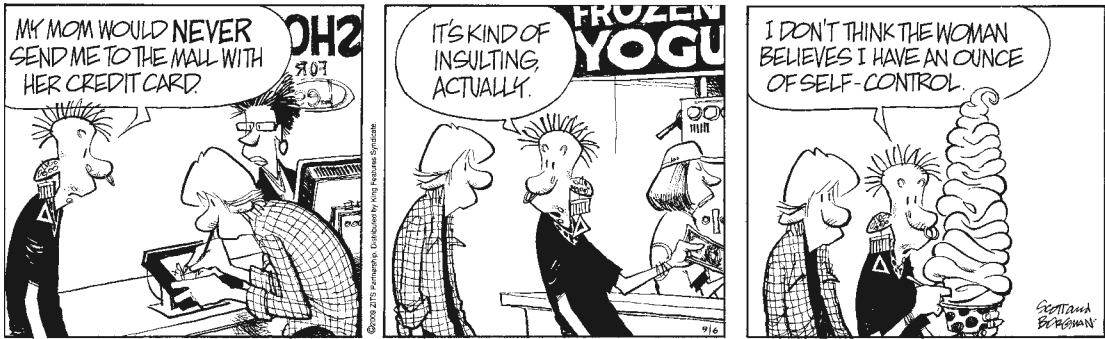


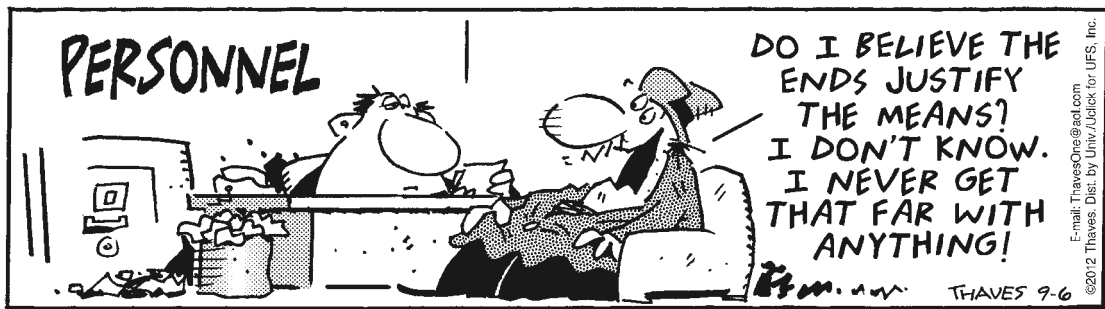
FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



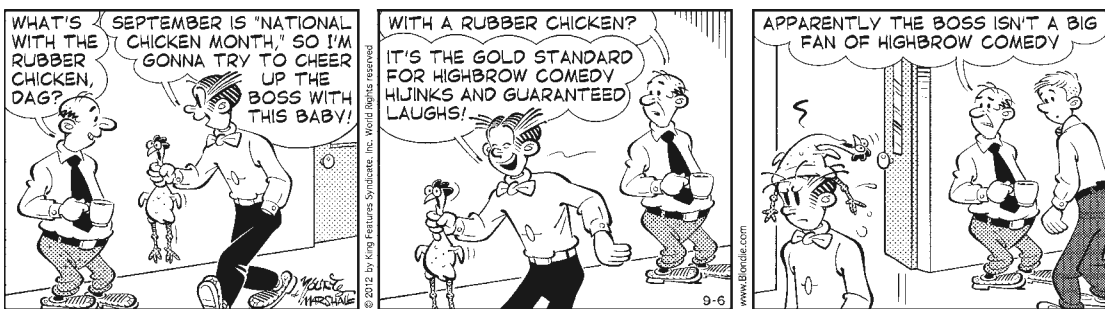
PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



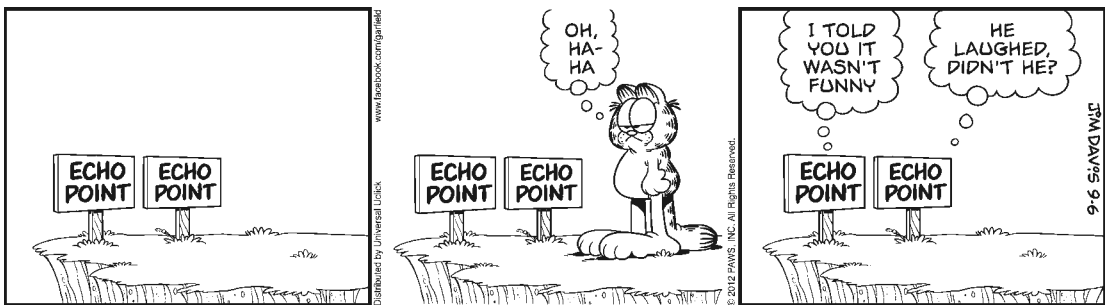
DICK TRACY | JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS



BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



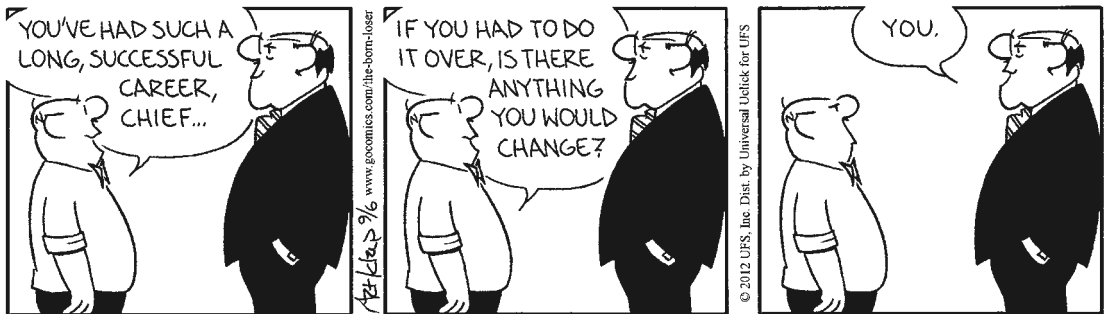
BEETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSOM



Bride Resists Mom's Attempt To Keep Step-Mom In Shadows

DEAR ABBY: "Disappearing Stepmother's" June 9 letter brought back memories of my stepdaughter "Amy's" wedding. Her mother also tried her best to prevent us from being involved. However, Amy included all four of her parents in the wedding. Dad and Stepdad walked her down the aisle together, and her mom and I lit the bride's candle together (though I'm sure she gritted her teeth when she did it).

The bride needs to develop a backbone and stand up to her mother. The dad (who's paying for half the wedding) should at least put his foot down about the guest list, and invite whomever he and his wife would like to be there. Wedding photos can be of the two families separately, including the stepmom. Otherwise, resentment will linger and poison the relationship between stepmom and stepdaughter. — ANOTHER STEPMOM

DEAR STEPMOM: I encouraged "Disappearing" to attend the wedding to support her stepdaughter and inject a dose of reality into the "fantasy," and readers were quick to share their views:

DEAR ABBY: I, too, am stepmom to two beautiful young women whose mother harbors animosity toward me and my husband. When the girls were kids she filled their heads with lies about us. Their father and I remained noncritical, loving and constant.

There were some rocky years, but my stepdaughters and I have made it through. When the younger one was married two years ago, she did a beautiful job including me. Her mother spent the wedding day spewing vile lies about us to anyone who'd listen, and is still bitter these 26 years later.

The girls see their mother as she is and do not let her affect their relationship with us. For this I credit my husband, who never tolerated her ill treatment of me. Stepmons are not looking to be in the spotlight or take anyone's place. But we are an important part of

the modern family and should be treated with the honor and respect we deserve. — MADE IT THROUGH
DEAR ABBY: I work in the wedding industry, and all too frequently I see the engaged couple manipulated by a parent in order to hurt the former spouse and alienate the stepparent. It is the bane of my professional existence. They cause so much stress for the couple that I've had brides break down and cry in my office and choose to elope rather than deal with the drama.

Parents must realize that their children are loved by MANY people, and the best gift they can give them on their wedding day is to set aside differences and old grudges in order to support the couple as they begin their marriage. — FRUSTRATED WEDDING PLANNER

DEAR ABBY: My husband's former wife has been a huge challenge for me, even showing up at our small wedding ceremony and slapping me in the face. The children were all there and I kept the evening going by hugging them and saying I was sorry their mom was so upset. Now, as I watch these grown kids and THEIR kids making their way through life, I am proud to have been part of showing them what a solid, loving family can be without alienation and selfishness. — BARBARA IN ILLINOIS

DEAR ABBY: I sympathize with "Disappearing," having myself been ignored at "blended" family events, including weddings. I am also conveniently excluded from family photos.

I deal with all of this by staying in the background during events. The gathering is not about me. My step-kids are simply trying to keep the drama caused by their mother to a minimum. They would never hear the end of it from her, and she has been known to go off in public. I know they appreciate my quiet approach because, when not in their mother's presence, they treat me with kindness, love and humor. — MARCIA IN VIRGINIA



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.

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 Virgo and a Moon in Taurus if born before 9:10 p.m. (PDT). Afterward, the Moon will be in Gemini.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR THURSDAY, SEPT. 6, 2012:

This year you naturally give an excellent impression that radiates positive energy. You are more verbal and caring than in past years. The biggest issue for you is that you'll have a tendency to wear rose-colored shades when relating to others. It is a good quality to expect the best, but there is some likelihood of disillusionment. If you are single, you might attract someone emotionally unavailable who could disappoint you. Try to be more realistic about potential suitors. If you are attached, the two of you gain by planning a special trip together. LEO absolutely adores you. 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 be enthusiastic, but curb any impulsiveness until you know that a key person agrees with you. He or she responds to compassion, not aggressive behavior. Your sense of humor emerges as you see the comedy in an evolving situation. Tonight: Indulge a friend.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★★ Much that occurs gives you a new appreciation for someone very close to you. In fact, in some manner, you might feel inspired by this person. Share more of this part of your experience. Good feelings mark your interactions. Tonight: Out and about.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★ Maintain a low profile, but at the same time, be aware of what is happening around you. You could be oversensitive to a comment. Choose to let go of feelings that might make you feel insecure. Trust that someone did not intend to have you feel like this. Tonight: Nap, then decide.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★★ You seem less burdened by a quandary than in the recent past. Focus on a goal, which might involve meeting with someone or having a discussion you have been putting off. If the first response you get is negative, let it go and do not react. This, too, will pass. Tonight: Already in weekend mode.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★★ You cannot underestimate the innate

charisma you exude. You discover that a partner, friend or potential sweetie feels as if he or she cannot do enough for you. All you need to do is say "Thank you!" Tonight: You might be calling off of work tomorrow.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★★ Continue to assume the very powerful role of observer. You might be surprised by what comes up out of the blue. Someone you often enjoy could become extremely controlling. You do not need to play along. Tonight: Allow your imagination to make plans.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★★ You discover the power of speaking your mind and understanding what is happening. With this knowledge, you can evolve to another level of caring or interacting. Refuse to close down, even if you are a bit insecure. Tonight: Togetherness works.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★★ Others do not mean to be so challenging or aggravating. Could you be making more out of a difficult situation than need be? Allow yourself to relax, and you could be delighted by what comes up for you. Tonight: Go along with a suggestion.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★★ Pace yourself, and you will not be upset. What you discover is that there are many ways to skin a cat, and everyone around you has a different version. Express your deep feelings without expectations of a certain response. Tonight: Out with friends and/or a loved one.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★★ Your creativity remains high, and your ability to move past an issue soars. Someone you interact with on a daily basis lets you know the depth of respect he or she has for you. In a personal connection, of course, the feelings being expressed could be much deeper. Tonight: Be a wild thing.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

★★★★ You are a sign that normally has no problem with taking risks; however, you suddenly could feel uncomfortable. Know that the way you presently feel is the way the majority of people feel all the time. Give yourself space as you gain empathy for many of your cohorts. Tonight: Nap.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

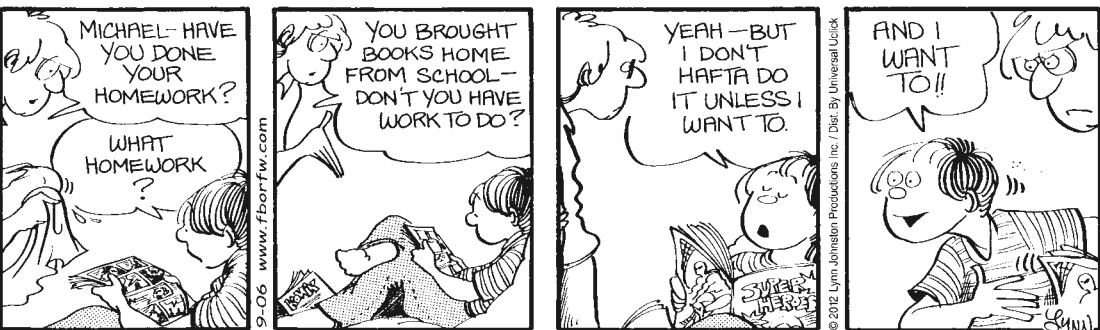
★★★★ Stay grounded. You understand where someone is coming from, which makes it easy to pitch in and help. Pressure builds in a meeting or with a friend. You simply do not see eye to eye with others at this point in time. Tonight: Hang out.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

