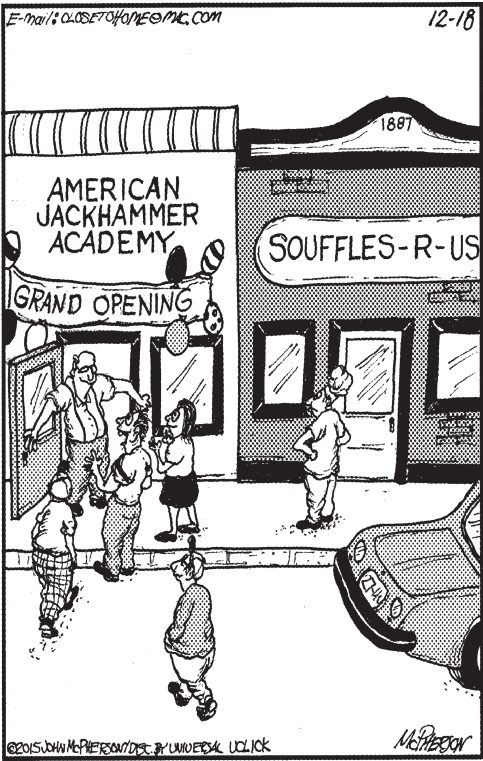


CLOSE TO HOME by John McPherson



Marriage is money arrangement to wife

Dear Abby: My wife and I have been married three years. It has been rocky since year two. She's a great mother to our kids, especially the one who is medically challenged. We have broken up twice so far, and are now back together. However, because of my job, we live in different states.

Bottom line: I'm no longer sure this is the right relationship for me. She goes to school full time while I work a ton of overtime to support two households. We hardly see each other. She has said she would rather me work and not see me so that everything gets paid. I feel she's more about the money than the marriage. What do you think? — *Unhappily Married in Baltimore*

Dear Unhappily: You and your wife both appear to be carrying a heavy load. For the sake of your children, it would be nice if your marriage could be resuscitated. However, not every marriage can be — and the arrangement you have now is clearly not working for you.



JEANNE PHILLIPS
DEAR ABBY

If your wife actually feels that she would rather not see you so that everything gets paid, then I think she has made her feelings clear. The marriage no longer exists; it's a financial arrangement. You have my sympathy.

Dear Abby: Why does it feel awkward for me to call my husband by his first name? When I say his name from another room to get his attention, it only feels natural for me to call him "Babe."

When I'm talking about him to someone else, I use his name, but it still makes me cringe. It's a perfectly normal, common name, so I don't know why it makes me so uncomfortable. And this doesn't just apply to my husband. Before him, I was in a six-year relationship with my high school sweetheart and had the same problem.

Why can I only call my significant others "Babe" when talking to them? — *Hubby's Name Is...*

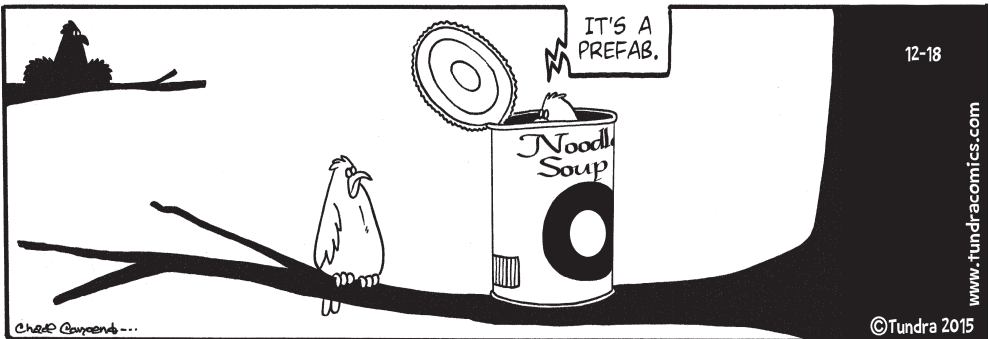
Dear Hubby's Name: When couples become intimately involved, it is common for them to use pet names with each other. That you call your husband and your former

boyfriend by the SAME name is interesting. Could it be that subconsciously you are/were afraid that if you don't use the same pet name, you will absentmindedly use the wrong one?

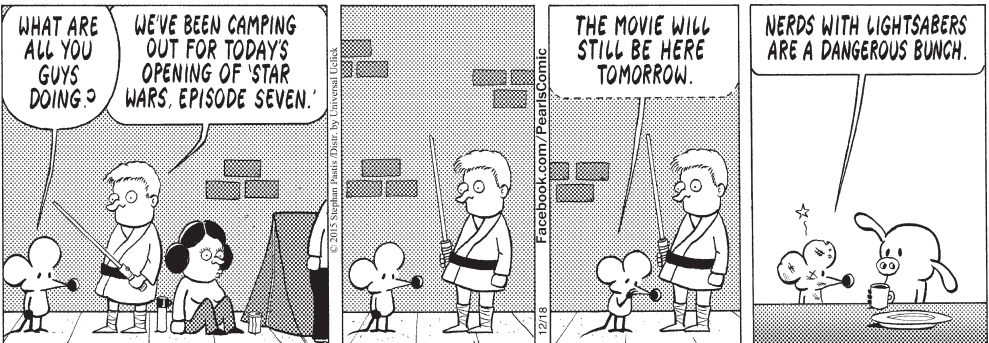
Dear Abby: My cousin and I have season tickets for the Broadway series at our local theater. Our problem is two women who sit next to us in the box. After intermission, when the second act starts, they talk loudly to each other as long as 10 minutes into the show. I want to say something, but I don't want to cause any negativity or bad feelings because we will see them at each show. How should I deal with it? — *Audience Member*

Dear Member: Here's how: When the women continue their conversation after the curtain rises, you say to the one nearest you, "Please be quiet. We can't hear the performance." That's not rude; it's being assertive. If they persist after that, complain to the management and ask that, if possible, in the future you be seated apart from the magpies.
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



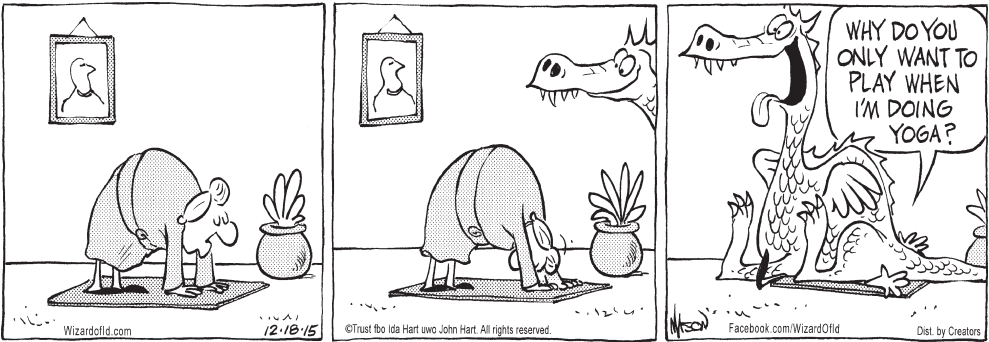
GARFIELD by Jim Davis



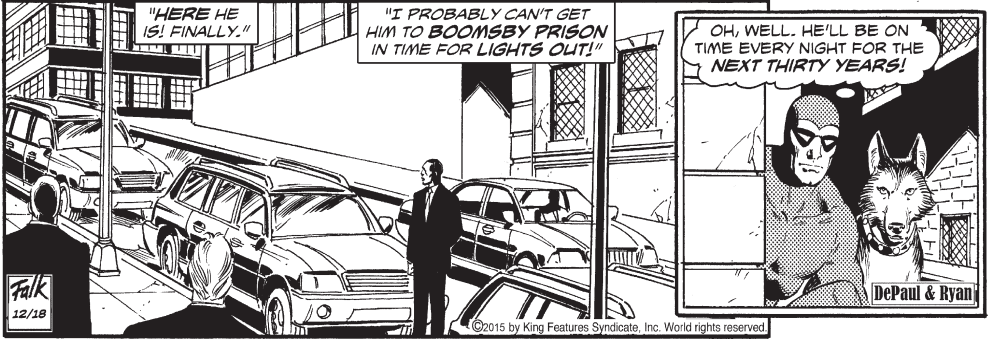
JEFF MACNELLY'S SHOE by Chris Cassatt and Gary Brookins



WIZARD OF ID by Brant Parker



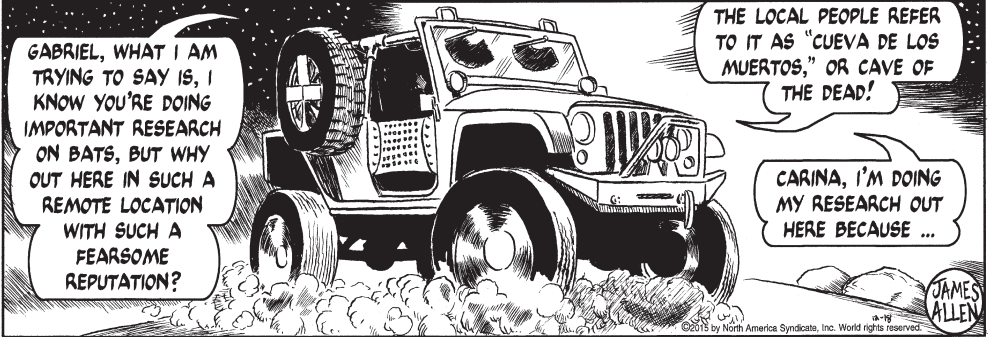
THE PHANTOM by Lee Falk



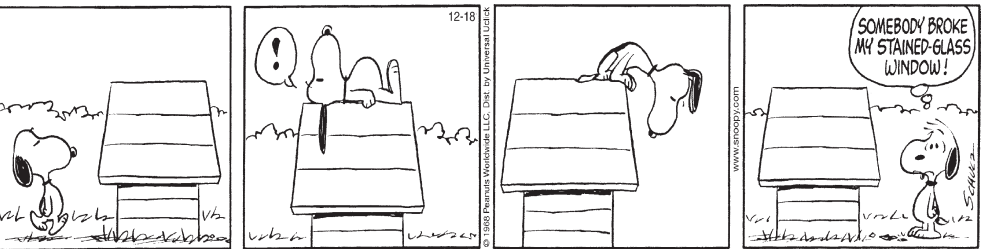
DILBERT by Scott Adams



MARK TRAIL by James Allen



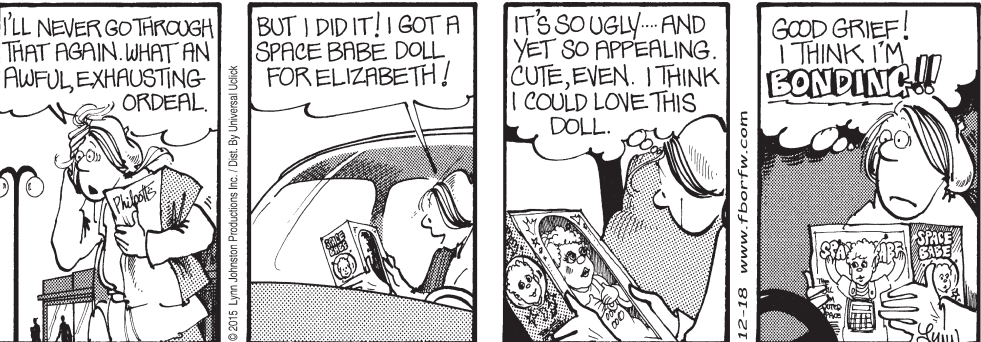
PEANUTS by Charles Schulz



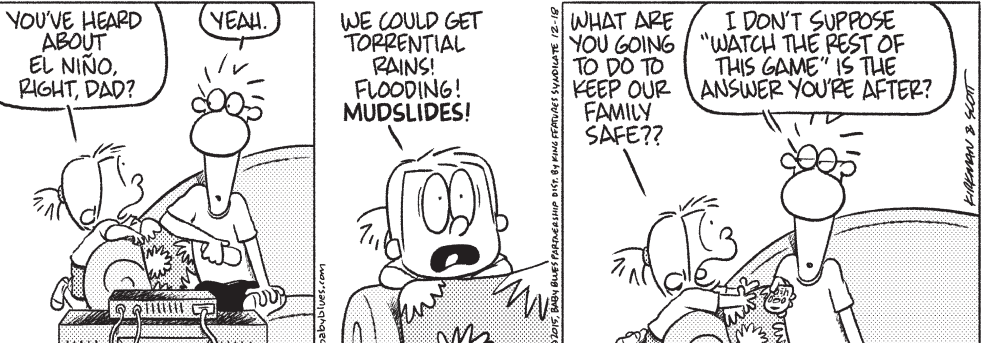
PICKLES by Brian Crane



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). Whatever has been keeping you from saying what you think, feeling your feelings and acknowledging your needs will now be lifted. You'll be free, expressive and well-received to boot!

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Stop making something else more important than your relationship with yourself. There's a juicy opportunity that will only surface when you're being true to you.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Each person resides in his or her own unique reality. It's a rare joy when you strike upon acres and acres of common ground with someone fantastic. There is so much to explore there.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Someone wants to get to know you better. Don't worry; you won't have to talk about yourself. Your actions will tell people who you are — no more explanation than that will be necessary.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). There's a mounting tension that, if you let build without release, could be destructive. Let off steam periodically throughout the day. By the way, you could use a few more tools for stress relief in your arsenal.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Details, rules, lists ... you care, but not to the point of preoccupation. You're able to compartmentalize your need for order. When you've done what you were

supposed to do, you'll cut loose and have some fun.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Your guiding planet Venus would like to remind you that there is no universal formula for beauty, humor, art or love. Therefore, you're encouraged to go beyond what you've been taught is "acceptable."

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You don't assume that a circumstance is fortunate or unfortunate until you've experienced it. Your maturity in this regard will place you among the elite. Whether or not that is fortunate or unfortunate remains to be experienced.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Wondering if you're good enough? You can stop wondering now and never wonder again. You were born good enough. The real question is: Which relationships are a fine fit for all your goodness?

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Your expectations might be derailed and, because you're well-versed in the art of making the best of things, this will prove to be a delightful twist.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). After a week of acting according to plan, you'll be yearning for adventure, and you won't be alone in this. Suggest a bit of spontaneity and you'll have no problem finding a partner in fun.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Because you're not wrapped up in what people think of you, you'll be the perfect candidate for drawing attention to a cause, entertaining the crowd or taking a social risk that will wake everyone up.



HOLIDAY MATHIS