



Crossword — By Thomas Joseph

Bridge — By Steven Becker

Word Sleuth

ACROSS

1 Flat-bottomed boat
5 Health resorts
9 Met performer
11 Response to an unexpected gift
12 Singer Cara
13 Studio sign
14 Went ahead
15 Pulling with effort
17 Dropping behind
19 Take to court
20 Head out
21 French article
22 "Keen!"
24 Do a checkout job
26 Pacific island nation
29 Swindle
30 Gaiter
32 Timber business
34 Binary digit
35 Love, to Luigi

DOWN

36 Water lily's kin
38 Second showing
39 Worry
40 Kaffiyeh
41 Part to play
10 Experience anew
11 Verne's traveler
16 Left on the plate
18 Street group
21 Drawn out
23 Switch type
24 Child of the 1950s
25 Soft yarn
27 Florentine painter
28 Like the Super Bowl
29 Healer Barton
30 Mortgage, e.g.
31 "Beau —"
33 Chow
37 Crew tool

Yesterday's answer

FAILED	TOSS
IMLATE	OAHU
RALPH	LAUREN
SETUP	
TIER	DEAF
POND	PIERRE
ART	HAT
DUE	
CARDIN	BOIL
HORN	TART
IDEAL	
CALVIN	KLEIN
OWIE	DEALTO
PEEL	SIDLED

South dealer, East-West vulnerable.

NORTH		EAST	
♦ Q 10 6	♠ 9 5 4 3	♦ Q 9 5 2	♠ A K Q 6
♥ K 4	♥ 2	♥ 2	♥ 2
♦ 10 8 6 3	♦ 10 9	♦ 10 9	♦ 10 9
SOUTH		WEST	
♦ A K J	♥ A J 10 8 6 3	♦ A K J 7 4	♥ 8 7 2
♥ A	♠ 8 7 3	♠ 10 9	♠ 10 9

The bidding: South 1♥, West Pass, North 1NT, East Pass. Opening lead — ten of clubs. Good defense is mostly a matter of plain common sense. As a case in point, take this deal where South was in three hearts and West led the club ten, which held the trick after dummy and East followed low. West then continued with the nine, won by East with the queen. This was followed by the ace of clubs, on which West discarded the deuce of spades, and then the king of clubs, ruffed by declarer with the jack. West overruffed with the queen, but South had no trouble scoring the rest of the tricks and so made exactly three hearts. It might seem that the outcome was entirely normal, but the fact is that West could and should have defeated the contract. All he had to do was to discard another spade when South ruffed the fourth club with the jack. Had West done that, declarer could not have stopped him from eventually scoring two trump tricks to put the contract down one. While it might seem normal for West to overruff the jack with the queen, the simple fact is that refusing to overruff assures West of scoring two trump tricks rather than one with his Q-9-7-5, regardless of South's trump holding or how he proceeds. The hand illustrates once again that bridge cannot be played mechanically, and that a moment's reflection is likely to pay greater dividends than a rapid play.

Tomorrow: Countdown to 13 tricks. ©2026 King Features Syndicate Inc.

DAILY CRYPTOQUOTES — HERE'S HOW TO WORK IT:

AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

7-22 CRYPTOQUOTE

L' ZD B FCD BX MEF GD HK

BLMNFJDM ... VRN LK L EFZD

PEFITDC DZDI HID YLKD KHG

NED VDNNDG, L EFZDI'N YLZDC

LI ZFLI. — BREFBBFC FYL

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: TRAVELING IN THE COMPANY OF THOSE WE LOVE IS HOME IN MOTION. — LEIGH HUNT

Horoscope

— By Georgia Nichols

Happy Birthday for Wednesday, July 22, 2026:

You are sensitive and caring. You're innovative, resourceful and energetic. Enjoy socializing this year. Your desire for life is at a pinnacle. Nurture the happiness and beauty that you have within yourself. Let your guard down and loosen up a bit! Have fun but remember your goals.

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

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

★★★★ Plan on more socializing and participating in sports events in the next several weeks. Romance, the creative arts and fun activities with children will flourish. In fact, the next four weeks are a great time for a vacation! Make plans to enjoy yourself. Tonight: Things are intense.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

★★★★ Today it's best to go along to get along when dealing with spouses, partners and close friends. Meanwhile, in the next four weeks,

your involvement with home, family and a parent will increase. Look for ways to make your home more comfortable. Enjoy relaxing in familiar surroundings. Tonight: Be cooperative.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

★★★★ The pace of your days will accelerate in the next four weeks. Suddenly you have places to go, things to do and people to see. Enjoy interacting with siblings, neighbors and relatives. Everyone wants to see your face! Tonight: Work hard.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)

★★★★ Tomorrow Mercury stops being retrograde in your sign, which is a great relief! Meanwhile, you will find that your focus on money, earnings and cash flow will increase in the next four weeks. Look for ways to boost your income, because this is your year to get richer! Tonight: Enjoy yourself.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

★★★★ Today the Sun enters your sign to stay for the next four weeks. (Happens once a year.) This is favorable for you! It will energize you and give you a chance to recharge your batteries for the rest of year. Expect good fortune, especially with lucky Jupiter in your sign! Tonight: Relax

at home.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

★★★★ Your personal year is coming to an end, which is why the next four weeks will be a quiet time for you. It's an excellent window for you to define future goals. Goals give you a clearer focus on what is important. Goals also give you a sense of purpose. Tonight: Clarify things.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)

★★★★ Your popularity will increase in the next four weeks. Get out and enjoy schmoozing! You'll welcome this because you are the most social sign of the zodiac. You might join groups as well as see friends. This is also an excellent time to define future goals. Tonight: Check your money.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)

★★★★ You'll look great to authority figures in the next four weeks because the Sun is at the top of your chart. This happens once a year and symbolizes that you're in a flattering spotlight. You impress everyone. This is the time to go after what you want! Tonight: You're strong.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

★★★★ Grab every opportunity to

travel and expand your world in the next four weeks. If you can't travel, then be a tourist in your own city. You can also expand your world through further education, books, film and talking to people from other backgrounds. Tonight: Enjoy solitude.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

★★★★ You can get richer or benefit in some way through the wealth and resources of someone else (perhaps a partner), not only this year, but very strongly in the next four weeks. Bear this in mind and keep your pockets open! Tonight: Be friendly.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

★★★★ For the next four weeks, you will need more sleep than usual. Accept this. Don't fight it. Take naps or get more rest. You also might focus on partners, spouses and close friendships more than usual. It's just what's happening. Tonight: You're noticed.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

★★★★ Good news! You'll be eager to work hard in the next four weeks simply because you're motivated. This energy and drive will come out of the blue. Use it to your advantage so you can improve your job or get a better job. Tonight: Enjoy privacy.

JUMBLE

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

LFNOE

NLBDA

DOSYDH

YOCBWO

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Yesterday's Jumbles: FLOOD BRAND CLOSET ROOKIE Answer: So many fans wanted signed copies of her new novel that the author was — BOOKED SOLID

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

How do you do it? Amazing! Voila! Here I go again!

AS THE LIMBO CHAMPION WENT UNDER THE FINAL BAR, HE SAID ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)