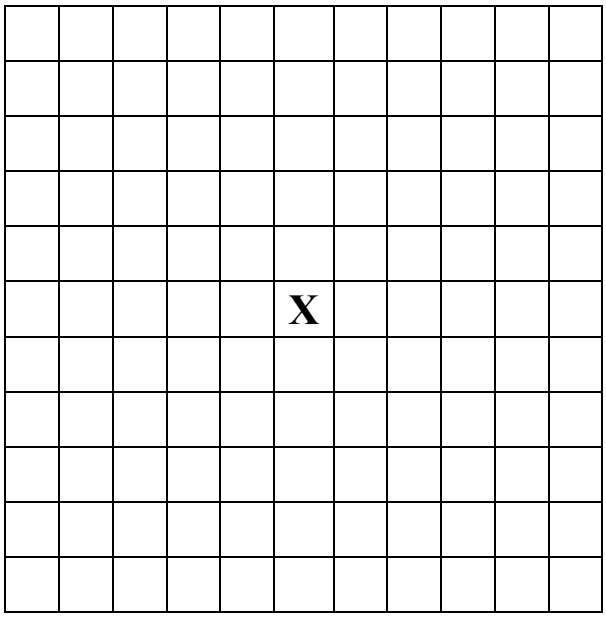
Puzzle #189 — February 2017 "Solve for X"

Instructions: Guess the words defined by the cryptic clues (answers vary in length from three to eleven letters, four are capitalized, and one is a two-word phrase) then enter them in the grid one after another in the same order as their clues, starting in the upper left corner, but skipping the central square marked by an X. Across words that don't end at the right continue on the next row, and down words that don't end at the bottom continue in the next column. Five across words and five down words won't fit in the grid unless one of their letters is omitted. Those ten letters, taken in order as they occur in across and down words, spell a three-word phrase related to an entire word that must be compacted into the square marked by an X. Thanks to Kevin Wald for test-solving and editing this puzzle.



Across

1. Covering vehicle swiftly
2. Train a bishop to speak with complexity
3. Nothing about a German plant
4. Chemical morning in England
5. Painter stirring a sticky substance
6. Base hit leads to confusion
7. Dotty or Linda getting a number
8. Troy's part of messy working method
9. An American writer bound to consume energy
10. See small vessel
11. Period of time that twenty earths orbit
12. Teaming illegally and making money
13. Supported knight in drill
14. Fuss about worship
15. Rustic route and ancient city by a lake
16. Son's sour beginning
17. Turned top at end to expand
18. Scoter's shelter
19. Random area including bottom land that's fit for cultivation
20. Guy, one that is ineffectual and empty
21. Talk back with agitation
22. Burden of bad deal

Down

1. Charlie replaces wife in animal fight
2. Think, eat, die digesting
3. Suffering Lear embracing one airy spirit
4. Mad Rosen retired a noisy sleeper
5. Mark ring restraining rod
6. Reconstructed part as ancient city
7. Repaired a telly not long ago
8. Go around east end molding
9. Padre's worn robe
10. Erstwhile earl's sticky mixture
11. Moving aria about true lasso
12. Aliment containing calcium oxide
13. Brother replaces king in mass for one that's buried
14. Fake money keeps company costing less
15. Spoken part of pastorale
16. Note: cracked vertebrae have a prolonged effect
17. Sound of sheep breaking table
18. Official answer found in lair
19. Male dancer taking on Grecian queen
20. A profit once more
21. Salvaged, but improperly secured
22. Keep out of cabaret
23. It's wrong to demean a worm