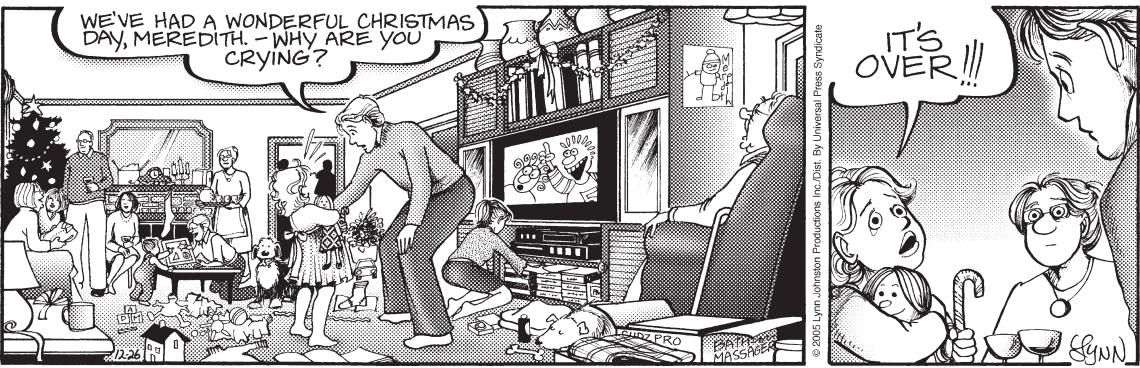
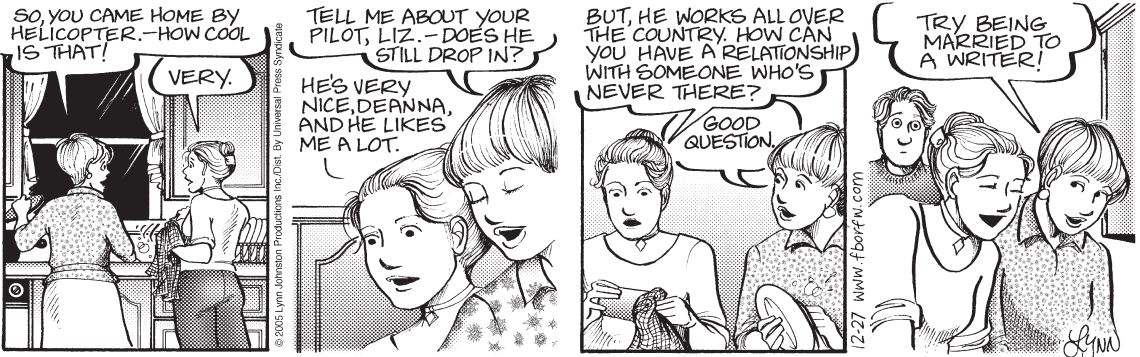


For Better or Worse • Lynn Johnston



For Better or Worse • Lynn Johnston



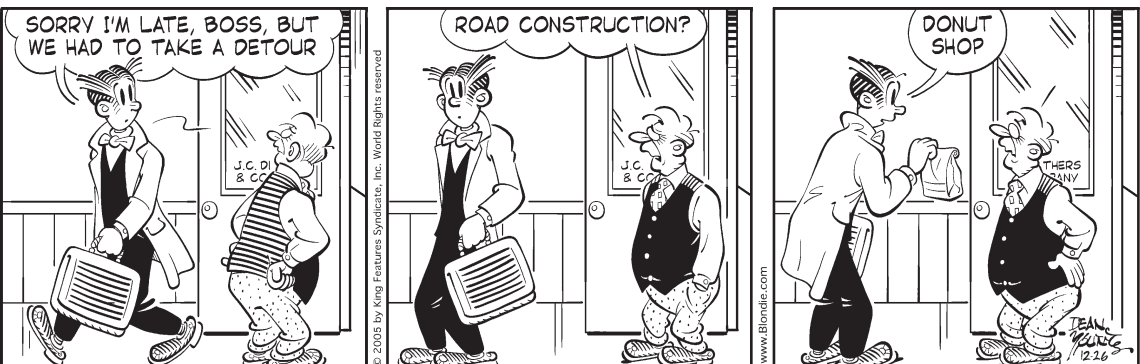
Garfield • Jim Davis



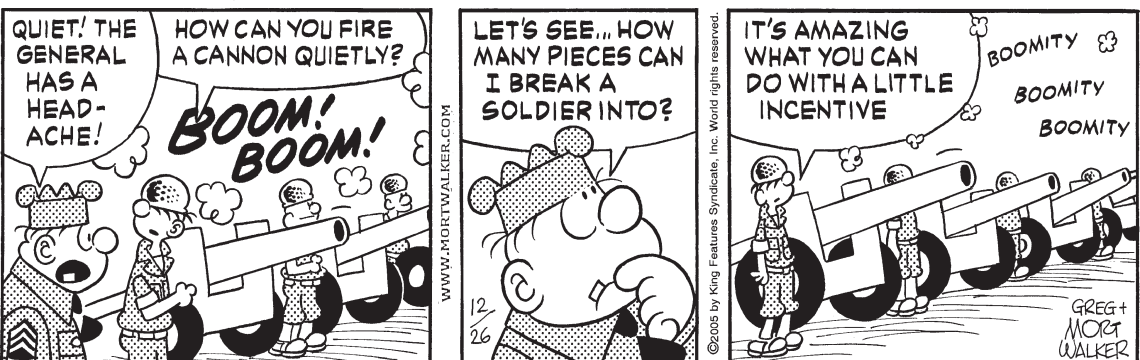
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



Blondie • Chic Young



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Cryptoquip

EJ XGPGVWZ EYXGBS;
WVG JFIYM FY W LFPWUZ
HEYMFH BFPGV, LEDK;
SKFXG UG XKISSGV UIDX
Saturday's Cryptoquip: WHILE PREPARING M' GIFTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS, I SUPPOSE I COUL LISTEN TO WRAP MUSIC.
Today's CRYPTOQUIP Clue: V equals R

U'CJ AJJE SFBG SYZS U
IUOYS YZCJ SF VJBFPSJ.
U JWDJPS SYZS'G AJ Z
IFCUEO JWDJVUJEPJ.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF SEVERAL INSECTS ARE FOUND ON A MOVABLE WINDOW COVER, MIGHT THOSE BE SHUTTER BUGS?
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals V

Crossword

ACROSS
1 Parlor piece
5 Lingerie item
8 Sometimes they say "HELLO"
12 Pick of the leader?
14 Arm bone
15 Satisfactoriness
16 Grand opening day?
17 Ourselves (Ger.)
18 Durum and bulgur
20 Actress Angelina
23 Barak of Israel
24 Monad
25 Pharyngeal tissue
28 X rating
29 On the qui vive
30 A chemical company

32 Girl serenaded by barber-shop quartets
34 Merriment
35 Rds.
36 "— Jacques"
37 Heavy work shoe
40 Conk out
41 Actor Julia
42 Australian city
47 Shrek is one
48 Truck driver
49 Disarray
50 Wet wriggler

51 Sicilian spouter
DOWN
1 Vast expanse
2 On in years
3 Retainer
4 Discharge completely
5 Prejudice
6 Sinbad's bird
7 No specific location
8 Monkey suit
9 Mater preceder
10 Summer-time pest
11 Back talk

13 Melody
19 Quest
20 Stick out
21 Draftable
22 "Swedish Nightingale"
23 Jenny
25 Estrange
26 What
27-Down isn't
27 Active one
29 Part of T.A.E.
31 Teensy
33 Philly squad
34 Lubricant
36 Motion picture
37 Sleepy Hollow's Mr. Bones
38 Anger
39 Shared by us
40 Transaction
43 Ruby or Sandra
44 Addams Family cousin
45 Lair
46 Historic period

Solution time: 24 mins.

DEEP INCA COS
ALMA NEAR OPT
SLIP LENT LEA
HARE ADD PANG
RAW INA
SPURNS DEPUTY
PERON GENTIE
ANNUAL ARRANT
TSO POT
BARE CUP IVES
ACE FARE GORE
INN ALGA ETNA
TED BEER REEL

Saturday's answer 12-26

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
12
15
17
18 19
20 21 22 23
24 25 26 27
28 29 30 31
32 33 34
35 36
37 38 39 40
41 42 43 44 45 46
47 48
49 50 51

ACROSS
1 Stamina, slangily
5 Dressed (in)
9 "Survivor" network
12 Teeny bit
13 Extravagant publicity
14 "The Greatest"
15 Plane-launching devices
17 Youngster
18 Arrived
19 Mirror's offering
21 Simply not done
24 Kazakhstan sea
25 Reaction re Yorick
26 South African city
30 Kitty
31 Accumulations
32 Sticky stuff
33 Saline solution

35 Modern-day money
36 Oodles
37 Astronaut-turned-senator
38 Master, on safari
40 Wound cover
42 Scull tool
43 Stuporous condition
48 Ms. Gardner
49 Wastes no time
50 Apple intruder
51 Decimal base

52 Role for Gwyneth
53 Dance lesson
DOWN
1 Fond du —, Wisc.
2 JFK info
3 Received
4 Hits hard
5 Crony
6 Sparky of baseball
7 Suitable
8 Wants
9 List
10 Online journal
11 Location
16 Remuneration
20 Wrestling surface

21 Reveille's opposite
22 Lotion additive
23 Sailing vessel
24 Mimicry specialist
26 Metropolis
27 Pub order
28 Tattered
29 Lunch hour, often
31 Flair
34 Ashy
35 Macaroni type
37 Roscoe
38 Gravy server
39 Bleacher-ites' choreography
40 Branch
41 Hacienda, por ejemplo
44 Intention
45 Anything but
46 Anger
47 Pump up the volume

Solution time: 21 mins.

SOFABRA TAGS
ELECTION ULNA
ADEQUACY XMAS
UNSWHEATS
JOLIE EHUD
UNIT ADENOID
TEN ALERT DOW
ADELINE GLEE
AVES FRERE
BROGANDIE
RAUL ADELAIDE
OGRE TEAMSTER
MESS EEL ETNA

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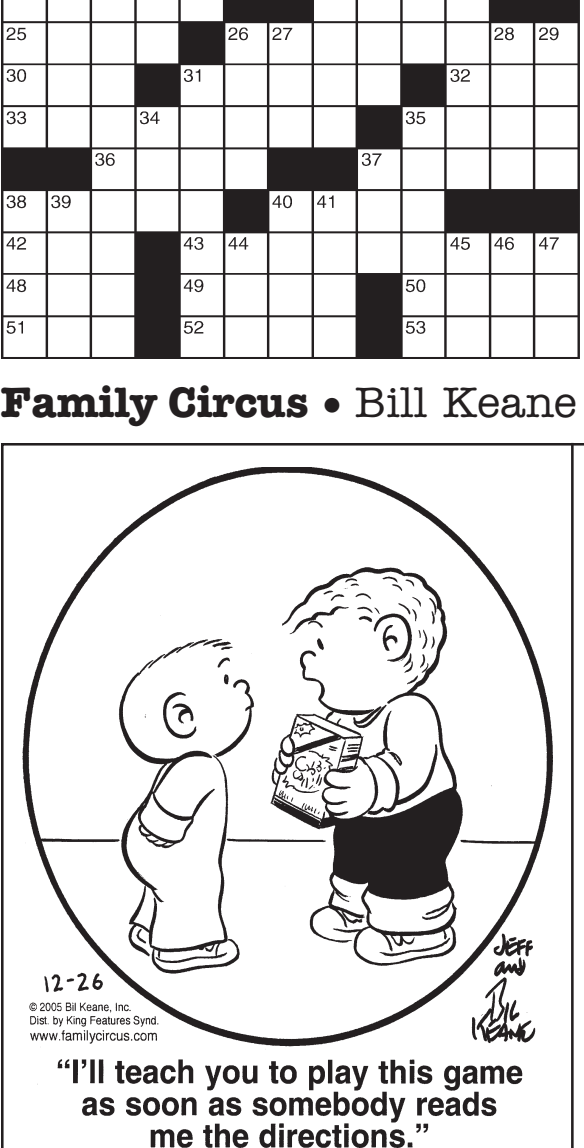
Solution time: 21 mins.

SOFABRA TAGS
ELECTION ULNA
ADEQUACY XMAS
UNSWHEATS
JOLIE EHUD
UNIT ADENOID
TEN ALERT DOW
ADELINE GLEE
AVES FRERE
BROGANDIE
RAUL ADELAIDE
OGRE TEAMSTER
MESS EEL ETNA

Yesterday's answer 12-27

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
12
15
16
17
18
19 20
21 22 23 24
25 26 27 28 29
30 31 32
33 34 35
36 37
38 39 40 41
42 43 44 45 46 47
48 49 50
51 52 53

Family Circus • Bill Keane



Bridge

South dealer.
Both sides vulnerable.

NORTH
♦ A Q J 5 3
♥ A Q 5
♦ J 10 6 4 3
♣ —

WEST
♦ 10 9 6 2
♥ J 8 7
♦ A K
♣ J 7 3 2

EAST
♦ 8 7 4
♥ K 4 3 2
♦ 7 5
♣ Q 8 6 4

SOUTH
♦ K
♥ 10 9 6
♦ A K 10 9 5

The bidding:

South
1 ♦
3 ♦
3 NT
5 ♦
Pass

West
Pass
Pass
Pass
Pass
Dble

North
2 ♦
3 ♦
4 ♦
6 ♦

East
Pass
Pass
Pass
Pass

Famous Hand

There are hands played in the annual world championship where the outcome is the same at both tables and therefore receives little notice. But some deals merit attention nevertheless — particularly when both teams fall from grace and duplicate their sins. One of the most startling cases of this sort occurred in the match between Brazil and the United States in 1973.

When a Brazilian pair held the North-South cards, the bidding went as shown. North's two-diamond response to South's opening diamond bid was systemic and indicated a very good hand. The bidding was fairly natural from this point on, but, although South indicated his willingness to stop at five diamonds, North could not resist the temptation to bid six. West doubled, and declarer went down one.

When a U.S. pair sat North-South, the bidding went:

South	West	North	East
Pass	Pass	1 D	Pass
3 D	Pass	3 S	Pass
4 C	Pass	4 H	Pass
5 C	Pass	5 D	Pass
6 D	Dble		

At this table, South passed originally, but then tried to make up for it by bidding strongly later on. North's one-diamond bid, rather than one spade, was also systemic. South finally bid six diamonds over North's two slam tries, and again this ignominious contract got doubled. So the outcome was a tie, each declarer going down one, and no blood was spilled.

It does seem odd, at this level of competition, that both pairs should undertake a slam missing the A-K of trumps, but it goes to show that even the world's best players are only human.

Tomorrow: A very valuable convention.
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North dealer.
North-South vulnerable.

NORTH
♦ Q 7
♥ Q 10 9 7
♦ K Q J 7 4
♣ K Q

WEST
♦ J 9 5 3 2
♥ 5 2
♦ —
♣ 10 9 5 4 3 2

EAST
♦ A K
♥ K J
♦ 9 8 6 5 3
♣ J 8 7 6

SOUTH
♦ 10 8 6 4
♥ A 8 6 4 3
♦ A 10 2
♣ A

The bidding:

North
1 ♦
2 ♥

East
Pass
Pass

South
1 ♥
4 ♥

West
Pass

Opening lead — three of spades.

A Very Valuable Convention

Here is a dramatic example of the use of the suit-preference convention, invented by Hy Lavinthal in 1933.

West leads the three of spades against South's four-heart contract. Under most circumstances, with a spade holding including the A-K, East would win the first trick with the king. But in the present case, to show that he has only two spades, East reverses the usual procedure by winning the first trick with the ace and the next one with the king.

If West is paying attention, he should realize that his partner's high-low indicates a doubleton spade. West therefore plays his jack of spades on East's king!

West's startling play of the jack, clearly a suit-preference signal since he must have lower spades in his hand, directs East to lead a diamond, rather than a club, at trick three. This is because West's play of an unnecessarily high card asks for the higher-ranking side suit to be returned; if West had desired a club return, he would have played his lowest spade to ask for a lead of the lower-ranking suit.

As a result, the very reasonable contract gets slaughtered. West ruffs East's diamond return and plays a spade. When dummy ruffs with the queen, East overruffs with the king and returns another diamond. West ruffs and plays still another spade. When dummy ruffs with the ten, East overruffs with the jack to put an end to the carnage and defeat the contract three tricks — 300 points!

Note that if there were no such weapon as the suit-preference signal, East might very well elect to return a club at trick three instead of a diamond. This misdirected shot would turn out to be very expensive indeed. Declarer would finish with 10 tricks instead of seven, and so would score a vulnerable game instead of going down three.