

CLOSE TO HOME by John McPherson



"You really need to scale back this year. Do you know how many calories are in 175 million cookies and 19 million glasses of milk?"

Teen is accused of 'abusing' boyfriend

Dear Abby: I'm 13 and in what I think is a serious relationship with "Josh." The problem is, his mom thinks I'm "mentally abusing" him.

I have never done anything to Josh to make her think that. She and I have had our disagreements and have not spoken for periods of time before, but nothing like this has ever happened.

I'm pretty sure I love Josh, and I don't want to lose him because of what his mom thinks of me. What should I do? — *Puzzled in Indiana*



JEANNE PHILLIPS
DEAR ABBY

Dear Puzzled: You didn't mention how old Josh is and how he feels about all the attention you're giving him, but I can offer a couple of suggestions. The first is to slow down.

Take a step back so Josh can have some breathing room. The second is to try to make a friend rather than an enemy of Josh's mother, who may be worried about a 13-year-old girl who seems fixated on her son.

Dear Abby: I remarried when my son, "Kevin," was 5. He's now 20. My husband has always tried to be a good dad to him even though Kevin was challenging at times.

Kevin is now in the military. Before he left, he adopted a dog, "Leisel," that's a year old. Kevin will be deployed overseas for three years and wants us to take her. We have a dog and cat, a big yard and three teenage daughters who want Leisel, but my husband says no. He says it was a mistake to get the dog in the first place, and Kevin needs to learn a lesson and do the hard thing and give her up.

I agree it was a mistake, and I don't really want another dog, but I'm willing to do it for my son. Lots of parents get "stuck" with their kids' pets. They roll their eyes and just do it. Who is right? — *Willing To Do It in West Virginia*

Dear Willing: You are. This is no time to teach your son a lesson. With the international situation heating up as it seems to be, there's no telling where your son could wind up being stationed. Let him go with peace of mind knowing his pet will be well cared for until he returns.

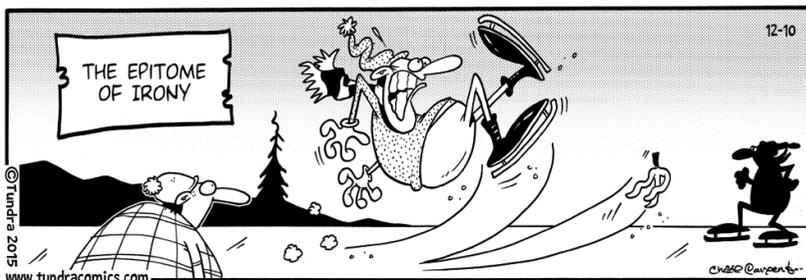
Dear Abby: You probably wonder why I think this is a problem, but it is for me. I'm a single male, almost 77, who can easily pass for 50 or 55. The problem is friends, acquaintances and some strangers think that because I look so much younger than my age, I should be able to perform the same physical tasks they do, which I can't. I have the same aches and pains as anyone else my age.

I'm flattered that I look younger, but how do I explain that because I look 50 to 55, doesn't mean I necessarily feel that way. I know, I know. Some people probably wish they had my problem. — *Young/Old in California*

Dear Young/Old: I have news for you. There are plenty of people half your age who also have physical problems that prevent them from performing certain tasks — including bad backs, bad knees, rotator cuff injuries and more. Because someone looks great doesn't necessarily mean that the person is 100 percent. If you are asked to do something beyond your ability, be honest about it and say no.

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

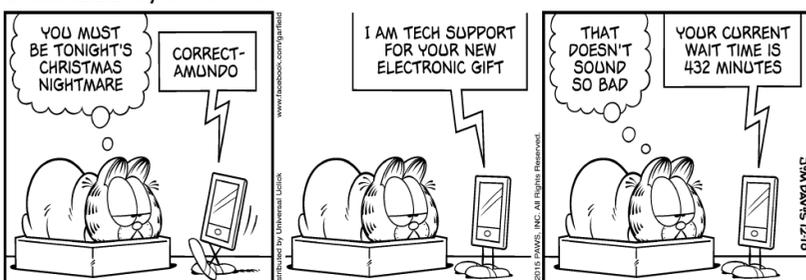
TUNDRA by Chad Carpenter



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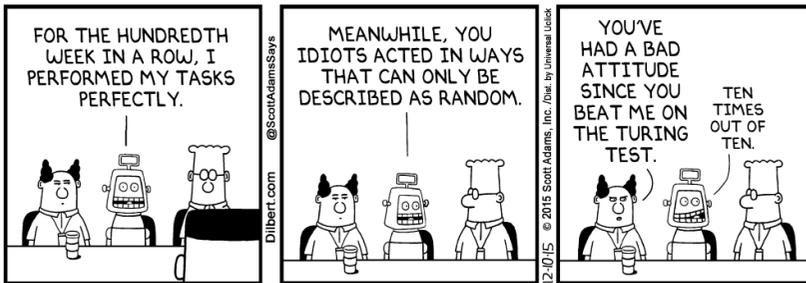
WIZARD OF ID by Brant Parker



THE PHANTOM by Lee Falk



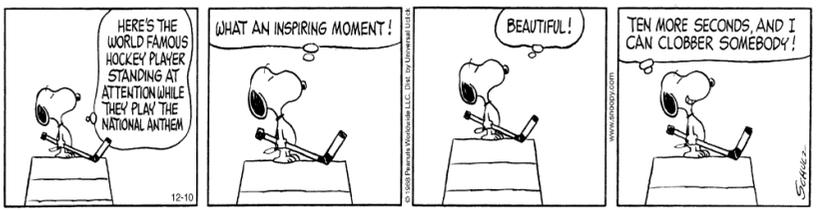
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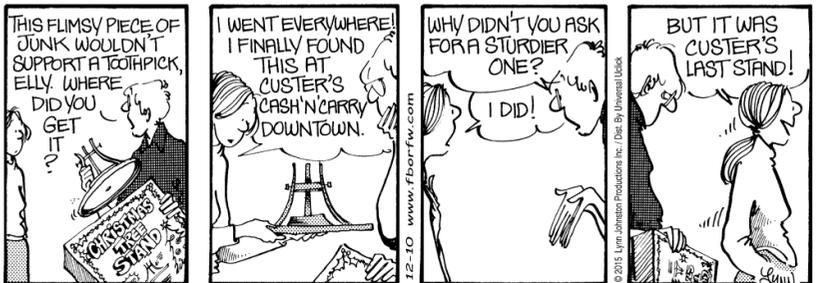
PEANUTS by Charles Schulz



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BABY BLUES by Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman



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DUSTIN by Steve Kelley and Jeff Parker



Daily Horoscope

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You are so focused on what you need to improve that you forget to be confident in what you've already accomplished. Give yourself more credit. The world needs what only you can deliver.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You feel like you should be further along than you are now, which will serve as motivation. You're actually in the perfect place. Things are moving; it's just hard to see right now.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Someone has already gone through what you're going through now and has just the kind of help and advice you most need. So why try to invent a solution when you can borrow one that will work just fine?

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You'll dance around a hot topic. It's hard to speak about it and even harder to be silent about it. Just know that your feelings on the matter are normal and do your best.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). There are fights to fight, struggles to endure, weapons to reveal — and yet your choice may be to artfully surrender instead. This surrender is not a last resort. It's an act of love, devotion and faith.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Success will happen in milestone markers. Place your goal beyond the thing you really want and there will

be many reasons to celebrate whether or not you achieve the far-flung aim.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Without pressure and heat there is no diamond; that's something to remember as you weather the extremes of the day. Keep thinking about the reason you're doing this — the jewels that are being forged.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Fitness trackers now come in beautiful designs. Stretchy batteries are used to power smart clothing. People are increasingly wearing technology. You'll have fun with a trend and enjoy being an early adopter.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Your talent for fantasy will be emphasized. Let your fantasy command you and you'll be unhappy. Stay in command of your fantasy and you'll be a great and satisfied artist.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Some count loving amongst the hardest of human tasks. Maybe it's a matter of timing, because today the loving choice comes so automatically to you that you've no idea how anyone could think that love is hard work.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Re-examine your thoughts, especially the ones that are holding your back, keeping you down or just getting in the way of you being all you want to be.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). It will be better to tolerate a small amount of boredom or discomfort. Really, this won't last long. By trying to avoid it, you could make things worse, as short-term pleasures bring long-term consequences.



HOLIDAY MATHS