

Puzzle #210 — December 2018 "Merry Christmas "

Instructions: Guess the words defined by the cryptic clues (answers vary in length from three to nine letters, and nine are capitalized), then enter them in the grid one after another in the same order as their clues, starting in the upper left corner. Across words that don't end at the right continue on the next row, and down words that don't end at the bottom continue in the next column. Seven across words and six down words won't fit in the grid unless one of their letters is removed. Those thirteen letters, taken in order as they occur in across and down words, spell a message related to the title and the mystery entries. Thanks to Kevin Wald for test-solving and editing this puzzle.

Across

1. *Mystery entry*
2. Instrument art is improved
3. Latrine is refurbished for dependent
4. Child has to beg for a barrel
5. Genuine increase without a breakdown
6. Habitat of whomever
7. Nine are about imminent
8. Wife in haste gushed forth
9. Spun cobwebs will cover a very strange person
10. Nice report about a parrot's beak
11. Ban turned bat eggs
12. Amartya's oddly stern
13. None yearn for judge
14. Wears a ring around an outer garment
15. California has nothing Mexican for our northern neighbor
16. Republican in most awful rage
17. Festering sac is on chest
18. Temporary shelters with excellent views
19. Measure of new crime around town
20. Sail off by eastern passageway
21. Hopes of retaining coin
22. Mix of plaster and glue goes illegally around school
23. Unsafe, erratic NE cruise
24. Endlessly polish bone
25. *Mystery entry*

Down

1. A tense, troubled council
2. Rustic noodles filled with golden liquid
3. Restored Doric or Roman leader's hall
4. Spirit of engine failing with one nail lost
5. Two nephews separately engaged in quiet expiation
6. Eye scattered tears
7. Seed coat's bad taste
8. Old western is mentally sound about heroin
9. Refuse to cook a stew
10. Egyptian goddess exists twice
11. Article on display in Parthenon
12. Rod has degree and weight
13. Having to do with sound of rattled coins
14. Smell from cracked door
15. Residue of soda pop clinging to Yalie
16. The natural order that attracts one initially
17. Brother abandons crazy cubism for song
18. Unit of magnetic flux distorted slate
19. Lake: a scene that's blurred
20. Pierce small fruit
21. Recognized wonk poisoned with nitrogen
22. Mae & I disturbed composer Maillart
23. Damn dogs start to eruct
24. Count claims son altered agreement