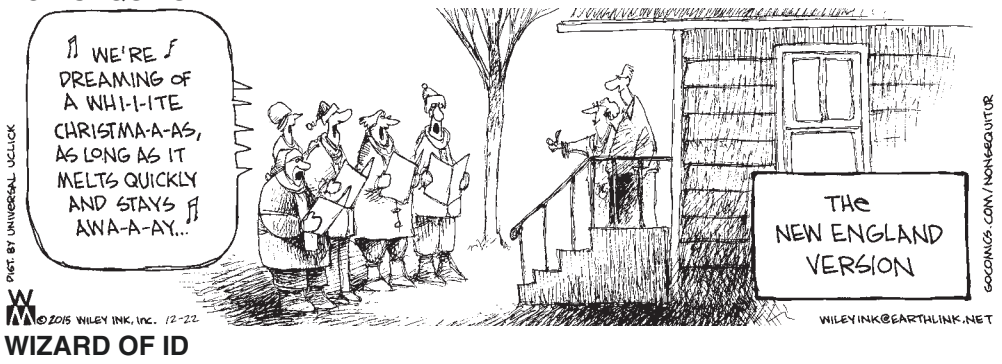

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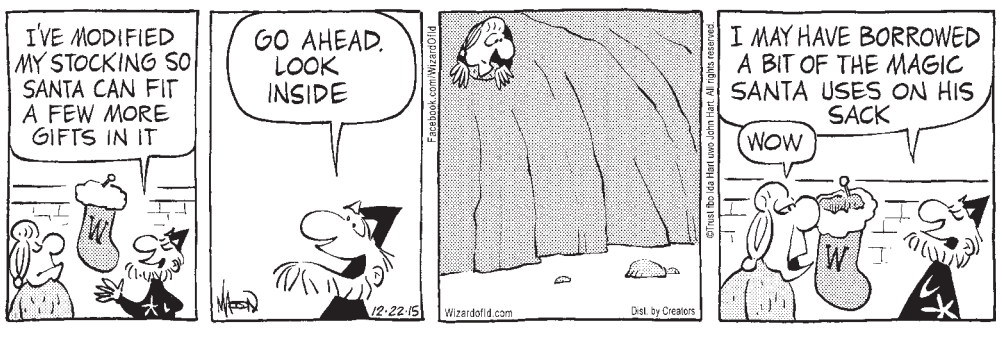

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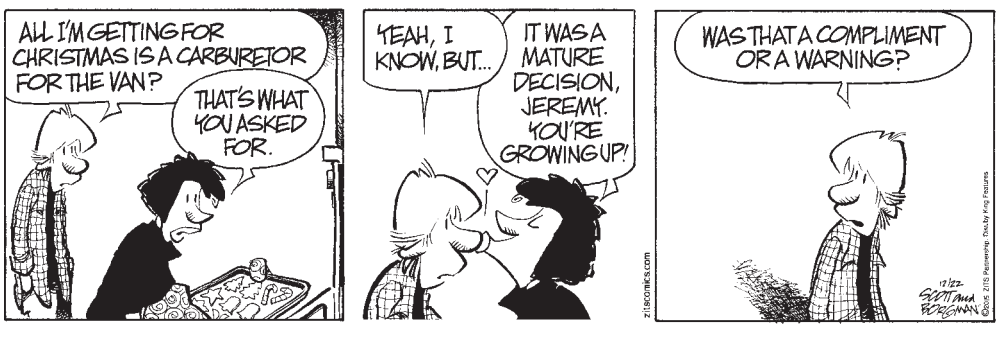

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