

Mercury Retrograde: A Tale of Two Elections

/EINPresswire.com/ Astrologers say it rarely happens. But when the planet Mercury halts its forward progress on Election Day and starts moving backwards in the heavens it's Katy bar the door.

Planet is the word ancient Greeks used for the "wandering stars" they observed contrarily moving at different speeds - and at times in different directions - through a firmament bedazzled by less adventurous fixed stars. They didn't realize what they were observing was an astronomical illusion.

Because planets orbit the sun at vast and varying distances, from an earthly perspective they appear to move backwards in the heavens when orbiting earth overtakes and passes slower moving outer planets. Or when the faster moving inner planets (Venus and Mercury) overtake and pass the earth.

Less easy to explain is why retrograde motion changes the way we experience a planet's archetypal energies, astrologer Barbara Schermer says.

To the ancients, fast-moving Mercury was the revered "messenger of the Gods."

Today, the planet is intellectually identified with such things as mental acuity, flexibility and duality. And it is said to influence speech, writing, mathematical reckoning, information technologies and communications devices of all kinds.

When retrograde, Mercury is well suited for reflecting, planning or strategizing. But under this influence human behavior becomes more quirky or mistake prone with problematic delays, uncertainty, false starts, miscommunication, miscalculations and the frustrating need to do things over.

According to Schermer, Mercury's reputation as a trickster was largely earned during those times of the year when the planet was retrograde.

She says the Mercury retrograde phenomenon was apparent on Election Day 2000. In a tight race bedeviled by voting irregularities and delays, the U.S. Supreme Court stepped in to halt a recount of ballots in Florida that had been ordered earlier by jurists in the state.

The higher court's historic decision cleared the way for George W. Bush to win Florida's Electoral

College delegates and pushed the candidate over the top in the national race. But the spectacle witnessed live on TV by millions of Americans was hardly an inspiring portrait of democracy in action.

The indelible memory many have of this Election Day debacle is of election judges pouring over thousands of paper ballots abused by cranky voting machines. The judges were tasked with the insane job of deciphering voter intent by counting hanging "chads" that were insufficiently punched out on some Florida ballots.

On Election Day 2012 there were no hanging chads to count on Florida ballots or need to ask the highest court in the land to step up and decide a winner. Florida election officials did need an extra day to tally statewide results, but by then the race already had been decided in other battleground states in favor of the incumbent.

Voters did suffer the indignity of having to wait in long lines to reach polling booths in some states. But this development might as easily be attributed to deliberate efforts aimed at frustrating voter turnout and didn't seem to produce the desired result.

To everyone's surprise the networks were able to call the race much sooner than expected. The losing campaign was so stunned by this unanticipated development it delayed conceding the election for more than 90 minutes after the outcome was obvious to everyone else.

Schermer says Mercury doesn't take sides in political elections. But as a harbinger of things to come, technical glitches and communications snafus did appear to dog the Republicans throughout the campaign.

There was the surreptitious taping of a fund-raising pitch to well heeled supporters that was said to hurt the challenger's chances with ordinary voters. But the cruelest blow to the campaign was delivered on Election Day when the GOP rolled out an IT system that campaign organizers believed would give the challenger an electronic equalizer to combat President Obama's vaunted ground game.

Called Orca, the system was named for the killer whale and was supposed to give the Romney campaign its own analytics on what was happening at polling places. Also, it was expected to aid get-out-the-vote efforts in key battle ground states.

The goal was to put a mobile application in the hands of 37,000 volunteers in swing states to help them track activity at the polls. The information provided was to be monitored and analyzed by more than 800 volunteers at campaign headquarters in Boston.

"Obviously the campaign neglected to seek the advice of a competent astrologer. The system wasn't beta tested until election day when Mercury was stalled and poised to go retrograde - the worst possible timing for this sort of thing," Schermer said.

On the morning of the election thousands of enthusiastic volunteers were left without communications or instructions for what to do. A series of deployment blunders and network and systems failures had caused Orca to perform more like a floundering minnow.

"That's pure Mercury retrograde in action," Schermer said.

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