





Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker





Blondie • Chic Young







Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne







Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



Sally Forth • Greg Howard

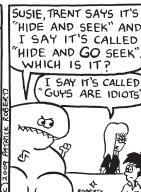




Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts







Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott













Dr. Joyce **Brothers**

Ask Dr. Brothers

Class clown says time to sober up

Dear Dr. Brothers: Since I was young, I've always been funny. I've been the class clown, the office cut-up, the person everyone would look to at a party for a joke or two. But lately, laughter is the last thing on my mind, as I've been going through some hard times. Every time I don't feel like being funny, my friends ask me what's wrong. I'm sick of having the pressure to always be the comedian. What should I do? – L.G.

Dear L.G.: It must be agonizing to feel like you always have to be the funny one, but you need to realize that the pressure is self-inflicted. No one really expects you to be "on" 24 hours a day. You're not disappointing your friends by not always cracking them up. You may be misinterpreting their concern when they ask you what's wrong; they might not be looking for a quick laugh, but rather insight into what's bugging you. Remember that friendship is a two-way street.

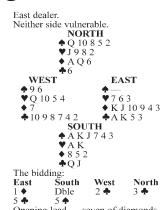
You seem to have cast yourself in the rigid role of perpetual comedian. It's possible that events in your childhood contributed to your behavior today. Too often, children of broken homes or alcoholic parents feel the need to avoid conflict and make things better by lightening up the situation with a joke. They may carry this perceived burden of being the merrymaker into adulthood, feeling the need and the responsibility to put everyone at ease. You need to start to realize that the problem is not with the expectations of your friends, but with what you expect from yourself. Give your friends a little more credit, and stop treating them as an audience. You'll be fine once you realize you don't always have to be a clown.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I hate going to the doctor. I get so nervous that my pulse races, turning me into a basket case. That might have been why my blood pressure was sky-high when the doc checked it. To make sure I really don't have high blood pressure, my doctor suggested I check it while not in his office. But this freaks me out too! I feel hopeless – am I doomed to never break this circle of anxiety? - C.F.

Dear C.F.: If there's one thing that anxiety craves more than anything else, it's more anxiety. When one troublesome thought is extinguished, a new one ignites immediately. It's like your worst nightmare has come to pass. The underlying reason why you get so nervous when you go to the doctor - you're afraid there's something really wrong with you - has now been confirmed. And not knowing if your anxiety made your blood pressure rise in the first place can be frustrating. You need to find an exit off the stress highway. There are worse things in the world than being

diagnosed with high blood pressure. Any doctor will tell you that with advances in medicine, a healthy diet and exercise, high blood pressure easily can be controlled. But first we have to aladvice and monitor your blood pressure away from his office. If the results are high, look at it as a lucky break that you caught it in time to treat.

Bridge • Steve Becker



Turning Defeat Into Victory

It is not uncommon for declarer to be playing in a contract where he appears to have bitten off more than he can chew. In many cases, declarer can do nothing to salvage such contracts, but there are some occasions where careful play can turn apparent defeat into victory.

Here is such a case. South is playing five spades, and West leads his singleton diamond. Declarer sees that his probable losers are two diamonds and a club, but he also notes that if either opponent was dealt three hearts to the queen, he can develop a trick by ruffing one of dummy's hearts and so make the contract.

Accordingly, he wins the opening lead with the ace of diamonds, cashes the A-K of spades and A-K of hearts, then enters dummy with a trump to lead the nine of hearts and ruff it.

The queen does not fall, but he is not yet completely out of ammunition. He still has another chance to make the contract, and it costs him nothing to try. So at this point he leads the jack of clubs.

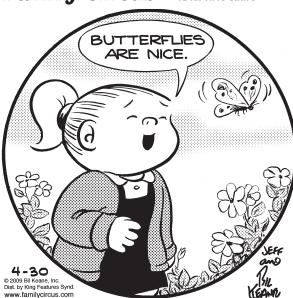
As the cards lie, East wins the club with the king and makes the best defensive play of continuing with the ace. Declarer ruffs in dummy and plays the jack of hearts, on which East shows South takes advantage of this favorable devel-

opment by discarding one of his diamond losers on the jack of hearts. Declarer can afford to make this play, since he has two diamond losers in any case, but, more importantly, it gives him the opportunity to make the contract if East started with six diamonds. Sure enough, West, upon winning the heart

with the queen, has no choice but to return a club. Declarer ruffs in dummy while discarding his remaining diamond, and the contract is home.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



"They don't bite or sting. They just flutter."

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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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

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Cryptoquip

Sudoku puzzle is at right.

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TEWNO, Q TNAPP Q'I JUVR U

OQAXA WM RZA MUXRQWV. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THIS ITALIAN RESTAURANT OFFERS EXTREMELY INEXPENSIVE low ourselves to be treated. Take your doctor's MEALS, YOU MIGHT EVEN GET PENNY PASTA,

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals I

(c) 2009 by King Features Syndicate **Crossword** • Eugene Sheffer

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fighter	48 Complete	kin	more
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34 Network Yesterday's answer 4-30

43 Traffic pylon 44 Eastern potentate 45 Pepper spray 46 Requests 49 Summertime mo. 50 Zero

attraction

23 Good

place to

