



*Spiritual Astrology Series: Aries*

## Aries in the Quest for the Life of Spirit

Eridanus: The Path of Exaltation

Margaret Dissinger

Eridanus, the Leo decanate of Aries, is the celestial river which flows through the heavens. The Sun is *exalted* when positioned from 11-20 degrees Aries, and so is at its most powerful. Leo, as co-ruler of this decanate, is full of creative energy. *Exaltation* is the key word for this decanate, so we must learn how to use this concept in our quest toward spiritual evolution. Our rivers here on



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### Points of Interest:

- "...water, from time immemorial, has been used as the universal symbol of those mental states which cause a ripple of the nervous system, as the surface of a pond is stirred by a summer breeze."
- Genesis tells us, even while the earth was without form and void, water is used to symbolize the medium, or agent, through which the Spirit of God accomplishes Her purpose.

## Spiritual Astrology: Eridanus — Exaltation

Scenza

Each of the twelve primary signs of the Zodiac is further subdivided into three ten-degree sections called decanates. The decanates enjoy a primary influence from their mother sign and a secondary influence from each of the signs that shares the same element as that sign. Hence, the second decanate of the first sign is termed *Aries-Leo*, as it is found within the prima-

ry sign Aries, and as the second of three decanates within that sign, enjoys a secondary influence further reinforced by the second fire sign, Leo.

The second decanate of the first Zodiacal sign is named *Eridanus*, and is depicted by a mighty, flowing river. Of course, as we are dealing in mythologies of esoteric wisdom, we must con-

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# The Stellarian Honor Guard

For the period between April 1 and June 30, 2020

Regular Contributors form the solid foundation from which The Church of Light can grow. This column honors those who financially support the work of spreading the Religion of the Stars. Guardian Angels contribute more than \$500 in a quarter. The Stellarian Honor Guard includes those who contribute between \$100 and \$500 per quarter. We are grateful for your generous contributions to The Church of Light.



*“There is an abundance of everything you need in your life. The best way to get it flowing into your life is to GIVE!”*

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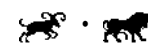
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**Editorial**

## The Exalted Act of Giving...

By Margaret Joscher, President

“Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.”

– Mohammed Ali

In this issue, Margaret Dissinger and Scenza explore the second decanate of Aries, Aries-Leo, represented by the constellation Eridanus and whose keyword is Exaltation. Radine Ramsey profiles Order of the Sphinx Astrologer, Janet Johnson, who has spent much of her life in service, and Paul Brewer discusses a NASA attempt to debunk astrology by suggesting that Ophiuchus was a thirteenth astrological sign.

During a recent on-line curriculum meeting, one of our members suggested we consider including philanthropy education in our coursework, that giving is not just sharing your gifts but also your time, talents and presence. I recounted to the team my attempts with instilling generosity in the foster kids I volunteer with by encouraging them to spend a few dollars on a toy donation at Christmas. A few dollars is a lot of money for a foster kid and it was a big ask, but I always enjoyed the smiles on their faces when they dropped the toy in the donation bin, in essence, their exaltation in doing a good work. It was usually an experience they had never had before.

A vivid memory of my first experience with giving then popped into my head. When I was 7 years old, I was hospitalized for two weeks in a ward of about a dozen children. My many aunts and uncles came by often to visit and bring me a little toy or puzzle, although I knew they did not have money to spend on such things. On the day of discharge as we left the ward, my Mom was holding me clutching all my toys when she stopped, turned around and said: “Look at all the kids who have to stay here, and they have nothing to play with. You have toys at home so why don’t you give your toys to them?” I hesitated for a second (come on, I was 7 and it was a bounty of riches) but then gave the toys to the ward nurse. I’ve never forgotten that wonderful feeling of exaltation and since then have tried to instill it in others as my Mom did with me. This is what we learn from those in our lives with generous hearts if we’re lucky to

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(Editorial Continued from page 3)

have them. I would enjoy hearing stories of your 'aha moments.' If you'd like to share, please email me: peg@light.org.

We've seen a significant upsurge in new members in the last few months. Although we've speculated as to the reasons, ultimately what matters is that we provide the members in our virtual organization more support in their studies, their good works and a greater sense of community. To that end, we have started New Mem-

ber Meet and Greets on-line and will be holding an on-line class and discussion on Course 1 - *Laws of Occultism* in October. Third Sunday online or Zoom services will start up in September. Our thanks to the Hermetician volunteers who generously give their time to make it happen. May you all have a wonderful Fall season and although the days are shorter, they are more temperate, filled with natural beauty and with sharing the bounty of summer.



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### **Eridanus: The Path of Exaltation (continued from page 1)**

Earth bring life or death to the lands they feed based on what they carry from the environment into those rivers. Just so, and like Eridanus, our emotions feed the rivers which carry energy to build our spiritual bodies. How we add emotional energy to our individual rivers is the crux of what Eridanus has to teach us in building a spiritual practice to feed our Spiritual Bodies. Is my river polluted, or is it pure?

Emotional energy is the fire which heats the furnace that enables us to transmute our base natures into spiritual gold. Eridanus is a river that runs fast and strong. As we grow toward building a viable spiritual body, the emotional water of life must constantly be refined and purified into a powerful substance capable of changing base instincts into the finer emotions represented by our expressions of higher love and kindness toward all. It is in this way we may really be able to live a life in which we Contribute Our Utmost to Universal Welfare.

In Hermetic Philosophy, we have a strong belief that when we pass from this physical plane of existence, there will be opportunities for us to advance in the divine chain of being based on our individual vibratory rates. Eridanus shows us that by refining our gross poisonous desires into lofty emotions of compassionate love and affection, we may raise our vibratory rates to contribute to our spiritual bodies while still in human form. The basic vibratory rate we have when we die determines the level where we will be upon our birth in the next plane of existence.

As students of Hermetic philosophy, we know that we have to "walk the walk" in order to sustain higher and higher vibratory levels. Each experience we have here on Earth provides the opportunity to practice a "higher thought and noble purpose" as we move through each experience (Closing Ritual). So it is inherent for our spiritual growth that we constantly find the middle path by practicing

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*"Emotional energy is the fire which heats the furnace that enables us to transmute our base natures into spiritual gold."*



love, tolerance, and kindness in every aspect of our lives, a very tall order to be sure.

“Contribute Our Utmost to Universal Welfare” is the motto we most hear as we study and follow the Hermetic Path. Lofty words which are empty without action. “Faith without works is death,” I have heard over and over in my life. I can have all the faith in the world that I am living a spiritual life, but unless it is backed up by the action of practicing love, tolerance, and kindness every day in every way, then I am simply talking the talk. It is action that raises the vibratory level. Without the work, it is a fool’s errand.

Zain tells us these higher emotions nourish and fatten kindred inclinations. If we are practicing the big three: love, tolerance, and kindness to the best of our ability each day, then we are creating our own river of affectional power to fuel the building of a spiritual body while here on Earth. What a concept! How do I practice this and sustain it in such a way that I AM walking the walk? The answer is in practicing EXALTATION in all our affairs. But of course, there is a catch. It is not my exaltation, but yours which I must practice.

The second definition posted for the word exaltation in the dictionary says, “the action of elevating someone in rank, power, or character.” In order to practice exaltation, I must exalt others. I must serve others. I must work for others and back that action with the honest wish that they may have all of the love and blessings I might want for myself. In the exaltation of others, I find the reality

of contributing to Universal Welfare. Small actions, small steps, small movements each day toward being more loving, more tolerant, and more kind to every living thing which crosses my path is the exaltation I must practice in order to continue to raise my vibratory rate.

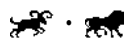
Our Church of Light Mantram gives us direction throughout of the how and why of this. It is located in Course VI, *Sacred Tarot*. Please look it up and practice it as much as possible. In the first packet we receive from the Church of Light, there are prayers and directions we can follow. We have the 21 courses to study and pass, and now we are forming on-line workshops and meetings to help one another. Sign up to mentor or be mentored. Ask for help, and be willing to help. Our spiritual growth is in selfless SERVICE to one another. Ask for what you need to grow; be willing to volunteer to help others. Please take the first steps in walking this path of Contributing Our Utmost to Universal Welfare. The spiritual body which is built by practicing and working selflessly is waiting for us. “What have I done today to add to my Spiritual Body?”

*“The Fountain of Immortal Life Springs From Man’s Emotional Nature; the Vibrations of Exalted Love Having a Rate Sufficiently Frequent to Affect Spiritual Substance and Build a Spiritual Body.”*

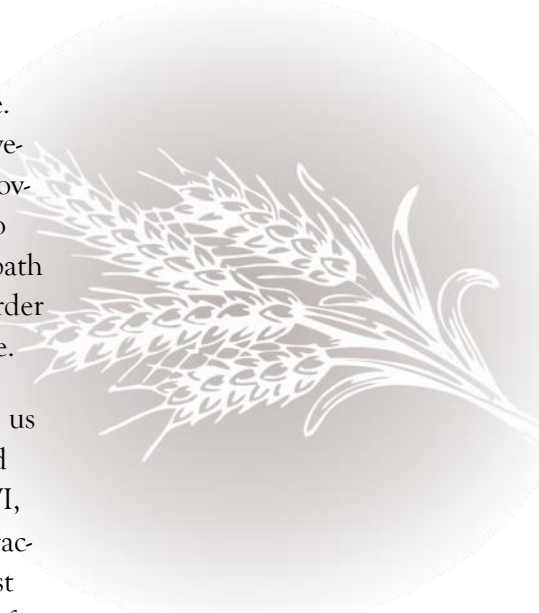
References:

*Spiritual Astrology*, Course 7

*Sacred Tarot*, Course 6



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*“If we are practicing the big three: love, tolerance, and kindness to the best of our ability each day, then we are creating our own river of affectional power to fuel the building of a spiritual body while here on Earth.”*



(Aries · Leo – Exaltation Continued from page 1)

“Ponce de Leon might have saved himself much travel in search of this same fountain of eternal youth, so aptly pictured by the river in the sky, had he but known about his endocrine glands, and the varied response of their secretions to the emotions. Minute chemical messengers, secreted into the blood, burn up the life in fits of rage, starve the organs in fear and melancholy, and add youth and vigor at the behest, not of passion, but of unselfish lore.”

— C. C. Zain,  
Spiritual Astrology

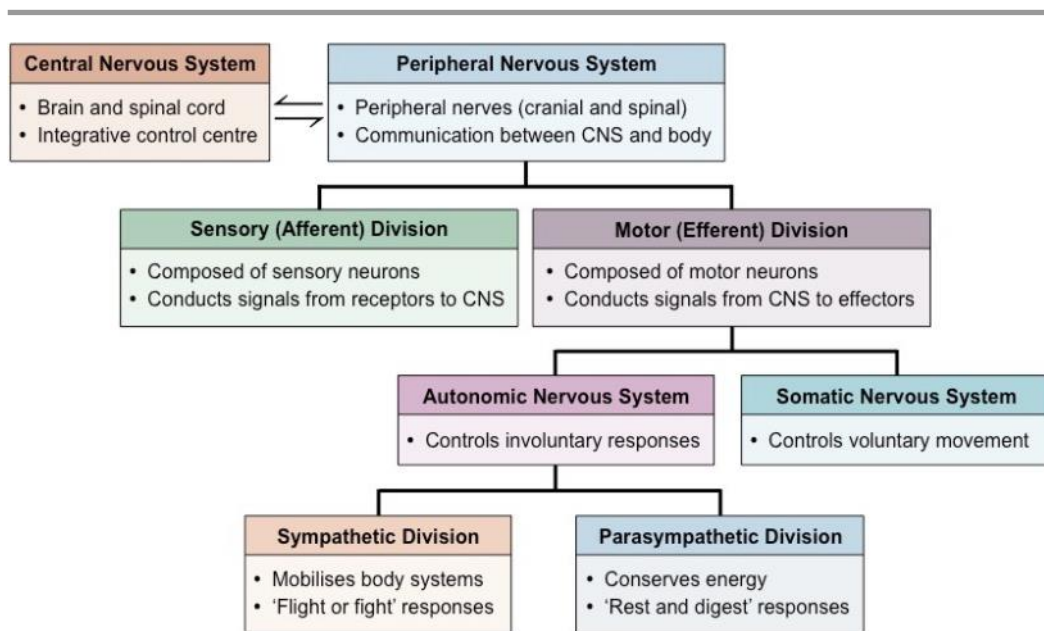
sider what inner meaning such a river might indicate. Zain informs us that the swift currents of the river represent the constantly shifting course of our emotions. Just as water is in ceaseless motion, perturbed by even the slightest breeze, so also our emotions are in constant flux, responding to internal and external cues of perception and experience, respectively. Furthermore, just as a mighty river often runs deep, so also do our emotions have the capacity to profoundly affect our interpretation of the events unfolding in our lives.

In a statement that well precedes the scientific understanding of his day, Zain explains the truest intention of the teaching according to the following text:

“The Fountain of Immortal Life Springs From Man’s Emotional Nature; the Vibrations of Exalted Love Having a Rate Sufficiently Frequent to Affect Spiritual Substance and Build a Spiritual Body.”

Science has only now begun to unlock the critical role that emotions play in the determination of physical health. As explained by Purves, Augustine, Fitzpatrick, et al. (2001), emotional arousal triggers changes in the autonomic nervous system (ANS). The ANS is a division of the nervous system that operates largely under unconscious control. It allows us to respond to threats to our survival through the classic fight-or-flight response (see diagram below).

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A chart summarizing the various divisions of the nervous system. Note the Sympathetic and Parasympathetic Divisions of the Autonomic Nervous System at the bottom of the flow chart.

The ANS comprises two complementary parts: The Sympathetic Division (SD) and the Parasympathetic Division (PD). The SD is the portion of our nervous system that mitigates the fight-or-flight response. Its network of nerves carries impulses that prepare us to either defend ourselves or flee in a survival scenario. Some of its actions include increasing heart rate and breathing rate, dilating the pupils, and redirecting blood supply to the muscles. All of its manifold actions are designed to help us survive an attack on our person.

The PD of the ANS is complementary in its design and function to the SD. While the SD is known as the fight-or-flight portion of our nervous system, the PD is colloquially termed the “rest and digest” aspect of our nervous system. It is dominant when we are resting, relaxing, have taken in a big meal, and are generally at ease. Whereas the SD helps us respond to an acute crisis, the PD helps our bodies return to a resting state, assesses injury, oversees the processes of healing, and maintains our general state of health.

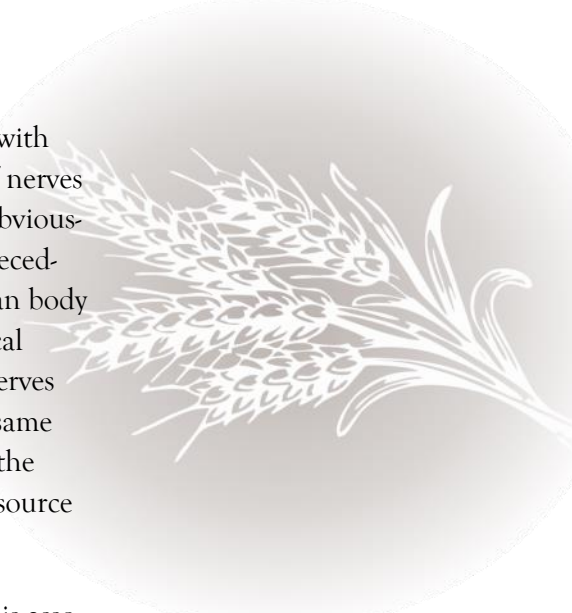
Interestingly, the human body is unable to distinguish between physical or psychological stress. There is only one stress response pathway in the human body, mitigated by the SD of the ANS. There is only one stress recovery pathway in the human body, overseen by the PD of the ANS. Whether you are scared because you have a big test coming up, or because a crocodile has

jumped out of a watering hole with jaws wide, the same network of nerves in your body responds, albeit obviously in different degrees to the preceding scenarios. Hence, the human body is unable to differentiate physical from psychic stress: the same nerves are called into action, and the same physiological changes occur in the human body, regardless of the source of stress.

The overstimulation of the SD is associated with a host of physical ailments. As Brower (2006) explains, there are now several empirically observed indications of the impact of stress on the physical body, through what has come to be called the mind-body connection, such as:

- ★ Workers in low-level jobs have more than twice the risk of developing metabolic syndrome, a precursor to heart disease and diabetes;
- ★ Acute and chronic psychological stress can increase the risk of heart attack and vascular disease;
- ★ Breast cancer survivors who participated in supportive-expressive group therapy had less pain, better quality of life, and lived longer than those who did not;
- ★ Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) reduced viral load in HIV-positive men being treated with highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART), ostensibly through alleviating depressed mood;

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*“Our river Eridanus,  
however, in which the bestial  
Cetus dabbles his paws, and  
on the bank of which brave  
Orion struggles with the  
mighty Bull, is a particular  
kind of water. It is not just  
any pond, nor is it a raging  
torrent. It is emotion, but not  
of the Passive, sluggish kind;  
nor yet is it torrid passion.  
This river is deep, strong of  
current, and ample wide.”*

*— C. C. Zain,  
Spiritual Astrology*



(Aries · Leo – Exaltation Continued from page 7)

- ★ Depression is implicated in the exacerbation of several inflammatory diseases, and is considered an emerging risk factor for heart disease.

While Zain was promoting such a viewpoint nearly 100 years ago, unsupported by the medical wisdom of his day, the latter has now caught up with his line of thinking, and supports the idea that our thoughts and emotions have a significant impact upon our physical well-being.

The river Eridanus is also associated with the age-old myth of the Fountain of Youth, a magical font which confers immortality upon those who imbibe its enchanted elixir. History is replete with explorers searching for its fabled waters. Juan Ponce de Leon is most famous for having sought it in the present state of Florida. However, it is speculated that Alexander the Great may also have been looking for it thousands of years earlier (Drye, 2020). No doubt many have tried before and after to locate its immortal waters.

As is the case with the physical alchemist who misses the forest for the trees in her quest to transmute lead into gold, such tales were never meant to be taken literally. Rather, they are allegories, in this specific case intended for the earnest *spiritual* alchemist who seeks to transmute the leaden experiences of life into spiritual gold

for growth, development, and furtherance of their earthly mission. Such a soul understands the proper relationship and application of these ancient admonitions.

Similarly, the river Eridanus flows mightily in she who understands that emotions have a legitimate and significant impact on physical health. She who would extend her life and welfare must zealously guard and direct her emotions in as much as possible. Rather than seeing the dark umbra of every eclipse, she will seek the halo of light emerging from its shadow. Rather than focus on the storm clouds of life as they gather and loom, she will recall the rainbow which ever follows the torrent. She will keep an unwavering focus on positive emotion and experience, understanding that through this conscious manipulation of the emotions, she can most effectively safeguard her health, happiness, and outcome. Most of all, she will understand that the finest tiers of emotional substance comprise unselfish, unprompted, unbidden love in its purest form. It is a love that acts unconditionally, without thought to return or recompense. A soul that can authentically harness this etheric vibration is poised to embrace future experiences whether on this plane or the next, and enriches herself not only here on Earth, but in terms of the development of a spiritual body that can serve her in realms beyond the here and now.

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*The Fountain of Youth*  
“...She will keep an unwavering focus on positive emotion and experience, understanding that through this conscious manipulation of the emotions, she can most effectively safeguard her health, happiness, and outcome.”

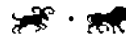


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Drye, Willie (2020). Fountain of Youth. National Geographic. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/history/archaeology/fountain-of-youth/#:~:text=But%20the%20name%20linked%20most,would%20be%20found%20in%20Florida.>

Purves, D., Augustine, G.J., Fitzpatrick, D., et al. (2001). Physiological changes associated with emotion. National Center for Biotechnology Information. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK10829/#:~:text=The%20most%20obvious%20signs%20of,can%20all%20accompany%20various%20emotions.>



Plato's Cave

*“It’s not what you look at  
that matters,  
it’s what you see.”*

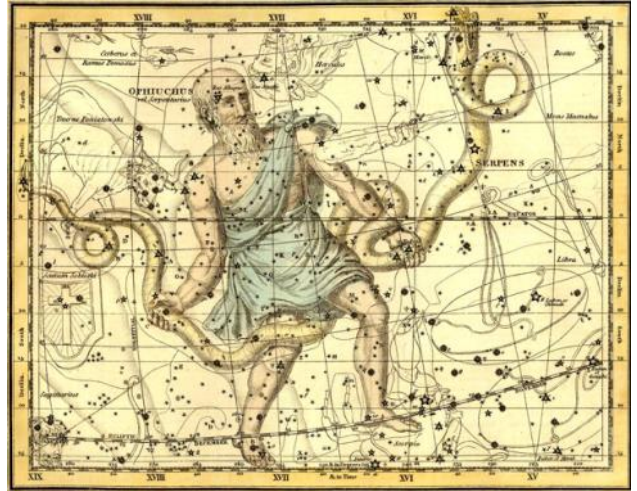
— Henry David Thoreau

# NASA Invents a Thirteenth Astrological Sign and Warns Us that Our Star-Sign Isn't What We Thought It Was!

By Paul Brewer

“...the zodiacal signs that we have today are the same ones used by the Babylonians since around 420 BCE when astrology, as we know it today, was born. In effect, they used the tropical zodiac which, at that time, was aligned with the zodiacal constellations. This is important if we are to believe that the mythology of the zodiacal constellations has any real correspondence to the nature of the twelve astrological signs.”

Many of you have seen recent media reports with the assertion, attributed to NASA, that the zodiac has a thirteenth sign corresponding to the constellation Ophiuchus. This first came to my attention due to an email from one of our Australian members. Then, a [social media](#) posting on Tumblr was forwarded to me from another one of our members here in the US. The Tumblr posting claimed that the information came from NASA, which, at the time seemed doubtful. A subsequent email from our Aussie member contained a link to a July 17, 2020 article from [news.com.au](#) that provided better information about the source of this story. The news.com.au source contacted NASA and, from their article: “A spokesman for the space agency said the now-viral article about Ophiuchus, which appeared on NASA’s kid’s website *Space Place*, was about proving astrology wasn’t science.” And, apparently, the same information was posted on Tumblr, where NASA has had a blog since 2015 according to <https://www.nasa.gov/press-release/nasa-to-share-the-universe-with-tumblr-users>. Note the exact same discussion occurred back in



2016. See “[No, NASA Didn’t Change Your Astrological Sign](#),” an article that appeared in *Slate*, a daily magazine and podcast network on the web, posted Sept 26, 2016 by Phil Plait.

Now, I am a great fan of NASA because I like space stuff, but it is a little irritating when they post misinformation, and what they have in these postings is more than misleading and poorly researched, it’s just wrong. The article claims that the Babylonians had thirteen zodiacal constellations, the 13th being Ophiuchus, which, by the way, does lie near the ecliptic, but is mostly well above it. The article claims that people born between November 29 and December 17 would

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(NASA Invents... Continued from page 10)

have Ophiuchus as their “star sign.” That, together with the fact that the positions of the constellations today have shifted westward relative to the ecliptic due to the earth’s [axial precession](#), is the reason why “your star-sign isn’t what you thought it was.”

To understand why this is total nonsense, we need a better historical background and a review of some astronomical facts. This article will address three often misunderstood concepts about modern/classical astrology:

1. Standard astrology uses the tropical zodiac. The tropical zodiac is the ecliptic – the apparent path of the Sun, Moon, and planets – and is completely independent of the constellations. The fact that the vernal equinox (0° Aries starting point of the ecliptic and tropical zodiac) has moved relative to the constellations due to axial precession is irrelevant to standard astrology.
2. There are twelve zodiacal signs and constellations, not thirteen. Ophiuchus never was one of the zodiacal signs/constellations.
3. Finally, the zodiacal signs that we have today are the same ones used by the Babylonians since around 420 BCE when astrology, as we know it today, was born. In effect, they used the tropical zodiac which, at that time, was aligned with the zodiacal constellations. This is important if we are to be-

lieve that the mythology of the zodiacal constellations has any real correspondence to the nature of the twelve astrological signs.

## Definitions

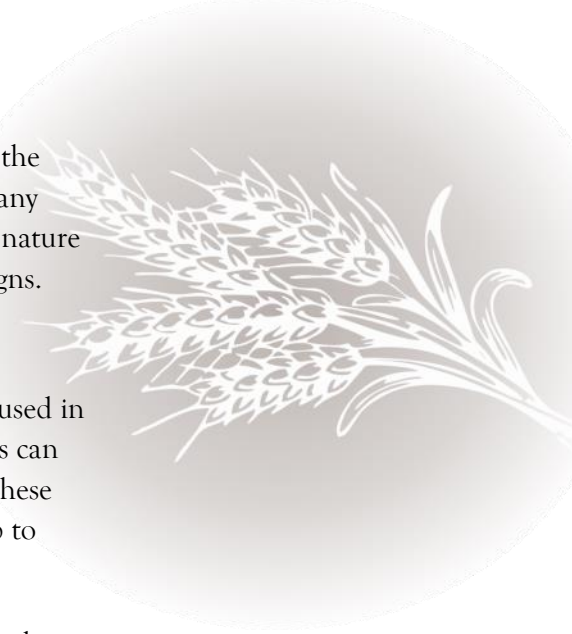
It is important to define terms used in this article because the concepts can be very confusing. If you keep these definitions in mind, it will help to make sense of it all.

**Ecliptic** – a circle defined by the Earth’s path around the Sun. Since the solar system planets all lie in the same plane, their “apparent” movement (what we see when we track them in the sky) through the constellations all follow this path. The beginning of the ecliptic is the point in the sky called the vernal (spring) equinox or, what astronomers and astrologers call, 0° Aries. The apparent position of the Sun, Moon and planets along the ecliptic is measured by astronomers and astrologers as their angular position relative to the vernal equinox.

**Constellated Zodiac** – This term is used to represent the band of twelve constellations that lie along the ecliptic and through which the Sun, Moon and planets travel. These constellations vary greatly in size and extent along the ecliptic.

**Tropical Zodiac** – This is the ecliptic divided into twelve 30° segments, called signs, that begin at the vernal equinox or 0° Aries. It is what standard astrology (and as-

(Continued on page 12)



*"Now I am a great fan of NASA because I like space stuff, but it is a little irritating when they post misinformation, and what they have in these postings is misleading and poorly researched..."*





(NASA Invents... Continued from page 11)

tronomy) uses to measure the position of the Sun, Moon and planets.

**Sidereal Zodiac** – This is the zodiacal band divided into twelve equal 30° segments starting at some point relative to the stars. We would expect that the beginning of the Sidereal Zodiac would start at the beginning of the constellation Aries, wherever that is. At some point in late Babylonian astronomy, the sidereal zodiac and the tropical zodiac were aligned but have since deviated due to the Earth’s axial precession.

### Standard Astrology Uses a Tropical Zodiac

First and foremost, the majority of astrologers, including the CoFL, uses the [tropical zodiac](#). The tropical zodiac, (ecliptic), is divided into twelve 30-degree sections corresponding to the twelve signs, whereas the constellations vary greatly in extent from Cancer taking up around 15° of the ecliptic to Virgo extending 50° along the ecliptic. The signs of the tropical zodiac are completely independent of the constellations, which, as NASA is kind enough to remind us, are groups of stars that are very far away. So much for breaking news. Thus, whether there are twelve or thirteen constellations is immaterial with respect to the influence of the astrological signs used by standard astrology.

“Standard astrology uses the tropical zodiac. The tropical zodiac is the ecliptic – the apparent path of the Sun, Moon, and planets – and is completely independent of the constellations. So, the fact that the vernal equinox (0° Aries starting point of the ecliptic and tropical zodiac) has moved relative to the constellations due to axial precession is irrelevant to standard astrology.

”

### The Babylonians did not recognize the constellation Ophiuchus

Secondly, the constellation Ophiuchus was definitely not one of the Babylonian zodiacal constellations. In this article I will reference the following scholarly articles by three science historians which are peer-reviewed and published on JSTOR, a digital library for scholars and researchers, the Archive for the History of Exact Sciences and the Journal for the History of Astronomy:

1. Van der Waerden, B. (1952). History of the Zodiac. *Archiv für Orientforschung*, 16, 216-230
2. Britton, J.P. Studies in Babylonian lunar theory: part III. The introduction of the uniform zodiac. *Arch. Hist. Exact Sci.* 64, 617-663 (2010). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00407-010-0064-z>
3. John Steele, A Study of Babylonian Observations Involving the Zodiac, *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 38 (2007), 443-458.

Nowhere in these three articles about the history of the Babylonian zodiac is there a single mention of Ophiuchus. Fifteen zodiacal constellations are listed in the Babylonian text MUL.APIN including Orion, Perseus, Auriga and the Pleiades plus eleven of the standard zodiacal constellations as early as 700 BCE. They recorded planetary positions relative to a set of “Normal Stars” in those fifteen constellations, but as yet they did not have a uniformly divided zodiac as we do

(Continued on page 13)



(NASA Invents... Continued from page 12)

now. By 419 BCE the Babylonians had divided the zodiacal band, starting at some point at the beginning of the constellation Aries, into twelve 30° sections, which they now referred to as “signs,” and were recording the positions of the Sun, Moon, and planets by their location in one of these twelve signs (van der Waerden, Britton). They now had twelve corresponding constellations that were recorded in the Babylonian planetary VAT 4924 – they were the twelve we have today. Ophiuchus is not included.

The Greeks, around 400 BCE or soon thereafter, adopted the twelve astrological signs and their corresponding constellations directly from the Babylonians. The Greek astronomer, Eudoxus of Cnidus (about 370 BCE), knew all about the zodiac and its twelve signs, gleaned from the Babylonians (van der Waerden). The Greek names for the twelve signs and constellations were derived, for the most part, directly from the Babylonian names.

Furthermore, Wikipedia, in the article on “[Ophiuchus \(the Constellation\)](#)” states the following:

*There is no evidence of the constellation preceding the classical era [i.e. the Greeks], and in Babylonian astronomy, a “Sitting Gods” constellation seems to have been located in the general area of Ophiuchus. However, Gavin White proposes that Ophiuchus may in fact be remotely descended from this Babylonian*

*an constellation, representing Nirah, a serpent-god who was sometimes depicted with his upper half human but with serpents for legs. The earliest mention of the constellation is in Aratus [Greek], informed by the lost catalogue of Eudoxus of Cnidus (4th century BCE)*



Ophiuchus is not really “on” the ecliptic, although the very bottom part of it does intersect. The zodiacal belt is about 20° wide, 10° on either side of the ecliptic. Ophiuchus stretches from the star Eta Ophiuchi that is about 7.2° above the ecliptic to Alpha Ophiuchi (the brightest star in the constellation) which is 35.8° above the ecliptic, so less than 10% of it lies in the zodiacal belt. Many (non-scholarly) sources on the internet include Ophiuchus as one of the zodiacal constellations – probably because they think it will irritate astrologers.

**Conclusion:** NASA is badly informed as are many other non-scholarly references on the internet. Ophiuchus is not, and has never been, a zodiacal constellation or sign. NASA’s article is basically “fake news.”

### **From whence came Ophiuchus?**

According to Wikipedia, the earliest mention of the constellation was in a work entitled *Phenomena* by the Greek astronomer Eudoxus of Cnidus (c. 390 BCE – c. 337 BCE), which was later lost. Fortunately, Eudoxus’ prose text was the basis for a poem of the same

*“There are twelve zodiacal signs and constellations, not thirteen. Ophiuchus never was one of the zodiacal signs/constellations.”*

(Continued on page 14)

name by Aratus which preserved the information.

All the work done on astrology by the Babylonians and the Greeks between the end of the 5th century BCE and the 2nd century CE was compiled by Claudius Ptolemy (c. 100 CE – c. 170 CE), the great Roman astronomer-astrologer-mathematician in Alexandria, Egypt. (Apparently Alexandria was a Roman province by 30 BCE, taken over from the Greeks.) The compiled work, known as the *Tetrabiblos*, consisted of four volumes. Ptolemy did not invent much astrology but collected the information from various sources and codified it along with lots of good astronomical information including planetary ephemerides and star catalogs and developed the first real house system.

By the 2nd century CE, the Greeks had identified 36 more constellations beyond the zodiacal constellations making 48 in all, listed by Ptolemy in the *Tetrabiblos*. Ophiuchus is one of those additional 36 constellations. But it was considered to be what C.C. Zain calls one of the “ultra-zodiacal” constellations, i.e., not one of the main twelve zodiacal constellations. Ptolemy also wrote about the decans (or decanates), the ten-degree sections of each of the twelve signs of the zodiac, 36 in all. The 36 ultra-zodiacal constellations corresponded to each of the 36 decans, and Ophiuchus, who struggles with the serpent, is associated with one of the Scorpio decanates.

*“By 419 BCE the Babylonians had divided the zodiacal band, starting at some point at the beginning of the constellation Aries, into twelve 30° sections, which they now referred to as “signs,” and were recording the positions of the Sun, Moon, and planets by their location in one of these twelve signs...They now had twelve corresponding constellations that were recorded in the Babylonian planetary VAT 4924 – they were the twelve we have today. Ophiuchus is not included”*

## **When, if ever, did the tropical zodiac align with the sidereal zodiac of the Babylonians?**

This is an important issue. The difference between the band of constellations that lie on the ecliptic, sometimes referred to as the constellated zodiac, and the use of the tropical zodiac (ecliptic) by astrology has caused great confusion over the course of time and is a constant source of misunderstanding and misinformation. The zodiacal constellations (in fact all 48 of Ptolemy’s original constellations) are pictographs meant to represent allegories imparting information about the nature of the various astrological signs and their decanates. But since the time of the Babylonians, the tropical zodiac has moved relative to the constellated zodiac due to the aforementioned phenomenon known as axial precession.

This precession of the ecliptic backwards through the constellations is due to the Earth’s axial “wobbling” – discovered by the 2nd-century-BCE Greek astronomer, Hipparchus. So, the vernal equinox (0° Aries) has precessed backwards from its “original” position at the beginning of the constellation Aries (at some point in time) into the constellation Pisces. Scientists and others ignorant of astrology love to taunt astrology buffs with this fact claiming that, if you thought you were a Virgo, you’re really a Leo... total nonsense because, once again, standard astrology uses the tropical zodiac, not the constellations, as did the Babylonians and Greeks. There are people who use the sidereal zodiac – known as sidereal as-

*(Continued on page 15)*

trology – but they are in the minority and, anyway, where the heck is 0° Aries among the constellations? (We'll figure this out below. Keep reading.)

The constellated zodiac evolved over thousands of years. By 419 BCE, the Babylonians had resolved their sidereal zodiac to a fixed band of twelve 30° signs, now used to measure planet positions instead of the set of fixed stars. C. C. Zain points out that the whole idea of the constellations was to picture some important attribute of people born in the corresponding sign or decanate. So, at some point, the beginning of Aries in the tropical zodiac (vernal equinox) had to coincide with the beginning of the Babylonian sidereal zodiac. But, when was this? Figuring this out will quickly confirm whether or not our premise, that the later Babylonians and Greeks used the tropical zodiac and that the constellations are merely pictographs illustrating the main attributes of the astrological signs and their decanates, is valid.

Both van der Waerden and Britton arrive at the same conclusion about the position of tropical zodiac relative to the sidereal zodiac of the Babylonians based on detailed studies of Babylonian astronomical records, which is now accepted as the standard by Babylonian historians and researchers. Their calculation is that the vernal equinox of 100 BCE (used, presumably, because of available astronomical records by the Greeks) was at 4.3° of the Babylonian sidereal zodiac!

Precessional motion backwards through the constellations takes 25,772 years (from Wikipedia) to complete the full circle or approximately 2,148 years to move back 30°. C.C. Zain (Serial Lesson 82, Chapter 12 of *Spiritual Astrology* first published in 1935) using 25,868 years for the precessional cycle or 2,156 years to move 30° and used Alpha Arietis, the brightest star in the constellation Aries, to compute the beginning of the Aquarian age as 1881. So 1881 – 2156 years = 275 BCE when the tropical zodiac 0° Aries approximately coincided with the beginning of the constellated Aries, according to Zain's calculation. But since that time, much more information about Babylonian and early Greek astrology has come to light.

Both van der Waerden and Britton calculated that the vernal equinox of 100 BCE was positioned at 4.3° of the Babylonian sidereal zodiac. Thus, using precessional motion of 30° in 2148 years, this would mean the tropical zodiac aligned with the Babylonian sidereal zodiac around -100 –  $(4.3 \times 2148 / 30) = -408$ . 408 BCE is close to what we would expect, given the recorded data of the Babylonians in 419 BCE.

Looking at the star map of Aries shown in Figure 1 (next page, from *Sky and Telescope*), we can see that Beta Arietis (the second brightest star in Aries shown by the red arrow in the star map) is the closest bright star to a theoretical western edge of the constellation (the planets move east through the constellations). Beta Arietis was also one of the Babylonian reference stars used to calculate planetary positions. If we use that as the beginning of constellated Aries,

(Continued on page 16)



#### EXALTATION

*a feeling or state of extreme  
happiness.*

*Make a list of things that  
make you feel happy.*

and, thus, the beginning of the Babylonian sidereal zodiac c. 419 BCE, then we get the following:

Beta Arietis: Current Right Ascension (RA) 1h54m38.4s, Declination  $20^{\circ} 48'29'' = 34^{\circ}$  longitude along the ecliptic.

Thus, for the vernal equinox to have moved approximately  $34^{\circ}$  back through the constellations from today to this “beginning” of constellated Aries at an axial precession rate of  $30^{\circ}$  in 2,148 years gives a date of  $34 \times 2148 / 30 = 2,434$  years ago for the two points to coincide (the vernal equinox with the beginning of constellated Aries using Beta Arietis). That date would be  $2020 - 2434 = 414$  BCE, which is very close to the van der Waerden/Britton result.

This, of course, would mean the Aquarian age started around 1734, which would correspond to the beginning of the industrial revolution in the mid-18th century.

Also, note how the constellation Pisces overlaps Aries in Figure 1.

This is common among the constellations as many do overlap. Now, look at Figure 2 (next page) that shows a diagram of the constellation Pisces, also

from *Sky and Telescope*. This diagram is annotated to show what the Babylonian sidereal zodiac would look like if we use Beta Arietis as the starting point among the constellations and then divide the ecliptic into  $30^{\circ}$  segments. The vernal equinox today now falls in the Aquarius section of the fixed Babylonian sidereal zodiac, which is why Zain and others say that we’re now in the Aquarian Age. But notice that the vernal equinox actually points to the star Omega Piscium in the constellation Pisces.

But, whether we use Alpha Arietis, Beta Arietis, or the van der Waerden/Britton calculation, we still get a date that’s smack dab in the middle of the period when astrology, as we know it today, was coming of age and almost exactly at the time when the standard twelve zodiacal constellations finally emerged.

“It should be noted that sidereal astrology uses a sidereal zodiac, but not one that aligns with the Babylonians sidereal zodiac. The Babylonian’s sidereal zodiac, as we calculated using Beta Arietis, is about  $34^{\circ}$  or days displaced from the sun sign dates of the current tropical signs.”

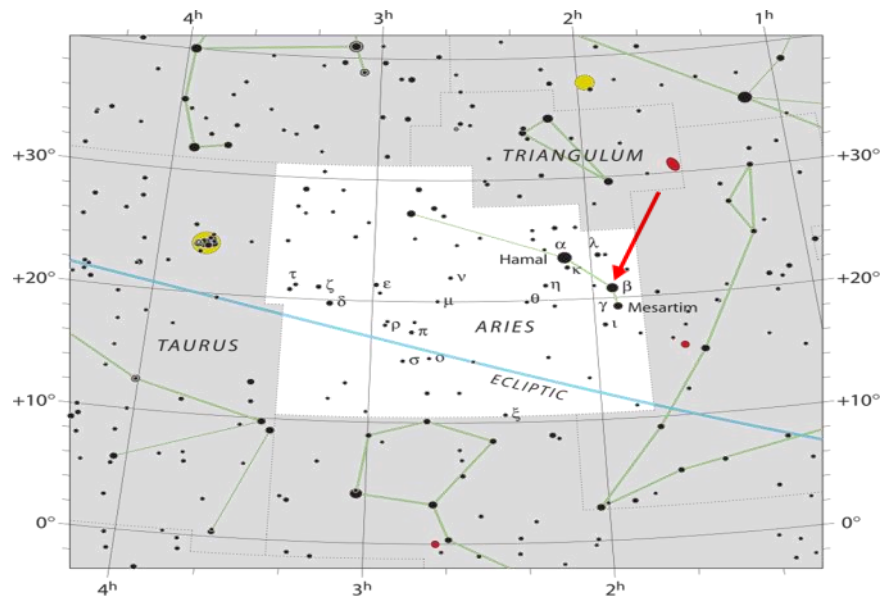


Figure 1. The Aries Constellation

It should be noted here that sidereal astrology uses a sidereal zodiac, but not

(Continued on page 17)



one that aligns with the Babylonians sidereal zodiac. The Babylonian's sidereal zodiac, as we calculated above using Beta Arietis, is about 34° or days displaced from the sun sign dates of the current tropical signs. See the Wikipedia article "[Sidereal and tropical astrology](#)" for more information about what sidereal astrologers use.

attributes we associate with the signs and decanates of the tropical zodiac. The fact that the tropical zodiac has shifted among the constellations due to axial precession since that time is irrelevant to the standard tropical astrology that's been practiced for 2500 years. NASA, please take note.

If you want more information about the history of western astrology, *A History of Western Astrology* by Jim Tester, 1987,

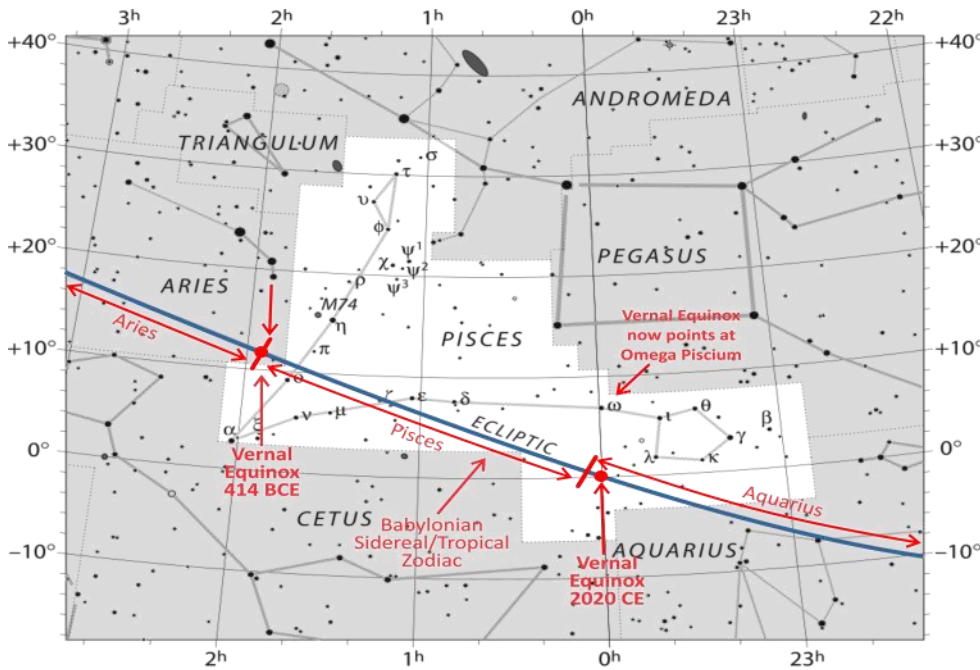
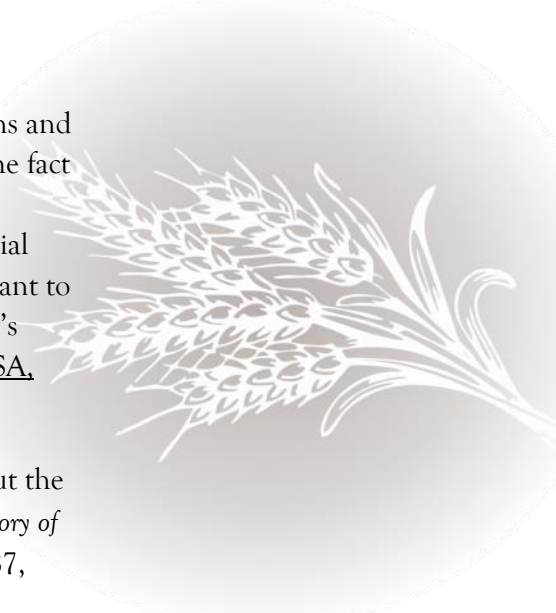


Figure 2. The Pisces Constellation

**MAIN POINT:** The zodiacal constellations as we know them today crystalized around 450 BCE to 400 BCE exactly at the time when the tropical zodiac coincided with the Babylonian sidereal zodiac. The Babylonians, along with the Greeks, in effect used the tropical zodiac, as we do today, which of course means that precession has no impact on what your astrological sign is. This fact lends credence to C. C. Zain's assertion that the stories associated with the constellated pictographs correspond to the

Boydell Press, is the authoritative source. If you want to know more about Babylonian and early Greek astrology, then the paper by B. L. van der Waerden, "History of the Zodiac," 1952 (see citation at the beginning of this article) is the seminal work. Neither of these sources were available to Elbert Benjamin when he was calculating the dates of the astrological ages.



"The zodiacal constellations as we know them today crystalized around 450 BCE to 400 BCE exactly at the time when the tropical zodiac coincided with the Babylonian sidereal zodiac. The Babylonians, along with the Greeks, in effect used the tropical zodiac, as we do today, which of course means that precession has no impact on what your astrological sign is."



## Stellarian Stories

# Janet Bowman Johnson – Marine, Astrologer, and Church of Light Member

By Radine Ramsey

Janet enjoyed taking classes at the local Roller Rink with the wood floors and passed all her tests for dance skating. She was doing mostly solo dance steps to waltz music and sometimes reversing direction on one skate. There were no jumps, twirls, or spins. Even without the high-flying jumps and twirls, Janet loved the sport of dance skating. Alas,

Camp Pendleton did not have a skating rink, and she did not end up with a career as a dance skater, but she did earn a bronze medal for her skating skills.

When she was attending community college, a Marine Recruiter came on campus. Her main purpose in going up to speak with him was to flirt. The Marine behaved very professionally and sent her on her way with a handful of brochures about the Women Marines. Since she was directionless at school, Janet decided that joining the Marines was a great idea!



*Janet and Christopher  
The most fun I ever had delivering a talk!!!  
"Defense Against The Dark Arts" Conference 2017*

She attended Boot Camp in Parris Island, South Carolina. It was her first time on a plane and first time out of state. As this was her first time on a plane, it was also the first time she became airsick.

Upon arriving at Boot Camp, personal items were taken from Janet and stored away. There were about 60 women to a room. They were all in bunk beds with a foot locker at one end and a stand-up cabinet at the other end. As if all this was not enough change for one day, the weather was also bizarre. It rained and stormed, and the venetian blinds clattered against



*(Continued on page 19)*

*"Though the earth contains greater energy and mass than any single being, linked together, people make the world go-round."*

— T. F. Hodge

(Janet Bowman Johnson Continued from page 18)

the window frames that were cracked open for better ventilation.

The first morning it was still dark as they fell out into formation. They were in front of their barracks and marched to chow wearing uniforms that were issued immediately upon arrival. Everyone was wearing big ponchos because it was pouring rain.

They marched to classes, drill practice, and to chow. For the first time in her life, Janet was delighted to go to the dentist because she could go ALONE. She was so excited that she danced down the middle of the street.

She learned about personal strength during Marine Corps Boot Camp. Janet was very proud to be a Woman Marine. She had her 19th birthday during Boot Camp.

While a Marine, Janet worked at the Training AIDS Library, MOS Drafting and Surveying. She made signs, worked in the library with training materials, and occasionally trained someone to use the 16 mm projectors. She was taught how to foul the machines so that if the Marine borrowing it failed to complete the pre-use check list, the machine did not work.

Later in life, Janet worked as a Volunteer in Police Services (VIPS). One afternoon she saw a couple of "old like me" women at her local shopping center wearing uniforms with badges on the



shirts. They were chatting over lunch at a sidewalk cafe. Janet stopped to ask them what they did. That is how she learned about being a Neighborhood Patrol Volunteer for the Concord Police Department.

She went through extensive training for about six months to become a

member of the Concord Police Department Patrol Unit. Janet performed vacation house checks and wrote tickets for some non-moving traffic violations (handicapped parking, red curb, etc.). She drove a Volunteer police car, used the police computer, and learned how to speak on the police radio (never interrupting an officer).

Janet did Neighborhood Patrol for six years, most of them as a field trainer for new NP members.

Janet's interest in astrology began in her teens because she wanted to better understand why people behave the way they do. In her twenties, she began her



(Continued on page 20)

*"We are stars wrapped in skin - The light you are seeking has always been within."*

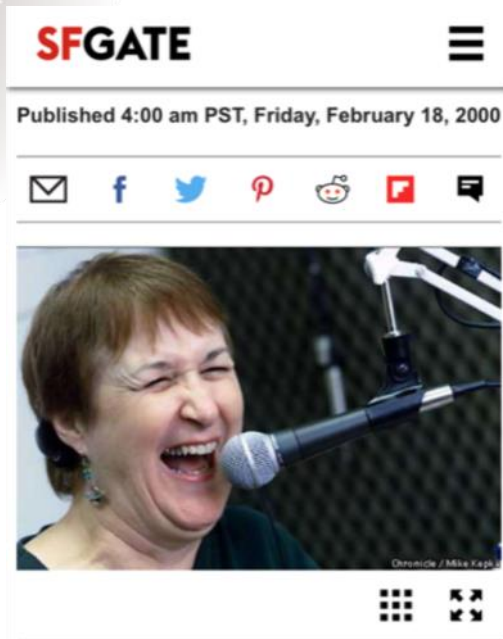
— Rumi





Janet Bowman Johnson Continued from page 19

serious study of astrology. By the time she took her first class, she discovered that she could have taught it.



*“The purpose in life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.”*

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

After several years of studying astrology on her own, she found Doris Chase Doane, and her school, the Astrological Faculty in San Francisco. Janet took the majority of her classes with Doris.

Doris and her instructors taught with the Church of Light materials and used their books, which is why some of Janet’s books are so old. In 1978, she passed her Professional Astrologers, Inc. exams “with flying colors” per Doris. Later that year, she also passed the Professional Level Exams with the American Federation of Astrologers.

In 1997 she was downsized from her corporate job as VP and Training Director for an international temporary help firm headquartered in Walnut Creek, California. Due to a solid client base in astrology, Janet was able to go full time as an astrologer rather than look for another job. She did character analysis and analysis of current trends and challenges for natal and progressed charts. Janet also did Tarot readings.

Janet was doing a radio program called *Seeing Beyond in San Francisco* and loved it. Therefore, she secured her own radio show called *Star Talk* at a local station. Janet produced and starred in *Star Talk*. Her primary purpose was to have fun and educate the public about astrology, whether or not they ever chose to get a reading. She always had callers. During the last half hour of the show, she would do single tarot card readings on the air. Great fun!



(Continued on page 21)



Janet also had a local TV cable show called Exploring the Intuitive Arts. The purpose of this show was also to educate. After about three and one-half years, the radio show went away when the station was sold. (When she heard that the station might be for sale, she did a chart on it and told the manager that it would sell this time. Janet had seen a “major character change” in the chart. The station went from English to Spanish programming!)

Janet was blessed to work at what she loved for seven years before retiring from client work in 2004 (when her husband retired from teaching).

After Janet retired, she learned that Doris was in the hospital in Sacramento. In March 2005 (see photo above), she visited Doris and noticed that Sutter’s Fort was right across the street from Sutter Hospital. She decided that if there was enough time she would visit Sutter’s Fort.



Janet and Doris Chase Doane

Janet bought her first basketry kit in the gift shop at Sutter’s Fort, and she was immediately hooked! During her first basketry retreat, she was introduced to using waxed linen

to create tiny baskets. She never looked back. Years later she learned to make the 12 tiny baskets that are pictured in her hand.

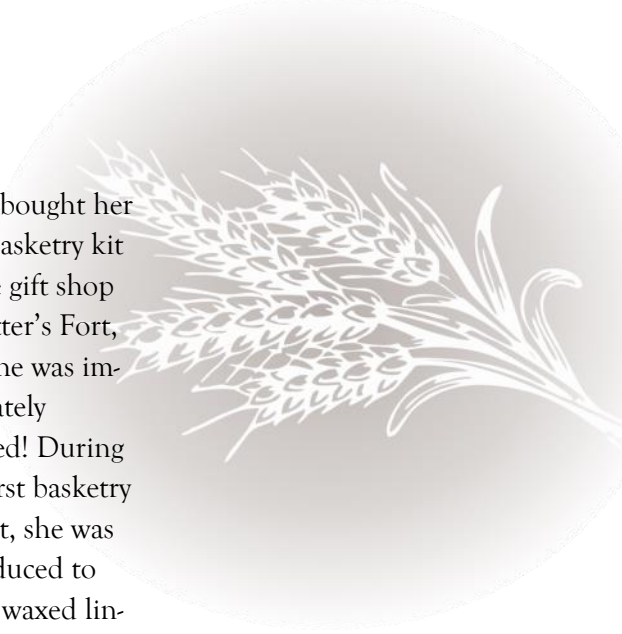
As Astrologer for the Church of Light and Order of the Sphinx, Janet writes quarterly reports for the Board of Directors offering insight into the right timing

for certain activities and potentially problematic upcoming issues. Janet LOVES doing this work for the Church.



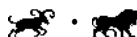
Janet also enjoys doing Horary Charts to help locate lost items. Although she is not an expert in that particular skill, she loves doing it.

Whether roller dancing, serving our country as a Marine, analyzing astrological charts, starring in an astrology-based radio show, or making tiny baskets, Janet Bowman Johnson has lots of fun.



*“What lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are tiny matters compared to what lives within us.”*

— Henry David Thoreau



# Membership Room

## Thank you to our Volunteers!

**Veiga O'Sickey** – Keeping our headquarters building strong, beautiful, healthy and sacred!

**Paul Brewer** – One of the many things he does is to provide a safe and comprehensive business structure for us to operate within!

**Patrick Ramsey** – Membership Minister extraordinaire and compassionate compadre!

These are just a few of the many who help us do so much.  
**If you have a skill you'd like to share, let us know!**



## Spotlight....Alan Gatlin

**I live in:** Vista California

**Became a Hermetician:** October 1, 2017.

**Favorite Church of Light books:** *Laws of Occultism* - I see it as the overview of our spiritual journey, how we can view life's experiences, and an introduction to the transformation process. I continue to be amazed at the new perspectives and insights I gain each time I read this volume.

**What I do in real life:** I am now semi-retired, teaching psychology and business organization classes to undergraduate students at a local university, working with companies in a management consulting capacity, and finishing my doctorate in Organizational Psychology.

**I enjoy:** Esoteric studies (of course), participation in Freemasonry, amateur radio (AI6K0), travel, outdoor activities, and working with people.



*"We cannot cure the world  
of sorrows, but we can  
choose to live in joy."  
— Joseph Campbell*

# Congratulations to Our Newest Hermeticians!



Nicholas Venzon

Brian C. Mendell

Paul Johnson

Ebri Eno Willie

Vanessa Brown



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## Mark Your Calendar....

Conference 2021 will be moving from June to September, a much friendlier time of year in New Mexico. Hope to see you here! Stay tuned for details.

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## The Church of Light Annual Membership Meeting for 2020

**You are invited to a scheduled Zoom meeting  
Saturday, November 7th, 1:30 PM MST**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94594598847>

Meeting ID: 945 9459 8847

For one tap mobile:

+16699009128,,94594598847# US (San Jose)

+13462487799,,94594598847# US (Houston)

To dial by your location:

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 945 9459 8847

Find your local number:

<https://zoom.us/u/agw5TPAkL>

**The meeting is setup to enable computer audio or a phone dial in.**



**The Church of Light**

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Albuquerque, NM 87106

*Where Science and  
Religion Are One*

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## The Church of Light Vision For the 21st Century

### **OUR MISSION:**

To promote Universal Welfare and the exaltation of humankind through the teaching and practices of the Religion of the Stars as outlined in the writings of C.C. Zain.

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES:**

A loving Cosmic Intelligence, of which we are all a part, whose infinite goodness guides us through undeviating natural law.

A Divine Plan manifests through progressive evolution in which each soul has a unique and important role.

A soul is completely moral when to the maximum extent of its abilities it adheres to the universal moral code: Contribute Your Utmost to Universal Welfare.

The realization of the soul's Mission and the attainment of Self-Conscious Immortality is the goal toward which each soul moves.

Love is the way to life. Unselfish Love alone makes immortality possible.

Through the proper exercise of one's mentality using Directed Thinking and Induced Emotion, it is possible to control one's own life and destiny, both here and hereafter.

Astrology is the Golden Key that unlocks the door to understanding the Soul's true character and potential.

The safe development of extrasensory perception (Extension of Consciousness) is the best tool for realizing each individual's mission in the Divine Plan and for verifying the survival of the soul after death of the physical body.

Religion is the sister of Science, and it evolves by incorporating new information as it is discovered and verified.

### **OUR VISION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY:**

We are a powerful force for good and for spiritual enlightenment and expand the reach and experience of our members because:

We provide reliable and verifiable information regarding the nature of the soul and its relationship to Deity and other life forms;

We seek out reliable and verifiable information regarding life on higher planes of existence, especially in regard to the transition we call death and the nature of the next life;

We develop increasingly advanced tools and training in astrology, extrasensory perception, directed thinking and induced emotion toward the end of maximizing each person's happiness, usefulness and spirituality;

We promote the importance of the four essential freedoms: Freedom from Want, Freedom from Fear, Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Religion;

We build a sense of community and spiritual purpose which uplifts and inspires our members to Contribute Their Utmost To Universal Welfare.