

Beetle Bailey



For Better or Worse



Blondie



Mallard Fillmore



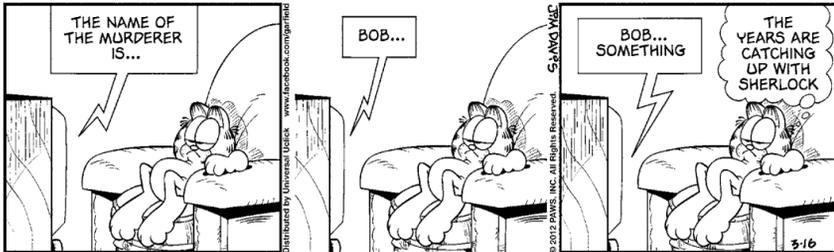
Hi and Lois



Buckles



Garfield



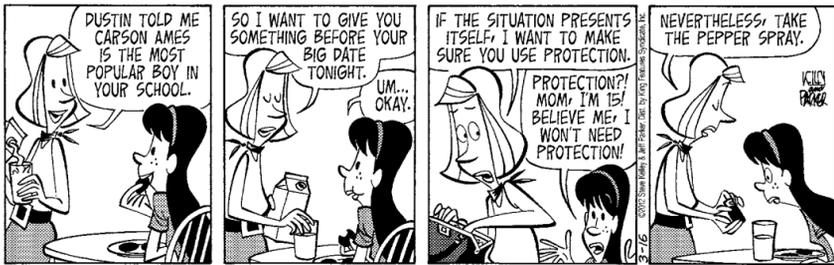
Shoe



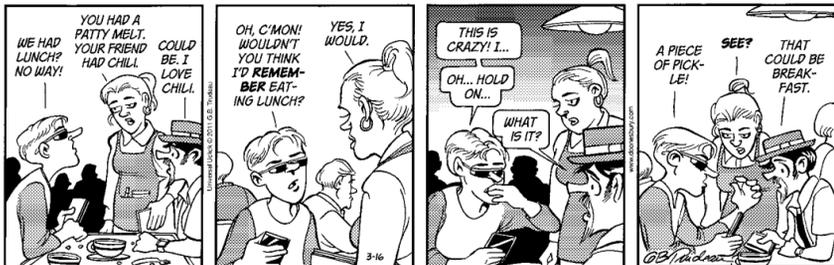
Andy Capp



Dustin



Doonesbury



CONTRACT BRIDGE

BY STEVE BECKER

You are South, and the bidding has gone:
North East South West
 1♦ Pass 2♣ Pass
 2♦ Pass ?
 What would you bid now with each of the following five hands?

1. ♠KJ♥95♦KJ8♣AQJ1096
2. ♠AJ7♥J73♦10♣KJ9643
3. ♠AK6♥854♦Q9♣AQ872
4. ♠Q8♥AJ♦962♣KJ8652
5. ♠K94♥QJ8♦Q10♣AJ963

1. Four diamonds. There is certainly at least a game somewhere, as you have values well beyond a minimum opening bid opposite partner's opening bid. Indeed, it might even be possible to make a slam despite partner's minimum rebid.

Ordinarily, minor-suit games are to be avoided, since it is usually easier to make nine tricks in notrump than 11 tricks in a minor. However, a notrump

BIDDING QUIZ

contract here looks much more dangerous than a suit contract, so a jump-raise of partner's diamonds (forcing) is therefore best. The double raise also leaves room for partner to use Blackwood or make a cuebid in hearts if he is interested in a slam. If he actually does bid four hearts next, you should take a stab at six diamonds.

2. Pass. In view of partner's minimum rebid, game is now unlikely. Trying to improve matters by bidding again might easily result in making them worse. Partner will probably make no more than eight or nine tricks in diamonds, so there is no good reason to bid again.

3. Two spades. It is unusual to bid a three-card suit, but there is no better way of inducing partner to bid notrump if he has a heart stopper. If he does not bid notrump at his next

turn, you will have to settle for game in diamonds.

4. Three diamonds. You can't very well give up without making at least a mild game try, even though partner made the weakest possible rebid. He might pass three diamonds, but even so it is better to offer him a shot at game in case he has a maximum (around 15 points) for his two-diamond rebid.

Two notrump rather than three diamonds is an alternative possibility, but it would be a bit more dangerous.

5. Three notrump. Here you have ideal notrump distribution and strength in the unbid suits, so you have no real choice other than to bid three notrump. It would be wrong to bid only two notrump, which is not forcing in this sequence. If you did, you might find yourself left at the post.

YOUR HOROSCOPE

Note: Bigar's Stars is based on the degree of your sun at birth. The sign name is simply a label astrologers put on a set of degrees for convenience. For best results, readers should refer to the dates following each sign.

BY JACQUELINE BIGAR

A baby born today has a Sun in Pisces and a Moon in Capricorn.
HAPPY BIRTHDAY for Friday, March 16, 2012:

This year you visualize and, for the most part, manifest your desires. Make sure you really want what you wish for; otherwise, there could be a problem. You have a unique gentleness about you that attracts many people. If you are single, you could be dating a lot and could meet someone special in the next six months. If you are attached, as a couple you need to visualize a long-term goal. The process of making it real will bond you even more closely. Count on CAPRICORN.

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult

ARIES (March 21-April 19) ★★ Hedge your bets, but also follow your instincts. You will stay on top of work, a community

effort or other situation. You'll see rewards come forward for a job well done. Don't hem and haw; instead, make fun plans. Tonight: A must appearance.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) ★★★★★ A meeting helps center you. You see beyond the immediate. Through associates and detachment, you visualize a fuller picture. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. You feel so much more connected. Invite a friend to join you after work. Tonight: Let the good times roll.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) ★★★★★ You are full of fun and life. You have a way of letting someone know exactly what your expectations are. At this moment in time, the response is likely to be positive and upbeat. Be careful about a new person you meet today. Tonight: Spend time with a special person.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) ★★★★★ Someone feels strongly about you and what

you have to offer. You could be confused about your options. Think carefully about what could happen if you just relax. Be aware that someone is giving you not-so-subtle hints. Tonight: Sort through invitations.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) ★★★ You have a lot of ground to cover. Your follow-through helps a key person. He or she appreciates your respect and ability to get the job done. You could be up for a promotion or change of title. You are being noticed within your immediate circle. Tonight: Join a friend for TGIF.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) ★★★★★ Clearly, the weekend holds more interest than the present. Still, toss yourself 110 percent into whatever you are doing. You will feel better about yourself, and the results will reflect this intensity. Touch base with a loved one. Tonight: Christen the weekend in style.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) ★★ You might decide to take off early or work from home today, if you are not lucky enough to take the whole day off. You find a partner unusually appealing. Maintain your focus on what you must do in order to make more time for fun. Tonight: Head home and make some calls.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) ★★★★★ Open up to suggestions. Avoid screening calls, if possible. You will get more done than you thought possible. At the same time, catch up on others' news. An invitation to a late lunch could wind up being a good segue into the weekend. Let it happen. Tonight: Be open.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) ★★ Be aware of the damages you might create by making an impulsive financial decision. Sometimes making a nurturing gesture can mean as much as buying an appropriate gift. Express your caring according to your budget. Tonight: Try not to kiss self-discipline goodbye.

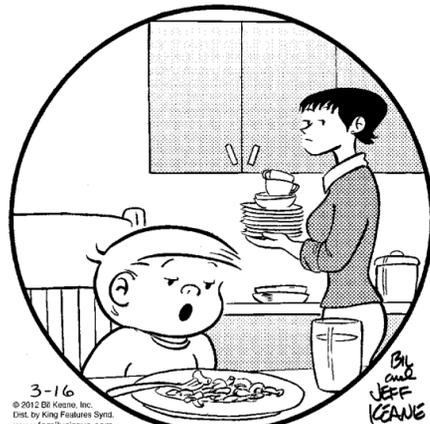
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) ★★★★★ You are in your element right now, so zero in on an important matter. Others are much more likely to come forward and express their support. You could be hard to stop. Don't forget to touch base with a child or loved one. Tonight: The action surrounds you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) ★★★ Once more, count on your sixth sense. Others might have different opinions. The problem lies in that each of you is sure you are right. Be less rigid, and work with different ideas. See where another person is coming from. Tonight: Make the most of the moment.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) ★★★★★ Zero in on what is important. Please don't sell yourself short. Investigate an opportunity or offer. Return calls. You might be delighted by how upbeat others are. You finally can have a discussion that you have been putting off. Tonight: At a favorite spot with favorite people.

BORN TODAY
 Actor Erik Estrada (1949), first lady Patricia Nixon (1912), comedian Jerry Lewis (1926)

The Family Circus



CROSSWORD PUZZLER

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 Thurman's "Gattaca" co-star | 1 Holds division |
| 6 Informal greeting | 2 Drama to a suspect |
| 11 Longed for | 3 Question to a Knightley of "Atonement" |
| 12 Square laundry problem | 4 Writer Ferber |
| 13 Throw with effort | 5 "I didn't catch that" |
| 14 Golf bunker | 6 Top garments |
| 15 Ollie's pal | 7 Question to a speeder |
| 16 "Lohen-grin" lady | 8 Singing star |
| 17 Without repairs | 9 Start the bidding |
| 18 Nogoood-nik | 10 Course goal |
| 19 Short solo birthplace | 11 Important times |
| 20 "Non-sense!" | 12 Whip weather |
| 21 Everest experts | 13 Tries the wine |
| 22 Look over | 14 Pharaoh symbols |
| 23 Lip | 15 Digs of "Chicago" |
| 24 Storage spot | 16 Blown away |
| 25 Gangsters' guns | 17 Sign of error |
| 26 Enterprise crewman | 18 Important times |
| 27 Love affair | 19 Whip weather |
| 28 Deserve | 20 Tries the wine |
| 29 Hero with a sword | 21 Pharaoh symbols |
| 30 Hostess Mesta | 22 Digs of "Chicago" |
| 31 To date | 23 Blown away |
| 32 Panache | 24 Sign of error |



Yesterday's answer

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