ANAGRAM: A word or phrase which, when its letters are rearranged, produces the answer word or phrase. One phrase is a description of or allusion to the other. Example: NAME FOR SHIP is an anagram of H.M.S. PINAFORE.

20. LATTES? IN HASTE, GO NW (*7, *10)
22. CLAIM: “HECK, I SENT IT (HEH)” (3, 5 =WABBIT, Cote St. Luc QC)

CRYPTOGRAM: A message in cipher, where each letter in the coded message stands for another letter wherever it appears. (No letter stands for itself.) The title provides a hint.

23. Biting wit. =ASOBI, Yardley PA

MINISAMPLE CRYPTIC by G NATURAL, New York NY

This specially designed minisample cryptic is just like a normal cryptic crossword, with this exception: a small piece should be removed from each of six entries before they are placed in the grid. The resulting entries are all words. For help on how to solve cryptic crosswords, go to www.puzzlers.org.

Welcome! You hold in your hands a special introductory edition of The ENIGMA, the monthly publication of The National Puzzlers’ League. We hope this “minisample” will be your ticket to joining us in a world of enigmatic artistry and brain-teasing entertainment.

The NPL offers many opportunities for puzzling camaraderie. The league holds a four-day summer convention, while individual members organize regional gatherings and participate in online activities, including a chat room and mailing list. And in the pages of The ENIGMA we strive to give each other with new conundrums and spur each other to greater heights of ingenuity, cleverness and wit.

Each issue of The ENIGMA (usually 20 or more pages) overflows with a variety of puzzles designed to challenge both newbie and veteran. Created by our members, these puzzles include cryptic crosswords, anagrams, word squares (and more complex geometrical forms) and a panoply of other linguistic inventions. But what makes The ENIGMA unique is its collection of what we call “flats,” puzzles in verse form that have proven over our 130-plus years to provide endless opportunities for creativity and continuous solving enjoyment.

Flats might seem odd at first—they’re not the sort of puzzle you’re likely to have stumbled across, since ours is the only English-language publication to feature them—but once you know the basic structure, we think you’ll love them. In each verse, one or more words are missing, replaced by words like “ONE” and “TWO”. Your task is to figure out the missing words, using hints provided by the verse. Here’s an example:

First, check out the title; it tells you what kind of words you need. In this case, you’re looking to transform one word into another by changing its last letter (like turning “barn” to “bar” or “routing” to “routine”). The enumeration, in parentheses, tells you that both answer words are seven letters long. The capitalized cues act as placeholders, showing you where the answer words belong, though keep in mind that the answer words must really rhyme or scan the way the cues do—they only have to make sense in context.

(Sflats also include a byline identifying the author, not by name but by nom de plume. This use of pseudonyms dates back centuries, and can be seen in British cryptic construction to this day.)

So, here are the two answer words: “hideout” and “hideous” — they tracked Joker to his hideous leer. If this example piques your interest, then you’re ready to turn the page and solve some more flats, along with a cryptic crossword and other goodies. And if you enjoy this minisample ENIGMA, we hope you’ll join us in the NPL! For more information and sample puzzles, you can visit www.puzzlers.org.
DELETION: A word becomes a new word when an interior letter is removed. Example: simile—smile
1. DELETION (7, 6) (A, B) The pros won't help me do my work. TAs object, but I just smirk. I got two F's, but don't blame me—It's obvious the A is B!
2. DELETION (8, 7) (ONE, TWO) He's really a farmer, not much of a doctor, TWO surgery means that you'll get a ONE poultice And leave with an eyeful of ear.

LETTER CHANGE: One letter is changed in a word to produce a new word. Example: a third-letter change: pantry—pantry
7. FOURTH-LETTER CHANGE (6) You must pay the ONE, or else your baby will die! die! die! The amount will be TWO, determined by rolling a die! die! die! =ELF MCCAY, TexasCon TX

REPEATED-LETTER CHANGE: All instances of a given letter in a word or phrase are changed to produce a new word or phrase. Example: porpoise—tortoise
8. REPEATED-LETTER CHANGE (7 2, *3 *3 “3”) (can be sung to the tune of “Auld Lang Syne”) You'll shepherd out the old at last, But while you're ONE the new, Resound those bells for Shepherds past, For movie stars like TWO. For wonder dogs like TWO, my friend, For wonder dogs like TWO. We'll raise a cup of kibble yet For movie stars like TWO. =JAHNAN, Nashovemville TA

CHARADE: A word is broken into two or more shorter words. Example: TOTAL = scarcity; ONE = scar, TWO = city
9. CHARADE (6; 3, 3) (COMBINE; A, B) My love for you I long to show; I want to B you something fine. Alas, a lack: I'm poor, sans dough. A rose is not in my COMBINE. But to the garden I will go; A new-formed A will make you mine. =BADIR, Princeton NJ

TRANSPOSAL: A word becomes a different one when its letters are rearranged (commonly called an “anagram”). Example: sleuth—hustle (In the first example, the cuewords are themselves transposals.)
10. TRANSPOSAL (5) A lovely floral centerpiece Adorns our dining table. It's beautiful, except those times A BLEATS falls on your STABLE. =EMBANGLER, TexasCon TX

HOMONYM: Two unrelated words or phrases are pronounced the same but spelled differently. Example: hair—hare
11. TRANSPOSAL (11) I have a ghostly girlfriend. We’ve etheerial relations. The fact, though, that she’s SECOND CLEARLY FIRST these situations. =TINHORN, Los Angeles CA

LETTER BANK: A shorter word or phrase with no repeated letters (the “bank”) is used to form a longer word or phrase, using all the letters in the bank at least once and as many more times as needed. Example: lens—senselessness
12. LETTER BANK (2 3 5, *4 *9 *8) The ugly duckling grew to be a swan, But don’t let LONGER PHRASE just put you on. Are you a cygnet, baby? No such luck! It’s SHORTER PHRASE you’ll be an ugly duck! =XEMU, Bridgewater NJ

(Rebus: A word or phrase is represented by letters. The word “abalone”—read as “a B, alone”—might be represented by B while the word “largess”—read as “large SS”—might be represented by SS)
15. HOMONYM (7, 2 *4) A cowboy’s career is quite messy, I fear, Too dirty to mention. His FIRST needs attention. To Autry this didn’t seem strange. “Oh, SECOND,” said Dale, when he’d come off the trail, “A bath’s your connection to get my affection When you’re back at our home on the range.” =SOUTH NATURAL, Holy Ork MY

HETERONYM: Two words or phrases have the same spelling but different pronunciations and spacing. Example: notable—not able (In the first flat the underlined words are a title.)
16. HETERONYM (9: *3 *1. *1. 4) Iran’s imams hate sexy saops. This Fox show makes them fret. That ONE word may just have a point. Is MANY WORDS? You bet. =SIJK, Seattle WA

REBUS: Just FIRST the name of Britney Spears; Then you can SECOND pix for years. =MR. TEX, Los Angeles CA

18. REBUS (*6) (can be sung to the tune of “Venus” by Bananarama) A goddess on the mountain top, The Parthenon her seat of fame, The summit of wisdom and mind, And ANSWER was her name. Yeah, baby, she’s thought it. She’s thought it. And ANSWER was her name. =SOUTH NATURAL, Holy Ork MY

19. REBUS (*3 *4 *5) A film like ANSWER shows there’s great enjoyment. In dancing nude when faced with unemployment. =MO’ NATURAL, Pebblework CY