



# LIGHT BRIDGE

THE 25-YEAR SPAN

By Eric Francis

Published by Planet Waves, Inc.

# **Light Bridge: The 25-Year Span**

By Eric Francis

Published by Planet Waves, Inc.

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## **Additional Credits**

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VERSION 1.1 - updated December 14, 2019

## About Planet Waves

**Planet Waves**, founded by investigative reporter [Eric Francis Coppolino](#), began publishing on the Internet at the winter solstice of 1998. From the beginning, the subject matter encompassed astrology, personal growth, politics, environmental issues and sexuality. There has always been a strong emphasis on art and photography. One result of this experiment has been the creation of a new genre of news reporting that approaches current events from an inner perspective. Today, Planet Waves publishes a twice-weekly online subscriber magazine, a free weekly podcast and a blog that updates about five times daily. We provide a friendly, timely news service that is broad-minded enough to have space for a new approach to perceiving reality. [Subscription information is here.](#)

**Light Bridge** is the 2011 annual edition of Planet Waves, featuring extended readings for all the signs in written and audio format. You may [sign up for Light Bridge here.](#)

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*Many of the astrological charts mentioned in the different essays are in published a separate PDF document that is associated with this book.*

## About the Illustrations

The illustrations in *Light Bridge: The 25-Year Span* were created by Carol McCloud of Vashon Island, WA. She writes:

"At the same time I began following the Mayan calendar in March of 1996, I created a series of 20 digital images/glyphs/nawals based on the designs of the basic 20 day-signs in the Mayan cycle of time. Creating these images started off as 'play' in my daily journals, a small symbolic notation to track the energy of each day. As each day's energy began to unfold, and the glyph designs morphed, I stayed open to all synchronistic experiences and allowed the day-sign or nawals (daily vibration) to teach me about who and what they were. I had no idea how profoundly this new language would capture my dreams, imagination and attention, or how deep the rabbit hole would go. The oracle cards and Mayan teachings took on a life of their own. The 'Evolution Oracle' cards and prints can be used to tap into the personal/collective consciousness, and all those layers in between. It is a way to navigate the 'end of time' -- and the beginning."

You can reach Carol at: [galacticalchemy.com](http://galacticalchemy.com) or [evolutionoracle.com](http://evolutionoracle.com)

Richard Tarnas, whose quotation appears on the next page, is the author of *Cosmos and Psyche*. He can be reached via his website, [RichardTarnas.com](http://RichardTarnas.com).



*I believe that humankind has entered into the most critical stages of a death-rebirth mystery. In retrospect it seems that the entire path of Western civilization has taken humankind and the planet on a trajectory of initiatory transformation, into a state of spiritual alienation, into an encounter with mortality on a global scale -- from world wars and holocausts to the nuclear crisis and now the planetary ecological crisis -- an encounter with mortality that is no longer individual and personal but rather transpersonal, collective, planetary; into a state of radical fragmentation, into the "wasteland," into that crisis of existential meaning and purpose that informed so many of the most sensitive individuals of the past century.*

*It is a collective dark night of the soul, a deep separation from the community of being, from the cosmos itself. We are undergoing this rite of passage with virtually no guidance from wise elders because the wise elders are themselves caught up in the same crisis. This initiation is too epochal for such confident guidance, too global, too unprecedented, too all-encompassing; it is larger than all of us. It seems that we are all entering into something new, a new development, a crisis of accelerated maturation, a birth, an entrance into a profoundly different way of being in the cosmos.*

-- Richard Tarnas, *Earth as Initiate?*



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# Introduction

Like most aspects of the future, 2012 has been a persistent mystery, but unlike most, it's one that has been fuelled by nearly nonstop mythologizing, theorizing and predictions of devastation.

The 12/21/12 date is supposedly associated with the 'end' of the Mayan calendar. However, calendars don't end. Phases of time transition from one into the next. We are definitely in a transitional time. We live in an era where we are seeing some of the consequences of what we've done to the planet, and to our minds. And at the same time we're seeing many examples of the historical process being manipulated. The two are related, but they are not the same thing.

We're also in a time when many people acknowledge that it's 'time to wake up'. I keep hearing that. It seems like most opportunities to wake up are subverted directly into (still more) fear, and this awakening process is rarely discussed or explained; it's more like a mystical longing.

Somewhere between the end of the world and sudden, unanimous (and effortless) enlightenment of humanity there is what's actually happening. What's actually happening is that we live in a time of accelerated change, both geopolitical and personal. The two are starting to intersect more and more every day. Astrology is where the two points have always encountered one another; astrology is the reminder that we all share one field of consciousness, individually and collectively.

What you have in this book is a compilation of articles that go back as far as 1987, describing an awakening process that is linked to preparation for the changes of our phase in history and gradually morphing into those actual developments.

I take more the enlightenment-oriented point of view, but I think of this less as a sudden event and more as a process of growth and awareness leading to curiosity and action. I don't try to speculate about events or their supposed meaning. I have spent most of my energy asking questions about the trajectory of world events, and considering how we might respond in the midst of them -- and no energy into making predictions. In fact this is probably the only 2012 book you'll ever read or hear about that makes no specific predictions, and if I'm looking ahead, it's certainly not to the end of the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Francis". The script is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter 'g'.

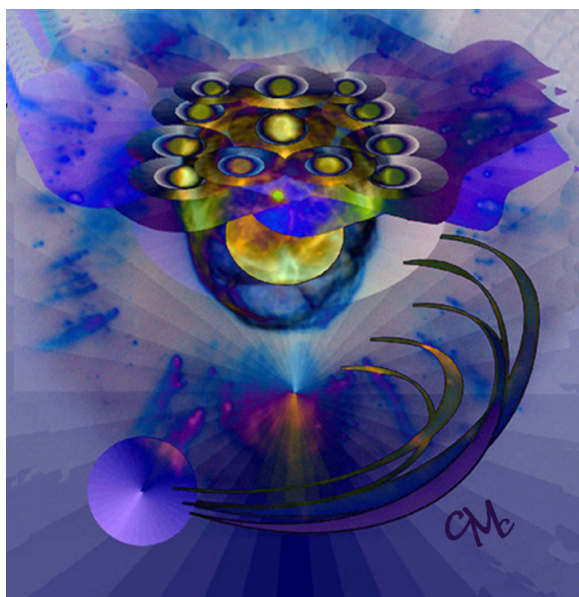
-- Eric Francis  
Kingston, NY, March 23, 2011



## The 25-Year Span: Harmonic Convergence to Solstice 2012

*"I look out across the slumbering sea of humanity, and I whisper these words in the night. And I know that I address a great being sleeping still in ignorance of itself. I know that if the wild winter winds of your communication systems send tatters or fragments of this message echoing in the darkness, it will still be to the unconscious that I speak. For the conscious have seen the sky start to brighten in the East and have felt the warming spring of eternal life begin to thaw the hardness of their preconceptions."*

-- The Starseed Transmissions



### ***An Unexpected Party***

When I participated in the Harmonic Convergence in August 1987, it was the first time I had heard of 2012. I was living in a spiritual community called Miracle Manor, with 11 other adults doing *A Course in Miracles*.

The *Course* is a yearlong self-study program. On one level, the most obvious, it is about spiritual psychology. On another it's an explanation of Christianity.

You could look at it as an introduction to healing method -- it is literally about training the mind to be open to miracles and to be a facilitator for

healing (same idea). In the *Course* there are no references to groups, meetings, organizations or communities, though there are or at least were a number of them; one formed in 1985. I moved there in the beginning of the second of two years that the place existed.

José Arguelles had just published *The Mayan Factor*, and we knew that the Harmonic Convergence had something to do with preparations for 2012. Arguelles had indeed planned this as the commencement of the final countdown till winter solstice 2012, by all reports the long count date 13.0.0.0.0.

At that point 2000 seemed like it was so far off that it would never come; 2012 was so remote there was little point thinking about it, but we were. For the record, it was nearly as mysterious then as it is now: mysterious and obvious.

Though the scientific and historical details leading to the creation of the Harmonic Convergence were a bit cryptic, there was no question that it was happening. Intuitively we understood we were taking part in something worthwhile and of global significance, dedicated to shifting the vibration of the planet. This was all happening at the height of the New Age. I would describe the New Age as a kind of subculture spiritualist current in society, with many odd little quirks, nearly all of which were new to me. New Agey has become a kind

of insult, though for all its kitsch some excellent books have passed through this section of the library.

I can trace my actual inquiry, my time on the path, back to high school, when I started on a book called *Notes to Myself* by Hugh Prather.

Until I arrived at Miracle Manor, I had spent most of my creative energy doing political journalism, writing political campaigns and experimenting with sex. I learned to be an editor, designer and photographer pretty young. But I was always curious about 'the other side' of the mind.

My drug tendencies were pot and acid, and my early tripping journey (in high school) was intermingled with my book choices. One of my favorites was *The Lazy Man's Guide to Enlightenment* by Thaddeus Golas. I viewed my excursions into psychedelia as being about raising inner awareness; that is, learning about myself. That was my intention, and that was what it felt like I was doing, though at times I had my doubts. But at the heart of the journey was self-discovery; self-actualization. I was on a path of considering my relationship to existence, and I remain on that journey.

Beginning the *Course* on my own in the spring of 1986 was a turning point for me, a commitment to a new level of training and dedication to the work. I started to open up in new ways, and it happened pretty quickly. When I heard that I might be able to live in Miracle Manor, that seemed like the obvious thing to do. So I reached out and, after some discussion, I was able to create a space there for me and my then-girlfriend Ginger.

I describe Miracle Manor as boot camp for pro mystics, proto healers and hardcore seekers. We exchanged a fairly amazing amount of information (I learned a lot about cooking, among other things). As well, the place was one long confrontation with family dynamics, interpersonal dynamics and a number of people with many different orientations and spiritual traditions getting together in a chaotic and barely functional place. Some people felt it was their role to be at their best. Others took the opportunity to be their most controlling, so to be sure, there were plenty of occasions to practice the central teaching of the *Course*, which is forgiveness.

Our supposed goal as a community was to complete the *Course* in one year, from Sept. 1, 1986 to Aug. 31, 1987. I am not sure when during that year the Harmonic Convergence first came up as a topic, though it was probably in June or July, toward the end. The setup was: we had a facility. Miracle Manor was located on the grounds of a former convent near New York City, on 6 acres of land, with a river, the Raritan, running through the backyard. We had a huge event room and a chapel and a community kitchen -- and grounds. We had a gazebo on the river that was just a portal to the moment. We each had a private room, the ones the nuns used to live in. There were a couple of extra dorm rooms with bunk beds that could accommodate about 10 extra people. It was the perfect place for a big event. But we had no event planned.

The Holistic Health Association of the Princeton Area (HHAPA) had an event planned but no place to hold it. How HHAPA and our crew got together was typical of everything that happened at Miracle Manor: it felt like a miracle, which is another way of saying beautiful synchronicity. These happened so frequently and so dependably at Miracle Manor that we learned to count on them as a way of life -- and that was the precise purpose of *A Course in*

*Miracles*. Basically, their event incarnated in our facility. We had no part in the organizing and leadership; I guess we invited our mailing list. But basically HHAPA ran the show, and it was nice.

I remember very little about the preparations. We often hosted events at Miracle Manor, and for a while anyway, this seemed like any other, perhaps a little more elaborate and important. We did some cleaning and rearranging with the growing sense that something significant was happening. Without openly stating what that was, we all understood. The exact event was set for noon Greenwich Mean Time on Aug. 16, 1987, which translated to 7 am New Jersey time. Using a precise time was so that a global meditation for world peace could be coordinated -- remember, without the benefit of the Internet. The word email didn't exist. There was no Facebook page for the event. The only worldly forms of communication were face-to-face yakking, mail or telephone. In a pinch you could send a telegram.

As for how we lived at that moment: in the same building, eating on different schedules. Neither did Miracle Manor have much in the way of coordinated *Course* classes or study groups, but there were occasional hot ones. It was more like a general immersion in New Age philosophy and practice, following family dynamics that typically emerge in group therapy. I did the *Course* work (in the theoretical sense, working with the three books and the mind training exercises) mostly on my own, and was rigorous in my studies and meditation.

Meanwhile, the daily immersion included Edgar Cayce, the idea of Earth changes, various entities from Ramtha to Seth. Some people were channels; some were into angels; some were into crystals -- I mean *really* into crystals. Others were into the space brothers and one liked to hang out on the Mothership. One woman could hear plants talking; she was a plant communicator. One contingent was devotees of the guru Hilda at St. John the Divine in New York City. There was lots of talk about the possibility of a forthcoming Tribulation Period: a time of major global trials, chaos and collapse (which at the time, based on the stability of the U.S., seemed like an odd proposition). I was exposed to all of these ideas and many more, taking it all in. Little of this was my cup of tea, but I was curious enough to take a lot in.

While I lived at Miracle Manor, I worked as a newspaper reporter for a paper in Warren, a town about half an hour away. There, I was solidly grounded in things like zoning laws, the Planning Board and the Sewerage Authority.

I had been hired for my first reporting job by Flo Higgins, the long-time editor of a gritty little newspaper called the *Echoes-Sentinel*. Flo, as it worked out, was an astrologer, and I was given the desk right where the astrology calendar hung on the wall. I had no prior interest in astrology; there was just this half-crazed editor in my life who owned a New Age bookstore called Aquarius Rising Books, and who cast my natal chart for me and sparked my curiosity in things like tarot cards and runes. Flo handed me a lit match.

Despite having little knowledge of astrology, I remember looking at the astrology calendar over my desk to see if there was anything I could decipher about the meaning of the Harmonic Convergence. I could see there were a lot of triangles a few days before the 16th, which turned out to be the Moon making trines to a number of planets gathered in the fire signs. I'm still unclear how much Western astrology went into planning the Harmonic Convergence; this seems to have been an event based more on the Mayan calendar than on the Western zodiac. Nobody seemed to understand the Mayan calendar; since then I've only met a few people who



do. But to me, with no knowledge of astrology, all those trines seemed significant, or at least unusual. As I looked at them, contemplating their meaning, they seemed to represent a gateway.

In the background of it all was a 2012 theme, but it seemed so far off in 1987 that it was hardly possible to draw a real connection. But we knew that it had something to do with Earth changes, indeed with mitigating Earth changes, and I personally understood the theme to be about laying an energetic foundation that would help the world avert nuclear war. Remember that at the time the Cold War was still a memory and a presence. The Berlin Wall would still be around for two more years. There was still the Eastern Bloc and the Iron Curtain and the USSR, which made up the basis of geopolitics.

### ***An Unexpected Telephone Call***

One evening about a week before the Harmonic Convergence, I was sitting in my room with my friend Dan. We had the same warped sense of humor and we had this idea to do a mock newspaper called the *New Age News / Tribulation Tribune*. There was a kind of ongoing debate among us seekers about what was coming: an age of enlightenment and peace and harmony (the widely prophesized dawn of the New Age), or a big mess: the Tribulation Period (first mentioned by that name in *Matthew*), where everything was quickly going to hell in a hand-basket, the world's systems would collapse and continents would skate around, rearranging all the zip codes.

We were laughing ourselves silly, working on an ad for the office of Dr. Imyour Friend (*I'm your doctor, and I'm your friend*) when my housemate Vicki came into my room with the portable phone. As she handed it to me, it had the distinct aura of death.

In the approximately two seconds between seeing her in my doorway and putting the phone to my ear, I thought: my grandmother has cancer, but it's too soon for her to die. I wonder who it could be. I learned one second later that it was my grandfather (her husband) who had just shot himself in the head. This was days before the Harmonic Convergence, right in the approach of all those trines. I thought: he couldn't make it through the threshold.

In my notebook that night, I wrote, "The first thing I've heard is that his chosen death stands as a reminder of the outcome of a thought system he practiced long before today."

I will spare too many details except to say that he was a troubled, authentically hateful, and to be fair, deeply wounded person who had been a recipient of and a source of psychological abuse and an unknown degree of sexual abuse in the family. Among the living, he was reviled by everyone but his brother. I dare say he did plenty to deserve it. When my grandmother got cancer and he suddenly had to take care of her, this was a lot to expect of him. After two recent prior attempts at taking his life, which involved running the car in the garage (a Nissan, which apparently didn't spew out enough toxins to kill a person), he finally went down into the basement and, with one bullet in the chamber of a small-calibre semi-automatic pistol, shot himself in the temple.

The police said this was unusual. Though it's impossible to fire a second shot if you hit your head the first time, most people load a full clip. He was fully ambidextrous. He used his right hand (masculine side) and entered through the feminine side of his brain.

As it worked out, the funeral was going to coincide precisely with the Harmonic Convergence event. Because he had been shot, the police kept the body a few extra days to do a murder investigation. After concluding that he and not someone else had indeed done the deed, they released his body to the funeral home. The first night of the wake was Saturday, Aug. 15, 1987 -- the eve of the Convergence. The second night was Aug. 16, the day of, and the burial was Monday morning, Aug. 17. The timing seemed astonishing: he would be getting a global send-off.

### ***It's Only Change***

At the time this happened, my brother was in the Army. He has a knack for one thing, really, which is getting in serious trouble. At the moment I got the phone call, he was sitting in the stockade in Fort Carson, CO, for having gone AWOL, apparently because he figured that would get him kicked out. He was about to get a general discharge when the Army expedited his papers so he could go to the funeral. Thus, my brother attended the Harmonic Convergence at Miracle Manor. He, my girlfriend Ginger and I spent the weekend shuttling between the two events.

When we returned from the wake on Saturday night, Miracle Manor was transformed. It was usually a sleepy, quiet, convent-like place. Now it was thriving with activity and motion and purpose and, moreover, with *energy*. This, late at night: all the better. The grounds, the rooms, the corridors, were *vibrating*. With the exception of our private rooms, HHAPA had taken over our facility; we were there to help if necessary, and we had minor roles, but they were the ones officiating, organizing, orchestrating. An altar was set up in the event room on the first floor, with a huge timpani drum. About 40 of their people were around. They were planning an all-night vigil. It was now just hours away from the Convergence.

We knew that we were among many, many spiritual communities around the world that were participating in this moment. Up until that time we had not talked openly about the significance of the Convergence, and as an event, it sprung itself on us. But walking into that space, into my home, was like standing in a portal, connected to everywhere else that this event was being celebrated, from Mount Shasta to Stonehenge. The sense of global connection was palpable.

HHAPA turned out to be run by people involved with the Sufi tradition, and they understood meditation and ritual. Many were in traditional Sufi garb. People were moving swiftly around, arranging the place, making food, and I have no idea what else. We took a little tour of the preparations and collapsed into bed. The only reason we slept was because we were so exhausted from the trip to Brooklyn for my grandfather's wake.

We set an alarm clock for 6 am, which meant we probably got about five hours of sleep. I remember pulling on some shorts and a t-shirt and padding downstairs barefoot with Ginger and my brother for the sunrise meditation. If there had been an energy portal obvious the night before, now it was open wide. I slipped into conscious meditation, and we joined the

circle that was forming. The timpani was being struck about once every three seconds, providing a foundation rhythm that had been going most of the night and would continue all day. There was a chant being played on the sound system.

It was children singing, over and over:

*Opening doors, closing doors  
I'm not afraid, it's only change*

*Opening doors, closing doors  
I'm not afraid, it's only change*

This put the whole experience into context. Though it was not easy to say what the Harmonic Convergence was, if it meant anything clearly it was about change; it was about focus on constructive, creative change; it was about unifying the world in some way, and raising the vibration of the planet. I did not stop to wonder whether this was possible; it merely seemed necessary, and it was simply what we were doing. The next few hours are a blur. I only have memory fragments. But the feeling I have is that we were crossing a kind of threshold in time, and subtly entering another dimension, or more like another dimension was washing over us.

On one level it seemed we were making a choice, to go in a certain direction: we had come to the branching of the road, where it is not possible to go straight ahead. One must go one way or the other, and we were choosing the one obvious way.

By midmorning, hundreds of people were converging on our community. The newspapers had picked up on the Harmonic Convergence story in the previous few days, so many people had heard about it by then. We were holding the only big event in our region, and somehow a lot of people found out what we were doing and showed up from everywhere. We made the front page of the Newark *Star-Ledger* the next day, which described the line of 200 cars waiting to park on our little convent grounds.

After the sunrise meditation was over, the place had a festive quality, with people everywhere and a sense of excitement and change. And, in a little while we had to put on proper dress clothes and attend the last night of my grandfather's wake. I can tell you I would have rather stayed at Miracle Manor that day, and I can also tell you that it seemed oddly apropos that we would be going to his funeral. One of the authentic members of the old guard, someone who did a fine job anchoring fear down to the planet, had jumped off right before this dimensional opening happened.

When we got back Sunday night, things had settled down considerably at Miracle Manor. In a surprise turn of events, we learned that Mario, our landlord and the originator of many dramas throughout the year, was throwing us out. He was the kind of guy who would do that two weeks before the lease was up. Another devotee of the religion of fear, apparently he was having his own version of not being able to make it into the next dimension. A strange twist was that in the chaos of the Convergence celebration, my girlfriend Ginger had supposedly left a file cabinet in the wrong place, and that was the 'reason' the whole community was being evicted. It seemed so strange as to verge on funny.



The next morning, Monday morning, was the funeral. We drove to Brooklyn, still flushed with the energy of the Harmonic Convergence. All my relatives from that side of the family are buried in the Bronx, which is well over an hour away. I am still reminded of that day every time I cross the Bronx-Whitestone Bridge. I am not sure how I would have felt had I only attended the Convergence ritual that weekend, but attending the funeral for the patriarch of paranoia made the point indelibly.

## ***An Artifact***

Here are my notes from the morning of Sunday, Aug. 16, 1987:

*Meditated through the world-joining from sunrise to 8:15 am, and then we sang for over an hour and something really just started pouring me all over the place. Tears of joy went on and on and on, and we sang and held hands and knew we were helping, knew that the best of our hopes was real, knew that God the Creator had co-authored the whole thing with us.*

*Now the road stretches gently before us. Now will the way be different because at the point of separation we took the only way to life. It seems now that the way of fear will never tempt me again fully. Never lure me into its grip, or its sleep.*

## ***The 25-Year Span***

We all moved on from Miracle Manor. I took an apartment with Ginger in Plainfield, about a half an hour away, and continued working for Flo Higgins for a while, then moved on to a more challenging job doing business journalism. As the years have unfolded, I've appreciated my experience there more and more. In my first year after university, I invested my energy in putting down a solid spiritual foundation, and had been exposed to many ideas and experiences that I might have missed otherwise. I had no idea what direction my life would take. However, I recognized my writing talent to some degree, and a psychic who came to visit us and gave me my first reading told me that I would be involved with international networking.

As history developed over the coming years, including the end of the Cold War, the democracy movement in China and many other events, I kept thinking back to the Harmonic Convergence as a reference point. I began to see it as a light anchor that we had dropped into consciousness and the Earth, which had helped us avoid many of the worst possibilities that could come with life on a militarized planet.

I didn't hear the term 25-year span till the other night when I was talking with my friend Heather Fae Speaker about 2012. I met Heather three years ago as a model for my Book of Blue project. She's become one of my closest friends and spiritual confidants in that time. Despite having done her chart, I somehow neglected to notice that she was born the weekend of the Harmonic Convergence. That, she said, was the beginning of the 25-year span from 1987 to 2012. I was astonished. I remembered that weekend vividly, as it was one of the strangest, most beautiful times in my life. And she was born in those very days: a living representative of the energy.

The image that came to mind was that she was born at one end of a light bridge, which spanned from one Harmonic Convergence to the next: the one on Dec. 21, 2012. But she had little knowledge of the first Convergence or what happened that weekend. I told her some of the stories, and told her that she was born in what may have been the largest, most focused, most sincere global meditation for peace in the history of the world. Now we are approaching the other end of that span -- the 2012 side.

In these years, the pace of history has accelerated. At Miracle Manor, we were calling it celestial speedup. Earth changes, a common topic of conversation there, certainly seem to have begun, and we don't know quite where history is leading. But we know we've reached another crux point, represented by the Jupiter-Uranus conjunction in Aries, and the collection of planets around the cardinal cross and Aries Point. This, as you will read in later chapters, is one of the key astrological pieces of the 2012 puzzle coming into place, and we can assume that history is reflecting that.

As I write, the oil gusher in the Gulf of Mexico is still running out of control, and everyone agrees this is the worst environmental disaster in the world. Global tensions are high, in the Middle East and the Korean peninsula. Climate-change is a household term and we wonder about the impacts of the ice caps melting. Floods, tornadoes, major earthquakes and tsunamis seem commonplace. [As I edit some seasons after the original writing, the nuclear reactors are still smouldering in Japan and a radiation plume is spreading around the world.

And the 'allies' have begun a new war in the Middle East, against Libya.] Xenophobia is running at an all-time high in the United States. World economies are on the brink of chaos, though this is not talked about openly and any real discussion of the world economy is eclipsed by the oil spill. We have no idea where these events will lead, though it seems obvious that they are building toward a peak as we approach the other end of the span, and that many individual cells in the planetary body are being called to awakening.

I cannot say that I fully understand the idea of 2012 or its implications. I have perceived it mainly as a focal point in a visioning process. As I have come to understand the Western astrology, it certainly seems to fit the theme of the Mayan astrology, which is about the end of the 13th baktun, a 5,125-year span (that is, of 13 baktuns, together comprising a piktun) that began in 3113 AD. You will read several different accounts of this in the following essays.

Though I can't say concretely what 2012 is, I've been thinking about it and writing about it for a long time -- all the while, working with the process of creating what it can be, and describing a version of events that is not focused on external cataclysm. The rest of this e-book consists of everything I've written about 2012 and related subjects, going as far back as we could research, and extending to a few weeks before publication. This includes articles about convergence points along the 25-year span that do not directly reference 2012 but which, looking in hindsight, are obviously related (such as some materials about Sept. 11, 2001).

I'm leaving the articles as originally written except for correcting obvious typing errors, obvious factual errors, and adding some inline comments [in brackets] that make what I consider necessary corrections. Each article has a brief introduction that explains its context and, if necessary, my thoughts about where the ideas fit into the larger scheme. This book is not intended to give a 'definitive meaning' of 2012. What I hope to offer are seeds of

understanding that may help you see a historical pattern, notice where you fit into it, and choose consciously how to respond.

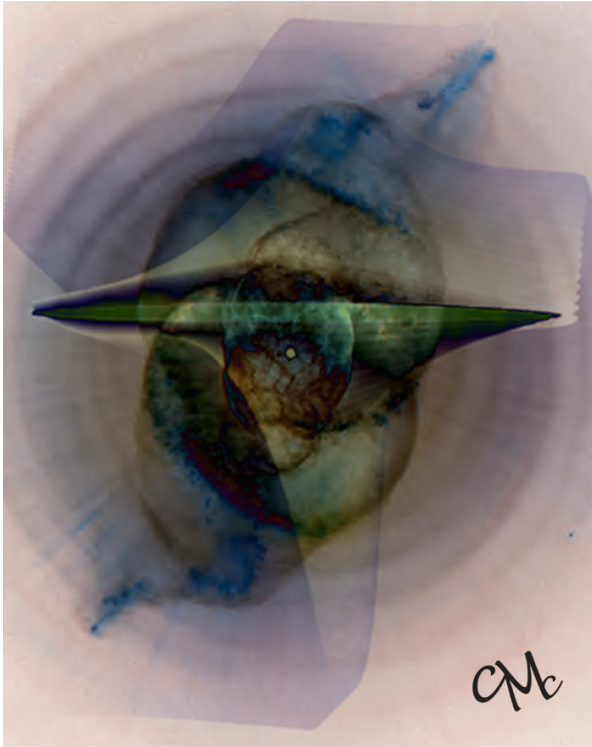
-- Kingston, New York, June 5, 2010; revised March 21, 2011.

*8. LAMAT. (Star) The Mayan star (June 3, 2010 in the traditional count; June 5, 2010 in some alternative counts). This step is basically about learning to love. You develop a tolerance and a compassion for yourself and others. The ability to love yourself is very important in attaining wisdom, and it is perfected here. You begin to feel a profound sense of your own value and a love for yourself exactly as you are. You evolve this self-love into a deep love for humanity and a love and caring for Planet Earth. Meditating with this glyph will help you remember and hold the vibration for unconditional love. The solar glyph painting Lamat portrays with colors our coming forth into being from love when we awake, creating our bodies out of light, then our return back to love, which we all do each time we fall asleep. Lamat is the symbolic portrayal that love is what we are.*



## Weekend of Listening

*This article was first published in 313, a collection of my poems and two essays. It was written in April 1987, shortly before the Harmonic Convergence. I retrieved this essay from a notebook chronicling events at Miracle Manor. It's intended as an artifact of that era, depicting the process in one spiritual community in the months leading up to the Harmonic Convergence, which is one end of the 25-year span from 1987 to 2012.*



That Saturday afternoon, the world felt still as a reflection of itself. I stepped out of the dining hall into our backyard and the wet spring air was sweet.

Low clouds rumbled with distant cracks of thunder and the river was swelled with the recent downpours. Our big white gazebo, set back perfectly about 10 feet from the river, was unmoving and called the scene to focus like a painting.

My good friend Jim Reilly was standing against the picnic table serene as always. I lit one of his cigarettes. We smoked for a while, appreciating the isolation that for central New Jersey is a miracle; it was hard to believe that just across the Raritan River was the town of Somerset, one of the fastest over-developing municipalities in the state.

Sometimes you could hear the distant roar of traffic beyond the tree line outlining the sensation that our building and grounds were some kind of misplaced Eden.

I was grateful Jim was around because I needed to talk to somebody who had all their marbles. Jim ran a Thursday night *Course in Miracles* discussion group in Brooklyn, and was my first friend after graduating from college. He was visiting our community for a few days to conduct a workshop called "Weekend of Listening," to which people other than residents were invited. With our building and grounds, a former convent set on six acres of woods and lawns located an hour from New York City, we had the perfect setup for workshops and retreats. But no one had registered for this one, and about half of those of us who lived here were away for the weekend.

"A really strange thing happened," I said after a while, and tried to put the thoughts together in a way in which I wasn't the center of the story. Jim finished his cigarette and put it out.

"Vickie just asked me if I was going to buy her dresser. I was supposed to have made a decision by yesterday because she needs the money, but I never got back to her because she

hasn't been around. I told her I didn't have the money right now, and that she could sell it to somebody else.

"She looked like she was furious but trying to keep it bottled up, and said, 'Alright...no...it's no...problem...' and turned suddenly and ran up the stairs, fuming, actually fuming. I could hear her. Then Rosalie walked into the kitchen and informed me out of nowhere that Vickie is planning on checking herself into a psychiatric hospital."

"That's what I heard from Rosalie, too," Jim said. This had a somber feel to it. We watched the brown river tumble by, carrying off branches and other natural junk that gets washed off the land when it pours like it had been lately.

I let this psychiatric hospital stuff sink in, doing my best not to resist it. I felt self-conscious about making a big deal out of it, and tried to recognize that it was just another normal thing for this life. There's a history of psychiatric illness in my family, and I understood that when people get brittle sometimes it's a good idea to deal with it professionally. This is sometimes an idea alien to a lot of folks, like people who talk seriously about Men in White Suits.

What alarmed me was that Vickie was always the dedicated and strong one in the community, the one who was consistently there to handle the responsibilities nobody else wanted. For example, she had recently re-sorted and re-ordered, practically by herself, an entire 2,000-letter bulk mailing that had been done wrong the first time. And she was always willing to deal with Mario, the landlord, who was rarely willing to work easily with anyone.

Basically I saw a lot of myself in her, and knew some of the feelings I was capable of, and the whole situation bothered me. From inside the second-floor hallway window overhead I heard a knock on a door and a voice; Daniel's voice, "Vickie, is everything alright?"

Vickie's room was right upstairs and the window was open. She asked him to go away. It was like listening to a play.

"Really, Vickie, I need to know if you're okay. We're worried about you. Can I come in?" Then she told him to go away, and told him not to bother her any more.

"Really, Vickie, you can talk to me..." Dan must have opened the door because suddenly it slammed violently, and with a piercing 10-second scream Vickie bleated, "Go away! Get out of here! Leave...me...alone!"

The door slammed again and Vickie started screaming wildly for him to go away. It was astonishing. I had never heard a person scream like that, literally chilling. Her voice was cracking up and was barely recognizable. I considered how the neighbors, only a few hundred feet away, would react if they heard it.

Then Rosalie, who was audibly quite angry, said something about calling the police, which instantly struck me as stupid. She and Daniel were the ones causing the disturbance. After about half a minute it all paused like a sudden halt of gunfire; Jim and I looked at each other. There was obviously nothing we could do. Vickie didn't want company, something that, if Dan and Rosalie hadn't figured out earlier, should've been fairly obvious by now.

It was quiet, in this tense way that builds with every second of silence as you wait for the next eruption.

We waited. I lit one of Jim's Marlboros and sucked the smoke down like it was oxygen. I could no longer identify with Vickie. It was still dead quiet and suddenly I was even happier that Jim would be around for the weekend. And I was glad that there was no workshop going on; though it seemed that fortunate little coincidences like this happened all the time around here.

I asked Jim if there was something he thought we should be doing, even though I knew the answer; reality testing, my mother calls it. He said no, he would just let things settle down and see what happened next.

I headed up to my room and wrote down a few notes in my Chronicle notebook. I wrote down a few factual things, and then commented:

*The Vickie Episode, like the thunder and the strange stillness in the air today, and Bill, the groundskeeper and the gardens he tends, and the pony, are all just symbols: external symbols for what is happening in the universe within. It's so obvious now I can't believe I don't see it all the time. Though there is the silent acknowledgement that something, though it's hard to say for sure what, is happening beyond the usual everyday experience.*

What happened next I observed on the way downstairs, and that was Vickie speeding her car out the driveway. That was that. She was on her own. I still had to fight this feeling that unless I was doing something I wasn't acting responsibly. It all seemed so serious: the thought of someone checking into a psychiatric hospital for what I figured was a nervous breakdown of some kind.

Rosalie, I learned later, had called the police, but apparently Vickie was gone by the time they got there. Dan was in the chapel, according to Rosalie, meditating to send Vickie healing energy. Rosalie always seemed to be offering what she thought was the latest important information, and for the first time in my life the idea of gossip annoyed me. She was an instigator. Her role in the community was that of the meddling neurotic mother. Yet I was as curious as anybody about what was happening.

Patrick, who had been through some truly intense experiences in Vietnam during the peak years of the war, was just taking it all in going about his business. I knew that compared to some of what he'd seen this was no big deal.

Todd, two-day-new member of the household and the only person with any professional psychological training, told me he believed Vickie was not an unstable person, and that she would be fine; not to worry. Take care of myself, he said. He added, and Patrick agreed, that the very dramatic quality of the whole episode put it in the category of "a very loud calling out for love," one which Todd had a hunch she was fully aware of and had planned almost consciously.

He asked if I thought we should get together as a group and talk things over. Having the availability of a support group was a key reason we had moved in together and formed what

we called a healing community. I said I thought it was a perfectly natural subject to have a meeting about, but it didn't happen until the regular Sunday night meeting the next evening, when we were forced to deal with it collectively. We had been having some problems lately functioning as a household, as a group entity. Todd had noticed this immediately, and said he might not be around long because of it.

If the collective entity wasn't functioning, the archetypal Grapevine was. Talk going around was: Vickie had been debating, for the past few days, "which plane of reality was better" for her; she had been spending a lot of time on "the Mothership" lately; she'd been talking about suicide and would be checking herself into a psychiatric hospital; that Janet, who had just come out of drug rehab, had stopped by and picked up some of Vickie's clothes and her vast crystal collection and would be taking her over to Rutgers University's psychiatric ward right up the road.

Todd packed his things and left Sunday afternoon. It struck me as funny that the therapist was taking off.

The Weekend of Listening concluded with the regular Sunday night meeting. Daniel and I suggested that it be held in the chapel instead of the lounge because the chapel was a more spiritually oriented environment, which we needed. Someone rang the chimes and we collected there.

We sat down in our usual circle, about eight of us including Jim and his friend Rica. We knew what we had to talk about, and why.

Dan admitted that he had handled himself poorly the day before. He had a way of just admitting he was wrong and that was that, no hard feelings either way.

Rosalie said nothing, but was so visibly shaken and exhausted -- almost catatonic -- that it looked like she was the one who needed some serious help. She just sat in her chair wrapped in a blanket and dozed off, giving the impression she was annoyed about having to be there.

I commented that it seemed provocative to see a person who was respected for her strength and stability lose it in a big way, just fall apart. It could happen to anybody. I said that as a community that had gathered for the reasons we had, our reactions to what happened were as important as what happened. This somehow led to a discussion about the present condition and the future of the community, in recognition of the ongoing leadership crisis. Somebody mentioned that Todd had packed up and left, leaving a message for us: "The Manor consists of a very fascinating group of individuals, but there is no group entity."

The discussion shifted to a general clearing session.

Ginger said to Rosalie: "I never felt I could bridge the gap between you as a person and the you who I can never walk past without hearing about the milk being left out or the floor needing mopping. How can I get past that?"

Rosalie: "Clean the floor."

Patrick: "The form of the community may change, but what we came here to do will follow us

wherever we are. When I learned to tolerate extreme emotional crisis in myself, I began to freak out less easily. I'm not even sure I still can freak out. If we really are going to be serious about healing deeply then some of the things that are going to come up are going to be heavy. We can give power to them by resisting and fighting, or we can allow the storms to blow up and then blow out. Some of the people dealing with Vickie didn't give her the room to blow out her storm."

Scott: "How much responsibility am I going to take in my relationship when logistics say I should take 50 percent? As one person in a community I should take 1/12 responsibility for what happens here. Let's take back our power and not give it to a 'community'. We have to learn to separate our peace from being a club. Until we recognize that, we have no business answering any community-related question."

Then he added, regarding Vickie: "Healing is the release from fear."

Then Patrick added; "There are some very interesting people coming out of mental hospitals."

Rica: "And going in."

### **Gratitude**

whose melody  
poetry meter and rhyme  
steady from moment to minute to time  
with unrelenting syncopation  
span the hour and the afternoon  
borne in the air and bearing the air  
carry the Word in each voice that I hear  
walk in my step  
awake in my sleep  
correct each digression  
uphold my decision despite the debate  
each moment of freedom  
ascending my weight

-- Eric Francis, from 313

## Thinking of You On Judgment Day

*This article introduces the grand cross and total solar eclipse of August 1999, the big astrological event at the end of the 20th century. It does not directly reference 2012, but it has the quality of being a step along the way: one of the convergence points across the span. The theme is 'millennial'. The degree of this eclipse -- 18+ Leo -- has been persistent, showing up in a number of historic charts over the years. This eclipse and the events surrounding it represent a key layer of the transition from one age to the next, a process of which the 2012 mythology is a part. This was written in Freiburg, Germany and Sts. Maries de la Mere, France in August 1998 after months of research. In the original article, I dedicate it to Alice A. Bailey because I studied Esoteric Astrology as a starting point.*

"In the next two decades, new technologies will allow the fielding of space-based weapons of devastating effectiveness to be used to deliver energy and mass as force projection in tactical and strategic conflict. These advances will enable lasers with reasonable mass and cost to effect very many kills."

-- from *New World Vistas*, by the U.S. Air Force

"It's politically sensitive, but it's going to happen. Some people don't want to hear this, and it sure isn't in vogue, but -- absolutely -- we're going to fight in space. We're going to fight from space and we're going to fight into space. That's why the U.S. has development programs in directed energy and hit-to-kill mechanisms."

-- Gen. Joseph Ashy, of the U.S. Space Command



One day next summer, Aug. 11, 1999, at 11:08 am GMT, to be exact, the Sun will appear to dim out, blocked by the solid, apparently lifeless mass of the Moon. At this moment, our little world will be centered at the cross-hairs of several planets closely aligned at 90 degrees in a big "x" -- known as a grand cross. Many astrologers have been watching this one coming for years.

For my friends in the reading audience who don't normally stroll around at lunch hour pondering planetary alignments or The Millennium, I can offer only this definitive interpretation: It won't be your average Wednesday.

I know, it's a stretch. Clearly, we're more intellectually advanced than the natives Magellan



tricked into believing he could make the Sun go out because he had predicted an eclipse, which gave him a lot of clout in their eyes. For the illuminated, educated mind of a modern Westerner, omens from the invisible world went out with the 1692 witchcraft trials in Salem. Right?

But then there are the pesky facts. Eclipses, whether we understand them or not, mark intense transition points. The Persian Gulf War and the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, are among them, plus a peculiar weekend several years ago when an electrical malfunction caused a rare chain-reaction of PCB and dioxin explosions that tainted buildings at SUNY-New Paltz so badly that the clean-up bill exceeded \$50 million, and one building could not be re-entered by students for six years. That same weekend, nine students were crushed to death in a bizarre incident in the City College of New York gymnasium. Both the SUNY and CCNY disasters were traced to negligence by public officials; the Gulf Oil War was murder; Diana's driver was drunk; but they all happened.

Eclipses, which often feel on a personal level like sudden, inevitable shifts in our lives, are not noted in most peoples' date books, and we're trained to ignore the connections rather than see them. The only place society consistently acknowledges astrology, the second oldest profession, is in a little mystical ghetto known as the horoscope column, though eclipses are often considered too esoteric to get mentioned.

Besides eclipses, grand crosses are about the only other events that entice astrologers to drop their charts, get on their knees and press their heads to Mother Earth. They happen every now and again (August 1996 comes to mind), but not like this one, which involves the Sun and Moon, Mars, Saturn and Uranus, precisely aligned across the powerful "fixed cross" of the zodiac -- Taurus, Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius -- with the Earth dangling in the middle of it all like a pea, and a total solar eclipse thrown in for good measure. Frankly, it's ominous.

When I started to get a sense of the whole business, my instinct was to print greeting cards, beautiful plastic-coated things with Jesus in a white raiment descending from the illuminated orange clouds of heaven, bearing the message, "Good Luck on Judgment Day."

After all, the calf, lion, eagle and man, the symbols of the four fixed signs, re-appear as what some people call "the four beasts of the apocalypse" in the so-called *Book of Revelation*, that 1st century masterpiece of political propaganda and occult symbolism that got stuck onto the end of the Christian Bible. Its spectacular visions of flaming trees, oceans of blood and swarms of locusts that sting like scorpions (inflicted upon us by a loving God, incidentally, mostly for the ever-popular crime of fucking) have been used to torment humanity (and entertain assorted poets, artists and tripping college students) since around the day it was written. The journalist Hunter S. Thompson says it's what he reads when he's bored at 4am in a hotel someplace like Nashville. The front desk, which doesn't usually stock Chaucer and Blake, always has one lying around.

Still, the *Book of Revelation* maintains those few persistent shreds of credibility, such as the poisonous ones I keep finding in my food and water, with fancy names like [2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-para-dioxin](#). *Revelation's* images of "sorceries" and "vials of wrath" remind me a tad too much of what I've read in my collection of Monsanto Chemical Co. documents for comfort, the evidence-tagged ones featuring sorcerers in lab coats cooking up their Pyrex jars of toxic rage.

Much as I'd love to dismiss the eclipse and the notion of an "apocalypse" as bullshit, the end of the world thing raises some valid questions now, and just in time. Of course "the world" isn't ending any time soon, but we're a different story. The poison is indeed spreading, households are in turmoil, and fear is rising. It's astonishing to me, ominous in fact, how many people smoke how many cigarettes no matter how much they know about how many poisons they contain -- as if, why worry?

As noted by German philosopher Dieter Duhm in his *Political Theory for a Nonviolent Earth*, there are many people already living in apocalyptic times. They range from the U'wa people of Colombia, who have threatened to commit mass suicide to protest destruction of the environment by oil exploration and drilling in their ancestral homelands, to many Christian and survivalist sects currently preparing for "The End" as a matter of what they feel is common sense.

We look at them askance, with a kind of sideways leer, and yet sometimes with a little envy, not so arrogant as to think they're totally nuts. I mean, who knows, right? When you stop and think about life for one second, your brain flashes: This Is Weird. And there's a little dioxin and PCBs in everything we eat and drink, right? And sperm counts in men today are half of our grandfathers', right? At that rate, how long before we're all sterile? And what about cancer rates hovering at around 50%?

Deep in the backs of our minds, way down in the dim crevices of the brainstem, near the data we use to fart, lurks the question of whether there's going to be some big cataclysm to mark the end of the millennium. Something like a financial market disaster or a chunk of California falling off the map, or a little atomic skirmish in midtown Manhattan, just to let us know we got it over with. After all these aeons, we finally have the ability to nuke ourselves, and good. And I mean, wouldn't it come as a great relief, after all the suspense? The question I hear asked most often seems to be when, not what. People in my community in New York seriously talk about Mohonk Mountain House becoming a kind of seaside resort. Then there are those highly spiritual and politically conscious individuals secretly wishing "It" will happen, just to screw the Rothschilds, the Rockefellers and the banks. Anything for a little revenge.

And then, finally, there are the sensible folk, the cool, rational beings who are certain things out there will be fine, but get the pressure from in there. It penetrates the air conditioning, the carpets and the surround-sound Vivaldi, mindless of the unplugged phones, creeping clear through the lies they told just to get a little peace and quiet. Lurking quietly in the corner. Waiting.

Little glimpses of how reality has become disconnected from what some people call "spirit" or "the source" and what other people call "the planet" are everywhere. There is an inner world wanting to burst out, and an outer world constantly bursting in, demanding to know: how long are we going to keep doing nothing about the devastation of the rainforests for the sake of Big Macs? What about that nuclear dumping in the oceans you read about yesterday? And why are you pretending the slow, steady heating of the atmosphere is meaningless? Don't the questions themselves drive us so mad that denial is an essential part of getting through the day? Don't they scream, "You are powerless!"

I would call this a first-class spiritual crisis. Nothing Bill Clinton signs or that the U.N. adopts can stop it. No well-documented facts we read in the newspaper, like the ones about the tobacco scandals, can make us change our lives.

Then there's the eclipse, which blazes out like a huge yellow sign on the slick highway blinking C - A - U - T - I - O - N. Eclipses release pressure, which can be messy, and we are under pressure. However, I am one of those good news astrologers. Massive eclipses? Flaming trees? No problem. Grand crosses? Oceans of blood? All in a day's work. Locusts that sting like scorpions? I have a recipe for them, with cinnamon. My job as an astrologer is to miraculously turn anything and everything I see in the sky into some kind of uplifting message from which, at the very least, no matter how dismal, pathetic and hopeless things look, you can gain fresh perspective and take action rather than merely freak out.

This is one reason why I'm writing about this long before the *New York Post* and the *Weekly World News* and The Jesus Channel grab hold of it. I expect that my esteemed colleagues at these reputable media, and lots of others, will have a feeding-frenzy with -- or under the crazed influence of -- this eclipse the like of which we haven't seen in a while. Here's why:

Within days of the event, the Earth will be visited, hopefully briefly, by a gadget called the Cassini Space Probe. Remember that name, if you don't already. This device was sent out by space aliens -- namely the U.S. government's cosmocrats at NASA, who last October launched Cassini amid great but not-great-enough controversy. Cassini's flight path is currently taking it to Venus, after which it will fly back past the Earth next summer, timed impeccably with the eclipse. This "flyby" will hopefully "slingshot" the probe further out into space, past Jupiter, to photograph our old friend Saturn. Astrologically, Saturn represents the edge, and we are surely headed there.

The problem is this: Cassini contains 72 pounds of high-grade plutonium, used in the electrical batteries that run its digital brain, radios and cameras. This sexy (and expensive) hunk of radioactivity will skim past the Earth's atmosphere moving very, very fast -- at about 42,300 miles per hour; but not very high: it's planned for about 450 miles altitude. If the slide-rule dudes at NASA screwed the pooch on their calculations, or if something mechanical or technical goes wrong that day, then Cassini, which has no heat shields, can re-enter the atmosphere, where it would incinerate like a meteor, spewing its nuclear stash all over the biosphere. This would be bad.

Seventy-two pounds is mucho plutonium. Far less can make a modest atomic bomb, say, something on the scale of Hiroshima. But this is an atomic battery, not a bomb, and the potential danger is the release of the plutonium rather than an explosion. In one prior space accident, just two pounds of plutonium burned up on re-entry of a satellite, and traces of that specific satellite's fuel, which were marked (radioactively tagged), were found in every corner of the globe. According to Dr. Helen Caldicott of Physicians for Social Responsibility, and other scientists, exposure to only *one-millionth of a gram* of the stuff can cause lung cancer, which means many other illnesses too. Thus, Cassini packs enough plutonium to give more than 32 billion people lung cancer. The planet Pluto represents mass-consciousness. Now I see why.

NASA documents talk about the need to "demolish some or all structures" in the event of Cassini falling from space and hitting a city, and to "relocate the affected population permanently." They've even budgeted for it.

In addition to Cassini being a very stupid idea, could it be the "terror" that will "come from the sky" that Nostradamus predicted hundreds of years ago for July and August 1999? Here are two translations of that quatrain:

*In the year 1999 and seven months,  
From the sky will come the great King of Terror.  
He will bring back to life the great king of the Mongols.  
Before and after war rules happily.*

Or, an alternate translation:

*When 1999 is seven months o'er  
Shall Heaven's great Vicar, anxious to appease,  
Stir up the Mongol-Lombard king once more  
And war reign haply where it once did cease.*

According to Dr. Karl Grossman, the investigative reporter and journalism professor at SUNY-Old Westbury who's been digging out the facts on this issue, NASA keeps raising its estimates of how many thousands of people would be killed by "accidental" re-entry of Cassini. Yet while scientists, astrologers and *Revelation*-toting Christians generally consider one another heretics, it all does kinda point to the same thing.

As for old Nostradamus, he may be right. There will indeed be "terror from the sky" next summer if the media grab the Cassini story and run with it, terrifying everyone, perhaps legitimately, yet pretending they had no clue about the danger of the plutonium release last October when Cassini was launched. And if they don't -- man, sister, mama, then I'll be even more shocked. It would sell a lot of newspapers, and besides which, we have a right to know.

So the grand cross/total solar eclipse of August 1999 turns out to be a kind of final exam for the second millennium, with many questions. We are, in my reading, facing a global initiation. The Earth itself takes center stage (at the center of the cross, and in the flight path of Cassini). An aspect of this initiation is that we get to respond to an environmental threat together. What will it be? Terror? Repentance? Rage? Will we pack into the discos, like in Tel Aviv the night Saddam Hussein was shooting off Scud missiles? Will we stay calm and let Cassini whirr right by, refusing to suck it in with our fear? Will most people not even have a clue?

Will we take the perfectly platinum opportunity to demand that the other dozen or so scheduled nuclear-powered NASA missions be scrubbed because the risk is just too ridiculous? Will we demand an end to the new, improved plan for the nuclear arming of space that the U.S. government is currently executing? General Joseph Ashy, commander-in-chief of the U.S. Space Command has stated: "It's politically sensitive, but it's going to happen. Some people don't want to hear this, and it sure isn't in vogue, but -- absolutely -- we're going to fight in space. We're going to fight from space and we're going to fight into space. That's why the U.S. has development programs in directed energy and hit-to-kill mechanisms."

Do we really want this?

Will we take the opportunity to look at some other very important environmental issues ourselves, rather than expecting expert commissions to handle them for us?

People love disasters. Disasters bring out the best in us. I've covered my share of midnight fires and ecological catastrophes, and it's very exciting. Things like blackouts, floods, earthquakes, subway strikes and wars pull the community together and make us all heroes. Sure, a few of us die, but it's worth it, right? One splendid week of the whole planet facing a massive threat to its existence -- a little terror from the sky -- would just perk us all right up like laughing daisies, and make the global village a real experience, not just a modem. And what a great movie concept!

In this light, the biggest question Cassini raises is about the outer life versus the inner life: what you might call the galactic versus the genetic. Do you have to be forced by allegedly outer circumstances to look at your existence, or do you look because it's time? Here's the one huge place where I lack my faith in the human race. Space Alien lottery tickets are very popular. Too many people, for my comfort, need UFOs landing in their back yards to believe that "we are not alone." Too few people can just pet a dog.

We know from countless movies that the threat is always from "out there." We like it that way. Yet is it clear this time that human beings have personally turned this weapon on the Earth?

Surely, a whole bunch of fear zapped from you, through you and into you all at once in a kind of high-tech cosmic horror-show, reported live on CNN, complete with prophesies and astrology charts to back it up, can wake you up and finally get you feeling alive and thinking seriously about your life choices and what it means to be here with the rest of us on our little blue world in space.

There's a better way. But hey -- good luck on Judgment Day.

## What Is 2012?

*This is from "The Centaurs Arrow," a series on Planet Waves. This edition ran on December 6/7, 2001. It was written in the months after the Sept. 11 incident, about which I have written many articles elsewhere. It's my first article looking directly at the subject of 2012. It's an attempt to sum up a diversity of viewpoints on the subject. Note that the references to the Mayan calendar are not elaborated in this article; they are merely mentioned. Dec. 21, 2012 is the end of the 13th baktun and the beginning of the 14th baktun. A baktun is 144,000 days; 13 baktuns are 5,125 years (a distinct measure of time called a piktun). Five cycles of 5,125 years are a great cycle of 25,625 -- or one precession of the equinoxes, or a Great Cycle. It's necessary to understand that there is no one Mayan calendar. The one that tracks these long phases of time is called the Long Count. The one that is used for day-to-day timekeeping is called the Tzolkin, which is a 260-day count that runs through the years. It is a kind of Mayan calendar that is not linked to our approximately 365-day solar year. A third entity is called the Dreamspell count, which was created by José Arguelles, and is based on the Tzolkin but which has some different concepts. The days in the Long Count are not named in the Long Count; their calendar date comes from the Tzolkin or Short Count.*



Tonight we go from the bizarre to the sublime and back again. Remember the [Great Attractor](#). There is some really weird shit up in the universe, and no matter what we know, we return to the idea that we don't have more than a clue.

The Great Attractor (a deep space object) has a theoretical first cousin in time, which is Dec. 21, 2012. This date is being viewed by many as a kind of convergence point when we *move beyond time*. In recent years its location has been revised to 2011, or a window of 2011-2012, though in the context of history this difference may be negligible.

Though I've got lots of informed colleagues, I read a bit and am in the flow of information, I've had a difficult time grasping just what this convergence point is supposed to be. This article is designed to get a discussion going, as a first word rather than a last.

There are many proposals circulating in the New Age movement as well as in indigenous communities that the Earth is ascending, and that "something intense is going to happen in 2012." Some of these proposals hold that there is a "second world" being created, a [holographic](#) copy of our own world, but in another dimension, and that humanity is going to divide, and a whole bunch of folks are going to end up in the higher-dimension world, and a whole bunch who can't make the trip in the lower dimension. For those of us who are ascending, we are, some say, currently being outfitted with light bodies that will house our souls in the higher world. The ascenders may not actually notice that they have gone anywhere, just that they are in a new world; those who do not ascend -- well, who knows.

The problem I have with this kind of theory is that it sounds like a candy-coated way to say "expect a holocaust to make Hitler's look like child's play," and I don't dabble in those ideologies, personally. Many people do, and most of their websites get far more hits than mine; negativity is extremely popular.

But I can accept the idea that our planet is going through a dimension shift, or a consciousness shift, which is accelerating our perception or experience of time, opening up previously closed channels of communication such as telepathy and synchronicity to unprecedented proportions, and which is causing people to rearrange their thoughts about reality. And it does seem that there is a polarization happening: that some people are getting denser and more negative, while others are going in the other direction, to a faster or lighter vibration.

So, on one hand, I am a skeptic, but a curious one. On the other, I am an astrologer, and I've been around the New Age movement since 1986, when, as circumstances would have it, I ended up living in a spiritual community with credible people who said they could hear plants talking, and others who could leave their bodies and beam aboard the mothership.

By contrast, at that time, I was working as a newspaper reporter covering industrial development and town governments, writing about sewer projects and the like; but experiencing a whole lot of actual miracles, which caused me to reevaluate my way of looking at life. I could not ignore the plant-talkers and the mothership visitors. So count me among the open-minded, a curious skeptic (who is rarely afraid to apply a useful idea to his life).

The idea of 2012 is potentially useful -- especially if it is true. And whatever 2012 is, like the rest of the future, our visioning process counts for most of the game. So I suggest we envision something sane, healthy and creative.

Carol Burkhart, a student of Dreamspell and Mayan astrology (and the illustrator of these glyphs) had this to say:

"My tendency is to forget about the dogma and go with the idea that we are all right in the middle of IT. So why not simply pay attention to the days/kin/Sun and months/Moon, eclipses and the cycles, one within another?" she wrote to the Planet Waves list today. "It's all about feeling our way through the darkness anyhow. Why not start now?"

Carol offers her view of the convergence date. She writes:

"The Mayan calendar end date of Dec. 21, 2012 is called 'The Great Cycle'. [Technically, it is not -- the Great Cycle is 25,625 years. A cycle of 5,125 years is 13 baktuns, or a piktun.] This 5,125-year [sub]-cycle began on Aug. 11, 3114 BCE, and is known as the Birth of Venus. It is the 13th baktun (a baktun is 360 days or one Mayan 'year' times 400 = 144,000 days). The glyph representing this day is 4 Ahau, which means enlightenment and ascension. There is a question of whether it should be 13 Ahau (the last day of the 260-day cycle), or 4 Ahau, which is the date that corresponds with the solstice date. An interesting debate is going on at [this site](#) between John Major Jenkins and Carl Calleman.

"The primary calendar used by Mayan daykeepers is the Tzolkin (a Venus calendar/count of 260 days) and is a harmonic of the Great Cycle, and very close to the human gestation cycle. Which means this cycle acts like the recapitulation of the gestation of the human species. It

takes five Great Cycles (or 26,000 Tuns/years) to equal the 'Grand Year' or precession of the equinoxes -- and the higher harmonic of 260.

"It was archeologist Eric Thompson, whose work confirmed the data of Goodman and Martinez, by correlating the stone stelae dates of the ancient Mayans to the current Gregorian calendar. The GMT correlation (Goodman-Martinez-Thompson) is the most recognized and is noted as the 'true' or 'classic' count."

I'll jump in here with a little background on one individual. A scholar named José Arguilles was the person who raised the issue of the Mayan calendar back in around 1970, before anyone had heard of it in popular culture, and extremely few had heard of it in academic culture. His work was controversial and daring, and led to a worldwide event called the Harmonic Convergence in 1987, which was a worldwide meditation for peace. His most famous book is called *The Mayan Factor*.

Carol continues, "Arguelles and his wife, Lloydine, although they have come up with different glyphs for different days, also agreed with the Dec. 21, 2012 date, as did Terence McKenna and his brother. This was first noted in their book, *The Invisible Landscape*, the first discussion of what is known as Timewave Zero. The Dec. 21, 2012 date was coincidentally discovered by them without prior knowledge during shamanic journeying (and lots and lots of 'shrooms).

"According to Mayan researcher John Major Jenkins, it is this date on the winter solstice of 2012 where a galactic alignment takes place with the solstice Sun. Actually, if one is looking at the heavens, I think we are already right in the middle of this alignment, happening during the years of 1998-2012. But Jenkins explains in his book *Maya Cosmogenesis*, how the Dec. 21 solstice Sun will exactly conjoin the 'dark rift' in the Milky Way, which is something the Mayans acted out during ceremonies and ball games and is what they referred to as the Mouth of the Crocodile. [Note, it will not exactly conjoin the dark rift, and even if it did, that conjunction would last more than a century. However, the winter solstice point is currently close to the dark band or Road to Xibalba. --efc]

"Various beginning and ending dates have been calculated, which all come down to sometime around 2011/2012. Here is a sampling of what others have to say about 2012 (I got most of this info from Geoff Stray's website). All of these are theoretical statements of what 2012 'means'.

1) José Arguelles in *The Mayan Factor* calls this the Galactic Synchronization -- which will be a kind of ascension process, or evolutionary leap to the next dimension.

2) Adrian Gilbert and Maurice Cotterell in *The Mayan Prophecies* relate this to the sunspot cycles. We are currently near the peak of one of those 11-year sunspot cycles, which might be an indication of what the future holds.

3) Graham Hancock in *Fingerprints of the Gods* discusses what he calls a crustal displacement, which he speculates will be due to an unusual planetary alignment at the end of the Great Cycle on Dec. 24, 2011, a date also given by Frank Waters.



4) John Major Jenkins writes about the solstice-galactic center conjunction: On 12/21/2012, the solstice sun will align with the dark rift in the Milky Way

5). The Hopi Tribal prophecy states that the 'Great Purification' will be over by 2011 and 'will be marked by the appearance of a new star'.

6) Willaru Huayta, a Peruvian 'spiritual messenger', says that 2013 is the end of the Inca calendar. He says a 'huge asteroid' three times larger than Jupiter will pass close to Earth, causing cataclysms that will kill off most of humankind.

7) *The Bible Code* by Michael Drosnin predicts in 2012, that a comet will crumble into pieces and/or 'annihilate' the Earth.

[Note that points 6 and 7 fit the bad vibes/apocalypse category, and apocalypse predictions have come a dime a dozen for about the past 1,000 years, and bad vibes are somewhat cheaper. --efc]

8) Paul Otto Hesse discovered a photon belt circling the central sun of the Pleiades. Our solar system passes through it every 12,500 years, and will next be fully immersed in it in 2011-2012.

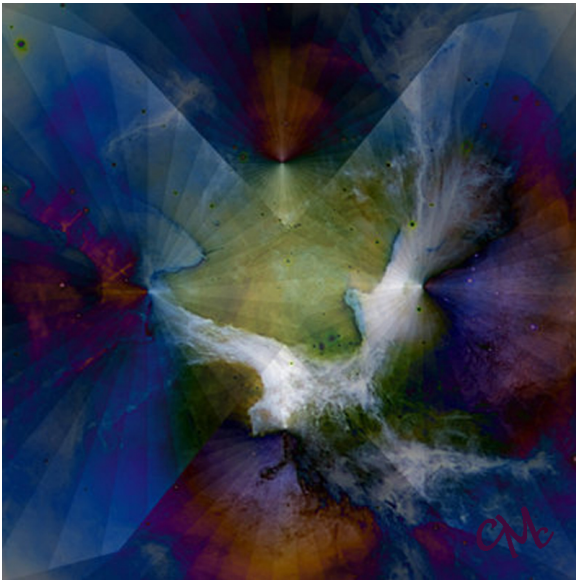
9) Channeled information like that from the Sirians (via Sheldon Nidle) says we should have entered the belt in 1996. In 2012/13 our whole solar system will travel down a wormhole in the direction of the Sirius system. The photon belt will alter DNA and chakras allowing us to use our inter-dimensional soul body for existence in a timeless higher dimension.

10) Barbara Hand Clow's version, in her book *The Pleiadian Agenda*, unifies all the others. In 1987, the galactic synchronization beam reacted with the photon band as we entered it. At winter solstice 2012, Earth's entire orbital path will be engulfed in the band; this will be the ascension. (This is speculative and has no basis in astronomy.)

Do you know any more than you did 15 minutes ago? I will know for sure that we're ascending when the words *wormhole*, *chakra* and *baktun* come in spellcheck. [Note, in 2010, wormhole and chakra are in spellcheck. Baktun is not, and spellcheck is not. --efc]

## Day Zero: Venus Transit of the Sun at Avebury Henge

*This was written outside London and published on Planet Waves immediately after the June 8, 2004 Venus transit of the Sun, an event wherein Venus transits directly over the disk of the Sun. It is a conjunction, but an extremely precise one, because it's an alignment by both longitude and declination, similar to an eclipse. Because these events are so rare, no living person had seen one when it happened. They come clustered in pairs, and the next one is in June 2012. The Mayans were skilled celestial observers and were great fans of the planet Venus; they were no doubt aware of these events.*



*Consciousness. I feel for myself and detect only awareness of my senses: the bright, sweet late afternoon light, the unfamiliar air of the English countryside, the fresh sheets that cocoon my body as I awaken.*

*My senses feel penetrated, soaking in the experience. My mouth is parched, and I am craving cunnilingus.*

*I reach for memory, and my life preceding this moment echoes like a vague dream from which I have awakened on another planet in another time. I think of the recent places I have called home: Seattle, Vashon Island, even London the previous morning, and it's like they don't exist*

*now and barely existed in the past. They are gone and I am helpless about it, but I don't care. My senses spread into the unfamiliar room. I see something I recognise: my Tarot cards on the table near the clock, and I realise I've been sleeping about 90 minutes. I draw a card, feel deeply reassured, but now I don't remember what it was. It is 6 pm the day of the Venus transit, June 8, 2004.*

*Even that feels like it never happened, or happened long ago.*

*But it was only hours ago, though now the experience seems to be covered in a protective cloak. That is how ritual spaces can feel: like a little dimension that opens up where things that somehow seem normal occur; then the space closes and it's like the experience stays within that space, or mostly so. Impressions and distorted memories remain.*

*At about 4am that day I awakened in another room of the same little hotel, dressed and, with my traveling partner, drove the mile into Avebury Circle in Wiltshire, west of London. Avebury is a vast stone circle that has been the site of Earth-based religious worship for about five or six thousand years. At daybreak it's silent, and there is no travel on the small highway*

that cuts through the site. The circle is about 380 metres across, so large that there is a small town in its midst, which is absolutely silent at this hour. An outer ring defines the larger space, surrounded by what seems like a dry moat, called a henge. At one time this seems like it was either filled with water, or was designed to create an energy channel around the site. The henge rises to a berm about 20-feet high and on top of this is a path that leads around the temple. This is geomancy: using the natural landscape and some landscape architecture to create a defined space for a specific purpose.

Inside, there are two smaller circles. We enter through a gate that contains a little sheep meadow and are outside the southernmost circle. The sheep always seem to be here, making their sweet little bleating cries. The atmosphere is not quite night, not quite day. I set my belongings down and put a towel on the ground in front of a small marker that holds the space where a large stone once stood, and I sit down. All the preparation for this day, the quest for understanding, the astrological charts, the numerous articles I've written, the 2012 connection, are elsewhere. Ritual is the world of direct experience. It is the experience of movement.

What is moving at this moment, however, is an argument. My traveling partner is trying to explain to me why she feels like I've been ignoring and abandoning her. I in turn have felt that emotionally, she's been nowhere to be found. It is a tense discussion and I am not in the mood to explain myself, and what I say does not seem to matter; so I try to listen, and I tell myself, okay, you came all this way, and this is what's happening. Just go with it.

Out of my bag I take my hard-back copy of *Esoteric Astrology* and put it in my lap, and draw a card and set it on the dark blue cover. I am looking right at The Lovers, upright and obvious. In fact this is one of two cards I used to illustrate the Venus transit while writing in the *Daily Mirror* a few weeks before. We are not lovers but we are in a mode familiar to many lovers, and that card tells me I am in the right place at the right time, having the right discussion. And it says, paraphrasing the announcers in the London Underground, *mind the gap*.

I look and see the Sun rising and all at once I get it. The Sun conjunct Venus, on the node of Venus, in Gemini, the sign of The Lovers card: recognizing all those patterns of relationship and realizing how those patterns add up to a culture of endless war. And then letting go of them in this moment, this space that is now opening. My traveling partner asks me what I'm thinking and I start to explain this. But before I can get two sentences in, a man in a white cloak and staff appears before me.

At this moment, the Sun has just begun to rise above the horizon, in the trees directly in front of me.

As the prior conversation unfolded, I had noticed that a figure appeared in the shadows, amongst some stones standing within the inner circle. But I didn't focus on him, I just noticed. He was moving in a pattern. He now introduces himself as "the keeper of the stones." I glance upward at him and am on my feet instantly; I shake his hand with a slight bow and ask his name; it is Terry. Terry does not waste any time explaining that we are within the Sun Circle of Avebury Henge, an ancient Druid site. To the north, out of our view, is the Moon Circle.

Because this is a solar event, he says, it is to be observed in this circle.

He walks and we follow him toward the inner stones, which seem to be placed more randomly, in a row, then that row curves to the left, and there is one extra stone out to the right. He asks me not to take notes. "The oral tradition," is all he says by way of explanation. I leave my new Moleskine travel notebook in my bag.

In front of this row of stones there is a big concrete marker, about four feet high, which he says marks the approximate place where an obelisk once stood. He gestures toward the ring of the Sun Circle toward a huge rectangular stone: the Vulva stone, he says it's called. When the obelisk was there, on Beltane sunrise it would cast a shadow long enough to touch the Vulva stone. (When I take a closer look at it, there is an intricate, beautiful and naturally formed shape of a vulva in this rock about 12 inches long, leading into a little cave.) The obelisk, it turns out, was broken up and made into a house nearby -- the fate of many stones, whose places are held by little markers based on a survey from the 1600s. The obelisk was measured while it lay on the ground in pieces at about 24 feet tall. Terry says it was really much higher.

The stones in the centre mark the astrological signs. About half of them are there; half have those markers that were placed there in the 1930s. The sequence, I learn, begins with Capricorn, to the far left as you stand facing the Vulva stone. This marks the direction where the Sun rises on solstice morning. We are standing inside a vast sundial designed to mark the seasons. The sundial itself is a temple set into the Earth. The seasons marked by this device were the turning points in the cycle of the year and the cycle of human life. There are numerous temples in this area, which both archaeologists and modern Druids believe were part of a complex of sites with related purposes; each is dedicated to a planet. Terry says that Stonehenge, the most famous of them, about an hour's drive away, is the temple to Mars and was the war council chamber. We visited that site yesterday and from my feeling of the place, his description fits.

Avebury Henge, he says, is the only temple to be equally dedicated to the male and female principles, the Sun and the Moon. From this discussion I can see that astrology is one branch of a much larger ancient system of practice, belief and ritual, a technical skill of the priesthood that served a functional role of determining and working with the timing of events. We are standing inside the chart.

Every now and then Terry unfolds a leather thing about 10 inches high and looks out at the Sun through it. He explains that it's a piece of glass used in goggles for an oxyacetylene cutting torch, which is as hot as the Sun. He hands me an extra piece, which is about four by six inches. It is number 11 glass of this variety, the darkest shade, about 1/4 inch thick. It looks like a sheet of onyx. I am skeptical. But after a while watching him stand there staring into the Sun, I realise he's been doing this for a while, as in many years and many eclipses, and he can still see (20/20, he claims).

Finally I look through the glass. The world drops into ultra-high contrast and the Sun appears as a perfect disk above the trees, dim and eerie. There is no sign of Venus; it's still only about 6am by this time and the transit is supposed to begin at about 6:30, when Venus touches the edge of the Sun. It will last about six hours.

More people start to arrive. A pair of witches, women about 55 years old working together, arrive and call a circle, using a piece of string and efficiently marking off 12 points with

crystals, like it was some kind of carpentry project. One launches into a brief discussion on how this site is connected via ley lines to many other temples, including the Great Pyramid on the Giza Plateau, where I participated in high ritual in 1996. That connection shoots through my body and I feel the truth of it. The pair finish their business and head over to the Moon Circle. There is apparently some kind of New Age gathering over there; a Shaman, said to be from Arizona, who turns out to be from Massachusetts, is doing a ceremony.

I remember that I have not called in the directions myself, and I stop and do that, facing each of the directions, calling on its strength, its spirit and its blessing, turning to the next, and then to the Earth and Sky. This is basic practice for all ritual and since I'm neither leading a ceremony nor consciously part of one, I've forgotten to do this.

Slowly a group gathers, but it's never cohesive; there is no central ritual. There is just a lot of activity, and Terry standing with his staff a metre in front of the obelisk marker, where he says he's stood for every ritual since 1969.

Then he sees it; Venus has cleared the corona of the Sun and is a visible dot against the rim of the solar disk.

He cries out, holding up his arms: *All hail Venus transit the Sun!*

He hands me the extra glass. I look, and sure enough, there it is, a little black dot on the Sun. There is no room for astrology here; this is an event in-body. It does not exactly feel momentous; it is just right there, merely unusual and new.

Then I realise with my intellect that the Earth, the Sun and Venus are exactly aligned for the first time in 121 years and I'm watching it from this six thousand-year-old cosmic radio dish. A vast temple made to the Earth, from the Earth, of the Earth and part of it. I feel the countless rituals that have occurred here in the past, the celebrations, the sacrifices, including human sacrifice. I look straight at the Sun. It's a truly strange feeling. I let the image impress itself into my consciousness, my memory, my body.

The next six hours feel from my perspective now, writing in London three days later, like they happened in dreamtime.

Every half hour or so I watch the planet move across the disk of the Sun, letting it sink into my cells. At some point I strip off my clothes and lay for a while under the direct rays, to take them in as thoroughly as possible.

Through the day, a BBC crew arrives, takes some shots through Terry's glass after interviewing him, and leaves; amateur astronomers with their telescopes arrive; little parties gather around the astrology sign marker stones. Tour groups arrive and leave, part of the usual activity at the site. Terry seems always to be standing in his spot, staring at the Sun.

Periodically during the transit the reality of what is happening percolates up to my consciousness: that we are at a point in time that demarcates the trailhead of an eight-year path that leads to 2012, a year always spoken of in ominous tones. I know from my research last week in London that an aspect of the Mayan long count of 5,125 years concludes that year, beginning some new phase in the great cycle of history. We now stand in the threshold

of what feels like an eight-year antechamber to that time, and this is the moment of crossing into that chamber. The Earth itself seems to be shifting in consciousness, space and time.

Finally the event reaches its peak after 9am. At this point I am lying naked on a big flannel shirt and Terry gets my attention. "You'll get burned," he says. "Venus burn, fine with me," I reply. He hands me a bottle of English mead. I take a drink and it is amazing. I have not had water for hours. He gestures that I should drink more, and I do: it has this smooth, sweet and natural feeling as it goes down.

In a while I dress and wander off in search of water. The little store inside the henge has opened. Later I stop at the Moon Circle, where the group, having finished its ceremony, reconvenes to do a staged drumming shot for television. I reach into my tarot cards and pull out the Devil.

I go back to the Sun Circle. By 11:30am it is nearly empty. There is an old friend of Terry, a woman named Buffie. She is funny and smart; like Terry, she exudes astrology but is not an astrologer per se. She, too, has the significance of the stones mixed with her blood. My travel partner drops in every now and then. Terry has determined that he will break the circle at 12:23 pm, when he's calculated that the event is over for our latitude. It is getting close. He encourages me to take a few last looks as Venus nears the outer edge of the Sun.

The last hour is both fast and slow; we are basically waiting it out, the three of us, exchanging stories and commenting on what we're feeling, making fun of the whole thing, whatever. Terry for the most part continues to stay in his spot, quite literally holding space; holding open the space and grounding the experience with the power of his consciousness and a whole lot of tradition. Finally, it is 12:15 and he begins the closing ritual, first facing to the South and releasing the winds and spirits of that direction, saying boldly that we will be calling on them again.

Then, with a voice that hits like a thunderclap, he says: *Venus transit the Sun! Hail and farewell!* Buffie repeats after him, with a depth and volume in her voice that startles me. I say it myself. *Hail and farewell!*

Terry turns to the West and releases that direction, always saying that we'll be needing you again. *Venus transit the Sun! Hail and farewell!*

Then to the North, then to the East, facing where the Sun arose.

*Hail and farewell!*

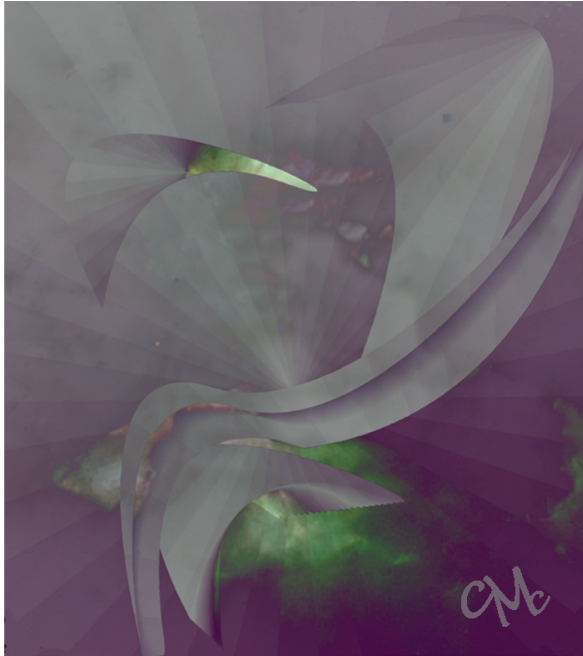
*Hail and farewell!*

*Hail and farewell!*

Farewell to the millennium turning. Farewell to the day. Onward into the spiral, down into the concentrated acceleration of history and whatever it may bring. Onward into the next world: the interworld, the world before the door, 2,924 days away.

## 2012 is Up for Grabs

*This article was written in Paris in January 2005 as part of the Planet Waves annual edition, Bridge to the Core. The title of that annual relates to the last years before Pluto crossed the Galactic Core in late Sagittarius.*



I did not understand 2012, you know, the jury was out for lunch, and the astrology seemed incomprehensible, and none of the people I'd asked or encountered for the past 18 years could spell it out for me in a way that went aha, until my friend Bessie, who lives near New Paltz, said casually one day, "2012 is up for grabs."

I'm not sure why that flipped the switch.

She said it kind of fast, but I heard her. I think when I understood 2012 as something that is *now happening* rather than something that *would happen*, and something *we are creating* rather than doomed to experience in linear fate-time, it made a lot more sense, particularly the way I like to do the rest of my astrology. It's good to work with variables.

In other articles in this publication, you'll read some of the astrological details of 2012 and the years between now and then, both referencing the familiar Western system of planetary movement, and the Mayan system of counting the days. In short, on Dec. 21, 2012, we arrive at the last day of a Mayan baktun, day 13.0.0.0.0. A baktun is 13 cycles of 144,000 days, or 5,125 years (called a piktun). A great cycle is five baktuns, or 26,525 years. This is approximately one precessional cycle, where the Aries Point circles the zodiac. Precessional movement is based on the wobble of the Earth. Notably, our own scientists cannot calculate how long this is precisely, but they know that's approximately 26,000 years; the Mayans are way ahead of us on this one.

Our current 5,125-year process of 13 baktuns, or a count of 1,872,000 days was apparently [according to John Major Jenkins] backdated long before the ancient Maya had even appeared on the planet, in what is now called Mexico.

Part of the mystery of Dec. 21, 2012 involves why these people chose that particular (and now very-nearby) date as their cyclical transition-date; apparently, according to Jenkins, they started at the *end point* and worked *backwards*, so it was not an accident. They did so long before the calendar we use was implemented; long before our own astronomers understood the precession of the equinoxes, on which their cycle is based; way before telescopes, computers, calculators, NASA, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Kopernikus, Galileo, Da Vinci or Madonna.

But they were watching. And they were counting. They were counting first backwards from, then forward toward, Dec. 21, 2012.

That's just seven short years off. And it works out that these are not your average seven years, even by the outrageous standards of the 20th century.

These are the seven years wherein the truth about climate change is going to come out, in rather obvious ways, not just theories and scientific papers. The years we expect to see vast changes in geopolitics: that is, the rule of the planet's geography, even as rising oceans change that geography. The years of the petroleum endgame -- the desperate end of, or perceived end of, the oil supply, which we are now seeing acted out shamelessly in Iraq. They are the years of the water crisis, wherein we are running out of the clean, fresh water upon which life depends. They are the years that follow the Western powers' choice to wage a fundamentalist religious war on a much stronger fundamentalist culture, one that our own propaganda claims has 'less value for life' than we do -- so that sounds pretty volatile.

Let's see. Climate change means rising oceans and it may mean more earthquakes, because the shape of the Earth's crust is changing as the ice caps melt. According to Ocean.com, 53% of the U.S. population lives on just 17% of the coastal landmass. The world average is that about half of all people live within 200km of the coast. In Japan it's a little more extreme: according to the Earthtrends web page, 96% of the population lives within 100km of the coast. People gather at the oceans. They build cities and empires. And we've just seen what the oceans can do.

Meanwhile, in the United States, the 'leader of the free world', we are seeing nothing less than a totalitarian government takeover, a police-security state, one that feels it can secretly put enemies of the state in jail for life without a trial, and so on and so on.

We conquer a country in the name of freedom, and then create torture factories that leave the former dictator in the dust. For anyone inclined to think I'm making up scary poo-poo like we claim the other guys did to make Saddam seem bad, perhaps just pick up a newspaper and read it; this is now being reported daily. My old friend Steve Bergstein, a civil rights lawyer, said to me this week that the United States was becoming "unrecognizable" from just a few years ago. Of course, to notice this, you had to be looking then and you have to be looking now.

Yet at the same time, there are many people aware of what is going on, and committed, if not to cultural and political change, to personal development and awareness. There is a well-grounded movement of people who live every day to ground the light on the planet, in the service of love. And there is an even bigger not-so-well organized movement; many people who are devoted to living in service and compassion, out of common sense; and to making the inner changes that make this possible. Anyway, oppression always creates its opposite, even though it may not emerge right away. But sooner or later, it does.

To put it plain and dumb and too much like a Stephen King novel, there seems to be a kind of race going on. Will those who are working in the service of love and understanding be able to ground enough loving energy on the planet, and focus that into real forms of worldly power, before those working in service of chaos, death and greed destroy everything?

We do not know. We had better not guess.



Which way will all the people who don't care go? You know, the undecided spiritual voters? And hey, who's really on what side? And doesn't all this 'us and them' sound a lot like 'you're with us or against us'? I know, it's weird. But I'm just reading my inbox and summarizing what I've been watching for like 25 years. If I were explaining this to a little kid and I had to be clear, basic and honest, this is how I would state the basic condition of the world. A bit polarized, we know: but the issue is the issue.

So what, then, is 2012? As you will read in other articles, the Western astrology on the way to this ominous date could grind rock to powder. We go through many changes, personally and together and preferably both at once. There are a few major culmination points. Meanwhile, we have to do jobs and cook for people and raise kids and write horoscopes and feed the chickens.

What comes of this process is obviously what we make of it, or what we're able to make of it. Okay, now I sound like the class president advertising the student government on the first day of school. It's YOUR student activity fee! So get involved! Yeah, man! That's it! It's YOUR life on YOUR freaking planet! It's your soul's mission to be here now! It's your karma to be here, dude, so get involved! C'mon it'll be fun!

Twenty-twelve is what we make it, one day at a time, one outer-planet sign change at a time, one breath at a time. Twenty-twelve is what we envision it to be. We, that is, you and me.

Not those cool groovy people somewhere else. Not the really enlightened ones who know how to have a good time and manifest new cars with their minds. Not the ones who really know what they're talking about, or who have been meditating 15 years longer than you. You and me. You and your friends. You and your kids. You and your mom and dad. You and your boss. You, me, and your mom and dad. You and your co-workers. You and your best friend. You and your lover. You and your clients. You and your therapist. You and the people you go dancing with. You and the people you get drunk with or do X with or go hunting with. Whatever. What do all these have in common? You.

This is different than thinking you have to personally take the whole thing on your shoulders. To the contrary: it's only necessary to do your little part, to be aware, to cooperate, and to maintain some sense of awareness of an integrated process going on, within you and without you. This is not merely intellectual abstraction. It is a way of looking at the world, of perceiving evolutionary change, and of adjusting your beliefs to adapt to reality. Too often, we attempt to adapt reality to our beliefs, and it works, sort of, for a while, at a great cost -- mostly pain and boredom.

For a variety of juicy reasons, we're about to enter a phase where our belief systems are tested against the actual state of the world; tested against how we feel; and seen in the context of what we know. Then we get to adjust, often on a daily basis. We get to make a lot of decisions. We get to look at the world and see it. We get to look at ourselves and see ourselves and adjust, and grow, and begin again. We get to look at time and see it as a creative process.

Time as a creative process! What a concept! Ah, and this is what astrology is for. It's a big paintbox of potential.

Twenty-twelve is up for grabs.

Consider this: Between today, the fairly warm, quiet and seemingly random afternoon of Jan. 13, 2005, when I am sitting in Paris writing this at 1:46 p.m., and Dec. 21, 2012, there are 2,899 days.

Your kid could count that high in an hour. Also, when you figure that we're really on day 1,869,101 of a total of 1,872,000 in the baktun, we're basically already pulling up to grandma's driveway on Thanksgiving Day after a coast-to-coast trip.

During the great majority of these remaining days, we're accompanied by a factor called Chiron in Aquarius. Whether this had anything to do with Mayan planning, I don't know; I doubt it, as our astronomical symbols had little to do with their thinking (though they may have known about Chiron). But that's how it works out -- Chiron in Aquarius is the bridge to the core. It's really the most perfect astrology to see us through this journey, given that the most important issues we face today fall so squarely into Aquarian territory by astrology dictionary definition that even the *Sceptical Inquirer* would have to agree.

Let's see. There is the issue of group dynamics. There is the issue of individuality. There is the issue of the psychology of conformism, and the related issue of the mass psychology of fascism. There is the idea and the reality of freedom. Aquarius, Aquarius, Aquarius.

There is media and its influence, which is how many of us connect to the larger world. How about technology -- Aquarius. How about how media and technology, combined with industry and government, which all join forces to create our ideas of who we think we are. The notion of 'self-concept' is Aquarian: a theory of self.

Chiron in Aquarius will focus those issues and pop them inside-out into the manifest world. Let me explain with the help of some astrological theory. Aquarius is the sign of freedom, and it's also the sign of mass-control. That it works in a polarity is typical of our plane of reality. It is the sign where the group meets the individual, and vice versa. One cannot be part of a group unless one is an individual. Leo, the opposite sign to Aquarius, provides a lot of that energy of individuality, by the way.

Aquarius is ruled by two planets: Saturn in the old school, and Uranus in the new one. Nice images of control versus freedom; discipline and creativity; containment and passion.

Chiron is now heading into Aquarius. Chiron focuses awareness, wherever it goes. It mediates between opposites and brings things out to a conscious level. Chiron, the actual planet, is in an orbit between Saturn and Uranus, so it's particularly attuned to those two planetary energies and can work as and act as either or both at any time. This phase of time is one in which we can see the relationship between freedom and control -- or at least have a huge crisis that is based on not seeing the relationship. Then, when we get curious enough about the crisis, we'll see soon enough what it's about.

A lot of people are going to find that their belief systems are too small to contain the reality they are experiencing. Then one day they change. This used to be called getting your mind blown. Chiron in Aquarius will surely blow some minds.

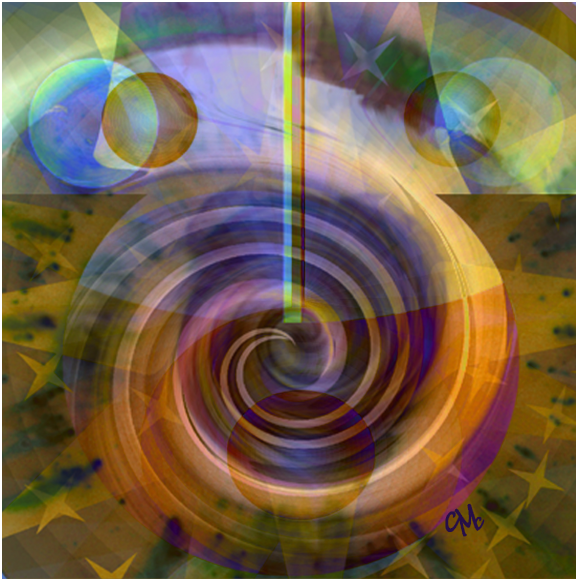
I have a lot more to say about this, and my thoughts are developing. Yet I can sum it up easily. Notice that the people who are striving for control always do two things: they spread fear (particularly through death) and they block, ban or deny the existence of sex. This combination is designed to do one thing, which is to alienate you from yourself and from everyone else. It is designed to divide you from your own biology. You from your life; you from the fact that you are alive. That, in turn, divides you from the people around you. Then, we're easy meat, and we buy a lot of bullshit at the mall. Such a plan is called divide and conquer and make a profit while you're at it.

In the next five weeks, three centaur planets change signs. Two go into Aquarius and light up that whole energy field like Burning Man; and another goes into Sagittarius. Later in the year, Saturn goes into Leo. A lot is going to change very fast. People who are into control for its own sake are in for a shocking revelation: it doesn't work so very well, particularly when people are aware of it, and especially when we want something better, more real, more fun and more free -- and have an idea that such exists.

That is a choice. Remember: 2005 is up for grabs.

## A Spiral Door

*This article was the introduction to The Spiral Door, the 2007 annual edition of Planet Waves (written in late 2006). It references Pluto conjunct the Galactic Core as a practice run for whatever we're going to experience in 2012.*



There are two basic ways to do astrology. One is you use a chart or study a particular cycle to explain something. The other way is you look at a person, time period or an event, and allow that to explain the astrology, exploring what the two have in common. One way relies on the mind a bit more, the other on the senses.

As this annual edition of Planet Waves goes to press, Pluto is in a close conjunction to the Galactic Core for the first time in about 250 years. This is the image of a Spiral Door: a door of the soul, a door in time, a door in history.

A lot more is happening, in particular, Jupiter is exactly square Uranus this week, which is a rare

and exciting aspect. Mars is on the Aries Point. Eclipses are starting to brew up. But let's focus on Pluto.

What does this conjunction mean? Let's check the sensory data. First, how do you feel? What do you notice around you? Do you feel safe? Do you have what you need? Are you having fun yet?

Second, let's check in with the world. What events stand out? In this approximate time frame, a Democratic congress was elected, Saddam Hussein was hanged and a lot of people feel sorry for him, Bush stated his intentions to bomb and/or invade Iran, the United Nations informed us that 34,000 Iraqis were killed in 2006 (a ridiculous understatement), more people are sick of the war than ever before, the running totals 3,000 U.S. troops dead and 500 with major amputations were announced, two of Saddam's accomplices were executed, Somalia was bombed, there were some huge earthquakes, a black man and a woman declared their candidacy for the U.S. presidency, insane winter storms are coursing through much of the United States, the worst storm in many years ripped through Northern Europe, pounding on coastlines and rattling everyone's houses, and the House of Representatives did its First 100 hours project, putting through a series of laws that actually help people.

That, and a few other things. Gee, it sounds like the Great Tribulation. It almost sounds like 2012.

Except that for most, life goes on as normal. The only time I remember someone commenting to me on what was happening in "the world" is when I came into my favorite Turkish restaurant, where I am now and where I write a lot of articles, and the guys were happy that

Saddam had been executed that day. Turks and Kurds are cousins, and Saddam was mean to Kurds. Nobody mentioned it again. When the big storm came through the area last week, a pipe above my bedroom leaked, so I discussed the weather with my landlord. Other than that, once I walk out my door, it's life as usual. Oh, smoking was banned in a lot of restaurants in Belgium by order of the King -- a step forward for civilization. I love that smokers now have to stand out in the rain rather than blow their toxins onto me.

Does this tell us much about Pluto on the Galactic Core? Does that tell us much about now? What's for dinner? What about that comet?

Fritz Perls, a pioneer of Gestalt therapy, said that we need to lose our minds and come to our senses. For the most part I agree. The stupor that much of humanity finds itself in would melt away if we would pay attention to our sensory data and not fixate on the constructions of our minds. It would help if we did not constantly jam our senses with repetitive input that basically ensures we can neither sense nor think, but rather that we exist in a perpetually tense, mildly uncomfortable form of half-sleep, something that in fact many people know they are doing intentionally and allow to persist because they feel it's easier. Listen, and you will hear people talk about this, admitting to voluntarily staying asleep. Interesting, right? Well, maybe not as interesting as dogs or playing drums, or dogs playing drums.

It is true, one response to an overwhelming situation is to deaden oneself. Deaden is a strange word. It seemingly means to numb out, but it really means to slowly kill. True fact, one option we have in the middle of life is to slowly kill ourselves, including shutting down our minds, abandoning our bodies and impatiently awaiting death. We have other options. One is to become more alive and experience life more vividly.

Coming to one's senses, that is, actually looking around, listening up and smelling the world, is an excellent idea, according to many who have tried it. You know, you notice the critters around you and stop pretending all those other people on the street aren't there. Paying attention has a bizarre way of awakening something deeper -- "the mind of the senses, the consciousness of creatures," in the words of Lord Krishna. Noticing one's senses is grounding, you start to pick up on a lot of beauty, and even the really weird stuff often has a way of being pleasurable because there is pleasure in noticing. The mind behind the senses comes to life and feeds us life.

Perhaps the difficult part is that once you start to feel, you will typically start to get the feeling you need to do something: get a new job, lose weight, go to therapy, make art, stop the war, have sex, quit Prozac, clean your room, have more sex, move out of your parents' house, move out of your parents' city, start a blog, etc. Action is the fruit of knowledge. Therefore, I make no distinction between deadening oneself and having a great excuse to do nothing; no distinction between not wanting to do anything, or deadening oneself to make that possible.

Often, you can find out a great deal about someone's intentions (including your own) from the results. People in a lot of conflict typically like it that way; people who refuse to live their lives get the benefit of not having to dare living; if you are making art and making love and doing good work, the chances are you planned it that way, and do it actively. Outcomes frequently reveal intentions, despite appearances.

Here is where I part ways with my dear old Uncle Fritz. It's when the senses deceive us; when

we need to apply the abstract mind to determine the truth. For example, our senses tell us the Sun goes around the Earth. We needed smart people, not trapped in their beliefs, who could do (or invent) math and see past the visual illusion of the Earth being the center to find out otherwise. They had an odd way of putting the truth of the Universe above all else.

Sometimes we have to look deeper than the senses. Sometimes pretty people are shitheads. Sometimes you need to look at the chart and make some assessments about where things are at. Pluto is crossing the Galactic Core now, and we know this.

This event is the culmination of Pluto in Sagittarius, a long, intense era of history that goes back to the middle of Bill Clinton's first term, and which notably involved a sex scandal that changed the course of world history. We've all been through a lot, and a lot of Pluto transits. Now we're in this big moment, and some are wondering what it all means.

Pluto is the astrological lord of the soul, of death and regeneration, of deep change, and of a specific dimension of sex -- the hormonal one, the one that pushes us to evolve, the one that drives us to total surrender. The Galactic Core is the spot where a super-massive black hole is binding our galaxy of 300 billion stars together with its gravity. The GC is a little like an astrological stand-in for God. Pluto is the stand-in for all that drives the human experience forward. Pluto going over this point is intense. Something that represents the potent God-force within (Pluto), and something that exists as the God-force in the outer world (the Core), are aligning, and we are watching the results. The sex aspect of Pluto and the God aspect of the Core are aligning, and the two are being superheated and fused into one consciousness.

And despite whatever significant progress humanity is making, we have a lot of death, murder and the making of mayhem and profits. In the midst of this exquisitely spiritual transit of Pluto in Sagittarius, the United States government went into a nation and committed mass murder in the name of peace right in front of everyone's face. We hardly hear a peep from anyone who objects. For our purposes, Cindy Sheehan does not count. I am talking about everyone else. When was the last time you gave a rant about the war in the employee lunchroom? People are "waking up," but not often to the point of action or actually caring. Meantime, we have bizarre things happening to the weather patterns, we have to buy water in little bottles because the water in our taps is no longer drinkable, we cling to the last few drops of oil, the ice caps and ice sheets are melting, and life goes on as usual. Here is where we need the abstract mind to help us.

I think that the Bush-Cheney administration going into Iraq, committing mass murder (interspersed by commercials) and basically getting away with it, deserves a closer look for a moment, because it reveals something about us, and it may reveal something of the times to come.

We need to ask our abstract mind what that really means. If this is you, what's your issue? The fact that the World Trade Center was such an obvious inside job and the boys got away with it is in the same category. So, too, were the stolen elections, the gutted constitution, the spying on all of us. How would you feel if I had access to your email, disk drives and could listen to your phone calls? We are seeing how much can be done to us and how few people will say boo because they want life to go on like it did yesterday. Of the 30 percent who still support Bush, I wonder how many would agree that if Bush said he had to bomb San Francisco, that would be fine. How do you feel about Dick Cheney shooting 450 birds on a hunting spree? What if

you found out I shot 450 birds this weekend? Would you still read my horoscopes? Pluto on the Galactic Core is a practice run for whatever we are calling 2012, and how we respond to events now both predicts and gives us a sense of our choices as we approach the vortex. How you are responding now predicts how you will respond as the intensity goes up, and it is going up. What is your main goal at this point? What are you doing about it? What is your relationship to your community? What is your vision for the world? Does it have anything to do with your vision for yourself? If so, what are you doing about it? Do you see spiritual growth as an abstraction, or is it something with tangible results and benefits? If God is in your life, does God tell you to get off your ass?

Perhaps the real issue is psychological, what we do with so much change, in the midst of so much change, which amounts to our whole way of perceiving the world being turned upside-down. Are we willing to embrace the total unfamiliarity that would subsume us, if we admitted the feeling, and the reality that creates it? Do we feel equipped to do so? What if we are not? Then what do we do? Go back to sleep, or wake up and help one another live? Or do we watch it all like the video game we wish it was? Do you ever worry how many people think it's all such a cool illusion? Does it bug you how many people are waiting for "Jesus to come back"?

Pluto aligning with the Galactic Core is the image of something deeply personal aligning with something vast, powerful and impersonal, and the two are having a talk. This is orienting us in the direction of home, and home starts with awareness. Globally, this alignment seems to be raising bloody hell, and with it, a slow wave of awakening; but it's nothing less than the hell we've denied decade after decade. And it may actually be that outer events getting so intense represent our awareness rising.

I recognize the paradox in all this, by the way. To live, we have to wake up, and to wake up, we have to wake up to the beauty and the horror of it all, and process the information. This is more complicated than eating ice cream, but it's better for you. In this, the ninth annual edition of Planet Waves, called The Spiral Door, I've asked a few of my friends who have gone through the door recently to show us how it's done, or at least tell us what they've learned.

## Through the Spiral Door and into Capricorn

*This article is dated Nov. 30, 2007 and was published in Small World Stories, the 2008 annual edition of Planet Waves. It focuses on Pluto changing signs to Capricorn, referencing its location near the dark band of the Milky Way, also called the Road to Xibalba. It also talks about the Aries Point, which makes an aspect to the dark band in the Milky Way.*



I guess we could sum up the big news of this coming winter in a few words: Pluto is entering Capricorn. So recently designated a dwarf planet, Pluto will have this odd new reputation tested as it ingresses the sign associated with government, big corporate interests, big science and the structure of society itself. These changes will invariably affect the structure of our personal lives, and we will have the opportunity to not only adapt but also create something new.

The Pluto ingress to Capricorn occurs in late January. We might call it a system check on a grand scale; Capricorn is the sign of "the system" and all the planets aligning there, most significantly Pluto, will represent the check. The last time we had a slow-mover in the

neighborhood was when Chiron arrived in the exciting winter of 2001-2002. If you are planning a calm, quiet winter, I suggest you run a hot bath right now; you may not have time by next week.

Before Pluto reaches Capricorn, however, its effect is being magnified by an alignment with the Galactic Core and Jupiter (exact Dec. 11), bringing a dozen or so years of Pluto in Sagittarius to a climax. We are now in the Spiral Door -- the alignment of Pluto with the core of our spiral galaxy, where we find the cosmic vulva sometimes referenced in modern versions of Mayan creation lore. Through this door is the 'other world', the portal to the other side, depicted as a birth canal through which human life emerged. That other side is the supposed home of the gods and the demons, and it would appear to be a metaphor for the human subconscious. This is the gestation place of our fears and our ideas, which are then born through the dark slit at the center of the galaxy.

This birth canal will be seeing a lot of action the next few weeks and months, as planets one by one align there, with Pluto as the focal point. Remember that this zone of the zodiac, where Sagittarius meets Capricorn close to the center of the galaxy, is the part of the sky associated with the 2012 phenomenon. This involves two distinct issues; one, an alignment between the position of the winter solstice Sun with the dark line down the center of the galaxy; and two, the day the Mayan calendar's 13th baktun ends on Dec. 21, 2012 (completing a 5,125-year cycle).

In essence, 2012 is a time, but it's also a place, and that place (where Sagittarius meets



Capricorn) is experiencing an unusual alignment of powerful planets right now and through the winter. The essence of where Sagittarius meets Capricorn is where holding a clear vision (Sagittarius) meets the initiative and resources to build that vision into something real (Capricorn). It may also represent overcoming our deepest fears. This is the story of humanity -- rising above misgiving, responding to necessity, and going from an idea to reality; materializing that which exists in concept and turning it into something that can serve our quest for creativity, survival and the improvement of our lives.

### **The Aries Point Connection**

While the galactic alignment is not something that has been considered by astrology for very long, or very well, something else has -- the [Aries Point](#).

The Aries Point is the first degree of Aries, the place the Sun is located on the vernal equinox or the first day of Northern Hemisphere spring. It is 90 degrees away from the first degree of Capricorn, thus making that same angle to the dark line down the center of the Milky Way. After years of observing the Aries Point, it does seem that corresponding angles in Cancer and Capricorn are somewhat more sensitive to planetary activity -- though the whole phenomenon is summed up with the term "Aries Point." More accurately, we would say that the *cardinal points* -- the first degrees of the cardinal signs -- are each hotspots in the sky, but all directly related to one another.

The cardinal points have a distinct property -- they join individuals with the collective. Developments associated with them affect many people, and individual experience becomes transpersonal. We go beyond ourselves. There is no private life that is not directed or even dictated by some larger public life; there is no individual life that does not affect the collective. Most people are aware of neither experience.

Usually, we experience this by being the hapless victim of world events, for example, the tsunami, Sept. 11 or one of many other "news" developments that have added up to a world that is changing very fast in ways we cannot really see because they are so prevalent. We live in the midst of this change like a fish in the water. The nature of the environment is invisible to normal perception. When we get an Aries Point alignment, we can momentarily see the changes for what they are.

Whatever developments 2012 might point to, we will be getting a taste of them as planets now gather around the 2012 region. It appears that the changes come on fast and strong, and we will begin to see the first rumblings of Pluto in Capricorn shake the world and who knows -- maybe even wake up a few people for a few seconds.

If you are an adventurer, pirate, public policy maker, criminal or astrologer, we are in high times. If you are seeking enlightenment, listen and you will learn a few things. If you want to assist with the world transition, now is the time. The most progress is possible in the times of the greatest change. But the winds of fortune are blowing so hard they could capsize a tugboat. Enormous profit and progress can come from the astrology you are about to experience; but remember that fortune favors the bold, and boldness is partly about staying upright.

As for specific predictions, what exactly do I see? A lot of something. Mainly, change. I see

some kind of shakeup in the government/corporate structure. Some event or series of events alters the structure of our society. I see the truth coming out about something ridiculously obvious; such as where the treasury went, or the precarious state of the world. Then, I see an extremely impressive display of media footwork in its aftermath, trying to interpret, reinterpret or utterly deceive us about the events. The key to that interpretation is when Mercury stations retrograde in an exact conjunction to Neptune in Aquarius a little after the main events take place. Two Full Moons very closely aligned to the Aries Point (and thus the 2012 point) precipitate matters, on Dec. 23 and then again on March 21. Much happens in between, as we will surely discover.

# The Sprint to 2012

*This was written January 2008 as part of Small World Stories, the 2008 annual edition of Planet Waves. It gives a fairly detailed look at the Western astrology leading into 2012, the first of two articles to do so.*



The astrology of 2008 puts us onto the final approach to 2012. Turn on your radar, buckle up, chuck the ginger ale and drop your landing gear: the Age of Technology is approaching the runway.

The year 2012 has been tossed around as something special since José Arguelles created the Harmonic Convergence in 1987. With that event, he called attention to the Mayan [Long Count](#), a calendar of approximately 1.87 million days used by the Maya in what is now Mexico and Guatemala. Something called the 13th baktun ends on Dec. 21, 2012, concluding a 5,125-year cycle. Notably, this cycle predates the Maya themselves, whose mathematicians dealt in very long spans of time extending before and after their own existence.

More recently, author [John Major Jenkins](#) proposed an astronomical theory for why the Mayans chose our particular era for the cycle to end. He suggests that it involves the alignment of the position of the winter solstice Sun with the dark band that runs through the center of the Milky Way galaxy (called the [Road to Xibalba](#)).

Due to the precession effect (that is, the very slow wobble of the Earth on its axis), the winter solstice point gets a little earlier every year (advancing a bit more than a degree per century). The same is true for the first day of all the seasons. The precession effect is usually used to measure the astrological/astronomical age. We are familiar with the concept from the Age of Aquarius theme, wherein the [Aries Point](#) (the first degree of the Western zodiac or the first day of spring), is moving into the constellation Aquarius.

Jenkins asks a very good question. Maybe it's not the constellation that Aries Point is in that's the true marker of our cosmic alignment, as we usually think. Maybe it's the point 90 degrees away, where Capricorn begins. Maybe that's where we need to be looking for information about an accurate calculation of the age we're in. Most Planet Waves readers are familiar with the Aries Point and its astonishing connections between personal and global events.

Jenkins proposes that we have one of the cardinal points (the first degrees of the cardinal signs Aries, Cancer, Libra and Capricorn) aligning with something tangible: the dark band running through the Galactic Core. Notably, it is the last of the four points, involving Capricorn -- the sign of corporations, government and the structure of society. All of the 2012 theories, whether friendly, cataclysmic or both (most are not so friendly, by the way), involve changes

to the structure of society, whatever else they may touch upon.

This is a cool theory. It helps explain why the Aries Point (which is shorthand for all four of the cardinal points or the four directions) is so hot these days. When events focus on the Aries Point, we get an idea of why it's so dependably connected to events that ripple through the lives of millions, and which we tend to feel so personally (an example of an Aries Point event was Sept. 11, 2001). Jenkins' theory provides a comprehensible link between Western and Mayan astrology, something that has been lacking throughout this whole discussion. Some astrologers have looked at that 2012 chart and claimed it contains nothing special, hence, 2012 cannot be that important. (Just because someone does not understand a chart does not mean it does not have meaningful information.)

### **Enter: Pluto in Capricorn**

What has not been discussed so widely are outer planet movements leading up to that date. The first of them -- and perhaps the most significant -- is Pluto entering Capricorn, a process which begins in about two weeks. That is another way of saying that Pluto is aligning with the position of the winter solstice Sun, i.e., the first degree of Capricorn. This places it on one of the cardinal points, as well as in aspect to the other three.

Obviously, Pluto in Capricorn is going to have a profound effect on the structure of society: on all Capricorn institutions, from corporations to the government to the banking system. True, this will affect individuals, but individuals tend to learn faster than groups and companies. We will all go through a series of individual initiations, but the key to some form of success here will be awareness about group initiation.

There are some companies, institutions and some governments that will do very well -- the ones that can loosen up their structures, both physical and ideological, and flex with the changes. These will surprise you -- when you hear the story of something that seemed stuffy and old suddenly becoming a progressive leader of some kind. Indeed, Pluto in Capricorn is all about leadership. It is about building and acting on the vision that has been developing during the years of Pluto in Sagittarius (1995-present).

Pluto's ingress to Capricorn is attended by some interesting Mars transits. At the time of the ingress in late January, Mars is in a loose (but significant) opposition -- in the process of making three exact ones. The third contact is March 7. So we get Mars and Pluto working the solstice points (from Cancer and Capricorn), which feels a little like flint on a piece of iron.

Then, shortly after Pluto ingresses Capricorn to stay (no more retrogrades into Sagittarius), Mars makes an exact conjunction to Pluto around the winter 2008 solstice. So we get a lot of personal fire (of Mars) added to the cosmic and hormonal fire (of Pluto) aspecting the 2012 region of the sky.

### **Lunar Nodes in the Middle Fixed Signs**

The Aries Point usually involves the cardinal signs. But something called Uranian astrology says that 135 degrees away from the cardinal points, we have the middle of the fixed signs. This is the sesquiquadrate aspect, which is described as a trigger aspect. A 45-degree aspect works in a similar way. The lunar nodes are now working their way backwards through Leo

and Aquarius. The annular eclipse on Feb. 7, 2008 falls right in the middle of Aquarius, setting off the Aries Point from 45-degrees away in Aquarius.

### **Saturn in Libra 2009-2012**

Here is an exciting one. Saturn has just entered Virgo, so we're not quite ready to be thinking about Saturn arriving in Libra -- but it's not so far away. Saturn arrives there for the first time on Oct. 29, 2009, i.e., late next year. A planet entering one of the cardinal signs puts it into direct contact with the Aries Point and the Capricorn solstice point -- in this case, directly opposite. Pluto is still in very early Capricorn at that point, which means we have a Saturn-Pluto square aspecting the Aries Point and the Cap solstice point. This will be positively thrilling, all the more so because Saturn is the ruler of Capricorn and has extraordinary power in Libra (it is said to be 'exalted' in this sign).

This is a turning point, one that will call attention to the overall theme of the Pluto in Capricorn era. It is a kind of catch-up point. The Saturn-Pluto trine (involving the earthy signs) does not necessarily mean that the two energies are not going to combine in some volatile or provocative ways -- trines can be incredibly influential. But the Saturn-Pluto square is a dimension shift, one that will emphasize a major shift in structure of some kind.

What we generally fail to recognize when we look at changes in society is that society is all about the relationships that people have with one another. We are good at pretending that our relationships with our coworkers have nothing to do with the relationships between companies or nations, but these things are holographic models of one another. With Saturn in Libra involved, we need to consider how the structure of our personal relationships relates to Capricorn -- the structure of society. Marriage, for example, is primarily an economic structure, based in law, not emotions.

Saturn in Libra square Pluto in Capricorn is -- among other things -- about feeling the connection between our relationships and the structure of society.

### **The Changes of 2010**

In 2010, there are three changes that mark a watershed. The first is that Saturn continues its ingress to Libra, retrograding back to Virgo and then making a final ingress in July. This means that the Saturn-Pluto square unfolds throughout this year.

Second, Chiron ingresses Pisces. The last time Chiron ingressed Pisces was on the day past the inauguration of John F. Kennedy, commencing the Sixties. Chiron will have spent about six years in Aquarius, a very different energy. Chiron, a potent focus of awareness, will be shifting from the most airy air sign to the most watery water sign -- a difference we will be able to feel.

Then for the most interesting change of the year, Uranus begins its ingress to Aries, going right over the Aries Point. Uranus is the planet of revolution, invention, disruption and forward-thinking. Contact with the Aries Point strongly implies some kind of cultural revolution. In other words, the natives will be getting restless.

## The Uranus-Pluto Square of 2012-2015

All of this is just a warm up, believe it or not. The grand finale is the Uranus-Pluto square of 2012-2015. That is to say, Pluto will be in early Capricorn and Uranus will be in early Aries. That is a 90-degree relationship, and by mid-2012, it is exact. Most meetings between the outer planets make three exact contacts over about nine months. Somewhat incredibly, the Uranus-Pluto square beginning in 2012 makes seven exact contacts through 2015 -- something that I have never seen or heard of before with any outer-planet aspect.

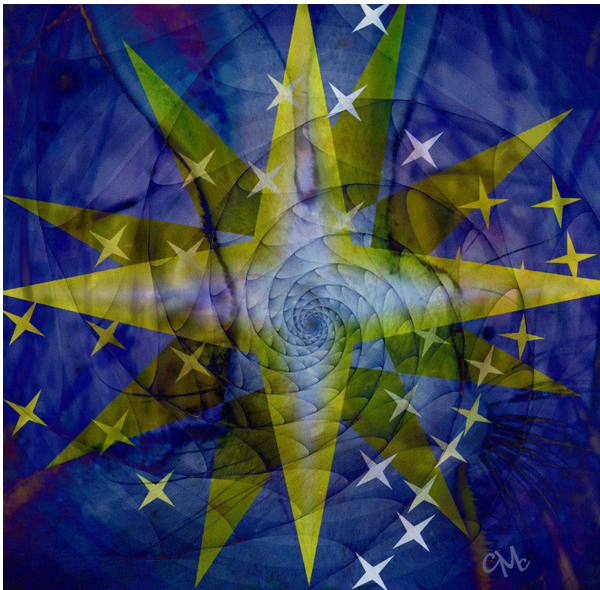
In other words, the two planets will remain in exact square for three years. Based on his story of the history of the Western world, Richard Tarnas in his book, *Cosmos and Psyche*, has demonstrated that quadrature alignments of Uranus and Pluto -- the conjunction, squares and opposition -- are times of social upheaval, progress and even revolution. This is indeed one of the most predictable combinations of planets, and one of the most powerfully focused on actual progress. The Sixties, a time of artistic, social and economic process, is perhaps the best and fortunately most memorable expressions of this aspect. Though there was more to the Sixties than this, the alchemy of that time was typical of what happens nearly every time these two planets align.

Based on the historical data he presents in his book, Tarnas gives this aspect a window of action that begins this year. So it is part of that final approach to 2012. Yet based on this highly unusual event of Uranus square Pluto, 2012 itself seems to be a beginning rather than an ending -- a time when we will finally see something vaguely equivalent of power to the people.

The only problem is, the people are going to have a reason to revolt. The years immediately ahead of us do not appear to be a time of equity and harmony, but rather a time of corporations and governments consolidating their power, even as they collapse under their own weight.

# The Shape of Time

*This article appeared in Planet Waves on May 9, 2008, and was reprinted by Chronogram around the same time.*



In his column last month in *Chronogram*, Jason Stern raised what he called "the question of destiny," asking, "Are the stories of our lives already written in a book of time while we are left to helplessly fulfil a preset plot?"

And of course there's the question of the larger world, and the unforeseen changes in economic, political and social conditions," such as what happens to individuals when a government bombs an entire population.

"These questions have always prevented me from making long-term plans," he wrote, due to his conviction that "the best approach to fulfilling possible futures is the discipline of

keeping the attention rooted in the moment, with faith that the next step will become apparent if I am present here and now."

He asked his readers to offer some ideas about this, and as Jason's astrologer and that of *Chronogram*, I thought I would give it a try. These are very old issues, and many of our ideas about them are programmed with religious concepts. For example, the fate versus free will discussion has been used as a cudgel in theology to address dumb questions like: If there is predestiny, are we programmed in advance to be saints or sinners and, therefore, is it set whether we're going to heaven or hell? If so, why does it matter what we do?

(The answer is: it does not matter, as long as you go to church just in case and leave a little something in the basket. But don't put that on your philosophy midterm.)

First, two observations about time. One involves our conception of linear time. An individual's perception of time is usually based on a cultural model that we are given in childhood and that is reinforced throughout life, and it's always related to technology. Our model is linear; time proceeds from the past to the future. Using this model, we exist in the present like a pair of socks hung on a clothesline, anchored to a tree in the past and the back porch in the future. Without a concept of the past (usually attached to traumatic or romanticized experiences) and the future (usually anchored in anxiety or hope), we would have no concept of the present. One slight problem is that we are hurtling toward the future but we can't see it. It's like driving down a highway staring into the rear-view mirror.

As a result, our ideas about the present are derived from our mostly fictional ideas about the past and entirely fictional ideas about the future. Imagine if our concept of time was rooted in the present and extended out in all directions (this is how astrology works). They are also based on our limited ideas about what birth and death are. Under this model, the tree is birth and the back porch is death; we think we exist for a span of time between the two, with no



idea of what is beyond either. Presumably, if there is something "beyond" birth and death, we should have access to it now, if we are paying attention.

As an aside, most of our clocks are now digital. I've never seen a comment anywhere about what it means that we switched from circular clocks a generation ago to nearly all digital clocks today. Time became faceless with this gesture; clocks used to have a face. An analogue clock at least presents a cyclical model of time; the hands go around and around in the context of a 12-hour cycle, in a way similar to how the Earth orbits the Sun. In a digital device, the sense of time as a line is emphasized; we move along the line like a tightrope walker and presumably we are always someplace new.

A digital clock isolates the current time and takes time out of the larger cycles that really comprise it. Both analogue and digital clocks offer models of sequential time, but they present two different pictures. Pictures mean a lot because they are connected to, and often shape, our concepts. Personally, I much prefer analogue clocks and watches, and I use that option on my computers when I remember.

Second, our calendar system is poorly suited for measuring very long spans of time. Our system does not exactly fall apart when you go back 5,000 years, but it does not hold up well. If you say June 7, 3008 BCE, is that really meaningful? What happened that day?

The Mayans and other Mezzo-American cultures utilized a system of counting days (the Long Count) that was organized into cycles that could easily measure 26,000-year cycles. They were, we're told, fond of the 5,125-year cycle (the baktun), and we are getting close to the end of one of those -- I'll get to this in a moment.

The Mayans also used a 260-day cycle (the Short Count) that was like a floating [island in time](#), moving through the centuries with day number 260 (and thus New Year) continuously falling in a different season. We have no convenient or conceptually coherent way to measure long spans of time. We can barely imagine 10 years in the future, and then one day a decade gets away from us. I think that our model of time is poorly suited for the effective use of it. It leaves us incredibly shortsighted, something we cannot afford right now.

If we switch to an astrological (i.e., planetary) frame of reference, we can take advantage of a system that is based on the cycles of nature, not abstractions. This system has its problems too, but at least the model is elliptical. You get some context; you can relate time and space in a tangible way. You can see synchronicities, in the form of planets making aspects which come with key historical events that reveal the nature of the alignments. We may not know how or why this works, but I can tell you that if you look you can see it working; then you can try to figure out how, but this seems to matter less. (If this topic interests you, take a look [at \*Cosmos and Psyche\*](#) by Richard Tarnas.)

Until the discovery of Uranus, the longest cycle conveniently available was about 29 years -- that of Saturn, which was traditionally considered the lord of time and also of death. When Uranus was discovered in the late 18th century, we were able to think in 84-year cycles. Pluto took us up to 250-year cycles in the early 20th century. Today we have Eris, which has a 557-year cycle; and we have Sedna, which has an approximately 12,000-year cycle. This is progress.



In 1977, Chiron was discovered with a 50-year orbit. This orbit is highly elliptical, so Chiron spends radically different lengths of time in different signs; this is one of its main uses. It reveals hidden patterns below the visible surface of reality that become plainly obvious when you study the patterns in someone's biography.

Using these tools, it is possible to track the cycle of two planets -- for example, the Uranus to Pluto cycle, which was very active in the 1960s as well as during many periods of revolution, and which will be active for the next seven years. This gives context: that is, it helps us find our location in the vast cycles of history and to assess the available energy of a particular time period. We can't necessarily make exact predictions, but we can tell which of the big energies are working together, note the context and respond accordingly.

There are other ways to measure. One is using rare events, such as when a planet makes an exact conjunction to the Sun, called a transit. (The word transit has two meanings; the more common one is when any planet contacts any other planet [such as the Saturn return] and the other is used by astronomy, to which I'm referring here.) You may recall the [Venus transit to the Sun](#) from June 2004. Here is a [Wiki article](#) that will confuse or clarify.

Conjunctions happen all the time, but it's rare that they align in two different dimensions. In other words, during a typical conjunction between Venus and the Sun, Venus will pass a little above or below the Sun. During a transit, Venus will cross the disk of the Sun. This happens at precise intervals. According to the very cool Wikipedia page on the topic, "Transits of Venus are among the rarest of predictable astronomical phenomena and currently occur in a pattern that repeats every 243 years, with pairs of transits eight years apart separated by long gaps of 121.5 years and 105.5 years."

The transits come in pairs, just like eclipses. Individual events in each pair are usually separated by eight years. The event corresponding to the June 2004 transit occurs in June 2012. This is interesting because the Mayan astronomer/astrologer/priests for whatever reason chose 2012 as the end date for the 13th baktun -- and they loved the cycle of Venus. So this correspondence cannot be a "mere" coincidence -- it is either a synchronicity or the result of careful planning.

We are approaching the exact midpoint of the 2004 and 2012 events. The events are separated by 2,920 days, and the midpoint between them is Saturday, June 7, 2008.

This event occurs with the Sun and Venus in Gemini, precisely in the midst of Mercury retrograde in Gemini. Note: it is not a transit of Venus, but with the Sun, Mercury and Venus clustered around the North Node of Venus (right where the 2004 and 2008 transits occur), this is a pretty special event. It seems to be a kind of tipping point on the way to whatever this elusive thing we're calling 2012 represents, and whatever Venus represents.

Now, you may ask how being aware of an event like this helps shape our concept of time, or helps us make better use of time. I would remind you that such an effort is only meaningful if you step outside the context of your daily grind. It's only meaningful if you seek meaning, and want to see your life as meaningful and part of some larger process. Unfortunately, for most people this is no more useful than going to a movie. If you want to access the subtler realms of psychic and temporal influence and really feel the contours of time, you need to think about it for a lot longer than it took you to read this article. Indeed, you need to involve yourself with

the process every day in some way, and be willing to shake up your old constructs of time and space.

However, it can be truly helpful to use cycles that stand outside the normal week/month/year measurement pattern as part of a reflection process. One simple exercise could be to make a detailed assessment of where you were at in the spring of 2004 and where you are today. Use that to conjure some visions for where you want to be in 2012. One immediate benefit is that it's possible to consider the four-year span of time between '04 and now.

We actually remember some of what happened that recently, and we have some sense of how we filled the time and what it felt like to live that long. Between the June 2004 transit and the midpoint, you lived 1,460 days.

The thing to remember is that these are not ordinary dates. June '04, '08 and '12 are hotspots; they are nodal points where many paths in a complex model of time converge in something akin to a cluster of exit and entrance ramps along a freeway. You're still driving down a highway and the wheels are still humming against the pavement.

You don't have to do that much. But you have options that don't normally exist: there are unusual points of access and egress in the vicinity. And it happens in the midst of a very interesting, seemingly routine cosmic shuffle known as Mercury retrograde, which will add to the sense of intrigue and perhaps help you loosen your grip on this tightrope of time that we refer to as reality.

*-- Additional research: Tracy Delaney, Philip Sedgwick*

## A Psychological Process

*One of the most beloved books of the New Age genre is called *The Starseed Transmissions* by Ken Carey (or Raphael). It is, I believe, an authentic channeling. This article is about one idea from *Starseed*, and it appeared in *Planet Waves* on June 27, 2008.*



In the late 1970s, a book was channeled that appeared five or so years later under the title *The Starseed Transmissions* by Raphael (who was later revealed to be a bricklayer named Ken Carey). It was circulated underground as a photocopied typescript for years, and I was fortunate enough to obtain a copy.

Before that happened, though, one summer a friend read me the text on the phone from a tattered published copy that she'd acquired.

The source described itself as halfway between a focus of human consciousness, an angel and an extraterrestrial, but said that technically it was extraterrestrial because his/her existence was located outside the Earth's sphere of influence.

The book vibrated with its source entity's presence like no channeled work I've encountered before or after. The writing infused my cells, and gave the feeling of directly imparting a new level of consciousness and perception. Before and after, my perception of the world was two different things.

Here is a taste of the language:

"I come from a time where there is no time but the eternal now. I retain, even in the midst of this relationship, an awareness of this realm and of the Universal Being that inhabits it. I come with a message that will prove to you vital in these final days of your history. My individual identity comes into being only as I enter the context of my relationship with you. When I am no longer needed in this capacity, I will merge back into the Being behind all being. There I remain in unity and fulfillment until the next impulse comes to send me on another mission. In the interim, there is no distinction between me and the Source. I and others of my kind desire at this time to bring humans to this same level of awareness."

We may ask why, rightfully. What right does anything or anyone external to our sphere of influence have to intervene in our events, even a little? The reason is that our little planet is in trouble, and many of us are asking for help. If there are deities or spiritual entities of any kind, we who consider ourselves spiritual would do well to ask how they would communicate with us, or work with us. The entity delivering *Starseed* tells us that the goal is to have a few people get the whole message, and then they take that message to the culture by means of their respective special talents.

*Starseed* describes a global transformation process necessary to raise humanity out of its dark concept of life and take us to a new, less selfish, less destructive level of mutual awareness. In short, our orientation must shift from death to life; from fear to love.

This is not merely an individual transition; rather, an individual has the distinct experience of joining with something larger, and working with it in their individual way. Each person, sooner or later, will have the experience of joining their normal awareness to what we could call cosmic consciousness, thereby letting go of our highly limited, fear-based view of what is possible (or impossible), and directly experiencing far greater potentials; which include taking their role within the greater story of the changes now afoot on the Earth.

While we will feel better as a result of this joining with the greater whole, we'll also help raise society's vibration to the point where we could (for example) stop a war or preclude the possibility of nuclear annihilation.

In the message's model of consciousness, individual identity is preserved even after the joining. We now have a metaphor to describe the shift -- individual minds would become like computers capable of going on the Internet rather than being stuck in their old limitations. This web of awareness, a human network, that would (and indeed does) surround and protect the globe seemed (and seems) more like a living plasma of consciousness; what the book calls *living information*. If you wonder just what truly creative people tap into, that is one way to describe it.

*Starseed* describes what it calls a *psychological process* that anyone involved in this shift will need to go through. It is an individual process that people willingly experience as part of preparing their minds for existence on a new level of awareness. The apparently brick-wall boundary of the ego has to be dealt with, as does its inherently fearful nature.

The heap of debris we call the past needs to be addressed, as do the patterns it holds. The thing about making changes with a primarily spiritual rather than primarily therapy-based orientation is we're allowed to include miracles in the process (a few therapists do). Still, I recommend a three-fold process, approaching personal changes from a therapy standpoint; from a spiritual standpoint; and from a sexual/relational standpoint.

"It is important that you recognize the creative power of your thoughts," it says in this chapter, "a power far beyond your knowledge. As long as you think negatively, Life will only allow you a token share of consciousness, lest you spread disease..."

"But the moment your thoughts are of Love and Life," it continues, existence will "flood you with perception. You were born to share in [this] creative power. The stuff of which you are made is so charged with the ability to create that everything you touch comes to life -- every thought, every identity, every image. You are the energizing force of the material plane, the bringer of life, the bestower of blessing and the sustainer of illusion. Through you, God is able to enter the very heart of Creation. Through you, God is revealed in material form."

In case you're wondering if this could possibly be true, or if you're up to the task, I ask you -- whose job is it, the Pope? Or are you expecting God to personally stroll down the street and feed the homeless, start an art gallery or write a horoscope column?

Now we come to one of the most challenging ideas contained in New Age thinking, perhaps the most difficult idea that we are meant to grasp in our lifetimes. Difficult because it entirely contradicts the victim consciousness that we were handed by our parents, and that so many have worked for so long to make sure we are so trapped in. Added to this is the idea that we are being called to action by the subtle messages of spirit. Tell me, how often have you ignored these callings, in favor of something less interesting, less daring and less fulfilling?

"You are the creator at this time of your own reality. If you would know the Creator of a greater reality, lay down your thoughts as you would a hoe after a day in the garden. The greater reality calls you now. You are required in its service. Your embryonic period is over, gestation is complete, the moment of birth is at hand."

In order to respond to this calling with our feelings and through actual choices, we need to rearrange the way we think; and this is what is meant by the "psychological process."

"In fear, you have been led far from your home in a state of grace, and deeply into worlds of elemental forces and bonded energy patterns. Now is the time to leave this prison. You need not leave your physical bodies, but you must leave your interpretations of what those objects and bodies are. Your interpretations and definitions only reflect the distortion of your subjective perspective."

And one last really helpful quotation:

"Interpretations are what stand between you and the clarity of perception that you will need to do the work that lies ahead. You must release them with your thoughts, with your dreams, with your hopes, and with your fears. They may seem to be insignificant, ethereal things, floating gently through your mind, but do not be misled by their apparent lack of substance. They are the stuff that wars are made of, the harbingers of death, the agents of disease and destruction. With the energy you give them through your attention, they have the strength to cripple a planet."

The overall implication here is that we would grow, change and develop as part of an accelerated conscious journey that prepares us as individuals to be part of a new level of shared consciousness; and that this, in turn, would raise the vibration of our culture, perhaps in quantum jumps. We would open the way to collective action in a way that seems impossible today. We all know these leaps happen from time to time, when enough people are ready.

In terms of getting ready, many of us individuals have felt these accelerations or shall I say strongly guided changes happen to us. They are not necessarily comfortable, and they are not necessarily good PR for enlightenment in a culture where seeking relief from pain is the main obsession. Indeed, growth can be extremely inconvenient. For example, admitting a relationship or career does not work, which can be a crucial pre-requisite for growth, can present us with many challenges and even more opportunities.

Many of these shifts involve clearing our physical and subtle bodies of toxins and debris that has accumulated over years or lifetimes, which is why they so often seem to involve getting sick. They involve letting go of emotional patterns that keep us trapped in old ways of thinking and behaving, ways we may try desperately to change by conditioning, behavior modification and intellectual reasoning. As the old Zen joke informs us, change comes from

within. Yet that change coming from within often requires that we change what is seemingly the most difficult thing in the world, our patterns of relationships.

Sometimes these phases are indicated in our personal charts by Chiron transits. They can seem to be triggered by Chiron events, but astrology is offering us a complex image of non-linear time. Others are indicated in the collective astrology -- the transits that we all experience and which I often describe in articles and horoscopes.

I can get the feeling this is what's happening when the events cluster like they did last week, particularly around the Aries Point -- for example, a Mercury station, a Pluto sign change, the Full Moon on the Galactic Core, and the northern solstice.

We can track these events, we can see when they are coming and astrology gives us a chance to describe some of their probable characteristics. When the weather actually shows up, we have to live through it as consciously as possible. This is more or less easy in relationships, especially as people close to one another reconcile their ideas about existence and about growth.

Mercury's recent retrograde process in Gemini, which is still working out as Mercury clears its echo or shadow phase, seems to represent one of these accelerations. The dance of Mercury has certainly put many of us through the paces, and to me this is a testament to how challenging it is to establish communication with one another: as Adrienne Rich so eloquently put it, the dream of a common language. That does seem to be the theme. Most of our lack of fulfillment, I believe, emerges from situations wherein we cannot communicate our needs, or our feelings.

Mercury has been pushing us to do just precisely that. Reversing directions twice in Gemini, we are being guided to look at the other side of the story; the other side of our awareness; the other side of every situation in our lives; the other side of who we are.

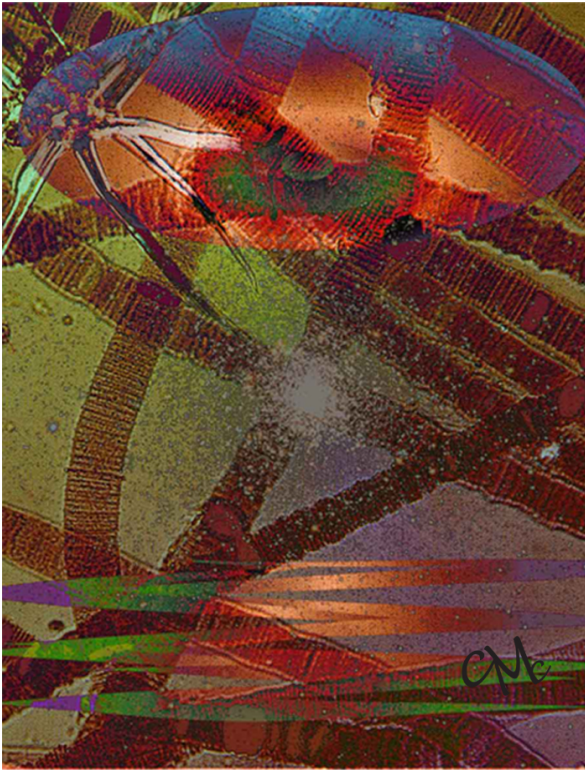
Many of us are in situations we need to change with desperate urgency, just so we feel better and get our lives out of the stuck patterns they are in. We need love, and many of us are not finding it within the conceptual frameworks that we drag around like a cage with holes cut out for our feet. We need to set ourselves free, so we can actually live. But the usual means are not working; like the latest weight-loss plan, they never really did work.

So we need to set down our frustration and look for another way. There is another way, but we need to recognize it when we see it, and be open to it when it arrives.



# Wake Up and Smell the Fear

*This is a daily blog entry that references the historical process, Western astrology and certain feelings associated with the 2012 phenomenon -- most of which involve fear. It was published April 27, 2009.*



The one thing we can say about the swine flu situation is that it is spreading fear like a nice healthy bush fire. It's certainly one of those things that is a potentially 'legitimate' source of this emotion — except for one thing: energetically, influenza is all about fear. I would reach so far as to say that if you're afraid of this thing, you've caught the flu.

The fear level we are seeing, however, is merely an eruption of what has been around for a long time. After decades of denial and being kept under the bed, it is now spilling out into the room. Our lives these years have, in one sense, been a long litany of what to be scared of, from wiretapping to the threat of terrorism to the continuing threat of nuclear war.

Yesterday I [covered the horoscope](#) for the news conference where the public health emergency in the United States was announced. This was a

watershed moment, as the United States remains in a position of global leadership and other countries look to see what we are doing and use our conduct as a guide to making their own decisions. With a legitimate president in the Oval Office, we can now count on this phenomenon once again. That the U.S. stepped into line with the World Health Organization is a strong statement.

Late last night, my good friend and astrology mentor David Arner reached me in Madison to go over the chart. He agreed with my interpretation but added two points. He suggested that the disinformation/confusion factor was a good bit higher than I was suggesting; and that Obama was telling the truth as far as he knew it, but he didn't know the truth.

The Moon in its rather tenuous position -- void of course, after just having made squares to Jupiter, Chiron and Neptune -- suggests strongly that the public is in the same straits.

I suggest that you turn down the volume on input sources saying how bad this is going to be, and those that pump the uncertainty factor. If you are looking for vectors of this pathogen, the most prominent is television, which has nothing new to add to the discussion and is simply spreading negativity. As I have said, the disease itself is fear, but physical influenza is more likely to manifest in a state of fear than it is in any other condition. Therefore, if you want to address this for yourself, it would be wise to turn off the television and process your feelings.

Processing means more than ruminating. It means giving your fear a voice and taking appropriate action when you can: such as doing something you're afraid of that you want to do. Fear often enough responds well to being challenged. If you can do the thing you're scared of, the fear can vanish like it was never there. Then you can figure out that fear is a kind of invitation or magnet to grow and become, rather than some invisible force hemming us into the past.

The most reassuring aspect in the chart is that we are fully in the Jupiter-Chiron-Neptune dynamic of the truth becoming transparent, obvious and identifiable. There is an important factor to the truth: it's not something that you need to be told. It's something that you know based on an inner orientation. How one would sort this out from fear (which we also seem to 'know') is the essence of spiritual growth.

I think the most troubling aspect of the chart is that the Moon is waxing. The situation seems to be getting bigger and gaining momentum, and we may well have our first test of our new life in the post-Bush years right at hand.

We also need to bear in mind that we are in the dynamic of Saturn-Uranus-Pluto even though the Saturn-Pluto square has not actually happened yet. That is in mid-November, it repeats in January of '10, and then in August of '10, being a three-pass square similar to the Saturn-Pluto opposition of 2001-2002. Part of what we are feeling is the ongoing opposition of Saturn and Uranus. As I've suggested before, this is just part of the picture. It represents the polarized progressive versus regressive movements that we have come to witness and participate in over the past decade.

Then there is Saturn-Pluto, which is coming in now and which will take us well into 2011. Finally there is the Uranus-Pluto square, which officially starts in 2012 but which is also in full effect now.

So what I am here to tell you, friends, Romans and readers, is that whatever you think 2012 might be, look around you and take note that we have disembarked from our long boat ride across the 20th century and nearly a decade of the 21st century and are now standing on its shores with our feet wet.

2012 is not about 'what happens'. On the spiritual level, for us as individuals and as a society, 2012 is about how creative we are about approaching whatever situations come our way. Can we even vaguely think in terms of community? Can we think beyond our own individual needs, and those of the person with whom we might be in a dyadic partnership? That's the challenge. Jupiter-Chiron-Neptune in this regard is a powerful resource, and to dial it in, ask precisely what it means for you, and what it would be at its best. Thankfully this aspect will be our companion through the year, and as Jupiter heads off into Pisces for 2010, Chiron and Neptune will remain in a conjunction, fully available to awareness.

What we do with this extraordinary healing and manifesting power is up to us, and I do mean us.



# The Road to Xibalba

*This article about the Western astrology connected with 2012 was published on June 5, 2009. One factual issue I still have is the direction of precessional movement, and whether the position of the Sun at winter solstice is advancing toward the Galactic Core in Sagittarius, or away from it. In either case, the position of the Sun that day is close to the dark band at the Galactic Core, though the movement is too slow to account for much distance even over the course of a century. If 2012 is really measured by precession, we've been here for a while.*



Lately I am hearing the discussion about 2012 happen just about every day. The concept of this being an important year was introduced to popular culture by José Argüelles at the time of the [Harmonic Convergence](#) in 1987. His work is inspired by Mayan astrology, and in that system we experience a turnover in the calendar, which -- so far as I have been able to discern, from the best source I have -- reaches the date 13.0.0.0.0 on Dec. 21. 2012.

That 13 at the front tells us that on the winter solstice of 2012, the 13th baktun will have ended. A baktun is 5,125 years and five of them represent a "great cycle" -- the precessional cycle of about 26,000 years. (Our scientists still cannot

calculate an exact length of one precessional cycle.) This is one full wobble of the Earth's axis, which makes the backdrop of the cosmos seem to slide along and which causes the astrological ages to change.

When you hear about the "Age of Aquarius" that is a reference to precessional movement. There are no exact dates when the astrological ages begin and end (though it's pretty clear from the early Christian iconography that we were in the Age of Pisces at the time of the presumed birth of Jesus/Joshua). Generally when people talk about an astrological age, they are making reference to the position of the Sun on the first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere. This will come about one day earlier every 70 years. However, a Mayan scholar and philosopher named John Major Jenkins has proposed that what we need to be looking at if we want to understand the Mayan system is not the first day of spring but rather the first day of winter -- the position of the Sun at the [Northern Hemisphere] winter solstice. That would be the position of the Sun on the first day of Capricorn, which incidentally is where Pluto is hanging out lately.

When you look at that, you find that it aligns closely with the center of our galaxy, and this, he says, is where we need to be getting our information. Because of the Earth's wobble, that position is advancing toward the Galactic Center and in particular the dark band at the center of the galaxy, which is known to some modern-day Mayan thinkers as the Road to Xibalba. It is the mythical opening to another dimension, the Mayan underworld; and the symbolism is distinctly yonic in nature: based on the vulva. Cave systems in Belize and Guatemala have also

been referred to as the entrance to Xibalba, though one physical expression referred to by *K'iche'* peoples is the dark rift which is visible in the Milky Way.

Let's set aside the Mayan symbolism for now and consider the Western astrology on the road to 2012. As of June 1, 2009 we are exactly 1,300 days from the winter solstice of 2012. During that time we experience many significant changes. For example, Uranus, Neptune and Chiron all change signs. We recently experienced the sign change of Pluto, which transited from Sagittarius to Capricorn (where it will remain until about 2023). As the other outer planets follow suit, our perception of the world will shift again and again with each of the transits.

Then there exist a wide diversity of aspects that tell the story. The most significant of which is occurring right now, as you read this: Chiron conjunct Neptune in Aquarius. Jupiter also happens to be in the mix and even through June these planets are within one degree. Through the month of June they remain in an exact conjunction. My sense is that this is astrology that will shape our time in history. More to the point, it is helping open up a new dimension of reality wherein we have increased creative authority over our lives. And we can, together, create a space where we can meet in psychic space and physical space and restructure our patterns of social interaction.

When we talk about the need for humanity to get free of its current moribund spiral descent into fear and self-repression, materialism and darkness, opening up such a living space, and recreating our relational patterns, is essential.

Aquarius, where this conjunction is taking place, is the sign of both mental and social patterns. Neptune, which has been there for a decade, has melted away the structure of our old patterns, though for many introducing a layer of pure fantasy, media haze and drug haze that makes it impossible to see reality. Chiron focuses Neptune energy, at once applying it precisely and providing an antidote, if necessary. Chiron is like a utility that helps us work with the energy of the outer planets.

Its conjunction to Neptune draws in and clarifies Neptune energy like a laser, which can be applied to awareness, to healing and to creative endeavors. Jupiter adds a wisdom factor, the quality of expansion and a global theme.

This aspect is big, and it is rare that we actually get to live through astrology consciously as it shapes our generation. Such is one of the powers granted by the Internet, and I am certain that the Net is one of the most important platforms for the changes we are witnessing. Yet what I am really describing is an entirely natural network in consciousness that is opening up and that we can access. I described this recently as a phenomenon of 6th dimensional morphogenetic fields in my weekly magazine.

This aspect holds well into 2010 and is a threshold to what follows next, leading to the first full-on 2012 astrology, which occurs in June 2012: the [Venus transit of the Sun](#), and Uranus square Pluto. The Venus event is a precise conjunction to the disk of the Sun, a rare event the Mayans revered. Uranus square Pluto is astrology that says liberation and revolution like nothing we have seen since the mid-1960s.

While there is a lot of noteworthy astrology on the way to 2012, that is the year that the really interesting movement begins. However, I can assure those who wish to participate in the

strange, the new and the unworldly that they will find plenty of intrigue and growth opportunities as these aspects unfold on the road to Xibalba.

All in all, what we need to give up is our attachment to our fears, our defenses and inert fantasies. We don't need to give these things up all at once -- the place to start is with our commitment to them. What I am saying here is that the reason we tend to have so much negativity in our lives is because we're attached to it. That doesn't mean we want it, but it does mean we tend to cling to it like it was some precious thing to be proud of, rather than something to let go of and embrace the framework of the next phase of reality.

One other crucial quality we must embrace is the feminine side of our brains, meaning our body and our consciousness. I don't mean gender bending, but rather a true encounter and integration with the biophilic (sensitive to all of life) quality that is distinctly female. I would propose that this is something essential particularly for women; through this process they can bring in their natural healing gifts and allow them to flourish.

The following is an abbreviated list of events between now and 2012. More examples are available at PlanetWaves.net.

### **Chariklo square Chiron (2009-2012).**

These are two very small, meaningful planets orbiting our Sun in the relatively new centaur class. They are currently in a square (90-degree) aspect. This aspect repeats in seven separate events between now and 2012, and as such is a constant companion along the way. The square is currently from Scorpio to Aquarius. It will gradually shift to an aspect between Sagittarius to Pisces.

In mythology, Chiron and Chariklo were consorts; she was a nymph and the wife of the famous surgeon, healer and mentor. Their story contains none of the philandering, mockery and hubris that is so common to the Greek myths. Yet they endure the many pains of the world and endure the flaws of both humanity and the gods. Chiron is about healing processes that benefit from or demand the raising of awareness and a humble approach to life, as tempered by awareness of both mortality and immortality.

In a square aspect, they are here to help us work out a dynamic in our relationships that is held internally. Our issues with fear, abandonment, psychic pain, physical sickness, inferiority and jealousy are all internally mediated. Chariklo's presence is calling us to be present for our own healing process. She is holding devoted space for us to make peace with our dualistic human/animal nature, and to gradually integrate the two without judgment.

### **Saturn square Pluto (2009-2010)**

In November, Saturn transits from Virgo to Libra. Once there, it will begin a series of three squares to Pluto in Capricorn. This will take place in aspect to the Aries Point, that is, the first degree of Aries, which magnifies the connection between the personal and the political. When Saturn and Pluto get together, the results can range from violence to a conservative backlash against our inherent freedom as humans.

In 2001, we experienced the opposition of Saturn and Pluto and we all saw the results, which lasted for the ensuing decade and created damage we are still dealing with. Indeed, we will for a long time. We now have an opportunity to see how our own obsession with fear and suppressing our life force contributed to the catastrophic aftermath of the Sept. 11 incident.

People who fancy themselves 'conservative' will have a chance to see the fear that is at the core of that ideology. Those who fancy themselves 'liberal' will have an opportunity to apply structure and discipline to their lives in the way that is essential to existing in an actual state of freedom. Through this aspect we will all have a significant opportunity to assess our relationship to fear. We will get to bear personal witness to the idea that trust is the key to love.

### **Chiron and Neptune enter Pisces (2010-2012)**

Both planets are now at the end of long passages through Aquarius, in a conjunction. As this conjunction separates, Chiron will lead the way into Pisces, beginning in 2010. Neptune will follow over the next two years (slow planets take a while to go into a new sign, usually retrograding back into the prior sign once.) In effect this is one transit and represents the full activation of Pisces energy.

We are accustomed to all the toxic forms of Pisces, from violent films to television advertising to wanton consumption of alcohol to every mood-altering pharmaceutical to spill out of corporate laboratories by the train carload. We obsess with status, fashion, appearance, glamour and living fantasy lives. Then to this we try to add a little sprinkling of 'spiritual' as if that would magically open the way to God.

Neptune is the modern ruler of Pisces. Its presence there will refresh the spiritual waters, flooding through both society and consciousness with revitalizing life. Chiron will make us aware of how toxic our ways of living and thinking are, and introduce -- often poignantly -- awareness of how we need to feel our emotions, our bodies and our souls.

### **Uranus enters Aries (2010-2011)**

The mighty liberator Uranus, the planet of foresight, technological advances, innovation and revolution, will personally cross the Aries Point three times starting in 2010, ending up in Aries to stay for seven years in 2011. If we are looking for a tipping point where the signs of change are inevitable, and this odd thing known as 'the public' actually wakes up, this is the event. On the personal level, this aspect says we have to think of ourselves differently. The real evolution is not a news event but an awakening of who we think we are. But we don't need to wait around -- this awakening is happening right now, just when we least expect it.

# Unraveling the Mystery of Self-Esteem

*When we talk about enlightenment and collective awakening, a topic that usually gets left out of the conversation is self-esteem and the extent to which this is damaged among many in our society. I am including the idea as part of a necessary process of awakening. This appeared in Planet Waves in July 2009.*

*Oft times nothing profits more Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right Well manag'd.*

*-- John Milton, Paradise Lost; 1667*



When we look back honestly on this phase of history, we'll see that one of the most profound issues of our day is a pandemic-scale crisis of self-esteem. We don't need to look far for the manifestations of this, or for the causes. T

hey surround us so completely that we barely notice them; or if we do, we assume they are an indelible part of existence. They are built into our relationships, which are often designed as shelter from the storm, but which don't usually work.

As Brian, my editor at *Chronogram* magazine put it when I ran this article idea past him, he's noticing this most in people feeling like they are going insane because the world doesn't appreciate who they are or what they have to offer. This is particularly strange in a world that has nothing but ever-increasing needs; in theory we should all be in greater demand.

To describe something as a crisis of self-esteem is to use a byword covering a great many potential situations. Ultimately they all come back to how we feel about ourselves and our existence. Do we feel good about who we are? On a deeper level, do we consciously notice our existence? Do we feel like we have a right to exist?

We may not be so articulate with ourselves. Usually, we get the data in emotional form. If we're struggling, it may arrive as anything from depression (literally, the sense of being pressed down) to the challenges of adapting in a world that is not the same place from hour to hour. Adapting takes energy and being in a constant process of adjustment can consume nearly all of our energy.

But there is something else unique to our time in history that I think may hold the key: as a society and often as individuals, we live as if we have no responsibility to anyone or anything; not ourselves, not our society, not the world. I'll give you an example. There is a large swath of society that feels like it's entitled to do absolutely anything at all. There is a larger swath that allows them to get away with it.

It's not just how we feel about ourselves that is suffering, but rather how we feel about very nearly everything. And in a word, that would be cynical. Cynical is another way of saying

having no respect. Another way is suggesting that we live in a time of ethical bankruptcy, which is taking a personal toll in the form of a great many people feeling worthless. It should come as no surprise that most have done very little to earn that sense of worth from themselves.

Let's get a definition of *esteem* up on the blackboard. According to *Etymology Online*, esteem means to estimate the value of something. The word dates back to 1450. It was initially used the same way we currently use the word *estimate*, so that a conscious evaluation is implied, not simply a notion or a quality. The term *self-esteem* is neutral: it can represent a high value, a low one or something in between, pending evaluation. There is an accounting involved; and that implies accountability. This is precisely the opposite of getting away with anything you can, or letting others get away with anything.

As for *self-esteem*, *Oxford English Dictionary* defines it, perhaps too simply, as "a favorable appreciation or opinion of oneself," and one of the first to apply the term was John Milton. The term was popularized by phrenology (a kind of pseudo-science involving reading bumps on the head), which assigned it a bump in the early 19th century.

In astrology, this is 2nd house territory, which is related to Taurus. It's possible to get a fairly clear understanding of a person's concept and experience of self-esteem by a careful reading of the 2nd house. Pretty much everything shows up there, though it's often necessary to look at the planet that rules the 2nd house (which will usually be placed in another house) and see what it's doing. The 2nd house is how a person feels about him or herself. It's also about one's personal assets, such as money and other valuables. Most of us have to work to build our assets, which suggests that self-esteem is not something that we're born with or that we inherit, but rather something that we earn.

When that bank account goes into negative numbers, which can come from our own actions, our refusal to invest in ourselves, or from others intentionally plundering us, the results can be a devastated sense of self-worth.

In practical terms, the pain we associate with low self-esteem can show up as any of the following: the feeling of being worthless or useless; having no sense of purpose; feeling like one's life is out of control; feeling submissive to the needs of others; feeling unworthy of love; hating oneself; walking around thinking everyone hates you; being stalked by guilt and/or shame; feeling like no place is actually home; obsession with relationship in the midst of any or all of this; constantly feeling lonely, even if you're in a relationship; being terrified of intimacy; or feeling like relationships are prison cells.

Let's add to that the feeling that life has already passed you by, such as feeling old at age 19.

What exactly is going on? How did this come to be? Well, let's start with the chaotic households that nearly everyone was brought up in, and how little time is devoted to children. Let's consider kids growing up around parents whose lives are nearly constant struggles, as has happened to so many of us. Adults living in a world of pain teaches kids to feel badly about themselves, which is a form of plundering them. Kids take on and blame themselves for the pain of their caregivers. Too often it's not possible for children to get the focus they need; most of us grow up neglected, which is another way of saying that we start with a negative example and persist in doing the same things to ourselves.



Many parents teach children specifically not to invest in themselves. The child or teenager wants to make an investment, such as learn a skill; an adult thinks it's a waste of time; the kid gives up. Note, some of us don't listen. My father told me numerous times not to be a writer; rather, he supposed I would make a better postal worker.

If we don't make these investments, which are spiritual as well as physical, we can exist in a world where everything seems to be better than we are. There is an estimation involved, and we typically count ourselves out. If we don't feel beautiful, every photograph of a glamorous model is going to seem more beautiful than we are. If we don't feel strong or successful, the images of men that portray guys with less to do, more money, fancier cars and sculpted muscles are an invitation to feel like shit. That supposedly calls for action, which is how most advertising works: by preying on our sense of inferiority.

My favorite example of this is that ad for the 'Army of One' -- a military recruitment ad (which I am now discovering from a Google search has been brutally, viciously satired a number of times). This masterpiece -- which, incredibly, we cannot find on any website, nor can we find still images from it -- features one soldier flying in a transport plane, fighting a war and so on. On the surface, it tells kids 'you're somebody special', but what it's really reminding young men about is how worthless they feel. There is twisted logic to the subsequent recommendation: do something about it; feel good about yourself and join the Army.

Be a hero. If you're not a hero, clearly you're a loser. Now divide this out over an entire society that has been primed to be vulnerable to precisely this message. We are susceptible to feeling like the greatest thing ever, or shameful and worthless. Because of how painful it is, we bury the whole conflict.

Let's give this a name: exiled narcissism (coined by my friend Maya's therapist, Steve Carroll). Exiled meaning pushed into the shadows of the psyche, and narcissism meaning the belief that we are better than someone for no good reason, or self-fixation at the expense of others. This can also involve obsessively fighting to prove we're better than others; a kind of competitiveness that our society loves so much but won't call by its real name. (For example, jealousy is considered precious, but it's rarely described as an attribute of narcissism.)

We are going through a phase of mental history wherein the only thing that's interesting is competing. Competing is a form of estimation; but it yields a value based on being better than someone else, not worthy in your own assessment of yourself.

You can no longer just be a good cook, and use food as a source of nourishment and pleasure. You have to be the top chef; and if you're not the top chef, then what are you? And at the same time, narcissism is allegedly a bad thing. So we shamefully have to shove it out of awareness. Then it comes back with a vengeance, because we "know we're special" and "deserve the best" and so on. Or we "lost the game" and are devastated. The sick part is that usually, this has less to do with Top Chef and more to do with being (or not being) Top Wife or Best Father.

We often flip back and forth between grandiosity and shame; between being the most beautiful and not beautiful enough. Grandiosity can feel like being righteously indignant and powerful and like you have the right to reject anyone or anything; shame is when you feel so worthless, the obvious conclusion is you deserve nothing and no one. If we can observe this

process for a while, we can see that neither of these polar extremes are true values. Neither would serve us in relationship to ourselves or to others; and in a true estimation, neither one actually exists.

Somewhere in here, we might decide it's time to love ourselves. But in doing this, we might seem to tread dangerously close to narcissism, or the fear of being labeled as such. I would say this may actually be true, particularly if our 'self-love' does not involve an actual estimation of our value, in our own eyes. Usually from this position we feel too worthless to start investing in ourselves; after all, what is the use?

This crisis goes deeper than psychology. Its roots are in something underneath 'esteem'. That something is the awareness of existence. In other words, maybe the problem has more to do with *self* than it does with *esteem*.

It's not just that many of us do not esteem ourselves (and harshly judge those who do), but that we don't even know we exist -- that we, in fact, stand out and stand open as a place within the cosmos where both a world and a person mutually unfold, manifest and reveal. We are so busy playing roles -- wife, mother, businessman, cool guy, someone busy getting rich, suffering poet and so on -- that we don't realize we are simply people.

Many of us don't believe we have a right to exist and to be the creators of our lives. In other words, we're not accountable to ourselves; and we don't feel we have a right to respond to our own needs. Why would we? This shows up, then, as low self-esteem. First we have to acknowledge existence, then claim our right to it, and finally esteem ourselves in the process. Implied in this process is the acknowledgement of death. Not dealing with death consciously creates a crisis because unless we acknowledge the other side of existence, which is to say, nonexistence, then we cannot really appreciate either.

Death is covered in the 8th house of astrology -- which is opposite the 2nd house. Notably, the 8th also involves the value that we get from others; and that includes the marriage contract. How many people get married because they feel worthless, or like they found the one person who will value them? The one person for whom we can be a hero, which is to say, worthy in the eyes of others so we can feel good about ourselves.

Here is a thought from *The Denial of Death* by Ernest Becker:

"The first thing we have to do with heroism is to lay bare its underside, show what gives human heroics its specific nature and impetus. Here we introduce directly one of the great rediscoveries of modern thought: that of all things that move man, one of the principal ones is his terror of death. After Darwin the problem of death as an evolutionary one came to the fore, and many thinkers immediately saw that it was a major psychological problem for man. They also very quickly saw what real heroism was about, as Shaler wrote just at the turn of the [20th] century: heroism is first and foremost a reflex of the terror of death."

How do we put this information to work? First I think we need to raise awareness about the fact that existence as we know it is a transient thing. Everything is in motion; everything changes; existence is a process of change; we are part of that process. This is exhilarating to some people and it makes most others despondent. And it is indeed possible to get caught in the thrill of death, which is a form of heroism. At this end of the spectrum as with any other, a



conscious, healthy relationship has to be established, and that really means coexisting peacefully with the ongoing process of change.

Maybe reaching that point of positive self-esteem is the moment when we feel we are worth an investment in ourselves, despite the fact that time goes on without us. The death connection can be useful in that it's a reminder that nobody is inherently better than anyone else, and that what we choose to do with our time is entirely up to us. As is (with the exception of our children) who we spend it with: people who care about themselves and act on it; people who care about us and act on it; or someone else entirely.

All of these are decisions we make on the way to personhood. As others have noted, I don't think we are born people; I think that becoming truly human is something we work at every day, all our lives. Why we would be struggling with this in our 'dehumanized' world today is easy to see; but if we want to do something about it, we first must recognize the need.

# The Fear and Chaos Index

*This article comments on cataclysm predictions that surround 2012. It was published as a daily edition of Planet Waves on Nov. 4, 2009.*



We're full throttle into one of those spells of history that exceeds the ability of most people to make sense of it; to contain what they perceive within their preconceptions. In other words, we all approach the world with pre-established beliefs, and compare what new things we perceive to them. If the new things are too intense, or challenge what we already think, we tend to either shut down or have our minds blown open — or just simply blown. And not in the earlier sense of that concept (the Sgt. Peppers album, *Burning Man*). I mean hurt.

We were warned -- not to fornicate.

Collectively, we're experiencing this increase in energy in a compromised state, and I would suggest, it's not a voluntary process in the way we usually think of that. Rather than openly

choosing, we set ourselves up to be forced, to be pushed, to be backed into having no other options. It helps to be open and flexible, for example, when you're being presented with new information or new experiences. Most of what we're open to now is fear.

Our other portals are being systematically closed by fear, by divided awareness, by pain and by what we do to avoid pain.

Most of that is by shutting down; closing ourselves off to the world, to people, and to ourselves. By blocking out genuinely natural energies (Eros, for example), or by mingling them with fear, we set ourselves up for even more fear, because fear is in part the result of resistance and a lack of trust in the flow of life.

One of the ways that people 'avoid fear' is to indulge deeper in it — for example, horror movies; most of these involve chaos; and the influences are coming in from every direction. The 2012 movie is about to come out. I'm sure it will be a smash hit. That's a lovely example of what we do to ourselves. It's official website begins, "With the Mayan calendar ending in 2012, a large group of people must deal with natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions, typhoons and glaciers."

The premise here is that volcanoes follow schedules, like trains. If the calendar predicts the disaster, then it's not a disaster. The calendar is supposedly astrological in nature, and *dis-aster* means "against the stars." So this sounds more like a happy coincidence. In fact there's a glacier outside my door right now, and we are great friends.

Another premise is that the Mayan calendar is 'ending'. No calendar ends; your datebook ends, but time does not end and the calendar itself does not end. From what I have read over the years, it is true that the 13th baktun of the Mayan calendar is ending, and that means that the 14th baktun is beginning.

If this implies natural disasters, I would remind everyone that we've been dealing with that since the beginning of time, and also for quite a few years in the millennial era. Does anyone remember the Asian tsunami and the hurricanes and all these floods and droughts? And bank failures? And just about anything else you can name?

Earlier this morning, I was reading one of those let's freak out websites pertaining to the supposed pole shift. It was sent to me by a reader asking my opinion; this happens a few times a month. The site she sent took me back to another website by a guy telling us how to "survive 2012." His "official website," as he calls it, begins, "Author Patrick Geryl came to the staggering conclusion that the Earth will soon be subjected to an immense disaster." Just try to visualize that. He's sitting there typing -- and then --

Well, then he declares that right after he's done writing this website, he's going to devote his time and energy to creating a survival group. Off to Walmart! Better stock up on [survival stuff](#). Don't forget the Sterno!

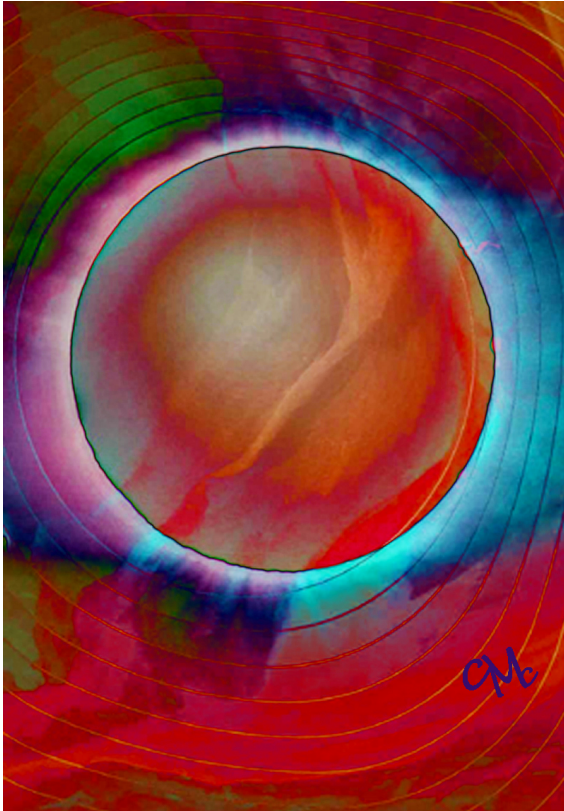
The problem with all this dis-aster (external drama) is that it generally leads us to ignore the personal growth factors involved in being alive: the exploration of our existence, the privilege of relating and sharing. Even while we're busy dealing with hurricanes, locusts, earthquakes and bank failures, we still have relationships and we still have a relationship with ourselves. We still have the option to be at peace with existence, and the privilege to seek that peace; or alternately, to view our relationship with existence as a battleground.

This is what you might call the spiritual piece; the place where we can take ownership of our existence, which includes the way we reassemble the "reality" that we perceive, once it's held in the confines of our mind. Once there, what we do with it is our business, though that choice affects many others. I would propose to you today that those who invest their energy in freaking themselves and others out are not using their minds creatively.

But I promise you, they long to. We all do.

# Everything, All At Once (or Welcome to 2012)

*This article, published on Jan. 15, 2010, was written in response to the Haiti earthquake, with an emphasis on Aries Point events.*



First, a historical note. Did you know that when Christopher Columbus “discovered” America, the thing he discovered was Haiti? So the island that was shaken and the country that was shaken to rubble has a hallowed place in the dark history of the New World, as the place where European feet first touched the ground. There, they met the native Tainos, one of the Arawak people; and made a settlement, called La Navidad, on the north coast of present-day Haiti.

Thus began a holocaust. In 2007, *U.S. News & World Report* said that from an estimated initial population of 250,000 in 1492, the Arawaks had dropped to 14,000 by 1517. How did that happen? There’s the famous entry from Columbus’ log, reporting his first encounter with them; that pretty much explains it.

“They brought us barrels of cotton thread and parrots and other little things which it would be tedious to list, and exchanged everything for

whatever we offered them. I kept my eyes open and tried to find out if there was any gold, and I saw that some of them had a little piece hanging from a hole in their nose. I gathered from their signs that if one goes south, or around the south side of the island, there is a king with great jars full of it, enormous amounts. I tried to persuade them to go there, but I saw that the idea was not to their liking. They would make fine servants. With 50 men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want.”

So much for Pat Robertson’s theory the Haiti quake happened because the Haitians had made a pact with the devil at Bois Caïman near Cap Haïtien on August 14, 1791. Yes, those in the slave revolt used Santeria at the commencement of the rebellion; that is historically documented. But even in the unlikely event that has some kind of karmic influence, it doesn’t explain what had happened on Hispaniola for the prior 300 years: brutal slavery at the hands of the Spaniards and the sugar-addicted French. Bad things have been happening in Haiti since Columbus laid eyes on the place.

Is this about something much bigger? Are we getting a message that this is so big, it’s a comment on the story of the entire New World?

Yes, earthquakes happen, and they can happen anywhere. For example, there is an active geological fault line running down the Hudson River. The Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant sits atop a newly identified intersection of two active seismic zones. We in New York who

don't even experience tremors could wake up to the Earth shaking one day next week or in 5,000 years.

### **The Aries Point and the Earthquake**

The Haiti earthquake occurred in the days before a solar eclipse, mixed up with an 11-planet alignment in Capricorn and Aquarius. Yet in the midst of that alignment was a specific astrological marker: the Aries Point.

That's the location of the Sun on the first day of Northern Hemisphere spring. The Aries Point, literally the first degree of the sign Aries, is extended by astrologers to include all four cardinal signs: the early degrees of Aries, Cancer, Libra and Capricorn, all of which are sensitive to Aries Point effects.

I often characterize the Aries Point as "the personal is political," in that the news that occurs around the time of an Aries Point event always affects a lot of people and also has a property of merging the personal and the collective realms. The world crashes into our living rooms. Everything happens at once. On the same day, relief efforts are underway from one of the deadliest earthquakes in recent history, and possibly in a very long time; congressional hearings on the banking crisis that nearly toppled the economy are proceeding. Citigroup was leveraged 68:1, debt to assets. There are no new regulations in place to prevent it from happening again.

Suddenly there's a new terrorist alert coming out of Yemen; and a new war. Most people hadn't heard of Yemen until a month ago. One near-miss incident on one flight is causing some to respond as if 9/11 had happened again.

A trial was underway in San Francisco to determine the constitutionality of banning same-sex marriage; talk about the personal being political. This trial is uniting one of the nation's top conservative attorneys, Ted Olson -- the US government's lawyer under George Bush -- with one of the stalwart "liberal" movements. Finally, a defection.

Then, in the approximate flavor of Mercury retrograde in Capricorn (on the Aries Point, with Pluto two degrees away), Google is considering pulling out of China.

### **That Was Just the Warm-up**

This is a snapshot of the culmination of Mercury retrograde, two eclipses and a massive alignment within about 60 degrees of sky: a lot of pressure, a lot of Aries Point. Mars (the ruler of Aries) is retrograde, too: That lasts all winter, and you could look at it as Mars being a bit reserved and feeling cramped in his style; or Mars calling us all to look inward and search out our true sense of self. That the retrograde takes place in Leo puts Mars opposite Aquarius, the sign of conformity to groups. We are just coming out of one of the most impressive phases of mass hypnosis that a talented, astrologically literate fantasy writer could ever make up. That would be based on a decade of Neptune in Aquarius, the drug of the masses being denial, Facebook, and Fox News.

Chiron is now conjunct Neptune, a rare event that is about clearing up all that fog and seeing through the denial, delusion, deception and false idealism of Neptune in Aquarius.

But here's what I'm here to tell you: We ain't seen nothin' yet. I can say this with some confidence after studying Aries Point effects for about 10 years, and knowing a little about the astrology of 2010. All the fuss about 2012 is the Aries Point, but we are fully into the aspect pattern right now, as planets begin to gather in the early degrees of the cardinal signs.

Of course the Flying Saucer People (who may be right) probably don't know that; yet the Mayan astrologers seem to have had a clue: Their Long Count comes to its transition on Dec. 21, 2012, with the Sun in the first degree of Capricorn, that is, aspecting the Aries Point precisely. The issue is not the Sun, itself; what the Mayans were looking at was where the Sun would be located, precisely on one of the cardinal points, and where they would be aligned at this time in the precessional cycle.

Before that happens, we have the spring of 2010. And here's a bit of what we get. The big event involves a conjunction in the first degree of Aries: the conjunction of Jupiter and Uranus, two very influential planets. Jupiter leaves Aquarius and moves into Pisces on Sunday, but it does something unusual: It cuts clear across Pisces and stops in the first degree of Aries, where it stations retrograde.

Uranus, meanwhile, has been in Pisces for nearly seven years. If you're a Pisces you've been on a wild ride, no doubt; but we've all been feeling this one as the morph of the technical world with the dream world, as a sense of bizarre instability and emotional restlessness. Uranus moves into Aries in June, right when Jupiter does, and we have the Jupiter-Uranus conjunction on the Aries Point. The last time these two planets teamed up with Aries Point involvement, it was in Libra the summer of 1969. That was the summer we had the Manson murders, the Moon landing, and Woodstock, among many, many other news events that get eclipsed by these big three.

What is this conjunction about? From a political angle, we see many signs of a mass movement or uprising -- even here. It could be aggressive, or even militant; it could just be highly energized. I recognize that there are occasionally protests in our time of history, but we still don't identify with this as being a time of rebellion or uprising against the many injustices that are being perpetrated. This seems strange, given all the years and years of abuses taken by the American public, and by extension, the public of many other countries. Most people will still tell you they don't know what to do about these things. Jupiter-Uranus to me looks like an invention, and in part, an invention of identity; one that can identify with the ability to respond.

Yet the influence of Aries could have certain individuals becoming extremely gung-ho about their "ideals" and Uranus could have them convinced they represent a "group." Jupiter can lead people to think they know more than they do. The theme of the hour is precisely the opposite: Figuring out how little we know and getting some perspective on all this group identification that has been dominating the political landscape of our era.

When Jupiter and Uranus meet on the Aries Point, they will be in alignment with Saturn and Pluto, which have already been stirring up plenty of change. In total, this is the 2012 alignment; the big leverage point, which has a series of peaks over the next three years. Pluto in Capricorn all by itself represents the banking collapse, the near-total dysfunction of Congress, and many other aspects of corporate and government decay. Astrologers have seen

this coming for years; in articles years ago I was describing a banking crisis though I did not know exactly what form it would take. Notably, when Chiron crossed Capricorn beginning in late 2001, we had the aftermath of the 9/11 event, the Enron scandal, Worldcom going down, Arthur Andersen, and a variety of government scandals involving the FBI and U.S. intelligence ignoring the warning signs about the imminent attacks.

What I said at the time was that Chiron in Capricorn was a kind of readiness exercise for Pluto's arrival; if we learned the lessons then, we would not have to go through them again. Now it seems the entire economy has turned into one giant Enron.

### **An Awakening of Consciousness**

Jupiter and Uranus in Aries add *a lot* of energy to this equation. But they add something else, something we really need: self-awakening. The thing about Aries is that it is deeply connected to themes like self-awareness. Aries is the original sign of I Am; it turns the key to existence, to action, and to desire. Uranus is a revolutionary force, forward thinking and provocative. It could have been named Prometheus just as well. The "fire of the gods" is the core of self-awareness, which of course all religions seem to have an issue with. Better to leave it all to God, than to be entrusted with the responsibility of making decisions.

Then comes Jupiter. Jupiter magnifies things and is an excellent compliment to Uranus because it brings in a wisdom aspect, a cultural attribute, and something worldly. And this sounds like it has the potential to be a sudden, spontaneous awakening of awareness, in particular, of self-awareness.

Opposite Jupiter/Uranus is Saturn in Libra, which is about taking relationships seriously. The '60s were great and all, but one of the missing pieces was a reverence for relationship. That was a problem. What happened in the '60s was not really a sexual revolution; it was the unleashing of long pent-up desire. There is plenty of sex going around these days, but most of it is not what you would call conscious or honest, and that is what we need.

At the same time, in the same era, many of the people who aspire to do the work on themselves are afraid of sex or sexual contact; a good few -- you must know some of these folks -- are chipper and spiritual and associate sex with the "baser instincts." Many people are trapped in relationship paradigms that force them to suppress who they, or is it who we are and it looks like that issue may finally catch fire. We sure could use the heat.



# The Greatest Aries Point Show on Earth

*I've written many articles about the Aries Point, which is the first degree of the zodiac, and the first degree of the sign Aries. The Aries Point has been a persistent factor in contemporary astrology, though it's still something of a boutique item. This article describes the events approaching the 2012 era using the Aries Point as a reference. This article appeared in Planet Waves on June 18, 2010. See resource document for the chart for the June 26, 2010 total lunar eclipse.*

*Went to the well but the water was dry  
Dipped my bucket in the clear blue sky  
Looked in the bottom and what did I see?  
The whole damned world looking back at me  
-- "Liberty," by the Grateful Dead (Hunter/Garcia)*



We are approaching the summer solstice, one of the most concentrated astrological moments of the year. This plays into an existing setup of planets gathering in the places where the changes of seasons are focused. As referenced many times on these pages, this is called the Aries Point: the imaginary cross in the sky that goes from Aries to Libra and Cancer to Capricorn. The Aries Point goes by several other names, including the cardinal cross of the heavens, though whatever you call it, the concept translates to events with strong influence on personal and global affairs.

If you're wondering why the world seems to be spinning off its axis, and why your life might feel like a trip through your own personal Twilight Zone Theme Park, check the astrology:

it's the Aries Point -- the one that reminds us that the personal is political and that every individual is connected to a larger public life. If you know your chart, even just a little, look for planets and angles early in the cardinal signs and see what you discover.

Mighty players in the cosmic drama have been collecting along this axis: the ones that change the world no matter what they do. Pluto, the first to arrive, is still in early Capricorn. Saturn is about to re-enter Libra to stay for two years. Jupiter and Uranus are conjunct in Aries, having their first exact meeting in the first degree of that sign (degree symbol: [a woman, risen from the sea](#)). This is an alignment of historic dimensions: I would rate it in the top five most potent setups of the past 50 years, up there with the mid-60s alignment, the grand cross of August 1999, and the Saturn-Pluto opposition of August 2001.

We can take these separately, noting that we are in the midst of several key alignments: for



example, Saturn opposite Uranus and Saturn square Pluto. And of course, we are now well into the effects of the gem of 2012, Uranus square Pluto -- the infamous spark plug of revolution.

While these charts make excellent things to study in retrospect, astrology is mostly about embracing our present moment. It is an easily available map to our experience, now. Most writers are describing the alignment as the 'cardinal T-square' because it involves three of the cardinal signs. It is also the 2012 alignment, which focuses on the square of Uranus in Aries and Pluto with the Moon in Capricorn. The Sun is about to complete the cross by ingressing the sign Cancer on Monday, June 21. This is followed by a spectacular lunar eclipse in Capricorn, exactly conjunct Pluto, on Saturday, June 26. Mercury is in the picture, close to the Sun, so whatever this alignment represents has a voice.

It's worth mentioning the influence of eclipses, which I describe in my weekly podcast. Eclipses are fulcrum events that concentrate both personal growth and the historical process. They define eras of time, but it's a little like getting propelled through a funnel and coming out in another dimension. Part of why they're so powerful is that they align several dimensions of space and time: in other words, they are multidimensional in a way that goes beyond what you ordinarily see in astrology.

If you're an astrology student and you're wondering what the lunar nodes are about, when you see the node, think eclipse. The lunar nodes (where eclipses always happen) are the energetic gateways to the past and the future that enable eclipses to be what they are. The nodes are separate from the Moon; they are points in space that have an 18-year orbit. Think of them as a meeting point. When the Sun and Moon are both near a node, that's when we have an eclipse -- or more accurately, a pair of eclipses, one at the Full Moon and another at the New Moon. Generally, eclipses arrive with a surge forward, with a release of the past and an unusual encounter with the future. Events can seem fated or karmic. They feel magnified, and (like the Aries Point) eclipses merge individual and collective consciousness.

Therefore, you could say we're heading into an interesting week -- not that we're vaguely short of interesting at the moment. When the Sun and Moon get involved with a slow-moving setup, it tends to precipitate the energy contained in that alignment and ground it in tangible ways. Imagine that the tension of the current alignment of slow-movers (Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Pluto) has been building for years, focused on the Aries Point. Now the Sun, Moon and lunar nodes arrive, and we have an eclipse -- two of them, actually, with the second being a total eclipse of the Sun on July 11. That looks and feels like a cascade. If I had to offer any astrologically-based advice, it would be to focus on what's truly important, and I mean that in the long run. Now is the time to concentrate positive attention on your most meaningful goals and plans.

A grand cross baptized by eclipses says that we are standing at a vast crossroads, where choices actually matter. The thing to know is, you are making decisions that affect things you aren't aware of yet. Therefore, the way to use an eclipse as a navigation tool is to focus on the goals and desires that reflect your deepest values.

## **The Cardinal Cross of the Heavens**

Planets are moving from mutable cross (Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, Pisces) to the cardinal

cross (Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn). For example, Uranus has been a longterm tenant of Pisces, and is now taking up residence in Aries. Pluto was in Sagittarius for more than a decade and is now in Capricorn. Saturn has been in Virgo for more than two years and is now moving into Libra.

In the mundane sense, the energy of the mutable cross is a season dissolving and yielding to the next; and the energy of the cardinal cross is a surge of power, like shoots pressing upwards in the spring (this is described eloquently in *The Book of Thoth* by Aleister Crowley). This 'change of seasons' is happening over a period of about five years (approximately 2007-2011), accompanied by other vital developments: for example, Chiron and Neptune ingressing Pisces.

The crosses have what you might call spiritual implications. This morning I got the intuition to check in with *Esoteric Astrology* by Alice A. Bailey (1880-1949; text published in 1951). While I'm here, I will offer some background. This book, part of a larger series called *A Treatise on the Seven Rays*, has little appeal to traditionally grounded astrologers. To them, many of its assertions seem ignorant, speculative and even ridiculous (typical characterizations of literature emerging from various mystery schools). Why this isn't the pot calling the kettle black is because traditional astrology is part of mainstream Western intellectual thought. It's not really mystical. Mainstream astrology is indeed mainstream, to the point of being the astrology of empire.

I've studied *Esoteric Astrology* and considered its ideas for about 15 years. Though many astrologers would be reluctant to acknowledge this (probably because it is so difficult to comprehend, and relatively few have actually got through the book) it's clearly one of the most influential works of 20th century astrology. Bailey grounds the practice of astrology in a deeper philosophy, rooting it in a veiled mystical tradition. She presents ideas that can only be verified or discounted through a combination of intuition, experience and additional study. Among the astrologers you read, you may notice that one broad category 'gets it' and one 'doesn't get it', with the 'it' being the fundamentally spiritual nature of astrology: that it's a raft to a further shore, and the memory of what's on the other side informs the work. The 'doesn't get it' camp is what you encounter when the astrology feels like Tinker Toys or an Erector Set. Note that if you dive into Bailey's writing by contrast it will make the Planet Waves websites seem as organized as an engineering library.

What we tune into via *Esoteric Astrology* is the sense of a vast latticework of the psychic levels; the very, very, very long history of human incarnation and of the solar system itself; and the idea that planetary energies and alignments have influence on many planes of existence. We learn that certain alignments bring together the influences of the different levels of reality -- and that's what's happening now. In short, the people of the planet are going through a group initiation, which is another way of saying a shift of consciousness by a wide population.

This shift of energy -- from a long stretch of time under the influence of the mutable cross, to the new setup focused on the cardinal cross -- is about as significant as it gets. Traditional astrology tells us the mutable cross is nervous, unstable, slow to respond and mired in a mental quality. The cardinal cross is assertive, action-oriented and seeks to create a new order. In a rare moment of connection, this is also reflected in what *Esoteric Astrology* has to say about the crosses, though it goes a bit deeper.

Bailey (channeling The Tibetan) describes the mutable cross as the cross of "repeated incarnations," the "cross of many changes" and the location of numerous experiments that "lead to successive and continuous expansions of consciousness." The mutable cross is all about encountering the endless challenges of incarnation. It's the cross of the "Son of God," that is, the version of the Christ that actually incarnated on Earth. Here we find that round-and-round quality of reincarnation; the sense of being stuck here, and stuck in patterns. More to the point, the mutable cross describes the long (long, long, long) experience of integrating spirit with matter. Bailey informs us that this is the second iteration of the solar system: we are in system two, as she calls it (literally, the second version of the solar system), because it takes that long for physical matter to be quickened to the point where it can fully meld and blend with soul energy; where it will support life.

The energy of the mutable cross is a gradual awakening to the presence of spirit within matter. For example, we are not just our bodies and our bodies are not merely physical. Mutability involves cultivating consciousness of the mind as a distinct entity, then noticing that it veils something more permanent: the soul. It takes a long time to notice this; humanity spends a lot of time on the mutable cross.

The cardinal cross is the cross of action: "the expression of will or power as it expresses itself in the great creative process."

What she terms the great creative process includes the incarnational experience of humanity, and a lot more than that. One aligned with the cardinal cross "no longer identifies with the form or even the soul, but with the will of divinity and with the eternal plan and purpose. It becomes his plan and purpose." Bailey describes this as the cross of the Cosmic Christ, which to me suggests that it's like magnetic north: an orienting pull in the direction of true ethics and purpose, available amidst the chaos of the psyche and of the world. This fits well with the Aries Point theme, because Aries Point events tend to be the easiest to orient our lives around. This includes planets and angles located in the cardinal signs: they are the places where we feel compelled to take action.

### **The Birthplace of Ideas**

Aries, in particular, is "the birthplace of ideas, and a true idea is in reality a spiritual impulse taking form." Note that we have two spectacularly creative planets conjunct in Aries: Jupiter and Uranus, which are making available many brilliant ideas that we can think of as spiritual impulses taking form. That's why you'd be wise to trust your ideas at this point in your existence, and to trust that ideas exist that can solve whatever you want to solve; and create whatever you want to create.

"Aries initiates the cycle of manifestation," she says. So you can think of the transition of Uranus from Pisces to Aries as just that: a form of grounding of a long-tested idea into tangible physical form and decisive action. In the system of *Esoteric Astrology*, Uranus is one of the rulers of the sign Aries (the other is Mercury, and the two are closely related).

Cancer, and all of this eclipse activity, is a reminder of the initial purpose of incarnation, be that in the universal sense or your individual intention for incarnation. The two are related and that relationship becomes obvious with activity on the cardinal cross in general and in

Cancer, specifically. There are few more potent signs of rebirth than a total solar eclipse in Cancer. The coming eclipse is conjunct Juno, which says that as we are reborn and transformed, so too are our relationships, our ideas of relationships and what we think of as our role as a partner. We have some work to do on the issue of jealousy, and Juno involved in this eclipse suggests that we make a note that it's not healthy, and that there is a sane, loving alternative.

Pluto in Capricorn is about attaining a definite goal as opposed to thinking about, and experimenting with, that goal. We are seeing many things get dismantled, torn apart and revealed for what they are: for example, the entire criminal enterprise of capitalism, veiled as political or economic theory.

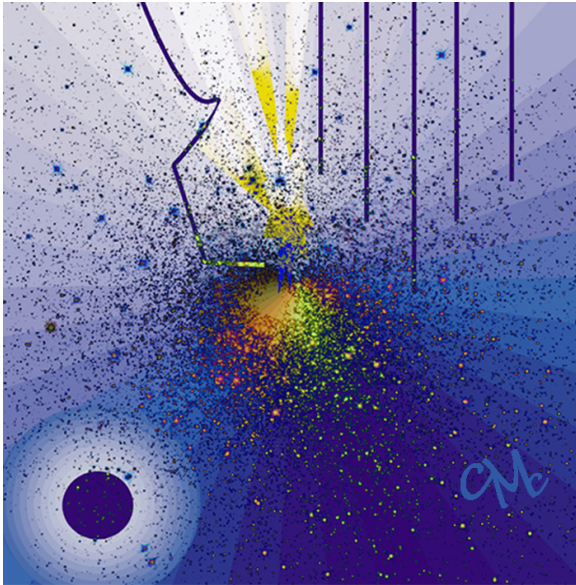
Saturn in Libra is about building. There is a close association to sex and money with Libra, though on a more critical level it is about the law: as she puts it, "law, legislation, legality and justice." And so Saturn in Libra is about actively building our integrity on the matter of laws, which are agreements. As Saturn moves through the last degrees of Virgo, we are seeing the results of laws that don't work, that don't protect people and that have an ulterior agenda. As Saturn in Libra does its work, we will witness the power of conscious agreements, of purpose and clarity in relationships. As a society, we are due to encounter the need to use our laws as tools for building a stable, sustainable world that supports and protects humanity from its less conscientious members.

One of my readers said that her take on Uranus in Aries square Pluto in Capricorn is *mandatory integrity*. Yes, it's easy to cheat, to deceive and to evade one's purpose, but it's going to become increasingly challenging: an occasion to which we all must rise, sooner or later. This includes addressing the unjust laws to which so many are subjected.

As we witness the tearing down of so much that is familiar and taken for granted, the alignment on the cardinal cross is compelling us to take action, to speak only the truth and to live as if we are alive. This is a group initiation. We are in this together. Remember that as you sail your timeship through the extraordinary weeks ahead, and beyond. Borrowing a bit from *A Course in Miracles*, "You cannot be fully committed part of the time."

## Let's Get Real: Saturn in Libra

*Most questions about personal evolution come back to relationships, or then can be seen through that filter. This article takes up some of the central questions that many people face. It appeared in Planet Waves on July 23, 2010.*



Have you ever caught yourself or someone you care about describing this scenario: when you're in a relationship you have to put your authentic life agenda aside, and be the 'relationship you', until you can't stand it any more and you get out of the relationship so you can go back to being the 'real you' for a while?

This way you can 'focus on yourself' and be creative and do the things you love; which works until you want a relationship again, for sex or companionship or both, but to get there you have to lose yourself and sacrifice what you consider the most important.

There are lots of versions of this scenario, which I call a split-self or hemisphere effect. The two sides of the brain act like different people with different needs and often it seems that both sides can't get their needs met at once, much less maintain a steady conversation. Another example is having intimate friendships with people, but after a while wanting to be closer than those permit, so you find a 'relationship'; then the other friendships, even if not directly sexual, must end once you're in a relationship.

Inside the relationship, you start to feel confined and want your other contacts, but various insecurities or the rules of appropriateness (yours or those of your partner) seem to prohibit that. Then you feel the limitations, and needing to deal with them, believe you have to sacrifice the relationship in order to have your more 'normal friendships'.

I am not suggesting that all relationships have this quality, though the world makes a compelling case that many of them do. Many have noted that monogamy (or what I will call unconscious monogamy) can be an isolating way of life, presuming not just sexual fidelity but often a kind of mental, emotional and social fidelity. Often this is born of paranoia as much as it is from a desire for togetherness. And, to be sure, it takes confidence and courage to go beyond this style of encounter.

How do relationships devolve into this state? Many of them start there. Early in this thing we call dating, we introduce prospective partners to our publicist, who looks a lot like us, but presents information strategically to ensure that we're acceptable to this other person who doesn't know us and is sure to think we're a total freak if we let on the truth. Typically when we do this we forget two things: the truth will eventually come out, and the other person probably has some surprises waiting for us. Dating is an interesting thing: it's like a mock friendship. You might act like friends, and spend time together like friends, and say you're friends, but the actual trust and familiarity are not there. It's like they are on credit.

Meanwhile, many people don't have sex with their friends so they don't 'ruin the friendship'. Hence, this thing we call dating -- the certified path to relationships -- takes place with someone other than a friend, such as an acquaintance, a stranger, a sex partner or as it turns out too often, an enemy.

In the dating process, we're supposed to do everything we can to present ourselves as acceptable to the other person, conceal all weaknesses and fears, present ourselves as impeccably monogamous, as successful and in perfect health; not mention opposite sex friends, bisexuality or our cross-dressing bondage fetish.

We all know how judgmental many people are, and more to the point, we know how judgmental we are. I think it's fair to lament how closed-minded so many people are, and how unconscious they can be about it. Question for you: how long is your list of turn-offs? How long is your list of requirements for a suitable suitor? That will give you an idea how difficult we make it for one another, and how far we've drifted from relationships as a source of pleasure and companionship, rather than getting a list of expectations met.

It's no wonder why we're so terrified to be ourselves. There's one other reason, too, which comes wrapped in a paradox. Most 'unpartnered' people you meet are cruising for The One. We're not seeking 'casual' relationships or casual sex; those are allegedly insincere and unfulfilling. We want the supposedly Real Thing, which precludes hanging loose and being real. So instead, we polish up the relationship résumé and put on our most authentic air. The contradiction is that if we're really looking for The One and not the supposedly dreaded, evil, scandalous, disease-laden friendship with benefits, The One is presumably The One who will accept us for who we are: and in that case, no gloss would be necessary.

Characterizing the typically backwards, upside-down thinking of the world, you could say that our search for a relationship is often driven by the desire to avoid relationships. The whole process is so laden with unquestioned habits, values and presumptions, including the presumption that it's acceptable to lie, it's amazing that anyone ever gets to know anyone else. But try as we may to avoid it, we do get to know one another, as the old saying goes, for better or for worse.

Then we wonder why our relationships are such a struggle; why we can go so long without a partner; why it so often feels like we'll never have sex again; why we have to make so many compromises once we're involved in a relationship.

It does not help that it's nearly impossible to have a real discussion about these topics. For example, in my experience, every person has his or her own sexual and emotional orientation. We each have specific needs, desires and tendencies. Yet nearly all discussions of relationship are based on the marriage model of allegedly exclusive heterosexual monogamy, or some certified, sanctified form of queer. There are severe penalties for violating these rules. Often it seems the people who dole out the penalties break the rules the most often.

We need some sanity here. We need to take relationships seriously, and that is going to take commitments to both growth and authenticity that are not generally proffered in our society.

Saturn entered Libra Thursday, and that's an occasion to consider the next phase of our lives. The planet of authority, structure, boundaries and commitments changes signs every 30 months or so, and as it does, we move dependably from theme to theme. Saturn in Libra is about focusing on relationships, and in particular, authenticity and balance in relationships.

For anyone even vaguely conscious, relationships are a focal point of growth. That requirement -- awareness -- rules out plenty of people. So does the notion of growth. For many others, relationships are where we hang out and avoid progress and indeed avoid ourselves. Which is, you know, fine as far as it goes: but if this is the case, we need to save some energy and stop wondering why things go so poorly so often. Why the divorces become so vicious. Why we seem to be on a constant search that goes on and on and on.

At some point in my astrological career, after years and years of hearing scores of relationship stories -- most of them from women -- it occurred to me: many people enter relationships as a pact to avoid growth. I considered this for a while, and considered my own life, and I realized why it was true, or why it seemed true. Our relationships are predicated on the idea that a stable, longterm situation is the objective or aim. Therefore, we will tend to suppress anything that threatens that concept of relationship. One of the things that threatens a relationship is when people change. Growth implies change, often in profound and unexpected directions. Within our culture's one available officially-certified style of relationship, growth can easily be perceived as a threat. To stay in a relationship, often you have to do your best to be the same. You have to be the person that your partner expects you to be.

The first thing that Saturn says is face reality. Usually by the time Saturn comes along and sets a limit, we've been aware of exceeding the limit for a while. Saturn in Libra is like peeling a veneer off of things. Libra works on several levels, and one of them is about presentation.

Everything that Libra touches is impeccably presented, and Saturn is coming along to strip off the finish and see what's under the surface. This is a terrifying prospect to most people. Most of us have so little experience simply being ourselves that we are extremely uncomfortable doing so. It feels unstable, vulnerable and scary. There is a fear we carry that if I am myself, this relationship will end.

The next thing that Saturn says is face your fears. Saturn can point to what we fear the most, and in the case of Saturn in Libra that would be about intimacy of any shade -- and if you ask me, sex and relationships are inseparable. Any two people who get to know one another for long enough will at least develop some sexual curiosity for one another. Alice A. Bailey notes in *Esoteric Astrology* that Libra is one of the most important signs for understanding sex (even surpassing Scorpio in this regard). Anyone who has read (let's be modest) so many as three books on the history of sex understands that we are nearly all clueless.

We are also a society of sexophobes. Most people don't even know it. Many people become viscerally, visually uncomfortable at the least mention or suggestion of sex, which of course requires perpetuating ignorance. In my office I have a genre of reader mail known as "I am not a prude" letters. These arrive in response to my website's frank articles about sex and pleasure, or my nude photos. The letters always start, "I am not a prude, but this conversation/photo/article is inappropriate for an astrology website." I guess we're just supposed to talk about romance -- nothing too real. I suggest that we make the discussion of sex normal, and that we get over our apprehension about it by diving into the subject matter.



Many consider avoiding the discussion a form of maintaining their integrity in a way you would expect from a vegan. In one of the classic "I am not a prude" letters of all time, a reader in Europe recently expressed not only her opposition to my photos but, when I pressed her for information, her objection to making information about sex available. "Sex is much better and more fun and more creative and more respectful without any 'education'," she wrote. "This leaves space for discovery." As if there is anything *but* space for discovery in sexuality. (I strongly advise Americans to stop thinking that Europeans are more enlightened about sex and relationships. They just have more nude beaches than we do and lower BMI because so many smoke.)

Our culture has so thoroughly suppressed honest discussion of sex that the mere mention of the topic seems destabilizing, dangerous or perverse. So it becomes, perpetuating fear and ignorance to an astonishing degree, glossed over by obsession with scandalous subject matter. We live with the illusion that we are an oversexed culture. But we emphasize the glamorous and the scandalous at the expense of what is simply true for us. I suggest we look at what our obsession with scandal is designed to cover over, and what it denies us.

We also suppress discussion of relationships, and the reason for this is the mandatory monogamy rule. Permissible discussions about relationships nearly all center around perpetuating the illusion of monogamy. Any real conversation about sex would be driven by curiosity, and we all know that curiosity does not honor the notion of monogamy.

I am not saying that there are not people who are happily monogamous. Clearly, there are some. But the preferences, values or experiences of some couples are not enough to make this way of living mandatory for everyone. Let's also make a distinction between monogamy as an organic state of being between two people, which seems to work pretty well most of the time, and monogamy imposed or self-imposed as a moral imperative, which seems to fail miserably most of the time. We need to know our options, and that takes finding out what they are, and challenging the guilt that might keep us in line if we want to try something original or different. If you're curious, give yourself space to learn and discover. Get used to people thinking you're different, and the feeling that your parents will not approve. Gay, lesbian, bi and trans people come out to their parents all the time and nearly all of them feel better about it. I think that those with 'alternative' concepts of relationships can learn a lot from them.

Saturn in Libra suggests putting some discipline into understanding both sex and relationships: and I mean actual understanding, not regurgitating *Sex and the City* or what you unwittingly ate at your parents' or grandparents' dinner table 30 years ago. There are some excellent books out. One is called *The Myth of Monogamy*, which is based on DNA testing of all kinds of critters. No -- ducks are not monogamous; let's have a good cry and get over it. A new one that's appeared is called *Sex at Dawn: The Prehistoric Origins of Modern Sexuality*. The publishers tracked down my address and sent me a copy. I haven't finished it yet but it's a lot of fun. One of the all-time classics is *Eros Denied* by Wayland Young, available for \$5 from any online used bookseller (published by Grove Press in 1964). I promise you this will be one of the most enlightening books you'll ever read. So too will *A General Theory of Love*, which talks about the neurology of emotional and sexual relationships, what we stand to gain by working with a good therapist, and how therapy works. [There is an [ongoing thread about therapy](#) on the Planet Waves daily blog.]

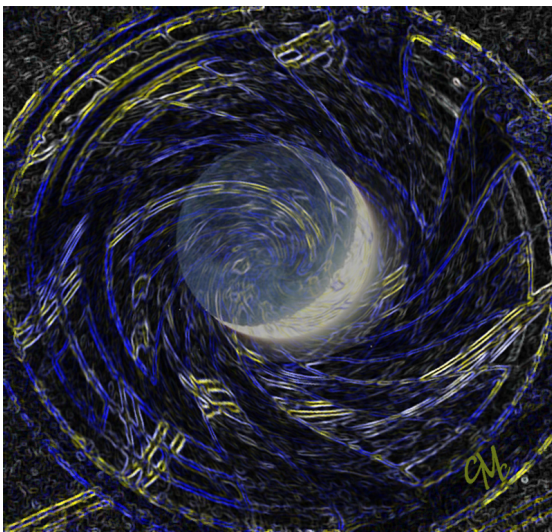
Finally, Saturn in Libra suggests that we have to make room for change. People who are alive grow and change, and the same is true for relationships that are alive. For those committed to living up to their grandparents' 50-year marriage or someday being like that cute, old couple you see in your neighborhood, this may be a tough thing. For those who have no sense of who they are outside of a relationship, this might be scary, but in order to be in a relationship you have to know yourself, accept yourself and love yourself. Of course, this is society's biggest taboo.

When you know yourself, you're free. You don't need to depend on others for your basic existence. You discover that it's your privilege to love, that it's your body and that this is your life. And when you're real with yourself, you can be real with others -- that is the starting point.

## History, Turning on a Phrase

*I have written many articles about the Sept. 11, 2001 incident, though this is my most comprehensive. I look at two of the charts, the main chart typically used for that event -- 8:46 am in New York City. I also look at a chart from later that afternoon, when WTC 7 was demolished. Both charts are in the resources area. This was published in Planet Waves on Oct. 8, 2010. Here is a [direct link to the original](#) version of History, Turning on a Phrase, which has many chart references and news links.*

*"We don't want freedom. We don't want justice. We just want someone to love."  
-- David Byrne / Talking Heads*



Yesterday's Libra New Moon quietly marked a threshold in world history, if you use astrology as a way of keeping track. We know that the 9th anniversary of the Sept. 11 incident was last month. Our culture is obsessed with anniversaries, but nature works on a little different schedule. Astrology points to its own moments of passage, and we happen to be at one right now. During the New Moon of Thursday, Oct. 7, the Sun and Moon were conjunct within two arc minutes -- that is, 1/30th of a degree -- to the ascendant of the chart for Sept. 11, 2001.

In the nine years since that incident, yesterday's was the closest New Moon to the chart's ascendant, and the only one occupying that degree, and it was close. My impression is that we have a rare moment of transparency around an event that shaped our lives, changed the world and, more significantly, reaffirmed something about human nature.

For those unfamiliar with the concept of the ascendant, it is also called the *rising sign*. In every chart there is a *sign* rising -- that is, a section of sky, represented by a zodiac sign, rising above the Earth's horizon in the east. In this case, Libra is the sign rising. There is also a *degree* rising, which is like the precise address of the chart and what it represents. Every chart with an exact time has a rising degree, including your natal chart. It's a good thing to know. On Sept. 11, precisely when Flight 11 was flown into the North Tower, that degree was 14+ Libra -- remarkable because Mercury was precisely rising at that moment. Mercury in the exact degree rising gave the chart emphasis, and an ominous quality, part of which was 'this is an event with a message'. (Let's refer to this as the North Tower chart.)

Libra is an astrological way of saying 'good show'. The events of Sept. 11 were compelling, even convincing, and they riled up our desire for justice, a Libra quality. But Mercury is the trickster. Behind the elegant image of Libra were a series of layers that remind us that things aren't always what they seem, and that appearances can deceive.

I consider the North Tower chart to be a world horoscope. The event was used to reshape

geopolitics. Several wars were started as a result of the attacks, which have yet to end, and the concept of the 'post 9-11 world' was born. So in a sense we have one of the birth charts of the 21st century: what some had thought would be the New American Century. The conservative think tank by that name argued for the new rise of a dominant American military, in a plan that called for waging a multi-front war early in the century. But in September 2000, one year before Sept. 11, it said that "the process of transformation, even if it brings revolutionary change, is likely to be a long one, absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event -- like a new Pearl Harbor."

Mercury is a reminder to depend on documentation as a way of keeping track of the facts. Who exactly was in the New American Century group of thinkers? Those who signed onto the New American Century manifesto included Dick Cheney, Scooter Libby, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Jeb Bush and Dan Quayle -- a Who's Who of neoconservative politics.

### **The North Tower Chart**

I've written a number of articles about the North Tower chart, most of them focusing on Mercury rising. Using classical methods of interpretation, Mercury in Libra was the planet associated with the secret enemy who perpetrated the attacks (the planet that rules the 12th house). It's a perfect description of someone stealthy, clever, able to focus on an image and use images, and who understood how to use the media. Sept. 11 was one of the most spectacular Mercury-type events ever, broadcast on live television, orchestrated by someone with a stunning gift for creating spin.

The planet representing the official government, the Moon (ruler of the 10th house), was void-of-course at the end of Gemini, indicating the government was asleep at the wheel. The other planet for the government -- by default, Saturn, representing the ruling structure of the country, and also what you might call the homeland (as the ruler of the 4th house) or shadow government -- was in Gemini. That's also a representation of the twin (Gemini) structures (Saturn) involved and an image of the two faces of the government.

Now here is where the chart starts to reveal its secrets. Mercury is the planet of Gemini, and Saturn is the planet exalted in Libra: they are *in reception*: that is, they *occupy one another's signs*. And they are in a perfect (to the degree) trine aspect, indicating cooperation.

That's another way of saying that they can switch places. The secret enemy and the homeland government look like they're functioning as one entity. From the first moment, we had an early warning that something was up, serving as an astrological notation of the many issues that would be raised by researchers and analysts in the decade to follow.

In particular, the relationship between Mercury and Saturn hinted at the government's foreknowledge or involvement in whatever happened. The idea that 'Bush knew' was circulating widely, even in the news, by the spring of 2002. Two years later, the CIA, under public pressure, declassified something called the [Presidential Daily Brief](#) of Aug. 6, 2001. Just one month before the attacks, the administration was warned by the CIA that "Bin Laden [was] determined to strike in the U.S.," outlining a number of current terrorist threats. Notably, this was the first time ever that a PDB was released to the public.

Even the official 9/11 Commission report said that the "system was blinking red" that summer.

Many writers and researchers have published on these and related issues, ranging from engineers asking how it was possible that the two towers collapsed at all, much less within 29 minutes of one another, to whether there was actually an airplane crash at the Pentagon. And with the thousands of planes intercepted by the Air Force for as little as veering off the course of the pilot's flight plan, how was it even vaguely possible that these four hijacked flights -- an unprecedented event -- were not intercepted? Fifty-nine minutes elapsed between the crash at the North Tower and whatever happened at the Pentagon. One would think that an hour was enough time for the Air Force to stop an attack on the military headquarters of the free world.

The problem with these questions does not involve their validity. I've looked into them all, and they all have a value worth considering, raising significant questions lacking easy answers. The real problem is social: it involves what others will think of you, or the fear of what others will think, when you start asking. People tend to either get scared or accuse you of being a conspiracy nut. Some become openly hostile if you propose that anything but the official version of events is possible.

A few will affirm that actual questions exist. Many polls indicate that the public is suspicious. More than half in one 2007 Zogby poll wanted Bush and Cheney to be investigated for their involvement in 9/11 and in the same poll more than 30% sought their immediate impeachment.

Even if the Mercury-Saturn relationship in the North Tower chart describes only the perception of the event, that perception has come with enormous pain and then a good dose of skepticism on the part of the public, and a lot of activity on the part of policy makers.

In retrospect, what did that look like? In *The Shock Doctrine*, published in 2007, author Naomi Klein describes "the intersection between super-profits and megadisasters" in which "the preferred method of advancing corporate goals [is] using moments of collective trauma to engage in radical social and economic engineering." Essentially, the process breaks down to two parts: 1. Create or exploit a shock; and 2. Use the confused and chaotic aftermath to push through/assert a corporate and/or political coup with no threat of backlash from a traumatized public.

Klein proposed that, "This feat required two stages. First, the White House used the omnipresent sense of peril in the aftermath of 9/11 to dramatically increase the policing, surveillance, detention and war-waging powers of the executive branch -- a power grab that the military historian Andrew Bacevich has termed 'a rolling coup'.

Then those newly enhanced and richly funded functions of security, invasion, occupation and reconstruction were immediately outsourced, handed over to the private sector to perform at a profit. Although the stated goal was fighting terrorism, the effect was the creation of the disaster capitalism complex -- a full-fledged new economy in homeland security, privatized war and disaster reconstruction tasked with nothing less than building and running a privatized security state, both at home and abroad."

## The Chart for World Trade Center 7

There's a second Sept. 11 chart that I haven't written much about yet, timed for the spontaneous collapse of World Trade Center 7 on the afternoon of Sept. 11. Most people still have not heard that a third tower of the World Trade Center collapsed that day -- a 47-story building with an impressive list of tenants. This building was not hit by any airplanes; it 'simply collapsed' at 5:21 pm. Notably, the 9/11 Commission did not look into how or why WTC 7 collapsed, so it came to no conclusions.

First let's take a look at the chart, which is for the moment the structure fell in its footprint in about six seconds. Having sustained no impact by an airplane and with several relatively small fires, we are told that a concrete and steel skyscraper fell straight down, on its own, at freefall speed.

Here's the [whole chart](#) in a separate window; to the right is a picture of the ascendant, the most significant piece. In this chart, like the North Tower chart, there is a planet rising -- but this time it's Neptune.

Neptune rising presents a mystery. It's also a beautiful image of how WTC 7 was a kind of non-event; it was invisible. Neptune is like a veil of fog, and that veil can indicate deception, denial or delusion (words that begin with the letter D tend to attach themselves to Neptune, including Drink, Drugs and Drama). In a public chart like this, one that potentially involves a crime, Neptune rising suggests we may never know the truth, or that the truth will be obscured or seem confusing. The sign involved is Aquarius; in fact the public (one of those Aquarius things) was so confused that most people have no idea that WTC 7 even existed, much less that it mysteriously fell down at 5:21 pm.

There are a couple of other interesting features to the chart. In the 11th house (a public place) there is a lot of activity. In particular, we have Mars in Capricorn on the South Node. In the shorthand notation of astrology we have an old story (South Node) about militarism (Mars) and the corporate/government system (Capricorn) -- and we have this in the 11th, right where anyone can see it. In other words, what this aspect describes is happening in plain sight.

In the same house, Ceres is conjunct Nessus in Capricorn. This will be fed to people like poison food, with them convinced it's some form of nourishment.

Opposite all of this, the Moon is in Cancer, on the North Node and opposite Mars: the people in their everyday lives, their home lives, taking care of themselves and their families, get caught in the mess. The Cancer Moon opposite Mars suggests the public can get emotionally swept away by a perceived enemy and security threat and thus lose track of the intellectual level -- and most of us did.

## What Larry Silverstein Said, and What BBC Predicted

Larry Silverstein was the developer of WTC 7 and its owner, and he held the lease on the twin towers (WTC 1 and WTC 2) as well. On Sept. 11, 2001, he was the landlord of the whole WTC complex, which included several other buildings. One year after the attacks, Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) aired a program called *America Rebuilds*. As part of a somber,



comprehensive documentary that was fitting for the one-year anniversary, the producers interviewed Silverstein.

In that interview, he told the story of what happened to WTC 7: "I remember getting a call from the Fire Department commander, telling me that they were not sure they were gonna be able to contain the fire, and I said, 'We've had such terrible loss of life, maybe the smartest thing to do is pull it'. And they made that decision to pull, and we watched the building collapse."

In other words, he is saying that the building was intentionally demolished. You can watch this [on video here](#). I recently purchased a copy of the DVD from PBS to verify that this segment is actually in the documentary, and it is there in proper context.

Now, what is interesting is that it takes weeks and sometimes months to prepare a building for demolition. If we are to believe the landlord's statement to PBS, this preparation was done in less than a day -- and that a demolition team was brought in through the catastrophe at Ground Zero, consulted architects and engineers familiar with the structure, then working extremely efficiently, rigged the building with dynamite and took it down. Either that or it had a preinstalled self-destruct mechanism.

The building was occupied by Salomon Brothers, as well as American Express and a couple of other banks and insurance companies. In addition, it had as its tenants the CIA, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the Secret Service, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the IRS, the Defense Department and the New York City Office of Emergency Management. Like the other World Trade Center buildings, evacuation began immediately when the first plane hit, before 9 am. So the officials in all of those agencies, including many federal officers, had no chance to clean their desks, take copies of disk drives or do anything before the building fell down later that day.

More interesting, BBC World, the international edition of BBC, broadcast that the building had collapsed at 4:54 pm EDT, 27 minutes in advance. This was also announced at the same time by BBC in the UK. [In this video](#), you can see the reporter, Jane Stanley, saying that the structure has fallen down *while it's shown in the frame*. We're really talking 'in plain sight, but might as well be invisible' here. WTC 7 is easily identified by its location, and by the little notch at the top, next to the penthouse.

This bit of prescience has been explained away by claiming there was a lot of erroneous news reported on Sept. 11, 2001. Except for one thing: this turned out not to be an error. It was accurate, just a little early.

Indira Singh, a private pilot and EMT who was volunteering as a rescue worker at Ground Zero that day, said that by 1 pm the word was out on the street that the building would be demolished and people in the area, such as volunteers and emergency workers, were backing off and retreating toward safer ground.

"By noon or one o'clock they told us we had to move from that triage site up to Pace University, a little further away, because Building 7 was gonna come down or being brought down," Singh said in a widely-reported 2005 interview on KPFA in Berkeley. She continued a bit further in, "There was another panic around four o'clock because they were bringing the



building down and people seemed to know this ahead of time, so people were panicking again and running." [\[Read the full interview here, and listen to it here.\]](#)

Apparently BBC was not the only network with a well-tuned crystal ball that day. About a minute before WTC 7 fell down, FOX 5 News in Washington, DC broadcast that a third building had fallen down while WTC 7 is shown in the frame. They are speculating that the smoke actually rising from the heap of WTC 1 and WTC 2 is from that third building that has supposedly already fallen. Then -- while they are discussing this -- WTC 7 [collapses live, on the air](#).

### **That Turn of Phrase**

The available facts add up to something a little weird, something that does not jive with the official story: controlled demolition was used to take down WTC 7, with all its highly sensitive contents in a rather sensitive moment. That this happened in a day is incredulous, particularly with the chaos of that particular place and time. The implication is that, if the building was indeed demolished, it was planned and set up in advance. If that's true, the entire story of Sept. 11, 2001 -- such as the surprise attack by Osama bin Laden -- falls in its footprint at the speed of freefall. And this has both historical implications, as well as psychological ones.

There are some obvious questions here, such as why would Silverstein admit this? My theory is that the way he phrased his statement was a plausible alibi. He claimed the Fire Department pulled the building that day, for immediate safety. Who knows how long it takes to prepare a building for demolition? Who knows that the Fire Department does not do the work of demolition teams? It sounds true enough. Yet there has literally been a decade-long debate over what Silverstein meant by "pull it." Or rather -- what he meant by "it." Clearly he meant pull something, but what?

When the time came to backpedal on his statement, Silverstein's office claimed he meant pull the *rescue operation* -- not the building. So let's pretend that's what he meant, and reconstruct the sequence of events using that scenario.

The following is a fictionalized, alternative version of events to test the theory.

The attacks happened just before 9 am, WTC 7 was evacuated, and WTC 1 and WTC 2 (the familiar North and South towers) both fell down by 10:30 am. WTC 7 was damaged by debris from the North Tower and there were some fires, but it was a modern steel and concrete skyscraper with numerous safety features, so it was expected to hold up. After all, it supposedly took direct hits from fuel-laden jet planes to knock down WTC 1 and 2.

However, the Fire Department commander was concerned about the fires and the stability of the building. So he called the landlord to check whether he should get his own firefighters out of the building, fearing it might collapse. This insinuates that the Fire Department needed the permission of the landlord, a civilian, on an immediate tactical decision in the face of some imminent safety issue.

Silverstein said, "pull it" [the search and rescue operation]. With that, the firefighters walked out, and everyone watched as the building mysteriously fell to the ground. [End of fictional scenario.]

You would be impressed the lengths to which some have argued -- relentlessly, for years -- that this is what he meant by "pull it." Wikipedia has been a particularly intense battle ground, and administrators, for example, have reserved the right to ban users who question this point of view in edits to encyclopedia articles. Others have argued vehemently that as a developer, Silverstein could not be expected to know the terminology of the demolition industry; he merely builds the buildings. However, he does so in a city that's the demolition capital of the world.

Referring to Silverstein's use of the term "pull it," one Wikipedia editor [wrote to me](#), "Any other interpretation of this quote is a fantasy manufactured to fit a preconceived narrative."

When there is a controversy over what a word means, I learned a while ago to look it up in the dictionary. "Pull" is defined by the *American Heritage Dictionary* as to remove a fixed object from its place, and the term "pull down" is noted as meaning to demolish a building. Ontario-based independent journalist Jeffrey Hill called up Controlled Demolition, Inc., a demolition industry leader which was called in by the federal government to clean up the mess at Ground Zero, and the company told him that the term "pull it" means to [demolish a building](#).

Remember -- Neptune is rising in the chart for the building falling down. There is a veil of confusion and deniability. Even the Wikipedia editor refers to "fantasy," a pure Neptune keyword. And the 11th house is packed with action in this chart. Whatever is happening is going on in plain sight, such as on BBC World, even if it seems difficult to see. By the way -- in 2007, BBC's editors finally issued a statement.

"We're not part of a conspiracy," they reassured the public, writing on the [company site](#). "Nobody told us what to say or do on September 11th. We didn't get told in advance that buildings were going to fall down. We didn't receive press releases or scripts in advance of events happening."

However, they added, "We no longer have the original tapes of our 9/11 coverage (for reasons of cock-up, not conspiracy)."

Oh, I'm happy it was just a cock-up. I would dread to think that BBC could be part of a conspiracy, or that they might delete their files to cover for such an odd occurrence that just happens to unravel so much of the official version of events. But if they reported that WTC 7 had already fallen down, and then it did so 27 minutes later, that just proves my theory that Brits make the best astrologers and psychics. And we should definitely put Jane Stanley to work covering the stock market.

I don't like conspiracy theories, but in this case, I have my own. Silverstein was actually talking to his wife in that call, and she said, "Larry, what do you want to have for dinner?"

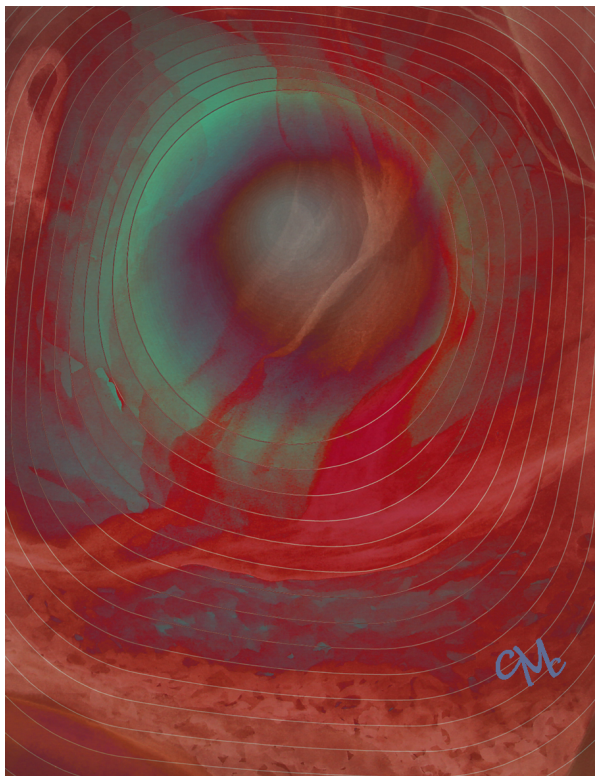
A devoted chicken lover, he said, "Pullet, pullet."

# How to Cross an Ocean; How to Light a Fire

*This article appeared in Planet Waves on Dec. 31, 2010. It is the introduction to the short version of the 2011 annual horoscopes.*

*"A belief is only a thought you continue to think; and when your beliefs match your desires, then your desires must become your reality."*

*-- Abraham-Hicks*



Pisces, as the last sign of the zodiac, represents the primal waters to which thought, action and memory return -- and from which they emerge. Seawater contains traces of nearly every element, from oxygen to iron to gold.

The history of humanity is contained in the world's oceans, as rivers course through canyons and cities and carry everything to the shore. Those things carried include the trace contaminants and drugs that have been created during our current age of industry, and which inevitably find their way into the sea -- which we then dip into as the supposedly eternal source of food.

Meanwhile, scientists have reported a 'water memory' phenomenon, where water retains the properties of what it once held, and responds to everything from thought to prayer to microwaves.

In calendar year 2011, we will learn a lot about Pisces. You can think of the most watery water sign as the universal recipient. It's the cosmic realm that contains every element, and is the place where the story of humanity collects from moment to moment. The ocean refuses no river.

Pisces is about to receive two new planets, which will shape our experience of life and be reflected in changes in the world we know. One is Chiron, which made a brief visit in 2010. On Feb. 8, Chiron will return to Pisces, where it will stay until it begins its process of entering Aries in 2018. Chiron, which has a wildly elliptical orbit, is currently moving at close to its slowest speed through the signs (eight and nine years in Pisces and Aries respectively); at the other end of the dial, in Virgo and Libra (where it was in the mid-1990s) Chiron sails through a sign in 18 months -- faster than Saturn moves through a sign (which takes about 30 months). So currently we have Chiron in its incarnation as an outer planet, slow and powerful. I have many reasons to believe this transit will take center stage, even amidst the truly momentous changes portended in the transits of 2011.

Wherever it may be, Chiron focuses attention, and the oceans (signified by Pisces) need attention. So too does the vast interior of human consciousness represented by Pisces. This last sign of the zodiac works for all of us as a source of creativity, emotional contact and escape from the hard-edged world of the ego. If not for Pisces, there would not be music or art, and sex would not be the same. We would not recognize the subtle shades of our emotions. Yet we tend to pollute this realm with everything from mind-bending psychotropic drugs to contact with 5,000 advertisements a day.

Melanie Reinhart says of this sign, "Forms disintegrate, the past is dissolved and our separateness is relinquished." These are processes that extend over time, rather than sudden shifts. Chiron focuses energy and accelerates any movement already underway, instigating its knack for healing first by raising our awareness -- or attempting to do so. With Chiron in Pisces (the sign of the hidden dimension), we will see what we've been missing.

The other planet entering Pisces is Neptune, which has not touched the waters of the sign it's so often associated with since shortly after its discovery in the 19th century. Neptune is wrapping up a long journey across Aquarius, which began in January 1998. This transit has in many ways taken over consciousness; at the beginning of this transit in the late 20th century, nobody would have believed we would be walking around with computers in our pockets, checking email 200 times a day, and basically investing our souls into cyberspace.

Few would have guessed that every local police department would be feeding information into the FBI database (not about arrests -- they've done that for decades; I mean about 'suspicious' behavior, your employment history, who you associate with, etc.), something more suitable for the old East Germany than the land of Jefferson and Madison. And who would have foreseen the opportunities this same technology creates for countless digital artists and musicians to create innovative work and share it around the world?

Neptune will exit Aquarius and touch the shore of Pisces on April 4, 2011, staying for a four-month visit. Then in 2012 it will re-enter Pisces to stay until 2025-26. This brief visit of Neptune is another harbinger of the 2012 era, representing a distinct shift in the spiritual vibration of the planet and a new phase of what we can call the history of our inner lives. This influence may overwhelm some; to others it will feel like flushing fresh water into a dry lake.

The extended, simultaneous presence of Chiron and Neptune in Pisces is about developing the awareness and discipline to handle deep emotional, and what you might call mystical, energy. You don't swim across the ocean -- you travel in a boat. The same is true for the oceanic multidimensional realms represented by Pisces. You can think of Chiron as the boat, the vessel which includes such tools as perception, analysis, documentation and -- most significantly -- boundaries.

The first boundary is where the collective realm ends and the individual realm of self begins. That is represented by the imaginary line between Pisces and Aries. Uranus has been in Pisces for seven years, stirring things up. In February, Uranus enters Aries, illustrating a radical transformation in our sense of self, and how we express the whole idea of self. We dearly need this shock to our self-awareness. I am trusting that Uranus is going to light the fire of curiosity about self, and remind us how being centered within ourselves is the key to sanity. I don't

mean narcissism and I don't mean egotism. I mean learning to focus our sense of being at our own core, and relate to the world from that alert, mindful space.

What will protect us from Uranus in Aries turning into an eruption of vanity is Chiron and Neptune connecting us to the spiritual depths of Pisces. It's as if Chiron and Neptune are helping us reach aspects of soul awareness and Uranus in Aries is helping us project our life force through our personality and body. Together, these transits -- which last for years -- will help many people wake up to the beauty of existence, to life and to participating in the changes that the world is going through.

Speaking of that -- the planets I've just described that are making changes in 2011 add momentum to another outer-planet change, which is Pluto in Capricorn. That has been in progress since about 2008, and has come with many changes in society, some of them jarring and frightening. We think of this variously as the banking crisis, the recession, the foreclosure crisis, the turmoil in government, the big hole in the Federal Reserve, and of course the general sense that everything might collapse tomorrow. That is Pluto restructuring the institutions of the world -- *and our ideas about them*. Pluto in Capricorn is liberating something from deep within these institutions -- WikiLeaks is a good example. They are having their corporate structures rearranged, and we are having our minds rearranged. We have to think about where and how we fit in differently than we did yesterday.

So it's a good thing that we have Uranus in Aries reminding us to wake up to who we are. Now, here is a clue about 2012. That's the year that Uranus moving through Aries first meets Pluto moving through Capricorn. This is called the Uranus-Pluto square. This is part of the cycle that delivers some of the most radical astrology ever documented by historians -- the astrology of revolution and of revelation. Think of how this is developing -- society changing, perhaps seeming like it's 'failing', while at the same time individuals are awakening to our creative power, one at a time getting into the process of creation and change.

The Uranus-Pluto square describes the place where radical self-awareness (Uranus in Aries) meets the vast and sweeping changes that the world is going through (Pluto in Capricorn). We all know the world is changing, and we all know that many of us feel a profound need to rethink who we are and find our role, our place of participation, our point of influence. We may feel driven by passion (Aries) and practical needs (Capricorn) as part of an urgent series of awakening events. The thing to do in the midst of it all is to feel: to be present with your feelings, and to notice what your senses are telling you.

Uranus in Aries is here to light the fire of self, and Chiron and Neptune are here to guide us across the ocean of our soul.



## With Love From Borasisi

*This article appeared in Planet Waves on March 4, 2011. It covers a newer planet called Borasisi, named in honor of Kurt Vonnegut -- who got the idea for the novel Cat's Cradle when he worked in the GE public relations department.*



Anyone who works with ideas in a public forum figures out sooner or later that most people will believe anything, particularly if it's not true. I've learned as much from writing satire as I have from writing about astrology or being an investigative reporter.

I've noticed that many readers will readily accept something cut from the whole cloth of fiction, no matter how absurd, as long as it looks sort of good. There seems to be this crack in consciousness through which very nearly anything can go.

Those whose intentions are more sinister than humorous will easily convince most of us that Al Qaeda is under the lid of every trash can and that Saddam Hussein has nuclear bombs he's ready to use on us.

You could look at this as a complex process involving many layers of psychology and incestuous relationships between the media, the government and the companies that profit from war; or you can look to that odd little property of consciousness where if you repeat something often enough, people tend to think it's true -- especially if they're scared.

This also works with loving intentions. I like to play a game based on this theory with dogs. When I meet a dog for the first time, I'm a stranger. We sniff one another and get acquainted. When I meet the dog again 15 minutes later, we're old friends. People are not that different. Familiarity breeds trust. More than looking for reasons to be suspicious, I think that most people are actually looking for reasons to trust and will take any opportunity. Con artists, drug manufacturers and politicians know this, and exploit it happily.

### Pisces New Moon and a New Planet For You

Today is the Pisces New Moon. It's exact at about 3:46 pm EST (12:46 pm in California, 8:46 pm in London and early Saturday morning in Oz). Usually, the Moon and Sun make a conjunction in Pisces just once a year, and this is the one. It's also the last New Moon of the astrological year; we're just two weeks from equinox, and a pretty hot equinox at that.

There's a lot of action in Pisces right now: Chiron has recently arrived, beginning an eight-year trek; Uranus is about to make its final exit after seven years on March 11; and we have more transient visitors, with Mercury and Mars present at the moment.

There's a longterm visitor I haven't mentioned much -- an outer planet discovered in 1999, called Borasisi. This friendly bit of ice and rock is located out in the Kuiper Belt, a region of space that was first discovered when Pluto made its arrival in 1930. Nobody knew it was the Kuiper Belt at the time; that wasn't confirmed until 1992, when Jane X. Luu co-discovered something called [1992 QB1](#) and we had evidence that Pluto was not alone.

Pluto has an orbit of 248 years, as do many other small planets orbiting our Sun (known as Plutinos); 1992 QB1 has an orbit of 289 years, which puts it in a slightly different class (classical Kuiper Belt objects). One interesting thing about QB1 is that despite having its orbit confirmed and being assigned a minor planet number (15760), it hasn't been named by its discoverers. (I've proposed Radharani, a name for the supreme goddess of Hinduism. I propose that she offers an alternate concept to the death and transformation that we typically get from Pluto.)

Five years later, two of the same astronomers discovered Borasisi in the same region of space. Traditionally the discoverer(s) get to name what they find, and they chose to name this one after something from a science fiction novel called *Cat's Cradle* by Kurt Vonnegut.

This is unusual. Under naming guidelines, planets in this class are named for gods of creation or resurrection. Borasisi is a name for the Sun in the fictional religion central to *Cat's Cradle* -- Bokononism. In the novel, the Moon is known as Pabu, and the binary companion of Borasisi has been given that name.

Astrologically, to understand Borasisi we need to look to *Cat's Cradle*, a wonderfully complex novel that addresses the themes of truth and lies, and technology and religion. One theme is that technology without conscience is very dangerous -- a central theme of our lives. At the center of the story is what Vonnegut described as a whiz-bang sci-fi device: a substance called Ice Nine, water that is frozen and stable at room temperature. It's a crystal that can teach any water with which it comes in contact to be frozen and stable at room temperature -- including ocean water. If you eat just a speck, you turn into Ice Nine.

Vonnegut got the idea when he was working as a PR man at General Electric in Schenectady. The concept came from a GE scientist who had the job of entertaining H.G. Wells (author of *The Time Machine* and *The Invisible Man*) when he visited GE's labs one day. Wells didn't do anything with the idea; many years later, Vonnegut did.

As someone who has covered GE's escapades for many years, I cannot think of a more apt metaphor than Ice Nine to describe the company's products or its lack of conscience. I am familiar with PCBs, which were the Big Deal -- as in miracle of modern science -- at the time that Vonnegut was in the PR department. These highly persistent toxins spread through the environment and the food chain, but the problem is you cannot dilute them. No matter how low the concentration, they still have a biological effect, and then, wherever they end up no matter how small the concentration, they move right up the food chain and concentrate again.

PCBs are scary. They are described in the press as 'potential carcinogens', which is extremely polite of them. They are hormonally active, toxic to DNA, immune suppressing and yes, carcinogenic. But I'll tell you a secret. If I were to call up GE's public relations department right now and say, "Hello, I'm a reporter. Are PCBs toxic?" they would fax back a press release that



says they're no more toxic than table salt. That is GE, and this attitude -- along with all the lies connected to the atomic bomb -- is what propelled Vonnegut to write *Cat's Cradle*. He says so [in this interview](#).

One of his comments is that science is supposedly interested in pursuing 'the truth', but doesn't care what happens with the results of its discoveries. In the interview, he gives the example that 'the truth' is what exploded over Hiroshima.

### **Lies of Religion, Truth of Science**

While *Cat's Cradle* addresses the damage caused by technology's pursuit of 'scientific truth', there is a deeply personal dimension, which Vonnegut addresses in the religion of Bokononism.

Bokonon is a god who lives among his people. There is a *Book of Bokonon*, of which the first line is, "All of the true things I am about to tell you are shameless lies." So it's a 'truthful' religion in that it admits that it's totally a lie; then it goes on to make up even more lies, designed to make its adherents feel better about their horrid existence.

This is a satire on the religions of the world that offer stories we are told, then which we tell ourselves, that make us feel better. You know, how Jesus died for our sins and how we have our little place in heaven and the Lord delivered the Jews from Egypt and all the animals visiting Buddha under a tree and this guy Arjuna being driven around in a chariot.

These are not usually understood to be stories or allegories; they are taken by most religious people, and taught to kids, as the actual truth, as God's actual word and as infallible law. In fact they are nothing of the kind. Indeed they are usually hooked into a deeper layer of social psychology designed to do little other than get control of people who would be too scary to those in power if they could actually think independently. Almost every organized religion systematically oppresses women. Nearly every religion is used, at one time or another, as an excuse to go out and kill a lot of people. In fact, the day he ordered the bombing of Hiroshima, Harry Truman got on the radio and said that God told him to do it. Then they tell us that God is love.

Perhaps you've noticed that nearly all religion is rooted in the fear of death. There would be no use for religion if people were not scared of what happens after this existence seems to end, and then religion comes along and fills up the whole question with all kinds of stories and theories and things you're supposed to do in order to go to heaven, be forgiven for sins you're accused of (by religion), or be loved by God (who is available only from religion).

Vonnegut challenges his readers with the idea that these lies are actually fairly harmless contrasted to the 'truths' of science. He's not exactly offering any commendations to either, just showing us the contrast. The lies lead to people being temporarily happier. Truths lead to mushroom clouds and Superfund sites so large nobody knows how large (such as GE's contamination of the Hudson estuary system, which killed off fishing as far as the Long Island Sound).

But speaking of the Hudson, no amount of contamination could stop the [21st Annual Shad Festival](#), which is sponsored by none other than Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and the Hudson Riverkeeper. Just keep eating those fish if you want some evidence that the river is perfectly clean.

### **Sweet Little White Lies -- and the Core Delusion**

People tend to tell small lies for a few reasons. One is convenience, such as to smooth over the social environment. In order to avoid conflict, which most people don't like, we are allowed to lie enough to camouflage our missteps or potentially offensive acts. It's also convenient to believe that a drug is safe or that food is clean or that a politician is honest. Everything will probably be fine, right? As for politicians, for most of them, up until March 4, 2011, lying has been merely a way of life.

Another is most people tend to lack the courage to tell the truth, or to hear it. It takes some guts to say what you really think and feel. And it takes some courage to call out someone you know is lying to you. Many people will live with a lover or spouse having an affair for years, with both parties 'pretending it's not happening'. So we live with a diversity of lies that simply go over the top of the maximum courage we can usually muster up.

Finally, people lie to keep a sense of control that they don't have in real life. According to one of my grad school professors at Rutgers, James Joyce once said somewhere that he couldn't understand why everyone doesn't want to be a writer, because you get to play god in your own little universe. Lying, which means making up stories, is a form of playing god.

The actual events of the world we cannot control; fiction we can control. Some people enjoy (or are addicted to) lying simply because it gives them a sense of power in a world where they feel they have none. If you haven't achieved much, you can make up a résumé or tell a story of accomplishment to someone on a first date. In this sense, lies can also fulfill the expectation of what we're 'supposed to be', which is itself a lie. If you do a little therapy or a little homework, you can figure out what these lies are, who told them to you and what effect they're having. Those are the first steps toward growing up and moving on.

The thing about lies is that they work two ways. Like dioxin (which is a kind of lie that circulates in our endocrine systems, and which is another product of GE) the receptor is as important as the chemical. Those who want to see accurately will sooner or later do so. Those who are committed to being deceived will be deceived till they change their mind about that. And those who get by on telling themselves lies about existence -- and to some extent, we all do -- we can do that as long as it's convenient.

Here is the problem, though. This state of deceived/deceiving is a root of many, if not all, diseases. This works on the physical level (dioxin, as mentioned, is the great deceiver of the endocrine system, sending all kinds of weird messages) and it works on the energetic level. What we withhold, and refuse to reveal, can make us energetically sick, and that can make us physically sick. Deception, particularly self-deception, can and does keep us 'trapped' in situations that make us sick. Many healing processes begin with admitting the truth to ourselves or our loved ones.

This is why [homeopathy, a branch of medicine](#) I mentioned recently, is so concerned with identifying what some call the core delusion. It's necessary to locate that place where people hold their deepest self-deception or mistaken belief so that the root of disease can be addressed. You don't need homeopathy to do this; you just need some awareness and willingness to grow. One thing my favorite homeopath, Rajan Sankaran, suggests is that one clue to delusions can be found in one's sense of humor (and I would add, lack thereof).

As a writer who thrives on satire, I am familiar with this -- the first place I go in doing a parody designed to unravel an injustice is straight into the delusion, and turn the thing inside-out with a little joke. If you're wondering how to apply this to your life or your healing process, I would start with considering what you cannot laugh about in yourself. That probably points to a hang-up you would feel better if you addressed.

### **As for Borasisi**

Now we have a planet that addresses this thematic matter. It's fitting that Borasisi is a longterm resident of Pisces in our era -- the sign of delusions and illusions, as well as beauty and creativity. This gives us an opportunity to see this territory for what it is. We have the power of consciousness to distinguish truth, lies and stories. Where we might have made up lies, we can also make up a story or tell the truth. There is plenty of strength in that moment of choice. I think what Vonnegut is saying is that the real distinguishing factor is the motive. What I am suggesting is that the distinguishing factor is integrity.

When a potent lunation happens very close to a newly discovered point, we get a kind of 'proving' (by which I mean *demonstration*) of some of the implications of that point. I would note that Donald Rumsfeld is out on the media circuit making up stories about his made-up stories about why we are (still) at war in Iraq. We can also take a look at the films that are currently showing or are about to come out right around now for additional information. There's one I keep seeing an ad for about all those guys chasing this other guy because they're in charge of his destiny. And I keep thinking, that's a heck of a lot of work. Anything with a theme of illusion, deception or image is fair game for consideration.

We can look to our relationships, and see the investment we have in being perceived a certain way because we have a certain partner; or how we want our partner to perceive us. One of my photo models this week used the term 'honest woman' to describe herself, as someone who is too modest to admit how much she likes sex. She is deeply invested in that image (meanwhile it's a challenge to look at her and *not* think of sex).

Many people want to be perceived as a good boy, even though they might be a criminal. This is a theme of Borasisi: the lies we tell ourselves in order to feel better. Yet remember, most of those 'necessary' lies are the result of guilt, which is an artificial toxic contaminant created by the industry of religion -- particularly where sex and relationship values are concerned.

There is another dimension of Borasisi that I'll get into another time, which involves *nothingness*. My friend and co-planetary delineator [Tracy Delaney](#) reminds me this is considered "to be the highest 'spiritual truth' of what we are, e.g., in Buddhism. So we perhaps have a cosmic equivalent of The Fool here -- the zero that can be first or last, deeply ignorant

or enlightened." She notes that science vs. religion is "a false dichotomy. You can't fight nothingness; you can't fight something that has no opposite, which is why spirit is invincible." These are the kinds of ideas she connects with Borasisi. We have scientific 'truths' of our era that suggest that a vacuum is not empty and atoms are not solid, which have implications for how we think and relate to existence.

Friday's New Moon is square a thing called the Great Attractor. It would take another thousand words to describe that -- I will point you to my [audio from earlier in the week](#), which tells the story. To sum up: the connection from the New Moon to this high-potency point in Sagittarius is about the intersection not only of two belief systems (such as science and religion) but of two entirely different orders of reality. And that intersection contains a whole lot of energy.

We have a lot of action developing in Pisces right now. Chiron has just entered this sign, which is pulling things into focus -- things many people would rather not see, or have seen about themselves. As I write on Thursday, the Moon is conjunct Chiron. Uranus is about to make its exit, which is going to shift the whole vibrational field of Pisces, if you believe that even exists, and in a little while Neptune is about to dip in.

To me, Chiron provides the most clarification of what the whole Borasisi thing is about: Chiron is insisting that we get some clarity here in the world of Maya. Notably, Chiron makes a conjunction to Borasisi in Pisces between 2014 and 2016. For those two years we will have a gradual merging of those energy fields, calling us to be clear about what we say and why we say it. It will be interesting to go back through history and look at the conjunctions, and see what they tell us. [Here is a list](#), programmed by Tracy. (Gee f\*cking whiz, the creation of the U.S. Constitution comes up as one of the very few dates listed.)

There is something in Borasisi about the use of creativity and narrative for constructive manifestation. There is also something about the conscious use of interpretation as a means of improving our lives. An entity named Abraham I am fond of suggests that we keep telling ourselves better and better stories about who we are and what we're capable of -- and eventually they will come true.

## Uranus in Aries

*This article appeared in Planet Waves on March 11, 2011, the last day that Uranus was in Pisces, and the day of the earthquake in Japan.*



Later today (overnight Friday in some time zones), Uranus leaves Pisces and enters Aries to stay for the next seven years. As the astrology picture of 2012-2015 assembles, this is one of the biggest pieces -- the presence of Uranus representing the energy surge; the impulse to enter the future. This has been warming up for a few years, but now is the moment we go into warp speed. In the words of Richard Tarnas, Uranus is Prometheus, the awakener.

Bringing Uranus into such a prominent place as the first degree of the zodiac amplifies its influence, and Uranus is already pretty hot: its characteristics include fast, surprising developments; future-oriented thinking; moments of revolution; and shocking surges of

awareness. As Uranus approaches its first exact square to Pluto in June 2012, we're only going to see this whole process accelerate, bring in more communities and wake up more people. In a phrase, 2012 is about [everything, all at once](#).

For some the awakening associated with this aspect will be extremely uncomfortable, challenging their old ways and pushing many out of their comfort zones. To do this astrology fully, it's necessary either to challenge or break away from everyone who is not. For many, the developing energies will be the most exciting thing that's ever happened, the moment of real involvement and participation. A lot of others will watch and shake their heads at how crazy the world is going. I reckon a good few will feel alienated and wish they could do more, having no idea how to.

Uranus in Aries actually began warming up its act last year, when Jupiter and Uranus briefly visited Aries and made a conjunction on June 8. That conjunction was in [the first degree of Aries](#) -- the Aries Point itself, the first degree of the astrological wheel. The location of the conjunction was one of those clues that our personal lives and the seemingly inaccessible, usually abstract realm of public existence were going to merge rapidly and in a large way. We had a clue that the effects would be international -- that was the presence of Jupiter. Sure enough, it has all happened.

I'll tell you this, though. Whenever I write about politics, I'm fully aware that for most people their contact with government consists of parking tickets, filing taxes and possibly watching television (which is the new scholarship).

Most of us neither understand nor appreciate what happens in the wider society, and we're pretty confused about it, too. How are we supposed to tell what's important when there's always a lot of action on TV? From what I could tell there were as many photographers outside Lindsay Lohan's 10-minute hearing Thursday as there are in Madison, Wisconsin, where we have a revolution brewing. The fiasco at the Lohan court appearance (for a troubled rich girl attempting to steal an expensive necklace, to me representing all that's wrong with the world) is part of a dumbing-down process that either creates distractions or makes us not care about what really matters.

It was fun watching Contessa Brewer on MSNBC Thursday afternoon get openly, vocally pissed off at her producer -- talking through her earpiece -- who informed her that she had to describe Lohan's dress *because people care*. The obvious question is does anyone care, or are they brainwashed into thinking they care?

In Wisconsin, right now, we are witnessing a struggle over the future of the American labor movement, which is the only voice in politics large enough to compete with what can be understated as a right-wing corporatist movement: that is, banks and corporations taking over everything. Labor unions, which are traditionally very powerful in Wisconsin, are the backbone of the Democratic Party, the American equivalent of the Labor Party in other countries. When despotic right wing legislators want to gut the right of unions to exist, they're saying they want all the marbles. And in a word, having all the marbles is tyranny.

When we look at the mess in politics (which primarily involves how sold out to corporate interests so many politicians are), any person with a shred of sensitivity will be repulsed; merely seeing the face of Scott Walker, the Tea Bagger puppet governor of Wisconsin (whose boss is a multi-billionaire oil and chemical guy from Texas), makes me a little nauseous. That, too, is part of the assault on common sense, empathy and humanity.

What we're witnessing in Wisconsin is supposed power that will stop at nothing. We are also witnessing an agenda. And we are seeing it everywhere, as an old concept of might makes right tries to hold on in a world that is about to deliver only change.

You may not have heard about this, but in Michigan, the state legislature is now passing a law that would allow the state government to enter a fiscally stressed municipality or school district, kick out the elected officials, take over -- and strip union rights. Gee, what a coincidence.

Other places, on seemingly less important matters, public officials are digging in their heels and pushing their will on people, lying to them, often successfully convincing them that they're powerless and basically doing anything to convince themselves they actually have power over others. This seems to be on the level of sport; something done for its own sake. In my own city I'm involved in an issue and one of the most perverse things I'm seeing is certain members of the community gloat that they are getting over on others -- or so they think.

One problem with having a politically illiterate population is that hardly anyone can see the larger agenda. In fact most would deny there even is one -- that all this movement in, shall we say, certain political directions is kind of a coincidence. People who espouse most of Ronald Reagan's views today would be considered liberals (they are not).



We here in the United States have put up with a lot during the past 30 years that the Neoconservative movement has been rising to power, and we have said so very little. There has been war after war, and giveback after giveback (civil rights, privacy, standard of living, reproductive rights). There was a fraudulent presidential impeachment, two stolen elections and a false-flag attack that has been used to justify anything anyone feels needs some justification.

The U.S. is sitting on \$14 trillion in public debt (nearly all of which went into private hands) that our children will either pay back or default on. Just about all the manufacturing jobs have gone to Indonesia and Mexico and China. We have seen the treasury looted again and again. Banks that were bailed out and profitable are sitting on trillions that they won't lend to businesses. Four hundred people have as much wealth as half the U.S. population.

There is a faction of American politics that will not be satisfied until every real job is shipped overseas, till everyone works at Walmart, till nobody has health care, and until women's rights are gutted entirely. What we're seeing in Wisconsin is, in two words, *resistance* to that agenda, and *progress* toward the new.

Yet all of this can still seem so abstract. I ask you -- why are so many people on antidepressants? Why do so many resort to fundamentalist religion? Why are so unbelievably many people drunk so often everywhere in the world? Why is there so much rage? Why are relationships so fragile? All of this relates to the political environment. Cause and effect are never separate; I cannot tell you which is causing which -- but there are many connections.

In case you're wondering about 2012, have a look around, and a look inside. Consider what is going on in your own life and see if you can discern a relationship to the wider world. That really is the exercise; at this moment, that's one point of growth. Deeper in, there is, as I've suggested, a ubiquitous need for emotional healing that may affect every single person on the planet.

Meanwhile, outer circumstances keep getting our attention. Perhaps you have been, or will be, affected by a layoff, a foreclosure or a bank failure. You may have lost a loved one in one of these disgusting, illegal wars, which would certainly shape your worldview. You may personally be experiencing the effects of climate change.

Maybe your Social Security or disability will be cut because someone wants a new yacht, or holds in disdain those less 'fortunate' than themselves. You may be eating Corexit with your shrimp chow mein. Probably, though, your personal point of contact to the wider world will come in forms that differ slightly from someone you see interviewed on the news. (Then again, what you think of as the news may be coming to your town, your street or your living room any day.)

Maybe you know you've contributed to the problem over and over by not speaking up every time you've known you wanted to; every time you saw injustice -- on whatever scale, including right in front of you -- but decided you were powerless or that you didn't want to bother. I promise you it's not too late to care, and to take action on whatever level feels right. One thing that will make this easier is that others around you will be getting involved. You won't need to feel like you're the only one who cares.



For most people, the revolutionary surge of Uranus square Pluto -- the epicenter of 2012 astrology -- will arise as a sense of restlessness, as the awakening of conscience, as the desire to influence the world in a creative way. Maybe that, in turn, will be about growing into some of the potential you keep feeling, that keeps calling you, begging you to respond. You may wake up one day and decide the truth really does matter: on whatever level you take that concept. Apparently the people of Wisconsin heard the wake-up call.

"I never thought I'd be covering a pro-democracy movement in the United States, much less in my city," said Elizabeth DiNovella, an editor for *The Progressive*. "I think people here really have this awareness of how money has spoiled politics. Even today a lot of people at the protest were chanting, 'The banks got bailed out; the people got sold out'."

The protests by far have been some of the most vibrant and sustained in the United States since the 1960s, with tens of thousands of people in the streets day after day, and an occupation of the capitol lasting for three weeks.

DiNovella said that the whole experience has taught people a lot. "The propaganda of the right no longer works on the people of Wisconsin. People are aware of what's going on and they recognize that something is wrong." She gave as one example how Fox News, during a rant about how the protests were being staged by "professional leftists," [showed footage of violence](#) at a union-related protest purportedly in Madison. The problem was that there were palm trees in the frame.

"Now people are carrying inflatable palm trees at protests," she said. "The energy here has been so positive and people have been so creative."

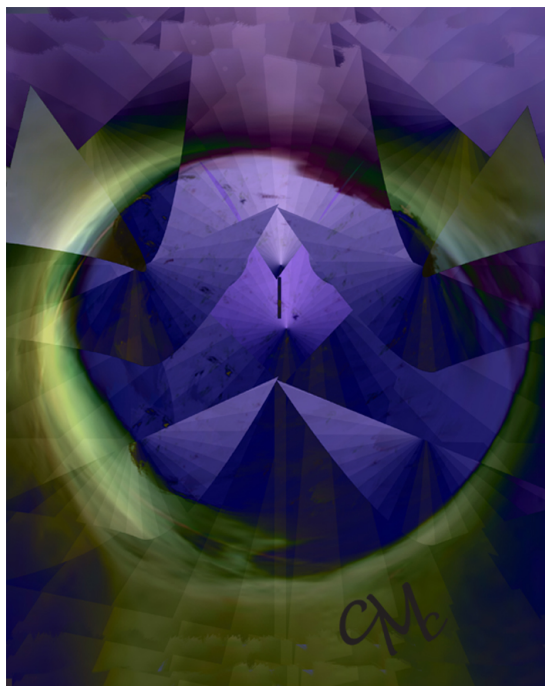
DiNovella has helped with protest movements in many parts of the world. "I'm so glad I didn't have to build a low-power radio station. Compared to other places, we already have the infrastructure." She said that recently the pipefitters union gave away 14,000 bratwurst and hot dogs, feeding hungry protesters -- many of whom have spent days on end out in the cold.

"Wisconsin has its own progressive tradition, especially involving unions, that is part of the American fabric. It's funny watching these reporters coming in from out of town who are surprised that this could happen here, including in the independent media," she added.

Uranus square Pluto is not just about addressing external oppression. It's also about an inner revolution over dark mother and dark father: the oppressive forces that we've internalized over the years, and from which we seek freedom. It's about breaking free from the structures that merely eat energy and feed negativity. Revolution is about getting out from under the shadow of the past, from guilt, and from the urge to suppress every creative or erotic or loving impulse you feel. Revolution is about figuring out you're actually alive, and doing something about it.

# Advent: Chiron in Pisces

*This was published in Planet Waves on Feb. 8, 2011.*



Today is the day that Chiron enters Pisces, where it will stay until 2018-2019. This is Chiron at the slow end of its orbit, in outer-planet mode. It seems like only yesterday (in the mid-1990s) when Chiron was clipping through a sign in just 18 months. I am here with an extended [special edition audio presentation](#) about this transit.

The recording is about 35 minutes, and describes the three basic levels of Chiron in Pisces: water itself, the emotional realm and the spiritual realm. I describe all three in the audio, and end with a bit of history about Chiron and Neptune in Aquarius.

Chiron is one of those things in astrology that really does need an introduction. Though the discussion has gone on some places for more than 30 years, there are relatively few cohesive and balanced discussions of what this energy represents. Amanda

Painter, one of the Planet Waves editors, researched my various articles about Chiron in Pisces and we've got her selections below. Each excerpt links to the article from which it originates.

First, I have an older piece on how Chiron may be applied in readings. It's called [When Astrology Listens](#). It describes a case-taking technique that enables the astrologer to deduce how Chiron is working in a person's chart, without having to speculate. The technique is based on listening to what a client has to say about their experiences of Chiron transits. Chiron is an influence that grounds strongly in experience rather than in theory, so the client's history can be quite meaningful and helpful to their own healing process and the astrologer's role as facilitator.

In Small World Stories, the 2008 annual edition, we included a succinct [introduction to Chiron](#). Described by someone named Al Morrison as 'the inconvenient benefic', "Chiron nearly always bestows a profound gift; it will save us over and over, waking us up just in the nick of time; but the events surrounding it almost always seem a bit shocking as they occur. Though over time, a degree of mastery of Chiron's most fundamental energy may be attained: and that energy is awareness." Further into the essay, I note why the events surrounding a Chiron transit can feel so jarring:

Perhaps if humanity were not so intent on denying its awareness, ignoring its knowledge, suppressing its potential and investing its energy in greed, Chiron would feel gentler or not be necessary at all. Perhaps if we considered understanding and embracing our shadow nature as important as seeking the light in our spiritual pursuits, we would not need Chiron. If it were more encouraged to allow curiosity its place, and to let it be a

teacher, we would not depend so heavily on Chiron to instigate the experiences and crises we need to learn and grow.

The influence of Chiron in Pisces on the natal charts of a whole generation of people born during the 1960s -- as well as the cultural matrix of that whole period -- gets a close look in an article from a decade ago, simply titled [Chiron in Pisces](#):

Chiron in Pisces is calling us to make peace with all the great mysteries of life: God, death, passion, Eros, altered states of consciousness, and the origin of the human experience. Individuals with Chiron in Pisces can express an innate knowledge of these mysteries, which can be developed into healing gifts or creative talents if the native chooses. It's worth mentioning that Pisces is the sign associated with illusion, theater, film, art and music. Other signs speak of the creative aspects in different manifestations; Pisces speaks to the waving of illusion, and a gift for doing this both artfully and with integrity.

Building on the theme of the 1960s as a defining era, [Chiron in Pisces: The Missing Piece](#) summarizes the relationship between two astrological phenomena which defined the Sixties and are again shaping our current 2012 era: the Uranus-Pluto cycle and Chiron in Pisces. It turns out that Chiron was a key piece to how the Sixties felt:

Across the sky in Pisces -- unknown to astronomers or astrologers at the time -- was a small planet called Chiron. Though it would not be discovered until 1977, planets are active long before we're aware of them, and Chiron's influence in this era was a protective spiritual backdrop that provided a kind of refuge, a source of inspiration and focal point within all the madness that could make a song like "[All You Need is Love](#)" meaningful. If you were born in the Sixties, Chiron in Pisces is likely to be a prominent factor in your astrology, and you've been working with it all your life.

In that same article, I describe how this current rendition of Chiron in Pisces comes with its own version of a wake-up call:

To put it bluntly, we might discover that we're not as spiritual as we thought, in the sense that we need to apply our beliefs and ideals to the world in a real way. Chiron calls for a practical approach to whatever it touches. If you believe you're spiritual, what is the working end of that equation? Where does that quality make contact with society -- not just your altar or your yoga mat? You could look at Chiron in Pisces as the focusing of dharma: *acting as if to hold the world together*. Chiron takes us out of the theoretical realm and directly into what comes with evidence and documentation.

Most recently, the subscriber issue [How to Cross an Ocean; How to Light a Fire](#) touched on today's ingress into Pisces, which shifts the flavor of our cultural focus:

Wherever it may be, Chiron focuses attention, and the oceans (signified by Pisces) need attention. So too does the vast interior of human consciousness represented by Pisces. This last sign of the zodiac works for all of us as a source of creativity, emotional contact and escape from the hard-edged world of the ego. If not for Pisces, there would not be music or art, and sex would not be the same. We would not recognize the subtle shades of our emotions. Yet we tend to pollute this realm with everything from mind-bending psychotropic drugs to contact with 5,000 advertisements a day.

It may sound a bit overwhelming in a rather diffuse sort of way. But as mysterious as the themes of Pisces and Neptune may feel to some, Chiron does not leave us drifting out to sea, as I explain later in that article:

The extended, simultaneous presence of Chiron and Neptune in Pisces is about developing the awareness and discipline to handle deep emotional, and what you might call mystical, energy. You don't swim across the ocean -- you travel in a boat. The same is true for the oceanic multidimensional realms represented by Pisces. You can think of Chiron as the boat, the vessel which includes such tools as perception, analysis, documentation and -- most significantly -- boundaries.

And as for calling attention to the water on the planet that Chiron in Pisces may represent, we saw a startling example in the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, which accompanied Chiron's temporary ingress into Pisces last year. [Pisces, Chiron and Whole-System Thinking](#) gives a broad view of some of what Chiron is trying to show us:

Chiron in Pisces is revealing a new dimension of awareness, or rather, pointing out what we need to be aware of. My take is that Chiron in Pisces is homing in on two things: one is natural systems, that is, what preexisted industrialism, and where these intersect with our technological systems. The other is what we think of as spirituality, and by that I mean we're being pointed to a void of awareness of how our beliefs influence our reality; how interconnected we all are; and how dependent we are on the environment in which we live.

Thank you to my Chiron teachers, who helped me figure out this little planet: Melanie Reinhart, Robert von Heeren, Zane Stein, Dale O'Brien, Barbara Hand Clow and many, many astrology clients who shared their biographies with me in the process of my working on their astrological charts.

## Here at the Edge of the World

*This was published in Planet Waves on March 18, 2011, one week to the day after the earthquake in Japan and the beginning of the nuclear crisis there. This article looks at the concept of the 'lost continent' as a persistent archetype on human consciousness, and the sense that 'the end is near' due to our ethical breaches, voluntary ignorance, greed and fear -- all themes of Atlantis.*



In the midst of all of this nuclear madness, Nat Geo channel premiered a special about some scientists who have discovered the remnants of what they believe is the lost city of Atlantis. Its location, according to the theory? Some mud flats in southern Spain, near Portugal, called Donaña. The program, called *Finding Atlantis*, was created for the Nat Geo channel by a Canadian production company, and with a little research is revealed to be controversial.

The original archeological project, started by a Spanish team and then joined by Richard Freund of the University of Hartford, searched the Donaña bogs using a kind of MRI device, looking for underground evidence of a civilization of which they seem to have found some additional clues (this is a previously researched site). Freund proposes that the location of the presumed

Atlantis focused on by the special was destroyed by a tidal wave. "This is the power of tsunamis," he told Reuters. "It is just so hard to understand that it can wipe out 60 miles inland, and that's pretty much what we're talking about."

"Debate about whether Atlantis truly existed has lasted for thousands of years," Reuters reported as background to the program. "Plato's 'dialogues' from around 360 B.C. are the only known historical sources of information about the iconic city. Plato said the island he called Atlantis 'in a single day and night...disappeared into the depths of the sea'." Yet though many have gone searching for Atlantis, others believe that Plato was speaking in a kind of intellectual metaphor.

Of the things about the archeological find that Freund claims exist, the most endearing are models of the fabled city that were supposedly created as memorials by its refugees who landed in Spain -- something denied by the Spanish scientists who say that no such models were found. For our purposes, though, it doesn't matter whether the TV special is true or not -- what matters is that the symbol of Atlantis makes a spontaneous appearance in our culture just as the world is on the brink of nuclear disaster.

Though we know very little about the actual Atlantis -- including what it was called, when it existed, or whether it existed -- the archetype of the *lost continent* is a persistent aspect of

human consciousness. Sometimes it's called Lemuria, or Mu. From one past-life regression about 10 years ago, I have a direct memory of being captain of a merchant marine vessel when Antarctica was inhabited, at the time of the mass evacuation from that continent. According to what I learned in my regression, one of the destinations for refugees was Spain. My wife went there. I stayed behind. It turned out that the leaders of the society who ordered the evacuation were about a century or two early in their predictions.

The myth of the lost civilization is persistent and it is intriguing. So, too, is the notion that a civilization, such as our own, might fall by its own undoing. I don't think there is anyone who hasn't considered whether this is inevitable; not out of any particular meanness or religious belief, but rather because we're such a bunch of dumb asses who refuse to wake up.

In modern mythology, Atlantis represents a society that was stricken from Earth because it was unable to handle the technology that it created. In some versions of the tale, that is specifically what we (in our era of gadgets) would think of as spiritual technology (telepathy, mental manipulation of matter and time), yet where the ethical capacity to handle these talents has failed to evolve along with the power we hold.

It is the same basic idea; and it's the same issue we're facing now. It's what Kurt Vonnegut was talking about in *Cat's Cradle*, which we read about two weeks ago when I covered Borasisi. In a particularly literal moment of astrology, the idea for the chemical that ends the world came out of General Electric, when Vonnegut was a PR man there. Notably, GE manufactured the transformers that are now threatening to spin totally out of control. This gives us a hint, by the way, that Borasisi has a resonance with the long history of crimes committed by GE.

Atlantis shows up as a factor in astrology as well. Minor planet specialist Martha Lang-Wescott delineates the asteroid (1198) Atlantis with the following themes: "Sense of impending doom; belief in deserved punishment/negative karma; invasions of privacy; access to inside or confidential information; abuse of resources, talents or information; importance of confidentiality/use of knowledge; water disasters; warnings."

In a phone interview Thursday, Wescott added another theme: "The other part of Atlantis is a negative projection, and we're seeing a lot of that. Atlantis is 'doomsday is here'." For example, she says that, "People with Venus/Atlantis aspects doom their relationships. If Atlantis is prominent [in a public chart], then you're going to hear astrologers talking about doom and gloom."

Here in our era dominated by the negative obsessions of fundamentalist Christians, there's plenty of that; it's a religion based on the Revelation or the Rapture or the Apocalypse, which is the supposed 'end of the world' -- predicted relentlessly for the past two thousand years (blended artfully with a radically sex-negative message), and presumed in modern times to be nuclear. I often wonder whether all these negative projections about cataclysm are adding up to the thing itself. Human thought is powerfully creative, and the federal budget has a lot of potential.

It is little known that J.R.R. Tolkien, in a work called *The Silmarillion*, gives his own version of the fall of Atlantis, an island he calls Numenor, located off of the western shores of Middle Earth. Numenor existed about 35 generations prior to the commencement of action in *The*



*Lord of the Rings*. Anyone who has read this book has met and loved one of the descendants of its refugees -- Strider (Aragorn, son of Arathorn), who becomes King Elessar I. Most of the wondrous places that readers visit along the way as Frodo and Samwise seek to destroy the ring were created by former Numenorian refugees and their descendants. The fictional empires of Arnor and Gondor were founded by a handful of people who escaped to Middle Earth right before a quake and tsunami destroyed Numenor. That is why they were described as the 'race of kings'. They founded empires. Incidentally there is a direct bloodline back to Elros, the founder of Numenor preserved by Strider in the group of which Strider is a part, which is known as the Rangers of the North. In other words Strider would be heir to the Numenorian throne, had that civilization existed in his day.

The most beloved fantasy novel of the 20th century has its early origins in a version of Atlantis. Numenor falls because its people, who live long and abundant lives in a kind of paradise, are terrified of death. They first become obsessed by wealth, then they crave the power and immortality of the gods who live on islands further west. Their downfall is propagated by Sauron, in an earlier incarnation than we know him in *The Lord of the Rings*. Their hubris is spiritual rather than technological: based on their fear of the unknown, they want to live forever.

More recently, in *Conversations with God* by Neale Donald Walsch, there is a part that I think of as the Atlantis passage. "As I have said, this isn't the first time your civilization has been at this brink," God says to Walsch at one point in their dialogue.

"I want to repeat this, because it is vital that you hear this. Once before on your planet, the technology you developed was far greater than your ability to use it responsibly. You are approaching the same point in human history again. It is vitally important that you understand this. Your present technology is threatening to outstrip your ability to use it wisely. Your society is on the verge of becoming a product of your technology rather than your technology being a product of your society. When a society becomes a product of its own technology, it destroys itself."

Whatever you may be hearing about the nuclear crisis in Japan, this week human civilization is now revealing how close it is to doing just that.

### **Fukushima Daiichi: Thousands of Tons of Radioactive Waste**

As of this writing on Thursday evening, here is the situation at the Fukushima Daiichi plant. All six of its reactor cores are in some level of distress after being damaged by an earthquake and tsunami one week ago. We've been covering this extensively on the Planet Waves blog. In short, the tsunami damaged the reactors' cooling systems, which has allowed the fuel to heat up and in three cases, partially melt.

As a result, there have been hydrogen explosions in reactors 1, 2 and 3. From what I am reading, it's fairly certain that the explosions in 2 and 3 breached the steel inner containment structures. Fuel cores have been exposed in all three due to cooling system failures, and there is a struggle to keep any water level at all in units 2 and 3. This means the fuel cores have melted partially and may melt entirely if they get too hot and the self-sustaining reaction goes out of control. When you hear news reporters use the word 'catastrophic' to describe something worse than is now happening, that's what they are hinting at.



While a full meltdown creates a worst-case scenario for reasons I will explain in a moment, Unit 3 has a special issue: about 6% of the fuel is called MOX, or mixed oxide, which contains plutonium.

Plutonium is another universe of toxicity than uranium. Inhaling as little as one-millionth of a gram can cause lung cancer, according to Dr. Helen Caldicott, co-founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility. I would dare to say it's more toxic than the worst dioxin, TCDD. Every single gram of the stuff is supposed to be highly regulated. So there is a special focus right now on Unit 3, though the presence of plutonium is rarely being mentioned; it is getting a bit of attention and I'm glad of that.

Impressively, the *Times* reported Thursday night, "The decision to focus on the No. 3 reactor appeared to suggest that Japanese officials believe it is a greater threat, since it is the only one at the site loaded with a mixed fuel known as MOX, for mixed oxide, which includes reclaimed plutonium."

Unit 4, meanwhile, has another issue. The spent fuel pond (a storage area for massive amounts of old fuel rods) has run dry (or was pumped dry in an emergency need for water) and the old rods are getting very hot from fission reactions that are stirring to life -- hot enough to potentially melt down. Unit 4 has burst into flames several times, apparently not from hydrogen explosions but rather from the fuel rods themselves starting to burn (most likely, the explosive zirconium cladding). The problem with spent fuel is that it contains high concentrations of the degradation products of fission, a whole stew of isotopes that move through the food chain and can jeopardize many organ systems.

Units 3 and 4 are currently being doused with seawater by helicopters, a technology better suited for fighting a forest fire. This is an utterly desperate measure. Units 1 and 2 are, we're told, being refilled ongoing with fire hoses and water cannons. As of late Thursday, engineers were still trying to restore power to the plant, which could provide some hope of the remaining cooling systems coming back online. And, by the way, there are problems with the spent fuel storage facilities heating up in Units 5 and 6, though the reactor cores in those units are presumably in fairly good shape compared to the others. But I have not heard the words 'cold shutdown' applied to them.

Assuming the situation stays stable for a while and is eventually brought under some vague semblance of control, that still implies the release of a plume of radioactive steam, an underground plume and a flood of radiation into the Pacific Ocean. This will contaminate much of Japan, and because the Jet Stream carries air east at a fairly rapid speed, I've read the plume will reach North America (particularly the West Coast) as early as this weekend. The levels may seem low at the moment. But relatively low levels of radioactivity can cause the same issues as higher doses based on what is known as the Petkau effect.

In addition, there is the issue of bioconcentration. Radioactive materials move through the food chain quickly, concentrating not only in predators but (for example) also in grass-eating cows. There is no such thing as a little radiation, and every drop of the water being dumped onto these reactor cores is turning radioactive and being released to the biosphere.

That was the good news. Borrowing from Rachel Maddow, I know this is a difficult time to say

worse, but it actually can get worse and has been hovering close to it from day to day. Remember that we are in new territory where nuclear accidents are concerned. This specific thing has never happened before. However, it is probable that if even one of these reactor cores or spent fuel ponds goes into full meltdown, it can sink below the land, reach the water table and create an underground explosion that destroys the small swath of land where this drama is unfolding, causing all of the reactor cores and spent fuel to go out of control. In any event there would be too much radiation for anyone to stay on the site keeping a grip on the others.

That would make Chernobyl into something that seems like a Science Fair experiment by comparison -- and it wasn't. There were about 180 tons of radioactive fuel involved in Chernobyl. At Fukushima, there are at minimum 1,000 tons and so far as I can tell, as much as 3,000 tons (including spent fuel) based on comments made by our government Wednesday, all concentrated in this one facility. (Rachel Maddow covered this in some detail last night).

### **The Full Moon, and the Aries Sun Conjunct Uranus**

The astrology for the next five days is not particularly encouraging, though if the workers now sacrificing their lives at the plant can keep a grip on this through around March 24, I would say the situation might de-escalate. Here's my reasoning.

We are currently building into the Full Moon in Virgo. This is a close Full Moon, happening at perigee. It's running with a lot of momentum, and it's happening at the very end of the astrological year, with the Sun at equinox -- about to enter Aries. Hence Saturday's Full Moon is an Aries Point event, which (as we have seen) tends to magnify things greatly and brings a lot of people into whatever situation is involved. It's the world crashing into your living room. It's you taking part in collective destiny in some direct way, just like we saw the people of Wisconsin do.

The Full Moon represents a peak, and the Sun-Uranus conjunction exactly on the equinox represents a kind of *collective surprise development*. Let's hope that's about some friendly space aliens showing up with their radiation-extinguishing devices and cooling off the whole situation; that's approximately what we need right now, because so far, things could use improvement.

A number of other features make this a pretty special Full Moon. For example, it's directly involved with the lunar nodes (which I covered two issues ago, and in the second article down). It's *exactly square* the nodes, which gives the event the feeling of an eclipse, or a point of no return.

The lunar nodes are aligned with two particularly meaningful points. The node in Sagittarius is pointing to the Galactic Core; hence, this Full Moon is square the core of our galaxy. This stirs up a spiritual crisis. To me the core represents our connection to Source, or our homing signal. The star that Planet Earth hangs out with is located 25,000 light years from the core -- far out near the edge of the galaxy. And our star is located between two of the spiral arms. So we are in a distant, remote location, in the boondocks of the galaxy -- and for this reason I am not surprised our particular planet so often has a 'god forsaken' feeling. The square between the Sun, the Moon and the Galactic Core suggests strongly that we have to seek inwardly for our spiritual connection. It also represents events that might provoke us to do that, and I

would say if you have not noticed that fact yet, this is an awesome time to pay attention. Remember that on our plane of reality, emotional impulses are binary: love and fear. Many have a hard time telling the difference. Here is a clue. If it does not feel like love, then it's probably fear.

The South Node, opposite the Galactic Core, is conjunct a point that keeps showing up again and again in charts. The point is at 28+ Gemini. This is a very strange spot in the zodiac that shows up prominently in the charts for Sept. 11, the Asian tsunami of 2004, WikiLeaks, two key charts for Japan -- and then for the quake one week ago. These are events that involve the breakdown of systems, turning points in history and in one case someone who is working to tell the truth about those systems.

I happen to have the asteroid Beagle there, and I've been hunting this point like a hound for several years. Up till now I was aware that the connection could not be a 'coincidence' (I covered this in my first article on WikiLeaks, by the way). Now, this is not merely a point that appears in the charts for catastrophes; it comes with an odd kind of disaster that seems eerily out of place -- and it's also present in people or things that raise our awareness. For example, WikiLeaks just published memos that prove Japan knew it could have this problem years ago.

When I saw how involved it was in both the charts for Japan and the quake, that made me more curious. There is a fixed star at this point, called Betelgeuse. I knew this star was there but I never researched it. A friend looked into it this week, and she dug something out of a 17th century astrology textbook -- no ordinary one, the first one ever published in English, called *Christian Astrology* by William Lilly. He associates the star with "rare engines of war." That is a quote. Now, that is interesting, since at the time he wrote that there was no such thing as a jetliner or a skyscraper.

Checking Wikipedia next, we learned more. Betelgeuse is a red star, connected with Mars. "With the history of astronomy intimately associated with mythology and astrology prior to the scientific revolution, the *red* star, like the planet Mars that derives its name from a Roman war god, has been closely associated with the martial archetype of conquest for millennia, and by extension the motif of death and rebirth." Notably this star is opposite the Galactic Core, facing toward intergalactic space. It feels that way.

Here is what I am thinking. As these global events come closer together, it's starting to feel like someone is *doing* all of this. I got that feeling the strongest over the weekend pondering how this extremely rare quake -- the 4th most powerful on record -- struck a region in Japan just where there are numerous nuclear reactors (including others not currently in distress). When I read the phrase *rare engines of war*, I suddenly felt like I was sitting in the middle of *someone else's war*.

The question is: whose war, and over what? I don't know, but I can tell you that the atom was not split for peaceful purposes. It was split with the intention of killing a lot of people. That much is history. Most wars are fought over the usual stupid reasons -- power, greed and egotism. Heck, why not? The world is ending anyway.

Next, it occurred to me that this was a war in which *environmental disasters were being used as weapons*. When Friday's quake happened, there were a spate of posts that went around about how the federal HAARP facility on the Alaskan tundra was turned up to full tilt at the time. I

wasn't in the control room taking pictures -- I don't know. But many people believe this is an electromagnetic device capable of changing weather patterns and inducing seemingly natural disasters. But this is not my field of inquiry; it was a little too tinfoil hat for me, that is, until I was looking at video of nuclear reactors blowing up one after the next.

So, I started asking around. I asked a friend who is an engineer if you can make an earthquake. He sent back a number of references, the most interesting of which was a quote from Bill Clinton's secretary of defense, a guy named William S. Cohen, during a news briefing. The quote comes from the Department of Defense transcript of that briefing.

He said he had read about the prospect of "some scientists in their laboratories trying to devise certain types of pathogens that would be ethnic-specific so that they could just eliminate certain ethnic groups and races; and others are designing some sort of engineering, some sort of insects that can destroy specific crops. *Others are engaging even in an eco-type of terrorism whereby they can alter the climate, set off earthquakes, volcanoes remotely through the use of electromagnetic waves*" [emphasis mine].

Gee whiz: the very secretary of defense speaking, not some conspiracy (or astrology) website? And, um, like -- *others* are doing this? Like who for instance?

Saddam Hussein? Castro? Russia? Darth Vader? Well, whoever.

When the United States is talkin', it's always someone else. We're nobody special, just the only country ever to use the Bomb on a population. And we happen to have one of these electromagnetic wave thingies -- a really big one and it keeps getting bigger. That would be HAARP. And this is not particularly new technology. Stuff like this was being developed by Nikola Tesla, an electrical engineer who was busy in the early 20th century. Tesla, who invented alternating current and thus the modern electrical grid, was ahead of his time. In 1897 he was researching cosmic rays.

I just looked at his chart. He has Mercury in that mysterious 28+ degree of Gemini: Mercury, the planet of the mind, of ideas and of messages. By the way -- for what it's worth -- he was the biggest rival of Thomas Edison, the founder of GE -- the company that designed those nuclear reactors that are melting down.

**Thank you, that was all very interesting**

-- but at the moment we're sitting here wondering what to do. Wondering what's going to happen to all that radiation. Wondering if they're going to get a grip. And the show is not over -- far from it.

In addition to the 2012 configuration (Uranus square Pluto) I've been describing for weeks, there are many other aspects gathering around the Aries Point that I haven't mentioned yet which hint at the possibility of a confrontation. These are about self-awareness awakening us to the forces of darkness that have, so far, kept themselves rather well cloaked. I mean, one definition of the perfect war is one that nobody knows is going on. It looks like something else.

In terms of how to process all this disaster by design, my own preference is to be aware rather than to pretend something is not happening. My preference is to stay connected and creative

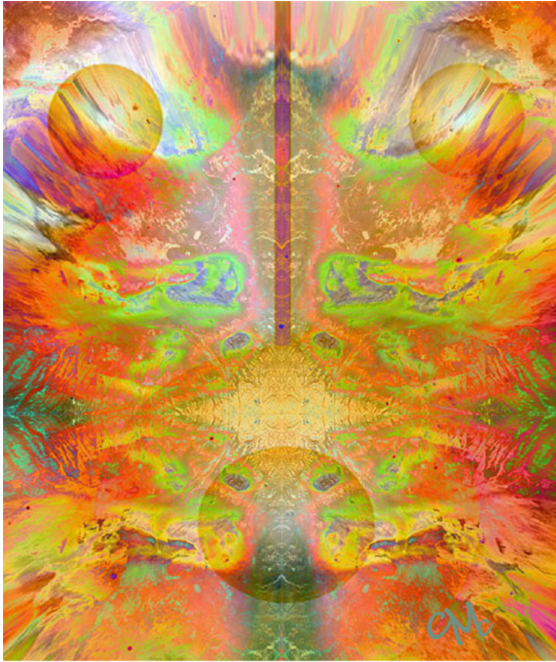
and curious rather than to pull away. I choose to embrace this moment with a sense of adventure rather than dread. This is a moment of collective awakening.

It may be the beginning of the very moment of collective awakening, here at the edge of the world.

I just have one question for you -- what are you doing?

# The Sacred Space of Self

*The concept of self has been taken over by religion and spirituality; it is barely in the realm of psychology anymore. This article uses the asteroid Vesta as a basis for an interior idea of self, which encompasses sexuality as an essential point on the spectrum of consciousness -- something nearly always left out or sidelined by writers with a spiritual focus. It was published in Planet Waves on Oct. 22, 2010.*



Of the mysteries of ancient Rome, the vestal virgins stand out as one of the most intriguing. Who were these women, who served half a lifetime tending the sacred fire, taken between ages six and 10, and maintaining celibacy through 30 (or more) years of service to the goddess?

They not only tended the city hearth, keeping its flames burning around the clock; for many generations they were present at every state function, standing as guardians on behalf of the goddess Vesta, who defended the city. Philosophers and emperors, including Cicero, revered them as central points of integrity for the empire, without whom Rome would surely fail.

Vesta, the goddess of the hearth, is rarely depicted in classical art; I've personally never seen a representation. At the center of her temple was not a cult statue or idol, but rather a flame. She is the incarnation of the goddess as fire; the living spirit of the element.

We have the stories of the vestals, actual women who did her work. They have names and histories: Aemilia, Licinda, Fabia, Aquilia Severa and of course, Coelia Concordia, the last head of the order, who was present when the Temple of Vesta was closed in 391 when Emperor Theodosius I banned pagan practice in the empire.

She stepped down in 394. Theodosius was the last emperor under whom the empire was politically unified, and the Sack of Rome occurred just 14 years later. Perhaps Cicero was right. Of that event, St. Jerome wrote, "The city which had conquered the whole world was itself conquered."

So, it would seem that the vestals and their ritual of constant devotion, at least symbolically, held a dimension of Rome's integrity. They could put this energy into their devotion because they were freed from the responsibilities of household relationships and child rearing. They used their time studying and working in the service of their patron goddess and in turn, the society around them.

Notably, their history seems to predate Rome itself. Rhea Silvia, the mythical mother of Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, was said to be a vestal virgin; she claimed that the god Mars found her in a forest and seduced her, and she gave birth to the twins.

## The Discovery of the Asteroids, and Vesta

In 1801, an astronomer discovered an orbiting body for the second time ever: that was Ceres. She was named for the goddess of agriculture. Two other asteroids were discovered soon after, Juno and Pallas.

In 1807, a German astronomer named Olbers discovered an orbiting body (at the time considered a planet), which he invited a colleague to name: that was Vesta. The brightest asteroid, comprising 9% of the mass of the inner belt, Vesta is supposedly visible without a telescope. We may wonder why the ancients, who had more time on their hands and much darker skies at night, did not note her wandering amidst the stars.

Vesta was the last asteroid discovered for 38 years. In 1845, Astraea was discovered, and the following year Neptune arrived. (This page provides a [chronology of minor planet discoveries](#).) The discovery of the asteroids opened the potential for additional feminine archetypes in astrology; it took about 150 years for astrologers to get going using them, and they're still considered something of a boutique item today.

As an astrological factor, I delineate Vesta as the experience of tending the inner hearth of creativity and sexuality. Her primary quality is devotion. She also represents an organizing principle. Think of how old houses were designed around the hearth as the focal point, and how the hearth is the center of the home's functions. Vesta describes how we organize physical space, and in a similar way, psychic space. If we devote ourselves to tending our creative processes, to tending our inner flame, we have a way to organize consciousness that is then reflected in our values and our expression of life force.

People with a strong Vesta placement will almost always have an unusual expression of sexuality. By strong placement, I mean making many aspects, conjunct the Sun or Moon, or placed on one of the chart's angles -- such as the ascendant or midheaven. Their relationship lives will 'just be different' than the people they know: the typical models of romance don't quite work, and they will wonder why. Many with this kind of placement will be inclined to think it's a relationship issue, and feel inadequate; with Vesta, the root of the matter is often how sexuality is processed differently. There is the element of service, and Vesta may be incarnating in her expression as the sacred prostitute.

Sacred prostitution means offering oneself sexually in the service of creation, or the service of the goddess, as you wish, but often another person is the direct beneficiary. This is the kind of erotic sharing that is neither romantic nor casual. It's not quite a mutual marriage. It's part of what I call the Third Way. Many people have touched upon this energy, but in my experience relatively few experience it consciously or consistently. Typically, we lack the language and the support systems that make it feasible, and we tend to take everything -- and everyone -- much too personally.

With a strong Vesta placement, there can also be an element of celibacy: that is, of long gaps in sexual activity, which can be particularly confusing for young women who are accustomed to getting plenty of sexual attention. It helps to hear about Vesta and the particular type of devotion she describes. This will often key in the memories of past lives spent as some kind of temple priestess.



You may read other interpretations of Vesta. Martha Lang-Wescott, for example, notes the mundane qualities: an obsession with projects instead of people; emotional distancing; hard work and career demands; being impersonal; sublimation of other interests into the career or vocation; sacrifice/denial of self (by others/self) for a 'greater goal'.

One author I read in *The Mountain Astrologer* circa 2000 said he noticed intense experiences of shame around Vesta placements, often relating to sex and inappropriate childhood sexual contact. I think all these concepts are valid, and some are rather perceptive, yet what is central to Vesta -- and to any planet -- is the *process* that unites all of the seemingly separate definitions.

With Vesta, that process involves the devotion of tending the inner hearth, be it for creativity, healing or service. At the center of our inner space is the fire of the soul that, in the complexities of physical life, rarely seems to burn on its own -- it needs to be tended, loved and honored continually, so that it can thrive and flourish. When the flame is tended, the empire of our lives can thrive because there is *integrity* at the core of who we are, and *fidelity* to our purpose.

### **Venus Retrograde, and Vesta in Scorpio**

We're now experiencing an impressive collection of planets in Scorpio, which include Venus retrograde. Vesta arrived about a week ago, and on Saturday Venus retrograde and Vesta will be making a conjunction.

Venus retrograde in Scorpio is an inner quest. Retrogrades imply internal orientation, movement of awareness toward the past, the search for something hidden, and an indication of what we turned off in childhood so as not to threaten our adult caregivers.

Scorpio implies sexuality and sexual themes. Certainly, we do a lot of shutting down here; even if our parents are not hung up on religiosity or their own untended injuries, few parents of prior generations (and, sadly, few today) encourage children to be comfortable with their sexuality.

Venus, one of two feminine archetypes from classical astrology, represents all facets of women, (usually) minus the maternal aspects covered by the Moon. Venus is the lover, the yin principle, the yearning kind of desire, and the most important indicator in the chart of what we value the most.

In Scorpio, Venus represents the powerful female desire nature, which some astrologers have associated with manipulation (associated with the power aspect of Scorpio). In a sense, Venus is out of place expressing desire directly; that is more the realm of Mars. Of course, this is in the opinion of the Holy See. If we want to know what sex was like before the Christians got hold of it and took over the topic completely, we need to study the bonobos. So far, no missionary has converted a single one. They are natural people. (You can read more about them, and what their lives say about humans, in an excellent new book called [\*Sex At Dawn: The Prehistoric Origins of Modern Sexuality\*](#).)

These critters, our closest primate cousins (with whom we share 98.5% of our DNA), use sex as a way of maintaining peace and harmony. They know nothing of the jealousy and control

suggested by Venus in Scorpio. Rather, they know that keeping the energy moving keeps their society in harmony, and provides a constant source of pleasure and bonding. (The authors of *Sex at Dawn* note that this is something more likely to occur in a matriarchal culture than a patriarchal one.)

With Venus retrograde, we have some introspection around the theme of jealousy and control (which exist as one concept). There are people who would argue that humans are incapable of learning or inventing something better than jealousy; that it's this thing that will always get in the way of a more open-minded approach to loving relationships.

But emotional concepts run in trends; in our control-oriented phase of cultural history, we have a reverence for jealousy that is strictly optional, and based on insecurities that are optional as well. It's all a matter of what we want. Incidentally, that something has already been invented: it's called *compersion*, which you can think of as a plus-plus symbiosis in the emotional environment. Compersion is about allowing pleasure and emotional contact to exist in others, particularly the people you love. (Here is a keynote presentation I gave recently called [Community and Compersion](#), which explains the concept.)

Venus retrograde is a quest to release jealousy and resentment in exchange for these other values. Indeed, this is a time to question what we value at all, and to examine the basis of our investment in relationships. Think of it this way: Venus is the ruler of Taurus. The sign opposite Taurus, therefore representing relationships, is Scorpio (counting signs, the 7th place). So Venus in her opposite sign will represent a relational involvement, and the retrograde is a kind of evaluation. What is the nature of this attachment, commitment or involvement? What are the definitions and boundaries involved, and how do I feel about them?

There is the question of attachment and how it so often substitutes for love; this one is rarely asked. More than anything, the Scorpio dimension will represent the deeper layers of the emotional bonds. With Venus retrograde, we now have a little more access to information than usual about how that connects to the past, and that emotional level.

### **Vesta: Devotion to Sexuality**

It is rare to hear someone say that they are devoted to sexuality. Most places, to admit as much invites all kinds of judgments, or the fear of being judged. Instead, we admit to wanting relationships and to certain ideas about them; we're obsessed with the notion of a soulmate or 'the one'; we admit to wanting comfort and security; we admit to wanting to marry for money, or the devotion to some ideal form of love. But who unabashedly admits that sex is one of their devotions? What personal ad service allows you to check that off as one of your interests?

Vesta in Scorpio speaks to just that common sense notion. When we consider the nuances of sexuality, we have to remember the wider cultural background that infuses the discussion and makes it all the more meaningful. Devotion to sexuality is a positive frame of reference; an affirmation of the importance and beauty of one of the best things that life has to offer, and the source of all existence. Part of the devotion is to keeping a constructive attitude, which is of course challenging when we get so few positive messages -- we need to look for those messages, and dialogue with them.

Think of Vesta in Scorpio as the specifically sexual flame that we must tend in order to have a healthy, wholesome existence. This tending can come in many forms, including nourishing desire, expressing that desire, encouraging ourselves to be curious, and applying our awareness to the healing projects that we know would help us. Many of these involve trust; injured trust is one of the most significant factors that affects our sexual needs. Vesta in Scorpio is about nourishing trust -- in particular the kind that's not based on the illusion of control.

There may be matters of sexual health that require regular or even daily maintenance. This is something we often take for granted. But the privy parts (as William Lilly describes them in the first description of Scorpio published in English) get a lot of other activity, and they require special care. Part of that special care is a 'use it or lose it' factor where sex is concerned.

There is also the dimension of knowledge. How many books about sexuality have you read? Not relationship theory; rather, books that actually consider the sexual nature of what a person is. Most of us think we know a lot about sex, but where exactly does that 'knowledge' come from? Even Rachel Maddow, the first lesbian prime time news anchor, can't utter the word 'masturbation' when it's called for in a news story. Part of devotion to sexuality is a commitment to awareness and honoring different viewpoints that exist, and to stretching your viewpoint. One measure of the ignorance of our culture is the current culture war being waged on same-sex lovers.

There is no way that would fly unless a lot of people were scared, judgmental, ignorant and (on top of that) feeling guilty about something. That's because attack is a projection of guilt, especially where sex is concerned.

Finally, there is the matter of tending one's own sexual truth. Every person has a unique sexual identity; we each need different things. Every person has a unique sexual orientation: there's a lot more than L, G, B, T and Q. Most of us try to fit our sexual orientation into a pre-fab theory that was basically forced on us as the only option. The source of that one option is usually religion -- hardly a place to go for enlightened information about sex and relationships. For example, we might be bisexual or polyamorous, and try to fit ourselves into a monogamous, heterosexual concept of a relationship.

Vesta in Scorpio would say: devote yourself to who you truly are, practice authenticity about your sexuality from day to day and hour to hour, and see what happens.

### **The Sacred Space Within**

Sexuality is deeply personal, and you may be aware of an inner sanctuary that is not someplace you regularly invite others -- even your lovers. You can think of that as represented by your Vesta placement, and under the current sky, Vesta in Scorpio. In that sanctuary, you're free to desire who and what you want, to dream any dream and to tend the flame of what makes you hot, no matter what anyone might think.

Now Venus is about to enter that inner sanctum. We could look at Venus retrograde contacting Vesta as a gesture of tending that inner flame. She is about to meet the element fire,

and burn off what must be cleansed. Or, we could consider that Venus has returned to the sanctuary to relight her flame, or to connect with the passion of youth. Vesta represents young women, and Venus retrograde is about older women learning from the younger ones. Think of Venus as entering the temple with her deepest needs and desires for healing and pleasure. Imagine that she is prepared to be absolutely honest in that space, to release what she doesn't need, and to honor the core fire of her goddess within. This is a kind of initiation ritual, where the ordinary (Venus) makes contact with the extraordinary (Vesta) in a gesture of reconsidering one's feelings, healing the past and, soon enough, moving forward with newfound passion.

There may be an element of sacrifice involved -- something that you don't need that you give up, in order to accept what you truly need or want.

The sanctuary where this exchange takes place exists at the core of our identity. It's the place where a transformative fire burns and identity is created from moment to moment. The embers have never gone out, and if we want to rekindle the flames, now is the time.