

The Bridgian Herald

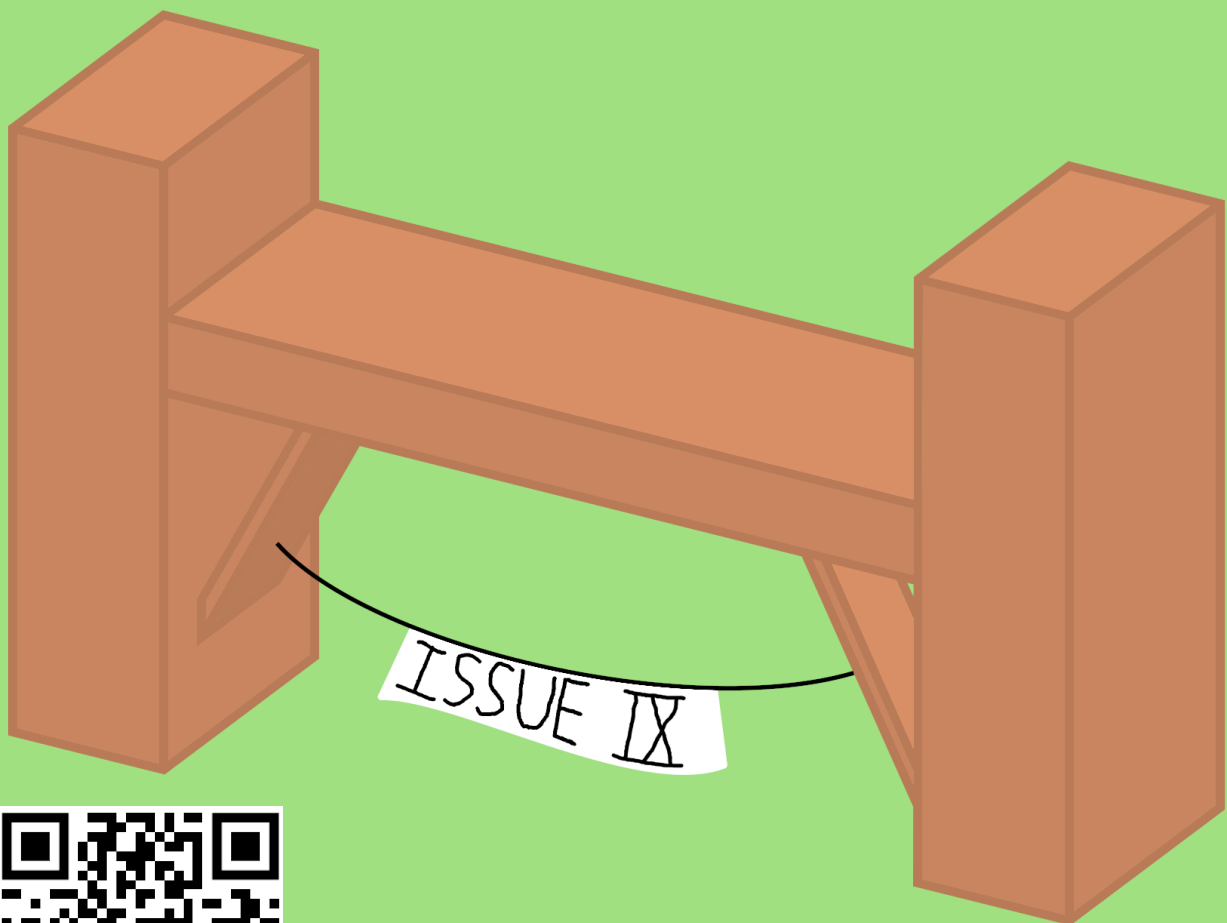
23rd September–20th October 2025

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Credits

Activities: Zachery

Articles: Zachery

Design: Zachery

Editing: Zachery

The Bridgian Herald

Initiated in November 2024 by the Bridge Base Foundation to ‘improve social cohesion and understanding in the School through the collectivisation of information.’ *Bísbbés taná!*

Whilst measures have been taken to ensure content-accuracy, it is possible that errors or omissions have been made. Feedback would be greatly appreciated to improve the *Herald* for all.

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Bridgian News

Half a Dueltree

The matter of “reduced membership”

DUELTREE

WHAT DOES the Foundation do when a Base is empty? Make a new one, of course, and wait for it to refill. Base φ , also known as Climber’s Base, in the region of Nārór, had been struggling ever since the *Group* “trimmed” the branches of the titular Tree and stole Table Point’s beams (see “Catabiosis”, *Issue 8*, 14th July). Of course, the Bridgians would be perfectly fine staying there, but they would also snap up easier alternatives that they find in the School.

Such was it when the Foundation hit upon Base μ , Dueltree Base, on the border between Bridgia and Gilnar – also known as ‘the two big trees by the car park’ to non-Bridgians. It was difficult to climb up at first, sure, but after ascending, one finds themselves atop a wide, flat branch extending out to a seating area, with a sneaky path around the back to a quieter lookout: King’s Seat.

Excited by the departure from Base φ , the *Group* appears not to have noticed that the tree is outside Senkaí’s borders and, therefore, in violation of their laws. This gradual relaxation of rules is typical due to their vague nature – the Bridgian definitions of the *ankai* are apparently too precise for Lintae – and the lax enforcement which the School follows. However, after an incident, the “laws” snap back to their start, and hang in sharpened focus for a moment. Then, they are forgotten about, the cycle repeats, *et cetera ad infinitum*.

Dueltree is likely to end in this very way, even if that will take some time to come into play. Its main use, at present, is as a staging point for excursions to Dthenden and Seldeth, two regions with historic, intensely opposing links to the Foundation. Climbing the tree is also a common activity, although competition has emerged for that space.

The main issue with constructing a true Base is the lack of interested people in the Foundation. Most prefer raiding to using the gathered materials, and building anything is a waste of time since, again, nobody is going to use it. The current policy is to wait until greater membership is obtained, keeping a good stock of items for this eventuality. In the meantime, Dueltree Mine provides a way to make a tangible impact on the physical landscape, namely by excavating under the main, flat branch.

It is fully expected that the Bridgians will move base again before settling into a constructive rhythm, as Base μ is not particularly conducive to plank-and-beam structures, except possibly across the branches of the Far Gilnar Tree. (The Foundation mainly occupies the more westerly Bridgia Tree instead.) However, gathering resources is more than half the effort in construction, so the presence is useful to enable any future activity.

The Treaty of Lenkaí, named after the same area that encompasses the western Dueltree, has seemingly fallen through completely, leaving only the tried and tested methods to acquire items for the Base. Whilst the riskier option, this is probably easier than the alternative, so the Bridgians may end up celebrating the rejection of the Treaty for the good of their old-fashioned ways. Conversely, the *Group* may catch on to this technique, causing everyone in Bridge Base to become reacquainted with the methods endorsed by the Head Guard.

Additionally, the Devious One, and the Head Guard to an extent, have obtained new duties upon joining the sixth-form portion of the School, some of which may overlap with the Bridgian times of break. This rekindles the fears of a dead Base evoked in the Great October Collapse and the β -Collapses, in a way that harbours urgency and digs at the hearts of seasoned members. There are still ways for this situation to improve, as it always has in the past, even if they may be difficult.

Typically, it is seen that Bridgian membership increases during the spring, then falls precipitously in autumn – *i.e.*, the decline in the base is a usual seasonal phenomenon. Anyway, even if the real Foundation falls apart over the next year, call it a success. That would mean the provision of much-needed activities for all the students at the School. Was that not always the mission of Bridge Base? ■

School News

The democratic dream

“Student leaders” commence their duties

LINTAE

IMAGINE A WORLD in which students control their own experience, by which the School fits the needs of all its users, and through which education is achieved not as a forced objective, but a willing pursuit. Participation would be greater, morale would be higher, and outcomes would be better under such a system. But the *Group* refuses to listen to such ideals – until now, we hope.

In mid-July, leaflets were sent out inviting any student at the School to apply for a roster of ‘leadership roles’: the pre-existing Council and Rights Respecting School (RRS) steering group, as well as eight ambassadors to promote different subjects. Included in the leaflet were initial commitments to each leader’s promoted subject. These included ‘digital’, ‘maths’, and ‘book clubs’, alongside ‘STEM activities’, ‘fitness challenges’, and ‘energy-saving’.

The *Group* announced their selections at a highly attended gathering on the 21st of July in the Assembly Room. Barring any exceptional circumstances, designates are expected to retain their roles for a year before the next round of applications commences. The newly designated leaders were also given lanyards that indicate their position (or positions, in the case of some) for others to see.

And so the meetings began. On the 9th of September, the subject promoters and RRS steering group both convened in the east of Lintae during the early morning. These refined the aims of the teams more exactly, letting each role be tailored more exactly to the students’ desires. Each promoter, for example, received a questionnaire in which they outlined their plans for the School over the next year. Included was a request for an activity day, presumably like those from the last term, so at least eight of these can be expected over the year.

Student Council started on the 16th, primed by an internal inspection from the School’s parent company, with students being invited to assess its strengths and weaknesses. Representatives largely agreed that bullying, for instance, was not a major issue at the School (certain Bridgian events notwithstanding), and that students had an adequate say in decision-making. Ironically, the meeting was noticeably lacking in such decision-making; hopefully, the pace will pick up a bit over the year.

One interesting note is the method by which the leaders are selected. Rather than being elected by the students that they represent, the *Group* picks the leaders unilaterally from the applicants. Some would balk at the potential for manipulation, as Entêkaí could specifically pick candidates that were supportive of them. On the other hand, recall the election for the ‘school president’ two years ago. Without a suitable official standing, the contest devolved into voting by personal affiliation rather than effective policy. The *Group*’s system of appraisals is clearly superior to this, although more consideration in the decisions would be better.

The purpose

What are the student leaders actually to do? More exactly, what can they accomplish that cannot be achieved by the pre-existent Council? The answer to this question is simple: they are to identify and enact targeted improvements, specifically for their subject. Student Council, meanwhile, focuses on wider, more systemic issues that require additional input from the School’s community. The Devious One, as a more “specialised” representative, is tasked with fostering engagement in mathematics and helping other students via a new maths club. He is also on the Student Council, as are many of the other leaders, fulfilling a wider role as well.

Think of this as a single national government versus an array of smaller, local governments – one tackles the larger problems that local polities are ill-equipped to deal with; each other fine-tunes its *métier* to make it more efficient, better managed, and well-fit to its unique needs. Essentially, the Council is Westminster, and a leader is your local borough council. (By that token, the *Group* must correspond to the monarchy. Hopefully it will be more constitutional than absolute after this!) →

Both types of leader are needed in tandem to manage and optimise the School's functions fully, as the *Group* no doubt learned when running with only Student Council. The presence of student leaders will improve management's effectiveness and synergise the operations of their respective subjects. Nonetheless, members of the Council should offer guidance to the subject leaders (and *vice versa*) to coordinate policies between teams.

The new *régime* appears already to be bearing fruit, too. The department for physical education has gained crucial resources that were previously lacking, by the will of the "Sports Captain". The "Drama & Arts Leader" has spearheaded the long-running campaign for a real drama budget. Finally, the "Maths Challenge Champion" has designed questionnaires for their mathematics club, which are being distributed as this issue goes to print. A lot of the promises that were made in July have yet to be availed, although that is hardly unexpected two weeks after the start of the administration.

The true confirmation of the scheme's success will be when (or if) initiatives are introduced outside the scope of the *Group's* mandates. That would show a clear commitment to expanding the influence of students at the School, leading to a fairer environment to learn in. It is, incidentally, also in the Foundation's objectives to increase its representation, to whatever end they please. But seriously, let us wait and see what the School is like a year from now – and for its end users' sake, make this establishment remain, so the *Group* hears us. ▀

Anmae ,ing fae-sà?

An evaluation of students' influence

ANETERNAL MAXIM of the Foundation goes thus: 'Entèkaí's only priority is its reputation.' As a prime exposé of this, take the First β -Collapse. Some say it was due to the instability of the Front Tyre Wall, the exclusion of the rules-based system at the time, or the chaos caused by the Bridgians in the Meeting Room. The *Group* saw all this, clearly, and decided to destroy Gilnar.

But all these arguments have one of two fatal flaws: either the problem started a long time prior, like the Wall, or it was so minor as to be imaginary, such as *Bridge Base Rules & Appendices*. The date of the event, the 29th of June, gives it all away. The *Group* was trying to hide evidence of the Base from any visitors to Inbepan's sports-day. Despite this, the tyres were left as a pile, highlighting the haste with which the manoeuvre was executed. This led to a temporary revival in the "Courtyard", although the Second β -Collapse soon followed.

And now we have Entèkaí promising a new government of 'student leaders', with powers that seem rather unlike their usual stance. It has, of course, garnered support from the student body, but might it be too good to be true? Might this scheme simply be a front to oppression behind the scenes? Might the leaders go the same way as the student president? One would hope not, but such things are never certain in *Bishkaí*. Typically, they are given outsize capabilities for the first month to allay any concerns, which are dropped soon after for the convenience of the *Group's* management.

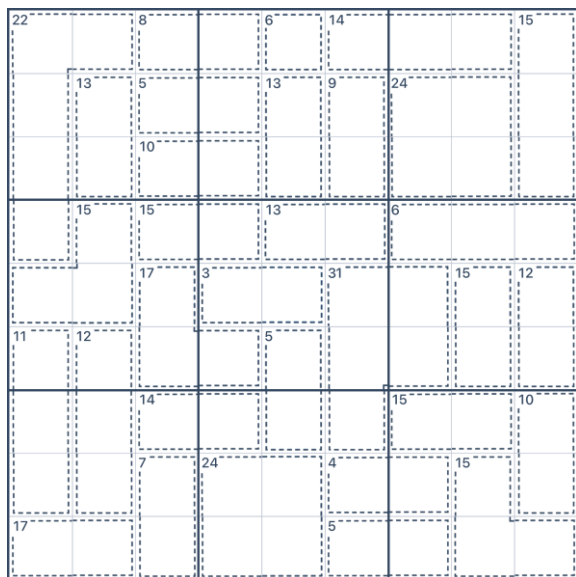
Another worry is that the new leaders may be used to direct attention away from their other failings. The former playground in Lintae, which has plagued School politics for years, has seen a noticeable slowdown in progress over the past months – this, though, can still be explained by the holidays. Environmental studies were begun two months ago but there appear to have been no more surveys conducted recently. Even so, the School is known to hide clear information behind locked doors, so events may be taking place, just in the background.

However, over the past year, Student Council and its sister organisation, the Rights Respecting School steering group, have achieved many great things. The turf on the Tennis Courts, campaigns against littering, the introduction of the Wellbeing Hub – all these would not have been possible without student input. Students are not especially good at assessing the sensibility of their proposals, but some have still been realised in a good way.

Now with the 'student leadership' scheme (see previous article), students have more abilities than ever before. This year could turn out to be better still, or it could make the *Group's* failings obvious to all. Which one is theirs to decide. ▀

Activities

Killer Sudoku



Instructions

Fill each square with a digit from 1–9, such that the squares within each dashed cage add up their respective total in the top-left. No digit may be repeated in a row, column, cage, or 3×3 box.

The puzzle is considered complete when there is a digit in all cells, following the above rules. There is only one possible solution given the initial clues, which should be reached using a logical approach for the maximum chance of success.

(Hint: consider the limited sets of possibilities of digits for cages of each size and total. Additionally, note that the digits 1–9 add up to 45 – this can be used to manipulate totals between cells.)

Maths Challenge

A group of scientists counted the number of plants of *Reynoutria japonica*, an invasive species, that were present in a greenhouse on the first day of each month between April and October:

1 2 7 24 53 98

Level 1 (easy)

Compute the mean rate of spread, in plants per month, between June and October.

Level 2 (medium)

Plot a labelled graph of the number of *R. japonica* plants between April and October, drawing a line of best fit to estimate November’s number of plants.

Level 3 (hard)

Suggest a possible factor which would make your extrapolation invalid, explaining the effect this would have on the true number of plants in November.

Level 4 (expert)

Compute a polynomial (degree 3) line of best fit by minimising the total variance from the data in the sequence, $\Sigma(ax^3 + bx^2 + cx + d - y)^2$, where x starts at 0 in April. Do not use trial and error.

Bonus challenge: compute the exact value of all the coefficients a, b, c, d , and use this to calculate the exact rate of spread of *R. japonica* in mid-May.

Solutions to all previous Maths Challenges can be found on the Foundation’s website, accessible via the adjacent QR-code.



Hypogram



Last issue's answers

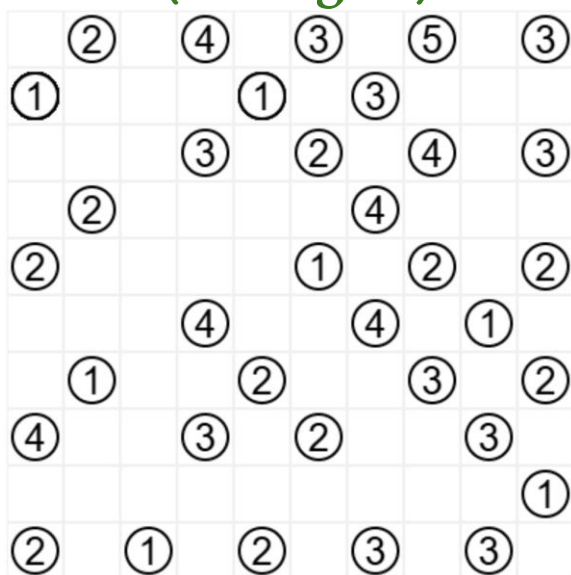
An, ha, arc, bah, ban, bar, bra, cab, can, car, nab, nah, ran, arch, bach, barn, bran, carb, carn, char, crab, ranch, branch.

Instructions

Find as many words as possible using some or all the letters above in any order, excluding proper nouns, plurals, and adverbs ending in '-ly'. Letters may not be repeated unless they appear multiple times above.

Scores for this puzzle: moderate = 4, good = 8, excellent = 12, mastering = 16 words found.

Hashi ("Bridges")

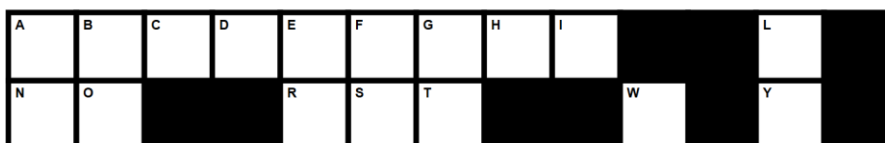
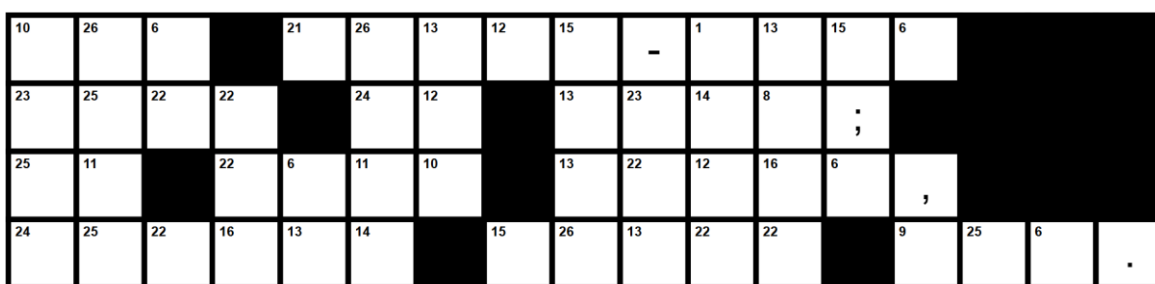


Instructions

Connect the ringed cells by bridges such that each cell has the indicated number of bridges connected to it. Bridges may only be horizontal or vertical, and cannot bend, cross another bridge, or pass over ringed cells. Cells can also be linked by double bridges (drawn as parallel lines), which count as 2 for the cells they connect.

The puzzle is considered complete when all cells have their requisite quantities of bridges connected (but no more), and the cells are linked by a single network of bridges – no disconnected islands allowed.

Codeword



Instructions

Each letter from A–Z is replaced by a random number in the range 1–26. Crack the code to reveal the hidden message. The puzzle is considered complete when all the letters are filled out following the key, and the message is correct – i.e., makes sense. (Tip: some letters are more common than others; use this to make first guesses.)