

7-1

Foklore with Dennis the Menace and Beetle Bailey

Dr. Collins

Foklore and the Media

M/W 10:30

Amy A. Kilburn

April 11, 1994

Folklore with Dennis the Menace and Beetle Bailey

Comic strips are a well-known part of the typical newspaper. They are inserted amongst all the seriousness of the world's news to make light of life. Dennis the Menace and Beetle Bailey are just a couple of prime examples of comic strips created to make light while most commonly using folk beliefs, speech and children's folklore.

My comic strip collection, consisting of ten comics from Beetle Bailey and Dennis the Menace, was obtained from the comic section of the *Lexington Herald Leader* during a five week span (January 21st to February 26th). The comics selected consisted of different types of folklore, this included folk belief, folk speech, and children's folklore, such as games.

Out of the ten comics collected, the majority, seven, were from the Dennis the Menace comic strip. Dennis the Menace is a one framed, black and white (except on Sundays), comic strip illustrated by two writers that portrays a witty child that is notorious for making grown-ups appear silly, especially Mr. Wilson. This comic strip is unique because it basically deals with a child, on a comical level, who takes in everything that's said and done around him and reuses it with his own interpretations.

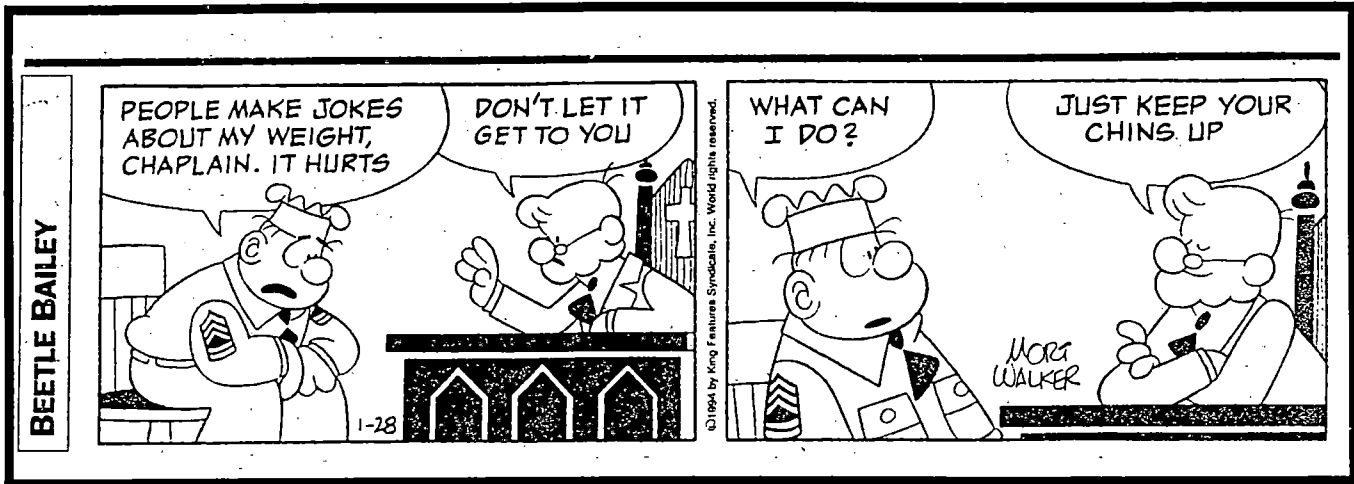
In analyzing the types of folklore found within the collection of Dennis the Menace comics, 86% contained certain folk speech, while 14% used children's folklore. Of all the ones containing folk speech, it was interesting to note that Dennis the Menace was the only one speaking. He was using classic phrases that a child wouldn't normally use, but that had probably been overheard. The one containing children's folklore

played on an interaction between Mr. Wilson and Dennis, where Dennis, once again, makes fun, unknowingly of Mr. Wilson.

To make my collection complete, three comics were used from the comic strip Beetle Baily which is a common one to three framed, black and white (except on Sundays), comic strip produced by Mort Walker. This series of comics is deals with a older group of individuals who are in the military. Beetle Bailey is the main character, but unlike Dennis the Menace, he is not present, nor does he have to be the subject of conversation in the series. The Sarge or his assistant are commonplace within the comical story. This comic series often deals with the Sarge because he is often strife with the basic problems of life. In fact, Beetle Bailey was not used in any of the examples within this collection.

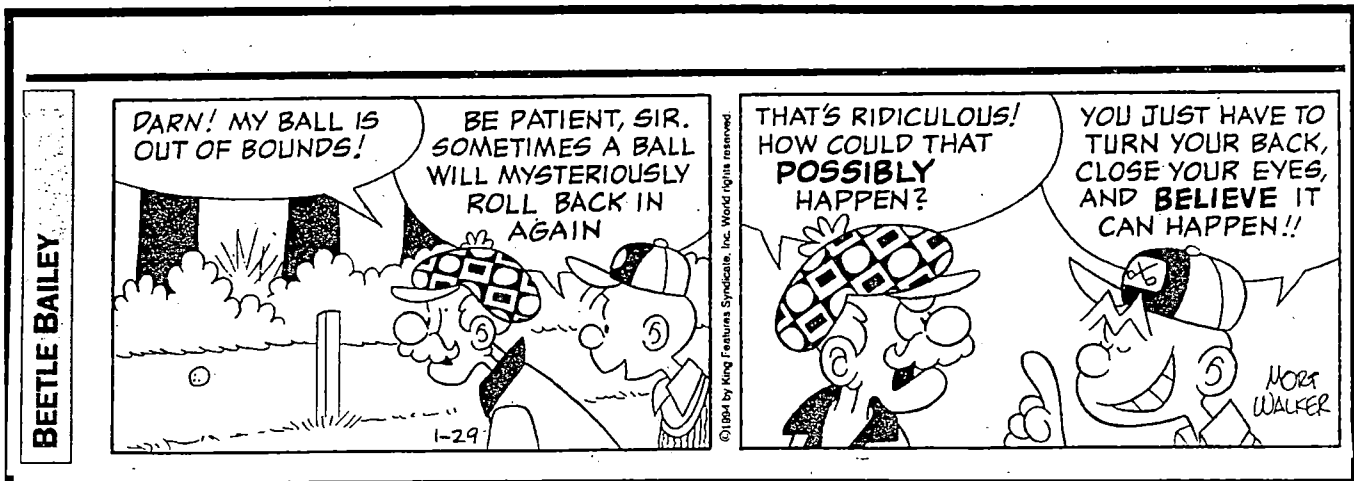
Folk speech was most prevalent in the samples collected, it was present in 66% of the examples. Folk belief was found in the remaining comic (33%). In dealing with the folk speech within the Beetle Bailey series, it is interesting to note that when it is used, it is more of an action and reaction. The speech is the reaction or it causes the action. This was not the case in the Dennis the Menace series probably because they only use the one frame and there is not a lot of room for a continuous dialogue, unless or course it is in the Sunday edition, which is full colored. The Dennis the Menace more of a catch all lesson that is taught from just looking at the one frame. It does not appear to unfold the small plot that Beetle Bailey uses.

In collecting and analyzing these two comic strips, the folk idea was prevalent just as it is in today's day to day world. they are used to make light of life, and considering that is its purpose, they are successful.



January 28, 1994

"Keep your chin's up" is an example of folk speech. It is used to try and lift ones spirits.

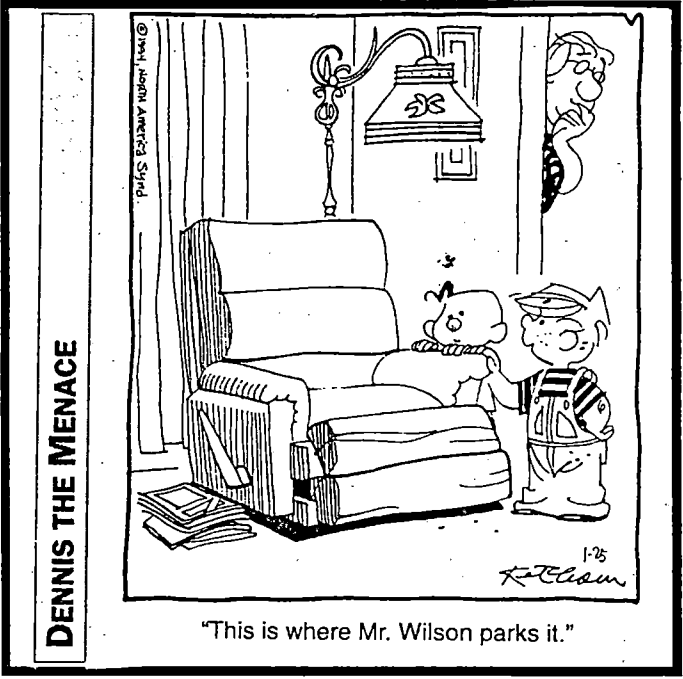


January 29, 1994

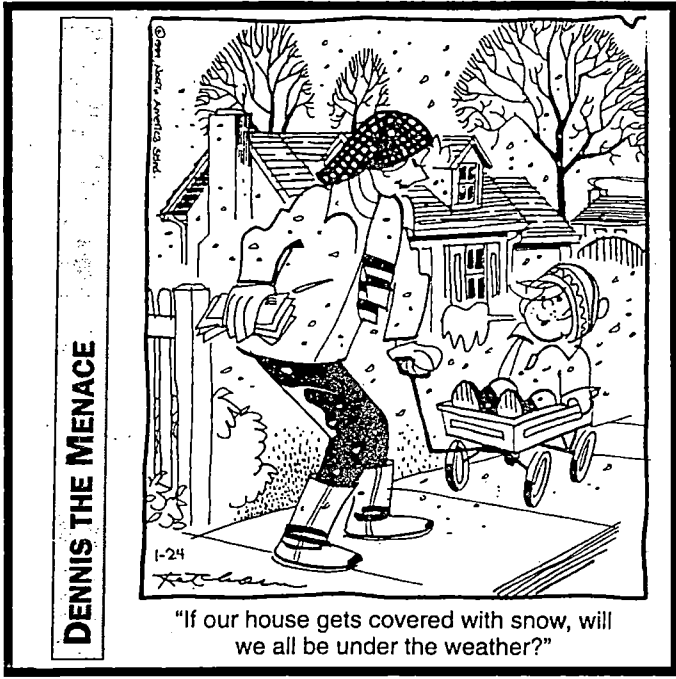
"You just have to turn your back, close your eyes, and believe it can happen" This is an clear example of one person's folk belief.



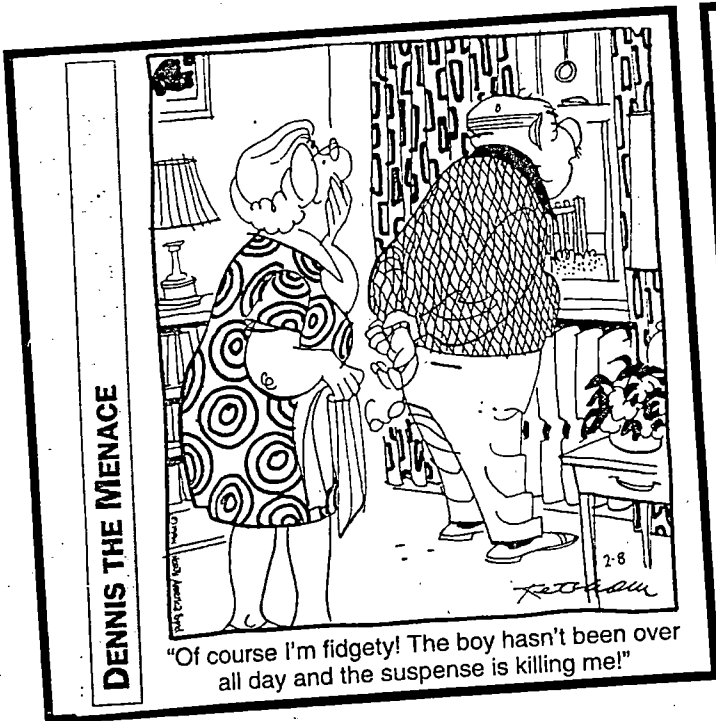
January 21, 1994
 "Home of my own" is an example of folk speech.



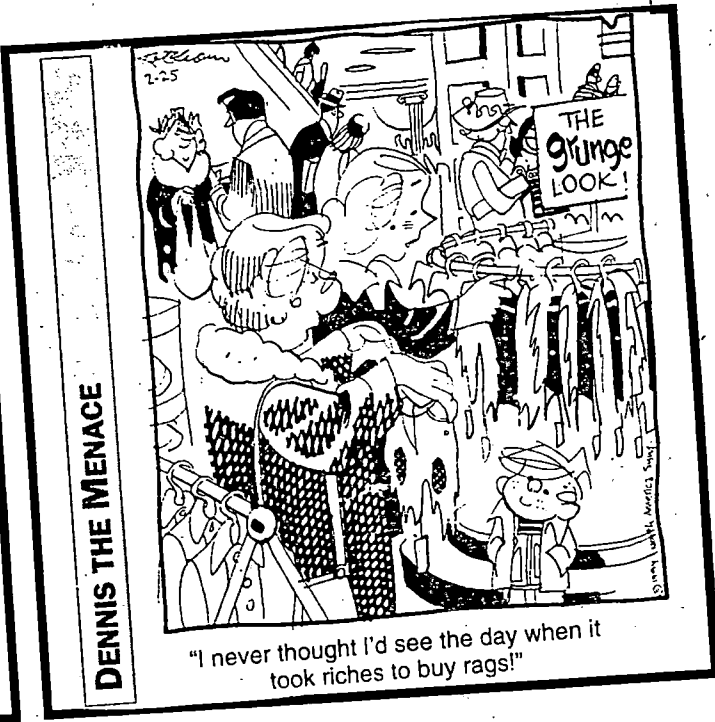
January 25, 1994
 "Parks it" is an example of folk speech. It is used to help describe where someone sits. (e.g. Park your butt right there)



January 24, 1994
 "Under the weather" is an example of folk speech. It is used to help describe someone who is not feeling well.



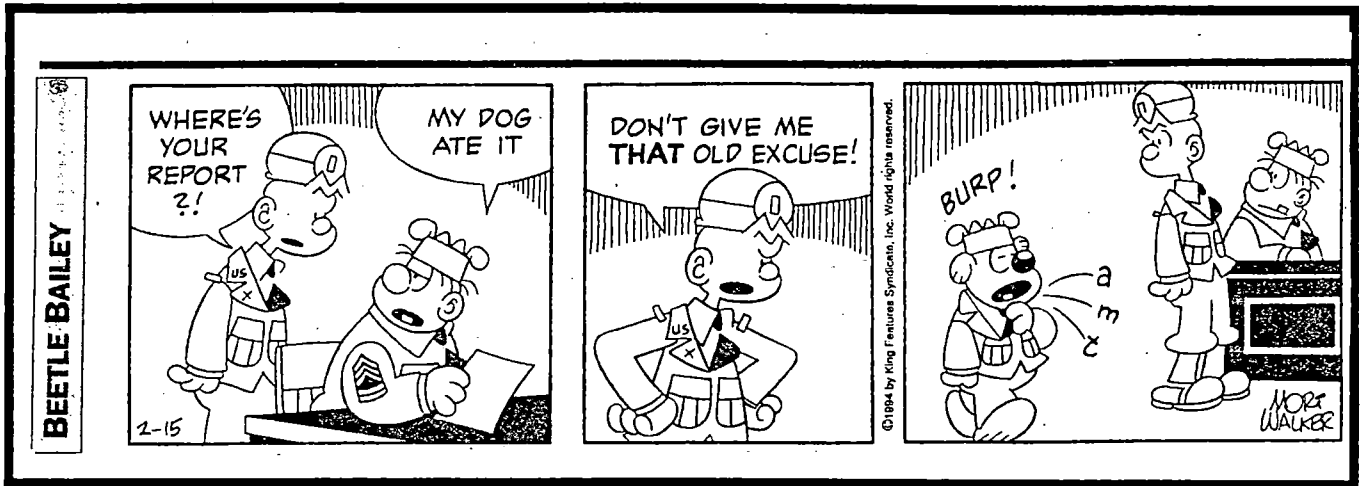
February 8, 1994
 "Suspense is killing me" is an example of folk speech. It is used in to help describe someone who is on edge waiting for something to happen.



February 25, 1994
 "Riches to buy rags" is an example of folk speech. This is a play on the common phrase from rags to riches.

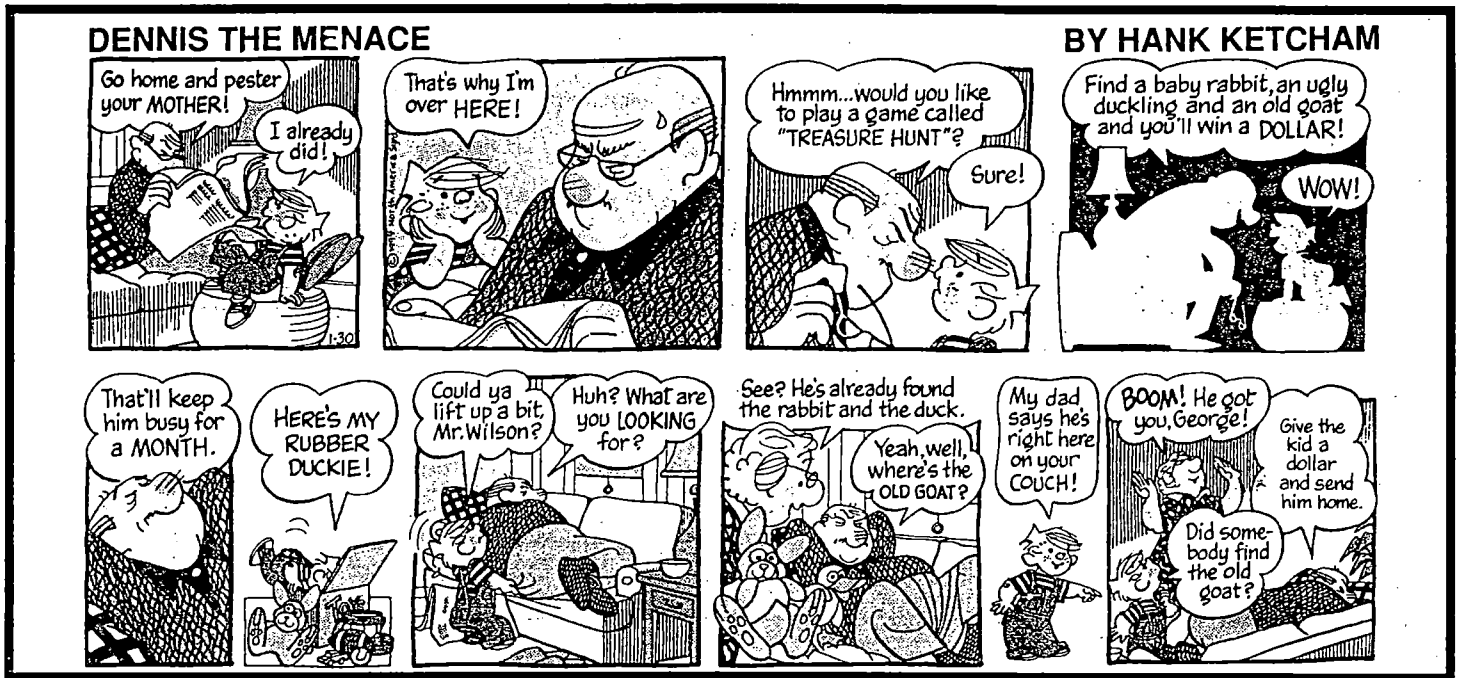


January 27, 1994
 "One of a kind" is an example of folk speech. It is used in to help describe someone/something that is unlike anything else.



February 15, 1994

"My dog ate it" is an example of folk speech. This is an example of



January 30, 1994

This larger comic has examples of folk speech and folk games within. The Treasure Hunt is a classic example of a children's game while the ugly duckling is a term used to describe something that is weird looking.