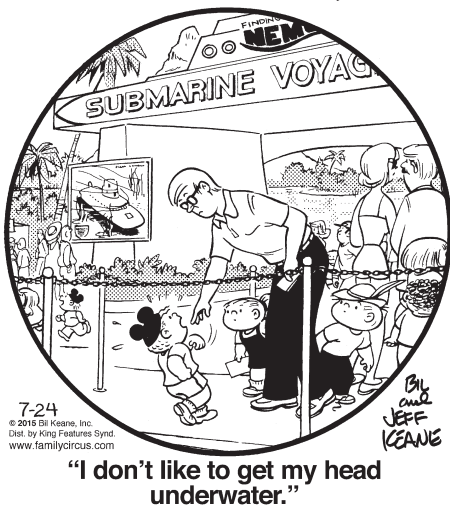


FAMILY CIRCUS | BILL KEANE



BIZARRO | DAN PIRARO



Mom's Helpful Hints Become Criticism In Girlfriend's Ears

DEAR ABBY: I'm frustrated about how to connect with my young adult son's 18-year-old girlfriend. He told me she has a bad relationship with her divorced parents, so he's hoping we can bond.

A problem that comes up frequently is, she's so anxious to show me how skilled and knowledgeable she is, she misses any tips and techniques I try to subtly teach her. They live together in another state, so our weekend visits at each other's homes seem to amplify the problem.

I'll give you an example: When I removed ice cubes from an ice tray, I ran water over the bottom briefly before twisting the tray. She laughed like I was clueless and said, "You don't have to do that, just twist the tray!" I replied that the water helped release the cubes more cleanly "because of the physics of the warmer water." She teased up, left the room and told my son (who repeated it to me) that I was being critical of her.

I have expressed appreciation for her, and my son has reassured her of my intentions, but I'm getting tired of tiptoeing around her issues. How can I help her understand that she can learn from me without it meaning that I think any less of her? — ON EGGSHELLS IN MONTANA

DEAR ON EGGSHELLS: It might be a good idea to quit trying to mother or teach this young woman anything unless you are specifically asked, because it appears she's not interested in learning from you.

From where I sit, you not only were not critical of her, but the opposite was true of what happened in that kitchen. If she hadn't laughed at you — ridiculed you — for the way you emptied the ice tray, you wouldn't have felt it necessary to explain your technique. So take a step back and stop trying to help her, because it's obviously not appreciated.

DEAR ABBY: I have new downstairs neighbors. While they appear to be pleasant in most circumstances, I cannot ignore the fact that the wife cries inconsolably in their bedroom three or four times a week, late at night. I never hear any yelling or disruption that leads up to this, just loud sobbing in the bedroom that keeps me up several times a week. I don't think she's being abused, but I do think she might be depressed.

Can you think of any kind way to send her to my therapist up the street for some help? Stick a business card in their door anonymously? Bring it up more directly? — UP ALL NIGHT IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

DEAR UP ALL NIGHT: Talk privately with the woman and tell her you are concerned about her because you have heard her crying. Do not ask her why, but if she volunteers, listen to what she has to say. She may need a grief support group or, as you suggested, a therapist. If either of those is the case, you should suggest it.



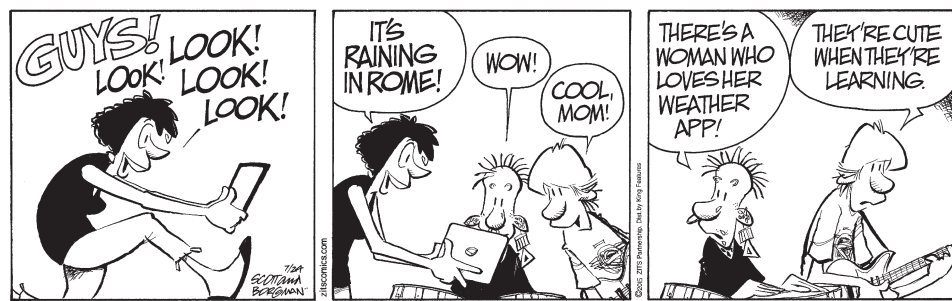
DEAR ABBY
Jeanne Phillips

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

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$14 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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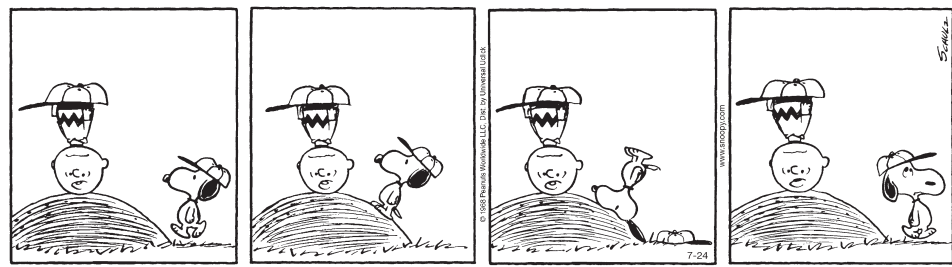
FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



BORN LOSER | ART SAMSON



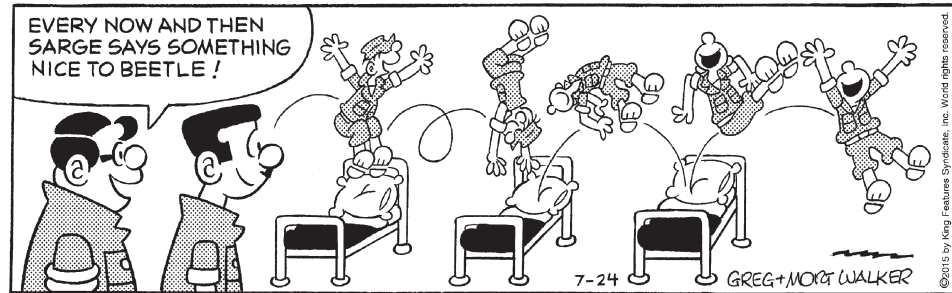
PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



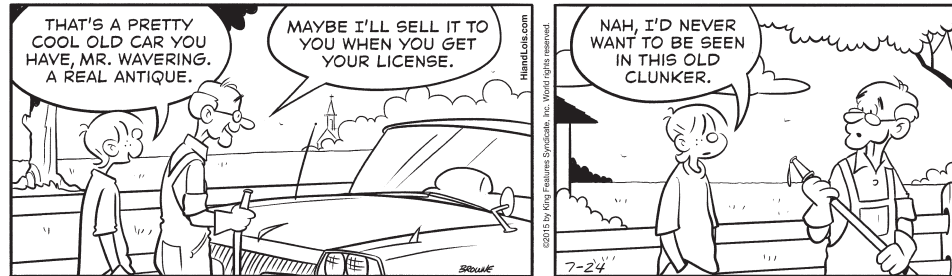
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE | CHRIS BROWNE



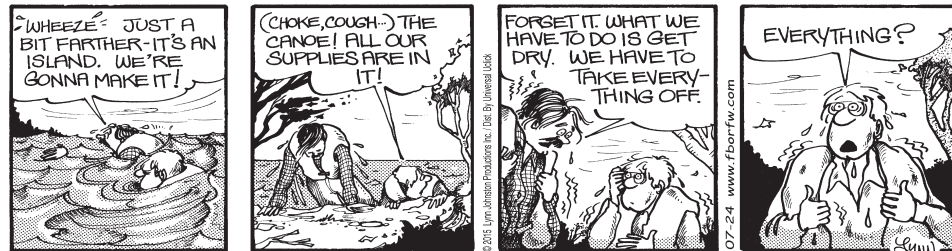
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HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



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 Leo and a Moon in Scorpio.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2015:

This year a pay raise or promotion is likely. You might keep many of your feelings to yourself; there also could be a few that you are not even aware of yet. Your home becomes your personal hideaway, and you value it as a retreat from the world. If you are single, you could meet someone in the next few weeks who could be very significant to your life. Curb a tendency to be possessive. If you are attached, the two of you benefit from working on your home together or entertaining more often. Emphasis will be on the quality of your life. SCORPIO intrigues 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)

★★★★ A loved one will demonstrate his or her caring in a big way. You might want to clear the way to do something very different, but you also must remain sensitive to this person. Remember to express compassion, and listen to his or her ideas. Tonight: In the whirlwind of life.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★★ Stay responsive to others, as they seem to want to be dominant right now. Pressure builds and could force your hand. Clearly, you need to communicate better. Understand what your expectations are from others. Make sure they understand yours as well. Tonight: Defer.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★ Playing catch up might not be fun, but it will be necessary. In your recent jubilant mood, you'll discover how carefree you can be. However, be sure not to let your responsibilities fall to the wayside. Worry less about your plans and more about your to-do list. Tonight: Join friends.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★★ You could be at your wits' end and might feel as if you need a break. You will find that you are able to flow through different issues and responsibilities. As a result, you'll free yourself to do whatever you want. Make plans for the weekend if you haven't yet. Tonight: TGIF!

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★ Get back to the basics when dealing with a personal matter, a relative or even a work-related

issue. You know what is best for you. Lighten up, even if there is some tension surrounding you. This too will pass. Tonight: Head home early, but first join a friend for Happy Hour.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★ Your efforts to reach out to someone will succeed. You might get some flak, but it won't be enough to deter you from your objective. Expect an unusual tale, and you won't be surprised when you hear the other side of the story. Be more forthright. Tonight: Make it easy.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★★ Be aware of the costs of making certain plans, as not everyone will agree with your choices. You could be worried about a personal matter that is consuming your thoughts. Slow down if you can. Think before you leap. Tonight: Make it your treat.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★★ Listen to a friend who seems to have some thoughts and ideas to share. You might be a little out of whack when trying to move forward with a personal matter. Your spontaneity could backfire, so be careful. Communication might need some revision. Tonight: The party begins.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★ You might want to rethink a personal matter. You could be uncomfortable with the outcome if you act too quickly. You are best off not overthinking the issue. Try to move in a new direction if possible. Make sure a plan is well-thought-out. Tonight: In the thick of things.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★★ Focus on your goals right now. Zero in on what is important, and figure out what needs to happen. A long-term desire could possibly manifest and become a reality. Touch base with a child or loved one. You have reason for celebration. Tonight: Pop a bottle of bubbly.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

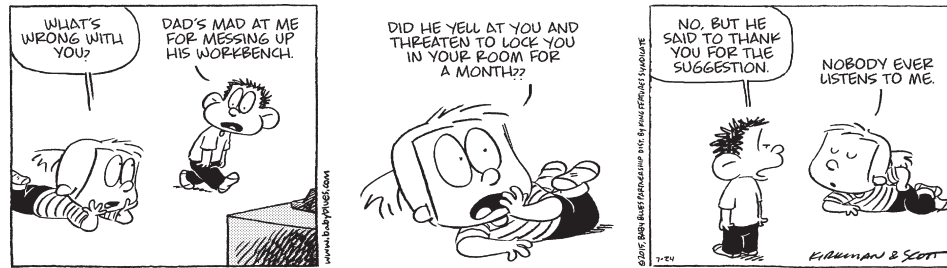
★★★ Pressure builds and forces you to take charge. You will have little choice, as everyone seems to be looking to you. Demonstrate your sensitivity with various issues. Your empathy will help draw others toward you. Understand your limits. Tonight: A must appearance.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

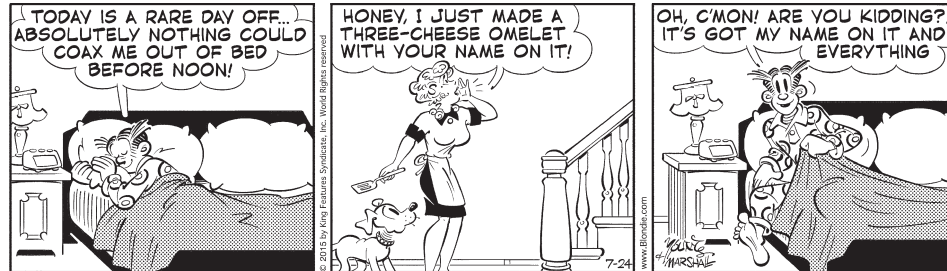
★★★★ The more you detach, the more likely it will be that a wonderful meeting of the minds is the outcome. Don't underestimate the people around you. How you view an important matter is subject to change after some important conversations. Tonight: Make sure music surrounds you.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

