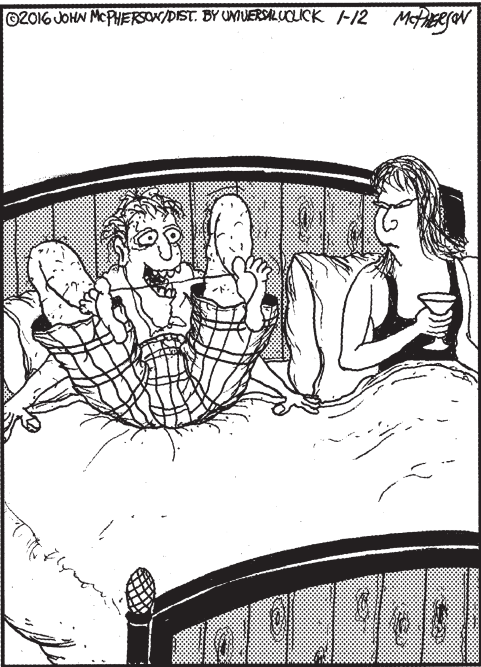


CLOSE TO HOME by John McPherson



As Ken showed Carol how he could floss his teeth with his feet, she felt the last ounces of passion drain from their marriage.

Man neglecting oral health needs help

Dear Abby: My husband has developed a bad case of periodontal disease. I'm afraid to kiss him because I don't want the bacteria causing the disease to spread and his bad breath is unbearable. Our sex life is suffering because of it.

We have two beautiful children together, and I love him very much — even if he loses all his teeth at the age of 37. I have explained how extremely important oral hygiene is to overall health, especially heart health, and how his unwillingness to deal with this sends the wrong message to our kids. He simply refuses or conveniently "forgets." When I asked him why, he said his mother traumatized him about it as a child.

My children are starting to take notice now. My daughter doesn't want to go near him, and my son thinks it's OK to not brush his teeth because his father doesn't. As you can see, this is disrupting our family. What kind of advice could I give him to get him to start taking care of his mouth? — *Wits' End in Florida*



JEANNE PHILLIPS
DEAR ABBY

Dear Wits' End: That your son is modeling his behavior after his father is terrible. There are psychologists who help patients overcome phobias and dentists who specialize in patients with your husband's problem. If necessary, dental work can be done under complete sedation.

If your husband would be willing to listen to your family doctor or the children's pediatrician, perhaps one of them can get through to him the importance of conquering his fear before it causes lasting damage to the next generation.

Dear Abby: I recently began a relationship with a wonderful man I'll call "Edward." He's smart, successful, sweet and has a wonderful sense of humor.

I adore him and can see myself spending many happy years, if not forever, with him. The problem is my parents. I'm 24 and a recent college graduate. I have a good job and have been living independently since I was 19. Edward is 31, divorced and has two kids (ages 5 and 8).

Because of his kids and marital status, my parents refuse to even meet him. They

claim I'm making a terrible mistake being involved with someone with so much "baggage."

I am very close to my parents, and their reaction is hurtful. This is the happiest I have been in a long time in a relationship, maybe ever. Neither Edward's kids nor the fact that he's divorced is an issue for me.

I've met his children and enjoy spending time with them. He has a civil relationship with his ex-wife, who also has a new partner.

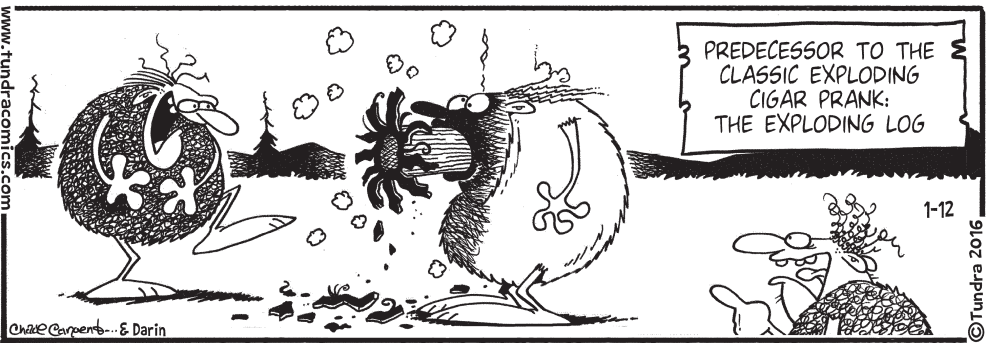
Do you think my parents' reaction is fair? Do you think in time they'll come around? — *Bittersweet in Love in Michigan*

Dear Bittersweet: Whether your parents' reaction is fair or not is beside the point. Their feelings are their feelings.

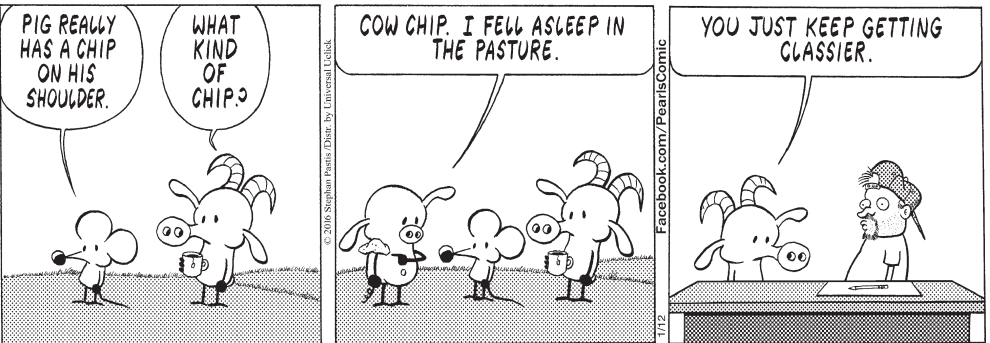
The relationship you have with Edward is new, and where it may lead is anybody's guess. If it lasts, your parents may come around. But as an adult, the choice of whom you date or will one day marry should be yours and no one else's.

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



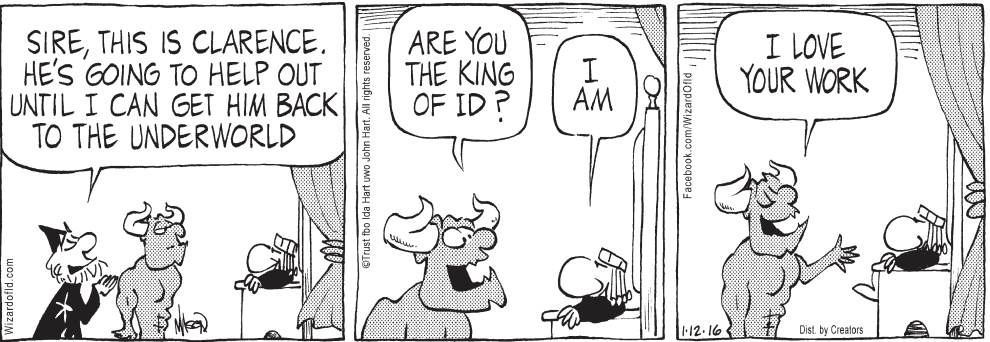
GARFIELD by Jim Davis



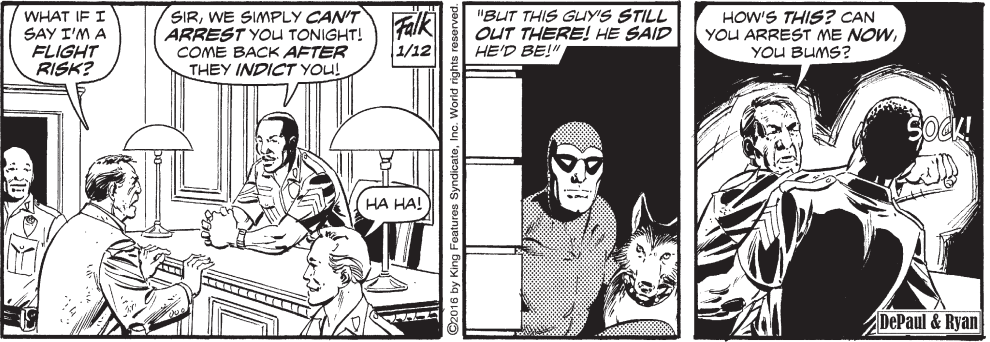
JEFF MACNELLY'S SHOE by Chris Cassatt and Gary Brookins



WIZARD OF ID by Brant Parker



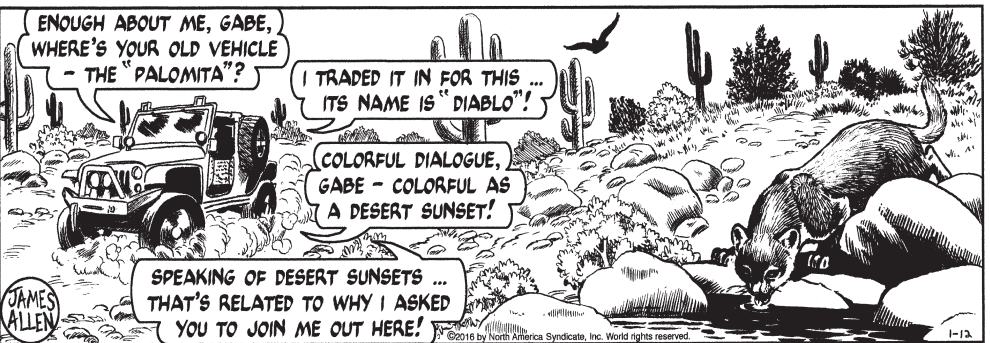
THE PHANTOM by Lee Falk



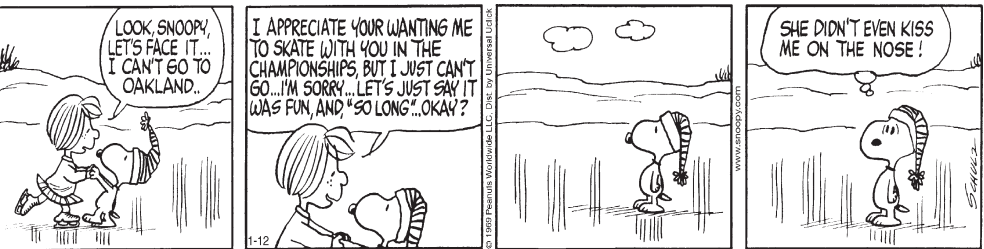
DILBERT by Scott Adams



MARK TRAIL by James Allen



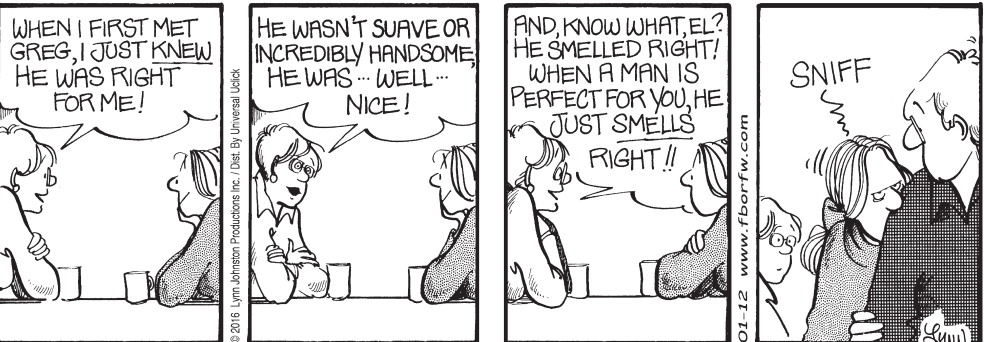
PEANUTS by Charles Schulz



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). Resist the urge to impress strangers. Who knows if you'll ever see those people again? You'll never regret spending the best of your energy making a stellar impression on those closest to you.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Nature is efficient. You were made with the sensors to tell you exactly what not to do. Pain equals "stop right now." Trust the equation and be very skeptical of anyone who tries to convince you otherwise.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You'll be making a presentation. While it will be important to come off as relevant to the times, your humanity is what will shine through. Warmth and softness will trump the clean, shiny cold of the cutting edge.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Because your senses are ready to take it all in, the day will be peppered with big feelings, inconsequential inventions, nuanced moods, surprises and excitements. What more could you want?

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). When you look objectively at your life, how much of it can you trace back to a dream of the way you wanted it to be? It's something to think about as you construct today's brand new dreams.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Those around you should know better by now than to question your seemingly idiosyncratic ways. There is always a

method to your madness, and if you had to stop and explain at every juncture, you wouldn't get half as much done.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You have the sneaking suspicion that you can do better, and you'll devote your energy to improving. You would rather be around the people who compel your strength than the people who agree to your status quo.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Considering how your imagination is running today, it will be important that you make an extra effort to see people the way they are and not the way you wish (or long) for them to be.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You have a decision to make. Take a risk and you'll set a plot in motion. If you don't take the risk, the plot will continue in the pattern that has already been established.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Something that has become very personal to you will become meaningful to others, too, if you share in the right way. Your plight is more universal than you know.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). They'll want to know your experience, but somehow it can't be told in a few words. You don't want the feeling to be reduced by over-simplification.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). So, you weren't expecting much? That was smart. You set yourself up for a pleasant surprise. You're going to appreciate what the others bring to the table today.



HOLIDAY MATHIS