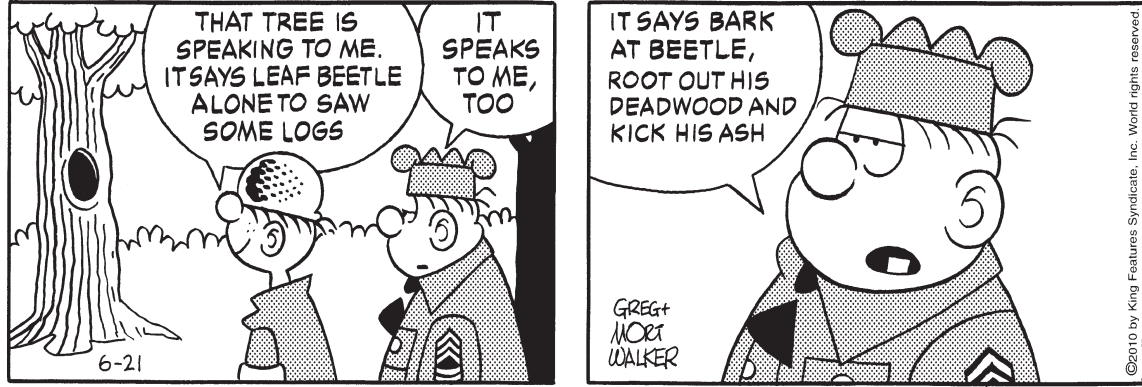


Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



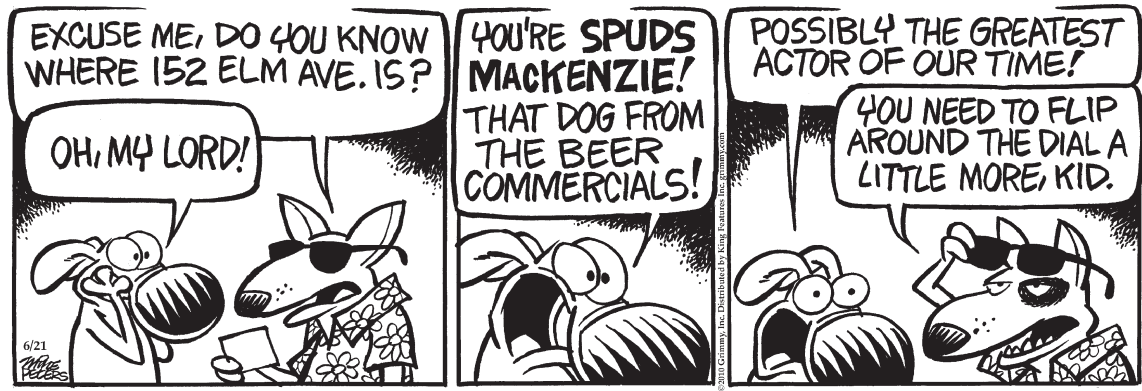
Blondie • Chic Young



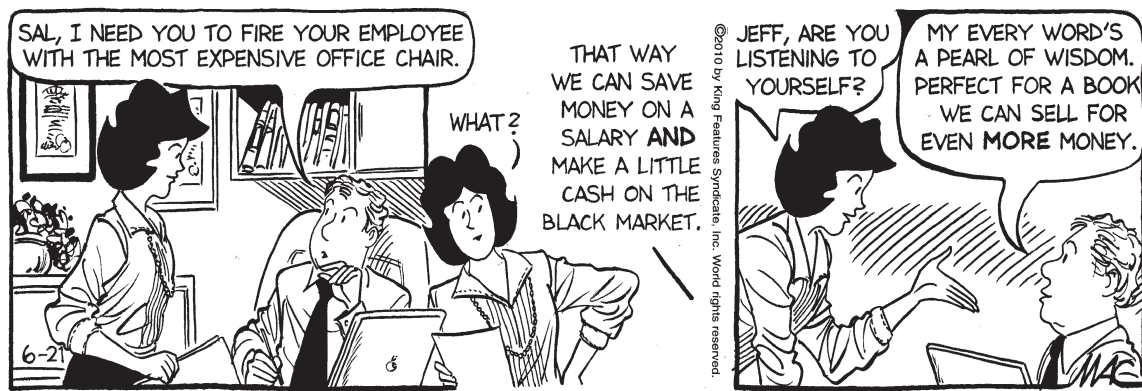
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



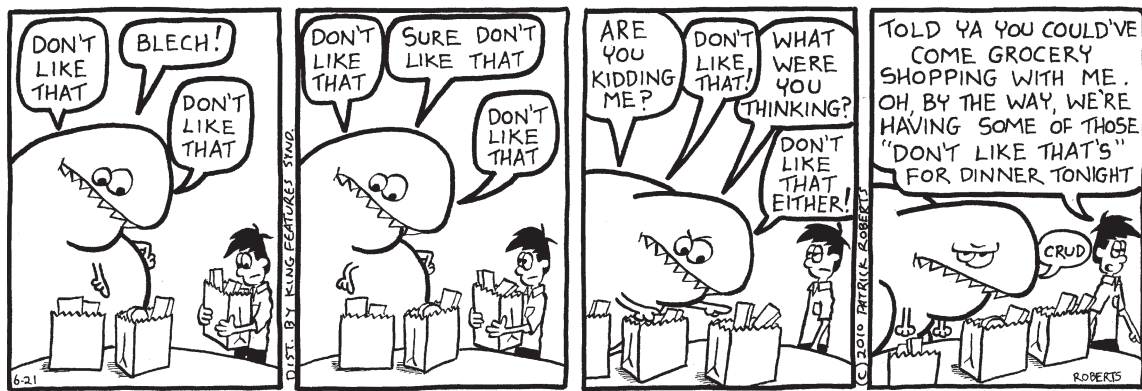
Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers

• Ask Dr. Brothers

Styles clash in office staff

Dear Dr. Brothers: I'm the owner of a small business, and I love my staff - all are smart, dependable and caring. Unfortunately, they don't love working together. They get along, but have different working and communication styles that make it hard to get anything done without me watching every detail. How can I help them work together more independently? - R.B.

Dear R.B.: Managing personality conflicts can be difficult, especially if they stem from basic personality differences. That doesn't mean you give up. While you can work through differences, it may be easier to avoid them with more careful and selective hiring of people who you think will work well with those already in the office.

You need to stress teamwork and promote group success. While individually your staff might get things done, they will do better if they work effectively together. By creating an environment in which the staff sees each other as colleagues, not competitors, you can encourage teamwork. You can foster this environment with regular meetings and training so everyone is on the same page. When conflicts arise, it is your responsibility to manage them. Discuss the situation that led to the conflict privately, and set deadlines and specific expectations to find a solution. It may seem counterintuitive, but assigning people to work together who have different styles can be beneficial by encouraging new ideas.

Dear Dr. Brothers: Like many people these days, I am looking for a job after being let go. I know employers do whatever they can to find background information on applicants and I would like to do the same. What are some ways I can check out a company without appearing as though I'm not committed? - K.F.

Dear K.F.: It is important to know what you're getting into when you're job hunting. It should be a process of matching, more than acceptance or rejection - not only should the company feel you are a good hire, but you should feel the company is good for you. You can start before you apply by doing research online. Looking into a company's financial health via financial websites can let you know if the company is strong or in trouble.

But finances aren't the only indicator a business will be rewarding to work for. By learning about the company's history, you can understand its current performance and where it is likely to head. You can find information on the company's website. Equally important is the history of the company's top decision-makers. You can search for them on the Internet, and learn what they've done and what they hope to do with the company. You can talk to employees at the company, take note of working conditions, and seek out blogs.

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Bridge • Steve Becker

West dealer. North-South vulnerable.

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

EAST
 ♠ 3
 ♥ A 9 7 6 4
 ♦ J 4 3
 ♣ A 8 6 4

SOUTH
 ♠ A K 9 7 6 5 4
 ♥ Q 5
 ♦ 10 8 6 2
 ♣ -

The bidding:
 West North East South
 1♥ Pass 3♦ 3♠
 4♥ 4♠ 5♥ 5♠
 Pass Pass Dble All Pass

Famous Hand

The United States won the 2009 world team championship in Sao Paulo, Brazil, defeating its archrival, Italy, by 36 IMPs in the 128-board final. The showdown between the two bridge giants, whose rivalry goes back half a century to the days of the legendary Italian Blue Team, was still in doubt with five deals to play, but the U.S. closed strongly to capture the Bermuda Bowl.

The victorious American squad was comprised of Nick Nickell, Bob Hamman, Jeff Meckstroth and Eric Rodwell, plus Zia Mahmod and Ralph Katz, replacing the late Paul Soloway and Richard Freeman. Italy was represented by Lorenzo Lauria, Alfredo Versace, Fulvio Fantoni, Claudio Nunes, Giorgio Duboin and newcomer Antonio Sementa.

Today's deal from the final produced a huge gain for the U.S. When Rodwell and Meckstroth held the North-South cards, the bidding went as shown. East's three diamonds indicated a heart fit, and the bidding followed natural lines thereafter. One can hardly blame Lauria, East, for doubling five spades holding two aces, but Meckstroth lost only the diamond ace for plus 1,050.

At the second table, with Hamman and Zia East-West, the auction took a decidedly different turn:

West North East South
 1♥ 2♠ 3♠ 3♠
 4♥ Pass Pass Dble
 Pass 4♠ 5♥ Dble
 All Pass

North led the club queen, ruffed by South, who then made a subtle slip by cashing a top spade before shifting to a diamond. Zia rose with the ace, ruffed a spade in dummy and then, with characteristic panache, announced that he would run his trumps and that if North had the K-Q of diamonds, the contract would make on a squeeze! This was indeed the case, as North could not keep both clubs and diamonds guarded when the last trump was cashed, so the U.S. gained another 650 points.

Observe that if South had not cashed a spade before shifting to a diamond, there would have been no squeeze.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



"Why do I hafta go to bed when the sun is still awake?"

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★ 6/21

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.

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

Cryptoquip

VZOPNC LPGUI VUZYNTBLJ
 YRU GBUQHPBLYC PV CPOU
 JPISVBCR: "YRU QPTIS"
 ZDDPTSBLJ YP DZTH."

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BECAUSE I KEEP MISUSING A CERTAIN PUNCTUATION MARK, THERE MIGHT BE AN APOSTROPHE CATASTROPHE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals F

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 36 Depend (on) 60 Cowboy nickname 19 Pitch mackerel! 21 Foolish one 37 Memorize 61 Choose 23 Deity 39 8 pecks = 2 — 25 Duel 41 Someone 1 Chicken (out) 26 Streamlet 7 Campus area, for short 43 Sticky stuff 27 Unfavorable votes 11 Baghdad's land 44 Teensy bit 3 Decline 28 Coconut provider 13 Commotion 46 Muscle 5 Valhalla 29 Sheltered 50 Platter 53 Erstwhile 6 "M*A*S*H" locale 31 Symbol of options 55 Foolproof 7 Track intrigue 16 Knight's address 56 Snug corner 35 Insect 38 Profit 17 Unsigned (Abbr.) 57 Emulate 8 Coffee vessel 40 Weep loudly 18 Accordion feature 58 Greek vowels 9 Past 42 Perch 20 Approach 59 Pismires 10 Lair 45 Create 47 Car 22 Tatter 59 Pismires 48 Christmas paper container? 49 Egg 50 Genetic substance 51 Charged bit 52 Drunkard 54 Country singer Brooks

DOWN 1 Holy 21 Foolish one 23 Deity 25 Duel 26 Streamlet 27 Unfavorable votes 28 Coconut provider 29 Sheltered 30 Clayey soil 31 Symbol of intrigue 35 Insect 38 Profit 40 Weep loudly 42 Perch 45 Create 47 Car 48 Christmas paper container? 49 Egg 50 Genetic substance 51 Charged bit 52 Drunkard 54 Country singer Brooks

Solution time: 27 mins.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---------|---------|-------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| MECCA | THE | GAD | | | | | | | |
| ALLOT | AUK | ANI | | | | | | | |
| BLEAT | CLEAVES | | | | | | | | |
| ALASKA | ZINCO | | | | | | | | |
| ORAR | REL | CANTO | | | | | | | |
| FILM | NEPAL | | | | | | | | |
| FRYERS | ERECTS | | | | | | | | |
| DEEDS | ALOE | | | | | | | | |
| LITUP | RTS | EYE | | | | | | | |
| ONES | MYOPIA | | | | | | | | |
| CLEANER | ONTAP | | | | | | | | |
| HEN | EMU | DOETH | | | | | | | |
| SITY | WON | ENDED | | | | | | | |

Saturday's answer 6-21

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|---|---|----|---|---|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | | | 12 | | | 13 | | | 14 |
| 15 | | | | | | 16 | | | 17 |
| 18 | | | | | | 19 | | | 20 |
| | | | | | | 21 | | | |
| | | | | | | 22 | | | |
| | | | | | | 23 | | | |
| | | | | | | 24 | | | |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | | | | 31 | | | 32 |
| 33 | | | | | | 34 | | | 35 |
| 37 | | | | | | 38 | | | 39 |
| 41 | | | | | | 42 | | | 43 |
| | | | | | | 44 | | | 45 |
| | | | | | | 46 | | | 47 |
| 50 | 51 | 52 | | | | 53 | | | 54 |
| 56 | | | | | | 57 | | | 58 |
| 59 | | | | | | 60 | | | 61 |