

THE PUZZLER

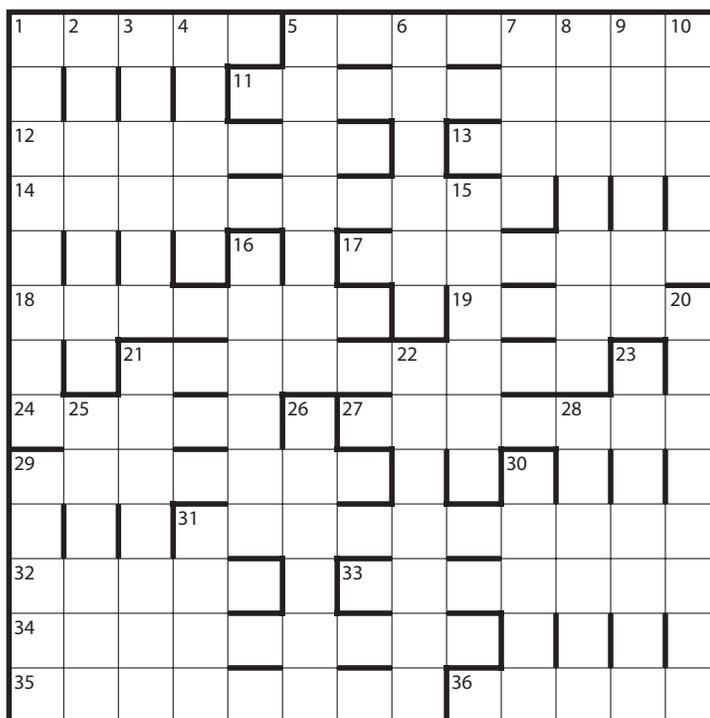
BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

Last Resort

In each Across clue, one word is missing its last letter. You may use the blank in front of an Across clue to record that clue's missing letter. When the puzzle is done, you'll have the final chore of arranging those 18 letters into a two-word phrase that is apt until, ironically, you discover it. As a last hint, this phrase jokingly describes the unclued two-word entry in the diagram at 21 Across. Four clue answers are capitalized.

Letters spell:

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. An introduction to clue-solving may be found online at www.theatlantic.com/issues/puzzclue.htm.



ACROSS

- ___ 1. Piece of wood spoke made a piercing hole (5)
- ___ 5. Hal penned article about one weebegone city near L.A. (8)
- ___ 11. Where to seek a wild yet a shy lamia in an odd light (9)
- ___ 12. Hero in *Señor* recalled feelings of sorrow (7)
- ___ 13. Fred rumples Eliot's ornamental designs (5)
- ___ 14. Nude embraces bad, bad men (4,2,4)
- ___ 17. Crud stunted figure in a university (7)
- ___ 18. Cheer for ant on the bottom of your shoe (7)
- ___ 19. Amis abets hipster poets (5)
- ___ 24. Before having a choice in voicemail (5)
- ___ 27. Idle chatter was in normal amount (7)
- ___ 29. Ripened banana produced a bellyache? (7)

- ___ 31. Horsemen, without exception, love succeeding tax (10)
- ___ 32. Luna flipped about new counterman (5)
- ___ 33. Marines reassigned in corps (7)
- ___ 34. Tom is not saying a word about gold fish (9)
- ___ 35. Things to do at night with Southern kissers? (8)
- ___ 36. Lie sated after getting a bit wild (5)

DOWN

- 1. Cook endlessly biting stick (8)
- 2. Interest in airing medical drama about driver (3,4)
- 3. Harry left an overcoat with distinctive sleeves (6)
- 4. Too soon acting like a viscount's superior? (5)
- 5. Hazard for seed season (7)
- 6. Maneuvered a stave in martial-arts fighting (6)
- 7. Large number of old Romans live for challenge (4)
- 8. Visual aids I point at which you hear (7)
- 9. A contingent of men at Antietam not going under (6)
- 10. Valuable hound having lost the lead (5)
- 15. Ruins of a European currency engulfing first of banks (6)
- 16. Medieval heroine in a novel or retrospective (6)
- 20. Angsty and snake-haired? (8)
- 21. Whipped up an air for a Pacific island (4,3)
- 22. In back of shopping center, Sue returned hammer (7)
- 23. With cultivation, could it be a big one? (7)
- 25. Angler upon breaking of a rule (6)
- 26. Shot taken by soccer great with a shoe problem? (6)
- 28. Potent victory I stir up (6)
- 29. Lots of energy in one of the NFL's teams (5)
- 30. Middle of stag painting? (5)
- 31. Bra part bearing small point (4)