

ADOPTTEES SEARCH HERITAGE
Sandy Johnson, Exec. Dir.

P.O. Box 762
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Council Bluffs, IA 51501
July 31, 1979

Greetings to our newest group members in Lincoln, Nebraska. Lots has happened since our July 10th meeting in Omaha. We continue to grow and learn.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

- August 7 (Tues.) Special Meeting-Omaha-7pm-Wine Cellar (Firehouse Dinner Theater)
This meeting is to prepare and organize our presentations to the Judiciary-Committee at their upcoming hearing in Omaha Aug. 10. Everyone interested in this legislation come prepared by writing a rough draft OR final written letter you would like submitted to the committee for the record. Copies of LR 132 and LB 483 and its proposed amendments will be available. Sen. Newell's assistant came to the Lincoln meeting--I'll give a report on that meeting.
- August 14 (Tues.) Regular Monthly Meeting-Omaha-7pm-Wine Cellar
Caring and Sharing. Bring membership dues.
- August 23 (Thurs.) Monthly Meeting-Lincoln-7pm-Andrews Hall, 2nd Floor-English Dept. Univ. of Nebraska at Lincoln campus

NEBRASKA JUDICIARY COMMITTEE SCHEDULES HEARINGS

LR 132 is a resolution to study the subject of opening adoption records. This resolution came out of the hearing on LB 483 when it became apparent there was much to learn about the subject before a suitable bill could be drawn up. We need to pack these hearings, as many as possible, as the senators will usually only attend those meetings in their home districts. I suggest we car pool to the hearings so we can get more acquainted, save gas, and don't get lost!

MEMBERSHIP FEES NOW DUE

We must get our business in order. As of now there is a \$10 Membership Fee and a \$2.00 Mailing Fee. The mailing fee is separate because there are a number of people who do not attend the meetings but want to know what we're doing. These fees are proposed to be annual unless our expenses cannot be met. I feel that the services of A.S.H. are well worth the money; just getting us together is worth it, otherwise, we would be ALONE. If you cannot pay this amount immediately then work out a plan with me. Gifts and donations by friends who support our efforts are most gratefully received.

PROGRESS REPORT/REUNIONS

John--has mother's name and is getting closer to locating her
Jean--has mother and father's name now
Mardee--met with sister, three brothers located
JoAnn--has grandparents located
Sandy--has father's name now

Please let me know of your progress or reunions--it inspires us all! Good luck. HELP! We need volunteers to assist in searches for out-of-staters.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Yours truly was given front page coverage in the Council Bluffs NONPAREIL on July 15, 1979. I suggest that others offer their "story" to the news media to encourage other adoptees.

Yours truly,

Sandy

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- November 13 - Omaha A.S.H. meets at 7pm at the Elks Club, 1515 S. 75th St.,
(Tues.) Parking lot available. We are having guests from Omaha-C.B.
adoption agencies to tell us their present adoption practices
and how they handle adoptee requests for information.
- December 11 - Omaha A.S.H. meets at 7pm at the home of Lorane Hendriks,
12231 Cuming, Omaha. Please call Lorane prior to the meeting
to confirm that we'll still be meeting there. (402) 493-4202.
- Lincoln A.S.H. - I was unable to get any news of their next meeting. If
you would like to know their schedule you may try calling:
Linnea Johnson (402) 477-4333 or (402) 472-1829 OR
Bonnie Goochey (402) 788-2579

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE - The Nebraska Unicameral's Judiciary Committee met on
October 26th to decide the course of the legislation to open sealed adoption
records. They decided not to decide. What that means is that it is up to
the sponsor of the bill (Sen. Dave Newell-Omaha) to decide if he will sponsor
it alone (rather than a committee sponsored bill). The bill (LB 483) is
now termed Legislative Requisition 2663 and Sen. Newell will be presenting
the bill at the next session, after Jan. 1980. There are a few minor changes:
1. There will be no date given outlawing direct adoptions--it will be con-
sidered the date the bill goes into effect; 2. Birth parents MAY sign a
consent or non-consent form but it will not be mandatory until such time as
the adoptee (as an adult) contacts the agency to request that information.
Then the birthparent must sign one of the forms. 3. The father of an
"illegitimate" child may claim paternity within 5 days of the child's birth
otherwise he cannot claim that right.

Basically the bill must first be voted to add the amendments (25 vote min.).
Then there are 2-3 votes taken at the next stages and if it passes them all
it goes to SELECT FILE. It is voted on again. At any point it can be
shelved - which is basically killing it. Then it goes to the lawyers for
legal correctness. Then...FINAL READING. If it passes that vote then it
goes to the governor for his signature. If he vetoes then it takes 30 votes
to override. It goes into law 90 days later.

WHAT WE NEED TO DO NOW IS WRITE ALL 49 Senators and the Governor
(Charles Thone) and tell them our views about this legislation. When it
is up for a vote we need to rewrite them (I hope to let you know about that
point as I stay in touch with Sen. Newell's aide). THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.
I realize it is a big job and time consuming and unfortunately we are few
BUT WE CAN DO IT!

I would assume that some of you, like me, wonder if this bill is
really what you want. You need to decide that for yourself and act accordingly.
I think it will be interesting to see how the legislators react to this bill.
It may be an indication of whether they would go for a more liberal one later.

ACTIVITIES - Recently I participated again in a Child Saving Institute panel
for prospective adoptive parents. I would welcome sharing that opportunity
with anyone else. It requires about 2 hours time and sharing your story.

ANY ONE KNOW? I saw an ad in our local shopper's bulletin that I'd like
to share with you. If any of you know about this let me know PLEASE:
Kings Adoption Service - does home studies for adoptions through lawyers,
factors etc. That was all it said. I plan to call the number to find out
about this.

HEARING - Well I plan to go to the Parentfinder's Conference this weekend. **570**
I really hope it is a valuable experience. I will be sure to tell you all
about it when I return. Please let me know your thoughts or anything else
you'd like to share. There will be no December newsletter. Have a nice Xmas.

Adoptees Search Heritage

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Phone: (712) 323-5493

Sandy Johnson,
Executive Director

Services for Adoptees in
Search of their Birth Parents

JANUARY 1980 NEWSLETTER

THANK YOU to all of you who responded to my plea for taking responsibility in ASH. I think as more of you are doing the more united and successful we'll be.

FEBRUARY MEETING - OMAHA: FEBRUARY 5th
2704 S. 48th Avenue, Omaha, Nebraska
(corner house) Eppersons: 551-5163
7pm Business Meeting-Distributing res-
ponsibilities

8pm Renee Baumel, adoptive mother, will speak about her feelings about her child's interest in her birth parents. Mrs. Baumel did research on adoptive parents for Betty Jean Lifton's book LOST & FOUND.

ONE A.S.H. MEMBER, an adoptee, has found his birth mother a few days ago after a year's search.

Another adoptee who has kept in touch with me has met her mother this past Christmas.

WE ARE REACHING OUR GOALS! CONGRATULATIONS!

**As many of you who have experienced it after finding a relative you are very highly sensitized. Try to prepare yourself and your family for a period where you may need to be alone and not answering questions about it. You emotions are overloaded and you need time to adjust.

MANY OF US ARE ANGRY! We have a right to be. We need to be able to identify the source of the anger so those innocent people we meet do not take personal offense. We might say: "I am angry that I cannot have the right to my own birth information!" "I am not angry at you personally." "I am angry at the system by which I am kept from knowing who I am" I think this is good advice, especially when dealing with legislators. They may feel our anger and think it is directed at them.

In all of us there is a hunger marrow deep, to know our heritage. To know who we are--and where we have come from.

Without this enriching knowledge there is a hollow yearning.

No matter what our attainments in life, there is the most disquieting.....loneliness- Alex Haley

"You Shall Know The Truth And The Truth Shall Set You Free" John 8:32

THANK YOU to Nina MacKenzie for being on the KETV interview, Omaha, on Jan. 24th. I thought it went quite well.

Sandy Johnson spoke at the Unitarian Church discussion group on January 30th. The group was very sympathetic.

THANKS YOU for volunteering to be on Child Saving Institutes panel for prospective adoptive parents discussion groups. We had one member and one non-member volunteer. The more we tell our stories the more we spread the word.

MIKE McKNIGHT, Channel 6 reporter, would like to do an interview with an adoptee searching. It would be shown after the next vote of the legislature is completed in conjunction with his story about that. He would like to accompany the person to various places he/she might go to search. He would like local (LINCOLN) people-- CALL HIM at 474-2574 (Lincoln number). COME ONE!--WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Parent Finder's Conference: Two of us went to Toronto to this fantastic conference. Some of the workshop themes were:

- Search and the role of the Intermediary
- Adoption and the Law
- Psychological and Sociological Effects of Adoption and Fostering
- Justification for Disclosure of Sealed Records
- Reunion! What Next?

They had a Search Workshop that showed all kinds of sources in Canada for searching. Among the speakers was David Kirk, author of SHARED FATE, a book on adoption research. He is an adoptive father. His new book, SHARED FATE REVISITED will be coming out soon. It looks to be very good- about how adoptees are treated differently by their family and society from nonadoptees. Dr. Kirk expressed his strong feeling that we (adoptees and birth mothers etc.) stop saying what we think others should have or should be doing FOR us and START DOING IT FOR OURSELVES.

"After growing up thinking I was Swedish and occasionally making Archie Bunker type jokes about my wife's Irish heritage, I was a little shocked to find I was 50% Irish. For the first time in my life I dressed in all green on St. Pat's Day - I feel whole, legal, a complete citizen with all rights . . . How do I feel? I feel great. But I do feel sadness for those who don't have the resources at their disposal that I had. I want to help them."

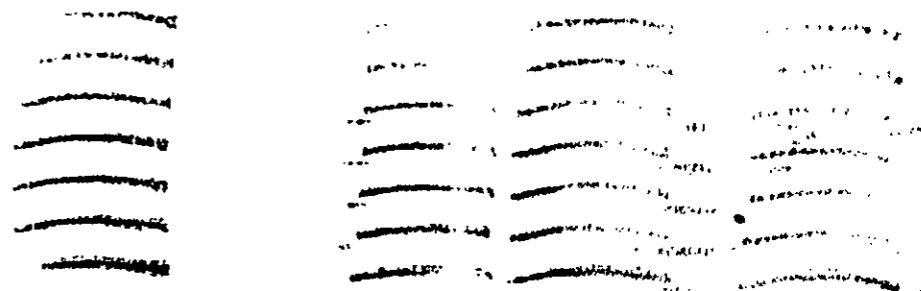
Bill N.
Kearney, Nebraska

"I have the desire to search for my birth parents, because without the information about my background, my life isn't complete . . . So far, I haven't any names or towns, but I'm hoping to find out more this summer. I have a grandfather who was a barber and an aunt who was a beautician. I'm hoping to obtain a list of licences for each in Lincoln, in order to compare last names. Good luck to everyone."

Karen Engle
Sterling, Michigan

"I am presently engaged in a search dating to 1926 . . . Place of residence of mother was in a village no longer in existence and presently have exhausted all leads. Need to come up with ideas for pursuing this search . . ."

M. Brower
Fullerton, Nebraska



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