

**For Better or Worse • Lynn Johnston**



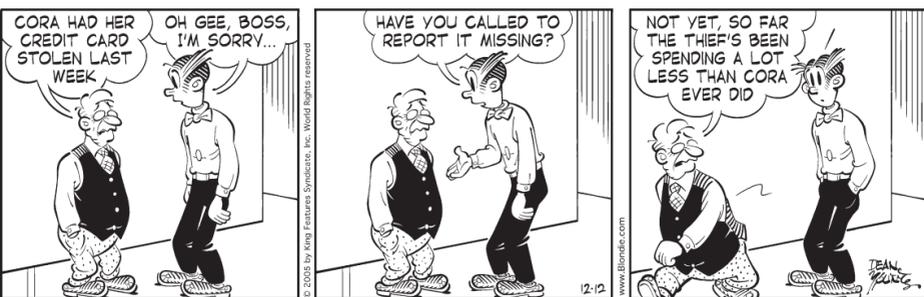
**Garfield • Jim Davis**



**Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne**



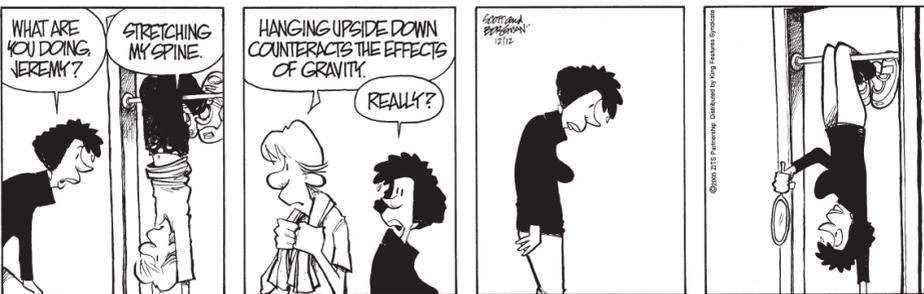
**Blondie • Chic Young**



**Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker**



**Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott**



**Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott**



**Sally Forth • Greg Howard**



**Wife wants birth father to get lost**

DEAR ABBY: Until now, I had a perfect life with a wonderful husband and a great 16-year-old son. My husband of 10 years, "Keith," has raised my son, "Mike," and loves him as his own. Mike grew up knowing that Keith was not his birth father, but has always treated him as if he were. My ex-husband remarried and now has three daughters. I never hid this from my son. But now, my ex-husband's daughters have "found" Mike on the Internet. They have been talking for a couple of weeks now, and Mike actually talked to his birth father on a couple of occasions.



**Abigail Van Buren**

Dear Abby

Mike now treats Keith very badly, and Keith doesn't know why. I knew about the conversations with his "sisters," but I did not know about the conversations with his father. Why would a man who abandoned me and his infant son 16 years ago all of a sudden want to come into his life now and disrupt our lives?

We have a great family, and I get very uncomfortable when Mike slips in things that happened 16 or 17 years ago, because he heard it from his father. What can I do?

DEAR WORRIED: I can think of one reason why the man who abandoned you and your baby boy is now disrupting your life. The answer is, he "only" had three girls and would now like to have a son. After all, all the work of raising this young man has been done.

Your son may be 16, but he is still a minor. I recommend you discuss this entire matter with an attorney who can tell you what your rights are as your son's custodial parent. (I am assuming you never received child support for the boy. If your ex wants "in" now, perhaps he should share some of the financial responsibility that Keith has shouldered for so many years.) And while you're at it, I urge you to consider family coun-

seling for you, your husband and your son. I don't know what your ex may have been telling the young man, but I guarantee it'll be better if it is put on the table by YOU, with a trained therapist who can help you to iron out the "wrinkles" before they become permanent-press.

DEAR ABBY: Every year at Christmas, my four longtime girlfriends and I "promise" not to buy each other expensive gifts. We all have large families, so it is a cost-saving measure.

However, invariably at least one of us ends up ignoring the rule and buys lavish gifts anyway! The small gift-givers end up feeling embarrassed, and the expensive gift-givers end up feeling guilty for violating our pledge.

DEAR "B": I have a suggestion: Make a pact this year that your only "gifts" will be in the form of letters to each other, describing a special memory of your friendship. Embellish the letters with all the traits your friends have that you admire. I promise you, the recipients will treasure it. If anyone breaks the pact, the others should not feel guilty for having kept the promise and given a gift of "self."

DEAR ABBY: I'm a 13-year-old boy with a problem. My mother won't stop using my underwear. If that's not bad enough, she only uses my NEW underwear. I constantly ask her to stop, but she won't.

— ANGRY  
DEAR ANGRY: At 13, you are old enough to have things of your own. Your mother shouldn't be using your underwear without your permission. The next time it happens, try this: Say you'd like to borrow some of hers.

DEAR ABBY: I grew up invisible in a household with three siblings, one of whom got by far the most attention.

To this day, my older brother's picture is displayed in our parents' family room — only his.

Two of my siblings were manic-depressive. There was never much calm, but that was no one's fault. My biggest complaint is that Dad ran out on us, taking work in another town. Although he had the option to stay, he left Mom and me to cope with the remaining brother who suffered from that horrible disease.

It was hell. I am still angry at my father, even though he is old and frail and doesn't have much time left. My wife says I need to sit down with him, explain why I am angry, clear the air, and also ask him to hang pictures of all of his children.

I say, some wounds are better left scabbed, if not healed. I feel that the absence of photographs speaks of an attitude that cannot be changed. What do you think?

— FORGOTTEN SON.  
DEAR FORGOTTEN SON: I think I agree with your wife. Although you may not be able to change your father's attitude (or priorities), it might be beneficial for you to give him a chance to explain why he left — one adult to another.

And as to why only one sibling's picture is displayed, it could have less to do with the amount of affection as much as the level of preoccupation. Please talk to your father before it's too late. It could lighten your load.

**Bridge**

North dealer.  
North-South vulnerable.  
NORTH  
♠ Q 4  
♥ K J 9 7 6 3  
♦ A 6  
♣ Q 7 4  
WEST  
♠ 10 8 5 2  
♥ A Q  
♦ J 9 8 5 4 3  
♣ 8  
EAST  
♠ —  
♥ 10 8 5 4 2  
♦ 10 2  
♣ A K J 6 5 2  
SOUTH  
♠ A K J 9 7 6 3  
♥ —  
♦ K Q 7  
♣ 10 9 3

The bidding:  
North 1♥ East 2♣ South 2♠ West Pass  
3♥ Pass 4♠  
Opening lead — eight of clubs.

**Famous Hand**

There are plays in bridge that make a lot of sense after they're pointed out, but are often overlooked in practice because they are so unusual.

For a good example, take this example from H.W. Kelsey's book "More Killing Defense."

South gets to four spades, and West leads his singleton club. Declarer follows low from dummy, and East wins with the jack.

East then cashes the king of clubs, and West has to choose a discard.

Probably most defenders would discard a low diamond on East's king of clubs, in which case declarer eventually makes the contract, losing three club tricks — period.

But if West considers the matter carefully at trick two, he discards the queen of hearts instead!

And when East next cashes the ace of clubs, West discards the ace of hearts!!

East now leads a heart, and South goes down one.

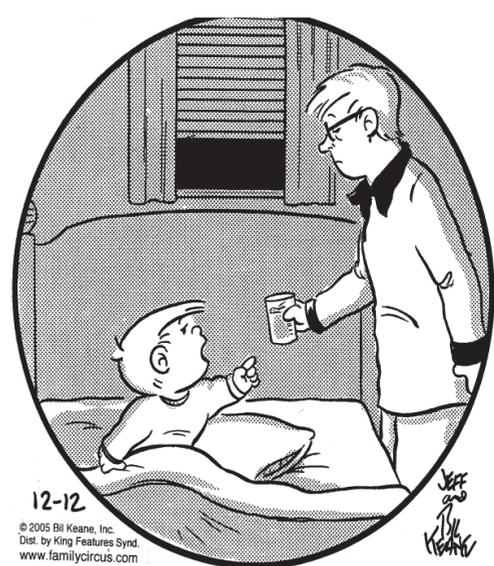
Regardless of what declarer elects to play on the heart return at trick four, he cannot avoid eventually losing a trump trick to West.

Fancy defense, you might say, but how in the world can anybody holding the West hand be expected to be that smart? Nevertheless, the fact remains that no harm can come from discarding the heart queen at trick two.

When declarer then follows to the third club, jettisoning the ace of hearts assures defeat of the contract, while the failure to do so will in some cases — this one in particular — allow declarer to make the contract.

Tomorrow: The line of least resistance. (c)2005 King Features Syndicate Inc.

**Family Circus • Bil Keane**

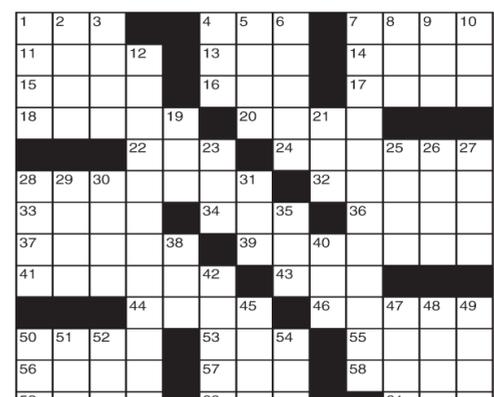


**Crossword**

**ACROSS**  
1 Bobby of hockey fame  
4 Despondent  
7 "Kiss Me, —"  
11 Retain  
13 Millieu for 1-Across  
14 Wading bird  
15 Hindu princess  
16 Ump  
17 "La Bohème," on Broadway  
18 Gas-station name  
20 Piglets' mummies  
22 Help  
24 Trap setter's outcry  
28 Vegas visitor  
32 Russian ballet company  
33 Sandusky's state  
34 Drenched  
36 Roof overhang  
37 Domineering  
39 Dignified old woman  
41 Method Table  
43 Sargasso swimmer  
44 Incursion  
46 Fair of hair  
50 Sheltered  
53 Follow relentlessly  
55 Duel tool  
56 Take out of context?  
57 Desiccate  
58 Taiwanese dollar  
59 LummoX  
60 Sweet potato  
61 Messy place  
12 Champion skier  
19 Refinery product  
21 Moo goo gai pan  
23 Morning moisture  
25 Rugged mountain  
26 Threw  
27 State with certainty  
28 Sailors ...  
29 ... and how to greet them  
30 Not see  
31 Roulette bet  
35 Place-kicker's pride  
38 Nay canceler  
40 Symbol of intrigue  
42 Blouse style  
45 1964 hurricane  
47 Comic-strip penguin  
48 In good order  
49 Say it isn't so  
50 Toss into the mix  
51 Virgin neighbor  
52 Right angle  
54 Workout site

**Solution time: 24 mins.**  
BATES PATES  
MOBILE IRENIC  
ALASKA CODDLE  
DEC STRAW UVA  
ARUM SAD ARES  
MOSEY NOWHERE  
NOD ROE  
REBUKED PAPAL  
ERAS POO DALE  
BAN MOOSE LEA  
USAGES IDCARD  
SENATE ENACTS  
DATES RATES

Saturday's answer 12-12



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**Cryptoquip**

ONUK XOR QURQU IUX  
YHBBUC, D IJUGG TRI  
YDINX GHT XNUT UKXUB  
DKXR HK HSBUC GXHXU.

Saturday's Cryptoquip: HAVING HEARD THE JURY'S VERDICT, THE JUDGE HANDED DOWN HIS SENTENCE WITH CONVICTION.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals P