

The Heckler

Sweet talker seduces with modern take on siren song

Another woman has intruded into our relationship. I've tried ignoring her, I've threatened, I've begged. But she's still here. She can do no wrong. No matter what she tells him to do, he'll do it, no questions asked. The self-assured, confident "follow-me" man I married won't venture forth without her. She lures him with her siren-song; he is Odysseus, she The Lorelei. "Turn right in 50 metres," her voice like melting chocolate. I call her Tiffany (I have my reasons).

Am I the only one aware of Tiffany's shortcomings? Ask her what her thoughts are on Afghanistan - nothing. Ask her if sexism has influenced Australian politics - nothing. Ask her for her views on global warming - nothing. She has no opinions, no conversation. I doubt she ever finished high school. But his eyes light up when she speaks; her voice mellifluous and seducing. "You will reach your destination in 25 minutes."



"How does she know that?" My voice is that of a harpy. "Anything can happen, what if there's a traffic hold-up, an accident?" "Then it will recalculate." He sounds so reasonable, calling her "it" when I know better.

I remember when he first brought Tiffany home. He spent hours reading her manual, murmuring sweet nothings as he positioned her just right. But this was just foreplay. He then programmed her functioning in his information, obeying

The Diary

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Taking the Long way on politics

Visit some of Sydney's more colourful circles and the message for political leaders is pretty unambiguous. "People I speak to are mostly people who voted Labor most of their lives. Most of them feel utterly betrayed and deserted by the Labor Party," **Graham Long**, pastor of the Wayside Chapel, told The Diary. "We're probably unusual. I know the whole world's gone redneck, but not round here." He comes across homeless, drug abuse and mental illness day-in, day-out, but it is our political antics that leave him dejected. "I see people criticising politicians no end. If you think you can keep up with **Malcolm Turnbull's** pace for a week, let me know. **Tanya Pilbersek** looks after a huge portfolio and brings up two kids. We should be proud of them." Then came the but... Next up for the Wayside is a commercial kitchen and an upgraded hall to stage professional plays and concerts. It's all part of Long and co's plan of "trying to overcome some of the barriers we build

between people all the time. We constantly construct a lonely world and say 'You belong to one world, we belong to another'."

Actor **Claudia Karvan** was invited to be guest of honour at Thursday night's launch of his latest book, *Love Over Hate*, at the Hughes Street HQ. Wayside chairman **Ian Martin** ("he's a bloody hero") and **Bob Ellicott, QC** ("he's 86 and sharp

in Melbourne doing Shakespeare, the poor man. It sounds like hell to me") was set to be represented by his wife, **Kate Agnew**. And if one man is qualified to give a social diagnosis, it's Long. "Australia damages its own soul when we choose to be cruel," he said of the treatment of asylum seekers. "We are like the poor people here who have an addiction - as a community we are self-harming."



Overcoming barriers: Graham Long and his new book.

as a razor, I don't know how he does it") were also due at the launch party, while actor **David Wenham** ("he's

Meaty subject proves to be on the money for cartoonist

When the Song Company's singers asked **Cathy Wilcox** to partner with them and sell prints of her politically charged cartoons at their *Song Co and Co* performance this Sunday, they can't have foreseen the subject material to be quite so en pointe.

With ICAC's climax this week have come inevitable rich pickings - both for onlookers and satirists. As well as some of her favourite moments from papers past, at least three Wilcox illustrations from this week's *Herald* ICAC coverage will greet the Leichardt Italian Forum Cultur-



his colourful cohorts - not to mention the "good guys" - form the basis of one of Wilcox's more memorable moments.

"In October, I did a cartoon on the vultures all swooping at ICAC, with a sign saying fresh meat," she said. A lawyer from the commission then contacted her and asked for two framed copies of the cartoon doctored with he and a colleague's name around the vulture's necks.

"He was clearly excited about the ear money to come from ICAC - but not so eager to pay," mused Wilcox. "It's been lawyer's picnic."