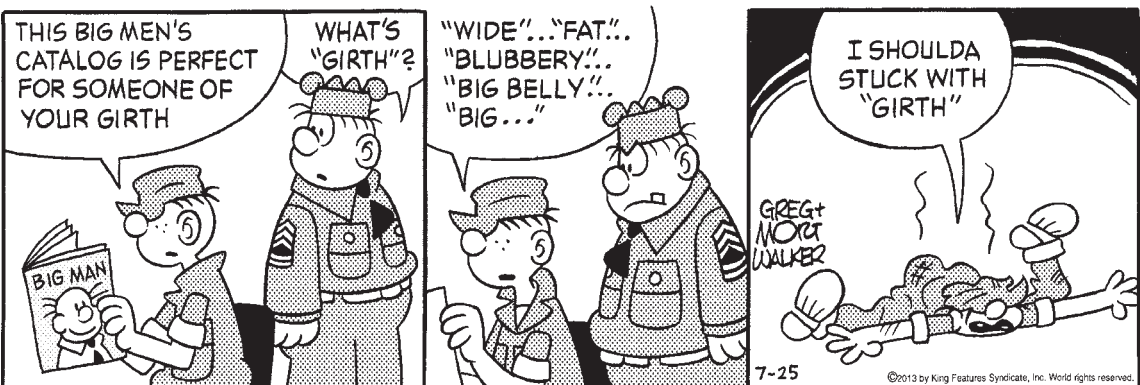


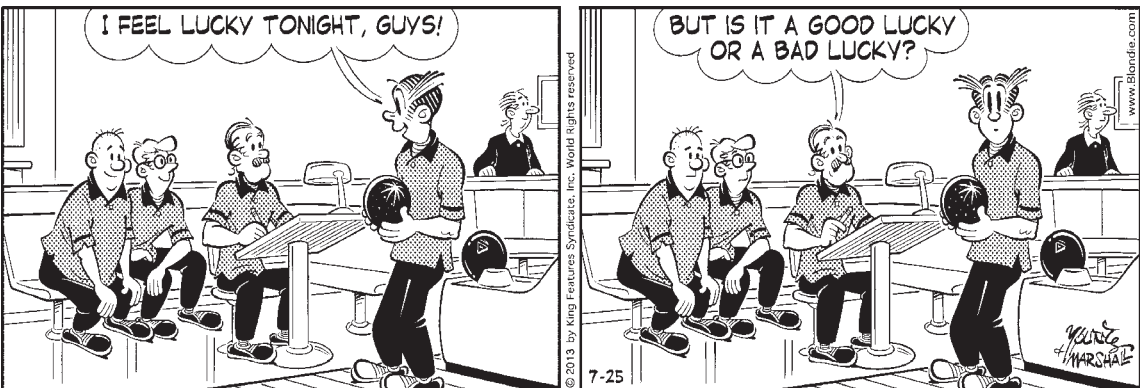
Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



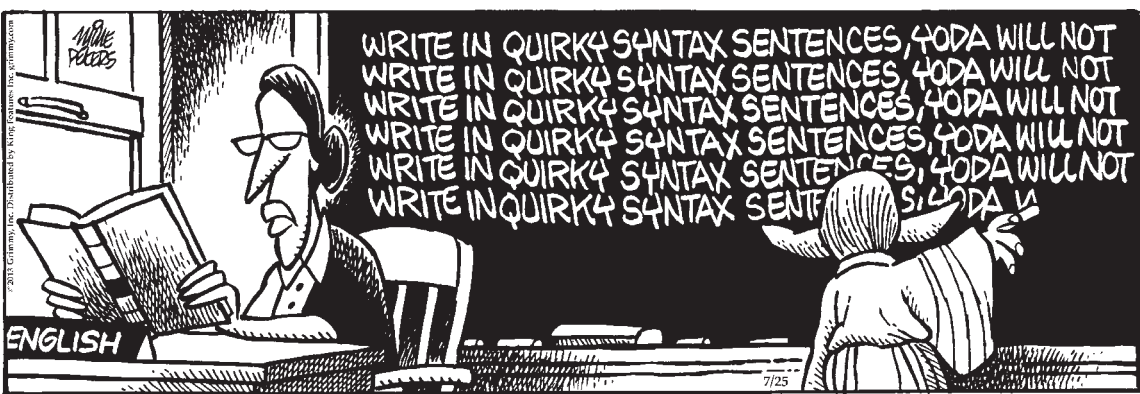
Blondie • Chic Young



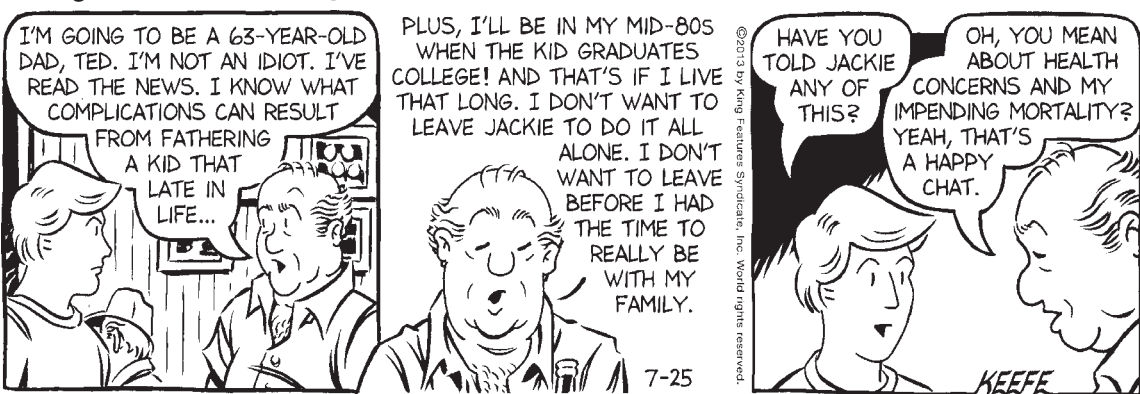
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



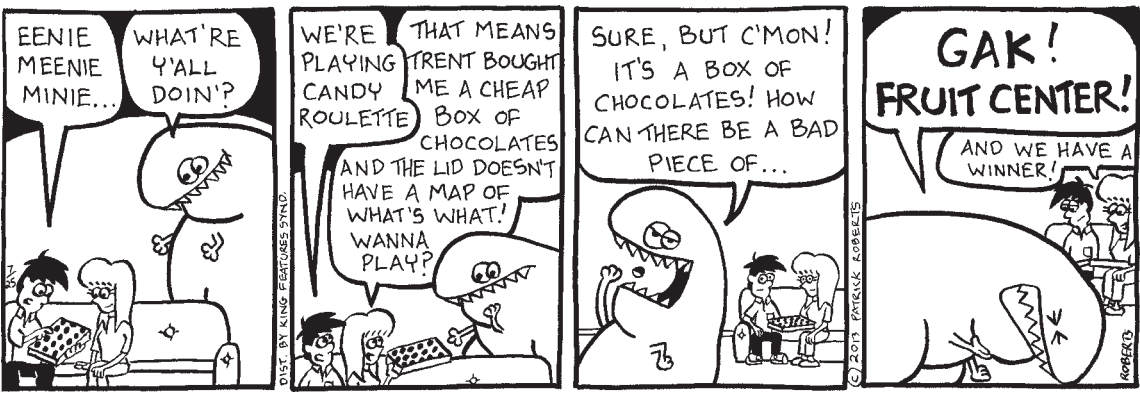
Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



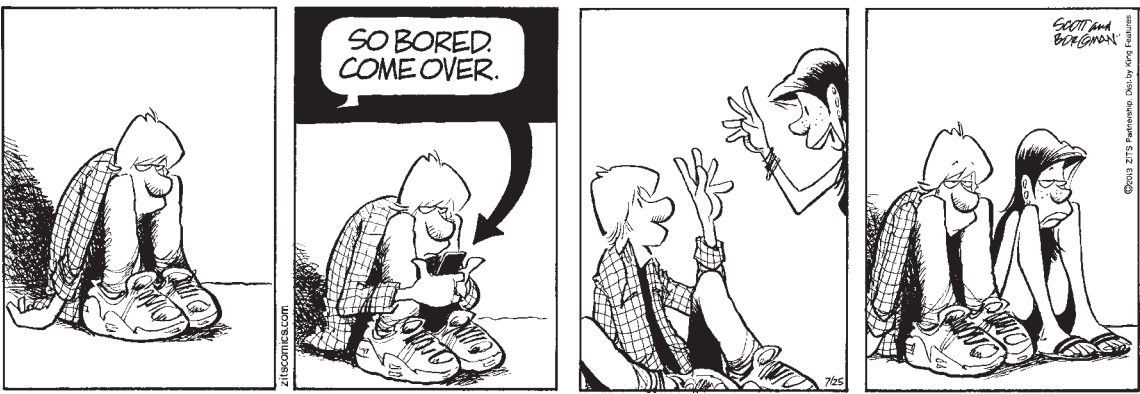
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Terry Kovel • Antiques and Collecting

Plate on lamp probably bogus

Q: I acquired a kerosene lamp in Utah last year. It seems to be brass and has a metal plate with the words, "Property of Pony Express Station No. 9." What can you tell me about it?

A: The metal plate is probably a fake. Many fake and fantasy maker or owner tags are showing up on oil lamps, lanterns and locks to suggest a connection that makes them attractive to collectors. The items themselves also are probably fakes or reproductions from India or China.

The most common of these fake tags are small, brass rectangular plates with simple, nondescript lettering. They advertise real or fictitious companies desirable to collectors interested in Wild West memorabilia or railroadiana. Pony Express and Wells Fargo are two of the most often referenced. The items may be nice collectibles, just don't expect them to be real.

Q: I have a toy gun that looks like a cap pistol but is solid metal. It has no moving parts, weighs 3 1/2 pounds and has "Stallion" on each side. I would like to know what it was made for since I don't think a child would play with it.

A: Cap guns were popular toys in the 1950s and '60s during the heyday of TV and movie westerns. Nichols Industries was founded by Talley and Lewis Nichols in Pasadena, Texas, in 1946 and became one of the largest manufacturers of cap guns in the world.

The company made "Stallion" cap guns in various sizes from 1950 to 1961. The first, the Stallion 45, was "Toy of the Year" in 1950. They were made to look like the Colt 45 Peacemaker and had a revolving cylinder. Smoke came out of the barrel when fired. Since your gun is relatively heavy and doesn't have moving parts, it may have been made as a paperweight or display item.

Nichols moved to Jacksonville, Texas, in 1954. It was sold to Kusan in 1965 and became Nichols Kusan. The company continued to make many of the Nichols cap gun models.

Q: I have an old safe 47 inches high, 32 inches wide and 27 inches deep and stands 8 inches off the floor on wheels. The door, which has a combination lock, reads "Barnes Safe & Lock Co., Greensburg, Pa." A gold band on the door edge has decorated corners. The safe has an inner door with key lock and interior compartments. When was it made? Value?

A: In 1845 Thomas Barnes, a blacksmith, and his brother-in-law, Edmund Burke, a locksmith, established the Burke & Barnes Safe Manufacturers Co. in Pittsburgh. The company made iron cellar doors, grillwork and strong boxes. After the great Pittsburgh fire of 1845, they experimented with designs for a fireproof safe.

Soon after the Civil War, Barnes perfected a seven-flange door safe, which became world famous as the best protection against fire ever invented. Burke retired in the early 1870s and the company name was changed to Barnes Safe & Lock Co.

In 1914 the company built a shop, a filing room and carpenter's shop in Greensburg, Pa. It made safes, including yours, bank deposit boxes and fire-proof chests until the '20s. Barnes safes have sold for \$300 up to about \$500. The value depends on condition.

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Bridge • Steve Becker

South dealer. Both sides vulnerable.

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

WEST
♦ J 9 7 4 3
♥ 8
♦ Q J 9 4
♠ J 9 5

EAST
♥ K 6 2
♦ 7 5 2
♠ K 7
♣ A K 8 4 3

SOUTH
♦ 8
♥ A K Q 10 9 6 3
♦ 6 5 2
♠ 7 2

The bidding:
South 3♥ West Pass North 4♥ East 4♥
Opening lead — queen of diamonds.

A Question of Probabilities

In the absence of any hard evidence to the contrary, declarer does best in the long run to stick religiously to percentages. Occasionally the percentage play will turn out wrong, and the anti-percentage play will turn out right, but if declarer wants to do well over the long haul, he will surely do better by playing the percentages rather than by not playing them.

Take this case where West leads the queen of diamonds, which holds, and continues with a diamond. East cashes the A-K and shifts to a trump. How should declarer proceed from this point?

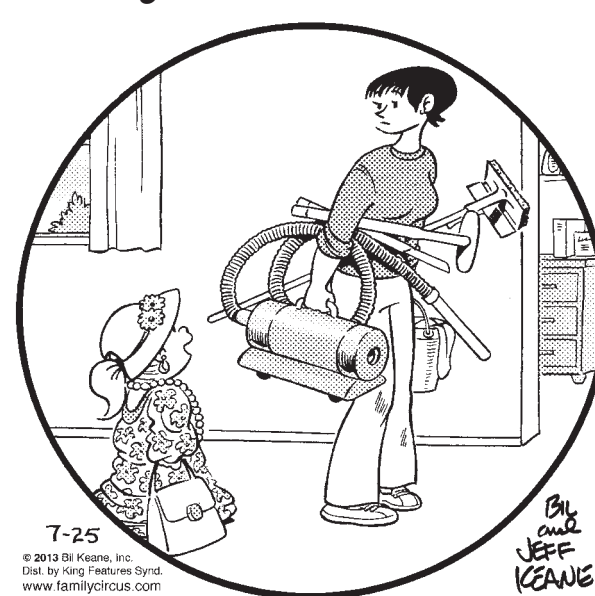
Having lost the first three tricks, it appears South must decide whether to attempt a spade finesse or a club finesse in order to avoid losing a club trick. Each finesse has an even chance of winning, so it might seem natural to settle the matter by mentally tossing a coin. But there is much more to the situation than at first meets the eye, as there is a way for declarer to add significantly to his chances.

The correct approach is to win the trump return with the nine, lead a spade to the ace and ruff a spade. South then crosses to the jack of trumps and ruffs the ten of spades. As it happens, the king falls on the ten, and declarer makes four hearts without having to risk a finesse.

If South stakes the outcome strictly on a finesse in either black suit, he has only a 50 percent chance of succeeding. But if he first tries to drop the king of spades by ruffing one or two rounds of the suit, he increases his chances considerably, since he still has the 50 percent chance of winning a club finesse in reserve if the spade king does not fall.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



7-25
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"I'm all ready to help you play house, Mommy."

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

3x3 Sudoku grid with numbers and empty cells.

Difficulty Level ★★

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.

9x9 Sudoku grid with numbers and empty cells.

Difficulty Level ★★★

Cryptoquip

EGIDB BDEPLNLQC IVD
QEITBD SG IVD ELPODQI
HJSISBU LQ IVD JNDJV

JEFLIEP OEHD E FBECTD-QSULU

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN THE SIXTIES WAR VETERAN REVEALS ALL IN HIS MEMOIR, I EXPECT HE COULD USE A 'NAM DE PLUME.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals T

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 1 Tolerate 5 Fix a skirt 8 Egyptian bird 12 "Novus — Seclo-rum" 13 Eggs 14 Make over 15 Place 16 "— the fields we go" 17 Big bothers 18 Distance 20 Body art, for short 22 Black Sabbath's genre 26 Host 29 Turn on the water-works 30 Away from WSW 31 Praise highly 32 Common interjec-tions 33 Destiny 34 Ctrl + + Del
- DOWN 11 "Mayday!" 19 Fairway gizmo 21 Grant or Irving 23 TV blocker 24 Initial stake 25 Lecher-ous look 26 Israeli airline 27 Sudanese Republic, now 28 Patterned bowls, vases, etc. 31 First 32 female Supreme Court Justice 33 June 14 35 Depot (Abbr.) 36 Blunder 38 Therefore 39 Deserves 42 Oxen connector 43 Pork portion 44 Sea flock 45 Peculiar 46 "O Sole —" 48 Have bills

Crossword solution grid with letters filled in.

Large crossword puzzle grid with numbers indicating starting points.