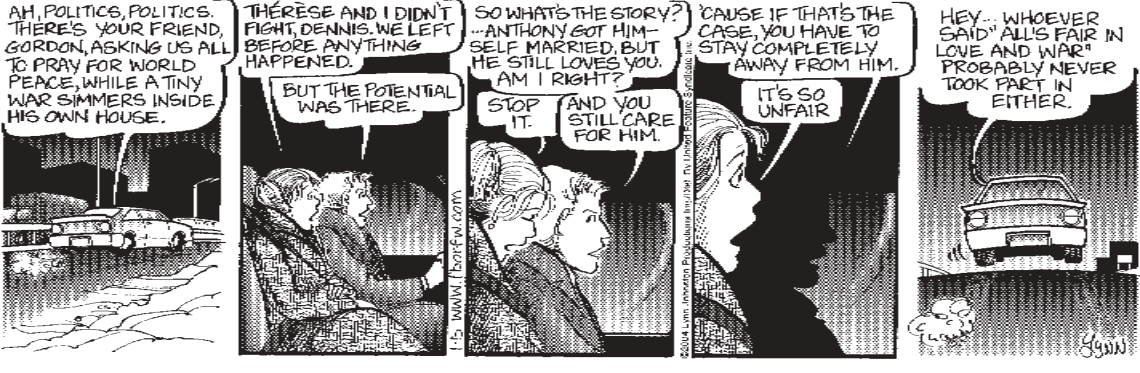
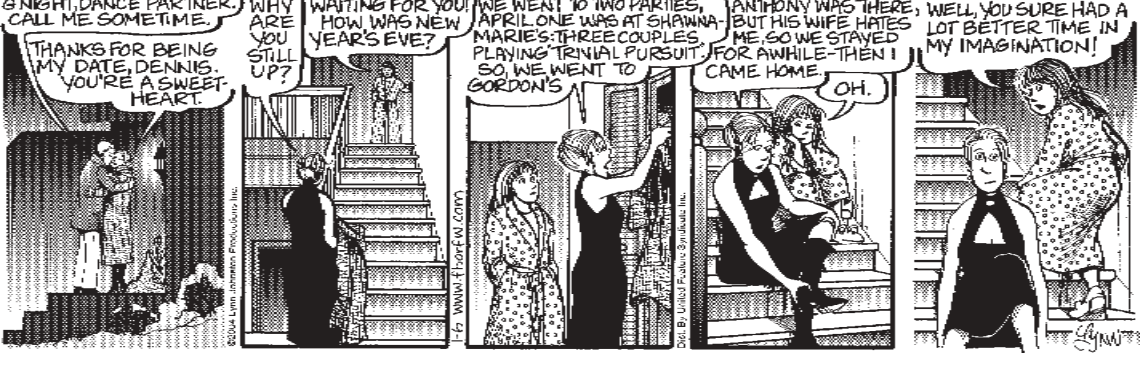


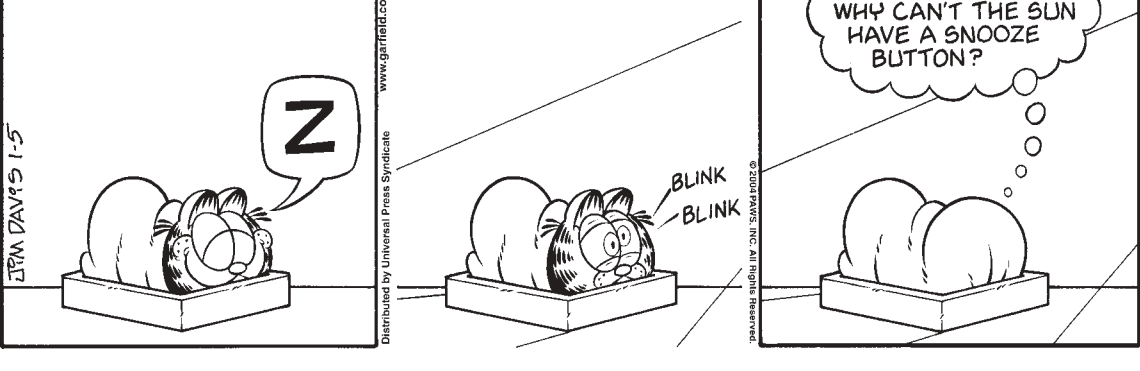
For Better or Worse • Lynn Johnston



For Better or Worse • Lynn Johnston



Garfield • Jim Davis



Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



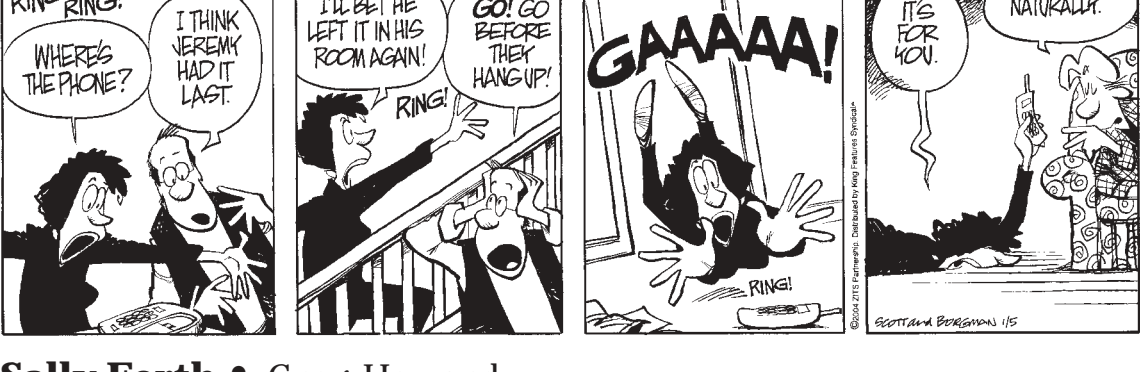
Blondie • Chic Young



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Holiday workers need our thanks

DEARABBY: I'd like to thank all those generous people who work nights, weekends and holidays. Without the help of the auto club operator who answered my call one Christmas morning (and the mechanic who showed up), I would have missed the joy of seeing my grandchild opening gifts.



Abigail Van Buren

• Dear Abby

We no longer argue about what everyone wants for Christmas breakfast because of the servers, chefs and busboys who give me the best present of all — more relaxed time with my family because everyone can eat what they want.

And let's not forget the emergency medical workers who are always there for childhood emergencies, all too often in the middle of the night or on holidays. Thanks, too, to the pharmacists who fill prescriptions when the establishments around them are closed.

I am grateful to everyone who gives up precious time with their own families and friends in order to make life easier for the rest of us.

Abby, thanks for printing this. I want all these generous people to know how appreciated they are, especially at holiday time. Bless you one and all.

— GRATEFUL

DEAR GRATEFUL: Thank you for an uplifting letter. Counting our blessings is a wonderful way to start a new year, and you have mentioned only a few of our unsung heroes. Add to that our police, our firefighters, our brave young men and women in the military, and caregivers everywhere. They, too, are unsung heroes.

DEAR ABBY: My husband, "Phil," and I lost a child two years ago on Christmas Eve. Before that Phil was always affectionate. Now he hardly shows his emotions at all, and doesn't tell me he loves me as often as he used to.

I love my husband with all my heart and want things the way they used to be. I think he is still hurting, but he refuses to get help. What should I do? Please help me. — LOVING HIM

DEAR LOVING: It's clear that your husband is still grieving and has not been able to move on as quickly as you have. Since he refuses to go to grief counseling, go without him. It may help you to understand that grief is an individual process, and perhaps it will better enable you to help him through it. Please accept my deepest sympathy for your loss.

DEAR ABBY: I really need some help. When I was 15, my half-brother raped me. I am now almost 40. I want nothing to do with him, and I don't want him around my kids. Abby, my half-brother keeps trying to call me. How can I make him leave me alone? — EMBARRASSED

DEAR EMBARRASSED: Please stop protecting him with your silence. Contact a rape crisis hotline. It is long overdue and you can still benefit from post-traumatic stress counseling. You have no reason to be embarrassed or to keep this a secret. A rape victim is never at fault.

You can also install caller ID on your telephone and block his calls to stop the harassment. If that fails, talk to your lawyer about a restraining order.

DEAR ABBY: I am 15. I have

been in a relationship with "Adam" for four years, but things just don't seem the same. I met him when I was 11 and we have been together ever since. I waited until my 14th birthday to give him my virginity and we were in love way before that. He is the only guy I have ever loved.

It seems like we fight all the time. He has never hit me or anything, but he has shaken me, and I'm wondering if he would ever hit me in the future. Do you think we should stay together? I want to, but then I don't. — TENNESSEE TEEN

DEAR TEEN: Let me explain something to you. Abusive behavior does not spring from the egg, fully formed like a chicken. It starts out small and grows like a vine until it weighs down and smothers the victim. I'll bet Adam didn't start out by shaking you. It probably started with nasty comments, then yelling — and now this. Will it continue to escalate? Very likely, unless Adam learns that it is unacceptable behavior and is willing to find acceptable ways of displaying his anger.

The preteen and teen years are supposed to be a time of growth and learning, both intellectually and socially. You have limited yourself to one person for too long, and on some level, I think you already know that. Tell Adam you no longer want an exclusive relationship, that you intend to concentrate on your studies and see other people. Then do it. If he doesn't like it, get your parents involved. I'm sure they will set him straight in a hurry.

Bridge

South dealer. Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH
 ♠ K 2
 ♥ K
 ♦ J 8 5
 ♣ K 10 9 8 5 4 2

WEST
 ♠ 10 7
 ♥ 10 9 8 3 2
 ♦ Q 9 6
 ♣ Q 6 3

EAST
 ♠ J 6 5 4
 ♥ A Q 7 6 5
 ♦ 2
 ♣ A J 7

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

The bidding:
 South 1♦ West Pass North 2♣ East Pass
 2♦ Pass 3♦ Pass
 3♠ Pass 4♦ Pass
 5♦ Pass

Opening lead — ten of hearts.

First Things First

Opening lead — ten of hearts. A player is dealt 6-5 distribution in about one deal out of 70, and the question is how best to describe this distribution to partner. When the six-card suit is lower in rank than the five-card suit, it is often possible to depict the 6-5 distribution accurately. In the bidding shown, South's three-spade bid is the key to identifying his 6-5 distribution.

When South bids two spades, North assumes his partner has only four spades. But when South next bids three spades, this assumption becomes invalid. Since South would not rebid an unsupported four-card suit, North concludes his partner has five spades.

The next step is for North to ask himself why South opened one diamond rather than one spade.

Because South would have opened one spade with 5-5 distribution, it follows that his opening diamond bid must be based on longer diamonds than spades, and from this North infers that South has 6-5 distribution.

Proper play makes the contract even though the diamonds and spades both break unfavorably. East wins the heart lead and returns a trump.

South takes the ace, ruffs a heart in dummy, cashes the K-A of spades and ruffs a spade with dummy's jack to guard against a 4-2 spade division.

This leaves the defense with no recourse, and sooner or later South loses a trump trick to West's queen to make five diamonds, losing only a heart and a trump.

Note that South does not draw any trumps until after he has ruffed both a heart and a spade in dummy.

He follows the general rule in suit contracts of not drawing trumps at once if there is a good reason not to do so.

Family Circus • Bil Keane



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"Mommy, do we know any all-white dogs?"

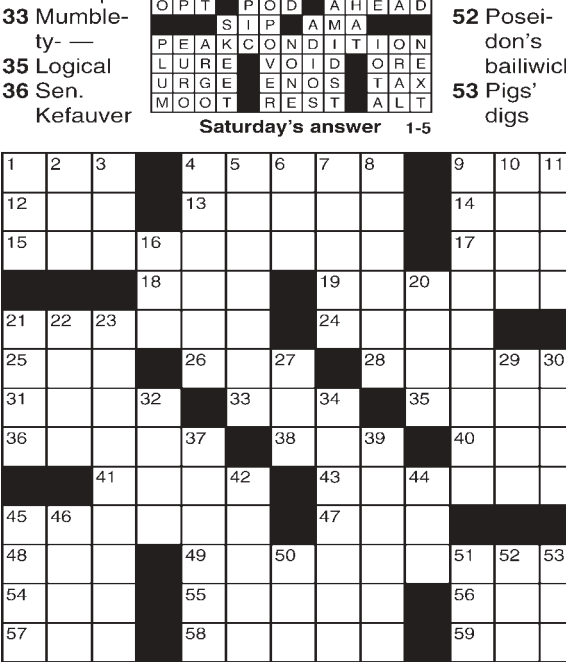
Crossword

- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|------------|---------------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------------|----------|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------|----------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------|-------------------------|---------------|
| ACROSS | 1 Bavarian peak | 4 Troll-thwarting trio | 9 Light brown Retainer | 12 Boredom | 14 Lemieux milieu | 15 House Speaker, 1977-87 | 17 Grand —, N.S. | 18 Picks out of a lineup | 21 Bounded Chicken serving | 24 Noun suffix | 25 Onassis, to pals | 26 CSA soldier | 28 Laconic | 31 Gladys Knight's backup | 33 Mumblety-ty — | 35 Logical | 36 Sen. Kefauver | 38 Stately tree | 40 Capek play | 41 Temple U. team | 43 Half a saying re | 45 Play-ground fixture | 47 Chopper | 48 — Baba | 49 Insobriety | 54 Fellow | 55 Race place | 56 Wager | 57 Chang's brother | 58 Handful at 55-Across | 59 Serenade the moon | 21 Part of a Super-man costume | 22 "Exodus" author | 23 Traversing the tulips? | 27 Spelling contest | 29 Warm and cozy | 30 Architect Saarinen | 32 Stitches | 34 "The Great One" | 37 "Heathers" actor | 39 Proverbs | 42 Filch | 44 Hundredth of a yen | 45 Unaltered | 46 Vivacity | 50 Omega precursor | 51 Recede | 52 Poseidon's bailiwick | 53 Pigs' digs |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|------------|---------------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------|-----------|---------------|-----------|---------------|----------|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------|----------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------|-----------|-------------------------|---------------|

Solution time: 24 mins.

SAC WACO BABA
 LEL AFAR IRON
 TRA FOAL NEON
 TOPO FONES GAME
 ILL APE
 OZONE ANY ALE
 HICK PIS WREN
 OPT POD AHEAD
 SIP AMA
 PEAK CONDITION
 LURE VOID ORE
 URGE ENOS TAX
 MOOT REST ALT

Saturday's answer 1-5



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Cryptoquip

W WEBVWUZ RKCA EJAX
 TZ JUXFJAXKRFXLQ.
 BMXZF BCC, XLZQ BFZ
 FZBC MCQ-TQ-UWV LXA.

Saturday's Cryptoquip: IF A COMPANY THAT PROVIDES FLIGHTS IS LOSING MONEY, IS THAT A RECEDING AIRLINE?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals L