

# MODERN LIVING

## The Revised Zodiac

Even a nonbeliever knows his astrological sign. If his birthday falls, for example, between May 22 and June 21, the charts have always told him that he is a Gemini. They reassure him that deep down he is a restless, versatile, clever, exuberant and expressive chap, even if friends and neighbors find him stolid, sullen and introverted. Sudden notification that this same fellow is in reality a Taurus—stubborn, systematic, kindhearted and musical—is sure to prove unsettling, particularly when he appears decidedly sloppy, mean and congenitally tone-deaf.

Worse still would be the news that he had been re-classified a Cetus, a sun sign that points to no personality traits whatever and cannot be found, embossed or appliquéd, on a single charm bracelet, watch fob, dish towel or shower curtain. Nonetheless, such a possibility now exists. So says Steven Schmidt, whose book, *Astrology 14* (Bobbs-Merrill; \$4.95), not only shifts the old signs to different dates but also adds two more constellations to the Zodiac.

**Perfectly Taurus.** Schmidt's theory turns upon the fact that in the 2,000 years since the old astrological rules were set up, there has been a slight change in the tilt of the earth's axis. This has caused an apparent shift in the positions of the constellations. In addition, he notes that astrologers have refused to recognize that there are actually 14 constellations in the Zodiac belt, not 12.

An even dozen, of course, is convenient for reckoning points of the compass or months of the year. Fourteen is a bother. Hence the two additional constellations, Cetus (the whale) and Ophiuchus (the serpent slayer), have been ignored. Not by Schmidt, who assigns each constellation 26 days instead of

30, making room for Cetus between Aries and Taurus, and for Ophiuchus between Sagittarius and Scorpio. Let the horoscopes fall where they may; his way, Schmidt argues, gives "a better guide to analyzing character."

To Schmidt, who was born on July 7 and was obviously dissatisfied at being designated a Cancer (sign of the tenacious, motherly and easily influenced), the change is eminently logical. The new line-up makes him a Gemini, "as might be expected, perhaps, of one who writes fiction and poetry by choice and edits scientific reports for a living." Other personalities, selected "at random" for proof that they are just as at home in the traditional horoscope, include such "hardly wishy-washy" Ariens as Warren Beatty, Debbie Reynolds and Schmidt's brother, Jack (obviously better off as "strong-willed, ambitious" Pisceans). Robert Schumann, Prince Philip and Schmidt's son, Sherwood, oldtime Geminis, are now perfectly Taurus.

**Essentially Irrational.** *Astrology 14* is not exactly moving either heaven or earth within the trade. Established astrologers like Carroll Righter, who built reputations and fortunes on a 12-sign system, dismiss Schmidt's theories as "meaningless." U.S.C. Astronomy Professor Gibson Reaves points out that "astrology is essentially irrational, and to try to give it such a rational, scientific explanation would spoil it for most people, anyway." Buffs like Clark Stillman, salesman at a Greenwich Village occult bookstore, complain that Schmidt doesn't ascribe any "elements" (air, water, fire, etc.) to his new signs or enhance them "for esoteric value" with much mythology. Actually, Schmidt borrows some myths from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, both on Cetus (a monster sent by Neptune to devour Andromeda) and on Ophiuchus (either a king killing a dragon, Heracles killing

INTERNATIONAL NEWS



MISS BUREAUCRAT & MISS CARBON COPY  
*Optimizing assets.*

a serpent, or a physician curing snakebites). "Anyway," Stillman insists, "according to Schmidt, I'm an Aquarius. But I don't feel it or act it. Therefore, I'm not."

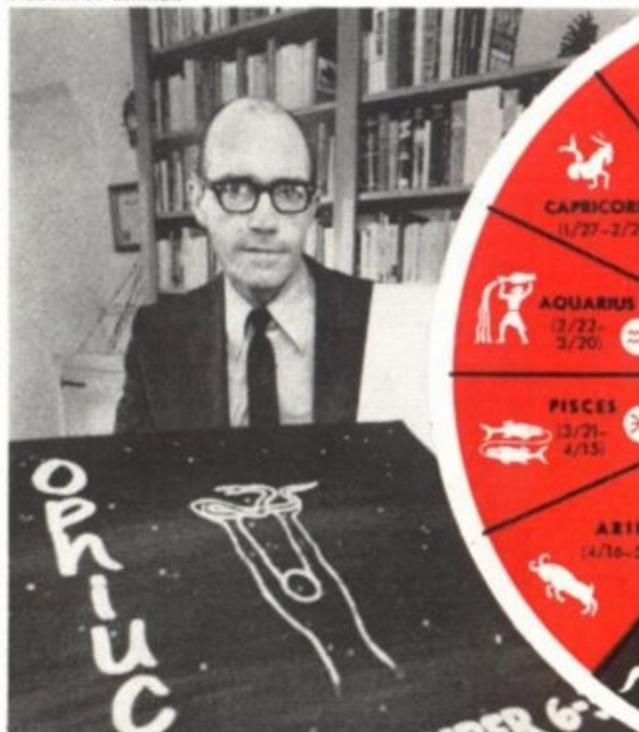
## Maximizing NATAPROBU

Most Americans have learned to co-exist with the inefficiencies and jargon of bureaucracy, accepting them with sullen resignation. Not so James Boren, president of NATAPROBU (for National Association of Professional Bureaucrats), a mischievous group organized to reform bureaucracy by lampooning it. Last week, at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., designed to demonstrate the bureaucratic characteristic of "dynamic inactivism," Boren belatedly named Sandra Summers, a Pentagon secretary, as "Miss Bureaucrat 1969."

Boren's Three Laws sum up NATAPROBU's philosophy: 1) When in charge, ponder; 2) When in trouble, delegate; and 3) When in doubt, mumble. The organization dedicates itself to "optimize the status quo by fostering adjustive adherence to procedural abstractions and rhetorical clearances." It also promotes "feasibility studies, reviews, surveys of plans, surveys of feasibility studies and surveys of reviews." NATAPROBU's gobbledegook letters and memos, sent irregularly to offending agencies, sound alarmingly real. Victims of the Internal Revenue Service's terrifying forms, for example, will immediately recognize such splendid Borenized phrases as "quanticized investment revenues" and "optimized financial implementation."

**Boring from Within.** NATAPROBU's latest campaign is aimed at the State Department, which has decided that all outgoing telegrams be prepared on special "optical character recognition" typewriters. At the moment, only three such typewriters exist at State, and only a few operators have mastered the system's intricacies. That provides Boren with a target that seems almost too good to be true. NATAPROBU's chief executive officer, presi-

WILLIAM J. WARREN



SCHMIDT & CHART

*Not on a single watch fob, dish towel or shower curtain.*

