# HOROSCOPE

BY SOUP CAN SAM
STAFF PSYCHIC

**Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)** Happiness shines bright this month. As the sun rises and the clouds roll in, revel in day-long dusk. Portland glows in the rain.

**Sagittarius (Nov. 23-Dec.23)** On top of old Smokey, the old song began, reminding us that if we climb a mountain we will find love. Maybe we misinterpreted the meaning of that song, but the stars are sure that a mountain was involved.

**Capricorn (Dec. 24-Jan. 19)** See me, feel me, touch me, sang a deaf, dumb, and blind kid. Shoot, if he can't get any attention, what luck do we have?

**Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19)** Eek! the nutria are out. Watch yourself out there.

**Pisces (Feb. 20-March 20)** And now for something completely different, according to a financial genius there is a disconnect between Wall Street and Main Street. Well, duh, I could've told you that. Oh, wait, I just did.

**Aries (March 21-April 20)** Naturally, if you lean to far either way you might fall over. It takes both wings to fly as Jada Mae Langloss told us. Check out her new blog, the stars command you.

**Taurus (April 21-May 20)** Always keep your funny side up. Or out. Either way, be sure to smile because it is about the cheapest way to keep up your happy.

**Gemini (May 21-June 21)** Christ died for your sins, or so the story goes. As far as we can tell the best thing to do is to be honest. Sinning or not, be true to your guns.

**Cancer (June 22-July 22)** Have you heard the one about the yogi who makes the grass green? Well, the gist is that you and the grass together make the grass green, meaning we all create our own reality. The stars command you to make a rosy world for the rose city.

**Leo (July 23-Aug. 23)** You know, without you, we, the stars, have no one to talk to. Life is a two-way street. Keep space around you to let people going the other way get by.

**Virgo (Aug. 24-Sept. 22)** Be the salt of the earth and the pepper on your salad.

**Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)** Change is coming. Not that there's anything wrong with that, but sometime you need that pointed it out.

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International Monetary Fund and the money creation process, but I really didn't understand any of that.

It wasn't until I had left my academic career behind and got involved in the peace and justice movement that I began to see information that was calling into question the dominant paradigm and the structures of banking and money that we had inherited in the past.

I was trying to get to the basic causes of the world's problems, like starving amidst plenty, the gaps in income and wealth around the world, why some countries were very affluent while other were economic basket cases, and why we had recurrent wars. And in the process of doing my research, I quickly realized that there were a number of causes at different levels. We have the personal values added to beliefs, cultural factors that dispose us in certain direction, but those all result in some fundamental structures: political, economic and social structures, and institutions that channel those ideas and channel human energy.

**J.Z.:** *With the recent economic crisis, is the time ripe for a new understanding of alternative monetary systems?*

**T.G.:** It is a ripe time because we're starting to feel the pain right here at home. Before, we were able to export the problem to other countries, Third World countries, I called them economic colonies of the Western economies – Europe, the U.S. and Japan. By dominating markets, both the market and the politics, the Banana Republics have been under the thumbs of the United States for well over a century. The U.S. military has been the enforcement arm of the imperial ambitions of American companies, not just American, these are multinational companies with no allegiance to any one country.

**J.Z.:** *It reminds me of "Confessions of an Economic Hit Man." The author's name escapes me, but it was very simply laid out how the banks and the military operated in vulnerable countries.*

**T.G.:** John Perkins ... he makes it very clear how that works. But before the United States, the empire was headed by Great Britain, and other European powers. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, you had many countries dominating other countries as political colonies and later as economic colonies.

We've seen a shift from political colonialism to economic colonialism, just as on the micro level we've seen a shift from overt slavery to wage slavery, but it sill reflects a shift in balances of power.

**J.Z.:** *You say that your search for social justice led you to conclude that the economic model was the root of the problem. How, then, will a different system correct environmental and social injustice?*

**T.G.:** I quickly came to realize that the fundamental linchpin, the keystone of this structure of power is the money and banking system. Money is the medium of exchange, and whoever controls the allocation of the medium of exchange controls the economy, and whoever controls the economy controls the politics.

The key to understanding all of this is to realize what the substance of money is. It's just credit. It's no longer gold or silver. It's not even any longer bank notes redeemable for gold or silver. What's behind the money today is a debt obligation. When a bank makes a loan, they create the money in the process of making the loan.

But banks, when they make a loan, they only create the principal and not the interest, the system has a debt imperative, which is a growth imperative. That's why economists constantly talk about growth. Because we have ever-increasing debt. And this compound-interest formula, it forces growth to accelerate over time.

We're seeing basically an explosion of the financial system with an explosion of debt. And as debtors try to service what they owe, they have to continually expand their profits, and so we continue to tear up more of our planet, to make more stuff, and we continue to consume more stuff and that's what's driving the consumer economy.

Once we realize that money is only credit, then we can take control and allocate it to whomever we want.

**J.Z.:** *How would the alternative economy work?*

**T.G.:** You create a credit-clearing organization, associated with a group of others, who are both producers and consumers. When you sell something into the system, your account is credited and when you buy something, it's debited.

We're reinventing money and banking from the bottom up. The banks have been perverse in their actions, and it's gotten worse and worse over time. We used to have community banks that used to provide credit. Most community banks have been gobbled up by large bank holding companies. And the credit is allocated to big corporations.

**J.Z.:** *It's like "It's a Wonderful Life," only in reality the small Bailey Savings and Loan was taken over by Mr. Potter.*

**T.G.:** There have been a lot of sound principles of sound banking that have been pushed aside and left behind, and so banks do more and more things that are not only dysfunctional but harmful to local economies.

When we realize that money is nothing but credit, and it's our credit, we don't have to give our credit to the banks and beg them to lend some of it back to us. By organizing a global exchange system, we can directly allocate credit to those we want to support.

**J.Z.:** *Describe some alternative systems you would favor. You've praised the "LETS" movement – Local Exchange Trading Systems, and the Swiss WIR Bank, which has 70,000 members and is the longest-running credit clearing system in the world. How do these systems operate?*

**T.G.:** There's actually hundreds of direct exchange systems. What we're talking about is reciprocal exchange. And that means it's an exchange among producers. Almost all of us are producers as well as consumers, we have a way of earning money, as well as spending money, even if it's only by selling our services to an employer. It's not exactly charity, it doesn't take care of those who are not able to produce anything. But indirectly it benefits them because it creates more wealth at the bottom of the pyramid. They're able to support those nonfinancial transactions that support charities in the gift economy. Right now, more of the value is going to the stop of the pyramid. We have CEOs giving themselves obscene bonuses even as the middle class is being destroyed.

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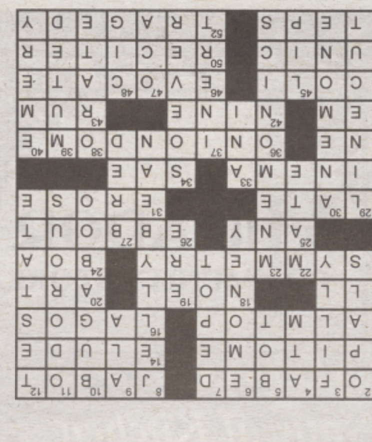
## Crossword answers for puzzle on page 16





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