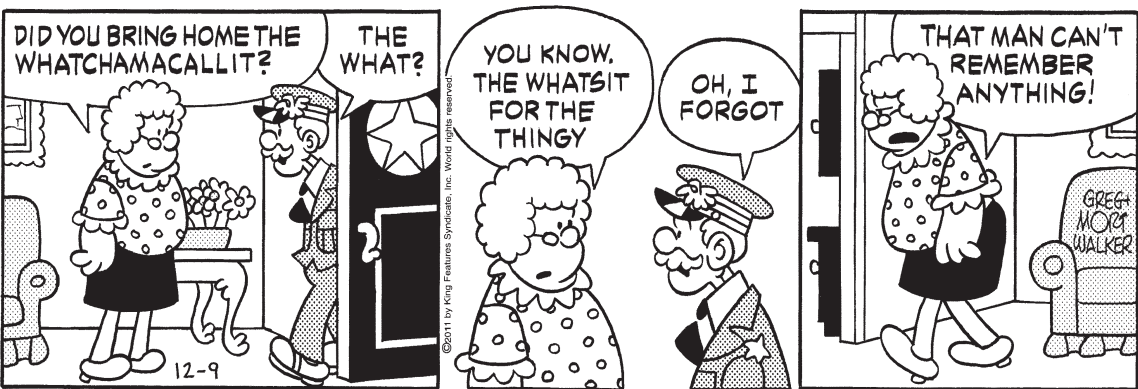


Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



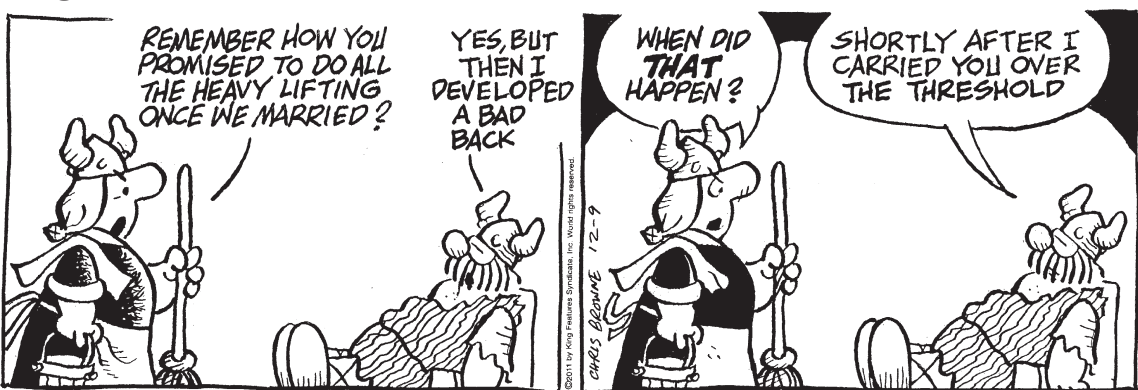
Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker



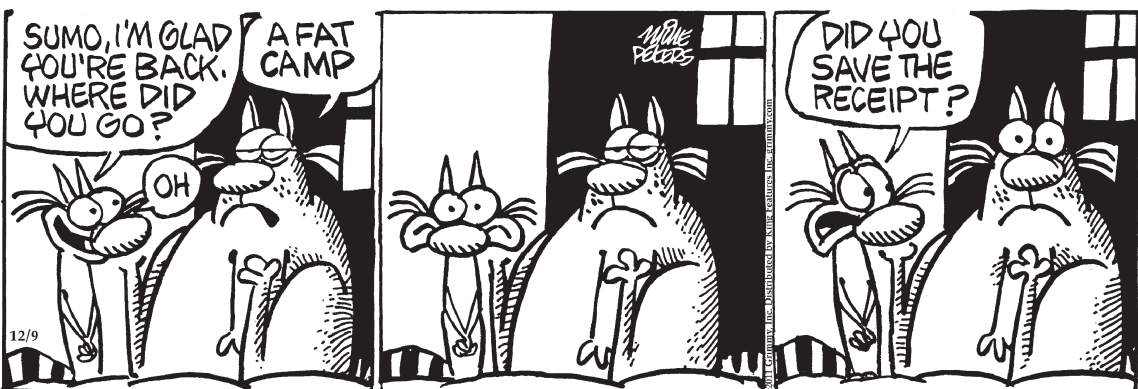
Blondie • Chic Young



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

What do you do if help is needed?

Dear Heloise: My hint involves STRANDED MOTORISTS. My husband and I were driving on the interstate and saw an elderly woman on the side of the road, outside of her car, appearing to be in distress.

I wanted to turn around and at least offer the use my cellphone to her. (I would never have considered stopping if my husband weren't with me.) But then I thought, "This is not safe, regardless of who is with me." I ended up not doing anything and just hoping that the police would come by eventually to assist her.

What do you think? – Shelly in Indiana
Wanting to help her is what I would want to do also. But some government agencies and safety experts recommend never stopping to help a stranded motorist.

If your car breaks down or you run out of gas, you should be prepared with a phone number of an agency that can help.

But what if you want to help or call for help for someone else? Some states have road assistance or safety agencies that can help. Make a list of these phone numbers and carry them with you or put them in your car.

Remember, calling 911 is only for reporting an immediate threat of loss of life or property. – Heloise

P.S.: Readers, comments?

SEND A GREAT HINT TO:

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

EASY WASH

Dear Heloise: I keep baby wash in a dispenser by the bathroom sink. It is useful as a facial cleanser, hand wash and a delicate-fabric wash. Cheap, no tears, smells nice and only one container to recycle! – Nancy F. in Pearlrand, Texas

WRAPPING PAPER

Dear Heloise: During the holidays, I wrap each person's gifts in a different wrapping paper. That way, if the tags fall off, we still know who each gift belongs to. Instead of buying a bunch of rolls of wrapping paper, I just buy a few of the double-sided kind. It saves space, and I still have plenty of options. – A Reader, via email

NEW YEAR'S TRADITION

Dear Heloise: At the start of the new year, my wife and I do a walk-through deciding what home-improvement projects we would like to do. For example, rooms that need to be painted, appliances that need to be replaced or decor that we would like to change.

We make a list and then prioritize based on importance, estimate of cost and time needed. We can easily schedule big projects or, when we have some free time, reference our list to see what needs to be done. – F.H. in Texas

BOOK HOLDER

Dear Heloise: I saw a man sitting in a restaurant holding his paperback book open with his smartphone! A great use for this device! – Kelly, via email

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Bridge • Steve Becker

1. You are declarer with the West hand at Four Spades.

WEST
♠ A 10 9 7
♥ K Q 3
♦ 10 4
♣ A K J 10

South West
Pass 1 ♣
Pass 1 ♠
Pass 4 ♠

North East
Pass 1 ♥
Pass 2 ♠

2. You are declarer with the West hand at Six Clubs, and North leads the jack of hearts. How would you play the hand?

WEST
♠ A Q 6
♥ 3
♦ A 7 2
♣ A K Q J 10 4

EAST
♠ 7 4 2
♥ A 8 4
♦ K Q 6 5 3
♣ 7 2

Test Your Play

1. There is much more to the play here than meets the casual eye. Oddly enough, you should play the three of hearts on South's four! To play the king or queen amounts to giving up on the hand.

Let's see why. You start by assuming that South has the king of spades, since you cannot make the contract unless he has that card. But once you make this assumption, it follows that South cannot also have the ace of hearts, as he would not have passed originally with the A-K of diamonds, the king of spades -- which circumstances compel you to assign him -- and the ace of hearts.

Your only real chance, therefore, is that South has the J-10-x or J-10-x-x of hearts, in which case your low heart play will draw North's ace without wasting your king or queen. To play an honor on South's four would be tantamount to conceding defeat without attempting to avoid it.

2. Win the heart, draw trumps and cash the ace of diamonds. If both opponents follow suit, the slam can be assured by leading another diamond and playing low from dummy! This guards against a 4-1 diamond division and guarantees 12 tricks.

If you play the queen on the second round of diamonds and the suit divides 4-1, you'll have to fall back on a spade finesse. It would be wrong to subject yourself to that risk when conceding a diamond trick gives you a sure thing. True, this will cost you 20 points more often than not, but that is a very tiny premium to pay for ensuring the slam.

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Family Circus • Bil Keane



Conceptis Sudoku • Dave Green

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

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

12/09

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.

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

Difficulty Level ★★★

Cryptoquip

MAFKG ZVHHFOX VZ N YQVZKG

QE QUONRGHKNK YQKVROD,

HAG EVUFQVD EGKKQMD XQH

FOHQ N ZFKKNU EFXAH.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BECAUSE THIS SUCKER CANDY IS KNOWN TO BE THE CHEAPEST BRAND, PEOPLE CALL IT THE LOWLY LOLLY.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: V equals U

Crossword • Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	DOWN	DOWN
1 Pickle holder	37 "French" dog	1 Actress — Pinkett Smith
4 React in horror	39 Shriner's chapeau	23 Pringles competitor
8 Anything but that	40 "— the fields we go ..."	24 Bad day for Caesar
12 Past	41 Anti-elderly prejudice	25 Taro root
13 Concept	42 Satchmo's genre	26 Pack (down)
14 Stroll	43 Large terrier	27 World's fair
15 Medium-sized dog	44 Burn soother	28 "Forget it!"
17 Without acting	45 Pesky insect	29 Aviate
18 To-do list	46 Silent	30 Mean
19 Every last crumb	47 Night light?	31 In a stupor
20 Stimp's cartoon pal	48 Tackles' team-mates	32 — de-France
21 Lassie, e.g.	49 Pavarotti's range	33 Sires
22 A mere handful	50 Toss in	34 Doughnut shop purchase
23 Nerve cell process	51 Carte lead-in	35 Capacitance measure
24 Turned blue?	52 Gas stat	36 Poetic foot
25 Wall climber	53 Deep-voiced singer	37 Insult
		38 Note to self
		39 Van Eyck or Vermeer
		40 Milwaukee product
		41 Menagerie
		42 Hostel

Solution time: 25 mins.

HEAL	REDO	FOP	
ILIA	ATOP	AMA	
FALSE	FACE	LIP	
INSERT	RASTA		
RR	EVADE		
ARTS	ALE	OREO	
SIR	MIN	IMP	
SOUP	ODD	ABOUT	
ERASE	ME		
LOBES	DOODLE		
OIL	TRUE	BLOOD	
GNU	IOTA	ULNA	
EKE	REEF	SEEM	

Yesterday's answer 12-9

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12			13				14			
15			16				17			
18						19	20			
			21			22			23	24
26	27	28			29				30	
31					32				33	
34					35				36	
37					38				39	
					40				41	
45	46	47			48	49			42	43
50					51				52	
53					54				55	