

SPAIN

Passion for futbol
very much alive in Madrid

A week and a half ago I sent in a story about Spain's modernity.

Spain is a thriving democracy that includes health protection along with basic constitutional rights and freedoms, I said. It doesn't deserve the image it has in many parts of the world: fiery and primitive passion, the Spanish Civil War, Francoism, and bull fights all over the place. In fact, the community of Catalonia has tried to outlaw corridas de toro on animal-rights grounds.

One part of that burns-like-fire image, however, is more than well-deserved: futbol.

Many Americans don't care all that much about soccer. In fact, I didn't either, until I took photos for the soccer beat for the IDS last semester. But they know of Real Madrid and FC Barcelona, of Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi, of the Spanish national team and their place in the upper echelon of world soccer. They may not know Spanish futbol. They may not follow it. But they respect it.

They don't know the half of it.

Major League Baseball and the NBA each have 30 teams in their top divisions, and the NFL has 32.

Real Madrid and Barcelona are only two of 181 professional soccer teams in Spain. Forty-two of those teams form the top two levels of the Liga de Futbol Profesional.

Yes, we have our own share of sport craziness. From riots in title-winning cities to IU's own celebration during the Final Four in 2002, we've created a unique brand of take-to-the-streets fandom.

But when soccer teams in Spain win major games, fans don't burn cars, because their rallies have enough fire as is. They've been cheering in the streets for decades, even centuries. It's so common that fans have chosen de facto rally points: la Plaza de Cibeles or la Plaza de Neptuno in Madrid and la Rambla in Barcelona.

Just last week, Atletico de Madrid, the second of three professional soccer teams in Madrid, reached the finals of the UEFA Europa League, and more than a thousand people rushed

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to Neptuno to celebrate. Men, women, children, teenagers, old guys and suit-clad businessmen chest-bumped and mosh-pitted to Atletico fight songs screamed at lung-busting levels as if they'd just gotten a golden ticket to heaven. And it wasn't Real Madrid.

Trust me, hell-raisers support Real, as well. At last weekend's game against Osasuna, an eleventh-place team, fans wore horn-spiked hats and yelled for (or, in the case of a few Brits sitting in front of us, against) the home team.

When something good happened, they raised their fists with joy; when something bad happened ... well, they raised their fists then, too, but with a few words to go with it. When Ronaldo scored in the 89th minute to lift the team to a 3-2 victory, the stadium almost exploded with cheers and hugs.



ALEX FARRIS | IDS

Atletico de Madrid fans storm the Plaza de Neptuno after their team reached the finals of the UEFA Europa League tournament Apr. 29. Spain has more than 180 professional soccer teams, including three top-tier teams in Madrid.

I've been to Colts games and two Oaken Buckets, but this is fandom. This is futbol as it should be — the kind that gets you to buy a Real Madrid scarf when you've only lived here for four months. The kind that gets you to run down to Neptuno on the other side of town after someone texts you while you're getting ready for bed.

The kind that's so contagious, you might bring the sickness back to the U.S.



ALEX FARRIS | IDS

Two spectators watch warm-ups before a soccer game between Real Madrid and Club Atlético Osasuna May 2 in Madrid.

SQUIRREL AND CROW



KENDALL & KLOPPENBURG



BLENDER KITTY



Yes, madam! You with the panty-lines! Tell your baby to stop pointing its finger at me! Yes, the brat in the purple carriage! (Or is that mauve?) It's very rude. What are you raising? A baby or a monster? If my hair was on fire—that would be one thing. But my hair is not on fire.

Is it?
mlteague© www.blenderkitty.com

MICHAEL TEAGUE

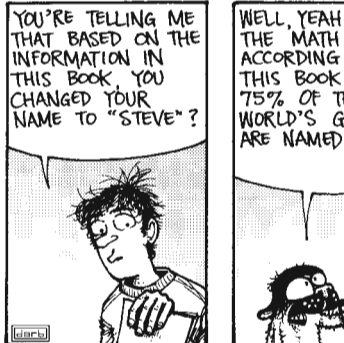
THE WILD LIFE



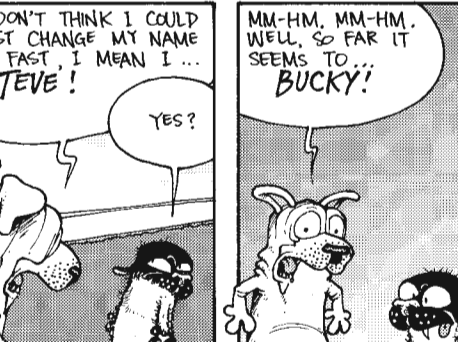
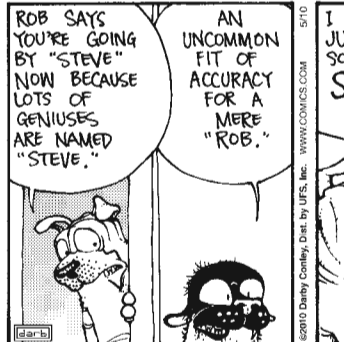
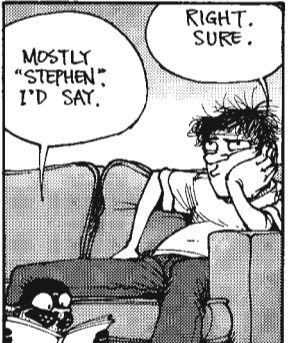
LWIN MOE & DAVID SOWARDS



GET FUZZY



DARBY CONLEY



NON SEQUITUR



- ACROSS**
- The U.S. minimum is \$7.25 per hour
 - In the phone directory
 - It can follow poli or precede fi
 - One out of two
 - Break out of jail
 - Refusals
 - Amo, amas, —
 - Ground beef concoctions on buns
 - Nervous twitch
 - Kitchen cabinet stack
 - Light beige
 - Dried meat sticks
 - War's opposite
 - Apprehension
 - Food fish that's often red
 - Quechua-speaking country
 - Two-time loser to Ike
 - Radical '60s org.
 - Winter underwear
 - Doofus
 - "Do... See God?": Jon Agee palindrome book
 - Meat-inspecting org.
 - Visibly embarrassed
 - Lynx family member
 - Kind of carnival show
 - Toronto ball team
 - Airline to Ben-Gurion
 - On the train
 - Rockies hrs.
 - Fruit-and-cinnamon-flavored cereal
 - Samoa's capital
 - Go after in court
 - Surgeon's tool
 - Long race, for short
 - Military gps.
 - Military instructions
 - Coastal raptor

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By Dan Naddor

5/10/10

- Pooh's creator
- Ice Age remnant
- Young newt
- Nielsen of "Naked Gun" films
- Muslim religion
- Highlanders, e.g.
- Record, à la Nixon
- Omar of "The Mod Squad" movie
- "L.A. Law" co-star Susan
- Nestlé brand named for its covering of tiny white confection balls
- Strong-armed
- Publishers, e.g.
- Cherokee on the road
- Jammies
- Handle roughly
- "Royal" newborn annoyance
- Gin flavoring
- Slangy "No way"
- Elderly
- School dance VIPs
- Grimm beast

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To get the advantage, check the day's rating: 10 is the easiest day, 0 the most challenging.

Taurus (April 20-May 20)
Today is a 6 - Every instruction you give seems like criticism. Actually, you're excited by the possibilities but want to make detailed refinements.

Gemini (May 21-June 21)
Today is a 6 - Ungrounded ideas have been floating around at work. As you draw them in, you see how they fit together. Take stock and share them with co-workers.

Cancer (June 22-July 22)
Today is a 5 - On one hand, you want to be the leader and the life of the party. On the other, you'd be just as happy going your own way. You get to choose.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)
Today is a 7 - You're tempted to play those slot machines today. Not a good idea. Instead, wax enthusiastic at work. Take creative risks rather than financial ones.

Linda Black writes horoscopes for Tribune Media Services. Her daily column is read by more than 4 million readers in newspapers across the country.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Today is a 5 - You hear things straight from the horse's mouth. You also can gather information from dreams or meditation - less direct, but equally revealing.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
Today is a 5 - The balance tilts in favor of careful spending. Everyone wants to get more stuff, but do you really need it all?

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Today is a 6 - If you could charge money for all the love going around right now, you'd be wealthy. You understand the needs of others, and they respond in kind.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Today is a 6 - The work you do today contributes greatly to a career goal. It seemed like something was missing, but now you've got it, and you make it yours.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
Today is a 6 - You're aware that you're ready to advance to the next stage. There are still nagging details to be resolved in order for you to move forward.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
Today is a 7 - An investment in home and family today is worth the effort. An older person suggests a gift that satisfies practical needs and also provides pleasure.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20)
Today is a 6 - Count yourself among the fortunate. You find out early on what's needed to please your boss. You have all day to figure out the logistics.

Aries (March 21-April 19)
Today is a 7 - Although today may feel stressful, energy will flow creatively if you remember to breathe. Results aren't immediately apparent but are worth waiting for.