Girl's doubts about religion put her at odds with parents

DEAR ABBY

DEAR ABBY: I'm 16 and come from a devout Roman Catholic family. My parents have taken my brother and me to church every Sunday without fail my entire life. We pray before meals, before school, at bedtime and at other times every day. My room is filled with religious objects. As far as I know, everyone else in my extended family is equally fervent.

My problem is, I have never felt very religious. Since I was 10 I have challenged the teachings of the church and, as I mature into adulthood, I'm beginning to identify as agnostic. When I told my parents, at first they were angry and disappointed. Then they told me I was "just going through a phase." I know this is more than a phase. It's a personal belief of mine they have been trying to bury my entire life.

I can't continue letting them ignore the real me. The stress of constantly having to lie to my parents about my faith is tearing me apart to the point that it interferes with my schoolwork and social life. How can I convince them that this isn't a phase, and that I'm not the Catholic girl they want me to be? If they continue to refuse to acknowledge my religious beliefs, who can I turn to for support? — **AGNOSTIC IN STOCKTON, CALIF.**

DEAR AGNOSTIC: Your parents should not have minimized your feelings by saying they are only a phase because it was dismissive. That said, you must not allow their devout faith – and your lack of it – to become a contest of wills or a basis for argument.

This is an important time in your life with your parents as you enter adulthood. Thank them for the great foundation they have given you. Tell them you hope they will continue to love you as you explore what your beliefs are on this spiritual journey – because it IS a journey.

The opposite of faith is not doubt; it is certainty.

DEAR ABBY: My friend "Molly" and I have been good friends for two years. But this year at school she has gotten new friends, and our relationship is slowly fading away. I'm not sure what to do. Should I wait and see what happens later on down the road or talk to her about it? Please help me. — **LEFT OUT IN CEDAR RAPIDS**

DEAR LEFT OUT: What you're experiencing is painful, but it is also a part of life. The fact is, friendships don't always stay the same or last forever.

Your idea of talking to Molly about this is a good one because you won't be left wondering what happened or blame yourself. But you should also explore ways of making new friends. If there are after-school clubs, special interest groups or other activities you can join, they will give you the chance to meet new people. By staying busy, you won't miss Molly so much, and may even form more long-lasting friendships.

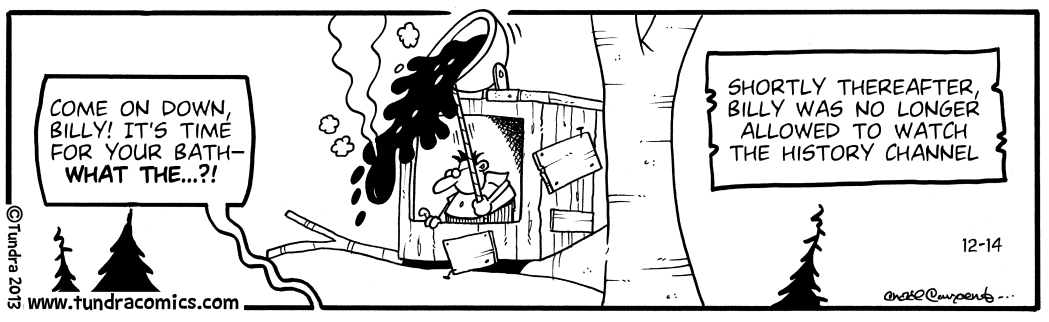
DEAR ABBY: I'm getting married next year. I am very excited to be marrying my fiance, a kind and caring man. But I am not at all excited to go dress shopping. What should I do? — **NO-FRILLS GIRL IN DAYTON, OHIO**

DEAR NO-FRILLS GIRL: No law says you must go dress shopping for your wedding if you don't want to. Tailor your wedding to your own tastes, and make it simple and casual. It's your day, so do what feels right for you.

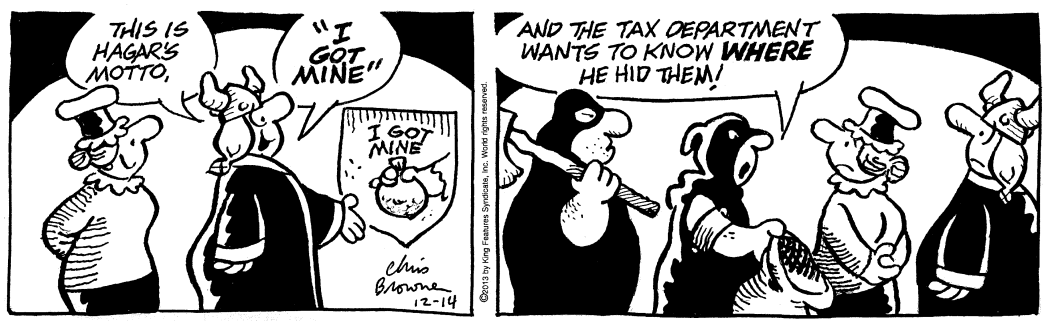
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

COMICS

Tundra



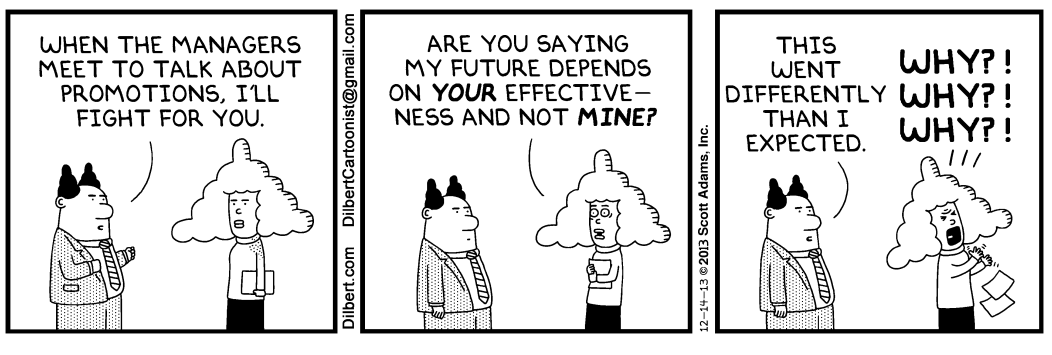
Hagar the Horrible



Peanuts

Baby Blues

Dilbert



su|do|ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

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

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.

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

HOROSCOPES

ARIES - Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, handle some unfinished business and establish clear priorities. Otherwise, you may turn what could be a productive week into something frustrating.

TAURUS - Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, when you wear your heart on your sleeve for everyone to see, you cannot be shy about expressing your emotions. Friends may be skeptical of you though.

GEMINI - May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, don't be shy about sharing unique plans with your loved ones. The support of friends and family members will only restore your confidence in this new direction.

CANCER - Jun 22/Jul 22

Expect your ideas to take shape over the next couple of days, Cancer. Concrete plans will materialize as you begin to pull thoughts from your imagination. The results will be unique.

LEO - Jul 23/Aug 23

You probably are not interested in inching along this week, Leo. Though it's good to attack a project with gusto, don't rush so much that you make mistakes.

VIRGO - Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, you are quite comfortable sharing your thoughts now that you have gotten some things worked out. It's now much easier to talk about future possibilities.

LIBRA - Sept 23/Oct 23

Decoding all of the mixed signals coming your way won't be easy, Libra. The only thing you can do for the moment is to take each signal one at a time.

SCORPIO - Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, you are not in the mood to play games, so you will want to push your romantic relationship to the next level. You will have no problem leading the way.

SAGITTARIUS - Nov 23/Dec 21

Opportunities to address your physical well-being present themselves this week, Sagittarius. Make the most of these opportunities to make a significant change.

CAPRICORN - Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, you will ride a creative wave for the next several days. Inspiration will strike when you least expect it. You should have some time for play.

AQUARIUS - Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, expect some support from family members and close friends. Receive their generosity as warmly as you can, even if you're feeling a bit smothered.

PISCES - Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, it can be easy to get swept away by other people's agendas when you attempt to lend a helping hand. Do your best to pitch in.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

DECEMBER 15
Geoff Stults, Actor (36)

DECEMBER 16
Miranda Otto, Actress (46)

DECEMBER 17
Manny Pacquiao, Athlete (35)

DECEMBER 18
Brad Pitt, Actor (50)

DECEMBER 19
Alyssa Milano, Actress (41)

DECEMBER 20
David Wright, Athlete (31)

DECEMBER 21
Ray Romano, Comic (56)

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

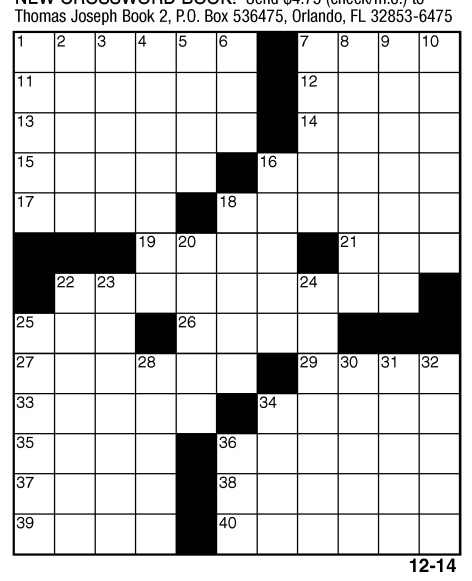
ACROSS
1 Cone units
7 Claiming cry
11 Come to light
12 Capital on a fjord
13 Capital on the Hudson
14 High time
15 Barbecue rods
16 Boarded
17 Despise
18 Auto highlights
19 Taj Mahal city
21 Favorite
22 Wash. peak
25 Remote
26 Average
27 Battery ends
29 Printer problems
33 Low-lying lands
34 "Impression: Sunrise" painter
35 Eyeball
36 Japanese emperor
37 Deplored
38 Like some garages
39 Declares
40 Mortar's mate

DOWN
1 Hide away
2 Mea —
3 Planetary path
4 Running wild
5 Groan inducers
6 Bond, for one
7 Generous one
8 U-235, e.g.
9 Reformer Amelia
10 Shakespeare poem
16 Accra's nation
18 Calls out
20 Toy store section
22 Central American capital
23 Bus's kin
24 Only a few get them
25 Prefers
28 Title documents
30 Put on — (fake it)
31 Military award
32 Cache
34 Coal source
36 Custodian's tool

S	T	A	R	S			F	L	A	T
P	O	S	I	T		G	L	I	D	E
R	E	A	D	Y		R	U	M	O	R
I	N	R	E		B	O	X	E	R	S
T	A	U		M	O	W		S	E	E
Z	I	L	L	I	O	N	S			
	L	E	A	N		O	K	R	A	
			P	I	L	L	I	O	N	S
M	O	N		G	O	D		M	A	P
A	N	A	L	O	G		S	A	G	E
R	I	V	A	L		A	K	I	R	A
S	C	A	R	F		D	I	N	A	R
H	E	L	D			S	T	E	M	S

Previous Puzzle

NEW CROSSWORD BOOK! Send $4.75 (check/m.o.) to Thomas Joseph Book 2, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475



12-14

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
1 Niger neighbor
5 River area
10 Estate recipient
11 "Lawrence of Arabia" star
13 Take apart
14 Sighed phrase
15 Hurled explosive
17 Homer's neighbor
18 Motorcycle add-on
19 Wisdom bringer
20 Comic Caesar
21 Stadium section
22 Hen's group
25 Coats with precious metal
26 Diving bird
27 Unruly crowd
28 Tough wood
29 Article supplement
33 Singer Tillis
34 Yet to come
35 Made blank
37 Impresses
38 Experience anew
39 Three squared
40 Out of style
41 Pants part

DOWN
1 Gulps down
2 Painter Matisse
3 Helped
4 Talks monotonously
5 Gizmo
6 Old anesthetic
7 Sad
8 Pedicure target
9 Stated without proof
12 Church leaders
16 Corrosive stuff
21 Lhasa natives
22 Fingerpointer
23 Snow White's sister
24 "Hubba hubba!"
25 Olympus group
27 Cared about
29 Colander's cousin
30 Rocker David
31 Sports spot
32 Stopwatch button
36 Use a chair

N	I	C	E	R		C	A	J	U	N
A	P	O	L	O		A	M	U	S	E
B	O	O	M	S		B	I	G	O	T
		L	O	W	B	I	D			
Y	A	W		E	O	N		C	O	W
U	P	H	O	L	D		L	O	L	A
C	H	I	L	L	Y	W	I	L	L	Y
C	I	T	E		F	E	E	D	I	N
A	D	E		V	A	T		W	E	E
			H	O	T	T	E	A		
Z	I	P	I	T		E	X	T	R	A
A	L	I	K	E		S	P	E	A	R
G	L	E	E	S		T	O	R	T	E

Previous Puzzle

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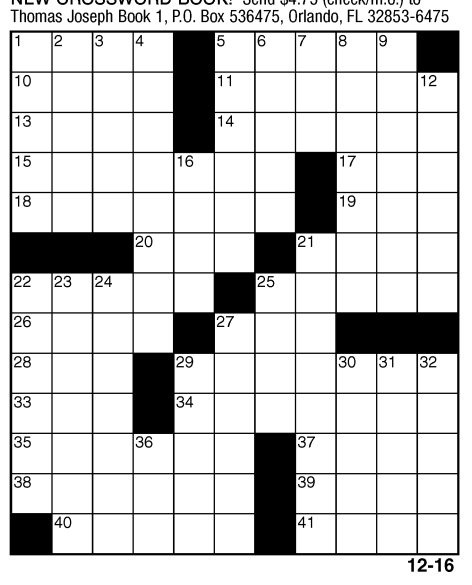

12-16

Daily Cryptoquote – Here's how to work it:

A X Y D L B A A X R
is L O N G F E L L O W

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.

12-14 CRYPTOQUOTE

N X A J X R E Q J P R R U F H Q R N I T K T H A H J F R R I R N O H A T X R C R Y A N V R J B K T B R Y R N K K A X R C R Y V Y J E F J K G. — B Y N X D P N B P N

Previous Cryptoquote: IF YOU EVEN DREAM OF BEATING ME YOU'D BETTER WAKE UP AND APOLOGIZE. – Muhammad Ali