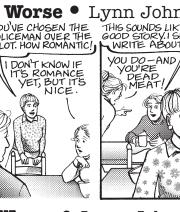
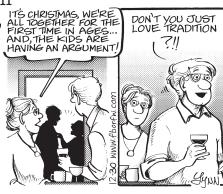
WEST

♥AKJ9

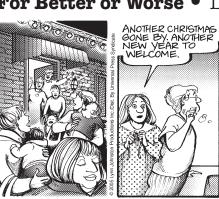
**♠** A K Q J 9 8







For Better or Worse • Lynn Johnston













**Hagar the Horrible •** Chris Browne







**Blondie •** Chic Young

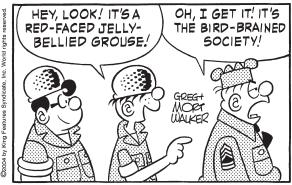






**Beetle Bailey •** Mort Walker

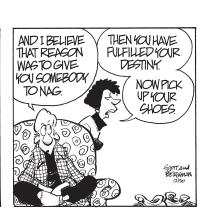




**Zits** • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott













## Cryptoquip

QGY KNGYKN AZWY UMZYMU H OHRJ BHGETO KQ

UGSYKRU DSRQ SW YTTJQ,

K QVBBSQT CSV ESVOJ QHC

"DNT OSD DNKEATRQ."

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHILE ANNOUNCING THE HOT-DOG-EATING CONTEST RESULTS, I SAID "AND THE WIENER IS ..."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals Y

MQLQYYQX, UQ W FZJDB

BQHDIU QA KQQJWDU AQY

UQLD FZHZZY YDZUQI. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A LAND PARCEL IS GROWING TONS OF WEEDS, I SUPPOSE YOU COULD SAY "THE LOT THICKENS."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals C

## Crossword

**ACROSS** 39 Praise in 1 Fox rival verse 4 Belea-41 Tend guered texts spacecraft 45 Left at

**DOWN** 

1 "USA

Todav'

2 Moisten.

3 Pundit

4 Nurse's

trayful

quencher

7 Yarn unit

product

9 Madam's

counter-

10 Ball-bear-

ing item

refrains

Cincinnati?

part

8 Brewery

in a way

23 Investi-

gate

26 Count-

28 Victory

sign

width

serving

33 Enthusiast

typos

40 Definitive

tenet

market

section

hemi-

44 "Monopo

45 Jumbled

combo

46 Small

48 Slalom

49 Yalie

50 British

51 Young

"Inc.'

fellow

23 That girl

24 In olden

days 25 Unproc-

essed

26 Glutton

27 Wilde-

beest

28 Cauldron

29 Idolater's

31 Roman

poet/

satirist

32 "Star Trek

34 Miss

II" villain

Piggy's

pronoun

(peevish)

sense!

40 Conan of

**NPR** 

41 Glazier's

sheet

42 Huxtable

son

43 Morgan

Virgil

39 Medley

35 Baseball

shoes

36 Dwarf

**37** Out of

emotion

move

sphere?

ly" piece

42 Super-

Corral VIP 43 Northern

32 Corn

**36** Info 37 Check for

illustration 25 Appomat-

5 Summery 30 Shoe

6 "I hear ya" 31 Plato's P

24 Night bird

tox figure

down start

7 Alacrity sea? 47 Past 12 Chop down 48 One-13 Writer vowel-Umberto only **14** UFO

city

16 One-

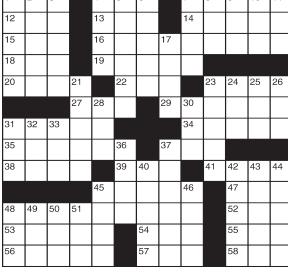
18 Sleep

actress passenger 52 Sort 15 Oklahoma 53 Sacrifice locale **54** — tai

vowel-only 55 Caviar. comediessentially **56** In a state of phenom dizziness tion 58 Some-

11 Trio in 19 Expensive 57 Commo-20 Clone 17 O.K. 22 Mess up where 21 Yuletide 23 Nitwit out 27 Eggs there 29 Miniature Solution time: 25 mins.

31 First name of 48-Across 34 First name of 16-Across 35 Towed 37 Preacher's title (Abbr.) 38 Doggiebag contents



**DOWN** 

Beach"

author

Ruth.

June

spread

agent

stuff

kinadom

target

much

Anita and

1 "Ship of

Fools"

yielding

humous

Lennon

6 Bedouin

8 Dentist's

directive

9 Unrivaled

11 Nuisance

19 Kept tabs

10 Touch

on

John

ship

3 Throe

4 Ski in a

zee

5 Post-

hit

7 Flee

2 Un-

**ACROSS 35** "On the 1 One who matters 36 Head of st. 37 Hot tub 4 Booty 8 Envelope 38 Sister of part 12 Mound stat 13 Folk 45 Bread history **46** DEA 14 Earring locale 15 Director 47 Hoedown Howard 16 Latin 48 Mongkut's 101 49 Stud fee? word 50 Prior to

17 Burden **18** Tina 51 Links Turner 52 Not so portrayer 21 Thither 53 Chances. 20 Succumb 22 Existed 23 Seraglio 26 Crone 27 Coll. transcript no.

30 "Zounds!" 31 Glee 32 Recognize **33** Ply paddles . 34 Oktoberfest souvenir

to gravity Solution time: 27 mins.

44 Deli loaves Yesterday's answer 12-3 12

## Family Circus • Bill Keane

©2005 Bil Keane, Inc. Dist. by King Features Sy www.familycircus.com "They don't celebrate it, but tonight

is New Year's Eve Eve.'

## **Bridge**

1. You are declarer with the West hand at Six Spades. North leads the four of spades, and you win South's ten with the jack. How would you play the hand?

AO9

2. Again you are declarer at Six Spades, but this time with a slightly different hand. North leads the four of spades, and you win South's ten with the jack. How would you play the hand? WEST **↑** A K Q J 9 8 ♥AKJ9

cards are divided. To assure the slam, draw another round of trumps, then cash the A-K of clubs and A-K of hearts. If both defenders follow suit in hearts, you can't lose more than one heart trick, so let's assume the worst — that one opponent has the Q-10-x-x of hearts. If North is the player with the Q-10-x-x, you next lead the four of diamonds to dummy's nine. (If North produces the jack or ten, you cover with dummy's

1. The contract is ice-cold regardless of how the

or return a diamond into the A-Q. In either case, you get rid of both of your heart losers. If South is the player with the Q-10-x-x, you make the slam simply by leading a diamond to dummy's ace

queen.) South wins but must yield a ruff-and-discard

and returning a heart toward your J-9. 2. Despite the striking similarity between this hand and the previous one, there is a world of difference in the correct approach to the play. (Both hands were composed by Israeli expert Paul Lukacs.) Again you can guarantee the slam against any dis-

tribution. But because this time dummy has the eight of diamonds instead of the nine, and also has an extra entry in the form of the king of clubs, you must adopt a different approach. Draw the one missing trump, cash the ace of hearts

(assume both defenders follow low) and ace of diamonds, then ruff a diamond. Next cash the A-K of clubs and ruff the queen of diamonds. Having eliminated both minor suits, you now lead the nine of hearts. If North has the Q-10-x-x, he wins

with the ten but must return a heart into your K-J or yield a ruff-and-discard. If South has the Q-10-x-x, he must win and return a heart, allowing you to take the proven finesse, or return a minor suit, giving you a ruff-and-discard as well

as the contract. Tomorrow: Let's find out where we stand. (c)2005 King Features Syndicate Inc.

South dealer. North-South vulnerable. A 1092 WEST **4** 9 6 3 ♦ K Q J 5 **SOUTH ♦** K Q 10 **♥** A 10 8 6 5 2 A O J The bidding: South West East Pass

Opening lead — king of diamonds. In some hands, the order in which declarer makes

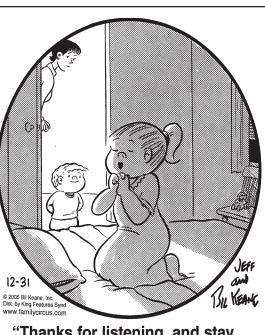
certain plays is of paramount importance. Take this case where South quickly bid a slam and almost as quickly went down one. Declarer took West's king-of-diamonds lead with dummy's ace, led a low heart and, after East played low, went up with the ace,

converting East's K-J of hearts into the setting tricks. North suggested that South should have made a safety play by playing the eight of hearts at trick two instead of the ace, thus guaranteeing no more than one trump loser. North's suggestion certainly would have worked on this deal and made the slam, but his analy-

sis was only partially correct. Proper play requires declarer to take a club finesse at trick two and postpone any trump plays until the result of the club finesse is known. In the actual deal, after the club finesse succeeds, the contract becomes a certainty. All that needs to be done is to ensure that only one trump trick is lost. The only way two trumps can be lost is if one defender was dealt all three missing trumps. To guard against that possibility, after winning the club finesse South enters dummy with a spade and leads a low trump. Then, (1) if East follows with a small trump, declarer plays the eight; (2) if East follows with an honor, declarer plays the ace; (3) if East

shows out, declarer plays the ace. Alternatively, declarer can also assure only one trump loser by leading a low heart toward the queen at trick three. In the actual deal, after the queen loses to the king, South overcomes East's jack via a subsequent

If the club finesse loses at trick two, declarer faces an entirely different proposition. Since he can no longer afford a trump loser, his best chance by far is to cash the ace of trumps in the hope that either opponent was dealt the singleton king.



"Thanks for listening, and stay tuned for Jeffy comin' up next."