

LOGOS: MIND TREASURES

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By Michael Erlewine (Michael@Erlewine.net)

I wanted to start writing something on food, eating, and what we eat, you know, how far organic foods and all that have come in our lifetime. I thought I would use as a graphic for my food blog the logo I designed for Eden Foods back in the 1960s. It is still being used today and I am proud to see my work on every can of beans or whatever when I browse the local food coops. Here is the original poster I did for them many years ago. I still like it.

But then my mind kind of wandered into all the logos and designs I have had to come up with over the years to help show the world just what I am doing or into. And some of you have messaged me about my designs and perhaps it is worth sharing with you how I look at logos, how important they are in my work. For some of you this could be very interesting.

A logo represent the essence or key impulse for your endeavor, a single concise image that represents the entire concept or project in a word or image as seen at a glance. For example, when I start a new business or project, the first thing I do is design a logo. If I can't come up with one that conveys the very heart of what I am about to do, I seldom will do the project. That is how important logos are in my life.

A logo can be a graphic image or just a word or title that communicates. For me, a logo is always a graphic in combination with a word or two. I am not really an artist. My mom was and she taught all her five boys to draw and think in terms of color and design, so over the years I have learned a little about getting my ideas into images. Often, I have other people render the final design for me. In recent years I have done more and more just by myself. So let me repeat myself a little, and this is only my personal take on all of this:

New ideas and projects that we blue-sky in our minds are like kites we fly in the air. They somehow need to be grounded to become real. To me, finding a logo is how I ground them. And by grounding them, I don't just mean making them practical. I feel that logos are the essence of the essence of the essence of what I intend to do. They have to be so deep and powerful that they cannot be unearthed or dislodge by time or by others. Think about that for a moment. And now I will share with you a secret.

I do not generally look outside in magazines, books, or around me to find the inspiration for a logo. I look inside only, and not just below the surface. To get a good logo, I somehow have to go so deep inside myself to find the logo that no one else on the planet would ever care to take the trouble of getting underneath it. This is a concept I learned from the Tibetans, that of "terma."

A terma is a profound Buddhist teaching hidden by great lamas (tertens) so that students will magically find that teaching sometime far in the future when it is most needed. Often these teaching are hidden under rocks or even in rocks, or caves, and so on. But there is another kind of terma or hidden teaching called "mind terma," teachings that are hidden deep in the mind itself. And the mind is open to any of us to realize and become aware of. We can learn to go there.

I feel that many of my logos are some kind of mind terma, an essential signature that I can find within my own mind, so that is always where I look first. And I don't just look beneath the surface, but I go as deep as I can go, where I have never been and where others probably will never reach either. And one more thing: I know when I find the right logo because it is so significant or active that even I can't see the end of its magnetic quality. Let me explain, if I can, and this is a general rule in my life, but also a key for you.

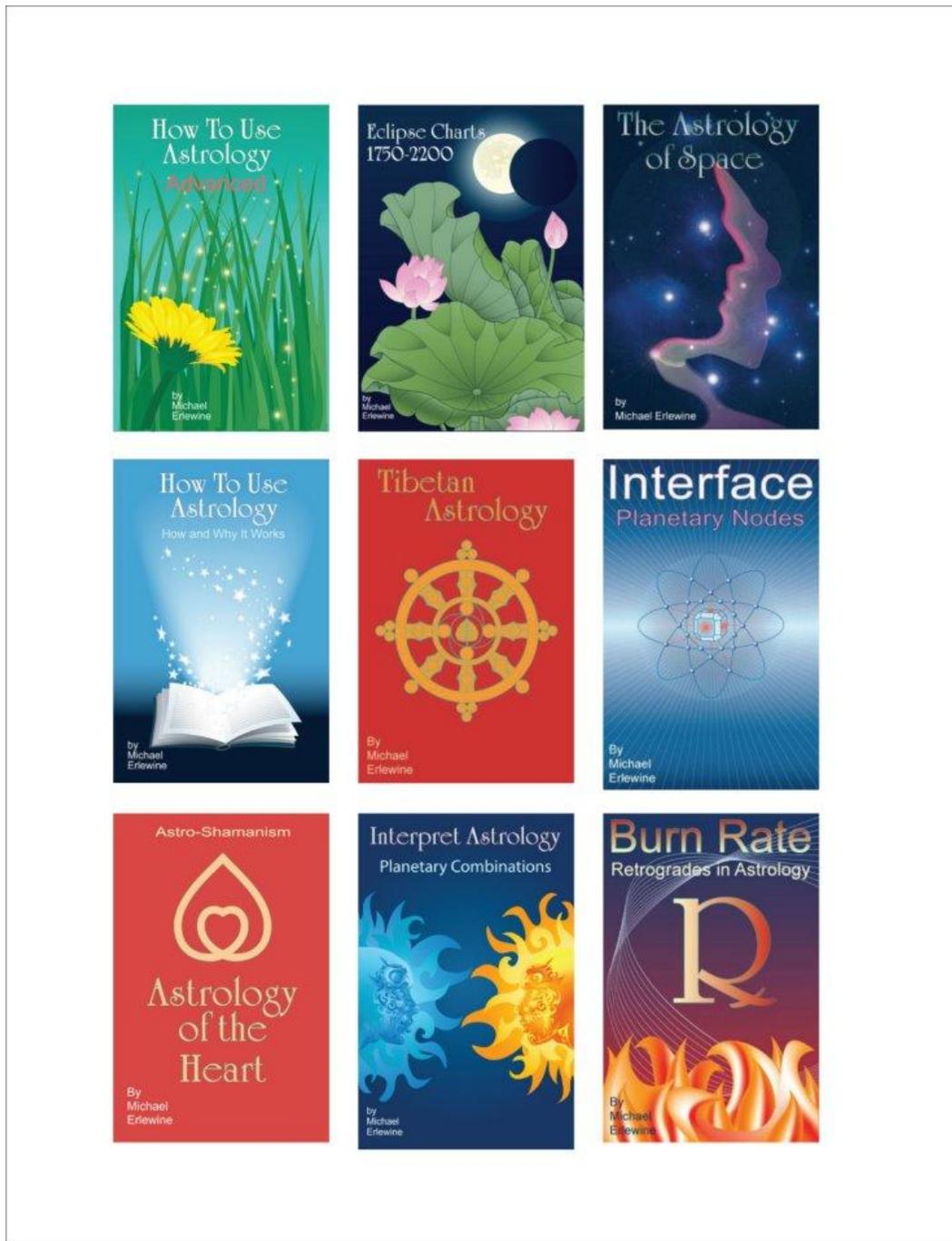
Something beautiful or powerful like a logo is not something just for me to show others, but it has to also mystify me into silence. It has to first work on me with its beauty until I cannot see the end of it. By this I mean, I am not done looking at it or appreciating it, so I know it will last into the future and not just have beauty for a day or a week. It must mesmerize me and shine and last far into the future, like a star in the night sky.

In other words, I select logos not only by sight but by feeling their power without conceptual thought. I must be in love with the image and unable to see the end of what it means. Logos must shine. This is something you can learn to recognize. These are treasures of the mind, and they are in your mind all the time if you will look. But you must be motivated by a need or a concept to go there. Got it?

I could go on, but I have given you enough that if this concept of mind treasures sparks you, then you can figure out how to do this for yourself. Now let's look at a few logos I have designed. But keep in mind that what are treasures to me may not be so to you. You will find your own treasures, of course.



Astrologyland.com is my concept, but here rendered by graphic artist Martin Machnowski. The concept is a place where non-astrologers can find some free astrology and have fun, but also purchase reports (written mostly by me) for themselves.



Book covers also can function as logos. I have written something like fifty or more books if you include all of the music and film books I produced. These covers were all designed by me and each one is intended to have a graphic impact that gives you a feeling or sense of what the book is about. There are lots of free e-books by me here:

<http://astrologysoftware.com/books/index.asp?orig>

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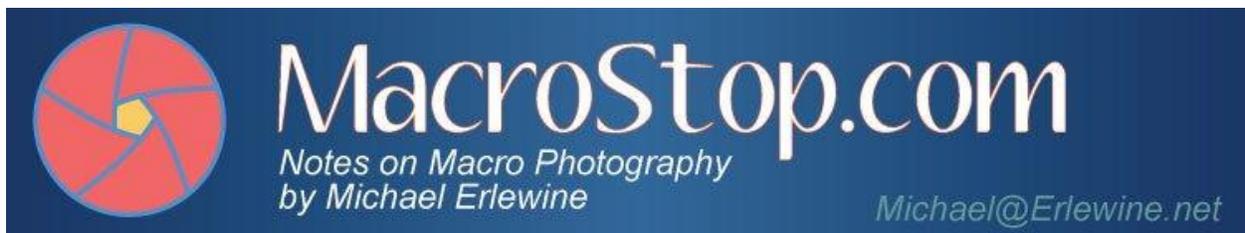
This graphic will be part of a 20-foot booth for an astrology conference (UAC) to be held in New Orleans next month. I am introducing a new astrology program called Blue*Star, and here you can see the logo and the general idea. This will be eight feet tall and I don't know how wide, but a large curved wall. This is my concept rendered by graphic artist Martin Machnowski.



This logo and poster I did for my brother Dan Erlewine, today the best-know instrument repairer and expert perhaps in the world. It is a four-pointed star, with four being the number of strength and durability, of course.



Here is the logo for the Heart Center, a communion center Margaret and I established in 1972 for sharing spiritual ideas. It is still going today and also embraces a large astrological library (probably the largest in the world) and a music/video studio. This image rendered by Stanley Doctor.



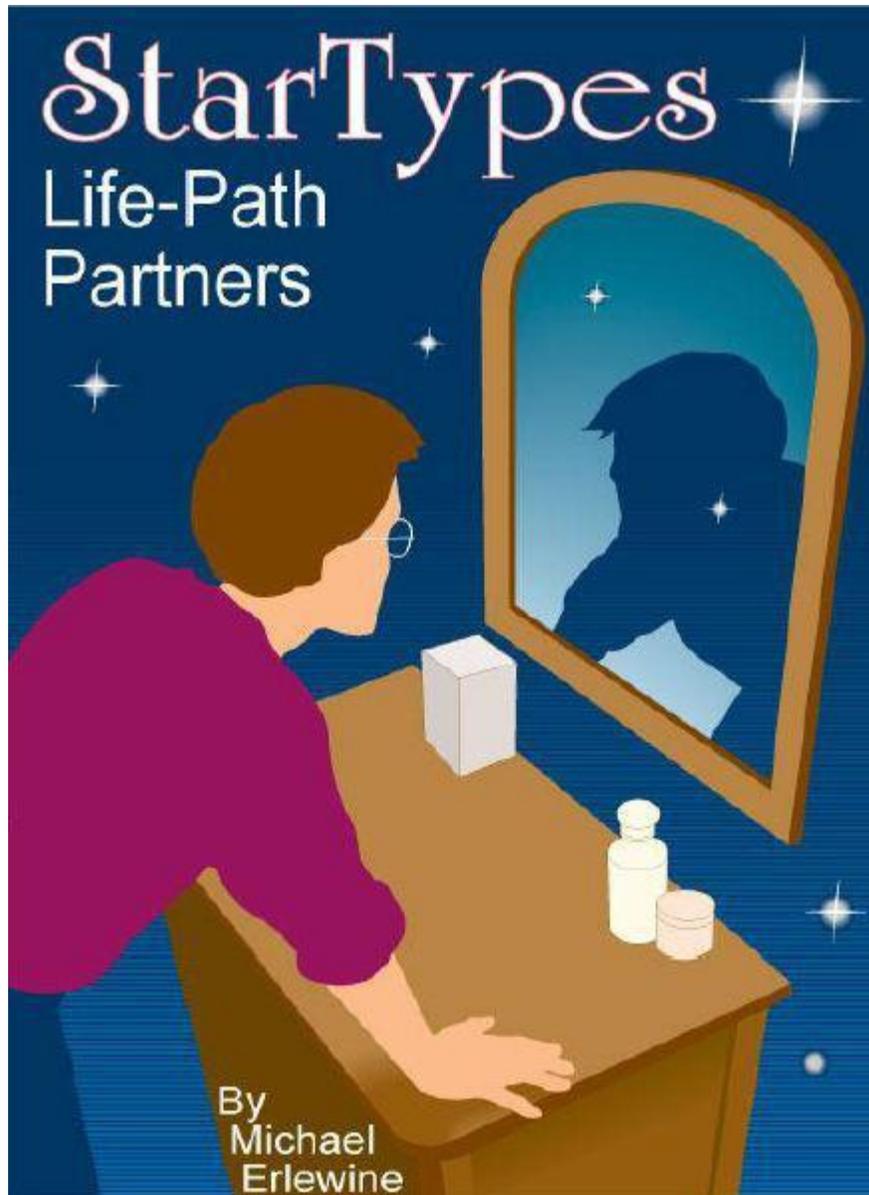
A logo for some of my photography work. Lots of free nature books at this site and how to do macro and close-up photography.



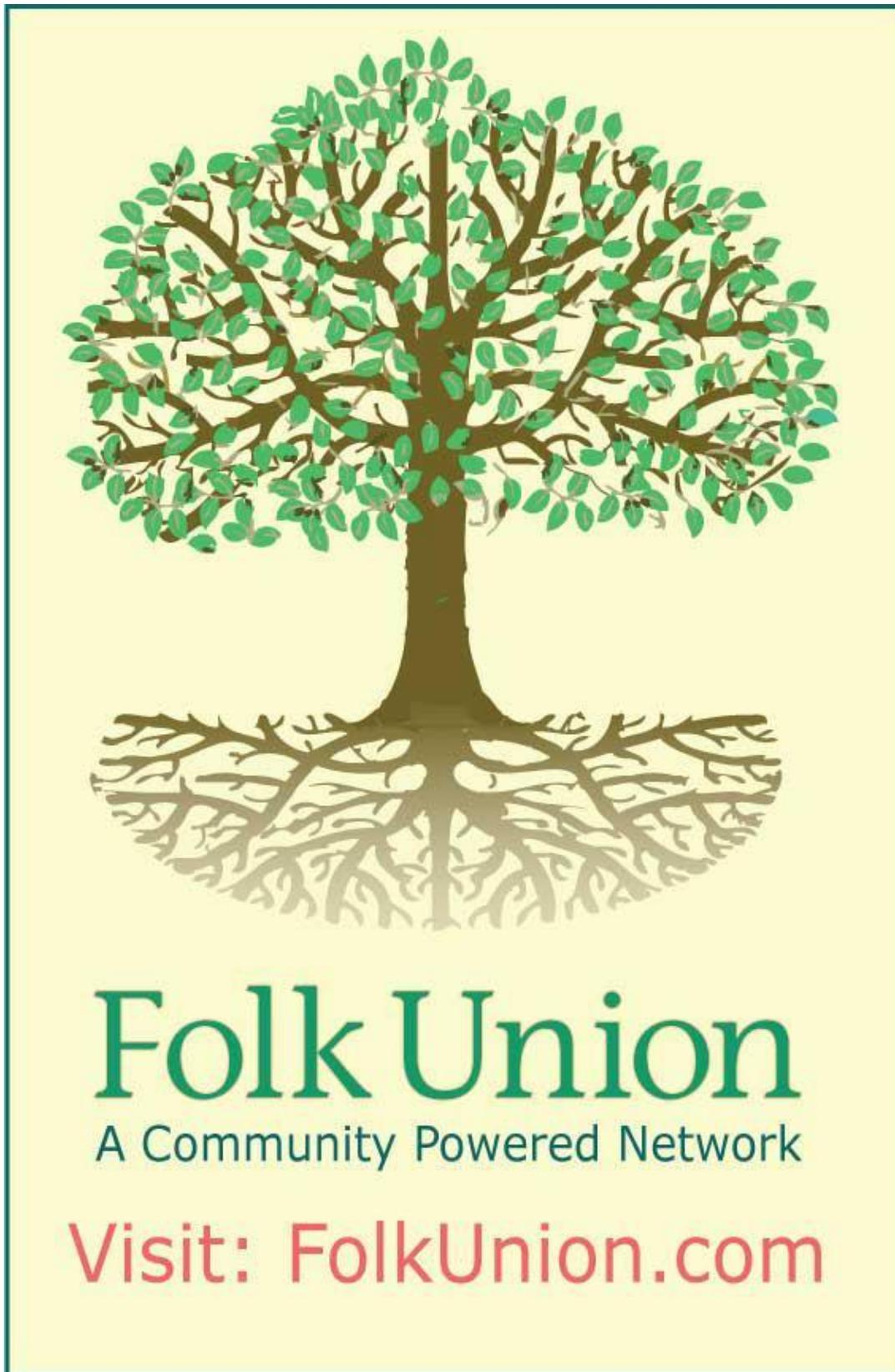
Logo for Matrix Astrology, the second oldest software company still on the Internet, the oldest being Microsoft. Again, not the four-pointed star to withstand the shocks of time, at least so far... since 1977.



I did a lot of posters back in the 1960s and 1970s, mostly for my band the Prime Movers Blues Band. Here are a few of them.



This is a name and image for StarTypes, my concept for presenting heliocentric astrology to everyone. I came up with the concept and image, but it was originally rendered by my brother Tom Erlewine.



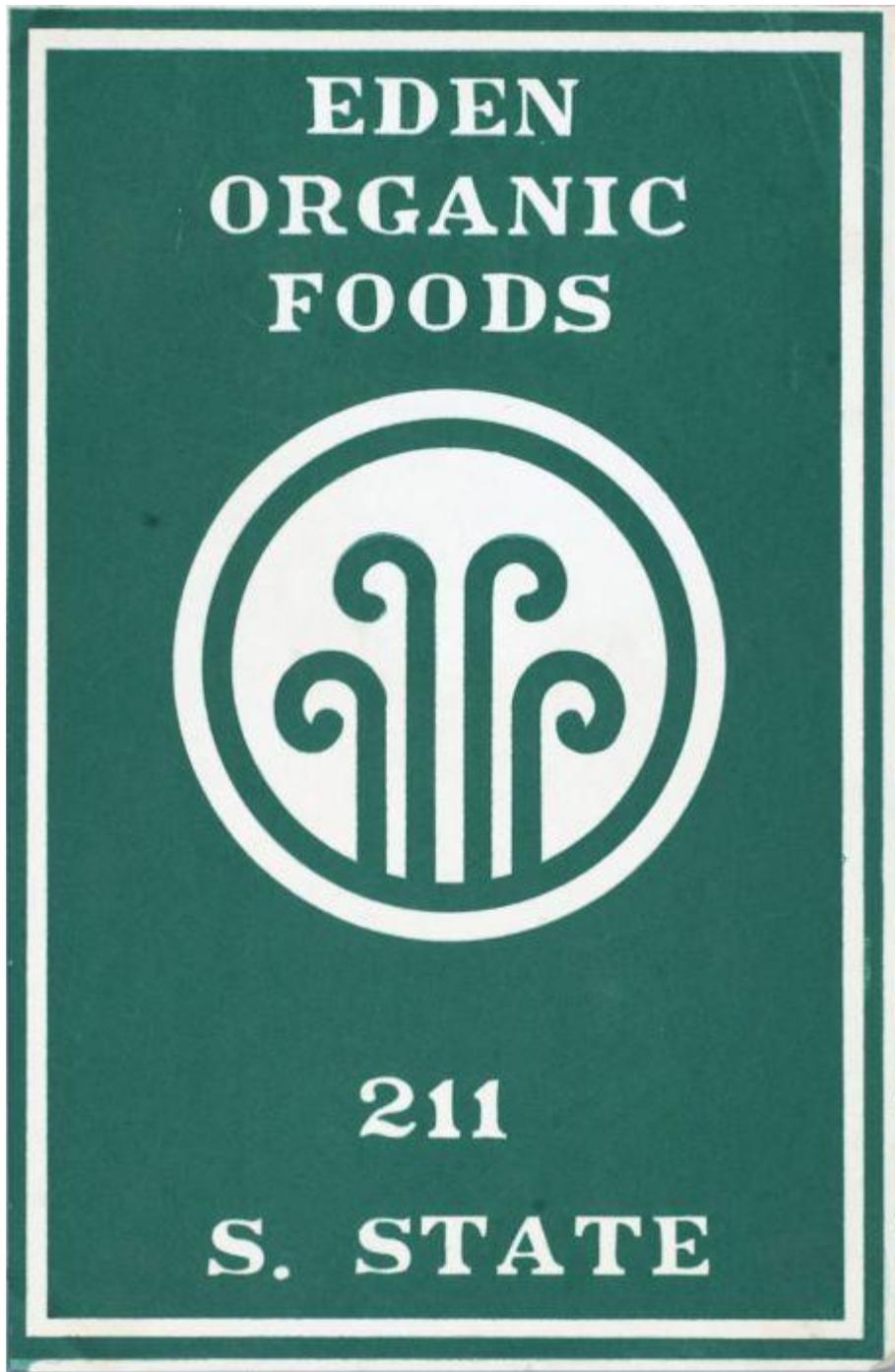
A logo for a community information sharing website, that never really got off the ground.



This logo is for AMG, the All-Media Guide, which comprises the All-Music Guide (allmusic.com), the All-Movie Guide (allmovie.com), and the All-Game Guide (allgame.com). I founded this company, which now provides music, and film, etc. information to the whole world. For example I helped to start Netflix by providing them with movie data for the first years of their startup. I sold this company some years ago, but it is the largest music review site in the world, and one of the two largest film sites, etc.



This simple logos was the name of my last music endeavor in the early 1970s, which was just me playing piano "Ann Arbor Heart Song." I was looking for a partner and found my wife Margaret, who would come and see me play.



Here is the original logo and poster I did for Eden Foods back in the late Sixties and early 1970s. As an astrologer, I also picked an inauguration date. They are still in business, so maybe I did OK.



Again, here is the BlueStar logo, which I developed many years ago, but here rendered by Martin Machnowski.



This image was designed for an astrological group, the “An Ann Arbor Astrological Association,” but it has since been use as an album cover by musician Seth Bernard.



This image is a logo for the Harvest Gathering, an annual gathering of musicians each year in the fall. It represents openness and hugging, which happens a lot at the gathering.