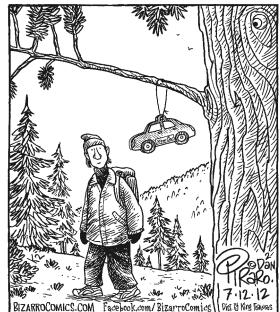
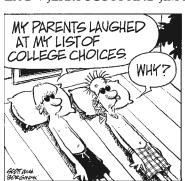


"Mommy, this shirt has an extra button."

BIZARRO | DAN PIRARO



ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



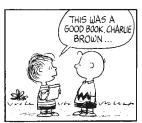




FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES

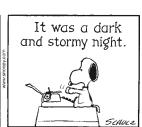


PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ









DICK TRACY | JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS







BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE







GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS

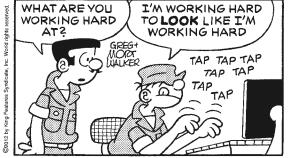






BEETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER





HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER





THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSOM







Email, Online Thank-Yous Suffice In Stressful Times

DEAR ABBY

■ Dear Abby is written by

known as Jeanne Phillips,

and was founded by her

mother Pauline Phillins

www.DearAbby.com or

P.O. Box 69440, Los An-

Write Dear Abby at

geles, CA 90069.

Abigail Van Buren, also

Jeanne Phillips

(April 18) asked about using email to thank those who donated to a fundraiser for her son, who has bone cancer. What is wrong with that?

I have been there. One of my twin boys was diagnosed with cancer at age 2. I was grateful for all the help my family and friends gave me, but I did not always have the time or energy to devote to writing thank-you cards.

You really have to have experienced this kind of long-term stress and trauma to understand. It takes all the strength you have to just get through each day without breaking down. For larger donations, I would write a card when I could or print some out on my computer. Sometimes I recruited a friend or family member to handle thank-you notes. People always ask, "What can I do?" Well, assign them this

task! Another way of thanking people was through a blog, like CaringBridge. These free websites were a great way to keep in touch with people and let them know what was going on. I often posted general notes of thanks there, then emailed everyone who contributed with a link to the site. The truth is, it was difficult to accept charity and help from others, and I often found myself overwhelmed by the outpouring

DEAR TRULY THANKFUL: Thank YOU for your heartfelt letter and helpful suggestions. I reminded "Wants" that writing personal thank-you notes was the proper thing to do, but not all readers agreed. Their comments:

of love and support. — TRULY THANKFUL IN NEW

DEAR ABBY: Any spare time that mom has needs to be spent with her family or taking care of herself. They are going through a very difficult time.

I believe that in this day and age, the majority of people would understand and not expect a thank-you

would be more than appreciated. Email is more acceptable now, especially among younger people. If this is all she has time for, it's better than no thank-you at all. — KELLY IN WINCHESTER, VA.

DEAR ABBY: To that mother of the child with cancer: Instead of writing thank-you notes to all the people who help you in the community, please spend that time with your son. Someday, return the favor with some other family's child. Many families in our town cope with childhood cancer. We help each other. It is important that you spend every precious moment with him, not writing cards. We all understand. — PAYING IT FORWARD IN CLYDE, OHIO

DEAR ABBY: You correctly advised Wants" that a handwritten, personal note was in order. However, having found myself in this position, I some-times first send out a quick "blanket"

email to all the donors: "Dear Friends and Family, you are great to contribute to our cause. Please forgive this email reply, but we want you to know right away how much your support means to us. You'll be hearing from us personally as soon as possible.

This acknowledges the generosity immediately, while relieving some stress for the writer at a busy time. — WISE IN

WASHINGTON

DEAR ABBY: Please tell "Wants" that her son should write some of the letters if he's old enough. The notes should be to people he knows. Folks won't expect a thank-you right away. — CANCER SURVIVOR IN OKLAHOMA

DEAR ABBY: Handwrite those notes. Make them brief. Following my wife's death two years ago, I handwrote about 400 thank-yous to those who had sent cards and flowers or made donations. It was cathartic for me, and it recognized the efforts of those who contributed. — DOING THE RIGHT THING IN MICHIGAN

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ACQUELINE 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 Cancer and a Moon in Taurus all day long.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR THURSDAY, JULY 12, 2012:

Ride the crest of good luck this year, which will become even better next year. Eliminate what no longer works for you. As you close doors, new ones will open. Opportunities strike wherever you put your focus. Pick only those you really want. If you are single, you could have quite the pick of suitors. Enjoy the process. If you are attached, the two of you seem to enjoy a new tango, where you turn up the love temperature. You might opt for a special, long-desired trip together. TAURUS helps pave the way for 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)

★★★★ Clearly an adjustment is made by others, but perhaps not for the reason you wanted. The change occurs because of certain financial benefits. Don't get picky - just be happy. Confusion surrounds conversations. Maintain a sense of humor. Tonight: Treat yourself, too.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

*** You know when it is prime time to make your move, and that time is now. Do not hesitate to push in order to get what you feel is needed. You have your eye on the long term, so do not be surprised if you get some flak from others who don't see your logic. Tonight: The world is your oyster.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★ Even if you must maintain a low profile, you'll gain a different perspective. In the long run, this stance is perfect, as new insights will allow you to make better choices. You see the light, so to speak. Tonight: You do not always need company -- do you? Do your own thing.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★★★ A goal-driven response inspires close-toperfect action. You cannot always operate like this, but you like the results. A partner might demonstrate an innate confusion when speaking or responding to you. Focus on your long-term goals instead of getting too uptight about a problem. Tonight: Where crowds can be

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

*** Others continue to look to you for guidance and understanding. You might want to change your M.O. as you discover what a burden you might be carrying. Give yourself time if you feel uncomfortable. Tonight: Leader of the gang (again).

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★★ Keep reaching out for someone you really care about. Pressure builds and forces your hand. Detach, and don't react. A partner demonstrates unusual imagination and caring. Be ready to take a leap of faith. Tonight: Choose a relaxing activity.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-0CT. 22)

★★★★ You cannot ignore a loved one's request. You might not know what to say, but you need to say something, should you be speechless or undecided. Work with others on an individual level, and you'll gain success. Be subtle and nonjudgmental when asking questions. Tonight: Visit over dinner.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21) **** Defer to others, especially as they are de-

termined to have their way. Communication flows, so use your ability to help yourself and others process a problem. Á friend could disappoint you. Plans also might change. Tonight: Sort through invitations. Think "weekend."

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★ You are tempted to plunge into whatever you do 100 percent. You could be confused by a personal matter. Revamp your budget if you need to, do not let someone's opinion affect you. Give yourself time. Don't demand the impossible from yourself. Tonight: Get some

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★★★ Once more, others are taken with a side of you that does not come out often: your creativity. You are known for your endurance and intellect. Ingenuity -- the blend of imagination and logic -- can find solutions where others cannot. Let more impulsiveness in. Tonight: Fun

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

★★★★ Stay close to home, and refuse to be intimidated. You might be seeing a constant flow of cash leaving your checking account. If this makes you uncomfortable, you know what to do -- just stop spending. Ask questions in a nonthreatening manner. Tonight: Your home is your castle.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

★★★★ State your case, ask questions and loosen up about a situation. You can achieve this without standing on ceremony or changing your goals. Most people will be highly responsive, with the exception of a close loved one. Tonight: Yap up a storm.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON









MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

