

# ASTRO FORECASTS WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE HEAVENS?

## by Tina Mews

### Aries

Use the Mercury retrograde period (Jan 30 – Feb 21) for clarifying your goals and aspirations of 2021. Your approach of networking might need some rethinking to avoid misunderstandings with others while friends from the past could appear in your life again bringing you an important message. As always when Mercury is retrograde, expect delays and there might be problems with the internet.

### Taurus

The Mercury retrograde period (Jan 30 – Feb 21) is great for reviewing your career path and vision for 2021. Refocus on what you really want and put your energy towards meaningful goals. Mars is in your sun sign until March 5 providing you with an energetic boost. Be careful with overcommitting yourself or taking on too much to avoid accidents or burn-outs.

### Gemini

Mercury retrograde periods are important times of slowing down and double checking as all communication can be confusing. During January 30 – February 21, take extra care with paying attention to the small things in life so that they can serve your larger purpose. Revise your beliefs and be witness to how they influence your overall perception.

### Cancer

Use this Mercury retrograde period for observing your energetic involvement with others. It is a good moment in time to settle old debts, may they be of material or spiritual/karmic nature. Rethink your overall energy output and balance it with what comes in from the other side. You will become clearer about how you invest your energy on all levels.

### Leo

This first Mercury retrograde period of the year (Jan 30 – Feb 21) falls in your solar 7th house of partnerships. Reconsider your commitments and contracts with others, may they be of personal or business nature. You might be called to resolve some unfinished business. Try not to resist this process even though it might stir your passion! Staying detached and objective is the key.

### Virgo

This Mercury retrograde period (Jan 30 – Feb 21) is useful for reflecting on your health, work and daily routine. Old habits can be replaced with new patterns that are more beneficial to your natural rhythms. The emphasis is on self-care and sharpening your intuition. Delays in communication can be expected during these weeks, so try not to panic!

## February

The occurrences of the past year have deeply changed our lives. Living with uncertainty has become part of the 'new normal' as we are trying to rebuild our reality. From an astrological point of view, we have entered a completely new epoch defined as the 'Air age' and marked by a rare Jupiter-Saturn conjunction in Aquarius at the last December solstice. This conjunction highlights humanity's need to unite (or perish) over the next two decades. Nevertheless, the deconstruction of the old order is not over yet. More systems and institutions are destined to fall during these turbulent times unless they change their ways to keep up with the incoming new frequencies. During 2021/22 the authoritative mechanisms of top-down control continue to be challenged until they are replaced by systems that favour self-responsibility, decentralisation and innovation, all in the spirit of Aquarius.

**Mercury turned retrograde on January 30 and will move direct again February 21.** While retrograde, Mercury invites us to listen to our intuition and investigate what has been buried or overlooked during the past weeks and months. Retrograde periods are associated with setbacks and delays, but are necessary slowdowns giving everyone time to reflect and revise their plans and projects for the year. For example, we can use these three weeks for doing our own research regarding the looming vaccination roll-out. Mercury in Aquarius reminds us to remain emotionally detached and objective in this matter. Doing things in a hurry might not lead to positive outcomes.

**The New Moon on February 12 marks the beginning of the Chinese year of the Metal Ox.** The Metal Ox stands for the process of rebuilding and advancing in a slow and steady way. The Aquarius New Moon chart, on the other hand, reveals a stellium of planets in Aquarius including Saturn, Jupiter, Venus, and Mercury. Aquarius is idealistic and stands for innovation as well as scientific and humanitarian progress all in the name of the common good. Of course, the common good can get defined in a variety of ways leading to different points of view. Nevertheless, a multiplicity of opinions and the right to disagree is one of the most important characteristics of a healthy democracy. Uranus, Lilith and Mars are in Taurus expressing a different set of values to the Aquarian ideas. Problems occur

when views get too entrenched. Aquarius and Taurus are both fixed signs with a determination to maintain their positions. Taurus stubbornly holds onto its material set of values that have withstood the test of times while Aquarius is futuristic oriented but can be righteous and opinionated about its aspirations, being too detached from other people's reality.

**On February 18, Saturn in Aquarius and Uranus in Taurus will form their first exact waning square aspect. Two more passes will follow on June 15th and December 24th.** This meeting of two mythic giants is

the most important outer planetary formation during 2021. Saturn and Uranus are strongly opposing principles. Their alignments can create a lot of tension as Saturn likes adherence to order and the status quo while Uranus is the cosmic awakener and disrupter of old forms so that new patterns can be birthed. Important societal and economic questions are raised when these forces align. However, the answers do not come easily or smoothly as we are energetically shifting into a new reality. Consciousness is the new currency. The current 45-year Saturn-Uranus cycle started in 1988, just months before the fall of the Berlin Wall, the disintegration of the USSR but also the Tiananmen Square Massacre. We are urged to break with patterns of fear to co-create a new more inclusive perception of reality. *"Behind the appearance of separation is one unified field of wholeness. Here the seer and the scenery are one."* – Deepak Chopra.

**The Full Moon, which peaks on February 27 at the 9th degree Virgo-Pisces,** highlights the need of integrating head and heart so that we can make wise decisions. Venus, the planet of love and beauty is conjunct the Sun and opposes the Moon. Balancing our yin and yang energies, intuition with logic and discernment with compassion is the quest of this Full Moon. Again, we are reminded that we live in a global community where health and healing have become a priority. Nevertheless, it is helpful to remember that fear and worry lower our frequency and our immunity. The Virgo Moon encourages us to keep our bodies and minds healthy through the right diet, regular exercise and positive thinking.

*Navigation by the stars: Personal astrology consultation including your year ahead: Plans, directions, concerns for 2021/22.*

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### Libra

Use this Mercury retrograde period (Jan 30 – Feb 21) for rethinking your channels of self-expression and creativity. It is a good period for processing and integrating new opportunities to gain more clarity about future directions and potentials. By shifting focus you will become clearer about which choices are viable and which are not.

### Scorpio

There is a lot going on at the home front and this Mercury retrograde period (Jan 30 – Feb 21) is helpful for sorting out priorities. Rethink where and how to apply your energy. Others might at times feel overwhelmed by your numerous projects and ideas, all in a different state of completion. Carefully and patiently communicating what to do next will help with keeping the peace.

### Sagittarius

Careful and conscious communication is the key to better understanding while Mercury is retrograde (Jan 30 – Feb 21). Reflect on how to tell your truth in a loving way and be equally open to humbly receive other versions of truth. Misunderstandings and delays are highly likely during these three weeks, so be prepared!

### Capricorn

Use this Mercury in retrograde period (Jan 30 – Feb 21) to balance your accounts and rethink how to best work with your finances. New channels of making an income might have opened and it is a good moment in time to assess their feasibility. Be vigilant with any purchases or the signing of contracts. Extra caution is required during the next three weeks.

### Aquarius

This is a time of new beginnings. Use this Mercury retrograde period (Jan 30 – Feb 21) for sorting out who you want to be and how to present yourself and your goals to the world. It is equally a time of expansion and contraction. Clarify what needs to go and what can stay and be further developed to perfect your life's goals.

### Pisces

Use this Mercury retrograde period (Jan 30 – Feb 21) to sharpen your intuition. This is a time of uncertainty, so rest and recharge your batteries, dream up your next chapter in life, play with your imagination. Events are happening behind the scenes and you might not be sitting in the driver's seat. All you can do is go with the flow.



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# Times they are a-changin’

by Marilyn Devlin

“The line it is drawn - The curse it is cast - The slow one now - Will later be the fast - As the present now - Will later be past - The order is rapidly fadin’ - And the first one now will later be last - For the times they are a-changin’” – Song by Bob Dylan released in 1964, two years into the big Aquarian gathering in 1962... the same one that’s happening now.

Well hello 2021... January sure gave us a guided tour. Whooo... that’s over. February feels much more sedate. Magick’s the sense I have. It’s what I’m feeling. And it’s feeling good. As if a door has opened giving us a peek... into a wondrous new land full of light and joyous things.

Yeah... the times are going to be as they are. You can’t rearrange two enormous Ages... shift them over, without a few strategic cataclysmic upheavals, a few testing moments and an extraordinary amount of change. And you know how we are with those.

I luv the big picture. Which is interesting for a Sun in Virgo. Virgos are said to love the details. Someways I do... like I see the dirt (with glasses these days). I like order, neat and clean.

But when it comes to the rest... I’m fascinated by the Meta. Vast space draws me in. That huge space all around us. Hubble reveals an estimated 100 billion galaxies in the Universe. It’s estimated that’ll increase to 200 billion with increased capacity in telescope technology.

Then there’s Earth, our Solar System and all her planets and asteroids... part of our Milky Way Galaxy. They say there’s hundreds of billions of stars in our galaxy and they’re thought to have planets of their own.

Anyways... I’m not an Astronomer but historically astrology and astronomy have been linked. It’s the Astronomers who give the planets names... give them their identity. Astrologers translate the mythology and message/ purpose of this identity.

I remember when I ‘found’ astrology back in 1960. I was young. But I knew what it was... ‘An Ancient Science’ I proclaimed.

The Big Picture fascinates me... reminds me of that night. I was maybe five or six. I’d recently started at a Catholic school. My dad was against it... he wasn’t Catholic. He was more concerned about our education. So he agreed to a trial. We didn’t last long...

That night’s carved in my memory. Can’t remember if I was asleep or awake, maybe both. Or maybe I was just an ‘astral traveller’ (possible). I started thinking about Eternity. As you do at five. It sounded like a really long time... and I wanted to know how long.

So I began flying... seriously. I was up high in the sky under the clouds and was flying. And looking. I was determined to find it... and planned to keep going ‘til I did. I kept flying on and on and on.

Then startled and terrified I jumped up and screamed... out of my bed and ran into my parents’ room, getting into bed with them. I couldn’t find it. There was no end... there was no end! No eternity. I couldn’t find it and I really looked. I couldn’t find it anywhere. And I’m pretty observant.

Nuns had told us we’d burn in hell for eternity if we sinned. That obviously made a big impression on my sensitive self. Hell forever and ever and evermore... jeez traumatising for anyone.

January felt crazy (sorry January). It was like... man what’s happened to everyone? I mean, talk about the veils of illusion. Man, were they thick. February? Well I’m not predicting miracles... but then miracles happen regularly. But it feels smoother, lighter, hopeful... feels the time for making Magick happen.

Wishing you a rip-roaring Aquarian Wave... and smooth entrance into the year of the Metal Ox. Yeah, a lot a bull about.

# Nimbin Trivia Time

by Eclectus

## Questions



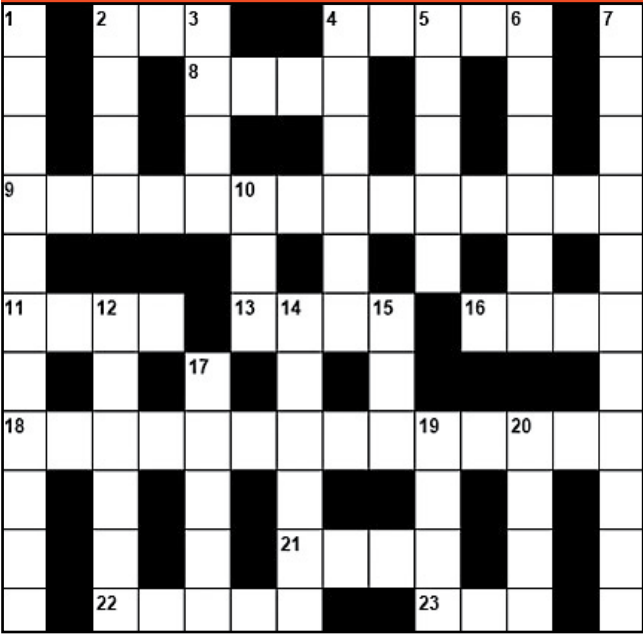
- Where is this interesting building and what is its purpose?
- Who recently topped the Triple J Hottest 100 for 2021?
- The following collective nouns are all used to describe a group of what? Flight, flutter, kaleidoscope, rabble, swarm, or wing?
- The America’s Cup, currently under way in Auckland, has had plenty of thrills and spills over the years and 2021 is no exception. What on-water event has sparked global attention already?
- What animal appears on the Australian ten cent coin? Bonus point if you can name the animal that appeared on the one shilling coin it replaced.
- Does a myrmecologist study ants, comets, pigments or soundscapes?
- In November 1975 a junior minister for only six weeks at the time came around a corner in Old Parliament House only to find then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam striding forth with a number of other ministers trailing in his wake. Gough immediately stopped and exclaimed, “And you’re sacked too!” The astounded minister indignantly demanded “What have I done?” Can you name this minister who later went on to become prime minister?
- What was the Green Revolution?
- If someone gave you an adzuki, would you plant it, play it or pluck it?
- Can you name the Australian film director whose films have won six Academy Awards, 11 Baftas and five Golden Globes? Hint: This director’s first professional position was working on *The Mavis Bramston Show* which ran from 1964 to 1968.

- Answers**
- Hobart’s Museum of Old and New Art. (Photo: *mona.net.au*)
  - Glass Animals from the UK with *Heat Waves*.
  - Butterflies.
  - The American Magic team’s 23 metre, 7.5 tonne Patriot, which is capable of over 90kph, picked up a huge gust of wind while executing an ambitious manoeuvre rounding a buoy. The wind plucked Patriot clean out of the water, capsizing the massive foiling monohull.
  - The Lyre bird has replaced the merino sheep.
  - Ants.
  - Paul Keating. It was the 11th of November 1975 and the Whitlam Government had just been sacked by Governor General, Sir John Kerr.
  - The Green Revolution was instituted by the United States and like-minded philanthropic organisations such as the Rockefeller Foundation early in the Cold War to increase Third World food production and deter the spread of Communism. It greatly alleviated food shortages and acted as a buffer to the spread of Communism. It reduced agrodiversity (most wheat grown now comes from only four species), and also had many detrimental socioeconomic and environmental effects including a significant contribution to climate change.
  - You’d plant it. The adzuki bean (*Vigna angularis*), also known as red mung bean, is used to make red bean paste, a common ingredient in East Asian cuisine. The adzuki was domesticated at least 5,000 years ago and is believed to be one of the earliest crops to be bred scientifically.
  - Peter Weir, whose movies have been nominated for 29 Oscars, including three for Best Director.

# Nimbin Crossword

2021-02

by 5ynic



## Across

- Coy
- Stop answering (calls and texts)? Spirit.
- Shrek?
- Fast fairground rides
- Measure of area
- Gucci Mane or 2 Chainz? Something you can’t escape
- Graven image
- Invaders of South America
- Chief? Curved architectural detail
- Sums
- Record? Wood

## Down

- Through the female line
- Market
- Harness (together?)
- Northwest Italian city
- Southern Ukrainian city
- Series of Tweets? Load a needle
- Becoming preserved for the ages?
- Informer? Sewer-dweller
- Sporadic, unpredictable
- Followers of Haile Selassie?
- Legume
- Seek? Errand
- Lentil curry
- Called? Step

Solution: Page 28

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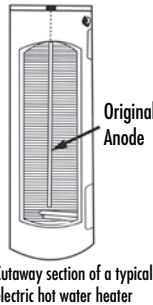
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## Nimbin Crossword Solution

From Page 27

M		S	H	Y		G	H	O	S	T		F	
A		E		O	G	R	E		D		H	O	
T		L		K		N		E		R		S	
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# Flush the crap and save the world

by Simon Thomas

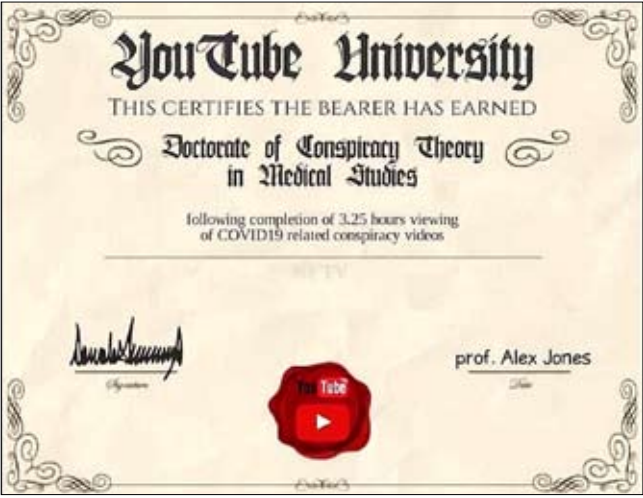
Do you have mates who have disappeared down a bunny burrow of batshit bullshit? I do, sadly. There is a whole Q of them.

**Time to set them free!**  
With Trump trumped and the conga-line of degenerates who raided the Capitol in Washington exchanging selfies for mugshots, the Parler poppycock is rapidly losing its lustre.

Sure the die-hards will cling like dags on a sheep’s tail to whatever flotsam the echo chamber floats their way, but many who were sucked down the sewer are looking for a life raft.

**Rude awakening**  
Imagine spending a couple of years banging on like a Jehovah’s witness about *The Truth*, only to wake up to the chilling realisation that Q is probably a gang of teen-aged pranksters, and that the Hollywood elite are more likely to be GF vegans than renochrome harvesting cannibals. I reckon you would feel like a right nong.

**Throw a lifeline, not an anchor**  
If somebody you know has popped their head out of the cess-pit to take a breath, grab some fresh air yourself and



give them the benefit of the doubt. After all, most of us have believed some pretty whacky stuff in our time.

Many people dive deep into the distortions because they find a sense of community. Open your heart and hope that it opens their mind.

The internet is a constant cascade of codswallop, so unless you want your loved one to sink back into the swamp, now might not be the ideal “I told you so” moment. Kindness counts.

**Confidential is compassionate**  
If you happen to notice a chink in your loved one’s armour of credulity, consider not shooting your load of truth all over their Facebook. Some things are better done one-to-one.

Hell, you might even hold

their hand, as long as you have some sanitiser.

**Try the truth sandwich**  
You don’t try to shove a loaf of bread down a baby’s mouth. Likewise, if somebody is emerging from the fog of delusion, find the common ground rather than bombarding them with your own opinions.  
Most of the kooky conspiracies contain a kernel of candour. Give them two slices of shared belief then lay the hard-to-swallow veracities gently between them. Take a picnic together rather than throwing tomatoes.

**Sound like Socrates**  
Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition, but the Greek inquisitorial methods are tried and true.

Sometimes communication is best through questions not answers.

Lead your friend up the garden path until they reach the dead end and then have the grace to let them think they got there on their own.

**Why should we even care what they think anyway?**  
Anyone who gives a toss about the state of the planet or the future of their kids bloody well should. Turn over the rock of a Covid denier and you will find a climate sceptic hiding underneath. It is no coincidence, and it is not even a mystery.

A lot of people think that there are no vested interests in misinformation, but nothing could be further from *The Truth*. Ironically, advances in communication technology due to science have spawned a pandemic of ignorance guided in part by the very people who wish to hide the predictable outcome of their activities.

Just as Big Tobacco pulled the wool over the eyes of the population for decades, the fossil fool industry puts billions into hoodwinking the complacent into believing that we can keep on shitting in our own nest ad nauseum without having to suffer the consequences.

Truth hurts, but lies destroy.

# Big things

by Pobblebonk and Oink

Pobblebonk and Oink were hoping to get up to see the Great Barrier Reef in 2020. Before climate change, the crown-of-thorns starfish, coral bleaching and greying years made a visit less rewarding. Alas, Covid-19 reared its dragon head.

It is often said that the Great Barrier Reef is the world’s largest living organism and is the only living organism that can be seen from space. This raises a few interesting issues. Firstly, as we would hope all should know, in the strict sense, it is nonsense.

The largest living organism in the world (as far as we know) is a Trembling Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) grove in Utah, USA, which consists of multiple stems growing from a single root system (all parts genetically identical) that covers an area of about 40 ha and has an estimated weight of about 6,000 tonnes.

The largest living animal species is of course the Blue Whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*) which grows to about 200 tonnes. And who knows how interconnected things are by fungal hyphae, so how big?

But all this gets us away from the Great Barrier Reef. We all know that the Reef is a collection of individual organisms but many of those individuals do, in many respects, depend on all of the other organisms for their survival.

It is entirely reasonable, and insightful, to consider the Reef as a ‘single organism’. Question is: is it the biggest? Seems to be an Australian preoccupation to think we have the biggest or hairiest or ugliest.

Even in the oh-so-politically-correct



The big potato, Robertson NSW Image courtesy wikipedia

Canberra, you don’t have to travel very far to see the biggest trout (in Adaminaby), the biggest sheep (in Goulburn), and the biggest potato (in Robertson). More locally, we have the biggest prawn in Ballina. And of course, this is the biggest load of rubbish, just like the claim about the Great Barrier Reef.

The rainforest of the Amazon, just like the Reef, can be usefully likened to a single organism and Amazonia, as the rainforest is sometimes referred to, is much bigger than the Reef, and clearly visible from space. Size wise, the Great Barrier Reef covers about 384,000 sq km compared to Amazonia’s 4,856,000 sq km. But is Amazonia the biggest?

That depends on how far you want to push the systems thinking. We can recall years ago, when we were both students, sitting around a campfire in the early hours of morning, on a high point amid the mangroves of Towra Point, Botany Bay, smoking scented Indonesian cigarettes to keep the

mosquitoes at bay, and between taking water temperature and dissolved oxygen readings, discussing deep philosophical things of interest to budding ecology students, when a supervisor opined that he thought of the whole ocean as a living organism! The bell rang, the light globe came on, and Pobblebonk and Oink have thought in systems ever since.

But just like the steak knives, there is more. There is the Greek Supreme Goddess of Earth.

In the early 1970’s James Lovelock published the first papers describing his Gaia hypothesis which, apologetically paraphrased, says the whole Earth can be thought of as a living organism. Now we’re getting big!

“I could do with a big cup of tea,” said Oink as Pobblebonk put the water on to boil. “With a big slice of Christmas cake.” Hooroo.

If you have a comment or a question, or a suggestion, you can contact Pobblebonk and Oink at: [pobble.bonk@gmail.com](mailto:pobble.bonk@gmail.com)



# Living legend

The world according to  
Magenta Appel-Pye

We went to see Russell Morris (pictured), the 1969 King of Pop, at the RSL club with its spew-inducing carpet and uncomfortable seats which were never meant to be sat in for a whole concert, and not a whiff of cigarette or dope smoke.

I haven't been out for what seems like years, and I only risked it because I love Russell's music and because it was on at 4pm on a Sunday afternoon which was very civilised considering the age of the audience and the band, all three of them in their 70's.

There were strict Covid rules, photo ID sign in, didn't bring my licence because I wasn't driving, so had to go home and get it, limited numbers, so they say, everyone supposed to be seated, and there sure as hell was no social distancing going on.

I look around and see a crowd of people with grey, white, dyed or no hair, the lucky ones to still be alive. The music starts and I'm catapulted back in time to being young wearing micro miniskirts and vertiginous cork platform shoes.

Down the front, three platinum blonde groupies grooving and gesticulating wildly in



their seats, real dancing isn't allowed because of Covid or maybe the fun police? But when they turn around, they've got old faces and we realise that, shockingly, so do we!

The concert was fantastic and their live version of *The Real Thing* was absolutely brilliant. The huge, full sound they evoked from two guitarists and a drummer was mind-boggling and I remembered what is so good about going to concerts and hearing live music.

For those moments, it was worth the risk of potentially dying from a virus, but I don't think I'll be doing that again, unless Russell comes back to town.



## She says

Thanks for your question because I previously didn't know about gurning – the manipulation of a particularly rubbery face into all manner of ghastly expressions for the amusement of others.

I can now re-frame my ideas about the ugly, admittedly funny, faces Uncle Norm pulls especially when playing the piano. With such a plastic face, and a bit of practice, he could be a gurning champion. But he just won't take it seriously.

Dick, you need to lighten up. You should appreciate what you have here. This girl sounds like fun. She doesn't take herself too seriously and is generous in sharing laughs. These are excellent qualities to ensure a long-term relationship that will see you ageing happily together. The older your girlfriend gets, the funnier she will become.

Much better than women who spend hours every day 'putting on their face'. What's wrong with their natural face? Nothing! That time would be better spent having quality time with you. Would you prefer a woman whose botoxed face can't move? How would you know what she's thinking or feeling if you can't read her?

One thing is for sure, outward beauty fades, unless people spend a fortune trying to prevent it, and become zombie looking, unhappy people, fighting the inevitable changes of living in a body. It's society's fault, which is why guerning competitions and competitors should be encouraged, appreciated and applauded.

This girl's a keeper. It would behoove you to quietly practise your ugly faces and, when you pop the question, pull your most hideous one. You'll crack her up, and I'm sure she'll say 'yes'.

Send your relationship problems to:  
[normanappel@westnet.com.au](mailto:normanappel@westnet.com.au)

## Gurning

My girlfriend has only one sport, at which she is a world champion. Unfortunately, it's gurning. I find it embarrassing.

– Dick Head, Dorroughby

by Uncle Norm and Auntie Maj

## HE says

Just about shat myself laughing at your letter. I thought you were trying to take the piss but Auntie Maj insists we take it seriously and help you. So I'll, er, try and keep a straight face.

Me senses a bit of jealousy here, mate. I bet you wish you could be the best at something. You might have had aspirations of being a great athlete, chess player, or hairdresser, but it all came to naught.

You probably never even won a meat raffle, and here you are with a World Champion! I can see how it could be galling to your underfed ego.

To my small mind, however, those two words 'World Champion' certainly impress. I'd be absolutely gushing if I ever met your girlfriend. I know I'd be proud as punch if my little pufferfish were to win a world title. Even if it was for projectile vomiting. It wouldn't matter to me, a champion is a champion.

You have a lot to be thankful for, Dick. She's chosen a sport that doesn't require a lot of expensive equipment and paraphernalia. She doesn't have to go out and train and have expensive coaching. At least she didn't take up martial arts or she would have punched your lights out by now.

I know the world is going down the toilet, but that's exactly why we need people like your girlfriend. If you can't realise how lucky you are to have scored this little honey, you should check to see if you've got a pulse.

I put it to you that the only thing you're a champion at, is being a moron. You should drop the attitude and be there for her when the inevitable happens.

There will come a time when the mind is willing but her face just won't co-operate any more. Sad, but it happens to all great champions.

"Happy is the man who finds a true friend, and far happier is he who finds that true friend in his wife." – Franz Schubert

# Dialogues

by S Sorrensen

This is boring, man!  
Shh!  
Well, it is...  
Yeah, but he's waiting for the Elders to show up. That's why he keeps talking.  
Where are they then?  
I don't know. I'm not an Elder keeper. Just be quiet.  
I'm leaving. I've been standing here in the sun listening to stuff I know already. I can dig it, but this is my day off, you know. I have plans. There's a chilled Yarra Valley Semillon in the car, losing its chill as we speak.  
I'm here standing in the sun too, you know, listening to you whinge about having to wait a few minutes – 30 minutes...  
30 minutes – until the Elders arrive.  
Chill out, man.  
Sorry. It's hot.  
Um, why exactly are we waiting for the Elders?  
To welcome us to country.  
Can't someone else do it? I'm getting sunburnt...  
It's a matter of respect.  
Okay.  
The dancers were good.  
Yeah. I liked that. So did my daughter. I like the traditional stuff. Very enjoyable.  
Oh, you brought your daughter?  
Yes. I thought that it'd be good for her to experience what Australia Day is really about.



Good on you. More and more Whitefellas are becoming aware of –  
She's gone now. She got bored, standing in the sun. Texted a friend here in town.  
Like father like daughter, eh?  
Look, I like this bloke, but does he realise he's talking to the converted here? We already know about the invasion and stuff. That's why we're here. To support the cause.  
What do you want then?  
What do you expect?  
Exhibition spear throwing?  
Wallaby-on-the-campfire cooking lessons? A song-and-dance show? Cabaret?  
Netflix? You want to be entertained?  
I don't know...  
If you want weird dress-ups and a campfire, check out any backyard Aussie Day celebration with people wrapped in flags and barbecue smoke swigging down booze to celebrate a culture which includes

murder and kidnapping...  
Okay. Jeez, I didn't...  
...not to mention slavery, torture and land theft.  
Okay!  
Not that I don't feel sorry for you having to stand in the sun, which gets hotter every year thanks to a planet-destroying culture which keeps you in white wine and your daughter in smartphones. It must be sooo hard for you to spend 30 minutes a year to acknowledge the terrible events of the last 230 years which created, and continues to create, the very privilege you live with –  
Okay!!  
...and is also killing the koalas...  
Jeez, man. You finished?  
Oh. Sorry. I'm... hot. I shouldn't hassle you.  
No, you shouldn't.  
It is hot. You go. See ya later.  
I'm staying.  
Really? Because of what I said?  
No. Because the Elders just arrived.

# Truth has become a commodity

Like gold, oil and sadly now fresh water. Unlike gold, oil and water however, the truth is malleable, a lie oft-repeated slowly becomes the truth.

If we say government-owned industries are wasteful and corrupt, somehow the waste and corruption of corporate owned industries is forgotten and governments are empowered to privatise our public assets, thus allowing the billionaire class to steal our nation out from under us.

In recent times the billionaire class has realised that the best truth for them is its contradiction.

Whatever their indiscretion, what they need to do is claim to be the very champion of the group they have abused, maligned or robbed.

That's why a misogynist like Tony Abbott took on



**Revenge of the Loon**  
by Laurie Axtens

the title of Minister for Women; it's why QAnon promoted Trump as the enemy of pedophilia; and it's why Andrew Forrester claims to be a great friend to the indigenous people of Australia.

If the predator/perpetrator can harness even the slightest support from those they oppress, that split can be capitalised on by the media that supports them. Their weakness is made a strength through perpetual repetition

of the falsehood. They make truth not just from a lie, but they turn black white, Trump into a hero and hatchet-faced Abbott into a woman's man.

Today's challenge, if you are willing to accept it, is to question one assumed truth every day. Actually research just one thing you hold to be true everyday.

For example, did Trump take strong action against pedophilia? No, actually the convictions for child pornography halved during his tenure according to his own government's records.

When you find yourself arguing a case, spend the time to look up the details. Use a decent source, something peer-reviewed and/or produced by a government – corrupt as they may be, they're better than Sky or any other religious-based site.

It's worth the effort.





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## Live theatre returns

by Jenny Dowell

Is *Educating Rita* the first live theatre production for 2021 in our region?

Lismore Theatre Company thinks so! Following the postponement of *Educating Rita* at Rochdale Theatre Goonellabah back in March 2020, the show will now open on Friday February 12 bringing live theatre back to Lismore and our region.

In the intervening 12 months, director David Addenbrooke has had some health challenges so Producer Kylie Fuad has stepped into his directing shoes to bring *Educating Rita* to the stage while making some tweaks to stamp her own influence on the show.

"We are so excited to be

back!" said Kylie. "I'm in constant conversation with David to ensure my work continues the vision he had for this production."

"The excellent script provides comedy and pathos and a heartfelt journey for both Frank and Rita, and our two actors are really bringing this to life for an intimate theatre experience."

*Educating Rita* is a two-hander, starring experienced LTC actors Elyse Dallinger and Gray Wilson in the roles Rita and Frank.

The plot centres around Rita, a hairdresser who is enthusiastically and newly enrolled in an Open University course in English Literature. Dr Frank Bryant is her jaded tutor, whose love of poetry is on a par with his



Elyse and Gray as Rita and Frank  
Photo: Richard Johnson

love of the bottle.

The whole play is set in Frank's office, where the dynamic of the teacher-student relationship changes and Rita discovers her own voice.

"Audiences are bound to relate to Rita and Frank," says Kylie, "and the set is amazing, thanks to so many locals who have helped us with furniture and other special pieces."

To ensure audiences are Covid-Safe, LTC is limiting audience numbers, instigating various hygiene measures, only offering on-line ticket sales and complying with regulations including use of the ServiceNSW QR registration.

Bookings can be made at: [www.lismoretheatrecompany.org.au](http://www.lismoretheatrecompany.org.au) for the nine shows over three weekends, including Sunday matinees.

## Gardening guide for February

by Caroline Nature

We recently watched *Kiss the Ground* on Netflix, an informative documentary about the importance of soil as a solution to healing the climate crisis.

The carbon exchange between barren soil, (whose microbial life has been killed mostly by overuse of nitrogen fertilisers and over tilling), and the atmosphere (where the unnatural overload of CO<sub>2</sub> and nitrous oxide is wreaking havoc), is now a measurable thing.

There are solutions that include holistic land and animal management that can and do make significant change, possibly more than converting our cars over to electricity. Google leaders like Allan Savory, Joel Salatin and Australians Anna and Michael Coughlan of the Land to Market project for more info and try to see this hopeful doco.

Small gardens can be easily transformed to holistic practices by following some basic principles. Start with organic seeds and seedlings and learn how to save your own seeds (see Jude and Michel Fanton's Seed Saving book). Use unpolluted water from rain collection and healthy dams.

Make your own fertiliser from worm farms, compost teas and hot composting. Use organic mulches like cut grass and pruned branches and leaves. These healthy ways will give life to the soil, the plants and finally to us.

Complete this cycle by properly composting your scraps and humanure and returning it all to the garden to enrich your soil life, store carbon and grow healthy food. You could say think globally and act locally!

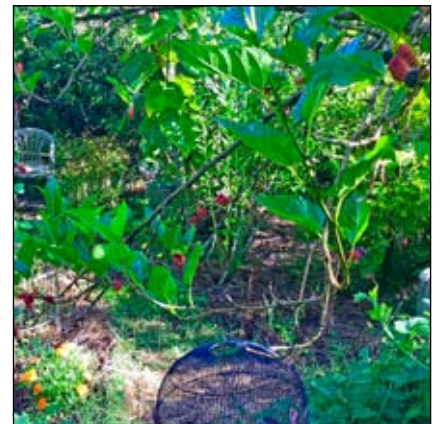
In January we daily harvested blueberries, grapes, pineapple guavas, strawberries and a small flush of mulberries that have grown out of season. The native Wompi tree has bunches of yellow fruit that tastes like custard apple and the birds leave us a few to sample. Passionfruits and guavas are growing bigger and pineapples are ripening.

### February 1-4

Full moon in Leo was on January 29 and this week, moon waning gibbous, is a good time to fertilise, with a liquid fertiliser or compost, around the base of plants. Pull out weeds and restore



Dahlias first blooms



Ripe mulberries

pathways and if you have pumpkins and they are rampant, pull them out of gardens and onto pathways where you can easily harvest the tips and keep an eye on the baby pumpkins.

Bag or cut bananas, use the trunks and leaves to mulch around bigger trees like citrus and pecans which grow so well in our subtropics. Harvest and dry herbs for the kitchen, plant more sweet potato runners to provide a continual harvest. Citrus trees are growing fruit right now and will love a fertilise.

### February 5-11

This week is maintenance, tidying up, mowing and brushcutting for mulch and compost building. Hot composting is the safest method to deal with pathogens and if you are physically able there is the 'Berkley' method which takes only 18 days. We feed scraps to our chickens who eat and scratch and poo onto the mulch in their pen, which we then collect and store in small piles in the garden. This will compost in situ and be ready to spread onto the garden beds in a couple of months.

### February 12-19

This week of the new moon is for planting green leafies, herbs, beans, tomatoes, chillies and perennials including nasturtiums, pansies, mint, tulsi basil and spinaches. If you are starting from seed, remember to water daily and protect from harsh sun or rain. I cover seeds with a bird cage then a piece of shade cloth over the top.

If you plant seeds this week, the seedlings will be ready to transplant this time next month and plants ready to eat in April, May and June. If you have seedlings, prepare the bed with organic liquid fertiliser and mulch the garden

first, then considering the plants space needs, make holes in the mulch and dig your seedlings into the soil. The mulch will add protection. At this time of year, water daily and protect with shade cloth.

### February 20-26

We can repeat last week's plantings and add leeks, spring onions and chives. You can never have too many greens! And if the weather is cooler consider planting, broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower for the autumn garden, ready in May. Plant marigolds, salvias and zinnias around the garden as companions, encouraging beneficial insects and providing biodiversity and colour.

Lemongrass is easy to transplant right now and is useful as a border plant and a relaxing tea. To collect transplantable pieces, dig up a clump and separate the stalks with roots on the end. Prepare the ground as if you are planting a seedling and water in well. Lemongrass loves water and does well in soggy areas.

### February 27-28

The full moon in Virgo is on Saturday at 7.19pm. If it is not raining, maybe take a walk in your moonlit garden. Take time to appreciate the rewards your garden gives you, nutritionally, physically and mentally. Autumn starts in March, and this is a good time to plant citrus trees in our subtropics. Daley's Nursery always has great varieties for our region and now has an on-line shop.

Keeping your connection with nature is up to you. Tending gardens, even just looking at nature, helps to restore a balance in me. My anxieties fade and I'm just in it with the plants and wildlife. Nature heals and for that we must protect her.



# As game as Julian Assange

Reviewed by  
Dr John Jiggins

**A** *Secret Australia* explores the extraordinary and transformative journalism of Julian Assange through essays by 18 prominent Australians, including writers Quentin Dempster, Helen Razer, Guy Rundle and Scott Ludlam, academics Richard Tanter and Sulette Dreyfus, and lawyers Jennifer Robinson and Julian Burnside, who examine the insights into corporate skulduggery, international affairs and war crimes provided by the WikiLeaks Archives.

Assange founded WikiLeaks, a website designed to enable whistle-blowers to reveal information that governments and corporations tried to hide, in 2006.

All his dreams came true when WikiLeaks was handed the greatest scoop of the twenty-first century: a cornucopia of exposés that included the Collateral Murder video, the Iraq and Afghanistan war logs, and the tranche of diplomatic cables, known as Cablegate.

It was this extraordinary bounty that launched Assange to fame world-wide, but he was aware of the persecution that befalls whistle-blowers, and had grave misgivings what the

consequence of his scoop might be. Human Rights lawyer Jennifer Robinson recalls a conversation she had with Assange in 2010, in the book's opening essay, 'WikiLeaks and Human Rights'.

Days after the release of the Iraq War Logs, Assange told her that there was more to come. He had over a quarter of a million US diplomatic cables and he was going to publish them. She writes:

*"I could barely wrap my head around the significance of what he had told me: it would provide the public unprecedented insight into international diplomacy, US foreign policy, and, as a result, Australian acquiescence to its ally's demands."*

*"Assange was acutely aware of the personal consequences and the persecution that would follow, but felt a duty to the source and to the public to publish the material WikiLeaks had received: 'They will chase me to the end of the world, but I have to do it.' 'I was struck by his courage and his commitment to ensuring that the public had access to this material, whatever the personal cost.'"*

He published, and found himself damned, persecuted for a decade by the most powerful liars in the world, whose crimes he dared to document. Is it any wonder that George Gittoes called his Archibald Award entry

portrait of Julian Assange, 'As game as... '?

Assange was also the most original voice in twenty-first-century journalism, argues Dr Sulette Dreyfus in her contribution, 'The Origins and Outcomes of a Digital Pioneer'.

WikiLeaks changed journalism, she says: the anonymous, secure digital dropbox that Assange pioneered through WikiLeaks has been widely copied by major corporations like the New York Times and the ABC, allowing whistle-blowers to transfer information to the public and securely preserve their anonymity, avoiding the remorseless persecution that is all too often their fate.

With the massive Cablegate files, Assange and WikiLeaks also pioneered analysing large data sets in a collaborative way on a never-before seen scale with a global coalition of 89 news organisations that included The New York Times, The Guardian, Le Monde, and La Repubblica. He bequeathed a digital archive of corporate and government secrets that researchers and the public can search, as well as journalists.

In his chapter on how WikiLeaks redefined National Security journalism, Quentin Dempster supports Dr Dreyfus and quotes from the 2011 Walkley Award to

WikiLeaks for 'outstanding contribution to journalism'.

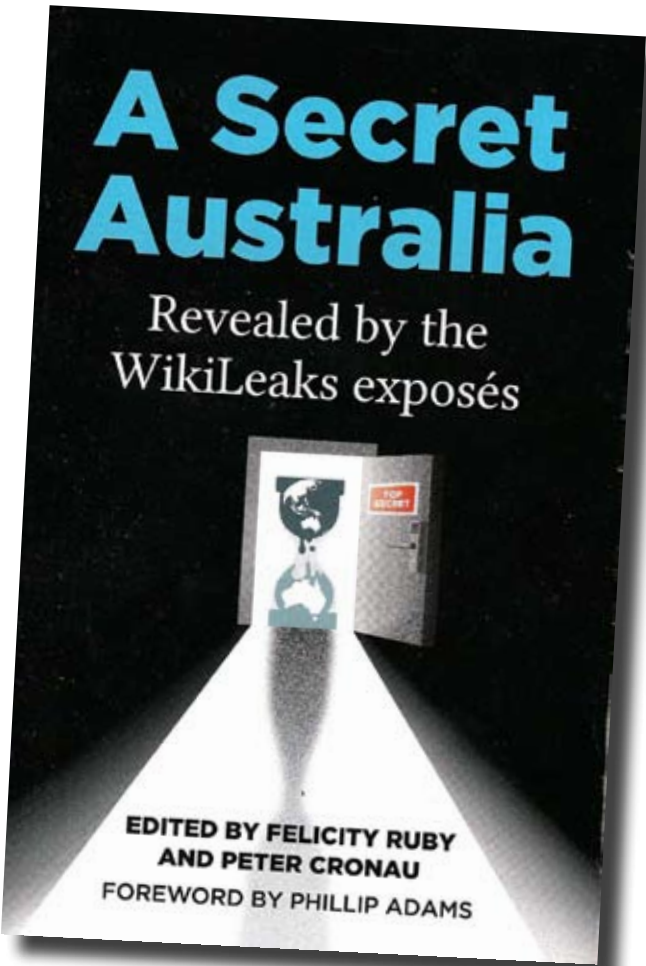
*"This year's winner has shown a courageous and controversial commitment to the finest traditions of journalism: justice through transparency. WikiLeaks applied new technology to penetrate the inner workings of government to reveal an avalanche of inconvenient truths in a global publishing coup."*

*"Its revelations on how the war on terror was being waged, to diplomatic bastardry, high-level horse-trading and the interference in the domestic affairs of nations, have had an undeniable impact."*

*"This innovation could just as easily have been developed by any of the world's major publishers – but it wasn't. Yet so many eagerly took advantage of the secret cables to create more scoops in a year than most journalists could imagine in a lifetime."*

Besides the Walkley, WikiLeaks and Assange have won over a dozen of the most important global journalism awards, bestowed by panels of the most prominent journalists worldwide, all of whom have made similar, glowing endorsements.

Yet the Big Lie promulgated by the US, that Julian Assange is not a journalist, persists in the Australian media, which is dominated by a US citizen,



Rupert Murdoch, notorious for misusing his media power to promote US wars.

Murdoch's minions resort to these ad hominin attacks to discredit WikiLeaks journalism because they can't deny the facts that anyone can confirm by simply searching the WikiLeaks website.

In this way, the narrative about Assange has been changed from his role as a truth-teller to an evil and perverted traitor.

It is a curious fact that

Australia gave birth to two such contrasting transformative figures of modern journalism, Assange and Murdoch.

It is the great shame of our nation that it participates in the persecution of one and allows its democracy to be manipulated by the other.

*A Secret Australia: Revealed by the WikiLeaks exposés; edited by Felicity Ruby and Peter Cronau, Monash University Publishing.*

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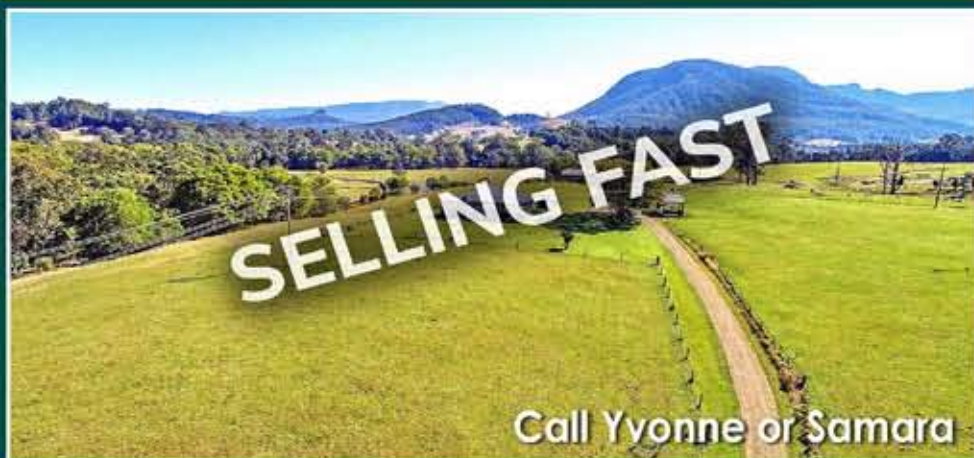
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