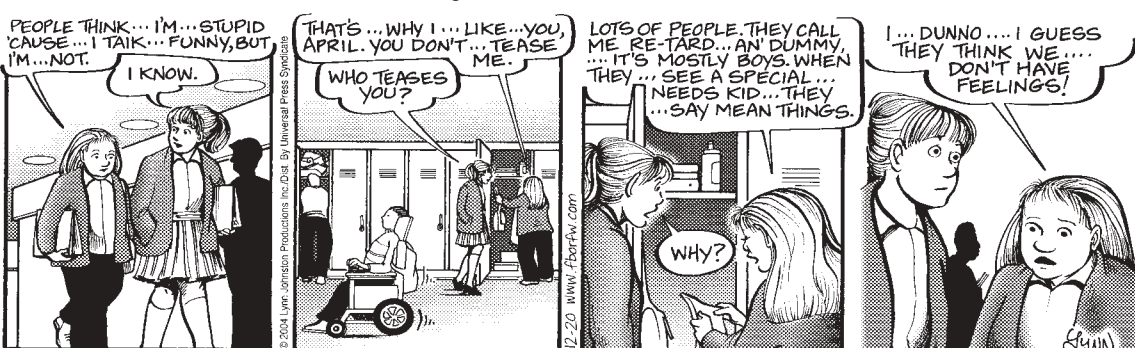


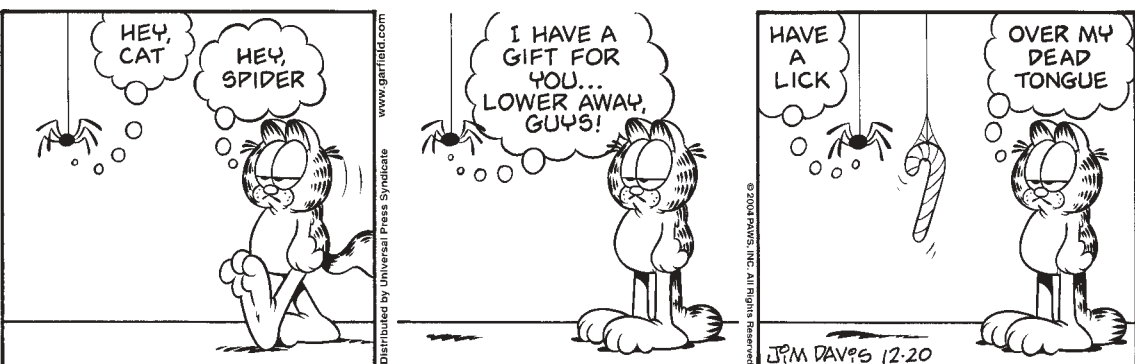
**For Better or Worse • Lynn Johnston**



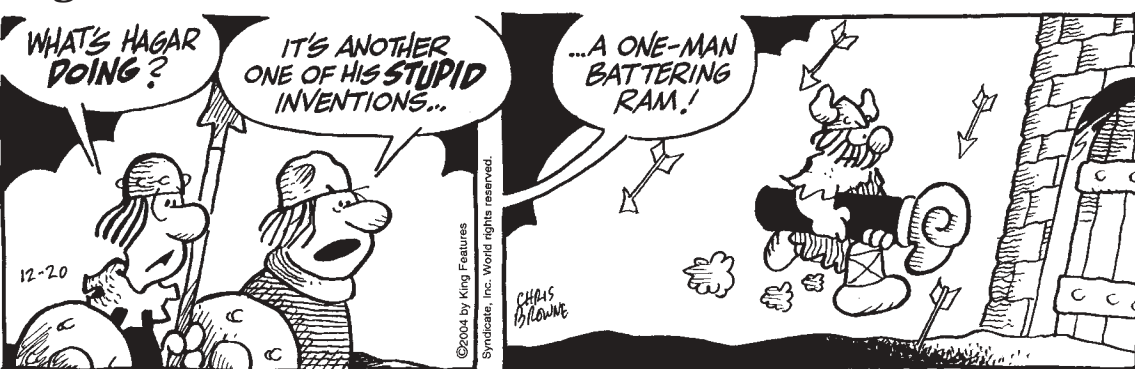
**Tod The Dinosaur • PR Condron**



**Garfield • Jim Davis**



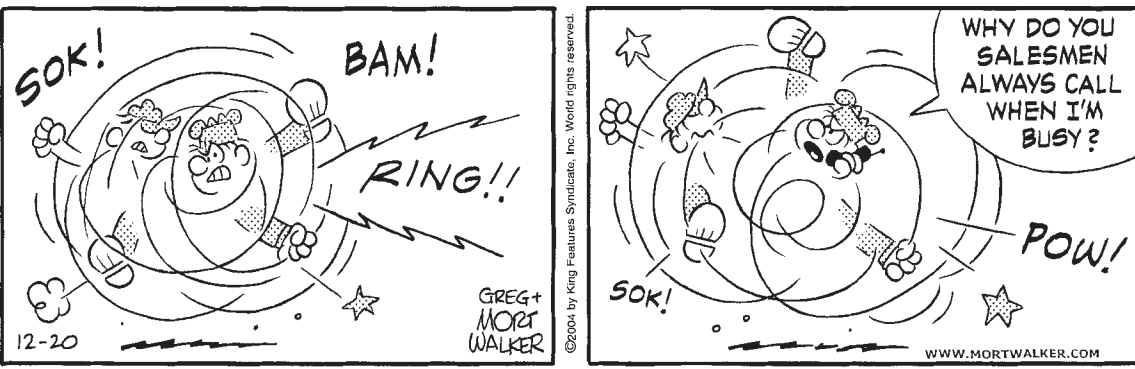
**Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne**



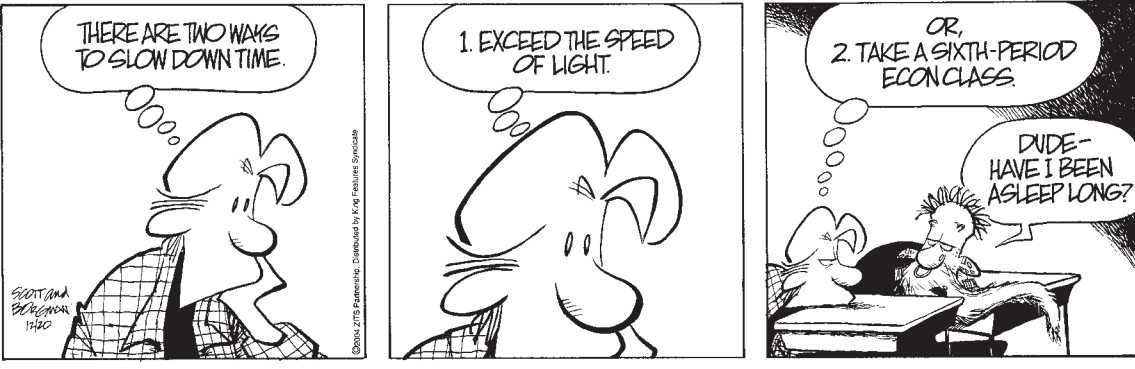
**Blondie • Chic Young**



**Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker**



**Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott**



**Sally Forth • Greg Howard**



**Sales parties are no fun for budgets**



**Abigail Van Buren**

• Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I would like to share my pet peeve with you. It's being invited to "sales parties" for kitchenware, beauty products, etc. I can't afford to spend money at these so-called parties because I have three children to feed.

I would prefer not to disclose my financial situation to every person who issues these invitations, which arrive sometimes on a weekly basis. I have tried to tell friends that I am busy that night, and they either find out that I really don't have plans or try to sign me up for an "outside order." I have shared with a few friends that I am on a strict budget, and they reply with "just come and don't buy anything."

That's not a workable solution, because the consultants see the word "no" as a challenge and won't take "no" for an answer. Also, it's intimidating to see everyone else pull out their checkbooks. How can I get uninvited permanently so I can stop avoiding the mailbox?

— CAN'T AFFORD MY FRIENDS IN ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.

DEAR CAN'T: Real friends don't subject friends to embarrassment or use them to get special deals by promoting commercial products.

Ignore the solicitations as you would any other, and don't feel guilty. If you're questioned, just say you weren't interested in buying — it's the truth.

DEAR ABBY: I recently attended several soccer practices for 6-year-olds. One boy on the team, "Timmy," is so obese he can barely run. His mother screams at him from the sidelines, giving him directions every few minutes.

Sometimes the poor child "runs" in the wrong direction and scores for the opposing team.

(I personally believe he suffers from ADD.) Timmy said to his mother, "I can't run!" — and he can't. His large belly and huge thighs prevent him from running. One can see his frustration.

After the game, each player is given a paper sack of refreshments. One time, it was a chocolate cupcake, a bag of chips and a cold drink. At the end of the game, after the snacks, Timmy ran to his mother. He was crying. She was talking on her cell phone. She said, "Here's 50 cents — go buy a candy bar." My heart aches for this boy. What would you suggest?

— CONCERNED PARENT, BLOOMINGTON, IND.

DEAR CONCERNED: Since you can't change Timmy's mother, speak to the coach. That's the only person the boy should be listening to during a game.

Perhaps the mother will take guidance from the coach regarding a healthy diet and exercise regimen for her son. Another thing you might do is volunteer to provide some healthy snacks for the players after the games, and organize the other team moms to do the same.

DEAR ABBY: My 14-year-old son was invited to a 14-year-old neighbor's birthday party. On the invitation it said, "Suggested gift — \$20."

The boy's parents were aware that he put it on the invitation. I think it was inappropriate to ask for a specific gift, especially money. What's

your opinion?

— OFFENDED IN MASSACHUSETTS

DEAR OFFENDED: My opinion is the same as yours. The fact that the parents didn't put a stop to the gift "suggestion" shows they either endorsed it or didn't know any better. By allowing it, the parents did a disservice to their son.

DEAR ABBY: I just read the letter from "Able but Unwilling in Alabama," whose mother and sister are urging him to "lend" money to his spendthrift brother.

"Able" said he and his wife had always lived frugally and have saved diligently, while his brother and his wife lived far beyond their means.

You responded that if "Able" was comfortable with his decision, he wouldn't have written to you.

He should stick to his guns. The brother and sister-in-law will be siphoning money from here to eternity.

Just like an alcoholic, if you give money to folks like that, they'll take and take until the money is gone. I know — I was one of those takers. I was never taught how to handle money.

I'll bet you get a lot of letters on that one, Abby!

— HOPEFULLY DOING BETTER IN FLORIDA

DEAR DOING BETTER: You are right. I did get mail from readers who felt I should have encouraged the writer to stand firm.

**Bridge**

North dealer. Neither side vulnerable.

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

The bidding:  
 North East South West  
 Pass Pass 1♥ 3♦  
 4♦ 5♦ 5♥ 6♦  
 Pass Pass 6♥ Dble  
 Opening lead — ace of clubs.

**Famous Hand**

When there's a borderline choice between which of two bids to make, you never know when exercising one choice might lead to tremendous success, while exercising the other might lead to absolute ruin.

This very situation arose in dramatic fashion on the accompanying deal from the 1970 World Championship match between Brazil and the United States.

At the first table, with Bobby Wolff and Jim Jacoby North-South for the United States, the bidding went as shown.

Jacoby opened with one heart, when he could just as easily have opened with one spade, and this paid off handsomely when he wound up making six hearts doubled for a score of 1,210 points.

There was nothing to the play. Jacoby ruffed the club lead, drove out the ace of hearts and claimed the rest of the tricks.

At the second table, with Gabriel Chagas and Pedro Assumpcao holding the North-South cards for Brazil, the bidding went:

North	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	1 S	2 D
2 H	4 D	4 H	4 S
Dble	Pass	Pass	5 D
5 S	6 C	6 S	Dble

Here South opened with a spade, the effect of which was that his side lost a slam. Eventually South wound up in six spades, which could not be made after West led a club.

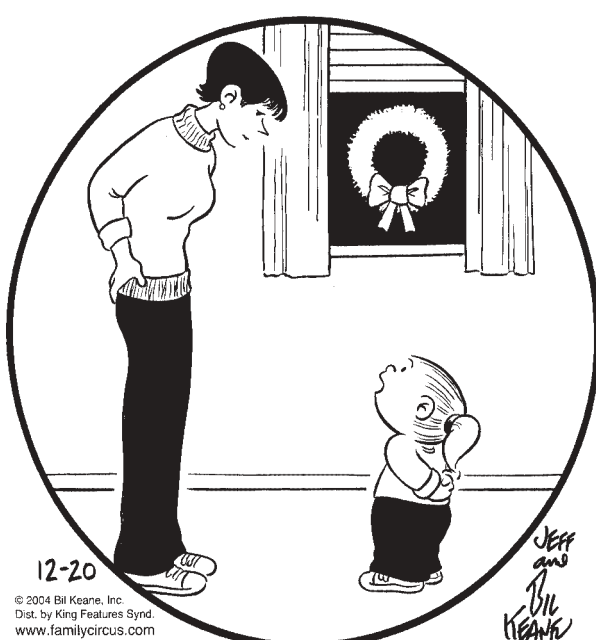
Declarer ruffed the club lead and played a round of trumps.

When West showed out, South could not afford to continue trumps, so he played a heart, hoping for a 1-1 division. West thereupon took the ace and returned a heart for East to ruff, and the slam went down one.

Observe that even if North had ended up in six hearts at this table (North had bid hearts first), the slam would likewise have failed against a spade lead by East.

Tomorrow: Structural visualization.  
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**Family Circus • Bil Keane**



"Is it too late to ask Santa to bring me a baby sister?"

**Crossword**

**ACROSS**

1 Counterfeit  
 5 Bankroll  
 8 Spill the beans  
 12 South American city  
 13 Freudian concept  
 14 Anger  
 15 Somewhere out there  
 16 Home  
 18 Handgun  
 20 Deflate, in a sense  
 21 Play area  
 23 People in general  
 24 Home  
 28 Pleasant  
 31 Computer button  
 32 Non-native Hawaiian  
 34 Year-end beverage  
 35 Campus bigwig  
 37 Home  
 39 Brylcreem quantity

**DOWN**

1 Rebuff a masher  
 2 Stereo arrangement  
 3 Latin 101 word  
 4 Constant sufferer  
 5 Literate and informed  
 6 Past  
 7 Extinct bird  
 8 Londoner or Liverpoolian  
 9 Pasta variety (Var.)  
 10 Kelp, e.g.  
 11 Harry's first lady  
 17 Fellow  
 19 Solemn pledge  
 22 Overwhelm  
 24 Proof abbr.  
 25 Exploit  
 26 Collegiate community  
 27 Unexpected hits  
 29 Anti  
 30 34-Cross ingredient  
 33 Right angles  
 36 Country  
 38 Peruvian pack  
 40 Pen name  
 42 Com-motions  
 43 Future stallion  
 44 Give as an example  
 46 Sax-playing Simpson  
 47 Chow  
 48 Unforeseen hangup  
 50 Felon's flight

**Solution time: 24 mins.**

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

Saturday's answer 12-20

**THANK YOU FOR READING THE**

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**Cryptoquip**

A Q E Q S M N R U A T Z ' T

V E P X C E Z X C S , S X G M X G V F

O C X P E P V S T E S Z N R C R A T

M X U O X G Q F A Q Z R C R T Z .

Saturday's Cryptoquip: IF THERE'S SOMETHING YOU DON'T WANT MOTHER TO FIND OUT, DO YOU SAY "MOM'S THE WORD"?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals N