

Sanchez first Spaniard to win US Open

NEW YORK Sept 11: Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario never gave up attitude turned a first-set thrashing into a three-set victory Saturday and her first US Open women's singles championship, reports AP.

The scrambling Sanchez-Vicario blunted the vaunted power of Graf to become the first Spanish woman to win the US title 1-6, 7-6 (7-3), 6-4.

"She played more aggressive at times than I did," Graf said. "She is somebody who tries for every point, even if she's down, like today."

"She never gives up." The energetic Sanchez-Vicario didn't give up Saturday until she had won her second Grand Slam title this year. She captured the French Open in June. Graf's only Grand Slam tournament win in 1994 was the Australian Open in January.

"I'm happy I'm there," Sanchez-Vicario said. "I won two Grand Slams but I'm still No 2 and Steffi is still No 1" on the computer rankings.

Two Spanish men — Manuel Santana in 1965 and Manuel Orantes in 1975 — have won the US men's singles. The victory also gives Spain three of the four Grand Slam women's titles this year: Conchita Martinez won Wimbledon in July.

The victory was worth 550,000 dollars to Sanchez-Vicario, the biggest payday in tennis and equal to the men's prize money.

A few hours after taking the singles title, Sanchez-Vicario came back to the stadium and reached the women's doubles final with Jana Novotna in a 7-6 (7-3), 6-2 victory over Gabriela Sabatini and Laris Neiland. Sanchez-Vicario and Novotna will play Sunday against Katerina Maleeva and Robin White.

Graf, who won here on the hardcourts of the National Tennis Centre last year, appeared as if she would breeze to her fourth US Open crown. She roared through the opening set in just 22 minutes, winning 20 of the 24 points in the last four games. Sanchez-Vicario made the mistake of trading big strokes with one of the biggest hitters in women's tennis, and she paid for it.

The Spaniard had only one winner in the first set while committing 10 unforced errors.

Graf, however, wasn't just good; she hit every line, and usually the outside of the line as she rolled up game after game. In the 11th game, for example, her backhand service return skidded off the baseline for a winner to make it 15-40.

She closed out the break on the next point when her service return, which hit right at the baseline, was returned long.

"She was playing very well and I was a little bit tentative," Sanchez-Vicario said of the opening set.

But it wasn't her luck that changed. It was the way Sanchez-Vicario changed her tactics and began forcing the issue instead of trading thunderbolts from the baseline.

"In the second set, I started making some easy mistakes," Graf said.

Sanchez-Vicario moved the ball around the court, slicing it, dicing it, sometimes hitting topspin, never giving Graf the same type of ball twice, trying to keep the German's feared forehand from becoming the dominant weapon it usually is.

It worked. Instead of hitting winners, Graf started pouncing out unforced errors. She finished with 46 unforced errors, 10 more than Sanchez-Vicario. And while Graf had only eight unforced errors in the opening set, she had 19 in each of the next two.

After trading service breaks in the third and fourth games of the second set, the two battled into a tiebreak after Graf staved off three set points to hold serve in the 10th game.

Again the two women found it difficult to hold serve in the tiebreaker — at one point, four consecutive points went against serve. But Sanchez-Vicario, helped by two Graf unforced errors, built a 6-3 lead, then pulled a surprise ace out of

service in the first, second, fifth and sixth games. After they held — Graf at 30, Sanchez-Vicario at 15 — it was time for Graf to serve again.

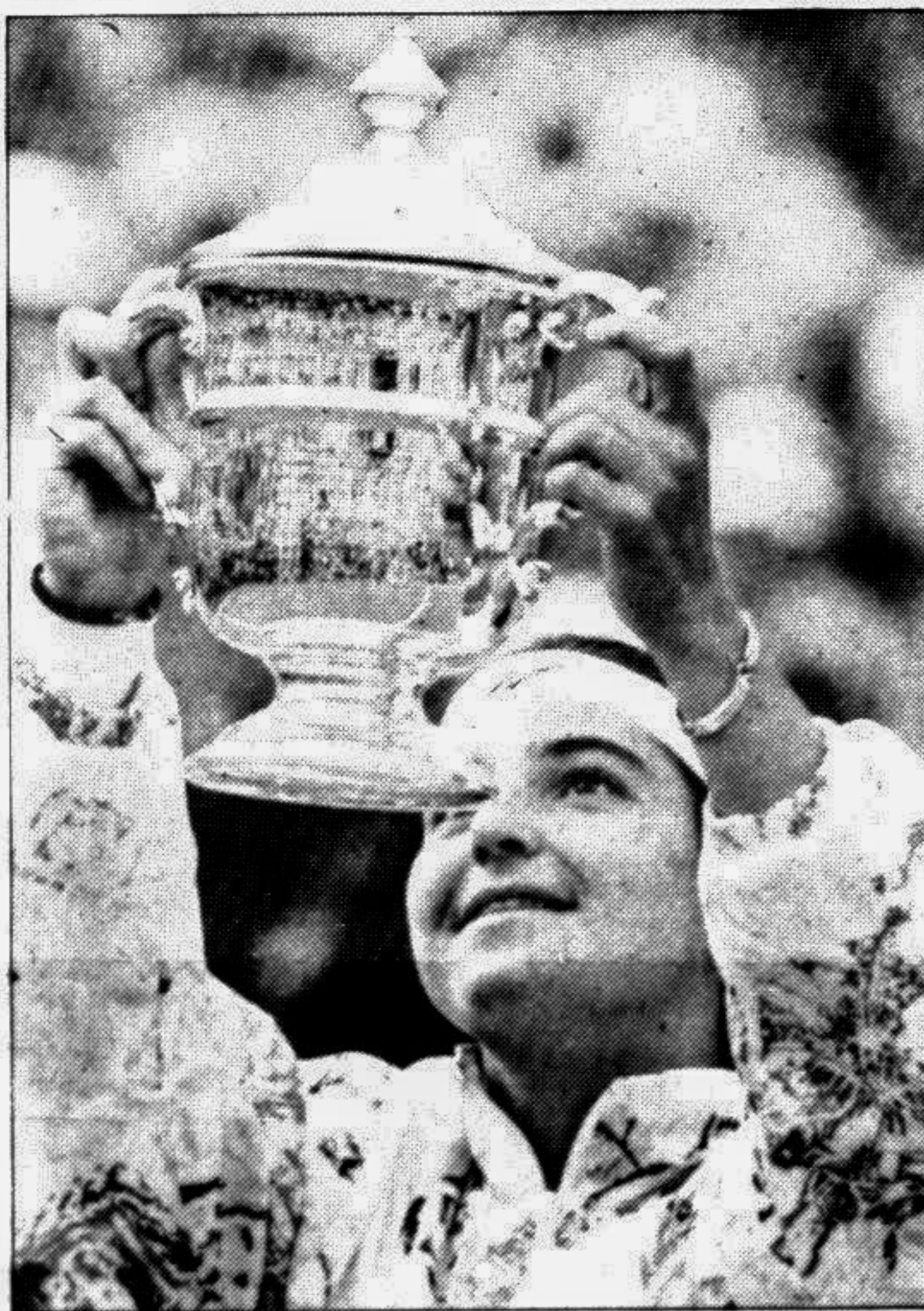
This time, Sanchez-Vicario's smash pulled her even at 15-all. She won the next point, then the next when she rifled a forehand down that line that Graf got a racket on, but couldn't control. When Graf double-faulted, Sanchez-Vicario had the final service break she needed and a 5-4 lead.

Graf, who aggravated her injured back in the eighth games of the middle set, didn't go away quietly. She fought off two match points and twice had break point.

But Saturday, it was Sanchez-Vicario who captured the trophy and the bigger check. This time, it was Graf who sailed a backhand long on the third match point.

"I think it was a close match, which is why the people got excited and into it," Graf said. "It wasn't an exceptional level, a great match."

It was only the fifth loss this year for Graf, but three of them came in Grand Slam tournaments. It was the sixth time the two have met this year and the third time Sanchez-Vicario has won.



Second-seed Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain holds up the US Open women's singles trophy after defeating defending champion Steffi Graf of Germany 1-6, 7-6, 6-4 in the final in New York on Sept 10. It is the first time a Spaniard has won the Open. — AFP photo

buried a forehand in the bottom of the net for yet another unforced error.

The tempo picked up in the final set. There were breaks of

three wins have been in a straight sets while Sanchez-Vicario has won the third times they have played three sets.

Signs of trouble for ACOG

ATLANTA, Sept 11: A proposed city ordinance allowing sponsors of the 1996 Olympic Games to erect billboards as tall as 10-storey buildings has run into an obstacle bigger than the signs themselves: The US constitution, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported Saturday, says Reuter.

A zoning specialist from the city attorney's office warned lawmakers this week that a plan backed by the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) could attract lawsuits from advertisers who have not paid a 40 million dollars sponsorship fee for the world athletic fete, the paper said.

ACOG hopes to reserve as many as 50 of the huge signs for sponsors such as the Coca Cola, Swatch and the Home Depot Inc. The billboards would be erected on public property near Olympic venues and remain standing for two years, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported.

But the contents of a letter from associate city attorney Robert Zoekler, published Saturday by the newspaper, warns that the proposal could constitute an unfair trade restraint by not giving equal access to Olympic non-sponsors. Experts also are concerned about an ordinance clause that would surrender city council authority to a two-person review committee responsible for the signs.

"This is so full of first amendment issues that nothing else matters," Emory University Law School dean Howard Hunter told the newspaper.

"A government should not be in the business of saying that the Ford Motor Co. can put up a sign but General Motors Corp can't. They are running the Olympic Committee into a quasi governmental agency," he told the paper.

Benn retains WBC title

BIRMINGHAM, England, Sept 11: British fighter Nigel Benn retained his WBC super middleweight title Saturday over Paraguayan Juan Carlos Gimenez, reports AP.

The 30-year-old champion earned a unanimous points decision from the three judges by margins of 118-112, 117-112 and 119-115, for the sixth defence of the title he won in Oct. 1992.

Benn immediately got on top of the 33-year-old challenger, reaching his head with accurate left leads in the first round, and he followed up with a sharp left hook which found its target.

When Gimenez tried to respond he came in swinging wildly and missing badly.

The challenger came with the reputation of a survivor rather than a threat at this level and Benn found it difficult to find a punch to put him down.

Benn, going into the fight with 32 knockouts in 38 wins, two losses and a draw, out-fought Gimenez with some excellent combinations.

He appeared much fitter than Gimenez who looked to be carrying some extra weight, even though he weighed in at 167 1/2 pounds (75.75 kilograms), compared to Benn's 167 1/4 pounds (75.7 kilograms).

Benn always had matters under control, although he was never able to fully impose himself on a man who had never been stopped in 52 previous contests, with 43 wins, six losses and three draws.

The fight was marred by violence in the crowd which threatened to have the bout called off.

Rojas floors Payakarun

BANGKOK, Thailand, Sept 11: Eloy Rojas of Venezuela knocked out Samart Payakarun of Thailand in the eighth round Sunday and retained his World Boxing Association featherweight crown, reports AP.

Rojas pummeled Samart repeatedly in rounds 7 and 8, and the fight ended when the Thai crumpled to the canvas after taking at least 10 uppercuts to the head in quick succession. The ring doctor immediately moved to attend to what appeared to be injuries to his nose.

The scheduled 12-round bout in the southern province of Trang was a comeback attempt for Samart, who had interrupted his ring career to become a singer.

Samart, pressed to the ropes again and again by the champ, was often able to duck away to safety. In the third and fourth rounds, he went toe to toe with Rojas, but was knocked down once, clearly throwing him off his stride.

The Thai tried to take the offensive, and dominated round 6. But Rojas skillfully kept the pressure on, knocking Samart down once again about 30 seconds into the eighth round before finally finishing him before a minute was up.



Russian Irina Privalova (C) leaves the field trailing as she wins the 100m in 11.32 seconds on the second day of the World Cup meet at Crystal Palace in London on Sept 10. In the background are Germany's Melanie Paschke (L) and Britain's Paula Thomas. — AFP photo

Twin triumphs for S Africa

LONDON, Sept 11: Okkert Brits and Elana Meyer won the pole vault and 10,000 metres at the World Cup on Saturday to become the first South Africans to capture major titles since their country was readmitted to international athletics, reports Reuter.

Meyer, 27, the Olympic and Commonwealth silver medalist, lapped the back marker as she sped to victory in 30 minutes 52.51 seconds, the fastest 10,000 time in the world this year which bettered her own African and personal record by almost 19 seconds.

Brits, 21, gained some consolation from missing out on an almost certain gold at last month's Commonwealth Games when he failed to record a height in Victoria, Canada.

This time he made no mistake, winning the competition with an African, World Cup and personal record of 5.90 metres and only narrowly failing to become the third man in history after Sergei Bubka of Ukraine and Rodion Gataullin of Russia to clear 6.00 or better when he brushed the bar three times at 6.05.

Brits' victory helped the African team maintain their overall lead in the men's competition with one-day remaining.

Africa, who won the men's title for the first time in Havana two years ago, have 86 points — 16.3 ahead of the Americans.

Britain, whose only victory in front of their own fans came in the men's 4x100m relay, were third with 66 points, ahead of Europe (66) on a tie-break system.

The United States were fifth on 63, followed by Asia (58), Germany (54.5) and Oceania (36).

Europe led the women's standings with 79 points followed by the Americas (73) and Germany (56).

The United States team, comprising nine of its top-ranked runners, is last with 32 points, a fact that has not gone unnoticed by officials of the International Amateur Athletic federation who have unofficially expressed concern that the world's most powerful athletics nation has failed to take this competition seriously.

Meyer was one athlete taking the competition very seriously and was delighted with her personal achievement of running under 31 minutes for the first time.

"I am happy to break 31 minutes and now I am looking forward to breaking 30," she said.

She was unaware that she was first South African to win a major title since the country was re-admitted to world athletics but said: "South Africa is a sportsman's country and it

will always be special for anybody to bring back a title or a championship."

The irony of Meyer and Brits' victories was that they were wearing the colours of their own country.

There was no better illustration of how times have changed in Africa than the fact that they shared victories for the same African team as Maria Mutola of Mozambique, Moses Kiptanui of Kenya and Nourredine Morceli of Algeria whose countries were once staunch opponents of the old apartheid regime.

Brits had to overcome a break in the competition because of a heavy storm that drenched the stadium for the second successive day.

He also withstood intense pressure from Frenchman Jean Gallione, bronze medalist in the recent European Championships.

"I was surprised I vaulted so high because the conditions were so bad. I now have my sights set on the gold or silver in Atlanta in 1996, said Brits.

Gallione finished second with a clearance of 5.75 metres. Morceli followed up last week's win in the Grand Prix final in Paris with another seemingly effortless victory in the 1500 in 3:34.70.

Morceli, whose appearance helped this end-of-season event maintain credibility, dismissed suggestions he had been paid to run here.

Mutola defied the wet weather to win her 30th consecutive 800 metres in 1:58.27.

Kiptanui, the world champion and world record holder in the 3,000 steeplechase, also had no trouble splashing through the puddles to take maximum points for Africa in 8:28.38.

Berger crashes during practice

MONZA, Italy, Sept 11: Gerhard Berger, the Austrian driver of the Ferrari team, crashed during Sunday's warmup for the Italian F-1 Grand Prix and was taken by ambulances to hospital for medical examinations, reports AP.

Berger suffered a neck lash when his car spun off the track at the Variante Della Roggia and crashed with the rear end into a barrier of tires.

Ferrari spokesman Giancarlo Baccini said Berger appeared to be unhurt and was likely to start in the race if doctors give their OK.

Baccini said the Ferrari driver was taken to the San Gerardo hospital of Monza "as a precautionary measure, to undergo X-ray examinations."

The driver was conscious as he was taken from the cockpit. He had a neck brace put on and was then driven away in an ambulance.

Baccini said Berger was going too fast at the Variante, braked late and the rear wheels blocked.

The Ferrari spokesman added that Berger spoke to team engineers about the setup of his race car at the track medical center before being taken to hospital.

The 35-year-old Austrian earned a front-row start in Sunday's race by clocking the second fastest qualifying time, behind his French teammate Jean Alesi.

Berger, winner of the German GP on July 31, spun off after 17 minutes of the warmup intended to test setting of cars for the race hours before the start of the Italian Grand Prix scheduled at 1300 GMT.

Stich next on Agassi's list

NEW YORK, Sept 11: Andre Agassi kept up his remarkable cruise through seeded players at the US Open on Saturday, reaching the championship with a methodical 6-3, 4-6, 6-2, 6-3 victory over No. 9 Todd Martin, reports AP.

Agassi, warming to his role of underdog and crowd favorite, will face No. 4 Michael Stich, who advanced with an efficient 7-5, 6-3, 7-6 (7-4)

seeded players in one year. Besides Martin, the victims have been No. 12 Wayne Ferreira, No. 6 Michael Chang and No. 13 Thomas Muster.

The victory over Chang, a five-set war of wills, convinced Agassi he could win this tournament, and now he is just one match away from that goal. If he wins, he would become just the third unseeded player to win the US Nationals and the third to win it one year after being eliminated in the first round.

"It's not a question of proving anything," he said. "Expectations have nothing to do with it. I want this because I want this. I'll do everything in my power to win it."

Agassi's tennis reputation had fallen since he won Wimbledon just two years ago. Armed with a new coach in Brad Gilbert and a new resolve he quickly became the darling of the Open.

"This is the greatest feeling in the world to me," he said. "I mean since Wimbledon I haven't been this excited about just stepping out on the court."

Against Martin, he played smart, smooth tennis, never allowing himself to be ruffled by his opponents' power game.

Martin's big serve produced 13 aces to just five for Agassi, but he also committed 60 unforced errors to Agassi's 16.

Twice, in the first and third sets, Agassi broke Martin to win the sets.

The match was a study in contrasts. Martin in traditional tennis whites, Agassi in purple and black with black shoes and cap and the pony tail poking from the back.

has drifted since he won Wimbledon in 1991. He has struggled in Grand Slam events ever since, never getting past the quarterfinals and more often eliminated earlier than that.

Stich arrived here candidly predicting disaster because he had experienced so much of it lately, including shocking first-round eliminations at the Open last year and at both Australia and Wimbledon this year.

After each match he won, he said he expected to lose



straight-sets upset of Karel Novacek.

Stich and Agassi try for their first US titles on Sunday.

"I'm very happy to be in the final," Stich said. "It is much more than I thought of coming into this tournament."

Like Agassi Stich's career



ANDRE AGASSI

the next. He hasn't lost any yet, though, and made quick work of Novacek, ranked No. 56 in the world, finishing in 1 hour, 49 minutes.

Stich said he does not dwell on past failures anymore. "I am old enough to put those things behind me," he said. "It's not like I'm thinking about it for two months and saying, 'Oh, you played so bad.' I lost against somebody who played better on the day and I learned to accept those things. It was very disappointing, but it was not the end of the world."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

1 Booty	of "The Crying Game"	56 Tackles'	11 Prepare
5 Weep loudly	39 Campus area	DOWN	20 Beach building
9 Bowe maneuver	42 "A Chorus Line"	1 Flushing field	22 Houston athlete
12 Aesopian also-ran	44 Mop number	2 Nearing the	24 Follower of
13 Medley chapter	48 Auntie's hubby	3 Jason's ship	25 Obedience-school command
15 Therefore	49 Pavlova portrayal	4 Chopin's companion	26 Fuss
16 Reaction of horror	50 Record	5 He played Rick Blaine	27 A mere handful
17 Cartoonist	51 Citric quaff	6 Astronaut Shepard	29 1773 jetsam
18 Cupid's speciality	52 One side of the Urals	7 Solomon's strength	31 "Cakes and —"
19 Addition-ally	53 Pinocchio's problems	8 Prune	35 Start to nod off
20 Bulk	54 Tree maker	9 "Star Wars" knight	36 Spheres of action
21 Needlefish	55 Some tooth-pastes	10 Neighbor of N.M.	39 Boggy area
23 "Son — gun!"			40 Loosen
25 Least risky			41 Scored a 100
28 Om			43 Apprehend
32 That is (to say), in Latin			45 Farmer's cart
33 Unimprovable			46 Mimicked
34 In the way of			47 She was just wild about Harry
36 Known only to insiders			49 Show-biz union
37 Neither's mate			
38 Stephen			

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CRYPTOQUIP

Q T N T G S X Z K R Z

S R B P U H Q G I T K S R Z N H E

H G K R Z U N H P Z N H I E

Q W X H W Z

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: FAMOUS OPERA STAR IS PURCHASING THE MUSIC STORE FOR A SONG.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: U equals P

The Cryptoquip 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.