

SUGAR AND SPICE

by Bill Smiley



That March Madness

I have a profound respect for poet T. S. Eliot. But one of his lines, that which says, "April is the cruellest month," is pure poppycock. He had obviously never spent a March in these parts.

April is no bargain, but March is a month no honest taxpayer should have to put up with. At its best, it is 31 days of pure drear; at its worst, a century of bleak horror.

Raw east winds that chap the hands, chill the bones, redden the nose, deaden the soul. Third bout of la grippe in three months. Holes in your overshoes. Faces of friends become hateful. Tailpipe and muffler gone on the car. Eavestroughs sagging. Spirits flagging. Spring is merely a word in the dictionary. Winter is a monster, clawing your shoulder.

If you're anything like me, you're hanging on by your teeth. This is fairly easy, because your nose has been running, and you're keeping a stiff upper lip. It's frozen. And your teeth are exposed.

It's a wonder we don't all turn as mad as March hares, and cut our collective throat, if only to add a bit of color to relieve grim, grey March.

But cheer up, chaps, all is not lost. I have a little therapeutic theory that works wonders. It is the only thing that saves me, in March, from running out into the snow, in bare feet and long underwear, babbling, "T. S. Eliot is mad, mad I tell you, mad!"

I first discovered this theory when I had trouble sleeping. After a long evening of too much work, too many fags, and too much coffee, I'd crawl into bed, and lie there as rigid as a rake, toes curled tightly, eyes burning brightly, no more chance of getting to sleep than getting to heaven.

One such night, I remembered. "Listen, Buster," I told myself. "Fifteen years ago tonight, you were lying on the floor of a box-car, freezing, hands and feet tied with wire, on your way to a prison camp.

"And here you are lying in a soft bed, in a warm house, with a warm woman beside you and warm blankets over you, and no

night-fighters shooting up the place, and no guards wandering in to give you a kick. So what if you don't sleep a wink?" In 14 seconds I was asleep. It works every time.

Now, the same technique applies when it comes to saving my sanity in March.

When the miseries of March have me reduced to one great bellow of frustration, I put it to work. "Old Buddy," I say to myself, "just go back 300 years. Let yourself go, now. Not three miles from here, they were eking out their March, half-frozen, half-starved, half-blind."

And I think about them — the Indians, nearing the bitter end of a bitter winter, in their long-houses. Men, women, children, dogs, pell-mell in a seventeenth-century Nissen hut made of boughs and bark and skins.

Two or three hundred human beings crawling over each other in about the space you and your family occupy. Cold. Hungry. Stench unbelievable. Smoke from cooking fires indescribable.

The last of the meat gone. The maize reduced to a few handfuls. Spruce tea and moss stew on the menu. Hunting impossible because of the slush. Flabby breasts and swollen bellies. And always the cold.

No refrigerators stocked with steaks and roasts and milk and eggs. No shelves of canned goods. No supermarket a few blocks away. No heat, no light. No bathroom. No books. No television. And always the cold.

A few cynics will add, "And no income tax, no mortgages, no insurance policies, no fuel bills, no ulcers, no doctor's bills." True. Wanna trade?

Not I. I turn up the thermostat a bit. I mix a hot toddy. Then I sit by the fireplace, listening to the wind whistling around the house. I sniff the waft of pot roast from the kitchen. I pick up a book, put a record on the hi-fi.

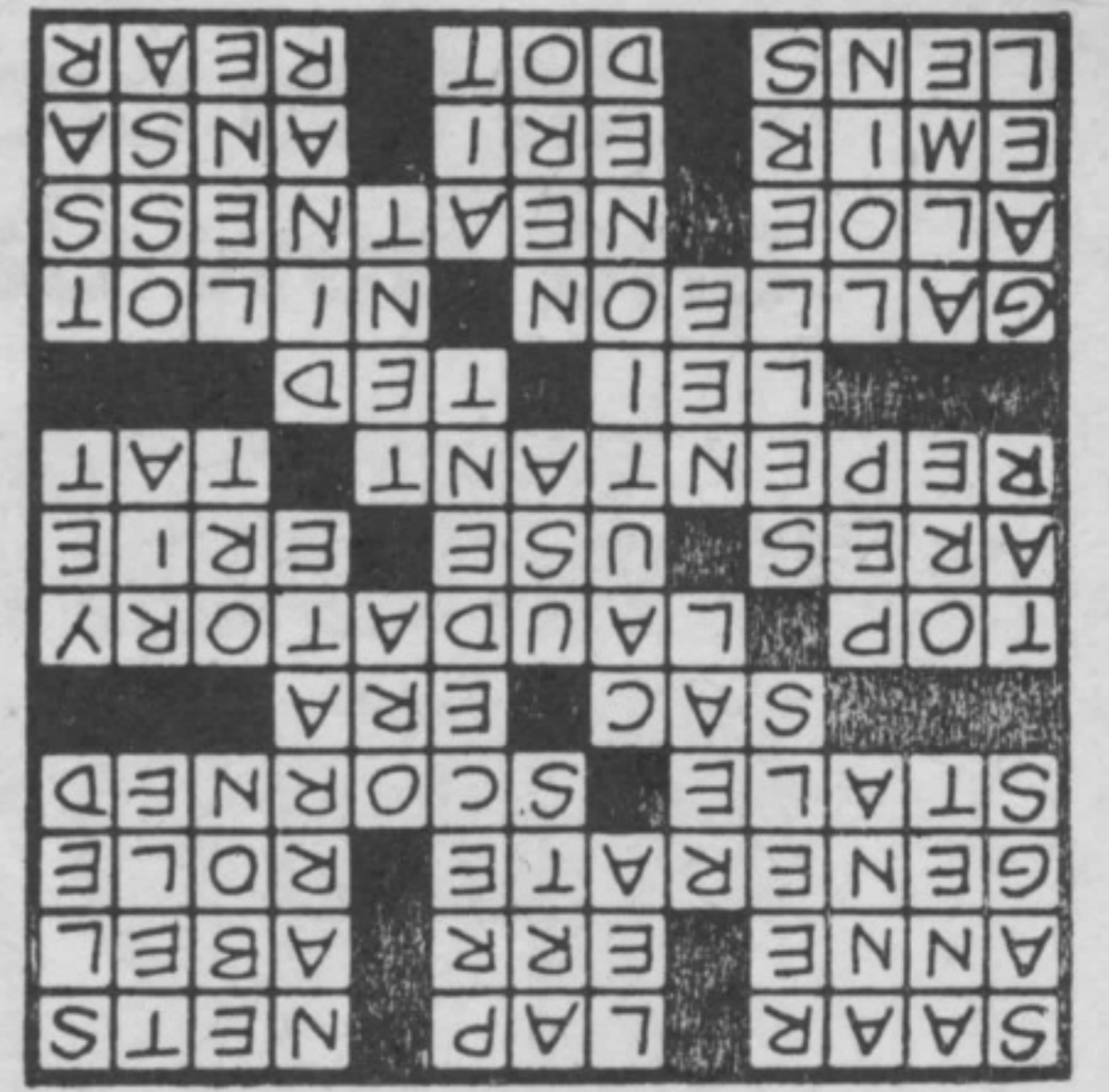
I listen to my wife, who is not fighting with Mrs. Abenaki about who gets the fire next, to make dog soup.

And my March madness is gone. Try it.

SNOW CARNIVAL - Continued from page 1
Queen Marcia Hamilton and King Ted Brown, Jr.

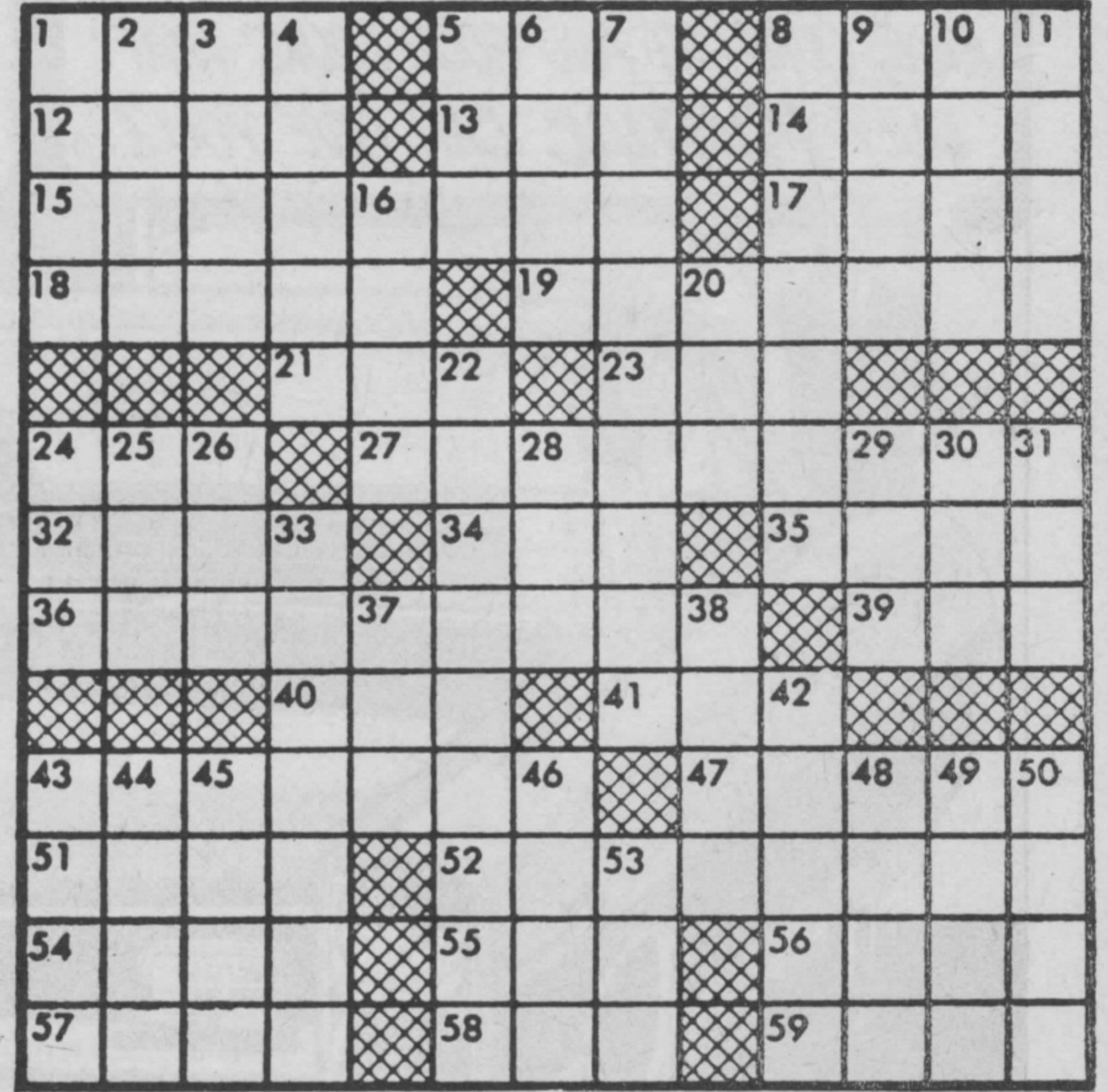
GUIDE ASSOCIATION MEETING NEXT WEEK
The Local Association to Guides & Brownies will meet on Monday, March 28th at 8.15 in the Community Church Hall. All Guiders are especially asked to be present.

- ACROSS**
- District in Germany
 - Once around track
 - Openwork fabric (pl.)
 - Girl's name
 - Be mistaken
 - Son of Adam
 - Produce
 - Part in play
 - Vapid
 - Derided
 - Algonquian Indian
 - Period of time
 - Cover
 - Praise-worthy
 - War god
 - Employ
 - Great Lake
 - Penitent
 - Make lace
 - Hawaiian wreath
 - Spread for drying
 - Early sailing vessel
 - Native Egyptian
 - Century plant
 - Tidiness
 - Arabian chieftain
 - Silkworm
 - Handle
 - Part of camera
 - Speck
 - Hind part
- DOWN**
- Sinks in middle
 - Dillseed
 - Girl's name
 - Walks unsteadily
 - Meadow
 - Academic subjects
 - Preceding
 - Tell
 - Black
 - Prefix: distant
 - Winter vehicle
 - Actual
 - Anglo-Saxon money
 - Warned
 - Sailor (colloq.)
 - Native metal
 - Vigor (colloq.)
 - Land of the free (init.)
 - Worthless leaving
 - Inlet
 - Still
 - Dealers
 - Born
 - Temporary shelter
 - Unit of Yugoslavian currency
 - Irishman
 - Egyptian singing girl
 - Cut of meat
 - Roman tyrant
 - Unaspirated
 - Mountain in Greece
 - Former Russian ruler
 - River island



SOLUTION

- 43-Irishman
- 44-Egyptian singing girl
- 45-Cut of meat
- 46-Roman tyrant
- 48-Unaspirated
- 49-Mountain in Greece
- 50-Former Russian ruler
- 53-River island



FOR HIS OLD AGE

AND THEN THERE'S THE MAN, aged eighty-four, who is saving his old-age pension for his old age.

One used sno-bug \$125

One 1966 Demonstrator ski doo 14 H.P. \$735

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MOTOR BIKES AND EXPECT
TO RECEIVE SOME SHORTLY.
INQUIRIES ARE INVITED.

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SALES
SCHREIBER - ONTARIO
PHONE 499