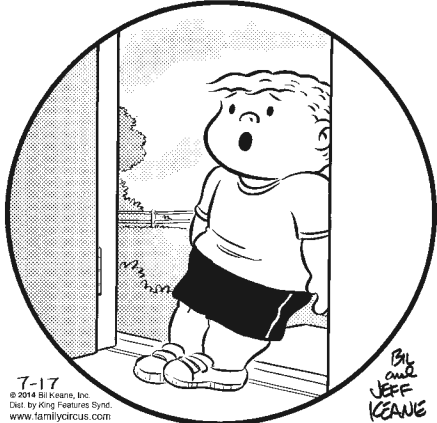


FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



7-17
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"Mommy, Billy said I haven't 'chieved my full potential. Is that a good thing or a bad thing?"

BIZARRO | DAN PIRARO



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Reader Reports Happy Ending To Engagement Ring Dilemma

DEAR ABBY: On July 26, 2011, you posted an answer to "Jittery Future Bride in Boston." I am that woman. I had asked you how to get my boyfriend of five years to use my deceased grandmother's ring as an engagement ring.

I followed your advice and told my boyfriend-at-the-time that I wanted to use a family ring. I spoke with my father about it and checked with my sister to see if she would mind if I used it.

We got engaged seven months ago, and my now-husband told me he had been hoping to take the stone from my paternal grandmother's ring, a stone from my maternal grandmother's ring and one from his family to make a new "joining of the families" ring. We haven't made it yet, but we all look forward to the special meaning that it will embody. We even plan to make a new setting out of the old setting. It's a fairy-tale ending. — BLUSHING BRIDE IN BOSTON

DEAR BLUSHING BRIDE: Actually, it's more like a fairy-tale beginning. I love the idea. Thank you for letting me know how things turned out. Not many of my readers take the time to do that. I wish you and your husband a lifetime of happiness together.

DEAR ABBY: The mother of a friend of mine died recently. I offered my condolences, and since then I haven't been the same.

I am nine months pregnant, and even though I should be excited and celebrating the anticipated arrival of our baby, all I can think about is that my mother is going to die one day. She's 52, healthy and happy, but I can't get it out of my mind. I have become a different person, crying at the most trivial things and often panicking that Mom's OK. I don't think I could make it through if any-

thing happened to her.

Dwelling on this is affecting my relationship with my husband and my friends. How do I stop obsessing over this? — ANXIOUS IN ALBUQUERQUE

DEAR ANXIOUS: A discussion with your OB/GYN would be helpful. By the last months of pregnancy, a woman's body is swimming in hormones. Those increased hormone levels have been known to have a profound effect on a woman's emotions.

The solution to your problem may be as simple as understanding that once your baby arrives and your hormones return to normal, you will be back on a more even keel. If that doesn't happen, you may have to talk with a mental health professional — although I doubt that will be necessary. In the meantime, your mother is healthy, happy and about to be a grandmother, so dwell on the positive.



DEAR ABBY
Jeanne Phillips

DEAR READERS: A thought for the day: The best exercise in the world is to bend down and help someone up.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby — Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

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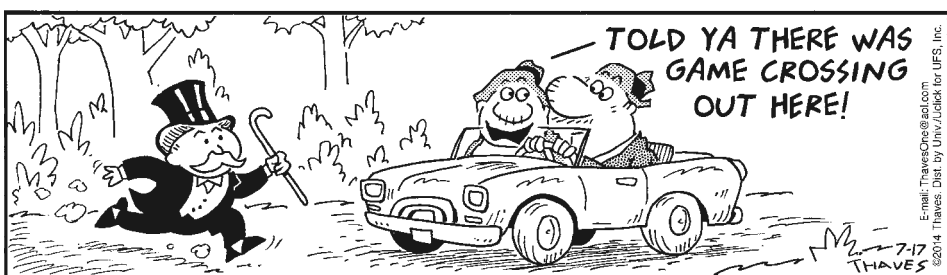
ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



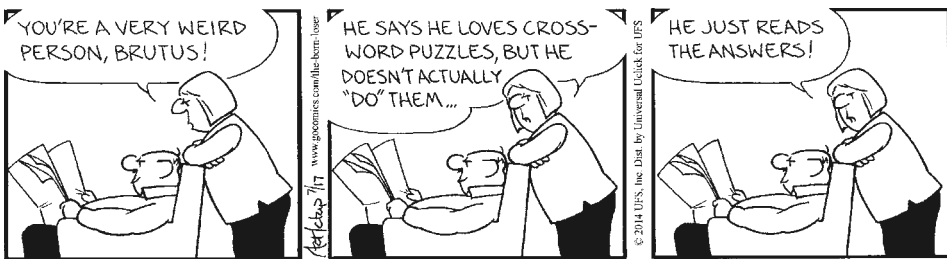
PICKLES | BRIAN CRANE



FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



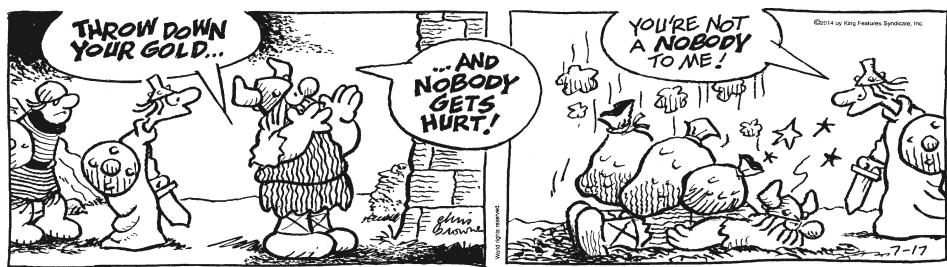
THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSON



PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



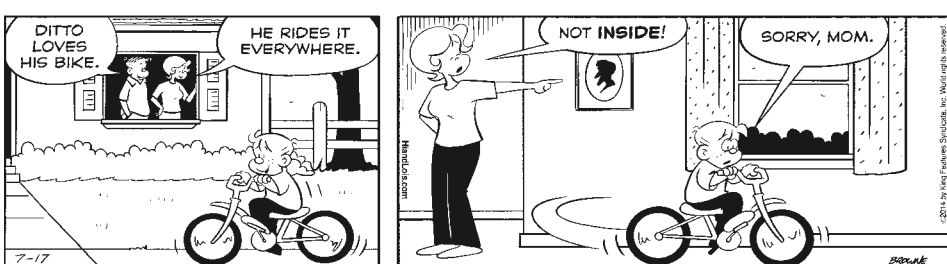
HÄGAR THE HORRIBLE | CHRIS BROWNE



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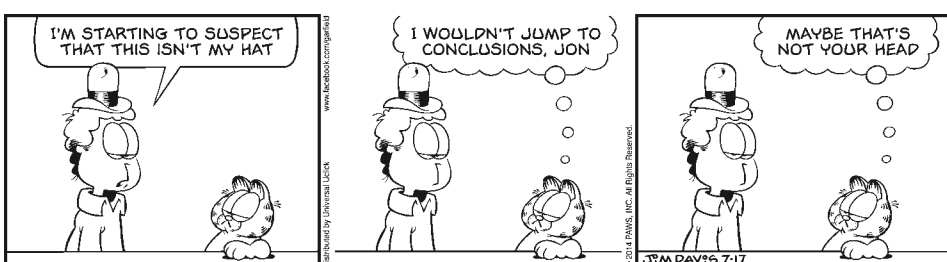
HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



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 Cancer and a Moon in Pisces if born before 12:24 a.m. (PDT). Afterward, the Moon will be in Aries.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR THURSDAY, JULY 17, 2014:

This year opportunities pop up from out of the blue, though they might force your hand in making decisions that you would prefer to avoid. If you are single, you attract many different personalities. Avoid getting too serious with anyone who is possessive. If you are attached, the two of you will reach a financial pinnacle, but only if you continue to save. A lucky bet or a promotion also could be part of the scenario. ARIES might be alluring, but he or she also can cause a lot of conflict in your life.

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)

★★★ Confusion will mark your words, though you might feel as if you are being very clear. As a result, you will have a choice to make that you would like to avoid. Be careful when suppressing your anger, as there could be a backfire. Tonight: Go for the moment.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★ You might choose to say less and listen more. What you see evolving could be somewhat depressing. Remember that everything can change in the blink of an eye. Be careful, as anger easily could disrupt and surprise you. Tonight: Get some extra R and R.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★ Emphasize what you want. You could be taken aback by someone's frustration. Try not to fan any flames; instead, help this person discuss his or her feelings. Be optimistic in your calls and in your communication, and you will see a positive response. Tonight: Where the gang is.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★★ You might decide that a new approach would be better, especially if you find that others are trying to force your hand. You understand moodiness and strange behavior, and you are likely to witness how quickly moods can change. Tonight: In the limelight.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★★ Keep reaching out to an expert to help you make a decision. If you can postpone having to

choose right now, you would be well advised to do so. A day or two wait will help you gain a different and more successful perspective. Tonight: Go off and try something new.

VRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★★ You will want to defer to others, as they seem to have a better grasp on a difficult situation. You might not understand the root of the problem. Remain positive in how you approach a potential disagreement. You know who you can trust. Tonight: Dinner for two.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★★ You seem to have been dealing with a lot of frustration and/or anger since March. That period is ending now, yet you might be surprised to have your ability to express these uncomfortable feelings tested today. Let others know how you feel. Tonight: Seek advice.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★ You might feel as if many people are forgetting important pieces of a puzzle, perhaps involving your immediate circle. Make a point to get past your irritation, and consider how you can persuade these same people to be more thorough. Tonight: Make it early, if possible.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★★ Your fiery nature takes over, which factors your creativity and dynamic thinking into the mix. Others enjoy this part of your personality, and they often step back and make way for you and your expansive ideas. Do not accept "no" as an answer. Tonight: Paint the town red.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★ Your mind might be on home and family. Your thinking will be clear to those close to you, though you still could tumble into controversy. You'll have to decide whether to stand up to different ideas, incorporate them or become rigid about them. Tonight: At home.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

★★★★ You often tell it as it is, which tends to trigger some uproar. You bring out a natural sense of defiance in others. You will find out quickly whether your style will work well in a new situation. Try to choose your words with care. Avoid getting personal. Tonight: Hang out.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

★★★ Be aware of your actions and how they might trigger a strong reaction from a loved one or an associate. On the other hand, remember to be sensitive to your needs. Use a measure of care with your finances. It will serve you well to honor your budget. Tonight: Pay bills first.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

