



No 405 January 2024



www.crosswordclub.org



Merry Christmas

GRIDATORIAL

'Tis the season to be merry! Again! Already! We have provided our normal bundle of puzzles for your Yuletide enjoyment, together with a few bonus puzzles and a bonus quiz if other festive entertainment palls.

One of Valkyrie's stylish half and half puzzles leads the way and we are pleased to feature a puzzle by a new compiler, CT, in slot 2. A hearty welcome to Chris, whose bio appears on page 6. St Jude, our favourite patron saint, challenges us with a straightforward but tricky slot 3. The AJ king, Manveru, presents some interestingly different words in his perennial favourite AJ and Crowsman has excelled himself with his cleverly constructed Nina puzzle in slot 5. Slot 6 is an unusually conventional puzzle from Flowerman, but no less tricky for that. Eclogue, when submitting their slot 7 *tour de force*, said "In response to occasional criticisms from CrOZworld solvers that Eclogue puzzles are full of Scottish, archaic and obscure terminology, please find attached an Eclogue puzzle full of... errr... Scottish, archaic and obscure terminology. You have been warned! Our very own Eager Beaver has dreamed up a psychedelic quiz to start 2024

We are sure that you will enjoy our bonuses, all previously unpublished, with offerings from a new South Australian combination in the form of Crow-Boy, a Jumbo barred package from KA, a conventional cryptic by Lexi Conner and a rather different puzzle from the ingenious InGrid, all wrapped up with a bonus quiz by Nigrum Cattus. No prizes for these, but much enjoyment, we hope.

Enjoy!

Ian

FROM THE ADJUDICATOR

An excellent selection of puzzles was presented for December as always and solvers have responded to all puzzles with very positive and well-deserved comments. However, a small number of clues did cause problems for a fairly large number of solvers. Occasional spelling errors also appeared in all 5 slots.

Slot 1: By far the worst dot gobbler of all 5 slots was, strangely for a "quick" definition, ARCOS at 22 down generating a total of 41 errors. Most offered ARCUS and a few ARCES and ARCHS. Chambers and Macquarie both list ARCO for "bow", hence the plural of ARCOS. (ARCUS, although not in references can be Googled to obtain "cloud", but with no apparent reference to BOW). Strangely, and typos surely (?), four entries showed SANDPAPER for "Bird" in 18-down.

STYE (46 across) threw some solvers. Because of some potential confusion in the Chambers citation for this obsolete meaning of the word STIE (5 occurrences) has been accepted.

Slot 2: This barred puzzle caused a wide variety of errors, given the unusual nature of some of the solutions, including GLENN for PLEON, OBELIA for ABELIA, TOILETS for TONLETS, TRUE for TREE, ASAE, ASAT and ASAS for ASAR and SPLATCH for SPLOTCH. (Well, variety is the spice of life!)

Slot 3: Not many problems were encountered with this well-received puzzle apart from DYNAMISTS, with its potentially confusing punctuation, which produced 15 errors, mostly DYNAMISMS (12 occurrences). TRANQUILIZER GUN was accepted for TRANQUILISER GUN as the word play does not indicate the S spelling.

Slot 4: Some solvers apparently missed the significance of the title "A Quizzical AJ". The title refers to the same alternating vowel/consonant pattern for all answers, just like the quiz. Furthermore this condition forces all of the checked letters in the grid to be vowels and all unchecked letters to be consonants.

MINIMAXED created 21 errors mostly MITIGATED (with 14 occurrences). Also offered were MILITATED, MINIMAXES AND MINIMALLY.

Slot 5: Considerable praise was expressed for the standard of
continued on page 2

LEADING FIGURES DECEMBER 2023

Puzzle No.	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Entries received	79	72	71	66	51	339
Correct Entries	33	56	51	37	43	320
Success rate(%)	42	78	72	56	84	65
Prizewinners	Sonia Roulston	Brian Tickle	Mal Cockburn	Maureen Blake	Alison Shield	from 82 members

Prizewinner: December Slots 1-5 correct: . Drew Meek. Congratulations!

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December slot 1-2023

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

December slot 2-2023

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

December slot 3-2023

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

December slot 4-2023

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

December slot 5-2023

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

December slot 6-2023

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

MEMBERS' RESULTS FOR DECEMBER 2023 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.		•	•	•	•	•	•	Evans J.			•	•			•	Milton R.			•				
Allen W.	•	•	•					Ferguson J.						•	•	Moline R.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Anderson C.	•	•	•					Garner P.					•			Parsons D.	•		•	•	•	•	•
Audrins K.		•	•	•	•	•	•	Grainger D.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Patterson A.		•	•	•	•	•	•
Axelsen U.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Hagan R.								Peach S.		•	•	•	•		•
Barbour J.		•		•		•		Harper K.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Powell S.			•				
Barnes J.		•	•					Hearn R.		•			•	•	•	Procter D.	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Batum C.			•		•			Howat S.		•	•	•	•	•	•	Rosendorff D.	•		•	•		•	•
Bettles K.	•	•	•		•	•	•	Jarman L.		•	•	•				Roulston S.	•	•			•	•	•
Blake M.	•	•		•	•	•	•	Jarman R.	•	•						Ryan W.			•				
Carroll L.		•		•	•	•	•	Jones G.		•	•	•	•	•	•	Shield A.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Cockburn B.	•		•	•	•	•	•	Kennedy L.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Siegman B.		•			•		
Cockburn M.	•	•		•		•		Lankshear J.		•	•	•				Simons A.	•	•	•	•	•		•
Cole G.		•						Leigh J.	•	•		•	•	•		Simpson F.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Colgan L.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Madden J.			•					Skinner R.	•	•		•	•	•	•
Coote P.			•			•	•	Martin A.	•	•						Steinberger M.	•						
Cornish W.							•	Mason I.			•					Storey N.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Cromer H.		•	•					McClelland C.	•	•				•		Symons B.		•	•	•	•	•	•
Crowe J.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	McKenzie I.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Taylor R.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Davis K.	•	•	•		•	•	•	McKenzie R.	•	•	•		•			Thompson I.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Dobele T.	•	•	•		•	•	•	McLeay T.							•	Tickle B.		•					
Dowse B.		•						Meek A.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Veress M.		•	•	•	•	•	•
Ducker R.		•	•		•	•		Miles A.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Wimbush R.		•	•			•	•
Dyer A.		•	•	•	•	•	•	Millard A.		•	•			•	•	Wood J.		•	•		•	•	•

From the Adjudicator - continued from page 1

clueing in this puzzle. Again, not many problems here but four solvers offered DATERS and NURSERIES instead of DATING and NUNNERIES (perhaps because DATING and NUNNERIES are not normally associated!)

COTM: Nominations were received across all slots, but the winner is Isla's Slot 3 Cryptic definition of TRANQUILISER GUN [Number of the beast?] with 6 votes followed closely by the devilishly cryptic ATTLEE [The French invade at nearly 10PM!] with 4 votes.

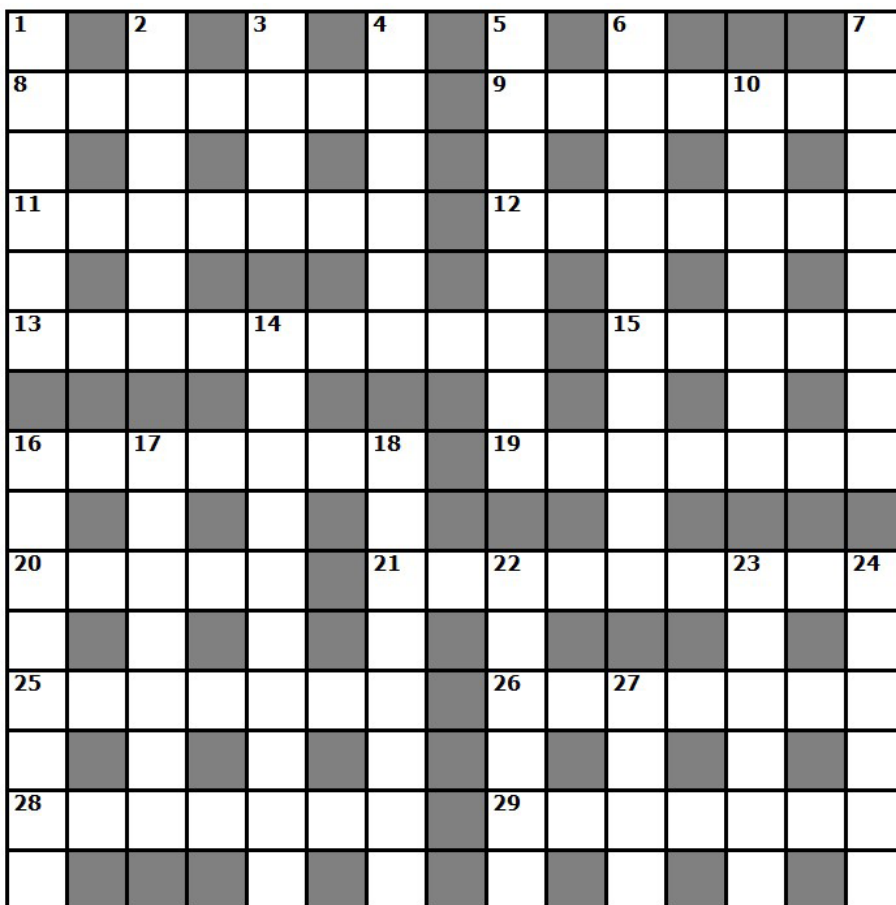
Thank you to all compilers for a great job and to all who contribute to the success of the club. Here's to an enjoyable festive season and more happy solving in 2024

Larry Kennedy

Slot 1

Half and
Half
by
Valkyrie

Prize
\$50



Across

- 8 Paints (7)
9 Seclude (7)
11 Canadian province (7)
12 Sieves (7)
13 Register (9)
15 Growths (5)
16 Infusions (7)
19 Mocks (7)
20 Preliminary proposition (5)
21 Enable people to begin (3,4,2)
25 Genuine (7)
26 Part of an atom (7)
28 Filled with gas (7)
29 Glasses (7)

Down

- 1 Spooner's pea rose creates a restful feeling (6)
2 Gammon left out of dish (6)
3 Appearance, saying who'll get the money (4)
4 Sasha, unconstrained, wore no top onto the beach (6)
5 Shaken bad boy halved bid (8)
6 Poet of value pursues song lyrics (10)
7 Stands firm as a result of annoyances about typist's problem (8)
10 Interested old city editor supported everyone (7)
14 Features sculptured in man with steel (10)
16 Australian explorer embraced lake island charm (8)
17 Class remains aroused (7)
18 Puts a temporary halt to suspicion about payout (8)
22 Vulnerable content often derogatory (6)
23 Kill revolutionary communist spirit (6)
24 Storeroom worker intercepted snoop (6)
27 Practised alternate run speeds (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.

By mail for Slots 1 to 5: Tony Dobeles email tandcdobeles@gmail.com or by mail to 10 Sharpe Street, Norman Gardens Qld 4701

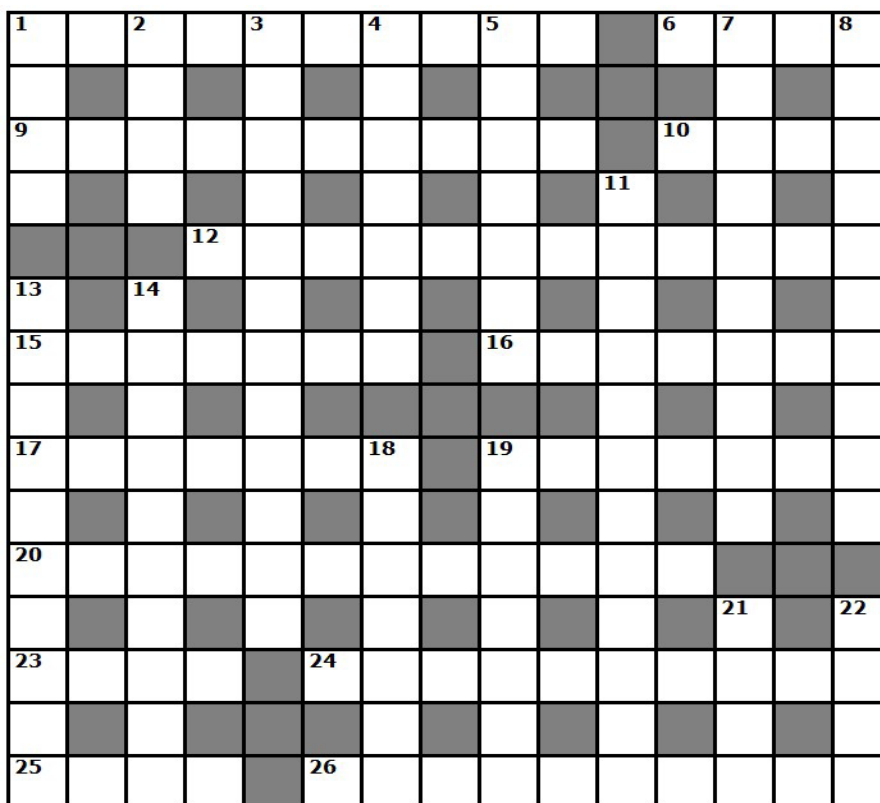
By mail for Slot 6: Ian Thompson 12 Olive Street, Malvern East Vic 3145 email irt_botanist@hotmail.com

By mail for slot 7: Kay Williams 12 Lindrum Crescent Holt ACT 2615 email ianw@webone.com.au

Closing mail date for all puzzles is 26 January 2023.

BLANK
GRIDS
PAGE 11

Slot 2

Cryptic
by
CTPrize
\$50

Across

- 1 Appallingly, news chief lay spilling guts post whisky vomit (10)
 6 Midlife switch: by 50 men start to feature (4)
 9 Greek master of triangles (and squares)? (10)
 10 Work soapsuds regularly (4)
 12 Deliveries go on this transport, but might be going too far? (12)
 15 Roasting vegetable's the usual bargain (7)
 16 Shabby summary (7)
 17 Channels evil exploits (7)
 19 Holders of shafts shake at the beginning of surgery (7)
 20 Wealthy folk crush one - no raise distributed (12)
 23 Carry to a better place? (4)
 24 Lie in the sun and the rest get sea-change, a hopeless state (6,4)
 25 Told to start, but give up (4)
 26 Drug cap subject to police enforcement (5,5)

Down

- 1 Upended seat, started tearing, made tears! (4)
 2 Consumes starter of egg and tomato salsa (4)
 3 Civic haunts a resort for an attitude displaying fanaticism (12)
 4 Showing self-importance: pride before a fall (3,4)
 5 Hide exile at Heraklion (7)
 7 Pervert spied minor in jail (10)
 8 Someone like 3 smashed missing toy (10)
 11 Chance money on Channel Islands' work for chopper technician? (12)
 13 A model runner I caught has marks to warn one off (10)
 14 Converted gender-fluid individual left date confused (10)
 18 Fake tanners use this oil container holding nut, linseed, avocado for starters (7)
 19 Fast bowler almost chucked it in, by midwicket, that is (7)
 21 Anthony Albanese, perhaps, holds back the French symbol of triumph (4)
 22 Let rip (4)

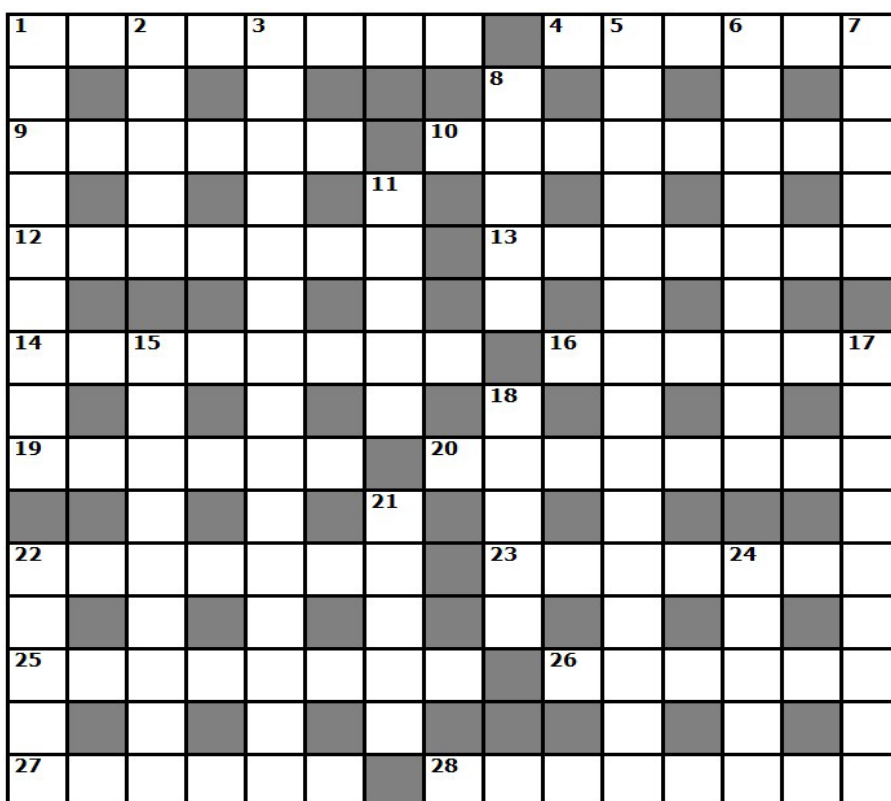


CT (Chris Thomas) I'm a Melbourne-based Dad of four young adult kids. Like many others it was in my teens in the 80's that an English teacher introduced me to cryptics, and it's been an on and off love affair since. I remember waiting for the Saturday Age and doing my best with it with my Mum and Dad. Also, vividly recall a clue that may have started the bug ... "Has volume control and wants the sound kept down!" (Librarian). Genius. Like a lot of us, a good cryptic definition brings a big smile.

I have a maths and Commerce Degree from Melbourne Uni and have had a career in Financial Markets (Syd/Mel/Lond/NY). During a mid-life crisis, I also owned and cooked in my own restaurant in Sydney a decade ago, but these days I am back to Investment advice.

My other loves are, in no particular order, trail running, St Kilda footy club (unrequited), giving my sage advice to my four kids and cooking.

Slot 3

Cryptic
by
St JudePrize
\$50

Across

- 1 Deny bag eaten naughtily (8)
 4 Charlie joins bare-breasted tramp and a peasant (6)
 9 Cultured old city's destruction (6)
 10 Pardoned graduate returning answer (D) (8)
 12 Ornament to bible is peculiar (7)
 13 A little woman to retreat inside for forgiveness (7)
 14 Emperor limits torts after attorney has a go (8)
 16 Promenade stumped by thunder (6)
 19 Use experimental destruction (6)
 20 Striped steak about right with 7? (8)
 22 Showed off and sailed about Sweden (7)
 23 Disrupt Thailand's currency (7)
 25 Luxury car captured by 27 deranged agitators (8)
 26 Join sections of abdomen laceration (6)
 27 Counteract rot consuming relative (6)
 28 Complete ensemble becomes gloomy (8)

Down

- 1 Foreshadow a stupid speed (9)
 2 Catch outside broadcast of plutocrat (5)
 3 Bodyguard laments a garment being ruined (9-2-4)
 5 Distaught coroner heard nut coming soon (6,3,6)
 6 Bulls' evil destruction of merchandise (9)
 7 Paddington's underwear? (5)
 8 Award hesitation with charm (5)
 11 Announce Victoria's one (5)
 15 Best I sign for trees' ornamentations (9)
 17 Deposit masons' initial testament? (9)
 18 Gangsta tsar keeps the figures (5)
 21 Confusion about love (5)
 22 More infamous home run (5)
 24 Beginning to badmouth, whinge and natter about boss (5)

General Feedback for December

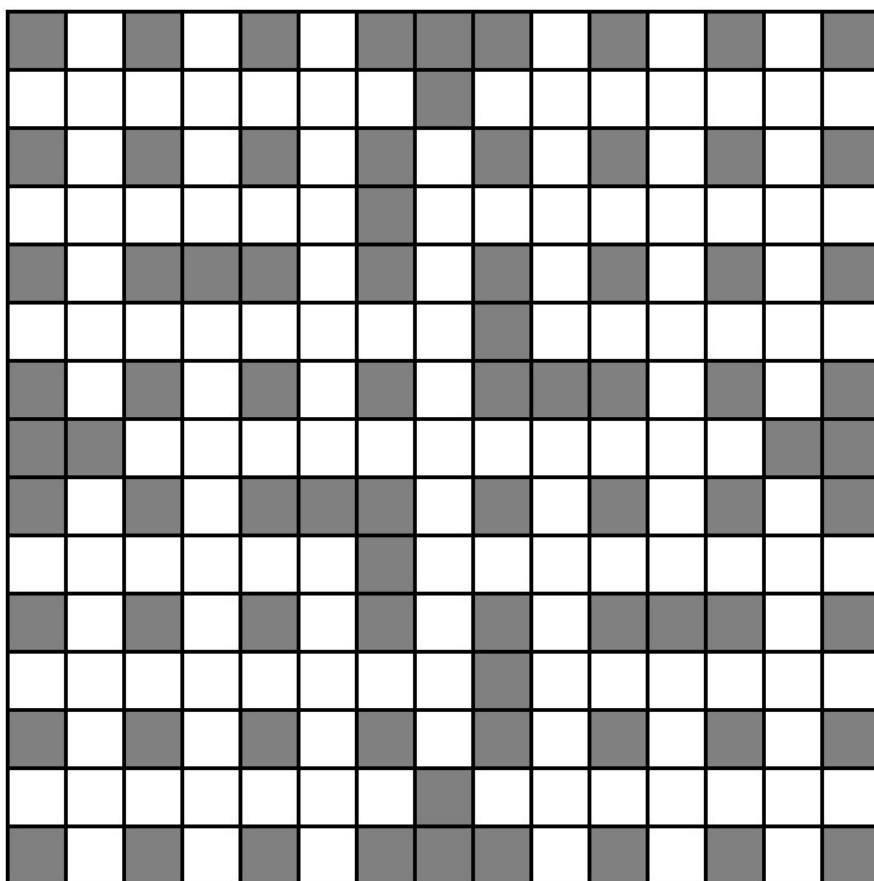
- Thank-you to all the people who put in so much effort to keep the rest of us entertained throughout the year. It really is very much appreciated. *Ulla Axelsen*
- Overall, the toughest month for quite sometime. Got nothing to do with us getting old of course. *Richard Skinner*
- Many thanks to the club for my Slot 6 prize - very handy for Christmas. *Laurence Kennedy*
- Thanks to all for a great year of crosswords. A merry Christmas and a happy new year to everyone. *Anne Simons*



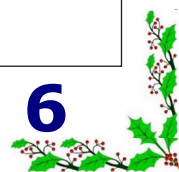
Slot 4

AJ
by
ManveruPrize
\$50

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



- A** Organism needing energy and phosphorus to develop! (10)
B *Be Concise* is about the disciplines of life (11)
C Caught with no money for cosmetic from the bark of a buckthorn (7)
D I missed revised deadline for mistakes to be removed (7)
E Centaurs - characters reimagined by an ancient people (8)
F Barricade trapping lord after duke disappeared from Medici home (8)
G Displays disgust after Government forces finally surround shellshocked Crimea (8)
H Reverend Spooner's friend to address love letters they're not (4,4)
I Byzantine style image illustrating Council of Nicaea's leading characters (4)
J Gemstone judge breaks chain clasping crown of topaz (7)
K It can hover when stabilizer incorporates way to meet resistance (7)
L Realign umbels to protect plant tissue (6)
M One has second role with night shifts? (11)
- N** Legal officials unavailable for certain stars? (8)
O Pillars of society - blokes with independence, oddly (8)
P UN, for instance, putting pressure on France and the other nine? (6)
Q Performers opening with Vivaldi perhaps? (7)
R Harry displaying anger with Vice-Admiral intervening (6)
S Safeguard Yorkshire river hemmed in by filthy place (6)
T *Meals on wheels* attempt to acquire expensive car without the fringe benefits? (7)
U Wearing livery, knight is concealed in the dark? (10)
V Elect to ban vowel transposition? (4)
W WD or WED. say? (7)
X United champion from Japan with a cross rising to the perfect spot (6)
Y Noddy and Sleepy, finally getting new names? (3-3)
Z A punchline covering current representation has more liveliness (7)

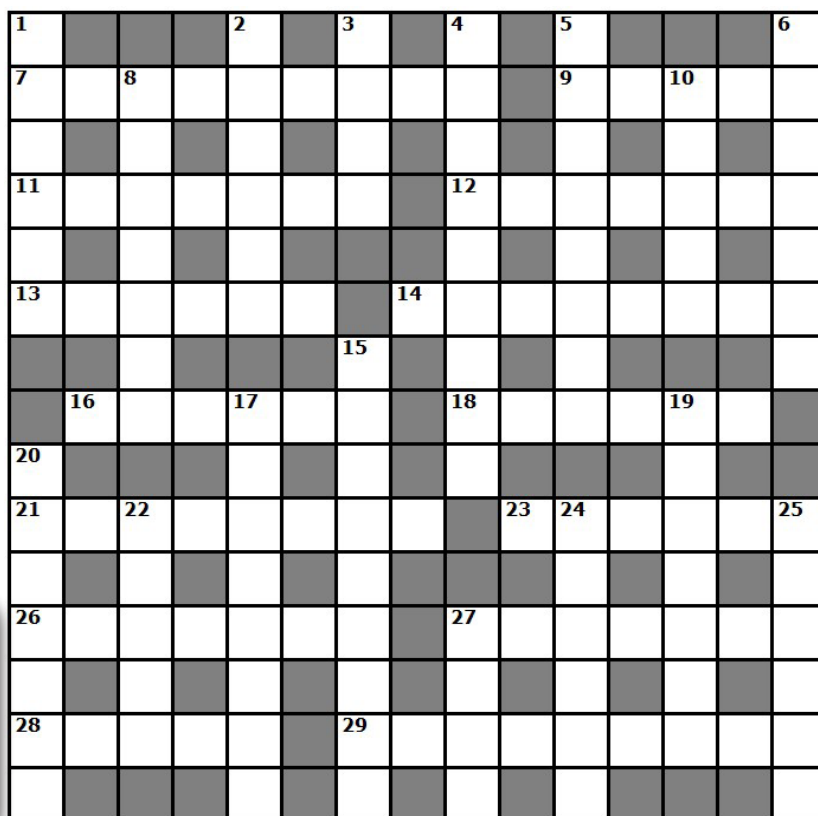


Slot 5

**30 Letters
for Nina
by
Crowsman**

**Prize
\$50**

Each clue contains two definitions in either order. One defines the answer to be entered. The other yields a subsidiary word equivalent to dropping a letter (and the space when two words) from the answer. In a few cases, the answer and the subsidiary word are connected logically.



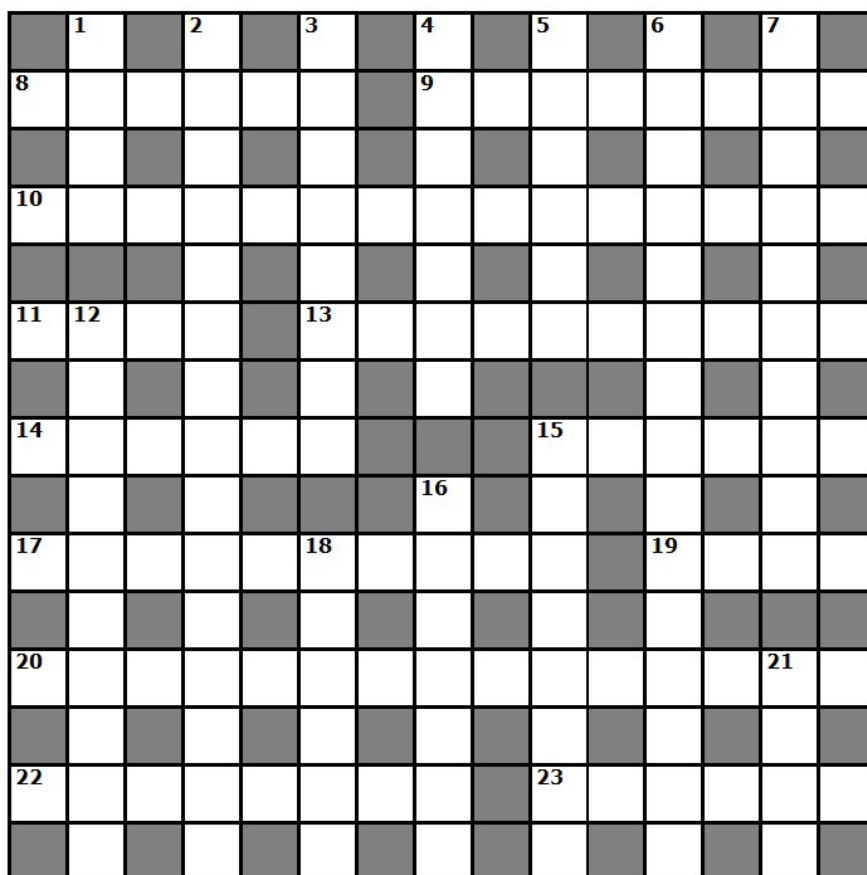
Across

- 7** Place for hiding personal history (9)
- 9** Contests to qualify bowlers, perhaps (5)
- 11** Credit card providers' problems (7)
- 12** Bearing someone seductive (7)
- 13** Untrustworthy key (6)
- 14** Straightened out squeaking, perhaps (8)
- 16** Rowers' stature (6)
- 18** Safeguard result (6)
- 21** Wild and giddy violent-tempered woman (8)
- 23** Berejiklian, perhaps, having open spaces in a wood (6)
- 26** Not far off by that means (7)
- 27** Nautical word for "usher"? (3,4)
- 28** Private saved perfect Nazi (5)
- 29** South African provincial cricket team near the top? (9)

Down

- 1** Features many links (6)
- 2** Two-pronged tool fitment in a bathroom (6)
- 3** Had been packing pads (4)
- 4** A way to avoid forgetting others (9)
- 5** Area near the shore turns yellowish (8)
- 6** Footstep with legs on either side (7)
- 8** Grant postponement to place elsewhere (7)
- 10** Seed covering part of year (5)
- 15** Making stable outbuildings on farm (9)
- 17** Africans' old money (8)
- 19** More sunburnt stags (3,4)
- 20** He was engaged to kill eminent US poet (7)
- 22** Wary of Groucho's look (5)
- 24** Barely inclined, cannot stand (6)
- 25** Greek island fried pastry (6)
- 27** Active mole (4)

Slot 6

Cryptic
by
FlowermanPrize
\$50

Across

- 8 Note altered tune in piece of music (6)
 9 Throbbing pain in ear after being bashed by fighter (8)
 10 Noted caller in a favourable position with face card and a two of spades (8,7)
 11 Are sailors spending the week in Levantine port? (4)
 13 Composition of outer skin primarily, adjectivally (10)
 14 Vagrant returning to drink Earl's spirit (6)
 15 Premier visiting heads of academy investigating cases of allergic reactions (6)
 17 Ockers hung around oil rig workers (10)
 19 Harry beginning to shoe horses (4)
 20 Large saloon bar destroyed by British defensive systems (7,8)
 22 Mark plugging rubella shot for protection (8)
 23 Maybe Carol receiving thank-you for knitted cape (6)

Down

- 1 Put up family extremely deficient in capital (4)

- 2 Move south to arrest international robbers holding lecturer's trunks (6,9)
 3 Affected fool filling stein regularly (8)
 4 Internal security catching Marge playing recording devices (7)
 5 Shocked agent has to replace enrolled nurse (6)
 6 Albanian must OK new supply chain in Eastern Europe (6,9)
 7 Humble gunman sure is upset after losing rifle on vacation (10)
 12 Over at Ohio farm chartered surveyor has taken bearings (4,2,4)
 15 Difficult to understand point ultimately in sailor's stratagem (8)
 16 Craft on top in competition easily beating one American team (7)
 18 Simpleton circles deserted lake in Nebraska (6)
 21 Some preferred a milder cheese (4)

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 Closing mail date: Friday 26 January 2024

Slot 7

**For Helen &
Peter
by
Eclogue**

**Prize
\$50**

Across

- 1 Potential energy in support lodge (5)
4 Jonathan's covered in rocks, Jack's interrupting buzzer and Mary Jane's embracing Lambert (9)
9 Defects generating green energy with sun (7)
10 Removes poor service in damn society (7)
11 Signalling appliances box seedy fluid after change in ultimate direction (9)
12 Initially, Far East Roman enclaves separated old mates (5)
13 Clever editors in part were prized (7)
15 Hebrew character contributing to notices for

basic units of meaning (7)

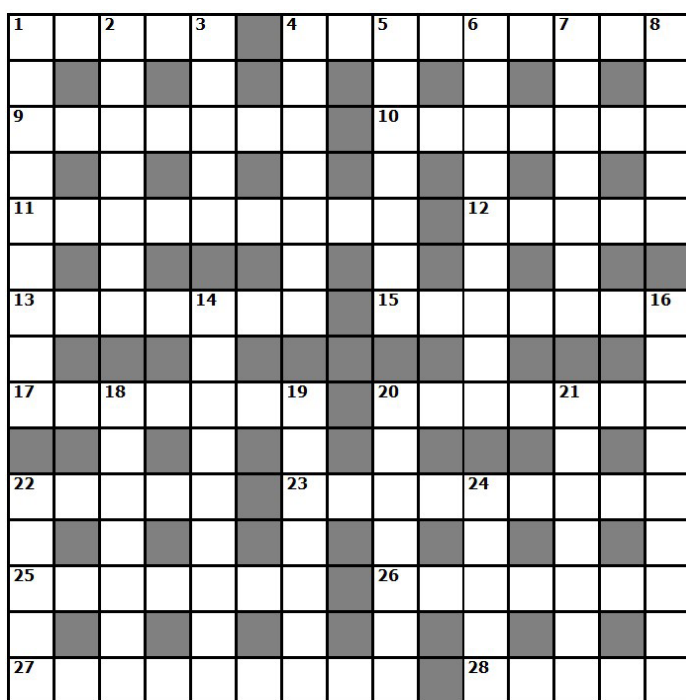
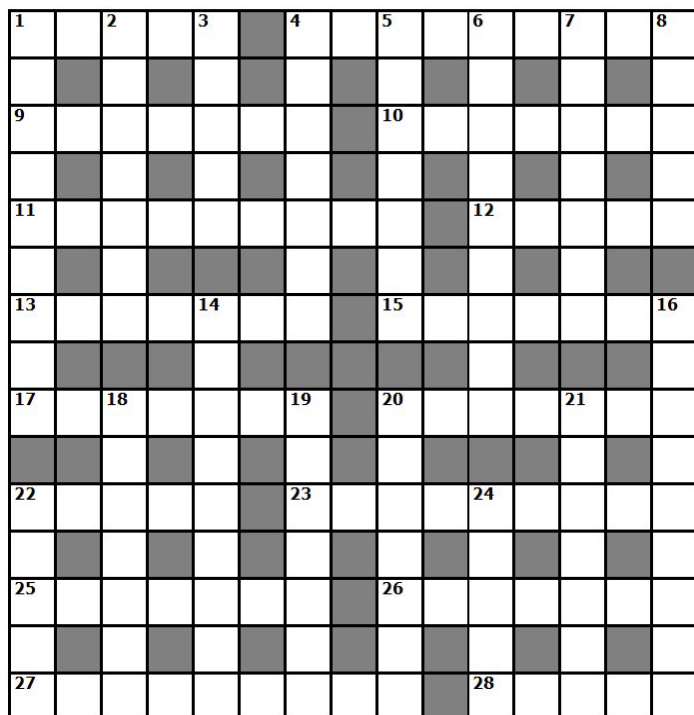
- 17 Cancelled permit in action (7)
20 Beggars in Perth live with mental deterioration briefly (7)
22 Herald's powdered space in seat (5)
23 Flat cap turned over, seen wiping disinfectants (9)
25 In retrospect oracle, enthralling last month, declines (7)
26 Young bawd to gain advantage over alien (7)
27 Contrary retired uncle once hired out rangefinder (9)
28 Wide mesh covers townships in Greece (5)

Down

- 1 Through time muscle turned and checked flow (9)
2 Criticises heads of group of Europeans (3-4)
3 Cries of praise primarily from European university games' enthusiastic spectators (5)
4 Person hugging other, heartily embraced (7)
5 Lures Judges onto high seas (7)
6 Will's very renowned source folio made out (4-5)
7 Purple flowers embellishing lur with vague myth (7)
8 Deprivation of sleep effects shown initially to be bouts that are unpleasant (5)
14 Coarse joke dreamt up for large settlement on the North Sea (9)
16 What's wrong with us? It is an inflammation in a cavity (9)
18 Camille cracked shell from a slug (7)
19 A little lad turned up, ready for computer file (4,3)
20 Following uptown Chicago, say, relative rises for one who murmurs (7)
21 Antipersonnel device losing power for mass hymn (7)
22 The old erase record initially in jazz style (5)
24 Goat, for one, having unpleasant smell on record (5)



Name: _____



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

Explanations for December 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.

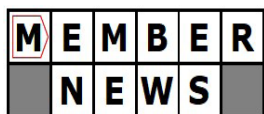
Slot 1 Bogeyman. Across: 1 dd, 4 dd, 7 F + ANS, 10 cd [Donne/IOM], 11 WAR in COD, 12 (E + FIR)<, 13 S + TAY, 14 UV + rEar, 15 TIDE<, 17 homoph "moose", 19 A + T + AIR<, 21 cd HOUSE + MAID, 24 NAB + OB, 25 PiSkY + CHIC, 27 EM + PRESS, 30 AM + C + E + E, 33 SE + MAP + (HERO)*, 35 (TROUNCE - NE)*, 36 BIS + HOP, 38 G + RAM, 40 E PIC, 41 RE in AA, 42 IO R..T, 43 FA in SARI, 44 T + ACT, 45 AUNTS - non-U, 46 dd, 47 Homoph "him".

Slot 2 KA. Across: 1 se(d)er, 5 of+fish, 10 port+(alvine)*, 13 tear+moo<, 14 cal(i)co, 15 hidden, 16 a+la+mo, 17 a+star+et<, 18 fines+s+e, 24 pay+back, 25 No 1 ball is odd, 27 anag, 29 t+ree, 30 (safer)*+h, 32 ton+lets, 33 homoph "pick a lily", 34 re+hash, 35 p+leon. **Down:** 1 dd, 2 cd - prohibition, 3 e+tui, 4 al+OT<, 5 overs+e+a, 6 fe(a)st, 7 fir(e)man, 8 sports+cast, 9 cd, 11 ac+cost, 19 sp(l)ot+ch, 20 dd, 21 gab+Elle, 22 r+otter, 23 hidden, 26 cd, 28 rhe(a)in, 30 a+sar [Chamb], 31 dd.

Slot 3 Isla. Across: 1 SAID* + BLING, 6 UP< chasing COY, 9 V(e)I(l)S + OR, 10 SHAM LANK Spoonerised, 11 cd, 13 C + ANTE + RED, 14 IN + TAKE, 16 NOB + ALL, 18 FEE + BLEST, 21 (HE + I SEE PROFIT SAG)*, investment = siege, 23 DINES inside SWAB<, 25 IDIO(t) + M, 26 E + LOPE & lit, 27 D+ ANY< + MISTS. **Down:** 1 OVID< + T, 2 (U + STAIN) in SABLE, 3 O in BARQUE, 4 rev hidden, 5 G + AMBIT, 6 (a)CI(d) + STERN, 7 YEA(r), 8 (UN KIND) + EST, 12 (PIE RUG RATS)* eating F, 13 CONS + TABLE, 15 ZERO + E + SIN, 17 IDE under LEES, 19 cd, 20 A + GREED, 22 SUM + PS, 24 WOO(d).

Slot 4 Crowsman. A AG(IT)ATE, **B** OBTAIN* + C, **C** CAN(COIN*)AL, **D** DIL(A + DIP<)ATED, **E** AXE< + MINE, **F** F(ELICIT)ATES, **G** G(AM)UT, **H** HUM + ORAL, **I** (MADE IT IT)*, **J** JUTE + S(trong), **K** K(EYED)IN, **L** dd, **M** MINIM + AXED, **N** NO(MINA)TE, **O** OR + IBIS, **P** LOP< + ICEMAN, **Q** AT in IRAQ<, **R** palindrome, **S** (f)ELINES<, **T** palindrome, **U** UNI(S)ON, **V** VASE + LINES, **W** WIG + AN, **X** S(ENEM(y))IX<, **Y** ERE in NAVY<, **Z** (CE + TOPAZ)<.

Slot 5 Zinzan. Across: 1 heads, 5 non-even,t, 9 (old,tapir)*, 10 ddef, 11 (to,sermonis-)*, 12 id es-, 13 S(ca(m)per)S, 16 S-----e<>(life)*, 17 B(OR)-row, 19 (cassette)*, 21 ddef, 22 on,(all fours), 25 at,t(le)e-, 26 un(ct)ions, 27 free,war,E, 28 -----se gues-----, **Down:** 2 -----t,-o-r- s-o-, 3 tap(x)e<, 4 (amused)*,e-----, 5 n-----,(no,less)*, 6 no,d,dies, 7 (civil)*<>trio, 8 -n,-un,-n,-eries, 14 chor-,(tries)*, 15 m(arse)ille, 18 woo(ma--er)*, 19 art<,duce, 20 s-p-l- i-c-e-s-, 23 (r)owing, 24 ran,GE.



New Members: A hearty welcome to all our new members, who have taken advantage of our offer of free membership for 2023 and 2024. We trust that you will enjoy our fellowship and look forward to your participation.

Compiler of the Year 2023 The Executive Committee has considered a number of options for the election of Compiler of the Year and is not satisfied that the traditional method, or recent alternatives, result in a satisfactory conclusion. We reviewed the Clue of the Month results for this year and noted that most of our regular compilers, who freely provide the members with their monthly challenges, featured at least once for COTM and many times for individual nominations. As a result we have decided that all our compilers are worthy of the title, thank them for their work, and so dub them "Joint Compilers of the Year for 2024".

Donations to the ACC Prize Fund: Many thanks to our members for their generous donations to the Prize Fund this month.

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 assistance. Do let Ian know if you are interested.

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 hyperlink

If you're not receiving your copy of the magazine, please email jenny@wenham.net.au to make sure we have your current email address.

December 1: Bogeyman (Ian Williams)

- Thank you Bogeyman. I enjoyed it and learned a few new words in the process! *Caroline Mackay-Sim*
- A good start to another month of fun. Thank you all. *Robyn Wimbush*
- I usually try to do the slot 1 without making use of references, not this one! The "fightin' fish" had me thinking. Very enjoyable. *Ulla Axelsen*
- Good clues. *Roy Taylor*
- A fun start to the month! *Fraser Simpson*
- A good mix of ordinary and obscure words, with (thankfully!) lots of checked letters. *Kath Harper*
- ISLE was my runner-up for COTM. *Nea Storey*
- Wow! 52 clues - Mr Williams' Whopper! *Tony Dobe*
- A lot a tricky words in this one. Great puzzle. *Mal Cockburn*

December 2: KA (Karl Audrins)

- A few strange words where others do fit, but overall good satisfaction. I especially liked OFFISH and TEA ROOM. *Len Colgan*
- The clue for OFFISH was a gem. *Brian Tickle*
- Some challenging words but a fun puzzle. *Ann Millard*
- The hardest part is filling in the answers on line! *Ian Mason*
- Very enjoyable although not totally sure of some of my answers. *Ulla Axelsen*
- Excessive use of dictionary required for my taste here. *Roy Taylor*
- I do like these puzzles. They certainly keep you on your toes. Liked 9dn HAMLET. *Julie Crowe*
- I learned a few new words. *Fraser Simpson*
- An interesting challenge with lots of quiriness as usual from KA. *Ian Thompson*
- Many unfamiliar words. *Nea Storey*
- I liked the clue for PICCALILLI. *Robyn McKenzie*
- Fun to solve. ASAR was the last clue I solved. *Mal Cockburn*

December 3: Isla (Rob Moline)

- A bit more challenging than the typical slot 3. BAPTISM is clever. The definition of DYNAMISTS seems unfair since it suggests a singular solution. *Ian McKenzie [A number of dynamists with one daughter seemed a rather difficult concept so we relied on the dictum, quoted by Don Manley, that "punctuation may be misleading" - Ed]*
- Best were No Ball and FEEBLEST. Is the apostrophe in 27ac misplaced? *Len Colgan*
- So many great clues. So many aha moments. *Ulla Axelsen*
- I loved these clues which needed a bit of lateral thinking. *Roy Taylor*
- Lots of great clues. Top fave was TRANQUILLIZER GUN. *Fraser Simpson*
- Some of these clues made me laugh in delight. *Kath Harper*
- Excellent surfaces. *Ian Thompson*
- I can sympathize with the setter because when I came to 21ac I had to check if it was seige or siege. *Tony Dobe*
- TRANQUILLIZER GUN was a corker! *Mal Cockburn*

December 4: Crowsman (Len Colgan)

- A good tough challenge. MINIMAXED was new to me. *Ian Thompson*
- Took ages to find the M word. Not sure of significance of title, but good fun all the same. *Ulla Axelsen*
- Great AJ. I note that all the answers fit the rule for his Quiz. *Roy Taylor*
- Was quizzical until the penny dropped! Added a nice element to solving. *Patricia Abbott*
- Amazing. All checked letters vowels, and all unchecked letters consonants. I imagine an enormous challenge for a setter, and all for our enjoyment. Thanks Len. *Julie Crowe*
- Al? Really AZ! Azed the inquisitor, like Ximenes *Brian Symons*
- Amazing. All checked letters vowels, and all unchecked letters consonants. I imagine an enormous challenge for a setter, and all for our enjoyment. Thanks Len. *Julie Crowe*
- Only while completing the online grid did I finally realise the significance of Crowsman's 'quizzical' title. *Kath Harper*
- Lots of great clues, as usual, from Crowsman! *Fraser Simpson*
- Hmm. Ian's cryptic remark had me diligently perusing answers on this one. OK, so all across clues have another four letter word within them but link...possibly. I did note that senile was in there, both up and down, but again, link...? I await the revelation. *Richard Skinner*
- Nice link with the Quiz! *Ron Jarman*
- A tough AJ indeed. *Mal Cockburn*

December 5 Zinzan (Andrew Patterson)

- Nice puzzle. Particularly liked ATTLEE & TORSO. *Ian McKenzie*
- Hard to pick COTM from IDES, ON ALL FOURS, ATTLEE and VITRIOLIC. LOI was MIKE. Duh! *Len Colgan*
- Wonderful clueing. *Brian Symons*
- Most enjoyable. *Ian Thompson*
- The clue to SEGUES [Goes from one piece to the next piece of unwise guesswork] summed up how I felt for a great deal of this puzzle. I can't justify my answer to 17-across with the definition, but it's all I could think of. Great challenge with some clever clues. *Ulla Axelsen*
- I especially liked NON EVENT, WOOMERA and MIKE. When the penny eventually dropped for ATTLEE I voted it COTM. *Roy Taylor*
- Some great clues here. MIKE and ON ALL FOURS both had me scratching my head, and ATTLEE was very clever. *Julie Crowe*
- This was tricky and I have little confidence in my solution. *Ann Millard*
- I needed a bit of lateral thinking to solve this one, but it was worth the effort. *Kath Harper*
- I enjoyed ON ALL FOURS, but it took me a long time to work out ATTLEE. *Nea Storey*
- I enjoyed this a lot. *Fraser Simpson*
- Tough. Very tough. But fair. *Richard Skinner*
- I found this rather tough, so not particularly confident! *Patricia Abbott*
- Several excellent clues. Hard to choose COTM! *Keith Bettles*
- I spent the longest time on this puzzle. ATTLEE gets my COTM as it was so cryptic. *Mal Cockburn*

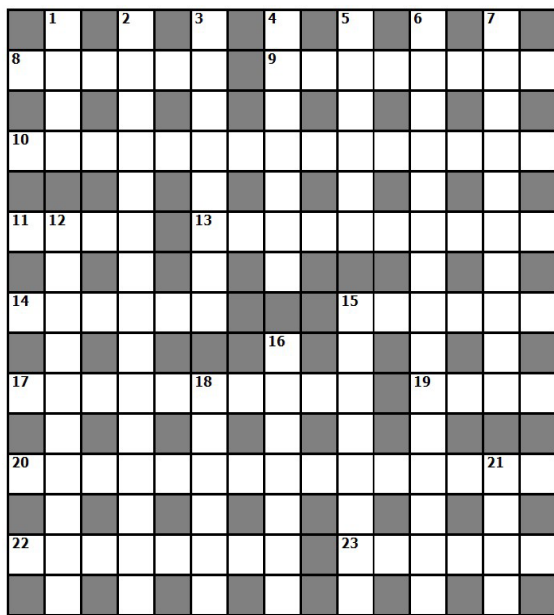


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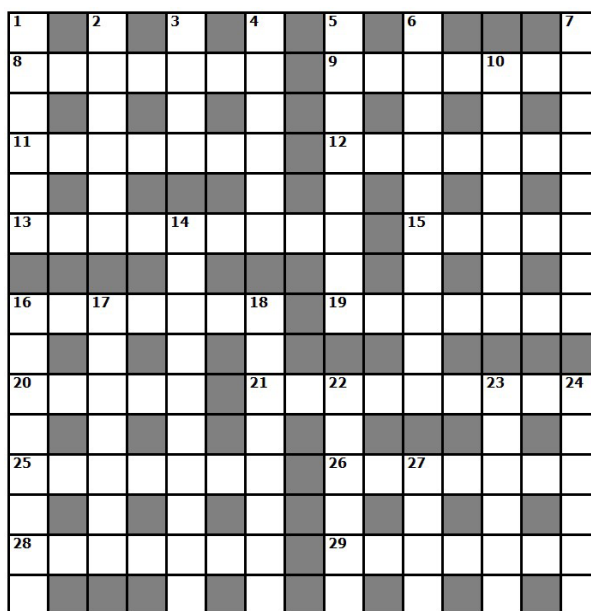


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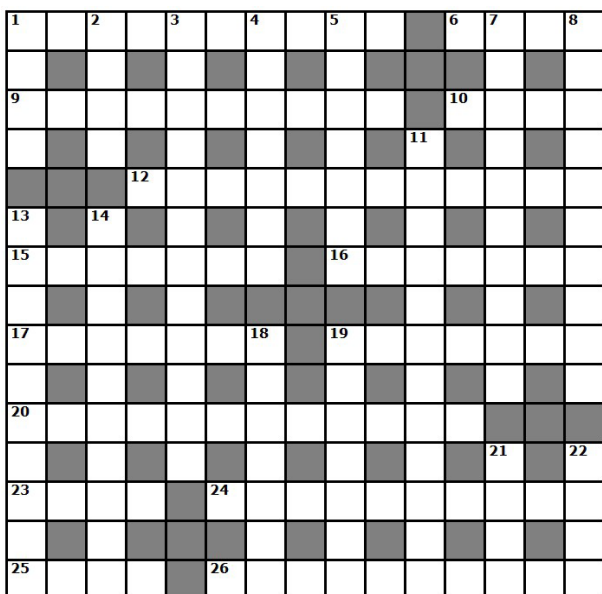
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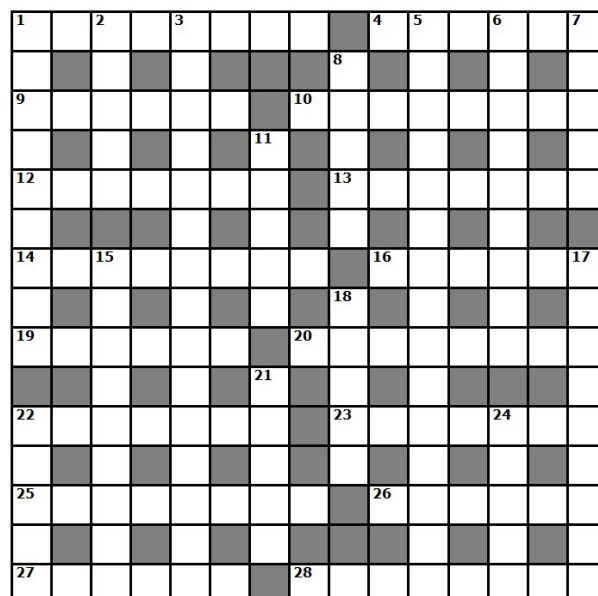


Clue of the Month

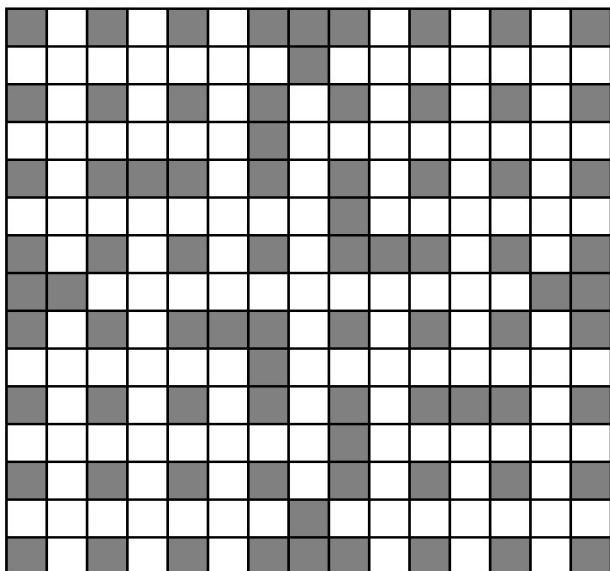
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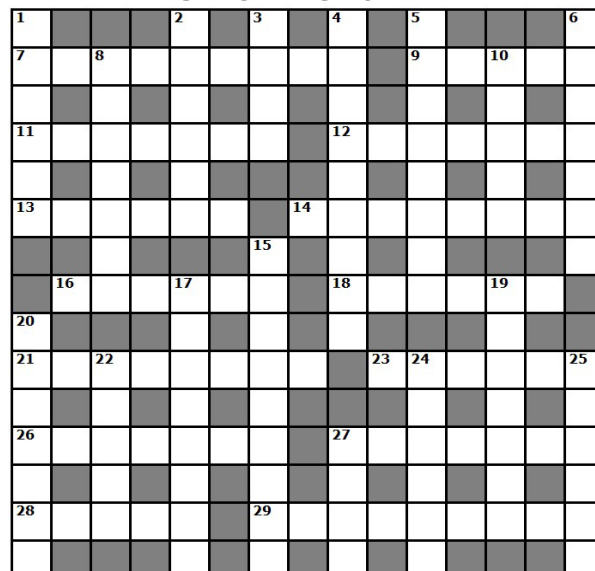
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JANUARY 4 2024



JANUARY 5 2024



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Quiz 1-2024 A Colourful Quiz by The Eager Beaver.

The letters of the solution to each clue form a colour. The clues are in alphabetical order of the solutions, **not** the colours. Solvers should submit the solution and the colour. Send your answers by email to Bev Cockburn: bevco4@bigpond.com or by mail to 27A Verlie Street South Wentworthville NSW 2145. Closing mail date 26 January 2024

- 1 Divisions of world history (4)
- 2 Substance stimulating antibodies (7)
- 3 South American native (9)
- 4 Very good! [Aust] ((6)
- 5 Freshwater fish (5)
- 6 Inter (4)
- 7 Song of praise (5)
- 8 Political alliances (7)
- 9 Of little cost (5)
- 10 Unpleasant task (5)
- 11 Preserve (4)
- 12 European oak (7)
- 13 Literary style (5)
- 14 Rotating ocean current (4)
- 15 New Year's Eve (8)
- 16 Crazy (6)
- 17 Shapeless mass (4)
- 18 Mineral constituents of a rock (7)
- 19 Fruit (5)
- 20 Small units of length(7)
- 21 Large unit of length (4)
- 22 Horny plate (4)
- 23 Identification label (7)
- 24 Button (6)
- 25 Central Asian animal (6)
- 26 Near the ear (7)
- 27 Painful (4)
- 28 Splinter (6)
- 29 Pieces of gossip (5)
- 30 Flexible twig (5)



Results of Quiz 12-2023, Alternating by Crowsman. Entries: 27
Winner: Lynn Jarman. Congratulations!

31: U Axelsen, L Jarman, T McLeay, A Miles, A Patterson, D Procter, W Ryan, F Simpson, M Veress **30:** P Abbott, P Garner, K Harper, J Leigh, A Millard, B Siegman, R Skinner, R Taylor **29:** W Allen, B Cockburn, J Crowe, R Jarman, I Mason, D Meek, D Rosendorff, R Wimbush **27:** D Grainger, C McClelland

Answers: 1 Americanised, 2 Bituminised, 3 Categorical, 4 Demilitarised, 5 Dilapidated, 6 Executive toy, 7 Facilitative, 8 Garage sales, 9 Hemiparasitic, 11 Inoperative, 10 Japanese cedar, 12 Keratinised, 13 Latin American, 14 Legitimised, 15 Manipulative, 16 Medicine cabinet, 17 Numerological, 18 Ovipositor, 19 Paracetamol, 20 Punitive damages, 21 Recapitulated, 22 Rehabilitative, 23 Semiperimeter, 24 Toxicological, 25 Unapologetic, 26 Unimaginative, 27 Verisimilitude, 28 Vituperative, 29 Wine vinegar, 30 Xenogenesis, 31 Zidovudine

Setter's Comments: Some other versions were accepted, such as 'bituminized' and 'bituminated' for #2. But, most surprisingly, I lost count of the number of entries spelling it 'bitumenised' which is what one probably expects unless you look it up. A stated precondition for this quiz was that all answers are in Chambers, to be fair. After some thought, I eventually accepted 'devitalised' and 'debilitated' for #5 even though they removed 'dilapidated', the one common answer with the AJ Slot 4 puzzle. Interesting that six of the answers end in IVE, plus two other first words.

Solvers' Feedback:

- Some new words but ultimately guessable and checkable. *Andrew Patterson*
- Had to watch your Ps and Qs entering this. *Roy Taylor*
- What a great collection of long words. *Betty Siegman*
- I did enjoy the quiz, though some provided quite a challenge. And what a lovely lot of long words. Many thanks. *Julie Crowe*
- Thanks for an entertaining quiz. It was a challenge to eliminate the potential answers that did not fit the pattern. *Kath Harper*
- Thanks for a very challenging Quiz, have learnt a lot of new words, not that I will remember them all. *Claire McClelland*
- This is a fun quiz with answers that can be figured out with vocabulary and word origin knowledge. Great choice of words. *Fraser Simpson*
- Bituminised - this is Spellcheck's spelling. I had written bitumenised on the basis of bitumen, a word from my vocabulary used in a previous job. Never assume! I assumed that 29 would begin with X and 30 with Y. However my 'logical'? words would have a pair of consonants. Thanks for the additions to my vocabulary. *Lynn Jarman*

December 6-2023 Cryptic by Robespierre

(see page 2 for solution)

Entries received: 51, Correct: 44, Success rate: 86%.**Prizewinner: Claire McClelland. Congratulations!****Compiler's observations**

An almost worryingly low error rate for a Slot 6 – but a total of eight, readily avoidable typos – and two ILIUMs for IDIOM. And the sourpuss birdbrain of a compiler hadn't even let the cat out of the bag (or pig out of the poke?) by alluding to the existence of 8 theme solutions as an additional aid to solvers. There were also 3 animal names (RAM, BOAR & HAKE) contained within the other solutions but this was entirely happenstance. Does that make a dog's breakfast?

Explanations – Across: 1,9 [L(O)UNG + RD] around ELIZA [as in Doolittle], **4** OB + LIVIN(g) around O, **10** (APRON)* + KING, **11** ID, MOI<, **12** WET around P(rang), **13** cd, **15** LOL [Laughing Out Loud] + LARD, **16** ROE around (TO< + L), **19,30** GREASE + MONK + YE<, **21** FAR + RAG + (ch)O(ps), **23** DON + KEY + (VETO)*, **25** US(h)ER, **27** N(o)N in EU + I(nstils), **28** LEAD + (SLAGS)*, **29** SUPS around HAKE. **Down: 1** (FELLOW)* around ON, **2** (O + UP + PAL)* in (RUN)*, **3** Spooner "rue goo", **5** BUG + BEAR, **6** IDIOT + BOARD, **7** hidden, **8** hidden<, **14** (RAM + ELI) inside CASE, **17** homoph. 'lone" + SHARK, **18** (TRY OUT)* around IS, **20** N inside EVE + LOP, **21** FA + TACT<, **22** cd, **24** N(e)IN + JA, **26** AGO around I.

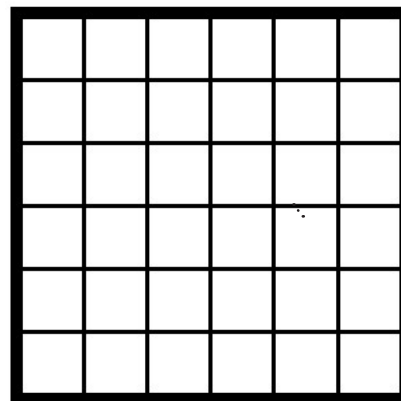
Solvers' Feedback

- Enjoyable challenge. Liked UNPOPULAR and NINJA. *Len Colgan*
- Very enjoyable. *Ian Thompson*
- Some very tricky definitions, but great fun with its 8 animal idioms. *Ulla Axelsen*
- Enough good tricky clues here. *Roy Taylor*
- I really enjoyed this one. *Julie Leigh*
- Some great clues. I liked 22d UDDERS! *Ann Millard*
- Neat clue for IDIOT BOARD *Nea Storey*
- Quite the menagerie! *Fraser Simpson*
- And I thought slot 5 was tough! I have no idea how 25A works or indeed, what the correct answer is. Might get lucky... *Richard Skinner*
- I loved all the animals embedded in this puzzle: lizard; monkey; donkey; shark; wolf; tiger; cat & bear and the udder parts of a cow. Great theme. *Mal Cockburn*

FRAZ WORD SQUARE Dec 6 (Solution on p 15)

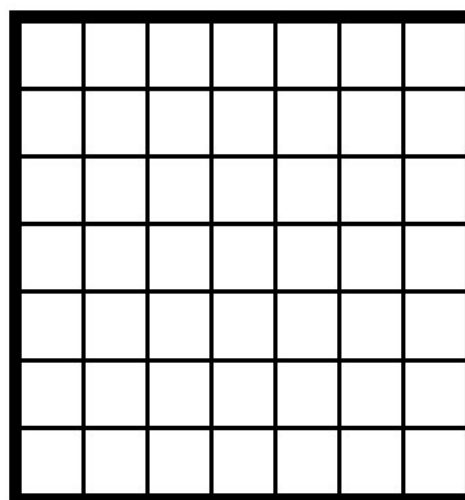
Identical words read across and down in this square. Clues are not listed in order.

- Abandon punishment
- Something that cleans blackboards...um...like...um...
- French fellow about to go behind harbour structure
- Quit acquiring last of designer clothing line?
- Sane drunk embraces each Trojan War hero
- Set apart clip in South Dakota

**FRAZ WORD SQUARE Dec 7** (Solution on p 15)

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

- Available from schemer, it involved retirees
- Barrio businesses foretell what North American cars need
- Gives a hand to donkey-worshippers?
- He abandons heirs outside a few compounds
- Large peninsula where Monrovia is
- Most angry, I pace street
- Oracle claiming Russian fighter backed governments in power



December 7-2023: Crowsman's Corner (Len Colgan)

Entries 55 . Correct 44 . Success rate 80 %.
Prizewinner: Alan Dyer. Congratulations!

Adjudicator's Comments: A repeated error was to enter MISADMINISTERED (not in Chambers) and MISAPPROPRIATES instead of the correct MALADMINISTERED and MALAPPROPRIATES. The wordplay "learned about boy, small" is MASTERED about (LAD + MINI), while "fitting amidst rising criticism" is APPROPRIATE inside SLAM<. The incorrect answers fail to match.

Explanations. Across: 1 HAM + GRUB<, 5 G + LIBBER, 9 MA(LAD + MINI)STERED, 10 R(EP)ORTERS, 11 LEARN*, 12 MAR + SHY, 13 BIG MO(U)TH, 15 C(A + PEW)ORK, 16 DISCUS(s), 19 ANIMA(I), 20 (s)UBARTICLE*, 21 PUT(THEM + OCKERS)ON, 22 RESULTS*, 23 SITS< around DEN. **Down:** 1 HUM + DRUM, 2 APPROPRIATE in SLAM<, 3 UNDER(THE)WEA(THE)R, 4 dd, 5 GAINS + AID, 6 INTE(RIM + DIVIDE)ND, 7 BAR + ON + MUNCH + A(USE)N, 8 H(PLOD)UR<, 14 AR(e) + CLAMPS, 15 CHAP + PAL, 17 rev hidden, 18 hidden.

Members' Feedback:

- Enjoyable puzzle. Especially appreciated PUT THE MOCKERS ON & UNDER THE WEATHER. *Ian McKenzie*
- A good finish to the month. Nearly put in PISCES for DISCUS in 16ac but it just didn't fit the word play of the clue. *Ulla Axelsen*
- The BARON and the other long words provided quite a challenge. I had not heard of the Queensland moth so BIGMOUTH took a while. *Roy Taylor*
- Great puzzle with some lovely clues. I loved GLIBBER and THEM OCKERS. However, UNDER THE WEATHER was my pick for COTM - clever, precise and fun! *Julie Crowe*
- What better way to finish off the month of Croz. *Ann Millard*
- Very enjoyable. My favourite wordplay was MALADMINISTERED. *Fraser Simpson*
- An excellent puzzle. I especially like: 'Put the mockers on' *Laurence Kennedy*
- Many thanks to our setters for some great puzzles to finish the year. I gave my COTM to Len's UNDER THE WEATHER but it could just as easily have gone to Robespierre's LOAN SHARK, Zinzan's ATTLEE, Isla's TRANQUILISER GUN or Bogeyman's ISLE. Well done all! *Andrew Miles*
- UNDER THE WEATHER and GAINSAID were my favourites out of a big set of great clues. *Mal Cockburn*
- Lots of amazing clues to work on. *Robyn McKenzie*

Solution to December Slot 7

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

Sol'n FRAZ WORD SQUARE 6-Dec

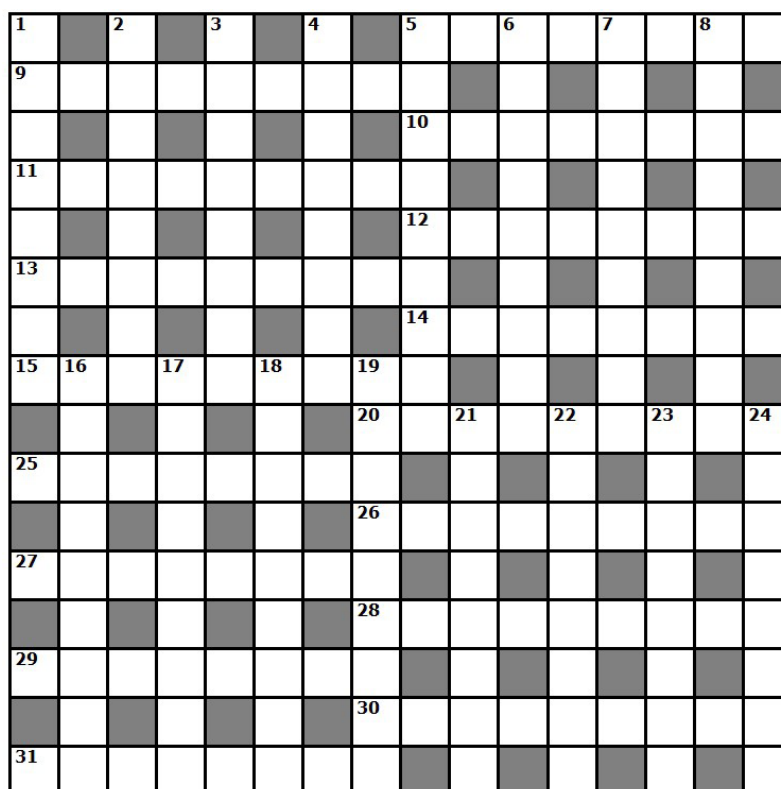
T	R	E	S	D
R	E	S	A	E
E	S	A	E	C
S	A	E	N	A
E	R	R	E	P
D	C	A	P	S

Sol'n FRAZ WORD SQUARE 7-Dec

S	T	S	I	S	S	V
T	S	E	T	A	I	R
S	E	M	E	G	R	E
I	T	I	R	E	M	E
S	A	G	E	D	B	O
S	R	E	M	O	S	I
A	I	E	R	I	B	L

Bonus 1**Cryptic
by
Crow-Boy**

This puzzle may be completed and assessed using ACCOLADE but will not be adjudicated. Solutions will be available from 1 January 2024

**Across**

- 5** Milk producer confining a beloved animal beside North African port. (4,4)
9 Car headlights control for day-time in Queensland city? (9)
10 Take up position in the middle, after opening, with knight check (8)
11 A charged particle in metal alloy grindings (9)
12 Having advantages and disadvantages, squeezed around ring after end of fight (3-5)
13 Eskimo takes time with one, on instinct (9)
14 Liberated a French skeptic in revolution (8)
15 Will small pet be kept in temporary accommodation? (9)
20 Swing bone about, poorly chewed (9)
25 Current amidst storms runs wild (8)
26 Resents bringing in flop pictures (9)
27 Sweet tablet in some water is sent back (8)
28 Ancient history not as hot around central Rome perhaps (5,4)
29 Tree change accommodating upset gran (8)
30 Captures St Faith's town with its leader abducted (9)
31 Somewhat forget the reason to succeed (3,5)

Down

- 1** Romantic intention record (8)
2 Reset a report holding up works (8)
3 Lifting up a set of tools (carpenter's tools), becomes cross with arms bent (8)
4 Visiting guy carried in poison found in deadly nightshade (8)
5 Browns upper torso with time in rising sun (9)
6 Mix pool spill with rain periodically (9)
7 Dreamt about unhealthy drudgery (9)
8 Most evil, like a candle set destroyed (9)
16 Fancy Truss rising up to make a speech! (9)
17 Classy blouse with feminine radiance (3-6)
18 Having made ends break beforehand, sharpen bullhorn (9)
19 Brother's daughter carries up money in the Philippines, for something to be positioned on a bridge (9)
21 Contract witches made with member of colony (8)
22 Glowing desire getting dreadfully sour (8)
23 Most cross its range in a new way (8)
24 What polities say is totally revealing for writer (8)

Bonus 2

Jumbo
by
KA

This puzzle may be completed and assessed using ACCOLADE but will not be adjudicated. Solutions will be available from 1 January 2024

Across

- 1 Prepare to include Catholic proclamation (5)
 6 Dandies have vehicle to go around river (5)
 11 Waits for offers to include drug (5)
 15 Ibsen oration includes the lady (6)
 16 Abolition of lament nun composed (9)
 18 Incises skin, wiping off iodine (4)
 19 Missile for Republican in an altercation (5)
 20 Repeat race around Portugal (6)
 21 A cat with yen for skeleton? (5)
 22 Indicative of a kind of language (5)
 23 Strike at area surrounding male (5)
 25 There is regret about code (7)
 28 I thus have a chord of equal tone (8)
 30 Adjusts nameless gifts (7)
 31 Burn rifle part (4)
 33 Pigeon plunged in America (4)
 35 Animal following countryman is a skunk (7)
 37 The respected Mrs Lauder went to sea (8)
 38 Australian oleander camouflages the chameleon (5)
 39 Spots of dirt on old South African statesman (5)
 42 Material of cloak covering Sovereign (5)
 44 Title of woman with junk, perhaps (8)
 48 African sprinted carrying baton (7)
 49 Falls over skewer (4)
 50 Announced mathematical function later in Scotland (4)
 51 Fish enjoy something slippery (3-4)
 54 Ill-treated pet cried, being worn out (8)
 56 Mosaic I left included girl looking back (7)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		14
15						16							17	
18				19					20					
21					22					23	24			
25		26		27			28					29		
30							31			32	33			34
35			36				37							
38					39	40			41	42			43	
44	45				46		47	48						
49				50				51			52			53
54				55				56						
57		58			59					60		61		
62			63			64					65			
66									67					
68					69					70				

- 57 Slander NCO with hearing apparatus (5)
 59 Group for Officer at Eastern festival (5)
 60 Penang staff conceals anxiety (5)
 62 Container for tile and small tree (6)
 64 Dryer for top soldiers at river (5)
 65 Way in for the first of groups at the Expo (4)
 66 Dishevelled nubile Ida was impossible to hear (9)
 67 Cliff containing metal is ladder-like (6)
 68 Officer has direction for group (5)
 69 Yeast fermented - until now (2,3)
 70 Signs for soldiers in Ordnance Survey (5)

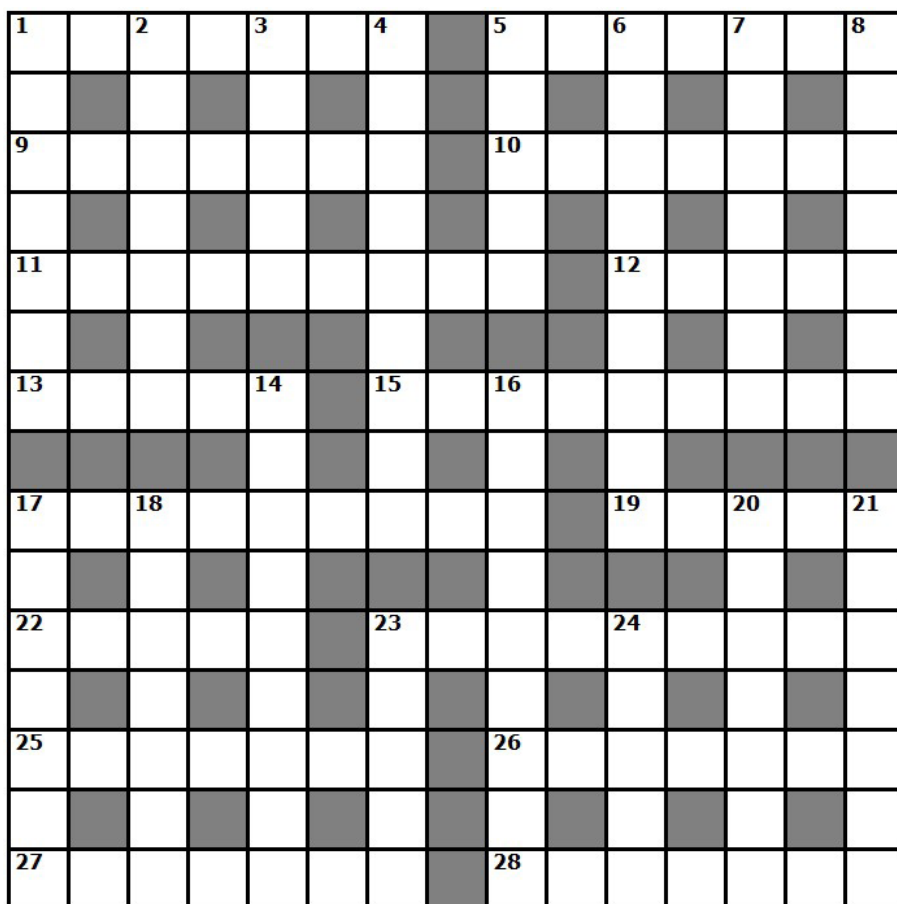
Down

- 1 Supernatural power held sedan on steep slope (6)
 2 Study is about altering route to atomic nucleus (8)
 3 Interested about Prince leaving horse (4)
 4 Flower of the Universe? (6)
 5 Salver for Australian involved in effort (4)
 6 Cafe employees have erroneous arts bias (8)
 7 In play, it is important to be serious (7)
 8 Plate exists in terminal (7)
 9 University tangling with Wests is most foolish (8)
 10 Tao Crusaders have returned tunic (7)
 11 Most proficient losing their leader are highly favoured (5)
 12 Solicitor loses money to child (3)

- 13 Girl takes train to shop (4)
 14 Peter, for one, and you, once had an infection (4)
 17 Koala is a local (6)
 24 Method of operation with sailors is new (6)
 26 Medico and lecturer are mixed up in musical (7)
 27 Adjournment about tax (6)
 29 It is customary around this time to be wandering around (7)
 32 Remember the revocation (6)
 34 Precedence includes garden (4)
 35 Friends hit back (4)
 36 The Spanish tray was adapted for beetle parts (6)
 40 Rebuilt cabins on motorway for taxis (8)
 41 Directions to match are most satisfactory (8)
 43 A stink pa stirred up in the country (8)
 45 Primate will mimic human (3-3)
 46 Itchy pox I avoided disguised a different condition (7)
 47 Frivolously, Australian cartoonist embraces the Italian (7)
 48 Judge has drug with re-made reefer (7)
 52 Hindu symbol has a fish with a medal (6)
 53 Stoves not hot for consumers (6)
 55 Wear away stick between two points (5)
 57 Transport southern fruit (4)
 58 Fill with returned letters (4)
 60 Bow with no musical direction (4)
 61 Female on drug creates a storm (4)
 63 Short kiss in public transport (3)

**Bonus 3****Cryptic
by
Lexi
Conner**

This puzzle may be completed and assessed using ACCOLADE but will not be adjudicated. Solutions will be available from 1 January 2024

**Across**

- 1 Prize for fellow with pocket (7)
- 5 Inspects non-starting pumps (7)
- 9 Pure federalists resort to rejecting fads (7)
- 10 Flash belt worn this month (7)
- 11 Increase in getting money interrupted by period of sleep (9)
- 12 Those at political margins accept bank lurk (5)
- 13 Order takeaways without weak sauce! (5)
- 15 Consumed unsafe quantity mostly used after function ended earlier (9)
- 17 Nicolas Small pursued Parrot or Finch to their homes (9)
- 19 Yes voter strays away from fish and fungus (5)
- 22 Introduction to back elements of tube design (5)
- 23 Authenticating gin if very different (9)
- 25 Frozen spikes rumoured to cause bikes not to start (7)
- 26 Least attractive humbug lies to cover up (7)
- 27 Old flame knocked over a quarter of spare rib on show (7)
- 28 Remained in though replaced! (5,2)

Down

- 1 Outer Japanese garments put together for some Catholics (7)
- 2 Band shortened hair style (4,3)
- 3 Lions looked inquisitively according to reports (5)
- 4 Dancing gnomes follow the signature tune (5,4)
- 5 Stopped sweetheart going inside in silence (5)
- 6 Blandly popular drink taken vainly (9)
- 7 With blazing heart, Aeolus became ardent (7)
- 8 Agreed to be paid (7)
- 14 Boat bash at waterside meeting place (5,4)
- 16 Cloaks baffle her sounds (9)
- 17 Doctor entered next to where visitors sit with a patient (7)
- 18 Refuse something like a massage? (7)
- 20 Australianise edelweiss to maintain flavour (7)
- 21 Nearly all right in number and tense (7)
- 23 Six is coming up – time to call (5)
- 24 Body of work made of oil (5)

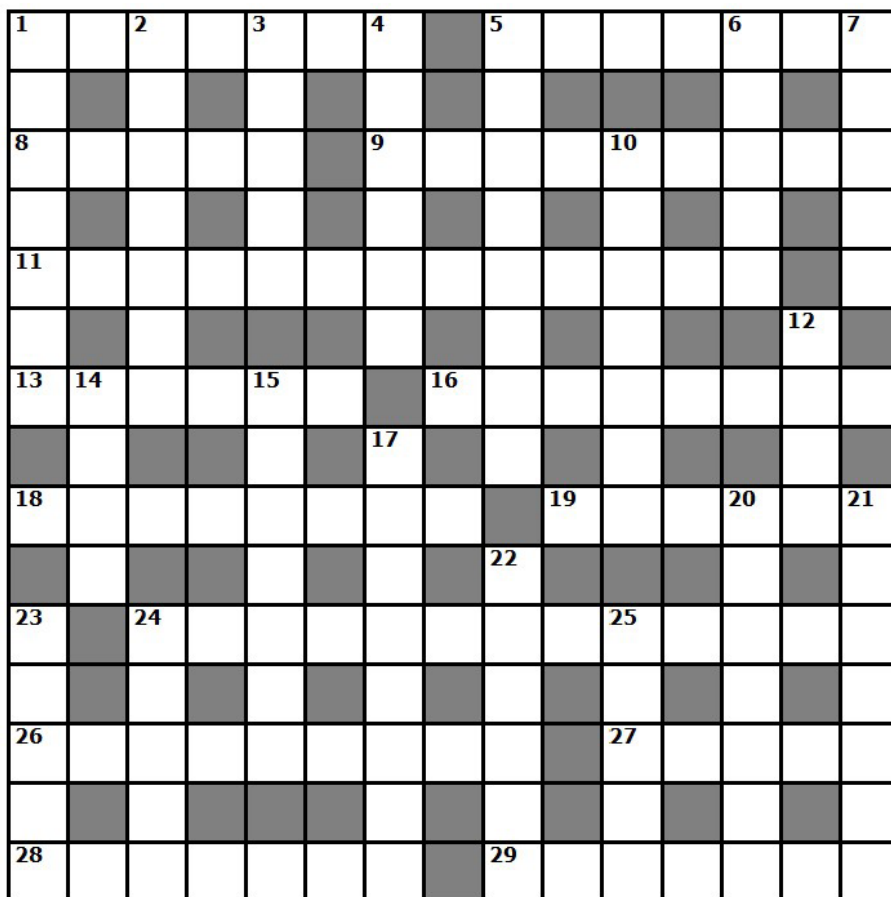


Bonus 4

Missing Alien(s) by InGrid

A number of Es and Ts are missing from the word play of all clues but definitions are normal.

This puzzle may be completed and assessed using ACCOLADE but will not be adjudicated. Solutions will be available from 1 January 2024



Across

- 1 Appeal ran over (7)
- 5 Toss drink back then left letter (7)
- 8 Current reversal to peace agreement (5)
- 9 Rebellious cross-dressing not scorned by these big cats (9)
- 11 Internal frameworks with new computer operating system for untangling large knots (13)
- 13 More spooky when two redheads circle island (6)
- 16 Uncommunicative cur in a pickle (8)
- 18 Poles take hour with Arab instrument, then hide (8)
- 19 Remove Democratic Liberal (6)
- 24 Crooked clan poll has head start on communication (9,4)
- 26 Regular smart gent caught by sudden appearance (9)
- 27 Drunk schoolie loses shoe and picks up bacteria (1,4)
- 28 Radius length of foot lever (7)
- 29 Bind or shackle part of heraldic band (7)

Down

- 1 Unknown room is remotest (7)
- 2 Missing edition from century creates roar (7)
- 3 Swords as an afterthought (5)
- 4 Illegitimate little darlings primarily named (6)
- 5 A heartless celebrity holds a flat fish (5,3)
- 6 Quizzes saints (5)
- 7 Follow sun around (5)
- 10 Sensitive independent in short shift (7)
- 12 Move at a pace or go back (4)
- 14 Son lost for ages (4)
- 15 Air raid precautions to transport protection device (7)
- 17 Upstart parish priest bearing cold cash! (8)
- 20 To charm Italian possibly over youth centre (7)
- 21 Similar to a fish kill in retrospect (3-4)
- 22 Official commanding knight in Tertiary deviation (6)
- 23 Vein reamed for this occasion (5)
- 24 Topic covers His Majesty (5)
- 25 Alter text about merchant navy department (5)

**November Clue-writing Competition: Write a clue for QUARTER (7)
Adjudicated by Drew Meek**

This is a word with many entries in Club references: 39 in Chambers and 40 in Macquarie. Admittedly, many definitions were variations of specific types of four-way division. So, I had expected a fair range of meanings in the entrants' clues' definitions. The unit of US currency and a neighbourhood predominated the definitions used. Mercy, a compass point and a fraction also were used. None went for a style of execution or citrus fruit segments or its heraldic use.

Eleven entries received to this competition, and most were of a high standard.

The winner was Ulla Axelsen with **Creative design to replace centre of eccentric neighbourhood**. Congratulations, Ulla!

The entries are listed in alphabetical order and the definitions are *italicised*.

Creative design to replace centre of eccentric neighbourhood*****

This clue is very well constructed charade clue. "creative design" indicates ART which replaces the centre of "eccentric" > QUeER to produce QUARTER, a neighbourhood. The secinds are clear and there are no superfluous words and to my mind the clue had the best surface reading (SR) of the entries.

Cu/rr/en/cy *1/2**

This one was not a common clue construction, though I have seen this type occasionally in Crozworld and other puzzles. Essentially, a cryptic definition using a rebus puzzle: Currency is a definition pointing to quarter. Under other circumstances perhaps too wide a definition but here the word is divided into four equal sets of two letters (quartered) suggesting to the solver that QUARTER is the type of currency that is the answer.

Graffiti perhaps embraced by Queens district****

Another nice charade clue for a district where ART (graffiti perhaps) is inside (embraced by) Queens QU & ER. The SR is good because Queens is a district of New York and street art there may be loved by some and loathed by others. While QU may be timeless for Queen, I wonder how long Queen = ER will remain suitable without an "old" indication.

Mercy for US athlete who throws back out****

A charade clue removing letters from QUARTERback for the definition of Mercy. On my first reading of this clue, I thought the first secind was "US athlete" and that "throws back out" was a clumsy way of indicating the removal of back that was used only for the good SR. However, I then realised that Quarterback is "US athlete that throws" and "back out" is a precise removal indicator.

Neighbourhood rock zone missing Queen ****

In this charade, the local implied culture is musical (ROCK) rather than visual art and the SR suggests the band, Queen. However, these are good misdirections: the rock is QUARTz with zone (Z) missing and queen is used to indicate ER (but the same comment applies as above on the currency of ER to indicate queen).

Rule is applied to group of players wasting time in game period ***

The only entrant using the "game period" definition of Quarter, though two other entries had sports motifs. The group of players is a QUARTet (wasting / removing time =T) with a rule (R) applied. I think the "in" is not a good link word to the definition part of the clue, since it suggests some second action. A slight rewording could have avoided this: Game period rule applied to group of players wasting time.

The quality of this is not strain'd and tis a district in a town and a fraction gained ***

A triple definition clue using the meaning of mercy for one of the definitions. This is suggested by a Bardic reference to Portia's speech from The Merchant of Venice. District is the second definition. Fraction is the third definition. "gained" doesn't contribute to the definition. Perhaps the setter included this (and "tis") to keep a Shakespearean tone to the SR. However the SR lacks a unifying sense seen in the higher scoring entries.

Two bits for two stones *1/2**

A double definition clue in this case. A quarter (US 25c) is two-bits. Two stone avoirdupois is a "quarter" and although it is more common to use "stone" as the weight plural, Chambers indicates it can also be "stones".

Two pints and an emergency room in America for 25 cents! ***

Two pints is a QUART + ER is 25c. So, the secinds and the definition are fair. However, the contribution of the exclamation mark is dubious. Ximenes in The Art of the Crossword said: *I use them only when I am exclaiming or for a technical purpose, to call the solver's attention to the fact that I'm doing something particularly outrageous, perhaps by deliberately misunderstanding the meaning of a word.* It's not the latter. Perhaps it is because 25c is such an extraordinarily low value for these items. But, this one also has a SR lacking a good unifying sense; two pints of what and what's the connection to the emergency room? The SR could be improved by some minor changes: For 25c, deliver two pints to emergency room in Chicago? Perhaps that would make the solver think of pints of blood; and Chicago to indicate the US usage is also the setting of the TV show of that name.

Two-bit spinster spirals out after brief quarrel **

A charade clue with an interesting initial secind. Spirals=spins removed (out) from spinster after QUARrel. The SR is also OK. However there is an error in the definition. Chambers indicates "two-bit" to mean "cheap or paltry, "two bits" is a quarter.

continued on p 21

Clue-writing Competition continued from p 20

... using first round racquet, struggled after losing initial championship point ****

A nice anagram clue. [R+ RACQUET] are rearranged (struggled). One of the lesser used definitions of quarter as point (of the compass). If part of a whole crossword, perhaps the ellipsis at the beginning could link the SR of the clue with the previous clue. Standalone, it is included because of the incomplete sentence structure used to avoid interfering link words in the anagram structure.

Clue-Writing Competition Scoring System

	Poor	Proper	Perfect
Definition	0	1	2
Secondaries	0	1	2
Fairness	0	1	2
Surface	0	1	2
x-factor	0	1	2
Total score	Star Rating		
1 or 2	*		
3 or 4	**		
5 - 7	***		
8 - 9	****		
10	*****		

January Clue-writing competition

The January Clue-writing competition will be adjudicated by Len Colgan. The word to be clued is **MANIPULATE (10)**. Please send your entry (one per member only), together with your explanation, to Len, preferably by email to **Len.Colgan@unisa.edu.au** or **1 Ailsa Avenue, Warradale, SA 5046**

Closing mail date 10 February 2023 Prize \$50.

Surface readings

Continuing the article from the Alberich website ([here](#)) giving some excellent advice on surface reading of a clue. The first two episodes of this article appeared in the October and November 2023 issues of CrOZworld.

From the setter's point of view, the easy way to write a themed crossword is to fit as many theme words – e.g. books by Dickens – into the grid and fill the remaining blanks with normal words. Nowadays we have software so it's possible to do this without too much effort. Then you either clue the theme words without definition (mentioning this in a preamble) or have all the theme answers refer to a key clue. In this example, 1 across could be DICKENS and all the clues for the books would be defined as "by 1 across". This can make for a fun solve, but some object that if you know the theme it's too easy and if you don't it becomes an exercise in searching for information. My own view is that if the theme is one I care about – e.g. opera – I'm happy even if some of the answers are a write-in. I'm always glad to see my interests shared by others, and I never complain when a puzzle's easy. On the other hand, I'm rather less chuffed if I have to go online to look up the names of footballers or pop songs. Some setters avoid this problem by presenting the theme mostly in the surface readings of the clues,

rather than in the answers, so that no more than a passing knowledge of the theme is needed to solve the puzzle. I can tell you from experience that this is quite a task.

I've done a few puzzles like that for this site, but the only one I've published in a paper is the Wagner bicentenary puzzle I wrote for the Independent. Going for themed surface readings rather than themed answers was a no-brainer. The titles of Wagner works are long – like the operas themselves – so it wouldn't have been possible to fit many into a 15 x 15 grid. I'm also aware that quite a few otherwise intelligent people wear their ignorance of opera as a badge of honour, and I didn't want the occasion to be spoiled by complaints.

I like to think that the results were quite good, and they must have been as the puzzle was selected to appear in Don Manley's Chambers Crossword Manual. I did manage to create surfaces which said something about the great man and his works, and also read tolerably well as English, but it was a huge undertaking and I'm not sure I would want to try doing anything like that again (unless I'm still around for Wagner's tercentenary!). That's why I have the highest admiration for setters who can provide this sort of themed puzzle on a regular basis and maintain consistently good surface readings. The best of these in my view is Tramp, who sets for the Guardian.

His first puzzle was themed around Fawlty Towers and he managed the seemingly impossible by getting the titles of all 12 episodes into the puzzle, many of them in the clues. Since then he's gone on to do such diverse themes as Stephen King, Peanuts, Dire Straits, Wagner, Roald Dahl, Pink Floyd, The Simpsons and Morrissey. I'm probably biased because I like all the themes except the last two (I've never seen the appeal of The Simpsons and my views on Morrissey are unprintable), but nevertheless it is one thing to write a one-off puzzle based on a favourite subject, as I did, and quite another to write a series of puzzles with a variety of themes without resorting to "bitty" clues and clumsy surface readings. It takes a considerable amount of talent to do this, and Tramp is one setter who definitely has that.

Happy surfaces!

It hardly needs saying that there are certain limits to what you can have as a surface reading in order to avoid offence, and I'm not going to patronise my readers by giving a lecture on taste and decency. I will point out though that sometimes a clue's literal meaning may not be offensive as such, but still paint a rather unpleasant picture that goes against the spirit of fun that crosswords are supposed to engender. For example

Wife with AIDS produces offspring (6)

as a clue for WHELPS (W + HELPS) isn't obscene and doesn't show any -isms or -phobias (as far as I know – I struggle to keep up with all the latest ones), but does this sort of thing really come under the heading

...continued on page 22

Surface readings continued from p 21

of entertainment? I don't think so. You're welcome to disagree, but if any editor actually passed this – and I think that's unlikely – I predict that there would be quite a few complaints from solvers. It's worth remembering that some solvers may be experiencing, or have recently experienced, unhappy circumstances and don't want to be reminded of them. It's for that reason I abandoned a clue (I forget what word it was for) after I'd come up with something like "daughter died swimming in channel".

It's a sad fact of modern life that however careful you are, there'll still be a time when some sanctimonious bore takes, or more likely pretends to take, offence to show how right-on he or she is. It goes with the territory in an age when some people need a trigger warning before they can read Winnie the Pooh (wouldn't a Tigger warning would be more suitable in this case anyway?). There's nothing you can do about such people, but you can keep them at a distance by reading through your clues from a non-cryptic point of view and amending any that have unhappy surface references. If you really like producing depressing stuff it would probably be better to write for other sections of the newspaper!

To finish, I'll admit that sometimes I try to convince myself that a clunky or nonsensical clue I've written is really pretty good after all if only you think about it the "right" way. What I do then is paste all or some of the clue, enclosed in quotes, into a search engine, and hope that I'll get lots of hits showing the same phrase cropping up in respectable journals or works of literature. Usually the search returns no hits at all, so I realise I have to abandon it, but sometimes I do get a hit or two – where the clue appeared in someone else's crossword! A case of great minds thinking alike, or fools seldom differing?

Word of the Year

From *The Macquarie Dictionary*, **cozzie livs** *noun*; Colloquial cost of living. [humorous play on COST OF LIVING]. The Committee noted that "Although **cozzie livs** was coined in the UK, it has resonated soundly with Australians, with its -ie suffix and its clipped formation, reminiscent of *menty b* and *locky d*. And what could be a more Australian approach to a major social and economic problem than to treat it with a bit of humour and informality?"

Honourable mentions went to:

algospeak *noun*; a form of coded language used on digital platforms in which words, such as those relating to sex, violence, etc., which would be triggers for a site's moderation rules to shadowban a user or remove a post, are replaced, by convention, with innocuous words which are sometimes similar in sound or form, as *seggs* for 'sex' and *unalive* for 'dead' or 'kill'.

blue-sky flood *noun*; a flood in low-lying areas caused by the flow of floodwater which has made its way from higher ground after the cessation of substantial rainfall.

And the British perspective, from The Crossword Centre - *Collins* chose AI (artificial intelligence). *The Cambridge Dictionary* chose another word connected with AI - hallucinate. When an artificial intelligence *hallucinates* it produces false information. More publicity was given to the choice of the *Oxford University Press*. Their winner was RIZZ - style, charm, or attractiveness; the ability to attract a romantic or sexual partner. Apparently, it derives from the middle of the word *charisma*. Among their short-list, on which readers could vote were:

Swiftie (n.): an enthusiastic fan of the singer Taylor Swift.

de-influencing (n.): the practice of discouraging people from buying particular products, or of encouraging people to reduce their consumption of material goods, esp. via social media.

Quiz Bonus 1-2024 Australian places by Nigrum Cattus. Answers are in alphabetical order. Answers next month.

- 1 Idea led a fashion (8)
- 2 Gay baron would flirt (6,7)
- 3 A slab overlays grave (7,6)
- 4 Bob can hide mistake (5,5)
- 5 Travel by any boat (6,3)
- 6 Lhli (6,4)
- 7 Infection in scar (6)
- 8 Proceed boy! Run! (6,4)
- 9 Persecuted after desertion (8,6)
- 10 "Padre, I'm distressed!" (7)
- 11 Maliciously slandering refs (8,6)
- 12 Rude lads' refrains (6,6)
- 13 Ran, left me in a flap (9)
- 14 Decadent gent disrobes (6,6)
- 15 Agreed a cartoon offended (5,5,4)
- 16 Police! Take grog in here! (9,5)
- 17 A marginal distraction (9)
- 18 Spillage; need mop soon (6,5)
- 19 War on waste (5)
- 20 In golf use iron or driver (3,5)
- 21 Doctor hid plain pills (7,6)
- 22 Built a pigpen (4,3)
- 23 Press raise fraud problem (7,8)
- 24 Husband lacks thumb, pet (3,5,5)
- 25 ER (3,3,6)
- 26 Web still woven (10)
- 27 Cast metal urinal (11)
- 28 Avow I'll do engineering (9)
- 29 Anyhow, grab award ma'am (10,3)
- 30 A normal brow shape (11)

beige flag (n.): a character trait that indicates that a partner or potential partner is boring or lacks originality; (also) a trait or habit, esp. of a partner or potential partner, viewed as extremely characteristic, but not distinctly good or bad.

heat dome (n.): a persistent high-pressure weather system over a particular geographic area, which traps a mass of hot air below it.

prompt (n.): an instruction given to an artificial intelligence program, algorithm, etc., which determines or influences the content it generates.

The Economist magazine chose the Yoruba verb – **japa**. In Yoruba, *japa* loosely translates to "run away" or "escape." Over time, the term found its way into Nigerian slang and has become a colloquial expression used to convey the idea of swift and evasive action.