



Laura





Bovinnie's  
HELPER'S  
HELPER'S  
HELPER'S

THE  
SAWCATCHER

NOW  
PLAYING:  
101  
DEAD  
MATADORS

The  
UNDERPLACE

Lulu Jones  
has hoof  
and mouth  
Lulu Jones

BARN-  
LESS

SAW  
CATCHER



MRS. LOW'S  
"Long-Lasting"



Try Mrs. Low's Salt

Club Club  
Club Club

APPEARING  
AT THE  
BLOWFLY TAVERN



THE  
DEATH CALVES

Jude More the  
calves for breath

FRANK MOODY HAZ  
OATS FOR BRAINS



Absc  
N  
CHIC



Licks

IT'S EVERYBODY'S  
Problem!



For more information



The Moo Note

MRS. O'LEARY'S  
COW  
1859-1871

THE WAX  
BUTCHER  
MUSEUM



absolutely  
NO  
HICKENS

Bob Suck  
sucks on  
electric fence



Sum 1 Cow  
1871-1871

THE  
COMPLETE  
FAR SIDE

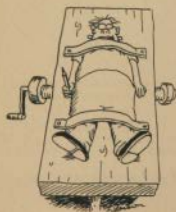
VOLUME TWO  
1987-1994



# THE COMPLETE FAR SIDE

VOLUME TWO  
1987-1994

Gary Larson



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Kansas City



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Larson



Examination of the W

1. What are the main points of the  
document? 2. How are the points  
related to each other?



87



## The Jungle in My Room

When I was growing up, Saturday mornings were paradise. As soon as I got my 25¢ allowance, I'd jump on my bike and head for the local drugstore. I had just two things on my mind: a Big Hunk candy bar and a *Tarzan* comic book.

If *Tarzan* wasn't available, I only had one backup choice: *Turok, Son of Stone*. *Turok* was about a couple of Indian braves trapped in this prehistoric valley, and they were constantly fighting off dinosaurs with their poison arrows. (Worked for me.)

That was it: *Tarzan* or *Turok*. (Candy bar-wise, I was more flexible.) Everything else was just taking up valuable shelf space. I mean, what was the deal with *Archie*? Give me a break! I never could figure out who could get their heart racing when they read about Archie and Jughead getting into "hot water" at Riverdale High School and—Oh, my God!—being sent to Mr. Weatherbee's office. (Although, I admit, Betty was sort of cute.)

There was this one issue of *Tarzan* that had a great impact on me—even more than the one where he battled the crocodile men. (That was pretty exciting, though; Archie, for the record, would have gotten his ass kicked by the crocodile men.) The *Tarzan* issue that I coveted was this one that had a dictionary in the back containing the *entire vocabulary* of the great apes!

This was a gold mine. Edgar Rice Burroughs, for those of you who haven't read the books, had created an actual language for the great apes. If you really wanted to be "inside" this world when you read about Tarzan's various adventures, you had to know Ape. Oddly enough, the apes themselves always mixed a little English in with their own language, but I never thought about that a whole lot.

I memorized that entire dictionary. (Well, it was only one or two pages long; they *were* apes, you know.) But today there are just a few words I still recall, especially *kreegah* and *bundolo*. English translation: "beware" and "kill," respectively. *Kreegah* and *bundolo* seemed to come up a lot in the jungle.

Note: Tarzan, for the record, never uttered "cowabunga" or "oongowa." They're Hollywood inventions, as far as I know. And the same goes for "Cheetah." Tarzan never had a sidekick chimpanzee named Cheetah. *Sheetah*, on the other hand, was the Ape word for leopard. So, theoretically, if a leopard ever got inside his treehouse, Tarzan might say something like, "Jane! Kreegah! ... Sheetah! ... Tarzan bundolo!" Now you're talking Ape.

However, if there was ever a reason to cry "foul" on the subject of Tarzan, it was what the movie makers did to his famous Tarzan yell. What in the hell was that? Were we all supposed to recoil in fear at the sound of someone yodeling in a tree? Even as a little kid, I never could believe that someone

had done that to Tarzan's "victory cry," a sound that Burroughs described as "shrill and horrible ... an awful cry ... a roaring shriek ... fearsome ... blood-curdling ... inhuman." He did *not* say "a sort of yodeling sound ... like someone being goosed while singing. ..."

But my growing interest in Nature began to conflict with my zeal for Tarzan. I remember being especially troubled by the countless varieties of tropical insects and parasites he would have been exposed to. Raised by apes, maybe, but still basically a half-naked Brit. And Tarzan, equipped with two standard-issue opposable thumbs, was described as being able to "fly" through the forest canopy like a monkey. This was getting tough to take, but I was still hanging in there. (As Judy Tenuta might say, "It could happen.")

And then there was this: Where did Tarzan get his hair cut? And his shave? Did you ever see any image of him with a beard? It seems to me, if you were (1) raised by apes, and (2) lived in the jungle, you'd sort of look like this:



My final problem, which perhaps made me have to part ways with *The Lord of the Jungle*, was this: What kind of apes did Tarzan get raised by? Mr. Burroughs never comes right out and says "chimpanzees"—he just says "apes." Their physical description is something more akin to a gorilla, but they weren't gorillas, because the author

distinguishes them from Tarzan's apes. In Africa, ape-wise, there's nothing left. (Yes, I know about bonobos; he wasn't Tarzan of the bonobos.) So he was Tarzan of *what* apes? This has driven me crazy all my life. (I had to share.)

I have no clear idea why I've written this essay on the subject of Tarzan. (You may be wondering the same thing.) I guess this ape-man has been such a frequent subject of mine, and such an enduring, pop-cultural icon, that I just had to go back. In particular, I recognize today, the artistic style of those comic books had an influence on the way I drew vines, ferns, trees, lions, buffaloes, spears, huts, and a lot of other jungle "stuff"—especially gorillas. The eyes of gorillas were almost never revealed in those early comics; they were only implied by the dark shadow created from an overhanging browridge. I loved that. I stole that.

Still, *Tarzan* was a great yarn for a kid like me, who could spend hours in his room and yet be somewhere far, far away. I suppose if I had built more model airplanes and cars, I would be a little more mechanically inclined than I am today. Edgar Rice Burroughs, however, stoked my imagination. His ape-man creation fed my interests in wild animals, Africa, and Nature as a whole—even if Tarzan eventually posed a few problems in logic for me.

Now Mowgli: There's a jungle character that makes perfect sense.



Helen paused. With an audible "wumph," Muffy's familiar yipping had ended, and only the sounds of Ed's football game now emanated from the living room.

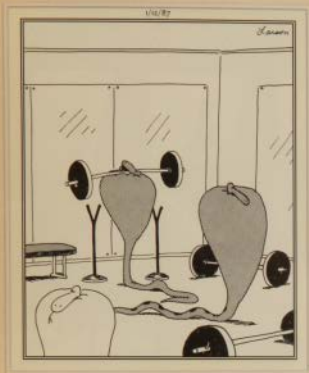


"I'll tell you what it looks like—it looks like it was done by a chimpanzee."



Astral traveling in water buffaloes





Snake weight rooms



"Listen—just take one of our brochures and see what we're all about. ... In the meantime, you may wish to ask yourself, 'Am I a happy cow?'"

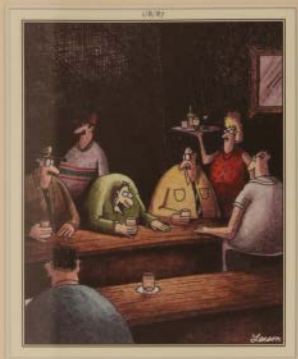


"Uh-oh, Donny. Sounds like the monster in the basement has heard you crying again. ... Let's be reeeeeeal quiet and hope he goes away."



"It's this new boyfriend, dear. ... I'm just afraid one day your father's going to up and blow him away."

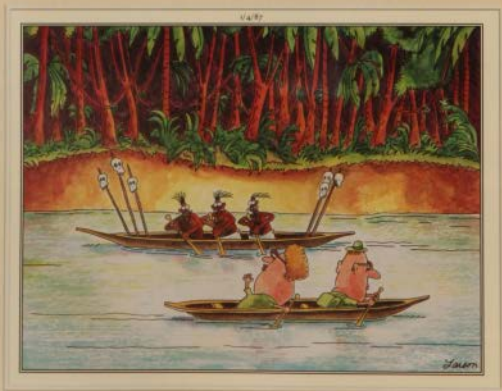




"Yeah. My boss don't appreciate me either. To him, I'm just a gofer. 'Igor! Go for brains! ... Igor! Go for dead bodies! ... Igor! Go for sandwiches!' ... I dunno—give me another beer."



"Why'd you do it, Biff? I mean, I always knew car chasing was in your blood—but the president's limo?"

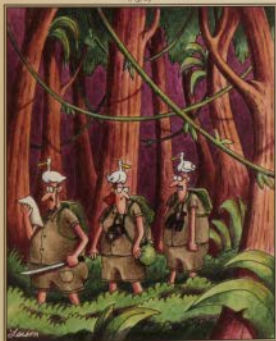


1/6/87



A young Genghis Khan and his Mongol hordette

1/13/87



Onward they pushed, through the thick, steamy jungle, separately ruing the witch doctor's parting words: "Before you leave this valley, each of you will be wearing a duck."

1/10/87



"For heaven's sake, Henry, tell the kids a pleasant story for once—they don't always have to hear the one about your head."



Chicken nudist colonies



When potato salad goes bad



Simultaneously all three went for the ball, and the coconut-like sound of their heads colliding secretly delighted the bird.



"Chief say, 'Someone ... here ... walk ... through ... buffalo ... field.'"



"Emma ... the dog ain't goin' for the new cat."

*To whom it may concern:*

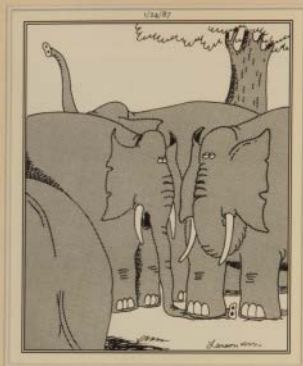
*I have tried throughout this book to hold fast to my own rule of not attaching explanations or apologies to any particular cartoons. Once I started that, I realized, it might never end. But here, I need to "make my case" regarding a cartoon that was almost universally misunderstood upon its initial publication. (And it especially stirred up my worst divided enemy, the Cat People.) Therefore, let it be known, it is the dog—in a mafia-like gesture—who has done this to the cat. The humans here are innocent. This time.*

—Gary Larson





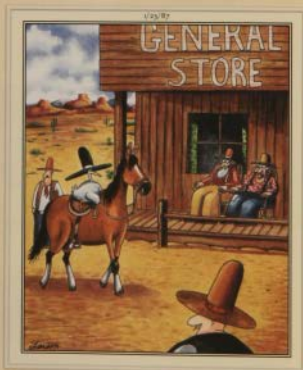
"He's got one shot left, Murray—and then he's ours!"



"Two questions, Mitch: How much do you weigh, and what's the most sensitive part of any elephant's anatomy?"



Unbeknownst to most historians, Einstein started down the road of professional basketball before an ankle injury diverted him into science.



"Somethin's up, Jed. ... That's Ben Potter's horse, all right, but ain't that Henry Morgan's chicken ridin' him?"



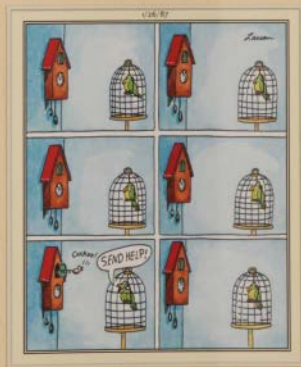
"Maybe it's not me, y'know? ... Maybe it's the rest of the herd that's gone insane."



Snake inventors

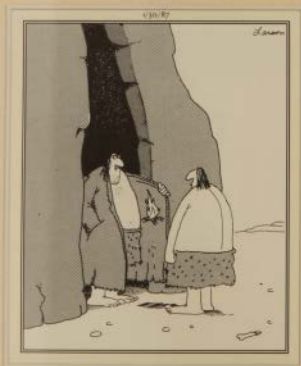


Non-singing canaries have to take wood shop.



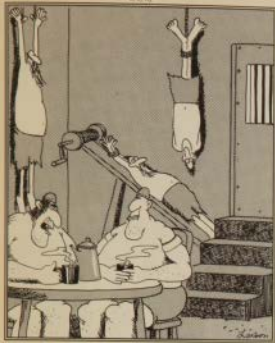


*Night of the Living Dead Chipmunks*



*The embarrassment of riding off into a fake sunset*

2/1/87



"You know, Russell, you're a great torturer. I mean, you can make a man scream for mercy in nothing flat ... but boy, you sure can't make a good cup of coffee."

2/1/87



"I've warned you kids about this—now I'm gonna straighten you out once and for all."

The Herald Statesman, Yonkers, N.Y., 2/19/87

## Beyond the bounds of decency? or simply humor out of this world?

NANCY Q. KEEFE

Dear Mrs. Keefe,

I was so upset after seeing the enclosed comic page<sup>1</sup> cartoon that appeared Monday (Feb. 2) in The Herald Statesman. It was the ugliest, meanest obscenity and satirical cartoon I have ever seen in a family paper. The so-called artist, Gary Larson, must be sick. I hope you agree.

I believe that you, being in touch with the various branches of your editorial staff, have more "clue" than I could have and would see that never again such a vile cartoon would be printed. It certainly is not fit for exposure to children.

Very truly yours, etc.

Here is my reply, which I have already mailed to him:

Dear Mr. Vall:

One of the first ideas that my father taught me as a child was that there are no wrong opinions and no really wrong tastes. He even taught me how to design large-gauge phrenology to express this. In Latin. The phrenology was not disapprobation, and in French Chanson a sonnet. Further, he said, these applied more to humor than even to love.

As it happens, Gary Larson's style is one of my favorites. We haven't carried it long in these newspapers, but my first newspaper, the highly regarded Berkshire Eagle of Pittsfield,

Mass! has been carrying Larson for years. One of my eldest friends gave me a 1987 calendar of Larson cartoons, about which I guffaw every day.

So I am not a good candidate to carry your message of disapprobation. But I will say this: Don't worry about the children. They don't get it. And when they do, they will not be as much affected, as indicated, as they are now, daily, by the offerings of television or the frequency of Fundamentals.

Satire is an ancient tradition, as old as Isaac Swift in "Gulliver's Travels" (or in "A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Ireland from being a Burden to their Parents or Country" — by starving or roasting them to eat), and as old as Horace of the first century before Christ (who wrote a whole series of Satires, and, I should add, Antiphanes, the Greek, although of the fifth century B.C., who wrote entire plays of satire).

To name "Satire is what causes Saturday night," as George S. Kaufman, put it. To a few of us, satire is what makes it possible to deal with the outrages of daily life.

To each his own.

Pleas, etc.

Nancy Q. Keefe is editorial page editor.

2/1/87

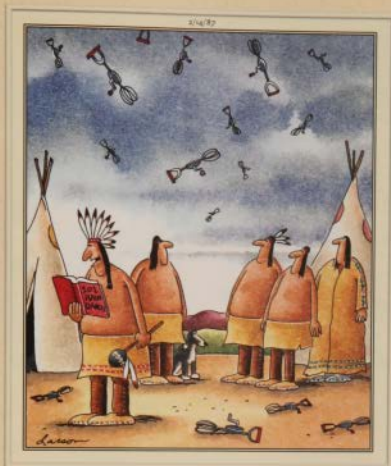


Suddenly, everyone turned and looked—there, standing in the doorway—this wretched, mean-looking ingrown.

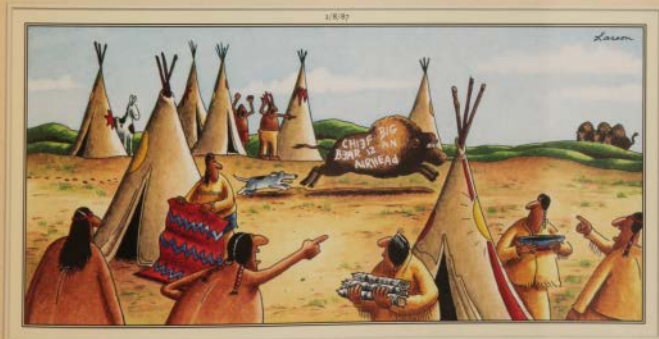




"Ooo! Now here's a nice one we built last fall."



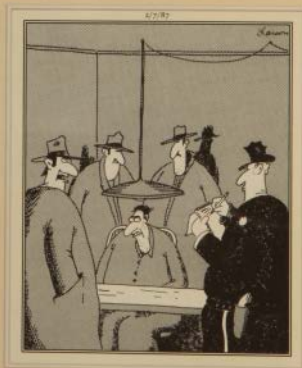
"Oh! Four steps to the left and then three to the right! ... What kind of a dance was I doing?"



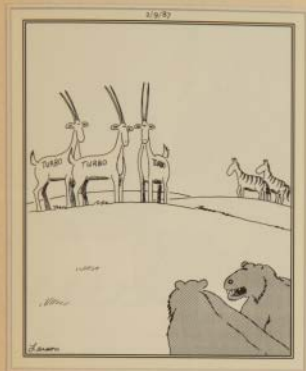
Buffalo dares



"So, until next week—adios, amoebas."



"You idiot! Don't write that down—his name ain't Puddin' Tame!"



"Forget these guys."



"There it is again ... a feeling that in a past life I was someone named Shirley MacLaine."



Thomas Sullivan, a blacksmith who attended the original Thanksgiving dinner, is generally credited as being the first person to stick olives on all his fingers.



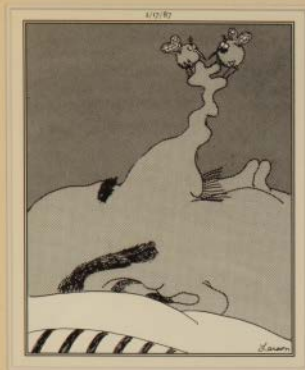
"Seems like Gramp's been there forever—fossilized right there on his favorite rock. ... Scares the hell out of the dog."



"See Dick run. See Jane run. Run run run. See the wolves chase Dick and Jane. Chase chase chase. ..."



"Thanks for coming. Something's wrong—everything just seems a little too quiet and normal today."



"Well, that about does it for the nose—I'm starting to hit cartilage."



"Oh, Thank! You've done it! ... If only we had a camera—but, of course, I'm getting ahead of myself."



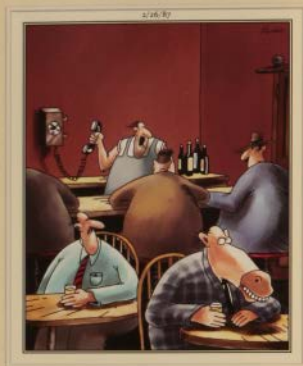
"Have you noticed that? ... You get stuck swinging behind some guy who's just lollygagging along, and sure enough he'll be wearin' a hat on the back of his head."



"Zelda! Cool it! ... The Rothenbergs hear the can opener!"



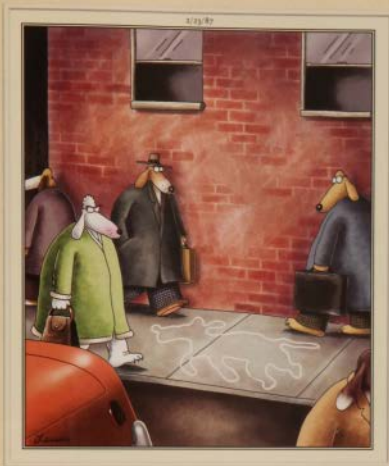
Deer grandmothers



"Horse! ... Is there a man called 'Horse'  
in here?"



Early wheeler-dealers

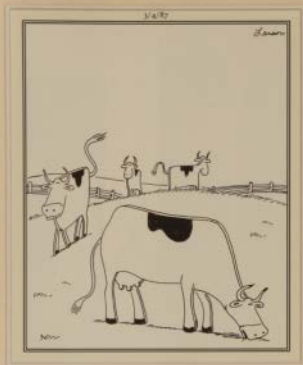


Wendell Zurkowit: slave to the waffle light



When a body meets a body comin' through the rye





Where "minute" steaks come from

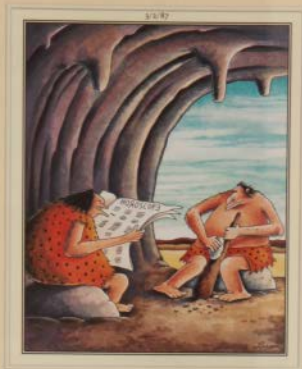


Where giraffes go to comb their hair

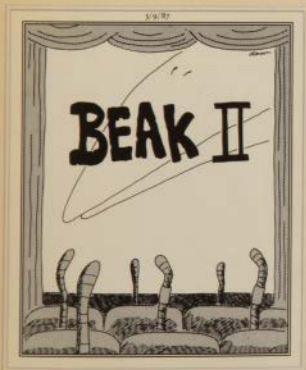




"Mom said no sitting on the edge, Wayne."



"You have a small capacity for reason, some basic tool-making skills, and the use of a few simple words.'... Yep. That's you."



Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the topsoil ...



Animal scratch 'n' sniffs



"She's lookin' good, Vern!"



Breakfast on other planets



Poodles of the Serengeti



Nov. 12, 1957: Kevin Wakefield, during snack time, makes kindergarten history by selecting the soda cracker over the graham.





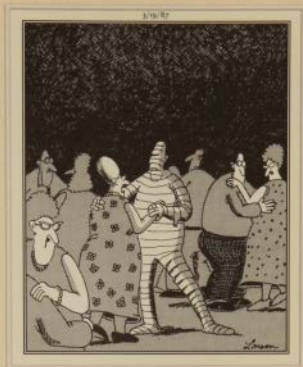
The fake McCoy's



"Now listen—will you *please* try to control yourself tonight? ... I don't want to see you goading some guy into crashing heads with you."



Dizzy Gillespie's seventh birthday party



"For heaven's sake, Roger—stop dragging that one leg."



"Whoa! Smells like a French primate house in here."



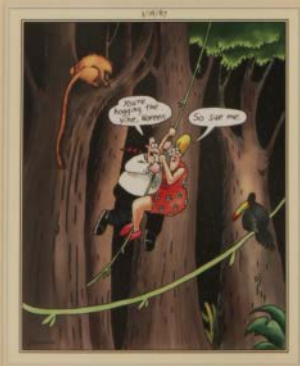
The spitting cobras at home



"Tell it again, Gramps! The one about being caught in the shark frenzy off the Great Barrier Reef!"



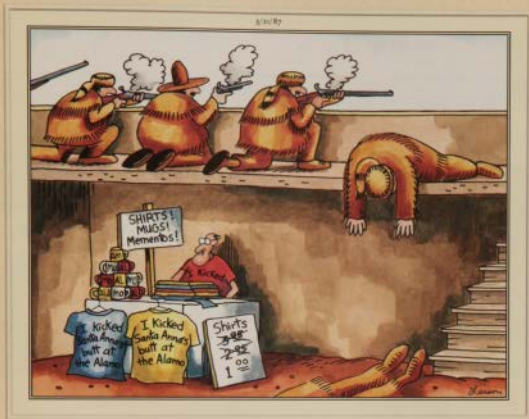
"You ever do this? ... Just sit in a place like this and antwatch?"



The Hendersons of the Jungle



Accountant street gangs

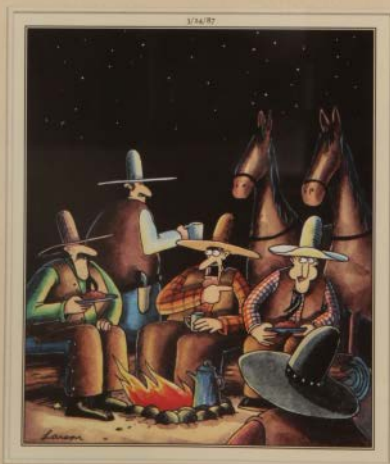


Chameleon faux pas: Arriving at a party in the same color as the host.

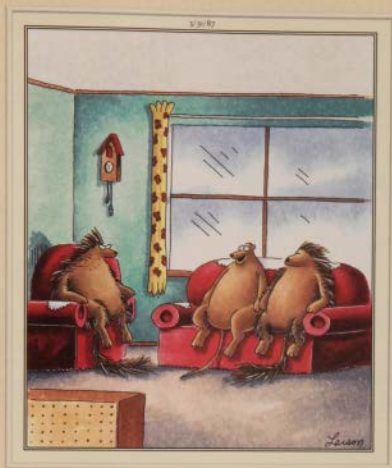


Unlucky fishing holes





"Hey, everyone! Simmons here just uttered a discouraging word!"



"I had them all removed last week and boy, do I feel great!"



Horror films of the Wild



Early piñatas



The Greystokes at marriage counseling



"Well, Frank's hoping for a male and I'd like a little female. ... But, really, we'll both be happy if it just has six eyes and eight legs."



"For crying out loud, Patrick—sit down. ... And enough with the 'give me the potatoes or give me death' nonsense."



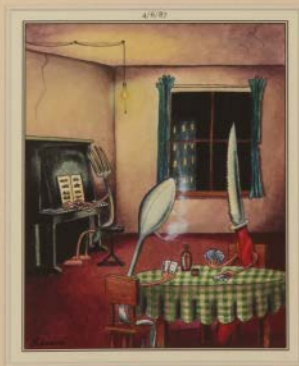
Mr. Ed spills his guts.



"And we're eating soon, so stay out of the kitty jar."



In the Old West, vegetarians were often shot with little provocation.



In the early days, living in their squalid apartment, all three shared dreams of success. In the end, however, Bob the Spoon and Ernie the Fork wound up in an old silverware drawer, and only Mack went on to fame and fortune.

4/1/87



4/8/87



"Again? You just had a glass of water twelve days ago."

4/10/87



"Well, this is getting nowhere fast."



Thor's hammer, screwdriver, and crescent wrench



"Won't talk, huh? ... Frankie! Hand me that scaler."



"Yes! Yes! That's it! Just a little higher. ...  
Ahhhhhhhhh ..."



How cow documentaries are made



"Well, *this* isn't very promising."





Randy Schueler's wingless butterfly collection



Early department stores





4/27/87



4/30/87



"More worms? ... Saaaaaaay—why are you being so nice to me all of a sudden?"

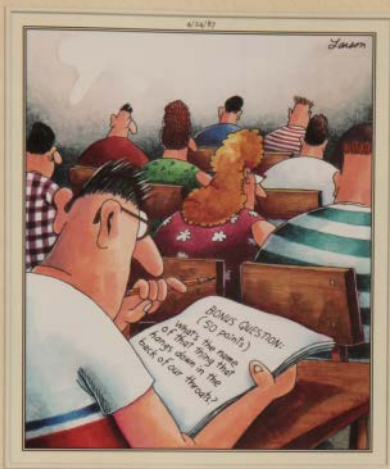
4/22/87



4/19/87



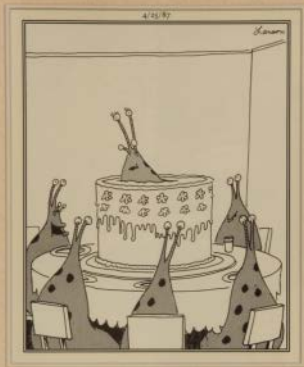
"Well, if I'm lucky, I should be able to get off this thing in about six more weeks."



Final page of the medical boards



The African dawn



"Hey! Now her whole head is out! ...  
This is getting better every minute!"



Ornithology 101 field trips



"You're not fooling anyone, Mitchell. ... You're not  
eating, you're just spreading it around."



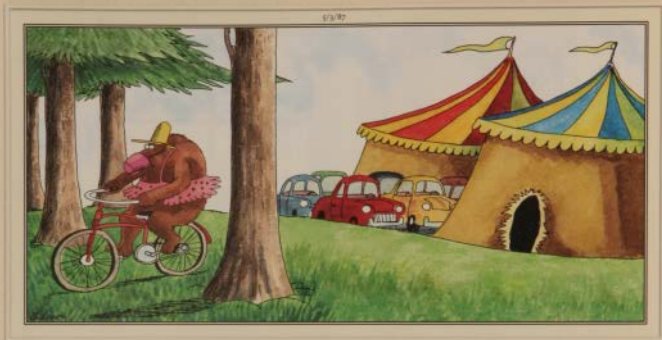
"Louis ... phonecaw."



The toaster divers of Pago Pago



Killer bees are generally described as starting out as larvae delinquents.



Bobo remained free the rest of his life, although he did find it necessary to seek counseling.



Inexplicably, Bob's porcupine goes flat.



Mutants on the Bounty



Products that prey on shark wimps



Stephen King's childhood ant farm



Suddenly, Dr. Frankenstein realized he had left his brain in San Francisco.



Early archaeologists



"Douglas! ... Hunch your shoulders!"



"Oh, wonderful! Look at this, Etta—another mouth to feed."





"You know, I don't feel so good, Dale. ... I think some of those red ants were still on the pink side."



Crow kids



"Hey, Norton! ... Ain't that your dog attackin' the president?"

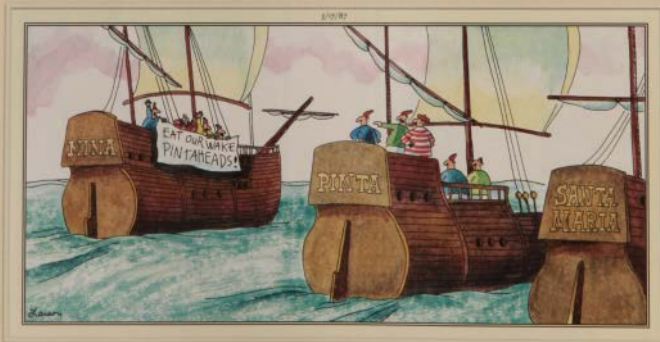




Kangaroo nerds



"Vince! Just trample him! ... He's drawing you into his kind of fight!"





And for the rest of his life, the young reptile suffered deep emotional scars.



And there, deep in the forest, both of them decided they would settle this the old-fashioned way.

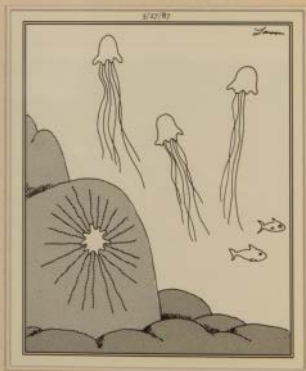




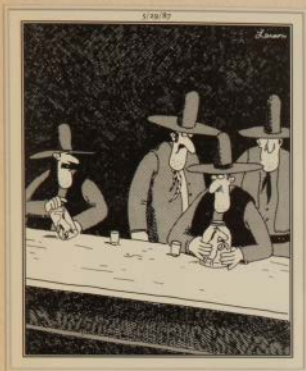
"This is it, Jenkins—indisputable proof that the Ice Age caught these people completely off guard."



At the Children's Zoo



When jellyfish travel at unsafe speeds



"Not bad, but you guys wanna see a *really* small horse?"



The armadillo ring of Belize

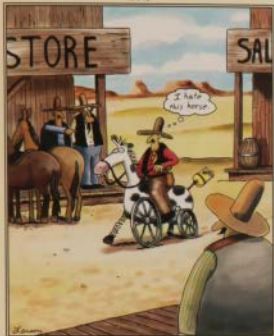


"Actually, Johnny knows this stuff better than me. ... Hey, Johnny! This lady wants to know the difference in all these fertilizers!"



"Wait a minute here. ... Did I floss?"

6/1/87

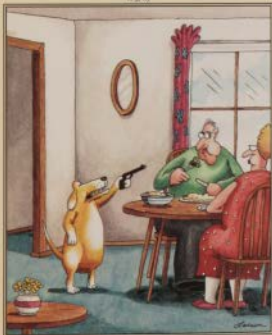


6/5/87



"Do I like it? Do I like it? ... Dang it, Thelma, you know my feelings on barbed wire!"

6/5/87



"Hey, bucko ... I'm through begging."

6/8/87



"For crying out loud, I was hibernating! ... Don't you guys ever take a pulse?"



"Mrs. Xxgzhr, may I be excused? I have to go  
Number  $\sqrt{(17.003)(n-2)}$ ."



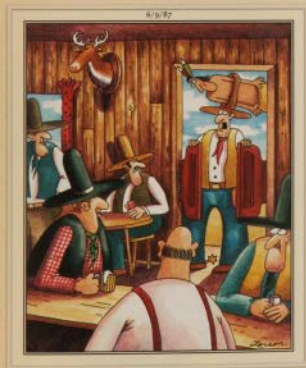
"Oh, yeah? ... How'd you like your  
nose unflattened?"



At the worm beach



"You recognize this, Mr. Grok? ... We found it in the bushes near the victim's cave. Isn't this your atlatl, Mr. Grok?"



"INDIANS!"



"So, Raymond ... Linda tells us you work in the security division of an automobile wreckage site."





For a very brief period, medieval scientists were known to have dabbled in the merits of cardboard armor.



"Wendell ... it's a quest for fire."



Roger crams for his microbiology midterm.



"Shoot! Drain's clogged. ... Man, I hate to think what might be down there."



Early attempts at the milkshake



"He told you *that*? Well, he's pulling your flagellum, Nancy."



"AAAAAA! ... I CAN SEE! I CAN SEE!  
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!"



When chickens dream



"That does it, Sid! ... You yell 'tarantula' one more time and you're gonna be wearin' this thing!"



"Hey! What's this, Higgins? Physics equations? ... Do you enjoy your job here as a cartoonist, Higgins?"



"And when the big moment comes, here's the nursery Robert and I have fixed up."



Where all the young farm animals go to smoke



Sled chickens of the North



"For crying out loud, Warren ... can't you just beat your chest like everyone else?"



And by a lucky coincidence, Carl had just reached the "m's."



"Now this is ... this is ... well, I guess it's another snake."

6/29/87



"No, no, no! What are you doing? ...  
Fifth leg! Fifth leg!"

6/30/87



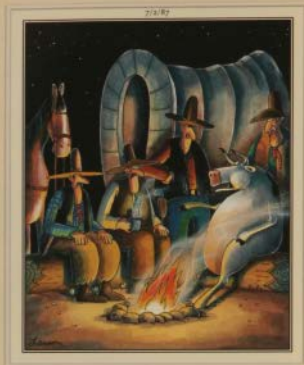
"And you, Johnson! You stick with your man  
and keep that hand in his face!"

6/28/87



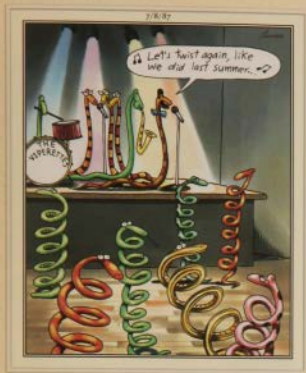


The conversation had been brisk and pleasant when, suddenly and simultaneously, everyone just got dog tired.



"A few cattle are going to stray off in the morning, and tomorrow night a stampede is planned around midnight. Look, I gotta get back. ... Remember, when we reach Santa Fe, I ain't slaughtered."





"You sure you're supposed to be doin' that, Mitch?"







"Well, the sloth nailed him. ... Y'know, ol' Hank never was exactly a 'quick draw.'"



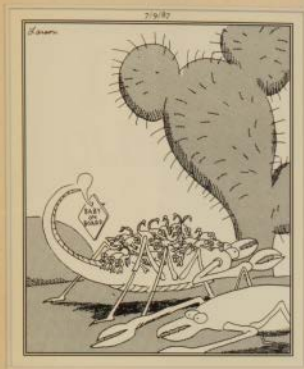
"Oh my God! Murray's attacking the bathroom mirror!"



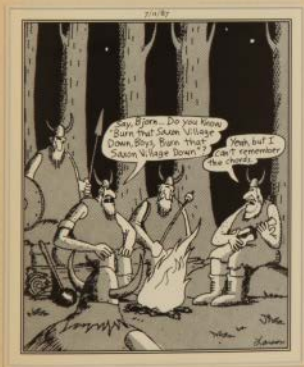
"Oh, boy! The 'Nerd'! ... Now my collection's complete!"



"It's the same dream night after night ... I walk out on my web, and suddenly a foot sticks—and then another foot sticks, and another, and another, and another ..."



"Arnold, you fool! Don't look up!"



Viking campfires



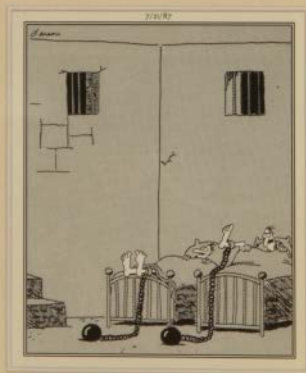
"For crying out loud, Jonah! Three days late, covered with slime, and smelling like fish! ... And what story have I got to swallow this time?"



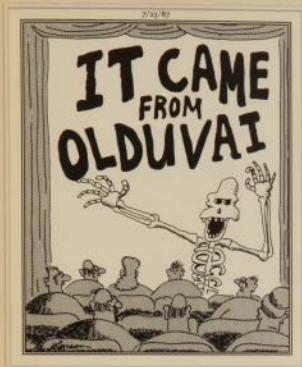
Although impolite, the other bears could never help staring at Larry's enormous deer gut.



"You eat your dirt, Billy. You want to grow up as big and slimy as your dad, don't you?"



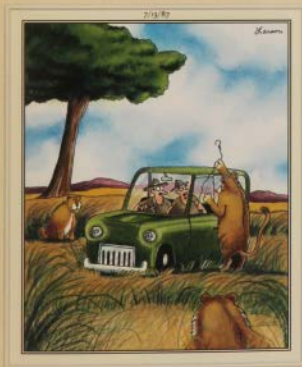
"What the hey? ... Someone's short-sheeted my bed again!"



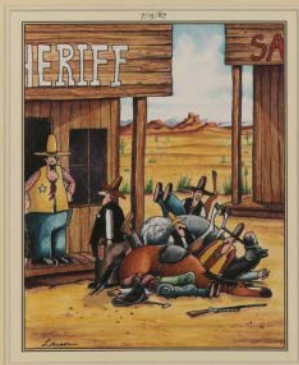
Anthro horror films



"Blow, Howie, blow! ... Yeah, yeah, yeah!  
You're cookin' now, Howie! ... All right! ...  
Charlie Parker, move over! ... Yeah!"



"Drive, George, drive! This one's got a  
coat hanger!"



"And so you just threw everything together?  
Matthews, a posse is something  
you have to organize."



When piranha dine out



"You're sick, Jessy! ... Sick, sick, sick!"



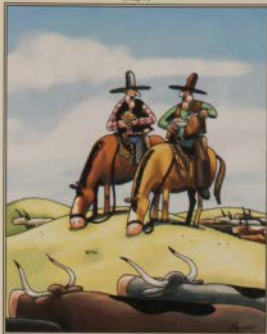
Animal horoscopes

7/23/87



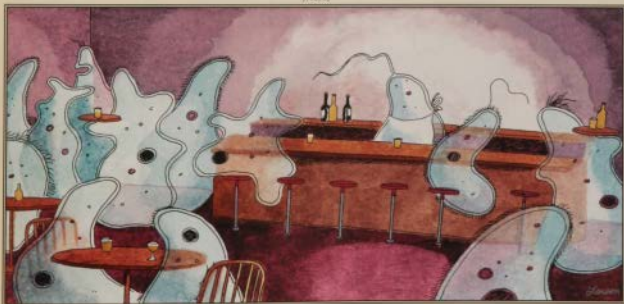
Another unsubstantiated photograph of the Loch Ness monster (taken by Reuben Hicks, 5/24/84, Chicago).

7/24/87



"Man, Ben, I'm gettin' tired of this. .... How many days now we've been eatin' this trail dust?"

7/26/87



Single-cell bars



"Think about it, Murray ... If we could get this baby runnin', we could run over hikers, pick up females, chase down mule deer—man, we'd be the grizzlies from hell."



Superman in his later years



"What'd I tell you, Blanche? Her place always smells like a house."



"Make your move, Bart—if you're feelin' lucky, that is."



"It's a letter from Julio in America. ... His banana bunch arrived safely and he's living in the back room of some grocery store."



"Bummer, Rusty. ... Seven years bad luck—of course, in your case, that works out to be 49 years."





Ineffective tools of persuasion

August 19, 1987

National Press Syndicate  
439 Main Street  
Kansas City, Missouri 64111

Re: Our Reference No. 1182/General

Dear Sirs:

We represent The Wiffle Ball, Inc. in trademark matters. It has come to our attention that the trademark WIFFLE was referred to in the comic strip "The Far Side" by Gary Larson. A copy of the comic strip is enclosed.

In the comic strip you refer to a "...wiffle bat" and show a man holding a bat with perforations. Please be advised that WIFFLE does not make a bat with perforations, and therefore the use of the brand name WIFFLE to a product that is not a product of The Wiffle Ball, Inc. is an inappropriate use of our client's valuable trademark WIFFLE.

In the future, when you use the brand name WIFFLE, the entire brand should be capitalized, and it should only be used in reference to a product currently manufactured by The Wiffle Ball, Inc.

Please forward a copy of this letter to Mr. Gary Larson.

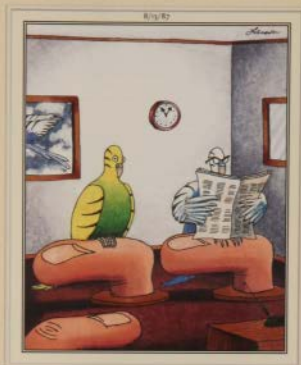
Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,  
Gene S. Wister

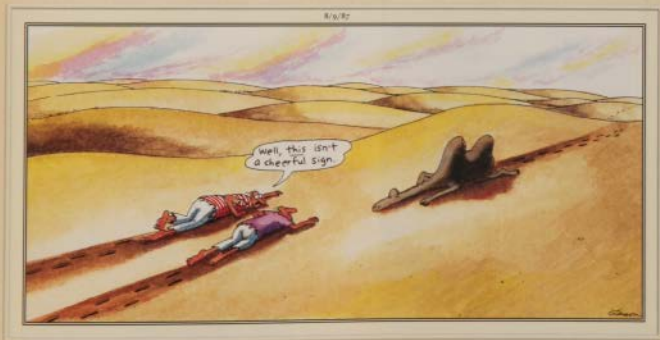
GOWLES  
KANSAS CITY  
c/o: David A. Willard



Just as Dale entered the clearing and discovered, standing together, the Loch Ness monster, Bigfoot, and Jackie Onassis, his camera jammed.



Parakeet furniture





How bears relax



And then, just as he predicted, Thag became the spiritual channeler for a two-million-year-old gibbon named Gus.



"Oh, don't be silly! No thanks needed. Just take the brain—but tell that doctor you work for not to be such a stranger."



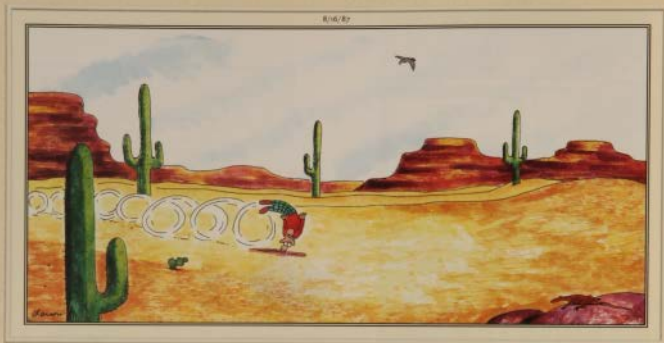
Canine comedians



Night of the Potato Bugs



"Well, the defendant and I had made this deal in which we both prospered. ... You know, one of those 'you-scratch-me-behind-my-ears-I'll-scratch-you-behind-yours' arrangements."



As the cactus stood watch over the sun-drenched land, a red-tailed hawk hung motionless in the desert sky. Little stirred, except an occasional lizard scurrying for shade or a tumblenerd drifting by.



Baryshnikov's ultimate nightmare



Eddie Nordquist and his "Death Kite"



Gus Ferguson: recipient of the first brain bypass operation.



When crows dream

8/16/87



Hell's library

8/17/87



Crossing paths on their respective journeys of destiny, Johnny Appleseed and Irving Ragweed nod "hello."

8/23/87



Trick clubbing exhibitions

8/27/87



"Hey, you wanna see a real scar? Check this baby out!"



Tough spiders



Some historians theorize that the Sphinx's nose was actually severed by Egyptian mobsters and, in an act of defiance, "delivered" to an unpopular pharaoh.



"Man, this is havin' no effect. ... But if the boss wants this varmint dragged through the desert, I ain't gonna argue."



Arizona Daily Star, Tucson, Ariz., 9/1/87

## Offensive 'Far Side'

To the editor:

I was appalled when I saw Gary Larson's "The Far Side" cartoon in the Star Aug. 26. This was of two Larson animals — presumably chimpanzees — in a tree. One, which was evidently supposed to be the female, was picking a long hair from the other's shoulder. The caption read, "Well, well — another blond hair! ... Conducting a little more 'research' with that Jane Goodall tramp!"

To refer to Dr. Goodall as a tramp is inexcusable — even by a self-described "innocent" cartoonist. The cartoon was incredibly offensive and in such poor taste that readers might well question the editorial judgment of running such an atrocity in a newspaper that pretends to be supplying the news to persons with a better than average intelligence. The cartoon and its message were absolutely stupid.

Dr. Goodall is a world-renowned scientist who has devoted 28 years of her life to studying chimpanzees in the wild. Her findings have caused the scientific world to redefine the meaning of the word "making" with her discoveries that include the

excessive assumption that men was the only primates to make and use tools, a distinction that had — until her findings disproved it — been a measure of superiority of human beings over other primates.

With no allegiance to any animal welfare group, Dr. Goodall is working very hard to investigate better treatment of chimpanzees in biomedical laboratories. Dr. Goodall has chosen to speak out for these animals that cannot speak for themselves.

"Tramp?" She'll fly!

The irresponsibility of the Star in choosing to run such an obscenity is disgusting. In fact, any woman should be shocked by the reference that the female — in this case, a typical Larson cynicism-wearing animal — would be unaware of what Dr. Goodall's research really is, its seriousness and the assumption that a female only would have the mentality to look for sexual implications.

Sue Enghel  
Executive Director  
The Jane Goodall Institute

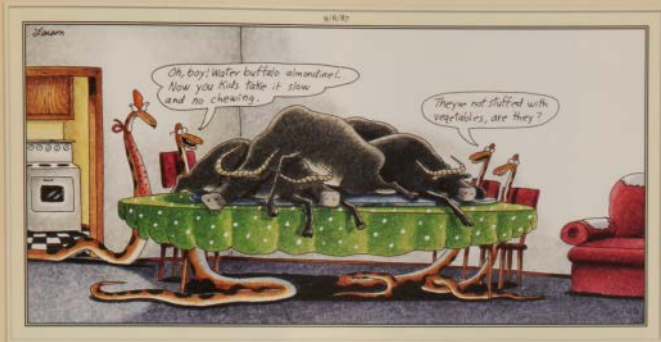
*Editor's note: Jane Goodall was out of the country when this cartoon appeared in newspapers and had not seen it when this letter was written. Unbeknownst to her, then executive director, Dr. Goodall was a big fan of The Far Side. Her reaction upon seeing the cartoon was to guffaw (her word) and say, "Wow! Fantastic! Real funny at last! Funny being to a Gary Larson cartoon!" She intended to write Gary an apology herself but got sidetracked. A year or so later, the National Geographic Society requested permission from Gary to indicate to reprint the cartoon and was denied, because of this letter. They responded, "That doesn't sound like the Jane Goodall we know." They checked around and discovered that Dr. Goodall loved the cartoon; permission was granted. Jane and Gary eventually met at her research facility in Gombe, and she went on to write the introduction to The Far Side Gallery 5 (1995).*



"Well, well—another blonde hair. ...  
Conducting a little more 'research'  
with that Jane Goodall tramp?"



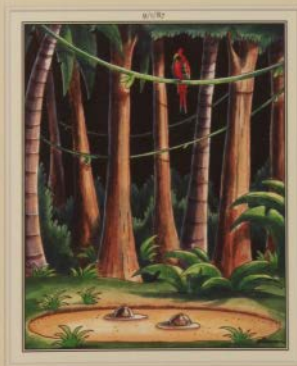
Punk flamingoes



Python dinners



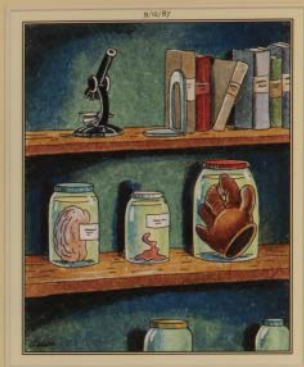
"Oh, wait! Wait, Cory! ... Add the cereal first and then the milk!"



"Let go, Morty! Let go, Morty! You're pulling me in! ... Let go, Morty! You're pulling me in!"



Pirate manicures



Broca's brain, appendix, and baseball glove



As a child, little Henry Jekyll would often change himself into a big, red-haired delinquent that parents in the neighborhood simply dubbed "that Hyde kid."



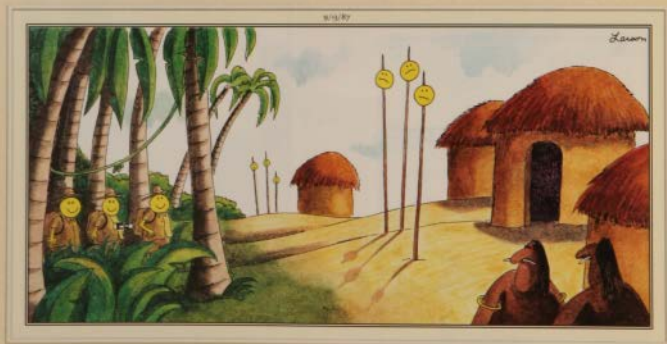
Horse styles of the '50s



That evening, with her blinds pulled, Mary had three helpings of corn, two baked potatoes, extra bread, and a little lamb.



"Yes ... will you accept a collect cattle call from Lester?"



9/26/87



The Potatoheads in Paris

9/18/87



"Well, it's cold again."



"Letter from Lonso ... and he sounds pretty lonely."



Flamingo toughs



"Okay, you've got me over a barrel ... but how do I know these are all the negatives?"



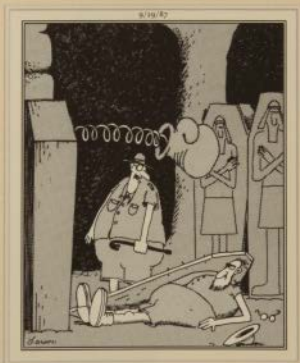
Songwriters of the Old West



"Listen. I've *tried* to communicate with him, but he's like a broken record: 'None of your beeswax, none of your beeswax.'"



If the Cleavers had been Eskimos

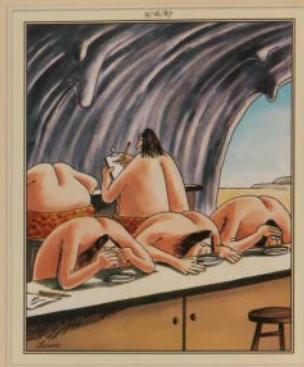


"Consider yourself fortunate, Belsky. ... As curses go, that sure beats having your descendants strangled in the night by a walking corpse."





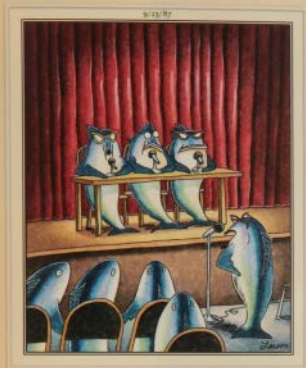
Young Victor Frankenstein stays after school.



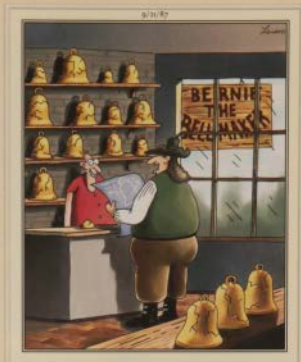
Early microbiologists



With their parents away, the young dragons would stay up late lighting their sneezes.



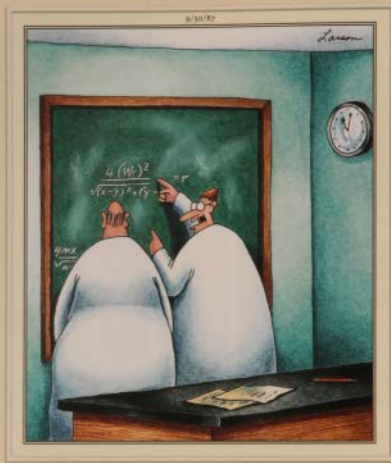
The committee to decide whether spawning should be taught in school.



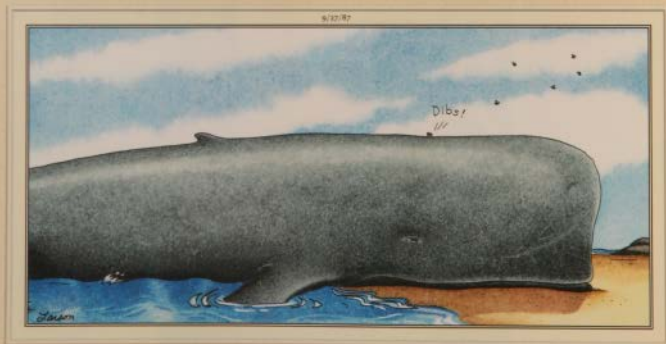
"Here are the blueprints. Now look: This is going to be the Liberty Bell, so we obviously expect that it be forged with great diligence and skill."



Darren's heart quickened: Once inside the home, and once the demonstration was in full swing, a sale was inevitable.



"Yes, yes, I know that, Sidney—everybody knows that! ... But look: Four wrongs squared, minus two wrongs to the fourth power, divided by this formula, do make a right."



The first fly on a beached whale



Animal camouflage



Nerds in hell



Scene from a corporate fairy tale



"And always—always—remember this:  
A swimmer in the water is worth two on the beach."



Although of some scientific debate, Neanderthal mobsters are frequently linked with the anthropological treasures of Olduvai Gorge.





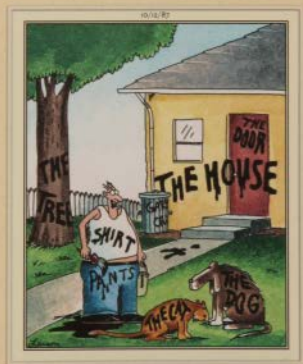
"Okay. The bank's open. ... Now, I know you're scared, Ramone. ... Obviously, we're all a little yellow."



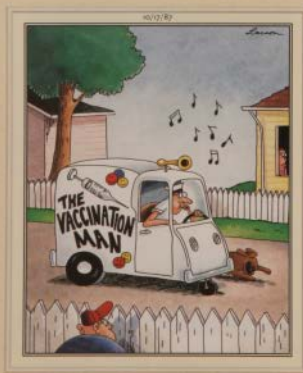
"Julian ... you're cheating."



Animal joke gifts



"Now! ... That should clear up a few things around here!"



Slowly he would cruise the neighborhood, waiting for that occasional careless child who confused him with another vendor.



Cat showers



"No doubt about it, boys. ... See these markings on the bottom? This is an Apache pie pan!"



"Well, he's done it *again!* ... Curse that paper chimp!"



Giraffe beach parties





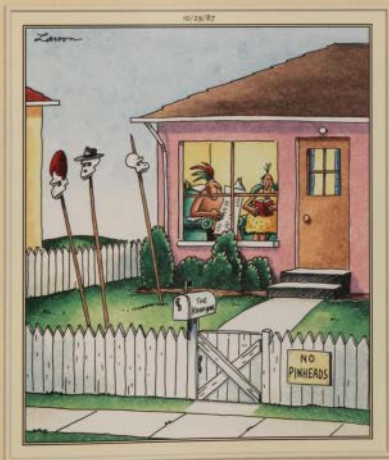
Rusty makes his move.



"And when I got home, Harold's coat and hat were gone, his worries were on the doorstep, and Gladys Mitchell, my neighbor, says she saw him heading west, on the sunny side of the street."



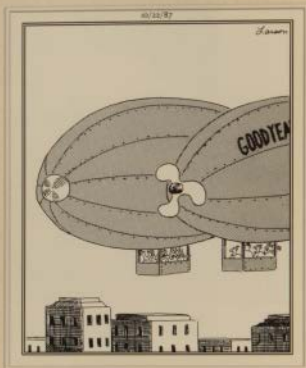
Wildlife preserves



Suburban headhunters



Feb. 22, 1946: Botanists create the first artificial flower.



Blimp near-misses



"Well, here we go, another exciting evening at the neighbors', with all of us sitting around going, 'Hello, my name is so-and-so. ... What's your name? ... I wanna cracker. ... Hello, my name is so-and-so.'"



All day long, a tough gang of astrophysicists would monopolize the telescope and intimidate the other researchers.



The elephant man meets a buffalo gal.



Piglet practical jokes



The birth of acid howl



"Crimony! ... I must've been tangled in some bimbo's hair for more than two hours!"



The bribe of Frankenstein



"Well, down I go."



"So close, and yet so far."



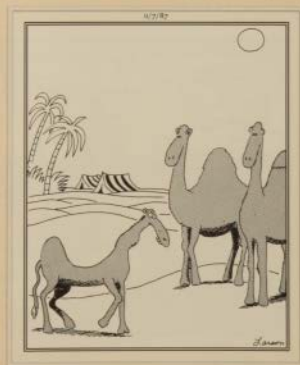
"Speak of the devil."



Edgar Allan Poe in a moment of writer's block



A full moon and an empty head



A camel named Igor



Dear Jason,  
c/o Springfield Newspaper  
851 Woodville  
Mesa, AZ 85204

November 22, 1987

William Glen, Editor  
Globe '87  
c/o Springfield News  
700 East 6th  
Billings, MT 59104

Dear Mr. Editor,

Our class has been looking at your comic strip the Fox Club. We would like to know how you got the names of the major appliances in the November 1987 cartoon.

We would appreciate it if you could let us in on the inside. Thank you for your time.

**Jenny Holman**

Jessica  
Cari Taylor  
Teresa Thompson  
Michael Peterson  
Jaye Howell  
Andy Robinson  
Melissa Wilson  
Craig Johnson  
Betha Hurdick

Thank you,  
Mrs. Jack Green  
5-4 grade

**Mrs. Tackhert**

Deandra Owens  
Tara Cummings  
James Stearns  
John Vargo  
Tina Hargrett  
Lisa Neale  
Amy Shetty  
Brenda Erickson

**UNIVERSAL  
HOUSE  
WINDMATE**

Dear Mrs. Murie and Class:

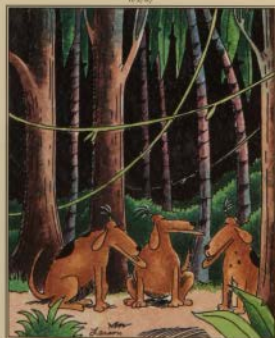
We are in receipt of your recent letters to Gary Larson asking about his cartoon Fox Club, Nov. 1.

Gary's cartoon was a parody of those puzzles that are full of hidden pictures. His cartoon had such cleverly hidden objects (hidden appliances in it), and such an outrageous sound (12), that it was not meant to be taken seriously.

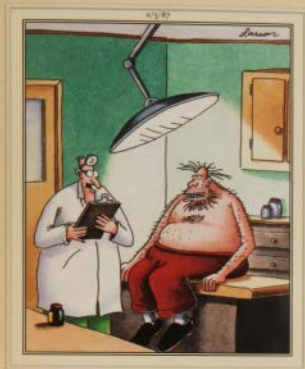
I hope this explanation is of some use to you.

Sincerely,

**John Alvarado**  
John Alvarado  
Executive Editor



The big-lipped dogs of the equatorial rain forest



"Well, Mr. Rosenberg, your lab results look pretty good—although I might suggest your testosterone level is a tad high."



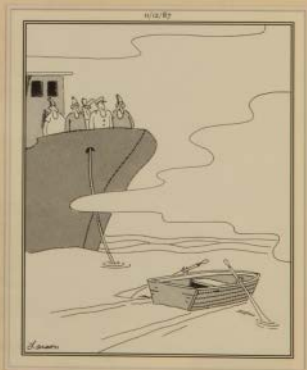




Through some unfortunate celestial error, Ernie is sent to Hog Heaven.



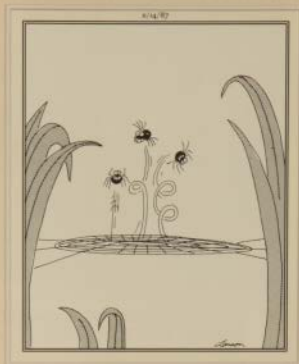
"Fellow octopi, or octopuses ... octopi? ... Dang, it's hard to start a speech with this crowd."



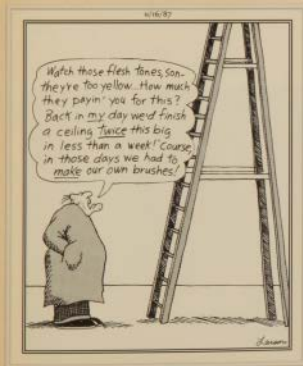
At first, the crew could hear only the creaking of oars. And then, out of the fog, the terrifying ghost dinghy appeared.



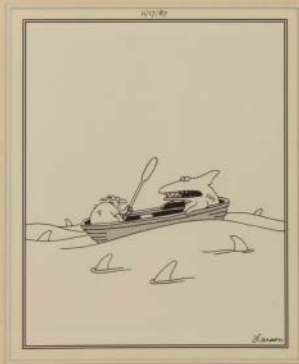
Bernie's sense of humor was seldom appreciated among the other bears.



On the weboline



Michelangelo's father



"Okay. I'll go back and tell my people that you're staying in the boat, but I warn you, they're not going to like it."



Suddenly, Jake started barking and, as a result, both he and Billy ended up sharing a small but interesting diorama in the Venutian Natural History Museum.



Fruitcases



"Good heavens, Mr. Farley, is that the end of someone's nose I see down there?"



The Etch A Sketch division at work.



Houdini escapes from a black hole.



In the Fly House of Horrors



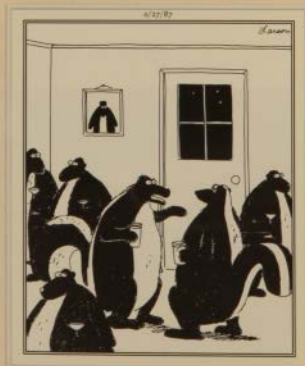
"Uh-oh, Vern! The Schumachers are in the tree again. We'll have to spray."



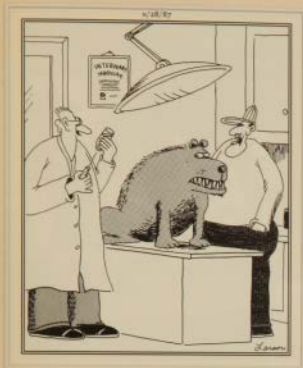
How fishermen blow their minds



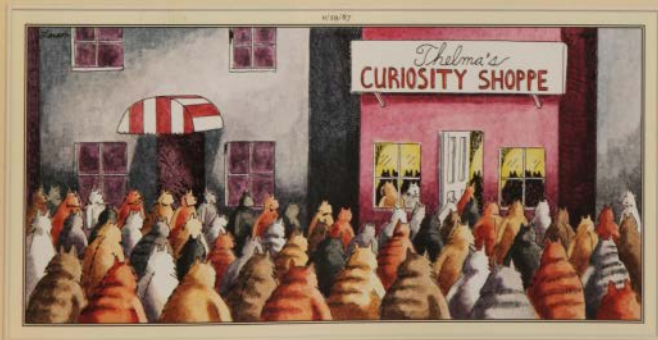
"Andy! Look what you're doing to your fork! ... Tuna salad doesn't require seven tons of pressure per square inch!"



"Oh, yeah? Well you don't stink! You never did and you never will, you mama's little rose!"



"Whoa! Is that a needle, Doc? 'Cause Zack don't like needles."





To Ernie's horror, and the ultimate disaster of all, one more elephant tried to squeeze on.

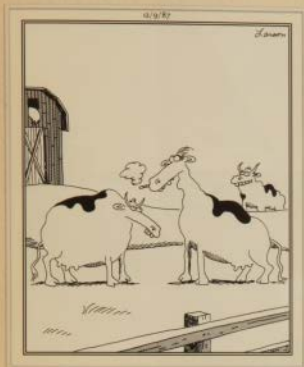


Saloon scenes on other planets



Scene from *Never Cry Cow*





Where beef jerky comes from



Rocking the anthropological world, a second "Lucy" is discovered in southern Uganda.



"Oh my God! It's from Connie! She's written me a 'John deer' letter!"



"That's a lie, Morty! ... Mom says you might have got the brains in the family, but I got the looks!"





Through a gross navigational error, the *Love Boat* steams into the Strait of Hormuz.



"Well, look who's excited to see you back from being declawed."



Jazz at the Wool Club

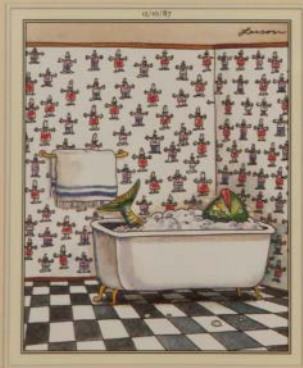




As a young colt, Mr. Ed was often sent to the hall for speaking out of turn.



Primitive mood music



Runaway trains



"I don't know what to tell you, Mr. Miller, but something has definitely gone awry with your workout program."



"Now relax. ... Just like last week, I'm going to hold the red cape up for the count of 10. ... When you start getting angry, I'll put it down."



"Oh my God! It's Leonard! ... He stuffed himself!"

12/21/87



"What the? ... This is lemonade! Where's my culture of amoebic dysentery?"

Newsey, Long Island, N.Y., 1/15/88

### Larsen Goes Too Far

Gary Larsen's comic strip "The Far Side" of Dec. 21 was very disturbing to me. By nature of his own work, Larsen's comics are abstract and rather obtuse at times but this one was too close to home. To depict medical laboratory personnel as haphazard, dangerous buffoons is at least a low blow to the hundreds of dedicated laboratory personnel working in the New York area. The comic shows three men working in a medical laboratory and one "scientist" eating lunch alongside his colleagues. (Eating in the laboratory is strictly prohibited.) As the diner is taking a drink from a glass, one of the others holds up a glass, saying "What the . . . ? This is lemonade! Where's my culture of amoebic dysentery?"

It is possible this sort of humor could entertain patrons in the pages of *Mad* magazine, but not a paper read by as many people as *Newsey* is. Larsen has gone a little too far into his "Far Side" world and I am afraid *Newsey* has not gone far enough to see that this sort of incredible satire does not present itself in *Newsey*.

Scott R. Mayuga  
Brentwood

*Editor's Note: The writer is a medical laboratory technologist and a member of the American Society of Clinical Pathologists.*

12/24/87



"We're in trouble."

12/23/87



12/25/87



"Egad! It's Professor DeArmond—the epitome of evil amongst butterfly collectors!"

12/29/87



Darwin reaches the Galápagos

12/28/87



Eskimo restaurants

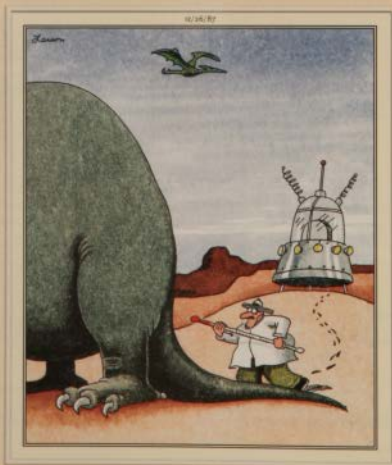
12/31/87



Scientific meat markets



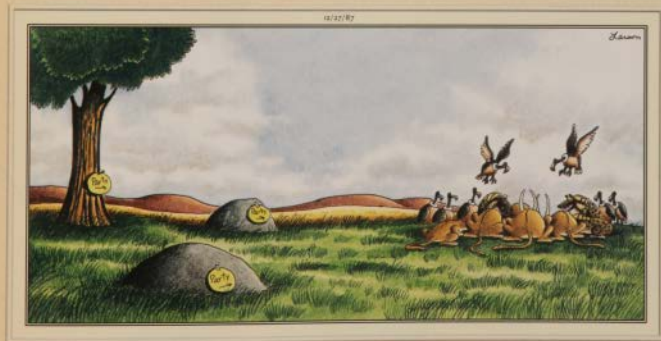
Temple of the Cods



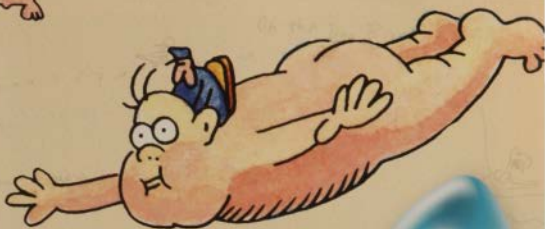
An instant later, both Professor Waxman and his time machine are obliterated, leaving the cold-blooded/warm-blooded dinosaur debate still unresolved.



"You want me to stop the car, Larry, or do you want to take your brother off the rack this instant?"







19



Larson



## The Good Wetch

Gladys Wetch was a neighbor of ours when I was a kid. (Does everyone have a neighbor named Gladys?) She was an older woman, short and stout, with a foreign accent whose origin eludes me now. She and her husband lived in a small gray house, kitty-corner to our own. If they had kids, the kids must have been older or something because I don't remember them. In fact, I was never once in the Wetches' house. The place just always seemed "apart" from everything else. But Gladys Wetch, herself, made a big impression on me when I was very young.

Mrs. Wetch was a frequent baby-sitter for my brother and me. (My parents both worked.) We had other baby-sitters over the years, but over time my brother, Dan, drove most of them away. (He was quite professional in that area.) The other sitters were all rather normal women, sort of like variations on Opie's Aunt Bee. They'd make us lunch, sometimes bake cookies, maybe clean the house, and essentially try to keep both themselves and the Larson boys alive for the few hours until my parents got home.

But Gladys Wetch was different. Gladys Wetch had a handle on Dan and me. She didn't bake cookies or clean the house. What she did was tell us stories. And I'm not talking about Mother Goose-type stories. Mrs. Wetch's specialty was the horror story. More specifically, her stories were the detailed retellings of the movies she had seen on *Nightmare Theater*, the local scare-the-hell-out-of-you show that aired on channel 13 every Friday night—exactly at midnight, of course.

So here's how it played out for some time: On weekends, I learned about Brer Rabbit, the Little Engine Who Could, and Mr. Toad from my mom. On weekdays, from Gladys Wetch, I learned all about Dracula, Frankenstein, werewolves, the Mummy, and the Creature from the Black Lagoon. I think it was a pretty balanced childhood. I especially remember Mrs. Wetch telling us about Rodan, this giant flying lizard creature. (A pterodactyl, I surmised years later.)

I used to think about Rodan a lot. Maybe it's because nothing could be more scary in my mind than a giant lizard-creature whose name sort of sounded like my brother's. And the story of Rodan is being told to me by a woman whose name, as you may have noticed, is one letter removed from "witch." Lots of buttons being pushed here.

But I also remember her vivid description of Dracula, and how he could change into a fog, flow under a bedroom door, and then re-form into his usual, undead body. I stuffed clothes under my door for a while after that, oblivious to the flaw that my door had no lock; Dracula could've just walked in, sucked my blood, and left. But if he *had* decided to go fog on me, my clothes barricade was in place, and I had Mrs. Wetch to thank for that.

The thing is, Gladys Wetch was our favorite baby-sitter.

And then one day something happened. I think my mom somehow found out about Mrs. Wetch and the things she was telling us, and I believe she and my mom must have had a "conversation." Anyway, I don't remember Mrs. Wetch coming around anymore. More recently, in writing this little essay, I asked my mom what she remembered about the woman. My mom suddenly seemed a little anxious. "Oh, she told you boys very strange stories! And once she even threatened to throw you both in the fireplace!" There was a pause, and then she quickly added, "But she meant it in a nice way, I'm sure."

I honestly don't remember the fireplace episode. But boy, do I remember those stories.

Yeah, Gladys Wetch was cool. She's passed on, no doubt, but believe me, she still haunts these pages. In a nice way, I'm sure.



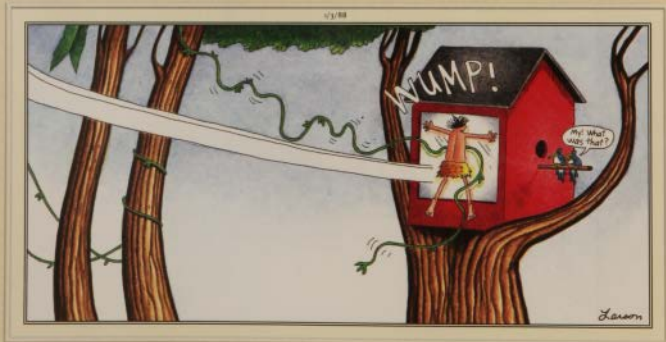
"Now let me get this straight: ... We hired you to babysit the kids, and instead you cooked and ate them both!"



Daddy long-leg jerks



"All right! Hand me the tongs, Frank. ... We got us a big den of rattlers here."





"Clean it up? Clean it up? Crimony, it's supposed to be a rathole!"



"Mind? Hey, buddy, these flat feet kept me out of the Army!"



"Anytime, Slim."



Although Edgar discreetly tried to hide his ailment, his friends still noticed his humantiasis.



The Squid family on vacation

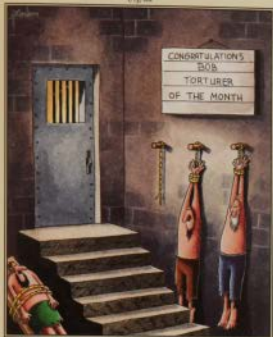


"Well, I'm not sure. ... I guess it's been washed."



Dial-a-Cat

1/11/88



The Des Moines Register, Des Moines, Iowa, 2/9/88

## A blot on the conscience of mankind

**I** AM WRITING to express my admiration at the "Far Side" cartoon that offers congratulations to Bob, the "Torturer of the Month." Using torture as the subject of humor is, in my view, the least offensive to me. Perhaps the authors of that cartoon believe that torture is something so far removed from today's world that we can afford to laugh at it. If the author of the cartoon believes that, you are ill-informed.

Torture is practiced today, according to Amnesty International, by one out of every three governments. As I write this letter, I am aware that in numerous places, people are being beaten, burned, having limbs amputated, and through much starvation, sexually abused, and, as depicted in the cartoon, being by their wrists for long periods of time. How can this be considered as the subject of humor?

Torture is not a laughing matter. It is a blot on the conscience of mankind that must be eradicated, not laughed at. The cartoon has done nothing to educate people about this evil, or to arouse people to work to stop torture and other violations of human rights.

The torturers of the world would like people to believe that the torture victims do not exist and that their crimes are so far removed from reality that the very concept can be the subject of funny little cartoons. In the meantime, their victims suffer in darkness and isolation.

Ignorance and silence are the torturer's best friends. — Michael L. Moskine

1/12/88



"Okay, you've passed the fire test, the riding test, and the combat test ... but now, paleface, now you must say 'toy boat' three times real fast!"

1/8/88



"Mom! The kids at school say we're a family of Nerdenthals! ... Is that true?"





Suddenly, in the middle of the flock,  
the cook is geosed.



Early wheel gangs



The Bluebird of Happiness long absent from his life, Ned is visited by the Chicken of Depression.



"Nope, I can't do it either. ... Dusty! Can you make an 'O' with your lips?"



"Now remember, Cory, show us that you can take good care of these little fellows and maybe next year we'll get you that puppy."



Humpty Dumpty's final days



Monster jobs



"Well, this may not be wise on a first date, but I just gotta try your garlic wharf rats."



June 2, 1952: Naturalists discover the Secret Chipmunk Burial Grounds.



"The wench, you idiot! Bring me the wench!"



Embarrassing moments at gene parties





When car chasers dream

**The  
Pantagraph**

By Bob  
Illustrated by  
THU, 12, 1988

Robert Duffy  
Vice President/  
National Sales Director  
International Press Syndicate  
4800 Main St.  
Arling, MD, 21011

Dear Bob:

Today, for the second time in less than a week, I feel like I got kicked in the back, specifically by Larson's Far Side.

Could you do something that we have routinely looked through a editorial screen.

We can no longer do that with Larson. Effective today, all the other cartoons will be run through an editor. What a waste of time and talent because Larson seems to have forgotten that good takes to him are important as good returns and able readers to a fairly magazine.

We thought the Far Side comic because we either supposed to be going by the comic page and the dog on the farmland and still usual overtones. We had our artists take care of that and striped it off at one of those things open to investigation. However, today's cartoon of a child on a horse is the same as the scale of the Far Side cartoon to figure.

We're not talking necessarily of representation.

We're talking about not possibly offending readers.

The best work could be an something not 10-day

i.e. editorial office.

I am not trying to make relations now checking to

reject and question time on the telephone with your

readers.

I am a fan of Larson's work, but I don't need any

more suggestions.

Sincerely,

Bill Hooper  
Marketing Director

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**UNIVERSAL  
WINGS  
WINGWALKER**

By Bob

In pantograph, we should have altered the art on the farmland of 1988. For the 1988 cartoon day, Larson, we had editors here, and we would not have put the cartoon down in an issue, or a fan of a cartoon day, but not an any decision to "continue" without readers.

As for the editor-in-chief, we thought it was funny and I will not, figure out who wrote the cartoon. Larson's humor is always and unpredictable. But not guaranteed.

In other case, if we had thought, maybe would better later, we would not have approached the cartoon in question.

Best regards,

Sincerely,  
Earl Stone  
Marketing Director

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"Oh, my gosh! Linda! Linda! ... I think your Barbie's contemplating suicide!"



"So! Planning on roaming the neighborhood with some of your buddies today?"



Hibernating Eskimos



Circa 300 B.C.: The first barbarian invader reaches the Great Wall of China.



Early kazoo bands



"Saaaaaaay ... *this* doesn't look spoiled."



"Again? Why is it that the revolution always gets this far and then everyone just chickens out?"



The matador's nightmare



Out there, ominously moving toward its destiny, was a truck with Reuben's name on it.



"For crying out loud, Igor! First there's that screw-up with the wrong brain business, and now you've let his head go through the wash in your pants pocket!"



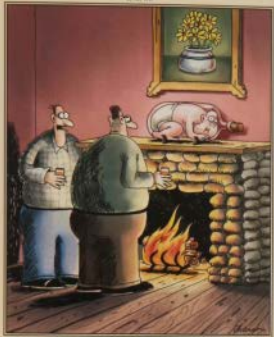


When ornithologists are mutually attracted



"Ah, yes, Mr. Frischberg, I thought you'd come ... but which of us is the *real* duck, Mr. Frischberg, and not just an illusion?"

2/12/88



"Beats me how they did it ... I got the whole thing at a garage sale for five bucks—and that included the stand."

The Florida Times-Union, Jacksonville, Fla., 2/21/88

Gary Larson's Far Side goes too far this time

The Times-Union is a better newspaper than to be associated with Gary Larson and his Far Side must I've had enough! This is a letter of protest! I read the Times-Union every morning and agree the Far Side because I find it very distasteful and scolding. However, on Feb. 12, it caught my eye and it totally disgusted me.

Larson, in his sick art, depicted a "jerked" or "yesserved" child in a basket on display on a fireplace mantel as a conversation piece! How utterly revolting! Larson's expression of himself as dehumanizing, demoralizing and scolding, I am offended, not only for myself and children, but for all the other decent folk out there who patronize the Times-Union and don't have the time to

let the newspaper know how they feel! Unfortunately, there are too many sick minds in this world. None of us are perfect for we all fall short of the glory of God. But Larson, in showing us all the inside of his mind by concentrating to the world his Far Side material.

If Larson must earn a living by selling his material, I suggest that he peddle it elsewhere. There are plenty of junk publications that his material would appeal to. Does the Times-Union really need it? It is a quality publication, I hope it is kept that way for everyone's sake.

DENNIS BARNDSCH  
Jacksonville Beach

Herald Dispatch, Huntington, W.V.  
2/22/88

Insensitive comic

To the editor:  
"The Far Side" cartoon in The Herald Dispatch on Friday, Feb. 12, was a perfect example of today's growing insensitivity to human life.

The cartoon depicting a man leaning to his friend about his "five bucks" garage sale find. The garage sale purchase happened to be an infant in a milk bottle which the man had placed respectfully on his mantel in his living room. This cartoon was most abusive to children and most distasteful to those who view human life in all forms as sacred and precious.

Children are naturally attracted to the comic. Morally sound lessons should be taught there.

Barry Meekins

2/14/88



Metamorphosis nightclubs



Dinosaur nerds



In the Hall of Fossil Appliances

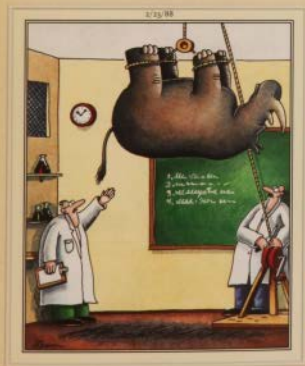


"Hey! You wanna kick me? Go ahead! C'mon, tough guy! Cat got your tongue? Maybe he took your whole brain! ... C'mon! KICK ME!"





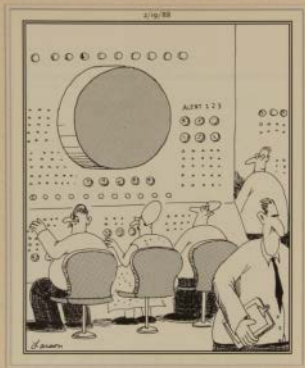
Gargoyle socks



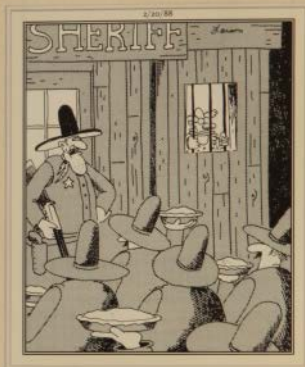
Testing whether or not rhinos land on their feet.



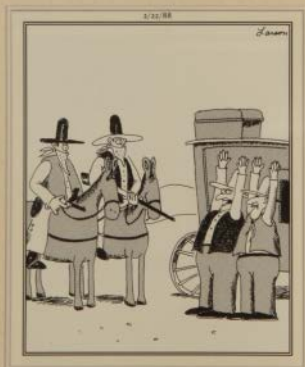
"Well, let's see—so far, I've got rhythm and I've got music. ... Actually, who could ask for anything more?"



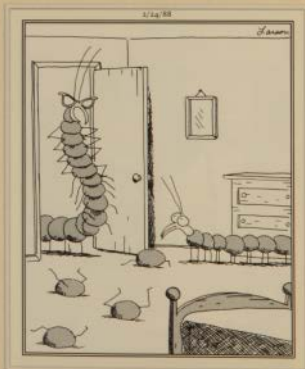
One day, Irwin knew, he was just going to have to push that big button.



"Look, I know you folks are lookin' for revenge—but there'll be no 'pie-for-a-pie' justice in my town!"

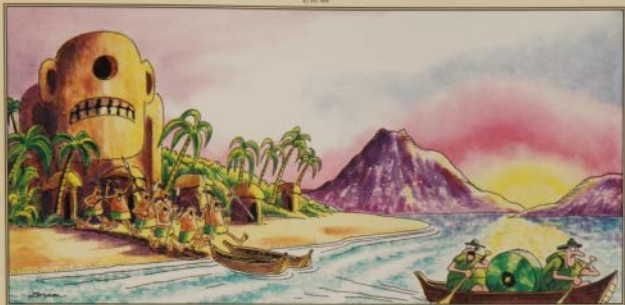


"Dollar to a doughnut it's them Cyclops brothers again."



"Just look at this room—body segments everywhere!"

2/21/88



In the quiet of the early dawn, before the village had awakened, Frank and Vern removed the fire god's emerald eye and fled the island—not calculating how soon the inhabitants would notice their defiled temple.

2/22/88



"Wow! Now Ed and Carl are gone. ... Seems like lately we've been dropping like ourselves."

2/22/88



"I'm serious this time, Norton. ... Get the theme from *Mr. Ed* out of your system or I'll kill you as you sleep!"



Romeo and Juliet



Hominid reconstructions



"Green blood? I hate green blood."



"No, wait! *That's* not Uncle Floyd! Who is that? ...  
Crimony, I think it's just an air bubble!"



Although troubled as a child, Zorro, as is well known, ultimately found his niche in history.



Elephant peer pressure





"Sure, I'm a creature—and I can accept that ... but lately it seems I've been turning into a miserable creature."



At the popular dog film *Man Throwing Sticks*





"Listen, Mom ... I just wanted you to know I'm okay. The stampede seems about over—although everyone's still a little spooked. Yeah, I know ... I miss the corral."



Like moths to a light, the neighborhood dogs were all drawn by Emile's uncontrollable fear.



"Hold it right there, Henry! ... You ain't plannin' on takin' that wrinkled horse into town, are you?"



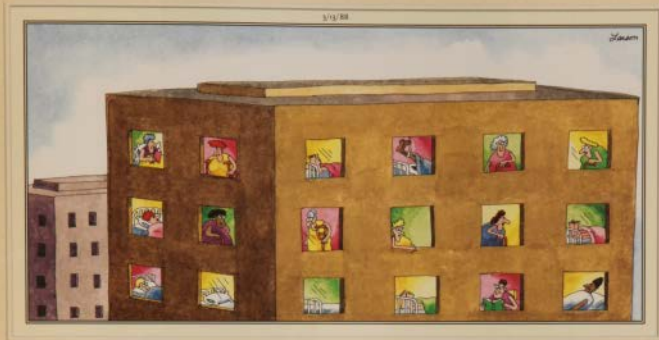
"Bob and Ruth! Come on in. ... Have you met Russell and Bill, our 1.5 children?"



Secret tools of the common crow



Whale dust baths



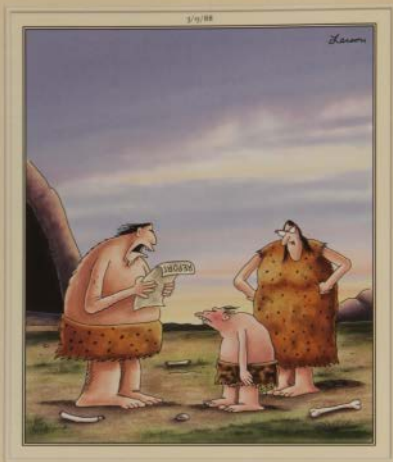
At the hospital for mothers whose children stepped on sidewalk cracks



Bird cellars



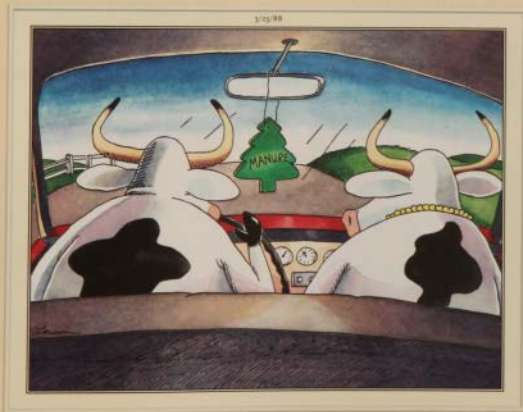
Deer vandals



"Oh, look, this get better ... 'F' in history!  
You even flunk something not happen yet?"



"Ernie! Look what you're doing—take those shoes off this instant!"





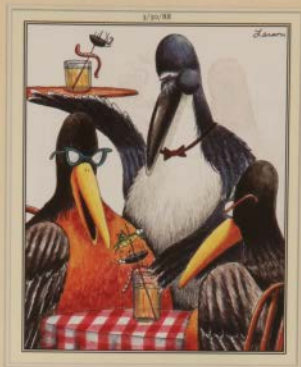
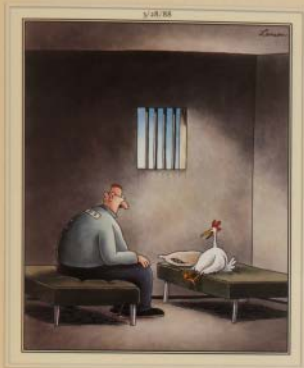
Dog heaven



"Man, Larry, I don't know if we're up to this. ...  
I mean, this guy's got kneecaps from hell."



"Johnson, back off! It's an *Armandia lidderdalii*,  
all right—but it's rabid!"



"Oh, my! Aren't these fancy drinks!"

"So then, when Old MacDonald turned his back,  
I took that ax and with a whack whack here and  
a whack whack there, I finished him off."







Cartoon readings



"Okay, here it is—I'm sick of your face, Ned."



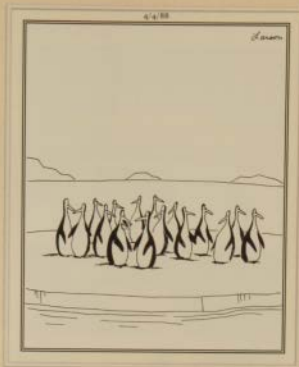
Amidst congratulatory applause, Cindy leaves the group.



Planaria sports



"Well, she's at it again ... that no-good nestwrecker."



"Well, that's an interesting bit of trivia—I guess I do only dream in black and white."



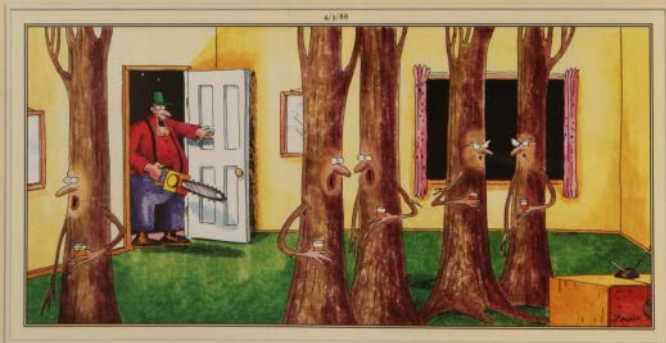
"You moron! From a hundred yards back I was screaming, 'Hellhole! Hellhole!'"



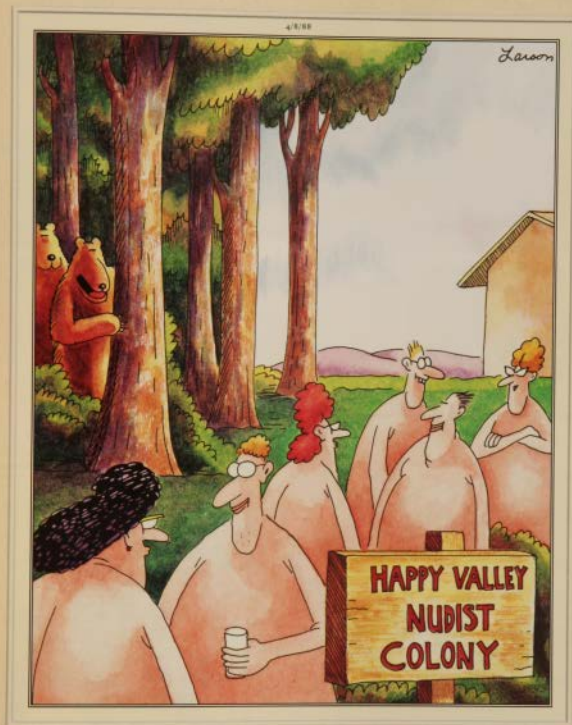
Professor Feldman, traveling back in time, gradually succumbs to the early stages of nonculture shock.



"For God's sake, hurry, driver! ... She's dropping babies all over the place!"



Nightmare on Oak Street



"Well, there goes my appetite."



Humpty's final resting place



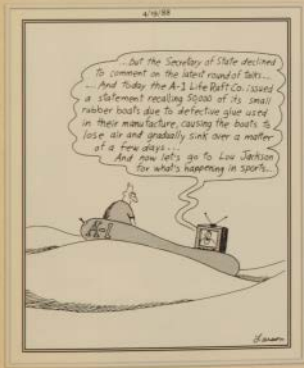
Mankind arrives on Earth



"Look—I never would have married him in the first place, but the jerk used a cattle prod."



Seconds before his ax fell, Farmer Dale suddenly noticed the chicken's tattoo—the tattoo that marked them both as brothers of an ancient Tibetan order sworn to loyalty and mutual aid.

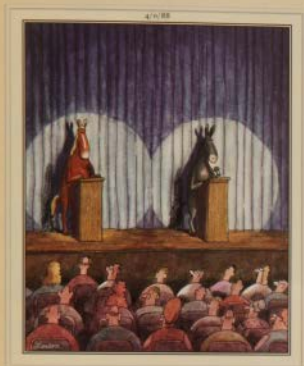




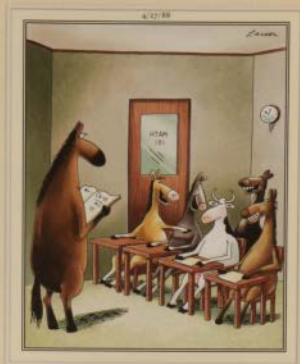
The townsfolk all stopped and stared; they didn't know the tall stranger who rode calmly through their midst, but they did know the reign of terror had ended.



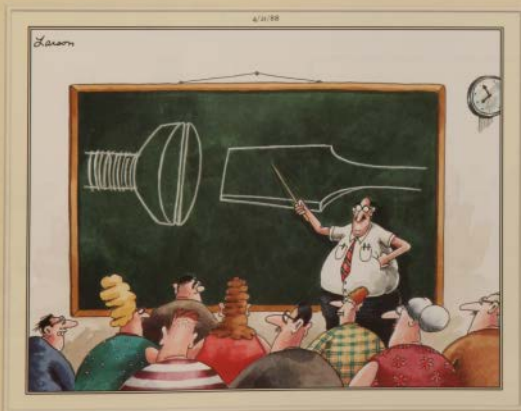
Moses as a kid



The famous "Mr. Ed vs. Francis the Talking Mule" debates

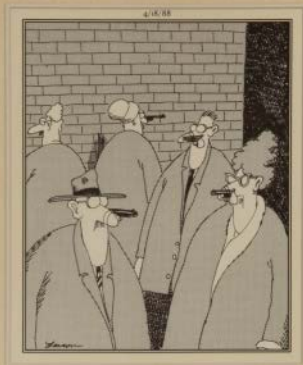


Her answer off by miles, Sheila's "cow sense" was always a target of ridicule.



School for the mechanically declined





The tragic proliferation of nose guns



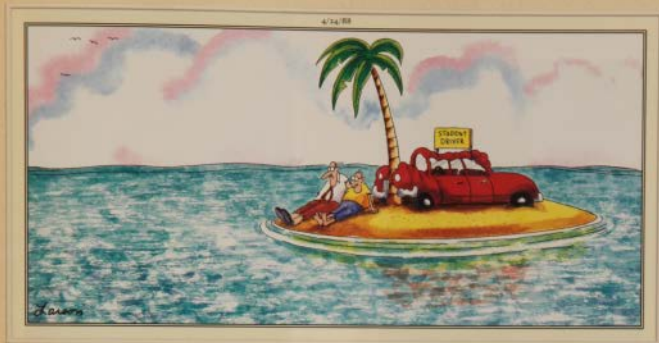
Scene from *Bring 'Em Back Preserved*



Animal joke gifts



"You know, it was just supposed to be a way to trick this little girl ... but off and on, I've been dressing up as a grandmother ever since."



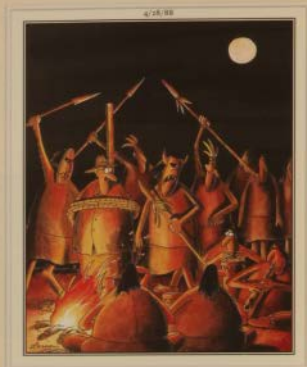
Times and places never to insert  
your contact lens



"Frankly, you've got a lot of anger toward  
the world to work out, Mr. Pembrose."



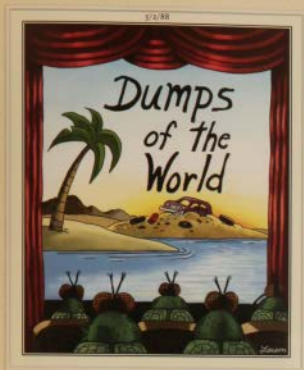
"Say, Will—why don't you pull that thing out and play us a tune?"



Suddenly, throwing the festivities into utter confusion, Ujang begins to play "Stardust."



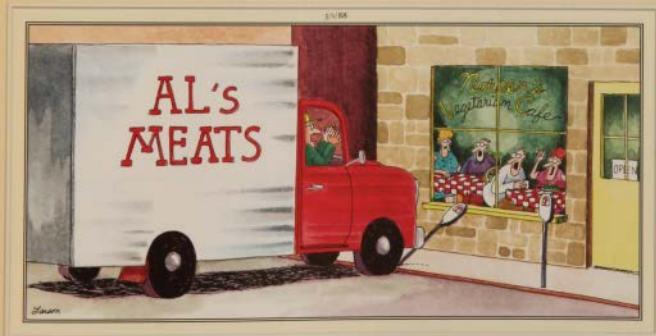
At the Vincent van Gogh School of Art

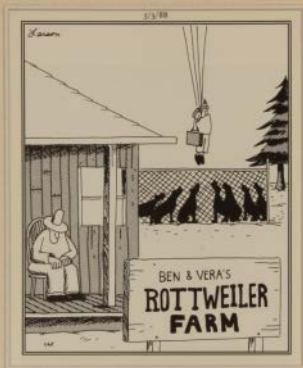


Fly travelogues



The Lone Ranger, long since retired, makes an unpleasant discovery.





The untold ending of D. B. Cooper



"Our people are positioned on every street corner, commander. ... Shall we commence with our plan to gradually eliminate these creatures?"



Aladdin's lamp, end table, and sofa



The rural professional and his cowphone



"Now go to sleep, Kevin—or once again I'll have to knock three times and summon the Floating Head of Death."



Primitive think tanks

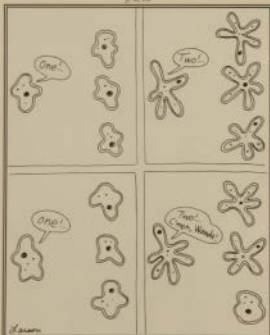


"And one final warning before we begin the exam—any stray eyeballs will be immediately thumped."

5/8/88



5/9/88

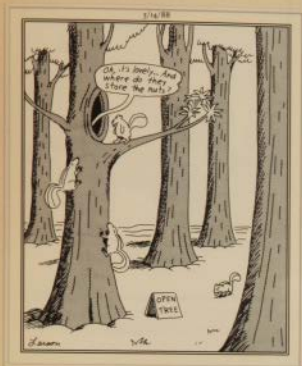


Amoeba aerobics

5/9/88



Primitive fraternities



When Irish setters go to work



Cow tourists



5/19/88



"No more flies, Arnold, until you've eaten some of your fertilizer."

5/21/88



"So! ... Let's do this again real soon."

5/23/88



5/24/88



At the Old Cartoonists' Home



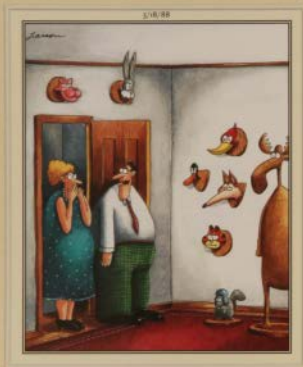
"Mom! Randy sneezed poison all over my rat!"



Fruitcakes of the World



"Look, Sid! Another snowball! ... I tell you, this place is slipping."



"Oh, for heaven's sake, Miss Carlisle! ...  
They're only cartoon animals!"



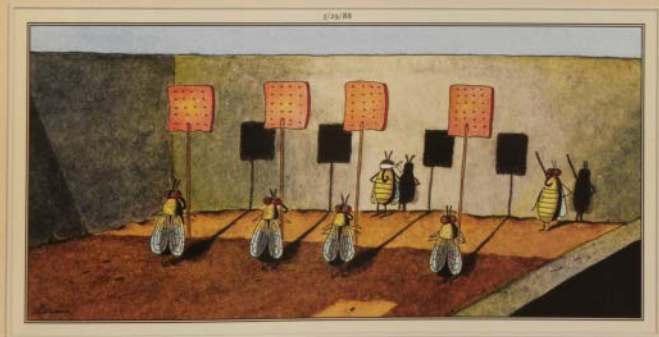
Although skilled with their pillow arsenal, the Wimpodites were favorite targets of Viking attacks.



"Now open even wider, Mr. Stevens. ... Just out of curiosity, we're going to see if we can also cram in this tennis ball."

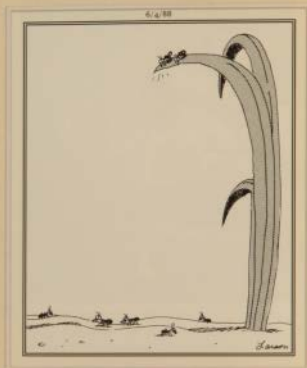


Cowmen Miranda





Suddenly, through forces not yet fully understood, Darren Belsky's apartment became the center of a new black hole.



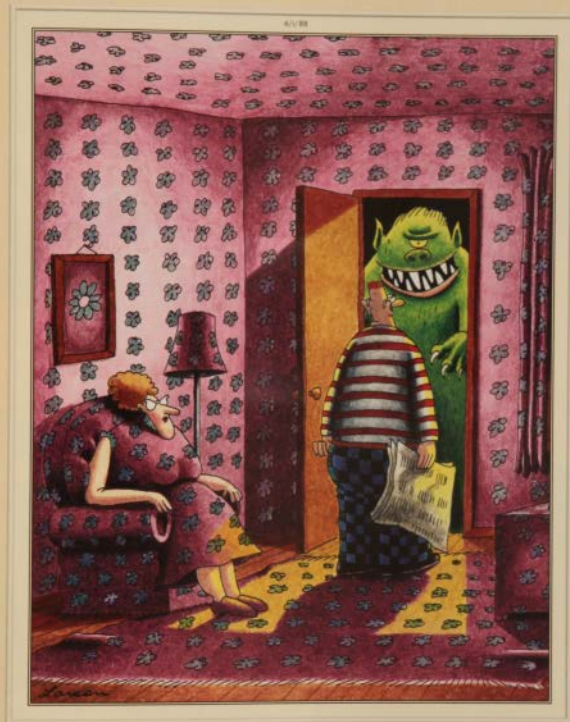
"Man, from way up here, we really look like ants."



The last cilium on a smoker's lung



Babette's Botulism: The Sequel



When the monster came, Lola, like the peppered moth and the arctic hare, remained motionless and undetected. Harold, of course, was immediately devoured.

6/3/88



6.6.88



Hummingbirds on vacation

6/3/88



Becoming a rogue in his later years, Dumbo terrorized the world's flyways.







Mountain families



"Dang! ... That cowhawk's back."



"I'm coming! I'm coming! ... Keep your skin on!"

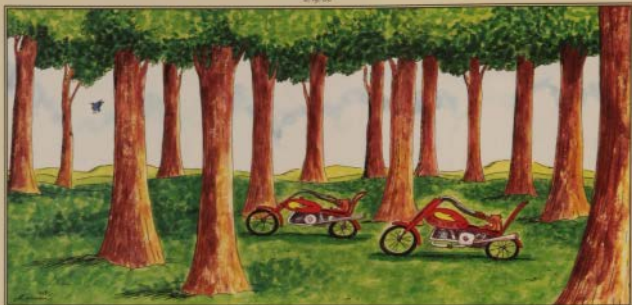


"First of all, this is going straight back—and I'll just have a little chat with whoever placed the order."



"Hey, I'm not crazy. ... Sure, I let him drive once in a while, but he's never, never off this leash for even a second."

6/19/88



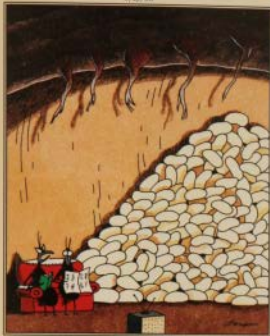
Hell's Chipmunks

6/22/88



"Bobby, please jiggle Grandpa's rat so it looks alive."

6/22/88



"You know, Vern ... the thought of what this place is gonna look like in about a week just creeps me out."

6/28/88



"I don't know if this is such a wise thing to do, George."

6/28/88



Historical note: According to some researchers, the final signer of the Declaration of Independence would have been Iggy Fenton if the pen hadn't suddenly gone dry.



Life in the primordial soup



"Somethin' dead in the road up ahead. ... Is that a cat? Too dang big for a cat. ... Calf, maybe. ... Sure do look like a cat, though."





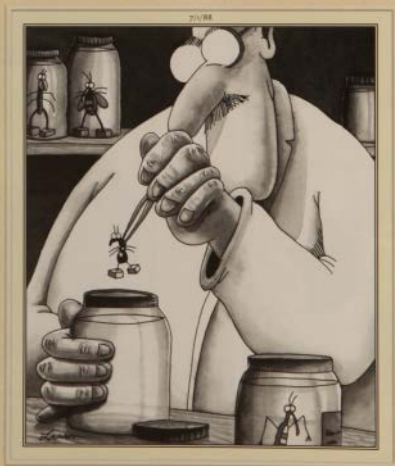
What really happened to Elvis



Folks came from miles around to see the Herringtons' ink smudge.



"Wait, you idiot! Let me first get rid of these exoskeletons!"





Tethercat

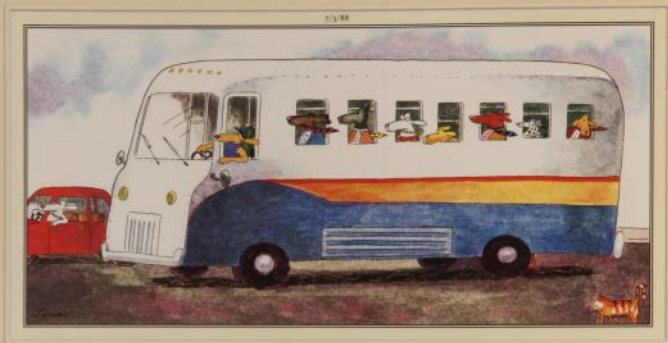


"Offensive foul? Offensive foul? Are you crazy? ...  
He was moving!"



Infamous moments in jazz





When dogs go to work



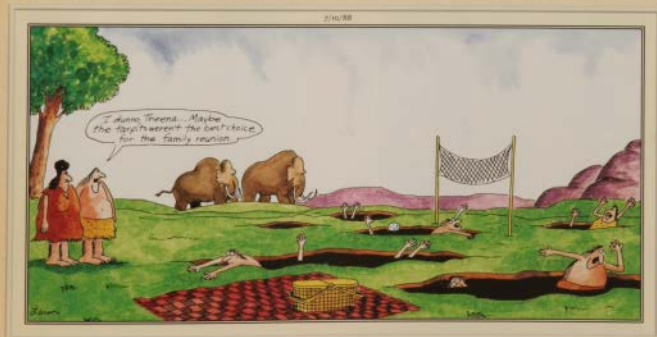
Embedded in Styrofoam "shoes," Carl is sent to "sleep with the humans."



"No, they're not real exciting pets—mostly they just lie around and wait to be fed—although a couple years ago Charles tried teachin' him to take a cookie from his mouth."



Street physicians

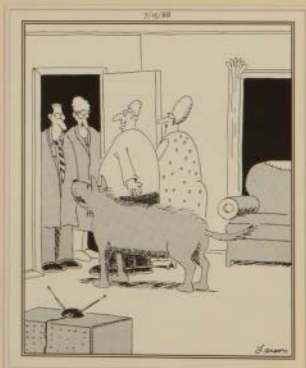




"Pretty cool, Dewey. ... Hey! Shake the jar and see if they'll fight!"



"Listen! Just follow our distress beacon and send some help! ... We're in quadrant 57 of the Milky Way—on a planet called 'Bob's Shoeworld.'"



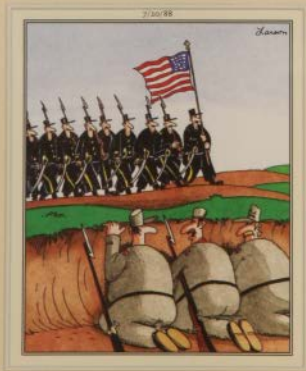
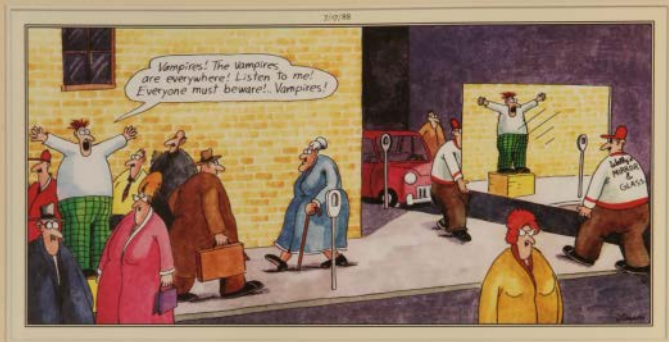
"Hey! Jack and Paula! You made it! ... Now, quickly: Keep one hand across your throat and put the other one confidently down on Bruno's head—stupid dog's going to get Agnes and me into a giant lawsuit one day."



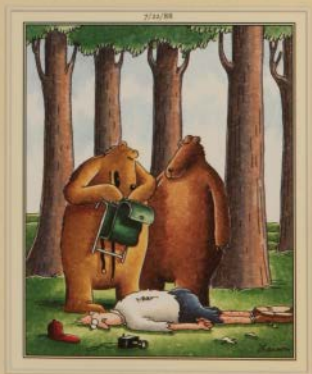
"Yeah? Well, I'll tell you who your friend saw me with—a decoy! That's who!"



"I built the forms around him just yesterday afternoon when he fell asleep, and by early evening I was able to mix and pour."



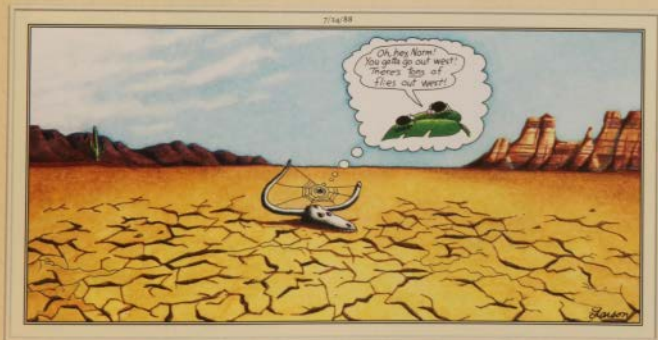
"I wasn't just whistling 'Dixie'! ... Sam, were you just whistling 'Dixie'?"



"I can't believe it! This is impossible! Nothing here but—wait! Wait! I see something! ... Yes! There they are—granola bars!"



"Oh, no! I have several others—Oggy here is just a tad aggressive, so he has to stay in a cage."





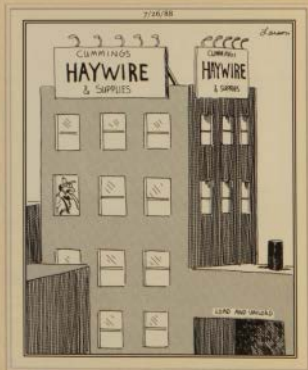
"I didn't say we were setting ducks! I said sitting ducks! ... I know the difference between sitting and setting, you idiot!"



Alien talk shows



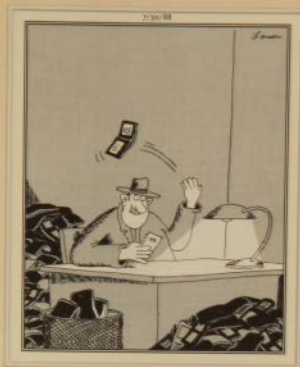
In Amoebae Park



"Mr. Cummings? This is Frank Dunham in Production. ... We've got some problems, Mr. Cummings. Machine No. 5 has jammed, several of the larger spools have gone off track, the generator's blown, and, well, everything seems to be you-know-what."



What sloths do when no one's around



Karl Malden in his basement



Scientists, after releasing her deep in the Antarctic, attempt to unravel the migratory secrets of the homing cow.

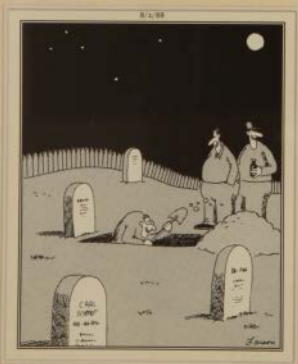




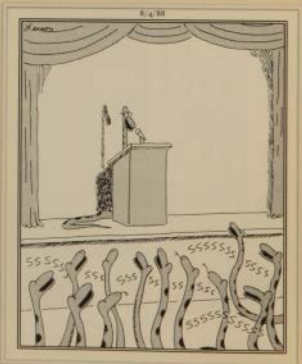
"Just left that baby in your arms a little. ... I guarantee you, whether they're drawn in ink or pencil, that sucker will wipe out any characters that come around."



The Fullertons demonstrate Sidney's trick knee.



Convinced by his buddies that in actual fact they were only grave "borrowing," a young Igor starts on his road to crime.



"Why, thank you. ... Thank you very much!"



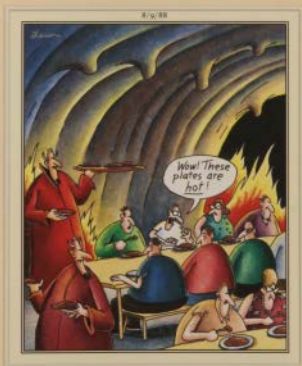
The plankton lobby



Practicing his skills wherever possible, Zorro's younger and less astute brother, Gomez, had a similar career cut short.



"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaa! Earl! ... We've got a poultrygeist!"



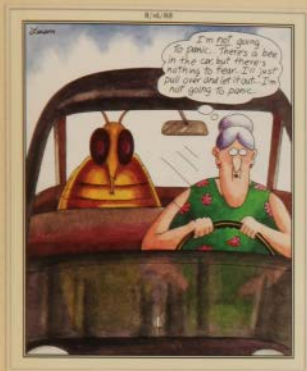
Hell's cafeteria



"Well, we've done everything we can; now we can only wait and see if she pulls through. ... If she doesn't, however, I got dibs on this porterhouse right here."



Why people named Buddy hate to drive



Suddenly, Dr. Morrissey's own creation, a hideous creature nine feet tall and bearing the heads of the Brady Bunch, turns against him.



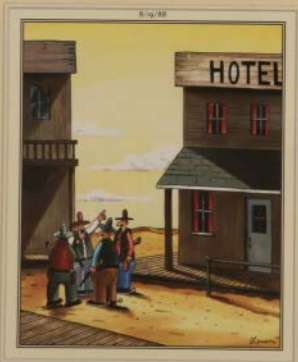
Animal waste management



The 25th annual "Part of the Problem" convention



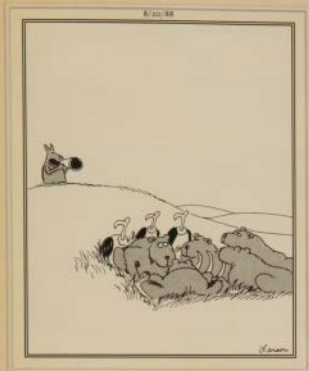
"What? You're just going to throw the tail away? ... Why, in my day, we used every gol dang part of a mammoth!"



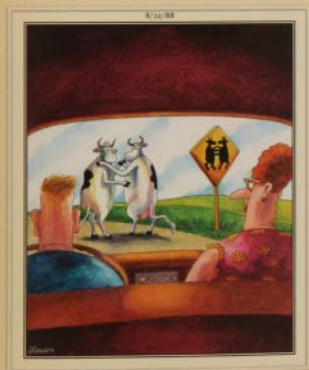
"Roy, you get up on the hotel roof there. And for godsakes, if you *are* plugged, don't just slump over and die—put some drama into it and throw yourself screaming from the edge."



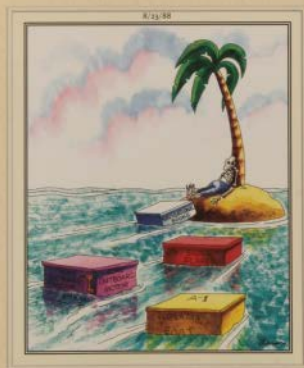
"So! Mr. Carlisle was right! ... I put you on a short leash so you can't harass him anymore, and look what you resort to!"



"Yo! Everyone down there! This is the jackal! I'm tired of slinking around the perimeter! ... I'm coming down to the kill! ... Is that gonna be cool with everyone? ... I don't want trouble!"



"Careful, Lyle! ... Cattle dancers!"





Door ding gnomes at work



"Oh, great—it's some of your relatives, David. ... You know, it's ironic that even we lice have parasites."



"Okay, when I say 'draw,' we draw. ... Ready? ... One, two, three—STRAW! ... Okay, just checkin' your ears. ... One, two, three—CLAW! ... Okay, DRAWbridge! ..."

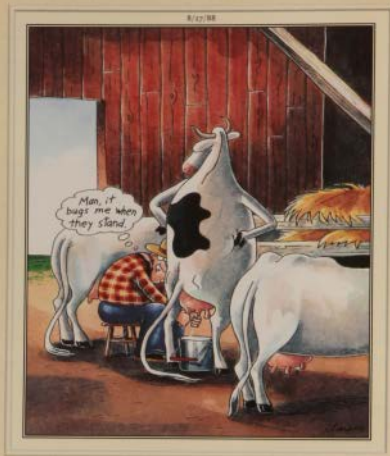


Scene from *Return of the Nose of Dr. Verlucci*

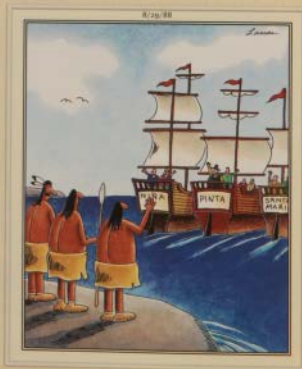


Dwayne paused. As usual, the forest was full of happy little animals—but this time, they just seemed *too* happy.

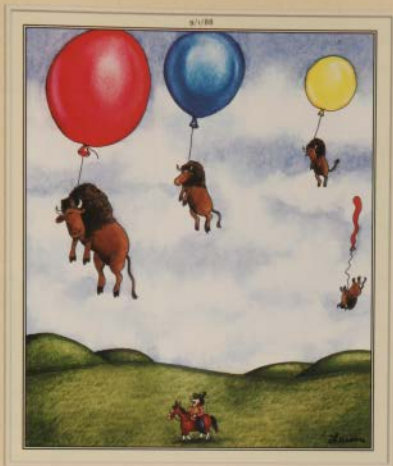




"Wait a minute! ... McCallister, you fool!  
This isn't what I said to bring!"



"Did you detect something a little ominous  
in the way they said, 'See you later?'"



**MORE FACTS OF NATURE:** As part of nature's way to help spread the species throughout its ecological niche, bison often utilize a behavior naturalists have described as "ballooning."



Splattered with juice and hooting excitedly, Neanderthals carve up their favorite kill, the woolly watermelon.



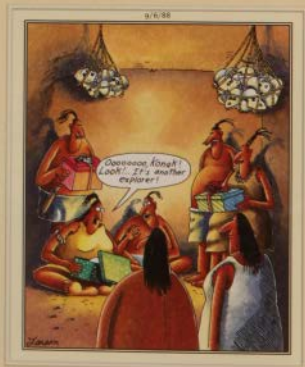
"Hey! What have I told you kids about screwing around in front of that window?"



Coral reef graffiti



"Oooooooweeeeee! This thing's been here a loooooooong time! ... Well, thank God for ketchup."



Headhunter hutwarming

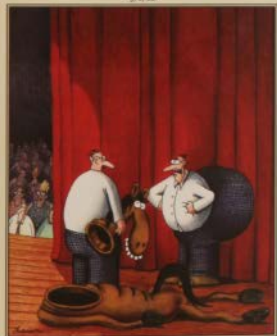
9/7/88



9/10/88

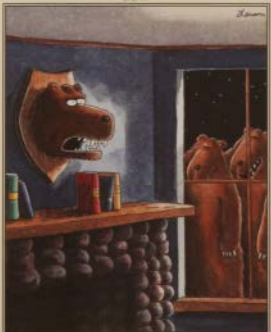


9/8/88



"I tell you I've had it! ... I'm not climbing into that getup one more time until you tell me why I'm always the back end!"

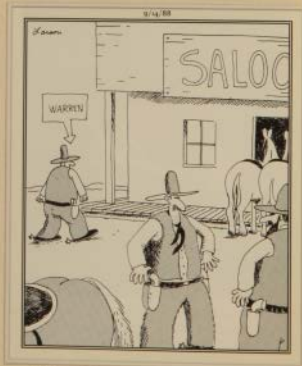
9/9/88



"It's Vinnie, all right. It's his nose, his mouth, his fur ... but his eyes—there's something not quite right about his eyes."



"Well, the Sullivans are out on their tire again."

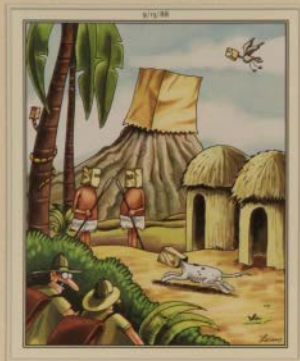


Warren Hagstrom: professional Western movie background street crosser



Ancient exterminators

"Hold it right there, young lady! Before you go out, you take off some of that makeup and wash off that gallon of pheromones!"



"This must be it, Jenkins—the legendary Ugliest Place on Earth."



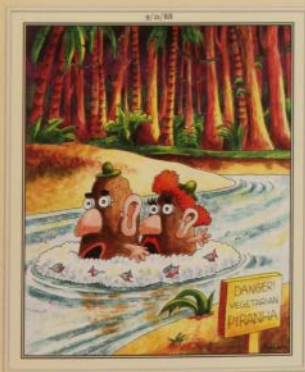
"Oh, good heavens, no, Gladys—not for me. ... I ate my young just an hour ago."



"Drive, Ted! We've stumbled into some cowtown."



"Zorak, you idiot! You've mixed incompatible species in the earth terrarium!"



The Potatoheads in Brazil

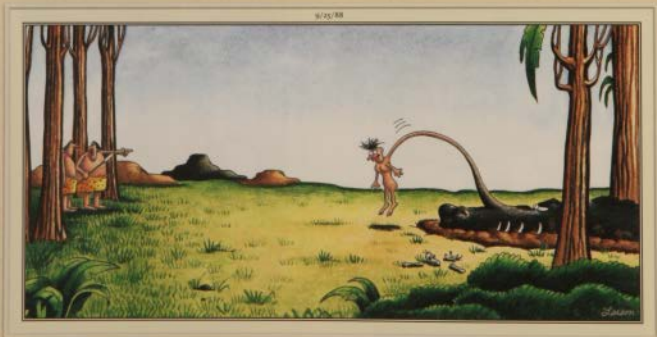


"Good heavens, Bernie! We've got company! ... And you're never going to catch that stupid squirrel anyway!"





Sucker fish at home



Burying itself deep in the mud, the hominideatodon, an evolutionary wonder, would slowly raise and lower its unique appendage in the hope of attracting its favorite prey.



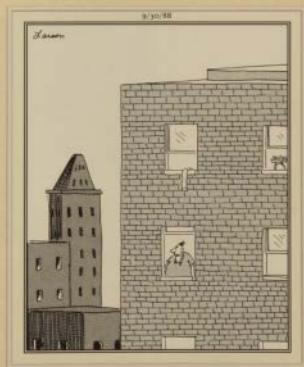
Awkward moments in the ant world



Pygmies on vacation



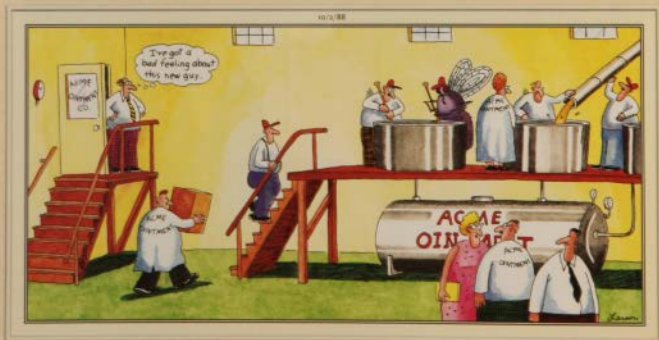
"You and Fred have such a lovely web, Edna—and I love what you've done with those fly wings."

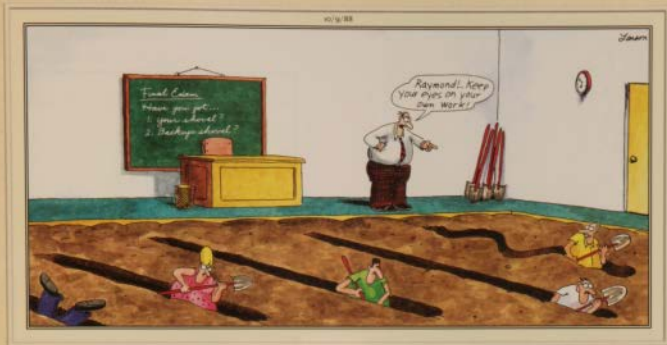


On a clear day, Eugene rose and looked around him and, regrettably, saw who he was.



"Aha! The murderer's footprints! ... 'Course, we all leave tracks like this."





Ditchdiggers School



Frog pioneers



"Hey! Ernie Wagner! I haven't seen you in, what's it been—twenty years? And hey—you've still got that thing growin' outta your head that looks like a Buick!"



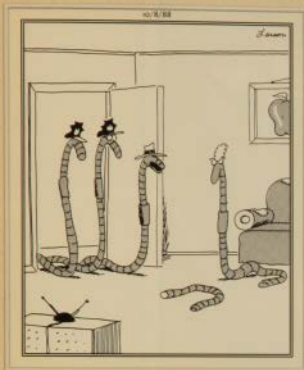
Anatidaephobia: the fear that somewhere, somehow, a duck is watching you.



Construction birds at lunch



Early settlers of Beverly Hills



"We understand your concern, ma'am—but this just isn't enough for us to go on. Now, you find the *other* half of your husband, and then we've got a case."



Scene from the film *Giraffes IV*: This time, they're not just looking for acacia leaves.



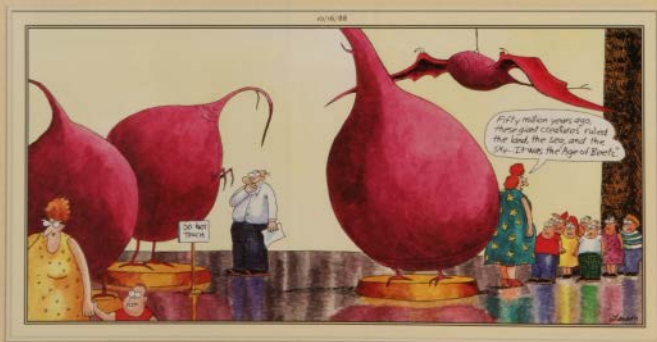
How the human egg is often deceived



"Hey ... Since the kids are in bed, what say we run out and kill ourselves a couple of planteaters."



Pinocchio in his later years



In the Hall of Beets



"Well, thank God we all made it out in time. ...  
'Course, now we're equally screwed."



Dogscapes





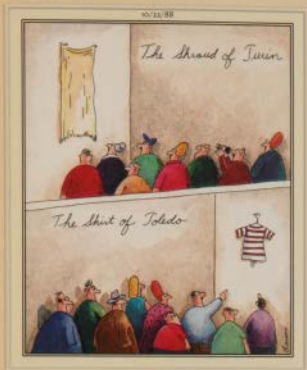
"I'm one of those species they always describe as 'awkward on land.'"



Animal toughs and their hangouts



Non-union wagon masters



"Hey, Bob ... did I scare you or what?"



"So then I says to Borg, 'You know, as long as we're under siege, one of us oughta moon these Saxon dogs.'"



In the hallway of the Old Cartoonists' Home



"Man, this is ugly—sheep and cattle never do mix well."



Mobile hobbyists



Bombardier beetles at home



The crepes of wrath



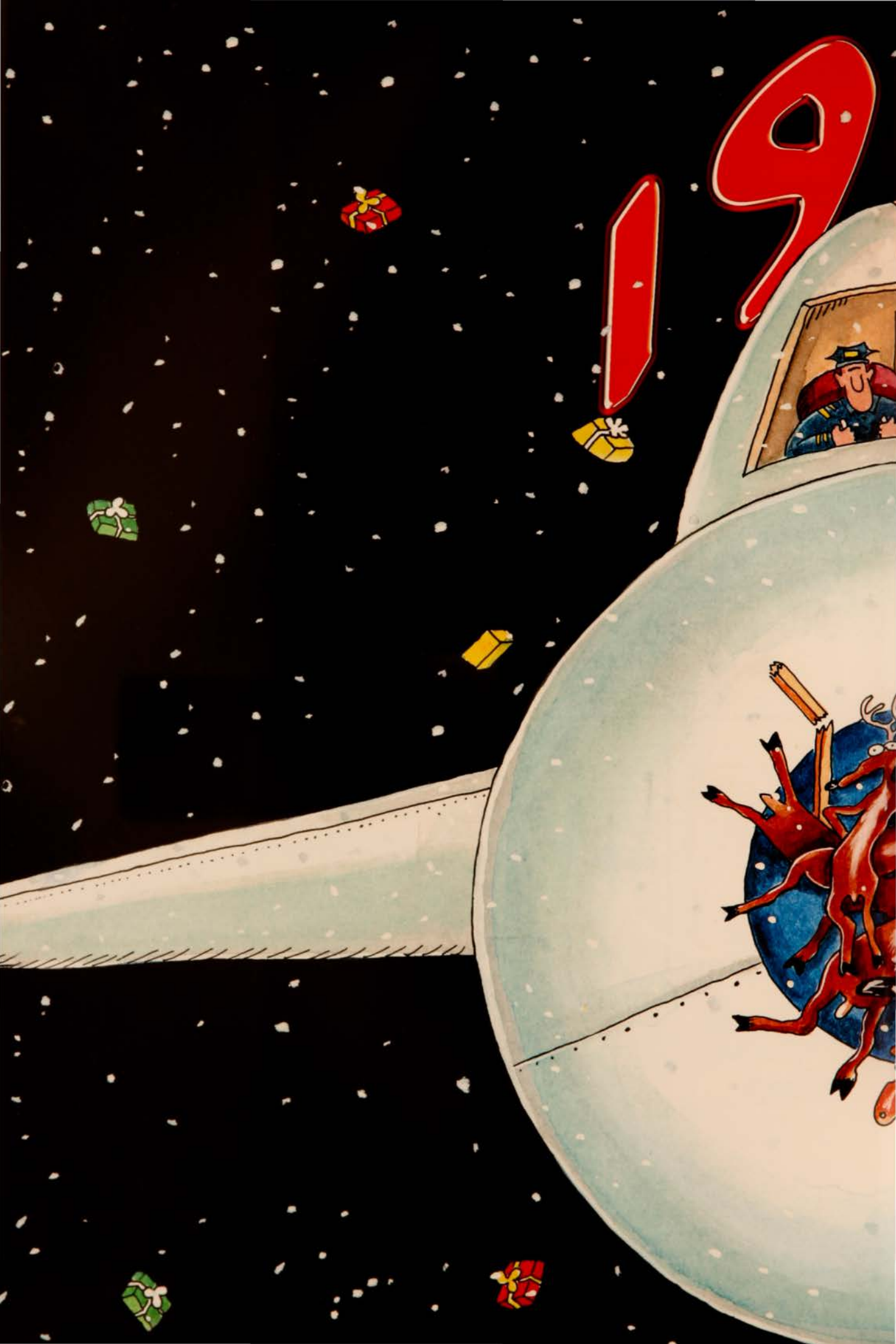
The End (Act One)

 <p>The role of the large woman in horn-rimmed glasses was played by Arlene Carmichael. Arlene had previously auditioned for several other cartoons before her "break" in "The Far Side."</p>	 <p>Various aliens, monsters, sharks, and large mammals were played by Frank Slavens and John McCosker. (Earlier this year both characters went down in a giant squid suit and were never seen again.)</p>	 <p>Playing a multitude of parts (cowmen, cowboys, etc.) was Daryl Simmons. Daryl plans to try out for an upcoming role in "Beetle Bailey."</p>
 <p>In the role of "the cow" was Jessica Van Horn, from Fremont Farms.</p>	 <p>Making his cartoon debut as "the nerdy little kid" was Jerry Miller. Jerry was originally turned down for the part of Sluggo in "Nancy."</p>	 <p>In various "scientific" roles was Andrew Figg. Regrettably, shortly before his stint with "The Far Side" ended, Andrew was erased.</p>
 <p>All the protozoans came from a drainage ditch on the outskirts of Shreveport, La. Most of them now live in a Beverly Hills petri dish.</p>	 <p>Cockroaches, slugs, and assorted invertebrates were all set free but came back into the house.</p>	 <p>Special thanks to Luan Plathor, who designed the black border.</p>

The Far Side cast

Editor's note: Gary leaves for a one-year sabbatical. He returns in 1990.







9

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Larson

## The Second-Most Asked Question

Before I get into this, I first must divulge what I, personally, consider to be the single-most penetrating and important question to ask any cartoonist. And no one has ever once asked me this. Get ready: So, [name of cartoonist], tell me—what kind of pen do you use?

Thrilling, isn't it? You can use it, if you wish, the next time you cross paths with someone who draws for a living. But I'm serious—it's the one thing I wondered about when I started out as a cartoonist. I may even ask it now. (Obviously, I never have very long conversations with other cartoonists.)

For me, everything else relates to the creative process, and I have never been able to deconstruct that invisible beast without ultimately being devoured by it.

So, please, let's move on from any exploration of that most-asked question regarding my cartoons, *Where do you get your ideas?* Not that I have ever begrudged anyone for asking it. (Hell, I guess no one's going to ask what kind of pen I use.) It's just that it's beyond my own understanding.

The second-place contender is an entirely *different* question, and one that has always fascinated me because I'm intrigued with why so many people have asked it: *How long does it take you to draw a cartoon?*

My initial response: Well, which cartoon are we talking about here? Does it involve amoebas or an anthill? A family of stick people or an army of Vikings? A lone vulture soaring overhead or a traffic jam in midtown? Just point the cartoon out to me and I'll scratch my head and come up with some lie.

I've suspected an ulterior motive from some people who ask me this question. I think they want to check to see if I'm *really* working. In other words, is cartooning a real job? If that's the hidden question, the answer is easy. No—it's not a real job. The guy laying asphalt in mid-July on a Louisiana highway has a real job. And I've had real jobs in my past. This was not one of them. What I did for a living was try to make that guy laying asphalt crack up once in a while so he didn't look around and notice I wasn't out there alongside him.

But I'm working on an additional theory: that this kind of question is an outgrowth of American culture. We just seem to want to quantify everything. *How much horsepower does that baby have? ... How much did they soak you for that? ... How much does that sucker weigh? ... How much time elapses before the female eats the male?* (Actually, it may not be just an American thing; I once read that some forest dwellers in Brazil distinguish between several kinds of venomous snakes based on the number of steps a bitten person can take before dropping dead. A

hundred-stepper, therefore, is clearly preferred over a ten-stepper, and a one-stepper is apparently just enough time to say, "Ow! ... Hey, was that a one-stepper?????"

So (I'm back), how long *did* it take for me to draw an average cartoon? Honestly, I can't compute that with any real certainty. (See why I like that pen question so much?) First of all, I enjoyed what I did. And when you enjoy doing something, time is a disconnect. Not that you can afford to ignore the clock entirely; if you're a syndicated cartoonist under contract, you have deadlines. Mine were weekly, and the lag time between the time I submitted something and when it showed up in a newspaper was about three weeks. But I'll never complain about deadlines to that guy laying asphalt. I would lose that whining contest.

There's also a critical part of the equation that has nothing to do with the physical execution of the cartoon, and that's the time invested in just sitting, staring, and thinking. And it's difficult to know if you're not, in truth, just doing the first two. (Sometimes I think it wouldn't have been a bad thing if a Lou Grant-type person burst into my office once in a while and said, "Larson! Draw!")

Finally, on to the "Looks Are Deceiving" category, and for that I've included an example, "Houdini's final undoing." I remember all too well my long day in hell with this cartoon.

A simple concept, really: Houdini has apparently met his match in a pair of Chinese handcuffs, with tragic results for the famous escape artist. Now, if you will, please pretend that you are the Cartoon Coroner and take a closer look at the "deceased." What we have here is a decomposed body, with the main focus on the head.

If it's too gruesome, it doesn't work. If it's too corny, it doesn't work. The expression on that face has to simultaneously capture silliness and scariness, horror and hilarity, sadness and stupidity. For me, this meant draw, erase, draw, erase, draw, erase ... for hours. I couldn't get it, although I think in the end I got sort of close. (I now see that the head should have been tilted forward just a little, dammit.) If it hadn't been for my deadline, I might be sitting there to this very day, doomed to draw Houdini's skull for the rest of my life until I, too, am discovered one day looking much like this very drawing, only perhaps funnier.

How long does it take for me to draw a cartoon? Let it go. Ask me what kind of pen I use.



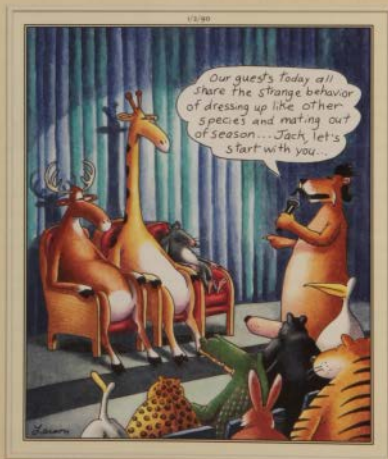




"You're so morbid, Jonathan—the paper comes, and that's the first section you always head for."



"Well, here we go again. ... Did anyone here not eat his or her homework on the way to school?"



Geraldo Rivera of the wild



Carmen Miranda's family reunion



Encroachment of the fish developers



"Jimzfoxy! Do you have to mess with the organisms on every planet we visit?"



Trouble brewing



Suddenly, on a national talk show in front of millions of viewers, Dick Clark ages 200 years in 30 seconds.



The heart of the jungle now well behind them, the three intrepid explorers entered the spleen.



Mammoth pointers

1/12/90



"Oh my God, Bernie! You're wearing one of my nylons?"

1/22/90



Ralph Harrison, king of salespersons

1/16/90



Scientific meat markets

1/17/90

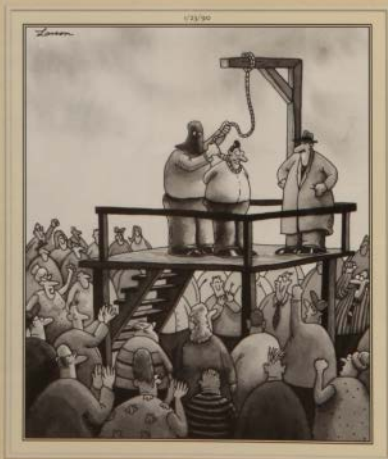




Sunset in the vampire army



"First of all, Mr. Hawkins, let's put the gun down. ... I would guess it's an itchy trigger finger, but I want to take a closer look."



At the public execution of the "Ring around the collar" copywriter

January 1990

January 2, 1986

Dear Gary,

I am one of your more famous unknown admirers. Part is, you make me famous - one of the most (in)famous copywriters of all time. Top, the executive was hitched, an c'nut was, the "Ring (Wink) around the collar" copywriter. And it's time to save the score.

My family and friends, long apprized of my dubious celebrity, have substituted me for not sounding satisfaction. Well, no, my, actually they just said I should get in touch with you. In here I am, unfortunately without my computer, and so apologetic, so bear with me.

Anyhow, just to give you a little background on the man you so graciously prepared for hanging...

Back in the sixties, I worked at Lever Brothers in New York City as a Promotion Specialist. I created name-and-belt kinds of stuff like point-of-purchase (POP) materials, contracts, coupons, and the whole stinking mess of marketing crap. Mainstay, a Big Name agency handled Lever's major campaigns.

I started my advertising career as an agency copywriter before going to Lever. My first real job after college was as a bona fide copywriter with what was back then the largest ad agency in the world, Interpublic. It broke up because of the anti-trust suitcases they still had a way in those days. It became McCann-Erickson and a bunch of other toothy agencies.

I was (at least to my own now hazy perception of those days) a hotshot at Lever, coming as I did from the "big one". Then came the days. I was in my early twenties, and just by youthful hubris and exuberance, if nothing else, more productive, and daily as creative, as the other three Promotion Specialists combined. Assured veterans as they may have been.

Not too surprisingly, with certain individuals at Lever my brain, will-to-ignite-a-massive-attitude-tide's-etc-well-[good] was Product Managers in particular, was on Wink and the other on the Pepsodent account....

As coincidence had it, about five months before I resigned from Lever, the aforementioned Managers pulled off a first time coup at Lever by becoming Co-presidents of the company.



Dear Ray:

Even as I sat at my drafting table so many moons ago and drew the cartoon to which you refer, I remember thinking, "Man, I hope I don't bear down this person." And after a pause of several seconds, I thought, "No way."

And now here you are. Like the Ghost of Far Side Past.

Your letter was very enjoyable, and read like some kind of "whodunnit" in the advertising world. And that Wink (ostensibly, when all's said and done, must have ultimately been very successful for your client - or they wouldn't have kept drawing it into our skulls for so many years.

Thanks for writing, and I'm glad to hear about your career change. It was going to say something about how wonderful it is that you're no longer coming up with ways to irritate millions of people, and then I realized one might make that same comment about me.

Cheers,

*Gary Lamm*

Gary Lamm

FarWorks, Inc.

Anyhow, one day, midway in my stay at Lever, my buddy Preston Ruby (we had become good friends during my time there, Ruby's claim to fame, other than being on back of a dirty collar, was his music, Jerry, who was the first black man to play on the other major league that side's, like Jack Ruby himself), brought me over a bottle of Wink. On its neck is a mock-up in paper of a collar and tie.

"Come up with something to say on this collar."

Ruby had already drawn some sketches on the tin representing states. Almost immediately I flashed on the idea of a dirty collar, and ring-angled, "Ring around the collar, we're out to get your dollar." I did it to the tune of that old childhood ditty from the days of the black plagues.

Ring around the necker, pocket full of power, all fall down.

Ruby suggested that that wasn't exactly a product benefit, so I hit him with "Wink around the collar beats ring around the collar every time," and that was it.

We finished the mock-up, and I brought it to the Product Manager. Barging into his office became the door-no-eyes, I didn't notice the "balls" on the side in the rear.

"What do you think of this for a POP program?"

My guess is a thoughtful half-second appraisal, and said he didn't like it. Meanwhile, as I began my last ditch appeal to sell him on it, the two guys I had noticed who happened to be agency Account Execs sidled up beside me. One reached for the mock-up saying, "Hey, this isn't a bad idea!"

"We could take this little idea, and run it into a national campaign. I like it."

And that's the story. The upshot is that this Product Manager in part for his brilliant Wink campaign strategy and the other (you) as President became Co-presidents. Some of my friends in higher places at Lever told me that just about their first official act as Co-presidents was a decision to give me six months notice.

Anyhow, I'm an holistic bodywork therapist, and it's the best thing I've ever done. I'll give you a fraction of me over every path. I also do a little freelance writing. I won't go so far as to say you owe me, but please write me something or call me. It's the one that was wrong and I'm practically begging. It would make me like real happy.

Perseveringly,

*Ray*



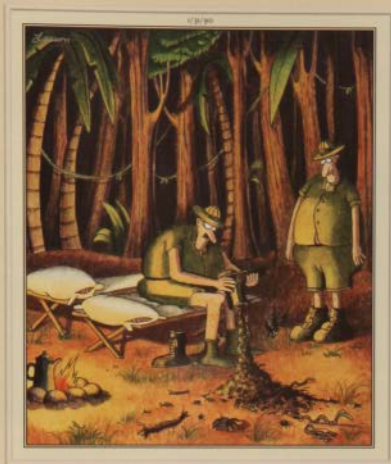
Deer Halloweens



When referees go home at night



Jimmy meets Mr. Ed.



To his horror, Irving suddenly realized he had failed to check his own boots before putting them on just minutes ago.



Water buffaloes at home



"I'm going off half-cocked? I'm going off half-cocked? ... Well, Mother was right—you can't argue with a shotgun."



2/2/90



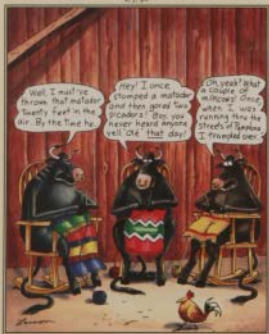
Suddenly, second-chair granite rock's jealousy of first-chair granite rock becomes uncontainable.

2/1/90



Morning in the crypt

2/1/90



Bullknitters

2/1/90



The parenting advantages of dentists

2/8/90



Wildlife day shifts

2/12/90



The deadly couch cobra—coiled and alert in its natural habitat.

2/6/90



The untold ending to the fable, "The Grasshopper and the Ant."

2/9/90



2/14/90



"This is no use, Wanda. It's like they say—we just don't have lips."

2/20/90



Our protagonist is about to check on the progress of her remodelers in this scene from *Leona Helmsley Meets the Three Stooges*.

2/13/90



2/13/90



And down they went: Bob and Francine—two more victims of the La Brea Carpets.

2/21/90



It was very late, and Raymond, fighting insomnia, went for a midnight snack. Unfortunately, he never saw the duck blind.

2/28/90



Life among the clover

2/18/90

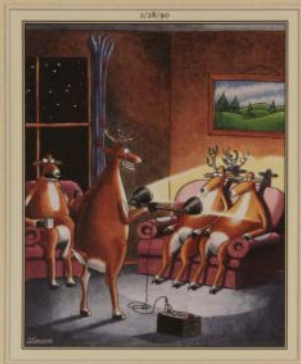


"Well, there he is, Billy—Big Red. Sure he's tough, but if you can ride him, he's yours."

2/19/90



Tales of the Known



"Okay, Frank, that's enough. ... I'm sure the Jeffersons are quite amazed at your car headlight device."



"Oooweeeee! You nailed him good, Vera—to think that little ol' ant was hoping to just up and walk off with your rubber tree plant."



Competition in Nature



Civil Service History: On Oct. 12, 1979 (Columbus Day), government employee George Sullivan goes in to work for a couple of hours to, in his own words, "take care of some unfinished business."

3/10/90



The night before the hunt, Neanderthals would carefully prepare their weaponry—often employing the help of the deadly poison-club frog.

3/5/90



3/16/90



God creates the animals.

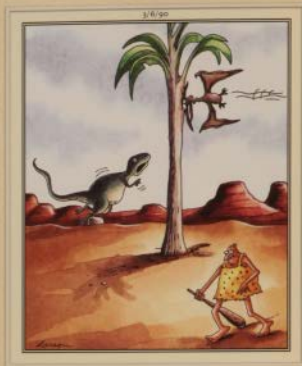
3/1/90



"Coast, Dad, coast!"



Dog restaurants



Although it lasted only 2 million years, the Awkward Age was considered a hazardous time for most species.



The rooster stared back at me, his power and confidence almost overwhelming. Down below, a female paused warily at the coop's entrance. I kept the camera running. They were beautiful, these *Chickens in the Mist*.



3/3/90



"It's a fax from your dog, Mr. Dansworth. It looks like your cat."

3/3/90



3/4/90



"Henry! Our party's total chaos! No one knows when to eat, where to stand, what to ... Oh, thank God! Here comes a Border collie!"

3/10/90



The bozone layer: shielding the rest of the solar system from the Earth's harmful effects.

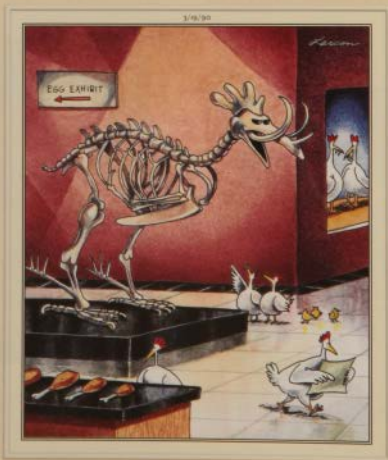




"Dang! Every day, more and more swatters are movin' in."



"I say we do it ... and trichinosis be damned!"



In the Chicken Museum



Midlife crises in moths



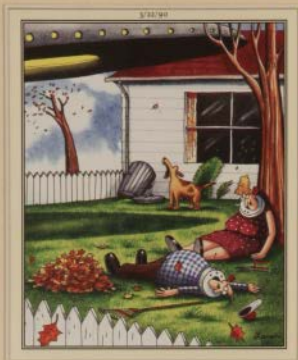
"Oh, I don't know. Billy's been having trouble in school, and Sally's always having some sort of crisis. I tell you, Edith, it's not easy raising the dead."



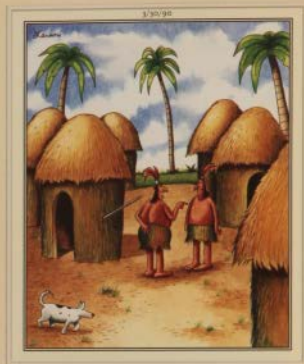
"Listen, you want to come over to my place? I get great FM."



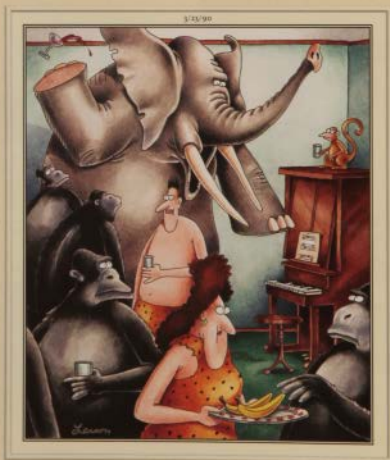
Tapeworms visiting a stomach park



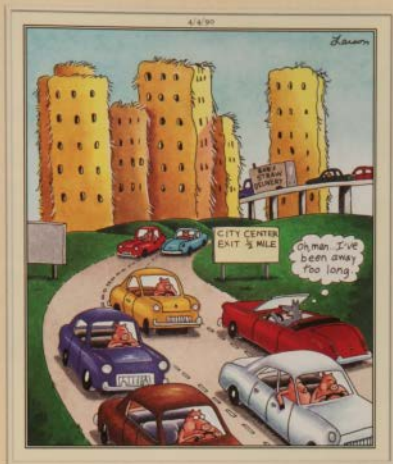
Hours later, when they finally came to, Hal and Ruby groggily returned to their yard—unknowingly wearing the radio collars and ear tags of alien biologists.



"Okay, Zukutu—that does it! Remember, those who live in grass houses shouldn't throw spears."



The party had been going splendidly—and then Tantor saw the ivory keyboard.



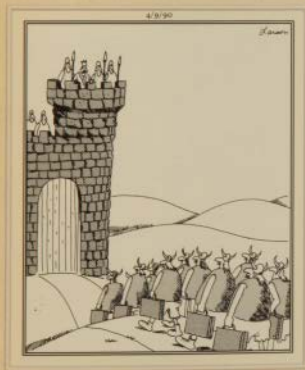
Special Agent Gumby falls into the frustrated hands of the enemy.





"Oh, yeah? Lewis, you're fired! You apparently forgot this is a cartoon, and I can read every word you think!"

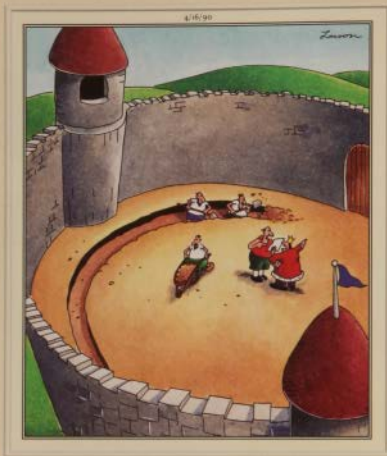




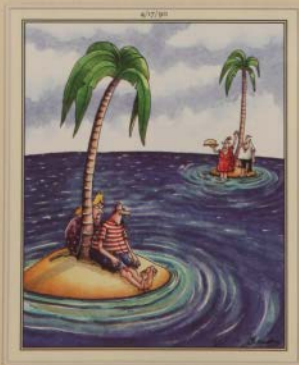
"My God! Vikings! And they mean business!"



"Don't worry ... your little boy's somewhere in our service department—but let's move on and check out the TD500."



Suddenly, a heated exchange took place between the king and the moat contractor.



"Uh-oh. Carol's inviting us over for cake, and I'm sure it's just loaded with palm oil."



"And as amoebas, you'll have no problems recruiting other sales reps ... just keep dividing and selling, dividing and selling."



Inconvenience stores



"Now Betty Sue, we know you're upset ...  
breaking up with a boyfriend is always hard.  
But, as they say, there are more protozoa  
in the lower intestine."



"Throw him in the swamp? You idiot!  
That's the *first* place they'll look."



4/22/90



Editor's note: This is a special cartoon Gary drew for Earth Day 1990, as part of a project in which many cartoonists participated to bring more awareness to the state of the environment.

4/24/90



"Well, there he goes again ... 'Course, I guess I did the same thing at his age—checking every day to see if I was becoming a silverback."

4/25/90

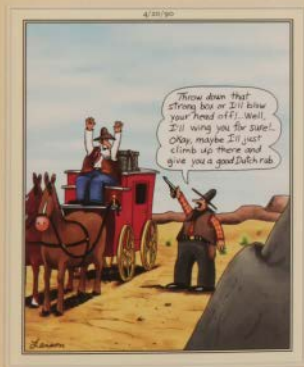


4/30/90





Nerds of the Old West



Semi-desperadoes



Bowler's hell



"On three, Vince. Ready?"



Sheep health classes



"So once they started talking, I just remained motionless, taking in every word. ... Of course, it was pure luck I just happened to be a fly on the wall."



Scenes from classic nature films



"Well, here's your problem, Marge—if you and Bob really want kids, next time try sittin' on these little guys."



Tragedy struck when Conroy, his mind preoccupied with work, stepped into the elevator—directly between a female grizzly and her cub.



Wharf cows



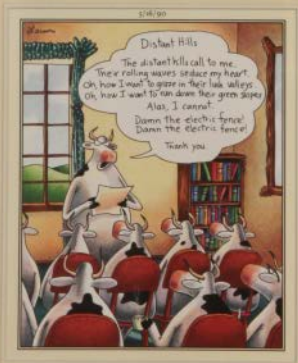
"Sometimes, just sometimes, I wish I didn't have to hop out of bed first thing every morning. ... 'Course, that's the only way I know how."



"All this time you've been able to go home whenever you desired—just click your heels together and repeat after me ..."



"No way am I going to that party tonight! I won't know anyone there, which means I'll be constantly introduced—and you know I never learned how to shake!"



Cow poetry



Slug vacation disasters



"Listen, before we try and take this guy, let me ask you this: You ever kill a flea before, Dawkins? ... It ain't easy."



"Wow, this place is really packed—or maybe it's just my compound eyes."



Punk accountants



Thag Anderson becomes the first fatality as a result of falling asleep at the wheel.



As the flock of monarchs, in a silent burst of black and gold, rose from the puddle's edge, a sudden "crack" knifed through the still morning air. A spider's shotgun had found its mark.



Helpful hints for the jungle traveler: Never drag your hand in piranha-infested waters.



"Okay, Mr. Dittman, remember: That brain is only a temporary, so don't think too hard with it."



Scene from *Dinner on Elm Street*



Until finally being replaced by its more popular and deadly cousin, the Bowie spoon was often used to settle disputes in the Old West.

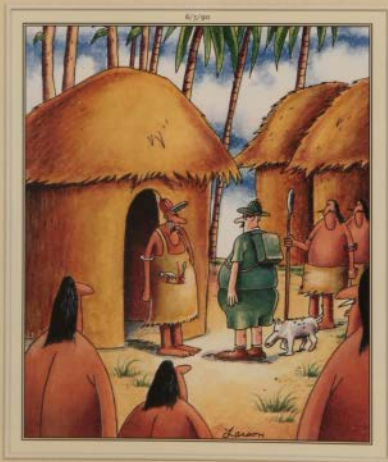
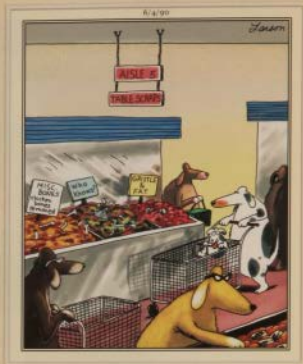


"Well, here we go again! I always get the gurney with one bad wheel!"





Common desert animal tracks



"You need to see medicine man—me just handyman."



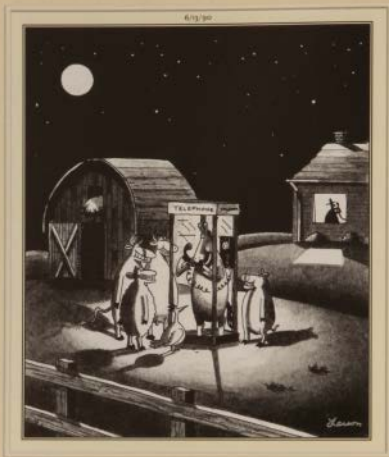
"Rex! Don't take it! Everyone knows their mouths are dirtier than our own!"



"Well, like I said, a mammoth shouldn't be allowed in the cave to begin with—but installing a swinging door was just plain crazy!"



"And one more thing about tomorrow's company picnic: Do I have to mention what happened last year when some moron sabotaged the games with a case of acid-filled LD-50s?"



"Farmer Bob ... your barn door's open."



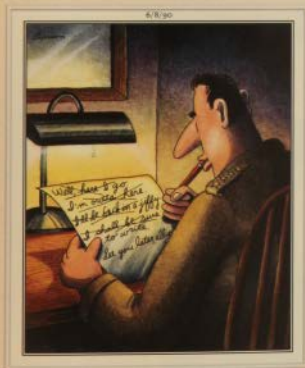
"And the really great thing about this jungle of ours is that any one of you could grow up to be King of the Apes."



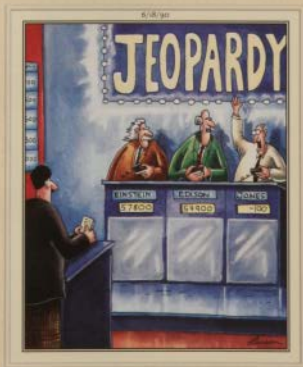
"Okay, Johnson—we've got a deal. We'll let your people and my people work out the details."



After flicking on the light, Professor Zurkowitz is caught off guard by the overnight success of his efforts to crossbreed flying fish and piranhas.



March 16, 1942: The night before he leaves the Philippines, General MacArthur works on his farewell address.



"Excuse me ... I know the game's almost over, but just for the record, I don't think my buzzer was working properly."



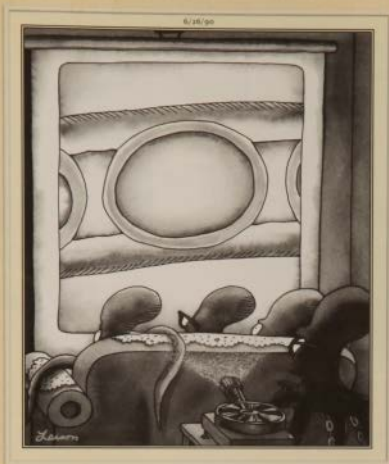
Elephan Gogh



"Well, Donald—forgot your sunblock, I see."



Tapeworms in a cow's stomach



"Again? Crimony! ... How many times did I have a tentacle over the lens?"



The evolution of Medusa's hair



Early shell games



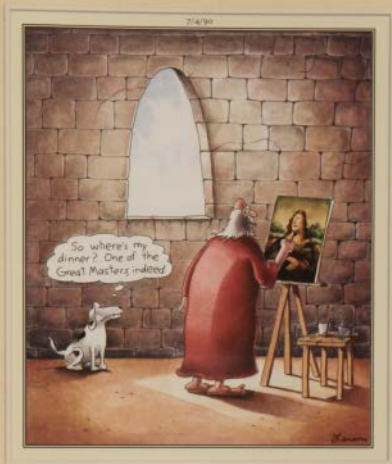
"Okay, Jane, this guy you want me to go out with—you say he lives alone, he doesn't have any friends, and he has a slight frothing problem. ... He's not a rogue, is he?"



Studying the African bagel beetle



Suddenly, the door was kicked open, and with nostrils flaring and manes flying, wild horses dragged Sam away.



Gus saw them when he crested the hill.  
Snakes. Three of them, basking on the road.  
Probably diamondbacks.



"Well, we could go back to my place, but  
you have to understand—I'm serious when I  
say it's just a hole in the wall."





Suddenly, two bystanders stuck their heads inside the frame and ruined one of the funniest cartoons ever.



"My sonar's got it at 12 feet away and closing ... 11 feet ... 10 feet ... God, it's enormous! Nine feet ..."



"Now this is our dead beetle room, and some of these babies are 50 times an ant's body weight. ... 'Course, we'll want to start you out on dried ladybugs."



"Now what? ... Oh God, Ernie! Navy ants!"



How to draw cartoons



"Crimony! Talk about overstaying your welcome! ... John, open the door and turn the porch light on--see if that gets rid of them."



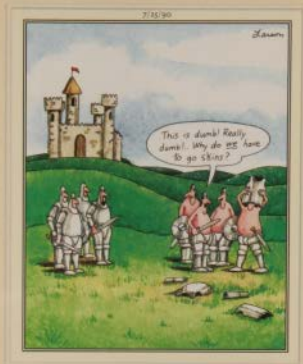
Math phobic's nightmare



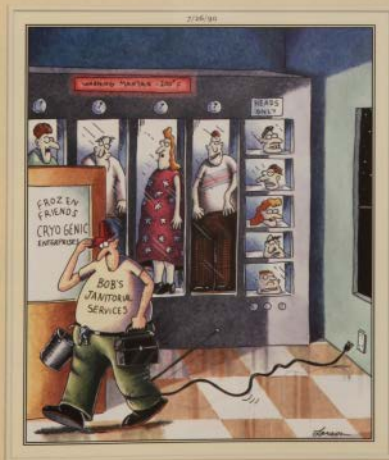
"Uh-oh, Bob, the dog's on fire. ... I think it's your turn to put him out."



"There! I felt it again, Donna! ...  
Raindrops! Raindrops!"



Medieval pickup battles





How rhinos are incited to charge



Failed lounge acts



"Frances, I've got a feeling we're not on Toto anymore."

7/24/90



Suddenly, and to Rodney's horror, the police arrived with nerd-sniffing dogs.

7/27/90



Irresponsible mountain goats

7/30/90



"Wowowo! ... Man, Lola, your feet are always so dang warm!"

7/31/90



"Dave! Ain't that your horse that kid is messin' with?"

8/1/90



"Oh, Helen! You're pregnant? That's wonderful! ...  
At first, I was taking you quite literally when you  
said you had one in the oven!"

8/2/90



"Hey! I'm *trying* to pass the potatoes! ...  
Remember, my forearms are just as  
useless as yours!"

8/4/90



"I said his *head*, you idiots!  
Bring me the cur's head!"

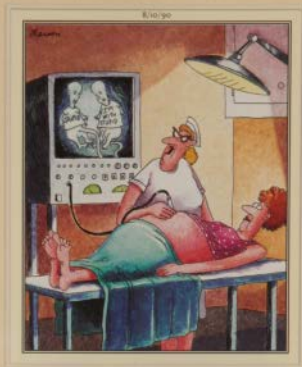
8/8/90



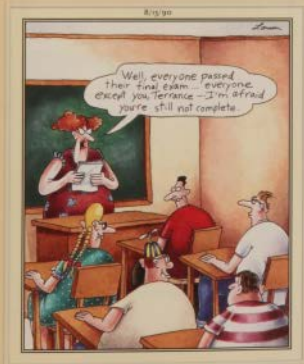
"Well, scratch number 24. He did pretty good,  
though—right up to the jet engine test."



Lizard thugs



"There you go, Mrs. Eagen—you can clearly see both twins on the monitor."



Fool school



"Well, just look at her and then tell me she didn't have her jowls lifted."





"Introducing automatic weapons to a couple of dumb animals was irresponsible to begin with, Frank—but, my God! To think you almost left the bullets in!"



In the Old West, cowboy show-offs often fell victim to the old whoopee saddle gag.



"Oh God, George! Stop! Stop the car! ... I've got another migration headache!"



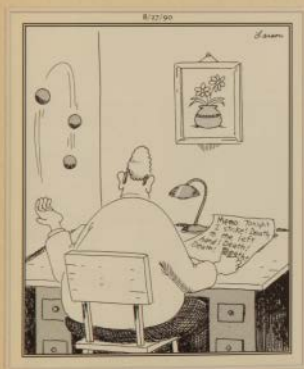
On what was to be his last day on the job, Gus is caught asleep at the switch.



Leon Redbone's workout video



"And, during my term, I'm looking forward to a kinder, gentler cave, with a thousand points of darkness showing us the way."



Innocent and carefree, Stuart's left hand didn't know what the right was doing.



"That was fast! ... Gunther! The Diver Delivery guy is here."



"Hey! What's the matter? ... There's only three of us here! C'mon! ... It's gonna be darrrrrk soon!"



Animal fast-food joints



"Oh, wait, Doreen—don't sit there. ...  
That chair's just not safe."

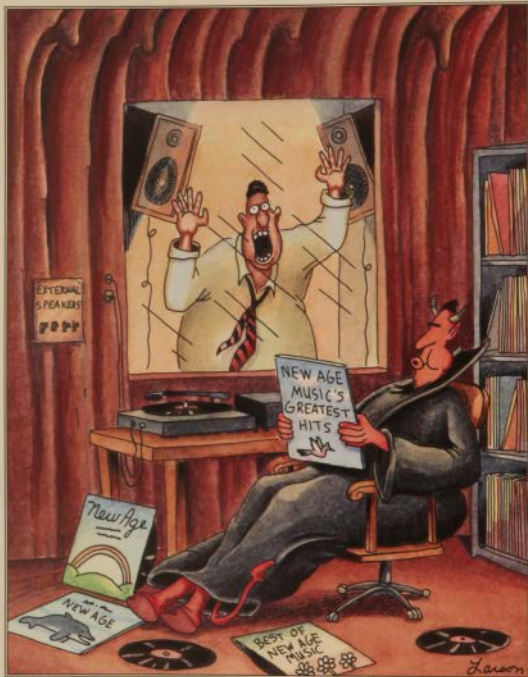


Hornet goody two-shoes



"Ooo! That one got 'em stirred up,  
Zangorn! Let's blow!"

8/29/90



Charlie Parker's private hell

*Editor's note: Gary leaves for a one-month vacation.*

10/1/90



"You're in luck! This place just came on the market a few days ago. ... The previous owners had their heads chopped off."

10/2/90



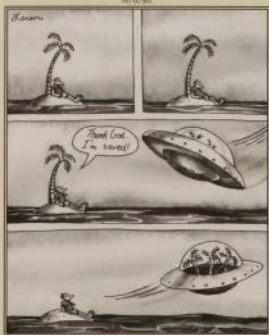
A day in the Invisible Man's household

10/3/90



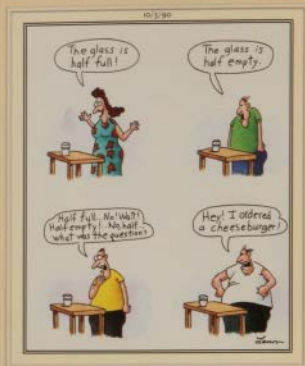
Centipede parking lots

10/10/90

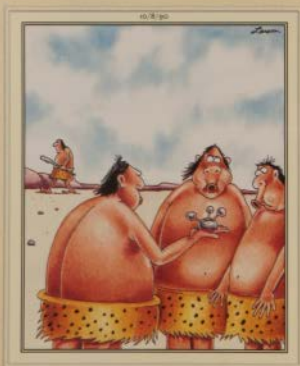




"Step back, Loretta! ... It's a red-hot poker!"



The four basic personality types



Danook shows off his Swiss Army Rock.



Each time the click beetle righted itself, Kyle would flip it over again—until something went dreadfully wrong.



Llamas at home



"Listen—I bought these here yesterday, and the dang things won't stop squeaking!"



"Zak! Don't eat parsley! ... Just for looks!"



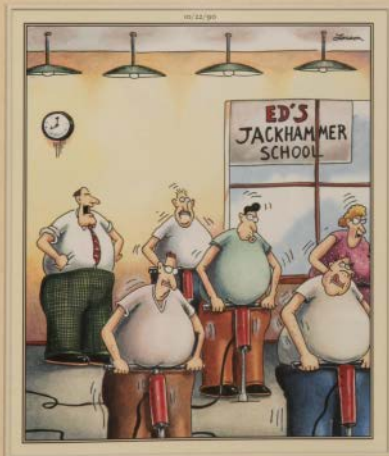




"Barbara, you just have to come over and see all my eggs! The address is: Doris Griswold, 5 feet 4 inches, 160 pounds, brown eyes—I'm in her hair."



"Who are we kidding, Luke? We know this is going to be just another standoff."



"C'mon! Keep those stomachs over the handles! Let the fat do the work! Let the fat do the work! ... That's it!"



**THE FAR SIDE**  
FEBRUARY

**1** 1983  
MONDAY

Dear Gary -  
How do ants  
know it's  
close or not  
close at this point  
in time? Foot  
needs to be  
drawn in  
approx. (Cues  
on ground heel  
up) i.e. foot  
has already  
and missed!

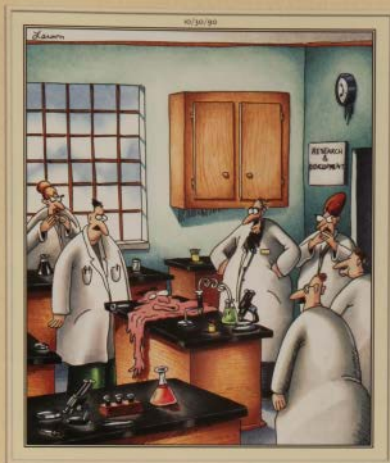
They are entertaining themselves with a grape  
Mr. J. J. landed and missed!

Feet are all heads toward  
grape - no feet drawn  
separately - little foot  
physically at this instance  
in time ants have no  
way of knowing if grape  
has been squashed or  
was in danger of being  
squashed - i.e. close!  
Seems to be a pinhead about  
this but me - in a huge  
fan - people think I'm  
a nut at work. Some think  
I'm Caltech's and so funny!  
It's more than so not "not it!"



Young ants entertaining themselves with a grape





"My God! It is Professor Dickle! ... Weinberg, see if you can make out what the devil he was working on, and the rest of you get back to your stations."



"Joe! You went and ate the pig I was going to serve this evening to the MacIntyres? ... Well, you just disgorge it—it should still be okay."



Aarddogs



The fate of Don King's great-great-grandfather



"Well, if there's a bone stuck in your throat, you deserve it! ... Do you see anyone else around here stupid enough to order fish?"



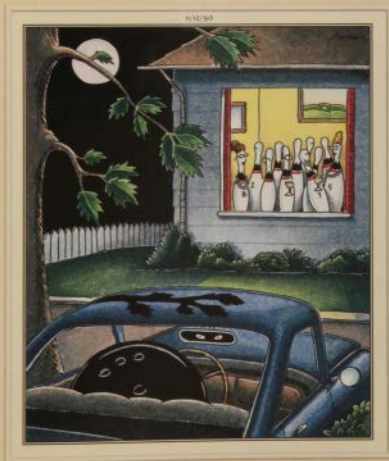
Faraway, on a hillside, a very specialized breed of dog heard the cry of distress.



"It's just a miracle you pulled through, George. ... Why, it was only a few hours ago the whole family was deliberating on whether or not to wring your neck."

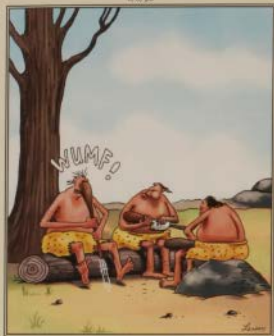


The class was quietly doing its lesson when Russell, suffering from problems at home, prepared to employ an attention-getting device.





"We must be careful, Cisco! ... Thees could be the eenfamous Queeksand Beds of Chihuahua."



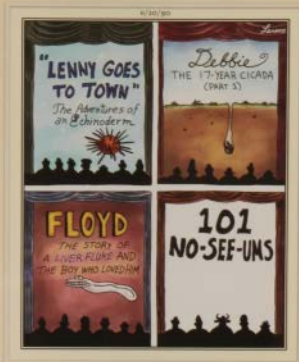
As the small band of hunter-gatherers sat around cleaning their weapons, one made the mistake of looking at his club straight on.



And so it went, night after night, year after year. In fact, the Hansens had been in a living hell ever since that fateful day the neighbor's "For Sale" sign had come down and a family of howler monkeys had moved in.



Fleaboy



Nature films that Disney test-marketed but never released.



In a recurring nightmare, Arsenio Hall sees himself walk onstage wearing golf clothes.



"That story again? ... Well, one stormy night, when the whole family was asleep, your grandfather quietly rose from his bed, took an ax, and made all you little grandkids."





Feb. 22, 1952: Veterinarians attempt the first skunk de-scenting operation.



Buffalo, N.Y., Nov. 2-5: The annual convention of the Big Galoot Society of America



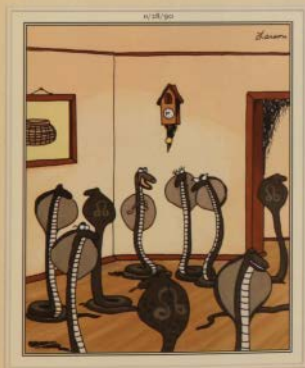
Luckily, Eddie had stumbled upon a rare variety of deadly nightshade, the amicable *Atropa belladonna congenialocus*. (Later that same day, however, he blundered into some poison oak—a flat-out intolerant species.)



From the book *Guide to Western Stuff*



Like most veterinary students, Doreen breezes through chapter 9.



In the corner, Vance was putting the move on two females—unaware that his fake hood had begun to slip.



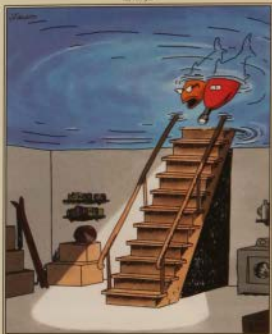
Misunderstanding his employees' screams of "Simmons has lost his marbles!" Mr. Wagner bursts from his office for the last time.

12/5/90



Perspectives in nature we rarely enjoy

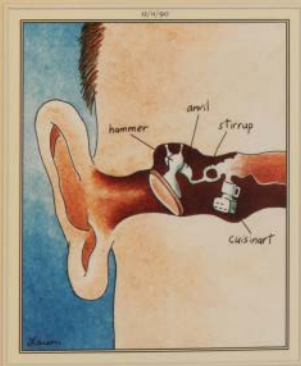
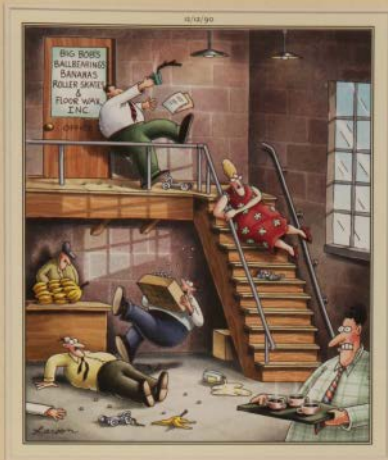
12/10/90



"Good heavens, John! Call someone! ...  
The entire basement looks dry!"

12/4/90





Professor Harold Rosenbloom's diagram of the middle ear, proposing his newly discovered fourth bone.



The prenatal development of Curly

12/3/90

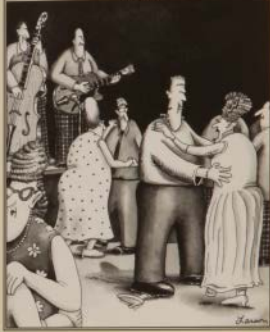
Loona



"They're Neanderthals, Loona. ...  
Every one of them."

12/6/90

Loona



"Idiot! ... You're standing on my foot!"

12/13/90

Loona



"Would you look at that? ... By thunder, you  
couldn't do that in *our* day—yessiree, the  
rocks were just a lot heavier back then."

12/14/90

Loona



"Okay, we're ready for the donor heart. ...  
Oh, very good. I see we once again have  
a big selection."



Buzzard beakniks



"Say, Anthony, this looks like a pleasant little place."



"Short-sheeted my bed, didn't you, Jenkins? ... You know, I could make your life miserable, too!"



Baby toys and gifts to avoid this Christmas



Far Side Lite: Not funny, but better for you.



"Ben—what d'ya say we turn the power off for a while and let the little guy roam around?"

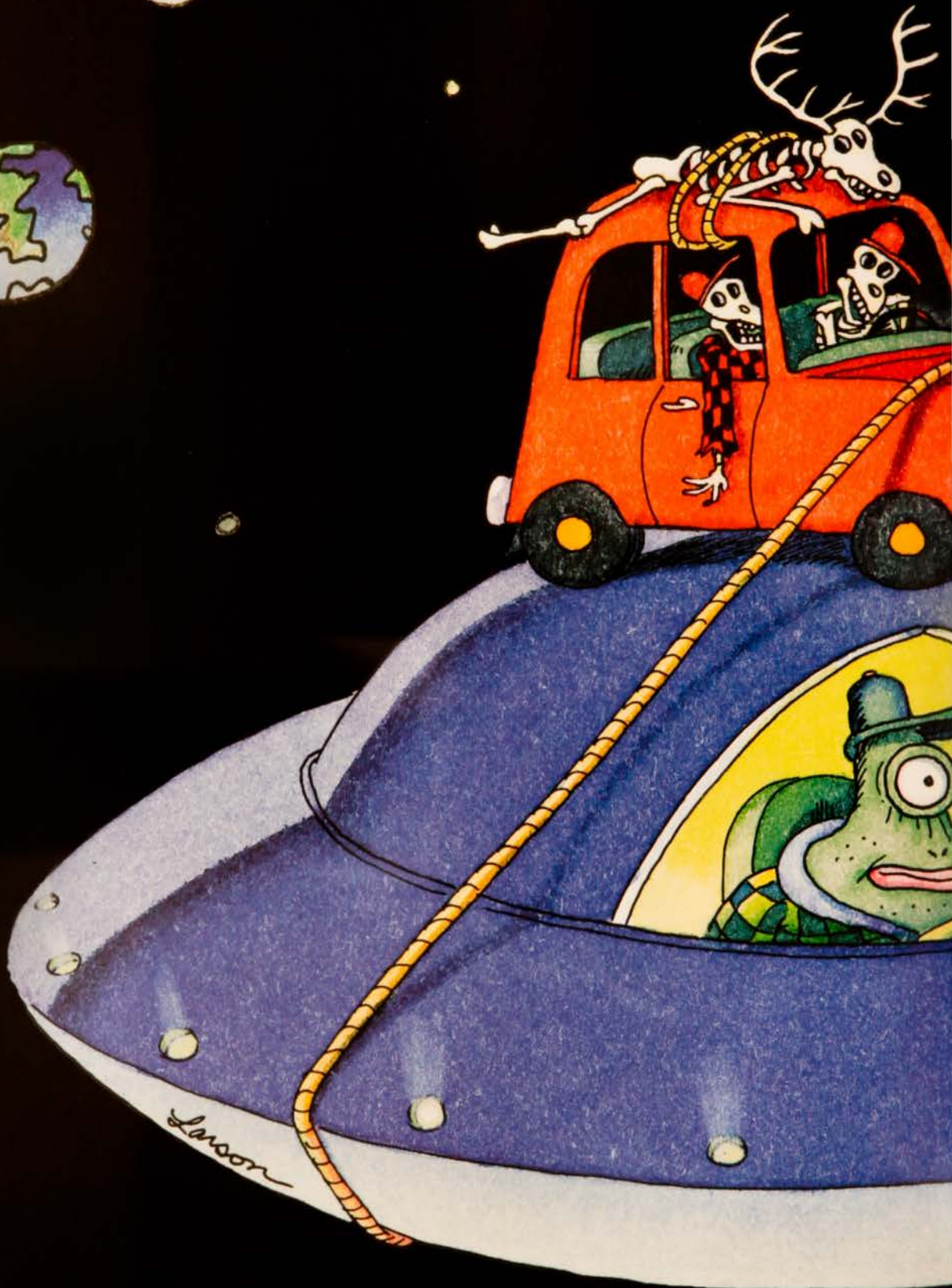


And with Johnny's revelation, Mr. Goodman's popularity in the neighborhood suddenly plummeted.



Another photograph from the Hubble Space Telescope





Lanoon



## Sorry for the Confusion

For many years I had a desire to begin one of my small collections with this short preface:

*If one of my cartoons has brought joy and laughter to just one person, if I have been able to make just one person simply smile and forget their troubles for only a moment, then that one cartoon, clearly, was not worth drawing.*

It was a joke, of course. Just a little bit of silliness. There was only one problem: I couldn't embrace this sentiment, even as a joke. It was at odds with the plain truth. I certainly never *knew* ahead of time that virtually no one would "get" a particular cartoon of mine, but if I had known, would it have killed my desire to draw it? Hard to say. One person getting it? That's tough. Two persons? I'm in.

On the other hand, I never got bogged down thinking too much about what was going on "out there." Really, a cartoonist is largely blind to reader reaction. This is the big wall that separates us from our distant and hairier cousin, the stand-up comedian. (I actually don't know if the "hairier" part is true; I'm guessing.)

Compare and contrast these two branches of the humoroid tree. For starters, we cartoonists are in ignorant bliss when we "bomb." We don't see the frozen faces or hear the collective groans or the universal "HUH?" that our little opus generated. For a comedian, however, bombing is a very public, very humiliating experience. I prefer ignorant bliss.

But the enviable side of this same coin is that comedians, perhaps at the price of such humiliating moments, are always learning from experience, throwing out jokes that didn't work, fine-tuning the ones that do. Small audiences become testing grounds for bigger audiences, and the comedians in turn are undoubtedly being shaped by the experience.

Cartoonists learn nothing from experience. There *is* no experience, really. At least none gained from "audience interaction." There *is* no audience. There's just an editor. And you, of course. There you are, probably sitting by yourself much like you are at this moment, reading your local newspaper or some other cartoon-accessorized publication. Maybe you're at home, sitting at the kitchen table, or on a bus, or in a diner, or on a park bench, or in a waiting room, or a prison cell. (I'm not joking; over my career, I've gotten more than a few fan letters from inmates, which won't surprise my detractors.)

In essence, I like to imagine you're as alone reading one of my cartoons as I was when I drew it. It's the only way I could bear it, I think. No "audience"—just you. Alone. Like me. (Now we're all depressed.)

If cartoonists do improve as the months and years go by, it's only because we're evolving from within, exploring ourselves, our characters. (There's editorial feedback, of course, but mostly at the beginning; after you've moved from your learner's permit to your license, editors make friendly, calm suggestions as you head down the road. It's only once in a while that they will actually scream and lunge for the wheel.) And there's one other evolution: We simply *draw* better

with time. My first cow would have made a bad cave painting; my last cow was up there with the best Neanderthal artist you could throw at me.

Actually, I think cartoonists have more in common with writers than we do with comedians. The following writer-cartoonist parallels come to mind: loners, quiet room, favorite chair, hand puppet (just me!), and our trusty writing/drawing tools. But there is also one huge difference: If *we* blow it, we lose a day. If a writer blows it, he or she loses, what—a year? Two years? Personally, I prefer a job where I might screw up my day, not my year. (I envision most writers finally finishing a body of work, shipping it off to their publisher, and then going out that evening to a five-star restaurant and having a great meal and a bottle of vintage wine; cartoonists finish a body of work, ship it off to their publisher, and fix themselves a really big bowl of their favorite cereal. It all equates.)

So how does a confusing cartoon even come into being? It's easy. Since I'm "audience free," I just go where my mind takes me. Then my editor sees it, says to himself, "Oh, well—I've seen him do stranger things," and off it goes to your local newspaper, where you finally see it and go, "Huh?" Meanwhile, I'm back home having cereal.

For show 'n' tell, I've found a cartoon (oh, the choices) of what, in hindsight, I concede was just a little too cumbersome and obtuse. (Of course, the King of



"Well, we'll never want for food, Doris... This rock is absolutely encrusted with oysters and mussels—all the way to the top!"

My Cartoons That Confused Everybody was one entitled "Cow tools" [Vol. 1, p. 251], but I've discussed that in a previous book and prefer not to once again relive my day in hell when that little gem was published.)

Let me be the first to acknowledge that even if you were to understand this thing, it's not exactly going to send you into gales of laughter. (Let's just call it "quiet humor," okay?) Here's the cartoon decoded: If you've managed to escape some disastrous event at sea, and then found safety on a small rock island, you would be well-advised to note where the various crustaceans and mollusks are making their little homes. Because "home" to those creatures is anywhere that is comfortably *below* high tide. (I knew I was in trouble when

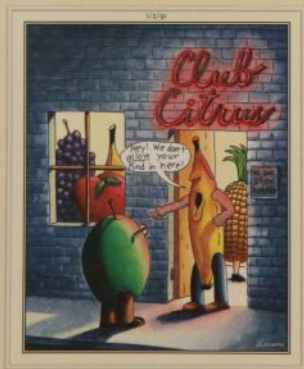
a marine biologist friend called me and asked me to explain this one.)

Even now, years after my retirement, I'm reminded of my reputation as The Great Confuser. One afternoon not long ago, a repair guy was at our house, trying to fix a problem with our electrical system. He tracked me down in the kitchen and started to explain to me in technical jargon what was wrong. I didn't have a clue what he was talking about, and at the end of his discourse I just looked at him and said, "Sorry, I'm confused." I didn't think he knew anything about me, but he suddenly narrowed his eyes and replied in an even tone, "Just consider it payback."

Fair enough.



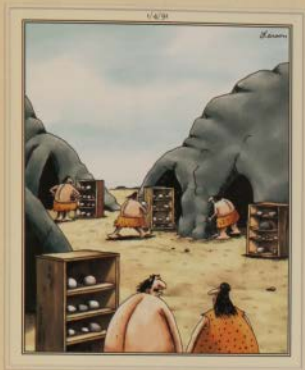
It was over. But before the police could arrive, the rioting employees had already turned on one another, using the closest weapons at hand.



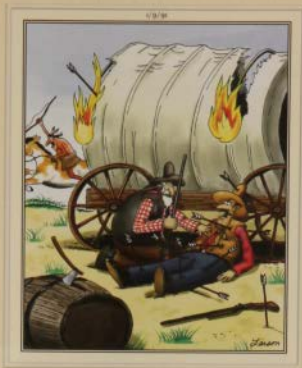
Forbidden fruit



"Mayday! Mayday! This is Flight 97! I'm in trouble! ... My second engine's on fire, my landing gear's jammed, and my worthless copilot's frozen!"



"You know, I used to like this hobby. ...  
But shoot! Seems like *everybody's* got  
a rock collection."



"Yeah, Clem, I hurt. But y'know, it's a  
good kind of hurt."



"Oh, for the love of—there goes Henry! ... Rita, you're closest  
to him—give that c-clamp 'bout a quarter turn, will ya?"



Fish dungeons



"Well, we'll never want for food, Doris ... This rock is absolutely encrusted with oysters and mussels—all the way to the top!"



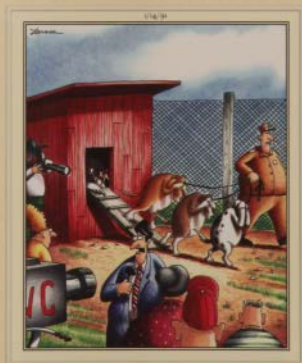
God makes the snake.



Innovative concepts in exposing city kids to nature



Primitive UFOs

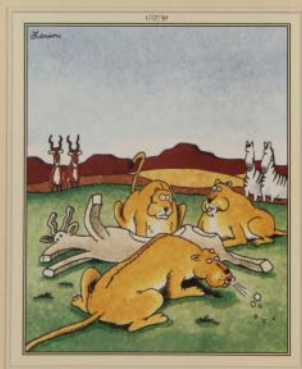


"The carnage out here is terrible, Sandy—feathers everywhere you ... Oh, here we go! The Animal Control Officer is leading the so-called Chicken Coop Three away at this very moment."

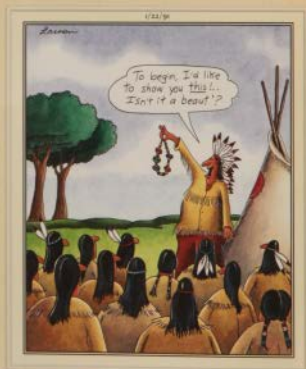




"Oh, gross!"



In sudden disgust, the three lionesses realized they had killed a tofudebeest—one of the Serengeti's obnoxious health antelopes.



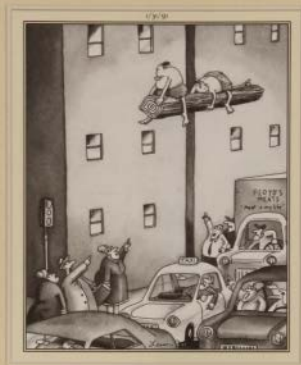
New York, 1626: Chief of the Manhattan Indians addresses his tribe for the last time.



"I'm afraid it's bad news, Mr. Griswold. ... The lab results indicate your body cavity is stuffed with a tasty, breadlike substance."



Lemmings on vacation



Hooting excitedly, primitive scientists Thak and Gork try out their new "Time Log."



The growing field of animal liposuction



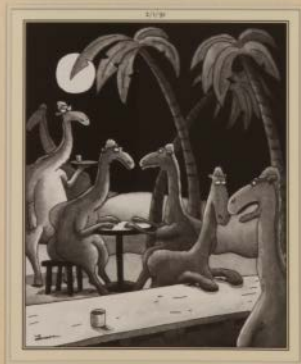
Although history has long forgotten them, Lambini & Sons are generally credited with the Sistine Chapel floor.



Cattle drive quartets



You never see it coming.



"Look at those two macho idiots. ... They haven't taken a drink in days—just to see which one ends up under the table."



"Oh, my! Cindy! This looks exquisite! ... And look, Frank—it even has a cheeseball stuffed in its mouth!"



My God! You've chosen the seven of CLUBS! A superstition will begin among certain Asian cultures that your horn, when ground up into a fine powder is the source of a powerful aphrodisiac and that belief will in turn cause a great demand which will give rise to a depraved, merciless group of professional killers who will hunt you down, cut off your horn, and leave your carcass for the buzzards!

**YOU ARE DOOMED!**  
**DOOMED!** Va ha ha ha ha ha ha ha

I want my \$2.00 back.



"Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! ... You're in my favorite chair again, Carl."



The birth of head-hunting



In the days before feathers



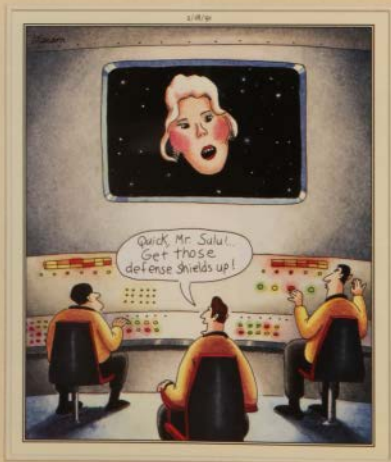
Andy looked up in horror. Right in front of Sally, a worm was emerging from his forehead—and he felt himself turning even redder.



"Aaaaaaa! There goes another batch of eggs, Frank! ... No wonder this nest was such a deal."



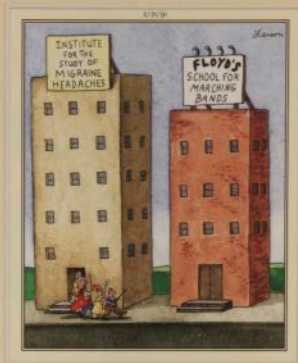
The Secret Elephant Aerial Grounds



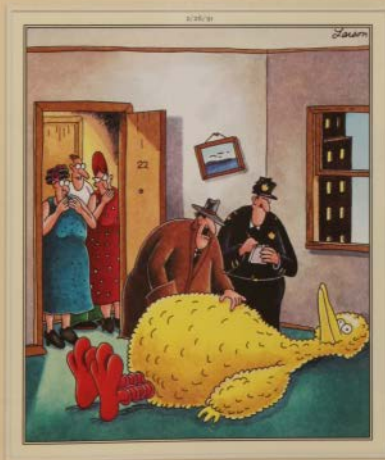
The crew of the *Starship Enterprise* encounters the floating head of Zsa Zsa Gabor.



"Wait, wait, wait—I'm confused. ... Bob, you're the one who's claiming your Siamese twin, Frank, changes into a werewolf every full moon?"



The dam bursts.



"Make a note of this, Muldoon. ... The wounds seem to be caused by bird shot ... big bird shot."

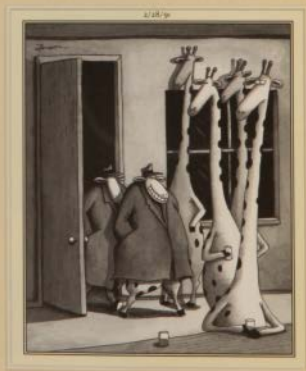




"Okay, ma'am—it's dead. In the future, however, it's always a good idea to check your shoe each time you and the kids return home."



Famous patrons of Chez Rotting Carcass



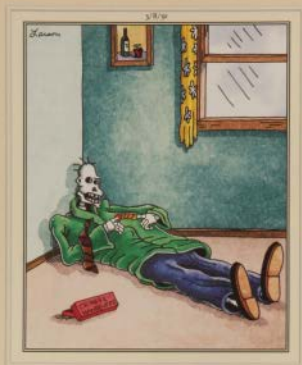
Giraffe thugs



"Oh, man! You must be looking for Apartment 3-G, Mary Worth, or one of those serious-type cartoons."



"Don't worry, Jimmy—they're just actors ... and that's not real ketchup."



Houdini's final undoing



"Ticks, fleas ... ticks, fleas ..."



"You just take your prey, slip 'em into the flex-o-tube, flip the switch, and the Mr. Coils o' Death takes over."



"Uh-oh, Lenny ... it's the slimelord."

3/7/91



"Hey, look ... you knew when you married me that I was a nonworking breed."

3/13/91



"Listen, Morrison! ... Oh, wait. It's okay—those are jungle triangles!"

3/14/91



"Well, what d'ya know! ... I'm a follower, too!"

3/15/91





"Oh, professor ... did I tell you I had another out-of-head experience last night?"



"Well, it's a delicate situation, sir. ... Sophisticated firing system, hair-trigger mechanisms, and Bob's wife just left him last night, so you know his head's not into this."





Ghost newspapers



"Look at this shirt, Remus! You can zip-a-dee-doo-dah all day long for all I care, but you keep that dang Mr. Bluebird off your shoulder!"



Saving on transportation costs, some pioneers were known to head west on covered skates.



"No, no, no! ... That regular rock!  
Me need Phillips!"



Amoebas at war



"We're in luck, Zorko!"





Every hour on the hour, a huge truck, made entirely of pressed ham, lumbers its way across dog heaven—and all the car chasers can decide for themselves whether or not to participate.



"There he is, Stan! ... On that birch tree, second branch from the top, and chattering away like crazy! ... I tell you—first come the squirrels and then come the squirrel guns."

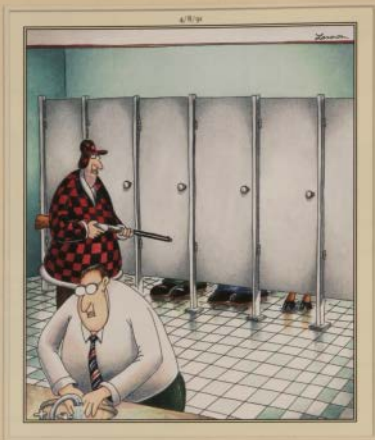


"It's Mrs. Griffin across the hall. ... Seems a giant tentacle smashed her door in today, grabbed her little shih tzu, and dragged it away. ... She called the Harrisons, but their squid was over at the park!"



"Remember this guy, Zelda? Stumbled into the den one day and just freaked out! ... Count those fang marks, everyone!"





His rifle poised, Gus burst through the door, stopped, and listened. Nothing but the gentle sound of running water and the rustling of magazines could be heard. The trail, apparently, had been false.



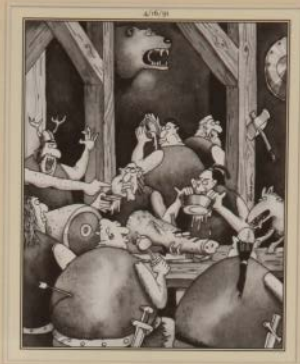
"Curse you, Ahmad! I specifically said, 'The picnic basket! Make sure you grab the picnic basket!'"



"C'mon, c'mon! You two quit circling the table and just sit down!"



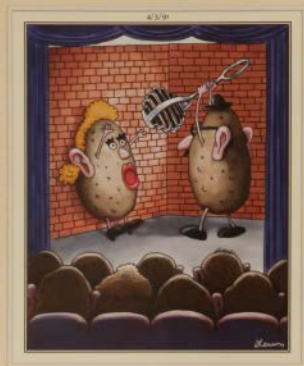
"Just ignore him. That's our rebellious young calf Matthew—he's into wearing leather clothes just for the shock value."



In a barbarian faux pas that quickly cost him his life, Garth is caught drinking his gruel with pinky fingers extended.



"Well, this is just going from bad to worse."



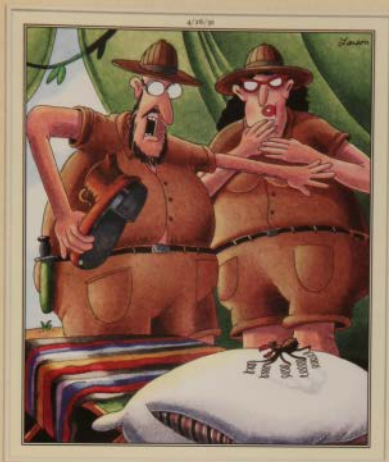
Masher films



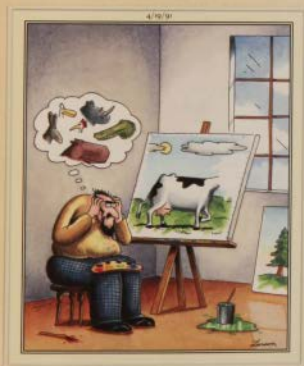
Early but unsuccessful practical jokes



"Got him, Byron! It's something in the *Vespula* genus, all right—and ooooweeeeee does he look mad!"



"Don't make any erratic movements, Miss Halloway. ... Not only is the truculent nature of this species amply documented, but, as you can discern for yourself, the little suckers can really jump."



The curse of "artist's block"



Front porch forecasters



Suddenly, one of the Dorkonians began to flagellate hysterically. Something, apparently, had gone down the wrong pipe.



In some remote areas of the world, the popular sport is to watch a courageous young man avoid being hugged by a Leo Buscaglia impersonator.





Shrew People: quick, carnivorous, usually nocturnal; smaller but more vicious than the better-known Mole People; eat five times their own body weight every day; cannibals.

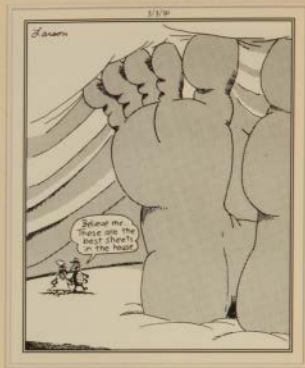


"I'm starting to feel dependent."





\*Young urban scientist



Bedbug dinner theater



"Wait a minute, friends ... Frank Stevens in marketing—you all know Frank—has just handed me a note ..."







Professor Lundquist, in a seminar on compulsive thinkers, illustrates his brain-stapling technique.



Although nervous, the Dickersons were well-received by this tribe of unique headhunters. It was Pooki, regrettably, that was to bear the brunt of their aggression.



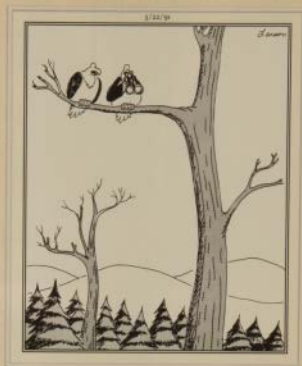
The Ty-D-Bol family at home



"Look at us, Hank. ... I tell you, there was a time when we did more than just watch the henhouse."



Horse hospitals



"You're cheating, Ned."



"AI's All-in-One Talent Agency and Construction Company, may I help you?"



Dung beetle neighborhoods



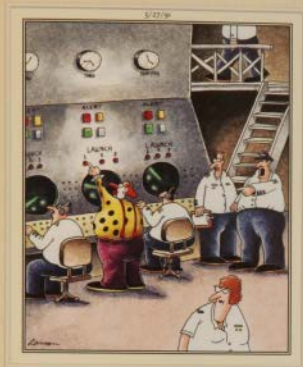
George Washington: general, president, visionary, ballroom break dancer.



The urban catsnake and its prey



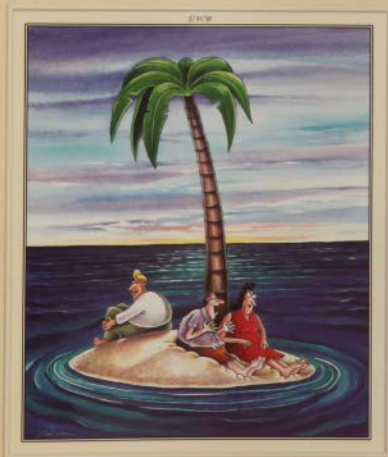
Kids' shows that bombed



"Hey! What's that clown think he's doing?"



What really happened to Tinkerbell



"What? You've met someone else? What are you saying? ...  
Oh, my God! It's not what's-his-name, is it?"



Leona Helmsley of the Paleozoic



"We can't go this way either, Simmons. ... See those lines? That's the international cartoon symbol for glass! ... He's got us good, the dirty buggar."



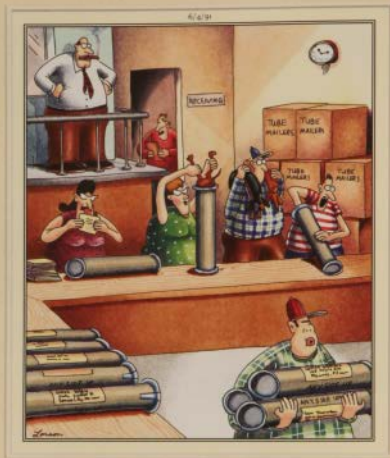
The hazards of teaching young Neanderthals



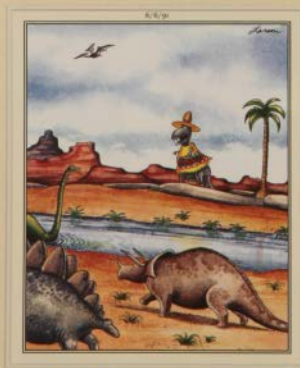
"Well, we're lost. I knew from the start that it was just plain idiotic to choose a leader based simply on the size of his or her respective pith helmet. Sorry, Cromwell."



The squirrels of Central Park



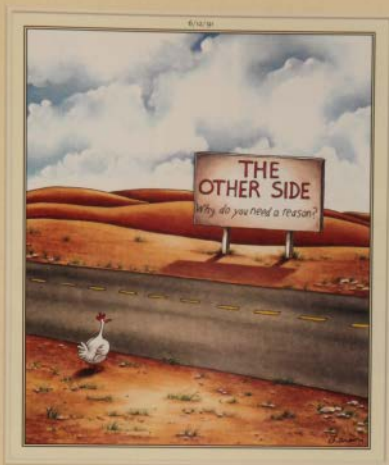
Wiener dog distribution centers



However, there was no question that, on the south side of the river, the land was ruled by the awesome *Tyrannosaurus Mex*.



Saturday mornings in cockroach households



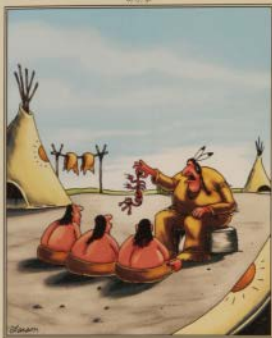


6/19/91



"The guy creeps me out, Zeena. Sure, he looks like he's just minding his own business—but he always keeps that one eye on my house."

6/20/91



"Take a good, long look at this. ... We don't know what it is, but it's the only part of the buffalo we don't use."

6/18/91



Insect game shows

6/20/91



Please do not feed the cartoon bears.



Mr. and Mrs. Bojangles' rebellious son



Freudian slide



"Sorry, kids—they've got cable, but no pond."



The rarely seen victory dance of the poison-arrow frog



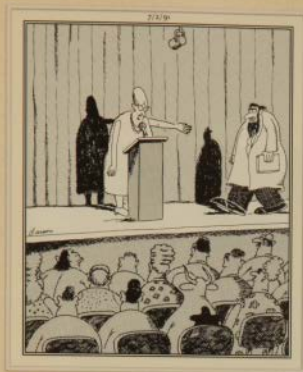
Inside a nuclear power plant



While his parents beamed, little Tommy Lundquist, future developer, surveyed the view from his newly constructed treehouse.



"It's roughage, and that's about it."



"And so please welcome one of this cartoon's most esteemed scientist-like characters, Professor Boris Needleman, here to present his paper, 'Beyond the Border: Analysis, Statistical Probability and Speculation of the Existence of Other Cartoons on The Known Comics Page.'"



The Blob family at home



"Hey! Not this new stuff. ... Me want Jurassic Coke."



"You're a long way from Big Poodle, stranger. ... This here is Dead Skunk, and if I were you I'd just keep on movin'."



"... And please let Mom, Dad, Rex, Ginger, Tucker, me,  
and all the rest of the family see color."

*Editor's note: Gary leaves  
for a one-month vacation.*



While their owners sleep, nervous little dogs prepare for their day.



"I'm worried about Frank these days. ... It seems he just can't unwind."



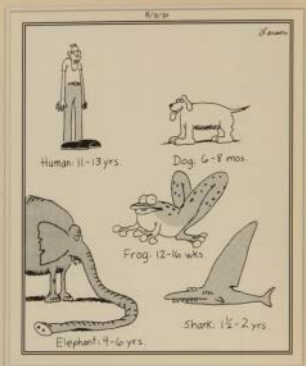
In 12th-century Pisa, Italy, the construction firm of Morrelli and Sons, whose members were all afflicted with a genetic disorder in which the left leg was considerably shorter than the right, begin work on a new tower.



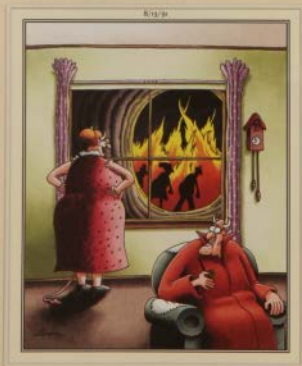
"According to these figures, Simmons, your department has lost another No. 2 Double N—and I want you to find it!"



"Bob! There's a fly on your lip! ... There he goes. ... He's back! He's back!"



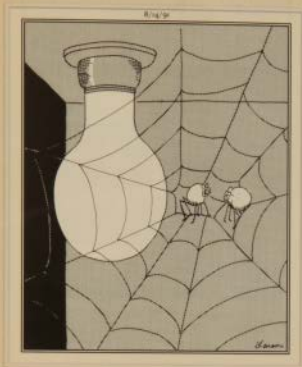
Awkward ages



"Looks like another hot one, Pa."



The life and times of Lulu, Mrs. O'Leary's ill-fated cow



"Crimony! Every night you ask me what's for dinner and every night I say the same thing: 'Moths, moths, moths!'"



"And here he is, the author of the exciting autobiography, *Shoe!*"



The herd moved in around him, but Zach had known better than to approach these animals without his trusty buffalo gum.



Unwittingly, Raymond wanders into the hive's company picnic.





"Oh, great! Now there goes my hat!"



Henry never knew what hit him.



Boid watching



Know your barbarians.



How poodles first came to North America



Fortunately for Sparky, Zeke knew the famous "Rex maneuver."



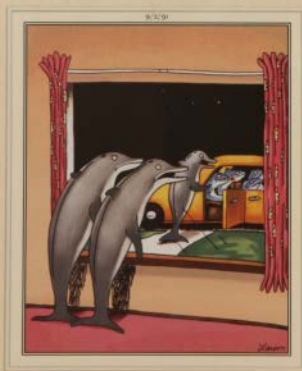
"Oh, there goes Lenny again—draining off the goldfish bowl. ... He wants to one day work for the Army Corps of Engineers, you know."



Mrs. MacIntyer smelled trouble. On one side of the fence was her fruit-laden apple tree; on the other was the neighborhood brat pack of Dennis the Menace, Eddie Haskell, and Damien II.



"Oh my God, Rogers! ... Is that? ... Is that? ... It is!  
It's the MUMMY'S PURSE!"



"Well, there he goes again. ... I suppose I shouldn't worry, but I just get a bad feeling about Jimmy hanging out with those tuna punks."



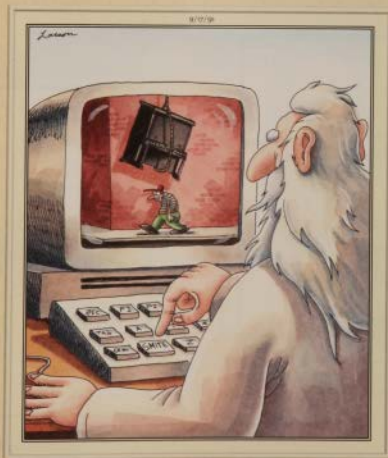
"Well, we're ready for the males' 100-meter freestyle, and I think we can rest assured that most of these athletes will select the dog paddle."



Special commuter lanes



Roommates Elvis and Salman Rushdie sneak a quick look at the outside world.



God at His computer



On the air with Snake Talk



At Mount Stoogetore



In its typical defensive behavior, the arctic clown remained motionless and concealed, betrayed only by its nose.



The farmers' Mafia sends Henry a message.



The art of conversation



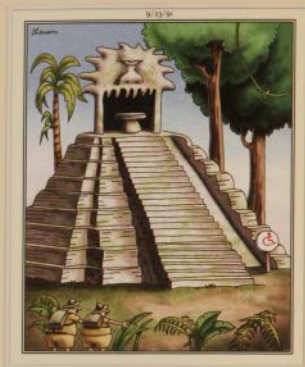
Flawed cultural treasures



"Boy, that's good. But it's interesting, Bob. ... Do you think everybody's mother makes a different kind of potato bug salad?"



Punk worms



August 11, 1959: In the heart of the Bolivian jungle, archaeologists stumble upon an ancient and heretofore unknown sacrificial altar.



"Whoa! Mr. Lewis! We don't know what that thing is or where it came from, but after what happened to the dog last week, we advise people not to touch it."



Carl "Javahead" Jones and his chopped espresso maker



Hell's video store

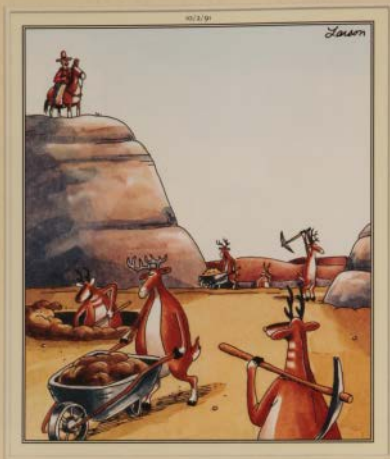
*To whom it may concern:*  
When I drew the above cartoon, I had not actually seen *Lintar*. I only knew, or sensed, that it had entered the film industry lexicon as a major turkey. Years later, I saw it on an airplane, and was stunned at what was happening to me: I was being entertained. Sure, maybe it's not the greatest film ever made, but my cartoon was way off the mark. There are so many cartoons for which I should probably write an apology, but this is the only one that compels me to do so.

—Gary Larson



In what was destined to be a short-lived spectacle, a chicken, suspended by a balloon, floated through the samurai bar's doorway.



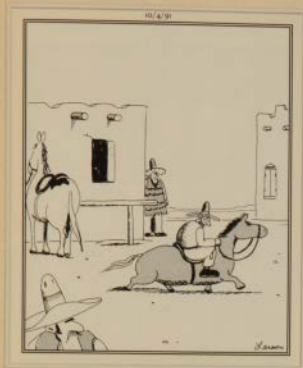


Where the deer and the antelope work



Omens and their meanings





Durango, Mexico, circa 1880: Juan Sanchez cruises through town on the first low-rider.



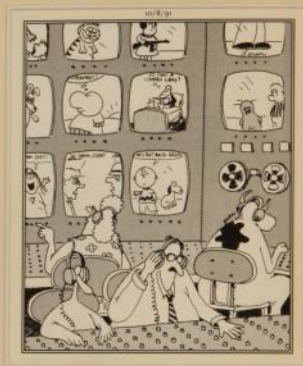
"You should hear him! ... First he growls and snarls at me and *then* he thinks he can make everything okay by scratching me behind the ears."



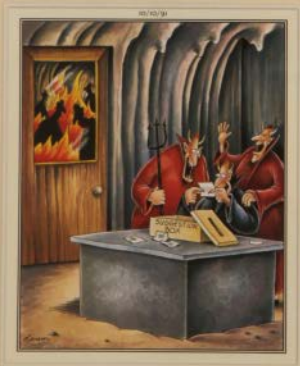
At the monthly meeting of Squidheads Anonymous



"You gotta help me, Mom. ... This assignment is due tomorrow, and Gramps doesn't understand the new tricks."



At *The Far Side's* spy center



"Okay, crybaby! You want the last soda? Well, let me GET IT READY FOR YOU!"



"My marriage is in trouble, Barbara. You ever tried communicating with a hammerhead?"



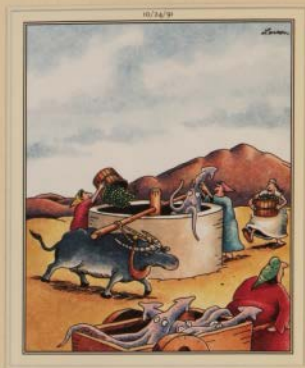
"Voilà! ... Your new dream home! If you like it, I can get a crew mixing wood fibers and saliva as early as tomorrow."



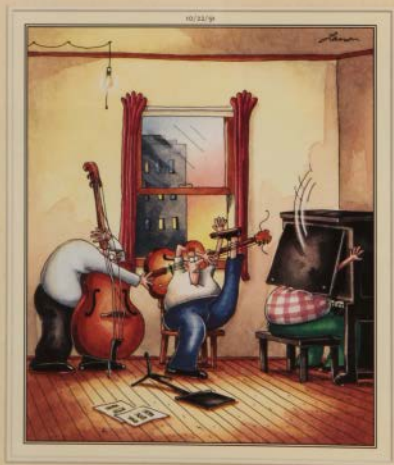
Dog previews



Professor Glickman, the lab practical joker, deftly places a single drop of hydrochloric acid on the back of Professor Bingham's neck.



Where we get calamari blanc



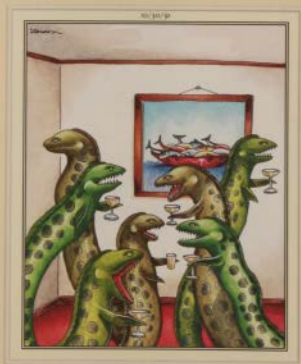
Three more careers are claimed by the Bermuda Triangle of jazz.



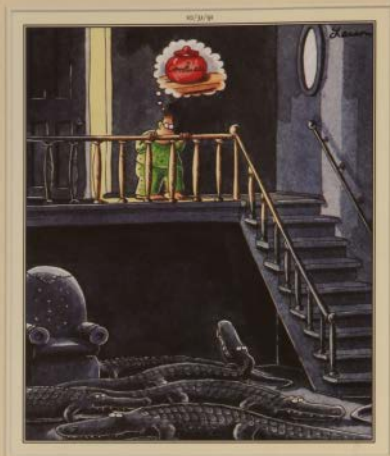
Vera looked around the room. Not another chicken anywhere. And then it struck her—this was a hay bar.



Dog ventriloquists



Social morays



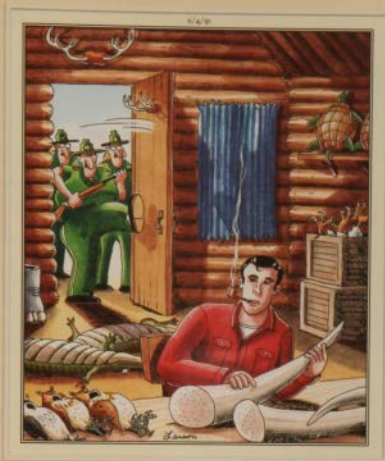
The nightly crisis of Todd's stomach vs. Todd's imagination



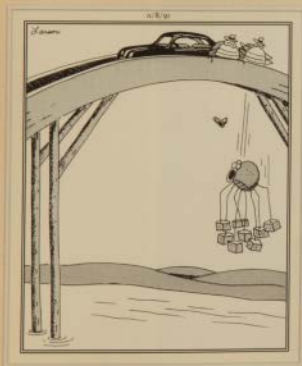
Stumpy didn't know how he got in this situation, but with the whole town watching, he knew he'd have to play it out.



How Mr. Ed was made to talk



Suddenly, Fish and Wildlife agents burst in on Mark Trail's poaching operation.



The spider Mafia at work

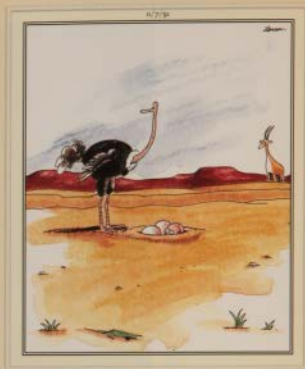


For many weeks, the two species had lived in mutual tolerance of one another. And then, without provocation, the hornets began throwing rocks at Ned's house.





"Hey! I got news for you, sweetheart! ...  
I am the lowest form of life on earth!"



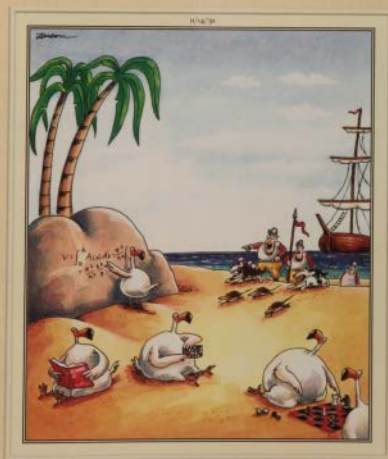
By blending in with the ostrich's eggs,  
Hare Krishnas are subsequently raised  
by the adult birds.



"Why don't you play some blues, Andrew?"



"I lift, you grab. ... Was that concept just a little too complex, Carl?"



Unbeknownst to most ornithologists, the dodo was actually a very advanced species, living alone quite peacefully until, in the 17th century, it was annihilated by men, rats, and dogs. As usual.



"Sure. The place you're lookin' for is straight over them hills. 'Course, that's as the crow flies, not as the chicken walks. Ha ha ha ha!"



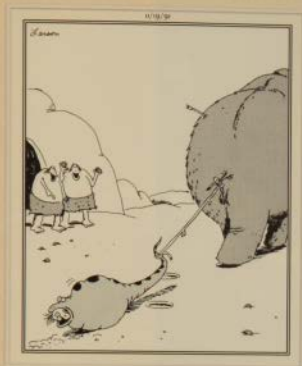
"Oh my God! ... '60s skins are back!"



Everything was starting to come into focus for Farmer MacDougal—his missing sheep, his missing beer, and his collie, Shep, who was getting just a little too sociable for his own good.



Why we see news anchorpersons only from the waist up.



Practical jokes of the Paleolithic

To whom it may concern

Hi!

Normally I have no problem with understanding the "fun side" but the following has thrown me. Not only are the drawings stupid - Please translate or at least give me a clue by back phone [redacted] - in an address letter.

Sincerely, [redacted]

**UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE**

April 22, 1991

Dear Mr. [redacted]:

Very coarse passed along to me your latest writing about a 500-200 cartoon by Janice titled "Practical Jokes of the Paleolithic".

The panel you didn't understand is a take on the getting-a-me-in-the-middle joke. The two women in the background have pulled a practical joke on the third woman. Whether the first one put the spear into the snake, and then laid the snake to the woman's tail. They then may have enjoyed the prospect of getting a meal in the form, which caused the woman to take the cartoon as a very funny joke.

The situation is not unlike someone putting a worm about long a few inches and taking the on a 100-foot. But this cartoon is not about worms of your age.

I hope this explanation helps. Thanks for taking the time to write.

Enclosure: [redacted]



Giorgio Armani at home



His wish to be a real person granted, the Visible Man takes his first steps into the real world—not suspecting that most people, upon seeing him, would either faint or throw up.



"Well, according to the dictionary, I'm just a large, flightless bird from East Africa. ... But believe me, Doris—once you get to know me, you'll see I'm much, much more than that."



Early checkers



"Whoa! Whoa! C'mon, you guys! This is just a friendly game of cards—ease up on those acid-filled beakers."



"Oh, yeah? Well, I'd rather be a living corpse made from dismembered body parts than a hunchbacked little grave robber like you!"



"You're a cold fish, Raymond."



John Denver on the comeback trail



The class abruptly stopped practicing. Here was a chance to not only employ their skills, but also to save the entire town.

12/1/91



Acts of God

August 23, 1984

Mr. Victor K. Hansen II  
Birmingham, Alabama

Dear Sir:

The reason this letter is being sent directly to you instead of to "Reader's Opinion" is that I am not interested in seeing my letter or my name in the paper, but I am very greatly concerned with a deplorable situation which you can, if you will, very easily fix right.

I do not believe that you are the best of men who would mock God, or who would enjoy seeing others hold the Almighty up to ridicule—but the "Far Side" cartoon which appears daily in the SAN FRANCISCO NEWS does just this on a recurring basis. Some time ago—perhaps two years ago—God was pictured in a series of cartoons entitled THE ACTS OF GOD, which appeared in a Sunday edition of the NEWS, as performing such acts as juggling and being shot out of a cannon, for the entertainment of the angels.

Like this, a week ago—in last Friday's paper, I believe—he was ridiculed as an apparently clumsy creator who was delighted to find that snakes were quite easy to make using modeling clay.

It is not surprising that a normal mind would enjoy ridiculing Almighty God—what is surprising is to find a respectable family newspaper such as the SAN FRANCISCO NEWS providing a platform for this wicked mind.

Surely, Mr. Hansen, you do not wish to make it appear that making God is an ordinary, respectable, acceptable thing to do, do you? Then will you not please issue to publish the "Far Side" cartoons in the NEWS?

Yours truly,

[Redacted]

12/6/91



Of course, prehistoric neighborhoods always had that one family whose front yard was strewn with old mammoth remains.

12/9/91

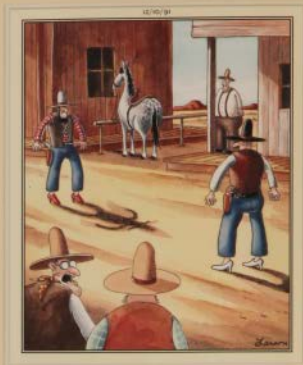


"Yeah, Vern! You heard what I said! And what are you gonna do about it? Huh? C'mon! What are ya gonna do? Huh? C'MON!"





Slave-ship entertainers



"I tell ya, Ben—no matter who wins this thing, Boot Hill ain't ever gonna seem the same."



Until his medical license was suspended, cosmetic surgeon Dr. Irwin Blumenfeld left many of his patients with the tragic side effect known as "buffalo nose."



If pets wore hats: a study in animal personalities and styles



"And now the weather—well, doggone it, but I'm afraid that cold front I told you about yesterday is just baaarrrrely going to miss us."



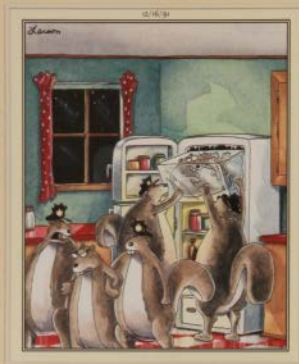
And then Al realized his problems were much bigger than just a smashed truck.



Cornered and sensing danger, Sidney flares his "eye spots."



"Oooooo! Check it out, Edith!  
It's a quadraceratops!"



"Come with us, ma'am—and if I were you, I'd get a good lawyer. No one's gonna buy that my-husband-was-only-hibernating story."



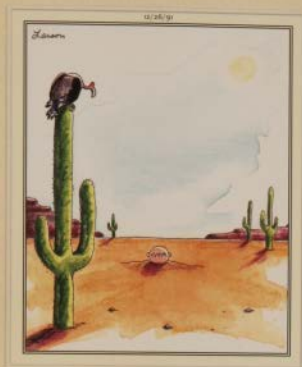
"Latte, Jed?"



"My gun, Desmond! I sense this striped man-eater is somewhere dead ahead, waiting to ambush us! ... Ohhhhhh, he thinks he's so clever."



"Waiter! What's that soup doin' on my fly?"



Charlie Brown in Indian country

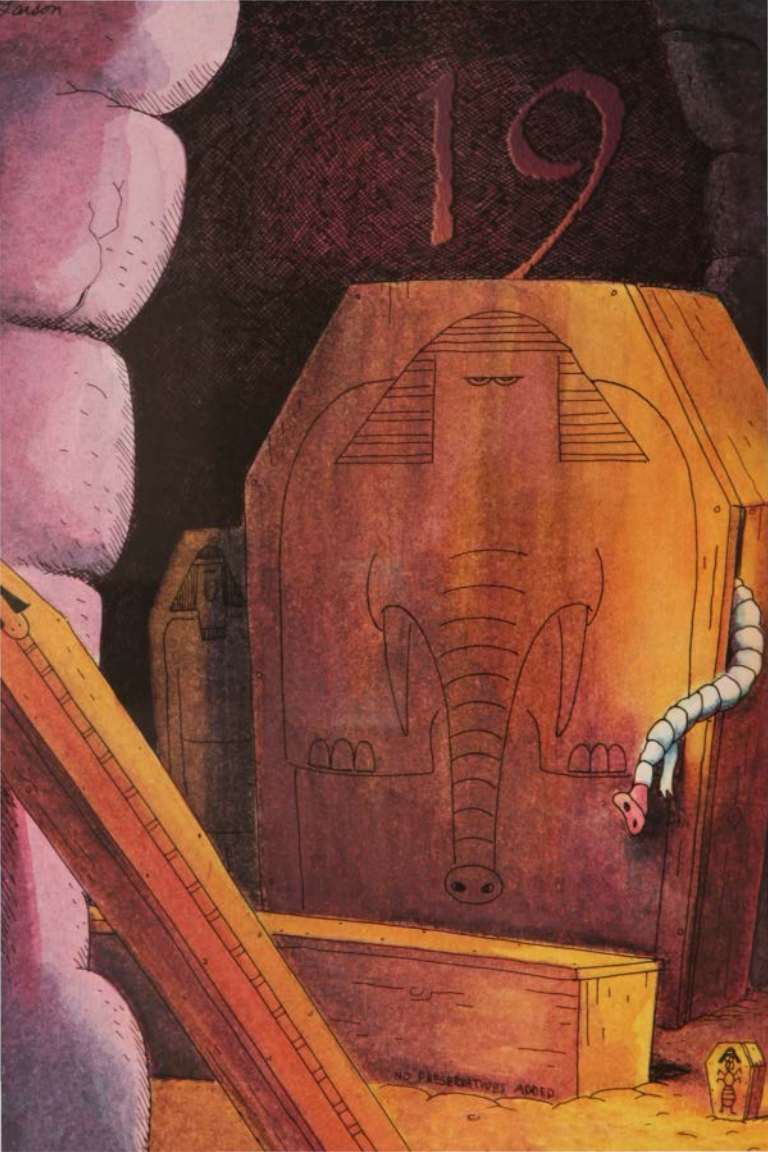


Carl had never had so much fun in his whole life, and he knew, from this moment on, that he would never again be a lone pine tree.



"I'm starting to worry about you, Earl. ... Stalking sheep in that outfit is one thing, but wearing it around the house is just a little bit kinky."





19

NO PARASITIVES ADDED





## The Minefields of Mirth

Having started this essay several times, I realize this subject could easily have required a third volume for this collection, which is already approaching critical mass. But maybe I can touch on just a few examples of how, in my experience, the simple formula:

drawing (d) + words (w) = cartoon (c)  
 can turn into:  
 d + w =  $\pi$  in my face.

First, there is the offensive variable: Inadvertently offending people (speaking for myself, I swear it was always inadvertent, although I admit to sometimes holding my breath when certain cartoons went "out the door") and reading their angry letters is a tough experience when you're first starting out young and enthusiastic, with visions of sugar cows in your head. Sometime after you receive your second or third "How DARE you!" letter, it begins to dawn on you that your own mother may not be the best gauge of how the rest of the world will always respond to you.

But eventually you learn the Big Truth: There's no avoiding this variable. You learn pretty fast in the humor business that offending some people is simply inevitable. (Unless I'm mistaken, even Dean Martin sang, "Everybody offends somebody sometime.") I suppose you could step around this particular land mine by drawing a strip like *Nancy*, although I'd be willing to bet that in his lifetime even Ernie Bushmiller got a letter or two suggesting that Sluggo was fostering some "social cancer."

How easy is it to offend someone? Try this: I once knew someone who expressed indignation over the cartoonist's universal symbol for cursing. You know, the "&\*#@\*\$#!" you sometimes see when, say, a character hits his thumb with a hammer? Maybe just a simple "#@!" would have been okay with this person, but a full, in-your-face "&\*#@\*\$#!" was apparently too much to handle. For the record, I don't believe I ever said "&\*#@\*\$#!" in any of my cartoons, except once when I made fun of the device.

Some land mines you unwittingly plant yourself, without a clue in the world of what you're doing. For example, the word "boink."

Warning to other cartoonists: Do not use "boink" as a sound effect for something smacking into something else. I didn't know this. I used it more than once. "Boink," as it turns out, can be considered a verb. (Especially by the Brits, who first brought the boink issue to my attention.) And as a verb, "boink" is a bad thing to say. Unless, of course, you *meant* to say "boink." Then I suppose "boink" is a beautiful thing, if perhaps not the most romantic way of expressing the thing that "boink" means, as a verb, you see. Whatever. Let's drop it.

Then there are the small, factual details that I sometimes overlooked. I suppose these are more equivalent to stumbling in a cartoon rather than actually falling, but frankly it used to bug the hell out of me when I did it. Case in point: Cassius Marcellus Coolidge.

It was a dark and stormy night. I was working on a cartoon based on that famous-for-being-kitschy painting, *Dogs Playing Poker* (Vol. 2, p. 423). I had to come up with a name for the artist. No use in checking the painting's history. I decided—*Dogs Playing Poker* is just one of those artifacts of American pop

culture that's always been around, right? It's just *Dogs Playing Poker* by the standard "artist unknown."

So I came up with the name "Gus Nickerson" for the long-forgotten artist. The cartoon gets published, years go by, and one morning I'm having breakfast and reading the *New York Times*, and wham!—there it is, front page: a human interest story about the life and times of Cassius Marcellus Coolidge, creator of *A Friend in Need*, the painting's real title, based on the fact that one dog is helping another cheat. Artist known.

Why did (and does) this bug me so much? Because these are the sort of small, arcane insights I enjoy capturing, like getting the right genus name on some insect. It wouldn't matter if only a handful of people would have discovered the cartoon's small "bonus." For me, that's what makes it fun. And in truth, it bugged me for another reason. If you think about it, *A Friend in Need* is arguably as famous (in this country, at least) as the *Mona Lisa* by what's-his-name, and I just didn't give Mr. Coolidge his proper due.

Then there's "Jimmy" Frankenstein (Vol. 1, p. 228). It jumped into my head that the mad scientist's name was "James Frankenstein." I have no explanation for this error. ("Jim Frankenstein" sounds more plausible as Victor's brother, who perhaps became a mad insurance salesman.)

Now allow me a brief excursion into the world of foreign translations. Here, the wheels can come off a cartoon completely and the whole shebang will plummet off a cliff in an entertaining ball of fire.

The translators usually are fairly successful at taking my sometimes very American clichés and expressions and finding their own native language equivalent. Of course, sometimes there's an impasse. And when a *cultural gap* opens up, well, that's when the fireball-over-the-cliff thing can happen. From Boot Hill to Eddie Haskell, some subjects just won't cut it in the *Le Journal Officiel de la République Français*.

Consider a cartoon I did on the subject of Babe the Blue Ox. (Vol. 1, p. 175). My German editors, naturally, had never heard of Paul Bunyan and his colorful sidekick. They took "blue" to mean "depressed." So in the German interpretation, hunters have mistaken the fabled animal for a big, "depressed" mule deer.

I'll simply show two other suggested translations below. These also are German, but I hasten to add that this problem wasn't unique to the Germans; I just liked these examples.

Original Caption

"Nik! The fireflies across the street—I think they're mooning us!"

Proposed Translation

"Nik! The fireflies across the street—I think they're trying to take the piss out of us!"



Original Caption

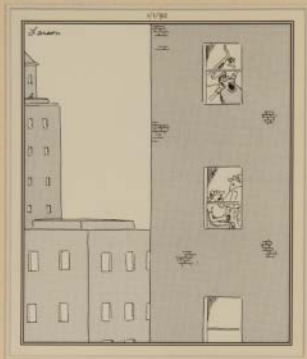
"Okay, folks! ... It's a wrap!"

Proposed Translation

"Okay, folks! ... The gift is ready!"

I need to call this a "wrap" myself. And I haven't even touched on the cartoons I drew that were simply misinterpreted. (Now we're moving into a theoretical volume four.) But, in the end, looking back at all the glitches, the near-misses, the gaffes, the should've/could'ves, I'm content. You know, ink happens.





"Whoa! Listen to that, Marge! ... I said that kid was playing a mean sax!"



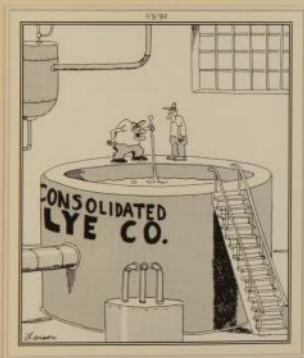
"Those snakes? Oh, they're just signing, honey."



"I hate 'em. They mess on the stools, they attack the mirror and—of course—they drink like birds."



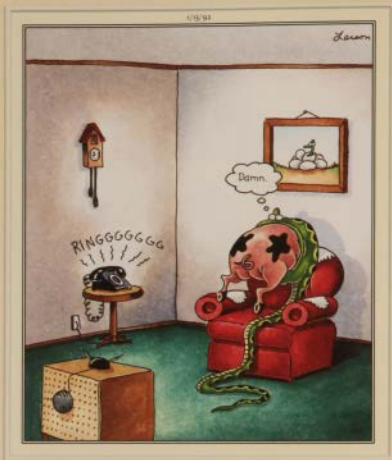
Darren was unaware that, under the table, his wife and Raymond were playing "tentacles."



"New guy, huh? Well, up here, you walk the edge! And the edge is a fickle hellcat. ... Love her, but never trust her, for her heart is full of lye!"



"Well, time for our weekly brainstem-storming session."



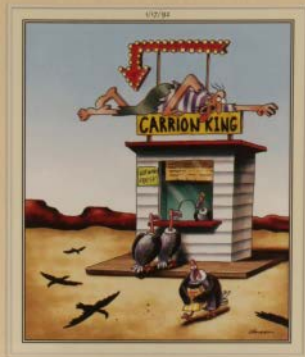
In the corridors of Clowngress



That night, their revenge was meted out on both Farmer MacDougal and his wife. The next day, police investigators found a scene that they could describe only as "grisly, yet strangely hilarious."



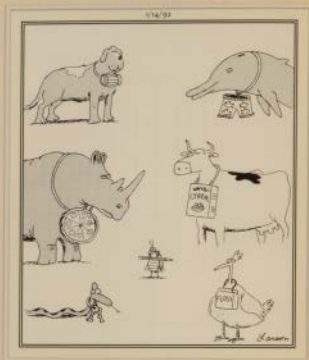
Colonel Sanders at the Pearly Gates



"And here's the jewel of my collection, purchased for a king's ransom from a one-eyed man in Istanbul. ... I give you—Zuzu's petals."



"Ooo! Look, Leon! An entire family of meatchucks!"



Some of our more common rescue animals



"Okay, let's start the exam. Stinking caps on, everyone—stinking caps on."



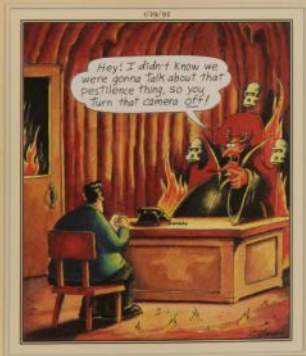
"Bad guy comin' in, Arnie! ... Minor key!"



"I don't have any hard evidence, Connie, but my intuition tells me that Ed's been cross-pollinating."

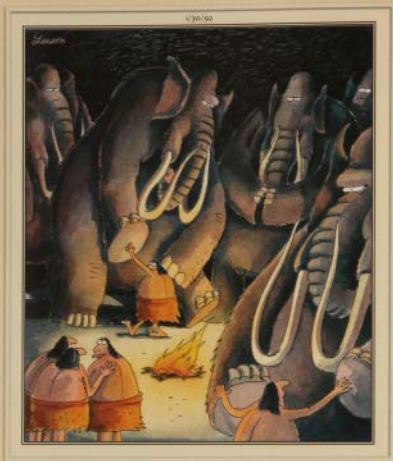


"Hey! Hey! Hey! ... Who's the wise guy that just turned down the thermostat?"



Mike Wallace interviews the devil.





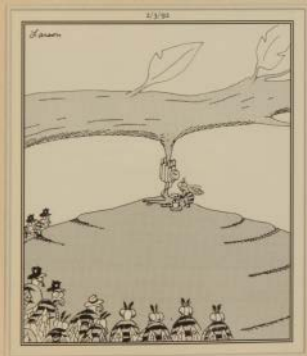
Tomorrow, they would be mortal enemies. But on the eve of the great hunt, feelings were put aside for the traditional Mammoth Dance.



Hospitals to avoid



Inside tours of Acme Fake Vomit, Inc.

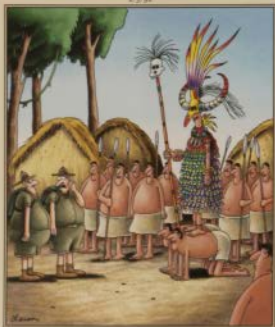


The Samson family at home

"We don't know exactly who he is, Captain—a disgruntled worker, we figure."



2/2/91



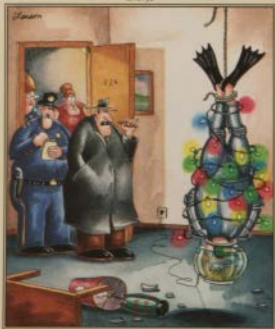
"Hey ... this could be the chief."

2/6/91



"Man, there's an old-timer with one foot in the wastebasket."

2/10/91



"Same as the others, O'Neill. The flippers, the fishbowl, the frog, the lights, the armor. ... Just one question remains: Is this the work of our guy, or a copycat?"

2/14/91



"Those, sire, are the uncommon folk."



Primitive résumés



"Hey! So I made the wrong decision! ... But you know, I really wasn't sure I wanted to swing on a star, carry moonbeams home in a jar!"



Theater of the gods



Sheep that pass in the night

2/10/91



2/10/91



2/10/91





Centaur rodeos



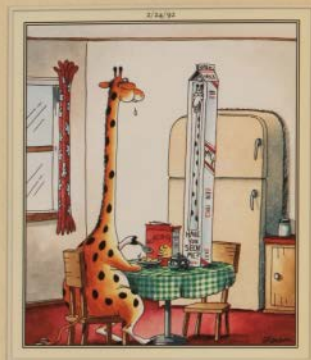
"Good heavens! Pablo got an 'F' in art! ... Well, I'm just going to go down to that school myself and meet this teacher face to face!"



"Eat my apple, will you? LEAVE MY GARDEN! BEGONE! ... And take all the mole traps with you!"



Environmental disasters in a flea's world



Scorpion school



"Oh my God! It's Yvonne!"



"Oh, Misty always hates me showing this slide. ... It's halftime at the '88 Detroit-Chicago game when we first met."



God designs the great white shark.



"Waiter, is that a hair in my salad?"



In Saddam Hussein's war room



In an ancient custom of retribution, the ranger Mafia sends Ted to "sleep with the bears."



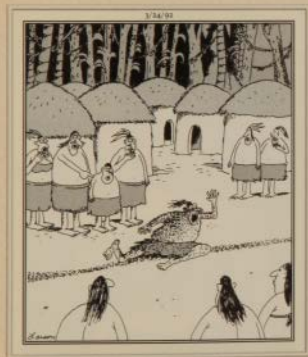
"Oh, yeah? Well, maybe I'll just come over there and rattle your cage!"



Some of our common crabs



Albums to avoid



Crossing the village, Mowaka is overpowered by army ants. (Later, bystanders were all quoted as saying they were horrified, but "didn't want to get involved.")



When Seeing Eye dogs dream



3/16/92



Lacking a horse, Jed was compelled to just drift along with the tumbling tumbleweed.

3/10/92



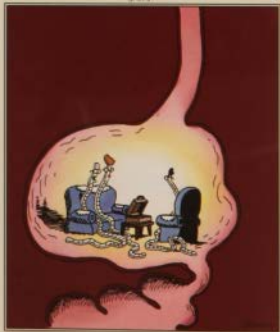
Sumo temporaries

3/16/92

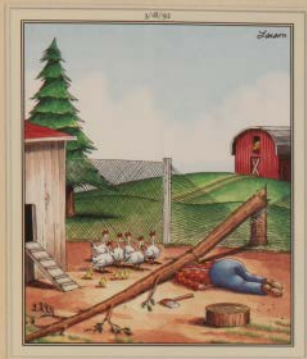


"Well, I'll be darned. ... Says here 70 percent of all accidents happen in the hole."

3/17/92



"Well, I'm not sure we can afford stomach insurance—right now we're trying to put the kids through the small intestine."



"Lord, we thank thee."



Clown therapy sessions

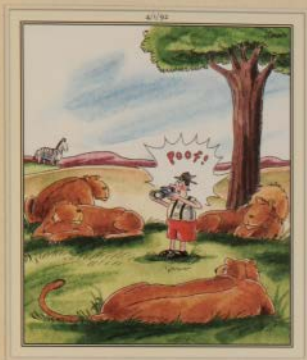


Basic lives



Donning his new canine decoder, Professor Schwartzman becomes the first human being on Earth to hear what barking dogs are actually saying.





While vacationing in Africa, Pinocchio had his longtime wish to be a real boy suddenly and unexpectedly granted.



Medieval chicken coops



"Oh, this is wonderful, Mr. Gruenfeld—I've only seen it a couple of times. You have corneal corruption. ... Evil eye, Mr. Gruenfeld, evil eye."



Date rejection lines

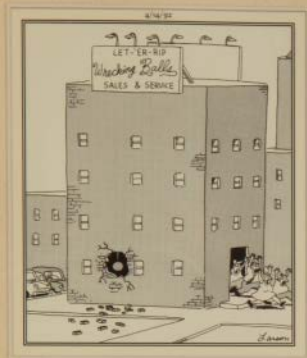


As Nyles left the safari club, his stomach suddenly knotted up. Foolishly, he had ignored the warnings not to park his Land Rover in this part of Tanzania.



Dance of the beekeepers





Up until that moment, Raymond had been a rather shy employee with a nervous twitch. Up until that moment.



"Holy cow! What's gotten into our La-Z-Boy?"



Concepts of hell



"Hey! It's Frank and Cindy! ... Haven't seen you folks for a while!"



Alert, but far from panicked, the herbivores studied the sudden arrival of two cheetah speedwalkers.



"Oh, my word, Helen! You play, *too*? ... And here I always thought you were just a songbird."



In the rodent family, the beaver is the king of the busy signal.



"For crying out loud! Look at this place! ... Well, this is one little satanic ritual that's coming to an end!"



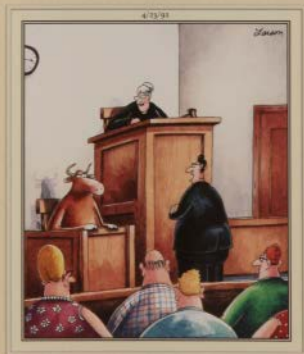
Scene from *Cape Buffalo Fear*



High drama at the Arthropod Trade Center



"Dang! That dog's been up on the sofa again, Hank—I just know it!"



"Look. We know *how* you did it—*how* is no longer the question. What we now want to know is *why*. ... Why now, brown cow?"





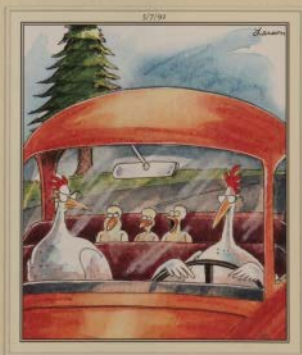
"Keep the door shut, Ernie! I just *know* that dang cat is going to try dragging that thing into the house."



"That's why I never walk in front."



"Okay, McFadden. ... So *that's* the way you wanna play."



"Mom! We were all singing 'She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain,' but Randy won't stop with the 'whack, whack' part!"





"LASSIE! ... COME HOME! ...  
LASSIE COME HOME!"



"So please welcome our keynote speaker,  
Professor Melvin Fenwick—the man who, back  
in 1952, first coined the now common phrase:  
'Fools! I'll destroy them all!'"



Fly dates



J. W. Miller with his staff and rod



The life and times of baby Jessica



"Margaret! You? ... I ... should ... have ...  
knowwwwwnnnnnn ..."



Junior high gorillas



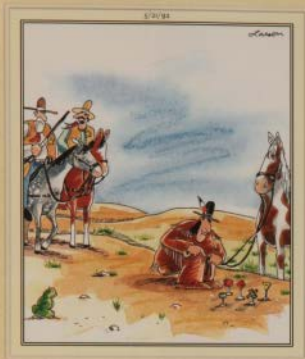
The action suddenly stopped while both sides waited patiently for the hornet to calm down.



In a tunnel under the Chicago River, a descendant of Mrs. O'Leary's cow follows her calling.



Good and evil shoes



"Now we'll find the varmint for sure. ...  
Red Cloud can read even the smallest trail signs."



The first Dirt Capades



Beeswax lunches



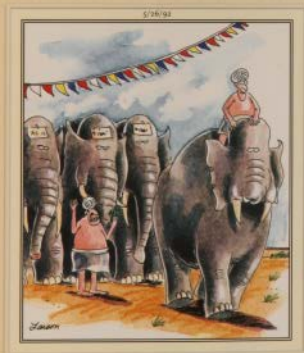
"Curse you, Flannegan! Curse you to hell! ...  
There, I've said it."



"Give me a hand here, boys! It's young Will Hawkins! ...  
Dang fool tried to ride into the sunset!"



"I wouldn't do that, bartender. ... Unless, of course, you think you're fast enough."



It wasn't until he got home that Sahib realized the thing had no front end.

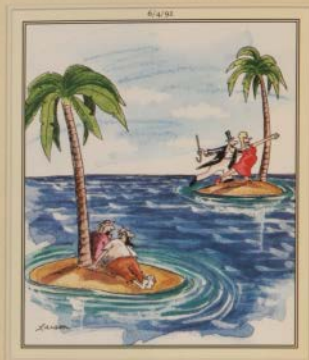


Modern art critic





Abraham Lincoln's first car



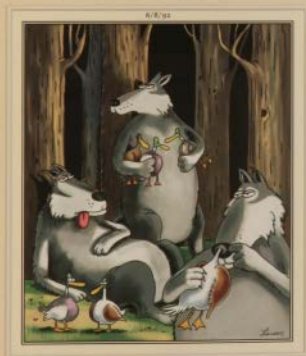
"Well, there they go again. The Stenbergs are always acting like life is one big musical."



"Okay, everyone just stand back! ... Anyone see what happened here?"

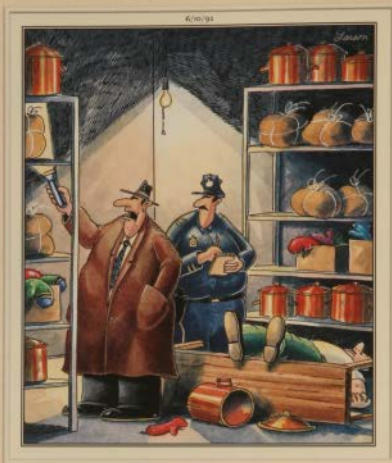


High above the hushed crowd, Rex tried to remain focused. Still, he couldn't shake one nagging thought: He was an old dog and this was a new trick.



Some wolves, their habitat destroyed and overwhelmed by human pressures, turn to snorting quack.





"Look here, McGinnis—hundreds of bright copper kettles, warm woolen mittens, brown paper packages tied up with string. ... Someone was after a few of this guy's favorite things."



"Look at the hordes down there, Phil. ... Have I ever told you what they look like? Huh? ... Have I?"



Lips of the animal kingdom



"There you are, my darling ... Rawlings! Don't move!"



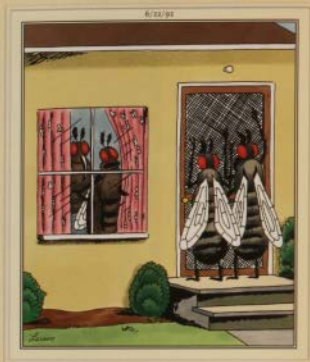
Eventually, Billy came to dread his father's lectures over all other forms of punishment.



"Well, first the bad news—you're definitely hooked."

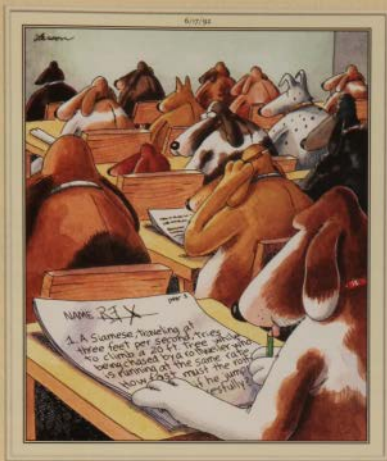


How to recognize the moods of an Irish setter



"Man, the Kellermans have a lot of nerve! ... If it wasn't for our screens, they'd probably walk right in!"





Before their admission to any canine university, dogs must first do well on the CATs.

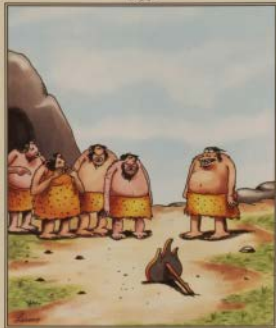


The last thing you see of an annoyed elephant



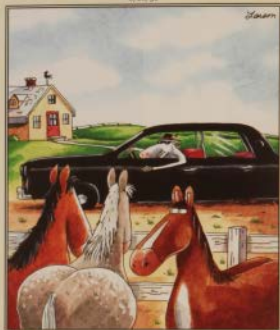
As suddenly as it started, Joe's gagging is alleviated when a small ninja sword is dislodged from his throat.

6/25/91



Zorg dupes the entire tribe in an incident later known as "firegate."

6/25/91



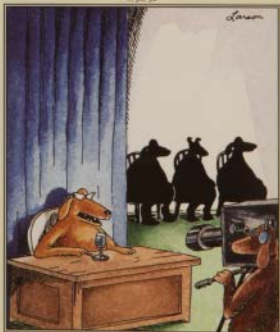
Every afternoon a sugar cube dealer would slowly cruise the corral looking for "customers."

6/29/91



Bottom of the pecking order, eh? Oh, I don't think so. Ha ha ha ha ha ha

6/30/91



"Dogs that drink from the toilet bowl—right after this message."



Insect witching rods



"Whoa whoa whoa, young man! You walk the plank like everyone else!"

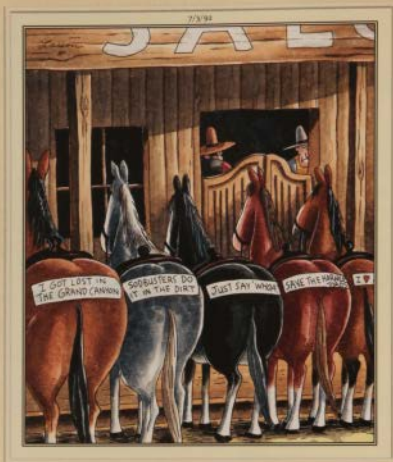


With the surgical team passed out, and with help from the observation deck, hospital custodian Leonard Knudson suddenly became responsible for bringing Mr. Gruenfeld "home."



A Louvre guard is suddenly unsettled by the arrival of Linda Blair.





Common bumper stickers of the Old West



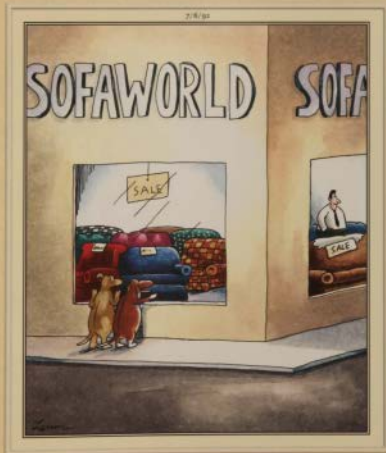
Although never achieving the fame of Tarzan, his African counterpart, Larry of the Lemurs was a common sight to natives of Madagascar.



Tarantula coffeehouses



Drawn by the pulsating sound of a rock thumping on a dead armadillo, two australopithecines stood at the forest edge. Instantly, Thag's agent knew they had a crossover hit.



"Oo! I'd get up on that big fuzzy one!"



"We can't go on like this, Ramone. ... One day, George is bound to take his blinders off."



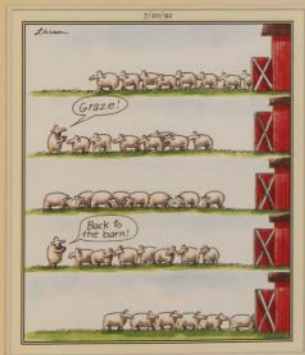
"Okay, Mr. Hook. Seems you're trying to decide between a career in pirating or massage therapy. Well, maybe we can help you narrow it down."



Every year, hundreds of tourists travel great distances to get a glimpse of the few remaining mountain Chihuahuas.



"Go ahead and jump, Sid! Hell, I know you're thinkin' it!"



He was king of the sheep.



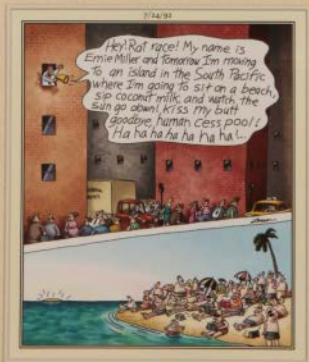
Wellington held out some beads and other trinkets, but the islanders had sent their fiercest lawyers—some of whom were chanting, "Sue him! Sue him!"



Chicken sexual fantasies



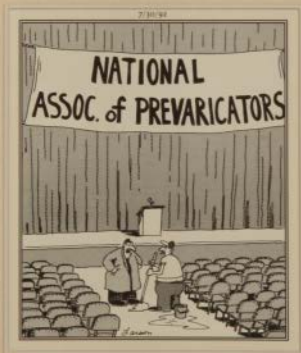
Early spokesmodels



Trouble brewing



Zombies: the driving dead



"Yesterday? I was told the meeting was today!"



The living hell of Maurice, Jacques Cousteau's cat



"Well, there goes Binky with the boss again. ...  
What a red-noser!"



The Zeonions came with the answers to many secrets of the universe. Vern, regrettably, came with thick glasses and his deer rifle.



And then the bovine watchers were given a real treat. On a small knoll, in full splendor, there suddenly appeared a Guatemalan cow of paradise.

8/10/92



Long before his rise to fame, artist Gus Nickerson experimented with many variations on a single theme—until that fateful day when a friend said, “Gus ... have you tried dogs playing poker?”

8/10/92



8/10/92



Where the respective worlds of boating and herpetology converge.

8/10/92



At Humpty's funeral





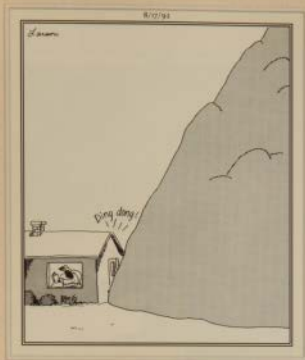
Revealing some of the mathematical computations every cartoonist must know.



Popeye on the dating scene



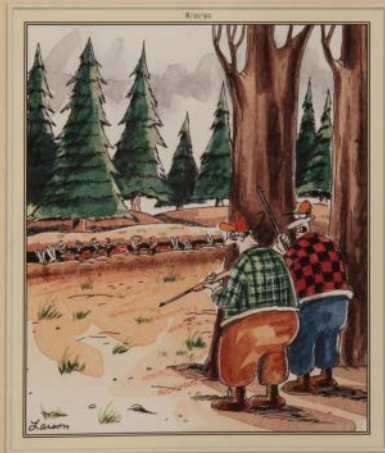
That night, Captain MacIntyre was killed by a following sea.



Again the doorbell chimed. With his wife out of town, and not expecting any visitors, Mohammed began to grow uneasy.



The writers for *Bewitched* sit down for their weekly brainstorming session.



"I've never seen this before, Roy! ... They've all stopped running!"

8/14/92



Every August, the fleas would test their endurance in the grueling Tour de Frank.

8/16/92



"Hey, boy! How ya doin'? ... Look at him, Dan. Poor guy's been floating out here for days, but he's still just as fat and happy as ever."

8/20/92

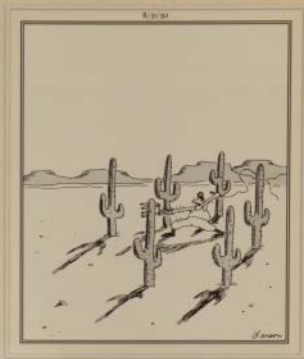


"Now now now. ... You won't be a lonely road forever, you know."

8/25/92



Things from Ipanema



Andre Lafleur: cactus tamer  
(later killed in central Arizona)



"This is it, Maurice! I've warned you to keep  
your hens off me!"



The Viking longcar was once the scourge of European roadways.



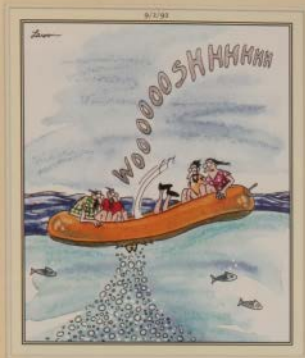
"I'm afraid we're going to have to head back, folks. ... We've got a warning light on up here, and darn if it isn't the big one."



Indispensable workers on any porcupine ranch, these amazing dogs will sometimes run across the backs of their charges.



Near misses of the Old West



To the horror of the lifeboat's other members, Madonna loses her balance and falls on her face.



Fumbling for his recline button, Ted unwittingly instigates a disaster.

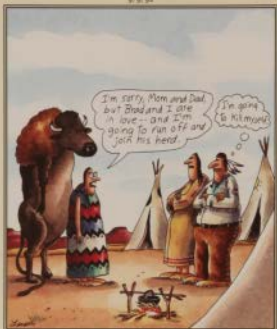


Boomer and Doug's relationship was never fully accepted by the other bears, who regarded all grubs in a much more traditional way.



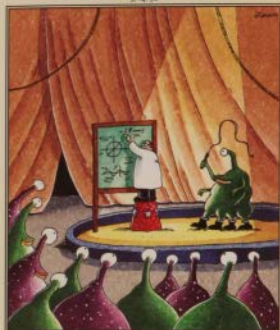
Laura runs to greet her pa in this scene from *Big Nose on the Prairie*.

9/9/92



Red Cloud's ultimate nightmare

9/14/92



Abducted by an alien circus company, Professor Doyle is forced to write calculus equations in center ring.

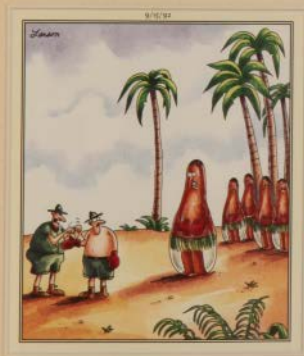
9/16/92



At Slow Cheetahs Anonymous



Calf delinquents



"Remember, Calloway, this is their biggest and best warrior—so stay alert! When you knock him down, he's gonna come right back at ya!"



"It's not good, ma'am. ... He's got field mice."





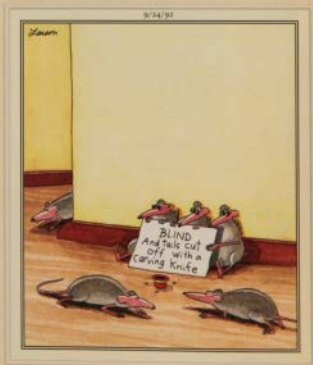
Giraffe limos



"Okay, ma'am, you said you warned your husband to put the newspaper down or you'd blow him away. ... Did he respond?"



Tensions mount on the Lewis and Clark expedition.





"So, Mr. Pig—you built that fire *after* you heard my client coming down your chimney? ... Did you know my client is an endangered species, Mr. Pig, while you yourself are nothing more than a walking side of ham?"



At the professional stick chaser's training camp



Suddenly, the cops stepped into the clearing, and the spamshiners knew they were busted.



"Aaaaaaaaa! It's Sid! ... Someone snuffed him!"



It was always a bizarre spectacle, but no one ever, ever, ridiculed the Teapot Kid.



"Oh, it's just Hank's little cross to bear—he's allergic to down and that's that."





A big day for Jimmy



Years later, Harold Zimmerman, the original "Hookhand" of campfire ghost stories, tells his grandchildren the "Tale of the Two Evil Teenagers."



"Nerd! ... Dang!"



"Fools! They made me into a free-range chicken ... and man, I never looked back."



Historical note: For many years, until they became truly nasty, Vikings would plunder, loot, and then egg the houses of coastal villagers.



Explorers from another cartoon are captured and tortured by the savage Farsidians.

10/15/92

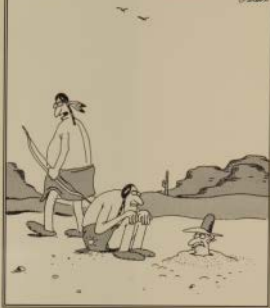
Lawson



"Cornelius! I've been watching him! ...  
Beware of the jawbone!"

10/16/92

Lawson



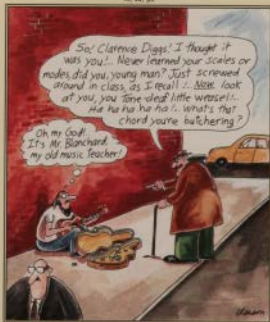
"Little Bear! A watched head never  
gets eaten by ants."

10/16/92



The woods were dark and foreboding, and Alice sensed that sinister eyes were watching her every step. Worst of all, she knew that Nature abhorred a vacuum.

10/22/92

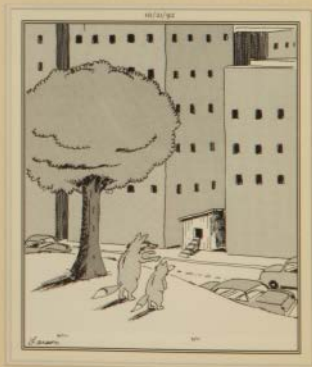




Early corsages



Suddenly, there he was, running along the far shore right in front of Bob and Vera, who would always remember they once saw the legendary "Character of the Lake."



"Well, I'll be! It's still there! The henhouse I used to watch as a kid!"



"Confession time, Mona—I've lead you astray."



"One good thing about living in this age—  
all the caves are brand-new."



Alien corner cafes, where sometimes  
dreams do come true.





"What the? ... Waiter! This looks like a little slice of heaven!"



For several hours, confusion reigned.



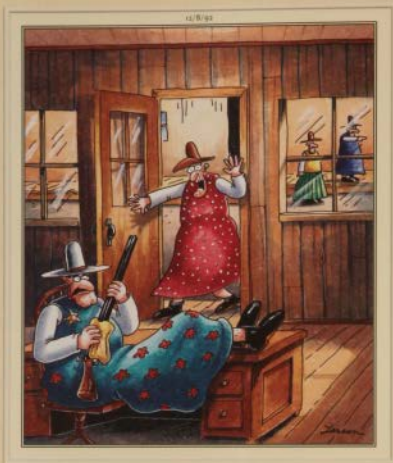
Later, Edna was forced to sell her Brussels sprout house.



"Hey, Lola. ... Did you see this thing in the paper?"



Suddenly, the whole world blows up.



"Sheriff! Ben Wiggins is ridin' into town, and he's wearin' that same little chiffon number that he wore when he shot Jake Sutton!"



Early plumbers



"Be patient, Leona, be patient. ... Zebras won't take a drink until they know it's absolutely safe."



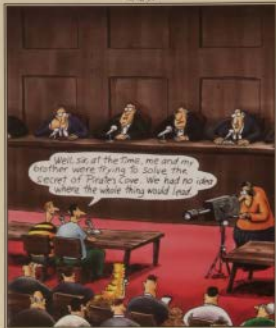
Pickpockets of the Rue Morgue



"In this dramatic turn of events, testimony against Mr. Pumpkinator is about to be given by his sister, Jeannie Jeannie Eatszucchini."

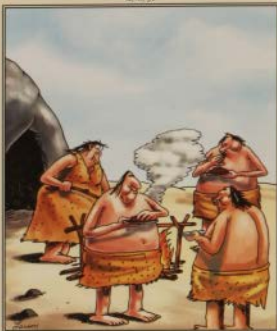


12/16/91



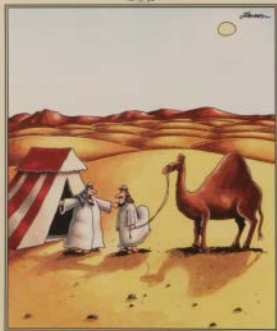
Testifying before a Senate subcommittee, the Hardy boys crack the Iran-contra scandal.

12/10/92



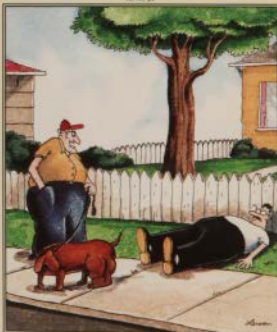
Origin of the expression "Puttin' on the dog"

12/15/90



"Abdul, my old friend! Come in, come in! ... Have you traveled far?"

12/16/92



"You didn't give me a chance to elaborate, friend. ... Mitsy doesn't bite, but man, can she kick!"



Careening through the neighborhood with reckless abandon, none of them suspected that Tuffy was still tied up.



The ever-popular Donner Party snow dome



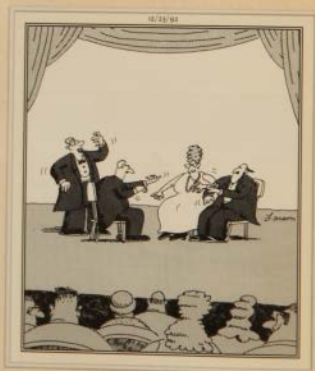
In her past, and unbeknownst to most people, Leona Helmsley was an avid bungee jumper.



Question: If a tree falls in the forest and no one's around, and it hits a mime, does anyone care?



Cossack accountants



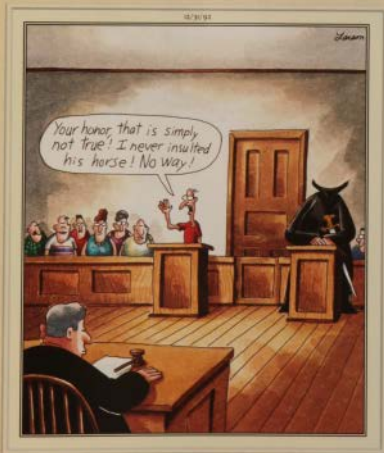
The Philadelphia Air Quartet



"And so there I was—beached! I could hear voices around me, but I couldn't go forward or back. And then it hit me: I could *rall!*"



"Now, moving on from the so-called funny bone, we come to this little guy—and you tickle *him* at your own peril."



Ichabod Crane v. the Headless Horseman in *The People's Court*.



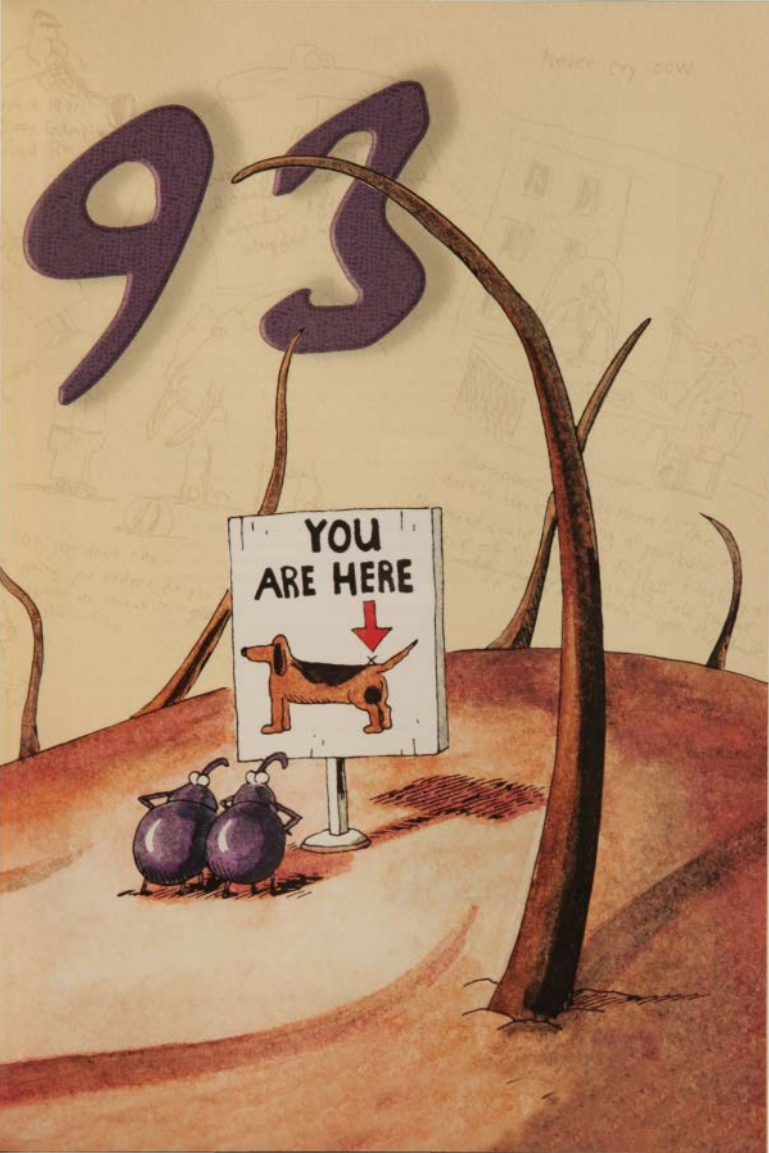


19

Lawson

Never cry now

# 93

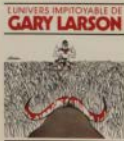


## I Remember...

- ... the magic cow that granted me three wishes.
- ... the phone call from Alice Smith, a magazine editor who bought my first cartoons and kick-started my interest in cartooning.
- ... the first check I ever received for drawing the above-mentioned cartoons. When a friend saw it, he advised me to frame it, not cash it. (I held off on the latter for about an hour.)
- ... my first "office," a phone booth at Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco, where I hung out and made calls to Chronicle Features, my future syndicate and where my portfolio had been temporarily impounded.
- ... realizing I had truly "arrived" when I got my electric pencil sharpener. (Listen, it was a big moment for me. It had suction cup feet, a see-through shavings container, and a light that told you when your lead was sharp! Yes, I had gone pro.)
- ... the time a woman, dressed in a rabbit suit, showed up at a book signing and hit me with a cream pie. (I think it was actually intended to be a "friendly" pie-in-the-face, but the episode was a little, well, awkward.) And since I had to leave directly for the airport and the pie had actually missed my face but not my shirt, on the flight home I'm sure everyone around me thought I was wearing banana cologne.
- ... some of the things that fans brought with them for me to sign, perhaps the most memorable being a large, stuffed shark. I suppose the runner-up might be the guy who brought in his bowling ball, along with an electric engraver.
- ... my first complaint letter, from a mother who demanded I tell her how she was supposed to explain to her five-year-old the meaning of my cartoon showing Santa Claus writing a cookbook called *Nine Ways to Serve Venison*.
- ... the time a foreign publisher took my first book cover, which looked like this:



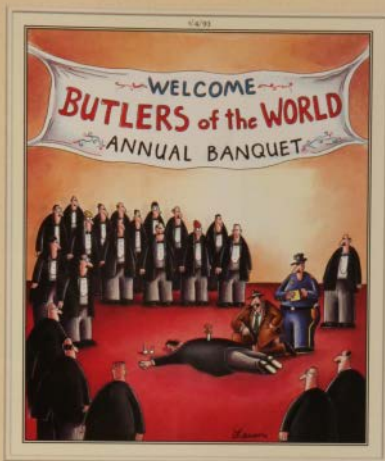
and made it look like this:



- ... the time I drew what I believe *may* have been the first naked butt (Vol. 2, p. 217) to appear on the comic pages of mainstream newspapers. (Not that this was ever one of my goals, but you have to grab these awards on your own because no one hands them out.)
- ... the absolute worst cartoon I ever drew and which still makes me cringe. (I thought about revealing it, but I fear I'd start hearing, "Oh, you're wrong—that's not your worst cartoon.")
- ... the time a TV reporter began an interview with: "Tell me, Mr. Larson, where is The Far Side, and is it difficult to travel there and back?" (*Twilight Zone* theme music, please.)
- ... the time a stranger, a woman, learned where I lived, knocked on my door, and asked for an autograph. I went to a room in the back of the house to get a pen, turned around, and there she was, standing right next to me, holding a butcher knife. (I made up the butcher knife part—this one seemed to need a little "something.")
- ... my first book signing, and a young man showed up with a photo album containing every cartoon I had ever drawn, cut out and neatly glued down and arranged in chronological order. Ask any cartoonist: Anyone who cuts out one of your cartoons has just paid you the greatest compliment. (I liked this guy.)
- ... the letter from another cartoonist's attorney threatening me with a lawsuit on behalf of his client, who claimed I had stolen his idea that had been published previously in a campus newspaper some 3,000 miles away from where I lived, BUT, of course, his client was willing to let the entire matter drop for \$50,000. (I passed, but thought about sending the guy an electric pencil sharpener as a small consolation prize.)
- ... the cartoon called "Cow tools" (Vol. 1, p. 251) that took me to hell and back because everyone tried to decipher something in the cartoon that was undecipherable, which was supposed to be the joke, which then became a joke on me, which wasn't funny anymore, which forced me to write a press release, which gave me a good lesson about drawing confusing cartoons, which lasted about a week.
- ... the night in Washington, D.C., after a crazy book signing when I couldn't find my publisher's rep and, searching for her, wandered out onto the sidewalk where I encountered a bunch of people who immediately crowded around me trying to get their *Far Side* books signed, and a car pulled up to the curb, a guy

yelled, "Gary! Quick! Get in!" so I did, we took off, and I found myself in a car full of more fans who were delighted I had joined them.

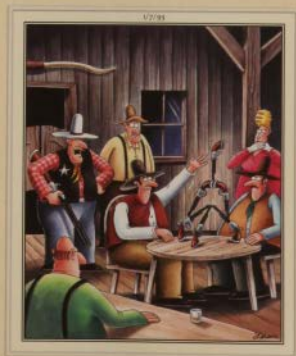
- ... the time I sat across a dinner table from Charles Addams, and neither of us said a word to the other. (I was intimidated; he suffered from narcolepsy.)
- ... the time I unwittingly wore a T-shirt that had one of my own cartoons on it into a grocery store. At the checkout stand, my shirt sparked a conversation between the clerk and the box boy, with the clerk saying to the box boy, "Did you know Gary Larson comes into the store every once in a while? ... yeah ... big bear of a guy ... very friendly ... not weird at all ... blah blah blah ... ." Still talking to the box boy, he handed me my change, and as I walked away he said something to the kid about pointing me out next time I'm in the store. (Officially, I would describe myself as more deer-size than bear-size.)
- ... the time I incurred the wrath of some Eskimos. (I'm still not exactly sure why.)
- ... the time I incurred the wrath of some cat lovers. (I know why.)
- ... the time I incurred the wrath of mental health organizations. (Shouldn't they have been reaching out to me?)
- ... the many times I incurred the wrath of Amnesty International. (They don't like cartoons about dungeons and people being tortured in them.)
- ... the time I incurred the wrath of some Christian fundamentalists. (I know why, but I was at more risk from the cat lovers.)
- ... the time I realized I needed to get an unlisted phone number. (Now you know why.)



"God, Collings, I hate to start a Monday with a case like this."



The Angel of Migraines



"Okay, boys—that'll be enough. ....  
We don't allow any gunplay in this town."



And for the rest of his life, Ernie told his friends that he had talked with God.



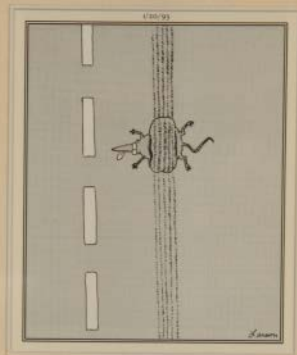
"Uh-oh. ... Looks like the usual airplane food."



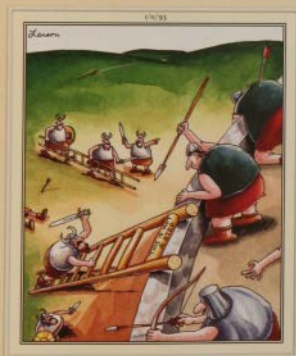
"Well, I'll be. ... I must've been holding the dang work order like *this!*"



Regrettably, Professor DeWitt's boasting fell on too many jealous ears, and that night, as he stumbled from the bar, he was ethzened by an unknown assailant and "relieved" of his trophy.



Scenes that make a crow smile







Moses parting his hair



A tragedy occurs off the coast of a land called Honah-Lee.



Snake department stores



Bivalve lore



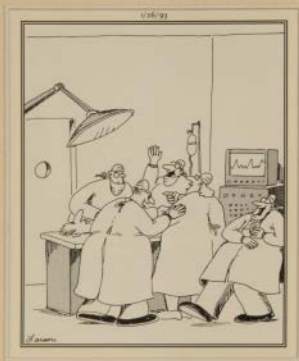
"You're damn lucky, Saunders. ... If that rhino had really respected you as an enemy, he'd have done a helluva lot more than just walk up and slap your face."



Scene from *Insurance Salesman of the Opera*



"We're screwed, Marge. Big Al is gone. ... Our star attraction. ... And God only knows where he is."



Carlton falls for the old rubber-scalpel gag.



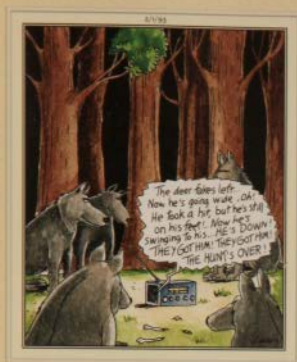
With no one looking, Koona would secretly sprinkle on a few sprouts.



"You're not fooling me, Ned. ... Taking a long walk on the beach sounds romantic, but I know you're just looking for crustaceans."



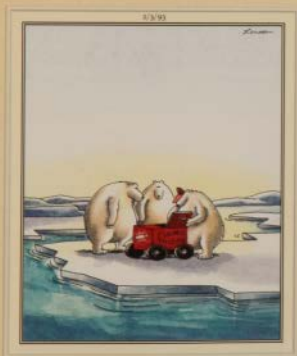
"Our camels are dead, we have no water, and yet we must cross this desert if we are to survive. ... For the love of Allah, Omar, do you ever trim your nose hairs?"

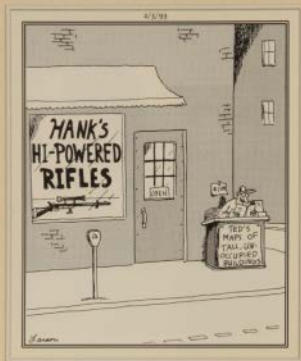


Monday night in the woods



"Quit school? *Quit school?* You wanna end up like your father—a career lab rat?"





"No, really, Mom—who do you like best?"



"Don't touch it, honey ... it's just a face in the crowd."



Be a virus, see the world.



The Angry Young Pachyderms



"Well, Douglas! I noticed during the exam your eyes weren't exactly rotating in their sockets."



Henry VIII on the dating scene



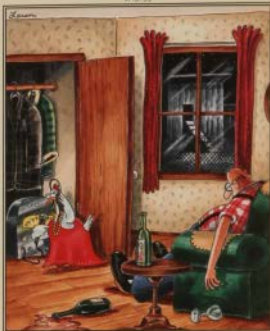
"Well, kid, ya beat me—and now every punk packin' a paddle and tryin' to make a name for himself will come lookin' for you! ... Welcome to hell, kid."

2/15/93



"Hey, Ruby! The circus is back in town! Remember when we went last year and that clown asked you to smell his boutonniere?"

2/18/93



She was known as Madame D'Gizarde, and, in the early '40s, she used deceit, drugs, and her beguiling charms to become the bane of chicken farmers everywhere.

2/18/93

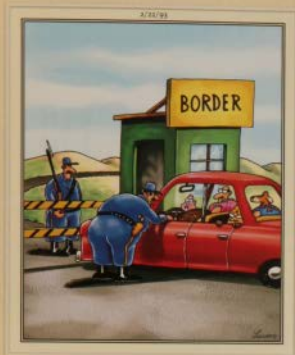


"Oh, man. ... Is that another one of those hiss-and-tell books?"

2/25/93



"Can't use ya, son ... says here your feet aren't flat."



"Excuse me, sir, but could your entire family please step out of the car? ... Your faces are not in order."



"Look, if it was electric, could I do this?"



How attack-wiener dogs are trained



Hummingbirds, of course, have to watch nature films with the action greatly speeded up.





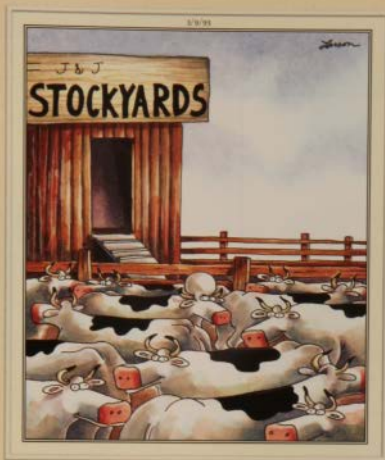
"Oh, the box of dead flies? Ramone gave them to me Saturday night during his courtship display. ... Of course, they were already sucked dry."



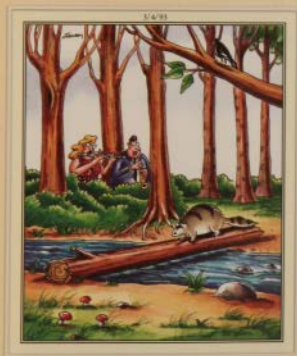
"Norm? This is Mitch. ... You were right—I found my drill."



"Hey! You! ... Yeah, you! I ain't gonna tell you again—quit spittin' on me!"



Only Claire, with her oversized brain, wore an expression of concern.



On this particular day, Rory the raccoon was hunting frogs at his favorite stream, and the pleasant background music told him that Mr. Mountain Lion was nowhere around.



"Several more deaths have been reported in the neck area, and although the authorities won't comment, some residents are blaming the new collar."



"It wasn't me, Dad! It was Randy's musk glands!"



"The problem, as I see it, is that you both are extremely adept at pushing each other's buttons."



Several times more dangerous than his African cousin, the junkyard rhino offers the ultimate in property protection.



Jurassic calendars



"And then, WHAM! This thing just came right out of left field."



"It's time we face reality, my friends. ... We're not exactly rocket scientists."



Unbeknownst to most students of psychology, Pavlov's first experiment was to ring a bell and cause his dog to attack Freud's cat.



"Look, Dad! ... Snidgets!"



Through mostly grunts and exaggerated gestures, two fishermen-gatherers attempt to communicate.



Santa arrives in the New World.



"Boy, everyone's really out wandering the streets tonight. ... I tell you, Charles, we're getting to be real home zombies."



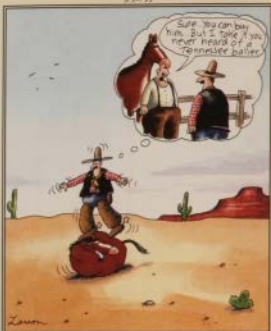
Sorry, your highness, but you're really not the dictator of Ithwana, a small European republic. In fact, there is no Ithwana. The hordes of advisers, the military parades, this office-- we faked it all as an experiment in human psychology. In fact, your highness, your real name is Edward Belcher, you're from Long Island, New York, and it's time to go home, Eddie.

3/24/93



"Dang! ... Stiff neck!"

3/30/93



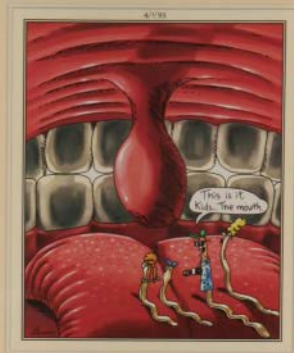
3/30/93



Drive-by erasings



"Hey, who's that? ... Oh—Mitch, the janitor. Well, our first test run has just gotten a little more interesting."



Tapeworms on vacation



Scene from *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Ed*





Hot off the press, the very first edition of the *Desert Island Times* caused the newspaper to quickly fold.

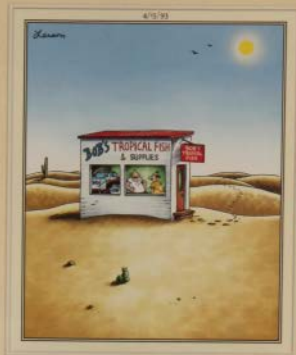


Chicken serial killers





"One more time: You were at the park, enjoying the afternoon, when you distinctly heard the defendant turn to his dog and say, 'Look, boy! A stickman!'"



"Hey! You're not lookin' to buy anything, are you? ... I think you best just keep movin', buddy."



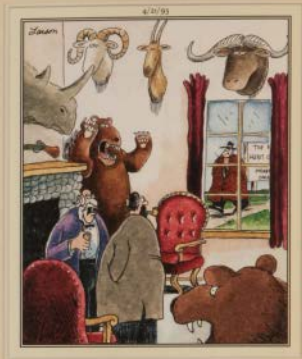
"Am I glad you boys came along! ... My horse seems to have come up lame."



He had seen Tanzania, and most of Mozambique was already behind him. There was no mistake. Chippy had done what most chimps only dream about: He had caught the Perfect Vine.



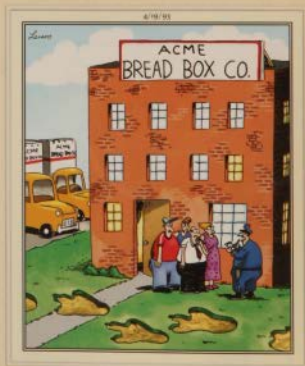
As witnesses later recalled, two small dogs just waltzed into the place, grabbed the cat, and waltzed out.



"Oh, God! Here comes Finchley! ... He's out of the closet, you know—says he kills only for food, not for sport."



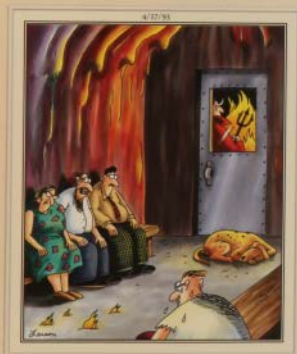
"He kids me ... he kids me not. ... He kids me ... he kids me not. ..."



"Okay, okay! Calm down, everyone! ... This monster—would you say he was bigger or smaller than your building? ... You can talk it over."



Only Bernard, in the front row, had the nerve to laugh at Death.



"His story? Well, I dunno. ... I always assumed he was just a bad dog."



It was no place for yellow squash.



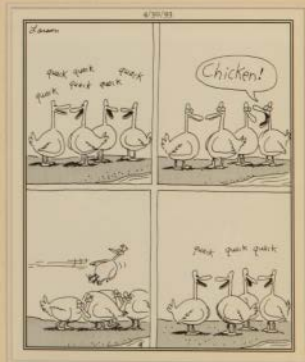
"Man, these pups today with all their fancy balls and whatnot. ... Why, back in our day, we had to play with a half-rotted cat's head."



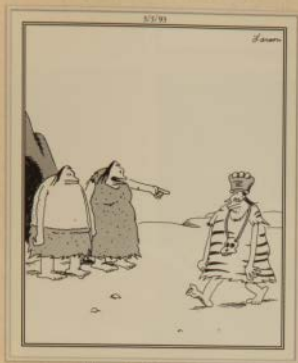
"We've done it! They've linked up! ... Man, Feldman must be freaking out—he even hates spiders."



Back in his college days, Igor was known as the HBOC.



"And so," the interviewer asked, "Do you ever have trouble coming up with ideas?" "Well, sometimes," the cartoonist replied.



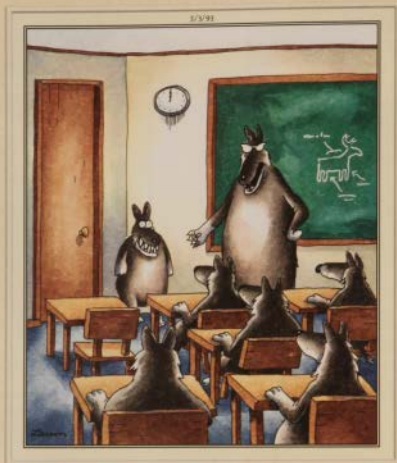
"Whoa! Look at Zagar! ...  
He dressed to the twos!"



On hot days, dogs are often subject to the  
phenomenon of cat mirages.



What the stranger didn't know, of course, was that  
Sam always kept a Dobie in his boot.



"Okay, time for lunch. ... And Dwayne here will be dismissing you by row number, since he's the alpha wolf today."



"Professor LaVonne had many enemies in the entomological world, detective, but if you examine that data label, you'll find exactly when and where he was—shall we say—'collected.'"



The magnificent Lipizzaner cows



"I love the desert."



"There he is! ... Bruno! Bad dog!"



"Amazing! The mummified remains of a prehistoric cave-painter, still clutching his brush! ... Seems he made an enemy, though."





The Shaolin School of Plumbing



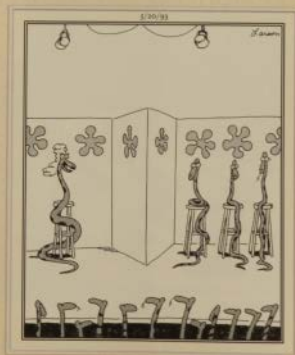
More facts of nature: All forest animals, to this very day, remember exactly where they were and what they were doing when they heard that Bambi's mother had been shot.



Failed marketing plays



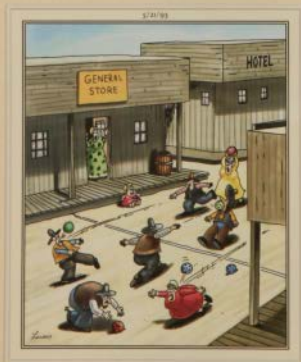
Octopus obedience school



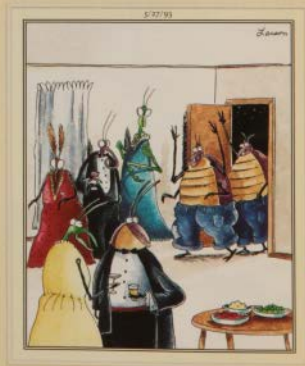
"Bachelor No. 3: Who would you rather swallow—Mickey Mouse, Speedy Gonzales, or Rocky the Flying Squirrel? ... And why?"



"Mmmmm ... interesting ... interesting. ... Well, I'd say we taste a little like chicken."



It was a tough frontier town; but later, after the arrival of the Earp brothers, things calmed down, and the town's name was shortened to simply Dodge City.



"Oh, my God! Dung beetles! ... And in their filthy dungarees, of course!"



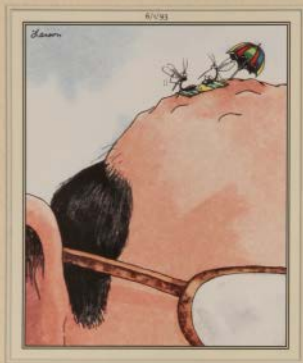
"Okay! When I say 'action,' all you bacteria charge the camera! ... Remember, this is the biggest scene in the whole movie—relatively speaking!"



As his eyes grew accustomed to the dark, Death suddenly noticed his girlfriend sitting with Dr. Jack Kevorkian.



"Well, lemme think. ... You've stumped me, son. Most folks only wanna know how to go the other way."



"Wow. ... That's ironic. I think something bit me."



"Oh, boy, was *that* an ugly day. ... Roy instantly took the bird in to be debeked, all the way yelling, 'Tit for tat! Tit for tat!'"



"Thanks for being my friend, Wayne."



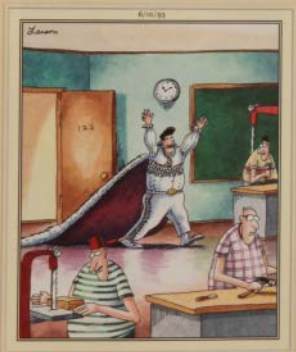
The curse of songwriter's block



"Of course, one of the more popular myths is that our 16th president was born in a little log cabin."



"You know, boys, sometimes I stare up at the stars like this and I wonder ... I wonder wonder who ... who wrote *The Book of Love*?"

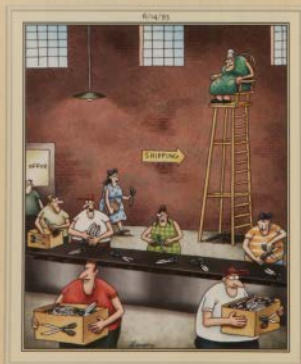


Long before his show business career, he was known as *Mr. Liberace*, the wood-shop teacher.





"Edgar! Leave him be! ... Always best to let sleeping dogs lie."



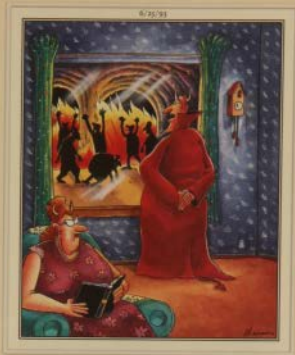
"You must be new here! ... That's Miss Crutchfield, and she's there to make sure *nobody* runs with scissors."



Boxer nightmares



At the I've Fallen and I Can't Get Up Building



"Tell me, Margaret. ... Am I a butthead?"



Now at your local feed store







"Twarn't the alien's fault, sheriff. ... Ol' Jeb Halloway kept stickin' his head in one of the critter's orifices and yellin', 'Jimmie crack-corn! Jimmie crack-corn!'"



"As you can see, most of these things are jackrabbits, but keep your eyes peeled for armadillo as well. ... We're about five miles now from the dead steer."



Structures, organs, and accessories (shown actual size) pertaining to *Mellisuga helenae*, the world's smallest hummingbird.



"Oh, this is so exciting! ... You know, no one's played that thing for years!"



"Hey, you'll love it! All she needs is some gravel, a few plants, and maybe one of those miniature human skeletons."



Vern, Chuck, and the pope go fishing.

July 1993



"Hello, ladies and gentlemen, Engineer Matthews here. ... Better take your seats and put them drinks down, 'cause around this corner we always hit some pretty bad trackulence."

*Editor's note: Gary leaves for a one-month vacation.*



Once the men got liquored up, they'd often take the leash laws into their own hands.



"Okay, kids, here we go. ... And I believe Danny's right, Randy—it's his turn to eat the queen."



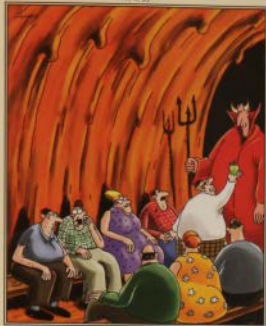
The first day at fly summer camp



Incredibly, Morty had forgotten to bring a pocketbook.

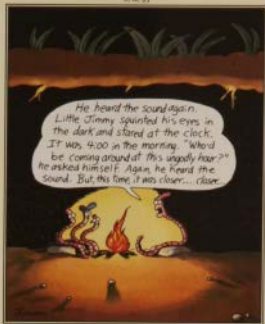


8/16/93



"There he goes again. ... Satan's pet."

8/16/93



Tales of the Early Bird

8/16/93



"And down here we keep Fluffy. ... We're afraid he may have gone mad."

8/16/93





Dr. Frankenstein vacations in Hawaii.



Before starting their day, squirrels must first pump themselves up.



"Ha! That finishes it! ... I always knew he'd be back one day to get the other one!"



"Whoa! ... Think I found the problem, buddy."



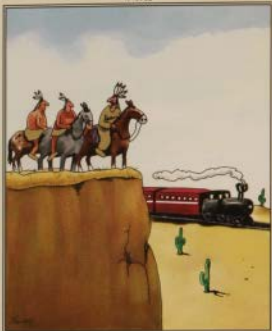
With one glance, Luanne sized up the two males in their goldfinch necklaces.

8/17/93



"Talk about rubbing it in! Not only did we arrive late, but they *deliberately* left his organ-donor card."

8/27/93



"Pardon me, boys—is that the Chattanooga Iron Horse?"

8/23/93



"My dad can act deader than your dad."

8/26/93



"You're a right-brained sort of person, Mr. Sommersby—very creative, artistic, etc. ... Unfortunately, I think I also see why you're having trouble figuring out your gas mileage."



"How could you think that? ... I've *always* been attracted by your personality."

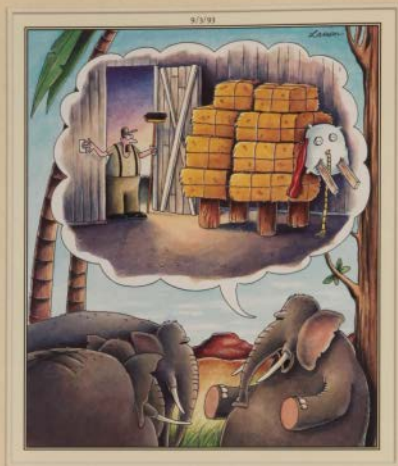


"Excuse me, but may I assume you're not Dr. Livingstone?"



Ironically, Barnum's and Bailey's respective kids—Sid and Marty—both ran away one night to join corporate America.





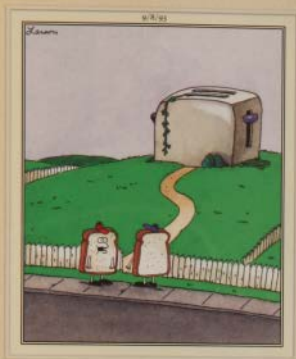
Back home in his native India, Toomba tells and retells the story of his daring escape from the Cleveland Zoo.



Prairie dog developers



"Time out, please! ... Eyelash!"

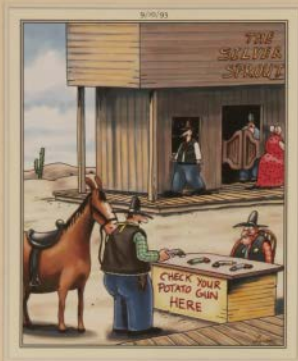


"I dunno, Andy. ... Mom said we were never to go near the old Sutter place."



At the Insurance Agents Wax Museum





Vegetarian towns of the Old West



Once again, Vernon has a good shirt ruined by a cheap pocket octopus.



"Sorry, ma'am, but your neighbors have reported not seeing your husband in weeks. We just have a few questions, and then you can get back to your canning."



Misunderstanding his dying father's advice, Arnie spent several years protecting the family mules.



After being frozen in ice for 10,000 years, Thag promotes his autobiography.



"I wouldn't laugh, Jack. ... I know things about you."



Scene from *The Crying Game II: The Rural Version*

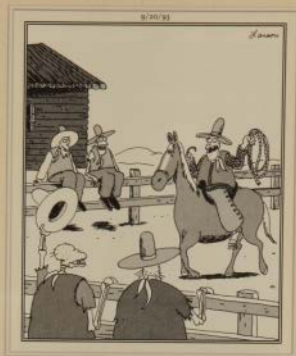
"You were hit last night by some kind of cult, Mr. Gilbert. ... Not the sickest cult I've ever seen, but a cult nonetheless."



At the Vatican's movie theater



"Now, you can't really hurt each other with those things, so next time you bicker, just go ahead and vent your anger—you'll both feel better."



Vacationing from their jobs of terrorizing young teenagers, zombies will often relax at a Western dead ranch.



Primitive theme parks



"Hey. Quit complaining. ... We all live out in the sticks."



"Okay, Bill. Tuesday night, 8 o'clock, over at the sheriff's office where they're holdin' your brother's killer. ... You want that with extra hollerin'?"



Entomological rodeos



Tension mounts in the final heat of the paper-rock-scissors event.

10/1/93



"Okay, Professor Big Mouth, we've all chipped in—here's the hundred bucks! ... But remember, you gotta kiss her on the lips!"

10/7/93



"Listen, Noreen—you wanna be the photographer next time, be my guest."

10/6/93



Classic conversation stoppers

10/1/93



"It's Jim Wilkins, Dave. Same as the others. Trussed up like a Christmas present with his hunting license stuffed in his mouth. ... I want this bear, Dave. I want him bad."

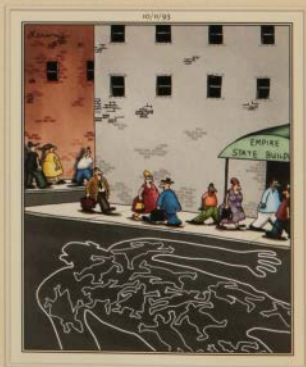




Later, when one of the monsters cranked up the volume, the party really got going.



The better-equipped slave ships, of course, always carried a spare.



A few days following the King Kong "incident," New Yorkers return to business as usual.



"Most interesting, ma'am—you've identified the defendant as the one you saw running from the scene. I take it, then, that you're unaware that my client is a walking stick?"



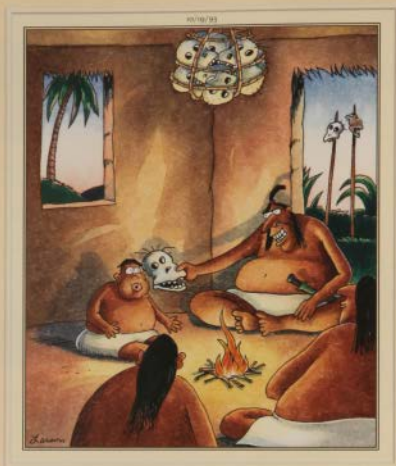
Daffy's résumé



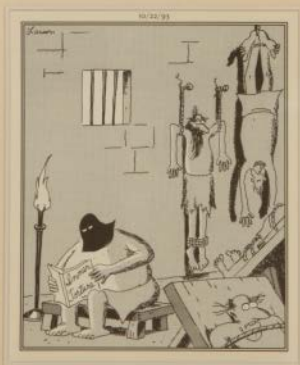
Eskimo rescue units

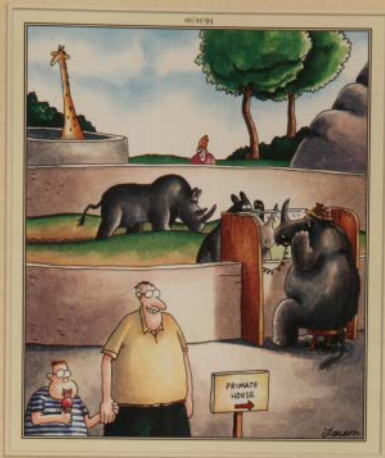


"Oh, God! It's that creepy Ted Sheldon and Louise Dickerson. ... They're skinheads, you know."



The whole family always enjoyed the way Uncle Numanga could reach over and "find" a skull in little Jerog's ear.

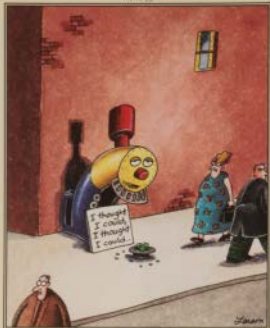




"Smash your left hand down about right here three times, then twice up in this area, then three times right about here. ... That's 'Louie Louie.'"

Some anthropologists believe that the discoveries of fire, shelter, and language were almost simultaneous.

10/18/93



10/20/93



"Could you come back later? He's catching a few Y's right now."

10/28/93



"Well, I've got good gnus and I've got bad gnus."

10/26/93



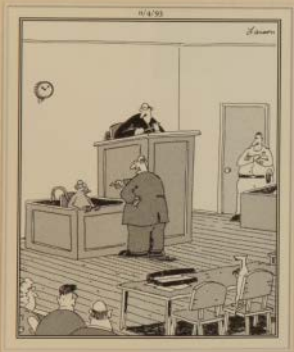
Scotty in hell



The entire parliament fell dead silent. For the first time since anyone could remember, one of the members voted "aye."



Fortunately, even the Boy Scouts who fail knot-tying get to go camping.



"Well, sir, my client says *he* wasn't having any fun, and that *you* just kept chasing him and chasing him around this mulberry bush, and that's when—out of self-defense—he decided to pop you one."



It had started off as a pleasant evening, but, as the Caldwells were soon to discover, it was a mistake to try and trump the old gypsy woman.



"This is it, son—my old chomping grounds. ...  
Gosh, the memories."



"And then one of the little kids shined his flashlight into the corner of the basement, and there they saw these strange jars. ... Some said 'creamy,' some said 'crunchy.' ..."



Summoned by the gonging, Professor Crutchfeld stepped into the clearing. The little caterpillars had done well this time in their offering.



At Electric Chair Operators Night School



At the Federal Mole Penitentiary



"Oh, man! The coffee's cold! They thought of everything!"





"Ooo! You're right, Sir Dwayne! If I knock right here, I can make him start buzzing. ... Ooo, and he's angry!"



Douglas is ejected from the spoon band.



Backing out of the driveway, Mr. Peabody suddenly brought his car to a stop. He had already heard a peculiar "thump," and now these crushed but familiar-looking glasses further intrigued him.



New Age construction workers



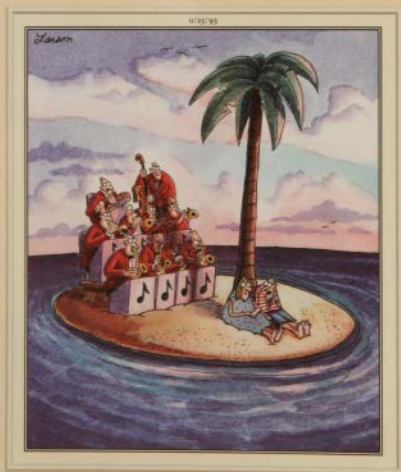
It had been a wonderfully successful day, and the dugout was filled with the sound of laughter and the fruits of their hunting skills. Only Kimbu wore a scowl, returning home with just a single knucklehead.



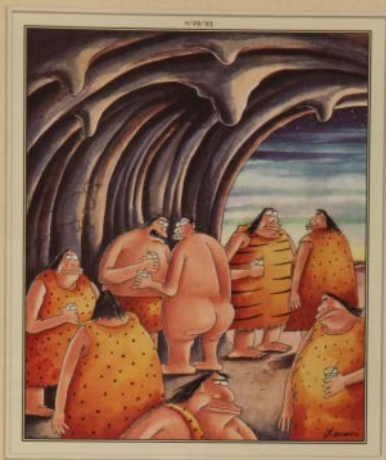
"Look. If you're so self-conscious about it, get yourself a gorilla mask."



"Listen up, my Cossack brethren! We'll ride into the valley like the wind, the thunder of our horses and the lightning of our steel striking fear in the hearts of our enemies! ... And remember—stay out of Mrs. Caldwell's garden!"



"Care to dance, Ms. Hollings?"



"A word of advice, Durk: It's the Mesolithic. We've domesticated the dog, we're using stone tools, and no one's naked anymore."

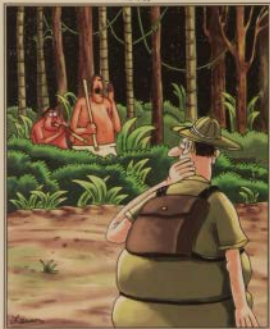


"Frankie! When didja get out? ... Gee, I bet you been sittin' in da cage wonderin' where me and da loot wuz! ... Oh, Frankie, Frankie ... heh heh heh ... Want some coffee, Frankie?"



Fortunately, both Ali and his camel knew to take refuge during a desert Spam storm.

02/2/93



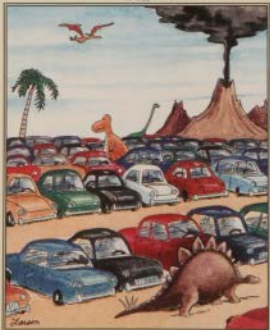
"It's okay! Dart not poisonous. ... Just showin' my kid the ropes!"

02/9/93



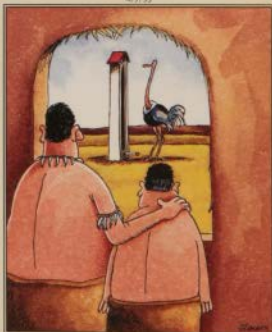
Raymond's last day as the band's sound technician.

02/6/93



Jurassic parking

02/7/93



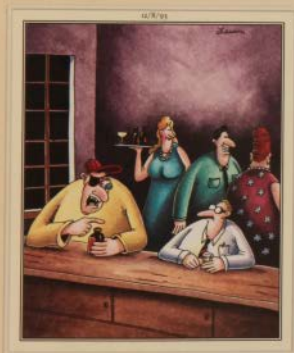
It was a special moment, as father and son watched their weekend project attract its first tenant.



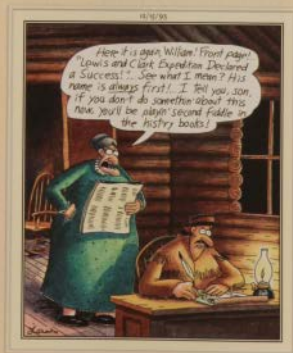
"Dang it, Morty! ... You're always showing this picture of me you took at 7 o'clock in the morning!"



Iggy knew he was extremely lucky to get a room with a view.



"Just keep starin', buddy, and I'll show ya my bad eye!"



Clark's mother

12/12/93



Suddenly, the car struck a pothole, the glove box flew open, and Sparky knew the date was basically over.

12/16/93



"No, no. ... Not this one. Too many bells and whistles."

12/17/93



12/10/93



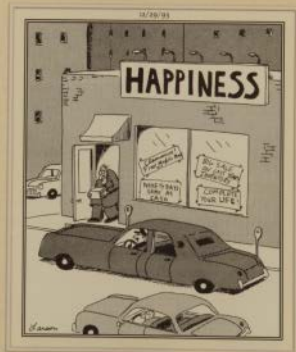
In their sibling's shadow



The questions were getting harder, and Ted could feel Lucky's watchful glare from across the room. He had been warned, he recalled, that this was a breed that would sometimes test him.



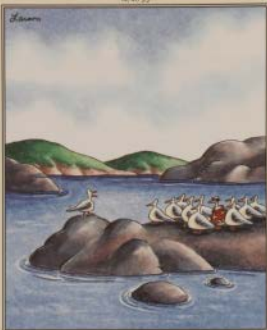
"Excuse me, Captain, but while we're waiting, would you like to join the crew and myself for a little snorkeling?"



His few friends had told him he could never buy it, but Mr. Crawley surmised that they just didn't know where the store was.



12/21/93



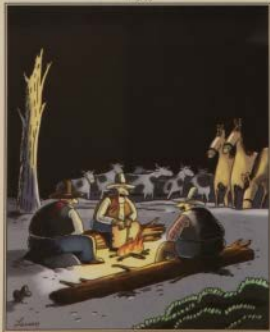
"Okay, everyone, we'll be departing for Antarctica in about 15 minutes. ... If anyone thinks he may be in the wrong migration, let us know now."

12/22/93



"I've been told you don't like my dirt!"

12/23/93



"Okay, I got one—do you say 'darn it' or 'dern it'?"

12/28/93





It was an innocent mistake, but nevertheless, a moment later Maurice found himself receiving the full brunt of the mummy's wrath.



Zeke froze. For the longest time, all he could do was stare at the chocolate mint that "someone" had placed on his bedroll.



The Ice Crusades

19



Lalson

# 94



GINGER  
Blah blah  
blah blah blah  
blah blah blah

ALIEN CREATURE

GROG  
Belovrd Neanderthal

Jimmy

## Final Thoughts

There's a little cartoon—a doodle, really—that I came across in one of my old sketchbooks while working on this two-volume, 18-pound hernia giver. And despite the fact that I believe there's a rule somewhere that you're not supposed to laugh at your own work, this one caught me off guard. I confess: I laughed.

What I was looking at was a tavern scene where the customers and staff are all praying mantises. One mantis dressed in a rumpled coat and tie is sitting by himself at the bar, clutching a stiff drink. He has no head. And, with a voice that emanates from somewhere down below his empty collar, he angrily blurts out just one word to the mantis bartender: "Women!"

It's a cartoon that never got further than my sketchbook, and I'm not sure why. I admit, you would have to know something about the sex lives of mantises to recognize the thin slice of natural history buried in among all the other anthropomorphic silliness, but I doubt that would have stayed my hand. I do see a note to myself on the same page questioning whether this male mantis would most likely blurt out "Women!" or "Females!" and I bet that was my undoing. These sorts of decisions usually started off as minor details, grew in significance, and finally sent me into the Don't-Draw-This Abyss. (Actually, I could have just referred to Cartoon Rule #359, which clearly states that "... anything walking around with a missing head shall be deemed funny, with the exception of a puppy or the Pope.")

On another page, I found my half-doodled, half-described idea of a nightclub filled with assorted invertebrates. The dance floor is packed with creatures, all having a good time (I like the imagery already, complete with disco ball), but at a table in the foreground sits a slug couple, dressed to the nines, looking hip, but—as always—compelled to wait for a slow song.

And then I stumbled upon my crude little sketch of the astrophysicists' convention. The scene is an auditorium, and everyone is seated as one of the guest speakers begins his presentation. Only there's apparently been a mistake. The speaker is a farmer, in overalls and brim hat, and he is giving a talk on String Bean Theory.

I'll stop there, but this is just a way of divulging the one thing that haunts me now. Not every day, and sometimes not for weeks, but sooner or later it creeps into my brain, stays a while, and leaves a lingering sadness after it's gone. It is this: What else didn't I draw? What other ideas and characters are doomed to remain everlastingly in my inkwell, never to have *The Far Side* marquee hoisted over their heads, left to wander forever in the Land of the Undrawn?

*C'est la vie*, I suppose. If you were to ask me today if I miss cartooning (and I do hear it a lot), my answer is no, not really. As they say, been there done that. Plus, for me, there was always the unforeseen nature of this

thing, which no doubt made it easier to eventually let it go. (When Career Day comes to your high school, you don't walk around looking for the Cartoon Guy.)

Do I think I might return to the drafting table one day? Well, they say never say never, so I'll take that advice. If that haunting problem I mentioned becomes more frequent, who knows—maybe I'll need to exorcise some ghosts. (At least I should work up that praying mantis cartoon; damn, I'm sorry I missed that one.)

Serendipity has handed me a way to wrap this up. I'm sitting here writing my final essay for this book, and every few minutes I lift my eyes from the computer monitor and stare out the window overlooking the garden. But I'm not looking at the garden. I'm watching the small spiders that have spun webs between the leaded panes and the brick frame. There are four of them, and they're catching gnats like they know it's the gnat warden's day off.

This is really a show. They're extremely small, these spiders, but the gnats—and they're as thick as, well, gnats—are considerably smaller. There are so many, the spiders aren't even bothering to throw a few holding threads around their prey. They're just grabbing and sucking down gnats, one after the other. I can't help but imagine that somewhere within the primitive, ganglionic mass that serves as a spider's brain, these little guys are experiencing a sensation that equates to what my dad, an avid fisherman, feels when a salmon strikes his line: Hot damn! Another one!

The parallels are interesting, now that I think about it: My dad's invisible fishing line/the spider's invisible web; my dad's net/the spider's holding threads; my dad sitting alone in his boat, patiently waiting for a strike/the spiders sitting alone in their webs, patiently waiting for the same signal. There's only one conclusion: My dad's really just like a big spider and all these little spiders are really just like my dad. (All we need now is for one of these little gnats to start screaming "Help me!" and this will get really weird.)

I'm telling you this because I'm guessing—or hoping—you may know me a little by now. My mind seems to wander. I started off wistfully describing a few cartoons I wish I had drawn, wondering about the ones yet to be imagined, and what happens?—I get cut off by some little spiders.

Here's where I think I must simply admit the truth: I want to stop writing about cartoons and thinking about cartoons. I just want to watch these little spiders. This is how I started as a cartoonist—drawn to the little story—and this is how I'll end.

And if you run into my dad, please don't squish him.



Crucial decisions along life's highway



Specialized obituaries



"Well, I just feel like I'm living under a microscope."



"Oh, not you, mister! ... I was referring to something here from my dog, Nimka."

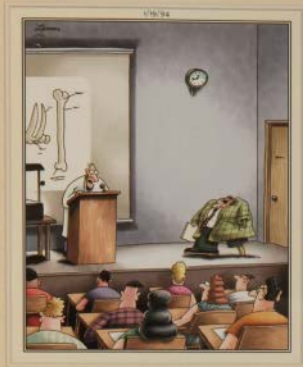
1/6/94



"Hey! You don't tell me what makes 'er tick!  
I know what makes 'er tick, sonny boy!"



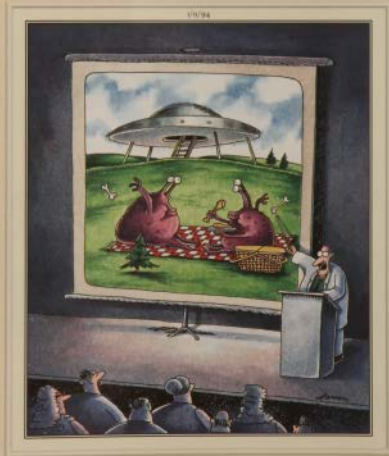




"Today, our guest lecturer is Dr. Clarence Tibbs, whose 20-year career has culminated in his recent autobiography, *Zoo Vet—I Quit!*"



Expatriates, they migrated in the 1920s to Paris's Left Bank, gathering in their favorite haunts and discussing the meaning of cream pies and big shoes. They were, in fact, the original Boclownians.



Professor Ferrington and his controversial theory that dinosaurs were actually the discarded "chicken" bones of giant, alien picnickers.



"This just makes me sick! ... Sick! ... Why, in my day, we collected *wild* heads from the jungle! ... These things are all *sissies!*"



"Oh my God, Alice! ... Heading right for us! A chewed-up No. 2 pencil!"



"Oh, and *that* makes me feel even worse! ... I laughed at Dinkins when he said his new lenses were indestructible."



"Uh, let's see ... I'll try the mammoth, please."



"I'm sorry, sir, but the reservation book simply says 'Jason.' ... There's nothing here about Jason and the Argonauts."



Midget Westerns

1/25/94



"That's him, officer. Second from the end—the 12-footer!"

1/31/94



"Well, I'd recommend either the chicken-fried steak or maybe the seafood platter. But look—I gotta be honest with ya—nothin' we serve is exactly what I'd call food for the gods."

1/26/94



"Crack the whip!"

1/26/94



After many years of marital bliss, tension enters the Kent household.

1/7/94



"Frank ... don't do that."

1/8/94



In medieval times, a suit of armor often served as a family's message center.

2/2/94

Lawson



Leonard felt his skin suddenly crawl. Coming through the door were a couple of real sketchy characters.

1/3/94



"You little softies! When I was your age, I had to crawl 14 inches to the surface and back! Every day! ... Through *hardpan*, by thunder!"

2/4/94



"Come on, Johnny—don't be chicken. ... After it's over, we'll all be strawbrothers."

March 17, 1994

NOTE: Mr. Gary Larson  
Los Angeles Times  
Times Mirror Square  
Los Angeles CA 90021

Dear Mr. Larson,

I want to thank you for many years of laughter at your "Far Side" cartoons. I have been a fan for a long time and read your work first when I got up the LA Times.

I also want to express my warmest wishes at your obituary of the enclosed cartoon. It is the first time I have ever felt offended by any of your work and felt the need to write.

I'm sure you didn't mean any harm, but I found that the depiction of a crucifixion scene and the casual judgment to "strawbrothers" struck at the core of my convictions as a follower of Jesus Christ.

I grew to a belief in Christianity as a young adult, and discovered that the central teaching of my new faith was the death and resurrection of Jesus to pay the penalty for my sin against God and His will for the people and world He created.

To treat something so meaningful to me and millions of others around the world in such a casual fashion is very painful.

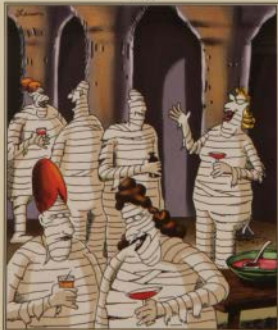
I will not stop enjoying your work and look forward to many more years of your creative genius. Please take this letter as constructive feedback. There are some things in life that really should not be treated as casually.

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,  
Steve Morgan

Editor's note: These are three scarecrows. No religious themes were intended.

2/10/94

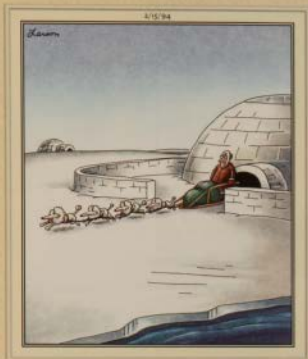


"Well, as usual, there goes Princess Luwana—always the center of attention. ... You know, underneath that outer wrap, she's held together with duct tape."

2/9/94



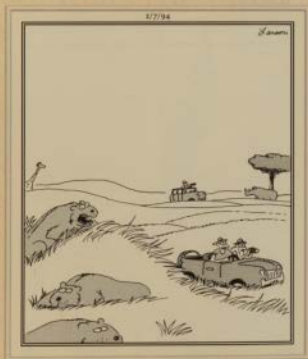
"Well, here he comes ... Mr. Never-Makes-a-Dud."



Beverly Hills of the North Pole



"Sorry, Kevin, but my friends have all advised me not to run with you anymore."



"Convertible! Convertible!"



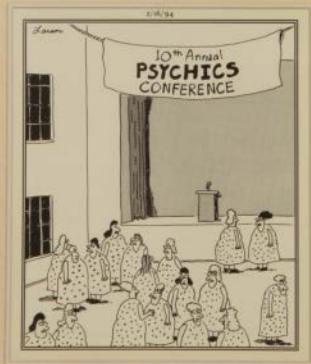




"Sorry, Bobby, but you know the rule—no swimming for a week after eating."



Thirty years had passed, and although he had no real regrets about marrying Wendy, buying a home, and having two kids, Peter found his thoughts often going back to his life in Never-Never-Land.



For the most part, the meeting was quite successful. Only a slight tension filled the air, stemming from the unforeseen faux pas of everyone showing up in the same dress.



"What? MacDougal is being promoted over me? ... Well, that does it! I won't take no orders from no stinkin' sobbuster!"



"What a find, Ms. Dinkins! ... It's Mailman, all right—but remarkably, this specimen is fully intact, with a *Canis nipponicus* still attached!"



More tension on the Lewis and Clark expedition



"The dentist just buzzed me, Mrs. Lewellyn—he's ready to see Bobby now."



This time his practical jokes had gone too far, and Wally was finally booted off the hill.



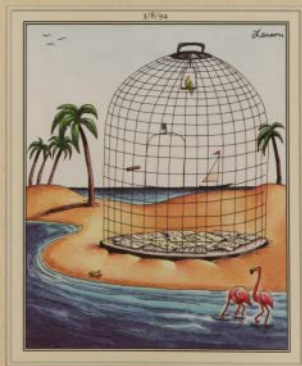
"Well, yes, that is the downside, Fluffy. ... Once we kill her, the pampering will end."



It's a known fact that the sheep that give us steel wool have no natural enemies.



He stood there—unflinching, tall, and silent as always. But as Gus soon found out, this outward calm belied the "Widowmaker's" reputation.



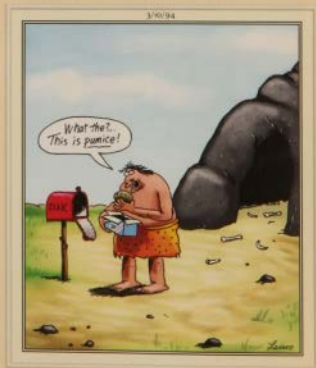
Winning the lottery had changed his life, but at times Chico still felt strangely unfulfilled.



"No, I never said that. ... Well, I actually *did* say it, but *after* he said it. He said it, *then* I said it. I'm a mimic—that's what I do."



"Oh, Professor DeWitt! Have you seen Professor Weinberg's time machine? ... It's digital!"



Primitive mail fraud

3/7/94



"Aaaaaaaaaa! ... Oh, sorry—it's just the dog."

3/9/94



Basic field trips

3/4/94



The sandwich Mafia sends Luigi to "sleep with the fourth-graders."

### Commission for Social Justice

Order Issued by Italy in America

March 17, 1994

Gary Larson, Cartoonist  
c/o Universal Press Syndicate  
4900 Main Street  
Kansas City, Missouri 64112

Re: "The Far Side"

Dear Mr. Larson:

I am writing on behalf of our State Chapter of the National Commission to complain about the cartoon which you drew for publication on March 14, 1994, in the Washington Post and many other newspapers across this country.

In the cartoon, two members of the "Sandwich Mafia" are seen pushing "Luigi" through an opening in a ceiling into a cafeteria to "sleep with the fourth-graders." A copy of the comic panel is enclosed for the purpose of identification.

This cartoon offends us in two ways. First, you use the Italian name "Luigi" indelicately. Instead of writing at length about your anger, I am enclosing a copy of the Position Paper of the National CMA for your utilization.

Second, you use the Italian name "Luigi" for one of your characters, thus making it certain to your reading public that this particular character is either Italian or Italian American.

This comic panel would be just as funny, if not funnier, if you gave the character either the name "Sam & Cheese" or "Peasant Butty & Jelly" or another sandwich name, instead of using a name which is clearly Italian.

Additionally, this cartoon offends us more because it is directed to children. Nothing causes the acid hatred of our own children more than seeing an Italian name, like their own, linked to criminal activity, in this case, the execution-style murder of "Luigi".

Therefore, in the future and for the best interests of our children, we would appreciate it if you would refrain from using the name "Luigi" and Italian names together in your cartoons.

Yours truly yours,  
Joseph D'Amico, Jr., Esq.  
VA State President  
Falls Church, VA 22043

An organization dedicated to the eradication of bias, bigotry and prejudice



"It's a cute trick, Warren, but the Schuberts are here for dinner, so just 'abracadabra' this thing back to where it was."



Making sure not to disturb their quarry, nature lovers would approach the glass slowly, hoping to get a good look at the normally shy dessert animals.



"I'm sorry, Sidney, but I can no longer help you. ... These are not my people."



Not heeding his father's advice to avoid eye contact, Joey makes a "contribution."

*Editor's note: Gary leaves for a one-month vacation.*



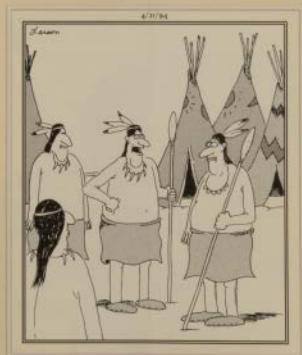
Monster game shows



At the Dog Museum



Graffiti in hell



"Well, Red Cloud, it just so happens I *did* go ask the chief! ... A bear claw necklace is a symbol of honor, a Grizzly Adams fingernail necklace is not!"





"So let's go over it again: You're about a mile up, you see something dying below you, you circle until it's dead, and down you go. Lenny, you stick close to your brothers and do what they do."



"Oh, and a word of warning about Mueller over there. ... He's got a good head on his shoulders, but it's best not to mention it."



"So, Professor Sadowsky, you're saying that your fellow researcher, Professor Lazzell, knowing full well that baboons consider eye contact to be threatening, handed you this hat on that fateful day you emerged from your Serengeti campsite."



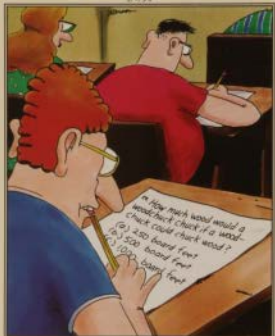
"Well, this guidebook is worthless! It just says these people worshipped two gods: one who was all-knowing and one who was all-seeing—but they don't tell you which is which, for crying out loud!"



"Whoa! Another bad one! ... I see your severed head lying quietly in the red-stained dirt, a surprised expression still frozen in your lifeless eyes. ... Next!"

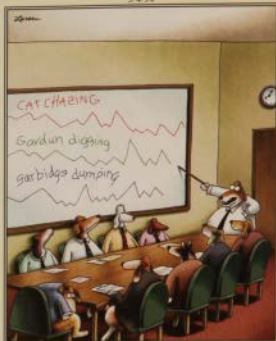


5/2/94



The Wildlife Management finals

5/4/94



"Now, if you all would examine the chart, you will notice that—well, well ... seems Mr. Sparky has found something more engrossing than this meeting."

5/3/94

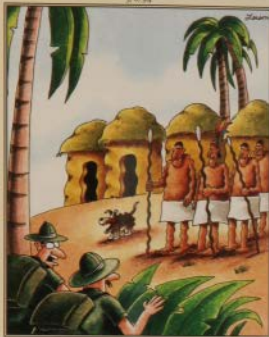


5/5/94



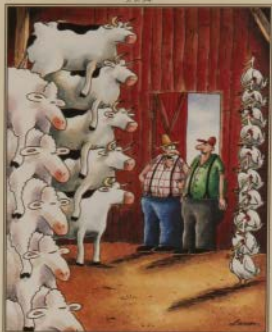
"Sorry, son, but for you to understand what happened, you have to first understand that back in the '60s we were all taking a lot of drugs."

5/6/94



"Now watch your step, Osborne. ... The Squiggly Line people have an inherent distrust for all smoothliners."

5/8/94



"It's the only way to go, Frank. Why, my life's changed, ever since I discovered Stackable Livestock®."

5/10/94



Hunting techniques of the modern anteater

5/10/94



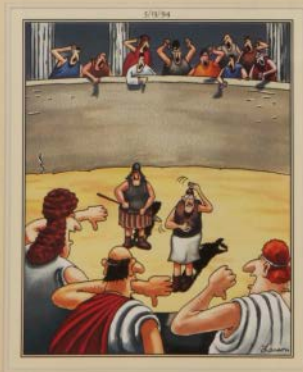
"The truth is, Stan, I'd like a place of my own."



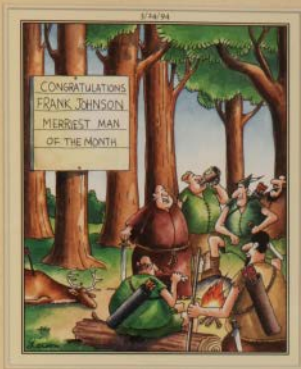
More trouble brewing



"My God, Carlson! After years of searching, this is an emotional moment for me! ... Voilà! I give you the Secret Elephant Breeding Grounds!"



In the stadiums of ancient Rome, the most feared trial was the rub-your-stomach-and-pat-your-head-at-the-same-time event.



For the time being, the monster wasn't in Ricky's closet. For the time being.



Moments before he was ripped to shreds, Edgar vaguely recalled having seen that same obnoxious tie earlier in the day.



"I would have gotten away scot-free if I had just gotten rid of the evidence. ... But, shoot—I'm a pack rat."



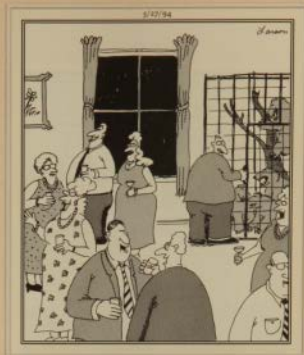
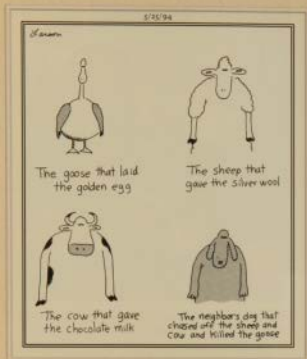
"Oh, man, Clem! To add insult to injury, I see a great campsite right over yonder."



Like frozen sentries of the Serengeti, the century-old termite mounds had withstood all tests of time and foe—all tests, that is, except the one involving drunken aardvarks and a stolen wrecking ball.



"Boy, Henry ... he really can do you!"



The party was going along splendidly—and then Morty opened the door to the wolverine display.



"Hey, we'll be lucky if we ever sell this place! ... Well, it's like everyone says—location, location, location."



"So George says, 'I'm goin' over there and tellin' that guy to shut that equipment off!'... So I said: 'George, that guy's a mad scientist. Call the cops. Don't go over there alone.'... Well, you know George."





History shmistory



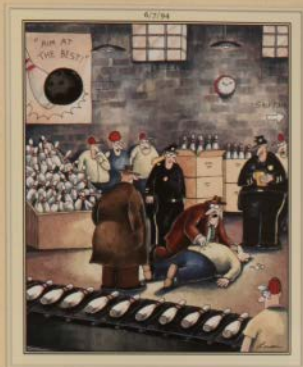
Mexico City, Christmas morning, 1837:  
Santa Anna's son, Juan, receives the original  
Davy Crockett hat.



"First that cretin Foster and now that jerk  
Cummings has instantly evaporated! ... I tell you,  
Ms. Goodman, without a doubt, I'm looking at  
an authentic, full-fledged wishing star!"



"Say. ... It's only a paper moon."



"Struck from behind, all right ... and from my first examination of the wound, I'd say this was done by some kind of heavy, blunt object."



Humboys



"So, they tell me you fancy yourself a tuba player."



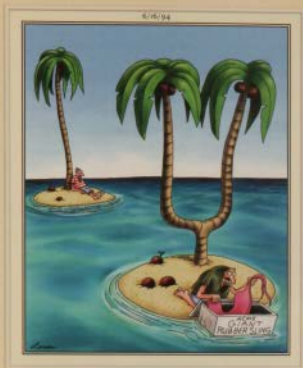
"You know, you and I could make primitive music together."



"Well, actually, Doreen, I rather resent being called a 'swamp thing.' ... I prefer the term 'wetlands-challenged-mutant.'"



For a long time, Farmer Hansen and his tall chickens enjoyed immense popularity—until Farmer Sutton got himself a longcow.



In an effort to show off, the monster would sometimes stand on his head.



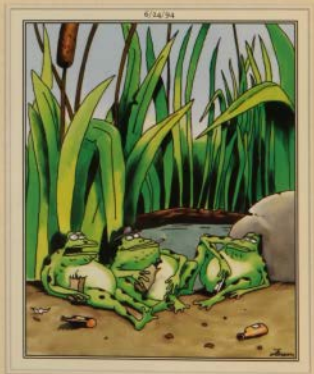
When things got slow in the midday heat, Arnie would often break out his trunk puppet.



Suddenly the Mensa partygoers froze when Clarence shockingly uttered the "D" word.



"It's a buzzard picnic, son—and you best remember to never take a look-see inside one of them baskets."



"Yeah. I remember Jerry. Good friend of mine. ... You know, I never understood a single word he said, but he always had some mighty fine wine."



"Face it, Fred—you're lost."



Primitive waiting rooms



"Hey, Jim—go out for a short one!"



"... And so the bartender says, 'Hey! That's not a soup spoon!'... But seriously, forks ..."



The ultimate gopher insult



7/6/94



"Okay, here's one, Marv: What's got 12 legs, six eyes, a hairy thorax, was found dead in its display case this morning, and goes 'crunch' inside a submarine sandwich?"

7/10/94



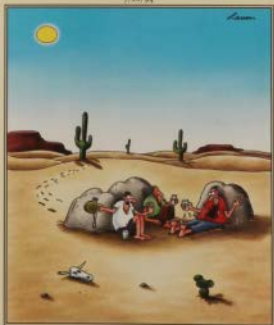
"I'm sorry, Delores—I didn't think you'd truly ever leave! ... But where will you go?"

7/14/94



"Yeah, I just got back! And the wizard I mentioned? He gave me a new brain! ... It's on the coffee table as we speak!"

7/30/94



"Sorry, Virgil—that's all you get. ... I don't know how you got hold of a dribble glass in the first place, but it's just your bad luck."





Scene from *Dog Invaders from Mars*



"Anybody else? ... This here's a school for buffalo hunters—and anyone who so much as utters the word 'bison' can join Morgenstern in the corner!"



Executioner understudies



"Everyone just keep your nets real still. ... They'll just wanna look over our jars, and we best not try to stop 'em."



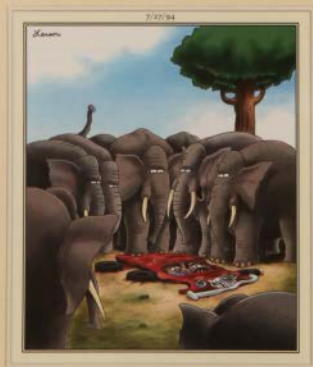
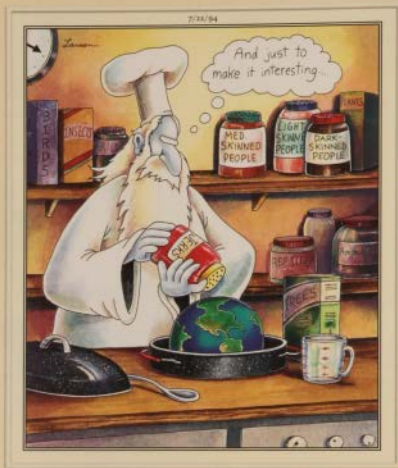
"Well, first you say you saw the defendant at the scene and now you say you *think* you saw him! ... Let's cut to the chase, Ms. Sunbeam—is it possible your entire testimony is nothing more than a mere fairy tale?"



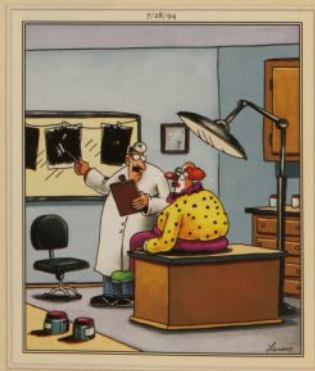
"That's just not impressive, Doris. ... The brain! Hold up the big brain!"

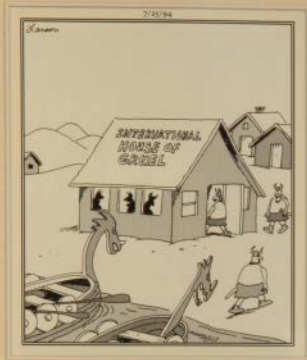


"Hey, Leon! Your bass sure is walking now!"

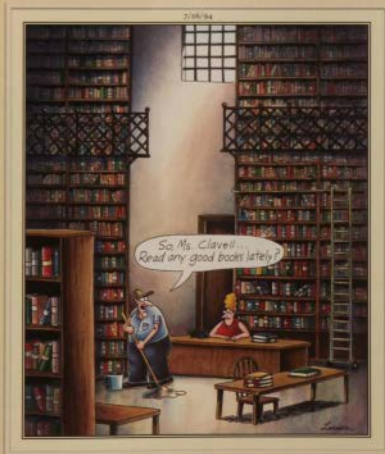


"You know, sometimes I sort of enjoy this herd mentality."





Understanding only German, Fritz was unaware that the clouds were becoming threatening.



After years of harboring his secret desires, Ned finally hits on the senior librarian.



"And you! What's your story? ... If you ain't a mutineer, then what the hell are you?"



Hellbillies



"I'm leaving you, Mitchell. You've never had tunnel vision and you never will."



At the Grizzly Ball, only Alice, with her kind heart, would not refuse to dance with Adams.

8/8/94



"I'm afraid you misunderstood. ... I said I'd like a mango."

8/9/94



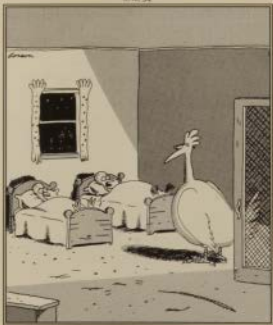
"Well, Griselda's back from the plastic surgeon's. ...  
Whoa! Look at the size of that wart!"

8/7/94



Abdul flunks

8/10/94



"No way was it me, Mom—you must've heard a peep out of Eddie."

8/1/94



Once again, a meeting between management and the Plutonium Truckers' Union grows tense.

8/10/94



In its more horrific method of retribution, the mob will sometimes dress victims as mimes, place them in glass boxes, and let them perish slowly in full view of the public.

8/16/94



"Yeah," she said. "Your fave and a mastodon's butt!... But, seriously, folks... have we got any cliff dwellers in the audience today?"

Stand-semi-erect comedy

8/17/94



Well, I'm an Assistant Negotiation Engineer... but I should make some RE next year.

In ancient Rome, it was tough for the guys who worked in the vomitoriums to get dates.



"Oh, they'll find something for you real soon. ...  
Me? I'm forever blowing bubbles."



Every Saturday morning, while his playmates  
patiently waited, little Normy Bates would  
always take a few extra minutes to yell  
at his "dog."

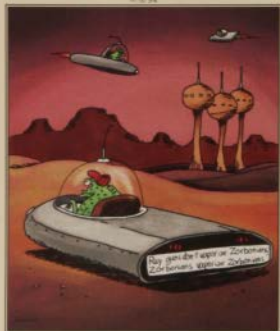


At the Cowboy Wax Museum





8/11/94

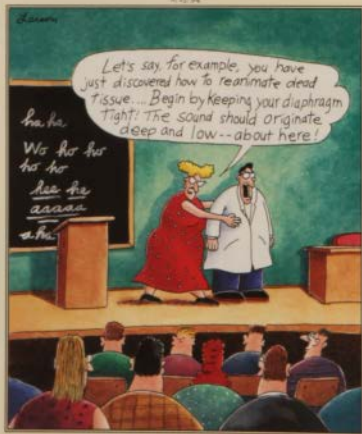


8/19/94



"I make no claims about all my success, Bernard. I never went to school, I never worked hard, and I'm not particularly bright. ... I'm just a lucky skunk, Bernard."

8/22/94



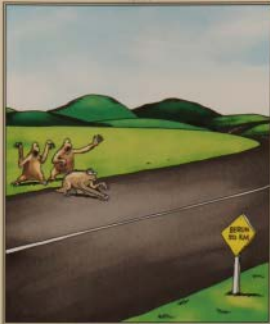
In their final year, all research science students are required to take one semester of Maniacal Laughter.

8/18/94



Bunker Hill, June 17, 1775: An unfortunate twist of fate for one young redcoat, Charles "Bugeyed" Bingham, was not knowing that the opposing American general had just uttered the historic command, "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes."

8/19/94



In the longest hour of his life, Morty takes the dare of his sloth buddies and crosses the Autobahn.

8/30/94



"And the note says: 'Dear classmates and Ms. Kilgore: Now that my family has moved away, I feel bad that I whined so much about being mistreated. Hope the contents of this box will set things right. Love, Pandora.'... How sweet."

8/29/94



When the dust had settled, a lone figure was revealed standing on the small knoll. Yes, he, too, was a herd animal—but he was *through* running.

9/1/94



12 October 1994

Dear Mr. Larson,

Congratulations on your imminent retirement. We will miss you.

As you will soon have a lot of time on your hands, perhaps you could find a moment to answer the letter regarding the enclosed cartoon, which I have discussed with my husband, coworkers, and friends, and

**WE DON'T GET IT!  
WE JUST DON'T GET IT!!!**

Sincerely,

Noreen Wiazale

*Editor's note: The aliens here have their own religious symbol, and they're attached to the rear of their flying saucer.*

9/2/94



The often romanticized image of cowboys and aliens

9/2/94



"We're *not* going to the mountains, so shut up and let's go! ... Most kids would count their lucky stars that every vacation their folks took 'em to the beach!"

9/10/94



"And so, as you enter the adult phase of your life, you will thank God that these past 17 years of being stuck in the ground and unable to move are finally over. ... Congratulations, cicadas of '94!"

9/10/94



"Don't eat the flippers, Zeke, or they'll know we're tourists."

9/7/94



Throughout their songwriting careers, the Gershwins rarely discussed their younger brother, Nathan, who played gutbucket.

9/7/94



"It's no good, Dawson! We're being sucked in by the sun's gravitational field and there's nothing we can do! ... And, let me add, those are my sunglasses you're wearing!"



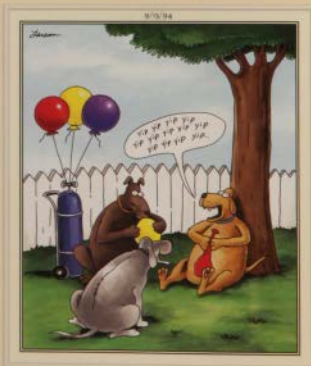
"Whoa whoa whoa! ... You'll have to go back and walk through again."



"Bootsy! ... Boooooootsy! ... We are calling you from the world of the living! ... Meowwww! ... Are you there, Bootsy? ... Give us a sign!"



"The problem, Mr. Fudd, is that you've been having a subliminal effect on everyone in the factory. We're proud of our product, Mr. Fudd, and there's no company in the world that builds a finer skwoo dwivuh. ... Dang! Now you got me doing it!"



Big dogs having fun with helium



"Boy, you wiped out, Kumba. ...  
Nothing left but rebar."



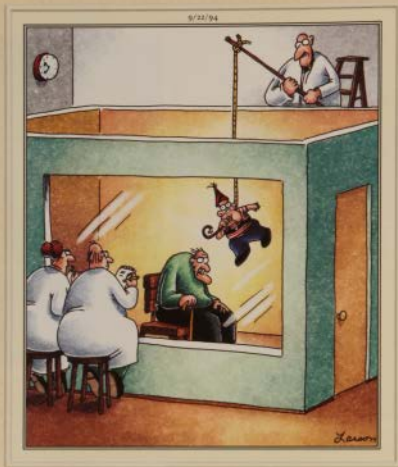
"Well, lad, you caught me fair and square. ...  
But truthfully, as far as leprechauns go, I've  
never been considered all that lucky."



Marie Antoinette's last-ditch effort  
to save her head.

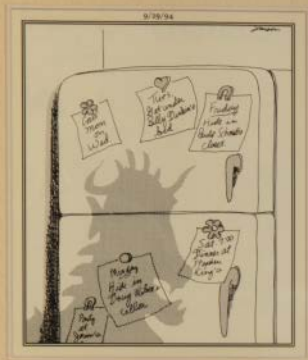


Fish thrill rides



At the Crabbiness Research Institute





On monster refrigerators



Sheep authors



"One day, Wilson, I'll be sitting at that desk."



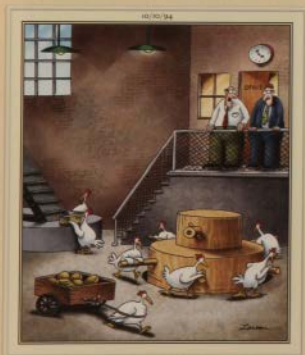
"Oh my gosh! You know what that is, Mooky? ... My dad had one when I was a kid!"



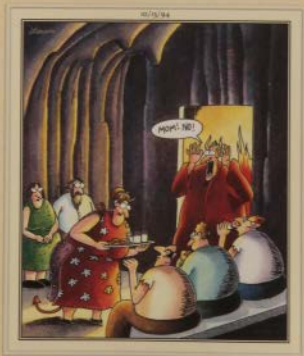




"Hey hey hey! ... Before you go, pack up this depressing garbage of yours and get it out of here!"



"Oh, yeah! They work real hard, all day long, seven days a week! ... And here's the best part—for chicken feed!"



Despite his repeated efforts to explain things to her, Satan could never dissuade his mother from offering cookies and milk to the accursed.



"I know you miss the Wainwrights, Bobby, but they were weak and stupid people—and that's why we have wolves and other large predators."



Scene from *Fiddle Attraction*



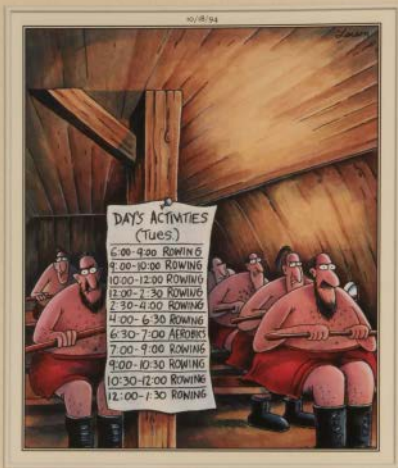
The Army's last-ditch effort to destroy Mothra



"And yes, Norman was beheaded, cleaned, and plucked. ... But we all know Norman's wacky sense of humor, and we can take comfort knowing he would've gotten a kick out of this."



"But on the other hand, Feldman, having the biggest brain among us means that it is mere child's play to subdue you with an ordinary headlock!"



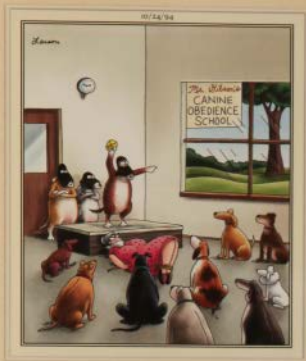
Slave-ship daily schedules



Life in the Old Weth



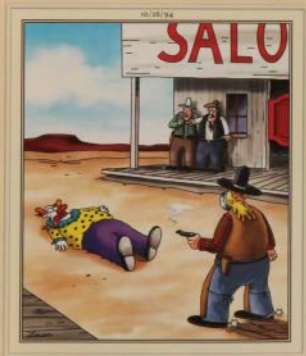
"Excuse me? Excuse me? ... I believe the biggest set of fang marks belongs to me, my friend!"



"And I say we go outside and we play with this ball!"



The gods play with Ted and Jerry



It was over. But the way the townsfolk called it, neither man was a clear winner.



"Uh, uh, uh—I wouldn't do that, Thorg. I know how to use this thing."

8/1/94



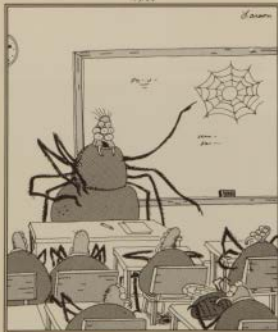
8/2/94

Korman



8/3/94

Korman



"Now what theorem applies to this ... Douglas! Is that a fly you're sucking on? Well, I hope you brought enough for everyone!"

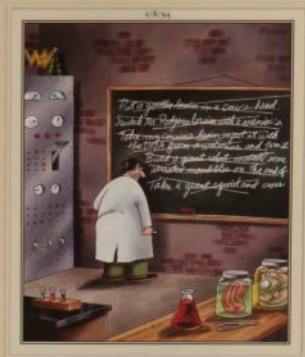
8/7/94



"Whoa! Here we go again! ...'Pony Express Rider Walks into Workplace, Starts Shooting Every Horse in Sight.'"



By secretly working out for many months, Irwin became the envy of all the 98-pound weaklings.



The curse of mad scientist's block



"You're up, Red."

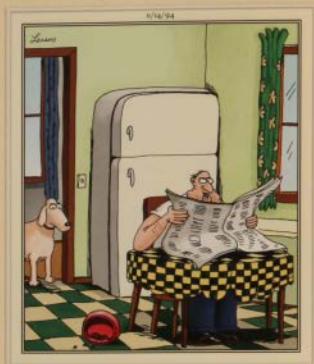


"Look. You *had* five bones, right? Your friend Zooky comes over, stays awhile, then leaves. Now you have *four* bones, right? ... You don't have to be a "Lassie" to figure this one out."





The life and times of Captain Hazelwood



An unnatural silence hung in the kitchen, and Spunky sensed that his arrival was unexpected.

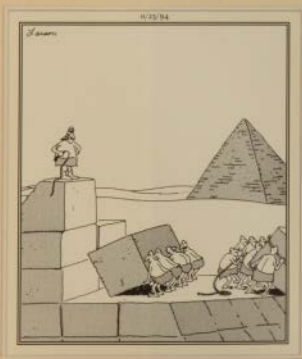


"Look, marriage is okay—but I also want my own identity. ... I mean, how would you like it if everyone referred to you as 'Chocolate Bar and Chocolate Bar?'"





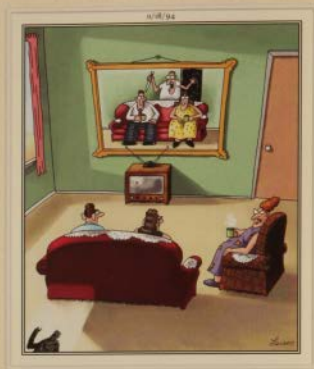
"There're some, folks! These rare and lovely creations have no natural enemies, but balloon animals never last too long in this harsh land."



"Remo! Lift with your knees, not your back!"



"Okay, that's pretty good! ... Now! I want everyone on this side of the aisle to come in rubbing their legs together when I signal! ... And let's show the other side how it's done!"



"Leonard painted that and hung it up just this afternoon. ... He calls it, *It's My Couch! My Couch! Don't They Understand?*"



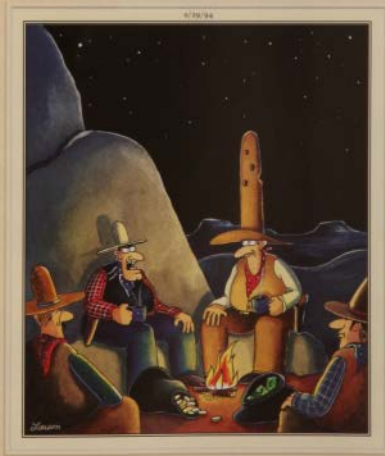
Dogs and alcohol: the tragic untold story.



By simply attaching the new ACME Wingbaby, airlines can significantly improve their passengers' overall comfort.



"Okay, you two! Problem solved!"



"Hell, Ben, you catch a few bullets through your hat during every holdup, and I'm finally gonna say I ain't ever been much impressed."



"I might have missed, Lou, but I take some satisfaction in knowing I busted up their little party."



"You ever get that urge, Frank? It begins with looking down from 50 stories up, thinking about the meaninglessness of life, listening to dark voices deep inside you, and you think, 'Should I? ... Should I? ... Should I push someone off?'"



"JOHNSON! BACK IN FORMATION! ...  
Dang, I hate sidewinders."

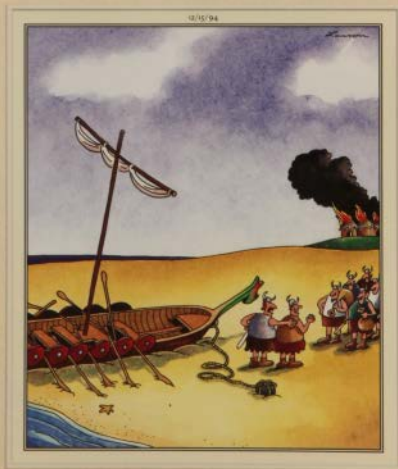




"Well, it was a private table."



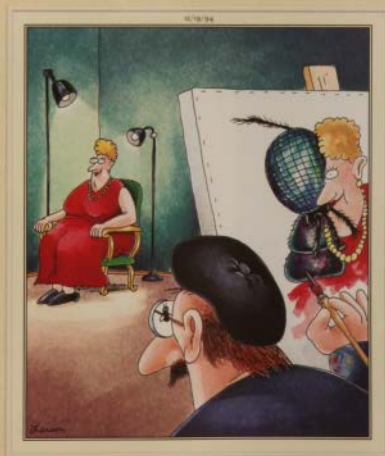
"You folks like flies? Well, wait till you see the parlor!"



"Everyone can just put down their loot and plunder, and Sven here—yes, old Sven, who was in charge of reading the tide chart—has something to say to us all."



Artist: G. Larson  
Medium: Ink on paper  
Title: It Was Late and I Was Tired





12/16/94



Hunting lodge readings

12/22/94



12/27/94



"Well, hell no, I can't tell Harriet! ... First thing she's gonna ask me is what was I doin' checkin' out a decoy!"

12/29/94



"Your dog had both motive and opportunity, ma'am: He hated the cat and he's had training in operating heavy machinery. ... Your husband, we feel, was just in the wrong place at the wrong time."

12/20/94



"CHICKEN UP!"

12/26/94



"The first thing I'm gonna do is wipe that smile off your face!"

12/23/94



12/28/94



"Situation's changed, Jules. ... Take my buffalo gun and hand me my mime rifle."

12/29/94



"He's making his nest now. ... There! See it? That son-of-a- ... he's got himself a futon!"

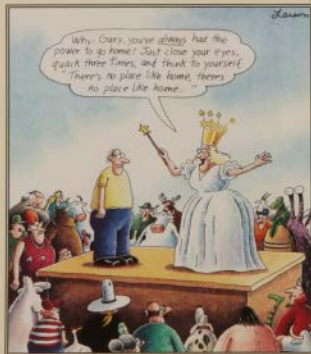
12/30/94



Until God warned him to knock it off, Noah would often try to get a little poker game going with some of the dumb animals.

The final syndicated Far Side cartoon to appear in newspapers

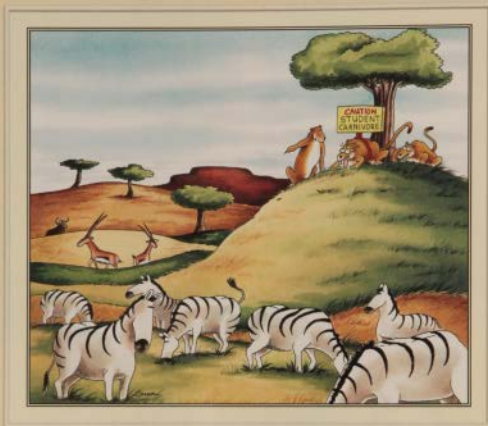
12/31



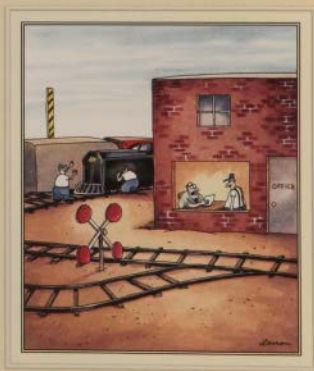
# Appendix



The following thirteen cartoons were created for *Last Chapter and Worse*, published in 1996, and were not syndicated in newspapers.



"You know, Ned, you're my best friend, and I just gotta tell someone. It's time I come out of the closet and stop living this lie. ... I hate animals."



"I've been looking at your time sheets, Webster ... leaving early, coming in late, etc., etc. ... Working for the railroad, Webster, means working *all* the livelong day."



When dumb animals attempt murder



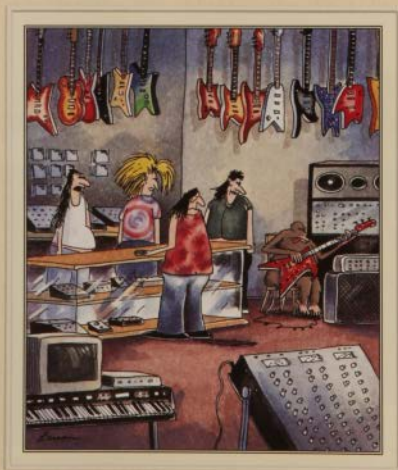
"It's just a simple Rorschach inkblot test, Mr. Bromwell, so just calm down and tell me what each one suggests to you."



"Well, I seen all the commotion, with that there monster destroyin' half the city and whatnor, and I says to myself, 'Hell! Why don't someone just shoot the varmint?'"



"Well, I suppose it'll be a few thousand more years before we get an 'Arts and Leisure' section."



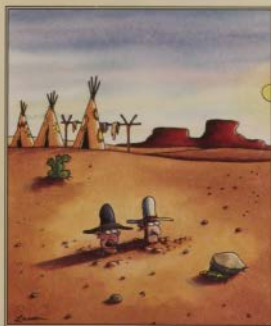
"Yeah, he comes in here a lot—never buys anything, climbs all over the store, has to try out every guitar ... and if you try taking it away from him, he starts screaming his head off."



"You're new here, ain'tcha, kid? Well, on some days the sandwiches contain a dead scorpion. ... Not every day, but some days—that's why it's hell, kid."



Despite being well-financed by the tobacco industry, the newly formed Smokers' Mountaineering Club met its doom just a few moments after leaving base camp.



"Hey, Frank ... nice and cool here in the shade ... yesiree ... niiiiice and cool."



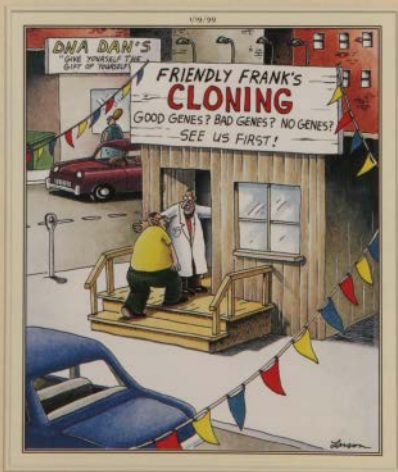
The following six cartoons were created as a special feature of the Science Times section of The New York Times called "The Far Side of Science."



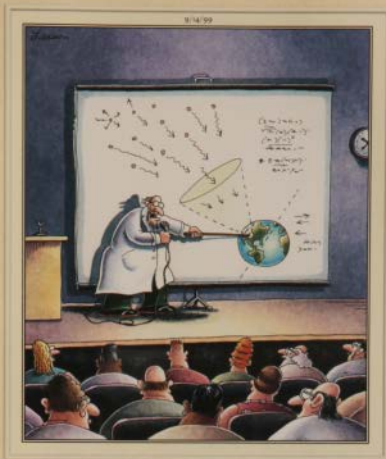
Science meets tabloid TV



Scientist hell



## Appendix



"So, in the general relativistic sense, we find that the dynamic friction of the tensor light cone is actually negative, creating a local convergence of photons, which causes the stars at night to be big and bright ... especially here, deep in the heart of Texas."



"Don't threaten *me*, Thagerson! My cousin is an anthropologist, and she can make your life *hell!*"



"Yes, we'll all miss him, but we must not forget: Louis was shot while slaughtering chickens, so we can take solace in knowing that he died doing what he loved."

The End









Licks

IT'S EVERYBODY'S  
Problem!



For More Details



The Moo Note

MRS. O'LEARY'S  
COW  
1854-1871

THE WAX  
BUTCHER  
MUSEUM



olutely  
NO  
ICKENS

Bob Santa  
sucks on  
electric fence

Sum 1 Cow  
67-100





The UNDER PLACE

NOW PLAYING:  
101  
DEAD  
MATADORS

THE SAN CATCHER

Bovinnie's  
HEIFERS  
HEIFERS  
HEIFERS!

Lille Jon  
has hook  
and mouth  
Luison

BARN-LESS

WAY  
+DE

Mafia staff



Judy True has  
alfalfa breath

FRANK MOODY HAZ  
OATS FOR BRAINS





CO  
FL  
r  
fi