

Fray Tracing by Ucaoimhu

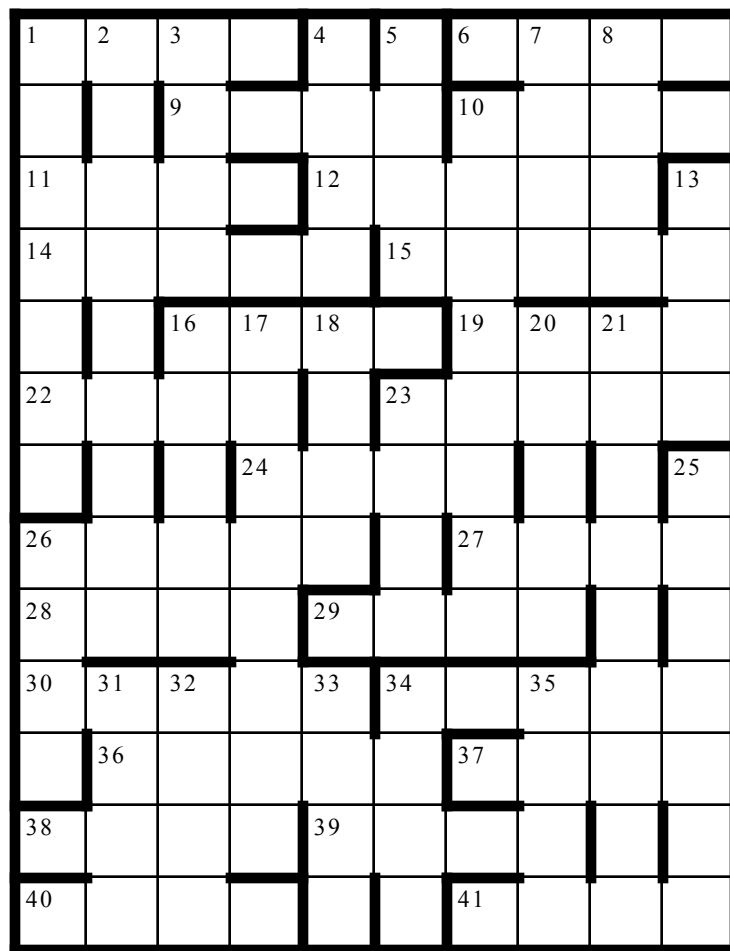
Since this is merely the day before, this puzzle honors the participants in a much less serious, but nevertheless dramatic effort — the carefully organized campaign to get me here for this event. To that end:

(1) Certain clues have answers that will not fit in the grid unless one square is packed tightly. If you draw lines connecting these squares, you will get a map of the route that was taken by one intrepid soul (me); the ordinary squares crossed by these lines will further describe this route, as well as stating the overall goal of this momentous struggle.

(2) Of the remaining clues, one third work normally, one third have a cryptic part that omits one letter from the answer, and one third have a cryptic part that yields an extraneous letter. If you first look at the position indicated by the omitted letters, and then repeatedly proceed as directed by the extraneous letters, you will see a sequence of words (all the same length) that form a coded message; decipher it to find another key figure in this effort.

ACROSS

1. Greek characters will be (hic!) drunk
6. Going around shopping center with a pack animal
9. Inform the first of thirty ladies
10. Replicate old Penny's clothing
11. Nocturnal birds with hollow legs
12. Ages of superficially astute Oxford fellows
14. Actor Fiennes is beginning to ride mountain horse
15. Wild rage!
16. Rotate tin containing taro paste
19. Irene, who sang in *Fame* with quartet from vicarage
22. Left Arizona clutching sappy letter from Homer
23. Explode phosphorus-filled gunk (2 wds.)
24. Orator's searched for a pamphlet
26. Yoko hugs hot singer of "Tiny Bubbles" (2 wds.)
27. Fraternal order of the Spanish kings
28. A lunatic oxygen-gas-consuming vehicle
29. Those people pinching the rear of Hollywood actress Lamarr
30. Travel east of distant city in North Dakota
34. Stitch up fabric muffling car alarm
36. Erica totaled an Oldsmobile Cutlass
37. During a May bride's speech
38. Component of ferric chloride, say!
39. Out of perverse Mr. Furley's head
40. Denials from a Russian still surrounded by Poles
41. Naval petty officer is terrible snob



DOWN

1. Pork sausage curling, at first, semi-horizontally
2. Old soul, barely grasping English greeting (3 wds.)
3. That thing is going to yours truly, at cost
4. Boring book primarily about Henry V
5. Florida Gabor is a bloodsucker
7. Diary contains woman's ultimate desire
8. Imitate semicircular part of church
10. Fabricated 400 clasps once, around October
13. Ensnare ET with Jay Z music, say
16. Amaze with remarkable feat
17. Write about the origin of the swine flu virus, say
18. Ron, I reconstructed Japanese objets d'art
20. In the manner of one enthralled to a suitable extent
21. Eggs on 1000 tribesmen in Crow dwelling places
23. Worried after finally opening door
25. Wagered, with the outcome determined by weird Norse kid (2 wds.)
26. Crazy party towards the rear of the ship
31. 6,272,640 square inches of mother-of-pearl
32. Disturbance in Brazilian city
33. He wrote *Carmina Burana* for eccentric female
34. Belonging to Levin, who writes about Indian garb
35. Shot a male sibling of Shemp and Curly