

# Um, excuse you

Dear Annie: I'm a woman in my mid-20s. About a month ago, I started seeing "Vern." He was my first date through an online dating site, so I was nervous and then pleasantly surprised when he turned out to be charming, sincere, witty and just as good-looking in person. We share a lot of the same interests and even, it turns out, have some mutual acquaintances.

The issue I'm writing about also started on our first date. Vern and I were enjoying a nice stroll on our city's river walk after dinner, when all of a sudden, he belched. One time and I wouldn't have even thought anything of it, but a few minutes later, it happened again. For the rest of the night, he was belching once every five minutes. He didn't say "excuse me" but just continued to talk as if nothing had happened.

We've been on a few dates since, and this has happened a few more times but not every time. How do I bring this up? Or do I even bring it up? I'm not trying to let this ruin a potentially great relationship, but still, I have

to be honest: It grosses me out. — *Unexcused*

**Dear Unexcused:** If Vern's been an otherwise polite person, I'm guessing he didn't say "excuse me" because it's become so commonplace he hardly notices it or because he was praying you didn't. There's most likely an underlying medical reason for the excessive belching. He may have acid reflux or stomach ulcers. Encourage him to talk to his doctor, more for his benefit than yours. Chronic acid exposure in the esophagus can cause serious health problems down the

line. **Dear Annie:** Recently, you printed a letter about a co-worker's odor. In the last sentence of your reply, you said, "To anyone thinking of skipping that pre-work shower, please don't."

Our world faces serious problems from global warming. If Americans shower almost every day and do so in hot water, they give rise to significant amounts of carbon emissions. Although less harmful energy sources, such as wind and solar power, are becoming

increasingly available, they may never be able to handle all our needs. As for nuclear power, it has disadvantages of a different kind.

I shower about twice a week and shower only in cold water during about half the weeks of the year.

Granted, I am retired and do not need to be very often with other people in close quarters. Another measure I take to limit my carbon footprint is to set my home thermostat at 62 degrees in winter and 76 degrees in summer. Also, because I live near virtually all my frequent destinations, I can reach them by bicycle or on foot most of the time.

I am hoping that before you suggest any particular routines or behaviors, you will pause to consider their implications with regard to global warming. — *Cleaner Climate*

**Dear Cleaner Climate:** You are right. My response was meant to be a general plea for personal hygiene, not a prescription for everyone to shower every day. By all means, folks should shower or bathe just as often as they need to in order to stay fresh. Thanks for raising the issue.

## DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.

## FRANK AND ERNEST



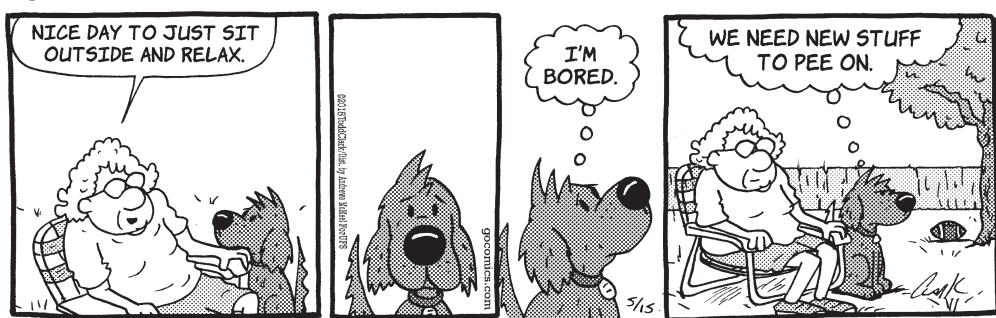
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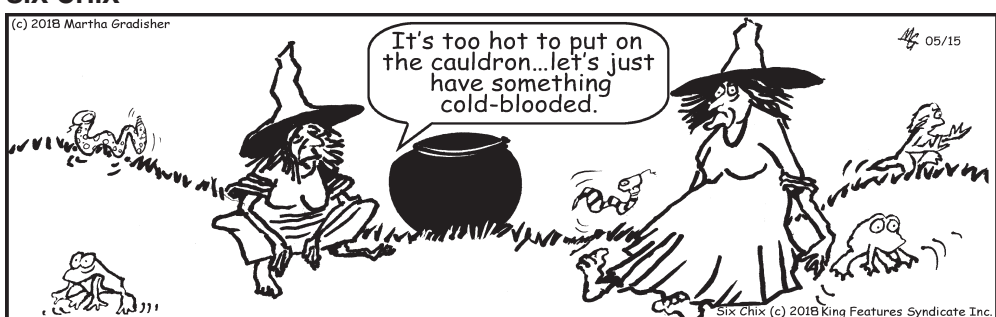
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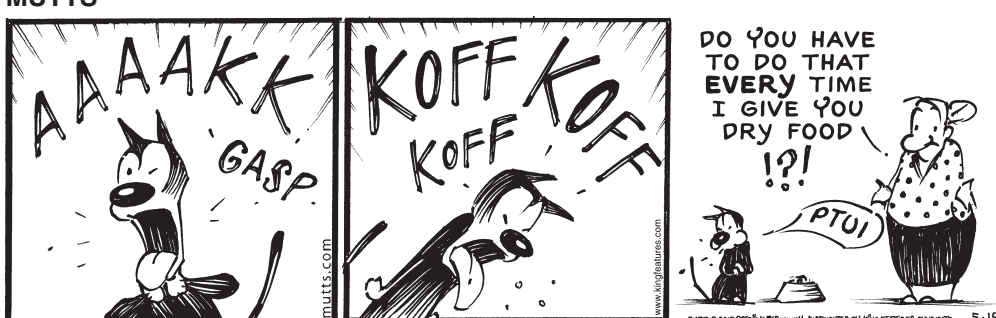
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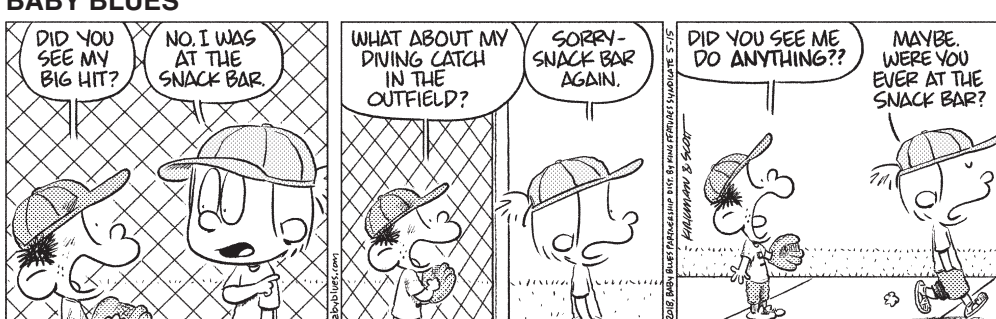
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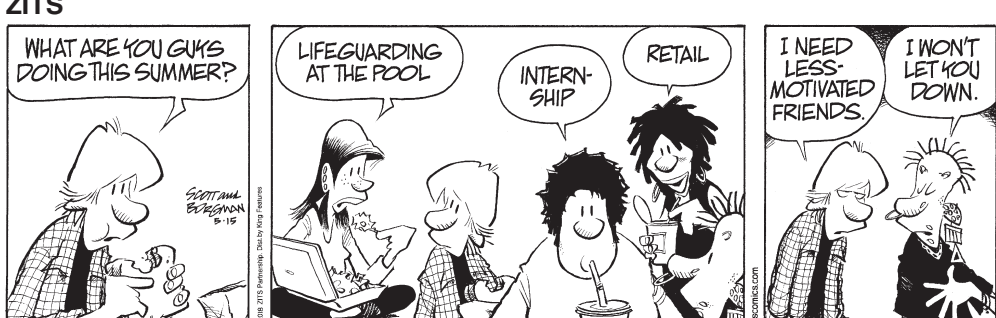
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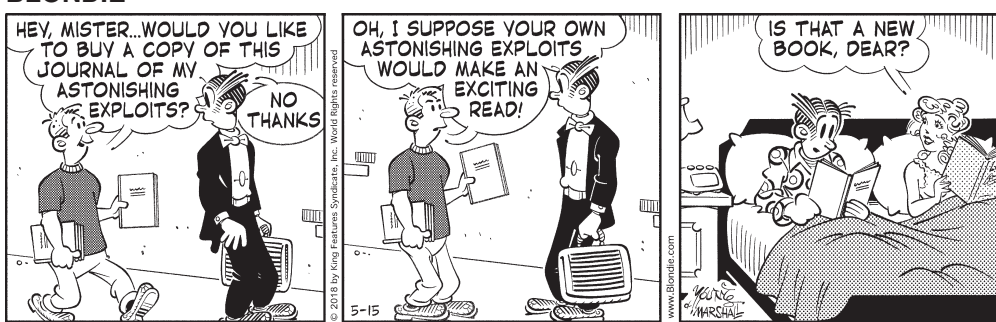
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## ZITS



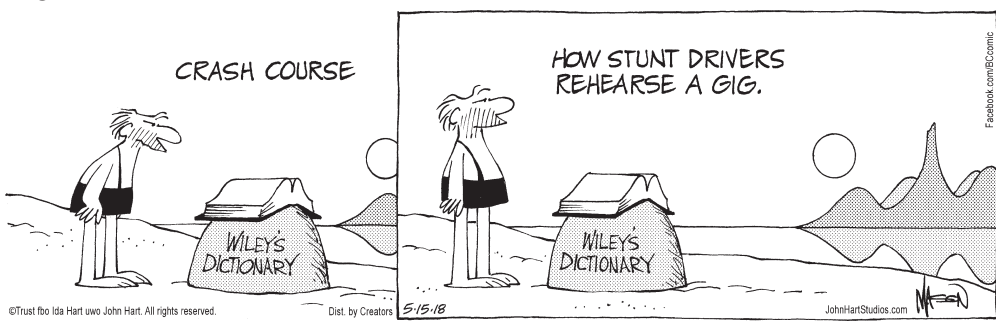
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## SALLY FORTH



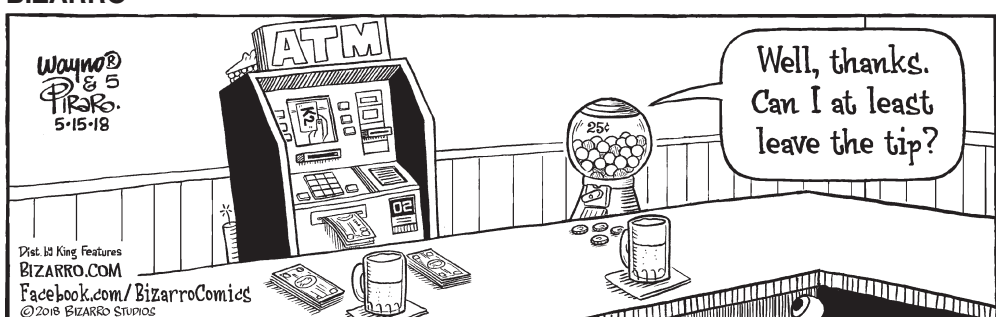
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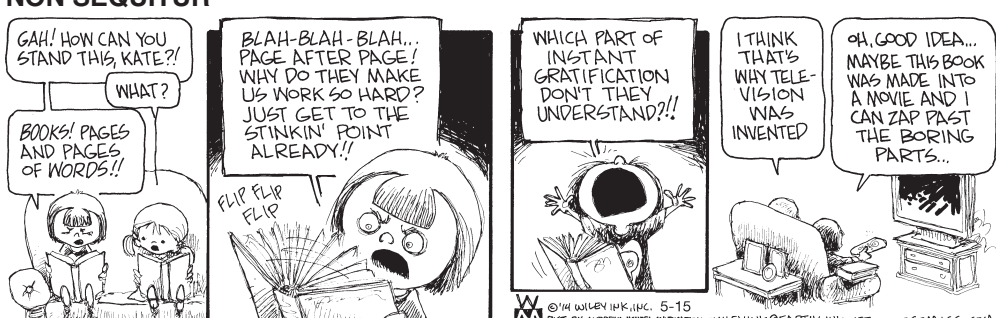
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## BIZARRO



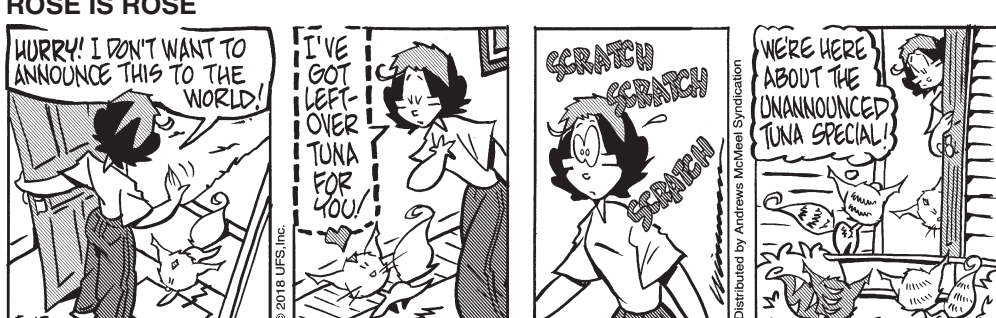
## NON SEQUITUR



## WIZARD OF ID



## ROSE IS ROSE



## TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** The shortcut will be obvious — someone will point to it with a shiny sign. The long and viable path won't be obvious, but if you're internally quiet, then you'll probably sense it. You'll have to clear some brush to get started.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** In your mind, it's not enough for you to just show up. You want to show up and know that they feel you there. You want to show up in such a way as to make sure that people will miss you when you don't.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** Efficiency is partly about good planning and mostly about dealing well with people. When people feel part of the team, they'll place a high priority on what needs to be accomplished for the win.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** You have someone powerful on your side, rooting for you to do whatever it takes for maximum vitality — and that someone is you. All success will spring from taking excellent care of yourself.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Should you knock yourself out to try and win over the very skeptical powers that be, or should you run the other direction from what's clearly a no-win situation? Choose the action that will make you feel the best about yourself.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** The magic and momentum will begin when your goals match up nicely with the goals of another. If this isn't happening, it's not you; it's the situation. Keep moving and looking for a match.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Your sensitivity to diet is turned up today, and you'll be more affected than usual by the foods you eat. Make a plan and stick to it no matter what. This will bring you peace and optimum results.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Being able to control your state of mind will be huge. To determine the state that would be most suited to the job and then have the self-mastery to move your head there ... well, that pretty much guarantees success today.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** The least powerful people are the ones who believe they are small. They'll show this by being nasty to underlings. Truly important people treat everyone with respect.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** The situation you're in today is not a zero-sum game. People need what you're offering just as much as they need what others are offering. You're in direct competition with no one.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** There will be those who look at everything as a "you" problem or a "me" problem. Those are the hardest ones to deal with. If you can create a team mentality, then everything will turn into "we," and you'll all get a lot accomplished.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** People don't want to be told what to do. They don't even want to be told what other people did to create success. People just want acknowledgement today. That's all. Share a kind word, and they'll be all ears.

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (May 16).** Much of your story is outside of your control, but when you take charge of what you can, you'll create an improved and truly customized future for yourself. Three key allies will help you. Recognize who's on your side and who's not. Mostly this is about feeling supported. June and September bring easy money. Pisces and Virgo adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 7, 40, 33, 8 and 45.