Puzzle #80 — January 2008 "Let's Face It"

Instructions: Guess the words defined by the cryptic clues (words vary in length from three to nine letters, and five of them are capitalized), then enter them in the grid one after another in the same order as their clues, starting in the upper left corner. 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. Four across words and four down words won't fit in the grid unless one of their letters is removed. Those eight letters, taken in order, spell a hyphenated phrase related to the mystery entry. I thank Kevin Wald for help with the clues.

Across

1. Our group follows start of action in strike break
2. Witchcraft holds ten back with attractive force
3. Get ready to take a step
4. Mark of current coin
5. These boys carry fat around
6. Baffle a fool with a sheet of paper
7. Challenge upset moderate center
8. Happiness is hugging trees
9. Witticism about small being the lion's share
10. Large body of water containing rare fluids
11. Rocky soil delayed ceremony
12. *Mystery entry*
13. Gooner's excited state
14. Start without leader for shelter
15. Chimp's distress about wood
16. Fish, losing top of head, becomes blue
17. Talk about Spanish river carriage
18. Man appears holding a large mass of rock
19. Hear welcome sound
20. Aircraft landed initially in ragged ridge
21. Stick Henry in charge instead of King.
22. A noon examination revealing no sense of right and wrong
23. Senseless if reversed before starting the suit

Down

1. Crudely hid things for a later look
2. In essence, socially backward and secular
3. Skin marking is a signal
4. Disney, for instance, recreated Taormina
5. Indian philosopher
6. It's dreary in Maldonado, Uruguay
7. Community gathering to take place before end of June
8. Judge takes Turkish coin for quartz
9. Watch end of tap slowly trickle
10. Newer analysis includes frog genus
11. Stern of ship hit barge
12. Oriental, as in a burlesque
13. Snide answer conceals thought
14. Burdened boy with plenty, essentially
15. Get going without a meal
16. A coat and a robe
17. Pleased about charter
18. Grand boater perhaps steps down to the river
19. Mound of sand covers head of crass simpleton
20. Stuff pig with top of turnip
21. Having wings, a teal flies
22. America rudely expels one picture-taker
23. Perform ceremony about established church
24. Looking forward to row about minerals