

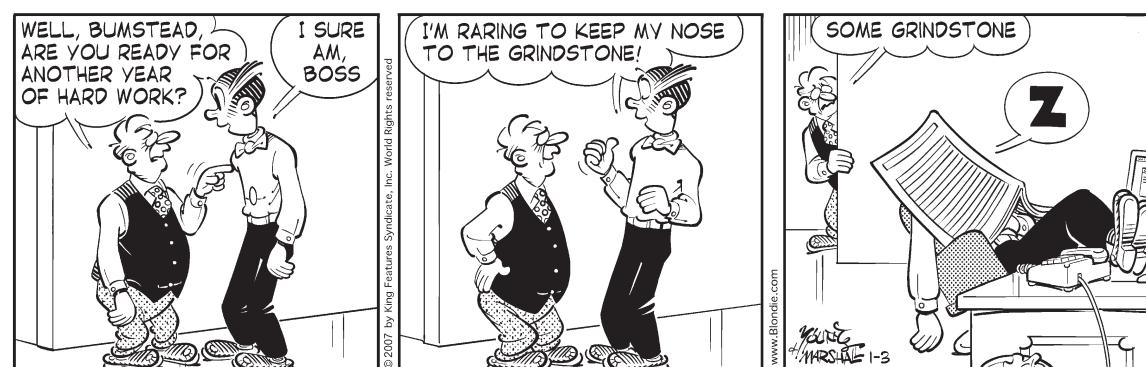
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



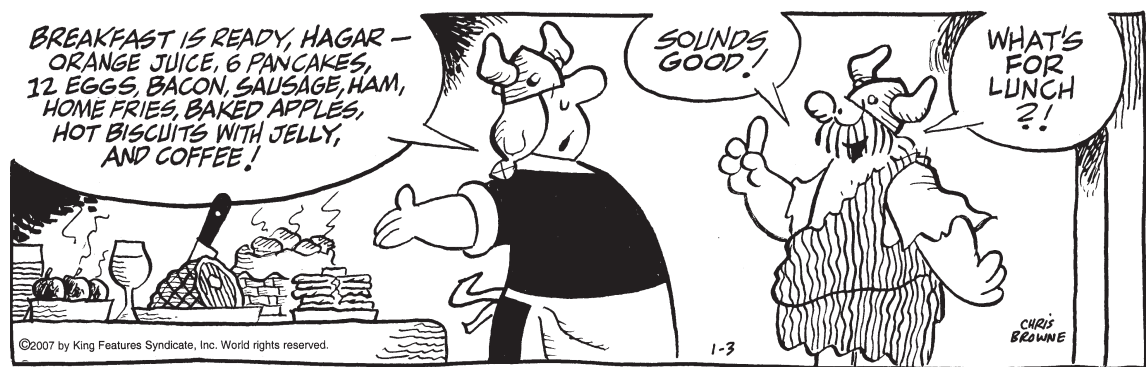
Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



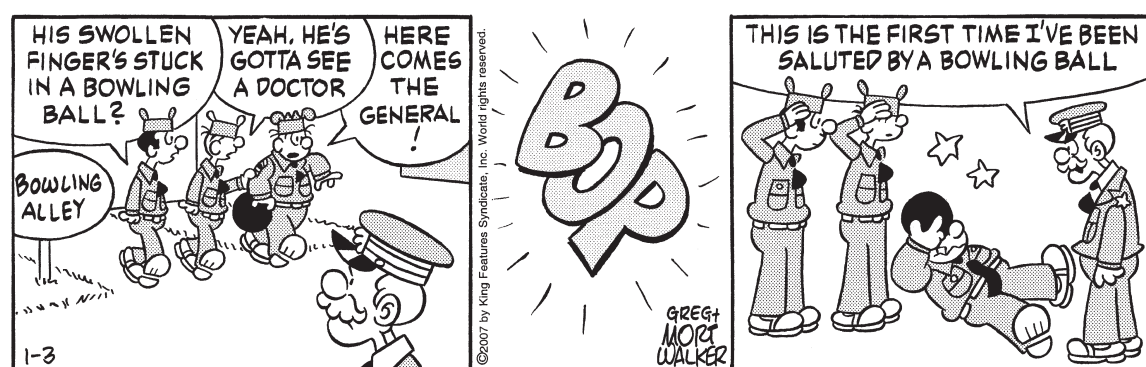
Blondie • Chic Young



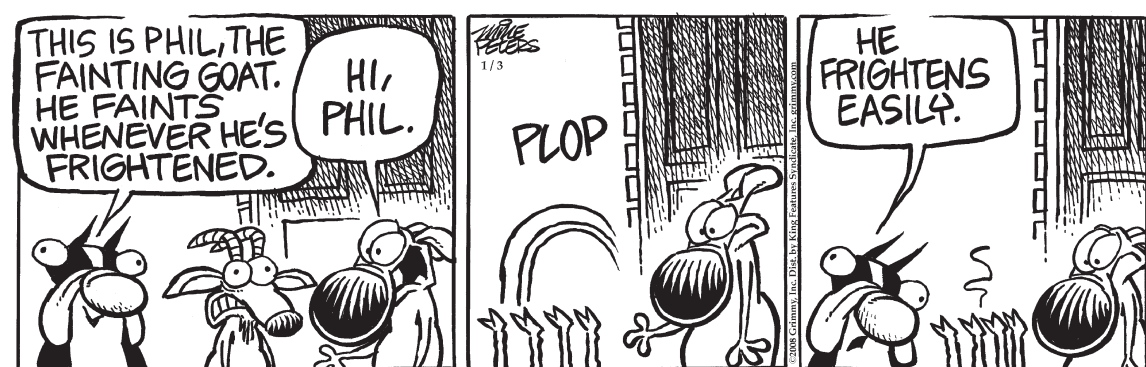
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



Tod the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★

1/03

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 today's Sudoku puzzle is right.

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

Difficulty Level ★★★

1/03

Bridge

North dealer. Neither side vulnerable.
NORTH
 ♠ 10 6 5 2
 ♥ A 9 4
 ♦ K 3
 ♣ A K 5 3
WEST
 ♠ Q 9 4
 ♥ Q 8 3
 ♦ J 10 8
 ♣ J 9 6 2
EAST
 ♠ J
 ♥ J 10 6 5
 ♦ 9 7 6 5 4 2
 ♣ 8 4
SOUTH
 ♠ A K 8 7 3
 ♥ K 7 2
 ♦ A Q
 ♣ Q 10 7

The bidding:
 North East South West
 1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
 2 ♠ Pass 4 NT Pass
 5 ♥ Pass 6 ♠
 Opening lead — jack of diamonds.

How to Bait the Hook

Assume you're declarer at six spades. You win the opening diamond lead with the ace and cash the A-K of spades, learning that you have to lose a trump trick. How would you continue?

One possibility is to cash the top clubs, hoping the jack will appear somewhere along the line. If it does, your heart loser can be parked on dummy's fourth club. In the actual case, however, this approach fails.

Another possibility is to give West his trump trick at this point, in which case he will simply return a diamond, putting you right back where The best plan by far, however, is to first cash the king of diamonds before giving West his spade trick. This represents only a slight deviation from the previous line, but it has a significant impact on West since he can no longer exit safely with a diamond. That would allow you to trump in one hand while discarding a heart from the other.

With the diamond return no longer an option, West has to decide whether to shift to a heart or a club. In the actual deal, the heart certainly looks more dangerous to him because, if you have the K-J-x or K-10-x, a heart return gives you an extra trick in the suit.

For this reason, West is more likely to return a club on the basis that if his partner has either the queen or ten of clubs, nothing will be lost, while a heart return requires East to have both the jack and ten (South almost surely has the king for his bidding). A club return, of course, hands you the slam on a silver platter, and even if West guesses to shift to a heart instead, you're no worse off than you were before.

The advantage of cashing the diamond king before giving West his spade trick is that you present him with an opportunity to go wrong and thus improve your chances. The beauty of this method of play is that it costs you absolutely nothing to test West's mettle.

Family Circus • Bil Keane



1-3

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"...we shouldn't put the Christmas Spirit away with them."

Crossword

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Cryptoquip

QZV JBRQNA'R RVAKNHR
 BAV UH JNVQUE GNAK. QZVS
 QSJUEBWS AVGVA QN ZUK

BR QZV AZSKV KUHURQVA
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN A SUPERHERC FINISHES HIS SCHOOLING, DOES HIS GRADUATION OUTFIT INCLUDE A CAPE AND GOWN?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals T