

## 2. First In . . . by Ucaimhu

The film *Game Night*, which is in part about competitive puzzle solving, contains the following riddle with no solution given (bracketed numerals added for reference):

[i] I'm brown and old by day, white and young by night. [ii] My eyes are glass. [iii] I have nine faces but no head. [iv] I sing to the sky but have no voice. [v] I'm everywhere and nowhere.

Since the solution is clearly the Washington Monument, this provides an opportunity to explore how the monument itself takes first prize in many competitions:

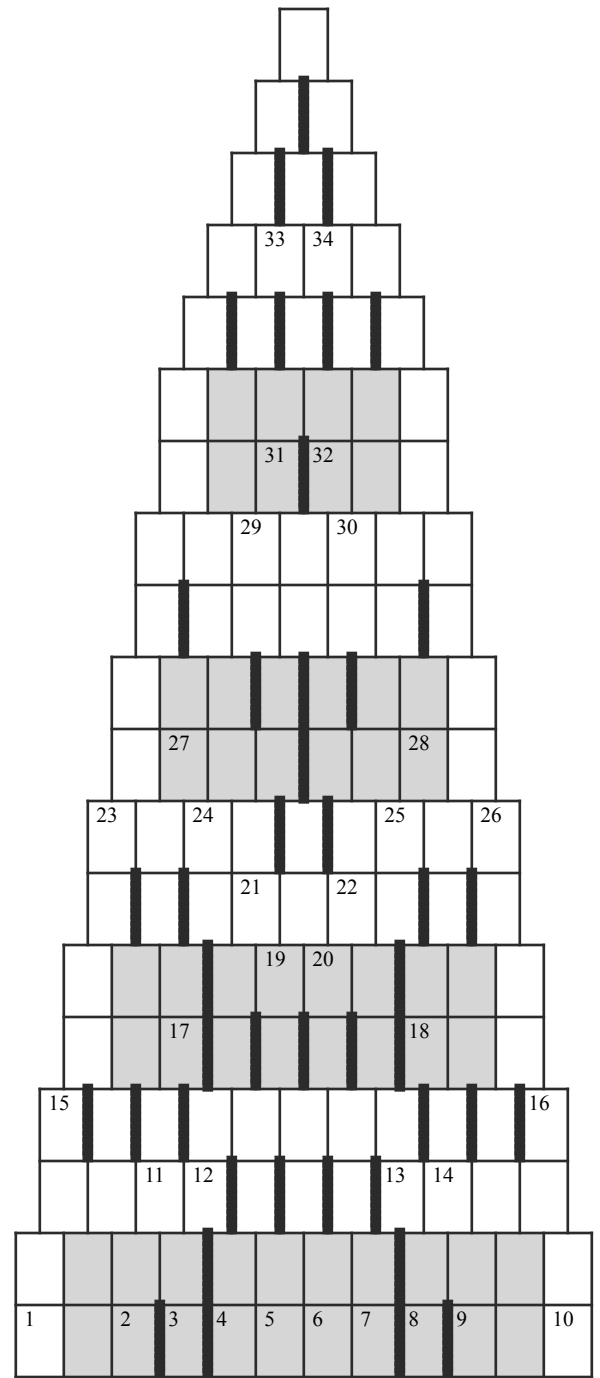
(1) As [iii] notes, the Washington Monument is an obelisk, which is a solid with nine faces: four triangles on top, four tall trapezoids on the sides, and a square base. In tribute, there are nine Across “clues”; each of these is really *three* clues for Across answers run together, and you must find where the three clues begin and end. (The tagging for all three clues is collected at the end of the triple “clue.”)

(2) You must also determine (from crossing letters) where in the grid to *enter* the Across answers. As [i] notes, the Washington Monument has darker internal stones that the public can only see by day, and white external stones that are lit up at night; in this grid, some rows have shaded internal squares and the outer Across entries in these rows extend outside beyond the edges of the grid. Once you have entered the Across answers, go through them in grid order bottom to top, for each one taking the first or second letter of its clue depending on whether it is in a shaded or unshaded row; this will tell you the second place winners in the Best Riddle and Best Monument competitions.

(3) The three characters preceding each Across “clue” label its three clues in order. For each letter outside the grid, going up and then down the monument, take the *last* letter of *the clue labeled with that letter*; this will give the second place winner in the Best US Obelisk competition.

(4) Each Up answer is entered starting at the numbered square and moving upwards; in some cases you thus must decide whether to head up-and-left or up-and-right. To help with this, the set of Up paths in the grid is left/right symmetric. As [ii] notes, the monument has a few glass windows; correspondingly, in the grid there are multiple squares (all in the same row) that will be left blank.

(5) As [iv] notes, the exterior of the monument’s aluminum top is inscribed with (among other texts) upwards-pointing words of praise; the grid’s top (reading up and then down) has the same inscription. For each letter of the inscription, the Across clue labeled with that letter will have one word of the same length as the grid row with “windows”; note the set of letters that word has at the positions of the windows. These sets of letters will tell you the second place winner of the Best Singing US Monument competition.



(6) Lastly, as [v] notes, the monument is a national symbol seen everywhere in the United States, but is not in any of those states. In another context, Washington himself is everywhere and nowhere, and he is not the only one. Each Up clue contains an incorrect letter, which you must correct to some other *alphanumeric character* before solving. In clue order, the incorrect letters will give the category for one final “Best” competition, which Washington won. The correct alphanumeric characters that *begin* their respective words, and separately those that *end* them, will give the contexts for Washington and one other person; those in the *interior* of their words will spell out where in the grid (if you know something else about *Game Night*) you can find, conspicuously absent, the second place winner.

## CLUES

### ACROSS

**ABC** One Musklike Tesla exec showing decadent Noel parts 2–5 of decadent NI3 term for *species altered by the environment-altered lyric alphabet creator* [NI3]

**DEF** Arenas pro stays near originally allowed a foursome from retrogressive foreign abbey to strike a tympani- or tumbadora-hearing netman's first score

**GHI** Oddly ogle Danish toy egg stuck into free-wheeling designer Christian Siriano's last two rolls by . . . er, unique individual in the UK [NI3]

**JKL** Hero nicknamed "Encyclopedia Brown" replaced yer ol' primary-school learning with some nonsense about calm ex that gets itchy, chiefly backing business on line (*hyph.*)

**MNO** They've studied money-making, somewhat bombastic earlier Dreamworks film from Arizona (describing new, tense sort of hydrocarbon grouping) Ace slyly unveiled around the beginning of Kwanzaa (*abbr.*)

**PQR** Ted is strange, and makes changes to piece of Biblical text, changing the T, H, and B when returning to check

**STU** Toothache treater bears *Five Recordings In Quebec*, a hit the loose Niobe finally (in 1400) was the host for (*abbr.*) (*abbr.*)

**VWX** Grass in a bookstore gets real pig mayhap to start orchestrating Bo Diddley's penultimate woodwind etudes, dropping the 'tude that's copped by VP with a scooter

**YZ&** Make slanted deal to get us striking your anvil, by using leverage shifted from outspoken, leonine coterie downtown in Chicago that is upset with conglomerate

### UP

1. Political group from British Columbia claiming I've just spouted something of note (4)
2. Word sung after "Lang's Snowy Neon-Filled Object" on the radio (4)
3. Fest of an ill Pope or Cardinal or Padre, e.g. (4, *abbr.*)
4. Position Ernie's pal next to grape, on the right (5)
5. Recorded proceedings say  $E2 = 5 + 7 - F + A$  (4) [NI3]
6. Later rant at annoying sunset (2-2)
7. "Two Tickets to Paradise" singer whose surname means "loft" or "audible whirlpool" (5)
8. Author's long, long title for *A Niño Across The Pyrenees* (4, *abbr.*)
9. Number each, top to bottom, with 22% of the half-life of uranium's most suable isotope (4)
10. Many phonons observed from the midpoint on (4)
11. Actor Flynn's role in *Chads Surrounding Romeo* (5)
12. C in red text put on an item after that item's presentient (3'1, *abbr.*)
13. The pincher must throw 16 2/15 of these wings (4)
14. Charm-filled king who raves while Gloucester overgears a Renault automobile (2 3)
15. Energy-packed elf, say, that's made water cold and made a dove cry (5)
16. Bits of letters left by marchesa in back for peons (5)
17. Kate's TV housemate's neatly complete partners (5)
18. Thanks offered in French or Belgian shaman's place outside of Cincinnati (5)
19. True Champagne lover that will file *vin blanc* initially with niacin etc. (7 1)
20. Leaving Dee with a nerd to scratch (8)
21. Doctor a minute drink that's stronger than a laser (4)
22. Measurer of whirling discoid comes to chat (4)
23. Loved having lenders from Ebay troubleshoot (5)
24. Rope obscured text on the button T's northwest of (4, *abbr.*)
25. I'm off to collect terminal from silo data unit (4)
26. Luminary burning indigo and string instrument (5)
27. Spying bisected round O — an O that's high up (7)
28. Distributed more items like the Fowl and Hierophant and Altered Stranger (7) [NI2]
29. Lou can incorrectly put IUP in old ads (6)
30. Sneak around topless Len and wrap bathroom tissue around it (6)
31. Sniveling date beginning to enjoy rum drink that's consumed a lot (6)
32. Eth letter from *stjúpróðir* disheartened Upper Canadian water agency (6)
33. Dutch beret by inwardly dense objects (4)
34. Skis of German-American wildebeests (4)