

Orphan Voyage of Florida

AT JACKSONVILLE

VOYAGER

February-March, 1984

P.O. Box 10909
Jacksonville, Florida 32247
Phone: (904)398-2703

POLICY: We are a group of adoptees, birthparents, adoptive parents and other interested individuals who have dedicated a large part of our lives toward humanizing the adoption experience and effecting reunions between adult persons separated through adoption. Our group is a member of the American Adoption Congress, a national organization which serves as an umbrella administration for those groups whose aim is to promote open, sound adoption practices.

EDITOR:

Brenda Rodriguez

MARCH MEETING:

Tuesday, March 20, 1984
7:00 PM
Baptist Medical Center
Function Room "C" - 8th Floor
at left side/rear of dining
area.

FUTURE MEETINGS:

April 17th, May 15th, and June 19th

SEARCH ADVISORS:



Barry Connor 268-6855
(7:00 to 10:00 PM)

Molly Johnson 285-4635
(Evenings)

Please be considerate when calling the above numbers, honoring the requested times. Thank you.

NEXT BOARD MEETING:

Thursday, March 15th

EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Susan Ames
Natalie Bloom
Mary Francis Boyles
Barry Connor

Sue Crouch
Molly Johnson
Brenda Rodriguez
Sharon Stokes

No, you didn't miss a newsletter, I have just been dragging my heels on getting one out - the past two months have been tremendously busy for me - thanks for bearing with me.

Orphan Voyage at Jacksonville will be making a presentation at the upcoming

"Mental Health Fair" being held in May at Florida Jr. College Downtown Campus. Our program will be on Adoption: An Identity Crisis. Further information on this will be in our next newsletter and at upcoming meetings. We hope to get some audience support and feedback from many of you. We appreciate Natalie Bloom's efforts in setting this program up, as it will give our group a tremendous exposure to many professionals in the mental health field.

We have included a few follow-up articles on the CABBAGE PATCH doll controversy, which should be of interest to many of you.

I'd like to print some of your successful search and reunion stories in our next newsletter, so please submit them to me ASAP. It is always great to share your joy (and trials) with those of us who understand and care.

See you all at next month's meeting. Until then,

Brenda

SEARCH SUCCESSES

It has been a great past two months for **Barbara Robbins**, one of our Jacksonville members. Last month, Barbara found one of the sisters she has been looking for. (Barbara's case is another of several siblings separated by adoption.) And now this month, she reports that she has located her younger **twin** sisters. We are thoroughly thrilled for you Barbara, and look forward to telling everyone about your upcoming reunions!

Natalie Bloom, who had previously been successful in locating her 80 year old birthmother in New York, has now furthered her search success by locating her birthsister in Miami. Natalie has been looking for her sister, Sylvia, for quite a long time, and we are really tickled that she has finally found her. Natalie's husband, Joe, recently was down in Miami on business, and had some extra time prior to his flight out, and decided that he was going to do everything he could to locate Sylvia. Within approximately an hour, he had tracked her down and made a phone call. Great work Joe!! I phoned Natalie tonight as I was working on the newsletter, and she said "Wait, there is someone I want to say hello to you." Her sister, Sylvia, got on the phone and told me just how wonderful it was to find out about Natalie - their reunion was taking place at that time, and both of them were thoroughly excited and in awe of each other. Congratulations, Natalie, we are all happy for you.

As we reported in our last newsletter, **Glenda Curry**, had left for California to meet her birthmother for the first time. Enclosed is a letter we have received from Glenda since that time. It is self-explanatory.

Dear Orphan Voyage,

After an 11 year off and on again search, I am happy to report that I have located my natural mother. She is the second oldest of nine children, and we have hit it off beautifully. She unfortunately was the **VICTIM** of a blackmarket child selling operation and did not

know for 26 years what had happened to her three children. Her whole family knew of me and my two brothers, but even though they too searched, they came up empty-handed.

It was through perseverance and persistence that I was able to locate her. It is at her home that I am now writing to you, and I know that everyone keeps on trying-eventually down the road, they will get leads to help locate whomever they are searching for. Use your every asset - legal rights, telephone & city directories - whatever means of information you have - it WILL pay off. If anyone wants to know the person they are searching for badly enough, that driving force should carry you through. There were times when I tried to give up - but always came back. I could have stopped and left it alone, but I found that I never could rid my mind of questions.

I now know names of persons involved in the illegal arrangements and how they did what they did. Luckily, they are no barrier for my relationship with my natural mother.

I also have MANY relatives I was unaware of and amazingly my two siblings and I resemble ALL of them - that resemblance also includes our children.

God opened the doors for my mother and I - and he will do it for each one of you too, if you but ask for his help, and truly believe he alone can do it.

I wish you all well and success in your searching - I am with you in MIND and SPIRIT as you search. Please feel free to correspond with me anytime - we are all united in the same cause.

As for my birthfather - I am presently considering a search for him, but have yet to follow through.

Sincerely,
A successful searcher -
Glenda A. Curry
c/o A.E. Minney
4245 Hale Street
Riverside, CA 92501

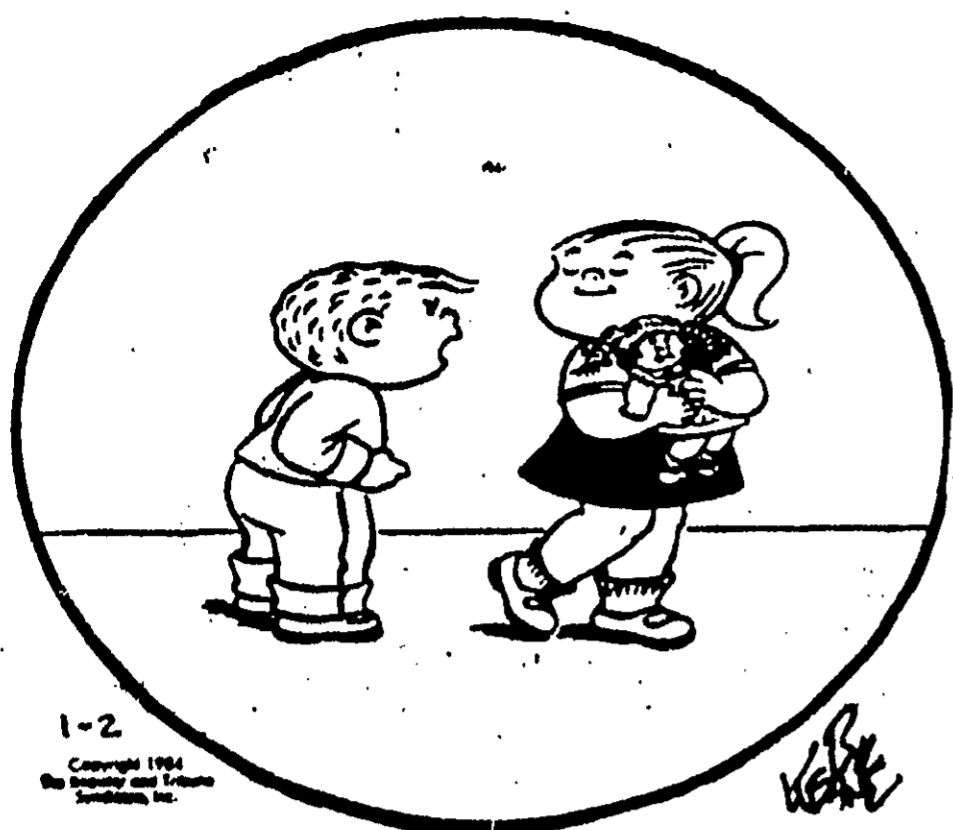
P.S. Keep on searching until you find.
The ones who will fill your minds.
When you're tempted to give in,
Get up, and try, try again..

Thanks for your wonderful letter Glenda, and best of luck to you and your new-found family. OJV

HOUSE BILL 324



Representative Elaine Gordon, D-Miami, and Sub-committee chairperson on adoption reform is backing HB 324, which would ban interstate advertisement for babies here in Florida. Saying they want to protect unwed mothers, unwanted children and would be adoptive parents, the House panel committee said this would apply to any medium of advertisement and would cover both solicitations to place an unwed mothers child, and/or offers of adoptable children to prospective parents. I have a copy of this bill, if anyone would like to read over it. Thanks to Lee Campbell, CUB, for bringing this bill to my attention.



"What's so great? I hate cabbage and I don't like patches!"

Cabbage Patch doll makers sued

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — An adopted person filed a \$100 million lawsuit yesterday against the makers of the Cabbage Patch dolls, saying their marketing techniques have had an "extremely detrimental effect" on everyone involved in the adoption process.

The class-action suit, filed in San Francisco Superior Court on behalf of Martin Brandfon, names Coleco Industries, which markets the dolls; Xavier Roberts, who created them; and Barbary Coast Dolls.

The suit seeks \$100 million in punitive damages and a permanent injunction to stop Coleco from issuing "adoption papers" with every doll, said Brandfon's attorney, Jayne Kelly Roberts.

"If Coleco came out with a black doll who did housework or a Chinese doll who did laundry, I have little doubt the advertising would be halted," she said.

Ms. Roberts said she has received calls from people across the country saying that their adopted children have been "severely upset" by the notion that they had been "sold or auctioned off" or that they might have sprung from a cabbage patch.

Brandfon, who spent several years searching for his natural parents, is particularly upset that the dolls come with papers showing their birth parents' identity when, in fact, most state laws prevent direct access to that information.

LEE H. CAMPBELL

Guest columnist

Don't exploit adoption process

DOVER, N.H. — A 14-year-old adoptee in New Jersey became distraught watching TV promotions for Cabbage Patch Kids. It made her even more confused about who she was and where she came from.

An Illinois adoptive mother wasn't prepared for her young son's anxiety when she brought home a Cabbage Patch Kid. Later the boy began crying. Then, concerned at his sister's mistreatment of the doll, he told her, "You adopted that doll, you can't treat it like that."

A California birthmother, reunited with her surrendered son, was asked by her younger 6-year-old, "Did you sell my brother like they're selling those kids?"

Clearly, the Cabbage Patch Kids are not as innocent as they look. By combining the idea of adoption with the buying and selling of products, the dolls exploit a sensitive and serious subject.

Millions of children and their parents are being unwittingly impressed with a distort-

ed idea — that it is fun to pretend adopted people are rescued from insignificant life forms and can be bought if you have the money.

"If there is bigotry in the nation, there will be toys that reflect that," wrote Irene Clipper in her book, *Growing Up With Toys*. Coleco's abuse of adoption as a marketing gimmick is a case in point.

And it's not just Coleco. Not only can you adopt a kid born of a cabbage, but you can also "bring home orphan draperies" and "adopt illegitimate stereo headsets."

Adoption is big business. We have become conditioned to the large sums of money some couples pay to adopt a healthy white baby rather than an available special needs child. We have learned that if applying at a number of agencies fails to yield a baby, you can turn to black marketeers and surrogate mothers.

No wonder, then, that buying kids has entered the commercial world of marketing. What

Lee H. Campbell is president of Concerned United Birthparents, an international adoption support organization.

these dolls are saying is that it's OK to buy children.

This is all very subliminal. Like cartoons, movies and games, toys convey psychological messages. But because we engage in them at a pleasurable level, we often fail to analyze the sexism, violence, and distortion of reality they may also be teaching us.

Yet we all are affected by it, whether we know it or not. Cabbage Patch Kids may seem harmless, but in fact they shape our values. Some children will express the fear these dolls cause, and their families will be able to deal with it. But many more will not.

Unless the public rejects this newest marketing gambit, a very complex institution involving sensitive and vulnerable people will be at risk.

"Twist of Fate"

as sung by Olivia Newton John

Do we deserve a second chance?
How did we fall into this circumstance?
We went so straight and narrow,
This is much more than we deserve.

A higher voice has called the tune,
Two hearts that lost the beat will now resume.
The gift of life extension,
By divine intervention.

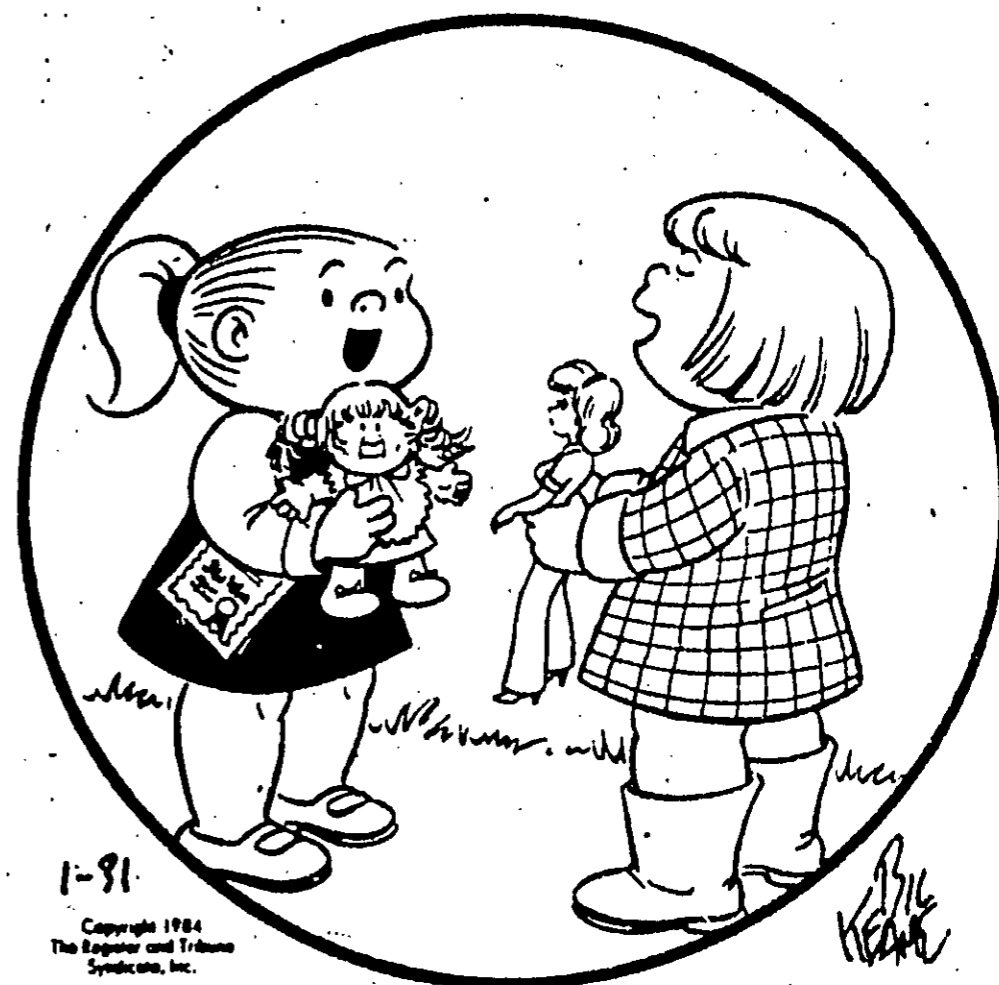
It's gotta be a strange twist of fate,
Telling me that heaven can just wait,
Telling me to get it right this time.
Life doesn't mean a thing without the love
you bring.
Love is what we found
The second time around.

Don't understand what's going on.....
Woke up this morning, all the hurt was gone!
This is a new beginning,
I'm back in the land of the living.

It's gotta be a strange twist of fate,
Telling me that heaven can wait,
Telling me to get it right this time,
Oh yes, I'm gonna get it right this time,
Cause Life doesn't mean a thing
without the love you bring.
Love is what we found,
The second time around.

Family Circus

Bill Keane



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The Register and Tribune
Syndicate, Inc.

"My doll has a birth certificate and
'doption papers.'"

"That's nothin'! Mine has a driver's license!"

Doll craze affronts adoptive parents, children



In response to the national attention given to the Cabbage Patch dolls marketed by Coleco Inc. with the merchandising gimmick of "adopting" these dolls, we would like to offer the following comments:

We take exception to the implication that an issue as serious and sensitive as adoption can be treated in such an insensitive manner. We live in a real world where real children are born to real birth mothers and birth fathers and placed in real homes with real adoptive parents. The care and concern with which this comes about is of importance to us as professionals involved in adoptions.

The illusion created by Coleco that dolls (referred to as "children" by the

company) can be adopted, complete with adoption papers and a "birth certificate," is an affront to the real people whose lives are affected by adoption.

It would seem the underlying message given by this company is that adopted children can be found in a cabbage patch, can be bought and have no previous history. We urge public awareness to the attempt to create a sales bonanza at the expense of one group of people.

**KATHRYN L. STRAYER
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SISTER MARLENE KUHNLEIN
Catholic Charities Bureau
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JACKSONVILLE, FL 32247

LEGACY OF AN ADOPTED CHILD

Once there were two women
Who never know each other
One you don't remember
The other you call mother.

Two different lives
shaped to make yours one.
One became your guiding star
The other became your sun.

The first gave you life
And the second taught you to live it.
The first gave you a need for love,
And the second was there to give it

One gave you a heritage
The other gave you a name.
One gave you the seed of talent
The other gave you aim.

One gave you emotions
The other calmed your fears.
One saw your first sweet smile
The other dried your tears.

One gave you up
It was all that she could do
The other prayed for a child -
And God led her straight to you.

And now you ask me through your tears
That age-old question through the years
Heredity or environment - which are you
the product of?
Neither, my darling, Neither...
Just two different kinds of love.

Anon