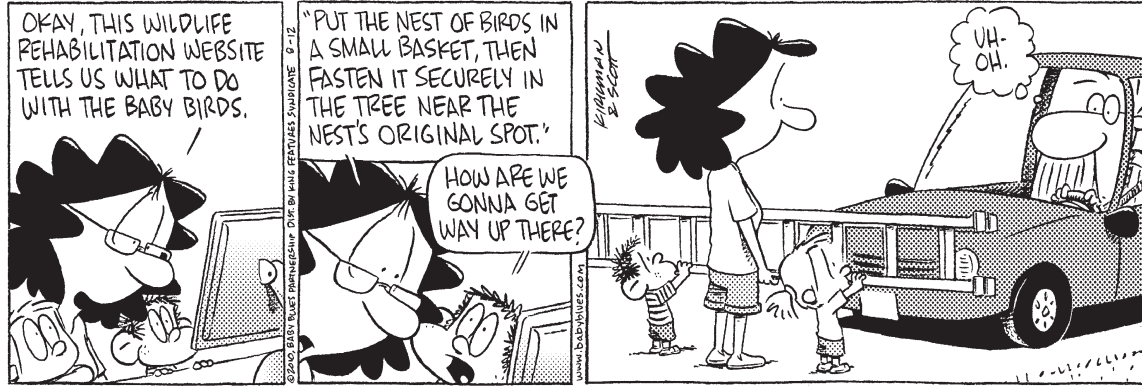
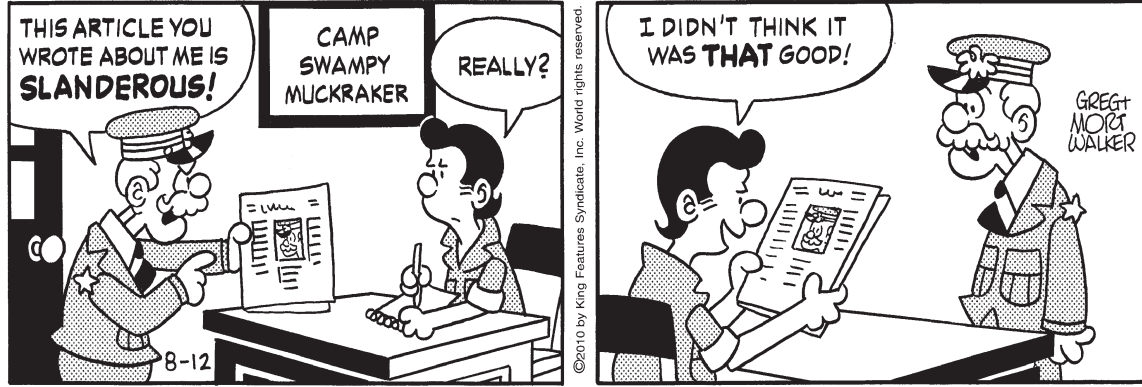


**Baby Blues** • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



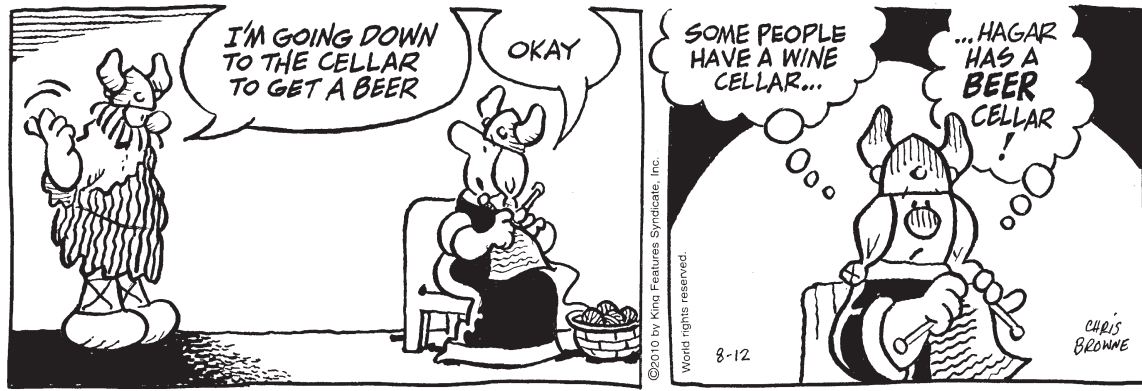
**Beetle Bailey** • Mort Walker



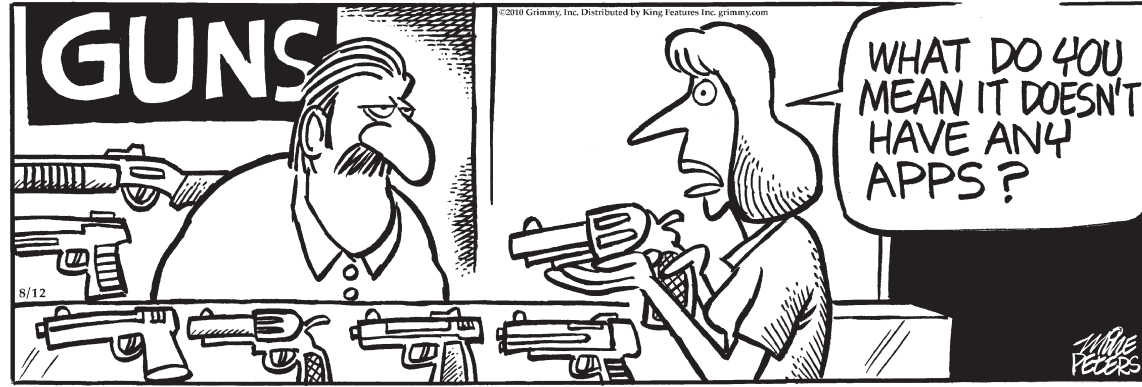
**Blondie** • Chic Young



**Hagar the Horrible** • Chris Browne



**Mother Goose and Grimm** • Mike Peters



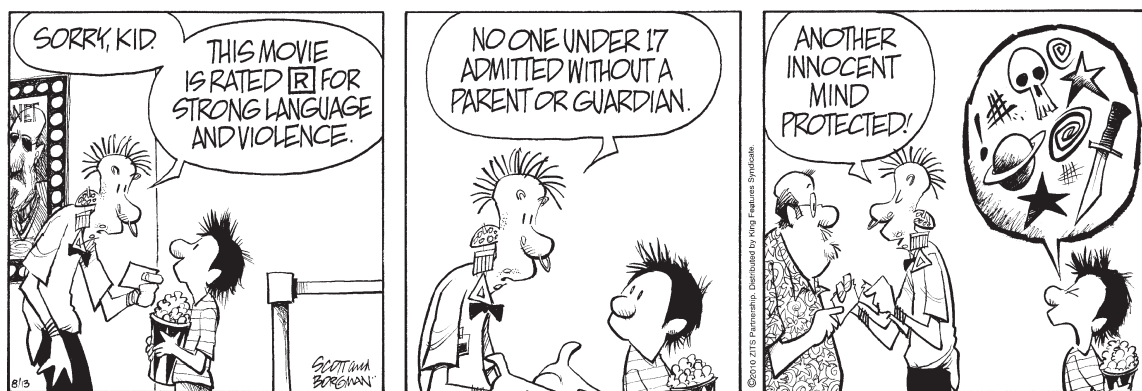
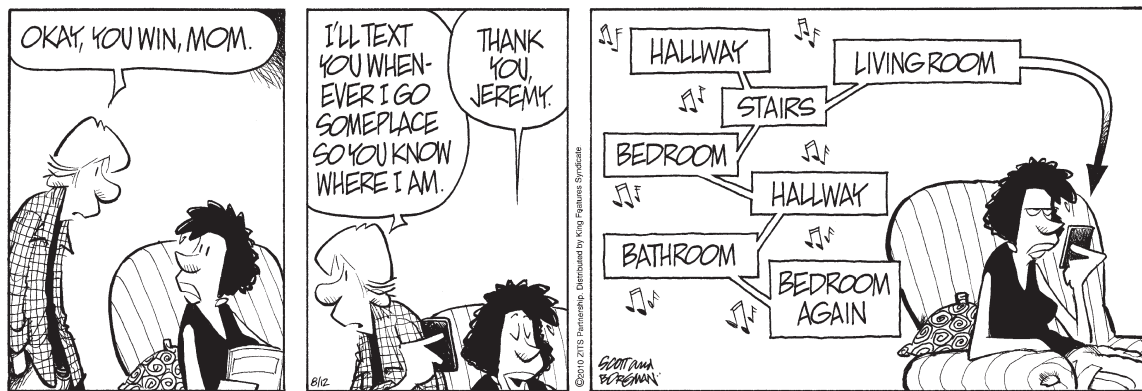
**Sally Forth** • Greg Howard



**Todd the Dinosaur** • Patrick Roberts



**Zits** • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



**Dr. Joyce Brothers**  
• Ask Dr. Brothers  
**Toddler stresses parents' nerves**

Dear Dr. Brothers: We are new parents, and have had a really scary thing happen: Our baby has started to crawl! We practically have wrapped up the whole house in bubble wrap and have gotten stressed out by the constant vigilance required now that our little one is mobile. In a couple of months she will be walking. We are starting to panic about the dangers out there and our helplessness. How can we cope? — I.C.

Dear I.C.: Parenting is tough and full of changing demands, no doubt about it. First you had to get over the shock of the baby turning your world upside-down. Then, just as you were lulled into a false sense of mastery with a routine and a small, manageable human being, it started to move around! There is something terrifying about scooting, crawling and, finally, walking and running. Each move is fraught with peril. And if you don't have your space babyproofed or if you lose yourself in your own work or thoughts for a minute, the worst could happen — or so you think.

But as I am sure you have heard, babies are not as fragile as we think. They need a certain amount of freedom to develop and thrive — this is not to say they should ever be left on their own or that bumps and falls are good for them. It seems you are in a state of paralysis and will need to take it one day at a time until you see you can cope. Please get together with other parents to brainstorm and even laugh at your fears. Yes, it's a long haul, but you'll do fine if you relax. Your child will thank you if you approach parenting with a confident air of good expectations.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I grew up in a chaotic household filled with kids, dogs, cats, relatives and visitors. I have spent my ensuing years trying to bring calm to my rather confused state of mind. Now my two kids want to get dogs and cats. I can't really cope with the mess animals bring to a household. My kids say that my clean house and car are more important than their happiness. Am I a bad mom? — G.R.

Dear G.R.: No, you are not a bad mom because you won't let your kids have a pet. Your reasons are valid, not arbitrary or capricious — it's not that you don't like dogs or cats, or that you are mean or too lazy to care for a pet or enjoy giving your kids a hard time. No, you are merely doing what you know you have to do in order to maintain your sense of calm and order. It is not a bad thing to know ourselves take whatever steps are necessary to protect our emotional health.

That said, there may be some tiny little steps you could take to throw your kids a bone, as it were, without compromising your ability to remain calm and uncluttered. Obviously your children don't know about your emotional needs, or they would not be trying to drag you so far out of your comfort zone. But perhaps you can let them have a small pet in a small, defined space, an arrangement that is controllable and would not threaten your sanity — say, some beautiful tropical fish or a hamster or a garden snake in an aquarium, or a pair of small birds. If they can care for the pet themselves, better yet. Try this compromise as a first step for everyone.

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**Bridge** • Steve Becker

North dealer.  
Both sides vulnerable.

**NORTH**  
♠ K 9 8 4  
♥ K 7  
♦ A J 9 3  
♣ A Q 5

**EAST**  
♠ 6  
♥ A Q J 9 6 4 3  
♦ 8  
♣ K 10 8 4

**SOUTH**  
♠ A Q J 10 5 2  
♥ K Q 7 6  
♦ 7 6 3

The bidding:  
North 1 NT    East 2♥    South 3♣    West Pass  
4♠    2 Pass    6♠

Opening lead — two of hearts.

**Happy Ending**  
The outcome of many deals is determined strictly by the location of one or more specific key cards. If they are favorably placed, declarer will prevail; if not, he will fail. It is often as simple as that.

But there are many other deals where declarer's fate is really in his own hands, even though the outcome may at first seem to depend on luck. It is these hands that give declarer an opportunity to demonstrate his skill.

Take this case where West leads a heart against six spades after East has overcalled in hearts. At first glance, it would appear that the success of the slam depends upon the location of the king of clubs. If West has it, the finesse will succeed, and declarer will lose only one club trick; if East has it, the finesse will fail — and so will the contract.

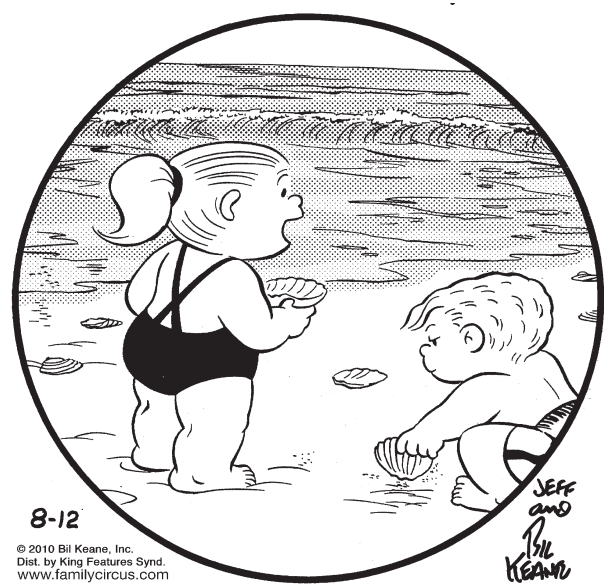
But this view is not correct, since with proper play South can make the slam regardless of who has the club king. Both the opening lead and the bidding have marked East with the ace of hearts, and declarer should put this information to good use.

He starts by playing low from dummy on the heart lead, ruffing East's jack. Next, two rounds of trumps are drawn. South then cashes four diamond tricks, ending in dummy. This sets the stage for the coup de grace that will assure the slam.

The king of hearts, carefully preserved for this moment, is now led. When East covers with the ace, declarer discards a club instead of ruffing. East wins the trick, but the battle is over. Whatever he returns — a club into dummy's A-Q or a heart, permitting South to discard a second club from his hand while ruffing in dummy — gives declarer the slam.

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**Family Circus** • Bil Keane



8-12  
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www.familycircus.com

**Conceptis Sudoku** • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★ 8/12

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.

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

**Cryptoquip**

TDTHQXC OPM BREWDL XFDHE

X TXRC DZ CDDLLXEPB MJD

DZEPO YPE ZQXFFPCYXBEP:

“EJP XMPS WDHTQP.”

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I WOULD SAY THE FORTIETH U.S. PRESIDENT'S PREFERRED SEASONING HERB WAS PROBABLY O-REAGAN-O.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: M equals W

**Crossword** • Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

1 Rum cake  
5 Ro-main's other name  
8 "Hey, you!"  
12 Unyielding  
13 Hooter  
14 Blue hue  
15 Decree  
16 Grazing area  
17 Litter's littlest  
18 Blue-beard's last wife  
20 Face  
22 Tuna container  
23 Inmate  
24 Cupid's alias  
27 Relied (on)  
32 Wire measure  
33 Tokyo's old name  
34 Mess up  
35 Rainbow  
38 Quarry

**DOWN**

11 London gallery  
19 Mother milieu  
24 Type measures  
25 Tear  
26 Poisonous shrub  
28 School's Web suffix  
29 Sachet  
30 Prior to  
31 Parched  
36 Jovial  
37 High-lander's hat  
38 Electrician's tool  
41 Lindbergh book  
42 Squad  
43 Davenport site  
44 Over again  
46 Sand  
47 Stash  
48 Leak slowly  
51 Eggs

**ACROSS**

39 "Eureka!"  
40 Piercing tool  
42 Movie industry  
45 Equine name  
49 "Mentals"  
49 Took the bus  
50 Affirmative action?  
52 Pennsylvania port  
53 Basin accessory  
54 Prior night  
55 Astronaut Sally  
56 Cautious

**DOWN**

1 "Death of a Salesman" son  
2 Met melody  
3 Grady vessel  
4 Shenanigans  
5 Sieve  
6 Have bills  
7 Serb or Bulgar  
8 Clergyman  
9 Waste  
10 Crooned  
11 London gallery  
19 Mother milieu  
24 Type measures  
25 Tear  
26 Poisonous shrub  
28 School's Web suffix  
29 Sachet  
30 Prior to  
31 Parched  
36 Jovial  
37 High-lander's hat  
38 Electrician's tool  
41 Lindbergh book  
42 Squad  
43 Davenport site  
44 Over again  
46 Sand  
47 Stash  
48 Leak slowly  
51 Eggs

**Yesterday's answer 8-12**

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				34
35						36	37			38
39							40	41		
42	43					44	45		46	47
48										48
49						50	51		52	
53						54			55	
56						57			58	