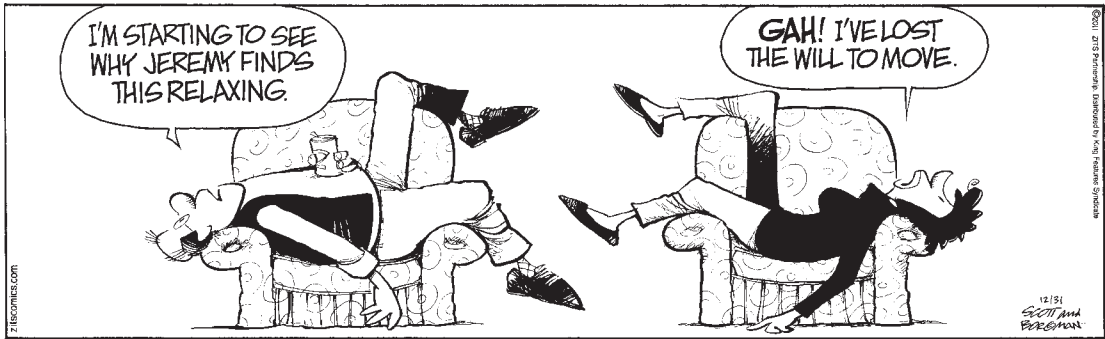


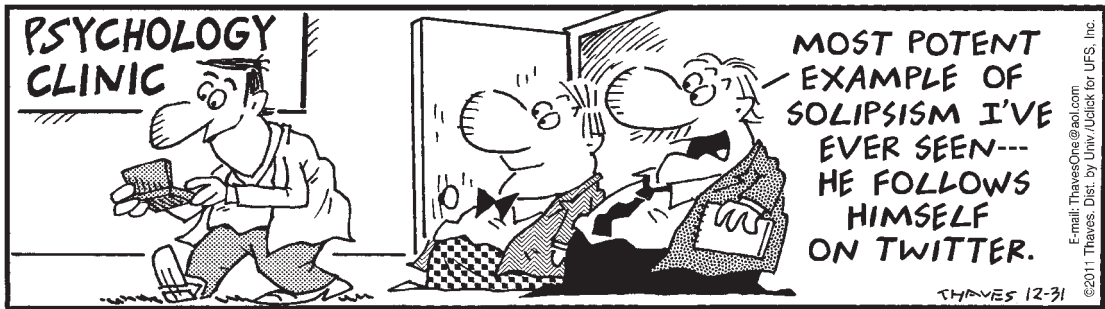
FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



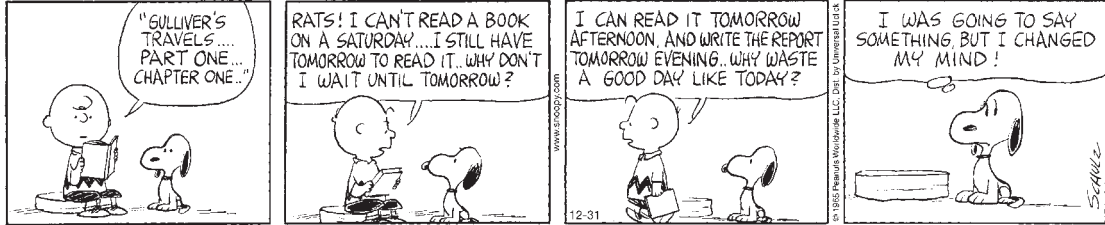
ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



DICK TRACY | JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS



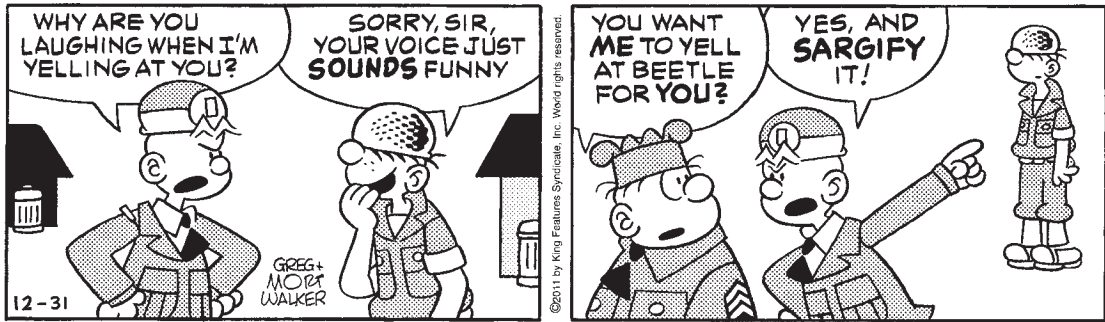
BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



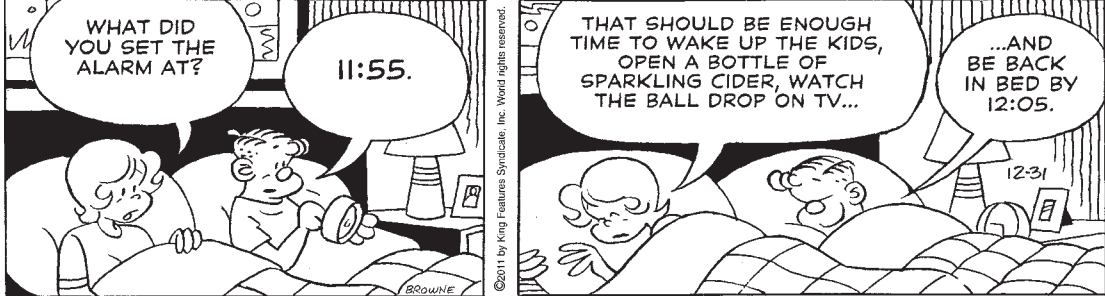
GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



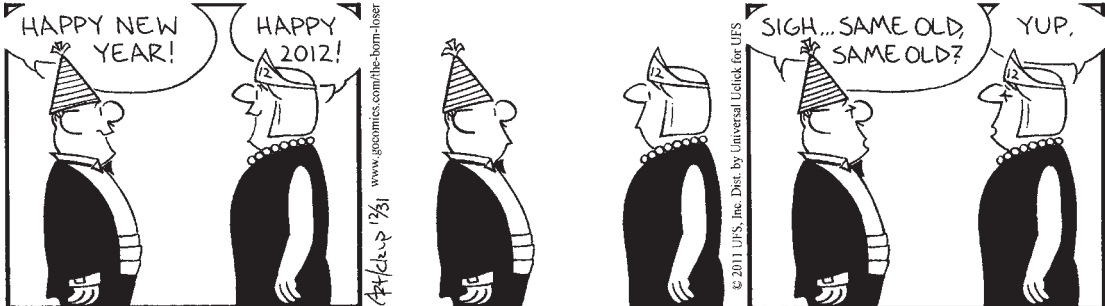
BEETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSON



BIZARRO | DAN PIRARO



# Friend Fears Middle-Schooler's Romance Headed For Trouble

DEAR ABBY: My friend "Kayla" and I are 12 and in seventh grade. Recently, Kayla informed me that she has acquired a new boyfriend. I didn't mind when she showed me all his lovely-dovey texts. I thought they were adorable.

When I asked Kayla why her boyfriend didn't sit with us at lunch, she laughed and said, "Oh, he doesn't go to school here. He's a junior in high school." That's why I'm writing.

Kayla is telling me that she and "Jacob" are making out, and their texts are getting progressively worse. Plus, Kayla has said her parents are taking her and Jacob to a concert. The concert is out of town and they will be renting a hotel room. I'm worried for my friend.

Am I incorrect for thinking this is wrong? — WORRIED FRIEND IN WASHINGTON STATE

DEAR WORRIED FRIEND: I agree with you that at 12, Kayla is too young to have a 16-year-old boyfriend. That her parents give her enough unsupervised time with him that they're involved in makeout sessions is also troubling. If this continues, Kayla could become pregnant and Jacob could be accused of statutory rape — even if Kayla was a willing participant.

Talk to your mother about what's going on. She may want to chat with Kayla's parents about this and mention the texts Jacob is sending their daughter.

DEAR ABBY: I have a question that may seem odd, but I hope you can give me an answer.

I know children can tell when a parent favors one sibling over another. What about cats? I adopted two cats — not littermates — from a shelter. While I love them both, one drives me crazy and the other is a sweet lovebug. Naturally, I prefer the sweet, cuddly one.

Can the kitty that drives me nuts tell that I prefer his "sister" over him? — LOVE 'EM BOTH, REALLY, ALBANY, N.Y.

DEAR LOVE 'EM BOTH: While I'm more of a people

expert than an animal behaviorist, let me share this. Cats and dogs, after thousands of years of living so closely with us humans, are indeed sensitive to human emotions. They can tell when we're happy, when we are nervous and when we're depressed. If you lavish affection and/or treats on one and not the other, it can create jealousy.

You don't know the history of the cats you adopted. It's possible the one that makes you "crazy" had less human contact than "Lovebug" or was mistreated in some way. With patience and positive reinforcement he may come around, so please don't give up on him.

DEAR ABBY: One of my brothers, "Carl," walked away from our family 18 years ago. My parents are elderly and in poor health. When they pass, how do we refer to this sibling in the obituary? — DRAWING A BLANK IN OHIO

DEAR DRAWING A BLANK: The entire family history does not have to be revealed in the obituary. All it should say is, "Survivors include: daughter Wendy, (husband, if there is one) of Ohio; son George, (wife); and son Carl." If you know where Carl is, include the information. If not, his name should be enough.

DEAR READERS: The year is almost over. Am I the only one who can't believe how fast it has gone? Incredible! From the bottom of my heart, I wish all of you a happy, healthy and prosperous 2012. If you plan on driving tonight, please don't drink. And if you'll be drinking tonight, please don't drive. Stay safe, everyone! — LOVE, ABBY

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable — and most frequently requested — poems and essays, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby — Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

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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, Dec. 31, 2011, has a Moon in Aries if born after 1:48 a.m. (PST). Before that time, the Moon is in Pisces. The Sun is in Capricorn all day.

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR SATURDAY, DEC. 31, 2011:

This year waves of surprises keep hitting, forcing you to at least think. What you have taken for granted will be up for questioning. Curb becoming controlling when faced with instability. Learn to flow and trust; you might be delighted at how everything works out. Consider becoming more independent professionally. If you are single, a bond formed this year could be characterized by instability. If you are attached, learn to flow and judge less. Tensions will ease. ARIES frequently delegates projects to 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)

★★★★★ You will know, feel and express the difference in the upcoming year. You vibrate with excitement and direction. Like many generations past, you are likely to take 2012 as a whole new beginning. Tonight: You are perfect no matter what you do.

### TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★ You sparkle as you greet the new year, yet something is holding you back. Sometimes pushing yourself too hard can cause more of a problem than just accepting the space you are in. Plans change. Tonight: Remember, tonight is not reflective of your entire year.

### GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★★ Knowing what you want is halfway to the finish line. Act rather than sit on your need to change some of the dynamics in your life. Update your life so that it works even better. Meanwhile, bring friends and loved ones together. Tonight: Christen the new year as only you can.

### CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★★★ Follow through on what is important to you. Listen to news; understand what works. Don't push an older friend or relative too hard. You might not like the results. Avoid a controlling person. Tonight: Others will take their cues from you.

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

★★★★★ You could really get into the new year more than many other signs. You are full of fun and festivities. The thought of a new year delights you to no end. The un-

expected occurs with communication and those at a distance. Tonight: Surround yourself with music.

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

★★★★★ One person wants all your time and attention. You might be inclined to give it to him or her. However, this person could become erratic. Make sure that behavior is OK. A child or loved one might need more control than you are giving him or her. Tonight: You don't need a large party, just that special person.

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

★★★★★ Note what is happening. If you are really tuned in, you'll feel more excitement than usual, with a sense of renewal. Do make your resolutions. Sometimes having discussions about resolutions — though they might feel silly — points to a new direction. Tonight: A force to be dealt with.

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

★★★★★ Your steady pace can make all the difference in the outcome of a personal matter. Others toss mini-boomerangs into your plans, forcing you to regroup several times. A conversation midafternoon or later could become difficult. Tonight: Greet 2012 in style.

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

★★★★★ You are one person who no one in your immediate circle should do without right now. You are up for the calendar change, more so than you have been in a long time. Your childlike side emerges as the day ends. Be careful about overdoing it. Tonight: Painting the town red.

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

★★★★★ You might want to head in another direction, which might cause tension around your home and with loved ones. The smart move is to do the party at your house. Your immediate circle might have many different ideas about what would be great to do. Tonight: Your place, please.

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

★★★★★ Put in the effort and make enough time to complete what you want. You could be overwhelmed by everything that you have to do. Nevertheless, with so many people seeking you out, you cannot say you are lonely. Tonight: Christen the new year with a smile.

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

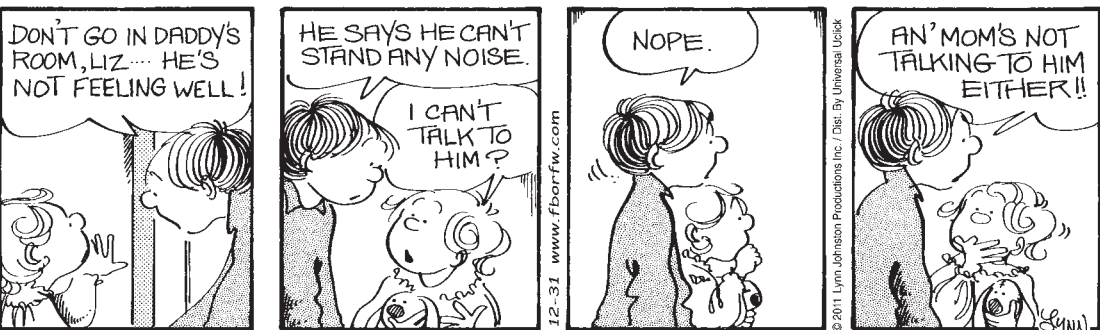
★★★★★ You won't want to say no to anything or anyone. As a result, you easily could go to some extremes and over-indulge. Your sense of well-being and happiness could be offset by a very negative person in your life. Tonight: Where it is happening.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

