

Further Reading (and Solving)

by Alex Vratsanos (supplement to his interview with Will Shortz)

- “Crossword Puzzle Challenges for Dummies” by Patrick Berry: Will called this book “the best book... that’s been published on the subject.” It contains many great puzzles to solve, and also has valuable advice on how to sell crossword puzzles. It is available at Amazon.com.
- Cruciverb, <http://www.cruciverb.com/index.php>: This website is a gold mine of resources, including the fundamental rules of constructing, a database containing over 18,000 puzzles from all major outlets, and a forum called Cruciverb-L, which can put you directly in contact with cruciverbalists and is free to join.
- XWord Info, <http://www.xwordinfo.com/>: This website beats Cruciverb in that it is more in-depth, is easier to use, is much more current, and goes back to *Times* crosswords before Will became Editor. Since the Fall of 2013, constructors and Will himself often comment on every new puzzle.
- ACPT, <http://www.crosswordtournament.com/>: The grandfather of all crossword tournament websites, this has a lot of information about the tournament, as well as pages about other crossword tournaments around the country, about the history of the crossword puzzle, and about Will.
- MGWCC, <http://xwordcontest.com/>: Gaffney’s puzzles are more than just puzzles—they are metapuzzles, which means there is another challenge for you to solve after you complete the crossword itself. He has posted a new puzzle there every Friday since 2008, and will do so until 2027, which will mark 1,000 weeks since he started.
- George Barany, <http://www.chem.umn.edu/groups/baranygp/puzzles/>: He teaches at the University of Minnesota and is a friend and collaborator of mine since April 2013. There are over 150 great and free-to-solve puzzles by a number of constructors, of which I am one (and you could be, too).
- 20 Under 30, <http://twentyunderthirty.com/>: This was a competition that saw 46 puzzles submitted for 20 spots. I was chosen as a winner, and you can buy a PDF book of the 20 puzzles for just \$5. They may have another such competition in the coming years.
- Crossword Compiler, <http://www.crossword-compiler.com/>: Constructor Nancy Salomon has called it “easily the best thing that has ever happened for crossword constructors.” I probably would never have become a published constructor without it; I can’t even begin to describe what it has meant to me as a crossword aficionado.
- Across Lite, <http://www.litsoft.com/across/alite/download/>: If nothing else on this list, look at Across Lite. Cruciverb’s Kevin McCann says “[t]wo thumbs way up. All online puzzles should be offered in Across Lite.” That says it all, except one thing more—it costs nothing to download!