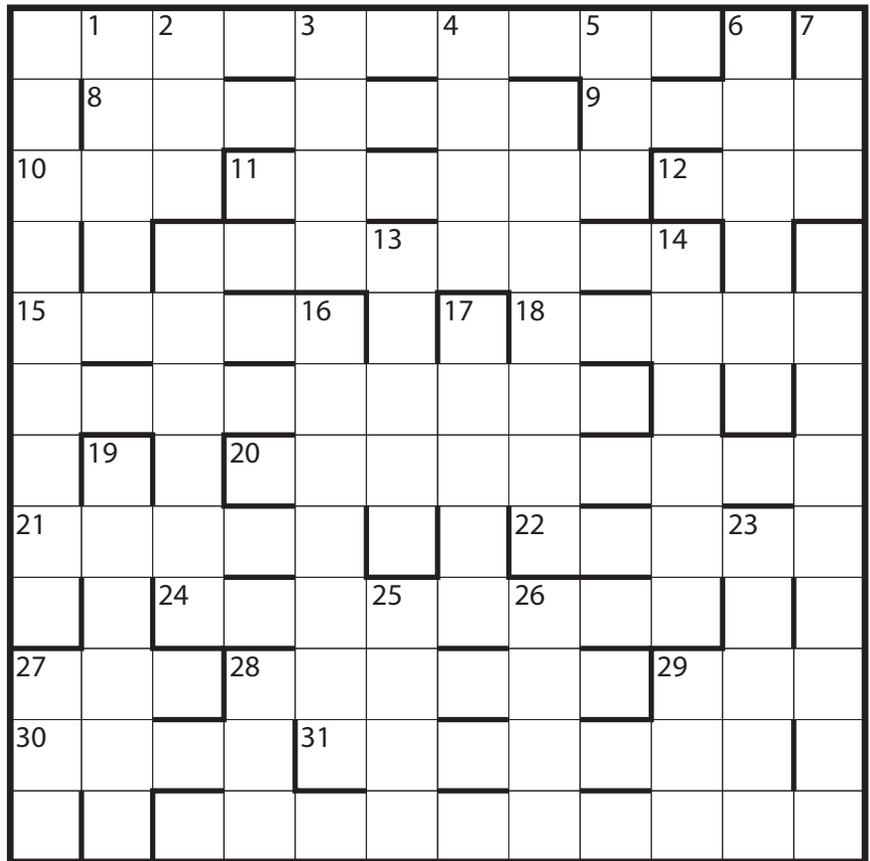


# WITH THE PRICE OF MEAT WHAT IT IS ...

by Mark Halpin

These are desperate times, and desperate measures are called for! To that end, all of the Victims answers (clued out of order) must be ground up and served in an appropriate manner in positions in the grid to be determined.

All modified entries are valid words. A message spanning the completed grid will, I hope, reflect the solver's reaction to this puzzling fare.



## VICTIMS

A little Priest intruding, concerned with punishing letter-writer (6, 2 wds)

Royal Marine, for one, tattled about romancing maidens (3)

Tinker putting out for sign, one that's promotional (6)

Tailor rises at cutting pieces (7)

Clerk with distress showing in a bit of a twist (7)

General at the front with one of his Privates retreating from engagement (3)

Shepherd's kid taking lamb's face to be smugly superior (5)

Politician initially bound by senior officeholder not, in the end, to run (6)

Actor given largest part and most artistic material (4)

22 Chuck, etc., I've brought around almost (5)

24 Centaurs stupefied ancient man (8)

27 Make a request twice a day (3)

29 Profit unevenly supplying tropical provender (3)

30 Don't open sauce, it's gunky (4)

31 Little in *Ice Age* involved mourning the past (7)

## DOWN

1 Stern, Lisa accepted parcel (5)

2 Steal a wee drink maybe (3)

3 Isolated northern compound (4)

4 "Tulsa" dancing without a sense of passion (4)

5 Family is endlessly good-hearted (3)

6 Couple of dimwits eating more shredded cabbage (6, *hyph*)

7 What's blamed for some behavior is too elevated (3)

13 Canoe lost in big body of water (5)

14 I see an eccentric enter slowly (6, 2 wds)

16 Criminally hire thug, taking hit out on father or son who sang (7)

17 Clinks coming from inside knight's suit, ultimately (5)

19 I enjoy hanging around hero (6)

23 Flowers die? Indeed, so we hear (5)

25 Grottesque-sounding citrus fruit (4)

26 Those that begin cycling inevitably get sexy butts (4)

27 Online journal left out mushy stuff (3)

28 Gym class article is kind of green (3)

29 Outspoken *Tonight Show* host is mean (3)

## ACROSS

8 Joins retro cat, imbibing gin liberally (7, 2 wds)

9 Cairo native evincing great strength and determination (4)

10 Rest of bad review taken back (3)

11 Commanding officer almost exploiting counterpart (6)

12 Shoals essentially surrounding river mouths (3)

15 Sore horse missed getting a perfect score (5)

18 Ascetic Hindu appeared to float before India's leader (5)

20 Traveling L.A. sisters missing flights? (9)

21 Fifty at church getting close, in a way (5)