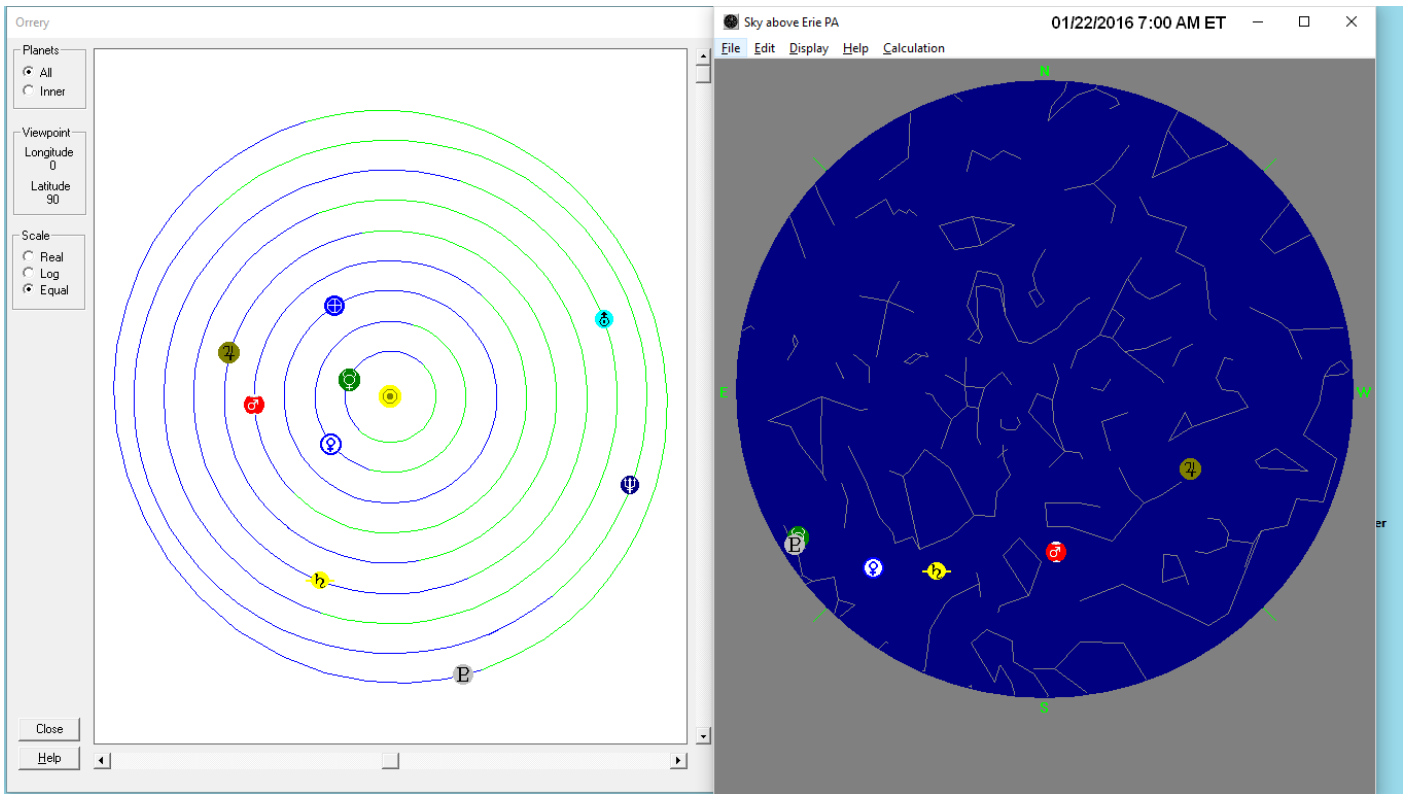


You may have read that the inner planets are now "lined up". Here is the actual situation. Going outward from the sun, the planets shown are Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and even Pluto. The planetary orbits are NOT to scale. They are compressed so that they will all fit on your screen. The SKY view shows what the Erie observer sees just before the (counter clockwise) rotating earth brings him into SUNRISE position. Note, for example how Mercury and Pluto appear superimposed - they are actually billions of miles apart, but are aligned in the Earth observer's line of sight.



I used Home Planet to make these figures. It is free astronomy software. Download and play with it!  
Download at: <https://www.fourmilab.ch/homeplanet/>

Note that there is nothing unusual about the planets appearing "along a line". Our solar system is confined to an almost flat plane so that, as viewed from any planet, the others all appear to travel along a common curve - the ecliptic. What is currently of note is that so many planets are bunched (angularly) enough together to be all simultaneously in view to the Earth observer.