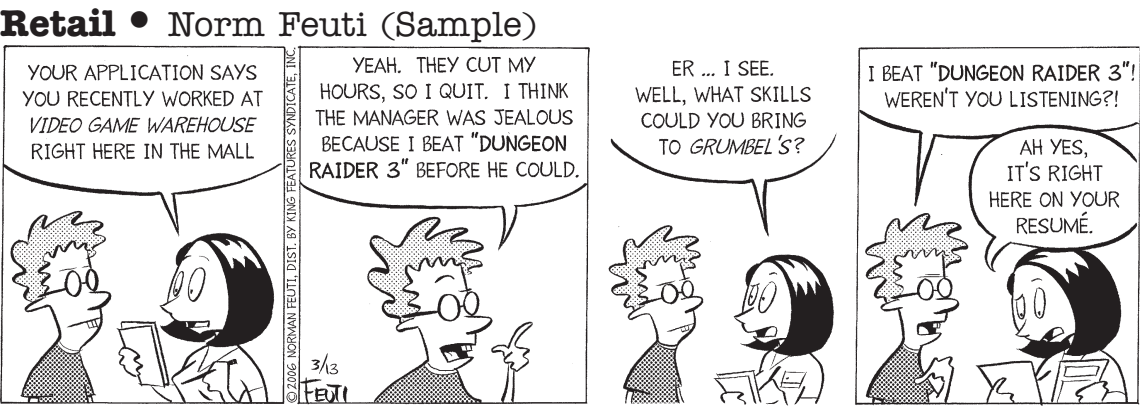
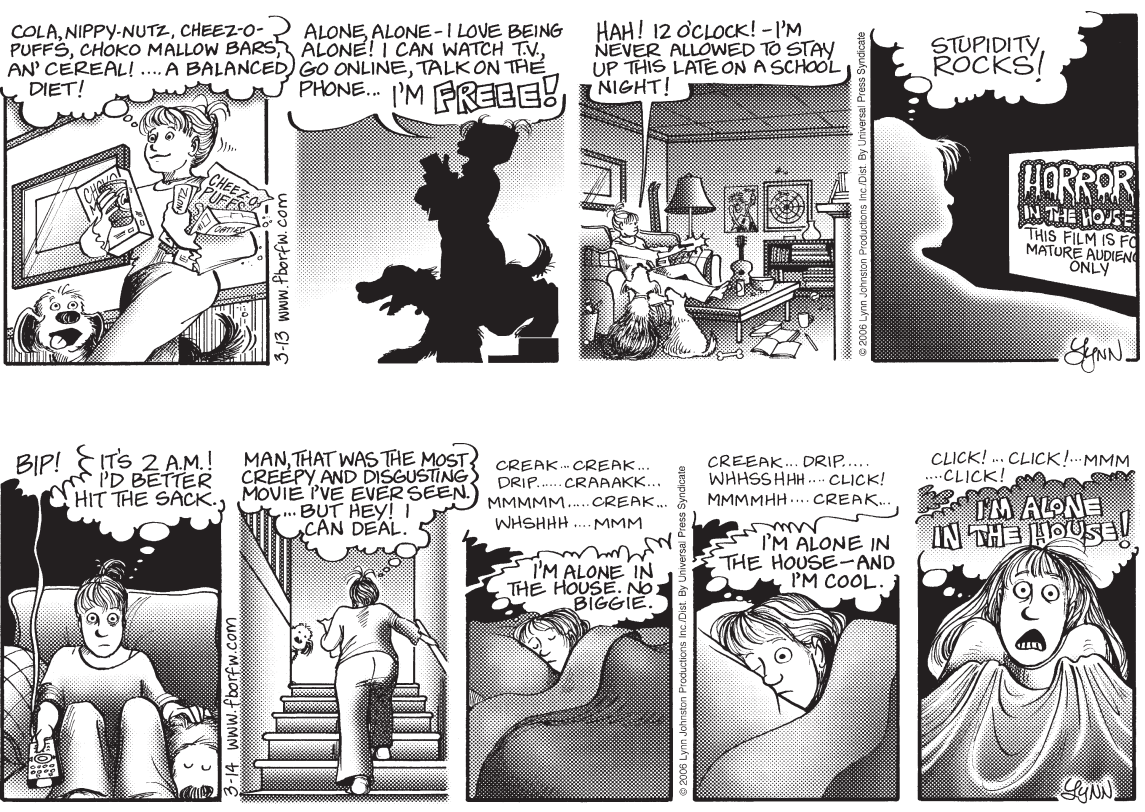
Retail • Norm Feuti (Sample)

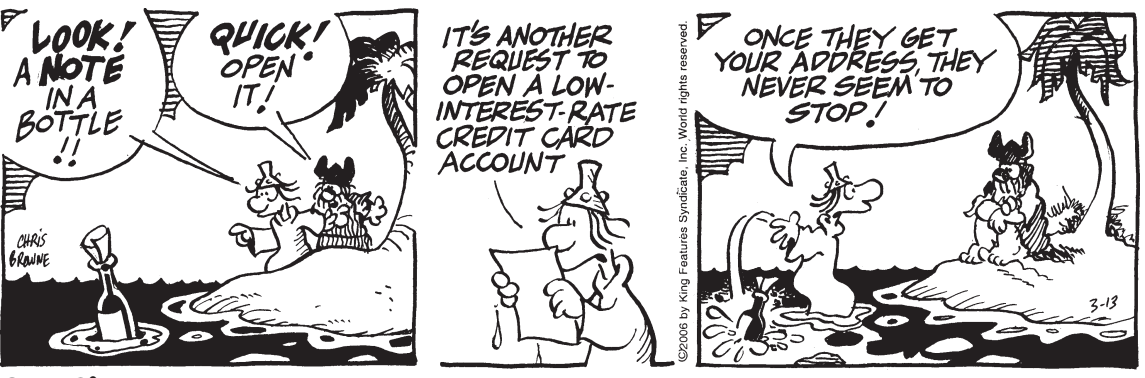


Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

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

Free help on taxes helps military spouses

Abigail Van Buren

• Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: My husband is a commander in the Air Force Reserve, recently deployed overseas. In his absence, I have been trying to establish a support group for the spouses of the deployed reservists in his unit.

A number of questions have come up among the spouses regarding the filing of income taxes for 2005. I am wondering if you know of any resources available for military service and family members, especially reservists.

— KATHERINE L. JOHNSON

DEAR KATHERINE: Every year, when tax season rolls around, there are always lots of questions. Some of them come in January, but most arise just before April 15. The good news is, help is now available for military service and family members at no cost.

This year, the Department of Defense is providing free access to the popular TurboTax filing program to all active duty guard and reserves (regardless of their activation status) and their family members via the Web site www.militaryonesource.com. This free program serves as an online "tax mentor" and helps in the preparation and filing of both federal and state taxes. Military OneSource can also refer you to certified financial counselors, tax experts and public accountants who can answer questions, also at no charge, by calling toll-free: (800) 342-9647.

(To access the numbers for overseas, Spanish language and hearing-impaired tax filers, log onto www.militaryonesource.com.)

Katherine, I'd like to personally thank you for establishing a support group for the spouses in your husband's unit because I am sure that at least some of them may feel isolated from one another while their loved ones are away. If you haven't already considered it, you might want to check with your nearest military installation family readiness group, state coordinator or family program director. Military OneSource's 24/7 readiness counselors can also connect you to whatever information or support services you need. Please convey my appreciation to your unit and the members of your new spouse group. I salute you.

DEAR ABBY: My daughter has six beautiful children. Lately, my grandkids have been repeating conversations that their mother has had with their father.

Some of the things they say are hurtful. They are young — the oldest are 8 and 7 — too young for me to tell them that what they are saying is unacceptable.

Example: The oldest says, "Your house is so small, you have no room for visitors." We do have a small house, but people are always welcome, and our dearest friends and family members know it. Once, the younger one said to me, "Dad says you laugh and talk too loud." This hurt me, and I can't help but take it personally. Should I say something to my daughter and son-in-law? And if so, what do I say without embarrassing them? Thanks.

— SMARTING IN BLUE SPRINGS, MO.

DEAR SMARTING: Excuse me, but I must disagree with you about something. At ages 8 and 7, your grandchildren are plenty old enough to be told when they say something rude and hurtful. Please don't wait any longer.

And as to what to say to your daughter and son-in-law — start out this way: "Little pitchers have big ears, and not only that, they leak." Shame on them.

DEAR ABBY: My best friend, "Dave," and I have known each other for 35 years, since kindergarten. Ten years ago, he married a woman from a wealthy family. It was the best and worst thing that ever happened to him. Ever since the wedding, Dave has lost touch with his old friends from the past. He talks down to everyone who is less successful than he is. I don't think he's even aware that he's doing it.

I have tried to talk to him about it in a nonconfrontational way with no luck. Most of my problems are financial, and Dave is no longer able to relate.

I no longer enjoy having lunch with him because all he ever talks about is how well he's doing in the stock market. Every time we get together it's the same conversation.

I have invited him to go fishing, sailing, skeet shooting — even over for a bonfire I throw every year. The only activity Dave ever wants to do is play golf, which I tried for five years and still don't enjoy. My friend seems to have lost all interest in anything beyond golf and money.

— UP TO HERE

DEAR UP TO HERE: Yes. Frankly, I'm surprised the "friendship" has lasted as long as it has. If you need my permission to move on, you have it. It doesn't have to be confrontational. Sometimes people just grow apart.

Bridge

Famous Hand
North dealer.
East-West vulnerable.

NORTH
[S] 6 5 4 2
[H] A Q 9 8 4 2
[D] K Q 7
[C] —

WEST
[S] J 3
[H] 10 7 3
[D] 9 6 5 2
[C] K Q 8 6

EAST
[S] Q 10 7
[H] K J 5
[D] A J 8
[C] A 10 9 5

SOUTH
[S] A K 9 8
[H] 6
[D] 10 4 3
[C] J 7 4 3 2

The bidding:

North	East	South	West
1 H	Pass	1 S	Pass
3 S	Pass	4 S	

Opening lead — king of clubs.

The first McConnell Cup, emblematic of victory in the Women's World Team Championship, was won in 1994 by a U.S. team composed of Marinesa Letizia, Rozanne Pollack, Sue Picus, Judi Radin and Jill Blanchard.

In a match that was in doubt up to the very last deal, they scored a narrow triumph in the final over another American team led by Sally Woolsey.

Today's deal was a key one for the winners. When it was first played, the bidding went as shown. Letizia, the declarer, ruffed the opening club lead and cashed the ace of hearts. She then ruffed a heart, a club, another heart and another club before cashing the A-K of trumps to produce this position, with declarer needing two more tricks:

North
H Q 9
D K Q 7

West
D 9 6 5 2
C Q
C A

East
S Q
D A J 8

South
D 10 4 3
C J 7

Letizia now led a diamond to the queen, and East, who had failed to unblock the club ace, was helpless. If she took the diamond with the ace, she could cash the spade queen and club ace, but declarer would score the last two tricks with the ten and king of diamonds. If instead East ducked the first diamond, declarer would play a heart to produce the same result. Four spades, making four, was worth 420 points.

At the other table, things took a decidedly different turn when East bid one notrump over the one-heart opening and everyone passed. East finished with eight tricks for a score of 120 points. This, plus the 420 gained at the first table, gave the Letizia team a pickup of 11 IMPs in a match they won by just 5 IMPs.

Tomorrow: A question of timing.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane

"Why did you have to go to the hospital to get PJ if doctors deliver babies?"

Cryptoquip

KZ M VBOIGJHW GCHW SMIIHRC JB QBCH MR HQHVJWBRKV EBVGOHRJ, K CGIIBCH SH KC EH-ZKQHE.

Saturday's Cryptoquip: WHEN FRUIT-PRESERVING PEOPLE DANCE, I SUPPOSE THEY WOULD PROBABLY FAVOR THE CAN-CAN.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals P

Crossword

ACROSS
1 Complacent
5 Beavers' construction
8 False deity
12 Pre-euro Italian money
13 Raw rock
14 July birthstone
15 Exam format
16 Distance across, maybe
18 Troubadour's offering
20 Rid of a stripe
21 Couturier Cassini
23 Symbol of intrigue
24 In nappies
28 Appellation
31 Hooter
32 Splicer's materials
34 Drone
35 Actress Celeste
37 Ring rocks
39 Omelet ingredient
41 Paradise
42 Tied the score
45 "You've got a call" device
49 Abusive speech
51 Bleachers choreography
52 Chutzpah
53 — long way
54 Met melody
55 Otherwise
56 Perched
57 Cheer

DOWN
1 Unkempt one
2 Actress Sorvino
3 — Mountains
4 Equine pace
5 Moved feebly
6 Onassis, familiarly
7 Samoa studier Margaret
8 German city ...
9 ... and how to get there?
10 Help a felon
11 Old instrument
17 Kitten's comment
19 Costs an arm and —
22 Bottled spirit?
24 Homer's expletive
25 Jima preceder
26 Plants with curative powers
27 Debt ignorer
29 Pie filling?
30 Type squares
33 Hook's henchman
36 Cloak
38 Unilateral
40 Mal de —
42 Advantage
43 Test tube
44 Home, slangily
46 Remove the rind
47 Satan's specialty
48 Authentic
50 Slithery squeezer

Solution time: 24 mins.

■	A	H	E	A	D	■	S	P	O	U	T	S
A	R	A	B	L	E	■	U	R	A	N	I	A
S	T	R	O	L	L	■	R	O	T	T	E	N
H	Y	M	N	■	A	P	E	X	■	I	D	S
■	■	■	Y	A	W	L	■	Y	A	M	■	■
A	M	I	■	B	A	A	S	■	N	E	R	O
Z	A	C	H	A	R	Y	T	A	Y	L	O	R
T	R	E	E	■	E	D	E	N	■	Y	E	T
■	■	■	W	E	D	■	O	P	A	L	■	■
S	P	A	■	E	C	H	O	■	A	G	U	E
P	O	T	A	T	O	■	N	A	P	E	R	Y
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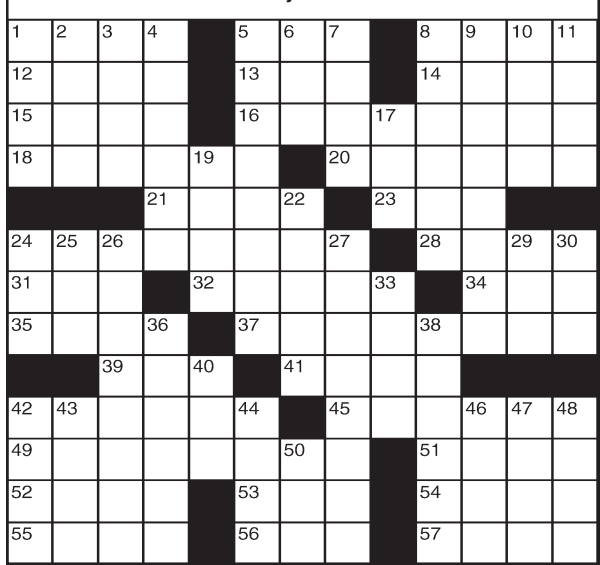
Saturday's answer 3-13