

Some Puzzle News by Ucaoimhu

(I) Yay! The tournament is celebrating a big anniversary!

(II) Boo! The Washington Post Hunt has been canceled; DC puzzlers will *not* be finding five clue numbers and a final clue. In commemoration, five Across clues have had their clue numbers omitted, and the final Across clue is missing (and its seven words have been replaced by [1] through [7] in the other Across clues).

(III) Yay! This July, the annual National Puzzlers' League convention will be in Boston. In preparation, all Down answers will be altered before entry (altered entries include a two word phrase and part of an animal name):

March Four will shed their outer layer for spring.

April Four will fool you by swapping their first two letters — but then appending those letters in their *original* order to the end.

May Four will lose their hearts, leading to:

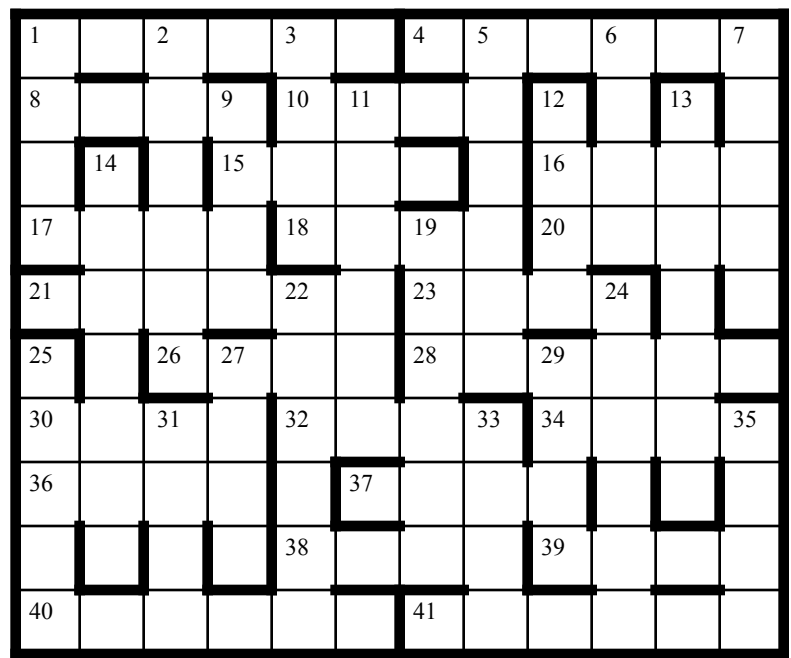
June Four will hold a wedding between the Morse codes for their last two letters (then translate the resulting code back into a letter and append it to the end).

July Four will have a “convention,” where two identical letters two apart convene — that is, move together and coalesce into just one such letter.

Finally, if you take the list of missing Across clue numbers, apply the missing last Across clue, write the resulting five-number list four times alongside the twenty Down clues, circle the *n*th letter of each clue where *n* is the number written alongside it, use the circled letters to fill in the blank in “Apply the five changes (March–July, in order) _____,” and follow the instruction that results, you will see what links all of these puzzle events.

ACROSS

1. Pretentious boy getting 2/7 of [2] area (2-2-2)
4. 2's, 27, etc. obscuring a semicircular [7] covering the outside of Ned's direction-reversing pipes (1-5)
8. [1]-eighths of a drachma Bo fit inside mold, barely (4)
10. Over five will be interrupted [3] this vacuous way of announcing oneself (2'1 1)
15. Two disks that real creme ultimately has [2]! (4)
16. One women's org. whose members are [6] based on their ancestors having fought the British for a lunar month (4)
17. Briefly, state where you'll find Duluth couple that starts [5] wearing manganese (4, *abbr.*)
18. Eats hash [1]-five degrees away from there ↗ (4)
20. Holder perversely inscribed with 25% of [4] prefix meaning “one step beyond” (4)
21. [5] : alphas :: finally : these wild moas, e.g. (6)
23. Set left behind for [4] *ET* host/musician named John (4)
26. Finished five hundred and [1], after losing thirty-nine (4)
28. Director Lee's claiming reversal of rightmost third of [7] is infuriating (6)
30. Rings encircling rod bisected [3] spheres (4)



32. Penniless Dora has, sixthly, [6] “other” on a Cuban questionnaire (4)
34. Center of [2], controlled country (4)
36. Vocally make fun of what Tommy Tune has, [5]? (4)
37. That creature is going to [4] end of Tyrol to stop the Italian (2'2)
38. Quartet aboard ship [6] a word to precede *dixit* (4)
39. A weird roe-and-chocolate bar made [3] Nestlé (4)
40. On the list of presidents note a third part of [7] 1 (6)
41. (6)

DOWN

1. Say, put paste on the author with a dour expression
2. The poet who wrote *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions and, Strangely, on Ned*
3. Doctor that is red is more dehydrated
5. Changed Tibet and Austria residents' way to say “please”
6. Earl goes after German and Ukranian, originally for no good reason
7. Fight with cross leader of ancient Greek city-state
9. Adoring look at that actor named Rhames
11. Letters that are Greek- and French-like
12. Mysterious Mo's car bounces
13. Talked about a place where couples are made to change
14. Duo of brothers, in time, exhibits sound quality
19. Former ruler of Troy's a Republican
22. An eating disorder of an old king near Iowa
24. A cry from those who try to begin heckling Queen Elizabeth I is in Spanish (2 *ws.*)
25. Piece of food left on a plate or tablespoon
27. Throw to untamed stoats (2 *ws.*)
29. Goldie ably conceals every other element of certain supporting tissues
31. First part of benevolent alien's wager
33. With audible voice, howl “Thin whalebone!”
35. “Nil-nil” that's accepted by flighty Hawaiian as a draw (*hyph.*)