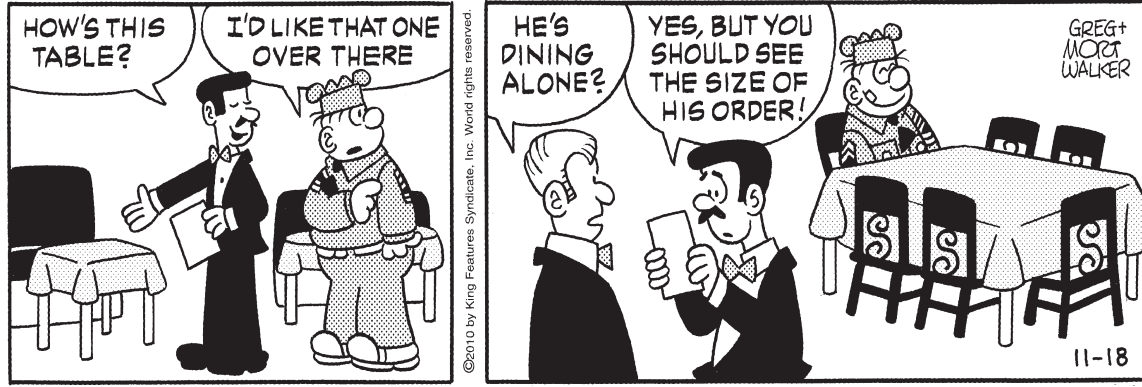


Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



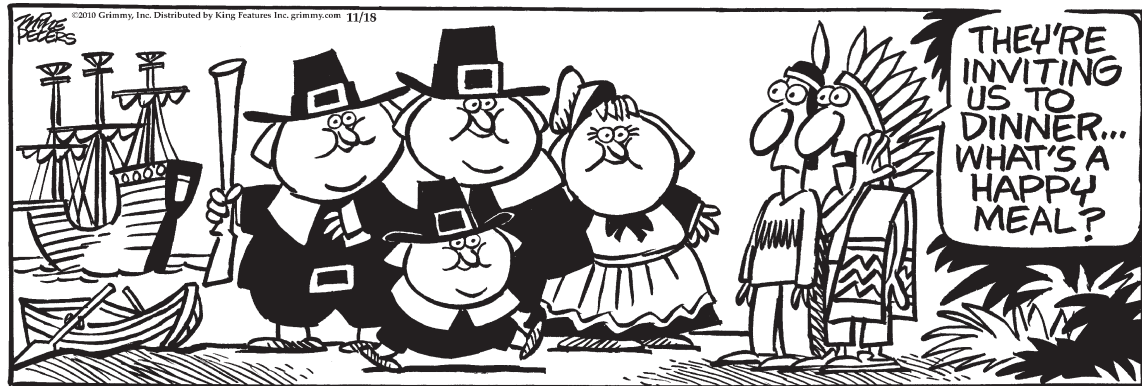
Blondie • Chic Young



Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



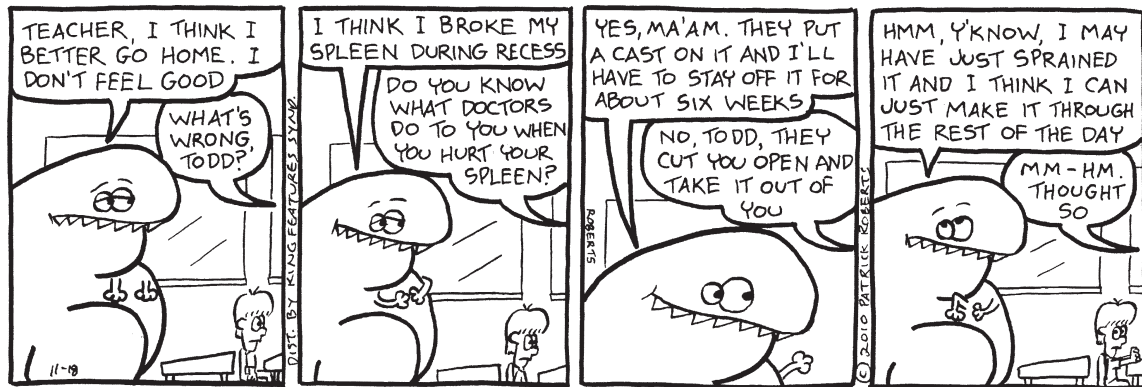
Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers

• Ask Dr. Brothers

How many kids in happy homes?

Dear Dr. Brothers: How can my sister be so thoughtless? She refuses to supply her beautiful young boy with a brother or sister, saying one child is enough! For her! How can she not think about her poor, lonely son and what this will do to him? How will he learn social skills by himself? It's not like she can't afford it. My sister and I are lucky enough to be extremely well off. Please help me set her straight. — W.F.

Dear W.F.: I hate to be the bearer of bad tidings, but if anyone needs to be set straight, it might be you! Obviously you love your sister and nephew, to be so concerned with their lives and his welfare. But not enough socialization? That's where aunts come in! You can introduce him to educational and cultural opportunities where he can meet other children. So can his parents. You don't mention a husband, but if your sister is a single mother, she may have her hands full with one child. The bottom line is this is a personal decision, and anyone who tries to make it for the mother and father is skating on thin ice.

As far as your concerns, only children seem to fare well without siblings, according to those who study family dynamics. In fact, Ohio State University did a study of 13,000 middle- and high-school students — a sizable population — and found that only children were chosen as friends just as often as kids with siblings. An earlier study had shown that kindergarteners without sibs had more difficulty with social skills, but these were rated by teachers, while the teens were rated by peers. The lesson might be that while only children may start with a disadvantage, they do adjust.

Dear Dr. Brothers: We've tried everything, but the dog we rescued from the animal shelter last month is not working out. Advertised as a "mellow, quiet friend," he's been a nightmare. He's eaten everything from drapes to shoes to our wedding album. Nonetheless, the kids adore him. My husband and I have made up our minds he has to go back — but how can we do this without breaking our children's hearts? — S.W.

Dear S.W.: It's sad when you think you've got a great new member of the family but it turns out to be just a disruptive visitor. The first thing you need to know is you probably are doing exactly the right thing. Unless you are ready to spend a lot of effort on dog training or an animal behaviorist — the one-on-one kind — you probably would be better off starting out with a more laid-back dog. Although adopting from a shelter is a good idea because of the number of unwanted pets out there, you need to do your homework.

Any pet you adopt should be selected with the temperament of your family and the dog in mind. You know if you can cope with a lively, energetic dog, or one that lies around all day. By the same token, the dog should be given behavior tests by the shelter to assess its readiness to fit into a household. Sometimes a shelter is told the dog is well-behaved, and doesn't know the pet actually has never lived indoors. As with anything, it's let the buyer — or adopter — beware. Your children should realize dogs are a years-long commitment, and all of you should approach the selection with that in mind. The dog you are returning might not have a chance to be adopted again.

Bridge • Steve Becker

North dealer. Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH
 ♠ A Q 4
 ♥ J 3
 ♦ J 9
 ♣ A K Q 9 8 2

WEST
 ♠ 9 7 6 5 2
 ♥ K 9 7 6
 ♦ 7 6 5
 ♣ 6

EAST
 ♠ 10 3
 ♥ A Q 4
 ♦ A Q 10 8 3
 ♣ 7 4 3

SOUTH
 ♠ K J 8
 ♥ 10 8 5 2
 ♦ K 4 2
 ♣ J 10 5

The bidding:
 North: 1♣, 1♦, 3♣, 4♣
 East: Pass, 1♥, 2♥, 3♥, 4♥
 South: Pass, 1NT, 2NT, 3NT, 4NT
 West: Pass, Pass, Pass, Pass

Opening lead — seven of diamonds.

Asleep at the Switch
 It is true that a defender does not have the great advantage — enjoyed by the declarer — of knowing the exact extent of his side's assets. But this disadvantage can very often be overcome by proper play. Once the opening lead is made and dummy appears, the defenders should usually be able to find the best defense.

Take this case where South got to three notrump and West led a diamond. East took the diamond with the ace and continued with the queen, planning to eventually score four diamond tricks and the ace of hearts to put the contract down one.

Unfortunately for East, declarer scampered home with the next 10 tricks and wound up making four notrump.

However, East should have defeated the contract and would have done so quite easily had he not acted so impulsively by returning the queen of diamonds at trick two.

A moment of thought would have told East that he was handing South the contract by returning a diamond. He could see that declarer would score six club tricks, a diamond and at least two spade tricks (with the aid of a finesse, if necessary), so a diamond continuation was sure to prove fatal.

Instead, East should have shifted to the ace of hearts at trick two, hoping to find his partner with the requisite length and strength in the suit necessary to defeat the contract. In the actual case, the heart shift would have put South down one. West would signal with the seven on the ace, and East would then continue with the queen and another heart to put a quick end to the proceedings.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★ 11/18

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.

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

Cryptoquip

K X E O I B L Q H R B L I E Q Q
 O X D I B S H U O U B S U S K X U I X
 E Z D N Y B S U Y N D E Q Q R
 X E Z Z R ? D Q E O U B S Y X U Z .
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF SINGER AIKEN WERE POSING FOR A PAINTING, I RECKON THAT YOU WOULD CALL HIM MODELING CLAY.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: U equals I

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
 1 Son of Noah
 5 Run for exercise
 8 Salver
 12 Carte
 13 Before
 14 Test the waters
 15 Language of Pakistan
 16 Timetable abbr.
 17 Grandson of Eve
 18 New Zealand discoverer
 20 Timid
 22 Marked by integrity
 26 Computer fodder
 29 Individual
 30 Ultra-modernist
 31 Prevents
 32 Agent
 33 Culture medium
 34 Judge Lance
 35 Literary collection

DOWN
 1 Pornography
 2 Wife of Zeus
 3 Tackles' team-mates
 4 Loose garb for islanders
 5 Unisex casual wear
 6 Bobby of hockey
 7 Deutschland
 8 Classic suit material
 9 Seeded players' concerns
 10 Big bother
 11 "Of course"
 19 Suitable dir.
 21 Compass
 23 November birthstone
 24 Spruced up
 25 Like the "Saw" movies
 26 Footnote abbr.
 27 Intl. defense group
 28 In search of prey
 32 Brief passage
 33 Add to
 35 Fool
 36 Modern-day evidence
 38 Japanese-American
 39 Picture
 42 Cat call?
 43 As well
 44 Corrosive alkalis
 45 Tenet
 46 Ovine remark
 48 Id counterpart

Solution time: 25 mins.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14		
15				16				17		
18				19			20	21		
				22			23			24
26	27	28					29			30
31							32			33
34							35			36
37							38			39
							40			41
45	46						47	48		49
50							51			52
53							54			55