The Big Apple
by Harth

Half the answers are too long (by two or three letters) to fit into the diagram. Before entering them, you will need to peel them (remove the first and last letter), or core them (remove the letters at the very center). The resulting entry will not usually be a word. Do not throw away the peels and cores! Put them in the compost pile below, to reveal, in alphabetical order, six reasons to say “I ♥ NY”. Three answers are capitalized. 13D is NI3, all other answers are 10C. 14A, 6D, 7D, and 27D are uncommon. Enumerations are withheld.

Across
1 To run fraudulent operation, politician returns
4 Covers much less ground, stopping short
8 Boat finally taking on load — that’s unusual
9 Criticize the Spanish judges
11 Out-of-focus cow in photograph — an alpine sight
13 Notes fever, not a state of exhaustion
14 In the end, seeks no approvals for thumpings of the nose
16 In Birds, he renders a part
18 Revolving un-star!
19 One new dog, completely (two words)
21 Strangely keen about pink oil
23 Insane Roman, essentially!
24 In a depression, a North Carolina hothead is sliding rocks
25 Speaker is one torn initially between two alternatives
30 Invert border in Spanish seal
33 Lack of processing is bad news in radium-sulfur compound
34 Skirt cat — tiptoe surreptitiously
35 A city to turn back, just the same
36 Shake an island
37 Was in olive drab clothing
38 Bolster dose of medicine before cry of pain
39 Unique and wild: expect a lion

Down
1 Young man finding TV brand name inside
2 Misspelling in O.E.D. word for tree
3 Shake and weep, then break last quartz (two words)
4 Early shows: vicious meanies host the opening
5 Join member of world organization?
6 Riding a child’s vehicle, U-turned
7 Nothing wrong about extremities of spine producing bone collagen
10 Break or hesitation for one doing renovation
12 Miner secure about bringing up small amount…
13 …small amount of pure refined carbon in New England
15 One thousand involved in unfortunate precontest mishap
17 At first, cassettes fall around reel-to-reel enthusiast
20 Archrival, née “Miss Chaos”, …
22 … zeroes in on thugs, violently
26 Explanation for a retail free-for-all taking over
27 Lithe Pat: “I care about a woodland plant:…
28 …yellow flower.” It sounds elegant and dishonest
29 Seeing nun without a head, you and I will get sick
31 His talent? Clueless, trite
32 Devour bird