

Wife of transgender husband searches for ways to cope

DEAR ABBY: A year ago, my husband of four years disclosed to me that he's transgender. We have a 3-year-old who has medical problems, which has resulted in numerous surgeries. Our lives have changed beyond belief, and I'm afraid our marriage has been damaged beyond repair.

He has come out of the closet, and I have gone into one to protect his secret and hide my heartache and devastation. The pain I feel is mostly for the lifelong struggles my husband has endured, but now I'm feeling the loss of my husband and our happy future together because I can't be the wife he needs.

How do I know that I've tried every option to make this work, especially when I am the only one regularly seeking therapy? When do I resign myself to the fact that my expectations of our marriage will never be achievable? And how do I say I want out without risking his (her) well-being? — **LAST STRAW IN THE MIDWEST**

DEAR LAST STRAW: It would be helpful for you to get emotional support in addition to the counselor you have been seeing. There are no "magic words" to tell your husband you can no longer live with the new person he's becoming.

However, I know of a group that can help you. You would benefit greatly by contacting the Straight



DEAR ABBY

Spouse Network, a group that was started by Amity Pierce Buxton, Ph.D., in the '80s. It offers peer support, as well as an on-line (worldwide) network of support groups. Just knowing you're not alone with this problem should be comforting. Find it at www.straightspouse.org.

DEAR ABBY: I have been communicating for three months with a gentleman I met on an online dating site. He says he wants to meet me in person, but every time we get close to setting a time and place, something comes up and he can't keep the date. We live in the same city, so traveling isn't the problem. When I ask why he's canceling our date, the answer is different every time.

I am beginning to think he just wants to communicate via email or chat. We have web-cammed and know what each other looks like, so that is probably not the issue, either. Should I keep waiting him out or just end it? — **PUZZLED IN INDIANA**

DEAR PUZZLED: By now it should be obvious that you are carrying on a conversation with someone who doesn't keep his word. He may be married or have misrepresented himself in some other way. If you want a real, flesh-and-blood relationship with someone, stop wasting your time with this person. Move on and don't look back.

DEAR ABBY: With Christmas almost here, I'm wondering how much it would cost today for all of the gifts in the carol "The 12 Days of Christmas"? — **JUST CURIOUS IN ORLANDO, FLORIDA**

DEAR JUST CURIOUS: According to an Associated Press story published this year quoting the annual analysis by PNC Wealth Management, those 364 items -- purchasing them each time they are mentioned in the song -- would set the giver back \$116,273. Not to belittle those birds, trees, golden rings and various musical artists, perhaps the money could be better spent?

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

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7		1				5		8
			9		2		1	
		3						6
1				6				5
	6		3		7			2
3				4				9
	4						1	
		5		7		9		
9		3				2		6

Instructions for play: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

That's all there is to it. There's no math involved. The grid has numbers, but nothing has to add up to anything else. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic. It's fun. It's challenging. It's addictive!

Solving time is typically from 10 to 30 minutes, depending on your skill and experience. The solution for today's puzzle will be published in Saturday's paper. Or you can go to www.sudoku.com to find the solution.

9	5	4	3	6	8	1	2	7
8	2	3	5	1	7	9	6	4
6	1	7	4	2	9	5	3	8
7	9	8	2	4	3	6	5	1
2	6	1	9	7	5	8	4	3
3	4	5	6	8	1	7	9	2
4	7	2	8	9	6	3	1	5
5	8	6	1	3	4	2	7	9
1	3	9	7	5	2	4	8	6

HELOISE'S KITCHENEERING BY HELOISE

Shopping Skills Put to the Test

Dear Readers: It's Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, 2014, and many of you are settled in, maybe opening a present or two, enjoying family. Some are preparing to cook.

But some are frantically doing LAST-MINUTE SHOPPING! I love the stories about people who have a tradition and always shop at the last minute -- sometimes really last-minute, arriving at a store only an hour or so before closing time!

Others shop all year long, finding just the right gift for the right person and keeping it until it's time to wrap and give.

Hanukkah ends today, so to all of my friends who celebrate, a big old Heloise hug. My best to all of my dear readers and to everyone you care about. — Heloise

Stale Marshmallows

Dear Heloise: I really enjoy marshmallows, but they get stale quickly. I don't remember reading this in your column, but here is my hint: Store them in a home-canning jar. I've kept them for months this way, and they are still fresh. — Linda D., via email

How do they last that long in your household? Keeping air out is the key, so putting them in any container that won't allow air in (or out) works just fine. — Heloise

Hard-Cooked Eggs

Dear Heloise: Don't know if you're aware, but there is a simple way to tell if eggs are hard-cooked without coloring them. (A previous hint: Add food coloring to the boiling water. — Heloise)

An uncooked egg cannot spin, but a hard-cooked one does. Put the egg on a hard surface, long axis parallel to the table, and give it a spin. If it is not cooked, the egg will stop immediately. If hard-cooked, it will spin on for quite a while. Never fails. — John Zelenak in New Jersey

Well, I guess it depends on your definition of "spin," John. A fresh or uncooked chicken egg (in shell) WILL SPIN -- not fast, it just sort of wobbles. And, interestingly, the older the egg, the larger the "air pocket" inside and the more it seems to wobble, but it does spin a few times. Thanks for the reminder about this forever hint that was used by our grandmothers and theirs, too! — Heloise

Send A Great Hint To:

Heloise
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San Antonio, TX 78279-5000
Fax: 210-HELOISE
Email: [Heloise\(at\)Heloise.com](mailto:Heloise(at)Heloise.com)

Keep Shelves Clean

Dear Heloise: I use old, clean cloth place mats on refrigerator shelves to keep them clean. When time to change them, I toss the soiled ones in the wash. Keep rotating, and you'll find that it's easier than washing the shelf itself. -- D.G., Battle Ground, Wash.

Easy Fix

Dear Heloise: I punctured my new rubber gloves that I use for washing dishes. To salvage them, I applied a waterproof adhesive bandage on the puncture site, and they haven't leaked for months! — Karen W., Erie, Pa.

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Funny fellows

5 Make finer

9 Love affair

11 Showy parrot

12— peso (Mexican currency)

13 Acrobatic

14 Golfer Ernie

15 Wonderful event

17 Spectacular failure

19 Give permission to

20 Innsbruck's area

21 Bear's lair

22 Final letter

24 Pasture grazer

26 Italian seaport

29 Heir, often

30 Shackle

32 Small boat

34 Nest item

35 Suspect's story

36 Bravery

38 Christina of

"Monster"

39 Find charming

40 Opponents

41 Proofing note

DOWN

1 Dwindled

2 Lucky charm

3 Passes

4 Family vehicle choice

5 Long story

6 Winter dripper

7 Collapsed

8 Online message

10 Date move genre, for short

11 Stallion's mate

16 Outlawed

18 In — (lined up)

21 Comic Carvey

23 Swiss city

24 "Gangsta's Paradise" rapper

25 How to serve chicken à la king

27 Spotted cat

28 1990s veep

29 Muffler's kin

30 1102, in old Rome

31 Long-plumed bird

33 Basics

37 TV spots

THOMAS CROSSWORD BOOKS 1 AND 2! Send \$4.75 (check/m.o.) for each book to P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8
				10		11		
9								
12						13		
14				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	

12-24

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Classic Christmas gift

5 Eyelashes

10 Game with mallets

11 Planters

12 Declare

13 Christmas decoration

14 Christmas pullers

16 Christmas exchange

20 Baby

23 Spanish gold

24 "Keen!"

25 Prepare to propose

27 Playing marble

28 Disrobed

29 Christmas decoration

32 Christmas activity

36 Christmas decorations

39 Clarinet cousin

40 For each

41 Blood fluids

42 Rushing sound: Var.

43 Christmas decoration

DOWN

1 Rigging support

2 Cherish

3 "The Time Machine" tribe

4 Perfectly memorized

5 Hearts

6 "If — a Rich Man"

7 Pasture

8 NYC subway

9 Fireplace bit

11 Adorable

15 Bond foe

17 Christmas song

18 Christmas symbol

19 Hawked

20 Fond of

21 At hand

22 Forest youngster

25 Casino game

26 Annual state-ment amount

28 In itself

30 Needs a massage

31 Fire starter

33 "Yeah, right!"

34 Director Ephron

35 Bike part

36 Bar concern

37 Wall St. debut

38 Joe, in Italy

CAROL	SANTA
ADORE	THORN
DONNA	RACED
	AREA
CHIMNEYS	KEY
RUDE	LETOFF
AGENT	DORIA
BESTOW	CARD
	SPARKLES
ABE	DREI
RODEO	SNIPS
EWING	EGRET
SLEDS	TSAIRS

Previous Puzzle

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1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9
10					11				
12						13			
14					15				
				16				17	18
20	21	22						23	
24						25	26		
27							28		
29			30	31					
					32			33	34
36	37	38						39	
40								41	
42								43	

12-25

Daily Cryptoquote — Here's how to work it:

A XYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-24

CRYPTOQUOTE

Q G O P G Q G I B S Q V Z D E R G D

G F L P F N U B E Q Z D Q U T Z L G B

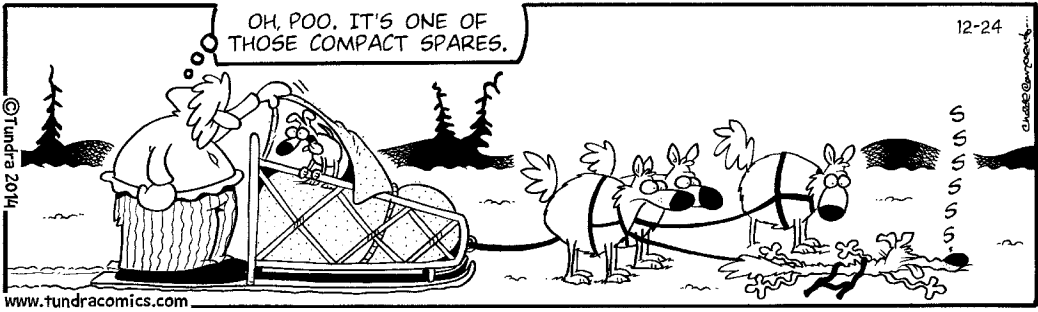
D P G D U F . — B U H V I H K K T P

I P U I T P

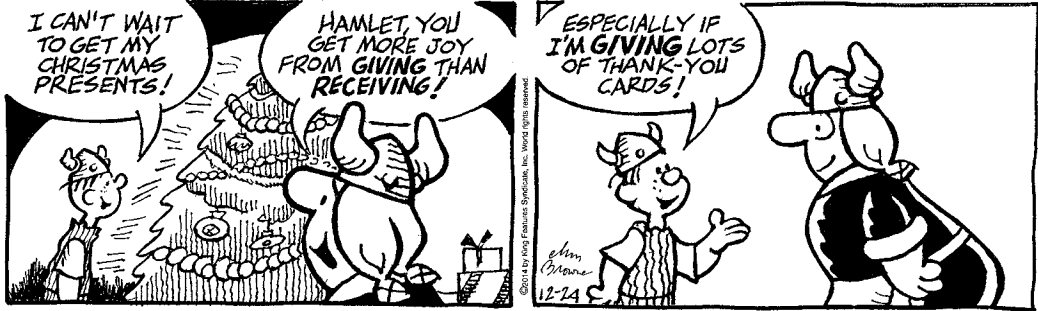
Previous Cryptoquote: IN EVERY CONCEIVABLE MANNER, THE FAMILY IS LINK TO OUR PAST, BRIDGE TO OUR FUTURE. — Alex Haley

COMICS

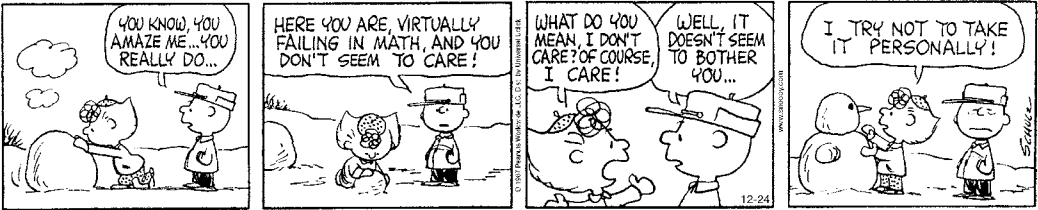
Tundra



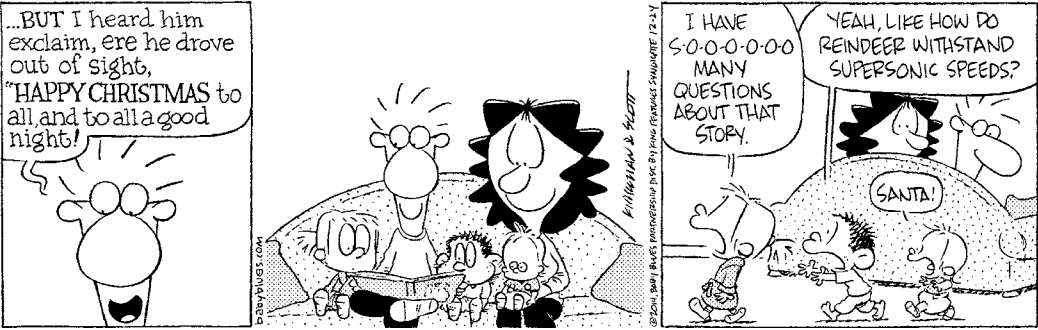
Hagar the Horrible



Peanuts



Baby Blues



Dilbert

