marvel daily at worldwide events, near and far, ruminating on being alive today. Opportunities abound, motivating us to cultivate new habits as we move from the known and familiar to renewed ways of being together, ways we have yet to dream. New frontiers await. For those who struggle with real change, personal or collective, historically speaking, this transitional period promises to be a breathtaking roller coaster ride!

At this writing, we can feel the heat rising as we approach the fourth exact Uranus/Pluto square. Recent political events in our own USA have been gripping, for us and the rest of the globe. As I write this, Mars in Virgo is in exact opposition to Neptune, and shortly Chiron, inspiring me to imagine, focus on, and expect the best, and to remember that we don’t always know what that looks like.

For OPA, these times are proving to be healthy and beneficial as our organization continues to grow and prosper. We are now tending to the details for our upcoming retreat, March 20-23, 2014, at the lovely Ocean Creek Resort in Myrtle Beach, SC.

Of the twelve tracks offered, two are now full. If you are thinking of joining us, and we sincerely hope you can, sign up now. This year group size is limited to only eight participants, except for the Certification Program, which is four. If you are interested in becoming an OPA Certified Astrologer, register soon. There is still space, but don’t delay.

OPA is proud to have some of the leading astrologers in their field on our faculty. We feel honored they are on our team. This year, two exceptional astrologers, new to the OPA faculty, will join us at the retreat. Jane Ridder-Patrick from Scotland will be offering Creating Health with Medical Astrology and Hal Bahr will be teaching Human Design for the Astrologer. Our retreat program is rich, varied and offers something for everyone.

The OPA monthly phone lecture series has been a huge success! We will continue to provide this benefit exclusively to our members. The monthly OPA-e-zine is another valuable and popular forum we offer to our members. Read and contribute to monthly topics of interest and address issues which arise in...
Venus & Her Many Desires [CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1]

Mayans aligned doorways and windows of their buildings to capture her vibrations. Julius Caesar even dedicated a magnificent temple to her patronage. Who could resist her? And why would you want to, anyway?

In the earlier writings, the image of Venus was associated with dire portents and tales of apocalyptic disaster. She was about power and control as well as love and intimacy. Following her legacy can shed light on her nature, both as the goddess of beauty and as the guardian of great power and influence.

Modern day Venuses appear everywhere on the covers of Vogue and Cosmopolitan, not to mention the issues of Women’s Heath, Self, and Fitness. In her modern incarnation, Venus never looked so good. And if these women are not full-blown goddesses, who cares? Besides being physically beautiful, they are smart, sophisticated, and eager to take the leadership role in many corporations and in businesses of their own. In the past 15 years, the number of women-owned businesses grew by 54%; there are now 8.3 million women-owned businesses in the United States alone.

And yet Venus, mistress of the heart, has always eluded our best efforts to capture her essence. Renaissance painters and pre-Raphaelian masters alike have tied to portray her in vain. Most people you meet have at least one story about how some tragic love affair practically put them over the edge. Sour grapes about not getting what we want go back to Adam and Eve. The feminine mystique still remains alive and unattainable, perhaps by design.

Everyone has Venus in their astrological makeup. It’s where we yearn to love and be loved, and feel beautiful and fulfilled. Regardless of how many billions of dollars people spend on fashion or real estate, the bottom line is this: Unless you’re believe in your heart you’re truly wonderful, all the props in the world cannot help you. Venus is our sense of what we feel we deserve, plain and simple.

We all start off knowing the assurance and warmth of caring parents and family. But by the time we become adults, all that gets replaced by the dreadful realization we don’t have the right body type, know the right people, or are on the fast track to the top. For the 99.9% of us that fall into this category, Venus can seem like a cruel joke. And yet, somewhere in our heart of hearts, we know we’ve been duped, but didn’t quite fall for it. Life is not contained by money, sex and approval, at least not in the long run. It’s all about that spark of feeling special, despite those string of unhappy love affairs and failed businesses. It’s knowing that our love is still the real thing.

Here’s How it Works

Venus takes 19 months to orbit the sun, spending about 9 months as the morning star before the dawn and another nine as the evening star. The ancients referred to her appearance before dawn as the ‘Bearer of Light’. Her twilight name was Hesperos. These two faces of Venus are a clue to her changing role over time. When Venus rises before the Sun, she is inspirational, youthful and concerned about manifesting herself successfully on the physical plane. When she rises after the Sun, she is wise and qualified, and her intuition understands the language of emotion and the human heart. We’re all born with Venus in our natal charts as either Morning or Evening Star. Other systems exist which further break this down into more detailed phases1.

The art of relationships has gone through a lot of changes over the centuries. At the bottom of it all lies the issue of involvement and power. This translates into establishing some sort of value system on our lives and a corresponding system of transferring ‘the
goods’ from one person to another. Very Venusian stuff. Marriage was the principle means of formalizing the connection between men and women, but there were many others, such as the head of the tribe or local community and even the pact that existed between the gods and the rest of us, otherwise known as religion. This all fell under the spell of Venus, who delicately rules the affairs of our hearts. Everyone was expected to do good and avoid evil to keep these relationships on the up and up. And yes, there were consequences for people who became enticed by one vice or another. Economists are quick to tell you 90% of the law is about ownership. In the first part of her cycle, Venus develops an increasing stronger grasp on her own power and worth, and is willing to pit herself against anyone who would deny her connection with the solar force. Even native-born Thomas Jefferson would allude to the ‘unalienable Rights’ that lie at the heart of our American dream.

As Venus forms its inferior conjunction with the Sun, the value system that is created is most pliable and subject to the influence of the Sun’s incredible power. This usually produces people who adhere to what the people in charge espoused, a sort of doing the right thing because it’s so overwhelming compelling to do so. However, Venus brings a new dimension into the blind self-assurance of the Sun. She is the key to opening the heart to the physical world she must inhabit on the way. She takes the Sun’s grandeur and shows us how to integrate it in our worldly and personal affairs.

If Mercury is the messenger, she is the ambassador, and she is tasked with making our experience meaningful and enlightening. She’s all about incarnation and being conscious of the physical reality we have to contend with. At the end of the day, she’s points us to the best life has to offer, steering us away from cheap values and addictions that could otherwise ruin everything.

Over the next 9 months after inferior conjunction, Venus struggles with finding her place in the world until she starts to question whether those values that meant so much in the beginning were relevant in the first place. We start to see the fly in the ointment, the flaws in the plan, and the wrinkles in our partner’s face. The heart knows. Something has got to give. It’s time to redefine and work on perspective.

That’s what happens at superior conjunction. Venus lines up with the Sun again, only this time on the other side of the earth. Now we feel lost, disconnected, betrayed. Like the prodigal son, we’ve bought into something, but discovered we can’t live with it. It’s exactly at that time that Venus gives us a clue to her cosmic wisdom: Attaching yourself to the passing parade is madness. Like Buddha would say: ‘Attachment to possessions are the root of unhappiness’. The values we should pay attention to are formless and eternal. Like love. Like beauty and honor. Forget about thinking you can remain youthful forever or surround yourself with yes-men to ease the pain. The cat’s out of the bag, and that’s just not going to do it anymore.

On the second part of her journey, Venus picks up understanding and wisdom. At the beginning, she is a bit unsure and so will mature over those nine months, learning what’s worth fighting for and what can be ignored. By the time she’s ready to come back to the rough and tumble of the next cycle, she is the wise woman or sage, totally conscious of what’s going on, but able to avoid being sucked into life’s vanities and rabbit-holes. She is the voice of experience and compassion, savoring the impetuous love of her youth but in touch with her heart, without needing anyone’s permission or approval. She has come to know the world and the world her. She will enter into the Sun’s embrace once more, to experience the next step in her amazing journey. A bit wiser perhaps, but altogether lovable, and able to inspire the best from us.

Jack Hopkins was last seen having altogether too much fun exploring his passionate interest in alternative divisions of the Zodiac. He has worked in the IT field for over 30 years and is author of several astrology programs which utilize his research on harmonics and degree areas. He is author of several astrological videos, one of which was presented at the Spring 2013 Retreat. Find him on the web at: www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzvSabWoOuUkWbQe4T7c1eTk-y8EpM9Pn&feature=imh_lolz and www.eagleeyes-spiritguide7.blogspot.com

2. The Politics of Relationship by Bob Malczansky http://t1 grp.yahoo.com/v1/Lsok1Nefd6PvGwvwsxQqH(O)5y43ENx8Pw7bwJNhNn4lqOiTHB0Crz5DGc1aDhgo-VQ8hj15KkXU7Xk9P2esyERkFwrs/ astrology%20Articles/The%20Politics%20of%20Relationship.doc
Reserving a seat at the OPA retreat in Myrtle Beach, for an ocean view feast on astrology, was a no-brainer for me. Choosing a track proved far more challenging. Show me a Taurus woman content to select a single entree from a gourmet menu laden with ten mouth-watering choices and I’ll show you a woman who has successfully solved one of the more difficult, if delicious, riddles in her nature. Raise the bar on her sensory overload by informing her that each of the entrees is accompanied with its own master chef and a bird’s eye view of their particular technique for boiling the bones of a theme into a rich extract of experience, which she can then take to the bank. I didn’t think it was fair of OPA to develop such a tantalizing menu and then expect me to choose “just one track”. Hungry as I was at the time, any one of them would have fed me handsomely.

Nearly every description of my Sun sign says that a practical component comes standard with my Taurus nature. This may be true, though I personally don’t use it very often. The last me (or whoever placed the order for this one) must have had their reasons, but the present me wouldn’t have bothered with the extra expense. I find it way more fun to fly by the seats of my pants than to deploy a parachute out my bootie only to slow me down. But hey, if it came with the package maybe I could deploy it now, to help settle me down and start to narrow my choices. I meditated on “practical” for a minute and indeed, I did manage to narrow the choices to two that seemed most likely to fill my most pressing dietary voids. As far as I was concerned these tracks represented two different food groups, a protein and a carbohydrate if you will, but both necessary components of a well-rounded meat and potatoes diet.

Allow me to digress for just a moment while I feed you a little more background information about my particular dietary situation. I love astrology and I want to write. The beginner’s track was tempting as a means to fortify my astrological diet, which so far consisted primarily of books. I needed to bulk up in other areas to fill out this rather flaccid approach. The writing track piqued my interest thanks to a long and unrequited desire to write. This urge, by now long repressed, was the excuse I used for deviating from my father’s sage advice by switching my major from business to English. I had long ago paid the karmic career path debt for that move but had yet to reap the supposedly forward thinking benefit.

Speaking of forward thinking, when I take the time to reread anything I have written I usually wind up rearranging my sentences. They almost always make better sense when I place the second sentence that I have written before the first one. Truth be told I don’t know if this suggests my thinking is forward or backward, or that I am behind or ahead of my thoughts. I do know that I have a sufficient quantity of hard aspects to explain away either scenario. I’ve determined that this idiosyncrasy, my difficulty determining whether the chicken or the egg should come first, is a repetitive pattern. I know it should tell me something about myself, but for the life of me I have no earthly idea what. In any event, the lazy in me nuzzled up to the thought of a quick...
infusion of writer’s inspiration, so I opted for the writing track - but not without some regret that I would not be moving my astrological ball forward.

I had little pre-conceived notion of what to expect from the writing track but admit that I presumed it would address writing more than astrology. I now appreciate the irony that what I had projected as an unfair challenge was a reflection of my own ignorance. Not only did the writing track deliver abundant astrological insight along with the many excellent writing tips, but it also teased a few of my more minimally conscious perceptions about how to approach them to the surface. That writing track delivered more value than I had initially bargained for... in a veritable mother lode of discovery - about writing, about astrology, and about me.

My first interface of any kind with an astrological community occurred in the previous May, when I traveled to New Orleans for the United Astrology Conference. Talk about a sensory overload, that experience had been surreal. The energy I felt there is beyond my ability to describe with words (which speaks ironically to the difference between reading about astrology and actually putting it in motion). Suffice to say, in this orgy of kindred souls I discovered something that I didn’t know I had been missing. Immersed in that highly charged environment, which was thrilling and mind-bending at the same time, I felt as though my astrological ball and I were riding astride a one-way rocket on its way out of the stratosphere.

At UAC I had to choose 4 lectures out of 16 every day... but I wanted to consume it all! I felt like a kid in a penny candy warehouse with only a nickel to spend. I already knew what the planets were and what the houses were, and that there were other things I still needed to grasp like aspects and transits. So I designed an improvised program around what I perceived as the most delectable choices, like a kid on a sugar high who could do little more than feed her jones according to the color of a candy wrapper or the recognition of a brand name. Even so, during that time I began to sense the universe taking over the reins and leading me into an even grander design of coalescing choices. UAC transported me to a nether realm that existed beyond my textbooks, and provided me with a glimpse of how lurking in the ingredients of a chart is the recipe for a soul. Where I had been focused on the ingredients, this meant the difference between visiting a museum all by myself to look at all the pretty pictures hanging on the wall and taking a guided tour with a department curator who knew how to tease the pictures into life through the stories they told.

I carried this dawning insight to my second astrological conference a couple of months later. The Midwest Astrology Conference had a more regional flavor which translated into a calmer and more intimate experience of astrology. There I was able to confirm my earlier observations and layer them with further clarity. The format was similar to UAC in that for each session we were given a variety of lecture topics to choose from, and so we slipped in and out of different classrooms with reconfigured audiences. What was different from UAC was that I actually had an opportunity to meet and rub elbows with a few of the master astrologers, some of whom I learned would be present in Myrtle Beach the following spring. I was so impressed with them that before I left MAC I reserved my seat for OPA, which would be my third and in some ways most illuminating, encounter with an astrological community.

OPA’s retreat concept is designed to immerse the student in a single topic for three days in an intimate small group setting. This also serves to keep the student up close and personal with the Professional group leader. It was in that setting, on day three of our writing track, that our leader, Arlan Wise, handed us our final assignments: to commence work on an article destined for the Career Astrologer. Gulp.

Over the past three days Arlan had done an admirable job of weaving her experience and tutelage through the group’s diverse range of astrological knowledge (with “moi” occupying the nadir of that particular curve), skill, personality and background, so that by now we were all more or less sitting on the same afghan. Still, I thought to myself, surely she meant to say “pretend” article...didn’t she?

My rational side understood that as a group, Arlan trusted our ability to tackle this assignment. But my emotional side took it as a pinch to the seat of my insecurities. This surprised me. I thought I had worked through my insecurities after the first day, when I had to come to grips with my greenhorn status relative to the astrological grownups occupying all the other seats in the room. When Arlan handed out that last assignment I figured I might be able to stretch and actually “pretend” to be a writer, but I wouldn’t dare to pretend I was an astrologer. There had already been far too much damage done to this important profession, by the few minimally informed who tainted the astrological label for everyone else when they fell into the delusion that they could speak an astrological truth with their flimsy dime store creds. I respected my newly adopted kindred buddies far too much to want to give them reason to bump me into the same shark pit.

There I sat, deer in the headlights, once again having mixed up the sequence between the chicken and the egg. So then what the hell could I contribute to the “Career Astrologer” that most of the OPA membership hadn’t already learned by the time they could walk? These rock stars would no doubt have a good chuckle...
Learning to Cook
[Continued from Page 5]

over of my rendition of chopsticks. I should have started at kindergarten.

I was a mite too big to go run and hide from this assignment, and our wonderful group provided a very safe container, so to buy some time I leaned back and began to explore the source of my unease. I owned up fairly quickly to an unreasonable fear of sounding stupid. I didn’t know where it came from and please, don’t blame my parents. They were and are the loveliest of souls and I am the last to consider them the source of it. I was encroaching on some tender territory but I hung in there and kept prodding. By the time the rest of my group were halfway through their articles I had yet to tap a key.

The realization of which brought another of my insecurities to light. It takes me for-flippin’ ever to figure out what I want to say and longer yet to say it. The other writers in my track seemed to pop out entire literary babies in the time it would take me to change their baby’s diapers. I realized the same phenomena was true of astrologers, who could breathe life into a piece of paper with chart printed on it. A good astrologer could look at a chart and turn it into a real life simulator. In the time it took me to call out “Sun in Sag in the 6th”, they had already grasped the plot, moved past the climax and were closing in on the punch line.

Then I thought about my own (real) kids, and how during their formative years I kept a record of the milestones that marked the progress of their youth. Hmm...would that count as me having written a book? Maybe I could borrow from that and write an article with the intention that it provide a snapshot in time, as a marker along the path of my astrological development. I could look back on it one day to see how far I had come: kind of like how old I was when I lost my first baby tooth... except I had the distinct feeling sitting there that I still had all my baby teeth. Alright then, I would prod around some more. Surely I could find something to write about.

My “kids” had grown and gone now, which is why I thought I had the time to write. Speaking of time, where had yesterday’s darling babies gone? Indeed, where had those thirty four years gone, since the day’s darling babies gone? Indeed, where had those thirty four years gone, since the time I exited university with high hopes and honors in English in tow? Could it be that I was too much a perfectionist – that time would never be able to ripen me to the level of my expectations?

That was the moment when I heard a comment that one of my fellow writing mates had pitched my way earlier in the day, when I was very obviously editing my essay on the fly as I read it aloud in front of the class. I realized that the comment, delivered with caring intent, had been echoing silently through my mind: “You’re too hard on yourself.” Now that I heard it, it rang true. I wouldn’t think of being even remotely “hard” on someone else wearing similar baby shoes, so why was I so demanding of myself? Obviously we all have to start somewhere. And then I heard my another voice in my head, one I recognized as my own. It said, “if all you do is read about taking a step and think about taking a step, you’ll never learn to walk. Give yourself permission to fall on your face. Anyone who ever got anywhere has had to go through the same passage.”

This proved to be a remarkable insight, thank you very much. For all the time and knowledge I have accumulated under my belt – 56 years of it – it was the OPA experience that busted that belt loose a notch or two, and in the process allowed me room to breathe and further expand. Perhaps I will call myself a writer some day, maybe even an astrologer - if I live long enough. This was never about the chicken and the egg. It was about learning to walk, no matter where that takes you. What comes first, the chicken or the egg? It doesn’t matter. Just pick one and run with it. But don’t forget to loosen your belt first.

Thank you OPA, I now know why you define your community as a family. I appreciated your support while I practiced my steps.

The President’s Report
[Continued from Page 1]

your astrology practice, whether you are a professional or amateur astrologer. You, our members, are the organization. Your participation is always welcome and encouraged!

As always, if you have an article about your practice or a piece of poetry, etc., you would like to submit, please send it to Twink, our priceless editor, at mrmc kenney@att.net.

Wishing you a peaceful, healthy and bright 2014. – Alexandra
modify his/her life in a particular

many acquaintances, especially those who know me as a representative of the technical world and an engineer through and through, are astonished that I am also an astrologer. “How can it be?” they ask. But this only seems strange at first. After having worked at a plant I realized that even the best technical education cannot answer many life questions. I decided to make good this deficit by studying astrology. Once I had this ambition, the opportunity was not long in coming. Soon I completed astrology training with Dmitry Paramonov.

As a Russian saying goes, “It is tales that are quickly spun, deeds are sooner said than done.” Of course, I needed time to master the new subject. But then a miracle occurred. My technical education helped me. I discovered a correspondence between production approaches, techniques and methods and those used in astrology. For example, you should find the major source of problems both in a birth chart and an electric circuit to figure out why this or that electronic chip goes wrong or why a person should modify his/her life in a particular sphere to work out the whole process. This persuaded me that astrology is not an abstract concept, but a key to my problems. So my technical education has become a basis for studying astrology, due to which I was able to master the astrological knowledge efficiently and fast.

So what do technical subjects have in common with astrology? It turns out that there are a lot of things in common. Answers are given by the subjects that are far from astrology: system analysis and decision making, system modeling, programming theory and technology, methods of neural network programming etc. Astrology can be considered as a system containing as many different models as a person, social media, out world, etc. Models can be logical, actable, discrete, imitative and others. Since there is a system, there should be key-notes of the system approach, such as long-run objective approach, unanimity, principle of connectedness, simulative approach etc.

How can an astrologer use the system approach? Due to the system approach we can draw out the scheme of chart interpretation. Moreover, every astrologer can draw out his/her own scheme. So I drew out my own scheme. Due to this I made the chart ingress automatic. A faster horoscope adjustment saves time for solving particular customer’s problems.

In such a manner, the system approach is a natural method of solving theoretical and real-world problems. I regret to say that most of people neglect this fact. In engineering, system ignorance brings about a break down, in other spheres it produces needless conflicting views which can mislead even an expert. That is why I suggest examining the key-notes of the system approach.

One of the key-notes is the long-run objective approach. First of all, you should set a clear survey objective. Vague, uncertain and inarticulate objectives result in an incorrect conclusion. People setting clear objectives are able than those acting with no objective. Giving up objectives we decline all responsibility and shift it to other shoulders. Having a clear objective we can easily work out our way to success. When succeeding, a person grows and improves.

Here is an example. Our customer (a woman) is preoccupied by a following problem: she cannot get married.

I suggest examining this problem regarding the long-run objective approach. Therefore we should take the following steps.

**Step 1. Objective setting.**

a) Examine the customer’s problem: what is not the customer happy with? Why? Is her objective real?

b) Set an objective (define what result you want to have): give clear problem-solving recommendations.

c) Define the resources that can help us solve the problem: necessary knowledge, finding the area in the birth chart that can help solve the problem.

d) Adjusting the criteria of achieving the objective. We need facts and circumstances to understand if we achieved the objective, not to give up the decision taken and not to drift off the heading.

e) Follow the adjusted scheme of interpreting the chart: get into the horoscope step by step, following the plan of reading the chart. First, get the general idea about the customer and sift the information needed for solving his/her problem.

f) An important issue is the responsibility of the astrologer in respect of a customer. If an astrologer doesn’t as— [CONTINUED ON PAGE 8]
some responsibilities for the results of his/her work, he/she escapes from the customer’s problem solving.

g) Take notes of the principal points of the consultation. This is a very important rule for an apprentice astrologer. The notes are of the facts and circumstances which engage, recall, and pushes forward.

While carrying out your work, be mindful of the objective. So our objective is to give an answer to the customer.

**Step 2. Despite the work done, the situation is still vague.**

You seem to be at a dead-lock, as the objective is large and ambiguous. Nevertheless, it can be broken apart and we can achieve little objectives.

Step 2 is similar to the objective setting, but at this step the detailed study of the chart is very important. It is necessary to discover weak points at the chart, in other words areas covering the reasons for marriage problems. For example, we have discovered communication obstacles. She is too aggressive to acquire information. She is a leader. She considers people as her competitors, rivals. She finds that her partner’s support is a sign of weakness.

The System Approach  
[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7]

**Step 3. This is the most difficult part.**

This step involves revision, synthesis, and conclusion, so the answer. The point is that trying to change the scheme of the objective can result in the whole system destruction. If the process outline is not clear, you run the danger of failing the result for different reasons. So before answering the question, it is very important to be sure that we didn’t fudge the information to match it with the problem. Therefore we examine the chart checking out the notes taken.

So why is it important to have clear objectives? When you know clearly what you want, all your activity is well-ordered and objective-orientated. What can happen if an astrologer doesn’t want or cannot state his/her objectives? It is not a big deal, of course. But he/she will pick the information randomly and a customer will not get a clear answer. Consequently, the time and money are gone with the wind.

The long-run objective approach consists of the following steps: 1) objective setting, 2) breaking apart the objective and 3) analysis of the work done. The advantage of this approach is in setting an objective and having a specific result. Achieving results motivates the future work and self-improvement.

Marina Pozderina is a member of OPA’s chapter in Russia.
A wedding day is supposed to be the culmination of a girl’s childhood dream: the prince on the white horse. On August 30, 1980 I married my prince. Heading off into that fantasy of “happily ever after,” who could have imagined what surprises would await us?

The first clue was a rocky start with his parents. We walked into their hotel room the morning after the wedding, a little foggy from the merriment the night before. The fog lifted quickly as I heard my new father-in-law say, “You whore!” Now that caught my attention and I was completely clueless as to what had prompted it. Turns out someone in his family misinterpreted my behavior at the reception while I was visiting with some old friends at a crowded table.

My husband was the oldest of six children in a close Irish Catholic family. News traveled fast within the clan. The shock of this encounter had me a little shaky. So less than 24 hours after my wedding, I was back in my parents’ home while my new husband dealt with his family. Lucky for me, he took my side and asked his parents to leave town.

Once back in the city where we all lived, we didn’t speak to his family for two years. When his siblings started getting married, we attempted to repair the rift. The first efforts were not successful so we missed the first two weddings. By the time the third one came along we had a truce, although not the reconciliation my husband had hoped for. No one was willing to admit they were wrong.

Life went on, careers were building, and babies were born to our siblings. My husband had made it clear he was not interested in having children and I agreed. Even though I had imagined myself with children, I was more interested in having my great love, my knight in shining armor. He weakened his position on children after a few years but I never conceived.

Our life was everything I had dreamed of, beginning with the honeymoon in Hawaii. Back in high school a classmate had married and when I read in the newspaper that she had honeymooned in Hawaii, it sounded so romantic. I had never traveled much out of the state of Florida, so the trip to Hawaii was as fabulous as my fantasy.

My idea of marriage was fashioned out of the TV shows of the 50’s like Donna Reed and June Cleaver, greeting the husband at the door all dressed up with dinner ready. But this was the 80’s. Women had careers. I was a CPA and my husband was an attorney. Secretly, I was just biding my time until I could be that 50’s housewife.

I was changing jobs about every two years. My husband started his own business and once it was off the ground, I wanted to be free to travel with him and entertain clients and their wives. He finally gave in. My dream resumed. There were business trips to California, Hawaii, and London. We built a home on the water. We vacationed in the Bahamas and then bought property there.

Sure we had the usual relationship issues that come with marriage and in-laws. With the entertaining lifestyle came lots of alcohol, which at times was excessive. We are both Pisces: Sun, Mars and Venus.

Then in September of 1997, after a trip to the Bahamas, my husband became ill. At first, he thought it was just an infection due to a cut he received while cleaning fish. When he didn’t feel better, the doctor started doing all kinds of digestive tests but everything looked normal, so they said.

We began building a home on our property in the Bahamas. He didn’t get better. This Bahamas house was his dream. With his Sun-Mars conjunction, no illness could keep him from his goal. Then on April 1, 1998 after 7 months of tests, a radiologist finally found the culprit - pancreatic cancer.

We were devastated. What happened to our “grow old along with me, the best is yet to be”? We got second and third opinions. Same diagnosis, prognosis: one year max.

Now our lifestyle became doctors and treatments. I may be [Continued on Page 10]
a Pisces but my Libra moon is no nurse! Hospitals are the last place I want to be. Luckily, I was spared hospitals for the most part, but I still had to help administer and monitor his chemotherapy treatments at home. This was my beloved; my soul mate, so I would do whatever was required.

His determination was impressive. He continued to work. If we weren’t flying to MD Anderson in Houston for check-ups, we were flying to the Bahamas to check on the construction of the house. The house was completed in May 1998 and we spent weeks at a time there, entertaining friends, fishing and diving. He insisted on squeezing every last moment out of the time he had left.

We had a New Year’s Eve party in the Bahamas to celebrate with our local friends. Then two days later, he decided we should get back to Florida and 3 weeks later he died. This story is just the prelude. Six years later, I was surfing the Internet looking for a vocational vacation. I had been studying metaphysical subjects since the Uranus-Neptune conjunction of 1993, even though I didn’t know astrology then. The word CPA caught my eye. I was not interested in anything accounting related, having left that profession behind years ago.

This CPA was the Centre for Psychological Astrology in England. They were offering an intensive beginners course in San Francisco for a week. Just what I was looking for! I signed up and headed to California. My “AH HAH!” moment was when the instructor glanced at my chart after I told her that my husband had died. She said, “it’s right here in your chart, Pluto went over your IC”. I was dumbfounded that my husband’s death was showing up in my astrology chart. Why would that be?

I didn’t know much astrology then, but that was the spark that propelled me to continue on this path. As I would learn in the coming years, my marriage was part of an eclipse cycle. It lasted 18-1/2 years. Looking back, there was a solar eclipse on August 10, 1980 (20 days before the wedding) at 18°Leo 17’. My natal Pluto is 18°Leo 16’ in the 12th house. The next eclipse in that cycle was a solar eclipse on August 11, 1999 (6-1/2 months after his death) at 18°Leo 21’.

I experienced some very intense, disturbing events in the months following that August eclipse. My metaphysical studies taught me that there are no accidents and everything happens for a reason. Still reeling from the transition of wife to widow, I was vulnerable. I no longer had the protection of the husband I had deferred to all these years. Other people did not have my best interests at heart. After the worst loss of my life, there were more losses to come: Losses of wealth and self-esteem. It was like being sucked into a vortex with no way out. I consoled myself with the thought that, whatever happened was for my highest good. I would be okay. I was divinely protected even if I didn’t feel like it.

It has now been 14 years since I journeyed to the underworld on that Pluto eclipse. I have been blessed with new friends who encourage my authenticity. I continue to deepen my knowledge of astrology and connect with my colleagues at conferences and workshops. I’ve got 4 more years before the next eclipse in this cycle hits in 2018. I’m counting on my astrology awareness to moderate my next meeting with Pluto.
Today, it is not uncommon to meet people who see astrology as more than a fascinating hobby; more and more view astrology as a profession. This shift is due to the fact that we have access to more information, an abundance of astrological software, the availability of modern means of communication, availability of electronic payment systems, as well as the widespread introduction of Internet. This greatly simplifies issues related to advertising and office procedures - all this makes astrology an attractive form of commercial activity. Astrology is becoming cost-effective and, as a consequence, there is a growing interest on the part of astrologers, who are ready to offer people paid consultations.

Every year the astrology market produces a group of young astrologers; full of energy with confidence believing that their astrological knowledge, the ability to speak well, and their ability to establish contact with people will allow them to quickly achieve success in the field of astrological counseling. Consequently, beginning astrologers enthusiastically enter the world of professional astrology, but for some reason, some time later, their enthusiasm wanes, and they quit. What’s going on? Let’s find out.

The main reason this happens is found in the motivation for opening a private astrological practice. Why does the person want to become a consulting astrologer? What is the expectation of life as an astrologer? What forethought has gone into the state of the astrological market? And what are his views on the future work?

If the original motivation was wrong then this astrologer is disappointed, and returns to a more stable source of earnings, leaving astrology to the status of a hobby.

Therefore, to avoid disappointment and not lose faith in yourself before you plunge headlong into professional astrological activities, it is desirable to think: why, exactly, you want to become a professional astrologer? What is your relationship to astrology? And are you ready to make it your profession? Ponder these questions, think about the motivation, and try to see yourself as an astrologer. What is your relationship to astrology? And are you ready to make it your profession?

This problem of the initial motivation exists in all spheres of activities that involve individual entrepreneurship. It would therefore be advisable to seek the experience of specialists from other fields adjacent to astrology. For example, let’s look at how to solve a similar problem in business. T. Hopkins, wrote a very interesting work on the study of this issue; his comments and suggestions are quite applicable to the activities of professional astrologers. I believe that these tips will help in the development of professional astrology.

Constantly communicating with professional astrologers who give consultations, discussing with them the issues of professional growth by participating in various joint astrological projects, I noticed that there are some specific stereotypes that are typical of those astrologers who cannot achieve success. At the same time, there is another group of stereotypes that operate with successful astrologers. In both cases these stereotypes relate with the initial motivation. So, let’s look at some notions, most often found with unsuccessful astrologers:

“By practicing astrology, one can make good money.” By practicing astrology, one really can make good money, but ... it is more than just being a true master of his craft. It should be borne in mind that all successful people achieve their success by working very much and constantly focusing on self-improving. Learning the secrets of effective counseling and creating a large customer base requires time and considerable effort. If you intend to work intensely, then counseling can actually be a very profitable business. Otherwise, be prepared for modest earnings.

“I love astrology and am well versed in it, so I think I can be a good consultant.” The realization that you love and know astrology very well does not mean that you can be a good consultant. Even if you love astrology as a science, the main quality for success as a coun-

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Why Do People Become Professional Astrologers? (continued from Page 11)

...eling astrologer is the love of people. Guided solely by personal sympathy to astrology, you will give preference to those areas of astrology which you find interesting; thus significantly limiting your range of activity, and missing things important for the client, because they are of little interest for you.

“The astrologer is a free personality, and be obey no ones, and works by himself.”

If you are engaged in private practice, you are your own boss in terms of time planning. However, our time is often occupied with affairs that you quite possibly do not want to do. Your success as an astrologer will be a direct reflection of your ability to do exactly what must be done. There is an old wisdom: “Success begins with a win over our own shortcomings.” This is essential in the management of any private practice. Many people become professional astrologers through a desire to be their own boss, but find that this is actually quite difficult. They just do not have enough self-discipline to manage themselves.

“I have the gift of eloquence, so I can to be a good consultant.” This is one of the most common misconceptions. The ability to quickly come in contact, start a conversation on any topic and in no time process the information is not the most important qualities needed for a good consultant. It is much easier to teach an introvert to ask questions than compel an extrovert to close his mouth. The consultation process involves the interaction of the consultant and the client. A good counselor asks the client the right questions and listens very carefully to him, to accurately grasp, with how the question came to him and how help him. To be an incorrigible chatterbox or inattentive companion makes it very difficult to do a good consultation. Successful consultants know that it is necessary to listen twice as much than to speak. Most people are much better at hearing their own voice than another’s. It is much more valuable to be an interested person than interesting person. If it is more important for you to be interesting rather than interested, then professional astrology is not for you.

“Giving astrological consultations is a simple job and pleasant pastime.”

Look at the esoteric salons, astrological sites and social networks, and you’ll see that they are filled by specialists—astrologers who are gathered together and entertain each other with funny stories. They are not doing astrology: they’re just gaily spending time. They have no time for counseling clients, or conducting research, or for participation in the public life of the astrological community, or for self-education. These “specialists” are absorbed with discussion of political events, of popular movies, news, fashion, and cooking.

Remember that the best astrologers work more than 40 ordinary hours per week, and every minute of time is used for something useful for their cause. If you decide to take the path of professional astrology and at the same thinking that you’ll work, without straining, and be your own boss, then you need to grasp that bosses usually work more than all the other, and usually take work with them wherever they go. If you do opt to specialize in astrology, then use time efficiently, namely: constantly pay attention to the study of the market, study astrological literature, improve your skills, and learn new techniques of counseling. The rational use of time is a professional necessity.

“It’s great to be constantly meet new interesting people.” To be interested in new people is a great and necessary quality for the astrologer consultant. But you have to remember that people will not necessarily have an interest to you. In practice, you still have to search out these people, to win their attention, to deserve their time. You have face that people are often reluctant to meet with you. Often it takes great effort to have a meeting take place. Another important aspect is that the sectarians, atheists, and religious radicals will often have an aggressive attitude toward astrology. If you are serious in you intention to become a professional astrologer consultant, you need to be not only master astrological counseling, but also learn techniques of self-motivation.

“I can find a place in astrology without any training.” If you want to become a truly professional astrologer, you should make astrology your lifestyle. It cannot be just your job, it’s not enough. Lifestyle means that from the time you wake up in the morning, every step, every breath, every look and every conversation is subordinate to the interests of the cause. Consider questions for astrological research drawn from your personal hobbies. Observe how other astrologers work. Develop your astrological skills and try new techniques. Yours astrological self-education will never be completed, because the world around us is constantly changing. To stay equal to the situation, you ca not stop even for a minute. In addition, ongoing training and familiarity with the new theories will support your enthusiasm. In any case, before you master the skills of a leader in his profession and to gain knowledge on the expert level, you have lots and lots to learn.

Here are some truths about working as a professional consulting astrologer:

It’s fun! The first positive point in the work of astrologer is that it is really fun. How great is the number of people who are terribly bored with their work? Life is meant to be joyful. And there’s no reason not to choose a job to our liking.

Astrologers are needed. The demand for skilled astrologers will always be there. Virtually every society feels the need for highly skilled astrologers. And this need is never fully satisfied.

Small capital investment. Working astrologers do have one big advantage: return on our assets with little capital investment. How much is an “entry ticket” to the profession? You can start a career as an astrologer having an initial capital of investing time and effort spent learning astrology and honing of the professional skills as a consultant.
My natal Venus is retrograde. I used to be ashamed to admit I didn’t get her. I’d think “How can I be an astrologer and not understand how natal retrogrades work?” During the first 10 years I studied, I read Martin Shulman’s book, *Karmic Astrology: Retrogrades and Relationships, Vol. III* repeatedly and anything else I could get my hands on.

I knew Venus was the go to planet to begin to comprehend one’s relationship profile. In those days I would pass her by and ask a series of questions. I’d start at the 7th house to see what was happening there and what sign was on the house cusp. Where is its ruler? What sign is it in? Is it interacting with other planets, angles? Are those relationships easy and flowing or challenging and stressful? Is the 7th house occupied? If so what planets, angles are those planets interacting with? I wanted to know why my relationships were uncommunicative, unsatisfying, and a struggle. When I looked at my Venus I focused on her conjunction with Pluto overlooking her more immediate conjunction to my Sun.

According to what I knew, her not being in direct motion wasn’t good. Adding her placement in Virgo, her Fall, further debilitates her; but conjunct to Pluto? That had to trump any other consideration. I felt like Persephone before I was knew who she was and what her myth meant. It became the story for why my relationships seemed to morph into some version of a familiar hell.

Still early in my education I understood that what Pluto [CONTINUED ON PAGE 14]
Lessons in Self-Love  [CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13]

touches he transforms. Adjacent study of spiritual wisdom supported that such a process was to be invited. It was just difficult to manage the emotional hits “plutonian” learning experiences took on me. I seemed to be in some degree of hell when it came to my finances, esteem, and relationships. Add in being frustrated for not getting why I was unable to stop doing, being whatever was bringing the pain. I scapegoated Pluto while acknowledging begrudgingly that on that infamous “some level” I supposed I was being helped. At some point I just forgot about Venus. She slipped through the cracks of my Pluto fear.

Time passed. It was easier connecting to the meaning of transiting retrogrades, especially Mercury. But when it’s encoded into your psychic DNA how do you identify it in your behavior? I had a lot of information explaining what it all meant but what good is that when you don’t recognize it in who you are? I needed to go beyond concepts and theory to see it in me. I hoped that at some point I’d get it.

All the while I accumulated more symbolism: her representation of the feminine principal; what represents beauty to us; what we like, our personal values. I remember reading somewhere a favorable aspect between Venus and Mars gave the ability to create what you want and supports the personal freedom to do what you will. Mine are both in Virgo but over fifteen degrees apart. I couldn’t help but feel abandonment for her. She was close but yet so far from her other half.

Years later when my struggle to know receded out of sight, I was in class listening to the teacher respond to a question. It was when he casually mentioned that natal retrograde Venus indicates an inability to recognize one’s own beauty the mirror cracked. Something caved internally. I thought of the times when I’d look in the mirror looking for the person that had just been complimented for what I said, wrote or did, and who I was or how I looked came flooding back to me. I didn’t hear what else he said. I was in the feeling I always had when looking to see the one complimented in me and instead found her missing for me.

The opaque veil between us thinned. There was an empty space I hadn’t identified before. That was it. This was how a retrograde planet could be identified within you. It’s the emptiness. It’s the missing connection to what the planet represents in your sense of who you are. In Venus’s case the inability to experience the beauty in me was the blinking neon clue hiding in plain sight. Vacant though it felt, it was Venus being as present as she could. How classic that through my suffering misperceived view of what I was missing, I missed seeing that she required from me what I was looking to others for.

Delving into this has been an important learning for me. A retrograde planet requires you to give to yourself what it represents intentionally whether or not you think or feel you know what you are doing. You do it until it feels natural to be it and then operate from what you have built within and continue adding to it.

Just as the first step to erect a new structure on the remains of an old one is to build a scaffold, you do the same. The scaffold is the knowing that you must give the planet principle to yourself. The consistent doing so fills in the planet structure on the remains of the memory. When you have built to where you can operate from there a natural shift occurs even as construction continues. At a point your structure is strong enough to dismantle the scaffold and support self-reliant expression.

Venus went direct by progression several weeks before I turned 24. I remember noticing that when I was 37 and newly separated from my first husband. Deep in disillusionment I searched to find a memory that fit all the descriptions I understood a retrograde Venus turned direct to be like. It was déjà vu all over again, as Yogi Berra the illustrious New York Yankee Manager was known to say. I couldn’t relate. Five years later, taking another look, I recognized there had been a shift though imperceptible then. After she went direct I went from not knowing I could have better relationships and feel better about myself to realizing I deserve to have exactly that. How to make it so? Finding that road took a few more years. I needed my teacher/guide to appear and show the way via astrology and spiritual wisdom. I’ve been building that structure one step at a time ever since.

Cheryl Hopkins is an astrologer, teacher and energy healer. Born in upstate New York, she graduated from New York’s Fashion Institute of Technology with a degree in Business Merchandising. She enjoyed a successful career in sales in the women’s apparel industry for twelve years. From there she moved into the corporate world beginning with a several year stint at Calvin Klein Cosmetics.

Though a student of human psychology and development for many years her interest in astrology wasn’t serious until she received an astrological consultation as a gift in the mid-eighties. It elevated her understanding that astrology is a valuable catalytic tool for deepening self-awareness and changed her life’s direction.

She apprenticed with her first teacher learning astrology, spiritual wisdom and energy healing in the early 1990’s. She is a level II certificate holder in Steven Forrest’s Evolutionary Astrology Apprenticeship Program and is the Program Director for The National Council For Geocosmic Research (NCGR) Richmond, Virginia chapter. As an energy healer, Cheryl is a PSYCH-K™ (Psychological Kinesiology) Facilitator and Reiki Practitioner. She maintains her practice in the Charlottesville, Virginia area at the foothills of the beautiful Blue Ridge mountains.

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