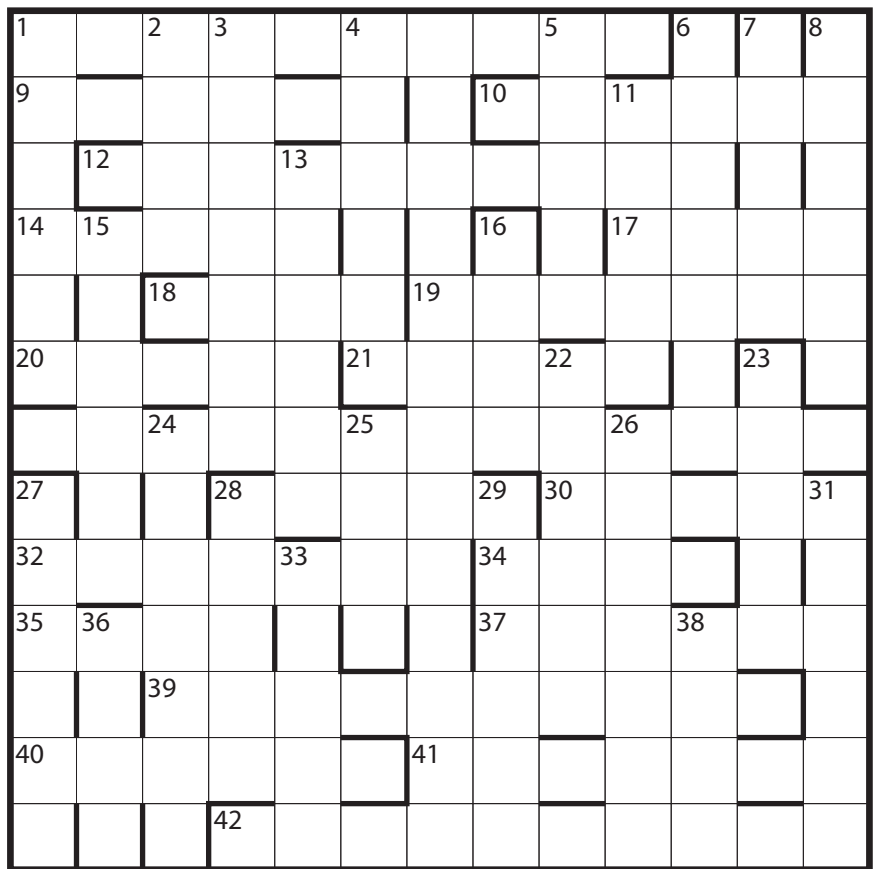


TRAGEDY TOMORROW...

by Mark Halpin

For now, laughter fills the air. And with good reason: there's a lot of funny business going on here. Two different apt modifications may affect answers being inscribed in the grid at right. The first and last letters of the clues for a certain set of answers, taken in an order to be determined, will spell out what has them rolling in the aisles tonight at the Forum.



ACROSS

- 1 Cleaning pans, maybe twisting rag in edges
- 9 Not oddly, we feel mice are more repulsively wriggly
- 10 Poke at ground somewhere in the Midwest
- 12 Idiosyncratic governor initially just sues veteran ... pathetic (2 wds)
- 14 Radical camp in Korean subdivision
- 17 Tim doesn't begin to cut down large picture format
- 18 Designer discarding a faulty radio
- 19 Bacon et al. embody most prominent of literary degrees
- 20 Like academic barriers I contested?
- 21 Writer of odes takes interpretation
- 28 Leaders of various outings like gathering along a river
- 30 Understanding for teens in country
- 32 One little snack for poet: fruit, rum (2 wds)
- 34 Nearest earn hugs, kiss
- 35 Arab cash left in spider hole maybe
- 37 Sophisticated sort of statue
- 39 Complete panic about last of plane's excessive cargo
- 40 Count Dracula & Frankenstein monster haunt adolescents' hearts
- 41 Start going ape: first, eat cut bananas
- 42 Easy-to-ride vehicle traveling here (we let her) (hyph)

DOWN

- 1 Noted Sandra, cross, has Greek character cast out (hyph)
- 2 Jungle natives bridge wooded valley
- 3 Ocean State athlete, in the winter, is on thinner ice
- 4 In large wooden ship, tradesmen primarily fight about carvings, etc.
- 5 Modern work of fiction
- 6 Live with Mennonites, radiant with optimism
- 7 Snake flayed with double-edged dagger
- 8 Monkeyshines somewhat lessen in a zoo? Just the reverse
- 11 Press investigated earliest American hybrid car
- 13 In Paris you party loudly ... it's charming
- 15 Cite western state fine that is going around
- 16 Certainly grass is getting high around end of June
- 22 Eve, if task is arduous, perhaps has a siesta (2 wds)
- 23 A boy, ten, mishandled weapon
- 24 Oils, not unusually!
- 25 Set down quality material
- 26 Disposed to remember even trite medley
- 27 Put together coriander or cumin with last of basil thrown in
- 28 A couple of villains hasten near-total computer catastrophe
- 29 Insurrectionist bombed a ranch
- 31 Author botched verse, like always (2 wds)
- 33 Start off detour up in Italian town
- 36 Maintain pub that's losing its exterior
- 38 Sickening, called for medicine bottle

If you're new to cryptic crosswords and would like tips for solving clues, please contact the constructor at markhalpin3@gmail.com.