NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD GOOFs
(continued from Vol. 40, February 2007)

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2002

Date: 8/17. Clue: Stowe slave. Answer: EVA. Problem: In “Uncle Tom’s Cabin,” Eva was the daughter of the slaveowner Augustine St. Clare. Topsy was the slave girl.

Date: 7/15. Clue: Prime rate setter, with “the.” Answer: FED. Problem: Individual banks set the prime rate, not the Fed.

Date: 6/27. Clue: Where Commodore Perry prevailed. Answer: ERIE. Problem: Oliver Hazard Perry, who prevailed at Erie, was not a commodore. His brother, Matthew Perry, had that title.

Date: 6/2. Clue: Nobelist for whom a physics unit is named. Answer: HERTZ. Problem: The hertz is named after Heinrich Rudolph Hertz, a German physicist, who did not win a Nobel Prize. It was his son, Gustav Hertz, also a German physicist, who won a Nobel.

Date: 3/14. Clue: Scalper’s victim. Answer: CUSTER. Problem: While George Custer’s men were scalped at the Battle of Little Bighorn, the victorious Sioux left Custer himself unscathed.

Date: 2/2. Clue: German newspaper ___ Bild. Answer: DER. Problem: The German “Bild” takes the neuter article “die.”

Date: 1/18. Clue: Birmingham-to-Montgomery dir. Answer: ESE. Problem: The direction is really SSE.

Date: 1/3. Clue: Neighbor of Lucy and Desi. Answer: FRED. Problem: On “I Love Lucy,” Lucy’s husband is Ricky. Desi is the actor’s name.

2001

Date: 12/29. Clue: Like Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony. Answer: IN E. Problem: Beethoven’s Seventh is in A major.

Date: 12/13. Clue: Bryant poem “___ Waterfall.” Answer: TO A. Problem: The correct title is “To a Waterfowl.”

Date: 8/29. Clue: Unique claim of the U.S. Open player whose name is hidden in 34-Across [i.e., Chris Evert]. Answer: SIX-TIME WINNER. Problem: Helen Wills Moody won the U.S. Open seven times.

Date: 7/15. Clue: Louisville landmark. Answer: RUPP ARENA. Problem: The University of Kentucky’s Rupp Arena is in Lexington, 75 miles from Louisville.

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Date: 7/7. Clue: Norse epics. Answer: EDDAS. Problem: The two ancient Icelandic literary works known as the Eddas are collections of poems and tales, not epics.


Date: 5/20. Clue: Mindspring or Yahoo!: Abbr. Answer: ISP. Problem: While many computer users have email addresses through Yahoo!, Yahoo! itself is not a Internet service provider. Its subscribers need to use an ISP to reach Yahoo!


Date: 4/9. Clue: Chops finely. Answer: RICES. Problem: While “rice” means to reduce food to fine particles, ricing does not involve chopping, but rather forcing the food through a sieve, for example.

Date: 3/30. Clue: Frequent Valentino co-star. Answer: LILA LEE. Problem: Rudolph Valentino and Lila Lee co-starred together only once, in the 1922 romance “Blood and Sand,” so it’s not correct to say that they were frequent co-stars.

Date: 1/26. Clue: “China Beach” star. Answer: DELANEY. Problem: Actress Dana Delany spells her name without a second E. A correct clue would have been “N.Y.P.D. Blue” actress” (as in Kim Delaney).

Date: 1/13. Clue: NASA pressure unit. Answer: ONE G. Problem: A “g” is a unit of force or acceleration, not pressure.

2000


Date: 12/1. Clue: Purchase of 1625. Answer: MANHATTAN ISLAND. Problem: The Dutch purchased Manhattan from the native Indians in 1626.

Date: 10/29. Clue: Brand of racing bikes. Answer: BMX. Problem: BMX is a kind of racing bike, not a brand.


Date: 8/17. Clue: Captain Hull, known as “Old Ironsides.” Answer: ISAAC. Problem: Old Ironsides was the ship that Isaac Hull commanded; he wasn’t called “Old Ironsides” himself.
Date: 8/15. Clue: Gwen Verdon sang it in 1966. Answer: HEY BIG SPENDER. Problem: While Gwen Verdon starred in the Broadway musical “Sweet Charity,” in which this song was sung, it was Helen Gallagher who sang the song.

Date: 8/4. Clue: Gore Vidal’s “Burr,” e.g. Answer: BIO. Problem: “Burr” was a work of fiction.


Date: 7/30. Clue: Actress Blanchett of “Titanic.” Answer: CATE. Problem: It was Kate Winslet who was in “Titanic.” Cate Blanchett starred in “Elizabeth” and other films.


Date: 6/9. Clue: It’s about 2,100 miles in diameter. Answer: PLUTO. Problem: The clue was based on an out-of-date reference. The most up-to-date information is that Pluto is about 1,400 miles in diameter.

Date: 5/7. Clue: Impossible score, in U.S. football. Answer: ONE. Problem: Technically speaking, if a team doesn’t show up (or it otherwise forfeits a game), the score is 1-0.

Date: 5/7. Clue: Mountain in Genesis. Answer: HOREB. Problem: The first mention of Horeb in the Bible is in Exodus.

Date: 4/15. Clue: New Mexico county where the first atomic bomb was exploded. Answer: OTERO. Problem: While it’s well-known that the world’s first atomic bomb was exploded near Alamogordo, N.M., and Alamogordo is the seat of Otero County, the actual blast site was in nearby Socorro County.


Date: 2/6. Clue: Cartesian conjunction. Answer: ERGO. Problem: In the statement “Cogito ergo sum,” the middle word is an adverb.

Date: 1/14. Clue: ___ Gate (one end of London Bridge). Answer: TRAITOR’S. Problem: Traitor’s Gate is one end of London’s Tower Bridge — which is not the same as London Bridge.

Date: 1/9. Clue: Hank & Gail’s favorite weather? Answer: SNOWSTORM. Problem: The Storm referred to in this punny thematic clue should have been actress Gale Storm.

1999

Date: 12/10. Clue: Only N.L. pitcher to win four Cy Young Awards. Answer: CARLTON. Problem: Greg Maddox also won the award four times, 1992-95.
Date: 12/2. Clue: Houston player, formerly. Answer: ASTRO. Problem: The Astros still play in Houston, although they did recently move to a new stadium.

Date: 11/19. Clue: Two-time N.L. M.V.P., 1954 and 1965. Answer: AARON. Problem: The clue properly describes home-run slugger Willie Mays. Hank Aaron was the 1957 N.L. M.V.P.

Date: 10/25. Clue: Transylvanian lab assistant? Answer: IGOR. Problem: It was “Dracula,” not “Frankenstein,” that was set in Transylvania.

Date: 10/24. Clue: 7-Up’s flavor. Answer: LIMON. Problem: First of all, in the well-known ad campaign, the word is spelled “lymon” with a “y.” And, second, the “lymon” flavor is Sprite’s, not 7-Up’s. While it’s true that 7-Up also has a lemon-lime flavor, presumably this is gotten by mixing lemon and lime juices, not by squeezing hybrid limons.

Date: 9/27. Clue: State in which Eisenhower was born. Answer: KANSAS. Problem: Dwight Eisenhower was born in Denison, Texas. When he was 2, his family moved to Kansas, which is where he grew up.

Date: 9/25. Clue: Reptiles of the genus Naja haje. Answer: ASPS. Problem: Naja haje is a species. The asp’s genus is Naja.


Date: 8/10. Clue: Masters holder. Abbr. Answer: PGA. Problem: While the P.G.A. recognizes the Masters golf tournament for purposes of earnings and scoring statistics, it does not hold the tournament itself.

Date: 8/10. Clue: Sen. McCarthy’s grp. Answer: HUAC. Problem: While both Sen. Joseph McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee sought to root out Communism in 1950s America, they worked (as their names suggest) independently of each other.

Date: 7/29. Clue: “Aren’t we ___?” (Sondheim lyric). Answer: A PAIR. Problem: The correct line from “Send in the Clowns” is “Are we a pair?” (This error was pointed out in a letter from Stephen Sondheim himself!)

Date: 7/9. Clue: Job title never held by any U.S. President. Answer: MAYOR. Problem: Three Presidents were mayors early in their careers — Grover Cleveland (Buffalo, N.Y.), Calvin Coolidge (Northampton, Mass.), and Andrew Johnson (Greeneville, Tenn.).

Date: 6/12. Clue: This, in Toledo. Answer: ESO. Problem: “Eso” in Spanish means “that.”

Date: 6/7. Clue: What to call a sergeant. Answer: SIR. Problem: In the Army, soldiers are specifically instructed not to call a sergeant “sir.”

Date: 6/4. Clue: Patriot’s place. Answer: SILO. Problem: Patriot missiles are transported on trucks and fired from rocket launchers; they are never put in silos.


Date: 2/28. Clue: Queen Eliz., e.g. Answer: HRH. Problem: The term “His [or Her] Royal Highness” is reserved for princes and princesses, not monarchs.

Date: 2/28. Clue: New York’s Penn Station is on it. Answer: NINTH. Problem: Penn Station is located between Seventh and Eighth Avenues in New York City.

Date: 1/14. Clue: Underway. Answer: AFOOT. Problem: As a solid word, “underway” is an adjective. As an adverb, it is spelled as two words (“under way”).

Date: 1/2. Clue: Fire, to Foch. Answer: FER. Problem: The French word “fer” means “iron.” The French word for “fire” is “feu.”

1998

Date: 12/10. Clue: What newbies write on-line. Answer: FAQS. Problem: Frequently asked questions, or FAQS, are things that computer newcomers read on-line, not write.

Date: 12/8. Clue: Memorable Big Top star born 12/8/1898. Answer: EMMETT KELLY. Problem: Emmett Kelly was born on 12/9/1898. Normally a mistake like this might be chalked up as a typo — but not when the whole point of the puzzle was to celebrate the famous clown’s 100th birthday.

Date: 11/23. Clue: “I agree!” Answer: HERE HERE. Problem: When people express emphatic agreement, they say “Hear hear!” A possible clue for “Here here!” would be “Open receiver’s cry, maybe.”


Date: 11/15. Clue: Gov. Bush of Florida. Answer: JEB. Problem: At the time this puzzle appeared, Jeb Bush was only Gov.-elect. So much for my attempt to be au courant.

Date: 10/3. Clue: Lords. Answer: SIRS. Problem: In England a lord is called “Lord,” not “Sir,” which is an inferior title.

Date: 9/26. Clue: Annual P.G.A. Tour event. Answer: SKINS GAME. Problem: The Skins Game is a televised golf event that features P.G.A. players, but it is not part of the P.G.A. Tour.

Date: 8/28. Clue: Spanish Philip, informally. Answer: PEPE. Problem: Pepe is a nickname for José, not Philip, despite what the Dictionary of First Names would have you believe.

Date: 7/26. Clue: “Die Fledermaus” maid. Answer: ADELA. Problem: The maid’s name in the Strauss operetta is Adele, with an “e.”

Date: 7/24. Clue: Resting place. Answer: MOOR. Problem: “Moor” means “to bring a boat to rest” or “the act or process of anchoring a boat.” But the place itself is a mooring.


Date: 7/6. Clue: Fiddler’s refrain. Answer: IF I WERE A RICH MAN. Problem: While this is indeed a refrain in the musical Fiddler on the Roof, the Fiddler himself doesn’t sing it. A correct clue would have been “‘Fiddler’ refrain.”


Date: 5/24. Clue: Oscillograph inventor Karl. Answer: BRAUN. Problem: Karl Braun invented the oscilloscope, which is a different device.

Date: 4/7. Clue: French back street. Answer: ALLÉE. Problem: “Allée” does not mean the same thing as “alley” in English. The French word means “avenue” or “path.”

Date: 4/5. Clue: Super Bowl M.V.P. Brett. Answer: FAVRE. Problem: The noted quarterback for Atlanta and Green Bay has never been Super Bowl M.V.P. A correct clue would have been “Three-time N.F.L. M.V.P. Brett.”

Date: 2/13. Clue: Heyerdahl raft. Answer: RA I. Problem: The historic exploratory vessel Ra I was a boat, not a raft.

Date: 2/13. Clue: French peers. Answer: ÉGALS. Problem: In French the plural of “égal” is “égaux.” (However, the Funk & Wagnalls dictionary lists “égal” as an English word, and does not list an irregular plural for it, so perhaps the word has been anglicized enough to make the puzzle’s answer legitimate after all.)

Date: 2/5. Clue: The “H” in Hellenic. Answer: ETA. Problem: The first letter of this Greek word is an epsilon, not an eta.

1997

Date: 12/31. Clue: With 16-Across, where the Pistons used to play. Answer: COBO + ARENA. Problem: The correct name of this Detroit sports facility is Cobo Hall.

Date: 12/15. Clue: Nonsecular types. Answer: LAITY. Problem: The laity are by definition secular. The clue should have read “Nonclerical types.”

Date: 12/13. Clue: Fashion designer Picone. Answer: EVAN. Problem: Evan and Picone are the names of two different men. The clue should have read “Fashion house __ Picone.”

Date: 11/16. Clue: Green eggs and ham advocate. Answer: SAM I AM. Problem: The Dr. Seuss character who at first hates — and later loves — green eggs and ham doesn’t have a name. Sam I Am is the character who offers the other one the dish, and we never learn what his opinion of it is.

Date: 11/15. Clue: Like jet streams. Answer: EASTERLY. Problem: While the word “easterly” in most contexts means “flowing from west to east,” in terms of winds it means “coming from the east.” Thus, jet streams are westerly, not easterly.

Date: 11/2. Clue: Milieu for Queen Elizabeth II. Answer: OCEAN. Problem: The ship’s name is properly rendered with an Arabic 2, not a Roman II.


Date: 10/14. Clue: Asia’s Sea of __. Answer: AZOV. Problem: The Sea of Azov, an arm of the Black Sea between Ukraine and Russia, is entirely in Europe.

Date: 10/5. Clue: [in a baseball puzzle] Member of the only team to win 111 games in a season. Answer: INDIAN. Problem: The Chicago Cubs won 116 games in 1906. The clue should have read “Member of the only A.L. team to win 111 games in a season.”

Date: 8/7. Clue: Sports org. based in Boulder, Colo. Answer: USOC. Problem: The U.S. Olympic Committee’s headquarters are in Colorado Springs — specifically, on Boulder Avenue, which was the source of the confusion.

Date: 7/13. Clue: Alaska air base. Answer: SEWARD. Problem: The nearest U.S. air base to Seward is in Anchorage, 75 miles away. Seward has just a regular airport.

Date: 7/11. Clue: Pony Express stop. Answer: ELKO. Problem: Elko, Nevada, was never a stop on the old Pony Express, although the Pony Express station in nearby Ruby Valley is now located in an Elko museum.

Date: 6/6. Clue: Foundry device. Answer: DROP FORGE. Problem: A foundry worker makes castings from molten metal, while a forge worker shapes metal through heating and hammering. The processes are quite different.
Date: 5/11. Clue: Deepest lake in the continental U.S. Answer: TAHOE. Problem: Crater Lake, in Oregon, is considerably deeper. This clue incorrectly relied on information in an old World Book Encyclopedia.

Date: 4/27. Clue: Spots, bibliically. Answer: SEEST. Problem: The archaic suffix “-est” is for second-person singular verbs, while “spots” is a third-person singular verb. The clue should have read “Spot, biblically.”


Date: 4/21. Clue: Greta who never actually said “I want to be alone.” Answer: GARBO. Problem: While Garbo is “famous” for never having said this line that is often attributed to her, actually she did say it — three times, in fact, in Grand Hotel.


Date: 3/30. Clue: Degas’s “Miss ___ at the Cirque Fernando”. Answer: LOLA. Problem: The painting’s correct title is “Miss La La at the Cirque Fernando.” The references I used for the clue, Merriam-Webster’s Biographical Dictionary and the Cambridge Biographical Dictionary, were both wrong.


Date: 3/16. Clue: Spice used in cooking. Answer: TARRAGON. Problem: Tarragon is an herb, not a spice.

Date: 3/12. Clue: Quetzalcoatl worshiper. Answer: MAYAN. Problem: While the Mayans worshiped a serpent god similar to Quetzalcoatl, strictly speaking Quetzalcoatl was a god of the Aztecs and Toltecs.

Date: 3/4. Clue: Shiite, e.g. Answer: ARAB. Problem: The majority of Shiites are Iranian, most of whom are of Persian descent, not Arabic.

Date: 1/19. Clue: Where Gideon defeated the Midianites. Answer: ENDOR. Problem: This biblical event occurred nowhere near Endor. The clue was based on a misinterpretation of the ambiguous text of Psalms 83: 9-10.

Date: 1/12. Clue: A as in Acre. Answer: ALEPH. Problem: In Hebrew the first letter of Acre is ayin.
Date: 1/12. Clue: Bygone computer. Answer: AMIGA. Problem: The Amiga was still being made at the time the puzzle appeared. Its market share, though, was minuscule.

Date: 1/12. Clue: Aladdin, e.g. Answer: ARAB. Problem: The hero of the classic story in “The Thousand and One Nights” is actually Chinese. (In the Disney movie, though, he’s Arabic, so maybe the clue is legitimate after all.)

Date: 1/2. Clue: Bucknell footballers. Answer: BISONS. Problem: The plural of the school’s athletes is simply Bison — no “s.”

1996

Date: 11/29. Clue: 180° from a Hitchcock classic? Answer: SSE. Problem: North by northwest is not the same thing as north-northwest. The former is a compass point 11°15’ west of north — or halfway between north-northwest and north.

Date: 11/27. Clue: 2-D. Answer: LINEAR. Problem: A line has only one dimension. Something two-dimensional is planar.

Date: 9/14. Clue: Vases in the Louvre. Answer: URNES. Problem: In France an “urne” is a ballot box or a vessel for holding cremated remains. It is not a “vase” in the English-language sense.

Date: 8/30. Clue: Arduous journey. Answer: ILIAD. Problem: An arduous journey is an odyssey. An iliad is a long narrative.

Date: 7/19. Clue: “Little Orphan Annie” villain, with “the.” Answer: ASP. Problem: The Asp was a good guy, not a villain. The reference book I checked called him a “henchman,” which I misinterpreted.

Date: 6/26. Clue: Wyoming’s largest city. Answer: CASPER. Problem: While Casper was Wyoming’s largest city in the 1980 census, by 1990 it had been passed by Cheyenne.

Date: 5/30. Clue: Noncoms. Abbr. Answer: PFC’S. Problem: Noncommissioned officers are sergeants and corporals. Privates — even first class ones — are not officers, commissioned or otherwise.


Date: 5/1. Clue: Salvation Army workers. Answer: SANTAS. Problem: The streetside Santas collecting money at Christmas work for the Volunteers of America, not (as is commonly believed) the Salvation Army. While the Salvation Army workers also collect money in kettles around the holidays, they don’t dress as Santas.

Date: 4/16. Clue: Prime minister, e.g. Answer: HEAD OF STATE. Problem: A prime minister is a head of government, not a head of state (which a king would be, for example). This distinction is
often missed in the United States, because the American president is simultaneously head of both state and government.

**Date:** 2/9. **Clue:** View from Darjeeling. **Answer:** EVEREST. **Problem:** While Mt. Everest is the highest mountain in the world, and Darjeeling is the nearest major city to the mountain, other peaks, I am told, intervene to block Darjeeling’s view.

**Date:** 1/26. **Clue:** Part of PBS: Abbr. **Answer:** SYST. **Problem:** The initials PBS stand for Public Broadcasting Service.

**Date:** 1/5. **Clue:** Boxcar cargoes. **Answer:** ORES. **Problem:** Boxcars, as enclosed railway cars, would be unlikely to carry mined rock. Gondolas and hopper cars are used for ore.

**1995**

**Date:** 12/26. **Clue:** Jimmy Doolittle, for one. **Answer:** WORLD WAR II ACE. **Problem:** While Jimmy Doolittle was a famous bomber pilot in the Pacific theater, he was not an ace. An ace is defined as a pilot who has shot down five or more enemy planes.

**Date:** 12/11. **Clue:** Lady Godiva got them. **Answer:** STARES. **Problem:** According to legend, Lady Godiva rode nude as a protest, and the townspeople, in appreciation and respect for her gesture, averted their eyes. Thus, she did not get stares.

**Date:** 11/15. **Clue:** Croatian-American inventor. **Answer:** TESLA. **Problem:** While Nikola Tesla was born in what is present-day Croatia, his parents were ethnically Serbian. The clue instead should have read “Serbian-American inventor.”

**Date:** 11/9. **Clue:** Tonto’s Scout, for one. **Answer:** APPALOOSA. **Problem:** While Scout was multi-colored, he was a pinto, not an appaloosa.

**Date:** 10/22. **Clue:** Hershey bar. **Answer:** OH HENRY! **Problem:** Oh Henry! is made by Nestlé, despite what the 1995 edition of Hoover’s Handbook of American Business says.

**Date:** 10/21. **Clue:** 5000 or Vigor, e.g. **Answer:** AUDI. **Problem:** The Vigor is an Acura. The clue should have read “5000 or Fox, e.g.”

**Date:** 10/5. **Clue:** Pyramid king. **Answer:** TUT. **Problem:** King Tut was buried in the side of a mountain, not a pyramid.

**Date:** 9/25. **Clue:** London’s Prince ___ Hall. **Answer:** ALBERT. **Problem:** The concert center near Kensington Gardens is called Royal Albert Hall.

**Date:** 9/24. **Clue:** Ristorante exhortation. **Answer:** MANGE. **Problem:** Italian for “Eat!” is “Mangia!” “Mange” is French.

**Date:** 9/10. **Clue:** Hugo novel “___ s’amuse.” **Answer:** LE ROI. **Problem:** This work was a play, not a novel.
Date: 8/26. Clue: Horse latitudes feature. Answer: TRADE WIND. Problem: The horse latitudes, which are belts about 30° north and south of the equator, are fairly calm. Trade winds blow between the horse latitudes and the equator.

Date: 8/13. Clue: One of a biblical trio. Answer: CASPAR. Problem: The Bible doesn’t say anywhere that the Wise Men were three in number, nor does it give their names. These details came from later Christian tradition. The clue would have been fine without mentioning “biblical.”

Date: 8/9. Clue: Charlie Chan comment. Answer: AH, SO. Problem: The jocular “Ah, so!” is more a mock-Japanese comment than a Chinese one, and it was never uttered by Charlie Chan.

Date: 7/16. Clue: Mountain where Dionysius was hidden. Answer: NYSA. Problem: Dionysius was a tyrant of ancient Syracuse. It was Dionysus [no “i”], the Greek god of fertility, wine, and drama, who as a child was hidden with the nymphs of Nysa.

Date: 7/4. Clue: Celebrity born July 4, 1900. Answer: LOUIS ARMSTRONG. Problem: The above is the birthdate that most reference books give. However, in recent years researchers have found that Armstrong falsified his date of birth and that he was really born on August 4, 1901. So much for this puzzle’s Fourth of July theme.

Date: 7/2. Clue: Mississippi has the most of any state. Answer: ESSES. Problem: Answer challenged by a reader from Massachusetts …

Date: 6/26. Clue: Fairway peg. Answer: TEE. Problem: Tees are used on tee-off greens, not fairways.

Date: 6/15. Clue: Problems for Elmer Fudd. Answer: ESSES [again!]. Problem: Elmer only mixes up his R’s and L’s. The clue should have read “Problems for Sylvester the Cat.”

Date: 6/3. Clue: Dan Patch, for a famous example. Answer: TROTTER. Problem: Dan Patch was a harness horse, which is completely different from a trotter.


Date: 4/9. Clue: Broadway’s “___ Baltimore.” Answer: HOT L. Problem: “Hot L Baltimore” was an off-Broadway hit. I verified that this play had been performed at the Circle in the Square, which is the name of a well-known Broadway theater. However, in 1973, when the play was running, the Circle in the Square was still downtown and off-Broadway.

Date: 4/4. Clue: Wisconsin city, birthplace of Harry Houdini. Answer: APPLETON. Problem: Houdini was born in Budapest, Hungary, and moved to Appleton when he was four. He claimed all his life that he was born in Appleton, which is how his birthplace is given in most references, and it was on one of these that I incorrectly relied.
Date: 4/2. Clue: Frontier sheriff. Answer: EARP. Problem: Wyatt Earp was a marshal, not a sheriff. The latter is a local official; the former is a federal one.

Date: 3/19. Clue: John ___, first president of the Continental Congress. Answer: HANSON. Problem: Hanson was the first president of the Continental Congress after ratification of the Articles of Confederation. Virginia’s Peyton Randolph was the Congress’s very first president.

Date: 3/18. Clue: Just. Answer: MERE. Problem: While the two words share a meaning (“being no more than”), “just” in this sense is an adverb and “mere” is an adjective, so they’re not synonyms.


Date: 2/19. Clue: Six Felines. Answer: REYES. Problem: Only five Spanish kings were named Felipe.

1994


Date: 12/4. Clue: Key of Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 7. Answer: C MAJOR. Problem: Tchaikovsky didn’t even have seven symphonies, much less one in C Major. The clue should have read “Key of Sibelius’s Symphony No. 7.”

Date: 11/8. Clue: “A Message from ___.” Answer: ALOES. Problem: The play was titled “A Lesson from Aloes.”

Date: 11/6. Clue: City near Sun Valley. Answer: RENO. Problem: Strictly speaking, this isn’t an error, because there is a tiny village near Reno named Sun Valley. However, the famous ski resort of this name, and the place I was thinking of, is in Idaho.

Date: 10/16. Clue: Name of four Popes. Answer: FELIX. Problem: Felix II was an anti-Pope. Of the four Felixes, only three were true Popes.

Date: 10/3. Clue: Muslim pilgrim. Answer: HADJ. Problem: A hadj is a Muslim pilgrimage. A Muslim pilgrim is a hadji.

Date: 8/7. Clue: Low-fat alternative. Answer: OLEO. Problem: Oleo has just as much fat as butter, only of a different type. Instead the clue might have read “Low saturated fat alternative,” which may be awkward but at least is correct.

Date: 8/1. Clue: House of Lords members. Answer: SIRS. Problem: Knights and baronets are sirs. The House of Lords is composed of peers.
Date: 7/23. Clue: Golf-cartlike vehicles. Answer: LEMS. Problem: This is a matter of common confusion, as it was for me until I was corrected. The vehicles that the astronauts drove on the moon are called moon rovers. A LEM (Lunar Excursion Module) is the vehicle that separates from the orbiting spacecraft and lands on the moon.

Date: 7/17. Clue: Alligator logo name. Answer: IZOD. Problem: The animal so frequently seen on shirts is a crocodile, not an alligator.

Date: 7/3. Clue: 19th-century sea novelist. Answer: DANA. Problem: Richard Henry Dana (of “Two Years Before the Mast” fame) wrote only nonfiction.

Date: 6/12. Clue: "Turandot" slave girl. Answer: TIU. Problem: Her name was Liu, not Tiu. Tiu is the name of the Teutonic sky god.

Date: 5/15. Clue: pitched. Answer: ROLLED. Problem: In nautical terminology, to pitch is to rock from front to back. To roll is to rock from side to side.

Date: 4/27. Clue: Observatory site? Answer: CLUE. Problem: There is no observatory in the game Clue. There is a conservatory, though.

Date: 4/24. Clue: Beethoven's Ninth. Answer: CHORALE. Problem: Beethoven's Ninth was his Choral Symphony, which is not the same thing as a chorale.


Date: 3/24. Clue: Became a member. Answer: ENTERED THE LISTS. Problem: To enter the lists means to become a competitor. This hard-to-find phrase appears in only a few American dictionaries, under "list."

Date: 3/12. Clue: Site in a whistle-stop campaign. Answer: CABOOSE. Problem: Trains in whistle-stop campaigns usually don't have cabooses. The politicians speak from passenger cars with open rear platforms.

Date: 3/7. Clue: First U.S. saint. Answer: SETON. Problem: Elizabeth Ann Seton was the first U.S.-born saint. Italian-born Frances Cabrini was actually the first U.S. citizen to be canonized.

Date: 2/14. Clue: Concorde's land there. Answer: ORLY. Problem: While the Concorde used to land at Orly, its only scheduled stops in France when this puzzle was published were at Charles de Gaulle.

Date: 2/14. Clue: University in Bridgeport, Conn. Answer: SACRED HEART. Problem: Sacred Heart is located in Fairfield, Conn. The university used to have a Bridgeport mailing address, but no longer.

Date: 2/8. Clue: ECU issuer. Answer: EEC. Problem: The ECU (European Currency Unit) was only an accounting concept, not a minted currency, so it cannot be said to have been issued.
Date: 12/21. Clue: Dance in a shtetl. Answer: HORA. Problem: As a writer for the Jewish newspaper Forward informed me, the hora is a Romanian folk dance that was popularized in Israel and has now spread to Jewish communities around the world, but it is not known for having been danced in the former shtetls of eastern Europe.

Date: 12/12. Clue: Earth’s shape. Answer: PEAR. Problem: If anything, the Earth appears to be slightly squashed at the polar regions. It’s definitely not pear-shaped.

Date: 12/6. Clue: Wellesley student. Answer: COED. Problem: The dictionaries say a coed is a student, usually female, at a coeducational college. As an all-female college, Wellesley by definition doesn’t have coeds.

Date: 11/21 [the very first Times crossword I edited]. Clue: Song also recorded as “Harlem Footwarmers.” Answer: MOOD INDIGO. Problem: Harlem Footwarmers was another name for Duke Ellington’s band, which recorded the song in 1931, not an alternative title to the song itself. This error resulted from an ambiguous entry in a reference book on old songs. After crediting the hit to Ellington, it added: “also recorded for Okeh 8840 (as ‘Harlem Footwarmers’”).

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