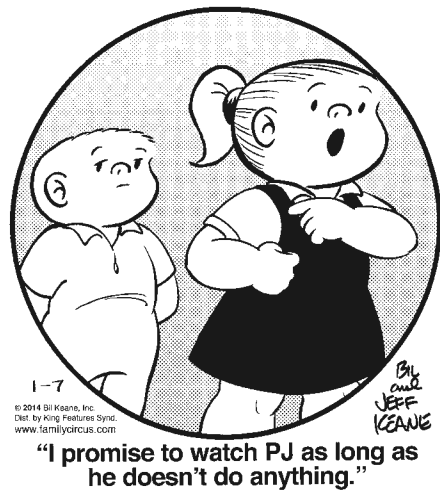


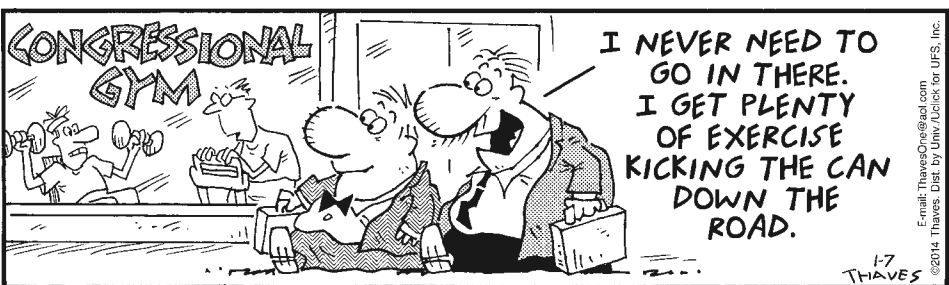
FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



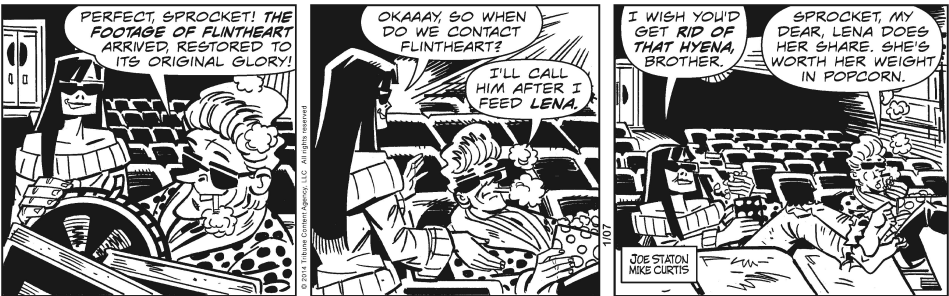
FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



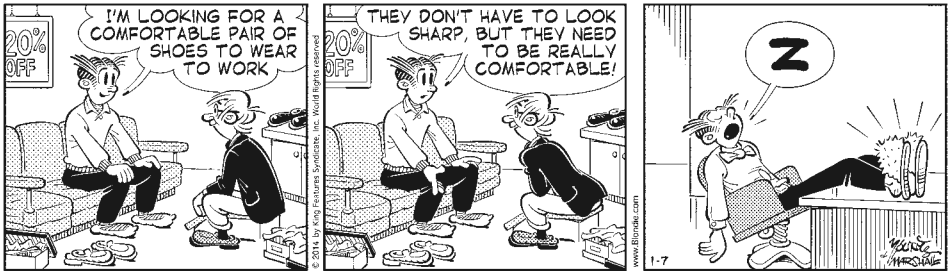
PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



DICK TRACY | JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



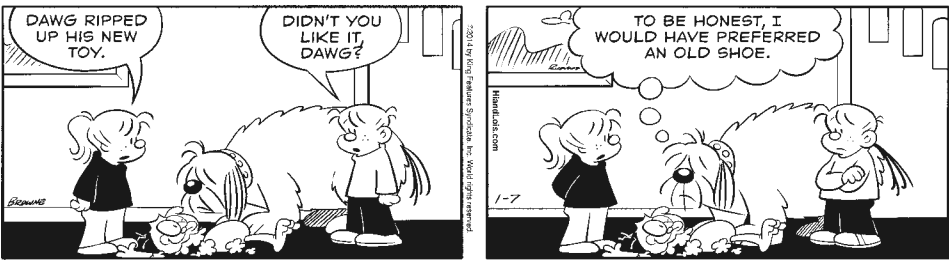
GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



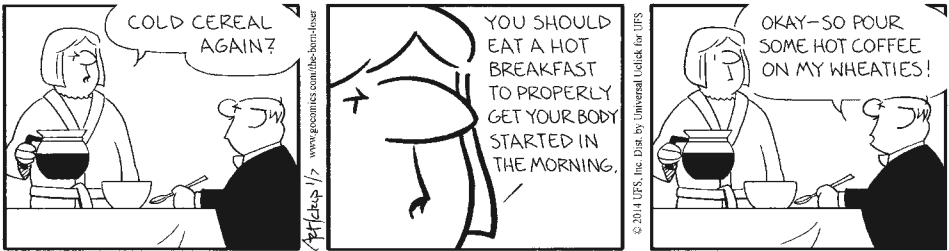
BEETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSOM



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS



Couple Wonders If Parenting Is Worth It Second Time Around

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I are happily married and will celebrate 15 years of marriage next year. We have a 5-year-old daughter. Our dilemma is whether or not we should have another child.

I'm 38 and my husband is 40. We have become comfortable with the fact that our daughter is getting more independent. We plan on doing a lot of traveling, and I will change jobs after I complete school. We are not sure about starting over with a baby.

We are doing OK financially, and if we have a second child, it would have to be within the next year, while I finish my classes and can be home to be with the baby. Our daughter is well-adjusted, and we plan on putting her in activities such as dance and gymnastics.

We would like your opinion, and also to hear from parents who had only one child, as well as people who were raised without a sibling. — MAYBE ONLY ONE IN GEORGIA

DEAR MAYBE ONLY ONE: If you are considering enlarging your family only so your daughter will have a sibling, I don't recommend it. What the six-year age difference means is that your children will not grow up "together." By the time the younger one is starting high school, the older one will be in college and gone. Even when they are closer in age, it's no guarantee that siblings will be close.

I cannot — and should not — decide this for you. I am throwing your question open to my readers and will share their opinions with you. However, I'm sure they will be varied.

DEAR ABBY: I am generally a conservative person. My 17-year-old son, "Leo," asked for an ear piercing when he was 13. I wasn't sure whether I liked the kind of impression it made, but because it was only one piercing, I agreed on the condition that he would stop at one hole.

When Leo was 15, he begged to have dreadlocks. Thinking it was a phase, I allowed it even though I wasn't thrilled. He has since cut off the dreads, but now says he wants an eyebrow piercing.

My son is a loving, wonderful, happy kid. He's active in school, well-liked, and an excellent student in an advanced academic program. I couldn't honestly think of a good reason to say no, even though this piercing freaks me out. I sense that Leo wants to do more piercings, but he's respectful enough to wait awhile.

My question is, what is a good reason to NOT agree to more piercings? Every argument I've thought of — unsightly, unsanitary, makes the wrong impression — is rather thin.

My 12-year-old daughter wants to dye her hair purple. I'm saying no, but still have no good reason for that, either. Am I just too old-fashioned? — NOT-WITH-IT MOM IN MACCABIM, ISRAEL

DEAR NOT-WITH-IT MOM: Tell your son he was born with a perfect body. When you agreed to the ear piercing, it was on the condition that there would be only one piercing, and you expect him to

keep his part of the bargain. If he asks for a further explanation, tell him it's because he has enough holes in his head.

As to your daughter, remember it's only hair and it will grow out. If this is her only form of rebellion, consider yourself lucky.

As to your being "too old-fashioned," it's a mother's JOB to be old-fashioned. Keep up the good work.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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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 in Capricorn and a Moon in Aries.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR TUESDAY, JAN. 7, 2014:

This year you face a lot of strong feelings, especially when you experience disruption or a forced decision. There is no room for hemming and hawing. You tend to be passionate about what you believe in, but you also can be quite practical and discerning about your decisions. This combination often leaves people wondering who is the real you. This dichotomy also could be a source of mixed messages. If you are single, you will meet at least one person with whom you could become seriously involved. Take your time getting to know this person. If you are attached, your tendency to send mixed messages often comes up in conversation. It will not take long for your sweetie to understand that both voices belong to you. ARIES can be a hothead!

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 can't deny a volatile element that runs through your day. Pressure builds because someone in authority makes heavy demands. A new beginning might be plausible, though there could be some awkward and/or hard moments. Tonight: Beam in more of what you want.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★ You might feel pressured and overwhelmed. A situation could become more out of control than you thought possible. Your sense of humor will come through, but perhaps a little too late. Express your true feelings. Tonight: Try to be unavailable. Cocoon, if need be.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★ You usually flex well with the unexpected. You might get an opportunity to test out that ability today. A friend could feel threatened by your devotion to someone else. Remind this person that your feelings for him or her are not affected by this. Tonight: Out and about.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★ You might decide that you can't depend on a higher-up to help you. This is an excellent decision, though it probably would be best not to announce it to the world. Your emotions could point you in one direction, while your intellect will suggest a different path. Tonight: Work late.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★★ Keep your eye on the big picture, especially as others seem to be reactive and difficult.

You will understand where they are coming from, but convincing them to consider a different perspective could backfire. Tonight: Choose something that you don't normally do.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★★ Deal with a partner directly. An argument regarding your spending might seem inevitable, but if you chill out, you could find a compromise. Friends surround you, but a child or loved one needs more of your time or attention. Tonight: Share with a trusted friend.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★★ You might want to defer to someone who seems much surer of his or her position than you do. Nevertheless, if you are not careful, a major disagreement still might ensue. Understand the effect that a loved one has on your moods and your reactions. Tonight: Paint the town red.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★★ In your situation, actions count more than words. You often push yourself very hard without thought to the implications. Stay focused and you will accomplish a lot more than you thought possible, especially if you maintain your distance. Tonight: Choose a relaxing activity.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★★ Allow your creativity to flourish, and you will gain as a result. You might have come to a conclusion that you want to buy a certain item that will add to the quality of your life. Talk to others who have made a similar purchase before you act. Tonight: Ever playful.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★ Deal with a personal matter before it deals with you. Your sense of humor emerges with a contrary boss or older friend who challenges one of your loved ones. You might be questioning the outcome and the reason behind this person's behavior. Tonight: Happily at home.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

★★★★ Communication remains vigorous, but it could take an interesting twist or turn. Just when you thought you had a grasp on a situation, you will discover otherwise. You might not know the other parties involved as well as you think you do. Tonight: Let off some steam.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

★★★ Be aware of the cost of being spontaneous. You might have set yourself back without intending to. You can stop what seems like a runaway train by opening up and expressing your deeper thoughts. As a result, you will be more comfortable with what occurs. Tonight: Be lively.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON

