

Think before you donate

Dear Annie: Would you please remind people to call and ask before they donate items to charity, animal shelters, nursing homes and thrift stores?

Years ago, when my husband was in a nursing home, a group of ladies spent many hours knitting beautiful lap blankets for the people in the nursing home. Right after the women left the nursing home, aides put all those lap blankets on a cart and went in each room to ask the visitors whether they would like a blanket to take home. When they came to me and asked, I questioned where they had gotten these beautiful knit blankets from. The aide said that some women had made them for the nursing home. I then asked why they were giving them away. He said they didn't have the time to take care of all the lap blankets for the patients. I didn't take one.

Why did the nursing home take the blankets? The

aides should've said, "It was so wonderful of you to think of us, but we can't use knitted blankets." Instead, they thanked the ladies and took the blankets, knowing they were not going to use them.

The courtesy of not giving away unneeded items should extend to thrift stores, too. If people have a stove or refrigerator that doesn't work, they shouldn't leave it behind a thrift store after dark.

People need to stop and think when they donate clothes, as well. Don't donate things that no one would ever wear. Put those at the curb for trash pickup. When our church was collecting clothes for the poor, we got a lot of beautiful clothes, but we also got clothes no one would ever wear. The same happens to thrift stores. They get bag after bag that they have to fill their dumpsters with.

I am sure some people just don't stop and think when donating. For example, when

you can give a set of sheets, give the pillowcases, too. That would make the poor happy. I had a friend who worked at a thrift store. That is why I know how much is not good. — Loveland, Ohio

Dear Loveland: Thank you for sharing with my readers this very useful advice. Though donating is always a thoughtful initiative, I think you have raised an interesting issue. Prior to giving away a piece of clothing, ask yourself, "Would anyone want to wear this?" I'd like to add that you never should donate expired food.

People at thrift stores and charities work hard to help those in need. Let's not give them more work by forcing them to sort through and discard what should have been put into the trash to begin with. If your clothes are overly ripped, torn, stained or worn, then be considerate and don't donate these items. And if you are a charity and someone gives you something very nice but you don't need it, then encourage the person to give to another charity in need.

DEAR ANNIE

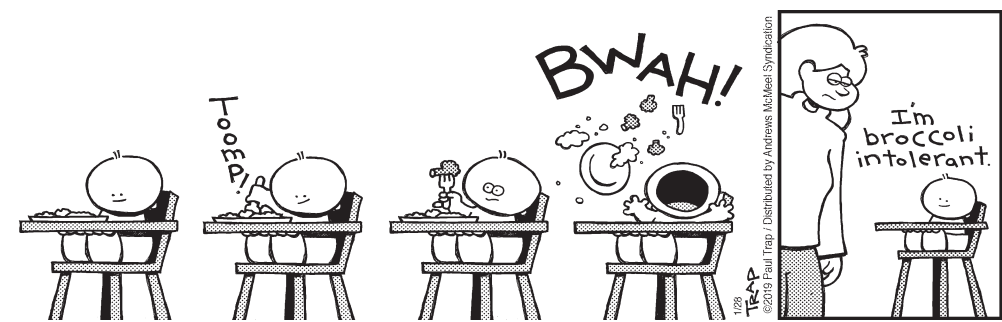


ANNIE LANE
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

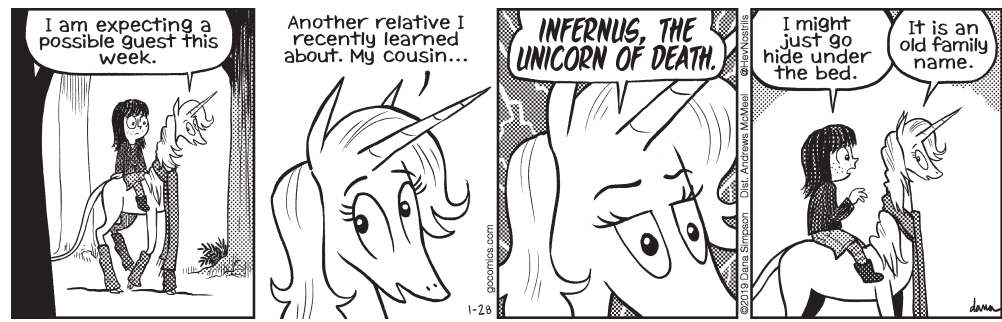
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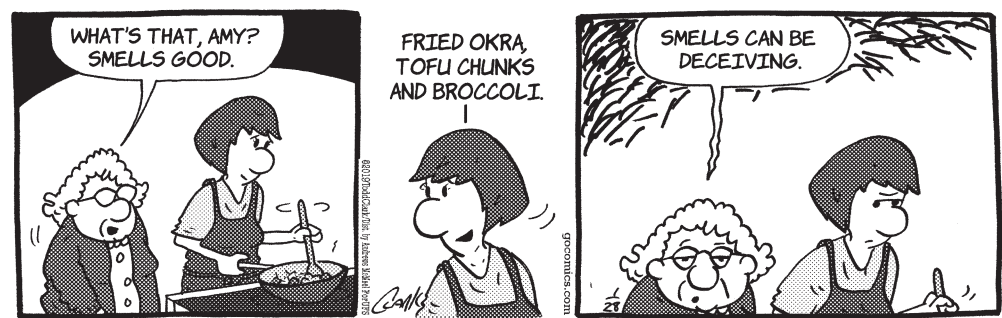
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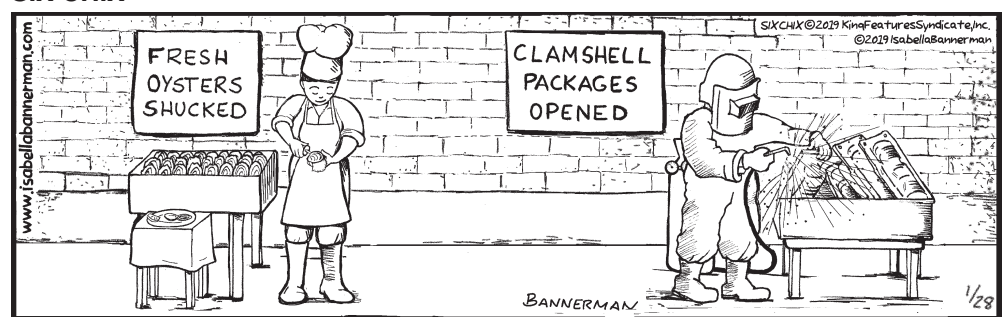
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MUTTS



BABY BLUES



ZITS



TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). There's so much to do. You're not sure if it's work or play, but you know it's fun, so who cares? Tonight: You'll find your way through what is, essentially, a maze.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). If you're not sticking to your personal rules — not erecting and enforcing personal boundaries — then it's possible you're unconsciously telling someone that it's OK for them to continue in a way that's not desirable to you.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You recognize what is convenient for you and what makes sense for you, and you have the right and the ability to say no when it doesn't fit into either category.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). The easiest way to learn the needs and wants of others is to simply ask. And if you can't ask others, ask yourself. To understand yourself more thoroughly is to understand others at deeper levels, too.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). A friendship takes your focus. This relationship thrives with good timing and healthy balance, which currently favors giving attention and quiet support over advice and efforts.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). There's an illusion going on, made possible by distance. Get closer to the action. Get inside the action if you can. That's how you're going to know what's really going on.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). To glimpse the future, observe what's happening at the boundaries. Boundaries include: edges of territory, opening and closing time, the limits of manners, customs and rules, the change of clothing that signals a shifting of roles.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Groups emerge. It's

important to know why. What's the attracting force bringing it together? What's the commonality? Inside this information is all you need to know to form a good group or dissolve a bad one.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). There's always the option to walk out of the room. It doesn't even have to be a bad room. There might not be anything technically wrong with the room, but if it's not for you, it's not ... and you can just walk out.

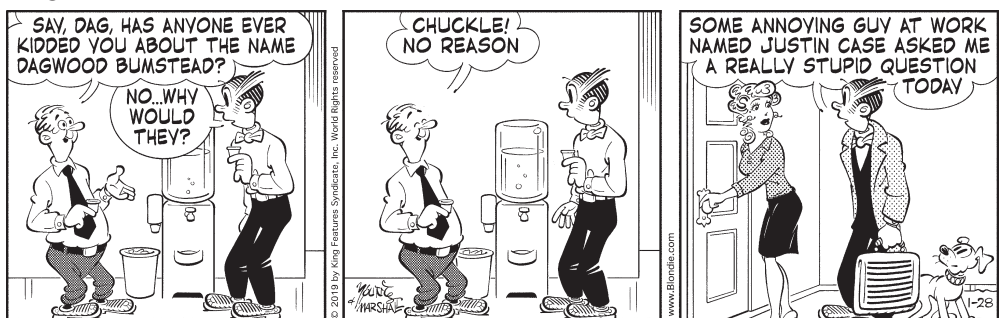
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Not long ago, you set out to solve a problem and you built a thing — a system, tool, attitude, set of rules or a guiding philosophy you hoped would be the answer. Now it's time to check that what you built works as intended.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). An agreement you made is turning into much more work for you than you thought it would be. There are people around you who, with a request and some clear instructions, could easily help. All will go well.

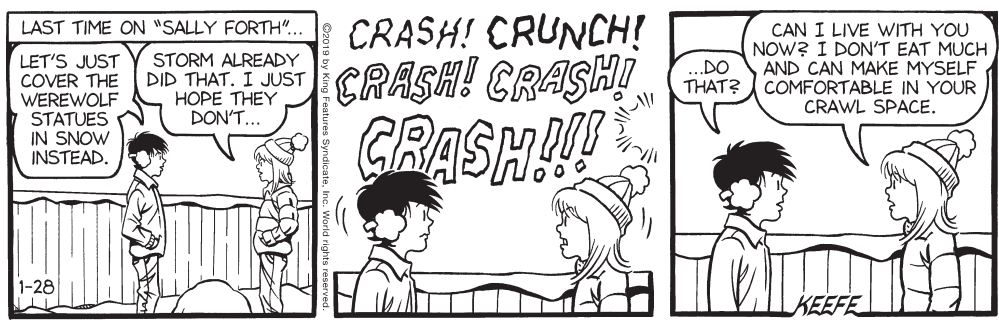
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You won't start what you can't finish. That's just not your style. Actually, it's no professional's style. Professionals decide what they are going to do and what "done" looks like, and they don't stop until the picture matches.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (Jan. 29). Your birthday gift will be a productive shortcut that takes you on a 10-week journey in five weeks. Other highlights of the year include: getting reacquainted with an old friend, enjoying family and your extended support system in a new and more relaxed way and the introduction of a novel and hip hobby. Cancer and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 10, 2, 22, 4 and 16.

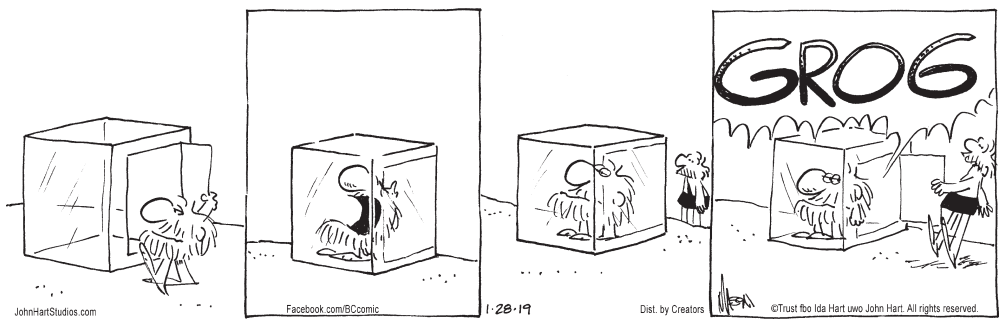
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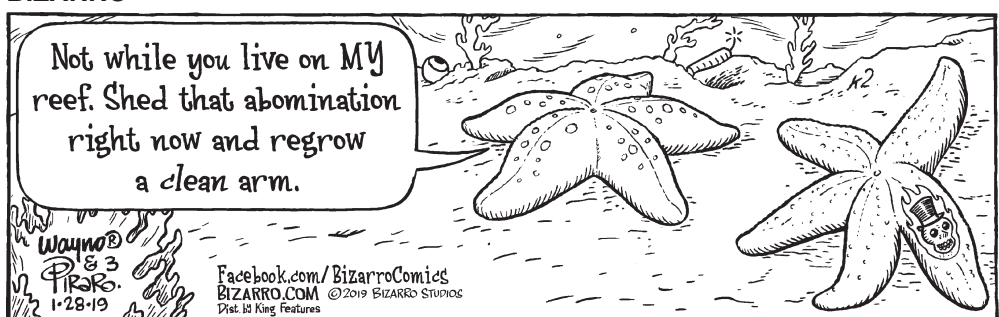
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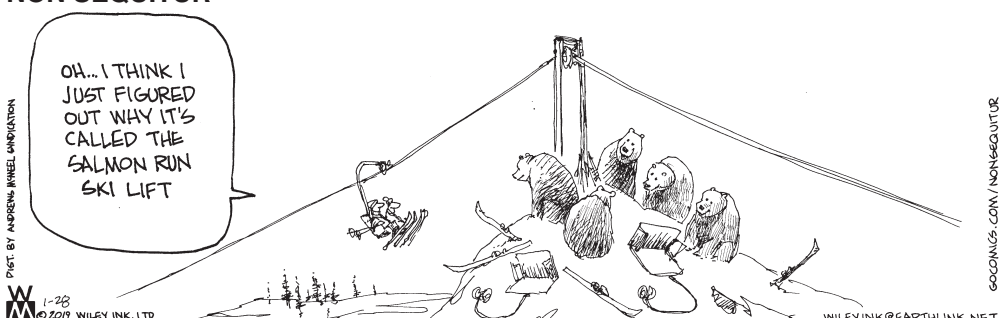
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