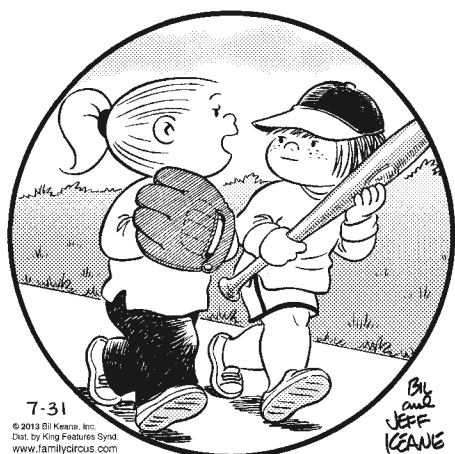


FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



7-31

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"My arm's feeling strong today. I'm gonna try to get my fastball over in less than three bounces."

BIZARRO | DAN PIRARO



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Young Couple's Intimacy Is Risky Without Birth Control

DEAR ABBY: My girlfriend, "Allison," and I have been in a relationship for two years. We met in our sophomore year of high school and have been dating ever since. We have an incredible relationship.

We were virgins when we started dating, but decided we would lose our virginity to each other. We have always used birth control pills and condoms to ensure we wouldn't be having any children.

Earlier this month we had a pregnancy scare. Allison had failed to tell me she stopped taking her birth control pills three months ago. My trust was broken, but most of all I was scared she might be pregnant. It turned out she wasn't, but because of the incident I have been skeptical about making love to her. She says this frustrates her, but I have told her the reason I won't is because she refuses to take the pill.

Abby, we are way too young to have a child and are totally unprepared. I'd still like to be intimate with Allison, but I'm afraid. What should I do? — BETRAYED IN BANGOR, MAINE

DEAR BETRAYED: You appear to be an intelligent and responsible young man. The first thing you should do is thank your higher power that there wasn't an "accident" and your girlfriend didn't become pregnant.

The next thing you should do is find out why Allison would stop taking her birth control pills without telling you. If there was a medical reason, there are other methods she could have used in their place. (If you are planning to attend college, she may have been thinking a baby would "anchor" you to her.)

And last, recognize that if you resume having sex with her — which I emphatically DON'T recommend — that you won't be able to trust her as far as birth control is concerned, and you will be the one totally responsible for preventing a pregnancy.

The saying, "Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on ME," applies here.

the relatively new craze of trashing the wedding dress. I think it's a deplorable waste. I'm sorry I kept mine and watched it yellow over the years, but I haven't heard a reasonable argument for destroying the gown.

Some women say if they have a daughter, she wouldn't want a dated dress. But if the dress is currently in style, I'm sure some less fortunate girl would love to have it. Rather than trash it, I say why not donate the dress or sell it and send the money to a woman's charity? — SENSIBLE IN THE SUNSHINE STATE

DEAR SENSIBLE: The only rational reason I can think of for "trashing" a wedding dress would be if the marriage was a disaster and the bride was doing it as a way of venting her anger. I can't speak for all young women, but I am willing to bet that many would be thrilled to wear the gown their mother wore. And for those who aren't interested or can't fit into it, your idea of recycling is compassionate, generous and sensible.

DEAR ABBY: My husband refuses to cover his mouth when he sneezes. He thinks that by "stifling" his sneeze he doesn't expel any particles. Besides being un-

healthy, I feel it is gross for the rest of us. Is it possible to sneeze and not spray? — DUCKING FOR SHELTER IN OHIO

DEAR DUCKING: No. Some sneezes can travel up to a distance of 5 feet, expelling thousands of droplets into the air and onto surfaces. "Stifle" or not, your husband should cover his mouth.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable — and most frequently requested — poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby — Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.



DEAR ABBY

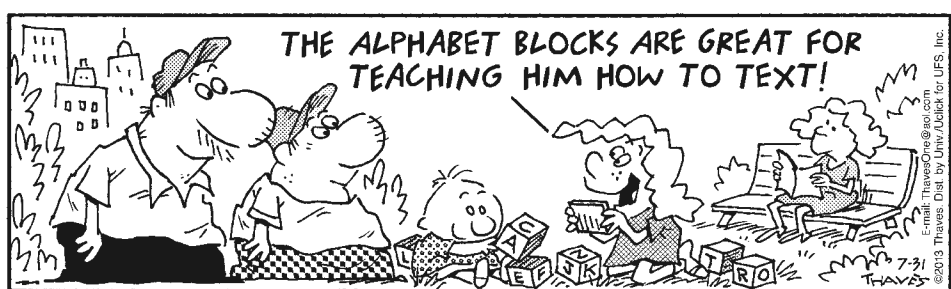
Jeanne Phillips

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.

ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



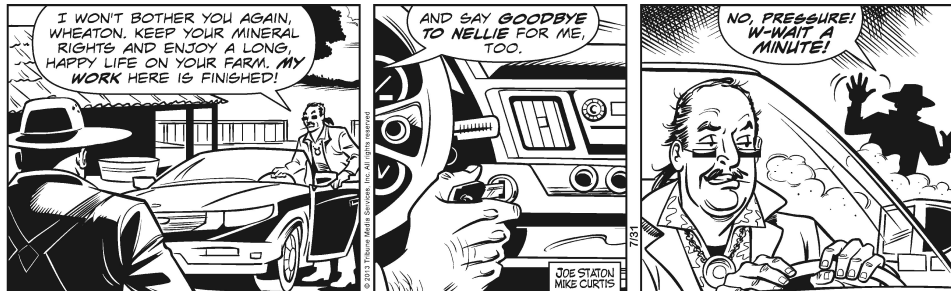
FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



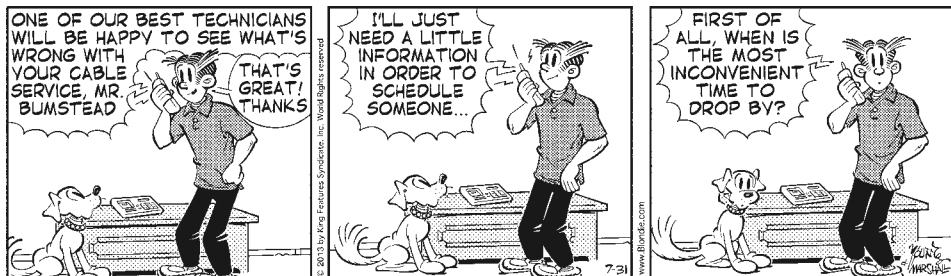
PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



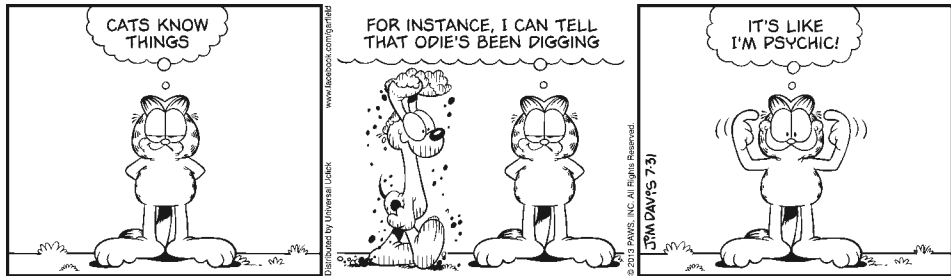
DICK TRACY | JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



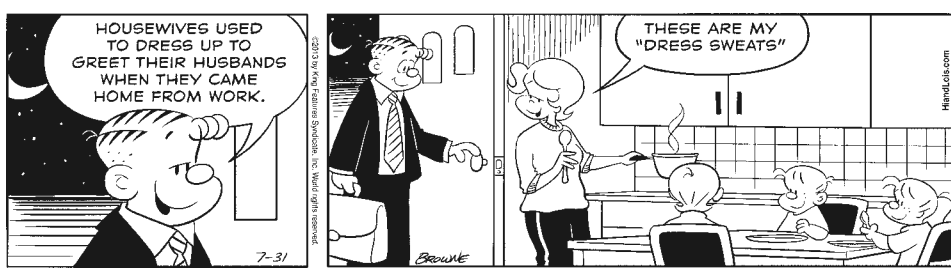
GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



BEETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSON



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS



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 Leo and a Moon in Taurus if born before 8:42 a.m. (PDT). Afterward, the Moon will be in Gemini.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 2013:

This year you communicate with accuracy and precision. Your instincts guide you more often than net. Networking provides you with connections, both professionally and personally. Learning to express yourself in a meaningful way will be important. If you are single, you could meet someone with ease. Choosing the right person will be crucial. If you are attached, the two of you will benefit from a substantial amount of private time together. Look at what does not work in your life, and consider letting it go. Next year, you will enter a new life and luck cycle. GEMINI is fun to go out with.

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 might be trying to get clarity about an upcoming event or situation. You will have difficulty, no matter what you try to do. You could lose your temper, and you'll be shocked by what comes out of your mouth. A little caution will go a long way. Tonight: Hang out at home.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★★ Your upbeat mood could change its focus to a money matter. The best of intentions easily could fall apart and cause a rift among friends. Decide not to allow this scenario to happen. Remain steady, and make a point of being direct in your dealings. Tonight: Treat yourself well.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★ You might be running around in an effort to get a lot done. You are able to see a situation differently from many because you can absorb a lot of information. A friend could be very unpredictable. Avoid mixing business with friendship. Tonight: Where the crowds are.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★★ Complete as much as you can quickly in the morning. The pressure of the day could be intense afterward. In some way, you might not be seeing a situation clearly. Your attempts for clarity appear futile at the moment. Tonight: Make it early. You will need the rest soon enough!

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★★ Friends mean a lot, especially in a business setting where you might have to ask

them for support. You could feel confused about a key associate whom you've always counted on. Forthcoming news could surprise you. Tonight: Keep your eye on the long term.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★★ You might want to run the show, but you could find it very difficult to do so. How you deal with someone could change radically once you get a better sense of where this person is coming from. Observe and keep asking questions. Tonight: A friend could push too hard.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★ Make it a point to get an overview of a situation. You might get a different perspective that will work wonders. You could be overly tired and withdrawn. You will want to think through a recent change more carefully. Will it work? Tonight: Return calls and emails, then decide.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★★ You might want to go right past a problem that has stopped you in your tracks before. Because of your previous experience, you initially might feel unsure of yourself. You even could become irritated by what develops. Stay the course, and you'll be OK. Tonight: Remain upbeat.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★ Be smart and say little, as it will allow someone to present his or her ideas and thoughts. You might want to revisit a mistake made a while ago by this person. Perhaps he or she needs to repeat the same mistake in order to learn from it. Tonight: Allow someone to let off some steam.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★ You might want to reconsider someone's ideas. Don't say "no" immediately; instead, ask insightful questions. Realize that you won't be able to push a situation through as quickly as you would like. Frustration might emerge as a result. Tonight: Say "yes" to an exciting offer.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

★★★★ You might want to answer someone's questions very diplomatically. If you share exactly what you're thinking, there could be a volatile exchange. Be careful if you feel irritated when working with machinery; otherwise, you could have an accident. Tonight: A midweek break.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

★★★ If you're feeling confused or if someone is intentionally weaving a haze around you, distance yourself rather than get into an argument that you might regret later. Your sense of humor will help you bypass an otherwise difficult situation. Tonight: Close to home.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON

