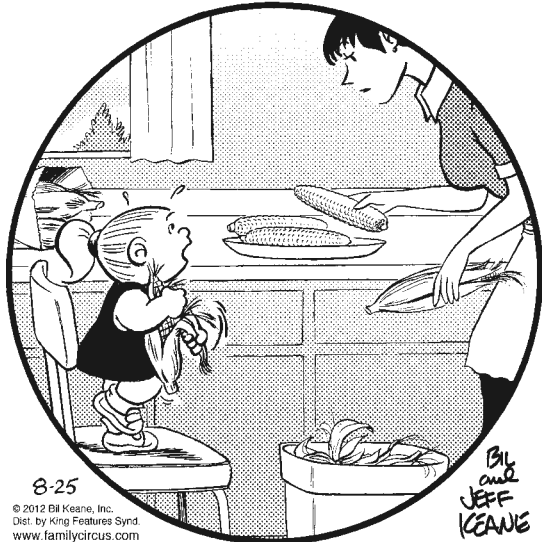
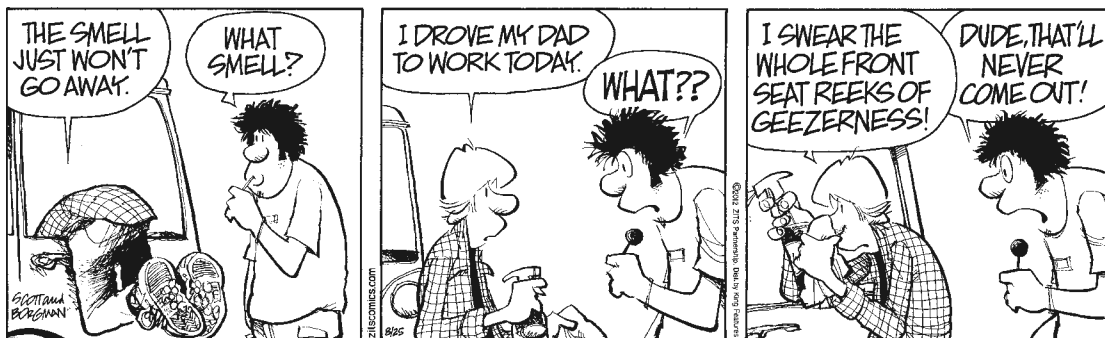


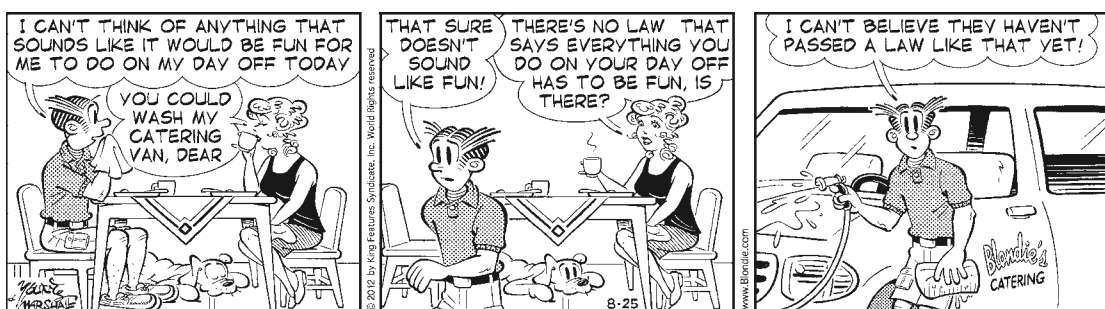
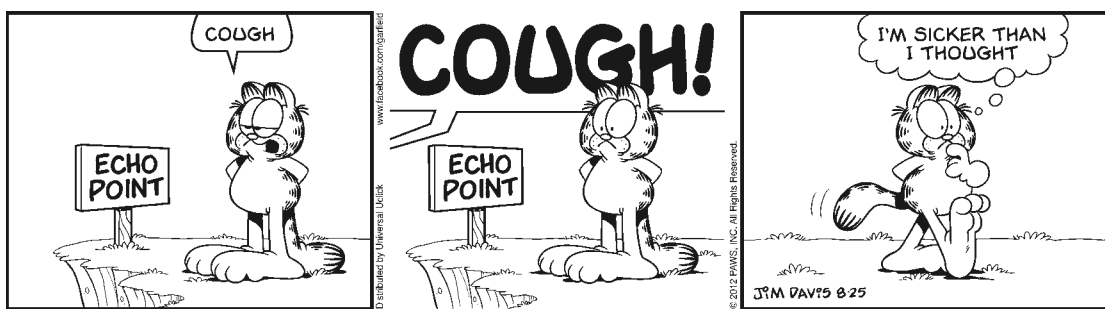
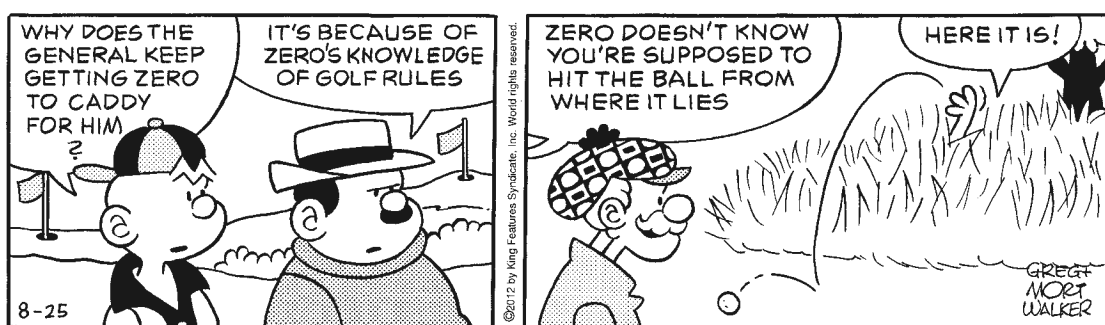
FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE


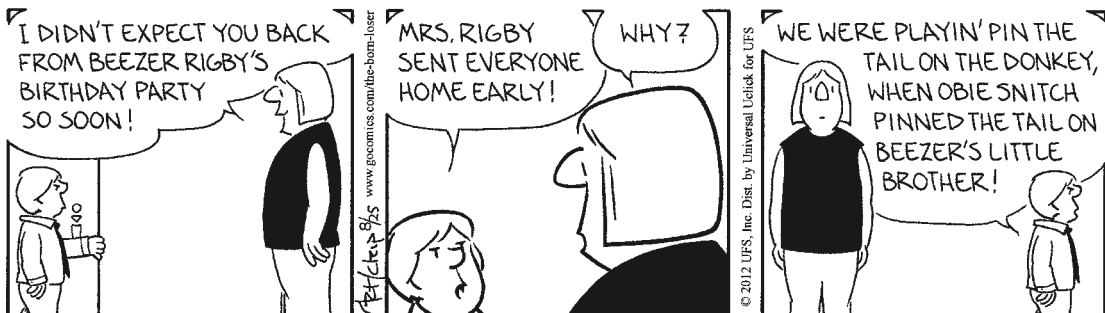
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BEETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER

HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER

THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSON


Sister Like's Sibling's Gift Idea So Much That She Steals It

DEAR ABBY: My sister sent me an email asking what I was getting our mom for her birthday because she had very few ideas. I told her I was planning to get Mom a gift card so she could buy a book for her e-reader.

Two days later, my sister emailed me back telling me she liked my idea so much she used it and mailed Mom the same gift card herself. She said it's "no big deal" if we got Mom the same thing.

It's a big deal to me. I think it was rude and inconsiderate. She says I'm being "ridiculous" because "it's only a gift card" and it doesn't matter if Mom got two of them. To me, if you ask what I'm getting someone as a gift, it's rude to run out and buy that item yourself. Who do you agree with? — LEARNED A LESSON IN LEWISBURG, PA.

DEAR LEARNED A LESSON: I agree with you. But rather than hold a grudge, take the lesson to heart. The next time your sister asks you for gift suggestions for a relative, tell her, "Gee, I haven't decided yet."

DEAR ABBY: I am an 11-year-old boy who lives in San Francisco. I read your column in the San Francisco Chronicle every day. I love your thinking and wish I could be as sensible as you. I just wanted to ask: How old do you think someone should be to read your column? I know your column can be possibly inappropriate, but love reading it anyway. — T.P. IN S.F.

DEAR T.P.: You are not the only young person who reads my column. (I printed a letter from a 7-year-old earlier this week.) I have been told that my column has been used for many years to start important conversations between people of all ages.

When I was growing up, no literature in our house was off limits — and any question I asked my

parents was given a straight answer. I hope it's the same in your family because if it is, you will grow up to be at LEAST as "sensible" as me.


DEAR ABBY

Jeanne Phillips

■ Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR ABBY: My daughter has given me permission to resume communication with my grandson, "Justin." She has kept us apart since he was 3. Justin is now 17.

I have been told by the other grandparents that Justin holds no animosity toward me. He knows I have never given up hope that one day we could reunite. Because of my daughter's unpredictable temperament and her use of my grandson as a way to control me, I'm leery and don't trust her to keep the door open between us. I'm afraid she'll slam it shut again.

What steps should I take? Justin turns 18 next year and his mom plans to "move without him, once he's 18." Should I contact him now or wait until he reaches 18? I am tired and all cried out, but I want to do the right thing for my grandson's mental health, given the craziness his mother has created.

— LOVING, LONGING GRANDMA

DEAR GRANDMA: Write your grandson a sweet note and inform him that his mother has given "permission" for you to make contact with him. Ask him to call you, so he can begin getting to know you. Find out what his plans are, and invite him to visit. However, do this SLOWLY — because you still don't know how much damage your daughter's "unpredictable temperament" has done in the formation of his personality and character. Proceed with your eyes wide open.

Because it appears your daughter wants to abandon her son as soon as she legally is able to, he will need all of the caring and supportive relatives he can find.

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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 Virgo and a Moon in Sagittarius all day.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR SATURDAY, AUG. 25, 2012:

This year you could be overwhelmed by how much you do, or have to do. The good news is that, because you handle responsibilities well, you could be in line for a pay raise. You also seem to be able to understand yourself well. If you are single, you might attract someone who is rarely understood by others, but who you seem to get. You'll enjoy that role. If you are attached, you find week-ends away together to be good both for the soul and for the bond between the two of you. SAGITTARIUS often might irritate you.

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)

★★★★ Reach out for someone at a distance, or make plans to visit this person. You might have quite a few people you have not spent time with in a while. Expect a lot of activity, and understand that you are the one who triggered it. A serious partner seems to lighten up. Tonight: Opt for adventure, not the same old ho-hum thing.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★★ A partnership (and maybe not yours) demands attention. Whether you're helping a couple or actively relating to a partner or loved one, you have your hands happily full. You might not have the fiery get-up-and-go that others have, but you more than make up for it today. Tonight: How about dinner for two?

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★ Make it your pleasure to defer to a friend, family member or loved one. You could afford to be docile and supportive, as you also demand a lot of support and feedback at times. A child or loved one is overserious. You know how to help this person lighten up. Tonight: Go with an offer.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★★ Plunge into a project that you feel has been on the back burner for too long. Your ability to listen and honor others' ideas is high. Feel free to reject their ideas as well. You have a strong sense of what works for you. Let go of an uptight attitude. Tonight: Choose only what you want to do.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★★ You certainly know how to take a day off and enjoy yourself. Your choices vary according to your age and lifestyle. Choose something you absolutely love to do and share it with someone else. Clearly, you understand the benefits of give-and-take on all levels. Tonight: Let the fun begin.

VRIGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★ Share more often with a roommate or family member. You want the strength and support of that bond to stay intact. An opportunity arises surrounding a responsibility, a superior and/or work. Trust your abilities to balance these different factions in your life. Tonight: Time for some relaxation.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★★ You continue to communicate as you always have, but you discover that others now immediately grasp what you are saying. See the difference a day or so makes? A call is packed with good news, which puts a smile on your face all day long! Tonight: Enjoy visiting over dinner.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★★ Do some price comparison before buying a big item. You still might go overboard, but at least you'll know why you chose what you did. This realization might eliminate any guilt. Do not let any negativity or insecurity impact your mood. Tonight: Treating again?

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★★ You whiz by others with a smile and lots of energy. Sure enough, certain people will want to know more. Expect inquiries, calls and tentative invitations. (The people doing the inviting probably want to join you in your good mood.) Tonight: Only what makes you smile.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★ Take a step back from the here and now, especially if you have been negative or judgmental as of late. Try to walk in someone else's shoes in order to understand where this person is coming from. You will be more open-minded as a result. Tonight: No crowds, please.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

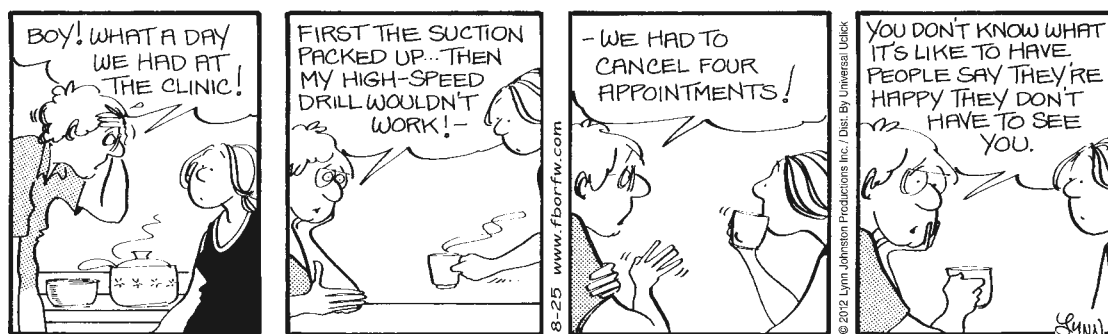
★★★★ Go where your friends are and where life at times seems silly yet meaningful. Your group of pals is one of the most important parts of your life. Do not get into anything that could prevent you from your primary agenda. Tonight: Let the party continue.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

★★★ Visit with an older friend or relative. This person enjoys your company and values your presence far more than you might realize. If you want to make other plans, do so, but only after you make this trip. Good news occurs on the homefront. Tonight: Visible and loving the moment.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT

FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON

MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS
