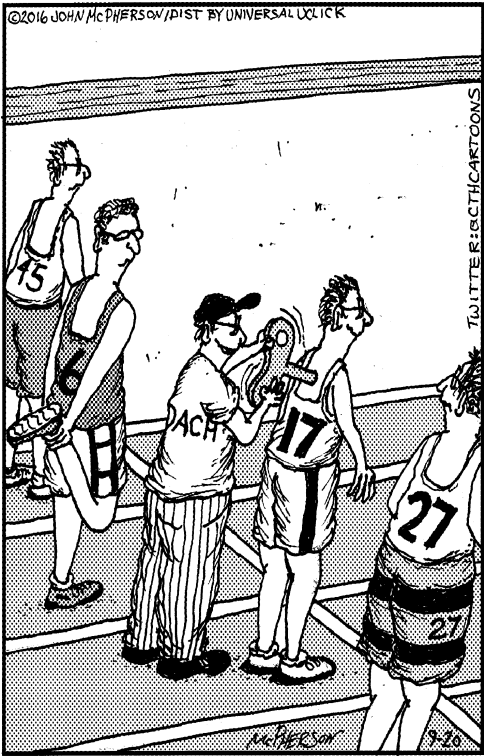


CLOSE TO HOME by John McPherson



Grandparents not fans of kids' clothing

Dear Abby: While our 6-year-old enjoys the positive attention he receives from his often unusual and imaginative clothing choices, his grandparents feel we are being “disrespectful to others” by allowing him and our other children to wear these outfits in public.

Neither my husband nor I was permitted freedom of expression as children, and we agreed that with the exception of health, profanity, lewdness, immodesty and adherence to organizational dress codes, that we would not restrict our children's freedom of expression.

While we often don't agree with our children's choice of attire, it seems prudent to choose the battles we fight.

Is anyone other than our parents actually offended by a pirate (sans weapon) in the dentist office, or a backward shirt at the grocery store?

And if they are offended, does their desire

not to see a costumed child trump my children's need for a healthy outlet for their individuality during this phase of their life over which they have so little control? — *Clark Kent's Mom*

Dear Clark Kent's Mom: I seriously doubt that anyone other than your parents and in-laws cares at all if your children visit the dentist looking like Clark Kent, a cowboy or his horse.

As far as I'm concerned, your children should be allowed to exercise their sartorial creativity. It's harmless. A few years from now they'll be getting pressure from peers about fitting in, so let them enjoy themselves while they can.

Dear Abby: I have been through quite a bit of turmoil in the last two years. My boyfriend died last year. We had been together for 13 years. He was only 32 and his death was unexpected.

I am realizing now that I didn't handle my grief very well. I had no real support system at the time and soon after he passed, I recon-

nected with an old flame I had been in contact with on and off through the years.

We have become somewhat serious, but I realize that before I can go further with this relationship, I must deal with the feelings of grief that I have for the loss of my boyfriend.

Any advice that you could provide would be greatly appreciated. I am at a loss on how to move forward in a healthy way. — *Lost in San Francisco*

Dear Lost: I'm sorry for the loss of your longtime boyfriend, but I'm glad you wrote. That you recognize you need help to process his loss before you can move forward takes an admirable sense of self-awareness.

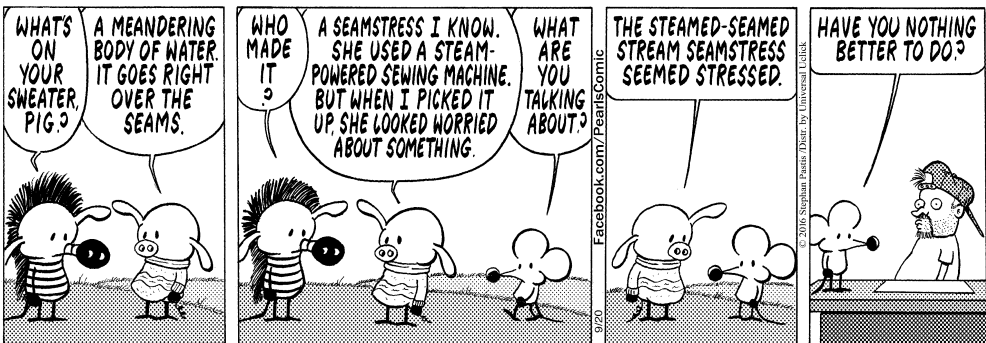
If you have a doctor or a health insurer, ask for a referral to a licensed mental health professional (a psychologist, social worker, etc.). That person can help you to work through your unresolved emotions by seeing you privately, or by referring you to a grief support group.

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

TUNDRA by Chad Carpenter



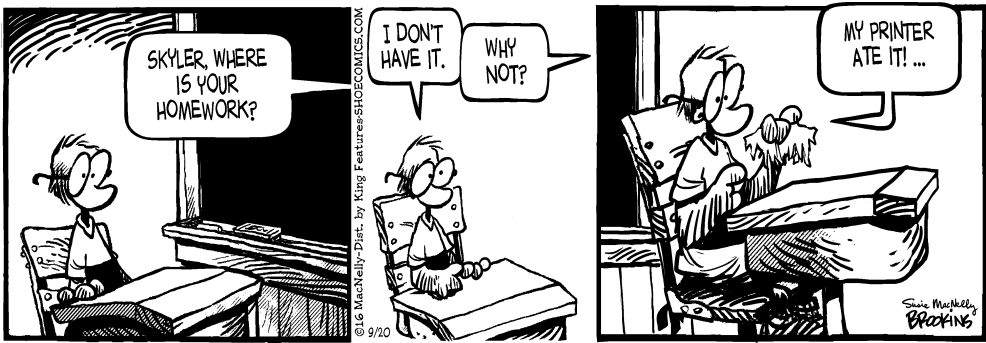
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE by Stephan Pastis



GARFIELD by Jim Davis



JEFF MACNELLY'S SHOE by Chris Cassatt and Gary Brookins



WIZARD OF ID by Brant Parker

