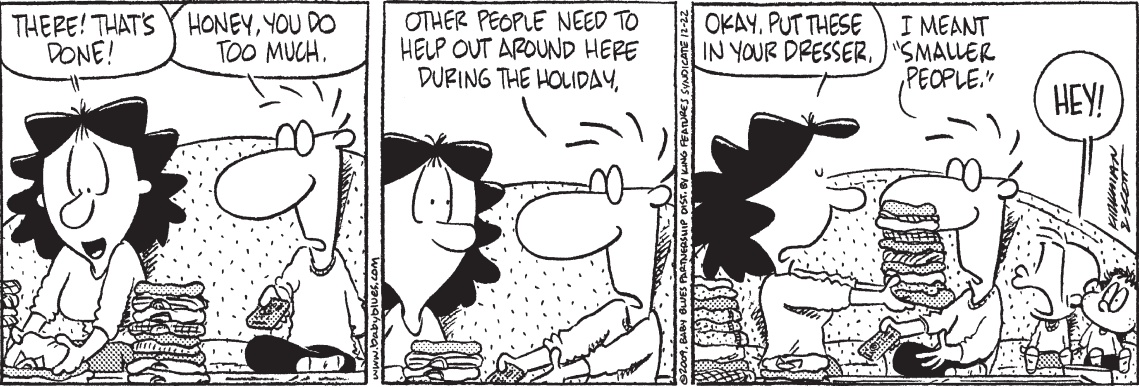
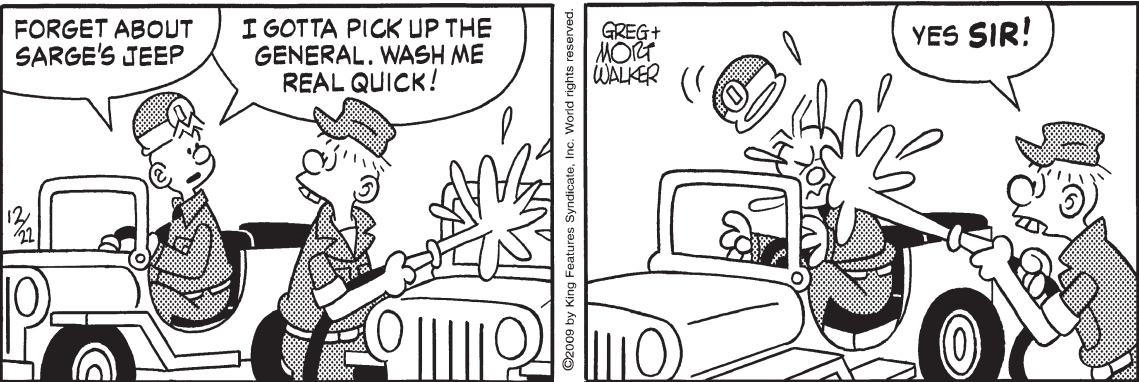


Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



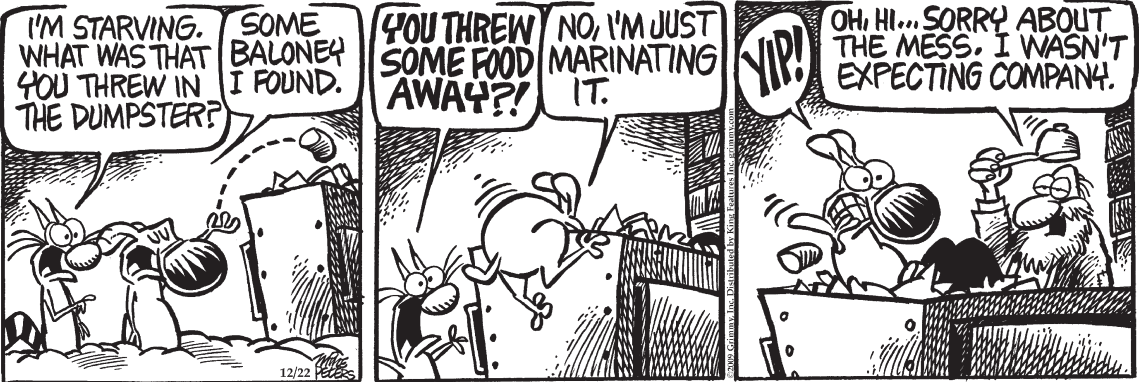
Blondie • Chic Young



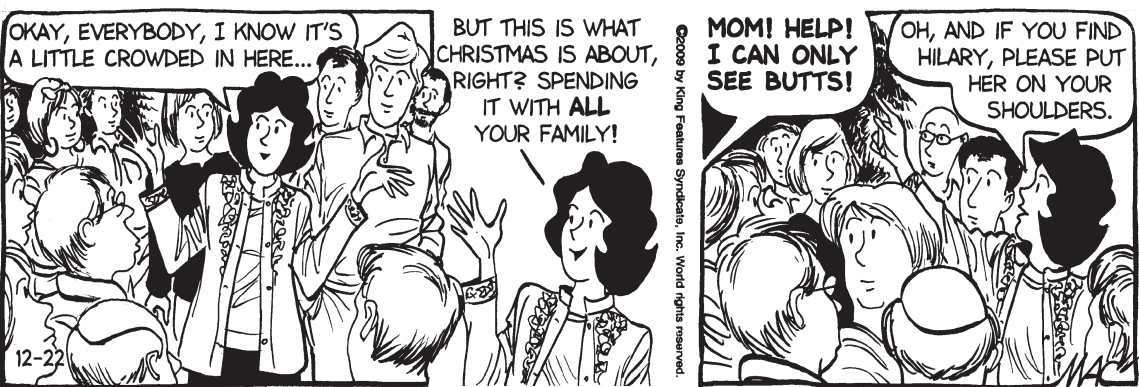
Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



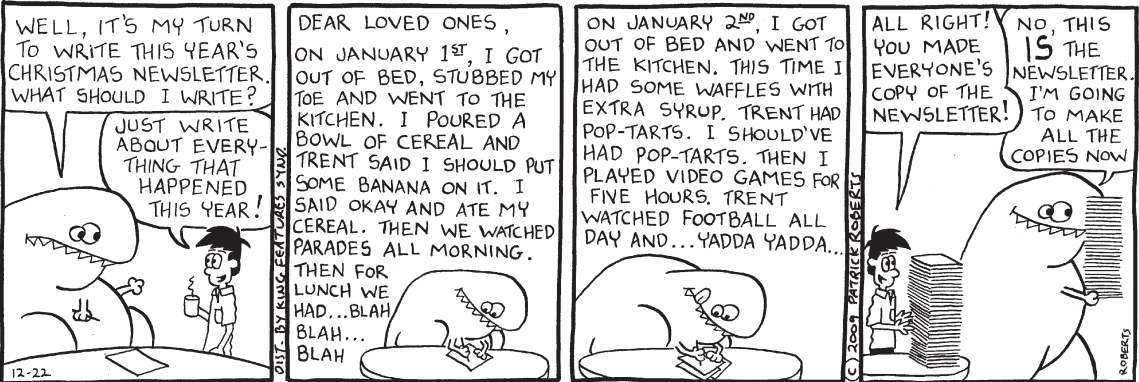
Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Dr. Joyce Brothers
• Ask Dr. Brothers

She's lost touch with old friends

Dear Dr. Brothers: I moved to the Midwest for a job about a year ago. I'm from the West Coast and was hesitant to leave, but the opportunity was too good to pass up. Now I have lost touch with my old friends, and am very lonely in this town. I don't want to make new friends; I just want to stay in touch with old ones. Am I closing myself off to new experiences here unnecessarily, and dooming myself to misery? – K.Y.

Dear K.Y.: It does sound like you haven't given your new life a fair chance. If you are committed to disliking a place, you will fulfill that expectation. On the other hand, if you keep an open mind and allow differences to be interesting and entertaining, rather than strange and terrible, you'll have an easier time with the transition.

Taking that into account, there is no reason why you can't make new friends and also keep in touch with old ones. This may take more time and effort than you're used to, but it will be worth it in the end. A couple of things that can help connect your new life with your old one are inviting old friends to visit, and introducing them to new acquaintances. The new friends will have some background on where you came from, and have someone in common – you – who can bring them together. You also can do everyday things to stay in touch by phone, e-mail or social-networking sites on the Internet like Facebook and Twitter. Don't forget to get out of the house and make new memories with new friends – it will ease homesickness but you won't lose track of home.

Dear Dr. Brothers: My daughter was just placed in a gifted program at her middle school. While I'm overjoyed she is gifted, I'm little worried about the program. She has done well socially. She's creative, and I don't want these things to get smothered as she is overwhelmed with tons of homework. Do I have the wrong impression, or is this a legitimate concern? – G.C.

Dear G.C.: You are right to be proud of your daughter, and to want to cultivate all aspects of her personality and intelligence. As you know, intelligence is not limited to IQ scores or math skills, but encompasses a whole range of traits, from emotional and social to rational and analytical. It can be harmful to play up one aspect of a child's intelligence and not allow her to express other aspects. Society does tend to identify certain academic subjects with high intelligence and being gifted. Maturing children are quick to accept identities placed on them, often to the detriment of the realization of their true self-identity.

Students in gifted programs may have higher self-esteem when it comes to academic accomplishments. As soon as students enter into gifted programs, they strive to meet the high expectations placed upon them. It is a shame that gifted students – by definition multitalented – are pigeonholed by social expectations. It is not every program, nor every child, that this applies to, but I would urge you to research your daughter's school's specific program and to involve your daughter in the decision-making process.

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Bridge • Steve Becker

South dealer. Neither side vulnerable.

NORTH
♠ A 10 7 4
♥ K 10 4
♦ A Q 2
♣ 9 3 2

WEST
♠ 5
♥ Q 8 6 5 3
♦ J 9 7 5 4
♣ Q J

EAST
♠ 8 3 2
♥ Q 2
♦ K 10 8 7 5 4
♣ 6

SOUTH
♠ K Q J 9 6
♥ A J 7
♦ K 10 8
♣ A 6

The bidding:
South West North East
1♠ Pass 3♦ Pass
4 NT Pass 5♥ Pass
5 NT Pass 6♣ Pass

Opening lead — queen of clubs.

An Arithmetical Calculation

Mention counting out a hand to most players, and you'd think they were being asked to climb Mount Everest in the dead of winter.

Some offer the excuse that it would be unfair to the other players to take the time necessary to figure out how the opposing cards are distributed. Besides, they'd probably get all mixed up trying to do it anyway.

However, since all that's involved in counting out a hand is the ability to count to 13, it's difficult to accept these excuses. Counting to 13 is mastered by most just about the same time they learn that two plus two equals four.

This deal shows how easily it's done. South wins the opening club lead with the ace and sees that the slam depends on guessing which way to finesse in hearts. He begins by drawing trumps, discovering that East started with three spades and West one. The A-K-Q of diamonds are then cashed, revealing that East began with two diamonds and West five.

A club is now led in the hope that additional information may be picked up before tackling the hearts. After West plays the jack, East overtakes it with the king to spare West from having to return a heart or a diamond, which would hand declarer the slam. East then returns the club ten, South ruffing as West discards a diamond.

This last trick is highly illuminating, because it reveals that East started with six clubs to go along with his three spades and two diamonds. This leaves him room for only two hearts, giving West five.

The rest is a matter of simple probabilities. Since West started with five of the seven missing hearts, the odds are 5-to-2 that he has the queen. So South takes the finesse through him and makes the slam.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



“Where did those wise men find a store that sold frankincense and myrrh?”

Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

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.

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

Difficulty Level ★

12/21

Cryptoquip

VXS IDSSHVI DVXRIL URV XQ

PHSNEHV B, H LDNQB UXED

YDNZHVI HVUDTSU BDPDYXZDB

TQHTCDSU' QHTCDSU.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BECAUSE WE MAKE OUR TWO DOGS WEAR MATCHING NECK BANDS, I LIKE TO CALL THEM COLLAR-COORDINATED.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals R

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**

1 Muslim pilgrimage

5 Omit

9 Omega prece

12 Jai —

13 Golden Rule word

14 Rowing need

15 Cheating

17 "Birth — Nation"

18 Bird house?

19 Page or Pompeo

21 Smartens (up)

24 Book after Joel

25 Pale

26 Starving

30 Modern-day evidence

31 Legerde-main

32 Gorilla

33 Jogged untogged?

35 Manitoba tribe

36 Swiss artist Paul
- 37 Creator

38 Bigfoot's family?

40 Part mine, part yours

42 Eggs

43 One-piece swimwear

48 Lair

49 Wedding shower?

50 Liniment target

51 Deluge refuge

52 Raw minerals

53 City on the Rhone

DOWN

1 Pos-sessed

21 Bankrolls
- 2 Foreman foe

3 Pickle holder

4 Un-licensed taxi

5 Dines

6 Entangle-ment

7 Judge Lance

8 Attack on one's opinions

9 Sly one with a cue

10 Secure

11 Persia, now

16 "Of course"

20 Part of UCLA

21 Bankrolls
- 22 "— It Romantic?"

23 Reality show for budding entrepreneurs

24 In the thick of

26 Charlatan

27 Census statistic

28 Duel tool

29 Antelope's playmate

31 Orchestra leader

34 Inventor Whitney

35 Informal

37 "— Miniver"

38 "Star Wars" sage

39 Always

40 Formerly

41 Banjos' kin

44 Melody

45 Un-friendly

46 However, in poetry

47 D.C. VIP

Solution time: 21 mins.

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

Yesterday's answer 12-22

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
48				49				50		
51				52				53		