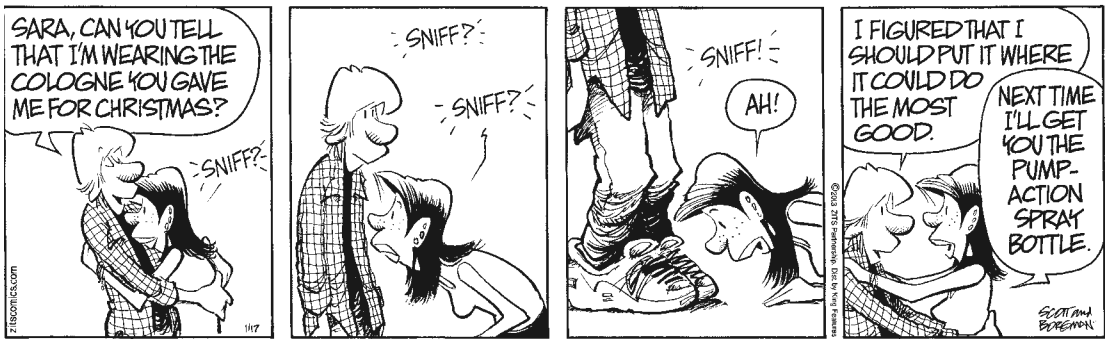


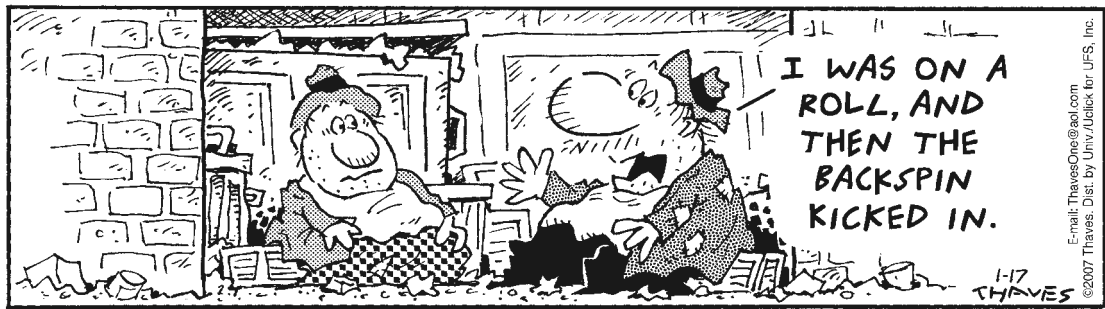
FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



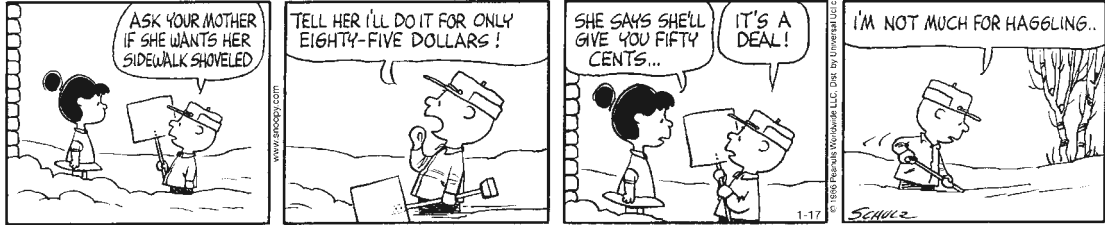
ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



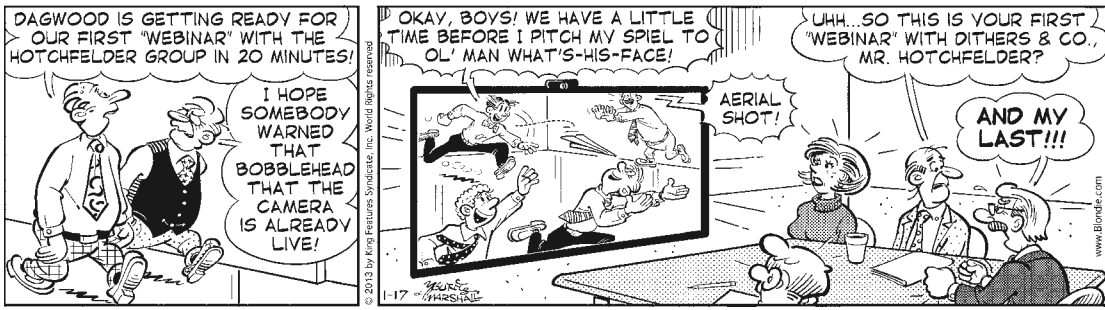
PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



DICK TRACY | JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS



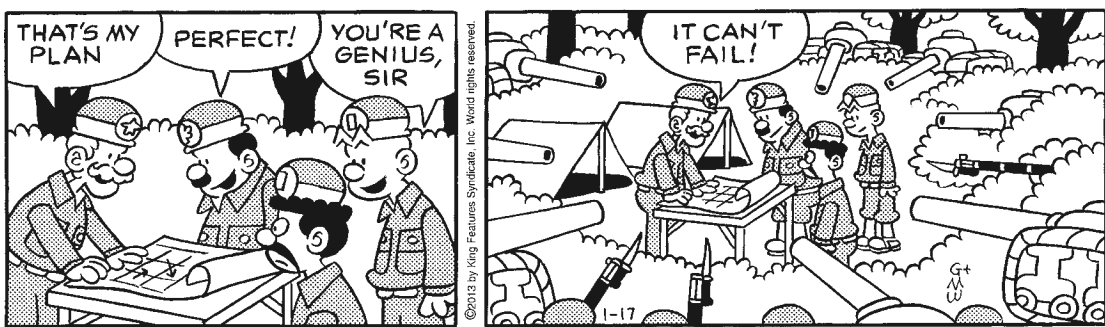
BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



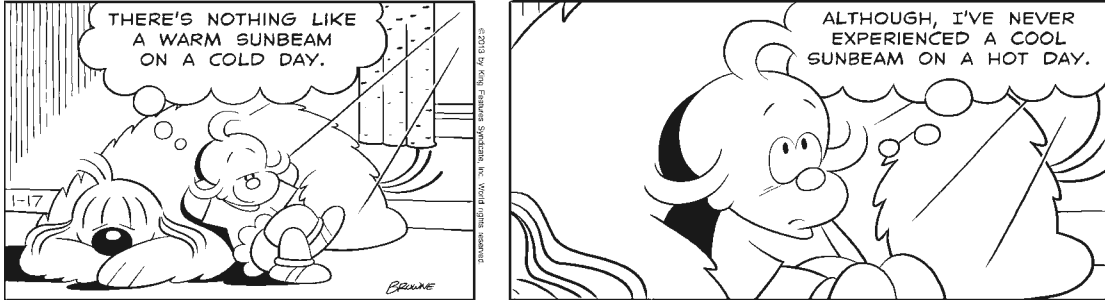
GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



BEEBLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSON



Grouchy Grandmother Talks Her Way Out Of Family Events

DEAR ABBY: My grandmother is 75 years old and, unfortunately, very unpleasant to be around. She has made many hurtful remarks in the past, which have led some family members to shut her out of their lives.

I live in another state and don't see my grandmother very often. I call her once or twice a month. When I do, she's nothing but pleasant with me, but she's often angry and tearful about other members of the family.

She feels her children and grandchildren should respect her as the matriarch of the family and include her in all family get-togethers. (My family tells me they have stopped inviting her to many functions because she's such a trouble-maker.)

I'm concerned about my grandmother and am beginning to think that my parents and siblings should overlook her unpleasant behavior and occasional snide remarks. At the very least they should include her in important family functions. I'd be interested in your opinion, so I can share it with my family. — TROUBLED IN MINNESOTA

DEAR TROUBLED: Your grandmother appears to be reaping what she has sown. Verbal abuse often leaves scars on those at whom it is aimed, and no one can be blamed for wanting distance from a person who is deliberately hurtful.

Respect is something that has to be earned. Your parents and siblings "respect" your grandmother from a distance because they have learned it's the only safe way to do so.

Does this mean she should automatically be excluded from all family get-togethers? No. However, before she's invited to an important event, she should give assurances that she'll watch her mouth and be on her best behavior. Or else.

If this seems heavy-handed, so be it. It's no crime to protect oneself from someone else's mean-spiritedness.

DEAR ABBY: Please allow me to share a dating technique with your readers that has saved me a lot of relationship headaches. I call it "the 90-day rule."

Whenever I start dating someone, I try to see them at least once a week for 90 days. That way, if there are any character flaws, I find out within the first 90 days.

Among the flaws I've discovered: drug dealing and addiction, alcoholism, driving without a valid license and with illegal license tags, and lying about their occupation.

The idea is to avoid sexual intimacy during those first 90 days to keep your head clear. If you are intimate too soon, you'll find yourself making excuses for your partner. This technique has never failed me — unless I made an exception.

May I suggest your readers try this 90-day rule? If they do, I promise they won't be disappointed because it takes TIME to get to know someone. Before you can love someone, you must learn who that person really is. — CLEAR-HEADED IN CLEARWATER, FLA.

DEAR CLEARHEADED: Your 90-day rule makes a lot of sense. I have heard from many readers who went too far too fast because they felt they had made an instant emotional connection. I warn them that physical attraction should not be confused with love because what they're really describing is infatuation.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

© 2013, Universal Press Syndicate

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 Aries.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR THURSDAY, JAN. 17, 2013:

This year you will make an unusually strong effort to keep the peace; however, remember that you are human. You will remain responsive to others' demands only to a certain point. You will be coming from a place of clarity and compassion, even in your professional life. If you are single, a serious yet attractive member of the opposite sex strolls right through your door. This event is far more likely to occur during the second half of your birthday year. If you are attached, the two of you have serious talks and become more accepting of each other. ARIES is likely to trigger a reaction from 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)

★★★★ Avoid getting into a situation where control is the major issue. Once that behavior is eliminated or toned down, you will be able to see the feelings behind the manipulation. A partner could be uptight about a money matter. Tonight: A friend wants you to join him or her.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★ Pull back and do some thinking before acting on an evolving situation with a difficult loved one. You might want to stop making judgments. When you walk in this person's shoes, you will gain a very different perspective. Tonight: Get into a favorite hobby.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★ A meeting energizes you to become more proactive about a long-term goal or desire. It is you who will need to make this happen. Work or a matter you deal with on a daily basis might be bringing you down. Consider accepting an invitation. Tonight: Make plans with a friend or loved one.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★ Step forward, and be willing to take a stand with someone who makes many demands. This person is not a good fit with your personality. A partner might be unusually controlling. You might need to subtly root out the issue. Tonight: Find your best friend and make plans.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★★ Keep reaching out to experts or people you respect for advice. When you hit a roadblock, you might want a different take on how to bypass it. A matter involv-

ing real estate or your personal life could mark a decision. Tonight: Read between the lines.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★★ Relate to an associate directly. You'll hear what this person is saying, but you might wonder if there is a hidden agenda behind his or her words. Do not be overserious in a conversation, yet be sure to express your bottom line. Tonight: Off to the gym.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★★ Defer to a strong-willed associate or friend. Apparently, this person has a strong vision for what needs to happen. Having your trust makes him or her feel good. Whether this fact is true is another question! Your choices often are made from a realistic perspective. Tonight: Say "yes."

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★ Pace yourself, as you could have a lot to do. You might hit a wall in a discussion, or perhaps someone seems to be pulling away. His or her perception of you might be the same. Be more open, and make time in the near future for a long-overdue talk. Tonight: Choose a stressbuster.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★★ Stay focused regarding an important conversation. A disagreement could emerge over a financial issue with a partner or loved one. Look at what exists below that surface. What is he or she really asking for? Tap into your imagination for answers. Tonight: Express your playfulness.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★ You have a lot going on around your home and personal life. You could have a very strong reaction to a discussion. You'll become quite controlling, if you are not careful. In that mindset, you will hit a stalemate. Is that what you want? Tonight: Buy someone a gift on the way home.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

★★★★ Do not stand on ceremony. Everyone will be happier once there is resolution, and the answer is in your hands. You need to get past a personal issue. The issue arose long before a key person became involved in the present scenario. Tonight: Join a friend at a favorite spot.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

★★★ Be aware of the costs of a problem that evolves. One path might be hard on your ego. A different path involves spending more money than you would like to. Deal with your strong feelings first, and you'll come up with positive responses. Tonight: Treat yourself.

© 2013, King Feature Syndicate

BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

