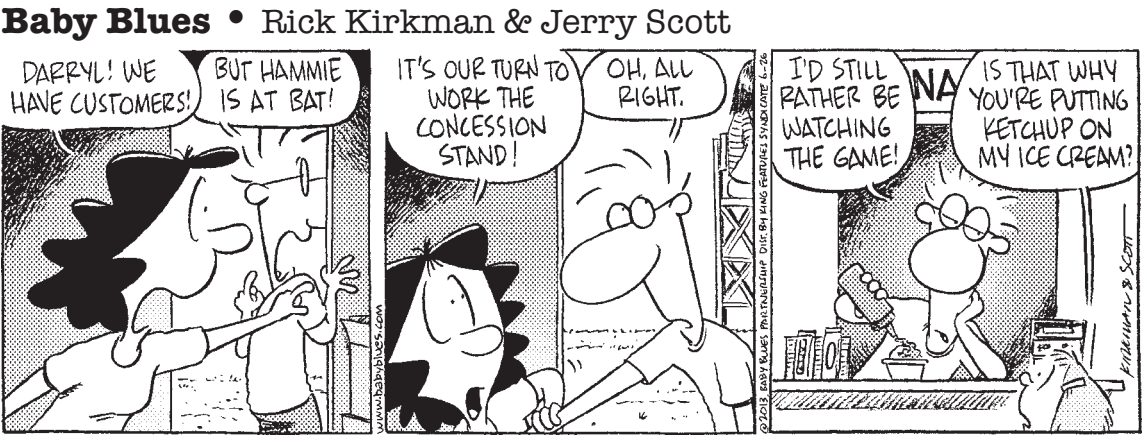
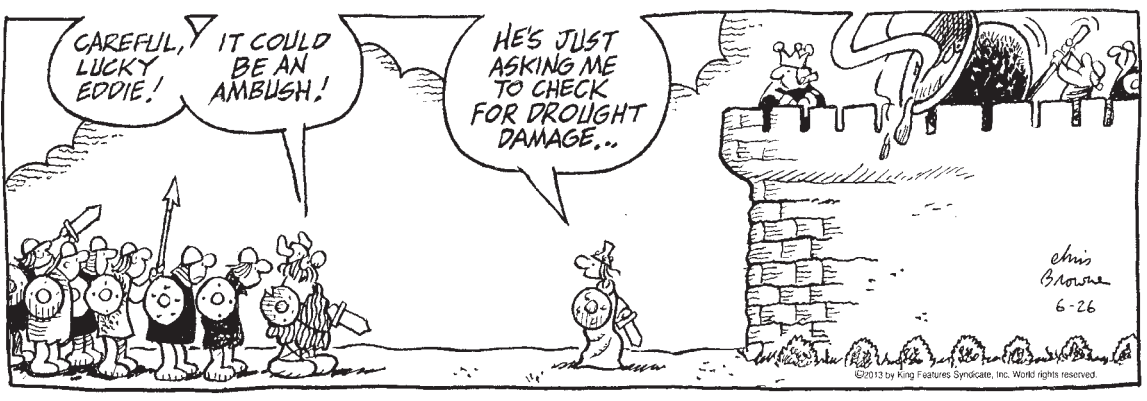
Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



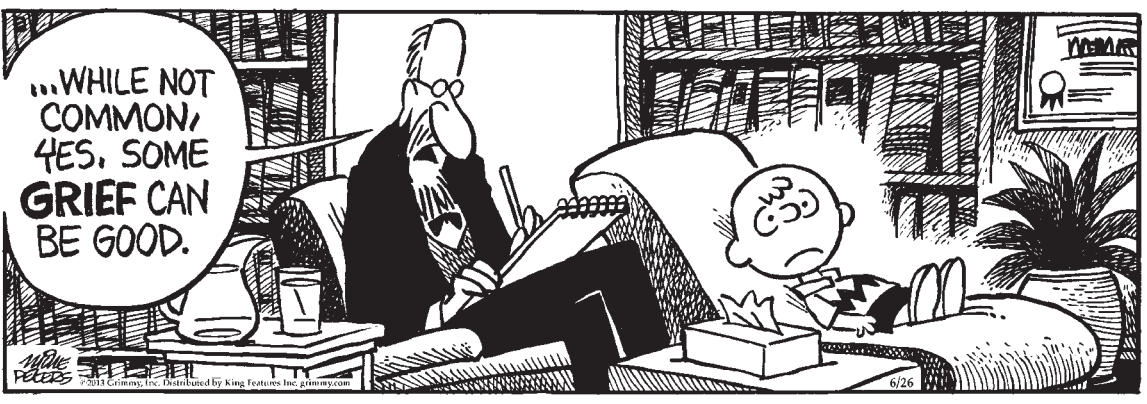
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker

Blondie • Chic Young

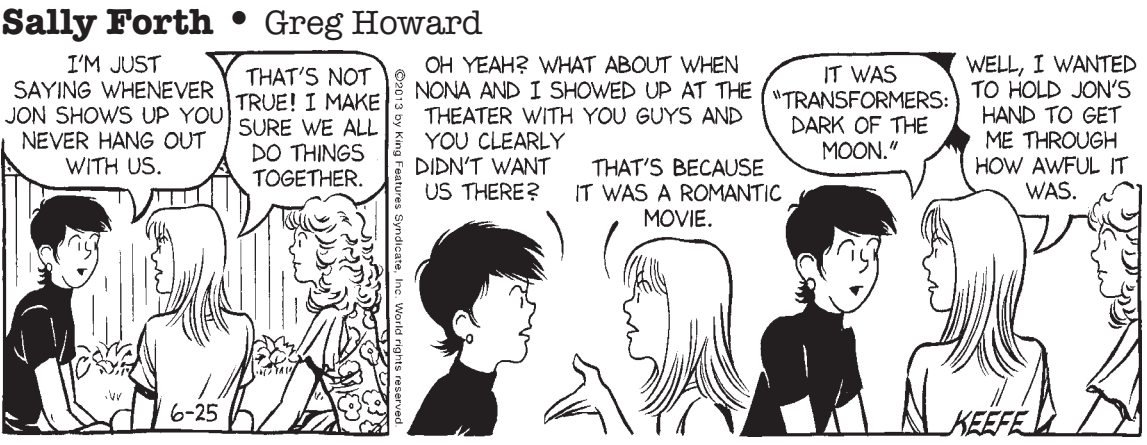
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne

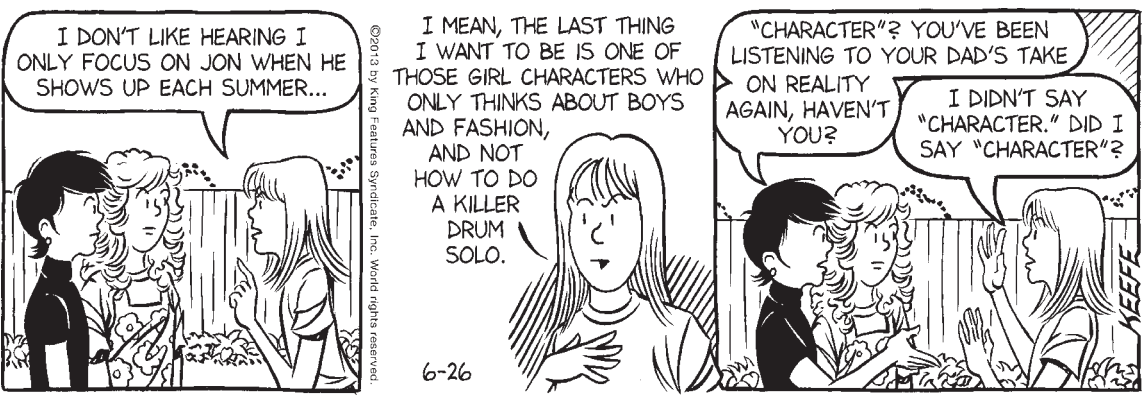


Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters

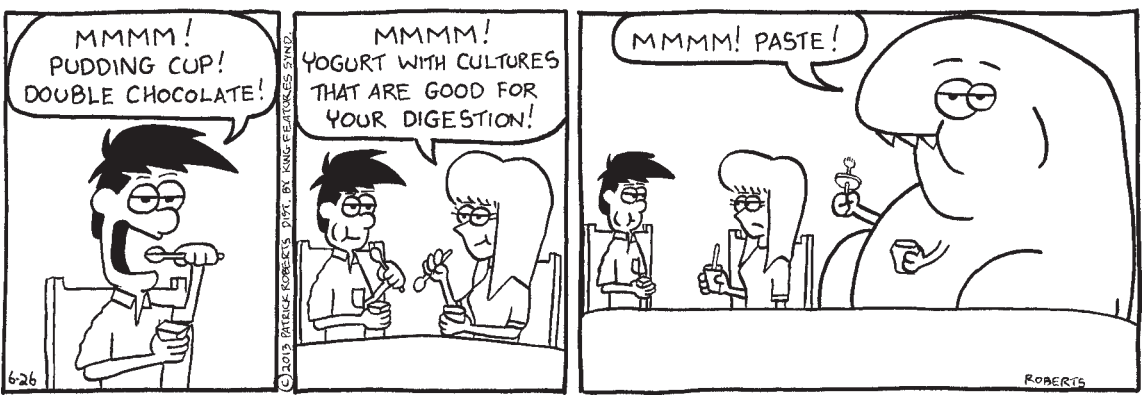


Sally Forth • Greg Howard

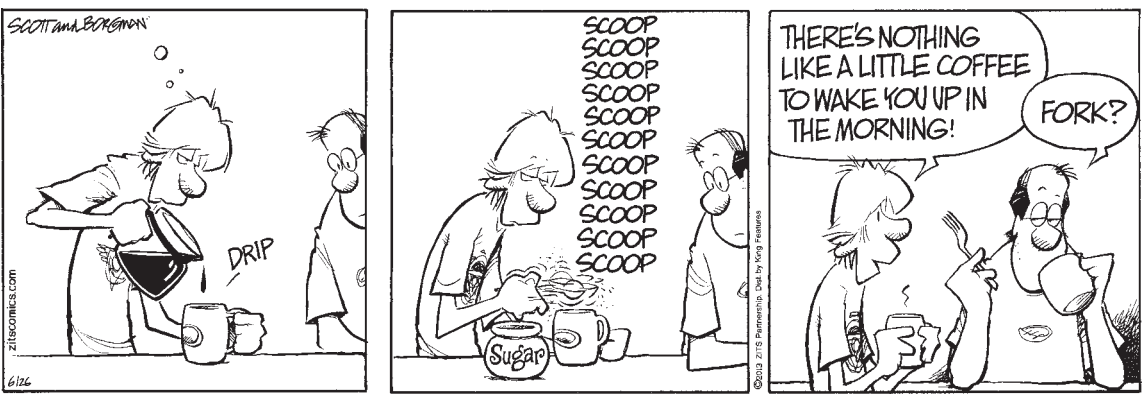




Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Heloise

• Hints from Heloise

Pimento pepper: hot, it's really not

Dear Heloise: I often see pimentos used in recipes and, of course, stuffed in olives, but what exactly are they? – Kevin H., via e-mail

They are little, heart-shaped red peppers! But they are not hot like a chili pepper. They are seeded, peeled, cored and cooked before being diced or sliced and packaged in jars. They have a sweet flavor and can be added to salads (potato and coleslaw are favorites), sandwiches and, of course, cheese. The "pimento" in olives is made from the same red pepper, but is processed into uniform pieces.

One of my favorite recipes that uses pimentos is my mother's (the original Heloise, 1919-1977) **Heloise's Pimento Cheese Spread**. To make it, you need the following ingredients:

1 pound boxed soft cheese (or any style cheese that can be grated)
1 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup finely chopped pickles (your favorite kind)
4 ounces pimentos

Grate the cheese (if necessary) using a food processor or the large side of a cheese grater. Place a large piece of plastic wrap or wax paper on the counter. Now you are going to layer your ingredients, starting with the grated cheese/soft cheese, followed by the mayonnaise, pimentos and pickles. Use a spatula to fold the ingredients over and over from the bottom to the top. Repeat the process until all the ingredients are gone. Next, store the spread in jars, making sure they are sealed tight, and place in the refrigerator.

For other favorite recipes, order my Heloise All-Time Favorite Recipes pamphlet by sending $5 and a long, self-addressed, stamped (66 cents) envelope to: Heloise/All-Time, P.O. Box 795001, San Antonio, TX 78279-5001. Keep a jar of pimentos in the pantry to add to egg salad, deviled eggs, potato salad or a side salad. They add a touch of "red" to the plate. – Heloise

MORE GRAVY

Dear Heloise: When making gravy (from drippings) and you need a larger amount, add some similar store-bought gravy to yours (beef, turkey, etc.). The amount added depends on the amount needed and the flavor you want. I can at least double the amount of "homemade" gravy I need. – Alice L. in New York

OVEN SPILLS

Dear Heloise: To remove oven drips or spills more easily, carefully sprinkle salt on the spots as soon as possible and while they are still hot. After they cool, they usually can be popped off. – N.R. in Pennsylvania

If the spill is stubborn and doesn't come off easily, then once the oven cools, remove the spill with a sturdy brush or plastic spatula (not a metal spatula, which may scrape the oven surface coating). – Heloise

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Bridge • Steve Becker

West dealer.
Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ A 8 2
♥ J 10 9 2
♦ 7 3 2
♣ K Q 9

WEST
♠ Q 6 4 3
♥ 7 6
♦ A K Q J 10
♣ 8 2

EAST
♠ 10 7 5
♥ A 4
♦ 8 5 4
♣ 10 7 6 4 3

SOUTH
♠ K J 9
♥ K Q 8 5 3
♦ 9 6
♣ A J 5

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
1 ♦	Pass	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	4 ♥		

Opening lead — king of diamonds.

A Rare Finesse

The "backward" finesse is a play that is rarely used because it is much less likely to succeed than an ordinary finesse. However, when a backward finesse offers the only realistic chance to make the contract, it must be risked.

Consider this deal where South gets to four hearts as shown and West leads the K-Q-A of diamonds. Declarer ruffs the third diamond and forces out the ace of hearts. South wins East's trump return and, having already lost three tricks, must avoid a spade loser.

With this spade combination, declarer would normally lead to the ace and then back to the jack, hoping East had the queen. This would win about half the time.

In this deal, though, declarer knows from the bidding that the normal spade finesse is doomed to fail. East has already shown up with the ace of hearts and presumably would not have passed his partner's opening bid if he also held the queen of spades. Furthermore, West would not have enough points for an opening bid without the spade queen.

Fortunately, South has the necessary spot cards in spades to make a backward finesse feasible. So he initiates the suit by leading the jack from his hand. If West ducks, the jack is allowed to ride, and the contract is home.

If West covers the jack with the queen, dummy wins with the ace and a spade is returned toward the K-9. After East follows low, the nine is played, and, because East has the ten, again declarer is home.

When the location of a missing queen is not known, a backward finesse in that suit will succeed only 25 percent of the time, since it depends on two cards -- the queen and ten -- being favorably placed. For this reason, the play is seldom used. But when the usual approach seems certain to fail, the backward finesse might offer the only hope.

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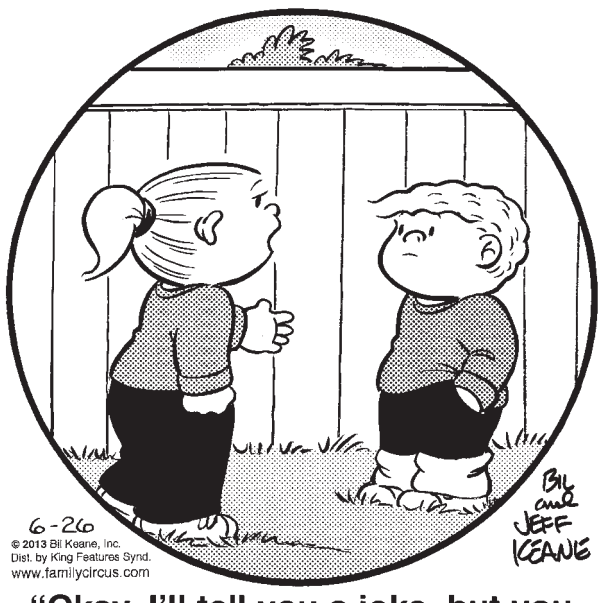
Family Circus • Bil Keane



"Okay, I'll tell you a joke, but you hafta laugh when I'm done."

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★ 6/26

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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.

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

Difficulty Level ★ 6/24

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Cryptoquip

C BRCYA S YXD OGPBR SOCSY ZXHPLVCJ ZPVXU LT XVXHRSYBO DGPVU HZGLSLVT LX AYGDY SO HSJRT-OBSY.

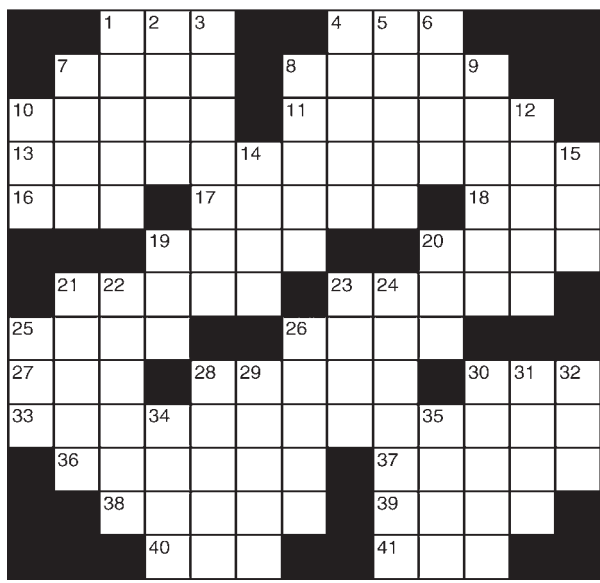
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IS A GYM MACHINE USED TO HELP A BODYBUILDER TIGHTEN HIS MUSCLES A CONTRACTION CONTRAPTION?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: L equals B

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Vagrant
4 Poke
7 Femur or fibula
8 Elaine's last name on "Seinfeld"
10 Cook by direct heat
11 Silvery
13 Smooth-coated pooch
16 1/20 ton (Abbr.)
17 Hum-dinger
18 Moving truck
19 Narnia's Aslan, e.g.
20 Antitoxins
21 Munchie
23 Enthusiasts' emotions
25 Roe provider
26 Group of quail
27 Debtor's letters
28 Muslim maiden
30 Thee
33 High-backed chairs
36 Earthling, in sci-fi
37 Flavor
38 Go over the books
39 Spud's buds
40 Always, in verse
41 Two, in Tijuana

DOWN
1 Give a leg up
2 One
3 Tuneful
4 Spanish wine town
5 Mad
6 Tavern offering
7 Forehead
8 Conductor's wand
9 Whine
10 English channel?
12 Signs of sorrow
14 Kindle competitor
15 Genetic stuff
19 Young fellow
20 Put into words
21 Try for a two-pointer
22 Queasiness
23 Nil
24 Ousted
25 Bro or sis
26 Beyond well-done
28 Throng
29 Where the elated walk
30 Affirmatives
31 Uneaten morsels
32 Work with
34 Verifiable
35 Boxer's successful blow

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

Yesterday's answer 6-26