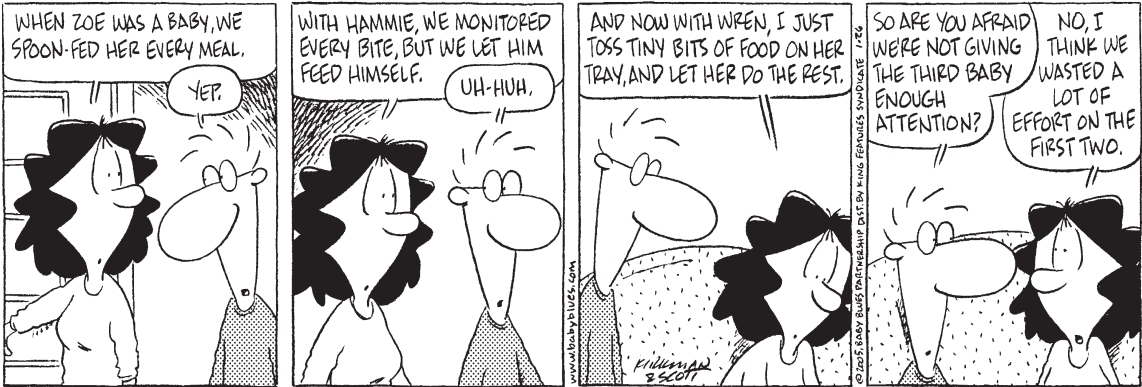


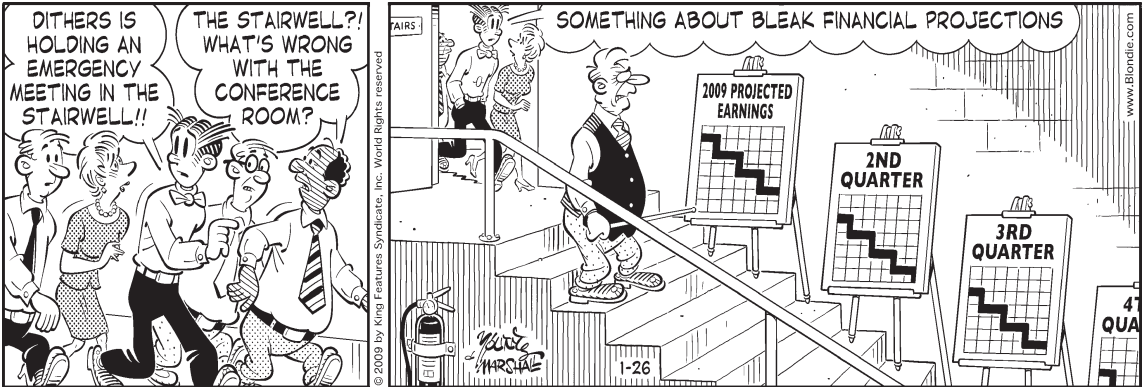
Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



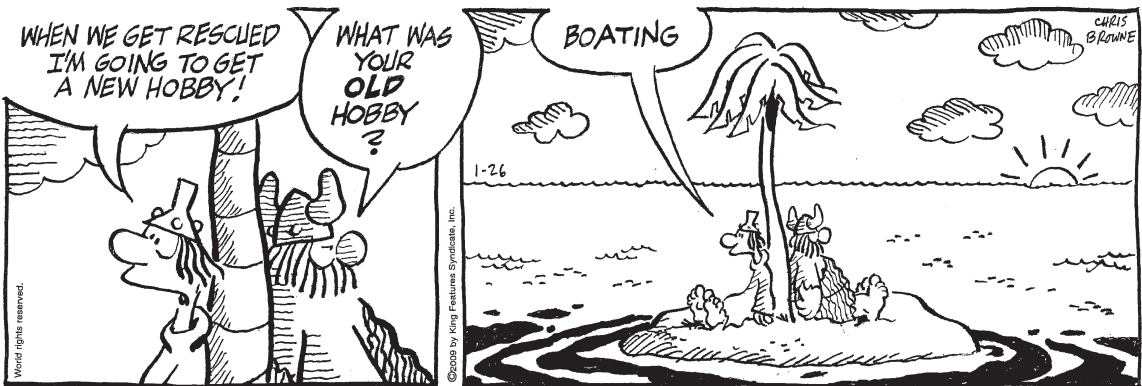
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Blondie • Chic Young



Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



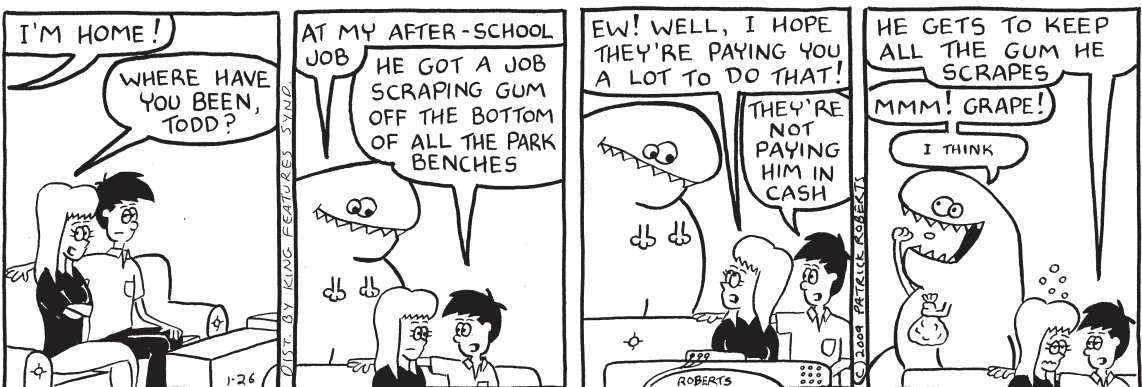
Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



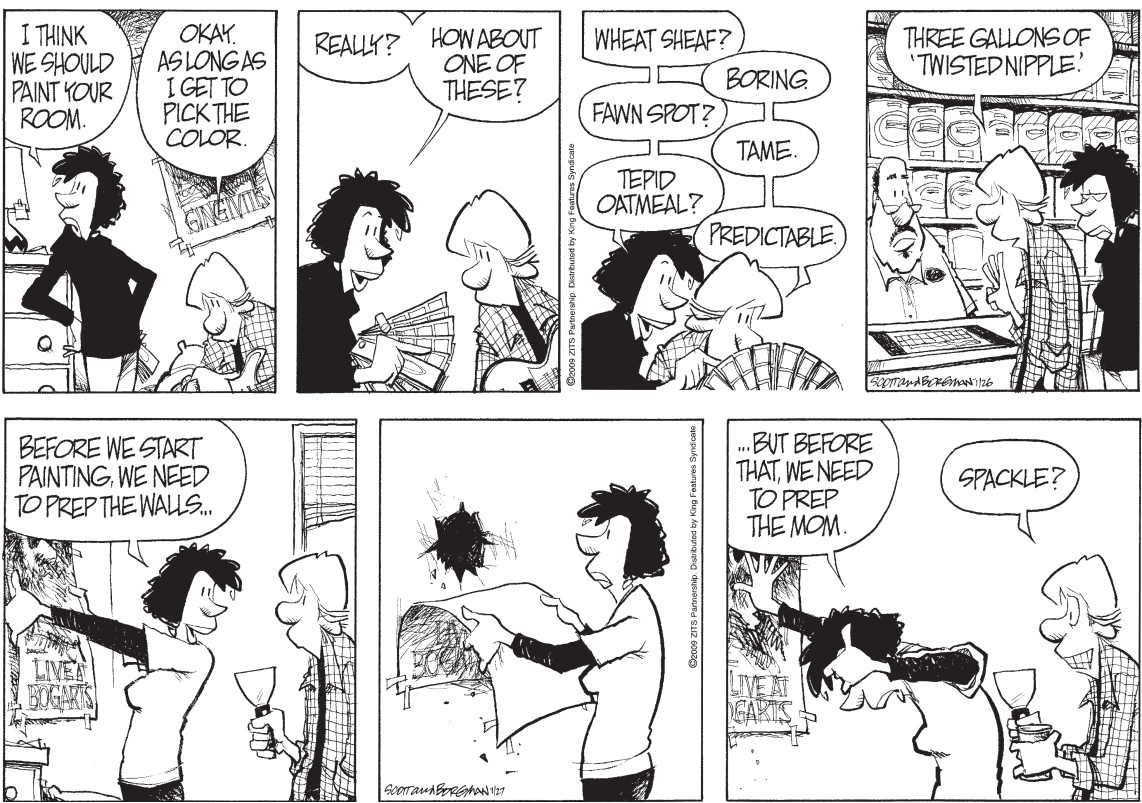
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers

• Ask Dr. Brothers

Families have odd behavior

Dear Dr. Brothers: During the recent holidays, we had several family get-togethers with relatives who came from far and wide. We have family members on both sides who sometimes act a little screwy, but my sister's husband drew everyone's attention. They've been married five years, but he never has anything to say. He actually spent most of the time at three different parties lying on a bed with the coats! My sister said only that he has a "cold," but I worry about her now. – A.R.

Dear A.R.: A cold, or just a cold shoulder? It sounds as though you don't really know your brother-in-law very well, and you all may be wondering if he is acting strangely for a reason other than a prolonged case of the sniffles. At the core of your question is a concern that your sister has married and is living with someone odd, or psychologically off-balance.

The second possibility is a little more challenging, from the family's standpoint. There is at least an even chance that your brother-in-law simply doesn't know you guys, isn't interested in getting to know you and finds the whole family reunion scenario a terrible bore! So his playing possum may be a passive-aggressive way of attending the functions but not participating. That would be a shame, because it is an embarrassment and hurtful to your sister, as well as less than complimentary to all your interesting relatives! In any case, the best idea is, again, to talk to your sister. Let her know you're concerned and want to have a happy family. Then sit back and listen.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I am having such a hard time. My cat, which I've had for 12 years, has kidney disease and is not going to live much longer. My husband has made several remarks that tell me he doesn't want to get another cat after she is gone. But I want to get one now so that it will be a little easier on me when the time comes. I can't imagine living without my cat or another one that I can love! I am a basket case. What's the best way to get my husband to understand? – F.P.

Dear F.P.: It's very difficult when two people in a household have different relationships with the pet, especially if one is emotionally invested and the other is not. You clearly are aiming to cushion the blow of your beloved cat's impending death by having another one to love already in the household, while your husband anticipates less of a feeling of loss, so therefore he doesn't see the need to protect against it.

What would be nice, of course, would be for him to recognize that you are going to be hurting and will benefit greatly if he can let you take on this new kitten, which might not otherwise make much difference to him. Make sure you haven't already taken unfair advantage of him in the pet department, though – if he is allergic, or the box is always dirty, or the cat keeps everyone awake at night or jumps on his desk, he may have other issues he is entitled to air before you come home with another pet. Being a "basket case" won't help, so try to be calm.

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Bridge • Steve Becker

East dealer. Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH

♠ 7
♥ J 8 6
♦ Q 10 8 6 5 3
♣ 9 5 4

WEST

♠ K 5
♥ 9 5 3
♦ A J 4
♣ A Q 10 6 2

EAST

♠ Q J 8 4 2
♥ 2
♦ K 7 2
♣ J 8 7 3

SOUTH

♠ A 10 9 6 3
♥ A K Q 10 7 4
♦ 9
♣ K

The bidding:
East 2♦ South 4♥ West All Pass
Opening lead — king of spades.

Famous Hand

This deal from the 1988 Vanderbilt Teams features excellent defensive play by Peter Boyd, a Virginian who has won several national and international titles over the past three decades. Boyd held the West hand and wound up defending against four hearts after his partner had opened with an unorthodox weak two-spade bid. South won the opening spade lead with the ace and ran the diamond nine to East's king. East returned a low club, and, after taking the king with the ace, Boyd stopped to think things over.

He judged that declarer might well be in position to score 10 tricks on a crossruff, trumping three spades in dummy to add to the ace of spades and at least six heart tricks in his hand. Accordingly, Boyd made the first of two key plays by shifting to a low trump. This was taken by dummy's six as East followed with the deuce and South the four.

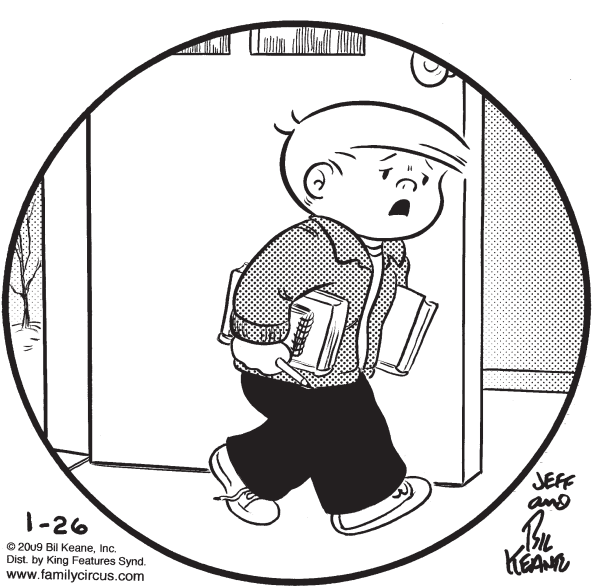
Since only nine tricks were now available on a crossruff, declarer's only remaining hope was to establish dummy's diamonds. So he ruffed a diamond with the queen of hearts and then led the heart seven toward dummy's J-8.

Had Boyd mechanically followed low, South would have gotten home safely by finessing dummy's eight, ruffing another diamond high and then leading the ten of hearts to the jack. This would have yielded 10 tricks: six hearts, a spade and three diamonds.

But Boyd had carefully kept track of all the heart spots played to this point. When the seven of hearts was led, he foiled declarer's plan by playing the nine! This deprived South of the extra entry needed to set up and run the diamonds, so he finished down two, thwarted by the combination of Boyd's heart shift at trick four and his entry-denying play of the heart nine two tricks later.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



“Boy, I spent the whole day learning from my mistakes.”

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

5	8			6			3	
9				7				2
			2	1				
		6		4		2	8	
8		7		3				5
	1	5		9		4		
			6		8			
7			5					6
	4			3			5	1

Difficulty Level ★ 1/26

This is a logic-based number placement puzzle. The goal is to enter a number, 1-9, in each cell in which each row, column and 3x3 region must contain only one instance of each numeral. The solution to the last Sudoku puzzle is at right.

1	8	6	2	4	5	3	9	7
3	4	7	9	1	6	8	5	2
9	2	5	3	7	8	1	6	4
4	5	3	8	9	7	6	2	1
8	1	2	5	6	4	9	7	3
6	7	9	1	3	2	4	8	5
5	6	4	7	8	1	2	3	9
2	3	8	4	5	9	7	1	6
7	9	1	6	2	3	5	4	8

Cryptoquip

YOVRNQO HGO NXVMXJOXHZMXRK

WMOH GRP MNHLZJRKOP

RVHML XMKHO, Z QNWWMQO

HGO YORHXZF YORH XZVF.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I GET EMBARRASSED TO BE SEEN RIDING IN A CERTAIN TOYOTA. I GUESS YOU MIGHT SAY I'M CAMRY-SHY.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: H equals T

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Exercise in the park
4 Duel tool
9 Method
12 Actress Gardner
13 "...excavating for —"
14 A Gershwin brother
15 Potbelly
17 Fresh
18 Pub order
19 Greek islander
21 Moves on momentum
24 Loathe
25 Melody
26 Conk out
28 Sounds contented
31 Church furniture
33 Pompous sort
35 Golfer Aoki
36 Wields scissors
38 Snapshot
40 Old French coin

DOWN

41 Memo-randum
43 Second of two
45 Inn
47 Historic period
48 "That tastes awful!"
49 Wisconsin lake
54 Bikini half
55 Draw out
56 Prune
57 Stitch
58 Discourage
59 "Monty Python" opener
1 Pugilist's shot

2 Eggs
3 Festive
4 Went like Columbus
5 Serious forgetfulness
6 Auction action
7 Tennyson's "—"
8 Swathe anew
9 Maxwell Anderson play
10 Neighborhood
11 Show boredom
16 Bankroll
20 Needle case

21 Spaces
22 Collateral option
23 "Rich Man, Poor Man" author
27 Kreskin's claim
29 Track competition
30 Acerbic
32 Dalmatian feature
34 Librarian's request
37 Intoxicated
39 Life's work
42 Skip a phoneme
44 Bill
45 Centers
46 Shrek is one
50 Enthusiast
51 Foreman foe
52 Understood
53 Harvest goddess

Saturday's answer 1-26

SPA	OPS	CRIES
TOG	DIP	OPINE
OUR	ECON	OMIST
ICE	SKOAL	
CHEW	ERR	WADE
	OPT	ZIRCON
ANGLE		FIEND
CONFAB	ASS	
TRUE	ALL	TOPE
	BLOCK	MAX
SATYRICON	ETA	
ATSEPA	AVE	GEL
PEPPY	LEE	ART

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12			13					14		
15			16					17		
			18			19		20		
21	22	23				24				
25			26		27	28			29	30
31		32		33		34		35		
36			37		38		39		40	
		41		42		43		44		
45	46					47				
48			49		50			51	52	53
54			55					56		
57			58					59		