

Loudmouthed newcomer

Dear Annie: I've played basketball with an informal team of women for well over 10 years. We've now celebrated most of our 40th birthdays together, and though some in the group of 20 or so have come and gone, we've been a pretty close and supportive cluster of friends. We play b-ball twice a week, go for coffee after morning games and occasionally go out for a drink after evening ones.

DEAR ANNIE



ANNIE LANE
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

About six months ago, a new player joined our ranks. She loves being part of the group and is a great player. But frankly, she is a loudmouth and huge drinker. Though I haven't heard direct complaints about her — because my friends are too kind to talk behind her back — I can see it on their faces. It's a pained expression. It's downright embarrassing when she's drunk and yelling insults about any one of us at a bar or restaurant.

This isn't the kind of team that members get kicked out of. My friends are too gra-

acious for that. But at the same time, she's ruining the dynamics of the group. I don't feel close enough to her to suggest getting help for her drinking problem. Besides, she flaunts it and does not appear to want to change. Any suggestions? — *Troubled in Toledo*

Dear Troubled: Alcohol abuse ruins lives. The kindest thing you and your teammates could do for this heavy-drinking "loudmouth" is not to refer to her as that! The only way to get closer to her and be kind to her is to have a frank conversation with her about the effects her drinking is having on the team. If your teammates are truly as kind as you say they are, you should tell her the truth.

Dear Annie: If you want to find yourself, do something for others. One of your readers said she was annoyed that a friend would call her twice a week to talk. It invaded her time for herself.

Listening is a gift, and most of us are not good at it. As a spouse, I am a terrible listener. I am trying to do a better job. But I do know that sometimes people just want to vent, and some of us can't help but want to fix what we hear.

I think ladies have their nails done so they will have someone listen to them. Ladies pay \$25 for a half-hour of talking, and they end up with shiny fingernails to boot. And they vent and often solve their own concerns.

What a gift it is to listen to others. Guys, are you listening? — *Husband for 42 Years*

Dear Husband: Interesting notion about the nail salons. Whether or not that hypothesis is correct, you're right that to listen to someone is to give him or her a gift. A few thoughts on "venting": When one partner just wants to vent, I've found it's helpful when the venter states upfront that he or she is just looking to vent and not soliciting advice. But one should also be careful not to make complaining a primary pastime.

TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Only a fool would go looking for trouble. However, when trouble comes with the territory, dive right in. Employ your emotional and spiritual faculties like faith, courage and passion. Left unused, they will diminish.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). In the past, there were vast stretches of unspoiled, unknown land to explore. Now all the unknown territories are in the land of ideas. You're an adventurer, prepared to discover something there today.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Today's success secret: Prime yourself with a positive self-talk session before the main actions of the day. Decide how you want things to play out, and then psych yourself into the frame of mind that will make it go that way.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). In families, everyone takes a role. Those roles fit together to create a unit. It's like you become who you need to be to make that unit function. And it doesn't always fit your idea of who you would like to be or who you are.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). There's a spirit of independence taking hold in you, and you'd really like to see what you can accomplish on your own before you seek advice or partnership.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Because you know how to laugh at life, you don't get stressed out over the same things that make other people so nervous. It's beautiful to be around, and it's the quality that will put you in a unique position today.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Knowing that people see in others what they recognize in themselves, you will very carefully choose what you call out in others, as well as what you praise and compliment.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). When you enter a room, the energy of the room changes as everyone gets a sample of what you bring in. You can hide what you feel, and others might consciously miss it, but unconsciously they cannot help but sample it.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). While some strive to be well-liked, others are actually afraid of coming into favor. It can be uncomfortable to be liked, as it can come with expectations and more attention than some people want to receive.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Pretending is an important part of development. It's how people learn. So while pretentiousness gets a bad rap, it's part of the process, and utterly forgivable.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You embrace responsibility. The essence of responsibility is ownership. It claims things, relationships and other situations and says "mine," mine to figure out, care for, take pleasure in; mine to lose or keep.

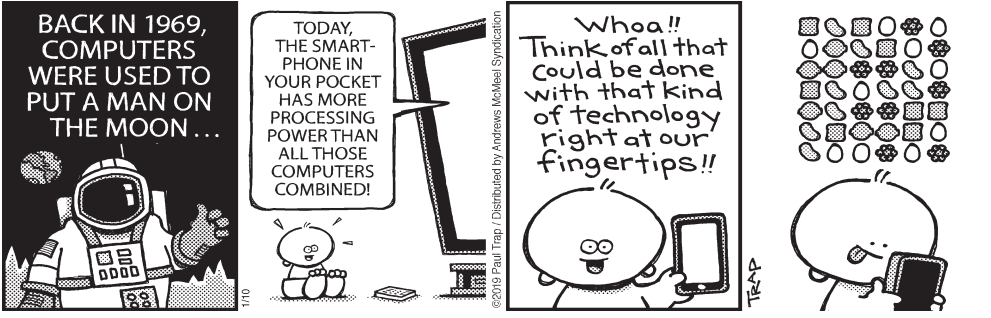
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The biblical proverb suggests, "As you sow, so shall you reap." The trouble is that many seeds look alike. This is true both figuratively and literally. Just plant what you have and hope for the best.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 11). Being able to recognize the profound beauty in a moment is your cosmic birthday gift. This solar return will bring you many such moments — sacred, loving experiences that, for years to come, will flood your heart with gratitude when recalled. March brings a reunion. June shows a stellar financial opportunity. Cancer and Taurus adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 10, 4, 28, 2 and 15.

FRANK AND ERNEST



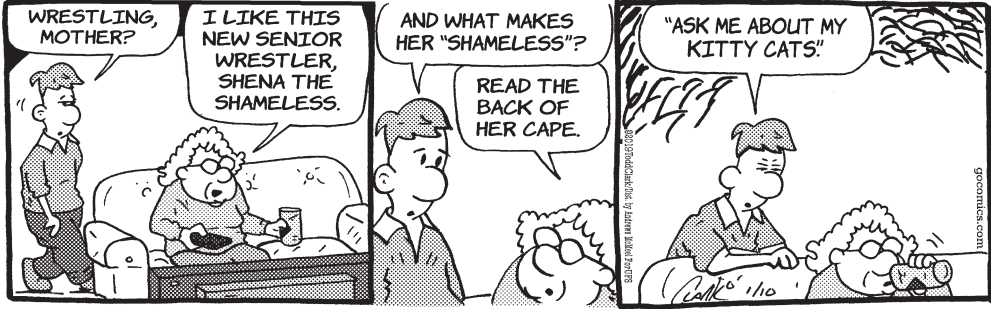
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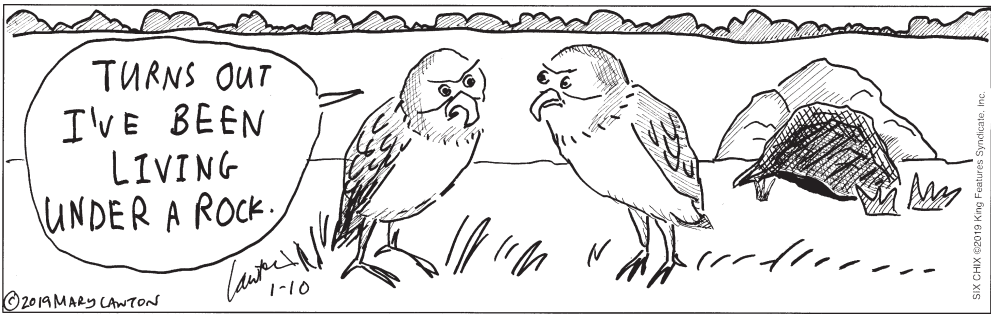
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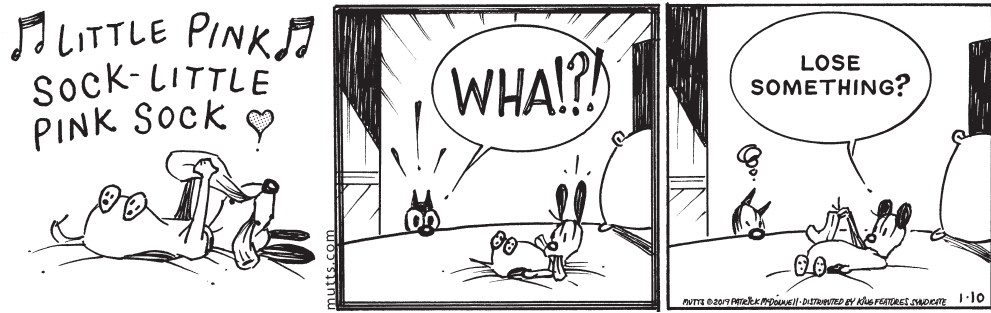
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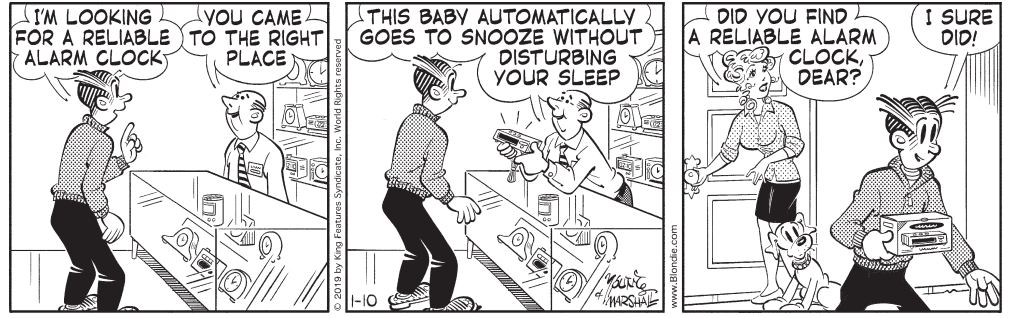
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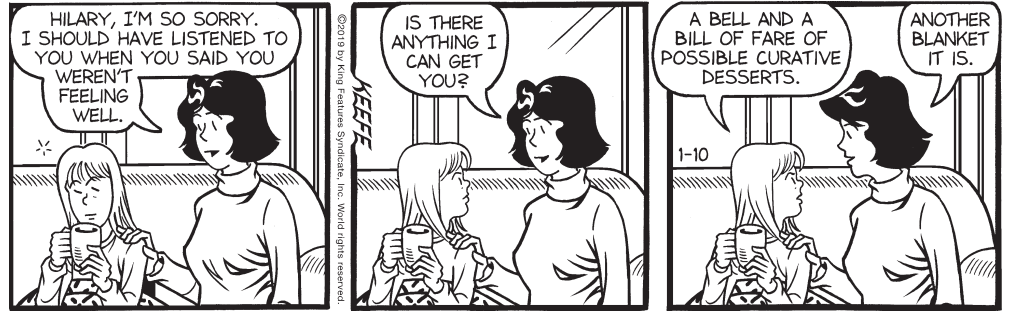
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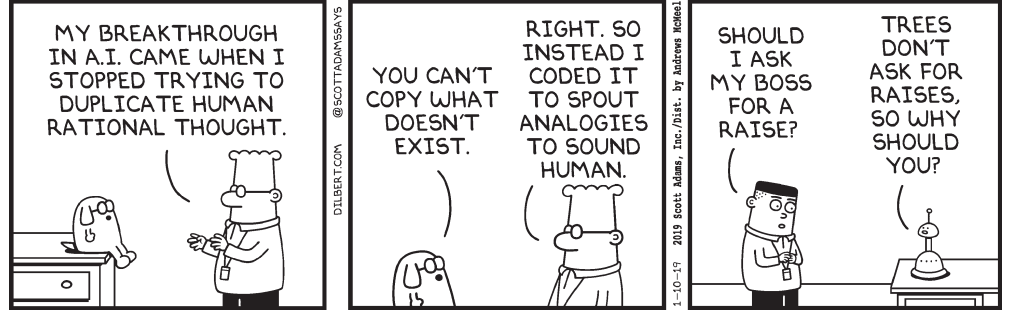
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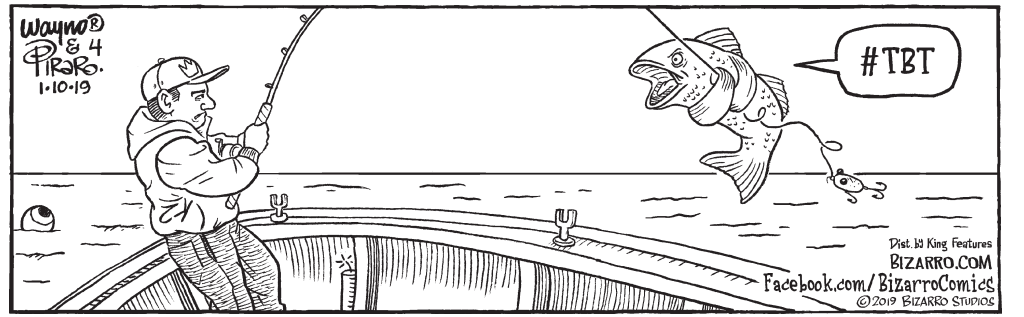
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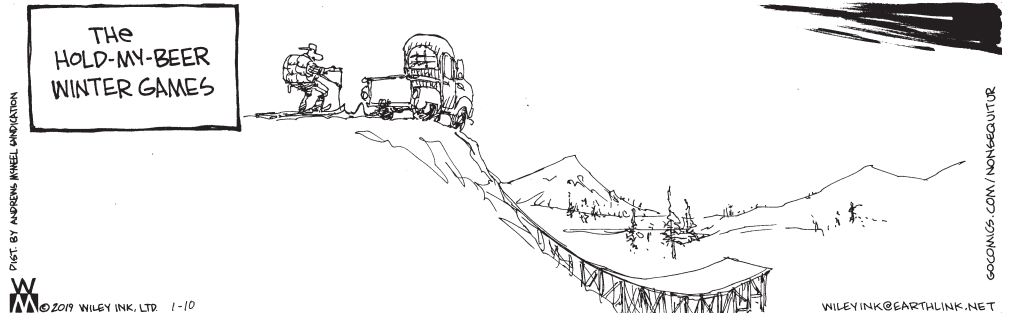
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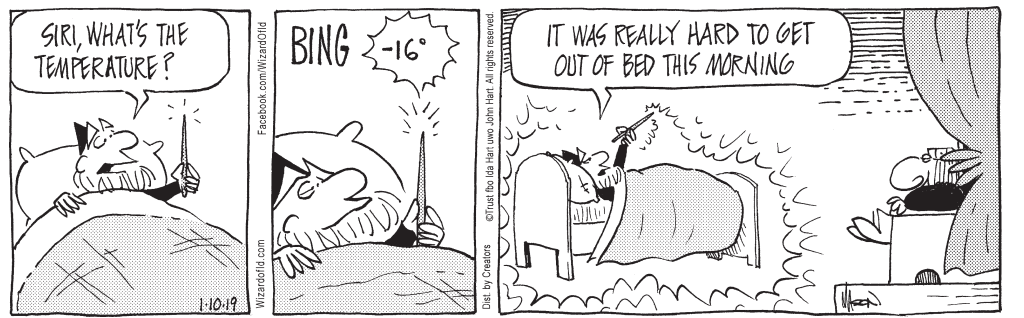
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