



# Aha! Addict

A local math prof is also one of the nation's top puzzlers.

Jeremiah Farrell's fascination with puzzles hit him early—around age 12—and hard. As he approaches his 70th birthday, the Butler professor emeritus in mathematics works four or five crosswords a day, including those in *The Indianapolis Star*, *USA Today*, the *Chicago Tribune* and, of course, *The New York Times*. "I do every puzzle I see. I've been doing this all my life," he says. "It's very satisfying and very entertaining, and it requires no batteries."

But Farrell doesn't just work crosswords. He writes them, too. Thanks to the recent *Wordplay* book and movie, he's perhaps best known for his 1996 Clinton-Dole election crossword that appeared in a November *New York Times*. Multiple correct answers for the down clues enabled solvers to fill in either "CLINTON ELECTED" or "BOBDOLE ELECTED" in the 14-letter spaces at the crossword's center. And the main clue? "Lead story in tomorrow's newspaper!"

Though he's technically retired, Farrell still teaches mathematics and a special course on games, and he's active in the International Puzzle Party, the National Puzzlers League, the Games and Puzzles Organization, and Gathering for Gardner—an invitation-only group for the cream of the puzzle-constructing crop. Why is his mind always seeking puzzles to solve? That's one he hasn't yet cracked. "You see these things, and it's like someone waving a red flag or something," he says. "Why do you climb Mt. Everest? Just because it's there." —S.B.