

# Astrological Influences in Effect at the Time of the Three Major NASA Accidents



NASA pm  
NATAL CHART

July 29, 1958  
12:30 PM  
Daylight Saving Time  
Washington, D.C.  
38°N53'42" 77°W02'12"  
Time Zone: 5 hours West  
Tropical Placidus



CALL POLICE TO  
REPORT SPACE  
SHUTTLE DEBRIS



Marcha A. Fox  
[www.ValkyrieAstrology.com](http://www.ValkyrieAstrology.com)

# **Astrological Influences in Effect at the time of the Three Major NASA Accidents:**

**1967 Apollo I Fire  
1986 Space Shuttle Challenger Disaster  
2003 Space Shuttle Columbia Accident**

**Marcha A. Fox  
B.S. Physics**

# **Astrological Influences in Effect at the time of the Three Major NASA Accidents, *i.e.* the 1967 Apollo I Fire, 1986 Space Shuttle Challenger Disaster and 2003 Space Shuttle Columbia Accident**

**Author:** Marcha A. Fox, B.S. Physics

## **Abstract**

*All three major NASA accidents occurred at the same time of year, between January 26 – February 1, though they were separated by several years. Investigation into the time of NASA's "birth" revealed that this particular week would represent the agency's solar opposition period. The NASA birth chart was developed using the best possible information combined with astrological computer program rectification to determine the most likely time of "birth".*

*Transits and lunations for the dates and times of the accidents were analyzed as well as some near misses that averted tragedy in spite of challenging circumstances and one entirely nominal shuttle launch that occurred during the solar opposition period. Numerous common malefic aspects attended all three accidents, which were further exacerbated by close orb lunations. Near misses and the nominal mission studied lacked the additional transits involving Mars, Saturn and Pluto.*

## **Introduction**

It seemed more than coincidence that all three major NASA accidents occurred at the same time of year, albeit several years apart. The Apollo I fire that killed astronauts Ed White, Roger Chaffee and Gus Grissom occurred January 27, 1967. The space shuttle, Challenger, was lost nearly exactly nineteen years later on January 28, 1986, killing teacher, Christa McAuliffe, and astronauts Judy Resnik, Ronald McNair, Dick Scobee, Greg Jarvis, Ellison Onizuka and Mike Smith. The space shuttle, Columbia, was lost February 1, 2003 along with its crew that included Rick Husband, David Brown, Laurel Clark, Kalpana Chawla, Michael Anderson, Ilan Ramon and William McCool. NASA, the most glamorous and grandiose of government agencies, also has a tendency toward calm and understatement, *i.e.* the famous Apollo XIII line, "Houston, we've had a problem"<sup>1</sup> when a chunk of the spacecraft blew off on the way to the Moon. Another example of understatement is the use within its ranks of the term "bad day." Everyone at NASA knows what that means. And there is no question that the time between January 26 and February 1 constituted "bad days."

## **NASA's "Time of Birth"**

After becoming a student of predictive astrology it occurred to me that there was undoubtedly some astrological influence common to that time of year. I did a bit of research to determine when the National Aeronautics and Space Administration was "born." This turned out to be July 29, 1958, when President Dwight Eisenhower signed H. R. 12575, the "National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958", into law in Washington, D. C.<sup>2</sup> That information alone was sufficient to provide some insight-- all three events occurred at solar opposition.

Desiring more detail regarding the time so I could cast a more accurate chart, I set out to find out the actual time that H.R. 12575 was signed. According to the NASA History Division, even an hour by hour accounting of the President's day did not mention the actual hour.<sup>3</sup> I would have expected that such a bill would have been signed with much fanfare, but due to political factors involved in creating a civilian space agency, it was apparently done rather quietly. (Supposedly, knowing the glacial speed of the Pentagon, they gave the Department of Defense a very short review period of the bill and then essentially slammed it through before they realized what had happened.)

Assuming there had to be a record somewhere, I then inquired with the National Archives and Records Administration, which yielded more details, but still not the hour. However, they noted that two press conferences were held that day and no mention was made at the morning conference of the signing of the bill. Following the 4:30 p.m. conference, press secretary, James Hagerty, told reporters that the President would shortly have a

statement for them on a bill he had “just signed” and indicated it was the Space Agency bill.<sup>4</sup> This implies that the bill was signed in the afternoon. Apparently the President’s printed statement was handed out at the end of the press conference.

Related to this dilemma is the lack of agreement regarding what constitutes the “birth” of a business, or in this case, a government agency. While some would argue that it occurs when a business obtains its license or, in this case, when the agency became law, others believe the “birth” occurs when they first open their doors to customers. This could be interpreted as when NASA began official operations in the beginning of the fiscal year on October 1, 1958.<sup>5</sup> Or was it “born” when the President’s statement was handed to the press?

### Rectification Results

Believing that the date of July 29 was sound due to the obvious implications of a solar opposition, I decided to try to identify a candidate time using the rectification feature of the Kepler astrological program. I used dates I was aware of, i.e. the major accidents as well as the Moon landing on July 20, 1969 and the first space shuttle flight on April 12, 1981.

Assuming that the document was signed during working hours, I started with 8:00 a.m. I hit major pay dirt when I tried 10:00 a.m. The rectification points for these accidents as well as the other events for that time were an amazing total of 7578 points. The Challenger accident scored 1982 points in the Transit to Natal; the moon landing scored 3873 in the Transit to Progressed; Columbia registered as 129 points in Transit to Natal and 236 in Solar Arc to Natal. Later, as I investigated what aspects were occurring at the time, I was surprised they weren’t even higher, but I don’t believe that House location is included as well as other factors that require the astrologer’s eye and experience. When I ran another rectification for 5:30 p.m. I likewise hit high probability with a total score of 10,953.

### Chart Characteristics for Candidate Birth Times

I decided to study both “birth” times to see how they compared, the results similar enough to convince me that while the birth time is undoubtedly important, aspects for major events can still be identified regardless. Having a reasonable degree of confidence that one or the other time was correct, I cast two Natal Charts. Bear in mind that the Natal Sun is in Leo for either birth time, making it NASA’s ruling planet as well making the fact that it was at or near solar opposition for all three major accidents slightly more significant.

Figure 1 (right), NASA’s A.M. Natal Chart, cast using the 10:00 a.m. time, showed the agency was a Leo with a Virgo ascendant and Capricorn moon, MC in Gemini. As someone who has worked at Johnson Space Center in Houston for over 17 years, the personality implications were apparent. The high-minded arrogance of Leo; the precision and detail of Virgo; the ambition and hard work of Capricorn and the two personalities of Gemini, apparent to an insider observing its public image versus internal politics.

On first glance, major features included two overlapping T-squares, one squaring off the Ascendant with the MC and Saturn and the other squaring the Sun with Neptune and Mars. Jupiter and Neptune in the 2<sup>nd</sup> House bode expansion (or possibly budget over-runs?) along with a touch of fantasy regarding its future assets. Saturn in the 3<sup>rd</sup> definitely enhanced the intellectual effort required to literally “go where no man had gone before.” The fact that it’s retrograde could bespeak delays, bureaucratic policies and possible power plays. There was something

*NASA am*  
NATAL CHART

July 29, 1958  
10:00 AM  
Daylight Saving Time  
Washington, D.C.  
38°53'42" 77°02'12"  
Time Zone: 5 hours West  
Tropical Placidus

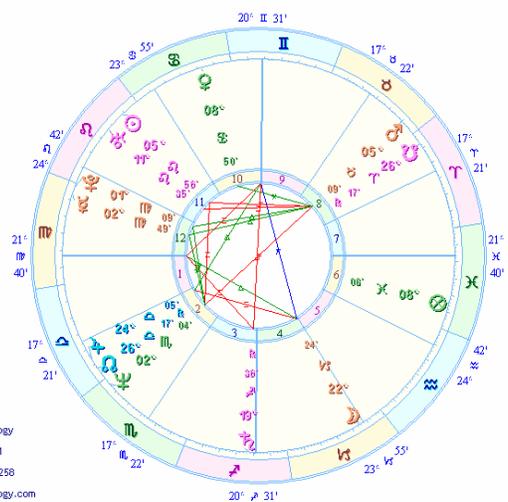


Figure 1

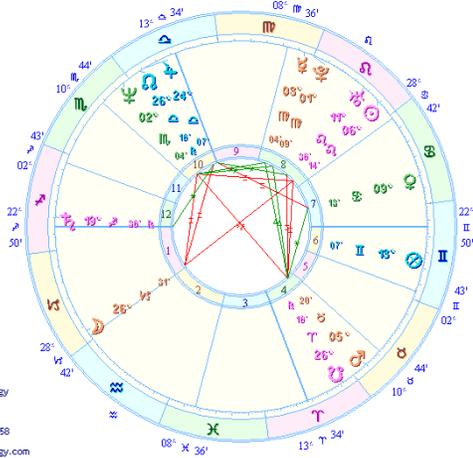
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whimsical about the Moon in the 4<sup>th</sup> House of home and personal environment with its implications for future exploration. And then there's Mars in the 8<sup>th</sup> House, definitely not a good placement for an agency involved in high risk activities. On the other hand, Venus in the 10<sup>th</sup> assured public support, even adoration; Uranus in the 11<sup>th</sup>

promoted teamwork for innovation. Pluto and Mercury in the 12<sup>th</sup> House of hidden elements and the subconscious could influence the spirit of discovery and communicating the mysteries of the universe far and wide.

**NASA pm**  
NATAL CHART

July 29, 1958  
5:30 PM  
Daylight Saving Time  
Washington, D.C.  
38°53'42" 77°40'12"  
Time Zone: 5 hours West  
Tropical Placidus



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**Figure 2**

Figure 2 (left), NASA's P.M. Natal Chart, using 5:30 p.m. as the birth time, resulted in a Leo Sun, Sagittarius Ascendant and Capricorn Moon. The Ascendant and MC were no longer Square, eliminating one T-Square. Sagittarius, with its high-minded, intellectual interests was appropriate as an Ascendant and the Capricorn Moon fit the hard work and seriousness required for literally stellar accomplishment. Saturn in the 12<sup>th</sup> House, Conjunct the Ascendant, also fit the required work ethic. The Sun, Mercury, Uranus and Pluto were all in the 8<sup>th</sup> House of death, sex and other people's money with Mars now located in the 4<sup>th</sup> House. Any NASA insider knows first-hand of the infighting and

competition between its Centers and Programs. Venus in the 7<sup>th</sup> could bode well for public relations and Neptune in the 10<sup>th</sup> could easily represent the dreams and aspirations associated with its mission. The majority of major aspects remained the same as for the 10:00 a.m. birth time.

**Documentation Allowed to Rule**

So thus NASA's personality was set in the stars just like anyone else. While House and Moon placement varied with the two times, the basics fit. Since I had more documentation supporting the afternoon "birth time" and my goal is to be as scientific and objective as possible, that is the time I used for this analysis. The astrologer in me preferred the morning time because I intuitively liked the House placements slightly better, but the physicist argued convincingly for the afternoon. C'est la vie.

**Lunations**

Transits and lunations are known for triggering Natal and Progressed chart features into actual events. As expected, in all three accidents, new and/or full moons had occurred in close orb to major aspects. With the Sun at the apex of the T-square, a lunation set it off in all three cases.

Event Date	Lunation		Sign	Aspects
	Date	Type (F/N)		
27 Jan 1967	26 Jan 1967	Full	05 Leo 37'	Conjunction w/ Natal Sun (06 Leo 14') activated Natal T-Square. NOTE: Full moon transit chart (Figure 3) contained a Grand Water Trine comprising Neptune, Jupiter and Saturn as well as an opposition between the Moon and Mercury. Biwheel with Natal Chart (Figure 4) shows Full Moon/ Neptune/ Sun/ Mars Fixed Grand Cross. Full Moon was in 8 <sup>th</sup> House.

Event Date	Lunation		Sign	Aspects
	Date	Type (F/N)		
28 Jan 1986	25 Jan 1986	Full	05 Leo 45'	Conjunction w/Natal Sun (06 Leo 14') with 29' of orb activated Natal T-Square. Full moon transit chart (Figure 5) contained Fixed Grand Cross with the Moon opposite Venus and Mercury, Mars square Jupiter and Pluto square the Sun and Venus. Biwheel (Figure 6) emphasizes the Grand Cross with transiting Mercury, Sun and Venus squaring Natal Mars and Natal Neptune and Natal Sun square Pluto.
1 Feb 2003 (Launch date 16 Jan 2003)	18 Jan 2003	Full	27 Can 55'	Full Moon transit chart nondescript (Figure 7). Biwheel (Figure 8) shows opposition to Natal Moon (26 Cap 31') with Full Moon within 1° orb of 8 <sup>th</sup> House cusp, activating the Natal T-square and the 8 <sup>th</sup> House generally, which contained Mercury, Pluto, Uranus and the Sun with Jupiter in transit. Transiting Pluto was conjunct Natal Saturn which is within 3° 31' orb of the Ascendant. Transiting Mars was square Natal Pluto and the Full Moon squared the North Node.
1 Feb 2003	1 Feb 2003	New	12 Aqu 09'	New Moon transits (Figure 9) show Jupiter opposite the New Moon & Neptune stellium. Biwheel (Figure 10) shows opposition to Natal Sun (06 Leo 14') with wide orb. However, it was well within orb for the Sun. The biwheel doesn't show it as dramatically as the others, but the opposing Sun activated the Natal T-square, creating a Fixed Grand Cross. However, New Moon was also opposite transiting Jupiter, which was conjunct Natal Uranus in the 8 <sup>th</sup> House. This New Moon occurred a mere three hours before the accident.

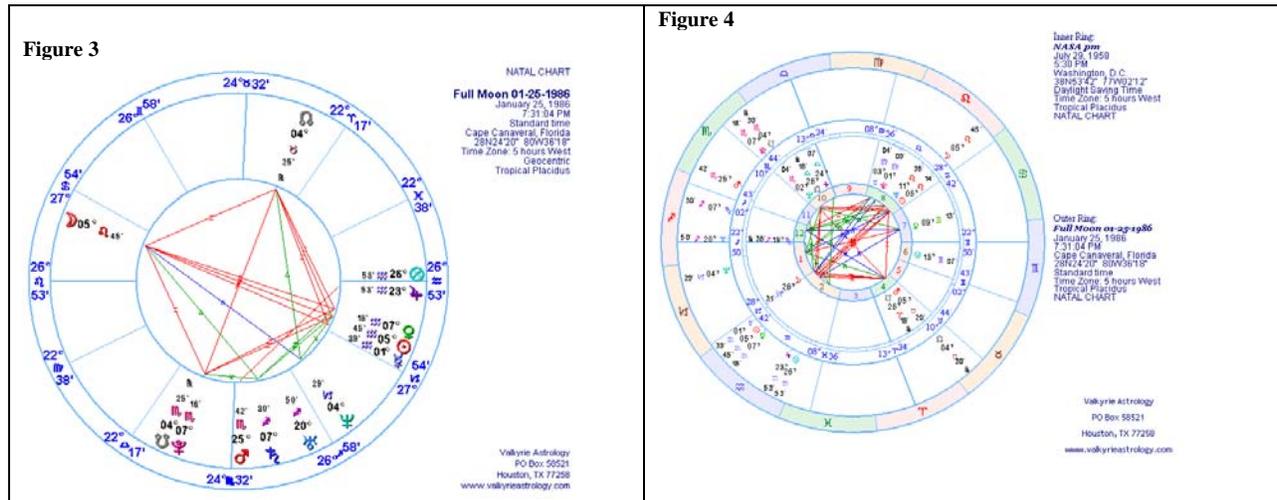


Figure 5

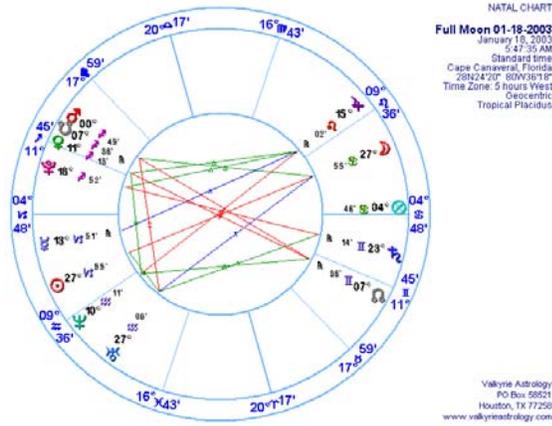


Figure 6

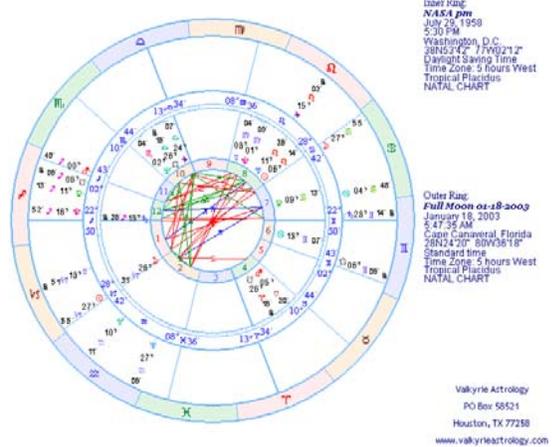


Figure 7

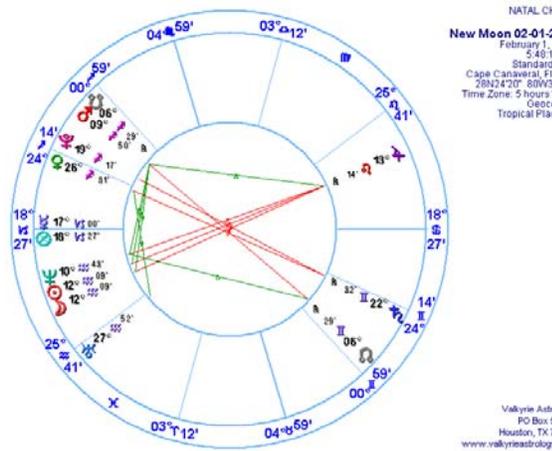


Figure 8

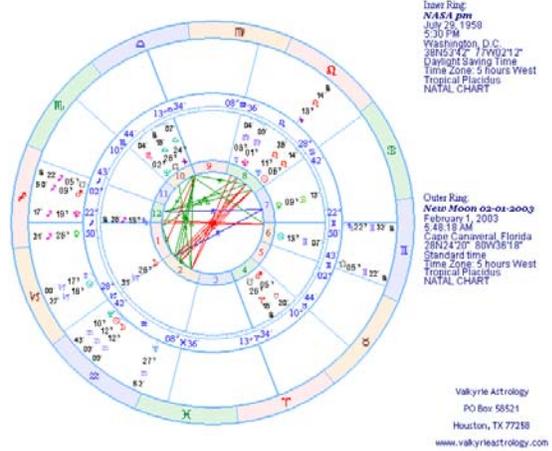


Figure 9

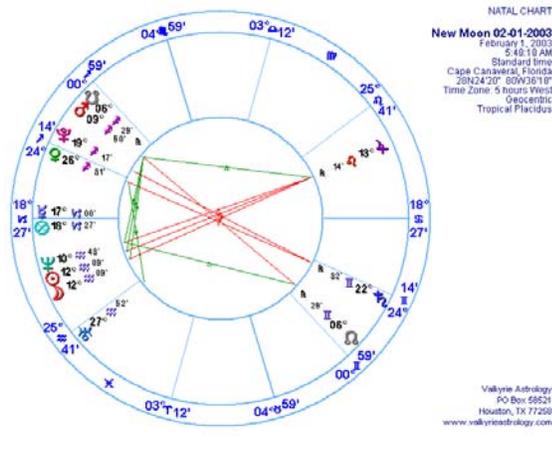
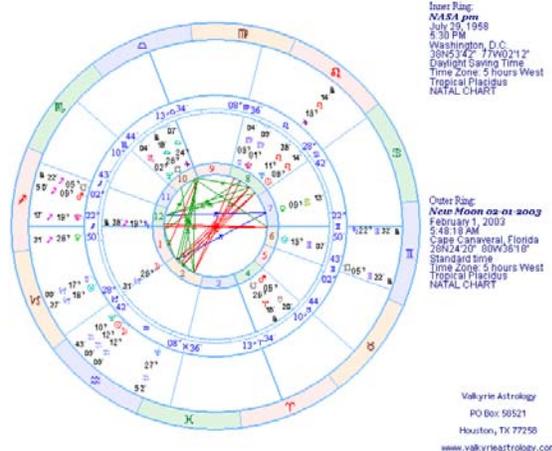


Figure 10



For Apollo I, transits (Figure 11) included Pluto squaring Natal Saturn within 44' orb, the Sun in opposition within 40' orb, Sun squaring Natal Mars, with Mars conjunct Natal Jupiter in the 10<sup>th</sup> House. Don't forget the Solar Opposition effectively created a Grand Cross, virtually exploding the chart with omens of very personalized trouble and death. The transit chart for the time of the accident (Figure 12) also has a Yod with Mars and the Moon at the base pointing to Saturn. The Grand Water Trine in effect at the time of the Full Moon the previous day was also still in effect.

Figure 11

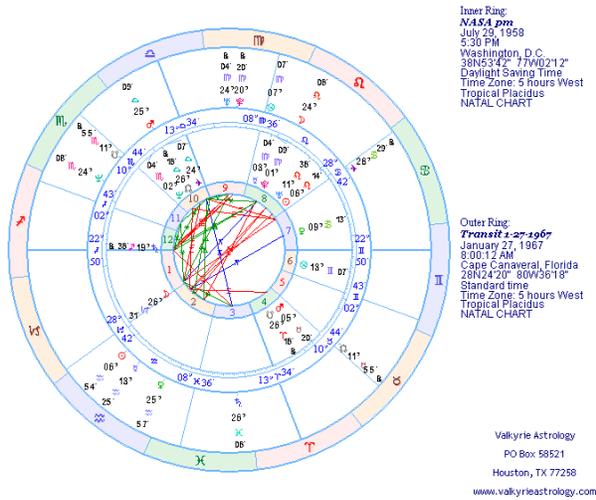
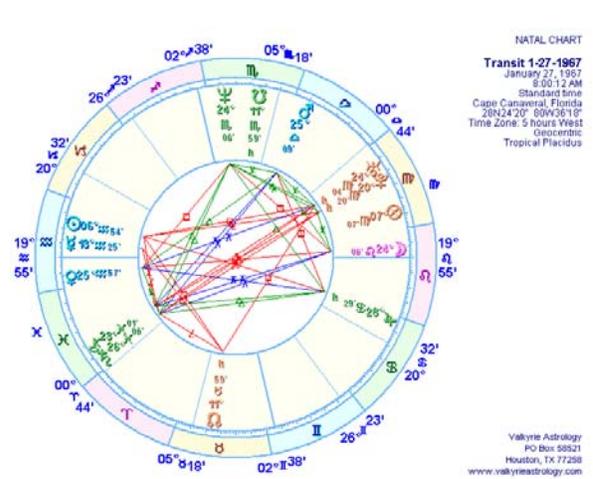


Figure 12



On January 10, 1986, eighteen days before the Challenger accident, a very unusual New Moon occurred. (Figure 13) The appearance of the transit chart is actually startling. Five planets (Sun, Moon, Venus, Mercury and Neptune) were in Capricorn and all were parading through NASA's 1<sup>st</sup> House. As if that weren't enough, Saturn and Uranus were in Sagittarius and Mars and Pluto were in Scorpio, so there was quite the lineup. All ten planets were between Scorpio and Aquarius and the only one below the horizon at the time was Jupiter. Planetary lineups like that are definitely rare, especially coincident with a New Moon.

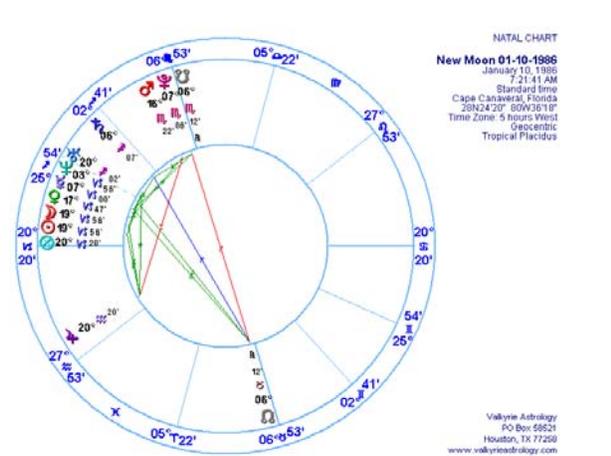


Figure 13

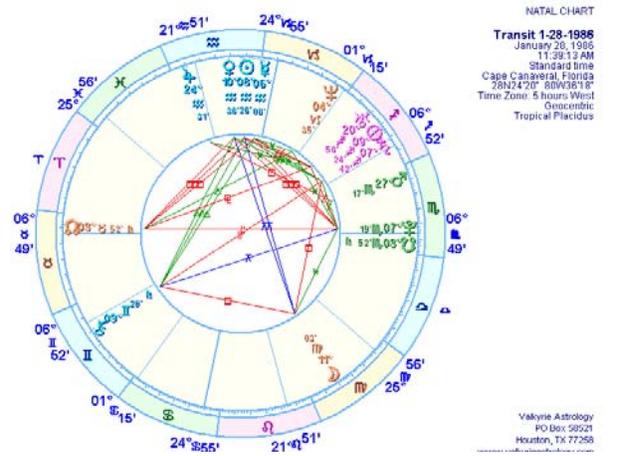
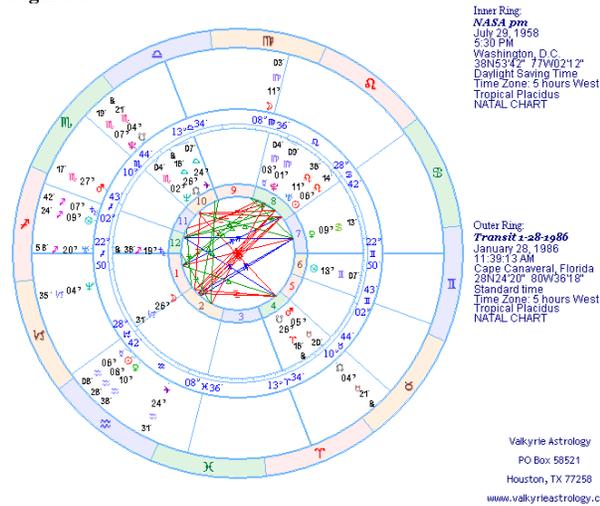


Figure 14

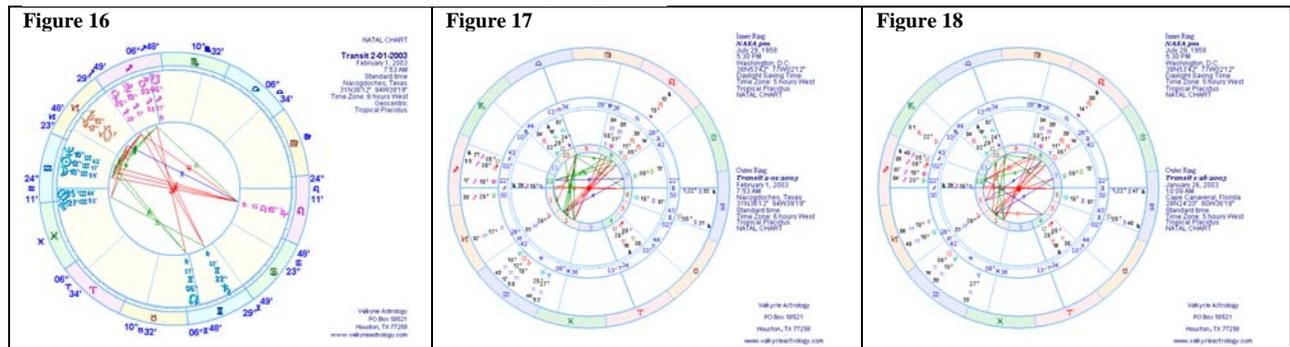
Challenger occurred 19 years and one day after Apollo I. Transits for January 28, 1986 (Figure 14) showed Pluto square the Sun, Venus and Mercury. The biwheel (Figure 15) shows that Pluto also opposed Natal Mars, once again setting off NASA's Natal T-Square, while Uranus in conjunction with Saturn in the 12<sup>th</sup> House moved in on the Ascendant. Transiting Mercury opposed the Natal Sun and squared Mars, undoubtedly contributing to the communications miasma that was later determined to be a contributor to the accident as researched by sociologist, Diann Vaughn.<sup>6</sup> Pluto was Trine 7<sup>th</sup> House Natal Venus, garnering a lot of public sympathy and emotionalism for

the tragedy, particularly with respect to teacher-in-space, Christa McAuliffe.

Figure 15



The Columbia disaster occurred 17 years and four days after Challenger. Transits for the time of the accident (Figure 16) show a criss-cross pattern with the bulk of planets in the eastern sky. At the time of the accident, the Sun and Moon were less than two degrees apart and opposite Natal Uranus in the 8<sup>th</sup> House with transiting Jupiter also conjunct Natal Uranus giving it a one-two punch. Pluto was conjunct Natal Saturn in the 12<sup>th</sup> House within a few degrees on the Ascendant. (Figure 17) Exact Solar Opposition (Figure 18) occurred on January 26, during the course of the space shuttle mission. At that time, transiting Saturn was on the 7<sup>th</sup> House cusp and opposite the Ascendant, the Sun squared Natal Mars within 55' orb and Mercury was square the MC.



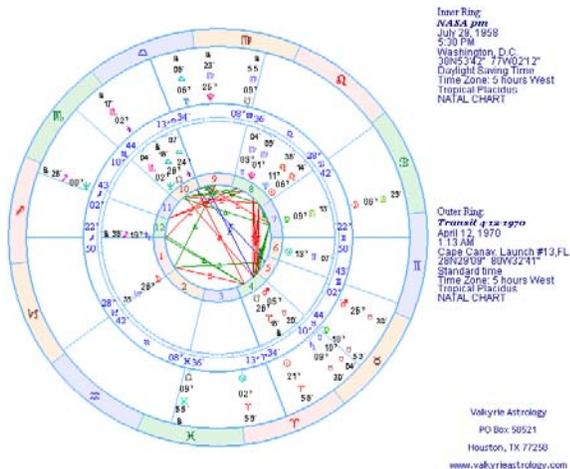
Generally, Columbia would appear to be less heavily aspected, at least visually, until you factor in two significant lunations, including the New Moon a few hours before the accident, and the occurrence of exact solar opposition during the mission. Transits at the time of the accident were virtually the same as the New Moon. One interesting note on the transits is the cluster of planets on the eastern horizon at the exact time the orbiter was raining flaming debris over Texas, though they would have been invisible in the daylight. In many respects this lineup was remarkably similar to the New Moon that ushered in 1986 less than three weeks before the Challenger disaster, though Saturn and Jupiter were not included and were in opposition.

### Near Misses

Of course the question that arises is what aspects were in effect during other NASA missions? Most people are familiar with the story of Apollo XIII, the ill-fated moon mission documented in a movie a few years ago that starred Tom Hanks. This had all the elements of a mission gone bad, but it did not result in any loss of life. One of the most obvious differences was the fact it was launched in April, not Solar Opposition.

In looking at the transits/Natal biwheel for the launch of Apollo XIII on April 12, 1970 (Figure 19), the most obvious feature is the cluster of planets on the 5<sup>th</sup> House cusp. These included Venus, Mercury, and Saturn, all in close orb with Mars in the same House and Sign as well. This stellium was in close orb square to Natal Uranus in the 8<sup>th</sup> House, resulting in a blending of surprises and a brush with death. However, the stellium also threw a sextile to Natal Venus, which was conjunct the transiting Moon in the 7<sup>th</sup> House. In addition, transiting Uranus was sextile the Natal Sun. These positive aspects apparently tempered the many squares and conjunctions in addition to the fact that Mars, Pluto and Saturn were relatively uninvolved.

Figure 19



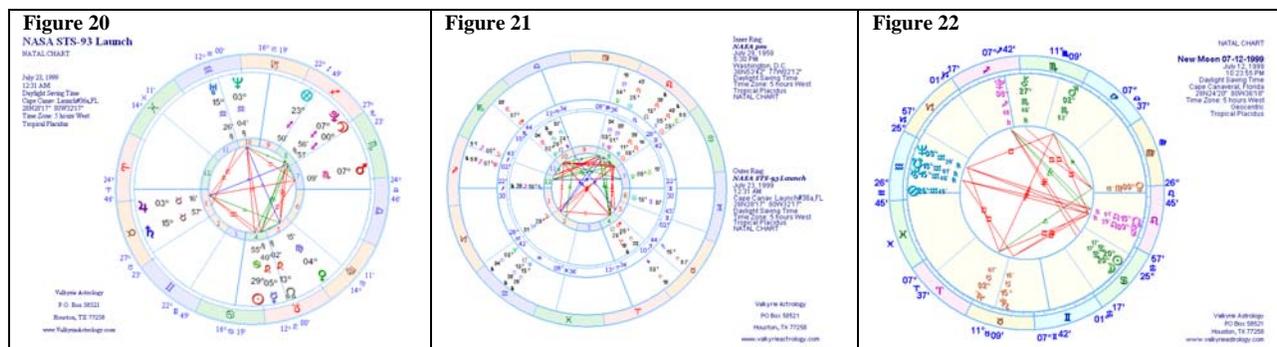
This flight ultimately became a significant victory for NASA with their innovative teamwork and “Failure is Not an Option” attitude that brought the three astronauts safely home. Jupiter transiting the 10<sup>th</sup> House in tight conjunction with Neptune could have easily provided an additional touch of the needed luck. Pluto trining the Natal Moon would have also helped. The T-square was disturbed but not fatally.

Transits for April 13, the day the explosion occurred, did not contain any dramatic changes from the day before. This is really not too surprising considering that the events that made this mishap inevitable had actually occurred several years before when the dropped the fuel tank at the manufacturing facility, but that’s another story. The New Moon on April 5, 1970 was generally unremarkable. If

anything there were numerous trines and nothing to disturb the Natal T-square.

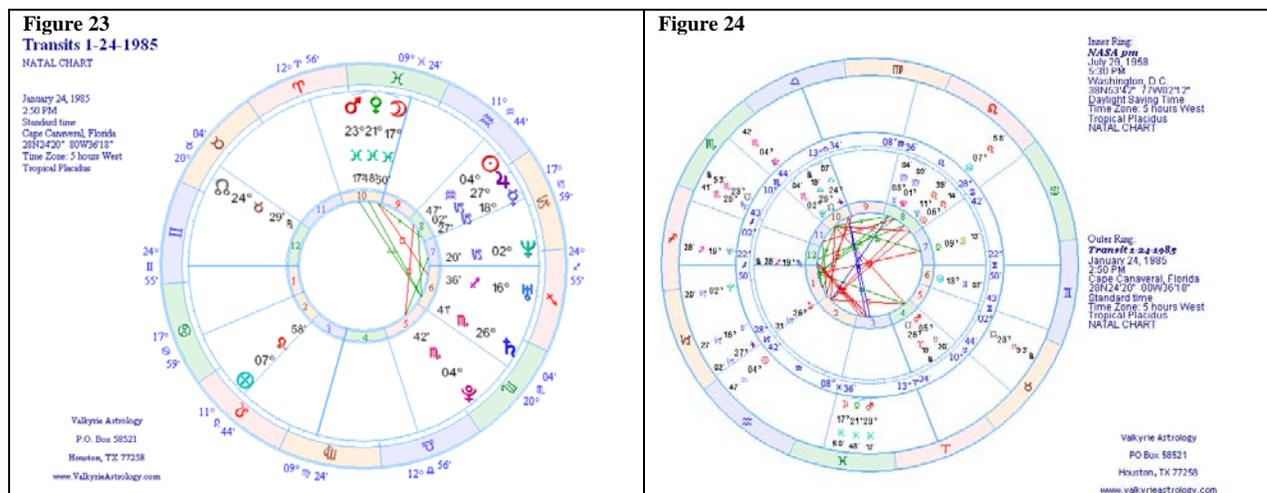
Oddly enough, eleven years to the day from the Apollo XIII launch, NASA scored another victory with the maiden voyage of the space shuttle, Columbia. Unlike the January-February timeframe, April is definitely a better month for spaceflight, possibly because attendant lunations are in trine to the cluster of planets in the Natal 8<sup>th</sup> house. These successes stimulate another 8<sup>th</sup> House trait, *i.e.* tax payer funding as a result of public approval.

Another near-miss disaster was the launch of space shuttle mission STS-93 on July 23, 1999. The primary objective of that mission was to launch the Chandra x-ray telescope. The timing was during a solar conjunction less than a week short of NASA’s “birthday.” The transits for that day (Figure 20) as well as a biwheel with NASA’s Natal planets (Figure 21) clearly show a dramatic Grand Cross. However, closer examination reveals that there were no aspects to Natal Saturn, relatively little activity with Pluto, and Mars had a bit of a mix. Similar to Apollo XIII, Pluto had no bad aspects but was Trine the Sun. There were influences on the 4<sup>th</sup> House Mars implying an accident, but they were balanced by a trine to Venus and perhaps being conjunct with transiting Jupiter for a bit of further assistance. The New Moon on July 12, 1999 threw a Grand Cross (Figure 22), but again the Natal Sun was largely unaffected, Natal Saturn was untouched other than a quincunx, Pluto had primarily positive aspects and Mars was unremarkable. The numerous Moon and Venus aspects were of additional interest in light of the fact that the commander for this shuttle mission was a woman, Eileen Collins.



### Success at Solar Opposition

Shuttle mission STS-51C occurred during Solar Opposition yet was uneventful. This launch occurred on January 24, 1985. The transits for that day were slightly ominous in that the Sun was square Natal Mars and Pluto was in tight opposition to it, giving the potential to activate the Natal T-square (Figure 23). A transiting stellium in the 3<sup>rd</sup> House squared Natal Saturn and the Ascendant, but the stellium included the Moon, Venus and Mars, so it wasn’t entirely malefic (Figure 24). The most recent lunation was a New Moon whereas all the accidents were preceded by a Full Moon in very close orb to the opposing Suns.



### New Moon versus Full Moon

While an orb of 5° or so when the Sun or Moon is involved in an aspect is considered acceptable, the Full Moons involved with the Apollo I and Challenger accidents were a tight 37' and 29' orb respectfully. The Full Moon immediately before the Columbia tragedy didn't aspect the Natal Sun at all and the New Moon that occurred a few hours before the accident had an orb to the Natal Sun of 5°55'. However, the Full Moon transits had a tight Mars square Natal Pluto and Pluto conjunct Natal Saturn, both of which were absent in January 1985. Columbia's New Moon had the Pluto conjunct Saturn aspect still in effect as well as numerous tight aspects on Natal Uranus, including the lunation itself within 33'.

For 51-C, the closest lunation was a New Moon that did not aspect the Sun within less than 5°. In fact, the New Moon's only aspects were a conjunction with the Natal Moon that had a wide 4°29' orb, and a square to Neptune. On launch day transiting Jupiter was in conjunction with the Natal Moon on the 2<sup>nd</sup> House cusp, perhaps instituting good fortune for NASA's possessions. Missing was a Lunation that was either opposite by less than 5° or conjunct the Natal Sun.

### Conclusion

All major NASA disasters involved Solar Oppositions as well as Lunations that set off the Natal T-square with Pluto squaring or conjoining Saturn, the Ascendant, or the Sun. Absence of any of these factors seemed to make the difference between a "bad day" and one where the heavens smiled upon the efforts of the fragile humans below and allowed them to succeed.

In conclusion, it shouldn't be surprising that the stars and planets drive events associated with NASA as much as they do for individuals. Space exploration missions as well as projects such as the Hubble Space Telescope and Chandra X-ray telescope have brought these celestial bodies closer than ever before. What no one seems to notice, however, or at least fails to admit, is that the cosmos is already an inherent part of us all, regardless of being an individual or government agency.

<sup>1</sup> Chaikin, Andrew, "A Man on the Moon: The Odyssey Continues," Time-Life Books, p. 104. The actual quote is as stated, not "Houston, we have a problem" as commonly believed. Likewise, Neil Armstrong's "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind" was actually "One small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind."

<sup>2</sup> Congressional Record, 58<sup>th</sup> Congress of the United States of America, January 7, 1958, H.R. 12575 signed by Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the House of Representatives and Richard M. Nixon, Vice President of the United States and President of the Senate and approved by Dwight W. Eisenhower on July 29, 1958.

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<sup>3</sup> Personal email dated June 15, 2005 from Mike Makara, NASA History Division re: Signing of Public Law 85-568.

<sup>4</sup> Personal email dated June 16, 2005 from Herbert L. Pankratz, Archivist at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) re: Signing of Public Law 85-568.

<sup>5</sup> [www.hq.nasa.gov/office/pao/History/monograph10/nasabrth.html](http://www.hq.nasa.gov/office/pao/History/monograph10/nasabrth.html)

<sup>6</sup> Vaughn, Diann, "The Challenger Launch Decision."

*This article originally appeared in the Journal of the International Society for Astrological Research, Volume XXXVI Number 3, Leo 2006.*

\* \* \*

*Marcha Fox has a bachelors degree in physics from Utah State University and has worked at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas for over 20 years, most of which has been spent in Space Shuttle and Payload Safety. She always believed that it was not a coincidence that all three NASA accidents occurred in virtually the same calendar week, implying astrological influences were involved, eventually driving her to conduct this research.*

*She began studying astrology over twenty-five years ago with the intent of debunking it and instead became convinced of its credibility and astounded by its accuracy. She is currently an advanced student pursuing her diploma from the Online College of Astrology. The mother of six children and grandmother of (currently) 15, she has had a statistically significant sampling of astrological test subjects within her close perusal for many years. Much to the mortification of her offspring, some of these long-time observations are documented in her sign write-ups.*

*As a physicist she is deeply aware that the most profound questions in the universe are yet unanswered. When those answers are found, she believes that the truth and mechanism of astrology will be among them. She has worked with the space shuttle in a variety of capacities ranging from engineer to manager for most of her career. As that program fades into the sunset she hopes to do the same and focus her sights on a new career in astrology. Marcha is a Capricorn with a Virgo rising and Gemini Moon. She invites all to visit her website at [www.ValkyrieAstrology.com](http://www.ValkyrieAstrology.com) and to direct comments to her at [astrogoddess@valkyriastrology.com](mailto:astrogoddess@valkyriastrology.com).*