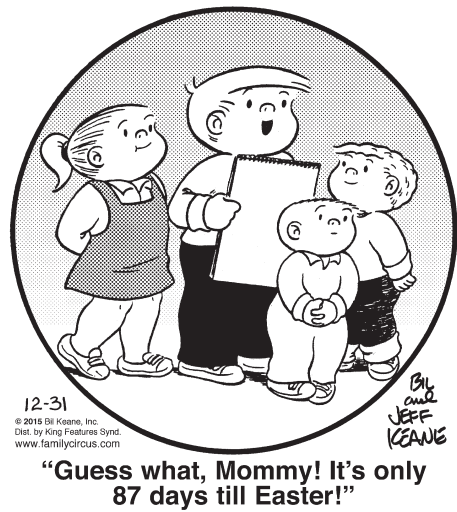


FAMILY CIRCUS | BILL KEANE



ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



PICKLES | BRIAN CRANE



FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



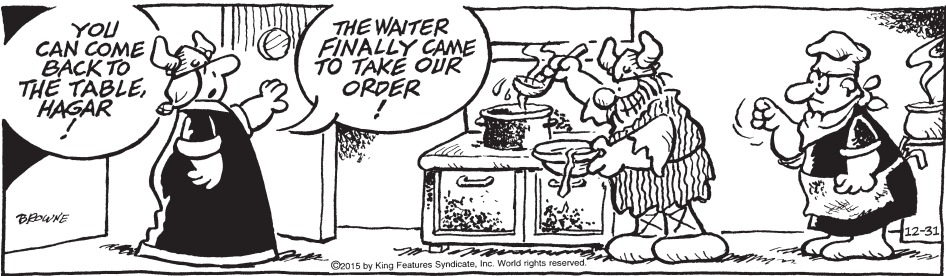
BORN LOSER | ART SAMSON



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



Mom Eschews Habit Of Baby Teething On Friend's Fingers

DEAR ABBY: A friend I really like has been extremely helpful baby-sitting my 4-month-old son every once in a while. The problem is, she informed me that she rubs his gums and lets him chew on her fingers. I find this gross and strange. Clean fingers or not, I'd prefer she not do this. She only has him a couple of hours at a time, and he has teething toys.

Am I overreacting? If not, how do I politely inform my friend that I'd rather she not put her fingers in my baby's mouth? I can't think of a way to explain it that wouldn't offend her.

— OFF LIMITS IN IDAHO
DEAR OFF LIMITS: What your friend is doing is neither gross nor strange. She was probably trying to soothe your teething baby who was showing signs of discomfort. Her fingers may have been more comfortable to chew on than the hard toy. However, you are the parent and if you prefer no more fingers in your baby's mouth, you should tell that to your friend and she shouldn't take offense.

DEAR ABBY: I often have thought about cooking food and taking it to neighbors when they experience a death in the family or a new baby, etc. I know when my parents passed away, kind relatives and neighbors brought us so much food we didn't know what to do with it all. But it was greatly appreciated and helped us more than they could ever know.

My problem is I tend to overthink this and then not follow through. (What if they don't eat meat? What if they're on special diets? What if they already have a lot of food or are allergic to something?) How can I offer something useful without knowing their eating habits? I have considered giving a restaurant gift card, but that doesn't seem as personal.



DEAR ABBY
Jeanne Phillips

It seems years ago people never put so much thought into making a dish and taking it to the neighbors. Can you give me some insight? — WANTS TO HELP IN MICHIGAN

DEAR WANTS TO HELP: I don't think you are overthinking at all. The questions in your mind are intelligent ones. That's why you should pick up the phone and tell the families that you intend to bring them a gift of food, but before you do, you would like to know if they have any dietary restrictions. (Perhaps they already have a freezer full of cakes, pies and cookies and would enjoy something more solid — like a casserole?) I am sure your thoughtfulness would be appreciated if you called to offer your condolences and asked what they could use.

CONFIDENTIAL TO MY READERS: A word to the wise: If you plan to toast the New Year tonight, please appoint a designated driver. And on this night especially, designated drivers should remember to drive defensively. To one and all, a happy, healthy New Year! — LOVE, ABBY

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.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$14 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are 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 has a Sun in Capricorn and a Moon in Virgo.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR THURSDAY, DEC. 31, 2015:

This year you'll learn to take an overview when you feel uptight or stressed. Travel and vacations will play an important role in your year. You are likely to meet someone who might be so unusual that interacting with him or her could be a real learning experience. If you are single, you could become involved with a foreigner. Before committing to this person, make sure you can accept his or her uniqueness. If you are attached, your in-laws might play a greater role in your life. You and your sweetie will pursue a long-term desire to experience a new adventure together. VIRGO is lucky 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)

★★★★ You will try hard to be mellow as the new year approaches. You have spent a lot of energy on touching base with key people and getting together more often. Be careful not to overshare some plans, even though they already might be public knowledge. Tonight: Your efforts pay off.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★★★ Reach out to others at a distance before you allow New Year's excitement to grab hold. You also might decide to do a different type of happening this year. Whatever you choose to do, put yourself in a position where you can just let go. Tonight: Greet 2016 as only you can.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★★ You could be at your wits' end, as you have so much ground to cover. Whether you decide to stay close to home for New Year's or you have many friends popping in, you will be busy. Plans can change if you are not comfortable with what is happening. Tonight: All smiles.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★★★ You might need to ask for more information before making a decision. A partner will be unusually open and caring. This person tends to have very different ideas from yours. Listen to what is being shared by those around you. Tonight: Get into the New Year's celebrations early.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★★ Curb a need to spend too much, whether it's to please you or a friend, or for any

other reason. This New Year's Eve has the makings of a wonderful beginning. Recognize how much a key person gives of him- or herself. Tonight: All smiles ... and it only gets better.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★★ You smile all day long, no matter what goes on or where you are coming from. You have an innate radiance that attracts many people. If you are single and wanting to make plans, you'll be happiest roving around. You could meet someone quite special as a result. Tonight: Out late.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★ How you feel on this final day of the year will have nothing to do with how you feel in 24 hours. You might be somewhat reflective and thoughtful about 2016, yet you could be questioning yourself about recent actions you have taken. Tonight: Relax with the moment.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★★★ Zero in on what you want. You could be overly tired and withdrawn. You also might wonder what would be the best way to proceed. Someone you care about could be unusually touchy. Remember, this day is not easy on some people. Tonight: Hang out with loved ones.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★★ Pressure builds to join in and be part of the crowd. Don't be surprised to find yourself at a spontaneous happening that sets the mood for New Year's. Resist saying "no," and enjoy the moment. An unexpected opportunity is likely to present itself. Tonight: Make it your pleasure.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★★★ Reach out to someone at a distance whom you care about. You might be ready for a long-overdue talk. Starting the new year with a clean slate and a different viewpoint could make all the difference in how you feel. Communication flourishes. Tonight: Wait until the midnight hour.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

★★★★ Reach out to several loved ones at a distance. You might want to hear about what is happening with them. Catching up on news will prove to be very rewarding, as it will make you happy. Realize what is happening between you and someone else. Tonight: Surprises lie ahead.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

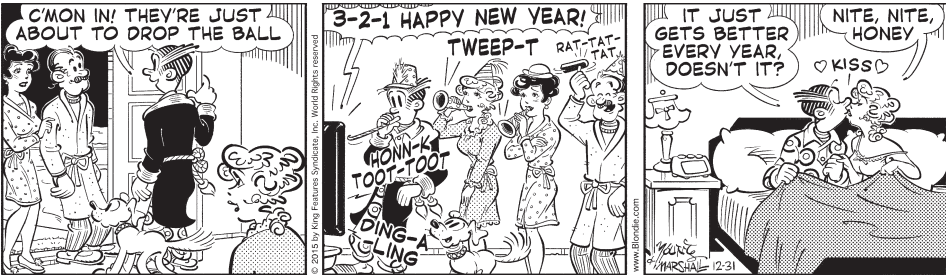
★★★★ Defer to someone else, and let him or her do whatever he or she wants. Your heightened sense of emotional well-being seems to permeate your interactions. Calls and inquiries come in from every direction. Tonight: Love the one you are with.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

