

# ADOPTION CIRCLES

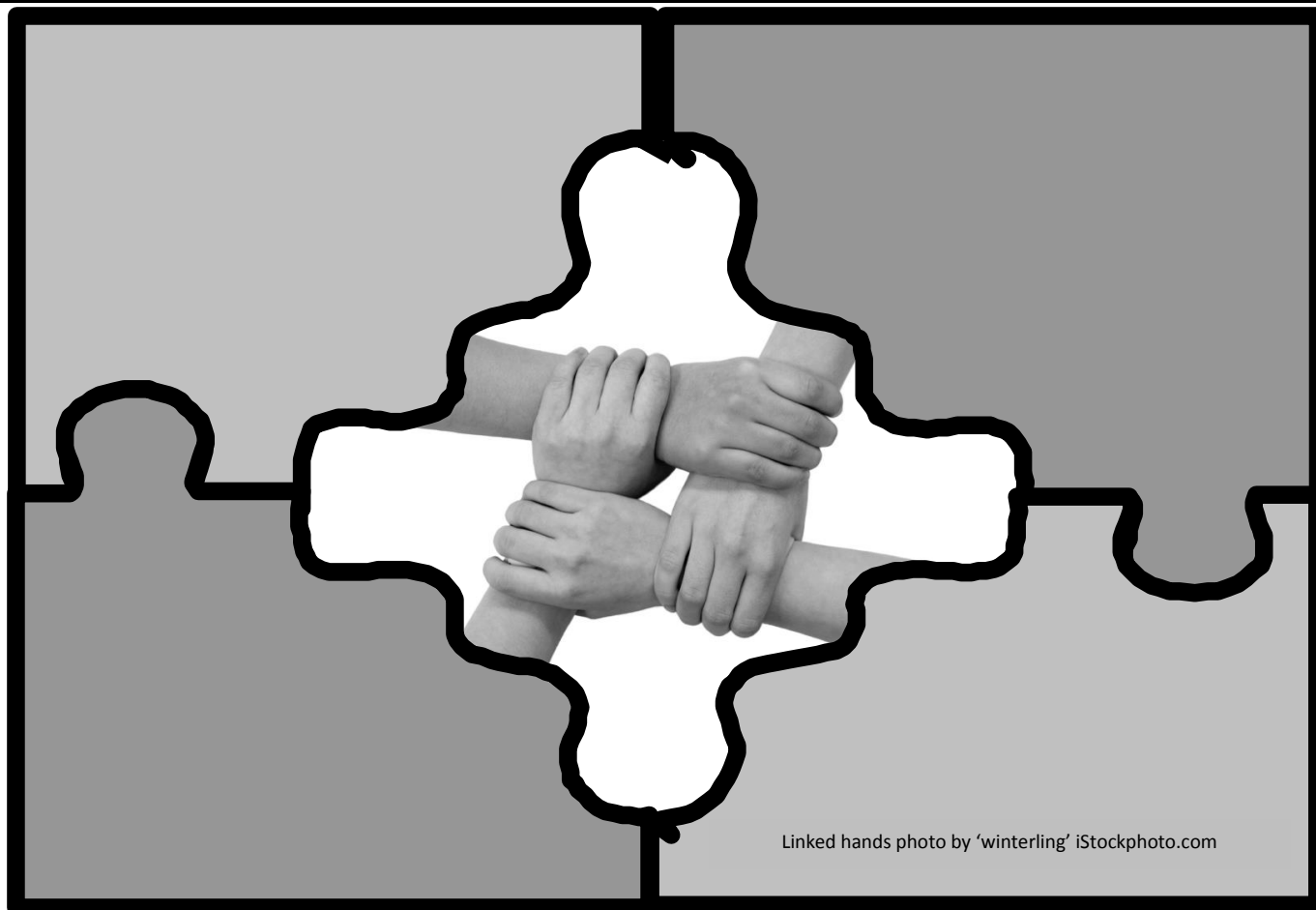
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## Loyalty

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## ADOPTION CIRCLES



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## FMNFS FACTS:

**Forget Me Not Family Society** is a provincially registered, non-profit society and a federally registered charity (#88908 4869 RR0001.) Tax receipts are issued for donations over \$25.00. 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 primary source of income is through membership fees. These funds go directly towards printing, postage, telephone expenses 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, Cloverdale and Kamloops, B.C.
- Individual peer support
- Resource library
- Referrals to professionals and other service groups
- Speakers Bureau to educate groups on post-adoption issues
- Quarterly Newsletter
- Annual weekend workshops

### 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 Associate Editor at: amynewman@telus.net. The Forget Me Not Family 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

By Marnie Tetz

Happy Spring Everyone!

By the time you are reading this we will be on the border of summer and from what I hear we are in for another hot one here on the West Coast.

The topic for this issue of Adoption Circles is loyalty. To me loyalty means that I will be there for my family and friends because I love them and care for them. Loyalty also means that I will continue to support organizations that I believe in. The Forget Me Not Family



Society, Myeloma Vancouver's "Stroll for a Cure" and the Girl Guides for their great cookies! The loyalty for family and friends is different than the loyalty that I have for the Girl Guides, however it's still a loyalty that comes from my dedication to those I care about whether they be family and friends or organizations that I believe do good things.

Loyalty gets tricky though when we are dealing with the adoption circle. As an adoptee I do have a sense of loyalty to my adoptive parents. They raised me and loved me. I have an attachment to them because of all the shared memories that we have.

When it comes to my family of origin what I feel is something deeper than loyalty. I feel a primal

attachment. I am theirs and they are mine. It's beyond loyalty - it's an inside feeling of oneness. It's the same feeling that I have for my children. I don't feel loyal to them, nor they to me. It's primal...we just are.

This issue of Adoption Circles is full of very thoughtful articles -- much food for thought.

Also included is a sneak peak at our presenter for our 9th Annual Fall Workshop (Yes 9th!!) as well as two great book reviews by Bernadette.

Please find yourself that comfy, cozy spot with your favourite drop, and immerse yourself in this issue of Adoption Circles. ~ Marnie

## Rymer Writes

By Bernadette Rymer

Here we are again with another very tough issue to explore, LOYALTY. Again you will be treated to, or perhaps exposed to, the complexities of the theme and many different viewpoints and experiences with loyalty. Thanks sincerely to each author and contributor for your time, energy and your trust in sharing your stories with us.



In reflecting on what I wanted my message to you to be, my mind kept scrolling back on two streams: my personal experience with loyalty – specifically in relation to adoption and adoption loss – and the wealth of information I have read about loyalty in preparation for this

AC. I came to the conclusion that loyalty is a very complex issue and no matter how I approached my message, visuals keep appearing before my inner eyes. I found many 'loyalty' images on the web, but none of them represented the pristine nature of



Image by Bernadette Rymer/2014

loyalty as it applies to adoption. I do not mean to imply that adoption is pristine – not at all – only that I wanted to present the best of loyalty and decided in order to do that I would create my own visual image.

This image, like our adoption journey, is a work in progress. The qualities and actions depicted are interactive, fluid and will likely change over time.

We welcome your thoughts and comments about this image or anything you read in this issue. We love hearing from you and we value your insights.

While reading this issue of AC may I say "Enjoy" or at least, I hope you find the contents to be a source of comfort, challenge and hope.

~~~~~

## Do Not Judge Me

By Gail Davies

December 7, 2013

Do not judge me  
I had no choice  
Do not judge me  
I had no voice

Damned if I did, damned if I don't  
Society wanted my child  
But I won't be persecuted, crucified  
Be meek or mild

You got what you wanted  
My precious baby  
But I won't damn you  
Let you have me

Alone, abandoned  
What choice could there be?  
A wonderful home, they told me  
Better than with me?

Back into my life you came one day  
You called me mother, wrote me letters  
Told me all you had lost  
And all that it cost



Told the ones you were raised with  
The opposite story  
We are all so conflicted  
It did not have to be

The lies we were told, of the lives we would have  
How could anyone know, what dreams we had  
What losses we would suffer  
All the what ifs

We lost our souls and the life we had  
Of course, we are conflicted  
Of course, you are loyal to the family you had  
Of course, there is jealousy for what we did not have

No one wants to take you away  
We all love you  
So why can't we just stay  
Loving you to the end, I pray

We should all be praised  
Praised for the lives we lived  
The things we have done  
This is not a competition

We didn't raise you  
Things will never be the same  
But we never forgot you  
No one won

# Family Loyalty

By D'Arcy Mahoney

The concept of family loyalty has always been a bit of a mystery to me. It has never really motivated me in the same way it does other members of my adoptive family, and I am curious as to why not.

One dictionary definition of loyalty is: A feeling or attitude of devoted attachment and affection. Often used in the plural, as in “My loyalties lie with my family.” When I looked up synonyms for loyalty, I found fidelity. Fidelity “implies unwavering devotion and allegiance to a person, principle, etc.”

From those definitions, it seems that I cannot consider loyalty without also considering devotion. In my experience, I can only feel devoted to something that I feel I belong to, and the feeling of belonging in my adoptive family has been elusive.

From my Mum and Dad's perspective, of course I belong in the family. They would probably feel hurt if they knew how much I feel like I do not belong. Despite their best efforts to treat me the same as their birth children and to love me the same way as they love them, I always had a sense that I did not really belong there. I do not look like any of them, my humour is different, I have some really different values and talents – who I am was never reflected back to me, and that made me feel like a square block in a round hole a lot of the time. It was lonely, and my parents were mystified as to why I should feel such loneliness when I was surrounded by so much love and so many people.

My adoptive Dad in particular had expectations that I should feel a strong loyalty to our whole extended family, as he did. When I was told I “should” feel this way or that, I just could not relate, quite frankly. I remember my Dad scolded me one time for not wanting to reach out to relatives who lived several provinces away. I had had very little contact with them, was shy approaching them, did not look like them, and had no shared ancestry with them. In

short, no real reason to feel any loyalty to them, but my Dad was livid. “We're family,” he cried, presuming that I should feel the same loyalty towards them as he did. I just did not relate, and I could not really explain it.

I would not use “devotion” as a way to describe the loyalty that I do feel towards my adoptive family. My feelings of loyalty are based on our shared history – growing up in the same household, sharing values, and having common experience. It has nothing to do with shared ancestry – although I was very close to both of my grandmothers, and my Mum's Mum in particular. I have very fond memories of baking lemon cookies in the kitchen with Grammie when she came to visit. My cousins and I do share that, and that creates a bond. But it's more like the family bond created when two families join in marriage than the bond of loyalty that is presumed to exist between blood relatives.



The words “family loyalty” also evoke the idea of obligation to me. When I think of an organization that I feel loyal to, I feel a sense of obligation to support it and to be grateful for what it has given

me. In my adoptive family, there was a sense that I should be grateful that they saved me from the life that I would have had if they had not adopted me. I do feel grateful for all that they have done for me, but not necessarily for that. I had nothing to do with the decision that I would be adopted, so the idea of feeling grateful for it seems weird to me.

I also felt obliged to demonstrate my loyalty to my family by doing my best to fit in, be like them, and feel the way they did about a lot of things, even though that did not come naturally to me. I tried hard to fit in and went so far as to pursue the “family career”, even though it was a very bad fit for my personality. My Dad in particular put a lot of pressure on me to pursue it and said that I was way smarter than he was and that he expected me to go further in my career than he had in his. I left that career a few years ago, and when someone asked me how I could do that after so much education and over a decade working at it, my gut-level response was “without a backward glance.” I am having a blast now pursuing my artistic interests and raising my son.

It has been interesting for me to connect with some blood relatives over the last couple of years. I have been in reunion with my birth mother’s sister and two cousins, and it has been eye opening. Although they are my birth family, I do not feel a sense of loyalty to them yet, as we’re just getting to know each other.

Equally, they do not really expect that I should feel a sense of family loyalty towards them. I think that is because I was given up at birth and raised by a completely different family. They just want to share more with me about my birth mother. She died many years ago. They want me to know about her and about our family, and they want to know me, as me.

With no expectations being put on me, I feel free to express myself authentically with them, a freedom I have not always felt with my adoptive family. I have dared to share the artistic side of me as my birth mother was an artist and my cousin is an actor, director and coach. When I talk with my aunt on FaceTime, I love seeing some of my expressions and my slightly crooked smile being reflected back to me. The process is like how I feel when I make a new friend. I feel excited to discover things about them, and what makes it extra special is that we have so much in common. For example, I love perogies and cabbage rolls although my Mum never made them, and it turns out that my birth mother’s family is Ukrainian.

When I consider my experience with my adoptive family and my experience in reunion, I find that my experience of family loyalty has an odd twist.

Because I am not related by blood to the people I was raised with, I do not have to take on the trip of family loyalty and make such an effort to be like them to fit in. I can just love them freely and feel loyal to them on the basis of our common experience. I have some choice in the matter.

And because I was not raised with the people to whom I am related by blood, I do not have to take on the trip of family loyalty and inherit any emotional baggage. I can just love them freely. I can just enjoy the fact that I finally get to have the experience of being around people I look like and start to build a common experience.

I describe my position as being a “free agent of the Universe.” I feel like I belong everywhere, and that I have the freedom to choose my loyalties, free of clan ties and ancestral obligation. It is wonderful.

Blood makes you related: Loyalty makes you family. ~ Anon

# Loyalty Sparks Rage

Contribution from a FMNFS member



Photo by Vera Kratochvil,  
PublicDomainPictures.net

I am sorry I am unable to get my creative juices flowing on the Loyalty issue. The topic of Loyalty brings up R-A-G-E, unbelievable rage; at the system, at the adoptive parents, at my own parents, the church, the community!! You name it!! ~ A Reunited Mother

## Choices

By Amy Newman

Loyalty is always about making choices. How do we demonstrate loyalty? We might choose to zip our lip instead of repeating gossip about a friend. Remain faithful to a spouse and resist a temptation to flirt. Visit elderly relatives. Keep going to the same hairdresser, accountant, and grocery store. Cheer for the same team. Why? Because we've established a relationship that we value or we get something out of it, like good service or value. Or is it because it's a mindless habit, it's expected of us and it's just easier to continue (don't rock the boat)?

Sometimes we will willingly and consciously choose to be loyal, to sacrifice our own immediate wants for the benefit of others. To me, that's simply LOVE and I don't think of it as just loyalty.

The word Loyalty can have a negative twist. When I first sat down to write on this topic, my first thoughts included the words *manipulation*, *power* and *guilt*.

When others pull the loyalty "should" on us we are likely to feel manipulated. What are their expectations? Did you buy into the implied agreement or were you coerced? Are you making

your choice out of love or obligation and duty? What are the consequences of being loyal or disloyal in your situation? What fits with your ultimate values?

Our hearts ache for the unwed mothers who were coerced by loyalty to parents and/or religious organizations into relinquishing a child they desperately wanted to keep.

Loyalty is not always virtuous. What actions do members of criminal organizations, militant extremists, religious zealots and cult members take in the name of loyalty?

Does loyalty to your spouse mean that you stay in an abusive relationship? Is it really loyalty if there is an imbalance of power and manipulation by fear?

When I first learned, as a child, about the Nazi Holocaust I decided that blind obedience was bad and it was a good thing to question authority. In a free and democratic society we must question our leaders and speak out against wrongs. My generation shook things up in the 1960s by questioning authority -- and extolling love. It takes courage to stand for what you believe, and I think courage and love are higher virtues than loyalty.

Loyalty is the highest virtue - taught by abusers and used as a control tool. ~ Dr. Bill Tollefson

Loyalty to the country always. Loyalty to the government when it deserves it. ~ Mark Twain

# Eli's Father

By Pamela Novotny

I just inadvertently found my son Eli's birth father, on Facebook of course. It is a photo taken at the age Eli is now.

There was a time, when Eli was about three, when telling him that he had not been in my tummy like his siblings had been, broke my heart. Not because I feared he would be disloyal to me and want his birth parents more than me, but because of the sad surprise that was for him.

I've never had a problem with Eli seeking or finding his birth parents, and have never seen that as an issue of loyalty on his part. We are each entitled to know our own story, and his birth parents are part of his. If I didn't want him to at least know of them (and then do what he wanted with that knowledge) it would be terribly disloyal of me, as his mother, to him.

My loyalty to my son means that I encourage him and support him in knowing himself – the wholeness of himself – and that must include birth parents.

I trust that he will do what he needs to do (which may not be what I would do) with the connection he has with them. It turns out his birth mother (whom he found on Facebook several years ago) withheld info about the birth father because he is an active addict. She has done much in the interest of Eli's welfare – beginning with relinquishing him. Now she fears he will be hurt by his birth father, because as a former addict herself, she knows that an addict loves the addiction more than he or she loves any person. That may well be true, if Eli contacts him.

I know his birth mother wasn't crazy about the idea of me telling Eli about his birth father and that he could contact him if he wished. I, however, trust that Eli will know what to do about it. Right now that seems to be nothing. It may be that seeing the picture of his birth father and learning his name will

be enough for Eli for some time.

Was I right in taking the picture of his father directly to Eli? The huge smile on Eli's face when I showed him the photo told me all I needed to know about how much this knowledge meant to him.

*Ms. Novotny has been a writer for more than 25 years, focusing on parenting, women's health issues and psychology. She lives in Boulder, Colorado with her husband and five children.*

[www.pamnovotnybooks.com](http://www.pamnovotnybooks.com)



"You've got more than one loyalty card? That's despicable."

*Used with permission from [www.CartoonStock.com](http://www.CartoonStock.com)*

# Loyalty: The Good, The Maybe Not So Good, and the Terribly Destructive

By Bernadette Rymer

**L**oyalty in relationship to adoption is a huge issue for most of us. Adoptees feel a strong sense of divided loyalties between the parents who raised them and the mother and family who gave them life, and as many see it, who gave them away. Reconciling these two loyalties is very difficult, takes years of hard work and solid support from others who have lived an experience similar to theirs.

Adopted families often feel resentment towards the birth family believing that the birth family gave up all rights to the 'child'. The adoptive parents may also feel threatened that the birth family will come back and take the adopted child from them. The birth family may feel that the child should have a sense of loyalty to them because they are blood related.

In this article I hope to present the genesis of loyalty: what it is, why we feel it, the decisions we make because of our loyalties and the possible outcomes of these decisions.

Loyalty is generally seen as a virtue. However, many experts who study the core and the function of loyalty believe that referring to loyalty as a virtue is problematic depending on to whom and why we feel loyalty, whether or not we were pressured into being loyal and how that loyalty plays out and affects our lives, and the lives of those we love.

The Encyclopedia Britannica (1971) describes loyalty as a personal devotion or sentiment of attachment to a particular object, which may be another person or group of persons, an association, an ideal, a duty, or a cause. Our loyalties stir and arouse us, bring meaning, direction, and purpose into our lives and unify and focus our activities.

Some experts believe that loyalty is a genetically inherited adaptive mechanism, a felt attachment to others that has survival value, personal and group survival. Further, they believe that our personal and

group identities are clarified and solidified by our loyalties. Loyalty is integral in close friendships, to allegiance to family, to church and many other relationships and associations who encourage, and in many case, expect us to be loyal.



Many of us have experienced our families and our churches expecting or sometimes demanding loyalty. Some organizations and often countries do what they can to foster it. Associations that evoke and maintain our loyalty tend to be those with which we have become deeply involved or *identified*, those which have intrinsic social or moral value.

Loyalty in the pure sense is mutually beneficial to both parties. Unfortunately, sometimes 'loyalties' can be destructive. One point made by several researchers jumped out at me and hit me where it hurts: The true or acid test (a conclusive test of the success or value of something) of loyalty is conduct: how we or others act, rather than intensity of feeling. Often the loyal person acts for, stays with or remains committed to the object of loyalty even when it is likely to be disadvantageous or costly to the loyal person to do so.

Does this sound familiar to you? It most certainly does to me. I think back to the pressure placed on me by my parents and church to be 'loyal' to them, and then I think of the disastrous forty-four year

fallout from my mis-informed and mis-placed loyalties. Certainly the loyalties I felt and the subsequent decisions were indeed very costly to me and to my child.

When loyalties expected and or demanded, this is not loyalty in the true sense, but is rather servitude, disguised as loyalty. It is not part of loyalty to be complaisant or servile, however loyalty may be corrupted into such, and unfortunately much too easily.

In any relationship involving loyalty, there must be openness communication, honesty, integrity and trust. Opposition is permitted, questioning and evaluating one's position free of duress is encouraged. When this questioning and opposition stays within bounds that are compatible with the well-being and best interests of both parties, the loyalty is strengthened. When such questioning and opposition is seen as disloyal by the object of the loyalty then true, pristine loyalty never existed, but rather servitude.

Some experts hold that loyalty as a virtue, is valuable in and of itself. I wondered about this.

- Does loyalty have any value in and of itself, independent of the particular associational object with which it is connected?
- Does loyalty, or the willingness or ability to show loyalty, have intrinsic value to our human development? Put in other words, do we contribute to our overall well-being if we show, feel and act loyally?
- Do we need to be loyal to someone or something in order to grow?

Two examples, one historic and one personal may help to demonstrate or shed light on these questions.

First, consider the historic and very tragic case of those loyal to the Nazi regime. Then think about your loyalty to the FMNFS and the value or benefit you gain from your involvement with this society.

Here is a heart wrenching question: If we can accept that for most of us, our loyalty to the FMNFS is not only important to us but may, in reality be critical to our emotional and psychological survival, can we then accept the same for those with Nazi loyalties?

These are two vastly different examples, with two vastly different outcomes, one mutually beneficial and the other mutually destructive. One is pristine loyalty, the other servitude.

When reflecting on my life in 1970, I wonder when I placed my mis-informed 'loyalties' in my parents and church, what would or could have been the outcome had I placed my loyalties in myself, and in my beautiful - innocent child?

I will never know. I will always wonder.

What about you? Think about your experience with adoption, and the loss you suffered as a result.

- What loyalty decisions did you make?
- To whom did you feel loyal? Why?
- What actions or conduct occurred to convince you to be loyal to the person/group?
- How do you feel now about those decisions, way back when?
- How does your experience with your earlier loyalties influence your current loyalties?
- Why is it so very difficult for us to face this issue head on?

I look for these qualities and characteristics in people. Honesty is number one, respect, and absolutely the third would have to be loyalty. ~ Summer Altice

Never push a loyal person to the point where they no longer care. ~ Anon

# Loyalty and Mothers

By Joe Soll 조 살, LCSW,  
Psychotherapist & Author

*Joe Soll is the author of "Adoption Healing... a path to recovery"  
(1 for moms, 1 for adoptees, 2 for both),  
Co-author of "Evil Exchange" and "Fatal Flight"*

**W**hat does the word 'mother' mean to an adoptee?

We know what an adoptive mother is because we grew up with ours.

What we can't know is what it's like to grow up with our first mother.  
We adoptees don't know what that word means the way other people do.

We can't know.

We must be loyal to the mom who raised us.

Perhaps it's even wrong to wonder what it's like to grow up with our first mother.

Wondering about it can put us in touch with the pain of the loss of our first mother.

Perhaps our adoptive mom will know what we are wondering about and send us 'back.'

Most of the above is unconscious.

- Wondering and worrying that goes on in our unconscious mind.
- Worrying and wondering that may stop us from searching.
- Wondering and worrying that may keep us distant from our first mom if we have a reunion.

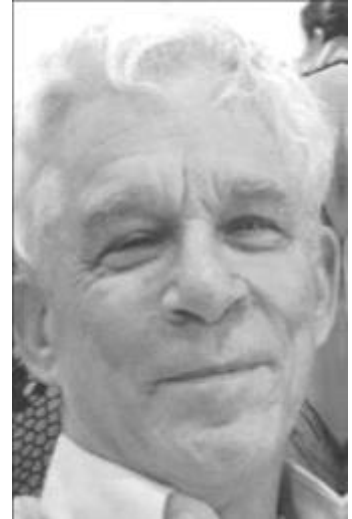
Do we dare to try to find out what the word mother means to other people?

Do we dare to feel the feelings that arise if we do?

Are we being disloyal if we try?

Question for Adoptees:

1. Are you aware of any inner conflict when you think about your two mothers?
2. Are you aware of any fear?
3. Have you been able to discuss this topic with either of your two mothers?



# Loyalty According to Adoption

By Bernadette Rymer

**L**inks destroyed - **L**ove **L**ost

**O**verwhelmed by parents, church, society

**Y**ielding to pressure - **Y**anking us apart.

**A**doption, deadly option: **A**djust they said.

**L**abelled, **L**acerated - **L**anguishing

**T**rust shattered -

**Y**earning always.

**L**inks reconnected – for the **L**ucky few,

**O**verjoyed - **O**vercome

**Y**ears: Lost ones regretted: Hope for those to come.

**A**doption reunion terminated: **A**lways wondering why?

**L**inks **L**iquidated - **L**ove **L**acerated

**T**rust **T**erminated: **T**inged & **T**arnished, **T**rauma recreated.

**Y**earning, **Y**ielding: Mother and Child, **Y**oked for life.

## Introducing Rich Uhrlaub

**T**he Forget Me Not Family Society is very pleased to have Rich Uhrlaub lead our upcoming Fall Workshop, November 1-2, 2014.

Rich Uhrlaub, M.Ed. serves on the boards of the American Adoption Congress and Adoptees in Search – Colorado's Triad Connection. He is a frequent speaker at conferences and a contributing author to *Finding Our Place: 100 Memorable Adoptees, Foster Persons and Orphanage Alumni* by Nikki McCaslin, and *Adoption and Mothering*, edited by Frances Latchford.

Gail Davies discovered Rich while attending the 2010 AAC Regional Conference. She writes, "I have

never felt so validated and understood. I came out of Rich's workshop on such a high that it was unbelievable"

A testimonial by Eileen McQuade, Past President, American Adoption Congress is found on his business website 303solutions.net: "Rich Uhrlaub is a wonderful resource for the American Adoption Congress. His workshops are thought-provoking, well-facilitated, and always leave participants with much more than they expected -- some of our most highly rated sessions!"

We are certain that members will find his workshop very worthwhile.  
~ Amy Newman

Loyalty and devotion lead to bravery. Bravery leads to the spirit of self-sacrifice. The spirit of self-sacrifice creates trust in the power of love. ~ Morihei Ueshiba

# What We Know For Sure About Adoption: It's Complicated

By Richard Uhrlaub, M.Ed.

**R**emember when everyone thought adoption was a straightforward, simple solution to a hush-hush social problem? When my parents adopted my older sister and me in the mid-late 1950s (prior to the surprise arrival of my younger sister through natural means), it was a simpler time, addressing a usually straightforward scenario: A woman, for whatever reason, could not raise her baby. Therefore, the baby needed a home. The prospective adoptive parents wanted to build a family and could offer a stable, loving home. Voila! Everyone's problem was solved by adoption.

Since then, everything we once thought about adoption began changing, slowly at first:

- The "Blank Slate Theory," in vogue at the time, has been eclipsed by new findings about the power of genetic influences through twin studies and cracking the human genome. Attachment theorists have studied and documented the significant impact of separating an infant from its biological mother.
- Adult adoptees raised under laws that sealed away their heritage have formed activist groups and are demanding equal rights to access to their original birth certificates.
- Mothers from what has been dubbed the "Baby Scoop Era" (1940-1980), many of whom surrendered their babies under extreme grief, duress and even coercion, are finding their voices and casting off the shame foisted on them—some with such passion and conviction that they have elicited formal apologies from the Australian government. At the same time, the fact that fewer American women are relinquishing their parental rights has created more of a "sellers' market," resulting in a related increase in compensation to women who are willing to let other parents raise their child.



Photo by Petr Kratochvil, PublicDomainPictures.net

- Parenthood in North America today is more often viewed as a right than a blessing, raising questions as to whether adoption is more about providing homes to children who need them, or acquiring babies for people who want them. Prospective adoptive parents' options have expanded to include international, trans-racial, open, semi-open, and designated (usually in-family) adoptions.
- Reproductive technologies offer couples and individuals "designer babies," frozen embryo adoptions, and surrogates living in India, who for a fee will carry a baby to term for them.
- Adoption agencies provide training to would-be parents about how to market themselves via the Internet, social media, college newspapers and personal networking to attract pregnant women. Yahoo! news reported that in 2012 some

2.5 million American couples were competing to adopt about 650,000 infants.

- Orphans, whether adopted from half way across the world by movie stars or photographed living in squalor, have become socio-political symbols in an increasingly disparate global economy.
- Adoption has morphed from a compassionate social service provided mostly by church-related agencies into a multi-billion dollar global business involving international treaties, political posturing, sometimes shadowy ethics, and even organized crime.

But somewhere, amid all the religious imperatives, commoditization and politicization swirling around adoptees like me (most of whom would desperately love to believe that all the fuss is still at least in part about us), there remains the hope to imagine adoption as something simple rooted in love, grace and commitment. Miraculously, and complications notwithstanding, people still can and do connect as family, however such families come together. Imagine that!

*Used with permission. This article is found online at the [ImagineProject.com](http://ImagineProject.com).*

## Absolute Loyalty

By Amy Newman

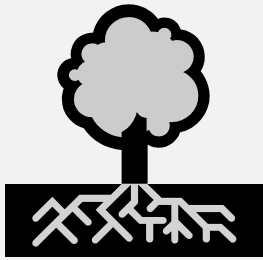


**A dog sleeping on the grave of his master**

**T**his photo went viral in 2012 in an email about Capitán, a dog who has lain at his master's grave in Argentina every evening since a few days after his burial in 2006. Capitán disappeared after his master's death, and found the grave by himself, according to the man's widow. The story is true and appears in the *New York Daily News* September 13, 2012, with photos of the real Capitán, a German Shepherd mix. However, the picture above which circulated the internet shows another, unidentified dog, in another cemetery.

In addition to loyalty, the story expresses a determined search for a loved one and the longing to be reunited.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



## **FMNFS Display & Information Booth at the Finding Your Roots Seminar**

Saturday Oct 18, 2014

Location: Family History Centre,  
6270 – 126th St, Surrey BC

Seminar cost: FREE

Drop-ins are okay, but online pre-registration ensures enough printed materials and correct seating for classes. Attendees may pre-order bag lunch \$5 with online registration.

<http://www.findingyourroots.ca>

## **FMNFS FALL WORKSHOP**



**November 1 & 2, 2014 Presenter: Rich Uhrlaub, M.Ed.**

**Earlybird rates \$140 Members and \$175 for Non-members.**

After September 15: \$160 and \$195

Saturday only \$130 and \$165

Location: Executive Airport Plaza Hotel & Conference Centre,  
7311 Westminster Hwy, Richmond, BC

*Watch for registration forms by email soon or contact [marnietetz@shaw.ca](mailto:marnietetz@shaw.ca)*

# **Forget Me Not Family Society**

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

**For the period of February 1, 2013 to January 31, 2014**

**Presented April 23, 2014**

**I**n a blink of an eye... 2013 came and is gone.

Since our AGM in April of 2013 your Board has met on an almost monthly basis to discuss what is best for the Forget Me Not Family Society and its membership. Always I must first thank our membership. Many who have supported the Forget Me Not Society for years upon years. You have been there supporting us as we continue to facilitate our support groups and publish what can only be called the amazing Adoption Circles newsletter. Without your support we would not be able to continue to do what we do. The Board has continued its work by offering our annual fall workshop and at least one other event that allows our members to either participate, be audience to or socialize with others who have been impacted by adoption.

Since our last AGM there have been many behind the scenes events taking place. Nancy Kato continues to speak to pre-adoptive parent groups sharing her story and enlightening couples hoping to adopt, on the pitfalls that are only too likely to come with their 'blank slate'. By sharing her story Nancy continues to put a face to the 'birthmother' and in doing so, I believe helps open the door to better understanding for the hopeful adoptive parents that may be too full of 'starry eyed' Hollywood style adoption stories. Bernadette Rymer also has spoken on a few occasions to pre-adoptive parent groups in the interior. Thank you to you both for this very important work that you are doing.

On October 9th, 2013 the Forget Me Not Family Society was honoured to make a presentation to a Masters class of students at the School of Social Work at UBC.

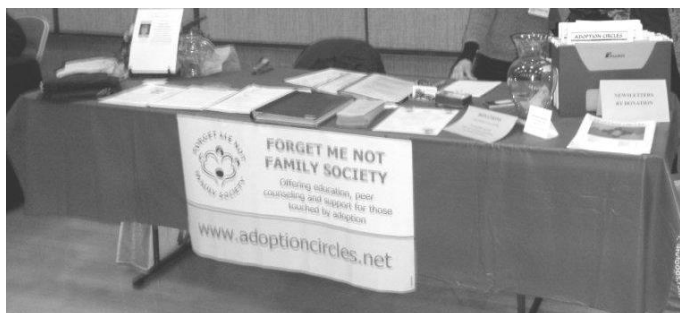


After intense rounds of communication with Dr. Edward Kruk, Associate Professor of Social Work at UBC, Bernadette then put together an all-star cast to make this presentation. A panel was assembled representing the adoption circle: Gail Davies spoke from her perspective as a birthmother, Margaret Ferguson spoke from her experience being a late discovery adoptee, and Steve Sharpe as an adoptive parent. Nancy Kato was the mediator.

This well planned and executed presentation was extremely well received by the entire class. Continuing in the very organized fashion in which the event was planned, Bernadette also included evaluations for the students to fill out. Their comments raved about the event and the perspectives that the students never would have learned if not for this panel. A big thank you to Bernadette for all of the hard work that she put into making this event a reality and to the Society members who graciously contributed their time and bared their souls for this presentation.

Once again in the fall Amy and Gail manned a booth at the "Finding Your Roots" seminar held at the Family History Centre in Surrey. This is the second time that the Society has had a booth at this event and once again many stopped by to chat and learn about the Society. Thanks to both of you for

your time. A little birdie has told me that the Society will once again have a booth this fall.



Our Fall Workshop “Releasing our Voices... Sharing our Stories” with Ray McGinnis had a small group of 22 in attendance... and as Sharon Jinkerson, who lead our healing/talking circle at the conclusion of the workshop said: “Those that are meant to be there will be.” Sharon was right!



From the start of Saturday Ray engaged the participants in a kind, warm, caring way. This gave everyone a safe place to express on paper their innermost thoughts and feelings... what was really going on deep down inside. It wasn't always adoption related but it was our truths and we felt safe. Using various techniques Ray had us write about our thoughts and feelings and then broke us into groups of three or four so we could share what we had written. Time and time again our thoughts and feelings were validated. We all knew that we were among enlightened witnesses who were more than willing to share a hug, a smile, a tear. We were safe! The perfect ending to the day was the circle that Sharon led with the help of Brenda Ireland, a longtime friend, who drummed and sang. Each of us was mesmerized by the spiritual nature of the ceremony that Sharon and Brenda led us

through. It was a perfect way to end an amazing day. Thanks to Past President Cecelia Reekie for taking time from her busy schedule to take part in the circle. Thanks also to Ray for his kindness and humour and to those who attended the workshop. Friendships were renewed, and new ones formed.

We are very pleased that Margaret Ferguson has continued on in her role as librarian of the Society's lending library. I don't think Margaret had a clue how many books we actually had. Thank you Margaret! I would also like to thank Kathy Chambers for taking over the role of Archivist. Kathy is now in possession of most of the 'history' of the Society. Old news clippings as well as past issues of the AC are some examples. Many thanks Kathy for looking after this important part of the Society for us.

The Board of the Forget Me Not Family Society may be small but we are mighty! Gail Davies continued on as our Treasurer/Secretary and Amy Newman and Bernadette Rymer continued their roles as Directors. I challenge you to find a more dedicated Board of volunteers. These women that I have had the pleasure and honour of working with are the real deal!

Sooooo ladies... my most favourite part... thanking each of you individually! Again in alphabetical order:

Amy... thank you! You are the one who sits back and listens, ponders... thinks about what you have heard and then you just go to it. You quietly have taken on the job of layout for the newsletter and have done a fabulous job! Your keen eye for details... fonts, white space, illustrations and the like has made our AC visually appealing to our readers. Not only have you worked tirelessly on the AC you have continued to organize our Board meetings so that we two old ladies from White Rock don't have to make that drive in the evening. You arranged and do what to me is the techie part and set up our 3 way call so that Gail and I can either be in the comfort of her home or mine rather than on the road late at night. For that alone you are never allowed to leave the Board as long as I'm on it!!! Pinky shake... okay? And as always you are the hostess-with-the-mostess making the arrangements so that

we can hold events, such as the AGM tonight in your Owners Lounge which really feels just like an extension to a cozy living room. Thank you... much appreciated!

Bernadette... you amaze me with your energy and your commitment to the Society and getting the word out about how adoption has collateral damage. Your work on the UBC presentation was nothing short of brilliant! From start to finish in your typical professional manner you put a human face to the suffering that adoption has done to those who are in the midst and living the aftermath. If not for you and your determination to make this event happen those students going for their Master's degree in Social Work would never have had a face to put to the terms birthmother, adoptee or adoptive parent. You did that! Bravo! And thanks. 'Thanks' seems like such a small word to show the appreciation that I feel, that we feel for all that you have done, which also includes the amazing year of Adoption Circles. You my friend will be a tough act to follow. However I know that when possible that you will still be more than willing to lend a hand. Thank you!

As always, Gail, you are the last, but never the least. You, my dear friend, are in reality the Grand Finale! Before I say more, let me reiterate what I say every year: YOU ARE NOT GOING ANYWHERE! As long as I'm around so are you. We will probably be pushing each other around in our wheelchairs, or having races with our walkers! And I will still be asking you questions about the financials. Speaking of which, thank you for all that you have done this

year with our 'books'. You have kept the receipts, paid our bills and filed the paperwork that is necessary under the Society's act with the government. When you have had a question you have taken that extra step and spoken to a CGA to clarify a question. You have sent out membership reminders updated membership lists, as well as kept the Board in line with making sure that we have a date for our next Board meeting before we adjourn. And after doing all of that you get the minutes to us in a timely manner, keep us updated with the financial statements and then start all over again by sending out the notices for the AGM. You are a keeper, and have been for over 20 years. I thank you, the other Board members thank you and the membership should be thanking you... and given the opportunity I know that they do and would.

On that note, without each of you, the work of running the Society no matter how large or small could not be done as smoothly and effortlessly as it appears. Because of the combined effort of four, workshops-POOF!-happen. Newsletters-POOF!-are written, published and arrive in mailboxes as if by magic! The magic is in the camaraderie of four seniors who had the misfortune of having their lives impacted by adoption, and the fortune of having the honour of working together.

To our members who have joined us tonight: Thank you for your support we couldn't do it without you!

Marnie Tetz, President  
Forget Me Not Family Society

### FMNFS Board of Directors for 2014-2015:

|                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                      |                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |  |  |
| Marnie Tetz,<br>President                                                           | Amy Newman,<br>Vice President                                                       | Gail Davies,<br>Treasurer/Secretary                                                  | Bernadette Rymer,<br>Director                                                         |

# To My Birthson: Daniel Robert Steel - born December 31st 1983

By Jennifer Steel

Written on December 26th 2013 (with an excerpt from *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost)

I made your life a little better,  
When I chose your parents for you.  
I was just seventeen, if you know what I mean.  
I didn't think I could raise you on my own.

For nine months, we shared the world together, when you were in my womb.  
Day by day, you grew and grew,  
Like a flower, beginning to bloom.

You are now a man, all on your own;  
raised by wise folks, who now call you, dear son.  
I can never take the place of your new family and I, too, can never be replaced.

I loved you then and I love you now.  
And as sure, as day leads on to day, and year leads on to year.  
I have longed for a chance to meet you and look into your face.

I want you to know, that I love you so.  
I want you to know, that I miss you so.  
I want you to know, that I will never let go,  
of the place you still hold in my heart.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.



Photo credit : Mike Coates, PublicDomainPictures.net

# Book Nook

By Bernadette Rymer

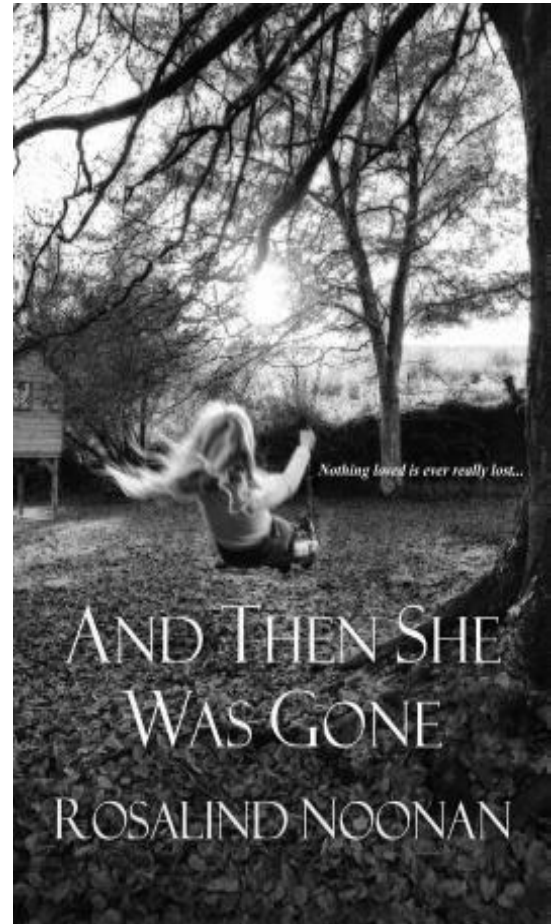
I have recently read two books which, between them, explore the issue of loyalty from many different viewpoints.

***And Then She Was Gone*** by Rosalind Noonan, is the story of Lauren, an eleven year old girl who is abducted and missing without a trace. Six years later she is found and seemingly without physical harm. The crux of the story is about the reunion issues that each family member faces when Lauren is found.

Both parents assume that Lauren will return to live with them and they have visions of all living 'happily ever after'. The younger daughter Sierra is trying to break out of her parents' extreme over-protectiveness, and at the same time she feels like the invisible child as her mother had devoted all of her attention and energy for six years into finding Lauren. The now seventeen year old Lauren is in fact extremely traumatized by her experience. She has very complex issues about her abduction, her captor and her family. She feels very estranged from her parents and in particular her mother who, naturally is doting on her child. She feels a strong sense of 'loyalty' to her captor who, over the period of her captivity, convinced (brainwashed) her into believing that her parents no longer cared about her, or they would have found her already. Lauren also feels that she has grown beyond what her parents can offer, and fearfully resists returning to live with them. She relates more openly to her younger sister Sierra who was six at the time of Lauren's abduction.

There is a strange and tragic twist to this story, one that I did not see coming, and one that hits at the baseline of issues surrounding loss: each family member lost so much as a result of Lauren's abduction, and had to work very hard individually and as a family to come to a resolution.

This book is a good read, one that I would recommend as it gives insights into the issue and the complexities of loyalty.



**Where We Belong** by Emily Griffin is about adoption and reunion. It starts out with a great deal of promise for the future for both mother and her now adolescent daughter whom she placed for adoption, believing that this was the best option for all involved.

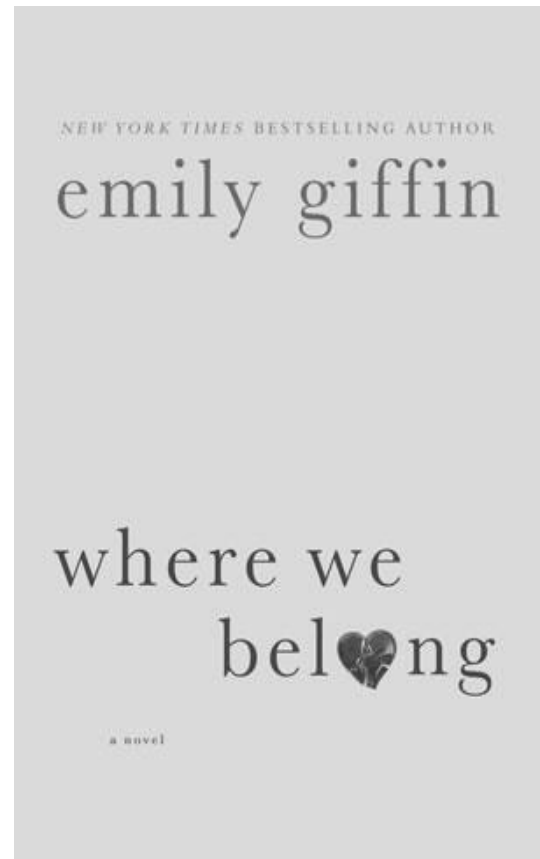
The author presents the issues and struggles of both the mother, Marion and 'child' Kirby, in a very realistic way, and rather sensitively plays out the initial awkwardness in the reunion relationship leading me to feel that this author really did her homework on adoption and adoption loss in preparation for writing this book. It was not long however before I became disenchanted with the tone and direction the story was taking. It seems that despite the struggles that both mother and 'child' endured while moving through initial difficulties, both had a perfectly wonderful life independent of the other.

The story has a distinctively 'happily ever after' ending which for me was a big letdown. I emailed the author and expressed my concerns about her book. I did not receive a response from her.

I am wondering what Ms. Griffin's knowledge and experience is with adoption loss, PTSD as a result of that loss and difficulties coming to terms with all the fall out of adoption loss?

My main concern is that the overall impression one gets from reading this book is that while adoption is indeed very complex, it all works out in the end and all are better off for the adoption process. This is far from the reality that we know .

My advice is to skip this one as there are many other good reads out there just waiting for you.



I have a loyalty that runs in my bloodstream, when I lock into someone or something, you can't get me away from it because I commit that thoroughly. That's in friendship, that's a deal, that's a commitment. Don't give me paper - I can get the same lawyer who drew it up to break it. But if you shake my hand, that's for life. ~ Jerry Lewis

## In the News

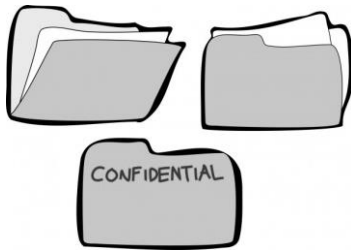
### “New Brunswick adoption records may be unsealed”

Government seeks public input on proposal. CBC News Posted: Apr 09, 2014

Discussion Paper: Opening of Sealed Adoption Records

### “Manitoba poised to further open adoption records”

Recently the provinces of New Brunswick and Manitoba have announced that they are considering opening adoption records for those wishing to find their birth families, and children lost to adoption. While details of the changes are slightly different for each province, essentially records will be open in the near future, so both adult adoptees and birth parents will be able to access identifying information. The veto process will be in place in both provinces, again the details vary slightly, to counter the concerns about the promise of privacy which was offered to those who placed children for adoption. However there is recognition by the provincial governments in both provinces that attitudes about adoption are changing and it is time to revise and modernize laws about adoption.



*Most mothers never asked for confidentiality, it was imposed on us.*

Support groups who have been lobbying their respective governments to open adoption records

are celebrating the possibility that very soon, adult adoptees and birth parents in both provinces will have access to identifying information which will help them to reunite with the loved ones lost due to adoption.

For more detailed information on the changing laws in each province, web search the topics or use the following links:

#### Manitoba

<http://globalnews.ca/news/1284764/manitoba-poised-to-further-open-adoptions/>

**New Brunswick:** full article and Discussion Paper: Opening of Sealed Adoption Records:  
[http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/social\\_development/promos/adoption.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/social_development/promos/adoption.html)

A link to the discussion paper is at the right. Scroll down to “Share Your Views” to use the online questionnaire, or  
Email: [sd-ds.discussion@gnb.ca](mailto:sd-ds.discussion@gnb.ca)

Voice your perspective and opinions on the changes that are being proposed for New Brunswick.

**The deadline for submissions is May 30, 2014.**

~ B. Rymer & A. Newman

Confidentiality is a virtue of the loyal, as loyalty is the virtue of faithfulness. ~ Edwin Louis Cole

## 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, BC (604) 852-9663 (kajandl@yahoo.ca)  
Judy Lanyon- Courtenay, BC (250) 338-2429 (juriah@shaw.ca)  
Leanne Neighbour – Kamloops, BC (250) 374-0990 (neighbourhoodz@shaw.ca)  
Lynn Carrier- Edmonton, AB (780) 455-8528 (carrierlynn@hotmail.com)

### **Reunited with Siblings:**

Michael Hodgson (tiggerboots@shaw.ca) (778) 395-0206

### **Reunited Birth Parents:**

Nancy Kato (katosan@telus.net) (604) 777-2920  
Susan Wiesendahl (susanwiesendahl@yahoo.ca) (604) 275-3243  
Alice McKinnon – Chilliwack, BC (604) 858-9970 (chkekray@shaw.ca)  
John Post - Castlegar, BC (250) 365-5991  
Diane Herbert – Abbotsford, BC (604) 870-1821 (dalendi@shaw.ca)  
Bernadette Rymer - Ashcroft, BC (250) 453-2360 (bjrymer@telus.net)  
Kathy Chambers (chattycats@telus.net) (604) 541-6267

### **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, BC (250) 992-5688  
Christine M. Gatzke, M.Ed., CPAC/ARC  
Psychotherapist (306) 352-4069 (christine.lachaine@clc-apathtohealing.ca)  
J. Amy Newman, Newman Research Services  
Genealogist/People Finder, Burnaby, BC  
(info@nrsfind.com) 1-877-521-3463 (604) 521-3463

### **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 in the LEAN ON ME Support List.

## Forget Me Not Family Society

### Support Groups



The FMNFS holds three support groups a month, for adoptees, birth/natural/first parents, adoptive parents and those in a supportive role:

**Cloverdale, B.C.** meets the first Thursday of each month.  
year-round from 6:30 - 8:30 pm.

Cloverdale Public Library 2nd floor  
5642-176 A Street, Cloverdale, B.C.

Contact Marnie Tetz (marnietetz@shaw.ca) or 604-535-4434.

**New Westminster, B.C.** meets the second Tuesday of each month  
year-round from 7 - 9 pm. New Westminster Public Library 2nd  
floor, 716 - 6th Ave, New Westminster, B.C.

Contact Nancy Kato (katosan@telus.net) or 604-777-2920.

**Kamloops, B.C. Interior Support Group** meets once a month  
(days and times vary). For information please contact Bernadette  
Rymer at (bjrymer@telus.net) or 1-250-453-2360.

### Other Support Groups

**Vancouver, BC: The Adoptees Association** holds a discussion  
group for adopted adults the third Tuesday of each month starting  
at 7 pm at the Rhizome Cafe, 317 East Broadway (near Main  
Street). Please contact Catherine at (katiesue@shaw.ca) or visit  
www.adopteesassociation.ca for more information.

Please note that the "Other Support Groups"  
do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of FMNFS.  
They are listed above for your information only.

## Adoption Circles is Your Newsletter ~ Your Voice!

Our next topic is “**Adoption: It’s Complicated.**” What complications have you experienced? What thoughts do you have after reading Rich Uhrlaub’s article (page 13)? Let us know your opinions on our topics, tell your story and news. Editorial support is available. Send to <amynewman@telus.net> or by mail c/o the Society.

| Issue        | Topic                      | Submission Deadline | Distribution |
|--------------|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Summer AC 70 | Adoption: It’s Complicated | July 15             | Aug 15       |
| Fall AC 71   | TBA                        |                     |              |

We are inviting readers to volunteer as **Guest Editor**, when Bernadette is away. This involves researching the topic on the web, pulling together relevant information for members and readers, inviting members and professionals to contribute and receiving their contributions, pasting each contribution onto one document and sending it to Amy so she can work her editorial magic. We also appreciate receiving illustrations and photos, as long as we can get permission from the artist/photographer to use them.

This newsletter is produced by volunteers. Distribution dates are estimates.

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## Have you renewed your MEMBERSHIP?

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/Province/State \_\_\_\_\_

Postal/Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Adoptee \_\_\_\_\_ Adoptive Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Sibling \_\_\_\_\_ Reunited \_\_\_\_\_

Prospective Adoptive Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Adoption Professional \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Change of Address \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Membership  
\$30.00/year  
Couples Membership \$50.00/year  
International Membership  
\$50.00/year  
Corporate Membership  
\$65.00/year

Please send cheque payable to the  
Forget Me Not Family Society  
#102-1860 Southmere Cres. E.,  
Surrey, BC V4A 6Y7