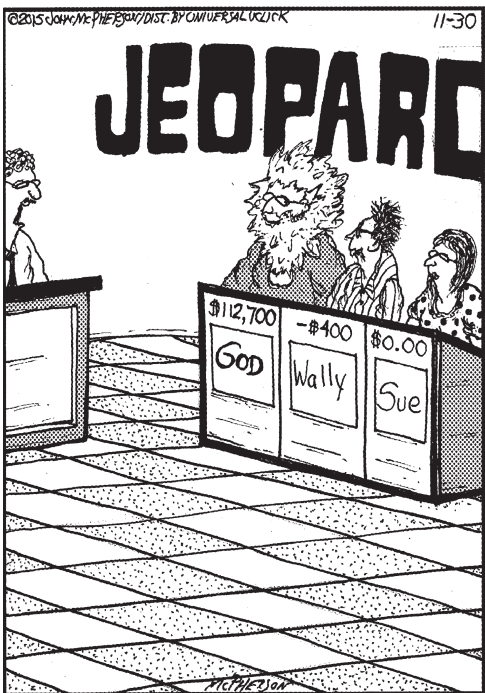


CLOSE TO HOME by John McPherson



"Right again, God, but please wait until AFTER I ask the question to answer."

Daughter dreads holiday visit to mom

Dear Abby: I gave birth to a baby girl two months ago. I have a wonderful husband and my in-laws are incredible. We live far away from both sides of the family.

My mom is a former cocaine and prescription pain meds addict.

Her addiction diminished her mental capacities, and it's difficult to relate to her because the only things she can talk about are her health issues and all the medications she's currently taking.

Mom recently came to visit us. I hadn't seen her in two years, and when she did, I realized we have nothing in common. She and my dad are still happily married, and Dad has yet to meet my child. I'm supposed to visit them for the holidays, but I'd rather spend the time with my in-laws. Any suggestions? — *Nothing in Common in Hawaii*



JEANNE PHILLIPS
DEAR ABBY

Dear Nothing in Common: Yes. Sometimes it's important to do things we would rather

not because they are the right thing to do. Your father is trying to make the best of a difficult situation, and your mother is working to overcome a serious illness — which addiction is.

Make the scheduled visit you committed to, and give your dad the chance to meet his grandchild. If, after that, you decide to permanently distance yourself from your parents, it will be your choice, but you may change your mind.

Dear Abby: My boyfriend of five years, "Jack," is funny, unique and generally very sweet. I'm currently on disability and working hard to get myself healthy enough to start working again. The problem is, Jack thinks I do nothing but sit on my butt all day.

When I worked, we used to trade massages to make each other feel relaxed because our jobs were physically demanding. Now, because I'm not working, he says it's my "job" to help him relax.

I give him a massage every night, but it's never reciprocated. When I ask him for one, he puts no effort into it and acts like it's a chore.

I no longer feel loved or special. I feel like a live-in masseuse, but I'm worried that if I stop, there will be no physical contact at all between us. What would be the best way to tell him know I'm tired of it? — *Rubbed the Wrong Way in Minnesota*

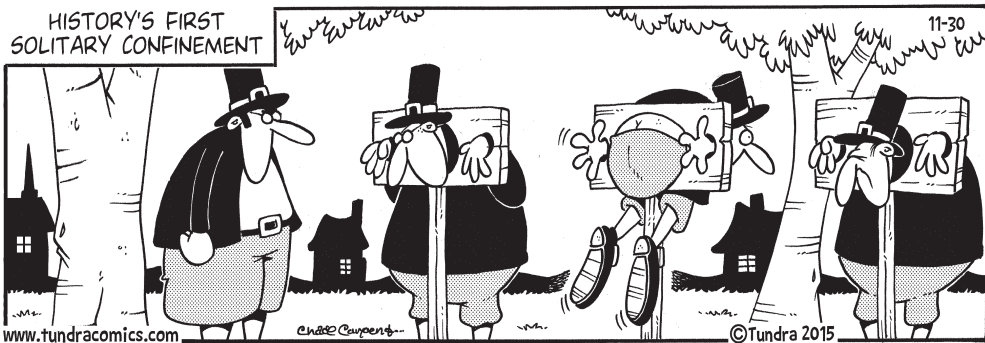
Dear Rubbed the Wrong Way: Jack doesn't sound all that "sweet" to me. Because you feel the way you do, tell him how his change of behavior is affecting you. Touch is important because it helps partners to stay connected.

Could it be that Jack's unwillingness to give you massages is "punishment" because you're not contributing financially as you did while you were working?

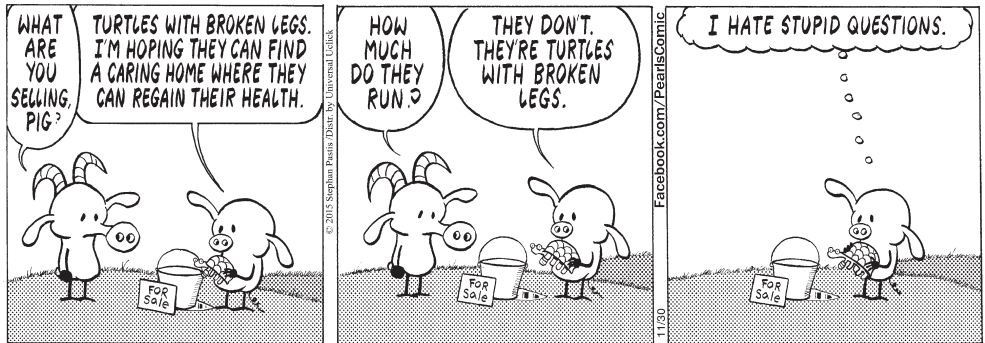
Tell him you miss the closeness you once shared, and that if the shoe were on the other foot, you wouldn't treat him this way. Depending on what he has to say, suggest that for the sake of your relationship, a compromise may be in order because your partnership is not equal now.

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

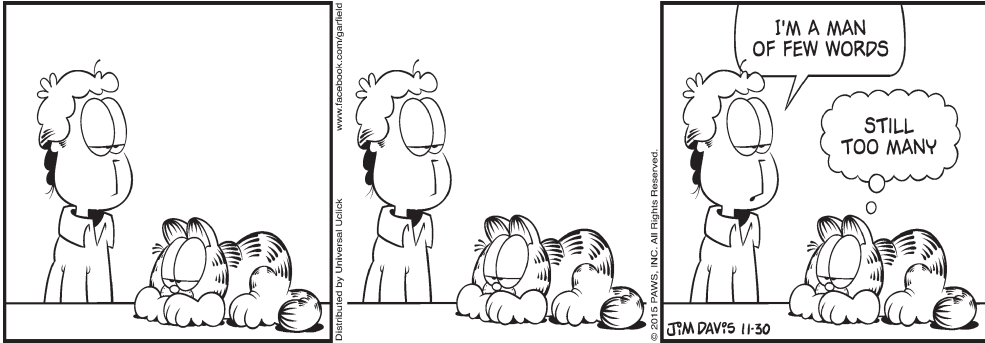
TUNDRA by Chad Carpenter



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE by Stephan Pastis



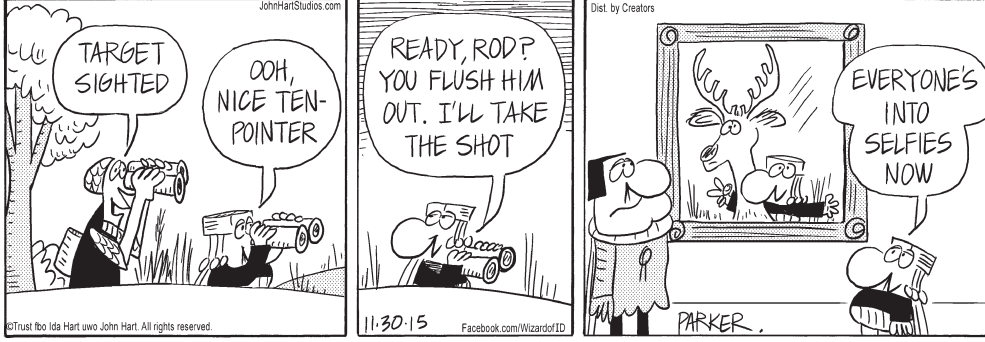
GARFIELD by Jim Davis



JEFF MACNELLY'S SHOE by Chris Cassatt and Gary Brookins



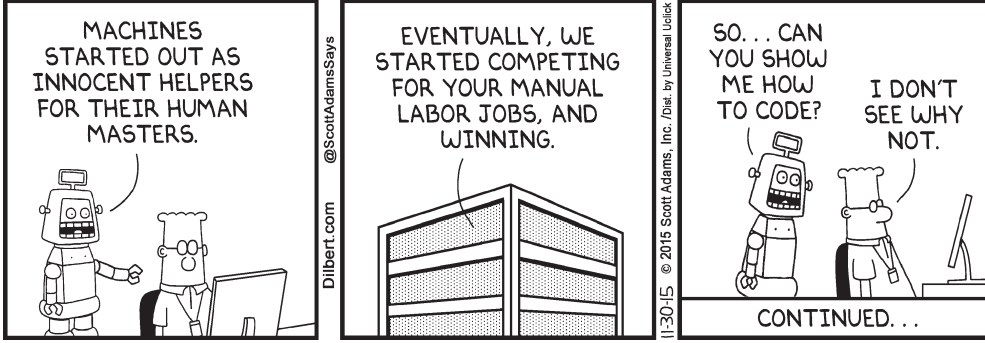
WIZARD OF ID by Brant Parker



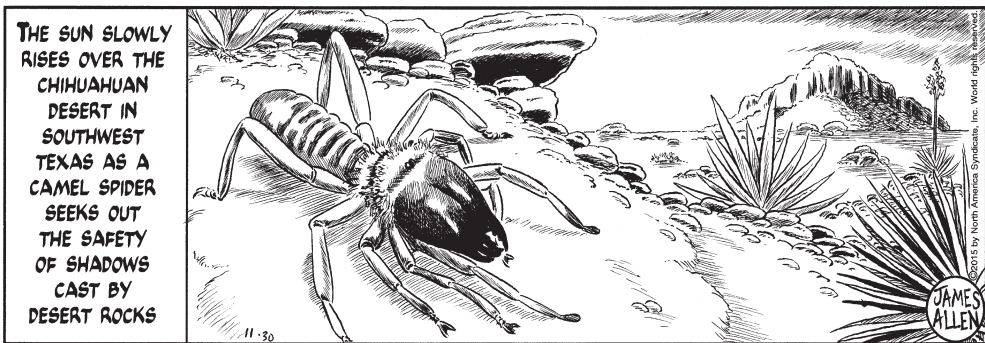
THE PHANTOM by Lee Falk



DILBERT by Scott Adams



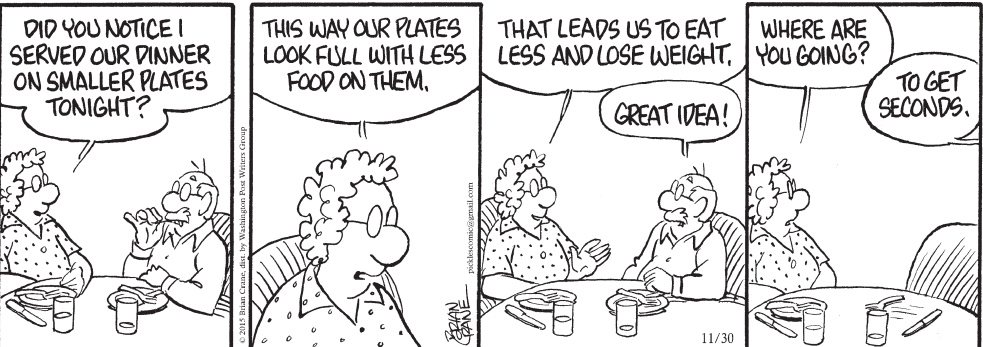
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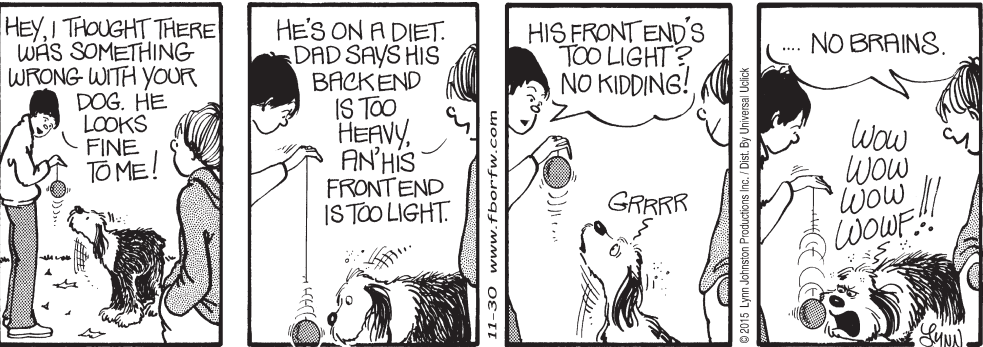
PEANUTS by Charles Schulz



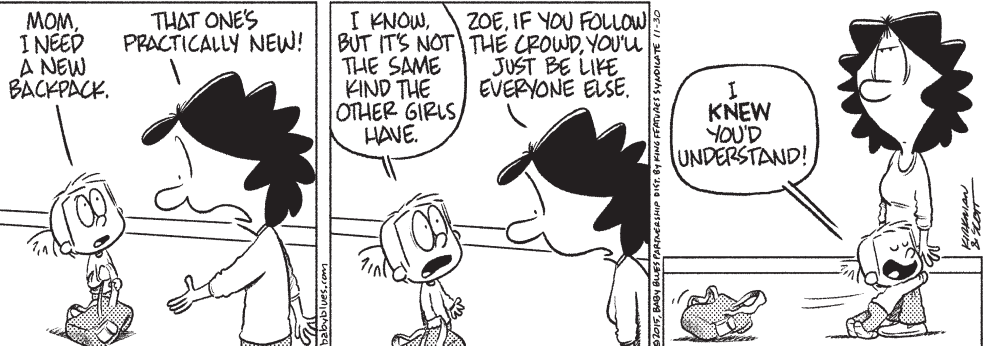
PICKLES by Brian Crane



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE by Lynn Johnston



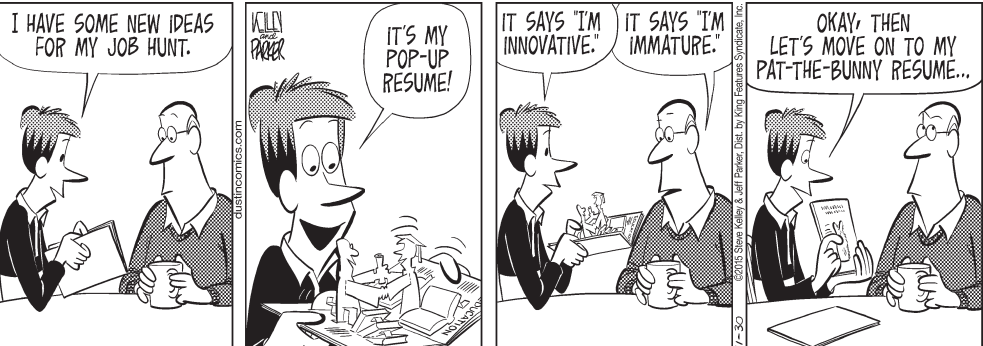
BABY BLUES by Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman



ZITS by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman



DUSTIN by Steve Kelley and Jeff Parker



Daily Horoscope

ARIES (March 21-April 19). Instead of offering up what you think people want you to be, take a moment to consider who you are. There will be a way to communicate effectively without having to pretend, posture or pose.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). To make the color gray with paint, use mostly white with a drop of black. Similarly, the gray areas of life are mostly light with various degrees of shadow. Stay upbeat as you navigate these gray areas. Focus on the good.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). They can't always show you how much they love you. It's too deep to express and besides, if you got it all at once it would be overwhelming. Try and appreciate the small daily gestures.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). It's called a relationship because you're supposed to be relating to one another: Remember the many ways in which you are similar: Empathize. Claim the common ground. Communicate.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Don't wait until you're absolutely certain to make your move. With your open mind, that day may never come. There will always be unanswered questions. Go ahead anyway.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Flip the coin; heads will take you one direction, tails another. But there's a catch to this game of chance. Both ways actually

wind up in the same spot. Hopefully that will make the flip less stressful.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You've lived moments in which you feel utterly un-self-consciously inseparable from the world, and you've lived moments of extreme isolation. It's why you can reach out with such compassion to someone in need today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). For the most part you'll feel comfortable going along with what's happening, but there are some finer points you'll want to work out. You'll make people think.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Someone likes you too well, and yet behaves in a completely appropriate way. This tension is creatively interesting. Your conversations will be full of insight and humor: If you work together, the result will be rather brilliant.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You'll be thinking forward to the things you still haven't done. There's a melancholy that goes with this thought process, because you're not sure you'll have time. You will have time if you start now.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll do the things to help your good reputation grow. Though it seems like you don't have time to put proper emphasis on your personal life, eventually your public status will favorably impact those close to you.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Be careful not to identify with a problem so completely that the problem becomes your identity. You don't want others to see you as a victim and you certainly don't want to see yourself that way.



HOLIDAY MATHIS