

Ewe Hall

By JED PILL



Continued from Page 1

He said women typically pay \$21 for a cycle of birth control pills plus the cost of a doctor's visit.

To work, two to four birth control pills are taken anytime up to 72 hours after sex — not just the "morning after" — and then the same dose is taken again exactly 12 hours later. The brands include Wyeth-Ayerst Laboratories' Ovral, Lo/Ovral, Nordette and Triphasil, and Berlex Laboratories Leven and Tri-Leven.

The pills prevent a fertilized egg from implanting into the uterus so that it can grow into an embryo. If a woman already is pregnant, the pills will have no effect.

Emergency contraception is different from the controversial abortion pill +RU++486+, which is awaiting final FDA approval and ends pregnancy by expelling an already growing embryo from the uterus.

The emergency contraceptive's side effects are nausea and vomiting, sometimes severe enough to prevent the pills from working. Over 4 million women have taken emergency contraception in Britain alone, and studies there have shown no serious side effects.

The FDA stopped short of forcing Wyeth-Ayerst and Berlex to relabel their contraceptives to add the emergency use, deciding instead to take the information directly to consumers and physicians.

It is highly unusual for the FDA to declare new uses for a drug when the manufacturer hasn't asked. The agency did name potassium iodide a radiation therapy after the Three Mile Island nuclear accident.

Legally, the FDA's action is a request for the manufacturers to seek permission to advertise morning-after contraception — essentially a pre-approval pending the filing of the proper paperwork.

Wyeth-Ayerst reiterated Monday that it won't sell emergency contraception here and said it opposes any efforts to relabel its products. Berlex declined comment.

Litigation concerns aside, the companies also fear a backlash from abortion foes.



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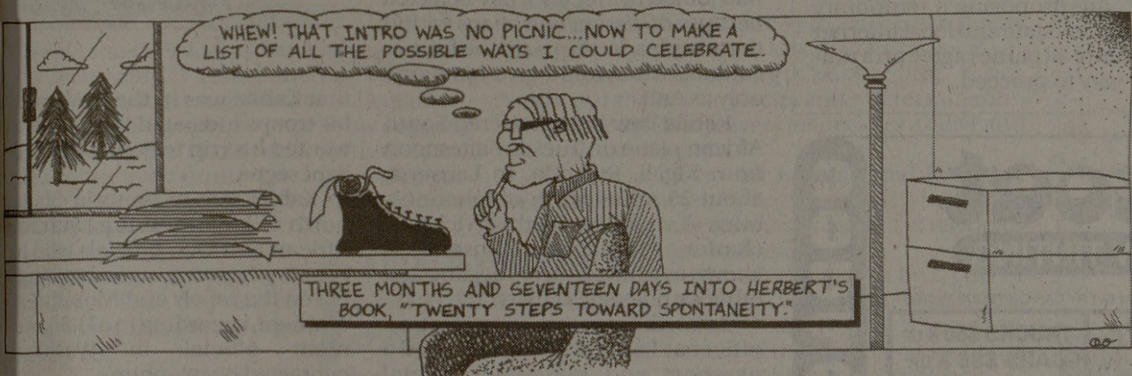
Peeps

By Michael



Sketch

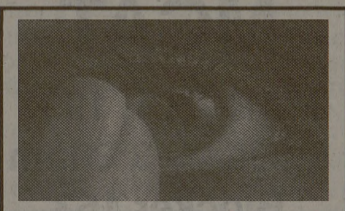
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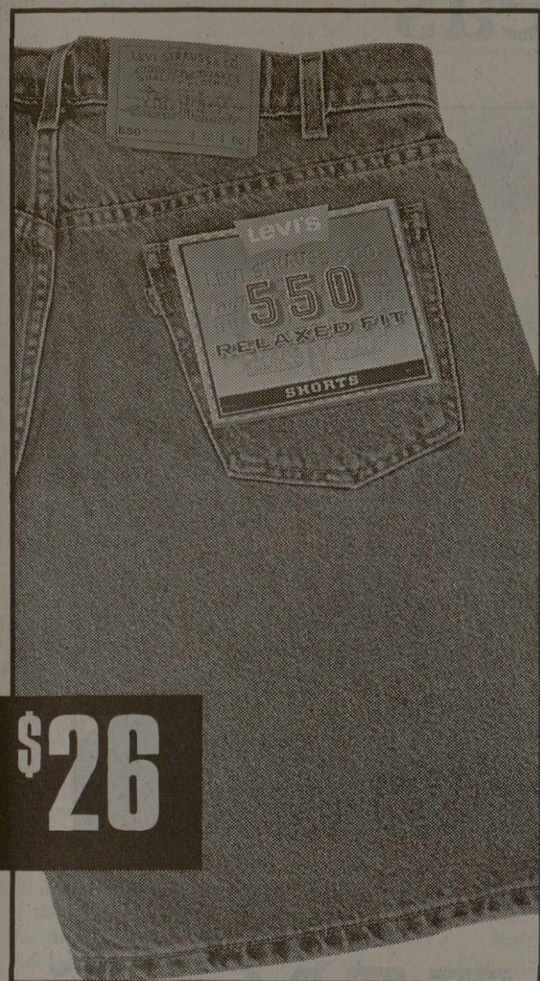
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