

Tired of the vegan questions

Dear Annie: It's almost the holidays, and I'm excited to spend time and enjoy great meals with extended family. But there's one thing I'm never sure how to deal with. I'm vegan, and the rest of my family is not. That wouldn't be a problem, except every time I have dinner with them, my aunts, uncles and elder cousins have a laundry list of questions for me: "Why are you vegan?" "What's wrong with dairy?" "How do you get protein?"

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

The only question that really gives me pause is the "why" one. I'm perfectly fine with the fact that my family members eat meat, and I wouldn't question them about it or pressure them. Yet they put me in an uncomfortable position, as I feel awkward talking about why I find it cruel to eat meat while they're in the middle of enjoying their meal. It makes me feel bad and guilty. I don't want to ruin their appetites or seem in any way as if I'm judging them. I've told them, "I'd rather not talk about it right now. It will gross everyone out." And they insist they want to know and can

handle it. (Of course, they always seem to forget by the following year, because they end up asking me all the same stuff again.)

Is there anything I can politely say to prevent a game of 20 questions this year, or do I just need to suck it up? — *Tired of Talking About This*

Dear Vegan: They're asking, so you shouldn't feel guilty for giving them answers. Perhaps spare them the gory details, but do be honest. I think these conversations will feel less tiresome once you let go of the fear of offending them. They're simply curious. Give thanks for the opportunity to share something you're passionate about with receptive relatives.

Dear Annie: My closest friend has decided to have a destination wedding, which is causing me some degree of anguish. Not being a fan of this type of wedding, I am troubled about my expenses and, more so, by the lack of respect for guests. We have to spend \$3,500 for a weekend to share this moment, and this is expected from me because of

our close relationship. I would like not to attend, but I am sure that this would mean a significant change in, if not the end of, my relationship with my friend. For the record, I am a man, and my friend is a woman. Does this gender difference have anything to do with our differing views of financial practicality? — *Debt-stipation Wedding*

Dear Debt: No, this isn't a gender thing. No reasonable person, male or female, should expect loved ones to shell out that much cash to attend a wedding.

According to the most recent American Express survey data, the average guest will spend \$673 on a wedding — a hefty enough chunk of change. That your friend is asking you to spend over five times that is absurd.

Talk to her about your concerns. Tell her that you consider her one of your closest friends and want to be there for her big day but that you just can't afford it. It's unfortunate, but she should expect that some people won't be able to make such an expensive trip. That was her (and her partner's) choice. If she stops being friends with you over that, she wasn't too good of a friend to begin with.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Life is not a reality TV show where you're either "in" or you're "out." Relationships often go along indefinitely, a little up-in-the-air, with various degrees of involvement. Don't be in a rush to categorize where you're at with people.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Keeping yourself safe from harm includes controlling the distance between you and people you love or could possibly love. It might help to think of yourself as a scientist, collecting data.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You're willing to fall in love with an idea, and you're just as willing to step back and say, "This is not the right choice for me." From this position you'll make stellar decisions that favor your long-term happiness.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). To make an emotional investment today will be riskier than other kinds of investing. It will also be more difficult to recover from if it doesn't go right. That's why what you're doing is mighty brave. Give yourself more credit for taking the risk.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You may not like the notions being brought to the table, but let them air anyway to discover how strong they really are. The censor will lose in the end because strong ideas find the fuel to keep the fire alive.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're not here to close the deal at all costs. You're here to make the deal that's right for you. This should include the higher good, but don't get overly wrapped up in the other person's side of it today.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). It would be fun to have certain people for friends, but alas, there are appropriate friendships and inappropriate

friendships, and those who can't figure out the difference are asking for trouble.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). There's no time for critique or complaint today. If you're walking around lamenting all that's wrong with society, you'll be distracted from the fact that you get to choose how to make this world better.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Someone will make you proud to be a leader and mentor. You don't ask anyone to be perfect; you just ask them to show up and try. When they knock it out of the park, you'll beam.

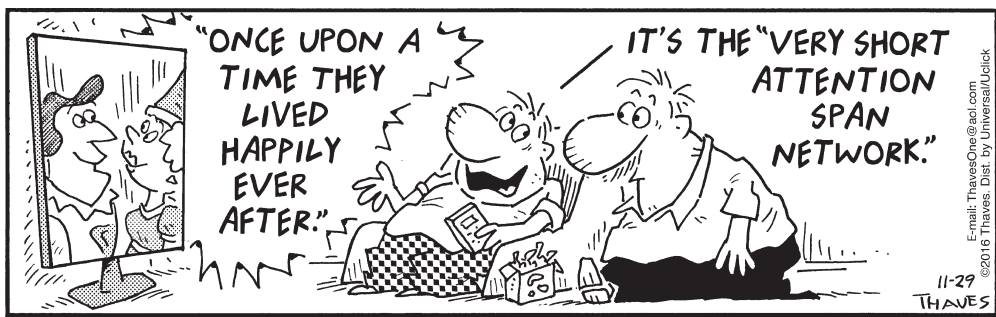
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Nothing you experience will go to waste. Your mind will be keen to pick up on the kind of details you can use to solve a problem. You'll be a regular Sherlock Holmes!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You haven't always been able to say that you like your life, but now you can, and this will be reflected in your activities of the day. You'll agree to propositions that look, sound and feel "so you."

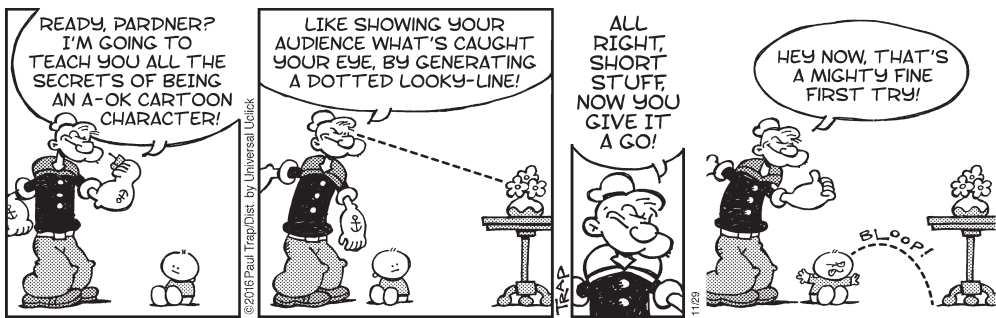
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). There's more being asked of you, so some of your usual self-care activities might slip through the cracks now, but the sacrifices you make will be worthwhile. Besides, you can catch up tomorrow.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Nov. 30). You're thoughtful, smart and willing to go the extra mile for people who need you. Because you're such a good friend, you'll gain access to exclusive opportunities. Take advantage of the chance to see new places, even though this will come at a cost. The plot twist in March will eventually favor you: Hold on. Aries and Pisces adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 30, 2, 22, 14 and 41.

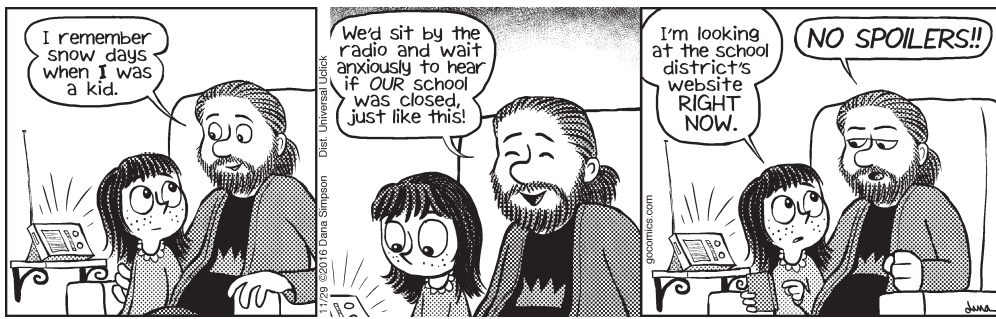
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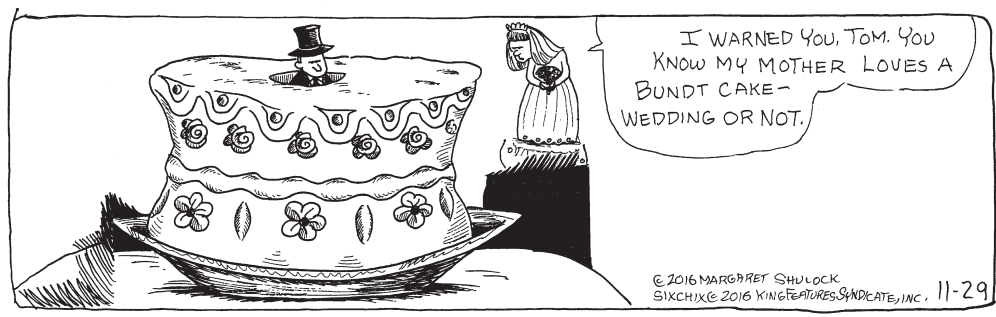
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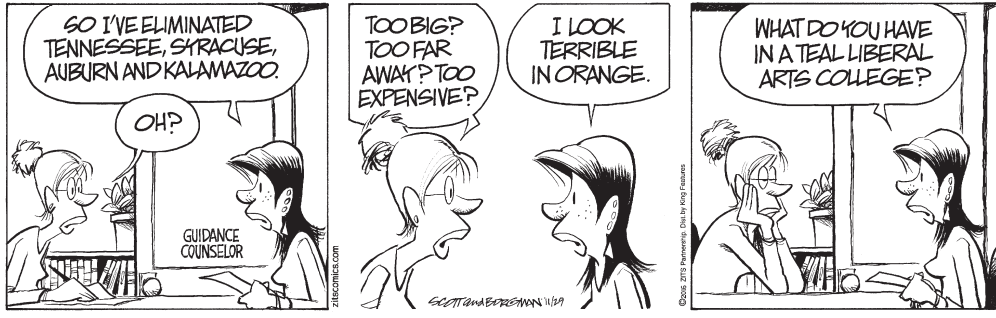
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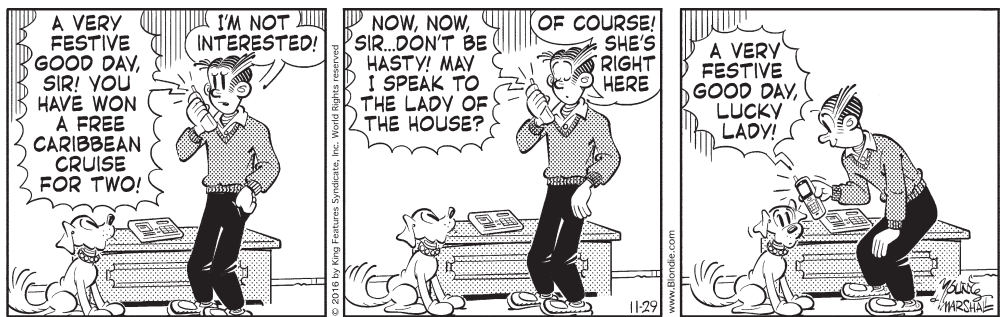
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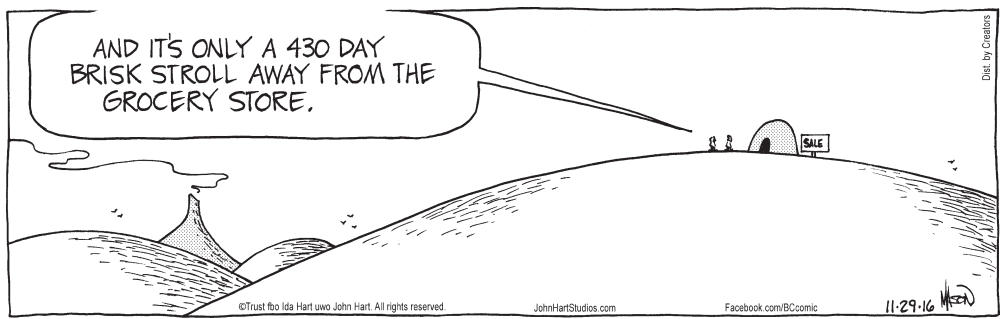
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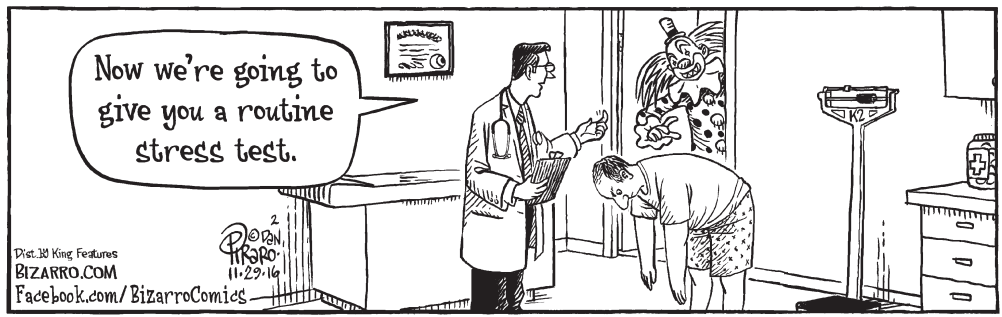
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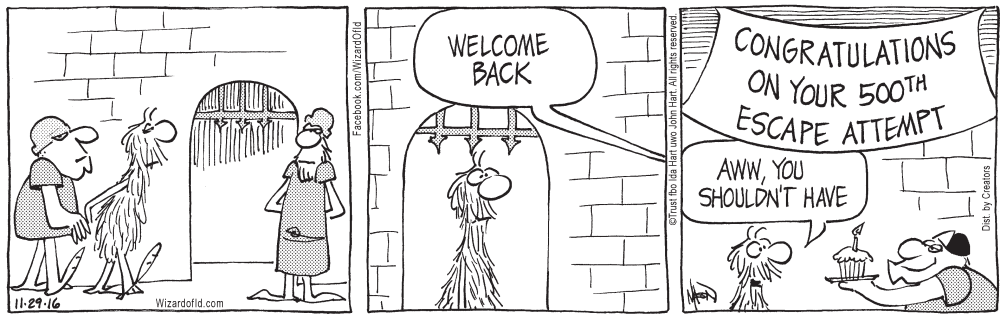
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