

The beauty of an open mind

Dear Annie: I have a gray problem — and not with my hair. I am surrounded by black-and-white-minded friends and family. They have inflexible opinions on every subject. And they all call my grayness fence-sitting. I'm sure I'm not the only one with this dilemma.

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

What's a person to do when he or she can see both sides of debates on most topics? I tend to get so frustrated. Someone will state his firm opinion on an issue, and when I say something more moderate, he'll get defensive and tell me it's all or nothing — in essence, that everything is either black or white.

Am I cursed by too much gray matter? — *Frustrated in Gray*

Dear Frustrated in Gray: Your open mind is a blessing, not a curse. And the attitude of your friends and family toward your "fence-sitting" says much more about them than it does about you. If they were really so sure of themselves, why would they have to convince someone else?

Keep doing what you're doing. Question everything and

consider all sides of an issue. It requires more mental energy, but it will keep you actively engaged with the world around you and will lend greater empathy and understanding. As Voltaire once said, "doubt is not a pleasant condition, but certainty is absurd."

Dear Annie: When I read your column, I note that you offer Al-Anon and Nar-Anon as support groups for families and loved ones of those with addiction problems or related behavioral problems. I'd like to offer another 12-step support group as an additional resource. It is Families Anonymous, with meetings all over the world.

For nearly 30 years, I have been a grateful member and contact person for Families Anonymous.

The purpose of our meetings is to offer support to those adults who are concerned about the alcohol, drug or behavioral problems of a loved one, a friend or maybe a co-worker. When people come to these meetings, they discover that they are no longer

alone but rather "among friends who have experienced similar problems." Our members do not judge or give advice; we simply listen and share our own personal experiences.

In ways that have to be experienced rather than explained, we become able to take the emphasis off the person we are concerned about and put the focus back on ourselves and what we call our own recovery. In time, when we work the program, we become much less confused and able to think clearly, to deal with problems of living.

The problems of someone you care about can take over your life and leave you unable to live the life you deserve.

Won't you join us? There is no preregistration; there are no dues or fees. We ask you to simply come, listen and share if you choose. — *Judy D.*

Dear Judy: Thank you for sharing this valuable resource. Support groups offer a space of love and solidarity. I encourage any readers who are struggling because of a loved one's behavior to visit <http://www.familiesanonymous.org> for more information today.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You didn't have to do any special conscious thinking to grow yourself to this level of human development, and you can't think your way into, or out of, the next phase either. So just relax! Breakthroughs will happen naturally.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Luckiest move: Make an agreement with life. For the next 24 hours you'll give it your all and expect nothing in return. You'll be an enthusiastic servant to the fates and the spirit of goodness itself.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You're just not in the mood to compromise. Some would call it stubborn. The bottom line is that you really want your way, and you'll dig your heels in about it, too. Anyone wanting to negotiate would be better off trying in a few days.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Two people stand in the same place: One of them is lost; the other is home. The shift from lost to found is one of accepting a place and getting to know it instead of rejecting it as somewhere other than where you're supposed to be.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Do you believe that there are some people you were meant to know? The fates don't seem to be acting as efficient social directors these days, so you're going to have to take it into your own hands. Mingle.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Your imagination and creativity are exceptionally strong today, and you can point them in the direction of fleshing out a task in a way that only you can. You'll make yourself indispensable.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). If an actor were to play you in the movie version of your story, what defining characteristics and behaviors do you think would be the focus for this current period? A bit of objectivity will help you see how you can be

more powerful in your life.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Your brain fills in blanks constantly throughout the day, so much faster than you're even aware of. Create habits of mind to stay positive. Here's a good one: "I'm happy because ..."

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The world is full of egomaniacs, and you feel a personal responsibility to counter that with selflessness. Check your motives, though. If you're yielding to others so that they'll approve of you, you're not really helping anyone.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). If you deprive yourself of what you want, you'll be all the more attracted to what's on the "restricted" list. Your best bet will be a strategy of distraction. What totally different thing might you do to interrupt this pattern?

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Relationships get complicated. Love gets messy. Romance disappoints. You wonder if it's worth the hype. Pull away to gain perspective — a positive and restorative choice. The turn is coming. Love is worth the effort.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Just because someone is happy with what you are doing, that doesn't necessarily make it right for you. People's approval can be fickle, impermanent and certainly nothing to base your sense of self on.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Aug. 16). You'll change simple and small behaviors and get incommensurately favorable results. It turns out that your healthy choices don't affect only you. As you do the things that help you command good energy, you'll improve your career, family and social ties in the process. There are domestic upgrades in March. Libra and Aquarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 45, 20, 21, 32 and 38.

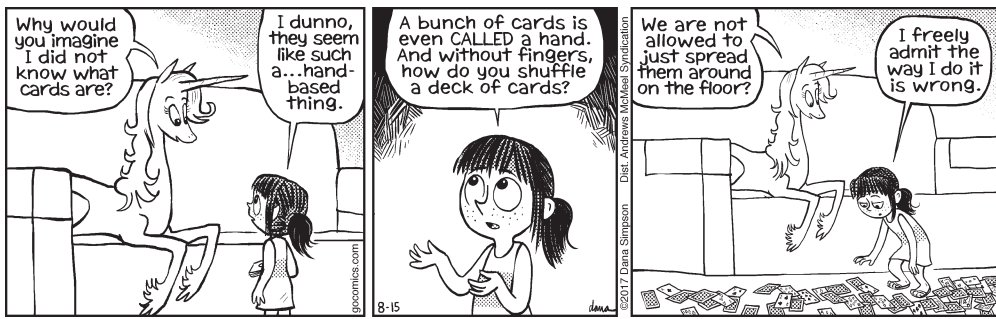
FRANK AND ERNEST



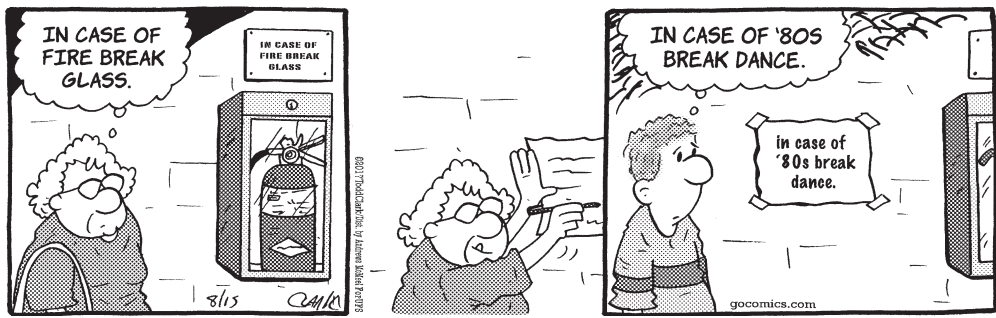
THATABABY



PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



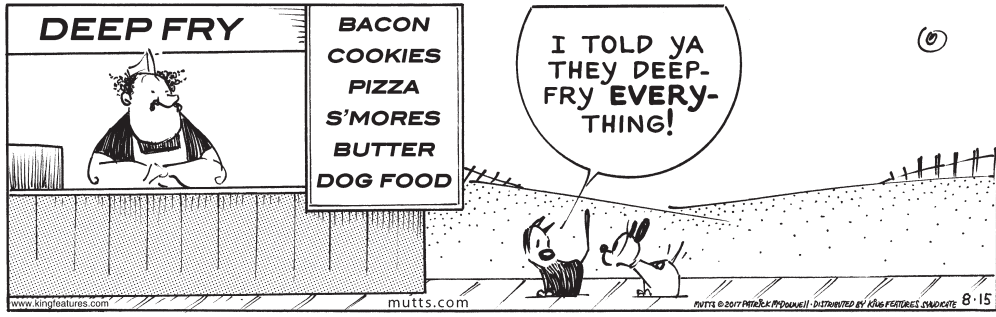
LOLA



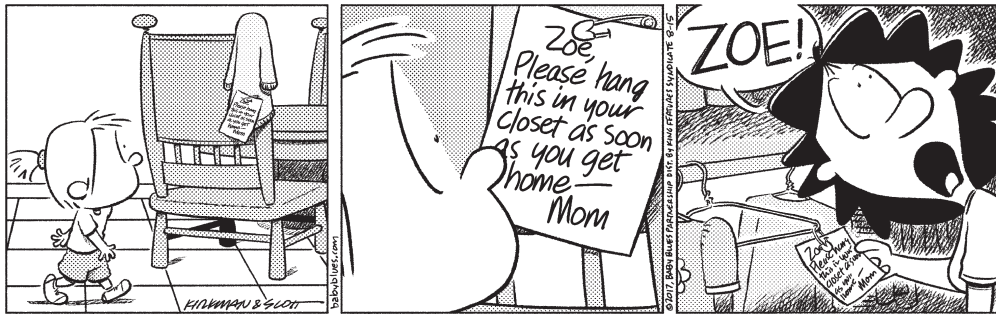
SIX CHIX



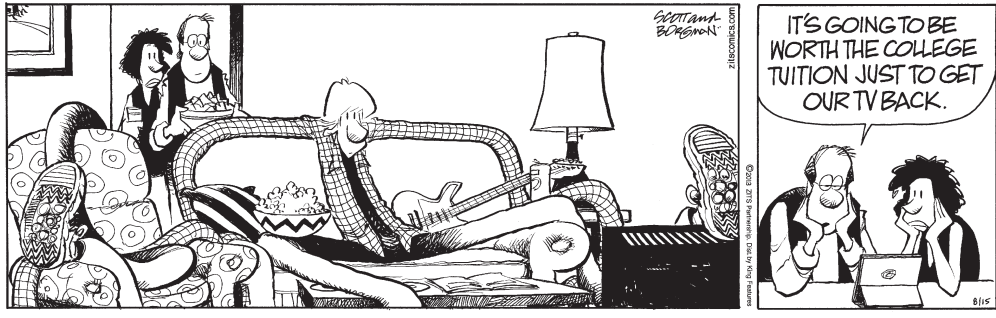
MUTTS



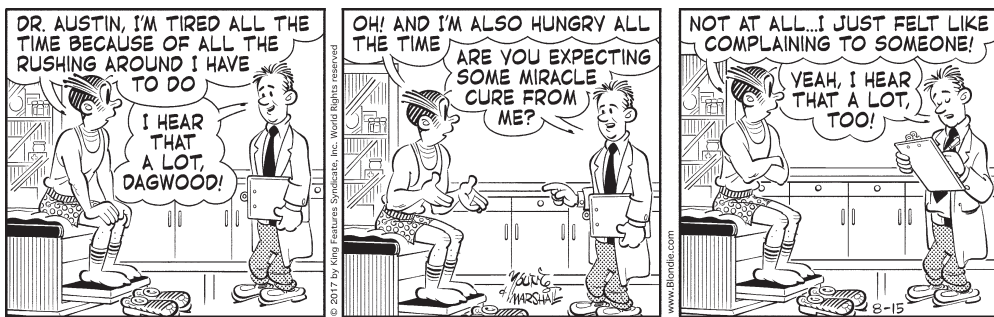
BABY BLUES



ZITS



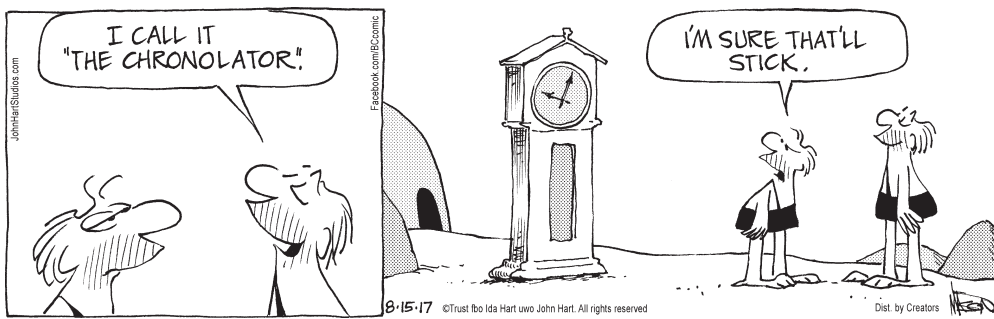
BLONDIE



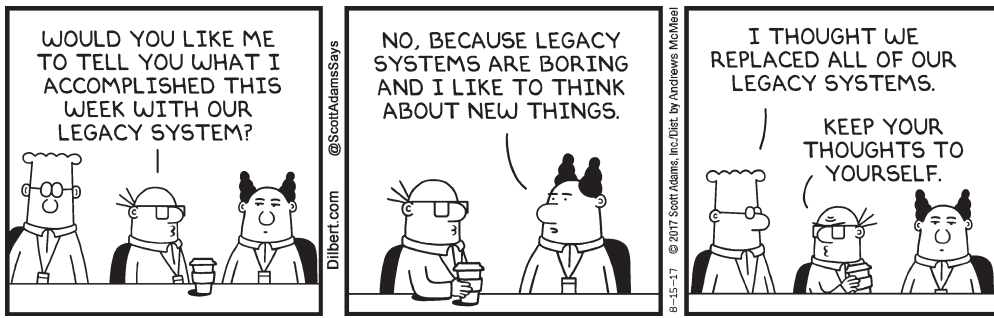
SALLY FORTH



B.C.



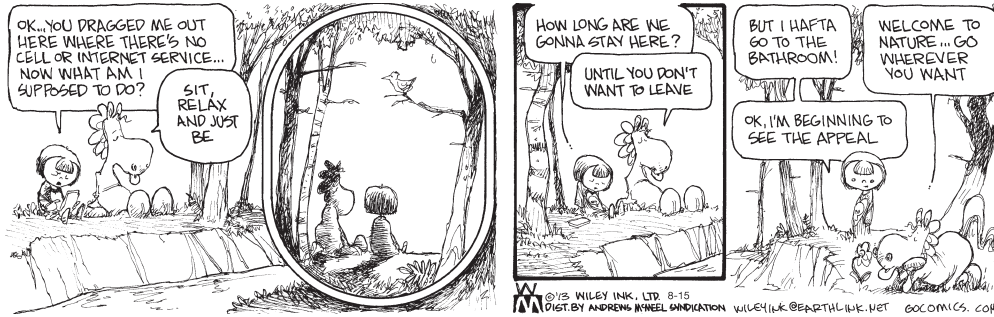
DILBERT



BIZARRO



NON SEQUITUR



WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

