



P A R E N T F I N D E R S N E W S L E T T E R

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Newsletter

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Elections were held at the May 10th Vancouver Meeting, and an eager slate of new executives were unanimously voted in. Our sincere appreciation to Joan for her years of hard work and our best wishes to the new executive.

Joan wishes to express her gratitude to the past executive for their dedication and good work.

Reunions - Since the last Newsletter there have been over sixty reunions!

Two briefs were submitted to the Provincial Government - one on behalf of the adoptees and the other on behalf of Birth Parents. Both dealt with the need for an adoption registry among other matters of concern. In addition to the formal submission of the Briefs, individual P.F. members wrote personal letters enclosing copies of the Brief to various MLA's. Response from MLA's has, for the most part, been receptive, with a few exceptions.

PROVINCIAL NEWS

British Columbia

Policy under review.

AL NEWS

MEETINGS

The meetings are held regularly every second Tuesday in each month. The time and location is published in the SUN NEWSPAPERS COMING EVENTS COLUMN THE SATURDAY PRIOR TO THE MEETING.

There will not be any meetings in July and August.

Please notify us of any change of address in order to ensure the delivery of your newsletter.

The following are excerpts of replies from MLA's to the Adoptees Briefs...

.... when a person has reached the age of majority he or she should have at their will access to their own heritage. I know that this is very much feared by some, but should not present major problems in our society. Dennis Cocke, MLA, New West.

.... I am in sympathy with the ideas expressed therein, and I will do whatever I can to support your group in the legislature. Don Lockstead, MLA.

.... I agree that the proposals of the brief are sensible and long overdue.
Lorne Nicolson, MLA, Nelson, Creston.

.... Your arguments are persuasive and my mind is open on this subject.
David A. Stupich, MLA, Nanaimo.

.... there is another side to this story and that we receive an equal number of appeals from parents who have given up their children or from adopting parents suggesting that we not change our policy in this regard. W.VanderZalm, Minister of Human Resources.

In another letter Mr. VanderZalm said that the matter was being looked into by all provinces of Canada. "I am open to discussion on the matter but at the present do not feel that a policy change in this regard is appropriate."

.... if a natural parent and a foster child independently and purposefully notify a central registry that they want to meet one another, that should be permitted. Who has the right to object to such a system? I certainly don't. Charles Barber, Victoria.

.... I took this up with the Government some time ago and was given several reasons why there has been no change. The number one reason seemed to be protecting the young girl that let her baby be adopted. Cyril M. Shelford, Skeena.

... I have no objection to adopted persons being able, through law, to find out who their real parents are. Graham R. Lea, Prince Rupert.

FORMAL RESPONSES - NO COMMITMENT

- Alex V. Fraser - Minister of Highways & Public Works
- Sam Bawlf - MLA, Minister of Recreation & Conservation
- Don Phillips - Minister of Economic Development
- W.S. King - MLA, Revelstoke, Slocan
- Dave Barrett - MLA, Vancouver East
- Harvey W. Schroeder - MLA, Chilliwack
- R.H. McClellan - Minister of Health
- T.M. Waterland - Minister of Forests

From the Desk of JOAN VANSTONE

1977 was a very good year for Parent Finders across Canada. The new groups in London, Ontario, Moncton, N.B. and New York, got into full swing. The membership is now over 5,000 nation-wide and there were 277 reunions.

Cracks are appearing in the government opposition to change and all provinces are reviewing policy re disclosure of information to adult adoptees. The Child Welfare League study has shown 87% of the people participating in a reunion experience as finding it positive and rewarding to know "who they are." The Children's Legislation in Britain received a large response and again 87% of the adoptees who received birth information were pleased and relieved to have their questions answered.

We feel certain that by 1978 at least one province in Canada, probably Saskatchewan, will have enacted legislative change. Please make it your duty to write to your local M. L. A. (name and address available from your local library) and to Mr. Wm. Vander Zalm, Minister of Human Resources, Parliament Buildings, Victoria, and state your demand for change very clearly. Constant pressure will turn the tide.

JOAN VANSTONE

CAPSULES from P.F. MONTHLY MEETINGS

Nov./77: Persons born or searching for relatives in the U.S. might use the Soundex Register in Nevada. It lists 22 adoptee-birth parent organizations. Contact JOAN VANSTONE for further info. re Soundex. A negative newspaper article, "Let sleeping Relatives Lie", Vanc. Sun., Oct. 27/77, brought in a lot of positive phone calls from Birth Mothers. GARY COWLEY, NORMA ROBINSON, participated in SANDY PRICE'S 2-hour talk show on CJOR. Very favorable public response. Appreciation was extended to JUNE YOUNG, Delta Co-ordinator, upon leaving full-time service to take employment.

Dec./77: Report that Alberta is presenting private member's bill regarding sealed adoption records and reunion registry for Alberta. Jan./78: Letter from WM VANDER ZALM to J. VANSTONE in reply to her letter - said new proposals being developed by senior staff in B. C. Govt. to eventually replace existing child welfare statutes. JOAN reported that the Child Welfare League of America (the guiding light of N. A. Social Workers) recommends revision of standards for adoption services - favours disclosure to adult adoptees with consent of natural parents of identifying information. Guest ISOBEL MCLEAN, (April's speaker) member of Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, which offers tremendous genealogical library services, advised library at 5280, Kincaid St., Burnaby, is open daily 10 to 3, evenings Tue. through Fri. Feb. 78 GARY COWLEY, guest speaker, was very helpful to the "Still searching." Newsletter received from Adoptive Parents Group in B. C., interested in P.F. opinions.

REFLECTIONS from SONIA BROOK

"Grant us the serenity of mind to accept that which cannot be changed, the courage to change that which can be changed, and the wisdom to tell one from the other."

(Author Unknown)

That serenity is the peace of understanding. It is the recognition of the immutability of tides and seasons within nature as within each of us. Serenity is not blind. It knows and grows. If it did not, we would inevitably saunter dreamily-nowhere.

The serenity of knowing and growing is the cornerstone of courage. Courage is not freedom from fear. Courage grows in the press of need to change and right the wrongs outside ourselves, starting within ourselves.

(Reflections, cont. p. 4)

