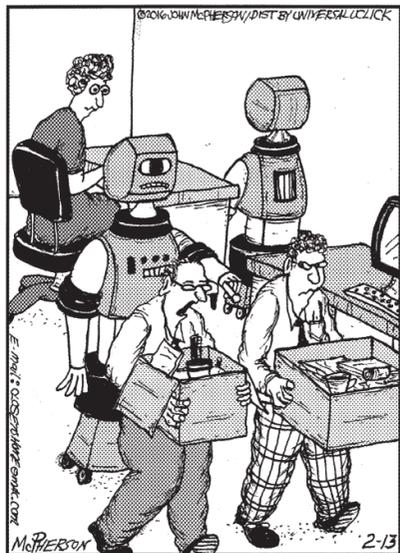


CLOSE TO HOME by John McPherson



"Man, it's bad enough to be replaced by a robot, but having one FIRE us takes the cake!"

Teenager's heart aches for young cousin

Dear Abby: I am 18 and in my sophomore year of college. A month ago, my family went through some major hardships. It came out that "Uncle Mark" has been cheating on my aunt for years and is moving his mistress to our area. They have two children, a son in elementary school and a daughter, "Dana," 13.



JEANNE PHILLIPS
DEAR ABBY

I feel bad for my aunt, but I'm absolutely devastated for Dana.

My Uncle Mark has skipped all of her school events in the wake of this mess, and I can't begin to imagine how disappointed Dana must feel.

Uncle Mark is a sociopath. He feels no empathy, manipulates others and has a sadistic streak. Dana was not close to her dad, but since this mess began she's even less so.

Abby, I don't want my cousin to feel like she's alone. Since I'm an older teenager, she looks up to me. How can I be supportive, and not intrude in this delicate situation?
— *Supportive Cousin in Maine*

Dear Supportive: You are kind to want to help. Your cousin is probably experiencing a range of emotions because of the turmoil that's going on around her family. The kindest thing to do would be to spend time with her when your schedule permits and allow her to vent when she needs to, because she will.

Dear Abby: I am a 10-year-old girl. I'm good at math and very intelligent. I have two questions: When I'm alone in a dark room, I feel like I have to run out of the room. Why?

My second question is, what kind of job can you get without going to college? — *Smart Southern Girl*

Dear Smart Southern Girl: Many people of every age — especially children and the elderly — have a fear of the dark. That's why parents use small night lights in their children's bedrooms and gadgets like The Clapper are popular.

Adults may be afraid of tripping or running into furniture. Teens who watch scary movies develop a fear of the dark because they imagine a "monster" is lurking out of sight who might harm them. The solution can be as

simple as keeping a night light on or switching a light on as you enter a darkened area.

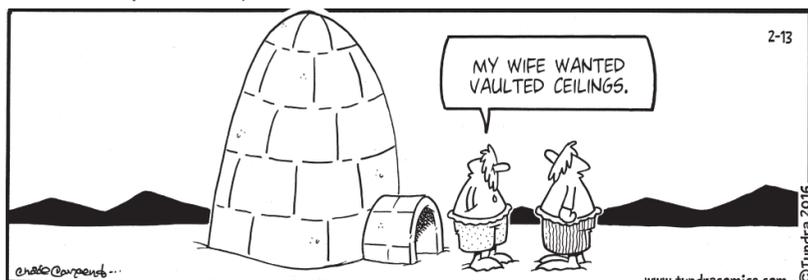
As to what kind of job a person can find without going to college, discuss this with a counselor at your school. College may not be for everyone, but I don't think it's likely you'll get a well-paying job without some advanced education — if not in a college, then in an apprenticeship program or a trade school with a proven high job placement record.

Dear Abby: My girlfriend and I have been having a huge disagreement lately. Since we can't seem to settle it, I'm asking for your help. I say that because tomatoes are technically fruits, ketchup is a smoothie. She disagrees because tomatoes are the only fruit in ketchup. Please tell me — is ketchup a smoothie? And if so, why? — *Spencer in Arizona*

Dear Spencer: In my opinion, ketchup is more a puree than a smoothie. "Smoothie" suggests a beverage that's drinkable, and I don't think ketchup qualifies.

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

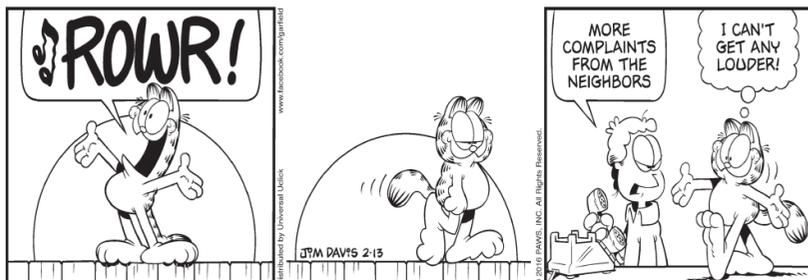
TUNDRA by Chad Carpenter



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE by Stephan Pastis



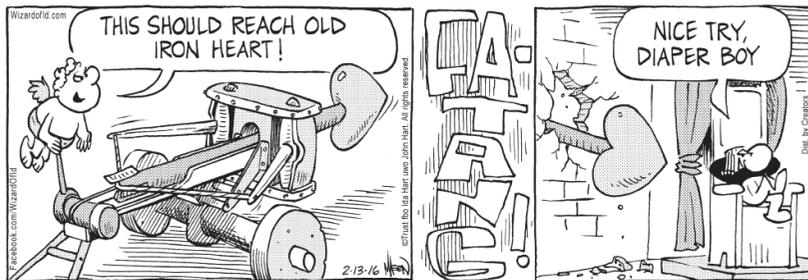
GARFIELD by Jim Davis



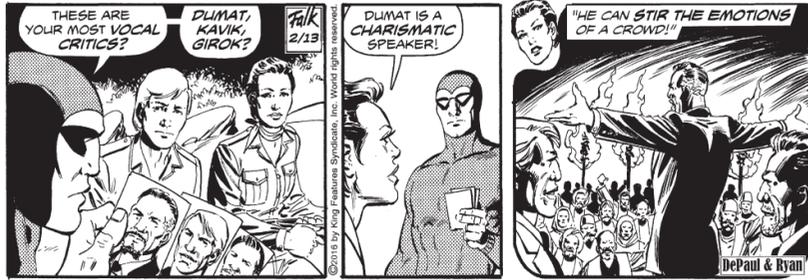
JEFF MACNELLY'S SHOE by Chris Cassatt and Gary Brookins



WIZARD OF ID by Brant Parker



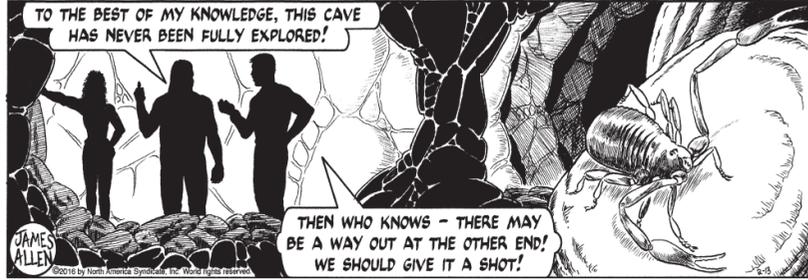
THE PHANTOM by Lee Falk



DILBERT by Scott Adams



MARK TRAIL by James Allen



PEANUTS by Charles Schulz



PICKLES by Brian Crane



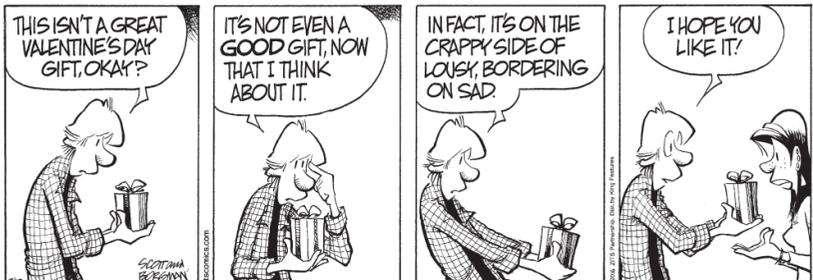
FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE by Lynn Johnston



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). Your dedication to a worthy purpose will be a source of great happiness, though not right away, and not after a week or even a month. Dedicate yourself anyway. You'll understand in time.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You are not a chameleon borrowing your color value from your environment. There's something in you that won't change to match a hue you feel is wrong for you. You'll stand as you really are.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You'll use every resource you have to solve the day's problem. If the problem is about getting more fun and excitement in your life, that's a trouble as worthy of attention as any of them.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). Is joy really a sustainable emotion? It's arguable, and yet, who will waste time in debate? Only a fool would spend precious energy on anything other than joy when joy is there for the taking.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). In order to preserve what you have you'll need to make a few rules regarding the use of it. This will include at least two other people. Communicate as specifically as possible and you should do just fine.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). When you command yourself to do something, it can go either way. Sometimes you rebel. Not now. You'll see the wisdom in what your higher mind is laying out.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Intelligence has less to do with success than tenacity. Usually you have both, though your current concentration on an attractive proposition could temporarily cloud your thoughts. Don't let that slow down your mission.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Some of the poets and philosophers have suggested that happiness occurs exclusively in the memory. You can prove them wrong by being happy in the moment and noticing it, too.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Don't think that just because you're on someone's good side you're impervious to that person's bad behavior. Whatever they do to the others, they'll do to you, too.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). You've built on the person you were when you were younger. You may not even remember how. That's why those who remember what you were like are invaluable assets in your self-discovery process.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). It doesn't matter if the group operates dysfunctionally. What matters is that it's a group and it operates. If you can accept that and have a good attitude about it, you'll win.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Everyone needs a witness. That is why even if all you are doing is "picking up" what another person is "putting down," it's a service more valuable than you might have suspected.

HOLIDAY MATHS

