

## 7 Super Solar Fire Tips and Tricks

Welcome to our first installment of Solar Fire Tips and Tricks. Solar Fire is very user-friendly making it fun to explore all the various features in the program. Our goal is for you to both enjoy working with Solar Fire and for you to use the program to its fullest potential. With Solar Fire in your astrological toolbox, learning and using new techniques is fun and rewarding.

### Tip 1 – Browsing through Time with Chart Animation

The most useful feature in v. 5 of Solar Fire has to be the animated chart function. You can move any chart or page in Solar Fire backward and forward in any time increment from seconds to years. You'll find all the chart animation options under Dynamic in Solar Fire's main menu.

A. To animate a single chart, highlight the desired chart in the Calculated Charts list on the main screen, and then click on Dynamic > Animate Chart. You can now move the chart backward or forward a) by typing in a new date and time, b) by adjusting the "Step by" boxes to a number of seconds, minutes, days, etc. and clicking on the blue arrow with a line next to it, or, c) for continuous motion, clicking on one of the blue arrows without a line. You would then use the slider bar to adjust the speed and would click on the red square to stop motion. (All these are fabulous tools for electional astrologers!)



Figure 1: Animation Buttons

B. You can also use the chart animation feature to calculate transiting, progressed, directed and profected charts – instantly, without having to go to the Chart menu to calculate them.

In the Calculated Charts box on the main screen, highlight the desired natal chart and click on Dynamic > Animate BiWheel. You will then see the natal chart on the inner wheel with the transits for the current moment around it. When you move the transits forward or back in time, the natal chart will stay the same.

If you instead go to the Dynamic menu and choose Animate a TriWheel, you'll automatically get natal, progressed and transiting charts. If you choose Animate QuadriWheel, you'll get natal, progressed, solar arc directed and transiting charts – all without ever calculating anything more than the natal chart! When you increment the time forward or back, the natal chart will stay the same, but the subsidiary charts will update. By selecting the Charts button to the right of the wheel you can choose from many different progression and direction methods.

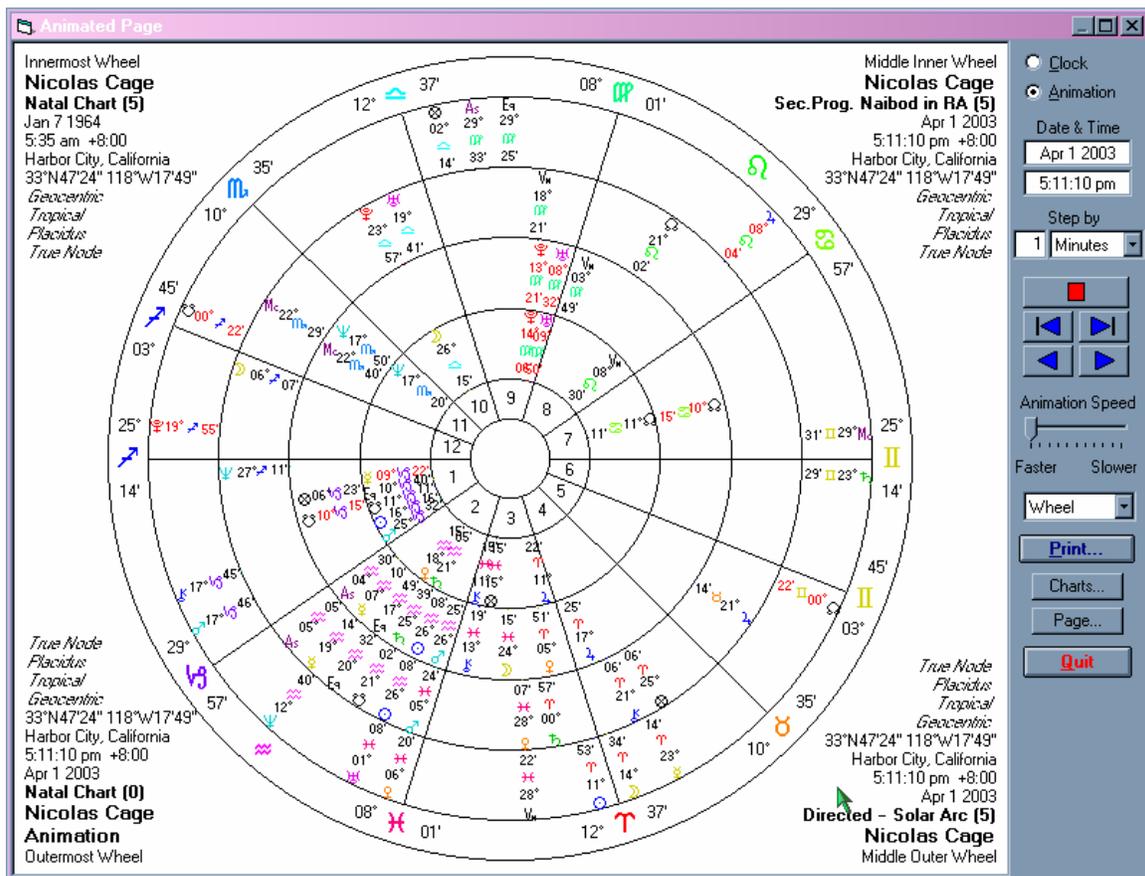


Figure 2: Animated QuadriWheel with Natal, Progressed, Directed and Transits

C. You can also use chart animation to look at transits around two natal charts. In the main screen's Calculated Charts box, highlight the natal chart that you want to go in the center, and click on Dynamic > Animate TriWheel. Then, click on the Charts button. A new dialog box will appear. This is divided into three sections: a) Base Charts; b) Dynamic method to apply to base chart and c). Selected Charts. "Base Charts" are the charts that are currently open and listed in the Calculated Charts section on SF's main screen. "Dynamic Method to apply to base chart" allows you to choose from a variety of options including "Fixed Base Chart." This means that you can choose another natal chart that will not move during the animation process. "Selected Charts" allows you to see what you've chosen and in which ring of the multiwheel that chart will appear. It's easiest to work from the bottom up in this section. In other words, first go to "Selected Charts" and highlight the ring you want to change, then choose the dynamic method (including Fixed Base Chart) to apply, and then choose the base chart.

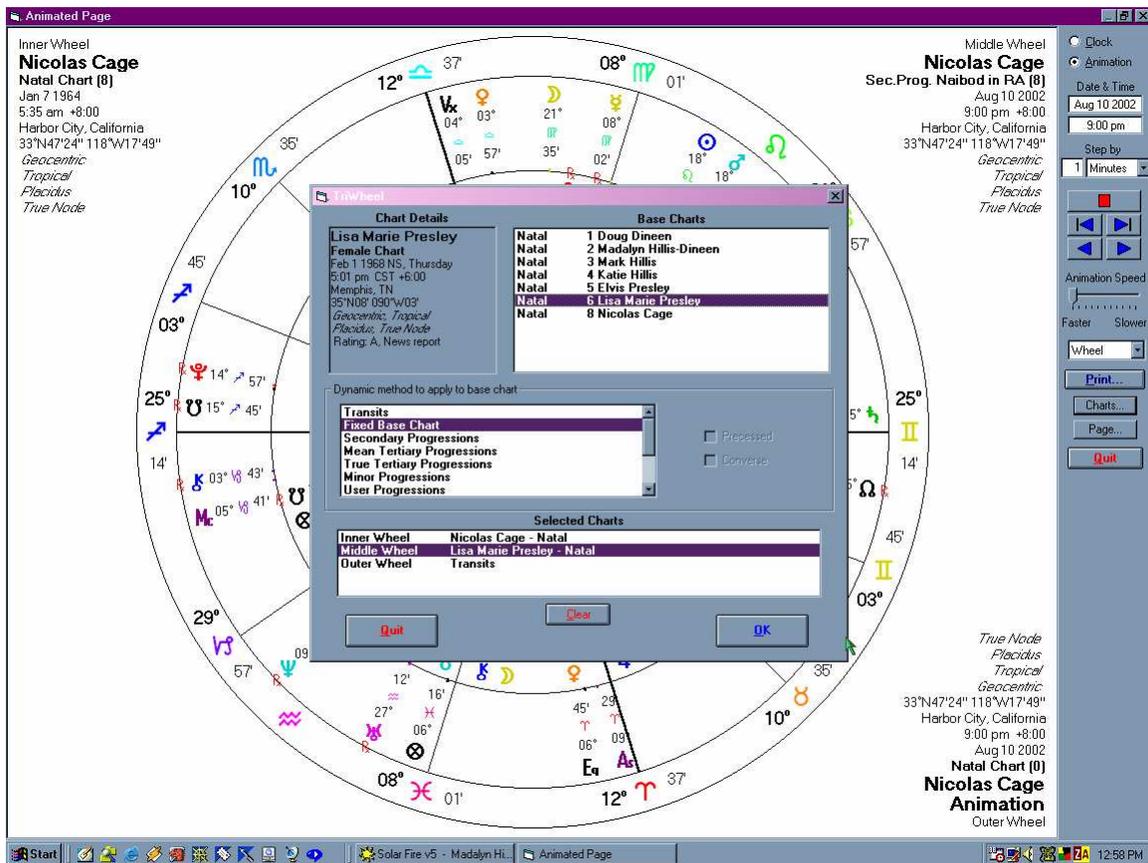


Figure 3: TriWheel Animation Dialog Box

D. The animation feature isn't limited just to wheels. You can also animate any of Solar Fire 5's pre-designed or user-designed pages. You can see updating aspectarians, planet position lists, midpoint trees, dignities, and any anything else that can appear in a page design. Here's how to see an animated page:

From Solar Fire 5's main screen, select Dynamic > Animate Page. Click on the plus sign next to the type of page you want to animate, select the title of the page, and click OK. When you are viewing an animated chart wheel, you can also access a page design to animate by clicking on the Pages button to the right of the wheel. If you started with a bi-, tri- or quadri-wheel, the page menu will then show only the page designs that deal with two, three or four charts.

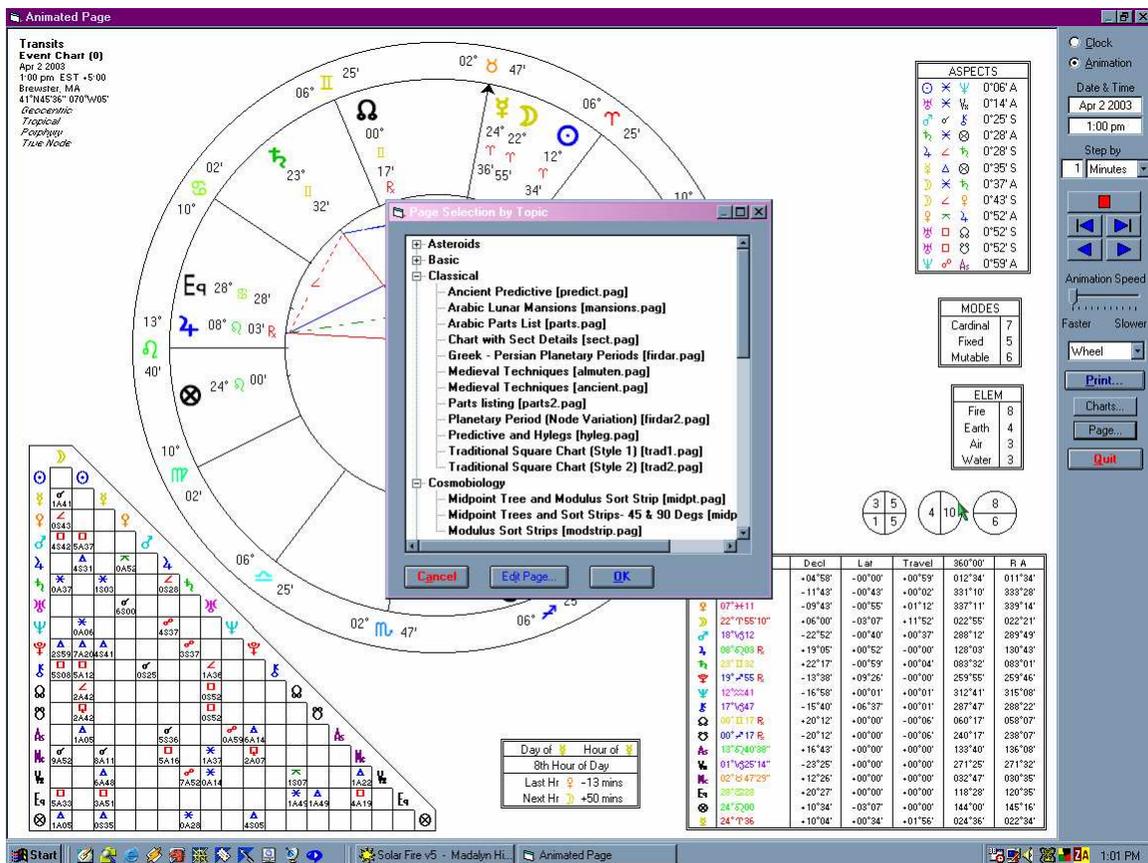
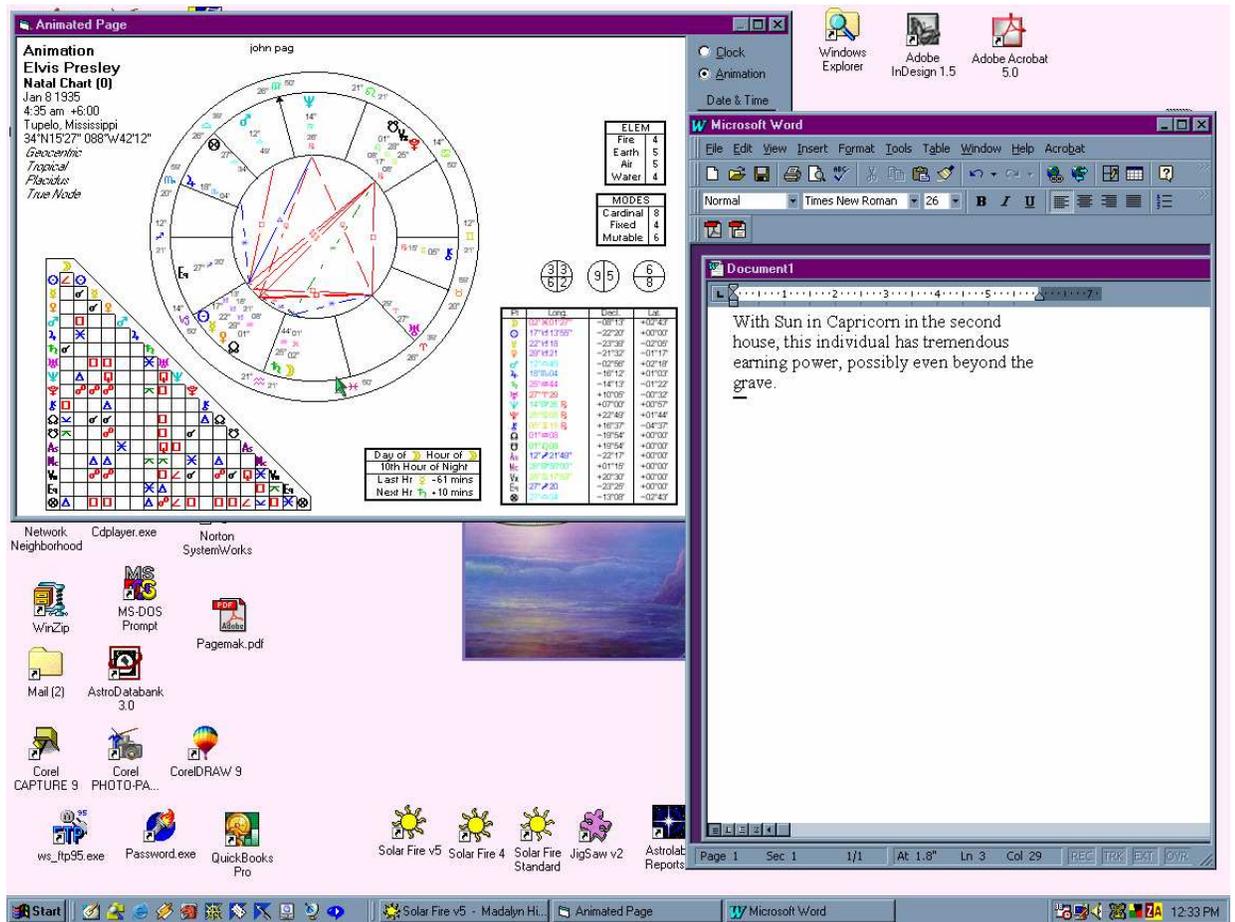


Figure 4: Page Topic Index in the Animation View Screen

**BONUS:** Since the chart animation is in a window that you can re-size, you can use this feature to keep a chart display open while you're working in another program -- for example, a word processor (perfect for making notes on charts or for writing astrological articles!).

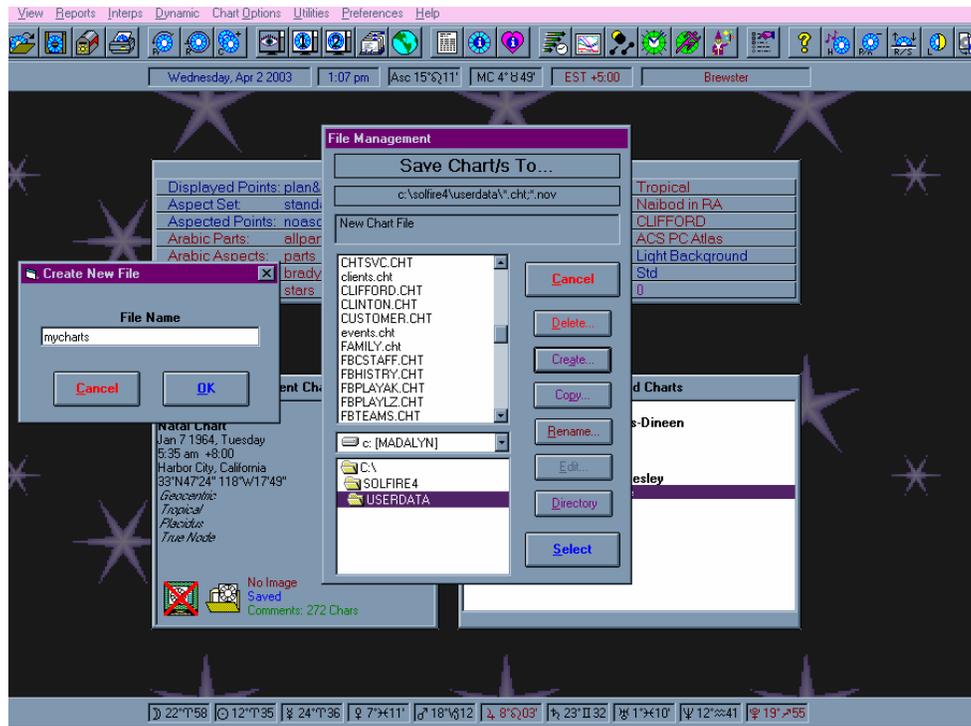


**Figure 5: Multi-Tasking Using the Animation View Screen in Solar Fire**

## Tip 2 – Create Unique File Names

Solar Fire 5 is an easily customizable program that allows you to do astrology your way. This includes giving you the ability to name your chart files virtually anything you wish. It's a good idea to take advantage of this feature in order to safeguard the new charts that you calculate. Instead of saving your new charts into Main, Clifford, Aussie or one of the other demo chart files that comes with Solar Fire, you should create your own chart files and give them different names of your own choosing. That way, if you ever have to reinstall Solar Fire, there will be no chance that the demo chart files that you reinstall will overwrite the files of the same name that you have modified, and thus destroy the additional charts that you have put into them.

So, when you go to save a chart and the File Management box opens, don't save your new charts into Main, Aussie, Clifford, etc. Click on the Create button and type in a new filename such as Family, Friends, MyCharts, Clients, or Celebrities. You'll be able to save many hundreds of charts into each new file that you create.



**Figure 6: Save Chart File Management Box**

If you've already saved some new charts into one of Solar Fire's demo chart files, not to worry – you can easily move the added charts to another file. From the Main Screen select Chart > Open, click on the "File" button and select one of the Solar Fire demo chart files. Scroll through the list of charts in that file, and while holding the Ctrl key down click on each chart that you want to move so that they all stay highlighted. Click on the Copy button, select the file you want to copy the charts to, and then click on Select. Then you can delete the charts in the demo file that you have just copied to the other file. With them still highlighted in the demo file, simply click on the Delete button. While we've focused on Chart files, it is easy to customize your own wheels, pages, point, and aspect files in Solar Fire and those should be given their own unique file names as well.

### Tip 3 – Emailing Charts and Pages

You can email any chart or page that is showing on the View Chart screen in Solar Fire. Just click on the Copy button at the right, choose Email Attachment and away you go.

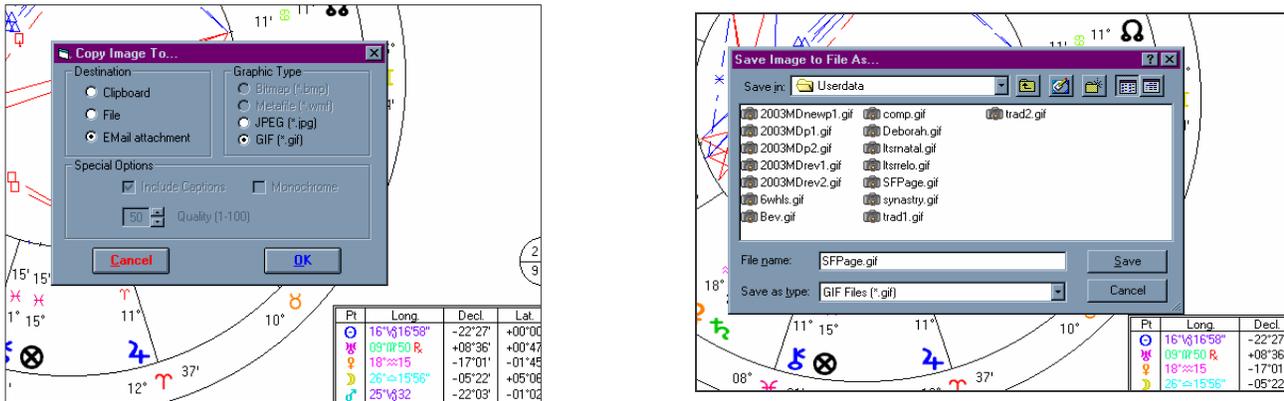


Figure 7-A, B: Emailing Charts

You must agree to save the image. You can use the default filename that is suggested or, if you want to save the images for re-use later, choose your own file name and directory. Once the image is saved, your email composer window will appear, and all you need to do is type in the email address of the recipient. (HOWEVER, if you have AOL or any other non-MAPI-compliant email software including Mozilla or Netscape v. 5 or higher, you will need to save the image and manually open your email program and attach the image to your email.)

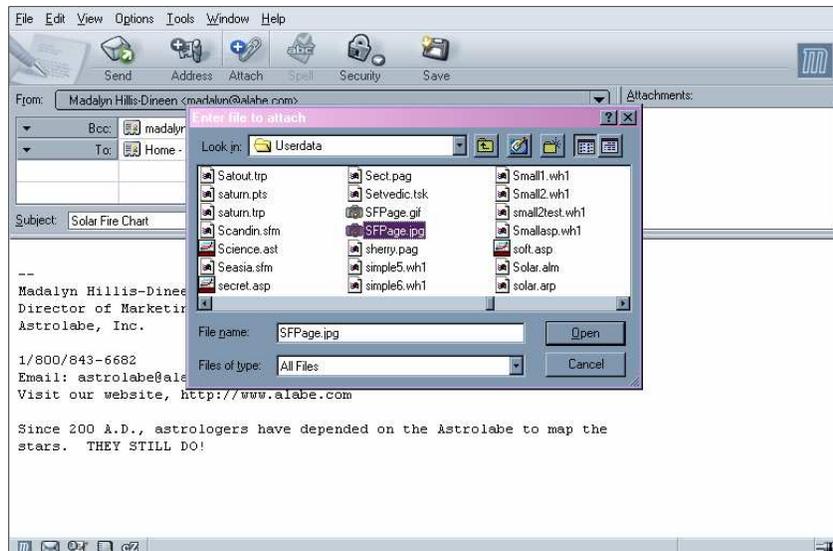


Figure 8: Attaching a Solar Fire Graphic Image to Email

## Tip 4 – Lifespan Declination Graphs

Looking at declination and progressed declination positions, especially of the Moon, is a technique that's become increasingly popular, thanks to the work of astrologers like Kt Boehrer, Carolyn Egan, Tashi Grady Powers, Carol Tebbs and research credited to Nelda Tanner and Leigh Westin. Originally conceptualized by Reinhold Ebertin who published it in the 1950s, this powerful method offers considerable insight even when you don't have an exact time of birth. This technique helps you pinpoint critical junctures in the lifetime as the progressed Moon contacts natal and progressed planets (Tanner), reaches maximum north and south declination, or changes from north to south and vice versa (Westin). The peaks are considered turning points (Tanner). For example, at the bottom or "Max South," you might shed what is no longer necessary in your life and build again to the top of "Max North," where you may be at a career or a personal peak and derive benefits that may sustain you for the ride down (Westin). At zero declination, when the planet is crossing the median line, the focus is again on life changes, frequently family issues or a physical move (Tanner).

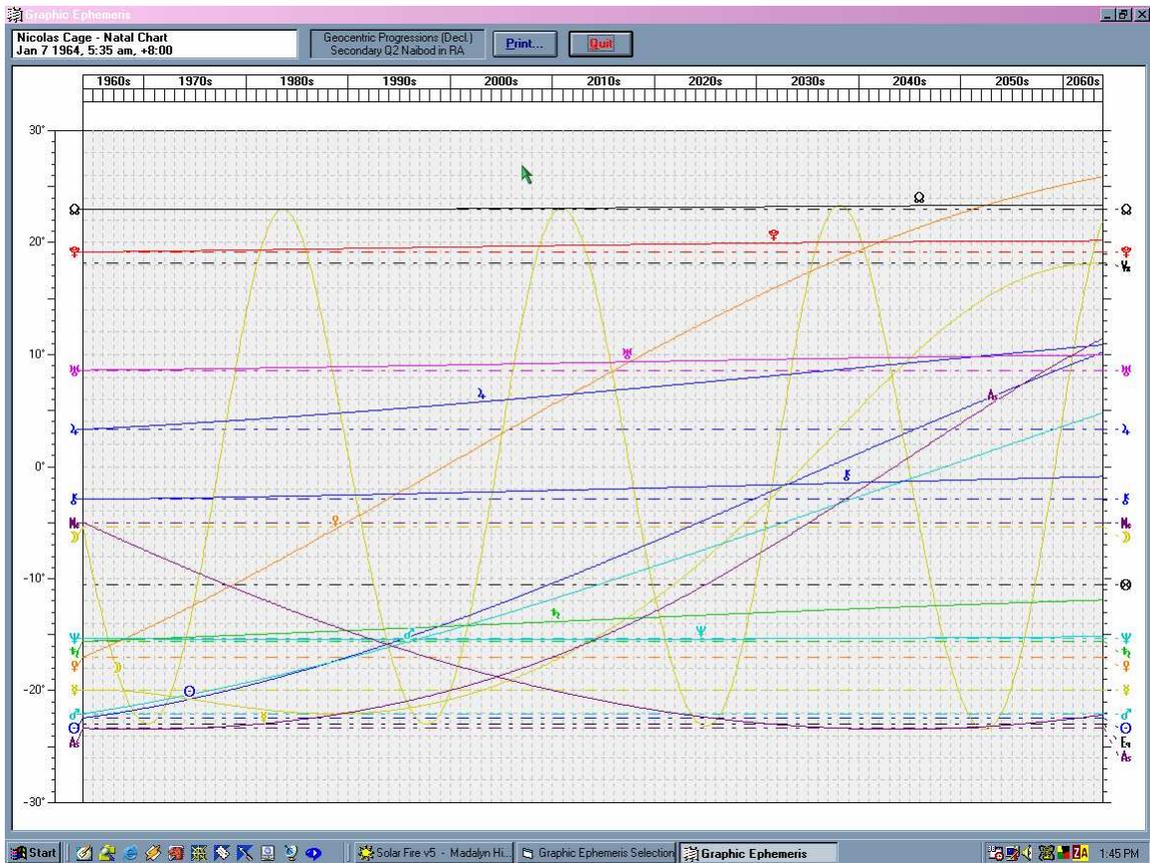


Figure 9: Lifespan Declination Graph for Nicolas Cage

To create a lifespan declination graph, go to Dynamic > Graphic Ephemeris. Under “Ephemeris Selection” choose Progressions and change the type from Longitude to Declination. Change the “Angle Extent” to 30 degrees. Make sure that “Radix Positions” is selected. In the “Period of Report” section, you want to start the report with the date of birth and you want to choose a time period of 100 years. Under Point Selection: Progressions, choose Planets (or create a file that includes only the Moon) and under Point Selection: Radix, choose your favorite listing. Click on Save Selection (just above the View button) and call it Lifespan Declination Graph. In future sessions of Solar Fire, you will be able to choose this same arrangement by going to the Saved Selections area and selecting it. Have fun exploring this powerful and useful technique!

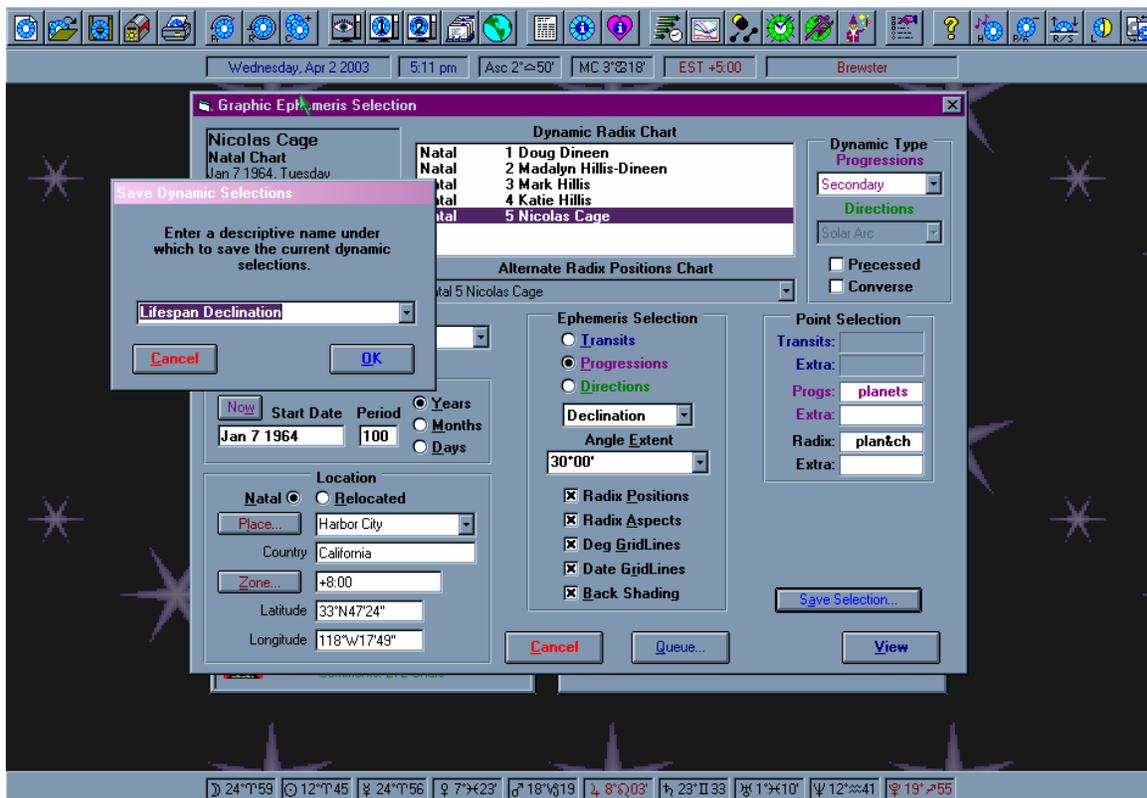


Figure 10: Graphic Ephemeris Selection Dialog Box

## Tip Five – Turn off Angle Rounding

Solar Fire is shipped to you with Angle Rounding turned on. This means that when a planet or angle is at 29 degrees 59 minutes and 31 seconds, it will appear on your screen as 0 degrees 0 minutes of the next sign. This is especially confusing when you are using the chart animation feature to find planetary ingresses. Or, it could conceivably change the Sun or rising sign so that you show up as a serious Capricorn when you really are a carefree Sag!

To turn off angle rounding, go to Preferences > Edit Settings. Click on the tab that says Misc. Click to remove the checkmark in the box next to “Round angles instead of truncating.” Then, click on OK. Go back to the Preferences menu and click on Save Settings. When asked whether you want to overwrite existing defaults, click on OK.

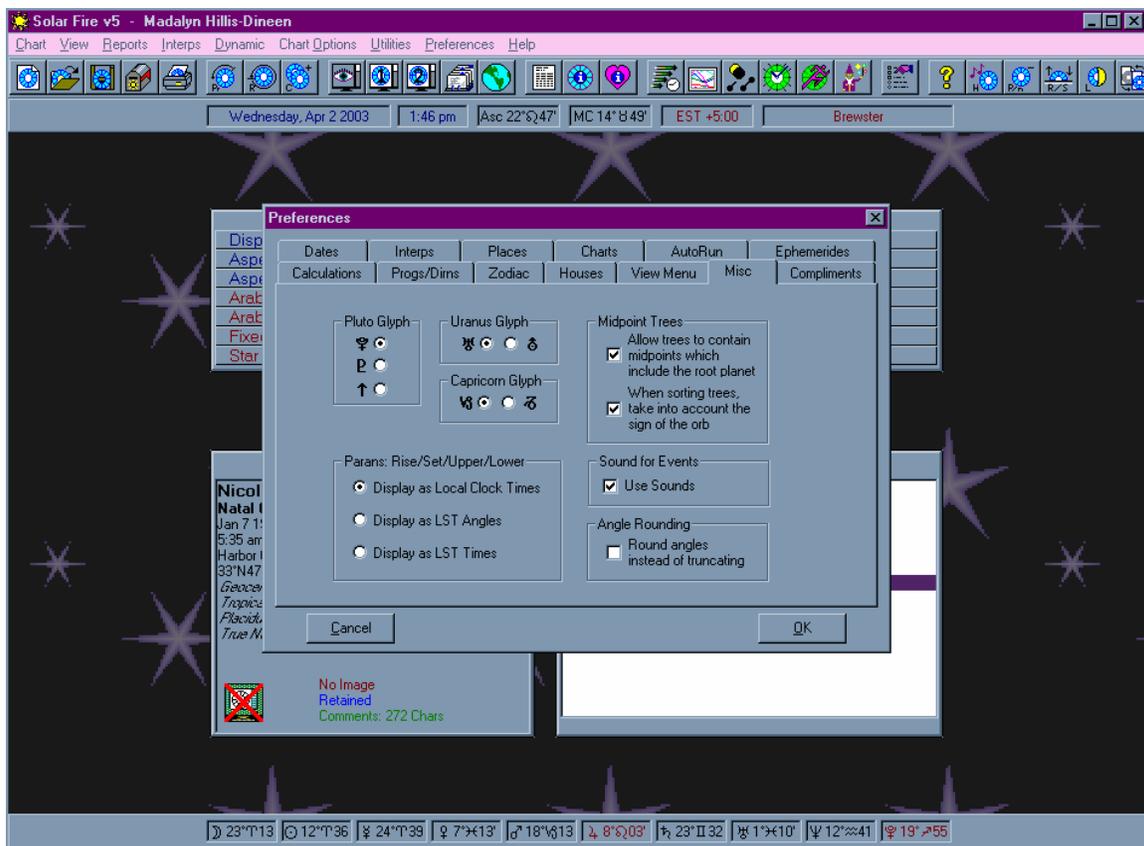


Figure 11: Preferences Dialog Box

While you are working in the Preferences menu, you might want to toggle off the “Save Settings on Exit” feature. This will allow you to experiment with different settings in Solar Fire without making them your defaults. Perhaps you are checking out Parallax Moon and get called away from the computer. If you shut down your program with Save Settings on Exit turned on, Parallax Moon will now become a default setting. The next time you look at charts, you may think that the Moon positions are inaccurate when all that’s really happened is that you’ve changed the calculation method.

### Tip 6 – The “Advanced” Returns Section

It’s very easy to calculate a solar or lunar return in Solar Fire, but you may not realize that you have many more return options available. When you choose “Advanced and Ingress” in the Returns Dialog Box, an Options button appears. When you click on this button you are taken into a whole new world of astrological techniques.

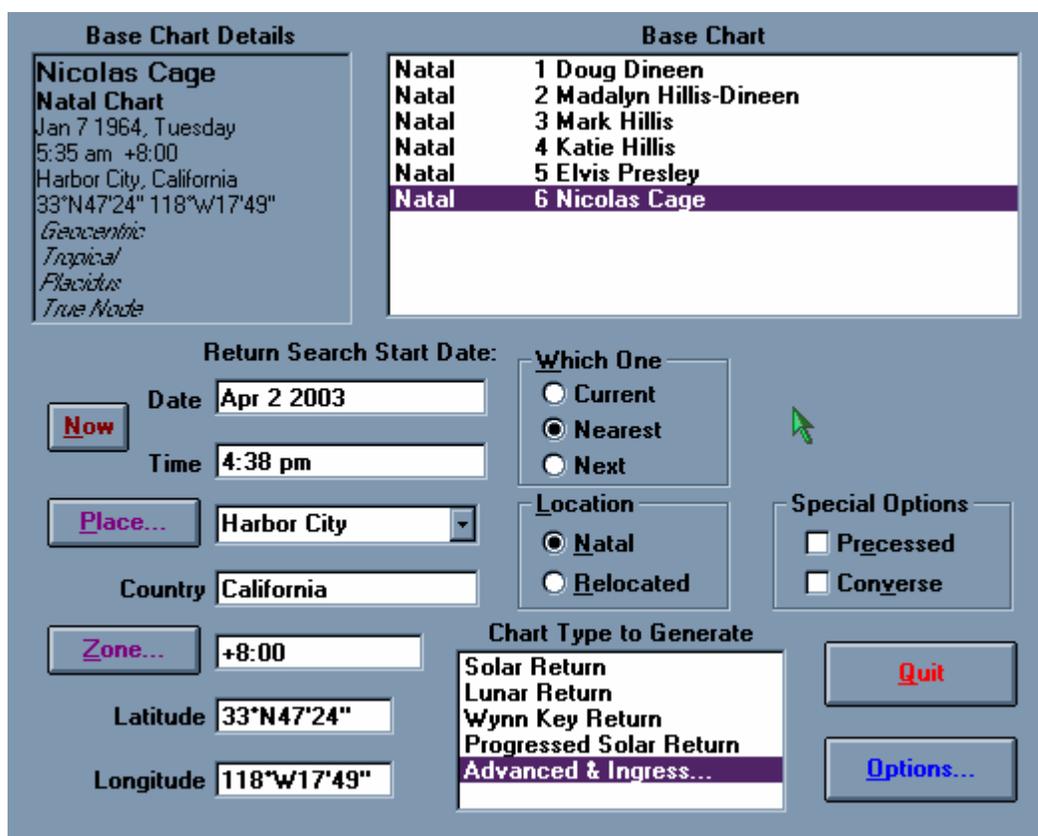


Figure 12: The Returns and Ingress Dialog Box

Once you are in the Advanced Return Selections Dialog Box, you can choose to create all 13 lunar returns for the year automatically, or you can do a series of demi and quarti solar or lunar returns. In fact, you can do a

return of any planet to its natal position or to points in square, opposition or any other aspect to the natal position. You can also type in any degree, minute and second of the zodiac and find out when any planet returns to that point.

You can also use the Advanced Return Selections box to calculate the chart for when a particular planet comes to the degree of another planet in the natal chart. Sidereal astrologers use this technique for the Sun and Moon and call them Solunars. Charts are created for the time each month when the transiting Moon is conjunct the natal Sun, and for the time each year when the transiting Sun is conjunct the natal Moon.

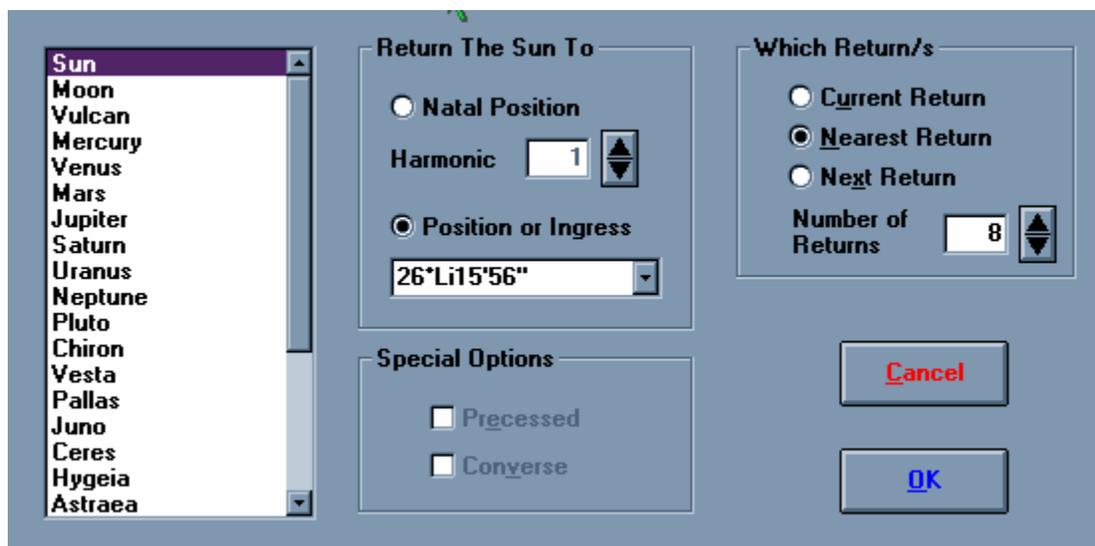


Figure 13: Creating 8 Years of Solunars for Nicolas Cage

For example, to calculate when the Sun returns to the natal Moon position, you would first select the natal chart, and then open the Advanced and Ingress window. Then in the list of planets on the left, you would click on the Moon. The exact position of the natal Moon will appear in gray under “Position or Ingress.” Click the circle next to “Position or Ingress” so that the Moon position becomes black. Then in the list at the left click on the Sun. If you wish, adjust the Harmonic (2 for a demi return when the opposition point is reached, 4 for a quartile return when the square point is reached, etc.), Which Return (Current for the one that just happened and is currently in effect, Next for the next return, and Nearest for the one nearest the current date whether before or after), and Number of Returns (if you want to do a series of returns starting with the one you just specified). Then click OK and the return will be calculated. This and so many other advanced astrological techniques are easy to explore in Solar Fire!

BONUS: Planets are calculated to a very high precision within Solar Fire, but in a Solar Fire display they may be shown only to the minute of arc. Perhaps you want to know the exact degree, minute and second of, say, your Mars. By clicking on Mars in the Advanced Return Dialog Box, you will find that precise information.

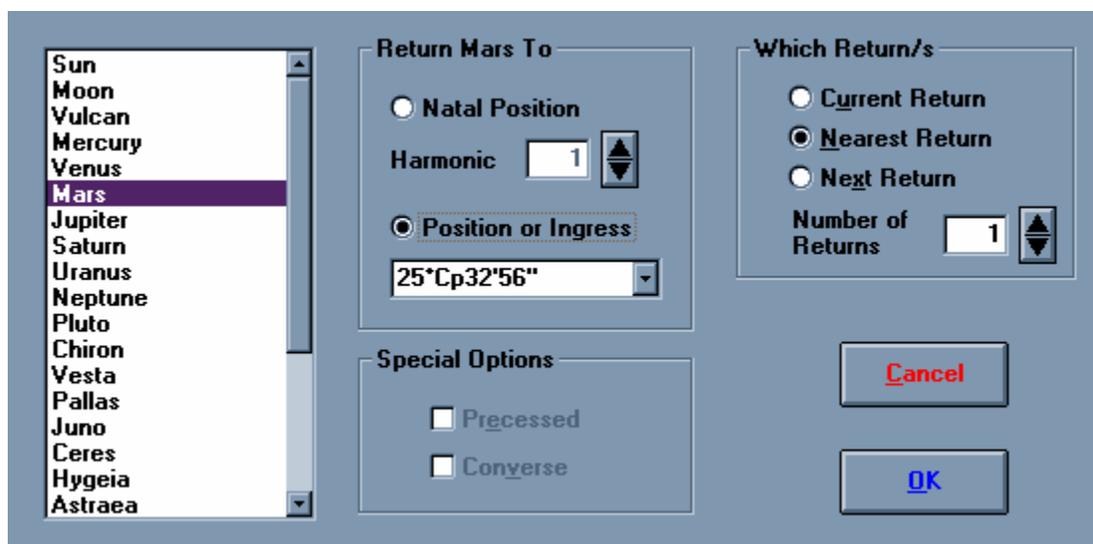


Figure 14: Using the Advanced Return Selections Dialog Box to find Exact Positions of Planets

### Tip 7 – Calculating Charts using Local Mean Time (LMT)

Local Mean Time is based upon the moment when the mean Sun crosses the Midheaven of the place rather than the meridian that defines the whole time zone. LMT was in use prior to the adoption of Standard Time on Nov. 18, 1883 and it continued to be used in many places for some time thereafter. It's important to note that when you calculate a chart for a time when LMT was in use you must make sure that Solar Fire and the ACS Atlas are using the proper hour correction. After you enter the date and place, type "lmt" into the Zone field if it isn't showing there already. Then be sure to tab past the Zone field and into the Latitude and Longitude fields. Since the correction is based on the longitude of the locale, you must do this to give Solar Fire the information it needs to calculate the proper time zone correction. If you do not do this, Solar Fire will calculate the chart as if it were for GMT and the time zone field will incorrectly read LMT +0:00. See examples below for George Washington.

Chart Name: George Washington  
 Date: Feb 22 1732 NS  
 Time: 10:05 am  
 Place: Westmoreland  
 Country/State: VA  
 Zone: LMT +0:00  
 Latitude: 38°N03'51"  
 Longitude: 076°W33'33"  
 Event Type: Unspecified  
 House System: Porphyry  
 Zodiac: Tropical  
 Coordinate System: Geocentric  
 Source Rating: [Empty]  
 Source Description: [Empty]  
 Buttons: Quit, OK, Comments..., Now, Place..., Zone..., Save..., Restore, Auto Lookup

Figure 15: Incorrect LMT Calculation

Chart Name: George Washington  
 Date: Feb 22 1732 NS  
 Time: 10:05 am  
 Place: Westmoreland  
 Country/State: VA  
 Zone: LMT +5:06:14  
 Latitude: 38°N03'51"  
 Longitude: 076°W33'33"  
 Event Type: Unspecified  
 House System: Porphyry  
 Zodiac: Tropical  
 Coordinate System: Geocentric  
 Source Rating: [Empty]  
 Source Description: [Empty]  
 Buttons: Quit, OK, Comments..., Now, Place..., Zone..., Save..., Restore, Auto Lookup

Figure 16: Correct LMT Calculation

Hope you've enjoyed our first installment of Solar Fire Tips and Tricks. We welcome your feedback – write to us at [Auguries@alabe.com](mailto:Auguries@alabe.com).

### Jupiter Direct Promotion – Your Chance to Save on Solar Fire and JigSaw!

We also want to share in a collective sigh of relief with our loyal customers. Jupiter has ended its four month long retrograde period and is again moving forward. And, for those of us in the Northern hemisphere, spring has

arrived! To celebrate, Astrolabe is happy to offer all Solar Fire 5 owners a 20% discount on the purchase of JigSaw2. JigSaw is an amazing program for research, rectification and family dynamics. It also includes Bernadette Brady's unique Group AstroDynamics Report.

And, if you don't already own Solar Fire 5, don't despair. You can take 10% off of your purchase of Solar Fire 5 (new program or upgrade) and if you've ever owned any Astrolabe program published during our 24 year history, you'll get 20% off your purchase of Solar Fire 5.

In order to claim your discount, you must include the code JUP8LEO in the comment section of our online shopping cart or mention it when you order by phone at 1-800 THE NOVA (1/800/843-6682). Offer ends 5/31/03... so don't delay!

To find out more about Solar Fire 5, go to <http://www.alabe.com/sf5feat.html>

For more details on JigSaw2 or to download a sample of the Group AstroDynamics Report, go to <http://alabe.com/jigsaw.htm>

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