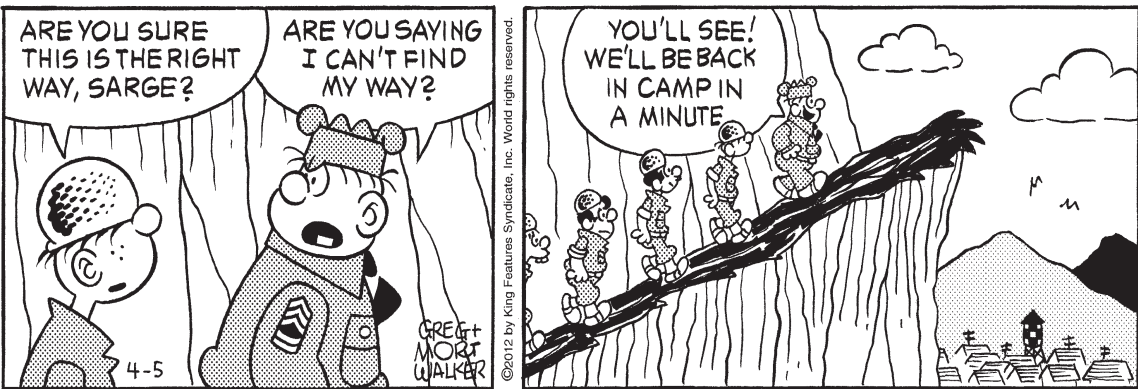


Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



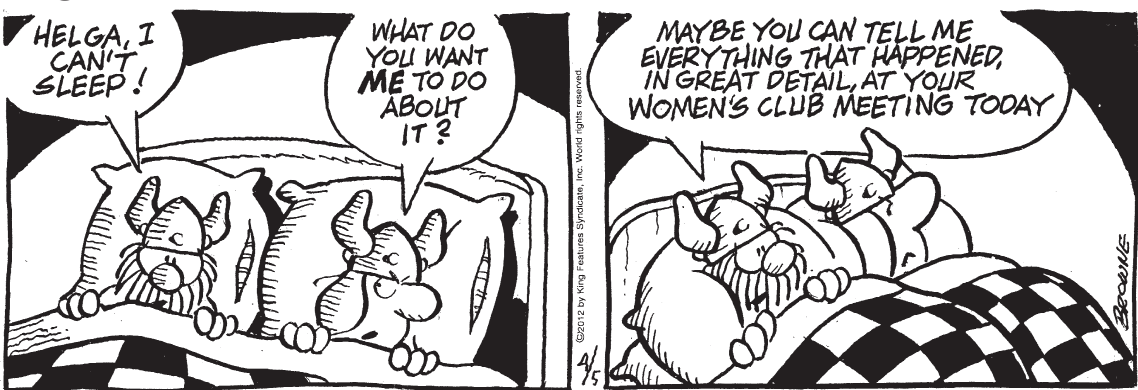
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



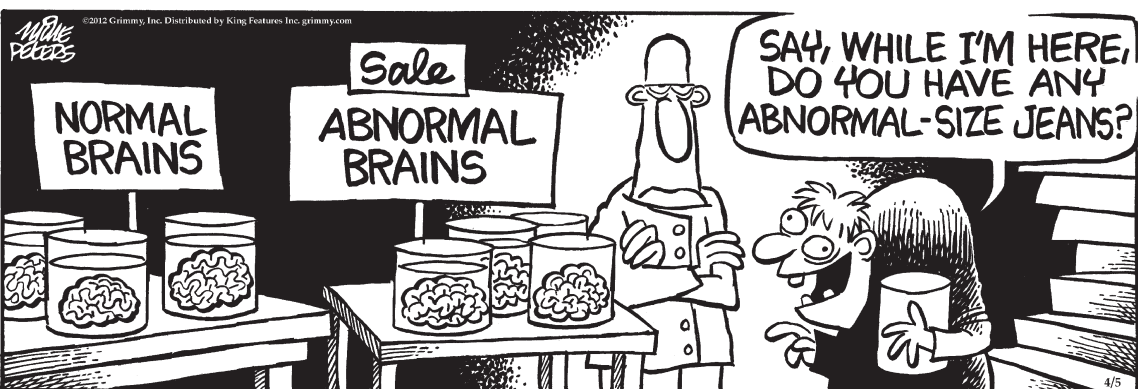
Blondie • Chic Young



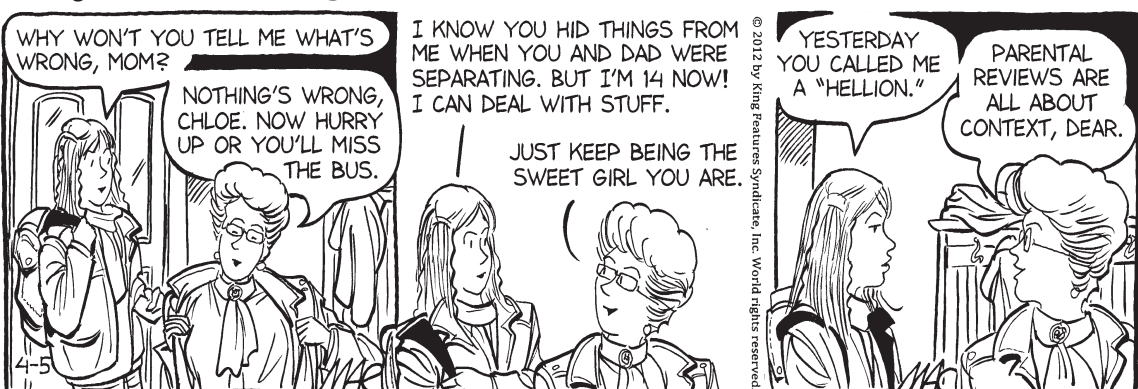
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



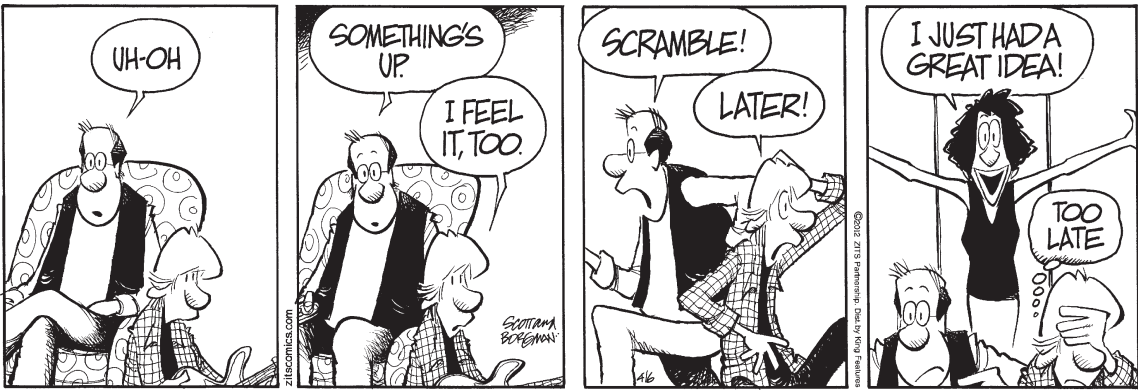
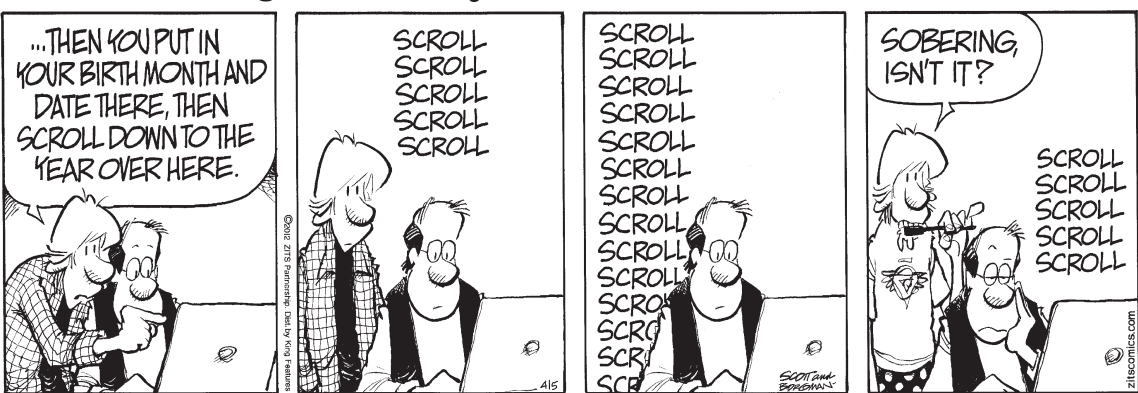
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Tom and Ray Magliozzi

• Click & Clack Talk Cars

Gentle braking is better for car

Dear Tom and Ray:
I always brake by lightly touching the brakes – not jerkily, so that any rider would notice, but sort of gradually coming to a stop. My daughter, after 40 years of riding with me, has noticed and asked why. I don't know. It just seems logical to me to treat the brakes gently. Of course, if I need to stop in a hurry, it's a different matter, and I've never run into anything. My daughter drives differently – and I guess most people do. Is my method better for the brakes – or, heaven forbid, worse? Or doesn't it make a difference? – Mary

TOM: It doesn't make much of a difference in how long the brake pads last, Mary. But I do think your method is better for other reasons.

RAY: First of all, when you wait 'til the last second and then stop aggressively, you can cause the temperature of the brake rotors to spike. And that, in turn, can lead to warping. Warped rotors have to be machined or replaced, and that costs money.

TOM: More importantly, stopping gently is better for every other part of the car. When you stop hard, you stretch and stress every component of the suspension system. After all, according to Sir Isaac Newton, the tires are stopping, but everything else wants to keep moving forward. Those opposing forces wear out bushings, bearings, springs and everything else.

RAY: Stopping gently also is more comfortable for your passengers. So you'll have fewer cases of whiplash when your passengers' heads go back and forth as you stomp on the brakes.

TOM: And finally, your armrests will last longer, because passengers won't be digging their fingernails into them in panic.

RAY: So keep stopping gently, Mary. It's exactly what you should be doing.

TOM: But please don't tell your daughter to change her braking style. We count on customers like her to keep the cash flow positive at the garage.

You want to buy a used car, but how do you find a good one? Tom and Ray can help! Order "How to Buy a Great Used Car: Secrets Only Your Mechanic Knows." Send \$4.75 (check or money order) to Used Car, Box 536475, Orlando, Fla., 32853-6475.

Get more Click and Clack in their new book, "Ask Click and Clack: Answers from Car Talk." Got a question about cars? E-mail Click and Clack by visiting the Car Talk website at www.cartalk.com.

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Bridge • Steve Becker

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

The Infernal Optimist

Optimism is a required trait in bridge; why else would one be advised to open the bidding – and thereby bid for more than half the tricks – when holding less than one-third of the honor cards?

But while optimism is necessary for consistent success, it must be tempered with a degree of pessimism. To blindly assume that everything will always go well is sure to cost many points that could have been saved over a period of time.

Take this case, for example. After the dummy came down, South thought he would make six clubs in a walk. Indeed, if the trumps were divided 2-2 and the diamonds 4-3, he would score all 13 tricks.

So, without giving the matter further thought, he won the spade lead and cashed the K-A of clubs. When clubs failed to break, South carried on with his initial plan – discard two hearts on dummy's diamonds, ruff a diamond to establish dummy's fifth card in the suit and eventually ruff two spades in dummy and discard another on the good diamond.

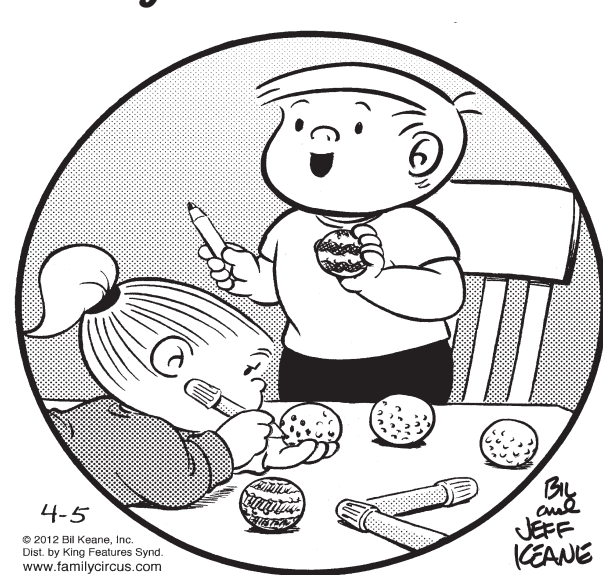
But when he played the A-K-Q of diamonds, discarding the 4-Q of hearts, West ruffed the third diamond and returned a spade. Declarer ruffed in dummy, but, with the diamonds breaking 5-2, he could not avoid losing a spade at the end for down one.

Once South discovered that he had a trump loser, he should have taken the time to reformulate his initial plan, which would no longer work if the diamonds failed to behave. There was nothing wrong with playing the A-K-Q of diamonds, but rather than discarding two hearts, he should have kept the queen of hearts and discarded a spade instead.

This would have allowed him to keep the heart finesse in reserve in case the diamonds didn't break, and when East later turned up with the heart king, the slam would still have been made.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



4-5

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"We finished dying all the eggs, so now we're decoratin' Daddy's golf balls."

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★

4/05

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.

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

Cryptoquip

M H B J D W E S Q H W U Q E M F I T D J O

H B J K G G D P D A U M " M F J J D M M

H B S G U J H B P I D O M, " H A U M

W U T K Q H B P H B A U P D Q H B P.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: QUARANTINED IN THE HOSPITAL, THE CANDY FANATIC ACTUALLY REQUESTED A DRIP OF PRALINE SOLUTION.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals N

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 — the night before ...
5 Peace antithesis
8 Stage presentation
12 Rope material
13 Coloring
14 Queue
15 Banister
16 Ovum
17 One
18 Spread open
20 Bullets and such
22 Schedules
26 Reinforcing device
29 And so on (Abbr.)
30 Ambulance VIP
31 Solemn promise
32 Monokin's lack
33 Cougar
34 John's Yoko

DOWN
10 Singer DiFranco
11 Still
19 Whopper
21 PC
23 Inducing goose-flesh
24 Austen heroine
25 Ollie's pal
26 Italy's silhouette
27 Royal of India
28 Perfume dispenser
32 Block of charcoal
33 Stamps
35 Hot tub
36 Moist
38 Obliterate
39 Shrewd
42 Met melody
43 "— la vie"
44 Millinery
45 Felon's flight
46 Lemieux milieu
48 Carnival city

Solution time: 25 mins.

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

Yesterday's answer 4-5

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14		
15				16				17		
18				19			20	21		
				22			23			24
26	27	28					29			30
31							32			33
34							35			36
37							38			39
							40			41
45	46						47	48		49
50							51			52
53							54			55