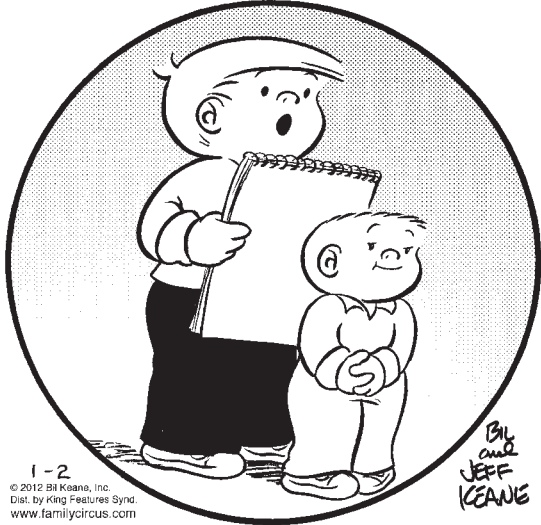
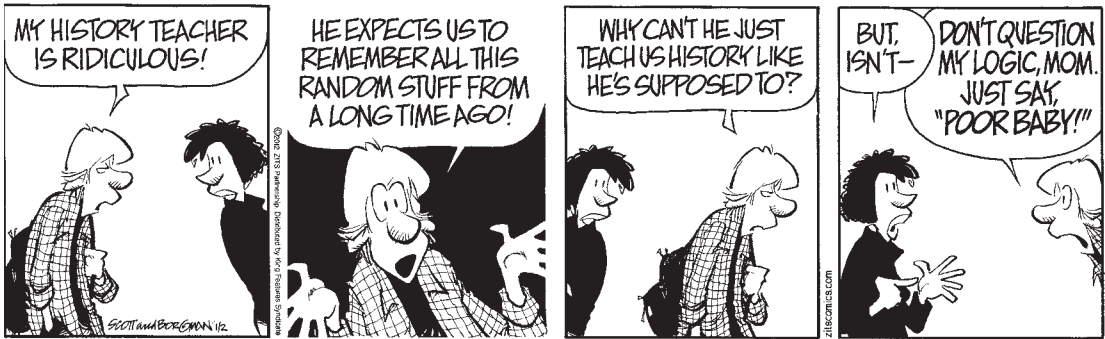


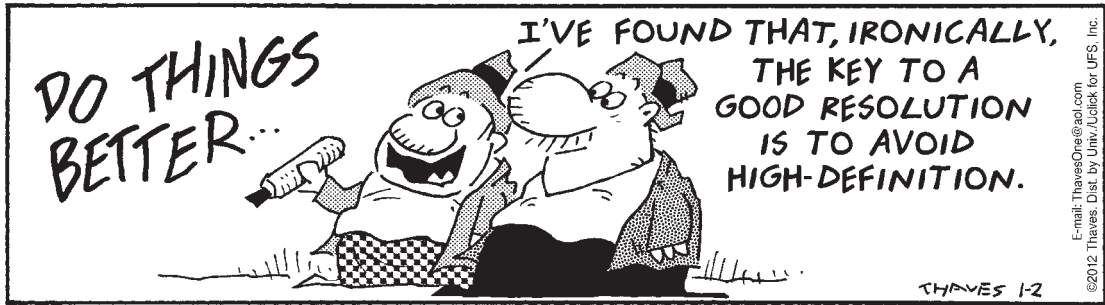
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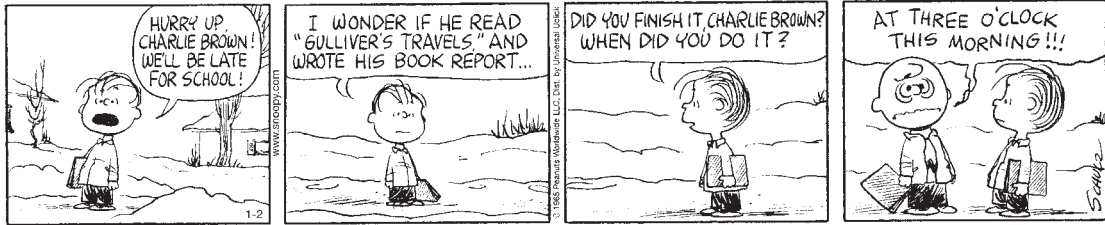
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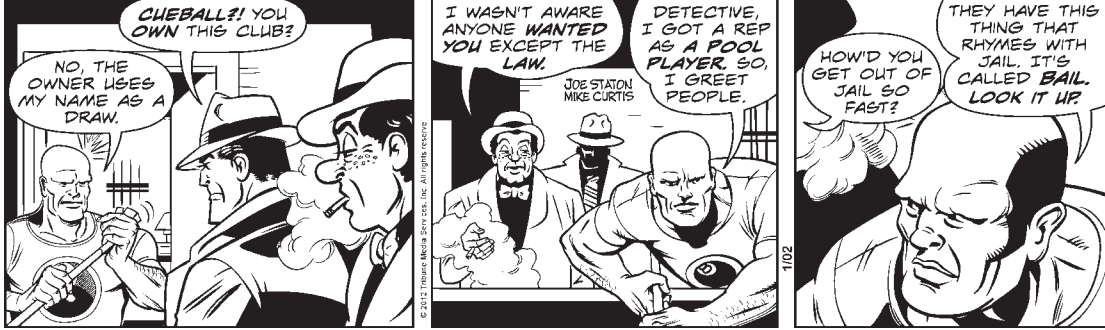
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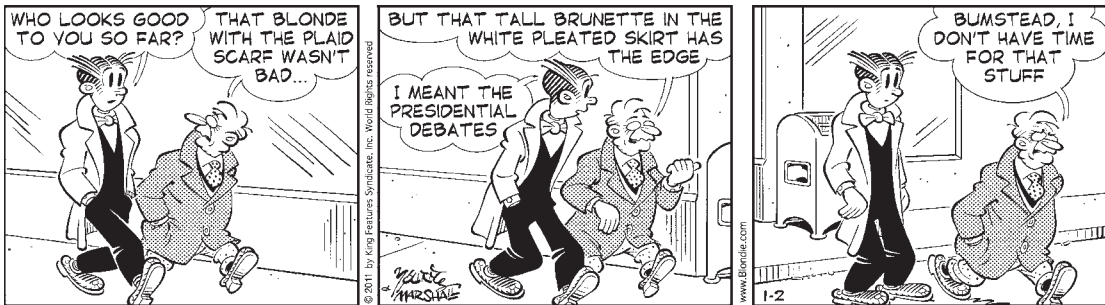
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DICK TRACY | JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



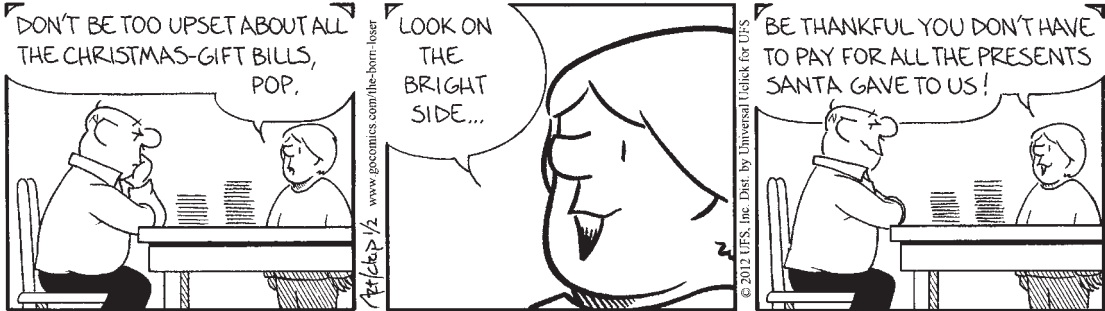
BEETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSON



# Office Birthday Celebration Is No Party For Guest Of Honor

DEAR ABBY: I have a problem that happens once a year — my birthday at work. There's a huge potluck with cake, banners, gifts and a card that has been circulating around the office for a week. I cringe at the attention. Everyone means well, but these celebrations are pure torture for me. I'm a 7-year-old all over again, trying my best to keep the anxiety and waterworks in check.

It goes back to my childhood. Growing up, we were very poor, and my parents made it clear that sacrifices had been made for my "big day," which always ended up with me guilt-ridden and in tears.

As an adult, I celebrate my birthday with my husband and son. We keep it low-key and I'm surrounded by the unconditional love I craved as a child.

I have tried bowing out and asked that gifts be made to charity instead, but I am told, "Oh, come on! We ALL have to go through this." I went so far as to confide to the party planners why I'm so uncomfortable. To my horror, a few of them began complaining about how hard they worked pulling everything together or how late they stayed up baking the cake, etc. It was like hearing my parents all over again.

Am I being too sensitive? I'd appreciate your opinion. — SPARE ME IN MICHIGAN

DEAR SPARE ME: Because you have tried talking to your co-workers about the special circumstances surrounding your reason for not wanting an office celebration, it's time to talk to your supervisor or someone in human resources. I see no reason why you should have to suffer emotional stress so that everyone can have a party on your birthday.

And no, you are not being too sensitive. The party-planners have been insensitive.

DEAR ABBY: My mother never liked my paternal grandmother. Grandma "Jane" was tolerated, but

often treated as an object of ridicule or contempt. My sister unquestioningly absorbed my mother's prejudice against her and is blatantly rude to her.

Over the years I have grown close to Grandma Jane. My husband and I visit her regularly. Dad knows, but says it's better if Mom doesn't know.

Grandma has asked me several times if I know why Mom dislikes her. She's in her 90s, isolated from her family and desperately searching for answers. I can only imagine it stems from some disagreement dating back to before I was born.

I am also sad that Dad won't visit his mother because Mom won't go with him. I can't believe Grandma Jane has done anything to deserve being forced to die alone, and it hurts knowing my mother would be so vindictive out of spite.

Grandma's good health can't last forever. I worry what will happen when she can no longer live independently. I believe in reconciliation, tolerance and a little maturity, but I know I am in the minority. What can I possibly do? — LOYAL DAUGHTER, CARING GRAND-DAUGHTER

DEAR LOYAL AND CARING: Not knowing the details of what caused the rift, I'm advising you to do as your father has suggested. If he were stronger, he would have insisted decades ago that his mother be treated with respect. That he would allow her to be ridiculed or treated rudely in his presence while he remained silent is shameful.

While you can't heal the breach, you can remain caring and supportive of your grandmother. When she can no longer live independently, she will need someone to help her or to move her to assisted living. The ideal person to watch over her then would be you.



## 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](http://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, Jan. 2, 2012, has a Sun in Capricorn and a Moon in Aries before 2:16 p.m. (PST). Afterward, the Moon will be in Taurus.

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR MONDAY, JAN. 2, 2012:

You are a force to be dealt with, especially within your community or professional circle. Never take a disagreement personally; understand that others can only come from their history. Appreciate and respect their uniqueness. With this attitude, others will respond accordingly this year. Travel, writing and allowing your mind to grow will change your direction and allow for new possibilities. If you are single, you are likely to hook up with someone very different. This person helps you see life through new eyes. If you are attached, share more of your ideas with your sweetie. You want him or her to at least experience your intellectual transformation. TAURUS can be quite provocative.

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 are nothing less than fiery in the morning, but your energy seems to fizzle when focusing on a money matter. Don't even question if someone is confused — he or she is, or you are! A talk puts you both on the same page. Tonight: Indulge at dinner — just a little.

### TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★ You have been out of whack longer than you realize. Recognize what has occurred when you feel much better late afternoon. Suddenly there is an opportunity to change directions. A new, somewhat odd person is about to pop onto the scene. Tonight: Only where you want to be.

### GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★ Push to get the job done. You could be exhausted and looking at an old situation differently. A new perspective could be important and most enlightening. Your sixth sense comes through. You know exactly what to say. Tonight: Vanish.

### CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★ You might have difficulty nailing down a problem, as an elusive detail is missing. Ask questions if you are confused. In fact, you need to clarify a situation before you make a decision. Tonight: Where the action is.

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

★★★★ Take off. Be willing to take a risk. Use good sense, but remember that if you don't take risks in life,

you have nothing. Confusion surrounds another person who often impacts your finances. Assume an attitude that says "no more." Tonight: Could be a late night.

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

★★★★ Work directly with a partner or associate. Sometimes, like today, there is an innate tension that makes you feel uncomfortable. You will see life through another person's eyes. Tonight: Put on some music.

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

★★★ Others could be far more challenging than you anticipated. Fatigue might have you acting like a real grump. When your creativity emerges, note how quickly this discomfort leaves. Take a good look at the situation when dealing with a child and/or an issue involving your daily life. A partner makes a tremendous effort. Tonight: Dinner and a chat.

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

★★★★ Get the job done. You could be exhausted by what is occurring. Slow down and take a deep breath, go for a walk or take a break. By incorporating a very different activity, you could recharge. Your enthusiasm returns. Tonight: Someone knows how to get you going!

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

★★★★ You might be harder on a friend than you realize. If this person has a strong reaction, understand that you might have pushed him or her away. In any case, stay even and direct with others. Know when to apologize, too. Focus on getting the job done. Tonight: Burning the candle at both ends.

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

★★★ The emphasis remains on real estate, home and a potential investment. A roommate might not be ready for your ideas and new direction. This person will adjust if you don't make a big deal out of his or her attitude. Your creativity flourishes late today. Tonight: Fun and games.

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

★★★ You could be asked a lot of questions in the a.m. You might want to close down or walk away. At the moment, you have difficulty understanding why all this is so important. Make calls; schedule meetings. Tonight: Happily head home.

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

★★★ Be aware of an innate insecurity and how this trait might be playing into your financial situation. Try to detach. No one is more judgmental about you than you. Cut yourself a break! Your intuition helps you make the right choice. Tonight: Hang with a friend.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

