The President’s Report

OPA Retreat

Dates Set for 2010
& OPA at ISAR

BY BOB MULLIGAN

We keep working to make our Astrologer’s Retreat better each year. Our next retreat will run from October 20th to the 23rd of 2010; Once again we have scheduled this event to be at the wonderful Asilomar, on the Monterey peninsula in Northern California. So we have more than a year before the fun begins; now we are working to perfect our program, make the physical arrangements, and fine tune work for each day. There will be a few new groups and some surprises. Alexandra signed our new contract with Asilomar right after our last retreat in April because we were all feeling so positive about the place. Twink started putting together our advertising. Benjamin has offered up his suggestions and has helped in many ways to get us headed in the right direction. Monica has been working on the first day of the retreat for our unifying educational experience for us all. The group leaders have been working to make sure that the coming experience is even better and more powerful.

The ISAR conference at the end of August was absolutely wonderful. So many OPA members were in attendance; I truly wish that I could have had more time to visit with each of you. We got seven registrations for next year’s retreat. We had four new members join the organization as well. We collected names, emails, and phone numbers form an additional hundred astrologers who all wanted to learn more about our organization. The table looked great, in large part because of the fantastic design work of our newsletter editor, Twink McKenney; and also because of the diligent efforts of Katrina Peters. Katrina did a fantastic job of organizing the literature table, staffing it, and being there personally through a major part of the conference. There were so many people that helped out at the table I’m afraid I can’t name everyone, but you all did a great job for the organization. We handed out lots of literature, had great conversations, and answered many questions. The literature table was a center of gravity and a real anchor in the trade show. [CONTINUED ON PAGE 6]
Anna Swora

Anna lives outside of Philadelphia, PA near family and friends. Last April I had the pleasure of meeting her at the OPA Retreat in Monterey!

In 1973 a friend offered her an astrological reading and since then Anna had held an interest in astrology. Shortly thereafter she purchased Sakoian and Acker’s Astrologers Handbook and began studying on her own. She majored in film and made a career in film-making, while continuing her study of astrology. Anna worked for PBS and won several awards from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for documentaries on the environment.

Using astrology in her own therapeutic process led her to becoming a professional astrologer in 1996 working in tandem with therapists and their clients. She started studying Glenn Perry’s material in 1996 and in 1998 enrolled in a program offered in Transpersonal Counseling offered through The Union Institute and the Center for Transformational Studies.

Anna has been involved in co-facilitating two separate groups. The first one studied the Perennial Path, based on the work of Ken Wilber, in which she overlaid astrology onto the group process, as well as onto individual charts. She also co-facilitated a study group on the work of John Briggs (author of books on chaos theory and the creative process) and John Amoroso (Transpersonal Psychotherapist) where she once again brought astrology into the individual and group processes.

Psychological astrology remains Anna’s passion! It is the focus for the value she finds in astrology, and shares with others today.

Stephanie Telesco

True to her Gemini Ascendant and Moon, Stephanie enjoys a dual career! Astrology has been passion since her first formal astrology reading in 1972. She grew up in the Philippines; a country she says loves all things esoteric. In the mid 1980’s she began taking classes in astrology and doing charts, something that she stills enjoys doing more than anything else. Currently she is taking John Frawley’s traditional, classical astrology course, based on Lily’s work. This has richly enriched her practice and expanded her knowledge of astrology, while satisfying her endless intellectual curiosity. She says “people want and appreciate hearing the truths in their charts”

With her husband, Stephanie has owned and operated The Brick Oven Bistro in Boise, ID – recently celebrating 25 years of business. The restaurant provides her with many opportunities to research astrology in action, from staff horoscopes to daily events reflecting astrological symbols. Recently Stephanie and her husband purchased a home in Nicaragua as their retirement retreat, where she looks forward to continuing her astrology work and practice – maybe even hold events there in the future.

Stephanie’s first OPA retreat was three years ago on Sanibel Island. She is immensely grateful to OPA; being part of the organization and attending the retreats have made a huge difference in her astrology practice. We look forward to seeing her again next year!
Geri Bellino

Geri found her way to astrology in the early 1980’s in New York City. While in therapy herself, a friend referred her to an astrologer. She was totally impressed and returned annually for a consultation. Synchronistically, she also met her Jungian therapist through her astrologer.

She calls herself an “intuitive” astrologer though she dislikes labels. Her work is about lifting people up and providing them with courage and hope, not fear. Currently, she is involved in a couple of peer groups, one in Colorado and one via Skype. Both are with Sandra Leigh Serio, a friend and mentor who has made a big difference in her astrology path. The OPA conference in April was a turning point for Geri’s life and career. After returning from the retreat, she started her professional astrological practice!

For 25 years, Geri has been involved in video and film production. Her master’s degree is in communication and she has worked closely within the college and university system. In 2004 she was transferred to Denver, which she now calls home. She is involved with the metaphysical community in Denver and has many friends within it. Geri is also taking Robert Corre’s online class and expanding her astrological horizons while working on her website. We wish you great success in all of your endeavors!

Laura Ann La Roche

Laura Ann’s earliest memory of astrology was when she was two and one-half years old! Her mom always read the funnies and horoscopes in their locally newspaper. She taught Laura Ann to read the alphabet by reading the newspaper, including the horoscope columns. She has always been interested in the larger picture of life and as a small child looked at the sky and called it God’s “star map” of heaven. Although she was raised in a devout Catholic family, her father took out a sun-sign book from the library for her at the age of six after a temper tantrum regarding a horoscope column. Apparently, Laura Ann did not agree with what was written. It was the local librarian who suggested she should begin engaging her innate interest in astrology.

Nuns and priests were a regular part of her early life and Laura Ann enjoyed engaging them in debate. One day she shared her rebellious ideas about the stars and moon with their family priest who calmly advised her to “never talk about this to anyone”. So she did for many, many years. During her fourth pregnancy, a friend gave her a gift certificate for an astrology session with Marcello Gallupi. Although his prophecies aggravated her at the time, he turned not only to be correct, but also to be her first astrology instructor. They studied together for fourteen years, until Marcello’s death. Laura Ann then studied with Aaron Hopkins and Noel Tyl.

After a long career as a nurse, Laura Ann now is a professional astrologer. Meeting Glenn Perry altered her path and now she is pursuing a career in psychology as well as seeking certification as a life coach. Her astrology practice largely consists of couples, small business and health care professionals. Through writing and speaking, Laura Ann bridges the gap for all of the misconceptions of astrology and the public, especially with clergymen and women of all faiths to bring clarity and truth to people. Thank you for your valuable contributions, Laura Ann!

Beverly Reynolds

Beverly lives in Rhode Island and is an old time New Englander. As a young girl she was always fascinated by the skies. On her first ever visit to a planetarium she was stunned by the magnificence of it and became lost in its entire splendor…literally. The teachers returned to find her still gazing at the sky.

When she discovered that she was a Leo, around the age of 10 or 12, she began reading magazines and all kinds of bits and pieces about astrology. Four or five years ago, Beverly met Jacqueline Janes and was stung by the astrology bug. Her mentor since, Jacqueline encouraged her to explore new paths for learning astrology. Thus Beverly found her way to the OPA retreat last spring.

Beverly has an affinity for horary astrology and enjoys working with solar return charts. She is continuing her education, as she wishes for greater structure to support her intuitive work with astrology. Beverly was deeply touched by the generosity and sharing of the OPA leaders at the retreat. She appreciated the unity of the OPA family and the tremendous opportunity to bond with others.

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Well said, Dvora. Wishing you continued success as you embark on your teaching career in building the bridge between astrology and psychology!

Anne Carpenter

Anne came to the OPA retreat from Bolton, England, where she currently resides. Since retiring from her career several years ago, Anne has plunged herself into the university and its academic world once again. She has also been participating in Glenn Perry’s AAP course. Having completed a degree in philosophy, Anne continued on to do a professional graduate diploma in teaching! As part of this course, she taught a fifteen week astrology class in the community while being observed and thoroughly enjoyed it. Gratefully, she was able to use much of the material in Glenn Perry’s manual.

Anne started to study astrology in the late 1970’s after her divorce. She was searching for deeper meaning and sought out several paths, astrology being one of them. In 1992 she completed the program offered by the Faculty of Astrological Studies in England. Then in 2005 she gained Glenn Perry’s AAP certificate and is now registered for the MA and PhD portion of the program. Yes, Anne has Saturn in the 9th house! Last year she was invited to conduct a half day workshop at a retreat on archetypes and served as the resident astrologer during the course of the entire retreat. Being in psychotherapy herself during the last couple of years, she has found astrology to be a very useful and powerful tool. For Anne, working with archetypes and synchronicities is a particularly exciting area of interest. In the future, she hopes to continue using her skills both teaching and sharing insights offered by astrology with clients. We look forward to welcoming Anne back to California and the OPA family in 2010!

Natasha Zaslove

It was a pleasure meeting Natasha in Asilomar last spring at the OPA retreat. Currently she lives and works in Sedona, AZ. In 2007 Natasha officially began her astrological studies though her interest in astrology dates back to her college years. Her upbringing groomed her for a more traditional, professional path. Eventually she pursued a career as an attorney and for years enjoyed professional success as a lawyer. In addition, Natasha is a yoga instructor and involved in the holistic health field.

During the last couple of years, Natasha has been doing many charts for friends and family and continues expanding her astrological knowledge. While attending The Blast in 2008 she realized how much more there is to learn in the various fields of astrology. Right now she is participating in Robert Corre’s on-line class and is really enjoying the process….quantify, quantify, quantify! She also values working with the asteroids and Lilith.

Her hope and vision is to work with professionals and business individuals. Natasha loves working with astrology and finds it extremely fulfilling! She appreciates astrology as a divination tool and spiritual practice. It is wonderful to have you as a member of our astrological family. Welcome!
I have thought so often of Jennifer Bobbitt since her departure from us because she was such a bright light wherever she went and particularly in our specific Asilomar training group last April. We all loved her enthusiastic participation and the love she shared with us, not only her love of Astrology but her love for each one of us. It was such a joy to be in her presence. She was also in my same ISAR Consulting Skills Training group at UAC so I had developed a deep resonance with her inner beauty. We know she will also brighten every group she encounters on her present journey. Somewhere I feel better for having known her here on earth. Jennifer, we bid you safe travels and much love in return for what you gave us.

Chris McRae, Team Leader

Right before Jennifer went into the hospital, thinking she would be going through chemo, she had her hair cut. These were taken at the salon by Leah, her good friend and hairdresser.

Jennifer with Randy Te and Alexandra Karacostas at Asilomar in April 2009.

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Remembering Jennifer Bobbitt
January 25, 1957 - August 12, 2009

I met Jennifer once, briefly, at a social event at OPA 2009. I remember a warm, smiling woman. Having grown up in Texas, on hearing her voice with that familiar accent I remember looking to see who it was.

Now, I will remember the generosity and thoughtfulness she showed in the midst of a devastating time. She wanted her paid registration to ISAR to be given as a scholarship to someone, and as a result I will be attending the conference. This gift means so much to me and I am very grateful.

Thank you, Jennifer. You will be a presence in my mind and heart, and I honor you.

Nancy Fisher

Jennifer and I met only over a year ago and we were immediately drawn to each other. We both knew that we had a learning journey to cultivate together, and this journey began many lifetimes ago. Jennifer will live on in my heart and I know that one day we will share more time together in lifetimes to come.

I extend my condolences to Jennifer’s family and to all of us who were honored to share her special love, courage and spirit. There will always be that moment in time when we have that special memory of Jennifer, with her radiant light of love and joy that will be needed to shine on our planet and feel more intensely from her in our heavenly sky.

Jennifer I miss you and I Love you, Your forever friend.

Randy Te

In loving memory of Jennifer Bobbitt, my roommate at the 2009 OPA Astrologer’s Retreat.

Sheila McGinty

Ready or Not, Some Day It Will All Come to An End

There will be no more sunrises, no minutes, hours or days. All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten, will pass to someone else.

Your wealth, fame and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance. It will not matter what you owned or what you were owed. Your grudges, resentments, frustrations, and jealousies will finally disappear.

So, too, your hopes, ambitions, plans, and to-do lists will expire. The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away. It won’t matter where you came from, or on what side of the tracks you lived, at the end. It won’t matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant. Even your gender and skin color will be irrelevant.

So what will matter? How will the value of your days be measured? What will matter is not what you bought, but what you built; not what you got but what you gave. What will matter is not your success, but your significance. What will matter is not what you learned, but what you taught. What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage or sacrifice that enriched, empowered or encouraged others to emulate your example.

What will matter i not your competence, but your character. What will matter is not how many people you knew, by how many will feel a lasting loss when you are gone. What will matter is not your memories, but the memories that live in those who loved you. What will matter is how long you will be remembered, by whom and for what.

Living a life that matters doesn’t happen by accident. It’s not a matter of circumstance but of choice.

Choose to live a life that matters ...

We make a living by what we get; we should make a life by what we give. It’s true that we don’t know what we’ve got until we lose it, but it’s also true that we don’t’ know what we’ve been missing until it arrives.

Life can give you a hundred reasons to cry, but you can give life a thousand reasons to smile.

In loving memory of Jennifer Bobbitt, my roommate at the 2009 OPA Astrologer’s Retreat.

Sheila McGinty
June Morrow did a great job of running out every day to get more supplies for the OPA social gatherings that we had every night. The evening OPA parties seemed to gather more people every night and the last night we had many people from AFAN join us; Frank Piechoski brought a healthy supply of food and drink down from the AFAN suite so many more people joined us; it is fair to say that a good time was had by all.

At the end of the conference, Sunday morning, I met with Grace Morris, and the heads of NCGR, AFAN and ISAR to discuss the new organization that NCGR is forming called PAA (Professional Astrologers Association); the idea behind this meeting was to discuss the ways that we can all work together in the future and how to avoid duplicating each other’s tasks. The meeting was fertile and it seems that, as an organization, OPA has much to offer to the other national and international astrology organizations. I’ll keep you posted as things develop further. The reason that NCGR is forming this new organization is because the federal government is challenging their non-profit 501c3 status. To be in compliance with the law, they are forming a 501c6 organization, which is non-profit, but a trade organization.

OPA was formed as a trade organization (501c6) at our inception in 2000. At this moment in time, the major organizations in the larger astrological community are working together most harmoniously; thank God. This is good news for all of us. The cause of astrology is furthered when we have harmony amongst ourselves.

I had the great privilege of attending Chris McRae’s post conference workshop called “Shape Shifters: Great Conjunctions & Powerful Patterns that Shape our Lives Individually and Collectively.” My only regret is that it was much too short … it was so interesting and so important I wish that it could have gone on for a week … but then, I remembered, this is very similar to the group work that Chris is leading at the next OPA retreat. Some of you will be lucky enough to be in this group.

We advertised that one of the people who registered for the OPA retreat at the ISAR conference would be able to go for free. It was a lottery. Well, as Jupiter would have it, front of three witnesses, Dvora Weil won the drawing. I called her immediately to inform her … She was overjoyed with winning, but offered her free pass to the conference as a scholarship, perhaps for a foreign astrologer to attend. Truly, OPA has the most generous, most community-minded astrologers in the world. Thank you, Dvora, someone will be very grateful for this.

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We are all grateful for your efforts and happy that you have become the latest “working members” of our family. Serving our organization is a wonderful way to serve the needs of the astrology community; OPA is always looking to help make our astrological work better and more meaningful to society is a tangible way; good astrology improves the quality of life on the planet. Give me a call or drop me a note if you will like to share the joy and participate a little more with the functioning of the organization.

Just a month before the ISAR Conference I received an email from Jennifer Bobbitt. She had been given three weeks to live. She remembered that she had already paid for the ISAR conference and was asking me (literally from her death bed) to see that some member of OPA could use her registration to attend this conference. What a spirit of community; we honor her kindness and thoughtfulness. May we all be so filled with thoughts of others; she was truly a role model for all of us.
What are OPA Retreats?

Ever since the Organization for Professional Astrology (OPA) formed (as Prosig) back in 1989, our annual meeting has been the centerpiece of our work to help astrologers do better astrology and to generally improve the field.

At first we held conferences which lasted one, two, and three days; exclusively designed to present anything and everything that could improve the life of the professional astrologer. We talked about professional standards, ethics, setting fees, the methods and manners of forecasting, accounting practices, and many other professional issues. We also observed each other in the process of reading charts; we talked about sessions that didn’t go as planned. In a word, we got involved in each other’s professional lives. We perfected many professional skills between 1989 and 2001 through our newsletters and conferences. In 2002 we took all of the material from our earlier conferences and condensed them into a peer review process and formulated a three day weekend experience we called the astrologer’s retreat. It was wildly successful. But, we were not satisfied with our success; we wanted to improve on it. And we did, and continue to do so.

The retreat has two main components; the large group experience and the small group experience. The large group experience happens with all of us gathering together for a time during the day (usually morning) when we all listen to the same speakers or participate in the same forum or workshop. The small group experience happens with participants working a set protocol in a pre-assigned group with a trained leader guiding the direction of the work. This work was detailed out in an article in The Mountain Astrologer called “Astrology’s Next Step” (The Mountain Astrologer - issue #133 June/July 2007)

Group leaders meet once a month throughout the year and keep working on the retreat experience. The retreat has been expanded to four days with the first day being an educational experience aimed at improving our practice, regardless of what system of astrology is being used. This innovation was greeted and embraced with enthusiasm and has been an added refinement to the program.

We added specialty tracks where participating individuals would be able to choose to work with one teacher who was working through a particular system: Vedic, Uranian, Psychological, etc. This addition was so successful that we decided to use this model for all our groups. Consequently, everyone chooses their group to be in at the time of registering. You can be in a beginner’s group if you know little or even no astrology; you can choose a forecasting group if you have been at it for a long time; you can choose to work with a group to improve your business skills; or you can choose to learn a different system. The group leaders are vastly different but all very skilled in their own right.

You might ask, what makes a retreat different from a regular astrology conference? Unlike regular astrology conferences, retreats offer an opportunity to: develop genuine intimacy, study some aspect of the field deeply, and to give you space and time for personal exploration. Retreats are an emotional as well as an intellectual experience.

Intimacy is real at the retreat; a subjective emotional bond can be formed with each member of your group at the retreat; life long friendships can develop, the beginnings of a personal and professional support group can be the natural extension from the time spent with your peers. Bonding is deep, personal, and lasting.

Instead of attending ten lectures of an hour each you get the chance to work with one teacher for fifteen hours. You can really absorb and practice a technique or method and ask questions of the person you have chosen to study with. The connection with your peers, who are also studying with your leader, gives a lively dynamic potency to the work in your group which leaves you with knowledge that you can directly apply to your career when you leave the retreat. You will know your subject in depth by the end of the retreat.

Whereas most conferences that people attend are focused externally, retreats are actually focused on you, the subject, more than the subject matter. As a consequence, you are led by the logic of experience to embark on a deep, personal exploration. At the end of the retreat you will know something more about yourself, your strengths, your limitations, etc. than you did before coming to this event. This unique integration of the subjective and objective components of experience is what makes the retreat a truly wonderful and empowering event in the lives of every participant.

We in OPA believe that we have designed an experience, for astrologers, which has the ability to transform the field of astrology, one astrologer at a time. Join us at the next retreat for the time of your life. The Astrologer’s Retreats unite the head and the heart for each participant.

More Information at: www.professional-astrology.org

or phone our OPA Conference Coordinator Alexandra Karacostas at 530-520-9992 or 530-343-6068
At the conference 30 astrologers spent 4 hours discussing the future of our craft. Where are we headed? Topics covered included dealing with the media, education, and ways of making astrology more effective,
The OPA Suite was party central! Astrologers arrived every evening after the conference for great networking, food & wine and conversation. It was definitely the place to be....

Rick Levine, Swiss astrologer Claude Weiss and Gissell Terry.

Dvora Weil, June Morrow and Nancy Fisher enjoyed their time together.

Glenn Perry enjoys the ISAR banquet.

Geri Bellino and Sandra-Leigh Serio

The ISAR banquet provided time for Monica Dimino and Caroline Gillett (Roy's wife) to catch up.

Serbian astrologer, Lea Insaragic, makes her point as Pat Tagilatela listens.

Katrina Peters speaks with Henry Seltzer, creator of Time Passages software while she worked the OPA table with Benjamin Bernstein.