

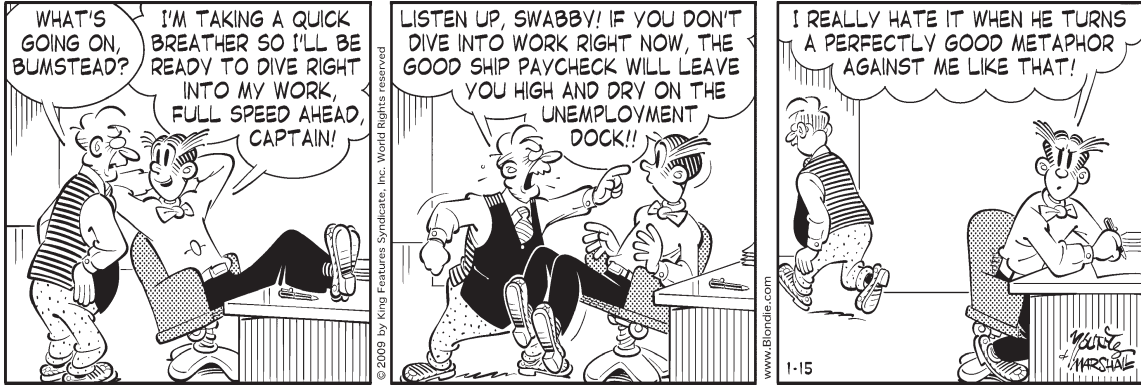
Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



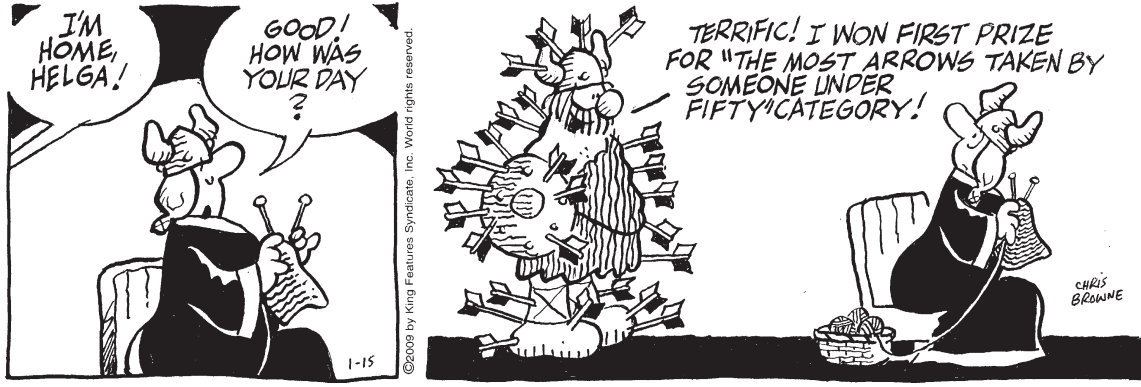
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



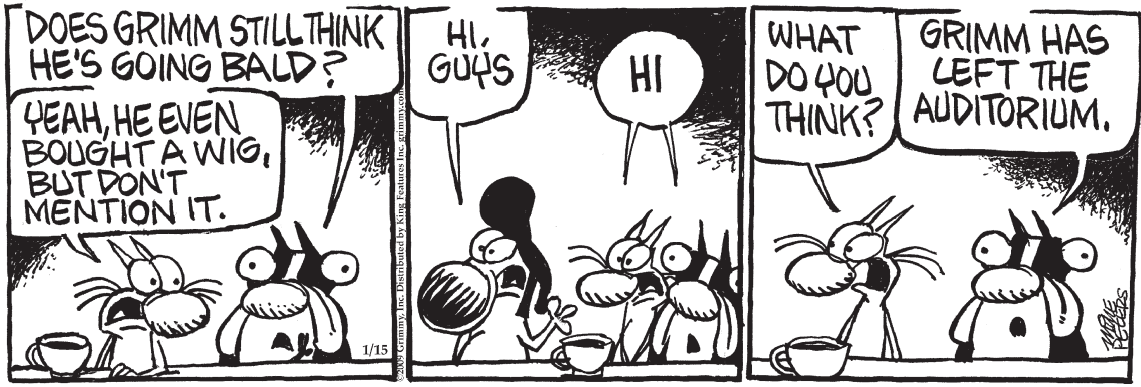
Blondie • Chic Young



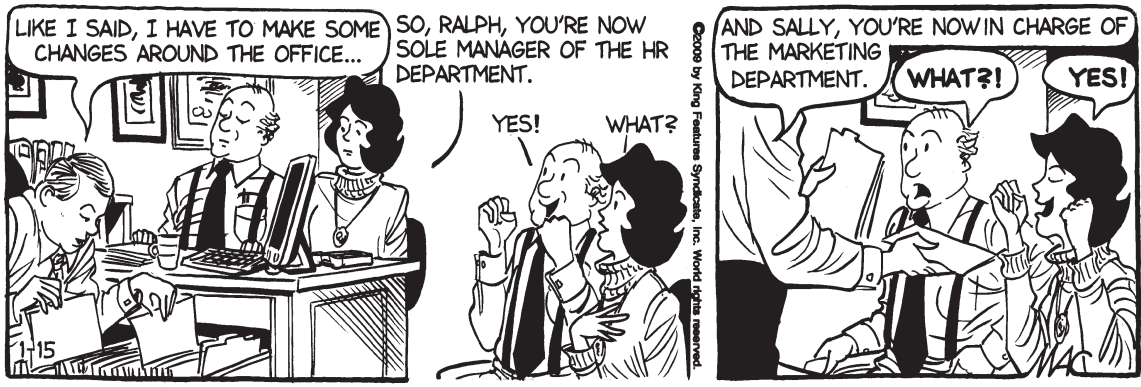
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



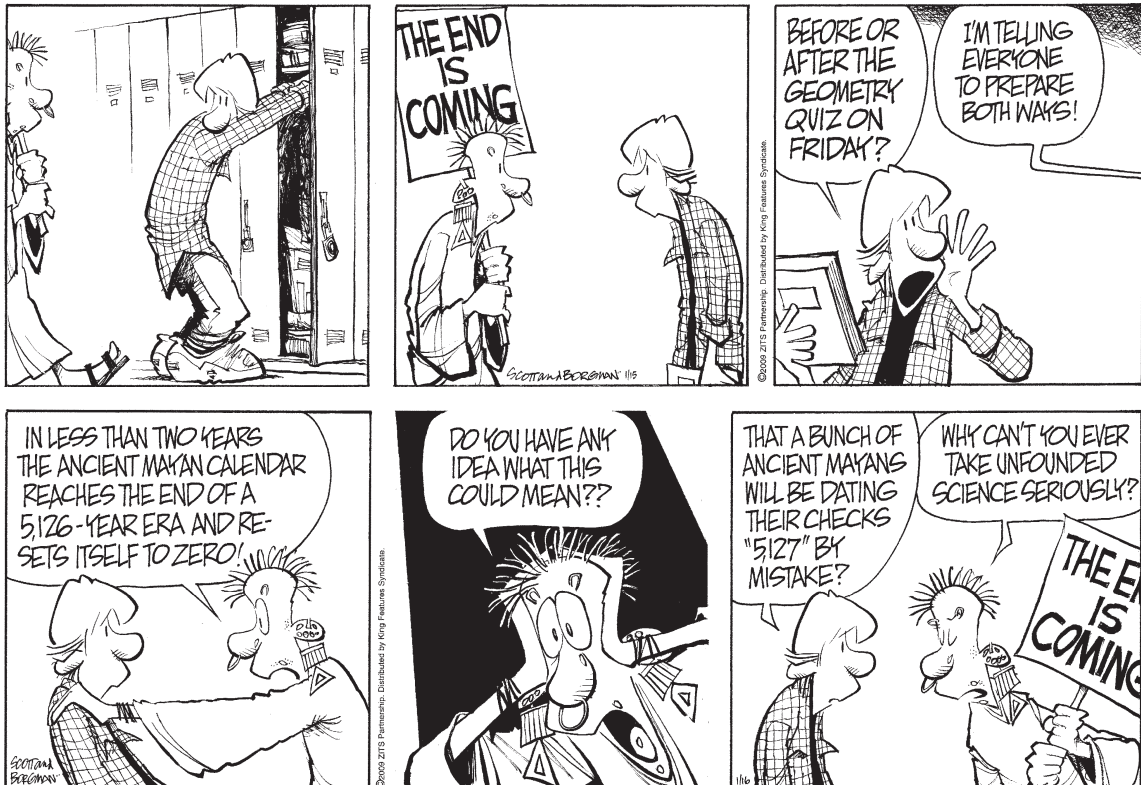
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers

• Ask Dr. Brothers

Hospital visit uncovers phobia

Dear Dr. Brothers: I have been blessed with very good health all my life. Recently, I went to visit a friend who had a baby – a happy occasion – but I found I was full of anxiety as I entered the hospital. I made a very short visit to the maternity ward. I later mentioned this to my mom and my aunt, and she reminded me that when I was only 10, I had to visit my uncle, who was in a bad accident, and I almost fainted. I am very worried about hospitals now. Help! -- S.G.

Dear S.G.: Although there is nothing you can do about it now, it's a shame that you were taken to the hospital if the sight of your uncle was so frightening as to almost cause you to faint. I am sure your relatives thought they were doing the right thing, and they probably were trying to cheer up your uncle with your visit. People always talk about how resilient children are, and it generally is true. But a very sensitive child, as you seem to have been, can be traumatized by such a frightening scenario as you were thrust into.

Luckily, your aunt was able to "connect the dots," and she is probably correct as to the source of your feeling of anxiety at the hospital. The fact that you had forgotten the incident may mean that it was safer not to remember that unpleasant time. Now that you realize you have nothing to fear from visiting friends in a hospital, perhaps you can settle your mind about it and practice entering and spending time there as though it were any other place of business. In other words, you need to be "desensitized" to the hospital. And hospitals are much less scary these days, especially the nurseries, which tend to be happy places. You can work through this gradually and begin to see a hospital as a place of happiness, help and healing, not just trauma and death. And if you have little kids, spare them the gruesome scenarios, just in case.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I have noticed through the years that it is harder and harder for me to get a good night's sleep. I am lucky enough to live in the country, where there's not a lot of traffic noise, but the birds do wake me in the morning! I am reluctant to shut out nature with shades, so the light wakes me, too. I read and eat and watch TV in bed, and I leave the radio on, as I don't like silence. Should I try sleeping pills? The more I worry about my sleep, the wider awake I become! -- K.M.

Dear K.M.: Good grief, is there anything you don't do in the bedroom? It sounds as though sleeping is way down on the list of possible outcomes when you go into that inner sanctum. It sounds as though you like plenty of stimulation in your life – even at bedtime and in the morning. If you are not willing to give up light, nature sounds and television, you should at least begin to try to scale back a bit. I realize that going from your current scenario to darkening curtains and dead silence would probably irritate you into bug-eyed wakefulness. But how about substituting a book for the TV before bed, and having your last snack out in the kitchen? Buy a "sounds of nature" machine that you can control, and set it for a time before you fall asleep and after you wake up. Then shut the windows and draw the curtains.

Bridge • Steve Becker

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

Resolving a Difficult Guess

A good declarer never relaxes just because he has an excellent chance to make his contract. Regardless of how promising his prospects are, he goes a step further and tries to find a way to ensure a favorable outcome against any lie of the opposing cards.

Consider this case where South arrived at six spades and West led a diamond. At this point, declarer could count 11 sure tricks, with a 12th in the offing if a club or heart finesse worked. Since the chance of winning at least one of the finesses was 3-to-1 in his favor, South had good reason to feel confident of success.

But 3-to-1 shots have been known to fail. Indeed, had declarer relied solely on the odds, he would have gone down one on this occasion. Instead, he found an approach that eventually assured him of winding up with 12 tricks.

After taking the diamond lead with the ace, he drew trumps in three rounds, then cashed the jack and queen of diamonds. Declarer now made two key plays: He left the king of diamonds in dummy for the moment and led a heart to the nine.

West won with the ten but could not avoid handing South his 12th trick by returning a heart or a club into one of declarer's A-Q's. The other queen could then be discarded on the king of diamonds.

Observe that if South had cashed the king of diamonds too early, he would not have been able to profit from the discard. If, for example, he discarded the nine of hearts and then tried a heart or club finesse, West would win and return the suit. Sooner or later, the other finesse would have to be attempted, and the slam would be lost.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



"Look! He's been struck by enlightening."

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

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.

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

Cryptoquip

C N S N F J C Z P F T M C Q S F P
 M I M T D T L X X N M T P S T C X C T A H
 Q M C E O E S F J A Q M E C J J M A

"D J S I M C L Z C D T H T D L O P."
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOU GAVE PESKY CRITTERS OUTFITS TO PUT ON, I RECKON YOU MIGHT CALL THEM VARMINTS' GARMENTS.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: N equals P

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

- Give the axe to
- Prompt
- Sur-rounded by
- Jamaican citrus
- Venomous viper
- Arp's style
- Handle roughly
- Long March leader
- Exile
- Threatening term
- Siestas
- Yogi Bear's home park
- Winter warmer
- Type squares
- Bagel topper
- Partner in crime
- More, to Manuel
- Father (Fr.)

DOWN

- Wrestling sort
- Culture medium
- Hint
- Party pooper
- Ship of the desert
- N.A. nation
- People things are named for
- Part of A.D.
- LummoX
- Swelled head
- "— Rhythm"
- Go angling
- Dog's case
- Wet expanse
- Foolish
- Minimum
- Standard
- Former partners
- Overly theatrical
- Hodge-podge
- Robert Graves subject
- Faux pas
- Triumph
- Take as one's own
- They're roomy and gloomy
- Picks out of a lineup
- Gram.
- Young Frankenstein" role
- Grandson of Eve
- "Portnoy's Complaint" author
- Sprite
- Miss Piggy's pronoun
- Palindromic title

Solution time: 25 mins.

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

Yesterday's answer 1-15

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12				13			14				
15				16			17				
18				19		20	21				
			22		23				24	25	
26	27	28			29				30		
31				32				33			
34				35				36			
37				38			39				
			40			41			42	43	44
45	46			47	48			49			
50				51				52			
53				54				55			