

NEWSLETTER NO. 1

ADOPTION FORUM OF PHILADELPHIA  
Box 5607 East Falls Station  
Philadelphia, Pa. 19139

Greetings!

This newsletter is a new project of the Adoption Forum. We hope to have it come out four times a year. We want to keep members and friends in touch with our group's activities, and we want to share items of interest concerning adoption with whoever is interested.

A Little History

This group was started in the Spring of 1974 by two adoptees, both members of national organizations for adoptees, who thought there should be an opportunity for Philadelphia Area adoptees to get together. They also felt it was important to promote communication among adoptees, adoptive parents, birth parents (of adoptees), and adoption professionals.

We have met monthly, first in a home and then at two different churches. We have also tried three different meeting times and have come to the conclusion that there is no time-and-place that is convenient for most members to meet. That is one reason we see this newsletter as an important addition to having meetings.

In the last year, members of the Adoption Forum have been guest speakers for adoptive parents' groups in Northeast Philadelphia, Warminster, and Media. We participated in an adoption conference at Temple University. We've spoken on WCAU Radio and WFTB and "appeared" on two television shows. (See the next page about our next television show!) We hope we've helped people, either to understand someone else better or to feel less alone in their own particular adoptive situation.

Future Meetings

For the months of February, March and April, we shall meet on the first Sunday afternoon of the month (2/1, 3/7, 4/4). These meetings will be at 2 p.m. at Debbie Steinberg's, Apt. C-314 (Jefferson Bldg.), The Presidential Apartments. This is where City Line Ave. meets the Schuylkill Expressway. The bus stops right there, or if you're driving, there's a big parking lot.

We expect, as usual, an exchange of adoption experiences, including those of adoptees who have located birth parents or are trying to. We have been delighted that several adoptees have brought their adoptive parents to a meeting. Everyone is welcome. Bring any interested friends, spouses, relatives.

Dues

We instituted dues last January, so it's time to pay again, if you've been a member since January, '75. We are raising our dues from \$5 to \$8, to cover the post office box, mailings, occasional meeting space and/or speaker's travelling expenses, and contribution to legal projects of our own or other groups. We'll send you a little note on your newsletter if your dues are due soon.

A Happy Reunion Story

One of our members recently found her birth parents in about three fairly easy steps. Her mother and father had married after her birth and had two other children. She went to visit her now-found family over Christmas, and we are looking forward to hearing about their meeting. At our December meeting, we saw pictures of the whole family and noticed how much our member looks like her brother and sister, who were as delighted as their parents to be found. The mother had often wished she could meet the daughter she'd given up but never imagined that an adoptee would want to search for birth parents!

lies openly and proudly." Apparently, many well-known Hawaiians have been raised this way and speak openly of their dual identity. "Their loyalty appears to be with their adoptive families, but they also take pride in the connection with their birth families."

#### PANDORA'S BOX

When Betty Jean Lifton (Twice Born) was on the Phil Donahue show recently, there were several of Yesterday's Children (Chicago group) in the audience. Several of them were asked to respond to a phoned in question, "Aren't you afraid you'll find out something awful about yourself?" A man who looked in his thirties said he had found out that he was the product of "a forced situation," and that he found that easier to deal with than the not knowing. We talked at our April meeting about the Pandora's box analogy that journalists seem to love to throw into their stories about adoptees' searches. Debbie Steinberg had looked up the Pandora's box story and found that when Pandora opened the box a second time, it contained HOPE.

#### IDEA FOR SEARCHERS

What would you think of getting together with a couple of other adoptees born where you were, picking a newspaper or magazine, and sharing the cost of an ad something like this:

Adoptees born in Camden on 8-3-44, 12-2-49, and 5-17-53 wishing to meet birth parents and/or relatives. Contact through Adoption Forum of Philadelphia, Box 5607 East Falls Station, Phila., Pa. 19129.

If you're interested, drop us a note and we'll put you together with others interested.

#### OUR TV SHOW

The cast for the program we did ourselves for "Take 12" was Joan Sommers (adoptee), Barbara LeClerq (birth mother), Barbara Ishizaki (adoptive mother), and Penny, who served as the moderator. When it was aired on March 8, Barbara Ishizaki watched with her six year old (adopted) twins, wondering how they would respond. When it was over, Ellie said, "Mommy, I just want you to know that I'm very proud of you."

#### PENNY'S REUNION

The first thing my birth mother said to me when I called her and told her who I was: "Oh, you know? I thought this might happen. Would you like to come visit me?" And then we talked for half an hour, catching up on each other's lives and what we look like! I spent the weekend with her three weeks later in Wyoming, but not before I found myself starting to quote my adoptive mother all the time (!) and not before my adoptive parents had asked me to please call them as soon as I got back and tell them all about it. And when I did get back, I found that they had sent me the money for my plane fare. I'm still getting used to the fact that I finally FOUND my birth mother, but I am definitely feeling closer than ever to my parents in California, because they were really there for me in something that was important to me. I think that is REAL PARENTING. And it wasn't easy for them - or me when I first decided that I wanted to meet my birth parents. I hadn't talked to my father about my adoption for over twenty years and knew that he would be very uncomfortable about the whole thing. We came a long way together... The thing I'm happiest about now is that I decided that searching for my birth parents was an okay thing to do. The thing I'm sorriest about is the extreme indignity in which adoptees are placed when they are not allowed to know who their first parents were.

Penny Callan Partridge and Debbie Steinberg

NEWSLETTER NO. 2

ADOPTION FORUM OF PHILADELPHIA  
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HELLO AGAIN

Last two meetings before summer will be on May 2 and June 6 (Sunday afternoons, 2 - 4). We'll be meeting again at Debbie's (Presidential Apts., C-314, on City Line Ave.). What would you most like to have people understand about adoption? There will be a reporter at the May meeting who would be interested in this. (He won't use names.)

Please note that there are old members whose dues are due again and new people we've corresponded with who haven't yet sent in a check (for \$8). We are going to have to be dropping names from our mailing list if dues are not paid. (This doesn't apply to the people in other organizations that we share our newsletter with.)

LOCAL AND NATIONAL ADOPTION NEWS

There will be an all-day adoption conference in Baltimore on June 12. We heard recently that one of the people involved in organizing this was a psychiatrist and an adoptive father before anyone bothered to tell him that he himself was an adoptee. "Adoption and Beyond II" will be held at The Friends' School, 5114 N. Charles St., Baltimore 21210 from 9:30 - 3:30. One of the seven workshops will center around how teen-age girls and their adoptive parents deal with sexuality, another on identity struggles, and others on the search, unsealing the records, how kids should be told about adoption, etc. The group sponsoring this conference is called The Adoption Connection Exchange (c/o lid. Conference of Social Concern, 22 W. 25th St., Baltimore, Md.). Drop a note to the Adoption Forum if you'd like to car pool from Philadelphia or So. Jersey.

Adoptees in Search (Colorado) has designed a way for groups all around the country to share the birth dates and birth places of people looking for relatives. Unless you make a note to the contrary on our new membership form, you will be part of this national registry.

Joan Sommers has been speaking to groups of prospective adoptive parents in New Jersey, and Penny Callan Partridge joined her at one of these meetings recently...Barbara LeClerq and Penny met with two divisions of the Welfare Department of Philadelphia: Adoption and Services to Unmarried Parents. In both cases, it was at the request of a social worker that we shared our experiences and ideas.

At our March mtg. we heard from an 18 year old who recently located her birth mother. She had been tired of having her adoptive parents say she was "turning out just like (her) mother," so she insisted that they stop this and also that they tell her her birth mother's name. Our mouths were hanging open in admiration when we thought of how scared and muddle-headed ~~WE~~ were at eighteen.

The March issue of Social Work contains an article by Sorosky, Baran and Pannor, who are studying adoptees who have had reunions with birth relatives. In this article, they urge a consideration of open adoption, "in which the birth parents meet the adoptive parents; participate in the separation and placement process, relinquish all legal, moral, and nurturing rights to the child, but retain the right to continuing contact and to knowledge of the child's whereabouts and welfare."

They say, "it is difficult to know why a process as final and irreversible as the traditional relinquishment and adoption was so little questioned by professionals in the field." And they describe traditional Hawaiian adoptions, in which the child "belonged to two fami-

Adoptees Write One to Her Alone  
 An adoptee who has written and called us for over a year from Tennessee recently wrote, "My search is over and successful. My real mother died at the age of 27 when I was 8. My grandmother told me that I could come stay with her anytime. She also said that she prayed I would become curious about my real family and hoped I would call one day. She said she cried and worried about me for 27 years. She had tried to reach me also."

#### News Flash!

An adoptee in New Jersey had her records opened for her this fall by a judge who considered it her legal right to see them. She would be glad to be contacted by adoptees who were adopted in New Jersey. Let us know if you'd like her name and number.

#### New Projects

We are asking everyone who finds a new-old relative to fill out a questionnaire so that we can see what methods of searching have brought results. We think this will be useful to people still searching or just beginning searches.

We are also setting up a file of people looking for birth relatives or children given up (now at least 18). This will include information pertinent to the birth, may help us put people together whose searches are similar, and might even serve to reunite people looking for each other.

We now have a scrapbook that people can peruse at meetings. If you have copies of clippings or articles pertaining to adoption which we could add to our scrapbook, please mail them in or bring them to a meeting.

#### Have you read ...

1. The Search for Anna Fisher, by Florence Fisher (Fawcett paperback)?
2. Twice Born, by Betty Jean Lifton (McGraw Hill)?
3. the articles on adoptees searching in January's Psychology Today?
4. a story about one of our members in the January Pageant?

#### Have you written ...

1. If you've had a reunion, please write to

Adoption Research Project  
 Box 49809  
 Los Angeles, Calif. 90049.

2. If you're an adoptee willing to spend a couple hours with written psychological tests, please write to

Dr. William R. Reynolds  
 Psychology Dept., Queens College  
 City Univ. of New York  
 Flushing, NY

We heard Dr. Reynolds make a preliminary report on his findings at the January AIMA meeting. Interesting, valuable. Please contribute.

#### Watch us!

On Monday night, February 9, at 6:30 p.m. on Channel 12, the Adoption Forum of Philadelphia will be presenting a half hour program that we wrote and produced ourselves. This is through WHiF's Take 12 series in which community groups take over and present what they want the way they want it. Please watch and let us know what you think.

Dabbie Steinberg and  
 Penny Callan Partridge,  
 Coordinators, Adoption Forum























































































































































