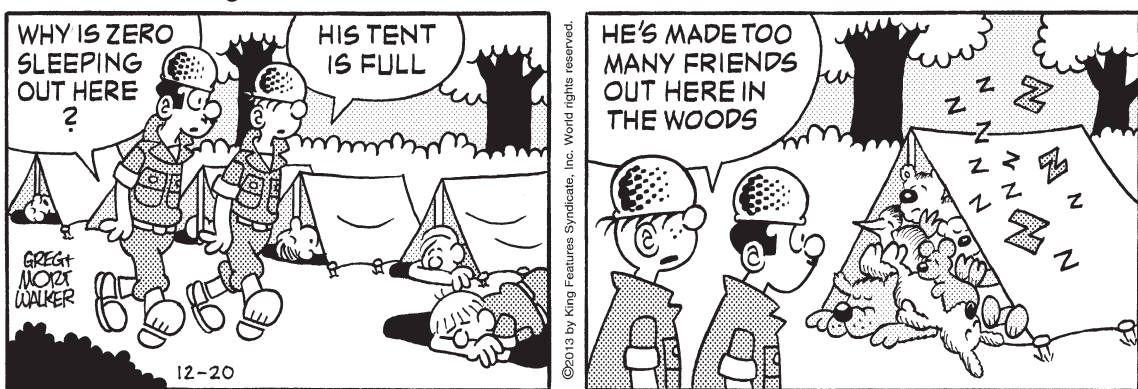


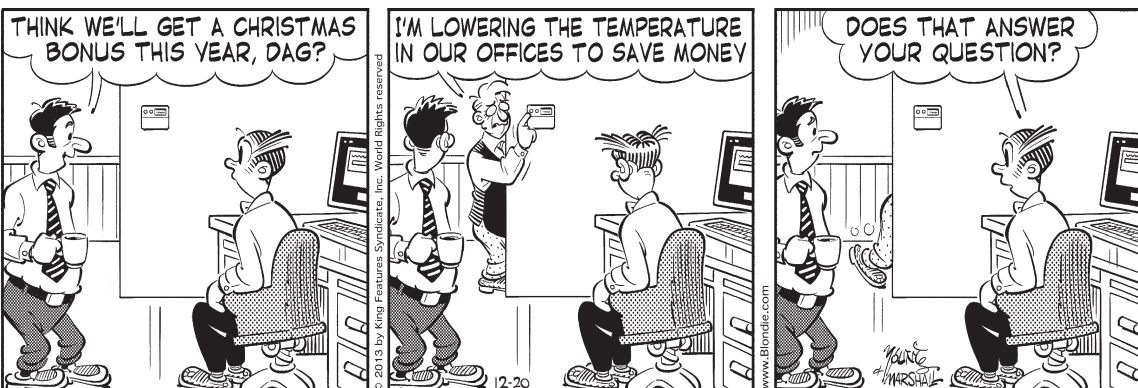
Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



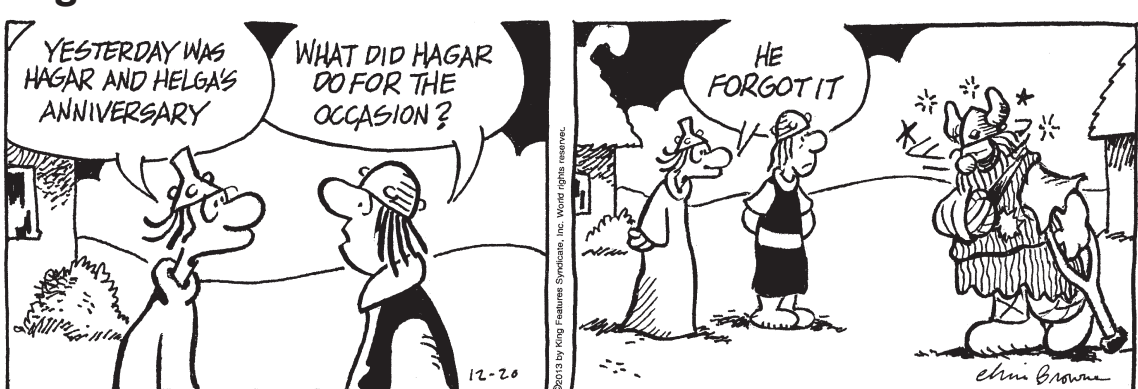
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Blondie • Chic Young



Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Heloise

- Hints from Heloise

Retired flags become stars

Dear Heloise: Information about retiring flags via cremation by funeral homes recently was published in one of your columns. I am writing to tell you about Stars for Our Troops.

Flags are sent to Stars for Our Troops from all over the country. The canton (blue) area is removed and washed, and then the stars are cut out and placed in a small pouch with a note to let our military know that they are not forgotten.

These stars are placed in care packages going to our military who are currently serving. Stars also are given with thank-you cards to our veterans in veterans hospitals, nursing homes, etc.

There are Star Parties going on throughout this great country. It is a great project for any age. Families find it a great "family time," and they learn about our country, flag and military. — Susan Wells, organizer, Stars for Our Troops

Dear Readers: I called Susan to find out more about this wonderful organization. What a heartwarming effort she and volunteers all across the country do, repurposing a flag that otherwise would have no further use. To learn more and find out how you can help, visit www.stars-fourtroops.org. To donate a flag, send it to: Stars for Our Troops, Gettysburg Flag Works, 715 Columbia Turnpike, East Greenbush, NY 12061. — Heloise

P.S.: I told her she probably will be swamped! **SEND A GREAT HINT TO:**

Heloise
P.O. Box 795000
San Antonio, TX 78279-5000
Email: [Heloise\(at\)Heloise.com](mailto:Heloise(at)Heloise.com)

TRAVEL HINT

Dear Heloise: When I travel, I look for Christmas ornaments to put on my tree. They were impossible to find in some places. While at Niagara Falls, I noticed a key chain decorated with a boatload of passengers dressed in rain gear — so cute!

I bought a small, artificial Christmas tree. The key chains slip easily on the branches. My little tree is now covered with key chains from Italy, London, India, etc., and it gets more attention than my large, 7-1/2-foot tree! — Phyllis W. in California

DEAF DOG

Dear Heloise: Thanks for printing the advice from blind dog owners. Our dog is a large 13-year-old in good health for her age, but she was rapidly becoming deaf.

We learned to still talk but also use hand signals at the same time. Facial expressions and eye contact are important to dogs, especially those who really know and trust us. She caught on to the hand signals right away. — A Reader, Belaire, Texas

Good for you and her! Yes, dogs can "read" facial and body expressions! — Heloise

PACIFYING PARENTS

Dear Heloise: I try to find ways to cut down on dirt but not my time. After my third child, I started keeping pacifiers in small, plastic condiment cups. It keeps them free from lint and snack dust in the bottom of my purse and the diaper bag, along with making them easy to find in a pinch. — Leslie in Indiana
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Bridge • Steve Becker

You are South, and the bidding has gone:
East 1♦ South 1NT West Pass North 2♦
Pass ?

What would you bid now with each of the following three hands?
1. ♠ KQ3 ♥ KJ7 ♦ QJ98 ♣ AQ5
2. ♠ QJ76 ♥ A9 ♦ A874 ♣ AJ3
3. ♠ K5 ♥ K83 ♦ KJ6 ♣ AQJ74

Bidding Quiz

1. Three notrump. North's two-diamond bid is basically a game try made in the form of a cuebid in the enemy suit. (It is possible to play this bid as having a different meaning — such as a transfer to hearts — so be sure to discuss this with your partner.) He has at least eight high-card points and is probably short in diamonds. He is likely to have four cards in one or both of the major suits, so you should bid a four-card major if you have one. Typically, partner could have any one of these hands:
♠ A874 ♥ Q962 ♦ 5 ♣ K843
♠ A986 ♥ A864 ♦ — ♣ J9632
♠ 986 ♥ AQ63 ♦ 92 ♣ K763

2. Two spades. Partner's cuebid asks you to name a four-card major suit if you have one, and the two-spade bid complies with this request. What happens thereafter depends on what partner does. After your two-spade bid, he will know that you have a 15-point to 18-point balanced hand that includes four spades. In most cases, partner will then be in good position to determine the best final contract.

3. Three clubs. Again, you have an opportunity to describe the nature of your hand. The three-club bid denies possession of a four-card major, and at the same time indicates a five-card club suit. This response, in conjunction with your previous notrump overcall, should enable partner to choose the best contract.

If partner bids three spades next, showing a five-card suit, you bid three notrump; if he bids three hearts, you raise to four hearts; if he bids three notrump, you pass.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



"Hi, Grandma! Want me to read you my Christmas list or just be surprised when you get it in the mail?"

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/20

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.

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

Cryptoquip

KZKSHMOK GKSK DKKUD EM

GWZK PYEDJGH TWSNKO

DEWELKD. Y EGYOP EGKH JWVV

EGYD TOMUK-UWO'D VWON.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF YOU'RE COOKING ANYTHING AND LOVE A PORK FLAVOR, YOU SHOULD ADD A TABLESPOON OF BACON SODA.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals E

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 Blackjack part
 - 4 Restroom, for short
 - 7 Immobilized
 - 12 Junior
 - 13 "— Had a Hammer"
 - 14 Paramour
 - 15 Dodge Durango, e.g.
 - 16 Stroll site
 - 18 Swelled head
 - 19 Taco topper
 - 20 Anything but that
 - 22 Scratch
 - 23 Ready for action
 - 27 "Do the Right Thing" director
 - 29 Cue
 - 31 Earth Day month
 - 34 Socially dominant
 - 35 TV ads
 - 37 "See ya"
 - 38 One of Hamlet's options
 - 39 Carrot companion
- DOWN**
- 41 Fable
 - 45 Denounces strongly
 - 47 Shock and —
 - 48 Noticeable
 - 52 Coop dweller
 - 53 Quite popular, in cyber-speak
 - 54 PBS supporter
 - 55 Fictional ogre
 - 56 Old computer language
 - 57 Parched
 - 58 Unclose
 - 1 No liability
- 23** Robot of Jewish legend
- 24** Band's ending
- 25** Speedometer meas.
- 26** Greek vowel
- 28** "Xanadu" group, for short
- 30** Shaft of light
- 31** Likely
- 32** Con foe
- 33** Filch
- 36** Bridge
- 37** Big headline
- 40** Make corrections
- 42** "Wheel!"
- 43** Insignificant one
- 44** Thus
- 45** Pickle flavor
- 46** Remain
- 48** Pipe, plastic, for short
- 49** Carnival city
- 50** Sphere
- 51** Chinese chairman

Solution time: 25 mins.

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

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							52		
53								54			55	
56								57			58	