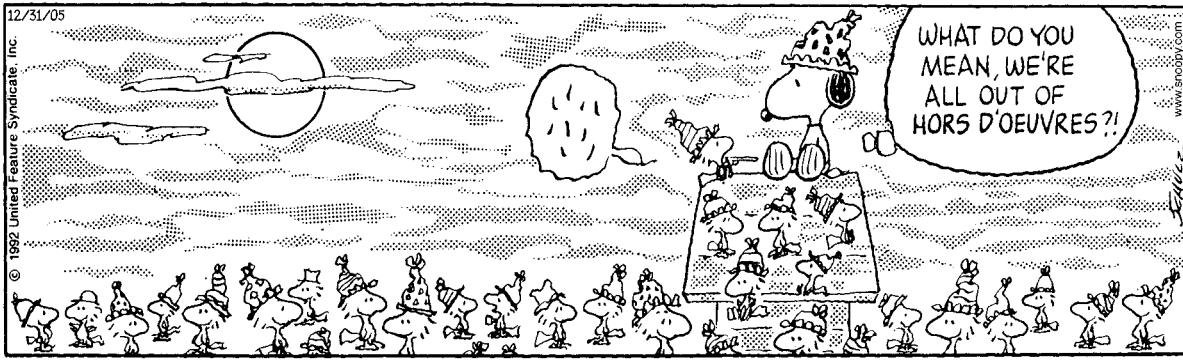


Comics

Peanuts

by Charles M. Schulz



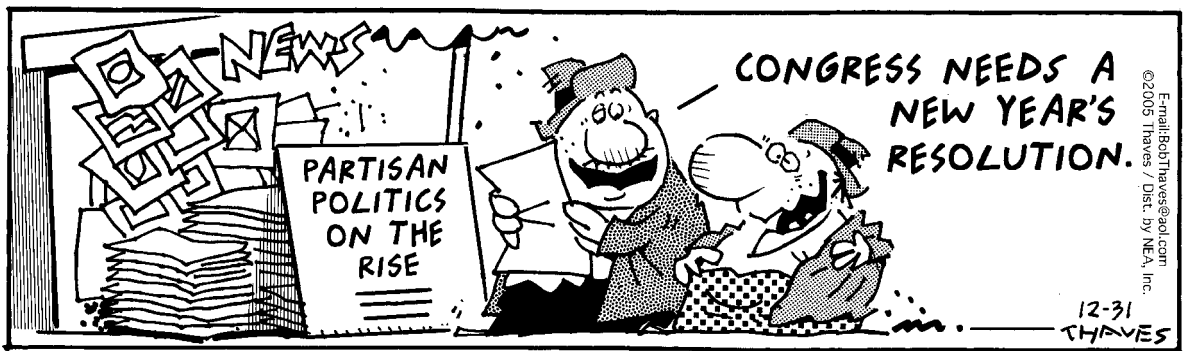
Garfield

by Jim Davis



Frank and Ernest

by Bob Thaves



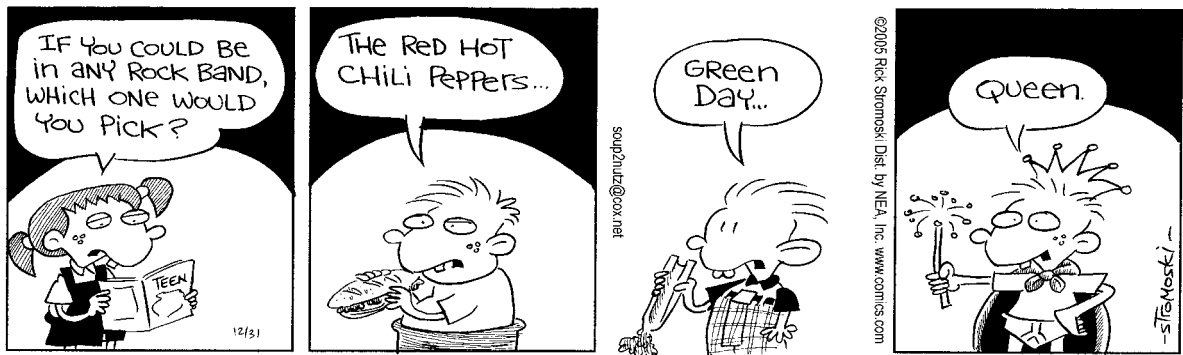
Big Nate

by Lincoln Peirce



Soup To Nuts

by Howie Schneider



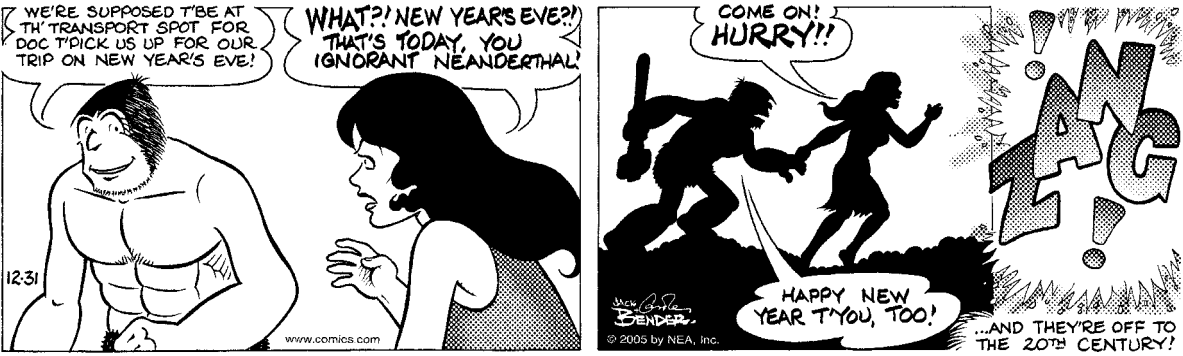
The Born Loser

by Art and Chip Sansom



Alley Oop

by Dave Graue



The Family Circus

by Bil Keane



12-31
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Dist. by King Features Synd.
www.familycircus.com

"Thanks for listening, and stay tuned for Jeffy comin' up next."

Kit 'N' Carlyle

by Larry Wright



12-31
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
LARRY WRIGHT
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Health

BY PETER GOTT, M.D.

Nursing homes not always home sweet home

DEAR DR. GOTT: Nursing home reform is sorely needed. Licensing doesn't ensure good care. These inspections are scheduled and, therefore, depend on adequate staff all putting their best foot forward.



By Peter Gott, M.D.

I've been a caretaker to loved ones in our house prior to their becoming nursing home residents — each in a different nursing home, both homes licensed. Daily visits (two to three hours) revealed many issues that I addressed through the chain of command, i.e. staff, ombudsman, doctor, state, corporate CEO. This proved busy work for me and yielded minimal improvement, if any, for any length of time.

Understaffing, inadequate training, apathetic attitudes and high employee turnover are all contributing factors. Many employees confide their personal lives and problems that would rival a pathetic soap opera!

Factory employees are required to

have mandatory drug screening. Unless it has changed by now, nursing home employees are not subjected to drug screening.

For the good employees, you are so appreciated, and God bless you! For the slackers — remember, you or a loved one may become a nursing home resident one day. How do you wish to be cared for? Think about it!

DEAR READER: There is enormous variation in the level of care from one skilled nursing facility to another. State and federal inspections are designed to identify improper care, documentation and good record keeping. In my experience, these criteria often do not reflect the true situation, as you have indicated. Rather, the really good care is provided by truly committed staff, continuing input by families, careful and thoughtful review of important health issues and appropriate, hands-on supervision by caring doctors. In essence, the fundamental issue is, how can we best ensure that the residents' quality of life is maximized?

Nursing homes are, for most residents, the last phase of life. A structured but warm environment is more important than, say, documenting adequately whether a resident refuses to eat Sunday pot roast.

As far as finding myself in such a facility, forget it.

Bridge

BY PHILLIP ALDER

North		12-31-05	
♠	A Q		
♥	10 7 4		
♦	J 8 3 2		
♣	A K J 5		
West		East	
♠	K 9 6 3	♠ 8 7 2	
♥	A J 9 8 6 5	♥ Q 2	
♦	A	♦ 10 6 5	
♣	6 2	♣ 9 8 7 4 3	
South			
♠	J 10 5 4		
♥	K 3		
♦	K Q 9 7 4		
♣	Q 10		
Dealer: West			
Vulnerable: Neither			
South	West	North	East
	2♦	Dbl.	2♥
3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
Opening lead: ♥ A			

pionships in Portugal. In the Bermuda Bowl, it was USA1 vs. USA2. The match did not disappoint the spectators, both on the Internet at Bridge Base Online and Swan Games, and in the auditorium at the playing site.

With 16 deals to go, USA1 (the defending champions) led by 18 international match points. The first board was indicative of the final session.

Bob Hamman (West for USA1) opened two diamonds, Flannery, promising four spades, five or six hearts, and 11-16 points. Eric Greco (North) doubled to show values and minor-suit length, Paul Soloway (East) corrected to two hearts, and Geoff Hampson blasted into three no-trump.

Although here it did not matter, Hamman led the heart ace, expecting his partner to have some heart length and confident that he would know what to do at trick two. West continued with a low heart, got in immediately with his diamond ace, and ran the hearts for two down: 100 to USA1.

At the other table, Fred Gitelman (West) opened one heart and Brad Moss (East) psyched one spade. This backfired when West raised to three spades and the contract went four down. That was a further 200 to USA1 and seven imps. USA1 won the match, 211-172.

Note that five diamonds by South is laydown. Only Benedicte Cronier - Sylvie Willard for France and Daniela von Arnim - Sabine Auker for Germany found that contract.

The Americans fight to the last lap

By Phillip Alder

First, I wish all of my readers a very happy New Year — may all your fitnesses succeed!

Two matches were highly anticipated in the semifinals at the world cham-

Your Birthday

BY BERNICE BEDE OSOL

you'll know how to make your points without appearing pushy.

The strongest assets you'll possess in the year ahead, which will give you an edge over the competition, will be your tactful manner and savoir faire. These traits will help you to erode all barriers.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) — You have two powerful factors going for you today that will increase your chances for success: a motivating drive and stern authority.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) — Those who are already quite fond of you will be further endeared today by the way you show concern for them and put yourself out on their behalf when you see trouble brewing for them.

PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20) — Because of your kind mannerisms, you're just the right person to give a gentle nudge to a member of your family who may have been neglecting a responsibility that needs to be taken care of.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) — Don't be afraid to take sides if you think someone is being unjustly accused today, especially if you know the facts behind the issue. Be prepared — achill could last for days if it isn't resolved.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) — Today you have the ability to display to others how a little bit of boldness can be seasoned with a large dose of sensitivity to handle a touchy situation without stepping on anyone's toes.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) — An overbearing person could attempt to run the show today, yet you're not likely to take a backseat to him or her. In the process,

CANCER (June 21-July 22) — When you see someone you like being stymied by conditions today over which he or she has little control, you won't hesitate to step to the forefront and handle what this person can't do.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) — You'll make a welcome addition to any group involvement today. The spirit of fraternity and camaraderie you bring into play gets group members pulling together for the welfare of everyone.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) — Chances are you'll accomplish far much more today than you set out to do, including a chore no one else wants to do that gets dumped on you. You'll actually find pleasure in the challenge.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) — This is your kind of day because you'll be able to maintain complete control over events, even those that could easily get out of control if not handled properly. You'll do a great job.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) — Family members will be lucky to have you around today. Every time a chasm opens up which could upset somebody, you'll step in and bridge the gap by making light of things.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) — This could turn out to be a fun day with family and friends. The magic elixir you use will combine those with limited views with charming company to gain a congenial mixture.

Sudoku

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