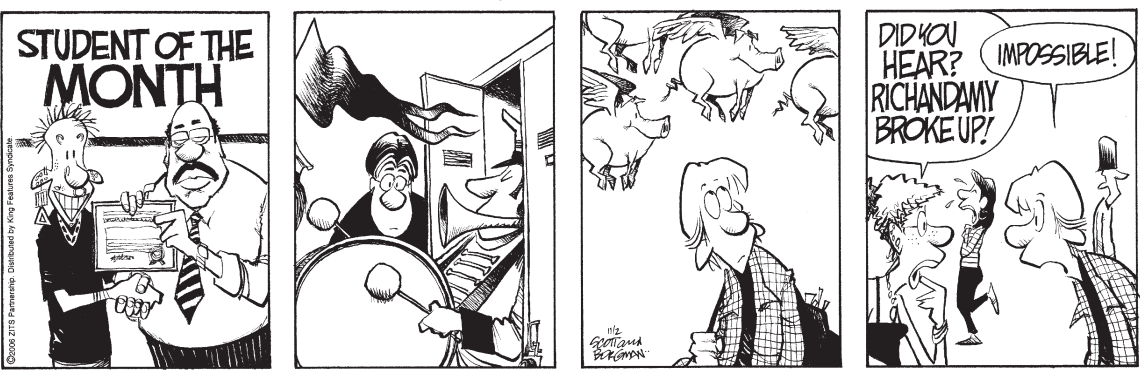
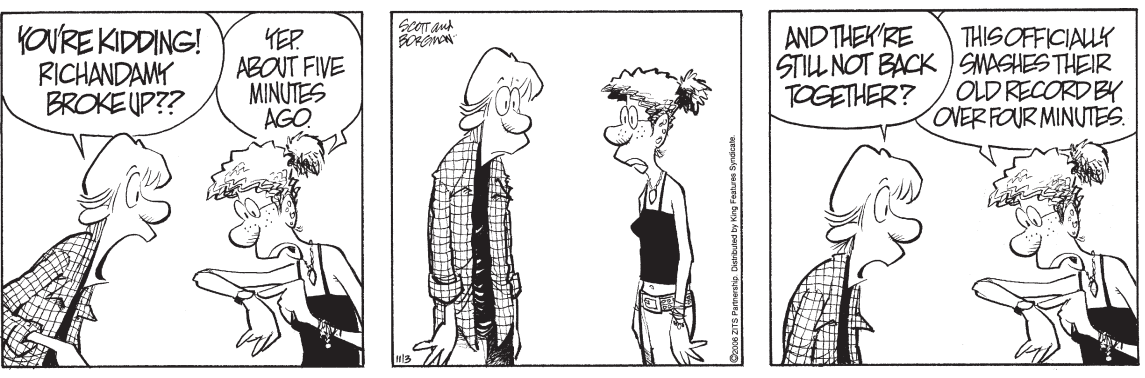
Sally Forth • Greg Howard

Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott

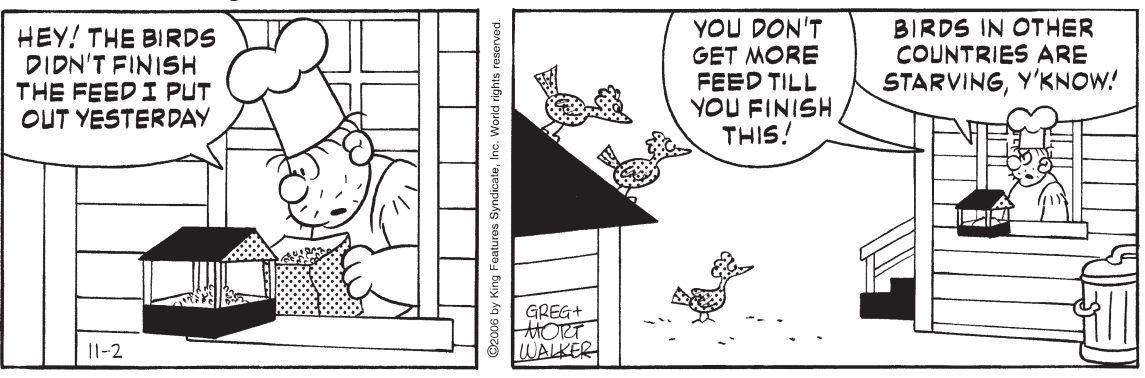




Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne

Blondie • Chic Young

Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

Crankshaft • Tom Batiuk and Chuck Ayers

THANK YOU FOR READING THE

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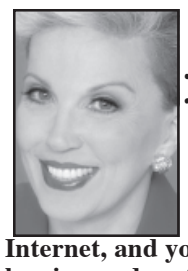
Cryptoquip

TS F LDRBJ QBFGX AFVJUBJ YFTU, PDMUJ LDM BKZBNX ATY XD QB RVDPV FG F ZDGX-DSSTNB DK?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN YOUR WHISKEY DRINK NEEDS TO BE REFILLED, I LIKE TO THINK OF IT AS BOURBON RENEWAL.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: L equals Y

Blogging about baby not good



Abigail Van Buren

• Dear Abby

Dear Dr. Brothers: I was disconcerted to learn what my sister-in-law has been up to lately. She and my brother are the parents of a darling baby, who is nearly a year old. Last Christmas, I learned through their newsletter that the wife is spending her time blogging on the Internet about the baby, on a daily basis. I went to the site out of curiosity, and I must say, she has left nothing to the imagination. Every detail of the baby's day is there, along with a few things I wouldn't want the world to know if I were my brother. I made a remark to him about "airing dirty diapers," and he told me, essentially, to mind my own business. What do you think of this? — H.S.

Dear H.S.: I have heard that blogging about babies is a popular pastime now, and I can see the positive benefits that might come from keeping a record of the baby's growth and development. We used to have scrapbooks for such things, but now the Internet serves as a repository for these records, along with all sorts of thoughts and debates that motherhood brings. For moms, it can be a respite from the isolation some suffer after leaving the workplace, and it can keep the connection with the outside world that they crave. Replies to their blogs can help them feel that they are sharing the "new mom" experience, or quell their worries that their child is the only one with a behavior problem or developmental delay. Blogging while the baby sleeps seems OK.

On the other hand, blogging has a potential for abuse, especially if it becomes a substitute for interacting with the child, or a place to lodge daily complaints against the father, or serves mainly to satisfy exhibitionistic urges while ignoring the family's privacy. I can't judge your brother's specific case, but in general, diaries and journals have been replaced by the Internet, and your sister-in-law has jumped on the bandwagon, hopefully with some taste and moderation.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I am one of those old-fashioned gals who likes to gather everyone around the table at dinnertime and gab about our day, share experiences and (hopefully) good food, and make plans for the weekend or a summer vacation. Unfortunately, we seem to be sitting on top of a ticking time bomb called overbooking, with just too much stuff to do. No one has the time to sit down and put some effort toward the fine art of conversation. Is it hopelessly out of date to expect a family to live together, pray together and eat together? — A.O.

Dear A.O.: You don't need to put yourself and your ideas down by labeling them "old-fashioned" and "out of date." The fact that you like family togetherness is a sign that you are operating under a time-tested and valuable way of exchanging views and thoughts within the family circle. And you don't need to rely on me to tell you that this is perfectly normal — and also quite emotionally satisfying. If you don't believe me, you can go check out any number of studies on how beneficial the family dinner (or breakfast) table is in promoting a feeling of togetherness and of actually helping children succeed. In fact, the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) recently reported that in the family that eats together, there is less alcohol, drug and cigarette use. The study also noted that family dinners are actually on the upswing since a decade ago. So don't be afraid to put your foot down when it comes to meals if you feel there is a benefit to the nightly gathering — even if that "night" only comes around once a week or so.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I don't want to sound overly dramatic, but my life has become a nightmare since my husband invited his mother to move in with us. She is in her 70s and lost her husband about a year ago. At that time, we explored various options, several of which sounded reasonable to me, but my husband insisted on taking her in. Now I spend all day catering to her, and we have no privacy. He seems OK with it, because he gets to go out to work. She is not senile but acts very helpless. Our two kids don't understand why she is here, either. Can I tell my husband to find a better place for her, or would that make me look like an evil witch? — D.W.

Dear D.W.: You have been put in a very uncomfortable position, and it is unfortunate that your husband hasn't been able to foresee the disruptive effect this move would have on his family. If you have enough money to explore other options, perhaps you can persuade your husband to use this time as a trial or transition period while continuing to investigate other ideas about what might be the best situation for his mother and your family. If he is at all reasonable, he will not refuse to go along with that idea. You might find a nicer place for your mother-in-law — a small home or condo near your house, or perhaps some sort of assisted-living facility — where instead of "catering" to her all day, you can help out occasionally while a staff of people or a group of friends helps make her time less frustrating. But for now, try to calm down and improve the atmosphere.

Bridge

South dealer.
North-South vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ 5 4 2
♥ 10 9 4
♦ Q 9 7 6 3 2
♣ 5

WEST
♠ 9 8 6
♥ Q 8 5 3
♦ 10 8 5 4
♣ 8 2

EAST
♠ 7
♥ J 6 2
♦ A K J
♣ Q J 10 9 7 4

SOUTH
♠ A K Q J 10 3
♥ A K 7
♦ —
♣ A K 6 3

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
2 ♣ *	Pass	2 ♦ **	3 ♣
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
5 ♠	Pass	6 ♠	

* strong, artificial
** negative
Opening lead — eight of clubs.

Comparing Right With Wrong

There is usually a right way and a wrong way to do things. The trick in bridge is to recognize the difference between right and wrong, and proceed accordingly.

Take this case where South reached six spades on the bidding shown and West led the eight of clubs.

Declarer took the club with the king and continued with the ace, discarding a heart from dummy. He then played the A-K of hearts, ruffed a heart in dummy, ruffed a diamond and then at tempted to ruff a club.

But when West ruffed with the six of spades and returned the nine, South was in bad shape.

He could not ruff his last club because West would score the eight of trumps, so he went down one.

Declarer should have made the slam, however. It was a mistake to cash the ace of clubs at trick two.

Instead, he should have ruffed a low club in dummy immediately.

South next leads a heart to his ace and returns the six of clubs. West probably ruffs, dummy discarding a heart, and returns a trump, but he is now fighting a losing battle. Declarer wins the trump, cashes the king of hearts and ruffs the heart seven with dummy's last trump. South then scores the rest of the tricks with his five remaining trumps and the ace of clubs.

The key play is to ruff a club in dummy before cashing the second high club. It might not seem important to do this, but the fact is that the contract stands or falls on this one decision.

The right way to play the hand proves to be much better than the wrong way to play it.

Tomorrow: Bidding quiz.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane

"No, yesternight."

Crossword

ACROSS
1 Venom ejector
4 Speedy
8 Base runner's goal
12 Grazing site
13 Ready for the picking
14 State with certainty
15 Scaly anteater
17 Reply to "Shall we?"
18 Press for payment
19 Oscar candidate
21 Score
24 Gist
25 That guy
26 Emulate Johnny Appleseed
28 Put one over on
32 Rainbow
34 Grecian vessel
36 Story
37 Denominations
39 "Uh-huh"
41 Collar
42 Feedbag tidbit
44 Ordeals
46 Small racing dog
50 Computer key
51 "You —?"
52 Temple to the gods
56 Edmonton's prov.
57 Fix text
58 Commotion
59 Info (Sl.)
60 Catch sight of
61 Stitch

DOWN
1 Heidi's height
2 Vast expanse
3 Widespread disease
4 Facades
5 Have a bug
6 "Wheel of Fortune" option
7 Mortise's partner
8 Popular food fish
9 It takes the cake
10 Apportion
11 Gaelic
16 Oater prop
20 Slander
21 Anything but that
22 Finish line
23 One of us
27 Ironic
29 Cure-alls
30 Mideast airline
31 Socialist candidate Eugene
33 Makeshift
35 Trawler need
38 Fool
40 Attractive
43 Reservation residence
45 Somewhat (Suff.)
46 End the day's filming
47 Headlight?
48 Busy with
49 Small amounts
53 Pinch
54 Praise in verse
55 Without delay

Solution time: 25 mins.

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

Yesterday's answer 11-2