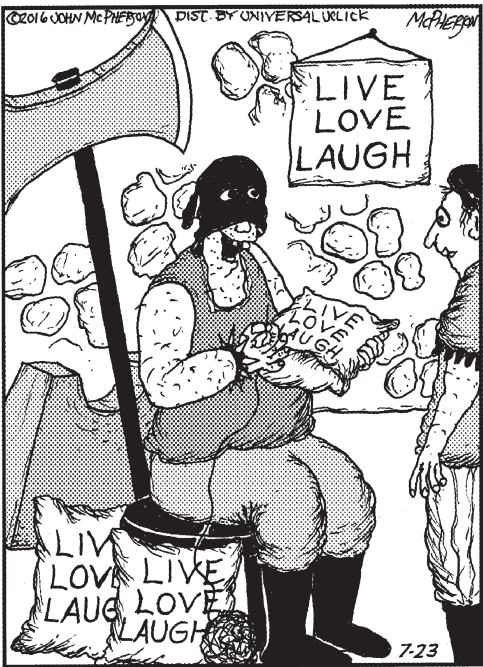


CLOSE TO HOME by John McPherson



"Making them helps me unwind during slow periods. I sell them for four bucks each at the craft fair."

Father's horseplay looks a lot like abuse

Dear Abby: I am a grandmother and great-grandmother who is concerned about the behavior of my grandson toward his 7-year-old daughter, "Beth," and her 9-year-old cousin, "Mandy." When Mandy recently visited me, she told me her uncle crept up behind her, put his hand over her mouth and then held her nose so she couldn't breathe. She said he has done that to Beth, too.



JEANNE PHILLIPS  
DEAR ABBY

Mandy said he held her like that until she felt faint and then let go, laughing. Apparently he does this "all in fun," but I see nothing funny about it. What would make someone do something like this? Mandy told me Beth is afraid of her dad and doesn't want to be left alone with him. I'm very concerned, but I live several states away and don't know what I can do. — *Not Funny*

Dear Not Funny: Your grandson has a bizarre sense of humor. That he would smother anyone — let alone a child — to the point of

fainting is sadistic, bullying, abusive behavior.

Talk to the child's mother to see how she feels about this. If he would do this to a child, one can only imagine what he may be doing to her. She is the person to put a stop to this. If she can't manage that, then any child in the home should be living elsewhere.

Dear Abby: I'm the father of three beautiful, healthy children, with another due very soon. My wife is 36 weeks pregnant, and so far, so good. My wife is, well, perfect. We are not newlyweds and we have seen highs and lows, but she's the greatest mother I could have asked for my children.

The problem? She wants to induce her labor early. She figures the baby is healthy enough and just gaining weight from here on (her OB/GYN agrees). I know she has done enough and I want to support her decision, but I can't help thinking our baby girl will come when she is ready. I don't want to cause any ripples this late in the game. I just feel I'm on thin ice here and in the minority. I don't want to drag my mom into this to prove a point! — *Emotional Dad in California*

Dear Emotional: If your wife's OB/GYN agrees that inducing your wife's labor early will not be harmful to the baby, and that's what your wife wants, then you are outvoted.

While you might request a second medical opinion, I strongly advise against dragging your mother into this disagreement because if you do, it will cause resentment not only against you, but also your mother.

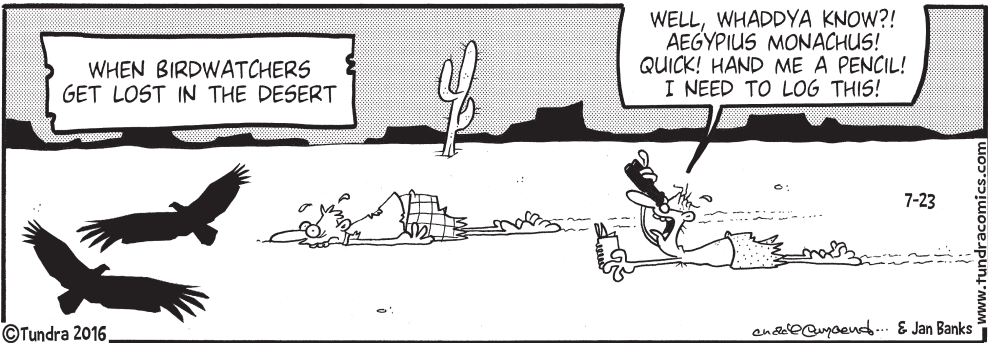
Dear Abby: I have a granddaughter who is getting married soon. If I give the couple money as a wedding gift, whose name should go on the check first, the bride's or the groom's? — *Grandpa in Iowa*

Dear Grandpa: If your granddaughter and her fiancé intend to have separate checking accounts, put her name on the check.

However, if they will be opening a joint account after the wedding, it would make sense to put both of their names on it, and the order in which you list the names is whichever you prefer.

Write Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

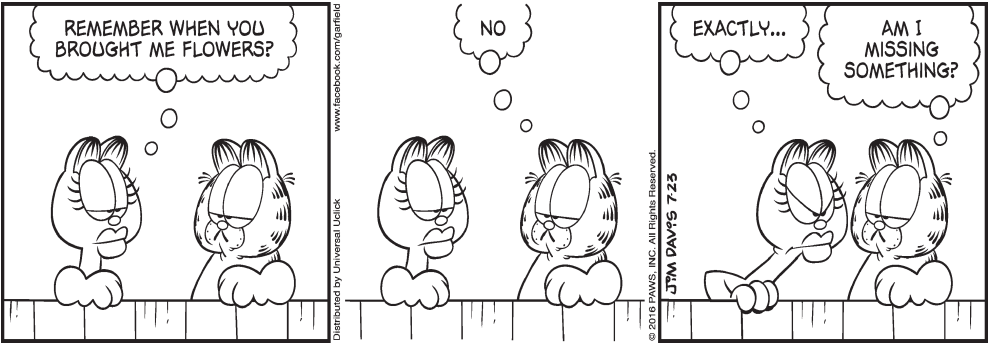
TUNDRA by Chad Carpenter



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE by Stephan Pastis



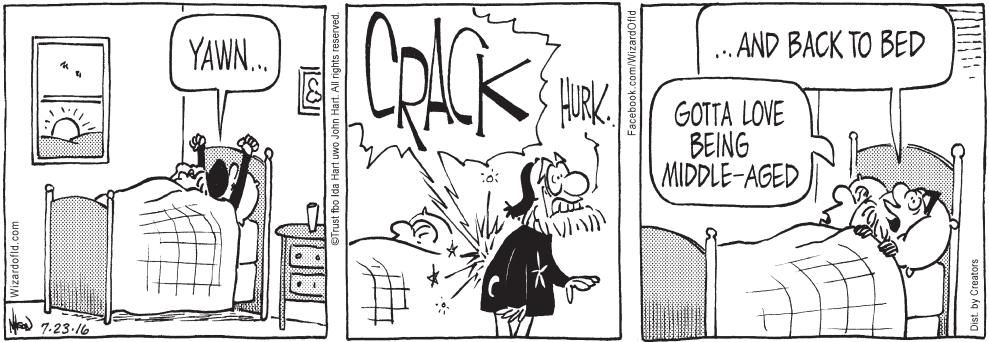
GARFIELD by Jim Davis



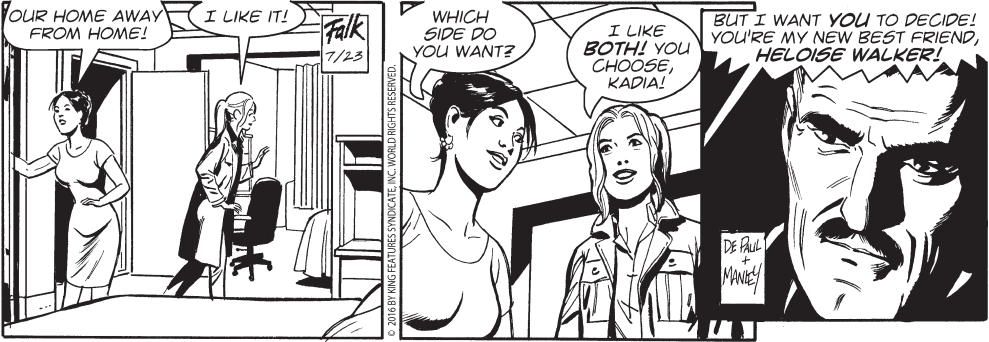
JEFF MACNELLY'S SHOE by Chris Cassatt and Gary Brookins



WIZARD OF ID by Brant Parker



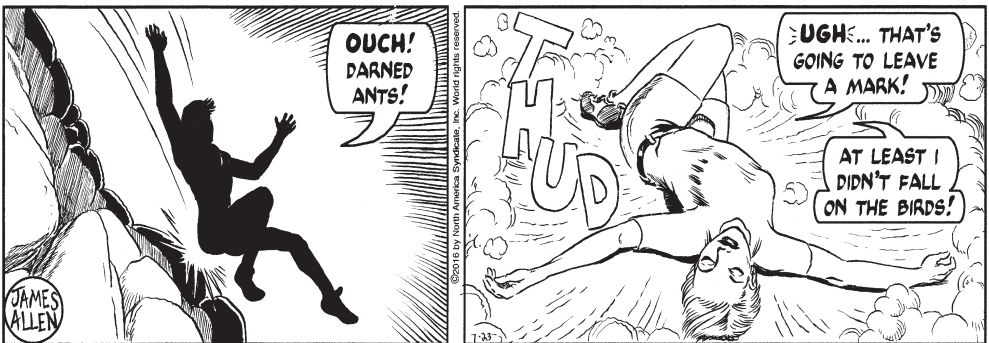
THE PHANTOM by Lee Falk



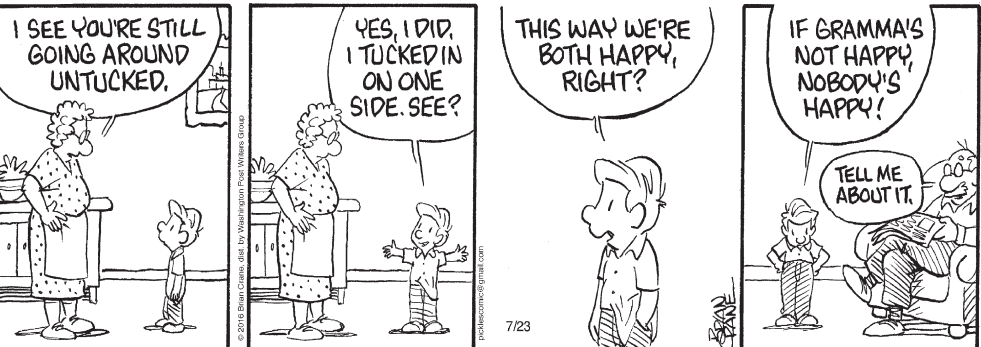
DILBERT by Scott Adams



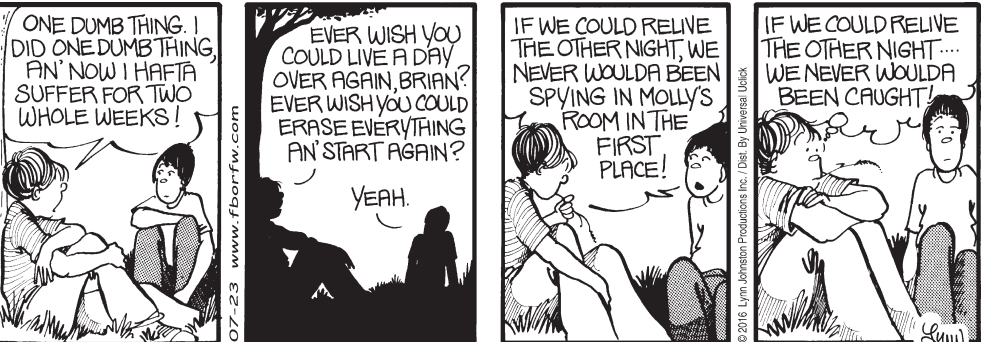
MARK TRAIL by James Allen



PEANUTS by Charles Schulz



FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE by Lynn Johnston



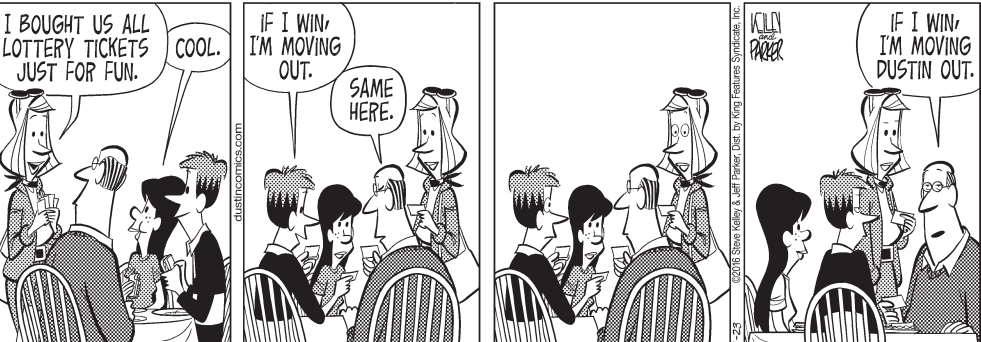
BABY BLUES by Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman



ZITS by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman



DUSTIN by Steve Kelley and Jeff Parker



Daily Horoscope

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** "Do you know what I mean?" they ask. You do, but that doesn't necessarily equate to agreement. The fact that they want validation from you says something. You've a strong presence now. They want your respect.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** What you did in the past is its own kind of ghost, haunting you at the oddest times. Just remember that ghosts, having no body, are illusory and able to distort themselves.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** Someone who took a road you didn't will give you a glimpse into your parallel life, and you'll gain insight as to what it might have been like to live, love or work in a different direction. You'll let this inform your next decision.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** There's something so great about doing it your way, even if the results themselves don't exactly turn out the way you intended (or even close). It's just interesting to know what the unadulterated, uncompromised version is.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** When everyone wants you to show up somewhere, it's a testament to your stellar company. It also has something to do with the way the financial end of these occasions is likely to shake out.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Sometimes you just have to bite the bullet and blurt out what's on your mind, but this is not one of those times.

If you feel nervous and wordless on the subject, wait it out. Nothing needs to be said just yet.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Is "almost" ever enough? "Nearly there" isn't there, to be sure, but it's not nowhere, either. Stand where you landed for a while and consider your options. This valiant but failed effort isn't the last step you'll take.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Remember when you took the popular route and were sorely disappointed in the views? That's what's at your creative core today, driving your unusual and oh-so-satisfying choices.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Just as the bitterness of coffee makes the flavor so compelling, a harsh take on a situation that's gotten sickeningly sweet will provide intellectual and comedic interest today.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** What flies for entertainment on a stage might be considered an overly bold and inappropriate response in real life. You're good at reading your "room," though, and will perform accordingly.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** Growth is often associated with pain, but currently you are in a relatively pleasurable growth period. Sure, there are moments of uncertainty, and it's not the most comfortable process in the world... but it's not half bad, either.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Foiled? Go again. Never end the story with the hero (you) in a position that doesn't have the audience (you) cheering. Who's to say tomorrow's play won't be a game changer? Keep trying.



HOLIDAY MATHIS