Adalogical Ænigmas
No. 49
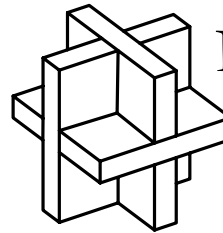
Pavel's Puzzles

High-quality mechanical and logic puzzles, direct from the designer!

http://www.pavelspuzzles.com

Gentle solver,

One hears often of late that "we live in *uncertain* times," but truly, is it not likely that the same sentiment has been expressed by many or even *most* people, at all times in history? I myself hold no immunity to the anxieties of uncertainty, and yet I am *comforted* somewhat by the realization of their timeless, universal quality.

I pray that the uncertainties of this ænigma will bring you some enjoyment, and relief from those of the world at large.

In the grid below, please blacken some of the *lettered* squares such that all of these blackened squares form a single, horizontally and/or vertically connected group, and where no 2×2 region is *entirely* blackened.

Squares containing numbers or question marks hold *clues*, and may not be blackened. There is one clue for each distinct run of consecutive black squares *immediately* encircling the clue square, each specifying the precise length of one of those runs (in no particular order). Each question mark stands for a single number, greater than zero, but initially *uncertain* to you.

For example, a square containing the clues '1 2' would have exactly *three* black squares amongst the up-to-eight squares immediately encircling it: two adjacent to one another, and the other separated from those two by at least one white square.

Once you have completed your grid, you may move on to finding the final answer to my ænigma. Identify every square that has exactly *one* run of black squares surrounding it. Advance each such square's letter in the alphabet (wrapping around from Z to A if necessary) by the *length* of that run. Reading the resulting letters, left to right, top to bottom, will reveal a clue to your final answer.

Good luck!

Example

T + 1 = U
M + 1 = N
A + 4 = E
Y + 2 = A
R + 1 = S

C + 6 = I
L + 2 = N
Z + 5 = E
P + 3 = S
O + 4 = S

Answer: UNEASINESS

⑥