

Apocalypse Not 2012

By Ashley Hafer - Posted on 06 December 2012

BOULDER - Instead of preparing for the end of the world, people are planning to party. Many see the much-hyped Apocalypse 2012 as simply a reason to celebrate.

Many movies, such as 2012 and Melancholia, are based off of different theories about how the world is going to come to an end.

Even YouTube channels and websites are dedicated to sharing the best ways to survive the Apocalypse on December 21, 2012. Many believe the end is near and that it is going to happen in just a few weeks when the ancient Mayan calendar runs out.

Doug Duncan, Director of University of Colorado's Fiske Planetarium, plans to be on the Great 2012 Not the End of the World Cruise. Guests will be able to mingle with scientists and authors discussing different scenarios about the much-awaited day.

"My favorite part of the cruise will be instead of a formal night, we're going to have a costume party," said Duncan. "A giant party on December 20th, just in case I'm wrong about the world ending and everyone is invited to dress up as an alien. Come in any costume."

A new Ipsos Global Publics Affairs Poll stated that ten percent of people worldwide believes the world will end when the Mayan calendar ends on December 21st, 2012.

Many scholars said they disagree as to whether the Mayan calendar is even synched up with ours, whether the date happened already, or will happen many decades from now.

"What really is happening, is kind of the same thing that happened to our calendar in 1999. A lot of people thought it was really something when all of those nines turned into zeros," said Duncan. "If you're the kind of person who watches your car odometer you know and roots for 9-9,9-9-9 to turn all into zeros, that's basically what happens with the Mayan calendar."

Boulder resident Rachel Leonard did not want to take chances. She has packed her bags for a trip to Mexico.

"I'm going to Tulum, Mexico because I want to visit the Mayan ruins and see how their culture celebrates this message of hope with the end of the calendar," said Leonard.

How the world will end is still up in the air, literally. The dark rift, an astronomical event where the sun and earth will line up with a massive black hole at the center of the galaxy, is tied to the end of the Mayan calendar. The huge gravitational forces of the black hole are expected to tear earth apart.

"It happens every single year and nobody dies, and the earth doesn't do anything weird so I can confidently say that nothing will happen due to the alignment," said Duncan.

There are other scenarios for doomsday; economic collapse, natural disasters, meteor strikes, and even a zombie apocalypse.

James Strider, CU student, said he does not believe in the zombie idea, but possibly a more realistic ending.

"With all of the hurricanes and natural disasters happening lately I think that it is possible," said Strider.

There have been many predictions of doomsday in history, none that proved true. Harold Camping predicted the world would end two different times last year.

First he said it would end on May 21, 2011, but when that did not happen due to a "mathematical error," he changed the date to October 21, 2011. Once again that did not happen, and he apologized for being wrong.

It was too late for his followers though who believed it and emptied out their life savings to donate to Camping's Family Radio and help spread the word about the rapture through billboards and radio spots.

The hype has even made it into primetime, with TV series such as TLC's "Livin' for the Apocalypse" and National Geographic's "Doomsday Preppers" that follow people devoted to surviving doomsday.

Their methods include stockpiling and growing their own food, preparing bunkers and second homes, gathering goods for trade and arming themselves with as much protective clothing and ammo as they can get.

Not everyone is prepared to stick it out the final days though.

"If something like that did happen I don't think I'd want to try to survive it because it's going to be a huge struggle and in the end you're going to die anyway," said Strider.

Some "doomsday preppers" are sprucing up their gardens in anticipation of the apocalypse, but others are taking cover under party hats.

According to International Business Times, Mexico is expecting millions of curious tourists throughout the region. Mexico is focusing on embracing a new beginning rather than the end of the world.

"I'm really excited to see all of the rituals but I really want to go and see all the music festivals and their native dances," said Leonard.

Even though the US is among the most paranoid about the Apocalypse, along with Russia and Poland, our Internet hosts jokes right alongside the rumors.

E-cards read "if the world ends in 2012, we have wasted our whole lives in school."

Skeptical Kid tweets "I survived 2000. I survived 6-6-6. I survived 11-11-11. I even survived the Bieber Fever epidemic. So dear 2012, come at me bro."

Duncan enjoys the hype, but he is not about to give it credibility.

"I'll tell you what I'll meet you here in about ten years for the next end of the world," said Duncan.

So it seems that predictions, are just that. One thing we can be reminded of is that the Mayan calendar can no more make predictions on when the world will end than our horoscopes can predict our love lives.