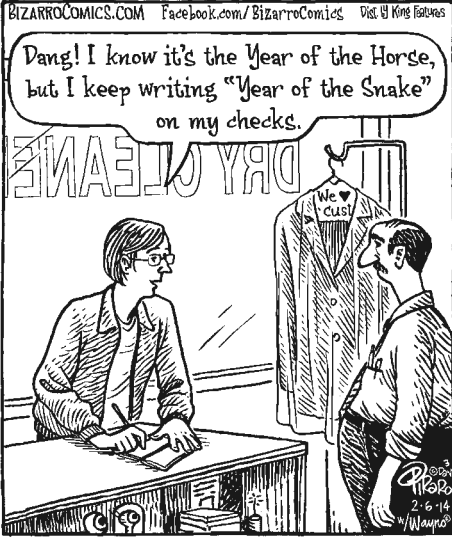


FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



"Daddy, how much snow does it take to close a school? I need to know whether to do my homework."

BIZARRO | DAN PIRARO

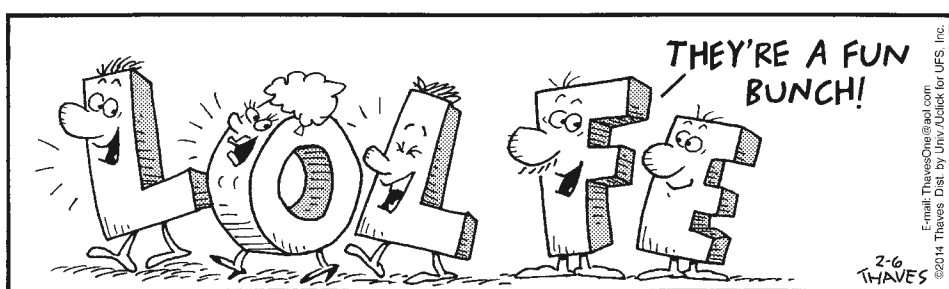


Dang! I know it's the Year of the Horse, but I keep writing "Year of the Snake" on my checks.

ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



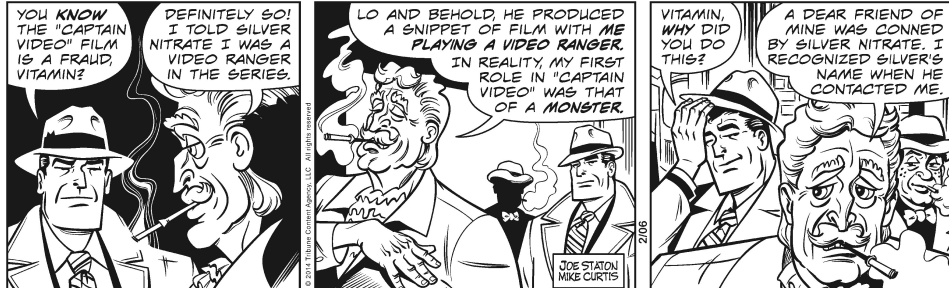
FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



DICK TRACY | JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



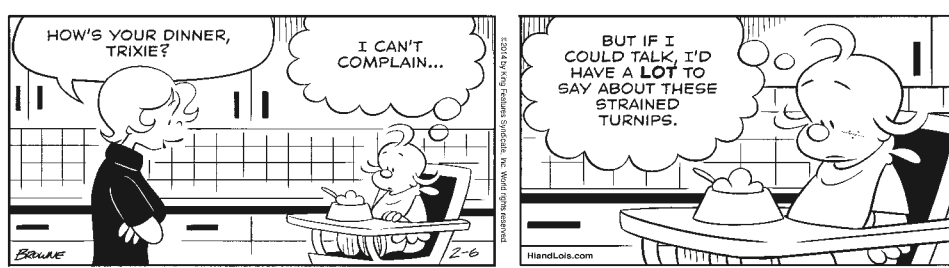
GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



BEETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



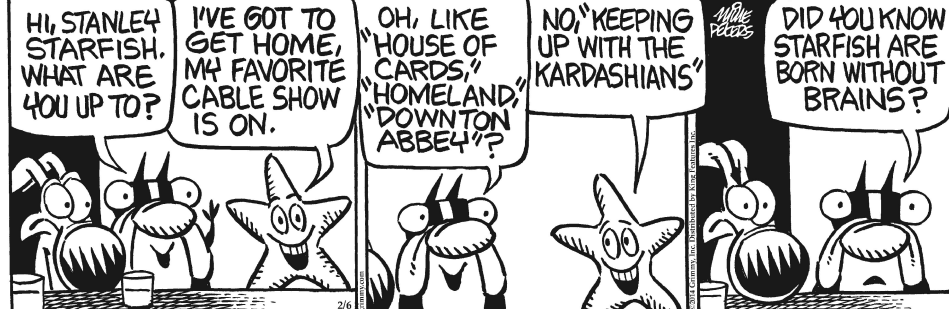
HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSON



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS



TO OUR READERS:

The PRESS & DAKOTAN is currently conducting a two-week test run of the popular comic strip "Take It From the Tinkersons" by Bill Bettwy. To accommodate the strip, we will be pre-empting "For Better or For Worse" from Jan. 27-Feb. 8. During this test run, we'd love to hear your feedback on the "Tinkersons" strip. We'd also like you to tell us what are your three favorite strips and three least-favorite strips currently offered in the P&D. Feel free to add other comments. Send your feedback to Kelly Hertz at kelly.hertz@yankton.net. or mail them to: Press & Dakotan, c/o Comics Survey, 319 Walnut, Yankton, SD 57078. The survey will end Saturday, Feb. 8.

Abby: Kids' Handheld Electronics May Be More Than Fun And Games

DEAR ABBY: I am writing about the letter from "Holding My Tongue" (Nov. 8), the woman who was upset because many children were playing with electronic devices during her grandchildren's school concerts and recitals. While I agree that most children should pay attention to the event at hand, as the mother of two children on the autism spectrum, I have a different perspective.

There are apps and games designed to keep these children occupied and help them deal with the stress and anxiety of being in a large group of people. I should not have to leave my sons at home because they are on the spectrum, so a harmless, quiet game that allows them to participate without being disruptive is a godsend to me.

Sometimes it is not obvious WHY someone is doing something; so as long as it isn't disrupting the event, please try to be tolerant. — LAURA IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR LAURA: Your point is well-stated, and was one made by a number of parents of children with special needs. Readers had interesting comments on this topic, so I'm sharing a few:

DEAR ABBY: If there's a possibility young children could be unruly during a performance, I think they should be allowed to use a tablet or something to keep them occupied.

Sometimes it's hard to find a sitter or afford one. When children get dragged to programs they have no interest in, they lose patience and become fidgety. If given something to occupy their attention, as long as it has headphones, then I don't see a problem. I'd rather have than kids shouting, screaming and crying because they're unhappy being there. — UNDERSTANDING IN LOUISIANA

DEAR ABBY: In this digital age, we have lost touch with basic common decency and respect for others. I not only notice this in children, but adults as well. I have seen people check their

emails while they are in church, or couples sitting together at a restaurant, both fixated on their electronic devices and not speaking a word to each other.

It's sad to imagine what the next generation will be like if we don't start putting the devices down and interacting with each other again like human beings. I raised all three of my kids this way, so I know it's not impossible. — MAIN-TAINING HUMAN CONTACT

DEAR ABBY: When my precious mother passed away last summer, my sister-in-law brought two handheld games to the funeral. My niece and nephew played and played while the pastor spoke about my mother.

It was the last straw for me in a series of incredibly rude actions over the years. My children were also appalled. When respect is no longer taught at home, we sink to the lowest level as a society. — DEBRA ON THE EAST COAST

DEAR ABBY: I have stopped attending my friends' grandchildren's recitals because I, too, cannot tolerate rudeness. Many parents today just don't want to bother with their children. If there is a toy that can keep them busy, their parents "enable" them to grow up as idiots who can't appreciate the world and its beauty because their world is lived entirely on an electronic screen. — GEORGE IN SOUTH CAROLINA

DEAR ABBY: What parents who allow this type of behavior don't seem to understand is that it transfers to the classroom. Their children assume it's OK to ignore the teacher, the lesson and instructions that in some cases could save a life. — FRUSTRATED EDUCATOR IN MIAMI

DEAR ABBY: I used to conduct workshops for teachers on how to instruct with newspapers. When I started my lecture, I would begin by saying, "OK, teachers, turn off your iPads, iPhones and iPods, because I don't want to become iRate." They loved it, and it was a great kickoff for the lecture. — ALFRED IN TEXAS

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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.

you will be left holding the bag. Observe what is happening around you. Tonight: Count on being the lead actor.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★★ Detach, even if you feel consigned to having a certain outcome. Mercury, the planet that rules your sign, goes retrograde today. Honor a change in your energy, and look for simple solutions. Avoid making any commitments right now. Tonight: Catch up on a friend's news.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★★ You could be overwhelmed by your thoughts, so make a point to carry out some must-do's. You will like the acknowledgment of a job well done. Get into a regular exercise program in the next few days, as tension could mount. Tonight: Go along with a loved one's idea.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★ Understand that you have a tendency to be negative. Obviously, this attitude colors whatever you do. Use care with a child or partner, as this person seems to be more reactive than usual. You might need to mellow out, given the circumstances. Tonight: Be more optimistic.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★ If you have an important matter on your plate, get it done as early as possible today. Take care of yourself, and schedule necessary doctors' appointments. Don't indulge in any extremes or overindulgences, and you will be much happier. Tonight: Squeeze in some exercise.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★★ You are able to carry out a lot of responsibilities. A friend could feel neglected at the moment. Be aware that you might receive the cold shoulder. You will be more in touch with this person's feelings if you demonstrate your value of him or her. Tonight: Time for play.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

★★★ You'll want to air out a problem that has been on your mind, as you might not be comfortable with what has been going on. Don't take all the blame; others are involved, too. You will breeze through your daily routine, which might allow time for a talk. Tonight: At home.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

★★★★ Express your opinion without expecting agreement, and you will be OK. Be more open in how you deal with a problem person in your life. Others will be curious, and your information could be helpful. You might start to see this person in a different light. Tonight: Hang out.

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A baby born today has a Sun in Aquarius and a Moon in Taurus.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR THURSDAY, FEB. 6, 2014:

This year you could be witness to or involved in more misunderstandings than in the past. Confirm appointments. Repeat what you think you heard. Above all else, avoid snap judgments relating to interpersonal problems until the whole story is revealed. You will develop patience and self-discipline as a result. If you are single, establishing a calm relationship could be difficult, though the likelihood of meeting someone special increases after July. If you are attached, the two of you will learn to understand each other better. You also will develop more patience. TAURUS is a stick in the mud. 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)

★★★★ Confusion surrounds the best-laid plans. You are entering a period where you would be well-advised not to make any formal agreements, as they are likely to backfire. Tension over a money matter needs to be worked out before late afternoon. Tonight: Buy a treat for yourself.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★★ Listen to a friend who always seems to be depressed. It is possible that this person could be going through a difficult period, and he or she just needs someone to express a more positive view. Showing compassion will encourage you to reach out to others. Tonight: Say "yes."

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★ You might sense that you are off-kilter and choose to ignore those feelings. Don't. You will be feeling stressed out by a situation, perhaps involving your work or health. Work through your tension; otherwise, you could add to your problems. Tonight: Take a personal night.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★ You could find a problem to be somewhat unresolvable at the moment. Everyone can have an "off" day, and that includes you. Don't push yourself so hard, and make it OK to play it low-key. Friends will seek you out. Tonight: Grab some munchies with a pal.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★ Don't count on others following through, as they could be experiencing some scheduling issues. If you want something done, do it yourself; otherwise,

BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



TAKE IT FROM THE TINKERSONS | BILL BETTWY

