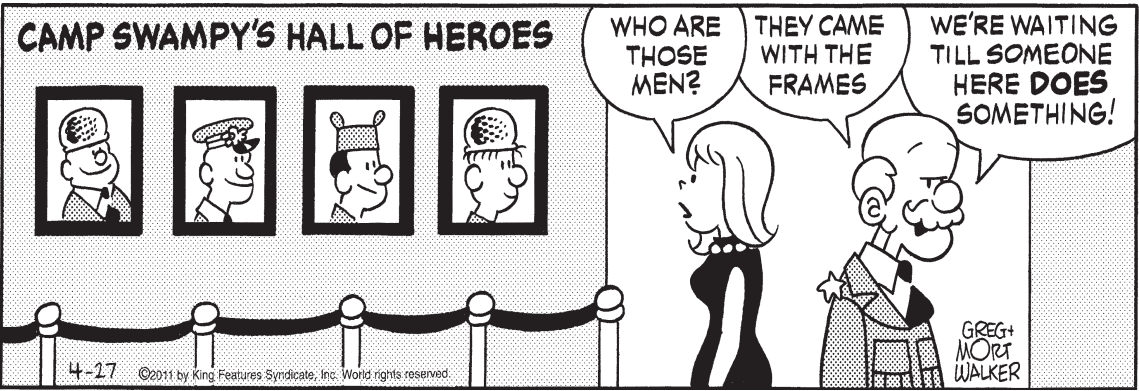


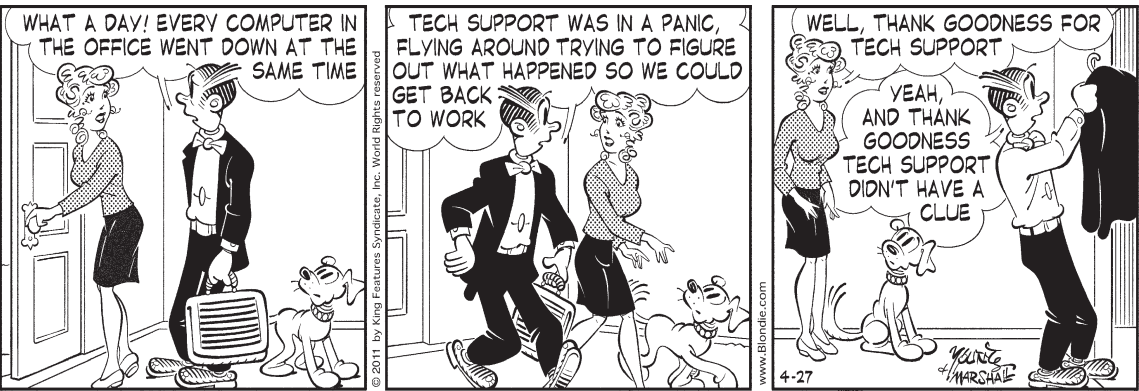
Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



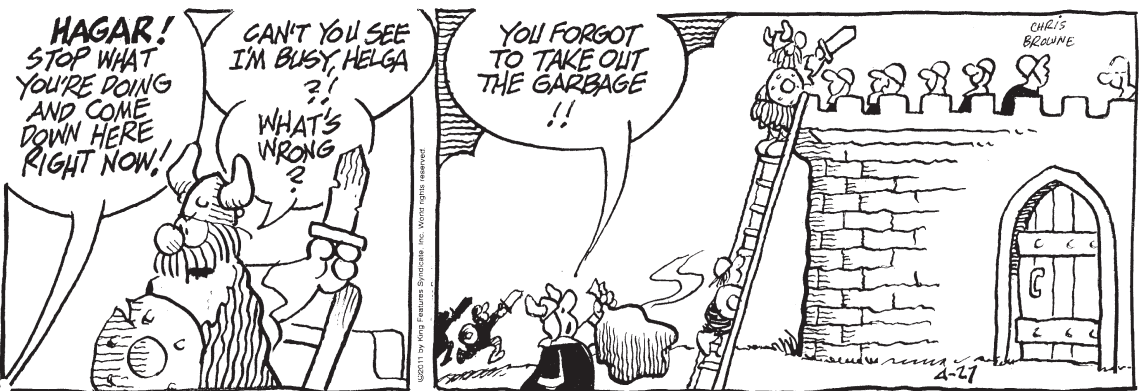
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



Blondie • Chic Young



Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne



Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters



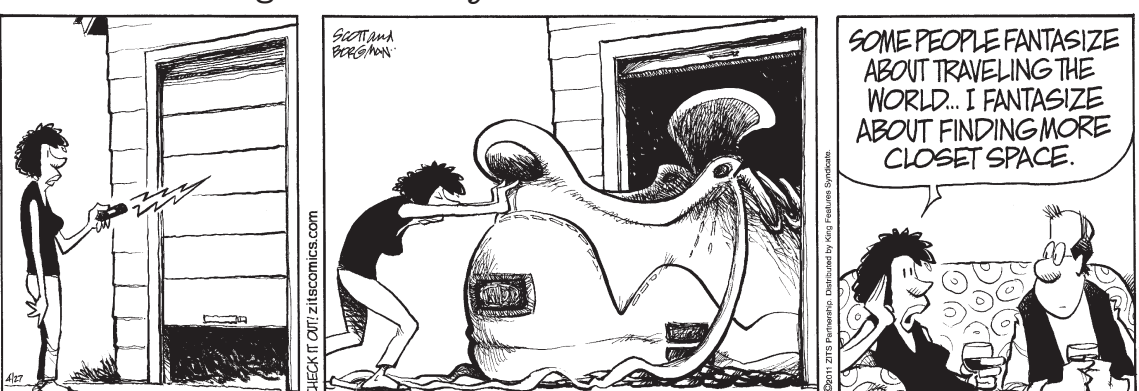
Sally Forth • Greg Howard



Todd the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts



Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott



Heloise

- Hints from Heloise

Store bananas on hook, in bag

Dear Readers: What's not to love about BANANAS? A single? A bunch? In a smoothie, or in bread? How often do you buy bananas? Once a week? Bananas that are extremely ripe (freckled) are sweeter than bananas that have slightly green peels, so pick accordingly.

Storing bananas on a banana hanger/hook keeps them from getting bruises. Green bananas can be ripened by placing them in a paper bag. To ripen quickly, add an apple or tomato to the bag, which helps the ripening process.

Once the bananas are as ripe as you'd like, you can place them in the fridge for up to two weeks. The skin will darken, but the inside will be firm and tasty. Also, peel them, place in a plastic freezer bag or container, and use later for breads, muffins, other baked goods and yummy smoothies.

What's your favorite way to buy, store and use bananas that are too ripe? Send your favorite hints, and we will send a Heloise pamphlet to everyone whose hint is selected. Send your banana hints to: Heloise/Bananas, P.O. Box 795000, San Antonio, TX 78279-5000. – Heloise

HOMEMADE NUT BUTTER

Dear Heloise: For several years, I would buy fresh peanut butter from the health-food store, straight from the grinding machine.

I decided to make my own. I bought a can of nuts and put it in my food processor. I added a little olive oil and refrigerated it. I also can use any other type of nut. It's delicious, free of preservatives and sugar, and easy to do. – Terry in Maui, Hawaii

Aloha to my friends in Hawaii, my "second" home state! – Heloise

CUPCAKE SANDWICH

Dear Heloise: The letter regarding using cupcakes to spell out a child's birthday greeting mentioned the mess cupcake icing can make. All the children who have passed through my classroom through the years were taught how to make a "cupcake sandwich." You just peel off the wrapper, hold the rim of the cupcake crown and give the bottom a firm twist or wiggle. It will pop right off, and then you put that piece of cake over the icing to form a sandwich. Much easier to hold than a regular cupcake, and no more icing all over your nose! – Margaret in Maryland

MEATBALL ADDITION

Dear Heloise: I keep a small plastic tub with a lid for collecting the crumbs at the bottom of cracker, chip and bread bags for meatloaf filler and meatballs. Just remember that most will include salt, so go easy when seasoning. -- Gayle from North Carolina

Here's another meatball hint from Celinda, who sent it via email: "I am a working mom and want to share my meatloaf secret. I cut leftover meatloaf into large chunks and toss them in spaghetti sauce for quick 'meatballs.' I enjoy your column and am a fellow Texan." – Heloise

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Bridge • Steve Becker

South dealer. Both sides vulnerable.

**NORTH**  
♠ 10  
♥ A 8  
♦ K Q J 10 9 8 6 4  
♣ A 3

**WEST**  
♠ 8 5  
♥ Q 9 6 2  
♦ 7 2  
♣ K 10 8 6 5

**EAST**  
♠ 7 6 4  
♥ K J 10 7 5  
♦ 3  
♣ Q J 9 4

**SOUTH**  
♠ A K Q J 9 3 2  
♥ 4 3  
♦ A 5  
♣ 7 2

The bidding:  
South 1 ♠ Pass 4 NT Pass  
West Pass 5 NT Pass  
North 4 NT Pass  
East 5 NT Pass

Opening lead — queen of clubs.

Is There a Doctor in the House?

Assume you're South and open the bidding with one spade. Partner responds four notrump, obviously Blackwood, so you bid five hearts, showing two aces. Partner then bids five notrump, asking how many kings you have.

Usually, the player who initiates Blackwood is the one who eventually places the final contract, with his partner merely indicating how many aces (and, if asked, kings) he has. In general, a player should not use Blackwood unless he knows exactly what to do after each of partner's possible responses. If he is not going to know what to do after partner responds, he shouldn't use Blackwood.

Stated differently, when the number of aces (or kings) partner has will not resolve the question of how many tricks can be made, it is better to employ other methods to investigate slam possibilities.

In the present case, even though your partner is theoretically captain of the ship, you should disregard his five-notrump request for kings and should instead bid either seven spades or seven notrump!

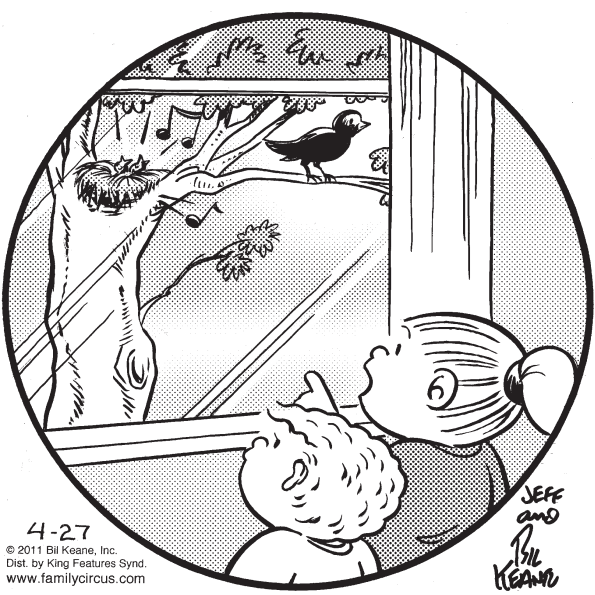
There is good reason for this. North's five-notrump bid guarantees that your side has all four aces and is at the same time a grand-slam try.

With eight solid winners to contribute to your cause — about five tricks more than your partner knows about — you can safely bid seven opposite a grand-slam try.

If you woodenly elected to bid six diamonds instead, showing one king, partner might pass in the actual case, and you'd miss a cold grand slam. This would be somewhat like the story of Molière's doctors, who insisted it was better for the patient to die after being given the correct treatment than to live after receiving the incorrect treatment.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



4-27  
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Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★ ★ 4/27

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.

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

Cryptoquip

F GPHAQJX GFNFSWHU FJJ

FCPTA VUEAFWH DAEWHNUL

WHDAETGUHA RJFXUED VPTJL

CU "QFERWDA'D CFSFFE."

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I FOUND SOME SMALL RAISINS ON THE SEAFLOOR. I SUSPECT ONE COULD CALL THEM OCEAN CURRANTS.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: J equals L

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**  
1 Disarray  
5 Drunkard  
8 Mac-Donald's place  
12 Year-end celebration  
13 Lawyers' org.  
14 Dunkable treat  
15 Hiker's energy source  
17 Bellow  
18 Mingle (with)  
19 Sequentially  
21 Pitching stat  
22 Replaces divots  
23 Fool  
26 Wet wriggler  
28 Handle skillfully  
31 Comestibles  
33 Lair  
35 Inside picture?  
36 Potato, for one

**38** Have a bug  
**40** That woman  
**41** Harvest  
**43** Mai — (cocktail)  
**45** Asian capital  
**47** Bucca-  
**51** Brewery products  
**52** Temporary solution  
**54** French meat entree  
**55** Trojans' sch.  
**56** Sea eagle  
**57** Charon's river

**58** "A mouse!"  
**59** Iditarod team

**DOWN**  
1 Legend  
2 Modern money  
3 Thick chunk  
4 River through Paris  
5 Did a springy Brazilian dance  
6 Japanese sash  
7 Urban fleet  
8 New Jersey base  
**9** Wake-up calls  
**10** Ca-boose's place  
**11** Early hours  
**16** Tradition-al tales  
**20** Promptly  
**23** Astern  
**24** Not worth a —  
**25** AA goal  
**27** Meadow  
**29** — -di-dah  
**30** Coloring agent  
**32** Discard  
**34** Argue over trifles  
**37** "Norma —"  
**39** Secular  
**42** Irritate  
**44** Annoyed  
**45** Sailors  
**46** Greatly  
**48** Roundish do  
**49** Chime sound  
**50** Former partners  
**53** Work with

**Solution time: 21 mins.**

TSP	ERA	LEAP
OPEC	NEW	ARCH
YEAH	DNA	DEED
SCRAM	OKAY	
	RED	ENJOYS
SWALLOW	DAMUP	
TAXI	GAB	NILE
ISLES	RIVETED	
RHEBOK	BOG	
	RULE	WRONG
ARCO	UTE	EPEE
CHOW	TUG	YARN
TOWN	ZIG	LOT

Yesterday's answer 4-27

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					58				59			