

MEN IN BLACK (answer)

by Gordon Dow

The grid is actually a bunch of anaquotes, mostly 24 letters long. Each row and column produces an anaquote, where each four-letter unit is used only once. The anaquotes are:

Rows:

SUBJECT OF BLOOD AND WHISKEY (Daniel, 29)
GUNROCK THE MUSTANG COLLEGE (Davis, 38)
HE INVENTED THE DYNAMION MAP (Fuller, 51)
PENNING THE HERO AND THE CROWN (McKinley, 28)
ONLY ONE-ARMED MAJOR LEAGUER (Gray, 48)
ANTARCTICA MASSIF NAMESAKE (Vinson, 87)
MIDDLE NAME OF WILLIAM YEATS (Butler, 1)
A MILWAUKEE BASEBALL PLAYER (Brewer, 52)
N.J. SENATOR AND BASKETBALLER (Bradley, 42)
THE GOVERNOR OF MISSISSIPPI (Barbour, 26)
HE PENNED DEATH OF A SALESMAN (Miller, 37)
THE THIN MAN'S COSTAR WITH LOY (Powell, 101)
SHE WAS JACKIE AND FOXY BROWN (Grier, 32)

Columns:

HE PLAYED OFFICER BOB HODGES (Duvall, 5)
HALLOWEEN II'S LAURIE STRODE (Curtis, 33)
THE HOST OF HARDBALL ON MSNBC (Matthews, 47)
NORMAN BRIDWELL'S BIG RED DOG (Clifford, 35)
GOLFER TIGER OR ITEMS HE USES (Woods, 46)
PREMIER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (Campbell, 34)
FAMOUS DEBATER WITH LINCOLN (Douglas, 81)
TONY BLAIR PRECEDED HIM AS PM (Brown, 53)
PLUMBER WHO WROTE PARIS EDGE (Hunt, 43)
A TRAFALGAR COLUMN NAMESAKE (Nelson, 30)
RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA AUTHOR (Clarke, 69)
DETECTIVE FRIEND OF THOMSON (Thompson, 20)
THE LEAD VOCALIST OF BAUHAUS (Murphy, 82)

Note that all of the answers are also the last names of Supreme Court Justices.

The grid is 13 x 13, so each column and row has a leftover quad. These 13 leftover quads are also an anaquote, yielding:

CALCULATE DIFFERENCES IN ORDER OF APPOINTMENT IN THESE CELLS

“These cells” are the leftover cells that spell this 52-letter message; each of these cells has a unique justice for its row and a unique justice for its column. The order of appointment for each justice appears next to their name, above. Two justices served discontinuous terms; the justices were chosen such that no pairs spanned these justices, so the solver can choose either enumerating principle without ambiguity.

Compute the differences, and order the results by the order in which the quads produced the 52-letter message, and convert using A=1, B=2, etc.:

CHIEF JUSTICE X

And the tenth Supreme Court Chief Justice was:

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT