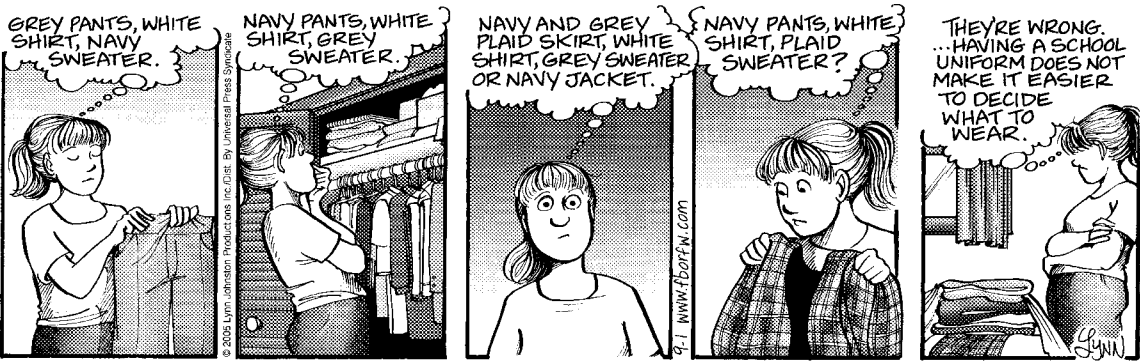


For Better or Worse • Lynn Johnston



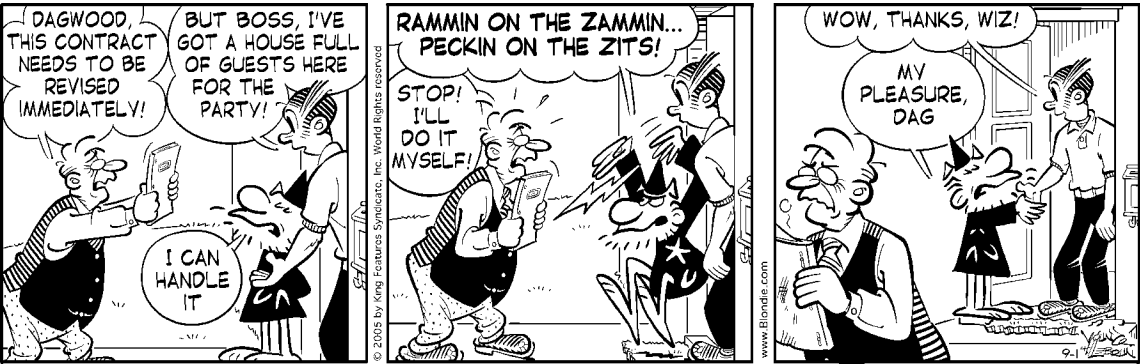
Garfield • Jim Davis



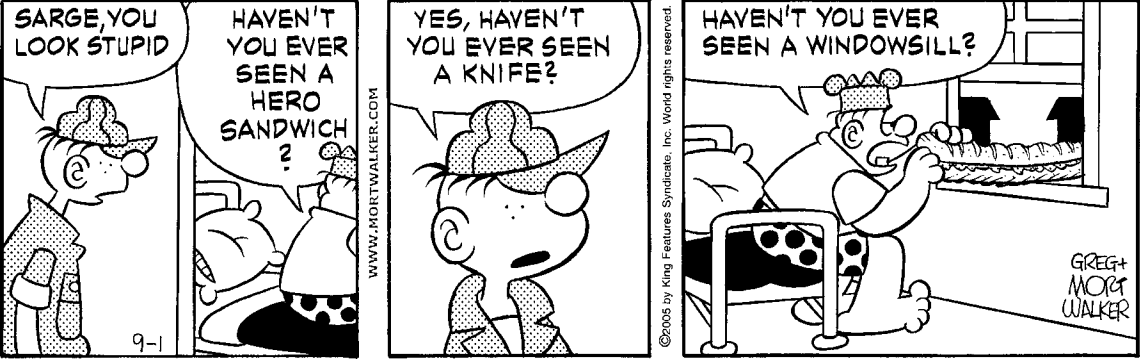
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



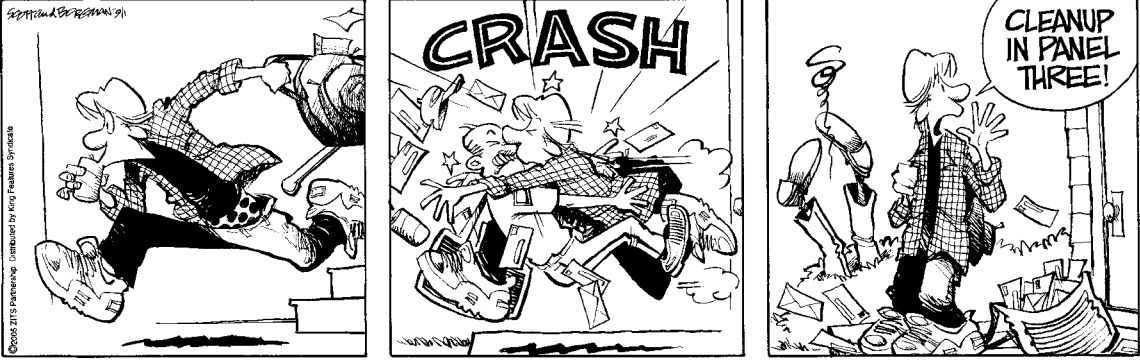
Blondie • Chic Young



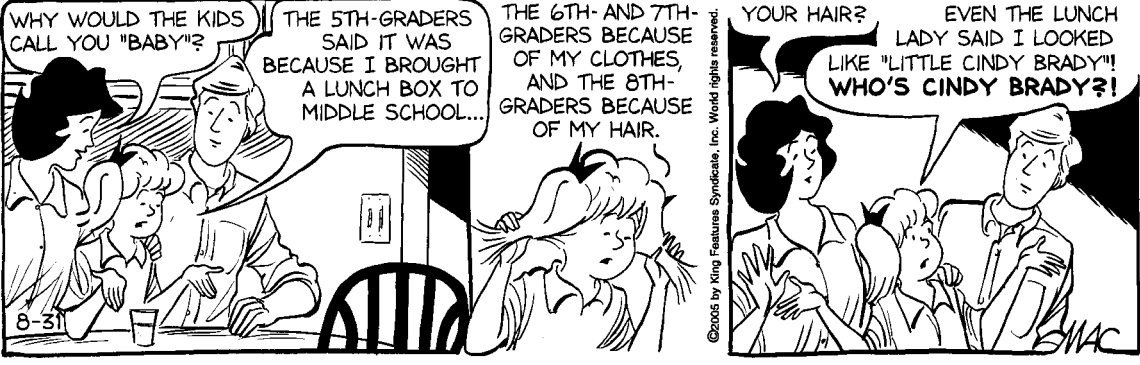
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



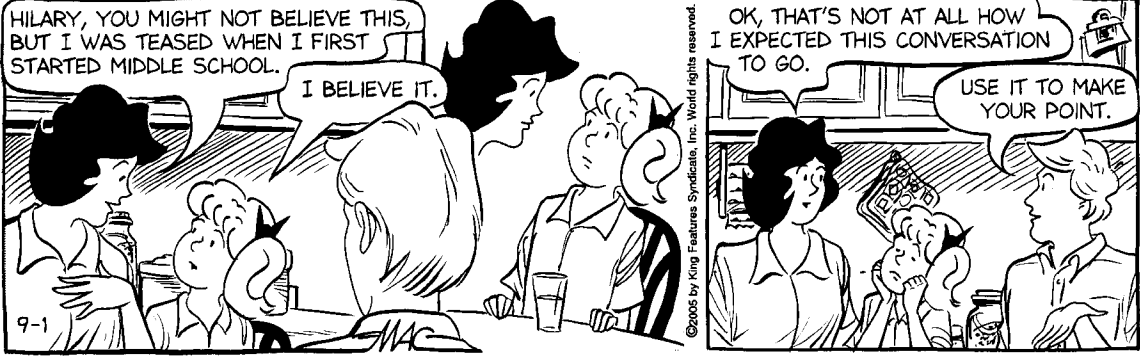
Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Cryptoquip

ICDG CTN-CKN HLGDV

VKLGO MDRFFJ NCKGJ RGO

TGVTGQDMD, IKLFO JKL

QRFF HCRH NFRVHTQ MRN?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A SHOREFRONT WERE KNOWN FOR ITS BREAD BAKERIES, YOU COULD CALL IT THE YEAST COAST.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals D

Readers weigh in on Abby's answer

DEAR ABBY: I was disappointed by your answer to "Wondering in Illinois," who is jealous of his wife's best friend, "Cassandra." You accused her of having a "girlfriend" (and I know you meant in the romantic sense rather than platonic). You told him they were due for a long talk. In my opinion, the problem is the husband's raging jealousy. What's the evidence of lesbian activity? Their vacations together? The phone calls? Obviously, this woman is having the kind of fun with her friend that she hasn't had with her nasty, suspicious husband in a long time. (I bet he hardly has two words for her if a game is on television.) Isn't one of the signs of an abuser when he starts wanting to control his wife's friends? I think her husband needs to get a life and some friends of his own.

—KEELAH IN ITHACA, N.Y.

DEAR KEELAH: When I advised "Wondering" that he didn't appear to be the first on his wife's list of priorities, I was UNDERSTATING the problem. The wife's girlfriend gives her lavish gifts and pays for their trips together; they make frequent bets with oil massages as the payoff, spend hours a day talking or text-messaging, ignore the husband to the point of rudeness if he's around, and the normal routine of the household is forgotten because of the distraction. It's not one thing — it's the aggregate. I stand by my answer. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: I agree that "Wondering" needs to find out what's going on. A friend of mine was married 11 years to his high school sweetheart. She, too, began spending a lot of time with a female co-worker, and he was often excluded. In time, he began to resent the massages, trips, dinners together and other activities they shared without him. When he confronted her, she



Abigail Van Buren

Dear Abby

accused him of "trying to come between her and her best friend."

He got the shock of his life when he walked in unexpectedly one afternoon and caught them in a compromising position. His wife then demanded a divorce. Twelve years later, his former wife and her "best friend" are still a couple.

If "Wondering's" wife isn't romantically involved with her friend, it's time he finds out what's lacking in their relationship that she's getting from the girlfriend.

—ALSO WONDERING

DEAR ALSO WONDERING: Good point. If there isn't a romance going on, marriage counseling could do them a world of good. A marriage can be healed only if both parties want it to be and are willing to cooperate.

DEAR ABBY: It does appear that the wife may be having an affair with her friend. I am a member of the Straight Spouse Network, an organization started by Amity Pierce Buxton to help the straight spouse understand the coming-out process of their gay spouse. The Straight Spouse Network is a worldwide organization whose membership comprises current or former heterosexual spouses/partners of gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender mates and mixed-orientation couples. Our members provide personal, confidential support and resource information to spouses, couples and families. We are the only support network of this kind in the world.

—MARIANNE IN GULFPORT, FLA.

DEAR MARIANNE: I am fa-

miliar with the Straight Spouse Network, which is allied with PFLAG, and have mentioned it in my column before. Dr. Buxton, who chairs the SSN, is a respected researcher and author of an excellent book, "The Other Side of the Closet" (John Wiley & Sons), that explains the gay spouse "dilemma" and offers strategies on how families can cope when the gay person "comes out." Not surprisingly, that's a complicated and emotionally wrenching process. The network's Web site is www.ssnetwk.org.

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I are in our late 20s, and we agreed to be the godparents of our niece when she was born. My husband's brother and the mother of our niece are not married. The baby now lives with her maternal grandparents because her parents are young and irresponsible. Both of them are on drugs, and at least one of them has charges pending. Are we still responsible as godparents now that the parents no longer have custody? There is nothing in writing, and this is getting to be a very sticky situation. The little girl is in good hands now. Please advise us.

—UNSURE

DEAR UNSURE: Do you want to serve as the child's godparents? If the answer is yes, pick up the phone and inform the grandparents that you were asked to be. If the parents of the baby are as irresponsible as you say, it may be news to them. If the grandparents are agreeable, I'm sure you can work it out between you.

Bridge

South dealer.

North-South vulnerable.

NORTH

♠ 7 3  
♥ K J 10 4 2  
♦ A K J 8  
♣ J 6

WEST

♠ Q J 10 5  
♥ Q 8 7 3  
♦ 9 5  
♣ 7 5 2

EAST

♠ K 8 6 4 2  
♥ A 9 6 5  
♦ 6 3  
♣ 9 4

SOUTH

♠ A 9  
♥ —  
♦ Q 10 7 4 2  
♣ A K Q 10 8 3

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	4 ♦	Pass
5 NT	Pass	7 ♦	

Opening lead — queen of spades.

The Grand Slam Force

There are many slam-oriented conventions, but one of the most valuable is the so-called Grand Slam Force.

The GSF is not a new convention (now about 70 years old), but it generally has not been accepted as a working tool by the average bridge player.

This is rather strange, since the GSF is easy to apply and hard to abuse. Furthermore, there are many more points than usual at stake when the occasion for its use arises.

Let's see how the convention is used here after North's jump-raise to four diamonds. At this point, South should feel certain of a small slam and should seriously consider the possibility of a grand slam.

The potential grand slam in diamonds does not depend on how many points or aces North has; rather, it rests solely on the question of whether North has the A-K of trumps.

If North has them, a grand slam is virtually certain. If North does not have them, South should settle for a small slam.

Accordingly, South leaps to five notrump — the Grand Slam Force — asking his partner to bid seven of the agreed trump suit if he has two of the three top trump honors.

North duly bids seven diamonds, which is easily made. In bidding the grand slam, North does not weigh his holdings in the other three suits; he simply obeys South's command to define his trump holding.

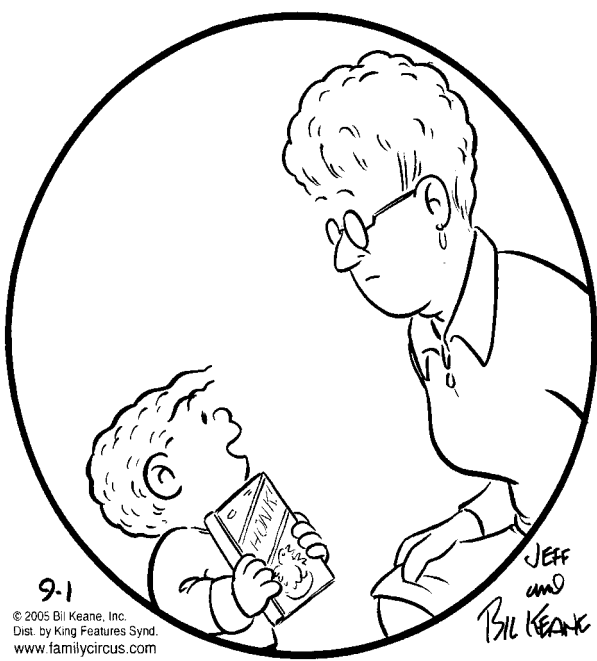
With only the ace or king of trumps, North would bid six diamonds.

The only danger associated with using the GSF is that one player or the other might misread it as part of the Blackwood Convention asking for kings.

The Blackwood five-notrump bid asking for kings, however, is always preceded by a four-notrump bid asking for aces, so there should be no confusion in this regard.

Tomorrow: Bidding quiz.

Family Circus • Bil Keane



"Here's a story I think you'll enjoy reading to me, Grandma."

Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 That's a laugh!
- 5 Off-tattooed word
- 8 Scored 100
- 12 Banned apple-reddener
- 13 Sea urchin eggs
- 14 November responsibility
- 15 Musical based on "La Bohème"
- 16 Frivolous one in song
- 17 "— for All Seasons"
- 18 Noble Florentine name
- 20 Sylvester's impediment
- 22 "Laugh-In" catchphrase
- 26 Bicycle part
- 29 Privy
- 30 Trinity member

DOWN

- 31 Bad sign
- 32 D.C. VIP
- 33 Give an extreme makeover to
- 34 Curry or Allen
- 35 H.S. subj.
- 36 Carnival attractions
- 37 Laying in a stash
- 40 Anything but that!
- 41 Straighten
- 45 Met melody
- 47 Actor Alastair
- 49 Sub in a tub
- 50 Any day now
- 51 Tulsa sch.

ACROSS

- 9 Calm
- 10 LAX info
- 11 Lair
- 19 Army rank (Abbr.)
- 21 Judge Lance
- 23 Big name in jeans
- 24 Fashion
- 25 Slaughter of baseball
- 26 Florist's supply
- 27 Discharge
- 28 Loss of a stripe
- 32 Cut
- 33 Chutist's release
- 35 Tackle moguls
- 36 Skedad-dle
- 38 Intone
- 39 Bungle
- 42 Peter Fonda role
- 43 Authentic
- 44 Abundant source
- 45 Cleo's slayer
- 46 Caviar provider
- 48 George's brother

Solution time: 25 mins.



Yesterday's answer 9-1

