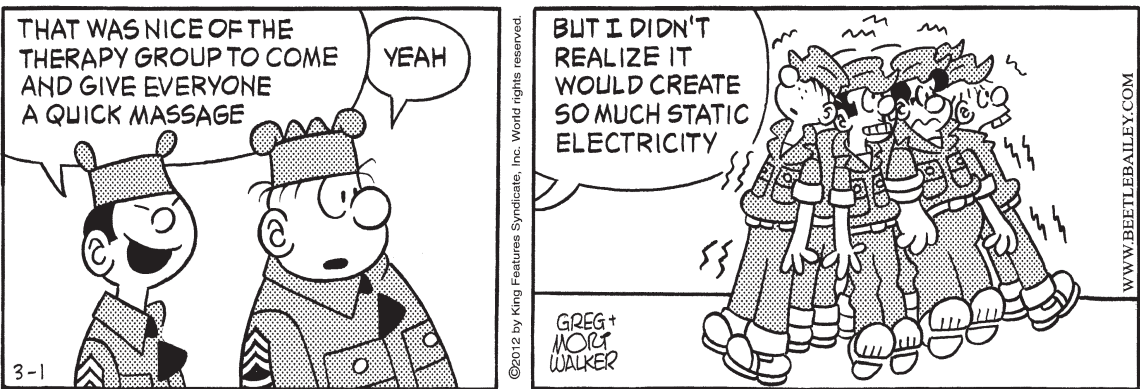


Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Blondie • Chic Young



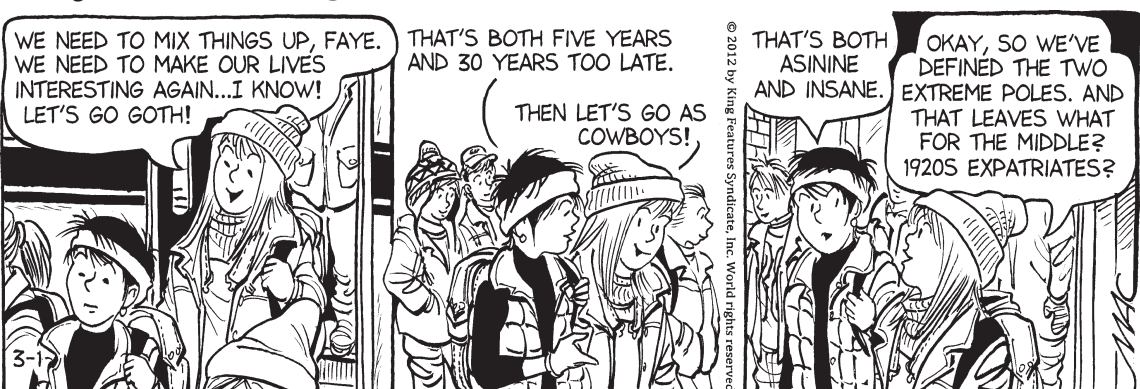
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



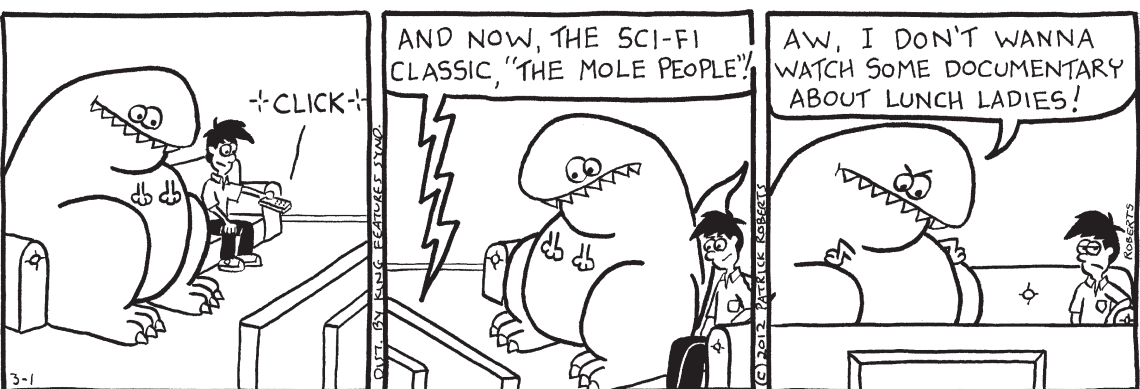
Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



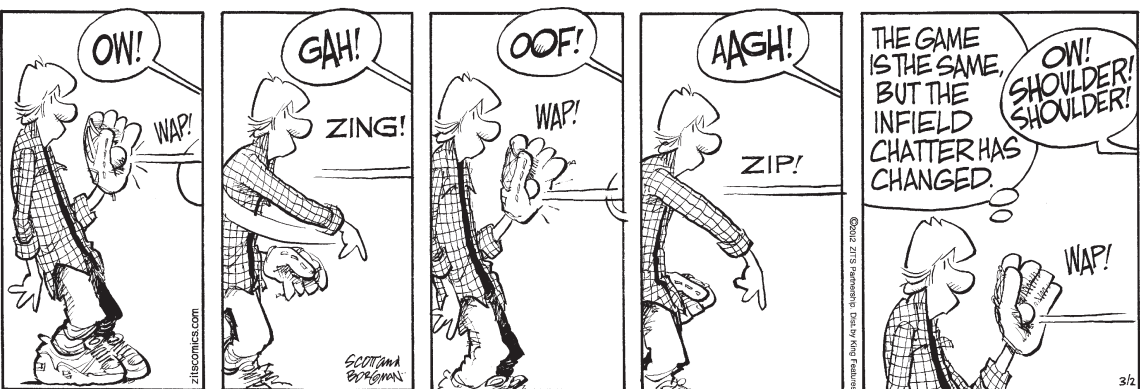
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers

• Ask Dr. Brothers

Baby sitting falls to grandparents

Dear Dr. Brothers: I'm a single mom and lucky to have a steady job. To save money, my parents offered to baby-sit my toddler. When I come home, she has wrecked the apartment, and I spend all night cleaning. My folks are retired, and just sit and let my daughter do whatever she wants. I can't afford to hire anyone. I'm grateful, but I'm also getting steamed. — L.N.

Dear L.N.: It's always dicey when you are dealing with relatives in a business decision. If your baby sitters were not the child's grandparents, you might fire them or discuss your expectations. But your parents mean well and are trying to help out. If you had to rely on daycare or another baby sitter, you'd have an unwanted financial burden and still risk having someone watch your child in a manner that wasn't satisfactory. So it might be worth biting the bullet and sitting down with your folks for a chat.

You can let them know how much you appreciate their help, and how important it is that your baby gets to know her grandparents. Any old baby sitter never would be able to take their place. That being said, ask your parents how they feel things are going? They may be overwhelmed and admit it. Then you would have to come up with corrective action together. If they think they are doing fine, ask about their routine. It could be that as you arrive home, they are taking a breather. You won't know till you ask.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I have been living with my boyfriend for two years. He's never been married, but I am divorced after a 12-year marriage. I was close to my two sisters-in-law and niece and nephew, and have continued those relationships, though my dealings with my ex tend to be strained. My boyfriend doesn't think it is "appropriate" to remain friendly with my ex's family. Should I give them up or keep them? — B.H.

Dear B.H.: Some people think the whole family of the ex should be unceremoniously dumped along with the husband, but I don't see any reason why you should burn your bridges just because your boyfriend decides your relationship with your former in-laws is not proper. His attitude is selfish and reflects an insecurity you may wish to explore. If you have told him there is no possibility of you and your ex getting back together, then the problem rests mainly with your boyfriend. There probably are jealousy issues, and your boyfriend doesn't want to admit it, so he is trying to assert whatever control he can get.

The thing is, he's probably had no exposure to these people, and so he can't imagine why you keep seeing them — they're not real to him. Why not expose him to them, and see if he steps up and attempts to be cordial? You may see a big change once he relaxes. If, on the other hand, he becomes adamant about your breaking off your friendship with these people, I would begin to take stock of the kind of man you see yourself with in the future. An issue like this could be the tip of an iceberg that you'd be better off steering clear of.

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Bridge • Steve Becker

South dealer. North-South vulnerable.

NORTH
 ♠ A 7
 ♥ K Q 10 4
 ♦ K Q J 9 7 4
 ♣ 10 8

EAST
 ♠ 9 5
 ♥ A J 9 7 6
 ♦ A 10 5 2
 ♣ 3 2

SOUTH
 ♠ K Q J 4
 ♥ K 5 3
 ♦ 3
 ♣ A Q J 9 6

The bidding:
 South West North East
 1 ♠ Pass 1 ♦ Pass
 3 NT
 Opening lead — eight of hearts.

Self-Preservation
 Declarer must always view the play of the hand as a whole rather than focusing on each trick as a problem in its own right.

Consider this case where South arrives at three notrump on the bidding shown, and West leads the eight of hearts. The question is which heart declarer should play from dummy to the first trick.

South should resolve this question by referring to the bidding and the overall layout of the hand. Observe what happens if declarer unthinkingly plays, say, the ten of hearts at trick one.

East covers with the jack, and South wins with the king. Declarer then presumably leads a diamond to the king, taken by East's ace. East returns a club, and the contract is down whether South finesses or not. If he finesses, he goes down two after West wins with the king and returns a heart; if he doesn't finesse, the best he can do is to cash out for down one.

The result is the same if declarer plays the four of hearts from dummy at trick one. East ducks, and the rest of the play is identical.

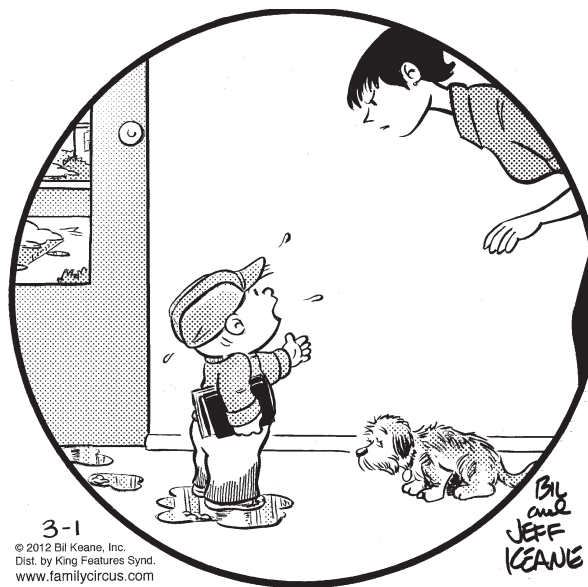
The winning play is not that difficult to find, given the circumstances. East is known to have at least a five-card heart suit, and West is obviously leading his top heart. South can therefore go a long way toward neutralizing East's hearts by playing the queen from dummy at trick one.

East must take the queen with the ace — otherwise declarer will score two heart tricks instead of one. After taking the ace, however, East cannot return a heart without allowing dummy's ten to take a trick. Whatever East shifts to, declarer has time to develop his clubs and so finish with nine tricks consisting of four clubs, four spades and a heart. The diamond suit need never be touched.

Once the threat of East's hearts has been defused, South has nothing to worry about.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



"Of course I'm acting childish. I'm a CHILD!"

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★ 3/01

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.

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

Cryptoquip

XMYV EOGXEZ BMJVMWY EWQ
 TCGVQ JMCWVQMCY VM
 JZGQOVY. GOBQQB, VIQH IEPO
 PQWH DWMDQW PQV-GTCQVVQ.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I HAVEN'T SPRUNG INTO THE AIR EVEN ONE TIME ALL EVENING. I GUESS I'M HAVING A LEAP-LESS NIGHT.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals T

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 Airport schedule data (Abbr.)
 - 5 Mop the deck
 - 9 Monoclonal closer
 - 12 Anger
 - 13 Sit for a photo
 - 14 Pal of Wynken and Blynken
 - 15 Ancient Mariner's burden
 - 17 Right angle
 - 18 Theatrical
 - 19 American emblem
 - 21 Performing
 - 22 Mythical lecher
 - 24 Geek
 - 27 — capita
 - 28 Billions of years
 - 31 Away from WSW
 - 32 Raw rock
 - 33 Potential syrup
 - 34 Probability
- DOWN**
- 1 Historic periods
 - 2 Pinball
 - 3 Actress
 - 4 Neptune or Poseidon
 - 5 Nimble
 - 6 Court
 - 7 Fool
 - 8 Surround
 - 9 144 units
 - 10 Weevil's morsel
 - 11 Not busy
 - 16 Coffee break
 - 20 Favorable vote
 - 22 Wait on
 - 23 Vicinity
 - 24 Ultra-modernist
 - 25 Conclusion
 - 26 Relief provider
 - 27 Milne
 - 29 "Unh-unh"
 - 30 Agent
 - 35 Actor
 - 37 Star-related
 - 39 Larry the — Guy
 - 40 Whatever number
 - 41 "— the word"
 - 42 Roundish hairstyle
 - 43 Old U.S. gas brand
 - 44 Libertine
 - 45 Requests
 - 46 "Hey, you!"
 - 49 Conger, for one
 - 50 Quarter-back

Solution time: 25 mins.

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H | Y | P | O | D | V | R | A | P | P | S |
| A | E | O | N | I | I | I | V | A | L | E |
| P | A | R | T | I | S | A | N | E | R | I |
| S | H | E | A | T | H | G | A | R | T | E |
| A | L | P | M | A | P | A | G | I | E | |
| B | O | A | T | G | E | E | E | N | I | D |
| C | Y | R | U | S | A | N | T | G | T | O |
| T | R | O | D | G | U | T | | | | |
| G | L | E | N | N | E | A | F | R | A | I |
| E | U | R | O | P | A | R | T | I | C | L |
| S | U | E | S | T | O | E | E | Y | E | S |

Yesterday's answer 3-1

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 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 | |