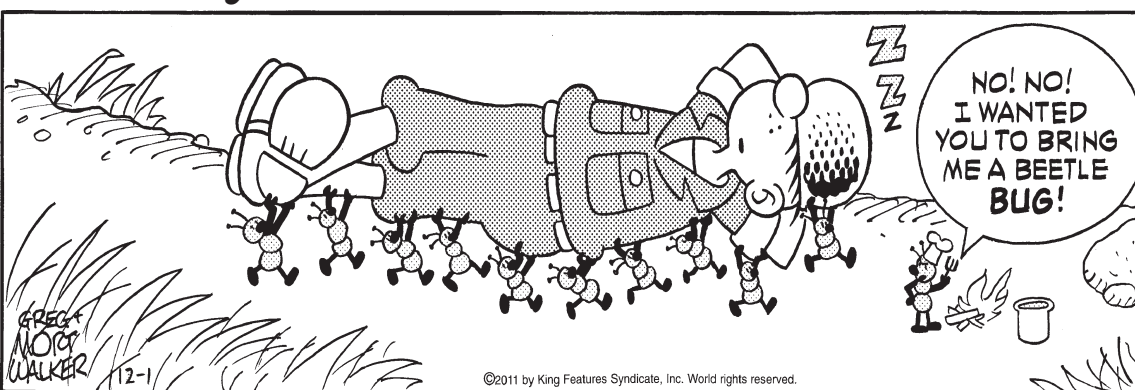


Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



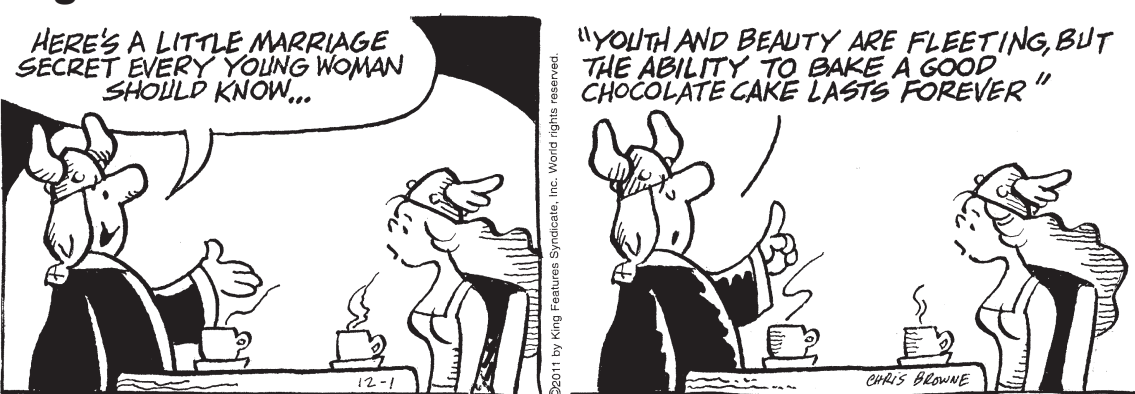
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



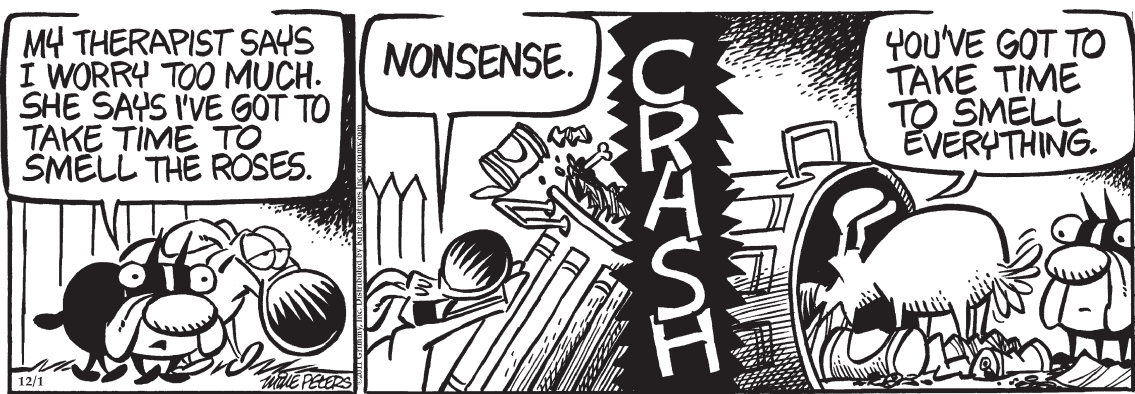
Blondie • Chic Young



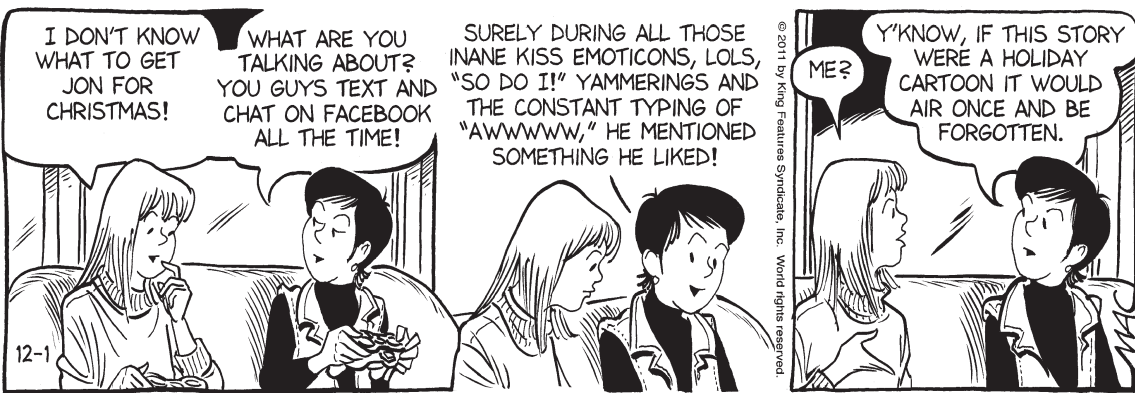
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



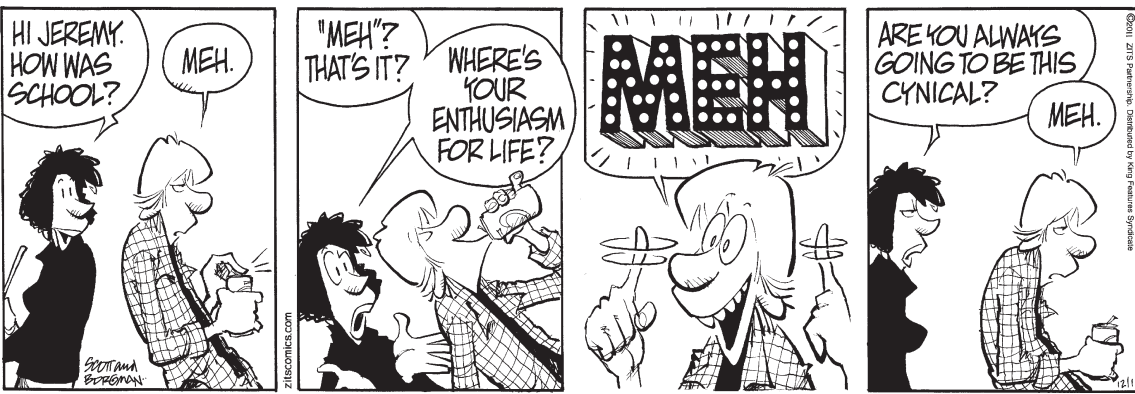
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers

• Ask Dr. Brothers

Son won't talk about problems

Dear Dr. Brothers: I have two children, a year apart in school. My son is 14 and quiet, and my daughter is 13 and never had a thought she didn't share. I like to sit with them after dinner and discuss what is on their minds. I know all about my daughter's dramas - endless - but my son rarely has anything to offer. He seems happy and secure, but I wonder if he is hiding something. - B.T.

Dear B.T.: Your son may be so entertained by his sister's complaints about friends and other issues he doesn't feel the need to speak up. You may want to split up your talk sessions so they are private for each child - then perhaps your son will find jump in. On the other hand, he may deliberately be avoiding the conversations because he doesn't want his sister (or maybe his mom) to know his private thoughts.

There's a third possibility, backed up by research published in *Child Development* from a study at the University of Missouri. In that survey, researchers found boys are not really embarrassed about disclosing their problems to their moms or psychologists; they are just action-oriented and consider it a waste of time! They may see their sisters emoting and getting keyed up with anxiety or depression. So perhaps you should be watching what your son does instead of focusing on what he says. You might get a clue to his problem-solving method. And encourage your daughter to action on her problem-solving.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I am about to become an aunt. My brother and his wife are expecting, but don't seem to realize there could be a problem with their pet. They have a toy dog that is nervous. They dress her and consider her their "baby," with no plans to change. How do I let them see that it might be a problem? - V.M.

Dear V.M.: Many people consider pets part of the family and wouldn't consider changing when a baby arrives. This seems especially true with tiny dogs, which don't seem to pose a threat and fit so cutely into doggie wardrobes. But your brother and his wife do need a heads-up when it comes to the dog and the baby. Putting the dog second may be an issue now, but after the baby comes, that transition happens naturally. Even the cutest dog can't compare with a new baby.

The owners may notice the dog becoming jealous, and need to make sure they still set aside one-on-one time for the dog. It will be a long time before the baby can treat the dog responsibly. There's going to be tail-pulling, grabbing, bothering it while it eats, tying ribbons to its ears, etc. You can help teach the child how to handle animals gently and to stay out of the way when it comes to dicey situations. But the main thing I want to make sure you tell your brother is a dog and a baby never should be left alone together, especially when the dog is the nervous type. Do this, and you will be a valuable and caring aunt.

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Bridge • Steve Becker

South dealer.
North-South vulnerable.

NORTH
♦ J 9 3 2
♥ 10 9
♦ K Q J 9 5
♠ 6 2

WEST
♦ 7 4
♥ Q 7 6 4 3
♦ A
♠ Q 9 8 5 4

EAST
♠ A 6
♥ K J 8 5
♦ 8 6 4 3 2
♣ J 7

SOUTH
♠ K Q 10 8 5
♥ A 2
♦ 10 7
♠ A K 10 3

The bidding:
1♠ South West North East
4♣ Pass 2♣ Pass

Opening lead — ace of diamonds.

Variation on a Theme

Most players are familiar with the suit-preference signal used when returning a suit that partner can ruff. If the leader of the suit wants his partner to return the higher-ranking of the two remaining suits (other than trumps and the suit being ruffed), he leads a high spot-card for his partner to ruff; if he prefers the lower-ranking suit, he returns his lowest card.

This handy device can be applied in many other defensive situations. Today's deal, which occurred in a team contest, illustrates a common variation.

At both tables, the contract was four spades, and both Wests led the singleton ace of diamonds. At the first table, where a relatively inexperienced pair held the East-West cards, East followed to the first trick with the deuce, ostensibly indicating a lack of interest in having diamonds continued. This left West in the dark as to what suit to shift to, so he tossed a mental coin and it came up clubs.

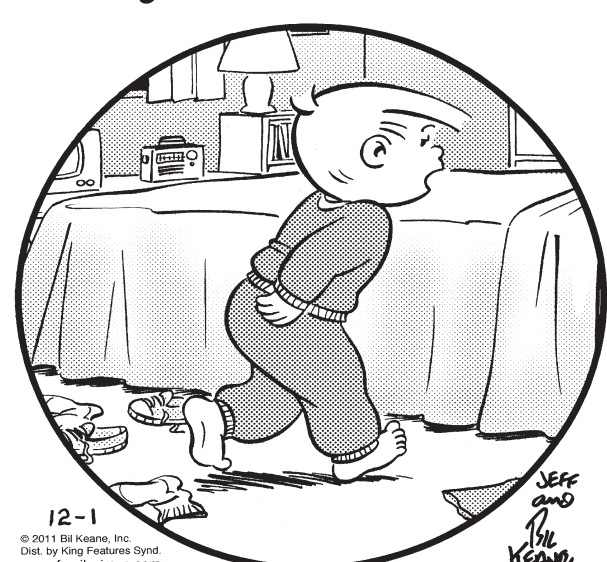
Declarer won East's jack with the ace and lost the queen of spades to East's ace. East returned a diamond, ruffed by West for the defenders' third trick, but that was the end of the line for the defense. South won West's heart shift, drew the missing trump and claimed the remainder, discarding his losing heart on one of dummy's high diamonds.

At the second table, where East-West had been to the wars a bit more often, the opening trick constituted a mandatory suit-preference situation. With West's ace likely to be a singleton, it was East's obligation to tell West what to do next. Accordingly, he played the diamond eight on West's ace, requesting a heart switch at trick two (a low diamond would have called for a club).

That settled declarer's hash. He won the heart shift with the ace and led a trump, but East won and gave his partner a diamond ruff, and the defenders then cashed their heart trick to sink the contract.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



"The best thing about goin' to bed is you're one day closer to Christmas!"

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/01

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.

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

Cryptoquip

LMSZU ASPQ XAD HMPMXEIQ

PUEJUJL EIU FIESXUJ USXIQ

MSXA XGML DPEZU, ML

XGEX FUSUIEP EJMMLMAS?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: NURSERY RHYME ABOUT A BEAST OF BURDEN THAT COULD BE QUITE QUICK ON ITS FEET: "YAK BE NIMBLE."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: L equals S

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 Practice boxing team
 - 5 Has permission
 - 8 Suspend piece
 - 12 Mah-jongg
 - 13 Yoko of music
 - 14 By word of mouth
 - 15 Surmounting
 - 16 Kvetch
 - 17 Shrek is one
 - 18 Fancy French cake
 - 20 Offer as an example
 - 22 \$ dispenser
 - 23 Comic DeLuxe
 - 24 Light bulb measure
 - 27 Length-wise and contiguous
 - 32 Hearty quaff
 - 33 "The Matrix" role
- DOWN**
- 1 Unescorted
 - 2 Pocketed bread
 - 3 Greatly
 - 4 Echo
 - 5 Memorial building
 - 6 Literary collection
 - 7 Quiet exercise
 - 8 Jinx
 - 9 Fight
 - 10 DEATH
 - 11 Jane Lynch's show
 - 19 What @ means
 - 21 Banned pesticide
 - 24 Humorist
 - 25 —
 - 26 Enveloping membrane
 - 28 Verdi's "—"
 - 29 Paper garden
 - 30 Affirmative action?
 - 31 Insult (Sl.)
 - 36 Easterners
 - 37 "Smoking or —?"
 - 38 Tranquil
 - 41 Therefore
 - 42 Big brass
 - 43 Shakespeare's river
 - 44 Strong wind
 - 46 Incursion
 - 47 Wight or Man
 - 48 Wittenessed
 - 51 — de

Solution time: 25 mins.

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

Yesterday's answer 12-1

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12								14		
15								17		
18				19			20	21		
24	25	26				27	28	29		30
32						33				34
35										38
42	43					44	45		46	47
49						50	51		52	
53						54			55	
56						57			58	