Sally Forth • Greg Howard

Zits • Jim Borgman & Jerry Scott

Blondie • Chic Young

Hagar the Horrible • Chris Browne

Beetle Bailey • Mort Walker

Mother Goose and Grimm • Mike Peters

Tod the Dinosaur • Patrick Roberts

Baby Blues • Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

Cryptoquip

QTLDTNIGQ M PBTNRTGNI

LPOT UTYNPXPCMLDL

RGBMUC DRTOLTXBTL G

FPUFYLLMPU IMLFYLLMPU.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHERE MIGHT PEOPLE HANG OUT WHEN THEY'RE SPREADING MALICIOUS GOSSIP? DOWN AT CATTY CORNER.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: L equals S

Conceptis Sudoku
By Dave Green

Difficulty Level ★ ★ ★   12/20

This is a logic-based number placement puzzle. The goal is to enter a number, 1-9, in each cell in which each row, column and 3x3 region must contain only one instance of each numeral. The solution to today's Sudoku puzzle is right.

Difficulty Level ★ ★ ★   12/20

Bridge

West dealer.
East-West vulnerable.

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

The bidding:

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1 ♦	6 ♥

Opening lead — jack of diamonds.

Requiem for a Small Slam

You sometimes have to close your eyes and bid a slam with no guarantee of making it, because there's no good way of finding out what you need to know. In most of these cases, the slam is bid simply because you feel you're a favorite to succeed. Consider this deal where South had to decide what to do after East opened one diamond. He felt certain he'd lose a diamond trick, so the question was whether he'd also lose a club trick.

South reasoned that if his partner held the jack of clubs, the slam would be laydown, and also that if the North hand contained any four or more clubs, the odds would strongly favor not losing a club trick. Furthermore, if North had a singleton or doubleton club, the seven of clubs could probably be ruffed in dummy. Accordingly, South leaped directly to six hearts. He naturally was disappointed to find partner with the one holding -- three small clubs -- that made the slam a shaky proposition. The outcome seemed to depend entirely on a 3-3 club division, a 36 percent chance that was not about to materialize, but he found a way to make the slam anyway.

After East won the first diamond trick, he played the ace of spades, ruffed by South. Declarer then cashed the ace of trumps before playing the A-K-Q of clubs. When East showed out but was unable to ruff, it was then a simple matter to trump the club seven with dummy's remaining heart and so bring home the slam.

It might seem that South took a very big chance when he failed to draw the only missing trump before playing his three top clubs, but his approach was well-reasoned. He was sure to succeed if the missing clubs were divided 3-3, but he would also get home safely if the clubs broke 4-2 or worse and the defender with the long clubs had the missing trump. If one of the high clubs did get ruffed, the contract was doomed regardless of how South played.

Family Circus • Bil Keane

Crossword

ACROSS
1 Nerd
5 English channel?
8 Cat call?
12 Needle case
13 Privy
14 Blue hue
15 "— have to do"
16 Raggedy doll
17 Crazy
18 Deodorant type
20 Tennille or Morrison
22 Saucy one
26 Deep sleep
29 Sarge, e.g.
30 Slapstick missile
31 Theatrical presentation
32 All ready
33 Swiss city
34 Atmosphere
35 Away from SSW
36 Presaged
37 Shenanigans
40 Ticklish Muppet
41 Mark over a long vowel
45 Simple
47 Use a Taser
49 Columbus' home
50 Cellulite, e.g.
51 NYC hrs.
52 Incline
53 Wee
54 Bashful
55 Seize

DOWN
1 "Dead Poets Society" director
2 "Beetle Bailey" dog
3 Zero
4 Party pooper
5 Bugs Bunny's voice
6 Good, in Grenoble
7 Meet
8 Food from heaven
9 Rigged
10 Chic no longer
11 Existed
19 Scull tool
21 Lennon's lady
23 Prepare to pray
24 Green land
25 Fax
26 Quarrel
27 Hodgepodge
28 Cheese often grated
32 Naps
33 Refuse to buy
35 Artesian appellation
36 Support system?
38 Spacecraft observation maneuver
39 Vacant
42 Comic Caroline
43 Porcine comment
44 Protuberance
45 Small salamander
46 "The Greatest"
48 Tray contents

Solution time: 25 mins.

Yesterday's answer 12-20