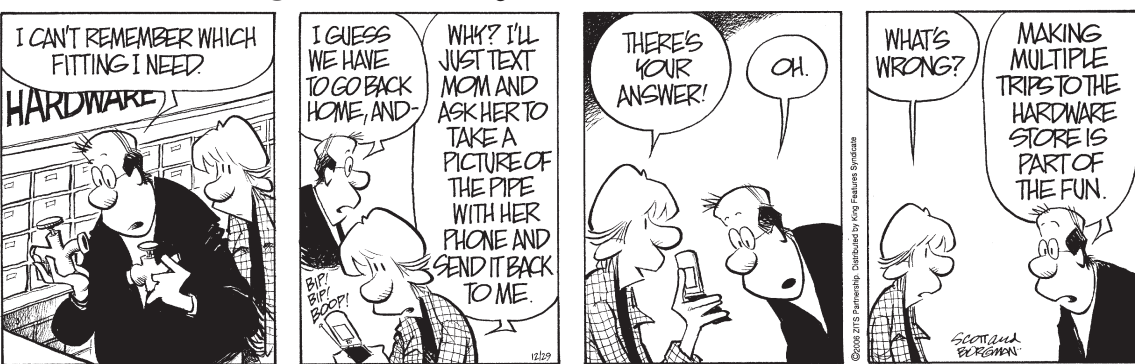


**Sally Forth • Greg Howard**



**Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott**



**Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott**



**Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne**



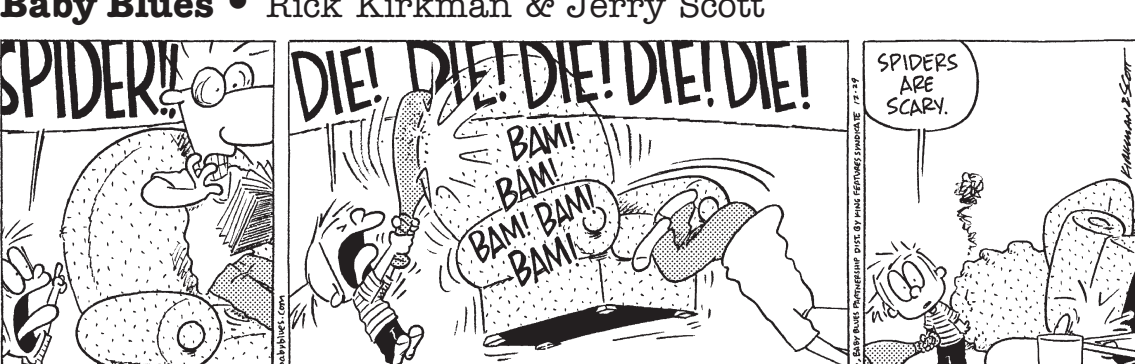
**Blondie • Chic Young**



**Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker**



**Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott**



**Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters**



**Cryptoquip**

CMD QONQXBL MAXBDL OP ECZ'QD VJQDVVOGF CZJ  
 ENKLDH CAAB K MZC CXDQ MIOAI FOPJ JC  
 GZHDXCNL CA CMD UAQCM, FOXD Y KDQVCG, O MCZWT  
 UKBZOI MZU EQXB-CAACMDG. AYWW ECZ KQDVGJ-JDGVD.  
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: TO FASHION A BEAUTIFUL KEEPSAKE NECKLACE, I SUPPOSE IT HELPS TO BE A LOCKET SCIENTIST. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THE UNLUCKY HOCKEY PLAYER TOOK A HIT DIRECTLY TO THE MOUTH, MAKING HIM PUCK-TOOTHED.  
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals O Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals R

**Crossword**

**ACROSS**  
 1 That girl  
 4 Trench  
 7 Norma Rae's concern  
 12 Gear projection  
 13 "The Name of the Rose" author  
 14 Excuse  
 15 "— Town"  
 16 1990s sitcom set at WNYX  
 18 Tramcar load  
 19 Filet mignon, e.g.  
 20 Pocket bread  
 22 Shade provider  
 23 Crazes  
 27 Shell game need  
 29 Draw out  
 31 Virile, plus  
 34 Song of sorrow  
 35 Launderer's chemical

**DOWN**  
 1 Reporter's coup  
 2 Beautiful maiden  
 3 Heron's cousin  
 4 Nerd-pack contents  
 5 Summer-time quaff  
 6 Post-shower wrap  
 7 Songbird  
 8 Carte lead-in  
 9 Auction action

**Solution time: 25 mins.**

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

**YESTERDAY'S ANSWER 12-29**

**Bidding Quiz**

You are the dealer, both sides vulnerable, and have opened One Heart. Partner has responded One Spade. What would you now bid with each of the following five hands?

- [S] AK75 [H] AQJ83 [D] 62 [C] A4
- [S] 95 [H] AJ842 [D] KQ5 [C] KJ7
- [S] 92 [H] KQ984 [D] AJ [C] KQ97
- [S] 843 [H] AKJ962 [D] K7 [C] A5
- [S] J6 [H] KQ853 [D] AKJ [C] AQ3

1. Four spades. A game contract must be reached once partner responds with one spade. Only an avowed pessimist would think that the combined hands might not provide a satisfactory play for game.

Whether the basis for this evaluation is point count — you have 18 high-card points plus two doubletons — or simply that it would be extremely unlikely to lose four tricks, a game must be undertaken.

A raise to three spades would be wrong, as this would not compel partner to bid again, but would merely invite him to go on.

2. One notrump. This rebid identifies a balanced hand of the minimum class, which is exactly what you have. It would be wrong to rebid your hearts with such a weak suit.

3. Two clubs. Hands with 5-4-2-2 distribution usually play better in a suit, so you should show your second suit rather than rebid one notrump. Although the two-club bid is by no means forcing, and might even be made on a minimum hand, it can be based on more than a minimum and is therefore to be preferred to one notrump, which is a limited rebid. This hand should not be treated as though it were a weak opening bid.

4. Three hearts. Your additional values above a minimum opening can be shown by jumping to three hearts, indicating 16 to 18 points. Partner is not required to bid again and may pass with six or seven points.

It is important to recognize that this 15-high-card-point hand is worth substantially more because of the length and strength of the heart suit and because partner's spade response helps cover your weakest suit. But it is not worth more than a three-heart bid because game is not likely to be made if partner's hand is so weak that he passes.

5. Three notrump. You should assume that partner has at least six points for his one-spade response. Since this brings the combined point count to at least 26, a game contract must be undertaken. The only question is how best to tell partner about the size and shape of your hand.

The jump-rebid to three notrump fills the bill perfectly. It indicates balanced distribution, approximately 20 points and strength in the unbid suits. It lays the foundation for a slam if partner has the type of hand that could produce a slam opposite this one.

North dealer.  
 Both sides vulnerable.

<b>NORTH</b>		<b>EAST</b>	
♥ Q 10 6 3	♠ A K 8 7 6 2	♠ K 10 3	♥ —
♦ Q J 4 3	♣ —	♣ —	♦ —
♣ K 7	♦ —	♦ —	♣ —
♠ A Q 5	♥ —	♥ —	♠ —

<b>WEST</b>		<b>SOUTH</b>	
♥ 7 2	♠ A K J 9 8 5 4	♠ —	♥ —
♦ 10 9 5	♣ —	♣ —	♦ —
♣ J 9 4 3	♦ A 10 8	♦ —	♣ —
♠ J 8 7 6	♥ 9 4 2	♥ —	♠ —

The bidding:  
 North 1♥ East 1♥ South 1♠ West Pass  
 Opening lead — ten of hearts.

**Think First, Play Later**

The importance of planning the play is well-illustrated in this deal, where South failed to justify his leap to six spades by not finding the way to make the contract.

West led the ten of hearts, covered by the jack and king and ruffed by South. Declarer then drew trumps and led a club to the queen, losing to the king. There was now no way to avoid losing another club, and South finished down one.

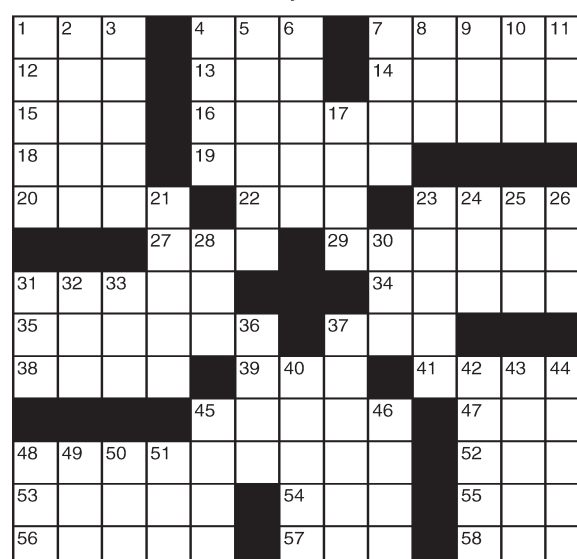
Declarer could have made the slam had he given more thought at the outset to finding a way to avoid staking his chances solely on the club finesse. He knew from both the bidding and opening lead that East had the A-K of hearts, and could have capitalized on this knowledge to assure the contract.

The simplest approach is to refrain from covering the ten of hearts with the jack at trick one. After East also follows low, South ruffs, draws two rounds of trumps, cashes the K-A of diamonds and ruffs the ten of diamonds in dummy.

The stage is now set for the decisive play. Declarer leads the queen of hearts from dummy's Q-J-4 and, after East covers with the king, discards the club deuce!

This places East in a hopeless position. If he returns the ace or a low heart, dummy's jack becomes a trick on which South can dispose of his other club loser. A club return from East into dummy's A-Q is equally fatal, and so is a diamond return, which allows declarer to discard a club as he ruffs in dummy.

Many declarers would instinctively cover the ten of hearts with the jack at trick one and then start thinking about how to play the hand. But that is not the right way to play the game. Think first, play later!



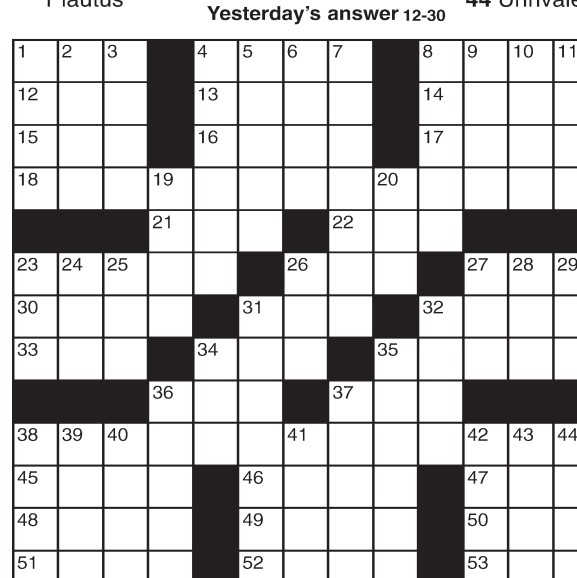
**ACROSS**  
 1 U.K. ref. bk.  
 4 Shakespeare, for one  
 8 Touch  
 12 Will Smith  
 13 Sheltered  
 14 Ironside  
 15 Owens  
 16 Blue hue  
 17 Therefore  
 18 Simple  
 21 "Hum-bug!"  
 22 Tramp  
 23 Verdant  
 26 Erstwhile warrior  
 27 Seesaw quorum  
 30 Ethereal  
 31 "Of course"  
 32 Brat's stocking stuffer?  
 33 Anderson's "High —"  
 34 Peace, to Plautus

**DOWN**  
 1 Diamond  
 2 Verve  
 3 Frisbee  
 4 Val  
 5 Hebrew letter  
 6 Authentic  
 7 "Lakmé"  
 8 Off  
 9 Reynolds or Bacharach  
 10 Desire  
 11 Stomped (on)

**Solution time: 27 mins.**

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

**YESTERDAY'S ANSWER 12-30**



**Family Circus • Bill Keane**



12-29  
 ©2006 Bill Keane, Inc. Dist. by King Features Synd. www.familycircus.com  
 "Could you click on this page and read me the next page?"

12-30  
 ©2006 Bill Keane, Inc. Dist. by King Features Synd. www.familycircus.com  
 "Tomorrow night they'll all sing Auld Lang Syne! That's the New Year's Eve carol."