

PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE



[ASTROFISH.NET](http://ASTROFISH.NET)'S MERCURY IN RETROGRADE

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## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

This text is gratefully dedicated to Sarah, Sagittarius,  
thanks for all the help and encouragement.

ASTROFISH.NET'S MERCURY IN RETROGRADE

This book is a work of fiction.

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astrofish.net  
P.O. Box 830657  
San Antonio, TX 78283  
USA

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Don't steal; it's bad karma.

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

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## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

### THE PORTABLE GUIDE TO MERCURY RETROGRADE

As an astrologer, as a horoscope writer who's been writing about Mercury Retrograde for several decades, I wanted a compendium, a collection of material to help ease this astrological condition.

Over years, spanning decades, I've gathered this material. Its purpose is to educate and elucidate.

Mercury retrograde gets a bad reputation, and it's hard to believe one little planet can be blamed for all the ills.

When I look at an astrology chart, for the sake of simplicity, I tend to use the Western Tropical Zodiac as a primary frame of reference. Just easier; although, I can – and do – combine more than one school of astrology thought.

At the end of this guide, there's a short list of the next decade's worth of Mercury Retrograde periods, and the sign associated with the beginning of the RX period. When I look at an astrology chart, I tend to consider the "natural" wheel. To keep it short, here's a quick summary:

#### Mercury Retrograde in Fire Signs?

Aries, Leo, Sagittarius – passion cools, not for long, but the heat or ardor wears off.

#### Mercury Retrograde in Earth Signs?

Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn – the bedrock, the foundation, gets shaken. Or seems to be shaken, and possibly needs examination.

#### Mercury Retrograde in Air Signs?

Gemini, Libra, Aquarius – Thinking/analysis needs to be reexamined. Possibly a confusing time for thought patterns.

#### Mercury Retrograde in Water Signs?

Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces – Emotional issues, and sometimes, misleading emotions.



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Xmas 1996

### MERCURY CHRONICLES

Merry FGS Xmas. This is coming to you as a friendly reminder about what the planets are doing right now. Yes, it's that time again, time for the topsy-turvy world of Mercury going backwards.

Mercury takes about 88 days to go around the Sun. It take us about 365 days to accomplish the same orbit. What this means is that a few times a year, Mercury looks like it is traveling backwards relative to the rest of the stars in the night sky.

What does it mean astrologically? Well, the easiest thing to do is to get under the bed and not come out for a few weeks. Since that's not a practical idea, a vacation is also a good idea. Which is where I am supposed to be right now. Too bad the plans went awry and I'm still working on vacation time. Oh yeah, and those dates for the little planet?

Mercury begins its backwards tumble on December 23 and rights itself on January 12. Going to be an interesting time for all.

A nice and very specific example of what happens when Mercury goes retrograde is communications get fouled up. And even better example came in the form of this email from my father. (And sending this note out on the wire might be the same as some communications getting fouled up--if Mother ever finds out!)

ASTROFISH.NET'S MERCURY IN RETROGRADE

To: KramerW@aol.com

From: OttoWetzel@aol.com

>Your Mother came rushing home late in the  
>afternoon from a meeting and was  
>in a hurry to change clothes to go to her  
>Yoga class. She parked in front  
>of the house and rushed inside, forgetting to  
>turn off the alarm. It went  
>off and she had to rush to the panel,  
>turn it of and then phoned to tell the  
>police it was a false alarm. This always flusters  
>her. Anyway,  
>she changed into her yoga outfit and went  
>to the door and looked out.  
>Guess what, no car!  
>  
>She panicked and rushed out to the driveway.  
>There was nothing to be seen  
>to the left but she did see her car across street  
>and part way up in the  
>neighbors begonias! Apparently she had  
>forgotten to put it in Park and  
>some time while she was setting off the  
>alarm and changing, the car took it  
>upon itself to take a little spin. Mind you this  
>was at about 6:25 PM - one  
>of the busiest times of the day on that street.  
>

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>So in her inimitable way she strolled  
>casually down the drive and across  
>the street and after carefully looking  
>around to see if anyone was  
>watching jumped into her car and got  
>ready to see if it would start.  
>About that time a group in a fine Jaguar  
>drove up and stopped to inquire  
>if she was all right. She assured them she  
>was started the car and  
>carefully backed out of the begonias. As far as  
>she can tell the car suffered  
>no damage.

This is an excellent example of what happens when Mercury goes retrograde.

One of my mother's fears is that I would publish just this sort of story. I didn't really publish it, it's just like my father wrote to me, so you can blame him.

That's the Sagittarius in me trying to avoid responsibility!

It does illustrate a point: little things go wrong under this pejorative influence. Nothing too worry about, just double check to make sure you put the car in "Park" and check to see if the alarm is off, or on, as the case may be. And watch out for the neighbor's begonias.

Kramer Wetzal, FGS  
Astrology home buoy

AOL Keyword: Kramer  
Sent from a Newton

Spring 1997

MERCURY RETROGRADE (AGAIN)

The easiest thing to do, astrologically, is to get under the bed and not come out for a few weeks. Since that's not a practical idea, a vacation is also a good idea. Oh yeah, and those dates for the little planet?

Mercury begins its backwards tumble on April 15 and rights itself on May 8. Going to be an interesting time for all. Since it's tax season, perhaps we should talk a little about compound interest. Or compounding an uncomfortable situation. Mars turns direct April 28, so this is going to add to the mayhem of what is happening.

A very specific example of what happens when Mercury goes retrograde is communications get fouled up. So does thinking. Like my mother never forgetting that I told the story about the car being in park (or not being in park, depending who is telling the tale).

During the last Mercury Retrograde period, I heroically and stoically (and singlehandedly) loaded a massive Yule log into the family fireplace. Since I'm good at picking stuff to burn (Male Fire Sign), this one log started up in a hurry.

Now, Mercury was retrograde, so what happened? Some innocent (and nosy, in my humble opinion) passerby noticed that there was huge volume of smoke issuing from the chimney, and that passerby called the fire department.

When the guys got there, they found me in a slightly smoky living room, casually and quizzically watching a fire.

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The problem? The flue wasn't fully open. It was Christmas time, so after dousing the log with some water, the firemen got some cookies from Ma Wetzel. One fellow was heartbroken because there wasn't a bigger fire. And they didn't get to use all their equipment, either. My family might never forgive me, as well, but we did burn that log later, AFTER opening the flue.

So, open the flue, and check to make sure the car is in park. Maybe double check some things while all this is going on, you can never be too safe.

16 August 1997

MERCURY RETROGRADE, THE FINAL CUT.

When the weather is acceptable, and when I'm in my home town of Austin, I like to hike around Town Lake. It's a brief and much needed respite from the hurried pace of beepers, computers, and cellular madness that seems to infect everyday life. It was on just such a hike that I finally got a grip on what to say about Mercury Retrograde. The mechanics of the picture are simple. Mercury takes about 88 days to go around the Sun. It takes us 365 days to accomplish the same thing. So there are a few times in the year when it looks like Mercury is moving in a manner not consistent with our version of reality. That means, it looks like Mercury is moving backwards.

To be sure, you've seen the bumper sticker, popular a few years ago, something about "Feces Occur." That's the continuing sentiment about what happens when Mercury goes retrograde. Just what is it, in the sky? Mercury is the planet of cars, computers, commerce and communication. Since the little devil is backwards right now, I'll call it the "3 C's." Makes as much sense.

During my enforced solitude, I was busy watching a pair of hawks cruising overhead. From the hawks, I turned my attention to a raven who was busy calling attention to some event requiring his approbation in his world. Then my mind started to wander into some mythology -- in the southwest, he's called Coyote, the trickster. In the Northwest, he's the Raven. In the old European culture, he's Reynaldo, the Fox. In modern, FGS-style astrology, I'll call it Mercury Retrograde.

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What is the job of the Trickster? In this way of looking at it the phenomenon, I would suggest that Mercury dredges up past issues and demands that these issues get equal air time in our brains. One of my more frequent observations is that old lovers usually try to contact me at this time. I don't care to submit the figures, besides, the myth about my behavior is far better than the actual numbers. What this tricky planet does, though, is act like a mirror and bring back past occurrences, one more time, for a chance for some revision and editing.

Imagine a military parade ground. Now imagine the commander, in his best command voice, giving the order to "Pass in Review." That's what Mercury is up to, making us all march, one more time, through the past. It also suggests that this time there is room for improvement. Now here's the problem of this tricky little guy: what you can improve upon might not be the most obvious right now. False starts are quite common at this point. That great idea you hatch right now might just be a great idea, but it isn't what you're really looking for.

Doing the right thing when Mercury is in its "Trickster" mode is to write the idea down. By the end of the three week period, you'll have a load of little notes scattered everywhere. Consider this an idea mine. You can go back into and sort out the good stuff from the dreck. Conventional astrology warns about embarking on new projects when Mercury is retrograde. Perhaps this isn't such a bad idea. You have to realize that Mercury does this about three times a year. If you are going to consider the starting point, the ending point, and everything else associated with its movement, you can tie up close to a third of the year. That leaves a narrow window for things to happen in. Add the phase of the Moon, and soon, there's not much worth doing any of the time.

## ASTROFISH.NET'S MERCURY IN RETROGRADE

What can be done about this? The best thing to do is be prepared. When Mercury is retrograde, take note. Don't panic. Don't let the little details get in the way of the larger picture. During the actual period of retrograde, that three week window, make an effort not to start too many new projects, and what you do start, be prepared to go back and rework it a little later.

I had one client who bought a computer when Mercury was retrograde. This was against my stern warnings, but it was a business necessity at the moment. Mere days after the purchase, the same computer went on sale for a substantially reduced price. If Mercury was retrograde for the buyer, it was also retrograde for the store. A certain amount of judicious complaining earned a credit. Then, a mistake on the manufacturer's part earned another rebate. It is possible to be proactive about Mercury, but the Trickster will demand that you keep the sales slip to prove it.



## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

16 August 1997

MERCURY CHRONICLES

Subject: Mercury Retrograde

(I've got to get a better proof reader than my cat.)

"Now Mercury endure thee with leasing, for thou speakest well of fools!

The Clown in Shakespeare's 12th Night [I.v]

I should note that last month I did get to see an excellent version of 12th Night in the park. If you ever get a chance, the Dallas Shakespeare Festival puts on wonderful free stuff in the park.

Mercury begins its backwards tumble on August 17 and rights itself on September 10. Going to be an interesting time for all. Let me relate this little story about Mercury retrograde and ticket sales: this is the good life.

For my Fairbanks trip last spring, I knew Mercury was going to be retrograde. I knew there would be problems. Hey, I'm the astrologer, I was prepared, sort of. I missed one reading because I was offered an opportunity to hop up to the Arctic Circle. Who would pass up a chance like that? And it didn't seem to be a problem--and I did get a chance to go further North than I had ever been. I didn't realize there was so much beyond Oklahoma. The next morning, I called the ticket agent who had been handling the ticket sales for readings.

"All booked up," she told me, "my computer shows no openings today at all."

## ASTROFISH.NET'S MERCURY IN RETROGRADE

That was great news. I sat down at my table in the hotel room and got ready for the steady stream of clients... and waited. After an hour without a single person, I began to worry. It turned out that the ticket promoter had told the agent who told the computer person who told the record store... and then I got lost with the details and chain of command.

With Mercury retrograde, you just never know what your computer will do.

So when Mercury is heading east, doing its little retrograde boogie, make sure the car is in park, check the flue in the fireplace, and always call Anchorage for ticket information.

And if you don't know exactly what it is that I'm talking about, you might try the [Mercury Chronicles Archive](#)

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Quidquid latine dictum sit, alturum viditur

Totus mundus agit histrionem

AOL Keyword: Kramer

Sent from a Newton via Aloha

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

10 August 1998

"From Alexandria

This is the news: he fishes, drinks, and wastes

The lamps of night in revel;"

Octavius Caesar

in Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra

[Act I, Scene IV]

I've found that Mercury Retrograde periods are kind of like good old Anthony, it seems like we all spend a lot of time wasting the night lamps, and this effort apparently seems to avail us naught. However, it doesn't look like it's all for nothing.

Aries : It's time for you to consider delving into your own, deep, personal and dark abyss. There is something lurking along the bottom of your own personal ocean, and whatever creature from the deep that is there, he or she needs some attention. This is another week that evokes memories of long forgotten B-Movies, ones with bad monsters. Shows that these days would go straight to video.

Watch out with the flammable liquids this week. If you can actually find a Full Service gas station, I think it would be best if your let some one else fill up your tank. There's no need to mix a Fire Sign with potentially combustible fluids this week. Or Scorpio's.

NOVEMBER 1998

"Mercury, lose all the serpentine craft of thy caduceus, if ye take not that little, little, less than little wit from them that they have"

(Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida, Act II, scene iii)

Mercury goes retrograde about three times a year. It's a natural cycle. It's a natural event. It's perfectly normal. It's nothing to be afraid of. It is something to watch out for. And, after heeding some of my own advice, I was very ready to take a vacation when this Mercurial Cycle was approaching.

First of all, I love London. It might have something to do with the fact that I have a degree in literature, and this place has long been the home of the printed word. It's especially kind to white, European males because they've been the backbone of good literature for a long time. Besides that, London always offers good theater experiences. When the weather's nice enough, the National Theater is walking distance from where I stay. The London home of the Royal Shakespeare Company is a short tube ride away.

Hatchard's is a lovely bookstore with that feeling of being in an English bookstore, and it's just a short walk down to Piccadilly Circus. So much to do, and so little time... and the FGS Faithful never let me down. One regular from El Paso was doing time in Paris and, to listen to her talk, hating the French. Like most of us English majors, she also loves London. It's a peaceful, easy feeling. And you can understand what the people are saying, most of the time.

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After shooting around London for the better part of day, we agreed to meet Ma and Pa Wetzel for some tea. This is no ordinary affair, this was to be HIGH TEA at the Lanesborough Hotel. After some exhaustive research, Ma Wetzel has determined that is the best place for tea. So me and my friend head over towards the hotel. The Lanesborough is right by Hyde Park Corner. There is a myriad of exits from the tube stop for Hyde Park Corner. I lead my friend up the ramp towards an exit three different times, finally getting it right on the third try.

"It's okay," she laughed it off, "Mercury is retrograde..."

When my folks joined us, Ma Wetzel had a harrowing tale of being passed by a Number 9 bus three different times. She finally had to take a cab, and even at that, she was a little late. I introduced my friend.

"Three times the Number 9 went right past me -- need to speak to them about that. Is Mercury retrograde?"

Now, when my folks had been seated, I introduced my friend as Irene (Aries, lots of Gemini), and Irene shook hands. But as the tea, crumpets, scones and little cucumber sandwiches arrived, Ma Wetzel kept referring to Irene as "Linda." After the third or fourth time, Pa Wetzel politely suggested that my friend's name was Irene and not Linda.

"Is Mercury retrograde?" Ma Wetzel asked, "I'm so sorry, Linda."

It didn't take long to get from tea to the theater for that night's show. The performance was wonderful and evocative. In fact, this performance had to be one of the better casts I've seen do this play, Shakespeare's "Troilus and Cressida." Admittedly, it's only the third time I've seen it on stage, but you get the idea that I really liked it. From the theater, it was hop on the tube to go home for the evening.

After the tube made a few stops, we had to hustle off. Now, both of us can navigate pretty well via the London Underground. It's a simple system, and the maps are color coded as well as having instructions in English. But somehow, we had gotten onto the wrong ride, and we were headed out towards the wild midlands of England. Get off at the next stop, walk over the little trestle bridge thing, and double back on our route.

So much for Mercury retrograde.

Check to make sure the flue is open.

Check to make sure the car is in park.

And make sure you know which train you are getting off and on.

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

March 1999

MERCURY, MARS, AND RETROGRADE MARCH

AUSTIN, TEXAS, MARCH 1999

Shady Acres Trailer Park, with its view of the Colorado River, and a trailer park with such a close proximity to Downtown Austin is a great home. It's where I belong. Being an astrologer, too, makes it easy for me to understand what is happening within the heavens above so I can detect a correlation to what is going on down here in Shady Acres. This month, March of 1999 promises to hold more than its fair share of Retrograde stories.

Before too long, not only will the errant messenger of the gods be retrograde, but Pluto and Mars will both be in apparent backward motion, as well. And that pesky planet which is not a planet, but also not really an asteroid, Chiron. All these things in the sky moving backwards are going to have an impact as we look at the spring of 1999. A lot of folks at the trailer park have a few things to say about this.

The beginning of the Mercury Retrograde was almost well-timed with a sudden thunderstorm that offered a great view of the horizon being lit up by brilliant and savage attacks of lightning. Along with the storm, buckets of much-needed rain came pouring down. One of my neighbors has a trailer that literally backs up onto the lake front. While it's the most reassuring place to be on a nice afternoon with the patio door open, watching the boats and river roll by, during the storm, it felt a little like the trailer was going to roll away. The great peals of thunder rattled the window, and sheets of water washed against the windows with alarming violence.

"Cool, huh?" he said. Right. I was little more worried about the foundation of the pads the trailers are parked on. The next day was alternately cloudy and cold, with clouds making haste across the sky, low clouds, dark and foreboding, with just a degree of sunlight in between to make the day feel a little strange. But Texas weather is dependable in one respect, it changes a lot. And when the weather got nice by the NEXT day, we all got out and looked around Shady Acres. The storm didn't ravage too much, not more than its usual damage, but the torrents of water that fell from the sky did cause a subtle change in the lake front property we occupy.

It looks like my neighbor's trailer is a little closer to the lake than before. It looks like the foundation itself has slipped, only by an inch or two, but still, in matter of mere yards, it does look like this last storm, heralded by the beginning of the Retrogrades, has caused a slip in the very foundation of where we live. I was busy looking at my place, after I saw what happened to his.

This recent Retrograde looks like it's going to cause some cracks in the foundation of everything right now. I'm just afraid that my trailer might end up a houseboat soon. Wouldn't be too surprised if there are similar cracks in more than one foundation, and not just here in Shady Acres. Mars rules things like cars, and by extension, mobile homes. Pluto, as the mythical lord of the underworld, could certainly represent the foundation. And Chiron? Even though I use Chiron when I work through a person's chart, I'm not entirely comfortable with its meaning yet. I just hope it represents the management doing something about the cracks in the foundation. But with Mercury backwards, and the weather in upheaval, it might take a few weeks to get anything done.



## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

So this retrograde, the rest of this month, is like the welcome rain, a time to hide out and let the stuff fall where it may. It's going to require a little bit of patch work, a little repair work, but retrogrades are like a roof that only leaks when it rains, when the sun's out, any thought about repair is easily neglected. Mobile homes are easy to fix though, just get a truck and jack, and we can right whatever is wrong.

12 July 1999

Gemini : A Gemini alone is a frightening concept to some astrologically minded individuals. Of course, I maintain that a Gemini alone is not reality because there are at least two or three different "personas" operating at any given moment. I don't worry about you guys.

You shouldn't be too worried, either, not this week. You start out the week with a lazy feeling, one that befits a good fisherman, an attitude that it just doesn't matter. Unfortunately, as the week gets older, you feel like there is something you are supposed to be doing, and yet... you just don't seem to get yourself motivated to get and maintain this contact with other people.

Really, you are going to relish a few moments of solitude at this point. It does you well. Besides, like I've suggested before, you're not really all alone, no Gemini is all alone in a situation like this.

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

26 March 2001

Libra: Many years ago, I finally realized that I am what I am, a male Caucasian with poor fashion sense and no rhythm. I'm not too sure about your sense of timing and rhythm, but the fashion sense – or apparent lack thereof – is a problem this week.

Rather than spend untold amounts of money of buying wardrobe after wardrobe, I gave it up and pretty much stick to loud shirts, shorts and sandals. [Or cowboy hats and endangered species boots -- in California.] Makes life a lot easier. I'd suggest you take a tip from my clothing collection as an easier way to approach a difficult time.

As much as you might be concerned about how we're all seeing you, and as much as you want to present the correct "look," realize that you share my fashion sense for the time being.

Something loud, tacky, maybe made of polyester, maybe a little wrinkled -- maybe something suitably different would work best. Why are we worried about what you look like? We're not, but sometimes the external image reflects what the inner landscape is like, and you might be a little confused. Instead of trying to blend in, following my lead in the apparel department is a good start. As far as rhythm and timing goes, you're on your own with that, but I suspect yours is still inherently better than mine.

17 October 2002

Aquarius: When I moved into my present trailer, I found that I had an extra cat litter tray. I just put it outside, a little under the trailer itself, as nice a spot as any to store the extra litter box. Gradually, the [Mistress of the House](#) [as she likes to be referred to] took to using that outdoor litter box. There are many theories as to why this is, why she prefers the outdoor, public utility rather than the private bath afforded here in the confines of my bathroom. At least one person has suggested that the cat must hate having to share a bathroom with me. I have another theory -- it's the view from her outdoor convenience. She has the whole of Shady Acres Trailer Park that she could use, but that one litter box is positioned so that it's both private and she has a decent view [even if it's from under a trailer.] What you're dealing with is similar. No, wait, it really is.

If you've ever changed the litter in a cat's box, you know what's coming up. It's not a pleasant task, but it's one of those chores us cat people have to put up with. It's like taking out the trash or scrubbing the bathroom, something that has to be done, even though the tasks aren't glamorous. Consider that part of your duties for this next few days. What really got me going, though, was that this is a time when you can examine some coincidence in your life, and understand it better. Near as I can tell, I want a bathroom with a view, too. The cat has the life I want. What can you do to make your life a little more like the exact life that you want? I'm thinking about cutting a hole in the roof so I can have a bathroom view, similar to hers.

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

28 November 2002

Leo: I was listening to a Bob Dylan CD [old recording, fresh CD], and not thinking, I looked at the clock, had to meet a client, and forgot about the CD playing. I jumped into the shower, and about halfway through, I heard something that I thought was the cell phone, or the beeper or the regular phone.

I crashed out of the shower, dripping wet, looked around, and found nothing. Old Bob was just launching into a harmonica solo. The shower was running, the music was blaring, and it was that hideous harmonica music.

To be honest, the tune usually evokes strong feelings, but at the moment all I could do was wonder if everyone felt like that was some of the worst harmonica music ever. I hope you're laughing at me, the sight of me in the front room of a trailer in Austin, dripping wet, the shower still running, and me, trying to figure out which electronic device is beeping, chiming, or ringing.

Got the image? I could've gotten really upset with myself--or that damn recording--but, for one, I've often found solace in the music and for two, it was my mistake, not anyone else. Jupiter is good. Mars and Venus, not so hot. Don't get upset at a clumsy error. Laugh at it. Or just stay away from bad harmonica players. You don't want to wind up tangled up and blue.

5 March 2003

MERCURY, METRO & MORE...

There's always got to be one, cute Mercury story. Being an astute student of astrology, and being aware of the current planetary dispositions, I carefully logged onto the CapMetro site and purchased my monthly pass, long before Mr. Mercury turned around in his apparent trajectory.

I didn't realize that I hadn't received the pass, conveniently mailed to me, until May 1.

Dig out the old email confirmation, fire off a note, and then, I realized that there was something else I needed to add to the note...

"Look, as a regular follower of the stars, and their paths, well, planets, mostly, I'm aware that Mercury, who rules communication, is in apparent retrograde motion, looks like he's going backwards compared to the rest of the planets' more orderly direction, and as such, it's no big deal. Don't sweat it, it's just a ruse of the planet's."

I had one weird as could be Friday afternoon. But I was also prepared. I was dressed in shorts that double as swimming togs, and I purposely left the bulk of pocket digital, battery operated stuff behind just so I could hit the creek on the way home.

My cell started ringing in the afternoon, and I was inundated with calls. By the time six rolled around, I was standing at the bus stop, arranging for work at an event, and what wound up, as I was wandering down Barton Springs Road, I made a half-dozen calls, and they all started out with, "Hey baby, I've missed you so..."

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

In my tired voice, none of the females I was reaching cared. Friday afternoon, it's unseasonably humid, not too warm, but torpid in a way usually reserved for later in the season.

I did arrange readings, well-paid party event, I did book a friend's wife in for some extra work, I did all of this, and smirking to myself, thinking, "Boy howdy, ain't you just a womanizer?" Which would be true until you stop and realize that there was no real romantic interest with any of the females I was talking with. All business.

At least it sounded good.

Cool dip in the pool, and some fine-as-could be rajas, poblano strips and cheese enchiladas for dinner.

I think one of the last calls was the funniest, as it involved food, and a Pisces that was inadvertently strapped for cash, so I offered to buy, and a Sagittarius.

"Yeah. Dinner. It'll be a like a ménage-a-trois."

She repeated the comment, and in the background, a loud "Eewww!"

At least it sounded good.

24 April 2003

THE BEGINNING OF THIS CYCLE'S MERCURY TALES

Being a dutiful son, not quite dutiful enough to scoot up to Dallas for Easter, and forgo the dubious pleasure of volunteering at the weekend event (conscriptation or press-ganged might be a better term), I did call.

Long chat with Ma Wetzels Scorpio self, and mulled over many matters of some importance. Health, welfare and so forth. I try to neglect her deplorable voting record as that just sets up unnecessary tension.

She's off, by now, to London, to go do what ever it is that she does over yonder. Pa Wetzels will be joining her soon enough.

I mentioned that I'd lost my copy of Pepys Diary, and she promised she would help further my education by picking up a copy for me, a real English copy as opposed to the annotated and relatively cheap American copy I've got. English book-binding always impresses me. Just feels more sturdy.

But since Mercury is stopped at 20 degrees of Taurus, as of now, I was digging through a backpack that I use from time to time. Mostly for laundry items that go the cleaners, or supplies for the office, like chocolate. A good fisherman always has the right bait on hand.

I hoisted it and wondered why it felt a little heavier than usual, I thought it only had one shirt in it. In the outside pocket of the pack? My dog-eared copy of Pepys Diary.

Isn't Mercury wonderful about dragging up lost items?



## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

30 August 2003

MERCURY RX TALES

"The rest of the story..."

I was wandering along the shores of Town Lake, or the Colorado River, depending on nomenclature, and I realized the whole back story for El Paso's Cafe Dali hadn't been told. Yet.

Wander back in years with me, I think it's been several years, Grace "the psychic lady" had put me up for a weekend, and we dined with her folks. Her daddy's a Scorpio, so me and him got along like a house afire.

Her daddy was a proto-geek, and I was, at the time, a nouveau-geek. He liked me and gave me a nickname, a term of affection, "Cool Arrow." "Cool" because, well, I am cool. "Arrow" because I was a straight shooter.

Now, not long ago, I developed a new taste for a slightly different afternoon beverage.

In Starbuck-ese, it's called a "doppio macchiato," however, one barista in SA told me it was really called a "curtado." Turns out, or so I think, he was pulling my leg.

See, that one feller, think he was a Mexican, told me that what I was asking for was really called a "pendejo" (pin-DAY-hoe). Then he made it with soy milk.

"That soy milk really accentuates the good roast of the beans," he was telling me.

Want to really impress the Spanish speaking folks?  
Know what I'll order next time?

"Me Cool Arrow. Soy pendejo, por favor."

13 April 2004

UNRELATED:

Despite the cold weather, not setting foot outside until the sun was well up in the sky, I managed to make it a whole day without wearing footwear. All depends on how one ranks and rates success, whether that measure is by money earned, hits on a web page, number of deals closed, the number of fish caught (and hopefully released), or, in my case, a whole day without having to wear shoes. I was hard at work, deep in production mode, getting material ready for this coming week.

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

3 June 2004

**Scorpio:** There's a barbecue [chain](#), originated in a town in Texas, and this one [chain](#) has about the best BBQ sauce I've ever tasted. I was curious about its ingredients, and I made the untimely mistake of reading the label. "Water, high fructose corn syrup, lard, pork lymph nodes, salt, garlic powder, nitrates, nitrites, nitrotes, nitrutes, ground up cigar butts, pocket lint, activated charcoal filters, javelina fur, BHT, BHA as a preservative...."

Ever get the feeling that sometimes, it's better not to know? That's the hazard of reading the label. Most of the excellent Scorpios I've ever been in contact with? They all want to know. Details. Exact details, specifics, and how to use this knowledge for the best of their Scorpio uses. Reading the label is a good idea. However, if you find yourself in BBQ place, just a little west of Austin? Can I recommend that you don't put on your reading glasses and look at the contents of that bottle of sauce? Might put you off your feed for a spell. Some things are unnecessary knowledge.

Sometimes, though, the inquisitive mind will get you in trouble. Some things are called "secret ingredients" for a reason. It's okay to be inquisitive. But try and not be too inquisitive. You wouldn't believe some of the other stuff on that label.

20 August 2004

FRIDAY FIVE

Is there still a Friday Five around? I don't know. Never did play well within the confines of the rules, but then, I've never really had much of a problem finding material to write about.

1. A couple of days ago, I was intrigued by Mistress Fredlet's question, who do you want to be when you grow up?
2. I always thought I wanted to be a rock star, but that would greatly interfere with my lifestyle, the teeming hordes of groupies alone would interfere with my solace while fishing. From what I can discern, my lack of musical ability wouldn't be much of an obstacle. Plus, I get worn out enough from working two days a week, I'm not sure I could tour incessantly.
3. I thought a reporter-at-large would be a good gig, too, but that one's not going to work, either. "We have an armed intruder, cover that story..." "Uh, did you say 'heavily armed'? I think I left the coffee pot on at home - I'd better skip this one."
4. There was a feller who worked the same circuit I do, way back when, always a sharp dresser. I'd figure I'd like to be like him, only be a professional gambler. But to do that? I'd have to win more than I do. As it is, I only rate poor amateur.
5. I've been writer, and had a secret desire to be classified as a writer, for years. First publication was artwork, then a poem, back when I was but a mere wisp of a lad. Now, if I could just combine a little Shakespeare, some fishing lore, and get around a topical subject, I might have a winner. I think that's who I want to be.

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

Thursday morning's mailbag contained a couple of highly complimentary notes. I might not be pleasing all the people all the time, but at least a couple of souls are enjoying my efforts and rewarding me with nice notes.

It's always a mad dash to get to the airport, what with Mercury confusing issues and so forth. I didn't want to be bereft of coffee beans when I return, so I had a last-minute dash to the store. Which reminded me about me selfless, undying love and adoration for all things Leo.

Just for the record, "I walked six miles, each way, in the snow, with bare feet, using barbwire for shoes, uphill both ways. Barefoot. In the snow. Uphill."

(Really, all that happened was I got stuck reading a [book](#) late into the night.)

The flight last night? Did I mention Mercury was retrograde? Did I mention I've found a sure-fire cure for Mercurial Mayhem? Two shots of airport espresso and a large scoop of Amy's Mexican Vanilla ice cream. Smooth, rich, creamy delight.

"Plane's two hours late?" High-pitched giggle,  
"Mercury's retrograde."

I half expected to start seeing tracers. Good thing I was wearing the wedding ring, one of them.

9 September 2004

SUSTAINED METAPHOR

Some months ago, I took a look at an upcoming scope and I hit upon – what I thought – was an ideal sustained metaphor. A theme that could run all the way through the scopes, for a whole 12 signs? I've tried it before, and I do this for my own amusement. Is it going to work? Gets a little repetitive, after a while.

I don't think I pulled this one off, but I did get the column finished in a timely and workmanlike manner. The ultimate test? When it goes live, one day in the future. Either folks will love it or they'll hate it. It was an amusing attempt. I thought the idea was brilliant - until I tried.

Unrelated:

I was pulling a four-inch Margarita (chartreuse) curly-tail grub on a 3/8 ounce weedless jighead through the water, more to watch its action than to really catch a fish. In the lake's clear water, I was admiring the way the tail fluttered. A tiny, itty-bitty black bass attacked it. Twice. Violently. As violent as a three-inch fish can - he was so tiny, he couldn't get his large mouth around the tail, much less up to the hook. But he did try! Love that, fish with attitude: "Looks good, I'll eat it. Even if it is bigger than me."

"It's my one night free, Virgo dearest, your call."

I tricked my buddy into calling me back, suggesting, since I hadn't seen her car in Shady Acres for the last few days, maybe she'd been abducted by space aliens. She called right back, assuring me she hadn't been abducted, and she blew off her previous engagement to dine with me. But between the call on her ride home and me arriving at the front door of her trailer, there was a little Mercury Mayhem.

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

"I knew I was getting cocky," she said, "thinking I got out of that Mercury Retrograde with no scratches. But when I went to the mail box today? After work? After I talked to you? Nothing but NSF notices. Then I thought someone hijacked my bank account. After 20 minutes on hold, I got it figured out, the State didn't do my direct deposit."

"Tequila soothes the chapped mind," I said.

"So I kept assuring the bank rep, the State of Texas hadn't gone out of business, and I hadn't been fired," she said.

24 March 2005

MORE "MERCURY FREAK-O-METER"

Subtitle: This time? It's personal.

(I guess I should trademark "Mercury freak-O-meter" but really, (tm) is too much work.)

The story starts with the way families, at least, the way my family interacts. Computer hardware used to be handed down, looking every bit like a typical patriarchal tree, where out-of-date and otherwise abandoned hardware goes from Father to first Born Male child, and from thence, on to the last in the line, Youngest Female.

I tapped the [Apple](http://Apple) website to see if the warranty was still good on an older model laptop, now in Pa Wetzels hands. I paid for the extended warranty because, in my experience, computer hardware either fails in the first 30 days, or shortly before the extended warranty period is over. 3 years on the old Titanium, and it didn't break (freak out, really) until that 2.5 year mark. That's a lot of miles, and a solid piece of hardware.

The extended warranty got the TiBook out to a service center and back in less than a week, at no cost to me. Other than not having the CPU handy.

I passed another laptop onto Pa Wetzels, and its warranty is still in effect. He called Wednesday morning, and I assured him that the hardware was still covered. Then I logged onto Apple, to check. According to the website, all they had a record of was 90-day "toll free tech support" for two items (I'm guessing last year's second iPod, a business tool. No, really, it saved me money.) And who needs tech support on an iPod?



## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

So I called. I had trouble speaking. I couldn't articulate the problem. When I finally got it out, I was able to confirm that the "book was still covered and that the extended warranty was tied to the machine's serial number. Not to my address. Nor to Sister's address, although, I did have to cough up her phone number.

There wasn't any level of frustration on my part, except for one area, in the whole series of information transactions: website.

Information I was attempting to get from the Apple site? [Click here](#), [click here](#), [click here](#), and still, the site didn't have what I was looking for. If I can't find data on a website in under three minutes, or less, I'm like so out of there. Why I called.

Made me think of a valid question, though, I mean, I know where everything is tucked away on my site, but how is the usability? Find what you want? Quickly? Easily?

30 March 2005

TWO-MEAT TUESDAY, NUMBER 13

More on Mercury:

Wind was up in the morning, strong and from the south east, so I opted for a flipping stick, and I was going to try working on a little fine tune to the casting skills. Using a baitcast reel isn't hard, it's the one where the operator has to thumb the line at the right point to prevent "professional backlash," which is nothing more than a tangled mess of line.

Some days, I wonder if I've forgotten more than I know, and I was working a jig through the creek bottom, certainly not anticipating any fish, but I was definitely enjoying hitting targets, trying to get a good thirty-foot pitch going. All about the rhythm.

I was doing so well, I was quite proud, for a few moments. Then, once again, pride goeth before the tangle.

I wound up with a nasty snarl. Eventually, I played out over half the line on the reel, maybe 50 yards or so before I got the mess untangled.

Halfway through the unknotting experience, I smiled to myself, almost a silly grin. Mercury. Retrograde. Can't fight it. So I'm sure I looked a little silly, grinning and wrestling with backlash.

I had an afternoon phone reading, and after that, a little fishing and then a quick catnap. The alarm went off. Twice. I dozed right through it. I woke up with three minutes to make a fifteen minute dash. Halfway there, I called up the client, "I'm running a little late, stuck in traffic you know," and at the same time, she was leaving me a voice mail, "We (~~We're?~~) running a little late," and she really was stuck in traffic.

So I wandered into the coffee shop, and she was right behind me with a new client in tow. I'm planning on seeing [Kinky](#) at the bookstore Wednesday night, so we were discussing plans while waiting to place an order.

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

"So we're going to the Crazy Lady before, then to the book signing, and...."

To non-Austin folks, and maybe even some of the more delicate Austin folks who never venture into a place like that, the Crazy Lady is a "gentleman's club." Or, as we say, it's a titty bar. The reason for the field trip, as I dubbed it, is the reputation that the dancers have - it's not a high-class place, at least, that's its street rep. Or, as my friend suggested, this is third and fourth hand data, the term that was bantered about was "skanky."

A massage class was gathering to study anatomy. One of the lads overheard our conversation and wanted to know what class it was that would take a field trip to the Crazy Lady. Much hilarity ensued. I seriously doubt I'll make the field trip portion of Wednesday's schedule. No "groping for trout in a peculiar river" for me (ad lib from Shakespeare's Measure for Measure.)

Any meeting with that [Libra](#) usually ends up at Amy's. Stopped at Jo's and fetched up three triple espressos. Wandered back to Amy's and I had mine packed with Mexican Vanilla. But on the menu, just as a special for the night?

Slick Fifty - Guinness (Amy's homemade) ice cream with espresso and Kahlua.

I wandered home, suitably wired. It was a strange night.

The mild weather meant that I could fish a little, too. Before midnight, the sunfish and catfish were hitting.

7 April 2005

[Aquarius](#): I wrote a short story, many years ago, where I tried to tell a familiar tale from a different point of view. The story was rejected by a couple of literary magazines, so I just put it in the "good try, not marketable" file and left it at that.

I was thinking about that story -- it's a familiar literary device these days -- and I was wondering if this was an idea that you could use in Aquarius land. The story I used was one of [Chaucer's tales](#), and I tried to tale it from the point-of-view of the much put-upon antagonist. The bad guy was always getting a terrible rap, so I tried to explain it from his world view. How everyone was always picking on him and how he was being mistreated, and if he had a union card, he certainly wouldn't be given such bad reputation.

Try my idea, under the last of the Mercury confusion, try looking at a tired situation, a tale that's been told many times, only, try telling it from the other side. Take the anti-hero, the bad guy, the evildoer, the one who usually fails, and see what that character's motivations, reactions, feelings and internal monologue is like.

It's about looking at some familiar situation and then, in the Aquarius mind's eye, rendering that scene from a completely different vantage point. Step outside, and look at the given scenario through the bad guy's eyes. Makes for an interesting way to tell a story -- even if the tale doesn't [sell](#).

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

27 July 2005

SURVIVING MERCURY WITH THE GRATEFUL DEAD

The Grateful Dead were one of the rock icons from the last part of the previous century. Which is odd, because, as a standard method - measure of success is the number of hits. Not really a hit-maker kind of a group. But the more I listen, the more I find "Americana" roots. A weird blend of country, and apparently, acid-influenced meandering material. The original hippie jam band. A rolling road show that had a true campaign quality with its camp followers. Plus, I doubt this was intentional, a following that taped the shows. First of the peer-to-peer file swapping?

"Red and White/Blue Suede shoes.

I'm Uncle Sam/How do you do?

Give me five/I'm still alive.

Ain't no luck/I learned to duck."

(Hunter - Garcia, [U.S. Blues](#))

I hit the "play" button while I was making morning coffee, and that song cycled up. To a certain point, it's become an anthem for me, just one line, I've been using it for years. Some of the best advice I can hand out: duck.

If only I could follow my own advice.

I tied a little spoon on the end of some leader, then a heavy cork, and launched it out into the lake. I've had some success with that arrangement. The problem I encountered - I can blame Mercury in apparent retrograde position - I had about seven feet of leader on a six-foot pole. As I started to whip the cork out, I felt something penetrate the back of my thigh. The rustle of shorts, a tiny pinprick, and tangled line falling down around my knee. Plus, right there, running through the shorts and into my leg? That tiny hook.

I clipped the line, and hobbled back into the trailer for surgery. In a flash, I had out the "diagonal wire cutters," and I clipped the hook off, leaving a little bend and barb still buried.

So a piercing really doesn't hurt. That one didn't. I managed to pull the tiny barb all the way through. Swab with alcohol. Attach a new hook to the lure, and tie it all back together. With less leader.

"I'm on the edge of an empty highway/howling at the blood on the moon."

(Hunter - Garcia, [Pride of Cucamonga](#))

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

28 July 2005

SOFTWARE & MERCURIAL MERCURY RX

Some items work well. Some are even cooler than I thought.

I accidentally clicked on a "feature" in the apple mail program, and discovered another nice set of utilities. Or a utility that makes it easier to work with the copious amounts of inbound correspondence. So that's another upgrade with happy results.

Overheard: Two neighbors were talking, and I had the kitchen window open, for the cigar smoke, so I could overhear a little snippet of the conversation, "Yeah, that one guy, long curly hair, always has a fishing pole? He never wears a shirt. Ever. Weird guy."

In my defense? It's summertime, last time I checked. Shoes and shirt are strictly optional. In fact, they don't make a lot of sense in 90 and 100 degree heat. But that could just be my take on the situation.

2 March 2006

(But I do live just like a monk.)

WORKING NOTES, MAGIC OF THE NIGHT

There will be no mention of brands, nor any links, in this brief wander through an Austin evening.

Mercury is about to turn backwards, in Pisces, as if that hasn't been figured out already. Means I'll be more distracted and yet, oddly peaceful, at the same time, Knowing why a problem exists doesn't fix the problem, but it gives me valuable expertise in working around the problem.

I was contracted as entertainment for a downtown convention. Good pay, usual hourly rates, early evening (supper time to some folks) slot, and since there wasn't a lot on the schedule, I'd agreed to this, some time in the distant past.

I put on a clean shirt, slid into a (passed the sniff test) clean pair of jeans, pulled on socks and boots, threw a laptop in the bag, and wandered off towards downtown, hopefully, a little early.

Forgot to buy a lottery ticket, but then, luck's funny, and I was guessing my number wasn't coming up. Not in a lottery way.

As I turned the corner onto Sixth Street, my original destination was blocked. Way it goes, sometimes, I do believe. Looked like about half-dozen fire trucks, EMS, and a command center truck, not to mention a couple of cop cars, plus the street was barricaded. Faint aroma of smoke, like something burning, still lingered. No smoke, though, for which I was glad, in as much as I don't care for the activity of the street, I do adore Sixth Street's historic building facades.



## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

I had half an hour to grab something to eat - I was starving - and get a couple of blocks up the hill to the hotel. Since my first choice was blocked, I settled on the next best solution, the first open Mexican restaurant. Had chips, two bowls of hot sauce, and the creme-de-la-creme, halfway through the first bowl of hot sauce, while waiting on fish tacos, I scooped a portion of a plastic wrapper out of the hot sauce. A lesser man would be offended. A less-adventuresome diner would be pitch a fit and demand free food, or walk out in a huff. Maybe a minute and a huff, to quote a certain movie star's line.

Me? I was hungry, in a hurry, the waitress was a cute little Scorpio, with those alluring smoky Scorpio eyes, and I couldn't be bothered because the bit of plastic proved that the salsa was fresh and homemade. Really fresh, like that afternoon.

Tacos were good. Maybe a liter or two of ice tea, and I was off, headed up the hill, thinking about the fire, worried that I didn't have a tie on, and that the nice, clean shirt would be all sweaty by the time I got there. I'd say something about the convention, but it's all a blur.

Clocked out, collected a check and stepped out of the hotel the wrong way. I had a client who lived at that hotel, once, so a misstep like that seemed odd. But I don't worry about minor details like an extra half-block.

I was pondering where I was going to stop for coffee, any of about three destinations presented themselves. Not like this is a problem, or, for that matter unusual, but I did run into a certain female (Taurus), and after a minute of conversation, stepped back onto the avenue to continue the discussion. Client/friend thing. We carried on for a while, friendly banter, and she allowed as how I looked "real good" in clean shirt and sport jacket.

Patrons showed up, and she had to jump back to work. I kept rolling towards home, and the coffee shop I stopped at? There was a lone person on the makeshift stage, strumming a guitar, and with a beautiful voice, singing some sad lament. I ordered the evening's single bit of fun, a shot of espresso, and I listened while she played.

Back on the street, the weather is almost perfect. I would call it perfect but I still had on jeans and that stupid starched shirt. Too warm for that kind of a monkey outfit for me.

I didn't have an iPod with me, so I was lost in my own thoughts, but considering where I had been, a lyric kept running through my head, an old Bob Dylan tune, as I recall.

"There was music in the cafes at night/Revolution in the air." That's Austin, at night, in March.

Culcullus non facit monachum.

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

4 July 2006

HAPPY JULY 4TH, MERCURY RX STYLE

One of my favorite places for "Texas coastal cuisine" is Water Street (something-something bar/restaurant/sea food emporium/raw oysters/live music/no live bait), originally, only available in Corpus Christi, TX. On Water Street, oddly enough.

Swinging through there, Sunday afternoon, long enough to grab a fabulous cup of coffee at Aqua Java cf., twin sisters who are Cancer - the baristas) and then some blackened Gulf Amber Jack at Water Street - it was in the men's room at the restaurant, I discovered the perfect analogy.

On the coast, everything is a little more casual - beach side, beach attitude, beach lifestyle, relaxed and unperturbed. So I go and do my business in the men's room, then step over to wash my hands.

They have one of the fancy automatic water spigots, just pass hands under the faucet and there's water running. And they have the automatic paper towel dispenser, too. Wave your hand in front of the little red eye, and off rolls a clean towel. That's the theory.

Mercury goes backwards 3, maybe 4 times in year. [No big deal](#). It's about [communications](#), electronic gadgets, and so on.

That paper towel dispenser was stuck in a loop. Looked like some one hit the machine with malice. Not much forethought, since it's only a stupid machine with a light-sensing dot, and even that doesn't always work too well.

To my untrained eye, I'd hazard a guess that some guy punched the side of the machine. It was slightly cocked from an original, upright position, and there was a paper towel hanging from the machine, sort of like a dog's tongue, lolling out.

I waved my clean and wet hand in front of the machine, and the machine burped, the eye flashed on and off, and nothing happened. I grabbed the extant hanging paper towel, and dried my hands. After I stepped away from the machine, another sheet of paper towel burped out.

Being of an empirical mind, and aware that I was still fishing for a perfect Mercury Retrograde analogy, I waved a hand in front of the red-dot eye again. Nothing. I stepped away from the machine. Another towel dribbled out.

I waved my hand a third time, in front of the red eye. Nothing. I paused. Nothing, I stepped away, a second sheet poured out to match the one I'd already coaxed out, previously.

Some folks will think that I was just playing with the machine, which, in and of itself, isn't very challenging until the wackiness factor is included. That, alone, doesn't make it appealing, or interesting for a long period of time. But the short stretch I was in the bathroom, that was enough to amuse me.

The machine worked, as intended, but at the inception of the Mercury trial and tribulations, the machine worked, as intended, but backwards. Or it sort of worked, just not the way it was intended, except, it did work, only not quite in synch with the user's demands.

In this next month, Mercury will start backing up and he's currently an evening star, barely visible right at sunset, but becomes an morning star over the next few weeks. Then Saturn, too. Plus Venus is in the mix, as well, clearly visible in the morning these days.

Impact and implications?

Mercury starts its errant path in Leo, but backs down into Cancer before too long, and we're going from a point where the idea has to do with passionate (Leo) energy dealing with a focal point in the emotional heart of the (Cancer) of the problem.

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

There's number of problem associated with Mercury in its apparent erratic pattern. But I kept thinking about that machine on the wall, the towel dispenser that was crooked. It worked, and when Mercury is retrograde, life goes on, like that paper towel machine. It sort of works. It works according to a cock-eyed internal logic that might - or might not - make any sense.

The malfunctioning, in the truest sense of the word, paper towel machine in the toilet at the restaurant alongside the bay, on the Gulf Coast, that was perfect example of what will - and won't - go wrong in the next few weeks. It's not drastic, just inconvenient. Or amusing, if you're like me, and the little things can keep me entertained.

19 July 2006

MERCURY AND MARS:

I was tightening the strap on my sandals, carving a new hole in said strap, and cinching up the shoes for a long walk. I whipped out a trusty pocketknife with a long, slender locking blade. I punched the hole, the buckle wouldn't buckle, so I punched it a little more, carved on it some more, finally, I worked the buckle into the new hole, my sandals were tighter and ready for long haul.

This left an extra flap of leather strap and using the same knife, I held the excess leather to my thumb, and I made to slice it off.

It's a sharp knife. Not the sharpest, but with a fresh hone, it can feel razor-sharp. Cut through the tough leather like it was butter. Created a nice incision on the ball of my thumb, too.

The next day, while I was slipping into the now-tighter sandals, my index finger slipped, and my nail gouged a tiny scrap of flesh out of a knuckle.

I can easily suggest that an errant Mercury caused the problems. But that's also a misrepresentation, too, since Mercury, in apparent retrograde motion, didn't cause the problem, it was how I approached the problems, and that's the real source of difficulty. In both cases, I was a little more sloppy than I should be. Mercury, Mars, or just me?

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

29 July 2006

MERCURY RETROGRADE

"Modest doubt is call'd

The beacon of the wise."

Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida (II.ii.17-8)

I rant about Mercury Retrograde, and in as much as I actually pay attention to such details, I'm a little more careful about the littlest planet's machinations. And while it's - strictly speaking - moving in a direct motion as of today, I've padded most of my predictions until the first of August, just to be safe.

I have no harrowing tales, no dramatic intrigues, nothing of that sort, just a much more mundane problem with Mercury. I lost my favorite cigar (lucky) lighter. It's tawdry little item, really, in the shape of a fishing lure, runs on pressurized gas, and it's been featured in a horoscope before. (cf., Leo.)

It serves at least two functions for me, one, the lighter brings me luck when fishing. So for the past weeks, there's been a relative paucity of fish. Second, it's a high pressure lighter for firing up a cigar in the face of a stiff breeze. At one time or another, the lighter has also served as a welding torch of sorts, being ever so much like a real welding torch, only, I guess, lighter.

It did go missing, when Mercury was retrograde. I know the lighter is waterproof, or water-resistant, as the scope points out. So I wasn't too worried, in case it got washed with laundry. But it didn't turn up when I finally got around to laundry from the last couple of weeks. I got a little worried, not so much what I would do - mechanical devices can be replaced if need be - but the intrinsic and sentimental value - plus the lucky charm aspect - none of that could be replaced.

The lighter did - eventually - reappear. It had been covered in a fold of leather, a simple leather strip that I use over the keyboard of laptop when I close the lid on said laptop. I had, on several occasions, done that crazy turn-everything-inside-out type of search. In a perfunctory way, of course, as I wasn't going to get upset over something that I knew wasn't really lost, just misplaced. Under the bed, in the laundry, desk drawers, kitchen, laundry again, I kept looking. Finally, I gave up. As I was getting ready for the ride to Dallas, there was the lighter, in the fold of leather. Right in front of me the entire time. Hidden, as it were, in plain sight.

I'm sure there's a homily herein, too.



## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

2 August 2006

MERCURIAL MAYHEM AND MORE

Yes, Mercury is no longer retrograde. And so on.

When I makes noises about "cleaning up from the mess," like I think [the weekly noise](#) alludes to, I'm reminded of a huge task I set forth at the beginning of this cycle, [a simple goal](#) of three books. It's all part of a cycle that is really five books in length, and possibly there's more in the works - I couldn't tell from the author's [website](#).

The books were originally released about six months to a year apart. In some cases, this is dense prose, it could easily take that long to read each novel. While it's written by a "science fiction author," the books are just pure speculation and some fantasy, a little history, and some romance dashed on top, just to make it all cohesive. But it's dense stuff. Heft the book in a bookstore before undertaking it. I'll promise the material doesn't suit everyone.

I'm fond - halfway through the last book - of the running gag between two characters - Newton (Sir Isaac) and Leibniz, arguing about who invented calculus. It's a math joke - of high order. For the geek group, bound to be a crowd pleaser.

I'm glad I undertook it the project of rereading the trilogy, but now that it's time to clean it all up, I'm still only part way through the last book. That's - to me - cleaning up from Mercury mayhem.

8 February 2007

Gemini: I was reading a web post about a sign along the wall at one place. "How do you expect us to raise cattle when you spend so much time shooting the bull?" At first glance, the basic Gemini is going to read that first line and naturally assume it's me taking a dig at the way the Gemini talks so much.

But I'm not, although most Gemini do present a fair target for such a comment. It's a comment that I'd like the Gemini folks to consider. Consider using it.

Cut through the accumulated male bovine by-product, and get to the heart of the problem. Mercury is backwards, and he's backwards in a place that's not good for the Gemini camp. Can't change that. How you deal with it, how you interact with the rest of the world?

That's the secret to success. You're welcome to swipe that comment, and use it yourself. I seriously doubt that Gemini will be producing too much verbiage; however, you will encounter other, non-Gemini folks who are. Reminds us of that sign, doesn't it?

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

13 June 2007

MERCURY, IMAGE AND IDEA

I was digging through the ice box, hoping to find a little something to stick in my mouth, just sort of a late afternoon snack attack. I was hungry, cleared some good miles on the trail, had a cold cup of coffee, sipping on some afternoon ice tea, and while I was digging through Frigidaire – and what did I find?

The ice box can be a pretty scary place, to start with. There's more bait than anything else in the freezer. Some live worms in the fruit cooler. And then? There was this half bag of “frozen, pre-cooked, tail-off” shrimp. Sealed bag. I opened it. Nasty. Kind of gone bad. Okay, really bad. I was about to toss it out, the first sacrifice to Mercury for the season, when I stopped. It was originally a two- pound bag, and there was just about two fingers of shrimp left. Thawed, frozen, thawed, and frozen a second time, then thawed, cold, smelly, starting to ripen a little, and good for the feral cats at the dumpster, or....

Perfect for bait.

Take something smelly, useless, not healthy for human consumption, and make use of it. Recycle, reuse, re-purpose? Perfect Mercury mix.

Mercury didn't make the shrimp go bad, I think they went bad after I ate the first pound and half, and let the rest sit in the ice box for a couple of weeks, so no, the planets didn't make them go bad. That's a fallacy. Although, dig around, I'm sure at least one astrologer can support a theory that the shrimp went bad because Mercury is retrograde. I can't recall, maybe it was a few weeks ago, wait, before the last El Paso trip, yeah, I think that was the last of the shrimp and salad combo dinners.

So when I discovered the formerly good shrimp now bad, as I was thinking about how happy some alley cats would be, I looked in my own freezer. There, next to the sorbet (it's a fruit group, right?) there was a bag of coastal bait shrimp, packaged up last time, for next time.

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

I got out another plastic bag, drained the smelly shrimp, added rock salt, and sometime, maybe in a few weeks or months, that will be ready again.

Planetary retrogrades, there are useful ways to put this energy to use.

But the world doesn't grind to a halt, when the planets go backwards. So what I do is dig for ideas. I try to keep a pen or pencil on my pocket and a scrap of paper. I'll scribble cryptic notes to myself, one-word reminders about a sign, or an instance, or an example. Something.

Better yet, point and click digital photography. Good example. I'll take hundreds, thousands of pictures, maybe tens of thousands of digital images in a year. Out of that? Hundreds, maybe just tens, maybe just a few images are worthwhile. Good time to sort through the [old material](#)? When the planets are backwards.

So back to the notion of writing, and stopping production work when Mercury is backwards. That doesn't mean that I'll stop everything, just generating new material. I get a chance to amuse myself with proof-reading, adding quaint links to punctuate points, and generally cleaning up mistakes I've made.

Then too, borrowing page from Sister (Gemini), I keep those scraps of paper, little notebooks and such, all on hand since I'll come up with a wealth of ideas during this time. Wonderful material that could be used as a perfect example to illustrate Mars or Venus, or any of the planets in action, and I'll make a note to myself. Good stuff to go back to when I feel a little stuck, in the future.

Nothing is more daunting than a blank page.

June 16 2007

#### DEALING WITH RETROGRADE PLANETS

Looking at the [ephemeris](#), this week, Mercury is at a stand-still. Mercury will be in apparent retrograde motion until July 7, 2007, and then, towards the end of July, Venus turns in apparent retrograde motion. July 27 to September 9, more or less. October 11 until the 31st? Mercury again. Mars, then, November 15 through January 30, 2008.

A faithful reader e-mailed and asked for guidance through this dark and difficult time. I continue to [travel](#) and work. It's simple, really.

Borrowing from my own work, it's easy to see a simple and reusable schedule. A process that can be duplicated and expanded as needed, a scalable solution to planet problems. Retrograde planets, especially the inner two, Mercury and Venus, as well as Mars, since this is a fairly common one, this material is easy to work with. My normal schedule is to write in the morning, with a simple goal of four pages of manuscript done before anything else. No breakfast, no clients, no nothing until I've done the four pages. Simple, easy goal. Works out to roughly a thousand usable, salable words, something I'm happy with, or, at least not dissatisfied. That's the start. There's a rhythm, a beat, sometimes music, sometimes great ideas, sometimes just material, but it flows. The point of creation is the happiest time, for me, or so it would seem. That's the fun part.

When Mercury is backwards, I'll stop working on new material. Plain and simple. I get a three week break from writing a new column, weekly astrology column. I've got a few of them done, almost six weeks' worth, so I'm safe to rest.

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

21 June 2007

Capricorn: [Mercury](#) is in a [backwards](#) position, on the opposite side of the [wheel](#) from you. Over yonder, in [Cancer](#). The -- almost -- full moon hits in [Sagittarius](#), right next to Jupiter, next week. This lends nothing but confusion and obfuscation to the Capricorn charts for this next few days.

While I'd love to clear it all up and make a crystal clear prediction, the point is, there is no clarity. It's like muddy water.

Here's a fishing hint, which, oddly enough, might work for [Capricorn](#), as well. When it's dark out -- like at night -- or when the lake's water is particularly churned up and muddy? A dark color bait seems to work rather well. Perhaps a little smelly, too, but most important, is the color. I tend towards a black plastic tube, maybe with some dark-blue metal-flakes as an adornment.

It's less about the fishing seeing the lure, the bait, and it's more about the fish being able to sense the movement, in the dark water. That's the clue, through and through. When the sight seems to be clouded, the next best solution is something that is nearly invisible and wiggles a bit. It's almost counterintuitive, but results count.

11 October 2007

Taurus: This is going to be a particularly rough Mercury backwards time for the dear, sweet [Taurus types](#). It's not an end, but it's far from being an auspicious time. At least, nominally. Point and problem is merely the communication thing with Mr. Mercury, opposite, and backwards. But this also highlights another, deeper theme, perhaps a concurrent theme to what's already being highlighted. There's a nuance that I can tickle out of the stars, and it's about a flowering romance. Or romance that could be flowering, only it's not. It isn't. Not just yet. This where I [earn my dollars](#), too, and this where a decent prognostication can save you some trouble. Understand that Mercury is retrograde, starting in Scorpio.

Understand that misunderstandings will occur, and grasp the idea that none of this will kill the deal, just delay it a little. Most of the Taurus folks I know are very willing to delay a little gratification. I'm suggesting you adopt my monk-like attitude. Goes a long way in keeping us out trouble. You'll get exactly what you asked for, only not on a mercurial timetable.



## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

3 January 2008

### MERCURY NOTES

A tale of two house sales. Real estate, a hot topic these days.

Mercury Retrograde gets a lot of attention. [Duly noted](#) for this year.

I have two first-hand experiences with Mercury Retrograde and real estate transactions. The first, an astrologer I consulted, that other person suggested that I time the sale differently. I was out of time, and out of patience, and frankly, I didn't like that particular astrologer too well. Bad bedside manner. The advice wasn't well-received on my part. I listed the place when Mercury was turning Retrograde. The good news is that I got an offer, and we reached an agreement, within days. This material is long lost in the "myth" section of my life, at this point. Just an advance warning, if someone is trying to track me down. Good luck.

But the data point is the transaction itself. While the listing and subsequent agreement to purchase occurred when Mercury was retrograde, the sale itself didn't close until Mercury was past the point where it started its retrograde pattern. Almost six months. Every conceivable delay encountered. A little lesson in Mercury Retrograde and what it means.

Run the screenplay forward about a dozen years. I sold another place, only I was timing this accurately with Mercury in mind. The place was listed for sale just after the moon was no longer dark, and Mercury wasn't yet retrograde. The sale closed when Mercury was backwards, but there wasn't a single hitch with that. I planned, and executed, according to Mercury being backwards. I allowed wiggle room.

Knowing Mercury and its influence, I allowed a couple of days. Didn't need it, but it was a good idea. In the first situation, the plan was conceived and executed under the influence of Mercury Retrograde. The results were predictably bad. The second time, I planned around Mercury, made allowances, and started well in advance of the influential period. It's all about timing, and execution.

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

7 February 2008

Aries: There are many [theories about dealing](#) with Mercury being [backwards](#). I should go over the rules [again](#), but I'm less thrilled at the prospect of trying explain material I've covered numerous times before. Mercury is going to be [backwards](#), in apparent retrograde motion, in Aquarius. Combine that with the rest of the planets now in Aquarius? There's a heady, steamy [mixture](#).

As a decent Aries, the biggest [mistakes](#) are easily blamed on Mercury. As an indecent Aries, though, you have to wonder if a single, small planet can really wreck so much havoc. Wreak havoc, I suppose, would be more [proper](#). Way it goes.

Mercury's Mayhem doesn't have to be too bad, not for Aries, not this time around, but I would implore you to use the usual cautions I tend to observe myself, no new work, wrap up old projects, keep a double check list handy, triple check, even, and consider going back over old material that you already covered. Editing is also a good idea at this time. And that term, editing, that doesn't just apply to written work. It could apply to just about every aspect of your life. [Consider](#) what you would trim and toss, if you could. I'm not saying do that, just consider it.

28 May 2008

FISH TALE

It was such a perfect solution, such a perfect answer on how to deal with the woe of Mercury being backwards. And so on and so forth. Mercury is currently in apparent retrograde motion in the tropical zodiac position know as Gemini. That much is obvious. Plain as can be. Dealing with that planet, and the effects of its apparent motion, that's the secret.

Went [fishing](#) with a buddy the other day. Excellent day on the lake. I took three pieces of equipment with me, a five and half foot Shakespeare Graphite (Lite) trigger pole with a small Ambassador reel wound with 17-pound [Spider Wire](#) mono with a quarter-ounce jig-head with a chartreuse 3-inch curly-tailed grub attached; a six and half foot All-Star Worm rod with a Bass Pro brand low-profile bait-cast reel wound with 15-pound test Stren-brand Big Game line with a dark (cheap) spinner bait tied on the end; and a seven-foot Shakespeare Graphite (lite) spinning reel with a Capricorn reel wound with [Power-Pro](#) 20-pound braided line with a weedless #3 hook topped with a purple worm.

The wind was stiff, early on, and I tossed that spinner bait right into the wind since I was aiming for the reeds again. Worked once, trying to get it to work again. A gust of wind slammed the lure short of its destination, smacked it right down into the water. The line kept spooling out. The result was a knotted mess.

Get upset? Why ever for? My buddy must have a few extra poles, and it wasn't like I was without equipment myself.

“Professional overrun, huh, throwing a bait-caster into the wind.”

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

He snickered, but not in a malicious manner.

“Reach into the glove box, there's a reel there, already spooled. Didn't know why I brought that one.”

[Curado reel](#), nice, real nice, spooled with Spider Wire 12-pound line. Snapped my reel off the pole, attached his reel, and I was back in business.

Mercury is like the tangled mess of fishing line, took me part of the next morning to undo my mess. My reel is back on the pole, and the reel has new line on it. The drag is adjusted a little tighter.

As Mercury confounds even the simplest of situations, there is a way out. There's a way to prevent problems from escalating. Swap fishing reels. Have a spare, a backup, a plan in case. Mercury will mess something up.

How bad?

Depends on how fast you can attach a new reel to the fishing pole.

23 September 2008

MERCURY RETROGRADE AND COWBOYS:

Drunk cowboys. Of the same family line as drunk rednecks. Not exactly the same, but similar.

Anyway, on San Antonio's fabled and storied Riverwalk, there I was, with my girlfriend. Evening weekend crowd, a little thinner than usual, but still, a few tourists lurking. We were probably headed to a coffee shop I know.

Ahead of us, weaving slightly, drink in hand, and I'm not sure, but I'll bet it was an alcoholic beverage, skinny cowboy kid. Must be between the age of 18 and 24, rough guess, too skinny for his jeans, which should've been tighter, but boots, a (faux) pearl snap shirt, and topped with a new straw hat. While straw isn't usually considered proper after Labor Day, that streamy evening on the Riverwalk? Looked just fine to me. I couldn't tell, but it looked like a turkey feather tucked into the hat's band.

He was moving just a tad slower than we were, but I reined in behind him. I know the type: drunk cowboy. Just like Mercury Retrograde.

He was jovial and happy, or so it seemed, but I was a little leery, and I didn't want to affront the lad in any way. Not that I couldn't take him, sober? I could disable him with one move. But drunk? I could wail away at his jaw, his face, soft body parts, usual pain receptors, to no avail. I know my cowboys. Whether he's ridden a bull for real, or not. Whether he's played in two-a-days. Or not. Not a chance I was going to take. He'd had, just an estimate, a blood-alcohol content a little over the legal limit to walk. Probably twice over the limit to drive. His judgement was impaired. Which worried me.

Not so much, I mean, I'm not all that typical of Texan, with a nod to that redneck comic, "I fish, I don't hunt..."\* No, it's just when I'm dressed in sandals and shorts, I look more like a beach person. In South

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

Texas, I get the California tag too frequently. So consider my attire, the sandals and shorts, Hawaiian shirt – compared to the more traditional cowboy attire the kid and his buddy had on. Then, too, consider the blood-alcohol content.

The weave is easy to recognize. The cowboy, real or drug-store, again, easy to spot. All I did was back off a few paces, give a wide berth to the drunk cowboy.

It's clear that a verbal transaction can go either way with a drunk cowboy. And it's clear he'd just as soon pummel me as drape an arm over my shoulder and talk like we're long-lost friends.

Mercury is like that. When Mercury heads in apparent retrograde pattern, like what's coming up? The easiest way to deal with it is to avoid confronting the drunk cowboy. A confrontation wouldn't bode well for me, either I get my ass kicked, or worse, I wind up with a new-found friend, slurring with alcohol-soaked breath, in my face. I'm not even sure which one is worse.

The way to avoid this kind of problem? Simple. Slow down. When a person (place or thing) starts to weave and act in a manner consistent with irrational behavior? Slow down. Let that person (place or thing) have its way. Stay out of its path.

Sometimes the most obvious solutions are easiest when Mercury is retrograde. And sometimes, when Mercury is retrograde? Good advice gets ignored.

The rest of the Mercury notes are [here](#), and the information on the upcoming Mercury Retrograde? That's in the regular [horoscopes](#).

\*I think the exact quote is, “I fish but I don't hunt, not because I think it's holier than thou to eat meat that's bludgeoned to death by someone else, no that's not it, it's too early and it's too cold.” Attributed to [Ron White](#).

8 January 2009

Pisces: The new year has started and the silly season is upon us. Mercury is backwards, and there isn't a lot that can be done to save you at this time. Not that you really need saving, either.

Point: Mercury is Retrograde.

Point: Mercury is in Aquarius.

Point: Venus is in Pisces.

Point: you're a Pisces.

Like I've suggested, it all points to the silly season being upon us. Outlandish goals, declarations of "true love," and all other manners of silliness? Watch it. If it's not you making the declarations, perhaps someone is foisting this upon your gentle Pisces nature. And that's the problem between the two inner planets, Venus and Mercury, there's a little bit of confusion.

I'd take all of this information and treat this like it was the beginning of what will be a long and tortured silly season. Never underestimate the lack of common sense in other people, other signs. Which is no excuse for this to affect you, but it probably will.



## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

12 January 2009

### [Mercury is Retrograde!](#)

WHEEEE!

I feel like a kid careening down the hill in an undisclosed-type of a wheeled-conveyance, lacking lateral, directional stability. I changed up the [lecture series](#) and that bombed miserably. Not that I care too much, I was trying to do something to keep me interested. What I found was it was time to address the Mercury concerns. Not a good time to launch something new, unless, of course, Mercury is retrograde in the natal chart – that changes the whole outlook.

ASTROFISH.NET – Premium Blend!

Mercury Retrograde, come on, the guidelines for this year, I put them at the beginning of the [Xmas Horoscopes](#), but that's the first one we start with. Mercury backs down from a position in an Air Sign (this week is Aquarius – an Air Sign) to a late point in Capricorn, before this is all said and done with. Capricorn – dirt sign.

The symbolism should be apparent – the element air, the starting point? Air, like thought process. Up in the air?

Mercury goes around the sun approximately every 88 days. Takes us a year, so that's about three, maybe three and half into our year. Planets tend to move in the same direction as the Moon, only not as swiftly. When Mercury, as the conductor of commerce, appears to stall and moves in pattern not consistent with the early understanding of observed phenomena, this is Mercury in Retrograde.

Patterns emerge, too. Like taking the concepts and plans and anchoring those ideals, which is what this is all about.

The other afternoon, I was chatting up my (Scorpio) mother. She was complaining about my horoscopes and then, bemoaning that Mercury was retrograde. I pointed out that the meaning of this pattern, especially now, since she's a water sign, it has nothing to do with her, personally. Too much. All it means is that there was something she should've looked after before, only she didn't. At that moment, in our conversation, she was headed into the garage to find some long-lost paperwork she needed to finish dealing with my father's will.

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

ASTROFISH.NET: Quality is Job One

Something she should've dealt with before, and – for whatever reason – she hadn't done yet.

That's what Mercury Retrograde is about.

Another thought came to mind and this ties into that whole “Secret” thing, the bland little book about the law of attraction. The point is, looking for bad things to happen? Is there a conscious willing of events to turn sour?

A common occurrence, from my perspective? I just started pulling this material together, but it makes more sense, as this is a typical expression, “I knew it was going to fail. Figures it would happen when Mercury is retrograde.”

Why I never set the bar too high, no outrageous expectations, no big let down.

I know I've written about this before, but one year, when Mercury was backwards like this, I was preparing some promotional material, a postcard mailing for the minimalist mailing list I maintain. Seemed to be the most effective marketing I've ever used. While it was good? I printed up a hundred with the wrong date for an event. Way it goes.

Food Allergy Caution: ASTROFISH.NET is produced in a facility that processes nuts

One of my favorite examples of what to do when Mercury is retrograde? Pay attention, I'm an astrologer, I live by this stuff, guided by stars, Fishing Guide to the Stars, hello? Anyway, I cease working on new material. I don't write anything new that I get paid for. Doesn't mean I stop writing, doesn't mean I stop altogether, I just don't work on new stuff for pay.

However, I have a little side project – where you're reading this – and that's something I can explore when Mercury is retrograde. Long-winded explorations in text. Myth, metaphor, metaphysics all mashed up.

## [ASTROFISH.NET](#)'S MERCURY IN RETROGRADE

So dealing with a Mercury retrograde? Lowered expectations, not so much “new stuff” as more – like as I suggest in the [scopes](#)? Covering by exploring or expanding upon material that was previously covered.

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

7 May 2009

"Smatter with your gossips, go."

Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet [III.v.171]

Taurus: As Mercury moves in its retrograde pattern, it's happening right on top of your Taurus self. This means? This means you're going to get a good dose of the usual "Mercury is retrograde" mayhem going on. Swirling around you. A veritable feeding frenzy of activity, all occurring in -- right on top of your Taurus head. Maybe not literally on top of your head, but close enough.

Okay, this horoscope is like the sign, "Low Bridge Ahead," and the top of your Taurus head is like my head, we share a unique way of finding the low beam. The "watch your head" comment couldn't be more appropriate. That's the warning.

Got it? Whether you choose to observe this warning, whether you select the warning from the plethora of choices you're getting these days? Up to you. I'm not saying you have to stop. I'm not saying you have to slow down. I'm not giving you that guidance.

With Mercury in apparent backwards spin, though? Think about the sign, the "Low Clearance," the "low beam ahead," the "duck your head, fool," comment from me. I can see comedy here, as you listen to me, turn around and run smack into the lower object, the low beam, the low bridge, just as you turn around and laugh at my advice. Me? I can blame Mercury.

7 May 2009

[Scorpio](#): I've used this tale before, but it so fits with Scorpio, and Mercury being [retrograde](#) in the sign that is on the opposite side of the wheel from you -- [Taurus](#). Mercury is retrograde in your 7th House, more or less. I'm inclined for less rather than more, but that's the way the number crunchers would like this to stack up.

What this is like, it's like a certain fish I used to catch. Same damn fish. It was a little earlier in the spring, a bass, a girl bass, and she was bedding at one spot, and I used to annoy her -- or tempt her -- I was never sure which one, and I caught that same fish a couple of times.

Not exactly a quick a study. What that fish lacked in mental agility, she made up for in "Bass Attitude." Which is why that's a favorite fish, but don't get sidetracked. Same bait, a Power Worm with a Tail, same time, over and over.

When your significant -- or insignificant other -- baits you with the same bait, and your Scorpio self keeps biting on the bait? Can't say I didn't try and warn you, first. With that one kind of bait? I think it's the action of the tail that always gets my attention.

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

10 May 2009

### MERCURY MESSAGES

Girlfriend e-mailed, set up a lunch date. No big deal. I mean, nice looking lass, hot, and all that, but yeah, just lunch. Time was set for 11:30, place was set, Tex-Mex.

Quelle surprise, non?

“Pick me up?”

“Yeah, I'll meet you there?”

“Sounds good.”

At 11:30 I was dressed and waiting. Ten minutes later, I get a text, “Where R U?”

Waiting on you to get me.

“Thought you'd meet us here.”

The Mercury message? Is it worth arguing that I was, indeed, correct, and that the “paper trail” bore out my agreed upon arrangements and that I was, indeed, due for a ride.

The question isn't whether or not I was right, which I was, but whether I wanted to argue and be right? And walk home. Alone. In the cold. Or?

“OK Mr. Smart Guy, is it Mercury Retrograde?”

Yeah I'll call it that.

18 May 2009

BREAK IT ON DOWN

Mercury Mayhem & School Kids:

Another Mercury Retrograde pattern emerged, as I was watching a teacher herd school kids along. Kids were somewhere between four and seven years old, be my guess. I can't get any more accurate than that because I have zero hands-on experience with kiddies, other than the adult form. Adult Children? Yeah, and there's not much difference, except size.

Which was part of the point. So the adults and adult children can work from this. It was about the way the teacher was herding. The long line of children, snaked along, in a fairly orderly row, the children meandering a bit, but to keep order? The teacher had to cover three times as much ground. Front, back, lead the front again keep the kids pointed in the right direction, and I got wore out just watching.

Easily took three times as long to march the kids from one point to another. Which speaks highly for the form of marching in formation rather than wandering willy-nilly, like me. Worse when I'm trying to transcribe notes on the phone and walk.



## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

17 September 2009

"The excuse thou dost make in this delay  
Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse."

Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet [II.v.33-4]

Virgo: There's this one Virgo, and between Mercury's pattern and Saturn, the two line up now, there's this one Virgo who needs to hear this. Or read it, really. When I'm tying a lure onto my fishing pole, when I'm attaching a piece of fishing hardware -- usually ends in a myriad of hooks -- I've learned to leave a small amount of fishing line as "extra." This tail end stuff? What happens? With monofilament line, as the line itself is stretched by a big fish? That tiny little bit of fishing line -- the tail end -- gets sucked back towards the knot. It's little bit of slack in a supposedly steady-state environment. As it turns out, the knot isn't so much a fixed object as it's a moveable one. More fluid dynamics and less physics, although there is an element of both when a big fish hits the end of the line. So if you tie a knot, or make a similar "steady-state" arrangement?

Leave a little slack in the process, just, like, you know, in case.

29 September 2009

[MERCURY RETROGRADE AND THE MOTEL](#)

This isn't about the fishing, flowers, or the weather, or the location, it was about the hotel I stayed at - during Mercury Retrograde, at the coast. I knew, ahead of time, that the place had a weird (to me) internet thing. Wired connections only. Make sure to take a laptop with an ethernet connection. Then, make sure to take an ethernet cable. While the hotel might be able to provide some, as I recall, it was spotty, at best.

They have, the hotel, added wireless networking. However, that's a weird one. Blame Mercury being retrograde? Sure, works for me.

There's another strange connection - or lack of connection - with this one motel. Ground floor? Used to be bay-side only, but seems to have extended to the whole ground floor: no cell connection. Strange as can be, and oddly refreshing.

No cell connection means no phone. Makes the holster-clip cell saddle almost superfluous. Almost.

Like many of the "fishing resort" motels and lodges along the Texas Riviera, this one motel has a fishing dock. When Mercury was retrograde, I fully anticipated disrupted communications. In the past, I've been able to get cell reception while on the dock. Usually while fishing. Or feeding the fish, as the activity might be better named.

## PORTABLE MERCURY RETROGRADE

“No service.” Has something to do with the cell phone's carrier. I'm unsure of the details. No handset information; however, there was another anomaly, the wireless signal. So I could get WiFi on my phone, just not voice. Not bad. Wasn't a terribly fast connection, still, something was better than nothing. I'd have to step out to the dock to send and receive [e-mail](#). Just as a curiosity, though, the same WiFi didn't work in the room I was booked into. Did the first night, but I had to drag out that ethernet cable before the end of the first evening.

For starters, I took an older laptop to the coast. Built-in Ethernet. Then, I fully expected the cell not to work in the room. Didn't bother me that my phone didn't work almost anywhere in town, it was a vacation. WiFi worked fine at the dock. Just meant I should fish more. There's a Fishing Guide that I've used to explore the bay's backwaters, and he knows his way around well enough. Again, problems with communications, and we never hooked up that time.

Issues? Mercury. Retrograde. Deal with it. Or, like me? Great excuse to be disconnected.

The message, like on the face of the phone?

“Searching...”

THE FINE PRINT:

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### Mercury in Retrograde Post Script – FUTURE DATES

2010:

17 April-11 May | Taurus

20 August - September 12 | Virgo

10 December - 30 December | Capricorn

2011:

30 March - 23 April | Aries

2 August - 26 August | Virgo

24 November - 13 December | Sagittarius

2012:

12 March - 4 April | Aries

14 July - 8 August | Leo

6 November - 26 November | Sagittarius

2013:

23 February - 17 March | Pisces

26 June - 23 July | Cancer

21 October - 10 November | Scorpio

2014:

6 February - 28 February | Pisces

7 June - 1 July | Cancer

4 October - 25 October | Scorpio

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2015:

21 January - 11 February | Aquarius

18 May - 11 June | Gemini

17 September - 9 October | Libra

2016:

5 January - 25 January | Aquarius

28 April - 22 May | Taurus

30 August - 22 September | Virgo

19 December - 8 January 2017 | Capricorn

2017:

9 April - 3 May | Taurus

12 August - 5 September | Virgo

3 December - 22 December | Sagittarius

2018:

22 March - 15 April | Aries

26 July - 18 August | Leo

16 November - 6 December | Sagittarius

2019:

5 March - 28 March | Pisces

7 July - 31 July | Leo

31 October - 20 November | Scorpio

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2020:

16 February - 9 March | Pisces

17 June - 12 July | Cancer

13 October - 3 November | Scorpio

2021:

30 January - 20 February | Aquarius

21 May - 22 June | Gemini

27 September - 17 October | Libra

Post Script:

“The Rodeo goes on forever and Fiesta never ends.”

