

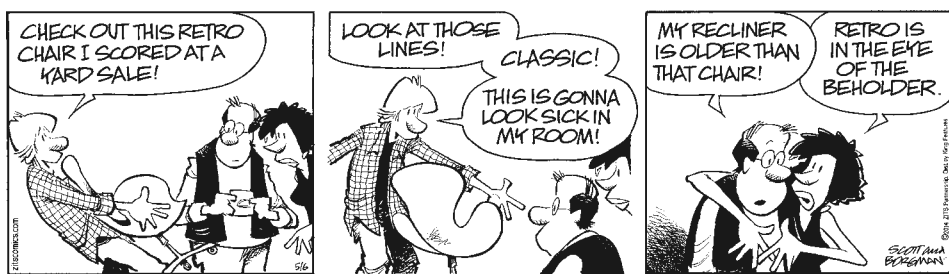
FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



BIZARRO | DAN PIRARO



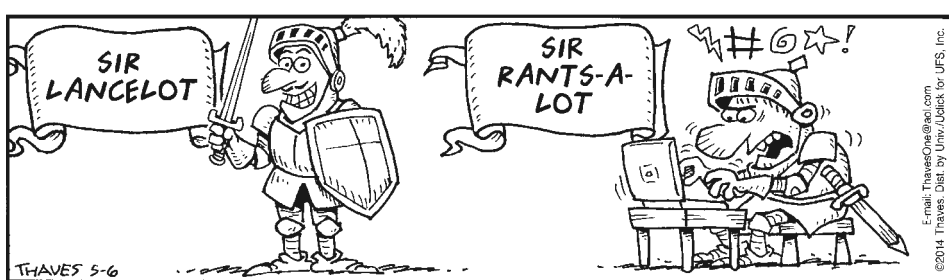
ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



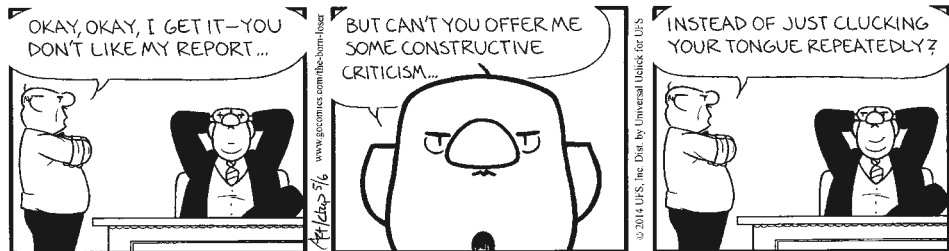
PICKLES | BRIAN CRANE



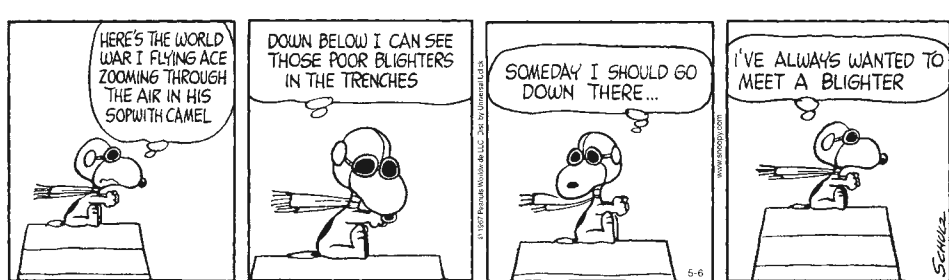
FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



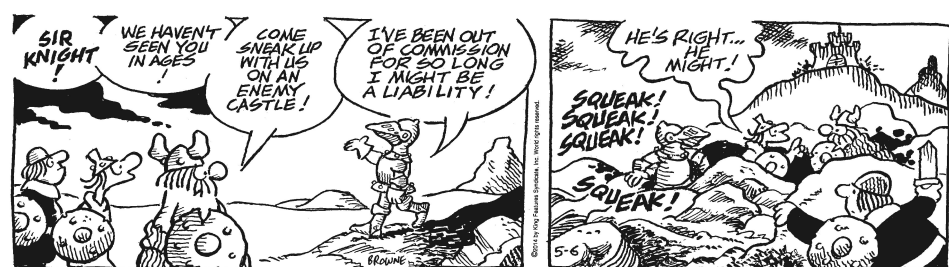
THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSON



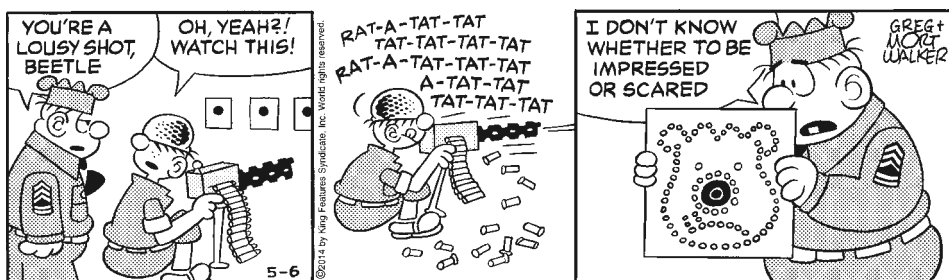
PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



HÄGAR THE HORRIBLE | CHRIS BROWNE



BETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



Gift Packaging Promises More Than It Can Deliver

DEAR ABBY: I recently went in on a gift with my friend "Ali" for our other friend, "Gena." Ali offered to purchase and wrap the gift, a nice wallet from an inexpensive store. Imagine my surprise when Ali turned up at Gena's birthday party with the wallet elaborately wrapped in expensive designer paper.

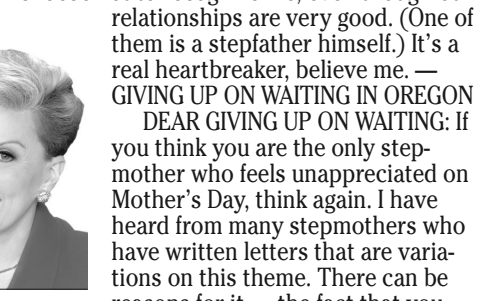
At first, I thought she had spent more of her money and upgraded our gift, but when Gena unwrapped the designer packaging to reveal the original wallet we had selected, I was taken aback. It turned out that Ali had reused the wrapping paper from a gift her husband had given her, disguising our present as something it wasn't.

Gena was clearly disappointed. Other guests who had been eyeing it looked excited at first, then confused. I felt our gift wasn't appreciated and we ended up looking cheap. I was at a loss for words. What would have been the appropriate way to handle the situation? Is this normal gift-wrapping practice, or did Ali cross the line? — FLABBERGASTED IN FLORIDA

DEAR FLABBERGASTED: Reusing wrapping paper isn't unusual. Gena's reaction to the gift was inappropriate. Instead of letting her disappointment show, Gena should have smiled and graciously thanked you and Ali for her gift. (Remember the phrase, "It's the thought that counts?") As for you, all you needed to say was "Happy Birthday!"

DEAR ABBY: With Mother's Day nearly upon us, would you remind your readers that stepmothers are worthy of recognition, too? If one has any regard for the feelings of his or her stepmom, PLEASE make her day by calling or visiting her and telling her how much she means to you. And I don't mean a phone call at 9 p.m.

I married my husband when his sons were in their late teens. Every Mother's Day for 14 years I have been reminded that his sons choose not to recognize me, even though our relationships are very good. (One of them is a stepfather himself.) It's a real heartbreaker, believe me. — GIVING UP ON WAITING IN OREGON



DEAR ABBY

Jeanne Phillips

DEAR GIVING UP ON WAITING: If you think you are the only stepmother who feels unappreciated on Mother's Day, think again. I have heard from many stepmothers who have written letters that are variations on this theme. There can be reasons for it — the fact that you didn't raise them, fear that it would be somehow disloyal to their birth mother, unresolved relationship issues or just being preoccupied.

If you haven't discussed this with your stepsons, perhaps you should. Or better yet, your husband should. But if that doesn't solve the problem, for your own sake, stop brooding about it and direct your attention elsewhere.

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.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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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 Taurus and a Moon in Leo.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2014:

This year you will evolve to a new level. Be willing to state your boundaries, and be ready to assert them. Others might test this newfound clarity. Many people surround you and want to be involved in your life. The issue will be that you are only one person, and there are only so many hours in the day. If you are single, you could be overwhelmed at times with so many choices of potential suitors. Date until you're absolutely sure that you are in the type of relationship you desire. If you are attached, maintain a strong bond with your sweetie. By late summer, you might want to move or remodel your home, as the two of you will be interested in making it more of a "nest." LEO loves hanging out with 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)

★★★★ Be direct in your dealings, as you know what to do and how to do it. Your ability to communicate will open doors and allow greater give-and-take between you and others. A loved one could be more upset than you originally had thought. Be careful. Tonight: Say "yes" to an offer.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★ Stay centered, and decide what choice will work best for you. Honor a change in your living style. You might want to put some of your energy into a project that is near and dear to your heart. Listen to someone's thoughts and ideas more carefully. Tonight: Head home.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★ You have a way and style about you that attracts many admirers who care a lot about you. You also could be driven to accomplish a lot more than you ever thought possible. You might be in the mood to socialize than to work. Tonight: Go out and enjoy yourself.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★ Be sensitive to your fiscal concerns, and know where you are heading with a personal matter. Understand more of what you need to get done. Relate to a child or loved one you care about more directly. In fact, take some extra time off to be with this person. Tonight: Anchored in.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★★ You'll beam in much more of what

you desire. Remain sure of yourself, and know that you don't need to justify your actions. You might feel energized and ready to take on another project. Remain receptive and forthcoming, even with a difficult person. Tonight: All smiles.

VRIGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★ Stay centered and direct in how you deal with others. The less said, the better off you will be. Others will notice that you are unusually quiet. In a few days, you will have a totally different impression. Deal with a loved one directly. Tonight: Not to be found.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★★ You have a lot going for you. Your immediate circle of friends could be larger than you realize. Keep in mind that your pals understand you very well. You seem to come from a more centered stance as of late. Tonight: Be among the crowds.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★★ All eyes will turn to you as you attempt to work through a problem. You could be in a situation that is more difficult than you originally thought it would be. Understand what is happening with someone you care about. Tonight: Out till the wee hours.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★★★ You might want to turn a situation around and handle it differently. You could see a personal matter in a new light. What was considered a hardship in the past might not be an issue anymore. Worry less about an immediate change or situation. Tonight: Make unusual plans.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★★ Deal with one person directly. Be sure to understand your natural limits and expectations. Be more serious about the possibilities that surround you. You might want to veer in a different direction in order to make a situation easier than it has been. Tonight: Be a duo.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

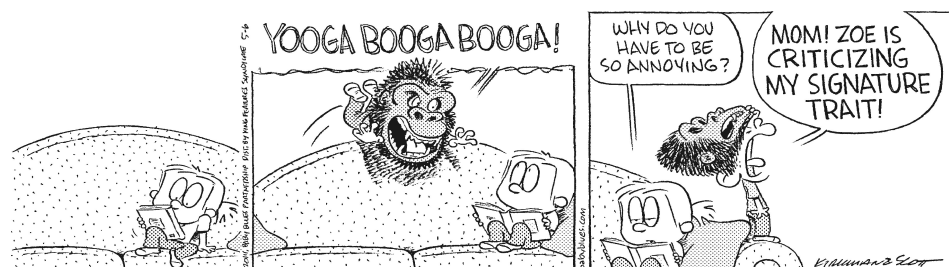
★★★★ Others seek you out. Observe and understand what needs to happen. Be willing to state your boundaries. You could be so full of fun and interesting conversations that others will continue seeking you out. Someone might have a crush on you. Tonight: Sort through invitations.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

★★★ You might want to consider an alternative surrounding an immediate situation. You have a lot to do and a lot of ground to cover. Recognize that you will need to stay focused on your long-term goals. Make it OK to relax and enjoy the moment. Tonight: Have some fun.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

