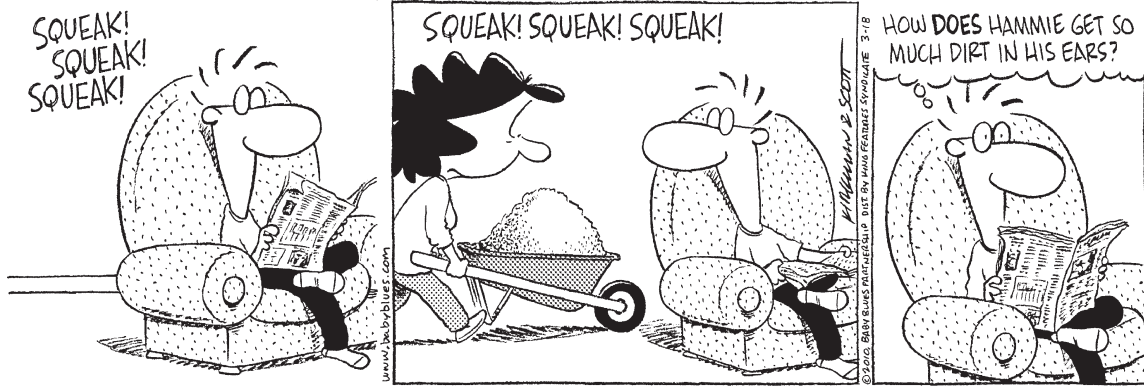
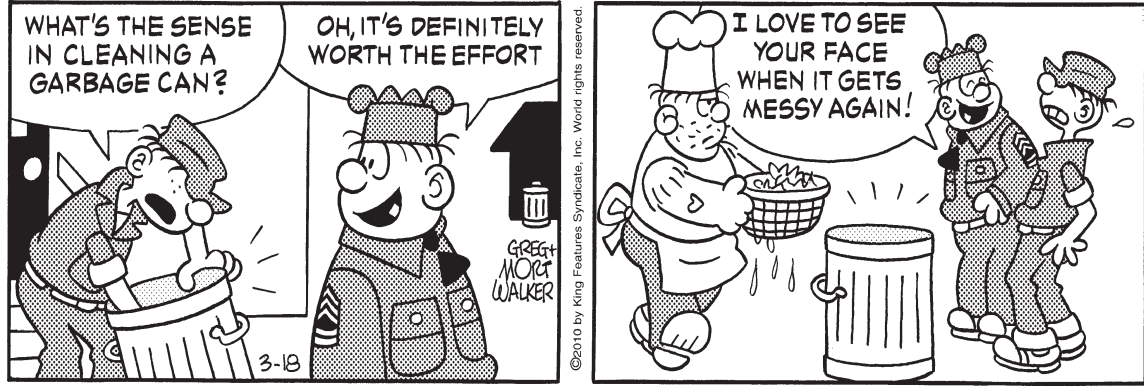


Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Blondie • Chic Young



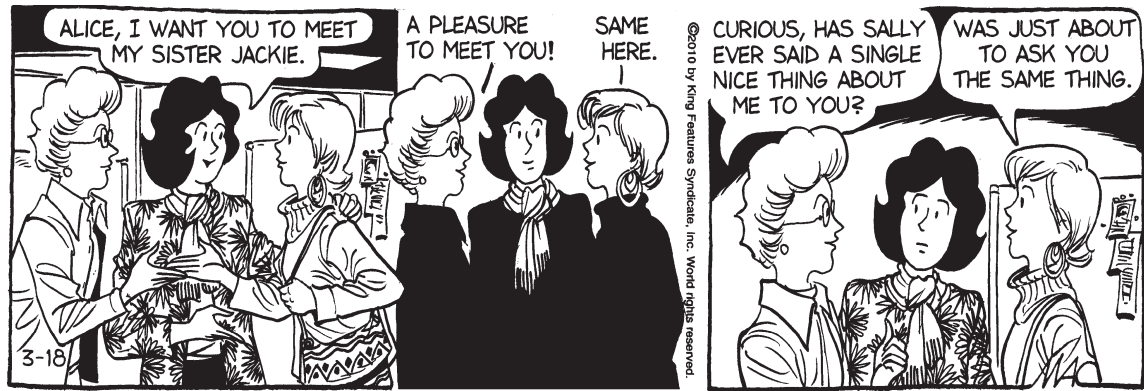
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



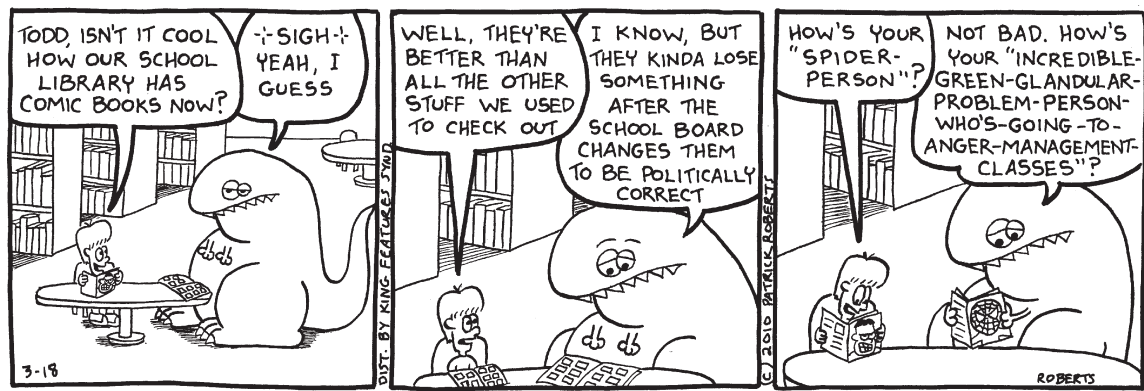
Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers

• Ask Dr. Brothers

Is she an excuse for neighbor?

Dear Dr. Brothers: I know a good relationship with your neighbor is priceless, but I feel like I'm just an excuse for the woman who lives next door to get out of her house. I think it's not so much that she enjoys my company as that she wants to get away from her husband. She's always inviting herself over, and it's driving me crazy. What are my options for dealing with this mess? - F.R.

Dear F.R.: I feel for you, because I know you must feel trapped by circumstances. There she is, right next door, and there is nothing you can do to get away. In this case, setting boundaries takes on a whole new meaning - did you ever hear the expression "good fences make good neighbors"? Well, I hope you don't have to resort to putting up a fence or a row of trees to act as a barrier between you and the assault from next door. That would be rude - so save it as a last-ditch option, one that might be ignored anyway, if this woman is as insensitive as she appears to be.

The solution lies in your availability. Emotional boundaries are going to be more useful than the last-ditch fence. You must indicate that your time is precious and that you don't have enough of it to share with her. You can do this by being unavailable when she comes. Be in the basement doing the laundry, and don't hear the doorbell. If she persists, gently tell her you are busy and will see her soon. Then you can take the steering wheel when it comes to how much access she has. If none of this works, you'll need to tell her you can't help her with her personal problems.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I was the last holdout among my friends to do it. This week, I finally joined Facebook, and was amazed. How one can simply link up with all these faces from the past simply astounds me. Here's the problem. An ex-girlfriend contacted me and wants to get together. I'm happily married - which she knows - and I don't want to upset my wife by telling her I might meet her. What should I do? - B.R.

Dear B.R.: The problem you are presented with by joining a social network is one that is being repeated endless times across the country. Anyone past high-school age who has a past of any sort is finding it impossible to hide from old memories - and those who want to rekindle them! Many people mean what they say - they would meet once and go on with their lives. Is your old girlfriend married, too? If so, you might ask her how she handled the potential visit on her end of the computer. Which brings me to the crux of the matter.

Since you have just joined Facebook and have a past, it would seem pretty foolish to make a decision without considering the overall picture. Surely this could happen again. You need to sit down with your wife and discuss all the "what ifs" that could come up. And if she is on the site too, discuss how she is going to handle blasts from her past. Obviously there will be special circumstances, but you should come to an agreement about how you want to cope with old friends. That will give you a guideline to deal with this one, as well as future requests. Setting boundaries now makes a lot of sense.

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Bridge • Steve Becker

South dealer. North-South vulnerable.
NORTH
♦ Q 9 3
♥ K Q 7
♣ Q 10 6
♦ 9 8 5

WEST EAST
♦ A 6 5 4 ♦ 7
♥ 9 5 ♥ 10 8 6 4 3 2
♦ 9 2 ♦ 8 5 4
♣ A K J 10 3 ♣ Q 7 2

The bidding:
South West North East
1♣ 2♣ 2♦ 3♦
3♦ 4♦ 4♠ 4♠
Opening lead - King of clubs.

The Battle for Trump Control
One of the great advantages of playing in a suit contract, rather than notrump, is that the trump suit neutralizes at least some of the tricks the defenders would otherwise be able to take with their high cards or long suits.

However, this advantage does not protect a declarer in every case. If the defenders persist in attacking with their long suit, they might eventually run declarer out of trumps and then be able to score whatever tricks they have left in their main suit.

Here is a case where the defenders can prevail in that manner, provided they play carefully. West leads three rounds of clubs, forcing declarer to ruff.

Superficially, it seems that South is now on solid ground, since he has four sure trump tricks, three heart tricks and four diamond tricks. Nevertheless, the contract will fail if West defends correctly.

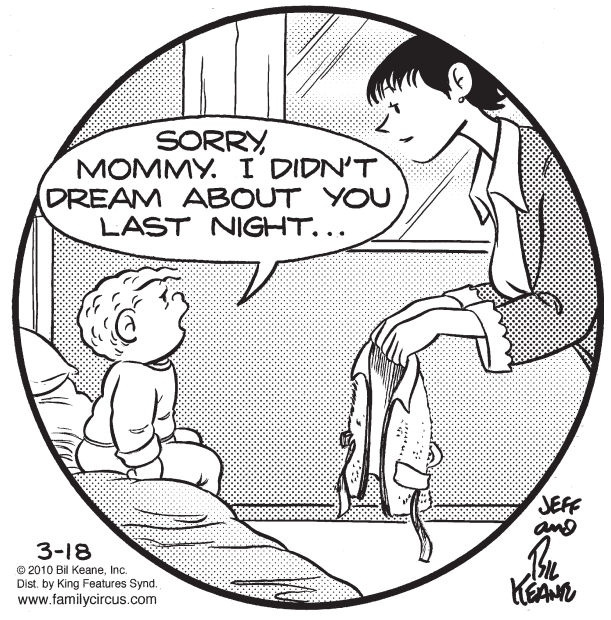
At trick four, declarer leads the king of trumps. If West takes the king with the ace, South easily wins the rest of the tricks. But if West ducks the king of trumps, leaving himself with the A-6-5 while South still has the J-10-8, West retains control of the trump suit.

When South continues with the jack, West ducks again, thus sealing declarer's fate. South cannot afford to lead another trump, because West would win with the ace and return a club to force out declarer's last trump and so defeat the contract two tricks.

The best South can do, after West ducks the first two trumps, is to cash as many tricks as he can in diamonds and hearts. Sooner or later, West ruffs one of them with the six of trumps, and the contract goes down one.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



"...but I promise I will tonight."

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

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.

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

Cryptoquip

X O X L X T K P M A G M B K
D A G H M B X Y K J H X V G M Q Z A P X Q L
S O M I B K I D R K T P B M J K N , S I K

HRMGK ZNSYKI VMXQHKIG?
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: AT THE HORSES' NECK HAIR GROOMING CONTEST, WE HEARD SOMEBODY REMARK "MAY THE BEST MANE WIN."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: M equals O

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN | ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 Donkey | 1 Tummy | 4 Attorney General | 11 Sea bird |
| 4 Difficult | 2 Muscles | 5 Eric | 16 Main-lander's memento |
| 8 Clenched hand | 3 Pouch | 5 Foreman foe | 20 - de deux |
| 12 Cudgel | 3 Mare's mate | 6 Laugh-a-minute | 25 Here (French) |
| 13 Hodge-podge | | 7 Recipient's benefactor | 26 Aries |
| 14 Formerly | | 8 Network of predatory relationships | 28 Family branches |
| 15 Green onion | | 9 -European | 32 Fax cover-page word |
| 17 Stench | | 10 Garbage barge | 36 Cry loudly |
| 18 Began | | 11 Sea bird | 37 Melodies |
| 19 Starting at the highest level | | 12 Sum-moned on a beeper | 39 Grumpy companion? |
| 21 Diversion | | 13 Lubricant | 41 By way of |
| 24 Uncooked | | 14 Competent | 42 Hiatus |
| 25 Here | | 15 Position- ed | |
| 26 Aries | | 16 Marceau, e.g. | |
| 28 Family branches | | 17 Guitar attachment | |
| 32 Fax cover-page word | | 18 Ultra-modern (Prefix) | |
| | | 19 Acapulco gold | |
| | | 20 Fresh | |

Solution time: 25 mins.

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

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
32			33		34		35		36	
37			38		39		40		41	
		42		43		44		45		
46	47	48			49		50			
51				52		53			54	55
56				57				58		
59				60				61		