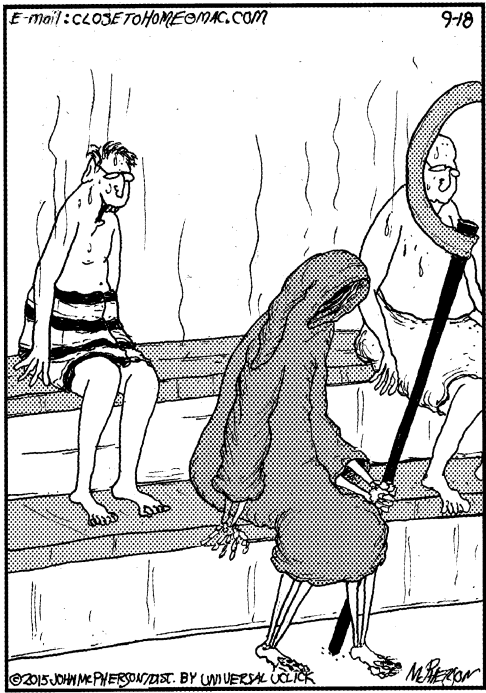


CLOSE TO HOME by John McPherson



"Hey, buddy, are you OK? You look like death warmed over."

Man continues to deal with prejudice

Dear Abby: Today was my high school reunion. I was the most notable student for all the wrong reasons. I was born with some birth defects and learning disabilities. I overcame them, but it was hard. While working blue-collar jobs, I lived in my car for a few years.

On a cold winter night several years ago, I met Dr. X in the emergency room. He was a former classmate of mine, and we pretended not to know one another.

He discovered I was living in my car and heard some of my story. Then he arranged for me to be admitted to the hospital for a day so I could get warmed up and recover. When I left the hospital, I found a \$100 bill in the gas tank door of my van. I'm sure it was from him.

I now have a home of my own and I'm doing OK, considering everything. When I sent my reservation and check to the reunion committee, it was returned uncashed with a \$50 bill along with a note saying "Please don't come."



JEANNE PHILLIPS
DEAR ABBY

The reunion was being held on the estate of Dr. X.

I guess my classmates are more closed-minded than I thought they would be. I was hoping age would mellow them.

In addition to the reservation return, I have seen a few forwarded emails mocking my attempts to find out about the event. I hope none of those people were blessed with a child with learning or physical issues.

I guess people never change on some things. Thankfully, I have found nicer, caring people along my journey in life, and for that I'd like to thank all of the kind people in the world. — *Unexpected Success*

Dear Unexpected Success: Your letter shocked me. I am glad to know how you are doing. Although people age, it's apparent that not all of them mature.

In case you haven't yet realized it, you weren't the only student in your class with problems. People who would behave as you have described were obviously born without a heart.

It is inexcusable for you to have been treated the way you were. In recognition of the chal-

lenges you have overcome, you should have been the guest of honor at the reunion.

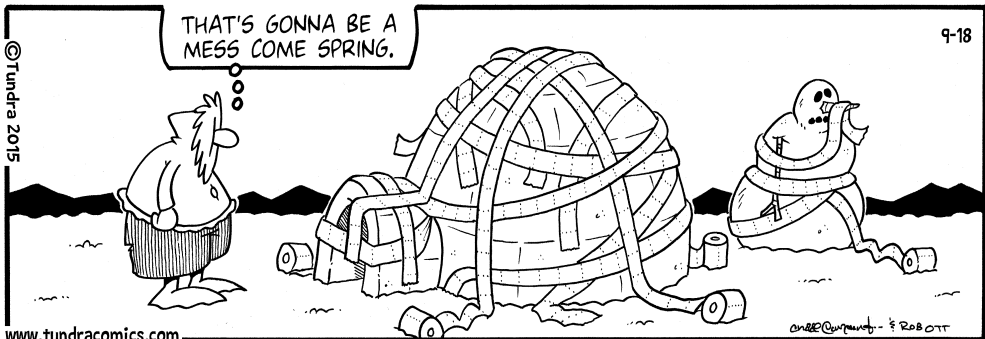
Dear Abby: I've been seeing a man for 15 months. I know he has three sisters and a brother. All he has said is they are not close and he doesn't keep in touch with them. There are no cards at holiday time, no phone calls or any mention of any of them (there are nieces and nephews, too), and no explanation about why they don't talk.

Should I be concerned that he doesn't share any of this with me? He has been very involved with my entire family, but I have never met a single relative of his. — *Kept in the Dark in Massachusetts*

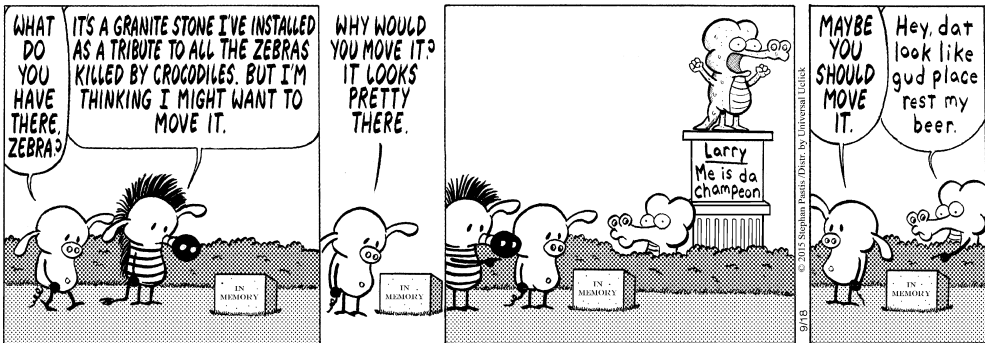
Dear Kept in the Dark: After 15 months of dating, you should be able to get some honest answers. There are probably good reasons why this man and his family are estranged. They may have been abusive to him, or he may be the black sheep of the family. But you will never know unless you ask directly.

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

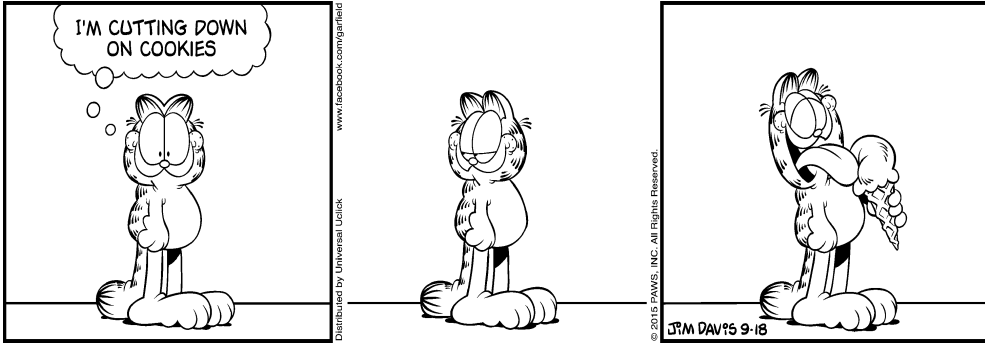
TUNDRA by Chad Carpenter



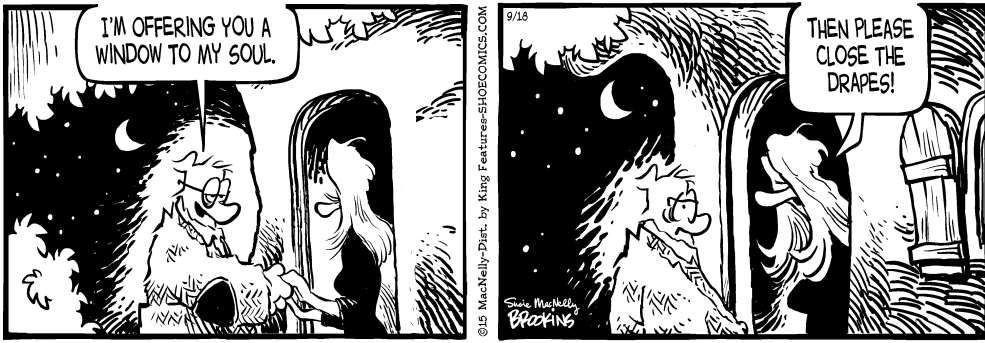
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE by Stephan Pastis



GARFIELD by Jim Davis



JEFF MACNELLY'S SHOE by Chris Cassatt and Gary Brookins



WIZARD OF ID by Brant Parker



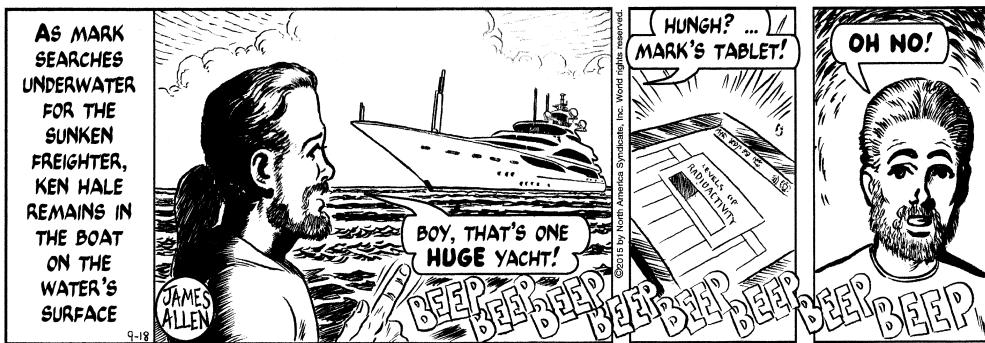
THE PHANTOM by Lee Falk



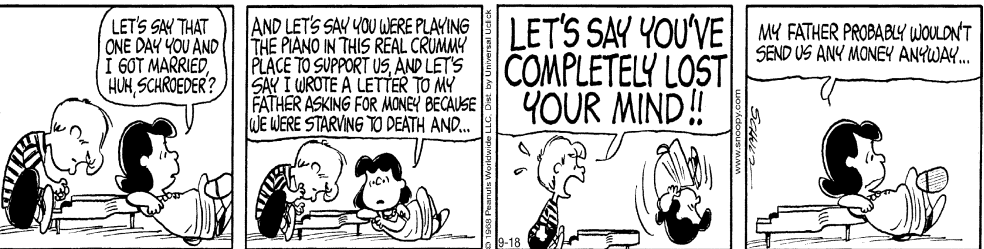
DILBERT by Scott Adams



MARK TRAIL by James Allen



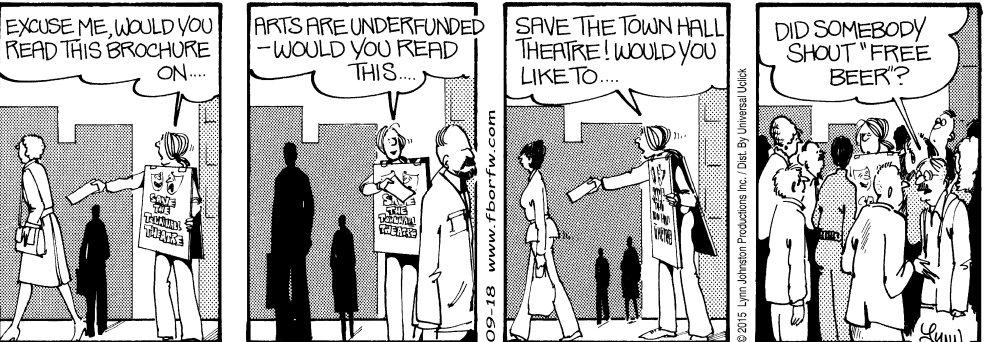
PEANUTS by Charles Schulz



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). Artistic glory can be bought. It's shiny and brand-specific, and it makes an impression strutting down the street, though often not the impression intended. People, including you, sense real confidence.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). The early day is filled with imperfect delights. The temptation will be to improve upon them later, although the more artistic choice may be to leave it alone and see how memory enhances the picture.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Your way with words is that you're never without them. The words are always right where you need them — well, almost always. Today brings an unfamiliar sensation: the argument getting lost on the tongue. It's for the best.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Just because they can't handle it doesn't make it "too much." You have a different tolerance, a different facility with the subject matter and a degree of confidence you can't expect them all to understand.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). If it's important to you, it's important. The same goes for the foolishness of the past that seemed do-or-die at the time. Have compassion for "past-you." You had your reasons, even though you no longer believe them.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). If there's someone you want to know better, ask now while your personal energy is impulsive, assertive and charming

as all get-out. Don't think about it too much. Just aim and launch.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Though your most accurate answer to today's questions may be "I don't know," it's not the answer that will move you forward. Resolve to learn whatever is necessary to succeed with your project.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The good opportunities in the near future will come much earlier or later in the day than you would normally choose to be active, but don't let that stop you from saying you'll be there. It will be worth it to change your schedule.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). The village idiot often winds up being the wisest one of them all. That's why you respectfully listen to all of the many opinions wafted your way today.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Being able to entertain views that differ from your own in a reasonable, calm, detached way will ultimately make you smarter and give you an advantage should you need to resolve a conflict of interest.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). There are a lot of people you like and feel friendly toward, but truly hitting it off with another person is a relatively rare gem of an occurrence and worth following through on.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The exercise routine that's fallen away doesn't need to stay away. Your physical energy may be low, and that's all the more reason to push yourself. The effort won't drain you; it will invigorate you.



HOLIDAY MATHIS