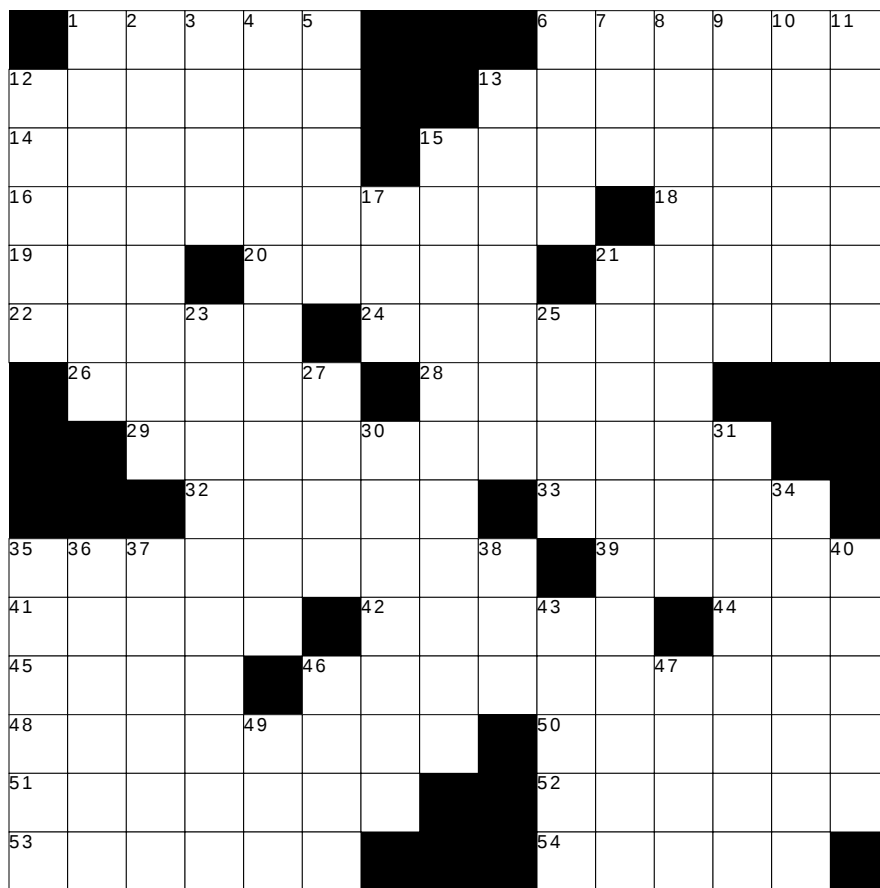


Across

- 1 Earliest leader of Thebes
 6 Takes a back seat, say
 12 Went for the gold, perhaps
 13 Flurry of phraseology
 14 Beyond budding
 15 They're "wet" with sauce and melted cheese
 16 TMI opposite
 18 Something positioned above a plate
 19 Four before O
 20 They're sweet
 21 Napoleon, for example
 22 Not-so-clever comeback
 24 Common late-spring mag recommendation
 26 Nickname of a mound or music great
 28 Put right
 29 "Shame!"
 32 Room ___
 33 No-win situations
 35 Modern wrinkle remover
 39 They may be mistaken for agaves
 41 ___ steak
 42 Hand holdings
 44 "I can be viewed without special formatting"
 45 Off the ___ (top-of-mind, not surprisingly)
 46 "...the preservation and ___ of their own liberties": Lincoln
 48 Pizzeria purchase
 50 Expected
 51 What 46-Across is
 52 It's 70 miles south



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- of Salem
 53 Combo with an ice scoop
 54 Pry away

Down

- 1 Pitching impediments
 2 Somewhat stronger "Right on!"
 3 Motorcycle Hall of Fame name
 4 Steelers' healers
 5 What a spot check takes care of
 6 Legendary ridiculing racer
 7 Olympic flag bearer at the Vancouver opening ceremony
 8 Kind of soup as a starter?
 9 Swift production of the 18th century

- 10 "Can't resist!"
 11 Fit together nicely
 12 US city with the Russian Bishop's House
 13 Pedagogic payees
 15 Utterly exhaust
 17 One of the Uranian Shakespearean moons
 21 Swift production of the 21st century
 23 What many American flags depict
 25 Given the go-ahead
 27 PowerPoint's F1
 30 Canvas constructions
 31 Multiply
 34 GPS ancestor
 35 Trip-taking need
 36 Social media slang evoking old-timey car horns

- 37 Put on low
 38 Disrespect metaphor
 40 Individuality
 43 Roll over
 46 Share on the Gram
 47 Word from the Latin for "drive"
 49 Rugby plastic accessory