

Hints for Puzzle "Lighten Up"

Parentheses around a clue mean that a letter must be omitted from the answer before it will fit in the grid. Numbers in parentheses indicate lengths of answers. An asterisk * indicates a capitalized word, a raised ^l an initialism, and a raised ^v a variant spelling.

Across

1. (Offered no wisdom about concealing curiosity) (6)
2. Put a tape around breast (4)
3. Closest eastern routing (7)
4. *Brew with a head of cream; Guinness, for instance (4)
5. Impression of female group (6)
6. (Girth of central fireplace) (6)
7. (Ingenious child lifter) (6)
8. Concern about Democratic framework (5)
9. Conscientious objector in prison dissected an arachnid (8)
10. Grounds and miles covered by flying scaup (6)
11. *Mystery entry* (6, 5)
12. *Seaport songs and sea airs started (6)
13. (Deal with rash originating in nipple) (5)
14. Viper shot at foot of giant shrub (6)
15. *(Retrospective look for French name for 60s rock band) (7)
16. Control of turbulent stream (6)
17. Harvest of Empire apples (4)
18. Challenge missile losing time to acquire energy (4)
19. Sector surrounding new sports center (5)
20. (After end of trials, purse is even) (5)
21. *The Birds* in travesty (4)
22. Young woman in game getting trounced (6)

Down

1. Small, flat disk of iron found in battle (5)
2. Official start of nationals, in general, is 1st of February (6)
3. (Sound of raspy-voiced mammal) (5)
4. Ill paid to carry old feet (5)
5. ^vRaja's wife managed with ease, so to speak (5)
6. Increase in power is exciting (4)
7. (Save cracked urn) (4)
8. (Partly covers the distance in Russia) (5)
9. Pet company's ready to begin (6)
10. (Head off state tax initiation) (5)
11. Clean out a cistern or receptacle (8)
12. DNA's altered to include thymine as base (5)
13. Claim losing one dollar (4)
14. Endless feast fit for a king (5)
15. Join German actor George (5)
16. Showy, quavering tenor holds 440 Hz note (6)
17. Mule ridden by retired primate (5)
18. ^lFederal funding agency's part in nine arrests (3)
19. Spice club (4)
20. Climax after small talk (5)
21. *(Continental origins of all southern Italians and Neapolitans) (5)
22. Rude lout keeps 200 hidden (6)
23. (Complain about tree) (6)
24. Thread of failure and defeat (5)
25. (To interfere with marketing at first made Peter sell) (6)