



GRAFFITI ON THE SPHINX

Nov 2018

If you've seen one nuclear war, you've seen them all.

#323

Well, now that I've sorted, binned, and inventoried around 1420 books, I can start catching up on NPL things, like working on my four October (too late!), ~~twenty sixteen twelve~~ ten November, and eighteen December flat holes. Not to mention getting NovGotS out less than two weeks late. Make that three weeks. (Selling books on eBay also eats up time.)

HARD, REFERENCE, AND FAVORITE FLATS:

My last flat sols were, 53, 25, 26, 30, 44, 45, 14, and 28, with 6, 8, 9, 27, 33, 36, 37, 42, 54, and 55 holding out. Of those I have, I think 3, 23, and 38

are hard even with modest research, including Lucifer. Besides the 'Nig easy list, I found 29, 40, 46, 52, 56, and 57 easy. I used references (including MW) to get 1, 3, 5, 14, 19, 22, 24, 25, 30, 32, 44, 45, 50, 58, 59, and 60, and think 19, 22, 24, 25, 50, and 58 may call for them; also 14, 30, and 48 for some. Source-tagged and freewheeling flats that can be solved without refs: 5, 11, 40, and maybe 31 and 54. My current favorites include Hot remembers Arachne, 10, 14, 25, 31, 40, 51, 59, F6, F7, F8, and cryptic contest results!. Heavy on Caoimhs and forms for some reason. Singables and pastiches: 25 - 'When I'm 64', by Paul McCartney 29 - 'Hey Jude', by Paul McCartney. 45 - just for the record:

Graffiti on the Sphinx (Vol. 27, no. 11, November 2018) is published monthly by Treesong (Philip M. Cohen, 112 Oak Lane, West Chester PA 19382-5435, tree.song@verizon.net), generally within two weeks of the latest Enigma's arrival by mail. It's online in two formats at <http://www.enigma.puzzlers.org/gots> until I find a way to do booklet format again. GotS hardcopy may someday be available if there are enough hardcopy subscribers to make it worth the work. Softcopy in Word Perfect X5 or PDF format, e-mailed, is free, or you can find the PDF on the NPL website. This is not an official publication of the National Puzzlers' League; opinions herein are strictly those of the editor and/or contributors, and are not to be taken as authoritative, unless you're the type who'll believe anything. Editorial interpolations within contributors' comments are set off by [brackets], I try to warn of material that might serve as a hint by enclosing it in (* these dojiggers *), Google and Lucifer searches are in <angle brackets>, and ¢ = 'comment (on)' (plural '¢¢'). The noun and verb 'Lucifer' mean 'research using the solving tools on the NPL webpage, which were programmed by Lucifer'; 't.c.' = 'thesaurus.com'; and Roget7 = *Roget's International Thesaurus*, 7th ed. References of the form 'm.n.p ¶ q' mean 'volume m, issue n, page p, paragraph q'; 'a'/'b' on a page number means column 1/2. These references have previously referenced the 2-up/booklet versions but I'll try to make them match this 1-up version in future. Minor editing (such as changing noms from all-caps, ± a comma, replacing with a synonym) is done several times a month without notice, even in direct quotes; major rewording is in <angle brackets>. Anything sent to me is considered usable in GotS unless marked DNQ (Do Not Quote); you can tell me to consider all your letters DNQ. I have an agreement with Quicks?lver to get comments sent with sol lists, so let us know, if you send any.

traditional nursery rhyme. 51 - LONG, traditional, possibly by W. de Wycombe.

GotS ERRATA:

27.9.1a My Errata: only one page-16 flat has TETCNBN; I had 'gasogenes' for #82 and nobody corrected my miserratum. 27.10.1a My Errata: delete the erratum for #26. I missed the point. 27.10.5 a.a.: actually, some 15 Feb anagrams were included.

GotS SOLUTIONS:

27.10.4b Convention Clippings:

Command performance: unknown.

Write down the midnight cheer and subsequent song. Delete Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. Replace Ethernet with July's stone. Remove all letters of McCartney's animal. Couples become single. Move second noble gas before first. First becomes last after failing grade. Result of all this: I don't know.

S (middle row of typewriter letters).

E (eight).

S (in the question).

I had no idea. Btnirn wrote, 'A few of us solved the movie puzzle. Each movie has a star whose first name and last name each contain the same single vowel:

North by Northwest: Cary Grant

Cedar Rapids: Ed Helms

The Ghost and Mr. Chicken: Don Knotts

Space Jam: Bugs Bunny

I came up with Will Smith, of *Men in Black*.

IX (Roman numerals).

(Capital R: The 'what word could come next' puzzle is based on the symbols above the numbers on a standard QWERTY keyboard (some of which have many names): exCLAMation point, comMER-Cial mark, octoTHORp, DOLLar sign, perCENT sign, CAREt, amperSAND, asterISK. PARE, RENT, and THESIS [also ENTHESIS: per Wiktionary, 'The point at which a tendon, ligament, or muscle inserts into a bone'] are possible next words.

Pronunciation changes when you add an acute

accent.

Don't know. Any ideas?

27.10.5b a.a.: *Star Wars IV: A New Hope*. Sex and the City: the movie. Chicken casserole. Inclement weather. Hydrogen nuclei fuse. The former American president George Walker Bush. (Apologies for the bad timing of this last one.)

THE SPHINX LOOKS BACK:

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

September: **1** - diet, takes a, needs a goal, a will. That's almost a transpo of 'self-denial'. Needs a fill. Ohh. Dischorran: this base was my first introduction to Wryboshian minimalism. **2** - from *Laverne & Shirley*, and thus WI-topical. I Googled to confirm, but if I hadn't known *6, Googling <"fictional beers"> gives hits that have it. **4** - degrades, letter bank, bigram flat, bigram bank (need an S here), rebade flat, takes a century. I couldn't get past 'ruins'; how does one 'compare' one team performance? So I e11Ced ???? a ??????, got five hits including 5 1 7, got 8, still got stuck on 6 4. 'Race' didn't work. So I Lucifered ^[compares]{6}\$ in 9C; got 133 hits, but the right one stood out. **5** - cloudier, murkier, shadier. Tesla coil? Localise. Callisto—duh! Moons! Gigadynes, teradynes, Ganymede. Io bio. I looked up Europa and saw 7. I question the physics here; I think laser output is ordinarily expressed in power (watt = joule/second, 1 kilogram•meter²/second³), not force (dynes = 1/100,000 newton, where a newton is 1 kilogram•meter/second²). This is sorta like saying has a rock has a weight of 7 pound-miles per hour. Also, I question whether a laser beam would spread out enough to make a big hole in the sky. Also a megadyne, being ten newtons, is not a whole lot of force, so if a few Mdyn did spread out I don't know how wide a hole they could push through miles of air. **6** - or, as I prefer to call it, a transposal alternade. I just checked the Guide for 10s. Didn't need to go past the A's. **7** - virgin, Vigin. Tudor, trudor, tuedor (Franco-Spanish killer?). Regal, fierce. Anglo. Blah. Never came close, despite 'virgin', but I can't fault the cluing. Her sun sign

September #7, continued

was indeed Virgo. **8** - Dischorran: the 4-4 took forever! **10** - Dischorran: This was my last sol by quite a bit. Notes for posterity: Don't think I can justify s(tor)age Nothing obvious for crab or shell. 'Deou' should be a word; I would also accept toom. F(leap)it at least fits? Or bu(star)d, if he can lock himself up in a bird (or a dowager?). After scanning through all 1097 3-letter words and 153 2-letter words in e10C, I got nothing. What am I missing? **11** - I t.c.'ed terminal, moribund, expiring, withered, no; abrasive, yes! **12** - cute use of line-initial 'State'. **15** - 'Bernie' gave me 'Vermont' and I worked from there. Patrick? **18** - 'D address' was clear but I couldn't think of a disapproving abbr. except 'TMI'. Should have considered 'L**' abbrs. I Googled <tmi nsfw "tl;dr"> to get a list, and found the not-so-disapproving 'LOL'. **19** - 'one intention'? Isn't that a band? **20** - Dischorran: ewwww. **21** - nil, nothing. That suggested 15; took some time to see how to distribute the Ts. **24** - I took 'riddle' literally, though I've often enough seen flats titled with cuewords. Shame on me. If I'd realized it was a stealth flat I wouldn't even have had to solve it; '10 6' would have sufficed. **KU1** - 'Iran' in 'Beiranvand' is a nice find. Not all that KUish, I thought; Google <"world cup" 2018 ali>, add <-gabr -abulayhi> to get rid of irrelevancies, and there he is. Dischorran: "soccer goalie Ali" for the Googlewin. **29** - regulation, inorgulate. I t.c.'d that, got convention, no use. In practise, pictarnies. At liberty. In practise. I thought 2 8 was specifically about unfreedom, which would never have worked. Using t.c. to get antonyms of 'freedom', had I thought to do it, would have found only 'restraint' as a plausible answer, and maybe 'responsibility', and clicking on either would have shown 'constraint'. Roget7 doesn't do antonyms, but looking up 'freedom' finds 'unconstraint', which might have clicked. **31** - anybody out there know the latest holistic fruit craze? ... Nemmind, got it. **37** - covers? I t.c.'d 'sheathe', only got 'cloaks'. I wrote 'with a cover spun knight' and somehow thought that worked. Weeks later, I realized it didn't. I think I would have gotten this if I'd only thought to Baus 'knight'. Clever, tough, fair cluing.

September #37, continued

Dischorran: with a style (la-di-da) spun; knight (n). **41** - one-time, wanton, bluish, college. t.c.'d 'former' and ignored 'whilom'. **42** - mother, father of three, doulas, nurses in roses, at lenth. 2 5 finally hit me. **44** - what a title! **47** - brilliant! I was so intimidated that I didn't even try hard, but I doubt I'd have gotten it, in any case. Pity I didn't know enough to kudize it. **54** - ah, Hasbro. Educational flat. **55** - line 2 led to 'organ'. Tuba, ab_ut, abu_t, horn, nroh. epoillac. t.c.'d 'proponent' (backer, patron) and 'praise' (approved, endorsed, extolled). Reversing those last and considering d__ words, I reversed course and got 'denier'. **57** - the author line did help. **58** - priest, hermit, hermitage, vow of silence. Roget7ed 'standoffishness', which led to 583.6; no good, but 584, 'seclusion', had 9. R/EDS: I have tried parson pastor purist (pursuits) listen (stillness) mystic (mysticism) father (hereafter) layman deacon lector fiends (definiens) etc. One or two or those might barely pass, but I don't think any of them are the intended solution. Dischorran: cretin, reticence? Deacon, cannonade? Father, hereafter is actually pretty good. **61** - I first tried to find tennis players. 'Below scratch' as a positive set me straight. Didn't recognize either. **63** - solitude, oli tued, vandal, hermitt, aha. **64** - 'no unches' came quickly but I couldn't get the rest. Maybe 'chess' (B = bishop), but I got nothing after 'so', despite 'clustered' and 'slews'.. Shame on me. **65** - got in via 'pathos'. **66** - 'hot dog' is MW. Dutch uncle. t.c.'d 'mentor': expert, friend, helper. Gal pal, big gut. Brains failing me, I asked e11C for 6 6 nouns not ending in -s, got 314 hits. A lot to go through, and nothing stood out. Common ground, family doctor (kin vet), father figure [breezed right by it!], lancet window (bay window?), object lesson, pelvic girdle (hip obi), second banana, social worker (red ant), string bikini, veggie burger. <"Dad bod"> gets 243,000 un-cleaned-up Google hits but I don't recall ever seeing it. But it was in the 2 Dec Sunday *Times* crossword. Too late. **67** - 'qat' and 'slogan' got me nowhere. Roget7ed 'ad': advert, notice, writeup, leaflet, handout. What can be condensed? Summary? After more than a month it occurred to me that 'chew' might be physical, hence 'stew', and

September #67, continued

'tagine' instantly came to mind. I don't know why; I'm not a fan of Moroccan fare. **69** - participant, pantric, plumcot. I t.c.'d the first and got 12. **71** - tourist, foolhardy, loner, eremite, recluse! **73** - tried to do halal/Allah to no avail. It would be a good base, though. Linko: for a Brit this was a WNFR after line two **74** - Wikipedia says ESPN said he was the world's most famous athlete, but I don't recall ever hearing of him, and nothing in the anagram says 'soccer' to me. I just fed it to anagram-solver.net. **76** - I didn't like this because I was reading it as inapt 'rent amount for saps' rather than 'they sap rent amount [from renters]'. **79** - 'back' in this is TETCBN in my book. **81** - could this be called an ambigram, given Teddy's loss as a Progressive? **82** - I considered this a while back as part of an alchemism base, but it rang no bells here. Good aptness. I wonder if the IUPAC and IUPAC were saving Yuri Oganessian until the first trans-uranic noble gas was found, so they could use the -on ending? But then why not go all the way with 'Oganession'?

F1 - my sol shows I reffed 8Ac2, the B in 1Ac2, 8Dn2, 14Dna, and fergossake the surname in 4Ac.

C3 - Good title. A = s, suggesting OAA = -ess, so OHEO = -ence. Then I guessed XH MHW could be 'do not'; 'disturb', then all the rest, followed. **C4** - G = s, DTED/DBHD suggested D = e. I guessed XYDDYK = 'letter' then 'twenty-six'. **C5** - S = i, repeated SQD could be -ing, after which I tried 'finding', 'adding', and 'D Day'. **C6** - 'ma/mamma-' looked plausible and suggested 'baby', whence 'Bob Hope'.

X1 - B - 'gave tip' is nicely misleading. C, F, M - rather opaque surfaces. I have no note about trouble with F but I now can't see how it works. Rubodramut? L - interesting story there. N - ah, as in 'put a lid on it'. O - very nicely constructed. Q - tricky, as 'wild' looks more like an anagram indicator than 'pitch'. R - good surface. I like to pronounce 'New Age' to rhyme with 'sewage'. S - très bon. T - X - excellent hidden! Y - well assembled; I like \times = times. BB - couldn't put an image to the surface, but got it on a second look.

X2 - 16Ac is another great surface. 32Ac was

September X2, concluded

tricky. 38Ac is obsolete. 18Dn's a nice find.

THE SPHINX STRIKES BACK:

I just found a postcard from newly return NPLer Χειρῶν, dated 26 Jul 1993, from the days when we were playing chess variants (aka fairy chess) by mail. These included Ralph Betza's Avalanche Chess, in which after every move a player moves one of the opponent's pawns one square forward (toward themselves) and Hans Klüver and Peter Kahl's Dynamo Chess, in which pieces can push and pull other pieces around (e.g., Qd1d3/d2d6), but not Wayne Schmittberger's Wildebeest Chess, which adds new pieces camel (extended knight, moving, e.g., Cc3d6) and wildebeest (camel + knight). He sent a flat that as far as I recall was never published, at least not in Enigma (background above not needed for solving); questionable cluing in A. Herewith:

ACROSTICAL ENIGMA (9)

- A. Table strange, I do confess
I love my games of fairy chess.
 - B. It motivates a guy to branch
Into a theme called 'avalanche'.
 - C. Sterling play in Dynamo.
Treesong's is the best, I know.
 - D. Trap, odds-on, snags wildebeest.
Queen stays svelte despite her feast.
- Despite their oddness, it's a law
That games are sometimes forced to draw.

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

Purely personal puzzle petards: Rhymes I regret, alphabetized: extra/texture, found/down, view/view. **3** - I found the WORD part very difficult. R/EDS: Quite an accomplishment getting all of this into one puzzle. **5** - I don't care for poeticke inversions like 'flats do write', particularly when they can easily be avoided by changing an arbitrary cueword. Like 'Dear A. Chemem of MATTES:/Such sad words you employ./All Krewe who author flats/Are only SMOOCH of joy,'. Or 'write us' for 'author'.

R/EDS: Proof again that NPLers can make a base out of almost anything. **6** - kudos? C-note? Pound? **8** - when Teki proposed the theme, 'svedberg' was the first time unit I thought of using. But I never did anything with it, because I am not Ucaaimhu. He wrote **seven** thematic flats this issue (8, 25, 31, 40, 43, 48, and (I presume) 54, not to mention time references in 1 and 13. **9** - good work. It couldn't be more of a single connected unit. And Lexman managed connection in #11. **'11'** - R/EDS: I'd never heard of 6 before and it was hard to find. **13** - fourth line a bit rushed. **14** - what a find! I guess I'll watch none. **16** - Good advice. For GotS reasons I feel I can't heed it. R/EDS: Neat. Clean. I like it. **20** - she KISSED him AND baked HIM some MUM? Line 2 wants to be anapests. Better 'She kissed him and she baked him MUM.' **25** - R/EDS: Nice puzzle all round. 9 was new to me. **26** - my answer is inferior and LAST WORD is +, but I think it's an acceptable alternative. **27** - eh? **31** - quite a cueword cluster, but clear. **37** - another damn plant flat. **38** - 'gulab jamun' is two words and has penultimate stress. I suppose Americans' pronunciation is far from standardized, but why use that arbitrary cueword in the first place? Memories of a fine recent dessert? If it's cluish, I don't see how. R/EDS: What a wonderful find. **40** - service is not always good at the Restaurant at the End of the Universe. (But the food is good. And obliging.) **41** - I don't care for the unrhymed French. Fine cluing, though. R/EDS: Well done, indeed! **42** - if you're eating circumspectly, why the signs of growth? **48** - leap year? No, too long. **49** - R/EDS: nice find and well clued. **50** - when I give a huge nod I get a crick in my neck. **53** - I'd prefer 'would' for 'did'. **59** - nice one!

F6 - R/EDS: Quite a feat of construction.

C5 - R/EDS: LOL!

Contest results: far and away my favorite of the issue, a mini-course in cryptic cluing. I think offering alternative approaches is particularly valuable. See 'Cryptic Clues' below for specific comments.

/dev/joe is extra-busy this month, so no August KK this month.

NOMPLAY:

'Art Brut' is a double transdeletion of 'tributary' and of 'bratwurst', and banks to 'Bruta', a London-based fashion label. 'Dublo' is an uninteresting transcurtailment of 'double' and a third-letter change of 'DUPLO®', a line of double-sized Lego bricks. It's in the transdeletion tongue-garbled (NI2), doubleganger (NI3: doppelgänger), guerdonable (NI2: rewardable), groundable, Oldenburg, bludgeon, unlobed, unbold, Dublo, loud, old, lo. A couple of blah steps but quite respectable length. Kreegah bundolo! 'Brobberty' is a nicely symmetric interlock of 'bobbery' and 'RT', and it banks to 'by rote' (NI2, NI3-findable). 'Plus One' transposes to the Danish surname 'Poulsen', as in Yussuf Poulsen (soccer pro), Louis Poulsen (lighting manufacturer), etc. It is a bank of loosen up, nonplusses, nonuples, Peloponnesus, and unpopulousness, among others. 'roamingrobyn' looks formidable but it's a decent interlock of rangy + orb + Mion (Charles-Louis Mion, French composer) and a transposal charade of amor (NI3: cherub) + gin + Byron.

KREWEWERK:

On 25 Nov Hot posted to the npl-folk mailing list: Banterweight died of a heart attack last night. She was out to dinner with a friend, and fell to the floor. They called 911, she was taken to the hospital, and died there. That's all I know.

There followed an outpouring of sad responses like nothing I've seen before on npl-folk. Here is some of it to suggest why:

Melifer: Oh, no! Banterweight was one of the people I most looked forward to seeing when I got to attend cons. I had the pleasure of sharing a room with her a few times, and I usually joined her for group solving the flat competition. She was always patient and encouraging to newbies and made it a point to welcome novice solvers into the group and saw to it that everyone got to participate. Our score didn't matter, it was only important that everyone had the satisfaction of solving puzzles. She was intelligent and funny, caring and friendly. Cons will not be the same for me without her.

G Natural: I echo Melifer's sentiments. I haven't been to a Con in a few years, but Banter-

weight was always a bright and smiling presence. Wow....what a shock to lose her so suddenly.

Xemu: My wife comes to cons sometimes, and she always made sure to be on Banterweight's team for the extravaganza. So sad.

Lunch Boy: I have nothing but good memories of Banterweight and I'm very sad to learn that I will not have the opportunity to have any more. Condolences all around.

Inka: I met Banterweight a few years ago, at my first con. She was very warm and friendly, and took the time to help get me started and to do some co-solving with me when I knew even less about puzzling than I do now. Really a great person.

Sue++: I loved being around her—she just lit up everyone around her with her sense of fun and kindness and intelligence. I'll miss her a lot.

Hale: Banterweight and I co-solved an official cryptic at my first convention, as well as at each other convention we co-attended. She was so welcoming and so patient. Co-solving and chatting and laughing with her at Recovery was a major moment of confirmation that the NPL was for me. I will miss her wonderful warmth, relentless wit, and unfailing smile.

Qoz: We're all echoing the same thing, but that doesn't make it any less true. Banterweight was always a guaranteed smile and a laugh. Always welcoming. Sad news indeed.

Joker: She and I always did one of the official cryptics and had a ball, as so many have described. We were also con-swimming buddies. I can't imagine a con without her.

Eric: I have warm memories from many years of conversations with Banterweight. She was funny, smart, thoughtful, opinionated (in a good way), extroverted...really a welcome addition to any gathering. And the short stories she wrote were good.

Teki: She and I walked the race in Milwaukee back in July. I was the designated trailer and she just wanted someone to hang out with. It was one of the highlights of the weekend for me. Afterwards, she emailed Sue++ claiming, in jest, that she had beat me at the finish. So, I had to reply that I was truly behind her all the way through the course.

Chainsaw: She was one of my favorite people ever. Luckily I remembered to let her know it. I didn't see her often, but when I did it was always special.

CRYPTIC CLUES:

Reflections on contest cryptics:

Kris Kross: I've often seen objections to constructions like 'jump start' for J, but they always seemed arbitrary to me. That's a perfectly natural English construction, as in 'road edge' for 'road's edge' or 'water level' for 'level of water'. It's a little less normal with a two-word head but it doesn't particularly bother me here. I should say that I'm nowhere second-guessing Tortoise's judgment, which is fine, but offering my own thoughts.

Something: Antigo Silt Loam is the state soil of Wisconsin. Hard to see how any reasonably compact clue could define this helpfully.

Zombie: I like the phrasing: 'the relationship [of being an ingredient] is not transitive'.

Bad: I wonder if it's possible to read 'accent' to mean 'accented syllable'? Seems a stretch.

Everyday: I echo Tortoise's delight.

Drain: but consider 'Italian *latte* is (English) "milk"'.

Anyway: addressing the 13ness of the fodder but not its (un)interestingness, how about 'Animal—i.e., a whittled reed? Nonsense!' or 'Bad idea: whittle reed animal'?

I hear: no way to use kumiss here. Oh, well.

Wisconsin: is this the first we've heard from Prof. Fishback?

In tree: interesting. I've never cared what comes first in 'X in Y'. I like Tortoise's version.

Oak: I also like Tortoise's here.

President: I didn't see what was 'usual' until I realized he meant the usual directional *command*.

Hokey: yes.

Rock: neat, one of the shortest clues in the contest.

Tortoise's favorite newbie clue is also mine.

Tiger: 'many' cryptic clues? Oh, he means in general, not in this contest.

'Bully': I like the compactness as well as the

surface.

Assassinated: ‘encompassing the essence’ is forced enough for me that I’d probably drop it to second place.

19th: I didn’t find this abstruse because in a wordplay context ‘19th-century don’ immediately makes me think of Dodgson...and Spooner. Rather wordy, though.

Lead: I wonder: would a comma in ‘Lead, U.S. Grant home’ sufficiently indicate that the answer is a ‘home’ for lead and a home for Grant? Good point about the too-related definitions. This is the shortest clue in the contest, by three letters. Ignore punctuation.

Wisconsin’s: agreed on all points.

Hector’s: of all possible clues to ‘badge’, ‘nametag’ is the best fit to ‘Hector’.

Elsie: well, it beats ‘wiry coda’.

This: ha!

Sentimentality: agreed.

President: agreed.

WI: Lie: WI derated the frolicsome animal. It’s counterfactual, but that’s OK.

Rock: I also like ‘bit of work’ for ‘erg’.

Spooner’s: agreed.

Harvey: I recognized ‘Harvey Mudd’ but couldn’t have told you who he was. Or, as it turned out, what. A thing likelier to be called ‘first class’.

Ring: agreed.

Try: A flower to solicit 506 Romans: it stinks. Bleh.

Fish: points for bravery.

CYBERBABBLE:

Marcus Asparagus on Facebook, 24 Nov: When you use the wrong word in a situation, that’s a malapropism. When you just can’t find the right word, that’s a malamute.

ewolf: If you’re right—a maladroitness? And if you’re not, a malagauche? [Or you’re from Madagascar.]

John Beck: Buying the wrong cookies = Mallo-mar.

Kevin L. Schwartz: This post is a good joke. But the actual word for the inability to recall a word is ‘lethologica’.

Pacho: So when something tastes really horrible it’s malicious ?

ALT.ANAGRAMS:

These are anagrams from the alt.anagrams newsgroup, 15-28 Feb 2009. @ = antigram, @@ = ambigram, ~ = not necessarily apposite but fit together well, T = topical at the time, ♥ = try this if you just want to do a few. Composer abbrs. from 27.1.5b ¶ Ω. Answers next month.

♥It made Fe cling (8 5) (MT).

I infiltrate visitor, no? (2 5 13) (+ spelling) (MT).

@@Oh! See perils of charlatans! (10 13) (MT).

US vim—lawn missiles! (^4 *5 *8) (MT). T?

♥Randy, I am told (1 5 3 3) (JP).

♥I in Cap-I-tol (JG).

♥Pain, sir? (MT).

♥The pain came on... (andy).

Worth a look, but too British, contrived, inapt, unfamiliar, unspecific, R-rated, or otherwise unsuitable for solving: T I’m so in love, so I made my only girl a bundle! = Danny Boyle’s movie *Slumdog Millionaire* (MK). Detroit, USA knew our ~ United Auto Workers (MT). Horizontal bop = harlot poon biz (biz). BA Co. = BOAC [British Overseas Airways Corporation, now just the B & A] (MT). Automakers ~ make USA rot (MJ). (Topical this month, no? Good despite unchanged ‘make’.) A normal end = an older man (JP). What does a woman really want? = a new man who was totally dear (JP). Aim is song = *Miss Saigon* (MT). @@Pieces of shit ignore ~ *The Origin of Species* (PC, after JG). @@The ‘fossil’ in that junk? Heck, it’s mainly the old leading man, Ford! = The hit film *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (MK). [Which, I learned from a.a., led to the phrase ‘nuking the fridge’ for film scenes that stretch credulity, like I.J. surviving an A-bomb blast in a lead-lined refrigerator.] It’s a life worth living ~ if I win that girl’s love! (MK) Harrison Ford ~ finds a horror (JG). @@This plain, tiny whore; rhinoplasty in white; sin to play within her? = Paris Whitney Hilton (JG). Rare art marvel posing her shining ear-jewel = Johannes Vermeer’s *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (MK). Press Control-Alt-Delete ~

and tell loser PC to reset! (HSP).

TALES FROM THE NPL CHAT ROOM:

As usual in games, the last clue or other material before revelation is ended by '❖❖' for easier play at home.

Let's finish the second list quiz from 31 Mar 2003. If anyone's trying this at home, I'd be interested in hearing how you did. Remember, you should be reasonably quick in answering.

T McAy: #3. Name one of the eight types of shots in billiards, which pool players strive to master.

T McAy: *** Reveal

Saxifrage: bank

En: masse

Endgame: bank shot

Kray: carom

Gabby: masse

Ucaoimhu: bank shot

Ziggy: banked

Tahnan: Bankshot.

Lunch Boy: masse

Qaqaq: masse

Jangler: carom

T McAy: Correct answers are Break, Straight, Rail, Off the rail, Bank, Masse, Jump, Combination

Qaqaq: And once again, my second choice (break) was the right choice

En: masse was only pool word i knew

T McAy: I'll accept banked for bank

Gabby: You responded to that question en masse, as did the rest of us, En. :)

T McAy: #4. Give the last name of one of the seven astronauts in the Mercury program.

T McAy: *** Reveal

Saxifrage: Slayton

Lunch Boy: Glenn

Jangler: Freddie Mercury

En: cooper

Tahnan: Glenn.

Endgame: Alan Shepherd

Ucaoimhu: Shepard

Gabby: Armstrong.

Ziggy: Johnson

Qaqaq: Scirra

Kray: Glenn

Shaken: Shepherd?

T McAy: Correct answers: Carpenter, Cooper, Glenn, Grissom, Schirra, Shepard, Slayton

Saxifrage: I used to play in Scott Carpenter Park growing up. Complete with rocket-shaped climbing thing/slide.

Qaqaq: After 9 questions, I'm finally unique! :-)

Lunch Boy: Exactly

Gabby: I think that question was a little extra hard for someone a) Canadian and b) under 30. :)

Tahnan: I'm American but under 30, and I've only heard of three of the seven, Gabby.

Saxifrage: Slayton's the only one of the 7 who didn't fly. (Well, not then... he got to fly on the Apollo/Soyuz joint mission in '75.)

Tahnan: #5. Name one of the five books on T McAy's nightstand.

Gabby: OK, under 32. It was rhetorical exaggeration.

Saxifrage: 'Islands I Have Known', by J. Ratite.

Lunch Boy: A Clue for the Crossword Lady

Qaqaq: 'Our Bodies, Ourselves'—don't ask why

Shaken: NI2? ;-)

T McAy: #5. Name one of the six television ratings issued by the American television broadcasting industry in 1996.

T McAy: *** Reveal

Qaqaq: M

Endgame: pg

Lunch Boy: TV-MA

Jangler: TV-Y7

Saxifrage: TV7

Ucaoimhu: TV-MA

Shaken: Nielsen.

Kray: Mature

En: 'violent'

Gabby: C 7

Tahnan: PG.

Ziggy: TV-MA

T McAy: Correct answers: TV-Y, TV-Y7, TV-G, TV-PG, TV-14, TV-M

Shaken: LOL.

Lunch Boy: argh

En: boy that was wrong

Tahnan: M, not MA?

Ucaoimhu: Crud.

Ziggy: M, not MA?
 Shaken: I totally misunderstood the Q.
 Shaken: :-P
 Kray: is 'Mature' acceptable for TV-M?
 Gabby: I went with Canadian version.
 Ucaoimhu: When did they bring in TV-MA?
 Saxifrage: Ouch, forgot the Y.
 Qaqaq: Or is 'M' acceptable for TV-M?
 T McAy: I'll accept Mature for TV-M
 En: i almost said just 'pg'
 Endgame: one correct, it looks like
 T McAy: And M for TV-M
 Saxifrage: And that shoots my score.
 Tahnan: One correct what?
 Gabby: Gimme a little time, and I'll come up with an all-canadian fivesome :)
 Kray: How the heck do you score this one?
 Shaken: 36! Woohoo!
 Endgame: well 3 now
 Tahnan: What I've learned is that I think like Endgame. :-)
 Qaqaq: So naturally, I match Kray
 Jangler: 26.
 Tahnan: We were right, I'm presuming, with 'pg' for 'tv-pg'?
 Lunch Boy: 20
 Endgame: like you too, bud
 Saxifrage: 22.
 Qaqaq: 13
 Kray: Q: you seem to have been on my tail all evening. Or maybe vice versa.
 En: 20
 Lunch Boy: And I almost went with TV-14 instead. Bah
 Tahnan: 15.
 Endgame: 27
 Kray: 19
 Ucaoimhu: 18.
 Saxifrage: Wow.
 Tahnan: Wow—that's much better than I thought I did.
 Saxifrage: Nice going, Qaqaq.
 Ziggy: 20-odd
 Qaqaq: I think others' MA was what gave it to me. :-)
 Lunch Boy: Which would have given me 11. Drat

and double drat
 Jangler: Qaqaq wins! Yaaaay Qaqaq!
 Shaken: What low scores!
 T McAy: fwiw, these are the books on my bedside table: The Rise of the Creative Class by Richard Florida, Finders Keepers by Mark Bowden, No Exit and Three Other Plays by Jean Paul Sartre, and Hoyle's Rules of Games by Morehead/Mott-Smith
 Tahnan: When you consider that the winning scores from the last game were 9, 10, 13, and 14...
 ...
 Jangler: Does anyone know what time the NYSun usually updates? I'm trying to decide whether to wait for the April Fools puz or to sleep.
 Tahnan: oh god, i hate april fools day.
 Qaqaq: So do we unmask now? :-)
 Jangler: Why, Tah?
 Tahnan: Because it's stupid. And because I'm gullible.
 Qaqaq: Speaking of the word 'gullible', did you know... :-)
 Tahnan: See? I believe anything too. Know what, Trip?
 Gabby: I've used that very 'did you know...' successfully on someone who was way too cocksure of himself with excellent results.
 Tahnan: I thought you were going to tell me that it's not in the dictionary.
 Qaqaq: Right
 Tahnan: Because someone told me that last year, and in fact I checked and it is.
 Jangler: Ah yes. But which dictionary did you check, Tah?
 Tahnan: Um...my 10C. Why, is it not in NI3?
 Qaqaq: It isn't? Why, let me run and check!
 Jangler: It's below the line, Tah.
 Gabby: Does anyone here know whether The Onion actually runs completely serious and factual stories on April Fools Day?
 Qaqaq: Hmm ... it IS in NI3, but I see why you had trouble finding it. They put it after 'gumball' for some reason.
 Tahnan: You know, it must be really, really tempting for lexicographers to leave 'gullible' out of the dictionary. After all, who would call them on it? Anyone who tried to point it out wouldn't be

believed.

Qaqaq: Huh. There are really only 3 words that end in GRY? I'll have to ponder that

Jangler: Arrrgh! Currently my local radio is playing that puzzle. See, there are these five (really random and stupid) questions that they ask, and they *keep asking* them until someone gets all five right. So I've had to hear GRY for the past 4 months or so

Qaqaq: Well, God only knows what the radio station thinks the intended GRY answer is

Ucaaimhu: A third party then posted 'There are three meanings of "nuts". One of them makes us angry. one of them makes us hungry . . .'

Gabby: Viagry.

En: 'the puzzle that will not die'

Qaqaq: Here, let me try. *stabs the puzzle, feeds it poison, stomps on it, machine-guns it*

Qaqaq: *does it all again*

Qaqaq: Ah, that felt good

En: (it's wearing garlic)

Jangler: Don't call it a puzzle. It's not worthy of the name.

Ucaaimhu: Ah. 'Rasputingry'.

Tahnan: You know, someone had to have invented that stupid -gry 'riddle.' I wonder if they can be tracked down.

Qaqaq: Someone should put a mark on his head and make him figure out whether it's black or white

Qaqaq: His life isn't worth 55 cents in two coins, one of which is not a nickel.

Ucaaimhu: Actually, that one has a non-trick answer. (Which is, admittedly, harder to get than the trick answer.)

Qaqaq: Should I have thrown in 'U.S.' before coins to eliminate the non-trick answer?

Ucaaimhu: No, both are US coins, neither is a nickel.

En: or 'current' u.s. coins

Qaqaq: Well, it's been a while since the 54-cent piece came out

Ucaaimhu: That's it, En—you have to go back a ways in time. (Although, of course, all old US currency is still negotiable—you'd just be a fool to spend it at face value.)

Qaqaq: I can't think of too many old US coins outside of the half-disme

Ucaaimhu: And the half-disme does it.

Qaqaq: I only learned about the half-disme from an Ellery Queen short story

Ucaaimhu: (Other old denominations include the 2-cent and 3-cent pieces, which don't help for this puzzle, but do for the Gift Of The Magi puzzle.)

Tahnan: There's a Gift of the Magi puzzle?

Jangler: Something something and three of it was in pennies.

Qaqaq: The Magi go north one mile, east one mile...

Ucaaimhu: 'One dollar and twenty-three cents. She counted it again. One dollar and twenty-three cents. And sixty cents of it in pennies.'

Qaqaq: The rest of it was a check for 63 cents

Qaqaq: Is there an intended solution that doesn't involve foreign currency, old currency, etc?

Ucaaimhu: Well, it's just the opening lines of 'Gift of the Magi'; there's not even an intended puzzle, let alone an intended solution. At the time the story was written, according to Martin Gardner (I believe), 2-cent coins were still current, and 3-cent coins were likely still circulating. So there isn't really a problem with the passage, it just looks like there's one.

...

Ucaaimhu: By the way, don't trust the 'Magi' excerpt above—I've looked it up other places now, and that guy got it wrong.

Ucaaimhu: One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies.

Ucaaimhu: The counting it again part is later in the opening paragraph.

Artistry: Twenty-two cents. That was all. And forty-three cents of it in quarters.'

Ucaaimhu: Also, I have some dates now. GotM was first published in 1906. The 3-cent piece was minted until 1889. The 2-cent piece was minted until 1872.

Qaqaq: Well, 17 years still isn't much in terms of the life of a coin

Ucaaimhu: Right. Not to mention that I don't think the story has to actually occur in 1906.

Qaqaq: I say just take the whole amount of the debit card and be done with it

Ucaaimhu: Ooh. I forgot about half-cents, which were minted until 1857. And lo and behold, the site

I'm now looking at (<http://www.maa.org/features/mathchat/mathchat_3_15_01.html>) quotes /dev/joe on this very question.

And that finally brings to an end the excerption of 31 Mar 2003 chat.

BOOKS:

I have wondered for years about the phrase 'falamagoosha shinnamaroosha', Googling and even Krewgling it without success. Today I fiddled with the spelling a bit, tried Google Books, and found a piece in the January 24, 1942 issue of *Billboard* about the success of 'Rose O'Day, latest addition to the double-talk cycle of song hits', by Charlie Tobias and Al Lewis. It seems that it's 'filagadusha-shinamarusha', reportedly an endearment from a traditional Gaelic lullaby. though I haven't been able to confirm the origin elsewhere. Johnny McCarthy sings to Rose O'Day, 'You're my filla-ga-dusha, / Shina-ma-rusha, / Bah-da-rah-da-boom-foo-dee-ay.' I somehow doubt the Gaelicity of that last line. There are variations in the lyric transcriptions but I write what I hear Kate Smith sing. No sheet music online.

CLIPPINGS:

Editing finished 2 Dec 2018. Praise **HERBIE!**