

BEYOND SUN SIGNS

by Janet Booth

WHAT IS ASTROLOGY?

Astrology comes from Greek for “study of the stars,” but truth be told, it’s much more concerned with planets. As for stars, mostly we focus on just a few constellations, a ring of them along the path where the sun, moon and planets appear to circle us. Since most of these constellations are named for animals, this band is came to be called the zodiac (same root word as zoo).

Although we don’t really notice it - good thing, our heads spin just thinking about this! - the earth is whizzing through space at an average speed of 20.658 km/second (63,048 mph) as it orbits the sun. AND our whole solar system is orbiting the center of our Milky Way Galaxy at a speed of 217 km/second or more (more than 450,000 mph).^{*} Even going that fast, it takes 225 million years to complete that circle! Yet every day, the sky doesn’t seem to change all that much (other than the weather) - or does it?

Since ancient times, people of all cultures have sought to find meaning in the sky. Although the planets and zodiac constellations go by different names, there is a lot of similarity to the astrologies developed by different cultures. All noticed that although the pattern and order of the constellations are fixed, we see different ones at different times of the year. And there are a few objects in the night sky that change their position over time relative to the rest of the firmament, traversing the zodiac path. These wandering stars are the planets (that’s the root meaning of the word). Many cultures worshipped the planets as gods, but in modern astrology, we don’t say we worship them, although we might respect them a good deal!

The “Building Blocks” of Astrology

The main components of astrology are planets, signs, houses and angular “relationships” between planets called “aspects” (which we won’t be concerned with here).

Planets (including the sun and moon) act like voices within us, showing our basic human drives. Think of them like verbs.

The expression of our drives is modified by the planets’ sign and the house locations.

Signs are 30-degree segments (1/12) of the 360-degree zodiac circle. Each adds its own flavor to behavior, functioning like an adverb, showing *how* we act on our urges.

Houses are sectors of the sky that act like departments of the circumstances of our lives. Like another adverb, they show *where* a drive is used or affects us the most.

Aspects tie influences of various planets together and show how the planets get along (or don’t, in many cases). Like another modifier, they indicate how we combine various facets of our personality, like those inner voices either in harmony or discord.

^{*} source: <http://www.hypertextbook.com/facts>; conversion from km/sec to mph by Janet Booth

What's In A Chart?

The word “horoscope” comes from Greek for a “look at the hour.” A horoscope chart is a “sky map” of a particular point in time, viewed from the perspective of a particular place on earth

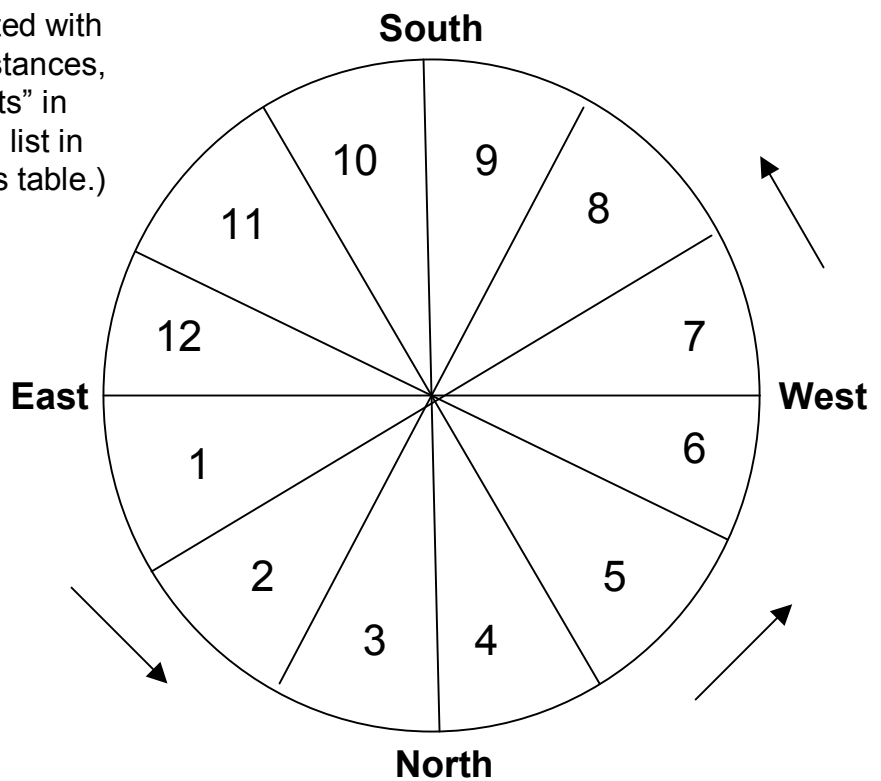
All charts are oriented in relation to the 4 directions, but these are in the reverse position of the directions on a typical earth map, because we're looking up at the sky from earth rather than looking down at the earth as if from above.

We divide the circle of the sky into 12 sectors, called “houses.” They are always in the same position relative to the four directions.

The houses of a chart begin in the East at the 1st House and go around the chart counterclockwise.

Each house is associated with a certain set of circumstances, kind of like “departments” in our lives. (See a partial list in the House Associations table.)

The beginning of each house (like its “doorway”) is called its “culp”. The sign that lines up on the culp is said to “rule” the house, and the planet in charge of that sign strongly influences the matters of that house. “Ruler-ship” means a strong association or affiliation between a planet and sign.



The zodiac circle aligns with the framework of the houses according to the time of year and the time of day for which the chart is calculated. (See more about this on the following pages.) Once the signs are lined up with the houses, we can determine in which houses the planets are located according to the signs they're travelling through.

A planet is said to be “in a sign” and “in a house”. For convenience, we refer to the sun and moon as planets, even though technically speaking, they are our star and our satellite, respectively. Look on your chart to see what the sign and house the sun and moon are in. We'll learn what these locations mean later in the lesson.

Apparent Solar Motion

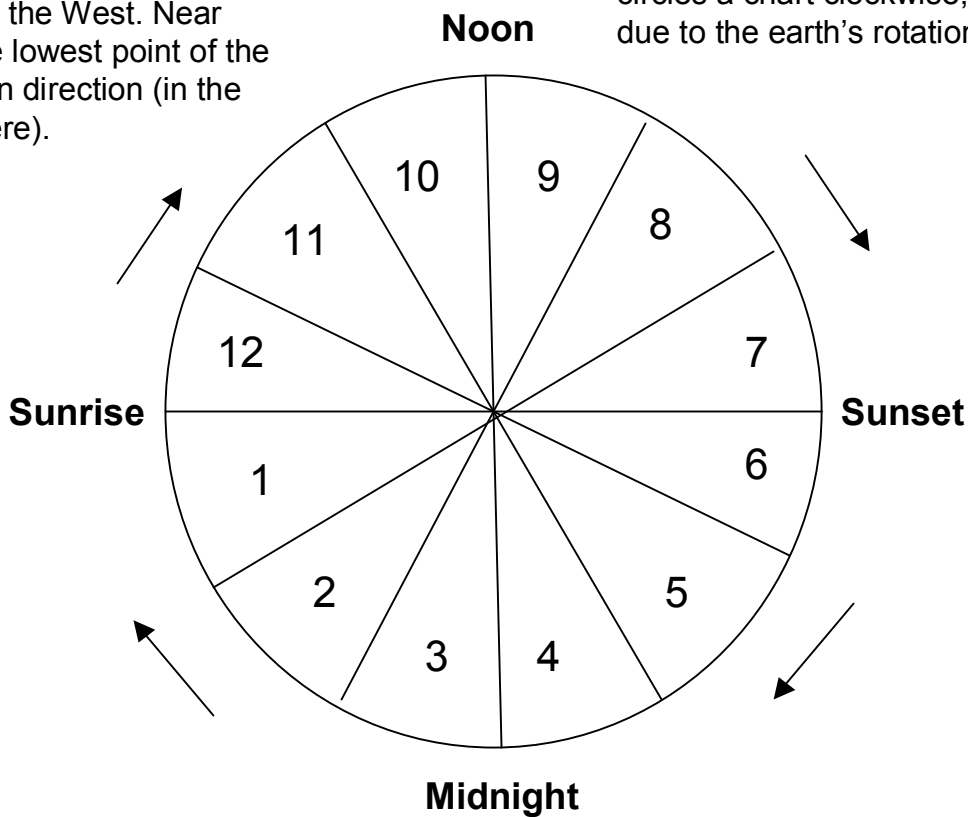
The Sun doesn't "move," other than to orbit the galactic center as previously mentioned. Ever since Copernicus, we've known that we orbit the Sun rather than the other way around. He was called a heretic for saying that we're not the center of God's creation!

There are two types of earthly motion in astrology. First is our revolution around the Sun, which we orbit in a year. This motion is related to the seasons. As the earth moves around the Sun, the Sun appears - to us - to move through the 12 signs of the zodiac. The second is our rotation on our axis every 24 hours, the definition of our day.

The Sun rises at the Eastern horizon, climbs to the top of the chart at the Southern-most point of the sky, then declines, setting in the West. Near midnight, it hits the lowest point of the sky, in the Northern direction (in the northern hemisphere).

At sunrise, the sign that the Sun is moving through (see next page) is rising. As the world turns, it faces the next sign, which appears to rise, then the next sign. A new sign rises about every 2 hours, or 1 degree of the zodiac about every 4 minutes. This is why having an accurate birth or event time is key.

The daily motion of the Sun, Moon and planets circles a chart clockwise, due to the earth's rotation.



The Sun's Chart Position at Various Times of Day

People born in the morning hours have the Sun on the Eastern (or left) side of the chart. People born in the middle of the day have the Sun near the top of the chart. People born near sunset have the Sun on the Western (or right) side of the chart. People born near midnight have the Sun near the bottom of the chart.

The house the Sun is traveling through at your birth shows the "department" of your life that has special importance. It's your place to shine, to get recognition, to be creative. It's where you put your heart.

Signs & Seasons

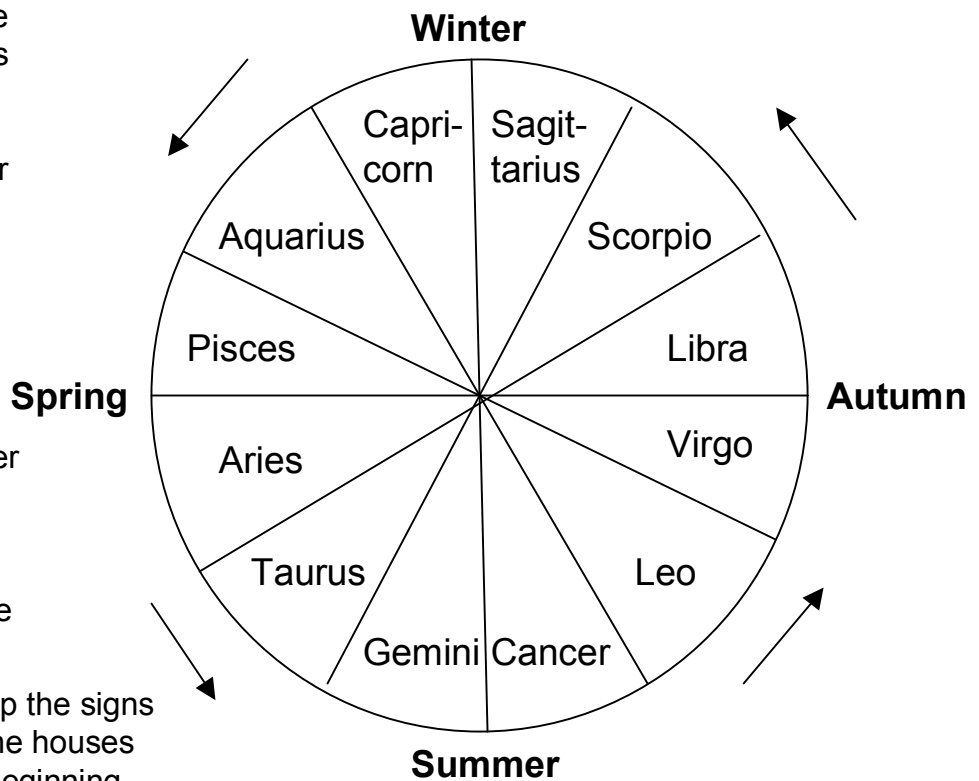
The signs of the zodiac are 30-degree segments of the sky. About 4,000 years ago, spring began when the Sun appeared to enter the constellation of the Ram, Aries, and the seasons were lined up with the actual zodiac constellations. That's around the time of the rise of astrology in Greece, the system that spawned most modern astrology. BUT spring begins a smidgen earlier each year, and over the course of 2,600 years, it moves through an entire constellation, circling the zodiac in 26,500 years. This is called the "precession of the equinoxes" and accounts for the "Great Ages," which move *backwards* through the zodiac. Within the next 300 years, we will leave the Age of Pisces and enter the Age of Aquarius. These Great Ages are associated with cultural developments in the human race.

Modern "Western" astrology counts the first day of spring as the first degree of Aries, and begins the astrological year there, basing its reference point on the seasons.

This is called "tropical" astrology, related to when the Sun's rays pass over the equator (at the equinoxes) and the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn at the solstices.

In a chart, we line up the signs of the zodiac with the houses counterclockwise, beginning with the Rising Sign, also called the "Ascendant" at the 1st House. The signs always follow each other in this order.

In India (primarily) and elsewhere, some astrologers measure the Sun's movement through the constellations only, ignoring the seasons and the Precession of the Equinoxes, in a type of astrology called "sidereal" (sigh deer' ree uhl). This word has a root that means "stars", which you see in consider, which means to consult the stars. The first degree of Aries does not have equal day and equal night in this system, and your Sun Sign could be in the sign *before* your "tropical" (or regular Western) Sun Sign!



This would be the order of the signs in the houses for someone born with Aries Rising. This is also the pattern called the **Natural Zodiac**, because it lines up the first sign of spring with the 1st house.

The Signs and their Traits

We group the signs two ways: into Elements and Modes (also called Qualities). There are 4 Elements (3 signs in each) and 3 Modes (4 signs in each), for a total of 12 signs. Each sign is a unique combination of Element and Mode. The traits of these categories give some hints as to the nature of the signs. Each sign has a multitude of associations, including colors, gems, plants, a ruling planet and a “home” house.

The Modes (---→) and (below) The Elements	<u>Cardinal</u> usher in the seasons; meet situation head on, DO some-thing about it	<u>Fixed</u> middle of season; consolidate, pre-serve, stand one’s ground, lots of inertia	<u>Mutable</u> end of the seasons; flexible, adjust or refine, respond, weave, dodge, go with the flow
<u>Fire</u> very energetic, enthusiastic, inspiring, impulsive	<u>Aries</u> vital, aggressive, courageous, competitive, confident, outgoing, energetic, impulsive, bold	<u>Leo</u> creative, dramatic, affectionate, courageous, generous, dictatorial, willful, egocentric	<u>Sagittarius</u> free, idealistic, philosophical, cheerful, honest, optimistic, frank, exaggerative, restless, scattered
<u>Earth</u> practical, utilitarian, materialistic, conservative, sensual	<u>Capricorn</u> ambitious, responsible, prudent, economical, efficient, disciplined, dependable, insensitive, pessimistic	<u>Taurus</u> stable, steadfast, practical, cautious, productive, consistent, protective, possessive, jealous, slow to act	<u>Virgo</u> critical, discriminating, modest, precise, discreet, inhibited, fastidious, worrisome, service-oriented
<u>Air</u> communicative, social, idealistic/ abstract, mental	<u>Libra</u> diplomatic, partner- & other-oriented, peaceful, fair, balanced, aesthetic, flirtatious, indecisive, gullible	<u>Aquarius</u> Independent, original, unusual, humanitarian, inventive, impersonal, detached, rebellious	<u>Gemini</u> communicative, adaptable, social, friendly, lively, intellectual, inquisitive, scattered, superficial
<u>Water</u> emotional, nurturing, responsive, sympathetic, psychic	<u>Cancer</u> maternal, nurturing, sympathetic, sensitive, protective tenacious, domestic, impressionable, a collector	<u>Scorpio</u> magnetic, powerful, intense, persevering, suspicious, passionate, secretive, resentful, sexual, domineering	<u>Pisces</u> responsive, sentimental, sympathetic, unselfish, psychic, vague, escapist, imitative, shifting

The Fire and Air signs are said to be of the “Masculine” polarity (outgoing, proactive, assertive, extroverted, “yang”), while the Earth and Water signs are of the “Feminine” polarity (receptive, passive, introverted, “yin”).

The Planets

Here are some of the *many* associations for the planets in our solar system. We are concerned here primarily with the Sun and Moon, but the “ruling planets” of your Sun, Moon and Rising signs will have an impact on you. Check their signs and houses.

Planet	Orbit Time	Associations (some of the many!)
Personal Planets		
Sun	1 year	the need for attention, to shine, to create, to be an individual; the ego, will-power, heart chakra, personal identity, creative power, vitality, the Father (yang), the boss, the King – the Sun is the heart of the chart, with its sign and house being the most important
Moon	1 month	the drive to nurture and be nurtured, to bond, to nest; home, family, tribe, community, culture, responses, habit patterns, feelings, receptivity, sensitivity, the Mother (yin) – the Moon is second only to the Sun in importance; its sign and house show where we want to be connected and secure
Mercury	1/3 of a year	the urge to communicate; the rational mind and thinking processes, all forms of communications, verbalization, lower education, short distance travel, transportation
Venus	1-5/8 years	the desire to relate, to love, to team up; affections, attraction, artsiness, desire for beauty, balance & harmony (“anima”)
Mars	2 years	the drive to survive, to compete and win; aggressiveness, assertiveness, initiative, independence, pioneering (“animus”)
Socio-cultural, “Generational” Planets		
Jupiter	12 years	the urge to grow and expand; philosophy, the Higher Mind, higher education, long distance travel or communications, foreigners
Saturn	29-30 years	the drive to consolidate, define, restrict or set boundaries; structure, limits, responsibility, organization, authority
Chiron (asteroid)	51 years	the ability to think outside the box; “maverick,” cleansing and healing, guru-type teacher, innovation, the “wounded healer”
Transcendental Planets		
Uranus	84 years	the desire to march to one’s own drummer, to experiment and invent; the unusual or unexpected, uniqueness, revolution
Neptune	164 years	the urge to transcend limits; imagination, psychic sensitivity, connection to the ALL, nebulousness, confusion, doubt, fears
Pluto	265 years	the drive to transformation, release, renew; metamorphosis, death and re-birth, shared resources, afterlife and the spirit world, psychology, parapsychology, sex, regeneration

House Associations

Each house has a planet and sign associated with it according to the “Natural Zodiac.” In an individual’s chart, there is usually another sign and its ruling planet associated with each house, as determined by the rising sign and the order of the signs around the chart. [If Aries is rising, then the Natural Zodiac associations are the personal associations.]

House	Associated Life Circumstances	Sign, Planet
1	House of Self – easiest natural expression, personality, outlook on life, your mask (“persona”), build, health, appearance, vitality, individuality, outward behavior, self-awareness, self-concern	Aries, Mars
2	Possessions, values, resources, personal financial security, spending capacity, how you make your money and meet obligations, use of material/non-material resources, sense of self worth	Taurus, Venus
3	Conscious mind, communications, near environment, short journeys, close relatives, early education and how you learn, intellectual activities, self-expression, ground transportation, siblings	Gemini, Mercury
4	Roots, home, parents (particularly mother), heredity, traditions, deepest emotional base, subconscious, place(s) of residence, real estate, property, conditions in early and late life	Cancer, Moon
5	Creativity, personal self-expression, pleasures, objects of affection (children, pets, lovers), vacations, hobbies, games, speculation, talents, need to display power or receive attention	Leo, Sun
6	Work, employment, attitudes toward servants or co-workers or subordinates, working conditions, self-adjustment, health, diet, hygiene, adaptation to environment, service, duties, daily tasks	Virgo, Mercury
7	Partnership(s), relationship(s), close associates, co-operativeness, concern for others, peers, open enemies, contracts, close associates, marital partner or mate, negotiations, lower courts	Libra, Venus
8	Birth, death, reproduction, regeneration, transformation, “other people’s money” (credit, tax, insurance, joint finances, investments), big business, sex, interest in occult/spirituality/rituals	Scorpio, Pluto
9	Foreign environments and languages, long journeys, superconscious, philosophy, religion, deep studies, higher education, ethics, high courts, publishing, in-laws, going beyond horizons	Sagittarius, Jupiter
10	Public standing, reputation, worldly attainment, ambition, profession, career, status, responsibilities, authority, father, guardian	Capricorn, Saturn
11	Hopes and wishes, goals, ideals, humanitarianism, associates, acquaintances, groups, friends, business contacts	Aquarius, Uranus
12	Subconscious, sleep, unseen or hidden causes or limitations, secrets, fears, suppressed things, need for withdrawal or privacy, hidden enemies, “ghosts,” confinement, capacity to go beyond oneself, House of Self-Undoing, House of Hidden Treasures	Pisces, Neptune

Your Most Important Signs

Sun Sign From your month of birth: the sign the Sun was in at the time of year you were born. This is the sign most people just call their sign. It shows your purpose and identity in this life and indicates how you want to shine. If you were born on a day near when the Sun changed signs (cusp), you are one or the other, not a blend. The day of the change can vary a little because of Leap Year, when we stick an extra day into the calendar, shifting the day/sign line-up.

Moon Sign From your day of birth: the sign the Moon was in at the time of your birth. The Moon changes signs every 2-3 days. People with the same birthday as you will have the same Sun Sign but if they are born in a different year than you, they will have a different Moon Sign. The Moon Sign shows your emotional nature and responses, habit patterns, and “inner child.” Within the time frame of each Sun sign (30 days), the Moon goes through all the signs, so you could have any sign for the Moon.

Rising Sign From your minute of birth: the sign rising up over the Eastern horizon at the time of your birth from the viewpoint of your birth. This is like your “lens” on life and colors how you see the world. It’s also your “mask” that you present to the outside world, your obvious outer personality. Each sign rises for about 2 hours each day, so you could have any sign Rising.

Other Factors That Can Strongly Affect Your Personality

Elements or Qualities in combination - Count the number of planets in each element and quality (they should total 10 for the 10 planets; don’t count the Rising Sign). If there is a “winner” in each category, the sign of that element and quality is your “**sign signature**” and may be an important sign for you, even if it is not your Sun, Moon or Rising sign.

An example would be 4 planets in Cardinal and 5 in Air. The Cardinal Air sign is Libra. To get this type of a planetary “count,” you would probably have at least a planet or two in Libra, but not necessarily your Sun, Moon or Rising Sign.

A Planet in the Sign It Rules - If a planet is in the sign it rules, that gives it extra strength and it will likely show up more prominently in your personality.

Planets exchanging Rulership, called “Mutual Reception” - An example would be the Sun in Virgo (ruled by Mercury) with Mercury in Leo (ruled by the Sun). In such a case, the two signs involved are both strong and act in a blended manner.

Any Planets in the First House - Since the First House is the house of the outer personality, any planets here - especially the first one to rise (first going counterclockwise) - will strongly impact your nature.

A Planet All By Its Lonesome on One Half of the Chart (“Singleton”) - draws extra attention to itself and can “steal” the energy of the whole chart, dominating the personality.

Resources

Recommended Reading

Some good basic beginner books that go “beyond sun signs” are:

- *The Only Astrology Book You'll Ever Need* by Joanna Woolfolk
- *Parker's Astrology* by Derek & Julia Parker
- *How to Learn Astrology* by Marc Edmund Jones
- *The Only Way To Learn Astrology - Vol. I* by Marion March and Joan McEvers

To see the astronomy associated with astrology, order *The Astronomical Companion* by Guy Ottewell from www.universalworkshop.com

On the Internet

My favorite site is www.StarIQ.com, where you can sign up for free emails that tell you when planets are doing things to *your* chart and what it all means. They also have cool articles on people in the news, with explanations of what's going on in their charts.

The Mountain Astrologer is a great magazine, online: www.mountainastrologer.com

Find out about the astronomical side of skywatching at www.skyandtelescope.com .

www.Antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/archivepix.html has an index of wonderful astronomical photos with their explanations, containing lots of links to other great pics. This is really magnificent! Plan to stay a while when you visit.

www.cafeastrology.com is a good overall site from Australian astrologer Kelli Fox.

Calculate your chart for free at Astrolabe's site www.alabe.com without being pressured to buy a report.

Live and In Person

I do readings at my place in West Hartford or over the phone. In either case, the reading is tape recorded as part of the service and includes charts. I keep a copy of the charts on file in case you call later with questions or come back for an annual “check up.” I teach classes and workshops from time to time and you can get on my mailing or email list(s).

We're very lucky in Connecticut to have one of the best regional astrological groups in the nation, the Astrological Society of Connecticut. I encourage you to check it out. We meet on the 3rd Thursday of the month from Sept. to May (2nd in Dec.) at the Keeney Center, 200 Main St., Wethersfield. Come at 6 PM for an astrology lesson before the 7 PM lecture (cost is \$15 for non-members, so it's worth it to join for \$35 annual dues. Call their InfoLine (860) 568-8617 or visit www.myasc.org