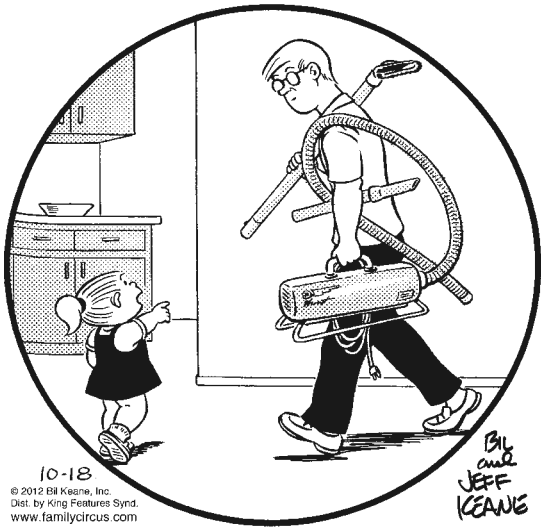


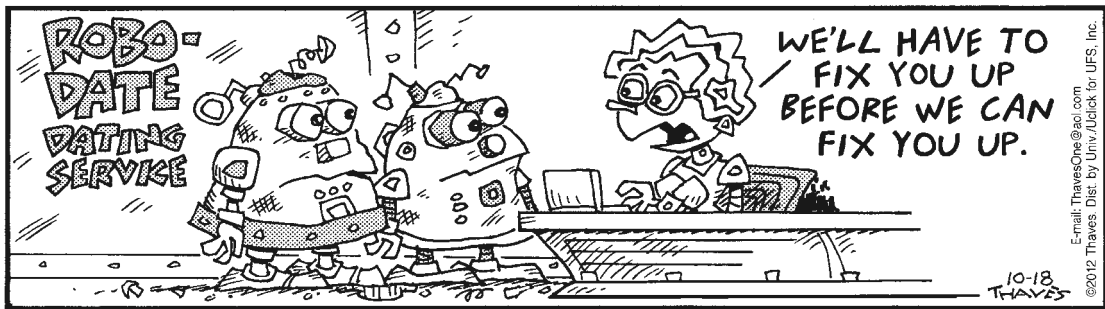
FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



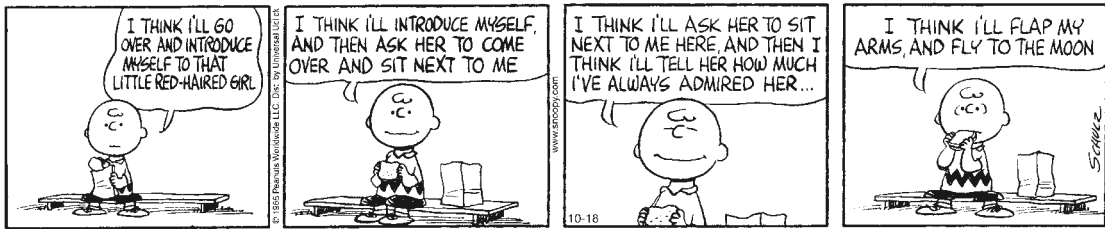
ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



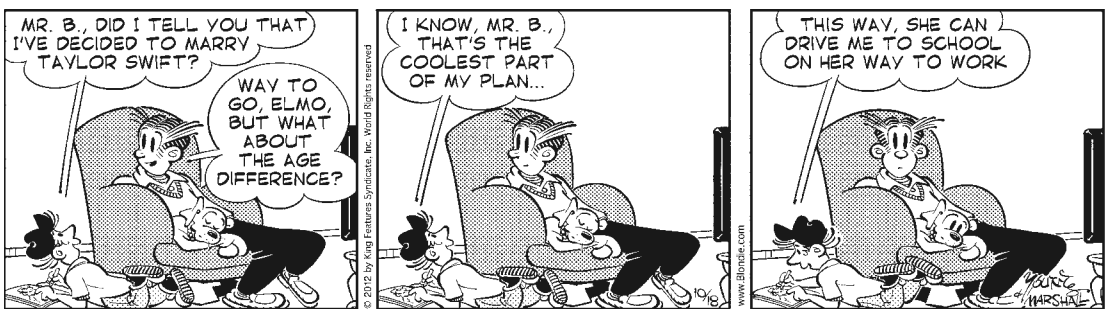
PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



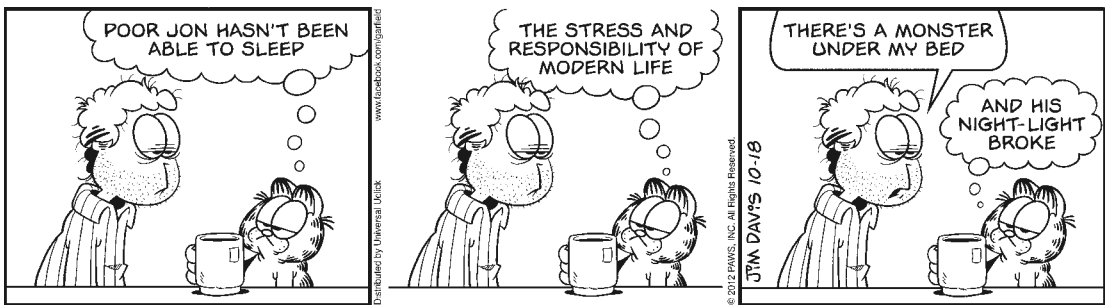
DICK TRACY | JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



BEEBLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSON



Marine Vet's Decision-Making Hints At More Serious Role

DEAR ABBY: This is in response to "Worried Mom in Gainesville, Fla." (July 13), whose son was not allowed to re-enlist in the Marine Corps.

I hate to say this, but that young man knew darned well when he got those tattoos he would not be able to re-enlist. The U.S. Navy (which the Marine Corps "technically" falls under) passed the New Enlistment Tattoo Policy in January 2003, with the Marine Corps adding its policy in April 2007. — SPOUSE OF RETIRED NAVY CPO

DEAR SPOUSE: You are correct. Many readers wrote to say the Navy had passed new tattoo policies in 2003 and the Marine Corps followed suit in 2007. If re-enlisting is so important to "Worried Mom's" son, all he needs to do is have his "tatts" removed. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: The issue isn't time served or his honorable discharge. The Marine Times recently published an article on Marine policy regarding tattoos. The Corps seeks to discourage full-sleeve tattoos and tattoos above the neck. They are regarded as unprofessional in appearance and may incorporate gang-related symbols. "Worried Mom's" son likely knew the guidelines. The mother said her son is bored and lacks focus in college. This suggests he may have PTSD. His desire to enlist in the French Foreign Legion may have short-term gains, but it may also compound mental health problems. — MARC IN SOUTH ORANGE, N.J.

DEAR ABBY: The nonsense about joining the French Foreign Legion shows that the young man lacks maturity. He chose to get the tattoos; he can either have laser removal or live with his decision. He wants to be a Marine and is crying about a regulation he does not like? That is definitely not Marine quality! It appears he needs a serious dose of maturity. — CHRIS IN INDEPENDENCE, MO.

DEAR ABBY: The French Foreign Legion is a rational choice for this bored veteran of two tours in

Iraq. After three five-year enlistments, he will be eligible to retire. Plus, the legion will prepare him for a civilian occupation.

He will be able to live in France after only one enlistment, which gives him the benefits of the French medical system. Many employers in Europe prefer to hire ex-legionnaires. The legion also has a history of teaching its recruits how to speak enough French to get along.

How do I know this? My brother joined the FFL at age 35. Wish I had, too. — CHARLES IN FORT WORTH, TEXAS

DEAR ABBY: Currently, the Australian forces are expanding and are unable to fill their ranks with their own citizens, so they are recruiting members from other nations. The mission of the Australian military is similar to the U.S. military. As a member of the Australian forces, he would be defending the same ideals as the U.S. military. I retired from the U.S. Navy last year and seriously considered doing this, too. — RETIRED NAVY, REDMOND, ORE.

DEAR ABBY: This young man, like our son, is clearly experiencing the effects of PTSD. The impact of this disorder on our servicemen affects their ability to readjust to civilian life and move forward with positive life planning. The signs of PTSD can be subtle, but they are very real. The man in that letter needs professional help. His injuries, while not physically obvious, require attention. — CONCERNED PARENTS



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.

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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 and Moon in Sagittarius all day.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR THURSDAY, OCT. 18, 2012:

This year your imagination opens many doors, and the only issue will be which one you would like to go through. The unexpected keeps you alert and excited about life. If you are single, you have a way about you that draws many people in. You will need to be selective in order to decide who you most want to be close to. Enjoy the process. If you are attached, a tendency to kiss and make up becomes more important. Both of you understand how vital this is to your relationship. SAGITTARIUS enjoys pulling you out of yourself. 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 might not realize how much you trigger certain people in your life, especially as of late. You see beyond the obvious and act accordingly. Others could be shocked as a result. An explanation definitely would help. Make calls and network; know what you expect and want. Tonight: Go for the untried.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★★ Work with a partner directly, and you really might appreciate the experience and its benefits. Pressure builds when a partner or associate pushes you too hard for your own good. You might be willing to spend money on a specific item. Tonight: A little fall shopping wouldn't hurt.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★ Your optimism remains, no matter what obstacles you face. In fact, a meaningful exchange occurs between you and someone else only because of your upbeat attitude. Sometimes you find a key person to be a little too aggressive or assertive. Tonight: Go with a friend's or loved one's decision.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★ Pace yourself, as you have a lot to accomplish. Know that your mind will be working overtime, and you'll have difficulty concentrating. You might make a decision about a job or situation that puts many demands on you. Follow through on what you need to do. Tonight: Get some exercise.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★★ You cannot go wrong if you are spontaneous. News or an idea surprises you by triggering all types of reactions -- some angry, some unpredictable. You'll land on your

feet no matter what. Your friends support you in your goals. Whether they agree with them or not will be irrelevant. Tonight: Paint the town red.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★ You are enthusiastic about a personal matter. If you are not dealing with that issue, you could have difficulty focusing on anything else. If you do manage to focus your attention elsewhere, then that issue and the people involved could resurface and tap you on the shoulder. Tonight: Work on your juggling skills.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★★ Make calls early, as you likely will be swamped by others seeking you out, whether it is via email, phone or simply arriving at your door. You could become frustrated and, as a result, lose your temper. News comes in from someone at a distance or from someone you do not speak to often. Tonight: Read between the lines.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★★ Be careful with spending. You could be letting go of negative feelings through shopping. Stop and deal with your frustrations head-on. You might want to get to the root of the issue and find out why you are so easily triggered. Cool off, then approach the problem. Tonight: Have fun with a friend.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★★ Funnel your energy into whatever you want, and your creativity will surge as a result. You might try out some of your wild ideas on someone. If you proceed as usual, you might become quite frustrated. Use your current unusual energy well. Tonight: Sort through offers.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★★ You might want to step back from a project for a while, especially if you have a conflict with someone involved. Stay calm when dealing with an unpredictable individual. This person might mean what he or she says now, but not later. Get as much done as you can on your own. Tonight: Work out or take a walk.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

★★★★ You might be more moved than you realize, as your mind wanders from one thought to another. Your creativity continues to be high. Share more of your ingenuity in a meeting. Others initially might be startled, but eventually they'll go along with some of your ideas. Tonight: Start the weekend early.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

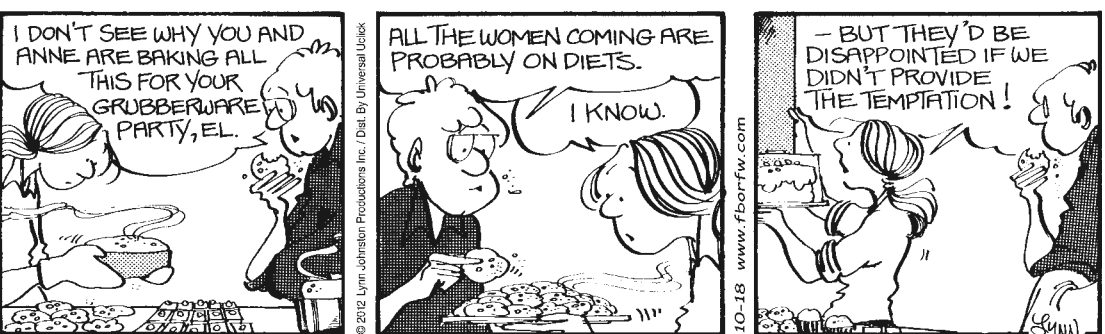
★★★ Pressure comes from what you think you need to accomplish as opposed to what others want you to do. At a certain point, you need to honor your priorities, or else you will not be happy. A family member or domestic matter occupies your attention. Tonight: Clear out as much as you can.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

