

astrological-cultural-spiritual-political
views & commentary...

Special Edition
August 2002

THE HERBST NEWSLETTER



Thoughts, dates, & reminders about our lives as members of the craziest species on this lovely planet. Like a message in a bottle washing up on the sandy shores of consciousness...

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Dear friends,

I was going to wait until September to write about what's going on in the heavens, but I decided to strike while the iron was hot (*strike*, *iron*, and *hot* are all relevant Martian words, by the way).

So welcome to this Extra! Extra! Read-All-About-It, just-off-the-presses Special Edition of my newsletter.

—Bill

The Cauldron of Heaven

A rare alignment of the Sun, Mars, and Uranus is making August a bit hotter than usual, and I don't mean the weather.

On August 10th, the Sun conjoined Mars. Every two years (or 25 1/2 months, to be more precise), the Sun passes Mars in the zodiac. The effective period of their conjunction is about seven weeks all told. This one's been building since July 15th and will last through September 4th, 2002.

Below is a short list of meanings of the Sun and Mars. Imagine what happens when they come together, when the Sun moves through the symbolic Martian force field:

Sun

*the wellspring of the self's life-energy
basic perceptions and values
authority, pride, dignity (or vanity, narcissism)
coherence & meaning,
one's connection to Cosmic Central
purpose & path; dharma*

Mars

*spontaneous self-assertion in action
masculine energies & attitudes
desire, passion, & potency
breaking through; the sharp, cutting edge
will, combativeness, and conflict (war)
urgency, heat, speed (or anger, impatience)*

During these seven weeks when Mars and the Sun are dancing, assertive, sharp, and combustible energies crackle through the ethos, revving the RPMs on the cosmic engine all the way to red-line. The burners are cranked up, and the soup is coming to a boil. So don't grab the pot with your bare hand. Put on that oven mitt or you'll get burned.

Given that this event occurs every two years, what makes this one a big deal? Well, the fact that it's happening in Leo, for one thing. Leo is the natural sign of the Sun and represents the self and the ego structures that keep us integrated as personalities. So Mars is hitting home, right where we live, at the core of who we are. The last time the Sun and Mars came together in Leo was August of 1970. Remember those turbulent days?

On top of that, the Sun and Mars will oppose Uranus in Aquarius during their conjunction. Oh, that kicks this up a notch, into a whole new level of significance. It's why so many people are upset right now. Look at a short list of some of Uranus' meanings:

Uranus

*independence and individuality
separation or detachment from others
sudden, unpredictable change; revolution & upheaval
awakening through shock; uprooting of habits
chaos as a means of disrupting the status quo
the intrusion of the new and unexpected*

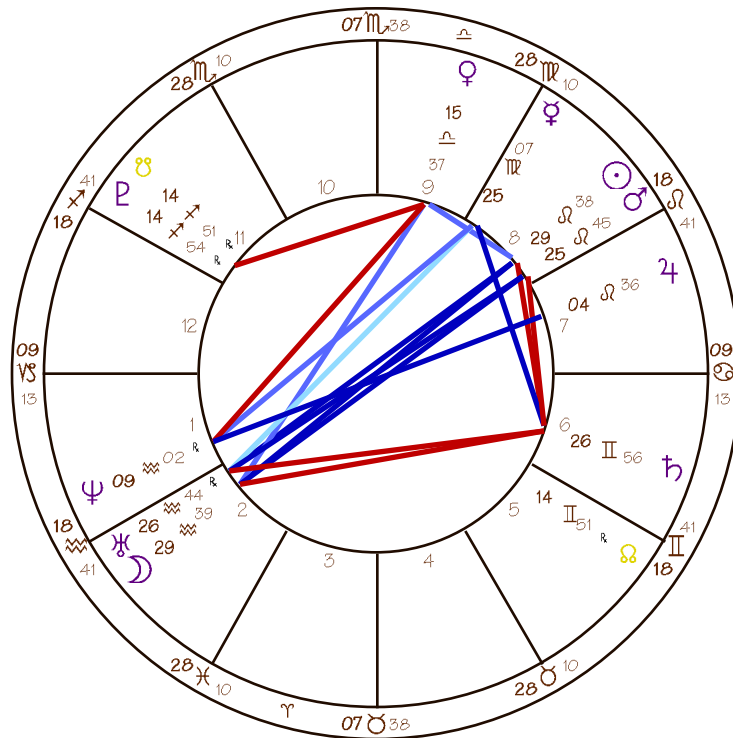
To give you an idea of the rarity of this event—Sun and Mars conjunct in Leo and both opposite Uranus in Aquarius—guess how many times this configuration has occurred since Uranus was discovered in 1781. The answer is NEVER. The last time this happened was in the year 992 A.D., just a decade more than 1,000 years ago. But that was eight centuries before anyone knew that Uranus existed.

To be fair, rarity alone doesn't imply that this is the most important astrological event of the age. In fact, it's not. No matter how high-energy the configuration is, its significance is limited to a two-year period. But for those of us alive right now, those next two years are quite meaningful.

Conjunctions are beginnings, oppositions are culminations. Think of them like spring planting and autumn harvest. Here we have both simultaneously—Sun and Mars conjunct in the Sun's own sign of Leo, while each is opposite Uranus in its most potent sign, Aquarius. What's cooking is a new way of being, a new set of desires and intentions—new drives, new goals, and new ways of acting. New passions and conflicts. What's culminating is a revolution, the shock of being awakened by the cosmic version of a 40,000-volt electric cattle prod.

So we have this internal cauldron bubbling away inside each of us, and its looking for a way to be expressed through radical and revolutionary acts involving others. All interpersonal relationships are unstable right now. Passions are inflamed, and we're bouncing off the walls like superballs. Good connections with others are extremely volatile in the alternating push-pull of attraction and separation.

Depending on a million factors—who you are, where you are, your personal circumstances, and how the conjunction activates your particular chart—you may feel exhilarated or exhausted right now. You could feel like a heat-seeking missile, but you might just as easily feel like the target itself. And perhaps both. Like everything in astrology, this is a double-edged sword. Even if you personally remain relatively unaffected by this energy, you'll notice it in those around you and in the larger world beyond. Something's smoldering, and it's about to ignite.



Leo Full Moon

22 August 2002, 5:30 p.m. CDT
Minneapolis, Minnesota

During the week of August 19th-25th, first the Sun and then Mars will oppose Uranus. That's when the pressure so many of us have been feeling will first come to a head and be released into manifestation—suddenly, and in ways that are nothing like we expect.

That last phrase is a key to what's coming—it does not conform to our expectations. It's a surprise. So any of you reading right now who might think that I'm implying some awful terrorist attack or other disaster, please stop thinking that. Those expectations have been drummed into us for the past year. Astrology says that this Uranian release of Sun-Mars energy will manifest in ways we didn't anticipate. And it's not just one event, it's a million small experiences—what happens to surprise you in your particular life may be very different from what occurs in my life to awaken me.

So please understand, I'm not sending out this Special Edition newsletter to predict some big event in the collective. I'm alerting each of you to the possibility of a personal awakening that may have meaning in changing your life, hopefully for the better. It may happen in one event or in a series, next week or over the coming six months, but it's on the way.

How does one prepare for something like this? There is no preparation, nothing to do in advance. Be as willing as you can to awaken, that's all. If you're sleeping and the alarm clock goes off, just get up. Yawn, stretch, then welcome the new day. Sure as shootin', if you ignore the alarm and go back to sleep, Mars and Uranus will dump a bucket of cold water on you. Whatever shock it takes to wake you up. These are volatile, provocative energies, and they don't take "no" for an answer.

This is not a time of serenity, although serenity is always called for. This is not a time of peace, although peace is the ultimate goal. This is not a time of love, although love may be the only true insurance we have, and the only effective antidote to the disturbed emotions that are so prevalent now.

All three of those—serenity, peace, and love—are essential. Maintain them inside. Share them with those around you if possible. But understand that those are not the energies swirling within and between us right now. Mars and Uranus combine to make powerful, surgical lasers, which cut right through any false security that masks our deeper fears.

This is a chance to begin anew, and, in so doing, to let go of the past. The future is here, and it's a brave new world. We might as well embrace it with full hearts and open minds. That is our best hope for shaping and directing these provocative energies in a way that produces positive results, in our own lives and for those we love.



In next month's September newsletter, I'll write about the upcoming Mercury retrograde, which will add a new wrinkle to all I've discussed here.

Bill Herbst resides in Minneapolis, Minnesota. To schedule an astrological session, either in-person locally or long-distance via telephone, send an email to bill@billherbst.com, or call 612-207-4486 and leave a voicemail.

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