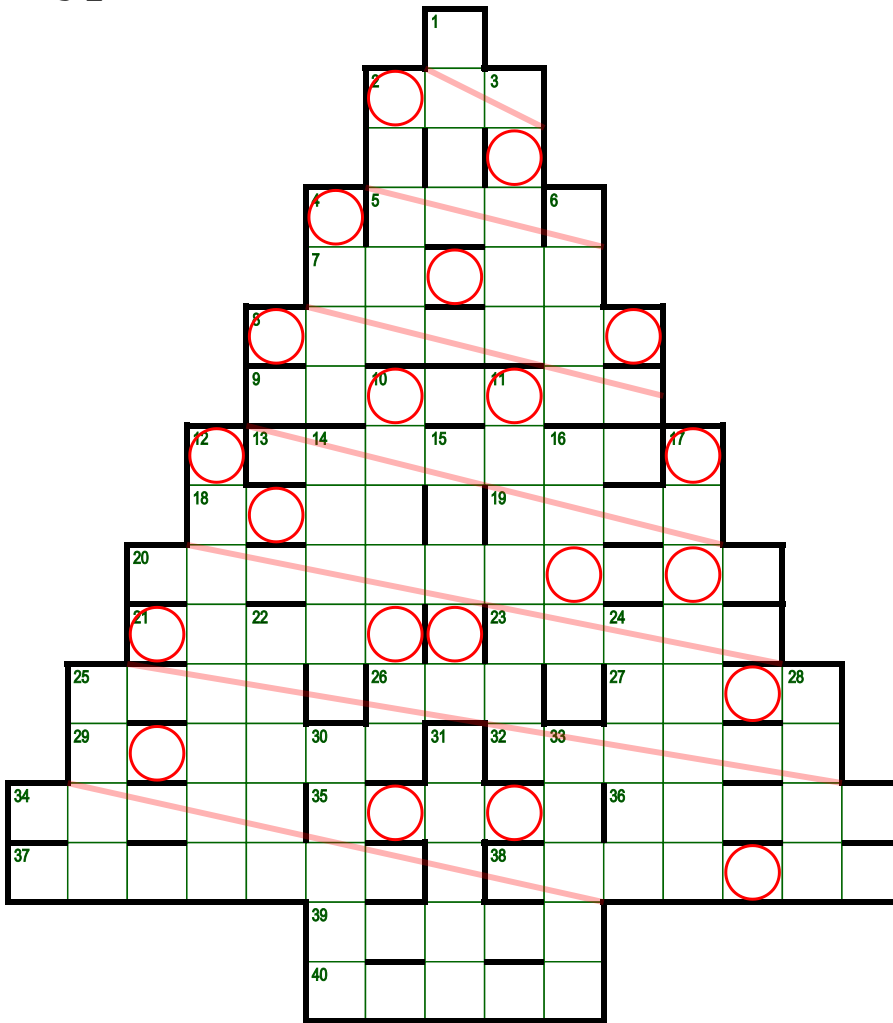


Cryptic Tree 2022-12

Darren Miller



Across:

- 2 Blubber like some grandfathers (3)
 5 At first blush, its recipient returns man's first gift to wife (3)
 7 Turbulent, boundless passion in the spring (5)
 8 Comic prince's cask hides round spike (7)
 9 Sir, step around the good fathers (7)
 13 Shut up, silly! Confections have no cost? (7)
 18 Doesn't keep heartless androids (4)
 19 Drops off daughter and son near New Orleans (4)
 20 Athletic husband holds metal in a trying place (7,4)

- 21 Turns toward quirky cafes (5)
 23 Lay it out in the country (5)
 25 Westbound trains to Monaco travel to Paris unaccompanied (4)
 26 Somewhat content with finger count (3)
 27 Bad ref drops bottoms, gets naked (4)
 29 Large mobs of extremely hormonal brides (6)
 32 Finely shredded like a kid's movie (6)
 34 Scoundrel to go back in regret (5)
 35 Losing scent at first, Ed's dog runs after duck (5)
 36 Visionary takes wife: a seamstress, perhaps (5)

- 37 Unconventional, unmanliest man leaves something useful (7)
 38 US leader loses ID here (7)
 39 Even stoic Adrian has sparkling headwear (5)
 40 Finally going North to South, Nolan comes back to a fashionable establishment (5)

Down:

- 1 People giving gifts are rummaging within (4)
 2 Spooner's unusual autumn was wild (5)
 3 Unfortunately, I bit a bone (5)
 4 Romeo, O Romeo, have a cry (4)
 6 Woman left twins distraught? On the contrary (3'1)
 10 Demands parts of 6D (7)
 11 Intoning of evil spirit at midnight (7)
 12 First attempt to turn lair around (5,3)
 14 Playful creature gets onto the ark oddly (5)
 15 Railing at swamp on borders of Chile (5)
 16 Governor Thomas has a point (5)
 17 Hermits skin bison and steal bananas (8)
 22 Primarily ciphers or data encrypted somehow! (5)
 24 Hear a low voice become lower (5)
 25 Picture a slug of booze (4)
 28 Beautiful garden located entirely inside (4)
 30 Tidies messes after I leave some changes (5)
 31 A deli exploded? That's perfect! (5)
 33 Tried again, but reparations didn't include patios (5)