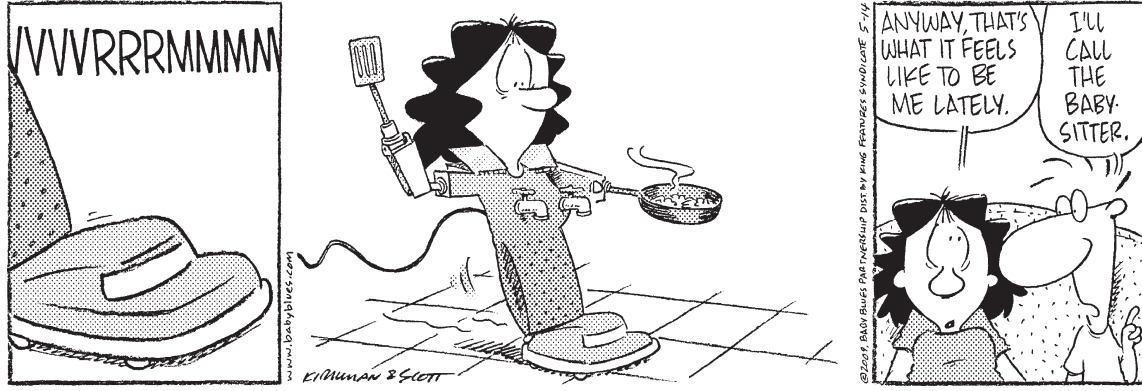
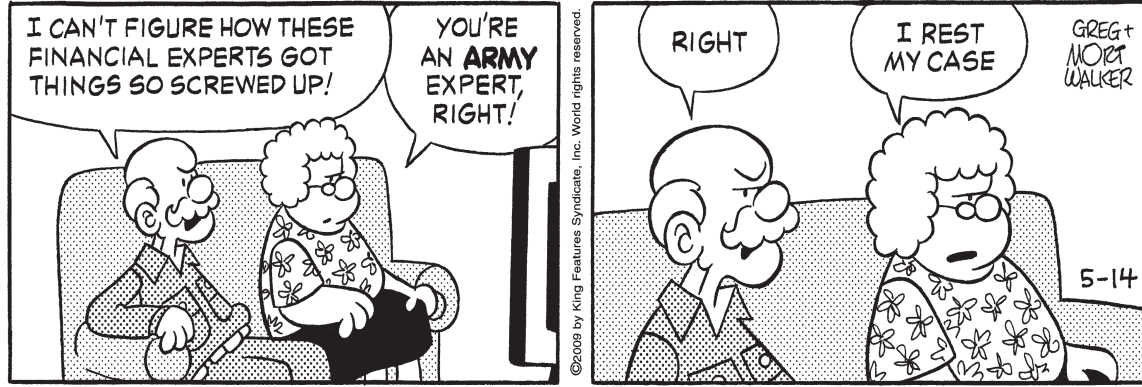


Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



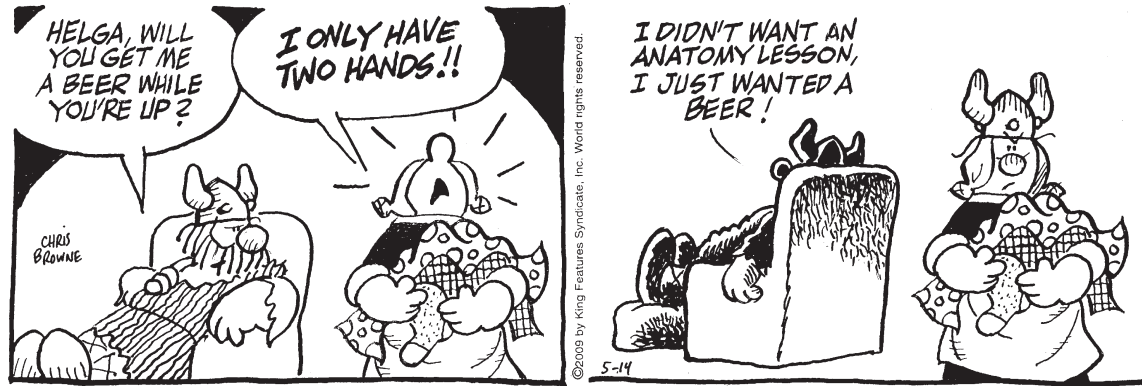
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Blondie • Chic Young



Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



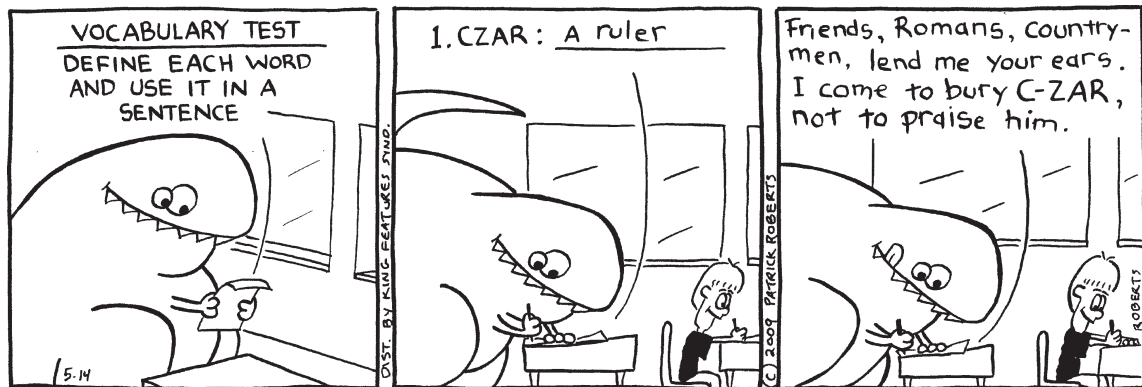
Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers

• Ask Dr. Brothers

Divorce changed brother's nature

Dear Dr. Brothers: Ever since my brother got divorced, he's been like a completely different person. First he bought an expensive home-entertainment system, complete with the latest video games. Then he signed up for every social-networking site he could find on the Internet, and now he's dating a girl who is 20 years younger! This is all coming from a man who used to be in bed by nine every night to escape his bad marriage. What's going on with him? — S.K.

Dear S.K.: Your brother's behavior may be surprising to you, but it's not all that unusual. After any breakup with a significant other, we have a tendency to reboot our personality. Getting out of an unhealthy relationship can be very liberating, and your brother probably is experiencing what it's like to have fun again.

But as long as he's still a responsible adult and is not letting his professional life go down the tubes, there's really no reason to be concerned. Your shock at his behavior probably stems from not seeing him this happy in a while. Instead of poo-pooing your brother's new girlfriend, go on a double date with them. Play some of those new video games with him; he'll probably be thrilled that you even asked. But in the end, his behavior most likely is a phase. Just as water finds its own level, your brother's antics will get less drastic in time. In the meantime, celebrate your brother's newfound freedom with him.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I've never really been a dog person, but now I've become one — but not by choice. My girlfriend found a stray dog at her job and thought it would be a good idea to take it home. Not her home, of course. She's already housing every creature known to man, so she decided to leave the pooch with me, explaining that a dog "would do me good." I don't want a dog, and I don't want our relationship to end because of this, either. Any advice? — R.C.

Dear R.C.: Your caring for the canine certainly is a conundrum. On one hand, you don't want your girlfriend to feel like she can walk all over you anytime she pleases, and on the other, you don't want this episode to be a relationship-ender. There are all kinds of ways you can proceed. But in the end, you may have to put aside the drama and consider the canine. In the middle of your situation is a poor homeless dog with nowhere to go. It's not a jacket or a CD that's causing such chaos, but a living, breathing animal.

You may want to make it very clear to your girlfriend that in the future you would like to be consulted in such important matters as caring for a pet. She might think she's doing you a favor, and may assume, since she keeps so many pets, that taking care of an animal is second nature to you. But some people just aren't cut out for the responsibility of pet ownership. Be honest with yourself. If you have no time to care for the dog — if you'd rather leave it outside, chained to a post all day than spend time walking it — then having a pet is not for you. But give it a shot first. You don't know what joy a pet can bring until you've had one.

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Bridge • Steve Becker

West dealer, North-South vulnerable.
NORTH
 ♠ 10 7 5
 ♥ 7 6
 ♦ Q J 10 8 5
 ♣ 9 3 2

WEST
 ♠ 16 3
 ♥ 11 10 3
 ♦ A K 7 6 4 3 2
 ♣ —

EAST
 ♠ 9 8 4 2
 ♥ 5 4
 ♦ 9
 ♣ K Q J 10 8 7

SOUTH
 ♠ A K Q
 ♥ A K Q 9 8 2
 ♦ —
 ♣ A 6 5 4

The bidding:
 West North East South
 4♦ Pass 4♥ 4♠
 Pass Pass 5♠ 5♥
 Opening lead — king of diamonds.

The Making of a Miracle

It didn't take long for declarer to see the contract was pretty hopeless. Given the bidding, East obviously had all six clubs, and he would just sit there and wait for his three club tricks. South regretted his failure to double five clubs, which would have gone down at least four tricks.

Upon further thought, though, South realized there was a real possibility of making the contract, and since any other line of play was utterly hopeless, it was worth trying.

So he ruffed the diamond lead, being careful to trump with the eight. He then played the A-K of hearts, noting that both defenders followed suit. Next, he cashed the A-K-Q of spades, and when everyone again followed suit, it looked as though the miracle would actually take place.

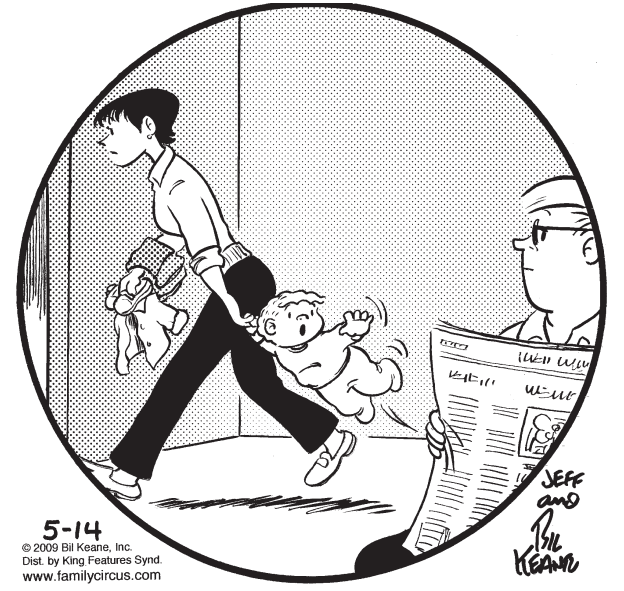
Declarer now made his bid for fame and fortune. He led the deuce of hearts, and West, whose hand had been shorn of everything but diamonds and the heart jack, had to win the trick. If he next led the ace of diamonds, declarer would discard a club, and would then discard two more clubs on West's forced return of another diamond to dummy's Q-J-10.

West tried to extricate himself from his hopeless position by leading a low diamond. Dummy won the trick as declarer discarded a club, but South returned a diamond and discarded another club. West won but again had to lead a diamond, and the contract was home.

Why did South trump the opening diamond lead with the eight? Because he needed the deuce to be sure West could be forced into the lead. Otherwise, West might have dropped the J-10 of trumps under the A-K to avoid being endplayed.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



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Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★ 5/14 ©2009 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

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.

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

Cryptoquip

VLHFK YFKLBKRJMO PBRF
 TJHVG HFPHP BM V KFKJFTFK,
 HDF TFH CFOVM HB

YKfyvkf DJP GVC KfyBKH.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A COUPLE OF UNION PICKETERS LOOK ALIKE, YOU MIGHT SAY THEY BEAR A STRIKING RESEMBLANCE.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: T equals V

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| ACROSS | 36 — | DOWN | 22 Winged |
| 1 Feathery neckpiece | 37 Battle | 1 Sheepish remark? | 23 Actress McClanahan |
| 4 Weevil invader | 39 Afternoon affair | 2 Hooter | 27 Trawler prop |
| 8 Diplomacy | 41 Fleur-de- — | 3 Sexy athlete | 29 Making a claim |
| 12 Puncturing tool | 42 Succumb to gravity | 5 — -Wan | 30 Gen-darme |
| 13 Reed instrument | 44 Thing | 6 Pro-tracted | 31 Bridge position |
| 14 Petri-dish matter | 46 Baton wielder | 7 Constitutional | 33 Fabric inserts |
| 15 Giving permission | 50 Journal | 8 Hunter's cry | 35 Author Buscaglia |
| 17 Entice | 51 Pinnacle | 9 Chills and fever | 38 Pack away |
| 18 Online address | 52 Soothing | 10 Singer Vikki | 40 Burning |
| 19 Exhibition setting | 56 Fit of peevishness | 11 Deuce beater | 43 Alumni |
| 21 Sweeney Todd, e.g. | 57 Voice of Fionia in "Shrek" | 16 Scepter topper | 45 Cohort of Whoopi and Sherri |
| 24 Deposit | 58 Teachers' org. | 20 Fond du —, Wisc. | 46 Hawk-eye's sitcom |
| 25 With 21-Down, "Arabian Nights" hero | 59 Towel marking | 21 See 25-Across | 47 Dermatology subject |
| 26 Scoot | 60 A handful | | 48 Ottoman potentate |
| 28 Rub the wrong way | 61 Sailor | | 49 Hodge-podge |
| 32 Exclamation point | | | 53 Hasty escape |
| 34 Conger or moray | | | 54 Ultra-modern |
| | | | 55 Tie up the phone |

Yesterday's answer 5-14

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14		
15								17		
		18				19		20		
21	22				23			24		
25				26		27		28	29	30
32		33			34		35		36	
37				38		39		40		41
				42		43		44		45
46	47	48				49		50		
51						52		53		54
56						57				58
59						60				61