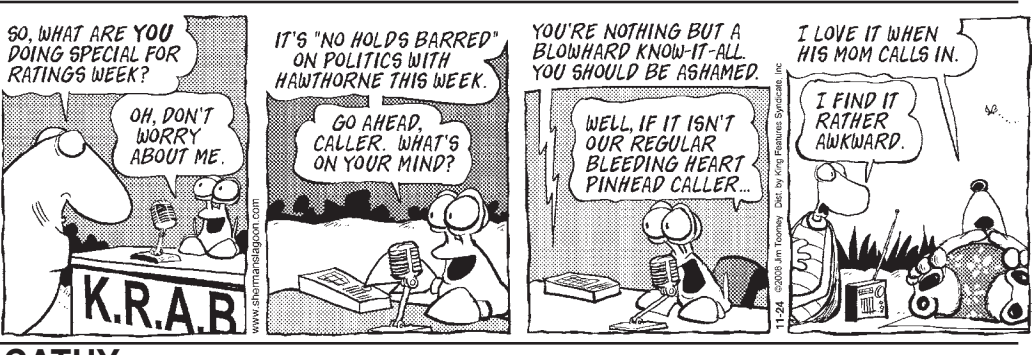
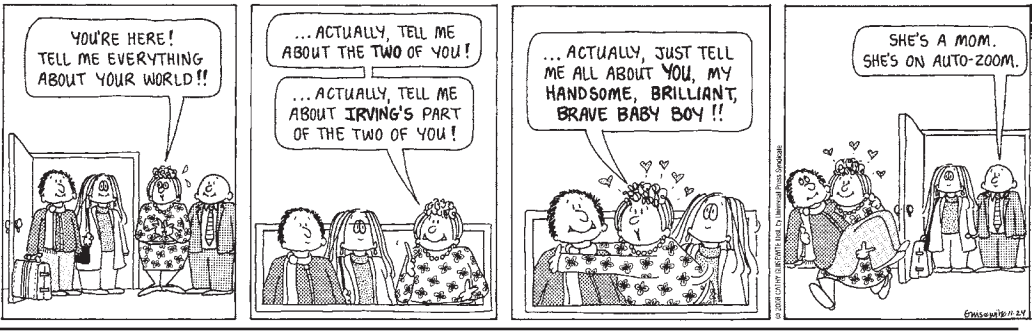


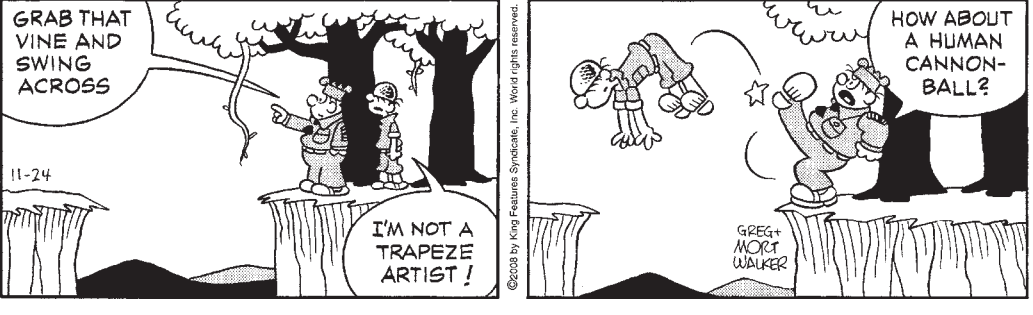
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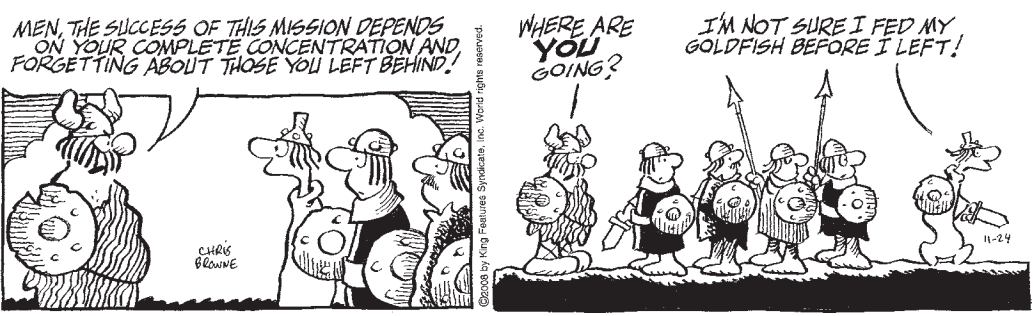
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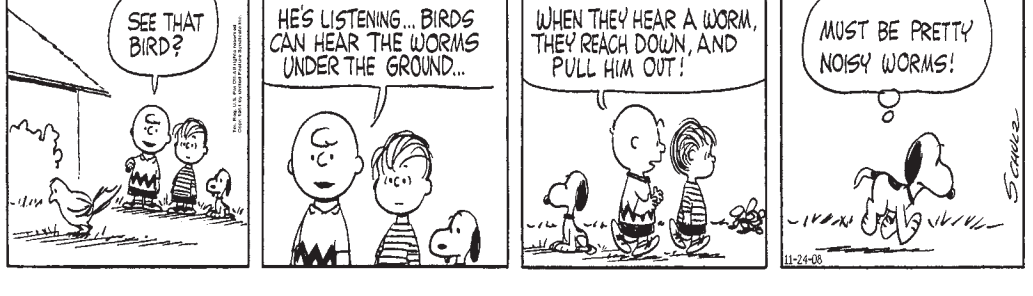
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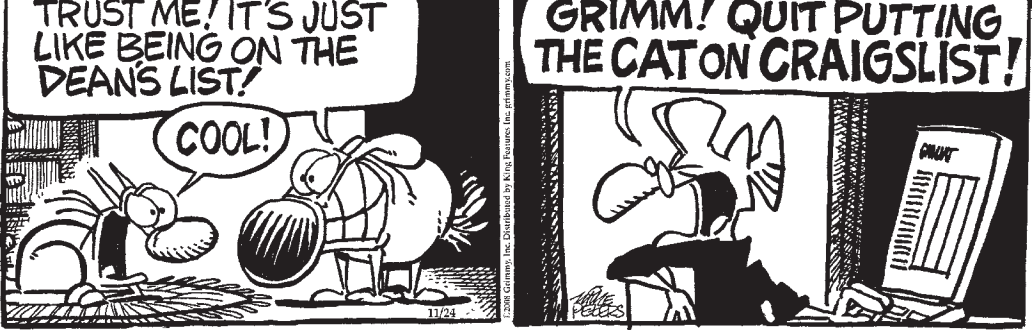
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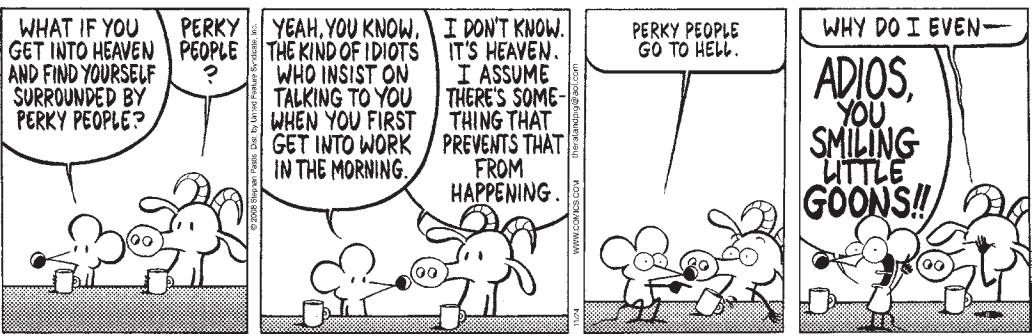
PEANUTS



MOTHER GOOSE AND GRIMM



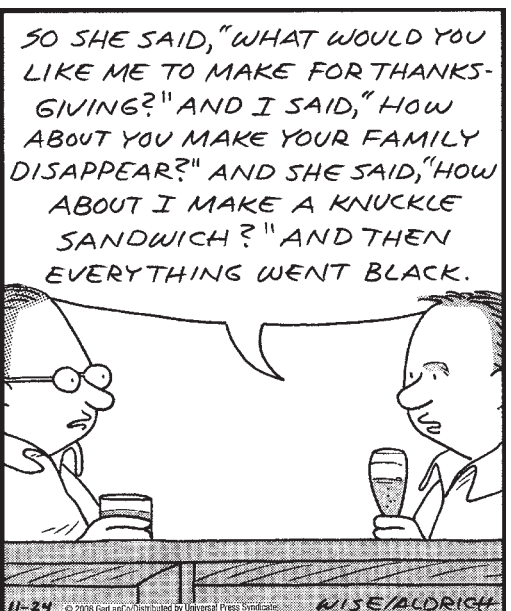
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



MONTY



REAL LIFE ADVENTURES



CLOSE TO HOME



Mraz disconnects from the world, makes CD

By Mesfin Fekadu
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — To record his third studio CD, Jason Mraz withdrew from the music industry so he wouldn't be affected by album sales and charts. Instead, the pop singer went to his hometown of San Diego and traveled to London while disconnecting himself from his phone and e-mail.

Months after its release, the album's first single, "I'm Yours," is still a hit on those charts Mraz tried to avoid, rounding off the top 10 this week on the Bill-



AP photo
In this Sept. 5, 2008, file photo, pop singer Jason Mraz arrives for the Stand Up to Cancer benefit at the Kodak Theater in Los Angeles.

Q&A

board Hot 100. He has also released a new book.

AP: What's been your most memorable moment on tour?

Mraz: When I first started touring, I got to tour with Jewel for many long weeks and on our last night she invited me on stage to do a duet and we shared a microphone, and I always thought that was so great because I could clearly see in her mouth while she's singing. I'm like right there in her face. Like up her nose at times and feeling her breath in my face. Maybe it was kind of perverted for me to have those experiences but it was great as a fan and fellow musician. It's a great opportunity to be that close to other musicians.

AP: Talk more about this book of photos.

Mraz: For the past five years that I've been touring, I've taken Polaroid instant film; Polaroid 600, the cheapest kind you can buy. And there's really something quite novelty and interesting about this film, and now I've taken thousands and thousands of pictures.

AP: Between studio sessions, live shows and the book, what's Jason doing in his free time?

Mraz: I spend a lot of my time, most

Randy Owen starts over with solo CD

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — As front man and lead singer of Alabama, Randy Owen racked up 42 No. 1 singles and dozens of other hits.

But his last hit with that legendary band was about a decade ago. And so far, radio has been lukewarm to Owen's first solo album, "One on One," released this month.

The disc debuted at No. 14 on Billboard's country chart, and the first two singles — the low-tempo "Braid My Hair" and "Like I Never Broke Her Heart" — have struggled to reach the Top 40.

"His audience is at the upper end, and radio seems to be targeting a younger audience," said John Hart, president of Bullseye Marketing Research in Nashville, which tests songs for radio appeal. "I think the industry looks at him fondly," Hart added. "But it's all a matter of what the programmers perceive as hip and cool."

Owen, 58, has put together a 10-piece band and hit the road again, doing a mix of old and new songs. At a recent Grand Ole Opry show, he played two numbers — his new single "Like I Never Broke Her Heart" followed by the Alabama classic "Mountain Music." The crowd politely applauded the first and went wild for the second.

He knows he's got his work cut out for him but says he enjoys being on stage with a band again.

"I love music. I love playing and singing and writing. I love performing," Owen said. "Great musicians make that possible. It's like getting in a really good race car and everything is working good in it and you

just drive it. It's a really neat experience."

Alabama retired from touring in 2004 after one of the most remarkable runs in country music history. They've sold over 46 million records in the United States and the Recording Industry Association of America named them Country Group of the Century in 1999. Though the group did put out a gospel CD in 2006, for the most part, Owen was he was content to retreat to his 2,000-acre cattle ranch on Lookout Mountain and focus on his charity work.

"I'm a very simple person. I don't live a complicated life, at least I don't think it's complicated. I like to have love around me and good friends and family, and I'm an outdoorsman, I'm a farm kid, a rancher. That's who I am," he said.

But Owen also missed performing, and after playing a few shows to test the waters, he decided to become a solo act.

"It's a continuation of what I've done," he said. "It's the same approach for me, just with different background vocals."

The new CD on Broken Bow Records is produced by John Rich of Big & Rich and includes "Braid My Hair," a song Owen calls "the most uplifting, wonderful song I ever heard that makes you cry." It's one of only four cuts on the 11-track CD that Owen didn't have a hand in writing. All publishing proceeds from the song go to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, a leading treatment center for children with cancer. Owen has been involved with St. Jude for about 20 years.

"It's a lesson for all of us," said Owen, the father of three children, of the song. "This little girl just wants to get well

Sudoku puzzle

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

Scratch pad

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

Yesterday's solution

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Die-hard soccer moms