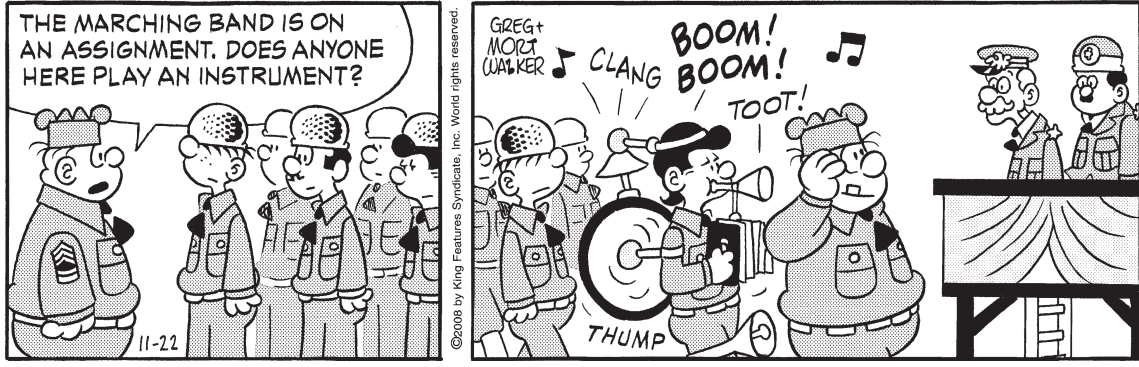


**Baby Blues** • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



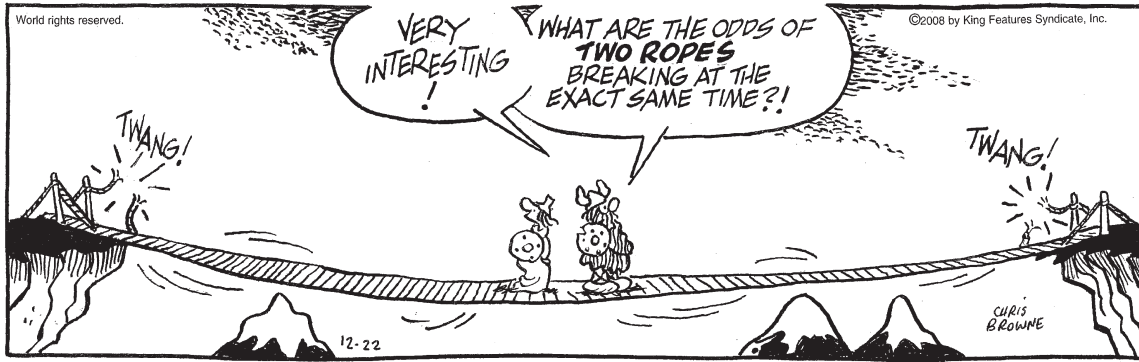
**Beetle Bailey** • Mort Walker



**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



**Conceptis Sudoku**

By Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★

12/22

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 the last Sudoku puzzle is at right.

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

Difficulty Level ★★★

12/19

**Bridge**

North dealer.  
North-South vulnerable.  
**NORTH**  
♠ 10 6 5 3  
♥ A K Q J 2  
♦ Q  
♣ K 5 4  
**WEST**  
♠ Q J  
♥ 9 7 6  
♦ K 9 8 6 4  
♣ 10 8 3  
**EAST**  
♠ A 2  
♥ 10 5 3  
♦ 10 7 5  
♣ A Q 9 7 2  
**SOUTH**  
♠ K 9 8 7 4  
♥ 8 4  
♦ A J 3 2  
♣ J 6

The bidding:  
North East South West  
1♥ Pass 1♠ Pass  
3♠ Pass 4♠ Pass  
Opening lead — three of clubs.

**Famous Hand**

It is said that defense is the most difficult part of the game, but in this deal from the 1997 world team championship, both pairs of defenders made short work of declarer's shaky but apparently ice-cold (as the cards lay) four-spade contract.

The deal occurred in the quarterfinal match between a U.S. team and China. At both tables, North-South bid aggressively to reach four spades, which with normal defense would yield 10 or 11 tricks. Against a heart or low diamond lead, for example, declarer would win in dummy and lead a spade to the king. With the ace aside and the suit divided 2-2, South would most likely finish with 11 tricks, losing only a spade and the ace of clubs. But both Wests found the most effective lead, a club.

Both Easts -- Xin Li for China and Michael Rosenberg for the U.S. -- took the opening club trick with the queen and made a quick assessment of their prospects. East had to assume the ace of clubs was a trick, and this, plus the ace of spades, would give the defenders three tricks. The question remaining was where a fourth trick might come from.

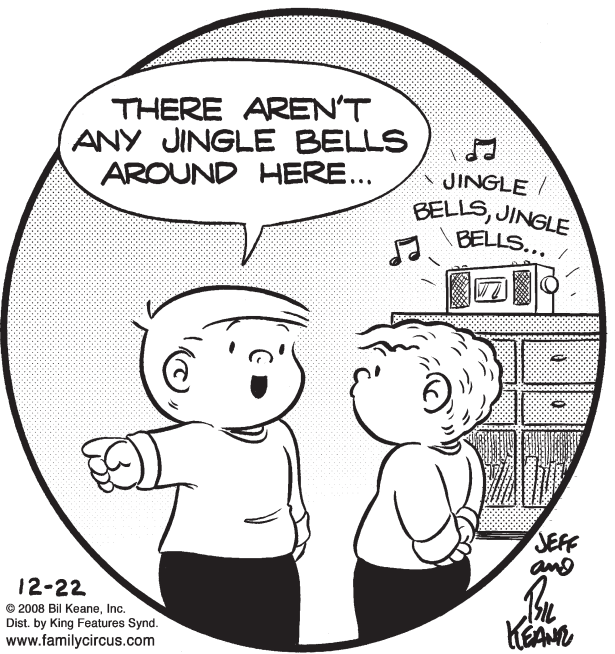
If West had the ace of diamonds, the contract would be set regardless of what East did, but if declarer had the diamond ace, it would be necessary to score a second trump trick.

Accordingly, both defenders, thinking along exactly the same lines, continued with the ace and another club at tricks two and three. South won with dummy's king and led a spade from dummy, but both Li and Rosenberg rose with the ace of spades and returned a fourth round of clubs, promoting West's spade queen as the setting trick.

Great minds do indeed run in the same channels.

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**Family Circus** • Bil Keane



“...but there's a Taco Bell two blocks away.”

**Crossword**

**ACROSS**  
1 Castle protection  
5 Help  
8 Paper quantity  
12 Acquire by ingenuity  
14 Sicilian volcano  
15 Passenger's confiner  
16 Loony  
17 That man's  
18 Wind musician  
20 Pains' mates  
23 From the start  
24 Duo  
25 Compulsive cleaner  
28 Bygone days, once  
29 Our planet  
30 Bill  
32 Pasty  
34 Sandwich shop  
35 Architect  
36 Ready for battle  
37 Not destroyed  
40 "CSI" evidence  
41 Bedouin  
42 Long high-temp stretch  
47 Reiner or Lewis  
48 Cuba, Jamaica, etc.  
49 Advertise greatly  
50 Red or Black  
51 Collections  
**DOWN**  
1 Wrong (Pref.)  
2 Inseparable  
3 Actress Gardner  
4 Leash  
5 Census statistics  
6 Under the weather  
7 Set off an explosion  
8 Fame  
9 Needle case  
10 Picnic intruders  
11 Sail support  
13 Wading bird  
19 "Little Women" woman  
20 Gorilla  
21 Tranquil  
22 Stash  
23 Eagle's nest  
25 Petroleum-like liquids  
26 Particular  
27 Hardy cabbage  
29 British prep school  
31 Auction offer  
33 Fit for use as farm-land  
34 Speaks slowly  
36 Con  
37 Apiece  
38 Picture of health?  
39 Rainout cover  
40 Information  
43 Away from WSW  
44 Brewery product  
45 Animal doc  
46 Ar follower

Solution time: 24 mins.

TIC	CYAN	RUTH								
ERA	HANA	ESAU								
CAS	TAWAY	NEXT								
	TURN	BORIS								
PAINT	DRAW									
OGRE	YOU	AND	ME							
DUO	HALLS	OIL								
SENTENCE	OWLS									
	HIKE	APINEA								
NADIR	SPEC									
ALICE	TYPEC	CAST								
SLAVE	HOURS	SEA								
HYDE	ENDS	TEN								

Yesterday's answer 12-20

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12				13					14	
15									16	
			17				18	19		
20	21	22				23				
24						25			26	27
28						29			30	31
						32			33	
						34			35	
						36			37	
38	39					40			41	
42	43					44	45	46		
47						48				
49						50			51	

THANK YOU FOR READING THE

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**Cryptoquip**  
12-22 CRYPTOQUIP

Z FEDM R KYI MND'H  
UDEHGREGVI LDWRVZQZEK  
QPRVDYHVI. Z HYBDHP IDY  
LZKNG HRI NP'H BWPRUNI-FPPE.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: STANDING FAR ENOUGH AWAY TO AVOID THE PUGILIST'S PUNCHES, I'VE PLACED MYSELF OUT OF ARM'S WAY.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: H equals S