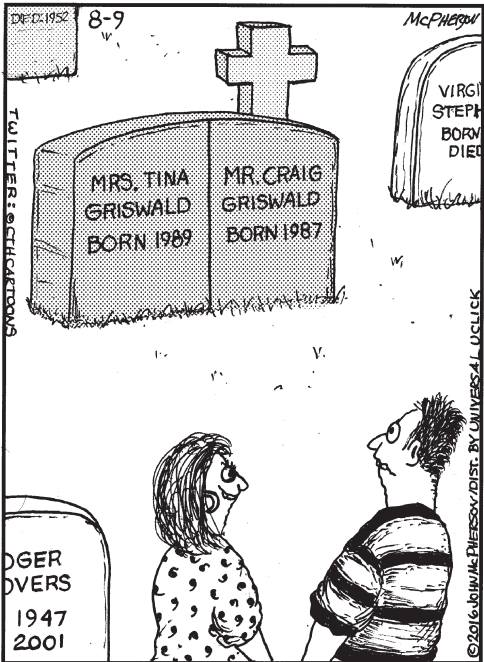


CLOSE TO HOME by John McPherson



Craig sensed that Tina was taking things a bit too seriously when, on their third date, she bought them adjoining burial plots.

Pediatrician rubs mom the wrong way

Dear Abby: I recently took my 5-year-old, “Ralphie,” to his pediatrician. While we were waiting to see the doctor, Ralphie played a game on my phone.

Then the doctor knocked on the door, entered, said “hi” and smiled. He called my son’s name and immediately, without any prompts to get Ralphie’s attention, proceeded to take the phone from my son’s hand.

You don’t simply take things from people’s hands to get their attention. Ralphie may be a child, but he is also a person. I would feel different if, after the doctor had tried to get his attention, my son had ignored him.

I understand Ralphie had to get ready to pay attention and follow instructions. If he hadn’t, I would have removed the phone myself. This doctor is very competent and has seen Ralphie since the day he was born. He has always been dry and a bit brusque.

How do I tell the doctor that I find what he did unacceptable without risking the relation-



JEANNE PHILLIPS
DEAR ABBY

ship? I’m not very assertive. The reason I don’t say anything most of the time is because I become angry very easily, and while I understand there are ways to say things, I simply do not possess those skills.

My emotions are so strong that I can’t find a way of being assertive without saying something rude. What can I do? — *Laura in New York*

Dear Laura: Ideally, YOU should have asked your son to return your cellphone when you heard the doctor enter. Write him a letter and tell him you were “taken aback” that he would take something from your boy without asking because what happened seemed to you to be disrespectful.

Put the letter aside for three days before sending it to be sure your message wasn’t written in the heat of anger. You are entitled to express your opinion. And if the doctor’s “brusque” manner is off-putting, find another pediatrician.

Dear Abby: I am a 17-year-old girl and I have a job as a barista. I have an uncle who keeps asking to borrow money from me. He

always promises he will pay me back, but he was in prison and he’s struggling to find a job.

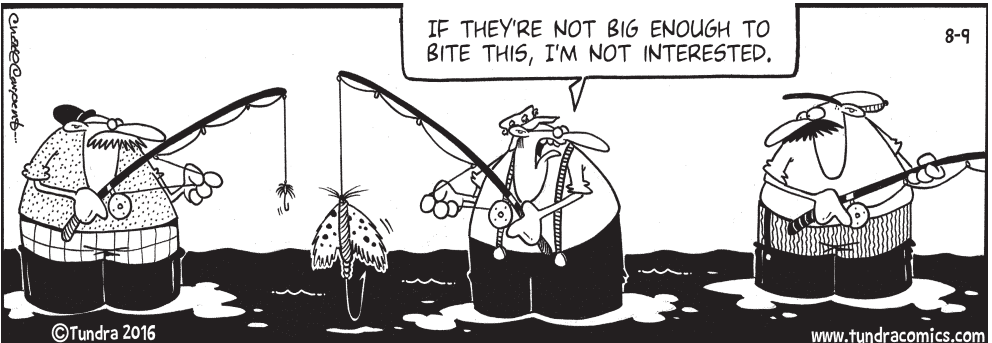
He never does repay me, which wouldn’t bother me if it were small amounts, but I’m trying to save for a car and college, and he always asks for amounts over \$50.

Several adults are telling me he takes advantage of me. I don’t know if I should continue to loan him money or tell him no. If I have to refuse him, it will be hard because I have a hard time saying no to others. I don’t know what to do anymore. Any advice would be great. — *Paycheck to Paycheck*

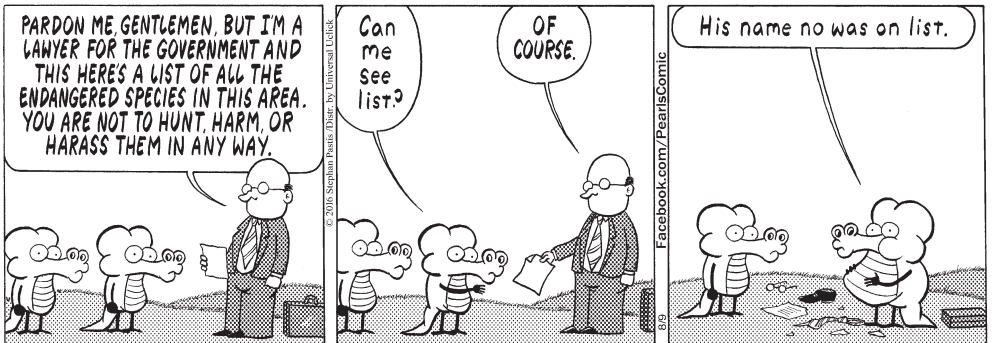
Dear P2P: You are a sweet and generous girl, but you are allowing yourself to be taken advantage of. Part of growing up is learning to stand up for yourself. The next time your uncle asks you for money, tell him that you’ll CONSIDER loaning him more after he has repaid you the money he has already borrowed. To do that isn’t “mean”; it is intelligent.

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

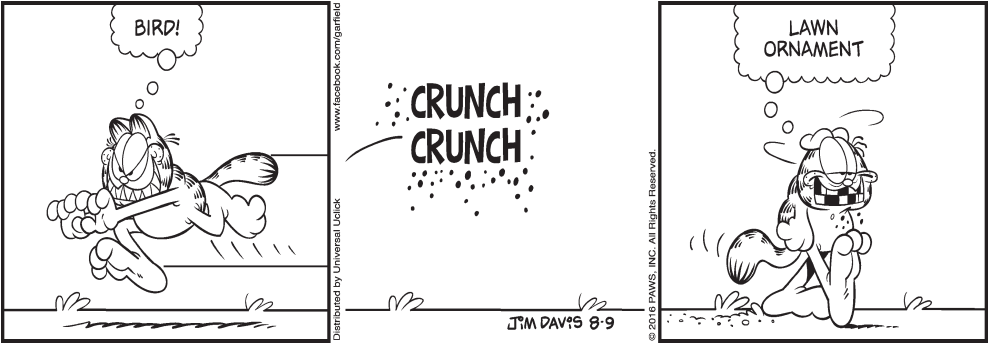
TUNDRA by Chad Carpenter



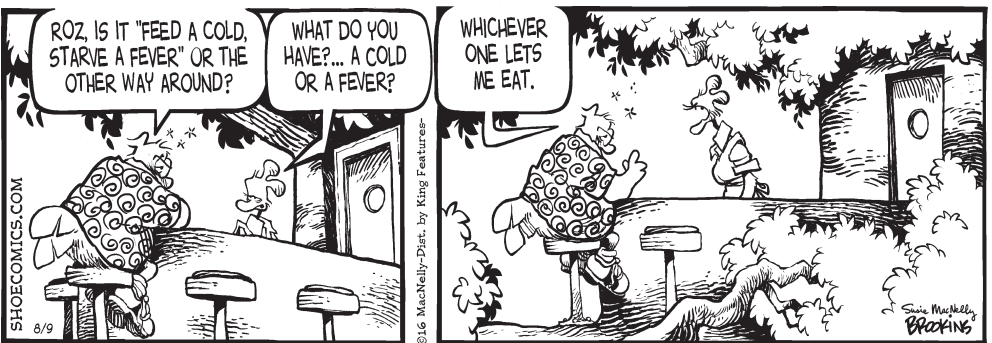
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE by Stephan Pastis



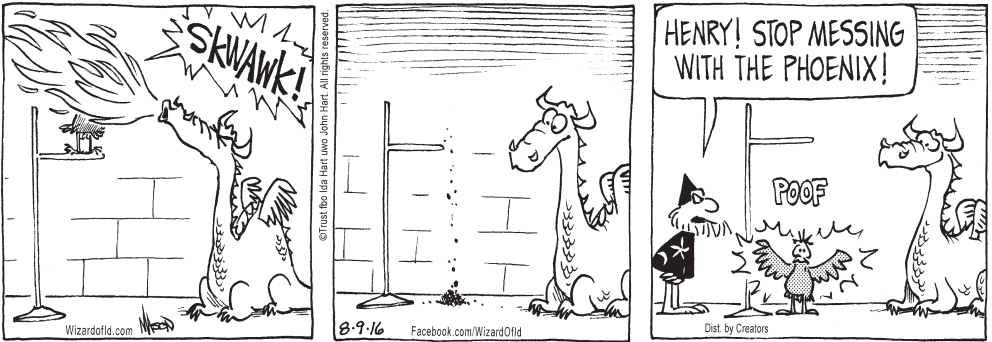
GARFIELD by Jim Davis



JEFF MACNELLY'S SHOE by Chris Cassatt and Gary Brookins



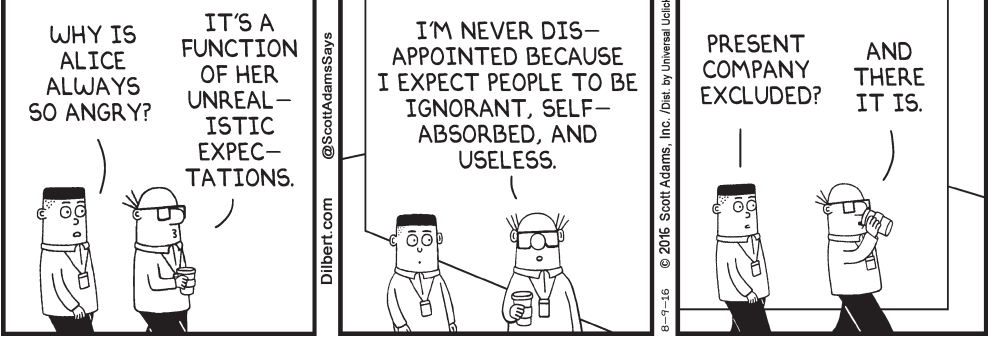
WIZARD OF ID by Brant Parker



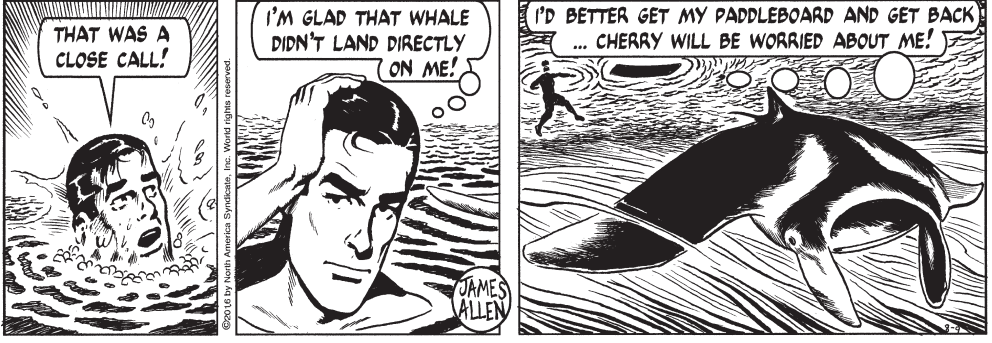
THE PHANTOM by Lee Falk



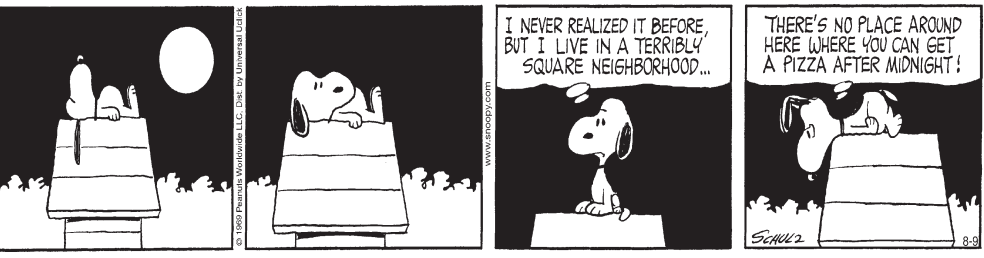
DILBERT by Scott Adams



MARK TRAIL by James Allen



PEANUTS by Charles Schulz



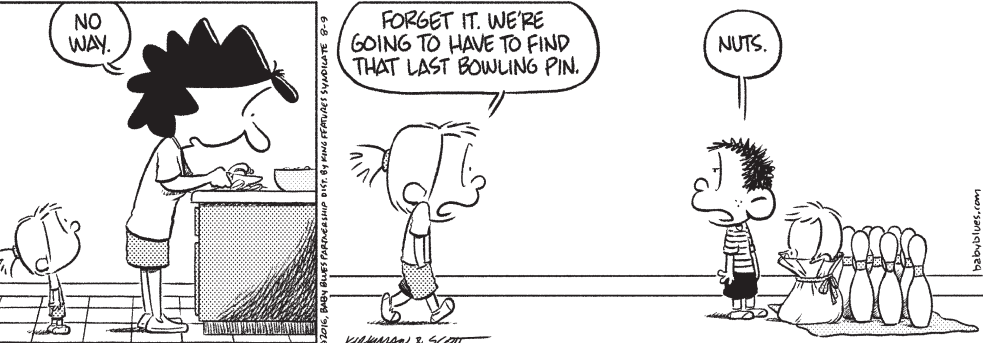
PICKLES by Brian Crane



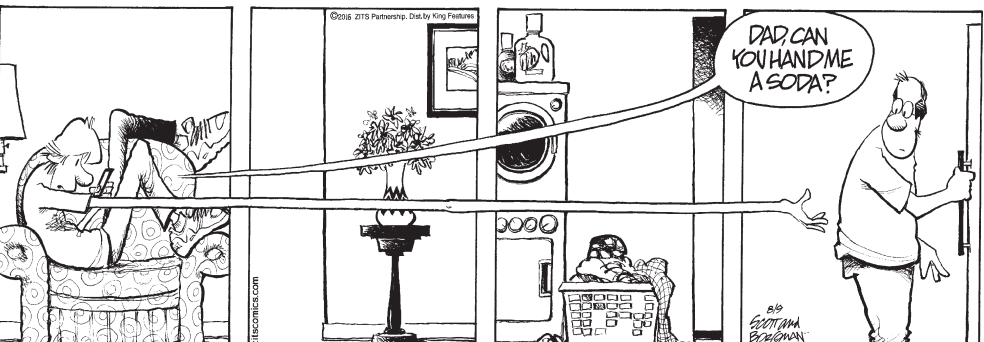
FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE by Lynn Johnston



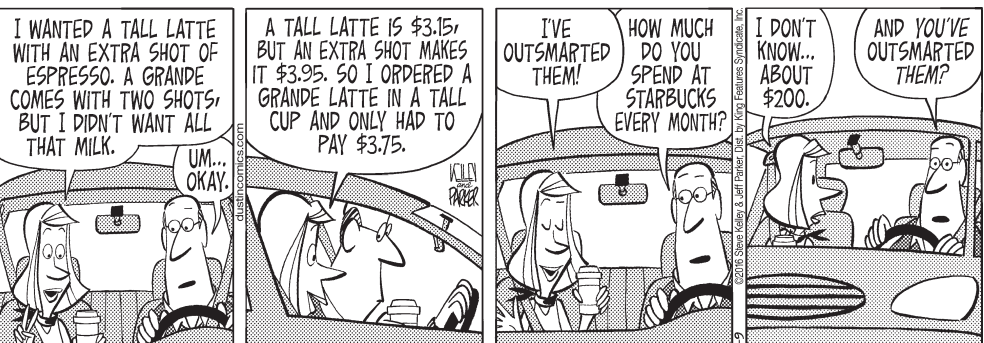
BABY BLUES by Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman



ZITS by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman



DUSTIN by Steve Kelley and Jeff Parker



Daily Horoscope

ARIES (March 21-April 19). When a person doesn’t make your preferred choice, you take it in stride and keep your response drama-free. This could be a test. How you behave at this time will crystalize someone’s opinion of you.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You’re emotionally independent. You know how to make yourself happy, and when you feel that life isn’t naturally going in that direction, you shake things up, take back the reins and steer back toward your happy place.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Something led you to wonder, and now your mind is busy creating a version of the story that connects the dots you know, but you don’t know everything, and this is not the whole story — or even an accurate one.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Like a well-prepared celebrity on a talk show, you’ve rehearsed your “talking points” and you’ve been warned not to go off script... you know, where all the juicy stuff is. Will you make an exception for that charming so-and-so?

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Everyone pays dues and proves usefulness. Don’t let anyone treat you badly, though. Stand up for yourself. Social and professional standing won’t be automatically given; it has to be claimed.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). It’s a subtle thing, but you stand taller, make yourself longer and become more connected to your environment.

You have the overriding feeling that you belong exactly where you are.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). That difference between your job and your work will become more obvious today, as a thought process involves you deeply: What you love about what you do may have very little to do with the job itself.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Crying can be the start of healing, a physical stress reliever that makes us feel better. But it can be other things, too — manipulation, the entry to an emotional pain loop, habit... Interpretation is key.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Someone you love may need you to put your sparkle, charm and expertise to the task of taking the intense, embarrassing or pressurizing focus off of his or her latest mistake.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Stress causes people to disassociate with the present flow and become a self-conscious witness to their own interactions. Your job will be to make someone comfortable in an uncomfortable situation so this person can shine.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Usually, you love more or less unconditionally. However, right now, if you were to think of yourself and your attention as a kind of prize, it would benefit all. Make them earn it — if only so they’ll appreciate what they have in you.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You’re as interested in the questions posed to you as you are in your answers to them, which will come from such a deep place inside you that they may actually surprise you.



HOLIDAY MATHIS