

Chain of Life

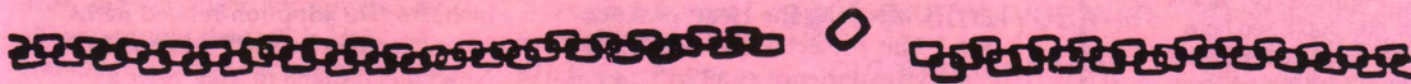
Issues in Adoption and Child Welfare

▲ SINCE 1989 ▲



P.O. Box 8081 • Berkeley, California 94707

Issue 37 • WINTER 1996 • JANINE BAER, M.A., EDITOR



An Adoptee in Cyberspace

Some of you have known the wonders of on-line communication for a while but I finally connected to adoption resources on the Internet in December. It was easy once I got access at work. With Netscape software installed, all I had to do was type "adoption" to search for relevant organizations; a group with "adoption" in its title came up on the screen. It was for adopting parents but it directed me to many other adoption-related sources.

With a click of the mouse, I learned the basics of how to adopt in China (healthy infant girls six months and older are available; adoption rules are set by the Chinese government). With another click, I connected with the Adoptees Mailing List, closer to my personal concerns. In a few more seconds, I found an article about the psychological needs of adoptees titled, "Issues Facing Adult Adoptees" from the National Adoption Information Clearinghouse (5640 Nicholson Lane, Suite 300, Rockville, MD 20852; 301-231-6512). Subtopics within the article include "Identity and Self-Es-

teem," "Feelings of Abandonment," "The Interest in Genetic Information," and "How Adopted Persons Cope" — our coping tools fall into the subtopics of "Support Groups," "Counseling,"

**instant
support
groups**

and "The Search for Birth Parents." The National Clearinghouse also has articles from the birth parents' perspective.

This medium is exciting because of the speed with which information can be accessed. No trips to the library, no waiting for information to be mailed to you the old-fashioned way via "snail mail," as Internet users call the postal system. Cyberspace has no geographic boundaries. And

with a color monitor, you can see full color pictures and graphics, something even a speedy but monochromatic fax machine can't match. For searchers, the Internet can be a remarkable search tool if you know the name of the person you want to find.

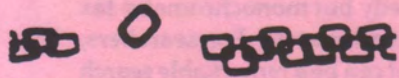
The Internet was created by the U.S. Department of Defense in the 1960s as an alternative means of communication that would survive a nuclear attack. By the 1980s, while waiting for that unpleasant scenario not to transpire, people at universities began to communicate on the Internet. At recent count, ten million Americans of all kinds had joined the party, with many more people worldwide.

The main obstacle to cyberspace, in my view and in my life, is (no surprise) money: to buy the computer, the software, a modem to connect your computer to your phone, and hourly fees to connect to an on-line service. I would be glad to receive articles about your adoption experiences in cyberspace. But please send them the old-fashioned way — until I get connected at home. ▲

CHAIN OF LIFE

is a forum for exploring adoption and related topics with special emphasis on the views of adopted adults. Viewpoints of authors are not necessarily held by the publisher and discussion on any topic is welcome. Please indicate whether any item you send to Chain of Life may be published.

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The title "Chain of Life" refers to the physical, genetic connection that *all people* have with other people, but that only adoptees in closed records adoptions are asked to ignore. Like everyone, adoptees are the product of our genes, our life experiences, and our own thoughts and actions. We have a right to know as much about ourselves as we need and want to know.

In addition to advocating open adoption records, Chain of Life works toward developing an understanding of when adoption is appropriate for some children, and when other forms of support are preferable, both in our current society and in a more humane society of the future. ▲

ADOPTION NEWS AND RESOURCES

▲ Sheila Ganz showed her film-in-progress at a benefit screening to a full house in Marin County, California, in early December. Sheila writes, "Myth, silence and fear have for too long dominated adoption. As a means of breaking down these barriers to integration and understanding, I am making the documentary, 'Unlocking the Heart of Adoption.' This project comes out of my personal experience as a birth parent. I narrate the film and tell my story along with different stories of adoptees, birth parents and adoptive parents in closed, open and transracial adoptions. This timely film will be a valuable educational tool in the national and international adoption community by encouraging openness and truth in adoption. This will lead to a healthy adoptive family environment, better communication in reunions and inner healing."

Sheila's film has been growing — in quality and in length — over the eight years she has been working on it. I saw it in April 1995 at the American Adoption Congress conference in Las Vegas and thought it was excellent but Sheila tells me it has even gotten better.

If Sheila Ganz's name sounds more familiar than the film's title, that could be because the title has changed over time from "Sealed Records, Sealed Lives" to "Broken Plate" to its current incarnation as "Unlocking the Heart of Adoption." For more information or to send a donation toward completion of the film, write: *Unlocking the Heart of Adoption, 1546 Great Highway, Suite 44, San Francisco, CA 94122.*

Sheila's goal is to finish the film by April, when she will be showing it at the AAC conference in Baltimore. After that she wants to have it shown

on public television. She will be presenting additional benefit screenings in the Bay Area this winter. For details, see the back of this newsletter, or call 415 / 564-3691.

▲ The October 1995 issue of *Klanwatch Intelligence Report*, a Project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, includes two adoption-related items in its "For The Record" section. In Newville, Indiana in May 1995, a white couple who adopted a black baby received threatening letters; racial slurs were written on their van and in their house. In Ashland, Oregon, also in May, a letter containing racial slurs and threats was sent to a white couple with ten adopted children, seven of whom are black and two who are Korean. *Thank you to the reader who sent in this information.*

▲ A high court ruling in New York makes it legal in that state for unmarried couples, both heterosexual and homosexual to adopt children. The New York Court of Appeals in Albany decided by a four-to-three vote that since single adults can adopt regardless of sexual orientation, the rights should extend to qualified unmarried couples. "To rule otherwise would mean that the thousands of New York children actually being raised in homes headed by two unmarried persons could have only one legal parent, not the two who want them," Judge Judith Kay wrote for the court's majority. New York is the third state after Vermont and Massachusetts to legalize the adoption of children by lesbian and gay couples. *Information from Sojourner, December 1995.*

▲ "Laurel L. Wilkening, chancellor of the University of California's

Irvine campus, told the UC board of regents at its meeting in San Francisco that her inquiry into allegations of stolen human embryos and missing records 'has been an exercise in frustration in the search for truth.' She added, 'The lack of cooperation by doctors and the lack of documents have been obstacles to the search for truth and have been encountered by all who sought the facts.' The scandal has forced the closure of UC Irvine's Center for Reproductive Health and three doctors have been suspended. But they are still getting salaries ranging from \$80,300 to \$120,000, a fact that made several regents nearly apoplectic. Two of the three doctors have fled the country, but the paychecks for all three are still being regularly deposited to their accounts....

"The allegations against the doctors, first raised by the clinic's bookkeeper in March 1994, are that the doctors 'took eggs and embryos from women without their consent and transferred them to other women, who were also not aware that the eggs or embryos were taken without the donor's consent,' Wilkening said. 'Next to outrage over these acts,' Wilkening told the regents, 'my other overwhelming emotion is anguish for the women and their families who languish in uncertainty over what happened to them.' "

Wilkening said that letters went out to 58 patients of the fertility clinic in November, "telling them doctors may have implanted them with eggs or embryos without their consent. More than 80 women have now been warned that they were either unwitting donors or recipients. Some of the women later gave birth, leaving the child's biological parentage in doubt."

...The FBI managed to get the records, but now UC cannot obtain them because "Federal law prohibits agents from disclosing such information while they are still in the middle of their investigation."

— excerpted from an article by Michael Taylor, San Francisco Chronicle, Nov. 17, 1995.

▲ **Adoption Searcher's Kit** includes how to avoid scams and rip-offs about searching, support groups in your area, searching legally on-line, and state requirements for access to information (such as whether you can register with an intermediary) in the state where the adoption was finalized. Send \$10. and the name of the state to: *Michele Heiderer, 163 Jim Creek Road, Arlington, WA 98223.*

▲ **Life Connections** is a mental health organization that specializes in adoption issues. They conduct therapy groups for adult adoptees, adolescent adoptees and adoptive parents in Albuquerque, New Mexico. For more information, call Nancy Parkhill at (505) 842-0776.

▲ A resource for lesbian and gay parents in Massachusetts is *Conceptions*,

a newsletter published by the Fenway Community Health Center. Write to: *100 Massachusetts Ave., Suite 401, Boston, MA 02115 or call 617-267-7766 ext. 570.*

doctors may have implanted them with eggs or embryos without their consent

▲ **Rainbow Flag Health Services** is a donor insemination program for lesbians who want known, gay male donors. RFHS has explained in its ads, "Some

artificially conceived children start asking about their biological fathers as young as 3 and 4. Being a known donor gives Gay Men who do not want to raise children an opportunity to have children in their lives, connects them to Lesbian families, and helps build community. Many Lesbians want donors to play "uncle" to their children. The demand for known donors is much greater than the supply...."

Two programs are now available: one in which the donor will be identified when the child is 3 months old, and one in which donors and recipients meet in person before a child's conception. **Rainbow Flag Health Services** can be reached at (510) 763-7737.



A national organization and referral network by and for lesbians choosing children. Wonderful, affirming 16 page momma'zine, celebrating lesbians' experiences and opinions about considering children, creating a family, blending families, and other diverse issues of significance to lesbian mothers, their friends, and their families. \$15-25 sliding scale annual membership, or \$3.00 for sample and information. 6x/yr. P.O. Box 82069, Columbus, Ohio 43202. (614) 267-0193.

Giving Away Simone by Jan L. Waldron

reviewed by *Marlou Russell, Ph.D.*

This book review was first published in New Woman Spirit, 270 N. Canon Drive, Suite 1309, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Subscriptions to New Woman Spirit are \$15. for 3 issues.

IN 1969, JAN WALDRON WAS seventeen, pregnant and unmarried. In her new book *Giving Away Simone* (Times Books), Waldron offers us some painful truths about being a birthmother. She describes relinquishing her baby, meeting her biracial daughter eleven years later and their ongoing reunion relationship.

Adoption runs in Waldron's family. She comes from a long line of women who didn't keep their children and children who lost their mothers. Her own mother, an adoptee, abandoned the family when Waldron and her brother were pre-teens. They were raised by their mother's mother — a woman who loved babies but never had biological children of her own.

This is the legacy Jan Waldron bravely sets out to explore. She doesn't ask anyone to pity her. Yet it's easy to empathize with her pain and the difficult decisions she had to make. Waldron describes with self-effacing candor her feelings about being pregnant: "I did not know, and was afraid to decide, my plan for this baby. So estranged was I from my own instincts that I deferred to anyone with an opinion."

Waldron describes what she ex-

perienced as a birthmother — fear, scorn, low self-esteem and the disrespect given to such an important

nection between the birth family and the adoptive family by visiting Simone over the years. He was the one who drove Waldron to meet Simone (re-named Rebecca) when she was eleven years old. Waldron's description of this meeting is moving and poignant, as is her telling of their continuing relationship.

Waldron's and Simone's emotional journey toward understanding is a long and arduous

Waldron directed her feelings about her surrendered daughter deep inside where no one — not even she — could reach them.

event as childbirth. Ironically, the only person who suggested that Waldron keep her baby was the pre-adoptive mother, her high school art teacher's wife.

Many birthmothers will identify with Waldron's experience of becoming a woman too soon. She tried to return to adolescence, but her memories differed from her classmates'. She had missed the prom, graduation, boyfriends and being grounded. Waldron directed her feelings about her surrendered daughter deep inside where no one — not even she — could reach them. The price of this protective barrier was feeling unlovable and forgetting how to cry.

Waldron's brother kept the con-

one. Waldron's balancing act of interacting with her new family and integrating Simone is a noble attempt at what she calls "giving her children to each other." The tenderness, crises, misunderstandings and communications of their reunion relationship allow the reader to see the truth about adoption. It becomes clear that an adoptee can still need mothering and that the pain of giving away your daughter never goes away.

Waldron explores the reunion relationship with Simone through stories of their experiences and letters they sent each other. But *Giving Away Simone* goes beyond being a story of relinquishment, reunion and open adoption. The author exposes her feelings and accepts responsibility for her actions. She now

CHAIN LETTERS



knows she had a baby to retrieve her mother, who had abandoned her. It takes courage and insight to be that honest, to admit to a personal agenda versus claiming the pregnancy was an accident. This is the beauty of *Giving Away Simone* and what sets it apart from some other birthmothers' books.

Waldron advocates truth-telling in adoption and tells the truth very well, using her sharp wit and personal vulnerabilities. Anyone involved in adoption or considering adoption should read *Giving Away Simone* to dispel their myths about open adoptions. The facts Waldron shares may surprise many people.

Jan Waldron is a brave and noble woman, not because she gave up her only daughter for adoption but because she has explored the larger picture of her family dynamics and questions the wisdom of current adoption practices. And how does Simone feel about Waldron, their relationship and the book? She writes about it in the afterword — don't miss it. ▲

Marlou Russell is a psychologist in private practice in Santa Monica, California, specializing in adoption issues. She lectures frequently on "The Lifelong Impact of Adoption," "Search and Reunion" and "What Therapists Need to Know About Adoption." Dr. Russell can be reached at (310) 829-1438.

November 1995

Janine,

I am including this note with my renewal for two reasons. First, to thank you for your newsletter. It keeps me up to date with new developments in legislation, books, and ways of thinking about adoption. It also makes me feel a little bit more "connected." Secondly, do you have any good resources, books, info about birthfathers? They are elusive!

Take it easy,

Kate Hemion
Santa Monica, CA

Response: And thank you for writing. As it happens, I remember seeing a new book about birth fathers listed in Tapestry Books' catalog. It is titled *Out of the Shadows: Birthfathers' Stories* by Mary Martin Mason. \$14.95 plus postage. Call Tapestry at 800-7675-2367; their list of adoption-related books grows all the time.

November 7, 1995

Dear Friends of *On the Vine*:

It has been many months since you received an issue of *On the Vine* — A Newsletter for Birth Parents of Minor Children, and for this I sincerely apologize. It is with a heavy heart that I write to you now to say that OTV publication has officially ended. Due to financial constraints, I am no longer able to support the production of this newsletter. After publishing the fourth issue (Spring 1995) I was still supporting 50% of the costs to produce OTV. Since that time, I have separated from my husband, and due to the enormous

demands of time and travel for my job, I can no longer keep my commitment to you as the publisher and editor of this newsletter.

I would like to thank each and every one of you for your interest, support, contributions, subscriptions and for sharing your intensely personal experiences as individuals who have been touched by adoption. I hope that in some sort of way, OTV helped you as it did me. I was able to connect to so many birth parents of minor children, as well as adoptive parents and adoptees. Before I started OTV, I felt as though there were few other birth parents out there like me: parents of children lost to adoption who had not been searched for and found. I know now that there are many of us, and that we often hesitate on the fringes of the adoption reform movement. We know that we must voice our opinions and take our place beside all the other members of the fight to reform adoption laws in this country and around the world. Emerson wrote that "Inaction is Suicide." Please be active, and believe in yourselves. We need not wait for any other person to tell us that we have "done our time" — for we already know that pain, and are too well acquainted with loss. Reach out to the people you meet on your journey to enlightenment who think positively and recognize your allies.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Dalton
Appleton, Wisconsin



Number of Children in Foster Care Rises in California

FEWER BEING REUNITED WITH FAMILIES

by Robert B. Gunnison
Chronicle Sacramento Bureau



January 6, 1996

Sacramento

The number of children removed from their families because of abuse and neglect in California has increased 25 percent since 1988, despite a state law designed to cut foster care placements, the legislative analyst reported yesterday.

Although the state's Child Welfare Services program is required by a 1982 law to keep children with parents whenever possible or reunify them quickly, foster care placement rates have risen from 6.8 per 1,000 children in 1988 to 9.2 in 1994. About half the children who enter foster care are not reunited with their parents.

The law also seeks to increase adoptions of children who cannot return to their families, but the report said the number of youngsters recommended for adoption has dropped, even though the number of foster children has increased.

Statewide, nearly 100,000 youngsters are in foster care, nearly double the number in 1988.

California's placement rate in 1993 was lower than that of New York and Illinois, but higher than the next seven most populous states.

"Foster care is an appropriate response to periodic crises."

— Marjorie Kelly,
Deputy Director,
Dept. of Social Services

Los Angeles County accounted for about 40 percent of the caseload in 1994 and had the highest placement rate of the 10 most populous counties — 16 per 1,000 children. Alameda and Contra Costa counties were slightly above the state average of 10, while Santa Clara County was below average.

Analyst Elizabeth Hill said more children could be reunited with parents if more services such as counseling were provided. "Currently, very few families receive ongoing services when a child is returned home," Hill said.

"It is likely that some children who are in long-term foster care could be

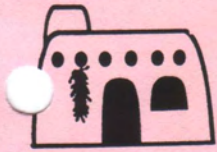
reunited with their families if counties had more flexibility to use foster care funds to provide services to the families rather than to pay for foster care placements," she said.

California is expected to pay \$1.7 billion in state, federal and local funds this year for foster care and child welfare services. Of this, about \$45 million will be spent on family preservation — programs designed to keep children and families together.

Hill said that more than one-third of children in the system in 1993 had been in the system at least three or more times, compared with about a quarter of the children in 1985.

Deputy Director Marjorie Kelly of the state Department of Social Services said she largely agreed with the report, and noted that the repeated placements may not be bad. "That may be a sign social workers are continuing to work with a family," she said. "Foster care is an appropriate response to periodic crises." ▲

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COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES (CASA) NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

Children's needs are not adequately funded in our society. Social workers do not have enough time to spend with children whose custody has been transferred to the state. In California, a volunteer organization called CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) has taken on the task of helping these children who have been removed from their families because of abuse or neglect. The CASA volunteer must devote about twelve hours a month to getting to know the child and being his or her advocate in court. Volunteers generally are committed to doing this for a year and a half. CASA also needs all kinds of professionals (lawyers, doctors, dentists, therapists) to volunteer their time

to these children.

If you would like to find out more about this program, contact CASA at 1-800-214-CASA. The California group can also be reached in San Francisco at 415-646-7365 or by e-mail at calcasa@slip.net. More information

is available on their website in cyberspace.



ANTI-ABORTION GROUP SEEKS TO LIMIT ADOPTEE ACCESS TO BIRTH INFORMATION

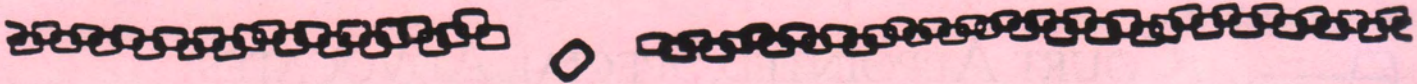
In the Adoption Network of Cleveland's November/December 1995 newsletter, Betsie Norris, Executive Director, wrote that an Ohio adoption reform bill was rewritten after the Ohio Right to Life Society met with Governor George Voinovich privately in September. Instead of a bill that would allow access to birth parent names when an adoptee reaches twenty-one — access that would not have been absolute since it could be vetoed by the birth parent — another bill that is better suited to the anti-abortion group was presented to the legislature. A group of

26 adoption professionals and organizations had been working with the governor for years to word the original bill and the Right to Life group changed it virtually over night.

The new version of House Bill 419 passed the Ohio House of Representatives by an overwhelming majority in November. It limits the non-identifying information that can be given to adopted adults, aiming to prevent the information from being used by an adoptee to identify the birth parent. Norris was not allowed to give her scheduled testimony about the bill at a

meeting in October, supposedly for lack of time, while the anti-abortion representative spoke for over an hour. In the January/February *Adoption Network News*, Norris called for constituents to contact their state senators in the hope of changing the wording of the bill, which is a comprehensive adoption bill that is likely to pass and to become Ohio's law for a long time.

Betsie Norris can be reached at 291 East 222 Street, Cleveland, OH 44123-1751, (216) 261-1511 for further information. By the time you receive this newsletter, the vote may have already been taken. ▲



More on Adoptees in Cyberspace: THE ADOPTEES MAILING LIST


I recently began receiving electronic mail from the Adoptees Mailing List and I'm very impressed with it as a means of communication among adoptees about our concerns. A subscriber can ask for advice, suggestions, or feedback from 1,000 or so others by posting a message to the entire list. Responses to these queries can be sent privately to the requestor or to the whole group. There are requests for help in searching for birth families as well as discussion about various issues and experiences of interest to adoptees.

While other online groups are open to all triad members, the Adoptees Mailing List was started specifically for adopted adults to share information and support among themselves. Angry or insulting messages, known as flames, are frowned

upon. Quoting anyone in print or even sharing messages outside the list is not permitted without consent of the individual author of a message. These guidelines helped build a safe context for sharing thoughts and feelings. The moderator of the list is Jeff Hartung, based in San Diego.

The Adoptees Mailing List is yet another reason to go electronic. When my daily batch of messages did not arrive, I missed receiving them!

Postscript: At the beginning of February, Jeff Hartung told the list that he will step down as its administrator at the end of the month. The list is in flux and will either continue with new volunteers or will be replaced with one or more similar lists.



WHO YOU ARE:

CHAIN OF LIFE SUBSCRIBERS AS OF FEBRUARY 8, 1996

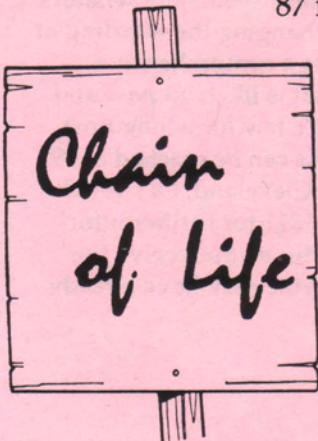
This newsletter is being sent to 92 paid subscribers and 24 organizations with which I exchange newsletters. The geographic breakdown of the 92 subscribers follows:

1 in NEW ZEALAND

4 in CANADA

87 in the UNITED STATES, in 24 different states:

- 40 in California
- 7 in New York
- 5 in New Jersey
- 5 in Illinois
- 3 each in Georgia and Iowa
- 2 each in Washington, Oregon, Hawaii, Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts
- 1 subscriber each in Florida, South Carolina, West Virginia, Vermont, Maine, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Colorado





Why All Adoptable Children in China are Healthy: Report alleges neglect of disabled children in orphanages

No one denies that many children in China die in the orphanages where mostly girls await adoption. The question is whether they are intentionally starved or if there is some other explanation for the high mortality rates.

Human Rights Watch, a New York based group, has written a 331-page exposé that alleges over half of the children admitted to some state orphanages die there. Dr. Zhang Shuyun is a physician whose case studies describe dozens of infants who died at the Shanghai Children's Welfare Institute where she worked from 1988 to 1993.

"The adoptability factor is important" according to Rone Tempest of the *Los Angeles Times*, since the children left to die are those who are disabled and considered unadoptable. "China in recent years has become a major source of children for foreign adoptive parents, including many in the United States," wrote Tempest, adding that, "Although China denies that it sells the children, most orphanages require a \$3,000 'donation' to the institution, creating an economic in-

centive for the orphanage staff to groom and nurture some babies for adoption while neglecting others deemed unadoptable." (January 6, 1996, *San Francisco Chronicle*).

Han Weicheng, the deputy director of Shanghai's Civil Affairs Bureau, claimed that mortality at the Shanghai Children's Welfare Institute was as high

as twenty percent at times between the late 1980s and the early 1990s, compared with 3 to 4 percent today. In response to the Human Rights Watch report, he stated at a news conference that children died unintentionally from disease, lack of heat in the orphanage, or the severe medical conditions with

which they were born. According to Patrick E. Tyler of the *New York Times*, "Han categorically denied the allegations of a former staff physician ... that

the Shanghai orphanage systematically singled out orphans for 'summary resolution,' or death, by withholding food or medical care from them." (January 9, 1996, *San Francisco Chronicle*).

The allegations of starvation of children with disabilities may go a long way toward explaining why the U.S. group "Families with Children from China" could state on their

Internet page that all children available for adoption from China "are healthy unless certain medical conditions are requested by the [adopting] family." ▲

"The adoptability factor is important"

Tennessee Bill Hits a Snag: Technical Glitch Requires Legislative Revision

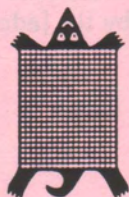
The National Council for Adoption, an umbrella organization of about 130 private adoption agencies across the United States, and its spokesperson Bill Pierce, would like to overturn Tennessee's adoptee access to information bill that was signed into law in June. They may still have a chance to influence the outcome because contradictory provisions of the bill — some sections of the bill were found to disagree with others — resulted in a decision to make the Senate version law and vote on the House version's provisions early this year. In the interim, the NCFCA is said to be organizing to limit access to original birth certificates for adult adoptees born after 1951. ▲

— summarized from the Tennessee Coalition for Adoption Reform Newsletter via the December 1995 edition of National Adoption Awareness Convention Newsbrief, P.O. Box 1860, Cape Coral, FL 33910.

\$\$\$\$ STATE OF THE BANK ACCOUNT \$\$\$\$\$

Chain of Life's bank account is almost empty. The donations many of you sent in the summer of 1994 have been spent on operating costs (photocopying, postage, P.O. Box rental, business license, advertising) while the number of subscribers has remained stable. Postage is a constant expense, because even when you do not receive a newsletter, I get requests for information, which I always answer with a brochure and other relevant information if I have it. I send an International Soundex Reunion Registry form if they ask for search information, for example.

If you are reading this, you are likely already to have given your support as a subscriber. But if not and you are able to, please contribute! Thank you.

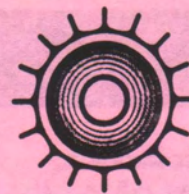


Update on Fertility Clinic Doctors: On January 19, 1996, the University of California Board of Regents voted to terminate the salaries of two doctors who have been accused of possible criminal wrongdoing, including egg and embryo-swapping, while at U.C. Irvine's former Center for Reproductive Health. Faculty members usually may continue to receive their salaries until an investigation is completed, but in the cases of doctors Ricardo Asch and Jose Balmaceda, both of whom have left the country to avoid prosecution, their salaries were terminated because they refuse to be available to complete the disciplinary review process. Thank you to the reader who sent this information. ▲

People Searching News Tackles Controversies

People Searching News is "a magazine for adoptees, birth families and professionals." It has a section of classified ads listing "adoptees in search" and "birth families in search." In addition, the Fall-Winter 1995 issue includes exposés of diverse individuals who may be charging triad members unfair fees: one editorial questions the business practices of a New York adoption reformer; another warns readers about a Miami attorney who "is baiting adoptees with a \$2,800. fee to search"; and a third article roasts a California adoption attorney who, among other things, PSN claims keeps birth mothers isolated from family and friends while arranging adoptions. "If you know of a baby broker/baby seller, please tell PSN," they request.

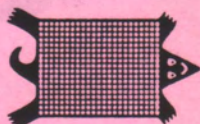
Unafraid of controversy within adoption reform circles, *People Searching News* promises to address "AAC: The Hostile Takeover" in its next issue. For more information write, **People Searching News, P.O. Box 100444, Palm Bay, FL 32910-0444.** Subscriptions are \$18. a year.



THE 1953 UNIFORM ADOPTION ACT RECOMMENDED BIRTH CERTIFICATE ACCESS FOR ADOPTEES !

SOMETIMES THERE IS PROGRESS as time passes and sometimes we go backwards. The latter is the case with the records access provisions of the Uniform Adoption Act. While contemporary architects of the UAA recommend sealing records to adoptees for 99 years, the 1953 version recommended that *only* adult adoptees should have access to their original birth certificates!

I came across this information in a footnote to a law journal article published in 1975, "The Adult Adoptee's Constitutional Right to Know His Origins" written by Carolyn Burke (*Southern California Law Review*). To quote, "The 1953 version of the Uniform Adoption Act provided for access to the original birth certificate 'only upon demand of the adopted person if of legal age or by an order of court.' (*Uniform Adoption Act, Section 14(2), 1953.*)



EVENTS

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EVENTS

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

▲ **FEBRUARY 18, 1996:** In San Francisco, a benefit for "Unlocking the Heart of Adoption," a film in progress by Sheila Ganz. For more information and reservations, call 415-564-3691.

▲ **MARCH 2, 1996:** In Oakland, "What's Important Now," the Third Annual Spring Training Intensive sponsored by *Pact, An Adoption Alliance*, will feature adoption experts David Brodzinsky, Ph.D., co-author of *Being Adopted* and *The Psychology of Adoption*; Patricia Irwin Johnston, M.S., an adoptive mother and author of *Adopting After Infertility*; Randolph Severson, Ph.D., psychologist and writer; and Susan Soon Keum Cox, reunited Korean adoptee and Director of Holt Heritage Camps. For more information or to register, call *Pact* at 415-221-6957.

▲ **MARCH 11, 1996:** In Berkeley, Susan Wadia-Ells, editor of the anthology, will read from her book *The Adoption Reader* at Black Oak Books on Shattuck Ave. near Vine St. (Call bookstore to confirm.) Local authors will join her.

▲ **MARCH 13, 1996:** In San Francisco, Susan Wadia-Ells will read from her anthology of women's voices in the triad, *The Adoption Reader*, at The Firehouse at Fort Mason Center in a benefit for PACER — the Post Adoption Center for Education and Research — and *Pact, An Adoption Alliance*. For more information, call Nancy at 415-202-0174 or PACER at 510-935-6622. Cost is \$14. at the door; PACER and *Pact* members are \$12. Books will be sold at the event.

▲ **MARCH 15, 1996:** In Berkeley, Sheila Ganz will hold a benefit screening of her film, "Unlocking the Heart of Adoption." For more information and reservations, call 415-564-3691. See Feb. 18 above for details.

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

▲ **APRIL 25 - 28, 1996:** "Coming of Age," American Adoption Congress's 18th Annual International Conference, Baltimore, Maryland. Dynamic keynote speakers are Annette Baran (social worker), Reverend Thomas Brosnan (Roman Catholic Priest and adoptee), Reuben Pannor (social worker), Joyce Maguire Pavao (therapist and adoptee), Barbara Tremiere (social worker and adoptive mother), and Mirah Riben (author and birth mother). Workshop speakers are numerous and include Betty Jean Lifton, Sheila Ganz (showing her film), Penny Partridge, Randolph Severson, Ken Watson, Mary Anne Manning Cohen, Marcy Axness, Cindy Bhimani, Rose Mary Prosen, and Kimberly Mays Twigg and Regina Twigg. If you don't have a brochure for all the wonderful details, try calling 714/434-7635 (conference questions line). March 25 is the cutoff date for reduced registration.



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