

From the President

Jo Belasco, Esq.

Hello everyone and Happy Summer Solstice (in the Northern Hemisphere – Happy Winter Solstice to our friends in the Southern Hemisphere)!



It seems hard to believe that a year ago, we were about to again embark on a new journey, one that would see our horse program re-emerge and that would lead us even further along our path of helping people reconnect to the natural world. So it is that we greet you with excitement and anticipation in this 2009 Summer Solstice edition of the LOOM.

While we can't give many details because the transaction is still in process, we are hopeful that all will work out well and that we will be relocating to Santa Fe County this summer. When we know that everything is all secured, we will send out a special email with all of the information concerning our new home and our move there.

Our Horse-Human Relationship Program has had some exciting developments as the year has moved from spring into summer. Program participants have enjoyed interacting with horses as they learn to balance, center and connect. We continue to get new participants almost on a weekly basis. Thanks to some exciting news about a new home for Tapestry, this issue explores some new directions for the horse program, including trail riding as a way to reconnect to the land and informative and fun classes that we will begin offering this fall. We are also going to be blogging much more intensively

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Musings on Cultural Change

by Carol L. Francisco, Ph.D.

My ongoing exploration of ancient art keeps digging ever deeper into human history: at Spring Equinox I was burrowing into the Roman Empire and the early years of the Common Era (fig. 1); with the approach of Summer Solstice I find myself peering about as far back as the Stone Age years of the Ancient Near East (roughly 50,000 to 10,000 BCE) (fig.2). I've been speeding through so many cultures so quickly that recurring reflections on the nature of cultural change have finally stopped me in my tracks. So now, when the light of the sun shines most brightly into dark places, I want to share with you some of my wandering thoughts on time, change, and Western culture, born of encounters with the work of long-dead artists (fig. 3).

Before *Quantum Leap*, or *Back to the Future*, or *Contact*, people in Western culture tended to conceive of time as a single line which connected the beginning and end of all things. This model of linear time emerged from the early cultures of the Ancient Near East and held an essential place in Judaism's understanding of reality (fig.4). Judeo-Christian culture embraced linear time as its own, and structured history and reality accordingly. Wherever the Church—and later Western culture—extended its influence through colonialism and conversion, linear time was a non-negotiable part of the package.

But many cultures prior to Judeo-Christian contact tended toward circular or spiraling ideas of time. These ideas took various forms, from the cyclical rebirth of the entire universe to models more directly reflecting the turning seasons and skies. Cycles of death and rebirth were generally part of these worldviews, and human burials in fetal position may have expressed this expectation (fig.5). For those of us firmly planted in a linear model of time, however, truly experiencing a circular model can be difficult.

Oddly enough, I can offer an example of time as a circle/spiral from my own experience. I've always thought in images—when I thought of time just as with everything else. For as long as I can remember, at least back into my elementary school years, whenever I have tried to recall memories in sequential order, I have imagined years as circles in an ascending counterclockwise spiral (fig.6). Winter begins each new circle at the top, moving into spring on the left, summer at the bottom side, and fall on the right, all rising toward a new winter and a new circle on the upward spiral. The spiral's circles are formed of rather misty mosaics of memory-images from the seasons and events of the year. I offer this example simply to suggest that if a thoroughly Western child of elementary-school years could spontaneously create such a circular model—one that persists on into adulthood alongside a standard linear model of time—then cyclical time might not be all that alien to any of us.

Linear time as it came to be understood in the Christian world defined history as the stage upon which God acted to lead Creation to its divinely ordained conclusion—thus contributing, if indirectly, to the Western idea of progress. Also moving onto the stage at some point was the idea of a divinely chosen people whose own culture set the standard for all other peoples. The commonplace acronyms BC and AD exemplify this bias, proclaiming that for people of all times and cultures, history is either a line moving toward Jesus' birth, or away from it toward the completion of time marked by his return (fig.7). By the 19th C, Western culture was