

# CROSSROADS

CROSSROADS Language Studio's Newsletter September, 2022

## Dance 'Til You Drop?

About a hundred years ago, the world was just recovering from two devastating disasters, the First World War and the Spanish Flu pandemic. Collectively, these two calamities cost the world about 100 million lives. People were eager to leave these horrors behind as quickly as possible. And so was born the era of the "Roaring 20's."

Americans, especially, were eager to break free from the moral and social constraints of the past and to enjoy all that life had to offer. Women smoked, drove cars and enjoyed liberties society had previously denied them. Unmarried couples danced openly in public and everyone drank alcohol despite prohibition. This spirit of hedonism gave birth to the jazz era and dance crazes like the Charleston.

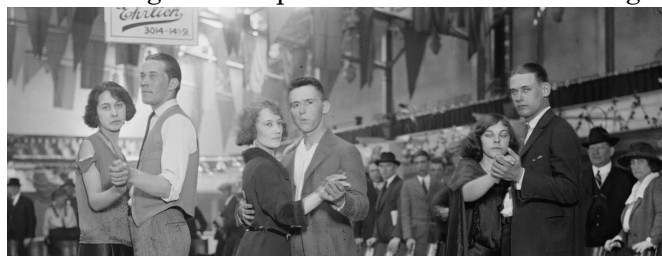
In addition, the recent revival of the Olympics created an obsession with world records and endurance events from marathon footraces to more bizarre events like flagpole sitting where participants would compete to see who could sit on top of a flagpole the longest.



But perhaps the most extreme craze of the Roaring 20's was the dance marathon. It was started in 1923 by New York dance instructor, Alma Cummings. What inspired Ms. Cummings to waltz around Manhattan's Audubon Ballroom for 27 hours straight, going through no less than six dancing partners along the way, is anyone's guess, but her performance caught on fast and within three weeks, her record had been broken no less than nine times in various locations across America. It followed that dance marathon events started popping up all over the country and soon took the form of competitions for prizes.

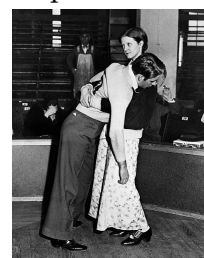
The basic rules were simple. Contestants didn't need to be good dancers, but they had to stay on their feet and continually move. As soon as one partner's knees touched the floor, they were eliminated. Contestants were given 15 minutes every hour to rest, use the bathroom, eat meals and even have their feet massaged, but as soon as the 15 minutes were up, it was back to the dance floor.

While dancing, contestants would often carry out normal daily tasks such as writing letters (their partner's back would suffice as a desk), reading the newspaper, even shaving (with a mirror hung around their partner's neck) and some contestants even managed to sleep on their feet while "dancing".

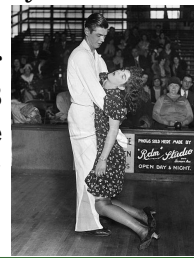


These grueling ordeals went on for days, weeks, even months. In 1928, Callum DeVillier and his partner Vonnie Kuchinski danced continuously for a mind-boggling 443 hours, almost 19 days! Then in 1931-32 they claimed the \$1,000 prize by enduring a staggering 157 days on the dance floor!!

These contests drew in huge audiences who would gawk at the dancers and cheer on their favorites. But the good natured fun, if it ever was, took on a much more sinister role during the 1930's depression years. During this period, life was tough. Many people lost their jobs and many became homeless. Entering a marathon at least allowed them a roof over their heads and a meal, as long as they kept "dancing". The competition for prize money became fierce and the stakes were high, very high. In the final hours of a marathon, it was not uncommon for contestants to collapse from exhaustion right on the dance floor. And there were even some deaths! The dance marathon had become a grotesque reflection of despair and desperation. Horace McCoy's 1935 novel



*They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* and later Sydney Pollock's 1973 movie of the same name, shockingly portrayed these bleak times.



## Net News

**NET LESSONS:** Too busy to come to CROSSROADS?

.... Try our *lessons on the net!*

Here is a YouTube video of couples dancing in a marathon:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iw1afR4mLv>

# Some Thoughts for the Month



**Joshua Says:** "There are ....., only interpretations," thus said Nietzsche, implying that we can never confirm the veracity of anything because our observations are biased interpretations greatly limited by, among other things, the language we use to think about the things we observe. It is easy to agree that the language spoken, even between native speakers, has limitations when it comes to understanding and expressing Truth. I wonder how much more this is the case with translation software?

**Junko Says:** Improve your listening skills! Amazon Audible will soon be available to all in the Open House. With Audible, you can listen to audio-books read by professional narrators. Numerous books are available in English and other languages covering many fields of interest. We are planning to keep selected books in Crossroads' Virtual Library for you to listen to. If you'd like to use the library, free, please ask me in the office.



**Marek Says:** The war in Ukraine continues to rage on, but thanks to continued support from European powers and the US, supplying much needed military equipment, the Ukrainian soldiers are able to break the impasse and successfully counterattack in the northeastern front, reclaiming vast areas of their land from the Russian invaders, and dealing a humiliating blow to the Russian army's strategy. Hopefully it will be the first in the series of significant victories that will bring this reckless conflict to an end.

**Mandcy dit:** Ça y est, les vacances sont finies. C'est la rentrée !! Fini la plage, les barbecues et les voyages. Maintenant, il faut étudier ou travailler. Pour ma part, je veux étudier le code de la route et passer mon permis de conduire. Pour préparer la rentrée, je suis allée chez le coiffeur et j'ai acheté des vêtements d'automne. Et vous, que faites-vous ? Et sinon, le mot du mois en France est "la sobriété", ça veut dire qu'il faut être économe. Ne pas utiliser la voiture pour aller acheter du pain. Éteindre toutes les lumières et ne pas prendre de longs bains. Il faut économiser l'énergie. Et vous ? Êtes-vous économe ?



## Play A Game!

Find the answers on P1

**ACROSS**

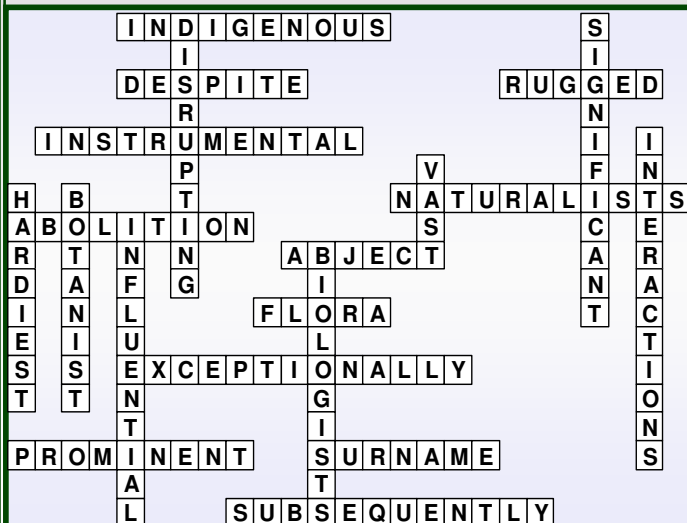
- 1 ability to withstand hardship
- 7 the pursuit of pleasure above all else
- 9 extreme loss of energy
- 11 people who take part in an event
- 16 forbidding the sale of alcohol
- 17 to bring back
- 18 to the point of exhaustion
- 19 look unintelligently in amazement
- 20 limits, bonds, restrictions

**DOWN**

- 2 events causing great loss
- 3 current fad, trend, all the rage
- 4 good enough
- 5 extremely unusual
- 6 completely destroying
- 8 removed from a race or contest
- 10 overwhelming, astonishing
- 12 severe, often painful experiences
- 13 distorted, unnatural
- 14 overcome with amazement
- 15 indicating evil ([print version here](#))

*A Euphemism is a “softer” way a saying something that may otherwise seem unpleasant or harsh. The following sentences use euphemisms to express certain ideas. See if you can “catch” the meanings.*

- My uncle has been in a **correctional facility** for the past 3 months.
  - A) complaints department at his company
  - B) hospital specializing in broken bones
  - C) prison
- My colleague is **feeling under the weather** and won't be coming to work today.
  - A) angry about the boss
  - B) sick
  - C) taking a day off because it's raining
- Her daughter is very **precocious**.
  - A) unintelligent.
  - B) shy.
  - C) badly behaved.
- Your friend's sister looks **well fed**.
  - A) healthy.
  - B) overweight/fat.
  - C) fed up with her job.
- His company **let him go** last week.
  - A) gave him a paid holiday
  - B) let him work on his own
  - C) fired him
- He's now **between jobs**.
  - A) unemployed.
  - B) working at two companies.
  - C) changing departments.
- Her dog was very old and sick so she had to **put it to sleep**.
  - A) give it some sleeping pills.
  - B) euthanize it.
  - C) pet it to comfort it.
- Their grandfather **passed away** three years ago.
  - A) died
  - B) left for a foreign country
  - C) gave his money to a charity



## Last Month's puzzle Solution

### ACROSS

- 1 native
- 4 regardless of
- 5 rough, uneven, rocky
- 6 helpful, influential,
- 11 people who study nature
- 12 do away with, end
- 14 most unfortunate, miserable
- 16 plant life
- 17 far beyond what is normal
- 18 standing out above others
- 19 family name
- 20 following in time or order

### DOWN

- 2 interfering, causing disorder
- 3 important in effect or meaning
- 7 reciprocal actions
- 8 to a great extent
- 9 most physically strong
- 10 a person who studies plants
- 13 having the power to effect
- 15 scientists who study living organisms



**Don't forget... Our SPECIAL 1+1 Campaign offer! Up to 50% off!!**

See our notice board, or ask Junko in our office, for the details.