

Why the September 20, 1973 Chart is Considered Correct

Sarah Laurent, Newsletter Editor

I phoned Terry Warneke, a lifetime member and former Education Director of ASA, to find out why ASA has always used the 1973 date for its birth chart. This article is based on what he said and reflects his views.

Which Date Matters?

Terry offered three logical reasons why the incorporation date is not necessarily the one that should be considered the date of ASA's birth. In the first place, many businesses and organizations exist for a period of time before they are incorporated. Using the incorporation date implies that they did not exist previously. ASA was operating as a fully-functioning organization 6 to 8 months before it incorporated as a state-recognized entity.

Second, an incorporation chart represents the entity's relationship with the government. If a business is involved, this relationship may have little or nothing to do with the business itself. For all practical purposes, the chart begins and ends at the time of incorporation.

Third, ASA is not a business. It is a non-profit organization and does not pay taxes. Even if, for some reason, a business should base its chart on its incorporation date, this does not necessarily apply to an organization such as ASA, whose relationship with the government is minimal.

An Amazing Beginning

ASA was the brainchild of John Gilliam and a few friends, including Charlotte Benson, Mary Ann Dennison, Bernice Honig, and Dawn Abbey. In August of 1973, John put ads in the Arizona Republic and the Phoenix Gazette, notifying the public that several people wanted to start an astrological organization and inviting anyone who was interested to attend. The Scottsdale Senior Center had not even been built at that time. John rented a conference room at a bank in downtown Scottsdale.

The meeting time was set for September 7, 1973 at 7:00 or 7:30 pm. The founders had no way of knowing how many people would attend; they expected maybe a dozen at the most. To their happy surprise, over a hundred people showed up, delaying the start time considerably. At 8:20 pm, John Gilliam called the meeting to order and asked for a vote on the motion to form an official organization. After that night, ASA began having regular monthly meetings, elected a board and drafted a preliminary constitution. John Gilliam was the first president. The following year, after a lot of careful thought, John came up with what he thought was a good incorporation chart and had ASA incorporated as a nonprofit organization.

There has never been disagreement among the original ASA members as to the correct chart for ASA. They unanimously agree that the September 20, 1973 chart is correct.

Astrology vs. Fortunetelling

Why did John Gilliam wait a year to incorporate ASA? Terry did not know, so he offered some speculation. In many cities, such as Tucson, astrology is considered fortunetelling, which is illegal. In the early days, Phoenix had such a law and Scottsdale did not. This is why ASA incorporated in Scottsdale.

When the Phoenix law came up for renewal, members of ASA testified before the Corporation Commission, and when the new law was drafted, astrology was no longer included under fortunetelling. Nor is a license required to practice astrology in Phoenix, unlike Tempe and Mesa.

Perhaps John waited because the political climate demanded it, or perhaps he wanted to make sure enthusiasm would remain high and ASA would remain a viable organization.