

The Traveler's Well

With Scott Wolfram

*"Move In Harmony With The
Sun, Moon and Stars!"*

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Dear Friends, I wanted to check in today on a couple of topics that have recently been in the forefront of the media over the last few days. These are uncertain times and the news of the last few days has certainly increased this uncertainty to some degree. So, I wanted to chat about a few things:

- [A 13th sign for the zodiac - Minnesotan's do have a sense of humor](#)
- [Climate Change Across The Globe](#)
- [The United States related to the January 4, 2011 Solar Eclipse](#) and the tragic shootings in Tucson.
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So much is happening around us right now that we need to take time for reflection. You might want to take a moment and reflect on the ways the Solar Eclipse has impacted your life. Was any aspect of your life energized? Did you experience a personal crisis? What new inspiration has been brought into the light?



Blessings and peace,

Scott Wolfram
[The Traveler's Well](#)

A 13th Constellation?

No Worries - Your Sign Has Not Changed

The truth has been revealed - Minnesotans do have a sense of humor! Having lived in Minnesota for over a decade, I can poke a bit of fun. These bitterly cold days push some Minnesotans to build wood huts on frozen lakes and drill holes in the ice in pursuit of very cold fish. If they catch any fish, then they take them home and ferment them in lye before consuming. For the record, I never attempted ice fishing, but a sense of humor is almost mandatory to survive this bitter cold (and the endless ice fishing stories)!

Since I am mainly asleep while news is being generated in the United States, I awoke to many e-mail messages. Among them my daughter, Sandy, wrote to ask about the proposal made by an astronomer, associated with the Minnesota Planetarium, that there needed to be a 13th sign added to the zodiac. This astronomer indicated this was necessary to "correct" the signs of the zodiac.

This article from the Minneapolis StarTribune suggested this was a new development and this "news" spread like wildfire across the web. But, alas, there is no new "news" here related to western astrology, which is the type of astrology I practice.

First, for thousands of years, all 13 constellations have been known to astrologers and astronomers alike - no new "news" here. So, in fact, we have old news. This topic reappears over time in small corners of the universe and always sparks interest, but never has this topic been discussed in our new 24 hour news cycle - naturally, it became viral quickly!

Second, having stated that there are 13 constellations, it is important to note that neither of the astrological systems (Tropical or Sidereal) incorporate this 13th constellation. So, again, while it might be fun to

consider, this constellation is not part of either astrological system (this covers 99.9999999% of all astrologers) and will not be added to the astrological zodiac .

From the perspective of Evolutionary Astrology, the 12 signs of the zodiac reflect the natural unfolding of the soul. Each sign reflects one of three qualities (Cardinal, Fixed, Mutable) and one of four elements (Fire, Earth, Air, Water). With three qualities and four elements, there are 12 unique combinations and thus, 12 signs in the zodiac that reflect the unfolding of the journey of the soul.

Third, for thousands of years, there have been two primary zodiac systems used in astrology: Tropical and Sidereal. Astrology that is practiced in the west, western astrology in its many forms, uses the Tropical zodiac. If you have had your chart done by me or 98% of western astrologers, it is based on a Tropical zodiac and its 12 constellations. The Tropical zodiac is not impacted in any way by the topic discussed in the article. So, from the perspective of western astrology, again, no new "news" - your Tropical Sun sign has not changed.

Fourth, while western astrology mainly uses the Tropical zodiac, Vedic astrology (and some other forms of astrology) use the Sidereal zodiac. Simply put, the difference between the two zodiacs is that the Tropical zodiac is fixed to the seasons and the Sidereal zodiac is fixed to the constellations. Tropical astrology fixes the signs of Aires and Libra to the spring and fall equinoxes and the signs of Cancer and Capricorn to the summer and winter solstices. The Sun sign most of us know (and more than likely the one's that appear in the newspaper, etc), particularly in the West, is based on a Tropical zodiac.

Finally, the main role the physical constellations play in tropical western astrology is in what is called the "Precession of the Ages". Over the centuries, the timing of the equinoxes gradually change in relation to the constellations. For example, in Tropical astrology, which is based on the seasons, the Sun moves into Aires on the spring equinox, or March 20th. In the Sidereal zodiac, this year at that same time, the Sun will be at 6 degrees of Pisces. Approximately every 2,160 years the spring equinox changes signs in relation to the Sidereal zodiac. For roughly the last 2,000 years, the spring equinox has taken place with the Sun in Sidereal Pisces. Thus, we are in the Age of Pisces. When we move into the Age of Aquarius, the spring equinox will find the Sun in Sidereal Aquarius. While there is no complete agreement on the beginning of the Age of Aquarius, the noted astrologer Dane Rudhyar proposed 2062.

So, when the 5th Dimension sang about the "dawning of the Age of Aquarius" in 1969, they were singing about the precession from the current Age of Pisces to the emerging Age of Aquarius. They were just a hundred years or so early!

Most importantly, the sign of your Sun, Moon, Ascendant, and the themes of your journey from lifetime to lifetime remain the same. So, no reason to remove those tattoos!

Strange Weather Events

Lately, weather patterns and environment events have also been dominating the news: snow in all 49 states of the United States on the same day; devastating floods in Australia, which is recovering from draught; raising sea levels threaten Bangladesh; heavy rains in Brazil have caused landslides... The loss of innocent life due to the unexpected results of this unusual weather is so very painful.

Here in southern Germany unseasonably warm weather threatens Germany's last remaining glacier and the 2011 Alpine Skiing Championship, but just about a month ago many Polish people died from an extreme and unexpected cold snap. These unusual weather patterns are taking innocent lives, displacing large populations and impacting local and global economies. This all adds to a feeling of uncertainty in our lives (as if we needed any more uncertainty right now).

Additionally, large populations of animals are dying. These massive "kill" events do happen and are occasionally recorded, but the number of events seem to be increasing and, when no explanation can be provided, uncertainty looms for all of us and we naturally question our own safety.

In Germany, the dioxin introduced into animal feed and is having a devastating impact on farmers, the economy and consumers worldwide. Also, a container ship of sulfuric acid "tipped over" in the Rhine River (no leakage yet). But, the number chemicals and toxins in our world seems to be out of control. These toxins have a tremendous impact on nature and our bodies and it feels like these chemicals are just exponentially growing.

One thing is certain - our weather is changing and we are all impacted by climate change to one degree or another.

What should we make of this news? As I often do, I turn to my "Old Uncle Saturn" for advice. Saturn whispered two suggestions into my ears, both of which are typical Saturnian notions.

First, Saturn asks that we as a society accept the truth that climate change is real. What is the correct label to use (for example, Global Warming, Ice Age Cometh, Polar Shift, Magnetic Pole Reversal, etc.)? I don't know, but the global climate is changing and we are all impacted one way or another. On one level, the causes of these changes are so much larger than us as individuals and this again increases feelings of uncertainty in daily life, which can become very distracting.

Mother Gaia is busy working to cleanse and heal the planet, but none of us can isolate ourselves from climate change. Having said this, we each have gifts to give society and that is how we help to heal our world! In the face of this uncertainty, we need to remain confident and strong and continue to focus on sharing our gifts and bringing light into the world.

Second, Uncle Saturn encourages each of us to take greater responsibility and consider how we can make our personal "footprint" on Mother Earth a bit lighter. Consider being a bit more committed to recycling. Or, you could even consider changing your diet, cooking more food from scratch and then composting the scraps. I know composting can be particularly difficult for those living in a major urban location. Here in Munich, they make composting easy, with a special bin for organic waste placed right next to the bin for paper recycling. Take your own unique inspiration for helping the environment and do it with joy!

Every little bit helps and uncertainty dissipates as we take more control over our world!

Solar Eclipse & The U.S. Chart In Light of The Events In Tucson

In my last newsletter, I wrote about the potential of January 4, 2011 Solar Eclipse. Since that eclipse, America has experienced the tragedy of the shooting in Tucson. A few weeks ago, I also wrote an article for an online astrology conference about the January 4, 2011 Solar Eclipse and the state of the United States. You can find the [complete article below](#) regarding how the chart of the United States will be impacted by the Solar Eclipses of 2011.

The tragic shooting in Tucson this past week connects three notes from the January newsletter.

First, *"All solar eclipses share one theme in common: They impact your birth chart by energizing circumstances that are waiting to be brought into the light and life."*

As a result of this tragic event, a national debate spawned related to the lack of civility in our national dialog. To me, our national dialog seemed to strongly shift as early as 911 and has strongly expanded since the 2008 election. In 2008, I remember how uncivil even democrat upon democrat dialog was as the battle between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama played out during the primaries. But, the deterioration of civility had been ignored or denied - as a population, we weren't discussing this. The mirror of the tragedy with the eclipse serves to force the nation to address what it has attempted to deny.

Second, *"If you experience a crisis during an eclipse, it is a message that there is some aspect of life that you have not paid enough attention to."*

The tragedy in Tucson was a national crisis. Similar tragedy strikes daily via gun violence in our society, but this violence was directed toward our form of government. The loss of civility in our national debate has caused some strong divisions and a whole lot of misinformation in the national debate. This has caused us to lose sight of the bigger picture. We have a lot of big problems to solve that require both sides to come together and develop constructive solutions.

Thus, the eclipse has brought to light the breakdown of civility that can no longer be ignored because it is diverting our attention away from problem identification and problem solving. Not because we are "too soft skinned" or that we need to protect our freedoms to express ourselves, do we need to have a "return to civility", but as a nation we have stumbled greatly during the economic crisis and we have a lot of problems to fix or we can too easily become a nation in decline. We can't come together and solve our problems until we can treat each other with greater respect.

Third was a question. *"Will the nation experience a rebirth of its purpose or a deeper crisis and further break down of social structures?"*

To the third point, as the solar eclipses continue to impact the chart of the United States throughout 2011, will we have a rebirth or will we experience further social breakdown. Unfortunately, the response of an increasing number of citizens has been to purchase more guns as the answer to their security concerns. Will we be able to discuss openly and creatively how to handle mental illness as a nation or will we prohibit great solutions with vitriolic language over health care reform?

President Obama's words in response to this national tragedy have embraced the positive potential of this eclipse. In offering his condolences to those who have suffered loss and injuring, he also attempted to begin a new dialog and begin the road to mending the fabric of the nation's social structures.

The January 4th solar eclipse did coincide with a crisis. The question is, where will the nation go from here, toward healing and a willingness to work together to solve or problems or toward greater instability.
Once again, stay tuned.

2011 - Eclipses, Transits and the U.S. Chart

A solar eclipse is a powerful astrological change agent. Eclipses not only express their own energy, but they also energize and amplify transits that are occurring at the same time as the eclipse. On a personal level, a solar eclipse will energize themes in our natal charts in order to support the process of change in our life. Solar eclipses also have a similar impact on a societal level. In 2011, two solar eclipses will impact the natal Sun in the chart of the United States and energize societal change. In this article, I wish to explore the themes associated with important outer planet transits in the United States chart that will be energized by these two solar eclipses.

TRANSITING URANUS - LOSS OF CIVILITY

In 2008 and early 2009, transiting Uranus energized the natal Mars-Neptune square in the United States natal chart. First, with transiting Uranus opposing natal Neptune, Uranus awakened "Evangelical America" in dramatic ways. The United States natal Neptune is in the 9th house and in the sign of Virgo, which is a perfect reflection of the religious beliefs of "Evangelical America". Transiting Uranus oppose natal Neptune has energized an extreme expression of those religious beliefs, that the United States should be first and foremost, a Christian Evangelical nation and not the democracy created by the Founding Fathers.

Second, with transiting Uranus squaring natal Mars, the aggressive quality of the nation has been energized via tension of opposing points of view. The United States natal Mars is in the 7th house and in the sign of Gemini reflecting the willingness to go into battle (Mars in 7th house) over opinions and words (Gemini). The battle of words and ideas has dramatically increased in intensity during transiting Uranus' square of natal Mars.

When taken together, one observation is easy to make: the anger and name calling has become a powerful centerpiece of the dissolution of civility and culture. This quality was well demonstrated throughout the last presidential campaign and seems to have taken hold and is growing in force as we prepare for another election in 2012.

TRANSITING NEPTUNE - CONFUSION ABOUT IDENTITY

In 2010 and early 2011, transiting Neptune is conjunct the United States Moon at 27 degrees Aquarius. This transit is a recipe for confusion about feelings and identity. Powerful Neptune transits often bring a lack of clarity, confusion and an inability to see the world clearly. Yet, it also brings a somewhat magical belief of inspiration, that what one is feeling is the "truth". The result, however, is almost always a misreading, a misunderstanding of the world. This is why astrologers recommend not making decisions under such a powerful Neptune transit. Neptune dissolves the ability to be clear or rational.

If there is one important ingredient to a healthy Democracy, it is the ability to be rational. The rise of the Tea Party Movement has clearly coincided with Neptune's transit to the United States Moon (Sibley Chart). The percentage of United States citizens that, contrary to all objective evidence, believe President Obama is a secret Muslim or that he is turning the nation into a communist state and compare him to Hitler or Stalin is astounding. Objectively, the United States is more free market than even its most conservative allies, like Great Britain. It is also important to note, that its closest allies, the other great democracies of the world, like Great Britain, Germany, France, Canada, Australia, do not share the hysterical view of Obama and the current government. Neptune's current hysteria is a phenomenon unique to the United States.

TRANSITING PLUTO - GOVERNMENT UNDER SIEGE

The third planet's transit is ultimately the most powerful and potentially the most destructive. For the past two years, transiting Pluto has opposed the United States natal Venus. Transiting Pluto will complete its final opposition to the United States natal Venus in 2011 and will next oppose natal Jupiter. Venus naturally rules culture and civility, and also rules government as the ruler of the United States natal Libra Midheaven. With transiting Pluto oppose natal Venus, the political motivations of the Tea Party and others appear to be to force the government to collapse. The nation seems to be unable to embrace the maturity to have a civil conversation about the real issues facing the nation and the world. As conversation descends into name calling and more and more people are carrying hand guns, the social fabric of the United States is crumbling and reverting back into the Wild West of 150 years ago.

HISTORICAL NOTE

It is interesting to note that all three of these planets (Neptune, Uranus and Pluto) played a role at the time of the Civil War, which began in 1861. In the lead up to the "secession" of the South and the birth of the Confederacy, transiting Neptune was opposed to the United States natal Neptune. During the entire course of the war, transiting Neptune was conjunct the IC in the United States chart. This combination is strikingly similar to our present transit of transiting Neptune conjunct the Moon (the Moon is the natural ruler of the IC or the 4th house). Both transits bring confusion around the idea of security and the heritage of the nation.

At the start of the Civil War, transiting Pluto was square to the natal Lunar Nodes, suggesting a powerful struggle between the past (South Node) and the future (North Node). Pluto brought a powerful demand that the nation would be forced to choose and there would be no avoiding this confrontation. Finally, transiting Uranus was conjunct the United States natal Uranus. It was the nation's first Uranus Return, returning the nation to reconsider the meaning of the Declaration of Independence and the nation itself.

THE THEMES ASSOCIATED WITH THESE THREE OUTER PLANET TRANSITS

The circumstances connected with the current outer planet transits identify powerful themes and are central to the course of the nation in 2011 and the years ahead:

- First, the political rise of religious fundamentalism over the desire for democracy. Conservatives have generally perceived themselves as being religious people, but now they see themselves as evangelicals first and foremost. This religious fervor is embodied in the formation of the Tea Party Movement and leads to the second theme, the unwillingness to make compromise.
- While compromise is a natural part of governing and was implicit in the three branches of government design of the United States Constitution, compromise has become a dirty word.
- The third theme is the degree to which the growth and pervasiveness of anger and even hatred are resulting in a significant loss of civility and culture. The degree of demagoguery and virulent language is poisoning the nation and its ability to function together.

Together, these three themes play the central role as important transits unfold over this year and are energized by the two eclipses impacting the United States chart.

TWO ENERGIZING SOLAR ECLIPSES

This brings us to two of the solar eclipses of 2011, which will both impact the United States natal Sun at 13 Cancer:

- On January 4, 2011, a solar eclipse at 13 Capricorn will **oppose** the United States natal Sun.
- On July 1, 2011, a second solar eclipse at 9 Cancer will **conjunction** the United States natal Sun.

Solar Eclipses energize the development of the themes of the birth chart, particularly when they connect directly, by conjunction or opposition, to a planet in the birth chart. Since the Sun is the heart of any birth chart and identifies the core purpose of the chart, eclipses impacting the Sun are of particular importance.

Eclipses tend to function in one of two ways:

- First, eclipses bring a need to focus one's attention and efforts on the part of the chart that has been energized. An eclipse conjunction or opposition the natal Sun brings an energy that can re-energize the nation, re-inspire its purpose and lead to a rebirth of meaning and a renewal of its vitality.
- Second, if the planet affected has been ignored or denied, an eclipse is likely to trigger a crisis. Eclipses impacting the Sun can result in a crisis of identity, of meaning and purpose. As the Sun rules the heart, an eclipse to the Sun can result in a "heart attack".

Since the Sun in the United States chart is impacted by the eclipse, the nation's identity, its purpose and capacity to shine must be tended to if we are to avoid a crisis. The transits we explored earlier in this article reflect the challenges to the perception of the nation's identity at this time. But, the Sun IS the identity of the nation. The United States Sun is in the 7th house and in the sign of Cancer. Thus, the United States shines when it nurtures (Cancer) others (7th house). The nation came into its most potent expression of its Sun when it created new friends and allies around the world after World War II. With the Marshall Plan, the United States helped Europe and Japan rebuild, which included those nations that fought against it during the war. The result at home was tremendous prosperity for its citizens. Beyond its borders, the United States became a beacon of freedom and democracy for much of the world.

When it is vibrant and filled with purpose, the Sun is naturally honorable, confident and magnanimous. In recent years, however, the United States has retreated from its honored status in the world. Nobility and honor are certainly not words that describe the current state of hysteria in the nation and the Tea Party in particular.

Over time, all civilizations and all empires first rise and then fall, particularly when they no longer play the role

demanded by their identity as identified in the birth chart. The United States is no exception. The solar eclipses of 2011 that impact the United States natal Sun will play a role in determining if the nation will have a resurgence of its identity and purpose and once again regain its role in the world. Will the United States retreat and fall behind? Or, will the United States rise to the occasion and emerge an even stronger force for good in the world?

TRANSITING URANUS CONJUNCT THE NATAL IC - WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE "AMERICAN"

Finally, in 2011, transiting Uranus will conjunct the IC in the United States chart and the identity of the nation will be tested. What does it mean to be an "American"? What are the founding principles of the nation that present day Americans believe in? Writers and journalists around the world have begun using the phrase "Civil War" to describe the state of the Union. At least one state governor has used the language of secession, connecting the language of leaders with the language of the Civil War, which began 150 years ago. The transits of Uranus, Neptune and Pluto have set the stage for the possibility of a nation divided. The Solar Eclipses of 2011 will bring the nation to either crisis or alternatively, to the potential for a rebirth of identity and purpose. One thing is certain, the astrological events of the year ahead will force the nation to reconsider its identity.