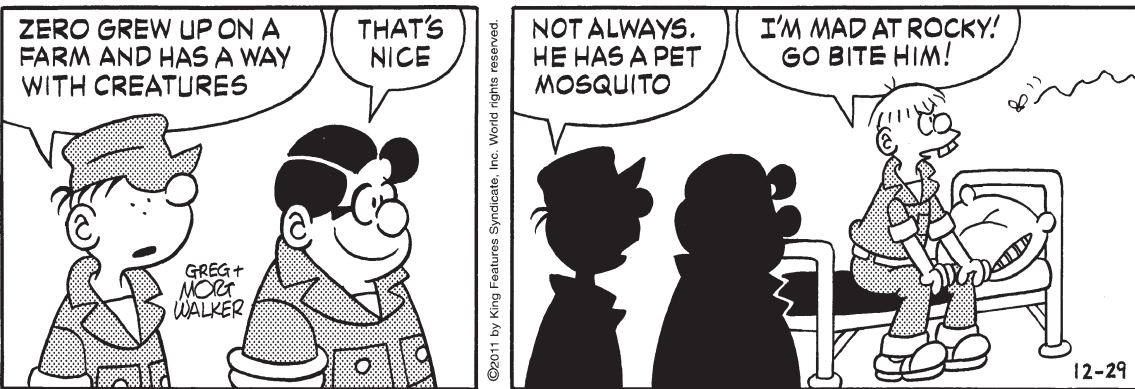


Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



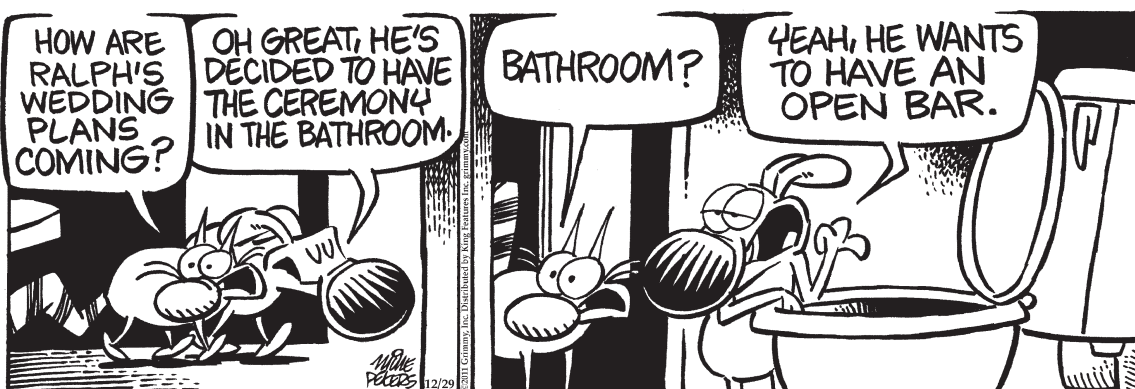
Blondie • Chic Young



Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



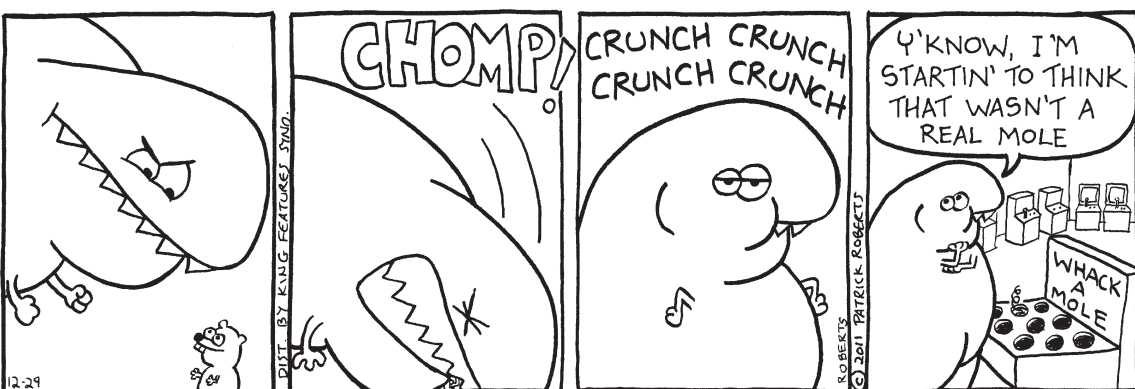
Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



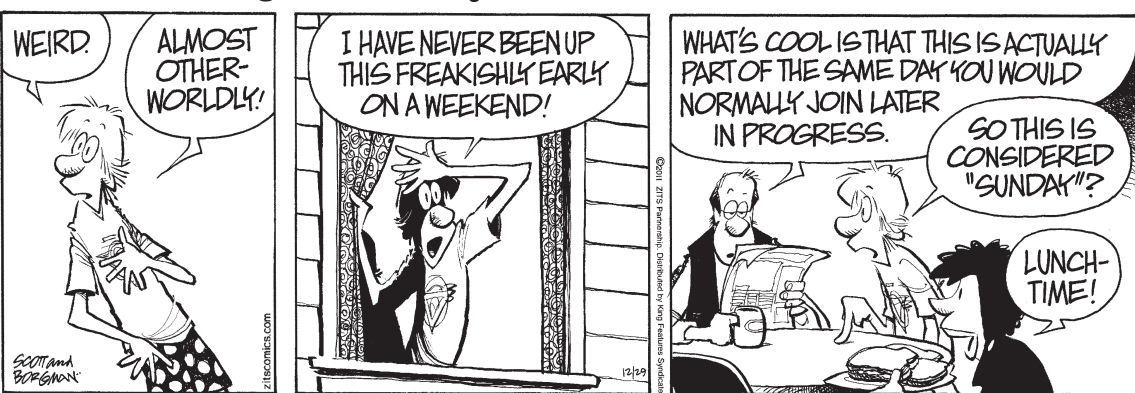
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers

• Ask Dr. Brothers

Mom fears teen will leave home

Dear Dr. Brothers: Our son is 16, and he's never liked school. Now he's spending a lot of time watching those "occupy" people in New York and reading about radical things. He says he wishes he could go and be with that mob of people. We are afraid he is going to take off. He's never even been out of our county, and wouldn't have any idea how to survive. What can we do to convince him it is a bad idea? — C.S.

Dear C.S.: The images from the occupy movement can be compelling from afar. While your son may not have found school fulfilling, he may never have been exposed to any activity so full of passion, excitement and commitment. He may have an undeveloped interest in social justice or politics. Not all education takes place in the classroom, and there may be much to learn from this movement. Of course your interest is in keeping him in school and safely at home until he is old enough to make his own big decisions.

If you and your husband are fearful your son may take off, address that issue right away. It sounds as though you need better communication and to explain your point of view in a calm and logical way. He may feel he has nothing to lose, and you want to make sure he understands that he needs to let you know if he has deeper issues he is wrestling with. The movement he admires is not centralized; perhaps he and some friends could start a local group dealing with some of the same problems. Let him know you're with him.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I am the mother of a sweet 10-year-old boy. When he was 5, his grandma bought him a paint set, and ever since then, he has wanted to be an artist. I have always encouraged him because I love him, but I haven't really seen any artistic talent. He is still gung-ho about it, and I wonder if I should switch him to some other interest. I don't want him to be disappointed if he finds out he isn't capable of competing in the art world. I don't know what to do. — G.V.

Dear G.V.: I think you are putting too much pressure on yourself and your son. You seem to have overlooked the fact that part of your job is to love unconditionally and encourage your son in whatever he is passionate about until he finds his own niche. You needn't feel guilty about encouraging him while he took his first steps toward the future. What would be a shame, though, would be if you let him know you believe he is not up to the challenge. I agree you should offer him other opportunities for creative expression, but it would be a mistake to try to shut down his interest in art because you think he won't be successful.

Art needn't be a competition, and there are so many facets of the world of the artist that he surely will find his particular skill set as he goes along. Many successful artists can't draw well, or need to practice and study for a long time in order to develop their talents. So instead of despairing, why not help him explore computer-aided design, cartooning, architecture or other alternatives to drawing and painting? And then step back while he does his own thing. Good luck!

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Bridge • Steve Becker

North dealer, North-South vulnerable.

NORTH
 ♠AKJ963
 ♥A5
 ♦AKQ84
 ♣—

WEST
 ♠1054
 ♥73
 ♦1062
 ♣AK1052

EAST
 ♠Q82
 ♥864
 ♦J7
 ♣J9763

SOUTH
 ♠KQJ1092
 ♥953
 ♦Q84

The bidding:
 North East South West
 2♣* Pass 2♥ Pass
 2♦ Pass 3♥ Pass
 4♥ Pass 4♥ Pass
 5NT Pass 7♥ Pass

* strong, artificial
 Opening lead — king of clubs.

The Grand Slam Force
 Most players shun artificial bidding conventions and are content to settle for Blackwood and Stayman and one or two other gadgets that might appeal to them. There is much to be said for this natural style of bidding. Readers of this column have probably detected an implicit endorsement of the more natural methods of bidding.

But this philosophy can be carried too far, because there are some relatively simple artificial conventions that can be profitably adopted without interfering with natural bidding.

One such convention is the grand slam force. Basically, this convention addresses itself to the case where a player feels there is an excellent chance for a grand slam, provided there is no loser in the trump suit.

Take this deal where North would happily bid seven hearts if he knew that his partner's hearts were headed by at least the K-Q. He elicits this information by leaping to five notrump, a special bid that commands partner to bid seven if he holds two of the three top trump honors, regardless of the rest of his hand. The five-notrump bid implies that hearts — the last suit named — are trumps. South has no choice but to bid seven hearts, which is easily made.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



12-29
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 www.familycircus.com
 "First there was God. Next came George Washington, and then Daddy."

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/29

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

Cryptoquip

ZGD YIHYSGX UQTSGNQ SRYS
 MGWTNC NEJQM YKC IHGXO
 WHMGX RYJGKD Y AUGJGKD
 ZYXOZQYS: Y UEXO-EAGNQ.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SINGER STEVENS AND ACTOR LIOTTA ARE VERY CHEERFUL GUYS. I'D SAY THEY'RE RAYS OF SUNSHINE.
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: S equals T

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
 1 Dillon or Damon
 5 Society newbie
 8 Sleeping
 12 Continental coin
 13 Moray or conger
 14 Existed
 15 Use a swizzle stick
 16 To and —
 17 Slave to cross-words?
 18 1970s rock band, Mott the —
 20 Complained
 22 Scull tool
 23 Farming (Abbr.)
 24 Despat
 27 Disparaging words
 32 Alley follower
- DOWN**
 33 Diarist
 34 "The Matrix" role
 35 Highly rated
 38 Mulligan, for one
 39 Help
 40 Storm center
 42 Dadaist
 43 Duchamp
 45 Swelling wave
 49 Duel tool
 50 Work with
 52 Green land
 53 Bloke
 54 Sister
 55 Pet shop purchase
- 11** Title-holder's document
19 Scale member
21 Snitch
24 Barracks bed
25 Menagerie
26 Obvious combo
28 Snopout
29 Belonging naturally
30 Golf prop
31 Boar's mate
36 Fine point
37 Praise in verse
38 Choose
41 Rocky Balboa's interjection
42 Humongous
43 Mimic
44 Breather
46 Perjurer
47 Therefore
48 Oboe insert
51 Seek restitution

Solution time: 25 mins.

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

Yesterday's answer 12-29

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		