Some Puzzle News by Ucaoimhu

(I) Yay! The tournament is celebrating a big anniversary!

(II) Boo! The Washington Post Hunt has been canceled; DC puzzlers will not be finding five clue numbers and a final clue. In commemoration, five Across clues have had their clue numbers omitted, and the final Across clue is missing (and its seven words have been replaced by [1] through [7] in the other Across clues).

(III) Yay! This July, the annual National Puzzlers’ League convention will be in Boston. In preparation, all Down answers will be altered before entry (altered entries include a two word phrase and part of an animal name):

**March** Four will shed their outer layer for spring.

**April** Four will fool you by swapping their first two letters — but then appending those letters in their original order to the end.

**May** Four will lose their hearts, leading to:

**June** Four will hold a wedding between the Morse codes for their last two letters (then translate the resulting code back into a letter and append it to the end).

**July** Four will have a “convention,” where two identical letters two apart convene — that is, move together and coalesce into just one such letter.

Finally, if you take the list of missing Across clue numbers, apply the missing last Across clue, write the resulting five-number list four times alongside the twenty Down clues, circle the nth letter of each clue where n is the number written alongside it, use the circled letters to fill in the blank in “Apply the five changes (March–July, in order) ________,” and follow the instruction that results, you will see what links all of these puzzle events.

**ACROSS**

1. Pretentious boy getting 2/7 of [2] area (2-2-2)
2. 2’s, 27, etc. obscuring a semicircular [7] covering the outside of Ned’s direction-reversing pipes (1-5)
3. [1]-eighths of a drachma Bo fit inside mold, barely (4)
4. Over five will be interrupted [3] this vacuous way of announcing oneself (2‘1 1)
5. Two disks that real creme ultimately has [2]! (4)
6. One women’s org. whose members are [6] based on their ancestors having fought the British for a lunar month (4)
7. Briefly, state where you’ll find Duluth couple that starts [5] wearing manganese (4, abbr.)
8. Eats hash [1]-five degrees away from there↑ (4)
10. [5] : alphas :: finally : these wild moas, e.g. (6)
12. Finished five hundred and [1], after losing thirty-nine (4)
13. Director Lee’s claiming reversal of rightmost third of [7] is infuriating (6)

**DOWN**

1. Say, put paste on the author with a dour expression
2. The poet who wrote *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* and, Strangely, on Ned
3. Doctor that is red is more dehydrated
4. Center of [2], controlled country (4)
5. Changed Tibet and Austria residents’ way to say “please” (6)
6. Earl goes after German and Ukranian, originally for no good reason
7. Fight with cross leader of ancient Greek city-state
8. Adoring look at that actor named Rhames
9. Letters that are Greek- and French-like
10. Mysterious Mo’s car bounces
11. Talked about a place where couples are made to change
12. Duo of brothers, in time, exhibits sound quality
13. Former ruler of Troy’s a Republican
14. An eating disorder of an old king near Iowa
15. A cry from those who try to begin heckling Queen Elizabeth I is in Spanish (2 wds.)
16. Penniless Dora has, sixthly, [6] “other” on a Cuban questionnaire (4)
17. Center of [2], controlled country (4)
18. Vocally make fun of what Tommy Tune has, [5]? (4)
19. That creature is going to [4] end of Tyrol to stop the Italian (2‘2)
22. On the list of presidents note a third part of [7] (6)
23. Piece of food left on a plate or tablespoon
24. Throw to untamed stoats (2 wds.)
25. Goldie ably conceals every other element of certain supporting tissues
26. First part of benevolent alien’s wager
27. With audible voice, howl “Thin whalebone!”
28. “Nil-nil” that’s accepted by flighty Hawaiian as a draw (hyph.)