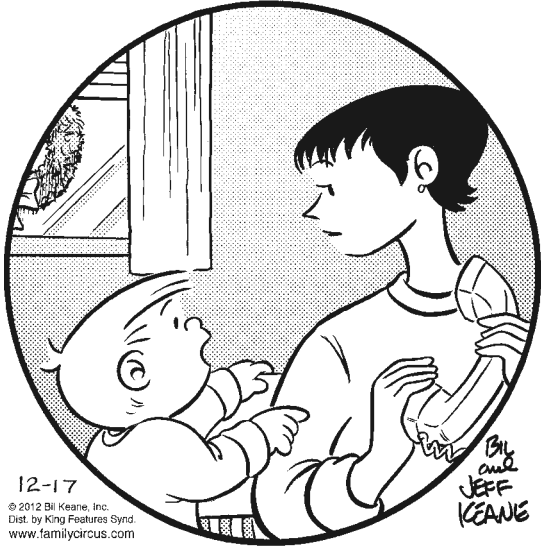
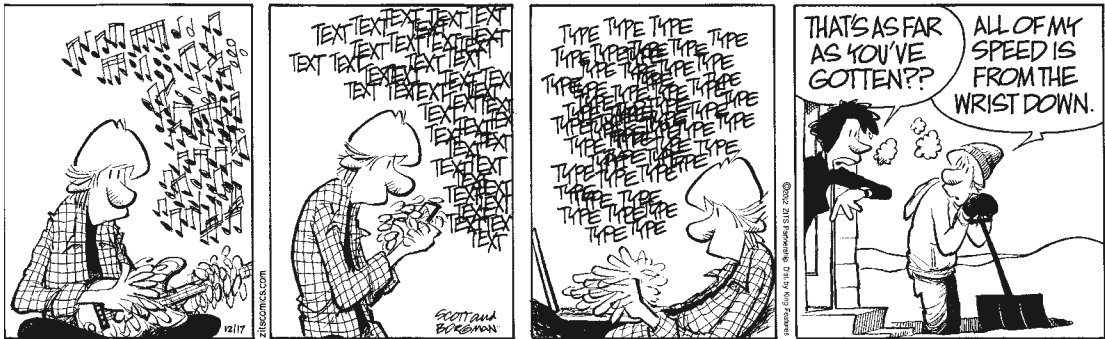


FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



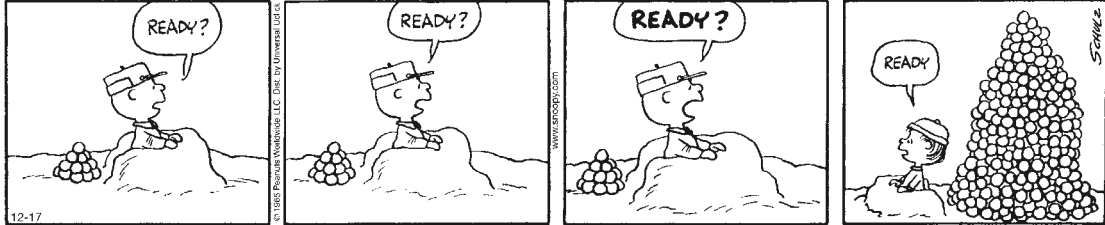
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FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



DICK TRACY | JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



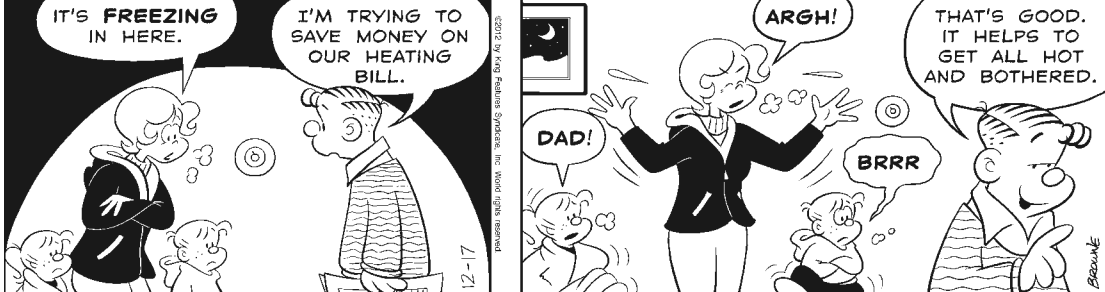
GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



BEETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



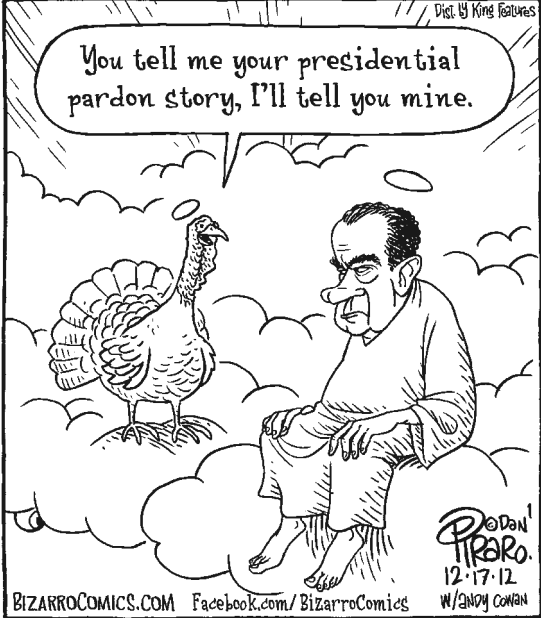
HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSON



BIZARRO | DAN PIRARO



# Man Buying His Own Gifts Is Selling His Wife Short

DEAR ABBY: Twice in recent years my husband has bought a gift for himself for Christmas, wrapped it, put it under the tree and then opened it on Christmas morning, gleefully exclaiming that it was a great gift and just what he wanted.

The first time he did it, he wrote my name on the gift card as the giver. The second time he didn't bother. When I asked him why, he said it was something he saw in the store and wanted. When I asked why he didn't just ask me to get it, he didn't have an answer.

He has also bought cards for himself for Valentine's Day. On both of them he wrote, "To Larry from 'Hon,'" his pet name for me.

I was flabbergasted and upset and asked him why he would do such a thing. He said he ran across the "perfect card" for him while looking for one for me.

I don't know what to make of his behavior, but it is demeaning and I feel angry for days afterward. He has a habit of comparing my gifts with those from his son or those he bought for himself, and it makes me feel as if mine don't measure up. My husband is 77. What's wrong with him? — PER- PLEXED IN FLORIDA

DEAR PERPLEXED: It appears you married someone who likes to buy on impulse and is insensitive to how his words and actions affect others. Look on the bright side: He's solved the problem of what to get the man who has everything for you!

However, because this is a recent change in his behavior, consider reporting it to his doctor.

DEAR ABBY: I have received several invitations to parties recently in which I was asked to do part of the work or participate in some of the expenses.

The one that really took the cake was to a party hosted by my boss. She had decided to celebrate her

birthday at her house, and when I and my co-workers RSVP'd, we were asked what type of dish we planned to bring. We also discovered that only invited EMPLOYEES were asked to bring food. Her

"real friends" weren't asked to bring anything. Needless to say, all but one employee remembered they had a "conflict."

If someone doesn't have the time or money to host a party, there are plenty of inexpensive foods, disposable tableware, etc., that can be used in a pleasant, cost-effective event without burdening — financially or otherwise — invited guests. What matters is getting together to celebrate and socialize and have a good time with friends and family. Abby, your thoughts? — UNHAPPY "GUEST" IN MISSOURI

DEAR "GUEST": I'm glad you asked. I agree with your sentiments. Your boss should be ashamed of herself for trying to use you and the other employees in the guise of having you as guests at her birthday party. How tacky!

DEAR ABBY: I'm attending a wedding in a few months. The bride has requested that all female guests not wear heels because they're a short couple. I don't have any flats that will go with

my dress, so I will have to either buy new shoes or "disappoint" the bride.

I've been hearing stories about wedding guests being told what colors to wear. I think brides (and couples) like this are going too far. What do you think? — PUT OUT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

DEAR PUT OUT: I think that if the bridal couple would like to feel a few inches taller on their big day, and buying a new pair of shoes would stretch your budget, you should consider having an old pair of flats dyed to match your dress, or skip the festivities and send your good wishes.

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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 Sagittarius and a Moon in Aquarius if born before 7:48 p.m. (PST). Afterward, the Moon will be in Pisces.

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR MONDAY, DEC. 17, 2012:

This year you hear and learn so much that you might experience an information overload. You do not always understand why people do what they do. Be aware of the fact that sometimes they don't either. Your drive to learn more marks your year. Some of you will go back to school, while others will find that learning about different lifestyles is helpful. If you are single, you could discover that you have too many potential suitors. Enjoy the process of choosing the right person. If you are attached, your home life remains pivotal. You even might decide to buy a home or change where you live. PISCES is often a source of stress for 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)

★★★★ Schedule meetings quickly, even if you feel pushed to do so. Others can't seem to handle business matters right now. You could be overwhelmed by the many hats you need to wear. Messages could get mixed, and others might be into control games. Tonight: Vanish quickly!

### TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★★ You step up to the plate and take the lead at work, school and/or within your immediate circle. You could feel stretched to the limit. A loved one will make an effort to help, but he or she will succeed only in irritating you. Walk away from someone's power play. Tonight: Where you want to be.

### GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★ Reach out to someone who can be a lighting rod of enlightenment. You appreciate this person's different perspective. When you work with a situation and use more expansive thinking, you will incorporate what you've learned. Tonight: Catch up with an older relative.

### CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★★ You get bored by the same old conversations. Toss in a new idea or two, and observe the responses you get. You will know right away whether you can open up this interaction. At least you will be able to get a feel for the possibilities. Tonight: Put on a piece of Christmas music.

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

★★★★ Others seek you out for a plethora of reasons. You might be so overwhelmed by everything you hear that you might want to hide. Consider taking a walk or signing up for a yoga class. Someone in your daily environment decides to be very controlling. Tonight: Dinner for two.

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

★★★★ You are able to make others laugh. Your ability to dive into a problem and find the solution also emerges. Your creativity tends to bubble up in problem-solving situations, and you'll feel more confident than you have in a while. Tonight: Go with a suggestion.

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

★★★★ Your quirky, fun personality might emerge at a most inappropriate moment. Make calls to a key person at a distance. This person's perspective adds dimension to a situation. Touch base with a family member when you have a few moments. Tonight: Slow down. Relax.

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

★★★ Make it OK to vanish for a while. Home might be the perfect place to hang out. Return a call to a neighbor or family member. This person knows how to manipulate people, and he or she often likes to practice on you. Be careful! Tonight: Choose what you most love to do.

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

★★★★ Stay tuned in to a family member's needs. Certain feelings will emerge, and you could become more verbal than in the recent past. Others will respond. Do not get involved in a petty struggle happening around you. Go out and do errands instead. Tonight: Head on home.

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

★★★★ Stay open to someone who can -- and probably will -- be difficult. You'll move through this situation with ease if you consider how strong you have been in the past. Refuse to make this situation more provocative. Tonight: Run holiday errands before meeting a friend.

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

★★★ Curb a need to overspend on loved ones. Know that you can make great choices within your budget. Be careful if you suddenly feel resentful of someone. You have been suppressing your feelings for a while. You also have been giving too much. Tonight: Treat yourself, too.

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

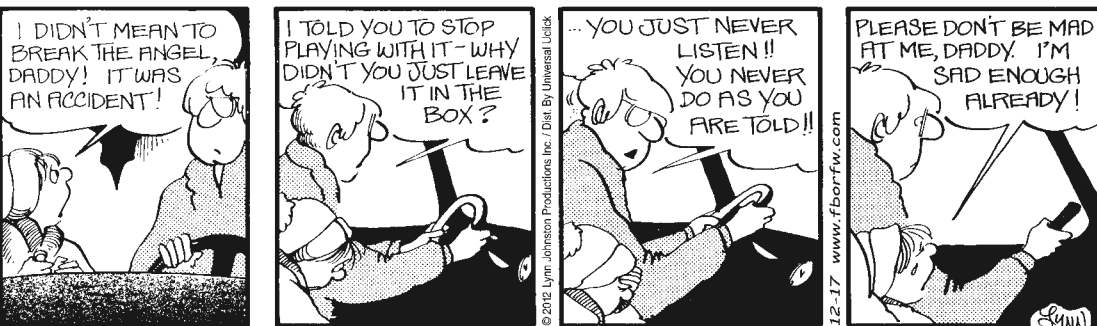
★★★★ Act on a friend's suggestion. When discussing it with others, you'll discover that they also like this idea. Stress could be an issue with so much to do. Give yourself permission not to get every detail done. Take some much-needed personal time. Tonight: You can do no wrong.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

