

# Her singing annoys us

**Dear Annie:** I go to a small school, with only a handful of people in my graduating year. We've all known one another since kindergarten and first grade, and we all spend our time talking and interacting as a group.

Sometimes at the lunch table — or when a conversation dies down and we're sitting in comfortable silence — one of my friends, "Laura," starts singing to herself.

This is bad enough on its own, but she is not a very good singer. She takes voice lessons and was taught to do something weird with her voice that is extremely annoying to listen to. Sometimes someone in the group will try to ask her to stop, claiming to be tired or have a headache and saying the singing is aggravating it.

No one likes her singing. But she just doesn't seem to get the hint. She keeps doing it whenever she isn't actively participating in the conversation. I don't think this is socially acceptable, but how can I tell her it isn't without hurting her feelings? — *Sick of the Singing*

**Dear Sick:** Time to close the curtain on these lunchtime musicals. We all do embarrassing and annoying things from time to time, and someone has to tell us it's become too much. That's what friends are for. As for hurting her feelings, you don't need to be brutal to be honest. Tell her that it's nothing personal — that even if she were Beyonce, the singing routine would get old.

If the little nightingale can't abide by that, she'll have to fly off and find another table. You're her friends, not her audience.

**Dear Annie:** This is in response to "Child Forever," who is feeling pressured by her parents to live closer to home even though she is enjoying life in her new city. I just felt compelled to give your initial response to this writer a thumbs-up.

I had loving yet smothering parents who seemed to think of me as a perpetual 10-year-old. When I went away to college, they would make frequent unannounced visits. When I secured a job in a neighboring town, they

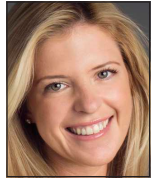
made frequent surprise visits there, as well. The reason they gave was that they wanted to check on my welfare. They often said something like, "We haven't heard from you for a few days." So there was some passive-aggressive guilt tripping.

I know that their intentions were good, but I realized it was up to me to get control of the situation. I arranged to meet them weekly, sometimes in a neutral setting to buy them lunch, sometimes in my home so they could feel reassured about my living arrangements and frequently in their home to help with projects and more.

This virtually eliminated the unexpected visits. It also let them know that I valued time spent with them. And the lesson I took away from this is that that was what they really desired — time spent together. — *Previously Smothered*

**Dear Previously:** Way to take the bull by the horns and promote communication over passive-aggressive behavior. If your parents didn't see you as an adult before that, they most certainly saw how grown up you were afterward.

## DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.

## TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** Not only is it natural to feel defensive around people who have a history of socking you when you're not expecting it: It's advisable. Likely this has to do with the soft jabs of a loved one. Arms up; protect your head; duck and cover.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** There's a point at which too much conversation clouds the meaning of things instead of making it clearer. While some seem committed to talking things to death, you jump in and fix it.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** It takes a confident person to risk being misunderstood and maybe that's partly why you'll do it. Plus, you'll learn more from people who are dissimilar to you than from people with whom you have a great deal in common.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** When things get a little more colorful and dramatic than is comfortable, be grateful for it. Were you to be limited to a very confined and unvarying society, you would be quickly bored to tears.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Discipline is just not something you easily come up with on your own right now. Enlist the help of a coach, a champion or a supportive friend. Not only will you get results; you'll feel loved in the process.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Before you get into the mix, remind yourself of your purpose. While you're at it, revel for a few minutes in what you're all about. Because if you're not sure of this, someone will come along and fill in the blanks for you.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Your big dream of the day may not be anything too spectacular; rather, it's a small personal accomplishment or meaningful exchange that drives you to work deliberately and connect warmly with

others today.  
**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Don't be surprised if, when you sit down to make a positive plan of action, negativity comes first. Work through the grievances. Once you give them airtime, they'll go away.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Fun-loving people are the best when fun is chief on the agenda. What about when it's not? If their love of fun is stronger than their love of doing the job at hand, trust your instincts and get the right person for the job.

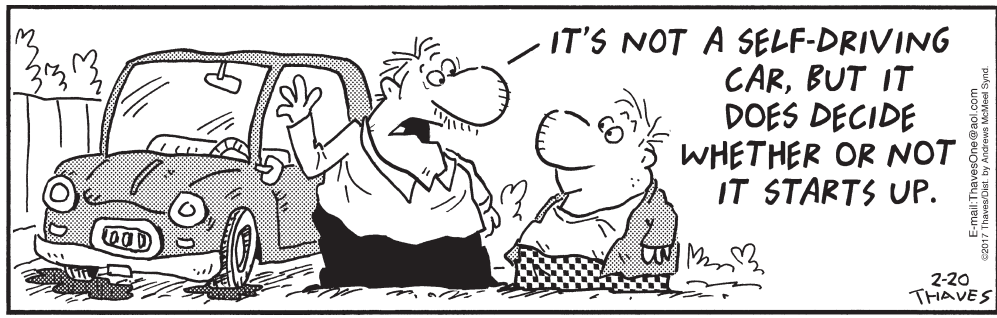
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** You're an artist. This doesn't always present itself in the way some people think about creativity, but there are so many ways to turn life into a beautiful experience. That's what you'll chase today.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Sameness leads to staleness. Seek variety and diversity. It takes an effort to mix things up, and you'll probably meet with resistance from those more fearful than you. Do it anyway. Everyone will be better for it.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** It's a day to read and learn. Social topics, in particular, will be lucky to know about. They'll also be as exciting to read up on as any fiction, because this learning paves the way to new adventures.

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 21).** A few stellar choices will carry you up this year. Happiness is having a pure strong love in your life. You'll put quite a lot of effort into establishing a habit over the next 10 weeks. After that, living the way you prefer will be nearly automatic. There's intense competition in March and September; get serious. Libra and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 8, 20, 5, 33 and 16.

## FRANK AND ERNEST



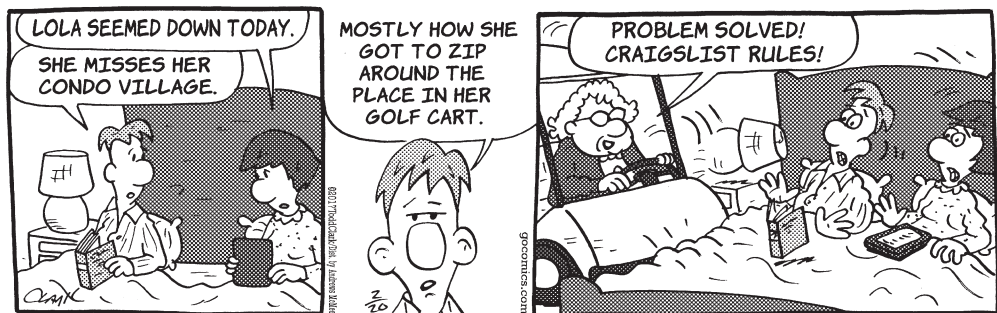
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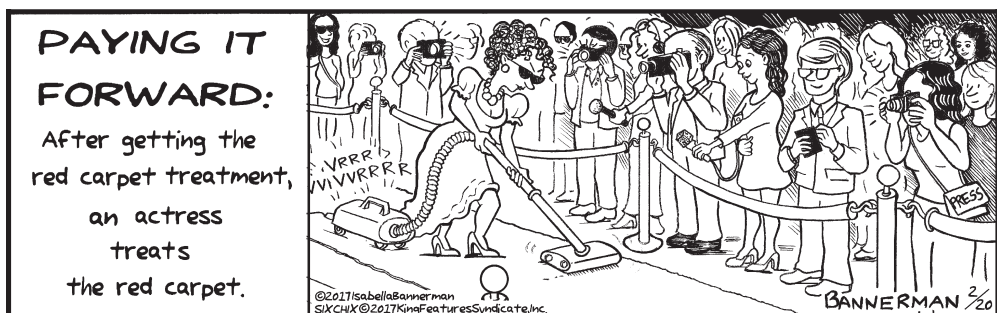
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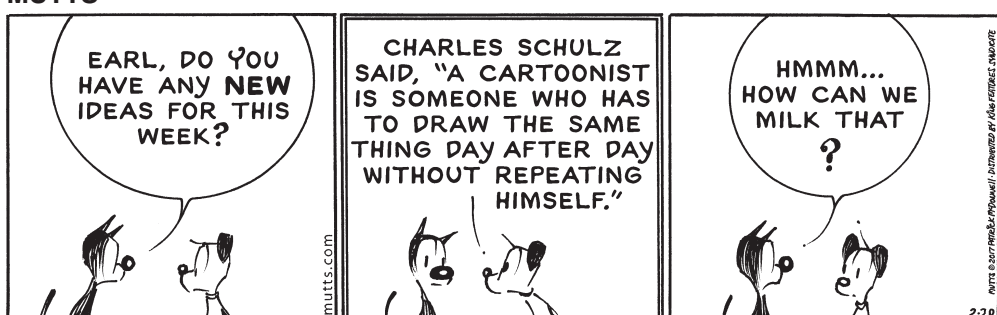
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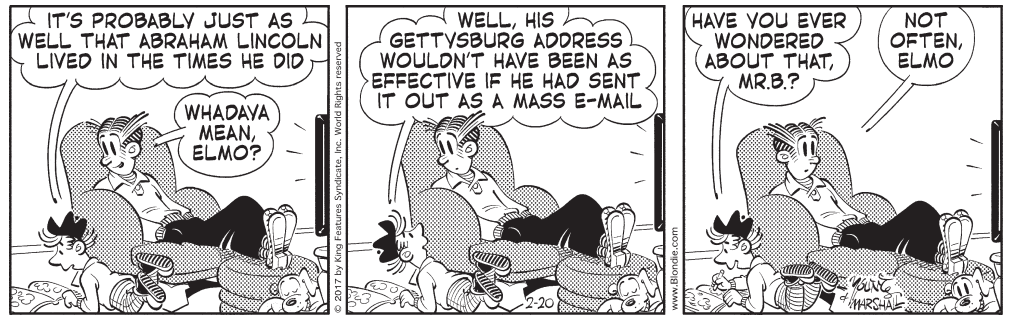
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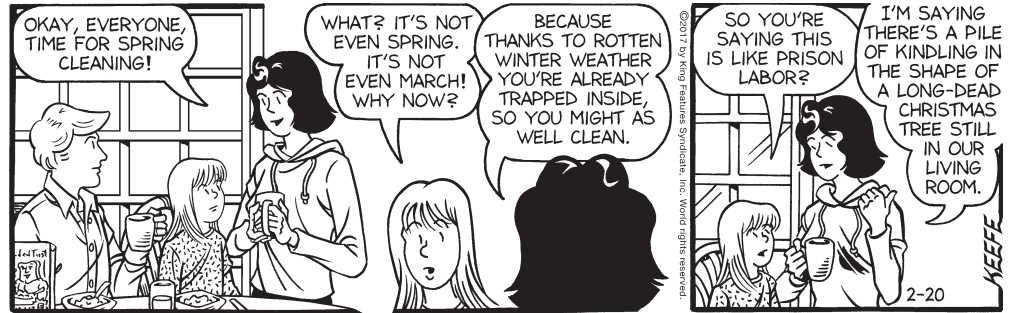
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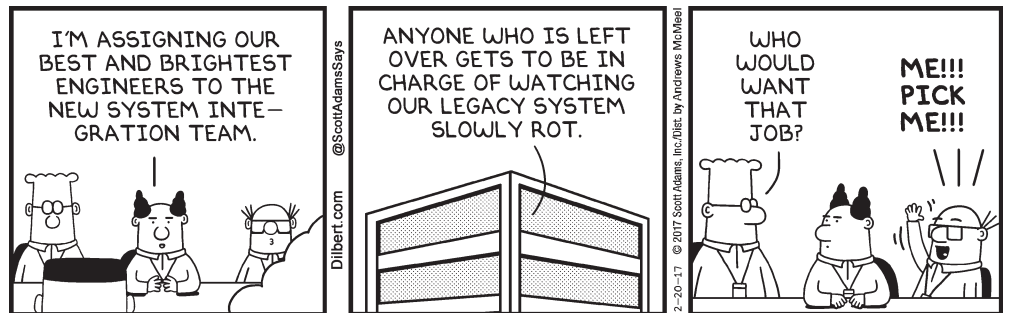
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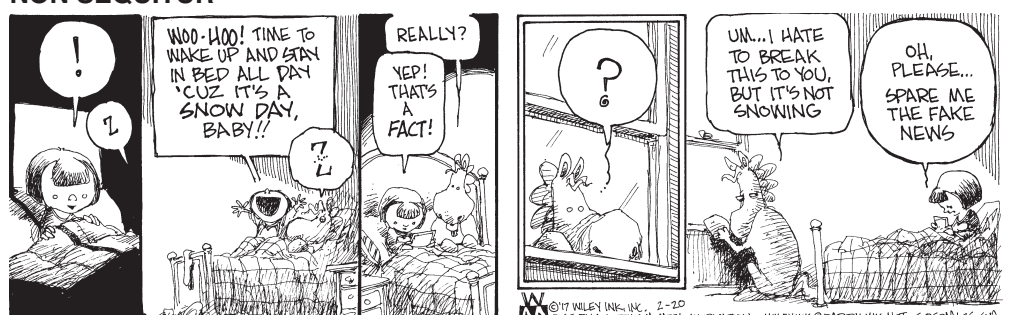
## DILBERT



## BIZARRO



## NON SEQUITUR



## WIZARD OF ID



## ROSE IS ROSE

