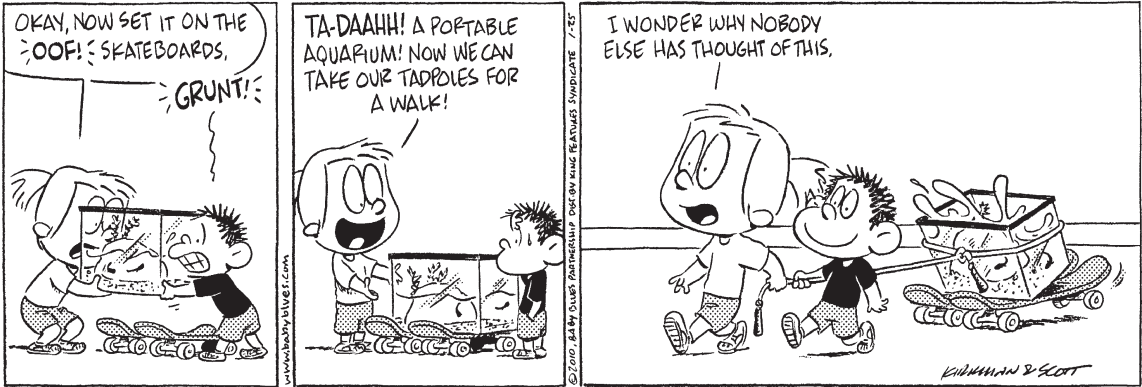
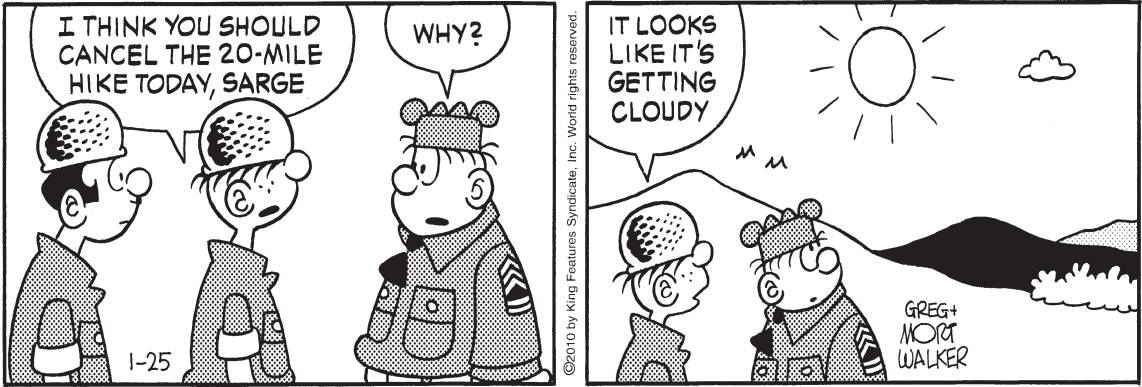


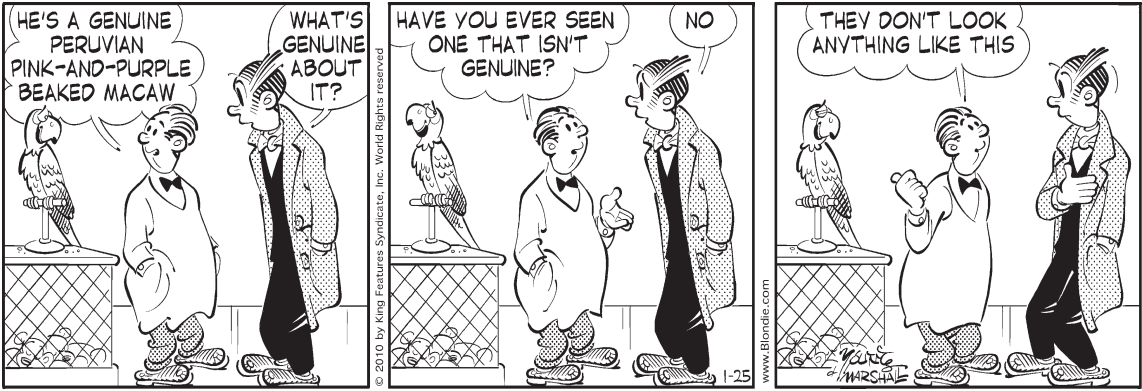
Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



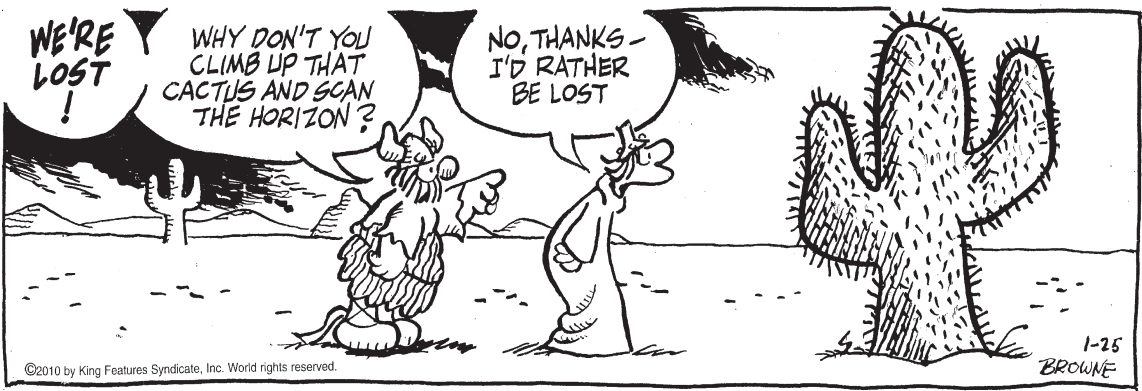
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Blondie • Chic Young



Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



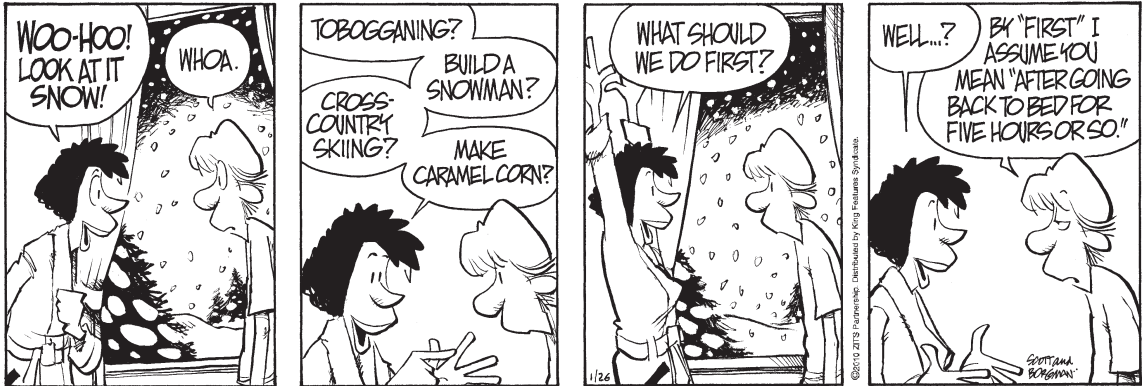
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers • Ask Dr. Brothers

Her boss tops insensitive scale

Dear Dr. Brothers: My life has turned into the movie "The Devil Wears Prada." If you take away the fashion stuff and put me in the role of the hapless assistant trying to please her monster boss, that film would be my life. I don't think it's going to have a happy ending, though. Life isn't Hollywood, and I can't understand why my boss seems to be the most insensitive person I've ever met. Why do some people lack empathy? – L.B.

Dear L.B.: In the world of business, where the economy is teetering on the brink of disaster, people sometimes take their most prominent qualities when it comes to leadership style and exaggerate them to monster proportions. This way, they figure they will be indispensable and scare the employees under them from ever challenging them. They ask more because they fear being disenfranchised if their group doesn't come out on top in the annual report. If you don't think about her lack of empathy, but consider how much pressure she is under to perform, you may look at your relationship through different eyes.

So, it is likely your boss is self-centered and self-directed. If you cooperate and are very goal-oriented, you may find a lot of objections to her management slipping away. Become her right-hand woman. Set business goals to lift your self-esteem, and that of the boss. These people respond well to those qualified to help them – and they reward loyal employees. So you have to be bigger than her – grit your teeth and begin!

Dear Dr. Brothers: I sound like an old codger, but it seems people are focusing on the wrong things nowadays. My granddaughter in Manhattan is always stressing out at her job, which she doesn't like. The times I see her, she's depressed. When I ask why she keeps at it, she says that she has all these bills. But the bills are for stuff she never enjoys! Is it wrong to think she would be happier if she lived more simply? – S.R.

Dear S.R.: Your granddaughter is not alone; you might call her the tip of the iceberg of a generation that has grown up believing that the person who dies with the most "toys" wins. Their parents were successful and passed the lifestyle to their children, who saw no reason why they should not be able to spend and acquire more stuff. The economic crash has opened eyes and caused heartache among those just starting out who have to go back to square one now that their home is in foreclosure or their job has been lost. The teens coming up may be even worse off.

According to a study by San Diego State University, teens have been plagued with rising psychological problems for decades, and their mental health is suffering. The study places some blame on the materialistic society today, resulting in depression, anxiety and paranoia, and rising rates of medication. The trend has worsened, as goals such as money and possessions have emerged as much more important than meaning in life, community involvement and relationships.

Bridge • Steve Becker

North dealer. North-South vulnerable.

NORTH

WEST EAST

SOUTH

The bidding:

North East South West

Opening lead — seven of hearts.

Famous Hand

At the same time that the U.S. team was crushing Brazil in the Bermuda Bowl final for the 2000 world championship, the U.S. women's team was finishing second to the Netherlands in the Venice Cup by the narrowest margin in the history of a world championship event -- one-half of an International Match Point.

The fractional margin was the result of slow-play penalties assessed against both teams in one of the eight 16-deal sets. Because the Americans were judged more responsible for the slow play, they incurred a 3.75 IMP penalty, while the Dutch were penalized 1.25. That minuscule difference ultimately decided the world title.

Just how slender and tenuous the final margin was is exemplified by today's deal -- the very last one of the 128-deal match -- which began with the U.S. trailing by half an IMP. The write-up in the American Contract Bridge League's monthly magazine, the Bulletin, describes what transpired as follows:

"On the last deal of the event, the U.S. still had a chance to win, but the team's fate depended on an opening lead.

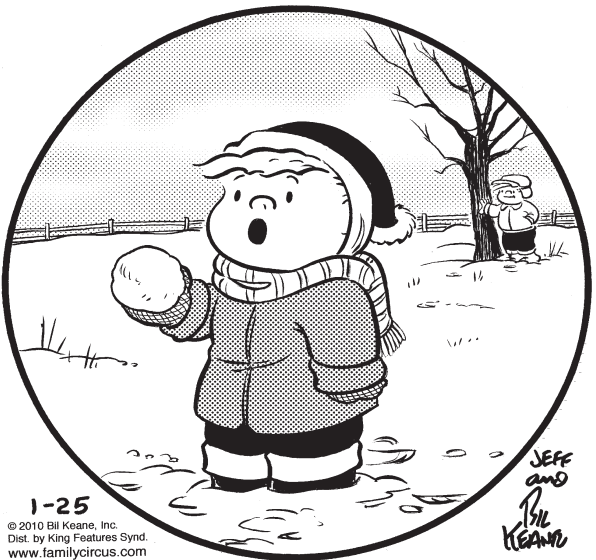
"The auction was short and sweet at both tables -- three clubs by North, three notrump by South. In the closed room, West led a low heart and the U.S. declarer wrapped up eleven tricks for plus 660.

"It was clear to the Vu-Graph audience that a spade lead by the U.S. West would hold declarer to ten tricks and earn the U.S. the IMP that would give them the gold medal. There was no compelling reason for a spade lead, however. A heart seemed the normal lead and much more likely.

"When West put the heart seven on the table, the Dutch partisans in the room erupted in wild applause. The final score in the Venice Cup had yet to be made official, but they knew that the trophy belonged to the Netherlands for the first time."

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



"Mommy, will you tell Billy to come closer? I can't hit him with my snowball from here."

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★

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.

Cryptoquip

OKUTK RHVBUTIZN DA IUFKB

OUII RHNN BKVDEFK LDNB

BKUJ AIDDV LHBBVZNNZN?

AEBDJN' RKDBDJN.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BECAUSE THE BOSSES AT MY OFFICE ARE ALL LITTLE SPRITES, I MUST ADMIT THAT I'M ELF-EMPLOYED.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals H

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Little white lie

4 Sun-related

9 Beef moister, on menus

12 Genetics abbr.

13 Mediterranean island

14 Multi-purpose truck

15 Lake Erie city

17 Lisa Simpson's instrument

18 Clay, today

19 Care-less attitude?

21 Tyke

24 Antitoxins

25 Discoverer's call

26 Weir

28 Unpaid bills

31 Old letter opener

33 Science workplace

35 Drench

36 Clan emblem

38 Toothpaste type

40 Reuters competitor

41 Birds, to Brutus

43 Took a nap

45 Straight

47 Past

48 Part of R.S.V.P.

49 1953

50 Compass dir.

55 Vinegar bottle

56 Gopher's prop

57 In medias

10 Provo's state

11 Alluring

16 Spigot

20 War god

21 Greatest

22 15-Across' state

23 Small TVs

27 Periodical, briefly

29 Recording

30 Hit the ice

32 Golfer Ballesteros

34 Scolds

37 Honorable guy

39 Emissary

42 Don't blink

44 Weep loudly

45 Addict

46 Three squared

50 Greek consonants

51 \$ dispenser

52 Spelling contest

53 Ever-green type

Solution time: 27 mins.

Saturday's answer 1-25

