Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Blondie • Chic Young

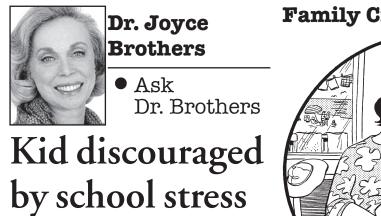


Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters





Dear Dr. Brothers: I feel so bad for my nephew. He is 10 years old, and a great little guy. He's full of life and enthusiastic about everything. But lately he has been moping around, and I see his confidence slipping. He seems discouraged much of the time. He doesn't seem to have the ability to understand or absorb the material at school, even though he seems to be as smart as the next kid. There is some testing going on, but in the meantime, can I help him somehow? - P.G.

Dear P.G.: It is quite sad to see a child suffering - if only self-esteem were something we could put a bandage on and tell the child it will be OK soon. I'm sure your nephew doesn't really know what the problem is - and I hope the tests will clarify what's going on with him - but you can be sure it is not because he is lazy, doesn't care or can't succeed. So if you can let him know you are proud of his attempts to succeed despite difficulties, and invite him to talk about his feelings, that might go a long way toward helping him overcome his discouraged state of mind.

It also might be helpful for you to spend some time with him trying to discover and encourage his own special talents. He is at an age where he can start developing interests outside of the classroom, and if he goes in the right direction, those interests can become passions and possibly even a career. Just because he isn't good at reading - or math or science – doesn't mean he can't take an interest in something that will light a spark. He may be excited by any number of things, from athletics to music to art to nature. He may have it in him to be a magician or a lifeguard or a forensic scientist. So start exploring.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I am seeing a guy who is a lot of fun and has lots of friends. We are in our mid-30s. But I notice that almost everyone in his social circle - full of artsy types - is close to Social Security age! They are all energetic, productive, fun, hip and all that, but does it seem odd to you? I feel strange when we hang out with this older set. Plus, he doesn't even talk to his own parents. - D.C.

Dear D.C.: I wouldn't use the word "odd," but it is unusual. Most young people don't like TLGO Y RLUREGO NYPXGP to hang out with anyone who reminds them of their parents' generation. But this generation of baby boomer senior citizens didn't fit that mold they never really grew up, the way their own parents did, and a lot of what they enjoy and think is important may appeal to their children and their wouldn't bother you, but it might be uncomfortable to be the only 30-something in the crowd, except for your date - who doesn't notice.

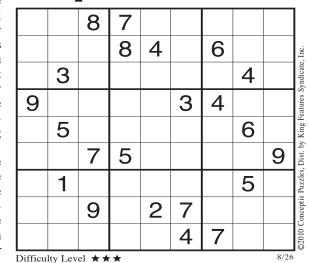
In a perfect world, no one would care about anyone else's age, race, gender and so forth. But in this case, you probably wouldn't be uncomfortable if your friend had at least a balance of all ages of companions. The fact that he gravitates toward older folks might stem from his lack of relationships with his own parents. It seems an easy answer, but sometimes the most obvious is the best bet – could it be that he is substituting all **Crossword** • Eugene Sheffer these older people for the parents he may feel he never had, or at least doesn't have today?

Family Circus • Bil Keane



"Don't bother me! It's the last day of vacation and I have 101 postcards to write!"

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green



This is a logic-based num-

ber 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.

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Difficulty Level ★★★ 8/25									

Cryptoquip

OGGSB JO MPDG NOIEB JO friends. And it sounds like a few older friends JYEG YRJUOO, U TOMIS YBBMXG LG GDDB JLGX QO. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF SOMEBODY WERE OBSESSED WITH SNAPS AND ZIPPERS, THAT MAY BE CHARACTERIZED AS A FASTEN-ATION.

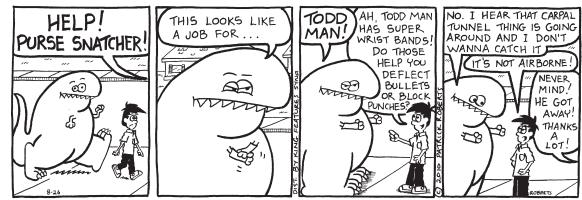
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals G

Sally Forth • Greg Howard

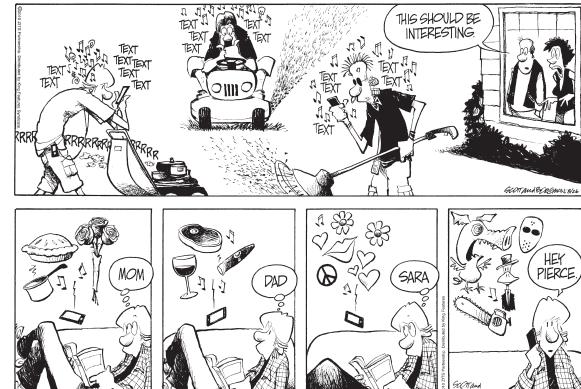
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Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



(c) 2010 by King Features Syndicate

Bridge • Steve Becker

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Avoiding a Guess

Assume you reach six hearts as shown and West leads a spade. When you play the ten, East 29 covers with the queen, and you win with the ace.

There is no way you can avoid losing a spade, so the big question is how to avoid a diamond loser. This would be easy enough to manage if you could see the opponents' cards - all you'd have to do is finesse against the player with the queen.

But you can't see the adverse hands and will 33 therefore have to rely on your ingenuity to help solve the problem. The only clue so far as to the probable location of the queen is that East entered 35 the bidding, so he is perhaps a bit more likely to have it.

This evidence is far from conclusive, however, and it would be incorrect to rely upon it exclusively. It is far better to try to learn more about the defenders' hands before making a final decision.

Accordingly, you cash the ace of clubs at trick two, then play a heart to the ten and ruff a club. When you next play a heart to the jack and return the jack of clubs, all your worries cease when East plays the king on it.

Instead of ruffing the club, as originally planned, you discard your spade loser, relieving you of the problem of having to guess how to play the diamonds.

East is on lead and must hand you the contract regardless of what he returns. If he leads a spade, dummy's jack becomes a trick, while if he leads a diamond, you score three diamond tricks. It turns out that the best way of dealing with the queen of diamonds is not to try to guess its location at all. (c)2010 King Features Syndicate Inc.

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