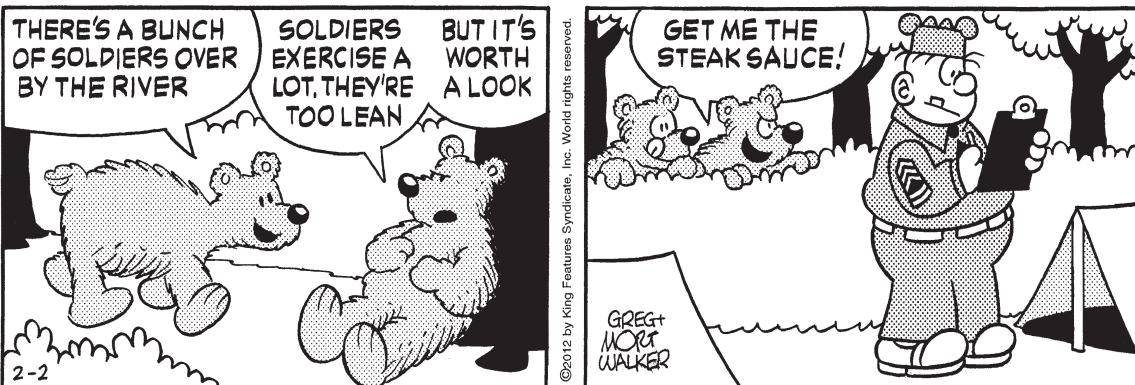


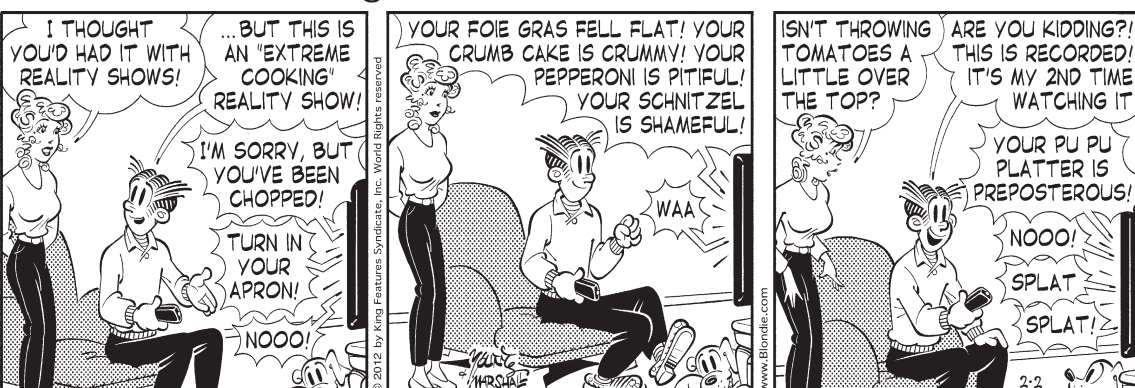
**Baby Blues** • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



**Beetle Bailey** • Mort Walker



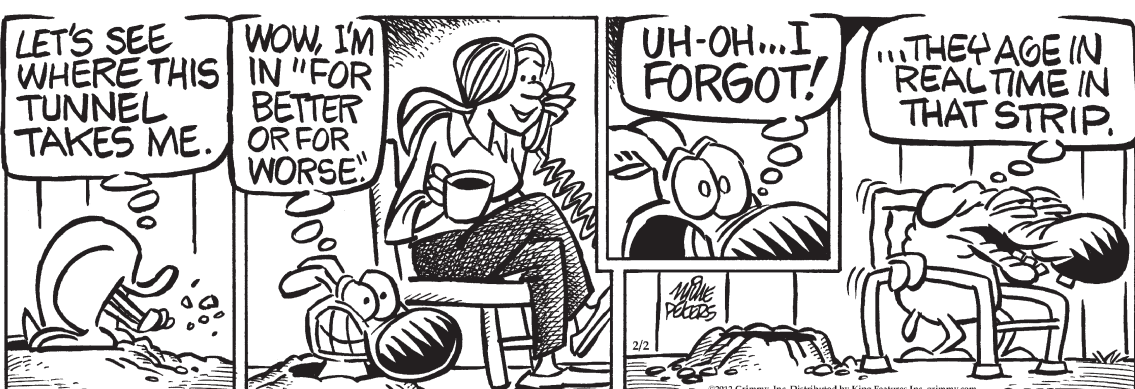
**Blondie** • Chic Young



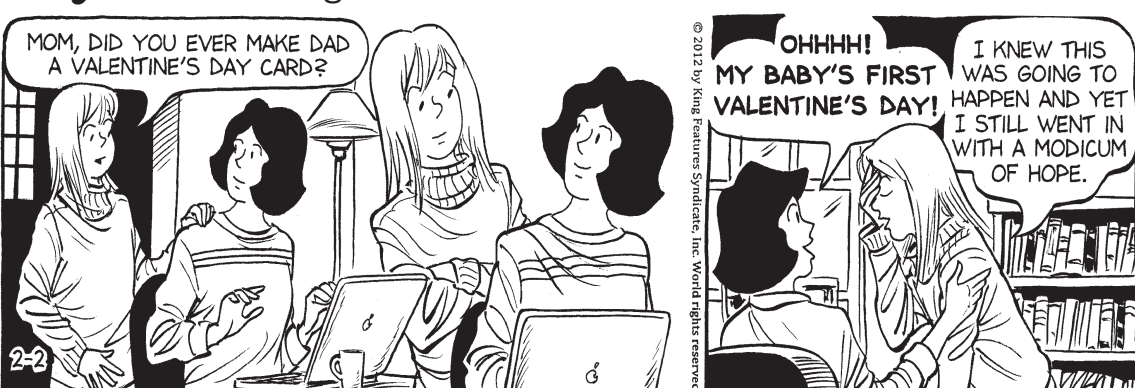
**Hagar the Horrible** • Chris Browne



**Mother Goose and Grimm** • Mike Peters



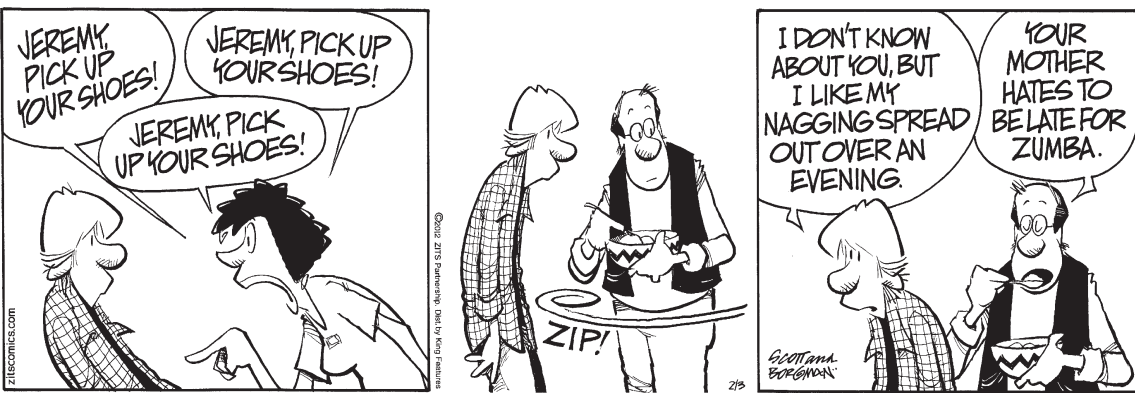
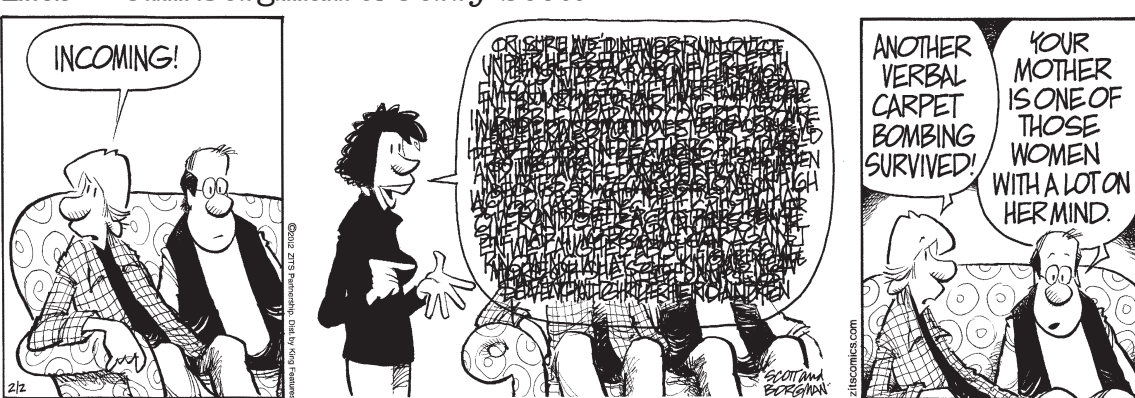
**Sally Forth** • Greg Howard



**Todd the Dinosaur** • Patrick Roberts



**Zits** • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



**Dr. Joyce Brothers**

• Ask Dr. Brothers

**Preschooler loves blanket**

Dear Dr. Brothers: My toddler is soon to be a preschooler, and I am worried that he has a lot of baggage – literally! He's gotten very attached to a backpack with his blankie and an old stuffed kangaroo. I have to wash them at night because he won't let them out of his sight, and he wears the backpack all the time. I'm sure this won't be acceptable at his preschool, but I don't know if taking them away in advance would be the right. I don't want to traumatize him. – F.B.

Dear F.B.: Transitions are notoriously difficult for toddlers and preschoolers, and your son is no exception. He has his security blanket, security stuffed animal and security backpack to help him out, and if these are allowed at his new school, they might actually be helpful – think of them as a substitute for you when he has to face the day without you. Perhaps you can talk to the staff in advance and come up with a plan that you will be able to discuss with him before school starts.

There may be a cubby or hook he can hang his backpack on, and a special time during the day when he can have it. Soon he will be caught up in exploring the new things in the room, and as he becomes more comfortable with the environment, he probably will find new items to replace the old favorites in his backpack. The main thing is to have a smooth and easy transition between home and school. Unless the school is very strict, I would let him take his favorite objects with him rather than forcing him to leave them at home from Day 1. And if the school is that strict, you might want to make sure you are comfortable with the environment there before enrolling him.

Dear Dr. Brothers: My husband and I both come from large families, and we all get together for parties and holidays. One of the traditions in his family has been having everyone there when a new grandchild is born. I'm eight months pregnant and have been listening to my parents and in-laws plans to do this when I have my son. I haven't said anything, but I really don't want to have an audience. Am I being too selfish? – C.J.

Dear C.J.: I'm sorry you are feeling the pressure of family traditions when you only should be looking forward to a safe delivery with as little stress as possible. It is hard to buck the trend, and your family means well. But you are not being selfish by wanting to ditch the relatives. Despite shows on TV and your family's traditions, you have every right to put your foot down, and the sooner the better.

The support of your husband is an essential part of doing so. Explain to him you feel the birth should be private, shared by the two of you. Your families can be in the waiting room. If you have to, get your medical team to explain your comfort level will be higher if you are not worrying about extra people in the room. Anyone who grumbles or calls you selfish doesn't deserve to be a part of the birth in the first place. Your mothers didn't have a family audience when you and your husband were born, and that's a good tradition, too.

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**Bridge** • Steve Becker

North dealer.  
North-South vulnerable.

**NORTH**  
♠ Q 9 3  
♥ A 7 5  
♦ A 9 3  
♣ J 8 4

**WEST**  
♠ J 8 7 6 2  
♥ Q 8 4  
♦ 5 2  
♣ A 7 2

**EAST**  
♠ K 10 5  
♥ J 9 6 3  
♦ Q J 10 8  
♣ 6 3

**SOUTH**  
♠ A 4  
♥ K 10 2  
♦ K 7 6 4  
♣ K 10 9 5

The bidding:  
North East South West  
1 ♠ Pass 2 NT Pass  
3 NT  
Opening lead — six of spades.

**An Indispensable Tool**  
The Rule of Eleven is a handy gadget that can be used by either side. Here is an unusual case that demonstrates the value of the rule.

West leads the six of spades, dummy following low, and the question is what East should play on this trick. If he plays the ten, which is probably what most players would do, declarer can make the contract by establishing clubs and guessing to play the nine of spades on West's spade return (or later leading a spade to the nine himself) to produce his ninth trick.

But let's suppose that East is a devout disciple of the Rule of Eleven and understands its workings perfectly. In that event, after West leads the six of spades and dummy follows with the three, East plays the five!

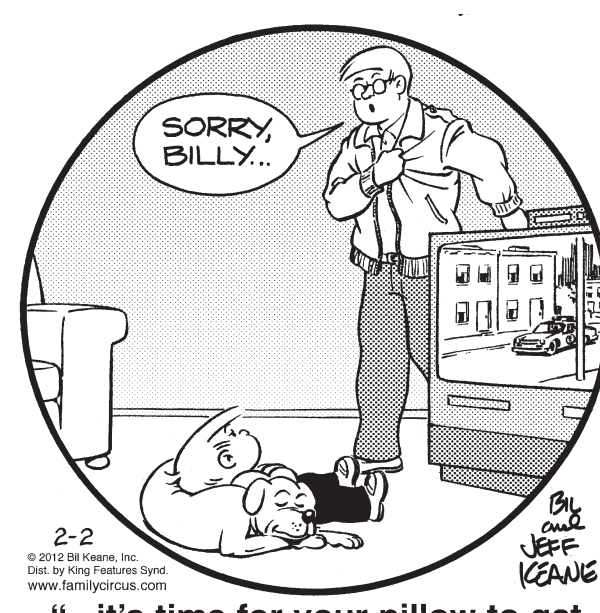
The effect of this startling play is that South goes down one. Declarer wins and attacks clubs, whereupon West takes the ace and leads another low spade. If the queen is played from dummy, East quickly defeats the contract by taking the king and continuing with the ten; if the nine is played from dummy, East wins with the ten, cashes the king and returns the queen of diamonds, leaving South with only eight tricks.

In applying the Rule of Eleven (which assumes that the lead is fourth-best), East deducts the number of the card led from 11, which in this case tells him that there are five cards higher than the six in the North, East and South hands.

East sees two of them in dummy and two of them in his own hand, so he knows South has only one spade higher than the six. Given South's two-notrump bid, this card is most likely to be the ace, which means East can safely play the five. Even if South's spade honor is the jack, the play of the five can do no worse than break even, since South is assured of a spade trick no matter what East plays.

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**Family Circus** • Bil Keane



**Conceptis Sudoku** • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★

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.

**Cryptoquip**

EJVOA ZQAEA PDNEE DNU  
IAEEADE OHKA TLHK ULJZNV,  
J ZQJVS HT ZQAK NE  
VNZJIA AVPDJEQ UANSALE.  
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I KEPT ZONING OUT AS MY SHIPMATE, A HATMAKER BY TRADE, BABBLED INCESSANTLY ABOUT CAP SIZING.  
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: T equals F

**Crossword** • Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**

1 Close  
5 Sidewalk eatery  
9 Eccentric outflow  
12 Volcanic  
13 "Caro nome" is one  
14 Ultra-modernist  
15 Comic's specialty  
17 Right angle  
18 Book after Job  
19 iPhone function  
21 Chance, for short  
22 Hue  
24 Presentation  
27 Second person  
28 Out of control  
31 Charged bit  
32 Pismire  
33 Ram's mate  
34 Profound  
36 In medias  
37 Seaport of Yemen  
38 Exciting

**DOWN**

3 Eye layer  
4 Candle fat  
5 Trash containers  
6 "All the Things You —"  
7 Ever-green type  
8 Supporter of the arts?  
9 — bandit (slot machine)  
10 Sandwich shop  
11 Action figure, really  
16 Mischievous kid  
20 Kiwi's extinct cousin  
23 — Island  
24 Rocker  
25 Vicious  
25 Weeding tool  
26 Small town description  
27 Play area  
29 Have bills  
30 Barbie's companion  
31 — ion  
35 Parishioner's seat  
37 Takes as one's own  
39 Island greeting  
40 Matter-horn, for one  
41 Comic strip  
42 Incursion  
43 Money supply  
44 Laugh-a-minute  
45 "— Karenina"  
46 Like custard or quiche  
49 Present  
50 Before

**Solution time: 25 mins.**

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

Yesterday's answer 2-2

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		