

No booze, please

Dear Annie: The adults in our family, all of whom are blessed with the necessities of life, have enjoyed a “shake the dice/give and take” holiday gift exchange for many years. Often gourmet food items and good wines and such are included. My daughter reminded me this year that we have family members who don't consume alcohol for various reasons, so for them to end up with a bottle of wine would be awkward and inconsiderate. Ban the booze for holiday gift exchanges! — Judy in Minnesota

DEAR ANNIE



ANNIE LANE
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

be mindful of nondrinking friends and family during all holiday festivities, not just gift exchanges. For one, this time of year can be a difficult time for anyone trying to stay sober. For another, it's just good hospitality to consider all guests' needs, not just drinkers', when hosting a party. Be sure to have non-alcoholic beverages — other than plain water — on hand, such as sparkling water, coffee, tea and even fun alcohol-free cocktails. As a bonus, having such options on display might encourage even drinkers to heed their better angels and reach for a sparkling water instead of another beer.

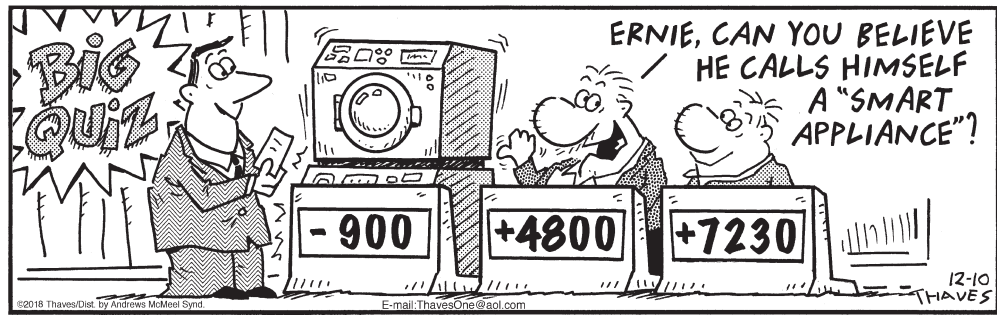
Dear Annie: I'm writing because your good-sense column reaches so many people. I just lost a dear friend, and it shouldn't have happened. She was beautiful, funny, witty, clever and tough. By

the end, we had found out just how tough.

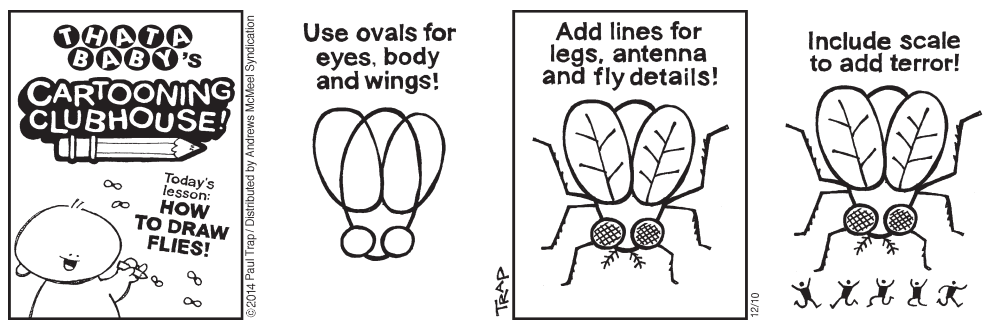
I have some survivor's guilt. About 20 years ago, I was bleeding when I shouldn't have been. I went to my doctor and said, “This isn't right, and it's sapping my energy.” She was a good doctor, and she hooked me up with a surgeon, and I had a hysterectomy. When I had my follow-up appointment with the surgeon, she said, “It was so big and ugly I sent it in for a biopsy. It was negative. You're good.” End of episode. Had I waited, how long till the biopsy would have been positive? Ladies, if you have symptoms, get them checked out. Please. — Crying Won't Bring Her Back

Dear Annie: I am very sorry for the loss of your friend. She sounded like a wonderful person. Thank you for this very important reminder that you should always get symptoms checked out sooner rather than later.

FRANK AND ERNEST



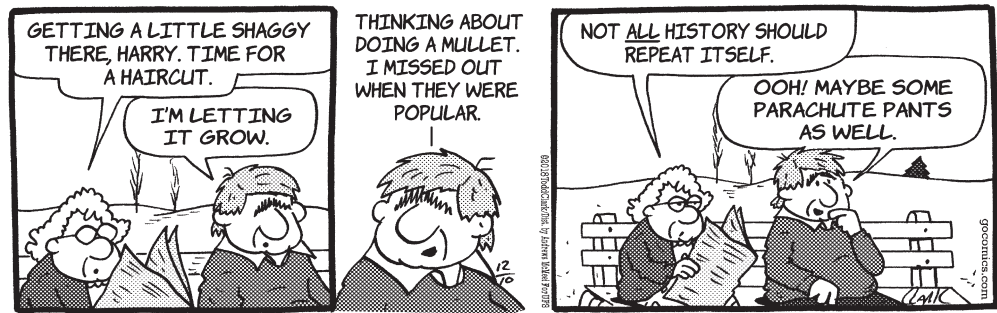
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PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



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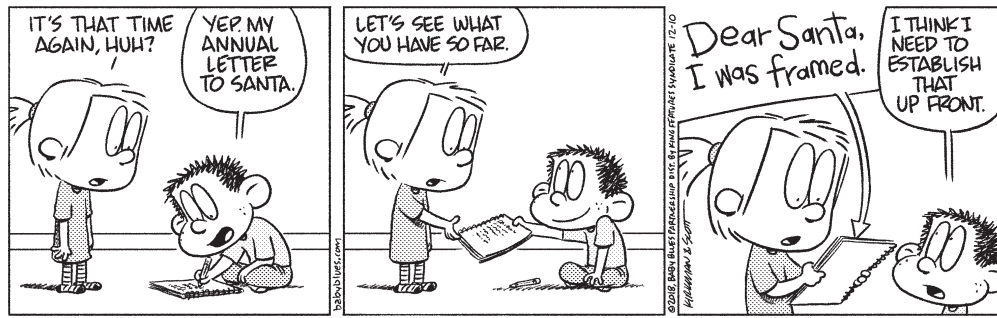
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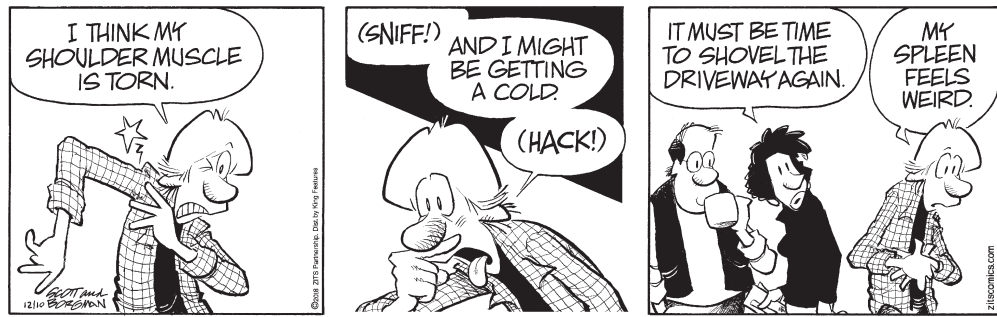
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BABY BLUES



ZITS



TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You are creative and will have ideas about new things to try. You're also, unlike many in your group, bold enough to pitch them. You'll start the ball rolling. Others will come forward after you do.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Don't fuss or hesitate over today's opportunities. They will be like fresh toast. Get it while it's hot. Otherwise, it will harden as it cools, making each bite a crumbly mess.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You'll be lucky today, although don't expect to think so until weeks later when you look back on the events of Dec. 10 and realize their role in landing you in a position of good fortune.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). The day's work will be a little like putting a stylish outfit together. It starts with wearing everything you think will work. Then you'll change out of different elements. And finally, you'll strip away everything superfluous.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The same force of attraction that shapes the swirling universe at large is at the heart of all you create in your personal realm. Careful, though, as attraction can also cause greed and jealousy. Monitor your attractions.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The situation today is something like a marching band in which more than half the players are on key and in time. The ones who are off sort of make it a messy show, but it still, more or less, sounds like music.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You don't want the same thing as the others, and for this reason, you'll find life a lot easier to manage. No lines, no inflated costs — you just go straight to the source and plunk down the money.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Make it brief. Then you'll be listened to. They may not understand it, because the spirit of brevity leaves much unexplained, but it's better to have attention and questions than to have no audience.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Imagine a world in which you spend your days very differently than you're spending them now. This thought exercise holds a drop of enlightenment if you go deep enough into it.

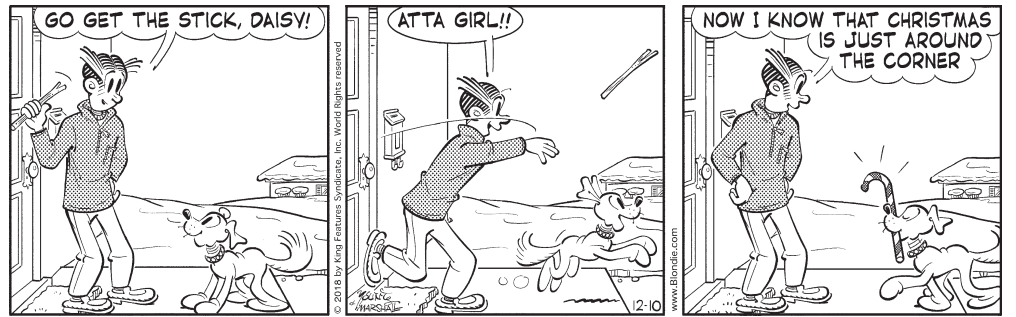
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Maybe it takes a degree of education to bandy about high-flown statements, but everyone knows that education is not intelligence. Today's best reason will come plain-clothed.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Instead of thinking of your failed projects as mistakes, think of them as school projects in the classroom of life. Generosity abounds from the standpoint of learning. Surely, you've earned many an A.

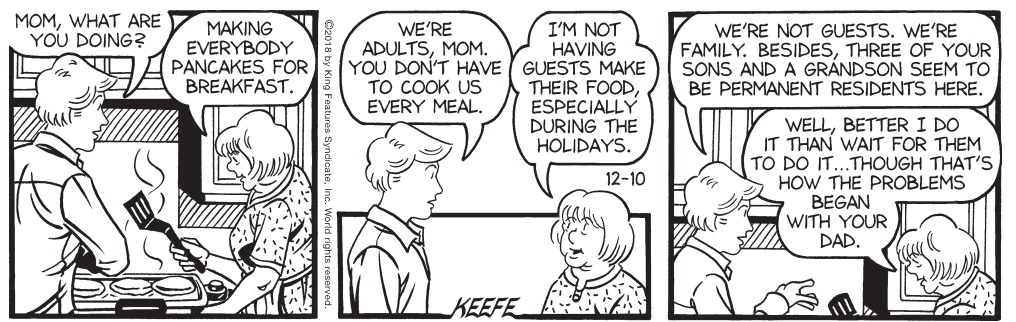
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're feeling sort of quiet, observant and reflective today. It's comfortable for you, as well as being a good look for you. One caution: People will project their hopes and wishes into the space you're holding.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Dec. 10). One of your many talents this solar return is for bringing people together and bathing in their resulting concentration of joy. Here comes a change in routine that has happy effects on your health and relationships. Also in 2019: an adorable animal encounter, the opening of a venture and an international passport. Scorpio and Pisces adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 10, 7, 8, 33 and 20.

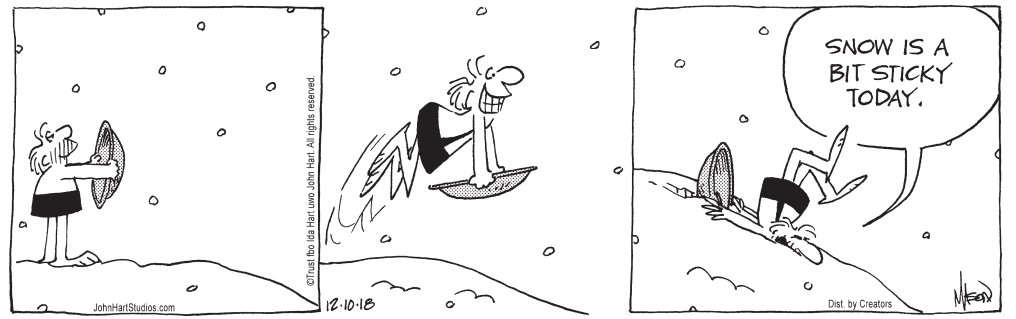
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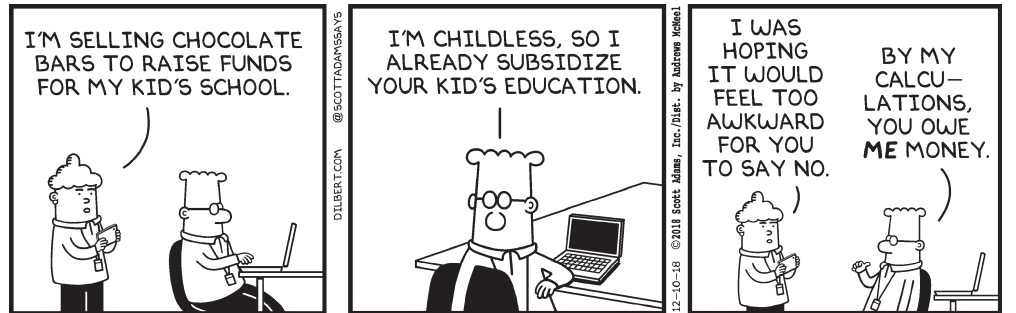
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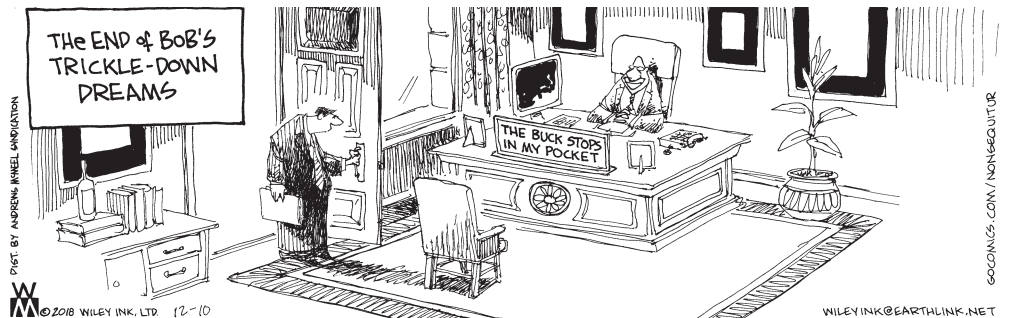
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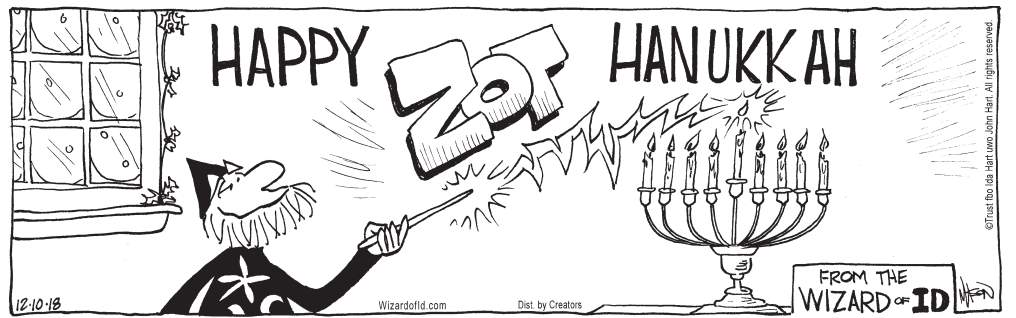
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WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

