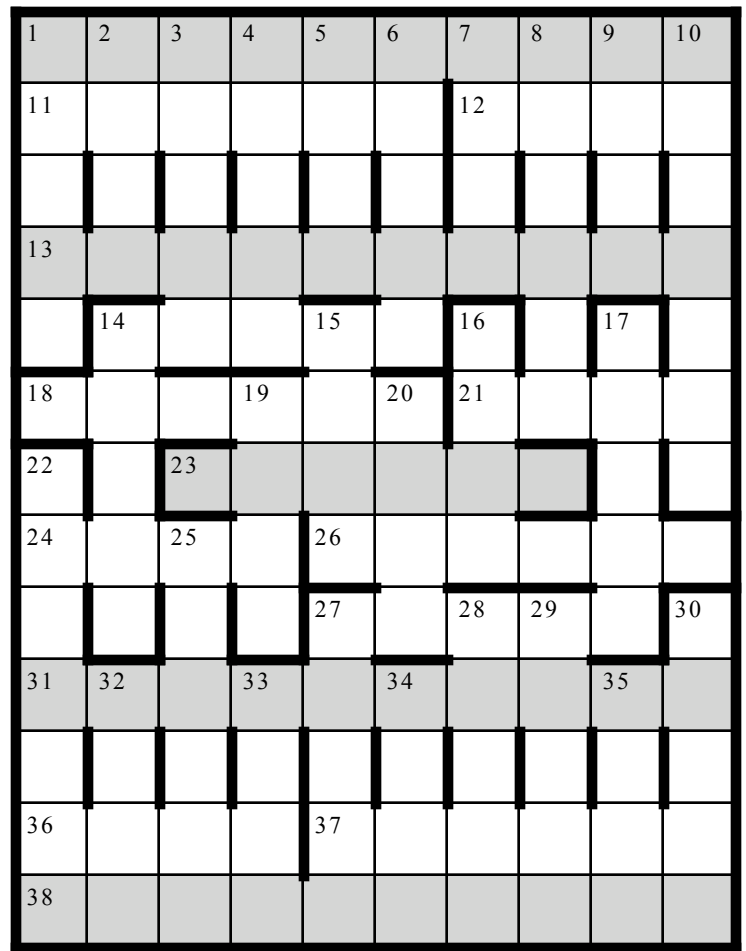


DCipherment by Ucaimhu

For this DC Hunt, I'm doing things a little differently — a difference that is reflected in a certain cipher, affecting only five letters, that is used in this puzzle. Specifically:

- (a) Six clues each contain one word, at least three of whose letters have been affected by the cipher; decipher these letters (yielding a different word) to make the clue solvable.
- (b) For six other clues, the answer has at least three letters that must be similarly deciphered, to yield the word to be entered in the grid. (One of these entries is a first name.)
- (c) Six other clues have a cryptic part that omits one letter from the answer; circle these letters in the grid (forming two fives, from one perspective). Left to right, they name an item I am using on this trip; if these letters are deciphered, then top to bottom they name the item I have previously used.

Another eighteen clues work normally. That leaves the five shaded Across entries; two of these (for which the clue has no straight definition) describe an action, and the other three “essentially” describe three other letter encipherments that, when applied to the second item from (c), yield the item I will use the *next* time I perform this action.



ACROSS

- 1. Florence embraces the feminine spirit? True (6 4)
- 11. Less plump person with Elks? (6)
- 12. Fess up . . . er, in a South American country (4)
- 13. Puts out too much unwrapped nova before troublesome Greek goddess comes a-courting (10)
- 14. Playwright Clifford dotes foolishly (5)
- 18. Part of a larger group of fat-coated basses (6)
- 21. Ran after small snow vehicle (4)
- 23. Its sag disturbed discriminating folks (6)
- 24. Hebrew month mentioned in Chinese lullaby (4)
- 26. Sajak ought to take in quiet Afghan's speech (6)
- 27. Hits skins (5)
- 31. Geometric figure resembling eight garlands adorning Minnesota actress Blanchett (10)
- 36. A host barely stirs (4)
- 37. Silly discs bearing college woman's name (6)
- 38. Got televised sports clue about leader of Giants (10)

DOWN

- 1. Leader of France can ultimately avoid deluge (5)
- 2. Love-sick Pope (3 1)
- 3. Turned east-west, in time! (5)
- 4. About to get uranium to harden (5)

- 5. Spilled one chicken-flavored soda (4)
- 6. Hundred-and-forty-four-thousand-and-thirteen-star flag's creator (5)
- 7. Chances to buy stock up then, before Dick (4, *abbr.*)
- 8. Cosmic cloud destroyed UN lab (6)
- 9. Hardy heroine in Spain is wearing shirts (4)
- 10. Vocalized better than loud, naked, tan German (7)
- 14. Go over actor's lines written by old Irish folk (5)
- 15. Dance endlessly? Nonsense (4)
- 16. Rents things from other planets (4)
- 17. Scots perhaps finally get into Disney pictures (5)
- 19. Somersaulting plus changing pennies? Zounds (4)
- 20. Important Russian dancing star (4)
- 22. Bled or shed, in part, next to a ranchero disheartened about unwritten rule (4 3)
- 25. Mobs running after green soups containing okra (6)
- 27. Pastry incorporating, primarily, mushroom caps (5)
- 28. Performing very well in timeless theatrical work (5)
- 29. Understood tabby leaping over it (5)
- 30. Short, precise sequel to II Thess. 4:5-6? (5)
- 32. Strange, dead Norse gods appear in this work (4)
- 33. Those that refuse hot snack (4)
- 34. Avoid south Asian nomad (4)
- 35. Way to encase a bit of *carne*! (4)