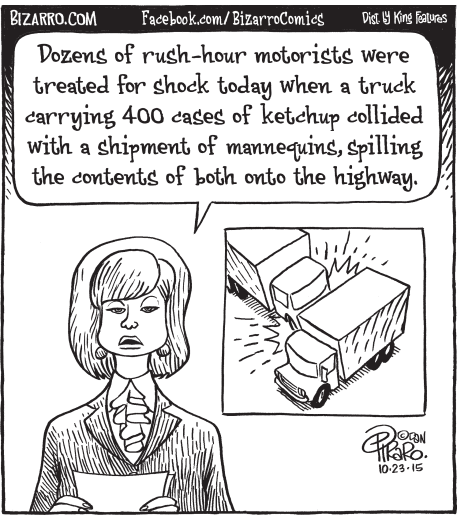


FAMILY CIRCUS | BILL KEANE



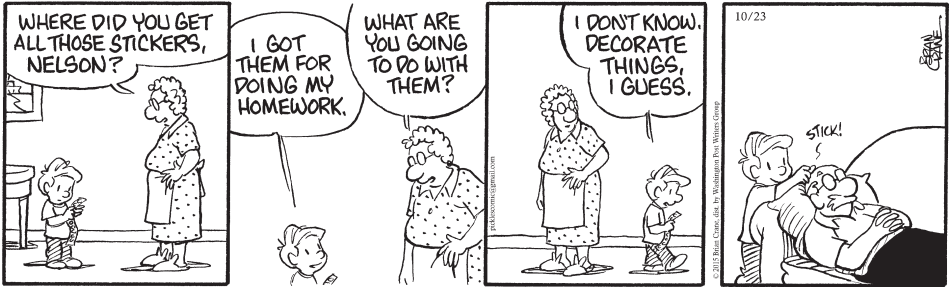
BIZARRO | DAN PIRARO



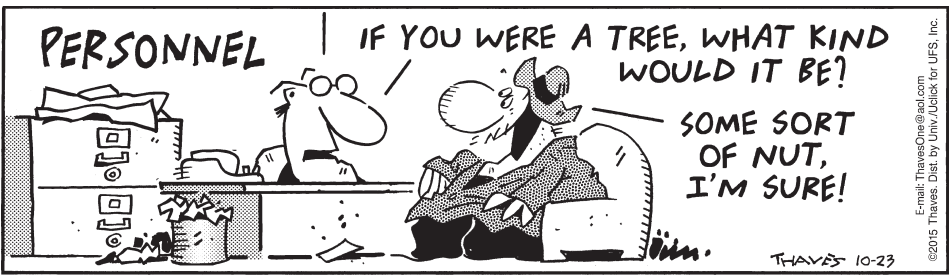
ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



PICKLES | BRIAN CRANE



FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



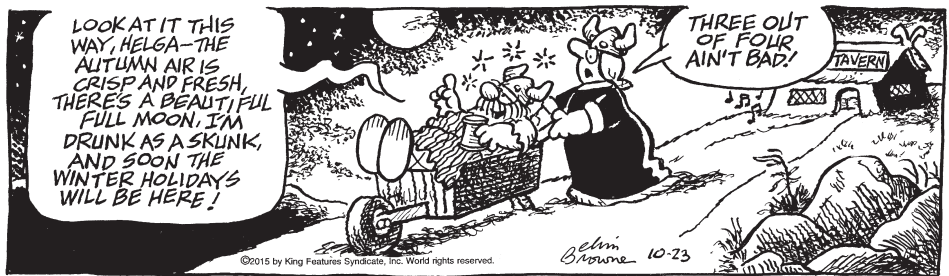
BORN LOSER | ART SAMSON



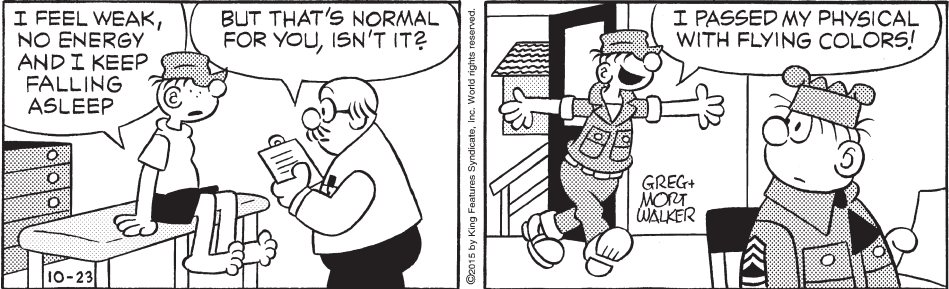
PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



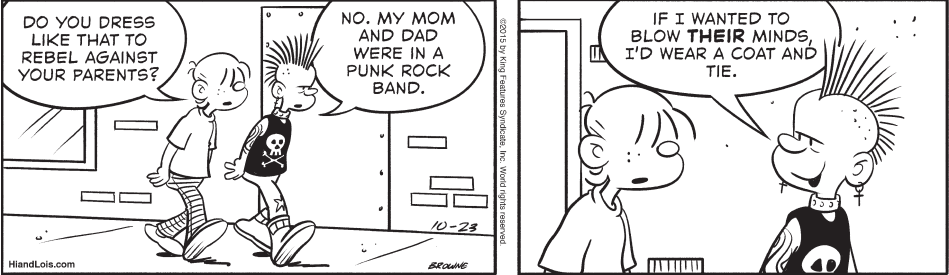
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE | CHRIS BROWNE



BETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



# Paying Grandma For Child Care Becomes Divorce War Weapon

DEAR ABBY: My daughter and her husband are divorced, and I take care of their twin daughters after school. I love the girls and treasure the time I get to spend with them.

Their parents' combined income is more than \$120,000. I am on a fixed income and ask for only \$10 per day (plus \$10 a week for gas) so I can take the girls places like the zoo or an occasional movie (which usually costs more than I am given). I feed them one meal a day on this budget as well.

Whenever discussions about money occur, the ex-husband repeatedly tells my daughter he thinks it's "offensive" that a grandparent charges money to watch the grandchildren. He uses it as a tactic to threaten to not pay for other needed expenses. How do I tell him I think he's out of line for making me feel bad for requesting the money? -- STUNNED AND HURT IN TEMPE, ARIZ.

DEAR STUNNED AND HURT: Your former son-in-law may have some bitterness because of the divorce. Whatever his reason, his children should not suffer for it. Frankly, he should be ashamed of himself.

If he raises the subject of being "offended" with you, remind him in PLAIN ENGLISH that you are on a limited income, food is expensive and if the money wasn't NEEDED you wouldn't ask for it. It's the truth. It's nothing to be ashamed of and certainly not offensive.

Let's do the math: Your granddaughters go to school five days a week; that's \$50, plus \$10 a week for gas. That's \$60! If they were in day care instead of being looked after by you, the cost would be many times that amount.

DEAR ABBY: I am an executive assistant. A few years ago, my boss passed away after a long illness. My 13 years with her accounted for the longest consistent span of my career, and for obvious reasons, I was not able to get a letter of recommendation. It was difficult applying for jobs without being able to pro-

vide a first-hand reference from my longest employer.

I am now happily employed, but I worry sometimes about what if it happens again. My current boss is in his early 50s, but not in the best health. I have no intention of going anywhere, and I don't want to send him the

wrong signal, but I'm wondering if it would be inappropriate to ask him for a reference letter, just to make sure I don't find myself in the same situation again. BTW, he knows about my former situation, so I think he would understand, but I'm not sure. -- EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT IN GEORGIA

DEAR EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: I'm sorry about the death of your former employer, but your lack of a letter of reference should not have prevented you from finding another job. Your length of employment

should have been proof enough that you were an asset to the company.

I do not think it would be a good idea to approach your boss about giving you a letter of reference for a couple of reasons. First, it might be regarded as a signal that you are not happy with your job. And second, because of fear of litigation, many employers today are reluctant to give out any information about an employee other than the length of time the person worked for the company.

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.

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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 if born before 1:17 p.m. (EDT). Afterward, the Sun will be in Scorpio. If born before 1:14 a.m. (EDT), the Moon is in Aquarius. Afterward, the Moon will be in Pisces.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR FRIDAY, OCT. 23, 2015:

This year you feel as if you can have whatever you want. Make sure you know what exactly you desire. You don't want to get it only to find out that you no longer want what it. Go through your wish list ASAP. Make it OK to change some of your goals. If you are single, you could meet someone spectacular through a friend. Whether this person is The One won't matter. If you are attached, be aware of the role of your day-to-day interactions with your sweetie. You can make your relationship flow even more smoothly. PISCES understands you better than you realize.

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 aware of what is happening. You might not be thrilled by what you think is coming down the path. You could be overwhelmed by certain feelings. Relating to others directly will result in a strong reaction. Try not to make any judgments. Tonight: Be with a favorite person.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★★ Try to schedule meetings and lunch for later in day. A meeting easily could evolve into a social happening. Invite your immediate circle to TGIF. You have a lot of energy invested in opening up and understanding where others come from. Tonight: Only where the action is.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★ Be aware of others' attention and focus, which most likely is on you. A supervisor could be observing how you handle yourself in various situations. Be yourself, but try to be slightly less talkative. Your imagination takes you in a new direction. Tonight: Be more direct.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★★ You have a different perspective from those around you. Trying to get confirmation that others agree with you could be impossible. You don't like to be forced into anything, so don't do the same to someone else. Go with a unique experience. Tonight: Be spontaneous.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★★ A close friend wants to have some time with you. Make it your pleasure. The people you deal with during the day want your full attention. Though you might have a lot on your mind, stay focused on each individual. Tonight: Know when to call it a night.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★★ Defer to others. They demand to have things their way, so let them. You have the ability to make a difference in someone's day. You have the ability to allow others to experiment in their new roles and provide any necessary feedback they need. Tonight: A great possibility.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★ You have a lot of ground to cover, and you are determined to accomplish what you want. Try not to close down when you don't get what you want. Stand up to manipulation from a roommate or a loved one. Tonight: Finish up a project before considering your plans.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★★ Your imagination takes you down an unusual path, but it's one that you will be delighted with. Listen to a loved one or dear friend when making a decision. You might feel as if your finances are not fluid enough. Tonight: Be naughty and nice!

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★ Fatigue could interfere with your plans and ability to achieve what you want. Your sense of direction around your home and domestic life will be a major focus. A power play might take you down a path you would prefer not to go. Try to detach and disengage. Tonight: Head home.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★★ You'll start a conversation, but you might not be up to finishing it, as it could go on and on. You also have other matters on your mind, and you'll want to delve into those thoughts. Let others know that you have something to do, and excuse yourself. Tonight: Say "yes."

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

★★★ Be aware of the costs of your decisions and actions. Someone could feel as if he or she is being pushed past his or her natural limits. Be open, and let this person have more space, even if you're not comfortable with the distance. Tonight: Make it your treat.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

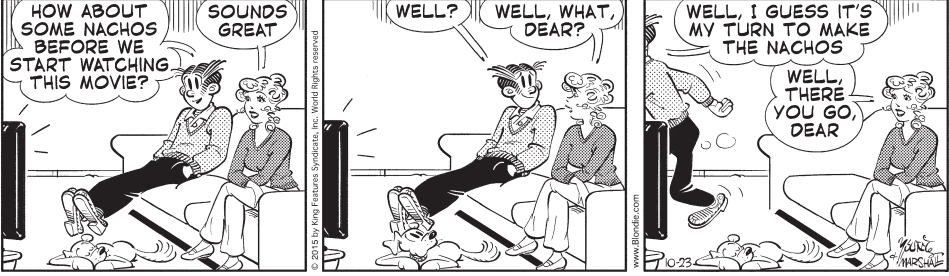
★★★★ You might want to dive into a situation or take the lead in a heartfelt project. Note how someone you care about closes down on you. You can't change this person's attitude, but you can remain courteous. A friend pulls you out of the doldrums. Tonight: Let the weekend begin.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

