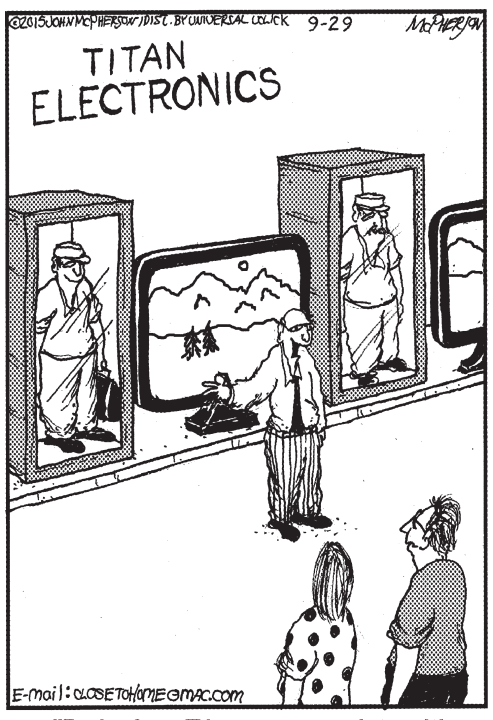
CLOSE TO HOME by John McPherson



"Each of our TVs comes complete with a cable installer."

Accent inquiries are friendly, not rude

JEANNE PHILLIPS
DEAR ABBY

Dear Abby: I have lived in the United States for 40 years. My first 32 years were spent in Puerto Rico, so I speak with an accent. My problem is almost everyone I meet asks me where I'm from. I usually try to disguise my discomfort by jokingly asking them to guess.

The truth is, I feel singled out as being different and not belonging. My friends and family tell me I'm being too sensitive, that people are just curious. I say it's rude to ask such a personal question of a total stranger. Would it be impolite for me to point out that they're asking for very personal information? Am I being too sensitive? — *Accented in Georgia*

Dear Accented: I think so. People are often curious when someone has an accent that is different from theirs. I have a strong Midwestern accent, and people ask me where I'm from. They aren't asking because they are nosy; they're trying to be friendly. Many people in this country come from other places, and the more people who come here, the more often that question will be raised.

Dear Abby: My four wonderful kids want to give their father and me a 50th wedding anniversary celebration next year. The problem is, everyone knows I'm an introvert who does not like going to parties. The thought of being the main focus of a big gathering fills me with dread.

My husband, who is outgoing, says I should let them do it for us if it will make them happy. He would probably enjoy it, but for me it will just be something to suffer through. I'd rather do something with just the two of us — like see a Broadway show. What do you think? Do I have to do this, even though I don't want to? — *Rose of Texas*

Dear Rose: I don't think you should have to suffer, but a compromise might be the solution to your problem. Instead of a large gathering, why not have a family celebration with your children, their spouses and your grandchildren?

And then, because you would like to see a Broadway show — go to New York for a "second honeymoon."

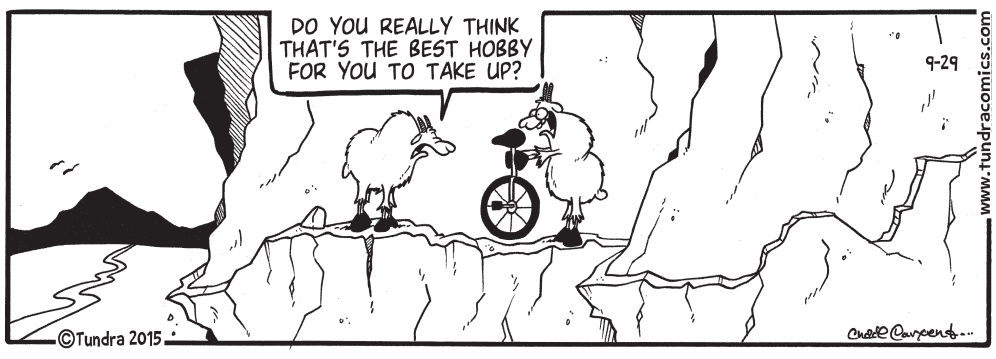
Dear Abby: I recently began dating a man who is kind, intelligent and fun. The only drawback I can see is that he keeps his fingernails long. I feel superficial confessing that something so petty is off-putting, but it is.

Is it OK to make a request of a man regarding his physical appearance? If so, how do I broach the conversation? And if not, what can I do so it won't bother me? — *Put Off in Delaware*

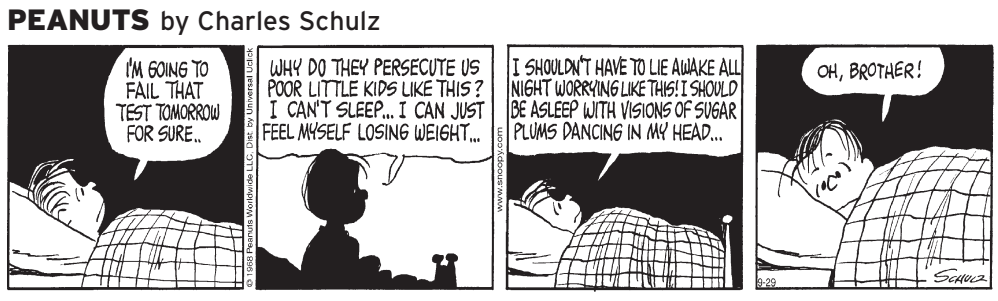
Dear Put Off: Could this man be a guitarist and need the nails for strumming? If not, I don't think it would be rude to casually ask him why he keeps his fingernails long. You might also suggest that the next time you go for a manicure he come along, and then suggest to him that men often get them and offer to treat him to one. If he has never experienced this, it might be a life-changing revelation. (That's what I'd do.)

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

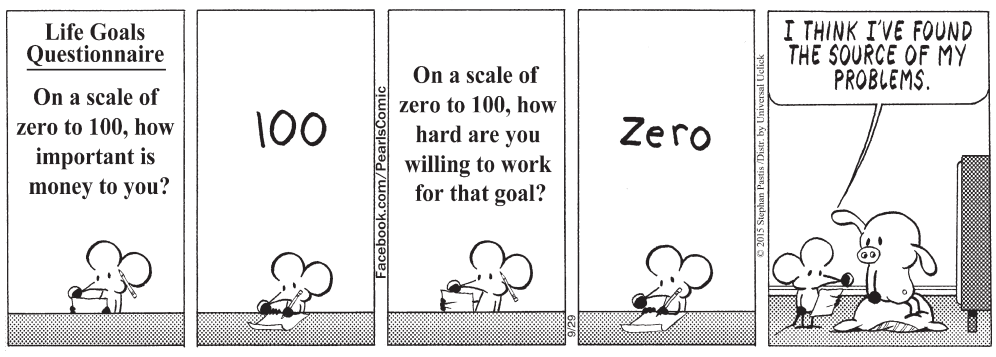
TUNDRA by Chad Carpenter



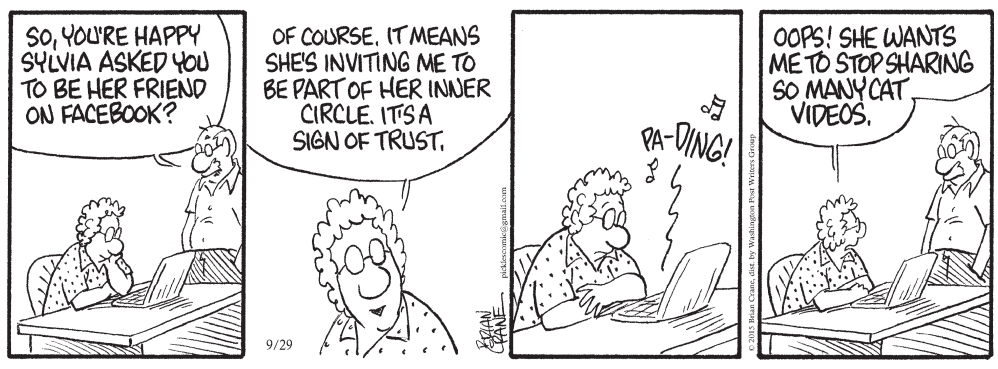
PEANUTS by Charles Schulz



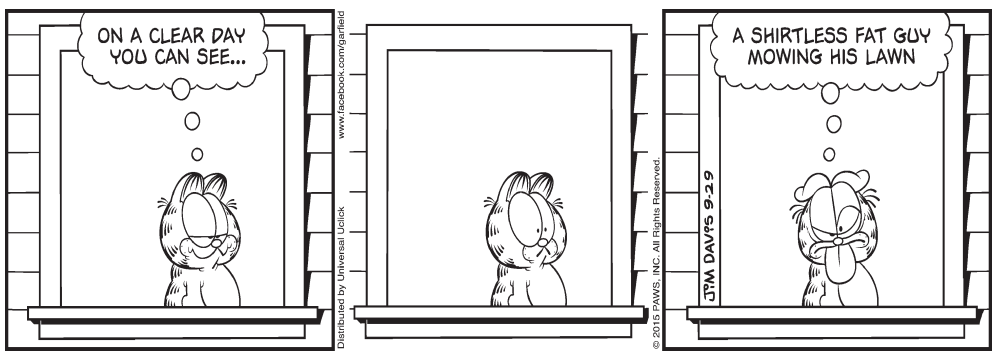
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE by Stephan Pastis



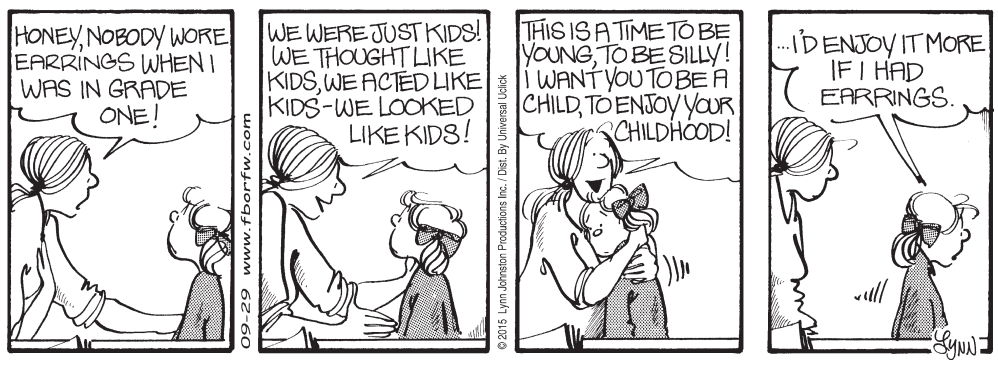
PICKLES by Brian Crane



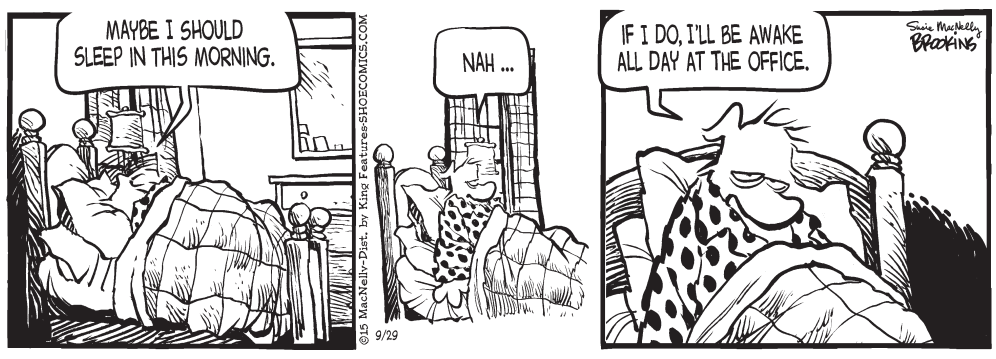
GARFIELD by Jim Davis



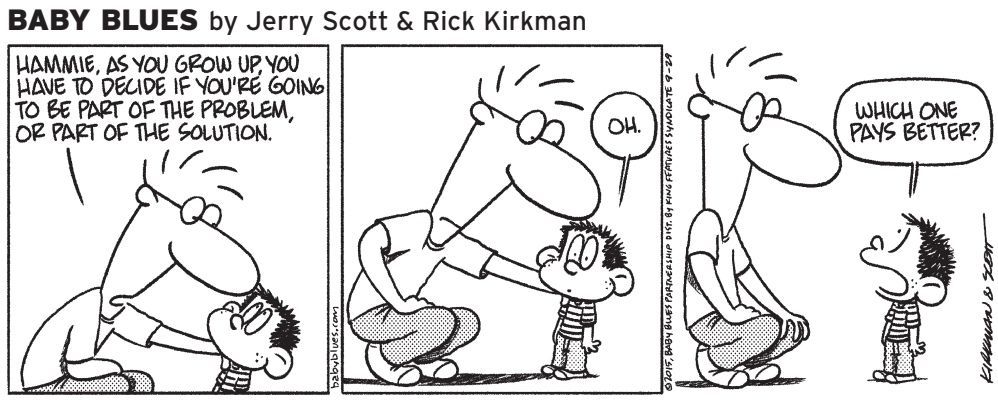
FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE by Lynn Johnston



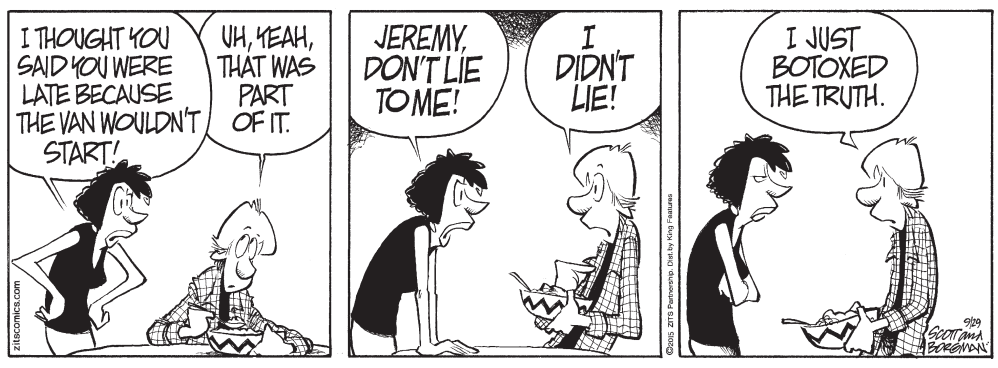
JEFF MACNELLY'S SHOE by Chris Cassatt and Gary Brookins



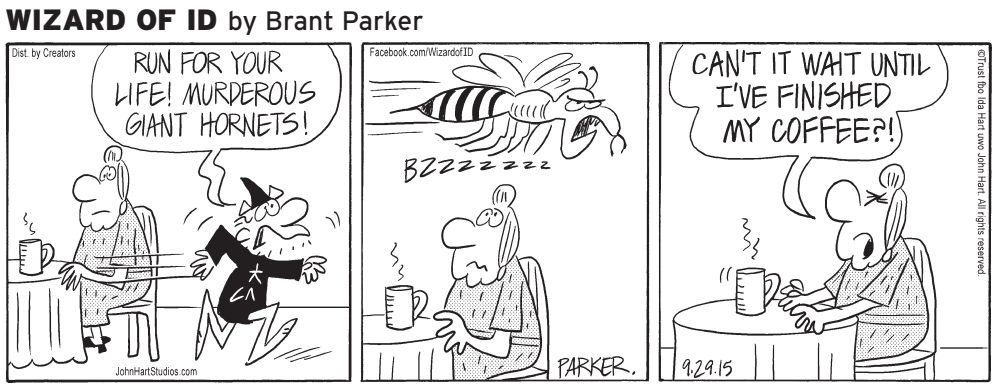
BABY BLUES by Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman



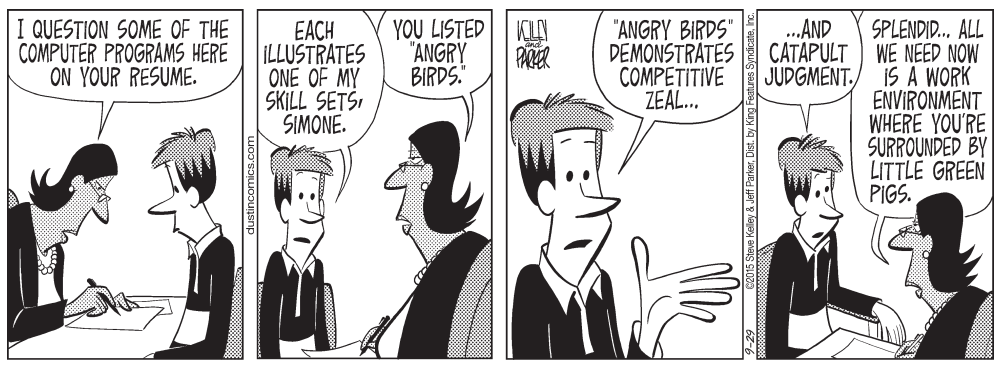
ZITS by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman



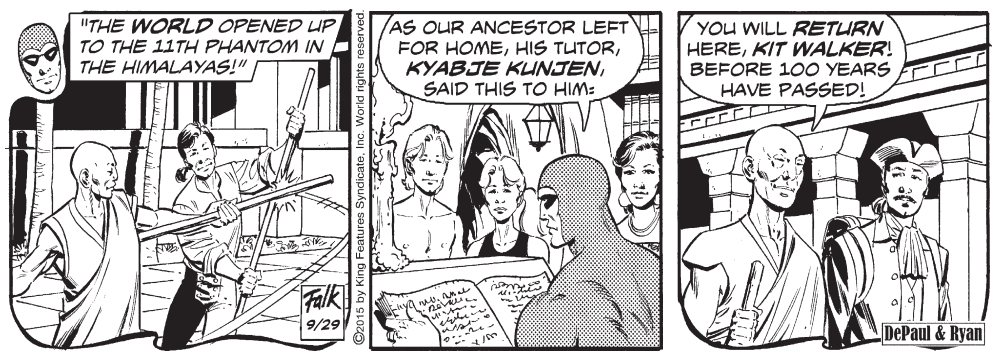
WIZARD OF ID by Brant Parker



DUSTIN by Steve Kelley and Jeff Parker

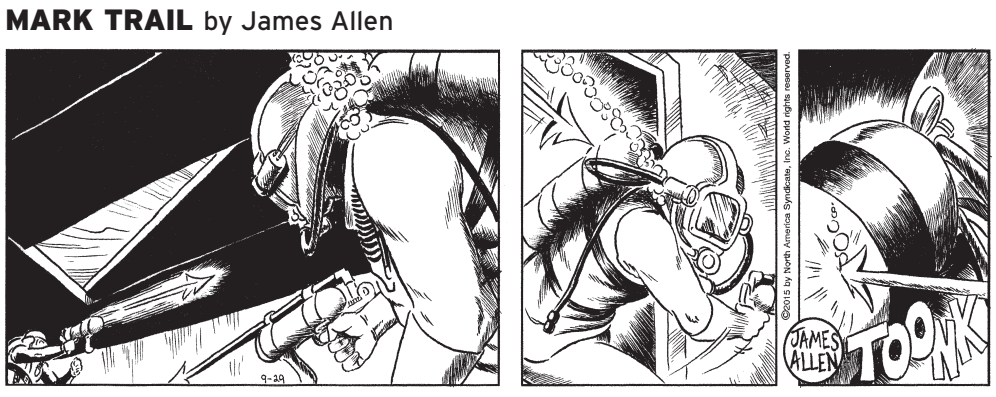


THE PHANTOM by Lee Falk



DILBERT by Scott Adams

MARK TRAIL by James Allen



Daily Horoscope

HOLIDAY MATHIS

ARIES (March 21-April 19). And what's to be done about the contrast between who you want to be and who you are? That you can even see it is a favorable omen. It's this kind of humility that will take you all the way.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Very few appreciate what's readily available. Even fewer pursue what's not available at all. It's the range in the middle that inspires desire. Snuggle yourself into a sweet spot between sometimes and very rarely available.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Leaders allow themselves to be guided by what they like, their fantasies of an ideal world, their dreams of what could be, while the others allow themselves to be guided by what's likely to gain approval.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're deciding how great you want to be at something. You have some natural talent and some time to practice, but do you have a reason good enough to keep you motivated through the work?

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The world is a puzzle, and you are the missing piece. Do not underestimate how vital you are to the big picture. Apply yourself and watch it all come together all around you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). It irks you that in certain relationships, you're always the one who reaches out first. Don't take it personally. It's not that they don't love you — they adore you!

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). It would be fun if everyone would behave according to your private script. They won't, but because you're an expert director, you'll make a masterpiece out of whatever "performances" you get.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You may not like how the day unwinds, but hang in there. Stay connected and keep working on the knotty problems. Without your skill, the others would be lost.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You do different things for different people, and perhaps you won't quite settle into the groove that is "so you" today. Just know that your top three roles in life don't begin to define the depths of you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Commitments come with responsibilities. Because you cherish your freedom, you're likely to say no to several offers in the weeks to come, starting with a decent one today.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Relationships need maintenance. A lunch date might seem inconvenient, but set it up anyway. Think of it as the periodical oil change that's necessary to keep the relationship running.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Some people are a lot harder to say no to than others. That's why you don't pick up the call. You know what will happen. Niceties lead to affinities, which lead to agreements — and there you are at "yes" again!