# For Better or Worse • Lynn Johnston



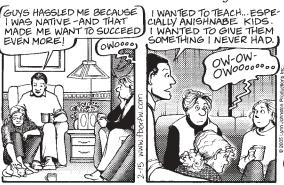








## For Better or Worse • Lynn Johnston







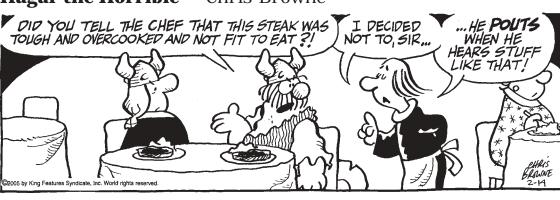
### Garfield • Jim Davis







### Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



### **Blondie •** Chic Young







**Beetle Bailey •** Mort Walker





Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott









## **Sally Forth •** Greg Howard

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## **Cryptoquip**

NJ S LPBCPU ASI S HWONVI

SC XSOLSHNOH, EW BPVQL

BSQQWL "CEW ANTSUL

PJ HSVTW."

Saturday's Cryptoquip: GRILLS AND STEAM IRONS ARE FLYING OFF THE SHELVES. THEY'RE DEFINITELY HOT ITEMS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: H equals G

# Americans send love to troops

**DEAR READERS: Because** today is Valentine's Day, I thought you might enjoy reading some of the 5 million messages of love and support sent to our men and women in the military during the Christmas holidays via OperationDear-Abby.net. Those "love letters" warmed my heart, as I know they will yours as well. Read

FROM RHONNIE IN TEX-**AS:** "I know things must be hard for you, being far from home and missing the friends and family you depend on for comfort. I know that when you signed on, you knew you could end up in an unfriendly place and would be gone for long periods of time. You knew this, yet you did it anyway. That selfless act says much of your character, your strength and your courage. "You're probably homesick,

as are your family and friends for you. You are loved and appreciated by more than only your friends and family. You have a strong nation behind you that wishes you home soon, whether you be in the heat of the desert or the cold and snow. Be safe, and thank you."

FROM SHARON IN SAN-FORD, MICH.: "Thank you for your service to our country. I pray that everywhere you go, and in everything you confront, that you will be given a special wisdom. It is my heart's desire that truth and freedom be strengthened, and flourish, and all error manifested and dissolved.' FROM ROBYN G., THE

WOODLANDS, TEXAS: "Thank you for all of your sacri-

## **Abigail Van Buren**

## Dear Abby

good fight to know that America is thankful, even if we don't write for you when you come home.:) Love and prayers."

FROM LOUISE IN LEWIS-VILLE, OHIO: "You may find it hard to understand that someone you don't even know is thinking about you. I am a mother of three and was an Army wife. You all are near and dear to my heart. Know that someone is praying that you come home safe and sound, that someone needs you to know you are not forgotten. Finish your job, make the world a better place and come home soon."

FROM BECKY IN ED-WARDSVILLE, ILL.: "Thank you for volunteering, and thank you for hanging in there during the tough times. There's no doubt we have the best sailors, soldiers, airmen, Marines and National Guard in the world, and you make us very proud. I'll continue to pray for your safety and hope you soon have a happy voyage home."

FROM ASHLEY IN MER-RITT ISLAND, FLA.: "Find strength in the small things, turn. Never-ending courage de- Los Angeles, Calif. 90069.

fices and hardships. I want ev- serves never-ending gratitude. eryone over there fighting the Thank you so much for all your sacrifices."

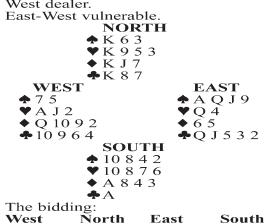
FROM "MIKEY" IN PAYall the time or send packages. We SON, ARIZ.: "Thank you a milare here for you and will be here lion times for the job you are doing in that distant location. My thoughts and prayers are with you. I am a senior citizen and understand why you are there. And although some in this country disagree with why you are there, we all agree that you should come home soon. Nevertheless, while you are there, we recognize that you are fighting the good fight, and hope your service ends soon. 'Thank you' seems an inadequate phrase for what should be said for your brave service. We all love you and hope you are reunited with your family as soon as possible."

> READERS: I know many of you have plans for tonight that include candlelight and flowers. This is a time when our members of the military deployed far from home acutely feel the absence of their loved

> So, please, OperationDearAbby.net and send a message telling them they are in our hearts. Happy Valentine's Day, everyone!

Editor's note: Dear Abby is laugh every chance you get, and written by Abigail Van Buren. know that you're missed and we Write Dear Abby at www.Dearpray every day for your safe re- Abby.com or P.O. Box 69440,

### **Bridge** West dealer.



Vest	ding: <b>North</b>	East	South
Pass	1 •	Pass	1 <b>Y</b>
Pass	2 ♥	Dble	Pass
NT	Pass	3 🚓	3 ♥
Oble	Pass	Pass	Pass

### **Famous Hand**

If you play in events scored by International Match Points — mostly team contests — you are familiar with the concept that at this form of scoring, making or defeating contracts is all-important, while overtricks or undertricks are of little consequence, as in rubber bridge. The loss of an IMP here or there, it is said, will rarely make the difference in the outcome.

Remarkably, within less than a half-year's time, a single IMP or two proved to be the deciding factor in two major tournaments.

First, as recounted here previously, the United States defeated Italy by just one IMP to win the 2003 world championship in a 128-deal match. Then, just five months later, the course of the Vanderbilt team championship was altered not just once, but twice — in the same match! — by an equally infinitesimal margin.

The drama unfolded in the final quarter of the 64-deal semifinal between teams captained by Nick Nickell and Richard Schwartz. Going into the last 16 deals, the Schwartz team trailed by the seemingly insurmountable margin of 53 IMPs to Nickell's many-time world and national championship squad.

Nevertheless, Schwartz had cut the deficit to 5 IMPs with just this deal remaining. When it was first played, Larry Cohen and Dave Berkowitz of the Schwartz team bid and made two hearts, a normal result that seemed unlikely to generate a 5-IMP swing.

Even if the North-South pair at the other table somehow went down one in two hearts, this would yield only a 4-IMP gain.

But to the amazement of onlookers, the auction shown transpired, with Mike Becker and Schwartz aggressively pushing North-South into three hearts.

Down one in this contract would not have sufficed, but Becker, desperately fighting for every IMP, elected to make a very close double, knowing that if he was wrong, it would probably cost any chance of winning the match. Becker's double made all the difference. The

contract went down one, -100. This, combined with +110 at the other table, gave Schwartz's team a gain of 210 points, worth exactly 5 IMPs, and sent the match into an eight-deal playoff. There, a single undertrick determined the outcome, as we shall see tomorrow.

Tomorrow: Famous Hand — Part Two. (c)2005 King Features Syndicate Inc.

## Family Circus • Bil Keane



"Mommy! Make PJ stop bein helpful!"

**56** Type

57 What-

DOWN

1 Give the

shoulder

2 Bean curd

cold

3 Stench

4 Pre-euro

money

5 One of

eight

Spanish

squares

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′	1 Put		peaks
	an end	37	Molasses-
•	to		like
	5 Inac-		syrups
	curate	39	Author
ı	8 Portent		Wallace
ı	12 Protuber-	41	Poet
,	ance		Teasdale
	13 Shuffle-	42	In the
,	board		same
	stick		place
	14 Ashen		(Lat.)
	15 Fleet	45	Works
	from far		dough
,	away?	49	X marks
r	16 Discus-		its spot
	sion in		"Begone!"
'	writing	52	Bridge
,	18 Chest of		position
	drawers	53	Pitch
	20 Interlaced	54	Bocelli
	21 Waitstaff's		solo
	due	55	Apportion

spot egone! dge sition

Angeles Solution time: 24 mins. 24 Footoperated levers 28 Appellation 31 "Eureka!" 32 Tending to leak slowly 34 Charged

6 Stole 30 Halves of stuff? 56-Across 7 Dozens of 33 Tall tale inches 36 Tranquil-8 Choice 38 Roman 9 Primary canvas emperor 10 Otherwise 40 Director Craven 42 Particular 43 Highland hillside 44 Speechless 46 Farm fraction place 48 Pronto, in the OR 50 Aries

11 Require

17 Punctur-

19 Lends a

22 Prognos-

24 Tit for -

26 First in

time

band's

29 Larry's pal

27 Rock

25 Greek

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