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Thursday, February 7, 2008

Local spotlight

Astro-stock predictors become financial stars

Maureen McDonald / Special to The Detroit News

With doomsayers predicting an immediate recession and an endless hike in gas prices, Farmington Hills astrologer and market timer Ray Merriman says bunk.

"The recession everybody is drumming about is a big fake-out. It could happen in one to three years, but not sooner," said Merriman, who consults the stars and planets for Fortune 500 clients who invest \$250 to \$2,500 for his opinions.

His latest book of forecasts sold out its 2,000-copy press run in two months. His Web site is www.mmacycles.com.

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Merriman suggests gas prices will top out by July 2008, tumbling 50-90 percent for the next three years. With the price drop, a corresponding increase in highway construction will be announced, pushing up the price of steel and concrete, he said. With a heavy heart, he sees a rise in global terrorism and a surge in businesses that sell munitions.

His astro/business forecasts are published weekly and quarterly newsletters are read by captains of industry, brokers and bankers around the world.

Merriman studies the Dow Jones and Nasdaq indexes, commodities markets and interest rates, along with the planets.

He is one of a growing number of astrology professionals generating six-figure incomes by working in harmony with the business community -- identifying what is hot and supplying it to customers by Internet, telephone and public appearances.

Mike Whitty, a business professor at the University of Detroit Mercy, said in times of uncertainty and crisis, throughout history, astrologers and psychics surge in sales.

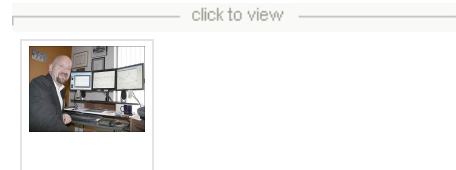
"We've seen a real maturity to the astrology business, people of sound mind and judgment who have become leaders in their field," Whitty said.

Richard Smoot, a retired social worker in Chelsea, coordinates www.astrodatabank.com and www.astrologysoftwareshop.com. With a marked increase in people learning astrology and relying on its predictions, students are less willing to undergo the laborious effort to read tiny symbols in magazines. With the right software, the chart-making coordinates come up instantly.

Smoot creates a \$400,000 income by operating a rating system for astrologers, offering updates on 200 to 800 products that have emerged in the



Farmington Hills astrologer and market timer Ray Merriman consults the stars and planets for Fortune 500 clients who invest \$250 to \$2,500 for his opinions. His latest forecast book sold out in two months. (Wayne E. Smith / The Detroit News)



Extras

Stellar careers

These three astrologers use the stars to predict business futures, select software or heal a broken heart.

www.MariaShaw.com. Maria Shaw of Genesee County hosts a weekly astrology show on WCDY-FM in Detroit.

www.astrodatabank.com. Richard Smoot offers product reviews and quick sales of up to 800 astrological software programs and conducts mini-readings on the Internet.

www.mmacycles.com. Ray Merriman is a certified business astrologer who studies heavenly cycles for trends and analyzes futures of commodities, industries and indexes.



market in the last two years. He offers reviews and drums up business by offering charts and insight into current celebrities and ancient leaders.

Maria Shaw, www.mariashaw.com, now owns a farm in Genesee County, a home on Mackinac Island and a condo in the French Quarter of New Orleans,

thanks to profits from her astrology business. She hosts a weekly astrology show on Detroit's 99.15 WYCD FM on Monday evenings, along with writing an astrology column for the National Enquirer.

Maureen McDonald is a Metro Detroit freelance writer.

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