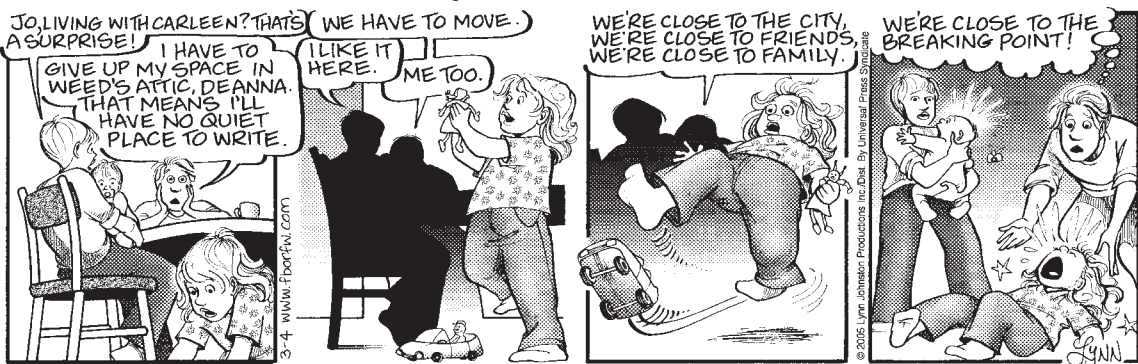
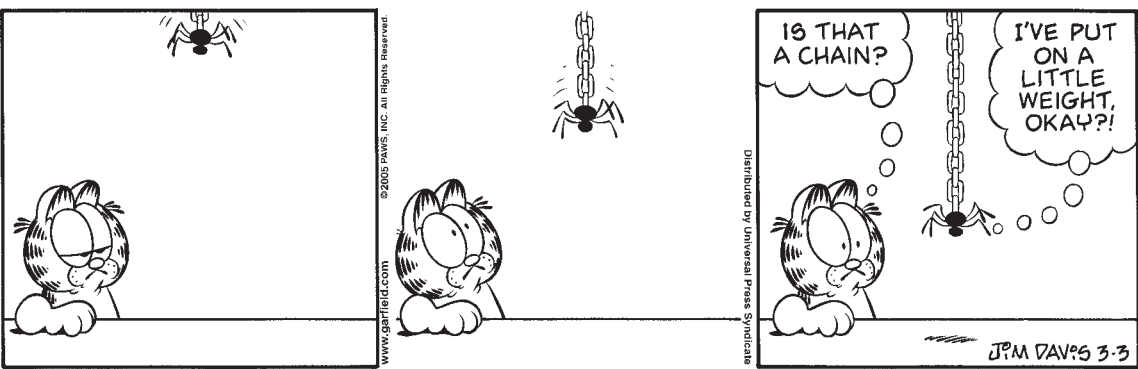


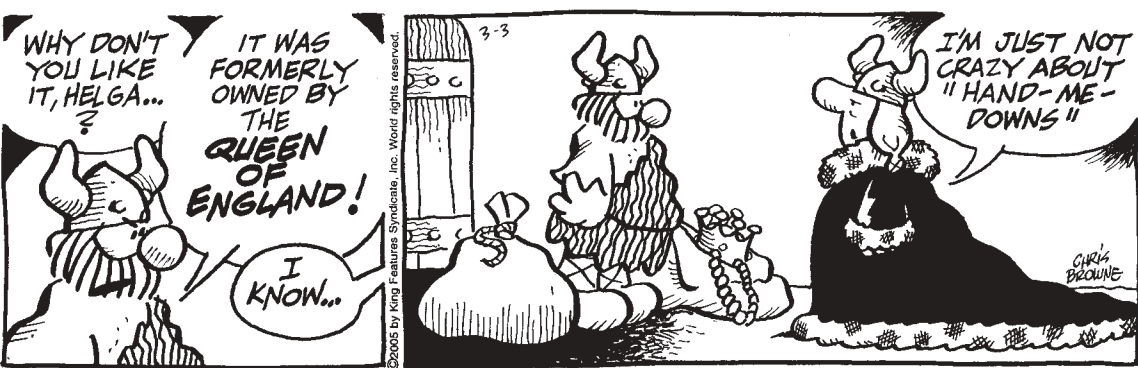
For Better or Worse • Lynn Johnston



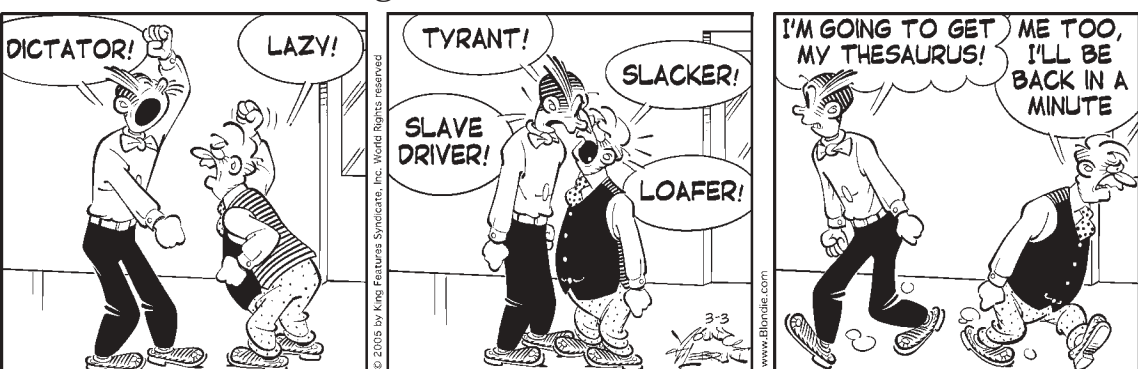
Garfield • Jim Davis



Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



Blondie • Chic Young



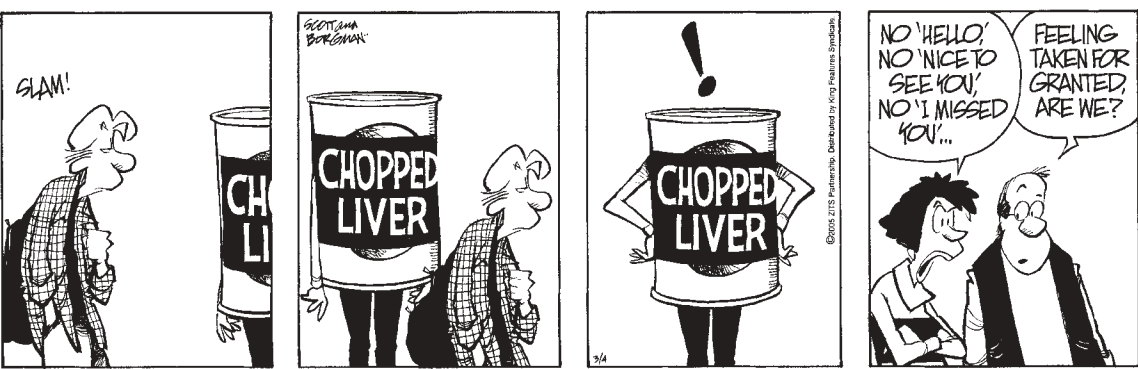
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Cryptoquip

Y ICCF PRIWF IQV KYVKWH

CFCGMPZOH. RC PFF NZQR

OMC GQQV KVCPOWVCH

RQVN IQV GCPZWOH.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IRISH SONG CONCERNING A FELLOW WHO ALWAYS SMILES WARMLY: "THE WEARING OF THE GRIN."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals E

Front desk clerk upset with parents

DEAR ABBY: I work in a hotel where many people pass through our lobby each day. We have great guests, but we also get our share of strange or questionable people, too. It's not uncommon for police to send us information or inquire about criminals of various sorts who stop over at hotels. And, for the record, it doesn't matter how posh the hotel is, either.

My letter concerns parents who allow very young children to come to the front desk alone, or to hang out in the lobby. I have seen scantily clad young teens in swimsuits walk by. These girls have no clue that they're being ogled by 40-plus businessmen in suits who make off-color comments about their bodies.

It's also not unusual to see 4- and 5-year-olds get on and off the elevators alone because their parents don't feel like coming to the desk to pick up items.

Why, then, do we wonder how our kids are snatched up so easily by predators?

Hotel staff are here to serve and be helpful, but we cannot serve as baby sitters.

We are often multitasking, so no one should assume we have an eye on your child. How are we to know whether the 50-year-old man pulling your 12-year-old daughter aside and whispering something in her ear is her dad — or a pervert?

When children go missing, we staff members get screamed at by parents insisting that we should have seen something suspicious about the person the child was last seen with. Well, here's the simple answer: We're employed to conduct hotel business, not monitor children. When the telephone rings, we must answer and take a reservation. Our attention cannot be on your child when there is a lobby bustling with activity, a line of five or more guests checking in and out, someone on the inside line requesting more pillows



Abigail Van Buren

• Dear Abby

or questioning a bill, and our outside lines are ringing off the hook.

— FRUSTRATED AT THE FRONT DESK

DEAR FRUSTRATED: I understand and sympathize.

Part of the problem may be that the hospitality industry has been so successful in making guests feel at home away from home, that people forget they are NOT at home. An illustration would be a recent item on the television news

An attractive young woman entered her upscale hotel and decided to dash into the powder room off the main lobby. She was unaware that a man followed her into the hotel through the lobby and into the bathroom. The only thing that saved her from his sexual assault was that another woman happened to enter the bathroom.

Signs posted in every hotel room warn guests to verify the identity of strangers before admitting them. In the interest of safety, travelers should never let their guard down, and parents should remain vigilant.

DEAR ABBY: My son, who is 19, went to his aunt and uncle's during the New Year's holidays. They live 3 1/2 hours away from us. On his way back home, he got a speeding ticket.

Do you think we were wrong to make him return his Christmas gifts as punishment? His ticket cost \$970 including attorney's fees. Our son thinks we were out of line.

— DISGUSTED IN GEORGIA

DEAR DISGUSTED: The punishment should fit the crime — and in this case, I don't think it did. Rather than returning his Christmas gifts, a better "punishment" would have been for him to repay the money you fronted on his behalf.

DEAR ABBY: My best friend "Mara," is 13. She's pregnant and refuses to tell her parents because she says they will go crazy. I keep telling her that telling her parents is what she should do, but she just won't listen.

Mara told me she's going to run away and has asked me to go with her. I would, because she's my best friend, but then I think she should stay because she's having a baby, and if that baby doesn't get enough food and stuff it could be harmed. I'm very confused.

— CONFUSED LITTLE GIRL

DEAR CONFUSED: Running away is no solution. If ever there was a time a child needed her parents, this is one of them. Mara's parents may be disappointed, but they will NOT "go crazy." Urge your friend again to tell her parents, and volunteer to be with her when she does. (An alternative would be to tell your mother, and ask your mother to accompany Mara when she gives them the news.)

P.S. You are a caring friend with a good head on your shoulders. I hope Mara calms down and listens to you, because you're absolutely correct that medical care during pregnancy can be vital in delivering a healthy baby.

Bridge

South dealer.
North-South vulnerable.

NORTH

♠ J 5
♥ 8 2
♦ 9 6 4 3
♣ A J 7 5 4

WEST

♠ 9 6 3
♥ J 10 9
♦ K J 2
♣ Q 10 6 3

EAST

♠ K 10 7 4
♥ 5 3
♦ Q 10 5
♣ K 9 8 2

SOUTH

♠ A Q 8 2
♥ A K Q 7 6 4
♦ A 8 7
♣ —

The bidding:

| South | West | North | East |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 ♥ | Pass | 1 NT | Pass |
| 4 ♥ | | | |

Opening lead — jack of hearts.

Steppingstone to Success

Some of the simplest plays are, despite their simplicity, difficult to perceive. Take this case where South was in four hearts and got a trump lead.

After winning with the queen, he led a low spade to the jack, hoping to find West with the king and in that way finish with 10 or 11 tricks.

But East won the jack with the king and returned a trump, holding South to nine tricks.

Dummy's ace of clubs withered on the vine, and South eventually lost two diamonds and another spade to go down one.

All South had to do to guarantee the contract was to play the queen of spades at trick two instead of the deuce.

Barring exceptional distribution, this play was likely to produce at least 10 tricks.

In the actual layout, what could East do if he took the queen of spades with the king?

His best return, a trump, would leave South with 10 tricks consisting of two spades, six hearts, a diamond and a club.

If East refused to take the queen with the king, South would next play the ace of spades, ruff a spade, discard a loser on the ace of clubs and finish with 11 tricks.

The outcome would be essentially the same if West held the king of spades. He would run into the same dead end as East.

It is not easy to think of leading the queen of spades at trick two, because it is not customary to lead the queen initially with A-Q-x-x facing J-x.

However, that is hardly a good reason for failing to make the play. Custom is sometimes more honored in the breach than in the observance.

Tomorrow: Bidding quiz.

(c)2005 King Features Syndicate Inc.

Family Circus • Bil Keane



Crossword

Crossword puzzle grid and clues.

ACROSS

- 1 Gift-tag word
- 5 Diastema
- 8 Detail
- 12 Mystique
- 13 Tree-ring tally
- 14 — Valley, Calif.
- 15 Crystal gazer
- 16 Curly's cohort
- 17 Writer Kingsley
- 18 — l'oeil (artistic illusion)
- 20 Tags
- 22 LummoX
- 23 Moment
- 24 Huck's craft
- 27 New Zealand port
- 32 — king
- 33 IRS employee
- 34 Shaft of light
- 35 Ascots et al.
- 38 Advantage
- 39 Prior to
- 40 An-nouncer Pardo

DOWN

- 42 Will subject
- 45 Zorba's place
- 49 Lose weight
- 50 Mound stat
- 52 Stream-let
- 53 A handful
- 54 Flee the fuzz
- 55 Five carats
- 56 Basin accessory
- 57 The lady
- 58 Longings
- 1 Contrite one
- 3 Hydrox rival
- 4 Wood-chuck's kin
- 5 Competitor's countenance
- 6 Past
- 7 Rid of rind
- 8 Sher-man's "Jeffersons"
- 9 Hours-worked record
- 10 Olympic runner
- 11 Not even come close
- 19 Ma's mate
- 21 Send out invitations
- 24 Took off
- 25 Brewery product
- 26 Camera hogs rack it up
- 28 "— Lazy River"
- 29 Gin, for one
- 30 Kvetch
- 31 Turn red?
- 36 "Seinfeld" role
- 37 Drenched
- 38 Pep
- 41 On the other hand
- 42 Being, to Brutus
- 43 Lento
- 44 Grown-up elvers
- 46 Green acres
- 47 Family
- 48 "Desire Under the —"
- 51 "Sis boom bah!"

Solution time: 25 mins.

Yesterday's answer 3-3

THANK YOU FOR READING THE

COLBY FREE PRESS

YOUR LOCAL SOURCE FOR: NEWS • WEATHER SPORTS

155 W. 5th • 785-462-3963