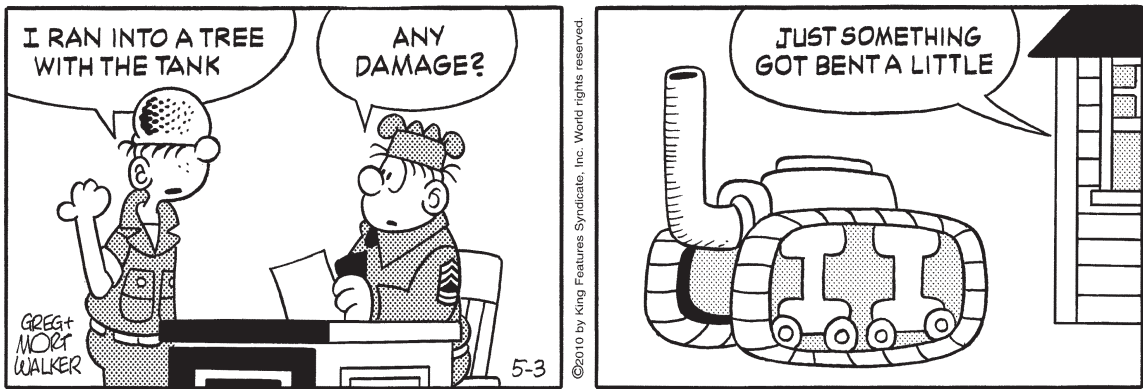


**Baby Blues** • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



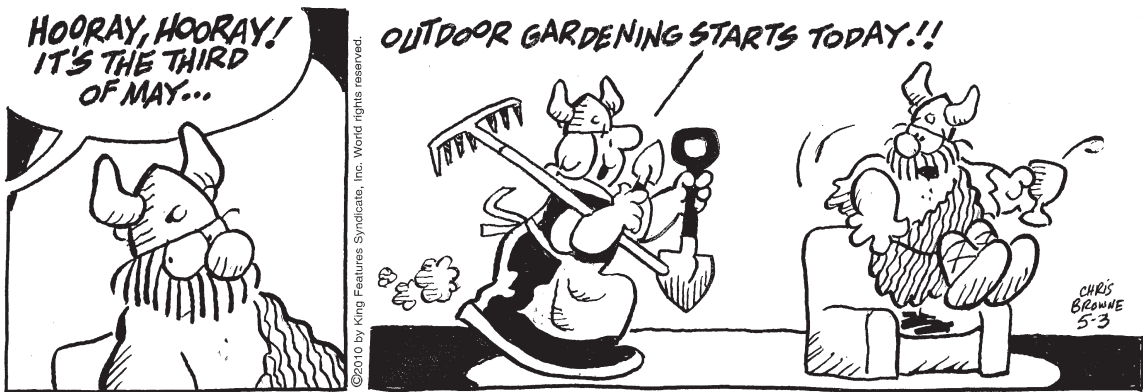
**Beetle Bailey** • Mort Walker



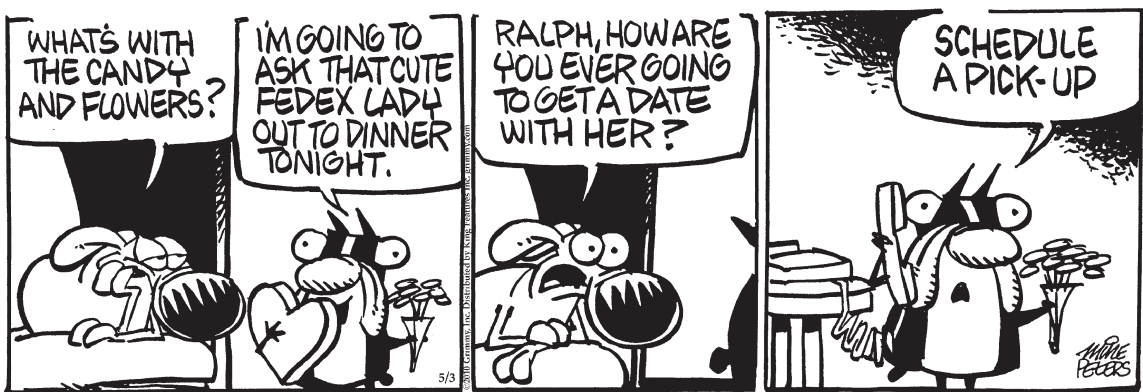
**Blondie** • Chic Young



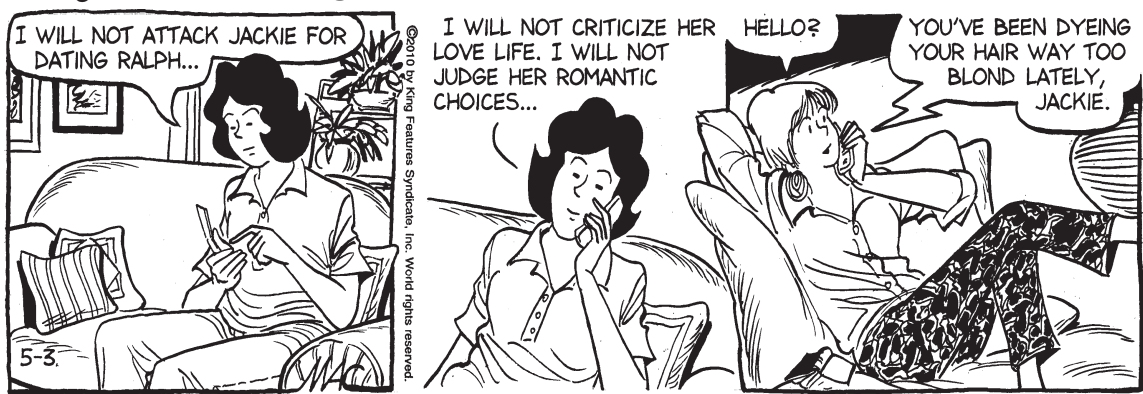
**Hagar the Horrible** • Chris Browne



**Mother Goose and Grimm** • Mike Peters



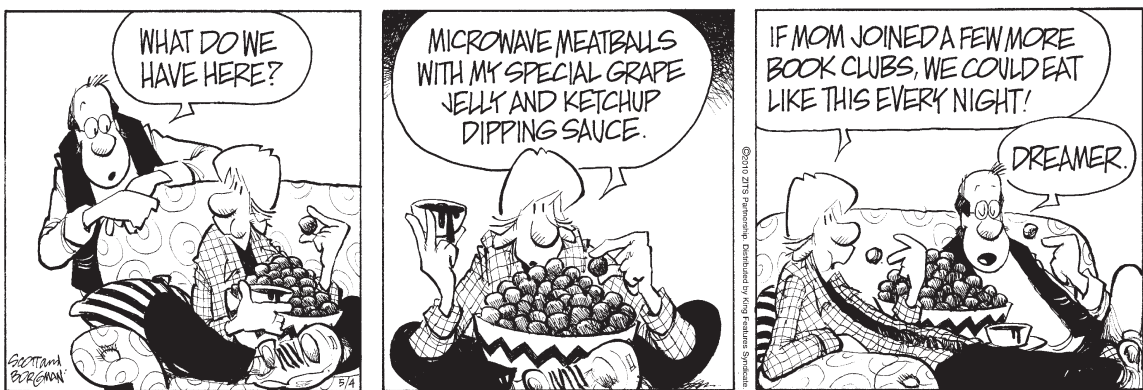
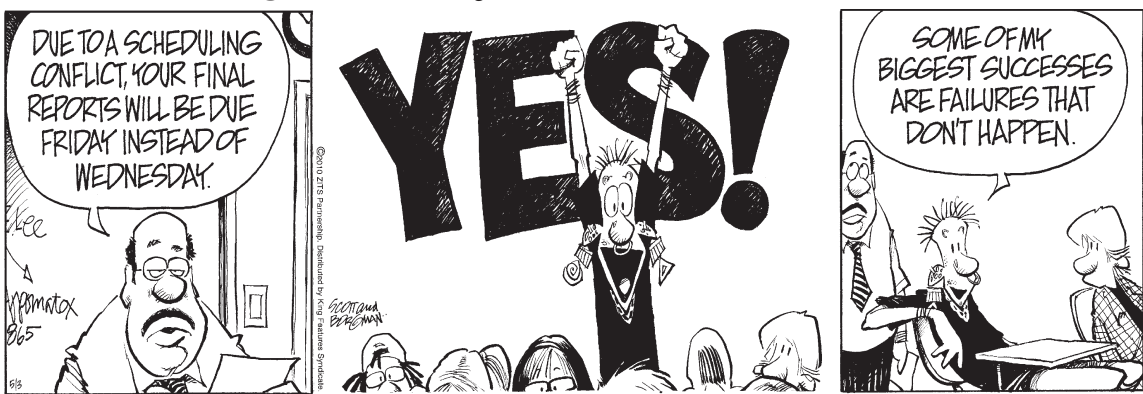
**Sally Forth** • Greg Howard



**Todd the Dinosaur** • Patrick Roberts



**Zits** • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



**Dr. Joyce Brothers**  
• Ask Dr. Brothers

**Work friends won't back off**

**Dear Dr. Brothers:** I am a new employee in a manufacturing plant with a group of older women who have been here for decades. They have taken me under their wing, which was nice as I learned the ropes, but they are becoming a nuisance. I understand the job and its requirements, and don't need their help anymore. How do I get out from under them without making enemies? I'd like to get to know the supervisors. — W.G.

**Dear W.G.:** There are a couple of possibilities, and without knowing what is driving this group, I will have to toss a few of them at the wall, and you can decide if any stick. The first is that these are just motherly types and you remind them of their children — or grandkids. If you are shy, or quiet, you may have activated their maternal instincts. Or, they might be control freaks who want to make sure you fit in by supervising your every move until you become a kind of robot they can control. That's a scary one, huh?

More possibilities are that these women are bored and looking for projects or are busybodies who like to stick their nose into other people's business. Or they might be diligent employees who want to keep up productivity and don't want a new person messing up. Or it could be something else. Figure out what's driving them, and move away from their sphere of influence as best you can. The best idea might be to hope someone else takes your place as the new employee and the ladies back off from their surveillance of you.

**Dear Dr. Brothers:** As long as I can remember, I have enjoyed storing things for later use. I try to be neat with and storage areas. However, I am running out of room. And lately, visitors have remarked on how "cluttered" and "full of stuff" my house is. They have mentioned "hoarding," which I don't think applies at all. How do I tell them I'm not some kind of nut? — T.R.

**Dear T.R.:** You don't sound like a nut to me ... after all, who doesn't keep things they might need? You never know, right? And trying to be neat doesn't sound nutty either — unless it is compulsive. So, though you sound reasonable, it's important to be honest with yourself. I don't know what you consider things you need to save. But if they include old newspapers, gum wrappers, broken plates — things people generally consider "garbage" — that's a whole other kettle of fish. Also, if you are running out of room, there is another cause for alarms. It's not very difficult for "stuff" to take over. So, you have objective thinking to do, and if you don't feel you can do it alone, there is lots of help available. It sounds as though you can start with friends who care about you — they aren't calling you a "nut," but I bet they'd like to help you get back on the right track. You may benefit from counseling and medication. But if you are just an overzealous collector, donate some stuff to charity, hold a garage sale and carry on!

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**Bridge** • Steve Becker

South dealer. Both sides vulnerable.

**NORTH**  
♠ A J 10 8 4  
♥ Q 3  
♦ 8 5  
♣ A K 6 3

**WEST**  
♠ 9 5 6 2  
♥ A 10 7 4  
♦ J 10 2

**EAST**  
♠ 7 3  
♥ 9 5  
♦ Q J 9 3 2  
♣ 9 8 5 4

**SOUTH**  
♠ K Q 6 2  
♥ A K J 7 4  
♦ K 6  
♣ Q 7

The bidding:  
South West North East  
1♥ Pass 1♠ Pass  
3♠ Pass 4♥ Pass  
4♠ Pass 5♥ Pass  
5NT Pass 6NT Pass  
Opening lead — ace of diamonds.

**Famous Hand**

The biggest swings in bridge usually involve slam hands. Good slam bidding is a skill well worth cultivating, since the failure to bid a makable slam results in the loss of a slam bonus, while bidding a slam that fails results in the loss of a game.

Today's deal features an unusually good bidding sequence that enabled North-South to arrive at an unbeatable six-notrump contract. The deal was played in a team-of-four championship many years ago. North was John Moran, and South was Milton Q. Ellenby.

It is easy to see that if a six-spade contract is undertaken with North as declarer, rapid defeat follows. East's natural opening lead of the queen of diamonds produces two immediate tricks for the defense.

It seems perfectly normal for North-South to arrive at six spades, especially since they have 13 tricks in the form of five spades, five hearts and three clubs without a diamond lead. However, with East on lead and West in possession of the ace of diamonds, the slam unfortunately fails. In fact, it did fail when the deal was played at the other table.

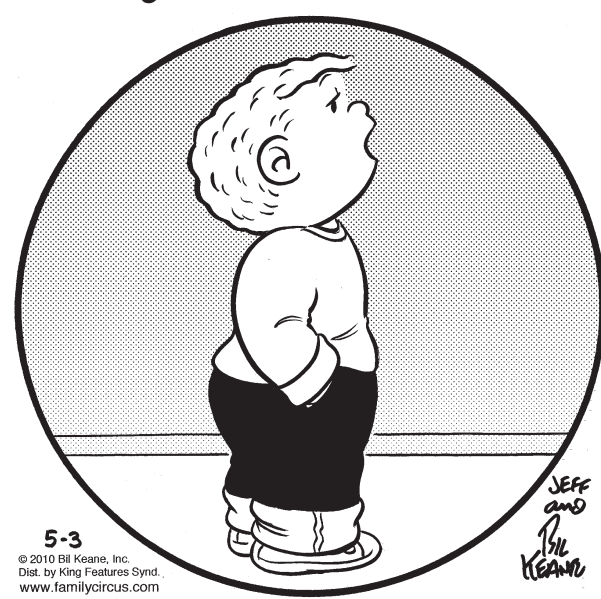
At the point when Moran made his highly unusual five-heart bid -- holding only the Q-3 -- he was concerned that there might be two quick diamond losers if he became declarer. To guard against this possibility, he offered his partner a chance to play the hand alternatively at either hearts or notrump.

Ellenby, attuned to his partner's fears, then came through with the winning five-notrump bid, which Moran happily raised to six. As a result, South became declarer, and from his seat the slam was impregnable.

Making six notrump was worth 1,440 points, which, added to the 100 points gained at the other table, yielded a pickup of 1,540 points on the deal.

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**Family Circus** • Bil Keane



"How many one-of-a-kinds are there?"

**Conceptis Sudoku** • Dave Green

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 |   | 6 | 9 |   | 7 |
|   | 3 |   |   | 6 |   |
|   | 7 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 2 |
| 6 |   | 8 | 5 | 4 |   |
|   | 1 |   |   | 9 |   |
| 7 |   | 1 | 9 | 3 |   |
|   | 1 | 5 | 4 |   | 3 |
|   | 8 |   |   | 2 | 7 |
| 9 |   | 2 | 6 |   | 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.

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

**Cryptoquip**

MKKQ ZMKTR Z OFNEK  
NFYAGPGPX KP Z ETPPS OKKA  
VFYQ ZLRFN XKGPX LKN  
VGO: "ZE G AZS VNSGPX."

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: DO YOU SUPPOSE YOU WOULD FIND A LOT OF GHOSTS OUT WANDERING AROUND DURING HAUNTING SEASON?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals O

**Crossword** • Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**  
1 Lily variety  
5 "—"  
8 Congressional party chief  
12 Tale teller  
13 "— -hoo!"  
14 Re planes and such  
15 Desertlike  
16 Lawyer, perhaps  
18 Superficial layer  
20 Melodic  
21 Rat—  
23 Columnist  
24 Lets the air out  
28 Fish's breather  
31 Neighbor of Can. and Mex.  
32 Native soldier of old India  
34 Watery expanse  
35 Grand story

**DOWN**  
17 Historic time  
19 Greek H's  
22 Reservation residence  
24 Payable  
25 Kreskin's claim  
26 Loyal  
27 Merchant's non-aggressive play  
29 CSA  
30 Young fellow  
33 "Okay"  
36 Red shade  
38 Claim  
40 Has the skills  
42 Mideast gulf  
43 Half (Pref.)  
44 Mouth-wash flavor  
46 Elliptical  
47 Upper-case  
48 Elbow counter-part  
50 Cravat

**37** Triumphed over  
**39** Sleuth, for short  
**41** And others (Lat.)  
**42** Guru's retreat  
**45** Low-quality stuff  
**49** Unquestionable  
**51** "—"  
**52** Ostriches' kin  
**53** Zero  
**54** Stare open-mouthed  
**55** Cleopatra's river

**1** Balkan dweller  
**2** Green land  
**3** Profit  
**4** Major trial  
**5** Added water  
**6** One of the Stooges  
**7** Couch  
**8** In decline  
**9** Pleasure seeker  
**10** Angers  
**11** Perspiration outlet

**Solution time: 27 mins.**

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | P | A | S | P | A | R | M | O | A | T |
| A | R | M | H | U | G | E | A | N | T | I |
| C | O | M | P | O | S | E | D | E | E | P |
| S | P | O | O | F | S | U | M | A |   |   |
| C | R | I | E | R | F | E | W | L | I | U |
| H | I | T | S | S | A | D | B | E | E | R |
| T | I | C | E | F | I | X | T | O | A | S |
| C | O | M | P | E | L | C | A | N |   |   |
|   | L | E | I | A | R | E | T | E | S |   |
| B | R | I | O | C | O | M | P | R | I | S |
| B | A | R | T | O | R | E | O | E | S | P |
| C | H | E | Z | N | E | O | N | D | O | T |

|    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| 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 |    |    |    |    |   | 56 |    | 57 |    |    |