DEAR MEG

Meg Whitcomb

A crack addict's warning in verse

By Meg Whitcomb

DEAR MEG — I was interested to read that you are a recovering alcoholic. (I know that no matter how long a person has been drug-free, he is always "recovering.")

I'm a recovering crack addict, and I could identify with your letter. You probably don't have room to print it, but I'm enclosing a poem I wrote about my addiction. It starts with when I first experimented with coke to the day it nearly killed me. With cocaine, life turns into an array of confusing, tormented thoughts, and each day is an escape from reality into fantasy. Thank you for listening, Meg. — LAURA LUEHRING, 17, FLA.

DEAR LAURA — If I didn't have space, I'd make it. I pray that every person who is doing cocaine will read your words and heed them. Here is your poem, and thanks for letting me use it.

So You Want to Die

Hey there! Bored with the old, want
something new?
I'll be your friend,
Let me walk with you.
I'll make you feel good,

I'll make you feel great,
I'll be your best friend,
I'll take you places
you've never been,
And once we start out
You'll want me again.
I've taken much stronger than you
To the grave,
So go steal for me,
And be my slave.
As your new master
And only friend,
For me, your values
You'll learn to bend.
To hurt and to kill
Is my only game.
I love you. Just try me once,
Cocaine

Write to Meg care of this newspaper. Meg can only answer letters that contain a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Questions of general interest will be discussed in future columns.

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Her grandchild is overdisciplined

By Meg Whitcomb

DEAR MEG — I have just returned from a visit with my daughter, her husband and their 3-year-old child. My daughter and her husband are older parents with advanced degrees in psychology.

I don't think my daughter realizes that Amy is only a baby. Every time she does the least little thing, she gets bawled out and sent to her room. This happens so often that it's almost a game.

I feel Amy should be spoken to instead of punished so much. In fact, some of the things she does are so insignificant, they could be overlooked entirely.

I've kept still because I'm only the grandmother, but I still teach the lower grades and I often baby-sit. I'd like to say something about this in my next letter to my daughter, but I don't know what. I do know it'll be a long time before I make another cross-country trip just to see Amy off to her room. — HELENA, MD.

DEAR HELENA — Raising well-adjusted children is as much a matter of instinct as it is of advanced intellect. Rewarding youngsters for good behavior, rather than punishing them harshly for bad, is the best way to help them grow into secure, self-disciplining individuals.

The constant punishment being doled out to Amy is likely to turn her into a docile, but secretly rebellious, little girl who never really accepts parental standards of good behavior as her own.

Since parenthood is a learned, rather than innate skill, Amy's parents would benefit from working with child-rearing experts, and you can tell them I suggested this. But don't stop visiting. You can be an important and happy influence on Amy.

DEAR MEG — My fiance was best man at my brother's wedding. There were a lot of parties before the wedding, and, of course, Jack and I were invited to them. But there were two parties Jack didn't take me to. His excuse was that they were "bachelor parties" and women weren't included. But a friend told me later that there were women at both parties — women nobody knew.

I asked Jack if my brother had shipped in some "professionals" (the sort of thing he'd do), but Jack said no. He said some girls just "dropped in" when they saw there was a party off the hotel lobby. Does this sound fishy to you? I asked my brother, but he wouldn't admit to anything. — SUSPICIOUS SIS, MO.

DEAR SIS — It doesn't sound fishy to me, but I'm not your brother. You must be aware of the bachelor dinner tradition, usually held a night or two before the big day, where no women from the wedding party are allowed. If not, you are now.

BRIDGE

James Jacoby

NORTH 7-18-87
♠ K J 9 8 5 4 2
♥ J 9 4
♦ - - -
♣ K 8 5

WEST
♠ 6
♥ Q 7 5
♦ K 10 8 6 5 3
♣ Q 10 7

EAST
♠ 3
♥ 6 3 2
♦ A J 9 4 2
♣ A J 9 2

SOUTH
♠ A Q 10 7
♥ A K 10 8
♦ Q 7
♣ 6 4 3

Vulnerable: East-West
Dealer: East

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1 NT
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	4 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Opening lead: ♦ 6

Danger lies to the west

By James Jacoby

No, ladies and gentlemen, the bidding diagram does not contain a misprint. The four-heart bid by North was a transfer bid, and South was only adhering to the convention when he bid four spades. If you employ such a bid, you can call it a Jacoby transfer bid at the four-level or you can call it a Texas transfer, but it is a good idea to discuss it with your partner before the game. Conventions like this one require partnership agreement.

Declarer ruffed the opening lead, *drew trumps ending in dummy* and took a heart finesse. After winning the heart queen, West realized that three club tricks were needed to set the contract. He therefore led the club queen, playing East for the A-J of clubs. Down one.

The contract can be assured after the opening lead if declarer makes the right avoidance plays. First let him throw a heart from dummy at trick one. East will win his diamond ace and presumably return a heart. Declarer wins the ace, draws the defenders' trumps and then plays the king and 10 of hearts. When West comes up with the queen, declarer can ruff and return to his hand with a spade to shed a club from dummy on the fourth heart. Even if West plays a low heart on the 10, South can play a club from dummy. Should East then win the heart queen, he will not be able to attack the club king in dummy, and declarer will make 10 tricks by getting rid of another low club in dummy on his fourth heart.

In search of entries

By James Jacoby

When South won the first trick with his heart queen, he suspected that he needed to grab nine tricks right away. So he played to dummy's queen of spades and took a diamond finesse. When West showed out, declarer needed an extra entry to dummy to pick up the diamond suit without a loser. He played another spade and put in the 10. When that held, he was home free. He played a diamond to his nine and a spade back to dummy's ace. A third diamond lead from dummy enabled declarer to make five diamond tricks and his contract.

As the hand was played, West could have thwarted South's plans by putting up the jack of spades on the second lead of that suit. The ace wins the trick, but the extra entry to dummy disappears.

Of course any declarer wishing to be enshrined in the bridge columnists' hall of fame will simply play the spade king at trick two and overtake with dummy's ace. Now, when a diamond to the jack discloses the bad split, declarer is able to finesse the spade 10 in dummy to gain an extra entry, and West is helpless to prevent it. That might not even be the right play, since it gives up an overtrick when the diamonds split normally (4-0 splits are fairly rare), but it makes for an interesting bridge story.

ASTRO•GRAPH

Bernice Bede Osol

Your Birthday

Interesting changes are in the offing for you in the year ahead. They could come about rather unexpectedly. For instance, you may begin with one type of venture, only to use it as a base to launch something different.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) You might leave a score of unfinished projects in your wake today. After you drive in a few nails, you may suddenly lose interest. Trying to patch up a broken romance? The Matchmaker set can help you understand what it might take to restore the relationship. Mail $2 to Matchmaker, c/o this newspaper, P.O. Box 91428, Cleveland, OH 44101-3428.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) It's best not to gamble at all today, but if you can't resist the urge, restrict your small wagers to familiar areas.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Usually you stick to your guns once you make up your mind, but today, others may be able to turn your decisions off and on like a light switch.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) If you are in a do-it-yourself mood today, it's best not to experiment with exotic, expensive materials. The result of a lack of know-how could be costly debris.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) Treating those you love generously is commendable, but it could also be a bit foolish if you go to extremes. It's the intent, not the cost of your gesture that counts.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) Don't break a commitment to a family member or relative at the last minute if something more appealing comes up today. This won't win you points with your relatives.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) You're not the best at keeping secrets today. With a minimum amount of probing, a nosy inquisitor could find out everything you know.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) When shopping today, try to be selective. If you're not, gadgets you'll have little use for will find their way into your tote bag.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) Others may not be quite ready for your avant-garde ideas today. Hold your far-out schemes in abeyance until they catch up with the times.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) Hunches might take precedence over your logical assumptions today. Although you may operate more by feelings than thought, it's best to reverse the procedure.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) If you introduce sudden changes into special plans today, it could cause consternation among your companions and crimp everyone's good time.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) Guard against an impulse today to switch objectives just when a goal is achievable. It's an unwise tactic that will deprive you of success.

POLLY'S POINTERS

Melt but don't burn the chocolate

By Polly Fisher

DEAR POLLY — I have a terrible time melting chocolate in my microwave oven. The chocolate comes out with hard and grainy lumps instead of nicely melted. What is the problem? — ALICE

DEAR ALICE — You're overheating the chocolate. Properly melted chocolate done in the microwave will not look liquidy when you peep in; it retains its shape but it can be stirred into a smooth, beautifully melted liquid. So you need to check on the chocolate and give it a stir before you think it's done. If you wait until the mass melts into a flat liquid, the chocolate will have already overheated and may take on the hard, grainy texture you describe. It may also become scorched and taste burned.

You can get more control by lowering the power level at which you melt the chocolate.

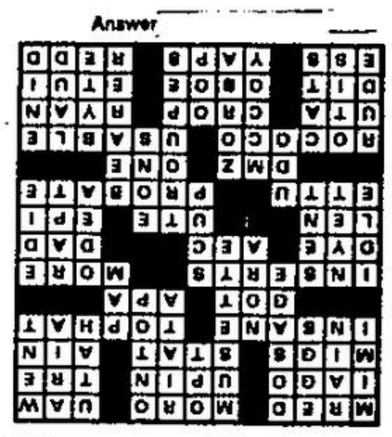
ACROSS

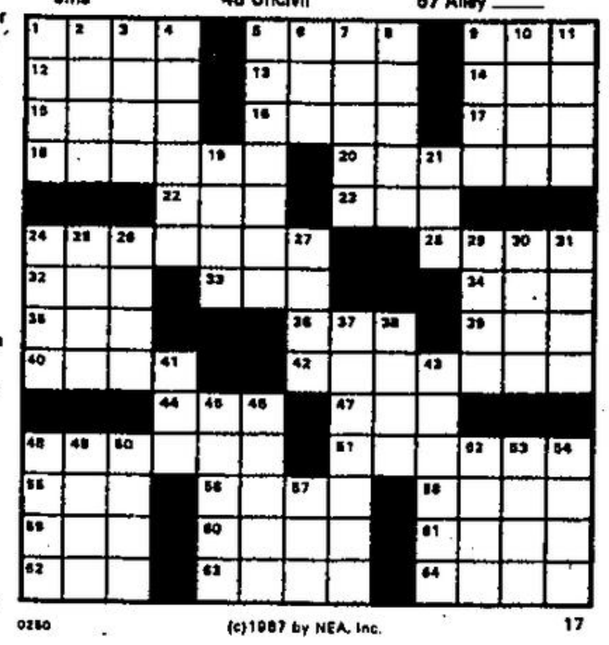
1 TV's talking horse (2 wds.)
5 Philippine native
9 Auto workers' union (abbr.)
12 Shakespearean villain
13 _____ _____ arms
14 Three (pref.)
15 Russian planes
16 Stationary (comb. form)
17 Own (Scot.)
18 Irrational
20 Fred Astaire movie (2 wds.)
22 Acquired
23 Wallaba tree
24 Additions
28 Greater in number
32 Stain
33 Former nuclear agency (abbr.)
34 Father
35 Bernstein, for short
36 American Indian
39 On (pref.)
40 _____ _____ Brute
42 Court type
44 Demilitarized zone (abbr.)
47 Undivided
48 Over-decorative
51 Functional
55 Actress Hagen
56 Handle of a whip
58 Actor _____ O'Neal
59 Code dot
60 Musical instrument
61 Needle case
62 Highway curve
63 Mouths (sl.)
64 _____ Foxx

DOWN

1 French woman's name
2 Pour down
3 Breakfast food
4 Amount of medicine
5 Bagpipe
6 Choose
7 Cowboy's rope
8 High up (2 wds.)
9 Beehive State
10 Solo
11 Departed
19 Ibsen character
21 Girl's nickname
24 Unemployed
25 Soviet refusal
26 Transmitted
27 Atlantic fish
29 Concert halls
30 Spellbound
31 Songstress Adams
37 Theater groups
38 Long times
41 Salad herb
43 Carrier
45 The real _____
46 Fictional Greek
48 Uncivil
49 Cornelia _____ Skinner
50 Broadway show
52 Computer term
53 Praise
54 Novelist Bagnold
57 Alley _____

Answer





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Georgetown
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The Old Bank
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★ Fresh Eggs

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All of the advertisers on this page have an Easter Egg in their ad. Only two eggs are the same. Find the two matching eggs, write down the names of the two stores with the same eggs and fill out the entry form below. Ballots must be deposited in the ballot box located at the participating stores on or before March 31, 1988.

The winner will be the first correct ballot drawn and will receive 100, $1.00 Downtown cash vouchers redeemable at any of the stores advertised on this page. Decision of the judges is final. Draw will be held April 1, 1988.

NAME _____
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Expires March 21, 1988
Answer
1. _____
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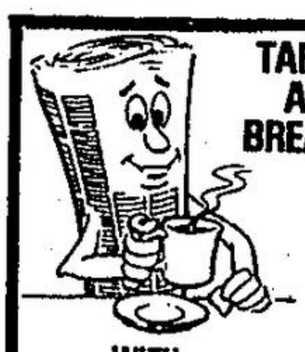
TAKE A BREAK

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