Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker







Blondie • Chic Young







Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne





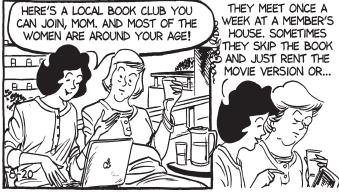
Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters







Sally Forth • Greg Howard





Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts

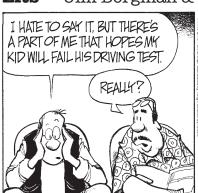




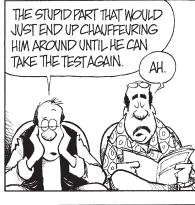




Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott









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Ask Dr. Brothers

New stepsister gets all attention

Dear Dr. Brothers: I am in one of those families that someone has named "blended," but I call it mashed together. There is no way I would ever choose to live with these people if my mom hadn't married this guy. He's OK, pretty much looks through me, but what makes me mad is this new so-called sister of mine (evil stepsister), my mom is gushing over and making me be "nice" to. We are both in middle school. Do you think I can get away with ignoring her in school? – C.C.

Dear C.C.: I'm sorry you are having to adjust to a brand-new "sibling" whom you don't like and don't want to hang out with. It is too bad your mom hasn't taken the time to let you get to know each other on your own terms, instead of saying you must be friends. But you may be exaggerating her desires. Maybe she actually does just want you to be nice, especially if your instinct is to be mean – is she really gushing, or are you just being dramatic? A little bit of kindness actually might go a long way toward your relationship – she is likely to return it, and your stepfather may feel less like looking right through you as well. While you don't seem to care right now, it would not be a bad thing if the two of you could have a cordial relationship instead of an invisible one.

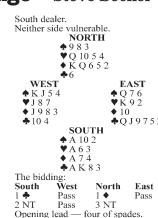
So, can you be "nice" at home and ignore this girl at school? I suppose so, but that probably would end up taking more effort than you wish to put into it. Why not at least think about letting your relationship develop naturally? No one can blame you for these emotions ... but they will admire you if you get them under control and face your new family with maturity. Think it over.

Dear Dr. Brothers: When I was a kid, I had two sets of aunts and uncles. I didn't know who was my "blood" and who wasn't, as they were all aunts and uncles and we were one big, happy family. It wasn't till I was in college that I even realized that one half of each of these couples was my relative by marriage. But today, everything is different. My sister has a child, but my husband refers to him as "your" nephew and makes it clear he isn't "really" related. He has no nephews of his own. How can I change his attitude? – S.J.

Dear S.J.: Just as you remember how you M were treated, your husband may have very different memories. I wonder if you have talked over his experiences. Chances are his relatives were uninvolved, or there was a very clear case of who was whose sister or brother. He may have been treated differently by the related aunt or uncle. So in his worldview, only the blood-related relative KFDT HU WEA YFECXW, YDA was family. If this is the case, you are up against a tradition that you want him to now drop.

Back off a bit. Your husband might take to being an uncle if you let him do it his own way. The goal, after all, is to have a family in which everyone enjoys one another. Don't push your husband on your nephew, but let him know how much you appreciate his involvement even though he had a different experience. When the child starts calling him "uncle," he may develop a new attitude! (c) 2009 by King Features Syndicate

Bridge • Steve Becker



Declarer Takes the Bait

A defender should try to make life as difficult as possible for declarer by masking the location of key honor cards. This can be done in a variety of ways, but the goal is always the same: to present declarer with more than one option in the hope that he will choose the wrong one.

Today's deal from a team event provides a case in point. West led a spade against three notrump, declarer taking his ace on the third round. Nine tricks were assured if the diamonds were divided 28 3-2, so South cashed the A-K. This revealed the 4-1 break, leaving him with only seven winners.

There was no point in continuing diamonds, since the defenders would then be certain to score five tricks (three spades, a diamond and a heart) before declarer could score nine. South therefore 33 turned his attention to the heart suit, cashing the ace and then leading a low heart to the ten (he would have done better to lead a low heart to the ten first). Instead of taking the king, however, which would have given declarer an easy nine tricks, East followed smoothly with the nine!

This left declarer in a quandary. If East actually had the king, the winning play was to continue with a low heart from dummy.

But if West had the K-J remaining, the contract could be made only by crossing to the ace of clubs and cashing the king before leading another heart toward dummy. West could take the king and cash a spade, but since he would have no clubs at that point (presumably having started with four spades, four hearts and four diamonds), he would next have to lead a heart or a diamond to dummy, giving South the contract. Declarer thought long and hard, and finally

chose the latter approach. But when he played the A-K of clubs and led a heart, East produced the king and cashed three good clubs to score a well-deserved two-trick set.

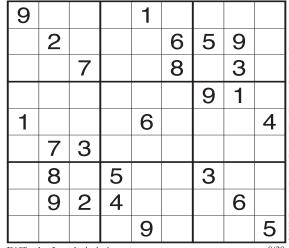
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Family Circus • Bil Keane



"Where can I buy a postcard? Grandma said to be sure to send her one.'

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green



Difficulty Level ★★★

This is a logic-based num- 986514273 ber 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.

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Cryptoquip

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Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals T

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1 Parker

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20 Just

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22 Verify

23 Do as

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24 Officer

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

36 Wall

37 What

38 Oblit-

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28-Across

ACROSS

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9 To the —

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