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"Sometimes you need to conceal a fact with words".
Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527)

GRIDATORIAL

We trust that all our members and their loved ones are safe from the fires and floods that are ravaging this wonderful, but testing, country. Our thoughts are with you.

The 2025 winner of the Slots 1 to 7 competition is Andrew Miles with a perfect 84. The 2025 ACC Quiz Solver of the Year was a three-way dead-heat, all with a perfect score of 320. They are Ulla Axelsen, Kath Harper and Andrew Patterson. Congratulations to all these clever people: more detail is available on page 13.

A goodly batch for your puzzling enjoyment this month. First off is a slot 1 from the pen of Leprechaun which we hope will prove rather less taxing than last month's offering in the location. Valkyrie presents her typically polished clues to a set of solutions with a twist. A broad hint to which will be staring you in the face. P-brane is sure to entertain with another crop of home-grown phrases, which should be familiar, whichever part of the country you live in. Crowsman has compiled a challenging, but solvable AJ, as is his trademark. The Mythtics return with one of their occasional themed puzzles, appropriately entitled, which we hope you will enjoy.

The slot 6 puzzle from T-boy is perhaps rather more testing than we have come to expect but will appeal to a wide range of solvers. Our many fans of the 15-letter solutions will be well-satisfied by the Crowsman's Corner puzzle this month and the whole is rounded off by one of Michael Vnuk's carefully-crafted quizzes, which this month will not require a great deal of typing for your response.

Many thanks to Larry Kennedy, whose well-considered words appear in the adjudication opposite and to all others, especially our compilers of puzzles, quizzes and word squares, who have contributed and continue to contribute to our monthly enjoyment.

Ian

FROM THE ADJUDICATOR

Our compilers have provided an excellent introduction to the new year with a brilliant display of creative imagination. Generally the puzzles have been much appreciated despite the head scratching (or perhaps because of it!).

Slot 1: KA kicked off the year with a very challenging puzzle which some solvers found to be surprisingly difficult for a Slot 1 puzzle. This is indicated by the lowest success rate (65.3%) of all 5 slots. The most common errors were OPACULAR for ORACULAR (3 occurrences), BLEW for BLOW (2 occurrences), TATY for TATT (2 occurrences) and HACK for HUCK (3 occurrences). Many 1-off errors occurred throughout the puzzle. SIGHTPROOF is accepted for LIGHTPROOF and EMEW is accepted for EMEU.

Slot 2: A seasonal offering by Ninian cleverly included the names of Snow White's 7 dwarves: (SLEEPY, DOPEY, SNEEZY, HAPPY, BASHFUL, DOC and GRUMPY). Clearly not all solvers spotted them resulting in the main errors which were HAPLY for HAPPY (8 occurrences) and DIPPY for DOPEY (5 occurrences).

Slot 3: Nanakat presented a well-constructed and enjoyable puzzle with dots lost as follows: SIMON for BIGOT (2 occurrences) and POINTOUR for POINTOUT (2 occurrences). Various 1-off errors also occurred.

Slot 4: Valkyrie provided the excellent AJ (always a favourite). The Nina LAUGHS was especially appreciated – a reminder, if needed, that crossword solving is meant to be fun! The main errors were: XEROTIC for XEROSIS (6 occurrences), and OBSOLESCING for OBSOLESCE (2 occurrences). Also SEVERED caused a few problems with 3 offerings of SECEDED and 2 of SEVERER.

Slot 5: Chris Thomas presented a challenging puzzle containing the seasonal Nina: "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year" very cleverly spelt by the first letters of the solutions.

continued on page 2

LEADING FIGURES

Puzzle No.	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Entries received	72	81	82	78	74	387
Correct Entries	47	66	72	64	62	311
Success rate(%)	65.3	81.5	87.8	82.1	83.8	80.4
Prizewinners	Barbara Morris	Frank Martin	Jenny Wenham	Ian McKenzie	Julie Leigh	from 86 members

Prizewinner: January Slots 1-5 correct: Sam Howat. Congratulations!

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January Slot 1

P	S	D	C	G	Z	J	
S	A	R	N	I	E	O	R
L	O	A	D	L	L	R	
B	L	O	W	D	R	A	M
I	M	A	C	I	O		
C	A	P	O	E	X	C	I
T	B	N	L	U	O		
C	E	D	I	T	W	A	I
L	R	I	I	H	R		
A	B	L	E	S	E	A	M
O	I			G	A	R	A
L	I	G	H	T	P	R	O
H	E	N	P	E	C	K	S
R	E	E	E	K	D	R	

January Slot 2

S	L	E	E	P	Y	B	L	E	E	E	Y	E	D
A	S	R				U	N	A	O				
D	O	P	E	Y		E	S	O	T	E	R	I	C
I	L	E	B	T	E	N	T						
S	T	A	I	R	W	A	Y	P	R	E	S	T	O
T	N					S	A	T	R				
C	A	R	B	O	H	Y	D	R	A	T	E	S	
D	R	F	D	I	N								
R	E	V	O	L	U	T	I	O	N	A	R	Y	
S			A	L	C			A	G				
A	P	H	I	D	S	S	T	R	A	P	P	E	R
T	A	S	E	S	S	T	U						
R	E	P	L	I	C	A	S	H	A	U	L	M	
A	P	D	S			E	R	P					
P	A	Y	M	E	N	T	S	S	N	E	E	Z	Y

January Slot 3

P	I			D	D	P	G						
R	O	A	C	H	N	E	C	E	S	S	A	R	Y
L	E	U	P	S	Y	E							
W	I	T	H	I	N	E	X	P	E	C	T	E	D
T	O	I	N	I	H	N							
S	I	T	U	A	T	E	D	S	N	O	W		
C	S			S	E	M							
M	A	J	E	S	T	Y	A	D	A	P	T	E	D
L	O	S	O	N									
G	O	A	L	P	E	R	S	I	S	T	S		
B	B	E	E	I	N	I							
V	I	C	T	O	R	I	A	S	I	T	C	O	M
G	U	A	K	K	O	N							
N	O	I	S	E	T	T	E	S	S	U	P	E	R
T	E	E	R										

January Slot 4

L	A	U		G	H	S	
W	I	N	N	I	N	G	C
M	I	I	O	M	M	V	
K	I	S	M	E	T	B	E
T	A	E	S	S	G	R	
Z	E	S	T	J	O	U	R
D	E	V	L	O	E	D	
E	S	C	A	P	E	R	O
P	D	O	M	I	N	A	N
P	N	T	E	F	O	M	
Q	U	E	S	T	I	O	N
L	A	O	T	E	R	D	
Y	A	W	N	I	N	G	X
R	E	S		D	W	C	

January Slot 5

A	N	D	A	H	A	P	
M	I	S	O	E	M	B	R
P	R	N	F	A	A	A	U
R	U	G	G	E	D	E	S
A	U	S	R	T	S	T	E
Y	A	N	Q	U	I	C	O
S	H	Y	P	H	E	N	R
W	E	E	Y				
I	D	A	R	E	S	A	Y
L	R	A	R	R	G	N	A
T	I	L	E	R	M	O	N
J	I	T	I	O	A	I	S
A	M	E	T	H	Y	S	T
S	S	Y	S	T	S	A	

January Slot 6

B	A	S	E	C	A	M	P	O	S	I	R	I	S
I	A	L	A					A	E	C			
L	I	N	G	E	R	I	E	S	C	H	E	M	A
L	I	N	G	A	L	D	R	E	V	F			
E	L	F	I	N	L	O	O	S	E	L	E	A	F
T	R	O	U	B	O								
H	O	L	D	I	T	X	Y	L	I	T	O	L	
C	I	E				E	A	D					
A	D	D	I	C	T	S	B	O	U	C	H	E	
C	O	K	O										
H	O	T	E	L	D	I	E	U	A	N	T	S	Y
A	I	L	M	D	M	I	P						
L	A	T	H	E	R	C	O	P	U	L	A	T	E
O	H	T											
T	E	E	T	E	R	C	R	E	E	P	S	U	P

MEMBERS' RESULTS FOR JANUARY 2026 Slots 1 to 7

MEMBER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	MEMBER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	MEMBER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Abbott P.	Garner P.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Morris B.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Allen W.	Goodman S.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Parsons D.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Anderson C.	Grainger D.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Patterson A.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Audrins K.	Graves C.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Peach S.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Axelsen U.	Hagan R.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Pinder S.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Barbour J.	Harper K.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Randall J.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Barnes J.	Hearn R.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Rosendorff D.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Batum C.	Hocking A.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Roulston S.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Bennett D.	Horadam K.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Ryan W.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Bettles K.	Howat S.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Shield A.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Blake M.	Jarman L.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Siegmán B.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Carroll L.	Jarman R.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Simons A.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Cockburn M.	Jones G.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Simpson F.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Colgan L.	Kennedy L.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Skinner R.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Coote P.	Kennedy M.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Smith J.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Cornish W.	Lankshear J.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Storti A.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Cromer H.	Leigh J.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Symons B.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Crowe J.	Madden J.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Taylor R.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Dasgupta K.	Martin A.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Taylor S.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Davis K.	Martin F.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Thomas C.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Dobele T.	McClelland C.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Thompson I.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Dodd M.	McKenzie I.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Thomson R.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Ducker R.	McKenzie R.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Wenham J.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Dyer A.	McLeay T.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Wilcox C.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Fitzgerald M.	Meek D.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Williams K.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Flinkenberg C.	Miles A.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Wimbush R.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Forward K.	Millard A.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Wood J.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Francis K.	Milton R.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	Woolston M.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Gamble K.	Moline R.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	

From the Adjudicator: continued from page 1

There were 2 occurrences of GIRO for MISO and 2 occurrences of YANKIE for YANQUI plus various 1-off errors.

COTM: Nominations were received across all slots. Leading the field jointly are Slot 3 (MAJESTY) and Slot 6 (SACRE BLUE) each with 4 votes. Congratulations to NanaKat and Robespierre!

Overall, a very promising start to 2026 with undoubtedly more highly enjoyable mental gymnastics to follow.

Larry Kennedy

Slot 1

**Half & Half
by
Leprechaun**



Cryptic clues are shown in italics.

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27						28								
29										30				

Across

- 1 *A pecan mixture for starter* (6)
- 4 Skirmishes (8)
- 10 State agenda for royal payments (5,4)
- 11 *Leader of journey drops behind fringe* (5)
- 12 *No end to mystery of wise men* (4)
- 13 Ideology (10)
- 15 Surround with trees (7)
- 16 more than one (6)
- 19 *Examiner in street accident* (6)
- 21 Amicable (7)
- 23 Seismic event (10)
- 25 *Random spot check* (4)
- 27 Nocturnal location (2,3)
- 28 Go past (9)
- 29 Timidity (8)
- 30 East European soup (6)

Down

- 1 Vegetable (8)
- 2 Easy to follow? (9)
- 3 *European election broadcast* (4)
- 5 *Feline panic exit?* (7)
- 6 *Tucker packs , maybe* (10)
- 7 *Pause rent increase* (3,2)
- 8 *Scatters bouquets* (6)
- 9 *Sonny's wife embedded network address in code* (6)
- 14 *Relay node faulty - causes alert* (8,2)
- 17 Large bird (9)
- 18 *Message of French church encapsulating argument* (8)
- 20 *Noisy leaders of rioters aggravate uncontrolled chaos on university surrounds* (7)
- 21 Leg ornament (6)
- 22 *The Spanish compiler overcome by smell of gas* (6)
- 24 *Cartel buries returned cash* (5)
- 26 European capital (4)

SEND SOLUTIONS TO:

For online entry, submission and adjudication of all slots via ACCOLADE click on the ACCOLADE button on www.crosswordclub.org home page.
 Slots 1 to 5: Jean Barbour via ACCOLADE or post to PO Box 290, Wonthaggi Vic 3995
 Slot 6: Toby McLeay via ACCOLADE or post to PO Box 1099, Balhanna, SA 5242
 Slot 7: Len Colgan via ACCOLADE or post to 1 Ailsa Avenue, Warradale, SA 5046

BLANK GRIDS PAGE 16

Closing mail date is 27 February 2026. ACCOLADE and email entries close at 00.01

Slot 2

Cryptic by Valkyrie



	1		2		3		4				5		6	
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18	19													
20					21						22			
23										24				

Across

- 7 Walk with a swagger before end of match? Good Heavens! (6)
- 8 Measuring instrument confused them more (8)
- 10 SUV perhaps, model with power for old tradesman (10)
- 11 E-response? (4)
- 12 \$1 and £1 raw spicy dishes contain tips of essential natural chillies (4,10)
- 14 Bird poo turned up in weed (6)
- 15 A gentle land (6)
- 18 Treat unsightly tinea without a second thought (14)
- 20 Easy for Spenser to peel 19-down (4)
- 21 Reject wrong lace associated with pump footwear (6-4)
- 23 A father caught between two men creates trouble (8)
- 24 Dark times when prospects change \ direction (6)

Down

- 1 Join together with diplomat wanting drug turn over (6,2)
- 2 Short and sweet, hot not cold discomfort (4)
- 3 Quality tea crate is smashed, credit reduced (14)
- 4 Take more than one's share of tent, start of yobbish coarseness (7)
- 5 Appealing to individual embracing experience with church (10)
- 6 Some berate chief engineer (6)
- 9 Lustreless male conjurors get time for tricking terminal operators of numbers and letters (14)
- 13 Finds fault with agent about height limits (10)
- 16 Parts of barns somewhat too flashy, lacking nothing (8)
- 17 Obsessed, persecuted and initially imprisoned (7)
- 19 Lower nitrogen before anaesthetic (6)
- 22 Greek letter said to produce sound of relief (4)

General feedback for January

- Thank you for my Slot 6 prize last month. *Keith Bettels*
- What would I do without you over Christmas? Thank you and a happy and healthy 2026 to you all. *Robyn Wimbush*
- A lovely batch of summer puzzling. *Kath Harper*
- A happy new year to all *Anne Simons*
- I was delighted to win slots 1-5. I usually don't even get them all correct! Many thanks. *Corryn Anderson*

Slot 3

**Cryptic
by
P-brane**



1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8
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		23				24								
25														
26									27					
28										29				

Across

- 1 Does a runner on stumps (5)
- 4 Spooner's amateur gardener finds it's physically demanding work (4,5)
- 9 Often tiresome lying doggo in one piece (6)
- 10 Locate horribly lost mule (5,3)
- 12 Lost during extended journey (4,9)
- 14 Regretted sounding insolent (4)
- 15 Romeo? A criminal boss cocky? (10)
- 18 Roughly impale hero with emu-bush (10)
- 20 Reversing spaces prepared for Italian diners? (4)
- 23 Boomer and his mob dispense rough justice here (8,5)
- 26 Can be worn out, or be idle (8)
- 27 Minor weakness with freedom of information: to table without thanks (6)
- 28 Direct network to dangerous Sydney-sider's snare (6-3)
- 29 Solvent in a true blue intoxicating drink? (5)

Down

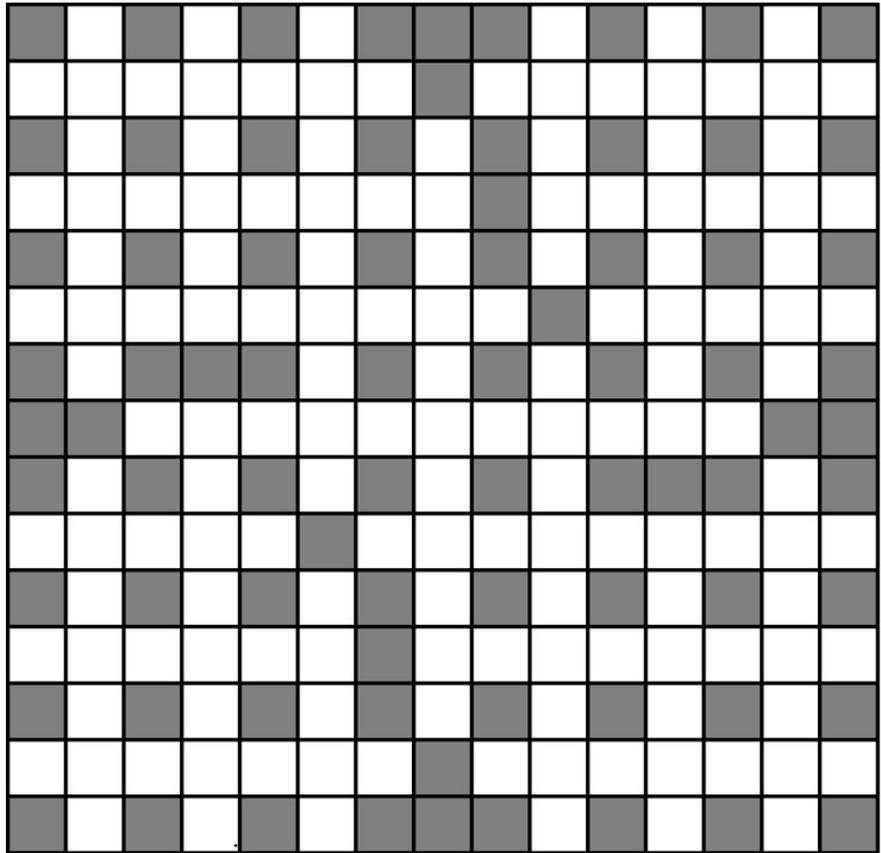
- 1 Green bread unfortunately found in fair weather watering hole (4,6)
- 2 Ardent in the past, the present and the future... perhaps (7)
- 3 Reputedly doctor's script for rug rat's movements finally coming to the fore (6)
- 5 Scrum basics essentially a dance (5)
- 6 More cowardly to call out debtor (8)
- 7 Tied up King (not Edward) (7)
- 8 Laws alternate Fat Cats ultimately dismiss (4)
- 11 Like the sky, indigo initially swamped by redness (6)
- 13 British accuracy about vibrancy of music (10)
- 16 Flat chat when volume finally adjusted to be played softly (6)
- 17 Disadvantage of being a losing team (8)
- 19 Large honker smashed with antler (7)
- 21 Tradie's first priority, timber (7)
- 22 Verbally confront a court about function (6)
- 24 Permit for unopened rendered fat (5)
- 25 Slave to the sound of a beach break (4)

Slot 4

AJ
by
Crowsman



Solutions begin with the given letter.
Place them in the grid jigsaw-wise,
where they fit.



- A** He danced a step for the audience (7)
- B** Curses, missing a means of transport (5)
- C** Class holds group recording (8)
- D** Geek turning both taps to soak thoroughly (6)
- E** Unproductive iron around bazaar (6)
- F** Supplies sift (4,3)
- G** Called up with stories, first of them most bad-tempered (9)
- H** Member of parliament interrupts female's glaring mistakes (7)
- I** It is found in one murdered retrospectively, JFK for instance (8)
- J** Hear nobleman fight for music player (7)
- K** System for recording musical instrument involved priest (9)
- L** Half Polynesian skirt, small, but they're hot! (5)
- M** Just after a month gets place on board (7)
- N** Territories involved in capture become lands of the Ottoman Empire (4,4)
- O** Years involved in elective surgery (9)
- P** Sketch beam inside entrance (9)
- Q** Duck, hearing Elmer Fudd's firework (7)
- R** It produced a large part in 'Exodus' (3,3)
- S** Stable included in cushy job (8)
- T** One old man trapped by brown snake (6)
- U** Single imprisoned out-and-out without reason (11)
- V** You gathered here in Paris, wild! (7)
- W** Blasts snakes (5)
- X** Rushed up and rushes down, cutting a number ascending with a dry abrasion (11)
- Y** Chinese money acquires pet in Mexican state (7)
- Z** Rising waterway restricted first of big oxen (5)

Slot 5

Cryptic by The Mythtics



The definition of six clues is indicated by an associated name: the wordplay of these clues leads to the solution to be entered.

	1		2		3		4		5		6			
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19											20	21		
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25											26			

Across

- 7 Recess welcomed by returning relieve class (6)
- 8 Most wretched habits, right at the beginning, start to torment (8)
- 10 Writer of ridicule posed with part of eye starting to turn (8)
- 11 A fallen angel, left out on honeysuckle (6)
- 12 Grey's hat is defaced (5)
- 13 Sent round headmaster for clock mechanism (9)
- 15 Cry of character from 9 for notice when tram is not stopping? (2,5)
- 17 One in Paris, having introductions to Notre Dame's ecclesiastical devotions, kept going! (7)
- 19 Anderson in conversation at back of boat (5,4)
- 20 Italian follows yellow and black circuit (5)
- 22 In the past, initially noone included clues lacking an angle (6)
- 23 Soldier to march back to protective walls (8)
- 25 Indication of failure to score after unrestrained exercise of modern mores (4,4)
- 26 Award by king on king (6)

Down

- 1 Hide with eccentric German Fleming (5,3,6)
- 2,21 Top bride price affected after disregarding model Lindsey (6,6)
- 3 Relationship in hospital facilities? Quite the reverse for mythical being (4)
- 4 Heath welcomes Oscar and Troy James (7)
- 5 Wells' squad surrounded by courage (9)
- 6 Spooner delves into Local Area Network author (8)
- 9 Clarke engineers nice, concise fit (7,7)
- 14 After removal of judge, scheming promoter takes on Telstra's lead minder (9)
- 16 Rover goes after street alien (8)
- 18 Turning faint, rescue group passes by (7)
- 21 See 2
- 24 Raw beginner contracted card sharp (4)

Slot 6

**Cryptic
by
T-boy**



1		2		3		4		5	6		7		8
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											19		20
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24								25					
26							27						

Across

- 1 Beverage contains poisons for PM (8)
- 5 A pinch of oriental cumin powder (6)
- 10 Strike vessel returning fish (7)
- 11 Every other girl left with head condition (7)
- 12 Corrupted US master coming back for tea (5)
- 13 Sidney along with Eli and Ned are jointly relegated (9)
- 14 Very high level call-girls back with old herpes treated (12)
- 18 Giving musical performance I burst into song after key cornet arrangement (12)
- 21 Encountered the states endlessly segmented (9)
- 23 Almost honest politician becomes president (5)
- 24 Implicate coal losing energy in combination with flammable liquid (7)
- 25 The very best mail trimmed back as shoulder armour (7)
- 26 I deserted desert leader with the Spanish money (6)
- 27 Unusually keen about pink paraffin oil (8)

Down

- 1 Lost without heroin in smoking receptacle (6)
- 2 Steer clear of operation (6)
- 3 Very short distance giving granny zero time (9)
- 4 Royalists act if disturbed sufficiently (14)
- 6 Garlic derivative - combine with head of lettuce (5)
- 7 Cleo has no ring solution without detergent! (8)
- 8 Very rich man called out expensive source of perfume ingredient (4,4)
- 9 See chaos, go in fruitless pursuit (4-5,5)
- 15 Exact observance of etiquette is exceptionally unpolitic (9)
- 16 Scuttles fraud found with corrupt reps (8)
- 17 Unpredictable officer transferring company into uranium (8)
- 19 A free BBC? (6)
- 20 Tart cut into optimal serve for each person (6)
- 22 Elk cow cries with ecstasy (5)

CROWSMAN'S CORNER

Slot 7

Cryptic



\$50 PRIZE

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8
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						13								14
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21							22							

Across

- 1 Try to hide mirror in shower? (5,4)
- 6 Fits pants (5)
- 9 Welsh briefly returning during straightforward test from CEO (8-7)
- 10 Glib talk involving bridge behind someone calling dog (8,7)
- 11 Each one consuming pastry (6)
- 12 Travel to interrupt explosive missile (7)
- 15 Lures back an ascetic (7)
- 16 Islamic welcome in place (6)
- 19 With reprimand backed internally, evict pair out from one's own clinic (7,8)
- 20 Christmas Island yurt I previously had rented out outside (9,6)
- 21 Without doubt having no end of pique? (5)
- 22 Loved walk around stable (9)

Down

- 1 Set off and move a bike forward outside base (8)
- 2 Hotel employee welcoming character, smart artist (8,7)
- 3 Incite Cary Grant to change banker (6,9)
- 4 Nameless wild-flower (6)

- 5 Hear again about soldiers' records office (8)
- 6 Plants from layer by beach holding smart knowledge (4-3-8)
- 7 Member of cabinet's rule getting little in support (7,8)
- 8 Only sun English see (6)
- 13 Cosmetic surgery truth keeps raising row (8)
- 14 Minister always involved in split (8)
- 17 Tailor passed suit (6)
- 18 Very good Australian, moving right up to third place (6)

The blank grid for this puzzle is on page 11



Quiz 2926-2 Voluptuous words by Michael Vnuk

I learnt a new word recently (at #23) which prompted this quiz. All answers share a similar property, and are arranged accordingly. Send your answers to Michael Vnuk michaelv@futureweb.com.au or post to 583 Greenhill Road, Burnside SA 5066. Closing mail date 27 February 2026.

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | Hawaiian feast (4) | 14 | Not typical (7) |
| 2 | Type of bells (7) | 15 | Clamorous and disorderly (10) |
| 3 | Salad vegetable (8) | 16 | Treatment with needles (11) |
| 4 | Deceitful (10) | 17 | Bunch of flowers (7) |
| 5 | Sweet alcoholic drink (7) | 18 | Independence (Swahili) (5) |
| 6 | Stupid person (variant spelling) (5) | 19 | Not typical (7) |
| 7 | Salad vegetable (7) | 20 | Tomorrow, etc (6) |
| 8 | Independence (Swahili) (5) | 21 | Symbol for ununium (3) |
| 9 | Academic conference (10) | 22 | Musical instrument (8) |
| 10 | African spiritual belief (4) | 23 | Internet slang to denote cuteness (3) |
| 11 | Musical instrument (7) | 24 | Sumptuous (9) |
| 12 | Branch of mathematics (8) | 25 | Type of grass (6) |
| 13 | Clamorous and disorderly (10) | 26 | Type of Asian citrus (4) |

Results of Quiz 1/2026, 5in5 by **Crowsman**. Entries: 23 Winner: **Warren Allen Congratulations!**

30: P Abbott, W Allen, U Axelsen, M Blake, J Crowe, K Forward, K Francis, P Garner, S Goodman, K Harper, J Leigh, A Millard, A Patterson, W Ryan, F Simpson, M Vnuk R Wimbush **29:** C McClelland, A Miles, S Pinder, R Taylor **28:** K Francis **27:** B Siegman.

Answers: 1 Ayatollahs, 2 Barcaroles, 3 Broken-down, 4 Cartouches, 5 Cauterises, 6 Deflowerer, 7 Endangered, 8 Fledgeling, 9 Gospellers, 10 Haversacks, 11 Implicitly, 12 Jargoneers, 13 Lipizzaner, 14 Mandingoes, 15 Mind-reader, 16 Musquashes, 17 Operations, 18 Overmodest, 19 Pestilence, 20 Preference, 21 Purchasers, 22 Restraints, 23 Rifle shots, 24 Scathingly, 25 Sportswear, 26 Trilateral, 27 Trustingly, 28 Unshackled, 29 Victresses, 30 Wallowings
Setter's Comments: Surprisingly, PARTI is a word in Chambers, and so TRI(PARTI)TE also satisfies both the criteria and the clue in #26. With a dominant West African tribe MAN(DINGO)ES appearing in several movies as well as two early Crowsman crosswords, I thought it was relatively well known, but clearly not. JARGONISTS was not accepted because 'jists' is merely a mis-spelling of 'gists', as explained in numerous web-sites and, consequently, is not in Chambers.

Solvers' Feedback:

- A mixture of common and uncommon words, not that I got all the common ones first! *Michael Vnuk*
- What a great quiz - What an amazing collection of words-within-words! *William Ryan*
- It was a great quiz, combining some 'gimmies' with some head-scratchers, and provided for a very pleasant morning's entertainment. *Kathryn Forward*
- Many thanks for a very interesting quiz to start the year. *Betty Siegman*
- Thank you for devising such a great puzzle! *Sue Pinder*
- This was quite a workout, enjoyable. Despite Chamber's definition, cautery in surgery is to stop bleeding, not infection. *Roy Taylor*.
- What a tough quiz. Was pleased to be given the info that six letters did not occur as initials. Some real challenges which made it more interesting, of course. Interesting that TRIPARTITE and TRILATERAL both worked for 26 (*Well spotted Ann. Len*). *Ann Millard*
- Thanks for this fun Five in Five quiz. Some fell out easily, others needed to be hunted down. PARTI is conspicuous by its uncommonality. *Andrew Miles*
- Strangely enough we were stuck for a long time on 16. *Julie Leigh*
- Thanks for your puzzle. I took one look at it and decided it would be too hard, but after some perseverance I managed to get all but #14 out. *Claire McClelland*
- First half went quickly, second half was a bit more challenging. Thanks for an enjoyable quiz. *Ulla Axelsen*
- Such a challenging quiz.... Took me literally days to find some of the answers, particularly the West African ethnic group. *Maureen Blake*
- A challenging quiz, and a vocabulary builder. Many thanks. *Scott Goodman*
- Your very clear instructions for this quiz made it sound straightforward, though a few unfamiliar terms nearly brought me undone. Thank you. *Kath Harper*
- An interesting start to 2026's quizzes. Thank you for kick-starting my quiz obsession although this one was not all smooth sailing. No. 26 could be TRIPARTITE too. *Robyn Wimbush*
- Loved your quiz. 16 and 14 were my last ones in. *Julie Crowe*
- Thanks for another clever quiz, always enjoyable. *Ken Francis*
- This was a challenge, but fun. Thank you. *Pat Garner*

January 6-2026 Cryptic by Robespierre (Ian McKenzie)
Entries received: 64 Correct: 55 Success rate: 86%.
Prizewinner: Ann Millard Congratulations!

Compiler's observations

As solvers recognised, this puzzle particularly played into Robespierre's penchant for English borrowings from French and risqué wordplay. All errors were one-offs apart from two solvers who evidently had all the intersecting letters correct for BILLET-DOUX but came up with HOAX for the second part. (Given all the intersecting letters, the Chambers Word Wizard or OneLook website indicates that the sought-after answer is the only fit.)

Explanations –

Across: **1** cd, **5** OS, IRIS, **9** LINGER, Irresistible, **10** SC [abbrev. scilicet], HEM, A, **12** hidden, **13** LOOS, (FEEL)* around A, **14** OLD inside HIT, **16** (Y,LIT) in LOX< [liquid oxygen], **19** ADD, ITS round maC, **23** HOT, (UE IDLE)<, **25** swap 1st 2 pairs in NASTY, **26** bLATHER, **27** (PAUL)* inside COT, E, **28** TweETER, **29** CREEP, SUP. **Down:** **1,11** BILL, (OUTED)*, X, **2** COLD BLOOD in French, **3** C, LEAN, **4** MAIL, LOT, **6** (CURSE ABLE)*, **7** ER<, EVE, **8** (A, FF) inside SCOLD, **15** (CO, L) inside DELETE, **17** TITIANS round bAtH, **18** CA, CH, A LOT, **20** SKI, M, **21** B, DUO<, O, IR, **22** HY, (U in PEP), **24** IT in THE, **25,21-across** (Earlobe, SO MUCH BEAU)*.

Solvers' Feedback

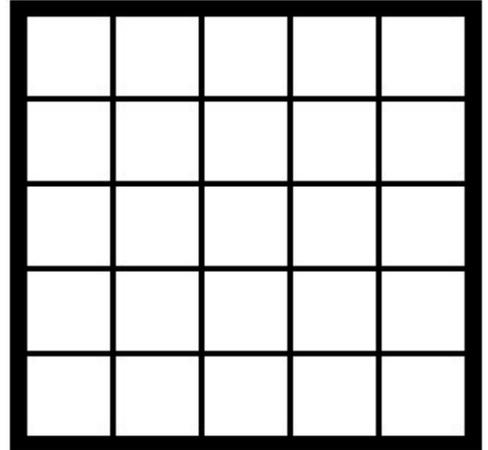
- Many top-notch clues such as 14Ac, 23Ac, 26Ac (COTM), 6Dn, 8Dn. I did not know 'sc = that is', which wasted much time. I am not keen on 'Chief Whip = W' grammatically. *Len Colgan*
- Classy. A few unknown words like Hotel Dieu and Cachalot which I wouldn't have got without the help of crossing letters. Very entertaining overall. *Krittibas Dasgupta*
- Thanks for another challenging and characteristically gritty puzzle; Ian. BTW: 23a was an easy solve for me as I had the dubious pleasure of attending the emergency department at the Hotel Dieu in 2017 when the radiology department confirmed that I had fractured my pelvis in a bicycle crash in the Alps some days earlier. It was quite an amazing experience. *Keith Gamble*
- A great grid, with many outstanding clues. *Michael Fitzgerald*
- This took a while! Deceptive clues with the actual definitions hard to find. I liked the risqué theme and voted DECOLLETE COTM. *Roy Taylor*
- Plenty of high-quality, entertaining clues. I enjoyed the French flavour, too. *Ian Thompson*
- Great puzzle, loved the French. De nombreux candidats pour l'indice du mois, mais le gagnant est SACRE BLEU *Toby Mcleay*
- Mon Dieu ! Quel casse-tête difficile mais passionnant ! Merci, Robespierre. BASE CAMP : J'ai mon COTM ! *Mal Cockburn*

FRAZ WORD SQUARE February 1

(Solution on p 12)

Identical words read across and down in this square. Clues are not listed in order.

- Addams family butler changing midday meal's central item
- Embarrassing display witnessed in the auditorium
- Explain lip cosmetic
- Instead blushing when backing law partner?
- Tear up edition after second hour

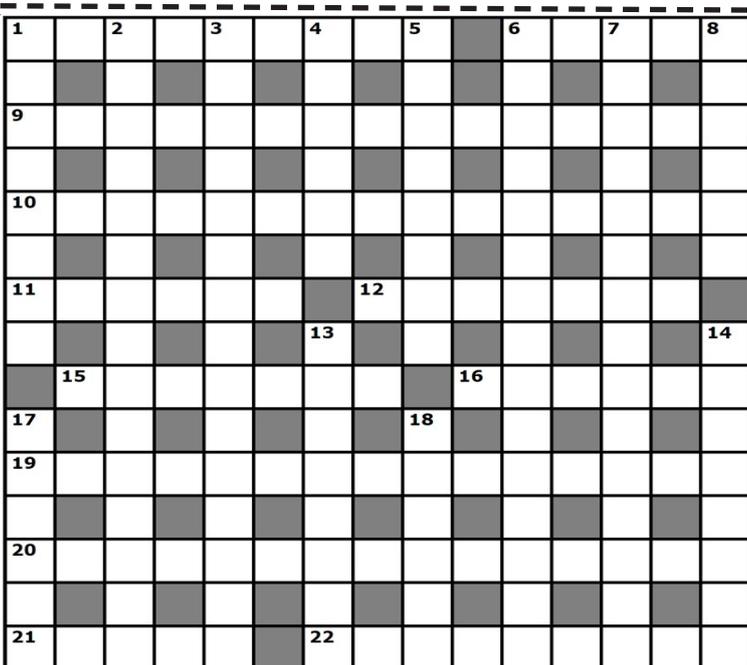
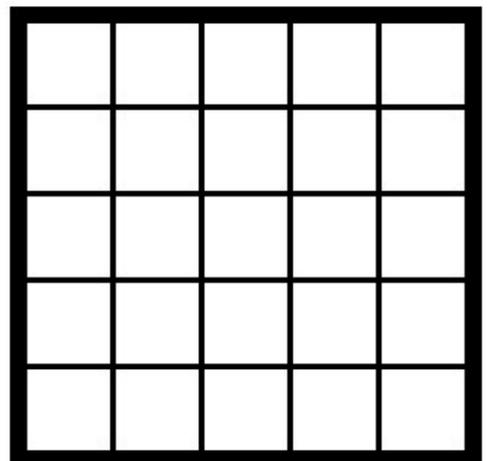


FRAZ WORD SQUARE February 2

(Solution on p 12)

Identical words read across and down in this square. Clues are not listed in order.

- A fellow handler
- Sort of finish public address in January
- Killed musician quietly enters seaside attraction
- One side of the U.S. Civil War, in composition or theme
- A Russian fighter beginning to overpower comrade



January 7-2026 Cryptic by Valkyrie (Ulla Axelsen)
Entries received 67; Correct 48; Success rate 72%.
Prizewinner: Jeremy Barnes. Congratulations!

Compiler's observations: Thanks to all who gave this a go, I'm glad you enjoyed this little Christmas cheer. Thanks also for all the lovely comments. Unfortunately 2 words caused a lot of grief: there was 6 occurrences of ORPHAN for URCHIN, and varying problems with DEMERARA. It was also a little sad to see that there would probably be another few extra dots awarded if the spelling part of ACCOLADE was used. Happy solving in 2026.

Explanations –

Across: 1 FOR+T+NITE, 5 (L)URCHIN(G), 10 R(EVER)ER, 11 G+R(cO...)W...+ER+S, 12/25 RING+O+(homoph "star", 13 WHITE H+A+I+R, 14 (RETP)* in COLIC - all in SEE, 19 (WE THREE KINGS)*, 22 (SECTARIANISM - ITS)*, 26 LEA+DINS, 27 Hidden, 28 PLAN+TS, 29 dd. Down: 1 Homoph "few roar", 2 R(OV)ING, 3 N+A+R+ROW+(SET)*, 4 TH(R)E+W, 6 Homoph "roan", 7 HIE+RAT+I+C, 8 SON< + IR(RE)E, 9 AG+LITTER, 15 REHEAT + fReShEn, 16 O+MISSIONS, 17 ALL in (SCOPE)*, 18 hidden<, 20 dd, 21 F(ROW)NS, 23 dIdDjlbOuTi, 24 SA(n<>K)NER.

Solvers' Feedback

- Great fun. Growers is a wonderful clue *Scott Goodman*
- Isn't 19Ac just amazing! Very enjoyable puzzle. Thanks Ulla. *Len Colgan*
- Liked how the theme was used here. Some great clues inc 14a; 1d; 7d and 8d. *Michael Fitzgerald*
- I did a lot of barking up the wrong Christmas tree on the way here. I think I got to the star on top. *Roy Taylor*
- Mix of tricky and straightforward clues with a clear Christmas theme. Loved Little Drummer Boy. *Krittibas Dasgupta*
- Excellent slot 7. *Richard Skinner*
- Always a fun and challenging puzzle from Valkyrie! *Kathryn Forward*
- Very enjoyable; thanks *Scott Goodman*
- Who knew that 'We Three Kings' concealed a gherkin?! *Kath Harper*
- This was hard. Not sure where some of my answers came from. Good one Ulla. *Robyn Wimbush*

Feedback on January Slot 6- continued from page 11

- Once I cottoned on to the French aspect of this, things became un peu plus facile! *Julie Leigh*
- Excellent surface readings, some even risqué! *Tony Dobeles*
- Unfortunately, I am learning Italian! *Richard Skinner*
- Robespierre must have been watching a sexy French movie when compiling this puzzle. Some great and amusing definitions. Great fun. *Ulla Axelsen*
- Tough one, Ian! Stuck on 18d for the longest time...but I have learned a new word! Thanks for the challenge and the French flavour! *Kathryn Forward*
- Tres magnifique *Scott Goodman*
- Challenging, enjoyable puzzle with great clues. My favourites were LINGERIE, XYLITOL, SACRE BLEU and SCAFFOLD. *Joan Smith*
- Some lovely clues here - and lots of French for good measure. *Kath Harper*
- So many funny clever clues! *Robyn Mckenzie*
- I really struggled with this one! Fingers crossed *Anne Simons*
- Mon Dieu! Difficile. *Robyn Wimbush*
- Robespierre did not disappoint and I had a few false starts here. *Alan Dyer*
- I found this crossword was exceptionally hard. I live in a "black spot" & don't get "IT" or mobile phone coverage. I also don't have a French Dictionary & couldn't find answers in "CHAMBERS". Luckily I could still

F	O	R	T	N	I	T	E		U	R	C	H	I	N	
U		O		A	H		A	H	I		O				
R	E	V	E	R	E	R		G	R	O	W	E	R	S	
O		I		R		E		L		N		R		I	
R	I	N	G	O		W	H	I	T	E	H	A	I	R	
E		G		W				T				T		R	
				S	E	C	R	E	T	P	O	L	I	C	E
E		D		S	E	E		M		C		E			
S	W	E	E	T	G	H	E	R	K	I	N				
C		M				E				S		F		F	
A	M	E	R	I	C	A	N	S		S	T	A	R	R	
L		R		D		R		A		I		T		O	
L	E	A	D	I	N	S		K	N	O	W	H	O	W	
O		R		O		E		E		N		E		N	
P	L	A	N	T	S		P	R	E	S	E	N	T	S	

Solution January Slot 7

Solution FRAZ WORD SQUARE Jan 1

D	E	R	H	S
E	N	E	C	S
R	E	D	R	O
H	C	R	U	L
S	S	O	L	G

Solution FRAZ WORD SQUARE Jan 2

H	T	R	O	N
T	N	E	G	A
R	E	P	I	P
O	G	I	M	A
N	A	P	A	J

remember some of my High School French (1950s). I'll be very surprised if I got it all right. However, thanks for a very stimulating puzzle. *Claire McClelland*

[Claire – I'm in awe that you almost managed to solve Slot 6 perfectly without internet aid. All the answers including the French flavoured, however, are listed in Chambers. – Robespierre.]

- A most enjoyable puzzle. Lots of good clues - clever and fun. The inclusion of several French words added to the enjoyment. *Julie Crowe*

A	C	C		
	R			
	O	Z		
O	Z			
	W			
N	O	T	E	S
	R			
	L			
	D			

Explanations for clues in January slots 1 to 5: Note: cd = cryptic definition; dd = double definition; rev or < = reversal; homophones are noted as "homoph" and words from which they are derived may be shown in quotes; anagrams as anag. if straightforward, or (NNNN)*. "Heads" or "Tails" are first or last letters of part of a clue; letters forming solutions are normally written as capitals and removals as lower case; hw or hidden = hidden word. Explanations provided by individual compilers may vary from this format.

Slot 1 KA (Karl Audrins). Down: 1 pal+(i)ate, 2 snow+mo(bi)le, 3 cd, 4 C.O.D.+A, 5 gala-h (hearts), 6 dd, 7 dd, 12 dd, 17 tuning+fork(bifurcation), 18 mother(scum in Chamb)+hood, 22 t(r)eacher, 24 bo(il)er, 25 Sl(L)T, 29 dd, 30 p+ace, 31 0+use.

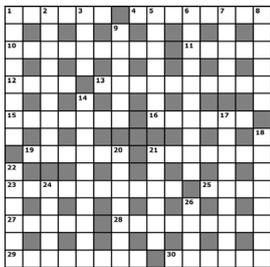
Slot 2 Ninian. Across: 1 <EELS+P+Y, 4 BLUE+EYED, 9 dd, 10 (COTERIES)*, 12 (TWA + SYRIA)*, 13 PRIEST+O, 15 (O+CRAB)* + HYDRATES, 18 REVOLUTION+wARY, 21 (HID+SAP)*, 23 S+TRAP+PER, 26 REPLLe(CA)s, 27 HAUL+M, 28 (Y+MEN) in PANTS, 29 SN (E...E) ZY. **Down:** 1 >DAS +IST, 2 (ASDEE)* around PLAIIn, 3 PRaYER, 5 sLUm +ST, 6 ENTER + TrAIN, 7 dd, 8 (aCT) in ROOD<, 11 BASH+FUL(L), 14 (I+D+D+CAST)*, 16 BROAD+SIDE, 17 (UbeRPARENTS)*,

19 (SPARTA)*, 20 RUMP in GuY, 22 HAP+PYx, 24 (SHANE)*, 25 EASTer.

Slot 3 NanaKat. Across: 7 dd, 8 (ExCESS+NARY)*, 10 WI+THIN, 11 (EXCEED+PT)*, 12 anag, 13 heads, 15 JEST in MAY, 17 hidden<, 20 dd, 22 (P+S+SISTER)*, 25 dd, 26 dd/cd - all sitcoms, 27 NOISE+SETT<, 28 SUPPER. **Down:** 1 POLITIC+AL, 2 dd, 3 dd, 4 SIPS* in DEED, 5 xd, 6 dd, 9 dd, 14 anag, 16 TOLE+RATE, 18 cd, 19 dd, 21 OB..+ TU..+ SE,,, 23 hidden<, 24 BIG+OT.

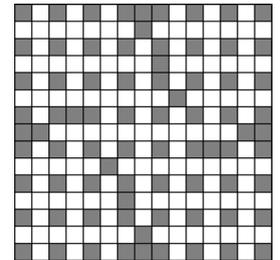
Slot 4 Valkyrie. A MATE in (A+SIN>), **B** BEEFEATER - F, **C** CAP+(TOES)*, **D** DOM + C in INANE, **E** ESC + APE + ROUTE, **F** F + REED, **G** (A ROME SMOG)*, **H** HO + MAGE, **I** IN + SA + NE, **J** JOUR + N + EYE + D, **K** Hidden, **L** LI(MITE)D, **M** MOO + D, **N** CInnAMON< with D for NN, **O** (COBBLESTONES - B)*, **P** POP(U)LAR, **Q** dd, **R** RE + RE + AD, **S** SEVERE + D, **T** TO + MOR + ROW, **U** Move T down in UNTIE, **V** VA(CATION)S, **W** W(INN)ING, **X** X + EROS + IS, **Y** (yIN YANG W)*, **Z** aZtEc SiTe.

Slot 5 CT. Across: 8 MISS + O, 9 DIOR< in EMBER, 11 hidden, 12 PAR< + I'D, 13 NAY< + QUIT, 14 MO< inside C+ ED+ IAN, 15 DD, CD [minus sign], 18 DD, 22 I + DARES + A + Y, 24 SEE arnd WAG, 27 DISTILLER - LIDS, 28 MOON + LIGHT, 29 METH inside STAYS*, 30 DD. **Down:** 1 (GUARDIAN-DA)*, 2 homoph "nun" + SUCH, 3 DR arnd FEE*, 4 A BAT + RIOT<, 5 homoph "horse", 6 APT inside A DIVE, 7 (TENPOUNDER-ONE)*, 10 homoph "praise", 16 Y+EARLIES, 17 hidden, 19 Gin in (EYE + LASS), 20 J in (WILT + AS), 21 YEA+TS, 23 EAR+THY, 25 ActioN + GINA, 26 SO< inside ROT .



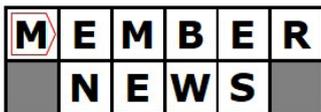
2025 Champion Solver of the Year

The **2025 ACC Slot Solver of the Year** has been run and won. As always it was a very close race. The 2025 winner is **Andrew Miles** with a perfect 84. He was closely followed by Len Colgan and Andrew Patterson with 83. Julie Crowe and Kath Harper were next on 81.



The **2025 ACC Quiz Solver of the Year** was a three-way dead-heat, all with a perfect score of 320. They are **Ulla Axelsen, Kath Harper** and **Andrew Patterson**. Following those were Anne Millard and Robyn Wimbush on 318.

Many congratulations to all winners and to all those who set Personal Bests in 2025!!



New Members Welcome Rosamond Mohacsi, John McLean and Greg Sanson, our new members this month. We look forward to your contributions and trust that you will enjoy our fellowship.

Macquarie Dictionary and Thesaurus. A number of members have commented favourably on the decision to provide the reference material to members as part of their subscription. The link seems to be working as we had hoped but if you do have any problems, don't hesitate to contact Ian.

Donations to the Prize Fund Many thanks for their generous donations to the Prize fund to Karl Audrins, Jean Barbour ,Julie Crowe, Cam Graves, Greg Jones, Jennifer Madden, John McLean, Drew Meek, Andrew Miles, Brian Symons, Guy Sansom and Margaret Steinberger. Many thanks: the donations are much appreciated.

ACCOLADE enhancement Sharp-eyed members will have noticed an additional button on the Submit page. This will make it easier to query midding dots, although one easy way to avoid them is to use the built-in spell check.

New compilers welcome! We welcome puzzles from new compilers. The easiest way to start is with a slot 1 Half and Half puzzle, which only involves cryptic clues for half of the solutions. If you're hesitant, some of our more experienced compilers will be delighted to pair with you and provide advice and assistance Email Ian for more detail and some helpful information.

Find us on

Join our Facebook group and discuss anything to do with words and puzzles. (No discussion of current prize puzzles please.)

Search for [Australian Crossword Club](#) or click the above hyperlink.

January 1: KA (Karl Audrins)

- 28ac SIGHT-PROOF is an alternative to LIGHT-PROOF. [Agreed - Adj] *Ian McKenzie*
- Without a doubt, the most challenging Slot 1 in my memory. Some unusual words and tricky cryptics. *Ann Millard*
- Personally, I would not have unchecked letters on the perimeter in a Slot 1 puzzle. *Len Colgan*
- The non-cryptics gave me the most trouble here. Especially unsure of TATT and EMEW. Favourites were SNOWMOBILE and SIT. *Michael Fitzgerald*
- Quite challenging for a Slot 1. *Frank Martin*
- Good slot 1 if you like them difficult. *Roy Taylor*
- Seemed a bit obscure in places for a Slot 1. *Andrew Patterson*
- There was a time when Slot 1 was designed around simple words that gave the solver an easy entry into the month's puzzles. This puzzle has many unusual and obsolete words. What happened to the original idea? *Mal Cockburn*
- A good slot 1 to start. *Tony Dobele*
- Tricky for a slot 1, with a number of obscure words. *Kath Harper*
- Not sure whether motherline or motherling or motherland. None work perfectly. *Lyria Bennett Moses*
- I always like to see how far I can get with Slot 1 before I have to use a dictionary - not very far this time. Thanks for the challenge. *Ulla Axelsen*
- Surprisingly tough! *Kathryn Forward*
- Normal clues were not easy and they were time-consuming. It was an unacceptable grid with 14 inaccessible letters which did not help with some of the across clues. *Joan Smith*
- Took a long time to get CODA. *Toby McLeay*
- Found this one rather difficult. Unsure of 26 and 32 across. *Anne Simons*
- Found this one quite challenging for a Slot 1. Unsure about a few (SLOGAN, TATT). *Alan Dyer*
- Was this meant to be a 'Half and Half'? KA appears to focus on being obtuse rather than compiling fun slots, especially for a Slot 1. This Slot 1 was extraordinary. I prefer to be able to complete a Slot 1 without a heap of resources on the desk. *Lynn Jarman*
- Am I the only puzzler who longs for the former Half & Half for slot 1? *Kate Williams*
- I didn't have a clue about an insect egg. *Ken Francis*

January 2: Ninian (Scott Goodman)

- Took me a while to work out the wordplay for EAST, DOCTOR and HAPPY. (You couldn't afford to be DOPEY or 20dn GRUMPY: "guys outside" seems to clue GS, rather than the required GY. *Ian McKenzie*
- Couldn't find Snow White but found the 7 dwarves. *Ann Millard*
- Haply, I was able to swap an L for a P just in time to prove (if proof were needed) that I was no Sleeping Beauty. *Con Flinkenberg*
- 20dn has a typo. [Punctuation may mislead - Ed] *Robert Thomson*
- Good theme and some praiseworthy clues. I do not agree 'guys outside = GY' and 22dn, HAPPY, is clumsy, despite the clever definition. Personally, I never use 'note = E, C or A', being cop-outs. *Len Colgan*
- Good summer fare - not too gruelling, not too breezy. Some very elegant clues. *Michael Fitzgerald*
- Liked CARBOHYDRATES, EAST and SNEEZY then noticed all 7 of the famous little people. *Toby McLeay*

- I'm still looking for Snow White. *Mal Cockburn*
- Enjoyed the challenge but didn't see the theme until after I finished! *Tony Dobele*
- Hi-ho Hi-ho! I cannot believe that I didn't wake up to the seven included dwarves until checking my completed answer. Duh! *Maureen Blake*
- A nice gentle puzzle, but it's always great to learn a new word! HAULM had me scratching my head! Nice to see all seven of Sleeping Beauty's friends present and accounted for! *Kathryn Forward*
- Snow White would love this. *Richard Skinner*
- Seven little people crammed into one puzzle - quite a feat. *Kath Harper*
- Some quite complex clues in this. Good challenge. *Ian Thompson*
- Found 7 dwarfs hiding in the grid. Thanks for a fun solve. *Ulla Axelsen*
- Lots of dwarfs and lots of clever clues. *Robyn McKenzie*
- And with all seven dwarves, a possible clue I missed till right at the end! *Julie Crowe*
- I did not see the 7 dwarves until submission! Great fun, thanks Ninian. I did like ESOTERIC and ASHEN. *Kathy Horadam*
- One of my favourite stories as a child, and an all-time great movie. *Betty Siegman*
- Those dwarves crept up on me. Or were they dwarfs? Great fun. *Robyn Wimbush*
- I felt 'dwarfed' by this Slot. *Alan Dyer*
- Always new words to learn! This time HAULM. *Mary Dodd*
- Great to see the seven dwarfs - helped with the solving. *Hilary Cromer*

January 3: NanaKat (Kathryn Forward)

- ROACH was a bit hard. *Robert Thomson*
- Much fun, especially appreciated ROACH and VICTORIA. *Michael Fitzgerald*
- Liked MAJESTY and learnt the name for a badger's burrow! *Toby McLeay*
- I liked SITCOM. *Tony Dobele*
- An enjoyable solve. SUPER was a bit tricky. *Ulla Axelsen*
- SUPER had me puzzled. I liked the misdirection in ROACH and the clues for SITCOM and MAJESTY. Thanks, NanaKat. *Kathy Horadam*
- I liked POINT OUT. *Julie Crowe*
- Another puzzle with 20 blocked initials, though a little easier to solve. Favourite clues SUPER and POINT OUT. *Joan Smith*
- Pleasant puzzle to solve. *Krittibas Dasgupta*
- Very clever clues and not too convoluted. However, I look forward to the explanation for SUPER and TOLERATE. 21dn, OBTUSE, certainly describes many clues in January Slot 1. *Lynn Jarman*

January 4: Valkyrie (Ulla Axelsen)

- LAUGHS. *Allan Storti*
- Always a favourite. I have ESCAPE ROUTE for "E" but couldn't find it written as one word anywhere. [Apologies - Corrected on ACCOLADE - Ed] *Ann Millard*
- I noticed LAUGHS but not sure if I have missed something else? *Julie Leigh*
- Very good - BEE-EATER, NOMADIC and VACATIONS were the pick of the bunch here I thought. *Michael Fitzgerald*
- I solved this one for LAUGHS. *Mal Cockburn*
- Lovely puzzle. Should Escape Route be treated as one word or two (6,5)? *Krittibas Dasgupta*
- I assume that "laughs" was a simple coincidence or have I missed something? *Richard Skinner*

continued on page 15

Feedback on January Slot 4 - continued from page 14

- Very enjoyable, was LAUGHS a mini-Nina? I couldn't parse U but enjoyed ZEST. *Kathy Horadam*
- Good to find a few laughs amid the serious business of crossword solving. *Kath Harper*
- Enjoyable AJ. ANIMATES and UNITE were my favourite clues. *Joan Smith*
- Thanks Ulla. Lots of laughs - well, only one... *Robyn Wimbush*
- An AJ with a Nina? One 'laughs' at the idea! *Alan Dyer*
- Looking forward to finding out the answer and the why to UNITE! *Mary Dodd*
- Thank you Valkyrie for an enjoyable Slot 4 with good links between clue and answer. *Lynn Jarman*
- The AJ enjoyable as usual. Thanks. *Hilary Cromer*

January 5: Chris-T-Mas (Chris Thomas)

- Some new words here for me that took with NONESUCH being the most surprising. *Keith Gamble*
- Splendid - too many good clues to mention here, but especially enjoyed REEFER, SEWAGE, AMETHYSTS and YEATS. *Michael Fitzgerald*
- Nothing easy about this tough puzzle with some excellent clues. *Roy Taylor*
- I struggled with the last few, but the Xmas message sorted me out. MCAAHNY. *Mal Cockburn*
- Same to you Chris. You are CHRISTMAS with a HO! *Toby McLeay*
- Some difficult but a great puzzle. Thank you. *Ann Millard*
- Tricky clues. I see ANDAHAP across the top but can't see the rest of the message. [First letters in clue order from 1-axross]- Ed] *Tony Dobebe*
- MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR. *Allan Storti*
- Really challenging grid. I had to guess a few, and got a few more through crossing letters. *Krittibas Dasgupta*
- Lots of great clues. RAPID, HYPHEN, AMETHYSTS, ROOST. *Toby McLeay*
- That was a challenge. It wasn't until I saw the list of words that I got the Christmas connection. Thank-you. *Ulla Axelsen*
- Finding the NINA early on helped a great deal! A clever grid which offered a lot of variety. I suspect that I have 2dn wrong, I have no idea what it might be! *Kathryn Forward*
- I stumbled on WILTJAS by sheer good luck. *Betty Siegman*
- Loved the HYPHEN clue. *Joan Smith*
- Thanks to the Macquarie subscription I was able to solve 20dn. *Warren Allen*
- Good clues. I particularly liked I DARESAY and MOONLIGHT. *Anne Simons*
- Liked SEWAGE. *Robyn Wimbush*

&lit Clues by Crowsman (reprinted from July 2022, but worth another look)

An uncommon type of clue is the &lit (sometimes written & Lit., meaning "and literally so"). It is commonly called the "all-in-one clue" as the wordplay is the same as the definition. A few &lit clues have appeared in CrOZworld, but they are difficult to compile perfectly, and are often overlooked by solvers. Most cryptic clues contain a definition and a wordplay, in either order, sometimes connected by a linking expression. However, consider the following classic clue

Terribly angered (7)

With only two words, where are the components? Here, 'terribly' looks like an anagram indicator and 'angered' might be a definition. There do not appear to be enough words in the clue. But the whole clue implies ANGERED* yielding ENRAGED, while 'terribly angered' certainly defines enraged. Consider this clue from our own Manveru (thank you Michael!).

Heck! I'm so unsettled! (8)

having the answer HOMESICK.

Where is the definition and where is the wordplay? Well, the whole clue can define or at least describe HOMESICK. But the whole clue is also the wordplay for (HECK IM SO)* with 'unsettled' as the anagram indicator. Every word in the clue is doing double duty.

The following is adapted from "The Chambers Complete Crossword Companion".

Take a good look at this clue:

No fellow for mixing (4,4)

Where is the definition, and where is the wordplay? The whole clue defines LONE WOLF, but it also yields the wordplay (NO FELLOW)* with 'for mixing' as the anagram indicator.

A somewhat overused old chestnut is

One has gone into the church (8)

which defines MINISTER, but can be totally re-interpreted as the wordplay MIN(I)STER.

Consider

I'm one involved with cost (9)

defining ECONOMIST, but equally (IM + ONE + COST)* with 'involved' as the anagram indicator.

An incredible &lit clue is

Who does able act for kitchen when given order? (5,4,3,6-6)

This defines CHIEF COOK AND BOTTLE-WASHER, an idiom for a person who does almost everything, as well as the wordplay (WHO DOES ABLE ACT FOR KITCHEN)* with 'when given order' as the anagram indicator. Wow!

Can you solve

Some unceremonious language (5) as an &lit clue?

There is an &lit clue somewhere in this month's CrOZworld.

Solutins to January Bonus puzzles and quiz

P	O	R	S	C	H	E		P	O	N	T	I	A	C
E		O		R				T		E		N		O
N	I	S	S	A	N		H	E	A	T	P	I	P	E
P		S		D		G	E	N		T		T		L
A	J	S		L	A	M	B	O	R	G	H	I	N	I
L		E		E		C	B	D		A		A		A
S	A	A	B				C	A	D	I	L	L	A	C
	S			S		M		L		N				G
T	H	I	S	T	L	E	S				B	O	M	B
R		N		A		R	U	N		J		C		U
I	N	F	U	N	D	I	B	U	L	A		E	R	G
U		I		D		N	A	B		G		A		A
M	E	D	I	A	T	O	R		P	U	N	N	E	T
P		E		R			U			A		I		T
H	O	L	I	D	A	Y		F	E	R	R	A	R	I

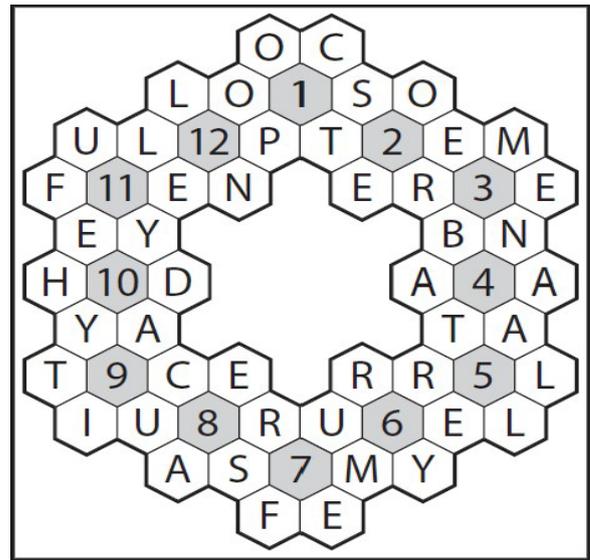
January BONUS 1

C	H	R	I	S	T	I	A	N		D	E	P	T	H
O		E		I			I		B	E	A	U		Y
S	A	L	I	S	B	U	R	Y		S	C	R	A	P
M		I		S			Y	O	U	T	H	S		N
O	N	G	O	I	N	G		Y		I		U		O
P		I		E		A	D	O	R	N	M	E	N	T
O	B	O	I	S	T	S			Y					H
L		N				H		F				R		E
I				H				L	O	W	G	E	A	R
T	A	L	K	I	N	G	T	O		R		D		A
A		E		R		E		P	E	A	S	O	U	P
N		G	H	E	T	T	O			I		C		I
I	S	A	A	C		S	T	R	E	T	C	H	E	S
S		C	L	A	D		T			H		R		T
M	A	Y	O	R		F	O	R	E	S	T	E	R	S

January BONUS 2

S	P	R	O	U	T		K	O	H	L	R	A	B	I
P		E		N		P		D		Y		R		N
A	R	T	I	C	H	O	K	E		C	R	E	S	S
R		S		U		N		N		R		O		E
S	K	I	R	R	E	T		S	H	A	L	L	O	T
E		N		D		O		E				A		S
S	C	A	L	L	I	O	N		N	A	V	E	W	
T				E		N		D		R				S
	S	W	E	D	E		P	I	M	I	E	N	T	O
A		H				C		A		S		E		L
S	P	I	N	A	C	H		L	E	T	T	U	C	E
H		T		N		O		L		O		R		M
O	N	I	O	N		S	W	E	E	T	C	O	R	N
R		N		U		E		D		L		N		L
E	G	G	P	L	A	N	T		C	E	L	E	R	Y

January BONUS 3



January BONUS 4

Answers to Bonus Quiz "Off with their heads" by Michael Vnuk

1 clean, 2 clumpy, 3 crude, 4 factual, 5 failing, 6 flute, 7 fox, 8 grapeseed, 9 grumble, 10 haitch, 11 lone, 12 methane, 13 praise, 14 ramble, 15 slow, 16 snick, 17 snip, 18 terbium, 19 yours, 20 zeta