

Marion D. March

GATHERING

(Thursday, May 26, 1994 after Ray Merriman at approximately 9:30 am - 10:00 am)

What Astrology Needs to Enhance its Professional Image

It's a good thing I don't shy away from controversies, because you've asked me to tackle a lulu of a topic. Thank goodness I've Sagittarius rising and am used to put my foot in my mouth - so here it goes.

To me this is a **two sided issue** - what do student/amateur astrologers have to do or learn when they want to become professional astrologers.

They need to know about ETHICS (What to tell whom and when)

ADVERTISING (how to sell themselves)

SURROUNDINGS (Kitchen table, park bench, office)

APPEARANCE

KNOWLEDGE (astrological & other background)

Don't want to spend too much time on this, it will all be discussed in detail at the **PRO-SIG CONFERENCE to be held in Annapolis, Nov. 11, 12 & 13.** (Flyers) Since they have honored me as their keynote speaker, I'll then add my 5 cents worth (or is it 50 cents worth now with inflation?)

The other side of issue is more complex and probably harder to get consensus on: I think the best example is in Steven Forrest's last book *The Night Speaks* where he relates how people fly in from far away to see him, his waiting list is long, he's been on TV, his name used in crossword puzzles and yet he has a primal fear that somebody's conservative grandfather will come up to him at a party and ask that simple, ubiquitous social question - by the way, Steve, what do you do?

What a tragedy, here we are, more able than ever to help, to counsel and advice

in many diverse ways, and yet we have to be embarrassed to admit to what we do.

So **WHAT SHOULD ASTROLOGERS DO TO BRING ASTROLOGY BACK AS A RESPECTED PROFESSION?**

(please note that I said **back** because once we were respected and accepted)

Controversy 1: **POVERTY CONSCIOUSNESS**

Do you think because you help someone, you should not charge for it? Do you think a nurse should do her chores for free? Or are you afraid that as a good Christian it is sinful to charge?

A profession is supposed to carry you through life, to enable you to have a roof over your head, to feed yourself and your family, to buy your clothes, a car if necessary and all else to ensure a decent life and avoid becoming a burden to the state. **DO YOU THINK SO LITTLE OF WHAT YOU DO, OR YOUR ABILITY TO DO IT, THAT YOU CANNOT CHARGE FOR IT?** If you don't value what you do, how can anyone else?

Tell 1975 **Barbara Watters story** of my \$75 per horoscope/8 hours of work etc.

(Even INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS, when they first venture into doing a neighbor's or friend's chart, should get compensated (get a book, baby-sitting, \$10.)

It is different in Western Europe (Verena Bachman will probably give you many insights at Saturday morning's Gathering) As I have observed in Switzerland, Germany, parts of France, Spain, Italy and even Chekoslovakia, they do not feel they have to be poor in order to be spiritual, helpful or true to themselves. In fact at the recent **Prague Congress** everyone was surprised when in my lecture on ASTROLOGY IN AMERICA I mentioned **"the trouble some astrologers have at earning a decent living here."**

It is time for astrologers to remember that PEOPLE RESPECT WHAT THEY PAY FOR

No true professional will give you something for nothing at best amongst some profession, such as the medical one, there is an exchange of services.

If you take pride in what you do and do it well, people will respect you and stand in line to pay you!

Controversy 2: PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF ASTROLOGERS

SUN SIGN ASTROLOGY has a good side: it gets people interested in the subject but the bad side is that it's treated as entertainment, makes astrology look ridiculous by dividing the whole world into 12 types!

900 NUMBERS No one really checks **how much, how little or even what you know**. There are some good astrologers on line, but also many charlatans, and lots of psychics, not exactly the kind of impression we want to give the public at large.

PSYCHIC FAIRS How can anyone take astrology seriously as long as it goes hand in hand with **tea leaves, crystal balls and gypsies**. Can you really blame the media for thinking us strange and funny?

"Ye olde shoppes" or reading cards on the boardwalks next to a big sign saying *ASTROLOGY* are not the right image either.

Quicky '**readings**' are not much better. In fact, we should stop giving **readings**, a word which has negative implications in today's language. It would be better to call it consultations or, if you are qualified, call it counseling.

Controversy 3: DEGREES

In the "good old days" astrology had a seat in the universities. It is high time to get back to that. The **Kepler** project is a step in the right direction and should be encouraged and supported. (Special presentation **Sunday at 5:45**

pa.) I presume you are all aware that a group in Seattle is trying to form a university which gives a degree in astrology. We also should try to get into existing universities. This is not only important because knowledge is good, but as more people practice humanistic and so-called psychological astrology, we enter a dangerous field where we can hurt others as easily as help them; We should have specialized training when we give advice that goes past our astrological knowhow.

Learning and Knowledge are also important because of the many SPECIALTIES we practice today.

The FINANCIAL ASTROLOGER needs to have financial background

The MEDICAL/HEALTH/NUTRITION ASTROLOGER should have pre-med or med training

MUNDANE ASTROLOGERS need to know about politics, history and economics. Of course this goes for any speciality. In the meantime, whatever subject you counsel in, take classes, stay au courant.

Controversy 4: LICENSING

This one brings out the biggest reaction and I can literally see some of you flinch or flex your Uranian muscles in protest.

A few weeks ago Newsweek had a great **cartoon** titled *"Which of these does NOT have to be registered?"* It showed a dog, a car, a bicycle and assault rifle! Unfortunately we can offer a similar cartoon showing a psychologist, a nurse, a realtor, a manicure and an astrologer and ask **"which of these professions do not have to be licensed?"**

You got it!

Unfortunately many so-called astrologers hang out their shingles without much training and we have no way of knowing in advance who knows something and who doesn't.

Astrology is considered Uranian/Neptunian and we reflect that by being unique (Uranus) and intuitive (Neptune), as well as rebellious (Uranus) and blurred of vision (Neptune), we don't want to be like anyone else do what anyone else does. So we protest when anyone mentions so plebeian a word as **licensing**.

Licensing evokes worries and fears. Who will judge us? Who will decide what is the right or wrong way of doing astrology and many similar problems.

Frankly I had all the same objections until I talked to a brilliant lawyer by the name of Jim Turner. Some of you may have met him at UAC'92 in Washington DC. He happens to be the man who made it possible for **acupuncturists** to get their license. He says they had exactly the same problems as we did, hailing from many different backgrounds, having a multitude of diverse approaches and schooling, using different methods and applications. Yet he said it was easy for them to agree because the licensing requirements were so standard and so primary that arguments quickly fell by the wayside.

Yet, as you all know, **Acupuncture** is now an accepted addition to medical care for which even the toughest insurance company will reimburse you!

Just as degrees or licenses will not ensure that someone is a good doctor or lawyer, only self-regulation within the profession will do that, all of the aforesaid is a beginning to try and regain what I would consider our rightful professional standing. I hope we'll start working toward some of these goals so we can again stand straight and with pride state **I AM AN ASTROLOGER!**