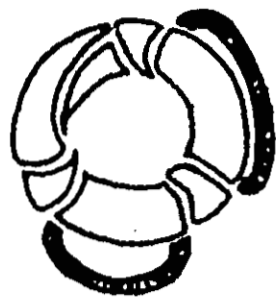


PITTSBURGH  
ADOPTION LIFELINE

P.A.L.  
P.O. Box 52  
Gibsonia, Pa. 15044



February 1982  
Co-founders  
Barbara Santa-Jean Vincent  
Co-ordinator Jean Vincent  
443-3370

Meetings

The monthly meetings are held in the downstairs meeting room of the Parkvale Savings Bank, the 2nd. Sunday of every month. Time: 1:30 P.M. Check list below for any changes.

If you are coming to the meeting on the turnpike, get off at Exit # 7, Irwin. Go West on Rt. 30 almost 4 miles to the Norwin Shopping Center. Turn left at the traffic light at the far end of center. The bank is on the right.

Coming from Pittsburgh on Rt. 30, go East until you get to the Norwin Center and turn right immediately before it.

Please feel free to bring someone for moral support. Bring information useful during our workshop.

March 14th

April 25th Please note! This is the 4th. Sunday

May No meeting! Mother's Day

June 13th

July 11th

August 8th

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Sorry the Newsletter is so late but I do have good reason. Many of you know that my husband had open heart surgery in January. He is progressing rapidly but is house bound and on a special diet etc.. Needless to say I am kept very busy.

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First on the agenda: Our heartfelt thanks go to each one of you that responded to our plea for financial help. About 50 people sent contributions of \$25, \$20, \$10 and \$5 and one contribution of \$50. (Thank you Candace) We had an enormous phone bill 11-21-81 to 12-21-81 of \$90. Will explain later. After all bills are paid including newsletter, we have a balance on hand of \$180.00. With new members that should hold us. Thank you very much!!! We are always in need of contributions so keep us in mind.

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In November I received a phone call from Dr. Ellen Frank. She wanted to interview an adoptee that had searched, found and had a relationship with birth family, plus pictures. My story filled the bill. Dr. Frank and I were on the A.M. Pittsburgh Show on Nov. 24th and Ch. 4 evening news on Nov. 25th. (National Adoption Week.) So far we have received 67 calls from A.M. Pittsburgh alone. By the time my husband and I got home the message

box was full. (30 calls) I had to return the calls so that is why our phone bill was so high.

Next, we had a call from Ch. 2 Pittsburgh for a program on Dec. 7th. Little did I know the three other people would be: Judge Paul Zavarella, Orphan Court-Professor Cyril C. Means, Jr., New York Law School-works with Alma in New York and last but not least, William Pierce, President of National Committee for Adoption. Watch for this name as he can do more harm to the open records movement than anyone I know. He gets a very large salary to fight same.

After the show was over, they asked us to tape a segment of Weekend Magazine with Tom Garrity for Dec. 13th. I really learned a great deal and was happy for the opportunity to speak out!

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Anyone that ever filled out an International-Soundex-Reunion-Registry form and sent it to Nevada please note...If you complete your search, please notify them to pull your card. Send to...Emmi May Vilardi-P.O. Box 2312-Carson City, Nevada 89701. We are lucky to have a Reunion File but they don't need obsolete information.

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We have had several great meetings lately...Freezing cold and all. Last month we had sixteen people but would like even more. A number of you have completed your searches and have not returned to share with us. I hope with spring just around the corner you will come back as your stories are very important. Also many of you joined but we have not heard from you again. Please don't sit back and wait to hear from us. We have 400 people on the mailing list so you do the calling or come on out. If I promised to help you but have not done so, please call or write and refresh my memory. I hope you understand that I have been on a Merry-Go-Round since November.

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Two speaking engagements coming up. The first one: The Lutheran Society, Westmoreland County, home study group. The second one is a foster parent's program. Many are adopting a child they have had for a long time.

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I received a lovely poem written especially for me from a new friend. She is not in the adoption triangle. Anyone that wishes to use it in a newsletter may do so but please tell where you got it.

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Decide now to attend our March, April or June meeting and mark your calendar!!! You won't be sorry.. Please bring a folding chair to use that day as we only have 16.

The magic number is 251 Who wants to make it 252?

Next newsletter in June!

See you soon

*Jeon*

Wondering And Wondering  
 For Jean Vincent  
 From Stephanie

Wondering from whence I came  
 Wondering from whom — their names.  
 The unsolved puzzle, the missing links.  
 "Does anyone care?" I often think.

Wondering why this turn of events.  
 Wondering why to your care I was sent.  
 I mean not to be cruel, please understand.  
 I need, can't you see, to know all that I am.

Wondering why you feel challenged and shamed  
 Wondering why my birthrights unclaimed.  
 I love you no less, although wanting wants mine.  
 I pray you will realize, I know it takes time.

Wondering, I set about, to journey far and wide  
 Wondering what I would find, what facts I'd been  
 denied.  
 For until now, the missing links would never let  
 me be.  
 Until I found out all I could, I never would  
 be free.

Standing this lonely road filled with pain and strife  
Wondering if I would hurt the loved ones in my life.  
But the neverending questions deep within my soul  
My birthright of my heritage must be found —  
to make me whole.

Standing and wondering beneath clouds of doubt and fear.  
My journey ended, the darkness passed  
I hope the world can hear!  
That it's not a selfish journey, adopted  
children travel.

Please show no scorn for their right to know  
Their heritage to unravel.

Surrounded by understanding only  
strengthens their lonely sorrow  
And if attitudes change and support is  
at hand —  
He can give but a brighter tomorrow.

# Adoption Papers: Do Birth Parents Deserve Privacy?

By JOHN TAYLOR  
Press Harrisburg Correspondent

HARRISBURG — This is just a hypothetical case, but ...

Jennifer was 15, pregnant and unmarried.

When the baby arrived, she immediately placed it up for adoption. Then she began putting her life back together.

Eventually, she married and bore three more children. She never told her husband about the child she gave up.

Twenty years later, there's a knock at the door. When Jennifer answers it, a young man smiles at her and says, "Hi, Mom. I'm your son, Michael."

Jennifer's story is fictitious, but it could occur in real life in Pennsylvania, where adopted children, upon reaching adulthood, may obtain copies of their original birth certificates.

An adopted person's original birth certificate carries the name of his or her natural mother and, very often, the natural father.

Most states conceal the identities of natural parents who place their infants for adoption. Pennsylvania, Alabama and Kansas are the exceptions.

Pennsylvania has allowed adoptees access to their original birth records since 1978, when an old law covering those birth records was reinterpreted by the attorney general's office.

State Rep. Stephen F. Freind, R-Delaware County, would like to end the practice.

"I believe that an adopted person should be able to obtain the identity of his natural parents only if those natural parents agree," Freind said.

In the past two legislative sessions, Freind has introduced bills calling for specific procedures an adopted child would have to follow in order to locate his natural parents.

The child would apply to the state Division of Vital Records in New Castle, contact the agency that handled his adoption or petition a court to make the search.

But in all instances, the natural parent or parents, assuming they could be found, would be asked whether they wished to be identified.

stances, the mere name of a natural parent is not enough to track down that person 18 years or more since the adoption.

But new regulations recently put into effect permit natural parents to file their current addresses with the state, indicating their willingness to be located.

The division will make no attempt to contact an adoptee, but if the adoptee should inquire about the names of his natural parents, the address also will be supplied.

Freind said he has no problem with the new regulations because they involve mutual consent.

But he gave two reasons why he believes the parents' names should be shielded:

"First of all," he said, "what happens to that family (in the Jennifer case) when Junior walks in? It could be absolutely devastating.

"My second concern is that many women who might otherwise bear a child and place it for adoption might choose abortion if they believed the child would re-enter their lives."

Freind's first bill was approved by the House, 169-22, during the 1979-80 legislative session, but died in the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee.

A member of that committee, Sen. Philip Price Jr., R-Philadelphia, said the bill was opposed by adopted persons who felt they had the right to know the names of their natural parents.

"We heard testimony from groups who give assistance to adoptees," Price said. "They told us that 80 to 90 percent of the reunions worked out fine if handled with sensitivity."

Price subsequently introduced a bill that would strengthen and even expand the attorney general's ruling by writing it into law. The bill is pending in the Senate.

But Freind also has re-introduced his bill this session, with some alterations, and although it has gone nowhere in nearly a year, he said he would push for House passage.

"There are conflicting interests between the adopted person's desire to know the identity of his natural parents and the parents' right to privacy," Freind said. "My bill seeks to resolve the conflict."

*(5)*  
This bill is known as House Bill # 548 and was introduced by Rep. Stephen F. Freind. It just passed in the Judiciary Committee and will go out on the floor for a full vote. If you are in favor of the adoptee getting his birth certificate, please vote NO on this bill. Write your representatives now! It will pass but wait until it goes to a Senate committee before writing them.

*Please let me know if you are willing to do this.....*

*If you need a list of the House and Senate please send a stamped self-addressed envelope to P.O. Box 52, Gibsonia, Pa. 15044 and you will receive a complete list.*

*Write one letter and make copies to send to as many as you will. It worked in 1980 and it can work again!!!*

*This article started with a hypothetical case. It is fiction...Not fact!!!*

If both natural parents stated their unwillingness to be identified, no information would be provided. If one parent consented, only the name and address of the consenting parent would be provided.

"If both natural parents were dead," Freind said, "their identity would not be revealed but the adopted person would be advised that his natural parents were deceased."

Charles L. Hardester, state director of vital records in New Castle, said about 2,900 adopted persons have obtained copies of their birth certificates since the 1978 ruling.

"At first, there were only about three a week," Hardester said, "but now it has increased to about 25 requests a week."

Hardester noted that in most in-

# House Adopts Bill Clarifying Custody

Pittsburgh Press, Tues., Feb. 2, 1982

**HARRISBURG (UPI)** — Last year, a bitter legal battle between natural and adoptive parents over custody of a young child named Rachael Marie provoked a storm of controversy over the state's adoption laws.

The House yesterday approved a bill designed to prevent such disputes by speeding the adoption process and paving the way for adoptive parents to gain custody of a child while not compromising the rights of biological parents.

Without debate, the House voted, 192-0 to send the bill, sponsored by Rep. Louis Hagarty, R-Montgomery, to the Senate for consideration.

"This is an attempt to set up a viable procedure for getting an adoption finalized faster," said Mrs. Hagarty.

"It's to provide safeguards to adoptive parents so as not to end up in the confusing situation the Yack case did."

The so-called "Yack case" involved a lengthy legal battle between the adoptive parents of infant Rachael Marie and the child's natural parents, an unmarried couple from Bethlehem, Lehigh County.

The battle ended last year when the Superior Court ordered the Bucks County couple who adopted Rachael Marie to return her to the natural parents.

The natural parents had given the child

up for adoption, but changed their minds and began legal efforts to get her back.

Most of the controversy centered on provisions of state law which required legal action by natural parents to formally and voluntarily give up their rights to the child.

In many cases, however, the natural parents, often young, unmarried mothers, were reluctant to appear in court because of embarrassment or family pressures.

Because current law does not enable adoptive parents to request such a court hearing, no hearing would be held, leaving adoptive parents without a final custody order.

Adoptive parents then were forced to wait six months before asking the court to terminate the natural parents' rights involuntarily.

During that six-month period, however, natural parents could change their minds and seek to regain their child because there was no final custody order.

Mrs. Hagarty said her bill would allow adoptive parents to request a court hearing to terminate the natural parents' rights 43 days after receiving the child.

It also provides that natural and adoptive parents are fully informed of their rights before a final custody order is granted.

And it requires hospitals and maternity centers to provide a list of counselors to mothers considering giving up their child.

(6)

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**ATTENTION: BIRTH PARENTS!**

## New state service will help adoptees find natural parents

Adoptees wishing to find a birthparent sometimes find it difficult because few of them still have the same name and address they had when they gave the child up for adoption.

Adopted persons in Pennsylvania can receive their original birth certificates from the Department of Health's Division of Vital Statistics.

Now, a new administrative procedure has been designed in which birthparents can write a letter to the Division of Vital Statistics, Box 1528, New Castle, Pa. 16103, stating the

name, birth date and birth place of the child they gave up.

They can specify that if that child, when 18 or older, wishes to know their identity, the agency can give them the birthparents' names and addresses.

Any questions about this new procedure can be directed to the Division of Vital Statistics at the above address or by phoning 656-3100.

*Speaking out on the House Bill Clarifying Custody. At this time, adoptive parents must wait six months to start the adoption proceedings. That is really too long but now this bill passed in the House, 192-0. It will now go to the Senate.*

*As far as I can see this is going from one extreme to another. Why not cut the time in half, giving the birthparent the chance to get on her feet and make a decision she can live with.*

*I feel that 43 days is just not long enough! If you feel the same way please write to any or all of our Senators. If this passes in the Senate, the next step, our Governor. After that we will have to live with it.*

*You may feel that I lean too far in one direction. That is not the case. It is because there are three sides to this triangle and all feelings are important!*