# KITCHEN SINK (answer)
## by Kenny Young

This puzzle has many steps and uses many popular encoding schemes.

First of all, the top line of the puzzle is encoded in standard 5-bit binary. It reads:

CLUES ENCODED WITHOUT LEADING ZEROS

This means that the clues will also be in binary, but without any zeros at the beginning – for example, A will simply be 1 instead of 00001. [Note: in earlier drafts of this puzzle, the spaces between letters were not provided.] The binary in parentheses is the length of the answer word.
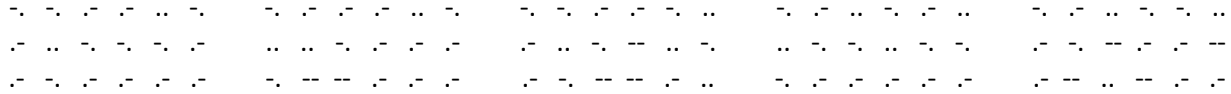
The following clues can now be deciphered:

| | |
|---|---|
| HE SNAPS FOOTBALLS (6) | CENTER |
| PRAISE ON HIGH (5) | EXALT |
| GRASSY PLAY AREA (4) | PARK |
| | |
| FIDDLE WITH MACHINES (6) | TINKER |
| REMOVE A TENANT (5) | EVICT |
| READY AN ARROW (4) | NOCK |
| | |
| LOUD CROW NOISES (4) | CAWS |
| EVEN LESS COOKED (5) | RAWER |
| VERY SMALL LAKE (4) | POND |
| | |
| ALMOST FELL OVER (8) | TEETERED |
| ACID FROM BLADDER (4) | URIC |
| PAPER ENTRY PASS (6) | TICKET |
| | |
| CLUMPS OF HAIR (5) | TUFTS |
| TEXAS CULT CITY (4) | WACO |
| CHINESE SAILING SHIP (4) | JUNK |

All of these words are too short to fit into the twelve blanks – but they all fit just fine if written in Morse code, which was obliquely clued by the dot-dash presentation of the binary data. The binary conversion looks like this:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CENTER | -.-..-.-.-. | TINKER | -..-.-.-.. | CAWS | -.-..-.--... | TEETERED | -..-..-..-.. | TUFTS | -..-..-... |
| EXALT | .-..-.-.-.- | EVICT | ....-..-.-.- | RAWER | .-..-.--..-. | URIC | ..-.-...-.- | WACO | .--.--.-.--- |
| PARK | .--..-.-..- | NOCK | -.----.-.-.- | POND | .--.----..-.. | TICKET | -..-..-.-..- | JUNK | .---..--.-.- |

The Morse code is now a regular block of dots and dashes, and the dots make a message in Braille:

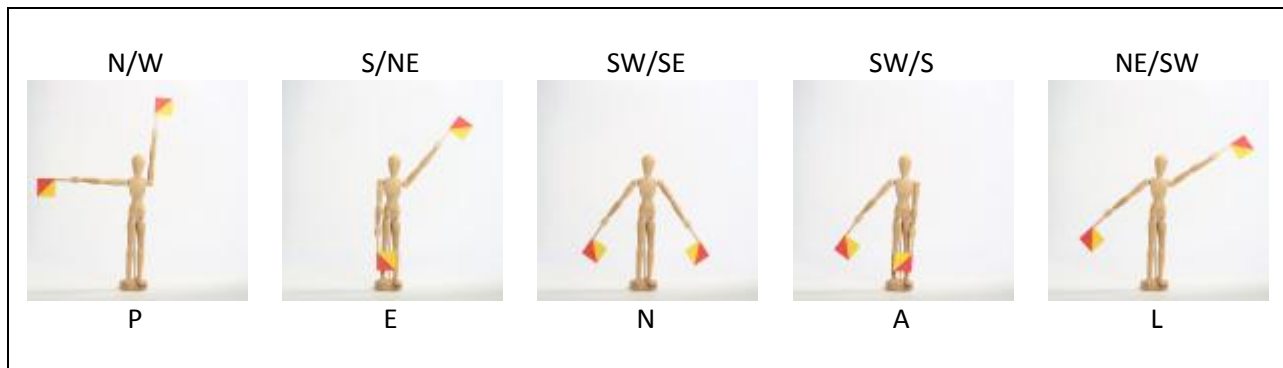SWOONS          WHELPS          SWEATY          WONTON          SEXISM

Next, the line underneath is a set of coordinates. The first number is always 1-5, and the second is always 1-6, This tells you to take the j'th letter out of the i'th word. Specifically:

| (4 6) | (2 1) | (5 5) | (1 5) | (3 3) | (2 6) | (4 1) | (1 6) | (2 3) | (5 1) | (1 2) | (3 1) | (4 3) | (5 2) | (1 1) | (3 2) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | W | S | N | E | S | W | S | E | S | W | S | N | E | S | W |

This collection of compass symbols can only mean one thing – Semaphore. But like the binary encoding of the clues, there is no help as to where to break the letters apart. Nonetheless, there are not many ways to break the string into valid pairs of compass directions, and only one of those makes a word:



| N/W | S/NE | SW/SE | SW/S | NE/SW |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| P | E | N | A | L |

[image thumbnails courtesy iStockPhoto.com]

The answer is therefore **PENAL**.