

FAMILY CIRCUS | BILL KEANE

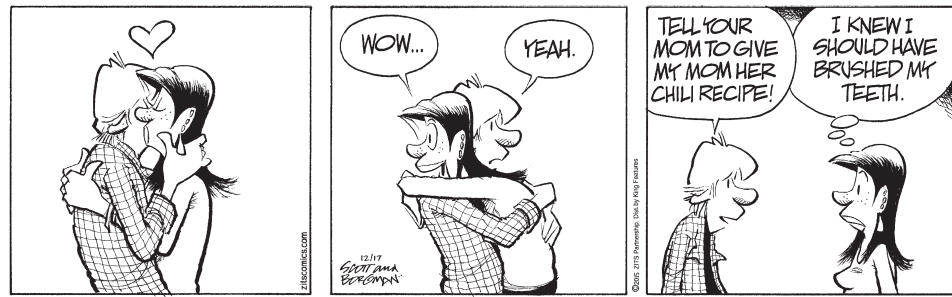


12-17  
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www.familycircus.com  
"They should have Santa be a challenge on Project Runway. He wears that same suit every year."

BIZARRO | DAN PIRARO



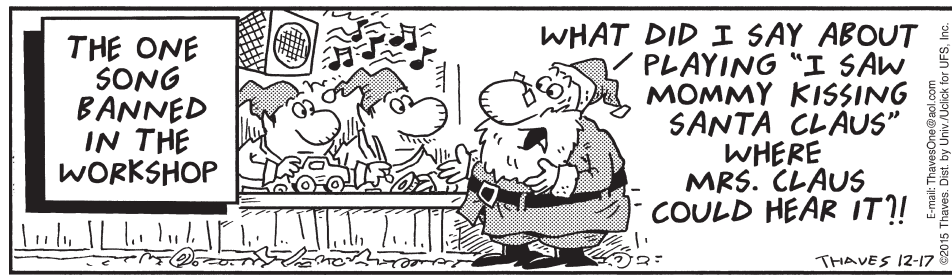
ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



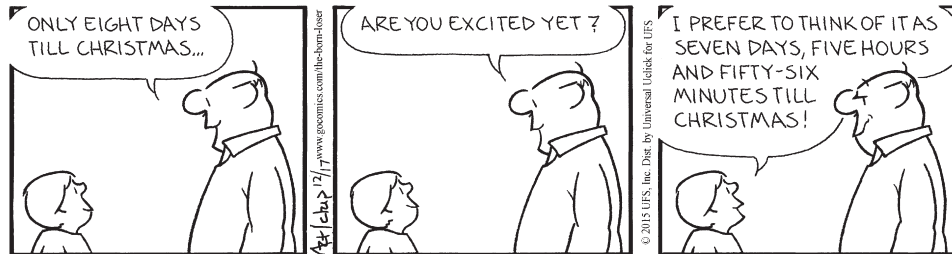
PICKLES | BRIAN CRANE



FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



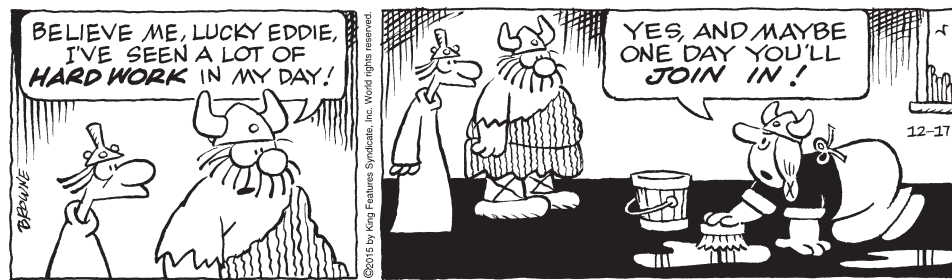
BORN LOSER | ART SAMSON



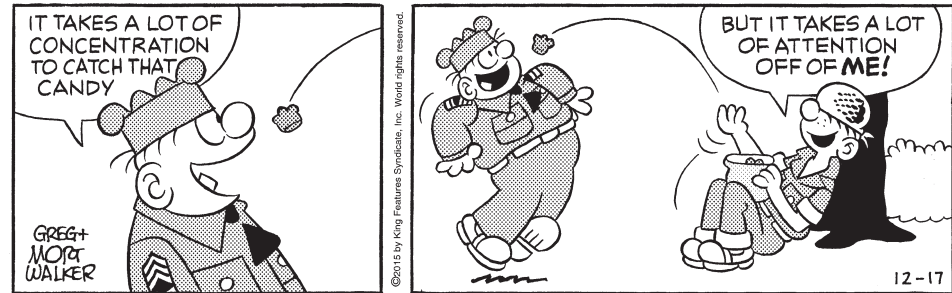
PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE | CHRIS BROWNE



BETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



# Murky Circumstances Of Crime Cloud Convict's Welcome Home

**DEAR ABBY:** After I became an adult and left home, my father remarried a woman with a grown son. "Jack" has been incarcerated for the past several years. I have only vague information about what he did, but I do know it was related to drugs and gang affiliation. His mother insists he was "framed" and refuses to talk about the charges. I haven't been able to find any public information except that this wasn't the first time he was arrested. My father has hinted that there is a bigger story there, but he keeps quiet out of respect for his wife's feelings.

Jack will be released soon, and my stepmom is already planning big family events for us to welcome him home. I have a wife and kids now, and I'm not sure I want them around an ex-con. At the same time, I don't really know what happened, and I don't want to start a family rift. What should I do next? — **WHAT'S THE SECRET?**

**DEAR WHAT'S:** Talk to your father and tell him that unless you know whether your children could be in danger if they are around him and base your decision on it. Not that Jack might ever hurt your children, but should a rival gang member come after him, they might be collateral damage, as we so often read about these days. Better to err on the side of caution.

**DEAR ABBY:** I was divorced 10 years ago. My children are all over 21. I talk with them once a month, but I contact my ex-wife only when there's an issue that relates to our kids.

My ex now has cancer. When she dies, am I expected to attend the funeral? I would like to go as a show of respect to my kids. However, I don't know how they would react

because they know I have had little contact with their mother for the last decade.

The same question goes for my ex-mother-in-law, who is almost 90. I had a good relationship with her until the divorce, at which point she would no longer talk to me. Should I be there since she is the grandmother of my children? — **PLANNING AHEAD**

**DEAR PLANNING:** I think your question may be somewhat premature. Your relationship with your ex-wife and her mother may improve before anyone dies — and let's admit it, YOU could be the one to go first.

If there is any chance that your presence at her mother's funeral would upset your ex-wife, then I vote for skipping it and explaining the reason to your children. As to attending your ex's funeral when (and if) the time comes, remember that funerals are to comfort the living.

During one of your monthly conversations with your children — once your ex-wife is determined to be terminal and NOT before — ask what their wishes are and abide by them.

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

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**DEAR ABBY**  
Jeanne Phillips

## 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 Pisces.

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR THURSDAY, DEC. 17, 2015:

This year your creativity plays a dominant role in your day-to-day life. You could be in your head so often that you forget the practical aspects of your life. You might want to keep a notebook for your ideas and dreams. You could become more grounded as a result. If you are single, you could meet someone any day, any time. Your charisma soars this year. If you are attached, you seem to be able to make your sweetie happy, as long as you can deflect some of his or her critical remarks. A fellow SAGITTARIUS can be overwhelming. 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)

★★★ Your sixth sense points to doing a better job, and clues you in to how to deal with a controlling individual. You could be too tired for your own good, and might need to take a timeout for a little while. Tonight: Listen, but don't contribute to someone else's contrariness.

### TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★★ Emphasize working with others; you'll find the results to be much better if you do. You might not always want to let others run with the ball, but you'll feel the need to do just that right now. Look at the big picture, and understand what is motivating you. Tonight: Among the crowds.

### GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★ You could be overwhelmed by everything you need to do. Rather than do nothing, throw yourself into your to-do list. You might be surprised by what you can accomplish. Your efforts will pay off, especially since a friend decides to pitch in. Tonight: Be grateful for what you have.

### CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★★ Look at the big picture, and know full well what you want to accomplish. You might see a shortcut or two if you just relax. Ask a loved one or a child to pitch in and help. Be open to someone else's sentiments. Tonight: Make sure you have mistletoe nearby.

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

★★★★ You can't help but respond to others directly, specifically one person. You might have chosen not to reveal some of your feelings to this

individual. Stay close to home, if possible. You could be angry or somewhat frustrated. Tonight: Be with a favorite person.

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

★★★★ You need to be aware of your dependency on others. You cannot control anyone else's mood, though you might try. Understand that a loved one could be upset if he or she doesn't feel as if you are giving him or her enough attention. Tonight: Go along with others' plans.

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

★★★ You could be feistier than you realize. You might lose your cool because you're fed up with the holidays and overwhelmed. A lot of action seems to be heading down the path toward you. Use care with spending, as you easily could go overboard. Tonight: Head home early.

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

★★★★ Your creativity perks up when you hit an obstacle. Refuse to overthink a talk with a contrary person in your life; otherwise, you could be out of sorts. It simply isn't worth it to give this conversation so much of your time, under the present circumstances. Tonight: Ever playful.

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

★★★ A family issue or a personal matter seems to dominate your thoughts. You might choose not to discuss the problem directly, but rather try to get past it by letting it go. Congratulate yourself if you can; otherwise you'll have to initiate a talk. Tonight: A friend is full of energy.

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

★★★ A boss often is contrary, and you might not want to deal with this person right now. How you handle a personal matter could change substantially after you discuss the situation with a key person in your life. You finally will see some alternatives. Tonight: Act with certainty.

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

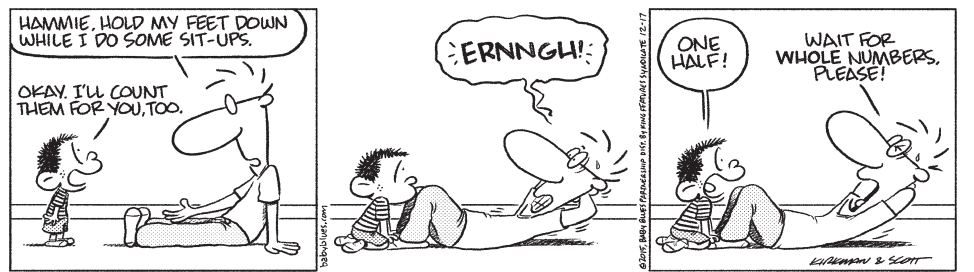
★★★ Be aware of the costs of continuing as you have been. In the long run, you won't be able to sustain this type of spending. Yes, it is the holidays, but you could be going overboard anyway. Be more upbeat, and trust your instincts with others. Tonight: Try to complete shopping ASAP.

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

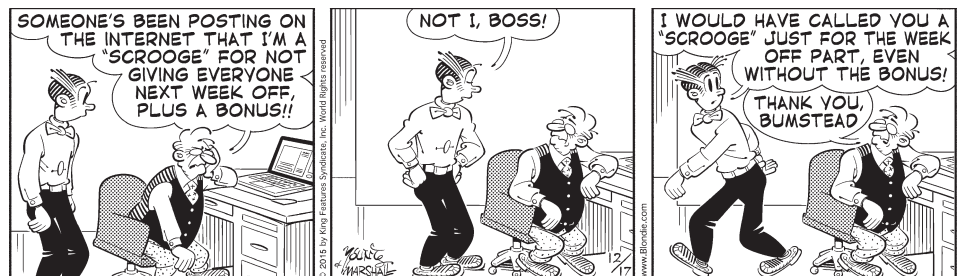
★★★★ You're in your element right now, with the exception of having to deal with a boss. This person has been withdrawn and could be quite difficult. You might not know how to help rein him or her in. Detach if you must. Look at the big picture. Tonight: Find your friends.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

