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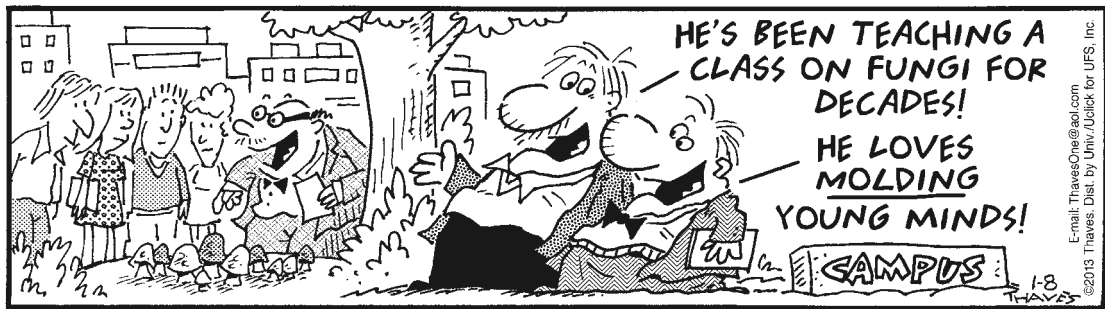
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“How many years of college does it take to become a king?”

ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



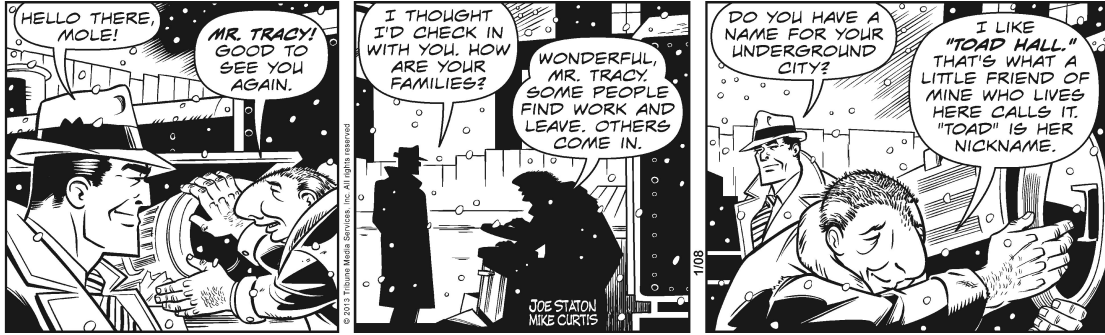
FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



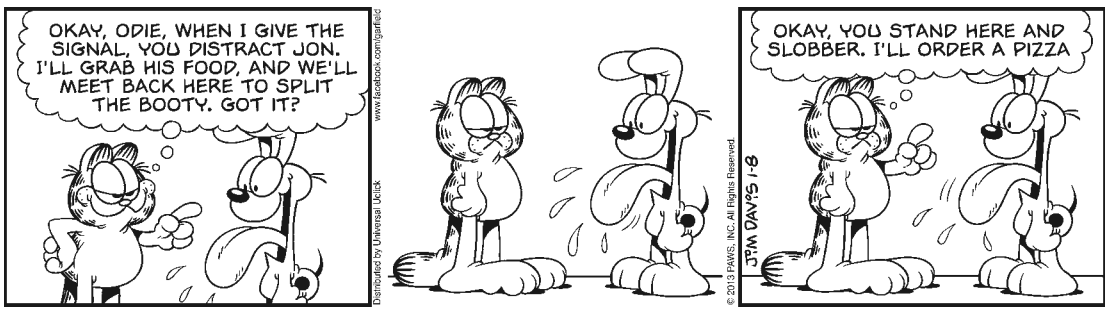
DICK TRACY | JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



BEETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSON



Visit With Man's Old Friends Won't Seem Like Old Times

DEAR ABBY: My husband, "Arthur," and I are planning a trip. One stop will be to see some friends of his, "Mac" and "Annie," from years back. I am dreading the visit.

Last year, Arthur had a heart attack. I called some of our closest friends to let them know he was in the hospital. One couple knew Mac and Annie, and told them about his illness.

Mac and Annie then called me and yelled at me for "allowing" my husband to get ill. I hung up, but they called back when I was at the hospital and left another hate-filled message on our answering machine. Not wanting Arthur to get upset, I erased it and never told him.

Abby, I don't want to see these people. I know I'll be suppressing the urge to slap them both, but I intend to try to be gracious. Should I tell my husband about my last encounter with them, or trust that they have enough sense not to bring up the matter? — DREADING THE VISIT IN TEXAS

DEAR DREADING: What exactly is it that you should have done to prevent your husband from having the heart attack — thrown your body over his fork so he couldn't eat the "wrong" foods, nagged him into quitting smoking, or "forced" him to exercise and adopt a different lifestyle? You're his wife, not his mother.

You should ABSOLUTELY tell your husband about those outrageous phone calls. Do not assume that folks with such an absence of common sense that they would attack you during a family crisis wouldn't do something equally inappropriate during the visit.

Frankly, I don't blame you for wanting to avoid them. Your husband should clear the air before either of you see them — if you decide to see them at all.

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I are on an ex-

tremely tight budget since I lost my job and he was forced to retire early because of health issues. We have a nice home (paid for) and older vehicles, and we have no complaints about our lifestyle other than being more penny-conscious to cover our basic expenses.

We receive numerous wedding invitations from our grown children's friends, whom we have known and loved since they were all in high school together. Our problem is what to do about a gift for them when we don't have the money for one. We love to attend the weddings and receptions, but I feel bad about not taking a gift.

What's the right thing to do? Do we go and not take anything, offer an explanation or decline the invitation? I always send a card and I don't want anyone to think we are cheap. My son was married last year, and people were very generous with their gifts, which I really appreciated.

We also received six graduation announcements last spring — same issue. I'd really appreciate some advice. — TIGHTENING OUR BELTS IN MISSOURI

DEAR TIGHTENING: When you receive a wedding invitation from one of your children's former high school friends, pick up the phone and explain your current circumstances and the fact that they, regrettably, prevent you from attending. That will leave the door open for them to invite you to come anyway. If the invitation is a sincere wish to share their special day with you and not a gift grab, they'll tell you your presence is all the "gift" they need. However, if they don't, send a card extending your good wishes.

As for the graduation announcements, they should be acknowledged with a nice card and a sweet note of congratulations. You are under no obligation to send a gift.



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 Sagittarius if born after 10:28 a.m. (PST). Before that time, the Moon is in Scorpio.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR TUESDAY, JAN. 8, 2013:

This year you might feel as if you have a lot of ground to cover. Don't worry so much, and you will do just that. Your energy seems to continually renew itself, as you're always ready for the next step. If you are single, you could be wondering what might be the best way to meet people. You will notice that you have a vast selection of wannabe sweeties, no matter what you do. If you are attached, the two of you will experience a lot of energy between you. Respect each other's differences. SAGITTARIUS brings out your adventuresome nature.

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)

***** Reach out for a second opinion, preferably from an expert. You could be confused by everything that you are hearing. You also might be resistant to the underlying message. Remain optimistic that you can resolve this matter well. Tonight: A must appearance.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

***** Have discussions on an individual level. Your creativity soars, and you make a difference, no matter who your company is or what you do. An event or discussion triggers an unexpected reaction, which might not be very comfortable. Tonight: Visit with a friend over dinner.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

***** Defer to someone else and get down to the basics, if you find that a conversation takes on a confusing tone. Your optimism and willingness to ask questions saves the day once again. Do some thinking about taking a trip in the next six months. Tonight: Listen to suggestions.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

***** Your answers are irrelevant to an associate. This person has a way of letting you know this fact, like it or not. A close loved one helps you understand what is going on with this person. Be open to this individual, as his or her perceptions are right on. Tonight: Accept an invitation.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

***** Nothing can stop you as long as you stay focused and resolute in your belief that solutions are out

there. The unexpected creates havoc, but you'll manage to emerge unscathed. Make time for a loved one, as this person appreciates your company. Tonight: Let the fun begin.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

***** You could be too concerned with a domestic matter. Until you resolve the issue, you might have difficulty staying centered and attending to other tasks that require your attention. A partner or loved one could be adding an element of confusion. Tonight: Say "yes" to living.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

***** Keep communication flowing. You might wonder exactly what someone is trying to say. The message is mixed, but you will come out OK. A partner gives you a jolt. Later, this person has been prone to doing more of the unexpected. Tonight: Go to a favorite spot.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

***** Be aware of a possessive side or a need to demonstrate that you are more than capable. Pull back some before reacting to a situation and expressing your feelings. In a few days, if you feel the same way, then perhaps you might want to look at your options. Tonight: Your treat.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

***** A family member wants to communicate, but this person could not be any more vague if he or she tried. The unexpected occurs, which forces your hand with a child or loved one. If you're single, you could meet someone quite interesting. Tonight: Let the good times happen.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

***** You only can trust your instincts so much. You might want to ask more questions, though know that you could be taken aback by what you learn. Be gentle when approaching someone. Your creativity soars, and your energy is high. Tonight: In the game of life.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

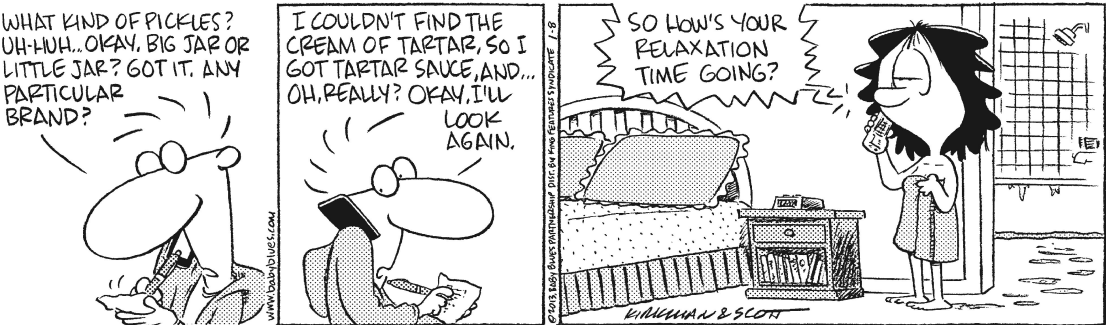
***** You care about a friend, perhaps a bit too much. This person might not be as honest or open as you might like. Listen more to a child or loved one who brings out your caring side. A comment might not be meant to be taken personally. Tonight: Where the crowds are.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

***** You might want to hear more about what is happening on the homefront. You could be confused, as you are distracted right now. The difficulty you're experiencing might change substantially given time and the awareness of the issue. Tonight: To the wee hours.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

