

Ars Poetica

I'M THINKING of getting out of the puzzle racket and going into the far more lucrative world of poetry. Here's my first effort:

Encoded Notes from a Convention Scout

We happen to arrange these things in pairs.
Kyoto would have been a lovely choice.
So much to do, I munch my lunch upstairs,
While listening to songs for solo voice.

The house masseur rubs less the less you tip.
A key worn on a chain may open doors.
My arm did ache, my fist could scarcely grip.
I liken his complexion to a boar's.

We must select a venue—nothing more.
We've always made smart choices in the past.
A moth locks in on neon from a store.
I think ten moral thoughts and stand aghast.

The brain is brimming—ha! It always does.
What was decided, then? Well, nothing was.

I wrote this sonnet for the International Congress of Actuaries (ICA). The congress is held once every four years in a different location, like the Olympics. Many cities have hosted both the congress and the Olympics, but only once, in 1900, in the same year. I wrote the poem from the perspective of a convention scout, weary from traveling the world in search of great convention sites.

Each line contains the encoded name of a city where the conference has been held, including, appropriately enough, the city that will host the next one in 2014. Can you identify the 14 cities? "Encoded" means anagrammed. Each city's letters, in English, are scrambled into one or two consecutive words.

All the cities are well-known. Most are world capitals. The rest, excepting one, are either the largest or second-largest in their countries. The exception, the third-largest city in its country, is still one of the most famous cities in the world.

Hint: The 2014 Winter Olympics will be held in Sochi, Russia. The 114-year record of separate cities for the congress and the Olympics will be preserved.

To heighten interest, let's have a contest for those so inclined. Clock yourself, and send me your time. I'll publish the highest three scores. All 14 cities in under 14 minutes is expert. Half a dozen in 10 minutes and the rest within an hour is average.



If you get all 14 cities, you might want to go to the ICA website, www.ica2014.com, and enter its contest. I asked the ICA to extend the original deadline of Nov. 30, 2010, to Jan. 31, 2011, to give *Contingencies* readers a chance to enter. A winner will be selected at random from the correct entries to the ICA and receive a \$250 gift card.

The 14 anagrammed cities:

Thanks to Eric Klis and Bob Fink, for test-solving and editorial suggestions.

Solutions may be e-mailed to Thomas.Toce@ey.com. In order to make the solver list, your solutions must be received by Jan. 31, 2011.

SHUTTERSTOCK

Answers to Previous Issue's Puzzle—Squares

A Across

- A: ALE = homophone of "ail"
- B: RIP = RIPA ("Philbin's partner") - A
- C: RHO = homophone of "row" ("block of frat houses")

A Down

- 1: RAH = homophone of "Ra" ("god overheard in Cairo")
- 2: OIL = BROIL ("cook") - BR ("bromine")
- 3: PER = reversal of "rep" ("agent")

B Across

- D: SIGH = homophone of "psi" ("term used by Schrödinger")
- E: IOTA = IO ("Jovian moon") + TA (reversal of "at")
- F: PELT = PE ("gym class") + LT ("Lawrence Taylor")
- G: REST = double definition

B Down

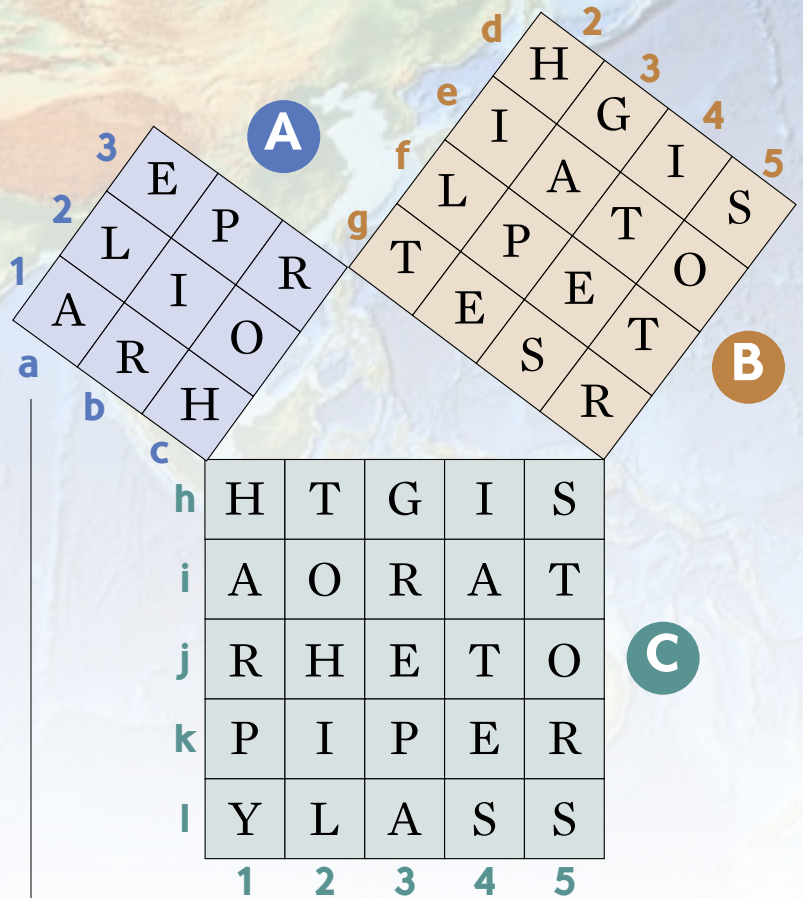
- 2: HILT = HILTON ("Paris") - ON
- 3: GAPE = G ("Gram") + APE ("simulate")
- 4: SITE = anagram of "ties"
- 5: ROTS = triple anagram! ("orts," "tors," and "sort")

C Across

- H: SIGHT = homophone of "cite" ("summon")
- I: AORTA = reversal of first five letters of "at Roanoke"
- J: OTHER = anagram of "or the"
- K: PIPER = PI ("transcendental number") + PER ("each")
- L: SLAYS = homophone of "sleighs" ("Christmas vehicles")

C Down

- 1: HARP Y = HARP ("play like an angel") + Y ("club")
 - 2: LITHO = LIT ("drunk") + HO ("whore")
 - 3: GRAPE = anagram of "pager"
 - 4: SATIE = SAT ("stayed put") + IE ("that is")
 - 5: SORTS = SO ("the same") + RTS ("routes" from "roads")
- The puzzle is dedicated to PYTHAGORAS, or (HARP Y - RAH) + (LITHO - OIL) + (GRAPE - PER) + (LITHO - HILT) + (GRAPE - GAPE) + (SATIE - SITE) + (SORTS - ROTS)



Solvers

Dean Apps, Karl Baker, Jonathan Berenbom, Jan Brown, Andrew Buckley, Bob Camp, Lois Cappellano, Samantha Casanova, Todd Dashoff, Josh DenHartog, Gregory Dreher, Mathew Eberhardt, Deb Edwards, Jess Feinman, Bob Fink, Tim Fitzgibbons, Nick Franceschine, Bruce Fuller, Mike Giampa, Jason Gladden, Elliott Goldstick, Jason Helbraun, Pete Hepokoski, Ruth Howald, Paul Ivanovskis, Brian Klimek, Eric Klis, Paul Kolell, Douglas Kraft, Louis Lana, Lee Michelson, Stu Mlot, Jim Muza, Anil Narale, Jim Phillips, Deb Poppel, David and Corinne Promislow, Debbie Rosenberg, Victor and Erin Rutherford, Lou Scarim, Craig Schmid, Bill Scott, Andrew Shewan, Sally Jane Smith, Glen Stark, Ethan Stroh, Doug Szper, Betsy Uzzell, Joshua Wallace, Michael Walsh, Dave Wallman, Arlene Woodruff, Wayne Worley, Frank Zaret

TOM TOCE is a senior manager for actuarial services with Ernst & Young in New York and is a member of the Jeopardy! Hall of Fame.