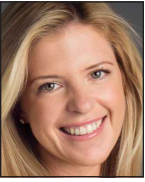


# Butterflies over new boyfriend

**Dear Annie:** I have been dating "Connor" for about three months. With the holidays approaching, I'm getting anxious for a couple of reasons. One, I'm thinking of what to get him for Christmas. We really like each other, and I see this as having the potential to be a very serious relationship, but it's still fairly new. He enjoys hiking and surfing and loves food and wine. What's a gift that says "you mean something to me" but doesn't go overboard? Is there some sort of chart for gifts for dating milestones as there is for wedding anniversaries (e.g., paper the first year, cotton the second year)?

The other reason I'm anxious is that he invited me to his office holiday party. He is an attorney at a successful law firm, and I'm a hairstylist. I didn't even go to college. So I'm a little intimidated. I've never met his boss or any of his colleagues, but from what he says, most of them are very serious, rude and unpleasant to be around. I'm quite the opposite of all that. Still, I'd love to support him. Is there a particular reason I should or shouldn't go? — *Krissy Kringle*

## DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.

**Dear Kriss:** Sounds as if your stomach is more a bowl full of butterflies than jelly. It's OK to feel nervous — that giddy feeling is a fun part of any new relationship — but don't let nerves stop you from showing your enthusiasm.

Why not buy him a cooking lesson or a gift certificate to a nice restaurant he's been meaning to try? Experience-based gifts are thoughtful and fun, and sites such as Groupon and Living Social have good deals.

As for his office holiday party, go. Don't fret too much about the big-wig colleagues. Remember no one can make you feel inferior without your consent. They're probably not so bad as he says they are. (If they are, you'll be able to commiserate all the better when he vents about work in the future.)

**Dear Annie:** There is a common theme to many of the people writing you: "I didn't get mine." People talk about not getting presents or cards. Some say, "A friend didn't give me what he should have." I checked the definition of "friend," and the only mention of giving was that of support.

What do we have friends for? Is it to enrich our lives or our properties? If your answer is to increase your properties, then you are actually looking for donors.

Perhaps a better question is, "What do we have etiquette for?" Etiquette seems to discard the idea that having friends who love us is enough to be grateful for. I think any tradition that does not bring us to kinder and less selfish behavior should be scrapped.

I have not checked to see who has given me a present since I was a kid. I don't expect a thank-you card for anything that I've done because I care about a person. If the person thanks me in person, that is enough.

I don't do favors to benefit myself (other than the obvious benefit of having friends), and I don't invite people to be around me because I want something more than friendship. — *Disappointed in Accepted Values*

**Dear Disappointed:** You make a great point. Perhaps we should be less concerned with keeping score.

But I do have to add, to those of you who might read this and think you've found an excuse not to send a thank-you card to Grandma: Just mail the darn thing. Please. It will make her smile.

## TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** Avoid personalizing other people's behaviors by assuming that they are reacting to you. Many factors affect behavior. You may only be a small part of it, but you'll be a positive part.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** An issue you deal with is not who you are. The less you identify with it the better. Separate yourself from the circumstances. Remind yourself of your good qualities and reinforce what you're all about.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** You probably wouldn't guess what someone finds attractive about you, but you don't have to. The more you focus on your strengths, curiosities and interests the bigger your light becomes.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** Love and commitment fuse together today. You won't be sure if you're doing something because you love it or if you love it because you're doing it. Either way, it's a slice of heaven.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Emotional courage is the key to getting the results you want. When you're willing to deal with uncertainty and embrace the pain that goes along with growing and changing, this is when the transformation you wish for begins.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Some feelings you want to build up, and others you want to feel a lot less of. Suppressing an emotion will only make it stronger. If you want to feel less of a thing, express it. Get it out, and let it diffuse.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** The less reactive you are, the better you'll handle things. The better you handle things, the more someone will admire and like you. The more someone admires and likes you, the higher you'll be

promoted.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** The way to tell a great question is by the answers you're getting. You'll create an environment of warmth and people will open up to you, giving you exactly what you want.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** The magic question of the day: How do you envision this process working? Ask yourself; ask others. It will get everyone thinking of the practical steps necessary to realize the goal.

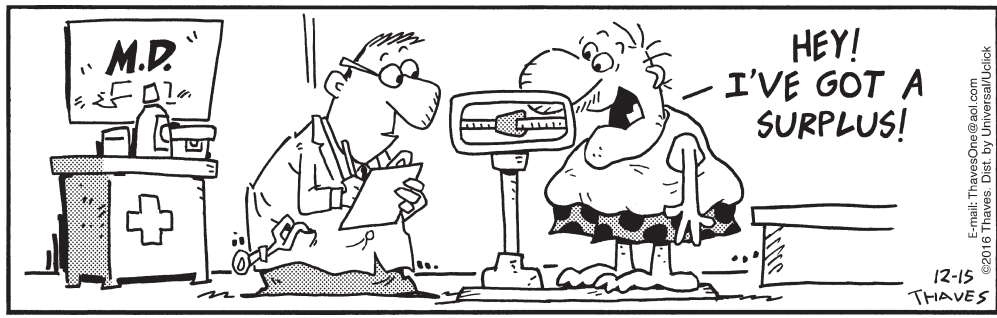
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** You may not wake up filled with a sunshiny spirit. This can still be a happy day. What's dragging your thoughts into the shadows? Identify the main issue. Confront and conquer.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Sometimes everything feels like a top priority, but of course that's not how priorities work. Get real about it. What's the one thing you could do to make the rest fall in line?

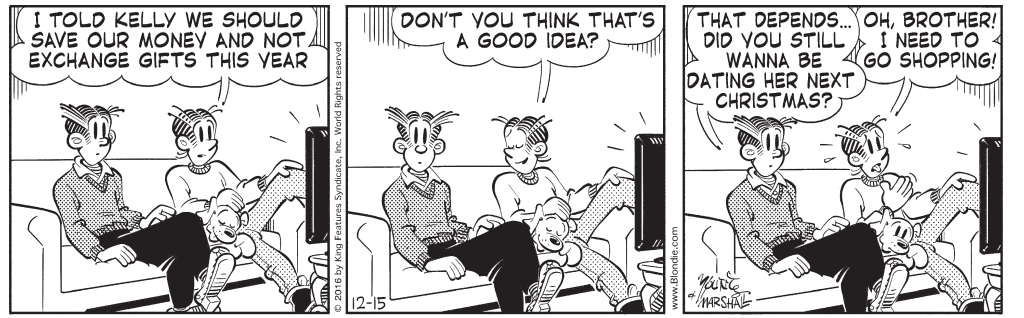
**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Most people listen to one another with a cursory level of attention. Listening is a muscle. It takes practice to get this muscle in shape. Listen better than others do (not hard), and seize the opportunities they miss.

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 16).** Things will go exceptionally well in the money department over the next three weeks, and this helps other things, too. Riding that line between being responsible to others and doing your own thing — that will be your growing edge in the early parts of the year. You'll always win when you bring your most professional self to the moment. Taurus and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 50, 2, 22 and 15.

## FRANK AND ERNEST



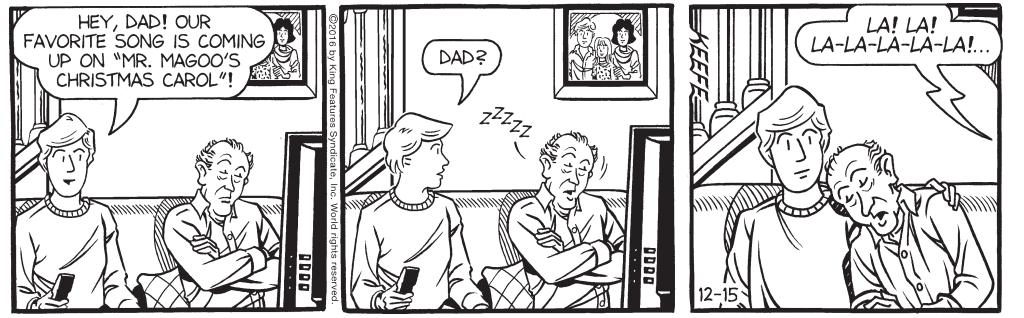
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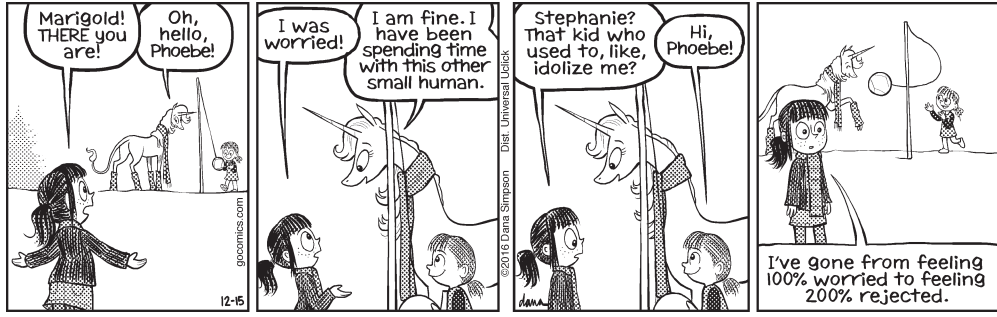
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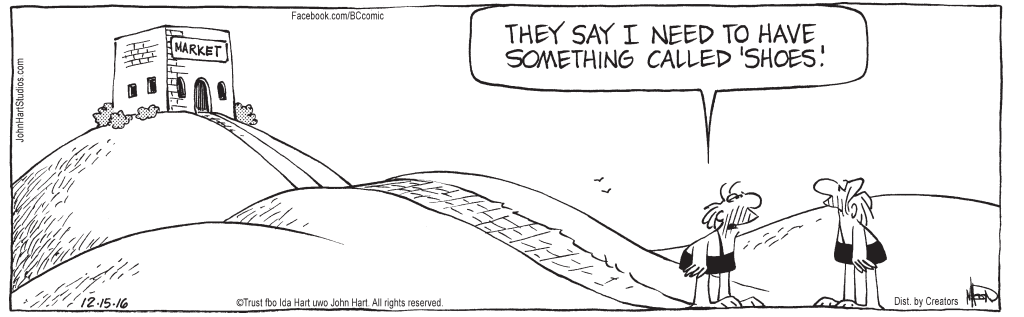
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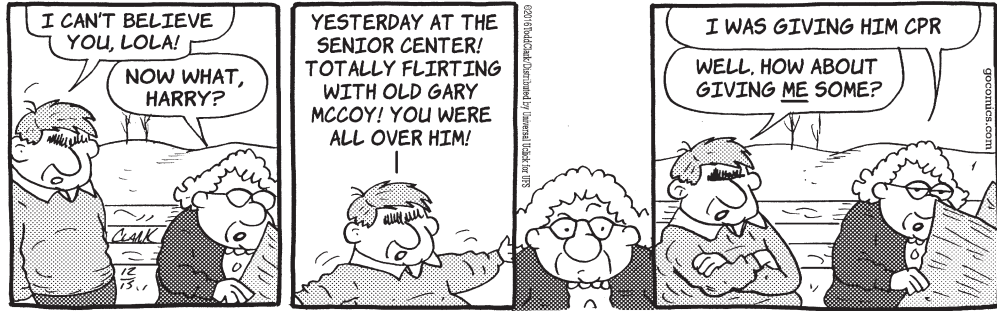
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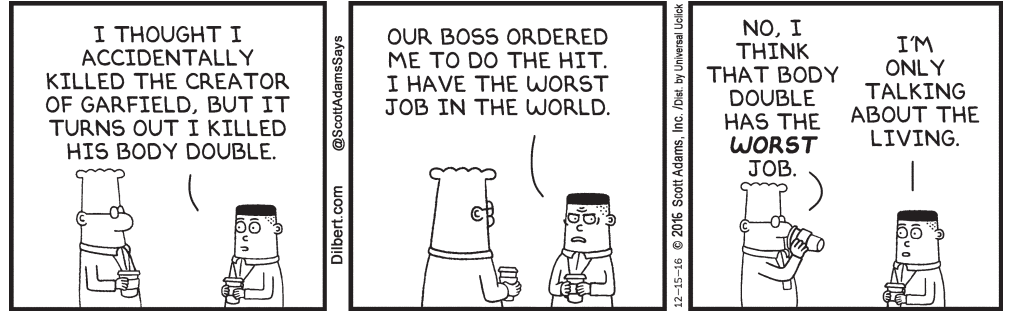
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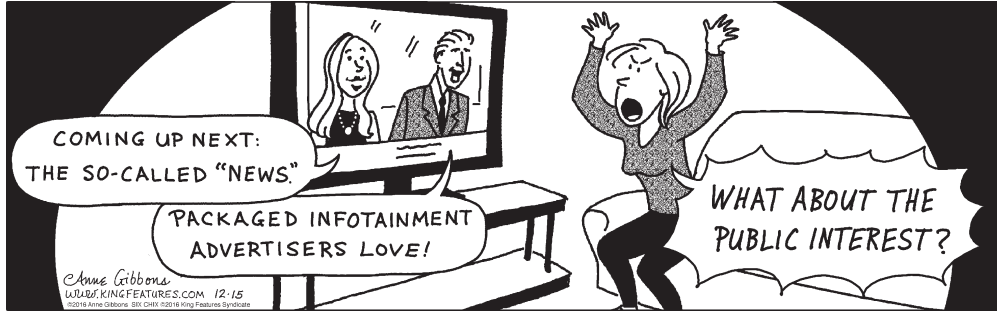
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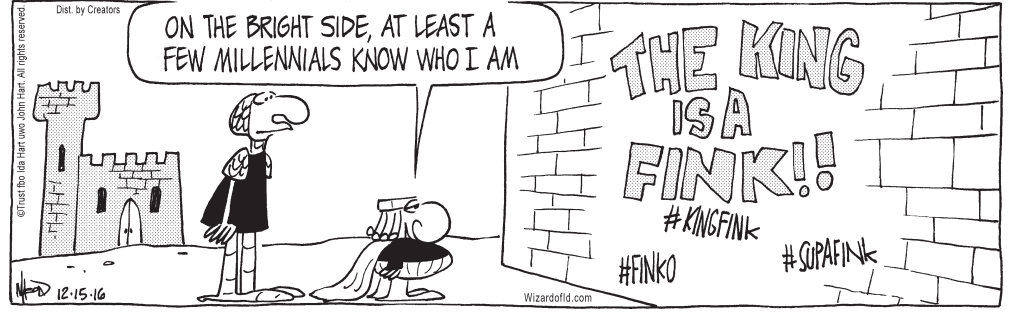
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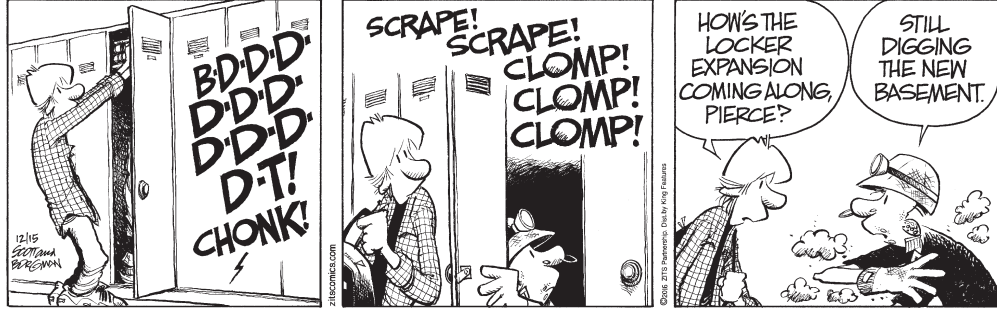
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## ZITS



## ROSE IS ROSE

