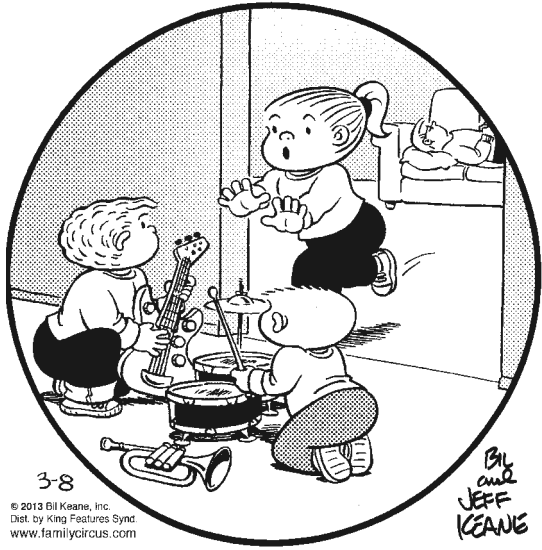
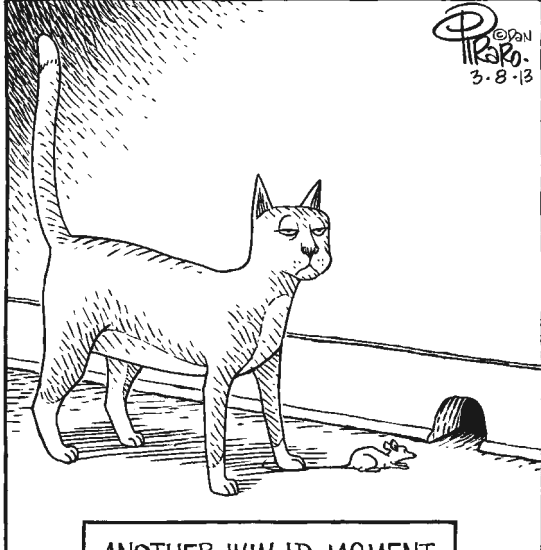


FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



"Hold it! Daddy says all he wants today is a little piece of quiet."

BIZARRO | DAN PIRARO



ANOTHER W.W.J.D. MOMENT

Son In Jail Struggles To Cope With Dad's Cancer Diagnosis

DEAR ABBY: I am in a county jail for parole violation. I am an addict, which is why I'm in this not-so-welcoming environment. I accept full responsibility for being here because ultimately it was my actions that guaranteed me confinement in jail.

I have been struck with some not-so-good news while here. On a recent visit with my parents I learned my mother, who suffers from a variety of health problems, can no longer work. My father, who must work to cover the cost of her medical care, has been diagnosed with liver cancer.

This is very difficult for me. My father is my absolute best friend. I have to be strong for my mother. I want to scream and cry and sometimes lash out, but my inner adult (I'm 26) tells me that would be immature.

I don't feel like I have come to terms with my father's illness. Although I know what is eventually to come, I have yet to feel any emotion, good or bad. I'm not sure if I'm blocking it or if I'm being the strong-willed adult I was raised to be by my father and best friend. I was never raised with the "men don't cry" or "be strong for your mother" concept. Am I repressing my emotions? And if so, is there anything I can do to start dealing with this? — JUST ANOTHER INMATE IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR JUST: All people do not react to bad news in the same way — crying, screaming or lashing out. Some go numb for a period of time, until they are ready to process their emotions. Part of your problem may be that because you're incarcerated, you feel helpless.

DEAR ABBY: I am the mother of a "yours, mine and ours" family. Between us, my husband and I have six children. I have been "Mom" for his three children since the oldest was 6. Fifteen years have passed, and I raised all of them as my own. Because the stress of such a large family has taken its toll at times, I have said I couldn't wait until everyone was 18 and out of the house.



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.

Three of the children are on their own now and three remain. The youngest is 14. I recently took my 18-year-old son to the Air Force recruiter to take his entrance test and as I watched him walk into the building, I started to cry. I realized I don't really want them to go away.

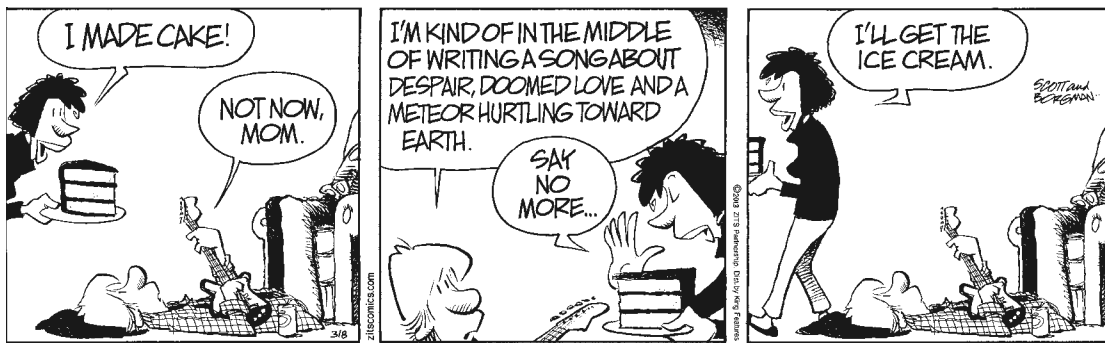
I have been a parent since I was 17, and now — at 40 — I'm having a hard time imagining life without them. I'm afraid of having only my husband to keep me occupied. There has never been a time without kids around. I'm afraid it'll be like starting our relationship all over again, and he may not like what he sees. How can I get past the fear of not being needed or wanted anymore? — ALMOST EMPTY-NESTED IN VERMONT

DEAR ALMOST EMPTY-NESTED: Instead of allowing fear or anxiety to drag you down, look at the bright side. Your nest will be full for four more years — and if there is something about yourself that you see that YOU don't like, there is plenty of time to do something about it.

You are more than "just" a mother. Because your responsibilities as a parent have lightened, use the time to broaden your horizons and develop some mutual interests with your husband that you couldn't before. Sometimes we can be our own harshest critics — so be a little kinder to yourself and consider what I have said. It is heartfelt.

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ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



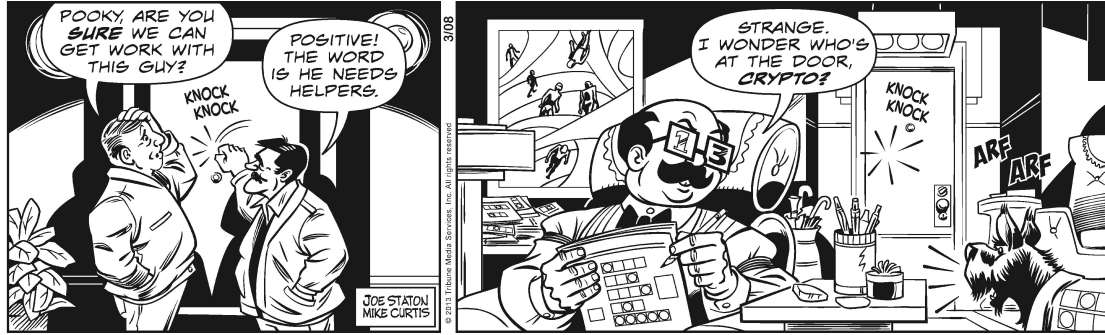
FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



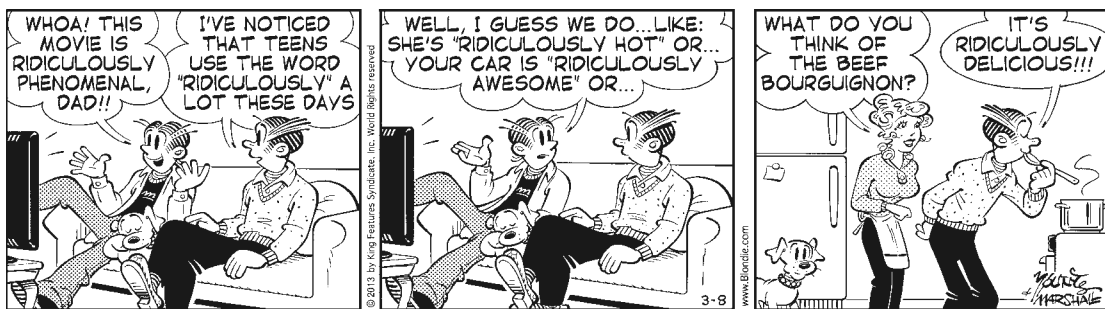
PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



DICK TRACY | JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



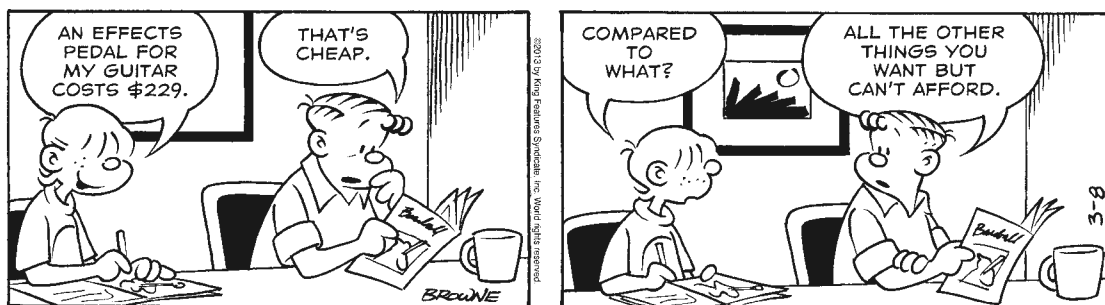
GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



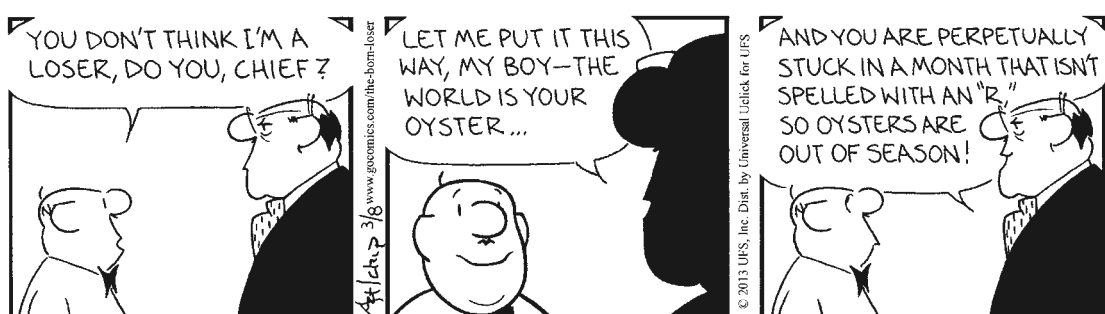
BEETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSON



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.

A baby born today has a Sun in Pisces and a Moon in Aquarius.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2013:

This year you might want to keep your own counsel more often. You will need time to center yourself, rethink situations and make important decisions. You also will enjoy your time more at home and with family.

ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19)

Listen to news. Events evoke a strong response. You might not be aware of your limits and choices, but you likely will decide that the best place to be is in charge.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

Pressure builds. Step forward and handle situations your way. You might not be so sure of yourself once you dive into a personal matter.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

Others find you to be unusually fortunate and able to deal with various types of situations. Use your skills to listen to others, and also to get past an immediate issue.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

Deal with others directly, and you'll get your desired response. Your instincts guide you as to how to handle a difficult situation.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

Note how many people are looking for you. You will have many sets of plans and options for company.

from which to choose. Your instincts tell you "the more, the merrier." Schedule a late lunch with a co-worker or a friend.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You could feel burdened by someone's requests, but you will do your best to meet them. Unfortunately, you might be the person left holding the bag at the end of the day.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

Your playfulness emerges when dealing with others. You might want to rethink a personal matter and make an adjustment.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

Your instincts point to working from home. Someone's quirky behavior might be the direct result of a perceived coldness from you.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Use care with your finances once more, even if funds are on the plus side. Consider your checking account to be a train station, and your money the train.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Watch what's happening with a loved one. An opinion you have held for a while could change as a result of a new experience.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

Decide to handle a personal matter directly. Understand more of what is happening within a key relationship. Others currently remain highly responsive to your energy.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)

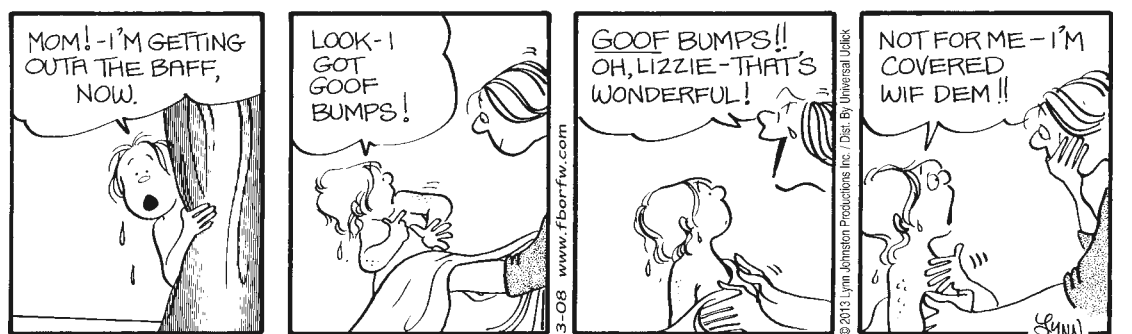
Consider taking at least part of today off, as you need some downtime. You have been pushing very hard for various reasons.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

