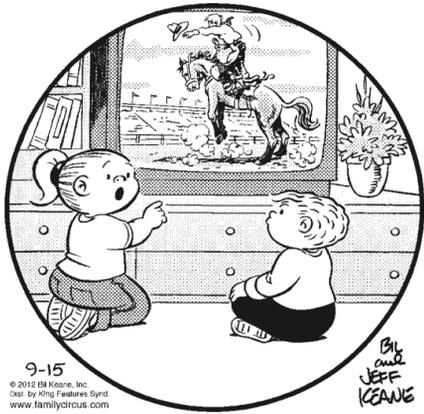


FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



9-15
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"Mommy, shouldn't they require horses to come with seat belts?"

BIZARRO | DAN PIRARO

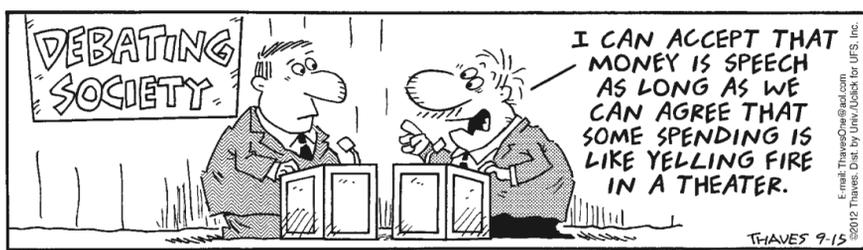


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Boyfriend Won't Stop Using Bathroom As His Man Cave

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend and I have been together for six years. We finally moved in together a year ago. Things have been going pretty well, with the exception of an unusual habit of his that has become more evident since living together. He spends anywhere from 45 minutes to 2 1/2 hours in the bathroom every day. A couple of times he has even fallen asleep in there.

He takes his computer in the bathroom because he claims he gets a lot of work done. Some days I barely get to see him because he works late and then spends the rest of the day you-know-where.

I have told him more than once how much it bothers me, but he continues to do it. It's driving a wedge between us. Am I overreacting? Is he purposely trying to put space between us? — TIRED OF THE TOILET TURMOIL

DEAR TIRED: He may be using the bathroom as a refuge from more "togetherness" than he can handle, or he may be doing something on his computer that's more than work-related. I do think there is more going on than he's telling you, but in order to get to the bottom of it, you will have to convince him to open up and be honest. And no, I do not think that after having invested six years in this relationship you are "overreacting."

DEAR ABBY: I am a 13-year-old girl whose parents are divorced. When I was a baby, I lived with my grandma, but my mom took me back when I was 7 or 8.

My mother abused me while I was living with her, but nobody knew it. When I was 12, I was sent to my dad's for Christmas. By then he was on his third marriage. His new wife already had two kids.

While I was visiting, Mom called to make trouble for me. She said she was worried I might be messing around with boys she didn't approve of, and threatened to "beat me bloody" when she got hold of me.

My dad went to court to see if I could stay with him permanently, and it turned out I could.

Now I'm having trouble with my stepmom and her kids. She thinks her two girls are little angels. She's mean to me and treats me like I'm doing something wrong all the time. I feel so alone.

Mom and Grandma want nothing to do with me. So, Abby, I have a few questions: Should I have a bad feeling about staying with my dad because of my stepmom? And, if I ever have my own kids, will I end up treating them like my mom treated me? Thank you for listening. — SAD TEEN, NORTH CAROLINA

DEAR SAD TEEN: There are many loving and caring stepparents. I'm sorry that you have been shortchanged by the women in your life, all of whom may be less mature than you are at your tender age. You will have to look elsewhere for the mentoring you need from an adult — a teacher, a counselor, a coach, or even the mother of one of your friends.

Please don't be afraid that you will automatically repeat the cycle of abuse that you have suffered. You have learned firsthand how not to treat others. Many adults are able to give their children the parenting they didn't experience themselves. (My hat is off to all of them.)

P.S. Perhaps fathers should not automatically assume that second (or third) wives will be able to accept and love their children from a prior marriage. Blending families should be done with eyes wide open.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)



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 and Moon in Virgo all day.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR SATURDAY, SEPT. 15, 2012:

You express an unusual energy and focus this year with whatever interests you. Others are taken back by your intensity and drive. You'll make waves wherever you go and more than likely will manifest what you want. If you are single and want a meaningful relationship, it is yours to have. Just be sure you are making the right commitment to the right person. If you are attached, be careful not to be too me-oriented. A relationship depends on some form of mutuality. Give your partner more time. A fellow VIRGO can make a fuss even more than you. Let this person be who he or she is, and let go of a need to criticize.

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 have get-up-and-go, as you are inspired to approach life differently. The unexpected runs riot, as usual. Maintain your sense of humor. Consider making a resolution on this New Moon to lose weight or exercise. It might be easier to execute right now. Tonight: Put your feet up.

TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★★ No one has to tell you what to do, as you are focused on a goal and not about to lose concentration. The emphasis might be about getting out to play or just enjoying yourself more. Think positively. Tonight: Change into weekend gear.

GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★ Pressure builds, but it is coming from your own internal judgments. Stop, think and depower the situation. You'll feel better, and you easily might be more effective relaxed. Enjoy the moment, yet remain organized. You have a lot of ground to cover. Tonight: At home.

CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★★ Keep conversations moving, and you'll be more likely to believe what someone says. Your imagination could go haywire from just one statement. Decisions and resolutions made today are likely to stick. Trust yourself, and flow with the moment. Tonight: Catch up on a friend's news.

LEO (JULY 23-AUG. 22)

★★★★ Make needed resolutions, especially regard-

ing your finances. Many people have great ideas for how to spend your funds, yet few recommendations have to do with savings. Still, you enjoy yourself so much you might not even care. Accept an invitation to a party. Tonight: Your treat.

VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

★★★★ You might be energized by a call you have yet to make. You could create a whirlwind of activity as you tear through your day. An older friend, boss or parent gives you a compliment that revitalizes you. Tonight: The world is your oyster.

LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

★★★ The front you put up when speaking to strangers has nothing to do with your inner musings. You could be hurt or angry by a loved one's negative feelings or crankiness. Reach out for a trusted friend. Tonight: Van-ish while you can.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

★★★★ You naturally gravitate to where your friends are. You might not be sure of what to say, but that's OK — just be yourself. A recent disagreement does not have to remain a barrier, as long as you decide to take appropriate action. Tonight: Let the party begin.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

★★★ You might want to kick back, but once others start following your lead, you could become a bit tense. Imitation is the highest form of flattery. An older friend or relative shares a meaningful insight. Tonight: Why not go into the wee hours?

CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

★★★★ Take off and go to that flea market or art show you have wanted to check out. By introducing a change of scenery, the experience will revive your energy and also give you new insights into a situation in your day-to-day life. Tonight: Go for exotic.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

★★★★ Someone might ask you to fill in or take over a responsibility, and you are likely to say "yes." The good news is that a partner supports you. The bad news is that you really might want to be somewhere else. Tonight: Let your hair down.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

★★★★ You could see that a lot of people seek you out, need you and want to be around you. You are learning to greet acceptance and popularity. With an eye to your many admirers, you might need to pick and choose your activities more carefully. Tonight: With a favorite person.

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BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS

