

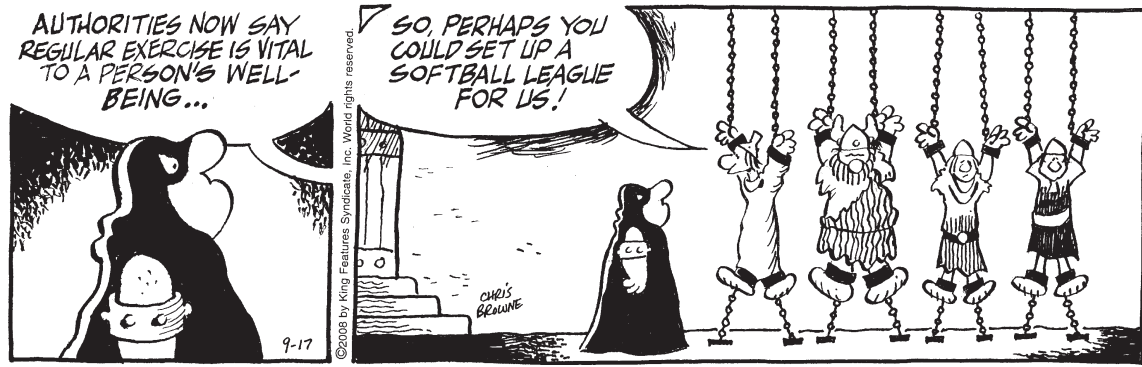
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



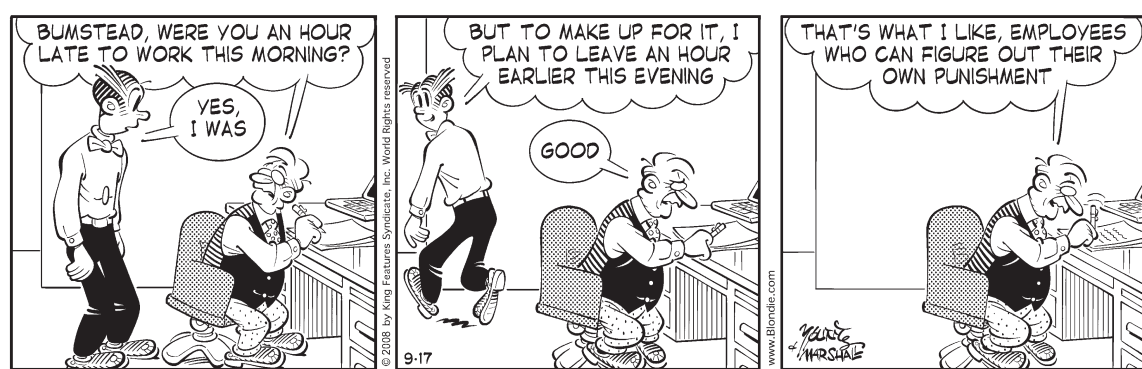
Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



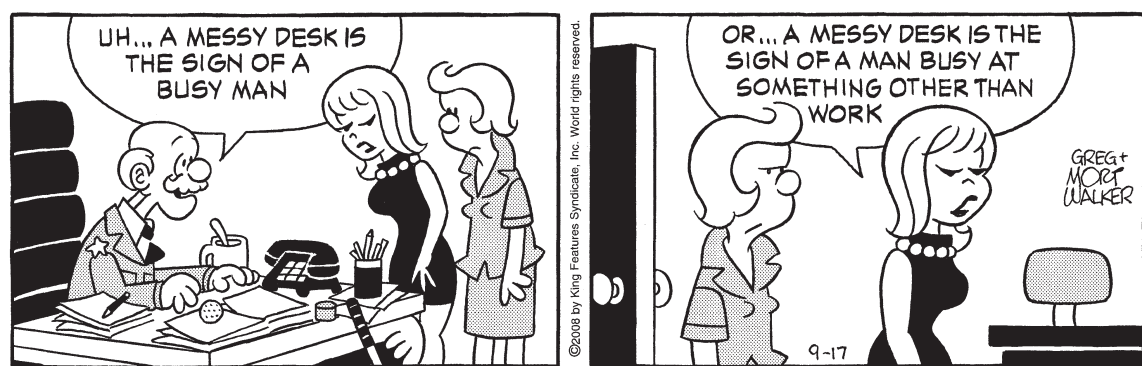
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



Blondie • Chic Young



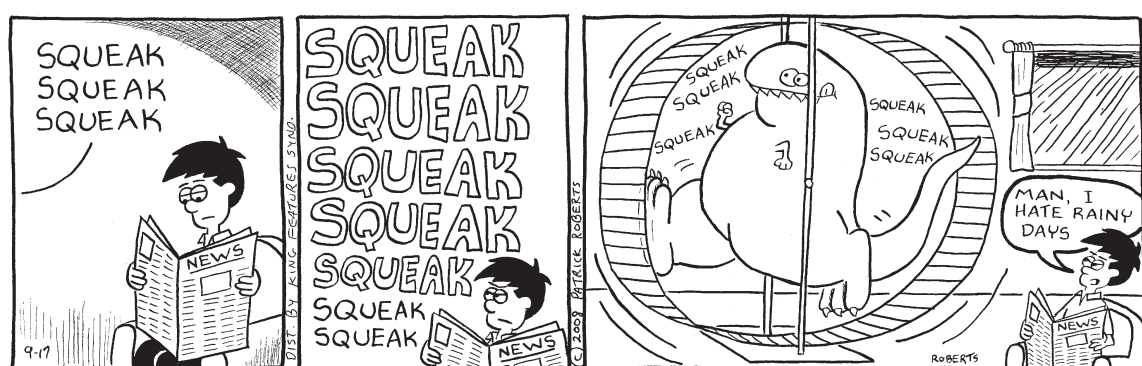
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



Tod the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



Cryptoquip

TAFM GNY'QF OZSFQVMR KYUS XK V OIZGEQ IK VZWSTVEXVP
 SAF CVQUS TNQW NC O LVTWZGXVEW DQTQ NVSSEXP
 UFMSFMBF, GNY BNYZW DF XS IZS, LXRBS SBVS NQ
 BAOMRVMR SAF UYDKFBS.
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE STAG, WHICH HAD RECENTLY BEEN BADLY HURT, WAS FOUND IN THE WOODS HANGING ON FOR DEER LIFE.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: G equals Y
 DILNVS OILNVS?
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN YOU'RE ALTERING JUST THE FIRST WORD OF A SENTENCE, YOU COULD BE CHANGING THE SUBJECT.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals T

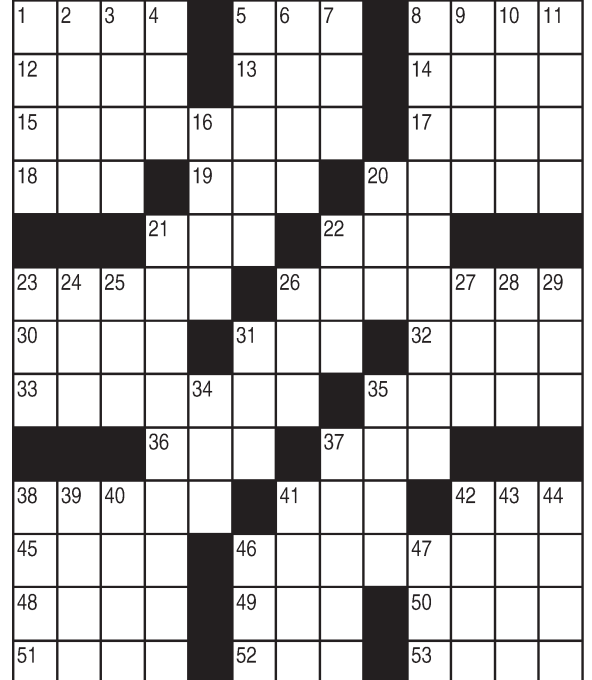
Crossword

- ACROSS**
 1 William H. of "Fargo"
 5 Recipe meas.
 8 Work at the keyboard
 12 — vera
 13 Hooter
 14 Frost
 15 Non-paying passenger
 17 Baseball scores
 18 Upper surface
 19 With it
 20 Elude
 21 Automaton, for short
 22 De-pressed
 23 Tote
 26 Rhesus monkey
 30 Curved molding
 31 Pack quantity
 32 Took off
- DOWN**
 33 Arizona tribe
 35 Green gem-stones
 36 Barbie's pal
 37 Rapture
 38 Wanderer
 41 Conger, e.g.
 42 Collection
 45 Swear 'tis true
 46 Gilligan, for one
 48 Antitoxins
 49 Halloween abbr.
 50 Actor Bogarde
 51 Bohemian
 52 Surprise cries
- ACROSS**
 53 Look last-ly
 21 Secession
 22 Remiss
 23 Inmate
 24 Khan title
 25 Gun the engine
 26 Wrong (Pref.)
 27 Proof conclusion
 28 French article
 29 UFO crew?
 31 Junior
 34 Clampett patriarch
 35 A bit of a shock
 37 "He — at scars..."
 38 Houston acronym
 39 Finished Sahl
 40 Comedian
 41 Apiece
 42 Hearty drink
 43 "My Name Is —"
 44 Youngster
 46 Bill's partner
 47 Rumpus

Solution time: 21 mins.

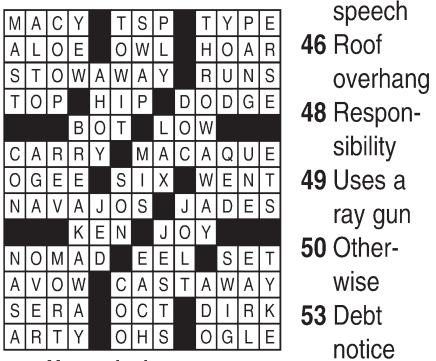


Yesterday's answer 9-16



- ACROSS**
 1 Lone Ranger trademark
 5 Tit for —
 8 Big bothers
 12 Killer whale
 13 Miners' gathering
 14 Unuttered "alas"
 15 Muscle relaxant
 17 Part of TLC
 18 Wooden shoes
 19 USNA freshmen
 21 Lennon's love
 22 One of the Jackson 5
 23 Dancer Charisse
 26 Help
 28 Cockpit occupant
 31 Raised platform
 33 Prune
 35 Farewell, in Florence
- DOWN**
 36 Make like Torvill and Dean
 38 "A mouse!"
 40 Weep
 41 Actress Sorvino
 43 Have a bug
 45 Snuck a look
 47 Nap
 51 Mortgage datum
 52 Oblique
 54 Microwave, e.g.
 55 A billion years
 56 Dines
 57 Twerp
 58 Trench
- DOWN**
 11 "Take Her, — Mine"
 16 Sicilian sputer
 20 Back talk
 23 LPs' successors
 24 Tibetan beast
 25 Twice the radius
 27 Buck's mate
 29 Rowing tool
 30 Plaything
 32 Wages
 34 Lowly one
 37 Before
 39 Chess piece
 42 Venomous viper
 44 Detached
 45 Pt. of speech
 46 Roof overhang
 48 Responsibility
 49 Uses a ray gun
 50 Otherwise
 53 Debt notice

Solution time: 21 mins.



Yesterday's answer 9-17

Bridge

North dealer. Neither side vulnerable.
NORTH
 ♠ A J 4
 ♥ A 8 5
 ♦ A K 7 3
 ♣ K 10 2
WEST
 ♠ Q 7 3
 ♥ K 9 7 6 3
 ♦ J 9 4
 ♣ 6 4
EAST
 ♠ K 9 8 6
 ♥ 10 2
 ♦ Q 10 5 2
 ♣ A 8 3
SOUTH
 ♠ 10 5 2
 ♥ Q J 4
 ♦ 8 6
 ♣ Q J 9 7 5
 The bidding:
 North 1♦
 East Pass
 South 1NT
 West Pass
 3NT
 Opening lead — six of hearts.

Look Before You Leap

After you've played bridge a while, you learn -- usually through bitter experience -- that reflex-action plays should be carefully avoided. There is no reward for speed in bridge, and long experience shows that it's far better to think first of what you're about to do before you actually do it.
 Consider this deal where West led a heart against three notrump. Declarer played low from dummy, taking East's ten with the queen. He next played a club to the king, but when East wisely held up his ace and also ducked the next club, South found himself in dire straits. He could establish the club suit if he wanted to, but since he had no subsequent entry to his hand, he was out of business. Soon after, South finished down two.

The sad part of the affair was that nothing could have stopped declarer from making nine tricks if he had played the hand correctly. All he had to do to assure the contract was to play the ace of hearts from dummy at trick one, resisting the temptation to let the lead run to his hand. By doing so, he would have preserved the Q-J of hearts, one of which was certain to provide him with an entry to his clubs later on.
 After taking the heart ace, declarer plays clubs until the ace is dislodged. Regardless of which defender wins the club, no return can prevent declarer from scoring four clubs, two diamonds, two hearts and a spade for a total of nine tricks.
 A heart return establishes an entry to the closed hand immediately, while a diamond return allows declarer to win in dummy and establish the heart entry himself. A spade return similarly causes no problem, since the 10-5-2 facing dummy's A-J-4 assure South that, no matter which defender wins the club and shifts to a spade, he has the necessary intermediate cards to assure the contract.

Tomorrow: Avoiding a finesse.
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West dealer. North-South vulnerable.
NORTH
 ♠ K 7 5 2
 ♥ 6 3
 ♦ J 10 7 4
 ♣ 9 5 3
WEST
 ♠ Q 10 8 4
 ♥ 8 5 2
 ♦ A Q 8 3
 ♣ Q 6
EAST
 ♠ 9 3
 ♥ 7
 ♦ 9 6 5 2
 ♣ A K J 10 8 4
SOUTH
 ♠ A J 6
 ♥ A K Q J 10 9 4
 ♦ K
 ♣ 7 2

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

Avoiding a Finesse

The opportunity to finesse is an irresistible lure to many declarers. But while the finesse is undoubtedly a valuable weapon in many situations, it is also much abused.
 The fact is that the finesse is a play that may or may not succeed, depending upon the location of a particular card or cards held by the defense. It should therefore not be used whenever there is an alternative line of play that accomplishes the desired result without risking a finesse.

Consider this deal where South is in four hearts and West leads the queen of clubs. East overtakes the queen with the jack, cashes the ace and continues with the jack, ruffed by declarer with the nine. South has already lost two tricks and must lose a diamond, so the outcome appears to depend upon the success of a spade finesse.
 Superficially, it might seem that South, after drawing trumps, should lead a low spade to the king and finesse the jack on the return. This play will succeed if East has the queen, but fails if West has it.

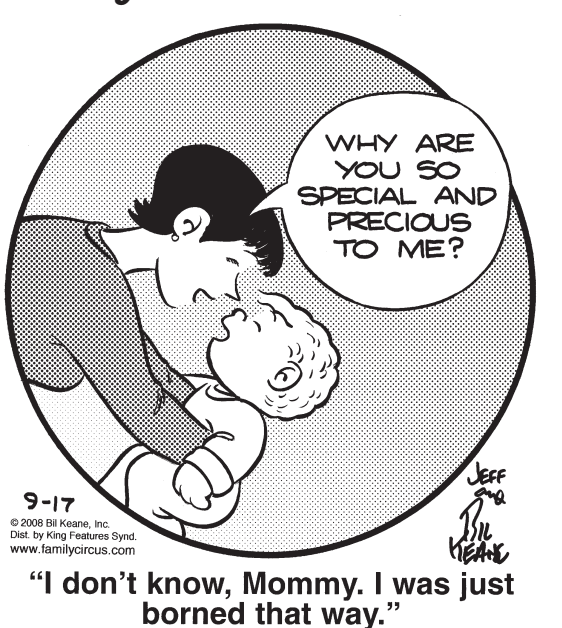
However, this is not the best line of play. After ruffing the jack of clubs, declarer should draw three rounds of trump and then play the king of diamonds. When West wins with the ace, which seems very likely from the bidding, the hand is over. It does not matter whether West returns a spade or a diamond, or where the queens of spades or diamonds are located.

A spade return automatically eliminates the spade loser, while a diamond return -- whether or not West has the queen -- establishes a diamond trick in dummy.

By leading the king of diamonds at trick seven, South obviates the risk involved in attempting the spade finesse. In effect, he wins the spade finesse by avoiding it.

Tomorrow: Any port in a storm.

Family Circus • Bill Keane



9-17
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 "I don't know, Mommy. I was just borned that way."