

# ADOPTION CIRCLES

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## Reunion Stalemate

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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

Hi All!

Summer is upon us...which is a really good thing as Spring didn't work very well for me! For those that are in the know I am now in full on recovery from my hiking accident and thankfully with the assistance of a cane walking on my own...yay! Looking forward to driving soon.

The FMNFS held its AGM on Saturday April 30th; I was just one day into being home after six weeks at my son and daughter-in-law's



and attended via FaceTime video call...thanks to Rian for bringing his wife's iPad.

Attendance at the AGM was poor. Total attendance was ten, including me via FaceTime; nine were either former or existing Board members. It's sad that so few attended but the writing is on the wall.

At the AGM we discussed where the FMNFS was going. Our membership is declining and our Board are seniors running out of steam who must retire.

With heavy hearts it was decided that after the next newsletter (AC 78) we will cease to publish *Adoption Circles*. Sadly there won't be another Fall workshop, as it has become an event that is more costly to hold and even with a big name like Ann Fessler, our 2015 workshop didn't quite break even. Even with the kindness of a long time member who anonymously donated funds to help those who wished to attend but found it a financial burden we only had two apply for the funding.

A few of us are willing to continue at a minimal level to keep two support groups and the website going for a time. Nancy Kato will still hold the New West group as she has for so many years, helping so many, and I will still run the Cloverdale group. Amy Newman will monitor our website and its support information, which will remain online as long as funds allow.

My thought is: I am so grateful that the FMNFS existed and was there for me through the ups and downs of my reunion(s). Where would I be if not for Ray Ensminger saying, "You need help" (duh!!) and giving me Nancy Kato's FMNFS number. Where would I be?

Is the Society obsolete? I don't think so. It's true that more adoption records are open, and people are easier to find online, leading to fewer people who feel the need for membership. One can find their sister/brother/mother/father/grandma/aunt/uncle on Facebook. Spit in a tube and send your DNA off...ta da! Family found. But how are things going two months, four months, or years after contact? How are you feeling? Do your family, friends and co-workers get that you are spinning out of control with feelings about possible new found family members? Do they?? Although some support information is available online, nothing compares

with in-person support and education the Society has been offering to help us handle the emotions that arise during our search and reunion experience.

My question is: Where do you want your Society to be? Do you want us?



**Unless members step forward as Directors, we must consider dissolving the Forget Me Not Family Society in January 2017.**

Our topic for this issue is adoption Reunion Stalemate. Thanks to those who contributed their stories and articles.

There are so many words that can describe what a stalemate is - the one I am choosing is 'dead end.' This describes mine. I met siblings and my mother, sadly she passed away but not before she and I connected. I feel blessed that after several years she and I connected and those who know my story will remember the work that went into making our connection happen. We were blessed...and I am not speaking in a religious sense when I say that.

The reunion with the rest of my new found family (my siblings that I was fortunate to meet) came to a dead end. Not in a bad way, just in a way that can happen with people that have life experiences that aren't shared. It's not that we didn't care about one another, it's just that we came to a dead end...time went by, too many miles in between, life happened. Would I change it? No. My reunion turned out to be what it was meant to be. I met my people. I know who they are, where they are and have pictures and memories. I am good with that. Most importantly my mother and I were able to have the time we did, I smile thinking about our visits and phone calls.

Maybe a stalemate isn't all bad. I guess it depends on what we are looking for. Or maybe it depends on the support that we get from those that have taken the journey before us.

Please make yourself comfortable, pour your favourite drop and enjoy another amazing issue of *Adoption Circles*. Thanks again to Bernadette and Amy for your incredible dedication and hard work.

# Rymer Writes: Reunion Stalemate

By Bernadette Rymer, Editor

It is with a heavy heart that I welcome you to this issue of Adoption Circles. While I am, as always, delighted that you are 'here' reading our newsletter, my heavy heart is directly related to the fact that for the past three years I have been living the nightmare of reunion stalemate. Thus, this is probably one of the most difficult editorials I have written because it hits home like a transport truck load of bricks. Which by the way is a heck of a lot heavier than a ton of bricks - you get by point!

CLONK! Wishes, hopes and beliefs smashed!

In my adoption loss healing journey I have never accepted information and ideas at face value and have always questioned "What, Why and How?" What do/did we know and understand about adoption reunions when we enter into them? What were our expectations? Did we buy into the T.V. versions of Happily Ever After Adoption Reunions?

I didn't. But I did believe that while we (tragically) can never regain the lost years and the lost relationships, I did hope and believe that if both parties entered reunion with love, trust and respect for each other, that we could build a meaningful future together.

For some of us, apparently not!

In this issue of our newsletter you will read articles from our near and dear Joe Soll, from Evelyn Robinson, our Australian 'mate' who was instrumental in education and advocacy regarding the truth of adoption trauma, leading to The Australian Apology, the world's first ever formal government apology to all those who lost loved ones to adoption. You will also read an article by Catherine Moore, a long-time member, now a Master in Clinical Counselling with specialty in



Adoption studies. We are very grateful to members of the FMNFS, Canadian Council of Natural Mother and Parent Finders Canada for sharing their stories. Each of these authors bravely bared their souls to share with us their experiences and insights and how they each have come to accept their reunion stalemate situation.

What is critical for me at this time is that I not be defeated by my feelings of hurt and betrayal, but that I continue

to believe in myself, and be grateful for all the very meaningful relationships that I do have. We hope that the articles and personal stories will provide you with some insights, new understanding and a renewed belief in yourself. Tough to do but critical to achieve.

In this issue of Adoption Circles you will find a section on the outcome of our FMNFS AGM. Coincidentally we, the Executive and Directors of the FMNFS are asking similar questions of "What, Why and How?" about our future as a society. Several factors need to be recognized and addressed:

- Our directors are aging and they are tired;
- We are experiencing declining membership and therefore declining funds to pay for the services we have so long prided ourselves in; and
- We have no new blood stepping up to support the work of the society.

Therefore, we have to ask some very tough questions and make some very painful decisions about our future as a society. You will find detailed information about this in our FMNFS business section starting on page 18.

So as always, sit back, take in and renew your belief in yourself.

# "Stalemate" in Long Term Adoption Reunions: Personal and Shared Lessons from the Front Line

By Catherine Moore, MA RCC

A few years ago I was curious to know what had happened in other long term reunions besides my own, some that I knew about and others I knew must be going on. So I asked the adoption community to share their stories, working through personal networks, online, and through the Adoptees Association, and the Forget Me Not Family Society. I was overwhelmed with the generous response and the surprising willingness of so many contributors to share their intimate, private stories. Lived adoption and reunion accounts came from all parts of the adoption circle, from people near and far, of all ages, covering an incredible breadth of experience. One contributor was a birth mother, an adoptive mother and an adoptee! What I learned I have put together into a book that will be published soon. In this article I want to share a few highlights that are relevant to the topic of stalemate.

So what is a stalemate? "A situation in which no progress can be made" according to dictionary.com. I think this one word captures the state of many long term reunions. Relationships take at least two to work, and when the rewards that normally drive a relationship forward are outweighed by the costs, the motivation also tends to run out. Without a sense of hope that things are progressing it is impossible to have a meaningful relationship. I would say that about half of the people who shared their reunion stories with me (around 45 people) could be described as stuck in stalemate. They described a situation where nothing moves forward, the contact that does happen feels empty and disappointing, and opens up the question: is it better to have this or nothing at all? Whether people shut down and avoid the problem relationship or whether they continue to



work at it alone - resolution of stalemate is impossible in these circumstances.

So what did the other half of the people I spoke with, who got beyond stalemate, do to avoid or resolve their stuck situations? Well, many of them didn't. At first. It needs acknowledging that there are all kinds of stalemates that serve different functions, and that reunions are an ongoing process. Some stalemates are initiated because one or more participants need a break. And while it is frustrating for the one not needing a break, accepting that it is part of the process and waiting patiently while at the same time attributing the best possible motives to the person taking the break, seems to be a successful strategy for long term relationship success. Even better is being able to communicate effectively about the feelings involved for all when a stalemate situation arises. There are lots of things that get in the way of this seemingly simple solution. Most of what gets in the way are hurt feelings and unsuccessful communication strategies. Honestly, it is very rare for reuniting families to handle breaks and stalemates with finesse, at least at the beginning.

I recommend to virtually anyone, struggling in any relationship, especially ultra-sensitive ones like reunions, that they read and try out the simple techniques found in a classic, easy to read book called *Non-Violent Communication: A language of*

"Waiting patiently while at the same time attributing the best possible motives to the person taking the break, seems to be a successful strategy."

*life: Life changing tools for healthy relationships* by Marshall Rosenberg.

Like many of the people who shared their stories with me, I have experienced a few stalemates along the way in my own 25 yearlong reunion. In my experience the most effective way out of stalemate is realizing what got you into it in the first place. For me, I have come to realize that the root of what has gotten me into stalemates is not being able to accept something about myself and or my reunion partner(s). There have been disappointments and regrets along the way, and each person in my reunion would define those differently I am sure! Getting out of my stalemates was through having learned from them and having changed something about myself - not expecting my reunion partner to change. (Well, I did at first, but sadly this has not worked and I understand that it never does.) No, ultimately I have been forced to change my attitude or my actions or both. This leads me to believe - from my own experience and from the stories of what I would term "successful" reunions - that overcoming stalemates with others is really more about overcoming stalemates with yourself.

The most "successful" or well-functioning reunions I have heard about are those where the individuals involved have delved deep into the painful parts of their adoption experience and have tried, or are trying, to find healing- for adoptees it is usually early trauma; for birth mothers it is often loss and shame; and for adoptive mothers it is frequently grief and fear. Those people who have come to some kind of understanding or peace with their own painful experience tend to have more empathy for themselves and for others in the adoption circle. They acknowledge their own pain and the pain of others, understanding that pain is relative, not fixed or quantifiable. The more empathy that is shared, the more accepting and forgiving the people are with one another. Those reunions that are faltering

around who has suffered more, or that are waiting for acknowledgement of their own suffering from reunion partners, tend to have a harder time moving forward and stay stuck in stalemate. Seeking your own healing seems to promote empathy which in turn creates positive relationships. And interestingly, the reunion itself is often what spurs the willingness to try and resolve the pain that arises along with it. So reunion is often a springboard for healing and if the inevitable stalemates that arise along the way can be worked through, a successful long term relationship results.

I have no magic bullet for how to solve all reunion stalemates, but I know you already know there is no

"Overcoming stalemates with others is really more about overcoming stalemates with yourself. "

such thing. If we are open to listening to and cultivating inner wisdom, and what I consider the most elusive of virtues - patience, I believe that we can

all find a path to a better reunion relationship. I could go on and on and on, in fact I do, in the book that will be coming out soon. If you want to hear more of my thoughts and reflections and the amazing collection of fascinating reunion stories so generously shared with me, then I invite you to stay tuned for when it is released. I will share more information at <http://www.adopteesassociation.ca>.

Thanks for reading. I hope that something in what I have shared has been helpful for you. You are never alone in your reunion journey, you have plenty of company on that difficult road, and since you have the courage to be on it, you know it is better to face the challenges involved than to have never tried.

**About the Author:** Catherine Moore holds a master's degree in Counselling Psychology and is trained in both Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Mindfulness Based Therapy. She has many years' experience counselling and working in the field of adoption, and is the co-founder and director of the non-profit We Are Adopted/ Adoptees Association. <http://catherinemore.ca>

# My Fairy-tale Came Crashing Down

By Anonymous

It seemed that hardly a day went by when I did not think about the baby I gave up for adoption, just barely past my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Such a traumatic experience. Being so young and encountering such incredible judgment and pressure from those around me at the time (my mother, a social worker and family doctor) and being sent to a home for unwed mothers in Vancouver. It was called Maywood Home for Unwed Mothers. It was a beautiful old big house on a large beautiful piece of property in a very affluent part of Vancouver. The beauty of it all ended there. It was run by the Salvation Army and of course was very regimental. The thing I remember most about my time there was the large picture over the mantel in the main living room. It was a picture of young women – probably in early 1900/s – obviously pregnant – with the caption – **FALLEN WOMEN**. This really stuck with me and enabled my lack of self-esteem. I believed I was one of them – a horribly bad girl.

Over the years when I thought of this place and of my baby I could barely breathe. I felt so sad, so ashamed and so guilty. I believed with all my heart that this pregnancy was my fault and that I must be a terrible person.

I had been violently raped and beaten when I was 15 years old by a friend of my dad's and I managed to blame myself. I did not have a love story to go with the baby I was carrying like many of the other girls at the home. I made one up so they didn't know what really happened. I never told anyone the real story.

Eventually I married and raised two children; however, I still carried with me the pain and the grief of the loss of my first born. It haunted me and kept me trapped in an emotional rollercoaster. I found a way to hide this from everyone around me. I buried the hurt so deep that I was able to not feel it anymore (most of the time). I yearned to know about him, to see him and to touch him. Was he loved, was he with a good family? Did he know about me? Did he hate me? And on and on. I made up a fairy-tale that he had a wonderful, perfect life –

one that I could have never imagined being able to provide him with.



Fairy Tale Illustration by Erica B., [publicdomainpictures.net](http://publicdomainpictures.net)

Slowly over the years it seemed that the suffering I endured started to fade as I became able to bury it all so deep inside me that my memory was lost inside me somewhere. I believed that I finally had recovered from it. However, I found many years later that it started to leak out. Slowly at first and then the flood gates opened and I had to seek professional help to manage the despair I encountered.

Finally after years of therapy I was able to start my search for him. It was confusing and frustrating and the adoption reunion registration did nothing because he was not also registered. I resorted to hiring a private investigator which was expensive but produced results within a few days. Amazing but frightening. Here I was with the actual ability to contact him if I wished.

I felt frozen at first but took a huge leap of faith and contacted him. All went well and he was very receptive to me. We spoke a few times and then talked about meeting in person. He was in another province and when we finally decided to meet I went to him. Spent a few days – I stayed in a hotel even though he offered his home to me. I felt I needed my space initially. I met his wife and children and got to know him little by little during a few more visits and from telephone conversations.

I learned that his adoptive parents divorced when he was twelve and that he had a sister, also adopted. He did not get along with his adoptive father or his sister. He had somewhat of a relationship with his

adoptive mother, they spoke occasionally. All very sad and worrisome from my perspective. Guilt started to creep back in but nonetheless this was his life. I sensed his sadness and saw that all was not good with him. His marriage was not stable and he was in financial distress. His children were extremely disrespectful to him and his wife. It was difficult to see this. My fairy-tale of how wonderful life would be for him with the adoption came crashing down. I felt responsible and again went into therapy.

We visited a few more times and still talk every once in a while but there is a void in connection. I tried to fix the disconnect a couple of times however

I realize it is what it is. We are worlds apart on so many levels.

I envisioned so much more when I started my search. Even acknowledging that it might not work out but I guess I didn't really believe that would be the outcome.

I am grateful that I was able to meet him and to know that I did the best I could do for him and for me. I feel so fortunate to have been able to resolve this part of my life even if it wasn't the result I had hoped for. It is far better to know than to spend your life wondering and worrying.

Name withheld by request

## Three Children

By Anonymous

I am 73 now.

I had three children given up for adoption; one daughter and two sons, who were born to me at ages 15, 17 and 19. They were born in 1958, 1960 and 1963. I was sent to Salvation Army homes in Windsor, Ontario (for my daughter in 1958 and for my son in 1963) and London, Ontario (for my son born in 1960).

My son born in 1960 found me first. He went to great lengths, contacting relatives. I received a telephone call from him. He said he was looking for his mother who he thought was my sister and could I help him. I knew he was my son; I was overwhelmed with so many thoughts, especially guilt and shame so I let him think his mother was my sister. Three years later, he phoned and said "remember me? I know you are my mother". He was angry I lied to him. Our reunion was very, very emotional in many ways. From the first contact from him 25 years ago, we have had numerous pullbacks due to his abusive anger, unforgiveness, jealousy of my other children and negative personality and not knowing how to relate to me. Currently, we are not in contact with each other and do not know the future of our relationship. I feel I have done the very best under all circumstances and hope and pray he is well and happy. I am very sad about it. I do have pleasant relationships with his two daughters, which is a blessing.

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My daughter born in 1958 found me in 1997. I was contacted by a lady who did birthmother searches. I immediately acknowledged I was her mother. Being married at this time, I had not divulged the births to my husband due to shame. When I did, he was very displeased with me.

I told my son that his sister contacted me. He immediately went to meet her before I did. My reunion with her was emotional and I felt there was something not right. The adoptive parents were not very accepting of me. Also my son met her before I did and filled her with his thoughts of me.

My daughter has a drug addiction and we have had a difficult relationship during the 20 years since our reunion. She has pulled back several times and has lied to me many times. I moved to where she lives to be closer to her but it has not lived up to my expectations. My daughter also gave up a child for adoption. She has another daughter and I have a very good relationship with her...another blessing.

-----  
When the records were opened in Ontario, I found my son born in 1963 through his daughter on Facebook. We agreed to meet. He was adopted in the city I am from. Our reunion was too emotional for me. He seemed OK with it all and acted strong. I met his three girls, his wife and adoptive mother. However, as time went on, I learned he was not well.



The Mask by Junior Libby, publicdomainpicuttres.

He had diabetes and was alcoholic. We met a few times...the last time was on his last birthday in 2014. The reason I say “was” is because he suddenly passed away last year. I attended his funeral and was not acknowledged for who I was to him. The obituary even read that he was born to the adoptive mother. Thankfully, someone spoke up, and it was changed.

This reunion did not live up to my expectations in many ways. From this son I have three granddaughters who I have only met twice. Our relationship is on Facebook which is like looking through the window of their house.

### MY THOUGHTS ON MY REUNIONS

I am happy I met each one of my children. There was a time when I had great fear, guilt and shame about it. I am happy I met them and it has been

helpful for me and I hope for them as well. I would definitely do it again....no matter the consequences because they are part of me.

When they pull back, I become like I was after losing them, thinking I will never see them again. I go through a grieving process all over again and have feelings of pain and hurt. I think the blame is on both sides; perhaps, we do not have good communication skills because each is afraid of something deep down inside which I believe is abandonment and loss. A wall goes up and we decide to go on with our lives as best we can.

I have a difficult time seeing my three adopted children as individuals sometimes. They are alike in many ways. Each has/had addictions which they told me about. They look like my side of the family and have similar characteristics and habits: the way they walk and manner of speaking. So yes, I have difficulty in seeing them as individuals. This is because they were not raised by me and I came into their lives after adoption. Their adoptive families play a large part in their lives and have interfered in my relationships with them; I feel left out.

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The best advice to other women is to be and stay strong because it will be a roller coaster ride. Tell them you love them and try to understand them as much as you possibly can. Also it is important to find a peer group and support each other. I also sought psychiatric help (cognitive therapy) which did help somewhat.

I have felt totally alone in all of these important events and had to cope as best as I could. I am most grateful for Monica Byrne of Parent Finders who helped me cope many, many times.

My husband could not accept me and my past life and it led to divorce.

I have to stay strong as I know I cannot depend on my children to be there for me. ~Name withheld

The Serenity Prayer: God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

Reinhold Niebuhr, American theologian

# Someday

By Judy

Once the adoption records were opened up, I applied immediately to find information about my son, who was born in Ottawa on August 4, 1965. I was probably one of the few birth mothers who never saw their child's face before relinquishing them for adoption – but at the time, I knew that if I saw my child, I would never be able to let him go.

My initial contact with my son took place a little over a year after I discovered his adoptive name, and I only waited that long since his adoptive mother had just passed away. He was very suspicious at first, but after several email exchanges, he provided me with details of his upbringing which, according to him, was a very positive and loving experience. He actually thanked me for giving him up, saying it was the best thing I could have done. His adoptive parents let him know early on that he was adopted, and each year on his birthday, they had him say a prayer for me – a very generous gesture.

My son was very reluctant to meet me in person, but for a couple of years of email exchanges, left the door open to the possibility that it could happen someday. The last message I received from my son was two years ago now, at Christmas – again a very positive, friendly message that led me to believe I

would have the opportunity to meet him. Since that time, I have reached out to him several times, but he has not answered a single one of my messages. I have absolutely no idea why he suddenly shut the door, even though I've asked many times what had gone wrong.

For the last two years, I have called him on his birthday – the first time he answered, thanked me for the birthday wishes and said he was having dinner with his sons (my grandsons) but didn't want to talk any longer. When I called him last year – on his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, he answered the phone, thanked me for the birthday wishes again, and when I mentioned that I hoped we could meet someday, he simply said "we'll have to see about that".

I have now, very reluctantly, decided that I must let it go, and wait for him to come to me – a very difficult decision, but I can't keep chasing him, or trying to force him to meet me. So, although I will think about him constantly and love him forever, it's time for me to let it go. It's taken me a long time to get here, but I can rest in the knowledge that he has had a good life, and will hopefully change his mind someday.



Flower-photo by Sergey Klimkin, publicdomainpictures.net

# Reunion

By Brenda Stengel

Reunion has been like a dam burst.  
Years of holding in feelings, dreams, hope.  
A glorious moment of the first phone call,  
The first hug, the first sight of my grandsons  
The euphoric gush of love, and sharing  
The slowing to a trickle.  
A bit of drying dampness,  
And only hope remains again.  
The dam builds  
Filling with self- doubt, sorrow and pain.

# Numbing Voids of Silence

By Sharon Pederson

It's a harsh reality that there can be a stalemate in the reunion phenomena. The term "stalemate" keeps me optimistic, and hopeful, but also on guard. On guard because those long stretches of no contact, complete silence and avoidance could happen again. Limbo ... and then ... an email, a phone call and it's supposed to be okay again as if nothing happened. And, it is okay again. As if nothing happened.

For the most part I accept this relationship comes and goes in waves. It never entered my mind when we first met that a stalemate could occur. Reunion was a wonderful event in my life. Full of surprises. And love: a fulfilling feeling of exuberance of love for her. She can do no wrong. She is beautiful and perfect. And she is mine.

But, every now and then it's as if we never met: The numbing voids of silence, or avoidance, or lack of recognition, or acknowledgement. During the silent times I sit and wonder how she is, where she is, what's happening for her, is she happy, is everything alright? Just like it was before we achieved reunion. The lifelong sentence of

wondering where, why, how, what persists and comes again when silence occurs. Never free of that nagging discomfort. To protect myself I put her out of my mind. I don't want to be angry. But, I do get annoyed at not knowing. I don't like my feelings of doubt and thoughts that I am 'less than' for her. Etc., etc., etc. What are the words for this lack? I get on with my life as she gets on with hers.

Part of losing a loved one in adoption is the "as if nothing happened" reality. What's left of my ragged family still consider "it" alias "she" never happened. That attitude dishonours and invalidates and dismisses her as well as me. Two realities: before reunion and after reunion. Especially when there's a "stalemate." A stalemate is temporary, one hopes. Is there ever an opportunity to bridge that gap in our relationship and bring those two realities together as seamless forever and ever?

Forever on guard. Never full and complete. Neither of us. It pains me that she feels as much angst and doubt as I do.

## Six Word Adoption Memoir Project

A short, non-fiction film at the American Adoption Congress Conference

If you had only six words to tell your adoption story, what six words would you choose?

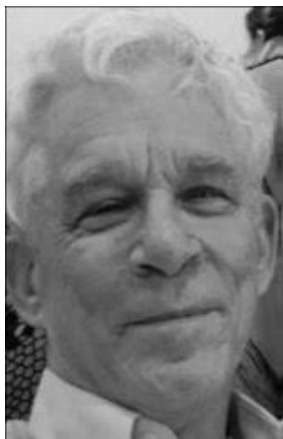
Gail Davies reports that the "Six Word Adoption Memoir Project" video was viewed at a workshop at the 2016 AAC Conference in Denver, Colorado. The film and was so well received that it was decided to have another viewing during one of the breaks on Sunday. Gail was part of the video when it was created at the AAC conference in Boston last year.

Watch the "Six Word Adoption Memoir Project" film (17 min.) on Facebook and its trailer on Vimeo "6WAM Trailer" (1:40 min.).

[www.facebook.com/6WAMproject/](http://www.facebook.com/6WAMproject/)

<https://vimeo.com/160042122>

You can contribute your own six words as a comment on the Facebook site, or upload a photo of yourself holding the printed words.



# Reunion and Regression

by Joe Soll 조살 , LCSW

Author of Adoption Healing... a path to recovery (3 versions) ; autobiography, I almost fell off the top of the Empire State Building. Co-author of Evil Exchange, Fatal Flight and Perilous Passage

Reunion relationships are often difficult. One of the things that complicates reunions is that they usually cause regression.

What does this mean? Well, for example...

When someone has a temper tantrum, they are acting like a two year old and unaware of it. Actually, for all intents and purposes, they ARE a two year old. Their two year old inner child has taken over their adult body.

You cannot reason with them. You need to wait until the two year old gives up control and/or the adult is somehow able to take control.

Having a reunion usually causes similar internal reactions. Reunions bring us face to face with our losses.

Reunions wake up painful feelings that have been buried for decades. This awakening can and usually does cause regression.

The separation of mother and child interrupted nature's process of the continuation of the bonding that began in the womb. When a reunion happens, our mind and body regress and want to continue nature's process.

The mom will usually regress to the age she was when she lost her baby. (Her younger self of that age takes over her adult body. This means she will be trying to give what she didn't get to give and can be smothering from the adoptee's standpoint.)

The adoptee however will most often have her inner child of different ages take over.

One moment she will act 7 years old, the next moment 2, the next 17, the next 5 and so on.

When her inner children take a breather, her adult self will take over and usually have no idea what has transpired or why. (Depending on the age of the inner child that takes over, the adoptee may be very needy one minute, very loving the next minute or very bitchy the next, with no apparent reason for the change, and no awareness of it either)

As adoptees, our anger at not being kept can stand between us and grieving the loss of our N-mom, and we must grieve that loss to be able to have a good relationship with her.

So to manage all of the above, the adoptee and the mom need to do some inner child work to lessen the periods of regression.

*How do they do this?*

They need to find a way to grieve the loss of their relationship with their other at the beginning, when they were separated by adoption.

They need to grieve the loss of their other and the loss of the relationship they would have had with her.

To do that, they need to make a grief list. A list of everything they lost...their other, the relationship with their other, special days etc.

Perhaps light a memorial candle in honor of the losses. Journal their feelings and find a way to cry. Hold their IC and let her cry in their arms.

I believe that only by crying about the loss of our sacred relationships with our other will we be able to stop trying to get back the relationship that we lost.

Part of the grieving is accepting that what you lost is gone forever. You can then explain to your inner child that she can't have what she lost. Hold her and let her cry about this.

Your adult self needs to believe it intellectually before your Inner Child will believe it. You need to explain to her that she can have a relationship with her other without getting what is gone forever. Your inner child may fight this acceptance tooth and nail but when she does accept it, you will regress

less and your relationship will usually do much, much better.

I hope you give your relationship this gift.

Namasté, Joe.

"The dream of yesterday is the hope of today and the reality of tomorrow." - Kathy Bell, *Regression*

## Other Reunion Articles by Joe Soll

Joe's articles can be found at [www.adoptionhealing.com](http://www.adoptionhealing.com), in text or as videos, or in past issues of *Adoption Circles* as marked– AC 59, AC 65 and this issue AC 77.

Joe writes: "One of the biggest problems in reunions is that people aren't told to prepare well in advance, nor helped to do so. Another is the understandable primal wound rage in every adoptee (that most of us are unaware of and deny having) that becomes passive aggressive anger let out on our natural moms. Every time the adoptee and mom get together, their inner core is reminded of the trauma of separation and the terror of those feelings can sabotage the reunion. Reunions can be a powder keg, waiting to explode in the faces of all."

I have a few short articles about what needs to be done in reunions to help them work (click on links):

- Conflict of Two Moms (AC 59 Fall 2011 Communication)
- Fear of Mommy Love (excerpt) "...Trauma victims (the loss of the mother/child relationship is a trauma of the highest order) always believe the trauma will repeat, so, if I let myself feel it, my mother will leave again and I will die. This fear of mommy love can sabotage a reunion in the blink of an eye without anyone being aware of what is really going on under the surface... We can overcome our fears."
- Terror is Non-Negotiable (excerpt) "We must remember that just because WE are ready to face our pain, it does not mean that our mother or child is ready. The fact that they do not call or write or answer our attempts at communication does not mean they don't care. It is not rude or disrespectful; it is a sign of their terror of facing the pain of losing you. Terror is not negotiable and we must respect their terror. "
- Reunion & Regression (video) (AC 77) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rq5\\_4eKn9uw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rq5_4eKn9uw)
- Blame Game (video) (AC 65 Spring 2013 Reframe Shame & Blame) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xrbbkWvbuus>
- More of Joe's videos: <http://www.adoptionhealing.com/AHVideos.shtml>

### **Adoption Crossroads 30th Anniversary Celebration BBQ with Joe Soll in Congers, NY**

**Sat. Sept 3, 2016 noon to 8:00 pm**

*You're invited!* Joe says: "We'll supply hot dogs, hamburgers, ribs, chips and dips and soda etc. If you want to bring pot luck it will be appreciated. Rain or shine, big lawn, big screened porch, big inside. Fun, camaraderie, peace, understanding and perhaps silliness. Bring your guitars." **RSVP to Joe by Aug 31**  
<joesoll@adoptionhealing.com>

**Click below for more info and driving instructions.**  
<https://www.adoptionhealing.com/Anniversaryouting.htm>

# Adoption Reunion Outcomes

By Evelyn Robinson

This is an excerpt from *Adoption Reunion – Ecstasy or Agony?* Chapter 3, *Reunion outcomes*,  
© Evelyn Robinson, June 2009. Used with permission.



## ***Why some people refuse reunion***

It is unwise to make any assumptions in a potential reunion situation. The person who makes the first contact has no way of knowing how far the other party has gone in processing and experiencing their grief. Even being the one who makes the contact does not necessarily mean that you are at an appropriate stage in your healing to accommodate the reunion well. It is always important to remember that you do not have the power to change the other person and that, in some respects, you will have to accept them as they are. Although a reunion by definition involves two parties, it may only have been sought by one party. In such cases, the invitation from one party to be part of a reunion is often an invitation to the other party to begin acknowledging their loss and experiencing their grief.

All of those who know that they have been separated from a family member by adoption choose whether or not to prepare themselves for the possibility of reunion. In some ways the situation is similar to facing the deaths of our parents. We all know that there is a strong likelihood that we will experience the deaths of our parents, whether we wish to or not. This means that we cannot honestly say, when this occurs, that we 'never thought this would happen'. Similarly, although many people have chosen not to prepare themselves for the possibility of adoption reunion, they cannot genuinely claim, if it does occur, that it has taken them totally by surprise.

Some people do not respond well to an invitation to be part of a reunion, because they are at a place in their life where they feel it necessary to concentrate on their own needs. They may not be willing to

introduce the reunion factor into their current situation. They may feel that all of their energies

are being used already and that they do not have the inner resources to confront the reunion issue. For them, it may be a question of postponing a reunion until what seems like a more appropriate time.

Sometimes original parents refuse to accept adult adopted children into their lives because they feel guilty and ashamed, not of the child, but of themselves. Sometimes adopted adults refuse to accept their original parents into their lives because they feel more comfortable minimising the impact of adoption on their lives and do not wish to make themselves vulnerable by exploring it. In situations such as these, those affected are not 'rejecting' the other party but rather are choosing not to proceed with their healing at that time. This is where some personal recovery work could be very valuable.

People sometimes say that they choose not to seek out a lost family member, because of fear of 'disruption'. They fear either the disruption to their own life or causing disruption to the life of the other party. In fact, our lives are made up of 'disruptions' – falling in love, having a child, taking a holiday, moving house, starting a new job. Many of these 'disruptions' are viewed in a positive light and, indeed, are considered to be expected elements of adult life. The sort of disruption you may cause, if you contact a family member from whom you have been separated by adoption, is the opportunity to address issues which have been buried and have perhaps been causing them stress and anxiety. This

is actually a 'disruption' which has the potential to have a very positive outcome.

Many people fear a reunion because it is a step into the unknown; it is a step from which there is no stepping back. They fear that this event will change their lives forever. People often fear grief and it can take courage to make a deliberate decision to confront one's grief. When people make statements like I couldn't cope with it or I'm not interested, often what they mean is, that they fear the impact of the grief and they know that dealing with it will be difficult and so they are choosing to avoid confronting it. If reunion is delayed, it is often a sign that the issues created by the adoption separation have not been addressed. There are many instances where one party is unprepared for reunion and their grieving and healing begin only after contact has been made.

The word 'interfere' also crops up frequently in discussion about adoption reunions. Interference occurs in adoptions because a child is adopted only after there has been interference with the initial bond between mother and child. It is that original interference which creates the need for recovery, of which reunion is such a large part. Suggesting that someone become involved in a reunion is not interfering; it is inviting. It is part of adulthood to consider invitations and either to accept or refuse them. Being invited to take part in an event is not generally viewed as interference.

Some people refuse to agree to be involved in a reunion because they claim to be concerned about the impact on others. In trying to take on responsibility for the feelings of others, however, they may be using this as an excuse for their own fear. Some of those affected by adoption separation lost the ability to trust their own feelings, when they were told that their feelings of grief resulting from the separation were inappropriate. They then find it difficult to deal with the option of contact.



Rejection photo, Word Clipart

Some adopted people refuse contact with their original parents as a way of expressing their anger with them. They refuse to respond to invitations as a way of punishing the original parents and exercising control over the situation. Sometimes they claim to be protecting their adoptive parents. Original parents sometimes refuse contact out of fear, or out of anger with the whole experience. They also sometimes claim to be protecting others such as their other children or their partner. Rather than protecting others, such behaviour can deny them the opportunity to grow, to learn and to show generosity.

At the Sixth Australian Conference on Adoption, Sarah Berryman reported on research into adoption reunions and their effects on people's lives which had been undertaken at the Post Adoption Resource Centre in New South Wales. The researchers interviewed eighty-one people who had used the centre to mediate on their behalf. They found that a majority of 'searchers' and, interestingly, an even larger majority of 'found' people described the reunion relationship in entirely positive or in largely positive terms and that although 59% of those who had been found reported that they had not planned to search for family members, eighty of the eighty-one people interviewed had no regrets about the reunion (Berryman, 1997, p306).

### ***Will the reunion ‘work out’?***

Some people talk of reunions between family members who have been separated by adoption in terms of ‘success’ and ‘failure’. I feel that this is an inappropriate and unhelpful way of looking at this complex situation. There are often family members, who have been part of the same family, who, as adults, choose not to spend time together. No one considers describing their relationships as having ‘failed’. We simply accept that we cannot choose our relatives and that we do not always have much in common with them, nor enjoy spending time in their company. As adults we make those choices. Regardless of our choices, however, nothing changes the fact that we are related.

Some people expect the person with whom they are to be reunited to do the recovery work for them. It is, in fact, the experience of reunion, not the person with whom you are reunited, which aids recovery. It is important to remember that people are responsible for their own recovery, regardless of whether or not a reunion takes place or whether or not it meets their expectations. The family member with whom you are reunited is not responsible for providing you with what you need to recover. Everyone can achieve a degree of personal recovery regardless of their reunion opportunities. Your relative may or may not appreciate your needs and your experience. Regardless of how much or how little they have to offer, you can use the experience of reunion to aid your recovery.

It is helpful for anyone contemplating a reunion if they have made some effort to know and understand themselves, before attempting to get to know or understand the other person. Personal recovery work will help people to get to know themselves better. It can be a preparation for reunion but it can also be useful in its own right for those who never have a reunion.

If you are considering initiating a reunion, then it is wise to bear in mind that the person you are hoping to meet may not have conducted any preparation for reunion and may need some time to come to terms with the reality of it.

Many have wondered why, in some reunion situations, contact continues for some time and then ceases. This can happen because, after reunion has taken place, some people want to go back. It often happens when a death occurs, that a survivor might wish that things could go back to the way they were before, when they were able to spend time with the lost one and look forward to a future with them. They wish that the death had never happened, as life was pleasanter before.

For some who experience an adoption reunion, they also would like to go back to the way life was before it happened. Life may have seemed simpler then and more comfortable and so they cut off from the other party, as if they had never met and try to get back to the comfortable place which they had inhabited, before they confronted the reality that reunion provides. It is not possible, of course, to undo a reunion experience, any more than it is possible to reverse a bereavement experience. *Trying to move back, by definition, prevents people from moving forward.*



“I’m Fine” illustration, Word Clipart

### ***Unknown factors***

Each party to an adoption reunion is bringing with them certain unknown issues. Any or all of these can give rise to difficulties in the reunion.

*Grief* ~ You have no way of knowing to what extent the other party has recognised or experienced their grief. It is wise not to underestimate the depth of this grief, even though it may not be immediately apparent.

*Experience* ~ The other party may already have had experiences with family members, or even with partners or friends, which have resulted in apprehension or issues of trust. They may have been mistreated or they may have been indulged. On the basis of this, they may have certain expectations around the reunion.

*Values* ~ Values and beliefs are very important to how we view the world and our place in it. People's values vary widely and sometimes differences in religious or moral beliefs can cause conflict. Personal qualities valued by one person may be of no importance to another. This can lead to disappointment and anxiety. It is important to remember the need for acceptance and honesty in reunion relationships.

*Knowledge* ~ Some people take time and trouble to prepare themselves for reunion by reading, talking and reflecting. Others go into a reunion with absolutely no awareness of the issues which underlie adoption separation and reunion.

*Emotions* ~ Reunion is a very emotional time and some emotions may seem to be unreasonable or frightening. It can be useful to find an outlet for these emotions which will not damage the reunion relationship.

*Personality* ~ Even in families where there has been no adoption, children often have very different personalities from each other and from their parents.

It takes time to familiarise yourself with someone's personal characteristics.

*Intentions* ~ Sadly, some people precipitate a reunion with the intention of punishing and may thereby cause pain. Others focus solely on what it is that they want from the reunion and show no concern for its impact on the other party.

*Expectations* ~ The parent and child may have been told that their feelings around the adoption separation are not valid. They may both have learned not to trust and may have lost faith in their ability to respond appropriately to emotional issues in their lives. It is wise not to go into a reunion with unrealistic expectations.

### ***Reunion outcomes***

Grief processing and the performance of mourning tasks have been described in various forms by many who have written about grief issues. In relation to processing the grief resulting from an adoption separation, I believe that the reunion experience can be very valuable. In my view there are four possible reunion outcomes in relation to grief processing.

There are those who choose not to attempt to bring about a reunion. These people have, in my opinion, either not begun to perform the mourning tasks, or else their progress through these tasks has been arrested at some point, short of seeking reunion.

There are others who experience reunion and resist performing the mourning tasks and so do not take the opportunity presented by reunion to address their issues of loss. For them the loss remains an on-going unresolved issue.

A third group desire a reunion but are unable to achieve it, because the other party remains unavailable to them. This can be as a result of death, refusal or simply the failure to locate the person sought. I believe that even when a physical reunion is not possible, a great deal can be achieved in the area of personal recovery. Confronting and

acknowledging the impact of the loss in one's life and celebrating the positive aspects of one's experience can be useful, even if no reunion takes place.

There are those who experience reunion and, as a result of that experience, they are able to perform the mourning tasks and incorporate the adoption experience into their lives. Happily, there are many families in which close, strong bonds are formed after reunion and these can enrich and enhance the lives of all the family members involved.

Regardless of the reunion outcome, most people find that they are glad to have faced their fears and survived. Questions are answered, mysteries are solved and many people feel a sense of personal satisfaction.

I believe that reunion can provide a great opportunity for healing to those who have been separated by adoption, by giving them the opportunity to process their grief and move forward. It is my considered opinion, therefore, that governments have a responsibility to enact legislation that will make the experience of reunion accessible to as many people as possible and provide services which will support people through the reunion experience.

**About the Author:** Evelyn Robinson is an activist, educator and author in Australia. She was instrumental in bringing about change in Australian adoption practices, public apologies issued by those involved in the adoption industry, and development of a national public inquiry into forced adoption practices.

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## **FORGET ME NOT FAMILY SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING April 30, 2016**



Some of the current and past board members at the AGM: Nancy Kato, Michael Hodgson, Gail Davies, Amy Newman, Bernadette Rymer, Audrey Harrington and Gloria Sweder.

**We're smiling for the photo, glad to get together but sad inside about the future of the Society.**

## **Election of Officers and Directors for 2016-2017**

President  
Vice-President  
Secretary/Treasurer

Marnie Tetz  
Amy Newman  
Gail Davies

Director  
Director  
Director

Bernadette Rymer  
Rian Martin  
Michael Hodgson

### **Board Members Departing in 2017**

For the past two years, three of our long-term Board members have been planning to retire and have now made a firm decision that they will not run after the end of this term: Marnie Tetz, President; Gail Davies, Secretary - Treasurer; Bernadette Rymer, Director and Editor. In light of this, the remaining board members have agreed it is time to wind things down.

Seriously, we have run out of steam. Although we care deeply about the Society and believe very strongly in the need for support and education in adoption issues, we cannot continue to provide the past degree of service any longer. We have been overwhelmed with work and issues in our personal lives. Several of us are dealing with the illness and deaths of friends and family, our own health and aging issues, and wanting to spend time with family. Membership has declined and we are not receiving enough funds to keep the Society going with the level of services we have provided for the last ten years. Organizing workshops and putting out a newsletter four times a year costs money and takes a great deal of volunteer time. We are really sorry that we must cut these services.

Unless more members step up to serve on the Board of Directors, who will do the basic tasks of keeping a charitable society active, even without workshops or newsletters? If you believe in the importance of the work we have been doing, please help. We can offer our support and guidance.

#### **IMPORTANT MESSAGE**

##### **ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE FORGET ME NOT FAMILY SOCIETY**

It was discussed and agreed at the AGM that the Forget Me Not Family Society be dissolved by January 31, 2017, under the following conditions:

- The next newsletter [AC 77] will explain the rationale for this decision, which includes that the current Board of Directors will not run for election in 2017, the rising costs of keeping the doors open, the lack of new membership and the loss of current membership;
- The Society will put out a call for people to come forward in support of keeping the organization going, with a commitment to becoming a member of the Board of Directors in 2017 to be received no later than September 30, 2016;
- Should no one come forward to take over the executive positions, the creation of our newsletter, maintenance of our website, maintenance of our financials, then the current Society will cease to be an active organization on January 31, 2017.

# **President's Report by Marnie Tetz**

**For the period Feb. 1, 2015 to Jan. 31, 2016**

**Presented at the Annual General Meeting April 30, 2016**

Hi everyone and welcome to the Forget Me Not Family Society's 2016 Annual General Meeting.

It's obvious our format is a bit different this year as I am having to Skype in to attend. On March 16th I started out on a short hike to Cascade Falls in Mission and ended up being brought out by firemen and ambulance attendants after slipping. They were amazingly kind and gentle making my ride down in the basket as smooth as Splash Mountain! That's what I was envisioning in my mind as I kept my eyes closed on the 'ride'! I had fractured my right leg and left foot. The patella had shifted slightly but thankfully not enough to require surgery. I had X-rays and saw my doctor on Thursday and thankfully am cast-free and ready for rehab!!!

OKAY! Enough about me! I will now share with you what your Board has been up to in the last year. We have been meeting on an almost monthly basis with conference calls to discuss where we are going as a Society. You may remember at our last AGM there was a lengthy discussion about our vision of where the FMNFS was going. We talked about the newsletter being phased out as a hard copy version and going to an email delivery system. We also talked about revamping the website, making it more user friendly and easier to find on the web. The other topic was rebranding of the Society. Perhaps changing the name to better reflect what it is that we do. At that meeting we also welcomed two new Board members, Rian Martin and Michael Hodgson.

At our first Board meeting following the AGM we got to work on the issue of revamping the website, a job that Amy and Rian spearheaded. Other topics discussed were having a volunteer to monitor our Face Book group, what it would mean and what it

would take to send the newsletter out via email only. We had listened to the suggestions made at the AGM and we went straight to work on them!

Nancy Kato took the lead with the Face Book group and consolidated from two to one. Thanks Nancy! And eventually Amy got us on track with a new website guru and our revamped website is up and running and looks great!

Speaking of the website, Amy has pretty well learned the ropes and is able to now make most of the updates herself. Instead of a name change Amy has incorporated 'Adoption Reunion Support Network' into our website to indicate what it is that we actually do. Hopefully this is making it easier to find us on the web. Huge thanks to Amy for running with this!

Our next yearly job was planning and organizing our annual fall workshop. Thanks to Gail for helping me with the contracts and the organizing of this event! We were thrilled to have author, filmmaker and adoptee Ann Fessler present for us. This had been a workshop a few years in the making and FINALLY it happened. The event was very well received in part because of Ann's outgoing personality and sense of humour.

However, before enjoying the workshop we had another event to work on. That was our presentation at UBC to the Masters class of social work students. For the third year Bernadette put together an amazing learning experience. As in the previous years, Bernadette made the introductions and Nancy Kato was our moderator. Nancy wore two hats this time, one as moderator and the other by presenting from experiences her as a birth mother. Michael Hodgson and I were the adoptees with Michael

sharing his story in depth. I must say he 'grabbed' the audience. Rian Martin shared his perspective as a birth and adoptive father. We had an amazing group of students who asked many questions and shared their thoughts. The afternoon flew by and I would say was possibly the best event of the three held so far. Thanks to Bernadette and the panel!

Of course my report wouldn't be complete without thanking our Board for all of their time and efforts with the Society.

Thanks to Rian for putting his name forward and joining the Board. You have volunteered to take on various jobs from seeing what you could do to eliminate our Cloverdale library rent, which unfortunately wasn't possible, to contacting various media organizations to promote the workshop. Because of this Bernadette and I were interviewed for an article which eventually appeared in the *Peace Arch News* in White Rock and South Surrey, BC. Many thanks Rian for your support this past year and for facilitating a few of the meetings in Cloverdale.

Thanks also to Michael for joining us on the Board and for your thoughtful suggestions on money saving ideas. For a small nonprofit that is always a good thing! We also appreciated your honesty when you shared with us that you needed to step back from your commitment to the Board because of your busy work and personal commitments.

Amy! Your continued work on the newsletter has made it better than ever if that's possible. Your attention to detail to pull it all together with the quotes, pictures and graphics you choose. Also your stick-with-it to update the website is very much appreciated! Thank you!!!

Bernadette! Working with you is a pleasure! (Well...working with all of you is a pleasure!!!). Your continued commitment to the educational program via the UBC presentations is so important! Even if one of those students is grabbed by what

they hear and learn then a difference will be made in how adoption is viewed. Continuing to have these presentations is so important! And of course your tireless work along with Amy on the AC. The topics are amazing and how you research and write your editorials always brings the issue together making for insightful reading and learning for our readers. Thank you!

Last, but by no means least, is Gail. What would we do without you??? You balance our books, file the paperwork with the government, and send out notices for renewals to our membership in your quiet unassuming way as you always have. And for the last four years you have also worn the hat of secretary. This meant keeping the minutes of each board meeting and the last four, now five AGMs. I don't want to think about how we could possibly be without you. So for now I won't. I will just offer my thanks to you for all you do!

Finally I want to thank our members who have stuck with us. You have kept up your memberships, attended our workshops and support groups. Remember, this is your Society made up of your people who GET what it is to walk in your shoes and to feel the highs and lows of adoption search and reunion. We know the dance steps and what it's like when we are waltzing but our other is doing the twist or even sitting the whole dance out. We get it.

We want to continue to be here to support you and the others that will come after you. To do so we need your help to keep going! Several of your long time Board members are running out of steam and we need you to step up to the plate to keep us going!

Thank you for being here today!

~ Marnie

[Editor's Note: This is Marnie's review of the previous year, which was presented at the beginning of the meeting and does not convey the sadness and emotion we felt at having to make our decision, after our discussion about the future of the society.]

## In the News

**Former 'unwed mothers' call for public inquiry** into forced adoptions, by Gloria Galloway, Ottawa — *The Globe and Mail*, Published Tuesday, May 17, 2016. The complete article may be found at: [www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/former-unwed-mothers-call-for-public-inquiry-into-forced-adoptions/article30072978/](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/former-unwed-mothers-call-for-public-inquiry-into-forced-adoptions/article30072978/)

**New York City Birth & Death Indexes** - The New York Public Library has removed the 1910-1982 city birth indexes and the 1949-1982 city death indexes. Searches now have to be addressed to the Health Department. These records were removed from the library as a reaction to their use on a recent TV show which publicized their value in adoption cases.

## DNA Adoption Articles: Reunions Made Possible by DNA Testing

**85-Year-Old Texas Man Adopted as a Baby Finally Finds His Biological Family:** "I'd Always Carried Around This Mystery" <http://www.people.com/article/texas-man-finds-biological-family-after-eight-decades>  
After years of searching, Jack Terrell finally met two half-sisters (age 80 and 82). His biological family had also been searching for him for many years. The reunion came about because of a match using FamilyTreeDNA, which he tried on a whim.

**Three Siblings Abandoned As Newborns by Same Mom at Separate Times Meet For First Time** <http://abcnews.go.com/US/siblings-abandoned-newborns-mom-separate-times-meet-time/story?id=38849407>  
Although they had different fathers, Barnicoat, Hundorf and Hutchison all had the same mother who abandoned them just hours after they were born at separate times over the years. "20/20" arranged for Hutchison to meet her half-siblings for the first time, and the connection between the three of them was immediate. "These three people were so much alike. They had the same sense of humor. They were cracking each other up," Moore said of the meeting. "There is something about biological and genetic bonds that survives any sort of separation."

**I Found My Dad after 33 Years of Searching** "He didn't even know she existed, but Katherine Benoit-Schwartz was determined to know more about the father she'd never met." *Good Housekeeping* article June 2016

**Sisters Who Were Abandoned in Cardboard Boxes as Infants Reunite after 50 Years Apart** Three biological sisters searching for their birth families found each other through DNA testing. *People.com*

**Archbishop of Canterbury Learns Identity of Biological Father** "The Archbishop of Canterbury has said a DNA test result revealing the identity of his biological father has come as a 'complete surprise.'" *BBC.com*



DNA by Виталий Смолыгин publicdomainpictures.net

### Recommended DNA Tests and Resources

DNA matching can work IF you are lucky enough to get a close match (sibling, grandparent, aunt/uncle, first cousin). Other matches may be possible to work with but the triangulation and analysis is a steep learning curve.

**Tests:** FamilyTreeDNA, 23AndMe and AncestryDNA. [adoptiondna.blogspot.ca/p/recommended-tests.html](http://adoptiondna.blogspot.ca/p/recommended-tests.html)  
If you plan to take tests with multiple companies you may be able to save money by transferring results from AncestryDNA to Family Tree DNA. Check here: [www.familytreedna.com/AutosomalTransfer](http://www.familytreedna.com/AutosomalTransfer)  
Adoption and DNA [adoptiondna.blogspot.ca](http://adoptiondna.blogspot.ca) and [www.facebook.com/groups/DNADetectives](https://www.facebook.com/groups/DNADetectives)

## 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) 862-4434  
 Kimberley-Ann Jandl – Abbotsford, BC (604) 309-7436  
 (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) 690-8982  
 (carrierlynn@hotmail.com)

### **Reunited with Siblings:**

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

### **Reunited Birth Parents:**

Nancy Kato (katosan@telus.net) (604) 777-2920  
 Alice McKinnon – Chilliwack, BC (604) 858-9970  
 (amckinn@telus.net)  
 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 (604) 541-6267  
 (chattycats@telus.net)

### **Adoptive Parents:**

Elizabeth Christian – Delta, BC (604) 329-0660  
 (elizabethc134@gmail.com)

### **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)  
 Christine M. Gatzke, M.Ed., CPAC/ARC  
 Psychotherapist (306) 352-4069  
 (christine.gatzke@clc-apathtohealing.ca)  
 Patricia Roles MSW, RSW, BCATR (604) 375-9215  
 (e-mailtherapy@shaw.ca) Skype: pat.roles  
 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 second Thursday of each month Sept to June 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 604-862-4434

**New Westminster, B.C.** now meets the third 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 periodically (days, times and venues vary). For information please contact Bernadette Rymer at (bjrymer@telus.net) or 1-250-453-2360.

## Other Support Groups

**Vancouver, BC: We Are Adopted / Adoptees Association** holds a discussion group for adopted adults monthly. The day changes each month. Please contact Catherine at (katiesue@shaw.ca). For more information visit [www.adopteesassociation.ca](http://www.adopteesassociation.ca).

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.

"If you want something done,  
ask a busy person."  
Benjamin Franklin (1706 - 1790)

## Just one more issue of Adoption Circles is planned

Our next topic is “Looking back: Moving Forward” OR “Past, Present and Future” OR “Making First Contact” We haven’t decided yet! What would you like the next issue to be about?

Please send us your submissions. Let us know your opinions, tell your story and news. Editorial support is available. Send to <brymer@telus.net> or <amynewman@telus.net> or by mail c/o the Society.

| Issue      | Topic | Submission Deadline | Distribution |
|------------|-------|---------------------|--------------|
| AC 78 Fall | TBA   | Oct 15              | Nov-Dec      |
|            |       |                     |              |

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

## Call for Guest Editor

Do you have a topic you are passionate about? We are inviting readers to volunteer as **Guest Editor**. This involves researching your topic on the web, pulling together relevant information for members and readers, inviting members and professionals to contribute; receiving articles, and sending them to Amy so she can work her editorial magic. We also appreciate illustrations and photos, as long as we can get permission from the artist/photographer to use them.



## Have you renewed your MEMBERSHIP?

(Hint: Your expiry date is on the mailing label)

Please support the work of society with your membership and/or a donation. Your contributions are used to pay for support group meeting room rentals, our telephone, website, office supplies, etc.

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

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

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Date of Application \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Membership  
**\$30.00/year (USA & Canada)**

Couples \$50.00/year  
International \$50.00/year  
Corporate \$65.00/year

Use the PayPal link at  
[www.AdoptionCircles.net](http://www.AdoptionCircles.net)  
Or send cheque payable to the  
Forget Me Not Family Society  
#102-1860 Southmere Cres. E.,  
Surrey, BC Canada  
V4A 6Y7

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