



Lost & Found

DECEMBER

SEARCH-FINDERS OF CALIFORNIA, INC. MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER

From the Editor

As I began production of this current newsletter, some of you were probably sporting a fresh tan from the conference in Hawaii. I myself, was bemoaning my fading tan, working indoors while the Indian Summer slipped away.

I had hoped to be a part of the Hawaii conference; but instead, I went to Oahu earlier in the summer to see my ailing father.

The last time I saw him was two years ago. He was in much better health then. It was his 80th birthday and I brought my son, with whom I'd reunited over five years earlier, to meet his grandfather for the first time. The trip - to put it mildly - was not as successful as I'd hoped it would be. My son, who has been in and out of rehab since he was a teen, had been doing quite well but had a relapse just before we left.

When we got to Hawaii he met his grandparents briefly, but then he got sick and didn't want to leave the hotel room. It was my father's birthday and I was determined that my son be there with me. We got into a huge argument over that and he stormed out of the hotel room. It was six months before I saw him again.

That, of course is the story in brief. But my point in telling it is this: all through my reunion relationship I impatiently tried to introduce and include my son in important aspects of my life; always trying to make up for lost time and lost relationships I felt he should have experienced growing up. Sometimes things worked out well; other times there was harsh disappointment and even disaster. And sometimes he would seize the given opportunity to punish me or test me.

Ah, the relief of living and learning!. Life

has become so much easier now that I have come to accept the bitter fact that I can't ever gain back experiences lost for either of us. I don't initiate anything any more. I've learned I can't control things; they simply have to evolve. Trying so hard all those years to make things right really took a toll. I invested a lot of precious time and energy to comparatively little avail. I had to try; but then I had to stop trying. My head and that brick wall collided far too many times.

We're looking at an ever changing situation. My son is well at the moment, and going to be a father soon. And again things will change; and I'll hopefully be prepared to roll with the punches...whatever they may be. Will I know my grandchild? Will I be "invited" to play an active role in his life? Or will this opportunity to give my grandchild love, a sense of family history, traditions and understanding of our unique traits and talents go unrequited?

In this issue you will read letters from two other birth mothers - they depict the struggle we all go through in establishing a place in our children's lives.

A third piece in this issue is a paper written by a student for her English 1B class. The assignment was to write about family history which was a challenge to a student whose mother is an adoptee. This unedited story is a very sweet reminder that love is the most important ingredient in any family.

I hope you gain some insights and inspiration from all these stories.

If you would like to share your story with us, please contact me at 408-298-3037 or e-mail me at callens1@earthlink.net

— Linda Ehle Callens, Editor

SEARCH FINDERS OF CALIFORNIA

Broken Seals 2000

Nicole Snow, Adoptee,
found her mother in Texas, February 8, 2000.

Krista Freitas, Adoptee,
found her mother in Pennsylvania, Uncle in
Washington, and Grandmother in Sonora.

Maria Marciel, Adoptee,
found her mother in Oregon, May 15, 2000.

Audrey Truso, Adoptee,
found her sister in Arizona and brother in Missouri,
May 24, 2000.

Alicia Wilson,
Adoptee, found her mother in Southern California,
June 21, 2000.

Lynn Telford-Shal,
Birth mother, found her daughter in North Carolina,
August 8, 2000.

Rhonda Rianda, Adoptee,
found her Birth mother on September 9, 2000.

June Ezzell, Birth mother,
found her daughter in Washington, October 24, 2000.

A LETTER OF THANKS

Dear Dot,

I'm writing to let you know I've had contact with my birth daughter, Suzann. I wrote to her as soon as I had an address and within two weeks received an e-mail from Dave; a good friend of hers. He very sweetly let me know Suzann was in the midst of a family medical crisis and couldn't respond at this time, but wanted me to know she had received the letter. She also requested picture.

I sent the pictures and a few days later I had another e-mail from Dave, letting me know he'd received them (as she'd requested) and would show them to her that evening.

This Wednesday I had an e-mail directly from Suzann, stating that she was sorry for the first

contact being in e-mail form, but due to the situation, it was all she could do. Her mother is ill and had surgery yesterday to determine the extent of the problem. She was apologetic in requesting my patience (my middle name - ha) as her energy has to be very involved in supporting her parents through this situation. I certainly understand. She also shared that anyone would say there's a resemblance - she's blond - but no other details. She let me know she's had a great life; great parents, job, friends. I'm very happy she's well and sending prayers for recovery to her mother. Suzanne said she'd get in touch again when she can and I know it may be some time.

The synchronicity of my finding her at this time is a bit eerie. But, I trust in the divine wisdom and will just wait to see how this story continues to unfold.

Thank you so much for your help. If you'd like to use any part of this letter to help others, feel free.

Blessing, Lynn Telford-Sahl

My Son Who Is Now My Brother

Reunion Story

by Ruth Indiveri



Like many adoption stories, mine began with a love affair, mostly - it turned out - more *my* love affair rather than the young airman's. In England in the early 1950's, my experience was definitely not unique, but the treatment I got from society in general would be regarded today as harshly unkind. No counselling, just punishment

No alternative given, and in my misery of being "dumped", I offered no resistance. I was banished to an extended family in the middle of my pregnancy, away from my home and of course, terminated from my job. I was instructed to stay there until six weeks before my due date, at which time I was sent to an unwed mothers home which was run by the Church Army, a segment of the Church of England.

The home was an impressive three-story house which had to be cleaned from top to bottom every day. We pregnant girls were called "Bumps", until our babies arrived.

Finally my "day" arrived. My son was born and I named him Simon Peter because I wanted his adoptive parents to keep that name as they would be Catholics. That much I had decided for myself. It worked. He was named Simon James Nicholas. I had at that time every intention of converting to Catholicism. As was usual, I kept Simon with me in hospital and learned how to breastfeed during the two weeks of "layin-in", as they called it then. I was then returned to the home with my baby son and continued with the routine there while caring for him as well. My milk slowly dried up. When Simon was six weeks old and beginning to bottle feed I had the call to take him to the Catholic Rescue Society to relinquish him. Only those who have had to go through that kind of experience can understand my misery. But I had to pick up my life and try to forget the past year.

Three years went by. During that period, I had

arranged to emigrate to Canada where I met my future husband and we had a beautiful daughter together. I wrote to the Adoption Society asking about Simon when he was three. No answer. I tried again when he was six and again when he was eight and received no replies. I would look at boys who were his exact age and imagine what he was doing.

Many years passed. Though my husband was in the military, I left a trail - in the form of letters - as we moved around.

I thought of Simon -- maybe he was in the British Army in Northern Ireland. Then during the Falklands War...how about in the U.N. Forces? Dealing in drugs...in prison...died in a car accident....emigrated to Australia? I was no longer thinking of a baby.

In 1996 I wrote again to the Adoption Society asking if they could find Simon. In response I received a warning letter...that such a long time had passed and an unknown road could lead to heartbreak; all kinds of possibilities and situations. Hadn't I already thought of those things enough?

And then, just by chance, I saw the newspaper article about ISSR (International Soundex Registry) Day. I thought I'd see what that all meant after I had finished a serger class at a store near the participating Crown Bookstore. And there she was...Dorothy Yturriaga...telling me about Search Finders and being so positive about finding Simon that I couldn't believe I had been so fearful.

I learned that adoption records had been opened in England for several years. My next step was to write to the Adoption Officer again and - lo'and behold! - a new adoption officer had replaced the negative one. Yes, he would be happy to search for

Simon. And after a short while I heard again that he had located him. He was going to meet him and arrange for a reunion by mail.

When Simon received his letter telling him that someone was looking for him, he immediately knew it was me. His adoptive parents were dead. I found out that his "mum" had been 40 years old when she adopted him and his "dad" had been 58. We both wonder now how such older people were allowed to adopt a small baby...

So, as arranged with the adoption officer, we started to write to each other - letters forwarded through the officer. Simon agreed that this re-connection had to be very gentle. He had different reason that I had.

We wrote increasingly longer letters to each other, telling of our lives during those 43 years. A lot of ground was covered, but I detected in his letters -

and he in mine - that we were using the same terminology. We kind of kept "throwing" scriptures to each other. It finally became obvious we had a lot more in common than a more-than-average knowledge of the bible. We were both Jehovah's Witnesses!

Why and how he had changed from Catholic to a Jehovah's Witness, and why and when I had become one ...is another story. But that is how my son is now my brother.

His apprehension over with, he called me and we met in England in the Spring of 1998. He has been married for over 20 years and has a 20 year-old daughter and a son, Peter(!), now 18.

Of all the 100,000 Jehovah's Witnesses in England, four are my family. On their part, they are joyous that they have family here who share their faith and do not oppose their choice of religion, as their Catholic families in England do. ♦

SEARCH-FINDERS STAFF

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For Information Call 408-356-6711
Or visit our web site: www.searchfinders.org

Thank You Ron!

Ron Bristol, the owner of Pro Image, is graciously allowing Search-Finders to use his new facility for meetings - and even has a special cupboard for us to store the coffee pot, supplies and books for our meetings.

And Thank You Ruth!...for the yummy home-made cakes you provide for our meetings.



HOLIDAY MEETING

December 14th
Pro Image, 1865 Camden Avenue
Camden at Leigh & Hillsdale
from 7pm -

Please bring a gift for the raffle
and a goodie to share.

I.S.R.R

International Soundex Reunion Registry

The International Soundex Reunion Registry is the world's largest reunion registry and is a free service.

What is a Reunion Registry?

A system for matching persons who desire contact with their next of kin-by- birth.

Who Can Register?

1. Any child/adoptee who is 18 years of age or older.
2. Birth parents.
3. Adoptive parents of adoptees who are still under the age of 18.

How Does it Work?

When a registration is received the information is computerized.

If data matches and the ISRR registrar determines a relationship exists, both parties will be notified immediately.

How is This Registry Funded?

ISRR is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation funded entirely by your donations.

How Much Does it Cost?

There is no fee or cost for this service. All contributions are tax-deductible. The generosity of each registrant will enable this registry to provide for the reunions of tomorrow.

ISRR Policy

This registry does not perform a search or provide search advice.

Voluntary registration by adults desiring contact or reunion with their next of kin-by-birth, is deemed legal consent for contact between parties to a match.

Registrants are held responsible for all information provided on their form and any documentation attached thereto.

ISRR will not notify you unless a "Match" is made.

ISRR will not accept an unsigned registration form.

Get your registration form on-line at www.istt.net or by sending a self- addressed stamped envelope to:

I.S.R.R.

P.O. Box 2312, Carson City, Nevada 89702-2312

You can reach them by phone at (775) 882-7755

p o e t ' s c o r n e r

The Yearning

by Alan Holmstrom

I never saw my birth Mom, I never touched her face
I never looked into her eyes, or felt her sweet embrace

The primal need for bonding, has been painful to my soul
The years of aching in my heart, slowly takes its toll

It takes its form in yearning, for the things I never had
It takes its form in crying, for the loss that's been so sad

I yearn to be suckled, as I hear her sing my name
I've been held by others, it's sweet but not the same

I yearn to be nurtured, but I fear reaching out
I yearn to be listened to, but my voice carries doubt

And even though I found her, and put some fears to rest
I'll always be that baby boy, still yearning for her breast.

Alan Holmstrom is an Adoptee who has been reunited with his birthparents for over eleven years. The beautiful poetry he creates is his way of expressing his feeling about being adopted.

“My Family Started in 1953”

Jessica Longoria
2-4-98
ENGL 1B
11:10 - 12:30

There are not too many stories that my family has to tell. Really, I am not sure where my family originated. So while deciding what to do on my first writing assignment, I realized that my family has just begun. I bet you will hear a lot of stories of people who will tell you about their ancestors and their past. I bet they will be full of tradition, of their hope for the future, and their hope that no one will forget the past. However, my mother, Carol Louise Harter Longoria, doesn't really have much past to tell. She was adopted into a loving family on May 17th, 1950, the day she was born. This would be my family's favorite story, the story when the Harter family really began.

My grandparents Bill and Lorene Harter met at a New Year's Eve party in the 1940's. It was love at first sight. My grandmother decided to marry my grandfather on March 31, 1945. As a happy young couple starting out fresh they were immediately struck down by hardship. My grandfather became very ill with hyper-thyroidism, and nearly died within their first year of marriage. It was a difficult time for my grandparents. My grandfather lost his job so they had to live in his older brother's log cabin. Although times were tough, it was love that pulled them through. After he recovered, a new company gave him a job and transferred him to San Francisco,

which was quite a change for a Pennsylvania boy. So they packed everything that they owned into their little car and headed out West to start their new life.

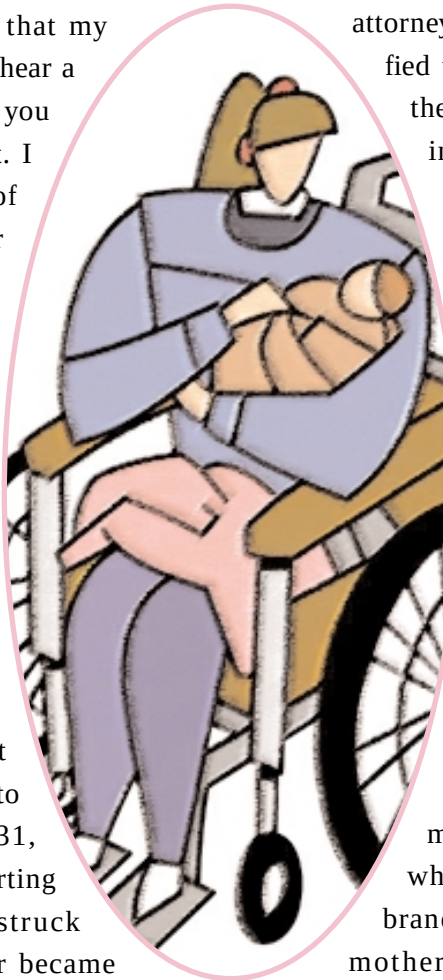
Just like every other couple during the 40's, society expected that they would now start a family. Both of my grandparents had always dreamed of having a large family. However, for them this wasn't easy. They tried for years to conceive a child. As heartbroken as they already were, they decided it was more important for them to have a child in their life than none at all. They started looking into adoption agencies but finally struck it rich with an adoption

attorney. On May 17, 1953 they were notified that a baby girl was born and that they could pick her up in Sacramento in six days. My grandparents were ecstatic. After all their last minute preparations for a brand new baby in the house, they asked Dutch and Vivian Lehmkuhl, close friends of the family, to accompany them on their three-hour trip. They were to be the baby's godparents. When they arrived at the hospital, the nurse handed a beautiful baby girl over to my grandmother's loving arms, and there was no mistaking that this baby was meant for my grandmother. The hospital personnel even wheeled my grandmother out of the hospital in a wheelchair, proud, and carrying her brand new baby girl just like all new mothers who had just given birth. To

this day my grandmother still refers to this as “the day she gave birth to Carol.” They now became a family.

Now my grandparents had the family they had so patiently waited for. In their hearts Carol was already their child, though the question still remained, did the birth mother want her back? The

continued on page 7



LOTS OF ALOHA

THE HAWAII CONFERENCE

**SURROUNDED BY THE LUSH,
SWAYING ROYAL PALMS, SHIMMERING
AQUA WATERS AND WARM SANDS...**

the inviting Haupuna Prince Hotel and Resort on “the big island” of Hawaii was a most enchanted setting for the October Independent Search Consultants Adoption Conference.

Several members of Search-Finders of California and Search-Finders of Idaho were greeted with the aloha spirit. Throughout their stay, the weather was nothing short of spectacular; the tropical sun shone every day, making the beach and pool even more enticing.

Despite the lure of those distractions, the presentations and workshops were well attended.

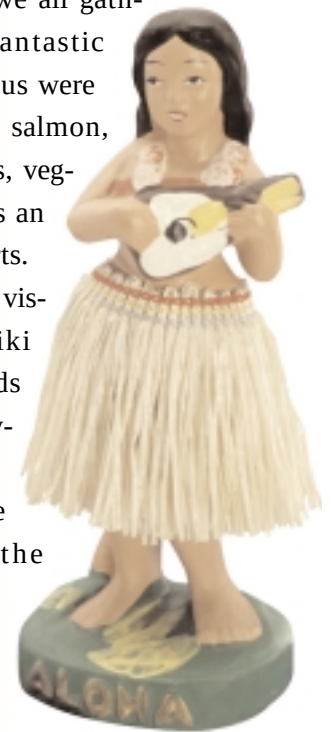
Dr. Tom Bouchard presented the fascinating results of his 20 year study on twins separated at birth and raised in different homes - sometimes even in different countries - and how similar the siblings mannerisms, interests and talents were even though they were raised apart. His findings demonstrate how hereditary and genetic traits from birth parents play a pivotal role in who an adoptee is, and in most cases, far outweighs environmental influences.

Kate Cleary presented her study on the difference in the apgar score in babies when the mother knew she was going to relinquish her child for adoption compared to babies who stayed with their mothers.

And there was an interesting workshop on adoption search and reunion stories and everyone was invited to share their story.

On Saturday night we all gathered on the beach for a fantastic Clam Bake. Laid out before us were endless tables of prime rib, salmon, shrimp of all varieties, fruits, vegetables and, yes...clams, plus an entire table filled with desserts.

Attendees dined and visited amid the flickering tiki torch flames and the sounds of gentle surf on sand - loving the ambiance of aloha - knowing that the Ultimate Vacation, disguised as the Ultimate Conference, was truly a success with an accent on pleasure. ♦



“My Family” continued from page 6

next months were filled with worries. To divert their attention, my grandparents took a trip back to Pennsylvania to show off their new family. But all good things must come to an end and they had to come home and back to their worries. Finally after months of waiting, on December 3, 1953, the California court said that Carol Louise Harter was

now legally the child of William and Lorene Harter.

Now, this story may not be full of heritage or full of tradition, but this is about the story of when my family became a family. You don't really need that much culture or a past to be loved and accepted into a new family. For me this is probably one of the most important stories I ever heard, not because it was about the past, but because it made my family into the loving family that I have today. ♦