

Winter 2006

By Kenneth Bowser

The most important feature of the first three months of the year for traders is the Jupiter-Neptune square. That combination will remain within one degree of the exact contact from January 16 to March 28. The square will be within two degrees from January 6 to April 6. The combination signifies fast expansion, in fact sometimes a frenzy of enthusiasm that becomes a free-for-all. The most extreme increases in the history of the U.S. stock market have come under the auspices of Jupiter and Neptune in combination. Interest rate hikes, rising oil prices and inflation also attend Jupiter-Neptune combinations. The major downside consideration with this pair is that its gains are ephemeral, insubstantial, unwarranted and likely to evaporate overnight when Saturn engages Neptune later in the year. For those disciplined traders who can recognize the top and sell at or near it, there is a great deal of money to be made in the short term. When the Jupiter-Neptune square wanes in April the markets will sag which will reveal the January through March gains as unsustainable. The markets will likely stumble at the Mars-Saturn conjunction in June—no other combination is a stronger downside factor for a market. But the longer lasting and therefore more serious factor is the Saturn-Neptune opposition that first becomes exact this summer on August 31st. The Saturn-Neptune opposition lasts for nearly a year. It is the opposite of Jupiter-Neptune in affect. Where Jupiter-Neptune expands without limit far beyond what is warranted into vulnerability, Saturn-Neptune descends without limit into vulnerability exploited: a trap that not only demolishes speculation, exposes fraud and some things which are merely suspect, but damages, denigrates and even destroys at least some true value. In other words, Saturn-Neptune cuts not only to the bone, but into the bone. Jupiter-Neptune is a balloon full of hot air based on hype, con, greed and what Alan Greenspan called “irrational exuberance”: an upside frenzy. Saturn-Neptune is a pin ever in search of balloons. Its stock in trade is fear, doubt, unequivocal realization of inadequacy and panic: a downside frenzy.

The sidereal Capricorn Solar Ingress of January 14, 2006 is much less rosy than the Jupiter-Neptune square. That all important ingress contains both distinctly unfortunate and bellicose features that portend continued war, indeed its expansion, especially around January 23rd. The Moon is close to Saturn which is symbolic of insecurity, tension, food shortages, health problems on a big scale and general malaise among the peoples of the world. The Moon-Saturn conjunction is the closest relationship in the chart but the proximity of those two bodies is deceiving because they don't appear in longitude to be as close as they actually are three dimensionally. The Moon in the Capsolar is conjoined to Saturn separated by six degrees of arc, which is a huge expanse of space if you look up at the sky. But the Moon has more than four and a half degrees of latitude above the ecliptic and almost twenty-four degrees of north declination above the equator. That means the Moon does not rise or set with its ecliptic degree. The Moon sets at Washington separated from Saturn by only 17 seconds of time. That is more than eighty times closer than 6 degrees of arc.

The next closest relationship exists, like the Saturn-Moon conjunction, in the equatorial coordinate system: Mars rises when the Sun appears in the upper meridian only 1 minute and 24 seconds from exact at Washington. This mundane square is another of the contacts symbolic of war. It suggests that Washington is the nexus of crisis and conflict in 2006. The main feature of autocracy and drastic action in the Capsolar equated to Washington, however, is Pluto at the lower meridian where it will remain all year. Pluto will make the first of three exact to the second transits over the I.C. on January 23rd. The other dates are June 6th and November 25th. This transit is symbolic of military alerts, saber rattling and deployment of military options, since it is also attended by Moon-Saturn and Sun-Mars. It is not a stand-by placement, but rather, one that points to action directed from Washington. Congressional and especially international outrage at what the president may invoke could make the Bush Administration a virtual pariah in the world, although many people and governments will privately applaud his action.

California and the San Francisco Bay Area in particular have been under great stress since December from an astrological point of view. To date, the stress has mostly manifested as weather extremes. Astrological conditions with an earthquake signature continue into January and February especially on January 19, 27, 28, 31 and February 4, 24, and 26th which suggests the possibility of a series of quakes.

RETROGRADE PLANETS

Planets in their stations are extremely powerful. A station is that point in a planet's orbit where its motion appears to slow to a standstill as seen from the Earth. A planet's retrograde station is the location in the zodiac where its forward motion stops and it begins to retrace the ground it has already covered in the zodiac. A planet's direct station is the location where the retrograde motion ends and the planet resumes its forward, that is, eastward motion. Retrograde motion was a mystery for millennia. It is misleading in that planets do not actually change direction; but they do regularly appear to move backwards, from the vantage point of the Earth, due to the geometry of the solar system.

Some astrologers make a big issue of direct versus retrograde motion and many people have come to believe that retrograde motion is something inherently unfortunate, or at least troublesome, bothersome, or that the principle of the planet undergoing retrograde motion is somehow compromised in its action. Mercury in particular is supposed to be difficult when retrograde. In my thirty-five years in astrology, I have not seen a more overdone and unreliable axiom in practice. It is claimed by some that a retrograde planet cannot function properly, that it is stunted, ruined, or at least somehow damaged. Statistical studies have been conducted to examine the matter and they have produced results consistent with my experience: retrograde planets are not impaired in their action. They may be even stronger than planets that are direct, due to their slow motion. Slow is better for benefics, but worse for malefics. One doesn't want to see Jupiter rush past important places in the horoscope, but most people would be happy to see Saturn fast in motion. One must believe that a leopard can change its spots to be confounded by a retrograde planet. The intrinsic nature of a planet, if it is benefic, cannot be contravened

because it is retrograde. Likewise, some astrologers claim that retrograde malefics are weakened and therefore not as difficult as when they are direct. Yet in the real world, malefics appear to be worse when retrograde because they're slow in motion and concentrate their rays over a narrow swath of the zodiac three times.

VENUS

Having said that, it is noteworthy that the year begins with Venus retrograde. If transiting Venus is retrograde and passing over several planets that relate to matters of the heart, family, or financial considerations—such as the natal Venus, the natal Moon or natal Jupiter—my experience is that people often find themselves smitten, pregnant, or on the receiving end of gifts. The retrograde condition has apparently nothing whatever about it that could be construed as undesirable in itself.

Venus, the lesser benefic, turned retrograde on December 24, 2005 and will turn direct on February 3, 2006. Those born within a day on either side of January 21 had Venus station on their Suns on Christmas Eve last year. Those born within a day on either side of January 6 will have Venus station on or near their Suns on February 3. Those born within a day on either side of July 8 will have Venus opposite their Suns in late January and early February. Those born within a day on either side of May 7 and September 9 will receive Venus's benefits to a somewhat lesser degree also during late January and early February. Venus is a happy, joyful, affectionate, sensual, playful and pleasing quality. It does not become something else when it is retrograde. If it falls across one's natal Saturn, it would be easy to blame the relationship problems that could attend that transit on Venus's retrograde motion, but it would be due instead, to the contact with Saturn. More likely an intractable problem, symbolized by Saturn, might be softened or rendered improved due to Venus's gentle ministrations in transit, which would be more concentrated than usual because of Venus's slow motion.

JUPITER

Jupiter, the greater benefic, turns retrograde on March 4th and slows to a stop between the two brightest stars in Libra, which represent the scale pans in the balance: Zubenelgenubi, the South Scale and Zubeneshamali, the North Scale. Jupiter is closer to the North Scale whose influence is considered fortunate and especially good for amassing riches.

Those born within a day on either side of November 12 will have Jupiter conjoined to their natal Suns, and those born within a day on either side of May 10 will have Jupiter in his station opposite their natal Suns in late February and early March. At the same time, those born within a day on either side of July 11 and March 10 will enjoy a modestly less but still substantial period of success. Any natal planet benefits from Jupiter's helpful rays. But it is, other things not considered, an especially fortunate thing to have Jupiter station on or near the natal Sun. It is consistent with promotion, graduation, success, birth, strong and ostensibly unlikely recovery from terrible injury, discovery, travel, fortunate outcome and a general quickening of one's affairs which until now may have

been mired in pending business, litigation, red tape or trouble beyond number and description. Jupiter does not become ineffectual or a lesser vehicle for dispensing benefit when it is retrograde. If anything, it is stronger during its retrograde periods because it is slower in motion.

SATURN

Saturn, the greater malefic, is retrograde during the entire first quarter of the year. Saturn in Cancer, the constellation related to domestic matters like homes and houses, has produced a very marked downturn in real estate sales and prices. The influence of Saturn is to slow, delay, confound, and sometimes defeat. In a sign in which it is better suited (Cancer is not well placed in Cancer; it is only worse in Aries), Saturn can provide stability, structure, tradition and fixed conditions that may become permanent by design. Saturn will pass through the part of Cancer called the “Beehive” whose principal star is Praesaepe. Saturn’s passage through the Beehive was considered unfortunate in the ancient world. The old lore is that it symbolizes trouble for people at large, disease, brutality, and that large groups may suffer the depredations of adventurers and warlords.

Saturn will be closest to the Beehive in January and February. It will slow to a crawl in March and touch the natal Suns, especially in the second half of March, of those born within a day on either side of July 27. Those born within a day on either side of January 24 will also feel the limiting affect of Saturn in a marked fashion, and birthdays two days on either side of January 24 will feel it to a somewhat less marked degree. Saturn also will touch the natal Suns of those born within a day or so on either side of March 25 and November 27. Common manifestations are business slowdowns or layoff, a bad review or grade on an exam, having to endure a disagreeable boss or co-workers and related things. Sometimes the Saturn periods merely indicate having to slog through the most difficult part of a dissertation or thesis that takes months of labor, or getting to the point in law school where the workload reaches three briefs per day or the first two grueling years in medical school when the regimen is close to overwhelming. Often one gives up something during such a transit (most commonly the loss is the option to be self-indulgent; fun is a major casualty of Saturn) or one may be obliged to be the dutiful son or daughter to an aging parent. Everyone who lives a normal life span gets many Saturn transits. It’s not the end of the world. It behooves those who undergo it to watch their health carefully. Even expensive dental work can mark the period.

URANUS

Uranus is direct during the first three months of the year. It covers slightly more than four and a half degrees in Aquarius from New Year’s Day through March 31st. Uranus makes a relationship called a quincunx—a 150 degree contact—with Saturn on January 19. It signifies a change in the momentum of the government, often to an uncompromising stance—more aggressive, single-minded and unwilling to tolerate dissent. Uranus, unless configured with a classical malefic, Mars or Saturn, is by itself distinctly benefic in action. It is somewhat like Jupiter in that it frequently brings

promotion but often unexpectedly and with more commotion. Uranus commonly symbolizes things exotic, foreign, new—cutting edge innovation that revolutionizes a process, an industry, or an individual who sees promise and opportunity before his or her fellows and is rewarded for it. Uranus shakes things up. People under its influence are generally stimulated by fast-moving and ground-breaking ideas that take them in directions that they had not anticipated. Sometimes people are posted to exotic locations far removed from their homelands when this planet becomes strong by transit. More commonly people break out of ruts, or to their surprise, find Mr. or Miss Right under their noses. Often people move and/or change jobs under the rays of this planet, especially when transiting Uranus configures their natal Suns. The people who get the heaviest dose of Uranus between January through March are those born between February 26 and March 3 and those born between August 31 and September 5.

NEPTUNE

Neptune is direct during the entire first quarter of the year. It covers slightly more than three degrees in Capricorn from New Year's Day through March 31 and doesn't make a close approach to any bright star on or near the ecliptic, which is the central line of the zodiac. The salient feature of Neptune's status during the first three months of the year is that it closely paces Jupiter. Jupiter will be within one degree of the square to Neptune for ten weeks from January 16 to March 27. That pair is essentially tied together by square for the entire three months: after the first week of January they are never at farther remove than a two degree square for the remaining eighty-three days of the quarter. Jupiter square Neptune is symbolic of wild financial expansion well beyond what is warranted by the economic realities of the moment.

People who simultaneously pick up Jupiter and Neptune to important positions in their horoscopes—especially the Sun or the Moon—may also undergo an expansion that could be partly religious in nature and which may take them well beyond areas in which they enjoy competence and confidence. Those born between February 4 and February 9, as well as August 8 through August 13 are likely to feel the most pronounced affect of Jupiter square Neptune during the first three months of 2006.

PLUTO

Pluto entered Sagittarius on December 30, 2005.* It symbolizes wholesale changes among heads of state, authorities of all kinds, including religious figures everywhere and crisis situations at the highest levels of society, business, industry and government. Pluto represents extremes: beginnings and endings that stamp the life indelibly, like the onset of illness or release from prison, losing a home to disaster or gaining one through providence, becoming a parent or an empty nester, moving from a pleasant and peaceful life into the heat of combat and vice versa. Pluto is intense; the issues that attend its transits are broad and deep in scope. Often Plutonian transits bring loneliness or at least solitary conditions while the transit is on, or one may feel estranged even within a relationship in which the partners are ships the pass in the night. Long buried issues are

irrevocably stimulated and erupt into consciousness or manifestation under this transit. Sometimes people even recall trauma that they made themselves forget as children under this transit. The Pluto transit is often a time of reckoning when one stands alone in the crossroads of life with fateful choices to make, and just as often with no choice to make at all, but a forced deviation from one path to another in order to fulfill the fate one chose before birth. The people who get the Pluto transit most fully in the winter quarter are those born with a day or two on either side of December 16 and June 16.

*Calculations are based on the sidereal zodiac.

SCHEDULE

MINNEAPOLIS, JANUARY 2006

Classes

Introduction to Western Sidereal Astrology

Wednesdays, January 18th—March 8th. 7:00 PM—9:30pm.

For more information, contact Colleen Mauro at
colleenmauro@aol.com

CALIFORNIA, MAY 2006

NCGR Lecture

Precession Correcting for Correct Astrological Timing

Thursday, May 11th, 7:30 pm

Fort Mason, San Francisco

NCRG Workshop

Solar and Lunar Returns

Saturday, May 13th **11-5pm**

Fort Mason, San Francisco

For more information contact:

Steve Pincus

stardial@earthlink.net

650-968-4513

South Bay Astrological Society Lecture

Precession Correcting for Correct Astrological Timing

Sunday, May 14th, 1:30 pm

San Jose, CA

For more information contact:
Cathi Brown
venusian9@yahoo.com
408 723-8711

Lecture, Open Secret Bookstore
Western Sidereal Astrology
San Rafael, CA
Date pending

I will also be available for readings. To schedule an appointment, contact Colleen Mauro at colleenmauro@aol.com

CUMBERLAND, MARYLAND, AUGUST, 2006

Lecture, Project Hindsight Conference
Babylonian Astrology
August 14th

For more information contact:
Ellen Black
Ellen@projecthindsight.com

I will also be available for readings. To schedule an appointment, contact Colleen Mauro at colleenmauro@aol.com

WASHINGTON D.C., AUGUST, 2006

Astrological readings. To make an appointment, contact Colleen Mauro at colleenmauro@aol.com

MINNEAPOLIS, SEPTEMBER, 2006

Lecture and workshop, dates pending.

NEW YORK CITY, OCTOBER, 2006

Lectures and workshop, dates pending.

I will also be available for readings in the New York area. To schedule an appointment, contact Colleen Mauro at colleenmauro@aol.com

CLEVELAND, OH, NOVEMBER, 2006

Astrological readings. To make an appointment, contact Colleen Mauro at colleenmauro@aol.com