



# KANSAS CITY ADOPTOLOGIST

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Meetings: First Saturday of each month, 1:00 P.M., Fifth Floor, Downtown Library. You are welcome.

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The National Congress Convention held in our area was a realistic experience of emotional highs and lows. Appreciation is belatedly extended to all persons who came from far and near to hold workshops, sit on panels and make talks....helping each of us realize we are not alone in our emotions.

There are nearly 240 organizations equal to ours, and since our own inception we have served nearly one thousand persons.

In England, Wales, and Scotland the records are wide open. At the present time here, five states have open records and in thirteen states access to records is "allowed". In Missouri records are closed. "Compelling need" is a prerequisite for any information.

P RESIDENT'S

P ARAGRAPH - - -

As usual, my telephone has been ringing off the wall today. It will continue to do so as long as there are adoptees, birthparents, siblings, grandparents, etc. who have the need to locate a "lost" loved one they feel compelled to find. The only way to accomplish this is to challenge and change the existing laws that bind us to a contract we are not even allowed to read. We should all get behind the American Adoption Congress, let it be known we are in every city, every state, not just one lone adoptee begging for any small bit of information a clerk is willing to hand out. Write to your senators and state representatives. Talk anytime anyone will listen. Educate only one person and he in turn can educate one more.

Birthparent come forward and let it be known that you want to know where your child is. Adoptive parents help your children search for birth families. Let others know. This is the only way we can educate those outside the triad.

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THIS NEWSLETTER

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## FRUSTRATED VICTORY SYNDROME

I found my family in 1978. This precious news was met with opposition from some of the least expected sources. Relatives and friends who have become adoptive parents could not see my reason for searching in the first place. They were immediately on the defensive. I found alienation in some relationships which I had long treasured. Although I still struggle to understand their point of view, it takes real courage to absorb such a development with empathy. If you initiate a search you must be prepared to accept the consequences which may develop. Insulate yourself against disappointment, for there are pitfalls in FINDING.

An adoptee who searches does so to lay to rest the inner turmoil of emotions and questions that long have lain dormant. Of course some others may not understand, but I have found through our adoptive group and the National Conference here of the American Adoption Congress that I certainly have never been alone. Nearly ten percent of America's population is now legally adopted. Thousands have been brought up such as I, with the stigma of a shrouded past, of being different through no fault of their own; with the same problems, feelings, loneliness which I experienced as a child. This very fact that I was not alone was comforting, a real revelation. We are not to be thwarted in our goals in life, in our ambitions, nor were we meant to feel inferior by feeling shortchanged in life. Even spouses have suffered needless concern as they observe our struggle to find our true selves.

Make no mistake. We need to know our background, not only because of medical reasons, but from the moral standpoint of giving stability to our descendants. It is our proper heritage and places a meaningful existence to our being. But be girded for whatever may develop. Meeting rejection may not be the only obstacle in a FIND. Be ready to absorb whatever may befall and you will still be a winner. GOOD LUCK.

Leona Umphrey,  
Editor

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In lieu of a find, these words from the 139th Psalm may be of comfort to those adoptees in search.....

"You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body, and knit them together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! It is amazing to think about. Your workmanship is marvelous - and how well I know it. You were there while I was being formed in utter seclusion! You saw me before I was born and scheduled every day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your Book!"

- The Living Bible

### BOOKS TO READ:

TWICE BORN (Memoirs of an adopted daughter) by Betty Jean Lifton.  
BIRTHMARK (Written by a natural mother) by Lorraine Dusky (Evans Press, 1979).  
THE ADOPTION TRIANGLE by Arthur D. Sorosky, Annette Baran and Reuben Panor.  
ORPHAN TRAIN by James Magnuson and Dorothea G. Petrie.  
I WOULD HAVE SEARCHED FOREVER (By a birth mother reunited) by Sandra Musser

These books are available at most book stores or can be ordered for you, or perhaps you can find them at libraries.

Attendees at the KCAAO/AAC Conference, Kansas City, MO May 29-30, 1981

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### LEGISLATION IN MISSOURI

Our legislative committee is organizing on a large scale for a state-wide lobbying effort in support of open adoption records in Missouri.

Anyone who has searched for his birth family or his social and medical histories knows of the time, struggle and turmoil caused by the process of piecing bits of information together in hopes of discovering significant clues. Our organization feels strongly committed to the goal of open adoption records. We view it as a right and a necessity if we are to be complete individuals. Open adoption records would not mean mandatory disclosure of the information to all adoptees and birthparents. It would simply give us the choice. Our group still provides guidance and support to adults in search of their birth family or histories. However, we feel the time is NOW for us and all interested persons to solidify and unify our efforts in order to work towards more equal and representative adoption laws.

Last year, the Missouri House and Senate both introduced positive legislation on open records. However, both bills died in committee. We are expecting legislation to again be introduced in the January session of 1982. The goal of our group is to have a contact individual in every county in Missouri who is willing to support and work with us on our lobbying effort. The contact person would be responsible for educating their own legislators on three basic issues. These issues are: open adoption records, the motivating factors behind a search for a birth family, and how for many adoptees the social and medical histories are an integral and necessary component in identity information. Hopefully you would be able to form a local core group to help you. Other ways you could be of help is by educating your own circle of friends, family and acquaintances on the issues, or by calling or sending a handwritten note to your legislators, informing them how you stand on an issue.

We need to get the word out. So if you would like to help, know of anyone who would like to help or if you need additional information, please feel free to write to the Legislative Committee, KCAA0, P. O. Box 15225, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.

Carolann Steinberg,  
 Legislative Assistant











