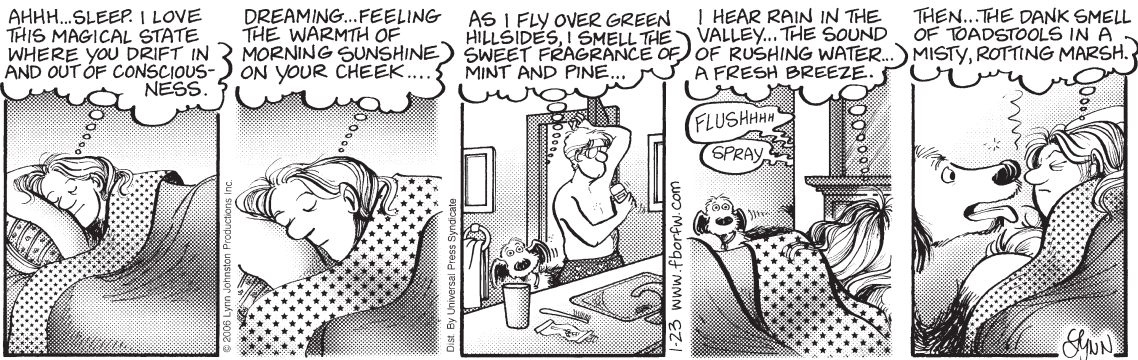


For Better or Worse • Lynn Johnston



Garfield • Jim Davis



Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



Blondie • Chic Young



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



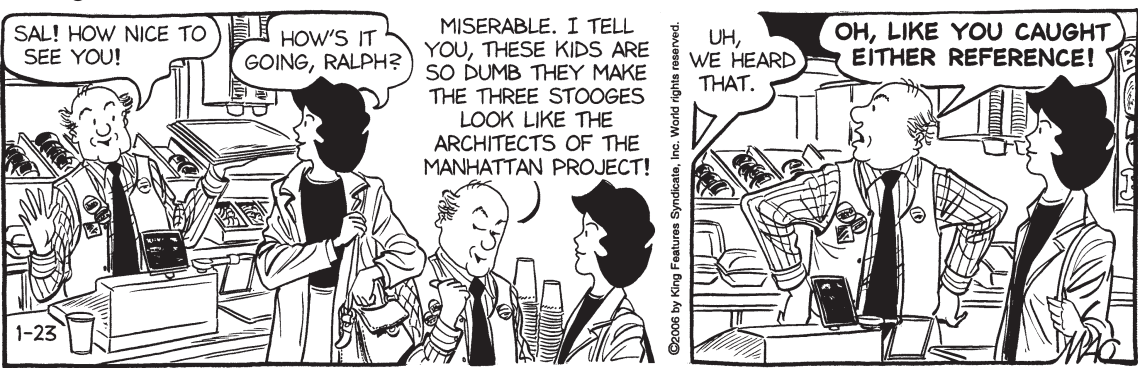
Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Cryptoquip

J B S W O X U Q J A C I J A T J A Q

Z B L U I M U Y U I Z V S U Z I M ,

P W O V C S W O X U L Z T J A Q

Z V U Z Y U W B Z X M L J A U A P U ?

Saturday's Cryptoquip: WHEN A COUPLE HAD LUNCH AT THE AMSTERDAM EATERY, PEOPLE SHOULD ASSUME THEY WENT DUTCH.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals E

Boy humiliated at birthday party

DEAR ABBY: Not long ago, I attended a birthday party for a 5-year-old boy. After the cake was brought out and the birthday song had been sung, the child's face was shoved into his beautiful birthday cake. The boy cried piteously amidst the roaring laughter of the children and the adults in the crowd.

I, and a few of the other adults, displayed shock, disgust and sympathy for the birthday boy. As if that wasn't enough, his 3-year-old brother was also smeared with the cake and frosting. He, too, burst into tears.

I have seen the same scenario at a 90-year-old's birthday party. Please give me your thoughts on this. There are other children's birthday parties I will be attending.

— DISMAYED GRAND-MOTHER, LAREDO, TEXAS
DEAR DISMAYED: I'm glad to oblige. I have never found humor at the expense of others to be funny. I consider it to be cruel, hostile, and a form of bullying. That a parent would tolerate, much less participate in, the humiliation of his or her child is an appalling breach of trust. If you truly believe that you will be seeing a repeat performance at another child's birthday party, I wouldn't blame you for not attending — and clearly stating the reason why.

DEAR ABBY: I have been dating "Neil" for two years. It has been an emotional roller-coaster, mostly because we live 500 miles apart and can't afford to visit each other regularly.

My problem is Neil is still in possession of the bridal gown that belonged to his former fiancée. They broke up more than five years ago. She has since married and gone on with her life.

Last March, I finally felt I had a right to ask him to dispose of it, but



Abigail Van Buren

• Dear Abby

he still has it. He tells me he is "trying" to get rid of it, but I have seen no real effort. (He said he has offered it for sale, but has had no takers.)

I just want it gone! Neil feels I'm overreacting. He insists he wants the money back that he spent on it. I say no one will pay what he originally paid, and he should cut his losses. I even offered to buy it and donate it to charity. All I got was a smile and, "I'll think about it."

Abby, I feel Neil is holding on to a past that's not there. I know he loves me and not her. But I'd feel better if that "reminder" was gone already. Am I wrong?

— DESPERATE GIRL-FRIEND

DEAR DESPERATE: If I were you, I'd drop the subject for now because you are needlessly turning this into a power struggle. You might succeed in bullying him into getting rid of this sad memento, but what I think you really resent is the emotional investment it represents. Please believe me when I tell you that the more you nag, the further you'll drive him away — and I don't mean geographically. If and when the romance moves to the next level — a formal engagement or marriage — ask him to "store" the dress elsewhere if it means too much to get rid of.

DEAR ABBY: My question concerns wedding etiquette. If my co-workers give me a wedding shower at work, am I obligated to invite them to my wedding?

— CONFUSED BRIDE, MARTINSBURG, W.VA.

DEAR CONFUSED BRIDE: If someone hosts or attends a shower for you, in my opinion, good manners dictate that the person be invited to your wedding.

DEAR ABBY: My friend "George" was widowed for a long time. He remarried a couple of years ago to "Renee," an incessant talker. Renee turns every conversation back either to herself or her daughter. It has gotten so bad that my wife and I really don't want to see them anymore.

Other people, including George, are aware of the problem. I asked him once if Renee realized how much she talked, and he replied that she's totally unaware of it. He doesn't know what to do about it, either.

Is there a way to get a message across to her that she's driving people crazy, and for the sake of the friendship, she needs to stop talking so much?

Please advise. We like them and would like to remain friends.

— CLUELESS

DEAR CLUELESS: Renee may be insecure and need to feel in control. She may need to be the center of attention, or be a compulsive talker.

Her problem could also be that she feels she's competing with the ghost of George's first wife, and rather than work to preserve his old friendships, she'd prefer they cultivate new ones together, with couples who never knew wife No. 1. Of course, the person who needs to address this problem with Renee is her husband.

If that doesn't improve the situation, my advice is to see George only for "man-to-man" visits over lunch.

Editor's note: Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069.

Bridge

West dealer.

North-South vulnerable.

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

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
2 ♣	Dble	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 ♠		

Opening lead — ten of hearts.

Famous Hand

One characteristic of the top players is their ability to conjure up brilliant plays apparently on the spur of the moment. As a case in point, consider this deal from the Brazil-Turkey match at the 1980 World Team Olympiad. Hero of the hand was the well-known Brazilian star Gabriel Chagas, who was East.

After West (Pedro Paulo Assumpcao) opened two clubs, showing a minimum opening bid with a strong club suit, the Turkish North-South reached four spades, against which Assumpcao led the heart ten.

South took the ace and, realizing he could not afford to draw trumps before establishing his diamonds, led a low diamond at trick two. Assumpcao went up with the ace, on which Chagas smoothly played the king!

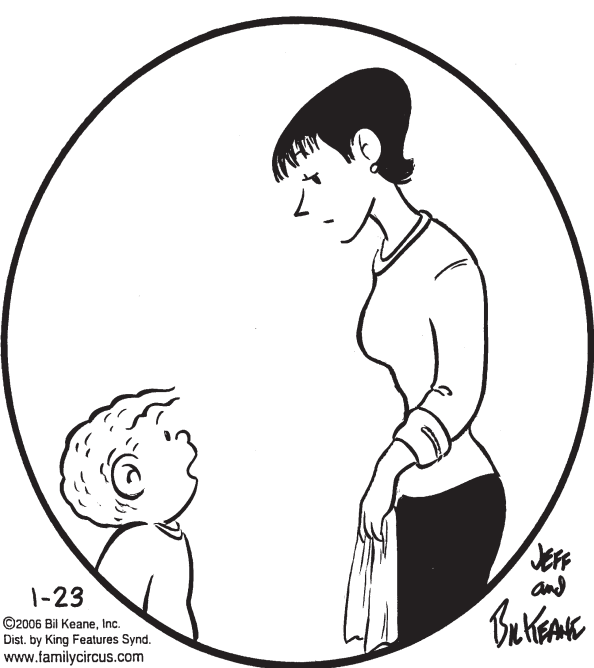
Declarer won West's heart continuation with the queen and, confident he was now home free, drew trumps, on which West discarded two clubs, then led the nine of diamonds and let it ride. One can only imagine his astonishment when Chagas produced the jack and returned a club, enabling West to score his remaining clubs for down three.

Had Chagas followed to the first diamond with the jack, as any ordinary mortal would have done, declarer would have had no trouble making the contract. But while we fully sympathize with South, it must be pointed out that he should have smelled a rat.

If West really had the A-J-8 of diamonds, as South presumably thought, why had West not returned a diamond at trick three for East to ruff? A club to West's ace would then have yielded a second diamond ruff to set the contract. Since West had not returned a diamond, though, there was good reason to suspect that things were not what they seemed. However, even if South had been less gullible and worked out what was actually going on, this in no way diminishes the brilliance and audacity of Chagas' king-of-diamonds play.

Tomorrow: Choosing between alternatives. (c)2006 King Features Syndicate Inc.

Family Circus • Bil Keane



Crossword

ACROSS	35 B.P.O.E.	DOWN	20 James
1 Arizona city	36 Lover of Daphnis	1 Roman 1900	Bond, for one
5 Emerald, e.g.	37 Three-card monte decoys	2 Yale student	21 Abound
8 Campus area	40 Seek restitution	3 Baltimore news-paper	23 Henry VIII had six
12 Ersatz stain remover	41 Scoundrels	4 Entrained	25 Sharp-shooter
14 Pakistani tongue	42 Troubadour suffix	5 Objective	26 Test tube
15 Labyrinth beast	47 Hydrox rival	6 School's URL	27 Saxophone range
16 On in years	48 Like some parents	7 Strict disciplinarian	29 Shoppers' mecca
17 Have a bug	49 Reduce a dependence	8 Friend	31 Shelter
18 "Monopoly" pieces	50 Apprehend	9 Incite	33 Ozzie or Harriet
20 Beatle drummer	51 Portent	10 Mideast gulf	34 Isolated area of a city
23 Use a sponge		11 Clothing	36 Point
24 Hang in the balance		12 Commotion	37 Garbage barge
25 Goddess of wisdom		13 Admitting clients	38 Tortoise's opponent

Solution time: 24 mins.															
CHEF	SIL	HO	YAK												
LEVI	HO	AN	URN												
AMEN	AN	NE	LEI												
WING	BA	D	TEST												
	EB	B	ICH												
CAR	REY	SH	UT												
ALONE	AM	AZE													
REWARD	HO	BBIT													
	ISO	ASS													
CAR	L	TAM	CH												
OVA	MAUL	R	OLE												
ROT	OGRE	E	PIC												
EW	BEAT	WEEK													

Saturday's answer 1-23

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14		
15								16		
			17			18	19			
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47				48						
49				50				51		

THANK YOU FOR READING THE

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