



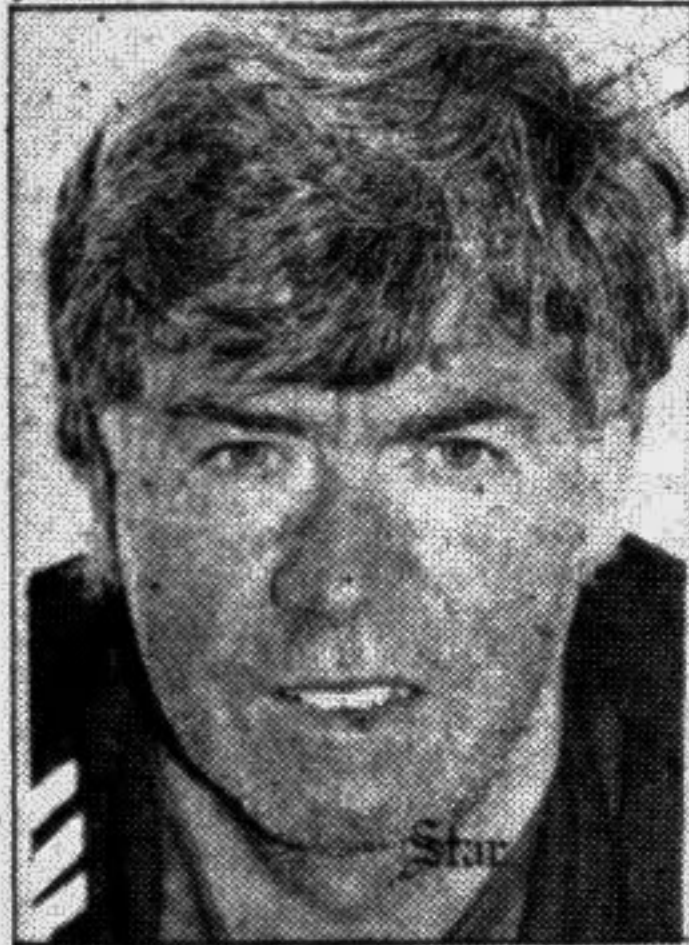
Share The Passion



Olsen predicts Italy-Sweden final

DALLAS, July 10: Italy will reach the World Cup final, where they will probably meet Sweden, predicts Norway coach Egil Olsen, reports Reuter.

But although Roberto Baggio's late goals against Spain in Saturday's quarter-final and against Nigeria have earned Italy a place in the semifinals, Olsen, recognised as a shrewd tactician, says he has not been impressed with the European player of the year.



EGIL OLSEN

"Italy played very well against us, and they are a very difficult team to play against," said Olsen, who took Norway to the finals for the first time since 1938.

"And they were far, far better than Nigeria in the second round. There was a very big difference between them."

"They have also had a lot of luck and I think that to reach the final, they had it against us and again today against Spain in the quarter-final."

"Not that I have not been impressed by Baggio. He has scored two important goals, but he has missed some good chances. And when he goes one-on-one he does not have the skill to beat the player."

He said most of the teams remaining in the tournament were capable of reaching the final, with perhaps the exception of Bulgaria, but he plumped for Sweden to meet Italy because of their all-round balance.

"They are good enough to beat anyone, and they have a good balance throughout the team. Martin Dahlin is good with the ball in the box and is scoring goals, and they always pose a danger from midfield, where they are very creative," he said.

"Stefan Schwarz and Jonas Thern are very strong defensively in midfield, and they play a flat back four zonal defence which is much harder to break down than man-marking."

"I think the difference between the teams is growing smaller and with a little luck any one of the sides still left in could make the final."

Eubank retains title

LONDON, July 10: Chris Eubank defended his World Boxing Organization Super Middleweight title Saturday with a unanimous points decision over unheralded Brazilian Mauricio Amarel, reports AP.

The 22-year-old challenger was only the WBO's seventh rated contender, but made Eubank work much harder than he thought he would need with the judges giving it to the champion 116-113, 115-113, 116-114.

This was the first fight of Eubank's 10 million pound (\$15 million) deal of eight title defenses within 12 months.



Britain's WBO super middleweight champion Chris Eubank (L) shakes hands with Mauricio Amarel (R) after his points victory over the Brazilian in London on July 9. — AFP photo

It's all to do with protocol

TRENTON, N.J., July 10: Among the thousands of World Cup volunteers there is a select group that says it is better to be seen than heard, reports AP.

World Cup protocol ambassadors move quietly among groups of foreign politicians and diplomats who are visiting America to see their countries play soccer.

"It is a heavy responsibility," said Marianne Ward, chief of protocol for the World Cup venue at Giants Stadium in East Rutherford. "The protocol ambassador may be the closest that these dignitaries come to an everyday American."

Protocol ambassadors are at each of the nine World Cup sites. They are responsible for meeting foreign VIPs at the airport and guiding them through their visit to the United States.

And they are always aware that it is a meeting of different cultures. For example, many Europeans have different ideas on an individual's personal space. It's impolite to pass items with the left hands to Moroccan, and it is rude to point with a finger in front of a

Saudi. Sam Destito, a lawyer from Wayne Township, said he became a protocol ambassador because he felt the world was issuing a challenge to America.

"I don't think the rest of the world thought America could handle the responsibility of the World Cup games," Destito said.

"Now visitors compliment me on our country's ability."

Destito has served as a protocol ambassador to the Prime Minister of Ireland, Albert Reynolds, his deputy Prime Minister and Henry Kissinger, the US former Secretary of State.

He escorted Prince Bandar, the Saudi ambassador to the United States, and Prince Sultan Bin Saad, president of his country's youth and welfare department.

"They talked about American football and the Dallas Cowboys," Destito said.

Bin Saad even expressed regret about the release of quarterback Phil Simms from the New York Giants.

Many of the escorts have worked in protocol positions at the federal and state level, or worked in similar professional positions. Nearly all have

multi-language skills.

"The prerequisite was people with exceptional backgrounds," said Lean Pavao, the World Cup national protocol manager in Los Angeles.

Lisa Scorsolini of New York is an international marketing specialist who speaks Italian.

"The World Cup is in my backyard," she said. "I couldn't let it pass without being involved."

Scorsolini has escorted the Italian deputy minister of foreign affairs. Like nearly all protocol ambassadors, she took a six-week leave of absence from work.

Destito said it has been difficult to juggle his duties as protocol ambassador and law partner.

"I spent a lot of late nights at the law office," he said.

Protocol ambassador Irish Browning prefers the name "gracious trouble-shooter." Browning says much of the work is not glamorous, like making appointments or leading tours, but once in a while a protocol ambassador gets to see the other side.

"I had an opportunity to speak to Ethel Kennedy," she said referring to the widow of Robert F. Kennedy. "Now how many people can say that?"

Warwickshire win B & H Cup

LONDON, July 10: All-rounder Paul Smith grabbed the limelight from batting stars Brian Lara and Graeme Hick on Saturday as Warwickshire crushed Worcestershire by six wickets in the final of the Benson and Hedges Cup at Lord's, reports Reuter.

After taking three wickets as Worcestershire totalled a disappointing 170 for nine in their 55 overs, Smith then guided Warwickshire to victory with nearly 11 overs to spare by hitting an unbeaten 42.

Neither world record breaker Lara nor Hick could breathe life into the low-scoring and decidedly low-key final played in front of a capacity 28,000 crowd.

A batting duel between Warwickshire's Lara and Worcestershire's Hick had been keenly anticipated.

But by the time Lara came to bat, the match was as good as won after a 91-run partnership between Warwickshire openers Dominic Ostler (55) and Roger Twose (37).

The West Indian's dismissal for only eight, chipping a simple catch to Hick at mid-wicket, left Warwickshire slightly in trouble for the only time in the match at 103 for three.

Smith's steadiness soon put them back on course with a mixture of strong drives and watchful defence.

Worcestershire were in trouble almost from the start after losing the toss and being put in to bat on a pitch helping the seam bowlers.

Gladstone Small, doubtful earlier this week because of a

hamstring injury, conceded eight runs in his first over, but then he and fellow former England seamer Tim Munton kept a tight grip on the batting.

They stayed in tandem for 18 overs, hardly offered a loose delivery between them and reduced Worcestershire to a state of high anxiety at 34 for two.

That had brought Hick and Australian Tom Moody together but neither was able to get on top of the bowling.

Hick's first dozen runs spanned 60 balls, while Moody was stuck on nought for 25 minutes.

Smith finally ended Hicks struggle, trapping him leg before for 27 and although Moody went on to make 47 he was left stranded in the middle of the pitch when a direct hit on the one stump he could see by Trevor Penny at point ran him out.

Lara said: "See — the press got it wrong. This game was not Lara v Hick. One-day cricket is a team game and today our two openers, our two opening bowlers and all-rounder Paul Smith were the ones who did it."

Worcestershire captain Tim Curtis praised Warwickshire's bowlers, but strongly criticised the preparation of the pitch.

He said: "It was damp at the start of play today and there was too much movement early on. The pitch then dried out this afternoon. This game should have been a showpiece, but I would have thought it was a very disappointing game for most fans to watch."

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard in the final of

the Benson and Hedges Cup (55 overs) at Lord's on Saturday.

WORCESTERSHIRE			
Curtis c Piper b Small	13		
Seymour b Munton	3		
Hick lbw b P Smith	27		
Moody run out	47		
G Haynes c Piper b N Smith	22		
Leatherdale c Ostler b P Smith	4		
Rhodes lbw b Twose	0		
Lampitt c Penny b P Smith	18		
Illingworth lbw b Reeve	1		
Radford not out	23		
Newport not out	1		
Extras: (lb-2, w-5, nb-4)	11		
Total: (for nine wickets, 55 overs)	170		

Fall of wickets: 1-10; 2-28; 3-55; 4-100; 5-124; 6-124; 7-125; 8-126; 9-168.

Bowling: O M R W				
Small	11	4	26	1
Munton	11	3	29	1
P Smith	11	1	34	3
Reeve	9	1	38	1
N Smith	5	0	16	1
Twose	8	1	25	1

WARWICKSHIRE			
Ostler run out	55		
Twose runout	37		
Lara c Hick b Newport	8		
Smith not out	42		
Asif Din c Rhodes b Moody	15		
Reeve not out	9		
Extras: (lb-1, w-5)	6		
Total: (for four wickets, 44.2 overs)	172		

Fall of wickets: 1-91; 2-98; 3-103; 4-147.

Bowling: O M R W				
Moody	11	2	31	1
Newport	8	0	29	0
Lampitt	9.2	1	38	0
Illingworth	6	0	22	0
Radford	8	0	39	0
Hick	2	0	12	0

Result: Warwickshire won by six wickets.



Italian fans crowd the streets of New York's Little Italy for celebration immediately after Italy beat Spain 2-1 to earn a passage to the semifinals. — AFP photo

Ill-omen for Aussie future

SYDNEY, July 10: Australia, emerging as a future world soccer force from relative obscurity, has been hit by a corruption scandal that could discredit its growing reputation on the field, reports Reuter.

Like elsewhere, most of the local current interest in the game is being fuelled by the World Cup in the US, but events off the field at home have generated more sinister newspaper headlines.

Claims of corruption surrounding the increasingly lucrative export of players overseas reached a crescendo in Australia's Parliament in Canberra late last month.

What came out was a disturbing view of Australian soccer involving allegations of money laundering, Mafia and drugs.

Conservative senator Michael Baume called on the government to protect soccer players giving evidence at a recently established Australian Soccer-Federation (ASF) inquiry into the sport.

"The reason why I raise this is that among the whole range of allegations that are being made are suggestions of money laundering, suitcases full of cash, mafia involvement, drugs involvement..." Baume said.

"Which would seem to me to be clear indicators that a level of protection of witnesses would be essential," he said.

However, the appeal for protection of witnesses fell on deaf ears.

Conservative politicians also urged the government to intervene and launch a Senate (Upper House) inquiry into the transfer of players overseas

and the involvement of national soccer coach Eddie Thomson.

The government will vote on the Senate inquiry in August.

Ironically, Australia's progress on the field, particularly at youth and Olympic Games level has created the circumstances which have apparently proved ripe for exploitation.

By finishing fourth at the Barcelona Olympic Games in 1992 a feat matched at the last two youth World Cups, and narrowly missing out to Argentina in qualifying for the 1994 World Cup, demand for Australia's semi-professional players has soared.

According to the ASF the game's governing body, more than 80 players currently play their trade overseas, primarily in England, Belgium and Malaysia.

Those transfers have generated millions of dollars in transfer fees, huge profits for agents — and more damaging headlines.

In November 1993, the English Football Association (FA) fined Premier league side Aston Villa 20,000 pounds (US dollar 30,600) for allegedly paying an agent to bring Australian goalkeeper Mark Bosnich to Britain in breach of FA rules preventing the purchase of players from a third party rather than the selling club.

In May, Australia's Inside sport magazine investigated national coach Thomson's involvement in player transfers, raising questions over a possible conflict of interest.

Thomson has admitted he sat in with Australian defender Ned Zelic during negotiations for his transfer to Germany's

Bor Dortmund in 1992. Thomson has strenuously denied any wrongdoing.

Last month, Australian authorities began proceedings against another key ASF administrator, commission Tony Labbozzetta.

Labbozzetta, who is also the president of leading Australian national soccer league club Marconi, is alleged to have overseen the transfer of current international midfielder Paul Okon to Belgium's club Brugge in 1991.

According to official complaint documents Marconi's accounts show a fee of Australian 300,000 dollars (US dollar 219,000) was paid while the transfer form lodged with the ASF reveals a figure of a 515,000 dollars (US dollars 376,000) — a discrepancy of a 215,000 dollars (157,000 US dollars).

Also last month, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation television current affairs programme four corners alleged further discrepancies totalling at least a 250,000 dollars (182,500 US dollars) in the 1988 transfers of striker Frank Farina and midfielder Vlado Bozinovski, also to club Brugge.

After initially denying the need for an independent inquiry, the ASF relented to public pressure last month by agreeing to investigate overseas transfers and the selection of national teams at all age levels.

But the credibility of the inquiry instigated by the ASF was damaged when the players' union advised their members against giving evidence because of a lack of protection against defamation, prompting the parliamentary exchange in Canberra.

Romanians brace for worst

BUCHAREST, July 10: Romanians eagerly awaited the World Cup quarter-final against Sweden on Sunday, but extra police will be on duty in the capital to deal with any trouble, reports Reuter.

Romanian spirits have been lifted by their best World Cup soccer performance ever.

The success has brightened the lives of a nation worn down by gloom poverty, political chaos and violence during the four years since the collapse of communist rule.

Three weekends in a row, thousands of Romanians poured on to the streets in the middle of the night to celebrate their team's triumphs.

There was outrage and protests ensued last weekend when a French news agency called the Romanian team a band of gypsies.

Ali's belt on sale

LONDON, July 10: The boxing belt given to heavyweight Muhammad Ali after he defeated Sonny Liston in 1964 is to be put up for sale on Monday, auctioneers said, reports Reuter.

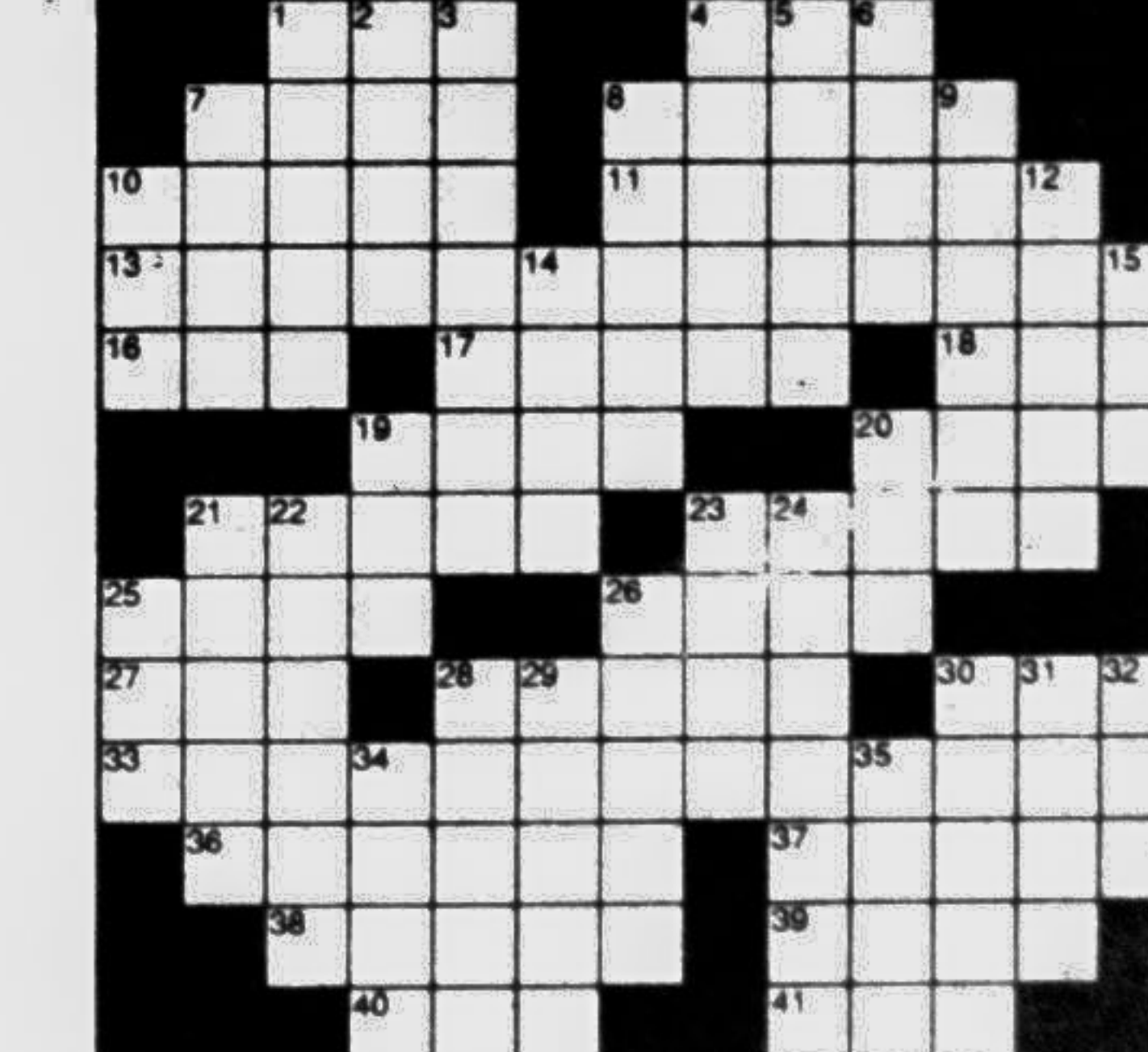
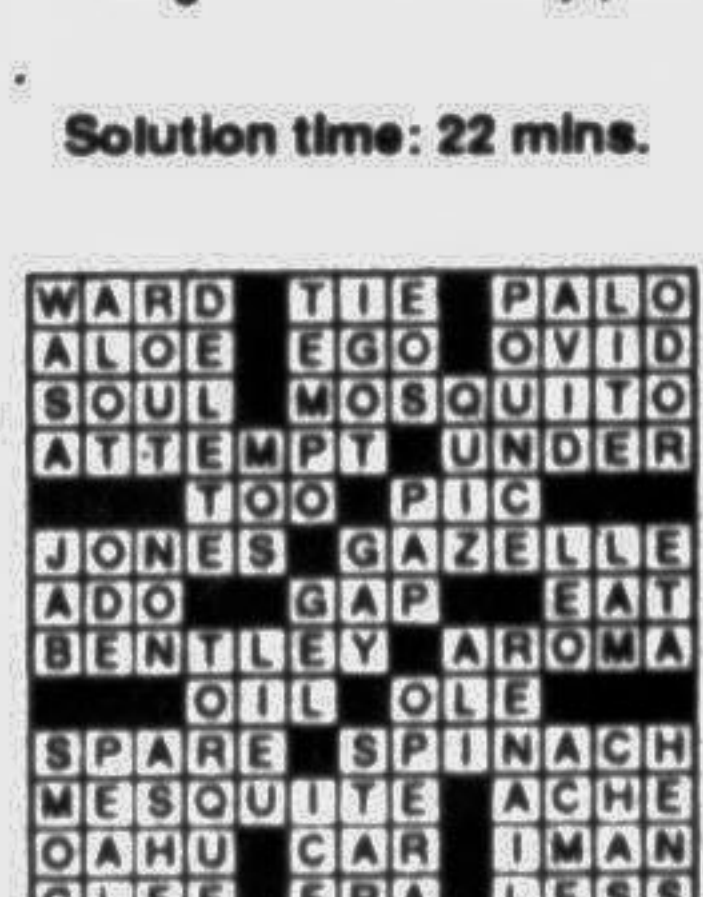
"This belt must be considered the most important piece of boxing memorabilia there is from the second half of the 20th century," said Jon Baddeley of Sotherby's collector department.

The anonymous seller of the belt was given it by the famous boxer. He won two other belts in his career — one is held by his family and the other is in Washington's Smithsonian Institute.

The belt has a green leather strap bearing a gilt metal oval with the inscription: "World Champion WBC"

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ACROSS | 27 Candle count | DOWN | 15 A billion years |
| 1 Backing | 28 Asparagus serving | 1 Lathers | 19 Clear the tables |
| 4 Super-loudly, in music | 30 Conditions | 2 Storybook baddie | 20 Army bigwig; abbr. |
| 7 Type-of dancer | 33 1956 Comden/Green/Styne song | 3 Iliescu is its leader | 21 Vision |
| 8 Cabinet contents, often | 36 Rose's home | 4 Predicaments | 22 Spoils: slang |
| 10 Warning | 37 Owl talk | 5 Signal light | 23 Do in, as a dragon |
| 11 Puts on a pedestal | 38 Puts aside | 6 Fedora material | 24 More severe |
| 13 1947 Cahn/Styne song | 39 Pound of poetry | 7 Smooth-talking | 25 Vanna's cohort |
| 16 Stomach muscles, briefly | 40 Nancy's man | 8 Noisome | 26 "For — sake!" |
| 17 Caphony | 41 Castilian king | 9 Bad mark | 28 Many shots at one time |
| 18 Earthy prefix | | 10 One-time link | 29 Hog the mirror |
| 19 Aviary denizen | | 12 Slander | 30 Tusk stuff |
| 20 Fed | | 14 Army post | 31 Goat's-milk cheese |
| 21 Short and fat | | | 32 Grads-to-be; abbr. |
| 23 Remove the wool | | | 34 Carson's predecessor |
| 25 Papal name, 12 times | | | 35 Seep slowly |
| 26 Blueprint | | | |



CRYPTOQUIP
F I Y Z W D R M W T D X
A I Z M L W I D W L U R N W S
Q I F R Q I A A W T L S Y R A Z R N
"U R F I X W W Z V I L V U"
Yesterday's Cryptiquip: ASKED OUR GREEN BAR-BECUE CHEF, HIS FIRST TIME AT THE GRILL, "MIND IF I SMOKE?"
Today's Cryptiquip clue: A equals I
The Cryptiquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.