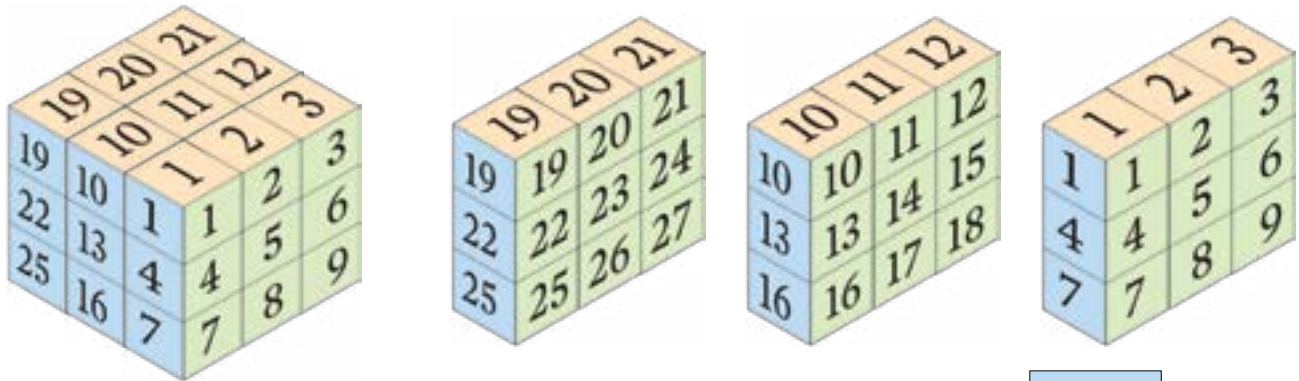


Strange-looking Concoctions

WE'VE HAD A BREAK FOR A FEW ISSUES from any puzzles requiring spatial gymnastics. Break's over—this one does. The completed puzzle is not a “strange-looking concoction,” just a large cube made up of 27 smaller cubes. These are numbered as shown. In solving, however, you might have to deconstruct each cube into something like the strange-looking blue diagram below. I did.



When the puzzle is finished, the nine squares on each face of the large cube will spell a nine-letter word pertinent to our profession. These nine-letter words are ordered, i.e., left to right then top to bottom. For the front, back, right-hand side, and left-hand side faces, top and bottom are unambiguous. The top and bottom faces could have different orientations. I have chosen the top of the top face to be the side farther from the front face and the top of the bottom face to be the side closer to the front face. As a guide, I've listed the cubes that each nine-letter word uses in order.

The six letters on each of the small cubes can be anagrammed to form a six-letter word. These are clued below. The 162 (i.e., 6×27) letters on the small cubes can be broken down into the 54 that appear on the surface of the large cube and the 108 that are hidden. The hidden

letters are really 54 pairs, because facing sides share a letter. Small Cube No. 14, for example, is in the center of the large cube and has no sides on the surface of the large cube. The six letters on Cube No. 14, therefore, can be gotten from the six surrounding cubes, without actually solving Clue No. 14.

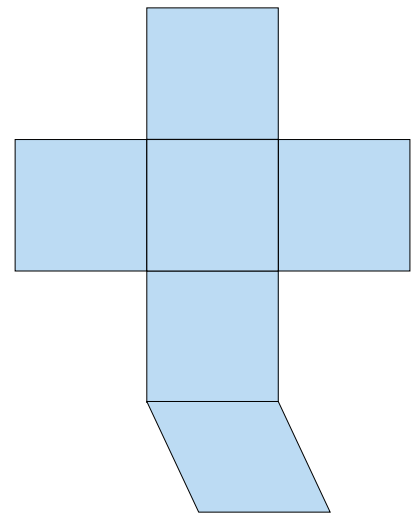
(There probably is great fun to be had in asking what is the minimum number of clues that must be solved in order to be sure of all the letters. But that sounds more like one of Mark Danburg-Wyld's puzzles.)

All 26 letters are used. That made construction much harder but seems only fair. (It also required the use of one unusual word, at Clue No. 5.)

There are two proper nouns, although one of them can also be a regular noun (just not as clued). Another word is hyphenated. Everything else can be played in Scrabble, including the above-mentioned unusual word.

Please submit just your word lists. If you send the letters filled in to the faces, it will take too long to grade them.

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



1. Little bovines playing claves
2. Demands from former circus teams?
3. Chinese philosophy, Tom, is a hodgepodge
4. Place of worship at the heart of Elmo's quest
5. Alliance after public relations practice
6. Tritone cut short, by God, with a kind of trumpet
7. Pardon? Air conditioner stopped working
8. Pass, rush, and pitch

Solutions may be emailed to Thomas.Toce@ey.com. In order to make the solver list, your solutions must be received by Sept. 30, 2011.

9. Fits about Center of Allentown for starters
10. Solutions for balding men (you and I): Hail Marys
11. Drunk running back embracing Barbie's boy for coins
12. Bleeding from drinking heavily after one
13. Swear again about a very old wound's onset
14. Entertain Rod Thursday behind sketchy bar
15. Daisy's cousin is all about zinfandel mania
16. Hint to crying infant's mother's sisters?
17. Support for Communist apparatus from the right
18. More apt tailor
19. For Manet, I state, "Ed joked"
20. Busted by Brother Ken
21. Sarcastic press I see on the net
22. Stunned by Mr. Clampett's dominating annualized rate of return
23. Second-rate, none of the above, and trouble
24. Op-Ed piece on Colonel, er, North
25. Peculiar indeed—and rejected
26. Marched without a leader and bowed
27. Funny, Meany's one who almost always agrees (3-3)

Clues for nine-letter words on faces of large cube

Front (1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9) Do you while texting ram our members?

Left (19-10-1-22-13-4-25-16-7) Some sleep in decent bit of descent

Right (3-12-21-6-15-24-9-18-27) Death by momentum, right, Ali? Thank you

Back (21-20-19-24-23-22-27-26-25) Run, in case exercising offers protection

Top (19-20-21-10-11-12-1-2-3) Gnarliest integrals yielding three-sided polygons

Bottom (7-8-9-16-17-18-25-26-27) Wildly insinuate certain streams of payments

Previous Issue's Puzzle—Operas and Presidents

1. Tosca ("coast")
2. Aida ("aid a")
3. Roosevelt ("vote-loser")
4. Washington ("showing tan")
5. Madison ("maids on")
6. Faust ("us fat")
7. Rigoletto ("Geritol to")
8. Wilson ("lows in")
9. Adams ("as mad")
10. Così fan tutte ("fatties count")
11. Hayes ("ah, yes")
12. Turandot ("TouT Rand")
13. Reagan ("Age ran")
14. Monroe ("no more")

Solvers—No Reference Used

Bob Campbell, Lois Cappellano, Jennifer Cheney, Michael Dolan, Deb Edwards, Jason Gladden, Paul Haley, Peter Hedgecock, David Kendall, Jerry Levy, Charlie Linn, Don Maves, Jeanette Manning, John Palmer, Joshua Parker, Alan Putney, Francis Regnaucourt, Debbie Rosenberg, Alan Silver, Ethan Stroh, Jim Verlautz, Lawrence Watts

Solvers—Used a Reference (or didn't specify)

Mark Ackerman, Dean Apps, Glenn Bier, Jan Brown, John Calcagno, Robert Clements, Christian Coleianne, Tim Connor, Todd Dashoff, David Ellsworth, Bryce Fawcett, Rita Fenichel, John Fibiger, Bob Fink, Tim Fitzgibbons, Nick Franceschine, Anant Galande, Mike Giamba, William Glasgow, David Harville, Mike Hill, Jason Helbraun, Joe Kilroy, Eric Klis, Paul Kolell, Douglas Kraft, Spencer Lloyd, Jeffrey McLane, Lee Michelson, Brett Miller, Jim Muza, Ray Niswander, Roy Olson, Susan Reynolds, Amy Rhodes, Jay Ripps, Lou Scarim, Craig Schmid, Lance Schulz, Bill Scott, Glen Stark, Doug Sziper, Chuck Underwood, Dave Wallman, Frank Zaret

Operas and Presidents brought out a large number of first-time solvers.



Welcome! As I suspected, the formidable topic of operas created problems for many of you whom I know to be very good puzzle solvers (including both my estimable test solvers).

The best unaided time was reported by Lois Cappellano, nine minutes and 20 seconds. Lois is a "Jeopardy!" aspirant and has been studying her operas and presidents. There were only four others coming in under 15 minutes, which I thought would be the expert threshold, and I was right. They were Joshua Parker at 10, Alan Silver at "just under 14," Paul Haley at 14:35, and Peter Hedgecock "just under the limit." Congratulations to all, or should I say, "Bravi!" □

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. He can be reached at Thomas.Toce@ey.com.