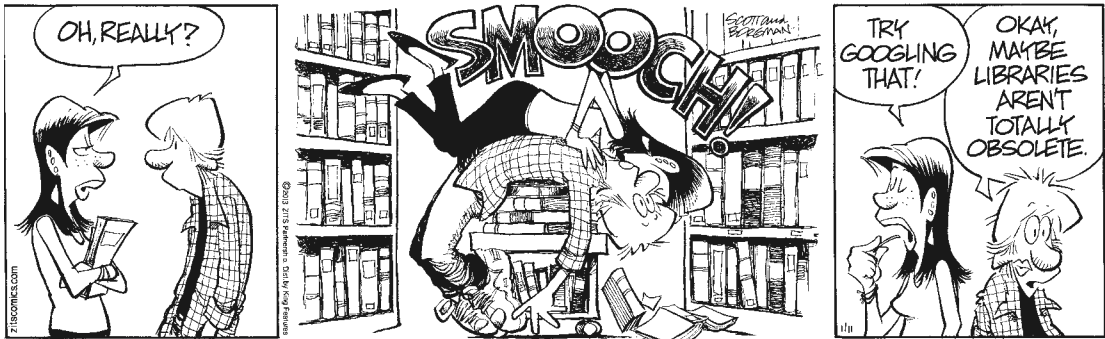


FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



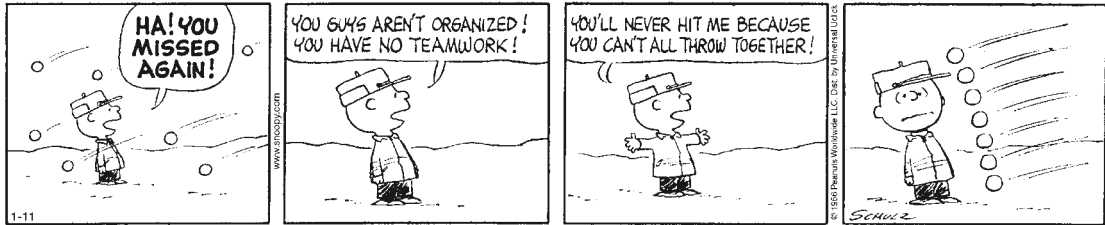
ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



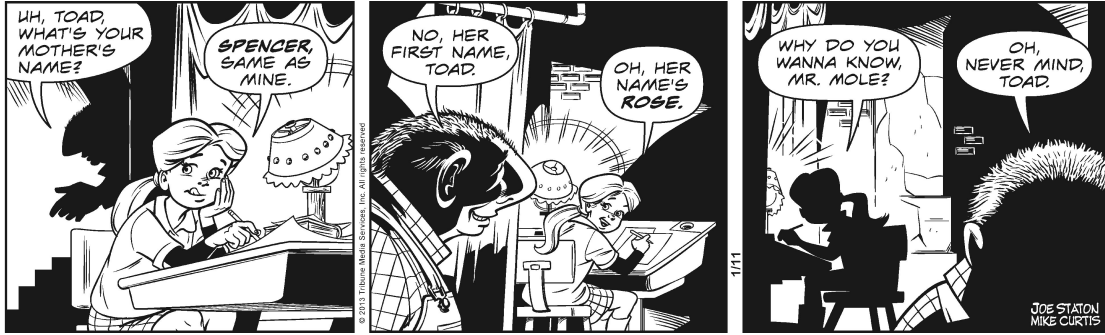
FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



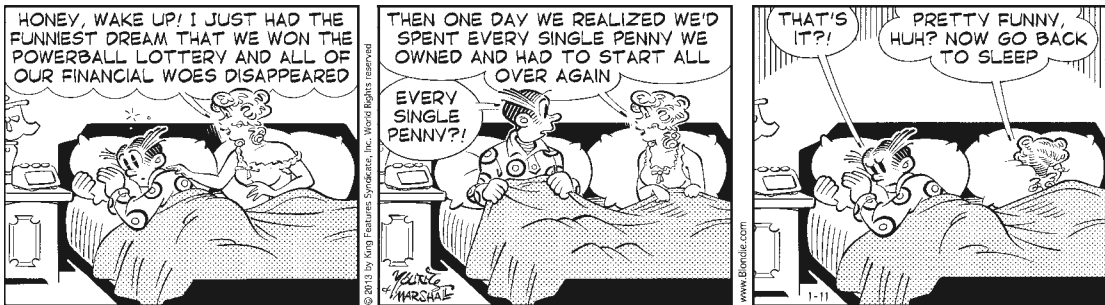
PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



DICK TRACY | JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



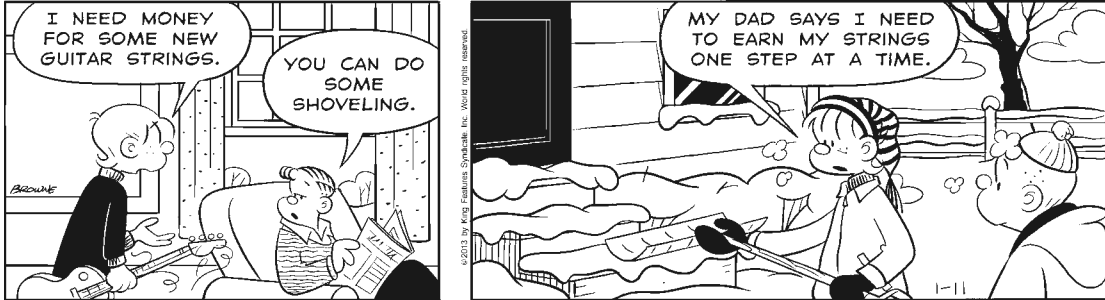
GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



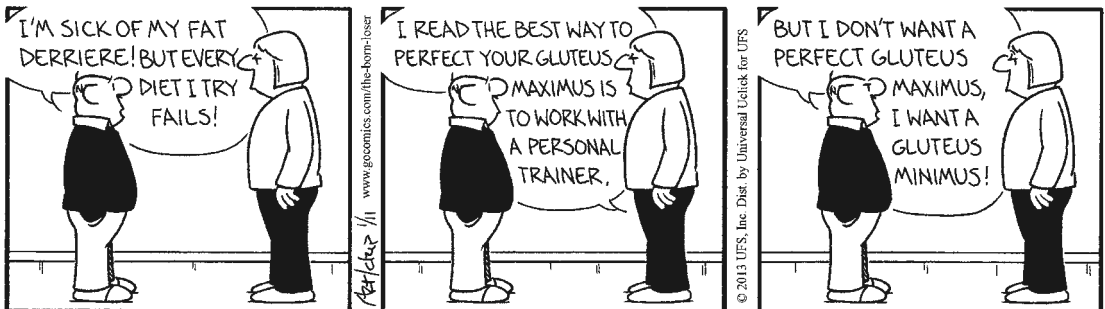
BEEBLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSONO



Perplexed Bride Ponders How To Let Bridesmaid Gently Go

DEAR ABBY: I used to be close friends with "Colette." We were so close that I asked her to be a bridesmaid in my April wedding.

Over the last several years of our friendship, Colette became selfish and domineering. It didn't bother me so much before, because I felt her positive qualities outweighed the negative. However, after several recent incidents, I finally told her I was upset. She offered a cop-out response, and we have not communicated since then. That was a month ago.

How do I let her know that I want to withdraw my request for her to be a bridesmaid? I don't want to hurt her feelings, but my wedding will be a small, private affair, and her presence would be painful and disruptive to me and another bridesmaid who recently had a similar experience with her.

Colette may not be burning with desire to come anyway, given our falling out, and hasn't yet incurred any of the expenses or spent any of the time and effort associated with being a bridesmaid. I don't want to act unkindly, even though I don't plan on rekindling the friendship. — NEEDS PERSPECTIVE IN KANSAS

DEAR NEEDS: Tell Colette politely that your plans have changed and that you have decided to "scale back" the wedding; therefore your wedding party will be smaller and you won't need her after all. It's euphemistic enough that it could be taken to mean that finances have dictated your decision, which would be face-saving for her.

If she feels as you suspect she does, she may be relieved to be let off the hook. And if not, well — you don't plan on continuing your friendship with her in any case. Do not make the conversation anything but polite and brief.

DEAR ABBY: My mother had to be placed in a nursing home a year and a half ago. It has been a difficult time in our lives. She had two small, adorable dogs that kept her company for many years. I have kept them at her home and provide daily care and love to them.

I tried to find them a loving home, to no avail. I can't bring them to my home because I'm allergic to dogs. They're accustomed to being indoors, and the elderly one can't stand the extreme heat in our area.

My problem is my brother. He knows I need a good home for Mom's dogs, but he went out and BOUGHT another dog for his family. I was hurt and angry when he told me, but tried not to show it. I'm bitter about it because Mom's pets still need a home.

I'm finding it hard to speak to my brother now. I have never had a mean bone in my body or felt this way before, but I don't understand how he could do this. Am I wrong to feel this way? I respect your opinion, so could you advise me? — DOGGONE IT!

DEAR DOGGONE IT: Your feelings are understandable. However, before you let them degenerate into lasting antipathy, have a frank talk with your

brother. Tell him your feelings and find out why he didn't volunteer to take in your mother's dogs. There is nothing to be gained by stewing in silence, and he may have had a reason.

You might have better luck finding a home for your mother's dogs if you contact no-kill shelters and rescue groups in your area. The dogs might be ideal companions for another senior if they are loving and housebroken. Most shelters offer a "senior for senior" discount where qualified senior citizens can adopt a senior companion animal, usually seven years old or older, with all fees waived.

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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 and Moon in Capricorn.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR FRIDAY, JAN. 11, 2013:

This year you often overthink situations; at other times, you are too impulsive. Learning to seesaw between these two qualities will demand a lot of your time and self-discipline. Others enjoy observing the process. If you are single, your unusual magnetism attracts quite a few admirers, who all want your time and attention. Do not feel the need to commit to any of them. Explore your different options. If you are attached, your sweetie might find you to be very me-oriented, which might be true. Remember, there are two people in a relationship. CAPRICORN is a wise soul.

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 typically are very verbal; however, today you might want to consider choosing your words carefully. You don't have to change the message, but how you say it could make all the difference. Brainstorm and share with a respected associate. Tonight: In the limelight.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★★ Keep reaching out to others -- perhaps even an expert or two. The more information, opinions and perspectives you hear, the stronger and more informed your decisions will be. A new beginning becomes possible involving a trip. Tonight: Let your imagination rock and roll.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★ You no longer can avoid dealing with a partner or having a key discussion. It seems that many people have a different perspective or understanding from you, and they feel the need to put in their two cents. Stick to your guns. Tonight: Togetherness -- still, keep it exclusive.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★ Recognize that the Force is not with you, but is with someone else. You quickly will be able to discern who seems to have it all together. Consider taking off for a fun day without your normal concerns. You'll feel refreshed as a result. Tonight: Go with someone's suggestion, if you desire.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★ Communicate your expectations, and expect to get the same back. Open up to new possibilities. You

could find that the suggested path might be the best way for you. A new situation evolves as well, though it does have an unstable factor. Tonight: Choose something easy.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★★ Your creativity comes forward, and it might surprise you. The result of a discussion will create a new beginning. Listen to news, and remain forward-looking. You set the pace for others far more than you realize. A child or loved one could be quite demonstrative. Tonight: TGIF.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★ Deal with a family member head-on. You might not appreciate this person's attitude, even if you can tell that he or she is making an effort. Be smart, and say very little that could be construed as negative feedback. Work on your attitude as well. Tonight: Mosey on home.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★★ Communication reveals much more of your feelings, as well as someone else's. You finally feel as if you are in a grounded place. Let a discussion continue, and consider making it an early day. Tonight: Share the evening with favorite people.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★★ You could be drawn in to what seems like a great idea, and it might very well be one. Just be realistic about whether you can afford a loss. Establish your bottom line, and you will be able to relax. Don't allow someone to push you too hard. Tonight: Let go of this week's stress.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★★ You could be delighted by a new opportunity that comes down your path. You won't even consider whether you should say yes or no; you simply will leap into action. Loosen up and be more upbeat. Others might be surprised to meet the new you. Tonight: The fun surrounds you.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

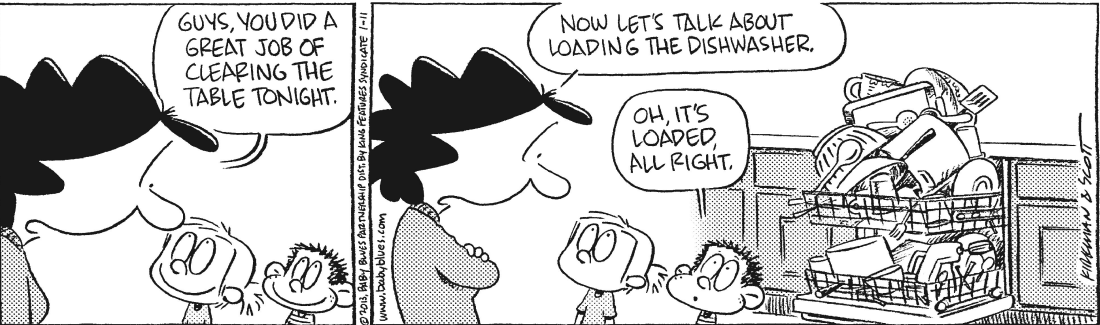
★★★★ You might want to understand what is happening behind the scenes. The best method is to say little and remain sensitive to someone's energy. Let an older relative know how much you appreciate him or her. Do not hold back. Tonight: Meet a friend, but head home early.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

★★★★ You can't help but win. No matter what you say and what choices you make, you'll come out ahead. At times, you have a way of pushing others away, but not right now. Someone from a distance touches you with his or her inquiry. Tonight: Find a reason to celebrate.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

