

# ALMA

ADOPTEE'S LIBERTY MOVEMENT ASSOCIATION  
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The ALMA Searchlight  
Autumn 1984

## 56-Year separation Over!



"...our bond will never fray nor break...it will stretch to the outermost edge of eternity and back again...spanning space and years..."

July, 1928 "We are destitute," said the young woman to the seven-week old infant. 'I can't get a job with you in my arms. I have no place to leave you, not even for a fraction of an hour. I am hungry. Before long you will be too. If I have no nourishment, neither will you. We can do one of two things. I can tie us together with one of your few diapers and jump out the window of a tall building...that would end our worries. Or, I can take you to a courthouse and give you up for adoption. All right, don't scowl. My choice is the first, but I can't do that to you. In the short time you have been here, I've learned a love I never knew before...a love that ties us together forever. We may never see each other again, but our bond will never fray, nor break. It will stretch to the outermost edge of eternity and back again, spanning space and years...retaining all its luster...Well, here we are, my dear love...at the door of the Juvenile Court. In a few moments, after my signature on a document, you will be carried out of my sight. For the first time in my life, I faint. You are gone.'

"I went on living, although much of the time I did not know why. With those depression years came illnesses, at least partially brought on by my lack of desire to live. When I couldn't endure it any more - a phone call to the 'court guardian' would bring comforting news. She had always 'just seen him recently.' He was 'well and the most intelligent child for miles around.' I drank in her words as from an oasis. On a few occasions she gave me pictures of him - one of them, a little blond kid in a toy auto, no smile..."

"The years passed, four of them in a TB sanitarium...a cure, and a marriage. Then World War II, and on July 11, 1943, my husband gave his life. Once again, I kept mine...and wondered why..."

October, 1983 "More than half-a-century had passed. I had married again. I had never forgotten my child. Was he still alive? Where? Many times I had tried to locate him - always to meet with the same rebuff... 'The records are sealed. They will never be opened...just forget it.' Forget the feeling that a part of my own body was missing?"

"More than ever I seemed pushed to locate my son. I told my husband, whose love and consideration for me increased a hundredfold. He has been supportive in every way. I wrote a letter to a newspaper asking for help. They referred me to the Florida Chapter of ALMA, and I registered."

"Early one Sunday morning the telephone rang. The pleasant male voice informed me that my son had been registered with ALMA for three years...that we were a 'MATCH'! Blessed registry!"

"As we planned the reunion I learned that I had four grandchildren and a granddaughter-in-law, too! We exchanged pictures. One of the pictures he sent me was of 'a little blond kid in a toy auto, no smile.'"

"My husband I went to meet them at the airport. We stopped at the escalator, looked up, and there he was on the top step. We knew each other immediately. When they reached the bottom, he held me, looked at my husband and said...'This is the first time I ever saw my own face walking toward me.'"

"For the second time in my life, I fainted. My son had returned - and this time, I was in his arms."

Mary E. Perlmutter, Florida 5/15/84

"One of my earliest memories is of sitting on my adoptive father's lap and wondering at his beard. My adoptive parents were wonderful people, and told me at a very early age that I was adopted. Sometime before I came into the picture, my parents adopted a little girl who had been abused as an infant. She was a year older than I and had a dark complexion, black hair and black eyes. Quite a contrast to the blond, blue-eyed baby who became her brother. When I was four, my adoptive father died. Our aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents surrounded my mother, sister and I with their love. Then another tragedy struck. At age nine, my sister died of spinal meningitis. It was a struggle for my mother to accept this blow. As a result, she and I became very close and have remained so to this day."

"I had always wondered who my real parents were...Were they rich or poor? What were they really like? Who did I look like? Were they musical, like me? Did I have brothers and sisters? But not until my own children were born did I become interested enough to begin to search...and I found that adoption records are sealed. I was unable to learn anything. Then, one day, I heard about ALMA."

"On Sunday afternoon, January 15, 1984, Karl Zimmer, ALMA's Registrar, phoned to tell me that my mother had registered with ALMA searching for me. An exchange of letters, and most importantly, a packet of photographs, made it clear that my search was indeed over. One photo she sent was of myself - a little blond kid in a toy auto..."

"Our reunion in Florida revealed a life I never knew existed - relatives and friends...an added dimension to my life and the lives of my four children - who now have three grandmothers!"

"I am happy to be reunited with the mother who gave me life, and to bring happiness and a sense of fulfillment to one who made a sacrifice in giving up a part of herself so many years ago."

## ADOPTIVE PARENTS

### and "The Search"

"Trust in your love for your adoptive parents, and in theirs for you. Tell them what is truly in your heart and ask for their support in your search. Remember, where real love exists, there will be no resentment - and there should be no guilt. There is room in the human heart for many loved people." Florence Fisher

"THERE'S ROOM IN THE HUMAN HEART FOR MANY LOVED PEOPLE"...CAROLYN OFFICER, smiles happily with adoptive parents, RUBY & BILL OFFICER and natural Mom, LOIS SHERMAN on reunion day!



"Dear ALMA... Although I registered with ALMA in Nov. '81, I didn't attend my first meeting until Jan. '82. I found my natural mother in March. Please print my story, so that other adoptees not only will be encouraged to search, but also to enlist the help of their adoptive parents... After contacting the agency and receiving 'non-identifying' information, I constructed a letter which described my mother and her family - saying nothing in the letter that would identify me as an adoptee. Instead, I said I was doing a genealogical search. Then, my adoptive mother and I stuffed 250 into envelopes. I went to the library and addressed them to anyone who had my birth last name (I was able to find that out). And the wait began. Several weeks passed before I received a phone call from a caller who asked who I was looking for and why... and my birthdate. After I told him, there was a long pause and I heard him say... 'that's her!' Then, another long pause... Suddenly, there was sobbing at the other end of the line. It was my natural mother - the man was her husband, who had always known about me. She said she had never stopped thinking about me, and had never meant to hurt me. I told her she hadn't... I loved her for saying that. I had been so afraid she wouldn't care. Then, my adoptive mother, who was as excited as I got on the line and started talking a mile a minute!... In May, my adoptive mom and I drove from San Diego to Portland, Oregon to meet my natural mother, her husband and my two sisters! Five days later my adoptive father flew up for the large family reunion. Everyone treated my parents and I as though we had been together always... Since then, with information from my natural mother I have also been reunited with my natural father. After finding my natural parents, I can only say that I have grown considerably, and my relationship with my adoptive family has benefited... I feel the future can only hold positive relationships between my natural and adoptive families. I do hope my story will give other adoptees the courage to share the search with their adoptive parents... With love and thanks to all at ALMA!.. CAROLYN OFFICER, California



ANGIE & JERRY GARCIA were high school sweethearts who were forced to relinquish their baby daughter for adoption. They eventually married and had a son. One month after their daughter's 18th birthday they registered with ALMA to begin the search. When they found LYNN, they discovered that she had started searching for them two weeks earlier with the help of her adoptive parents. We were delighted to welcome (l. to r.) CLAIRE & ELLEN SCHLOENVOGT, Lynn's adoptive parents, and ANGIE & JERRY GARCIA, her natural parents to our March '84 Sacramento ALMA Conference, where they all participated in a panel discussion.



November '83 Sacramento ALMA meeting panel discussion with ANGIE, LYNN & JERRY.



North Hollywood, ALMA meeting, March 18, 1984 - NANCY NASSER, adoptee & natural mother, JOHANNA CHRISTENSEN wearing ALMA "I FOUND" buttons! Sharing their reunion moment is Nancy's adoptive Mom, DELTA NASSER.

## In Their Own Words...

### another "ALMATCH" Reunion

"Thank you ALMA, with all my heart,  
for this second chance."

"Four years ago I read about ALMA in 'Dear Abby' and registered. April 9, 1984, ALMA phoned to tell me my daughter and I had been matched on the Registry! That was the most rewarding moment of my life. I hadn't realized what an emptiness she had left in me until I heard her voice. It was as if I were complete again - whole. She flew in to see me, and is even more sensitive, beautiful and loving than in my dreams. Not a day went by these past 21 years that I hadn't thought of her. Her adoptive parents have been very kind and I've tried to be conscious and considerate of their feelings. Thank you, ALMA, with all my heart, for this second chance. Without you and your diligent workers my life would have had this tragic vacancy forever. I hope our story encourages and inspires others to search for that most special person." - Sally Marr, L.A., Calif.



"The greatest feeling of all is that she wanted to find me as much as I wanted to find her."

"For four years I had been searching on my own. Until a few months ago I had never heard of ALMA. Then I registered, prepared for a long wait - but was matched with my mother in 16 days! I can't express to anyone else exactly how I feel, but seeing and talking to my mother made me realize that I was actually born! I have also met my father, grandmother, aunts, uncles and cousins - and I will treasure them forever. I have my roots and understand more about myself. The greatest feeling of all is that she wanted to find me as much as I wanted to find her. God bless you and your organization for the joy you are giving to so many." - Marie Suzanne Stark, Dallas, Texas

"Strange - we felt we had known everyone all our lives..."



Jim with brother, Terry, sisters, Yvette & Sherry

"Jim and I wanted to share one of the most beautiful experiences in our lives with ALMA - our trip to Wyoming to meet his families! He spent 2 days with his natural mother and her husband...stayed up all night talking and getting to know each other. His Dad died 19 years ago, but we went to meet aunts, uncles and about 40 cousins! Then, on to Rawlins, where we met his Dad's wife and got to know his half-sisters and brothers. Strange - we felt we had known everyone all our lives, but just hadn't seen them for a couple of years...We cannot thank everyone in ALMA enough for helping us. If there is any way we can help others, please let us know." - Jim and Kathy Kelly and family, Fort Bragg

"I joined ALMA...  
WITHIN TEN HOURS  
I located my family!"

"I am 37 and have spent the past 20 years searching. Those years were filled with repeated frustration and rage. In vain, I attempted to comply with the law. The Connecticut Probate Court denied my petition to open my records...my social worker reminded me nothing could be done until the laws were changed. At this point, I joined ALMA. Within TEN HOURS I located my family in New York! Within ten days I was reunited with my brother, Richard, and my grandmother, 91, who was a hooper on Broadway! (see picture). Another brother, Gordon, lives in Vermont. He sent roses, letters and a gift. We are planning a reunion...During my many years of preparation, I always cautioned myself against the worst and hoped for the best. Family and close friends warned me to 'forget the past, live for today and work toward the future.' For adoptees, that advice is unwise! We need to know our roots, and the answers to unexplained patterns of behavior. My advice to any adoptee is to enter your search from a position of strength. Then, no matter what the outcome, you will retain a feeling of pride and self-worth.

"My sincere thanks and gratitude are extended to ALMA for the support and undaunted enthusiasm which gave me the confidence to know that my task was not an impossible, futile battle born within the framework of the judicial system." - LaVerna Bauer Feldman

"Grandma, 91, was a hooper on Broadway!"



My grandmother explaining my heredity to me.



Saying a temporary 'goodbye' to brother, Richard.





















