



## WRITTEN IN THE STARS

Well, if the reaction in Letters (SAM, Summer '07) is anything to go by, astrology is both alive and well within the hallowed halls of the old school! Like several of your correspondents, it seems I should have taken more notice at the time of publication. But I'm not all that surprised really. After all, some of my best friends (sic) are astrologers – at least I suppose they are, as that is the first page they rush to in the daily tabloid!

In any event, I don't think I'm missing too much, having moved on from mythology some time ago. However, David Juste's observation that "astrology was an integral and essential element (in the early development) of Western culture" – and elsewhere for that matter – is entirely valid. Nowadays I derive great satisfaction from delving into the next stage of the human journey, namely evolutionary consciousness. Now that's something academia could get into and the letters would be both valuable commentary and relevant to the human condition.

Many thanks for the tarted up magazine content and format. It's a big improvement.

Keep up the good work.

Gary Fuller  
(not-so-grumpy-old MBA '77)  
Warwick, Qld

## L'ESTRANGE FRUIT

It was courageous of Michael L'Estrange (SAM, Summer '07) to have risked mentioning the inclusion of "the stars" in our motto. The angst, which that topic has raised since Dr Juste's article, borders on questioning Merewether's wisdom in choosing those words.

Their adoption, however, surely legitimises Sydney's venturing into that realm more than a random other university. Moreover, it could well be seen as obligatory for this institution to have a resident astrological scholar, and to pay considerable homage to the holder of the appointment. In so doing we may have to expect a certain level of disdain from extra-mural types, but surely never from within our own ranks.

While it is said "keep your feet on the ground, but your head in the clouds", it's clearly academically dangerous to go any higher.

Tony Martin (BDS '62 MDS '65)  
Mortdale, NSW

## MOTHERS OF INVENTION

How hypocritical of the grumpy old Skeptics to rubbish poor venerable Astrology whilst they seem willing to accept her children. Chronology has grown up some since she was asked only to tell of the solstices and equinoxes; Astronomy has matured since her prophecies of the position of the planets, and which lights were planets; Agriculture still tells farmers when to plant and how to maximise their crops and long range radio broadcasts still rely on Meteorology to predict the effect of the planets.

Very few people do not know their Sun sign and something of the character traits associated with it, and even if it were only a self-fulfilling prophecy, nevertheless astute therapists would be remiss in ignoring such self-perceptions by their clients.

It's to be hoped that the future's historians will be kinder to the Skeptics' cult than they have been to one of the mothers of our current level of knowledge in the sciences. If current historians are generous enough to place Astrology in her rightful position as a founder of many of our modern studies then they are empowered by their professionalism.

James McGarry (PhD '92)  
Failford NSW

## SANGUINE OR CHOLERIC

I don't know enough about astrology to form an opinion about its status, though I recognise that many famous scientists were believers. One ancient and medieval belief, in which I do have faith however, is the theory of humours.

Admittedly, my only contact with contemporary psychology is a grainy, sepia film shown in the Wallace Theatre where every second or third phrase was "the eminent Professor Pavlov". My son is a psychologist, but he just writes off the theory of humours as another of his father's screwball ideas. We don't argue, though, because I can point out that he is a cognitive scientist, not a clinician, so we have no propositions to agree or disagree about.

But the humours remain embedded in my mind as far superior to modern psychological categories as an explanation of human behaviour, and I wish they were still taught to psychology students.

Ken Goodwin (MA '63)  
Indooroopilly, Qld

*Editor's note: my stars (Pisces) advise that this correspondence should now be declared closed.*



Sceptics... believe in it not



Pavlov's theory of humours

### LESSER OF TWO EVALS

I am wondering if the apparently universal spelling in the magazine (*SAM* Summer '07) of mediaeval as "medieval" is a part of the seemingly increasing Americanisation (Americanization) of the University? In this context, it is noteworthy that a major survey by the United States Studies Centre at the University found that when respondents were asked to judge "the influence of American culture on Australia", the majority said that they were "not at all pleased" about the influence of "the American language".

I should, therefore, welcome your views, and those of both the Department of English and your readers, on the desirability, or otherwise, of the prevailing use of "medieval" in the magazine.

**Tony Stockwell (MDS '82)**  
Claremont, WA

### LCDISM? QUE?

I feel that it is important to comment on the lowering of your editorial standards.

LCDism??  
Whilst I accept alumni as a collective noun for graduates of the University of Sydney (and used by your magazine) I cannot accept the use of alumnus to describe Clover Moore (*SAM*, Summer '07).

The correct term is alumna! I expected better of the Authoress, Editress, and the Editorial Advisory Committee.

**Stephanie Bell (BSc '04)**  
London, UK

*Editor's note: Res ita est ut dixisti. Decretum falsum erat. Benigne.*

(Also see page 8 on this topic.)

### ULTIMO OMISSION

In the article on the inimitable Clover Moore, (*SAM*, Summer '07) Geraldine O'Brien commits an unforgivable sin of omission. In referring to the Broadway/ Ultimo "knowledge precinct", no mention is made of the largest and one of the oldest inhabitants of that precinct, namely Sydney Institute, Ultimo College formerly Sydney Technical College (STC).

It seems to be the fate of TAFE that, despite its vast enrolments, its amazing diversity and its unquestioned importance to the national wellbeing, it is all but invisible to a certain stratum of Sydney commentators.

Newcomers to the area, such as the tiny campus of Notre Dame University, get a mention along with the ABC, which is a relatively recent arrival in Ultimo. UTS is noted without any comment that STC was one of its main progenitors (as it was earlier for UNSW).

STC was formally established in 1883 and by 1891 was installed at its current site in Ultimo more or less contemporaneously with the

Technological Museum that, in 1988, morphed into the Powerhouse Museum.

In O'Brien's list, only the University of Sydney, established in 1850, predates Sydney Tech (as it is still known by many).

I have just retired from over a quarter century of teaching in Biomedical and Applied Sciences in TAFE, the past 17 years at Ultimo. A colleague of mine, who has just been recognised for 50 years of teaching at Ultimo, has often reminded me that when he was studying, there was only Sydney Uni and Sydney Tech, the latter often referred to as the working man's university.

**Peter Weitzel (PhD Pharm '77)**  
Ashfield, NSW



### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor should include: full name, address (not for publication), degree(s) and year(s) of graduation where applicable, daytime phone number and/or email address.

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