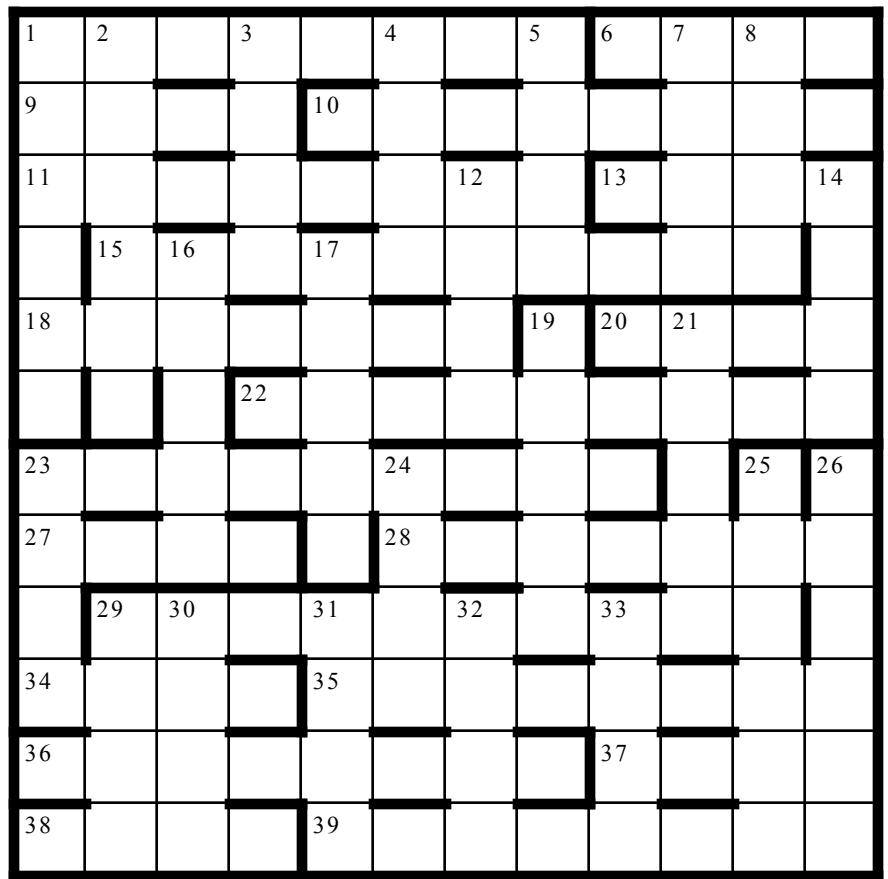


Catching Four by Ucaoimhu

This long-awaited sequel to the hit cryptic “The Hinger Games” involves a four-part train tour! To get to the Capitol, our protagonist has taken a trip through twelve districts, each of which can be associated with a “product” that is an Across answer in one grid row. Most Down clues contain an extraneous word that must be removed before solving; grouping these words (in clue order) in ones and twos properly, and appending a certain word to each group, gives the stops on the tour in the same order as the products in the grid.

Also, the clue for each product has an incorrect letter that must be corrected before solving; the incorrect letters indicate the *real* order of the products (and their corresponding stops). In this order, you will see that the tour had four three-stop legs that were (as seen in the product associations) Preliminary, Beastly, Tasty, and Short.

Each clue not used above contains an extraneous two-letter sequence in some word; this sequence must be removed before solving. Write these extra letter pairs in two columns in clue order. The bottoms of the columns will show how the tour was conducted (two legs each) and the tops will give one final stop on the tour. One (appropriate) letter pair appears in both a “bottom” and a “top” as above; the answer to the corresponding clue might be uttered to launch the next Hinger Games, and the *correct* letters from paragraph two in clue order will name someone with excellent qualifications (based on past experience launching a similar event) to launch it.



ACROSS

1. Write ode, being captivated by firearms and waterfowl (8)
6. Pretends to be McCoy, primarily when wearing some undershirts (4)
9. Hopper, who wrote gossip for the peeress, but not hot Norse opus (4)
10. Leaving Brea to be in Concord, NY, taking in . . . er, foliage (8)
11. Use tube PFC Kramer altered with a partner to make a secondary support structure (8) [NI3]
13. New York newspaper ignores 1000 things a jeep breaks in the Senate (4)
15. Cold, spoiled, perverse painter Paul drinking first and fourth parts of Marge’s stimulating beverage (6 4)
18. Can vote foolishly for a little party in Argentina (7)
20. Turk inside of lingerie-, liquor- and lager-selling establishments (4)
22. Beyoncé, whose tunes are spun by DAs endlessly, gets Ed good info (9)
23. 100 men with many livers, eating TV network’s food (9)
27. Works lard after wasting time with liquid fats (4)

28. The Tahitian canoe fit into a category he’d ultimately enlivened (7)
29. PIs, etc., feed weird bugs (10)
34. Hound of Indian city’s food supplier (4)
35. Group member, author, louse, and puzzle creator destroyed Terra (8)
36. Step functioning as protection for white heads of five crustaceans (8)
37. Head and heart of eastern queen’s soothsayer (4)
38. Rodman tossing ring at king displays high social position (4)
39. Parts of fowl Dad’s dicing on Wednesday, essentially (8)

DOWN

1. Spring holiday involved cash hidden under both ends of South Pole (6)
2. Brings out what cows chew when in view, facing the north park (6)
3. Leaders of street gang unveiled iffy hooked implement (4)
4. Word after *Dies* in a union hymn or Gershwin tune’s coda (4)
5. Reportedly, Providence clothing line is to appear (4)

7. Judiciary put an upper bound on lice, oddly (4)
8. Journey over land that is (according to Fellini) three kilometers square (4)
12. Catty comment about a lack of Felicity Kendall movies, chiefly (4)
14. Salty, yttrium-free selenium object often enclosed in a letter (4, *abbr.*)
16. Bestir Supporting Actress winner Tatum and one adult lady (1’4)
17. Elegant, fluid feet of Sean Penn and pitcher Young (5)
19. Told gallery to observe skinny woman’s name (5)
21. A decimal place finally accepted by rocker Snider and singer Adkins (5)
23. Code rewritten not just for women, nor for men, but for Naboth (4)
24. Getting barely similar route (4)
25. Humorist Hector is around 128 stone (6)
26. Penn State publicity spot is wrong to depict venomous snakes (6)
29. Race back wildly for *Scott Pilgrim* actor Michael (4)
30. Pekoe’s given name without six consecutive letters and dash (4)
31. True, one bay very loudly spat (4)
32. At first, downtown Portland is a place populated by Italians (4)
33. Designated hitter claims one’s crossing plate (4)