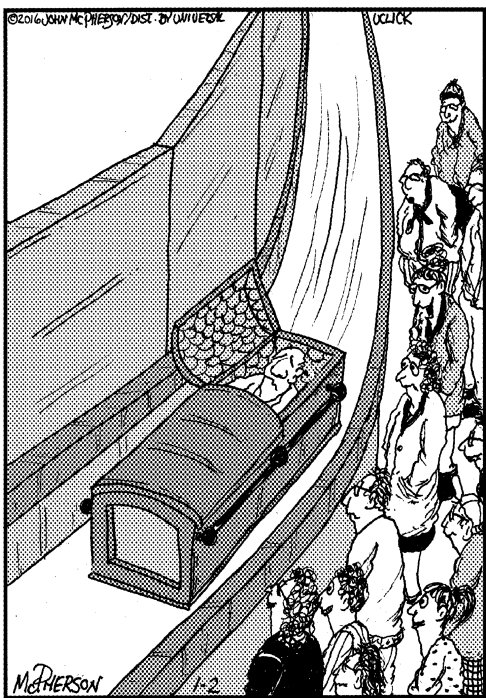


CLOSE TO HOME by John McPherson

At the funeral of 1932 bobsled gold medalist Hans Voortman.

Man without kids has right to chime in

Dear Abby: I'm a gay man in my late 40s who has worked for 10 years in the public school system with young adults and kids with special needs.

I have done everything from changing preschoolers' diapers, to tutoring, travel training and teaching life skills to older children.

In the process, I have encountered my share of cooperation, defiance, failure and success.

When speaking with family, friends or strangers about their parenting, I sometimes share my experiences.

This is usually accepted and even encouraged, but occasionally I am put in my place by a parent who feels I must be told that what I've done "isn't the same as being a parent."

Some even go so far as to imply that I should remain silent, as I have nothing of a parenting nature to offer.

I would think that making everyone feel included would be more important than off-

cial parent status, especially when discussing similar experiences.

So what's the best way to handle this? I have no kids of my own; my students are all I have to share stories about.

Should I just dummy up? — *Sort of Childless in San Francisco*

Dear Sort of Childless: No, but recognize that whatever you offered clearly made someone defensive.

When people are in that mode, they aren't receptive to your opinion.

Remember the phrase "casting pearls before swine"? It means offering something valuable to those who don't understand that it's precious.

You and I, and most parents, understand that you are rich in experience. Don't let the others get under your skin.

Dear Abby: My boyfriend, "Richard," is 15 years my senior, and the more he is involved in my life, the more overprotective he is becoming. Some of his concerns are legitimate, but it seems like he considers me more like a child or "little woman" than his equal partner.

He isn't comfortable with me walking two blocks from my house to a friend's house at night without an escort.

I recently obtained my motorcycle license, and he doesn't want me riding at night. The latest issue is that he doesn't want me to walk him to his car because he would "rather me be locked safely in the house."

I think I'm capable enough to cross my front lawn at night without being attacked.

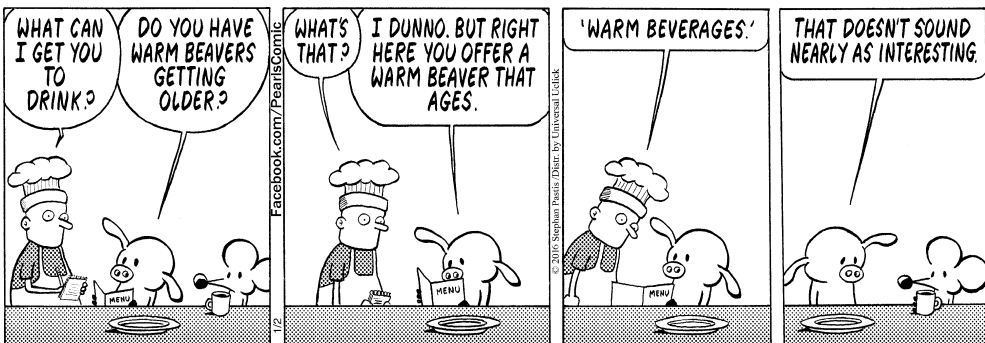
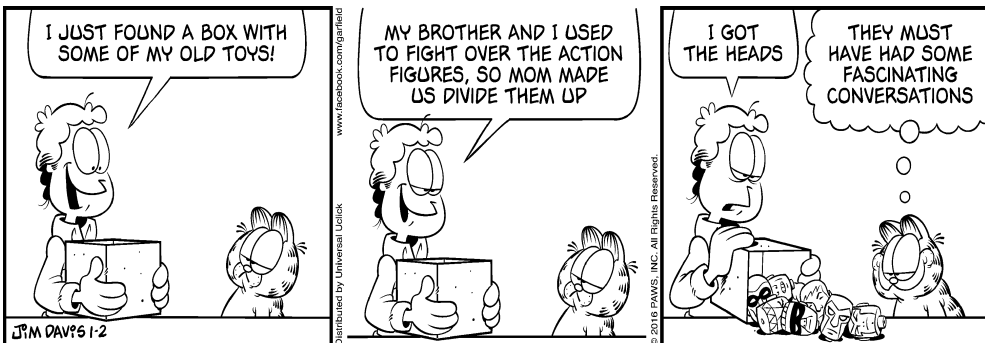
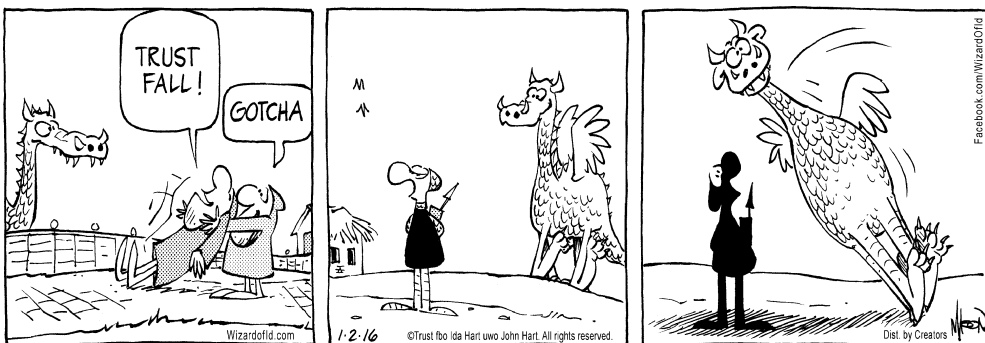
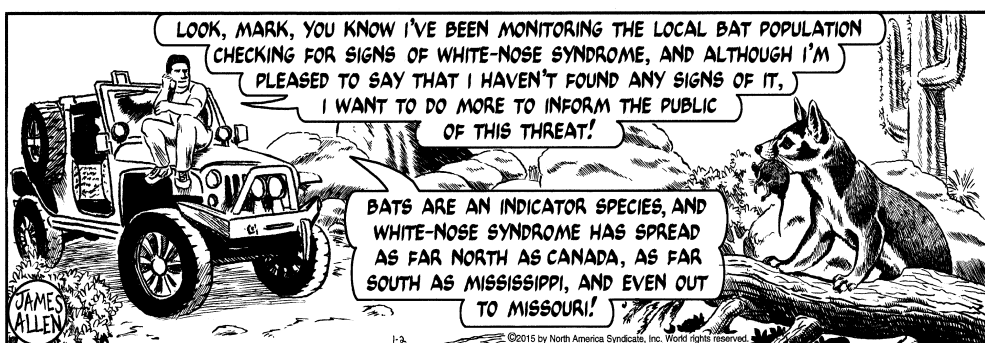
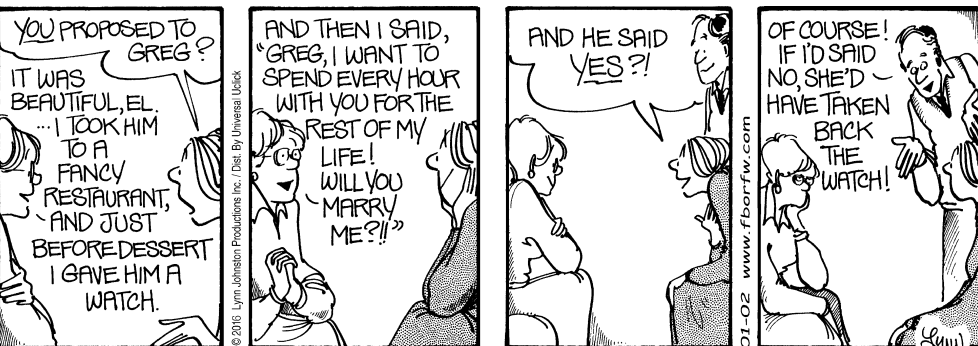
How do I differentiate between legitimate concern and overprotective paranoia? — *Overprotected*

Dear Overprotected: If your neighborhood is safe, then this may be a question of how your boyfriend is presenting his concerns to you.

If he is SUGGESTING that he would prefer you be more cautious after dark, that's one thing.

However, if he's INSISTING, then it's something else, and it could be a tip-off that he's not only "parental," but controlling.

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). Before you plunk down your money for the product, ask to see it in action. Also, a worthwhile teacher will be able to demonstrate the results of his or her teaching. Buyer beware!

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). What happened to shake your sense of self? Regardless of the cause, this uncertainty will provide an opportunity for you to view what you're doing with detached interest.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). If you seem to be running counter to your action plan, canceling out the sense of progress you had in recent days, worry not. This isn't a reversal, just a detour to broaden your outlook.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). The fun you're having is a commercial for the fun others could be having. They'll pay attention and then be ready to sign up for whatever you're doing. Honestly, you should get a commission.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). None of today's efforts will be in vain. They might not work out, but that doesn't mean they won't work into something you do later. Keep an easy-going manner because once you get frustrated, it's downhill from there.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). In a sense you're at the gambling table. You've had less before, much less, in fact. Does remembering those

times make you more or less inclined to take a risk?

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You know the secret: None can resist the one who makes them feel like the super-powered version of themselves. Your admiring gaze is a steroid shot to the ego.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). They find you exciting to be around because they are not quite sure how you're going to react but they can count on you to be rather pleasant about it. You're intense, not overbearing!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Love comes in so many forms for you today that if love were chocolates, you'd have enough of an assortment for a proper sampler box. Life is sweet!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Those around you will relax into the calm vibration emanating from you now. There's at least one person you know who needs the grounding influence desperately and could even be healed by it.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). When you're stuck in emotional quicksand, the vine that is your lifeline will come in the form of humor. Also, remember the rules of quicksand: no thrashing around. Be still so you won't sink further.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're not objective enough to know who you used to be, but you remember how you use to feel. This is better. It will improve further when you implement the plans you're dreaming about today.

JEANNE PHILLIPS
DEAR ABBY

HOLIDAY MATHIS