



# NIGHT OWL reporter

By ERNEST LEOGRANDE

## Occult in the Open

The world of mysticism, once good for lots of laughs by nonbelievers, has picked up so many followers that hearing about schools in the occult sciences today doesn't sound any stranger than hearing about a course in cordon bleu cuisine.

Astrology was the big breakthrough. How can you call a concern with the zodiac eccentric when half the pitches in singles bars begin with, "What's your sign?"

The other night I sat down with Vera Scott, retired director of fashion and advertising for a textile firm, and asked her about Innervision, a non-profit incorporated school she started 10 years ago

for these matters. She uses a staff of volunteer specialists for her evening classes at the Advertising Club, a site she said she chose for its dignified associations, to counter any slurs on the curriculum.

"Our growth has been phenomenal in the past year," she said. "Five years ago you might have heard that the things we teach were for eccentrics but not today. Everybody's interested in at least one of them even if it's only curiosity.

"Hands always fascinated me, and the first thing I learned was palmistry from a medical doctor. I went from there to astrology and numerology." Innervision also teaches the ever-popular tarot card interpretation and some subjects which are on the debatable borderline between physical and metaphysical, like ESP, transcendental meditation.



The tarot tells, schools say.

She had to drop the I Ching (an Oriental divination using thin sticks), she said, because this 1960s fad didn't sustain a public interest. "But I just added pyramids," she said, fingering a gold filigree ankh, a souvenir from a trip to Egypt last year. This category of belief holds that the pyramidal shapes generate energy affecting people and events.

Lawyer Charles Blaisdell, a Yale graduate, is putting together a school for mystical sciences which will unite rather than separate subjects. He says he wants to build a student body who will work together on learning the sources of mystical thought to use them for spiritual improvement.

For beginners, students at his West End Ave. apartment will be learning the cabala, basic astrology—no personal charting, though—and tarot symbolism. Later will come alchemy, which is really about spiritual transformation, he said, and not that shtick about turning lead into gold. (Gold is this year's turkey anyway, so disappointment's unlikely.)

Relaxing among his maroon-bound volumes of "Federal Practice," Blaisdell commented on his sideline, "I've been interested in these sciences for 10 years. I like the mental discipline of law but it's not creative enough for me. After a while, one contract litigation or one divorce case is like another, you know."