

HORRORSCOPE FOR THE SUMMER MONTHS OF 2016:

To allow for the vagaries of the universe and interpretive inexactitude, it might pay to read everyone else's stars as well.

SAGITTARIUS

Do not be a pussy this month. An uncouth, loud and vulgar person can grab more than headlines. Be wary of the full moon when this soon-to-be powerful person's hair might leap out and envelop the world. To find out if you're in the running and have, or are, "a young, and beautiful, piece of ass" phone Donald for a prediction on 212-836-3249.

CAPRICORN

Now look here. This global warming crap has gone on long enough. Science my armpit. Look deeply into your tea cup and the leaves will plainly tell you how even a slight concession from the current government will flounder. Listen to the dregs: "It was a clear attempt to reintroduce a price on hot air to satisfy the extreme greens and others seduced by the socialist alarmism of anthropogenic climate change". For more gems of wisdom phone Cory on 08 8362 8600.

AQUARIUS

Today is a good day to realise that the Prime Vertical is the Great Circle inscribed on the celestial sphere that passes through the east point, zenith, west point and nadir of any place. The Prime Minister is no exception. He passes through all points on the political spectrum in his never-ending quest to find a friend. To hear the latest concession phone Malcolm on 02 6277 7700.

PISCES

Make time to put aside political differences and just look at the issues. We can't all vote for the same party, that's totalitarianism. But polite exchange of views is preferable to retreat into enclaves of like-minded ideologues.

ARIES

A predominance of melancholic humour is linked with depression and constipation. Of course you know this if you've made it to this point in the *BWD* Horroroscope. There is a cure. I've found that an occasional dose of the *Daily Telegraph* reliably keeps me regular and the Bolt Report is especially useful cut into strips and impaled on a nail.

TAURUS

How has 2016 been for you? That bad huh? It's time to take a more optimistic outlook on life. Just remember that in a year's time when you look back at 2017, you might realise just how good this past year has been.

GEMINI

Did you see the story in the local paper, and again in the one its wrapped around, about how hard it is to start a small business? It's all that red tape and then the banks won't give you money. If you read on though ... oh joy, there is a solution. There are friendly people out there who can cut the red tape and lend you the start-up capital. And if you read to the very end you'd see the disclaimer that the author's family company might be the money lender and that the newspaper's owners might receive a commission on any deals. To hear more impartial investment advice ring 02 8777 7777.



CANCER

Santa Claus has been chosen as the new mascot for the National Broadband Network. To be fair to Santa though, he does arrive regularly and more people believe in him. In fact, if you look closely in the night sky on December 25 you might see Santa and even receive something as long as you're within 12km of Mt Gillamatong and have a clear line of sight.

LEO

Are you feeling a bit bleached? The Great Barrier Reef certainly is and there's worse coming. Do we really need to lift the world's mining magnates out of wealth into astronomical wealth? Poor people deserve free energy from the sun.

VIRGO

Limitless numbers of universes split off constantly and continue to exist and develop in other temporal dimensions. This probably explains the last party you went to — a couple of drinks too many and you wake up living in synastry. It can be prudent to superimpose your birth chart over that of a prospective partner before you actually and physically superimpose yourselves.

LIBRA

There's global financial trouble looming on the horizon. Reducing debt is still the best bet to keep your head above water.

SCORPIO

This humble magazine's politics might not be to everyone's liking but it's locally produced with lots of love and attention. Compare that with the current strategy of our corporate newspaper owners who have reduced their effort to part-time 'do the lot' workers feeding in to an algorithmic pun generator back at head office.

United we shine

I wrote this for the 2016 National Union of Workers essay competition (no luck) about the benefits of maintaining a strong labour movement.

Where to mate?" The eyes in the mirror checked me out.

"Town thanks," I replied.

"Another conference is it?" The disdain in the tone showing just what he thought of conference types.

"Yep," I said. "The topic is 'fair society, fair planet, fair jobs and fair food.'" "Fair dinkum!" he exploded, glancing over his shoulder. "I'll tell you what's not fair. It's when you've spent an hour in the airport queue waiting to pick up a fare, and when you do, the bastard only wants to go to town".

We retreated, each to his own thoughts, until the silence threatened to become hostile.

"What do you think about driverless cars?" I blurted, hearing the implication a whisker too late and hoping he wouldn't take it personally.

This time he did turn his head to check out just what it was he had in the back seat. "Stone the crows mate. You've got a driverless car already. You're in a vehicle on the way to your destination and you're not driving are you? What more do you want?"

It was tempting to want the soothing voice of Siri asking what type of music I liked or offering to tell me the day's main stories. But then again, in a fair society perhaps I should want the driver to keep his job.

"All this fascination with high-tech really gives me the irritis." He waved a hand across the windscreen. "Do we need to spend our technological budget automating all these drivers into the back seat of their own cars? What will they do then ... read the paper, email, play cards?"

"They reckon they've made cars ninety-nine percent automatic already," I ventured.

The cabby snorted. "Rubbish! If you have to be ready to resume control at a moment's notice, that's not an autonomous driving experience, that's a recipe for inattentive disaster."

"Anyway, we already have nearly

driverless vehicles on a per-passenger basis. They're called buses and trains."

I looked out of the window at the surrounding cars crawling, accelerating, merging, dodging cyclists and pedestrians and I too wondered why you'd bother automating all those space-hogging personal transport capsules.

"We're going to be looking at a fair planet as well." I said.

"Oh what, like lifting the word's poor to our standard of living do you mean?"

"Yep that sort of thing," I replied. "Like when the Environment Minister talks about using Australian coal to help India provide access to electricity for all its people".

"You ... are ... kidding me, right?" I held his steely gaze in the cab's mirror as long as I could until I felt at least one of us should be watching the cars in front.

"Let me ask you this," he said. "Do you think your electricity is cheap? Do you pay the bill with a smile?"

"Not really, when you put it like that," I admitted.

We'd stopped at the lights and he turned to give me both ocular barrels. "Do you realise that most of your electricity comes from the Hunter Valley, made from coal running from the mine to the furnace on a conveyor belt? That it then runs through transmission infrastructure paid for last century? And you think it's a bit expensive, eh?" "Yes."

"Well, think about this. Someone has to pay for the big mine in Queensland,



towards the future by Paul Cockram

the 500 kilometre train line, the port, the ships across the sea, the power station in India, the transmission poles and wires and last but not least, the power meter and the quarterly bill.

"Thousands or millions of poor villagers on one end of the wire forever sending money to a few overfed capitalists at the power station end hardly seems likely to lift the users out of poverty — quite the opposite."

"Tell me this," said the cabby. "If you had cash to spare could you reduce your electricity bill?"

"Sure, I could. I'd buy solar panels and put them on the roof; maybe invest in some batteries as well."

"There you go," said the cabby as the lights turned green and off we went. "You want to use solar power because after the cost of the panels the fuel arrives free from then on."

"That's the cruelty in expanding or even continuing Australia's coal exports for electricity generation. The same applies to our domestic consumption. It's keeping the consumer paying through the nose for as long as possible."

"But what about our economy, the loss of income and the jobs," I ventured.

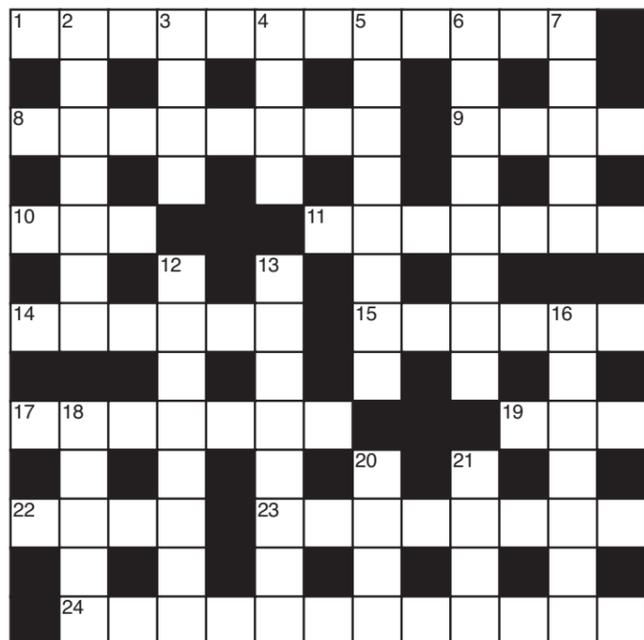
Again the wild eyes in the mirror. "A desperate furphy by an industry on the skids. Of course when we make most of our electricity from burning coal the jobs will not be lost overnight. What jobs are we talking about anyway? Machinery operators and electrical technicians will be in short supply once we get on with building solar arrays and wind farms across rural Australia.

"I wish you well with your conference because only the labour movement has the ability to become a 'broad church' not tied to party politics. It need have only a few 'commandments'. To support fair work practices, local and global, that move towards social equity and environmental oversight to value and monitor the legacy our industrial footprint leaves for future generations.

"You people won't change the world overnight but you can challenge the direction our captains of industry and their tame politicians are taking us. The rich are getting richer; the divide between them and the poor is ever widening while the environment is suffering so seriously that our life-enabling atmosphere is degrading towards disaster.

Whew, I feel like I've done a session already, I thought. "Just drop me on the corner thanks." I handed over the money. "Keep the change."

BRAIDWOOD BAFFLER #11



ACROSS

- Useful gardening vessels (8,4)
- Auris interna (5,3)
- Some people look like this when they are 10 across (4)
- Unhappy (3)
- An army officer, normally speaking (7)
- Don't come to Australia in a boat seeking this! (6)
- A corrector of written and other material (6)
- Such people aren't free to choose (7)
- A piece of furniture: piece of ground (3)
- Famous former German tennis player, Steffi (4)
- Colloquially, you might meet someone around these (3,5)
- A branch of agriculture (12)

DOWN

- They only last a year (7)
- Made something last longer (4)
- Notion (4)

- Adam was the first one, biblically speaking (8)
- A neat fruit tart (5,3)
- A mixture of fresh vegetables or fruit (5)
- Sweet Italian biscuits (8)
- I'm optimistic about where I'm going (3,2,3)
- Bad in golf, OK elsewhere (4,3)
- A growing medium (5)
- A male admirer (4)
- Suspicious? You might smell one! (4)

SOLUTION TO BAFFLER #10

