

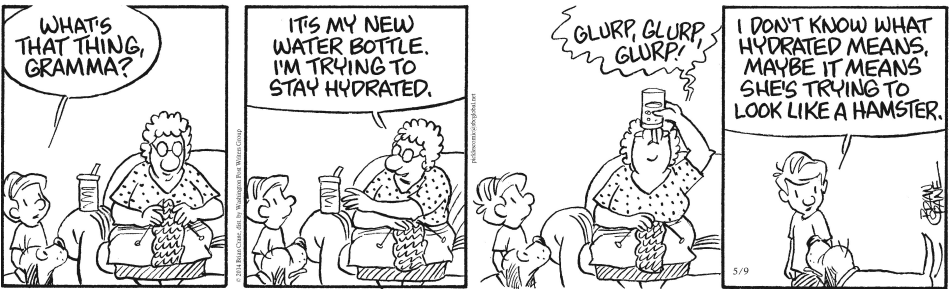
FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



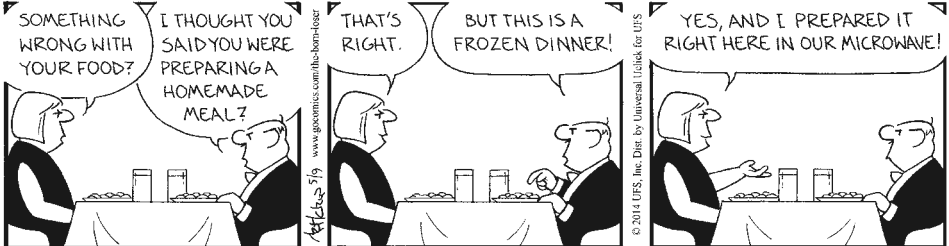
PICKLES | BRIAN CRANE



FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSON



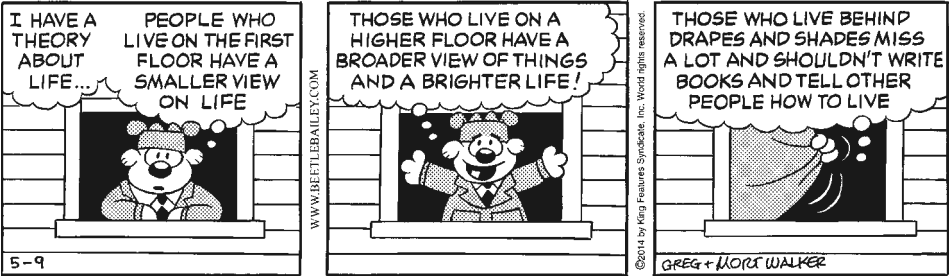
PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



HÄGAR THE HORRIBLE | CHRIS BROWNE



BEETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



BIZARRO | DAN PIRARO



Husband's Absence Gives Wife Freedom From Abuse

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 27-year-old woman trapped in a loveless marriage. My husband is a few years younger, and very co-dependent. Before he dated me, he had never had a girlfriend or a sexual encounter. I came into the relationship with a child and some trust/fear issues because my ex had abused me.

My husband has now become verbally, sexually and to a lesser degree, physically abusive, to the point of striking my 5-year-old son. I threw him out for that, but caved to pressure from my family to take him back. They think he's a "stabilizing" influence in my life. They don't know about, or can't grasp, his abuse or the abuse I survived previously. If I hint at it, they accuse me of "lying for attention."

My husband has left for basic training with the army and will be gone for a few months. I already feel freer, lighter and more able to cope with things. If I leave him while he's away, the social and family repercussions will be devastating. My son and I may be forced to relocate.

I'm torn and afraid. I went through with the marriage only to please my family, as the abuse started before the wedding. It has been a year and a half, and all I can think about is getting out. Help me, please. — CANADIAN READER

DEAR READER: Of course I will help. Deciding to leave an abusive partner can be wrenching as well as frightening. However, because abuse tends to escalate, it is what you MUST do. Your and your child's safety could depend on it. It is shameful that your family isn't supportive, but don't let that stop you. Relocate if you must.

You need to form an escape plan. The way to do that is to call the National Domestic Violence Hotline. The phone number is 800-799-7233. Counselors there can refer you to help in your area — they have done this for other Canadian women. They also offer

education and empowerment programs so that victims will be less likely to be sweet-talked by their abusers into returning for more punishment.

Don't wait to reach out because your son's physical and emotional health depend on it. If not for yourself, do it for him.

DEAR ABBY: I have a friend who lives a few states away. We talk on the phone every week. Either she calls me or I call her. Every time she calls me, it's when she is driving somewhere. As soon as she arrives at her destination or pulls up in her driveway, she says, "I'm home (here) now. Gotta go!" and hangs up.

This has been going on for years. I stay on the phone all the time she rambles on and never cut her short. It's really starting to get to me. What should I do? — FUMING IN FLORIDA

DEAR FUMING: If this has been happening "for years" and you are just now writing me about it, I'd call that one slow burn. Pick up the phone, call your friend and tell her exactly how you feel about it. If you don't, she'll continue doing what she has been doing because she thinks it's all right with you.

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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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 Virgo.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR FRIDAY, MAY 9, 2014:

This year you always seem to find solutions to your and other people's problems. If you're in an artistic or creative field, you could be entering a banner year. Your home becomes a higher priority than in the past. As long as you have a venue to expresses your high creativity, you will be content. If you are single, you will meet someone in your daily life, simply by going about your everyday business. If you are attached, you will be unusually content to stay at home, though you might have a strong desire to redecorate. Remember to keep your sweetie informed of what is going on. VIRGO intrigues you, either because of or despite his or her remoteness.

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'll float into the weekend feeling good, as if you have accomplished a major goal. Take time to make an appointment with the doctor, or perhaps schedule a long-overdue haircut. Do more for yourself, not just for others. Tonight: Happily head home.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★★★ Your imagination proves to be a resource, not only for you, but also for a loved one. Some of your wild flights of fancy might make others giggle. Schedule some special time for a child who values your company. Use caution with your funds. Tonight: Let the good times roll.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★ You will be sharing your ideas with both willing and unwilling audiences. Somehow, you'll sense that a financial risk may be worth taking. Take your time in making this decision. Reach out to an older family member. Tonight: You don't need to go far.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★★★ Whatever you blurt out seems to be appreciated. Be reasonable in a discussion with a loved one who is making an attempt to be more open. You might need to relax with a friend a little more often, as this person reflects a novel view of life. Tonight: Visit with a close pal.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★★ You might want to open a door and

change your direction. Right now, your well-being and fiscal soundness need to be your highest priorities. Someone close to you might be encouraging you to let go and give in to your wilder side. Don't. Tonight: Tap into your intuition.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★★ You could be more in touch with your feelings than you are aware. Remain confident that you will make the right move at the right time. Whatever you are focused on is where you will succeed. Someone you meet today could be unusually important to your life. Tonight: Out.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★ You could be overwhelmed by what is happening around you. As a result, the instinct to pull back and cocoon is likely to emerge. You might have doubts about yourself or another key person. Make it OK to assume a holding pattern. Tonight: In the limelight.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★★ Emphasize what is positive about a situation. You will need to detach and take a look at what is happening, as you could be distorting what is going on. Some of your assumptions might be coloring your vision. Tonight: Enjoy the moment, and be where the crowds are.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★★ Deal with one person directly, and don't let anyone or any issue sidetrack you from the moment. Fatigue seems to mark your decisions. You could have an offer that you need to checkout. Refuse to feel pressured. Tonight: Spend time with a favorite person.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★★★ Your ability to see past the obvious will make a big difference to several associates. This group seeks unusual yet effective solutions. You are more grounded than you have been in the past. Listen to news openly. Tonight: Be willing to walk into uncharted territory.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

★★★★ You might want to move in a new direction with the urging of a partner. You could be uncomfortable with what comes up in a conversation. Question your direction and choose carefully, but do not fall back into a rut! Tonight: Chat over a leisurely dinner.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

★★★★ You are full of fun, and you'll enjoy yourself no matter which direction you head in. It appears as if a key person might be pushing you to make choices that he or she would prefer. Observe this person's manipulative style. You will know what to do! Tonight: All smiles.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

