



November 1981

ROOTS AND WINGS
P. O. 32
Tucker, Georgia 30083
(404) 934-9326

This issue of *TAKE FLIGHT* is the first newsletter of our new search and support group, ROOTS AND WINGS, and is being mailed to independent search groups throughout the United States to introduce ourselves. We would like you to put us on your mailing list for your newsletter and we, in turn, will mail you ours. We will publish *TAKE FLIGHT* monthly, providing the editor stays on the ball!

We started out as an ALMA-affiliated search group in March this year, with Lyn Greiner as our coordinator. On Saturday, September 26, we "gave birth to" ROOTS AND WINGS, breaking away from our ALMA affiliation and becoming an independent search group. Our membership is open to adoptees (18 years and older), birth mothers whose children are 18 years and older, and adoptive parents.

Our name is taken from a well-known saying: *There are two things of lasting quality which we can bequeath our children--one is roots and the other wings.* We encourage our adoptee members to search for their roots and take flight (soar to new heights) when they find their wings.

We hope you will enjoy our newsletter and will send any contributions for it (current legislation, thoughts, articles, poetry) to the address shown above.

Anne M.
Writer-Editor

Money makes the world go around,
The world go around,
The world go around...

And money will get ROOTS AND WINGS
Off the ground.

Money is not a popular subject these days, since there isn't much of it to go around any more! But it's a subject that needs to be brought up in this very first newsletter. Membership forms were given out at our September 26 meeting; annual dues are \$25. We believe it is fair that members attend one meeting free to find out for themselves what our group is about and decide whether or not they wish to join. After that, we expect those who wish to continue to come to meetings to fill out a membership form and support the group by paying their dues and participating as fully as they can during the meetings. Our expenses include: fees to become a nonprofit, incorporated group; stationery; envelopes; printing costs for the newsletter; and postage (which we all know is out of sight. Multiply the 20-cent rate in November times a mailing of an anticipated 200 = \$40 MONTHLY, just for postage). If you haven't mailed your membership form and check yet, please take a moment to do so now, or bring it to the next meeting TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 7:30 PM, in the Justice of the Peace Chambers in Tucker.

IN BRIEF...

With the Stone Mountain Scottish Festival and Highland Games coming on October 17 and 18, my thoughts are turned toward the wonderment I first felt (and still do) when I was able to share in the celebration of my Scotch heritage.

Our heritage (Webster's defines it as "something possessed as a result of one's natural situation or birth: birthright") belongs to us and is as richly diverse as we are. To be denied this is to be denied our very existence.

The blaze of clan banners and the shrill of bagpipes belong to me, BY RIGHT, as a McIntosh. When I place the McIntosh sash around me, I am doing what generations of my people did before me--it is a tie to my past. I can still appreciate and enjoy the cultural heritage of my adoptive family (I'd kill for a Czechoslovakian klatche!!), but there is a difference. The circumstances of my birth do not erase my nationality.

For some, this is not as important as other things such as medical records, personal information, etc. However, what IS important is your right to have whatever information you require to satisfy you as a human being. That's what ROOTS AND WINGS is all about. We are here to help you reach your goal--to give encouragement and support along the way and to be there when you need us (before, during, and after!).

Being an adoptee who has "found" has had many advantages and has given me things I would have otherwise been denied -- how else could a Scotch/Irish, Cherokee/Creek Indian end up with first cousins who are Czechoslovakian, Italian, Greek, Polish, and French!!!

HAPPY FLYING!!

Lyn Greiner
President

While I sit and listen to each of you pour out your story,
I remember the first time I told mine.

As you shed your tears of frustration, my eyes fill;
I feel your pain as well.

As you find another door, I wait with you to open it, and
I rejoice again and again when the light shines through,
knowing it will illuminate the way for both of us.

AN ADOPTEE

Our meetings are held on the last Tuesday of each month. Mark your calendar now for the coming months. Next meeting is Tuesday, October 27, 7:30 PM, in the Justice of the Peace Chambers, rear of the Cofer Building, Main Street, Tucker. Call Lyn if you need directions, 934-9326. C U there!

HELLO OUT THERE!! We need to hear from you if you want to stay on our mailing list. A postcard or phone call will do. We don't want to waste your time or ours. If you are not interested in receiving the newsletter please take a moment to let us know.

LOVING ENOUGH TO LET GO ...

This section of the newsletter is devoted to adoptive parents, and I would hope that the adoptees in our group will share it with their parents.

The following letter was written by Martha E. Houck, an adoptive mother in New Jersey, and published as part of an ALMA newsletter in support of a New Jersey Assembly Bill. I called Mrs. Houck and asked her permission to quote several paragraphs in TAKE FLIGHT. Mrs. Houck gladly gave her permission and offered to send also a copy of an article she wrote a year ago on the subject of adoptive parents and which was printed in the New York Times. I will feature that article next month. Mrs. Houck asked me to stress two things: that birth mothers should not seek to find their children until they are 18 years old, and that adoptees should not begin their search until they are 18 years old.

It has been only the past few years that Mrs. Houck has realized that adoptees are fearful of telling their adoptive parents they wish to search for their birth (or natural) parents and that not all adoptive parents are supportive of their children's search for their identity. She spends a good deal of her time talking to groups and trying to educate them about this very real, very deep-rooted need. She suggests that community education courses be given at night school for adoptive parents so they can react to and act upon their children's needs. She regrets that when her children were teenagers and sending out "signals," she was too inexperienced to respond to them and know how to deal with them. She also suggests that adoptees be open with their parents and discuss their need to search. They may be more receptive and loving than you think.

And now her letter...

Dear Adoptive Parents:

As an adoptive mother of three children, now adults, I have come to understand the very real need, usually not articulated, to know their biological history. Of course they know and love the grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins they have grown up with. But to pretend there is nothing more to their extended family is to play games. Two of the seemingly casual remarks made by our children as teenagers are forever etched on my heart: "I consider I had no life until I was 9 months old" and "I could be any kind of a mongrel."

Our daughter, as an adult, has searched and, after many, many months of expenditure of energy, money and time, has found her birth mother. When my husband needed his birth certificate some years ago, and it was learned that his record in the small rural area was not complete, the County Clerk was most helpful in checking all resources and advising him as to the proper procedure.

Is it just that one citizen is denied what is so readily available to another? ...

Some of you may feel your children are disloyal in wanting to know their biological heritage. They are not showing a lessening of love for you-- only a yearning to fill a void. Do you love one child less, because you have another child? No. What do we want for those we dearly love? Certainly we do not put strings on love. We want for them that which will make them complete persons.

Do you think your child is running a risk to search? Of course there is a risk. We were willing to risk when we chose to adopt. Our children also have the right of choice. Indeed, to live is to risk; to live fully is to admit the possibility of failure.

But with all the ups and downs, hasn't it been worth it? I can't imagine my life without our children and grandchildren.

PLEASE support, actively, this [New Jersey Assembly] bill. It is a very positive way of telling your children how much you love and support THEM.

May God be with you and your children.

Martha E. Houck
Bedminster, NJ 07921

Editor's note: It is the policy of ROOTS AND WINGS not to help adoptees search until after they have reached 18 years of age, and not to assist birth mothers search for children who are younger than 18 years of age.

"Who's My Real Mother" by Grace Thompson appeared in GUIDEPOSTS, August 1981. If written permission from GUIDEPOSTS arrives (to reprint the article and include it as part of this newsletter) in time, it will be attached to this issue. If not, we'll include it next time.

EDUCATION IS THE KEY ... I can't say enough about reading available material on adoption, especially the books that probe in depth the three sides of the adoption triangle: The adoptive parents, The adoptees, and The birth mothers. These books open your eyes to the other sides of the triangle. Most importantly, they let you know that you are not alone in your feelings. We all have the gut that hurts, the emotional stress, the uncertainties, the fears, the elations, the depressions, the feeling of aloneness at times. We are more alike, than unlike! At the same time, some of these books teach you that the other sides of the triangle are experiencing the same feelings, perhaps not for the same reasons you are--but to understand and appreciate their feelings and their reasons is a BIG step in the right direction and toward open communication with each other. These are the most current:

THE ADOPTION TRIANGLE - Arthur Sorosky, Annette Baran, Reuben Pannor (Anchor Books)
LOST AND FOUND - Betty Jean Lifton (Bantam Books)
TWICE BORN (memoirs of an adopted daughter) - Betty Jean Lifton
IN SEARCH OF A STRANGER (an adoptee in search, novel style) - Warren E. Siegmund
THE ADOPTION SEARCHBOOK - Mary Jo Rillera - \$11 (Tri-Adoption Library,
7511 Westminster, Westminster, California 92583)

ROOTS AND WINGS is starting a library of books on adoption so that members may borrow books at meetings and return them the following month. Donations are welcome! On hand now are two copies of THE ADOPTION TRIANGLE and LOST AND FOUND.

SEARCH BOOK Cathy Bronson, our search assistant, is presently compiling a Search Book that will be available to our members, free of charge. It is a huge undertaking, and we thank Cathy for her gift of time and love in compiling this valuable aid.