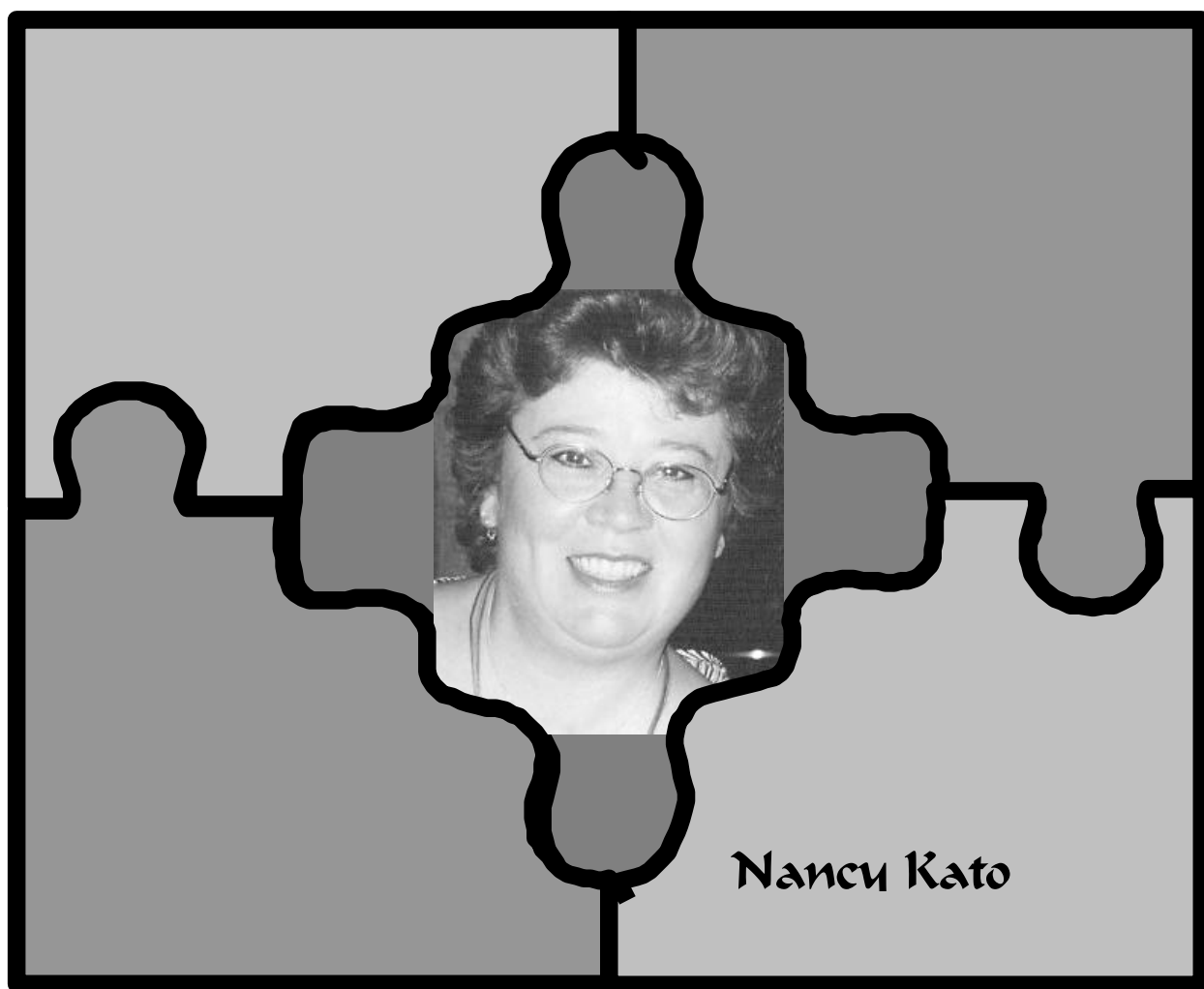


ADOPTION CIRCLES

Canada's Post-Adoption Quarterly

Issue 53 Spring 2010 \$3.50



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ADOPTION CIRCLES

**Spring 2010
Publisher
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walters.sandra@shaw.ca or by mail care of the Society at the address noted above.

FORGET ME NOT FACTS:

Forget Me Not Family Society is a provincially registered, non-profit society and a federally registered charity. Tax receipts are issued for donations to our Society. Charity #88908-4869-RR0001. Our Society was formed for education, consultation, peer counseling and to offer support to all those touched by adoption: adoptees, birth parents, adoptive parents, and concerned professionals. Our only source of income is through membership fees, fundraising, and donations. These funds go directly towards printing, postage, telephone, office equipment and supplies.

WHAT WE OFFER:

Experience shows that at various times in life, the issues and concerns of adoption need to be addressed. We provide our members with opportunities to gain further understanding of adoption issues through:

- Conducting monthly support groups in New Westminster, Surrey and Cloverdale
- Internet "chat" support group through a Facebook page
- Individual peer support
- Resource library
- Referrals to professionals and other service groups
- Speakers Bureau to educate groups on post-adoption issues
- Quarterly Newsletter

OUR MANDATE:

- To encourage and develop a recognition of the benefits of family preservation and openness in adoption practice.
- To establish and operate a Post Adoption Resource Centre providing education, consultation, counseling and support to those touched by adoption: adoptees, birthparents, adoptive parents, and concerned professionals.
- To provide community education programs, panel presentations and workshops on post adoption issues for any members of the community who wish to learn more about adoption and reunion issues.

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER:

ADOPTION CIRCLES is published quarterly and is available by subscription to our Society. Membership is open to anyone who is interested in adoption and post-adoption issues.

Comments and contributions are always welcome. Please mail submissions to our office or forward to the Editor at: walters.sandra@shaw.ca

The Forget Me Not Society reserves the right to edit all material submitted on the basis of space, relevance, and suitability. **Please note that the material published in the Newsletter, including the article by the Editor, does not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the Forget Me Not Family Society.**



President's Message

Marnie Tetz

Another year of the Forget Me Not Family Society has come and gone. I don't know where the time goes. It seems like only a couple

of years since I first walked in the doors of the Cloverdale support group meeting, however, it was 9 years ago, in 2001. I had been in union* with my brother for a year and, in recent months, had been in touch with Ray Ensminger. Ray had found my mother as well as another brother and had also made contact with my uncle. This should have all been joyous but it wasn't. During a tearful telephone conversation with Ray, he said that he thought I needed support and suggested the FMN. And so, that is how I arrived at the doors of FMN that night in Cloverdale.

From the first phone conversation with Nancy Kato, I knew that I was going to be in the right place. Nancy was warm and I could tell by the way she spoke that she "got" it. Thank you, Nancy, for all of your kindness and support over the years. Thank you also for seeing something in me, and for allowing my passion for those whose lives have been touched by adoption to be ignited.

I also wish to thank the rest of the executive: our secretary, Gloria Sweder, for all of her hard work in keeping the minutes in order and for making sure that our next board meeting is scheduled; Gail Davies, our treasurer, who keeps

our books in order, and who has patiently accepted my help even when I've forgotten to fill out the deposit slip correctly or missed some other detail. Gail always nudges me with a gentle reminder, and Gail... I promise that I will do better this year !!!! I also wish to thank Audrey Harrington for stepping up and accepting the nomination for Vice President, Audrey, I so appreciate your fun personality, and also your business sense, I will be relying on you !!!! Amy Newman and Heather Albrecht, returning directors, thank you for your commitment to the Society, and your willingness to do whatever job needs doing, that's huge and much appreciated !!!! We welcome a new director this year, Bernadette Rymer, who has agreed to join us on the board, even with her commute from Ashcroft (for those that don't live in the area, that's about a 5 hour drive). Many thanks, Bernadette, I know that you will be an asset to our team.

Finally I would like to acknowledge Sandra Walters, our editor/ director. I remember that first meeting that she attended, and I'm sure she was wondering what she had gotten herself into. We wondered if she would return. She did, and with a vengeance. I will pat myself on the back, because I was the one who nominated her to fill the shoes of secretary. I knew that we needed someone who was organized and who would get us on track and keep us on track (Lord knows that Nancy had been doing this for far too

long on her own). I knew that Sandra was the one for the job, since she was constantly taking notes at meetings. The rest of the story is history. Sandra and Nancy resurrected the newsletter and, in the 6 years since, there is a lot of water under the bridge. The Society has hosted 4 workshops in as many years, that have been well received, with Joe Soll twice, Nancy Verrier, and local adoption therapist Lee Crawford. We are looking forward to our next workshop that hopefully will take place in October.

The New Westminster support group is still going strong, the Surrey group is in its 5th year working on adoptee issues. And, once again the Cloverdale library is the venue for a support group that, like the New Westminster group, is open to all.

Thanks to everyone who has supported me as my journey unfolded. I look forward to the next year being a busy one that will be as fulfilling as the past nine.

*(*I say union, because my brother and I had never been together before, I save the term reunion for those who have known one another, and then been separated.)*

This issue of **Adoption Circles** focuses on Ethics in adoption. There is a wide

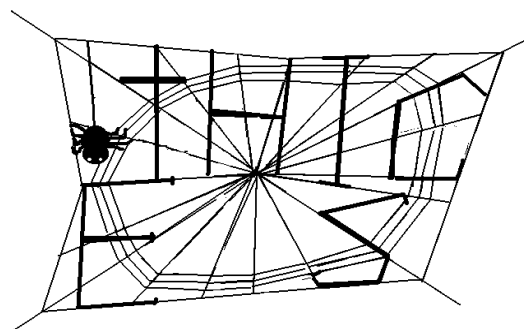
range of perspectives that discuss how ethics may impact the language or names we use, the approach we take to adoption or its sister, abortion, and whether the concept of forgiveness fits in our quest for healing. As the Society's Annual General Meeting was held recently, a new board of directors was elected and we bid farewell to our retiring President, Nancy Kato. Therefore, we also dedicate space in this issue to print Nancy's last President's Report, as well as a report of the AGM, luncheon dedication to Nancy, the Workshop with Ray Ensminger, and the dinner gathering which followed.

Hard to believe, but I'm entering my 7th term as Newsletter Editor, having started Adoption Circles in its current format with the Fall 2004 issue (#33) in which our first Personality Profile was of Nancy Kato. In response to the question posed to her in 2004: Why do you continue to dedicate so many hours and energy to adoption search and reunion support? Nancy answered:

"I truly believe that one person can make a difference. Through the efforts of a whole bunch of individuals, we managed to



Walters' Web
Sandra Walters



change the *Adoption Act* of B.C. to one of open records- a leader and model for many provinces and states that are moving towards openness in adoption. I have, through my journey, rediscovered myself and finally realized what my purpose is: to share the learning of my experiences so that others can, perhaps, create an opportunity for change. I don't want to see birth mothers still in the "closet" of fear, shame and humiliation- we don't need to be there. We have a right to be heard and tell our stories. We have a right to grieve for the loss of our children. We have the right to find them. Adoptees have the right to their birth information, heritage, history, family. And it's not easy, and I want to be there to provide support to others that are starting their journey."

Over the last six years, I believe readers have become familiar with the basic format of the Newsletter. We try to have a one-word focus to inspire readers and potential contributors to think about how that concept relates to adoption. My Walters' Web article discusses this focus from the perspective of an adopted adult and I have, in the past, incorporated book or movie reviews or comments on current events or shared elements of my adoption search and reunion story that may be relevant. The President's Message section allows the Society President to share her perspective on the focus, or on some other concern. We always print a Lean-On-Me list and a list of Support Group-times, places and contacts, so that these resources are readily available and kept current. In the Announcements section, we endeavour to provide lots of notice of upcoming events, a Newsletter deadline schedule, and any other items of interest.

The Personality Profile is a regular section where we introduce a person who is relatively high-profile in some aspect of adoption search and reunion. Over the years, we have interviewed: Lee Crawford, Joe Soll, Monica Byrne, Cecelia Reekie, Michael Grand, Marianne Auger, Joan Vanstone, Patrick McMahon, Ray Ensminger, Greg Evans, Zara Phillips, Rick Ouston, Thomas Brosnan, Alison Larkin, Brenda McCreight, Nancy Verrier and Olivia Pratten, to name a few. From time to time, we have also included Movie or Book Review Sections, Poetry, short stories, Websites of interest, and Letters to the Editor. But, most importantly, we publish members' stories or other expressions of their feelings or opinions. This allows each one of us to find a voice. Somehow, it becomes more real if we know someone has heard us—whether because we have spoken our stories or someone has read them. Also, it gives us an opportunity to share what we've learned along the way so that someone else may benefit from either the progress or the mistakes that we've made.

As readers have come to know, I do not agree with censorship and will only edit submissions for glaring grammatical or spelling errors, or for swearing language (unless used as an integral part of an artistic expression, particularly in poetry). Both our readers and our contributors are adults and need to take responsibility for what they write. It is always open to a person who strongly disagrees with an opinion to state why, and

to attempt to convince readers to his or her point of view. Free speech is an extremely valuable right, and we need to learn to use it more and to be truly tolerant of its usage by others.

My vision for the future of the Newsletter is for more members to get involved in its production. I was delighted to have Bernadette Rymer step forward as a new board member as she has also expressed an interest in getting involved with the Newsletter. Being involved with the Personality Profile segment, for example, would provide the opportunity to think of a person in adoption that you've been wanting to get to know more about, and then finding a way to contact and interview them. By having some fresh ideas for the Newsletter, we could develop some new regular features or revisit some others to make them even better. Views on News, for example, was a short commentary on topical adoption-related news items and would be a perfect feature for someone who likes to stay on top of current events and express an opinion.

As I mentioned at the AGM, I am passionate about continuing the Newsletter, but I am also realistic. Unless others get involved to help with producing **Adoption Circles** four times per year (Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter), we may need to pull back to a schedule of just two issues per year. I am confident that Forget Me Not members will rise to the challenge and we will keep the Newsletter going strong. It is an important way to keep the momentum going between our attendance at support group meetings or workshops or other events, and it allows us to reach out into the community at large too. Think about how different your life would be if your eyes had not been opened to the issues of adoption search and reunion. Our Newsletter is one tool for helping to make people aware, and to also get them the support they will need.

AC~

If you would like to read previous Walters' Web articles, please follow the link from the Forget Me Not Website at:
www.adoptioncircles.net, or visit me at:

www.waltersweb.webs.com.

Adoption & The Missionary Position– Part III

Presentation in Dublin, Ireland 2003

by Father Tom Brosnan

As continued from the Winter 2010 issue:

"My mother gave birth to me in a Catholic hospital in which I was baptized a few days later. Yet, on the baptismal certificate issued my adoptive parents, it says that I was born to my adoptive parents and baptized at their parish church on a different date, some six months after my birth. This certificate (which I have in my

possession is an official church document) yet it is a lie, all of it lies, and implies that I was intentionally baptized twice – a practice strictly forbidden in sacramental theology and by church law."

...The current sex scandal sweeping the Catholic Church in the UK, the U.S. and here in Ireland is about sex, yes -- but it's also about secrecy, the way the bishops chose to keep

facts secret, secret from those who most needed to know. And, as was told so well in the film *Secrets & Lies* – you can never keep a secret without eventually lying. Catholic bishops made such a strategy into an art form. What they wanted to do – all with supposed good intention – was to protect the church from scandal. Ironically they caused a scandal far worse and more damaging by their actions.

“The idea that deception can serve religion shocked St. Augustine so deeply he once wrote that the worst lie is that which religion deploys for its own advance.” (Gary Wills. *Saint Augustine*, Penguin Press, 1999)

“It is secrecy that is everywhere the soul of bureaucracy,” Simone Weil said. “It is the condition of all privilege and of all oppression.”

Although when I was adopted in 1953 and the adoption agency encouraged my parents to tell me about my adoption early on, they did not tell me until I was twelve, and then only at the insistence of my teacher. We never discussed adoption, my parents and I, but it was the very air we breathed. It was the proverbial elephant in the living room that no one acknowledged but everyone had to accommodate. All family secrets are like this; they eat away at trust – the very fabric of healthy families.

When I decided to search for my birth mother when I was 32, I found her in Baltimore, Maryland. I didn’t have to tell my adoptive parents that I found her – but felt I should. It was one of the hardest things I ever did because I knew, from a lifetime of reading non-verbal messages, that it would cause a lot of pain. But I told -- and it did. My mother cried as if I stabbed her through the heart. But then something very interesting happened. My parents started talking about their experience of adopting me: what they went through, how they felt. Penny Callan Partridge says it best, I think, in one of her stories. “Finding my birthparents,” she wrote, “gave me my adoptive parents.” After being part of the adoption reform community for many years now, I believe it always works like this. It seems to be a law of family physics or something: once secrecy is broken and the light begins to shine, burdens long carried can be let down and memories can be reclaimed. That’s, perhaps, what the strange prophecy in the gospel means to me. You remember, when Mary and Joseph take Jesus to the Temple (Luke 2: 22-35: what we celebrate as the Feast of the Presentation) and the old man Simeon takes the child in his arms and says to his mother: your heart will be pierced as with a sword so that the thoughts of many hearts may be laid bare.

The sealing of birth certificates, amending them, actually creating false certificates in order to keep things confidential is rooted, it seems, in good intention. But even

the best of intentions cannot make into good something inherently evil. Yet the intention was never to keep secret from the adopted himself the names of the parents who gave him birth. To alter a birth certificate is to lie. St. Thomas Aquinas had something to say about that centuries ago. “For Aquinas, the most decisive human trait is that human beings are truth-seeking animals, moved by love for the truth (come what may)...so inherent is this drive in human nature it is an imperative – that to address a human being in any lesser mode is to do his nature violence.” (“Thomas Aquinas, The First Whig” by Michael Novak in *Crisis* October, 1990). Lies do violence. They desecrate the inherent dignity we possess as human beings.

Secrecy and lies are at the heart of oppressive systems. Orlando Paterson of Harvard would write a lot about slavery. At the risk of offending I would suggest that the phenomenon of natal alienation, as Patterson calls it, can be applied to closed adoption as well.

“The root of slavery’s evil is not racism or even economic exploitation of people as property, but the ritual dehumanization that deprives people of their natal identity in family and society.” (“Paul, Slavery and Freedom: Personal and Socio-Historical Reflections” by Orlando Paterson in *Semeia* 83/84, Society of Biblical Literature, 1998) “To be without birthright...is to not be allowed to inform your understanding of social reality with the inherited meanings of your forbears, or to anchor the living present in any conscious community of memory.”

Dr. Lesten Havens of Harvard Medical School once said (“The Psychological Possession of Human Beings” at the American Adoption Congress Conference, April 1989, New York) that “...in some circumstances and places these historical expressions of (physical) possession (of human beings) have been replaced by psychological forms of possession, which lacks the candor of outright slavery, but is possession nonetheless and probably even more dangerous because the possessed may not (even) know (it).”

It is dangerous to employ hyperbole when speaking of adoption, and I do not intend to insinuate that adoptive parents are like slaveholders. But I do believe the system of closed adoption, of sealed and altered records, which employs a subterfuge which in effect intentionally robs the adopted of the knowledge of their natal identity – I do intend to indict that system as an utterly cruel one which should be abolished whether enshrined in civil or church or religious law. It’s time. It is time.

To be continued in the next edition of Adoption Circles... stay tuned!

Letter to a Member of Parliament

Re: Restriction on Late Abortion

This society is becoming too abusive and abortion is not the answer to everything. For all of us that were not derived from a 'planned pregnancy', we should stop late abortions from happening. How can you have any self-respect when you look at photos organizations show of dead infants? It looks barbaric and like infanticide. How we treat infants is important. We don't want some kind of caste system. For the survivors of an unplanned pregnancy, it would be much more feeling of safety and security of person if infants in the third trimester and their mothers were given protection.

If babies are not treated humanely, who is going to be? To save a premature infant in one hospital room and abort one the same age in the next does not seem right. This is discrimination or prejudice. It can be prejudice against the illegitimate and it is appalling taken to this extent. Carrying a child to term should be safe. It's not okay to be assaulted when you're pregnant. It makes you wonder who is being done away with or gotten rid of in this society. Did they never have a place? When I see the pictures, I think of people (adoptees) that I've known. To allow late abortion affects peoples' attitudes and some people are getting pretty nasty, with the "...you should never have been born" attitude. We cannot feel safe when we see that kind of violence done to infants here. Learned attitude makes a big difference.

I think abortion often has a lot to do with a woman's attitude about being mistreated and she is angry, understandably. But, by the third trimester, I think that the baby's welfare should be considered more. We are not talking about an embryonic egg shape anymore. It is a well-defined, developed human being, is unique, and is able to live outside the womb as a premature infant. A premature infant has an instinct for

survival- why wouldn't one the same age in the womb have one too?

Photos of late abortion are really disturbing, but people need to know what's going on. How can women expect to be treated right if men are looking at these photos? In the third trimester, a baby is already formed and it's not her fault for whatever happened. If it looks like a human being, I don't think it's supposed to be destroyed.

I don't know who late abortion is happening to, but it must be psychologically deranging and totally devastating once the disturbed woman realizes what she's done. Why would Medicare pay for something so harmful? Whatever a woman is going through, she shouldn't be allowed to harm herself to that extent. A man that destroys a baby that looks like a baby in a late abortion is really committing a criminal act. A mother might decide that she doesn't want the baby at this stage but arrangements for its adoption could then commence. Children are taken away from abusive parents and I think a baby in the third trimester should be protected too.

It's not okay to watch a distressed woman make a serious mistake that could cause her a lifetime of torment and suffering. Let us have some human dignity and compassion and stop late abortion from happening. There needs to be a law. The babies in the pictures (I saw) were not saved and they should have been. We need a more harmonious society than this.

Sincerely,
Anonymous,
Victoria, B.C.

P.S. A good book out now is called "Women's Health After Abortion: The Medical and Psychological Evidence". As medical facts keep coming in, women are going to be more able to make an informed decision.

PERSONALITY PROFILE

Nancy Kato



FORGET ME NOT FAMILY SOCIETY PRESIDENT'S REPORT

**For the period February 1, 2009 to January 31, 2010
Presented 24 April 2010**



This past fiscal year has been a busy one! Thanks to Gloria, we managed to hold more meetings in the past year than we have for a very long time! These were productive discussions about how to move forward and helped to bring awareness to the Board members on what is required to run our successful Society. Attendance at our support group meetings is strong and "new" people are showing up all the time.

Sandra Walters has produced some excellent editions of our newsletter over the past year. They are thought provoking and often challenge the way people think. This year we covered "Celebrities", "Youth", "Sexuality in Reunion" and "Disabilities". We could definitely use more contributors and additional resources to assist with the newsletter. Earlier in the year we were able to provide Sandra with a subsidy toward a new computer – this was the result of a grant received from The Wolrige Foundation for this purpose. We would also like to acknowledge Lynn Mayhew for her layout/design of our newsletter. Lynn actually lives back East and modern technology has allowed her to work from there.

Although our website is up-to-date with respect to content, it could use some refreshing. Unfortunately, we do not have the expertise required to maintain and design a website. Narius Dastur is contracted to assist when we need something done; however, he does not have responsibility for content or look – we could use some help with this. It's a great avenue for getting information out to the community and our "pulse check" surveys have been quite interesting! With respect to reaching out, we are about to move away from our Yahoo site. We have set up a Facebook page and this is much more readily available to people. We also discontinued the "chat" feature with Yahoo.

Gail Davies, our Treasurer, has put together a program for managing our membership renewals. She now invoices our membership which has resulted in an increase in renewals. Our financials are in good shape as you will see from her report. Audrey Harrington has been reviewing the By-laws and our Constitution against the *Society Act* to ensure we are in compliance, and capitalizing on the rules where appropriate. We also need to understand our limitations as well.

The AGM was held on April 18, 2009 with very low attendance. Lunch was provided and catered by Michael Hodgson (thank you Michael!). Following lunch, we showed the movie "Obaachan's Garden" – the story of a woman who left her children in Japan and never told anyone until her 100th birthday. She was reunited with her 84 year old daughter at the age of 104.

In October 2009, we offered a 2-day workshop with Nancy Verrier. This was a very successful event with approximately 50 people in attendance, representing all sides of the adoption reunion triad. It was great to see Nancy and hear her perspectives. As usual, there is never enough time and she was on her way back to California before we knew it.

With respect to our Support groups:

- *Surrey monthly support group* – this is a group for adopted adults only. They currently do not have specific space where they meet; but the group is okay with meeting in a local coffee shop. They continue to look at issues they feel are adoptee centered.
- *Cloverdale support group* – congratulations to Marnie for starting a group in Cloverdale. This is all-inclusive and is held at the Public Library - the initial response has been very positive.
- *New Westminster support group* – we are now in year 18 for this group. The New Westminster Public Library continues to be sporadic in allowing us to have a block of time booked; however, Douglas College has been a fairly good alternative. It is anticipated that attendance at the meetings will go down now that

Cloverdale has opened, allowing for more in-depth conversations and exploring of concerns and issues.

- *Vancouver support group* –thanks to Lee Crawford who ran the Vancouver Chapter for almost two years. She has decided to end the meetings as they were becoming much more therapeutic than support. She is going back to focusing on therapy and offering group sessions.

For the 2010/2011 fiscal year, we will need to update our brochure. We will keep working on our Continuing Education Program. Sandra Walters has completed two segments and will be starting a third shortly. Sandra submits periodic status updates to the Victoria Foundation as they provided us with a grant to create the program. Fundraising is something we need to always be conscious of and one proposal is to bring back our “movie nights”. Consideration also has to be given to a new phone number for the Society.

Nancy has spoken many times over the past year to pre-adopting parent education groups and has bookings for the upcoming year. It would be a good plan to mentor others to go out and speak at these sessions (or for anyone else who wants information on reunion). The Ministry for Children and Family Development is always looking for speakers (for example, the office in Nanaimo would like someone to come over for a half day).

During this past year, we lost 2 pioneers in adoption – one was Lex Reynolds, lawyer, advocate, and strong supporter of adoption reform who helped push forward the change of the 1949 BC *Adoption Act*. The other was Helen Mark, Adoptive Mother, founder of Adoptive Families Association, Inter-country adoption specialist, and long time friend of Forget Me Not.

I would like to thank Marnie – she has been a willing student and I’m proud of what she has done. The same can be said for all the Board members, Gail, Gloria, Sandra, Amy, Heather, and Audrey, who have shown dedication and commitment to the Society and have a sincere desire to see the Society continue on and be successful. Thank you Dan – although you weren’t able to attend our meetings, I do appreciate that you want to give back to our community and perhaps there is something we can get you to do in the future! And thanks to Lynn Mayhew for stepping up and taking on the job of newsletter design and layout. A number of our members have stepped forward this year to volunteer with the coordination of our workshops and that is very much appreciated.

As many of you are aware, this was my final year on the Board of Forget Me Not Family Society. I have decided to “retire” after 19 years of being involved in the adoption reunion reform movement. It has been an amazing journey to say the least! From my first conference where I wouldn’t even tell people my name, to where I stand today – outspoken, advocate, speaker,

conference organizer, reunion specialist, peer counselor, confident, media contact, writer, fund raiser, and reunited mom and grandmother. I have seen the opening of records in British Columbia; I have fought the battle of photo listings; I have shared in the frustrations of opening records in other Provinces; and stood toe to toe with radical reform groups. I have served on the Boards of the Adoption Council of Canada and the American Adoption Congress; and been an active participant of the BC Adoption Network. I have stood alone in a room full of adoptive parents at a NACAC conference in Toronto and shouted, “Where are the books on being a birth mother!” and I have stood at the podium at the NACAC conference in Vancouver to receive the Adoption Activist of the Year Award (along with my good pal Cecelia).

I have met hundreds of people with incredible stories and cried buckets of tears over the loss of family connection. I have met fascinatingly interesting people – Dolores Teller, Peter Dodds, Michael Grand, Ken Watson, Carol Schaeffer, Brenda McCreight, Ted Myers, Monica Byrne, Damsel Plum, Joyce Pavao, Joan Vanstone and dozens of others who have made me laugh and cry and forge ahead when some of us felt the battle would never end.

I discovered organizations and agencies all around the country that I could connect with and the people who work there – Parent Finders of Canada, Saskatchewan Adoptive Parents Association, Concerned United Birthparents, Adoptive Families Association of British Columbia, Bastard Nation, Origins, Washington Area Reform Movement (WARM), various Governments and government offices, and many, many more.

I have watched the Forget Me Not Family Society grow to become an internationally recognized organization; respected by many for its expertise on adoption reunion. We offered national conferences before anyone else, and continue to offer exceptional workshops. We have managed to survive with no other income other than donations, memberships, and a couple of small grants received here and there. The services we offer are still needed today, even 12 years after open records in B.C., and we are the only agency in BC with these services.

We all had a common goal – to ensure that every adopted person knew their origins (& received their original birth certificate) and that every birth parent and adopted person had the opportunity to meet each other. We were the pioneers who made a difference in how the world looks at adoption and reunions today. I have stood, and stand, in awe of the people I have met who have done so much more than I ever could, and whose stories have moved me, astounded me and motivated me.

I became completely impassioned with the drive to make a difference, to ensure that no other mother, or father, would ever have to live not knowing what had happened to their child. It was a story I knew, I could walk the talk. My experiences and association with the Forget Me Not Family Society have helped me grow to offer in ways I could never dream of. After all, I had no dreams – relinquishment of the right to parent my

daughter took care of those! I had no dreams, I had no self-image, I had no sense of self-worth. The Society embraced me with all its empathy and compassion and allowed me to realize that I was so much more than the life I was living in my "secret shame". It helped me to find my voice ... and I have certainly used it! It helped me to heal the deeply imbedded wounds caused by the loss of my child and to allow love in my heart again. I no longer had to seal out the world or people or relationships. I am forever indebted to the Society – its members, its network, and its Board, for giving me the opportunity to reclaim myself in a safe and welcoming environment.

I will truly miss the Society and all it has come to represent for me. Walking away today is going to be very difficult. I have developed lasting friendships with people like Cecelia Reekie, Gail Davies, Michael Grand, and Monica Byrne, just to name a few from the early days, plus so many more over the ensuing years. Adoption is what brought us all together almost 20 years ago and yet, at times, it feels like it was just yesterday. It has truly been a rewarding experience!!

But don't worry – I won't be too far away. I plan to continue running my support group and speak for the Ministry and I will be available for anyone who wants to talk to me.

I am very grateful to Marnie Tetz who has agreed to step forward and be nominated for the position of President. I

believe she has the compassion and empathy necessary for this group and all it has to deal with. I know that she has been a good friend to me over the past few years and she has been willing to jump in with both feet to get the job done. I do have to remind her though that it is important to delegate now and then!!

Thank you Gail for being here all these years and for your friendship – the stories we could tell!! I'm glad you are staying with the Society – they need you.

Finally, I want to thank the countless people who have entered my life. Your stories have touched me in so many ways, and I have learned so much from each and every one of you. I can't tell you enough how important it is to continue telling your story. We need to hear you; we need to learn from you ... and each other ... and we deserve the right to know the truth and to heal. All of you have made my past 19 years an incredible experience which has helped me to mature and grow and dream again, and learn to accept others for who they are. I cannot judge what I have not lived; what I have learned is that you matter, your lives mean something and you are valued. It has been an honour to know you, lead you, and hear you.

Thank you.

*Nancy Kato
Mother, now Past President*

OUR AGM AND.....OUR AFTERNOON WITH RAY

APRIL 24TH, 2010

April 24, 2010 was a rainy day.....not like most of our AGM's, that are clear sunny and warm. So a good thing, considering that we would be spending it inside.

This year we had planned ahead, and arranged for Ray Ensminger, a social worker who runs Reunion Associates, a Licensed Adoption Search Agency in Alberta, to be our guest speaker after the AGM. After many years of leading us as President, Nancy Kato has stepped down, and I have taken the helm, as President. I know that Nancy isn't going to be far away if I need to send out an S.O.S. Audrey Harrington has agreed to step up to the plate as Vice President, Gloria Sweder has agreed, thankfully, to continue to be Secretary, Gail Davies as treasurer, who has been there forever, and will continue to be there FOREVER (Gail, hope you are reading this). The board will be Amy Newman, Heather Albrecht, as directors, as well as Sandra Walters as director and newsletter editor..... and we welcome Bernadette Rymer.

After the formalities of the AGM, Cecelia Reekie, Past President of the Society, spoke about the long time friendship she and Nancy Kato have shared, as well as shared experiences of the many conferences they have held and attended. At that time Nancy was presented with flowers, a gift of a photo box from the Society, and many cards that had been sent by those who could not attend.

We broke for lunch, which was then followed by the "Afternoon with Ray Ensminger". Ray was funny, and comfortable. He shared with us many of his experiences of helping reunions take place. How the light bulb was turned on for him about mothers and their babies.....and how adoption wasn't the perfect solution.

Mostly he shared with us his empathy and compassion for what he thinks it is to be a birth/natural/reunited parent.....as well as the empathy and compassion for those adopted *children*, that do grow up.....not knowing who we are or where we came from. And for what it is to be an enlightened adoptive parent.

We also had a Social Worker from B.C. in our midst who spoke, and used the term 'unplanned', instead of 'unwanted'. That was huge for me. We were not unwanted.....we were unplanned.....

And.....so, after that afternoon, after that day.....of structure.....electing board members.....and lunch, and sharing compassion, we headed for a dinner of fun and pasta.....and then the moments of heading home.....for a good night's sleep, and another year of support for the Forget Me Not Family Society.
by MARNIE TETZ

*Please check out our website www.adoptioncircles.net for the biographies of our executive and new board member.

FORGET ME NOT FAMILY SOCIETY

BUSINESS & EDUCATION, FRIENDSHIP, FOOD & FUN!!



WORKSHOP with RAY ENSMINGER:

Forty-four years in social work includes: social assistance, child welfare, corrections, family services, mental health and aboriginal services. Passion for 31 years has been his involvement in adoption reunions and adoption legislation reform. BUT he says his "...most enduring memories, my best teachers about adoption issues and the people I admire most for their courage and perseverance in pursuing their right to know their origins are the 5,000+ members of the adoption circle with whom I have walked their incredible journey of search and reunion."



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of the Forget Me Not Family Society for the period February 1, 2009 through January 31, 2010

Executive members (left to right):
Gail Davies (Treasurer), Nancy Kato (President), Marnie Tetz (Vice-President) and Gloria Sweder (Secretary)

New Executive (2010- 2011):
President- Marnie Tetz
Vice-President- Audrey Harrington
Treasurer- Gail Davies
Secretary- Gloria Sweder
Directors- Sandra Walters, Amy Newman, Heather Albrecht and Bernadette Rymer



TRIBUTE to retiring Society President, NANCY KATO:

Cecelia Reekie's speech recalled how she and Nancy met, how they became involved in the Society, and the many adoption search and reunion conferences, workshops and reform activities they have been involved with over the years.

Please see Cecelia's speech printed with permission in this Newsletter.

FRIENDSHIP, FOOD & FUN:

Workshop attendees gathered for social time at a local restaurant.

Photo right: Marnie Tetz and Heather Albrecht.

Below right: (l to r): Gail Davies, Donna Doogan and Gwen Mackie (members of the original "Missing Pieces Thru Adoption Society"- 1992), and Audrey Harrington.



Tribute to retiring Society President, Nancy Kato

Speech delivered on April 24, 2010
by Cecelia Reekie

I am so pleased to be here this afternoon to honour my dear friend, Nancy. When speaking with Marnie and Gail, I was saying that I was nervous to be doing this, I really haven't been involved in FMNFS for a couple of years, but that I really wanted to be here today and share some stories about Nancy.

I have given much thought as to what I would like to share with you and, as I thought back over the many, many years that I have known my dear friend, there was a lot of funny stories and experiences that we shared. So I am going to highlight a few of them.

Back in the early 1990's, Forget Me Not Family Society was formed and I was beginning my own journey to find and seek my identity. I truly had no idea how much work "reunion" was going to be for me and my "whole" family. My reunion happened very quickly with both my birth mom and birth dad. It was complicated by the fact that my adoptive dad was in politics at the time and the media decided to publish and broadcast my story. I decided to join FMNFS and attend the support group meeting in Cloverdale, where I learned that my adoption issues and reunion issues were normal. THANK GOD!

I also had the opportunity to attend a conference hosted by FMNFS at the Sheraton Guilford Hotel. What an amazing experience that was for me to hear the stories of adoption and reunion. I decided that I wanted to join the Board of FMNFS and learn as much as I could.

I attended my first conference in Calgary on a National Level with Kathryn Vea and Sandi Blackie. What a wonderful time for me as I learned that I had an important story to share. Thus the beginning of my many, many years with FMNFS.

I met Nancy a couple of years later, at our Annual Conference hosted by FMNFS; this was at a time when our membership was very large and many people were seeking reunion. The media would show up at these conferences and I was in desperate

need to have a birth mom who was willing to share her story. Well, Nancy did it! I am not sure how I talked her into sharing her story with the media when she had barely shared it with people she knew and people who she worked with. I must have been awfully persuasive to get her to talk to the media, because she used to hide from the cameras all the time.

She joined the Board of FMNFS and our relationship began, both on a professional level as well as a personal level. We worked incredibly well together and had the same vision of what we wanted to offer our members of FMNFS; we also became dear friends in which we have shared our personal lives such as relationships, children, birthdays, reunions, oh so many great events in our lives. Nancy and I became great friends and one that I could rely on and get support when I needed it. Nancy and I also had the opportunity to travel together, oh what fun that was!! Do you remember getting on the elevator with me? There was maybe 20-30 floors and I pushed every button. It took forever to get to our room this was of course after a couple of drinks! What about you piggybacking me through a parking lot, what was that all about?! I must be getting old because I remember some of these events but I don't remember the details!! Do you remember one of our friends showing up to a conference with a joint in her bra?! What about the time we were so upset with the picture of children that were waiting for homes that we went throughout the hotel and tore those pictures down.

We had the opportunity to meet so many people: some we adored and respected and some that just annoyed us. How about the time we went to dinner at the Keg, what were we doing, picking a person from the adoption community and then singing about them, oh my god, we laughed so hard that night and the waiters had a great time with us as well!!! Do you remember karaoke in Edmonton, oh what fun!! Who knew that Gail could sing so well?!

I also want to say that you and I made a difference in the world of adoption. We discussed and raised the issue of photo listing, we took part with Ministry of Children and Family by sharing our stories with their education class, we fought for open records, and we worked hard to support families through their own adoption experience. I have experienced times since leaving FMNFS where someone has come to me and said that you made a difference in my life- that is good to hear. You have worked incredibly hard for FMNFS and you have impacted many individuals; some you know, some you don't. You will continue to work for the support group, which I was happy to hear, that you were willing to

continue. That is your passion and you make a difference for each one of those individuals that attend the support group.

There are so many stories that I could share, there are some terrific memories. I am once again excited to be able to be here and be able to honour my dear friend, Nancy. You are a woman who is dedicated, committed, strong, reliable, visionary and, most importantly, honest. What more could an organization want in a President? You have done an amazing job for FMNFS and I am sure I speak on behalf of all the members to say Thank You!!
Much love, Cecelia

Labels We Hate – What Do They Mean?

Copyright Ann Wilmer, 2010

Billy Connolly, a big burly Scotsman with a wild mane of silver hair, gets a laugh every time he throws out this line: "If Jesus was a Jew, how come he has a Mexican first name?" To triad members, the answer is obvious: "He was adopted!"

Sometimes the only way to deal with hurtful epithets is to turn them into jokes. The truth is that words have power. Names have power. Labels carry meaning beyond, or in addition to, the denotative meaning (dictionary definition). Connotative meanings attach themselves to labels that we use based on our own personal values and beliefs and the settings in which we learn them. Like stereotypes, a kind of verbal shorthand that we use to figure out how to approach strangers, they have value only in so far as they are accurate and free of bias.

Anna Nicole Smith is credited with this witticism: "Vickie Lynn Hogan is my birth certificate's name." Wouldn't that get a laugh at a convention of triad members? It's true, an amended birth certificate is fictional (or fraudulent, if you prefer) and that makes the name an alias. Most adoptees can live with that, although they would like to have a copy of their OBC (*original birth certificate*). What most find hard to swallow is being referred to, far into late middle age, as an adopted "child."

The label, innocuous to many, starts a slow burn when adopted adults hear it. Terminology that makes adoptees perpetual children makes it easier for legislatures to treat adults as unable to direct their own affairs. Labeling adoptees as children may not be the most powerful factor preventing lawmakers from changing the laws that prevent adopted adults from knowing their own origins, but it does make you wonder.

A Chinese proverb says: "The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right names," Adoption is fraught with labels that stereotype the protagonists and, depending on your point of view, ascribes to them certain characteristics that dictate how you treat them as individuals.

An even more contentious term than "adopted child" is "birth mother," usually written as one word making it a collective noun instead of using "birth" as an adjective to describe "mother." And this is not accidental. Differentiating "birth mothers" from other mothers makes it easier to negate or disregard their role in adoption. Last April, a number of women who surrendered a child to adoption appeared before the Health Committee Ohio House or Representatives to testify in favour of HB 7. Mid-testimony of the first witness, most of the members of the committee simply walked out. These women did not even get a hearing. Is it because the terminology we use make it so easy to dismiss their opinions?

“Personally I use and prefer the term birthmother. I do not condemn anyone who prefers to use a different term, but it bothers me that not everyone is as tolerant,” said Chris Scott, who has recently been reunited with the son she surrendered.

But Melanee Packard, disagrees: “I am not JUST a birth mother; I did not JUST give birth to my son...I am my son's FIRST mother...I was FIRST to feed him, through his umbilical cord. I was FIRST to hold him, in my belly, keeping him safe and warm. I was FIRST to love him, enough to know that no matter how badly it hurt me and how long I suffered, it was best for him to be raised by others. I was the FIRST to feel his heart beat. I was the FIRST to feel him move. I am his FIRST mom.”

“I think of myself as my daughter's Birthmother,” said Tracy Kish. “I gave her birth, I gave her life, I could not give her the best, I gave her to someone that could. There is not a day that goes by where I do not think of her. I feel blessed to have been able to give a couple the gift of family. I cherish the time that I was able to bond with her in her first two days of life. I know in God's time I will be able to reunite with my daughter and her parents. I look forward to her meeting her three brothers and my husband. I was 17 when she was born and now she is 24. I pray that I can meet her soon.”

When you think about it, the term “adoptive mother” does the same thing. But the terms are carved deeply into the literature and considered appropriate terms by professionals engaged in the practice of adoption.

Over the past three decades, with the gradual awakening of all corners of the triad to the realities of adoption, their role in it and their personal needs, the adoption reform community has tried on any number of labels, searching for something that is comfortable for everyone. That may be a vain pursuit.

First, it was thought appropriate to designate a “natural” mother, but the obvious flip side was that adoptive mothers were what? Unnatural mothers? That would not do. Others have suggested “first” mothers and while this has not been contrasted with second mother, last mother, etc., it raises hackles in some quarters as well. Most readers know women who are militant in their preference of this designation and others who refer to themselves as birth mothers, seemingly without cringing. There is no universally accepted path.

“I simply refer to myself as a reunited mother”, said Roberta Beavers, AAC state representative for Maine. “When supporting and writing about adoptee human rights legislation I refer to the family of origin as that is the terminology used in my texts while completing my masters in counseling.”

Ann Ball added: “I personally consider myself my son's MOM. I remember the first time someone told me that he was my son and I was his mom. I stop using the words 'birth' and 'first' and made it very simple. I am and will always be his MOM. That is one thing his a'mom and society cannot take away from me. I gave birth to him, and am his MOM.”

One possible solution is to stick to the terms that do not carry baggage. Whether a woman gives birth to a child or rears it, she certainly qualifies for the designation, mother. In context it will soon become clear which mother is being discussed. It might not be the most efficient way to designate a woman's role in the life of an adoptee, but it might be one way to avoid hurtful monikers.

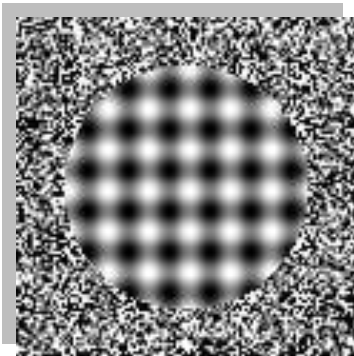
“Birth families” become “families of origin.” Adoptees have two families, even if ties to their original family are severed, which raises the issue of why adoptees need access to their unique identities. Alice Walker (*The Color Purple*) writes: “How simple a thing it seems to me that to know ourselves as we are, we must know our mother's names.”

This article first appeared in the Spring 2010 issue of The AAC Decree, published by the American Adoption Congress, and is reprinted here with the author's kind permission. Wilmer, a reunited adopted adult, is also a long-time adoption reform activist, the founding president of the Green Ribbon Campaign for Open Records and a reunited adoptee. In her spare time she heads Capital Letters, a public relations firm specializing in newsletter production, including The AAC Decree, of which she is editor.

Focus on Ethics

Tapping into the Taproot – The Ethics of Dislocation

by Joan Lawrence



Ethics is a big subject these days. It has become one of today's most critical issues. Simply put, it means doing what is fair, honest and legal. In the context of adoption, ethics is about human rights and the ability to know one's worth in the

midst of relocation. It is a deeply felt value system that only those in the adoption triangle fully understand.

Ideally, all children should be raised by parents in a community to which they can relate and where they belong both culturally and genetically. Yet we do not live in an ideal world. I heard a broadcast about the struggles currently happening with the newly adopted children from orphanages in Haiti. They have experienced little personal attention because of the large number of children needing care with limited resources. Consequently, the adopting parents struggle to communicate with their children who have trouble expressing themselves in their new surroundings. It is a significant challenge for both the children and the new parents.

However, resilience and adaptability are elements of our human condition. Yet, even forty years after the event, birthparents continue to long for their offspring. In a recently aired documentary, this fact, along with the pain of birthmothers who collectively continue to experience grief for the lack of choice they were given in surrendering their children, was extremely poignant. The particular child of the couple in the story did not even know that she was adopted - another layer of dislocation - with which to cope. This renewed relationship will require resilience on many levels.

I am not coming from an outside perspective on this issue. I am an adoptee who, at age 71, does not have her birth name, nationality or genetic background. A social worker in a government-sponsored agency in Montreal has my information but cannot release it to me because of provincial red-tape that would make her "lose her job"! Records are still closed in my birthplace. I, along with hundreds of others, may never have this information or make connection with possible siblings. Similarly, dislocated children from Haiti and other countries might

have the same fate. While continuing to work for change, I began to consider other ways of seeing the situation.

In a world where disasters, disease and war separate children from parents, adoption seems to be one of the few options for children on their own. We have recently seen the ongoing experience of the Haitian earthquake's disastrous dislocation of people and the fallout for children. Some lifting of the red-tape that surrounds the adoption process occurred. Thousands more children around the globe await similar outcomes when disasters strike and dislocation becomes a fact of life. This on top of the thousands waiting to find adoptive parents. Having worked with refugees, I have seen and experienced the amazing stamina that happens when people are forced to make changes in order to survive.

Ethics is often understood as an ideal - a way of believing that there is a perfect attitude or solution which justifies our need to discern what is right and wrong. Situational ethics, on the other hand, is a system, according to Webster, by which acts are judged within their context rather than by categorical principles. It seems that this broader perspective is appropriate when faced with the alternatives: namely permanent loss of any quality of life.

Lately there is a lot of talk about DNA testing as a way of showing how we are all connected with a small degree of separation. A new genealogy program makes the claim that well-known personalities were related biologically to the most incredible matches, surprising the participants. In fact, the Human Genome Project elicited stories in the media about how we share 99.9 percent of our genetic code with every person on the planet. The human community, regardless of skin colour, environment at birth, early experiences and so on, is intimately connected with an even smaller degree of separation than ever imagined.

I am encouraged to consider the situational ethics approach to the larger question of adoption. No, this does not eliminate the pain of the "primal wound". It does not take away the loss of primary parents who often were coerced into making a decision they later regretted. It does not alter the fact that there are many dynamics which continue to dislocate the adoption triangle both physically and psychically. But, if the taproot of our collective humanity is that we are all connected, it seems, to me, that here is an invitation to enter onto the world stage of multiculturalism, to sing our unique song and to choose to be

beacons of hope in a world where the simple act of daily living for so many can be an ongoing struggle.

Taproots go deep. They also put out other roots, generating plants in ways that sustain and nurture their

life. Ultimately, we are all dislocated in some way from our original ancestors. And yet, in the wonderful web of life, we are all connected in the most mysterious and marvelous ways. This, to me, is the essential situational ethic in a rapidly changing world.

Legend of Teekon

by Sandra Walters April 2010

Their bond was deep and strong. The brothers had survived the death of their mother at the hands of man. Since shortly after birth, they had protected and cared for each other. Only the strongest survived in the Yukon. Usually a pack was larger, but the brothers' unity and oneness of mind made their combined strength like that of many wolves. Their hearts beat with almost the same rhythm.

This winter had been harsh and the growing brothers were hungry. The painful emptiness was forcing them into new territory in search of meat. Since the death of their mother, they had avoided man and stayed in remote country, but the luring scent of a possible meal was dragging them towards the settlement. They hunted in unison, anticipating each other's thoughts and strategies.

The brothers began to circle, studying the dangerous creatures' movements. Their cold blue eyes searched for the young and the old in the group, the slower and the vulnerable. Their gaze tracked a young one that was venturing out, away from the protection of the others. Patiently, they waited for the fleeting opportunity. As they crouched in anticipation, their glances to each other communicated that the gnawing at their insides would soon be sated.

The hunter was in an agitated state as he collected his weapons. The wolves had declared war through their act which had thrown a family into grief. His knives would be razor sharp for this night's trap. But his grandmother's words were ominous. She spoke to him of a vision that had come to her from the Creator. The night's full moon would present him with a decision that had the potential to improve the lives of many. His grandmother was wise like the owl after which she was named, and he held great respect for her counsel. He also knew a hunter must



always stay focused on the task at hand, or he might be the next to fall.

The edge of the hunting knife reflected the light from the moon as the hunter slowly dipped it in the warm blood. As he drew the blade out, he watched as the blood hardened on the freezing surface. Again he dipped the knife, and again he watched the red turn dark with the cold. He repeated this many times until two blades wore thick coats of fresh, icy blood. When he was a young boy, he had learned that a hunter must find the weakness in a creature's nature and use that to trap him. With a wolf, the scent of blood would bring him near, and the taste of blood would bring the village's slow revenge.

It had been many nights since the brothers had eaten their full, and the hunger had returned to them more powerful than before. But the cold wind carried promise of another meal and they approached across the snow. In the clearing, two tree branches appeared to protrude from the white surface. The brothers each thought a deer must have become snagged, tearing its flesh. The smell brought them close and they paused to listen for danger. The dark was silent. Each brother began to taste the blood, which thawed with the warmth from their mouths. As they lapped at the source of their desire, they hardly noticed the razor edge slicing. It was now their own blood that they were consuming.

The hunter remained frozen in the forest, not wanting to alert his prey. He had waited for many long, frigid hours before he saw the creatures approach his trap. Once they got a taste, the hunter was sure they would stay until he could claim victory in this battle of strategy. When the dark figures fell over with weakness onto the snow, as if falling asleep, he would seize his opportunity to pierce them with his sharpened spear. He approached slowly

over the surface that made a slight crunching sound as he stepped. With the sharp implement raised high in the air, the hunter hesitated when the hoot of an owl called out from the forest. Remembering his grandmother's vision caused him to look to the full moon hanging over the tops of the trees. He sensed he was at a crossroads and he silently asked the Creator to show him the decision that was destined to make life easier for many.

The wind swirled snow crystals around the hunter's feet and words from the Creator filled his ears. The only thing between us and a life of peace and love, is the decision of each one of us to allow the Creator to empower us to live a life of peace and love. With this new understanding, the hunter chose to make an offer to his enemy. However, when he attempted to speak to the wolves laying before him, his words choked on the anger filling his throat. They had ripped a young life out of the village and devastated a family, and they would do it again if given a chance- how could he consider sparing their lives? The hunter drew the wind into his lungs and opened himself to the Creator's power.

A voice spoke out in the night and the hunter startled himself with the confidence of his own words. He heard himself speaking of the chance for peace. He would help the wolves heal from their wounds if they would humble themselves to strive for peace and love. They would give a voice to the harm they caused to the village and try to feel the pain and loss of the family. While one brother's heart softened with the hunter's offer, the other brother felt pride and anger well up in his chest.

One brother thought only of himself and argued with the hunter. He had no choice but to take the child in order to survive. He had been starving. It was man who had first killed his own mother. He was the one who had suffered. He would rather die there on the snow than to acknowledge man's loss. But for the brother who was open to harmony, his first thoughts were not of himself. Rather, he focused on the possibility of healing in his relationship with man. Admitting to the kill of the young boy, the wolf howled with the pain he now felt, as though he had lost his own son. He asked to return to the village with the hunter to seek forgiveness from the family. Agreeing to this request, the hunter wrapped the creature in animal skins to drag him on the snow, and they began the journey back to the village together.

With the power of the Creator, man embraced the creature who made itself open to peace and love. Over the years, this creature became a great helper to man, pulling sleds across great distances that were not possible when man was alone. Love grew so that the creature became a loyal and trustworthy friend to man and improved the lives of many. Man, in turn, cared for the creature, ensuring he was fed and given affection. Although the wolf brother left on the snow survived his wounds, he found himself re-opening them again and again throughout the seasons to keep the pain alive. It helped to keep his anger and pride strong. At least until the moon hangs full in the sky and reminds him of his brother living in harmony in the village. Then, the vast expanse of his sadness comes crashing in, and he howls out in despair and utter loneliness. This is the story of teekon, the wolf, and his brother, the dog, who became man's closest friend.

FORGIVE, For What?!

by Joe Soll

I often hear adoptees say that they very much want to let their mums know that they are forgiven. I ask the adoptee what they think they need to forgive their mums for and the answer is, "...for giving me up, of course." When I suggest that their mum might not have had a choice, I usually get a blank stare or some anger. "Everyone has a choice", they say with anger.

Herein lies the problem. As adoptees, our "primal wound" rage is huge and our adult self has to be willing to take control of that hurt, angry child we were and explain that maybe mum did not have a choice. To do that, our adult self has to stop thinking that anyone has the right to judge anyone else. Moreover, we did not walk in our mum's

shoes. We do not know what it was like for them 20 or 30 or 40 or more years ago.

We need to read the literature that explores how and why our mums were treated. "Wake Up Little Susie" and "The Girls Who Went Away" are good first choices. Rollo May, one of the greatest existential therapists who ever lived said, "...when someone makes a decision, that decision is based on their maturity, life circumstances, wisdom, societal pressures, etc. At the moment they make that decision, they have no other choice."

I sometimes think we need to say "no reasonable choice" since I know mums who had the option of having their abusive or alcoholic or rage-aholic parents raise their baby. Are those really choices?

Why do we think the worst when we have no knowledge of the circumstances? Why not presume our mums had no choice, instead of presuming that they did?

It occurs to me that by hanging on to the belief that our moms had a choice and didn't value us enough to keep us we cause ourselves tremendous pain. At the same time we are devaluing our mums which on the surface means we didn't lose quite as much so won't hurt as much. Anna Freud said that "...the horrors of war pale beside the loss of a mother", and in my opinion, beside the loss of a child.

To confuse matters even more, a lot of mums say they want to be forgiven because they still carry the horrible shame and guilt from giving in to the brainwashing they endured. Our mums need to read

the books as well. Sadly, trauma victims often hang on to the belief that they had a choice because they can avoid the memories of being helpless which can be even more terrifying and painful than believing they had a choice.

We also need to stop thinking that anyone had more pain than anyone else. There is no meter to measure pain. We've all suffered one of the worst losses any human being can endure. We need to be able to comfort each other, not blame each other. Instead of thinking we need to forgive or be forgiven, we need to be there FOR each other so we can grieve and hence heal.

Joe Soll, LCSW, DAPA, psychotherapist, author of "Adoption Healing... a path to recovery" and co-author of "Evil Exchange"

Announcements

WRITERS WANTED: Adoption Circles is created by volunteers who have their own adoption stories and who feel a commitment to help others. If you have some original writing relating to adoption that you would like to submit for publication, please forward it to the Editor at: walters.sandra@shaw.ca.

The deadlines and focus of the Newsletter are as follows:

EDITION	FOCUS	DEADLINE	DISTRIBUTION
Summer	Undisclosed	Jul13,	Aug 24, 2010
Fall	Suffering	Oct 12,	Nov. 9, 2010
Winter	Belonging	Jan 10,	Feb 14, 2011
Spring	Religion	Apr12,	May 11, 2011

(**Thank you to all who have forwarded contributions, which may appear in this edition, or in an upcoming edition.)

YUKON'S ADOPTION LAWS: As of April 30th, 2010, adopted adults and their birth parents are able to apply for copies of the original and amended birth registrations, subject to no-contact declarations and disclosure vetoes. Both adopted adults and birth parents can apply for non-identifying information. For the adopted person this will include information that was collected at the time of the adoption which that will describe the birth parents, and may include information about interests, hobbies, appearance and ethnicity. Birth parent will receive similar information about the adoptive family. The wait time for this information is approximately 4 months.

A passive registry is also in place where adopted adults and birth parents can register. If a match is made the government will notify the parties and facilitate a reunion. Both adopted adults and birth parents can request a search be done. If the adoptee/ birth parent agrees to contact, the government will facilitate the reunion. Searches usually begin 2 years after the request is received by the Adoption Disclosure Registry. Birth fathers, if interviewed at the time of surrender and named on the original birth certificate can apply to have a search done on their behalf. The adopted adult may also request a search for him through the ADR. As long as his name is on file he can request that his name be placed on the registry. The Adoption Disclosure Registry is offering counselling and can also recommend a counsellor who deals with adoption issues. There is no charge for these services.

There is no website, so for information please contact:

Adoption Disclosure Registry
Health and Social Services
Government of Yukon
PO Box 2703 H10
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6
Telephone (867) 667-3002
Fax (867) 393-6204
Toll free in Yukon 1-800-661-0408 ext 3002

ARE YOU MOVING?: If so, please email the Society secretary, Gloria Sweder, at gsweder@shaw.ca. Please include your new mailing address and phone number and the date of your move. This will ensure that you don't miss out on any copies of **Adoption Circles**, or other communication from the Society.

LEAN ON ME

Telephone/e-mail Support List



Reunited Adoptees:

Cecelia Reekie (cecelia_r@telus.net) (604) 857-2125
 Betty Anderson (bettboop@telus.net) (604) 531-4074
 Dan Carson
 (ariete_132@hotmail.com) (604) 557-0230

Marnie Tetz (marnietetz@shaw.ca) (604) 535-4434
 Kimberley-Ann Jandl – Abbotsford
 (kajandl@yahoo.ca) (604) 852-9663
 Judy Lanyon- Courteney
 (juriah@shaw.ca) (250) 338-2429
 Leanne Neighbour – Kamloops
 (neighbourhoodz@shaw.ca) (250) 374-0990
 Lynn Carrier- Edmonton
 (carrierlynn@hotmail.com) (780) 455-8528

Reunited with Siblings:

Michael Hodgson
 (tiggerboots@telus.net) (604) 524-3686

Reunited Birth Parents:

Nancy Kato (katosan@telus.net) (604) 777-2920
 Susan Wiesendahl
 (susanwiesendahl@yahoo.ca) (604) 275-3243
 Alice McKinnon - Chilliwack
 (alicemck@telus.net) (604) 858-9970
 John Post - Castlegar
 (250) 365-5991
 Diane Herbert - Abbotsford
 (dalendi@shaw.ca) (604) 870-1821

Searching Step-Adoptee:

Edith Archibald
 (eearchibald@shaw.ca) (604) 583-7792

Interested Professionals:

Judy Archer, MSW, RSW, (250) 758-1275
 Counselor and Consultant in Adoption
 (judyarcher@shaw.ca)
 Lee Crawford, M.Ed. R.C.C. (604) 875-9957
 (leecrawford@shaw.ca)
 John Thomas - Quesnel (250) 992-5688
 Christine M. Gatzke, M.Ed., CPAC/ARC
 Psychotherapist (306) 352-4069
 (christine.lachaine@clc-apathtohealing.ca)

Genetic Attraction:

Anne Tasko, M.A. R.C.C. (250) 721-5995
 (anntasko@shaw.ca)

This is a peer support service.

Please contact our office if you wish to be included on the
LEAN ON ME Telephone / E-mail Support List.

SUPPORT GROUPS



Abbotsford Hope Services hosts a support group for new birth mothers. The group meets bi-weekly in either Abbotsford or Langley. Please contact Hope for more information by telephone: 1-800-916-4673 or e-mail: hopesupport@shaw.ca

Cloverdale The Forget Me Not Society holds a support group for adoptees, birth/ natural mothers, adoptive parents and those in a supportive role. We meet the first Thursday of each month (except for July & August), at the Cloverdale public library on the 2nd floor at 5642- 176A Street from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. For more information, contact Marnie Tetz by e-mail at: marnietetz@shaw.ca or call: 604-535-4434.

Nanaimo Family Life Association has a support group for adoptees. For details, contact Stephen Cochran at: 250-754-3331.

New Westminster The Forget Me Not Family Society holds a support group for birth parents and adopted adults. We meet the second Tuesday of each month at the New Westminster Public Library, 716- 6th Avenue, from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. For more information, contact Nancy Kato at: 604-777-2920; or e-mail at: katosan@telus.net

Surrey The Forget Me Not Family Society holds a support group for adopted adults. We meet the third Tuesday of each month for coffee from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. We take a break for July and August. For more information regarding meeting place, please contact Sandra Walters at: 778- 994-2845 or e-mail at: walters.sandra@shaw.ca

Vancouver The Adoptees' Association holds a discussion group for adopted adults the third Wednesday of each month starting at 7:00 PM at the Rhizome Cafe, 317 East Broadway (near Main Street). Please e-mail Catherine for more information at: catiesue@shaw.ca or visit www.adopteesassociation.ca for more information.



Forgotten Mother

Find a replacement?
There is no other

The touch, the smell
of your forgotten Mother.

How can a child
who had no voice

reject me now
when given the choice?

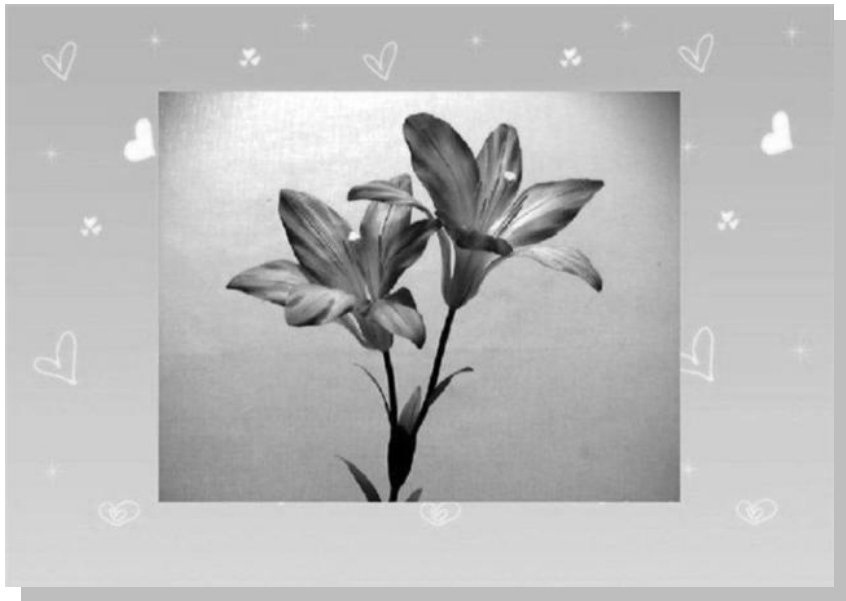
Born of my body,
torn from my heart.

Social mores
forced us apart.

Find a replacement?
There is no other.

The open arms
of your forgotten Mother.

Patent pending - Colleen Rud(d)
Mother's Day 2000 - the new millennium!



To place a sponsorship ad, please call: 604-777-2920. Business card size available for \$40. Please note that advertising is limited to members of the Society, which reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of the proposed Ad to the purpose of our publication.

Membership to the **Forget Me Not Family Society** includes:

- ✓ Subscription to **Adoption Circles**, a quarterly publication
- ✓ Reduction in workshop fees
- ✓ Information on books and support groups

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City/Province/State _____

Postal/Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

Email _____

Birth Parent _____ Adoptee _____ Adoptive Parent _____ Sibling _____ Reunited _____

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Individual membership is \$25.00 per year. Corporate membership is \$60.00 per year. Please send cheque payable to the

Forget Me Not Family Society to:
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