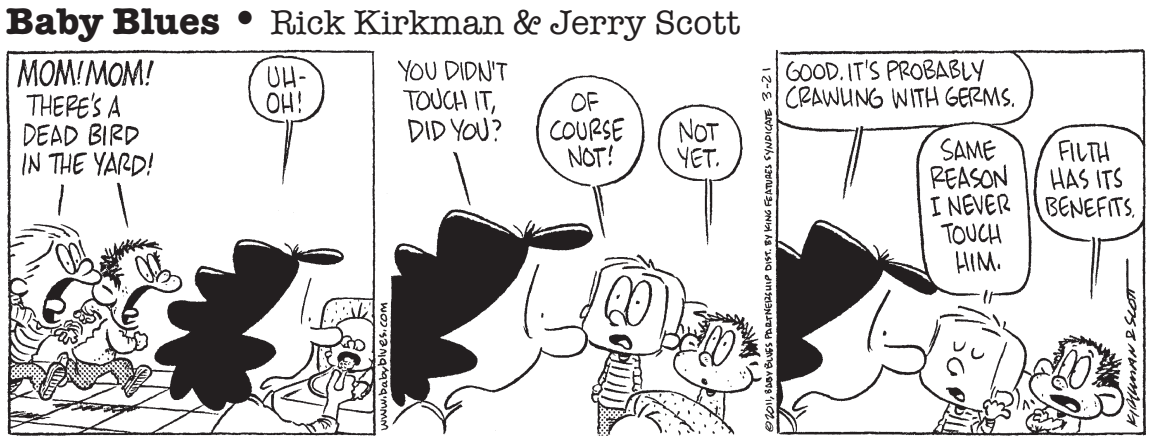
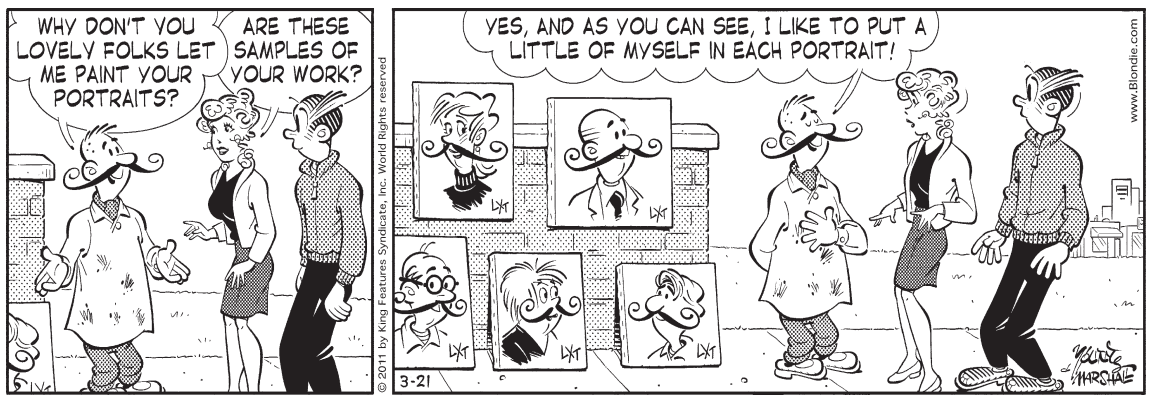
Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker

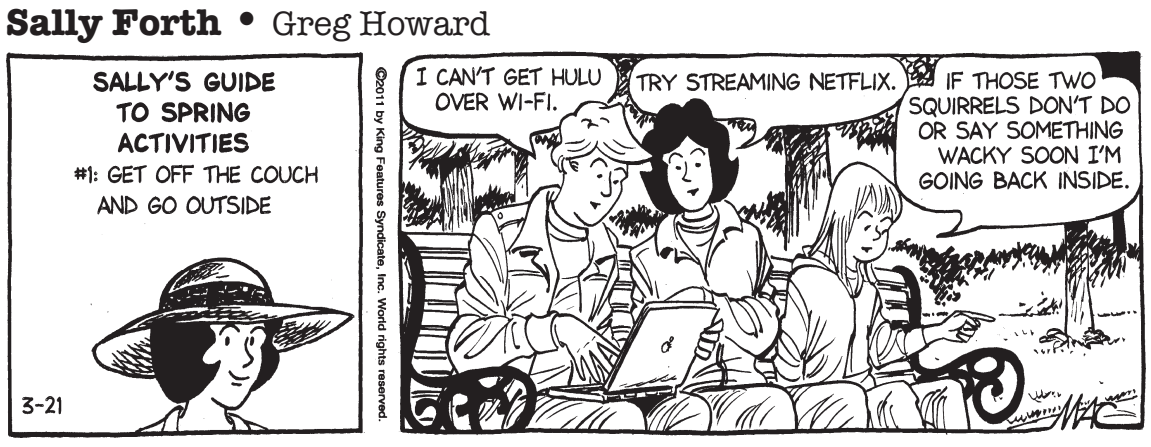
Blondie • Chic Young



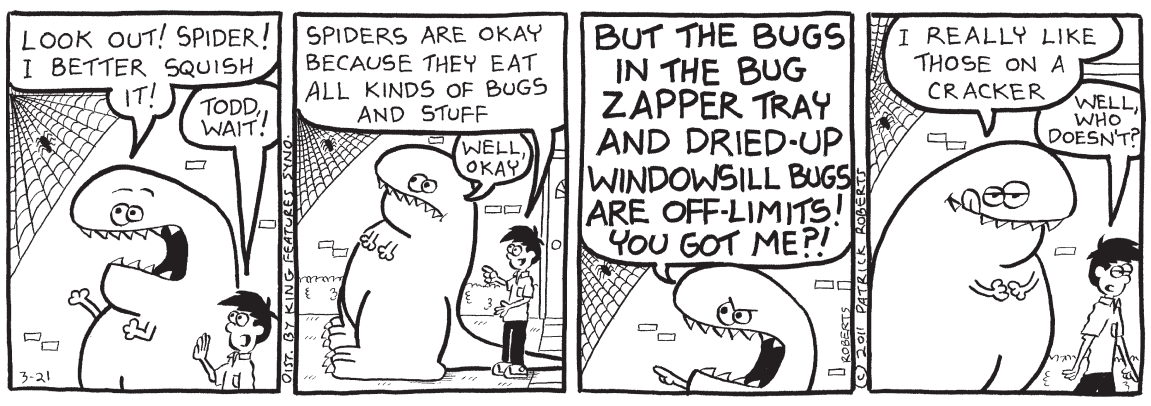
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne

Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters

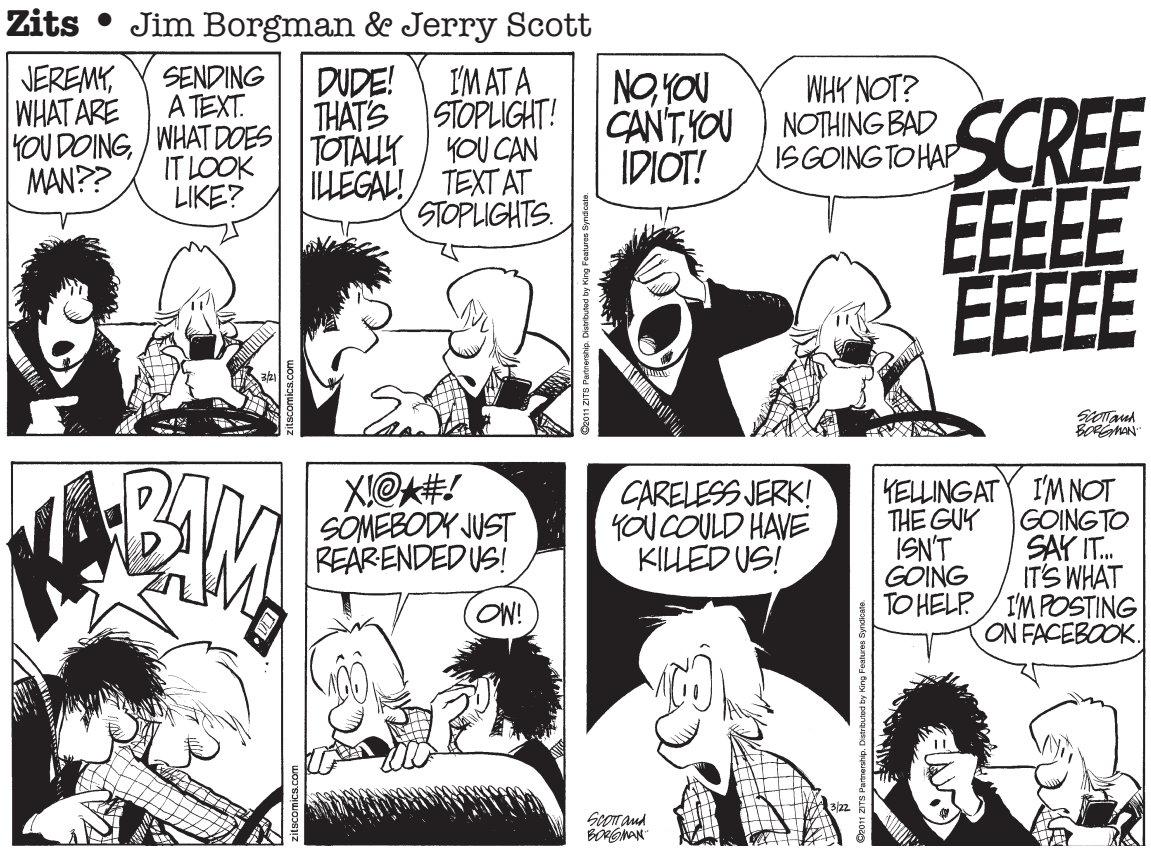
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers • Ask Dr. Brothers

She's planning baby on demand

Dear Dr. Brothers: My wife and I really want to have a baby. The problem is, she wants to schedule the birth on a certain day. I think this is nearly impossible; she's convinced we can do it if we try. She wants a Valentine's Day baby, so our conception date is all planned. This is driving me a little nuts, and I am now worried about performance anxiety. What can I do? – C.W.

Dear C.W.: It sounds as though you feel you don't have much power in this relationship, but in reality you hold all the cards – your wife will not have much recourse if you decide not to cooperate. While there are many tools for planning the timing of conception and the date of delivery, the chances of everything working the way you want are slim to none. Unless there is a medical reason to schedule a birth, your wife's doctor might take a dim view of such a thing and the odds of the due date falling on Valentine's Day – and the baby cooperating – are slim.

If your wife is fortunate enough to get pregnant, it will be easy to calculate a due date at that time, so she will get used to the idea of an alternative to her plan. But even then, a due date is approximate. It sounds as though your wife could use some prenatal classes to bring her up to speed on the realities of pregnancy. In any case, there's no reason you can't have a very special Valentine's Day next year – celebrating either a new baby or a soon-to-be-born one. If neither of these is appropriate, you still can celebrate your love and the hopes you have for a family. For now, tell your wife that you are excited to embark on this journey with her, and leave the rest to fate.

Dear Dr. Brothers: My husband says I'm micromanaging our 7-year-old's education, when I think I'm just a concerned parent. We have the means to send our son to a private school with the best teachers, but I think they could be doing more. I believe a parent has every right to suggest her child's curriculum. People are telling me to butt out. Who's right? – L.G.

Dear L.G.: It must be interesting to have a young child and watch him learn, grow and mature. Although there are fewer mandates for private school curriculum, there are thought-out plans teachers have put together for your child's education. Although your suggestions probably are welcome in a parent/teacher meeting, your best way of helping is to give your son's teachers information about his interests, abilities, difficulties and dreams. The better they know him, the more individualized attention they can give him.

There is a fine line between accepting the school's expertise, and "butting out." If you schedule a meeting with the teacher and the principal, who can better explain the institution's educational philosophy, you may be less anxious about your son's academic success. Volunteering in the classroom or with outside enrichment activities also would help convince the school you are there to help, not criticize. I'm sure the school appreciates involved parents, and probably has earned its great reputation by doing a good job educating each student.

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Bridge • Steve Becker

East dealer.
Neither side vulnerable.

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

WEST
♠ K 4 3
♥ J 9
♦ K Q J 8 7
♣ 10 5 3

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

SOUTH
♠ 10 6 5
♥ Q 10 8 4 3
♦ 5
♣ 8 7 6 4

The bidding:

East	South	West	North
Pass	Pass	1 ♦	Dble
2 ♦	Pass	Pass	Dble
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	3 ♦
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	6 ♥

Opening lead — king of diamonds.

Famous Hand

This deal, played in New Orleans during the 1978 world team championship, features both good bidding and good play. When Steve Robinson and Kit Woolsey of the U.S. held the North-South hands, the bidding went as shown. Woolsey's jump to four hearts, with only two high-card points, might seem unusual, but it was actually well-reasoned.

Robinson had doubled one diamond and two diamonds for takeout and had then cuebid to show an exceptionally powerful hand. Woolsey therefore reappraised the value of his rather meager holding. He realized he had a much better trump suit than he might have had, and he also gave great weight to his singleton diamond. So, to show that he had a better hand than a three-heart bid would have indicated, Woolsey leaped to four.

Robinson raised to six, and West led a diamond. Woolsey then timed the play perfectly, with an eye toward eventually executing an endplay. After taking the ace of diamonds, he ruffed a diamond, took a spade finesse, then ruffed dummy's last diamond before repeating the spade finesse.

After playing the trump ace, Woolsey next made the key move of cashing the ace of spades to reduce his own hand and dummy's to only trumps and clubs before leading a second trump to his queen.

When both opponents followed to the second trump, Woolsey could finally feel certain of making the slam. He led a club, planning to play dummy's nine if West followed low, or dummy's queen if West produced the ten or jack. East would then be forced to return a club, yielding a trick in that suit, or else concede a ruff-and-discard. Either way, the slam was home.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane

"Grandma, why does your phone have all these wires?"

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★ 3/21

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

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 3/18

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Cryptoquip

CV E NMIDO IV NAPXEZSZ OUMVIMPUQ ZIPUMZEDRSZ CX DXCZIX, KIDRQ AID KERR SWES VRCO-ZAXKWCXN?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A PASTOR DIRECTED A FIERY SERMON AT SOMEBODY WHO'S WEEPING, HE'D BE PREACHING TO THE CRIER.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals I

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Compete
4 Hooded snake
9 Take to court
12 Be unwell
13 After (Fr.)
14 Moreover
15 "Threescore and ten" durations
17 Multipurpose truck
18 Needlefish
19 Church official
21 Throw and catch repeatedly
24 Eyelid woe
25 Greek H
26 Away from NNE
28 Calyx component
31 Scottish caps
33 Prepared
35 Judicious
36 Ledge
38 Selleck or Hanks
40 Sister
41 Chums
43 Threw
45 Footballer's headgear
47 Consumed
48 Fertility clinic supply
49 Refuse holders
54 Writing implement
55 Level of society
56 Female deer
57 Type measures
58 High-strung
59 Praise in verse

DOWN
1 Actor Kilmer
2 Three, in old Rome
3 Subordinate Claus?
4 Cellist Pablo
5 Weigh heavily upon
6 Lingerie item
7 Tears
8 Wealth
9 Some cookware
10 "Do — others ..."
11 Paradise
16 Early bird?
20 Favorable votes
21 "West Side Story" gang
22 Hexagonal state
23 Strategies
27 Moist
29 Chills and fever
30 Give for a time
32 Bang the door
34 As you like it, in a recipe
37 Chevy Chase sleuth role
39 Mid-May honoree
42 Wander off
44 Moment
45 Crosby crony
46 Still
50 Venomous viper
51 Commotion
52 "Wynken, Blynken and —"
53 Witness

Solution time: 27 mins.

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

Saturday's answer 3-21

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					■	59		