

# ASTRA NEWS

6TH / 16 / 21  
ISSUE



*Hello everyone!*

*Congratulations with the sixth issue of "Astra News"!*

*In this issue we are starting the project "The Republic of Mars".*

*I want to thank everyone who contributed to this issue!*

*Enjoy!*

*Yours,*

*Leonid*

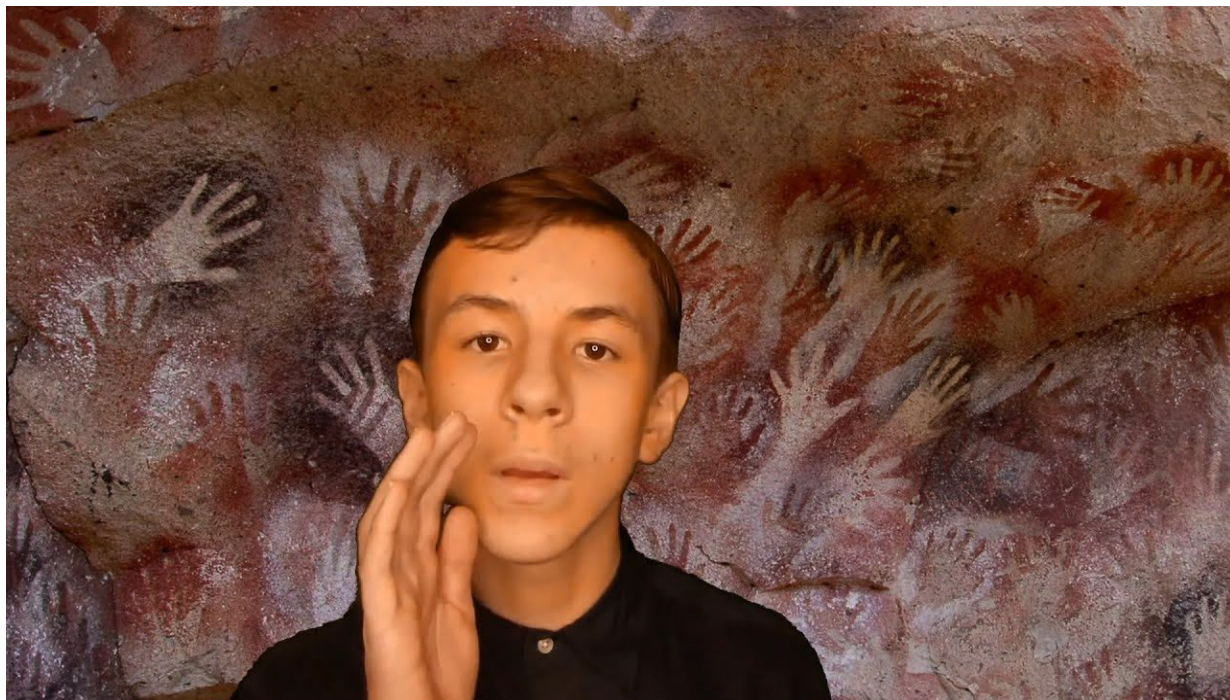
*The cover for the sixth issue was designed by Leonid*

### **The Cave**

Audio-video promotion for the magazine "Astra News"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X55QFD4VMYk> (2:56)

It was spoken in the SPARK series talk of the 24<sup>th</sup> of September,  
the video was then recorded on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September.



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## *How to Throw Knives Safely and Correctly*

By Keira Young

Knife throwing is a very visually appealing skill to learn. One, you get to use weapons. Two, you feel cool doing it. Three, you actually look cool doing it. Nothing is more satisfying than throwing a knife and hearing the soft thud of the point sinking into your target, but it takes some work to get there. When I first started to learn knife throwing, I didn't do any research. I just picked up a knife and started throwing the way I thought would work. I really regret not doing any research first. Not learning the proper way to throw a knife was a mistake. If you don't take the necessary precautions, you could end up hurting yourself. This could be anything from twisting your arm the wrong way, to jabbing the point into your foot, to impaling a family member, neighbor, or pet. I was smart enough to make sure the area was clear and not throw the knife at a piece of metal that would cause the knife to come flying back at me (trust me, it can. You'll pierce your eye out kid). This is all a dramatic way of saying that things can go seriously wrong if you don't think about what you are doing. It matters with the little things too, throwing the knife wrong for two days got me blisters, I wasn't using the right throwing technique. The technique is the most important part of throwing a knife successfully into your target. Throughout this article, you will learn the precautions you need to take, the right things to throw at and/or with, and how to set a path that will lead to triumph.

I know I talked a lot about safety a few sentences ago, but it really is important to take this seriously. The blade of your knife doesn't have to be sharp (which it should not if you are a beginner) for you to hurt yourself or others. Make sure that when you pick your permanent throwing station you set it up so you wouldn't be throwing the knife remotely towards anyone, or anyone's house, because you wouldn't want your neighbor to sue you if you accidentally bust a window or two as you practiced. You should also be wearing shoes that would protect your feet/toes. So no sandals or flip flops or socks for that matter, preferably something with a hard toe, but sneakers or walking shoes should do the job if you can't afford to be picky. Along with wearing appropriate footwear, clothes in general should be chosen wisely. Even though it doesn't seem like you are moving a lot, think about it. You are outside, swinging your arm up and down, and going to get your knives. That also may not seem like much, but you will have to retrieve the ones that are thirty feet away from you, or in the bushes where you can't see them. If it is above 70 degrees, heat exhaustion is a possibility for some people. So wear something lightweight that you don't mind getting sweaty and dirty (maybe I just sweat a lot, who knows). On the topic of sweat, wear bug repellent. At this time of year, bugs are brutal and annoying. Nothing is more frustrating than trying to line up your throw and having bugs landing on you, biting you, and swarming around your head. The swetier you get, the more they are attracted to you. Lastly, let other people know what you are doing so they know to have caution.

Next, picking your target. As a beginner with limited options, a simple tree trunk is great for target practice. They are probably abundant and relatively easy to stick a projectile into. If you have more materials, then you could rig up a board of plywood or something like that to throw at, that is what my setup is at the moment. Make sure to have something supporting the board behind it, like a tree trunk. If you have the time and resources to build it, you could make something that looks like this, with the grain of the wood going towards you.



**DO NOT** throw your knife at metal, rubber, or house siding material. If you aren't sure about a material, don't use it. Use a **wooden** target. It is very unlikely that you don't have spare wood available at your home or close by. If you don't, you can make your own target with supplies from Home Depot or any hardware store, if you don't feel like making one, you can buy cheap ones off of Amazon or Etsy. You can draw a target on it if you feel like it, I personally don't, but it doesn't really matter.

Your throwing stance is also important. Keep your weight on your dominant foot (google how to find your dominant foot), have your non-dominant foot in front of the other with no weight on it. As you raise your hand to throw, the hand you aren't throwing with should be pointing to where you want to aim. As you actually throw, move your body weight forward onto your front, non-dominant, foot, ending with following through on your throw and leaning forward.

Lastly, we have techniques. Of course, there are more ways to throw knives than this, which you can search for yourself, but I will be sharing 2 ways.

First, the hammer technique. Basically, you hold the knife the way you would hold a hammer. You hold the handle of the knife, all fingers wrapped around. Assume your throwing stance, raise your arm so the length from shoulder to elbow is parallel to the ground. Your elbow should be at a 90 degree angle, then move your entire set arm backwards, keeping that 90 degree angle. It is important that you have it going straight back. Once your entire arm is raised,

flex your wrist backwards, the knife itself should be parallel to the ground. You can do a few practice swings using your non-dominant arm as your guide, as your dominant hand should be the one holding the knife. Once your arm is ready, move your arm straight forward. The entire movement, once you learn the throwing stance, should be one fluid movement, your arm going straight back, and straight forward. You should be releasing the knife by just relaxing the muscles in your hand, the centrifugal force your arm has generated will carry the knife forward without much effort. You should release the knife just before your arm comes in line with the target you are aiming for. This, like all techniques, will take some trial and error. Tweaking your form until you can stick the knife into your target fairly consistently.

Next, the Mumyō-Ryū technique. This technique is based off of a technique that Japanese warriors used for throwing circular objects, such as shurikens. First step, locate the center of gravity of your knife, this will be important later. To do this, try to balance the knife on one finger, the center of gravity should be the point where it doesn't tip to either side, remember where this position is. Next, assume the thumb grip. This grip is used for multiple knife throwing techniques. Rest your index finger along the spine of the knife, wrapping the rest of your fingers around the handle. If you are asking, "how far up should my hand be on the knife?", remember that center of gravity that you found? The tip of your index finger should be resting there. Your middle finger should be curled around the knife, and your thumb should be right on top of it, this is why it is called a thumb grip, this is a looser grip, but should be held mainly between your middle finger and thumb. Assume your throwing stance that we discussed earlier. Raise your arm next to your head, your upper arm should be parallel to the ground, your elbow at a 90 degree angle. Keeping this angle, move your arm outward, forgive me for making this analogy, but as if you were T-posing and made a 90 degree angle with your elbow. Your hand and knife should still be facing forward. To throw the knife, use the same principles as in the hammer technique, except that instead of going straight back and straight forward, due to your arm being away from your head, you should be bringing your arm from outside, to next to your guide arm. Like all techniques, use some trial and error to become fairly consistent with sticking the knife into your target.

There are many ways to throw a knife, I encourage you to search these on your own, but these are some fairly basic techniques that should generate no spin when done correctly. You can also throw a knife that it spins 1, 2, or 3 times. You can also hold the knife from the blade end (which is safer than you think because it doesn't have to be a sharp edge). Remember that knife throwing can be difficult, it can take months to learn and a lifetime to master. If you are interested in this, stick with it. It is a very cool skill to learn and builds a lot of character through trial and error, failing and getting back up again, you even sometimes have to go through minor injuries such as friction blisters. In my opinion, there are three steps to learning how to successfully throw a knife.

Safety first,

Master the

basics,

And practice.

One small note

It so happened that Keira's article  
corresponds and continues what you saw and see now.  
Talking about coincidences/synchronicity.  
Neither one of us was trying to achieve this.  
But now I'll synchronize the following intentionally.  
Just as Keira suggested.  
I'll repeat it after her.  
Here is another empty space.  
Fill it out.

- Leonid



# Walking With the Rain

by Leonid Vishnevskiy

This short story was written on a wonderful 2021 spring day when it was raining. The sound of the rain is the actual recorded rain that day.

The sound of the rain is important. Please, listen to and watch the video from the YouTube link rather than read the text.

\* \* \*

Listen to and watch: <https://youtu.be/3VB7fKDYPdU> (1:28)



When grey clouds form and the ground gets mushy, people scatter into their homes if they can. It becomes cold outside, and it gets uncomfortable to walk, especially in those new shoes you have. Rain. To other people I am the only one left on the streets.

Don't get me wrong, it's not like I don't have a place to go to; I do, and it is quite comfortable. But I do prefer to be out here, in the rain. It gives everything a fresh look, and the grey clouds close up everything around me, as though I'm in my own private room. When the mist comes, nothing looks like it will disturb me anymore. The sound of the rain is calm, and the calm coldness of the rain splashes onto me. A coldness that soothes you, that calms the heated worries of your mind. Puddles mirror the streets with even cleaner spots than the surrounding already rain-cleaned ones. Rain makes everything appear mysterious, but not scary.

Others look at me, and think that I am alone. But there I am, me and my friend, the rain.

*The End*

# The Republic of Mars

by Leonid

The idea of this project is not mine. This was suggested in the onboarding email. There was also Nuke Mars, and while Nuke Mars meets my interests more, with time I began to realize the importance of The Republic of Mars.

Technical questions of how to colonize Mars are very important. Without them, we would not be able to get to Mars or stay on it, or at least safely. But are we directing enough attention to whether we as humans, who have developed and always lived on Earth, could successfully adapt on Mars?

What I want to say now I already formulated in the article “The Martian Stone Age” (1<sup>st</sup> issue of “Astra News”, May 22, 2021), and in short it is:

**To colonize Mars, we need to expand not only our technical capabilities, but also our philosophical capabilities.**

That was not the only time when I was trying to cover the subject of Mars colonization in “Astra News”. There was also an article “Who Should Colonize Mars First?” (3<sup>rd</sup> issue of “Astra News”, July 17, 2021).

But let’s do something different.

Let’s start a project where other students of Astra Nova would join and it would become a joint project.

Below is the presentation where I suggest to start the project of The Republic of Mars. Some of you might have already seen it. You can either read it on pages 10-11 (below is the full text of the presentation) or listen to it with the following link:

Listen to and watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Toi9wgvC71A> (4:46). I made some slight variations between the spoken speech and the written speech, but they do not contradict each other.



## The Republic of Mars

### The Republic of Mars. Children on Mars

Presentation of the project "The Republic of Mars"

Recorded on October 4, 2021

I sit in my room today, with the speech that I wrote for you in front of me and that I am about to present. Outside, it is so beautiful. But for how much longer can we experience this on Earth? We don't know what sort of a future is waiting for the Earth. Since you're here, listening to this speech, I am sure that you also dream of expanding our civilization into space. I want to believe that someday, our ancestors will be able to experience the beauty of another planet.

The Republic of Mars.

Sooner or later humans will be on Mars. The new era of our civilization will take its turn. Lots of work has to be done though for this to happen. Part of this work are technical solutions, things like how do we reach Mars safely, how do we provide the first settlement with supplies, etc.

Does giving the first settlers the idea of how they should organize their life on Mars just as important? Looking at our history on Earth, I think it is. One of the major "achievements" of our civilization is that we have weapons that can destroy our planet numerous times, not mentioning that each day we add to destroying our habitable environment on Earth. Let's not let that happen on Mars.

I am talking about creating an ideal society. We all know that the idea of one is not new but we also know that it never succeeded. So then, why am I bringing it up now? How will we on Mars be different from us here on Earth? Where is the chance for success of this society?

I think the main difference is this.

By the time we started to have ideas and theories of the ideal state, society, we had already been fighting with each other. If you search on the internet about Plato, I believe he was the first one to come up with the theory of the ideal state, you will learn that during Plato's time wars were already part of human life.

We are talking about building the social life of the only settlement on Mars, thus there are no huge conflicts, wars. Or are we? Concerning the space race, I do see a chance that there will be more than one settlement, but let's not consider that for now.

Hopefully, this society will grow and thrive. Our goal will be to make sure that as the number of people grows in the Martian society, it will still remain peaceful and well.

I already have worked on some thoughts for the Republic of Mars, you can read them in the first issue of the magazine "Astra News" in the article "The Martian Stone Age" and in the third issue of the magazine in the article "Who Should Colonize Mars First?"

Thinking about the Republic of Mars is very interesting. So many questions arise. Like, for example:

What about children born on Mars? Should we tell them of how wonderful life on Earth was, or should we save them from that feeling? If we decide to keep it from them, how should we be then with books, movies, art that we made on Earth? Does it mean that we should not pass part of our culture on to a new generation on Mars? How should we tell, teach them about Earth?

Write what you think about this for the sixth issue of "Astra News". It doesn't have to be long; a few sentences will do. We will then publish the thoughts of each of you in one article, or some of you may want to write a separate article about it.

This speech will also be published in "Astra News". Please, send your work by October 15, 9 AM PT.

P.S.

Added on October 15.

Please, send your articles when they are ready. "Astra News" is released regularly.

***The End***

## CHILDREN ON MARS

by Leonid Vishnevskiy

When we think of Martians, we usually think of them as green creatures. I don't know from where it started, but I've always imagined them like that as well. Until I started thinking about "The Republic of Mars". And then I had a thought: our children born on Mars could call themselves "Martians".

Martians...what could that mean? Usually, you would think that your identity would be the place that you were born in and grew up in. But what if for years, say, your family was German, but you were born and raised in Italy? Would you be Italian, or German? Your whole family was in Germany, you're undoubtedly engulfed in German culture. Yet you lived your whole childhood in Italy. And so, who are you: an Italian, or a German?

And then, it matters how they see Earth to consider themselves Martians. If, for instance, they think of Earth's life like we think of Jupiter's life (i.e., they think that it has no life), then they would quite simply call themselves Martians.

But most likely life on Earth would still exist and they would know about it, so how they see Earth will depend on what we will tell them about it. So then, what should we tell them?

Let's see what would happen if we lie to them and tell them that life on Earth is bad, and that they should be happy that they were born on Mars. Since sometimes we have to neglect moral principles to survive, we will leave aside for now the one that says lying is bad. I'll give you an example of when we have to neglect moral. As you probably know, if there is an emergency on a plane and passengers need to put oxygen masks on, adults should do it before children. This way it's less likely that they will lose consciences and thus they will be able to assist children in the emergency situation.

So, we neglect that lying is bad. But there is still one more thing that we have to consider: there is the risk that one day the lie will be uncovered. That not only will they feel themselves lied to and start losing trust in those who brought them on Mars, but it will also destroy the very base of their beliefs, including their identity of being Martians.

Imagine, for instance, that you want to live in a very beautiful place, that you saw in photos, but cannot go there. However, people tell you that it is bad there, and you believe that. But then eventually you find out that the photo was speaking the truth. You will not only feel lied to, but at that moment the whole thing that you built your life around will be destroyed, because remember, we are talking about adapting to life on another planet.

We must not lie about the Earth. Not only because lying is bad, but because the risk associated with it is too high.

So then, how should we be?

One idea is not *what*, but *how* we tell them of the Earth. Since we cannot lie, we need to tell them the truth. That does not mean that we will focus less on the good. However, we also cannot focus excessively on it either, as that would also be a sort of lie, just a hidden one.

Here I want to remind us again that we are talking about a situation where life on Earth continues to exist. Because otherwise before us there would be no decision to make of what we should say about Earth (look at the third and fourth paragraphs).

Maybe we should try to tell them of how important they are to us on Earth. Of how humanity always dreamed to colonize Mars. How one time from a wish it became something that we need to do. But then they could ask themselves: "Why me? Why me?".

They are on Mars, which no matter how cool it seems to us, in reality it is a desolate, dangerous planet which would, at first anyways, have a small population. We are excited to live there because it is so different, because it expands our horizons, it makes us a multi-planetary species, it leads us to new discoveries. But imagine this, and this is how it would look like in the beginning: would you rather be born in an abandoned, old house with a slightly toxic atmosphere in the middle of nowhere, or would you rather be born in a new house in a good neighborhood with a good atmosphere? Surely the latter. The same for a Martian.

*No, this is not the end...*

I hope that in this article I didn't disappoint you that I didn't answer the question of "What/how do we tell Martian children of Earth?", I hope that you weren't expecting that. It is not an easy subject. I ask you to join me to cover it as well as other questions that arise when we think about colonizing Mars.

#### CONCLUSION:

In this stage of development, I think that we shouldn't jump to answer questions. Rather, we should try to find the right questions, and then we should formulate them correctly. And only then should we try to answer them.

I hope that in the next issues we will continue this project together! After all, there will never be just one human on Mars.