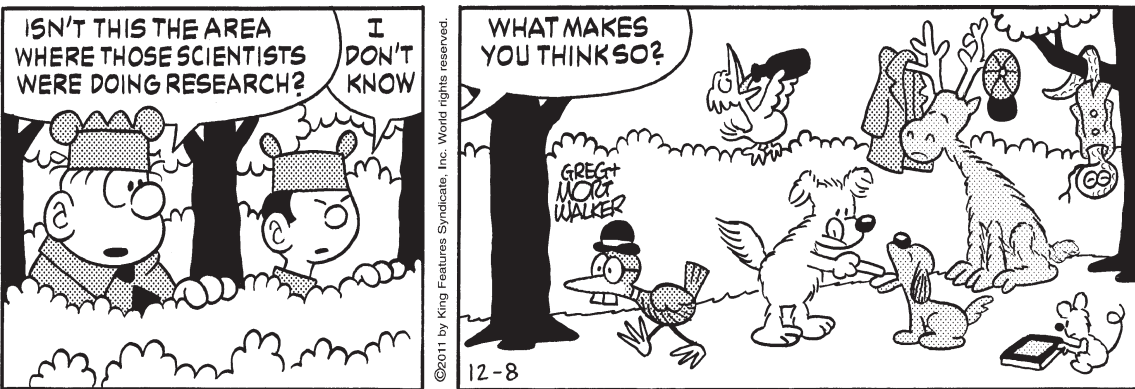


Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



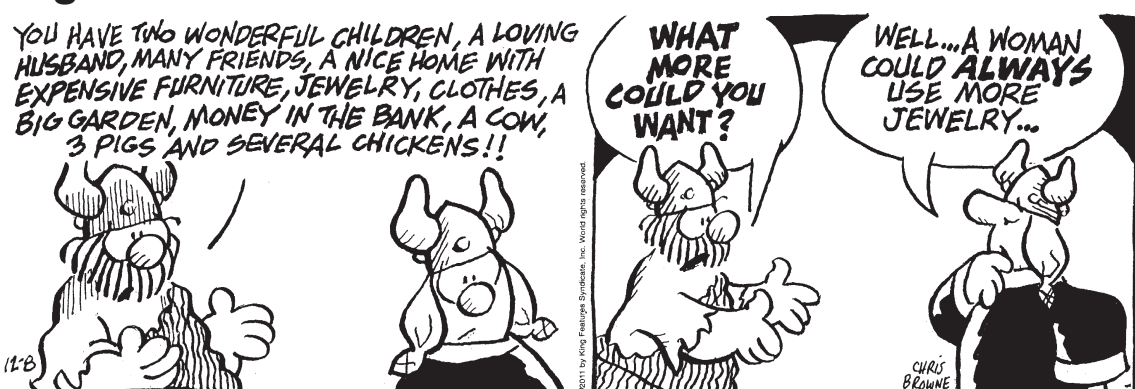
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Blondie • Chic Young



Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



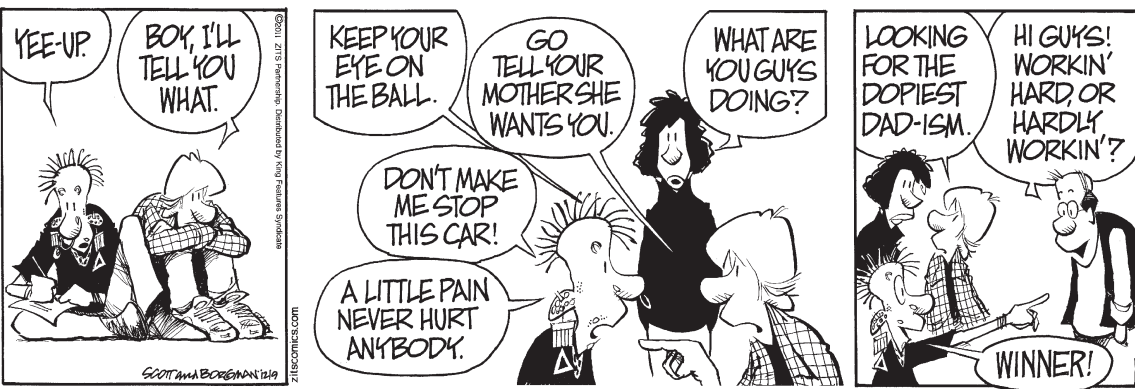
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers



Couple not sure about parenting

Dear Dr. Brothers: My husband and I are at the stage that we are thinking about kids. Our best friends took the plunge two years ago, and now have a toddler, who is sometimes cute but usually full of tantrums, screaming and tears. We don't want to cope with that. Our friends are exhausted but trying to convince us it's all good. We find it hard to believe them, and we're scared. — N.M.

Dear N.M.: It is good to recognize your fears and negative emotions about becoming parents. It is those who rush into it without a moment's thought who usually are the most unprepared for the reality, you are more likely to take your potential new roles more realistically. What you need now is a more balanced view of life with a baby. True, it isn't all fun and games, but perhaps what they haven't shared with you is the little everyday moments that make all the sleep deprivation and tantrums worth it.

Sometimes it's hard to identify with people who love their kids. It's common to find couples who don't think they really like kids — until they get one of their own. Somehow there is a great difference between a child who carries your genes and someone else's who is rolling on the floor kicking and screaming. So take the time, when your friends are rested and smiling, to ask them to share with you some of the wonderful moments they've had. I'm sure with a more balanced perspective, you can move forward.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I have two children, who are a handful. It is always stressful when we visit my parents for Sunday dinner. The kids don't want to sit still and every time my dad tries to discipline them or ask for help or respect, they run to me and say Grandpa is being mean to them. They are 4 and 6. How can I improve this situation? I want them all to get along, not be at each other's throats every time we get together. — R.T.

Dear R.T.: It seems as though your kids may need a firmer hand from Mom and Dad before they even get anywhere near Sunday dinner at Grandpa's. There seems to be a lack of direction on your part when it comes to what behavior is expected from your children when they are visiting. They are old enough to understand there are going to be rules when they visit their grandparents, and that you are going to be watching. Set up some consequences so they know they have a clear choice. Then keep them under supervision while they interact with Grandpa so that he doesn't have to be a policeman. He'll like that.

Think about some of the activities Grandpa wishes they would get involved in. As long as it's not just heavy labor or something unpleasant, talk up how much fun it will be to help Grandpa. You can remind them how much he loves and enjoys them, and how nice it would be to make him smile instead of frown or yell. Try to get them motivated to help out and make their grandpa happy. Most kids are generous and kind once they know what is expected of them and what rewards may follow. You don't need to bribe them with anything but the promise of the Sunday visits being much more fun when they cooperate.

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Bridge • Steve Becker

West dealer.
Both sides vulnerable.

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

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

EAST
♠ 6 5
♥ 10 8 4 2
♦ K 6
♣ 8 7 6 5 3

SOUTH
♠ —
♥ A K Q J 7
♦ 8 5 3
♣ A J 10 9 4

The bidding:
West North East South
4♠ 5♦ Pass 6♥

Opening lead — king of spades.

A Snare and a Delusion

Let's say you're declarer at six hearts and West leads the king of spades. How should you play the hand?

The normal reaction probably would be to ruff the spade lead, play four rounds of trumps, cash five club tricks and then try a diamond finesse.

If you decided to play this way, you'd go down two. East would win the diamond with the king in the three-card end position and return a spade to West's A-10 to put a sad end to the proceedings. True, you can salvage a trick at the end by rejecting the diamond finesse, but, even if you do, it won't be much of a victory.

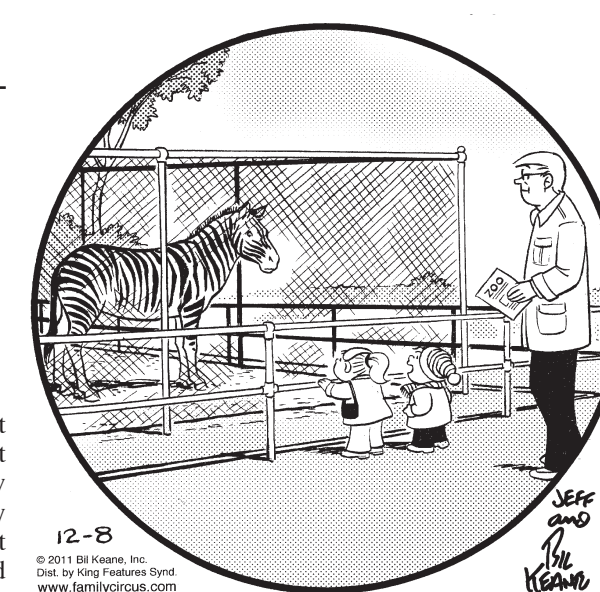
Actually, 12 tricks are there, easy as pie, once you realize that the diamond finesse is a snare and a delusion. After drawing trumps and discarding three diamonds from dummy, all you have to do to wrap up the slam is to cross to the queen of clubs, lead the queen of spades and discard a diamond on it. The jack of spades (on which you later discard a second diamond) thus becomes your 12th trick.

The key to playing the hand this way lies in recognizing that you start with 11 top tricks and that you should try to score your 12th trick in spades rather than diamonds.

It is perfectly natural to regard dummy's beautiful diamonds as a prime source of tricks, but in this particular case all you need is one additional trick rather than a whole bunch of them. Once the trumps divide 4-3, establishing a spade trick in dummy makes a successful outcome an absolute certainty.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



12-8
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"When the horses play football he gets to be the referee."

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/08

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.

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

Cryptoquip

EDGYPBD VXTB BPGQDF
GYHCJ TB QHUKH VU ED VXD
GXDYLDLV EFYHC, LDULID
GYII TV VXD IUKIJ IUIIJ.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THEY MADE SUCH A BIG COMMOTION ABOUT AN UPCOMING HAWAIIAN DANCE, I'D SAY IT WAS A HULA HOOPLA.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals T

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Get well truly
5 Start over
9 Dandy locations
12 Pelvic bones
13 On
14 "I — Camera"
15 Mask series
17 Back talk
18 Advertising section
19 Selassie wor-shipper
21 B&O, for ex.
22 Dodge
24 — and crafts
27 Hearty brew
28 Sandwich treat
31 Round Table address
32 60 sec.
33 Mischievous tyke
34 First course, often
36 Peculiar
37 Touch
38 Obliterate

DOWN
3 Has a bug
4 "Star Wars"
5 Huck's weaponry
6 Schedule abbr.
7 Elmer, to Bugs
8 "Tosca," e.g.
9 It barely connects to the sternum
10 Leave out
11 One of the Three Bears
16 Mess up
16 Mess up
20 Commotion
22 Skip a phoneme
23 Sell
24 Fool
25 Carnival city
26 Loyal to the end
27 Andy's old radio pal
29 Ostrich's kin
30 Make up your mind
35 Opposite of "post-"
37 Greek god of the winds
39 Moving about
40 Flash — box
41 Theater
42 Sty cry
43 Unwilling to listen
44 Apportion (out)
45 Unveiled
46 Cheese choice
49 Shad product
50 Salt Lake athlete

Solution time: 25 mins.

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

Yesterday's answer 12-8

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		