

# Thinking of an old flame

**Dear Annie:** In December, I went to a holiday house party, and most of the people in the crowd were my old friends from college (class of 1979). I hadn't seen some of these people in 25 years or more. The hostess pulled out her giant photo album, and there they were, several pictures of my favorite ex-girlfriend and me having the time of our lives. I haven't seen or talked to her since 1985. So my big question is: Would it be kosher to write her a light and lively letter and catch up? We've both been married with kids for close to 30 years. (I looked her up online.) She's the one who got away from me, but I'm not looking for any do-over; we had our chances. But I would pay big money for a time machine! What do you think? — *Nostalgic in Boston*

## DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.

wishing for a time machine, I think you'd better keep your distance. I'd also recommend taking off those rose-colored glasses when looking at your past. There was a reason you two broke up. Reminisce about your college days as much as you'd like, but don't try to resurrect them.

**Dear Annie:** When I saw the letter from "Feeling Neurotic," the young person who is experiencing random bouts of anxiety and dread, the words "sense of impending doom" jumped off the page at me. Just put the word "overwhelming" in front and you have the exact phrase I've used to describe how I feel sometimes. The first time it happened, I was 50 years old and driving down the road. Nine years later, I still experience these episodes, but on a very infrequent basis.

Minus the obsessive-compulsive behavior, "Feeling Neurotic" and I share the same confusing experience. There is no apparent reason for that feeling, no particular stimulus, no way of explaining or understanding or predicting it. Over time, I've learned to roll with it by reasoning that it is just a feeling —

that it always passes in a short time and there is no harm other than the "sense of impending doom" itself.

It's just my opinion, but I think "Neurotic's" obsessive-compulsive behavior is merely a response to the anxiety attacks rather than a symptom to be treated. A sense of helplessness that accompanies the anxiety may be prompting behavior simply because "Neurotic" needs to do something in response.

I think the OCD behavior is a self-defense response. Because the anxiety attack is illogical, there is no apparent cause for it and there is no tangible threat to respond to, "Neurotic" is compelled by the brain's self-defense mechanism to do something, anything, even if that something is illogical.

I hope this high-school sophomore is able to learn to deal with this. The first step is to accept that the anxiety attacks are not a harbinger of doom and to control the obsessive-compulsive impulse. I'm sure it can be done. — *Anxious in New England*

**Dear Anxious:** Thank you for sharing your experience. I'm sharing your insights here with the hope they help "Feeling Neurotic," as well as other readers who experience anxiety attacks.

## TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** If you didn't sign up to be the hero, don't worry, the real heroes never do. They get roped into doing the right thing. And usually by their own heartstrings, and lacking the stomach for cowardice, they keep up the trend.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** Your workload will be intense today, but so will be your energy. The extent of determination will be tested. What they don't know is that you'll never give up. For as long as you can possibly hang in there, you will.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** You combine that bright intellect with the human touch to unbeatable effect. The tendency to include everyone, even (and especially!) those who don't fit in is part of your enormous charm.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** Each person has a level of untidiness they are willing to accept. Woe to the people who go beyond that point today, as you're in no mood to let it slide. This is true of both your emotional and your physical world.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** This is one of those fast-paced days when you'll feel that life is getting out of hand ... or maybe you're just realizing that it never really was in your hands in the first place.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** A different frame doesn't change the picture per say, but it changes how we look at the picture. Experiment with this concept as you're in a position to direct someone's attention.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** For you, the hardest part of being tolerant is tolerating the intolerant. It's part of the work though, and you'll regret it if you let someone's uncongenial attitude get under your skin.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** You like to interact with those who are confident in their knowledge. It is far less favorable to interact with those who rigidly assume that their way is the only correct way.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Maybe there are no stupid questions, but there are definitely questions that open new worlds. And there are also questions that open cans of worms.

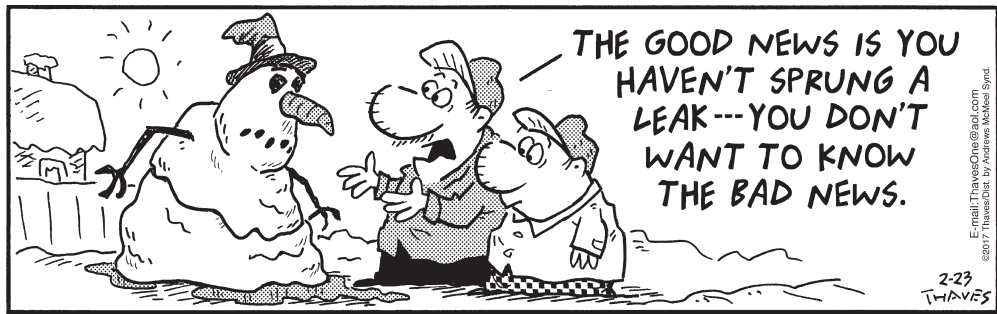
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** There's nothing you could say to make someone understand better than they do at this moment. It's not your fault; it's the nature of maturity. People can't mature faster than they do. Give love, not words.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Your life has been full of surprises and serendipity and it's about to get even more interesting in that regard. The more people you know, the more likely you are to run into someone you know.

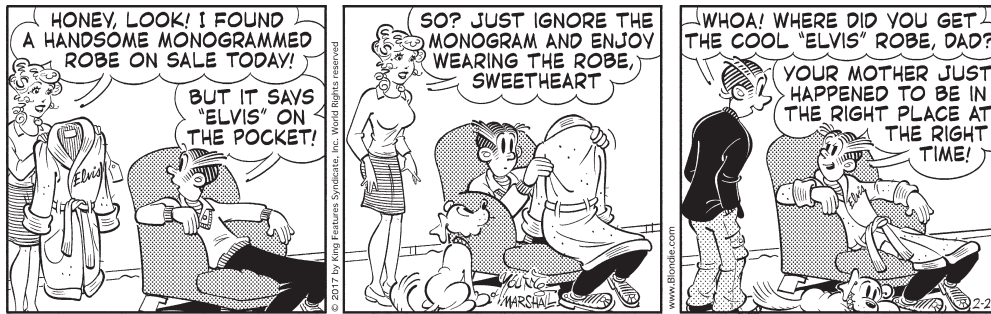
**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** There are many who ask for good advice who won't follow it. Maybe what they are looking for is not advice so much as validation, support and a general sense that they are not in this alone.

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Feb. 24).** It's said that a smooth sea never made a skillful mariner, but there will be plenty of time for learning to handle life's storms later. Enjoy the glassy sailing now! You'll make money and feel the warmth of love. June's challenges strengthen family bonds. September begins a thrilling educational process. Libra and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 4, 18, 25, 37 and 1.

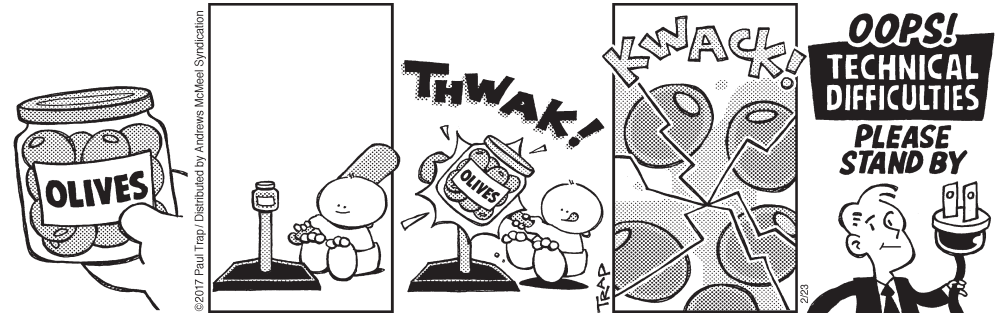
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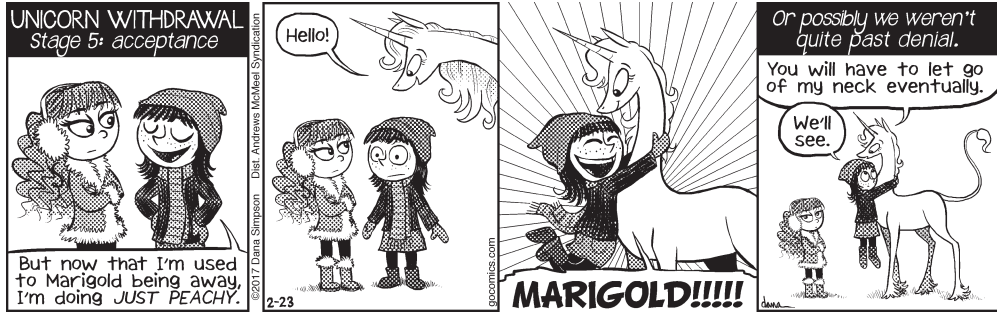
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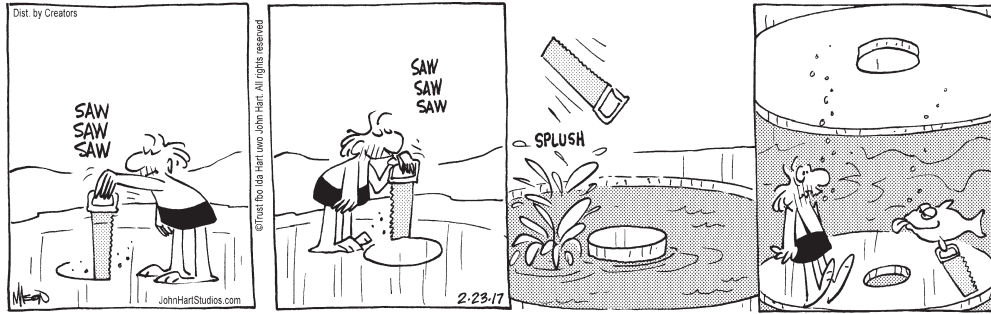
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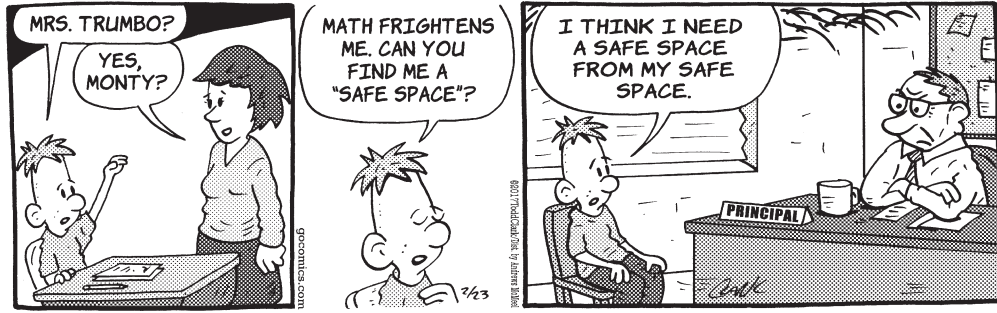
## PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



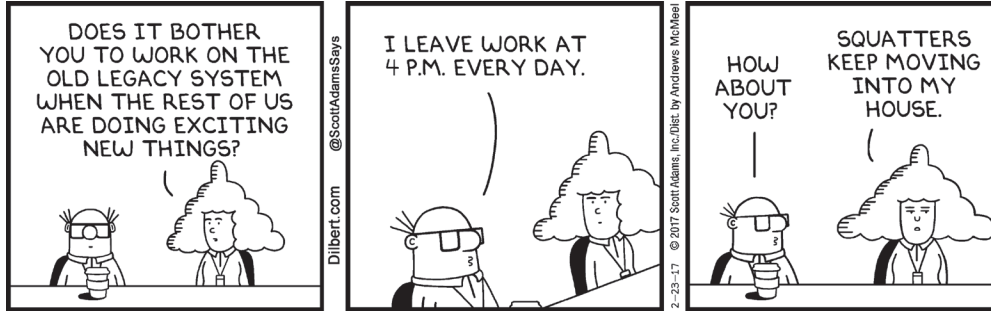
## B.C.



## LOLA



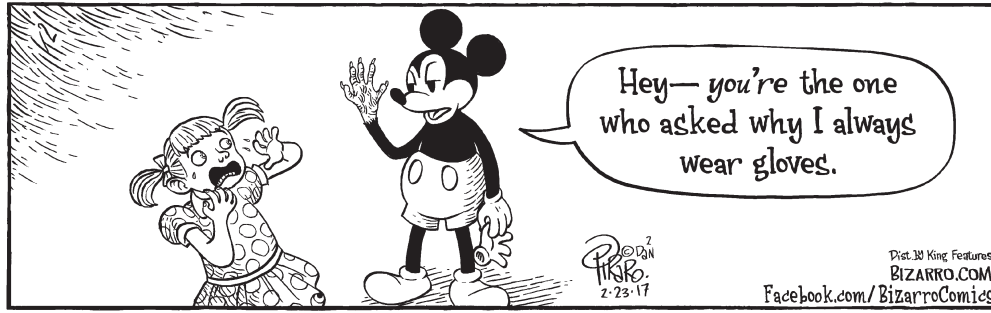
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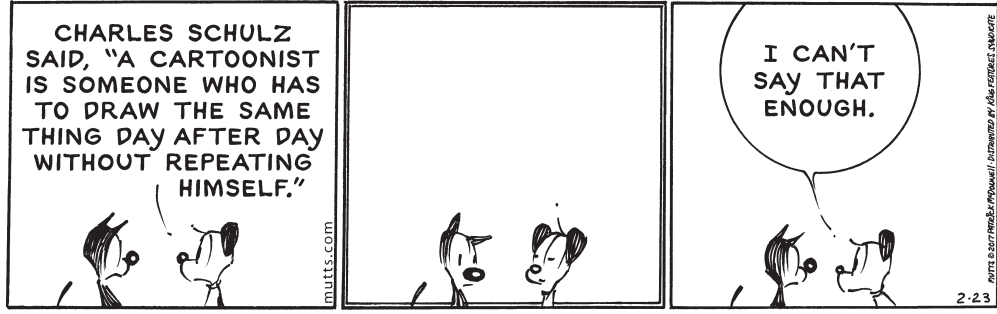
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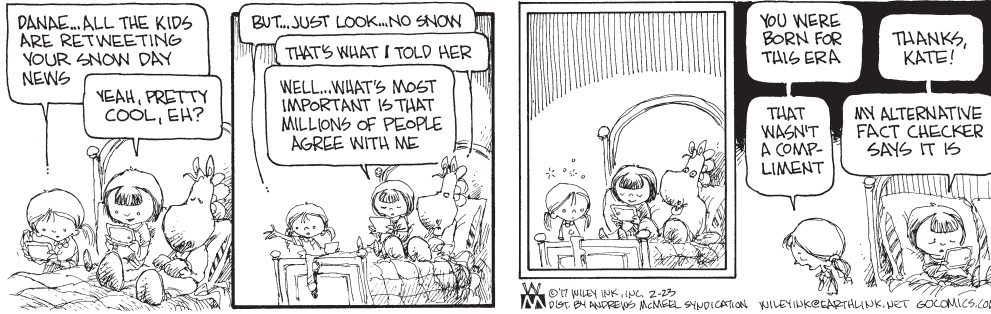
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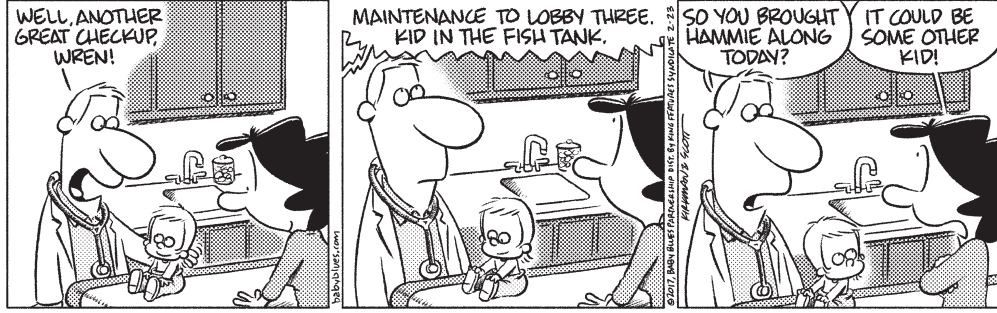
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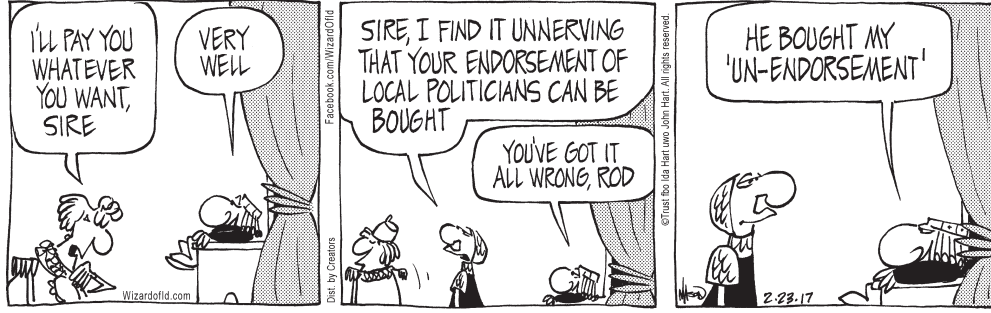
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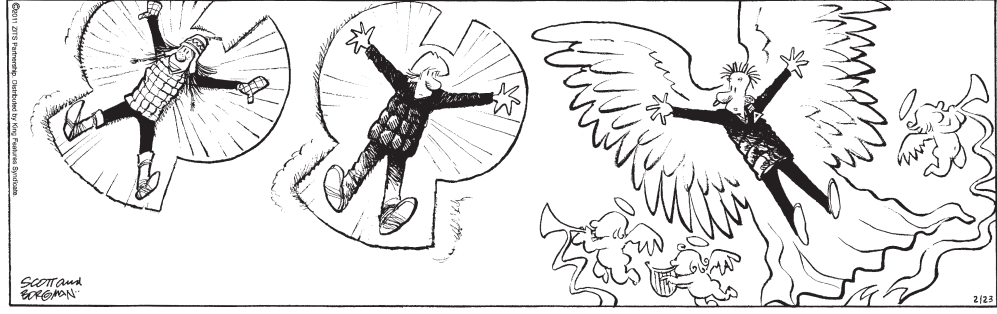
## BABY BLUES



## WIZARD OF ID



## ZITS



## ROSE IS ROSE

