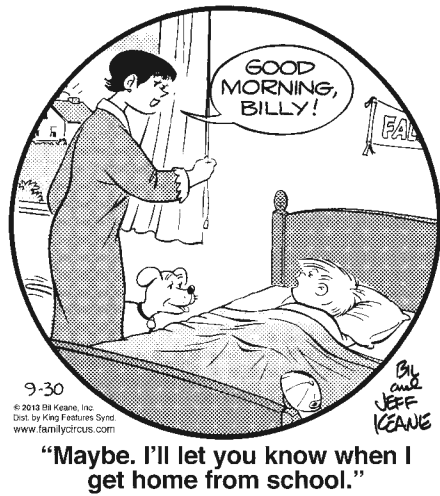


FAMILY CIRCUS | BIL KEANE



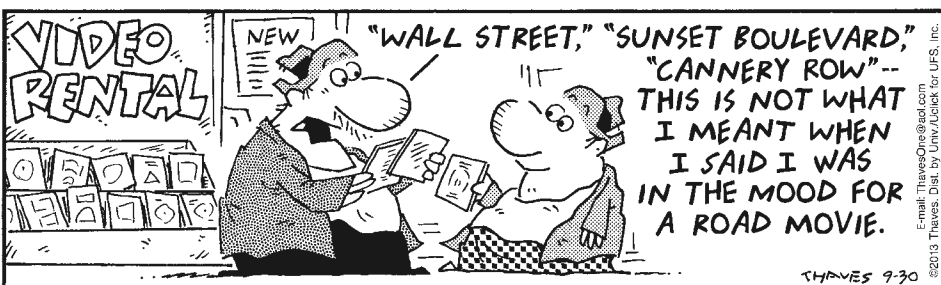
BIZARRO | DAN PIRARO



ZITS | JERRY SCOTT AND JIM BORGMAN



FRANK AND ERNEST | BOB THAVES



PEANUTS | CHARLES M. SCHULZ



DICK TRACY | JOE STATON AND MIKE CURTIS



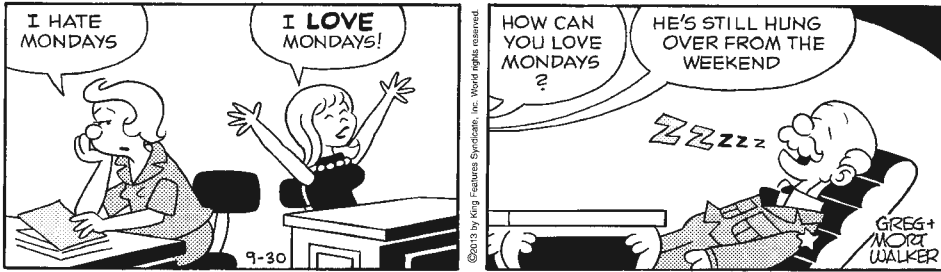
BLONDIE | YOUNG & DRAKE



GARFIELD | JIM DAVIS



BEETLE BAILEY | MORT WALKER



HI AND LOIS | BRIAN AND GREG WALKER



THE BORN LOSER | ART SANSON



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM | MIKE PETERS



# Family Won't Pay Deadbeat Dad's Cremation Expenses

DEAR ABBY: I was divorced 14 years ago. Afterward, my ex, "Tom," hid from me because he was afraid I'd have him arrested for not paying child support.

Our son is a Marine, and the Red Cross notified him that his father was dying in a hospital on the East Coast. My ex's aunt had contacted them to notify my son as next of kin. Tom had remarried, divorced again and had a girlfriend. He died a few days later.

Nobody is willing to pay for his cremation. I asked his sister and aunt if we could split the bill three ways, even though I realize I'm not obligated. They refused, even after being told the remains would be deemed "unclaimed." The county would dispose of him as an indigent drifter. Their excuse was they hadn't heard from him in several years. I told them they were preaching to the choir, since I was the one he hid from.

I do not resent my ex because I realize his death was as unpredictable as his life. But I do feel bitterly taken advantage of. When I accused his relatives of false concern, they got angry at me. How can I demonstrate honor to my son by dishonoring his father that way? — ON THE SPOT IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR ON THE SPOT: You are not the next of kin; your son is. Ask him what he thinks would be the appropriate way to handle his deadbeat dad's remains. You made the effort to have the family pay for the burial, and that should show your son that you tried to honor his father.

I don't know how long it has been since your ex passed, but this is a case where the body could have been donated to a medical school. There is nothing dishonorable about that.

DEAR ABBY: A friend who lives out of town asked me if she can stay with me for a few days. We often host each other. However, she also mentioned that she has a bedbug infestation.

I could take precautions, but some friends have said it was nervy of her to even ask because it put me in an awkward position. I honestly would prefer she not come, but I feel guilty. Any advice? — POSSIBLE HOST IN NEW YORK

DEAR POSSIBLE HOST: Yes. Tell your friend you would love to see her, but in light of her revelation, you think it would be better if she stays in a hotel during this visit. And unless you are absolutely sure that her home and clothing are insect-free, entertain her away from your dwelling. Bedbugs can cling to EVERYTHING — suitcases, clothing, you name it. Hostess, protect thyself.

DEAR ABBY: My husband died three years ago and I'm still grieving deeply. Time hasn't made it easier; in fact, it's getting more difficult. No one around me understands or even cares, for that matter.

How do I find a good therapist? I don't know what questions to ask to see if I can trust him or her with my thoughts, and if we would get along. Any suggestions? — DYING OF A BROKEN HEART

DEAR DYING: A way to find a good therapist would be to ask friends and/or your doctor for referrals and explain that since your husband's death your grief hasn't lessened. Your state psychological association can also provide the names of members who specialize in grief counseling.

Interview several prospective therapists. A question you should ask is how many patients with your problem he or she has successfully treated. However, the bottom line is whether you feel the therapist listens well and has the compassion to help you, which is as important as any diploma hanging on the wall. You'll know when you meet someone you are comfortable with.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable — and most frequently requested — poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby — Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

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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 and a Moon in Leo all day.

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR MONDAY, SEPT. 30, 2013:

This year will be pleasant for you, especially if you enjoy your friends and fulfill your long-desired goals! You seem to be fortunate in nearly every area of your life. Your career blooms in July 2014. You'll start to see the results of your efforts in the period that follows. If you are single, let others know of your decision to maintain that status. Some of you will meet several potential life mates. If you are attached, the two of you will need to deal with a certain amount of the unexpected. Stay goal-oriented and focused. LEO can be a strong personality.

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)

★★★★ The unexpected continues to make daily life exciting for anyone around you. Whether you're working on a love letter or coming up with a new business idea, your creativity seems to be at work. Tonight: Kick up your heels and be noticed. Don't worry about tomorrow.

### TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

★★★ You will want to spend more time at home than you have in a while. Pressure could build, and you might feel more comfortable staying at home. However, be aware that a family member likely will lose his or her cool as a result. Just do your thing. Tonight: Make a favorite dinner.

### GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

★★★★★ So many people seek you out that you easily could be overwhelmed by all of the requests and invitations. Listen to what people are sharing. Try to avoid getting into a tiff, if possible. Screen your calls in order to accomplish what you want. Tonight: Off to enjoy yourself.

### CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 22)

★★★ Be aware of others' needs. Recognize that you have a tendency to go overboard. You might not worry about the damages now, but you will later. Be careful if you become angry or frustrated, as you could be accident-prone. Tonight: A little restraint might help.

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

★★★★ Others will be delighted to have you around, at least until they realize the level of your energy. In fact, if you can't express yourself the

way you want to, you could become difficult. Be open to positive changes. Someone's reaction might surprise you. Tonight: Let it all hang out.

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

★★★ Trust your sixth sense about what is going on behind the scenes. You might want to rethink a recent decision you've made once you either confirm or deny what your intuition is telling you. Don't swallow your anger; make a point to choose your words with care. Tonight: Lie low.

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

★★★★ Understand that someone you care about suddenly could become difficult. You do not have to react or do anything. Stay calm and centered. You will see this person realize the error of his or her ways. A neighbor could be on the warpath. Tonight: Beam in more of what you want.

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

★★★★ Someone you look up to seems to be bent out of shape. You might be taken aback by this person's behavior at the moment. If you are smart, you will keep your opinion to yourself. This person will calm down, and you will feel more relaxed as a result. Tonight: A must appearance.

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

★★★ At first, you might be upset by what is going on. The unexpected could throw your plans in several different directions. You will be forced to gather your own facts, and as you do, you will notice that you are detaching considerably. Tonight: Think about taking off for a few days.

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

★★★★ You absorb a lot of information, and quite quickly at that. Nevertheless, you might feel challenged by someone you look up to. Your limits could be tested, as well as your ability to handle someone else's less-than-perfect behavior. Tonight: Spend time with a close friend.

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

★★★ Someone you know quite well might come barreling toward you like an enraged animal. How you handle this person's behavior could determine the long-term durability of this bond. Think carefully about the ramifications. Tonight: Out and about. Others seek you out.

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

★★★★ You might be trying to do so much that you could be accident-prone as you speed from one person or activity to another. You might need to take some time to sit down, discuss what needs to get done immediately, and revamp your schedule. Tonight: A close encounter.

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## BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



## FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE | LYNN JOHNSTON

