

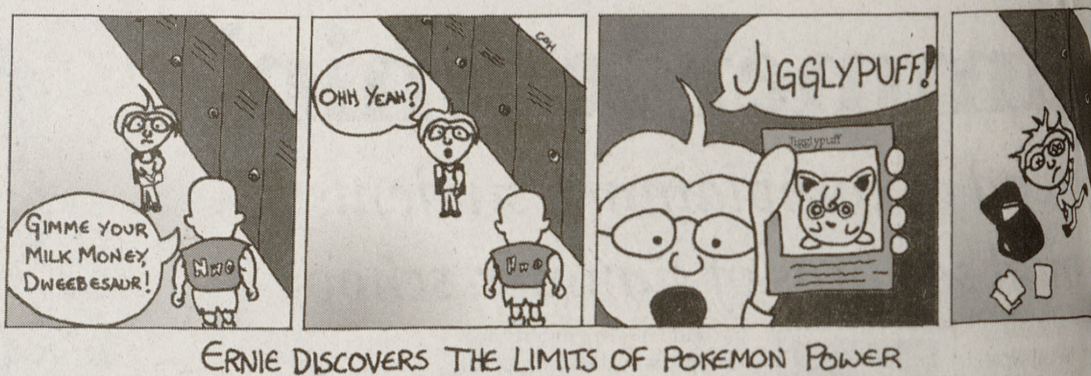
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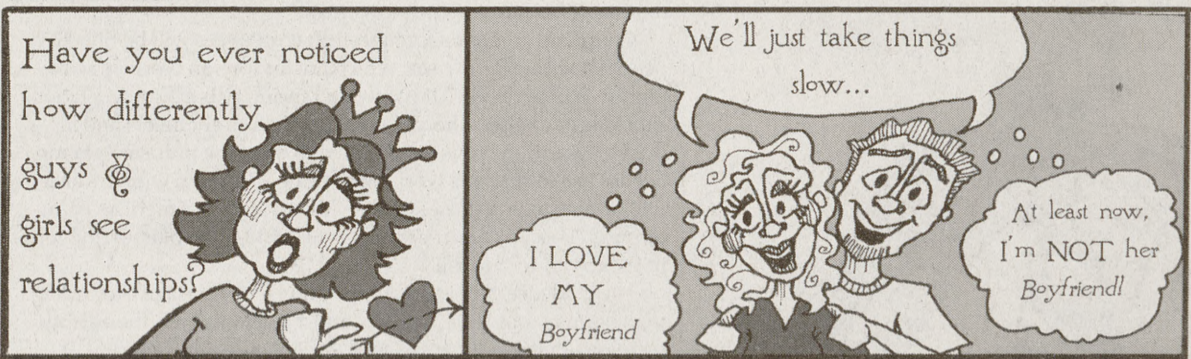
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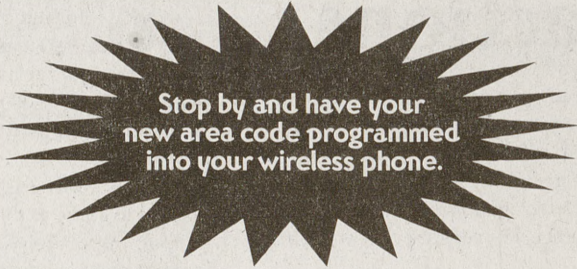
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## Israel receives U.N. invitation

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Israel on Tuesday accepted an invitation to temporarily join a U.N. regional group, which gives the Jewish state the chance to be represented on U.N. bodies in New York for the first time in four decades.

The invitation from the U.N. regional group of European, North American and other countries on Friday capped a lengthy campaign led by the United States, Israel's main ally at the United Nations.

U.S. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke expressed delight that one of the America's priorities during the Clinton administration's last year had been fulfilled.

"We were told it couldn't be done, but here we are to celebrate it," Holbrooke said. "It is a historic step forward in the elimination of a huge injustice."

The campaign to bring Israel into the world body's fold will continue, because this week's invitation was limited only to the regional group in New York — not in Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna, where the United Nations also operates.

But Holbrooke said "New York is the mothership" of U.N. operations, and Israel's admission into the European group was the critical hurdle.

Israel's U.N. Ambassador Yehuda Lancry said his government was happy with its admission to the West European and Others Group.

"It's very important, taking into consideration that we have been excluded for 40 years, that we were considered a sort of pariah of the international community," Lancry said.

"This is a new chapter we are opening with the United Nations and family of nations."

Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who had increasingly voiced concern about Israel's isolation at the United Nations and worked behind the scenes to correct it — was glad that the U.N. had issued the invitation, according to his spokesperson, Fred Eckhard.

Under U.N. rules, the regional groups decide the 10 rotating seats on the Security Council and other U.N. committee assignments. Israel was only U.N. member that was not part of a regional group.

**"It's very important, taking into consideration that we have been excluded for 40 years, that we were considered a sort of pariah of the international community."**

— Yehuda Lancry  
Israel's U.N. ambassador

cause Arab nations have blocked its admission to the Arab Group — where it belongs geographically. Israel's membership in the European group is only temporary, and Israel will continue to try to join the Asian group, the Netherlands U.N. Ambassador Ter van Walsum.

"The arrangement is for four years, then we will reconsider," said van Walsum, the European group's chair.

Other conditions prevent Israel from submitting candidates for contest posts for two years. Israel also will accept the European group's rotation for U.N. posts, which will effectively bar the country from membership on the U.N. Economic and Social Council and other bodies for a considerably longer, van Walsum said.

"We accepted a series of limitations since these limitations appear to be inevitable," Lancry said. "You can't just and disturb all the rotation systems that have been reached."

News in Brief

Smokers awarded damages in court

MIAMI (AP) — Youth anti-smoking ads produced by tobacco companies are actually recruitment pitches for new customers, a public health expert testified Tuesday in a landmark smoking case.

Dr. Michael Siegel, a specialist on cigarette promotions, singled out the industry's "Think, Don't Smoke" slogan for conveying the opposite of its stated message.

Siegel is testifying on behalf of 300,000 to 500,000 sick Florida smokers in a class-action lawsuit. The jury has already ruled that cigarette companies make a dangerous product and awarded \$12.7 million in compensatory damages to three smokers representing the class.

Two Spanish teens kill friend for 'fame'

MADRID, Spain (AP) — Two Spanish teen-age girls said they killed a 16-year-old friend because it would help them "become famous," news reports said Tuesday.

The girls, 16 and 17, whose names were not released, were arrested Sunday in the southern town of San Fernando de Cadiz. Police found the body of Garcia with 18 stab wounds in a nearby field. The two were jailed Monday on murder charges.

The killing, which occurred Friday, has been front-page news in the Spanish newspaper El Pais. The private television network Tele 5 reported that after the girls returned home to change their names, they then went out.

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