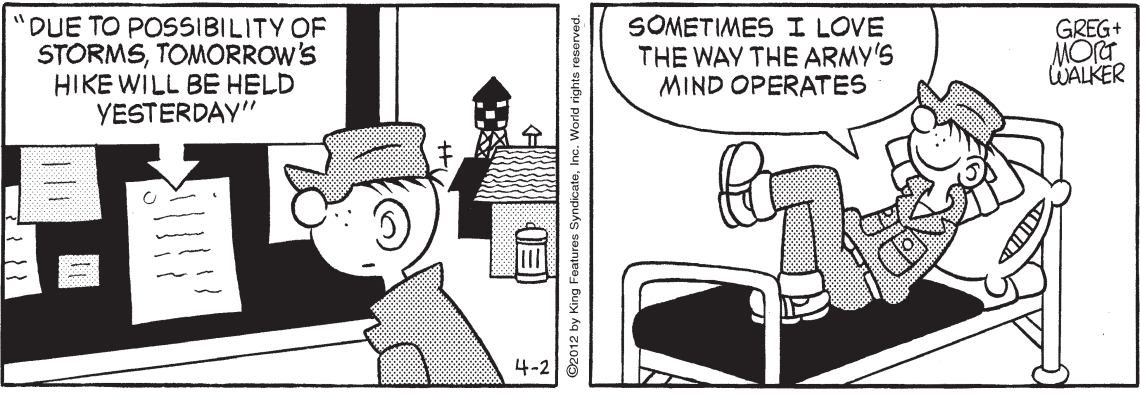


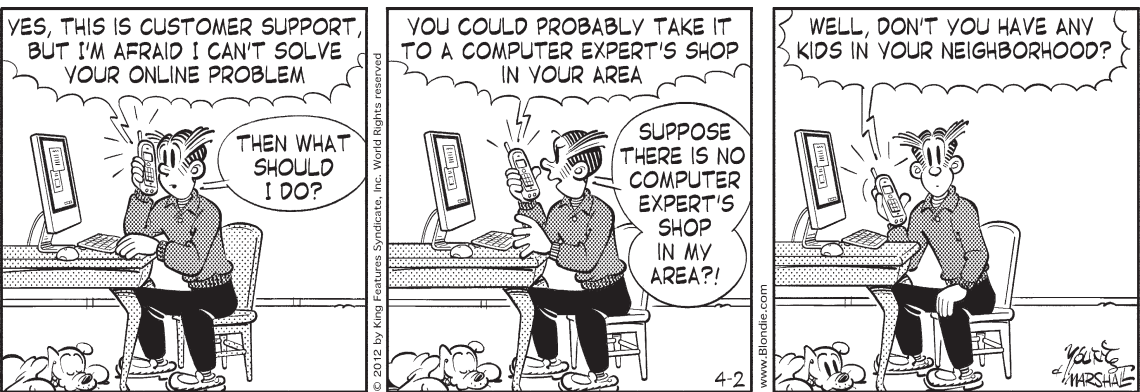
Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



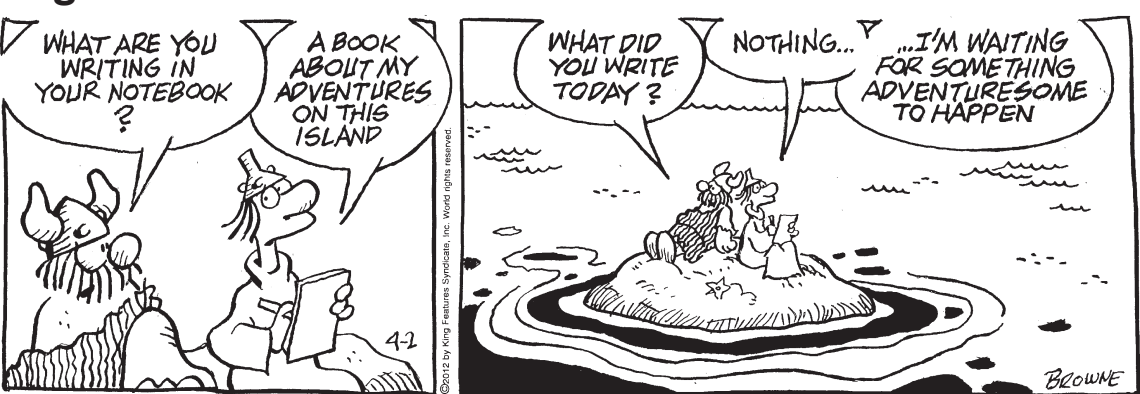
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Blondie • Chic Young



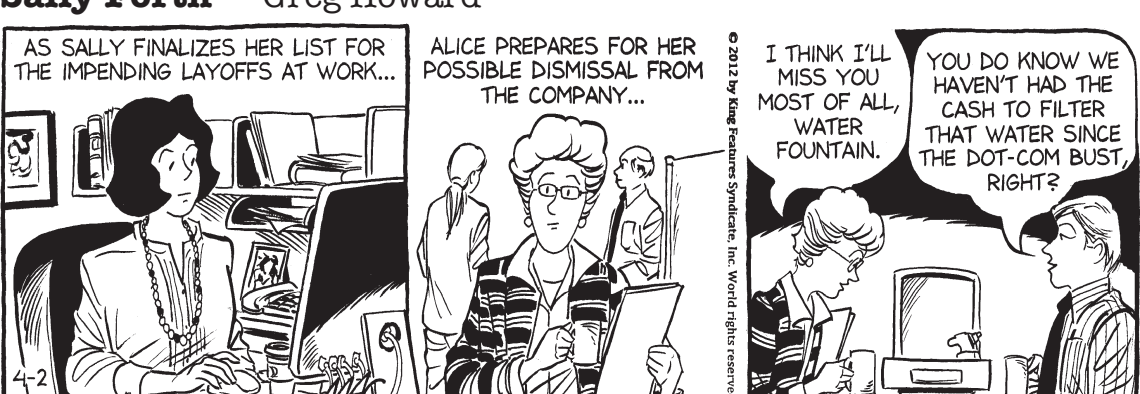
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



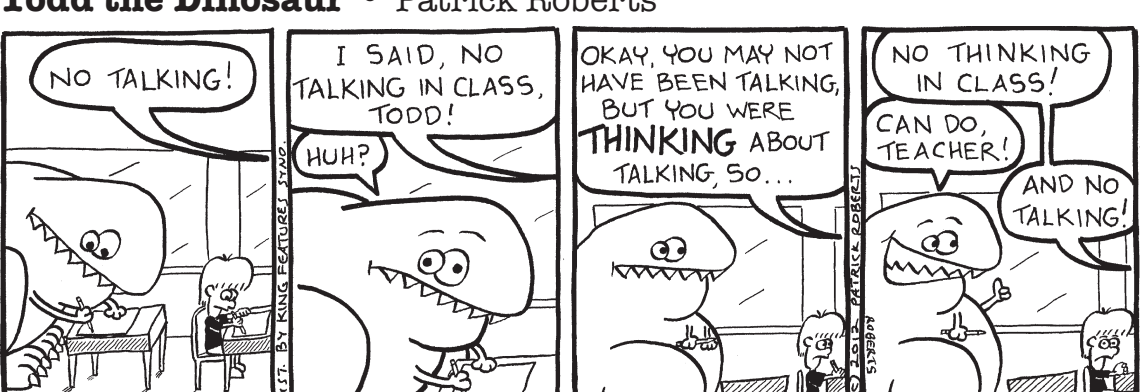
Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Tom and Ray Magliozzi

• Click & Clack Talk Cars

Can diagnostics be overdone?

Dear Tom and Ray:

The dashboard of our 2004 Honda lit up like a Christmas tree. We had the car towed to our dealer. On the bill, we were dismayed to see we had been charged \$80 three times for "diagnostics." The service manager said they had to connect the car three times to the computer to read the on-board diagnostic codes. This experience prompts a couple of questions: (1) Why would they have to connect the computer multiple times? Can't they get all the error codes at once? (2) Why should the customer be charged for the tools the mechanic uses? Don't mechanics need the codes anyway in order to work on today's cars? If the mechanic has to use his 5/8 wrench to do his job, should the customer be charged? It seems the diagnostic machine is the same thing. - Randy

RAY: It certainly seems questionable, doesn't it? But in fact, there are times when you need to scan a car more than once.

TOM: The codes don't always tell you exactly what to replace; they just indicate a failure. So if the code says you have an evaporative emissions system failure, you wouldn't start by replacing the whole system; you'd start by replacing the valve or hose that fails most commonly.

RAY: Then you'd test-drive the car. If the check-engine light stays off, you know you've fixed the problem. But if it comes on again, you have to scan the car again for your next clue.

TOM: And you do pay for the mechanic's equipment. If a shop buys an expensive diagnostic machine it charges its customers every time it's used, to pay for it.

RAY: And all businesses charge for their equipment, whether it's separated out or embedded in the cost. When you go to the hospital, you might pay \$1,500 for a night in a hospital bed - because you're paying for the staff that wakes you up and the equipment they stick in you.

TOM: On top of that, if they use a particularly expensive piece of equipment you get charged for that as well. And it may save you several days in the hospital if they pinpoint your problem.

RAY: The same is true for onboard automotive diagnostics. With the computerized scanner, you get a more accurate diagnosis more quickly, and save the hours of labor that the mechanic would have spent testing each sensor individually.

TOM: So we think the dealer has a right to charge you three times if it had to scan your car three times. But we'd never do that.

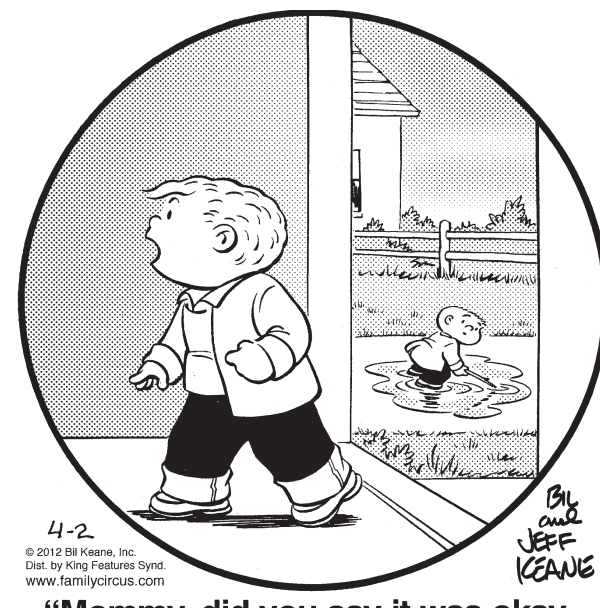
RAY: No. We'd charge you once for a scan, and then add the labor time to do follow-up scans.

TOM: The scan tool is a very simple device that plugs in under the dashboard. So there's little labor involved. It usually takes only a few minutes to plug it in and interpret the results.

RAY: If you talk to the service manager, he might give you a break. Suggest that you pay for half an hour of labor instead of two extra scans. And suggest they make that company policy.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★ 4/02

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.

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

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

Cryptoquip

PBREA FUHF ZBS IQAOH PFHO
PBRSP RIFHZKM YAAQ ZHPP
QHOPF, TIDKY MID PHM UA
UHP H PI-KIT EHOAAO?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I FIGURE YOU WILL EVENTUALLY ORDER A DRINK WHICH YOU DISLIKE, BASED ON THE LAW OF BEVERAGES.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals R

Bridge • Steve Becker

South dealer. Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ A 9 6 3 2
♥ K 8 7 3
♦ 5 2
♣ 5

WEST
♠ Q 10 5
♥ 10 9 4
♦ 7 6
♣ K Q 6 3 2

EAST
♠ 8 4
♥ A 6 5 2
♦ 4 3
♣ A 10 9 8 4

SOUTH
♠ K 7
♥ Q J
♦ A K Q J 9 8
♣ J 7

The bidding:
South West North East
3 NT Pass Pass Pass
Opening lead - three of clubs.

Famous Hand

Bridge is not like tick-tack-toe, where there is always a clearly correct play and no room for argument. Bridge is a much more complicated game, with plenty of room for legitimate differences of opinion in both the bidding and the play.

Consider this deal from the Vanderbilt teams some years ago. At the first table, sitting East-West, were two world-famous experts - whose names are mercifully omitted - defending against South's opening bid of three notrump.

West led his fourth-best club, won by East with the ace, and East returned the eight, also his original fourth-best club. Declarer played the jack, and West, after excruciating thought, concluded that South had started with the J-10-9-7. He therefore ducked the jack, hoping to score three more club tricks later on.

Alas, this proved to be a serious miscalculation when declarer won all the remaining tricks. Afterward, West angrily contended that East should have returned the ten of clubs, not the eight, but East was in no mood to discuss this debatable contention.

At the second table, where the East-West pair were not nearly so famous - and, in fact, were not famous at all - the defense functioned much more effectively.

Here, too, South opened the bidding with three notrump. Again the opening lead was the three of clubs, and again the eight was returned by East. But at this table, West did not find the defense to be either difficult or complicated.

He won the jack with the queen and continued with the king and another club. So the defenders quickly collected five clubs and a heart for down two, and West went on to the next deal without even bothering to look around for applause.

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Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Spaces
5 Slight touch
8 South American country
12 Geometric multiplication
13 Individual
14 Ostriches' kin
15 Willing, old-style
16 Bowling variation
18 Wool provider from
20 Examiner
21 - -tat-tat
23 Set of parts and tools
24 Anarchist's belief
28 Pinches
31 Coach Parseghian
32 Choral composition

DOWN
1 Festive party
2 Seed covering
3 Chick's sound
4 Jungle expedition
5 Philanthropic gift
6 Blackbird
7 Crooked
8 Stomach enzyme
9 Sending out
10 Mysterious letter
11 Cold War country (Abbr.)
17 "A mouse!"
19 Serene
22 Moving about
24 Arrest
25 A Gershwin
26 Lecture
27 Made of iron, e.g.
29 Baked dessert
30 - Francisco
33 Three-some
36 Plates garnishes
40 Trench
42 Formerly
43 Crafty
44 Staff
46 Poi source
47 Ireland
48 Deli loaves
50 Drenched

Solution time: 27 mins.

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

Saturday's answer 4-2

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11							
12				13				14									
15				16				17									
18				19				20									
				21				22									
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						