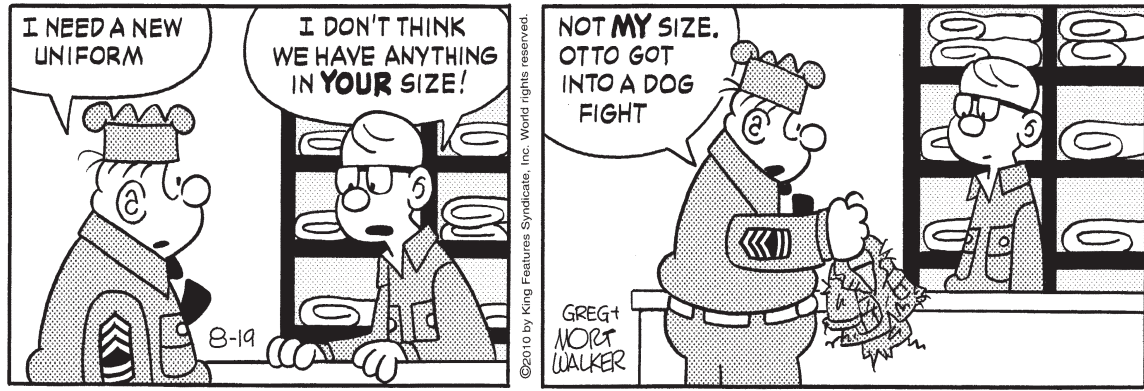


Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Blondie • Chic Young



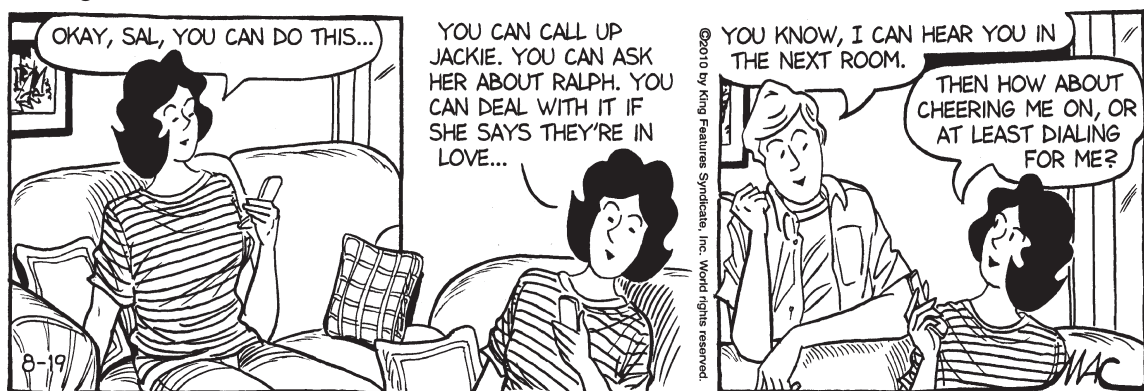
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



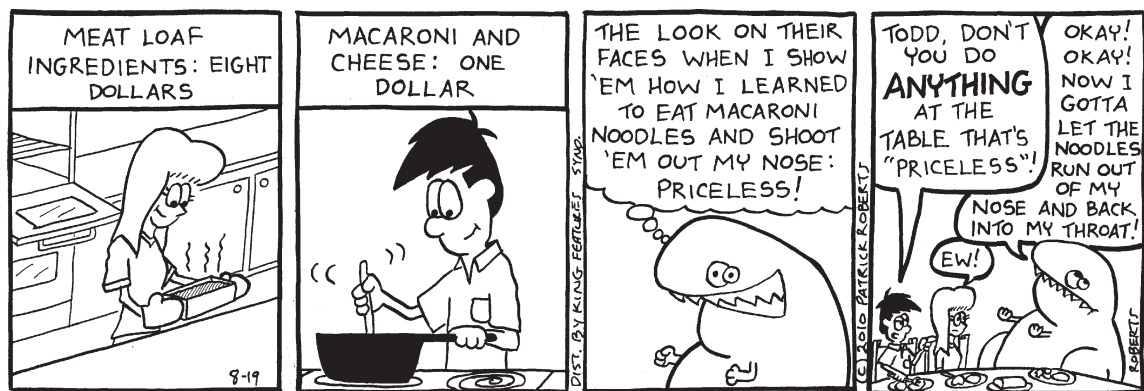
Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



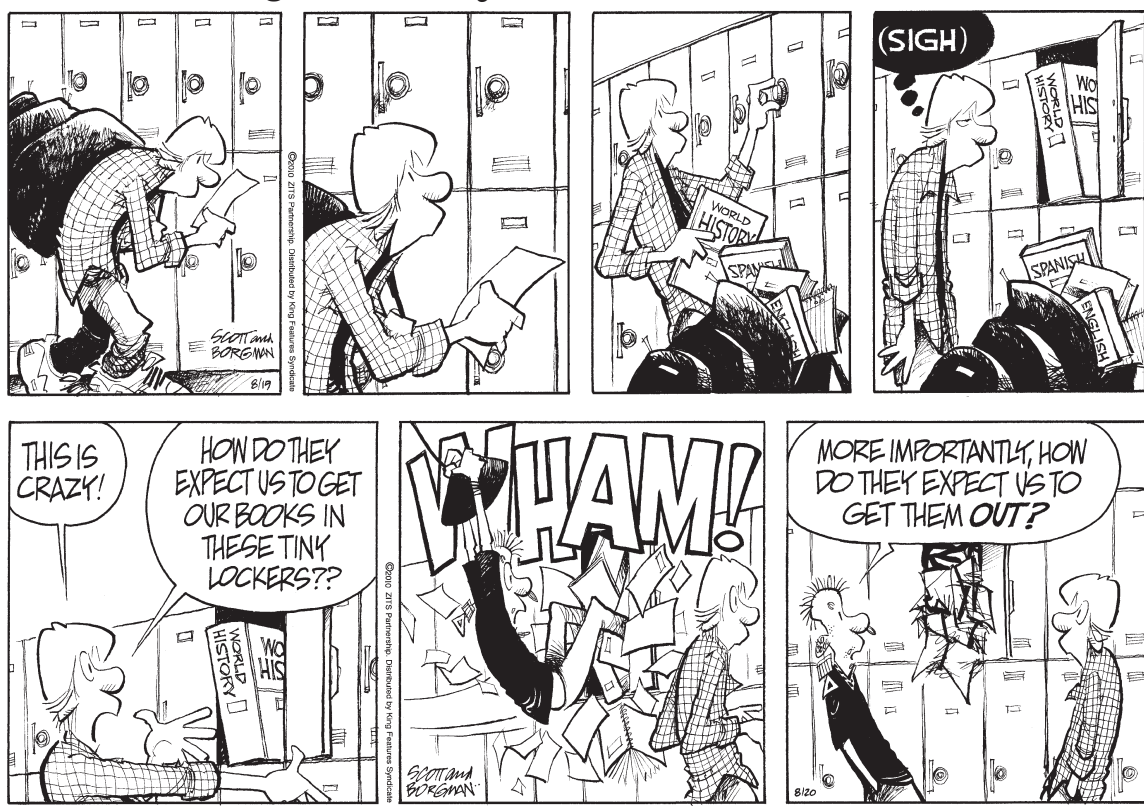
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers

• Ask Dr. Brothers

Husband hates holiday parties

Dear Dr. Brothers: Whether it's New Year's Eve or the Fourth of July, my husband is a party pooper. He hates to celebrate holidays and makes everyone miserable. This Fourth was the worst. After watching fireworks at a park for five minutes, my husband insisted we leave to avoid traffic - which caused my 4-year-old to throw a tantrum. I don't know what to do. - K.H.

Dear K.H.: Some people don't like to be told to celebrate holidays that might not hold meaning for them, or to spend money on gifts that seem forced and unnatural, or to go through rituals they may not have enjoyed in their youth and enjoy even less now. Perhaps your husband's family either overdosed on holiday cheer or ignored all the greeting-card holidays. In any case, even Independence Day fireworks can be marred if they revolve around traffic jams and long waits at portable toilets. So your husband's angst is somewhat understandable.

It is likely not going to be productive to try to interest your husband in these celebrations when he has had a lifetime to build up a dislike for them. But it might be worthwhile to talk about the holiday traditions you would like your son to be able to participate in. If his dad doesn't care for crowds, perhaps you could start traditions closer to home. Have a small gathering at your house or a park, or celebrate with your own family. I'm sure you can find a happy medium that will make holiday times pleasant for everybody.

Dear Dr. Brothers: Please help settle an argument between my husband and me. He keeps insisting I talk to my mother - who turns 78 this week - about moving into a retirement community. This gets me so angry - the thought of moving her anywhere! She's my mom, not a piece of furniture, and she's in good health both physically and mentally. He says it's "only a matter of time" and keeps badgering me. Who's right? - G.D.

Dear G.D.: Older adults are capable of making their own decisions, just as younger people are. Since, as you point out, your mother is not furniture, neither is she an inanimate object whose fate is to be decided by others. Especially if she is of sound mind and body, it would be a shame to settle this without consulting her. I know you are reluctant to bring up the subject, for that alone can start worries in an elderly person's brain - are they trying to get rid of me? Is it all downhill from here? How would I adjust? What if I don't want to go? What if I can't take care of myself?

As you can see, the topic opens up a can of worms, and that is why most of us don't plan how to spend our final years. Have a talk with your mom - she deserves to contribute to the decision. She may be grateful for the chance to discuss this - perhaps she even has made plans you're not aware of. Regardless of whether she is in your home or her own, I think you should discuss the options ahead. You can keep your head in the sand for a while, but it sounds like your husband is intent on keeping this alive. I am sure he is concerned about your mother's welfare, but he must realize she should have a hand in the decision.

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Bridge • Steve Becker

South dealer. Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ 6 4
♥ K 10 7
♦ K 9 5 2
♣ Q 8 4 3

WEST
♠ A Q 10 8
♥ 8 3 2
♦ Q J 6
♣ J 10 5

EAST
♠ 5 2
♥ 6 4
♦ 10 8 7 3
♣ K 9 7 6 2

SOUTH
♠ K J 9 7 3
♥ A Q J 9 5
♦ A 4
♣ A

The bidding:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 1 NT Pass
3 ♥ Pass 3 NT Pass
4 ♥

Opening lead - two of hearts.

Finding the Killing Lead

For the defense, the most critical play is often the opening lead. Time and again, it can be seen that if a defender starts out with the most effective lead for his side, the contract will fail - or at least be put in some degree of jeopardy.

Unfortunately, the opening leader does not have the advantage of viewing the dummy when trying to select the initial salvo. All he has to guide him is his own 13 cards and the bidding. In some cases, though, that can be quite enough.

Take this case where South wound up in four hearts on the auction shown. West had a choice of two seemingly natural leads, the jack of clubs or the queen of diamonds. But before mechanically leading either card, he paused to consider the bidding.

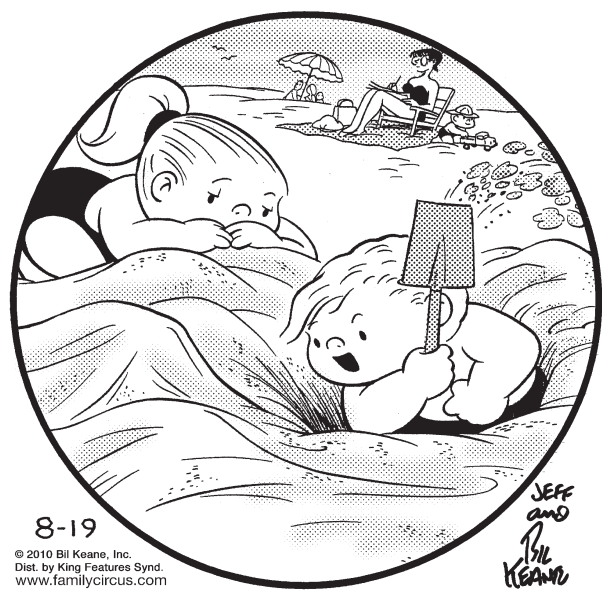
Based on North's final pass of four hearts, and his failure to support spades at any stage, it was clear that he held at most two spades. This made it quite likely that South would try to ruff his spade losers with dummy's hearts. To cut down on this possibility, and to protect his own strong spade holding, West therefore led a trump.

After this lead, there was no way for declarer to score 10 tricks. In practice, he won the first trump in dummy and led a spade to the jack and queen, whereupon West returned another trump. South won in dummy and tried a spade to the nine, losing to the ten. A third trump by West then marooned declarer with two more spade losers, so he had to go down one.

Had West gotten off to any other lead, South could not have been prevented from ruffing at least one spade in dummy, even if West switched to a trump after winning the first spade. Declarer would then have lost only three spades and made the contract.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



8-19
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"Wow! There's sure a lot of sand down here!"

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★ 8/19

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.

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

Cryptoquip

BRASK XJMX ORWA'B AKSD

JMRH KIRXB AW BIKOO MX

MOO, R HKSDWA JK JMBA'X

M BSKAX XW JRB IMAK.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN A SLIM PERSON DISPATCHES CREDITORS, WOULD PEOPLE CALL HIM A SLENDER LENDER SENDER?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals L

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN | DOWN | DOWN |
| 1 Unopened roses | 38 Icicles' locations | 1 Prohibits | 22 New Testament book |
| 5 "Oh, woe" | 40 Exist | 2 Hexagonal state | 23 "My bad" |
| 9 Hair goop | 41 Where the action is | 3 One thin | 24 Protrude |
| 12 Persisting | 43 Celebration | 4 Buffet table fuel | 25 Work with |
| 13 Crooked | 47 Started of a sort | 5 With skill | 26 Barry Humphries portrayal |
| 14 Past | 48 Fool | 6 Meadow | 27 Marathon fraction |
| 15 Identifier | 51 Still or Stein | 7 Picnic intruder | 29 Spoon-bender |
| 17 Swab | 52 String instrument | 8 Unyielding | 30 Idaho, the State |
| 18 Spanish wine | 53 — out (supplemented) | 9 "Jeopardy!", e.g. | 35 Zero-star review |
| 19 Actress | 54 Alias abbr. | 10 Hollywood wood | 37 Get angry |
| 21 "Forget it!" | 55 Tend texts | 11 Bound along | 39 Trumpet feature |
| 22 Dr. Salk | 56 "— hear you correctly?" | 16 Expert | 40 Chest protector |
| 24 Martial art | | 20 Dine | 41 Actress Jessica |
| 27 Long March leader | | | 42 Stench |
| 28 Hoodlum | | | 43 Fedora material |
| 31 Loser to Ghana in the 2010 World Cup | | | 44 Munro pseudonym |
| 32 Mischievous tyke | | | 45 Even |
| 33 Raw rock | | | 46 "The King —" |
| 34 Office part-timer | | | 49 Help |
| 36 "Mis-ables" | | | 50 Miss Piggy's pronoun |
| 37 Do laps in the pool | | | |

Solution time: 25 mins.

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

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		