

SEARCH FINDERS OF CALIFORNIA
P.O. BOX 24595
SAN JOSE, CA 95154-4595
(408) 356-6711

"IDENTITY IS IMPORTANT"

Volume I No. 2
Pennie Peterson - Editor

SUMMER 1984
Carol Longoria - Staff Writer

SEARCH FINDERS OF CALIFORNIA is a volunteer organization composed of Adoptees, Adoptive Parents, Birth Parents and others searching for relatives.

Our purpose is to assist in searches and/or reunions. A warm and supportive environment is provided in which to share the joys and frustrations of this search. The opportunity is offered for anyone involved to share his or her experiences

The Staff, some of which are nationally certified by "Independent Search Consultants", volunteer their time and contribute over 30 years of combined experience. They frequently attend workshops, seminars, local and national conferences to keep current on issues, techniques, and to establish networking.

SEARCH FINDERS is a member of the American Adoption Congress, a national organization whose aim is to promote openness, honesty and sound practices in adoption.

NEXT GENERAL MEETING DATES AND TIMES*

7:30 p.m. = Potential new member's orientation.

8:00 p.m. = Sharing time; adoption news; individual search consultations.

Location:

Mercury Savings and Loan
Community Room
Corner of Blossom Hill and Pearl
San Jose, CA

Dates:

June 14th
July 12th
August 9th
September 13th

*Always the 2nd Thurs of the month.

SPECIAL THANKS

We extend a thank you to all those who participated in our last fundraiser sponsorship program. A special thanks to the following members:

- Deanna Duffy
- Donna Catterick
- Sandra and Mark Remson
- Victoria Wagner
- Lorene Harter
- Vivian Wahlen
- Martin Brandfon

PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF IT!

For those of you that would like to leave a phone number for your babysitters on the nights of our general meeting, our new meeting place at Mercury Savings has a pay phone in the corner. The number is (408) 224-9439.

NEW BROCHURES

Our new brochures have finally arrived. We think they are a great improvement over the old brochures. If you would like a copy (or copies), please contact Dot on the Search Finders phone (408) 356-6711.

FOR SALE

We have two new items on our Sale Table at the General Meetings:

- 1) ISC Calendar of Search Hints 1985 (for those of you who enjoyed the humor of the 1984 calendar, you will definitely enjoy this new cartoon type calendar!)
- 2) "Legacy of an Adopted Child" poem (always a favorite of Search Finders) which has been done in a beautiful calligraphy style and printed on parchment paper. They will sell for \$2.00 a piece. A special thanks to Jan Magill for her time and artistry.

"LEGACY OF AN ADOPTED CHILD"

Once there were two women
Who never knew each other
One you do not 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 in it.
The first gave you a need for love
And the second was there to give it.

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

One gave you emotions
The other calmed your fear.
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
The 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.

...Annon

GOOD QUOTE

From Dr. Leo Buscaglia's article in the San Jose Mercury on May 18, 1984. "Looking into our Parents":

"No one exists in isolation. Each of us is in a part of a greater story, some of it already written, some that we will write and some that we pass on to others to complete. ...Often we are too concerned with tomorrow to recognize the significance of our yesterdays. Yet they represent the thread of explanation which guides us to who we are now."

RENEWAL TIME

Some of your memberships are due for renewal. Please send your renewal fees to Joe Magill at the Search Finders address. Remember renewal fees are only \$15.00.

MEETINGS IN TWO SESSIONS

Just a reminder, SEARCH FINDERS divides it's monthly meetings into two sessions. The first, is for potential new members to become acquainted with SEARCH FINDERS and its staff. Each new member is assigned to a Primary Search Consultant and is given a basic New Member Packet. The second session is a search workshop for active members. At the meetings, we also report news events concerning adoptee's rights, legislation and court cases, conferences and the sealed record controversy.

AMERICAN ADOPTION CONGRESS ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN SEATTLE

We were fortunate to have five members of Search Finders present in Satttle; Donna Catterick, Sara Crystal, Carol Longoria, Pennie Peterson and Dorothy Yturriaga. It was the largest showing at a National Conference since Kansas City in 1980. (At least we know 5 people whose budgets are shot!)

The Conference was one of the best. The following workshops were offered: Adoption-a developmental Psychological Perspective; Minor Search; Adoption-Effects on Relationships; Search Techniques; Counseling the Adoptive Family; Legal Issues; Legislative Strategy; Open Adoption; Issues of Significant Others; Wearing Two Hats in the Triad - Which Comes First?; Networking Professional Consultants; Birthparent Issues and Concerns; Educating the Community; Gay and Lesbian Issues; WARM's Intermediary System with Washington State Courts; Male Perspective; Dealing with Rejection; Using the Media to Reach the Community; Adoption in the 80's; A Return to the Past?; Pregnancy Counseling; Artifical Insemination and Surrogate

AMERICAN ADOPTION CONGRESS ANNUAL
NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN SEATTLE

Continued

Parenting; Genetic Sexual Attraction; Teen-
age Support Groups; Dealing with Grief;
Birthfather Issues; How to Lobby;
Adjustment with the "New Family"; Adoptees
in Prision; Minesota Study of Twins Reared
Apart; Making Contact; Adolescent Adoptees
in Crisis; The Adoptive Parents' Response;
Those Who Have Been Found; Fundraising;
Responsibility of Search and Reunion;
Adoptive Parent Issues and Concerns;
Heredity and Environment.

The Conference was hosted by WARM (Wash-
ington Adoptees Rights Movement) and as you
can see by the extensive list of workshops,
there was a wide variety of subjects dealing
with adoption that was covered. The most
noteable speakers were Dr. Thomas Bouchard
Jr. with his twins study and Philip Adams,
an attorney from San Francisco sho has done
independent open adoptions for 45 years (he
arranged Carol Longoria's adoption).

Of course we were unable to attend all the
workshops, but as many as possible were
attended. If you would like more infor-
mation about any of them, please contact the
people listed above who attended.

In addition, there was even a Dinner/Cruise
on the Puget Sound featuring Salmon and a
relaxing time.

On a more personal note, for those of you
who know Dot Yturriaga's story, she was
finally able to observe her birthmother for
two hours unnoticed at a Seattle restrant.
You know what she discovered? That her
Birthmother was actually a "real person" and
not a 10 foot tall myth - amazing!

AAC MEMBERSHIPS

We are printing a membership form for the
AAC. Anyone can become a member as an
individual. SEARCH FINDERS is already a
member as an organization. Please consider
this membership as support for a national
organization that aims for honest and sound
adoption practics.

REGIONAL MEETING IN SEATTLE

In addition to the National meetings, there
was a Regional Meeting of Region #9 (Calif-
ornia, Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah and
Hawaii) on Friday Evening. Search Finders
bid to host the regional conference in the
Fall of 1985 was accepted. Also the results
of the mailed ballots for new officers was
announced and they are as follows:

Regional Director: Carol Longoria
Alternate Director: Gayle Beckstead
Secretary/Treasurer: Marti Reinhart
Newsletter Director: Susan V. Hammond

Where is was great to get a member of Search
Finders as the new Regional Director, it was
only a temporary measure. On Saturday, the
Board of the American Adoption Congress
elected Carol Longoria to the national
office of Treasurer. So as of July 1, 1984,
the new regional officers will be changed
to the following:

Regional Director: Gayle Beckstead
Alternate Director: Martin Brandfon

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS AND IDEAS

Anyone who would be interested in helping in
any way with the Regional Conference in the
Fall of 1985 in which Search Finders is
hosting. Please contact Dot at the Search
Finder phone (408) 356-6711.

MAKE PLANS NOW

Do not forget that the next Regional Conf-
erence will be in Albuquerque, New Mexico on
the weekend of September 21, 22 & 23rd. It
should be a great conference and is alot
closer to us than the next National Conf-
erence in Florida. See Carol Longoria for
more detils.

PERSONALS CORNER

Donna Catterick located her birthson (age 19) in Oaklahoma City, and found out from the church pastor that her son does not know he was adopted. The pastor talked to the adoptive mother to find out this information. Donna is now n a quandry, should she contact or not and if she does contact how can she do so without hurting her son? Any idea's or experiences in this area? If so, please contact her.

Marie Laue, with the help of her daughter, Marilyn Boots, and family, located her 26 year old birthson Robert, right in San Jose.

Andy Beyer located her birthmother on the East Coast.

Gay Dell Sax located her birthmother in Southern California.

Deanna Duffy located her birthmother in New York in May. Her birthmother is married to a dentist and was very glad Deanna found her. Her birthmother is also an adoptive mother...its a small world.

SEARCH AND TRIAD SURVEY

Search Triad of Phoenix, Arizona sent out a survey to the candidates in the last state election. They received a 30.6% response, which is considered above the "good" range of 20% response. There were three purposes of the survey: 1) to determine which potential legislators are supportive of the causes of Search Triad and the movement; 2) to determine the level of awareness each candidate had for the basic issues of the search movement; 3) to increase awareness of the group just by the act of mailing the form. As an added bonus, Search Triad discovered some candidates had ties to the movement by representing one or more aspects of the triad in their own personal lives. One candidate surveyed was eventually elected and joined the group as a seraching adoptee! The questions were

SEARCH AND TRIAD SURVEY CONT.

decided by the board of directors and discussed with members of the group. The questions and vote follow:

Are you aware that everyone in the general population except adoptees have access to their original birth certificate (adoptees of Indian heritage have access at any age)?
37 yes, 8 no

Do you agree with current Arizona law that adoptees do not have access to their original surnames and medical history?
7 yes, 31 no

Would you support legislation allowing all adult adoptees access to all records surrounding the placement?
29 yes, 7 no

Would you support legislation allowing birthparents of adult adoptees access to all records surrounding the placement?
23 yes, 10 no

Would you support a non tax supported volunteer registry to match adoptees and birthparents who are mutually agreeable to reunion?
40 yes, 0 no

Would you support a non tax supported information referral service available for adult adoptees?
35 yes, 0 no

Would you support a non tax supported information referral service for birthparents of adult adoptees?
30 yes, 2 no

Do you support adult access to medical, biological and ethnic records?
36 yes, 0 no

AMERICAN ADOPTION CONGRESS

The AMERICAN ADOPTION CONGRESS is an International Educational Network dedicated to promoting Openness and Honesty in adoption.

The AAC was established in 1978 to provide a forum for local search and support groups to meet on a national level. Incorporated in 1981 under the non-profit laws of the State of Missouri, granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service in 1982, the AAC is currently involved in many endeavors to educate the general public and the adoption community to the needs for adoption reform.

The AMERICAN ADOPTION CONGRESS is concerned that:

BIRTHPARENTS be able to obtain information about their children and claim responsibility for childrearing and child caring so they have feelings of positive worth about themselves, their parenting experiences, and the adopting family.

ADOPTees be able to have the opportunity to know their history and family of origin.

ADOPTIVE PARENTS be able to claim responsibility for childrearing and child caring so they have feelings of positive worth about themselves, their parenting experience and the birth family.

Recognizing these concerns
 The AMERICAN ADOPTION CONGRESS is dedicated to:

The right of **BIRTHPARENTS AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS** who choose, or have been subject to, closed adoptions, to specific in the adoption contract and records the conditions for future access and identification, retaining the right to mutually amend those conditions, if they choose;

The right of **ADOPTees** to obtain complete information about their families of origin, and to seek out and meet members of that family as they choose,

The right of **BIRTHPARENTS AND ADOPTIVE PARENTS** to supportive counsel and services and to effect an open adoption, if placement is their choice.

AMERICAN ADOPTION CONGRESS

Membership Information

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIPS

Initial Application Fee . . . \$ 5.00
 One Year Membership . . . \$ 15.00
 Three Year Membership . . \$ 40.00
 Five Year Membership . . . \$ 70.00
 Lifetime Membership . . . \$150.00

ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Initial Application Fee . . . \$ 5.00
 One Year Membership . . . \$ 20.00
 Three Year Membership . . \$ 60.00
 Five Year Membership . . . \$100.00
 Lifetime Membership . . . \$250.00

AGENCY MEMBERSHIPS

Initial Application Fee . . . \$ 5.00
 One Year Membership . . . \$ 45.00
 Three Year Membership . . \$130.00
 Five Year Membership . . . \$220.00
 Lifetime Membership . . . \$500.00

*** * PAYABLE IN U.S. FUNDS ONLY * ***

Members will receive the official publication, the AAC Decree which is published four times a year.

Members will be entitled to vote at Regional and National Conferences. Members will receive reduced Registration Fees for Regional and National Conferences.

Members will receive Legislative Updates on recent legislative actions across the United States & Canada pertaining to the Open Records Movement.

Members will receive the AAC ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY of all member organizations.

Members will receive an official AAC membership card.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

CHECK BELOW

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Occupation _____ Male _____ Female _____
 Birthdate _____
 Where did you learn about the AAC _____

Adoptee _____
 Adoptive Parent _____
 Birth Parent _____
 Professional _____
 Search Group _____
 Support Group _____
 Agency _____
 Other _____

DURING THE MONTH SEARCH ASSISTANCE:

- | | | | |
|---|----------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Dian Gabbott, Santa Clara | (408) 249-5348 | Sandy Viguers, Hollister | (408) 637-8616
(evenings and weekends) |
| Carol Longoria, Gilroy
(days and after 8:00 p.m.) | (408) 848-1261 | Dorothy (Dot) Yturriaga,
San Jose | (408) 356-2747 |
| Joe and Jan McGill, San Jose
(Tues-Fri evenings after 6:00 p.m.
and Saturday and Sunday afternoons) | (408) 997-1638 | | |
| Pennie Peterson, Sunnyvale
(evenings & weekends) | (408) 744-1515 | | |

Adoption no longer is always a faceless transaction

Natural mothers choosing, and even meeting, new parents

By Kevinne Moran
Staff Writer

SHE NAMED her daughter Jeanne, from the French words for "I love you." And then Cath-
erine Winlers gave away her baby.
That was two years ago. Now the child has a new name and new parents.
She has asked her lawyer to get a picture from the name and new parents.
"Sue, Winlers wonders about the child's well-being. She has asked her lawyer to get a picture from the adoptive parent."
"She will always be my first child," said Winlers, who is now 25 and lives in Palo Alto. "I need to update my image of her. I only know her as a newborn."
Tammie Canet's daughter was born last December. When the baby was 3 days old, Canet placed her in the arms of adoptive parents she had chosen.
"I missed her so much in the first month," said Canet, who is 18. "I'll always miss her." Canet lives in San Jose, the moved here from San Diego shortly after discovering she was pregnant.
Both women chose the people who will raise their children. Canet arranged her adoption through the Santa Clara County adoption service. Winlers turned to Marc Gradstein, an attorney in San Francisco who specializes in adoption.
The women don't know whether they will ever see their firstborn again.
And that bothers them.
In retrospect, both women say they wish they had built even more "openness" into their adoption. They'd like to know how their children are doing over the years.
Despite some second thoughts, both women were able to arrange the kind of adoptions they thought they wanted at the time of their children's births.
In an increasing number of adoptions, both in Santa Clara County and nationwide, mothers suddenly are finding that they have real clout. If they insist, they can dictate exactly how the adoption of their babies will be handled.
Twenty years ago, the "birth mother" usually had no control over who adopted her child, and the identity of her child's adoptive parents were kept from her. These days, in part because they have something rare — a healthy, adoptable infant — most birth mothers play a big part in choosing their child's new parents.

ARE WAITING for every infant available for adoption. In Calloway, there were 9,568 requests for children in the last quarter of 1983. In Santa Clara County, there were only 17 adoptions completed. "Approved" homes on the waiting list.
The baby shortage is largely due to legalized abortion, more effective contraception and a trend among unmarried teen-age mothers to keep their children.
At agencies and adoption attorneys' offices, the birth mother is typically given several resumes or files to flip through. Often, she can arrange to meet the prospective adoptive parents. In some cases, both parties disclose only their first names. In others, they become longtime friends. Most fall somewhere in between.
On the other side of the adoption picture are the adoptive parents. They often wait years to be chosen, either through an agency or by a birth mother who often has seen their "resume" and picture at a doctor's or lawyer's office.
After six years of infertility tests and several operations, Jeff and Carole Plotnick of San Jose decided to try adoption. They waited five more years and 10 months before they received their daughter, Kristin, from the Children's Home Society.
In the early part of their search, the Plotnicks sent out resumes at the suggestion of a private attorney. But after two adoptions fell through — the birth mother decided to keep their babies at the last minute — the Plotnicks decided to use an agency.
"The issue of loss became very real to us," Carole Plotnick said. "We were up and down and back and forth continually. With the agency, we didn't get the call until it was time to just go and pick up Kristin."
They got the baby when she was less than a month old. A little more than a year later, they're very protective of Kristin. They asked that details about her adoption — how many days old she was when they got her, where she was born and other identifying characteristics — be excluded from a newspaper article.

IT'S AS IF they fear her mother could come back for her someday.
"We know it's an irrational fear," said Jeff Plotnick. But his wife said: "I don't really look at it as a fear. This is the way we've chosen to do it. And it's the way she's chosen, too. We have both chosen to remain anonymous from each other. If we give a lot of details, it would be easy for the birth parents to find us and vice versa. We don't give details out of respect for each other's wishes."
Ron and Nancy Lawson, also of San Jose, adopted their daughter, Arnelia, two years ago — just after her birth. They found her after sending out about 500 resumes and pictures to friends, associates and doctors in the Bay Area. A birth mother contacted their attorney.

THE LAWSONS met their child's birth mother during her pregnancy. They still keep in touch through letters sent through their attorney.
"Arnelia's mother wanted to meet us, but still maintain some distance," Nancy Lawson said. So the Lawsones met her for dinner at a restaurant.
"I think it helped her to have some idea where her baby was going. She showed a real sense of strength. We can never know how hard it was for her to give up Arnelia — just as she can't ever know how hard it was for us to wait for Arnelia," Nancy Lawson said.
Susanne Arma, a Portola Valley writer who has spent several years interviewing adoptive and birth parents as well as adoptees, said these women's feelings are typical.
"An adoption never ends for anyone involved in it. The first thing that society needs to realize is that adoption is a difficult and complex process, not a perfect solution. There are a lot of rough edges and quite natural fears."
Winlers and Canet say they have no regrets about giving up their children for adoption. But still, they have conflicting feelings.
"I knew as much as I wanted her, I couldn't take care of her," Canet said. "One of my biggest fears is that she'll grow up hating me. No one can guarantee she'll have a good childhood. This was the best I could do." She also has some fears about being too "open." She insisted that a newspaper article either include her last name or her picture — but not both. "It's a question of protecting privacy — theirs and mine." For Winlers, the decision to give up her child came relatively easily. In the previous year, she'd had an abortion.
"I considered adoption then, and I feel like I was talked out of it. This time, I was determined to treat my own feelings," she said.
She discovered the second unexpected pregnancy just as she was ending a relationship with the child's father. She didn't want another abortion, nor did she feel confident about raising a child alone.
"Most adoptive parents have already gone through the whole process of dealing with infertility. Chances are their relationship is pretty strong after all that."

Mothers who are giving up children "need to have some sense of control," Arma concludes. "In closed adoptions, where the identities of the birth parents and the adoptive parents are kept from each other, there is always a shadow hanging over everyone. That shadow can pop up any time. When the child decides to search for his birth parents. When the adoptive parents blame problems on the child's roots. And when the birth mother finds she has trouble forming permanent relationships."
Arma defines an open adoption as one in which "the control of all the decisions rests with the people directly affected, which means primarily those who are raising the child."
But, Arma said, even in so-called open adoptions, "there has to be structure. An adoption has to be final. It doesn't mean a biological parent should have no rights. In the past, they were kept from knowing virtually anything about where the child went — all society gave them was a right to be punished ..."

IN BOTH AGENCY and private adoptions, then, the trend is toward more openness throughout the adoptive process.
Susanne Arma, who has just published "To Love and Let Go," a book that follows several adoptions through the eyes of all the parties — the birth parents, the adoptive parents and the adopted child — argues that some degree of openness is essential to a successful adoption.
Mothers who are giving up children "need to have some sense of control," Arma concludes. "In closed adoptions, where the identities of the birth parents and the adoptive parents are kept from each other, there is always a shadow hanging over everyone. That shadow can pop up any time. When the child decides to search for his birth parents. When the adoptive parents blame problems on the child's roots. And when the birth mother finds she has trouble forming permanent relationships."
Arma defines an open adoption as one in which "the control of all the decisions rests with the people directly affected, which means primarily those who are raising the child."
But, Arma said, even in so-called open adoptions, "there has to be structure. An adoption has to be final. It doesn't mean a biological parent should have no rights. In the past, they were kept from knowing virtually anything about where the child went — all society gave them was a right to be punished ..."

CROSS THE country, an estimated 40 couples are waiting for every infant available for adoption. In Calloway, there were 9,568 requests for children in the last quarter of 1983. In Santa Clara County, there were only 17 adoptions completed. "Approved" homes on the waiting list.
The baby shortage is largely due to legalized abortion, more effective contraception and a trend among unmarried teen-age mothers to keep their children.
At agencies and adoption attorneys' offices, the birth mother is typically given several resumes or files to flip through. Often, she can arrange to meet the prospective adoptive parents. In some cases, both parties disclose only their first names. In others, they become longtime friends. Most fall somewhere in between.
On the other side of the adoption picture are the adoptive parents. They often wait years to be chosen, either through an agency or by a birth mother who often has seen their "resume" and picture at a doctor's or lawyer's office.
After six years of infertility tests and several operations, Jeff and Carole Plotnick of San Jose decided to try adoption. They waited five more years and 10 months before they received their daughter, Kristin, from the Children's Home Society.
In the early part of their search, the Plotnicks sent out resumes at the suggestion of a private attorney. But after two adoptions fell through — the birth mother decided to keep their babies at the last minute — the Plotnicks decided to use an agency.
"The issue of loss became very real to us," Carole Plotnick said. "We were up and down and back and forth continually. With the agency, we didn't get the call until it was time to just go and pick up Kristin."
They got the baby when she was less than a month old. A little more than a year later, they're very protective of Kristin. They asked that details about her adoption — how many days old she was when they got her, where she was born and other identifying characteristics — be excluded from a newspaper article.

IN BOTH AGENCY and private adoptions, then, the trend is toward more openness throughout the adoptive process.
Susanne Arma, who has just published "To Love and Let Go," a book that follows several adoptions through the eyes of all the parties — the birth parents, the adoptive parents and the adopted child — argues that some degree of openness is essential to a successful adoption.
Mothers who are giving up children "need to have some sense of control," Arma concludes. "In closed adoptions, where the identities of the birth parents and the adoptive parents are kept from each other, there is always a shadow hanging over everyone. That shadow can pop up any time. When the child decides to search for his birth parents. When the adoptive parents blame problems on the child's roots. And when the birth mother finds she has trouble forming permanent relationships."
Arma defines an open adoption as one in which "the control of all the decisions rests with the people directly affected, which means primarily those who are raising the child."
But, Arma said, even in so-called open adoptions, "there has to be structure. An adoption has to be final. It doesn't mean a biological parent should have no rights. In the past, they were kept from knowing virtually anything about where the child went — all society gave them was a right to be punished ..."

CROSS THE country, an estimated 40 couples are waiting for every infant available for adoption. In Calloway, there were 9,568 requests for children in the last quarter of 1983. In Santa Clara County, there were only 17 adoptions completed. "Approved" homes on the waiting list.
The baby shortage is largely due to legalized abortion, more effective contraception and a trend among unmarried teen-age mothers to keep their children.
At agencies and adoption attorneys' offices, the birth mother is typically given several resumes or files to flip through. Often, she can arrange to meet the prospective adoptive parents. In some cases, both parties disclose only their first names. In others, they become longtime friends. Most fall somewhere in between.
On the other side of the adoption picture are the adoptive parents. They often wait years to be chosen, either through an agency or by a birth mother who often has seen their "resume" and picture at a doctor's or lawyer's office.
After six years of infertility tests and several operations, Jeff and Carole Plotnick of San Jose decided to try adoption. They waited five more years and 10 months before they received their daughter, Kristin, from the Children's Home Society.
In the early part of their search, the Plotnicks sent out resumes at the suggestion of a private attorney. But after two adoptions fell through — the birth mother decided to keep their babies at the last minute — the Plotnicks decided to use an agency.
"The issue of loss became very real to us," Carole Plotnick said. "We were up and down and back and forth continually. With the agency, we didn't get the call until it was time to just go and pick up Kristin."
They got the baby when she was less than a month old. A little more than a year later, they're very protective of Kristin. They asked that details about her adoption — how many days old she was when they got her, where she was born and other identifying characteristics — be excluded from a newspaper article.

IN BOTH AGENCY and private adoptions, then, the trend is toward more openness throughout the adoptive process.
Susanne Arma, who has just published "To Love and Let Go," a book that follows several adoptions through the eyes of all the parties — the birth parents, the adoptive parents and the adopted child — argues that some degree of openness is essential to a successful adoption.
Mothers who are giving up children "need to have some sense of control," Arma concludes. "In closed adoptions, where the identities of the birth parents and the adoptive parents are kept from each other, there is always a shadow hanging over everyone. That shadow can pop up any time. When the child decides to search for his birth parents. When the adoptive parents blame problems on the child's roots. And when the birth mother finds she has trouble forming permanent relationships."
Arma defines an open adoption as one in which "the control of all the decisions rests with the people directly affected, which means primarily those who are raising the child."
But, Arma said, even in so-called open adoptions, "there has to be structure. An adoption has to be final. It doesn't mean a biological parent should have no rights. In the past, they were kept from knowing virtually anything about where the child went — all society gave them was a right to be punished ..."

GIORIA AMBROSINI, spokeswoman for the Santa Clara County adoption service, said the agency places only about 10 infants a year and has about 100 couples waiting at any one time. The number of available infants has fallen so drastically in the past 10 years, she said, that the county agency has now changed its focus toward the placement of older children and handicapped children, the traditionally hard-to-place children with special needs. At Catholic Social Services, spokeswoman Marcia Popper said that about 100 couples are on the waiting list at any given time. That agency lets couples they can reasonably expect a 2 1/2-year wait for a child. "Because birth parents are so active now in choosing the family for their child, we try to keep a balanced pool of homes that represent all the different kinds of people who make up the world," Popper said. Louise Gulin, adoption program coordinator at Children's Home Society, said prospective adoptive parents in their files wait "anywhere from three months to four years." These days, she said, most birth parents want on playing a role in selecting adoptive parents.
After interviewing the birth mother — or both — she, it possible — Gulin said, the agency chooses from its files several families that seem to fit the birth parents' ideal couple. The birth parents outline how they think the adoptive parents should feel about religion, discipline, sports, education and a variety of other matters. They discuss the lives and interests of the parent. They think would be perfect for their child. "Occasionally, they ask to meet a couple. . . . We will arrange that," she said. "We honor their wishes."

IN BOTH AGENCY and private adoptions, then, the trend is toward more openness throughout the adoptive process.
Susanne Arma, who has just published "To Love and Let Go," a book that follows several adoptions through the eyes of all the parties — the birth parents, the adoptive parents and the adopted child — argues that some degree of openness is essential to a successful adoption.
Mothers who are giving up children "need to have some sense of control," Arma concludes. "In closed adoptions, where the identities of the birth parents and the adoptive parents are kept from each other, there is always a shadow hanging over everyone. That shadow can pop up any time. When the child decides to search for his birth parents. When the adoptive parents blame problems on the child's roots. And when the birth mother finds she has trouble forming permanent relationships."
Arma defines an open adoption as one in which "the control of all the decisions rests with the people directly affected, which means primarily those who are raising the child."
But, Arma said, even in so-called open adoptions, "there has to be structure. An adoption has to be final. It doesn't mean a biological parent should have no rights. In the past, they were kept from knowing virtually anything about where the child went — all society gave them was a right to be punished ..."

IN BOTH AGENCY and private adoptions, then, the trend is toward more openness throughout the adoptive process.
Susanne Arma, who has just published "To Love and Let Go," a book that follows several adoptions through the eyes of all the parties — the birth parents, the adoptive parents and the adopted child — argues that some degree of openness is essential to a successful adoption.
Mothers who are giving up children "need to have some sense of control," Arma concludes. "In closed adoptions, where the identities of the birth parents and the adoptive parents are kept from each other, there is always a shadow hanging over everyone. That shadow can pop up any time. When the child decides to search for his birth parents. When the adoptive parents blame problems on the child's roots. And when the birth mother finds she has trouble forming permanent relationships."
Arma defines an open adoption as one in which "the control of all the decisions rests with the people directly affected, which means primarily those who are raising the child."
But, Arma said, even in so-called open adoptions, "there has to be structure. An adoption has to be final. It doesn't mean a biological parent should have no rights. In the past, they were kept from knowing virtually anything about where the child went — all society gave them was a right to be punished ..."

IN BOTH AGENCY and private adoptions, then, the trend is toward more openness throughout the adoptive process.
Susanne Arma, who has just published "To Love and Let Go," a book that follows several adoptions through the eyes of all the parties — the birth parents, the adoptive parents and the adopted child — argues that some degree of openness is essential to a successful adoption.
Mothers who are giving up children "need to have some sense of control," Arma concludes. "In closed adoptions, where the identities of the birth parents and the adoptive parents are kept from each other, there is always a shadow hanging over everyone. That shadow can pop up any time. When the child decides to search for his birth parents. When the adoptive parents blame problems on the child's roots. And when the birth mother finds she has trouble forming permanent relationships."
Arma defines an open adoption as one in which "the control of all the decisions rests with the people directly affected, which means primarily those who are raising the child."
But, Arma said, even in so-called open adoptions, "there has to be structure. An adoption has to be final. It doesn't mean a biological parent should have no rights. In the past, they were kept from knowing virtually anything about where the child went — all society gave them was a right to be punished ..."

IN BOTH AGENCY and private adoptions, then, the trend is toward more openness throughout the adoptive process.
Susanne Arma, who has just published "To Love and Let Go," a book that follows several adoptions through the eyes of all the parties — the birth parents, the adoptive parents and the adopted child — argues that some degree of openness is essential to a successful adoption.
Mothers who are giving up children "need to have some sense of control," Arma concludes. "In closed adoptions, where the identities of the birth parents and the adoptive parents are kept from each other, there is always a shadow hanging over everyone. That shadow can pop up any time. When the child decides to search for his birth parents. When the adoptive parents blame problems on the child's roots. And when the birth mother finds she has trouble forming permanent relationships."
Arma defines an open adoption as one in which "the control of all the decisions rests with the people directly affected, which means primarily those who are raising the child."
But, Arma said, even in so-called open adoptions, "there has to be structure. An adoption has to be final. It doesn't mean a biological parent should have no rights. In the past, they were kept from knowing virtually anything about where the child went — all society gave them was a right to be punished ..."

1001

1001

Bright Side Of Adoption

DEAR READERS: "Curious in Florida," the parents of three adopted children, asked me to poll my readers to find out what to expect if their adopted children decided to search for their biological parents.

Today, a sample of letters with happy endings:

DEAR ABBY: Being an adopted child, I yearned to know about my "roots," but I didn't want to hurt my adoptive parents, so I waited until after I was married to start my search.

Three months later, I flew to a small Midwestern town and walked into a Dairy Queen where my mother was working behind the counter. I knew immediately that she was my mother. She looked at me and something told her that I was the daughter she hadn't seen since I was 5 days old. We were both overcome with emotion. Her boss sent her home and we talked until 5 a.m. She's been divorced twice, has three other children and seven stepchildren. She's had a hard life.

I'm glad I satisfied my curiosity. I'm also glad she had the courage to give me up. It made me appreciate my adoptive parents all the more.

GLAD I SEARCHED

DEAR ABBY: I gave up a beautiful boy 22 years ago because I was 16, unmarried and my parents forced me to.

I was contacted six months ago by an attorney who asked me if I wanted to meet the child I had given away in 1962. I was thrilled out of my mind! I'm married now and have four children and a wonderful husband. He knew about my first-born; my children did not.

My husband and I flew immediately

S.F. Chronicle - April 1984



to meet my son. It was an emotionally charged experience for all of us. His adoptive parents had told him on his 21st birthday that if he wanted to meet me, they would make the search and they did. Imagine that! They had a fine dinner and spent the evening showing us home movies of their son from the day they got him until he graduated from college last May. It was almost like watching him grow up. We were treated like "family."

We gained a son and our lives have been enriched. Our hearts are filled with love and gratitude for these generous people, and "our son" (as they call him) could not be a finer gentleman.

OUR CUP RUNNETH OVER

DEAR ABBY: I located my birth mother. This was her message to me: "Thank you for affirming that I did the right thing in giving you up. I wish to God I had had the courage to do the same thing for your younger brother and sister, but society lays such a guilt trip on us if we don't raise our own children.

"Please go home and tell your parents 'thanks' from both of us. Goodbye."

I won't tell you what my life would have been like if I had been raised by this bitter, unhappy woman.

I was happy to have seen the contrast and grateful to her for having given me away — and even more grateful to the mother who raised me.

SAN DIEGO

Tomorrow: Letters with less than happy endings. Stay tuned.

Motherhood has its tragic side

This is the tale of two mothers.

They have the title by definition: a female who gives birth to an offspring.

Yet, neither has nursed her baby, bathed it, rocked it or kissed it as it slept.

They show up every Mother's Day to painfully remember that moment when they made a decision they would question for the rest of their lives.

When Peg (not her real name) decided to give her baby up for adoption she was 17 years old. "I didn't even think of the part of the child I was taking with me," she wrote. "All I thought of was trying to get my parents to stop crying, get my life back to normal, and find a place for the baby to grow.

"Does anyone know how many times I sat on my bed and hugged my pillow and ached for him? I held him once, but I doubt that he remembers anything I told him. I told him hello and goodbye when he was 10 days old. I told him to never forget how much I loved him. I loved him enough to let go when it was best. I could never do it again. It almost killed me.

"Sometimes I have this heart-felt panic that I don't know if he is in danger. I remember the flutterings of life, but it's all I have of my son. I don't even have the satisfaction of knowing he loves and trusts me."

Pam (not her real name) was estranged from her family when she became pregnant. Without a sup-

Gilroy Dispatch 5-14-84

Erma Bombeck



port system she clung desperately "to the one human being who related to my doubts and fears.

"Every little child we see that is about the same age reminds us of the gifts that we denied. The life we destroyed or gave away. Few people would allow us the right to say that we lost a child. 'Lost' is too easy. We should be made to admit the full weight of our sins. Admit that we 'murdered or abandoned' it. None of us expect sympathy. But a little compassion would help."

Excerpts from the letters of these two mothers are shared with you on this day for one reason. Not to judge. Not to pass sentence. But to point out to young girls who have not been faced with the decision, that pregnancy is not as "simplistic" or as "routine" or as "final" as society would have you believe.

This is the one moment in your life where they will be done. And it is awesome.

It is not the end of a problem — but only the beginning.

NEW!

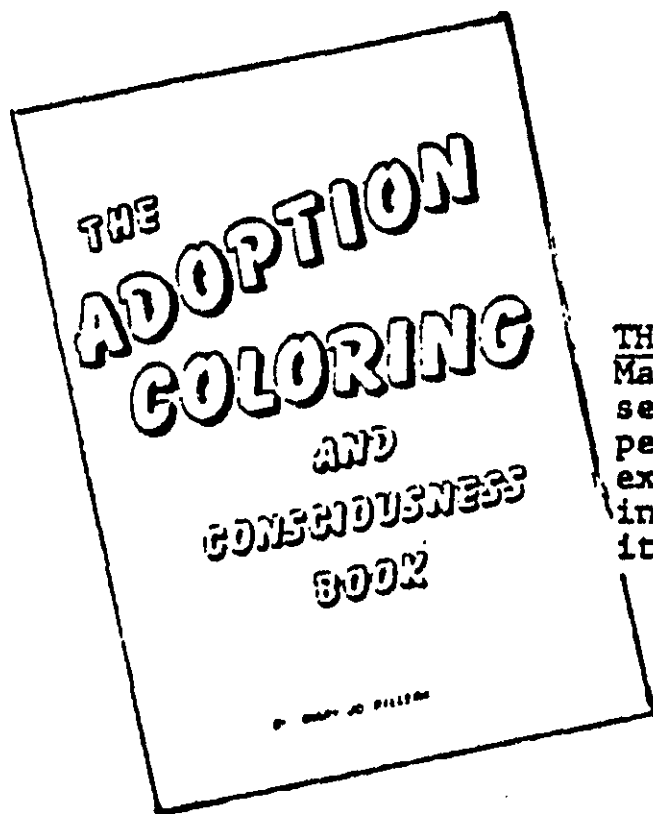
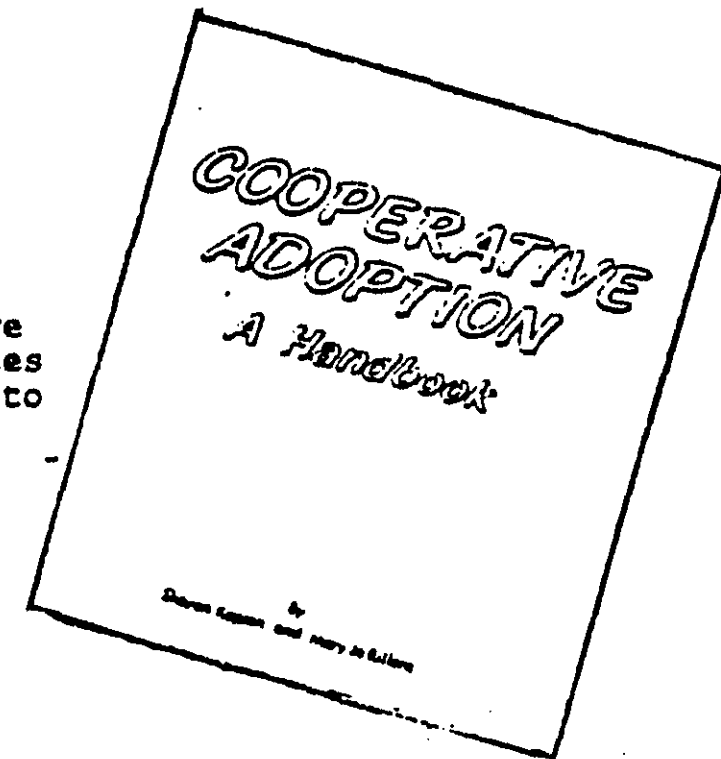
at TRIADOPTION^{S.M.}

Remember your donations help keep information available.

BOOKLETS

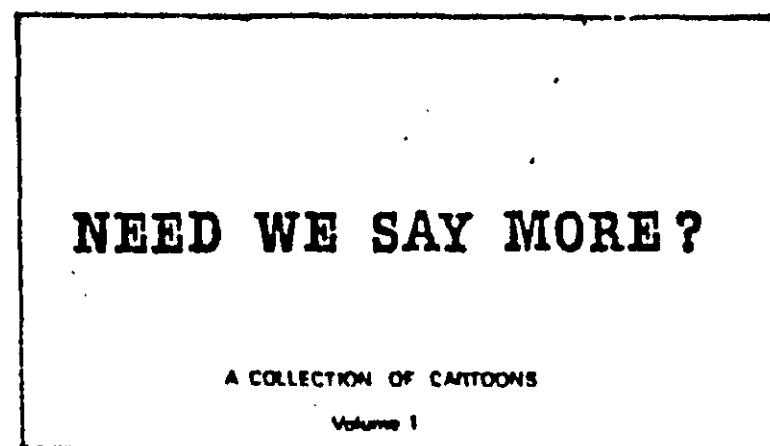
FOR EACH DONATION OF \$7.00 or more
order one of the following -

COOPERATIVE ADOPTION A Handbook for prospective birth and adoptive families. This guide outlines development of cooperative, open relationships to guarantee the adoptee continued access to both families, information and identity.



THE ADOPTION COLORING AND CONSCIOUSNESS BOOK by Mary Jo Hillera. Fifty-two pages of nonsense and sense. It is a path to travel and a guide for your personal growth. It is a tool for internal and external change. It is an instrument to be utilized in expanding awareness. It is exactly what you make it!

NEED WE SAY MORE? A COLLECTION OF CARTOONS Volume 1. These cartoons have appeared in publications around the world and are sent into Triadoption as part of the clipping service. They are compiled as part of an educational outreach to reflect the judgemental, questionable, negative or humorous views of society.



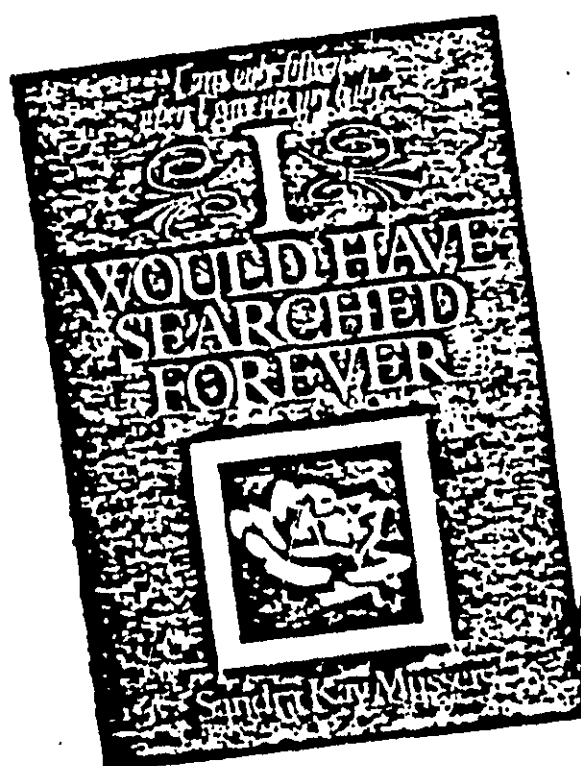
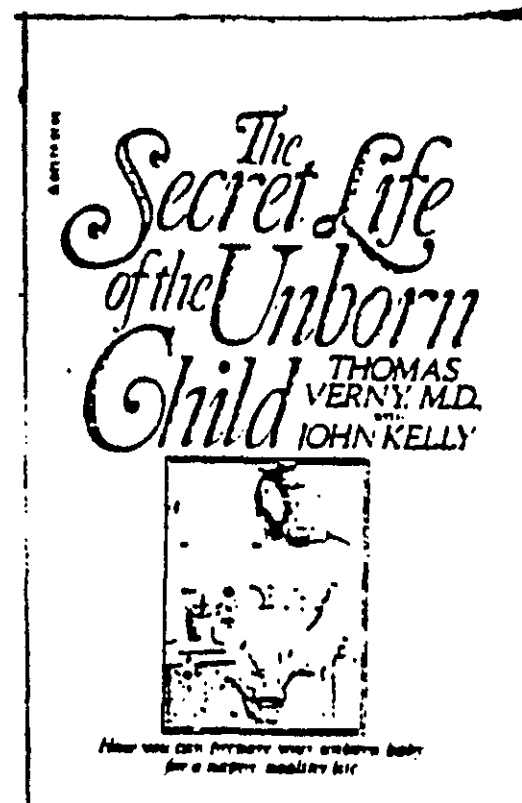
BOOKS

FOR EACH DONATION OF \$15.00 or more
order one of the following -



LOST AND FOUND THE ADOPTION EXPERIENCE by Betty Jean Lifton. A powerful, eloquently moving book pleads for the right of the adoptee to know their origins. It sets out to shatter the taboo of secrecy and guilt surrounding the information that is crucial to the emotional well-being of every individual.

THE SECRET LIFE OF THE UNBORN CHILD by Thomas Verny, M.D., with John Kelly. The ways a parent responds to the unborn child may affect his/her physical and emotional well-being forever. Voices, sounds, music, stress, sensitivities and environment can influence the unborn child. A wonderful, enlightening look into the magic of pre and post birth infant worlds.



I WOULD HAVE SEARCHED FOREVER by Sandra Kay Musser. The first of two tells of Sandra's reluctant surrender of her infant daughter and the search to locate her years later. Though this book ends without resolve the personal, religious, spiritual reflections uplift the reader.

WHAT KIND OF LOVE IS THIS? By Sandra Kay Musser. Where I WOULD HAVE SEARCHED ends, this book begins. It completes not only her personal story and insightful resolution but includes others stories.

1006

SEARCH FINDERS OF CALIFORNIA
P.O. BOX 24595
SAN JOSE, CA 95154-4595
(408) 356-6711

"IDENTITY IS IMPORTANT"

Volume I No. 3
Pennie Peterson - Editor

FALL 1984
Carol Longoria - Staff Writer

SEARCH FINDERS OF CALIFORNIA is a volunteer organization composed of Adoptees, Adoptive Parents, Birth Parents and others searching for relatives.

Our purpose is to assist in searches and/or reunions. A warm and supportive environment is provided in which to share the joys and frustrations of this search. The opportunity is offered for anyone involved to share his or her experiences

The Staff, some of which are nationally certified by "Independent Search Consultants", volunteer their time and contribute over 30 years of combined experience. They frequently attend workshops, seminars, local and national conferences to keep current on issues, techniques, and to establish networking.

SEARCH FINDERS is a member of the American Adoption Congress, a national organization whose aim is to promote openness, honesty and sound practices in adoption.

NEXT GENERAL MEETING DATES AND TIMES*

- 7:30 p.m. = General Sharing Time
- 8:15 p.m. = 15 minute break time - coffee and library time
- 8:30 p.m. = Individual Search Time and Potential New Member Orientation

Location:
Mercury Savings and Loan
Community Room
Corner of Blossom Hill and Pearl
San Jose, CA

Dates:
November 8th
December 13th
January 10th
February 14th

*Always the 2nd Thurs of the month.

CHANGE IN TIME STRUCTURE OF GENERAL MEETINGS

The time structure of our General Meetings has been changed. It was decided that the system was not working as well as planned . . . so out with the old and in with the new. As noted below, there will be a 15 minutes break to get coffee, tea and take care of your library needs. After this time, members will consult with their Primary Search Consultants and potential new members will be given an orientation and sign up session before being assigned to their Primary Search Consultant.

LIBRARY TO RENT-A-BOOK

Due to the number of books that have been lost and the problem of keeping our library current with the latest adoption books, we are changing our library policies from a free lend system to a Rent-A-Book system. The Library will only be open during a break time at the General Meetings. To Rent-A-Book you will have to be a member and need to donate \$1.00 for soft-back books and \$2.00 for hard-back books. For more information see LAURIE GONTERMAN, Search Finders's Librarian.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Starting in November, Search Finders will give out membership cards for current members. If you are unable to attend the November meeting, look for them in the mail. This is a good time to check and see if your membership is current. If it is not, remember renewals are only \$15.00. See or call BECKIE EASTWOOD, Membership Secretary for more information.

STEVE LOPEZ

We are very proud to include a copy of STEVE'S article written about LAURIE GONTERMAN'S story and Search Finders. We hope you enjoy it !!!!

