

THE STARS ARE DEFINITELY CRAZY

HORRORSCOPE FOR THE WINTER MONTHS OF 2019:

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

TAURUS

All your chickens will come home to roost this month but remember you can't unscramble an omelette from a politician's hair. Eggs these days need not only to be free-range but long range as well if you want to avoid some chicken punches from your target turkey. Remember, nazis don't get the yolk.

GEMINI

Ellem-A-Oh is the god of cyber scorn, sister to Ohemgee, princess of confected outrage or advertised surprise. Double-you Taf can be invoked when other forms of enquiry have proved fruitless or less dramatic.

CANCER

Some bruvvers do 'ave 'em. The quite sensible opposition to a mega mine aimed at bleeding India's poor is complicated by the shenanigans of the CMEMEME&FU. Tomorrow's future should not be sold to prop up a very few jobs today.

LEO

People will be seeking your advice in the next week, hoping to gain insight and information, usually as you sit down to dinner. Tell them to eff off and you'll vote however you like when you get to the polling place. Press 1 for Lib, 2 for Lab, 3 for Grn and redial a dill for PUP. Huawei then sends a text to what's-his-name.

VIRGO

Old King Coal leaves a bloody big hole, and he takes the stuff for free. He gets his tax breaks with the invoice he fakes and there's no money left for the dole. Then he calls for his books and goes on a fiddler's spree. And of course the outgoing Energy Minister gets on the board and we go round again — whoopie!

LIBRA

As you know, the Vernal point moves backwards through the sidereal zodiac at the rate of a little over one degree every 72 years. In Canberra the Venal point out does this, moving backwards to the fossil era at an alarming rate with an expected rise of three degrees every 50 years. Of course there will only be one degree or less of separation from post pollie to generous recompense.

SCORPIO

Have you seen the new Facebook group, 'Braidwood Naysayers, Pedants and Yokels'? Its immoderators have a policy of anything goes, except lost and found dogs or cats which has its own following on that other site. New emoji are being developed for 'tar and feather', 'get run out of town', 'why don't you just crawl into a hole and die' and the like. Political discussion will not be tolerated.



SAGITTARIUS

This month's predictions are based on an actual read. Your smart meter number is 200935672:5. Your anytime is Step 1 and any complaints may also be escalated to a Complaint Resolution Specialist on the first floor or doubly escalated to a Team Manager on the second floor.

CAPRICORN

Don't bottle up those nasty intemperate thoughts that rattle around in your head, that's what Facebook is for. Slag off a Scorpio, they're in that new group.

AQUARIUS

Are you a rich intemperate, shamelessly unscientific buffoon? There may be a job for you in Australian politics. Buffoonery was a once derided trait, but since the 2016 US election it's a cause célèbre. If you must tell lies, make them big ones. As a crook bank can be too big to fail, so can a rank crook be too big to nail.

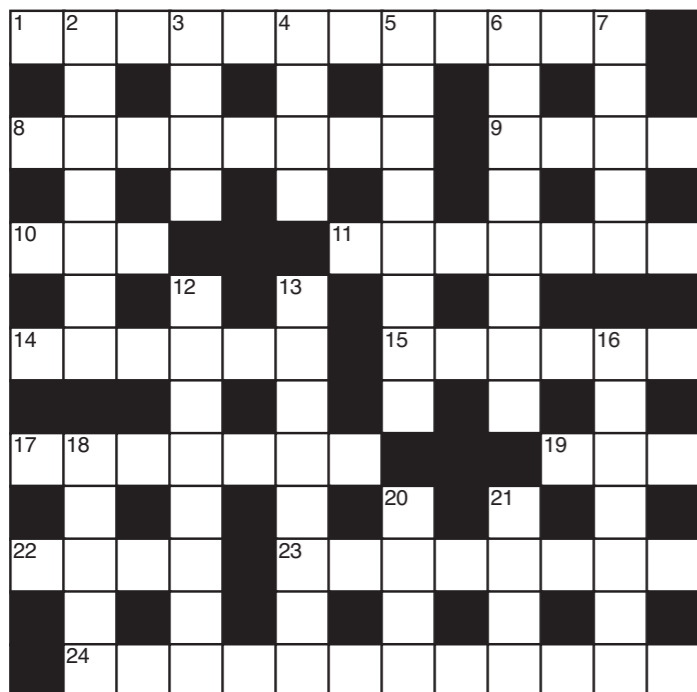
PISCES

Be kind to everyone this month. You're not the only one who feels the world is a crazy place. Especially don't feel paranoid about thinking that politics has gone to the dogs and they've buried it like a rancid bone. You're not paranoid, the bone is really down there and it stinks.

ARIES

Make a wish. Something along the lines of, 'even if I don't think it will save the planet, I sure would like cheaper electricity and if a community-operated solar farm could do that, I'm in'. Then of course, if other people like you in communities all around the world were to do the same thing, the planet would be saved even if you didn't mean to.

BRAIDWOOD BAFFLER BWD 19



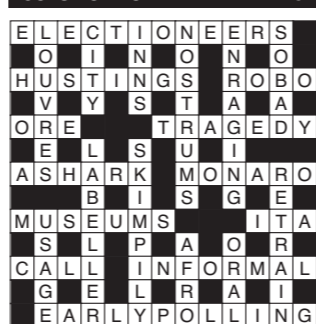
CLUES ACROSS

- In centuries past, witches were tried according to this system of justice. In debates today, some participants can cast blame on their opponents in this way. (12)
- There's a controversial one in Central Queensland. (8)
- A 'doing' word. (4)
- Will your next one be electric? (3)
- "It's the, stupid!" (7)
- Your mental or physical condition. (6)
- More submissive (6)
- Tango, quickstep and jive are all forms of this activity. (7)
- "Its all as clear as ..." (3)
- If you're against it, you're.. (4)
- Donkeys vote this way (8)
- When candidates depose unpopular sitting members, their supporters might say "Goodbye... (2,2,4,4)."
- In ancient times, you might ring this to alert others to danger. (5)
- Happening Australia-wide on May eighteenth. (8)
- Rhythmical repetition of a song, prayer or sound. (8)
- Teach, inform. (7)
- "You're going to take your medicine." Child replies, "(2,3)".
- Hairstyle created by combing the hair away from the scalp in a large, rounded shape. (4)
- Abbreviated term for a particular academic rank. (4)

CLUES DOWN

- Top of the list in the minds of some voters (7)
- Utilised. (4)
- Continent nearest Australia (4)
- Defeat an opponent (8)
- Created or designed (8)

SOLUTION TO BAFFLER BWD 18



WE CAN MAKE IT BETTER

We have no idea how smart the future will be

Saturday night in 1972. Suddenly through the smokey room erupts a cry of anguish, "Hey man. Who left my new Joni Mitchell album out of its sleeve?"

"Oh man, it's got ash all over it and ... goddam it man it's been scratched too." For the benefit of BWD's younger readers, an album is a circular piece of plastic, 300 mm in diameter, impressed with a long spiralling groove that vibrates a stylus on an arm as it goes round and round underneath. Electronic jiggery-pokery sends the signal to an amplifier, then to speakers and on to the ears of, in this case, a roomful of hippies.

At the time, albums were possessions of high treasure and exquisite pleasure. Young readers' grandparents would raid shops to 'liberate' milk crates to store them in. Their large size, twelve inches in dinosaur talk, allowed the outer sleeves to be adorned with artwork that equalled, and occasionally surpassed, the audio experience.

At the time, we thought LPs were terrific because our parents hadn't had 'Long Playing' records. Theirs went at the breakneck speed of 78 rpm and were made of fragile shellac that you only dropped once.

LPs, rotating at a more sedate 33 1/3 rpm allowed up to 25 minutes or 6 songs on each side, wow! But weren't we blown away in the 1990s when CDs came along. The compact disk could play the whole album in one go. Digital optical disc data storage was an amazing leap up from the bulky vinyl record.

Are you wondering about the point of this story? Have a look at the picture on this page. This is my record collection from my first Beatles LP (Help!) through to the advent of CDs.

In front of the stack of vinyls do you see the 1980s robot partly obscuring Pink Floyd's 'Atom Heart Mother' cow? In its hand is a 32GB memory stick.

The stack of records weighs 83.7 kg and takes up a lot of space as you can see — over the years I lost all but one of the milk crates. The stick weighs 3.5 grams, nearly 24,000 times lighter, and if it was any smaller I'd lose it.

There are 375 albums in that stack and the tiny 32GB stick will hold 615. That's a mighty lot of technological advancement in fifty years.

The advance of electricity

The point I'm getting at is that the scale of technological change is not reliably predicted at any point in history. But we can look back in wonderment at its achievement and effect on our lives.

We need to separate what we know is not working from baseless claims that nothing else will work. For instance, we know that mining and burning coal to make electricity is a bad idea. But the people who want to keep using it, for what ever reason, find it expedient to claim that solar and wind energy is just 'kiddy power' by comparison and not up to the task.

The evidence is all to the contrary. Electricity in all its forms has seen incredible advances right through the twentieth century and it's still advancing at the speed of energy along a wire.



ALL THESE RECORDS AND TWICE MORE WILL FIT ON THE TINY STICK. A FEW EARLIER STORAGE DEVICES LANGUISH REDUNDANTLY IN FRONT.



towards the future by Paul Cockram

The twentieth century could be described as the age of oil, just as the nineteenth was the age of coal. In the railways, use of coal lasted only half way through the twentieth century when it was realised that enormous increases in productivity could be made by switching to diesel and electric traction. Coal's days were numbered and in the space of two decades steam locomotives disappeared just like the poor dinosaurs.

Solar is at the 'vinyl' stage

There is nothing the sun can't power. Running the entire biosphere of the planet is no mean feat, so supplying our factories and houses with ample electricity is a diddle by comparison. If our governments stopped their habit of thwarting and belittling renewable

energy, and gave our scientists funding and genuine encouragement, the rate of change and advancement would bring us up to par, or better, with more savvy countries.

Australia has everything it needs to lead the world in solar power advancement except political leadership. Solar and wind can't be depleted or exhausted, we can have as much as can be collected.

Finite fuels like oil, coal and gas, apart from being non-renewable, are expensive to extract and the cost goes up over time as the easier deposits are exhausted. Solar and wind are the opposite. Spend the money now on the collection machinery and enjoy the free plentiful supply endlessly into the future.

We don't know what the future will bring but it's not our job to worry about that. In the here and now, it is our responsibility to the people of the future to identify any threats to them and to do our utmost to mitigate those threats. We have a moral obligation to reduce our lethal footprint on this planet that we're minding and to provide our children with all the time we can give them to develop their own technology. ■