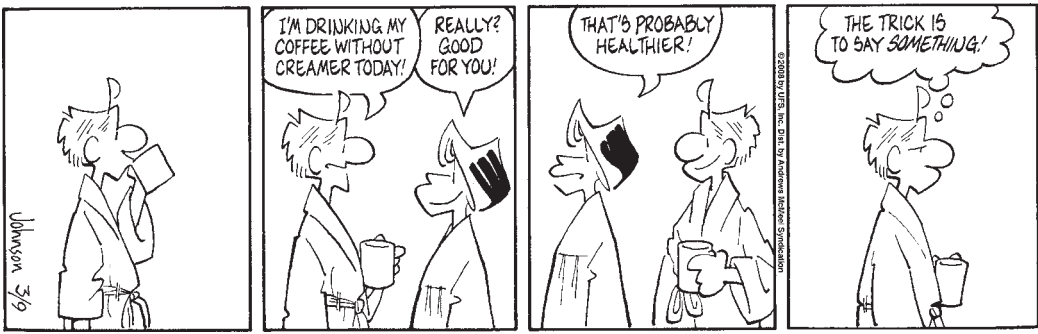
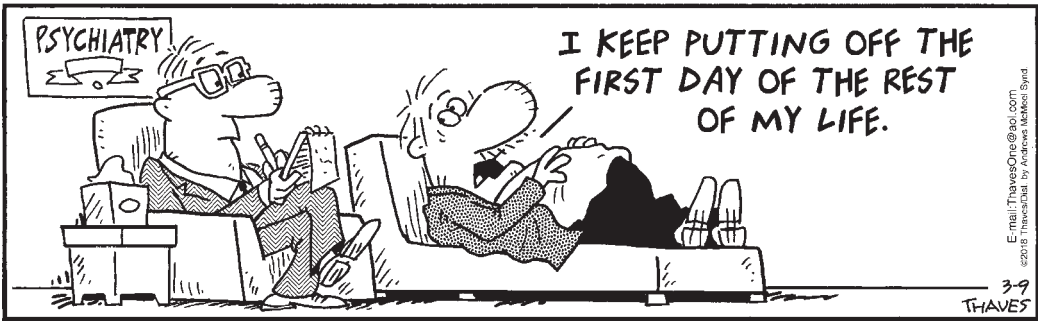


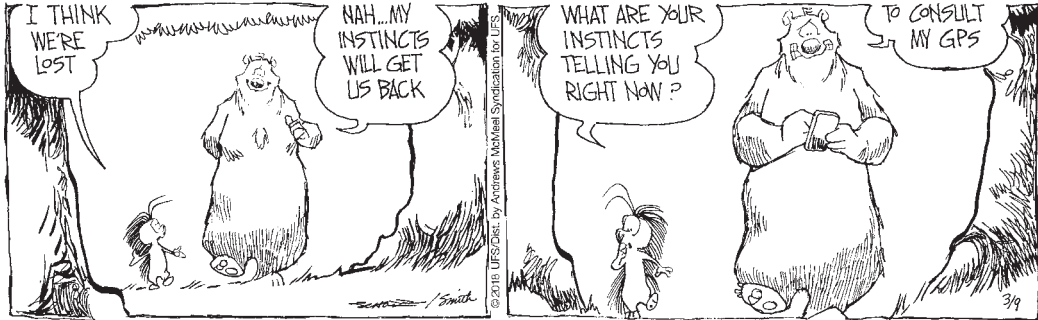
ARLO AND JANIS® by Jimmy Johnson



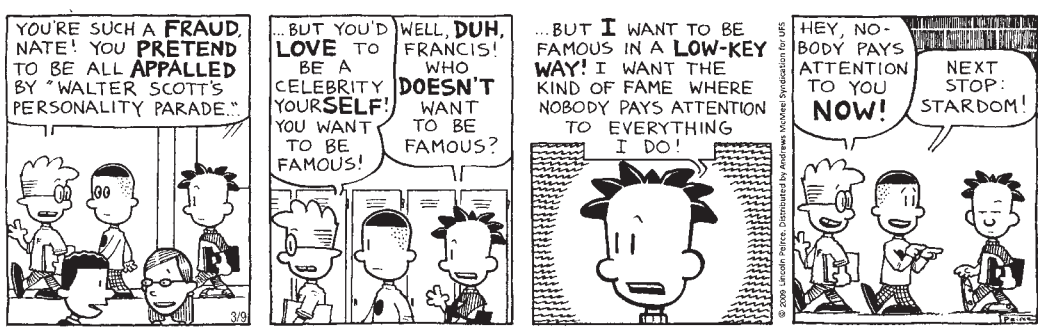
FRANK & ERNEST® by Bob Thaves



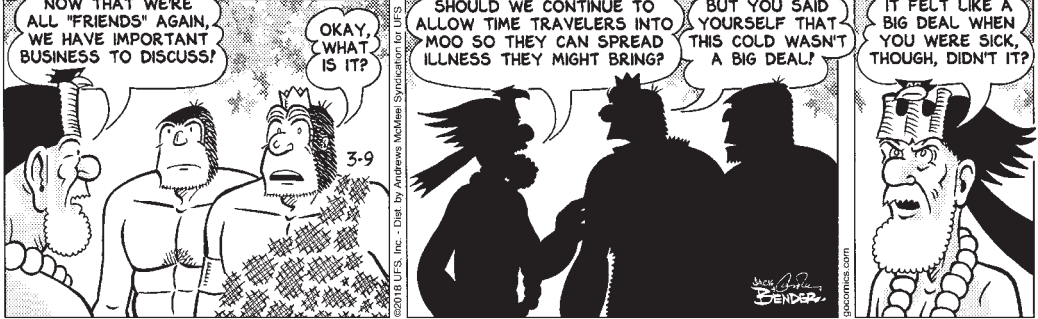
THE GRIZZWELLS® by Bill Schorr



BIG NATE® by Lincoln Peirce



ALLEY OOP by Jack and Carole Bender



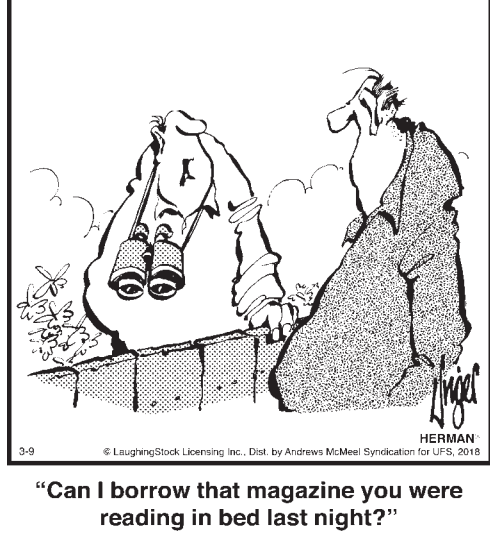
SOUP TO NUTZ by Rick Stromoski



THE BORN LOSER™ by Art & Chip Sansom



HERMAN® by Jim Unger



REALITY CHECK® by Dave Whamond



AT THE MOVIES

'Wrinkle in Time' is visually gorgeous

(AP) -- Go ahead, pick your favorite young, villain-vanquishing fantasy heroine. Meg Murry probably came first.

Katniss Everdeen? She arrived in 2001. Hermione Granger? That was 1997. Elphaba, the green girl from "Wicked"? 2003. But Meg, the reluctant, bespectacled heroine of Madeleine L'Engle's classic "A Wrinkle in Time," has been with us, and on the shelves of middle-schoolers, since 1962.

Enter Ava DuVernay, tapped by Disney to put her own spin on this tale of self-discovery across the space-time continuum. And the talented "Selma" director does not shy away from the task of adapting the story to the 21st century. With the help of a terrifically diverse cast anchored by the sweet — but too sweet, here — newcomer Storm Reid, and A-listers like Oprah Winfrey and Reese Witherspoon, DuVernay has made a film that is unabashedly — some might say relentlessly — of the moment. Hip-hop quotes, eating disorders, a "Hamilton" reference? Yup, yup, yup.

It's also all over the map, in every way possible. It's visually gorgeous at times but then boring to behold at others, emotionally poignant at times but stunningly cloying at others. It's also confusing. Mostly, it's just a frustrating whole comprised of some pretty promising parts.

We begin, as "Wrinkle" fans surely know, with that "dark and stormy night." It's been four years since Meg's beloved father, a physicist, disappeared mysteriously. Dad had been exploring serious issues involving time travel. And now he's gone, leaving Meg (Reid), her mom (Gugu Mbatha-Raw) and precocious little brother Charles Wallace (Deric McCabe) wondering if they will ever see him again.

The outside world is dismissive, including the school principal. Meg has problems at school — she's said to be aggressive and troublesome, although frankly, this is hard to see from Reid's appealingly thoughtful, sweet demeanor.

hues, and gems across her forehead, exhorting Meg to be a warrior in tones that recall the late poet Maya Angelou. Kaling's character is the least compelling, maybe because she's "evolved past language" and thus only allowed to spout quotes from others, a diverse bunch that includes Buddha, OutKast, Kahlil Gibran, and Lin-Manuel Miranda.

After an initial stay on the ravishing planet Uriel, and a visit to the Happy Medium, the kids end up on the frightening planet of Camazotz, ruled by the dark force called It. Their time here is the most visually interesting of the film, especially the scene of scarily alike children bouncing the same balls at the same moment outside the same houses.

In case you haven't read the book, we won't get more specific. But if you have, beware that some elements — including a pretty major plot twist involving Meg's road to heroism — are either compressed beyond recognition or deleted altogether.

While the faults of this film decidedly do not make it stronger, maybe its well-meaning spirit will be enough to appeal to a new generation of Meg Murry fans.

"A Wrinkle in Time," a Walt Disney Studios release, has been rated PG by the Motion Picture Association of America "for thematic elements and some peril." Running time: 109 minutes.

In any case, soon Meg, Charles Wallace and friend Calvin (Levi Miller), whose quirky character has sadly been turned into a blandly handsome nothing, will be on their journey, via a time travel concept called a tesseract, to find Dr. Murry.

Accompanying them on this perilous quest, at various stages, is a triumvirate of very entertaining older women, er, celestial beings — Mrs. Whatsit (Witherspoon), Mrs. Who (Mindy Kaling) and Mrs. Which (Winfrey). Witherspoon is the most engaging of the bunch — ditzy and charming and, at 2,379,152,497 years of age, the youngest of the group.

Winfrey's Mrs. Who is the grande dame, imposing with dramatic white hair, sparkling lips and eyes in various hues, and gems across her forehead, exhorting Meg to be a warrior in tones that recall the late poet Maya Angelou. Kaling's character

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CROSSWORDS

ACROSS

1 Pony Express load

5 Hosp. worker

8 Foreign visitors?

12 Big Dipper bear

13 Livy's trio

14 Good hold

15 Carpe —!

16 Italian cheese (2 wds.)

18 Soft breeze

20 Finished

21 Narrow inlet

22 Berlin conjunction

23 Toll roads

26 Chronicles

29 Knuckle under

30 Metropolis

31 Western treaty grp.

33 Loud clamor

34 Karate cousin

35 Right away

36 Coal layers

38 TV journalist Rita

39 Dazzle

40 Hot beverage

41 Playing marble

44 Chirped

47 More rundown

49 Multiplied

51 Dumas senior

52 Pacino and Unser

53 — — upswing

54 Bird food

55 Born as

56 Lucy Lawless role

DOWN

1 Beauty pack

2 N.M. neighbor

3 Psychic's intro (2 wds.)

4 Type of eel

5 Tripoli's country

6 Square pillar

7 Goose egg

8 Kampala's country

9 Flintstone dad

10 River in France

11 Raced

17 Cent

19 That guy's

22 Till

23 Whale school

24 Egret cousin

25 Lois Lane's co-worker

26 Verdi heroine

27 Oodles

28 Volvo rival

30 Winsome

32 Farm abode

34 Chatted

35 Orator's perch

37 Plundered

38 So-so mark

40 Not long-winded

41 Hooded reptiles

42 Clarified butter

43 Horror-flick staple

44 Volcano goddess

45 Sea eagle

46 College VIP

48 Woosnam of golf

50 Court evidence, maybe

Want more puzzles? Check out the "Just Right Crossword Puzzles" books at QuillDriverBooks.com

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