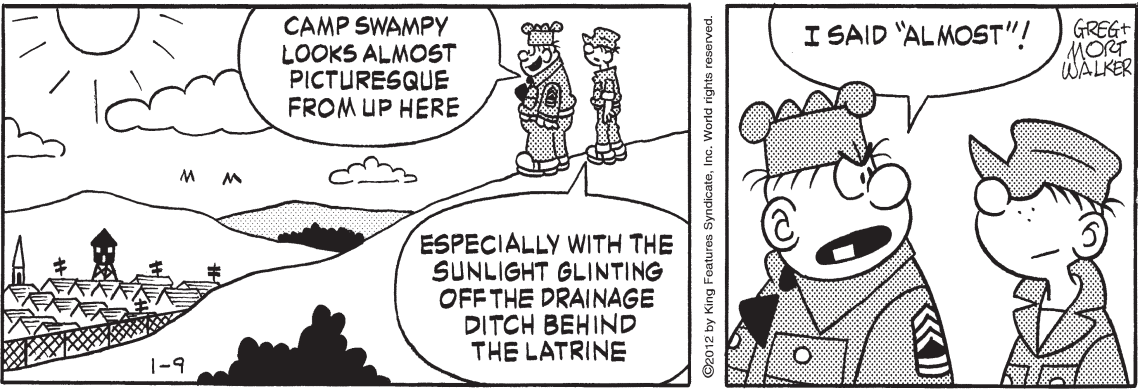


Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



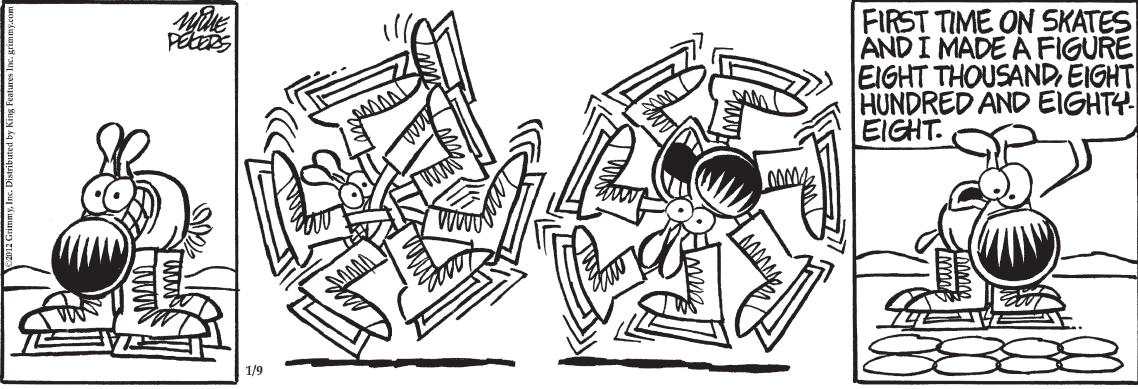
Blondie • Chic Young



Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



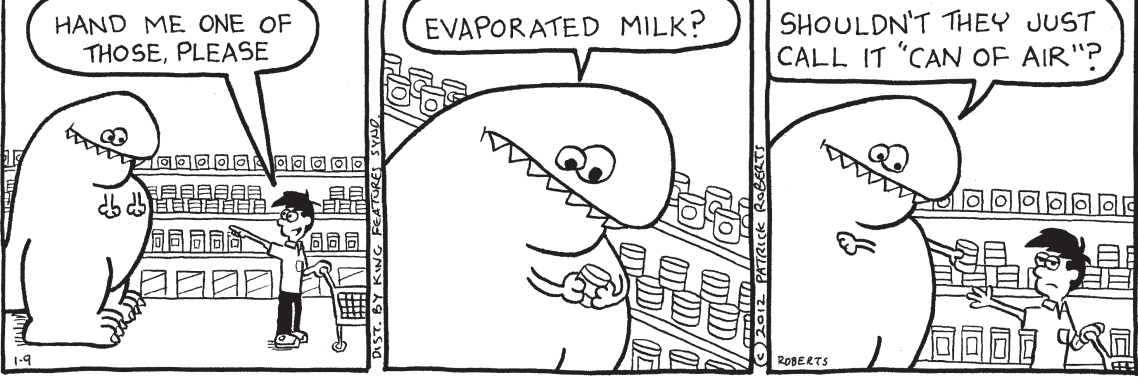
Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers
• Ask Dr. Brothers
Rude clerks inhibit shopping

Dear Dr. Brothers: I finally lost a lot of weight and looked forward to a shopping trip to replace my old "fat clothes." I haven't bought anything in a few years, and have things changed! It used to be clerks would help you with selection and bring you different sizes in the dressing room. Now it's every man for himself and waiting in long lines to purchase things. The clerks were so unhelpful and rude at all three stores that I gave up. What's wrong with these people? – J.R.

Dear J.R.: "These people" might be the same ones who helped you with a smile a few years ago. But in this tough economy, they probably are having to work harder, work longer hours for less pay or rush off to another job just to make ends meet. In other words, while customer service is the ideal, in all but the most upscale boutiques, no one has the luxury to wait on you hand and foot in the dressing room. So if you feel you are being treated rudely, don't take it personally. There is much to be said for doing as much as you can for yourself – hang the clothes you don't want back where you found them, and be self-sufficient enough to bring a couple of different sizes with you to the dressing room. You'll soon adjust.

But just so you know you are not alone, a recent study by the University of Southern California and Georgetown University led researchers to the conclusion that rude employees drive customers away, and that most such customers didn't bring the problem to anyone's attention. Training programs can help, but if people stop shopping instead of complaining, the problem is not going to solve itself. So don't be afraid to speak up.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I have a problem that has plagued me all my life: It doesn't take much to embarrass me! Things that others might just laugh off leave me feeling mortified. Yesterday someone told me my mascara was running, and I was the one who wanted to run! Is there some way to train myself not to be embarrassed so easily? I think I have as much self-esteem as the next girl, but I feel like a little kid instead of a 35-year-old! – C.N.

Dear C.N.: There is nothing shameful about being embarrassed. In fact, take a moment and distinguish between shame and what you are feeling. You don't describe feelings of being caught with your hand in the cookie jar; it's just those little life glitches tripping you up, and your red face gives you away. As long as the feeling passes within a reasonable time – judge for yourself how long is reasonable – it might be better to come to terms with being easily embarrassed, instead of trying to wipe it out completely. The only "training" I can think of is to live in a perfect world where nothing ever goes askew. And don't confuse embarrassment with immaturity.

Maybe this will help: A recent study at the University of California at Berkeley led to the conclusion that being subject to moderate amounts of embarrassment is actually a good thing, socially speaking. After experiments, they argued that easily embarrassed people are actually the type others trust, and they may be more generous as well. So if you can think of your trait as positive instead of embarrassing, you might even be able to raise that healthy self-esteem a notch.

Bridge • Steve Becker

South dealer.
East-West vulnerable.
NORTH
♦ K J 10 4 2
♥ 9 7
♦ 10 6
♣ J 10 7 4
WEST
♦ Q 9 5
♥ A J 6 3
♦ Q J 3
♣ 3 2
EAST
♥ Q 8 4 2
♦ K 9 8 5 4 2
♣ A K Q
SOUTH
♦ A 8 7 6 3
♥ K 10
♦ A 7
♣ 9 8 6 5
The bidding:
South 1 ♠
West Pass
North 4 ♠
East 4 ♠
Opening lead — queen of diamonds.

Famous Hand
One of the biggest swings of the 1989 Venice Cup final between the Netherlands and the United States occurred on this deal.

When Beth Palmer and Lynn Deas of the U.S. held the North-South hands, the bidding went as shown. Deas, South, consistent with the partnership style, opened a marginal one spade at favorable vulnerability. Palmer then did her part to muddy the waters for the opposition by leaping to four spades.

East could have taken any of several actions at this point, but chose the conservative course by passing, hoping her side had nothing big in the offing. The undoubted contract went down three for a score of plus 150 to the Dutch, but this scarcely made up for what happened at the other table, where the bidding went:

South West North East
Pass Pass 1 ♠ ! Dble
Redble 4 ♥ Pass Pass
4 ♠ Pass Pass 5 ♥
Dble

Here, with room to operate, the American East-West pair, Kitty Bethel and Margie Gwozdzensky, were able to find their heart fit and determine that their side had the balance of power. Bethel had no trouble carrying on to five hearts after South bid four spades. South then doubled, no doubt thinking her side had the balance of strength.

With the trumps 2-2 and the heart king onside, Gwozdzensky easily made the contract with an overtrick for a score of 1,050 points. The 900-point difference between the two tables gave the U.S. a 14-IMP pickup on the deal.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★

1/09

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.

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

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

Cryptoquip

V O D X F T X K U M D O D X S

M P A K G K U G A E P T D A O G M Y D I

V G U K P T K L E X O - M P X U D I

T S X U T G K Y : T O P K U D I T S L F D K .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IT WAS UNMISTAKABLY APPARENT THAT THE TWO YOUNG BREAD BAKERS HAD BEEN FALLING MADLY IN LOAF.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: T equals F

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Study hard
5 Unruly group
8 Oscar-winner Kedrova
12 Get up
13 Yoko of music
14 Soon, in verse
15 "Zounds!"
16 Obama, e.g.
18 Elk
20 Alternative to boxers
31 Anger
32 Admit
34 Capek play
35 Obi, for example
37 Outward behavior

DOWN
39 Work on the sound-track
41 Roof overhang
42 Slowly, in music
45 Duration
49 Inanity
51 Continental coin
52 Pub orders
53 Wall-climbing plant
54 War god
55 Fine spray
56 Caribbean or Coral
57 Fat

1 Ship's staff
2 Latvia's capital
3 Pronto, on a memo
4 Physician
5 Adapted
6 Individual
7 Flop on stage
8 More frilly
9 As part of an exchange
10 Bread unit
11 Picnic invaders
17 Sphere
19 Lofty

22 Cosmetician
24 Insult (Sl.)
25 Historic time
26 Partners of messieurs
27 Everest, e.g.
29 Two-some
30 Blunder
33 Actress of an exchange
36 Least minuscule
38 Virgil hero
40 Crib
42 Leading man?
43 Sandwich shop
44 Elevator name
46 Mentor
47 Genealogy chart
48 Emcee
50 "— been had!"

Solution time: 27 mins.

Yesterday's answer 1-7

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			