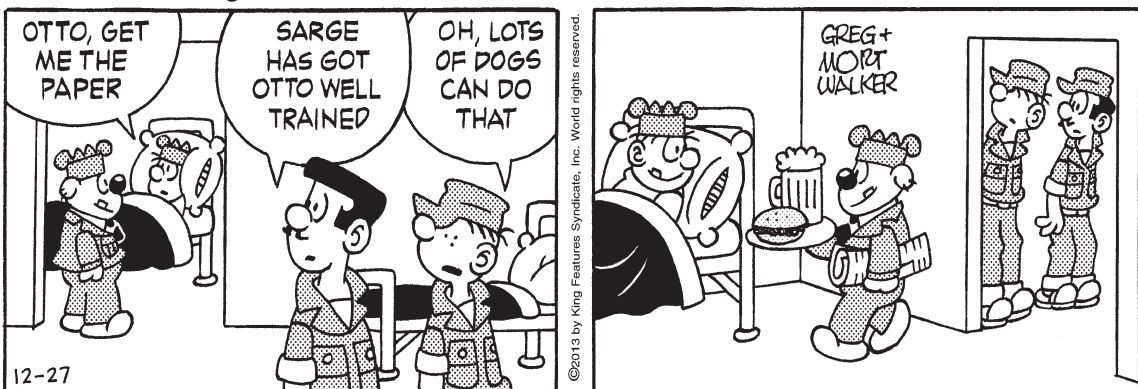


**Baby Blues** • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



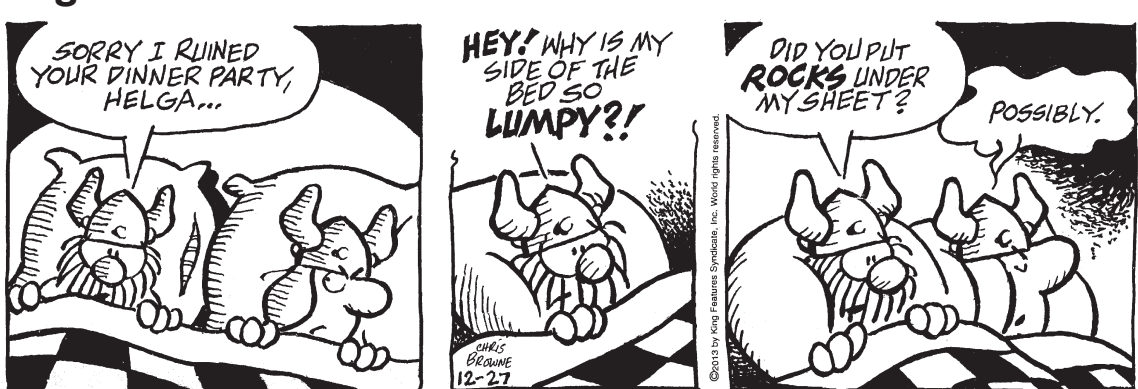
**Beetle Bailey** • Mort Walker



**Blondie** • Chic Young



**Hagar the Horrible** • Chris Browne



**Mother Goose and Grimm** • Mike Peters



**Sally Forth** • Greg Howard



**Sally Forth** • Greg Howard



**Todd the Dinosaur** • Patrick Roberts



**Zits** • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



**Heloise**

- Hints from Heloise

**Oriental rugs can last and last**

Dear Heloise: I just purchased an oriental rug. Do you have hints for how to take care of it? I want to keep it looking good. — Helen, via email

Oriental rugs are beautiful additions to any home and can last a long time. Here are some hints for taking care of your rug:

- Lightly vacuum the rug weekly to remove dirt. If possible, use a vacuum that does not have a beater bar and uses only suction. A new rug might shed, so don't be surprised if it happens.
- Place the rug in a spot out of direct sunlight to reduce fading.
- Rotate the rug every six months or so for even wear, especially if it's in a high-traffic area.
- Clean up spills by blotting with bath towels.
- Have the rug professionally cleaned every few years.

Enjoy your rug! — Heloise

**TRAVEL HINT**

Dear Heloise: My husband and I have been fortunate to travel to many different countries. Of course, we go to the popular landmarks, museums and historical sites.

We have collected ticket stubs for entrance into places (like the Vatican). I now laminate them and use them as bookmarks. Seeing them brings fond memories. — Linda W., via email

I'm with you! I have my ticket stubs to see the Beatles! The price was \$3! Of course, that was September 1964, and my big brother Louis took me! They are in a framed picture of the Fab Four, signed by all of them! — Heloise

**ORDER FIRST**

Dear Heloise: I have a 3-year-old son. When at a restaurant, I always order his food when the waitress comes to take our drink order. His food comes out first, and I am not trying to entertain him and get him to sit still for a long time waiting for his food. A bonus is that when my food comes, he is already set up and eating, so I can enjoy my food. — T.A. in Texas

**GREASY GUNK**

Dear Heloise: Today I cleaned our barbecue grill and ended up with black, greasy gunk on my hands. Having no heavy-duty cleaner available, I used a little trick I learned from Cajun friends years ago. A dab of mayonnaise works just as well to remove that gunk as any special hand cleaner I've ever used. Try it, and you will be surprised! — Doug J., Watson, La.

**HEARTWORM IN CATS**

Dear Heloise: I read your advice on the importance of year-round heartworm prevention in dogs. It is excellent advice; however, you omitted the danger of heartworms in cats. While heartworms can be treated in dogs, there is no treatment for cats, other than prevention. So it is vital that cats also are kept on a constant heartworm regimen. This applies to both indoor and outdoor cats and dogs. Mosquitoes come into the house, as we all know! — Diane in California

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**Bridge** • Steve Becker

**1. You are declarer** with the West hand at Four Spades, North having opened the bidding with one diamond, which your partner doubled. North leads the queen of hearts. How would you play the hand? (Assume the trumps are divided 2-2 or 3-1.)

- |              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| <b>WEST</b>  | <b>EAST</b> |
| ♠ A K J 10 6 | ♠ Q 9 5 3   |
| ♥ 8 5 2      | ♥ A K 7     |
| ♦ K 9        | ♦ 6 4 2     |
| ♣ Q 7 2      | ♣ A J 3     |

**2. You are declarer** with the West hand at Six Hearts, and North leads the queen of clubs. How would you play the hand?

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| <b>WEST</b> | <b>EAST</b> |
| ♠ 8         | ♠ A Q 6 5 3 |
| ♥ K Q 9 8   | ♥ A J 10 4  |
| ♦ A K 4 2   | ♦ 7 5 3     |
| ♣ A 7 6 3   | ♣ 4         |

**Test Your Play**

**1.** Your potential losers are a heart, two diamonds and a club, but one of them can almost certainly be averted by capitalizing on the knowledge gained from North's opening bid. Aside from the Q-J of hearts, he is almost certain to have the A-Q or A-J of diamonds and the king of clubs.

The first step in the right direction is to duck North's queen of hearts! The purpose is to prevent South from later gaining the lead with a heart for a killing diamond return through your king.

Let's say North continues with a heart to dummy's king. You draw trumps, lead a low club to the jack, cash the ace of hearts and then play the ace and another club. North presumably wins with the king but must then return a diamond or yield a ruff-and-discard, handing you the contract.

**2.** Your best chance for 12 tricks lies in a cross-ruff. However, after winning the first club, you should prepare the groundwork for the crossruff by first cashing the A-K of diamonds. Though there is a slight possibility that the first or second diamond will be ruffed, that presents far less of a risk than any other method of play.

You next play a spade to the ace and ruff a spade. It is important to ruff a spade in your hand before ruffing a club in dummy. (If you think it makes no difference, try ruffing a club first. You are then apt to finish with just 11 tricks instead of 12!)

Now ruff your clubs and spades in alternating order, scoring eight trump tricks, a spade, a club and two diamonds in all.

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**Family Circus** • Bil Keane



12-27

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"Guess what, Mommy! It's only 363 days till it's Christmas again!"

**Conceptis Sudoku** • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

12/27

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.

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

**Cryptoquip**

HASH GHJA-OBKQXJGVF GVCYJH

GY CVQCTGJ HK CJXSQKB'Y

JSOGHSU, YK G FXCYY GH'Y

S P X G H K T K Y P X G H K

**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** FOR SOME REASON I HAVE NO INTEREST IN CRISP, RED FRUIT. YOU COULD SAY I'M VERY APPLE-THETIC.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: H equals T

**Crossword** • Eugene Sheffer

- |                     |                    |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b>       | <b>43 Profit</b>   | <b>2 Brag-</b>      | <b>21 Watch</b>    |
| <b>1 Summa-</b>     | <b>44 Tropical</b> | <b>gart's</b>       | <b>chain</b>       |
| <b>6 Predica-</b>   | <b>45 Short —</b>  | <b>3 Syna-</b>      | <b>22 Regret</b>   |
| <b>9 Hot tub</b>    | <b>(little</b>     | <b>gogue</b>        | <b>tree,</b>       |
| <b>12 Tequila</b>   | <b>47 Bach</b>     | <b>4 State with</b> | <b>26 Known</b>    |
| <b>source</b>       | <b>composition</b> | <b>certainty</b>    | <b>to but</b>      |
| <b>13 Flabber-</b>  | <b>49 Freight</b>  | <b>5 Graceful</b>   | <b>a few</b>       |
| <b>gast</b>         | <b>52 Swat</b>     | <b>young</b>        | <b>28 Engine</b>   |
| <b>14 Greek</b>     | <b>53 Auto</b>     | <b>women</b>        | <b>30 Attempt</b>  |
| <b>cross</b>        | <b>54 Like</b>     | <b>6 Hyper</b>      | <b>32 Witch's</b>  |
| <b>15 Lost</b>      | <b>college</b>     | <b>7 Vacation-</b>  | <b>spell</b>       |
| <b>cause</b>        | <b>walls</b>       | <b>ing</b>          | <b>(Scot.)</b>     |
| <b>16 Soldier's</b> | <b>55 Type</b>     | <b>8 "Two</b>       | <b>33 Caustic</b>  |
| <b>flask</b>        | <b>measures</b>    | <b>and a</b>        | <b>solution</b>    |
| <b>18 Devious</b>   | <b>9 Guide</b>     | <b>Half —"</b>      | <b>34 "Guin-</b>   |
| <b>20 Ardor</b>     | <b>56 Historic</b> | <b>10 Hymn</b>      | <b>ness</b>        |
| <b>21 To and —</b>  | <b>57 Reserva-</b> | <b>11 Family</b>    | <b>Book"</b>       |
| <b>23 Yon</b>       | <b>maiden</b>      | <b>members</b>      | <b>suffix</b>      |
| <b>24 Flower-</b>   | <b>residence</b>   | <b>17 Greek</b>     | <b>36 Vast</b>     |
| <b>less</b>         | <b>19 Pursuit</b>  | <b>con-</b>         | <b>dry</b>         |
| <b>25 Not all</b>   | <b>1 Tatter</b>    | <b>nants</b>        | <b>38 Hidden</b>   |
| <b>mine</b>         |                    |                     | <b>supply</b>      |
| <b>27 Fess up</b>   |                    |                     | <b>39 Repeat-</b>  |
| <b>29 Sur-</b>      |                    |                     | <b>edly</b>        |
| <b>rounds</b>       |                    |                     | <b>40 Small</b>    |
| <b>31 Deity's</b>   |                    |                     | <b>ones</b>        |
| <b>mouth-</b>       |                    |                     | <b>42 Permis-</b>  |
| <b>piece</b>        |                    |                     | <b>sible</b>       |
| <b>35 Gleam</b>     |                    |                     | <b>45 Luminary</b> |
| <b>altern-</b>      |                    |                     | <b>46 Best-</b>    |
| <b>ative</b>        |                    |                     | <b>liked</b>       |
| <b>37 Speaks</b>    |                    |                     | <b>48 Expert</b>   |
| <b>38 Tote</b>      |                    |                     | <b>50 "Golly!"</b> |
| <b>41 MSN rival</b> |                    |                     | <b>51 Rhyming</b>  |

**Solution time: 25 mins.**

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

Yesterday's answer 12-27

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			