## Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott
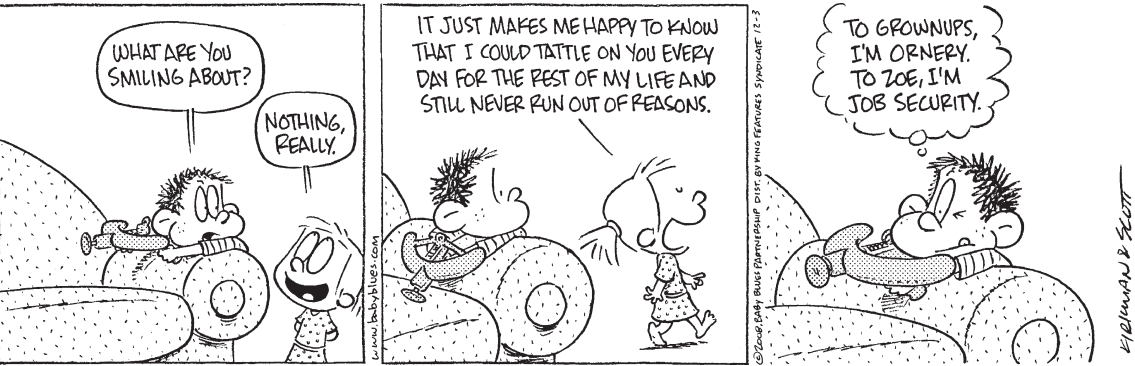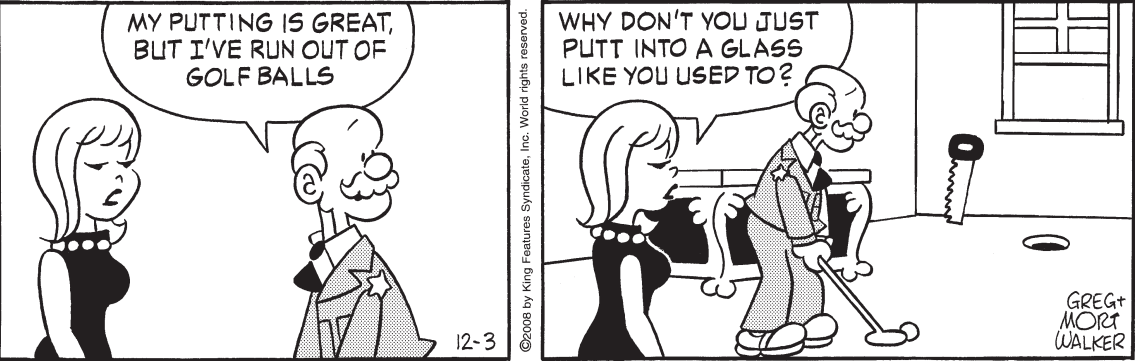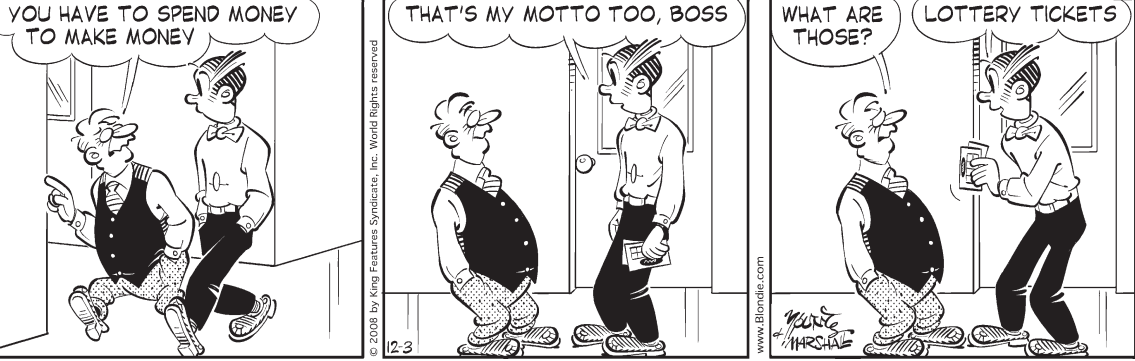
## Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker

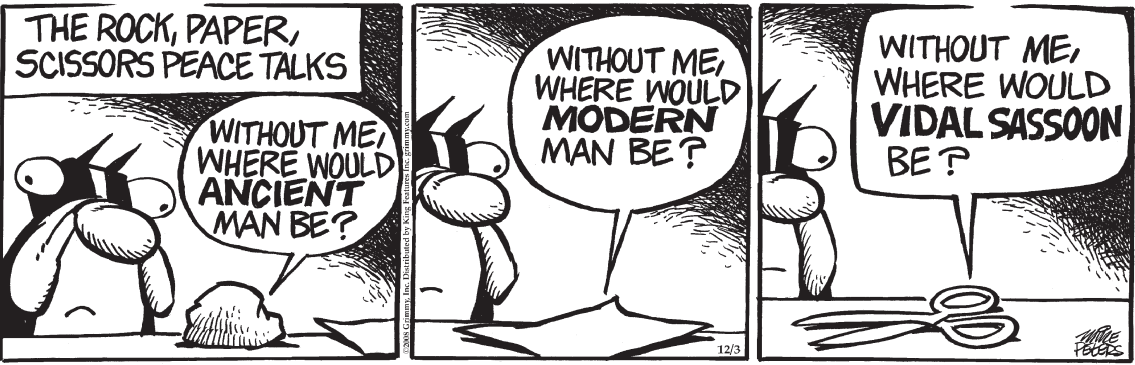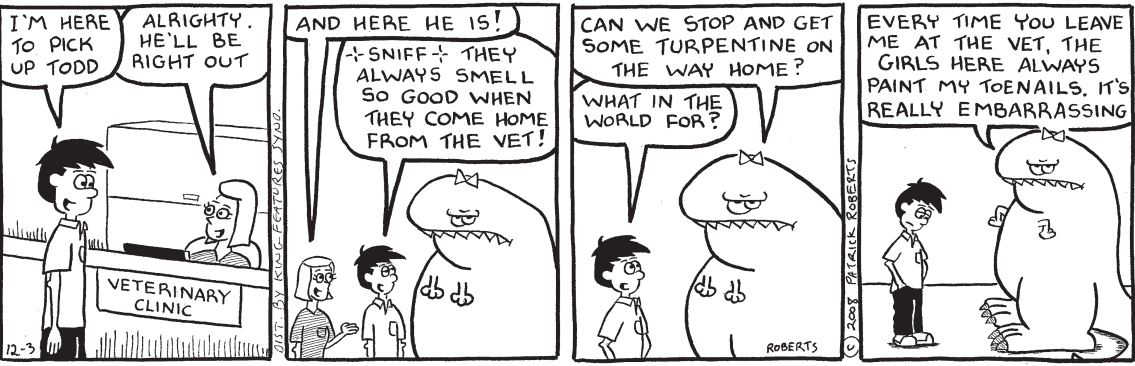## Blondie • Chic Young

## Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne

## Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters

## Sally Forth • Greg Howard

## Tod the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts

## Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott

## Cryptoquip

12/3 Today's Cryptoquip Puzzle:

S D  O U R P  E I T U M U I  S O

V K U N Z T P N  D K U R  N P T U K E B S Y P

F U U N  Y E K H S O M,  C U Z  R E C  P H N

Z V  F S B M  I E T J Z P K  I S J Z U K.

Answer to 12/1 Cryptoquip:
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: CLASSIC FILM ABOUT THE HANDCRAFTING OF A FINE INDIAN STRINGED INSTRUMENT: "A SITAR IS BORN."

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12/3 Today's Sudoku Puzzle:

# Conceptis Sudoku
By Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★ ★ ★    12/03

This is a logic-based number placement puzzle. The goal is to enter a number, 1-9, in each cell in which each row, column and 3x3 region must contain only one instance of each numeral. The solution to today's Sudoku puzzle is right.

12/1 Sudoku Puzzle Answer:

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

Difficulty Level ★    12/01

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# Bridge

South dealer.
Both sides vulnerable.

```
              NORTH
              ♠ A K 10 8
              ♥ Q 7 5
              ♦ J 3
              ♣ J 10 9 4
WEST                      EAST
♠ 6 3                     ♠ 9 7 5 4
♥ 8 6 4                   ♥ 10 9 3 2
♦ K 9 8 5 2               ♦ A Q
♣ A 8 3                   ♣ 6 5 2
              SOUTH
              ♠ Q J 2
              ♥ A K J
              ♦ 10 7 6 4
              ♣ K Q 7
```

The bidding:

| South | West | North | East |
|-------|------|-------|------|
| 1 NT  | Pass | 2 ♣   | Pass |
| 2 ♦   | Pass | 3 NT  |      |

Opening lead — five of diamonds.

### Stayman Stumbles

Nowadays, virtually all players use the Stayman Convention to explore for a possible 4-4 major-suit fit after partner has opened the bidding with one (or two) notrump.

That explains North's two-club bid in today's hand, where he knew the combined hands contained enough points for game, but first wanted to find out whether South had four spades. When South indicated that he did not have four cards in either major by bidding two diamonds, North then carried on to three notrump.

While the Stayman Convention works well in the great majority of hands, it is not an undiluted blessing. It sometimes helps the opponents, as it did in this deal where West found the winning defense.

West led a diamond. East took the ace and continued with the queen, and it was at this point that West made the excellent play of overtaking the queen and continuing with the nine to force out the ten.

As a result, South went down, losing four diamond tricks and the ace of clubs. Had West played low on the queen of diamonds, declarer would have made three notrump.

West's defense, which gave declarer a diamond trick he could not have made on his own, was in part attributable to what West had learned from the bidding. Thanks to the Stayman inquiry, West knew that South could not collect more than eight tricks (four spades, three hearts and the ten of diamonds), before he would have to lead a club. It was therefore perfectly safe to overtake the diamond queen and thereby assure defeat of the contract.

Tomorrow: The battle for survival.

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## Family Circus • Bil Keane

"Have I waited long enough to ask, 'What time is it?' again?"

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# Crossword

**ACROSS**
1 Funny folks
5 Every iota
8 State
12 Birthright barterer
13 Pod denizen
14 Unembellished
15 Word-for-word
17 Met melody
18 Third rock from the Sun
19 Applied the first coat
21 Stromboli spillage
24 Popular card game
25 With 34-Across, kind of number a ZIP code generally is
28 Morays
30 Guitar's kin
33 Raw rock
34 See 25-Across
35 Afternoon affair
36 Apiece
37 Muhammad and Laila
38 Burn around the edges
39 Resistance measure
41 Gandhi wrapper?
43 Tomorrow, in Tijuana
46 Join together
50 Ear-related
51 Spine component
54 Make fun of
55 Have bills
56 Encounter
57 Hot tubs
58 Take a spouse
59 Big hatchets

**DOWN**
1 "— Only Just Begun"
2 Cruising
3 "Young Frankenstein" actress Teri
4 Hardly blunt
5 Suitable
6 Floral garland
7 Aladdin's prop
8 Forcefully
9 Martini ingredient
10 A Great Lake
11 Peruse
16 "Eureka!"
20 Oxidation outcome
22 Bridal concealer
23 Sponsorship
25 Dandy
26 Rage
27 Brunette in the "Archie" comics
29 Bart's sister
31 Mauna —
32 Hearing organ
34 Rhett's shocking word
38 Hollywood industry
40 Cabbies
42 Trench
43 Some parents
44 On
45 Acknowledge
47 Mountain goat
48 Genealogy chart
49 Diner sign
52 Ram's mate
53 Roulette bet

Solution time: 21 mins.

Yesterday's answer 12-3