

Amaro, Maria
Folklore, 373
Final Project

"Hamburgers, Cokes and Fries," is what the newspaper advertisement calls to us. In a picture, our memories can float back to time that all was right with our world, as long as we had our cokes in our hand. As a culture our occupation with food is all consuming. It permeates all facets of our civilization. We have power lunches/ breakfasts; we invite people to our houses for drinks and finger foods, but not to a sit-down formal meal. It is an accepted practice to judge a person's intimacy level by the extent of what foods we share with our friends and associates. In rituals that deal with food, it is humour that is a key element in our acceptance of these rituals. Humour can and does smooth the bumps of socialization, and through humour especially in print and visual, helps tie the knot of our social fabric.

In this project I look at a comic strip called Family Circus from the years 1993-96 by the author Bill Keane. Newspapers have syndicated his comic strip across the nation in more than a hundred newspapers. The paper I chose was, The Bowling Green Daily news. It is readily available to whoever wishes to review the dates I have looked at, which are November 11th to 30th from 93-96.

In this project I attempted to track the use of foodways in

the comic strip, and to see if the comic strip allowed for various degrees of acculturation, socialization, and family bonding techniques, during the holiday season of Thanksgiving, which is traditionally from the first week of November to the last day of the month.

good explanation
My criteria for accepting an issue was if the comic had food as a focal point in the issues either in words or pictures, or any combination of the two. Once in while the use of food was used to enforced stereotypical ideal behavior of the idyllic suburban family household. As in #6, #9, #15, #17, #18.

The word usage in the strip had several levels. Some issues attempted to show certain levels of acculturation practices. It must be pointed out that the majority of words spoken were from the children. The children are all under the age of ten, with the youngest being roughly between the age of one and two. Obviously, at this tender age social faux-faus are acceptable. As in #19, where the daughter is mimicking socially accepted norms of behavior that host accepts from a guest. In this issue, the use of finger foods suggests that there is a higher degree of social etiquette needed, and obviously the elder broached the boundaries when she over reach for her favorite finger food. We can juxtapose this against #3 where Billy makes his desire for a deceased relative known. Though the family can construe this as an awkward situation, it is not. For the wish was made among the

family; also, the intimacy level was extremely high. We can tell this because of the sit-down formal dinner is in progress.

Wordplay is also used in #1, #11, #7.

In two issues wordplay with food names is used to touch on various social awareness issues that have cross social, ethnical boundaries. Macaroni becomes Macaraena; Snowpeas, a staple in Chinese cuisine is thought to be "frozen food a natural." In this issue, one wonders if this family ever eats anything that is not in a box, that has to be open and cook. The economic-social implications of ones choices of buying food are well out the scope of this paper, but clearly it's something that could be look at in depth.

Food has always been a bonding element in family groups, and certain foods become sense foods to us. Sense foods are as individualist as the person who is reading this report. Briefly sense foods are food that brings us back subconsciously to our childhood, it could be an aroma or a spice or a particular event in our daily lives that trigger a memory. It is the food that we will always grab when we want to be loved, or just want to feel a sense of well being.

In Family Circus there are two, issues #4, #5 respectively touch on this subject poignantly, #5 shows the mother bringing soup and sandwich and drink to Billy who is clearly sick. Trace memories of many individuals, are ones of primary care giver

It can
also be
described.

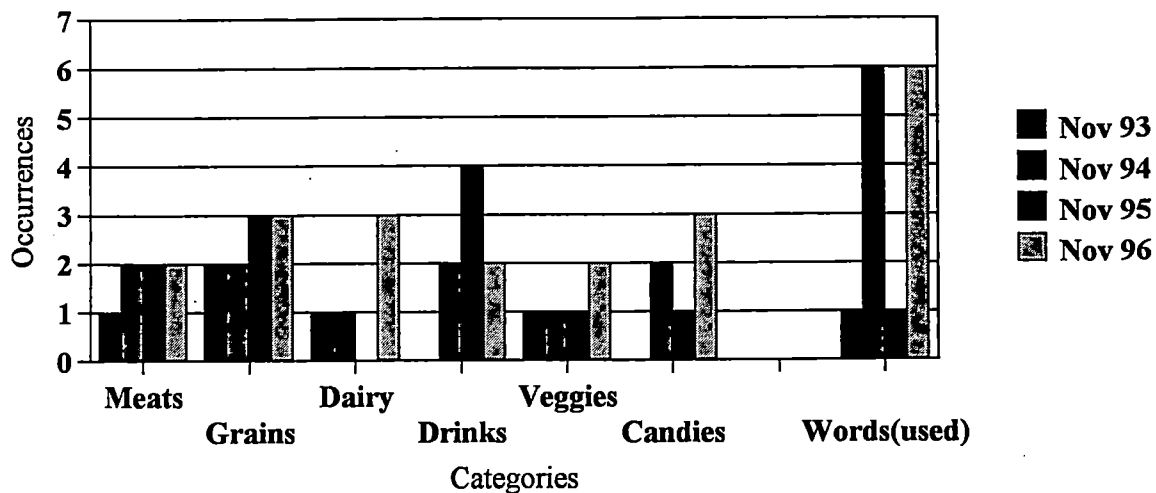
coming to take care of us while bring food. Issue #4 is another trace memory, not as poignant as #5, but more in the spirit of verbal wordplay, and the misunderstanding of children's view of medicine and physiology. Yet, the trace memory is strong for chocolate is a food item that is giving to sooth and comfort children.

Overall we can see that food is use Family Circus to add to the dynamics of family humour and bonding. However, if we were extrapolating the numbers for more than three years we may find out that foodways does not play an important enough role in the strip to deduce any meaningful mirrors of society. In all 19 issues not one minority was represented. When reference was made, though it was not in a disparaging mode, it was it the form of light ridicule. Humour is a form of a coping device for many cultures and it could be argued that through humour comes acceptance of cross-cultural values. Still, Family Circus neither is a coping device for its viewers nor does it mirror society accurately. What it is, is a surreal picture of what we view our family unites of thirty years ago, (if it ever existed at all). It is of no surprise that this comic strip came ~~in~~ to be popular in the Reagan years.

good point

	Nov 93	Nov 94	Nov 95	Nov 96
Meats	1	2	2	2
Grains	2	2	3	3
Dairy	1	1	0	3
Drinks	0	2	4	2
Veggies	1	1	1	2
Candies	0	2	1	3
Words(used	1	6	1	6

Foodways' use in Family Circus (93-96)

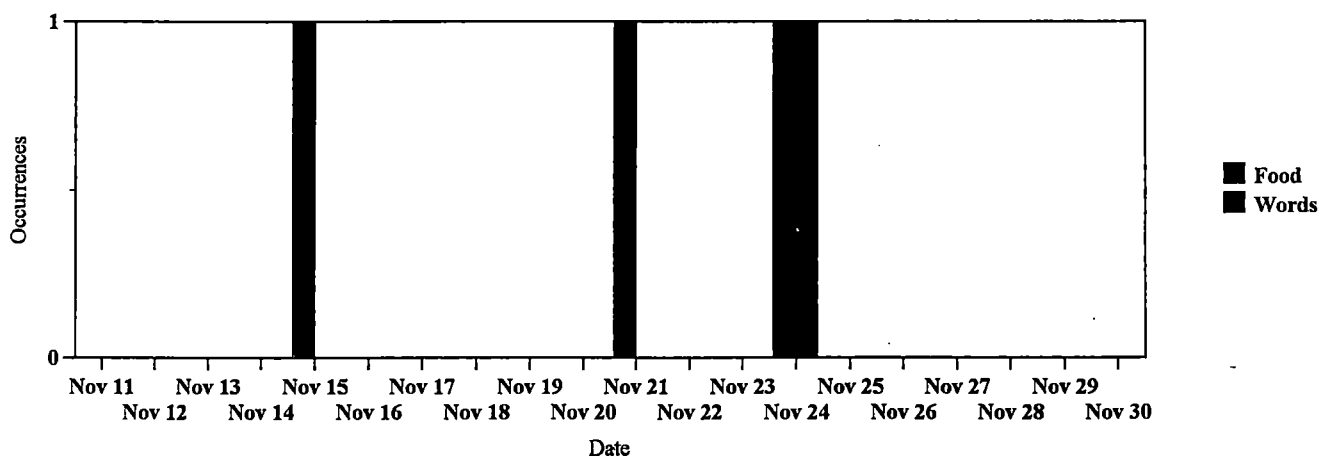


I hope what I've explained
to you already helps you
develop more illustrations.
Ask if you have more questions.

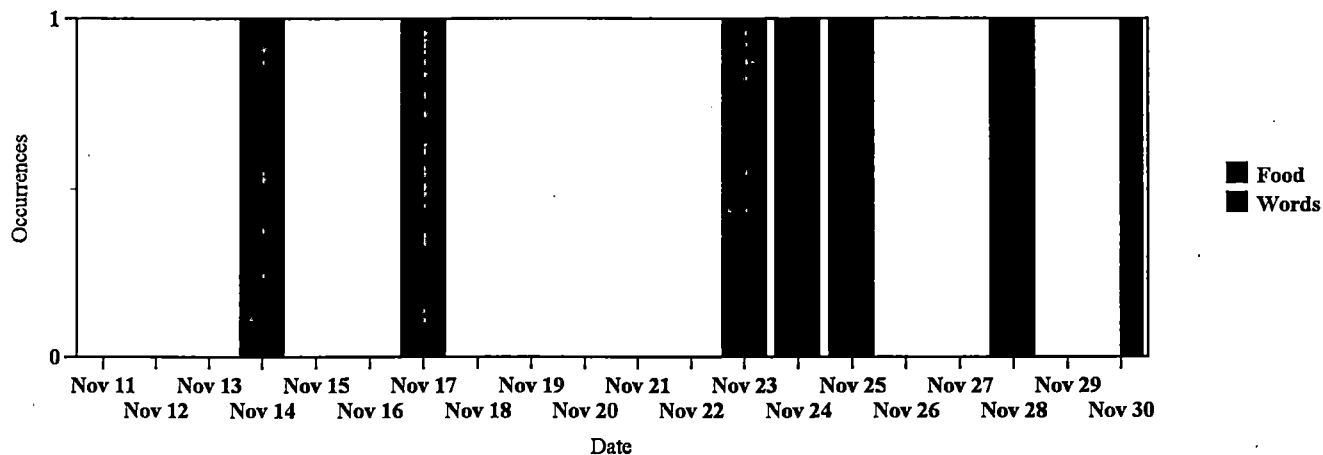
1-6

93	Food	Words	94	Food	Words	95	Food	Words	96	Food	Words
Nov 11	0	0	Nov 11	0	0	Nov 11	0	0	Nov 11	0	0
Nov 12	0	0	Nov 12	0	0	Nov 12	0	0	Nov 12	1	1
Nov 13	0	0	Nov 13	0	0	Nov 13	0	1	Nov 13	0	0
Nov 14	0	0	Nov 14	1	1	Nov 14	1	0	Nov 14	0	0
Nov 15	1	0	Nov 15	0	0	Nov 15	1	0	Nov 15	0	0
Nov 16	0	0	Nov 16	0	0	Nov 16	0	0	Nov 16	0	0
Nov 17	0	0	Nov 17	1	1	Nov 17	1	0	Nov 17	1	1
Nov 18	0	0	Nov 18	0	0	Nov 18	0	0	Nov 18	0	0
Nov 19	0	0	Nov 19	0	0	Nov 19	0	0	Nov 19	0	0
Nov 20	0	0	Nov 20	0	0	Nov 20	0	0	Nov 20	0	0
Nov 21	1	0	Nov 21	0	0	Nov 21	0	0	Nov 21	0	0
Nov 22	0	0	Nov 22	0	0	Nov 22	1	1	Nov 22	0	0
Nov 23	0	0	Nov 23	1	1	Nov 23	0	0	Nov 23	0	0
Nov 24	1	1	Nov 24	1	1	Nov 24	0	0	Nov 24	0	0
Nov 25	0	0	Nov 25	1	1	Nov 25	0	0	Nov 25	0	0
Nov 26	0	0	Nov 26	0	0	Nov 26	0	0	Nov 26	1	0
Nov 27	0	0	Nov 27	0	0	Nov 27	0	0	Nov 27	1	0
Nov 28	0	0	Nov 28	1	1	Nov 28	0	0	Nov 28	0	0
Nov 29	0	0	Nov 29	0	0	Nov 29	0	0	Nov 29	0	0
Nov 30	0	0	Nov 30	0	1	Nov 30	1	0	Nov 30	0	0

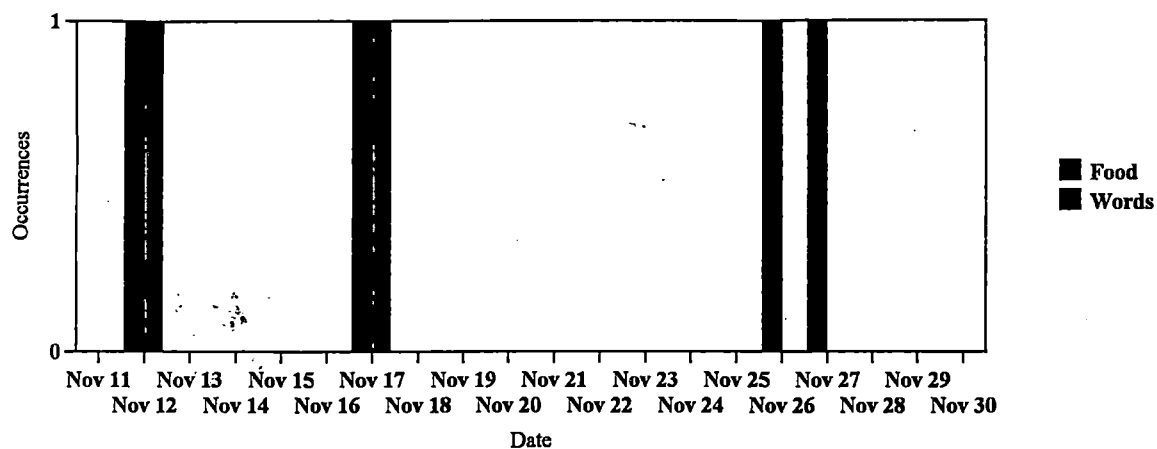
Food and Words in Family Circle/93



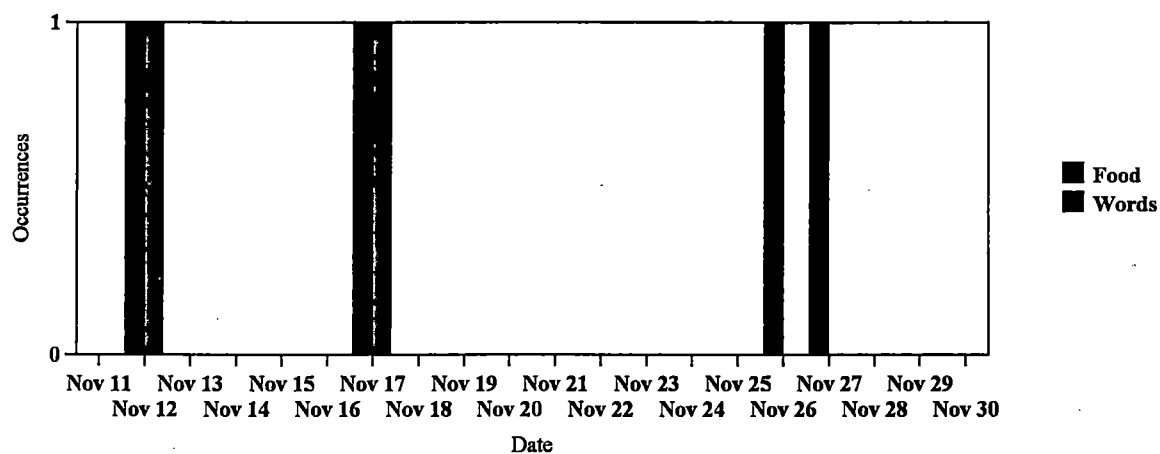
Food and Words in Family Circus/94



Food and Words in Family Circus/95



Food and Words in Family Circus/96



THE FAMILY CIRCUS



11-12

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"Oh, boy! My favorite! Macarena and cheese!"

Bill Keane

1 NOV 12 1995

THE FAMILY CIRCUS NOV 27, 1996



11-27

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"He's mad because he got bumped from his seat by the groceries."

Bill Keane

2

Family Circus NOV 8, 1995 PARK CITY DAILY NEWS

PARK CITY DAILY NEWS

THE FAMILY CIRCUS NOV 28, 1996



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"Know what would make me really thankful? If Granddad could be here too."

Bill Keane

3



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"I think I need more chocolate in my blood."

Bill Keane

21

41



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"He's playing two roles -
Sneezy and Grumpy."



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"If I were homeschooled and
missed a day, you wouldn't hafta
write a note to the teacher."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



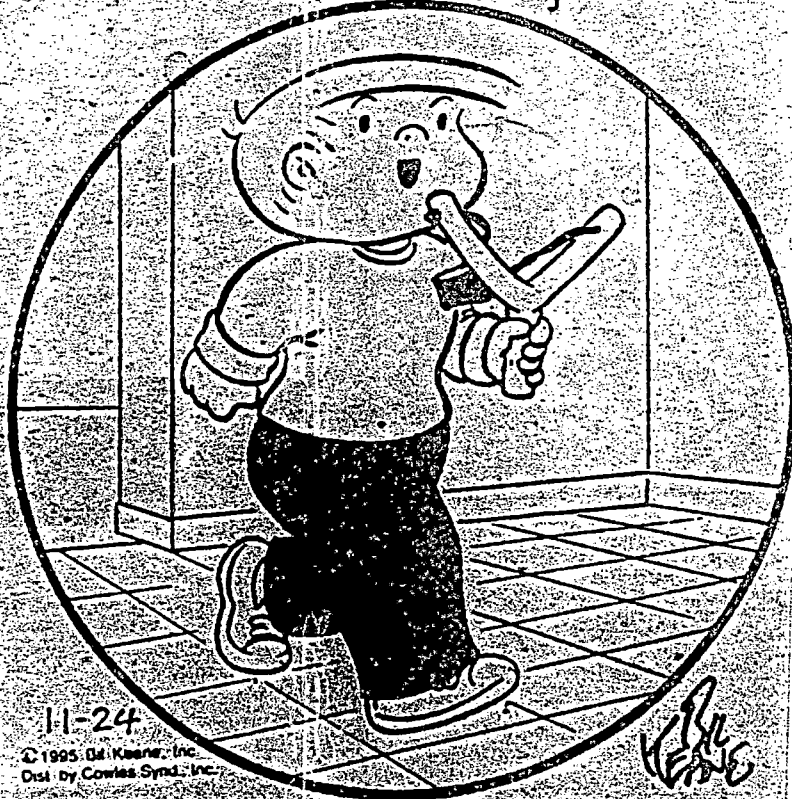
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"It's not a corn of plenty, Jeffy. It's a
hornicokia."

agreements morning, but is likely to

NOV 22, 1995



11-24

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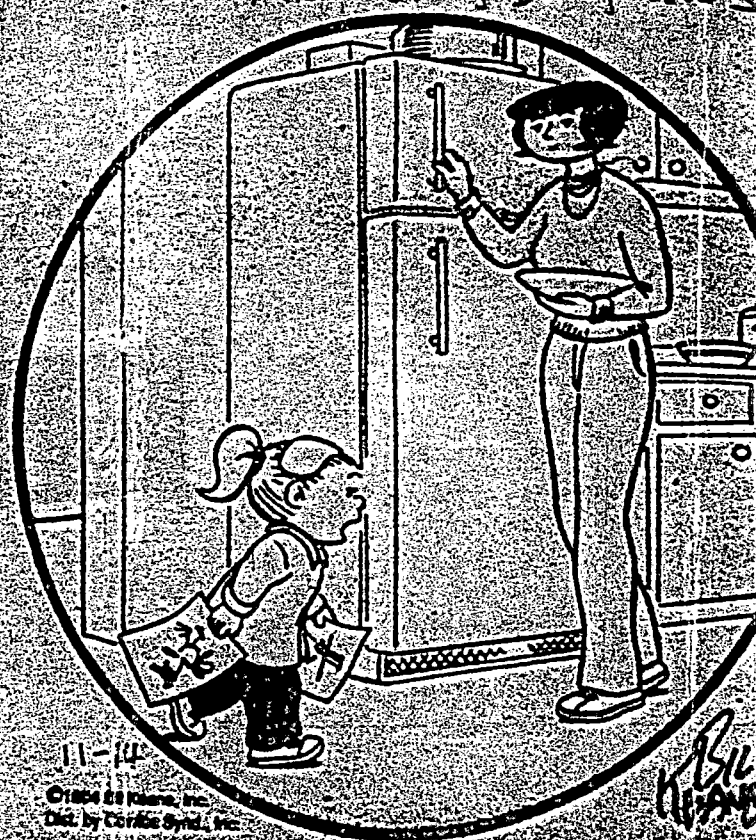
"Do we have any marshmallows?
I'm gonna shoot 'em at
people I like."



11-30

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"Would you read this magazine right away, Mommy? I want to cut some things out of it."



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"I don't like November. Turkeys and pilgrims are too hard to draw."



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"Are snow peas the ones that come frozen?"

THE FAMILY CIRCUS BY BIL KEANE



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"Instead of a big one, let's get two little ones so we can have two wishbones."

THE FAMILY CIRCUS BY BIL KEANE

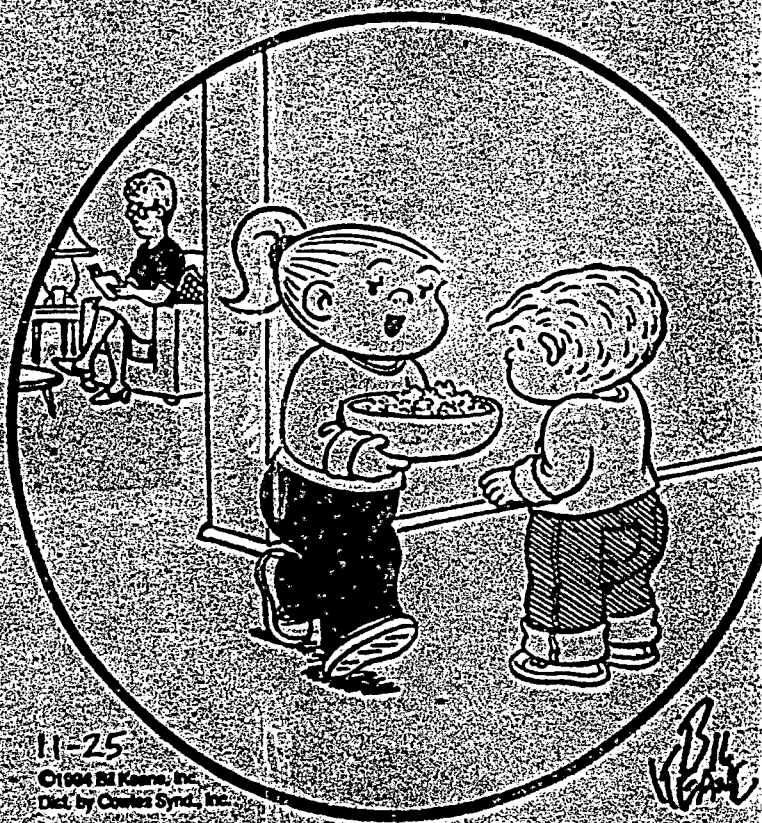


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"Do I hafta finish this, Mommy?
I'm all out of thanks."

Family Circus Nov 25, 1994 1-11 PARK CITY DAILY NEWS

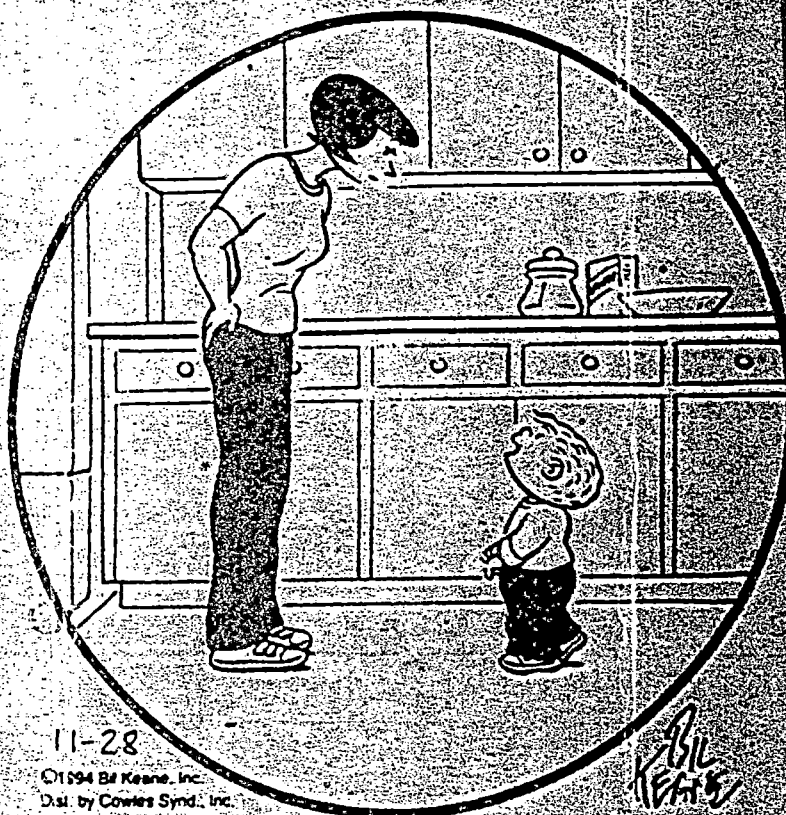


11-25

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"Grandma says she needs help
eating all this popcorn."

Family Circus Nov 28, 1994 PARK CITY DAILY NEWS



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"Could I have a fig mutani?"

THE FAMILY CIRCUS BY BIL KEANE



11-30

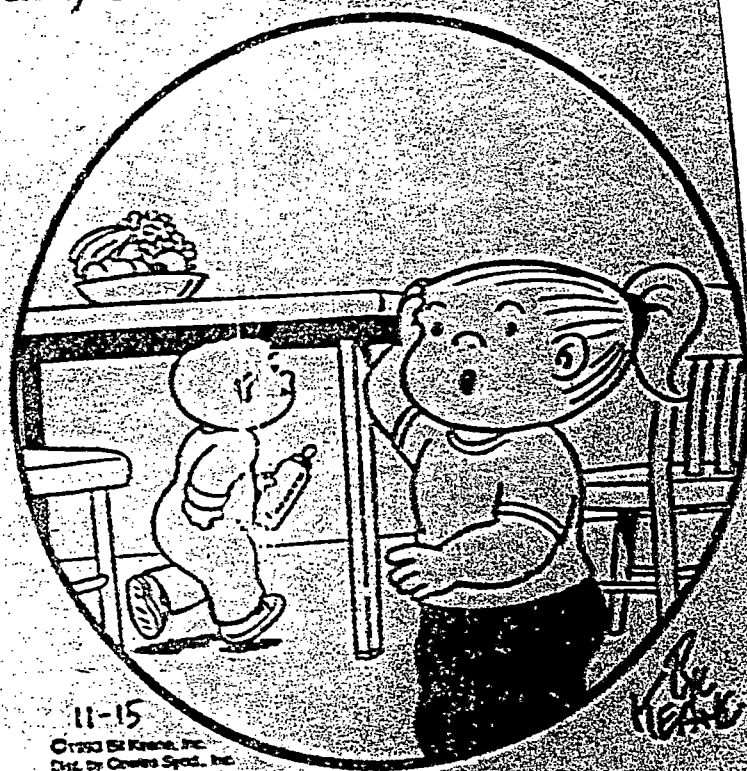
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"Baba means 'bottle' or 'baby' or 'Barfy'
... whichever shows up first."

Family Circus

PARK CITY DAILY NEWS

11-15-1994

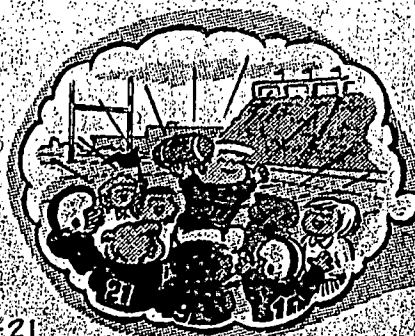
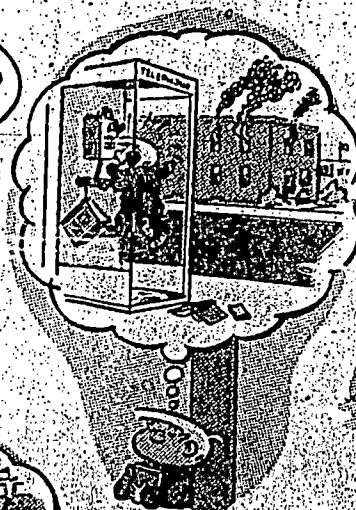
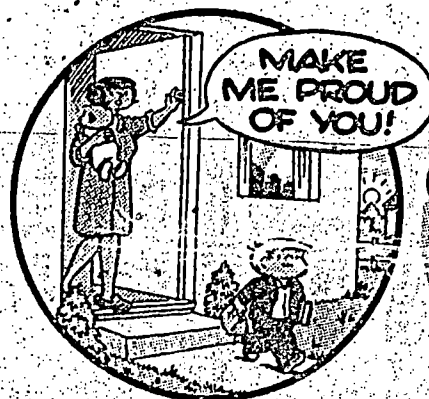


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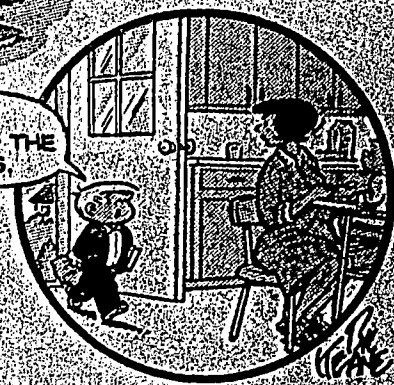
"Pretty soon PJ won't be able to
walk under the table without
bonking his head."

17

PARK CITY DAILY NEWS



I MISSED THE BUS.



11-21
© 1993 PA. KANE, INC. THE BY CORLETT GARDING

18

PARK CITY DAILY NEWS

Family Circus



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"Don't reach. You should always
take the one nearest you."