Santa's Workshop

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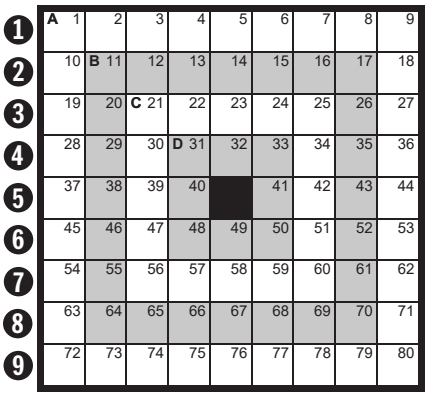
The elves at the North Pole have lost several letters written to Santa. Your job is to help them find these missing letters so they can finish their work for the holidays. The first three puzzles will each yield a six- or seven-letter secret gift, and this will come in handy for the final puzzle. (Acknowledgments to Mike Shenk and Patrick Berry.)

PUZZLE 1: MARCHING BANDS

Each Row contains two answers side by side; their clues are given in order, but you must determine the dividing points between them. The Band answers start in a lettered square (A-D) and wind around clockwise, ending in the space below that square.



ROWS

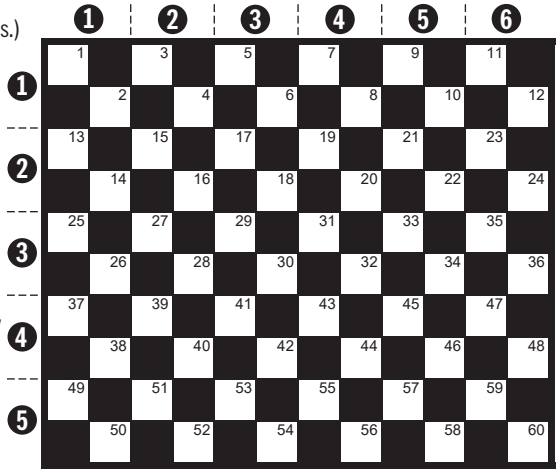
1 Contradict, as a claim
Sleeveless garment that one may wear over a tuxedo shirt
2 Reduced to grain-size bits, as potatoes
____ apart (rip up)
3 Border
Reduce, ____, Recycle
4 Kotex product
Magic/Wizards org.
5 Commotions
Like a 20-20 score
6 Around, as in a date
Shopping cart object
7 Guitar neck attachments
Optimistic feeling
8 Swinging primate
Beers with a golden color, often
9 Artist's inspiration
Seaside cities

BANDS

A Has faith (in)
Go through a novel
Untidy room's feature
Tug of war need
Poison ivy's relative
Actress Blanchett
B Lipton drinks (2 wds.)
Hive insect
Fit for a king or queen
Search engine revenue source (2 wds.)
C Actor Richard
Small issue to "pick"
Very (2 wds.)
Former amateur
D Autos like the Grand Am and the Firebird

PUZZLE 2: CHECKERED FLAG

Answers proceed in zigzags in clue order, using two horizontal lines of squares for Rows and two vertical lines of squares for Columns. For example, for the first answer of Row 1, start at square 1, move to square 2, then square 3 and so on.



ROWS

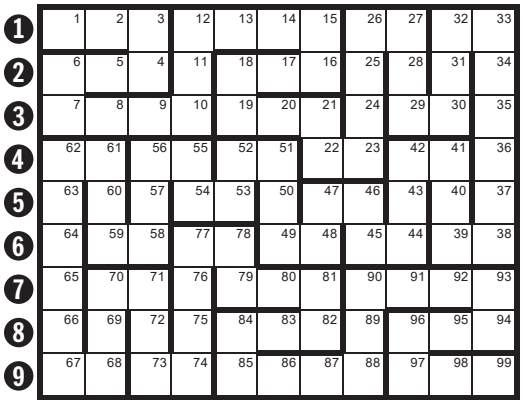
1 Visibly sad (2 wds.)
Living spaces
2 Voltaire classic
"Inferno" poet
3 "That's right"
Machine part
Weak, as an argument
4 J. Lo's ex (hyph.)
Boxing legend Muhammad
Erie passageway
5 Caustic cleaner
Hide-and-____
Kinda

COLUMNS

1 Member of a 16th-century Peruvian empire
Ahead of schedule
2 Conclusions
Poetic tributes
3 Name hidden in "charity"
Pomeranian or pug, e.g.
Martial arts star Bruce
4 Lose fur
Quick wrist movements
5 ____-pedi
Spanish word for "hand"
6 ____ Park, Colo.
1945 Crimean conference site

PUZZLE 3: LABYRINTH

Answers proceed both in Rows and a Path in clue order. Path answers begin at square 1 and wind around in numerical order, ending at 99.



ROWS

1 Provide details on
Cereal grain
2 Vibrations in the ground
Musical rhyming with "Fame"
3 Tale told at bedtime
Singer Morissette
4 Weaving device
Cancel, as an offer
5 Andy Warhol genre (2 wds.)
Bellybutton type
6 Sailing (2 wds.)
Mars bar filling
7 Wound-up shape
Using scissors
8 Queen's decrees
Roofs' overhangs
9 Unlike a loner
Wails loudly

PATH

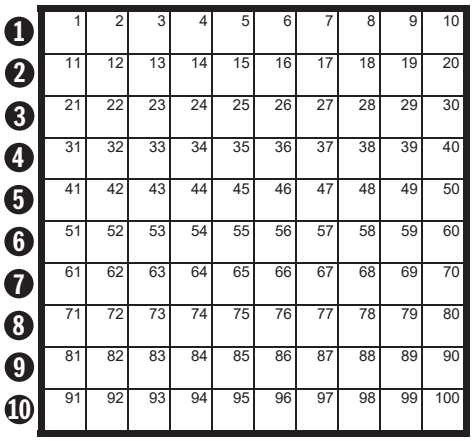
- 1991 military code name (2 wds.)
- Bones in a cage
- Kansas City team
- Arrived
- Creates cartoons
- Holding back
- Labor organization
- ____ cotta
- Photo ____ (PR events)
- Hammer or pliers, e.g.
- Highest poker card
- "Same" (3 wds.)
- Frozen dripper
- Like adorable animals
- Chat
- Enjoying dinner, say
- Odds' opposite in math

FINAL PUZZLE: GIFT BOXES

A	N	S
W	E	R

A	N
S	W
E	R

Answers are in both Rows and Boxes, with Row answers appearing in clue order. Box letters must be entered left-to-right, top-to-bottom in rectangular or square boxes (see ANSWER examples at right). Box clues are ordered alphabetically by answer, and answer lengths are given, but you must use the Row answers to determine where each Box goes. When the puzzle is complete, eight unboxed letters will give you a hint to finding the three secret gifts in this grid. The squares of each of these gifts will tell you where you can find Santa's four-word message in the first three puzzles.



ROWS

1 Have a bite of
Device for getting online
2 "Downton Abbey" countess
Swashbuckling sword
3 Shortest month?
Pizza meat
4 Agree
Tale with Zeus or Hera, e.g.
5 Neither's partner
Thing stowed on an airplane
Fix, as at the vet
6 "Wednesday" director Burton
Previously
7 High-card-wins card game
Cooped (up)
Used a bench
8 "Fast as You Can" singer Apple
____-of-the-art
9 Fruits with juices used in whiskey sours
"____ me your ears"
10 Makes some changes to, as a jacket
Flower's origin

BOXES

- Venues for concerts or sports (6)
- Went to, as a class (8)
- Sarah or John in "Terminator 2" (6)
- Havana's nation (4)
- Exit, as from a cocoon (6)
- Angsty hip-hop subgenre (3,3)
- Computer document (4)
- Terrifying creatures (8)
- Divides into halves, say (6)
- Goes off course (6)
- Washington city on Puget Sound (6)
- "Honor Thy Father" author Gay ____ (6)
- Kiss guitarist Tommy (6)
- Means of traveling to the past or future, in science fiction (4,4)
- GI Joe's org. (2,4)