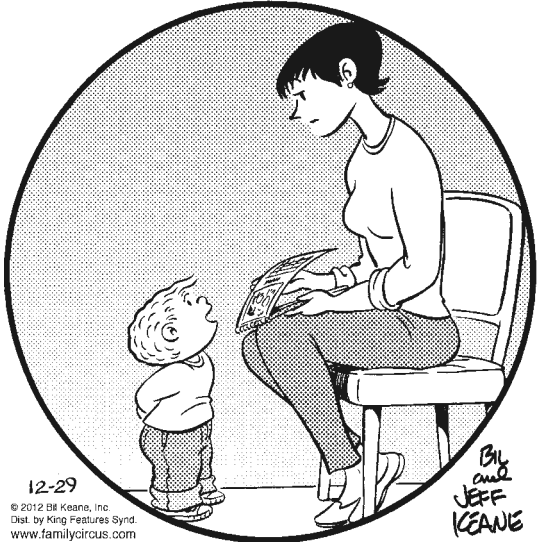


FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



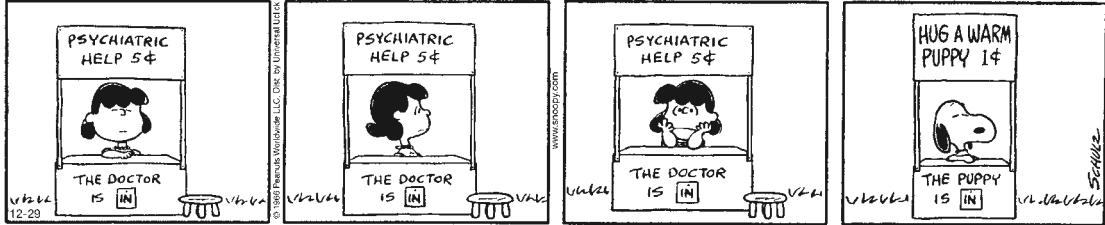
ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



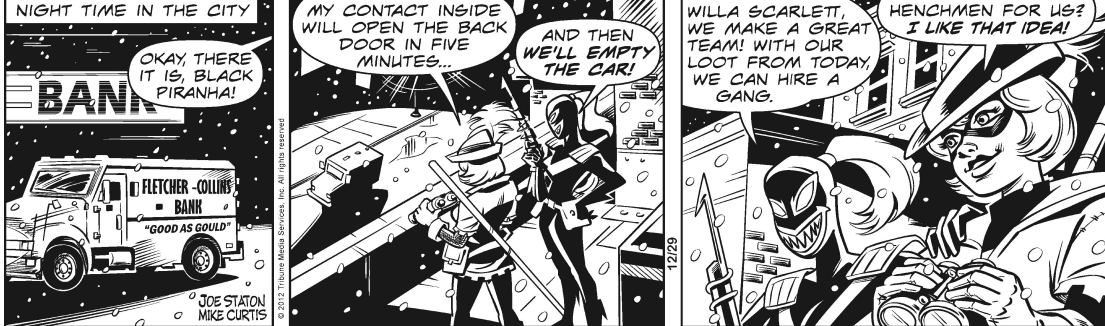
FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



DICK TRACY | JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS



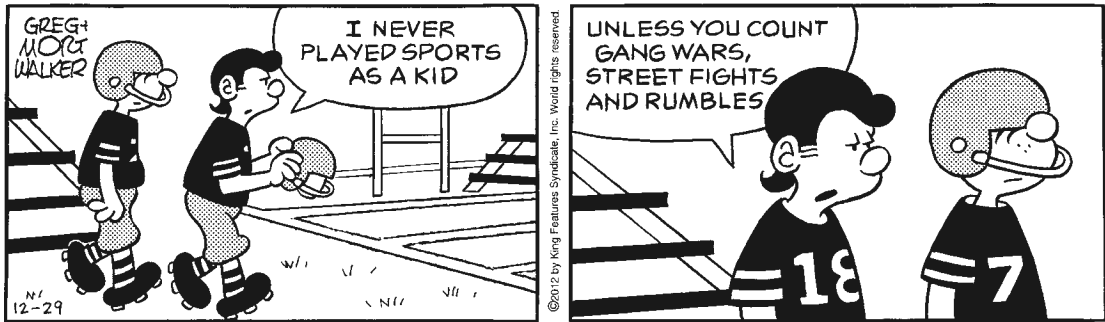
BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



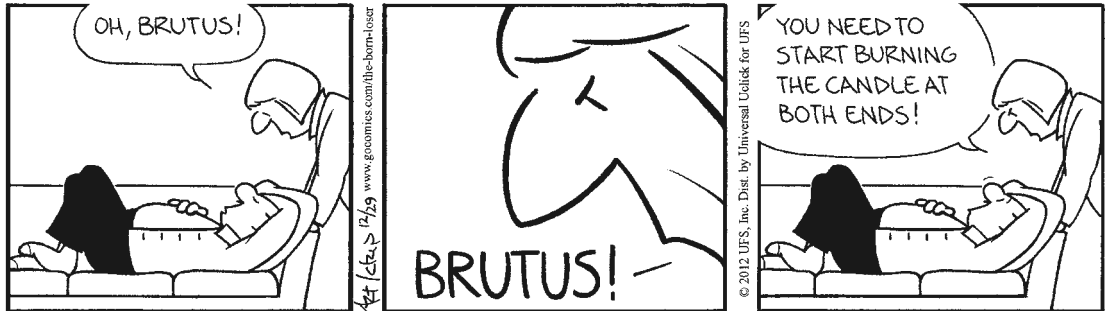
BEETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSON



Big Thinker Looks For Big Changes In Slacker Boyfriend

DEAR ABBY: I have been dating "Lance" for about two years now. We communicate well, have great chemistry and are very affectionate with each other. Lance is kind, creative (he's an artist) and considerate. However, he lacks ambition.

I'm a big thinker who wants big things in life. I have traveled extensively and am very involved in the world of academia. Lance works in a bar three nights a week and plays video games when I'm not around. I know from our conversations that he is intelligent and capable of doing so much more.

Is there any way to motivate him without nagging? I feel I may be selling myself short by being with someone who is content to sit on the couch. On the other hand, I have dated more ambitious men who turned out to be jerks. Must women have to choose between nice guys who finish last and dominating power mongers? — ASKING TOO MUCH? IN SAN FRANCISCO

DEAR ASKING TOO MUCH?: The male sex is not divided into two categories — nice guys who finish last and power mongers. If you look around, you will see there are control freaks who finish last, and nice men who work hard at their jobs or professions and are successful.

If you feel you are selling yourself short by being with Lance, then you probably are. If you would like to motivate him, tell him you think you need to be with someone who has more direction in life. If that doesn't galvanize him to action, nothing will.

DEAR ABBY: After being in a four-year relationship with an alcoholic who was emotionally, verbally and at times physically abusive, I got out. I have moved back with my parents to save money so I can get my own place. When I told my mother

about some of the incidents that happened, she said, "I know how you can be." My father seemed more supportive — until recently.

My ex has a son I grew close to, as did my parents. Last week, I found out my ex had contacted them and his son will be coming here for a visit. Abby, I don't want my ex to know anything about my current life! I'm afraid he's trying to manipulate and torment me while I try to move forward.

I feel hurt and angry at my parents for not respecting my feelings. I can't seem to get through to my mom, and Dad just looked at me and said, "Well, YOU'RE the one who stayed for so long!" I don't know if I can forgive them for this. Any advice would be greatly appreciated. — HURT DAUGHTER IN MASSACHUSETTS

DEAR HURT DAUGHTER: I'll try. When people are attracted to — and stay with — a partner who is emotionally, verbally and sometimes physically abusive, it's sometimes because there was dysfunction in their upbringing. You don't say how long you have been staying with your parents, but if there is no alternative, you need to stick to your plan and stay until you

have enough money to rent a place of your own. When the boy arrives, greet him warmly and spend as little time there as possible. Give him no information about your work or your social life other than to say you are doing fine and are very happy. And as soon as you have enough money to establish some independence, get out of there. P.S. If you haven't already joined an Al-Anon group, I recommend it. Attend some meetings before the boy arrives, and don't keep that a secret while he's there.



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.

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 Capricorn and a Moon in Cancer if born before 11:45 p.m. (PST). Afterward, the Moon will be in Leo.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR SATURDAY, DEC. 29, 2012:

This year you will make decisions about many different issues, but when it comes to following through on them, it could be a problem. If you are not 100 percent dedicated to a decision, don't do it. You also might feel the need to redo conversations in both your personal and professional lives. If you are single, go with the flow, especially as the summer months approach. Summertime could produce a very interesting friend, if not something more. If you are attached, avoid petty arguments. Express your caring and your commitment to each other. CANCER has the same issue as you, but expresses it 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)

★★★ Tension builds. Choose to take a much-needed, unscheduled day off. You enjoy spontaneity. You also might have some observations to think about. A day away from the daily grind could be more than a mood-changer. Tonight: Take care of yourself first.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★★★ Keep plans light and easy. Write a few thank-you notes, work on your New Year's wishes and make or confirm plans to greet 2013. Take care of some errands, but above all else, make sure that you get to relax before the next round. Tonight: Join friends for dinner.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★ You might be juggling your finances or find yourself having to rob Peter to pay Paul. Stop and take a hard look at the situation. Is there any way you could avoid this scenario? Even if the path is rocky, it could be well worth it. Tonight: Fun does not have to cost you anything.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★★★ Enjoy others' attention, but don't forget about someone who could be far more in need of it, and who could use some emotional support as well. You have put in a lot of effort into the recent holiday. You need time for yourself, too. Tonight: Wherever you go, people are all smiles.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★ Step away from the daily grind for a bit. Spend

the day alone or with one other person. Everyone needs time to recharge his or her battery, and you'll need this even more as you interact with others. Screen calls, and play it low-key. Tonight: Suddenly, you feel revived.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★★ Get together with friends. The activity is not important, as long as you do not assume the lead. Plans could change quite suddenly if you are single. You could meet that special someone very soon. This person might not be like anyone else you know. Tonight: Don't make it late.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★★ Deal with an older friend or relative directly. You have been avoiding this situation. You could continue this same avoidance game, or start the new year on the right path. A domestic change might be unavoidable. Don't stress out -- just accept it. Tonight: To the wee hours.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★★ Detach from your immediate surroundings, as you could be overtired and withdrawn. Honor a need to revitalize yourself. Hop in the car, and go for a drive. Stop at a favorite flea market. Getting away might be more important than you realize. Tonight: Follow the music.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★★ When was the last time you spent some quiet one-on-one time with a certain loved one? Make plans to get together with this person, even if you need to cancel other plans. Relationships need nurturing. This one is not any different. Tonight: Partake in a meal together.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★★ Defer to a friend or loved one. You might discover that letting go could be difficult, but worthwhile. You'll find that you won't have to plan out every hour or have to stay mentally ahead of what is happening. Now you can remain present in the moment. Tonight: Do not be alone.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

★★★★ Make a push to get errands done, and don't forget to send out your Christmas thank-yous. Plans to join a friend later could be fun. Brainstorm your New Year's resolutions. Also, catch up on this person's news. You'll gain a new perspective as a result. Tonight: Out late.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

★★★★ Express your concern and caring to a loved one. Whatever you are seeing, know that this person might not even be aware of it. Resist harping on the same point, unless you want to create more tension. Get into a favorite pastime together. Tonight: Let the good times roll.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

