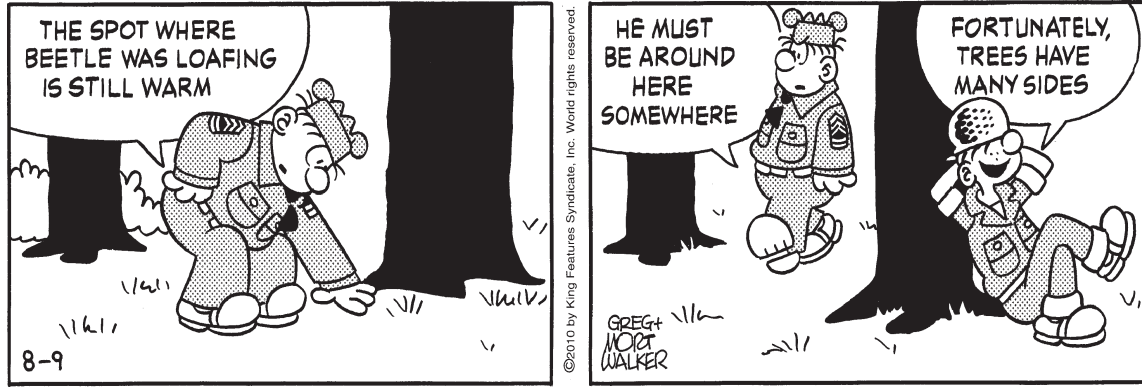


**Baby Blues** • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



**Beetle Bailey** • Mort Walker



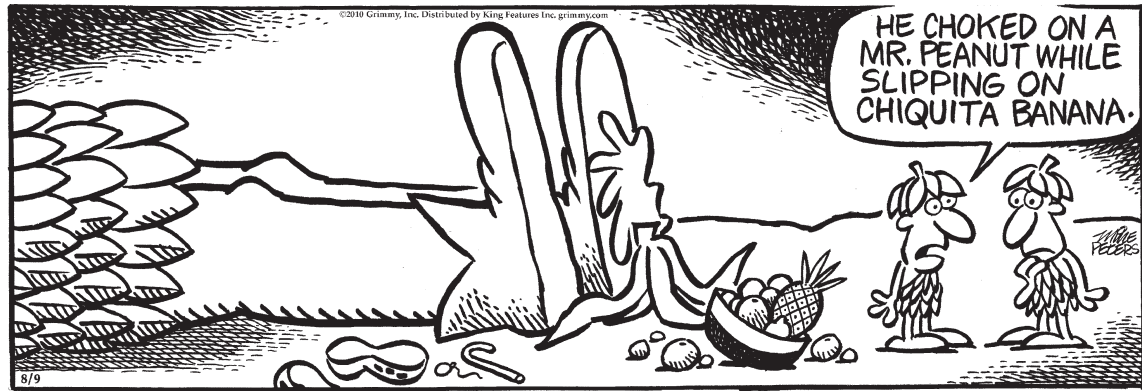
**Blondie** • Chic Young



**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

**Friend always exaggerates tales**

**Dear Dr. Brothers:** When my best friend tells me she has had a huge blowout with her mother, I just shrug. When she says she didn't get any sleep last night, I don't suggest a sleeping pill. The reason is that I don't believe her, because she always exaggerates everything. So I have stopped being supportive when she comes to me with these tales, and now she is calling me insensitive and uncaring. How do I be a good friend without buying all her tales of woe? — L.R.

**Dear L.R.:** It is interesting to see the way you describe your friend: She "always" exaggerates "everything." Notice the absolutes there? That would be a description I might have expected from your friend. I hope you will examine the possibility of the problem not being only her exaggeration, but also your own need to compete for one-upmanship. Do you play a game of "Can you top this?"

I was interested to see the examples of her exaggerations. They are all downers. She doesn't seem to brag about getting the best deal, or anything involving superlatives. So, perhaps she is looking for reassurance that everything will be OK or that she is a deserving person or a person worth saving from all these traumas. That would give you a clue if you really want to be a good friend — know that she has a victim self-image, and try to help her see the other side of the coin, even if you must exaggerate a bit at first!

**Dear Dr. Brothers:** I am a middle-age guy who has never really been alone. I have a wife of 22 years, two kids who are off at college and a dog. I have relatives nearby, and my parents are still living and visit regularly. So, my question to you is, Why have I begun to feel so lonely? I am literally surrounded by people all day at work, and rarely spend time by myself. I am a moderately happy person — that is, I don't expect much. I don't like feeling lonely in a crowd. — V.W.

**Dear V.W.:** Many people equate loneliness with being alone — and swear you can't be lonely if you are surrounded by people. Usually the reason they have this belief is that they have never experienced being lonely unless they were left by themselves with nothing to do. Then they are apt to be bored, and to interpret their boredom as loneliness. But you and I both know that being truly lonely has nothing to do with how many friends we have or the number of months it has been since we've had a single hour to ourselves. When we realize we are lonely in spite of being surrounded by people, it's time to change things.

You sound rather gray, just about neutral in your level of happiness within the family, job, relationships and activities. When everything is painted with the same brush — no exciting highs or devastating lows — you might want to consider the possibility that you are suffering from depression, which can coexist with loneliness. You are an empty-nester, yet you don't seem to realize this as a factor in your feelings. Maybe you miss your kids more than you are willing or able to admit. Talking to someone you respect and care about might make this journey easy for you.

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**Bridge** • Steve Becker

South dealer. East-West vulnerable.

**NORTH**  
♠ K 9 8 2  
♥ Q 8 5 3  
♦ A Q 2  
♣ A

**WEST**  
♠ Q 10 7  
♥ J 6 2  
♦ J 7 5 4  
♣ 8 3 2

**EAST**  
♠ 6 5 3  
♥ 4  
♦ K 9 8 3  
♣ Q 10 9 7 6

**SOUTH**  
♠ A J 4  
♥ A K 10 7  
♦ 10 6  
♣ K J 5 4

The bidding:  
South West North East  
1 NT Pass 2 ♣ Pass  
2 ♥ Pass 6 ♠ Pass  
Opening lead — four of diamonds.

**Famous Hand**

One innocent-looking play can sometimes make all the difference between the success and failure of a contract. For a striking example, consider this deal played in a match between the United States and Italy.

When an American pair held the North-South cards, they got to six hearts as shown, and West led a diamond. Declarer finessed the queen, losing to the king, and back came the nine of diamonds to the ten, jack and ace. Declarer later tried a spade finesse, losing to West's queen, and so finished down one.

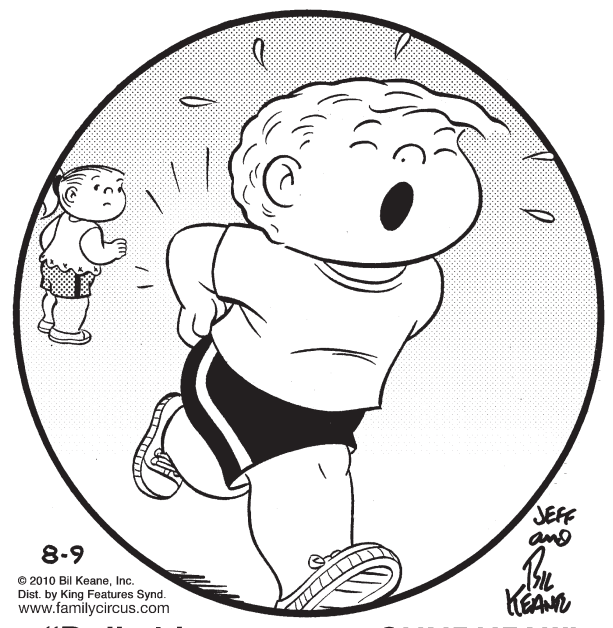
When the Italian North-South pair played the hand, they also reached six hearts with South as declarer, and again West led a diamond. But at this table, South made the contract. Furthermore, he did so simply by playing the deuce of diamonds from dummy at trick one instead of the queen. East could do no better than win with the king, and South had his 12th trick.

When the play is analyzed, it becomes clear that the Italian declarer's approach was far better than his counterpart's at the other table. Playing low from dummy at trick one wins whenever West has led from the jack, regardless of who has the king. At the same time, it maintains the possibility of a successful diamond finesse later on, if South decides to fall back on that option.

But even more to the point, if East wins the diamond lead with the jack, declarer gains an additional advantage. Whatever East returns, South, after drawing trumps, can cash the K-A of spades without running the risk of a spade finesse. Occasionally (nearly 20 percent of the time) the singleton or doubleton queen will appear. Even if it does not, South still has the diamond finesse to fall back on.

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**Family Circus** • Bil Keane



**Conceptis Sudoku** • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★ 8/09

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.

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

**Cryptoquip**

WUDOV ELV DIAKVBXHD UW  
WEHDMUDQ UDWUMV HD  
VQBTEUHD EIXA, U'M OHKK  
LUX H TVVC HXUM H TBCHXUM.

**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** THE BARRACKS HAS PLENTY OF NEATLY STACKED PORTABLE BEDS. YOU COULD SAY IT'S COTS-EFFICIENT.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: M equals D

**Crossword** • Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

1 Completely  
4 Expire  
9 Big pig  
12 Zodiac sign  
13 Playful water critter  
14 "Hail!"  
15 Living room piece  
17 Scooted  
18 — de mer  
19 Piece of pasta  
21 Take a breath  
24 Formerly, formerly  
25 Mediterranean or Baltic  
26 Home for 9-Across  
28 Losses weight  
31 Traditional stories  
33 Listener  
35 Leave out  
36 Finish  
38 Fellows

**DOWN**

40 Historic time  
41 Faucet problem  
43 Autumn, e.g.  
45 Leisurely walk  
47 Scot's cap  
48 Swiss canton  
49 Fonda/Hopper classic  
54 Gun the engine  
55 Serviceable  
56 Have debts  
57 CBS logo  
58 Studied (over)  
59 Whammy  
60 Capri, for one  
61 Hearty brew  
62 Meadow storage device  
63 — Angeles  
64 Natives  
65 Jock  
66 School org.  
67 Paris' river  
68 Mistakes bit  
69 Dickens novel  
70 Ellipse  
71 Hereditary  
72 Singer Sumac  
73 Norway's capital  
74 Night light?  
75 Data-storage device  
76 Sweet potato  
77 Surrealist Joan  
78 Ollie's pal  
79 Continental money  
80 Shape anew  
81 Amass  
82 Ap-proached  
83 Socrates' student  
84 Chartres chum  
85 Foolproof beater  
86 Madam's counterpart  
87 Homer's interjection  
88 Ram's mate  
89 Actor Harrison

**Solution time: 27 mins.**

**Saturday's answer 8-9**

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
31										30
36				37		38		39		40
			41				42		43	44
45	46						47			
48				49		50			51	52
54									56	
57							58			59