

Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



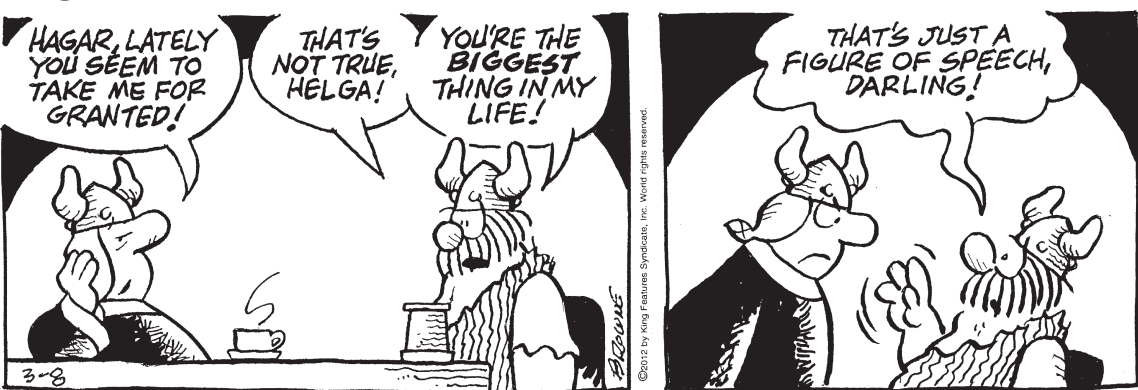
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



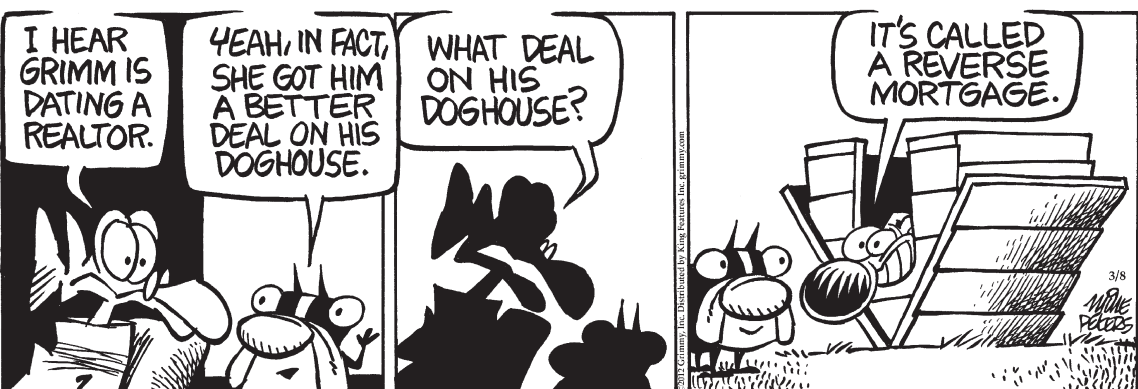
Blondie • Chic Young



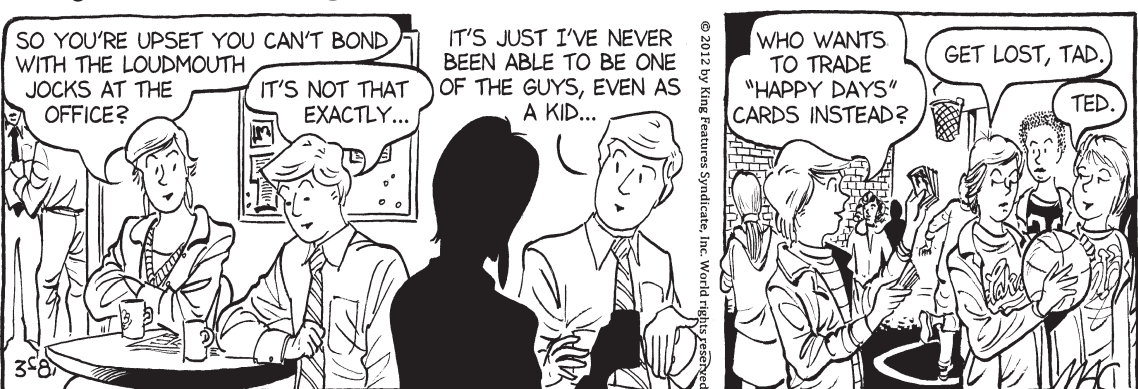
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



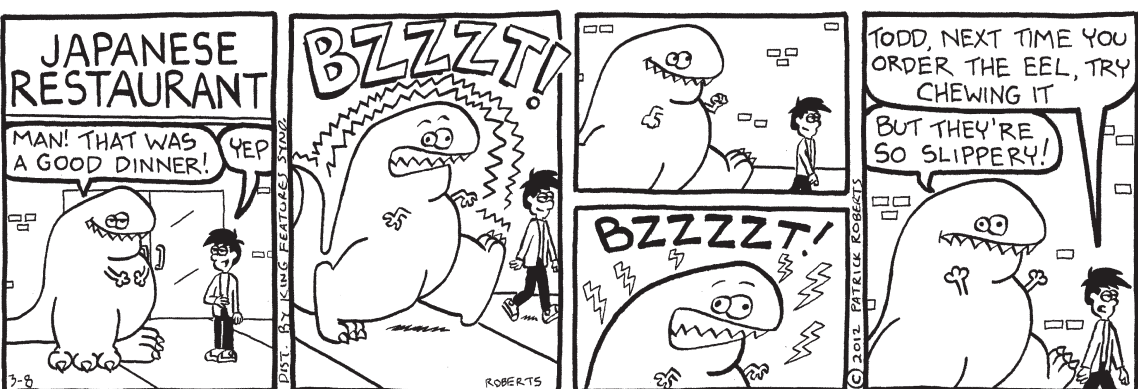
Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



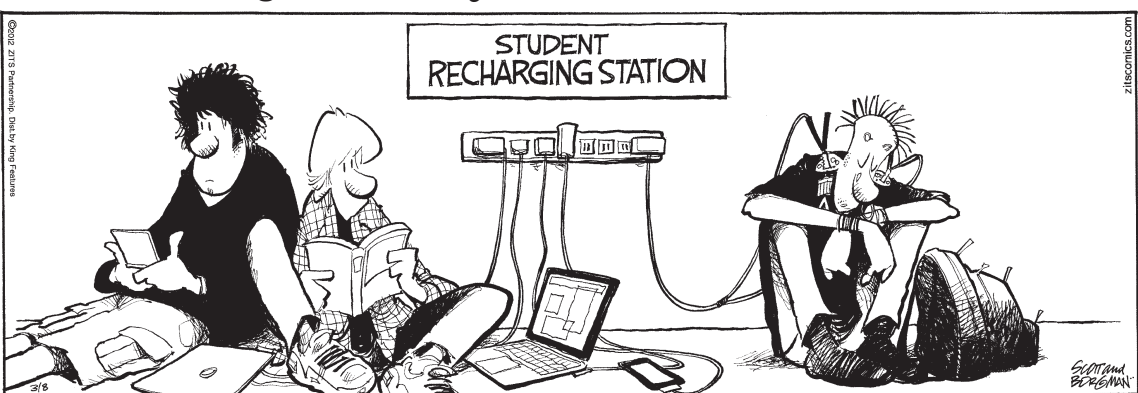
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers

• Ask Dr. Brothers

Lonely child lacks friends

Dear Dr. Brothers: I have a 9-year-old daughter who reminds me of myself as a child. I was an only child and lonely, and now despite wanting a big family we have been blessed only with one. She is just as lonely as I was, despite our efforts to surround her with kids since she was a baby. Her classmates don't seem to take to her, and she often comes home crying that she was the last one chosen or had to sit alone at lunch. How do I end this nightmare? — S.M.

Dear S.M.: I can hear the painful feelings in your letter, and I understand you are reliving the nightmare of your lonely childhood. But before you start probing where she is coming from and whether it's the same spot you were, you need to give your daughter the opportunity to deviate from the script. And at this point it may mean stopping the play dates and pre-chosen friends, and letting her be alone for a while. Then you can work on her social skills and what she has to offer classmates in terms of a nice, fun child who is not the same as you were.

Perhaps you can take some strength from that and move on to living your own life not dragged down by your old baggage and watching your child like a hawk for signs of being her mother's daughter. Help your daughter identify one or two girls she'd like to be friends with, and give her the tools she needs to invite them to a fun weekend activity. It can include the whole family, if that makes her comfortable. But you can step back and let the girls have time together to relax and play. You might be surprised how they find their way to things they like about each other.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I am upset about what has happened to our extended-family dinners. We've always met for Sunday dinner with our family of four and my brother's family of three. Now that our kids are teens, they should be able to behave. Instead, they've turned it into a battleground of kids against their parents. Help! — V.A.

Dear V.A.: One thing can be said for the Occupy movement: It undoubtedly has shaken up a lot of family dinners, where the biggest controversy used to be who got the last dinner roll. So for what it's worth, you are not alone. It is understandable you are upset about the way things have developed. Family dinners have been endangered by our fast-paced, fragmented lives. Getting everyone together is the glue that bonds relatives to one another, and we have all heard that families who dine together stay together. But if the ritual becomes a battleground, is it worthwhile?

I think you can salvage the family dinner if you all observe a few ground rules. No yelling or disrespectful comments — and that goes for adults, too. Beyond that, there's no reason why you shouldn't allow your children to express themselves. It's great they are developing their own attitudes and taking an interest in something outside of themselves and teenage obsessions. Try not to think of them as misbehaving — they are trying to spread their wings, and if your response is to attempt to shut them down, you may regret it later, when they have given up and stopped communicating with the family.

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Bridge • Steve Becker

East dealer. Both sides vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ 8 5 4
♥ J 6
♦ K Q 7 3
♣ A 10 8 5

WEST
♠ J 7 3 2
♥ Q 10 5 2
♦ 9
♣ J 9 6 2

EAST
♠ K Q 9
♥ K 9 4 3
♦ J 10 6 4
♣ 7 4

SOUTH
♠ A 10 6
♥ A 8 7
♦ A 8 5 2
♣ K Q 3

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

The Moment of Truth
Assume you're in three notrump and West leads the deuce of hearts. You play dummy's jack, hoping West has led from the K-Q, but East produces the king, and you duck. East returns the heart three, and you play low again. West wins with the ten and continues with a third heart, forcing out your ace.

You have been looking at eight sure tricks right from the start, and the ninth trick seems all but assured. Indeed, with any luck at all, you'll wind up with an overtrick. But when you lead a low diamond to the queen and another back to the ace, West discards a spade, and making the contract is now far from certain.

The outcome boils down to scoring four club tricks, so you cash the K-Q of clubs and lead your last club, on which West plays the nine.

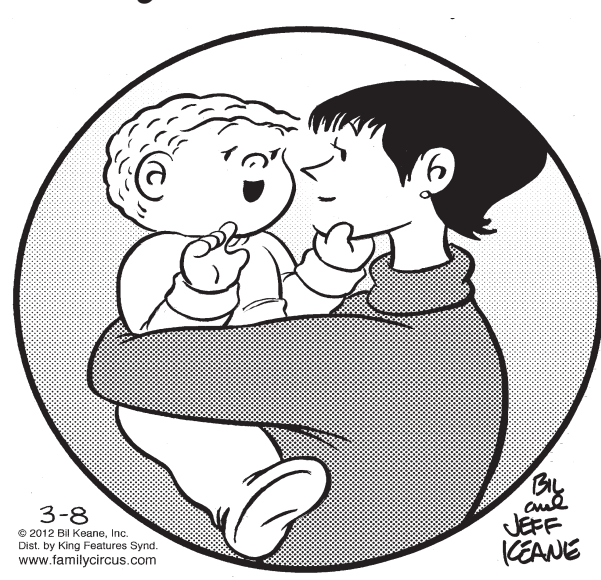
This brings you to the moment of truth. If West has the jack, you should play dummy's ten; if East has the jack, you should play the ace. Decisions of this kind are seldom a tossup; there is nearly always a reason for favoring one play over the other. This case is no exception, as there is a good clue to lean on.

It all goes back to West's opening lead. Presumably, West would have led from a five-card suit if he had one. His lead of the heart deuce indicated a four-card suit, and this was confirmed by East's return of the three, showing that he also had four hearts.

Once it is conceded that West doesn't have a five-card suit, it follows that his original distribution was 4-4-1-4 (since he showed out on the second diamond lead). Finessing the ten of clubs therefore becomes the right play.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



"When I grow up I hope this is gonna be one of our good ol' days."

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★ 3/08

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

QX CFCJCB PNJONLZ AU

JBOK NJ WZEX NFKZPJZ

N'WZ ZWZF SZBEP UAOLJ

JBX N SBWZ JAPNCQ APNCQ

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BECAUSE THOSE TWO HOSPITAL EMPLOYEES ARE WASHING ITEMS VERY VIGOROUSLY, ARE THEY SCRUB NURSES?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: W equals V

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Paddock papa
5 Rotating part
8 Late-rigged boat
12 Mid-eastern gulf
13 "The Greatest"
14 Aarchitect Saarinen
15 Paper quantity
16 Under the weather
17 George Herman Ruth
18 Damage
20 Praise highly
22 Conclusive proof
26 Grip
29 Trigger's rider
30 Id counterpart
31 See 36-Across
32 Victory
33 Auction
34 — out a living
35 Lubricate

DOWN
11 Mischievous tyke
21 Whatever number
23 Baleen whale's fodder
24 Wrinkly citrus
25 Christmas refrain
26 Staff leader?
27 Norse trickster god
28 Did a mean job?
32 Some Native American homes
33 Relieved
35 Individual
36 Pismire
38 Crazy
39 Poetic feet
42 Staffer
43 Droops
44 "Star —"
45 Moment
46 Commotion
48 Excessively

Solution time: 25 mins.

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14		
15				16				17		
18				19			20	21		
			22			23				24
26	27	28				29				30
31				32				33		
34				35				36		
37				38				39		
			40					41		
45	46			47	48			49		
50				51				52		
53				54				55		