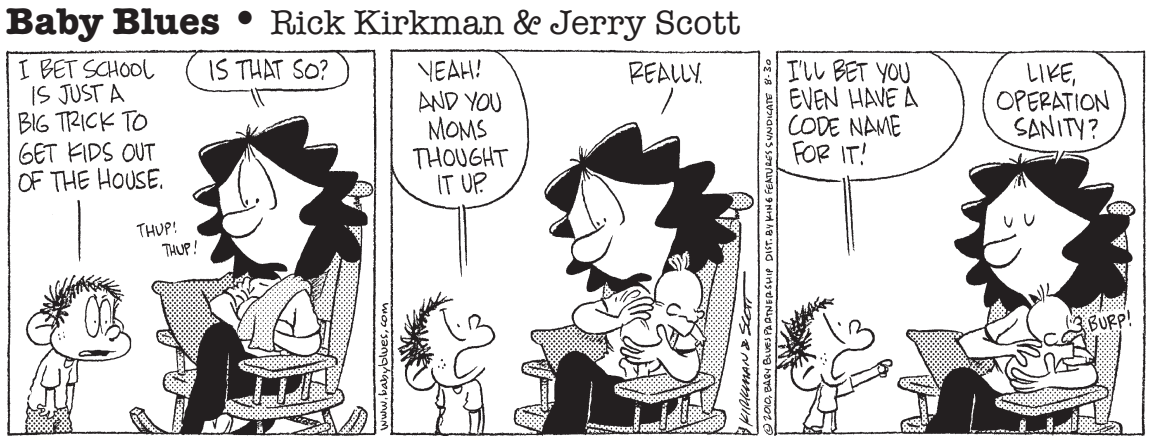
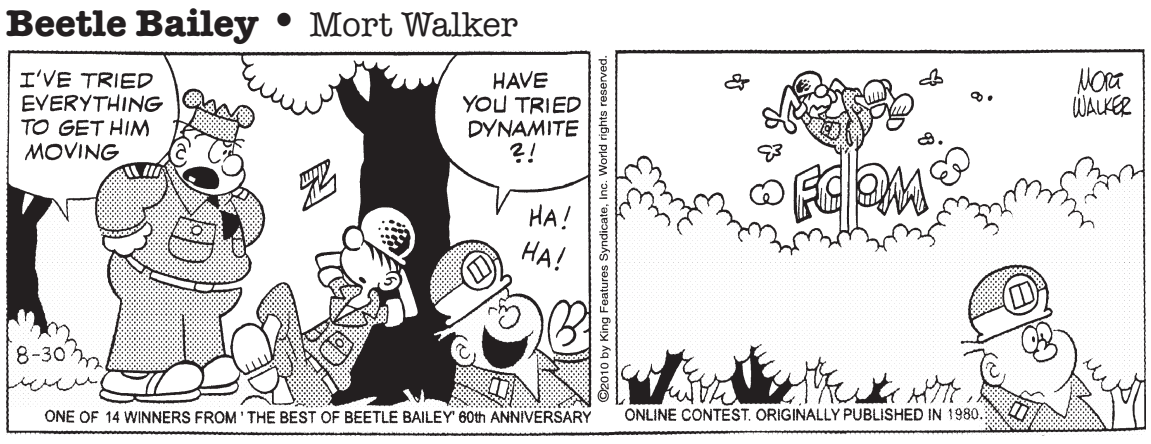
Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

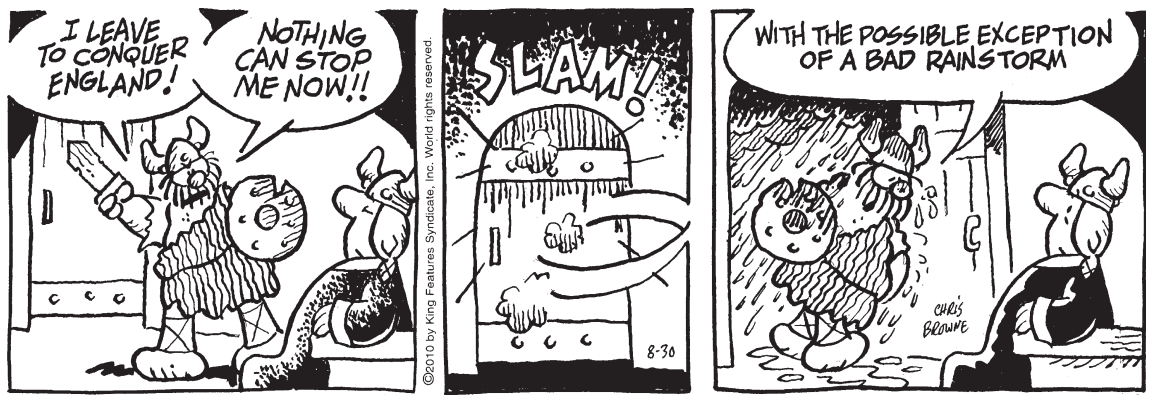


Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



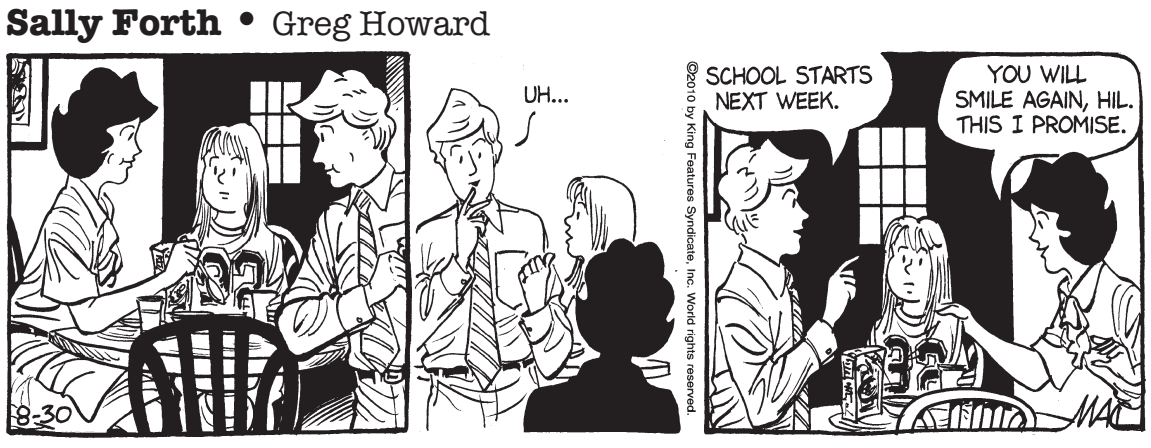
Blondie • Chic Young

Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne

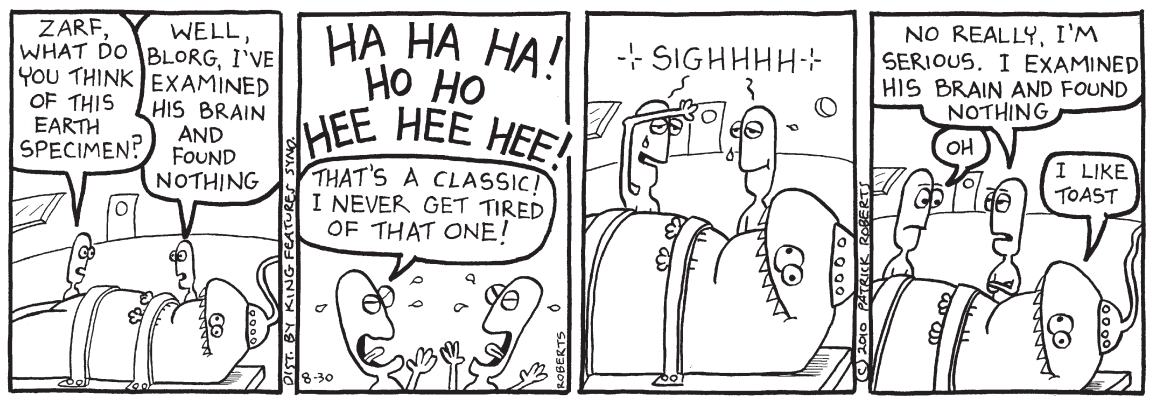


Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters

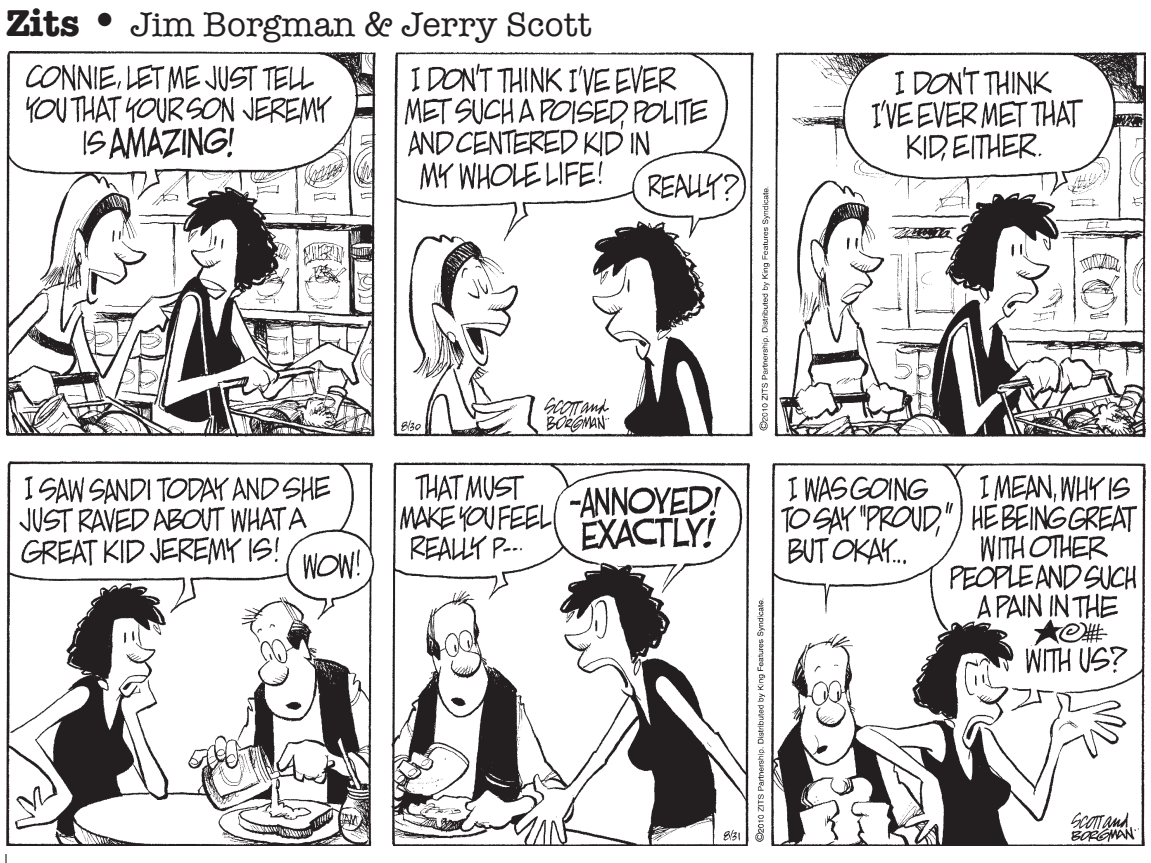
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers

• Ask Dr. Brothers

Wife's boss worries him

Dear Dr. Brothers: My wife recently told me that at the last Christmas party, her boss tried to hit on her! She said it was "no big deal" and laughed it off. Now I want to punch this guy in the face! When I say she should find another job, she gets angry. I don't want anybody taking advantage of her, and at the very least feel I should confront this guy. How can I deal with this? – G.F.

Dear G.F.: I'll bet your wife is very sorry right now that she was so open – not with the boss, but with her husband! You have failed to understand things from her point of view, and your reaction has succeeded only in blowing everything out of proportion. If you go and beat up the boss, there will be bad consequences. You could be charged with assault, the boss will have a broken nose and your wife will lose her job! I'm sure you won't do anything foolish. Confronting the guy is a playground maneuver with big-kid consequences.

It is admirable that you feel so protective. But she needs to step up and take whatever comes from her ill-advised party flirtation with the boss – if she did anything to invite his advances, which you don't know and haven't considered. Quitting her job in this economy seems a bad idea, and it is no wonder she is alarmed to have you suggest such a thing. You should let her handle career moves, and she probably will be more aware of appropriate boundaries in the future. But I wouldn't count on her confiding in you, if you are going to overreact. So try to be more low-key while being there for your wife.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I work as a cashier at a grocery store. I am always paired with this bagger who is the friendliest person in the world. He doesn't really bother anyone – until he brings up the year 2012. He's convinced the world will end in two years, and once he gets going, he doesn't quit! It gets embarrassing. I've tried to not let it bother me, but it does. What makes a person believe this stuff? – C.H.

Dear C.H.: Your bagger friend very likely doesn't get a lot of stimulation from his job. You don't mention whether he is a retiree, a mentally challenged individual, a high-school kid or someone in between. But the fact that he is a bagger doesn't mean he doesn't have a rich fantasy life – in fact, this kind of work might unleash creativity if there isn't much to think about! At the same time, a bagger might socialize with the people in the grocery line. It makes the job more pleasant if shoppers are responsive and it fulfills his need for social stimulation, which we all need.

So, why does he think the world is going to end? Why does he spout off to strangers? Chances are, he believes the theory. He probably is doing the kind of spreading of the word people do when they get sold on an idea. And what better way to make an impact than to take controversial beliefs and see how big a splash he can make? This may be his way of getting attention, and trying to find people who share his concerns.

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Bridge • Steve Becker

North dealer.
North-South vulnerable.

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

WEST
♠ 3
♥ 10 7 4 3 2
♦ 10 8 7 5 2
♣ J 5

EAST
♠ Q 7
♥ Q J 6
♦ Q 4
♣ K 10 9 8 4 3

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

The bidding:

North	East	South	West
1 NT	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	5 ♠	Pass
6 ♠			

Opening lead — jack of clubs.

Famous Hand

Let's say – as an academic proposition and independent of the hand on view – that you require three tricks in a suit where dummy has J-x-x and you have A-K-9.

There are only two sensible ways to play this combination. One is to cash the A-K, hoping to find either opponent with the singleton or doubleton queen. The other is to lead low from dummy, planning to finesse the nine. This method succeeds when your right-hand opponent has both the queen and ten.

Mathematically, it is far better to try the double-finesse. The A-K will drop the queen only once in every 10 attempts, while the double-finesse will succeed about one time in four.

All-time great Jean Besse of Switzerland was declarer in today's deal from a match against Italy many years ago. He finessed the opening club lead unsuccessfully, won East's club return with the ace and drew trumps. He then cashed the K-A of hearts and ruffed a heart.

After ruffing a club in dummy, on which West showed out, Besse was confronted by the problem of making three diamond tricks with the combination discussed above.

He led the three of diamonds from dummy, but after East followed with the four, Besse played the A-K of diamonds, caught the queen and so made the slam.

Why did Besse abandon the normal percentage play, which he was certainly aware of? Because he realized that in this case finessing the nine could not win, and that his only real chance was to drop the doubleton queen.

Besse knew that East had started with exactly two spades and six clubs, plus at least three hearts, so East could not possibly have the Q-10-4 of diamonds (which would give him 14 cards). His only hope, therefore, was that East had started with the Q-4 of diamonds.

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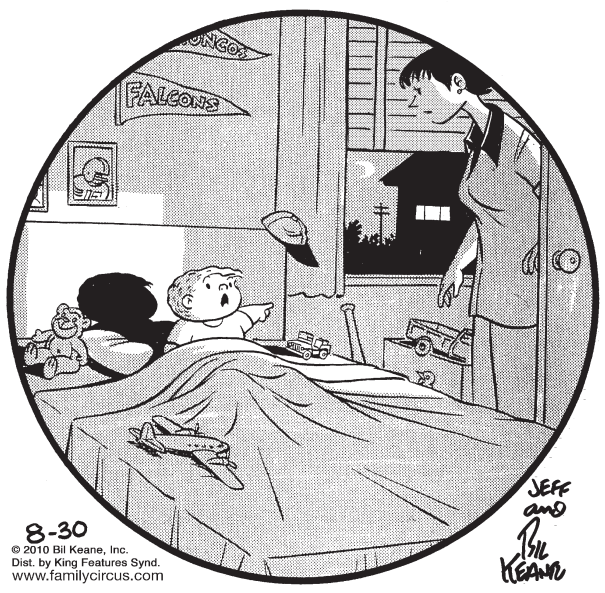
Family Circus • Bil Keane



"I can't sleep 'cause I can't hear the ocean."

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★ 8/30

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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.

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

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 8/27

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Cryptoquip

VNDM X "EIXY VXYE" LAYA YDXKKO ZYXGDE X HDEEDYI JT RZD ZYDXW, WRLNI ND GRERI X OJHX TJAMIXRM?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SO AS NOT TO GET A SPEEDING TICKET, I SCRIBBLED ON THE DASHBOARD THE LINE "KEEP OFF THE GAS."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: D equals E

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Smooch
5 Light-switch setting
8 Golf ball holders
12 Handel's "Messiah," e.g.
14 And others (Abbr.)
15 Aardvark
16 Emanation
17 Donkey
18 With almost no effort
20 Grown-up
23 Competent
24 Scottish girl
25 Movie-house
28 Compass dir.
29 The — and the Papas
30 Disencumber
32 "— love hath no man ..."
34 Typical dog's name
35 Catcher's aid
36 Environmentally friendly
37 Briny
40 — Lanka
41 Arkin or Alda
42 Fast-firing rifle
47 Heard reveille
48 Move to another country
49 Appear
50 Press for payment
51 Hosiery mishap

DOWN
1 — constrictor
2 Coffee vessel
3 Perched
4 Filches
5 Table scraps
6 "A pox upon thee!"
7 Ancestor
8 Afternoon service?
9 Needle case
10 Viscount's superior
11 Do in
13 Brewer's kiln
19 "Sad to say, ..."
20 Hearty quaff
21 "Phooey!"
22 Addict
23 Record producer Ertegun
25 In shreds
26 See 39-Down
27 Roller coaster, for one
29 Primary
31 Mafia bigwig
33 Marshall Mathers' nom de rap
34 Monks
36 Diver Louganis
37 Cutting tools
38 Lotion additive
39 With 26-Down, War of 1812 battle site
40 Whirl
43 Ostrich's cousin
44 Light brown
45 Greek vowel
46 ,— U.S. Pat. Off.

Solution time: 27 mins.

M	O	B	■	A	U	R	A	■	H	U	G	E
A	I	R	■	B	R	O	S	■	E	R	O	S
P	L	A	Y	B	A	C	K	■	A	S	A	P
■	■	N	O	E	L	■	■	I	T	A	L	Y
S	A	D	L	Y	■	S	I	N	E	■	■	■
H	U	N	K	■	B	A	C	K	D	O	W	N
A	T	E	■	S	O	L	E	S	■	V	I	E
D	O	W	N	C	O	L	D	■	R	E	N	O
■	■	■	E	A	S	Y	■	H	E	R	O	N
O	D	I	U	M	■	■	P	I	A	F	■	■
R	E	N	T	■	C	O	L	D	P	L	A	Y
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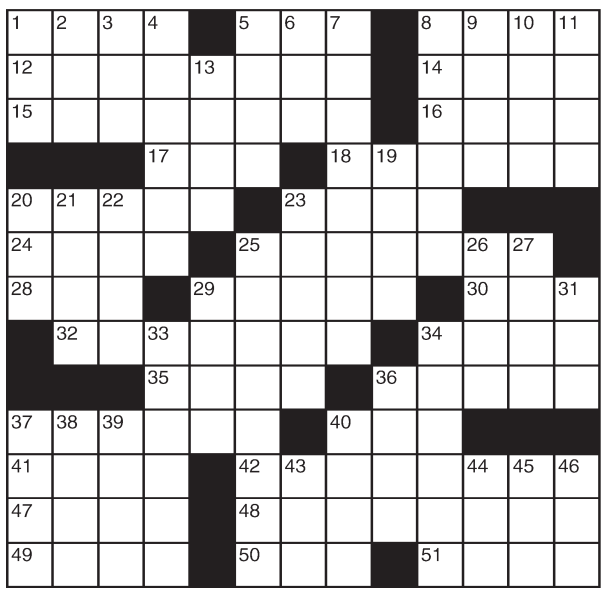
Saturday's answer 8-30