

For Your Amusement

THIS ISSUE, WE HAVE A PUZZLE THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH TAYLOR SWIFT. Instead, I offer a new construction from the formidable team of Bob Fink and Jerry Miccolis, which I think you'll enjoy. They write:

Welcome to the AAA Amusement Park! Step right up and try your hand at our games of skill!

One game of skill, of course, is working your way through the maze of a cryptic puzzle. But there's another carnival game that you'll need to play to complete this particular puzzle.

Only one of the Across answers will fit into the grid. The others require you to engage in that other game, which is described by the answer that does fit.

All answers—as well as the modified grid entries—are common single words playable in Scrabble. There are no proper nouns, hyphenated words, multi-word phrases, or variant spellings. Do be wary of punctuation, though, which has been known to deceive.

So, grab a corn dog and some cotton candy, and enjoy the games!

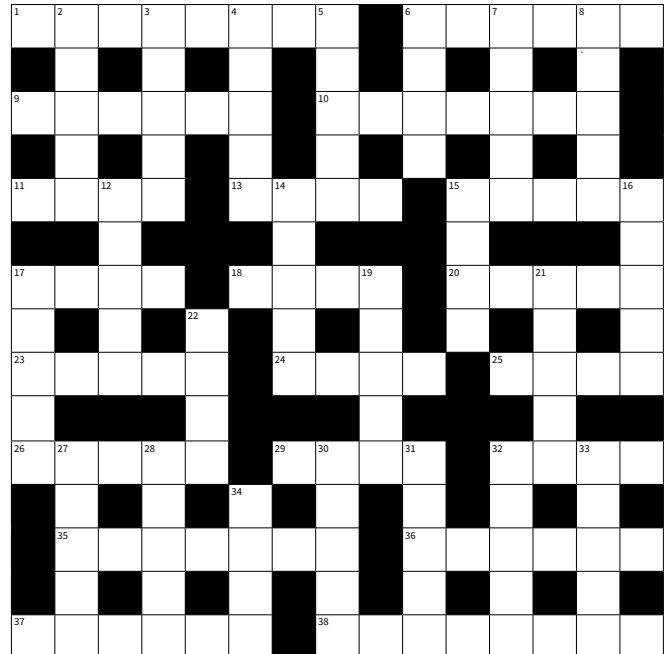
Thanks, as always, to Tom Toce for his expert editorial comments and suggestions.

Across

1. Exercising? No fun, dude, without support
6. Ropes in the heads of Latin America's secret society of English speakers
9. Making a bundle from moving ingots around the middle of April
10. Sunshine State sidekick takes in Naples' earliest wader
11. Reorganized loyal brass, say
13. Easily run around a fortune teller?
15. Shooting star is awfully remote
17. Wrecked ocean vessel
18. Regarding a contest
20. Crooked old tie worked
23. Short Sumatran swinger takes on excellent color
24. Man's alternative hair product loses satisfactory rating
25. Take pleasure in losing Jersey's primary but claiming victory for representative
26. Justly taking out mob head, so it has been reported
29. Infatuate Abe's other occupants
32. Call for some brandy with ice
35. Distributing all over school, attempting to debunk?
36. Raised a glass to a small-time editor
37. Frost, the German, is a packrat
38. Runny grits, son, is fair game

Down

2. Indigenous DC NLER joins rival league
3. "Integrity is a key element of *Shogun*," I typed
4. Finger jab Mitt in the gut



5. Suspend and put back in upside down
6. Shuffle, deal, and open
7. Share golfer's concern
8. National symbol is a headless dog
12. Fifty-nine unmade bedsheets
14. Mr. Gore with worthless compilation
15. Partner, what comes after "check"?
16. Flush in red, buddy...no black
17. Doctor mongrel above emergency room
19. Oddly true: Sikhs supplying ivory
21. Alan airbrushed furnishings for veranda
22. The guy who couldn't defeat Truman loses energy and gets steamy
27. Iowa supports exotic art in towering lobbies
28. Took it easy, we hear, and cut without a knife
30. After introduction, flying ace Chuck is raring to go
31. Giant bird with a nightingale's head
32. See? Vi's on it
33. Discussed ocean voyage with deckhands from several ships
34. Story: "Real Estate Investment Trust Goes Belly-Up"

TOM TOCE is an FCAS and a senior manager at EY. He is a member of the Jeopardy Hall of Fame. Solutions may be emailed to ttoce@nyc.rr.com. In order to make the solver list, you should send him your solutions by August 1, 2024.