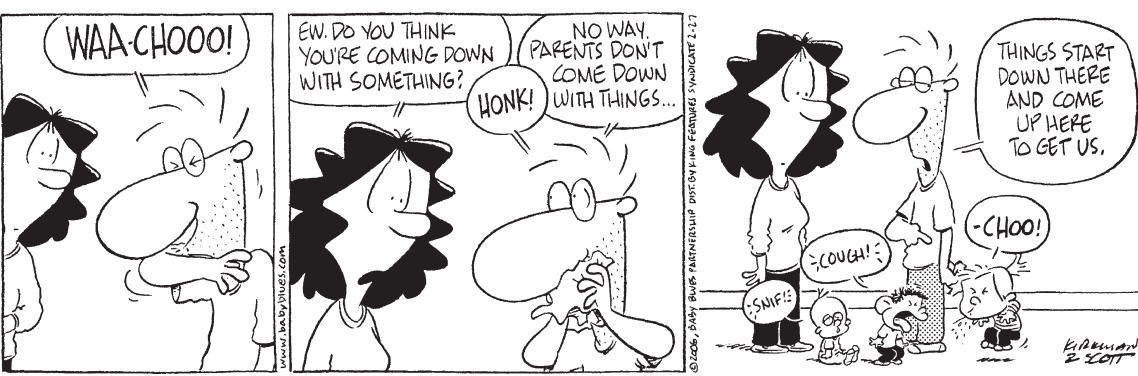


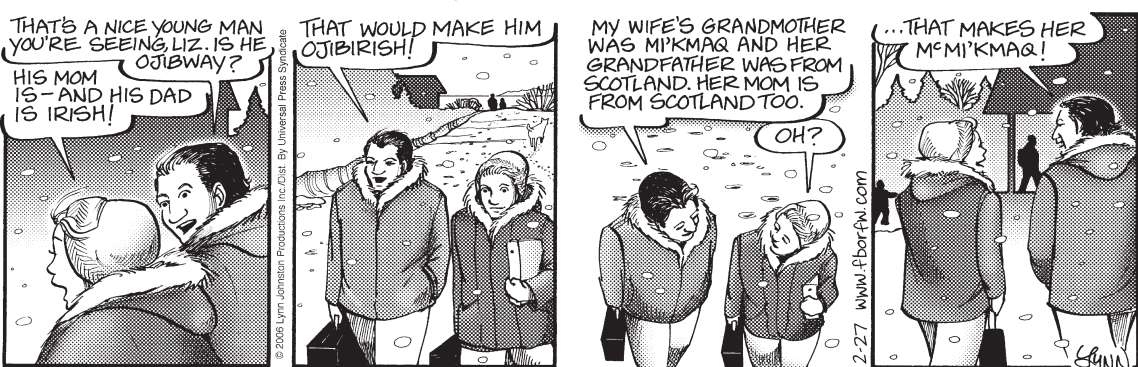
Retail • Norm Feuti (Sample)



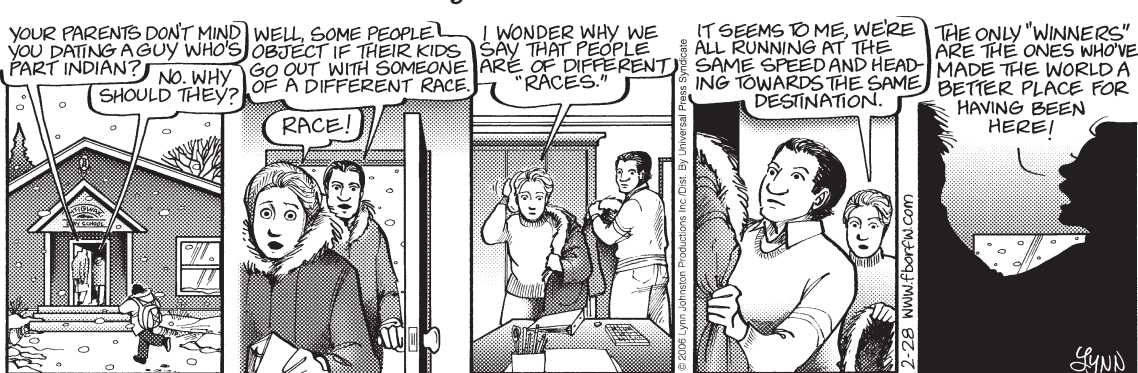
Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



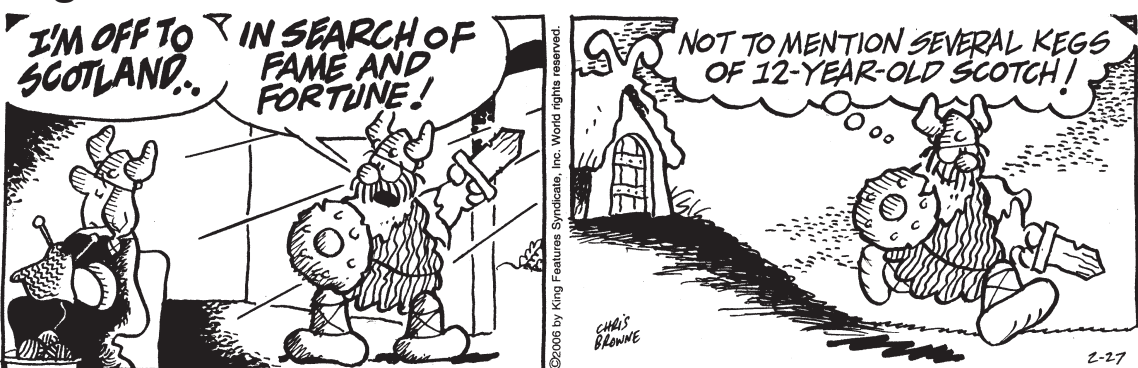
For Better or Worse • Lynn Johnston



For Better or Worse • Lynn Johnston



Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



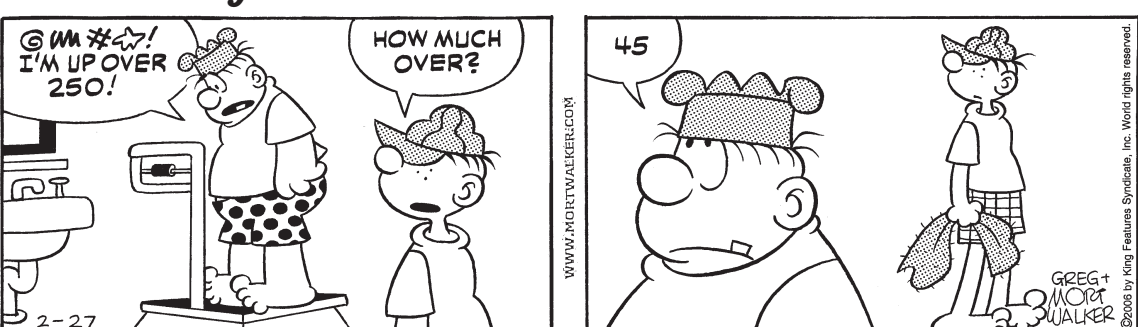
Garfield • Jim Davis



Blondie • Chic Young



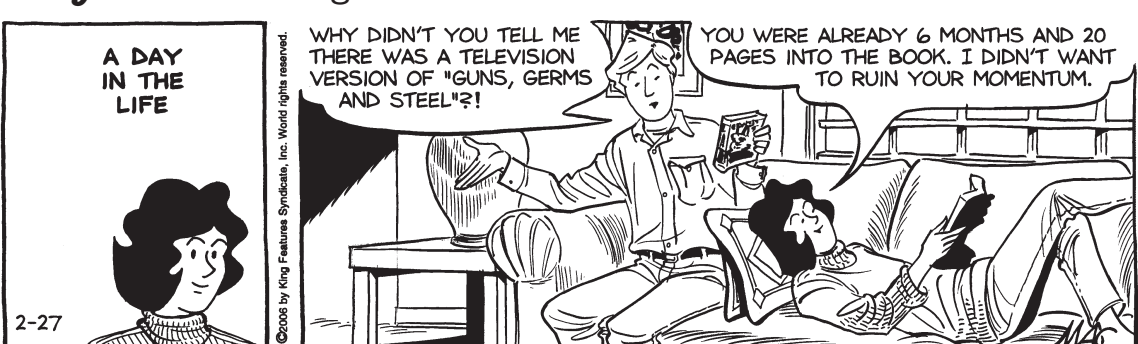
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Breaking cycle of abuse begins now

DEAR ABBY: Your recent letters regarding domestic violence bring important attention to the dangers of this problem. Unfortunately, every year thousands of Americans lose loved ones to this terrible epidemic, and most are left wondering what they could have done to prevent it.



Abigail Van Buren

Dear Abby

Too often we assume that violence happens only to other people — people of a different race or culture, people who live in a different community, or people in a different type of relationship. But domestic violence does not discriminate. It can touch everyone — through friends, co-workers and family members who are suffering silently without our even knowing it. Many of us also know abusers — people who may seem charming and likable on the surface but cause fear, self-doubt, pain, even death, to those they claim to love.

Recent studies show that as many as one-third of teens experience abuse in a dating relationship. And, more than half of teens say they know friends who have been physically, sexually or verbally abused. The need for early intervention to change these shocking statistics is clear.

We must reach out to youth and talk openly and often about these issues so we can help them to avoid the terrible sorrow felt by families and others who are victims of abuse. Each of us has the right to a safe and healthy relationship free from violence, coercion and fear.

— JESSICA ARONOFF, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BREAK THE CYCLE

DEAR JESSICA: Thank you for an important letter. I hope it grabs the attention it deserves from teens and their parents. Your statement that as many as one-third of teenagers experience abuse in a dating relationship, and more than half of them have friends who have been physically,

sexually or emotionally abused, will shock many people, I am sure. Readers, Break the Cycle provides domestic violence education, information and help to students ages 12 to 24 throughout the country. It teaches what healthy relationships are and helps them to recognize the warning signs of abuse. Break the Cycle lets them know that help is available if they are suffering or in danger, and shows them that they deserve safe, supportive, non-violent relationships.

There are opportunities for interested people to help in this endeavor. To find out more about this worthwhile program, log onto www.breakthecycle.org, or call toll-free at 1-888-988-8336. I have supported Break the Cycle in the past, and continue to do so, because the earlier young people learn to differentiate between healthy relationships and obsessive, destructive ones, the healthier our society will be.

DEAR ABBY: I am confused about my sexual orientation. I am an 18-year-old girl. Although I encounter a lot of attractive guys at work, I don't find myself attracted to any of them. I do think that they are handsome, but I never, ever get that "butterflies in the stomach" feeling that my friends describe to me. At the same time, I am pretty sure I am not a lesbian.

Is there something wrong with me? Could I be asexual? Is there any way this can be diagnosed?

— CONFUSED IN NEVADA

DEAR CONFUSED: I hate to

see you diagnose and label yourself. It is possible that you have simply not met the right person yet. Real life is not the way it's presented in movies and music videos, where the hero and heroine are struck by lightning and carried away at first encounter. Give it one more year, and if you still feel there is something missing, discuss it with your doctor. Sexuality is a matter of degree, and no two people are exactly alike.

DEAR ABBY: I am the mother of two children ages 7 and 4. In a recent child development class, there was a discussion about sex education for small children. My professor mentioned that if children aren't asking questions about sex, we should initiate talks with our children. She also said that children should have the sex talk by 8 years old. Is this correct?

I can't imagine talking to my children about sex at such an early age. What's the best age to have the sex talk, and is there a limit on how much we should talk about?

— SYLVIA IN SAN DIEGO

DEAR SYLVIA: Much depends upon the level of maturity of the child, which can vary from individual to individual. Parents should certainly use correct terminology when talking about body parts. It's best to arm children with knowledge before their hormones kick in.

I agree with your professor that by age 8 or 9, some discussion of puberty should be introduced. If you wait much longer, your children will hear "the facts" from their friends instead of from you, and too often, the information they receive from peers is incorrect.

Editor's note: Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069.

Bridge

West dealer. Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH
 ♠ K 7 5
 ♥ 8
 ♦ A Q 10 9 7
 ♣ A K 10 6

WEST
 ♠ J
 ♥ A J 10 9 7 6 4
 ♦ 6
 ♣ Q J 9 4

EAST
 ♠ 10 6
 ♥ K 5 2
 ♦ 8 4 3 2
 ♣ 8 7 5 2

SOUTH
 ♠ A Q 9 8 4 3 2
 ♥ Q 3
 ♦ K J 5
 ♣ 3

The bidding:
 West 4♥ North Dble East Pass South 5♠
 Pass 6♠

Opening lead — ace of hearts.

Famous Hand
 What happens when two players with a great deal of imagination collide with one another? Something's got to give, and it did in this hand played in a tournament many years ago.

West opened as dealer with four hearts. It was certainly a well-timed pre-emptive bid, since it turned out that North-South had the balance of strength. North doubled — most partnerships these days play this as takeout — and South had far too good a hand to bid a mere four spades.

South wanted to get to a slam if North had the right kind of hand, but he had no way of knowing whether a slam could be made, particularly since he had two losing hearts. So he consulted partner about it by jumping to five spades, and North, of course, bid six.

West led the ace of hearts. As anyone can plainly see, it doesn't take a high degree of skill to make six spades on this layout — but South wound up going down one!

On the ace of hearts, East (Jack Ehrlenbach) played the king! West continued with a heart, and declarer, assuming that the four-heart bid was based on a nine-card suit, trumped with dummy's king.

Declarer then led the seven of spades from dummy, East playing the six. South's imagination now started working overtime. He had seen Ehrlenbach follow to the second heart lead, and he wondered why East had played the king on the opening trick.

Declarer finally came to the conclusion that the only sensible explanation for Ehrlenbach's play was that he had started with the J-10-6 of spades and was trying to develop a trump trick for himself by panicking South into ruffing with the king. So declarer finessed the seven, lost to West's jack and went down one. East's imagination proved to be more rewarding than South's.

We offer no opinion about declarer's play, which might have turned out right, but you have to hand it to Ehrlenbach for creating the opportunity that gave South a chance to go wrong.

Cryptoquip

O I B L Z A B A Z I B P N J P

L F B R Y B E O E Y A P K N J E A,

O ' T Y B R U O Y I O P Y A X U Z O X J

Y U Z K F T M J A U J A K M J P.

Saturday's Cryptoquip: BEING TAKEN TO THE ORTHODONTIST TO GET NEW DENTAL WORK, I CRIED "OFF TO THE BRACES!"

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: T equals D

Family Circus • Bil Keane



Crossword

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN | DOWN | DOWN |
| 1 Crony | 41 Take on | 1 Church furniture | 16 Obtained |
| 4 1945 conference site | 43 Go pale | 2 Sailor's assent | 20 Hebrew month |
| 9 Attempt | 45 eBay customer bit | 3 Mainlander's memento | 21 Gentle Ben was one |
| 12 Storm center | 47 Charged | 4 Brutes encountered by Gulliver | 22 Look lasciviously |
| 13 Perpendicular to the keel | 48 Commotion | 5 Tummy | 23 Six-pointer |
| 14 Regret | 49 New Year's Eve tally | 6 Writer | 27 Jackson 5 song |
| 15 Burden | 54 Stitch | 7 Light brownish orange | 29 Leif's dad |
| 17 Raggedy doll | 55 Marooned one's locale | 8 Embryo membrane | 30 "Murder, She Wrote" doc |
| 18 "Hollywood Squares" win | 56 ___ Beta Kappa | 9 Search diligently | 32 Hotel staffer |
| 19 Relatives | 57 Hosiery shade | 10 Mysterious character | 34 Presidential advisers |
| 21 Lowest point | 58 Debate | | 37 Summary |
| 24 Hollandaise ingredient | 59 Opposite of 21-Across | | 39 Intoxicated |
| 25 Swelled head | | | 42 Worn down |
| 26 Ocean | | | 44 Besides which |
| 28 Art class subjects, maybe | | | 45 Cordage fiber |
| 31 Astringent | | | 46 Notion |
| 33 Peacock network | | | 50 Final (Abbr.) |
| 35 Traditional tales | | | 51 Make up your mind |
| 36 Summarize | | | 52 Personal question? |
| 38 Taxi | | | 53 Pinch |

Solution time: 24 mins.



Saturday's answer 2-27

