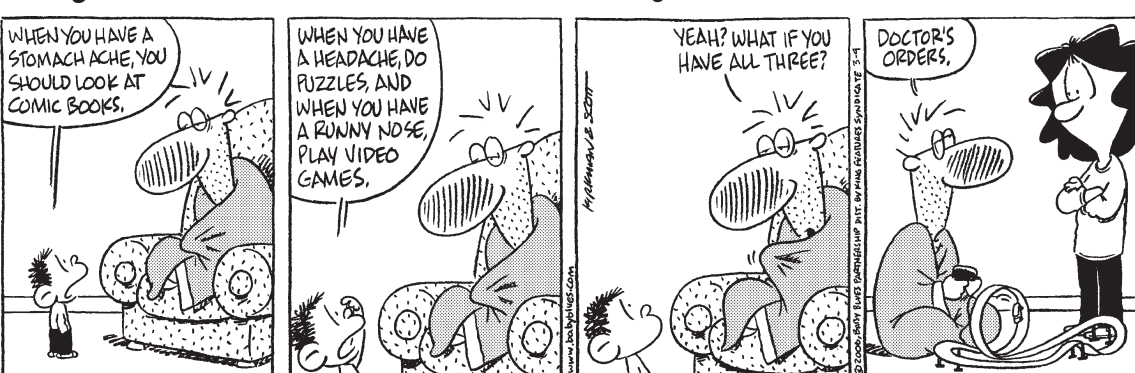


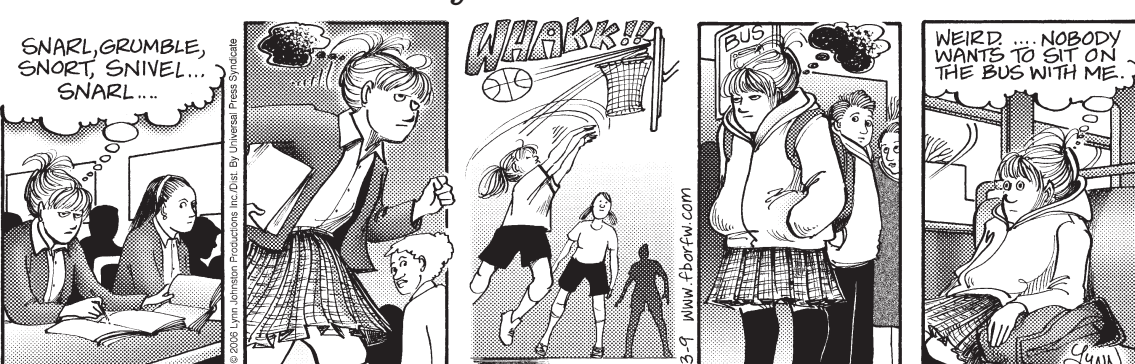
Retail • Norm Feuti (Sample)



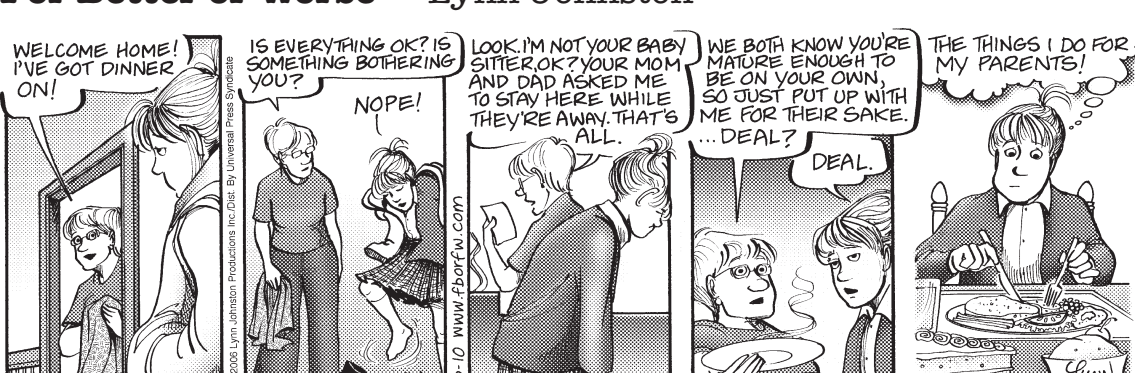
Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



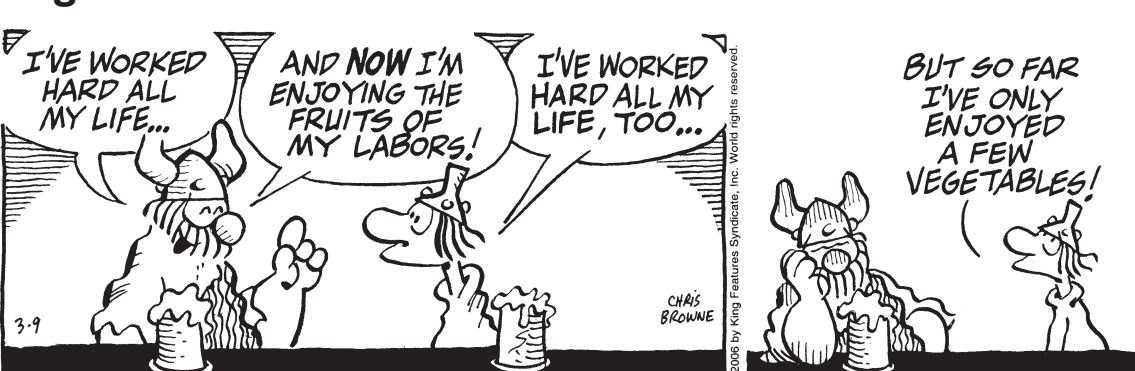
For Better or Worse • Lynn Johnston



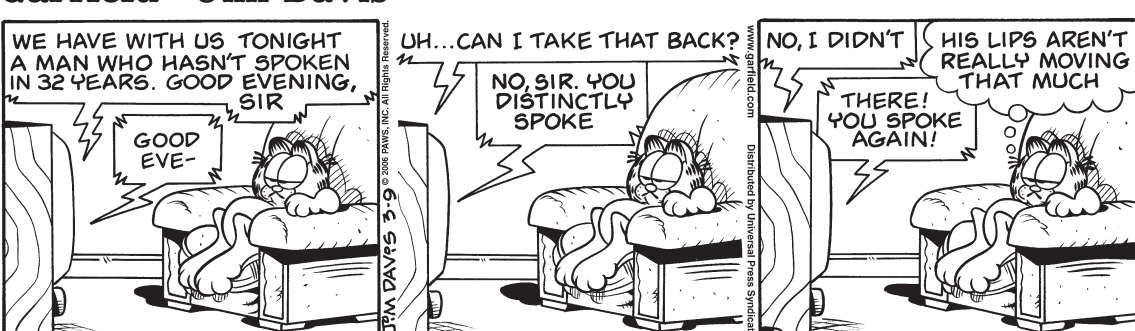
For Better or Worse • Lynn Johnston



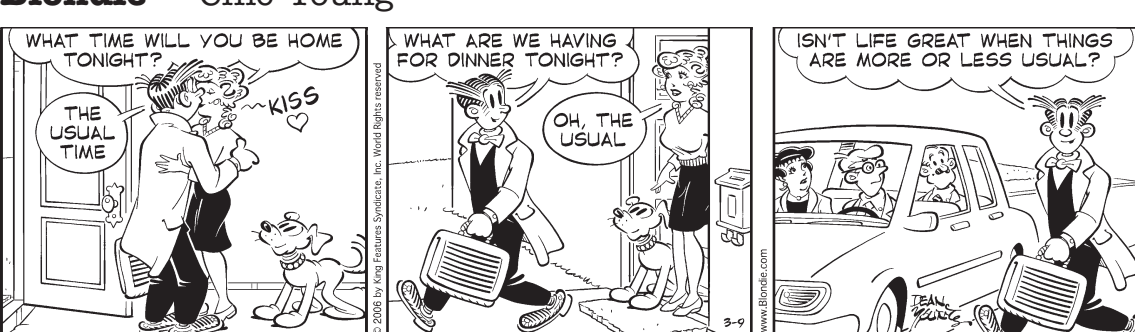
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



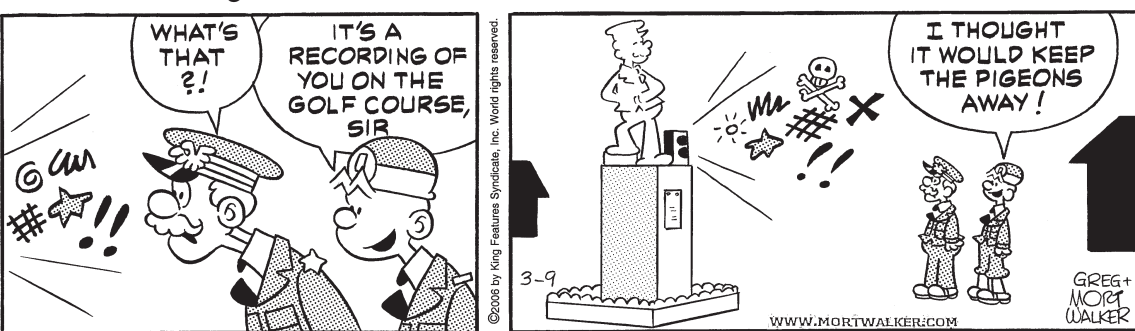
Garfield • Jim Davis



Blondie • Chic Young



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Cake-in-the-face tradition discussed

DEAR ABBY: I have never written you before, but the letter you printed from "Dismayed Grandmother" in Laredo, Texas, brought back memories. I couldn't have been more than 8, and it was my father's birthday. There were flowers on his birthday cake, and he said to me, "Smell the flowers! Go ahead, smell the flowers!" I hesitated, but he insisted, so I bent over the cake to smell the flowers and he pushed my face into the frosting.



Abigail Van Buren

Dear Abby

I am now 72, and I still remember how it felt to be deceived and humiliated by my father. Other people in the room may have been laughing, but I wasn't. My father thought he was being funny. Instead, he lost his daughter's love and trust that day.

DEAR WISHES: As I said in my reply to "Dismayed Grandmother," I have never found humor at the expense of others to be funny. In fact, I consider it cruel, hostile, and a form of bullying. That a parent would tolerate, much less participate in, the humiliation of his or her child is an appalling breach of trust. Your reaction proves the truth of my statement.

Read on, because the letter to which you referred brought in some interesting mail.

DEAR ABBY: The same thing happened to me. The person who did it was my former father-in-law. He thought it was the funniest thing he had ever seen. Surprisingly, however, when HIS birthday rolled around, it wasn't so funny anymore. Imagine that!

DEAR ABBY: You missed the boat on the face-in-the-birthday-

cake letter. Here in Mexico it is common — nay, usual — for the birthday boy or girl (or man or woman) to have his or her face pushed into the cake. After the candles are blown out, the birthday person is supposed to take a little bite of the cake with his or her mouth — not using any utensils — for good luck. It is usually when the person's face is near the cake that someone standing behind him or her pushes their face into it.

I assume that's what happened at the party the grandmother attended, since it was from Laredo, Texas, which is on the border with Mexico.

I personally do not enjoy being pushed into the cake (as I have been on several occasions), and yes, some kids do cry when it happens. But it's all done in fun, and I believe it's important to be a good sport about it.

Whether this tradition should or should not be continued is debatable — but frankly, you are not the one who should be debating (or criticizing) it.

When you referred to this custom as a form of "bullying," you were speaking from a U.S. cultural perspective. You and the letter writer may have been "aghast" out of cultural ignorance — just as people from other countries might consider the "pinching" (ow!) that happens on St. Patrick's Day in the United States to be physical abuse.

— ROBIN IN MEXICO CITY

DEAR ABBY: Birthday parties shouldn't involve tears, and it's a shame that the boy's celebration was spoiled by this tradition. The hosts of the party should have better prepared the child for the event.

I was introduced to that birthday tradition while living and teaching in northern Mexico. It shocked me the first time it happened, but students explained that, for many children, it's an eagerly anticipated part of their birthday celebration.

— AMY IN CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

DEAR ABBY: I have been married nine years. "Marianne" and I have two wonderful boys and a terrific relationship — except for one thing, lousy sex.

In therapy, Marianne has confessed to me that she is not turned on by me and that there is nothing I can do to change it — I am just "not her type." (I am an attractive man, but she married me for my personality.) Needless to say, I am very hurt.

Before her confession, I thought Marianne was just not very sexual. Now it turns out that she is, just not with me. What do I do?

— CRUSHED IN CEDAR FALLS, IOWA

DEAR CRUSHED: It appears that your terrific relationship is based more on a platonic attraction than a physical one as far as your wife is concerned. If that's enough for you, accept the status quo. If it's not, however, an amicable divorce might make the both of you happier.

Editor's note: Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069.

Bridge

South dealer.
Auction bridge.

NORTH
♠ 4 2
♥ 6 3
♦ Q 10 8 5 4 3
♣ K J 6

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

EAST
♠ Q J 10 7 6 5
♥ A 10 7
♦ J 9
♣ 9 4

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

The bidding:
South West North East
1 NT Pass 2 ♦ 2 ♠
2 NT
Opening lead — queen of hearts.

There's Many a Slip

Sidney Lenz used to tell the story of a hand he played in the days of auction bridge. If the bidding seems absurd, it can be explained by remembering that in auction the bid ding structure was far different from what it is today in contract bridge.

In those days, a game or slam bonus was awarded whether or not it was bid — provided the number of tricks a declarer took added up to a game or slam. Lengthy bidding sequences were unusual, and opening with one no trump was a very common practice, regardless of distribution.

Lenz (West) led the queen of hearts, disregarding partner's spade bid. East, after communing with him self at length, signaled with the ten instead of playing the ace.

Declarer heaved a huge sigh of relief, won the heart with the king and cashed six diamonds and six clubs to score a grand slam. East could have turned the result completely around had he played the ace of hearts and caught the king.

On the ten-of-hearts return by East, Lenz could overtake with the jack and play a low heart to East's seven. East's queen-of-spades return would then allow Lenz to cash his hearts and return a spade, where upon East would run his spades and the defenders would score 13 tricks.

You don't often see a hand where a defender's misplay costs his side 26 tricks — but, for whatever it's worth, this is one of them. It is, though, a feat utterly unworthy of emulation.

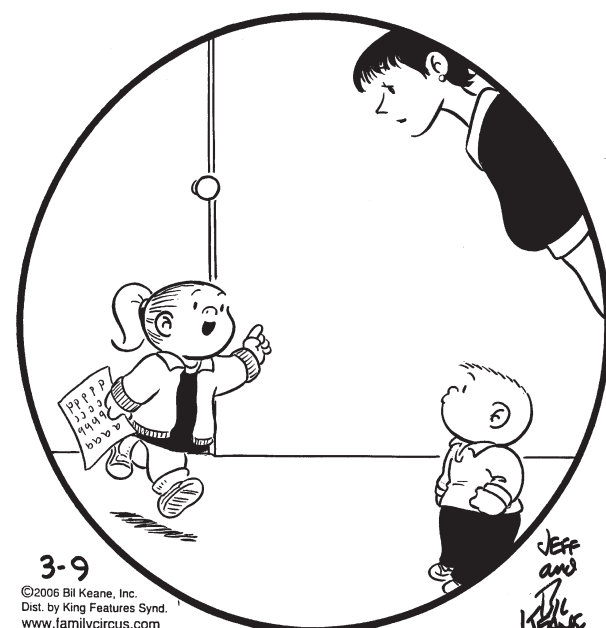
Cryptoquip

TK FZG'JB NJFTMR NZ
SYNXU FZGJ SBTRUN, TN
SZGDQ IB IBMBKTXYD

MZN NZ BYN ZM KJF QYF.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I GUESS A GREAT APE THAT GOES AROUND SCOLDING AND LECTURING PEOPLE IS A HARANGUE-UTANG.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals F

Family Circus • Bil Keane



"Mommy! Ask me what I learned in school today before I forget it!"

Crossword

- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------|---------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|
| ACROSS | 1 Moselle feeder | 5 Near the treasure | 9 Kimono closer | 12 Bruins' sch. | 13 Chills and fever | 14 Spacecraft compartment | 15 Elroy Hirsch's nickname | 17 Before | 18 "Whadja say?" | 19 Stoppage of breath | 21 Dorothy's aunt | 22 Iraq port city | 24 Album filler | 27 Round Table address | 28 Approximately | 31 Overly | 32 Last (Abbr.) | 33 "Hiroshima — Amour" | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| DOWN | 1 Similar stuff | 2 Height (Pref.) | 3 "There oughta be —!" | 4 Bronx cheers | 5 Cartoonist Kelly | 6 Census statistic | 7 Bad hairpiece | 8 Mini-plateaus | 9 Welcoming gesture | 10 Cause of ennui | 11 Concept | 16 Sweet potato | 20 Favoring | 22 Kid's father | 23 Bohemian | 24 Harper Valley org. | 25 Debtor's letters | 26 Reason to rethink, maybe | 27 Canal zone | 29 Brillo competitor | 30 Lennon's lady | 35 The buck stops here | 37 Kate Hepburn's quartet | 39 Demand | 40 Reaction to pyrotechnics | 41 Finger-paint | 42 Otherwise | 43 Vail gear | 44 Heal, as a fracture | 45 Advantages | 46 Despot | 49 JFK info | 50 Coffee quantity |

Solution time: 25 mins.



Yesterday's answer 3-9

