

Is blacking out a big deal?

Editor's Note: "Dear Annie," by Annie Lane, is the successor column to "Annie's Mailbox," whose writers, Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, have retired.

Dear Annie: I'm a 21-year-old college junior. I love college for every reason you would think.

I love the autonomy to select my own classes and study the things that interest me. I love the freedom to make my own schedule. I love being treated like an adult, in that nobody is making sure I go to class or do my schoolwork.

I also love college for the parties. Though I am by no means a lush, I go out and drink heavily Thursday, Friday and Saturday night almost every week. Most of those nights, I cannot remember chunks of the evening. I know that this might be jarring to hear, but it's the norm in college. The joke around campus is to ask your friends the next morning, "Did we see each other last night?"

I'm sure most doctors or alcohol treatment professionals would say that I (or a large percentage of American college kids) have a drinking problem, but it really doesn't feel that way. I have a cumulative 3.4 GPA, and I am telling you, everyone drinks and blacks out. It's not a big deal. So my

Dear Annie



By Annie Lane

Creators Syndicate Inc.

question is: What's all the fuss about when it comes to blacking out? Isn't it just a rite of passage? — *Fuzzy Student*

Dear Fuzzy: Blacking out is not normal. Let me repeat: Blacking out is not normal. It might seem as if everyone is doing it, but people with drinking problems have a way of conveniently overestimating how much everyone else is drinking.

I would be willing to wager that your peers aren't blacking out so much as you think. If they are, you may be seeking out heavy drinkers to normalize your behavior.

I won't try to scare you out of drinking — mostly because that wouldn't work but also because drinking in moderation can be fine, if you can do it. So try it. Slow way down, and stop earlier. If you can't, then you have a problem. And the fact that you're writing to me indicates that on

some level, you already know.

Dear Annie: My husband is obsessed with fantasy sports leagues. Right now, it's baseball. It's the first thing he does when he wakes up in the morning and the last thing he does before he goes to sleep at night, and it takes up a lot of the time in between. I am so sick of coming downstairs to see him glued to his iPad, checking scores and doing whatever else people do for fantasy leagues. I really don't understand any of it.

He's retired, so he has plenty of free time to waste on this stuff. He does have other hobbies. He plays golf and tennis and occasionally volunteers at the soup kitchen. But as soon as he gets home, it's right back to his iPad. When we go out to eat, he's constantly checking his phone. I feel invisible. Do you have any tips on how I can get him to spend more time in the real world? — *Tired of Fantasy*

Dear Tired: If you're at all interested in sports, you could try participating in a league with him. This could help you understand what he's so passionate about. And who knows? It might even be fun.

If that doesn't appeal to you, then tell your husband how you feel — without harshly judging the hobby he cares so much about. Remember, you're on the same team.

Tomorrow's horoscope

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Though you don't like to dwell on upsetting experiences of the past, you can now see them as though you were a casual observer, not the one at the center of the scene. Doing so will help you work out today's dilemma.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You've discharged quite a lot of emotional energy as of late, and now there's a hum of mental calm to accompany your every move. It's a good soundtrack.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Speaking in abstract principles won't help what's going on for you personally. Ground your conversation and anecdotes in the facts and happenings of your life.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're tough and so you have to do the tough work. After you clear up this bit of gnarly (or perhaps just inordinately tedious) business, you'll be back to your charismatic, hilarious, sparkly self.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You sometimes wonder if the person you're being in a relationship is intrinsic to who you are or only showing up because of the circumstances present in that particular dynamic. Take yourself out of it and see.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). It's an ideal day to assess your current status in concrete measures. Whether it's counting your blessings, children, money or body stats, size up the facts and find out exactly where you're at.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You may be surprised by a sudden awareness of a responsibility you didn't know you had. Probably, it's something you've already been taking care of, though now, instead of acting automatically, you see the choice in this.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Was it some-

thing bad that happened or was it a wisdom-building experience? Well, if you never thought of it that way before, you'll run with the idea today and apply that wisdom all over the place.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The computing power that's woven into almost everything you do will have a definite effect on a main relationship today. It could, if used well, bring you much closer to your love. If used badly, it could cause a wedge.

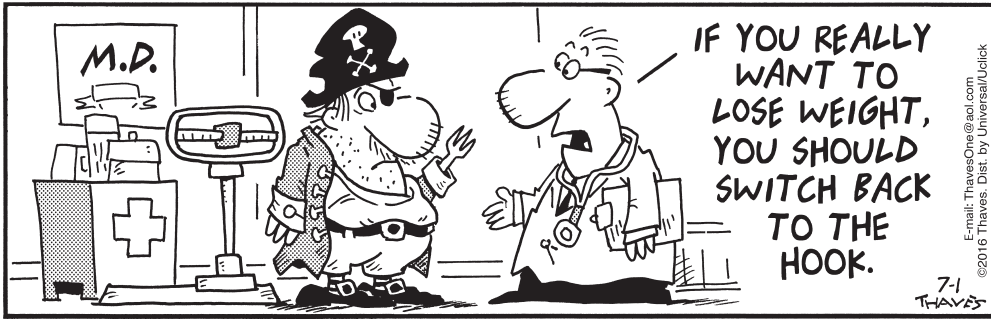
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You want to excel, but when you do, there is a set of feelings on the other side of it that catches you off guard. Remember how it was last time. You're going to succeed again, so it's important that you prepare yourself for it.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The pertinent question is whether your current sense of what you're capable of is actually balanced or it's a distortion you've created based on the expectations and needs of those around you.

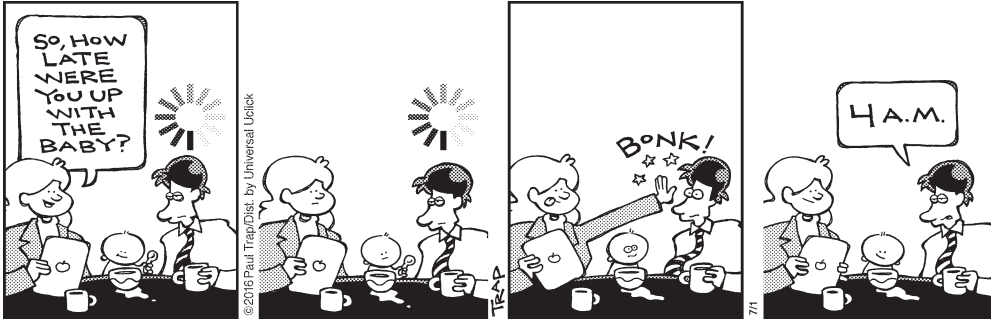
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). On your way to the next evolution, the one in which you gain what you've been wanting, something gets lost. It's most commonly something you weren't using and don't need anyway, but grieving may be called for.

SATURDAY'S BIRTHDAY (July 2). You see yourself as not only a person, but also a producer of a kind of feeling that you give the people lucky enough to be around you. Your warmth and the quirky way you look at life will add much joy to the lives of others. There's a big payoff in August. You'll meet one you've long admired before 2016 is up. Aquarius and Libra adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 9, 20, 14, 33 and 42.

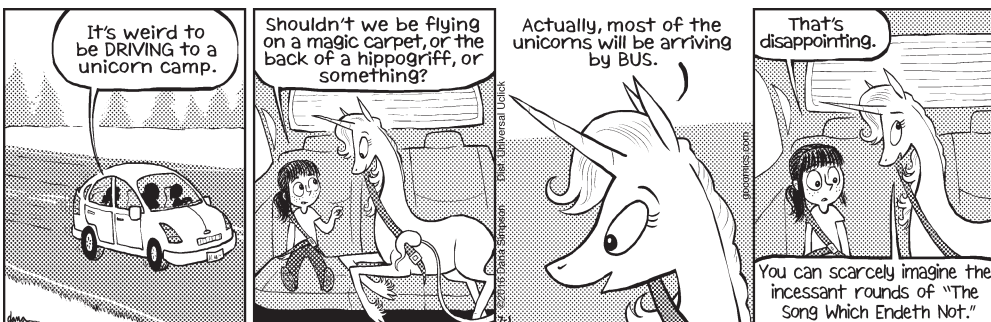
FRANK AND ERNEST



THATABABY



PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



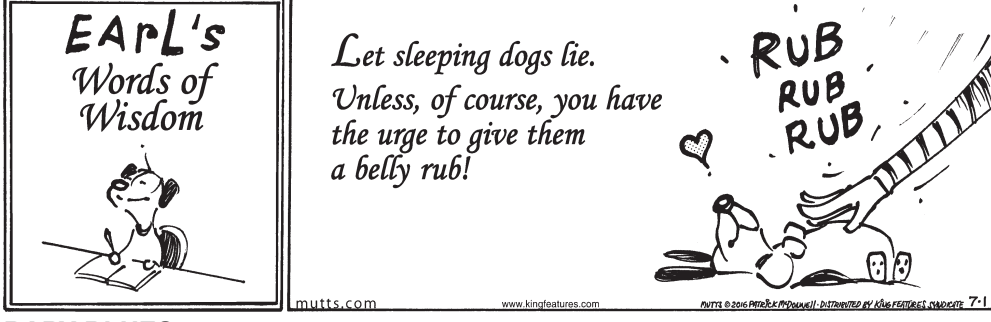
LOLA



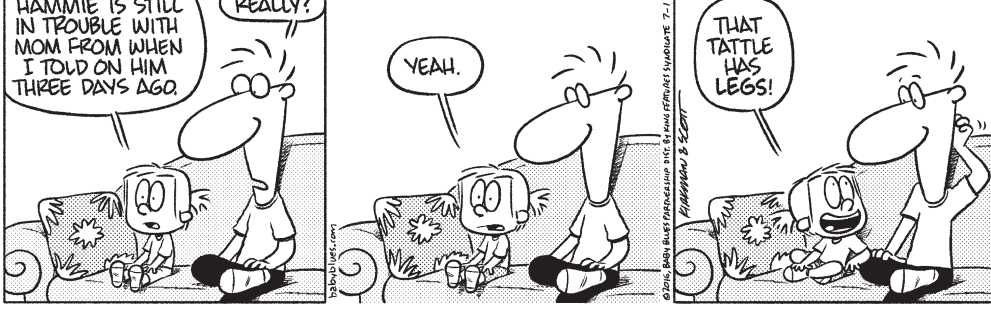
SIX CHIX



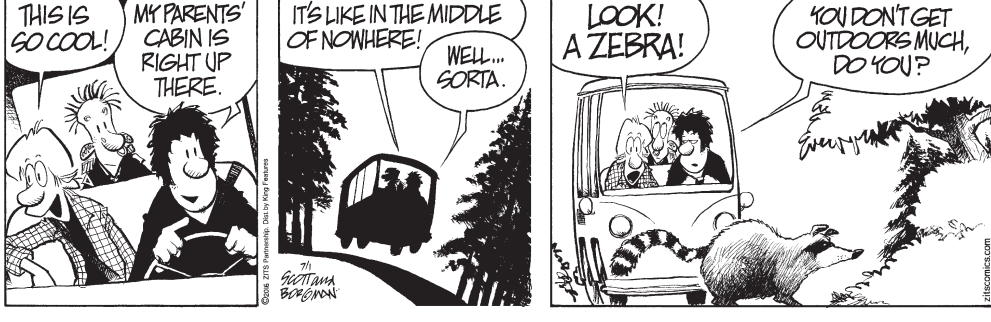
MUTTS



BABY BLUES



ZITS



BLONDIE



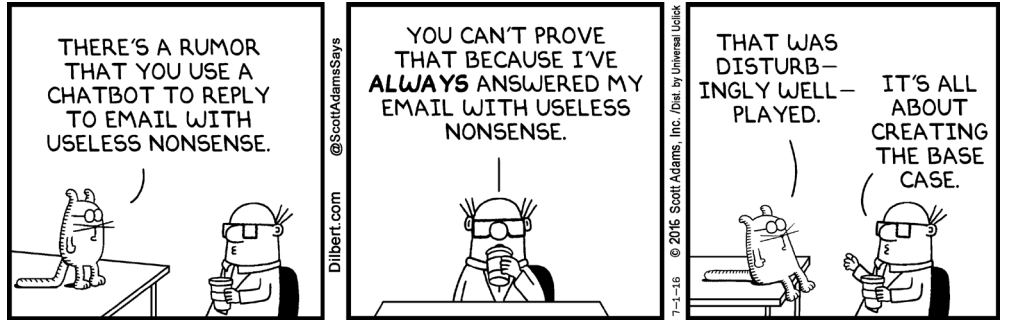
SALLY FORTH



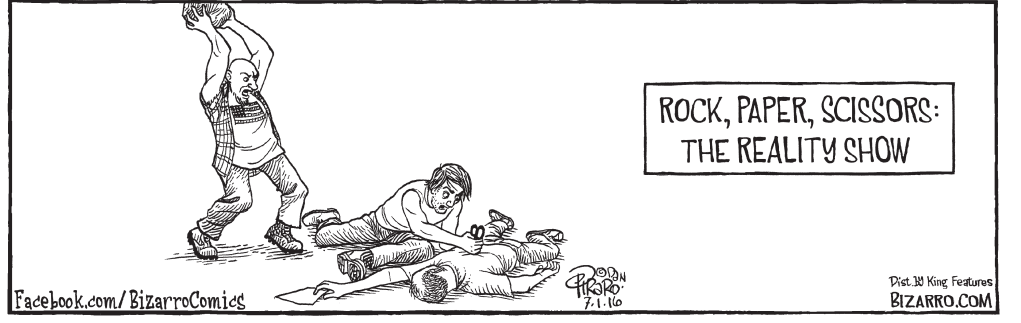
B.C.



DILBERT



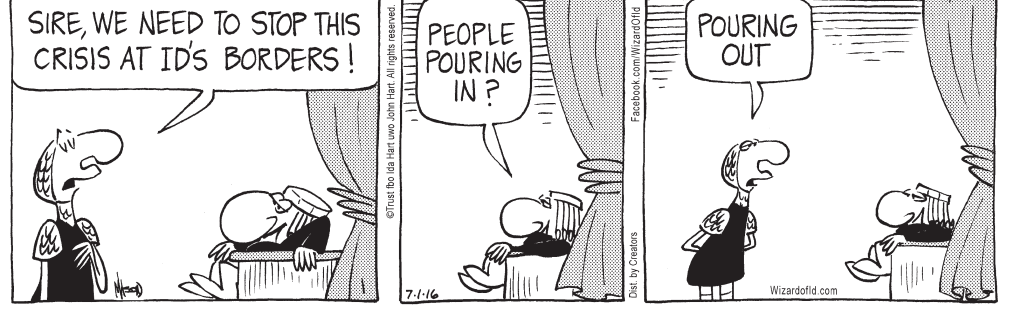
BIZARRO



NON SEQUITUR



WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

