

<http://history.howstuffworks.com>

In case you haven't heard, the world is going to end on December 21, 2012. From the Maya, who chose this day as an end to their calendar, to a 3,000-year-old Chinese calendar that ends one day later, to Nostradamus, who claimed the world would be destroyed by the third Antichrist on this day, (the first Antichrists being Napoleon and Hitler), it seems there is little hope for humankind. Considering that we are currently in the year 2009, we only have a little over three and a half years before facing the apocalypse. The freshmen at Clarke this year will be graduating the spring before the end of the world, and few of us will have time to get situated with jobs or grad school before doomsday. So what is the point of attending school when we're not even going to have enough time to take advantage of it?

I asked a couple of Clarke students and professors what they think will happen. Spanish major Regina Neenan jokes that the signs are already here. "The world has already begun to end," she said. "You can see it all around. I'm only in school because my parents are forcing me to stay here. I might as well; we don't have much to look forward to, but it's something to do in the meantime."

The Mayan calendar predicts that on the winter solstice scheduled for December 21, 2012 at 11:11 p.m. the sun will become perfectly aligned between earth and the center of the Milky Way Galaxy blocking earth from the center of the galaxy. This is also what the ancient Egyptian calendar predicts. Current scientists do not disagree, and say that this only happens once every 26,000 years.

Ann Pelelo, an English professor at Clarke, went to Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico in the summer of 2000 to study the past, present and future applications of Mayan works with a group of professors. They visited three different Mayan astronomical libraries not open to the public. "The Maya have gotten lots of things right: the idea of zero, and they made one of the most accurate calendars still known to humankind," she said. "I'm not saying it's probable that the world will end, but it's not impossible. I'm not going to live my life like it's going to end in three years, however."

Some students believe the world is going to change but don't believe in the predictions of the Maya or Nostradamus.

"I believe the world will not end completely, but the world as we know it will end because the Avian Bird Flu is going to sweep through the Unit-

2012

The end of the world?

Story by Ian Livingston

Layout by Lacey Reynolds

ed States and kill millions,” nursing major Maria Reichle said. She bases this theory on the fact that hospitals, colleges and the government have gone through much trouble preparing emergency action plans in case such an outbreak does occur.

Most people we know cannot help but doubt the inevitable. Matt Clausing, a sophomore business finance major, disagrees that anything will happen on 2012. “Absolutely nothing will happen,” he said. “It’s just like Y2K.” (In 1999 people went out and bought flashlights and canned food because they believed that when the year 2000 came, all the computers in the world would crash when the date changed from 1999 to 2000.)

Many experts such as Anthony Aveni, professor of astronomy, anthropology and Native American studies at Colgate University, also doubt that anything will happen. “I think that the popular books about what the Maya say is going to happen are really fabricated on the basis of very little evidence,” he said. “I just think it’s sad; it really just frustrates me. People are really misunderstanding this really cool culture by focusing on this ‘2012’ thing. It means more about us than it does about the Maya.”


Clarke astronomy professor Jason Stecklein

agrees nothing will happen. “I clearly don’t believe in it,” he said. “I take no heed of this day and wouldn’t take any precautions. I wouldn’t take off school that day.”

Stecklein also agrees that the Mayan culture was an amazing civilization, but says he hasn’t researched the end point of the Mayan calendar. He did say, however, that over the past few years he has had students ask him his opinion about the issue.

Many people just want to hear the facts regarding the 2012 rumors and are trying to seek out credible sources. Stecklein is not alone in the scientific community as a skeptic of this idea. The good folks at NASA have a Web site called “Ask an Astrobiologist” at astrobiology.nasa.gov that offers average people the chance to ask real astrobiologists their opinions on subjects related to astronomy. All 2012 questions have been predictably shot down as being rumors and based on misinformation.

With movies depicting the apocalypse as brought about by alien attacks, zombies, and mass suicides becoming more frequent, and the movie “2012” coming out next Nov. 13, it is guaranteed that 2012 will become another huge public scare, perhaps even bigger than Y2K. There are a growing number of Web sites dedicated to 2012 ranging



from sites that offer “official” 2012 clothing to sites that are counting down the time to ones that offer tips for surviving the end of the world, and even a site that offers a survival class.

If you are interested in learning the survival skills necessary to live through an apocalypse and would also like to take a trip to Kentucky, this is the class for you. The \$750 week-long class is a two-phase lesson on surviving in a North American landscape free of people. The first phase is dedicated to learning the skills necessary for immediate survival after doomsday. The second phase teaches the skills needed to sustain life in a post-apocalyptic world. This class is obviously necessary for anyone planning to see the year 2013, and sign up is available at www.2012survivalschool.com.

To go with the class you may want to buy some survival guides or gear. If you want to stock up on food, I would advise visiting www.Patriotfood.com, a site that offers food stockpiles going for a claimed one cent per pound. For a more complete disaster kit, www.disasterrx.com offers survival packages targeted at 2012 shoppers. For those less knowledgeable about survival skills, a survival guide may be the best choice. Lawoftime.org/content/survivalguide offers a survival guide that will answer all your questions. If you just want to know how long you have to live, you’re in luck. There are a plethora of sites dedicated to counting down the seconds to our demise. Countdownto2012.net offers one such clock.

So now that you have heard the facts as well as the rumors and know everything you need to survive this imminent disaster, the only question is, with so many different cultures and people predicting the apocalypse on the same day, is this the real deal? I won’t be dropping out of college and giving up any time soon, but I can’t help but wait for what will happen at 11:11 p.m. on Dec. 21, 2012.