

They come empty-handed

Dear Annie: My wife and I are both retired seniors. We sold our house and moved to the town where our son, daughter-in-law and grandson live. My wife loves to take the little guy swimming and do many other activities with him. Every Sunday, we have a family dinner at our home. They come with much joy, and we all have a great time together.

My question is about the fact that they never bring anything, such as a bottle of wine, and they have never invited us out to dinner or to have dinner at their home. Are my expectations wrong, or did we simply miss the boat with our son's 42-year upbringing? I would never have visited my mother without the thought of taking her out for dinner or at least bringing her some flowers. — *Saddened*

Dear Saddened: I'm not sure you have much to be sad about. Congratulations on your grandson and the fact that your son and daughter-in-law want to have family dinner with you every Sunday night. That is lovely. Grandparents and family dinners are such a gift.

And you said that they come with joy. Wow, that is amazing!

As far as their bringing something or taking you out to dinner goes, you should have an honest conversation with your son about it and suggest that you go over to his house next week. But if he hesitates, he must have his reasons, and you should accept that. Above all else, you don't want to upset your happy Sunday family dinners.

Dear Annie: I just read the letter from "Disappointed In-Law." Even though I love my children, including their spouses, and grandchildren more than anything in the world, I may be that in-law who doesn't ask them questions. I used to ask questions but too often got the impression that I wasn't doing it right, that I was being too nosy or insensitive or needy. When I asked how I could do better, I was reprimanded for making them uncomfortable by asking. I know they are good kids, and I dearly love them, so I try my best to pay attention and figure out how to do better. It is painful, though, to feel so judged and shut out of their

lives. I remind myself they are doing their best, too.

Maybe "Disappointed In-Law" could try saying something like, "Would you like to hear about (blank)?" That way, she could see whether some kind of social awkwardness is getting in the way of better communication. I would be in heaven to hear about anything my kids want to tell me. — *Trying*

Dear Trying: I commend you for trying. That really is all we can do — try our best with people through open and honest communication and love.

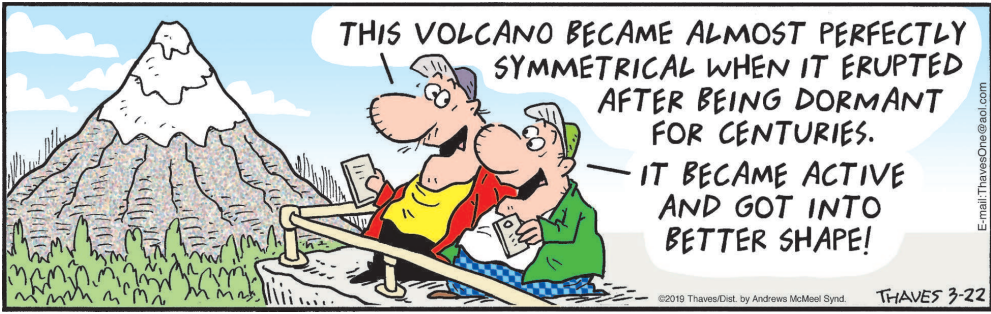
Dear Annie: I just want to say that your response to "Crushing Friend" was spot on. I have been in the same situation for a few months. I have a crush on a friend whom I recently got back in touch with, and it's been hard to keep those feelings in check. It's true that one way or another, feelings are going to come out. I just recently told my friend how I feel about her. It feels good to be able to tell her, yet at the same time, it's hard, so I just wanted to say thank you for your advice. It really helped me to see that I shouldn't feel bad for expressing how I feel. — *Hesitant at First*

DEAR ANNIE



ANNIE LANE
Creators
Syndicate Inc.

FRANK AND ERNEST



THATABABY



PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



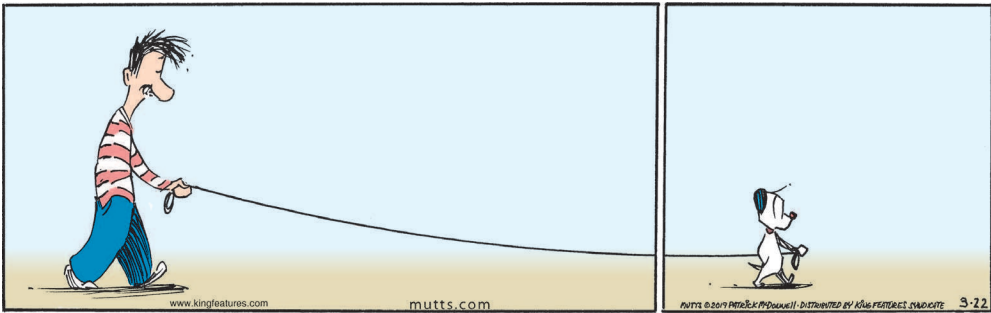
LOLA



SIX CHIX



MUTTS



BABY BLUES



ZITS



TOMORROW'S HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). As you move into a new awareness, you feel less certain of your direction. What you considered only yesterday the plan that made complete sense, now seems like a weak option. So don't act yet. More will be revealed.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Today comes with a feeling akin to hitchhiking. It feels as if you're hurling down the road of life at a speed you have no control over, in a vehicle that is not your own, and yet you're still getting where you want to go.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Today's variety of ideas is more fluid. The ideas splash and play in a watercourse far from the mainstream but will trickle through and make it there anyway. After all, you have the same right to your opinion that everyone else has.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Work opens your horizons in ways you never would have known about were you not willing to dedicate yourself, for an amount of time, to earn an amount of money.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The good comes with the bad. You wouldn't want it all one way. This will become apparent as you'll appreciate the one who keeps you centered, while also appreciating the one who knocks you way off center.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Conversations fragment and loop-the-loop, and then shoot off through the stratosphere. What will you do with all this weird input? As resourceful and clever as you are, you'll either turn it into art or commerce.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You're able to commit fully to what you're into. What you like, you love, all the way through. Therefore, the term "guilty pleasure" doesn't apply. No need to apologize for

something that's working for you.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Those on the outside want in. You're not good with this right now. You don't have the skills or the hardness to handle begging eyes. Protect yourself. More layers!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). This is a frenzied pace and it needs to be counteracted by a slower frame of mind. Breathe deeply, hold it, let it out. Breath handles what any number of more complicated mental tricks could not.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). What's stifling to you? Is it someone who says that you can't? Is it yourself when you say that it has to be done this way? This is the day you'll break through the stifling messages.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). How well are you really communicating these days? You know what you mean, but are you letting them know, too, with your eyes, with your body, with your full intention? Consider that your challenge today.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). People come and go through your life. Maybe you don't make it to the top tier and maybe they don't. It's vaguely painful to lose status, but a function of social reality. Something will be rectified along these lines today.

TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (March 23). You're showing up in a way that few have ever attempted. You're taking little things with great seriousness, serious things with great levity. This is not a sign of disrespect but rather complete respect for a higher guard, a guard that can't be bothered with the silliness of things that don't matter and can't deny what does. Capricorn and Sagittarius adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 8, 20, 1, 22, 18 and 33.

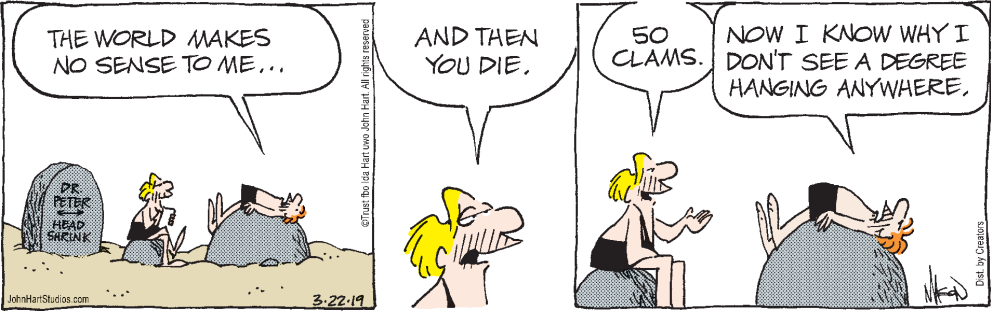
BLONDIE



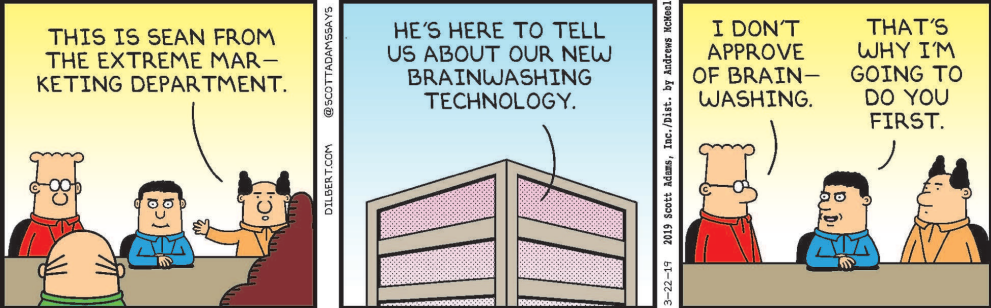
SALLY FORTH



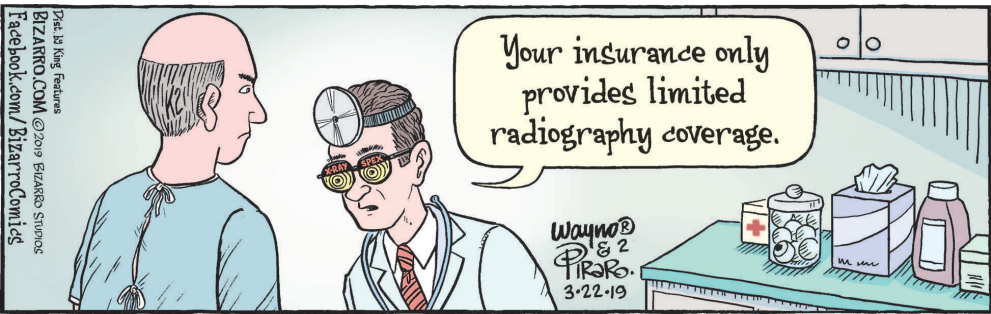
B.C.



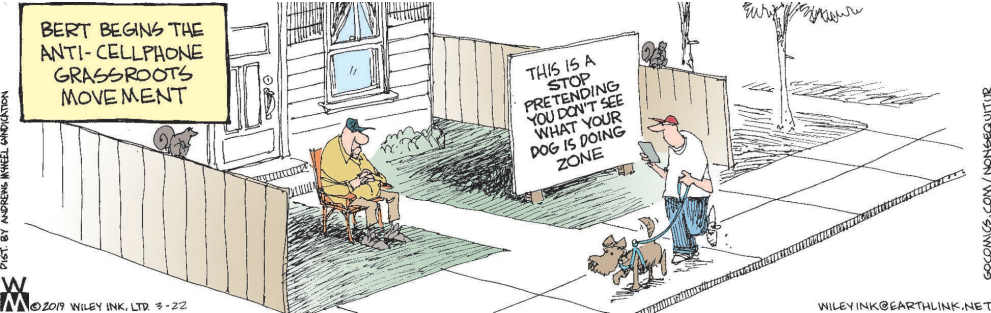
DILBERT



BIZARRO



NON SEQUITUR



WIZARD OF ID



ROSE IS ROSE

