

# Can't girlfriend stop yakking?

**Dear Annie:** I am a healthy, active, 68-year-old divorced man, still employed and productive. About a year ago, I met "Caroline," a pleasant, generous, compatible woman, and have since enjoyed her company on a regular basis. We spent Christmas together in Europe. It was lovely.

Unfortunately, there is one problem that drives me crazy: Caroline is a compulsive talker. It doesn't matter if we're in a movie theater, we're watching a TV show or I'm trying to read the newspaper. She just starts yakking in my ear. I try to ignore it, but she goes right on. She doesn't get the hint that I'm not interested in chatting at that precise moment.

How do I tell her nicely to shut up for a while? — *Patient But Tired*

**Dear Patient:** Might Caroline have a hearing problem? Is she insecure and believes she has to fill all the silences between you? The next time she does this, you should gently hold her hand and say, "Caroline, it would be nice for us to watch this show together. Can we talk when it's over?" If she persists, you might ask her to see her doctor to have her hearing checked. Later, when you have some peaceful

## Annie's Mailbox

Creators Syndicate Inc.

Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



time together, tell her how much you enjoy just spending quiet time in her company and how nice it is that the silence is comfortable. This will help reinforce the behavior you want. But make sure to pay attention to her when you are, in fact, having a conversation. Some people chatter endlessly because they feel that their words are being ignored.

**Dear Annie:** You published that silly cost of the 12 days of Christmas and once again, eight maids a milking were being paid \$58 — minimum wage for the past three years.

This is so wrong! I milked cows on a dairy farm for 15 years, and let me tell you, it is a skilled occupation. I went to milking school. And it pays more than minimum wage. I was paid \$12 when the federal minimum wage was \$5.60.

And what about the cost of those cows? Why isn't that included? A dairy cow costs at least \$1,500, so eight of them — one for each maid — would be \$12,000. However, if the gift-giver bought the cows, he would have to hire at least one milkmaid full time. This should be corrected. — *Anne in Pennsylvania*

**Dear Anne:** We truly enjoyed your letter. We rarely hear from someone who worked as a milkmaid. And of course, how much the milkmaids receive each day would depend on how many hours they worked. Also, nothing in the song indicates that the gift-giver included cows. Only the maids-a-milking. Since the song was first published in 1780, we assume the recipient already had cows.

The figures we printed came from the PNC Bank (originally the Provident National Bank in Philadelphia), which calculates maids-a-milking as unskilled labor, and thus they are paid minimum wage. We will be happy to pass along your claim that they are skilled labor and therefore entitled to more money.

We're still chuckling. Thank you so much for writing. You made our day.

# Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** Don't ask for what you want. Get in there and politely inform the gatekeeper that you already have what you want, and that you're available and ready for more of it.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** There are undeniable benefits to being on-trend, depending on whose trend it happens to be. Something to keep in mind: If you create the culture, you don't have to worry about staying ahead of it.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** You've been an idealist; you've been a cynic. And today you'll float around the vast middle ground between the two extremes. That's where you meet friends who think at your level. Such a treasure!

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** When you were small you had to be in a familiar place to feel completely safe. Now you've grown into your "crab" essence. You're safe because of who you are, not because of where you are.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** The moon favors your every move; this is your day, your night, your extended-play dance in the spotlight. Savor the creative outlet. When your turn is over, the creativity will still be inside you, waiting for the next showcase.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Unless you're very aware of your surroundings and how others are feeling, you may not realize what's at stake in a situation. Challenge yourself to be more observant. What you'll note is that everyday life takes courage.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Education is expensive, especially the unstructured, informal education you get from hanging out with people in glamorous settings. Be frugal now so that you'll be able to weather the storm

that is coming later.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Laughter is one of your favorite love notes. It means that someone is sharing in your joy of life, as well as your intellect, point of view and general experience. You'll connect in giggles and love.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** It's a day to pay the piper, and he's not offering a layaway plan or installment options, either. Regardless of how you choose to handle it, by the end of the day you'll be square.

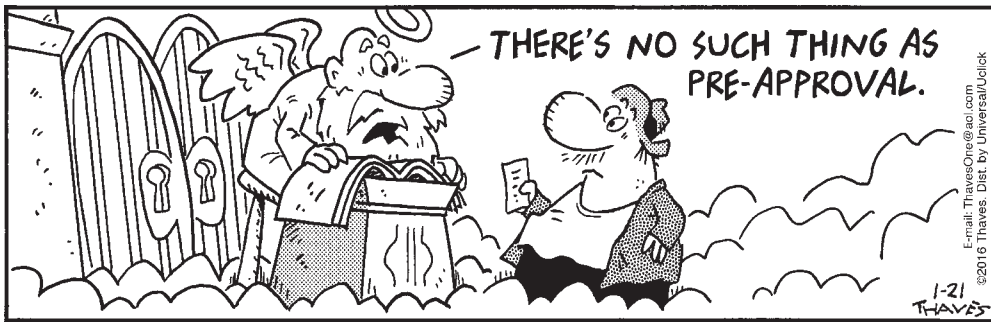
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** Of course there are no winners in conversation. However, if there were winners, the prize would go to the one who chooses the best topic. You've a knack for knowing which one will bring the most interest and fun.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** You thrill to the unpredictable turns of this rollercoaster day. The anticipation will be sweet — maybe even sweeter than the fast plunge that comes afterward.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Indulge your whims, or they will turn against you, pouting and dragging your mood through the mud. Your instinct to play needs expression. With no specific agenda, activities take you where you need to be.

**FRIDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 22).** February brings a delightful someone to share the minutiae with. Family has a strong bearing on where you'll live and on professional concerns, too. You'll bank money from a savvy sale in March. Networking and travel come in May. The cause that's near to your heart in June will lead you to others as passionate as you. Aries and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 40, 2, 11 and 17.

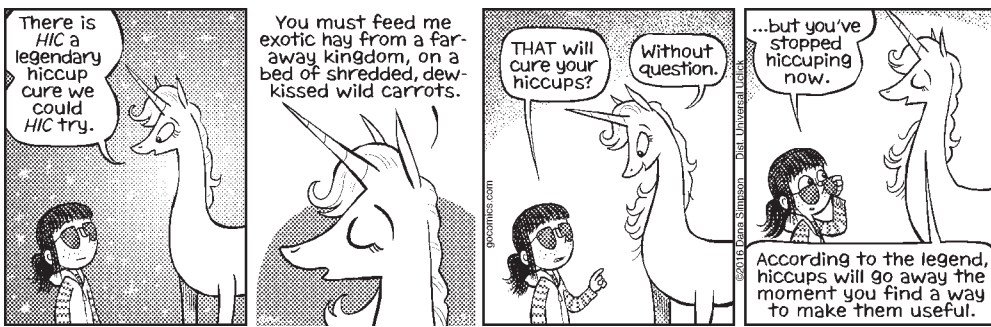
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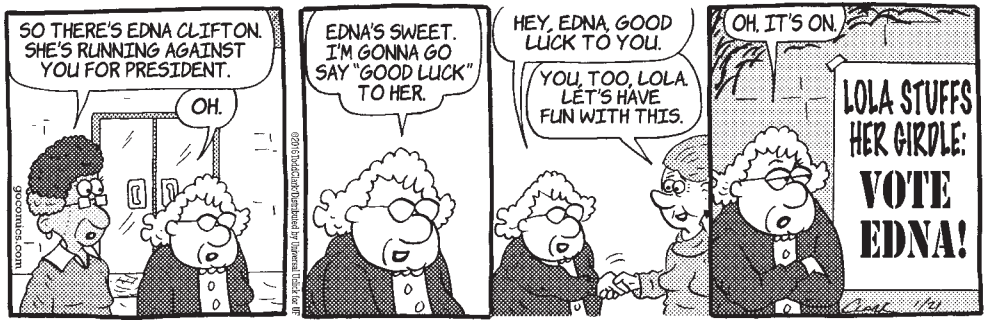
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## PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



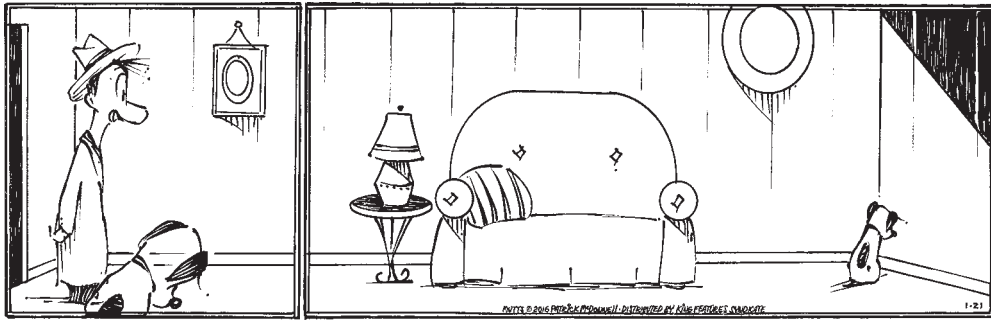
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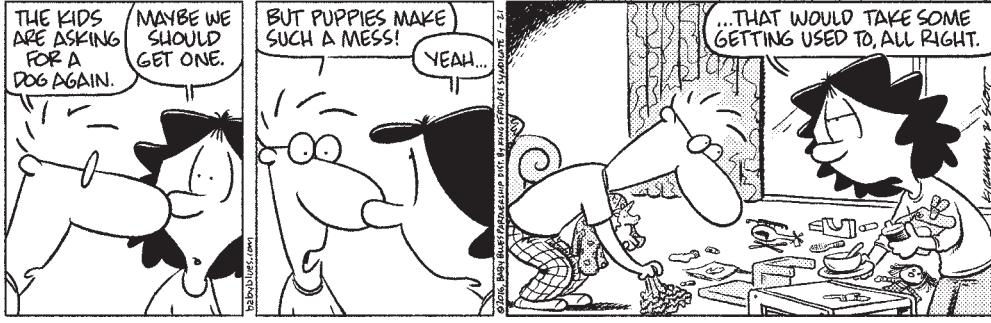
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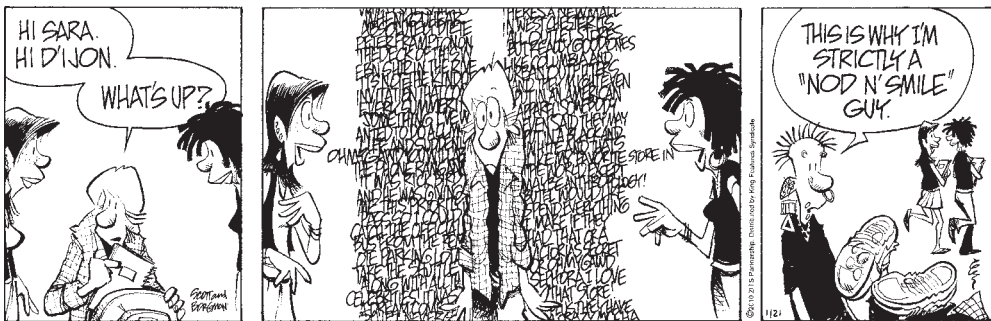
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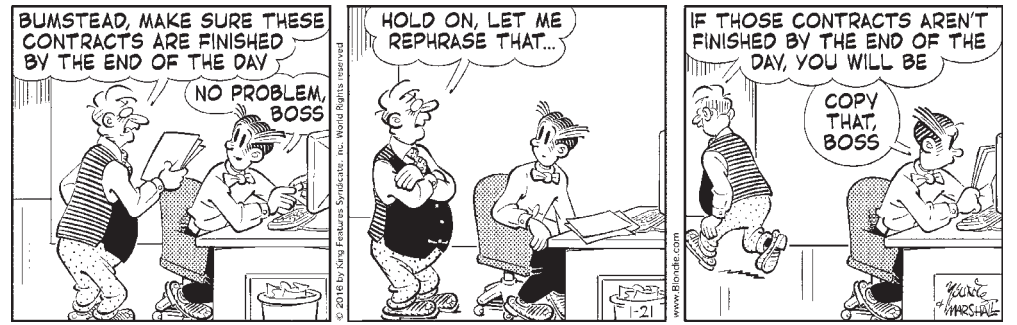
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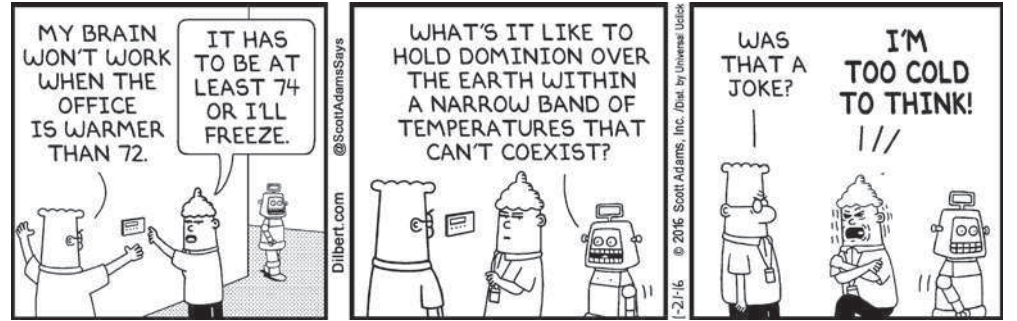
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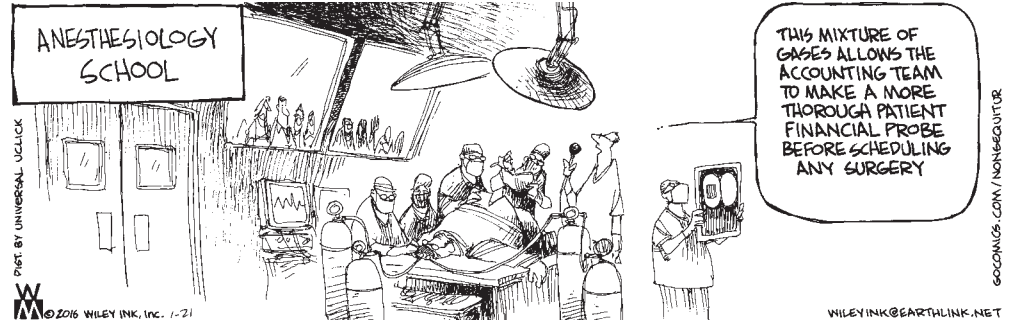
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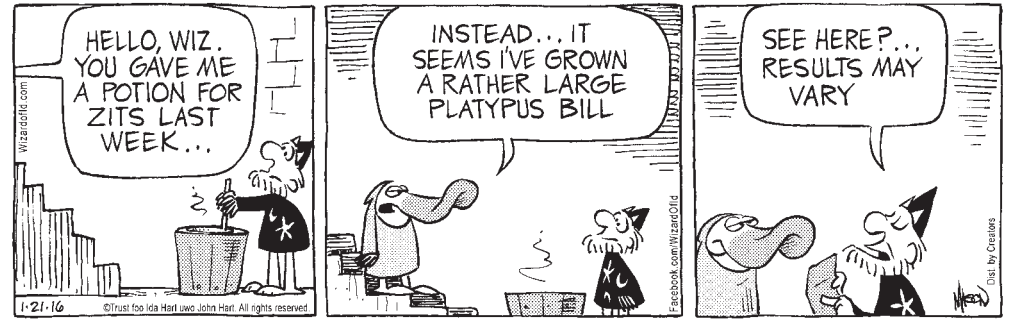
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## NON SEQUITUR



## WIZARD OF ID



## ROSE IS ROSE

