

Co-ed sleepovers revisited

Dear Readers: I recently published a letter from "Not Comfortable," who is helping to raise her three granddaughters. She stated that coed sleepovers seem to be the norm for children in her town, and she wondered what reader consensus is on that topic. I was delighted to hear from people of all ages on all sides of the issue. Here's but a small sample.

Dear Annie: I am writing about "Not Comfortable." I am a 13-year-old boy in the eighth grade, and 90 percent of my friends are girls. I have two particular female friends with whom I am very close and have been friends for four years. We have sleepovers often. Sometimes we sleep at their house (they are sisters), and sometimes we sleep at mine. Their parents are fine with our sleepovers, and so are mine.

Two of the girls "Not Comfortable" wrote to you about are 11, and I think that at that age, they are still young enough that coed sleepovers are fine. I think boys and girls can be in the same

room for a sleepover, and you can check on them if you would like. If you don't trust your child with coed sleepovers, you can put a monitor or another device in the room. — *Sleepover Connoisseur*

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Dear Sleepover Connoisseur: You seem like a thoughtful young man. The monitoring device is a novel solution, though I'm not sure it would suffice for the following folks.

Dear Annie: I don't think parents should put their kids in a situation where they might get themselves into trouble. We can't be everywhere as parents, but we can do our best to not "provide" situations that might cause unwanted results, e.g., teen pregnancies. Keep up the dialogue! — *Cheryl*

Dear Cheryl: Thanks for writing. The dialogue continues.

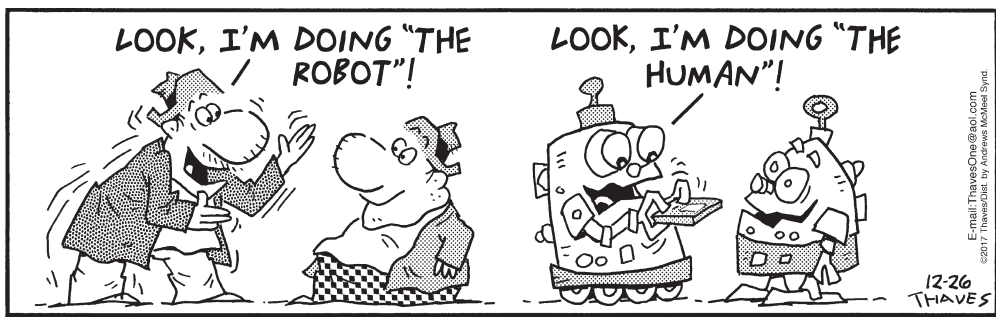
Dear Annie: When my daughter had her first serious boyfriend, I started out worrying a lot about what they were doing together when they were alone. When she asked whether she

could start birth control, I had to admit to myself that she was already sexually active. I was really upset. But I supported her.

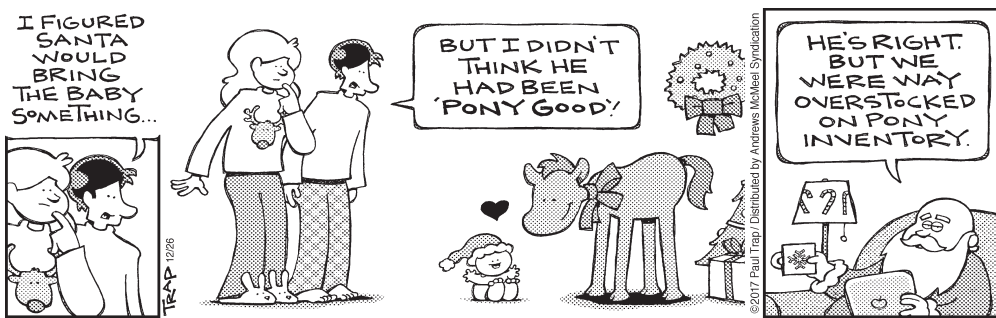
Since then, she has been open about everything and talked to me about things that I would never dream of saying to my mother (even now). Eventually, my daughter would sleep at her boyfriend's house, and then he started staying at our house, too. (They live 40 minutes of dark, moose-filled, no-cell-service driving apart.) Instead of sneaking around, they would hang out at home. I realized that I felt really good knowing that they were safe and not at some party. My daughter appreciated my listening to her and not just sticking to outdated social taboos. We are incredibly close, and that is a bond built on openness and trust. — *No Regrets*

Dear No Regrets: While I'm not sure you'll convince many of my readers that coed sleepovers are OK (I'm still not sure I'm convinced myself), I do agree that trust and openness, rather than deceit and secrecy, are key to a healthy relationship with your teens. Thanks for writing.

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). In the cry of one broken heart is the song of all the broken hearts through history. It's why you can't listen without echoing the mournful resonance inside you. At least there's a comfort and healing in this.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). If you don't easily fall asleep, there are good reasons; perhaps too much is on your mind, or an exciting possibility has you reeling. Or could you be awake in someone else's dream? Embrace the mystical: It's good for imagination.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). While Frank Sinatra may have had a hit doing it "My Way," for most people the real adventure begins when "My Way" doesn't pan out and we must learn to do it "A Way" (or in today's case, any possible way that will work, really).

CANCER (June 22-July 22). There's something coming your way — an important sale or a bonus. The rewards will have a direct correlation to the work you put in and the stellar attitude in your approach. It's nice when things happen this cleanly.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You're usually pretty intuitive about what others might need, but what this intuition is probably telling you now is to just ask. You'll be quite surprised by what you hear.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Dreams are good; plans are better. A little of both will serve you best. Because if you only plan, it won't be interesting enough, and if you only dream, it won't be practical enough.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You'll be on the hunt for a new experience. So while the cost matters, and the risk is a factor to consider as well, the enticement of the unfamiliar teamed with your curiosity will trump your trepidation.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You care about something that isn't conventional. Getting into it more might lead you slightly and temporarily away from certain people who will never really get it, but it will bond you with people who share your interest.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The moment when it happens is not the next one; it's always this one... if for no other reason than the fact that you can't live or do anything in the next one. Keep reminding yourself to stay alert to what's happening now.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Since you are the beholder, you get to say what's beautiful. Try to do this away from the influence of others to get a true read. Otherwise you'll be unduly swayed.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). It's easy to say no when you have already said yes to something else. Since your schedule fills up on a first-come, first-served basis, you'll do well to be the first one to fill it up with what you really want your life to be about.

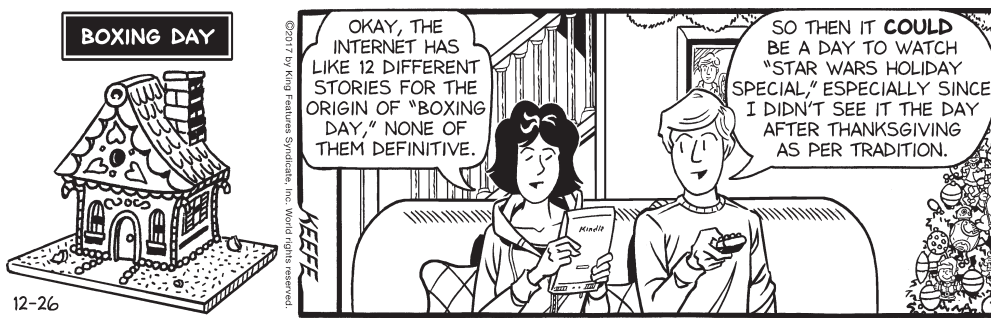
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). According to Grabel's Law, two is not equal to three, not even for large values of two. In a related story, getting something different from what you want (even if you get a lot of it) is still not getting what you want.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 27). An investment made years ago will finally pay off in 2018. Among the stellar decisions you'll make this year will be your choice to rely on the reliable. Loved ones will give you the lift you need to stretch into new roles and challenges. A friendship gets sweeter with a shared adventure. Speak your heart in June. Gemini and Libra adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 30, 45, 22, 19 and 31.

BLONDIE



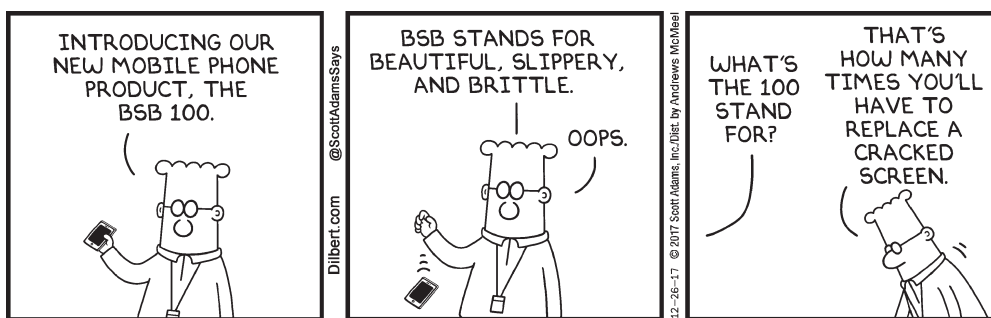
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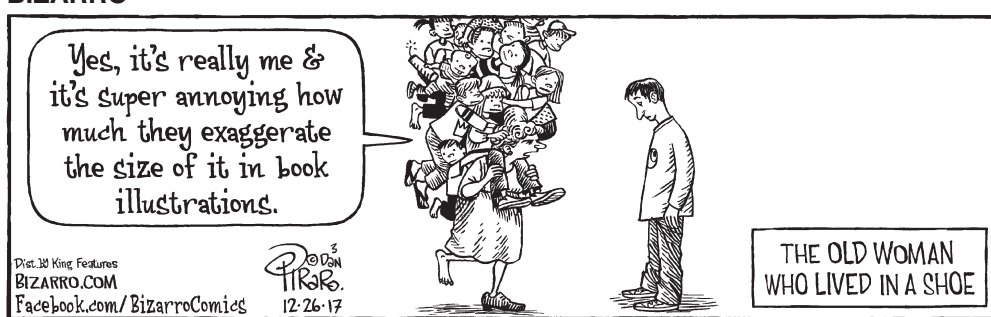
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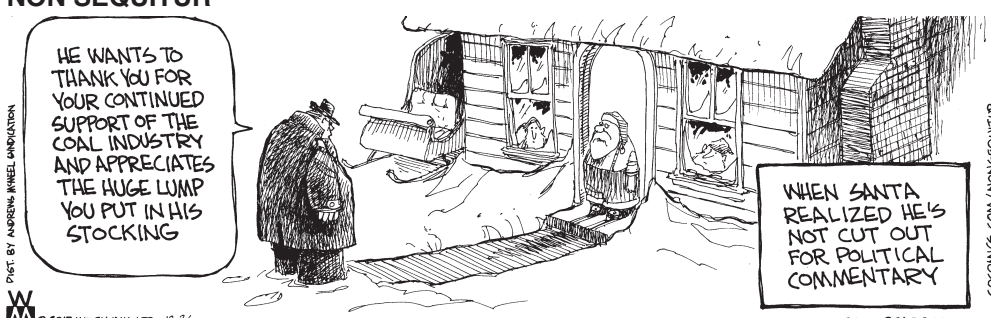
DILBERT



BIZARRO



NON SEQUITUR



WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

