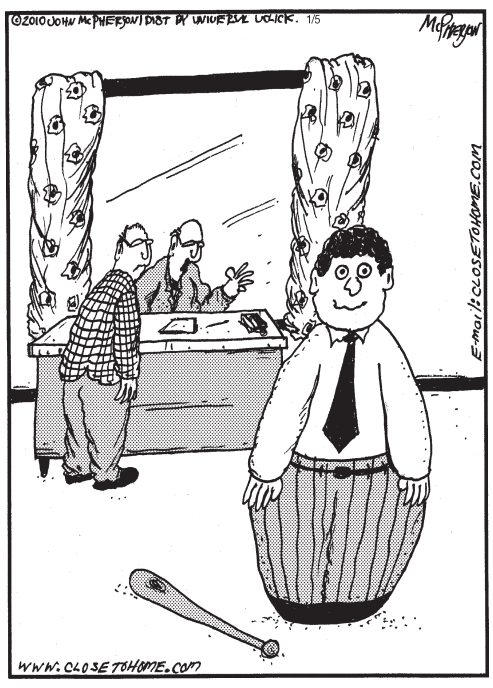
CLOSE TO HOME by John McPherson



"As part of our severance package, you're allowed to take three smacks at this blow-up doll of the company CEO."

Grandma-to-be wants to feel excited

Dear Abby: My daughter-in-law, "Eden," is married to my daughter. Eden is now pregnant via artificial insemination. I will never meet the donor and know almost nothing about him.

Could this be why I don't have the enthusiasm for this pregnancy that I should have, since the baby will be my first grandchild?

I feel guilty that I'm not excited. I'm wondering if it's because there is no blood connection, but neither would there be if the baby were adopted.

Eden is due in a month. We live close by, and I need to generate some enthusiasm. Any suggestions? — *Grandma-in-waiting*

JEANNE PHILLIPS
DEAR ABBY

Dear Grandma: Yes. Start by doing all the things you would if you WERE excited about this grandchild.

Be as participatory as your daughter and daughter-in-law will allow. If you do, while I can't guarantee that you will feel a bond with the baby, your chances of forming one will be greater. And please stop feeling guilty. Relationships take time to build, and this is no exception.

Dear Abby: My husband and I are facing a big decision: whether to move to a better school district for our daughter. The one we're in doesn't rate high, and yes, we can afford to move to a more elite area. So what is holding us back? Our wonderful neighbors!

They are our best friends. Our husbands are close, and it's the same with our kids — even the dogs. We vacation together and take turns carpooling to school in the mornings. They have welcomed my daughter into their home, and ditto for us and their children. Are we fools to walk away from such contentment and love? — *Heavy Decision in Pennsylvania*

Dear Heavy Decision: If you and your friends are close for reasons other than geography and convenience, your relationship with them should be a lasting one. However, your daughter's education should come first, and if they are true friends, they will understand why you are making the move.

Dear Abby: As someone on a second marriage, may I point something out to your readers?

An engagement is not marriage. People need to take a hard look at the person they are choosing to spend the rest of their lives with, and understand that they cannot change another person. Red flags should be addressed DURING THE ENGAGEMENT. That little annoyance will grow and has the potential to blossom into a huge issue.

Counseling can be wonderfully useful, but bear in mind it can take several tries to find a counselor who clicks with you.

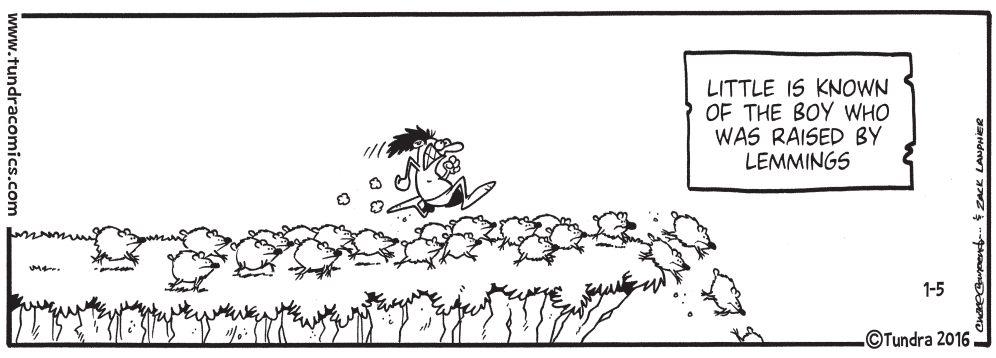
Take it from me, divorce is horrible and can cause damage that can never really be undone. — *Experienced in Tennessee*

Dear Experienced: You're right; problems don't solve themselves, and people in love don't always think rationally.

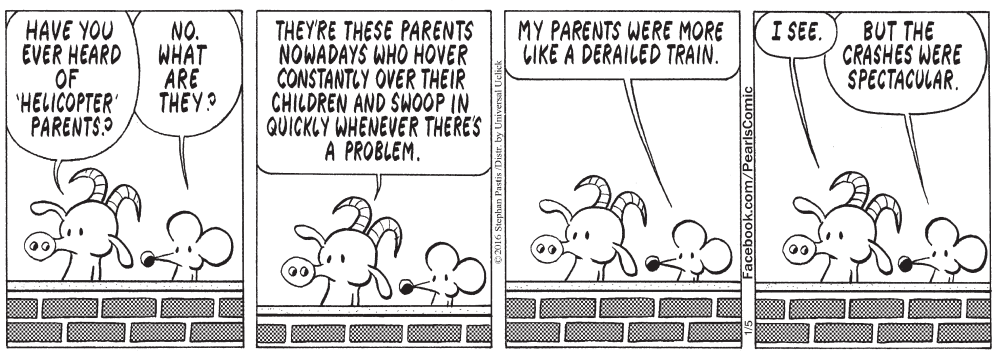
However, I hope they will pay attention to your excellent advice because I couldn't have said it better myself.

Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

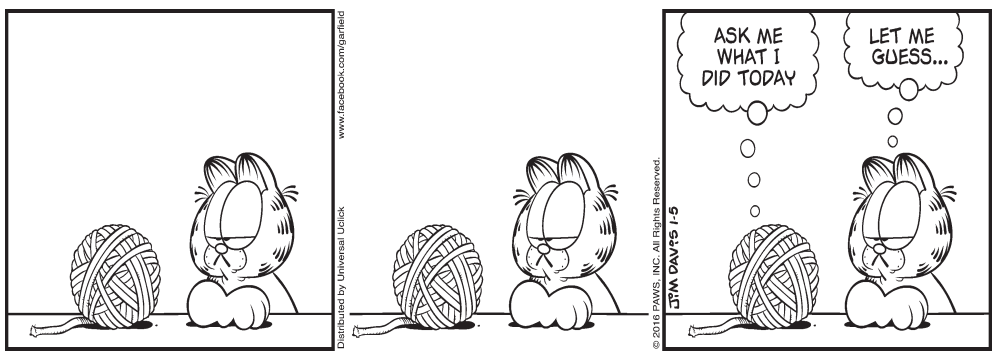
TUNDRA by Chad Carpenter



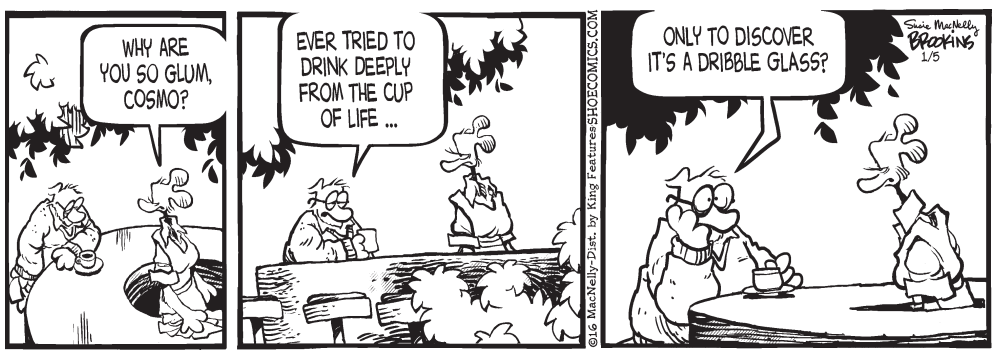
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE by Stephan Pastis



GARFIELD by Jim Davis



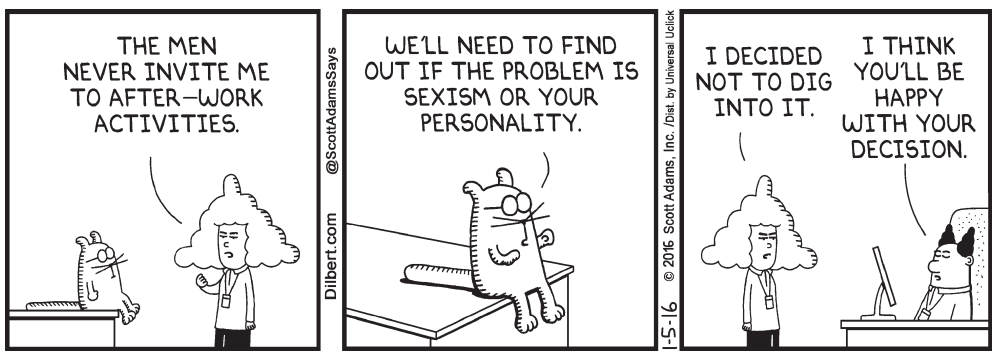
JEFF MACNELLY'S SHOE by Chris Cassatt and Gary Brookins



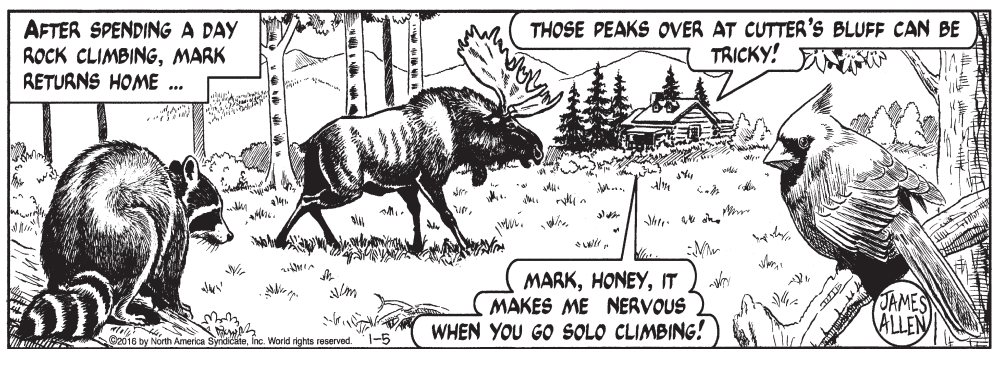
WIZARD OF ID by Brant Parker

THE PHANTOM by Lee Falk

DILBERT by Scott Adams

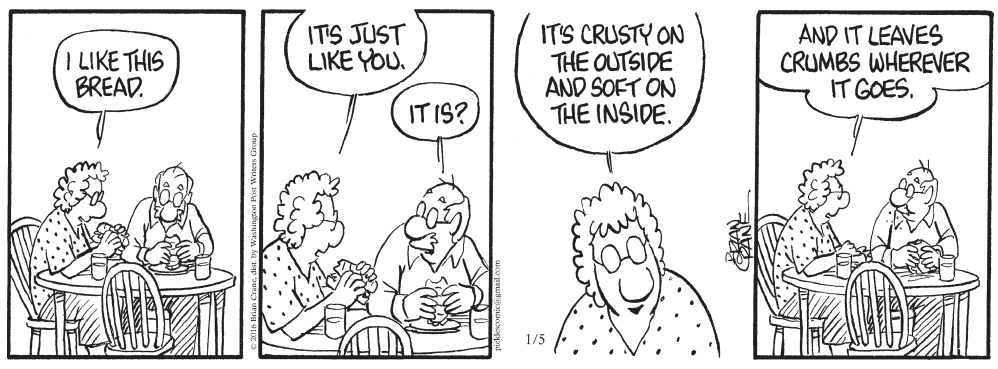


MARK TRAIL by James Allen

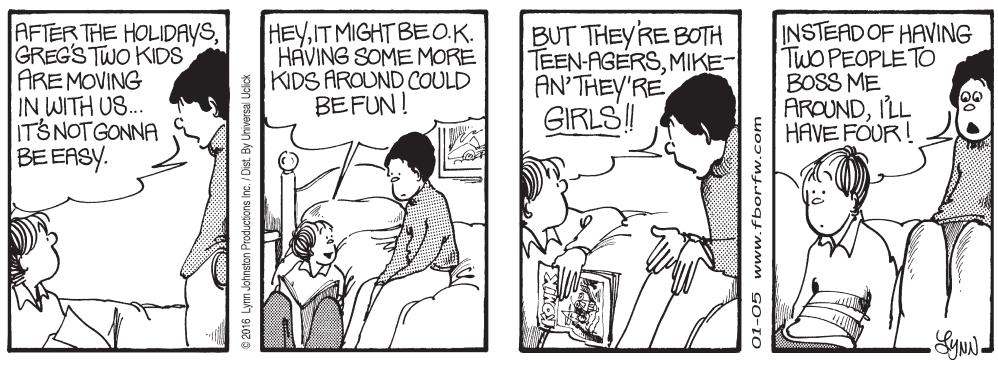


PEANUTS by Charles Schulz

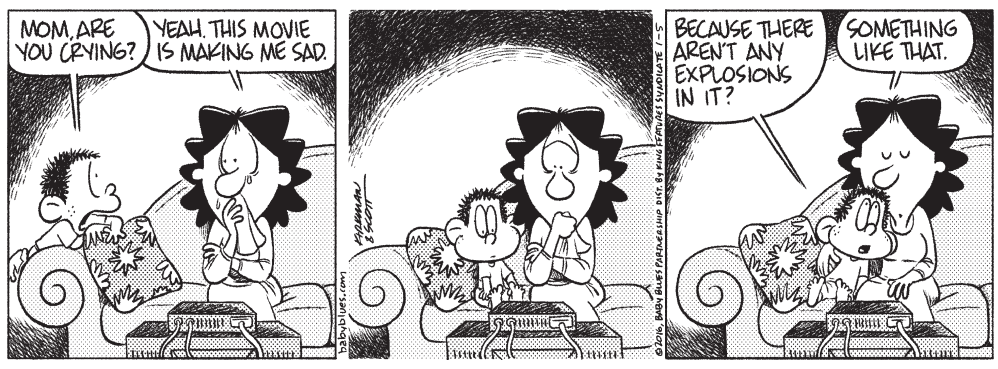
PICKLES by Brian Crane



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE by Lynn Johnston

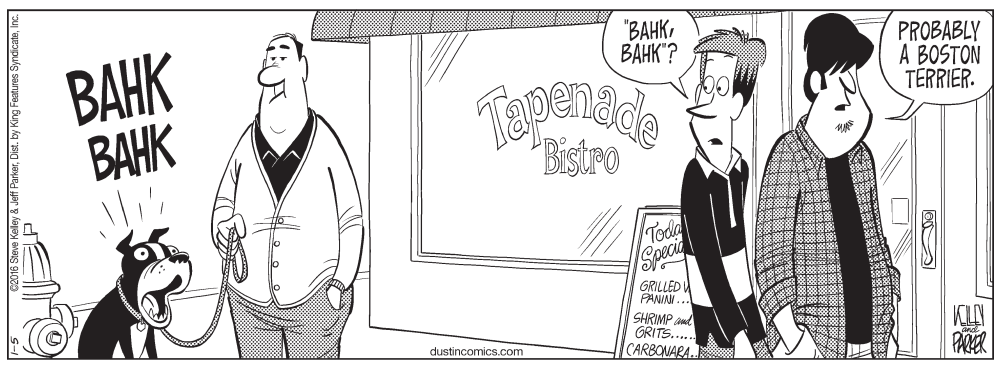


BABY BLUES by Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman



ZITS by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

DUSTIN by Steve Kelley and Jeff Parker



Daily Horoscope

ARIES (March 21-April 19). If your entire identity is based on your success in one area of life, you're lessening your chances of having a great day. What else do you have going on with high-five potential? Add new projects and activities to the list.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The dating world is a complicated place. It's a good thing your natural instincts kick in to help you navigate it either for yourself or your loved ones. If you give advice, it will be brilliant. If you take advice, take your own.

HOLIDAY MATHIS

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Laughing is what helps you make it through. Don't wait until you're feeing bad to look for the funny. Stock up so you're ready when the weird days hit. Today will bring comic treasures.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You've become what you once envied and, strangely, that fact alone brings little satisfaction. It was the way it pushed you to grow that really mattered all along. Don't let that stop you from envying something new.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). It's a simple fact of human nature: Nobody likes things being crammed down their throat. You're adept in the art of persuasion today, which will include leading by example so you don't have to launch into the hard sell.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Regarding the sort of change that happens today: Give it time to sink in. Let it ruminate for a few days. Don't go immediately back to what you're familiar with. Live in the transition.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Some secret thing is distracting you — it's hiding right below the surface of your awareness and nudging you softly. It wants to be uncovered. All you have to do is ask yourself a few questions and you'll figure out this little puzzle.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). From Penicillin to Velcro, many important and useful discoveries were made by chance instead of contemplation. However, when you contemplate, chance will favor you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). It's not that you're unhappy with the way things are. You just happen to be fascinated by the potential of things. It's how your mind works, leaping into an imaginary future and carrying reality along with it.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). If you feel slightly tense walking into the room it's only because you have an agenda beyond what others in the room have. Relax into the prevalent mood and it will be easier to get this agenda across.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Do you really make the world better by following your bliss? Of course! Though you should be warned: These days it will take a lot more courage and planning to devote yourself to your own enjoyment.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're excellent at drawing boundaries. You're so clear on what you will and won't do that you can say it with a light touch, getting the message across instantaneously.