

# Dinners price mother out

**Dear Annie:** My daughter and son-in-law live in another state. He is a doctor, and she is a nurse. They are both 30 and have no student loan debt. They have two kids. I go up and visit whenever I can. I don't make near the amount of money they do, but when we all go out to eat, I have to pay for myself — even if I just order coffee and no food, which happens sometimes because they like to go to expensive places. I told them I'm on a budget, so recently, they've picked places where I can at least afford an appetizer. Is it wrong of me to hope they pay for my meals? Should I just offer to stay at the house while they go out? — *Mom on a Budget*

**DEAR ANNIE**



Annie Lane  
Creators  
Syndicate Inc.

**Dear Mom on a Budget:** When you've taken the trouble to visit, it would be polite of your daughter and son-in-law to treat you as their guest and pick up the tab when you go out to eat. It's not wrong of you to hope for that. But it is futile for you to just hope and expect that to be enough to elicit change.

Talk to your daughter can-

dly about what a strain the expensive meals out are. Offer to pick out restaurants that are within your budget. If they won't agree to go to a restaurant you can afford, then they should at least agree to help cover the cost of your meals. I suspect that they're living so comfortably they've forgotten that money is an object for most of us. Let's hope your conversation will be enough to remind them and give them a more generous perspective.

**Dear Annie:** "Single Senior" wrote about activities for single seniors and mentioned a \$40-a-year activities center. You considered that a bargain to jump on.

In Ocala, Florida, there is a hospital-sponsored group called Prestige 55. It costs \$25 to join for life. The main activity is evening talks by doctors and other experts on various health-related subjects. Each is preceded by a free supper. So you can get your initiation fee back in a week or two. It also includes a variety of other events and activities, such

as art classes, visits to interesting places, bus trips and nature hikes. Some have fees. The semi-weekly aquatic exercise class in an indoor pool is \$30 a year. A newer group in town has a similar set of lectures at noon, followed by free lunches. You can easily make friends at many of those events. Sometimes the pool group will sit together at a meal table. Thrift shop touring can be fun — and free if you do not buy anything. And as you say, some newspapers periodically print lists of local clubs and volunteer service groups. Hospitals, schools, shelters, youth centers, libraries, churches and charities are always looking for people. All are good places to meet new friends. — *Old Mainer*

**Dear Old Mainer:** Staying social is so important to health. Studies have shown that it's good for our immune and cardiovascular systems, among many other things. (See the article "Social Relationships and Health: A Flashpoint for Health Policy," by Debra Umberson and Jennifer Karas Montez, if you'd like the in-depth analysis of why.) Not to mention, it's just plain fun. Thanks for writing.

## TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** Thoughtless people need your tolerance. Think of this as a test. If you fail it, cut yourself a break. It only means that your coping resources are already a bit stretched. Compassion starts with self-compassion.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** There's much to be gained by suspending disbelief long enough to, say, get immersed in the world of a movie or understand the finer points of an argument you do not agree with.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** You have the strength, guts and initiative to do things your way, which flies in the face of convention and is sure to evoke bewilderment from most onlookers. In time, bewilderment will turn to admiration.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** Endings do not have to be failures; they don't even have to be losses. Things end because it's time for them to. Then the graceful thing is to acknowledge the crowd with a bow and get off the stage.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Remember when you thought you needed a Frappuccino but really needed an apple? Or you thought you needed a cookie and what you really needed was a support system? Today is different. You know exactly what you need.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Groups have personalities. No single person in the group is responsible for the entire personality of the group, but everyone contributes, and not equally. Pay attention to tone of the group on the whole. Is it for you?

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Some feelings are hard to name — combo platters of emotion with spice levels of varying intensity. Try to put words to it, if only for your own edification. The

words will make the feelings more palatable.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Anyone can click with someone who shares interests and general worldviews. It takes a superstar to find ways to connect with people when such things are not readily apparent.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Relationships are worth it no matter how short or long they turn out to be, no matter how lucrative or not the arrangement is, or how frustrating or easy or fun or painful or thrilling. You're better for it. That's the takeaway.

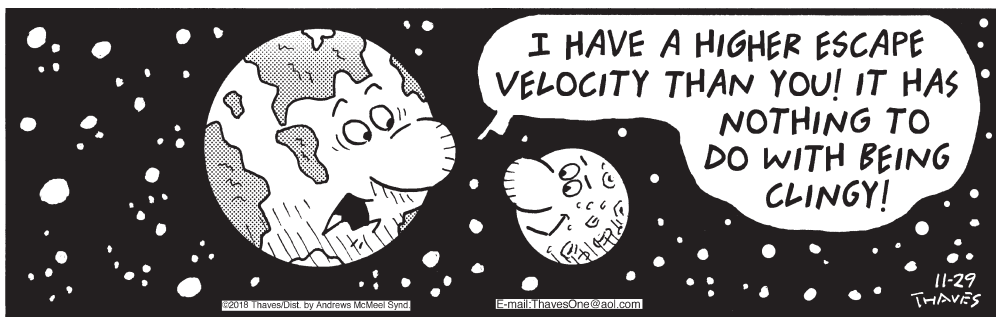
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** Get the right tools for the job, even if it costs more or pushes back your start time. You'll go in with higher enthusiasm and morale and avoid much frustration throughout the life of the project.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** The same location can represent "vacation and freedom" to one person and "work and obligation" to another. When you're there because you want to be there, it's an entirely different place.

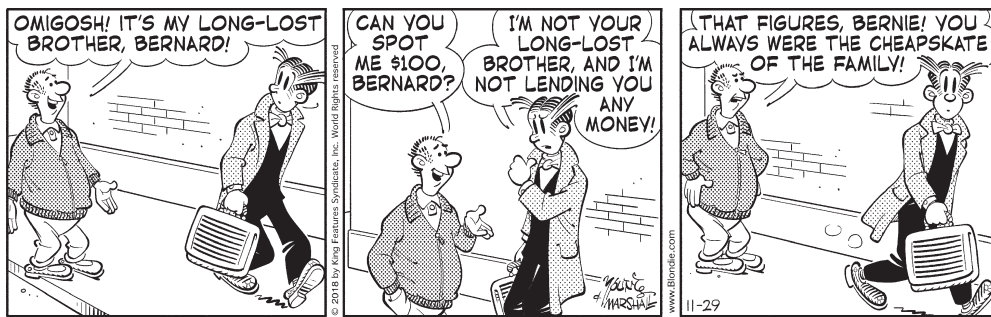
**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Here's an approach to try that you just might find liberating because decision-making gets easier; instead of right or wrong, true or false, good or terrible, think of things as "for me" or "not for me."

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Nov. 30).** Realizing that you're the only one who can decide if life is matching up to your vision, if relationships are fulfilling your needs, or if this is what you want, you gather together your powers and make surprising and unconventional choices this solar return, freeing a vividly alive version of yourself. Scorpio and Aquarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 10, 2, 22, 18 and 47.

**FRANK AND ERNEST**



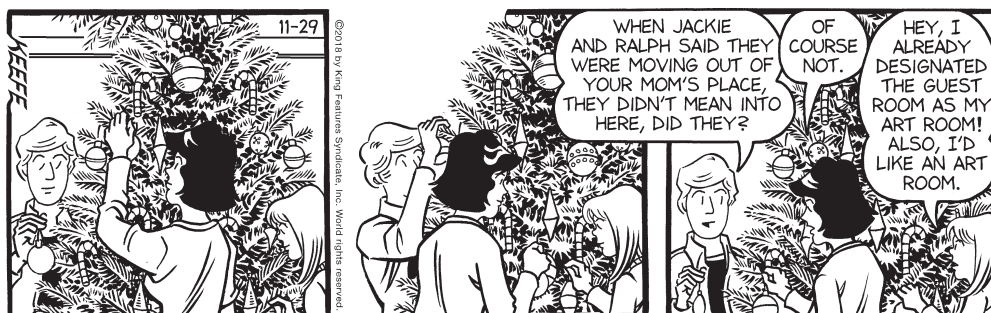
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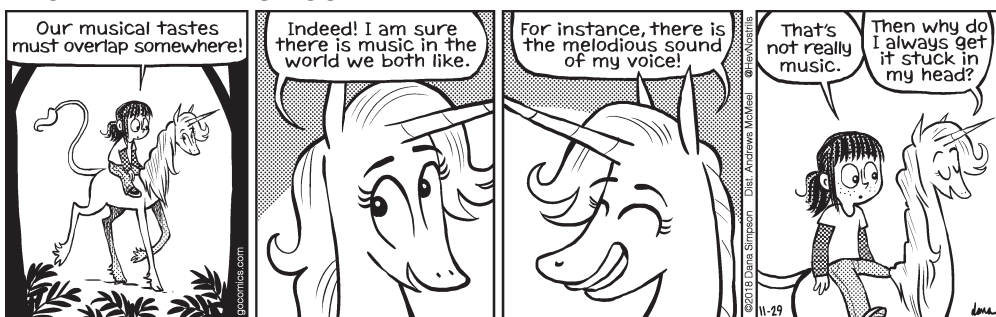
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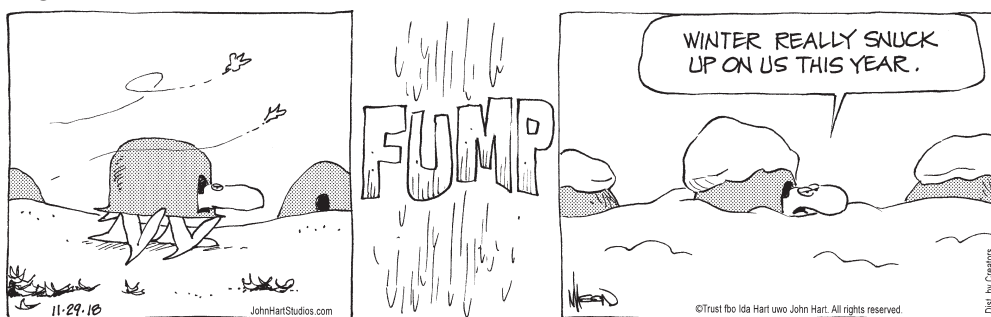
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**PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN**



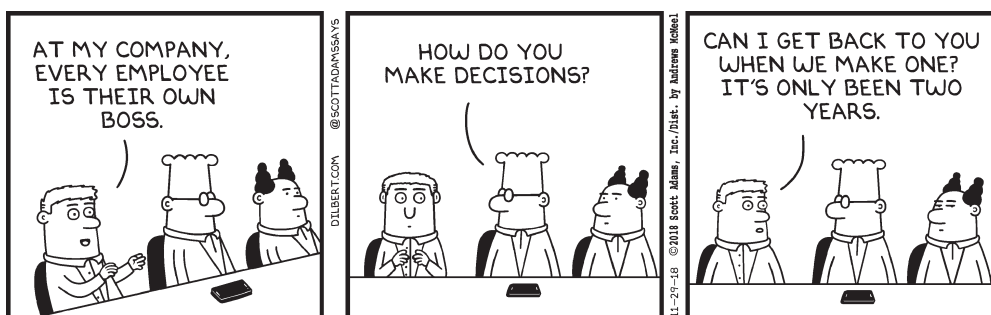
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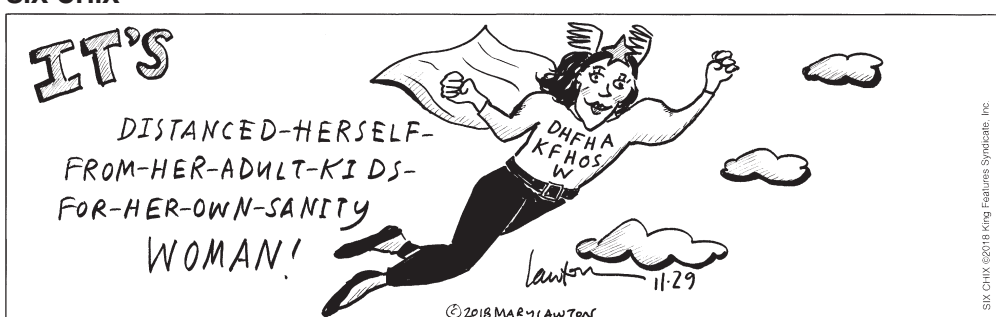
**LOLA**



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**ROSE IS ROSE**

