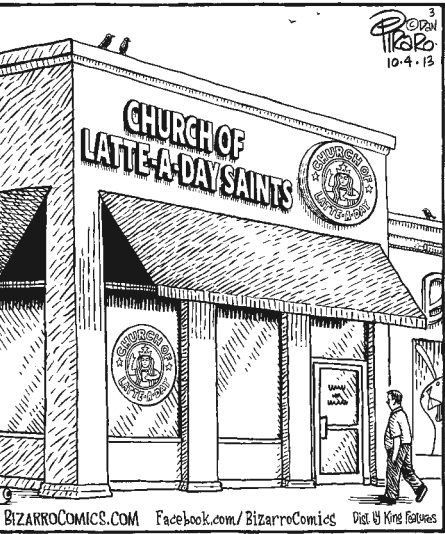


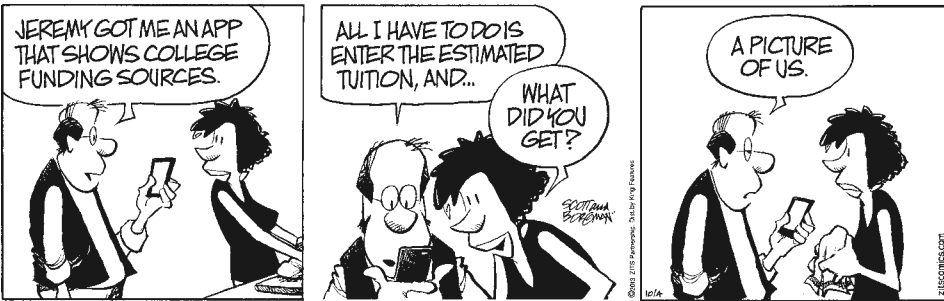
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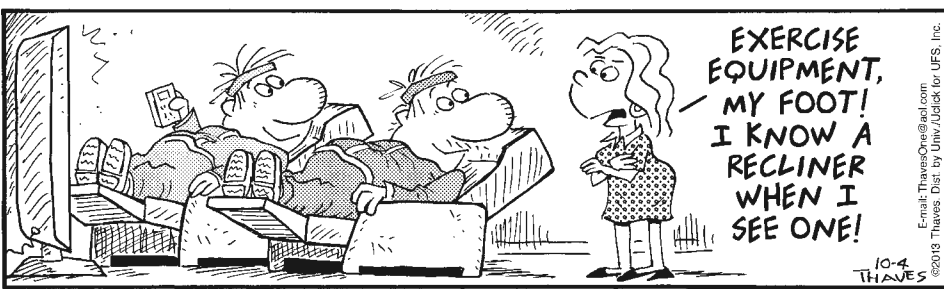
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ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



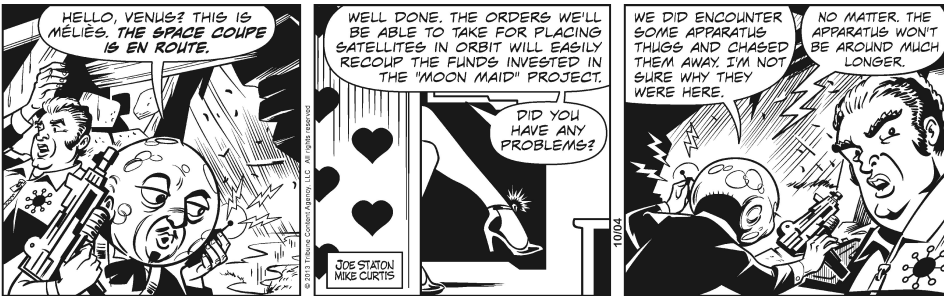
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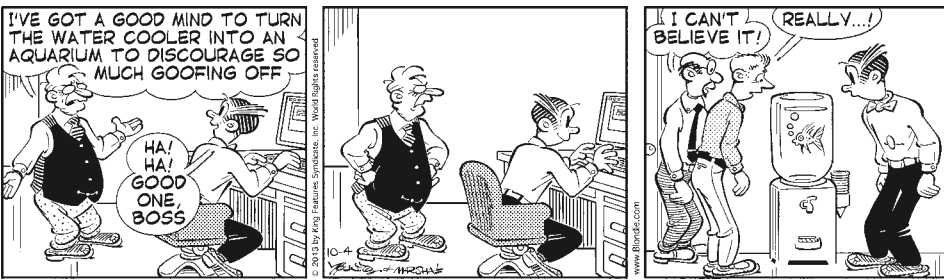
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DICK TRACY | JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS



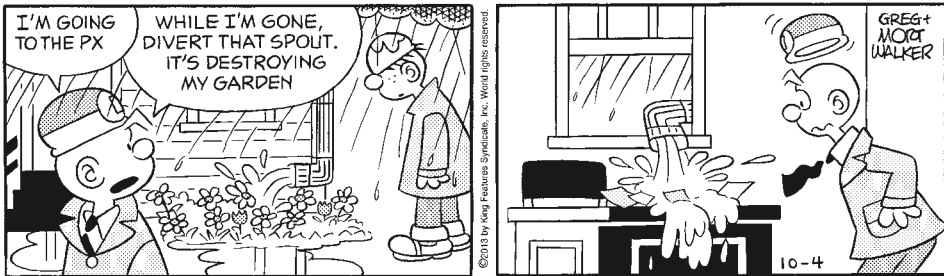
BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



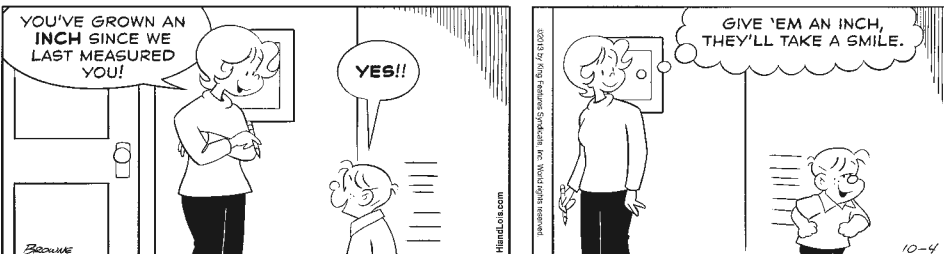
GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



BEETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



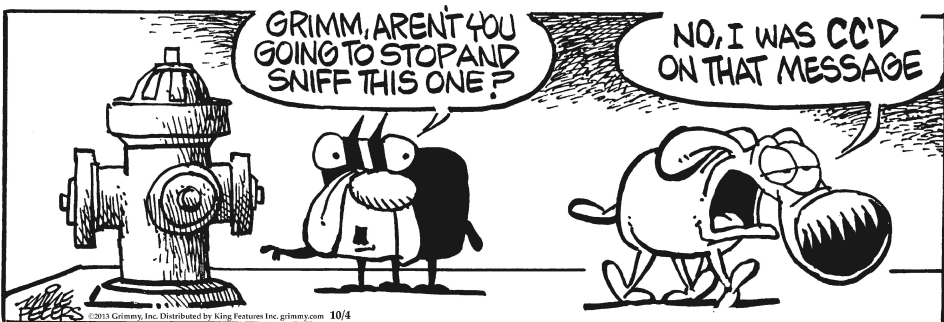
HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSOM



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS



# Parents Feel Weighed Down By Kids' Homework Burden

DEAR ABBY: My kids attend a private school that has made it a goal to be a "blue ribbon" school. To that end, teachers pile on so much homework that many of our parents send our kids to bed after three hours and finish it ourselves. Our kids are completely overwhelmed with senseless piles of busy-work.

This summer, our children had to read four substantial books and complete hefty vocabulary packets and math packets that required most of us parents to hire tutors. Our children are stressed, anxious and depressed. We have never indulged them with a lot of video game or TV time. I have considered pulling my kids out of this school, but the public schools around here are awful.

Parents are miserable. Kids are miserable. We want them to have a decent education, but we also want them to be happy people — and right now, no one is happy. — PRESSURED MOM OF PRESSURED KIDS

DEAR PRESSURED: Are you aware that some educators feel that students should have no summer vacation at all, and should be in class year-round? The assignments your children were given may have been designed to keep their skills sharp so they would be prepared for the fall term. Because you and other parents feel your children are being overburdened with busywork, it's time to address this as a group with the principal so you can voice your concerns and get an explanation.

DEAR ABBY: My 12-year-old grandson lies often. His parents are trying to give him consequences for his lying as a "team effort." I don't want to be the stern grandma and have him have bad memories of me. When he lies to me, should I look the other way and ignore it or follow through with my own consequences? — GRANDMA IN ST. PETE, FLA.

DEAR GRANDMA: Would you prefer your

grandson remember you as the grandmother whose eye he could spit in, tell her it's raining and she would accept it? It would be better to ask him why he feels it is necessary to lie to someone who loves him, tell him that you expect honesty from him and if you don't receive it there will be MORE consequences.

Remember, you are also a part of the team, and this is an important life lesson he needs to learn.

DEAR ABBY: My only son is 18. He didn't attend his prom. He quit school and goes to night school instead. I'll never see him in a cap and gown, holding his diploma. On top of that, he told me six months ago that he's bisexual and that he has a boyfriend in the U.K. I'm having a hard time with all of this.

I taught my son to love and respect everyone, regardless of race, religion or sexual orientation. Now I'm afraid I won't have any grandchildren. Even more upsetting, he wants to move to the U.K. to be with his 26-year-old boyfriend.

I feel so cheated — no prom, no graduation, no grandchildren! I'm scared and I cry every day. How do I accept him being him?

— CHEATED IN CONNECTICUT

DEAR CHEATED: OK, so reality isn't in sync with your fantasy about how your son would turn out. But why are you dwelling on the negative?

Your son is completing his high school education, and with his GED could very well go on to college or a technical school. While he didn't attend his prom, he has found a meaningful relationship. He may eventually give you the grandchildren you long for — other same-sex couples have done it.

So look on the bright side. If you count your blessings, encourage him and accept the man he loves, you could have a life of adventure and international travel, a warm relationship with both of them and gain a son.

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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 Libra all day.

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR FRIDAY, OCT. 4, 2013:

This year you open up to a new opportunity that you might not had dreamed was possible. You will not question the validity of the option; you simply will jump on it. Others find you to be unusually magnetic and creative. You will have your share of admirers. If you are single, enjoy dating, but do not make a commitment until you are absolutely sure that this person is right for you. If you are attached, you will attract a lot of attention this year. Be sure to dote on your sweetie as much as possible. He or she will need it, considering you are likely to be on center stage all year long. Another LIBRA adds to your creativity and ideas.

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)

★★★★ Have you burned some bridges lately? You will have an opportunity to mend damaged relationships. Think "long term," and you might be more willing to let go of a grievance. When you make the call, expect a shocked response. Tonight: Have a discussion over dinner.

### TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★ Pace yourself and recognize your limits. You might be prone to being distracted, especially as a sudden insight opens a new door. How you let someone else know that enough is enough could determine the strength of this bond for a while. Tonight: Do something just for you.

### GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★ Others see your mischievous grin. Whether you are in touch with your feelings is another issue altogether. Spending time with a loved one allows more spontaneity and freedom. You will be like two kids playing together in the sandbox. Tonight: Let the good times rock and roll.

### CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★ Your sense of humor emerges, even if you're just dealing with the family cat. Lighten up the mood, and understand that everyone needs some time off from stress and obligations. In fact, the best solutions often emerge when people are distracted. Tonight: Ever playful.

### LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★★ Communication could surprise you. You might understand much more than others do.

Move forward with an eye to change. You'll want to follow up on an important personal matter. Check out a potential purchase with care. Tonight: Hang out with friends at a favorite haunt.

### VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★★ Remain realistic about the cost of a new purchase. You might be surprised at the expense, but you still might want to buy the item regardless. Be honest with yourself as you make a decision. You won't want to have any regrets. Tonight: Let someone else treat for a change.

### LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★★★ You'll smile when faced with an exciting proposition. The issue is not whether you want to make this move, but rather how you will make it. Understanding could evolve to a new level after a serious discussion. Remain confident. Tonight: Others respond to your requests.

### SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★ You might want to make a change in your day-to-day life. Just understand that the energy needed to make this happen will have to come from within you. Recognize the importance of this decision and the implications involved. Tonight: Head home before it is too late!

### SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★★ Zero in on what you want. As a sign that is impulsive, you often do just that; however, the effort is not always sustained. If you stay focused, you could make a major change that you have been longing for. A loved one could surprise you. Tonight: In the fun of the moment.

### CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★★ You might be wondering what path would be most effective to take. Let go of your concerns, and simply do what seems natural. You are likely to make the right move as a result. Others will follow you, as they trust your judgment. Tonight: A force to be dealt with.

### AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

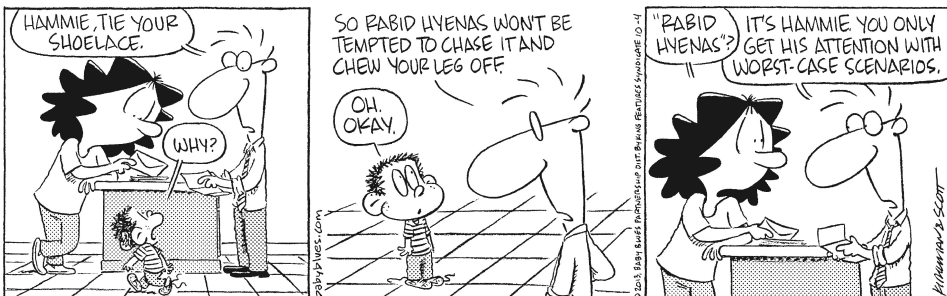
★★★★★ You might want to reach out to someone at a distance. You could be feeling rather crazy for choosing to respond to a friend or loved one who appears to be a bit off the wall. Recognize what is happening with this person. Tonight: Try a new music spot or a new restaurant.

### PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

★★★★★ Pressure builds around spending and obligations. A partner might want to approach finances in a different manner. You know what works for you. Consider having more independence from each other. Tonight: Be a duo. Know that you don't need to share everything.

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## BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



## FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON

