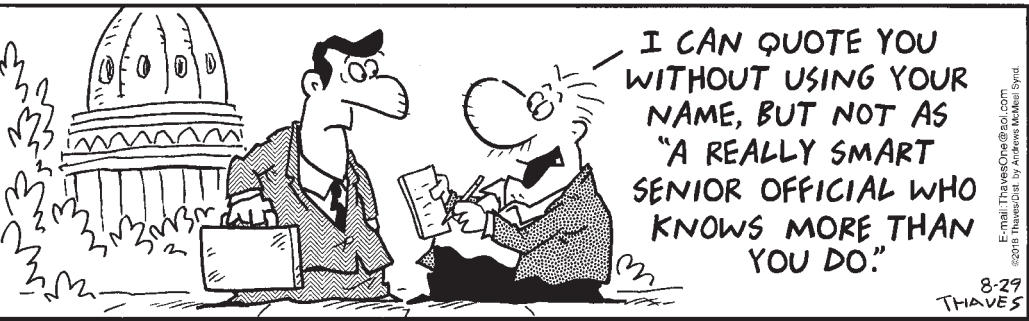


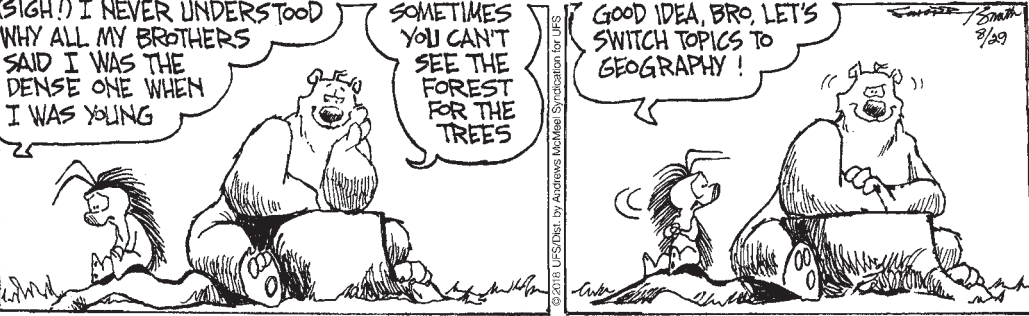
ARLO AND JANIS® by Jimmy Johnson



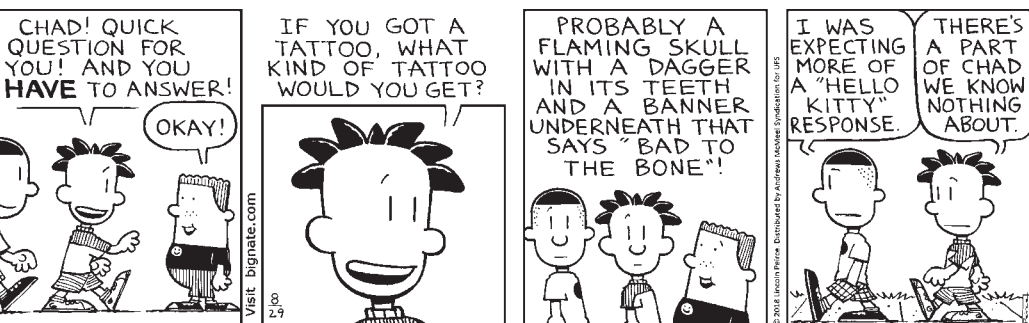
FRANK & ERNEST® by Bob Thaves



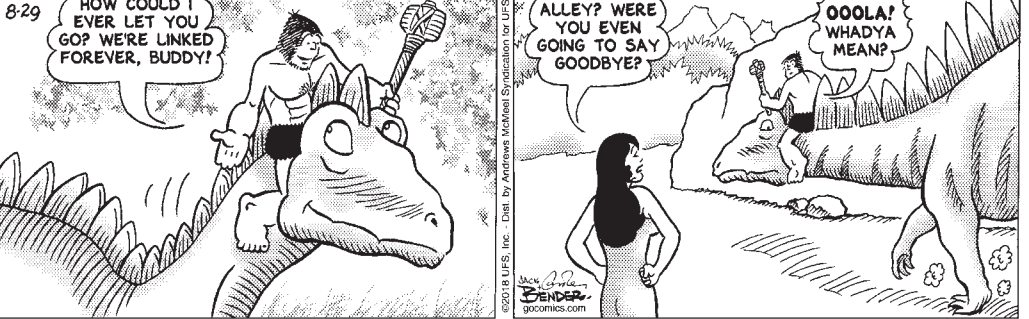
THE GRIZZWELLS® by Bill Schorr



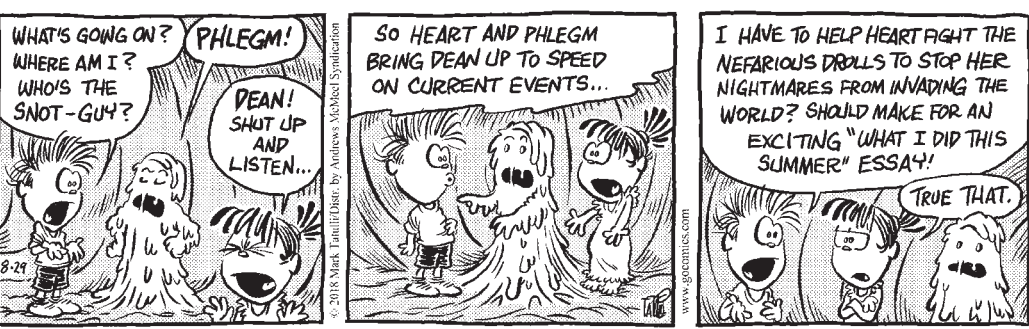
BIG NATE® by Lincoln Peirce



ALLEY OOP by Jack and Carole Bender



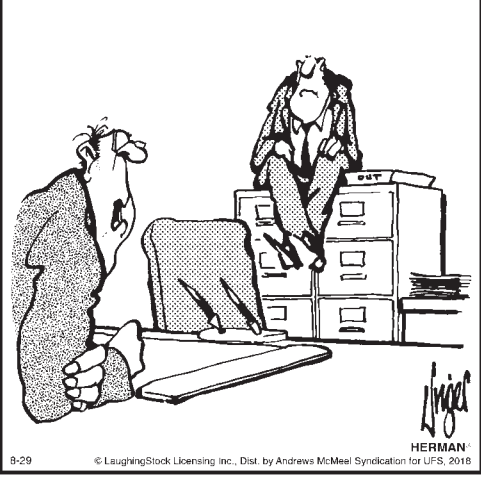
HEART OF THE CITY by Mark Tatulli



THE BORN LOSER™ by Art & Chip Sansom



HERMAN® by Jim Unger



REALITY CHECK® by Dave Whamond



SENSE AND SENSITIVITY
By Harriette Cole

Freshman feels insecure about skin and braces

DEAR HARRIETTE: I'm self-conscious about my skin. I'm starting my freshman year of high school, and my skin is so bad. I recently met with my dermatologist, and he put me on medication, but I don't think it's going to work as quickly as I want it to. I try new makeup products to cover up my blemishes, but it almost looks worse. I'm upset that I'm going to be starting high school with bad skin.

On top of that, I found out that I won't be getting my braces off until the middle of the year. I feel like I'm the only rising freshman with bad skin and braces. Am I ever going to get over my insecurities?

-- Insecure Freshman, Philadelphia

DEAR INSECURE FRESHMAN: This may be hard for you to believe, but you are not alone. Bad skin typically comes from a combination of natural hormonal changes during puberty and your diet. It can take a long time for you to get your skin under control, even when you are mindful and follow your doctor's directions. That means you must have patience as you follow the protocol.

You are right about makeup. It tends to make distressed skin look worse. As hard as it may seem, it is best for you not to put makeup on top of your blemishes. If you can keep your skin clean while it is healing, it will clear up sooner.

As far as braces go, think about the payoff. You will have straight teeth, though the process is long and often uncomfortable. You can weather this storm. Take stock as you go around school to see how many people share your pain. You will be amazed at how many

students are just like you.

DEAR HARRIETTE: My mom's boyfriend proposed to her last week. They have been seeing each other for two years, and he makes her happy. I'm not close with him, so I don't know how I feel about this.

I have such a strong relationship with my dad that I know no man will ever fill his shoes. Sometimes my mom's boyfriend will try to act like a paternal figure, as if I don't have one. I know he is trying hard and just wants my siblings and me to like him, but I think he tries too hard. We have an amicable relationship, and I'm happy to see my mom happy, but I still don't know how I feel about him. Is that normal, considering my mom is going to be marrying this man?

-- Mom Marries New Man, Boston

DEAR MOM MARRIES NEW MAN: This is often an awkward moment for families, especially when your dad still figures prominently in your life. Talk to your mother about expectations. What does she hope your relationship will become with her soon-to-be-husband? Make it clear to her that you remain close with your father and you do not want her fiancé to be a father figure. Establish what the goal is, and work toward that. At the very least, be respectful and kind to him.

(Harriette Cole is a stylist and founder of DREAMLEAPERS, an initiative to help people access and activate their dreams. You can send questions to askharriette@harriettecole.com or c/o Andrews McMeel Syndication, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, MO 64106.)

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS

1 Informal wear
6 Kvetch
12 Mechanic's concern
14 Hobbled
15 Tempest spot?
16 Royal decrees
17 It may be fragile
18 Brooklyn cager
19 Bump
21 Colbert's network
23 Beret cousin
26 Moo goo — pan
27 Frat letter
28 Taxi ticker
30 Question
31 NASA counterpart
32 Dumpster outputs
33 Cinnamon stick, e.g.

35 Low card
37 Comstock Lode st.
38 Piano part
39 Untold centuries
40 Sixth sense
41 Break in
42 Pal
43 Banned bug spray
44 Retiree's kitty
46 "The," to Wolfgang
48 Big name in trains
51 Laundry problems
55 Go up
56 Wild blue —
57 Flat-topped hills
58 Muzzles

DOWN

1 Jacuzzi feature
2 Flight dir.

3 Turkish honorific
4 More pleasant
5 Comfy
6 Hollows
7 Take the trolley

8 Skipped
9 Merchandise ID
10 Harden
11 Mag. staffers
13 Memorable decades
19 Quartz variety
20 Japanese martial art
22 Stiff straw hat
24 Made amends
25 Least
26 Breathe hard
27 Fishing gear
28 Gaze dreamily
29 Host's plea
34 Kitchen fixture
36 Like pine scent
42 Gets bare on top
43 Pipe unclogger
45 Descartes' name
47 British prep school
48 Test tube site
49 Ames inst.
50 Fall mo.
52 Visa and passport
53 Born as
54 Almost-grads

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Answer to Previous Puzzle

BOL	SLAB	SCAB
RAY	LOBO	HOLE
ESC	INCA	AMEN
WIRING	RAMP	
SACK	MUIR	
ESPRIT	LI	
GETA	OER	YELL
EAUX	MBA	IDLE
ERR	OPAQUE	
SNAP	SLAT	
ESTA	FUDGED	
MIDI	FOUR	AMI
STUD	RASP	VPS
GAPE	ORES	EEK

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