

The other grandmother

Dear Annie: I know this is short notice, seeing as my question is about Christmas, but I'm hoping that you can publish an answer. I'm quite sure there are others in my shoes.

I have a 9-year-old grandson, "Bradley." He has been in and out of our lives, mainly because of the fact that his mother, "Jill," and my son, "Andrew," are not married and my son is not to have custody of Bradley at all. Jill and Bradley have mainly lived with Jill's parents.

We have never been as grandparents and grandson should be, but my husband, my daughters and I have tried. I knew this, but his mother finally admitted that one of the reasons she never left him at my house while she ran errands or let him spend the night was that her dad didn't want him around us. She said her dad (Bradley's grandpa) was always worried that we'd let Andrew come over and kidnap him — which we would never do.

Anyway, for about a year now, when Bradley does come

over, he never talks unless we talk first, and even then he only has one- or two-word answers. Jill has always let him sit in on adult conversations, something I totally disagree with. If she starts talking about how this or that is going wrong in her life, he jumps in and makes sure to give his input, but it's adult stuff he doesn't need to know about. We realize he forms his opinions based on what his mother says.

Jill generally only brings him around during holidays, when gifts are in order. We can tell he really doesn't want to be here but his mother is forcing him to come to get a present. My dilemma: Do I continue buying gifts for him in the amount that I do for my other grandchildren, the ones I see often? Am I supposed to overlook what Jill is doing and pretend that he is doing nothing wrong? I don't want to be the grandma who is trying to gift a grandson into coming more, because that has no effect on him anyway. — *Christmas in Kentucky*

Dear Christmas in Kentucky: This little boy is only 9, and based on your letter, he's probably getting a lot of mixed signals from the adults in his life about how to behave and whom he can trust. It's no wonder he's a little reserved.

You're under no obligation to buy him gifts of a certain value, but I would continue to show him the same love and attention you show your other grandchildren. If his home life is chaotic, your reliable support could mean more than you know.

Dear Annie: We just want to thank you for the answer to the letter from the victim of a scam. The column appeared in our paper yesterday. It came at a time when we were helping our son decide whether he should get involved in a similar-sounding job offer he found on the internet. We contacted the Federal Trade Commission and received confirmation that it was indeed a scam! We will be forever grateful. — *Don and Gloria in Connecticut*

Dear Don and Gloria: How serendipitous. Thank you for sharing that. You've made my day.

DEAR ANNIE

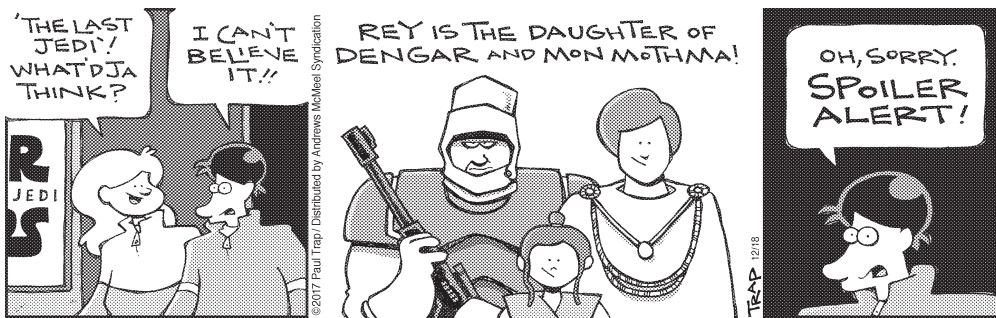


Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

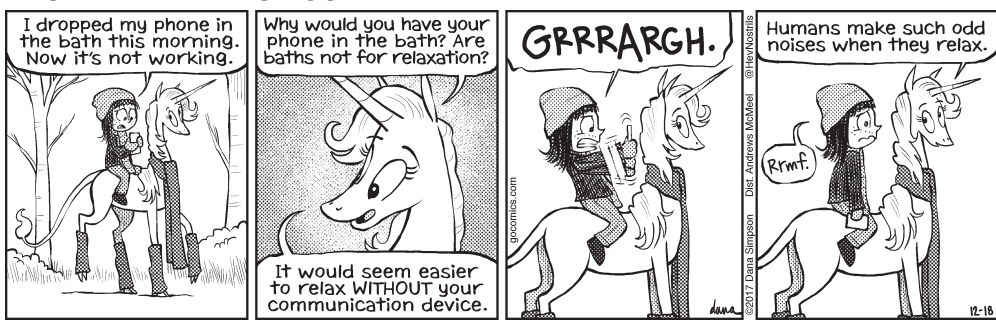
FRANK AND ERNEST



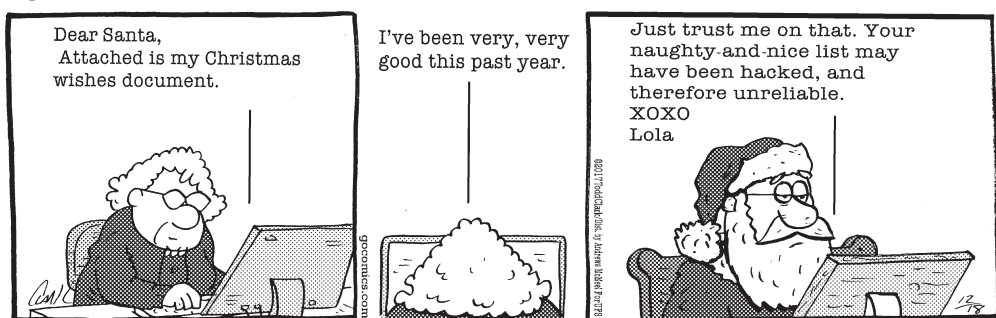
THATABABY



PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



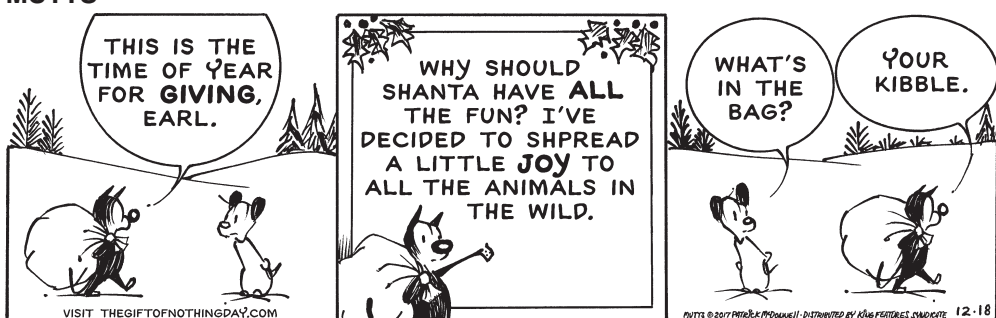
LOLA



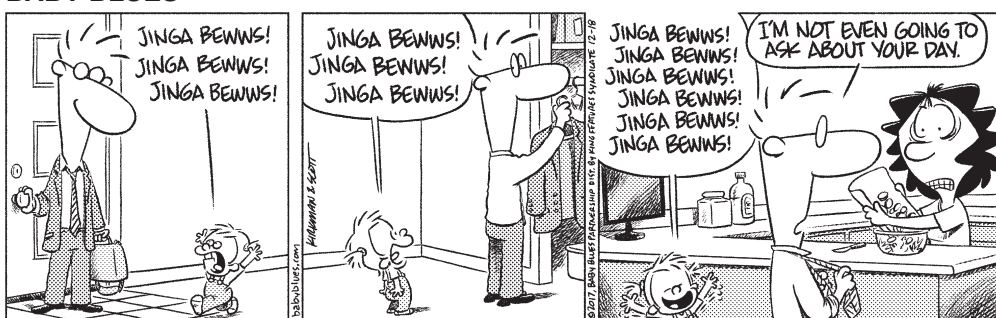
SIX CHIX



MUTTS



BABY BLUES



ZITS



TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). It's all temporary — the mood, the circumstance, the things you want out of this ... and yet, it matters. You'll feel as though you're defining yourself with the action you take.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You'll be looking for ways to do more and need less and you'll find them. There's magic in this pursuit. It will also be quite addicting, especially in the case of doing things for others.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You've often had the impression that the game is rigged. Today that suspicion comes sneaking around again, although this time it seems to be rigged in your favor ... so is that going to be a problem?

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Whether it's emotional or actual baggage, you'll be less effective trying to dead lift it on your own. You can handle much more weight with a little strategy. Can it be leveraged? Can it be rolled?

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). An ordeal can be an adventure and an adventure can be an ordeal, and today they'll be one and the same, depending on how you look at this. It's easier to approach it brightly when there's someone to impress.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Trial and error is the only way to learn this complex thing you've taken on. Sure, the theoretical knowledge will help, but it can only take you so far. You'll advance through your mistakes. Mastery will be eventual and inevitable.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You're great at slipping into the mindset that will serve the moment best. This is a talent in and of itself — a sign of emotional genius really — and you'll be able to trade on it for some nice dividends today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). It's not important that they know everything you mean. In fact, it's better that they don't. As people fill in the blanks with their own story, they connect with you. Mysteries are opportunities. Voids are invitations.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). What stands alone? Nothing and no one. Life here is about groups. Organisms, tribes, cultures ... from bacteria to trees to animals and people, it's all working together. As much as you'd like that not to be true today, it still is.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). There's not one bad thing on your to-do list today. You could potentially take pleasure in every single activity. The thing is, there are so many of them, and most of them rather pressing. You can do this!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your day-to-day is slowly morphing into a different pattern. Your style is changing, too. But your values will stay the same. Like a developing child, you will fulfill the potential of what you always were.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Kindness and self-respect are at the center of your decision to step up and own your actions when they're great and when they're not. We're all just learning and in need of both encouragement and correction.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 19). In the next 10 weeks, luck, attitude and ability intersect in the perfect convergence to bring you money. Your excitement over an idea will be the defining factor — your idea of another person, or of the future, or of humanity in general. What/whom you take care of will reward you enormously in the spring. Aquarius and Leo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 15, 5, 22, 28 and 31.

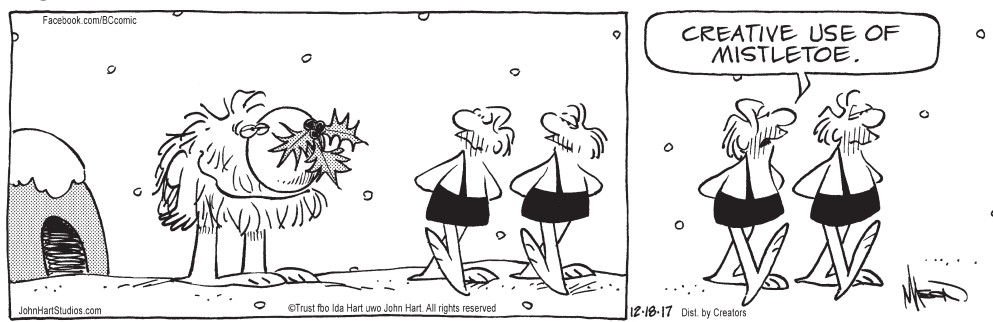
BLONDIE



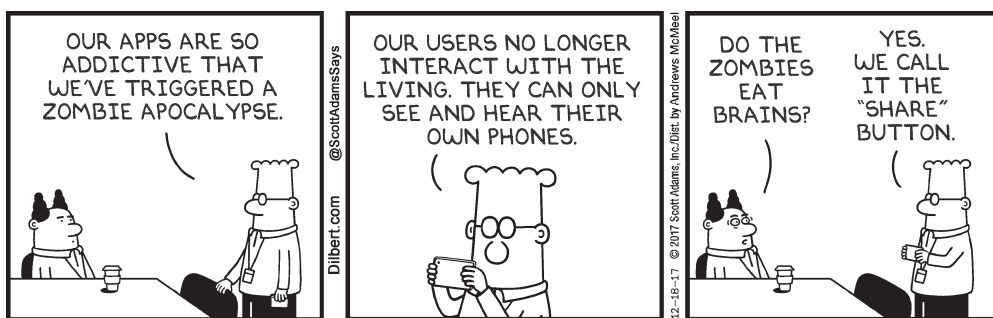
SALLY FORTH



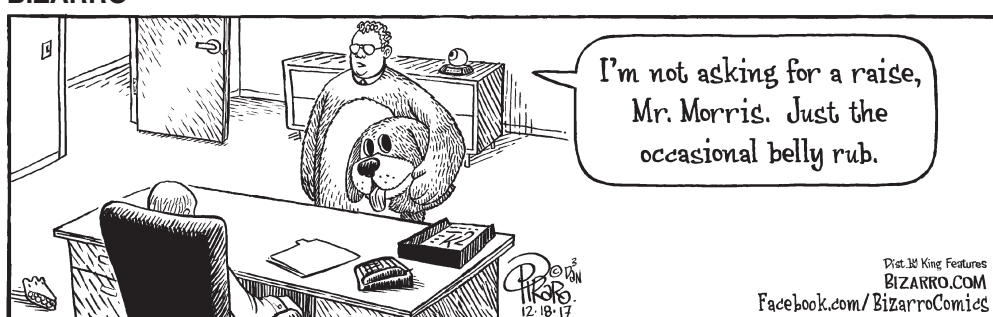
B.C.



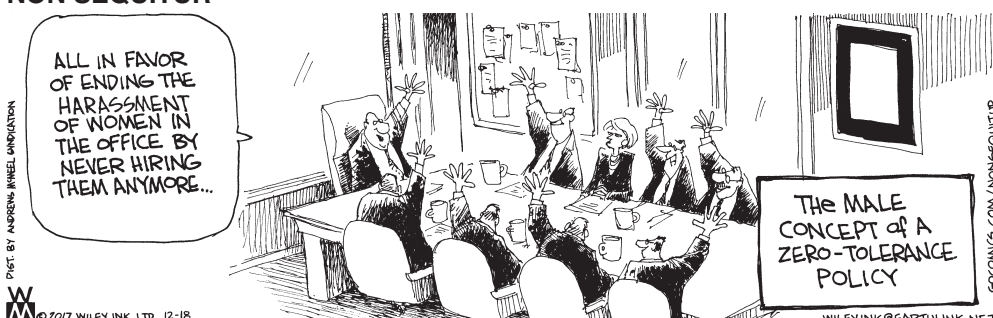
DILBERT



BIZARRO



NON SEQUITUR



WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

