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*Ottawa Outlook, nee North Hero News and World Review …. ……. Mostly stuff no one else would print.*

Saturday, July 30, 2011 c:/outlk11, 11wc14 (2011 Letter #10 )

**Crosswords**

We are crossword enthusiasts. They are good for the brain, jog the memory, fairly reasonable and a book of 300 lasts for months. A common living room scene: Lucile on the sofa (white wine), Ken in the ottoman chair (red wine) and Bailey in her chair (awaiting supper). Crossword books are in use, … well two anyway.

Lucile & Ken in cooperation comprise a fairly wide ‘coverage’ knowledge. Language clues? English, French, German, Latin & Spanish are well covered. As are: literature, music, sports, history, geography, synonyms, antonyms et al. Once you get into this you realize you don’t need a wide-wide knowledge of say, individual sports for example. Take baseball. Three players will get you through most puzzles: Enos Slaughter, Mel Ott & Orel Hersheiser Golf’s even easier. See golf in a clue, … write in Ernie Els, one or both. (Enos also does double duty in Biblical clues.)

About the worst crossword puzzles are those with, “ Part 1 of a 7 part quip” . Good grief, … each part is maybe 10-14 letters long and one usually has to solve everything else before coming up with the solution. Quip clue parts are usually in bold type. Seeing bold type among the clues usually leads to an immediate ‘on to the next puzzle’.

Also, … the sneaky crossword puzzle writers take some getting used to. This hurdle is not helped by one-track minds not used to thinking outside the box when doing puzzles. Example. Ken is doing a puzzle. A clue is read. “Lamb Parts”, 6 letters. Hmmmn, lets see. Mutton? Cutlet? Nope, not the latter, clue is plural. Geez, leave it. Never did figure it out, had to peak. The *“lamb parts?”* They were, *… “essays”*  Good Grief, … think a Charles Lamb did write essays, but it was about a pig wasn’t it? Maybe you are not confused, but I am. Also, … a recent Lucille stickler, “Horney Brothers”. Hmmmn, … Karamazov? Nope, only 4 letters. Answer: “Elks”.

Reading the clue carefully is very important. Oft-times language clues do not specify: FR, GER. SPAN. No, no, much too straight forward. They come as, “Aachen Wife”. Hurting spouse? Nope, … German Frau. It gets even worse. How about Cologne to Klaus? Good Grief, not many know the German name for this city. (We could spell this one, but don’t know how to implant an umlaut.) French clues are more or less the same, just substitute Pierre for Klaus. If the clue contains an imbedded abbreviation or acronym, the answer will be in the same form.

‘Leader/Follower clues can always sneak up on one. Example: “Mission leader”, 5 letters Hmmmn, who lead that Apollo Mission anyway? Not even close, answer: “Inter”. Then there is: Roman Gods vs Greek gods, Hebrew Alphabet, Roman numbers, cities/rivers/lakes you’ve never heard of, et al.

Our biggest exasperation re crosswords? We are stumped on a clue. Finally look at the answer. Oh gee, why didn’t I think of that! A few crosswords later, … same clue. Do we remember? Of course not. Our closing this month will be, … a crossword clue.

Columbus leader, ------- (seven letters), From Ottawa, Lucille, Bailey & Ken.

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