



# GRAFFITI ON THE SPHINX

March 2013

No matter when you go, then you are.

#255

## MY PERSONAL ERRATA AND ADDENDA:

Bit late for that.

22.2.4a Xemu: k/w-azoo, of course. 22.2.4b  
Xemu: what, when.

## HARD, REFERENCE, AND FAVORITE FLATS:

My last March flat sols were ##18, 30, and 9; never did get #10. Also got #14 wrong. I won't bother with hard/easy/reffy/unreffy stats because they're stale, but my faves are approximately 7, 9, 21, 29, 30, 37, 39!, 41, 47, 50, F3, X3, X7, and X9. The bang moved from X9 (because of the amazing squeezing of multiple items into one little square) to X3 (because of the neat clueing and the punchline) to #39 (because it's just so much fun to reread).

## GotS SOLUTIONS:

## THE SPHINX LOOKS BACK:

Each flat number marks a change of commenter; if no new one's given, it's me.

January: President's Message - hm. E.g., as; floam; fur/fer; ska punk; ade, ice(d) tea. Dichromatic; Skor (Heath?); tram?; pass? Not enough to show me any connections. When do we get the answers, or at least a hint? **1** - tomb, Ripple, dye are blatantly clued, and as soon as you see 'two mus' everything falls into place. **3** - the start of the line, constrained by giving letters, and the end, constrained by rhyme, are the least likely places for

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**Jan #3, continued**

the clueing. Quite striking, then, to see both parts clued by the starting words. I couldn't locate any of the clues and wound up asking e11C for ???ment words. **5** - despite 'elemental', I didn't see that the fourth letter required the fourth element. I lazily found it by feeding `^(.)().\1\2\3$` to the NPL non-Ajax search. **12** - gave me more trouble than it should have. I had to ref Noth and Esme, and sett/slab/slat when 'flag' didn't fit, but the -4 4 wouldn't yield. I wikied *Les Misérables* and found Fantine and Cosette, but couldn't see what to do with them, so I went off after the actresses. Weeks later I went back and tried to fit Cosette into the rubric; click! Even then, I didn't immediately realize that my assumption that mere = lower-case was wrong. *Mère*. Duh. **15** - I had no idea whatever of how to approach this, so I just did a search for \*4 \*6 phrases. Given that, Warren Buffett was the first person to come to mind. I don't know that I would ever have gotten it from Jimmy. OK, he sings about 'wasting away again in Margaritaville' but I took that as song, not autobiography. R/EDS: a write-in for me. Wall Street to Warren Buffet and who can ever forget 'Margaritaville', by Jimmy Buffet? 1977 I think. **18** - the first two words are easy, the last three come from wikiing *A.U.C.*, but the stuff in the middle baffled me. 'You bloke' seemed to demand 'gent' and 'changing' called for 'toga' for 'to gap'. The 3 could be his, the, old.... The only one I could make work was 'old': en, T, o. [= old], not in that order, change to gap, 'a'. But Caoimh disconfirmed it. I never did solve it. **19** - excellent switch of meanings of 'race'. **20** - a new meaning of 'pother' for me, but you couldn't ask for better clueing. R/EDS: I too had cinders, residencies until Abacus set me straight. I think it might even be an answer that could be accepted, albeit not nearly as good as the intended one. **22** - reffing politicians and leaders while test-solving, I came up with royals/salary rolls, which Teki denied. He said 'Think current events' and I got it at once. Not helpfully clued, say I. Rather Icelandic; they may have had fiscal problems but I dare say nothing much like the locked-in strict-deadline fiscal arrangements of today. **23** - I expected a construction like 'fling clinging mud', so I

**Jan #23, continued**

got nowhere Bausing 'throw'. Hurl bung fire shy lob pelt snap shag flip. So I turned to baby animals and, feeling tired, Baused that. Tsk. Shoulda gotten it by brain. **26** - first a tattoo, then a fanfare. What next, a piano concerto? **29** - sibs, Aegean guns. I looked at a map to get it. **36** - Stetson Whiskies? Not sweet enough.

**F2** - does this page go in the baby album? **F3-4** - I remain unconvinced about the long-term viability of this type, but these do make a case for occasional use.

**C3** - the title comes from Tahnan's role as go-to guy when linguistics questions crop up in npl-folk discussions.

**X1** - nice cryptic tidbit. **X6** - a fine quinqueryptic. Almost all good natural surfaces; only 17Ac struck me as a bit less so. I finished the puzzle in 10:20 but continued till 24:14 trying to figure out 7Ac. Teki finally explained *Up/ET* to me. 9Ac - not hard but nicely sneaky. 11Ac - good use of 'standard'. 22Ac - a favorite. 1Dn puzzled me a good while; oh, yeah, British (not-so-)cryptic definition. 13Dn - 'wanting stars' puzzled me for a while. 16Dn - biggest grin of the puzzle. 18Dn - nice definition.

**GotS PotSHotS:**

I used 'Wikipediate' a couple of times this issue to mean 'look up in Wikipedia', but I was unhappy with a five-syllable word for something I do so often. I'm told that 'wiki' has been used for that purpose, so I've changed to that. I know that there are lots of other wikis, but I think that for GotS purposes I can take Wikipedia as the default. I'll use the full form for others, like if I Wiktionary something.

**PUZZLE PATER:**

In January C4, raw comments on the potential stress when/if Merriam-Webster comes out with 12C and NI4. One bit of that stress can be dealt with now: given that NI2 has been out of print for fifty years (NI3 came out in 1961), isn't it about time we dropped it as a standard reference? That doesn't mean NI2 entries would be forbidden, just that they'd have no special status relative to those of,

say, Funk & Wagnalls or Random House or American Heritage dictionaries. I think I'll try to get this on the agenda for the 2013 business meeting.

### THE SPHINX STRIKES BACK:

MISTRANSLATION (3-2-3, 7) (NOUN = 7)

In this SUBSTANTIF, branching off a lane,  
Employees of a rural advertiser  
Prepare a new recycling campaign  
To sell the NOUN from processed sugarcane  
To feedlots, and to farms as fertilizer.  
=Ralf P. Olio, Estrogen OH

### A SURVEY OF CURRENT ENGLISH-LANGUAGE VERSE-PUZZLE MAGAZINES:

Oulipo: haven't seen any signs of interest, but if someone wants to see the Madden book I can bring it to Austin.

Resigned/Removed list: first time for this, I think? I like it; just interesting to see the balance with the incomers. I don't recognize any of them but Dado, though I faintly recall NeuRonn (if I'm not confusing him with Newrow).

Purely personal puzzle predications: **1** - R/EDS: In case anyone is interested, the Charbonneau Commission is an ongoing thing in Montreal these days where finally they are uncovering and exposing a disgusting level of corruption that has gone on in the construction industry in cahoots with the city for over 50 years. More power to them. **2** - the previous record wrecker was bad enough. This is why I'm never tempted to Hunt. **3** - R/EDS: Well, I never thought I'd say it in print (take note, Hot) but all three of this month's picture flats are rather good and fair puzzles. **5** - R/EDS: \*SAMUEL is rather obscure. I had to reread it several times before the one key word led me to further research. **6** - how can a name be 'inferable', I wondered. Oh, that's how. **9** - R/EDS: Now, this is just brilliant. **13** - skeptics don't care. **15** - R/EDS: Oh wow! Who'd have believed such a find existed? Tasteful cuewords to boot. [But that's not how to say \*6.] **19** - not gonna illustrate that one with a photographic reference! Mind you, Googling the relevant phrase gets 37 English image hits, but none seem clueful. **20** - growl hiss KU mutter. **21** - R/EDS: It's funny in that

Witz came up with this one while solving my Dec #16. Neither of us acted on it and I'm glad someone chose to and did it well. **23** - finally noticed the theme. But where's April? **26** - Depi Cation? No. If only it could be Depp Action. **27** - R/EDS: Nice find. **30** - impressive triple play. **37** - this one is remarkable. Even now that I've solved it, it doesn't look like it could be true. **39** - my issue favorite is usually a cryptic but this is so much fun I finally changed my bang. Great enjambments and a funny theme. I'd never heard 'Under the Sea' in full until I watched it on YouTube while writing this comment; I really liked that too. **40** - pierogies are popular in my old hometown of Aliquippa, PA, as well as here in Cleveland, but they're spelled 'pierogi'. I ended up reffing 'dumpling'. **41** - R/EDS: Great puzzle. Clean reading. **44** - R/EDS: Very clever in that I'd sort of been thinking in the opposite direction for quite a while. **45** - this needed to be done. **50** - can something this short and sweet be new?

**F3** - novel.

**X3** - a fine cryptic. Nice aha's from 22A and then the message; good surfaces; and a number of clues using surprising definitions, a trick I associate particularly with Andreas. Inventive anagram indicators too. **X7** - R/EDS: Not having read the puzzle notes first, I did this the only way I am capable. I converted the letters to numbers and solved it that way. Even then, with only 18 given, it was very tough. [Since the choice of the nine symbols has nothing to do with the solving techniques—they could even be ☞ ☛ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞—I don't see why it's harder with letters. The puzzle note certainly helped!] **X9** - a tour de force. It's amazing how much he packed into a mere 8x8 puzzle, overloading both the diagram (with four hidden 'letters' and the thing they spell) and the clues (with four letters to be extracted from each, in addition to the answer).

### NOMPLAY:

The March new members include Nōm, presumably a homonom of Noam (at least, I monosyllabize the latter), and Yegna Narayan, who banks to, among other words, 'anergy' (immune unresponsiveness). The other Indian-American newbie,

Navneet Sushon, banks to ‘outshaven’, but that is not MW and gets only three Google hits (plus five as a Dutch name). On the other hand, we lost the flaxen Oregon congressman Eileene Coscolluela (linaceous Les AuCoin).

### CRYPTIC CLUES:

From 29 Jul 2002 chat:

Ucaoimhu: The folks at Dell, having an entire 50-state country of cryptic setters to draw upon, managed to find someone who does things that even a Briton won’t.

Ucaoimhu: Such as ‘Critic Pauline and family jump into large pools of water (5)’. Or ‘Destroyed telephone wires and attachments (5)’. [Indirect anagrams.]

Gabby: Never mind the 50 states, I’ve never even seen a Canadian cryptic do anything that awful, and there are some loosey-goosey’s among Canadian constructors.

Ucaoimhu: One possible game: Dig up a bunch of clues that suck, and have people try to come up with clues, using the exact same construction, that don’t.

Ucaoimhu: [F]or example, there was a clue ‘Mister A. S. Perry is distraught (7)’, which could easily be modified into something much less lame.

Gabby: I actually kinda like that one (except for the awkward anagram indicator)

Ucaoimhu: It has its good points. But ‘A. S. Perry’ is screamingly contrived. And easily avoidable—‘Mister Perry’s a lunatic (7)’

Ucaoimhu: ‘Foundation to remain the same? (5)’

D. Ness: I was thinking B as is

Saxifrage: B = be? be = remain?

Ucaoimhu: (B = be, I think—the reverse is used in a different clue in the same puzzle.)

Saxifrage: Clunky clue.

D. Ness: Publisher’s clunky clue (4)

Gabby: Rewrite, perhaps not much better... ‘Lance, I snuck in to foundation (5)’

Gabby: Lance Bass is a music personality from ‘one of those boy bands’ as I recall.

...

D. Ness: Speaking of bad cryptic clues...

D. Ness: Here’s a general question. Can ‘me’ be used to clue ‘I’?

Qaqaq: I’ve seen it done, but I don’t much like it myself

Ucaoimhu: Not by I, it can’t.

Charts: I’ve seen ‘constructor’ or ‘setter’

Ucaoimhu: Or ‘yours truly’.

Qaqaq: I’ve used ‘Trip’ at the start of a clue to clue I.

Artistry: I still remember ‘Trip is gay soul’

Qaqaq: That was really lucky, Art. I wish I had planned it. :-)

### CYBERBABBLE:

A Language Log post, ‘Naming people after gods’, had a subthread about cars. ‘The only theophoric car name that comes to mind is Mazda.’ (Cf. the founder’s name, Mr Jujiro Matsuda.) Others added the Saturn and Mercury. ajay wrote: ‘Saturn - what a great name for a family car. (Room for six kids inside!)’

Another post, ‘Rhymes with language’, discussed things like *Anguish Languish*; *Mots d’Heures: Gousses, Rames*; mondegreens; and other language-warping fun. In the comments, John Cowan wrote, ‘However, the phenomenon of mis-OCRing English words, whether [in songs or] otherwise, is known as rnoridegreeri.’

And a very recent one in Language Hat pointed to <http://bigthink.com/strange-maps/608-dull-flag-and-tongue-of-gangsta-the-laugh-out-loud-place-names-of-shetland-and-orkney>. It has maps showing the location of Flossy Groups, Rotten Gutter, Muckle Hell, Gump of Spurness, Lambhelia Cuddies, Gravity, and many more. See for yourself.

### ALT.ANAGRAMS:

These are a.a. anagrams from 1 Mar to 21 Apr 2004. @ = antigram, @@ = ambigram, ~ = not apposite but fit together well, τ = topical at the time, ♥ = try this if you just want to do a few. Answers next month.

To save space now and in future, I use these abbreviations, from the June 2004 GotS with additions: AA = ABACUSAPTS, AD = Art Day, ADe = Andrew Denny, AH = Adrian Hickford, AM = Allan Morley, AMC = Andrew McCormack, AS = Anna Shefl (Lardy Girl), BP = Brenden Preece, BW =

Brad Williams, BZ = Ben Zimmer (formerly Elf of the NPL), CA = Carl Anderson, CB = Chris Bradfield, CD = Chuck Davis, CrD = 'Crash Davis' (Roger Earl Bush), CS = Christopher S. Sturdy (aka Horrid Stretchy Pus), D = Mike Keith (aka Domnei; there was already another MK), D@ = daniel@fun-with-words.com, DA = Daniel Austin, DB = David Bourke, DE = Daniel Frederick Etter, DF = Dan Fortier (aka Danthrax), DG = David A. Green, DoF = Don Fortier (aka dfoofnik), DP = David James Polewka, EG = Ernesto Guiraldes (of Chile), EJ = Earle Jones, ET = Equinox Tetrachloride (Paul Collins), FB = Felix M. Benner, GP = Graham Perkins, HPR = Hans-Peter Reich, H&W = Husband and Wife, JA = Jessica Arts, JB = Janet Burholt, JD = John Dagg, JF = Jean Fontaine, JFa = Joe Fathallah, JFi = John Fidler, JG = Jon Gearhart, JH = Jan Hyde, JL = Jake Linwood (aka (I.D.) Letterman) JM = Janet Muggeridge, JMo = John Morahan, JP = Judson Pewther, JS = Jim Sullivan, JT = John Tezel, JY = James H. Young, K = Katrina (aka PlayOfLite), KH = Kevin Hale, L = Letterman, LB = Larry Brash, LG = Linda Garrett, LR = Len Richards, MA = 'Melaleuca Alternifolia', MB = Mick Brocklehurst; MG = Maurice Goddard, MI = Mattias Inghe (of Sweden), MK = Meyran Kraus (of Israel), MM = Marc Macauley, MP = Matjaz Pihler, MS = Martin J. Son, MT = Mick Tully, NE = Noam D. Elkies [aka 8], NR = Neil J. Rubenking (aka Johnnie Burning Elk), Or = 'Ormasyna', PC = Phil Carmody (aka Fat Phil), PK = Paul Klenk, PL = Paul Lusch, PP = Paul Pan, RB = Richard Brodie, RG = Richard Grantham, RM = 'Rag Mo', RR = Rick Rothstein, RY = Ron Young, SG = Scott Gardner, SH = Son Hong (Nguyen), SK = Steve Krakowski (aka Krakers), SKe = SpursKevin, SS = Santi Spadaro, TM = Tom Myers (aka IKOIKO), WB = Wayne Baisley (aka I'm not a real doofus), WC = Whitney Cohen, WN = Walter Newbolt, WNo = Wilhelm Noeker, WR = Wayne Rhine, WTP = William Tunstall-Pedoe, ZR = Zoran Radislavlević.

Confirm gay ties a threat (DB) (3 8 2 8). Sect adamant: "Lennon tried it" (DB); an old Indian-sect treatment (MT); at end, intent's to "clear a mind" (RR) ([\*14 \*10]). Had teeth aplenty (L) (3 5 7). Castle, knight, armour... (AH) (^4 \*6'1 \*7). †Begin

to remodel Christ (MK) (3 8 \*3 \*6). ...breed farts (MT) (5 5). G.B. born writer, no? (RM) ([\*6 \*8]). †Get Christ bloodied, turn on cameras (MK) (3 \*1\*1 5 3 8 \*3 \*6). His fine path to the cross (DF) (^3 ^7 2 3 \*6). Septics (MK). @@Who? The noisy nut? (AS) (\*7 \*7). Priest by that (RM) (3 9). @@Fete a truth ethos (MT) (3 [\*6 \*6]). Great pains (WB). Nightmare cockup (DB); Crime! Gotcha, punk! (JL); ~Might crack one up (MK) (8 7). Ah, I'd rank the wise poems far above all! (MK) ([\*7 \*11], 3 ^4 2 \*4). To exciseman (WB) ([6 5]). P.S. Ain't walking; wheel him (RR) ([\*7 \*7 \*7]).

Worth a look, but too British, contrived, inapt, unfamiliar, unspecific, or otherwise unsuitable for solving: @@two thousand and four = Don't do hot-war fun, USA (MT). Maharishi Mahesh Yogi = Heigh-ho! I'm a hairy mass (DAG). Ancient pyramids = man inside a crypt (MK) [excellent except for number mismatch; maybe 'idea: man in crypt = ancient pyramid']. The Rosetta spacecraft mission = see it: star ship to scan far comet! [scheduled to land on comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko in May 2014] (HPR). Al-Qaida unit takes responsibility = initially pointed at Basques (a risk!) (DF) [initial suspicions about the terrorist train bombing in Madrid]. Belgian brandy chocolates = best alcohol-bearing candy (MK) [alas, the base gets 0 non-anagram hits]. The Oxford versus Cambridge University Boat Race = day out for River Thames excursion, BBC TV is agreed (DB). Remanded in police custody...sadly, dope crime continued (DB). The smoking ban in Ireland = mankind on isle breathing? (RM). Britney Spears nude = dirty pubes ensnare (DB). Sexual intercourse with animals = I rate this "womanless luxuriance" / otherwise exclaims, "is unnatural" (RR). Inside the condoms ~ I'd soon ditch semen (RM). @@'Portaloo' public convenience = proven clean cubicle to poo in (DB) [I deleted a repeated 'a']. Tony Blair's u-turn on a Europe vote = In? Out? Labour puts on a Tory veneer (DB).

A shark-attack thread turned into a series of anagrammers' signs:

Sign on anagrammer's motel room door: PLEASE! ~ ASLEEP! (DF)

Sign in an anagrammer's nuclear waste

dump-site: Contaminated -- No Admittance! (RR)

Sign on an anagrammer's parked car (assuming pigeons can read?): No shit ~ on this! (DF)

An anagrammer sells his condo: For sale: Second floor digs ~ (Considers all good offers) (DF)

At the anagrammer's tropical fish store: Danger! Piranha fish ~ nips finger...AAH!...hard! (DF)

### **TALES FROM THE NPL CHAT ROOM:**

Moving on to 29 July 2002 chat:

Gabby: A found welded transposal from my recent extended weekend in Calgary - a bluegrass band named Restless Lester.

[Everything else moved to Cryptic Clues.]

### **CLIPPINGS:**

Plergb, defined as not going home for nine days' vacation nor reading all that junk fantasy. Editing finished 3 June 2013. Praise **HERBIE**!