The World’s Tallest Cryptic

Kevin Wald

This column is a place for those bits of contagious mathematics that travel from person to person in the community, because they are so elegant, surprising, or appealing that one has an urge to pass them on.

Contributions are most welcome.

Tall, isn’t it?
“It tries to be. Choose your entries right, and you can head up as high as you want.”
“But then I’ll never reach a final answer!”
“Well, that you have to do in the altogether different way described.”

Across

2:
Lord Vader comprehends horrible woe, not the correct way to read the final answer to this puzzle (4, 2, 5)

11:
Emotionless jerk comes after mug and ring (7)

13:
Note about comedienne Margaret’s academic organization (6)
Entertainment Editors’ Note

To the right sort of puzzle fan, January means one thing: the MIT Mystery Hunt. This annual event challenges teams of MIT students and enthusiasts from around the world to solve a succession of puzzles of all shapes, sizes, and styles, some never before seen. Answers to individual puzzles somehow fit together to reveal the higher-order metapuzzles a team must solve to win—earning them the right to run the hunt the following year.

This puzzle is a cryptic crossword which appeared in the 2008 Mystery Hunt, reproduced here with the kind permission of its constructor, Kevin Wald. The “final answer” to this puzzle is a single word, which may not be obvious even if you have solved the crossword part of the puzzle. Kevin’s directions and clues contain the only hints you’ll get.

Readers not familiar with cryptic-style (also called British-style) crossword clues are invited to peruse the National Puzzler’s League’s online guide, but it is an acquired skill. As an alternative, on page following Clues of this issue you can find a list of the Answers to each of the sets of Across and Up clues. Even with these answers in hand, filling in the grid and discovering the final answer poses a challenge. If all else fails, the sets of Across and Up clues. Even with these answers in hand, filling in the grid and discovering the final answer poses a challenge. If all else fails, the

Entertainments Editors welcome submissions of crosswords and other puzzles with similar appeal at all levels of accessibility.

14: Our lady, in shackles, reveals the exact length of the final answer to this puzzle (4, 7)
16: Revolutionary obtains submachine gun (4)
18: Celebrated getting the German area united into a larger political entity (9)
19: At last, that weirdo barber Sweeney (4)
21: Ripe to tangle with a supernatural being (4)
22: A bunch of stitches look sound (4)
25 + 45n: Semitic language lacks masculine word meaning “beer” (4) Look and sound of resentment (4) Noisily drops horseriding equipment (4)
26 + 45n: The French gutlessly honor the Cowardly Lion’s portrayer (4) Fifty-one-foot elevator (4) Knocks box over (4)
28 + 45n: Change caused by an effect of the moon spinning (4) Norse God in love with noise (4) Behead cod; otherwise, it stinks (4)
31 + 45n: Network showing Cavemen, a cartoon about cavemen (3) Do I fill the role of Pierre’s friend? (3) In Arles, you mostly work (3)
32 + 45n: One who is in love, dear — or crazy (6) One who positions things in real confusion (6, var. spelling) Druuggie starting to snort printer ink (6)
33 + 45n: Fired after getting old, misguided Dan bombed (10) Hauled around a nob that’s tossed back bubbly (10) Vehicles containing Mr. Weasley, fruit drink, and guns (10)
34 + 45n: Spots headless boys (3) Desire for the riches of the East (3) He’d misread an Old English letter (3) Upset Playboy’s founder with expression of disdain (3) The ultimate in hyacinths (3)
38 + 45n: Lunatic erases things for relaxation (6) Lets Ed hurt the presumptive heir (6) Trees filled with, um, a kind of glue (6)
39 + 45n: Metal shirts and shades (5) Ultimately, not suspicious of the Lone Ranger’s sidekick (5)
41 + 45n: Fabrics of the first of seven types (5) Each bird that sings a Weird Al parody (3, 2)
42 + 45n: Evacuated Ferrara with one Italian’s animals (5) Eye part of over-trimmed veal (5) Perform numbers with one actress named Reed (5)
43 + 45n: Humongous nude actor named McK- ellen (3) Attention: This is a serving of corn (3) Californian airport is negligent (3)
45 + 45n: A mass of ice secondarily absorbs a ten-millionth of a joule (4) Is in the wrong English train, son (4) Shamuses mentioned in issues of an MIT paper (4)
47 + 45n: One unbelievably long time (3) Stimpy’s pal is almost torn apart (3) Where you permanently store data for a Gypsy (3)
49 + 45n: Set is little help (4) I run around, becoming a wreck (4) Ashen after getting red alert (4)
52 + 45n: Some bread, left out for a dullard (3) A cur’s remark is far inferior (3)
54 + 45n: 1,101 here in Quebec (3) Electronic chips is complicated [sic] (3, abbr.)
55 + 45n: Stare with disgust, essentially, at a scripting language (4) Exhibit surprise by staring at the tail-biting snake (4)
56 + 45n: Heard about Damon’s pad (3) Needlefish found in hangars (3)

1http://www.puzzlers.org/guide/index.php?expand= cryptics1

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