

Taking Inventory

TEN ACROSS ANSWERS ARE TOO LONG BY ONE LETTER. Either the first or the last letter must be omitted for entry into the diagram. Both the original answer and its modified version will be legitimate words. The omissions lead to different meanings, so you might find CLARK and LARK, but you won't find LARK and LARKS. The ten omitted letters, in order, will spell out a pertinent two-word phrase.

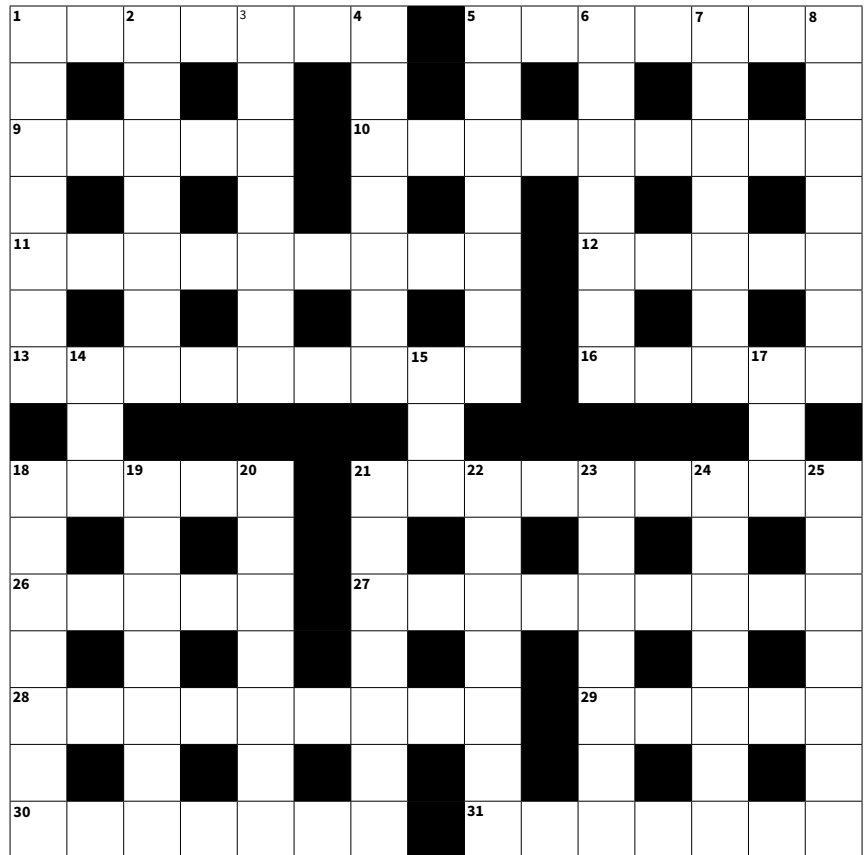
There will be five two proper nouns entered into the grid. One other answer will be a proper noun, but after the deletion, the grid entry will be a common noun. There is one foreign word. Everything else is playable in Scrabble. Ignore punctuation, which is intended to confuse. Thanks to Bob Fink, Eric Klis, and Jerry Miccolis for test-solving and editorial suggestions.

Across

- 1 Blamed for accident second-hand
- 5 Struggles with accents
- 9 Squeamish apparatchik, full of bad luck
- 10 Witch hazel's integrants decomposed
- 11 Throw rug behind where the fringe turns up
- 12 Harry barged in upset
- 13 Some cats covering rare Van Halen and Hendrix
- 16 Rouse bum in Italy's capital
- 18 Manifest evidence, evidently
- 21 Pence admitting hint of favoritism
- 26 Resoundingly deliver a big gun
- 27 Abatements caused by substitute assignments?
- 28 Hater wielding pungent vegetable for Italian film director
- 29 Softer pitching from Woods
- 30 Possibly Rick's set for decals
- 31 Sol, like most slackers, is lacking liquidity

Down

- 1 Maisei's reckless and unpredictable
- 2 Boiled rice has one seeking consideration
- 3 Stuck with rising debts while getting degree
- 4 Have the right to desecrate preserve on the outskirts



- 5 Hector's uneasy with Kindles
- 6 Upwardly mobile clip joint with newborn acclaim
- 7 Big shot sporting suspenders
- 8 Nannies rest, it's recreation
- 14 Laugh I experienced in the ancient Greek
- 15 M*A*S*H is droll, I've heard it said
- 17 Mythical monster or Caligula's head?
- 18 Spirited winemaker assumes support may end prematurely
- 19 Like coastal waters with citrine eddies
- 20 Exaggerate Eastern patience over Chinese dynasty

- 21 Sneaks porter, upsetting witnesses
- 22 Attractive pies with no crust and brownies
- 23 Fluster badly in Pacific
- 24 One nerd worked with a color from Benjamin Moore (4,3)
- 25 Starts to employ a secret execution so Brigham Young just wins (5,2)

Two-word phrase:
