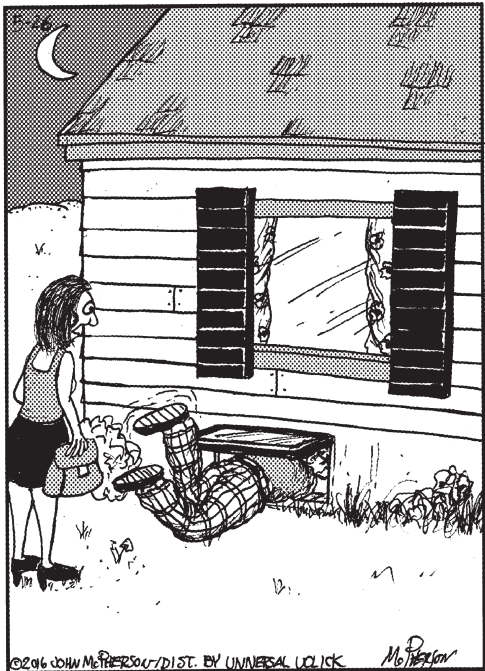


CLOSE TO HOME by John McPherson



"I know you said you live in your parents' basement, but I at least thought they KNEW you live there!"

Mom objects to kids paying for damage

Dear Abby: We visit my in-laws two or three times a year. During our most recent visit, my kids (ages 12 and 14) were roughhousing with their cousins and slammed a door, which resulted in a broken frame. Their grandpa had asked them to stop, which they apparently didn't do.

Now, three months later, my in-laws are visiting us, and my mother-in-law is having the kids pay for the frame. When I spoke up and let her know I thought this was inappropriate, she became very upset and said, "Kids these days don't have any consequences," and this is what she and the kids had agreed should happen. I emphasized in front of the kids how important it is to listen, to be accountable for your actions and to see what they could've done to make it up to her.

It seems to me that a conversation about respect and listening is plenty appropriate but, after that, shouldn't my mother-in-law have gracefully let it go? These kid are considered by most people to be great kids.



JEANNE PHILLIPS
DEAR ABBY

Was I wrong to express my opinion that having the kids pay her is inappropriate? If it wasn't, then maybe we shouldn't visit at her home, since it's filled with breakable valuables. I am very frustrated by my controlling mother-in-law. — *Upset in Morro Bay*

Dear Upset: Your "great kids" ignored their grandfather when he asked them to quit roughhousing, and the result was significant property damage. If they had agreed with their grandmother that there would be restitution — I assume the same was true of their cousins — you were wrong to interfere. That you would do this in the presence of your kids was a mistake.

I agree with your mother-in-law that one of the problems in our society today is the lack of accountability or consequences when people do something wrong. I applaud her for sticking to her guns, and you owe her an apology.

Dear Abby: I am going to my girlfriend's mother's 60th birthday party. I just found out that her younger sister is pregnant — unbeknownst to her parents — and she plans to

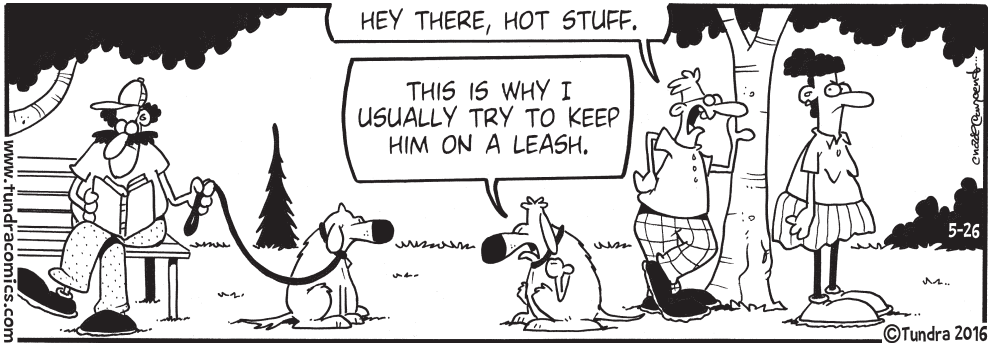
surprise them the next day on their mom's actual birthdate. The little sister has asked that we not drink at the dinner because she doesn't want to feel left out. This caused an argument between me and my girlfriend because I think her request is silly and kind of selfish.

Is there a rule of etiquette about this? Isn't it weird that someone would ask that you not drink a couple of beers or a glass of wine at a birthday dinner? If I'm on a diet, I don't ask people to eat only salad or to order less around me. I think she should make a "headache/not feeling well" excuse rather than try to limit/control the fun of others. — *Social Drinker*

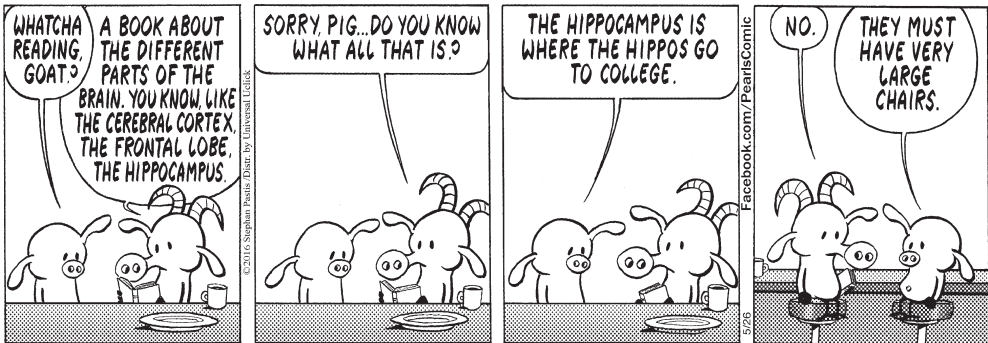
Dear Social Drinker: No rule of etiquette covers this. I agree that you shouldn't have to abstain at the celebration if you prefer to indulge. However, the decision should be voluntary and not imposed upon you. Your girlfriend may prefer not to have alcohol that night to support her sister, but that doesn't mean you must.

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

TUNDRA by Chad Carpenter



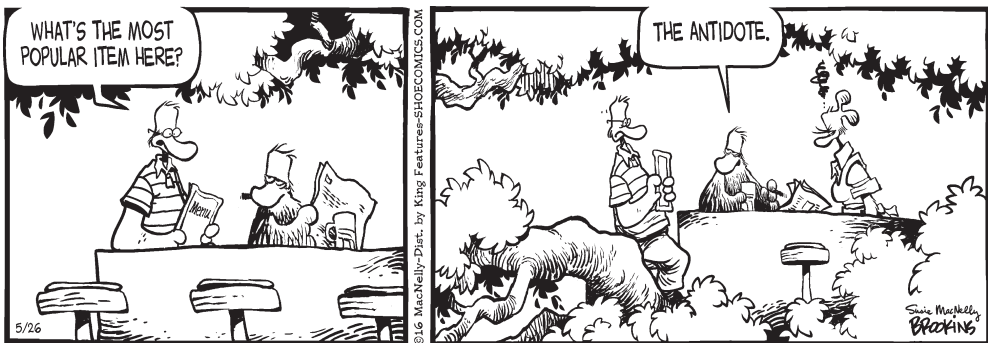
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE by Stephan Pastis



GARFIELD by Jim Davis



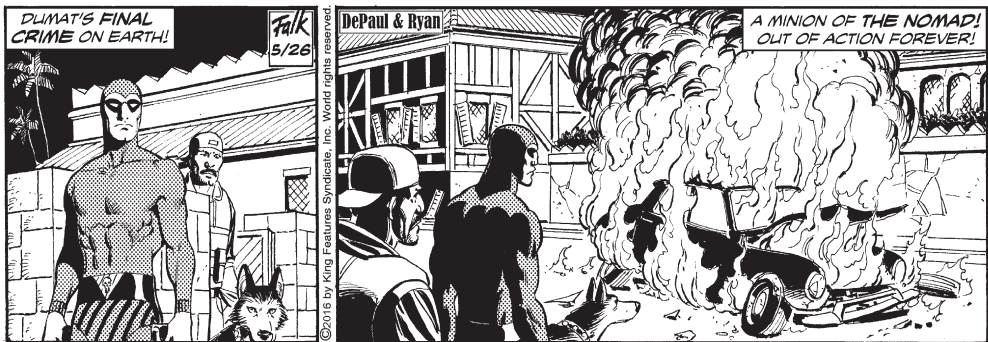
JEFF MACNELLY'S SHOE by Chris Cassatt and Gary Brookins



WIZARD OF ID by Brant Parker



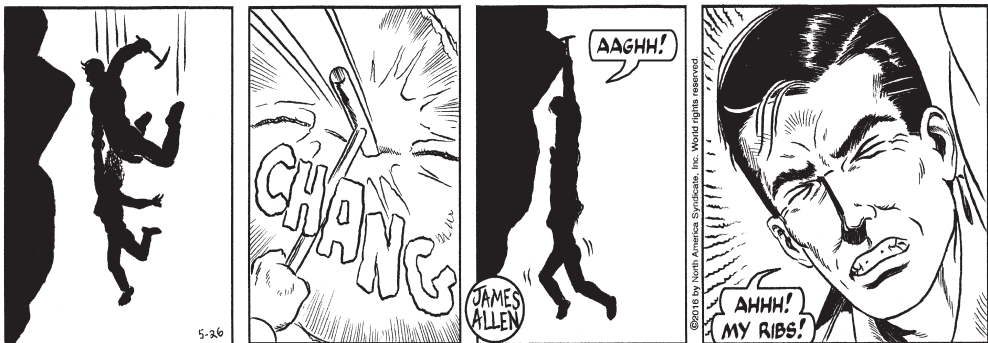
THE PHANTOM by Lee Falk



DILBERT by Scott Adams



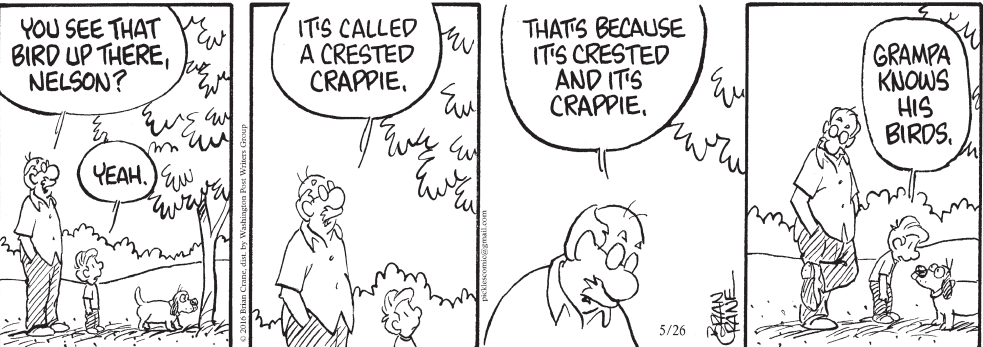
MARK TRAIL by James Allen



PEANUTS by Charles Schulz



PICKLES by Brian Crane



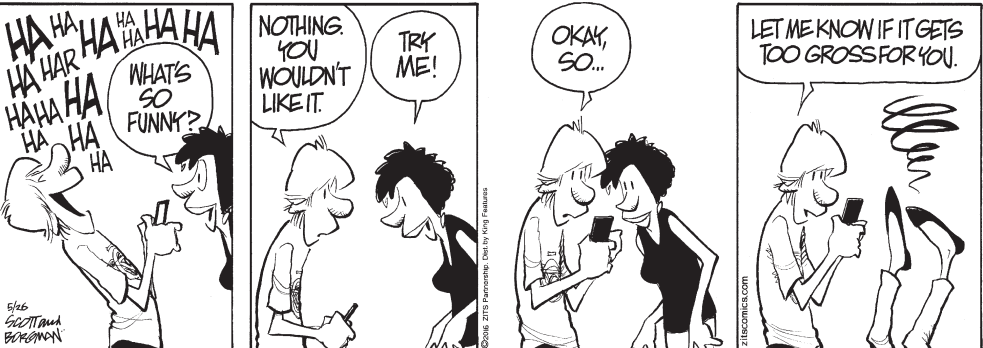
FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE by Lynn Johnston



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 someone you respect is in charge you fall right into compliance with what's being requested of you. But when it's time to self-regulate, you'll be in a mood to push the limits.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Write your wishes because there is power in your ink-paper-hand-heart connection. If your wish is a secret it will be even luckier for you to have it in this form, as powerful as it is hidden away.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Something will take place to improve the situation between you and that person who is causing you pain. Will it be gentle talk or honest, tough love? Only you know the mode that will best suit the relationship.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Other people's dramas will only sound like gossip or a decoy if they come from you. Besides, the most interesting events center on you. Believe it and share your own stories.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Like a college student afraid to join the real world workforce, sometimes learning can be used as an excuse not to move forward. You know all you need to know. Now get out there and use it.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You'll be doing business on behalf of those unable or unwilling to do it themselves. There's honor in this. Also responsibility — it's best not to dwell on that

part. Just execute this quickly with a clear intention and a light heart.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). A great coach will help you think ahead of where you are and help you plan and do all it takes to get to the next level. Keep this in mind and you will eventually attract the right person.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Today will feel a bit like working in a computer program you basically know, until you hit that one key that sends you to an entirely different screen you're not sure how to escape from. Breathe and ask for help.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Sure, you've done brave things. Some might even call you heroic. But this isn't what you've built your reputation on. Consistency and good cheer have earned you major loyalty.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You will get people working in concert to effect meaningful change. This talent of yours is not to be taken lightly, even though it doesn't require much effort from you today. One successful act will have a snowball effect.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You will learn who you are by seeing what you can do. You will learn what you can do by trying what you probably can't do. The one who is least afraid of looking ridiculous wins!

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Sometimes the superficial things you think are going to make you happy actually do. As much as you'd like to claim the spiritually high road, a lower indulgence may do just as much to stoke your joy.



HOLIDAY MATHIS