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Ani Black dismisses a recent study debunking astrology, saying scientists and astrologers will probably never see eye to eye.

Victoria astrologer says the nearness of Mars translates to ...

Torrid times for Earthlings

BY GRANIA LITWIN
Times Colonist staff

Raging Interior wildfires, massive electrical outages, heat related deaths in Europe, unexpected bombings and flashpoint war zones are no surprise to astrologer Ani Black.

"There is a lot going on, and we should never underestimate the power of the time period we are in," says the Victoria astrologer and longtime stargazer who notes the proximity of Mars translates to torrid times for Earthlings.

Next Tuesday and Wednesday the Red Planet will pass its closest to Earth in 59,000 years — just 55.7 million kilometres — and anybody looking at the sky these evenings can already see its spectacular poker-pink glow. But the effects have been brewing for some time, and will be felt for several weeks to come.

"Mars is a masculine planet and symbolizes the god of war. It is associated with the element of fire," Black says. This could signal accidents, explosive situations around the world and more conflict where wars are being waged already, "or potentially (in countries) such as North Korea.

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Victoria astrologer

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• **HOW TO VIEW MARS, MONITOR, PAGE D5**



Mars, the Red Planet, will be the closest it has been to Earth in 59,000 years next week, bringing much havoc with it, according to astrologers.

onto their anger and letting it damage them internally. If you hear your neighbours fighting, it's not permanent. Think of it as a little weather passing through."

The warmth and excitement of Mars may lead to impulsive sexual behaviour, perhaps even crimes of passion, and because Mars has rule over sharp objects and machinery, when that combines with violence, drive, aggression and libido, it's time to take care.

"From a perspective of dis-ease, there is a lack of ease at a time like this. Don't even think about road rage.

"And if you have any major infection in the body, go to the doctor, don't think twice about getting it checked out. The immune system is less strong now, both in the individual and the collective."

Any person, country or business born or established from Feb. 26 to March 1, or Aug. 31 through Sept. 6 — in any year — could

feel they are on the hot seat right now, she said, "but what's most interesting is that Mars is also in retrograde motion now. It started at the end of July and doesn't clear that until November."

Every planet has a retrograde period during which it appears to travel slower. This is just a matter of perspective, not fact, as when you are travelling in a train at 90 miles an hour and pass another doing only 70. Looking out the window, the slower train appears to be going backwards.

"It is an apparent motion. What we traditionally say at times like these is, we need to review and go back over elements of that planet," which means this is a good time to reflect on our own passions, angers, flashpoints and power drives, to look at what agitates us and why.

"This is a great time to be inactive," says Black. We live in a "go, go" culture and spend precious little time in contemplation. The recent blackout in the East offered people no choice about slowing down. Everything ground to a halt, "forcing people also to reflect on matters of energy conservation."

She says the proximity of Mars explains why Americans are now in a very reflective mood, looking back on their recent acts of aggression in Iraq and the motivation behind them.

Commenting on a recent study that debunked astrology, Black said scientists and astrologers will likely never see eye to eye.

"Science studies the physical realm — that which can be measured by the five senses. Anything beyond that is beyond them.... Astrologers, like doctors, practise an art."

Science still has too young and too arrogant a world view to really embrace the eternal concept of the soul, she says.

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Mars: 'Extreme' describes the times

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Local astrologer George Strutch agrees, saying science is the study of replication, of repeating experiments again and again with identical results, which doesn't happen in the world of humanity and astrology.

He also points out that Mars does not create situations on Earth, but simply reflects what is going on. "As the Bible says: 'On Earth as it is in Heaven.'"

He believes this is a very interesting time globally, for everything from financial markets to

individual lives, and says the word "extreme" immediately comes to mind.

"The market is very volatile right now and I wouldn't be surprised if, out of the sheer excitement and stress, there isn't a huge upswing and blowing up into inflation. It would be completely unfounded, but may happen. Or there may be a collapse. Whatever happens, it will be extreme because Mars has to do with action, energy and initiative, with fight or flight," Strutch said.

"When Mars comes so close to Earth, it's saying this is immediate: You will feel the most beautiful heights of excitement, but also the lows of

disappointment will be felt very acutely too.

"People's frustration tolerances over the next couple of weeks will be significantly lower than normal, everything will be magnified. There will be moments of very, very intense closeness or intense fear and strife. More fire, heat, bombings. People will be testy, impatient, volatile," he said.

He also agrees that now is a time to look back at anger, to analyse reactivity and response.

"Anger is always a secondary emotion," Strutch said. "It comes after fear" and before revenge.