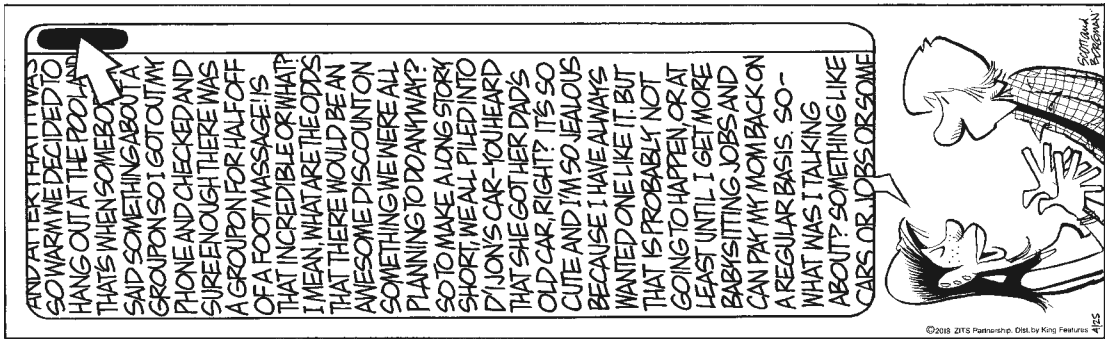


FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



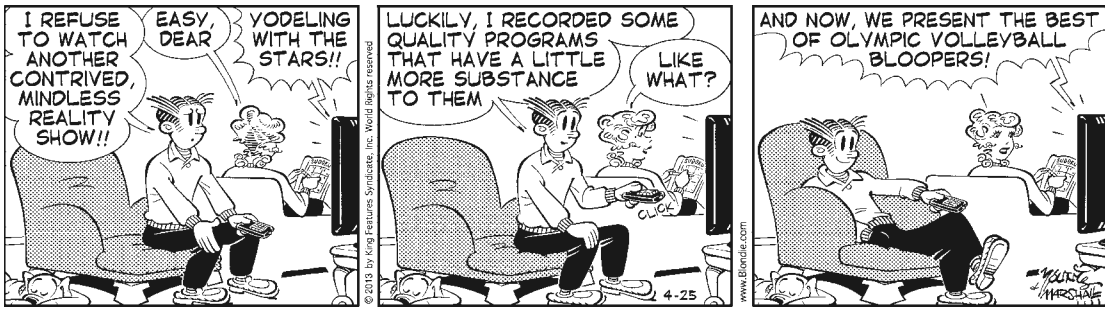
PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



DICK TRACY | JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



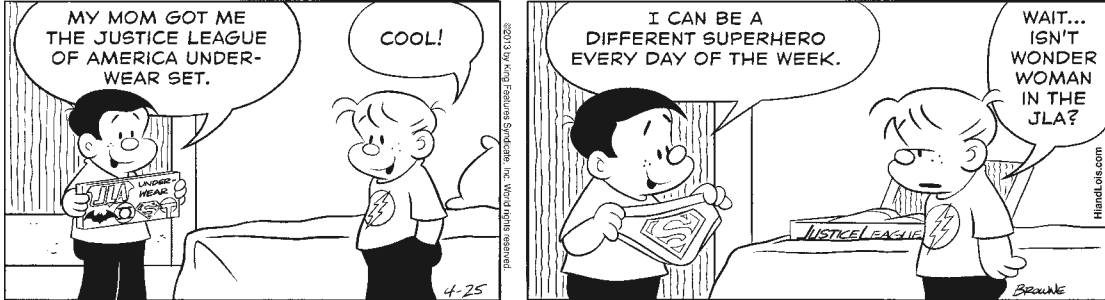
GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



BEEBLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



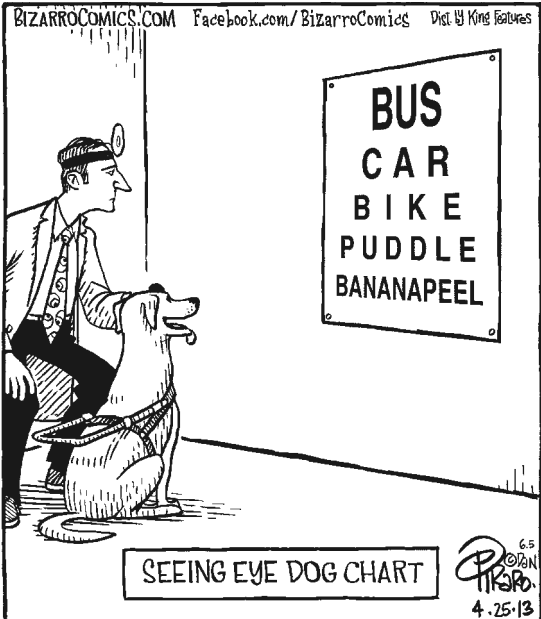
HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSON



BIZARRO | DAN PIRARO



# Stranger's Encouraging Words Inspire Woman Toward Goal

DEAR ABBY: I was moved by the letter from "Losing Slowly in Ohio" (Jan. 14), who is 50 pounds overweight and walks every day with her friend to lose weight. She said that almost daily people made fun of them. My heart goes out to her.

I was in her shoes once. With diet and exercise I lost more than 60 pounds, and I've kept it off. But I was never ridiculed as she was. On the contrary, one day after I had just begun a daily 1-mile jog and was struggling to keep going, I passed by a man who cheerfully called out to me to "keep at it, and one day you'll be a 10!"

Abby, I can't tell you what that meant to me. I thought about his encouragement whenever I felt hopeless and was thinking of giving up. The memory of his kind words inspired me to go on. Thirty years later, I still think about his encouragement with amazement and gratitude.

We all have a choice: We can be kind to each other and offer friends and strangers alike support for the challenges we all face, or we can make ourselves feel superior by being cruel and demeaning. In the end, our choice shapes our character and we receive what we give, so we must choose wisely.

I'm sorry that "Losing" has met with only ignorant jerks so far. I would be honored to pay it forward and tell her how incredibly brave she is, and to encourage her to stick with it. Because she has the courage to keep exercising in the face of constant humiliation, I know without a doubt that she will reach her goals. — WENDY IN COLORADO

DEAR WENDY: Thank you for your upbeat response. Many other readers were quick to "weigh in" with letters of support for "Losing Slowly".

DEAR ABBY: I, too, have a weight problem, which I am working to resolve. But I can tell you from experience that the worst kind of discrimination is di-

rected against people with weight problems. I have been insulted in the workplace, in restaurants and doctor's offices. I have not been hired for jobs because I am perceived as fat and lazy.

I am NOT lazy! I keep a clean house, work hard at my job as a secretary every day, and I am a good wife and parent. We may ignore it and pretend that it doesn't hurt us or matter, but I can tell you it IS painful, demeaning, and it doesn't go away. I have been in meetings or at social functions and have had to excuse myself to have a good cry. — STILL SUFFERING IN KENTUCKY

DEAR ABBY: Please let "Losing Slowly" know she has another option to continue her new, healthy lifestyle in a safe environment. I have worked in malls for years, and they have all had a mall walkers' club.

The mall allows people in to walk, including many seniors, before it opens in the morning. There she will have access to a place where everyone is on the same page. The walkers are safe from traffic, the climate, and morons who have the manners of a junkyard dog. The regulars there can tell her how many miles they can cover. It's a great society of people who support and root for each other. — NEVER GIVING UP IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

DEAR ABBY: I would suggest the two ladies create T-shirts that read "At Least We're Trying!" and watch the jeers turn into cheers. — CAROL IN WISCONSIN

DEAR ABBY: I applaud her effort and your response, but may I raise the issue of people like myself who are ridiculed about being too THIN? Strangers say things like "Eat something, or the wind will blow you away!" Please remind your readers that making fun of very thin people is just as hurtful as doing it to overweight individuals. — WISP OF A WOMAN IN THE WEST

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## JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Bigar's Stars is based on the degree of your sun at birth. The sign name is simply a label astrologers put on a set of degrees for convenience. For best results, readers should refer to the dates following each sign.

A baby born today has a Sun in Taurus and a Moon in Libra if born before 3:25 a.m. (PDT). Afterward, the Moon will be in Scorpio.

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2013:

This year you have a lot of pressure on you, even when dealing with very difficult people. You tend to have more energy and power than you have had in the past. Your creativity flows, which makes you very desirable to the opposite sex. If you are single, you will have many choices. You do not need to look for someone. If you are attached, you could see a fireworks display happening between the two of you more frequently. SCORPIO has issues similar to yours, but he or she manifests them differently.

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult

### ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19)

HHHH Today's lunar eclipse suggests that you slow down, especially regarding communication. Curb any sarcastic comments, even if you think they are funny. Understand that others might be uncomfortable, so make it a point to listen to them carefully. Tonight: Take a deep breath.

### TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★ Someone might open up and let you know about all of the things that you have done wrong. Maintain your composure, and recognize that this person is unusually upset. Defending yourself might not be as important as listening to him or her right now. Tonight: Go with the flow.

### GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★ You usually give 100 percent, but that does not lessen the impact of today's lunar eclipse. You might want to pull back and establish boundaries if too much is dumped on you, or if you need more space to complete your work. Tonight: Put your feet up and relax.

### CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★★ You might want to think in terms of adding more fun to your life. Excitement seems inevitable, especially involving a creative venture or a loved one. In the near future, a change in status is very possible. Tonight: Meet friends, and dance the night away.

### LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★ Pressure builds at home, and it could seep into

other areas of your life. It would be in your best interests to do something to stop this pattern. A family member might be overserious. There is no way around it. You have humor and caring going for you. Tonight: Make it early.

### VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★ Unexpected information comes forward that could set you back, at least for a little while. Someone who is instrumental to your well-being could be vague at best. You need to get more facts before making any decisions. Tonight: Do not push someone too hard.

### LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★ You could find that your more possessive side emerges in a discussion. If money is slipping through your fingers quickly, realize that you might be trying to ease some strong feelings. Be aware of the implications as well as your actions. Tonight: Ever playful.

### SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★★ You could discover that you have more hidden feelings and agendas than you thought. Emotions run high, and you might not have your usual self-discipline. Try to refrain from doing anything that could have some serious ramifications. Tonight: Play it cool.

### SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★ Slow down to avoid making a mistake that could happen too easily. Even if you have an agreement with someone, you could discover otherwise today. Let this lunar eclipse work positively in your life and bring out what is hidden within you. Tonight: Not to be found.

### CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★★ You could be looking at a major change in the near future. This transformation could be very different from one person to the next. Stay clear. You have unusual insight, and others often come to you for solutions to their problems. Tonight: Accept someone's invitation.

### AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

★★★ You might want to say little if a personal matter is blowing up in your face. Deal with outside matters, run errands and touch base with others. Listen to feedback, and try not to minimize the importance of certain decisions. Tonight: Out and about with friends.

### PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

★★★★ Your ability to get past an immediate problem marks your decisions. Don't assume that you have resolved the situation just yet, though. You might want to test the resolution with a little time. People are very changeable at this point in time. Tonight: In the limelight.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

