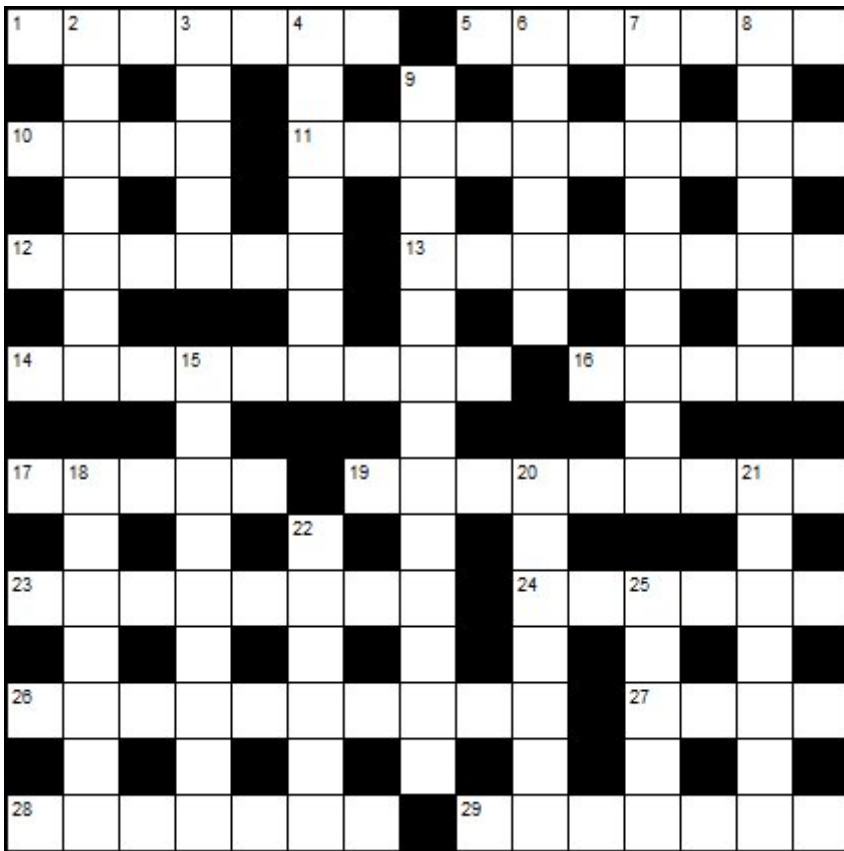


Puzzle by Soup

This is Soup's debut here, but he's no stranger to setting: he has the distinction of having been the typesetter for Araucaria's custom puzzles, and continued as a setter in his own right, producing custom puzzles. This puzzle is a real challenge and will provide even experienced solvers with a demanding mental workout. Favourite clue: 15 down.



For all across clues, an anagram of the word indicated by the clue and definition should be entered in the grid.

ACROSS

- 1 Mark, ask about transport costs (7)
- 5 Moderate payment for donkey discussed (7)
- 10 Charlie Sheen's dishonesty (4)
- 11 Running down country, following deer (10)
- 12 Line of trees with gnu's head seen where its behind was before – get back! (6)
- 13 Business with a swindle taking no effort to run (8)
- 14 Bomber's house (9)
- 16 Playing roulette at first – even? Balls! (5)
- 17 Put foot in seconds, taken back for exchanges (5)
- 19 Sanctions plane display before matches (9)
- 23 Command to approach princess who's lost a jester (8)
- 24 Starts to panic – "I should talk, or Lisa could be fired" (6)
- 26 Ring about note on caution (10)
- 27 Roughly use hammer (4)
- 28 Move aside: server engineer starts to find bug (7)
- 29 Clue for "R" in Holmes's league? (7)

DOWN

- 2 Dawn's direction: butcher sea bird (7)
- 3 Pattern seen in cut hem edge (5)
- 4 Poor man plucked little heart from bird (7)
- 6 Woman takes in soldier with disease (6)
- 7 Old trail at first mistakenly seen (9)
- 8 Get rid of gossip, first – it causes a lot of hot air (3,4)
- 9 Gain advantage over some charlatan, sneakily (5,1,5,2)
- 15 Firms distribute letters: some reply (9)
- 18 A component of DNA? (7)
- 20 Former lover modelled nude (7)
- 21 Bag lady found hiding 1,000 little carvings (7)
- 22 Contended with potholes (6)
- 25 Go for holiday (5)