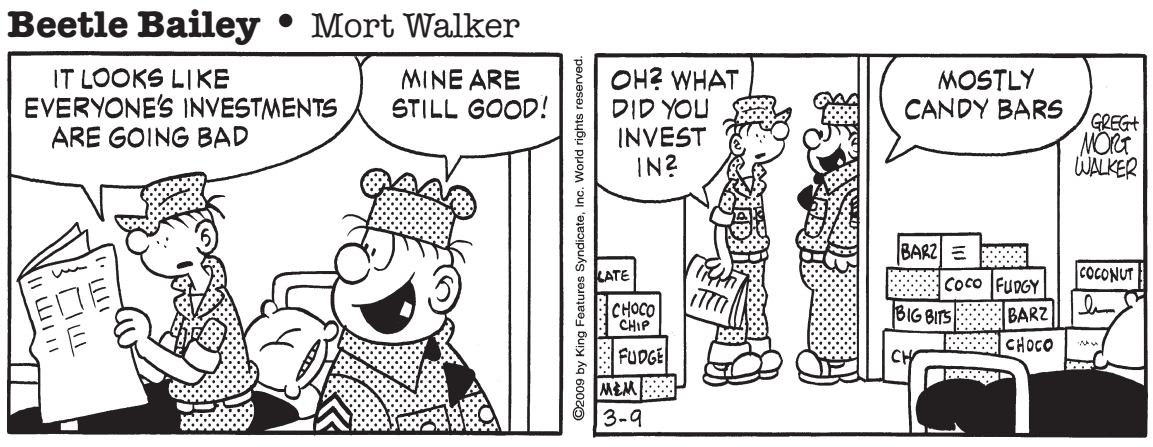
Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Blondie • Chic Young

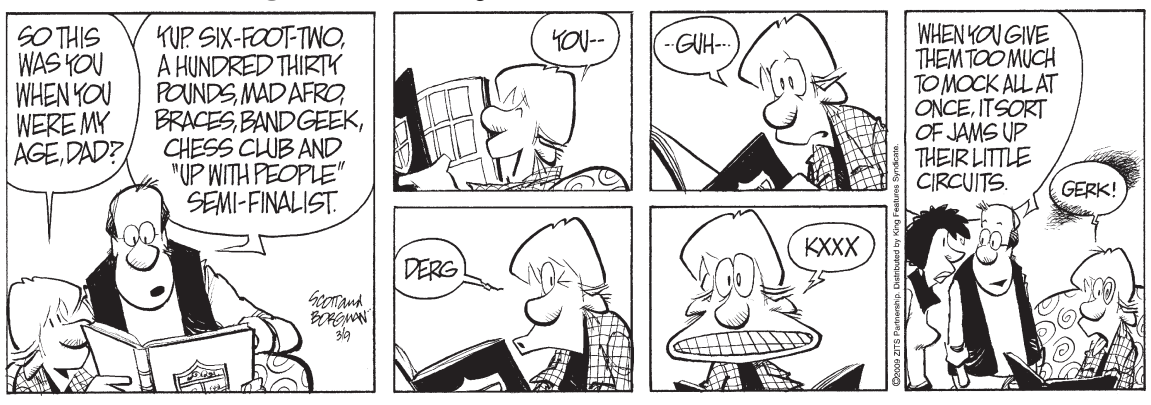
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne

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

I'm running out of excuses

Dear Dr. Brothers: Last year during the holiday season, I signed up for some volunteer work at a local nonprofit. I then started to receive all these e-mails asking me to volunteer some more – which I did. The group continues to ask me at least once every two weeks if I have any spare time to donate. I've started to make excuses, which I feel guilty about, but they keep asking me to volunteer! I like to volunteer once in a while, but I'm running out of things to tell them. What should I do? – G.B.

Dear G.B.: It's good that you have recognized the value in volunteering. When we take the time to help others, the psychological benefits we receive in return are numerous. Besides simply feeling better about ourselves, we open ourselves up to a whole world we may just have read about in the news or witnessed on TV.

However, you shouldn't have to feel pestered into donating your time. Volunteering should be a personal choice, not something you feel guilted into. You don't want to build up resentment toward the program's organizers, as you might transfer those feelings to the people who need help – a cranky volunteer is of no use to anyone. Instead of continuing the route of making up various excuses, why not simply adopt an "I'll call you when I'm free" policy with the organizers? They most likely do not feel like they are harassing you with their e-mails – how are they to know when you are free? – and it probably would save them a lot of time and effort. Be honest.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I finally went through with it. After years of worrying about my nonexistent hairline, I saved up enough money to get hair restoration surgery (i.e., plugs). I'm really happy with the way my hair looks now – but one thing has been bothering me. I haven't been to work since I had the procedure, so what's the right way for me to introduce my new look without everyone saying, "What is that, a wig?" – L.L.

Dear L.L.: When it comes to such delicate matters involving cosmetic improvements, there's really no right or wrong way to go about reintroducing yourself to your peer group. Anything you might try to ease others into the change – the sudden wearing of a hat, for example – probably would only serve to make it a bigger deal than it already is. There are a few things you should be prepared for.

On your first day back, you most likely will be greeted with a good degree of lingering stares and some flat-out questions. You can deal with the situation either with humor ("I just woke up this morning, and it was like this. It's a miracle!") or the more direct approach ("Yes, they are in fact plugs. How do they look?") Either way, it's something you have to confront head-on In the end, you may be making too much ado about your hair. What may seem dramatically different to others at first will seem natural to them before they know it.

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Bridge • Steve Becker

East dealer.
Both sides vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ A K 8 5 4
♥ Q J 10 2
♦ Q 5
♣ 10 3

WEST
♠ 10 6
♥ 7 6 5
♦ A K 7 3
♣ A 7 6 4

EAST
♠ Q 9 7 3 2
♥ A K 9 8 4
♦ 2
♣ J 9

SOUTH
♠ J
♥ 3
♦ J 10 9 8 6 4
♣ K Q 8 5 2

The bidding:

East	South	West	North
2 NT	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
Pass	3 NT	Dble	Pass
Pass	Redble	All Pass!	

Opening lead — five of hearts.

Famous Hand

You'd never think such a thing could happen in a world championship. Those who witnessed it could not recollect ever having seen anything like it before. Those who heard about it afterward could only shake their heads in wonderment.

But happen it did at the 1987 world team championship, in the semifinal-round match between England and Sweden. The bidding shown took place at the table where Tony Forrester and John Armstrong were East-West for Great Britain, playing against Magnus Lindkvist and Bjorn Fallenius of Sweden.

In the English pair's methods, East's opening two-notrump bid showed two unspecified five-card suits and seven to 10 high-card points. The trouble for North-South started when Lindkvist, South, balanced with three notrump over West's three-heart bid. The notrump bid in this situation was intended as unusual, showing both minors. West doubled for penalties, and it was then North's turn to act.

With no real preference for either minor, Fallenius passed the double around to his partner, expecting him to choose his better suit. But when Lindkvist redoubled instead – which he apparently thought would force North to make the final choice – Fallenius had second thoughts about the meaning of the three-notrump bid. Eventually he decided that South had a strong, balanced hand, so he passed, and three notrump redoubled became the final contract!

The defense was relentlessly accurate, limiting declarer to only four tricks – two spades, a heart and a club. This amounted to down five for a penalty of 2,800 points, thought to be the biggest in the history of the Bermuda Bowl competition. Together with the 110 points scored by their teammates at the other table for making three diamonds, the British scored 2,910 points on the deal for a gain of 21 International Match Points, and went on to earn a place in the final.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane

"Watch out, Mommy! We're 'bout to start our Iditarod!"

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★ 3/09

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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.

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

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 3/06

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Cryptoquip

DSTMTITU WAGUTYY SWUOTU ZU FTUGKMTQQK SWY HKMMTU, K YXOOZYT GSZYT DZXQH FT IWQTUKT'Y AWQZUKTY.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A CONSPICUOUSLY COLORFUL FELLOW WERE FLOATING IN WATER, I SUPPOSE HE MIGHT BE FLAM-BUOYANT.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals O

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Poker variety
5 Crooner Damone
8 Ellipse
12 Sci-fi's Sky-walker
13 Leading lady?
14 Lima's country
15 Help in a crime
16 Greek
18 Tangy green condiment
20 Noble
21 Anatomical cavities
23 West of Hollywood
24 Sasha and Malia's mom
28 Men only
31 Tavern
32 Diarist Samuel
34 — -la-la
35 All over again
37 Wood-finishing substances
39 Homer's interjection
41 Cain's victim
42 Arouse
45 Arouse
49 "Holder" of a brief explanation
51 Guy
52 Reed instrument
53 Have a bug
54 Additionally
55 Swiss city
56 In medias —
57 Witnessed

DOWN
1 Cabbage salad
2 Big brass instrument
3 Guitars' kin
4 Remove (from)
5 Planes, trains and automobiles
6 "— Got a Secret"
7 Honeycomb compartment
8 La Scala shows
9 Family feud
10 Seed covering
11 Historic sitcom star
17 Sellers co-star Herbert
19 Road Runner's sound
22 Omega's opposite
24 Biz deg.
25 Author Fleming
26 The U in "IOU"
27 Looks at intently
29 Joan of —
30 Petrol
33 Dispatched
36 Opposite of "improve"
38 South American herd
40 "Whadja say?"
42 Nose-in-the-air sort
43 Toothpaste dispenser
44 Bosc or Bartlett
46 Hardy cabbage
47 Otherwise
48 Night light?
50 Falsehood

Solution time: 27 mins.

S	H	H	■	A	B	U	T	■	D	E	E	M
A	Y	E	■	W	A	S	H	■	O	K	R	A
S	P	R	I	N	T	E	R	■	Z	E	R	O
H	E	R	M	I	T	■	U	K	E	■	■	■
■	■	■	A	N	Y	■	W	I	N	T	E	R
G	L	O	G	G	■	F	A	X	■	O	R	E
R	O	V	E	■	P	R	Y	■	G	R	I	N
I	C	E	■	G	U	Y	■	G	L	I	N	T
P	I	N	T	E	R	■	O	N	E	■	■	■
■	■	■	A	M	I	■	G	E	N	E	R	A
L	A	M	P	■	S	P	L	I	N	T	E	R
O	B	I	E	■	T	E	E	S	■	C	A	M
W	E	A	R	■	S	A	S	S	■	H	R	S

Yesterday's answer 3-7

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			