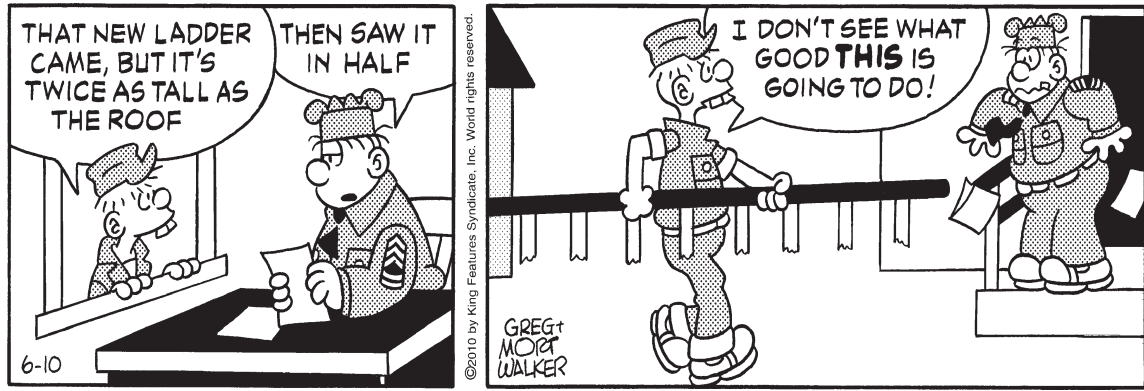


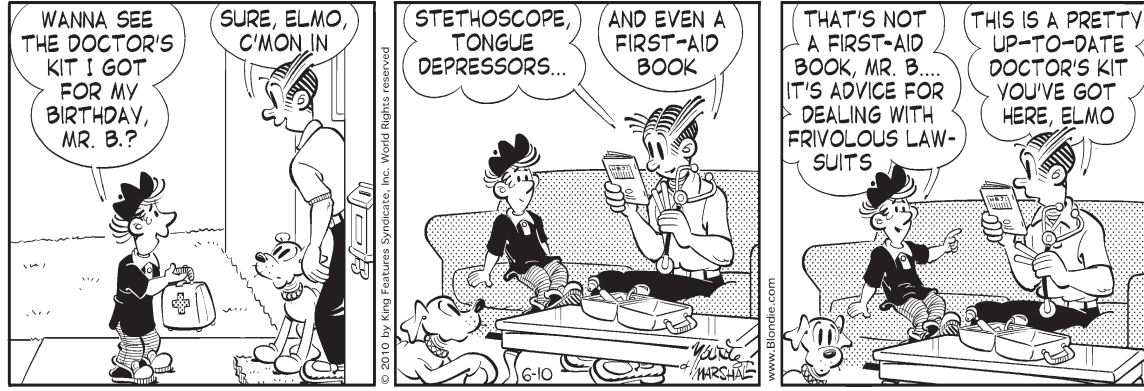
Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



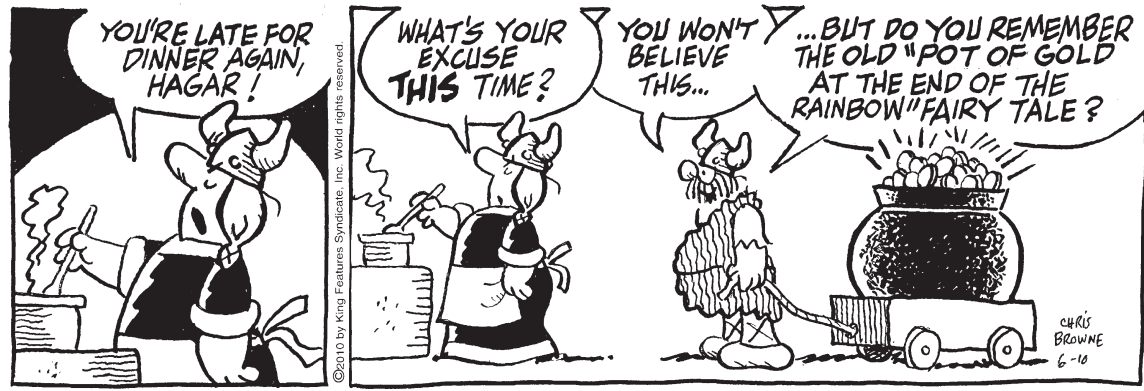
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



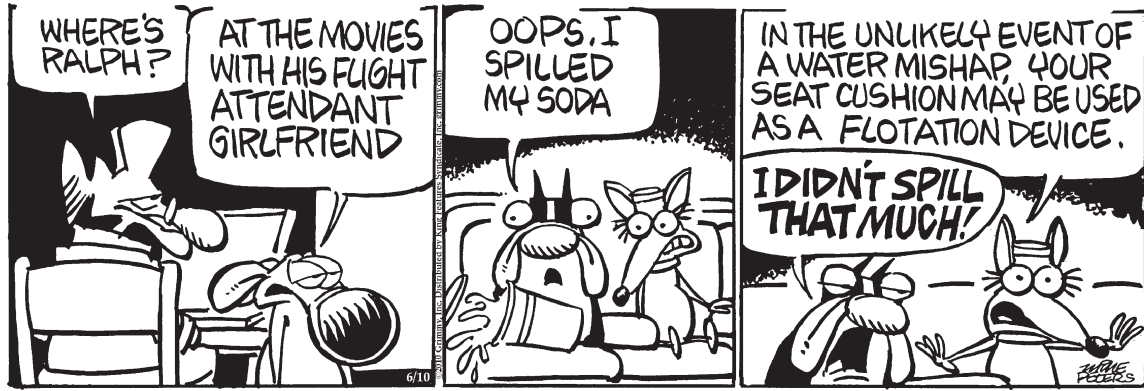
Blondie • Chic Young



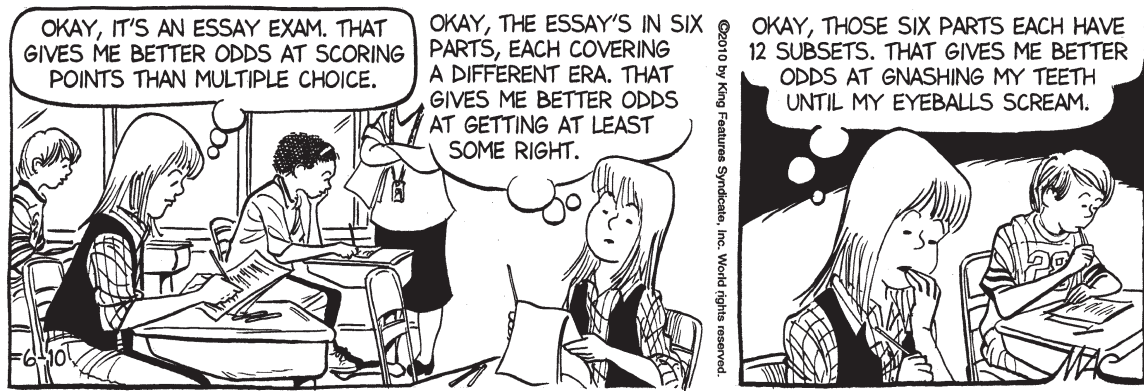
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



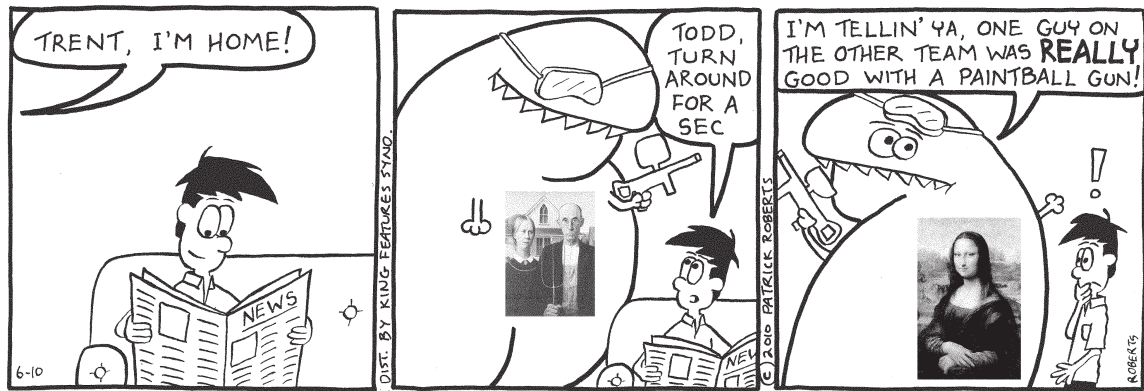
Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



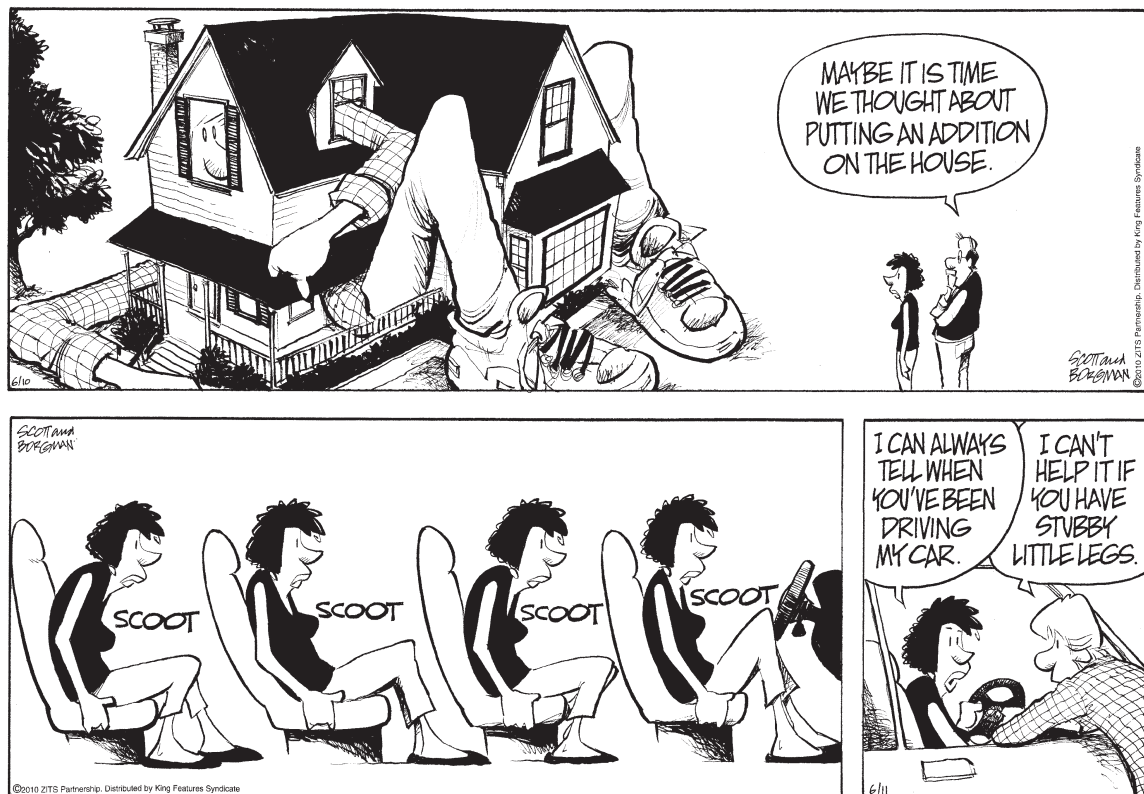
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers

• Ask Dr. Brothers

Big sister steals from little sister

Dear Dr. Brothers: I have two girls, 9 and 13. They always have been well-behaved, loving sisters. Lately I have had complaints from the little one about stuff missing from her room, and the older one has hidden the things. These are little items like stuffed animals, glitter and stickers. When I ask why she took them, she shrugs, or says: "I don't know. Sorry." She always has been a great sister. What do you make of this? - P.S.

Dear P.S.: It is always puzzling and disappointing to a parent when a formerly well-behaved child suddenly falls off the deep end. You think you've done your parenting job well, and she is turning out to be a fine, trouble-free young lady, when BAM! Something like this hits you. So now you have to calmly get to the bottom of it. Stealing is interesting, because while it is a common phase, it can signal deeper issues. Luckily when it is in the family, you don't have a store detective and public trauma to deal with. But you may have some serious issues nonetheless. It may be a good idea to make sure your daughter isn't coping with jealousy or other problems that are making her act out. Think of this as a wake-up call.

If your household is typical, your younger daughter has enjoyed being the "baby" and may be somewhat spoiled. The "good" older sister has always done what's right as the big sister. There's pressure in this. She sees her stuff handed down, but never gets anything in return. Maybe if she takes things and hides them, it makes her feel better. Talk to your daughter and find out what is bothering her. You might find it helpful to team up with a mental-health professional.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I see my daughter trying to raise my grandson and granddaughter without gender bias, an admirable idea whose time has come and gone. She is determined to make them into confused little gender-neutral beings! I joke about it, but wonder if this might be detrimental to their development. How far should she go to make sure she doesn't stereotype them? - F.J.

Dear F.J.: Each generation has to make its own mistakes in parenting and social issues. The frustrating thing is you already have observed the gender-neutral sideshow, and are not interested in reruns - especially involving your grandchildren. If only there were some way to pass along your experience, without your daughter feeling insulted. You have to decide whether her experiment is harmful, or could be broadening - which is what the movement was all about in the first place.

Your daughter will notice at some point that her attempts to get her son to play with dolls or her daughter to play with trucks might not be a roaring success. We have learned it's OK to be a girl or a boy, with distinct and separate natures and interests. Your daughter can learn there are opportunities for both sexes in nontraditional roles. No one blinks at a male nurse or a female pilot today, so maybe it isn't necessary to dress boys in pink or send girls to play in the mud. Don't worry, the kids will be fine.

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Bridge • Steve Becker

North dealer. Both sides vulnerable.

NORTH
 ♠ A Q J 5 2
 ♥ A 8 7 3
 ♦ Q 9
 ♣ 6 4

WEST
 ♠ 10 7 6 4
 ♥ J 4
 ♦ K 5
 ♣ Q 10 8 5 2

EAST
 ♠ K 9
 ♥ Q 10 9 2
 ♦ 7 6 3 2
 ♣ J 9 3

SOUTH
 ♠ 8 3
 ♥ K 6 5
 ♦ A J 10 8 4
 ♣ A K 7

The bidding:
 North East South West
 1♠ Pass 2♦ Pass
 2♥ Pass 3NT Pass
 Opening lead - five of clubs.

An Error of Convenience

Regardless of the caliber of the game you play in, one truth remains constant: Many more points are lost on easy hands than are lost on difficult ones. This is because complicated hands that require great skill are relatively rare, while the everyday garden variety that require no special skills come up all the time.

Consider this case where South wound up in three notrump and West led a club. Declarer won the jack of clubs with the ace and immediately led a spade to the jack, losing to the king.

South won the club return and cashed the A-Q of spades. When the suit didn't break evenly, he tried a diamond finesse. Unfortunately, West produced the king and cashed three clubs for down one.

It cannot be denied that declarer ran into a few bad breaks along the way - two finesses lost, the spades didn't split, and the opposing clubs were divided 5-3. However, the fact is that he went down on a hand where making at least nine tricks was an absolute certainty.

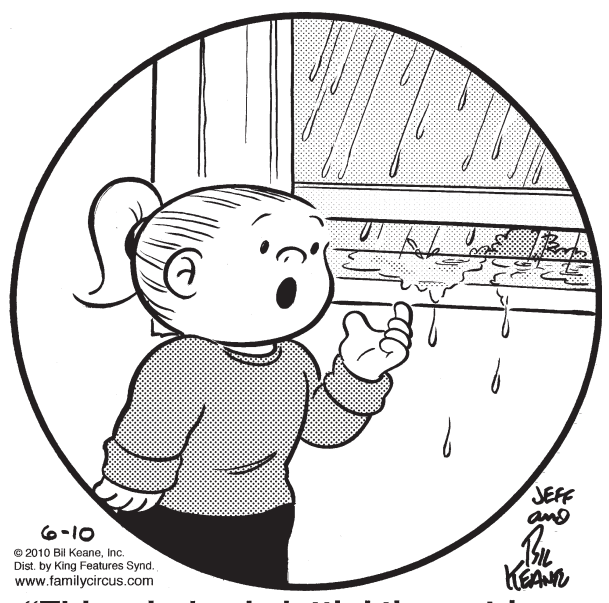
South failed because he attacked the wrong suit at the outset. Had he won the opening club lead, crossed to dummy with a heart and tried the diamond finesse first, he could not have made less than four diamond tricks, two clubs, two hearts and a spade for his contract. Indeed, he could just as easily have assured nine tricks by leading a low diamond from his hand at trick two, conceding a trick to the king.

Declarer's error was essentially an error of convenience. Because he had to win the opening club lead in his hand, it was much more convenient to try the spade finesse first than it was to cross to dummy and try the diamond finesse.

The reason for South's failure on this relatively straightforward deal was, sad to say, simply a matter of laziness.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



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Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

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.

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

Cryptoquip

SQ XHYMHM SX VDOMK BH
 FNUC U BRH-HQ-U-LSEK SE U
 FHLMD OUYM, RHNK CHV

XUC SB'X FUSD FDMXXVDM?
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SONG ABOUT A MARRIED COUPLE WHO LIKE TO WORK TOGETHER DOING CARPENTRY: "SAND BY YOUR MAN."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals Y

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 Space | 1 Jewel |
| 4 Do | 2 Past |
| laps in the pool | 3 Skunks |
| 8 Four-star review | 4 Charlie Brown's creator |
| 12 Swelled head | 5 Xbox 360 competitor |
| 13 2003 Derby-winning horse, Funny — | 6 Without doing anything |
| 14 Eastern potentate | 7 Big brawl |
| 15 Potential mountain? | 8 One with a lot to sell? |
| 17 "So be it" | 9 BBs et al. |
| 18 End of a school's URL | 10 Panorama |
| 19 Becomes jaundiced | 11 Sea flock |
| 21 Bogart's love | 16 Author LeShan |
| 24 Dine | 17 Author LeShan |
| 25 Eggs | 18 Author LeShan |
| 26 Menagerie | 19 Author LeShan |
| 28 Coffee plus chocolate | 20 Felon's flight |
| 32 Gives permission | 21 Philippine knife |
| | 22 State with certainty |
| | 23 Cut off |
| | 27 Scepter |
| | 29 Picnic side dish |
| | 30 Barber's concern |
| | 31 Tosses in |
| | 33 Temporary stay |
| | 35 LummoX |
| | 38 Postal "villains" |
| | 43 Hitchcock |
| | 45 "Uh-huh" |
| | 46 Hoofbeat sound |
| | 47 Staffer |
| | 48 Russell or Redbone |
| | 49 Diner employee |
| | 53 Mainlander's memento |
| | 54 "The Greatest" |
| | 55 Longing |

Solution time: 25 mins.

OLD	BEAK	AMMO
MAO	OLIO	SOAR
ISM	XYLOPHONE	
THEFT	PAC	
LOCK	MAYBE	
XENOPHON	NOEL	
EVE	SELES	YAK
NEAR	XANTHOUS	
ANTES	SERA	
MOW	EDUCE	
XENOPHILE	POD	
IGOT	EDIT	ODD
SORE	WOES	NAY

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				58		
59				60				61		