

## **Astrology's Rise in Connecticut: A 1970s Resurgence**

### **By Jeanne Maglaty, The Hartford Courant**

As astrology gains unprecedented popularity across Connecticut, its presence is becoming ubiquitous in everyday life. The signs of its rise are visible everywhere—from newspapers and radio stations to cruise ships and ski resorts. The once-niche interest is now a mainstream hobby, with numbers proving its burgeoning following.

One testament to this trend is the newly established Astrological Institute of Research in Hartford, founded by Alpee Lavoie and his wife, Betty. The couple transformed a seven-room apartment into a vibrant learning center, adorned with astrological symbols and decorated with love and dedication. "We had limited funds but a lot of love to put into the center," Lavoie said, reflecting on their efforts

The institute offers a variety of classes catering to different levels of astrology enthusiasts, from beginners to advanced students. With over 35 students enrolled, Lavoie and his fellow instructors, Nellie Blakesly and Ruth Gerry, are committed to educating and expanding the community of serious astrology students

.Astrology's appeal is reflected in the growth of organizations such as the Astrological Society of Connecticut. Founded in 1972 with just ten members, the society now boasts about 100 dues-paying members. Alberta Benson, the society's president, attributes this growth to the increasing interest in astrology during what she calls "The Me Decade." "Astrology provides people with insight into themselves," she said, explaining its allure

Despite its popularity, astrology remains controversial. While some view it as a legitimate science, others dismiss it as pseudoscience or pure bunk. Alpee Lavoie is determined to change these perceptions. "I want to prove to the people of Connecticut, astrology is not witchcraft, not black magic. It's a science people have misused for many years," he asserted

The debate over astrology's validity is underscored by a statement signed by 186 leading scientists, including 18 Nobel prize winners, which appeared in Humanist magazine. The statement decried astrology as lacking scientific foundation and warned the public against following astrologers' advice

Nevertheless, proponents like Lavoie continue their work undeterred. Lavoie spent ten years conducting extensive research to validate astrology's principles. His specialty, horary astrology, answers specific questions such as the best time to sign a contract or get married

The growing interest in astrology is also evident in the number of educational workshops and events held across the state. For instance, a recent workshop with renowned astrologer Noel Tyl attracted 90 participants. Despite the male-dominated perception of the field, the workshop saw only 11 male attendees, highlighting the significant female presence in astrology. "Women enter the field more often because they possess a desirable intuitive quality," Benson noted

Astrology's influence extends beyond personal insights. The National Council for Geocosmic Research, which investigates the interactions between life, the earth, and the

cosmos, has active chapters in western Connecticut and Hartford. Members explore various metaphysical fields, continually amazed by the overlap between them. "Astrology is perhaps the most exact and scientific," said Mana Sullivan, president of the Hartford chapter

Despite its rise, the practice of astrology is not without its challenges. A 1971 state statute technically makes practicing astrology illegal, although the law remains unenforced. Lavoie emphasizes ethical practice and aims to give people direction rather than making deterministic predictions. "There's a lot of bad astrology. They ruin it for the good ones," he remarked

The article also highlights the community's goal to use astrology to work with children, helping parents understand and curb potential personality traits early on. Benson believes astrology can even help prevent child abuse by making parents aware of their temper triggers

As astrology continues to capture the public's imagination, it remains a field of both fascination and skepticism. Its growing popularity in Connecticut is a testament to its enduring appeal and the human desire for self-awareness and understanding.

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## References:

- The Hartford Courant. (1977, October 30). *Astrology Dawns As Rising Hobby*