A Turning Point

BY BOB MULLIGAN

2009 has been a turning point year for OPA. Transiting Pluto has finished crossing our Ascendant; we have been transformed. And now, we are in the midst of a revitalizing process which is the outgrowth of this fundamental shift within the organization. Many people in OPA have discussed the meaning of this transition, and the conversations have been lively.

However, it is important to remember our 1st house Moon is at 4 degrees of Capricorn; we will have Pluto very nearly Conjunct our natal Moon all through 2010. Deep changes will obviously continue. Remember the Moon rules our Seventh house.

For those of you who follow the astrology of OPA’s developmental steps will note that in our first meeting chart we had a 10th house Uranus at 2 degrees and 33 minutes of Capricorn. This placement has just received his last Conjunction with Transiting Pluto. We have “stirred the pot” so to speak, and now we have real transforming change upon us.

Certain years in our history stand out as truly important: 1989 our founding, 2000 our incorporation as a separate organization, 2002 our first retreat, and now 2010 will be the beginning of our process of certifying professional astrologers. This action by OPA will give birth to other things. New procedures will stream forth from this activity.

We all agree that good astrology has the power to raise consciousness on the planet; further, good astrology is dependent on good astrologers. OPA’s mission has always been to present a better astrology to the world; each of us in our own way (through our practice) help people, organizations, and governing bodies. As an organization, we have always encouraged anything that would improve the lives of practicing professional astrologers. And now we have an opportunity to take the next step. We are fulfilling our destiny.

There are [CONTINUED ON PAGE 6]
Take a Chance!
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to listen to Jake’s show. That had been going on for many years. How many? I don’t exactly know, perhaps 10 years.

One day in 2008, I was reading a column by Robert Feeder, at that time a Chicago Sun-Times reporter, that was reporting that Jake Hartford was — suddenly — off the air!! I was astounded and immediately emailed my support to Jake.

Then, it seemed like the next day but I don’t know if it was, I read in Mr. Feeder’s column that Jake and his show would be on another radio station, WCPT-AM in Chicago. I was ecstatic. Plus, it was going to start at 7 a.m. on Saturdays instead of 5 a.m. WOW! I could sleep in on Saturdays now!

One Saturday morning, as I was listening to Jake and working on a Natal chart for a client, Jake mentioned having a resident chef, a resident attorney and a resident doctor, etc.

These were people who called into the show regularly. As I was listening to the list of resident authorities, I thought ‘What Jake needs now is a resident Astrologer.’

So figuring I had nothing to lose, I emailed him that he needed an Astrologer and that I would be willing to be his resident Astrologer. I gave him a little of my background as an Astrologer.

Six weeks later, I received an email from Jake Hartford saying “I’m willing to try this if your game.” I was overjoyed at first and then I got nervous.

My first time on Jake’s show was February 28, 2009 at 8 a.m. (for those who would like to chart it, I was on the phone in Evanston, IL, Jake was on the radio in Chicago, IL). I had prepared diligently for all the signs of the Zodiac, any possible questions, etc.

Then the surprise came. When I got on the air, instead of asking about signs or whatever anyone would ask about Astrology, Jake started throwing birthdates at me! I was working from the seat of my pants! Thank goodness I knew where all the planets were and had my trusty Ephemeris.

I did well, according to Jake. He said the trick to radio was to be able to change in mid-stream.

I’ve been appearing on Awake with Jake about every 2 to 3 weeks ever since. I love it and am able to ‘promote’ Astrology positively.

I had a teacher once many years ago who, as he was holding an Ephemeris, said, ‘One day, all you’ll need is this book.’ It does help having 30 years experience, too.

I want to publicly thank Jake Hartford for allowing me the honor to be on his radio show, Awake With Jake. May he and his family have unceasing blessings and all the good in life.

The moral of the story is to go with your gut, your little voice, your hunch. It will not steer you in the wrong direction.

June Morrow is a consulting Astrologer in Evanston, Illinois. She also serves as OPA’s Membership Secretary.
A Note for Consulting Astrologers

BY ALEXANDRA KARACOSTAS

In the early days of my work as a consulting astrologer, I imagined that astrological information was what people really wanted from me. I spent the majority of my time with clients talking, usually having much to say and hopefully sharing something that would touch them in a meaningful way. I passionately wanted to deliver insight. At times this made the consultation more about my needs rather than theirs, hopefully not obviously!

Over the course of time I realized that I also was getting paid to listen. Of course, asking thoughtful and relevant questions is essential to a consulting astrologer. But, I found that creating space for clients to speak and be heard was probably the single most important factor between a “successful” session and a mediocre one.

Clients come to us with questions and the desire for direction in their lives. They rely upon our astrological knowledge and interpretation. But looking at a horoscope does not reveal who the person really is in present time. We can observe patterns, predispositions and determine where an individual is within particular cycles in their life. After all, as an astrologer, timing is everything! It is about the where and when, but not about the how. The “how” is determined by the client’s unique circumstances, which we discover through listening.

There is much to this “listening” process. Self-empowerment author Stephen Covey’s fifth habit of highly successful people is, “seek first to understand, then to be understood.” At the very least, allow for the experience of being unconditionally present together with the client. As Yogi Berra said, “You can observe much by watching”. There is a definite learning curve to listening well. It requires lots and lots of practice, much of it personally difficult. Yet it is a practice well worth the initial discomfort.

It is also important to affirm the positive in a client’s life, to highlight their gifts. As Galway Kinnel writes, “to re-teach a thing its loveliness”. My experience is that most of us are predisposed to focus on our shortcomings. As an astrologer, part of my job in helping my client is to honor and acknowledge their essential goodness. This I do through interactive reflection with the client, refining the affirmative in reframing their picture. This process creates the opportunity to reconsider a given interpretation and shed light on alternate perspectives that are more constructive for the client.

To conclude, simply imparting astrological knowledge and information is not enough if we truly want to make a difference in someone’s life. Our ability to listen, create space in our interactions with clients, and mirror the positive, are vital skills to being better astrologers and allies to those we serve.

At the next OPA Retreat in Asilomar, CA this October, Giselle Terry and Richard Smoot will be offering an Intensive designed to enhance empathy, compassion and listening skills. Anyone who plans to do client work will surely benefit from this excellent track. This is just one of the many exceptional programs OPA will be offering next year. Space is limited, so sign up now!

Noted astrologer and OPA Member, Robert Blaschke, needs our prayers.

He is battling cancer and has recently had a set back.

Please e-mail him at ewastro@earthlink.net with your thoughts, good wishes and appreciation for all he does for our craft.

Robert’s books are available on his website
earthwalkastrology.com
OPA Workshops!

OPA has such a wealth of material about the nuts and bolts of being a professional astrologer, in order to make some of this information available, the OPA board has decided to hold one-day workshops in different locations to bring the information to you, our members, and to other astrologers who are interested in learning what we have to teach. This material has been gathered through the years, from conferences, retreats, and Career Astrologer articles. It is useful and informative.

We plan to start with four one-day workshops. The first locations will be Hartford, Ct., Asheville, NC, Naples, Fl., and Los Angeles, Ca. The meetings will run from 9 am until 4:30 pm. There will be an hour break for lunch. The morning will be a teaching unit, covering topics relevant for the professional, or the aspiring professional, astrologer including how to get and keep clients, how to handle money, and discussing different consulting styles. There will be a class on the new technologies to help you stay up to date on how to use them in your practice.

The afternoon will be used for peer group work. All attendees will participate in this group work and be able to experience how valuable it is.

The cost will be $75 and each participant will receive a $100 coupon good for use for tuition at the next OPA retreat. We realize that the current economic situation is inhibiting many from attending conferences, so we are trying to streamline costs and by eliminating the need for travel expenses and hotel fees by bringing the material to you. Tell your friends and come for the day.

Dates and locations will be announced on the OPA website and in the E-news.

For more information, please contact Arlan Wise at arlanw@vineyard.net.

There is a workshop scheduled for June 12, 2010 at Wesleyan University in Middletown, CT.

OPA will have a table at the NCGR Conference in Boston - February 2010. If you can help out please e-mail Katrina Peters katsiddha@hotmail.com.
Often send Bob and the OPA board members links to interesting articles that I think could help them in their business. As someone who spends the better part of his day in front of the computer, I come across a lot of different kinds of websites and resources. Bob recently asked me to share some of these with you so I'd like to introduce my first "link roundup." As aspiring and full-time astrologers, we need to wear a variety of hats in order to build our businesses, from writer to marketer to bookkeeper. I hope you'll find some of these useful.

**WRITING**

If you have a website or even a newsletter then you're writing on a regular basis. As someone who does both I know it can be challenging—finding inspiration to actually getting it onto the web or out to your mailing list. Here are few websites I enjoy for helping me with my writing.

*Write To Done* (www.writetodone.com) provides good, simple advice to the blogger (of course his tips apply to most types of writing as well). Check out this article on blogging basics: http://writetodone.com/2009/10/15/15-basics-of-insanely-useful-blogwriting/

*Copy Blogger* (www.copyblogger.com) is about blogging and marketing. The articles tend to be short but contain at least a few key points that you can easily put into practice.

Want more? Check out "The Top Ten Blogs for Writers": http://www.writingwhitepapers.com/blog/2008/09/22/top-10-blogs-for-writers-winners/

**WEBSITE**

I'd venture to say that most astrologers today have a website. I came across this list of 101 five-minute fixes to improve your website. It's a lot to digest at once, so you might want to bookmark this page: http://www.insidecrm.com/features/101-web-site-fxes-031808/

Are you thinking about updating your website? Or do you just need an updated contact page? Check out Pattern Tap (www.patterntap.com/) to find some design inspiration. It showcases great design ideas and categorizes them into collections for articles, headers, backgrounds, shopping carts, and much more.

If you have a website, do you know how well it's doing? *Hub Spot* (www.hubspot.com) offers a free assessment called the "Website Grader," (http://websitegrader.com/) that will measure your SEO (search engine optimization) effectiveness. I did this for my website in November of 2008 and got a score of 67. After making some changes, blogging more consistently, and finding ways to create links back to my website, my score rose to an 87 in about 6 months. Hubspot also offers articles and free conference calls about a variety of content marketing topics.

Do you have any favorite links you'd like to share with us? Do you have any specific questions about technology or how to use it to benefit your practice? Send them into webmaster@professional-astrology.org and we'll post them on the website and in our next Career Astrologer.

Ron Akanowicz is a Miami-based astrologer and OPA's web master. He can be reached at 786-853-1666 or ron@miamiastrology.com, www.miamiastrology.com
President’s Report
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

several ongoing projects in the organization that deserve some special mention; certification, different levels of membership, One Day Workshops, our winter board meeting and planning session for our one day workshop, the October Retreat, OPA at the NCGR conference.

Certification
Why Certification?

We believe that OPA certified astrologers will have a positive effect on world culture. Certification will be a method for securing that people around the world will have access to astrology that is useful; people who are ready to appreciate and utilize good astrology will have access to it. We plan to actively support and promote the astrologers we certify.

This process of certification will take a little time to bring to fruition. The details of the process will be worked out at the winter board meeting in January and clarified at the group leader’s meeting in June. The requirements will be attendance at a number of retreats, a number of years in practice, and proven competence in a number of areas which will be graded by the group leader.

In order for an astrologer to receive a passing grade and be moved on for certification they will have to participate in a number of traditional peer review groups like the ones that we did at our earlier retreat. We will run these as stand alone events in the next few years; participants can also use groups they have been in from past retreats to satisfy these requirements.

We will have the details of the certification process up and functioning by our next retreat.

We can certify astrologers as professionals by having our group leaders pass people who have completed the three day OPA retreat successfully.

Here is a preliminary check list that group leaders will have to certify for each participant:

1. That they can read a chart.
2. They are sensitive to the needs of their client.
3. They demonstrate reasonable counseling skills.
4. They are capable of reaching out to the community.
5. They show an ability to be vulnerable.
6. They are pro-active.
7. They can develop a plan of action.

We all agree that good astrology has the power to raise consciousness on the planet; further, good astrology is dependent on good astrologers.

We want to certify astrologers who are capable of earning a living as a professional astrologer in a competent, ethical, and helpful manner. We are interested in training astrologers to be able to qualify for this and to have a list of referrals to places where people can get the training that we feel is necessary.

In order for this certification to be obtainable; we will need to allow people to use past retreat experiences to qualify, offer peer group work at the time of our retreats, and give weekend retreat experiences periodically at different locations.

Different Levels of Membership

A short time ago, Sandra Leigh Serio suggested that we have different levels of membership in OPA. We discussed this idea; we looked for a way that different kinds of memberships could strengthen and validate the importance of our peer review model which we have spent the last seven years refining. The board will work on this at our winter meeting and the results will take shape in spring. As a direct consequence of our professional certification process we will develop different levels of membership.

One Day Workshop

Arlan Wise came up with a great idea of having one day workshops at different locations around the country to familiarize other astrologers with OPA’s work and programs.

Here is a preliminary outline for this new OPA idea

Schedule

9 am -

Teaching- done by 2 or 3 teachers

TOPICS WOULD BE: The nuts and bolts of setting up a practice, including how to handle money, consulting styles, and how to get and keep clients

New technology- recording devices, webinars, conference calls classes, websites

12-1

Lunch (we will not provide lunch.)

1-4

Peer group work

We will have 2 or 3 groups, depending on the ratio between teachers and participants.

4-4:30 PM

Wrap up, questions, feedback

So far we are exploring having these events in Naples, Florida; CT/ Springfield, MA area; Cleveland, Ohio; Los Angeles, California; and perhaps other places. Arlan suggests we should have 3-4 a year to begin with and add additional places as we get rolling.

We can do our advertising through local astrology groups. Katrina Peters, as outreach coordinator, will have to arrange this. We can use our website, ISAR e-letter, our e-news. We can use the email list we have from conferences. Money - we will probably charge $75 for the day. 10% goes to OPA, any
money for expenses to the host, and the rest divided between rent for a space if we need it, and the speakers. We will have to spend some money on water, tea, and coffee for the attendees. The local contact, either an astrology group or a person, will be in charge of collecting the money.

All attendees can receive a $100 discount coupon to the next retreat. Arlan is the coordinator person for the one day workshop and she would like to have a partner. It should be a team effort so write or phone Arlan if you would like to volunteer.

arlanw@vineyard.net or 508-645-9292.

**Winter Board Meeting & One Day Workshop Planning Session**

Our winter board meeting is planned for **Thursday, January 21- Sunday the 24th**, here at my home in Naples, Florida. This board meeting is critical for the continuity of our very ambitious 2010 calendar, and we have a very full agenda.

Immediately following our board meeting we will have a two day planning session for our one day workshops. If you would like to be involved in planning the content or would like to be a teacher for the one day workshop, you are invited to attend this meeting. This offer is open to any OPA member who wishes to participate. All board members and all group leaders should make every effort to attend this meeting since many foundational ingredients will be put into place at this time. If you have never been involved in an OPA activity, now is the perfect opportunity to become involved in a soul satisfying way.

This two day meeting will be at my home Monday January 25th and Tuesday the 26th. Call me or email if you are interested in being part of the experience, 239-261-2840.

Our upcoming **OPA Retreat (October 20th - 23rd 2010)** promises to be our best event ever.

As you know we will be back at Asilomar, where we were for our 2009 retreat. The atmosphere at this northern California coastal park is so supportive of the type of work we do at the retreat it seemed logical to return.

Wednesday, the first day of the retreat we will all be together for a time of learning, exploring, and sharing. The topic will be **Free Will and Determinism. Monica Dimino** is putting this day together and will do an extraordinary job, as always. There will be talks, panels, and open discussions involving everyone. If you would like to present something to this gathering on this topic, call or email Monica Dimino at 617-923-6424 or email at mhabled@aol.com.

If you are not registered for the retreat yet, you can do it through our web site www.professional-astrology.org. When you register for the retreat you will be signing up for a specific group and group leader. You can change groups up until 60 days prior to the retreat. The group leaders have been busy working to perfect a number of different and very interesting groups. Three of these groups merit special mention; **Giselle Terry** and **Richard Smoot** will lead the ISAR “Consulting Skills” as one of our groups; **Maurice Fernandez**, the Evolutionary astrologer, will lead a group called “The Spiritual Dimensions of the Chart”; and, **Ani Bettati** will come from Argentina to lead our “Beginner’s Group”. Get more information and the schedule from our website.

**OPA at the NCGR Conference**

NCGR Conference in Boston (February 25-28, 2010) is going to be a prime opportunity for us to book people in to the OPA Retreat in the fall. **Katrina Peters** (our outreach coordinator) is doing a great job getting our literature table together for the conference. **If you are going to the conference and can help at the table; email or call Katrina Peters at 239-369-7833 or katsiddha@hotmail.com.** The trade show hours are Feb 25th Thurs 2-6pm, Feb 26 Fri 8-6pm, Sat 27th 8-6pm, Sun 28th 8-6pm.

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**Have you stopped by OPA’s New Website?**

OPA Webmaster, Ron Akanowicz, has been busy designing & setting up our new site.

Check it out! AND, if you write a newsletter we can post a link to send potential clients your way.

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**We welcome your submissions to The Career Astrologer**

Please tell us about your work ... what’s new and exciting, how you are managing during these challenging times. We would love to hear from you. Deadline for the next issue is January 15, 2010.

Please e-mail articles and photographs/artwork to Twink Mckenney at mrmckenney@att.net
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We’re headed back to **Asilomar on California’s Monterey Peninsula**
October 20-23, 2010

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Full Track Descriptions & Registration at [www.professional-astrology.org](http://www.professional-astrology.org)

Questions? **Call OPA Conference Coordinator, Alexandra Karacostas at 530-520-9992**