

Magic Carpet Ride by Hamlet

It's time for a celebration! Our invitees just need us to tell them how to get there.

Six colorful characters have helped with cluing. Each one has a quirk: a non-standard way to clue individual letters using exactly one word. Each character has contributed their quirky cluing method to three clues.

Once the grid is complete, you can travel along a sequence of cells to create a path, starting from the cell indicated by the entrance arrow above 1-Down.

- If the entry containing your current cell has a cardinal direction letter (N, E, S, or W) in it, you will proceed in that direction. Note the letter that is immediately in that direction from the direction letter.
- If the entry containing your current cell has no cardinal direction letter in it, you will proceed in the direction that the entry is written in the grid. Note the associated cardinal direction letter (S or E).

Travel along the entry in the specified direction until you reach a cell in a new entry. (At one point, you will reach a cell in *two* new entries. One will instruct you to stop; choose the other.) Let A be the number of the entry's cells along which you just traveled (including the cell you started on); place a dot above the A th letter of the associated clue. (None of these clues were touched by our helpers.)

Repeat this process until it leads you off the grid at the exit arrow and to the location of the gathering, the name of which will be revealed by the noted letters. Furthermore, the letters with dots above them, read in path order, will reveal what these dots represent: a seventh character's suggestion for how our attendees might find their way back home after the festivities.

Some clues neither involve a non-standard letter cluing nor clue an entry in the path. In the B th such clue (in clue order), circle the B th letter. These circled letters will reveal the names of two very special guests of honor.

Each helper's name, which is for you to determine, clues a letter using their preferred non-standard cluing method. For each of the affected clues, use this information to determine which helper contributed to it. Let C be the position of the first occurrence of the letter clued by that helper's name; note the character in the C th position from the *end* of the clue. These letters, when ordered properly at the bottom of this page, will reveal what we are celebrating.

THE LOCATION OF THE GATHERING:

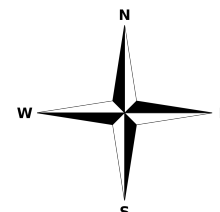
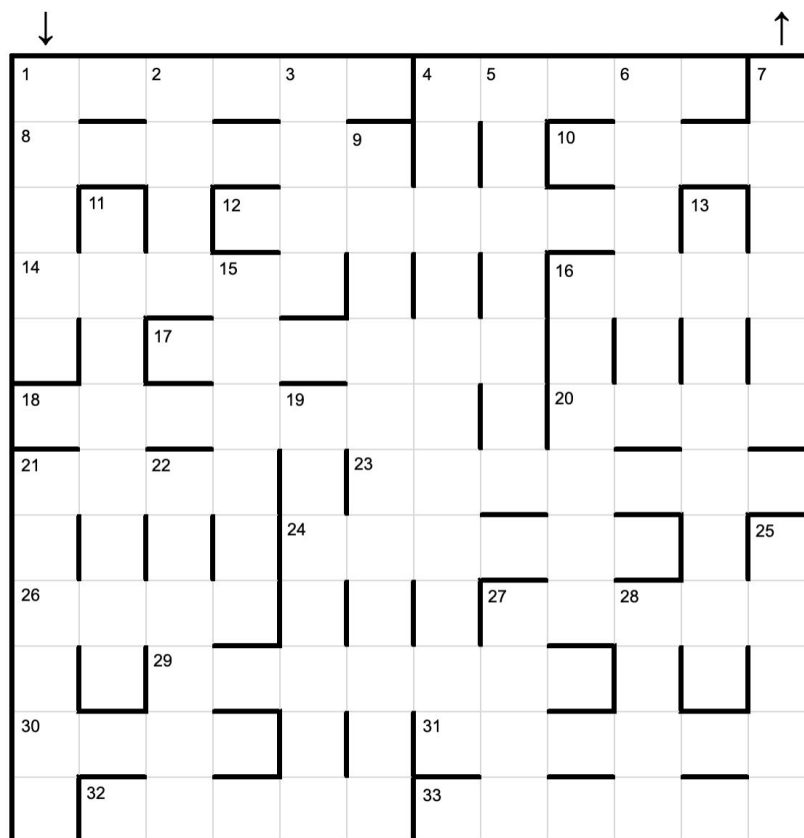
HOW OUR ATTENDEES MIGHT FIND THEIR WAY BACK HOME:

THE NAMES OF TWO VERY SPECIAL GUESTS OF HONOR:

WHAT WE ARE CELEBRATING:



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Across

1. Motivate dance part (6)
4. Plumbers are known for this copper coating hack when starting late (5)
8. A halo encircles plump, headless doll in a theater on West 125th St (6)
10. Big cat, um, eaten by dad (4)
12. Replacement milk farm Lou cultivated (7)
14. Heal hurting gut after pie enters, leaves (5)
16. World Series champs turned back for South Park character (4)
17. Chanukah hero who beheaded Holofernes, judged only halfway there by Rutherford, holding it in (6)
18. To play overly excitedly in tag, "It" atoned (7)
20. Insolvent, once replacing love with malice, coming back to frolic and skip (4)
21. Pearl Harbor ace in two 180-degree turns for fiesta in the 50th US state (4)
23. Couple of Texans (and Millard) in transport are ornery (7)
24. Spiky haircut displayed by first pair to mount MIM-23 surface-to-air missile (6)
26. Implement for "driving out" wrinkles drove in charged particle (4)
27. Popular princess abuzz in region populated by many Hindus (5)
29. "No! Behold and begone!" turns back demon (7)
30. Idris, the actor, recalls (with flinch) "honest" president of the USA (4)
31. Tantrists' chief sorceress is a jerk (6)
32. In Moscow, yes, I shook Yuri's head to find that special someone for Donald (5)
33. Shifty Bayer stashes doc in bread shop (6)

Down

1. Huge celebration of equality, if one isn't included (5)
2. Turn back home to animals and fire; gradually it seeps in (4)
3. Missive written in weed farming area (4)
4. Icy sphere that zooms through space, encountering a grain containing a famous prototype of artificial intelligence, to rapidly decelerate until totally motionless (11, 4 wds.)
5. Do without luxuries in berserk hug riot (7, 2 wds.)
6. Marin is being held in defiance of court's order with four in San José (6)
7. Spinning two cups: cooler fixation for felines (6)
9. Promiscuous bacchanalia features lotion smeared around Hefner's principal study with feathered bodies (11)
11. Confusing a drum rag with protective gear for archers (8)
13. As is described in a rabbinic masterwork, Earth One is coated in talc (8)
15. Fall in mutual embraces, looking westward (6)
16. Aimlessly tossed around in all four directions, sailor loses heart (6)
19. Fleets are made with ease, without using any energy (7)
21. According to Reverend Spooner, one who works very hard to hang around doing nothing at all (6)
22. Monocellular organism Barack kept in a recycled beam (6)
25. Manic comic character with axe decapitated bat and disemboweled harpy (5)
27. Cry of discomfort after heroin, followed by a state famously mistaken for heaven (4)
28. Lemon consumed with fruit that grows on many palm trees in Tunisia (4)