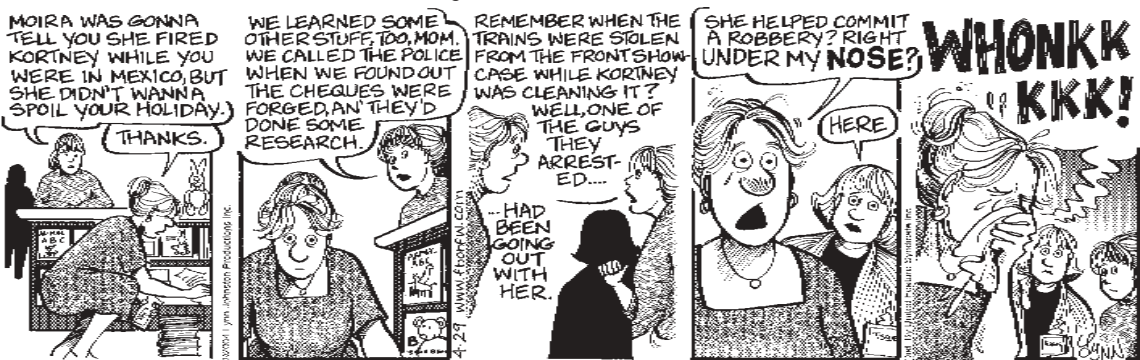


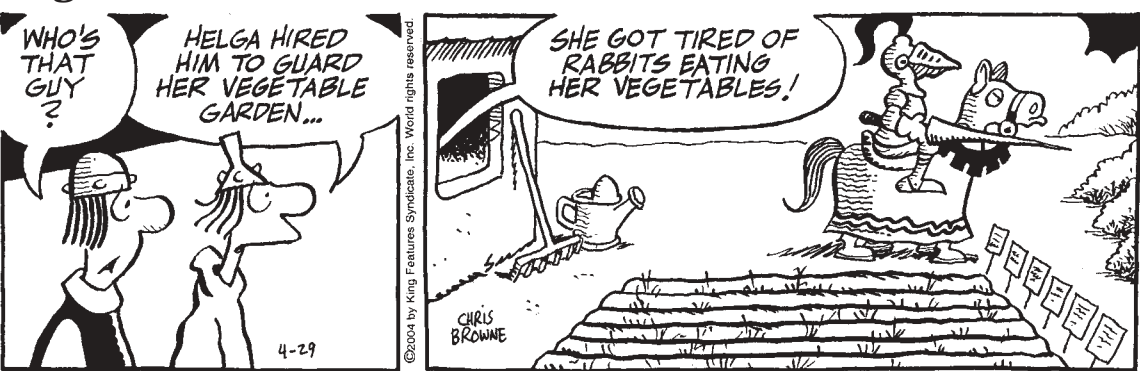
For Better or Worse • Lynn Johnston



Garfield • Jim Davis



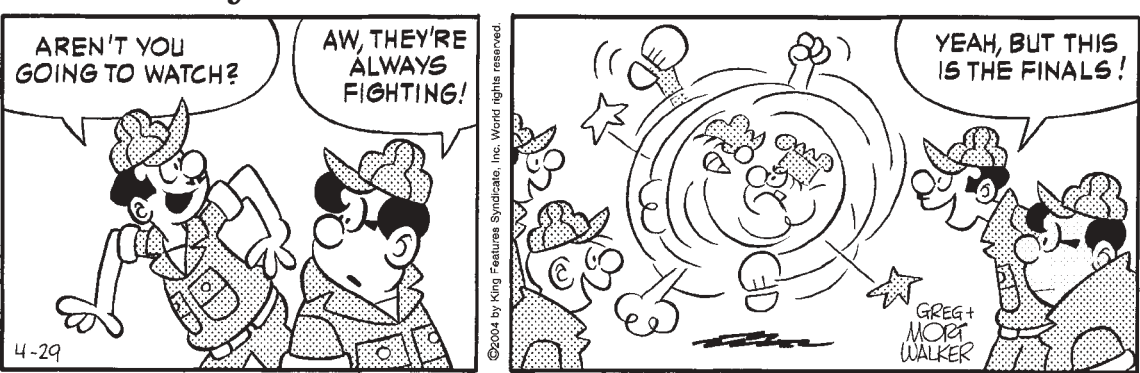
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



Blondie • Chic Young



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



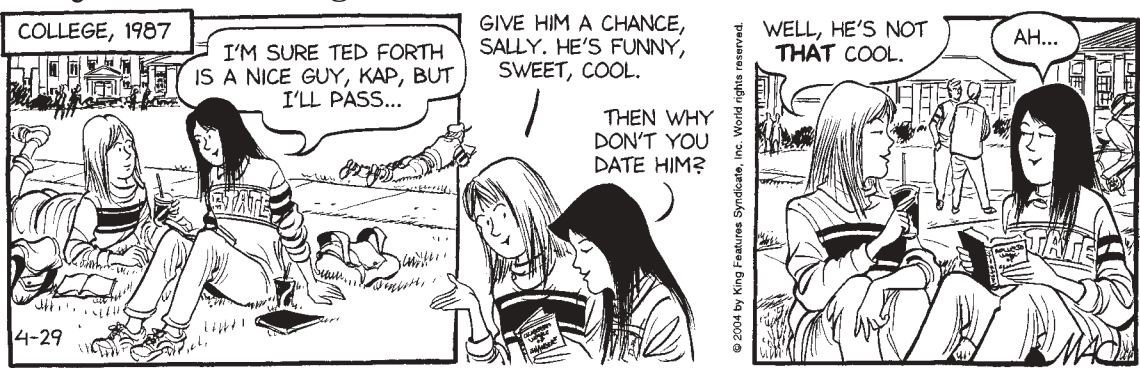
Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Cryptoquip

ML OEDKN QZ SDG LE

V AMLZ Y UYG DYK ES

CYANZGMGC QYJMOJ GYUZN

“LAEVZK YGN ZAAEA.”

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF I ADORED THOSE LITTLE FURROWS IN THE CHIN, WOULD THAT MEAN I'M A CLEFTOMANIAC?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals R

Body piercing debate continues



Abigail Van Buren

• Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I just finished reading the letter from “Upset in Collegeville, Pa.,” regarding the 15-year-old girl who wanted to get her belly button pierced. Your response included, “As long as the procedure is done hygienically, it shouldn't cause any damage.”

I am a gynecologist. I have observed that navel piercings often cause significant permanent scarring, especially at the upper piercing site. These scars are far larger than one would expect. They can also be associated with darkening of the skin at the scar site, which makes them even more cosmetically unacceptable.

I can't explain why other piercings such as earlobes usually have no scarring while navel piercings often result in unsightly permanent scars. Anyone considering a belly button piercing should be aware of this potentially permanent problem.

—OREGON GYNECOLOGIST

DEAR OREGON GYNECOLOGIST: Thank you for writing. Although I live in Los Angeles, probably the navel-piercing capital of the United States, I cannot claim to have seen as many belly buttons “up close and personal” as you have, so I bow to your expertise. Many readers commented regarding that letter. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: May I add a note to your response to the parents who agreed to let their daughter pierce her belly button, then changed their minds? I am 62 and still can't quite forgive my father for much the same thing.

He was old-fashioned and wouldn't let my older sister drive. When I was 15, I begged to take driver's ed and get my license at 16. He agreed — on the condition that I pay for the lessons myself.

Well, I did — and passed with flying colors. But when I turned 16, he

refused to allow me to get my license. When I asked why he'd lied to me, he said he hadn't lied. He simply thought I'd never be able to save enough to pay for the course. Even after 46 years, I still think he lied to me. My advice to the parents: Do not break your word. It could damage your relationship with your son or daughter forever.

—MARJ G., WESLACO, TEXAS

DEAR MARJ: I agree. She fulfilled her part of the bargain, so the parents shouldn't have reneged on their promise.

DEAR ABBY: In some states, piercing isn't legal before age 16, even with parental consent. If the parents relent, I hope they'll find out what the local laws are and go to the most reputable person who performs piercings. My advice to potential piercers: Stay away from those who will do the piercing regardless of state law.

—SUZANNE, PRIMEVAL INK TATTOO, MONROE, WASH.

DEAR SUZANNE: Good advice.

DEAR ABBY: While I respect the right to change one's mind, the relationship of a parent to a child can be permanently damaged by relatively small betrayals. In today's world, belly button piercing is little more than a fashion statement, and the parents who are waffling over their promise to let their daughter pierce her navel in exchange for good grades risk far more by breaking their promise than by allowing

the piercing.

—GEORGE (A YOUNG PARENT WITH CHILDREN), SANTA MONICA, CALIF.
DEAR GEORGE: I agree. And you stated it very well.

DEAR ABBY: I am a 30-year-old, struggling single mother. My 10-year-old daughter's father, “Lenny,” was in prison for the first eight years of her life.

He's a career criminal. You name it, he's done it.

Lenny's out now, but he hasn't changed. He wants to spend time with his daughter, but every time I let her go with him, she comes home with another story.

The world is a scary place, and I feel the need to protect her. I'm afraid he's exposing her to the wrong things.

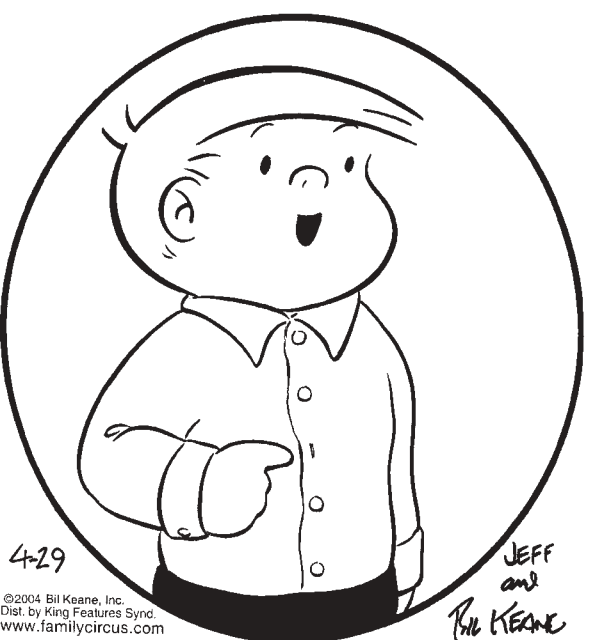
I also think he “works” while she's around. As far as I know, Lenny is still being pursued by the law and bounty hunters.

Sometimes it seems crystal clear. But then I think: Lenny is her father. He loves her. He's just not smart enough to be part of her life.

Legally he has no rights. His name isn't on her birth certificate. There are no court orders for visitation or child support. Abby, what should I do?

—TORN IN TWO
DEAR TORN: Your first priority must be your daughter's safety. Ask yourself what could happen if the bounty hunters or the police were to catch up with Lenny and your daughter were on the premises. You already know what you have to do. Now do it.

Family Circus • Bil Keane



Bridge

South dealer.

North-South vulnerable.

NORTH

♠ Q 5 4
♥ 8 4 2
♦ A 10 2
♣ K Q 5 2

WEST

♠ 9 6 3
♥ Q J 7 3
♦ K Q 4
♣ J 9 6

EAST

♠ J 10 8 7
♥ —
♦ 9 8 7 6 5 3
♣ 10 8 3

SOUTH

♠ A K 2
♥ A K 10 9 6 5
♦ J
♣ A 7 4

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
1 ♥	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
4 NT	Pass	5 ♦	Pass
5 NT	Pass	6 ♦	Pass
6 ♥			

Opening lead — king of diamonds.

The Rabbit-in-the-Hat Trick

There are hands that experts play well even in their sleep. Here is a case of this sort.

Our expert declarer gets to six hearts, and West leads the king of diamonds. Upon seeing dummy, South might have a fleeting thought of making seven if the trumps are divided favorably.

But he quickly dismisses this notion when, after taking the diamond with the ace, he plays a trump to the ace and East shows out.

This distressing development fails to faze our imaginary declarer, however. He has been to the wars before and realizes that if the gods are kind to him, he can still get home safely.

He proceeds on the assumption that the slam can still be made — despite the 4-0 trump division — if West started with precisely 3-4-3-3 distribution. Accordingly, after the trump play at trick two, our hero cashes the A-K-Q of spades, ruffs a diamond, cashes the A-K-Q of clubs and ruffs dummy's last diamond.

Having negotiated these hurdles without incident, declarer is now in position to claim the slam.

Everyone is down to three cards, with West holding the Q-J-7 of trumps and South the K-10-9.

Declarer exits with the nine, and West's two trump tricks suddenly dwindle to one.

It is true that if West had any distribution other than 3-4-3-3, the slam would fail.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that South has to hope for this distribution and must plan his play as if it actually exists.

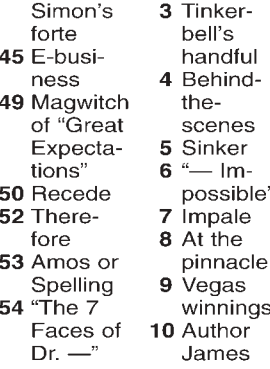
Crossword

ACROSS
1 New Zealand
5 Affront (Sl.)
8 Admitting a draft
12 Davis autobiography, “Yes, —”
13 Coopers-town Giant
14 Senate employee
15 A huge amount
16 Dos Passos trilogy
17 Tops tortes
18 Denouement, maybe
20 Archbishop played by Richard Burton
22 Homer Simpson's expletive
23 Road rally need
24 Spiked club
27 Vague
32 Wing
33 Eg. and Syr., once

34 “You over-spoke,” in chat-roomese
35 Floppy, e.g.
38 Venomous vipers
39 Swindled
40 Suitable
42 Neil Simon's forte
45 E-business
49 Magwitch of “Great Expectations”
50 Recede
52 Therefore
53 Amos or Spelling
54 “The 7 Faces of Dr. —”

DOWN
11 Leftovers
19 “— way!”
21 Exotic poultry
24 Frenzied
25 — Baba
26 Goat's wool yarn
28 Take the cake?
29 Rye holder
30 Diamond arbiter
31 Marie, to Donny
36 Kato — (name in 1995 trial)
37 TV announcer Hall
38 Be there
41 Italian river
42 Long-running musical
43 Reed instrument
44 Holler
46 Algonquian language
47 Amorous look
48 Jell-O creation
51 Ovine remark

Solution time: 25 mins.



Yesterday's answer 4-29



THANK YOU FOR READING THE

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