

Talkers: Turn down the volume

Dear Annie: I have increasingly noticed how loud people can be in public places. On a recent short regional flight, I sat in front of two men who I quickly learned work for the same large company. They began chatting about their lives from the moment we left the gate and didn't stop until we landed. One man spoke with an appropriate indoor voice, but the other was incredibly loud. I put earplugs in and even pulled my hoodie over my head, to no avail. I could neither read nor nap.

Here are some facts I learned: This man flunked out of college due to partying and drinking. He has massive credit card debt and is counting on an inheritance from his mother when she dies. He's taking his wife to the Caribbean in two weeks. He lives in a nice suburb. He hates his boss. He isn't terribly fond of his wife, either, and he'd love to sleep with Scarlett Johansson.

I exited the plane exhausted and angry, but I didn't confront him. If this type of incident happens again, what would you suggest I do? — *Heard Too Much*

Dear Heard: We, too, are often surprised to hear people giving out personal details and private infor-

Annie's Mailbox

Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar



mation at the top of their lungs. Sometimes this indicates a hearing problem. It is a dangerous practice, as this information can be used by those who are not well-intentioned. Knowing where someone works and lives and that he will be gone for two weeks is inviting a break-in. And any stranger could be a close friend of his boss, which could cost him his job.

Nonetheless, his personal life is not your concern. As a fellow passenger, you are entitled to ask him politely to turn down the volume so you can get some rest, or ask the flight attendant to do it for you.

Dear Annie: Why are TV shows that depict medical scenes so graphic? I imagine it's an attempt at realism, but it's disgusting to see. Do they have so little respect for their audiences that this is the only way to increase ratings?

Our society has become absolutely numb to the gore that we are subjected to each day, and most of it is totally unnecessary.

I've watched medical and police dramas for years, and they don't need such graphic details to create a storyline and keep viewers interested. If I wanted to see realistic views of someone's body parts being removed, I would have become a doctor. It's worse if I am eating while watching TV. This kind of thing makes me want to throw up, so I have given up watching some otherwise good programs. And I'd be willing to bet that the majority of audience members feel the same way.

Please print this letter so that the creators know how some of us feel about their determination to make everything so graphic. We're tuning out because we are tired of the blood and guts. — S.

Dear S.: The rise of cable TV spurred a great deal of competition as to who can show more than the other guy. There are restrictions on network television when it comes to sex and language, but not so much about graphic violence, so that's where it gets amped up. We agree that showing so much is nauseating as well as desensitizing.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Sometimes improving yourself is a form of self-love, and other times it's a form of self-rejection. So, which is it? Your motive is the key. Why do you want the change? Be honest.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). For now, forget about what they need. What makes you come alive? Chances are their needs will be altered and, in some cases, fulfilled by the very same thing that makes you happier.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Your resentment toward a person may very well be warranted, and yet it's not helping you. You can't drop it, because it's unresolved. But you can contain it until the time of resolution comes.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Either there won't be enough time to prepare, or there won't be enough information to know how to. These factors are blessings. Instead of showing up strong, you'll show up curious and be more engaging for it.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You may enjoy or even prefer another person's version of the story, but don't let that stop you from telling your side. It will turn out to be important to you and everyone else that your version gets heard.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You want to be adding skills, meeting people and refining your game. One special alliance will help you do all of those things and more. The first step is to lighten up and let whimsy be your guide.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You've chosen a role that suits you. You won't play the part to perfection, but only because that would be both boring and impossible. Close attention to "costuming" will start your run on a winning note.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your casual friendliness is making it very easy for someone to trust you and possibly — if you're not careful — even love you. The question is: How many fans do you really want?

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). A creative leaning or pet cause will bring you up close and personal to someone you've admired at a distance for some time now. While the encounter won't exactly match your fantasy, it will exceed your expectations.

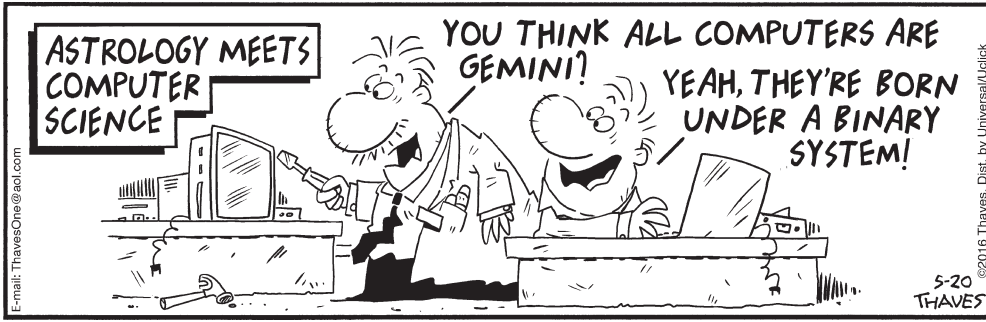
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Because you think so highly of someone, you naturally feed into this person's fantasy persona. A transformation will happen right before your eyes. Your belief is the magic spell that will make it so.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). There have been times when you've been unaware of just how closely you were following your influences. Right now someone is similarly unaware of his imitation of you. Everyone copies to learn.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Social opportunities abound. You can't say yes to everyone without someone being disappointed, but you can buy yourself time to make a decision by giving everyone a firm maybe.

SATURDAY'S BIRTHDAY (May 21). The next three months bring opportunities that seem straight from a sample sale — odd shapes, colors and sizes — a creative challenge with fantastically lucky results. Couples will adventure in June and intertwine business to lucrative effect in September. Singles aiming to fulfill a business agenda accidentally catch feelings. Leo and Aries adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 17, 22, 38 and 45.

FRANK AND ERNEST



THATABABY



PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



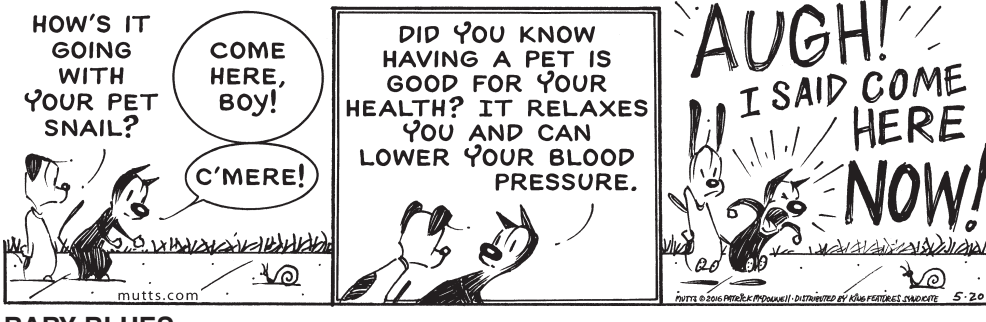
LOLA



SIX CHIX



MUTTS



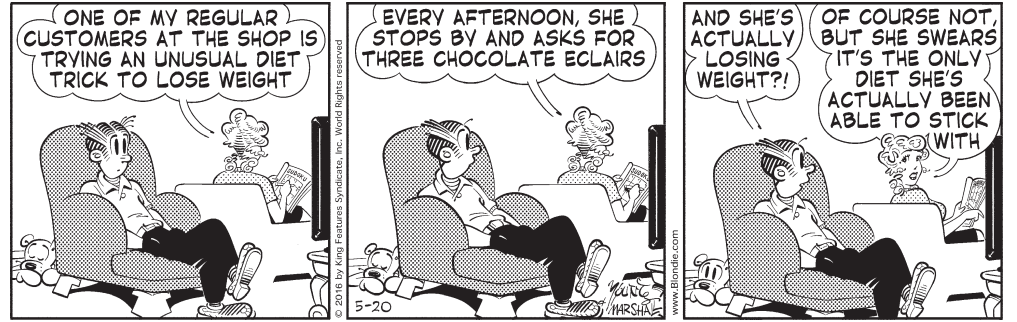
BABY BLUES



ZITS



BLONDIE



SALLY FORTH



B.C.



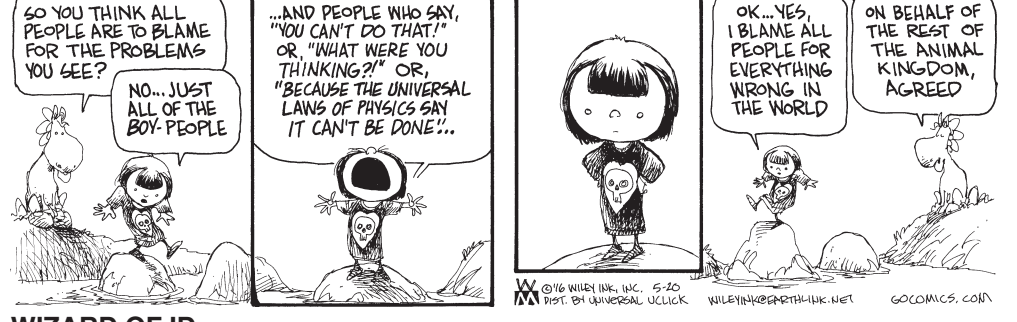
DILBERT



BIZARRO



NON SEQUITUR



WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

