

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

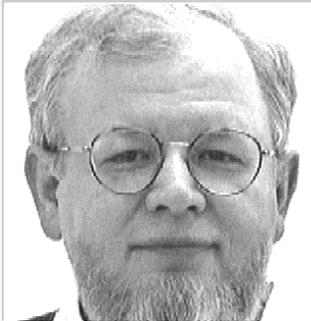
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THE HERBST NEWSLETTER



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,

For more than two years, I've written a great deal about politics, as viewed through the twin lenses of astrology and my own personal beliefs. At this point, I'm pretty fed up with the whole political circus, not because Bush won (which didn't thrill me, but I wasn't enthused about the Kerry alternative, either), but rather because my psychic sensors are just plain worn out from the vibrations of collective stress, fear, and conflict.

I could say that I'll write less about politics from now on, but, if this newsletter is any indication, politics may continue to be an unavoidable subject. At any rate, my intention is to devote more newsletters in the near future to purely astrological issues. Until then, I hope you can put up with one final chapter on the election, my two cents' worth of "What Now?" analysis.

ELECTION POST-MORTEM

Thank God it's over.

More than ever before, this election campaign ripped away the paper-thin pretense that American politics is anything other than a stinking cesspool of crass manipulation and unconscionable deceit. Both major-party candidates, their campaign spokespeople, and their 527 attack dogs were guilty of endless partisan lies that ranged from the subtly dubious to the outrageously bald-faced. In fairness, though, the Democrats can't hold a candle in that department to the Republicans, who have taken lying to the level of an art form, and a strikingly successful one at that.

Truth, of course, is an elusive creature, especially in America, where image trumps substance, fantasy mocks reality, and you can convince a gullible public of damn near anything, as long as you play to their fears, advertise with a vengeance, and never deviate from hammering home your simplistic message in easy, predigested sound bytes. Baby food for adult babies.

In the September newsletter, I discussed the possibilities for the future in the astrological charts of both major-party candidates. Now that one of those possible futures has been dismissed (John Kerry), I want to

go into more depth about what's upcoming in President George W. Bush's chart and how those active cycles may affect his second term.

Like many astrologers, I made no clear prediction about the outcome of this election. Astrologically, it was simply too close to call in advance. The best interpretation I could offer was that the heavens did not particularly favor President Bush, but I also stated that I didn't know who would win. In the end, Bush's advantages (incumbency, simplicity, and a frightened electorate) proved sufficient to give him a second term.

At Mr. Bush's press conference this past week, he appeared ebullient at his victory, and why not? His chart has been under withering pressure for the past year, yet Bush not only persevered, but won. With a 51-48% margin of victory, where 100,000 votes in Ohio would have swung the election, claiming any definitive mandate is questionable, but arrogance is Bush's stock in trade. His actual words were that he had "earned capital in the campaign" and now "intended to spend it." Ah, another endearing metaphor straight from capitalism, our national religion.

Clearly, Bush intends to push harder than ever for his radical agenda (Uranus is the leading planet in his chart). There will be no conciliation, no "reaching across the aisle" to ameliorate the 55 million Americans who voted against him. The president is on a seek-and-destroy mission with a vengeance typical of his political history. Anyone who opposes his beliefs is an arch enemy to be destroyed.

Does astrology support this take-no-prisoners attitude as Bush's second term unfolds? Will he be able to use his Republican-controlled Congress to push through tort reform, more tax cuts, and Social Security privatization? Will he wage further wars in "pre-emptive" invasions against Syria, Iran, or North Korea? Could any of the ongoing scandals (Abu Ghraib, Valerie Plume, or the tragedy in Iraq) gain enough public momentum to tarnish his image or derail his plans? The astrological responses to all those questions are quite mixed.

Numerous chart factors will embolden Mr. Bush. Between this December and August of 2005, a trio of significant Jupiter transits occurs in his chart (Jupiter first-quarter square his natal Sun and conjunct his natal Moon and Jupiter). Jupiter transits are linked to optimism, buoyancy, social opportunity, and good fortune in general.

The beginning of Bush's current twelve-year Jupiter-Sun cycle coincided with the 9/11 attacks in 2001, lifting his presidency out of the confused morass of its first year and galvanizing Mr. Bush with the vision that has sustained him ever since. The upcoming Jupiter transits represent the next phase of that energetic vision, the making physical of what started in deep emotion. So we can expect the president to continue to prosecute his wars on America's "enemies" with renewed vigor.

The pitfalls of Jupiter transits stem mainly from overconfidence (which leans toward hubris) and counting on one's luck, both of which are errors to which Bush is vulnerable. Those dangers won't deter the president, but they may complicate his life (and ours) later through unforeseen and unintended consequences.

The other provocative factor upcoming in Bush's chart is Uranus' transiting square to his natal Mars, which lasts about a year, starting in late February 2005 and remaining active through January 2006. I wrote about this transit at some length in the September newsletter, but it deserves reiterating.

This transit is one of the most aggressive and potent in all of astrology. Uranus represents sudden, shocking developments of a radical and revolutionary nature. Considered as an event-oriented passage, it presages unpredictable changes of circumstance. Interpreted psychologically, as an inward state, Uranus provokes intractable willfulness and bold action, where all caution is cast aside.

In the chart of a president already inclined toward war, Uranus' transit of Mars is profoundly worrisome. Violence is almost surely the result, whether as intentional state-to-state warfare, more unexpected terrorist attacks, or even harm to Bush himself. Psychologically, Mr. Bush will experience extreme

impatience, and he will very likely lash out angrily and with little tact at anyone who stands in his way, earning him even more enemies than he has now.

The pitfall of the Uranus-Mars transit is recklessness, moving ahead without any concern for what may be very real dangers of retaliation. Bush has already exhibited these tendencies, and they could easily be expressed ten-fold during 2005.

To add fuel to this fire, consider that the most commonly used chart of the USA (called the “Sibly” chart) contains a Mars-Neptune square that is being transited by Pluto in 2004-2005. The last time Pluto transited Mars and Neptune in the USA chart was from late-1967 through mid-1969, which was the period of the most dramatic military escalation of our misadventure in Vietnam, with accompanying assassinations (Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King), massive civil disobedience, and race riots here at home. That chaotic turbulence is upon us once again.

Given these belligerent factors in the president’s and the nation’s charts, the first year of Bush’s second term is astrologically the most dangerous time our country has faced for decades.

On the other hand, what chart factors might constrain the President? Two sets of transits, from Chiron and Saturn, will provide if not inhibition, at least serious consequences to Bush’s intentions.

In January, Chiron opposes Bush’s Saturn, and then, over the rest of 2005, it sits on Bush’s Descendant. Chiron’s action is to bring to awareness unhealed wounds and other long-term unconscious disturbances in our lives. It does this by ripping open the abscessed parts of our psyches, revealing to us what we have ignored, often through a painful confrontation with our own misunderstandings. For George W. Bush, these transits indicate that he may be forced to deal with two of his personal failings: 1. the refusal to face reality (Saturn), and 2. The stubborn unwillingness to listen to contrary viewpoints (Descendant).

Despite his re-election, Saturn will continue to put pressure on Mr. Bush. He is undergoing two important Saturn transits now: his second Saturn Return (meaning that Saturn in the heavens has returned to its location at Bush’s birth) and Saturn square his Midheaven.

Saturn Returns are chronological; they occur for everyone at the ages of 29, 58, and 87. The first Saturn Return represents the end of childhood and beginning of real adulthood. The second Saturn Return symbolizes the end of the personal or family-based ambitions of productive mid-life and their replacement by increasing concerns for one’s legacy, enlarged perspectives on humanity, and greater interest in universal questions of life and death. This transit (along with the simultaneous activation of Bush’s Midheaven, the point in every chart that indicates career drive and social standing), means that the president is rethinking the uses to which his power might be used for the greater good.

Unfortunately, Bush’s idea of the greater good differs substantially from about half of his fellow Americans. Saturn indicates that he may encounter far more resistance and frustration than he anticipates. That won’t prevent him from pushing ahead, but it will set up the next looming series of sobering Saturn transits.

From late August 2005 through early July 2006, Saturn will pass over Bush’s Ascendant, Mercury, and Pluto. These three simultaneous transits will have a stark and powerful effect toward restraining the president. Starting in the middle of his Uranus-Mars transit, Saturn indicates a chilling reaction in real consequences. Saturn’s passage of the Ascendant indicates chickens coming home to roost in a period of forced personal reassessment. The results of whatever we did in our lives over the previous 22 years—successes and failures, wise choices and confused mistakes—finally emerge in another of the various Saturnian events that represent “reaping what we sowed.”

Transits carry both generic interpretations that apply to all of us and other, more personal ramifications that are tailored to each individual life. In Bush’s case, the personal meanings of these Saturn transits include his relationship to his parents and family of origin (especially harkening back to difficulties or grief in his childhood), his emotional and physical vitality, and questions of faith versus doubt. In addi-

tion, certain Saturn transits (especially the ones upcoming) bring revelations of what had previously been secret, meaning kept hidden from public view or denied in Bush's awareness. If any brewing scandals do finally boil over to censure the president, that period (Aug 2005 – July 2006) will be their most likely timing.

Through the initial two years of his second term, President Bush's health—mental, emotional, and physical—will be under increasing pressure. As I've written before, Bush's defenses are very strong (stress tends to be diverted into his unconscious), but the built-in strain of his office and unexpected opposition from external reality may exact a larger toll from him than they have so far.

Pragmatically, we can be certain that Mr. Bush will attempt to manifest his revolutionary vision for America and its role in the world. To what extent he will succeed in this crusade remains to be seen.



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