

Shops should turn it down

Dear Annie: On a recent out-of-town excursion to do some shopping and planning for a new bathroom installation, we found ourselves in a very annoying predicament.

We stopped for lunch at a very nice restaurant, only to be assaulted by loud music the second we walked in. Thankfully, the waitress honored our request and did turn it down so we could enjoy a nice leisurely lunch.

Then it was on to the big-box store for a major purchase — only to be assaulted once again by extremely loud music the minute we stepped inside. Needless to say, the measurements and planning were extremely difficult, as it was hard to think because of the noise. An employee there said it was beyond his control and that there was nothing that could be done. We walked out. That store lost a nice sale because of this.

This never used to be a problem. Can't retailers think

and play quiet background music or none at all? Most people have things on their minds when shopping. Maybe someone reading this letter will "get" it. Noise pollution is not healthy indoors, for sure.

— Nancy

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Dear Nancy: I hear you loud and clear. When I walk into a store or restaurant and the music is blasting, I tend to turn right back around. And we're not alone. In a study by consumer marketing blog Triggerpulling, loud music shortened the average consumer's shopping time. Though I have no practical advice to give (short of perhaps keeping some earplugs handy in your purse), I'm printing this as a plea to retailers and restaurateurs alike: Please, keep it down.

Dear Annie: I am a faithful reader of the column and felt compelled to write in because I can really relate to "Deep in Dishes," whose roommate isn't cleaning up after herself in the kitchen.

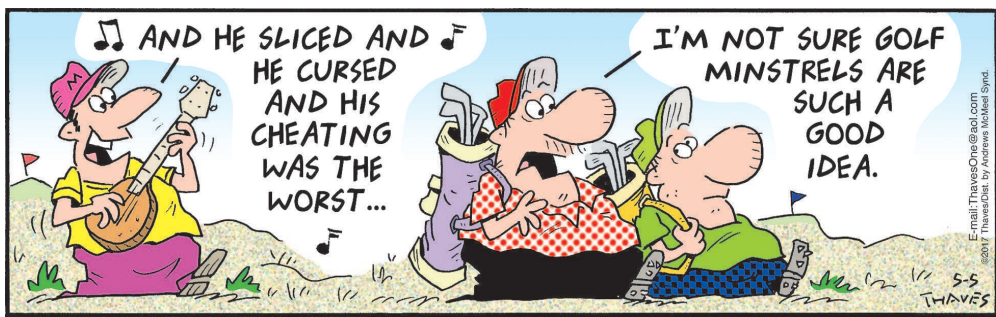
I shared an apartment with two dear friends during college. Two of us were "clean freaks" and did our dishes daily. Our third, just like the roommate "Deep in Dishes" wrote about, left hers for days, forgot they were hers and then refused to do them. Plates, frying pans with stuck-on food, etc. — they'd sit in the sink for days.

Please tell "Deep in Dishes" to put anything left unwashed overnight by "Wendy" in a small plastic tub and leave it on her bed. The kitchen will be clean, and Wendy won't be able to deny they are hers. And if she leaves them in the sink again without washing them, they should reappear on her bed the next day. Worked like a charm for us.

By the way, 30 years later, we are still close friends and laugh about this! — Debbie H.

Dear Debbie: I hear so many stories about how living together has caused falling-outs and ruined friendships. It's refreshing to hear from someone who didn't let roommate problems sink a great friendship.

FRANK AND ERNEST



THATABABY



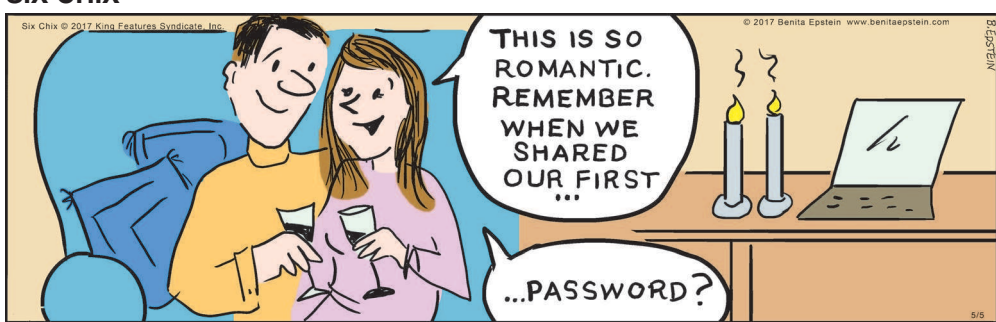
PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



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BABY BLUES



ZITS



TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). The difference is you. You are the one who can change the negative into a positive, find the opportunity in limitation and make the most of each win.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). There's no hurry. There's nowhere you have to be that is not where you are. Embody this, and the synchronicity you feel with your surroundings will make you most attractive to all kinds of opportunities.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Although it's true that household chores go faster when done by others and financial details seem more affordable when someone else is paying, you're still determined to take charge and do it all on your own today. Go figure!

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Sooner or later, community concerns will wind up being your concern. You may as well get involved now while opportunities to take on more responsibility will be super-lucky for you.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Your love is like sunshine. People will come out of their comfort zones to feel your warmth. The sun doesn't worry about giving equally to everyone; it shines for all. You should do the same.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). How do you make someone want what you have? Make sure they know this thing of yours is in limited supply, so rare that it's most likely unavailable to them or at least certainly very difficult to obtain.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Gather information, but don't react to it yet. There's more to come tomorrow. And even when you learn all the relevant details, be slow to make your next move. Play your cards close to the vest.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your aim is rather complex. Practice and repeat all the little parts. This is doable, but it does require a new neurological wiring in your head. Keep going over it until you can produce automatically and effortlessly.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You may find yourself in an awkward position, but you shouldn't let this worry you too much. So much of life is awkward — that is, if you're doing it right. Anyway, getting out of this is simple. Just tell the truth.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Half-hearted intensity won't produce half-hearted results; rather, it will produce nothing at all. You'll get what you want by committing fully to it. If you can't commit fully, you may as well find something else to want.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Take the calculated risk. It will improve your lot. And on a related note: Instead of making excuses as to why you should get together with that attractive someone, just confess your admiration!

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). There's power in knowing what people want, especially if you're in a position to offer it. There's no one-size-fits-all answer here. Your talent for careful observation comes into play.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (May 6). When you love someone, you tend to put up with a lot more from them than you would from anyone else. This applies to beloved endeavors as well, and both will work in your favor in a big way this solar return, as your labors of love will produce astounding results. Windfall months: May, August and December. Scorpio and Capricorn adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 8, 30, 22, 29 and 17.

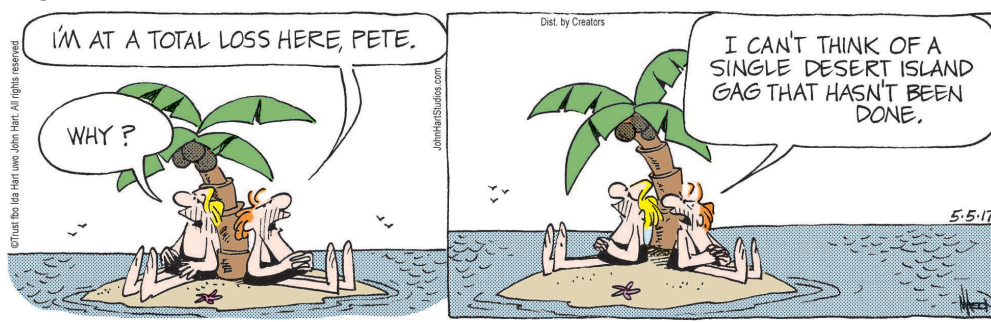
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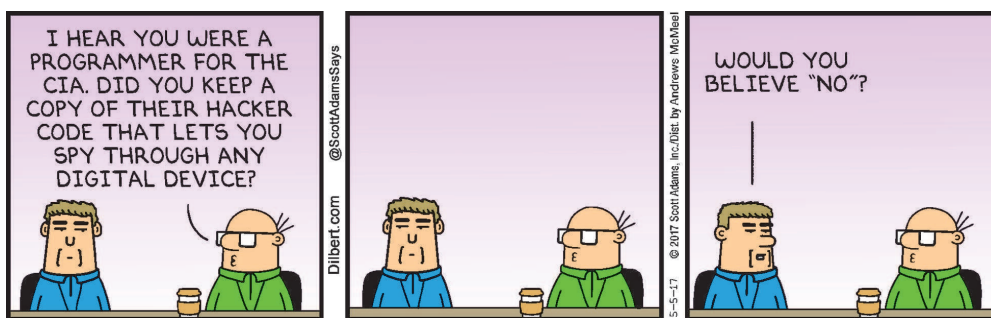
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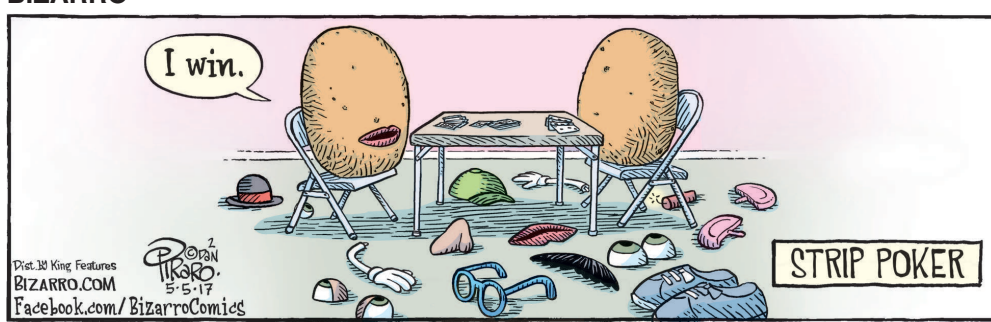
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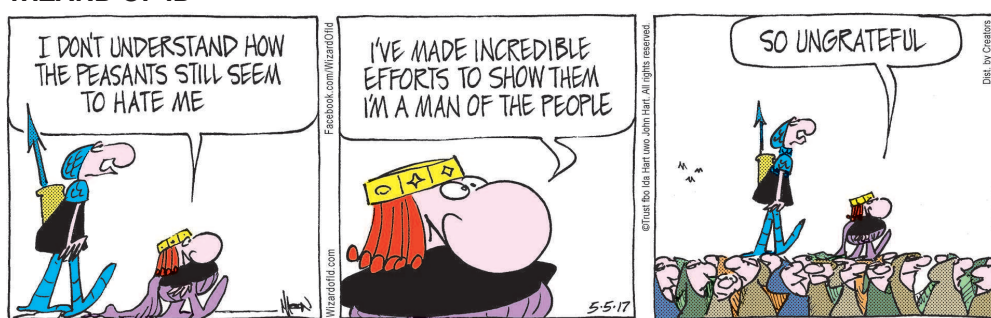
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WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

