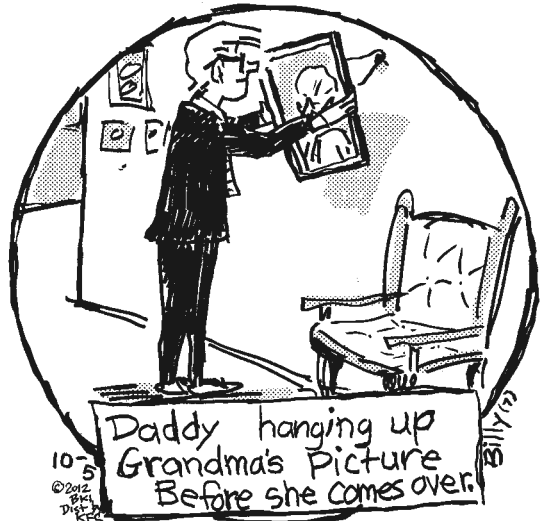


FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



Guest cartoonist Billy (age 7) continues his week of observations.

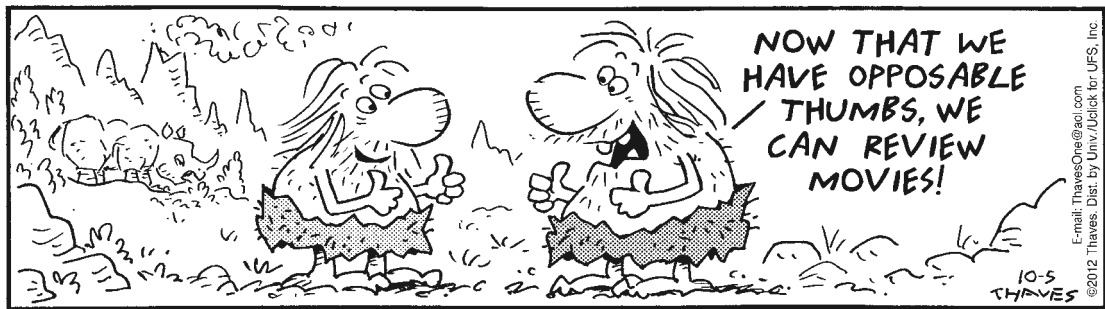
BIZARRO | DAN PIRARO



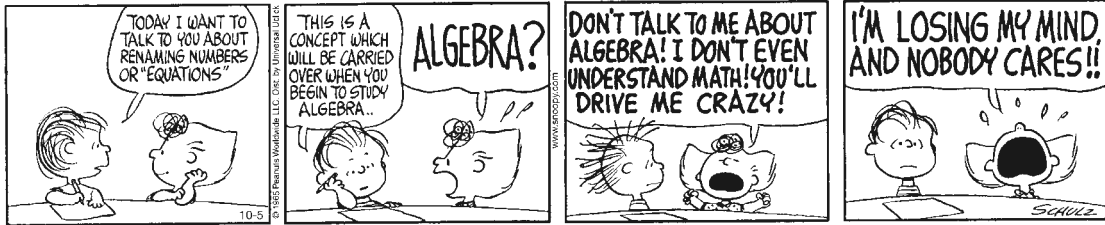
ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



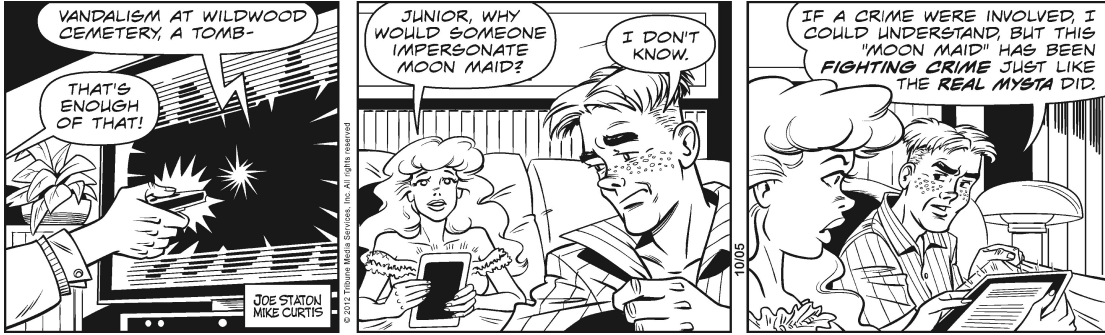
FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



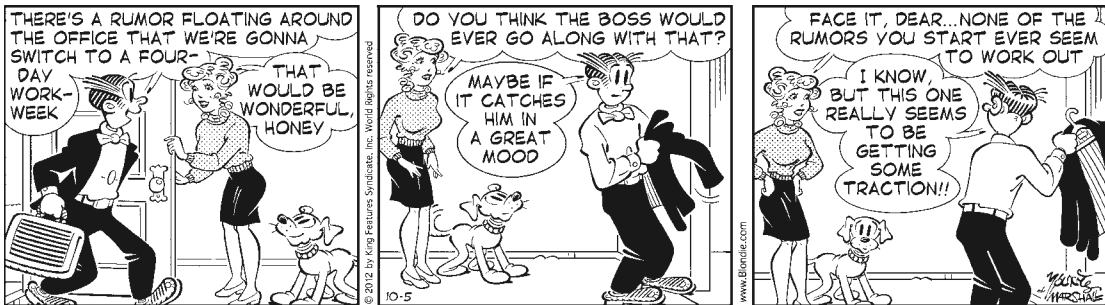
PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



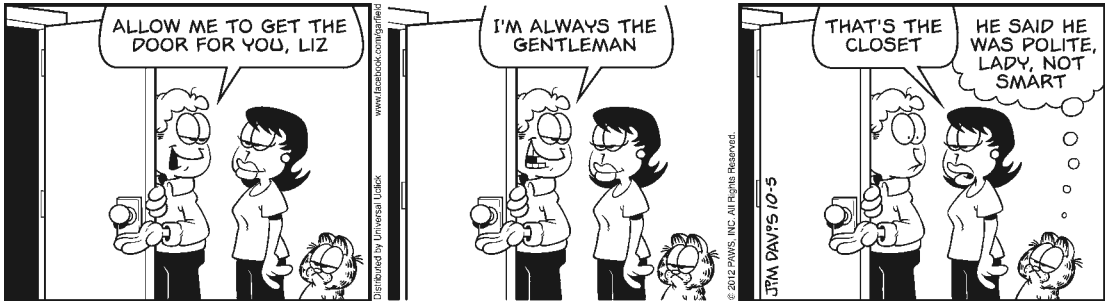
DICK TRACY | JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



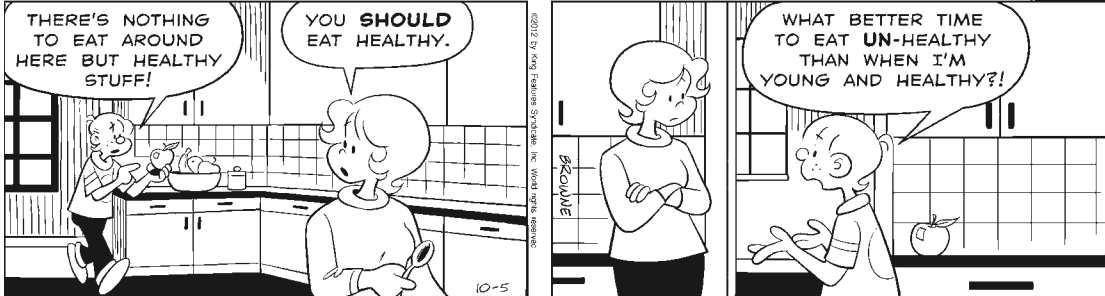
GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



BEEBLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSON



Sales Parties Take Advantage Of Loyalties Among Friends

DEAR ABBY: Your column has been a fixture in my life. Thank you for the smiles and the tears.

My dilemma: I received yet another invitation to someone's home for a "product party." In the past year, I have been considered a prospective buyer of cookware, candles, makeup, toys and vitamins. While I have at times used all these products, the invitations to sales parties that come from friends and sometimes friends of friends, irritate me.

When I phone to decline, the hostess invariably says, "Oh, you don't have to buy anything." Of course that's not exactly entirely true because it's a sales party, and "guests" are pressured in various ways to buy the product. People often buy things they don't need or want because they fear they'd be disloyal to the hostess if they didn't.

When I was growing up, my father said, "You don't invite friends to your house to sell them things." Maybe Dad was on to something.

Abby, how should unwanted invitations be handled? — IRKED IN INDIANA
DEAR IRKED: Continue to decline the invitations. Tell the hostess you have "a conflict" and cannot change your plans. (You don't have to give any details.)

P.S. To ease your conscience, your "conflict" can be your plan to watch your favorite "I Love Lucy" rerun on TV.

DEAR ABBY: I'm wondering what I should do when my biological father dies. He and my mother divorced before I was born. I've had little contact with him, but my older sister and brother lived with him growing up and are close to him.

My mother died 20 years ago, and afterward I tried to get to know him, but he didn't want to know me. He never paid child support. Both he and my mother remarried. I was fortunate to have a loving

stepfather, and I was very close to him until his death.

When the time comes, I am considering not going to my birth father's funeral. I have not told my sister how I feel because she thinks he is the greatest. I think he is a dirt ball.

What do you advise, under these circumstances? — CONFUSED IN SIOUX CITY

DEAR CONFUSED: Funerals are for the living. Go to his funeral and give your siblings the emotional support they will need. I understand why you feel the way you do, but in this situation, it would be an act of kindness to keep your true feelings to yourself.



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.

DEAR ABBY: Several years ago, when I read one of your letters about pennies from heaven, I laughed about it to myself. My sister-in-law had died a few months earlier and I said, "OK, Sharyn, if you're there, send me a penny from heaven."

Abby, the next day when I arrived at work, there on my keyboard was a perfectly placed penny. And for weeks afterward I kept finding more pennies. Finally I had to say, "OK, Sharyn, I get it." And the pennies stopped. — A BELIEVER NOW IN SOMERS, CONN.

DEAR BELIEVER NOW: I'm glad your faith is restored. If you saved them, have them made into charms for a bracelet. Every time you wear it you'll feel close to the sister-in-law who's smiling down on you.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity 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 Libra and a Moon in Gemini all day.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR FRIDAY, OCT. 5, 2012:

This year you could develop a more reserved attitude about your finances. You might feel as if you have restricted yourself in many ways in the past year. Now, you will choose to walk through a new door and establish a fresh outlook. You also will think a lot about what you offer. If you are single, a dashing, unique person rushes into your life. Proceed with caution, as this person might be withholding important information. If you are attached, the two of you benefit from you lightening up and deciding to enjoy yourself more than ever. Know that you are carrying a lucky rabbit's foot this year. GEMINI does talk a lot, but at least he or she is interesting.

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)

★★★★ Listen to others, especially an associate, partner or loved one who might be having strong feelings about a financial matter. Understand where this person might be coming from. You will see a key relationship lighten up in the next few months. Tonight: Speak your mind.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★★ Deal with a transforming money situation quickly and efficiently. In the next few months, you could discover that a partner is closing down or coming off as cold. Be sensitive yet aware that there is a gap that needs to be bridged. Tonight: Pay your bills.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★ If something is going wrong and you are not as confident as usual, do not worry. You are entering a period of reflection, and this will allow you to understand someone better. Remain even and steady in dealing with people in general. Tonight: Beam in what you want.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★ Listen to news carefully, and know that you could be overreacting at this point. Try not to wonder what is going on so much. Know when to pull back, as there could be many other perspectives. Give a child or loved one some space for now. Tonight: Play it low-key.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★★ You might zero in on what you want only to discover today or shortly thereafter that you don't really want it. You have unusual vigor, yet you are able to let go

of a situation quickly. A family member could become more touchy than usual. Unfortunately, this attitude could be the beginning of a trend. Tonight: Speak your mind.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★ Take a chance, and know your limitations. Conversations could become more difficult in the next few months. A boss might have made -- or will make -- a promise that could take a while to fulfill. Do not be impatient ... just hang in there. Tonight: In the limelight.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★★ Intellectualize, but if you experience a strong reaction, detach rather than talk yourself down. You will gain a whole new perspective that could surprise you. You never thought you would come to this position. Use care with funds, now and in the near future. Tonight: Go for a movie or a different escape.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★★★ Deal with a partner or associate directly. This person is generally very open, but he or she might be slow to decide in your favor. Learn patience and understanding. A child or potential loved one definitely has rose-colored shades on when it comes to you. Tonight: Follow your feelings.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★★ Defer to others, especially if you are unsure of which way to go. A cocky partner or associate could change his or her mind. Be understanding rather than combative. Sometimes you throw these types of situations back in this person's face. What is the purpose, other than to be right? Tonight: Respond to someone's efforts.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★★★ You communicate with accuracy and clarity. Your serious tone gives others a lot to digest. In-depth responses might take a while to emerge, as people have a lot to think about. Now wait for the results. Tonight: Off to the gym.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

★★★★ Your need to understand what is happening is instrumental to finding a creative solution. In a diplomatic manner, ask as many questions as need be. You could be surprised by what comes up. A child or new friend adds welcome levity. Tonight: Your turn to show some cheerfulness.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

★★★ Remain sure of yourself, and air out others' ideas with care. You might be filtering out some important facts and ideas. Open up to new possibilities, as in the long run, you will have no choice. You might be more comfortable with the tried and true. Is it still effective? Tonight: Chat with a roommate or family member.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

