

THE ALMANAC



The truth of his origin is the birth-right of every man.

ADOPTees LIBERTY MOVEMENT ASSOCIATION

NEVADA AND CALIFORNIA (NORTH)

(916) 393-ALMA P.O. BOX 8081 SACRAMENTO, CA. 95818

MEETINGS: 2nd SUNDAY of EACH MONTH, 1 PM to 4 PM

CAROL McDOWELL, COORDINATOR

* ISSUE HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ALMA MARCH 1984 *
* NO IX *****

COORDINATORS MESSAGE by Carol McDowell

ALMA MEETING ATTENDANCE As we were putting this newsletter together, we couldn't help think of how fortunate the members are in this area. Just six short years ago, when I first started my search several of us were driving to San Francisco each month to attend ALMA meetings. There were no ALMA meetings in the Sacramento area. Today we have a meeting each month. These meetings are well attended, but there are so many of you that could take more advantage of the availability of the ALMA meetings. HOW INTERESTED IN FINDING ARE YOU? Isn't driving 50-60 miles, or more, worth finding? Many of the members that were travelling all the way to San Francisco even took busses. They wanted to find and they did.

On this our 6th Anniversary, I was recalling all we have gone through. Our first meetings were held in the homes of Marty Renault and Lois Todd. We've come a long way! We want to go a lot further, with your help we can. Our goal is to help everybody have a successful find.

The following Coordinators' message, taken in part, from Southern California's Pursuit (their ALMA Newsletter), written by Linn Howard and Gaye Funk, Coordinators:

Dear ALMA members:

Are you just a name on the mailing list? Are you wondering why another year has gone by and still you haven't found? Ask yourself how many ALMA meetings you attended last year. None? One? How do you expect to find?

Yes, ALMA is a search and support group. But you have to come to ALMA for that search help and support. If our volunteer staff can find time to come to ALMA meetings to help you, then we feel you can certainly come to meetings to get assistance. This is the only way we can function, as a group, to help you. Remember, we are all volunteers who have completed our own searches. We are people with families and jobs also. There is no way we could ever help all of you by mail or phone. This is why you must attend meetings. you'll receive search help and you'll also get to meet other adoptees, birth parents and adoptive parents. Maybe you'll meet someone to share a ride with and to share your search experiences. Some of our best friends we've met through ALMA. We hope you'll complete your search and continue with us as a search assistant. This is the only way we can continue to help others.

That really tells it like it is. Thanks Linn and Gaye.

It hurts me to see somebody who wants to find putting it off. I missed meeting my maternal grandmother by less than a year. Another member missed meeting her birth father by only 2 months. Don't become one of these statistics. People are perishable. Come to the meetings let us help you help yourself and, hopefull, you will stay on and help us help others. Don't procrastinate on such an important thing.

Procrastinator: One who won't take NOW for an answer. (Daffynition)
by George E. Bergman

1.

MEETING DATE CHANGE Because of Mothers Day falling on our regular meeting Sunday, the May meeting will be held on the third Sunday, May, 20, 1984. MAY MEETING ON MAY 20th.

DUES RENEWAL Unless you are a new member who joined in October, November or December of 1983, your membership in ALMA expired on Dec. 31, 1983, and a renewal is due. Please renew through Sacramento office.

ALMA is financed solely through your membership fees and generous contributions. Your money is used to maintain the ALMATCH Reunion Registry, pay printing costs, postage, phone bills, office rent for the national office in New York, monthly rent for our meeting room and many other expenses.

March 11, 1984 Come to the regular March meeting and meet ALMA'S President and founder. Florence Fisher will be on hand. ALMA is celebrating 13th anniversary. Mark your calendar, on March 12, Florence will be a guest on, LOOK WHO'S TALKING, KCRA TV, Channel 3, with Jim Finnerty and Susan Pearson, at 9:00 AM. For more information see elsewhere in this newsletter.

New Staff Members Congratulations to: Sue Corum, Kathleen Doyle, Joan Fowler, Debbie Helmic, Fred Lewis, Bill and Mary Null, Pat Pavlousky and Tom Spanton. These dedicated members have completed search assistant training and are ready to help other members. Please give them your support.



Northern Calif-Southern Oregon **ALMA NEWS** by Leila Higgs

REDDING The Redding group is entering their fourth year of operation and in that time has helped in many successful searches.

CHICO The Chico group just celebrated their second anniversary on February 10th and are still growing by leaps and bounds.

Both groups are fortunate to have a dedicated staff that remains very active. These two groups are quite proud of having a 100% find rate. All the members and staff are to be commended for their fine work.

ARCATA-EUREKA We recently, June 1983, formed a new satellite group serving the north coastal area, from the Ukiah area north beyond the Oregon border. This group is headed by Rosemary Hawkins. Thanks to the extra efforts by Rosemary and her staff the group is growing rapidly and doing quite well.

CHAPTER NEWS This chapter is also helping members from the state of Oregon by letters and by telephone. The membership, in that state, is also growing daily. Hopefully, sometime in the near future there will be someone willing to start, a much needed, satellite group in that area. This coordinator is getting writers' cramp from all the correspondence. We are assisting members as far north as Portland, Oregon.

For more information contact Leila Higgs at : (916) 824-4790,
ALMA P.O. Box 271 Vina, Ca. 96092

Northern California meeting note The Chico meeting, March 14, is going to have a special guest speaker. Eunice Roberts, the Regional Director of Social Services for the State of California, will be our guest. She will answer any questions you have about the adoption process. Please try to attend.

In Redding, for the April meeting, we will have a speaker relating Indian rights and benefits. This also is a must try to attend meeting since many of us could be of Indian heritage.

For more chapter information contact Leila Higgs,
(916) 824-4790 ALMA P.O. Box 271 Vina, Ca. 96092



ALMA



ADOPTEE'S LIBERTY MOVEMENT ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL OFFICE P.O. BOX 154
WASHINGTON BRIDGE STATION NEW YORK, N.Y. 10033
FLORENCE FISHER, PRESIDENT

ALMA CELEBRATES 13 YEARS

At the March 11, 1984, meeting we will celebrate ALMA'S 13th Anniversary. This has been 13 dynamic years!! On hand, from New York, to help celebrate will be Florence Fisher, ALMA'S president and founder.

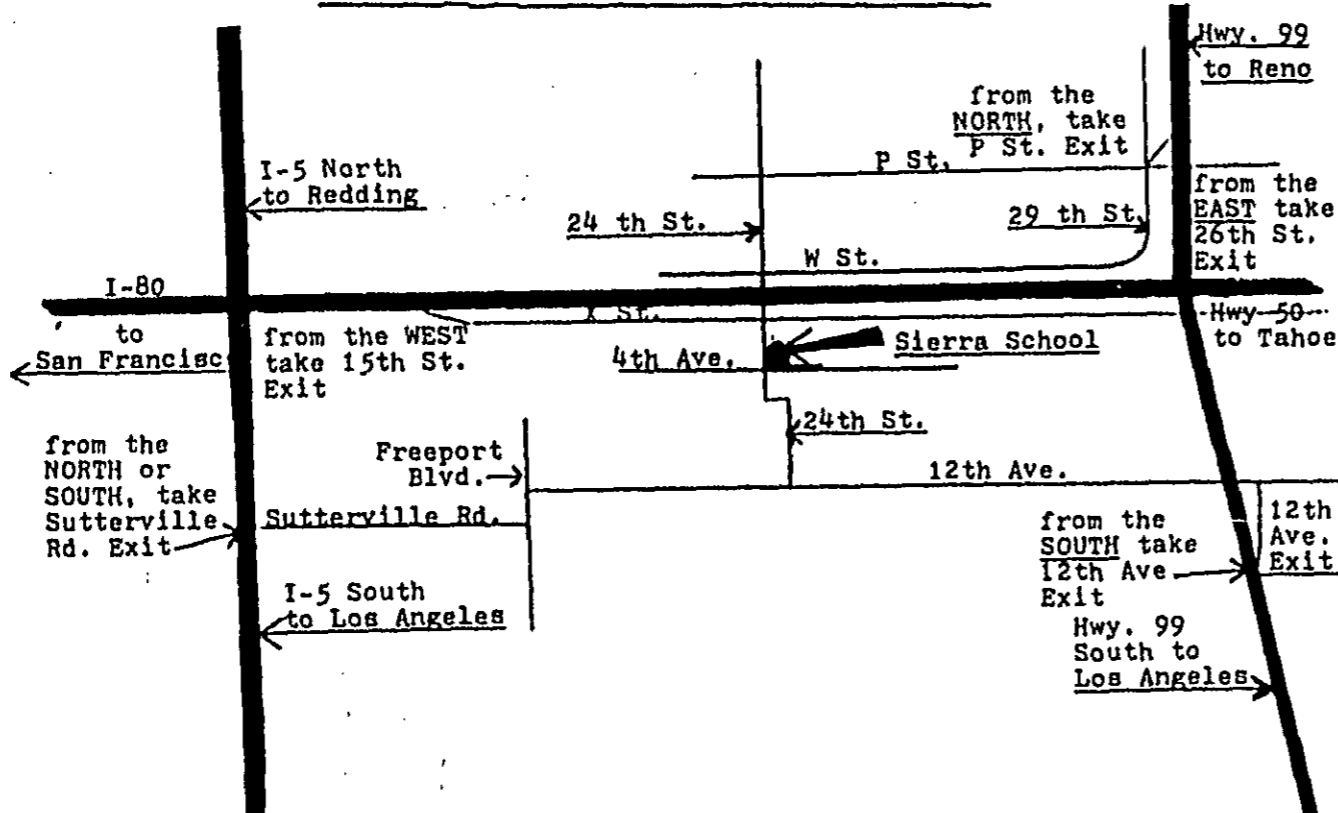
Florence, as most of you know, is an adult adoptee who searched and found both parents. Her own search took 20 years. Because of her long and frustrating search, Florence saw a need and put an ad in a New York newspaper that read, "Adult who was an adopted child desires contact with other adoptees to exchange views on adoptive situation and for mutual assistance in search for natural parents". This was the start of The Adoptees Liberty Movement (ALMA).

Florence Fisher

Alma now has chapters in most states and several foreign countries. ALMA chapters are totally staffed by unpaid volunteers. ALMA also operates an International Reunion Registry ("ALMATCH") with considerable success.

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Directions to Sierra School



Don't miss the opportunity to meet Florence, March 11, 1984, from 1:00 to 4:00 PM. Sierra School 2791- 24th Street (@ 4th Ave.)

Meeting Agenda:
Self introductions,
Talk by Florence,
Regular meeting (open to all),
Search workshop, (for members only)

You can't know where you're going unless you know where you come from.
by Bill Moyers

ALMA UPDATE Please be sure that all the information that ALMA has on you is up to date. Have you moved? Have you changed your phone number? Wouldn't it be a shame if the ALMATCH had a match on you and couldn't find you?

LOST but Found Dept.

ONCE UPON A TIME . . . ANGIE & JERRY GARCIA were high school sweethearts, forced to relinquish their baby daughter born 8-30-64, Fremont. After their marriage, they had a son, Jerry Duane, now 16. On their daughter's 18th birthday, they started to search for her. When they found Lynn, she had started searching for them 2 wks. before. Angie: "We're lucky to have Lynn and her parents a part of the family. Her parents are as pleased as we are!" Lynn: "I'm really happy to expand my family & that I have more people to love."



CLAIRE ELLEN ANGIE JERRY

ABOVE: At the March 1983 ALMA meeting, Angie & Jerry were on the panel with Lynn's adoptive parents, Ellen & Claire Schloenvogt.

BELOW: At the November 1983 ALMA meeting, Angie & Jerry were on the panel with Lynn.

ANGIE LYNN JERRY



A TRAGIC BEGINNING. . . A FAIRY TALE ENDING. . . My name is JANICE DIRCKS. On 6-14-63, my daughter was born in Sacramento. I was 14 years old, a victim of molestation, so I placed my precious child for adoption. Tears & heartbreaking sobs accompanied my farewell promise to her that we would see each other again one day. Almost 20 years later, with the help of Carol McDowell & ALMA, my promise started to come true as I held that precious name, Tricia Ann Thornburg, & her phone number in my hands. I sat there for an hour...I can't begin to express doubts & fears which began to form. Had I found her only to risk losing her again? How would she react to me? All these fears were overcome by the hope that I might gain my daughter back. With trembling hands I dialed, many times,..finally an answer. When I told her I was her natural mother, asking if she wanted to talk to me, she answered, 'Oh God, yes!' How easily we talked. My blessings were doubled...I have a granddaughter! We decided to meet Sunday; but without the help of my husband & children, I doubt I could have made it through those 3 days. On Sunday, I waited for her with my heart in my throat, my mouth dry, my hands perspiring, praying she wouldn't be disappointed. When her car pulled up, my mirror image got out. Running to me, she threw her arms around me. She gave me the hug for which I had waited for 20 years. (THIS WAS AN ALMATCH !)

SHOW SPARKS SAME-DAY SEARCH. . . DEBBIE LAKEY, born 11-27-60, Chico, saw a T.V. show about the Chico & Redding ALMAS. Immediately, she called Leila Higgs. Before the night was through, she had joined at the Chico meeting & had everything to call her mother. "Even with constant urging & help from my boyfriend George, it took me 2 weeks to make the classic phone call. For 10 minutes my mother denied everything, but she finally overcame the initial shock & warmed up to the idea that it was really me!!! By the end of the 30 minute call, she had promised to write & invited me to visit! After 3 months of letter writing, George & I met my mother on an emotion filled day. Only an adoptee can understand these feelings of joy, uncertainty & awe. My mother broke out the champagne & we toasted our reunion; she showed us pictures of my brother & other relatives. I hope to meet my brother soon. I have yet to search for my natural father, which I will do. For now, I am satisfied with the identity I have finally found."

THE NEWS WENT OFF LIKE A BOMB!

With help from his adoptive father, when TOM SPANTON, born 3-4-49, Stockton, joined ALMA, he already had the address of his parents, brothers, sisters at their Oakdale home. In June he drove past their house thinking, "When the time is right, I'll call them."

Suddenly he was in a phone booth. "I was real nervous.

The news went off like a bomb!

My mother was real upset I was

able to find them." After frantic

calls to Chris Ebner, the Search Assistant who had helped him, Tom called again, this time his father answering, with the same stern questions on how he found them. "My father walked into the coffee shop." Strong resemblance. "We stared & talked. He said to call my mother later as she was too upset to meet me that day. So when I called her, her attitude had changed; she looked forward to our first meeting! The day we 3 met, they were 1/2 hour late...it seemed a lot longer...I wondered if I should put my arms around her...just what to do. It was a hug. My mother sat down saying, 'Well, where do you want to start?' We talked 7 hours, had dinner. We discussed their telling my brothers & sisters about me. My mother said my sister Pat would want to meet me as soon as she found out. True. I would like to have listened when they told the family about me. I hear it went well. The next week, Mom, Dad, Pat & her 2 young sons met me for breakfast. Then, my brother John called saying he would like to meet me before Sunday without everyone around. He brought his wife & young son & we had a couple of hours together. At the Sunday gathering at Pat's, I met my brother Jim & my sister Jean. Another brother, 16 months younger than I, was killed by lightning 10 years ago. We all sat around getting used to being one family; they invited me to their annual July 4th get-together. The entire family has opened their arms & hearts to me with WELCOME HOME SON." (Tom is spending a lot of time with his family; he brought his mother & sister Pat to the August ALMA meeting, all 3 obviously happy. Tom is a new Search Assistant.)



SISTER PAT TOM MOTHER
ALMA MEETING AUGUST 1983

KANSAS MEMBER FINDS CALIFORNIA SISTER. . . SANDRA NIEHOFF of Garden City, KS joined ALMA to search for a 35 year old sister adopted in California at birth. After dozens of letters & phone calls, Sandra's sister's delighted adoptive father phoned, "You have found your sister!" Wrote Sandra, "My sister knew she was adopted but not about me so they planned to tell her before my phone call to her. We were both almost speechless when I called. Through phone calls, letters & pictures, we found our looks, our handwriting & our personalities are remarkably similar. We hope to meet soon. Thank you ALMA for being there! Had it not been for the support & encouragement of the people of ALMA, I might have given up. I intend to remain an ALMA member, helping someone like me. I want to do my part in fighting for open records for adults. A California judge had a clerk write to me, 'The Judge has determined that you should not be allowed access to the information you seek.' If I had not had other avenues to pursue, I would still be looking. God Bless you ALMA!!!"

FIVE-MINUTE SEARCH IN PARADISE

HUGH LINTHICUM of Paradise called, then met, Coordinator Leila Higgs in Corning. Leila helped him locate his daughter in five minutes. "I could not believe it," exclaimed Hugh, "Here I had been struggling with the problem for some months. The following day I called my daughter who was very happy to hear from me. She had been trying to find me. We are to meet next week. I am very happy. I owe so much to Leila & to ALMA. I am very grateful. Thank you."

ADOPTEE SEARCHES FOR BOTH DAUGHTER AND BIRTH MOTHER



LOIS

JOAN

DIANE

Two days before Mother's Day, JOAN FOWLER of Penryn found her 19 year old daughter, Diane Williams living in Sacramento. Then in August, she found her birth mother, Lois Shields, in Washington. The threesome came to the February ALMA meeting and the next day were on news interviews on 3 T.V. stations, then in The Sacramento Bee. Joan's birth father is dead, but she found & visited a full sister in Minnesota.

JOAN: I feel more complete. I just wouldn't have been satisfied until I found them both.....When I made the phone call to Lois, after waiting all this time, almost 40 years, I couldn't think what I was supposed to say to her!

LOIS: When you relinquish a child, you give up your legal rights. Circumstances as they were at that time didn't allow me to keep her..... I find her to be an extremely interesting person, interested in the same things I am.....I think it added a new dimension to all our lives..... After a few words I knew who she was. Just instinct I guess.

DIANE: When Joan first called me, I said, "My gosh, I've been waiting for you all my life!".....I expected to be the one to look for her!..... I've always wanted a big family. Put them altogether & I have a big family!

LOVE OF HORSES IS IN THE GENES!

MARY ANN ANDERSON, born 11-22-1948 as Carla Marie Platter in Kansas City, MO & adopted in Kansas, found her mother in the MO Ozarks last month, one year after joining ALMA. "I was always asking questions about my birth parents with never a straight answer. As an adult & mother with no medical background, I was concerned when Erica, my older daughter, had her thyroid removed at the age of 7. All my life I felt disconnected, never felt I belonged. With my fair skin & red hair among dark skinned people, it was apparent I was adopted. The day of my mother's funeral, her nieces from Texas demanded I open my mother's storage so they could take what they wanted, since I was adopted & not entitled to family things! A point of realization for me! Then in 1983, I was living in Eureka, where Rosemary Hawkins started telling me about ALMA & some of the problems adoptees face. I read 'In Search of Anna Fisher' 'Lost & Found' & newsletters; so much came into perspective. Attended ALMA meetings, first in Eureka, then later Leila's then I moved to Chico, finding the support & understanding from others I'd needed for 35 years! So after 4 months of putting pieces together, I made the call. Substantiating that the Jessie Platter on the line was the one, 'This is really difficult, but I am Carla.' Then I lost it. I cried. All the emotions that had built up inside of me came pouring out. 'You're joking! I was hoping that's what this was about!!!' Her primary concern was that I was all right & happy. She has a lot of guilt about those 35 years & tried to bury the unhappy memories. I grew up an only child, & still am, as Jessie never had other children. We write often, starting by sending lists of likes & dislikes: both love horses (Jessie rode for the first 6 months of her pregnancy), both were tomboys, although she looks quite elegant in the pictures she sent. My mother said her family is prepared to love & accept me, which is a lovely gift. I'm falling in love with her; she's quite a lady. I feel better about myself; thanks to connecting with a family I fit into & Leila's ALMA group. I no longer feel like a Cabbage Patch Kid made out of court documents. So I'm helping others as much as I can within ALMA. This reunion has been so positive, it scares me. My mother & aunt are so prepared to love & accept me, so unconditionally & after the negativisms I was raised with: 'You'll never amount to anything,' 'You're a bum,' 'You're horrid,' that I have a hard time accepting unconditional love. I feel I have to earn acceptance. Then I live in fear that she'll be disappointed in me. But I'll be fine. Thank God for ALMA. Love, Mary Ann AKA Carla Marie

STORY SHOWS WHY ALMA OPPOSES INTERMEDIARY SYSTEM

PATRICIA PARSONS, Burnt Ranch, CA was born in Seattle in 1948, joined the Eureka ALMA in 1977. When she petitioned the court in Washington, her letter was turned over to an adoptee organization, which, opposite to ALMA, requires intermediaries. "They informed me they would have to obtain signed consent from my mother before contact would be allowed. My intermediary did locate my mother in Minneapolis. At first she said she would sign & return consent forms. Two years later, my mother was still deciding. A phone call to me in 1980 was set up; we talked an hour. She wouldn't say yes, but couldn't say no. Another call in summer 1981 was set up; she was calling anonymously. She promised to come to California that winter. No word from her at all. In May 1982 I decided her time was up. After my own detective work, I flew to Minneapolis in June 1982, phoning her at work, telling her I knew from the way things were going no time would ever be right for us to meet, so I thought I would surprise her. We spent several afternoons together with her making all the arrangements. This was very positive as I had only asked her for one hour of her time. Although she has a high pressure public contact job, she is a very inward person, dealing with her difficulties by packing them away inside. She was worried I might seek out her three other children who do not know of me. To ease her mind, I promised I would not contact them on this trip, but before I die, I definitely will meet them. Her husband took off work to tell me what great harm I would do to him & his family if I tried to contact the kids. (THE KIDS are 26, 30 & 31). I decided I would give her more time on the issue of THE KIDS. Because of her unfounded fears & fantasies, she avoided meeting me for 2 years. She admitted our visit was not as bad as she had anticipated. 'Though she'd never admit it, we like each other. She told me things I'm sure she's told no one else. We really had a good time together, eating out, sightseeing in the country.

Now the best part: she told me my father's name! She appreciated my not asking, but 2 more cups of coffee & she told me the whole story! When I phoned my father that evening, he sounded quite positive; he remembered her; said he could be my father. Yes, we could meet tomorrow but he wanted to talk to his wife first. OOPS, he phoned at midnight, saying in a totally different tone we should forget the whole thing as there was no way of knowing for sure. Phoned him next day at house he was remodeling, apologizing for not being very awake when he called so late, not remembering what he said. (A trick I used the night before to get his work phone: I told him the phone I was using was out of order so much lately, could I have his work number so I could call him. This came in handy when his wife tried to nix the whole thing)....I drove 20 miles with tears in my eyes. Shirley said it was difficult for her to look at me at first as I have his eyes & nose. I wondered if he would see the resemblance also. At the house, I yelled upstairs. He came down, hammer in hand, so we met in the street. Shaking his hand, I asked how he was doing. We talked a little; he said there was no way knowing for sure; I could tell he noticed the resemblance; was happy to know who I was. (He has 2 sons, no daughters with his wife). His wife knew about it; he had tried to forget. I told him I did not expect him to acknowledge the fact although I believe I had found the right person! He just looked at me; we knew that we each knew. Funny I am so impressed with him; he is so much more out front than my mother. 'Though he didn't show outward emotion, we both knew we were father & daughter. He's also a rather handsome devil, a thinking man who works with his hands. I'll just let our meeting sink in for a year or two to see if he's ready to spend more than 10 minutes with me.

As for my mother, she has promised to come to California this winter. I'm not going to write her lots of letters or phone her, maybe a card & pictures; let her make the first move. I do like Shirley; we enjoy our time together but I feel bad for her inability to let her feelings out. My adoptive mother is so different...such a warm person My folks know all about my search & find. My Mom even made me tell the story twice!!! All in all, I had a double positive find. I'm looking forward to the future....Although I have my father's eyes & nose, I have exactly the same fine strawberry hair as my mother; we each have a curly permanent. Waitresses notice us for that reason. Also we're both big-boned with about 15 extra pounds, both had horrible nosebleeds as children. She passed that trait to all three of her other children.

P.S. Please take this donation for ALMA.

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