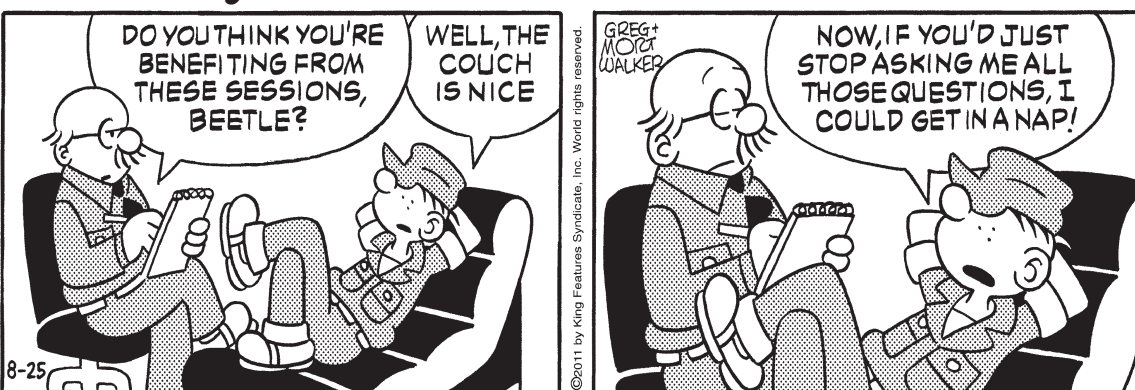


Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



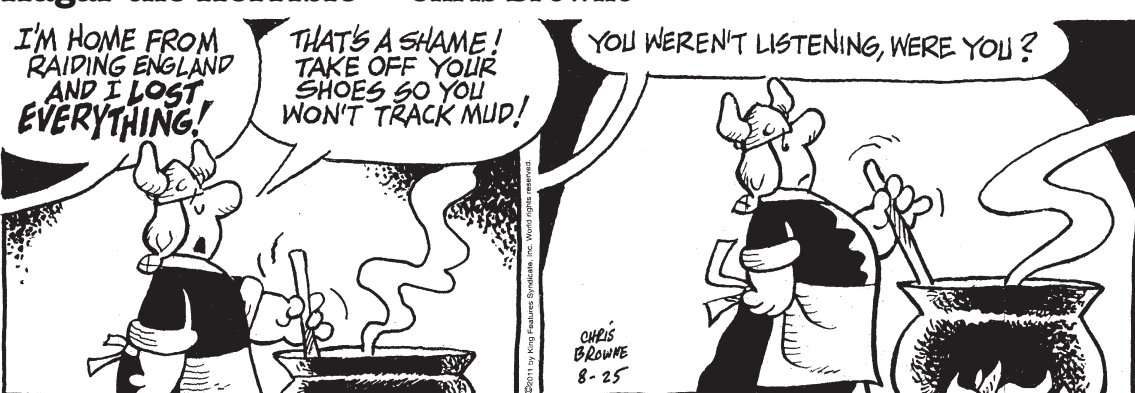
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Blondie • Chic Young



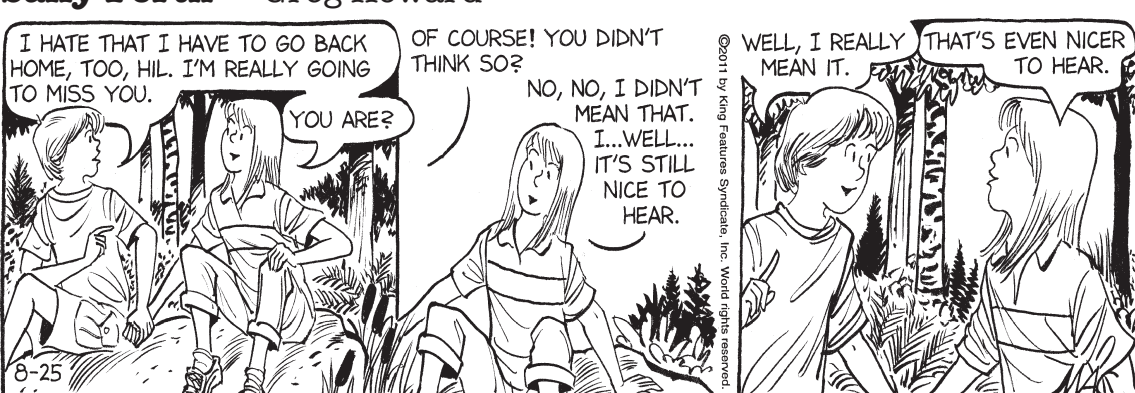
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



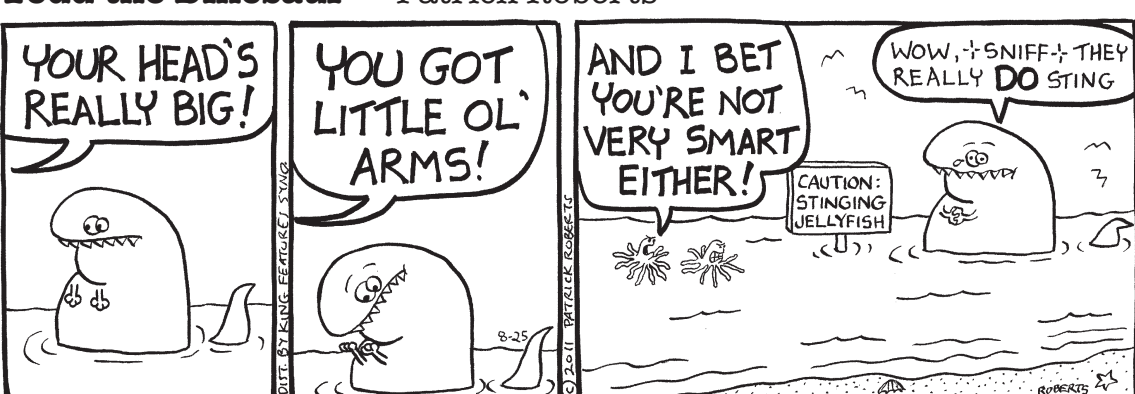
Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



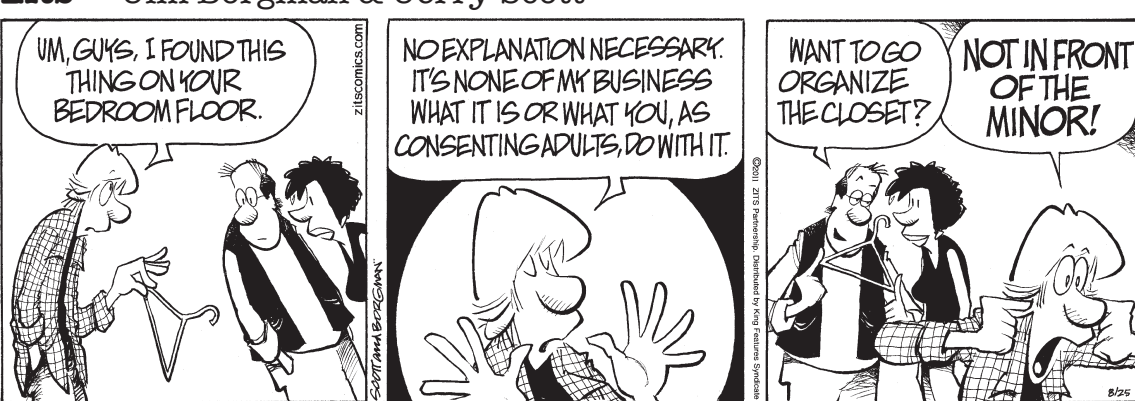
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers



• Ask Dr. Brothers

Eight-year-old runs the house

Dear Dr. Brothers: I knew when I married my wife that her 8-year-old daughter was part of the package. I really do understand that she loves her very much. But over the course of four years, it's become apparent that her daughter runs the show. Our dinners are always based on what she wants. Our TV shows are always her choices. We can't play any music that she doesn't like. My wife becomes very upset when I bring up this stuff, and I'm at the end of my rope. -- G.K.

Dear G.K.: You are in a household where you are the stepparent of a 'tween, the new definition of a preteen who is already a diva but isn't yet old enough to wear a bra. She may just be a bratty kid to you, and it's unfortunate that you haven't been able (or perhaps willing) to work toward having your own relationship with her. You may have been very reluctant to step in and assert yourself in the household, and the child has sensed that. Many stepparents wonder if they have the right to discipline their spouse's child, and they never want to make waves, so they just stay out of it. That can yield the power imbalance you find yourself coping with -- neither you nor your wife has claimed the head position in the household, so the kid has grabbed it.

Ask your wife if she is happy with how things are going -- she probably isn't either but doesn't want to be put on the defensive and be blamed for the way she is raising her daughter. If you approach her in the spirit of the three of you being a team that needs to work together more smoothly, you may find the balance you are looking for.

Dear Dr. Brothers: Last week some new neighbors moved in next door. They are a very poor family of three, and the first time the father knocked on the door, I was happy to help him out with the good old cup of sugar. I think that was a really bad move, because it seems every time he needs something, he doesn't hesitate to knock. I've given him rides to the store, food from my refrigerator and money. How can I dial this whole thing back a bit? -- D.B.

Dear D.B.: Wow, you really are a nice and accommodating neighbor. But it seems the people next door have you pegged as their own personal servant and welfare agent. It is nice to be able to help them out a bit while they are new residents getting settled in, but it's really not cool of them to abuse your generosity.

Perhaps if you are willing to invest just a little more time and effort, you can find out what resources are available for your new neighbors, and ask some of the people whose responsibility it is to shepherd people through the processes to give them a call and get the ball rolling. Even if this family does take advantage of some of the official help out there, though, they probably will turn to you occasionally. There is nothing wrong with establishing limits at this late date -- once they are really OK, you can let them know what your boundaries are.

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Bridge • Steve Becker

East dealer.
East-West vulnerable.
NORTH
♠ 6 2
♥ K J 9 7 3
♦ K J 5
♣ 8 6 3
WEST
♠ A 4
♥ 10 8 6 4 2
♦ Q 8 6 3
♣ J 4
EAST
♠ —
♥ A Q 5
♦ 10 9
♣ A K Q 10 9 7 5 2
SOUTH
♠ K Q J 10 9 8 7 5 3
♥ —
♦ A 7 4 2
♣ —

The bidding:
East South West North
5 ♠ 5 ♣ Pass Pass
6 ♣ Pass Pass Dble
Opening lead -- ace of diamonds.

Opening lead -- ace of diamonds. Post-mortems often prove very illuminating, since they permit an analysis of every avenue of play with all four hands in view.

Consider this deal played in a national championship. East opened five clubs, vulnerable, and carried on to six after South bid five spades. North doubled, and East finished down one after South led the ace and another diamond.

South was unhappy with the outcome, contending he could have made a slam in spades -- worth 980 points -- against any defense. After a club lead, he would have ruffed, played a diamond to the jack, continued with the K-A of diamonds and ruffed a diamond in dummy to produce his 12th trick. His only loser would have been a trump.

West challenged this statement, claiming he could stop the slam by leading the ace and another trump. But South stuck to his guns, insisting he would have made the slam even with a trump lead and offered to back his opinion by betting the traditional old family homestead.

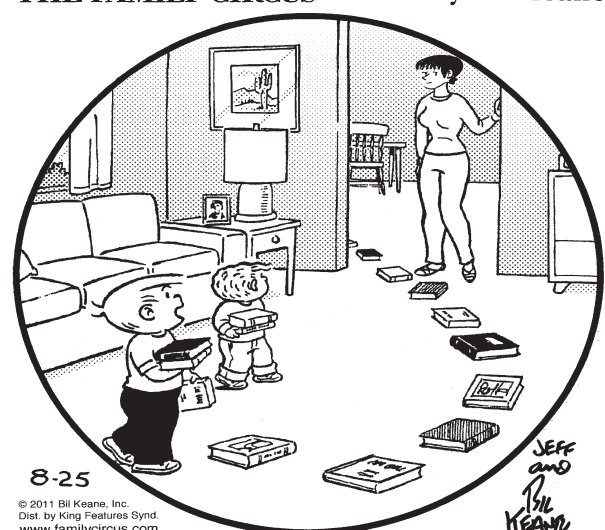
Further analysis led to the conclusion that South was right. Declarer wins the second trump lead with dummy's six and returns the king of hearts, forcing East to cover with the ace. South ruffs, leads a diamond to the jack and returns the jack of hearts.

When East covers with the queen, South ruffs and then cashes all his remaining trumps, reducing his own hand to the A-7-4 of diamonds. On the last trump, West must choose a discard from the Q-8-6 of diamonds and ten of hearts in front of dummy's K-5 of diamonds and 9-7 of hearts. West can't discard successfully, and declarer makes the slam.

All of which explains why South is still living happily on his old family homestead.
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Family Circus • Bil Keane

THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane



"You'll have to stay on the stepping-stones unless you like your shoes gettin' wet."

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

By Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★ 8/25

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

Cryptoquip

8-25 CRYPTOQUIP

JH IWFVTM WZIWO JROF GI

XIZH KICC-CVMEFIQ. HDR

KDT'F IXIZ OII JI OVFFVTM

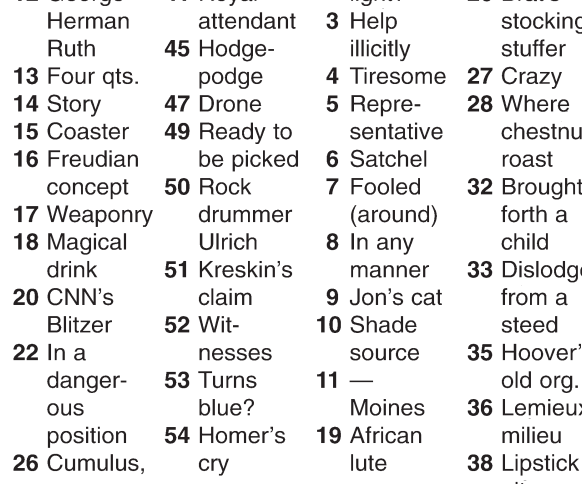
WF FEI QVJJIZ FWGCI.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT MIGHT YOU CALL A STORE FULL OF FLU-RIDDEN PEOPLE WITH NOISY SYMPTOMS? A COUGHY SHOP.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals E

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS
1 Just one of those things
5 "Wipeout" network
8 On in years
12 George Herman Ruth
13 Four qts.
14 Story
15 Coaster
16 Freudian concept
17 Weaponry
18 Magical drink
20 CNN's Blitzer
22 In a dangerous position
26 Cumulus, e.g.
29 Apiece
30 Always, in verse
31 "My bad"
32 Foundation
33 Radius neighbor
34 Expert
35 Ever-green type
- 36 Arabian Sea feeder
37 "Gun-smoke" saloon
40 Move like a moth
41 Royal attendant
45 Hodge-podge
47 Drone
49 Ready to be picked
50 Rock drummer
51 Kreskin's claim
52 Wittnesses
53 Turns blue?
54 Homer's cry
- 55 Tackles' team-mates
DOWN
1 Recipe meas.
2 Head light?
3 Help illicitly
4 Tiresome
5 Representative
6 Satchel
7 Fooled (around)
8 In any manner
9 Jon's cat
10 Shade source
11 —
12 Moines
19 African lute
21 Rowing need
23 "Fidelio," e.g.
24 Waiter's handout
25 Support group?
26 Brat's stocking stuffer
27 Crazy
28 Where chestnuts roast
32 Brought forth a child
33 Dislodge from a steed
35 Hoover's old org.
36 Lermieux milieu
38 Lipstick alternative
39 Naiad or dryad
42 Carriage
43 Mimicked
44 Untouchable Eliot
45 Antiquated
46 Deposit
48 G.I. entertainers



Solution time: 25 mins.



Yesterday's answer 8-25

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		
45	46				47	48			49	
50					51				52	
53					54				55	