A New Decade
by Ucaoimhu

To mark the new decade a certain person has just entered, most of this puzzle grid consists of (a) a rectangle of 40 boxes, and (b) a square of 49 boxes. The other seven-box rectangle, (c), is shaded in. When the grid is completely filled you must also shade in certain boxes from (a) and (b), as follows:

1. Most of the letters in (a) occur more than once in (a), but a few appear there only once. Shade in any row of boxes in (a) that does not contain a box with such a non-duplicated letter.
2. Shade in any box in (b) whose letter also occurs in (c).

Once this shading is done, you should recognize the shape formed by the unshaded boxes. You may also note that two unshaded boxes in (b) are marked, and the position of each, in its own way, matches the contents of (c). Only one, though, is due right of a certain unshaded word in (a).

As an additional aid to recognition, the cryptic part of each Across clue yields one extra letter (all Down clues work normally); in clue order, these letters spell out two more items in this decade, which if properly placed would straddle the shape formed. For each Down clue, find the number n of unshaded letters in its entry, and take the nth character of the clue (counting spaces); these characters, in clue order, will explain further what those two items are.

Finally, if you do the same for the number of shaded letters in each Down entry and take the nth character from the end of the clue, you will get an additional message.

ACROSS
1. A former president eats bass up (2 3)
2. Small matter-lifter is not put together right (6)
3. The Italian footwear binds (6)
4. With no club, Manilow’d turned boring (4)
5. Radio operator’s prefix meaning “computery” (4)
6. A former musician Brian touches nitrogen gas (5)
7. After party, she measured amount of drugs taken (4)
8. Light flotilla leaving Florida with army cop (3 4)
9. With no club, Manilow’d turned boring (4)
10. Retired Belgian who gutted trout (4)
11. Ultra-dark, poetically timeless (5)
12. ULTRA-dark, poetically timeless 10 includes Bo (4)
13. Piano Man is about lunatic getting higher (5)
14. The Cuban perhaps put butter cream on over 10% of the population (6)
15. A former president eats bass up (2 3)
16. Word Penny initially thinks is “enticing” (5)
17. Evergreen tree has a name once more (4)
18. Ultradark, poetically timeless 10 includes Bo (4)
19. A former musician Brian touches nitrogen gas (5)
20. Not near the starts of all four alpaca rides (4)
21. Exclaimed “Look!” in a deposit of minerals (4)
22. Amorphously arranged atoms congeal, dummy (5)
23. Child describing large amount of space before this clue is serious (6)
24. Little disbeliever says “3 AM” poetically is earth-shaking (6)
25. Intercourse-averse hill-dweller is king of Rome (7)
26. Country singer in India and Quebec (4)
27. Evergreen tree has a name once more (4)
28. Dance involving a horizontal pole-arm, say (4)
29. The Cuban perhaps put butter cream on over 10% of the population (6)
30. Directors Ang and Spike will claim one is biased (5)

DOWN
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