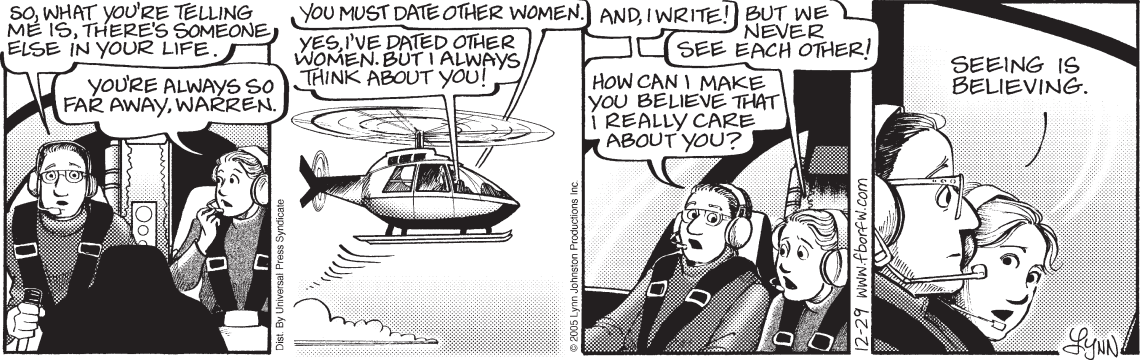


For Better or Worse • Lynn Johnston



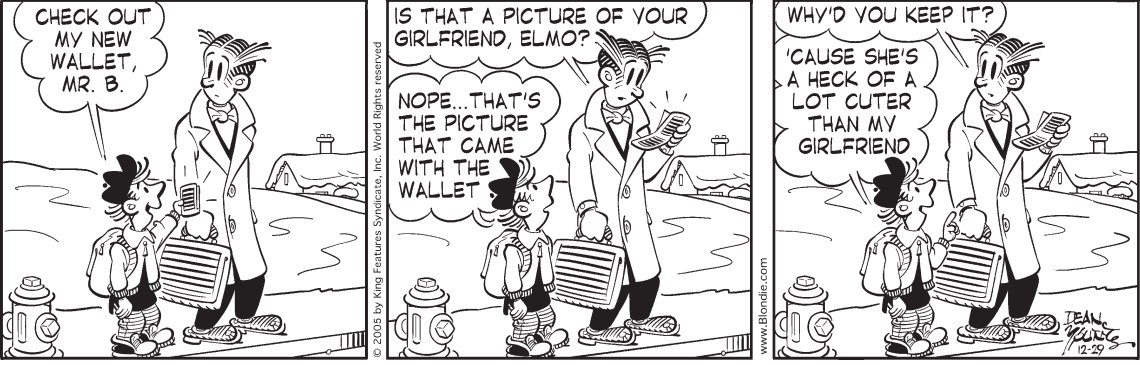
Garfield • Jim Davis



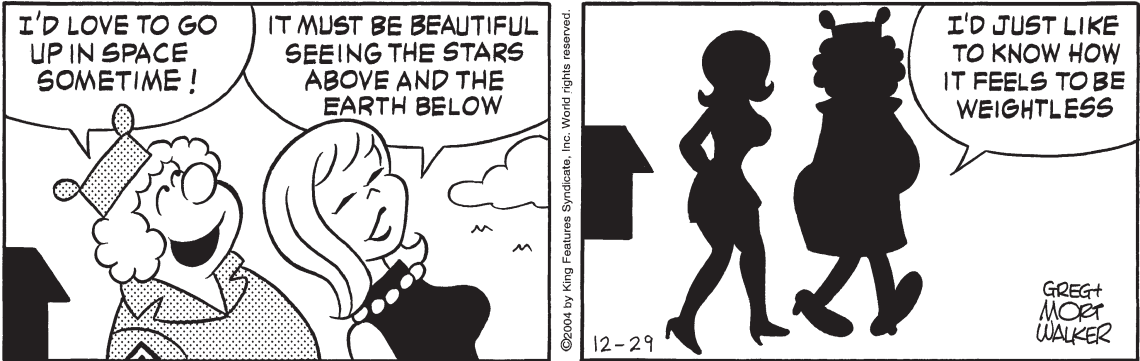
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



Blondie • Chic Young



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



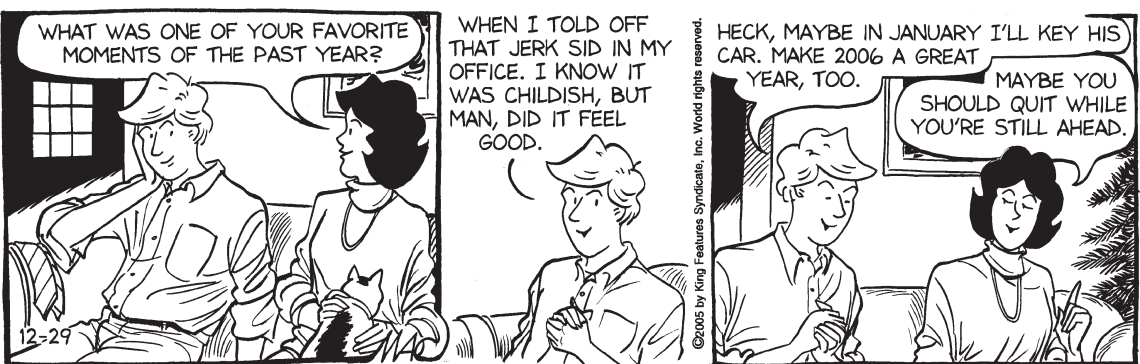
Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Cryptoquip

T F V K M L P P Y Q P X V P U A F M

F Y A - N Y U - M L A V P U X Y P A M B A

S M B Q K A B , V B L V N " L P N

A F M T V M P M S V B . . . "

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOU DON'T PAY TOO MUCH FOR CARNIVAL GAMES, THEN I SUPPOSE YOU'VE GOTTEN A FAIR DEAL.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: P equals N

Right words make all the difference

DEAR ABBY: "Aaron in Syracuse" asked whether it was rude of him to ask, "May I ask who's calling, please?" when he answers the phone at home. His wife says it's nosy and people will think he's screening his calls.

Abby, the person who should decide if calls need to be screened and callers identified should be the recipient of the call. If the calls are for Aaron's wife and she doesn't want or need him to identify the caller for her, then he should not do it. On the other hand, if she doesn't want to be bothered by calls and requests that he "screen" for her, that's different.

Because he insists on doing it over her objections, I wonder if he's motivated out of inappropriate curiosity, jealousy or insecurity.

Please note: My view is specific to adults in the household. Whether parents identify callers for their minor children is a matter for parents to decide.

— CYNTHIA IN ALBANY, N.Y.

DEAR CYNTHIA: You have a point, but the mail that came in response to "Aaron's" query indicates that various readers saw the problem in a different light. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: In my years of work answering a company telephone, I have discovered that saying, "May I SAY who is calling, please?" conveys the idea that the need to know is to relay the information to the call recipient.

"May I ASK who is calling?" has a note of nosiness to it, and does not imply that the need to know is just to relay the name.

Before I learned this trick, people would sometimes take offense at the question.

However, using the word "say" instead of the word "ask" has never resulted in offense taken.

— DIANE IN GARDINER



Abigail Van Buren

• Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: You missed a golden opportunity to educate your readers on proper phone manners! I have always stressed to my teenagers, and their friends, that when they make a phone call, they should identify themselves first, then ask for the person they wish to speak to, as in, "Hello, this is John. May I please speak to Kenny?" Not only will this prevent the problem of the person wondering who is calling, it's just common sense and good manners.

I stress to them that in the business world, it shows not only good manners, but also consideration for others, both of which seem to be in short supply these days.

— WELL-MANNERED IN WASHINGTON STATE

DEAR ABBY: I agree with your advice to "Aaron" — however, there is one exception. When I was in my teens, my mother became an ordained minister. From that time on, if someone called for her and didn't identify him/herself, we didn't ask, as there might be confidentiality issues for the caller.

— MARGARET IN PHILADELPHIA

DEAR ABBY: About 40 years ago, a grand old New York department store opened a suburban branch in our area. They had a team from the telephone company come in and give a few classes in telephone etiquette to all the new employees.

We were instructed to say, "May I TELL her who is calling?" in a pleasant tone, and I have done it ever since. People are invariably politely responsive. Also, we were told

never to "mute" the receiver against our diaphragm while calling someone to the phone, because the chest cavity acts as an amplifier. Imagine a caller hearing, "It's that pest again!" or something worse vibrating through the phone. I enjoy your column.

— TAMPA READER

DEAR ABBY: My wife passed away a little over a year ago from cancer. I am a widower now. My question concerns how I should refer to my wife in conversation. I don't want to say "my dead wife." It seems a bit insensitive or maybe a little off-putting.

I was recently on an airplane going back east to visit my former brother- and sister-in-law. During the flight I got into a wonderful conversation with one of the flight attendants. She seemed really interested in me — until I told her the reason for my trip. Then it was like an invisible barrier went down between us. The minute I mentioned my wife had died, the "connection" was over. Can you help me?

— DANNY IN PHOENIX

DEAR DANNY: I don't know what caused the flight attendant to back off from what seemed like a promising beginning, but it's possible that she wasn't as interested in pursuing a relationship as you assumed.

Had she been interested, mentioning that you are widowed would have been the signal that made her forge ahead. In the future, it's perfectly acceptable to mention the fact that your wife passed away. It means you're eligible. Simply refer to her as your deceased wife.

Editor's note: Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069.

Family Circus • Bil Keane



Bridge

East dealer.

East-West vulnerable.

NORTH		EAST	
♠	A 8	♠	J 9 6 3 2
♥	7 4	♥	A J
♦	Q J 7 3	♦	9 8 4
♣	K J 10 9 7	♣	8 6 2
WEST		SOUTH	
♠	10 5 4	♠	K Q 7
♥	K 10 8 6 5 3	♥	Q 9 2
♦	K 6 2	♦	A 10 5
♣	4	♣	A Q 5 3

The bidding:

East	South	West	North
Pass	1 NT	Pass	3 NT

Opening lead — six of hearts.

A Crucial Decision

The outcome of a contract frequently hinges on the play of one card.

For this reason, when declarer is faced with a situation where his decision as to which card to play might make or break the contract, he should direct all his energies to solving that problem.

Consider this deal where West leads a heart against South's three-notrump contract. East wins with the ace and returns the jack.

South must now decide whether to play the nine or the queen. If he plays the queen, he goes down two; if he plays the nine, he makes the contract.

The question is how declarer can tell which play is correct.

The answer is simple — if he knows the Rule of Eleven. Declarer's main problem is to determine East's heart holding.

If East started with four hearts, South makes the contract whatever he plays — all he loses is four heart tricks. If East started with A-J-x, South goes down whatever he does because the defense collects the first five tricks.

This leaves only two situations where declarer's play makes any difference: the one where East has A-J doubleton (in which case South must duck to make the contract), and the one where East has A-J-10 tripleton (in which case South must cover to block the suit and thereby prevent it from being run).

By applying the Rule of Eleven, declarer can tell (by subtracting six — the card led — from 11), that the North, East and South hands contain five cards higher than the six.

Since those five cards — dummy's seven, South's Q-9 and East's A-J — are all accounted for at trick two, it follows that East could not have started with A-J-10 and that the only chance of blocking the suit is to duck and hope East was dealt the A-J doubleton.

Tomorrow: Test your play.

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Crossword

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ACROSS | 39 Group of whales | 60 Monty Hall's offering | 16 "Bali —" |
| 1 "A Chorus Line" song | 41 Insana of CNBC | 20 McGraw or Allen | 21 Fleet from far away? |
| 4 Actions at auctions | 42 Take steps comeback | 61 CSA soldier | 22 PBS science show |
| 8 Canyon | 44 Talked like Sylvester | DOWN | 1 In need of fixing |
| 12 Main-lender's memento | 46 Comb type | 2 Keanu's "Matrix" role | 23 Thither |
| 13 Beef cut | 50 Red or Black | 3 Important age | 27 Gripe on and on |
| 14 Soup du — | 51 Mayberry moppet | 4 Fair | 29 Roofing material |
| 15 Place of disfavor | 52 Computer accessory | 5 Debtor's letters | 30 Medicinal plant |
| 17 Poet — Wheeler Wilcox | 56 Carriage | 6 Platter | 31 Give temporarily |
| 18 Solo of "Star Wars" | 57 Cook-book compiler | 7 Furtive sort | 33 Tidies up |
| 19 Boo | 58 Ram's ma'am | 8 Voted out | 35 Crony |
| 21 Messy | 59 Remnants | 9 Pop choice | 38 Nipper's co. |
| 24 DIY buy | | 10 Ship's chassis | 40 Church songbook |
| 25 Adversary | | 11 Exam format | 43 Shy |
| 26 A billion years | | | 45 Bishop's balliwick |
| 28 Gold, silver or bronze | | | 46 Apple variety |
| 32 Micro-wave, e.g. | | | 47 "You can hear — drop" |
| 34 Entry in baby's agenda | | | 48 Even |
| 36 Roy's missus | | | 49 Traditional tales |
| 37 Less loony | | | 53 Ms. Thurman |

Solution time: 25 mins.

G	O	A	C	L	I	P	S	O	F	T
N	U	N	A	O	N	E	T	I	L	E
A	C	T	M	U	S	K	M	E	L	O
W	H	I	N	E	A	R				
M	U	S	T	A	C	H	E	T	E	A
A	N	T	S	A	R	A	S	O	A	L
S	T	E	M	M	U	S	H	R	O	O
T	O	W	E	L	M	E	R	E		
		S	E	E		T	I	D	I	O
M	U	S	C	O	V	I	T	E	D	N
O	K	R	A	E	R	I	K	L	U	G
N	E	A	L	R	E	P	S	E	S	

Yesterday's answer 12-29

1	2	3		4	5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12				13					14			
15			16						17			
		18				19			20			
21	22				23		24					
25				26		27		28		29	30	31
32			33		34		35		36			
37				38		39		40		41		
			42		43		44		45			
46	47	48			49		50					
51					52		53			54	55	
56					57					58		
59					60					61		

THANK YOU FOR READING THE

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