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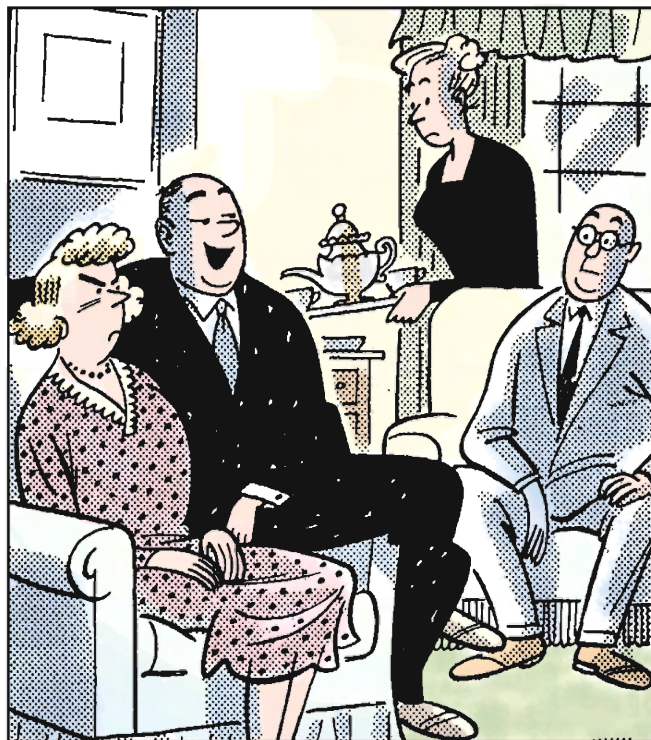
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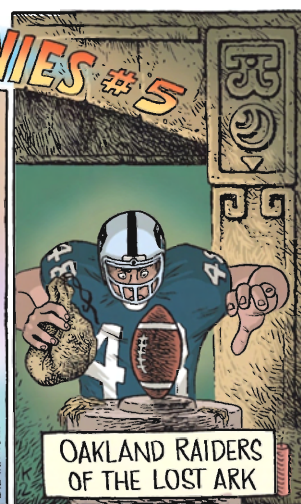
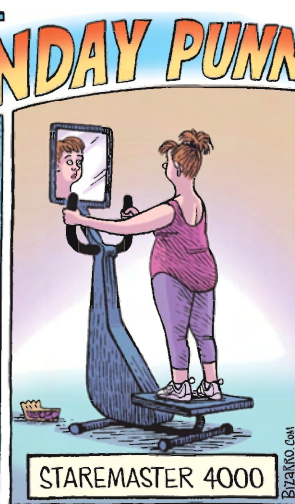
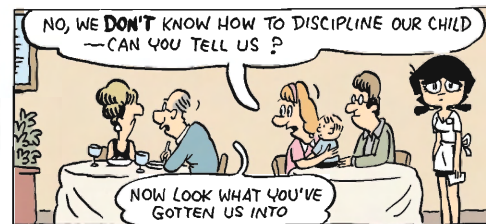
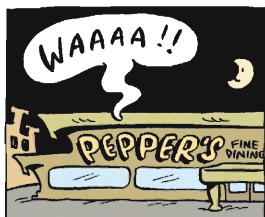
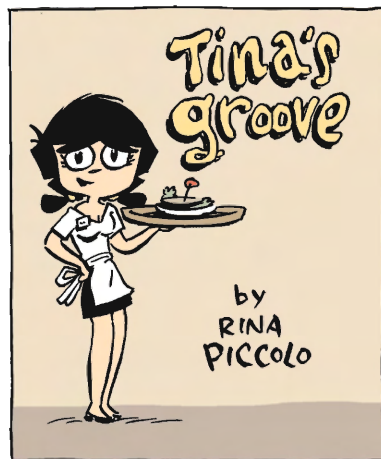
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DEBBIE TRAVIS' HOUSE TO HOME



HEIRLOOMS CREATE COZY ROOMS

BY DEBBIE TRAVIS

Contemporary home design is no longer all about sleek, sterile environments. The minimalist movement has turned a softer cheek as the need for a more comforting home base became apparent. There will always be an important place for cutting-edge design; this evolutionary process is both exciting and inspiring. If you are missing the comfort factor in your design plan, there is a way to embrace the best of both contemporary and traditional. Transform a room into a welcoming oasis by infusing some history into the mix.

How do you do this? Hand-me-downs are a start. You may have a nostalgic grouping of ancestral photos in antique frames, an old rocking chair, an heirloom carpet or granny's china cabinet. These pieces hold memories that connect you in an instant to thoughts of family and home. However, the history doesn't have to be personal. Age is the priceless commodity. Age, and a handmade touch.

Recycling, the New Age mantra, has grown into big business. Buying furniture can be a real adventure when one of your guidelines is that the chosen piece has lineage. Antique shops and stores that specialize in collections from popular decades, estate sales and flea markets are all fascinating shopping destinations. For those who enjoy refinishing and reupholstering, reusing good-quality furniture is a satisfying way to personalize your home.

On a larger scale, companies such as Restoration Hardware have been very successful at merging history with a fresh, modern approach. Their tables are handmade from solid reclaimed pine timbers taken from 100-year-old buildings in Britain. The gray tones of the aged, raw wood have an unfinished touch that makes a great complement to modern interiors. The country setting shown in the photo is a stunning example of old meets new. Old plank shelves are supported with steel and sit on industrial wheels. The ageless farmhouse table sits on a natural seagrass rug. And two large steel pendant lamps that have today's popular polished-nickel finish punctuate the updated mood.

Barn board and driftwood both bring a feeling of history installed as shelves or a mantel for the fireplace. Depend-

ing where you find it, recycled wood may require some work. A good sanding will take care of splinters, any nail holes add to the history of the piece, and you can leave the wood raw or polish it, or apply stain or a whitewash if it suits your purpose.

Bed quilts, wall tapestries, embroidered linens and hand-stitched fabrics bring life and detail to an otherwise stark interior. Their intricate patterns and joyous colorways have been handed down through the ages, repeated and enriched by each generation of artisans. It's impossible not to be touched by such handiwork; the stories and symbolism captured within the fabrics bring life to any space they inhabit. If you are searching for that comfort fix to complete your home decor, look to aged wood, traditional leathers and textured upholstery, and items with that made-by-hand feel. Whether you buy new, recycle and refinish, or create them yourself, these are the pieces that will never become dated.

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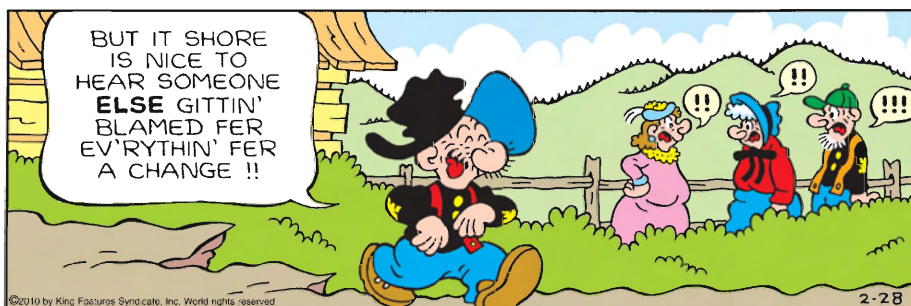
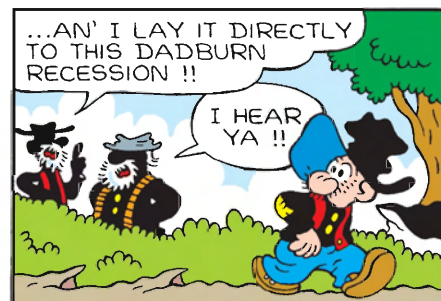
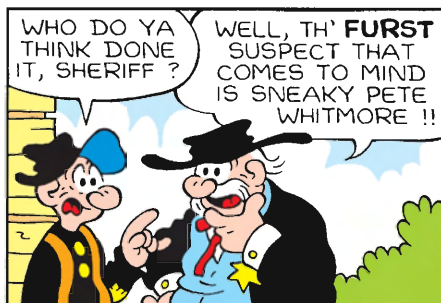
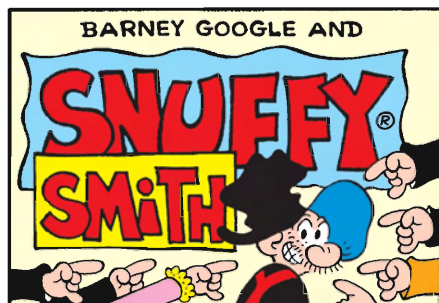
Dear Debbie: We are renovating two bathrooms that have cultured marble on the sink counter and in the shower area. After deep cleaning, the marble in the showers is in perfect condition, but the counters are badly scratched. I would like to replace them with granite, but my contractor recommends marble. Why not granite? Is there any rule about mixing stones? — *Sheri*

Dear Sheri: Marble is warmer to the touch than granite, which is why it is a more popular choice for bathrooms, but it does have its drawbacks. Marble is softer and more porous, which allows for the stains and scratches that you have experienced. Even when sealed, it does require maintenance. Granite is harder and almost nonporous. It resists stains and will last longer, making it a better option for high-traffic areas such as kitchen counters. A busy bathroom counter needs to be tough too, and granite is a good choice. There are many color and marking variations available; you will have no problem finding a granite counter that will complement the existing marble. All stone surfaces are beautiful and exist in harmony with each other in an interior setting just as they do in nature.

(c) 2010 Debbie Travis



This welcoming country dining room combines century-old pine planks with stylish polished-nickel light fixtures to produce the new, warmer look in modern design.



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PINE-CONE FEEDER

BY HELOISE

Dear Heloise: I clipped your suet recipe a while back and finally got around to making it last month. The birds devour it. Thank you for the recipe. My birds thank you, too. — *Ken Erickson, via e-mail.*

Dear Ken: Glad they enjoy it. Suet is beef or lamb fat, and it is commonly used as bird food. Get it from your butcher and cook it down. Add some cornmeal or peanut butter, roll pine cones in it and sprinkle with birdseed. Or, you can make a pine-cone bird feeder without the suet. Just roll a pine cone in peanut butter and then in birdseed. Hang from a tree with wire or floss, and watch finches, cardinals and bluebirds dive right in. This is a great project for kids. — *Heloise*

HAIR BEGONE!

Dear Readers: Is pet hair driving you crazy? Here are some quick hints from Heloise Central for removing it:

- lint roller
- slightly damp synthetic sponge
- waffle-type rubber shelving
- hairbrush (one with man-made bristles)
- masking or duct tape
- rubber-soled shoe (clean)
- microfiber cloth
- rubber glove

One of these will help you remove pet hair quickly and completely from furniture or other surfaces. — *Heloise*

PLANT GARDENS

Dear Heloise: I am a person who gardens for recreation and a creative outlet. Every year, I end up needing to replace plants because people allow their dogs to use my front yard for a toilet. These neighbors would never stomp around killing my garden, but they carelessly allow their pets to do so. Please ask pet owners to respect their neighbors' gardens. — *Janet S., Battle Ground, Wash.*

BIRD-NEST HELPER

Dear Heloise: Help birds build a nest in the spring. Fill an empty water bottle with small pieces of yarn. When the bottle is full, cut a hole toward the bottom of the bottle and hang it in a tree in your yard. — *Cecile Mowrey, Somersworth, N.H.*

HAIR NEST

Dear Heloise: Back in the Victorian era, women put their hairbrush hair in small, covered containers called hair receivers. The hair was used for a variety of things: to make hair jewelry, as pincushion stuffing or to put inside lockets.

I have found a wonderful, modern idea for using tufts of hair from the hairbrush. I go outside with the hairbrush, rake a comb through it and let the hair go into the wind. Birds use the hair for their nests — they love it. Once in a while, after a storm, I will find a small nest. It brings a smile to my face every time!

— *Ellen in Indiana*

RELIEF FROM GREASE

Dear Heloise: Right after our dog was groomed, Breeze was running around and showing off. He ran under the trailer hitch on the motor home and got axle grease all over him. We tried everything to remove it, to no avail. In desperation, I grabbed a jar of udder cream. I slathered it all over, and it took the grease right off! Since the cream is a lanolin-based emollient, it made Breeze's coat soft and shiny, too! — *Lesley, via e-mail*

CATS VS. TOILET PAPER

Dear Heloise: Someone recently wrote you with a hint for getting around the problem of cats unrolling the toilet paper. It's easier to simply turn the roll around, so the paper unrolls from the back rather than the front. In my experience, cats paw the roll rather than grab the end of the paper. Positioning it backward foils them. — *Amy Hazelrigg, Roswell, N.M.*

PET PAL

Dear Readers: Judy Leftoff of Baton Rouge, La., sent in a photo of her adorable Yorkie, Bella, giving her best pose. To see Bella, visit www.Heloise.com. — *Heloise*

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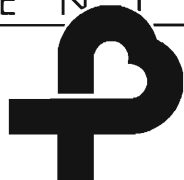
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FROMMER'S BUDGET TRAVEL



BY ARTHUR FROMMER

BEST OF CRUISE SHIPS

Though superficially they may look alike, the various cruise lines tend to emphasize different themes, policies, entertainment programs and atmosphere. My daughter, Pauline, recently did a paper on the subject, which, supplemented by my own cruise experiences, resulted in the following thumbnail sketches of the leaders in maritime travel:

Carnival Cruise Lines: The dining room staff occasionally erupts into the Macarena during mealtimes; the maitre d' periodically bursts into song. Fun, fun, fun is the promise of a Carnival cruise, appealing to almost an exclusively American clientele with few Europeans aboard and a wide age range of passengers. Decor of the ships is flamboyant, as if the designers were on mood-altering chemicals; entertainment is Vegas-style.

Celebrity Cruises: Artsy and tasteful, appealing to an audience that seems to be made up heavily of career professionals. A great many boomers book the ships, as do many Europeans. Although this is an upscale line, its price structure is relatively modest and almost comparable to that of the lower-category Carnival or Royal Caribbean. But open-air entertainments will never include the hairy-chest or wet-bikini competitions of the mass-market lines.

Holland-America Line: Traditional and elegant, featuring ballroom dancing, Dutch officers, a formal Captain's dinner and an older clientele than most others, the industry's richest program of intellectual offerings. Bedtime for many passengers is 10 p.m., and a serene atmosphere prevails. In summer, Alaskan itineraries are emphasized; in winter, creative itineraries.

Royal Caribbean: Many of its ships are massive vessels featuring sports-minded activities: simulated surfing, rock-climbing walls, ziplines, boxing rings. It gets a slightly more affluent clientele than Carnival (its chief competitor), more

Europeans; has an excellent children's program that competes with Disney for family-pleasing cruises. Improved food, but lots of commercial offers, nickle-and-diming.

Norwegian Cruise Lines: Features "freestyle" dining in many optional dining rooms favored by first-time cruisers and people in their 40s who value flexible mealtimes, lack of formal dressing and the right to dine alone. Perhaps the cheapest of all the major lines, but hit-or-miss service has been reported. This summer, the immense Norwegian Epic joins the fleet, with 128 small cabins solely for singles (with no single supplement).

Princess Cruises: The original "love boats." A premium line with marginally higher rates than the mass-volume companies, it has a number of smaller ships pursuing more exotic or lengthier itineraries favored by an older crowd. Generally (and except for its newer, larger ships), doesn't offer the spaciousness of most Celebrity cruise ships. But it enjoys a fiercely loyal clientele that likes its formula.

Disney Cruises: Caters to a relatively affluent family audience. Why affluent? Because Disney never discounts its prices. Presents excellent entertainment programs to its young passengers; maintains separate quiet areas for adult passengers, who include a great many grandparents and a large number of Europeans.

The seven cruise lines I've named are the larger ones and don't include all of the big lines. Nevertheless, they probably account for at least 80 percent of all cruise berths.

Looking for an alternative to pricey Europe for your summer vacation? Consider Panama, where round-trip airfares can be as low as \$300 from many U.S. cities. Go to any number of airfare search engines (Orbitz.com, Travelocity.com, Momondo.com, Kayak.com).

Though nonstop round-trip airfares to that Central American nation can run as high as \$800-\$1,000, you'll discover round-trip, one-stop flights there on numerous dates for as little as \$300, especially in summer. And once in Panama, you'll encounter wonderfully low prices for rooms and meals, all quoted in U.S. dollars (the currency of this one-time American protectorate).

Mudslide damage to the roads and other approaches to Machu Picchu in Peru is so serious that local authorities have shut down the famed site for "at least" two months. That undoubtedly means that three months are the least you'll have to wait, but your eventual visit will contribute to the recovery of the villages and villagers so cruelly affected by this natural catastrophe.

No fewer than two major tour operators (Gate 1 Travel and FriendlyPlanet Travel) have recently cut the price for an airfare-included, one-week visit to India's "Golden Triangle" (New Delhi, Jaipur and Agra) to \$1,099 — a remarkable bargain opportunity. You're placed at comfortable hotels, given daily breakfast and a couple of other meals, and taken by escorted sightseeing to India's most awesome attractions — and, of course, you're also flown to India round-trip. I doubt we'll ever again see a \$1,099 price tag for such a trip after the current programs expire.

Though lodgings and tickets to the historic Oberammergau Passion Play in Bavaria are an obvious seller's market, there are some indications of a weakening of prices. Recently, Gate 1 Travel reduced the price to \$799 per person for two hotel nights in Oberammergau, several meals, and a Category 1 ticket to the famed, all-day performance. Though you'll have to add airfare to Europe and transport to Oberammergau (near Munich), you'll pay

much less than the sky-high rates that tour operators have been asking until now.

* * *

Business doesn't seem to have picked up in Las Vegas (to put it mildly). I use, as my indicator of that, the calendars of room prices posted by the MGM Mirage.com organization for its deluxe, 4,000-room Aria Hotel in Vegas' new City Center development. Those show plenty of dates in February and March when rooms are available at \$149 and \$159 per night, and scattered dates in April when rooms are available for \$159 a room per night. Prior to the slowdown, badly affecting Vegas, the Aria was undoubtedly hoping for \$300 a night — a rate supported by the amenities of that spectacular structure.

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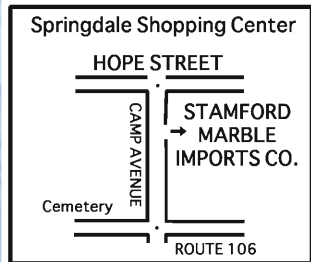
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NASCAR

THIS WEEK

By Monte Dutton
NASCAR This Week

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Jamie McMurray's Daytona 500 victory shouldn't have been considered an upset. It was the Joplin, Mo.'s second consecutive victory on a track where carburetor restrictor plates are used, and it was also his second career victory at Daytona International Speedway.

It was, however, dramatic, and it marked his first start in a new ride at Earnhardt Ganassi Racing.

"It's unbelievable," said McMurray, 33. "I can't really put it into words the way it feels. I talked to my wife this morning. She was like, you know, 'What would it mean to you if you won this race today?' I told her it would be like a dream come true.

"I'm trying to be genuine and as sincere as I can and not sound cliché. As a kid growing up, this is what you dream of, of being able to win the Daytona 500."

Perhaps McMurray had a sense of déjà vu. In a previous stint (2002-05) driving for owner Chip Ganassi, he finished 13th, 11th and 12th in the (now) Sprint Cup standings and won at Charlotte Motor Speedway in his second race, substituting for injured Sterling Marlin.

McMurray received crucial drafting help from Greg Biffle, formerly his teammate at Roush Fenway Racing.

"I'm so happy for him," said Biffle. "I went straight to Victory Lane when I got done with my interviews. I felt like I was a big part of getting him up there because he spun his tires like crazy (on a restart), and I got against his bumper and was against his bumper all the way through second gear, third gear and fourth gear, and I pushed him across (turns) one and two, which I hadn't done all night.

"I was able to stay against him down the backstretch and we just took off."

"Plate racing is a lot about people helping you," said McMurray. "When you get out there, you have a decision to make when you get behind somebody of which one you want to help. I've been really fortunate that I'm pretty good friends with a lot of guys out there. You know, guys typically will help me when I get to plate races.

"You cannot win one of these races without help. It's not just from one guy. It takes a lot of people. You've got to have a fast car, and everything's got to work out for you. I've been obviously really fortunate the last two plate tracks."



Kevin Harvick

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Fox could probably claim credit for changing the method by which Sprint Cup races are decided.

During the running of the Budweiser Shootout, the network's broadcast team was either misinformed, intentionally nonspecific or misleading when it told viewers a green-flag finish was guaranteed.

The race, won by Kevin Harvick, was actually decided under standard "green-white-checkered" procedures, which provide only one try at producing such a finish. The race ended under caution.

Fox's team wasn't right; it was prophetic.

On Thursday, NASCAR announced it would revise its procedures and make up to three tries at green-flag finishes in Sprint Cup, Nationwide and Camping World Truck.

"We want to do all we can to finish our races under green-flag conditions," said NASCAR's competition vice president, Rob- in Pemberton.

"We felt that putting a cap at three attempts to finish the race under green is the way to go. It gives fans what they want and also gives the teams a better opportunity to prepare for their end-of-race strategy."

It's infectious — Danica Patrick finds stock-car racing challenging, competitive, tight and difficult.

But does she like it?

"Yes," she said, "I do like it. I had so much fun last weekend in the ARCA race. I'm still having fun now. It's a little bit more of a challenge, for sure. It's not just put your foot down, drive around wherever you want out there. You've got to be 'up on the wheel' a little bit in this car.

"But that's OK. I'm still enjoying it a lot. The fans have been good. People have been good. My team's great. Everybody has been helpful. The drivers are really helpful."

Not so fast — Michael Waltrip announced earlier this year that the Daytona 500 would be his last Sprint Cup race. He said he was considering the occasional Camping World Truck Series appearance.

After barely making the 500 field, Waltrip said he has reconsidered.

"I think I'm going to get to do Talladega, which I'm looking forward to very much," he said. "I look forward to seeing what else is out there for me."

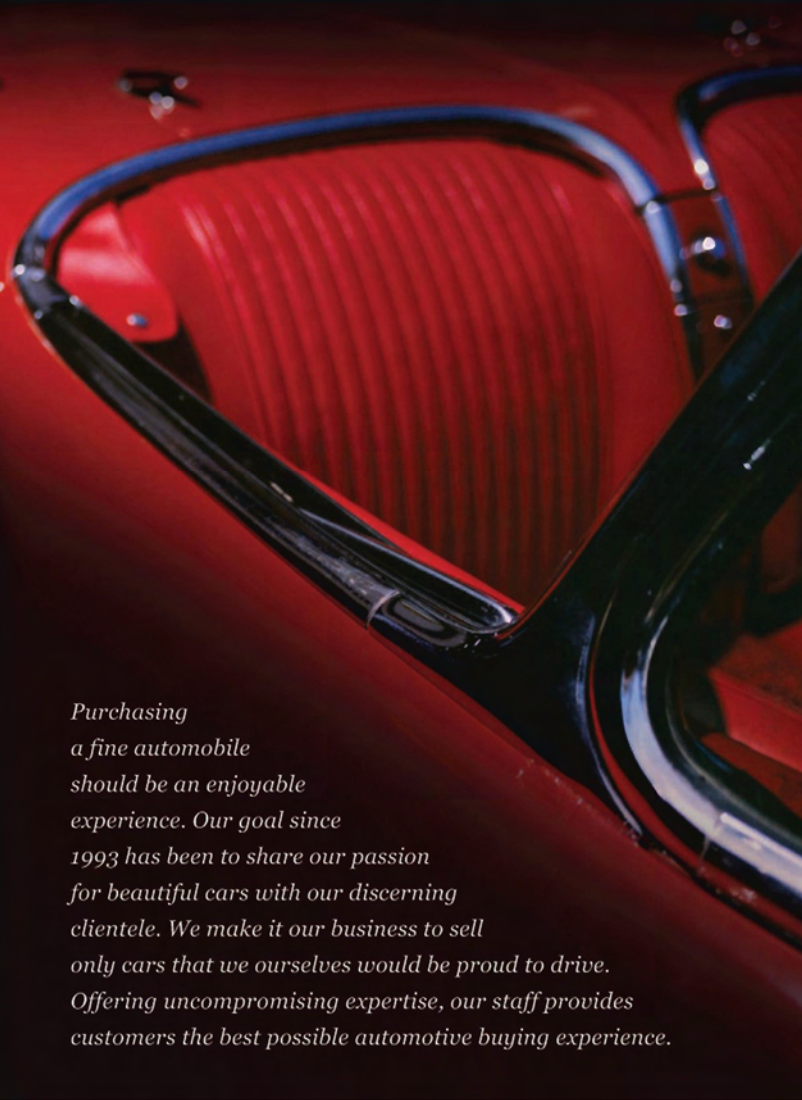


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by Sally Huss

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JILL JACKSON'S HOLLYWOOD

By JILL JACKSON

HOLLYWOOD ... Relax, girls! That cute little lady with Chris Pine at a recent award show was his agent, Susan Schwarz, who is happily married to entertainment attorney Stuart Berton. She tends Chris' career, and the "buck stops there." So, don't despair. As far as I know, there is no one at the moment as a permanent fixture in Chris' life.

Letter from Helen B. Kelly of Brooklyn, N.Y., berating me for saying Johnny Depp is not sexy. Says Kelly, "Are you out of your mind? How can you say Johnny Depp is not sexy?" She recommends I see a good eye doctor. However, she does say that other than that, she enjoys the column. So, Helen, thanks for reading, and I shall certainly seek the sex in Johnny Depp.

There will be no "Spider-Man 4." Columbia Pictures has scrapped the present script and is looking at a new one that wouldn't be produced until 2012. And that's all I know about it for now, except that Spidey star Tobey McGuire is looking at other projects and spending his spare time riding his bike about. On the personal side, Tobey doesn't smoke, drink or eat meat, and he works out extensively to keep fit.

Aside to King H. of Birmingham, Ala.: I won't argue with you. You say Angelina Jolie is the sexiest femme in films today. I can't think of any other who would knock her out of the box.

It was a hoot! I hope some of you saw Kiefer Sutherland on the "Late Show with David Letterman" wearing a dress. He lost a bet. Didn't say what it was, but there he was in a fluffy frock waving his bare legs about while everybody had fun watching.

Sharon Stone's immediate future is assured. She will appear on NBC's "Law and Order SUV" for four epi-

sodes playing a cop turned prosecutor. Here's a lady that's like rare wine. She looks better and better with age. And while pursuing a career, she still manages to have a fun kind of life.

Honestly! And I know I'm being redundant. BUT those "little black nothing" dresses are looking more and more like bathing suits. On every show, at every party, everywhere. Hopefully the fashion will change soon. It would be nice to see some red and blue and even green for a change!

Bryce Dallas Howard stars in "Loss of a Teardrop Diamond," and she appeared at the premiere party on the arm of her dad — actor, writer, producer Ron Howard. The two have a truly loving relationship.



Bryce Dallas Howard

Those of you who come from rainy country as I do (New Orleans) know how to deal with the drops. Not so in Tinseltown, where water rarely falls from the sky. Hardly anyone has rain gear or an umbrella (except the big ones on the beach to protect from the sun). So when the drops do fall, they run for shelter, slip around on the wet roads and give thanks for the much-needed water. But as the awards season is here, let's hope they don't fall too often — or too hard.

Big excitement in the last month of 2009 when Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio showed up at the London premiere of "Revolutionary Road." Leonardo in shirt, jacket and tie, (no

T-shirt here) and Kate in one of those "little nothing" black dresses. There was a lot of hand kissing and bowing and curtsying before they joined the sit-down audience.

First lady Michelle Obama made yellow the fashionable color after parading down the street in a yellow suit at last year's inauguration. However, lately she has been wearing a lot of red. Looks like she will be another fashion trendsetter a la Jackie Kennedy.

And again, conversation of film writers at lunch. This time on the sexiest femme in films. ALL agreed it had to be Marilyn Monroe, but the most gorgeous face ever to grace a screen belongs to Greta Garbo. I'll buy that anytime, anywhere. How about you?

Now on to hairdos in '09. Definitely long. Definitely straight. Definitely parted in the middle. However, the color was anywhere from blonde, to red, to black, to brown. Wearer's choice.

Congratulations to Cuba Gooding Jr. for his Screen Actor's Guild nomination in the Male Actor in a TV Movie or Miniseries category. This for his "Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story." And what a nice person he is. Several years ago he received an award from the Hollywood Women's Press Club, and I was awarded its "Life Achievement Award." He came all the way across a crowded room to shake my hand. I wish him well in all his ventures.

On the map, Palm Springs is a little spot in the California desert. However, it's one of the richest communities in the state, housing many celebs and lots of the very, very rich. AND when it held its film festival, it was indeed a GALA! Celebrated this year were Morgan Freeman and Helen Mirren. Not the biggest stars in the galaxy, but definitely two of the best actors. Everyone showed up in their finest finery with the "little nothing, show everything" black dress very much in evidence on the ladies, and everything from T-shirt to tuxedo on the men.

BITS 'N' PIECES: Just a bit. Britney, Paris and Lindsay haven't stirred up any smoke so far into the new year.

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CELEBRITY EXTRA

By CINDY ELAVSKY

Q: When will my favorite show, "Army Wives," be back for the new season? I'm going through some serious withdrawals here! — Cassandra F., via e-mail

A: Your wait isn't much longer. Lifetime Television's highest-rated series ever, "Army Wives," will be back for its fourth season on Sunday, April 11, with 18 brand-new episodes. Seasons 1 to 3 are now available on DVD, so you have a month or so to catch up on anything you might have missed.

Q: Last month, the advertising promos for "Little People, Big World" said the last show would be airing soon. I pray it means just for this season and not the FINAL show. This family has taught so many of us to be aware of little people (the way we should have been) and how many of us just did not realize how ignorant we were. My family loves the Roloff family and how honest they are about everything, and watching their children grow up is like seeing friends' children grow up. We appreciate Matt and Amy opening up their lives, as we learn along with them and their children. — Bea K. in Canada

A: According to TLC, these were just the "last episodes" of the first half of the fifth season. "Little People, Big World" has gone on a winter hiatus,



Matt and Amy Roloff

like many shows have been doing lately, but they will be back to finish out the season. The second half of Season 5 is scheduled to begin airing in April.

Q: I thought Ricky Gervais did a bang-up job hosting the Golden Globe Awards. Is there any chance he'll pay a visit to "The Office"? — Kristin W., via e-mail

A: There is a very good chance of that happening. Ricky Gervais — who co-created the original U.K. version of the show as well as the American version with Stephen Merchant — has already made directing and writing "appearances" on the U.S. show. Ricky recently told the U.K. television show "This Morning": "I quite like the idea that Michael Scott bumps into this guy [David Brent, the boss of the U.K. 'Office'] and takes him back to the office as the best bloke ever, and the office goes, 'Oh my God, there's two of them.' It would be devastating for the people in the office."

Q: Back in the 1950s, there was a 15-minute sitcom called "Life with

Elizabeth." I remember that Betty White was the star, but I never see it mentioned when I read about her career. Was she the star, and who was the male lead? — Gerry F., Tennessee Ridge, Tenn.

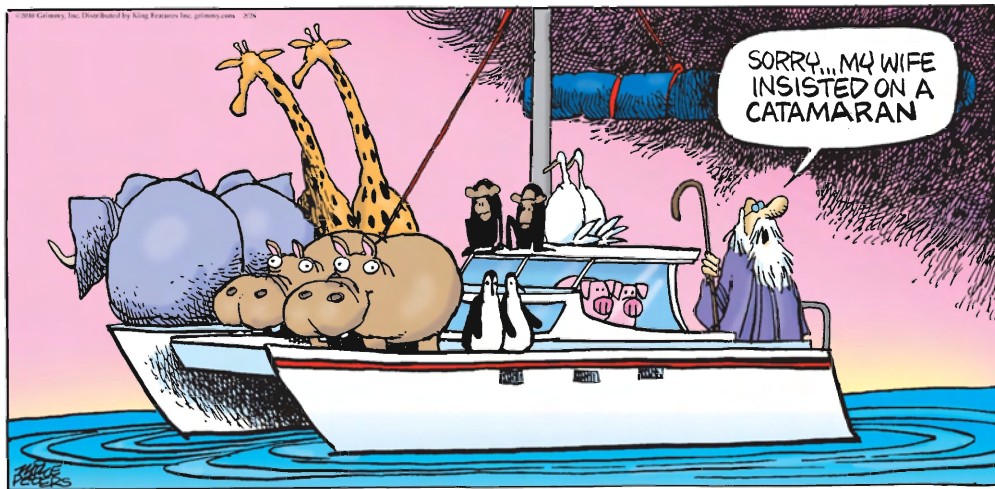
A: You have quite a memory! The great Betty White did indeed play the role of Elizabeth, with Del Moore playing her husband, Alvin. "Life With Elizabeth" aired from 1953-55, and the DVDs can be found on amazon.com and various other online sources. You also can watch nine episodes for free at tv4u.com.

Q: My brother and I have an ongoing disagreement that I hope you can help with. He says that the child actor in Madonna's "Open Your Heart" video is a young Leonardo DiCaprio. I say it is someone else. Who's correct? — Summer G., Huntsville, Ala.

A: Tell your brother that girls know best, because you are correct in this argument. Leo's breakthrough role was that of Luke in "Growing Pains" back in 1991 (his movie breakthrough would come two years later opposite Robert DeNiro in "This Boy's Life").

The young boy in the Madonna video is child actor Felix Howard. He is from the U.K. and was 13 when he danced alongside the Material Girl. Felix soon left the acting world behind and went on to play in bands and later became a songwriter, writing songs for Amy Winehouse, Kylie Minogue, Holly Valance and Beverly Knight. He then got into the business side of the recording industry, and this past summer was promoted to head of A&R for EMI Music Publishing in the U.K.

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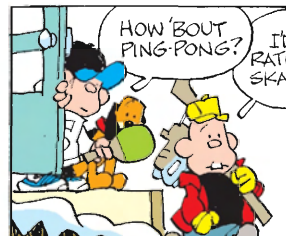
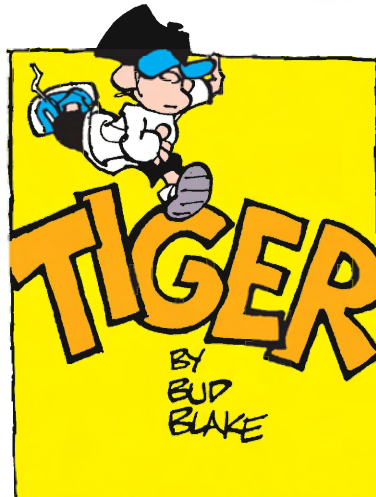
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Chicken Soup for the Soul



LUNCH WITH A FACEBOOK FRIEND

By Carol Band

"The Internet is the most important single development in the history of human communication since the invention of call waiting." — Dave Barry

It was a typical Tuesday morning. The alarm didn't go off and everyone overslept. We ran out of milk, the coffeemaker overflowed and my husband stepped in the water that had cascaded onto the floor and soaked his last pair of clean socks. The printer cartridge ran out of ink while my son was assembling a history project that should have been done the night before, and the cat hacked up a hairball under the dining-room table. Frankly, the day wasn't looking very promising.

My husband squished out of the house without kissing me good-bye and, as I shooed Lewis off to school, he grabbed his iPod but forgot to grab his lunch and his history project. I unfurled a wad of toilet paper and cleaned up the cat puke (the last of the paper towels went to mop up the coffeemaker disaster), then collected Lew's lunch and homework and trudged to the car in my slippers. "What a stupid life," I thought.

My daughter had left the gas tank empty and the front seat littered with Frisbees, parking tickets and paper cups. I coasted downhill to the school and rolled into the closest gas station, where the attendant pointed out that the inspection sticker had expired.

Back at home, I walked the dog, fed the cat, ran the dishwasher, threw in a load of laundry and took a tepid shower because all the hot water was gone. I looked in my closet for something to wear and pulled on a white T-shirt. Then I pulled it off because it made me look fat. I tried to button up a blue button-down. Ugh. Four shirts later, I settled on a black turtleneck, paired it with my favorite black pants and searched the house for a roll of Scotch tape or a lint brush.

Normally, I don't agonize over what to wear. But today, I was meeting a friend for lunch.

Actually, she's not a real friend. She is a Facebook friend — someone who popped up on my laptop some 20-odd years after we had attended college together in upstate New York. I signed

up for Facebook a few months ago, although I realize it should probably remain the domain of the young (to quote my daughter: "Mom, old people are ruining Facebook!"). Kids have the time and technological know-how to take online quizzes, post pictures of their parties and keep the world abreast of their status — "Just ate a pint of Ben & Jerry's!" I have stuff to do — like hunt for my car keys and try to get the cat hair off my black pants.

As I drove to the restaurant, I checked my reflection in the rear-view mirror. Never do this, especially if you're meeting someone for the first time in 20 years. Nothing will deflate your self-esteem more completely than the slightly green-tinged view of the top third of your head in direct sunlight. Ugh. As I walked into the restaurant, I hoped that my old friend looked worse. She didn't. I saw her sitting in a corner booth and she looked terrific. Her hair was coiffed, her clothes were designer. Frankly, she looked better than she did in college. I sucked in my stomach as I walked across the dining room.

"Sorry I'm late," I apologized. "It's been a horrible morning." I slid into the booth, grateful that my cat-hairy pants and the 20 pounds I had gained since 1983 were hidden.

"You look fabulous," she lied.

"No, you do ... really," I said.

I wanted to order the turkey Reuben because I was craving comfort food, but my friend ordered a salad, and I said, "Make that two." We started to awkwardly outline the past two decades.

"What about you?" she asked, and I heard myself talking ... Three kids — all doing great, a husband who can still make me laugh, occasional vacations, a house in a neighborhood that I love and some interesting freelance work. I didn't want to brag, so I told her about the cat puke and the coffeemaker and how I almost ran out of gas. And then I realized — it might have been a bad morning, but it's still a pretty good life.

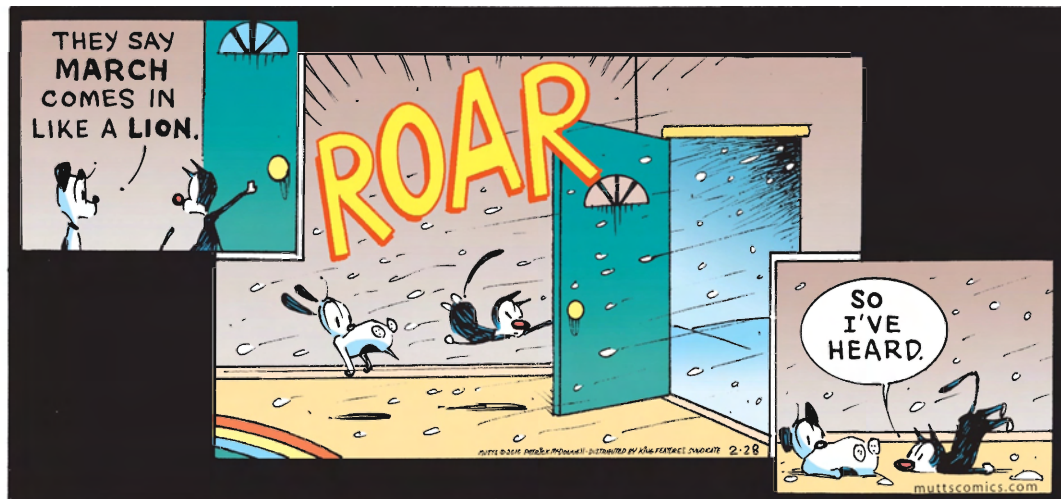
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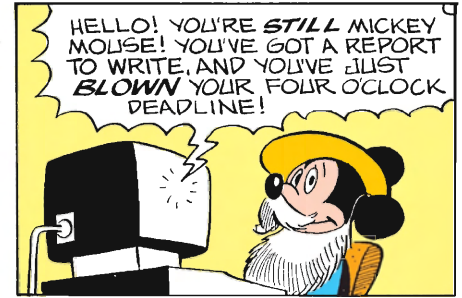
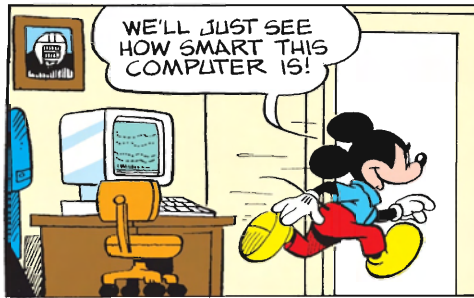
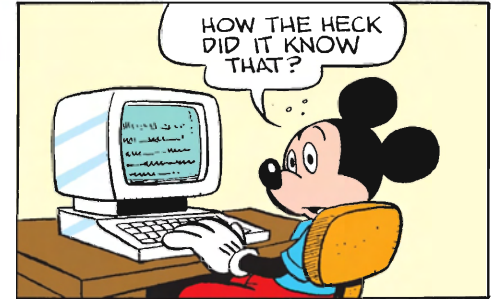
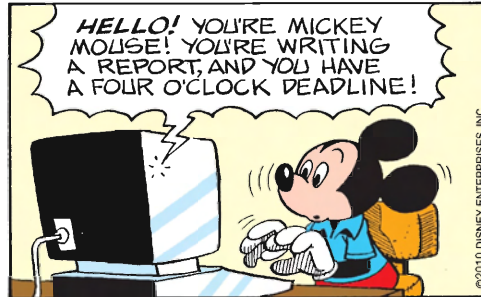
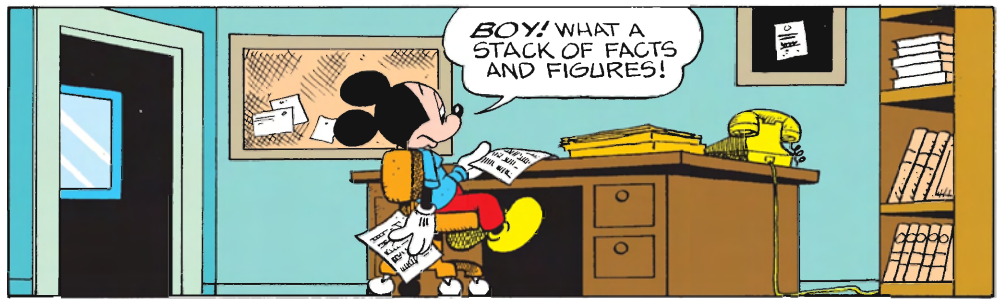
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KOVELS ANTIQUES

By Ralph and Terry Kovel

MIRRORS THROUGH THE YEARS

Mirrors have been used since ancient times. The Greeks and Romans used polished metal disks. It was not until the 16th century in Venice that someone came up with the idea of using a thin piece of glass backed by a reflecting piece of metal. By 1835 a German scientist made mirrors by coating a piece of glass with metallic silver. That method, with improvements, is used today. Glass mirrors were small at first because of the problem of making large pieces of glass, but by the 17th century the wealthy were buying large mirrors made in England, France or Venice. By 1800 mirrors with frames were important decorative pieces. Some frames were made of silver, ivory or tortoiseshell, veneered with expensive



Ivy-covered tree branches with birds and a nest surround this 22-by-16-inch mirror. The majolica frame was made by Hugo Lonitz, who worked in Germany between 1886 and 1904. It brought \$3,824 at a Sloans & Kenyon auction in Chevy Chase, Md.

woods or covered in needlework or beads. Carved wooden frames were made to match other household decorations, and soon a mirror over the mantel was almost required. Because glass was the expensive part of any mirror, the old glass was often used in a new frame when redecorating. By the 19th century, a mirror was no longer a luxury. Mirrors were built into pieces of furniture, such as wardrobes and wall-mounted candleholders, and were hung on the wall to make a room look larger. If you have an old mirror with a broken frame or cloudy glass, resilver the glass and use it again. New glass is thinner and gives a whiter reflection than old glass. You can test this by holding the edge of a white card against the glass. If the card and the reflection are the same white color, the mirror was made after 1850. If the reflection is more yellow or gray, the glass was made before 1850. Mirrors in any traditional style can be found, some original, some reproductions. Even today, mirrors are popular room accessories.

Q: After cleaning out my grown children's rooms, I found a forgotten and nearly unused 1960s-era G.I. Joe action figure and footlocker. The locker is filled with uniforms, weapons, hats, ID tags, etc. — more than 40 pieces. Is it worth anything?

A: The 11 1/2-inch G.I. Joe action figure (never referred to as a "doll") was introduced by Hasbro in 1964. At least seven different footlockers, either wood or plastic, were sold between 1965 and 1969. Most of them were marketed as "Adventure Packs" and contained all sorts of military equipment, from helmets to hand grenades. Some came with snowshoes and climbing rope.

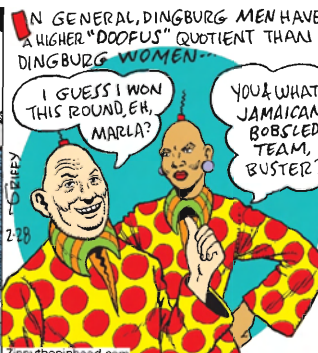
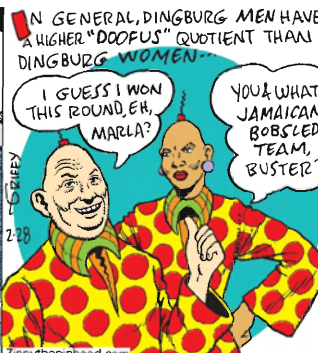
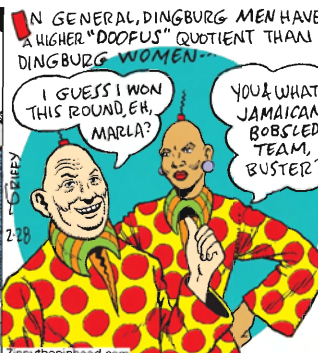
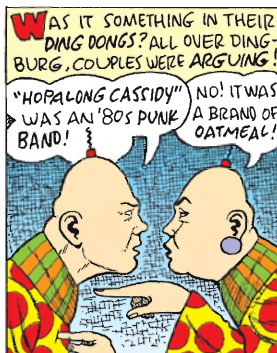
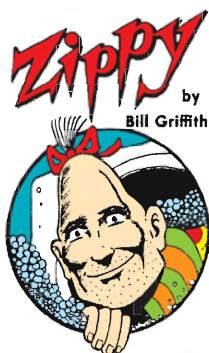
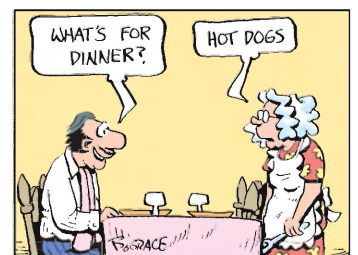
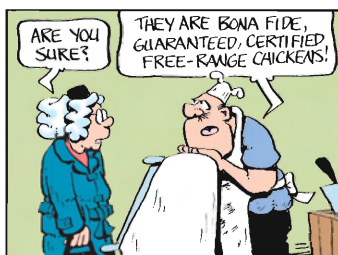
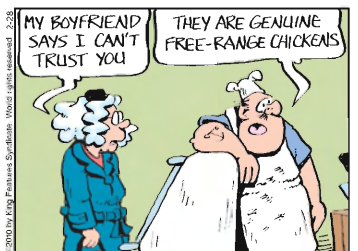
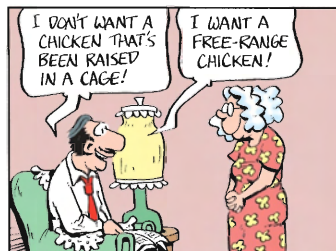
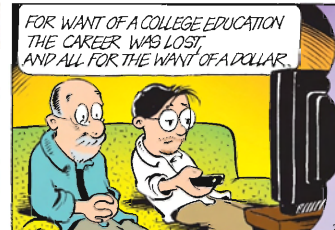
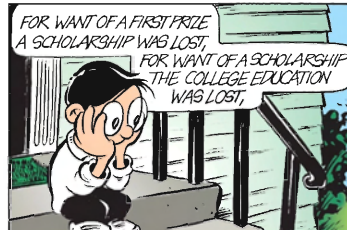
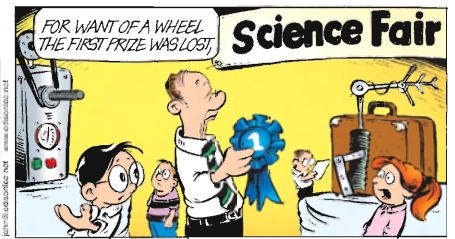
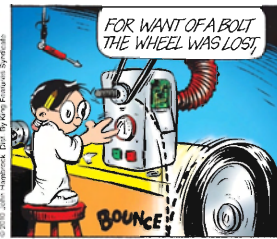
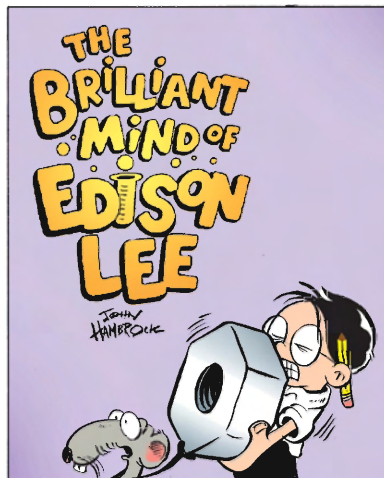
Depending on which footlocker you have and its condition, it could sell for \$100 to \$250 if you have the original packaging. The value of your action figure also depends on which model you have. Some sell for hundreds and even thousands of dollars if you have the original box. Prices drop considerably if you don't have the original packaging or if any parts or pieces are missing.

Q: We own a framed reverse-painting on glass of an American battleship. The printed title on it is "USS Georgia, Preparedness." When did the U.S. Navy use this ship? And can you tell me who painted my picture?

A: Unless the painting is signed, the artist will remain unknown. Painting on the reverse side of glass has been popular in the United States for about 200 years, and it was done by professional artists as well as self-taught painters. The USS Georgia was commissioned in 1906 and served as a training and escort ship during World War I. It was decommissioned in 1920 and was sold for scrap three years later. The use of the word "Preparedness" in the title probably narrows the date of your painting to the years immediately before or during America's participation in World War I, 1917-18. The U.S. Naval Secretary, Josephus Daniels, started urging "preparedness" for war in his public speeches in 1915.

Tip: Label photographs with the name of the people, place and date of the event. Do not write on the front of the picture. Do not use a ballpoint pen. Use a graphite pencil or an acid-free label.

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THE SUPER HANDYMAN

BY AL AND KELLY CARRELL
ORGANIZED GARAGE

With privilege comes responsibility, and that's true for garages as much as anything else. Most garages are full of all sorts of things besides our cars. Some are so crowded that you aren't sure exactly what is stored in them. Here are some great ideas that can help you store lots of things in a more organized way.

Storage shelves are a super way to do it. If you buy the type that are freestanding, then you don't even have to do much work, except assembly in most cases. Just make sure to use shelving that is strong enough to hold the weight. If they are going to be extra high, secure them to the wall for added insurance.

Storage cabinets also are available that are made just for garages. They are tougher than standard cabinets, moisture resistant and lockable, in most cases. If you get creative, you might find surplus or used cabinets that you can turn into great shop storage.

One of the most clever storage systems that has come out in the past few years is in overhead storage. Several manufacturers have created easy-to-install overhead storage racks that attach to the ceiling of your garage. That could double your storage space if you covered the ceiling with racks (but don't do that).

As far as wall storage goes, there are a lot of choices. Pegboard has been a standard choice for many years, but there are other similar systems available these days that may work just as well. With these types of storage systems, you can store lots of smaller items right on your wall. Shelves are available for these systems, but most are small. The hooks and hangers are the best parts of these systems. You can install hangers for tools, sports and rec equipment and gardening supplies.

Great storage solutions

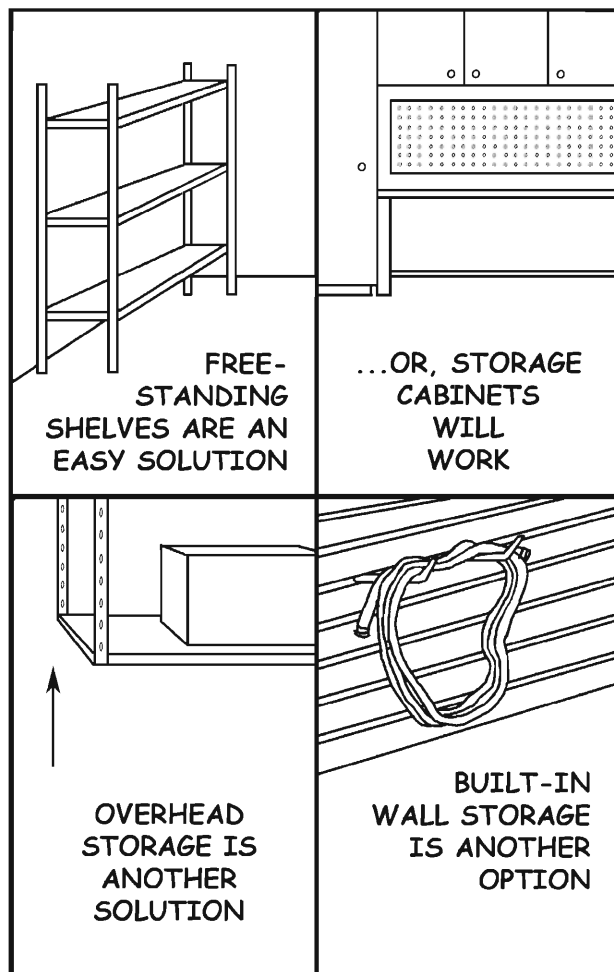
keep supplies safe and easy to find so they can save you money and time in the long run.

Q: We have to install a new floor in our downstairs powder room. Can we install new vinyl flooring right over the old? — D.R.

A: Yes, if the current flooring is fully intact and smooth. Check with your new flooring dealer to make sure no additional prep work is needed for the adhesive used to install the new flooring.

Q: Our front porch is concrete, and we have some dark stains that need to be removed. One very large stain is from our old door mat, which was in place for a long time. How do we clean this up now? — J.G.

A: Try using trisodium phosphate. It's a great cleaner, sold in most paint stores. Just read and follow the label directions. If you need to follow with some laundry bleach and water to remove mildew and mold, do that afterward. It's a good idea to apply a water seal to the surface to prevent more stains in the future.



Got a question or a handy tip? Send it to The Super Handyman in care of this publication, or visit our Web site at www.thesuperhandyman.com. Those of general interest will be used in future columns.

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Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

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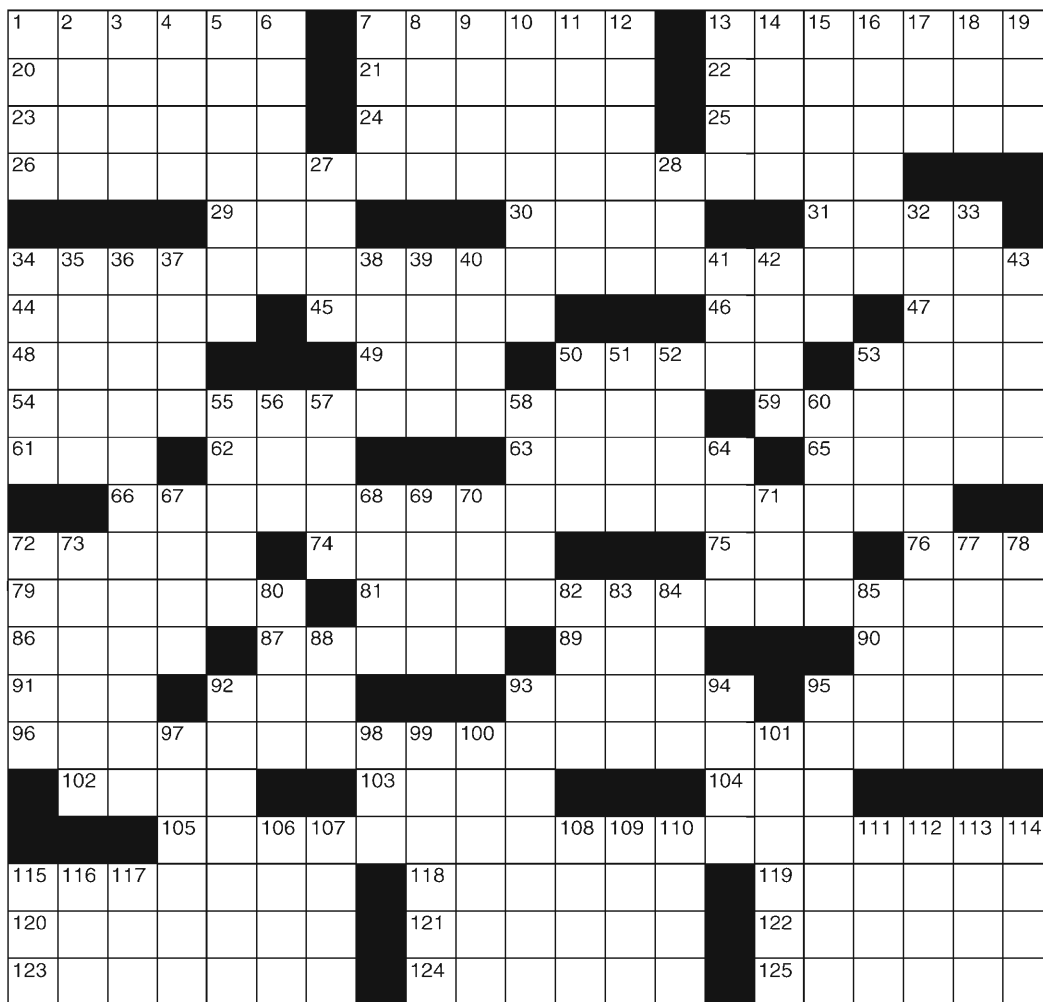


PREMIER Crossword

By Frank A. Longo

**STOCKING
CAPS**
ACROSS

- 1 One of four card suits
 7 Sand, essentially
 13 Determined to succeed at all costs
 20 Kansas City suburb
 21 Many, many
 22 Most pitch-black
 23 Involve
 24 Out-of- — (many a tourist)
 25 Lipton drink
 26 Start of a riddle
 29 As well
 30 Overlook
 31 "Around the World in 80 Days" traveler Phileas —
 34 Riddle, part 2
 44 Wandered
 45 Spanish for "good"
 46 Likable prez?
 47 Keg device
 48 Lacking depth and scope, briefly
 49 School URL ending
 50 In the least
 53 Taboo thing
 54 Riddle, part 3
 59 Add up (to)
 61 "C' — la vie!"
 62 Genetic cell material
 63 Parts of hearts
 65 Trial figs.
 66 Riddle, part 4
 72 Eroded
 74 Brief
 75 TV's Longoria
 76 It comes before the "carte"
 79 Not sharply defined, as a PC image
 81 Riddle, part 5
 86 Abbr. after a quote
 87 Bungle
 89 Give gas to, as an engine
 90 Wine: Prefix
 91 Bus. boss
 92 — Lingus (Irish carrier)
 93 Damascus is its capital
 95 More achy
 96 End of the riddle
 102 Italian volcano
 103 Early TV host Jack
 104 Singer Corinne Bailey —
 105 Riddle's answer
 115 In an ill-defined way
 118 Book: Prefix
 119 Be a pilot
 120 Of Tehran
 121 1970s-'80s House speaker Tip
 122 Suppose
 123 Quandary
 124 Defeated
 125 Say OK

**DOWN**

- 1 Rubbed out
 2 Phnom — (capital of Cambodia)
 3 Chip in
 4 College head
 5 Were
 6 Alehouse
 7 RSVP facilitator
 8 "Leave — Beaver"
 9 It's to be paid back
 10 Up to speed, musically
 11 Revise as a team
 12 From the top
 13 Half of MVI
 14 One way to put out an album
 15 Painter Georgia
 16 Frees from
 17 Baseball's Tigers, on scoreboards
 18 British verb suffix
 19 Seventh Greek letter
 27 Ancient Dead Sea kingdom
 28 Gen. Lee's org.
 32 "Scram!"
 33 Mom's mom
 34 Treasure- — (gold mine)
 35 Chaplin's fourth wife and others
 36 Past an ailment's peak, e.g.
 37 Prefix with cab
 38 Tallow source
 39 Actress Lamarr
 40 "Movin' —" ("The Jeffersons" theme song)
 41 Up to, in ads
 42 Norman loc.
 43 Blemishes
 50 — Spumante (Italian wine)
 51 In tatters
 52 Not worth —
 53 — bene
 55 Preach, e.g.
 56 Essen conjunction
 57 Animal pouches
 58 Our planet
 60 Taj —
 64 "Wait —!"
 67 Work for
 68 Units of resistance
 69 Null and —
 70 Hence
 71 Neighbor of Penna.
 72 Gentle as —
 73 Place for taste buds
 77 Bedsheets and such
 78 Of — (somewhat)
 80 Captain Hook's pal
 82 "— little harder"
 83 Thyme, e.g.
 84 Devil's doing
 85 Weaver's device
 88 Tax gp.
 92 Disneyland locale
 93 Disco lights
 94 Ending for million
 95 Harvest bundles
 97 Not off-key
 98 Sauna locale
 99 Bit of jewelry dangling from a lobe
 100 Nicole Kidman's "Moulin Rouge" role
 101 Huge desert
 106 "Rio Lobo" actor jack
 107 Mimicking bird
 108 Dart along
 109 Piece in Scrabble
 110 See 112-Down
 111 Little jerks
 112 With 110-Down, become established
 113 Princes' school
 114 Landlord's check
 115 Kid- — (TV for tykes)
 116 Jackie's "O"
 117 Guy's mate

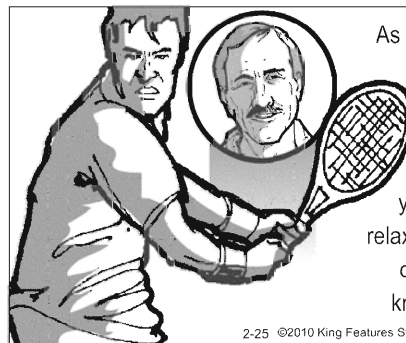
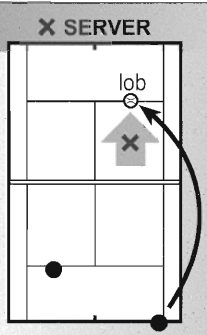
STAN SMITH'S TENNIS CLASS

DOUBLES: REACTING TO THE LOB

If the opponent hits a lob return of serve that will land in the front of the court, most of the time, your net partner should cover it and hit the smash. He will have to move his feet to get back in time.

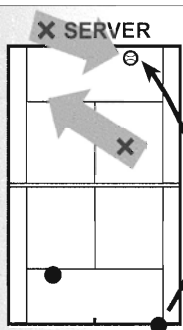
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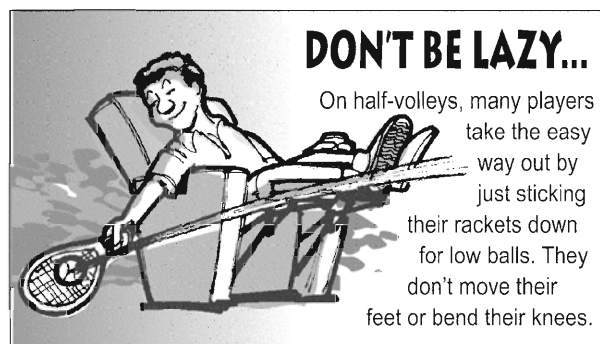


As you are warming up, you can check out your opponent's game. As you hit, look for weakness you can attack. It can relax you and boost your confidence when you know your game plan.

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Only if your net partner cannot reach the lob, particularly when it is landing deep on his side, should the server move across and cover the shot for him.

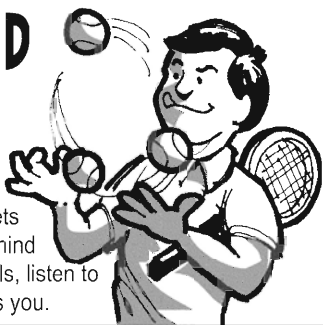


DON'T BE LAZY...

On half-volleys, many players take the easy way out by just sticking their rackets down for low balls. They don't move their feet or bend their knees.

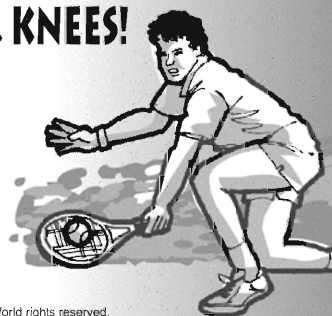
PLAY RELAXED

Before a match, try to relax and find ways to take your mind off stress. You can avoid slow starts by developing a routine that gets you in the proper frame of mind to play. You can bounce balls, listen to music, anything that relaxes you.



... BEND YOUR KNEES!

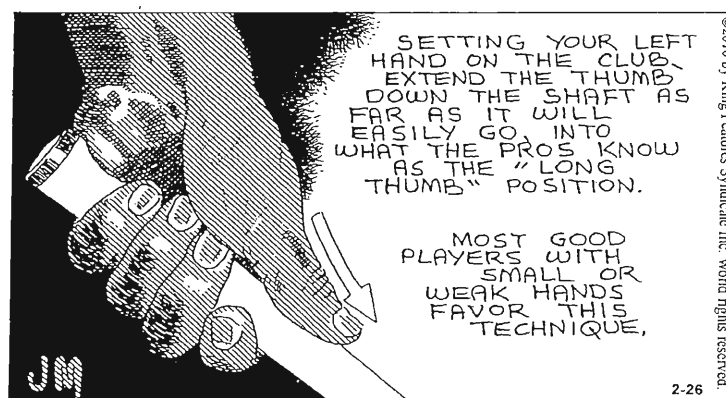
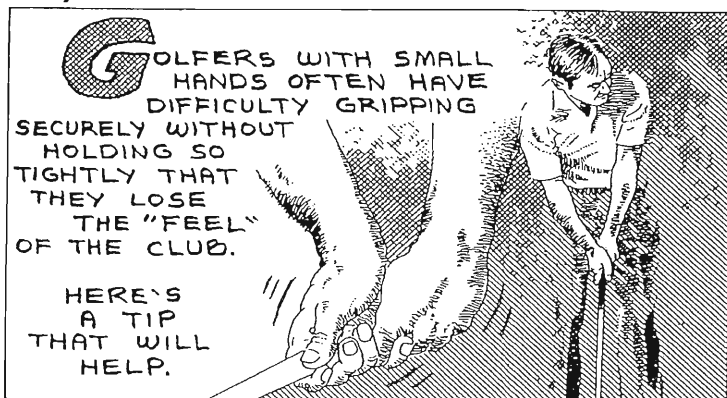
It's important to bend at the knees and get as low as possible for half-volleys. If you get down low, you are less likely to "pop" the ball long or into the net.



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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

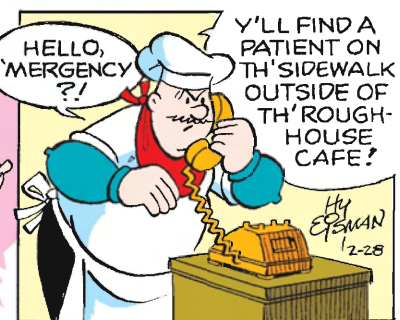
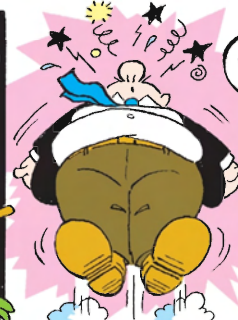
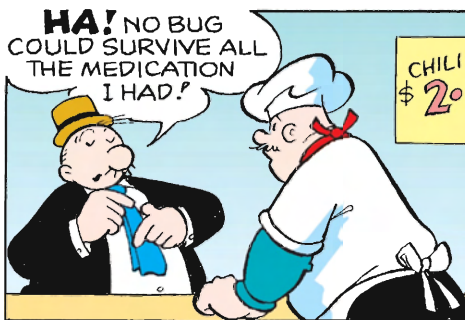
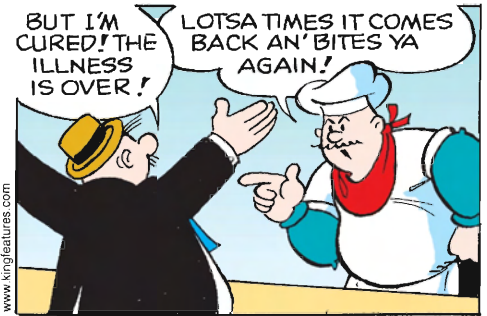
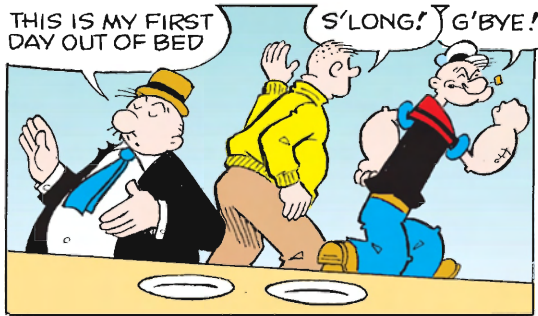
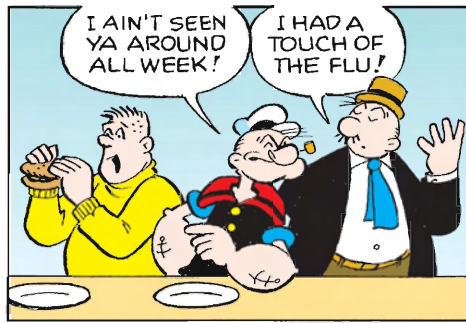
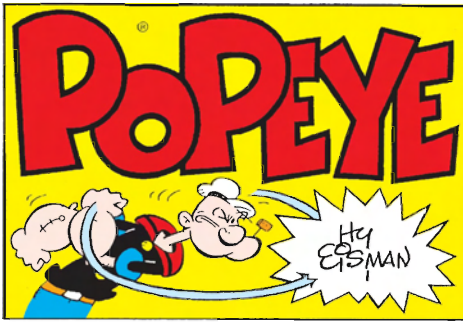
Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS



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2-26

We hope you enjoy all the features and entertainment in our fun magazine.
Drop us a line if you have any suggestions, comments, or just to say "hello"
neal@thebestoftimes.us



SOLUTIONS

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

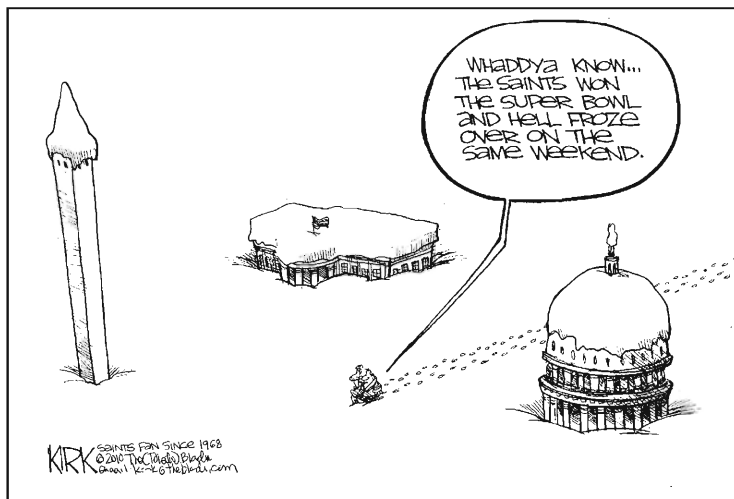
Difficulty Level ★★★★★

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