

Moving past Christmas blues

Dear Annie: Whenever Christmas rolls around, I feel sick. I want to enjoy the merriment as much as most people seem to. Unfortunately, I have negative associations with the winter holidays. I'm sure I'm not alone in dreading Christmas. How can I put these associations aside in order to have a happy holiday season? — *Cringing at Christmas*

DEAR ANNIE



Annie Lane
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

Dear Cringing at Christmas: It sounds as though it's not Christmas you're cringing at so much as the unresolved emotions it brings up for you. It's also possible that you're experiencing seasonal affective disorder, a type of depression that affects an estimated 3 million Americans each year. Either way, counseling could be a hugely beneficial tool for exploring, processing and, one hopes, moving past these negative associations.

Dear Annie: This is in response to "Grieving Mom," the mother who received a letter from a woman who is alive because of an organ donation

from "Grieving Mom's" son who tragically died.

My husband died while riding his bicycle three years ago. We donated his organs because that's what he had indicated he wanted. Later, I received a note from someone who had gotten a tendon from him, thanking us for making this hard decision. We were so grateful to get that letter, knowing that maybe someone else could now ride a bike or be able to walk or function normally.

My heart aches for "Grieving Mom," but I know that the recipient of the organ was just trying to express her gratitude to that mother for giving her some more time. I hope that one day, "Grieving Mom" can accept the offering of gratitude. — *Aching Heart*

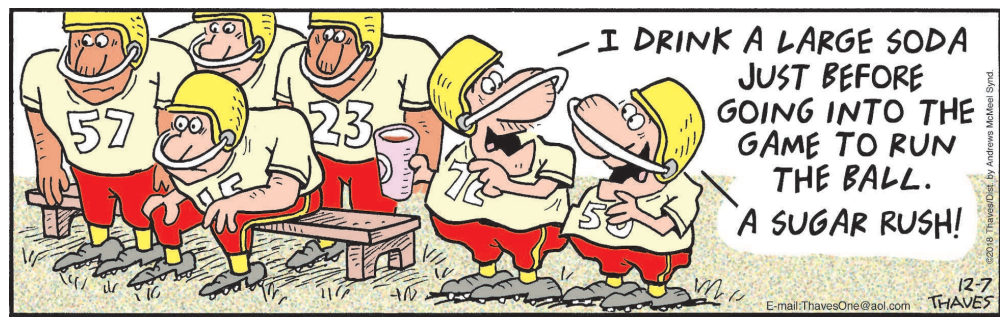
Dear Aching Heart: I am so incredibly sorry for your loss. Thank you for sharing your experience and offering some heartfelt perspective.

Dear Annie: This is a response to "Grieving Mom." I lost my 31-year-old son to a

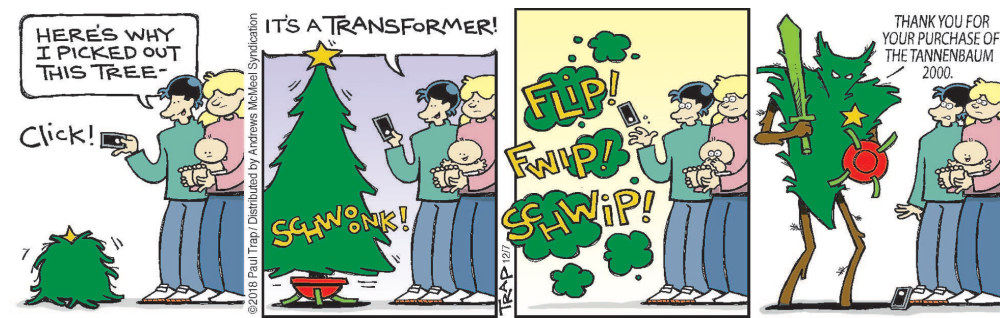
drunken driver last year. My son was riding his bicycle cross-country. With no hesitation, our family donated every part of his beautiful body so that others could have better lives. Greg would have wanted that. My point of this letter is to highlight how we all have different responses to tragic losses. Whereas "Grieving Mom" wants no contact with the recipient of her son's heart and is appalled that the receiver reached out to her, I would embrace the chance to hug the individual who has my son's heart beating in his or her body. What a gift for the both of us! Please remind your readers to take the time to become organ donors so that others might have the chance for a better life and your loved one, in a beautiful way, could live on. — *Barry*

Dear Barry: I am so sorry for the loss of your son. It sounds as if he was a generous and kind person. Thank you for your perspective. A single organ donor may save the lives of up to eight people and improve the lives of up to 50, according to the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

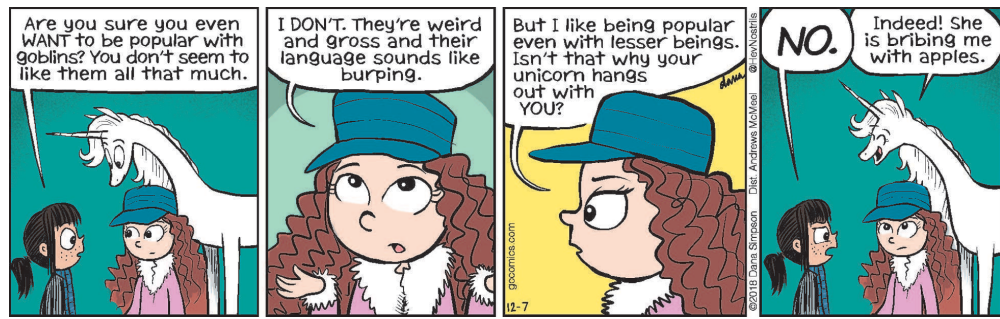
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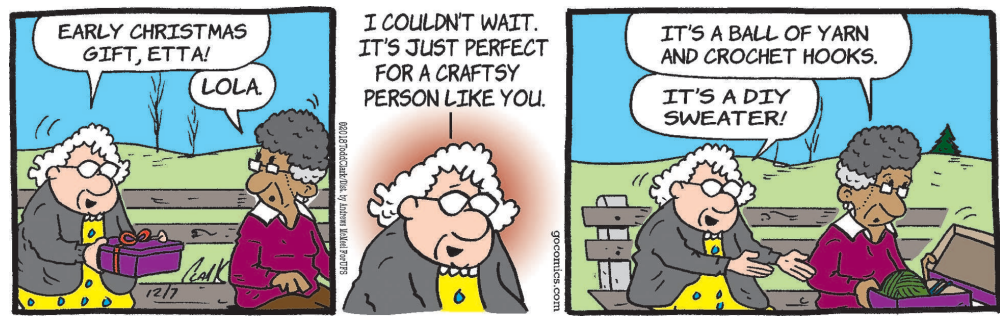
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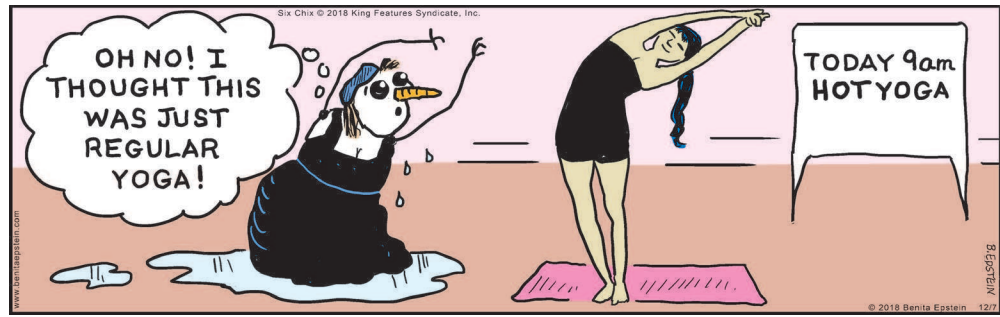
PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



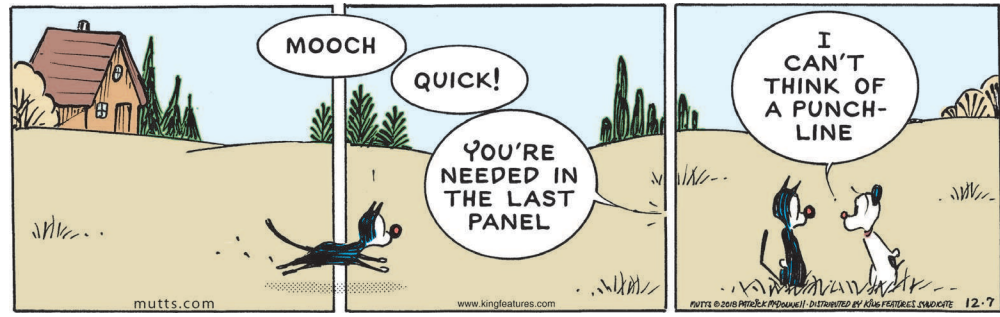
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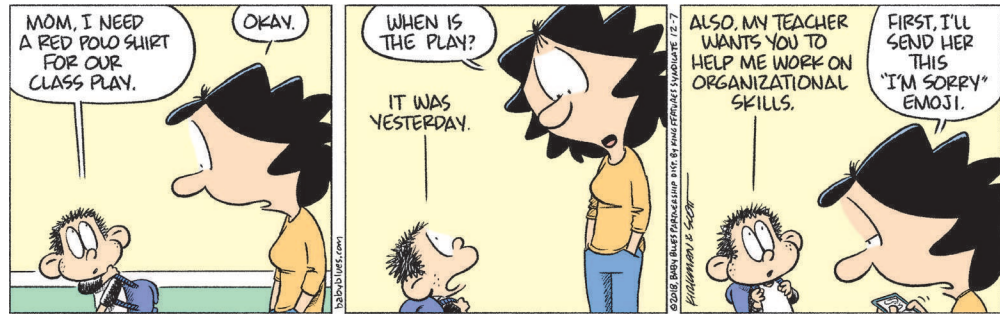
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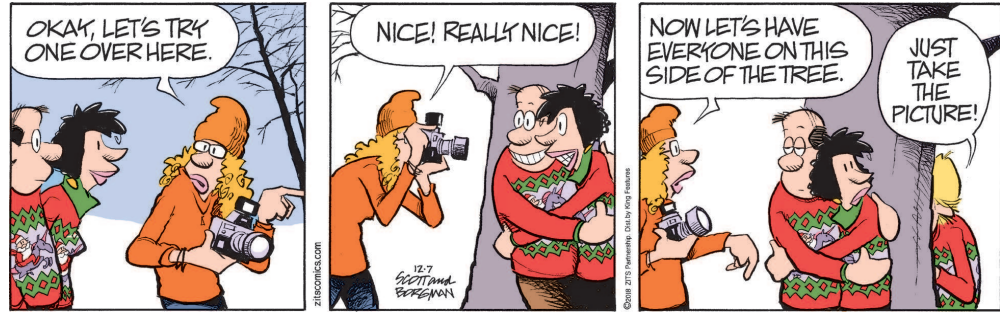
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BABY BLUES



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TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You're not out to change the world today; you just want to find a better way to live within it. Mostly this has to do with learning what's there and asking others how they're doing it.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You don't always want attention or people around you. But when you do feel like company, the quickest way to becoming more attractive is to get happy. So how are you going to get happy?

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Just because one person is serving another doesn't mean that the person is any less valued than the other. In fact, it takes a big heart and a solidly developed sense of self to serve others well.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Chemistry, mutual admiration and shared humor are among the many things that contribute to the longevity and health of a relationship. However, nothing contributes more today than forgiveness.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). You don't always get the credit for what you do. Maybe that's a good thing today. If you have too much praise heaped on you, you'll attract jealousy and high expectations for next time — two pressures you don't need.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You've been taught that it's impolite to express boredom, and over time this has caused you to be oblivious to the symptoms. Wake up to boredom now. Boredom is a sign that you're not in the right place. It's a sign to move on.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). The playfulness that's so cute in animals (including the human animal) is also very necessary; it gets the creature ready for life. Playing is often a simulation, a chance to hone some skills to prepare for the challenges to come.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Whether something is offensive or not depends on many factors including (but not limited to) context, zeitgeist, social mores and, most importantly, who is the messenger. Know what story is yours and is not yours to tell.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Going with the flow just isn't appropriate in every situation. As your own advocate, you'll need to speak up today about what you need and what you don't understand. Get the knowledge and resources you're due.

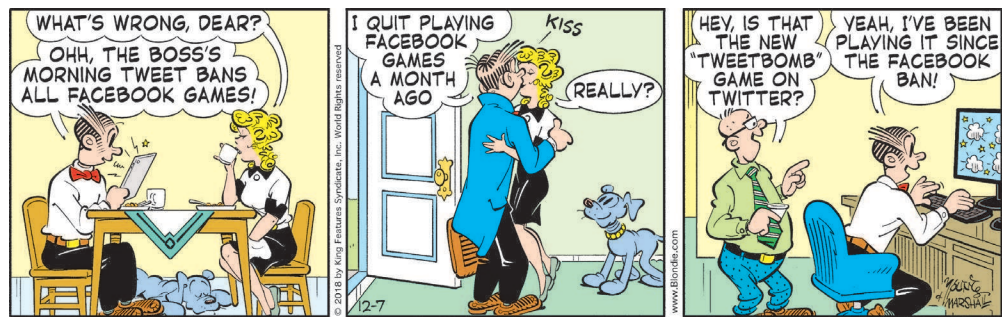
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). There's a significant event in the future that seems to be reaching back through time to poke you. This poke is a signal to heed. The event may seem very far off indeed, but if you wait until it's not, it will be too late.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You don't have to overthink your part in the timing of things. To be prompt will be enough. Promptitude will keep you within the boundary of good manners, fine reputation, dutiful service and bountiful fortunes.

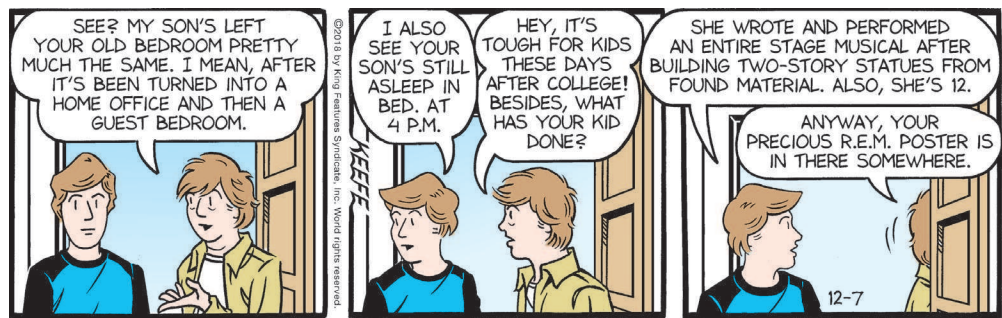
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Among your many rights is the right to be left alone. This you desire not out of anti-social instincts but out of a sincere need for the peace and solitude that will engender a reconnection with the things that make you who you are.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 8). Your past generosity has set the stage for some excellent karma to swing back around, and the solar return sets off the bounty. Other highlights include finding information you've been seeking for years, a sale that makes you proud and the feeling that you're finally coming into your own in a certain exclusive social world. Leo and Aquarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 38, 20, 44, 1 and 7.

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SALLY FORTH



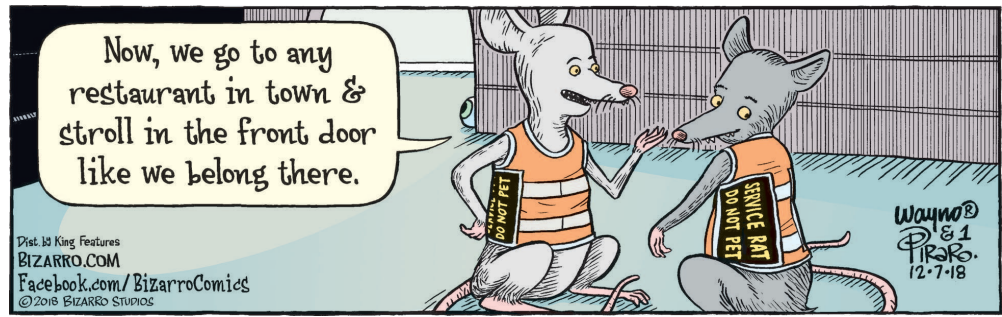
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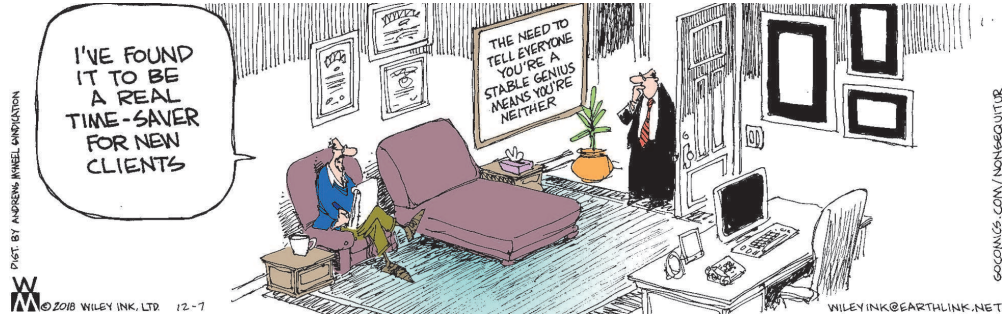
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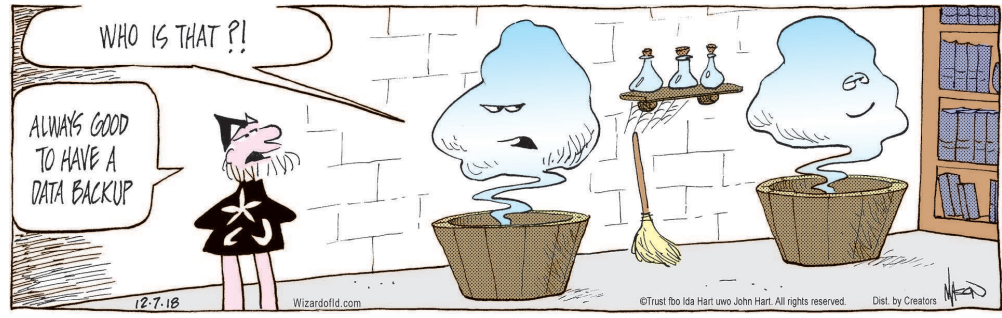
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