

TARGET

Peg Richer - 532-5589
Gayle Wolthuis - 245-9916
Joanne Belt - 531-3722

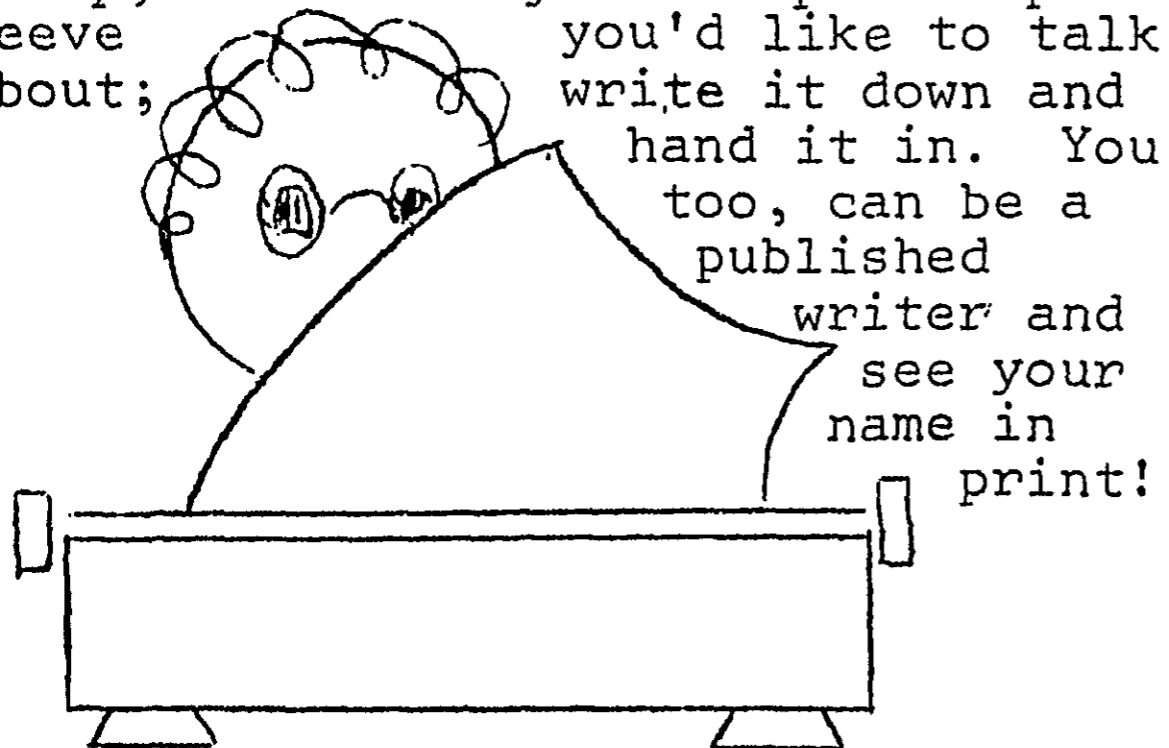
NOVEMBER 1978

A PUBLICATION OF GRAND RAPIDS' AIM 22 FRONTENAC SE, WYOMING, MICHIGAN 49508

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR: Between all of us, we receive many, many newsletters from other groups around the country which make for excellent reading. A lot of time and work is involved in even the smallest of these letters, and all are interesting and informative. Please ask to see some at our meetings, we are glad to share.

In our newsletter this month, I am devoting a space to just that; newsletters from all over the country. We can use many ideas expressed in these publications and learn much by reading of their experiences. Some of the articles and poetry is beautiful and inspiring and makes me wish for some of the same in our own newsletter.

I hope that all you aspiring authors and poets will take the time to donate something to our newsletter. In this case, we'd certainly like to keep up with the Joneses'. A newsletter written only by one person can reflect only one point of view, which could be rather limiting. The best publications contain articles written by many different ideas and viewpoints. It doesn't matter if your grammar or spelling is less than perfect, if you've only just gotten started with our group, or suddenly developed a "pet peeve you'd like to talk about; write it down and hand it in. You too, can be a published writer and see your name in print!



SEARCH, THE HOW-TO (Con't from last month)

The next meeting you attend, take all of your information along. It is helpful to have all the information in front of you to refer to so we can better help you.

If you have somehow managed to find a name -- your birth name or your mother's maiden name, you may have lightened your work considerably. Even if the information given was just gossip or hearsay, don't discard anything until you have checked it out. Write to the Department of Vital Records in Lansing and ask for (your) birth certificate under that name. Give them the name, date of birth, city and county of your birth, but not your adoptive name, or any mention of the fact that you were adopted. Usually within two or three weeks you'll get either your birth certificate or a letter explaining why they couldn't send it.

If the letter states that they simply didn't have enough information, try to get that information, but don't give up until or unless they actually say that the record has been sealed. Actually, there are some other ways you can check on that name.

Look for that name in telephone books, city directories and Bressers in the year and city in which you were born. Sometimes a few discreet phone calls can give you some ideas on "likely candidates". Look for a woman of approximate age, physical characteristics, or background. Any information you have about your biological mother may be helpful.

(CON'T NEXT MONTH)

NEWS FROM A DISTANCE:

From AIS (Adoptees in Search, Inc. of Bethesda, Maryland) Joanne Small has been nominated by HEW Secretary Joseph Califano to serve on the model Adoption Legislation and Procedures Advisory Panel. The establishment of this Panel was authorized by Title II, Adoption Opportunities of the Abuse Prevention and Treatment and Adoption Reform Act of 1978.

The law requires the Panel propose model adoption legislation to the secretary no later than August 11, 1979. As stated in the Chapter, the Panel's purpose shall be to, "...advise and assist the Secretary in the review of current conditions, practices and laws relating to adoption, with special reference to their effect of facilitating or impeding the location of suitable adoptive homes for children who would benefit by adoption and the completion of suitable adoptions for such children."

Joanne is serving on the Subcommittee on Adoption Hearing Issues. A major area of consideration by this Subcommittee is Treatment of Records. Specific questions posed were: Should the legislation make provision for giving adult adoptees access to the records of their adoption, make separate provisions for adoptions taking place before passage of open records provisions, provide for the involvement of biological and/or adoptive parents if an adoptee seeks access to records, etc. At the end of four days meetings, Joanne reports that the Panel appears to favor open records for the adult adoptee as well as the birth and adoptive parents.

The next series of meetings will begin January 8-10. Joanne has sent a letter to a dozen of the largest adoption activist groups seeking their input into her work with the Panel.

THE ADOPTION FORMAT & DIGEST, from California. We have several copies of their first "trial issue", which I will gladly share at our meeting. This publication will certainly be helpful and informative for everyone. Some excerpts from the paper:


"This publication was designed as a means to get the word out to the public that WE EXIST...that includes everyone; groups, individuals - everyone who has an interest in the so-called "dis-placed" -- adoptees, orphans, children separated by family through divorce or death, institutionalized children, foster children, war waifs, etc...and families, natural or adoptive; foster or whatever."

"We would like this newspaper to be a focal point for all printed news--by uniting we can produce a fine publication that can be a real asset in the fight for rights."

They are also hoping to get Jean Paton of Orphan Voyage to write her story for the paper. I, for one would be interested.

The AF&D also will help search by publishing personal ads, ads for search pals wanted and volunteer search assistants wanted.

The AF&D will also accept articles for their paper...with required permission from the author, of course. They will also send copies to organizations, libraries, newspapers, etc.; so send them names! Also they will publish a list of groups' names and addresses and will accept ads from any group for a fee.

MORE 

BOOKS 'N ARTICLES

Ruth Carter Stapleton's book, The Experience of Inner Healing has a mention of adoption and adoptees in the first chapter. It deals with influences before birth.

Did you catch the August 14th issue of People Magazine, where author James Michener discusses his life as a foundling?

The Adoption Triangle, by Sorosky, Baron and Panner, is still one of the best I've read. It lists case histories, personal thoughts from all members of the adoptive triangle and is an excellent source of information and enjoyment for anyone interested in the subject of adoption.

CHAPTER NEWS

Doris Former was our big celebrity this month, with her picture in the paper. Seems she was supposed to be on jury duty and since they've got very little parking down there, she called to ask if she could get out of it since she can't walk far. When the court refused, she called the press to ask if she could park in their lot, and it seems she had a reporter following her around a lot! Great picture, Doris!

Gayle and Joanne went for a ride one Sunday to visit Peg Richer's new trailer. They couldn't remember what road, lake or direction it was in, but would you believe they found it? Peg wasn't even home, but they left a note anyway.

Speaking of Peg Richer, she's going to be visiting her brother over the holidays.

"She is the other half of myself, as I am half of her. We are indivisible. I cannot stay where she cannot be. We have to go, wherever we go, together. If I had never discovered her, if I did not know that she existed, I could have been half happy ...but never more than half a person.

-William E. Barrett

THE PODIUM

This year has seen the greatest and most useful changes in the adoption frontier. No longer are we sitting alone, like solitary beacons; we have become a vast network of news, information and help to each other. No other action can do so much to change the views of the public and the legislature.

I personally talked to a lawyer informally about his views on adoption. What he said, in part, was: The agencies, Judges and Lawyers aren't worried a bit about what adoption groups such as yours can accomplish. You're all so busy fighting amongst yourselves that you've forgotten what the real fight is about! The only way you will win is to unite; and fight the battle together, State by State."

Well, I think we have realized that, and the real fight has begun. We are joining forces, we've stopped worrying about prestige and the importance of seeing our name in print. We're finally getting to the real issues and now we'll see some direct action. There are a few groups holding out, but when they realize the futility of fighting alone and see the progress made in unity, they'll join hands with the rest of us.

Yes, the new day has dawned and our new tomorrow is here. We will see and help history being made in 1979.

Feb 79

Q & M Target

G. R.

OUR TELEVISION STARS.....

On Monday, January 8, Peg and Joanne appeared on Channel 13's "EYEWITNESS AT NOON" show. It must have taken a lot of courage on Joanne's part since not all of her family and friends know about her child. The station was very helpful, however, and agreed to photograph only from the back and with the help of Peg's wig, I'm sure no one guessed who she was.

Since this was the first time we had a Birth Mother on the media; we were eager to see what response we would get. It sure didn't take long; the minute the show was finished, my phone started ringing. For about three days I was deluged with calls and even now I'm getting three or four a week.

For once, most of the calls were from Birth-Parents. Many, many times the same themes were repeated by these women; the harrassment they felt they had recieved, the concern they still had for the child they had given up; and the relief they felt that there was a group like ours where they could talk and express their feelings freely.

I also received three calls from adoptive parents, which is wonderful. These people have much to gain from groups like ours; we can help them understand their adoptive child through relating our experiences, State Law changes we propose will unify and help agencies to help the parents, and changes we propose within the agencies themselves will serve to educate and smooth the path for better understanding and communication between all three members of the adoptive triangle.

Two of the calls from adoptive parents were supportive, one was not. To the man who shouted in my ear for five minutes straight without taking a breath or giving me a chance to say anything:

"I pity your adoptive children. I'll bet when they were growing up you constantly reminded them of how grateful they should be that you rescued them from the gutter you found them in, when they were naughty, you probably reminded them of how bad their biological parents were and warned them that they were going to turn out the same rotten way."

All he saw on the show was the biological parent; all he heard was that she would like to know how her child was doing and that she would like to see him one day. He summed up his tirade with, "Good people like us, out of the goodness of our hearts, take in your "bastards" (his words, not mine!) and raise them for you. Then you come back after we've done all the work and want to see them!"

THE ADOPTIVE PARENTS.....

One Adoptive Mother called to ask just what we had in mind about changing the laws and what we hoped to accomplish.

WART

Oct. 1981

GRAND RAPIDS' AIM
22 FRONTENAC S.E.
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49508

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Meetings are held the first and third Wednesdays of each month at the Wyoming Library, 5350 Micheal S.W., at 7:50 p.m.

Book Review: Recently we sent for a copy of "A View of Open Adoption as Practised by Catholic Social Services of Green Bay, Wisconsin". It's available from C.S.S., Box 38, Green Bay Wisconsin, 54305 at a cost of \$15.00. Since we're so much in favor of what this agency is doing, it is very hard to be critical of any publication from them, but in this case, we felt that not enough information was included. Possibly we were looking at the subject from a slightly different slant than most persons who would request a book of this sort, but we felt that it could have contained more facts and figures geared to act as ammunition against those agencies opposed to open adoption. C.S.S. does say how they do the adoptions, but very little information on how many adoptions have been done, what they consider the success rate to be and the feelings of those involved in these adoptions. We're going to write to them, however, and see if we can get those facts and figures to supplement the information in the book.

We're still seeing quite a few newsletters from all over; some are comparatively new groups. Here's a partial listing:

Adoption Forum
6808 Ridge Ave. (Recr)
Philadelphia, 19128

Oregon Adoptive Rights Association
P.O. Box 1332
Beaverton, Oregon 97075

"Chatter"
Adoptees Search Rights Association
P.O. Box 8713
Toledo, Ohio 43623

Open A.R.M.S. Quarterly
P.O. Box 1522
North Platte, Nebraska 69101

Truth Seekers in Adoption
Box 286
Roscoe, Illinois 61073

Adoptees in Search (AIS)
P.O. Box 27294
Denver, Colorado 80227

I carry copies of these newsletters in my notebook -- yours to read for the asking.

REUNIONS: Joanne Belt recently found her son, right in this city. After visiting the agency and going over information obtained from all over, she was led to check a family right in this city. Because of her son's age, Joanne has not contacted him or his family, but isn't it nice to finally know?

Sandy Lynch also has been in contact with her family. I really haven't got the story straight, however, so I better not repeat what I'm not sure of.

Mr. Berg

