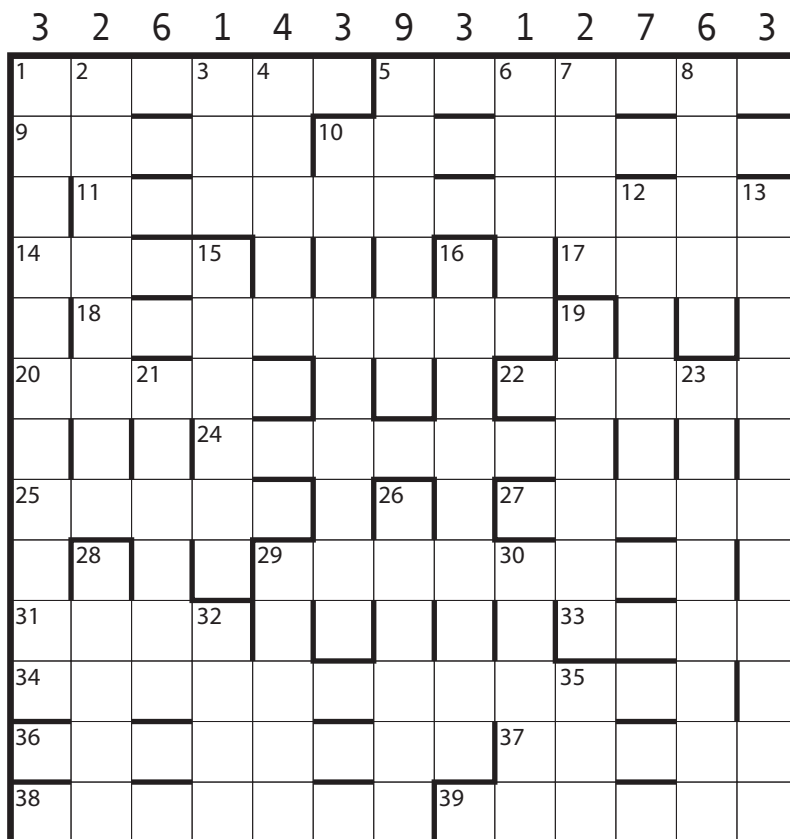


AFTER HOURS

by Mark Halpin

When the department store depicted in *Evening Primrose* closes for the night, its secret inhabitants emerge to live their confined, nocturnal lives. Evidence of their presence can be seen in this puzzle's grid, in which a number of store fixtures and furnishings have been disturbed from their original positions.

This disorder might suggest that at least one character is unhappily searching for something. From the initial letter of each of the store items seen in the grid, look upward the number of spaces indicated above it (not all numbers will be used). Reading the letters in those spaces left to right will reveal what's being sought.



ACROSS

- 1 Hopelessly belly-up after debuting low-tech invention
- 5 Most adroit G-man returned before trial
- 9 Visitor to Siam meeting new Peace Prize recipient
- 10 TV doc depicting judiciary almost entirely as excellent, yes? (2 wds)
- 11 Charming nuts fight duel about lady
- 14 Sculpted figure's elbow missing bit of glaze
- 17 Eroded soil is common rural sight
- 18 Rats John recalled infesting filthy abodes
- 20 Outspoken eccentric made appreciative noises
- 22 Overheard exclamation of surprise at the home of actor Milo
- 24 Monsoon is heading toward the interior in the near future
- 25 Fast time? No, ultimately rather slow
- 27 Humorous Milton passage written in amber letters
- 29 Soldier using sneak tactics is out of control, I'll argue (*variant spelling*)
- 31 Biblical scribe is last character seen in a long time
- 33 Pet name is fiancé's earliest expression of love
- 34 Superb detail becoming degraded and shabby-seeming
- 36 Drool, taking in nearly naked scene of writhing bodies?
- 37 Like a zombie or vampire or siren flying around
- 38 Mechanical engineers sketch some apparatus for a GI (2 wds)
- 39 Turn quite a bore about party for renowned French director
- 2 Louisiana town's first engulfed by disproportionate wave
- 3 Resinous substance Ripken turned up
- 4 Take no chances describing Methuselah's dad
- 5 Tony-winner Sandy did some awful things on the way to the top
- 6 Worries about guitar pieces
- 7 Star transposed pitches
- 8 Fifty percent of skunks ("Fifty?" "Fifty") head inside?
- 10 Well-known Texan fell apart displaying unsatisfactory quantity of produce
- 12 One trolling deep crevice in sound
- 13 Fond old aunts tidied room full of stray objects (3 wds)
- 15 Discards waste; for example, poorly-designed sets
- 16 Philosopher touting improvement to the world, or elitism, strangely
- 19 Getting grill cleaned out up front makes summer more jolly
- 21 Horse, not finishing, garnering no accolades
- 23 Come upon arrangement of tune in endless repeat performance
- 26 Brother's joke about university attended by yours truly
- 28 Breeziness permeating online publication? Just the opposite
- 29 Frat boy's grades initially really stink
- 30 Popular threesome forgetting one piece of music played early on

DOWN

- 1 Drink apace, wretched and in anguish (*hyph*)

- 32 Big boats' curved details discussed
- 35 Support opera before it closes