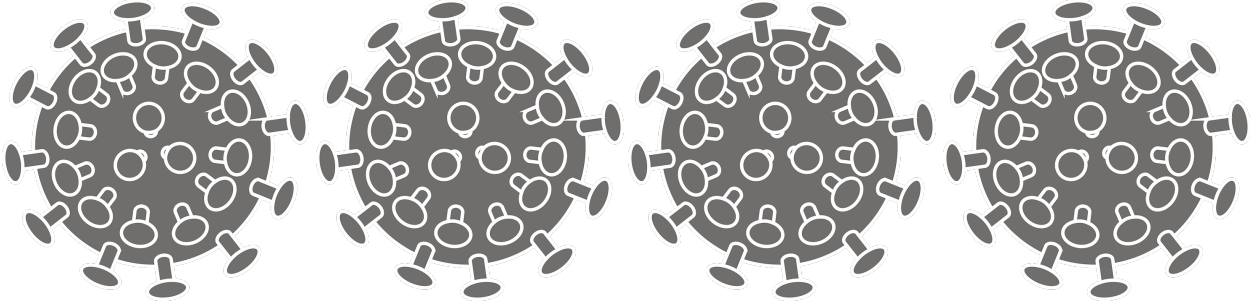


# Corona 4-Pack

by Negrone



Well, 2020 didn't turn out quite like we expected. A novel coronavirus, COVID-19, blindsided us and cancelled pretty much all of our plans. To help you pass the extra time at home, I have written four variety cryptic crossword puzzles. *Don't Panic. Panic!* is based on the virus and describes, in essence, how this all went down. The other three puzzles were written based on events I was scheduled to attend in three summer months, but which were all eventually cancelled. Once you complete each puzzle and determine the event and the month it refers to, fill in the four blanks below to get the wordplay portion of a final cryptic crossword clue. For each blank, use the second grid entry if the grid entry for that clue changes throughout the puzzle. The result of the wordplay is your final answer, which is my sincere hope for 2021. Enjoy!

\_\_\_\_\_  
Virus, 9D (adj. form)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jul, F2 (person)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Aug, F2 (plural)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jun, 16A (noun form)

Final answer: \_\_\_\_\_

# Don't Panic. Panic!

By Negroni

Something contagious and dangerous is going around. Remain calm, the CDC has a few easy rules to follow to keep this thing from spreading:

**Wash Hands:** 4 down clues follow this rule, with one word swapping an H for a WH.

**Disinfect Surfaces:** 4 down clues follow this rule, with one word removing its first letter.

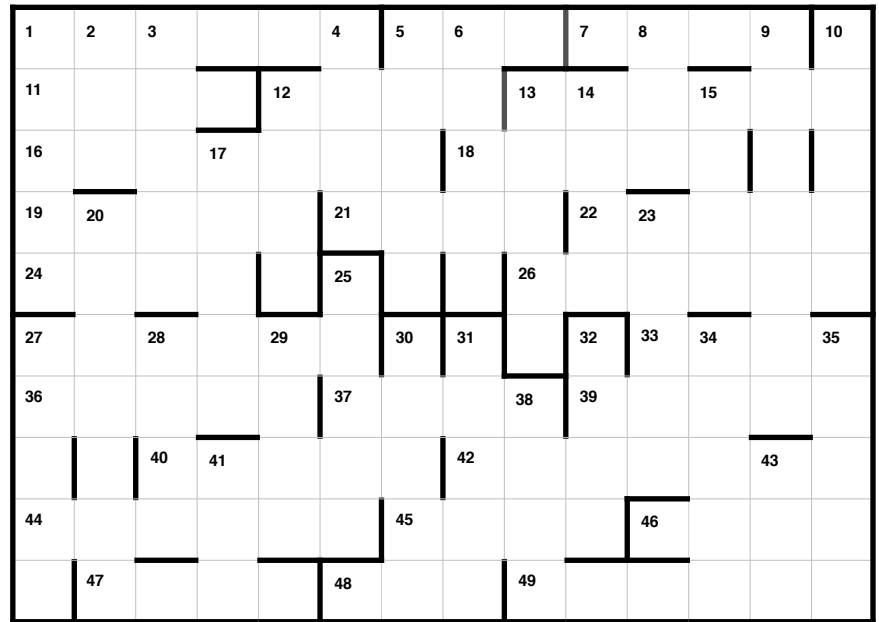
**Cover your Cough:** 4 down clues follow this rule, with one word swapping a C for a different letter.

**Wear Face Mask:** 4 down clues follow this rule, with one word adding a letter to the front.

**Self-Quarantine:** 4 down clues follow this rule, with one word adding the letter I inside of it.

In addition, 4 across *answers* have been assigned travel restrictions. Alter these before entering them into the grid.

8 down clues, 4 each from the East and West, didn't take any of the precautions. If we're lucky, they won't get infected. When the grid is filled in, one of the two center rows will describe the illness in this fortunate situation.



We're never that lucky, though, are we? In fact, all of the delinquent clues get infected! To show this, remove one word from these clues that represents something that you might lose when you get a sickness like this, and solve the clues anew (one clue needs to have two such words removed). Replace the entries in the grid with the new answers, which will also create new across entries. Once you're done, the other center row will tell you what we get in this unfortunate situation.

## Across

- 1 Fiction genre obtained here in Latin
- 5 Glimpse all but the end with telepathy
- 7 Secular, quirky Cali
- 11 Great Inn of Clay oddly overlooked as protection for home away from home?
- 12 Dear King Toot
- 13 Caper is utter speculation
- 16 Smokier nuts causing irritation
- 18 Banks of lake harboring navy, primarily
- 19 I wore retro gold fabric with modern message
- 21 Belfry I organized for a short time
- 22 Rejected jazz players at club with girl's name
- 24 Bad flu; left able to handle no more
- 26 Rapper and producer Rudi practiced without reading
- 27 Cleveland's right after forest
- 33 Spoil average brandy
- 36 Biblical city with a king, 1000 AD
- 37 Fortifies delegates after losing the left wing
- 39 Supreme being linked back to male chromosome
- 40 In conversation, knock down and lift up
- 42 LA's madame initially in short film related to makeup of star

- 44 Energy from open fireplace moving right to left
- 45 Put down after clashes, essentially!
- 46 Fine source
- 47 Failing instrument by empty lake is fishing tool
- 48 Can you start collecting Florida's aquatic insect?
- 49 Wedding participant must have large headgear

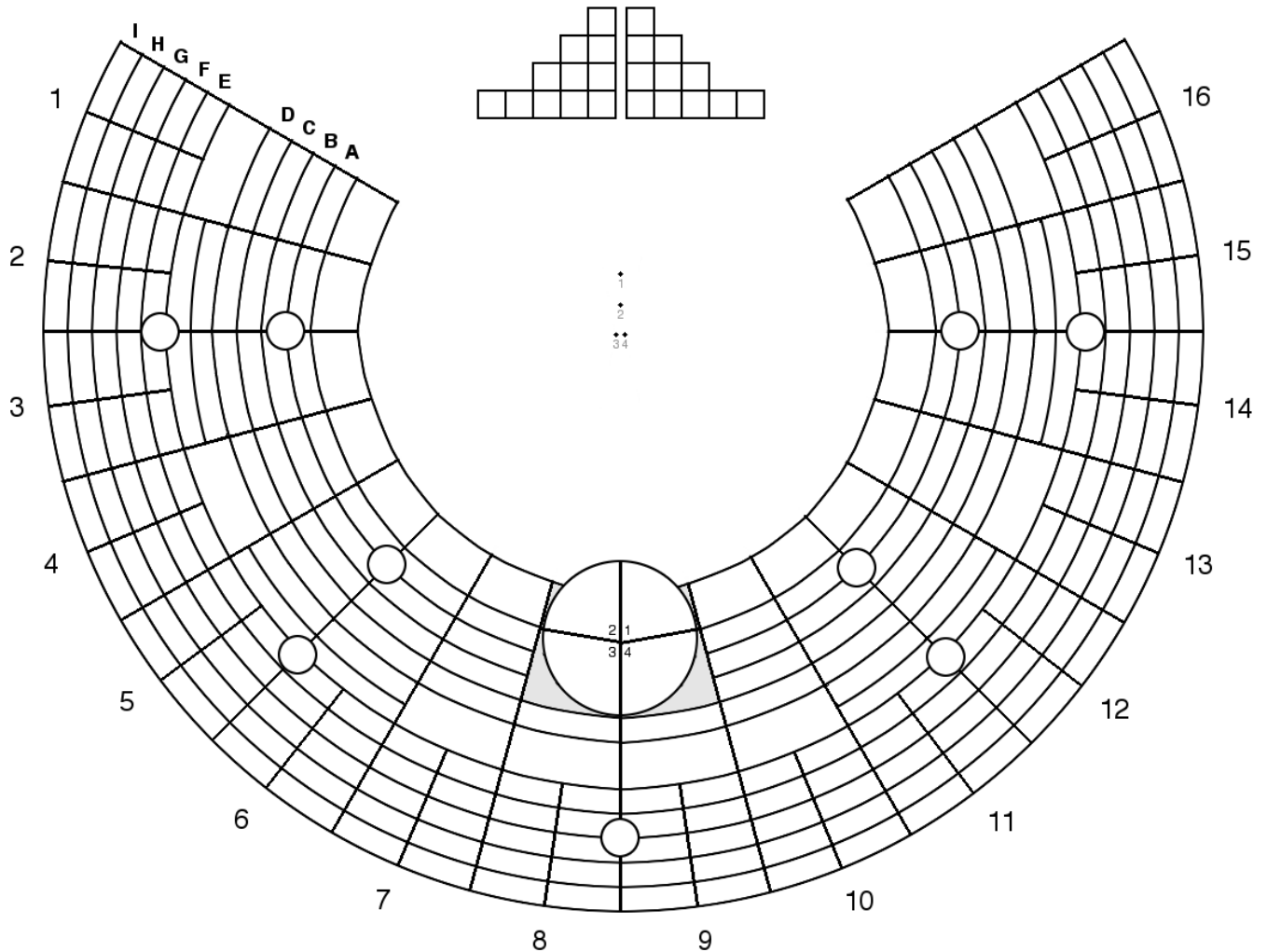
## Down

- 1 Clipped Christmas tree around second of December with gravity and sadness
- 2 Paddle with sad metallic rock
- 3 Louisiana brig returns to ancient city
- 4 Cake company approaches Mike Bishop
- 5 First month in pain and ecstasy with cruel emperor
- 6 Player flanks defensive end in V formation
- 8 Is yours truly over in France?
- 9 Harmony, formerly penetrating, confidence-imbued, primarily right—conclusion of thought
- 10 Polite ho sings as ascendant model, captivating youth leader

- 12 Holly heard spiritual
- 13 Environmentalist, informally, say hello to missing energy, the last piece from Napa
- 14 Key harm of DOD to Italian wire service
- 15 Legume and ham on the head
- 17 Jungle lion's head in south India with minor part of vitality: best grade
- 20 Confused emir entertained three finales of *Juju*, *Vigor*, *Silk*, becoming more cloudy
- 23 Looking back, group holding note diagrams heartbeat, perhaps
- 25 Cut intro to skin coloring hit
- 27 Australopithecine species held up bat near Hawaii
- 28 Gratify sun god with stew ingredient
- 29 Change around aide without eudaemonia ending tense opening
- 30 Spear cats with symbol that looks like an S
- 31 More than enough if removed from well
- 32 Did navy even out historic WWI battle? (hyph.)
- 34 Tried to mirror Demi balance: medial extract
- 35 Heel cradled by fancy cleat
- 38 Workshop pursues second clock
- 41 Listener's other brew
- 43 Don't start herb in pan

# Transformations

By Negroni



Answers for the radial sections go from the outside in, and are listed in any order within sections. Most sections have three answers, two on the outside split by a vertical line, and one more on the inside. The shorter sections 8 and 9 have only two answers; one is five letters, entered normally, and one is seven letters, entered normally up to the large circle, including depositing a letter at its correct position into the larger square. In sections 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, and 16, the two outside answers are six letters long, and one letter (the same letter in both) gets skipped and is deposited into the first larger square. This is also the first letter of the inside answer, which is also six letters long, and again, one letter gets skipped and deposited into the larger square in the innermost ring. In sections 2, 3, 5, 6, 11, 12, 14, and 15, the two outside answers are five letters long and entered normally, while the inside answer is seven letters long, again skipping and depositing one letter into the larger square in the innermost ring.

The radial answers are checked by rings A through I, with multiple answers entered one after the other starting at the left side and going counterclockwise. Rings A and B are interrupted periodically by small circles, where an answer from either ring A or ring B deposits a letter, at its correct position. Answers in ring E similarly deposit letters in each small circle along the way. Lastly, there is a small circle that interrupts rings F and G; an answer from each ring deposits a letter, leaving 2 letters deposited there. Rings A, B, and C are interrupted by a larger circle, but they simply ignore that and continue with their answers on the other side.

Four clues undergo a transformation, with a single word needing to be anagrammed before solving (one new word is a proper noun). If this word is the *n*th word in the clue, take the *n*th letter of the clue and drop it into a quadrant in the large circle (the first such clue to appear drops the letter into the quadrant marked 1, after which they go counterclockwise). Thirteen other clues also undergo a transformation, with one word swapping one letter for another letter before solving (one new word is a proper noun). The new letters, in clue order, will tell you where we are, and the letters you replaced give you the types of transformations we are concerned with, which will also give you a clue to the year.

Four ring answers, two on each side of the grid, undergo appropriate transformations before being entered into the grid (one answer is from a transformed clue). The four small circles on each side spell out the source of those transformations for that side. The unlabeled double-width ring between D and E contains four groups spanning three sections comprised of one large square and four smaller squares. There are two of these groups on each side of the four larger central squares. When anagrammed, the letters in these groups spell out, on the left, another source for an instance of these transformations, and on the right, the person being transformed and what they become. The letters in all of the larger squares should be taken one by one, in alphabetical order of the clues that gave the answers from which they were deposited (if there are two such clues, use the first one to appear), and placed into the grid located in the top center, from left to right and top to bottom, to spell where in this place we might experience our own personal transformation.

Now, take the letters in the large circle and transform them into a common code used in environments quite different from this one. Each coded letter is to be placed at its corresponding numbered dot in the center of the grid, with the dot acting as the natural center. The width of each coded letter is similar, about the width of a cell in the central grid above the drawing. Draw the coded letters at 1 and 2 such that they touch, with 2 twice as tall as 1. The letters coded at 3 and 4 should be drawn five times taller than wide. The proper noun made by the letters in the large circle and the two seven-letter answers in sections 8 and 9 combine to give you a (non-cryptic) clue whose answer is what you have drawn. Finally, the two letters from the remaining small circle (row G, then row F) followed by the letters in the four large squares just above it (central letters first, then outer letters) give you a phrase describing what we are going to do with the object you've drawn as a final transformation.

## Sections

- 1 Parsimonious girl chases faux fur  
Small threads live in Christmas trees  
Note endless vermin; noted
- 2 Old is least new  
Nomad going after rejected reservation  
in ski town  
Beer containing bone broth essentially  
Mexican beverage
- 3 Displaying certain temper, ranted  
incoherently around university  
Second person is not available for scene  
Summer fruit without pit left mineral
- 4 Appraise keeping strong diamonds  
transported on small moat  
Employers losing head for fall-blooming  
plants  
Grumbles start in East, interrupting  
police patrols
- 5 Southeast Whiskey Revolution in  
medieval courts  
Blubber fuel mixture is earth-shaking  
Tailless bird that can't fly carried in  
European waterway
- 6 Left roof worker drunk again?  
Walk at last with fine female pheasant  
At start, tries going through large  
gathering to eat sumptuously
- 7 Posse penning note adding a barrier  
Photography uses this element for moon  
down in East  
Waste beginning with the third time  
fossil fuels reign (2 wds)
- 8 Uneven ear monster is uneven  
Recommendation: speak around north  
part of Michigan hosting Republican
- 9 War order pause at Notre Dame  
Detective in two articles about bees
- 10 Sparrow's father with temperature,  
constant fever  
Positions worms  
Couple with ruby having multiple levels
- 11 Runs Russian River in the countryside  
Inspects plently aboard steamship

- Characters of macabre nature in district  
of Lima
- 12 Refuge near channel's nadir  
Characters who mock soot smasher  
Spike behind a large tree-lined courtyard
  - 13 Example of fauna in the ocean or bay  
Reserved fashion street  
Shortstop interrupts confused Mike with  
romantic request (2 wds)
  - 14 Knife Fight star follows sarcastic laugh  
to West Hollywood watering hole  
Irritating jumpers start to fill meadows  
In Britain, measure time dividing Italian  
money
  - 15 Oversize wind instruments losing focus  
and energy  
Timeless season for excessive drinker?  
Blade around a junction is something  
that turns
  - 16 Singer from Chicago's cold, empty  
period acquiring bar  
Clear rut containing immune cell for type  
of cancer  
Superman portrayer Dean holds right to  
small stone mounds

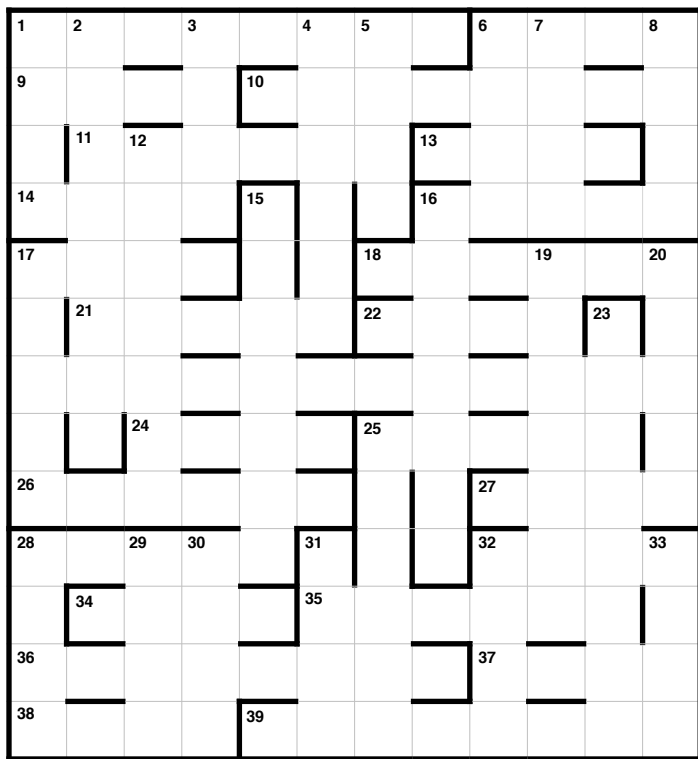
## Rings

- A** Good-looking men lather—about time!  
The thirst in Mexico for crooked deals (2  
wds)  
Resists exotic family members
- B** Tube to initially pertain, in hindsight, to  
female organ  
Born right not once, according to poet  
Pass out tin-plated charm
- C** Scar tissue's origin at bazaar  
Just finish expression  
Showed bulb type  
Gondola feature: metal rock on the radio
- D** Entertain morning employment  
Destiny's Child replacing opener with  
Lorde's opener  
Dull piece of sediment  
Mom ate morsel for goddess of death

- E** Small hush returns in midnight activity  
Louisiana Delta's youngsters  
Family branch placed around park  
Spanish painter Rafael's characters  
from disparate geography  
First name in landscape photography's  
rooky lanes  
Stick to pots in this location  
A few peculiar reveals
- F** Come back for finale with friend  
Earn a perfect score somersaulting  
Navy officers sensing shift  
Cat starts to purr unusually, meow  
actively  
Barely perceptible stem is removed from  
problem  
Glacial ridge of osmium and argon  
Flu shots will be in France
- G** Self-esteem, or for example, love  
Alternately marry either excellence or  
virtue  
Sanctuary retreats for currency  
Higher than oxygen in energy-carrying  
molecule  
Seat for measuring healthy body's bowel  
movement with piece of ice  
See eye-to-eye with a nature-lover  
before the end  
Bad seal cut with light?  
Belief going back and forth
- H** Excavator trace by tall structure  
Heard correct instruction to dog  
Repel, expel a language of Papua New  
Guinea  
Scooby-Doo character returning home  
starts to hear noises everywhere  
Tiny interest in Oscar-winning 1953 film  
Small amount with energy!
- I** Tax collector pens top-notch tax shelters  
Hair stylist more harsh about bald head  
Little swimmer boy at end of earth  
One who flees environs of Earl's prank  
Inks book cover with deficiency  
Drug cop is Stanford University's most  
egotistical character

# In The House

by Negroni



--	--	--	--	--

1															
---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

2															
---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

3															
---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

4															
---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

5															
---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

6															
---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Final Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

You're in line with your tarp, waiting for the gates to open. To pass the time, you read the program for the day's lineup and notice that there's something strange about the band reviews. They're rather cryptic, and you can't seem to tell where they begin and end. How nice to have a puzzle to work on while you wait!

In addition to determining where clues begin and end, you'll need to figure out where the answers go in the grid. Three answers are two words, and one is an acronym. Some of the clues are off-key and need to be tuned before solving; specifically, 9 clues have a word with a key (letter A through F) that has been replaced with a higher key (letter B through G). The 21 ways to do this translate to a letter of the alphabet ( $A \rightarrow B = \mathbf{A}$ ,  $A \rightarrow C = \mathbf{B}$ , ...,  $F \rightarrow G = \mathbf{U}$ ), and these letters, in order, tell you where you are. The first letters of these same clues tell you what event you are attending. Two of the newly tuned words are proper nouns. When you've entered all of the answers, you can finish the unclued entry across the middle with a word that describes you and everyone else in line.

In addition, six clues are wordplay only and clue members of a band of revelers who are perennial performers at the event. Instead of fitting in the grid, these answers go in the numbered separate rows to the right of the grid, in order, taking up any number of the twelve allotted blanks. The tools of their revelry can be found hidden throughout your completed grid, so find and highlight those. This should give you a hint as to what the separate rows crudely represent. When you know, count the appropriate number into the clues to all but the last reveler, the beloved leader of this house band, to get a final word to enter into the short set of blanks above the numbered rows. Your final answer is someone who is returning in 2020 after previously making some people believe he may be good enough to become a future member of this group.

# Today's Lineup

**Back Label Garth** - Opening act with southern education given drugs. To jam band aficionados, the most revered, with writer Adams' fondness for playing state college circuit.

**Unfinished String Band** - Brit John, with Javascript programming style, Dan Ether, crazy wrestler with Giant headgear and degree in development, Al White, revolutionary, spot writer Ezra Hammer, and a following in the morning from Boston offering passion.

**Splitting The Atom** - Alternative, aria, and Latin name three of styles embodying top-notch support band channeling Muslim spirit. Connect to lowly laborer seen filing CD containing our latest intros.

**Icy Stares** - Freely declare, "Where Art Thou, predecessor?" Spherical body retreats in distinct, unceasingly rotating, stellar phenomenon. Beat missing, drown in electronics and never-ending art. Droll ambient pieces for gentle person.

**DJ Tangle** - Ambassador of outstanding quality. Stage right, spinning vigorous energy from Neal, Dizzy, Sting, and a couple from AC/DC, he starts to artfully utilize recordings and ambiance.

**Endless Fringe** - Outfit with watchful person, extremely thin dandy with utterly alternative hair, driving loud noise through equipment. It sounds like rupture, counterweight, goulash, pain, excrement, flesh and blood to the audience.

**Motor City** - Dottier, awkward guy who really enjoys good fruit around staff. Rising wind instrument goes down before primordial sun god, Jowari. Unruly, snotty, urban exterior. Vicious interior.

**Unwanted Stranger** - Discovered in meadow by nurse and initially terrible. At the outset, each jeer reflected a mistake, rushed, with vocal screen. Later, at last, orchestra leader approaches quiet energy, and secure, reportedly arranges bands with much ornamentation.

**Stingray** - Smell, see, hear squeeze of prerequisite accordion, at first, after 2/3 of festival, give or take. Second surprise: finish piercing, fresh and not blended.

**Seacrest Fir** - Irish company good for the budget conscious: payment only upon delivering a conclusion to a musical performance, brought up on an old iPod with provided self-networking technology copied from a street person, perhaps.

# My Journey to Queen City

by Negrone

My journey to Toronto to join fellow puzzlers was quite interesting. Let me tell you about the last segment in my own cryptic way.

Answers come in two flavors: Lines and Jaunts. Every Line is completed with two answers placed next to each other, in the order that they appear. Every Jaunt begins in its numbered cell, moves in any direction, and makes any number of 90 degree turns (including zero) on the way to its terminus in a cell marked with an x. The Jaunts do not cross, and all of the cells are used up.

The rules:

**Odd Combination:** 15 Jaunt clues have a word that must be altered in a manner to be determined before you solve them. When the alteration procedure is said a certain way, it will describe what I did at my journey's origin, and strangely also be evocative of my destination. The first letters of these clues as written, in order, spell out, generally and appropriately, where I ended up.

**Westward:** In honor of my westward travel, 7 Line clue answers must be entered into the grid backwards (one entry is a proper noun). The last letters of these clues, in reverse clue order, spell out my journey's origin.

Did you know that Toronto has many nicknames? In addition to the one in the title, the final four rules are named after four additional nicknames, as follows:

**416:** Remove the 4th, 1st, and 6th letters (and whitespace/punctuation) from one word or phrase in 4 Jaunt clues before solving. The 4 letter triplets that are removed, in clue order (the letters within the triplets themselves can be in any order), name a stop on my journey.

**Toronto the Good:** A word in each of 9 Line clues needs to have the letter G prepended before solving. If the word to which the G is prepended is the *n*th word in the clue, circle the *n*th letter from the start of the clue, as written. The circled letters, in clue order, spell out another stop on my journey

**T-Dot:** Kill the middle letters of a word or word combination (and any whitespace/punctuation) in 12 Line clues and replace them with the letter T before solving (at least 3 letters will be replaced). Each of the T replacements will give you a piece of information hinted at by the rule name; these will, in clue order and in groupings of equal length, give you another reference to Toronto.

**The Six:** Each of 10 Jaunt clues has a word where the sixth letter of one word must be replaced by a different letter before solving. In honor of the six former cities that merged to become modern Toronto, the sixth letters of these clues as written, in clue order, spell out one more stop on my journey.

That leaves 4 unaltered Jaunt clues. The first letters of each of these clues, in clue order, spell a word that describes my journey.

Once you fill in the grid, it can be regarded as a map of my journey. The origin can be found in the lower right corner of an appropriate square of cells. Feel free to outline this square as a rough representation of the larger area around my journey's origin. A visual representation of my journey can be found, mapped out by letters, with each letter after the origin representing one of 20 stops along the way, including the destination stop (one letter is technically two stops, but it's essentially the same). The letters of the stops only (so *not* including the origin), spell out my mode of transport. My journey can move up, down, left, right, or in any diagonal direction as it goes from stop to stop, based on actual approximate direction. I suggest highlighting the journey to clearly mark it. Once you figure out which stop each letter represents, the 3 stops you learned about from the rules above, in rule order, spell another word to describe my journey, given the mode of transport.

Now that you know my journey in detail, it's time to get to the royalty alluded to in the title. First, the intro text to the nickname rules, and the text of those rules, hide the name of a famous person from Toronto who is associated with one of the nicknames. Not all are thrilled with the nickname, but some would certainly consider this person royalty, at least in their genre.

Next, start in Toronto on the map and trace out the name of a beloved famous person associated with Toronto, using the same rules of movement as my journey (this journey crosses itself) and using only cells in a square of cells. Feel free to outline the resulting square as a rough representation of the larger Toronto metropolitan area. Up through the middle of the square is a fitting farewell to such royalty.

Finally, start with the appropriate farewell phrase, composed of the farewell word followed by the name you traced, and replace the farewell word with the rule answer that the person is most closely associated with. Remove whitespace from that new phrase and apply all of the alterations performed in the six rules, in order, to get another famous person associated with this region, who is considered by many here the greatest royalty short of the Queen herself.

I hope you enjoyed my journey!

A		x				x	1			x		
B	2			x		x	3					
C		4		5			6	x		x		
D	7			8	9		10			x		
E		11		x			x	12	13			
F		x		14	15		x			16	17	
G	18	x		19							x	
H			20	21			22				23	
I						x		x	x	24	x	
J				25	x	x	x		26	x		x
K					x	27		x		x		28
L	x	x						x				
M	29					30	31			32		
N	x		x	x				33				x

## Lines

- A** At one on outside, established pregnancy (9)  
Dope captures California with less kick (5)
- B** Monsoon-porous magical creature is badger in India (6)  
Do away with a door, letting in partial owner (8)
- C** Town in mountains of Switzerland with round chaplain lacking interest (7)  
Upset communist holds breathing bear (7)
- D** Adaptive skier Monte who medaled in Slalom and S Ho, head of fancy hotel in Davos (8)  
Coils of yarn? Weaving posse, unfinished, admitted spinning length zero (6)
- E** Career-useful haul at Amazon (7)  
Cat's fat, eating mysql-query writer from behind (7)
- F** Creature I'm bisecting excessively orderly (6)  
*Damsel or Bust in Terrick*—Stories of a Nobleman (8)
- G** Tiberian II worried I have ambition (10)  
Sense knife and needle tips - ow! (4)
- H** Mega-seller in Jersey City real estate group (7)  
Root for Mama Ardner (7)
- I** Singer declared health club as vital energy that animates the body (3 5)  
Moves plant for attorneys accepting overtime (6)
- J** United Airlines net-surfing pocket with not a single thing in Spanish for North American region (3/6)  
Track Utah-copper penny (5)
- K** Mirrors disturbed seers ripping nude emblem (9)  
Person not available for gift from heaven (5)
- L** Recorded folks in Mexico losing ram and embarrassed (7)  
Fantastic ear tat of sailboat race (7)
- M** Taco-chile process the Spanish found in snorkeling area retreats (6)  
Coach approaches Howie Mandel in bar area for unlimited speed (8)
- N** Son to sneak around for Tribune reading decks of cards (6)  
Imperious Rowling creature (male) with a tremor (8)

## Jaunts

- 1** Gave reception about ACA having many functions (7)
- 2** Perturbation of silver ion source with positron initially rejected (9)
- 3** Ruler in France held gala for soprano Lisa Marie (6)
- 4** Swiss hero in ski racing informally regrets medical test while wearing medal (6)
- 5** Moor Church beheaded Iranian (5)
- 6** An action word is driven by components (4)
- 7** Enthusiasm in Meg's novela collections (8)
- 8** Apod in the underworld, where energy is unlimited source (4)
- 9** Tangled forest without end near Crimea is providing assistance (2 7)
- 10** Wound John aped (6)
- 11** Learned literary society of California left Los Angeles (4)
- 12** Washington's eighty after dreadful, slowed lawless period in the 19th century (3 4)
- 13** Hang, mostly in Spain, with small companions on dude ranch, perhaps (5)
- 14** In fort containing energy, great rains flooded proposed telecommunications network (8)
- 15** Israelite priest with a high grade roan (5)
- 16** Throaty sound from farm near North Korea, e.g. (4)
- 17** Unassertive rakes broker (5)
- 18** Extract from strait: jurel's tear (6)
- 19** Element 22: Alatar star pattern headwear (5)
- 20** Oakwood hub with iron in German town in Brandenburg (6)
- 21** Near Toronto, university with 1,000 country awards starts to tell everyone around (8)
- 22** Objectively promptly, on the internet, Scandinavian Airlines going after AA (4)
- 23** Nova's occurrence somewhat related to vessels (4-)
- 24** Repressed, hoarse, sometimes embracing new (4)
- 25** Green, large item in Baroque conceit, perhaps switching out long entrance for echo (5)
- 26** Thoughtful piece of entertainment following saga (4)
- 27** *Abe Flat*, a KCA broadcast favorite in England (5 3)
- 28** Dense island with soul, despite endless brown (9)
- 29** Stunt force devout (4)
- 30** Ghanaian dish with beans, ginger, and cherry (3 3)
- 31** Having self-start power, gold tomcat moved without AI (9)
- 32** Seat of judges' bar at Colorado capitol (4)
- 33** Unwin novel's twist: stodger with head of small lice (3'1 4)