CROSS-WISE

Turbulent Scene

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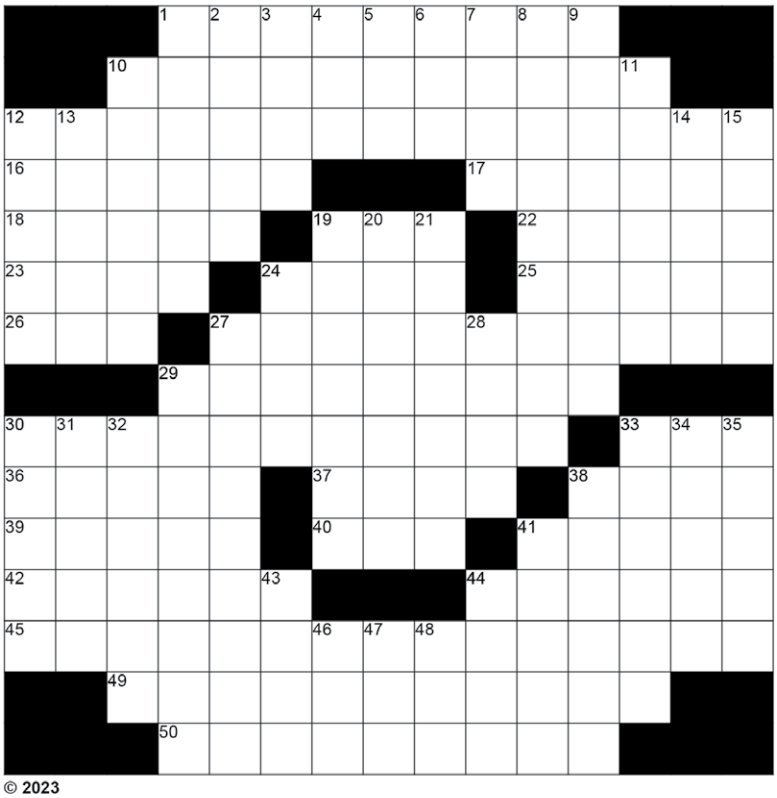

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ACROSS

1. Lady Miss Kier or Lady Gaga
10. What happened to India in 1947
12. Come down in buckets
16. Some refrigerators and dishwashers
17. Get off
18. DiCaprio's Juliet
19. Marilyn portrayer in "Blonde"
22. School board?
23. ___ Lacoste
24. Repulsive fare
25. "Punk poet laureate" Smith
26. Marks, as a ballot
27. Area of diffluence in the atmosphere
29. Radii x 2
30. "Father knows best," e.g.
33. Debugging experts?: Abbr.
36. Highly proficient
37. Neighbor of an Estonian
38. [I'm just a kitty, but I'm going to scare you anyway!]
39. Truck in Tottenham
40. Hot time in Paris
41. Word with guard or roll
42. Military flotilla
44. Popular jeans brand of the 1980s
45. Type of shear instability that often leads to 38-Down
49. Times of yore
50. FedEx concerns

DOWN

1. Awarded zero stars, say
2. Pod creatures
3. Mom-and-pop orgs.?
4. Directive to a boxer
5. Part of FWIW
6. Actress Long or Vardalos
7. Gamelan member
8. Nourishment for a plant embryo
9. Things that may pop up on a bad date
10. Spots for benched players?
11. Hungarian-American conductor Antal
12. Layer that comprises the bottom fifth of the atmospheric boundary layer
13. Knock the socks off of
14. Bug
15. Buzz up, maybe
19. Like a bunch of bull?
20. Small stationery item
21. Mineral that sounds hungry
24. Joan : Catalan :: ___ : Irish
27. What your lazy roommate left again in the sink, perhaps
28. Hinge (upon)
29. Corrupts, in a way
30. ___ paneer
31. Really fancy
32. Periodically
33. Things your ears and Amsterdam have in common
34. "Not gonna!"
35. ___ con pollo
38. See 45-Across ... and they are evoked by the black squares in this puzzle
41. What you may put a pedal to the metal for
43. Against from the start?
44. Agents from 33-Across, for short
46. Groovy
47. Hemming-and-hawing word
48. Caustic cleaner

See page 912 for the answers to this puzzle.

Which brings us to today's main idea. In these writings, bracketing more than two millennia, we see civics defined as the study of the rights and obligations of citizens in *society.* In this view, society is the platform of interest. The rights (think *life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,* for example) and the obligations are considered in this context alone. Even with this constraint, the complexities are daunting—the subject of continuing examination, interpretation, and vigorous, even violent debate. Questions of ethics and morality quickly arise; considerations of so-called natural law (think, for example, the Golden Rule) and (for some) God's law can come into play.

What's missing? Explicit incorporation of a different set of natural *laws.* Truth is, civics is lived out on a finite planet: a planet with generous but limited natural resources; a planet featuring fierce extremes of flood and drought, earthquakes, volcanism, and more; and a planet that at the same time is proving troublingly fragile—easily and sometimes irrevocably damaged by societal actions and decisions, however well-intended. History provides examples of civilization decline resulting from societal failure to account for environmental realities. To list a few: Mesopotomia struggled to cope with the soil salination resulting from irrigation. Here in the United States, the Anasazi people and other contemporaneous cultures wilted under the pressures of the so-called Great Drought. Just as Covid has rocked today's world, the Great Plague of Athens (40 B.C.) damaged Greek fortunes and changed the course of world history. Climate change and pandemics emphasize that the scale of today's geocivics is truly global.

Citizens of ancient Sparta might be forgiven for overlooking the role of nature in human affairs, but not the societies of today. Perhaps the twenty-first-century preoccupation ought to be **Geocivics—the study of the rights and obligations of citizens in society on a generous-but-finite, dangerous-but-fragile Earth.**

Integrate the study of civics and the geosciences in public schools? Natural for educators to see this idea as cringeworthy. (*Our communities are already upset with us, Bill. And these two topics are each controversial in and of themselves. Combine them? Yeah, right. What could possibly go wrong?*)

But the Earth is emotionally detached, unmoved by any consideration of love, or hate, or rights, or responsibilities. Any beneficence or malfeasance of human beings the planet accepts without question. It doesn't judge. In response, the planet simply does "what it's gotta do." It obeys laws of motion, conservation of energy, entropy imperatives and the like. No amount of human intervention can stay the drought or the flood, the cold spell or the heat wave. Yet civics can change the *societal outcomes*—reducing the death, injury, property loss, economic disruption, environmental degradation. And civics can accomplish this most effectively when it incorporates geoscience. Earth's inexorable response to human actions and ability to dominate human affairs just might focus minds, shift attention from squabbling over abstractions to common search for coping strategies.

It is likely too much to expect that this sobering terrestrial context would dampen or civilize (there's that root word again) the disagreements that polarize nations and peoples in any short term. But it would take the educational high ground: realism. It would put the emphasis on the needed societal actions. Over time, it might drive us to pay more attention to our sacred responsibilities to others and to our planetary habitation. It might renew interest in civics more broadly. By such means, it might improve the prospects of our children and grandchildren. Which brings to mind a closing quote:

> **"The goal of life is living in agreement with nature."**
>
> **—Zeno of Citium**

Answers to the puzzle on page 904.