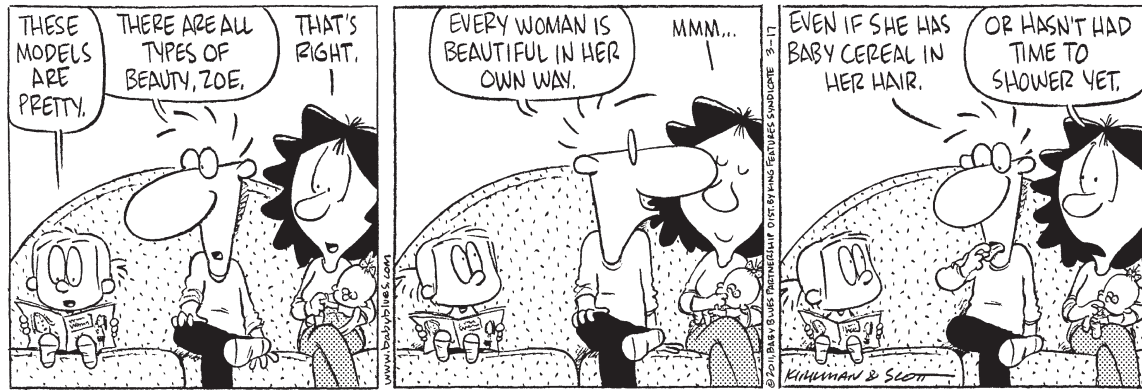


**Baby Blues** • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



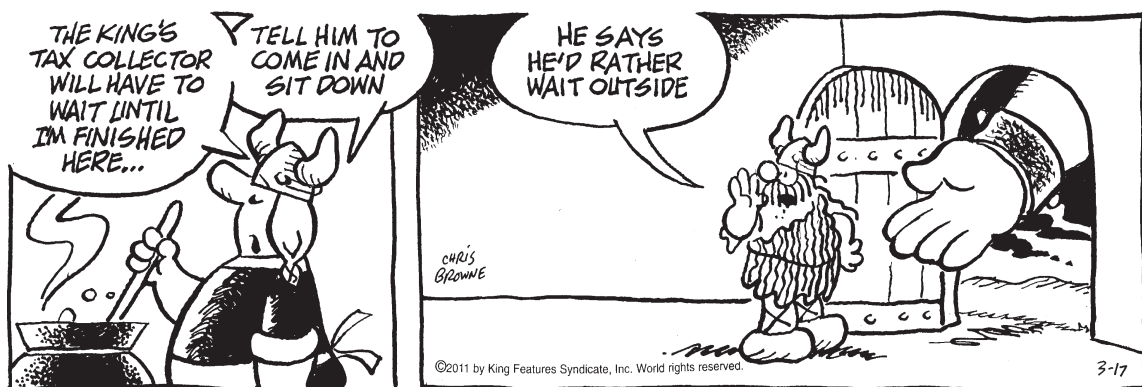
**Beetle Bailey** • Mort Walker



**Blondie** • Chic Young



**Hagar the Horrible** • Chris Browne



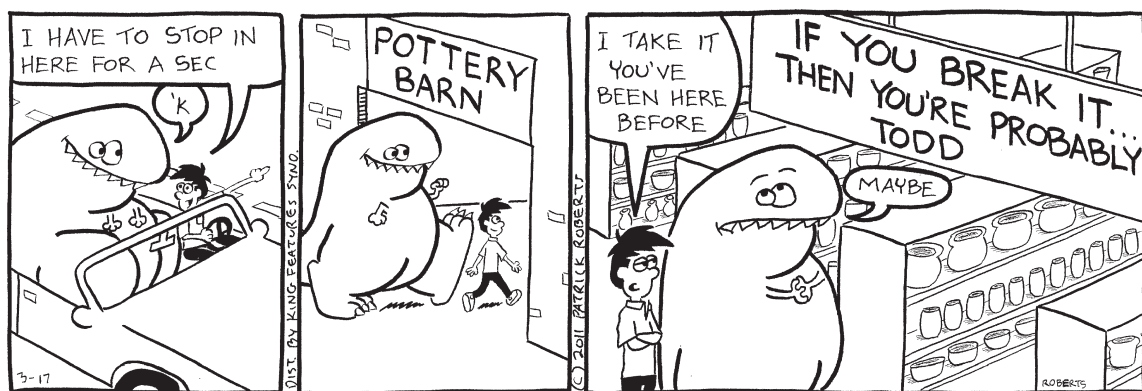
**Mother Goose and Grimm** • Mike Peters



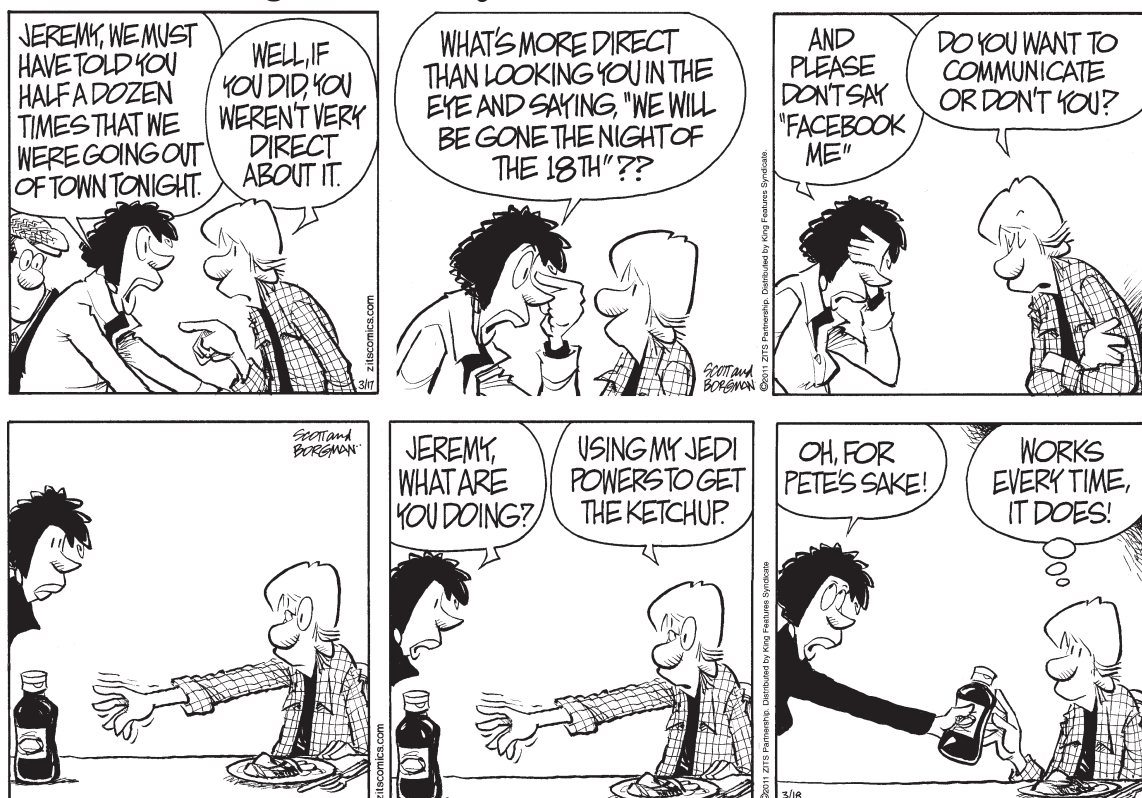
**Sally Forth** • Greg Howard



**Todd the Dinosaur** • Patrick Roberts



**Zits** • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



**Dr. Joyce Brothers**  
• Ask Dr. Brothers  
**Baby schedule rather overdone**

**Dr. Brothers:** My wife and I want to have a baby. The problem is, she wants to schedule the birth. While I think this is impossible, she's convinced we can do it. She wants a Valentine's Day baby, so our conception date is planned. This is driving me nuts, and I am worried about performance anxiety. What can I do? — C.W.

**Dear C.W.:** It sounds as though you feel like you don't have much power in this relationship, but in reality you hold all the cards — your wife will not have much recourse if you decide not to cooperate with her ill-conceived scheme. The simple fact is that while there are many tools for planning conception and the date of delivery, the chances of everything working out just the way you want are slim to none. Unless there is a medical reason to schedule a birth, your wife's doctor might take a dim view of doing such a thing, and the odds of the due date falling on Valentine's Day — and the baby cooperating — are rather slim.

If your wife is fortunate enough to get pregnant, it will be easy to calculate a due date, so she will have months to get used to an alternative to her master plan. Even then, a due date is approximate. It sounds as though your wife could use prenatal classes to bring her up to speed on the realities of pregnancy. In any case, there's no reason you can't have a special Valentine's Day — celebrating either a new baby or a soon-to-be-born one. If neither is appropriate, you still can celebrate your love and the hopes you have. For now, tell your wife you are excited to embark on this journey with her, and leave the rest to fate.

**Dear Dr. Brothers:** My husband says I'm micromanaging our 7-year-old's education, when I think I'm just being a concerned parent. We have the means to send our son to a highly respected private school with the best teachers, but I think they could be doing more. I believe a parent has every right to suggest what should be included in her child's curriculum. People are telling me to butt out. Who's right? — L.G.

**Dear L.G.:** It must be very interesting to have a young child and watch him learn, grow and mature. Although there are fewer mandates for private schools when it comes to curriculum, there probably are very-well-thought-out plans all the teachers in each grade have put together for your child's education. Although your suggestions probably are welcome in a parent/teacher meeting, it is more likely your best way of helping is to give your son's teachers the most information you can about his interests, abilities, difficulties and dreams. The better they know him, the more individualized attention they can give him.

There is a fine line between accepting the school's expertise, and "butting out." If you schedule a meeting with the teacher and the principal, who can better explain the institution's educational philosophy, you may be less anxious about your son's academic success. Volunteering to help in class or with activities also would help convince the school you are there to help, not criticize. I'm sure the school appreciates involved parents and has earned its great reputation by doing a good job educating each student.

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**Bridge** • Steve Becker

South dealer. Both sides vulnerable.

**NORTH**  
♠ K Q 6  
♥ J 9 4  
♦ 9 7 3  
♣ 8 5 4 2

**WEST**  
♠ 10 7 5 2  
♥ 6  
♦ K 10 5 4  
♣ J 10 9 7

**EAST**  
♠ J 9 8 4 3  
♥ Q 8 3  
♦ J 8 6 2  
♣ 3

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

The bidding:  
South West North East  
2 ♠ \* Pass 2 ♦ \*\*  
2 ♥ Pass 3 ♣ Pass  
6 ♥

\* strong, artificial \*\* waiting  
Opening lead — jack of clubs.

**A Time for Giving**

All too often, a result that is really due to poor play is blamed on bad luck. These are the hands that have been known to drive many a dummy to drink.

Here is a prime example. South bid the excellent heart slam after North had shown modest values by raising to three hearts.

Declarer won the opening club lead with the ace and immediately cashed the A-K of hearts. The failure of the queen to fall did not yet concern South, since if the opposing clubs were divided 3-2, he could still get home safely by eventually using dummy's fourth club as an entry to the K-Q of spades.

Accordingly, declarer cashed the ace of spades and then played the king of clubs. But when East showed out and refused to ruff either the king or the queen, South could no longer make the slam. South was quick to blame the defeat on the "terrible" divisions in hearts and clubs, but the outcome was actually his own fault. With proper play, the contract is a virtual laydown from the outset.

To assure 12 tricks, all declarer has to do is be willing to lose a trick to the queen of hearts. After winning the first club, he should cash the heart and spade aces and then lead a low heart to the nine.

Regardless of who wins the trick or how the suit is divided, South cannot be stopped from sooner or later entering dummy with the jack of hearts to discard a club and a diamond on the K-Q of spades. It is true that this approach will cost an overtrick if the trumps are divided 2-2, but that is a small price to pay for ensuring a small slam.

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**Family Circus** • Bil Keane



3-17

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"Shouldn't they have colored the clovers green?"

**Conceptis Sudoku** • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★

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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.

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

Difficulty Level ★★★

**Cryptoquip**

FPQQMFHOC NLGMD LDPHFJ  
DJNBBT BHVJZ ENDRMOCJDHOC,  
H'Z FNT QJMQBJ RHCKG  
LNBB GMR N KNEV.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN TENDING TO UNWANTED PLANTS AROUND GARDEN ROWS, YOU'RE PROBABLY WEEDING BETWEEN THE LINES.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals P

**Crossword** • Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 Existed
  - 4 Homeless child
  - 8 "That was close!"
  - 12 Candle count
  - 13 Frizzy hairdo
  - 14 Frost
  - 15 Affectionate
  - 17 Satan's specialty
  - 18 Illustrations
  - 19 Corrupt
  - 21 Savings overseer
  - 24 —
  - 25 Trench
  - 26 Flop
  - 28 New York town named for a former senator
  - 32 Saharan
  - 34 Unruly crowd
  - 36 "— Only Just Begun"
  - 37 Mother-of-pearl
  - 39 Bankroll
  - 41 Lair
  - 42 Eggs
  - 44 Slow down
  - 46 Carnauba plant
  - 50 Opposed to
  - 51 "Sesame Street" favorite
  - 52 Huge
  - 56 Suitor
  - 57 West Point team
  - 58 Gilbert & Sullivan princess
  - 59 Unsurpassable
  - 60 Chows down
  - 61 Police officer
  - 2 Past
  - 3 Relating to meanings of words
  - 4 Desired
  - 5 Sternward
  - 6 Rainbow
  - 7 Concentrate
  - 8 Early show
  - 9 Apiary structure
  - 10 Eastern potentate
  - 11 Reminder of a whipping
  - 16 Noah's craft
  - 20 Crony
  - 21 Cereal choice
  - 22 Emanation
  - 23 Pirates' quaff
  - 27 Part of DJIA
  - 29 Showing off one's learning
  - 30 Always
  - 31 Make one's way
  - 33 GED candidate
  - 35 Prevent
  - 38 Actress
  - 43 Aquarium buildup
  - 45 Heavy weight
  - 46 Jimmy who wrote "MacArthur Park"
  - 47 Sheltered
  - 48 Yuletide
  - 49 Actress
  - 53 Prime meridian hrs.
  - 54 Altar affirmative
  - 55 Upper limit

Solution time: 25 mins.

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

Yesterday's answer 3-17

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		
60			61			62		63		