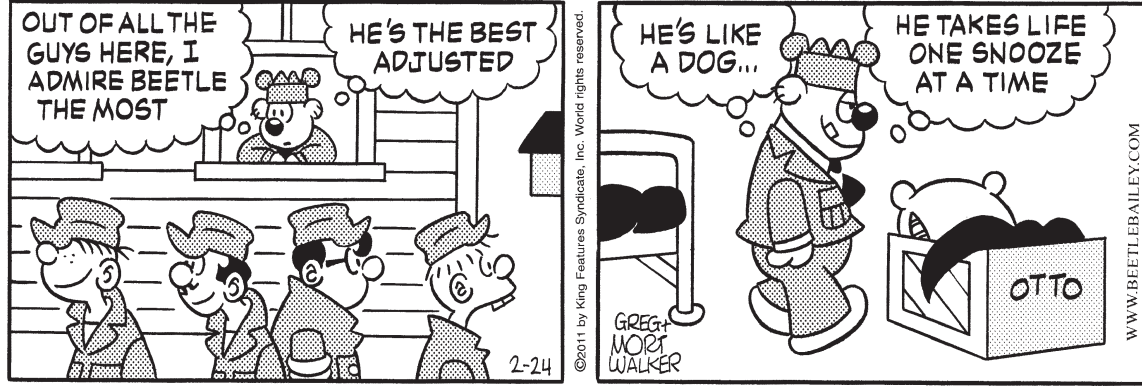


**Baby Blues** • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



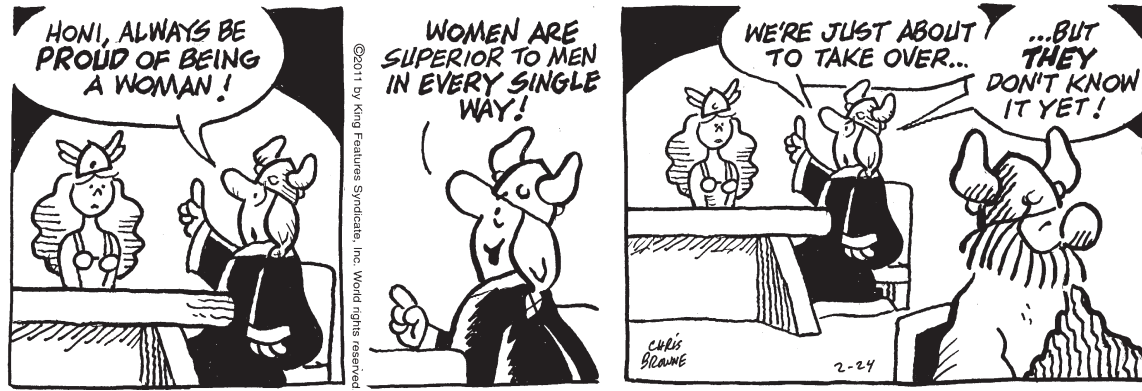
**Beetle Bailey** • Mort Walker



**Blondie** • Chic Young



**Hagar the Horrible** • Chris Browne



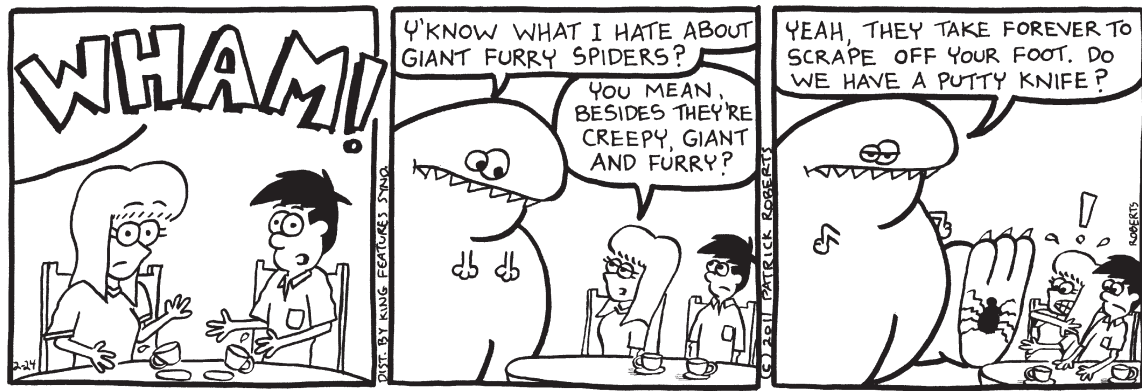
**Mother Goose and Grimm** • Mike Peters



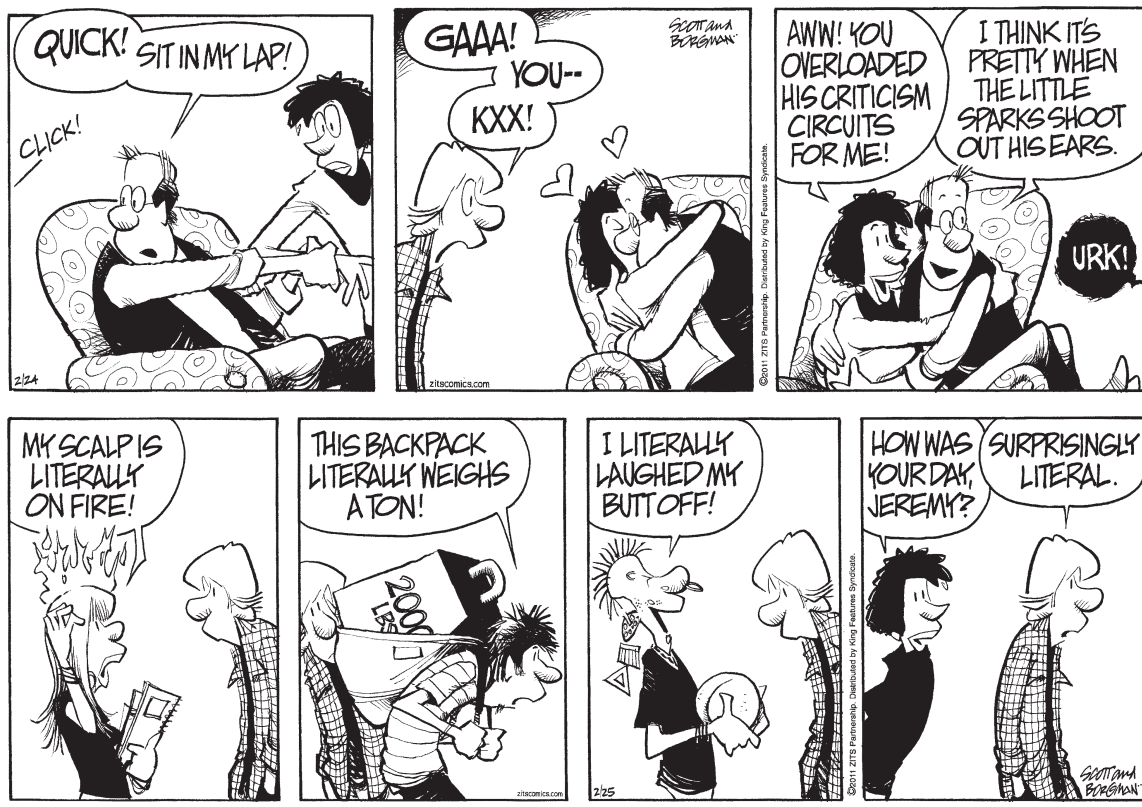
**Sally Forth** • Greg Howard



**Todd the Dinosaur** • Patrick Roberts



**Zits** • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



**Dr. Joyce Brothers**

• Ask Dr. Brothers

**Baby sitter can help school kids**

Dear Dr. Brothers: I baby-sit for two elementary-school kids, and I'm worried because they're not doing well in school. They live in a great school district, and seem motivated, but don't have the discipline to keep up with schoolwork. Their parents are busy and it seems they're not helping their kids with school. Is there anything I can do without overstepping my bounds? — L.R.

Dear L.R.: It says a lot that you have noticed a lack of parental involvement and the impact on the kids' schoolwork. Parental involvement, it turns out, is more important even than a child's own motivation in doing well in school, according to a recent article in *Review of Economics and Statistics*. While the quality of the school district plays a role in success in school, this is partially mediated through how much effort parents are willing and able to put in. So, if you feel comfortable in your relationship with either parent, you should bring up the subject of school and homework, and express your concerns about the kids.

While you can't be a substitute for a parent, you can provide a little discipline and order for the kids you baby-sit, and encourage them to learn in interesting ways. As someone they look up to, they'll be keen to pick up on your interests. You can set a good example — talk about how you like school and how important homework is. You can come up with fun ways to integrate things the kids are learning in school into playtime. With a little effort, you can help get them on track.

Dear Dr. Brothers: My son is almost 2 years old, and sucks his thumb almost all the time. I've gotten mixed messages about whether it's normal or a dangerous bad habit. He's a happy toddler, and it's not causing problems, but I don't want to let it go if he should stop. Should I try to break this habit, or will he just grow out of it? — C.P.

Dear C.P.: It's not surprising you've gotten mixed messages regarding thumb-sucking, since there are a lot of opinions. What experts agree on is that in most children, thumb-sucking is merely a habit, and not a reflection of any problems. The need to suckle is present in all babies, but can be stronger in some. If your baby's sucking desires aren't satiated after nursing, it would be normal to find comfort in sucking on an easily accessible part of his own body — the thumb. In fact, babies in the womb can be seen sucking their thumb on ultrasound images. For most kids, the desire to suck their thumb subsides by about age 2. If thumb-sucking continues much past 2 or 3 years, or is very frequent or intense, it can start to cause problems, not only with the thumb and teeth, but also socially. If you do want to try to wean your son off his thumb, start by replacing it with alternatives like playing games or rocking and singing. If you work at this slowly but surely and with a calm attitude, when your son is in a pleasant and receptive mood, you should start to see results soon.

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**Bridge** • Steve Becker

West dealer. Neither side vulnerable.

**NORTH**  
 ♠ A Q 9  
 ♥ A 5  
 ♦ 7 6  
 ♣ K J 10 6 3 2

**WEST**  
 ♠ 10 6 3  
 ♥ 9 6 2  
 ♦ 10 8 4 3 2  
 ♣ 7 4

**EAST**  
 ♠ 8  
 ♥ K Q J 10 7 4  
 ♦ 5  
 ♣ Q 9 8 5

**SOUTH**  
 ♠ K 7 5 4 2  
 ♥ 8 3  
 ♦ A K Q J 9  
 ♣ A

The bidding:  
 West North East South  
 Pass 1♣ 3♥ 3♣  
 Pass 4♥ Pass 4NT  
 Pass 5♣ Pass 7♣  
 Opening lead — nine of hearts.

**Proper Technique Pays Off**  
 This deal occurred in the 1986 Cavendish Club Invitational, regarded by many as the most prestigious pairs contest in the world. The declarer was Michael Rosenberg, who together with his partner, Matt Granovetter, finished first in the 36-pair field.

They were one of five pairs to reach a grand slam on the North-South cards, but were the only pair to make it without any assistance from the defense. By agreement, North's five-spade response to four notrump showed two aces plus the queen of spades, after which South had no compunctions about bidding seven spades.

Rosenberg won the opening heart lead with dummy's ace, crossed to the ace of clubs and led a spade to the ace. He now had several options open to him, but unerringly chose the winning line.

At trick four, he cashed the queen of spades and then played the king of clubs, discarding his heart loser. When the queen of clubs did not appear, he next played two high diamonds, leaving the missing ten of trumps outstanding for the moment.

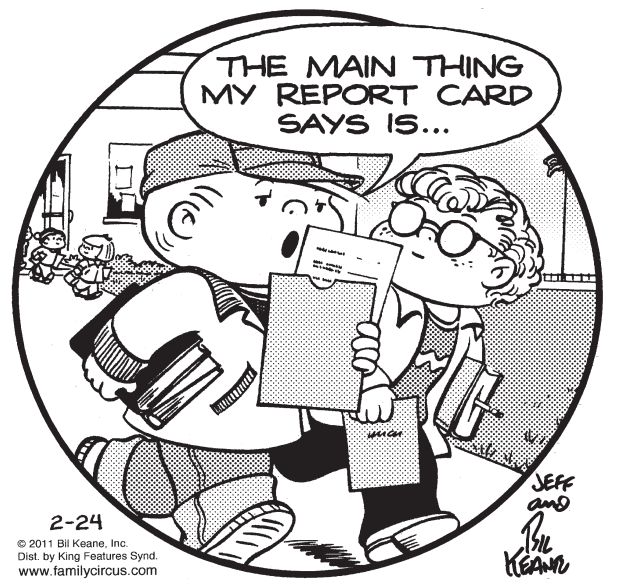
The advantage of playing diamonds while a trump was still missing can be seen in the actual deal. Had the third trump been drawn, declarer would have gone down due to the unlucky 5-1 division of the opposing diamonds.

But Rosenberg decided it could cost nothing to take out insurance against a bad diamond break — unlikely as it was — by testing diamonds first. Had both opponents followed to the A-K of diamonds, he would have drawn the missing trump and claimed the rest.

As it was, though, East showed out on the second diamond but was unable to ruff. Rosenberg then ruffed the nine of diamonds with dummy's nine of trumps, returned to his hand with a heart ruff and drew West's last trump to bring in the grand slam.

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**Family Circus** • Bil Keane



"... I won't be havin' much fun this weekend."

**Conceptis Sudoku** • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★

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.

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

**Cryptoquip**

JFCX KCYKPC ECLGCI R  
 ACEDRGX AREDYXX QGEP LCEN  
 XCQRDGLCPN, G OTKKYOC

DFCN AYTPH KRX HYER.  
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SUPPOSING A BATHROOM IS BEING USED BY A MANY-ARMED SEA CREATURE, MIGHT YOU SAY IT'S OCTO-PIED?  
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals P

**Crossword** • Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

1 Frisbee, e.g.  
 5 Dance syllable  
 8 Somewhere out there  
 12 Busy with  
 13 "Town"  
 14 Acrimony  
 15 Cicatrix  
 16 Ran into  
 17 "Yeah, right!"  
 18 Victorian vehicle  
 20 America's Cup entries  
 22 — out a living  
 23 18-Across, e.g.  
 24 Cardholder's woe  
 27 Drought-stricken region  
 32 In olden times  
 33 Category  
 34 Court

**DOWN**

1 Plate  
 2 Erstwhile  
 3 Ollie's partner  
 4 Old-style foundation  
 5 —  
 6 Shade  
 7 Bohemian  
 8 1981 Genesis album  
 9 No-privacy situation  
 10 Settled down  
 11 "Zebras"  
 19 Fine  
 21 Performance  
 24 Slight touch  
 25 "I" strain?  
 26 Impress  
 28 Einstein's birthplace  
 29 Framewor  
 30 Travail  
 31 Bagel  
 36 Cut off  
 37 Wildebeest  
 38 Dossier  
 41 Type measure  
 42 Animal stomach  
 43 Scandinavian city  
 44 Prepare to travel  
 46 "The Music Man" locale  
 47 Dance lesson  
 48 Criterion  
 51 Adversary

**Solution time: 25 mins.**

AMIS SPA SETH  
 BATH ERG PYRE  
 BULLS EYE LEER  
 ALLLOT SPICES  
 CATS ETA  
 JACK RAYS NOD  
 AGA METOO DAY  
 YON OKAY BYTE  
 DAS NOEL  
 SCYTHE GALAS  
 ELBA BARGRAPH  
 GOAL BRA ERIE  
 OGRE SEW SKED

Yesterday's answer 2-24

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				57				58		