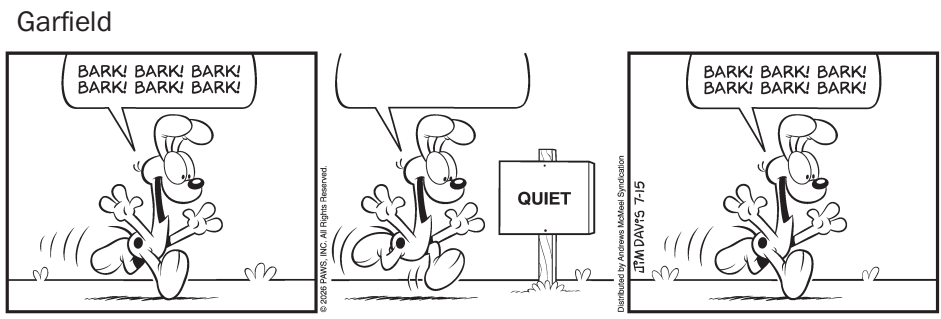
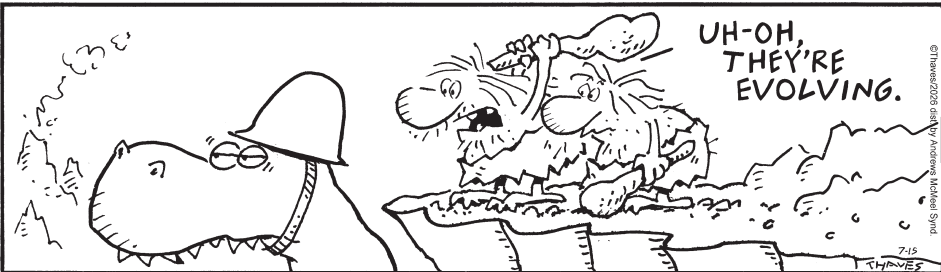




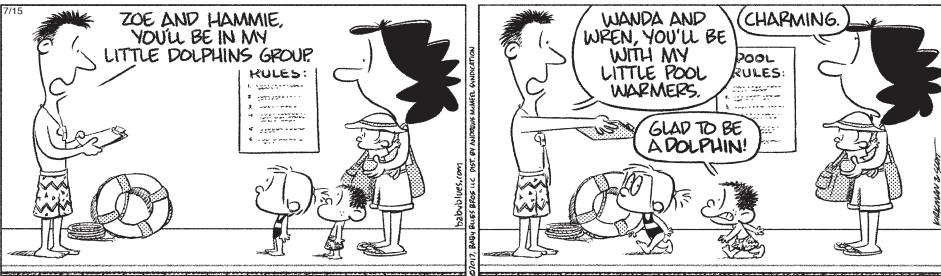
Frank & Ernest



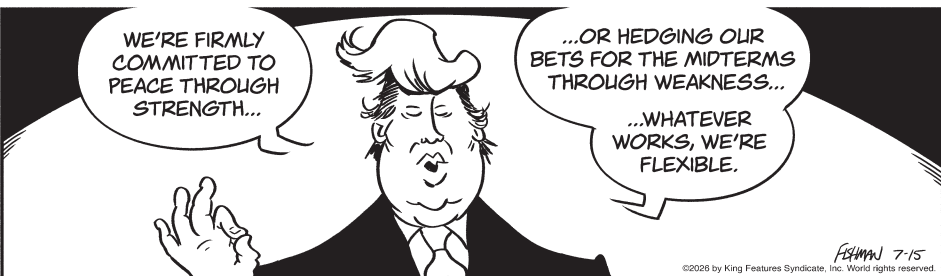
Born Loser



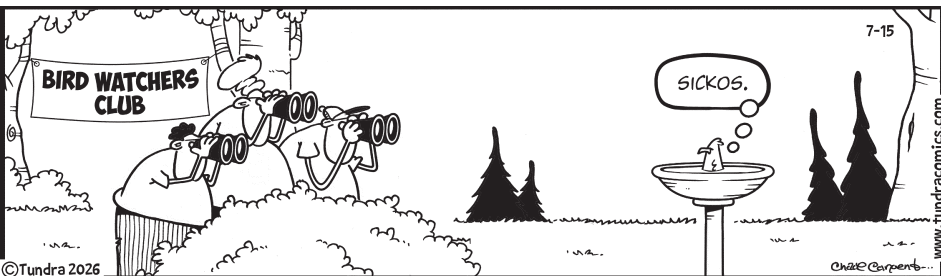
Baby Blues



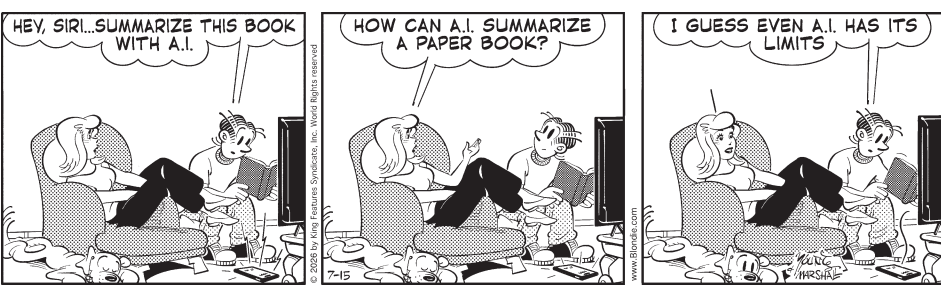
Mallard Fillmore



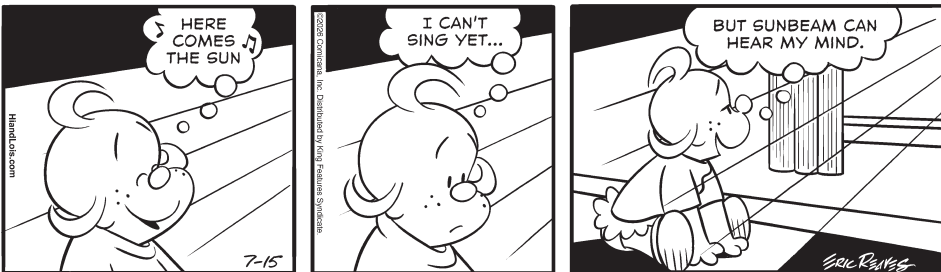
Tundra



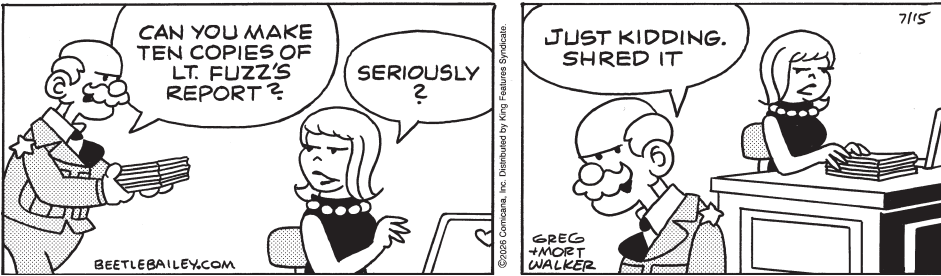
Elaine



Hi & Lois



Beetle Bailey



Snuffy Smith



Zits



Crossword – By Thomas Joseph

ACROSS

1 Flock member

5 "Wild, man!"

11 Lotion additive

12 Relaxed

13 Spice from nutmeg

14 Ice cream flavor

15 Fire remnant

16 Corrals

17 Entertain

19 Letter before sigma

22 Burger topper

24 Tea stirrer

26 Bounce back

27 High point

28 Article

30 Tour de France vehicles

31 Cool, to jazzmen

32 Bitter humor

34 Wildly eager

35 Rule in India

38 Ice cream flavor

41 Casual shirt

42 Ladybug, for one

43 Fill completely

44 Places faith in

DOWN

45 Fans' favorite

1 Tibetan monk

2 Weary sigh

3 Ice cream flavor

4 Flower visitor

5 Watch parts

6 Makes amends

7 Game callers

8 Clumsy one

9 Try out

10 Casual shirt

16 Play on words

18 Earth circler

19 Ice cream flavor

20 Browser button

21 Some bills

22 "Little Women" sister

23 Aspirin's target

25 Aspirin's target

29 Male escort

30 Marshy area

33 Seth of "The Studio"

34 Small workers

36 Choir voice

37 Singer Billy

38 Diminish

39 "Golly!"

40 Attain

41 Letter before omega

Yesterday's answer

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

Bridge – By Steven Becker

A play fit for a king

South dealer. Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH

9 7 5 4

10 9 6

6 3

6 2

WEST

16

K 5 2

8 4 2

Q J 10 8 3

EAST

Q 10 8 2

Q 8 4

K 10 9 7

9 5

SOUTH

A K 3

7 3

A Q J 5

A K 7 4

The bidding:

South	West	North	East
2 NT	Pass	3	Pass
3	Pass	3	Pass
3 NT			

Opening lead — queen of clubs.

Experience is a marvelous teacher, but one of the dangers in playing the game for a long time is that it may lead to occasional carelessness in commonplace situations.

Take this case where South is in three notrump. Let's say South ducks the opening club lead and wins the next club with the king. He then plays a heart and, when West follows low, finesses the nine. If East takes his queen, which seems the natural thing to do, South has no trouble scoring 10 tricks. Whatever East returns,

declarer takes a second heart finesse and makes the contract with an overtrick, scoring four hearts and two tricks in each of the other suits.

If East does not take his queen, South still gets home safely. He takes a successful diamond finesse, crosses to the ace of hearts and repeats the diamond finesse. Declarer thus scores two spades, two hearts, three diamonds and two clubs.

However, South would find it impossible to make nine tricks if West played the king of hearts on the first heart lead! This would limit South to just one heart trick.

Declarer might duck the king, hoping West also had the queen, or might take the king and attempt a diamond finesse. Either way, though, South can't make nine tricks.

West should surely play the king of hearts when the suit is first led despite the usual practice by a defender of playing second-hand low. General rules are always subservient to common sense, and in the present case, West should apply that invaluable commodity to the situation at hand.

West should reason that if South has the queen of hearts, the king is doomed, come what may. He therefore plays the king on the assumption that East has the queen, and hopes that by doing so he will limit dummy to one heart trick.

Tomorrow: Magic act.

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DAILY CRYPTOQUOTES – HERE'S HOW TO WORK IT:

A X Y D L B A A X R

is L O N G F E L L O W

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

7-15

CRYPTOQUOTE

J B M A H Z Q S S K X B N F J N F L X K

H Y L U D L Q S M N F F E F N V Q S S .

— X L N I R L O Z K B U

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: BE FEARLESS IN THE PURSUIT OF WHAT SETS YOUR SOUL ON FIRE. — JENNIFER LEE

Word Sleuth

WORD SLEUTH

WORDS ENDING IN "LO"

D H E B Y V T Q O L I G D B Y

W T R P M K A M A R I L L O I

F D B Y W U T O M A T I L L O

S Q O M K I F D B R S L O L Z

X W U S Q O N L E O I I L E J

H F D C P A Y M L R W I L B V

T S Q P N U O L A P D O E O L

K I H F O L E G N A T L J T E

C B Z L O H I B M B Y L W R V

U S I S R C Q R L L P E N O M

L K J I H F A O L O C C I P E

Tuesday's unlisted clue: AUDREY

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

Wednesday's unlisted clue hint: GOING IT ALONE

Amarillo	Hello	Piccolo	Tangelo
Armadillo	Jello	Portobello	Tomatillo
Cello	Kilo	Pueblo	Tremolo
Cigarillo	Pablo	Silo	

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7/15

Horoscope

– By Georgia Nichols

Happy Birthday for Wednesday, July 15, 2026:

You are imaginative, innovative and empathetic. You have astute analytical abilities. Exciting changes will bring increased personal freedom this year. Stay flexible. Let go of things that have held you back. Seek out new opportunities and be ready to act fast on them. Trust your intuition. Travel is likely.

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★★ An unusual idea or an unexpected event might take you into an entirely new headspace today. You might entertain the notion of a new kind of future for yourself than you had previously thought -- something more romantic, more spiritual or touchy-feely (call it whatever you like). Tonight: Socialize.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★★ You are certainly aware of the value of wealth in practical terms. However, today you might receive

a new interpretation of the energy of wealth and what is possible to achieve, for yourself or for others. This is illuminating and perhaps liberating! Tonight: Relax at home.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★★ Something might occur today that makes you more deeply appreciate a friend or a group to which you might belong. You see that this interaction benefits you in an almost idealistic way. Or perhaps this person (or group) inspires you. Tonight: Discussions.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★★ Today you might be admired for taking a stand on a certain issue or speaking up about something that is important to you. What you do will reveal a level of compassion, understanding and idealistic values that might inspire someone else. Tonight: Check your belongings.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★★ Some kind of subtle shift might take place that prompts you to think about a different future for yourself, or perhaps a different path. Or you might see how travel or further education can change your future. Whatever it is, it's heartening. Tonight: You're powerful.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★★ With Venus in your sign, you are gracious and diplomatic, which is a good thing, because a boss, parent or someone in authority might do something that catches you off guard. Ironically, whatever happens might open your eyes to a new way of doing things in the future. Tonight: Enjoy privacy.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★★ People admire you right now. In an unexpected way, something related to travel, further education, medicine or the law might catch you off guard and open new worlds for you. This could be related to a friend or a group, or not. Be open to see what develops; it might be meaningful. Tonight: Be friendly.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★★ Be aware that people notice you today. Perhaps this is because something unexpected benefits you -- an inheritance, bonus, gift or the indirect benefit through a partner or friend. Whatever happens might allow you to expand your world in a way that offers you a more promising future! Tonight: You're admired.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★★ Listen to the ideas of partners, spouses and close friends, because they might be the source of

something that can lead to a positive shift in your life. It could be a deeper understanding or a deeper appreciation of what you have and who you are. Or it might show you a door that you can open. Tonight: Explore!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★★ Something related to your health, your job or even a pet might have the power to inspire you to consider something in a new light. You might not be content with old goals, because suddenly, new insights promise a refreshing level of consciousness. Tonight: Check your finances.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★★ You might feel more inspired by romance or something related to kids that lifts you to a new level of appreciation and ambition. It's as if you are suddenly seeing new possibilities or appreciating things in a new way, and it's like an epiphany for you. Tonight: Cooperate.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★★ Your appreciation of the value of home and family might take on a new level of meaning today. You might suddenly grasp that it is something more important than you thought. Whatever happens opens your mind to a new awareness. Tonight: Get organized.

JUMBLE

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

IYDSA

EPTSE

AANBNA

GFTERO

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Ans. here:

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: FRUIT CRUMB BUCKET CHANGE
Answer: When fresh hay was brought in, the horses liked it — "MUNCH" BETTER

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

It was completed in 1935 and outputs enough electricity for over half a million homes.

I came here when I was a child.

My grandfather worked on the dam.

BECAUSE HOOVER DAM'S HYDROELECTRIC FACILITY WAS WELL-BUILT, IT'S LASTED ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.