



May 2003

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**Announcements:**

The New York Statewide Adoption Reform (NYSAR) movement designated Tuesday, May 20, 2003 as **Lobby Day** for NYSAR.

They are attempting to get a Senate Bill for open records moved out of the Judiciary Committee and onto the Senate floor.

While we in Pennsylvania cannot be recognized in New York, we can, at the very least, give them our financial aid to further their cause. The more states that open their records, the more pressure will be applied to those who don't. An individual membership is \$30 payable to:

NYSAR  
P.O. Box 9025  
Schenectady, New York 12309

*The Newsletter of The Adoption Counseling Home*

## Adoption in the News

*By Marianne Sieniawski*

Have you noticed that recently there has been more coverage in the newspapers and on television about adoption?

Well, if not, you have been missing out on stories that range anywhere from a football Coach's search/reunion to Oprah's discussion with male donor inseminations, to even Dr. Phil hosting a show on birth mother secrets.

We triad members have all seen the endless amount of reunion shows on daytime television, not to mention the vast collection of *Lifetime* adoption stories.

So what's happening with the sudden increase of

adoption news, or is the media **finally** waking up to see that viewers, not just triad members, are very interested in adoption matters? Studies show that 1 in 10 people are connected, in some way, to an adoption triad.

For instance, last July in Colorado adoption law changed, allowing agencies to attempt reunification if both parties gave their written consent. That proved to be a major step toward reunion for birth parents Jim and Kitty Fassel who had been searching for about a year. In turn, their birth son, John Mathieson, was also searching for them for seven years.

However, what makes this story even more unique than Jim Fassel being the

Head Coach of the New York Giants, is that he and his wife stayed together despite relinquishing a child for adoption. Many unwed mothers, like Kitty, at that time, chose adoption for their babies, but never married the birth father. The Fassels, however, overcame many obstacles and got married.

Upon their first face-to-face meeting, Mrs. Fassel commented, "I felt like I had been asleep for 34 years and was waking up to the greatest dream come true."

Adoption, as we have previously noted, is a lifelong issue. Reunion is just the beginning of a new chapter in this process. We will continue to follow this story (if permitted) & others along the way.

## Positives

At the next group meeting on June 4 at 7:00pm, the group will discuss "Positives". Group members are asked to bring a list of the good things derived from their adoption experience.

We have hammered too long on the negative feelings and responses to adoption related issues. There is always something beneficial that

can be realized if one digs deep enough. It is these affirmations, plus viewing our lives from other perspectives, that will help us to heel. Dr. Joyce Pavao, the renowned Adoption Therapist, teaches us not to pathologize adoption. That is, she wants us not to see it from a sickness viewpoint. In order to do this, we must force ourselves to find out what we learned from our experiences, good and bad.

At this meeting, we might speculate on what positive values we received from our Adoptive Parents, what giving up a child has done for our psychic development and energy, or how not being able to have a biological child has forced us to realize our strengths.

## Group Evaluations

At the conclusion of session I, group members provided the following responses to a questionnaire about their experiences in a **TACH** group.

**Question:**

The group experience, in general, was beneficial to me because...

**Answer:**

- *It didn't make me feel so alone*
- *I heard about the triad perspective of different situations & it helped me with more assistance in understanding whatever a triad member is feeling*
- *Every one's sharing is always helpful... mine included*
- *I have started to understand myself*

*better*

- *It provided insight into certain issues not shared before*

**Question:**

The best thing about the group, for me, was...

**Answer:**

- *Sharing my feelings & getting feedback*
- *Getting to open up to others & having them open up to me*
- *I gained more insights regarding my issues as well as others, which help in the "accepting" process*
- *I can't wait to come. We are so friendly... especially Dee. I can't wait to see her smile*
- *The sense of belonging*

**Question:**

As a leader Dee was...

**Answer:**

- *Lively & a great hostess*
- *Excellent. She responded appropriately & probed when there was a problem*
- *Caring, understanding, sharing, lighthearted, serious*
- *Very good*
- *Understanding, hospitable, organized, knowledgeable*

**Question:**

I got the most out of...

**Answer:**

- *The topic driven discussions*
- *The last homework*
- *Mine & everyone's sharing*
- *Listening & just being here*
- *group discussions*

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**When asked about TACH group therapy, one member commented, "I have started to understand myself better."**

## Fantasy: *The death of a fantasy is the birth of reality*

The topic for discussion for the last **TACH** group meeting was "Fantasy". Each participant related her (or his) adoption fantasy. We heard from adoptees who grew up thinking their birthparents were royalty or lived in the neighborhood. We heard from birthparents who envisioned that their children lived far away, never to be seen again. An adoptive parent reported her fantasy was that her children would arrive without any adoption issues, that she would receive children whose history would be



obliterated.

When reality appears, the fantasy dies, or at the least is challenged. And, sometimes, with this new reality comes anger and

depression at being deceived. Therefore, it is important to separate fantasy from reality as hard & painful as it might be. Being aware of the truth brings responsibility to the future along with a new maturity.

Do we mourn the death of the fantasy? Yes, but with time limitations. Just like grieving the loss of a relative or good friend, we need to go through the process in order to go on with clarity.

## Soulful Longings

My Child, My Soul...when I gave you away,  
I sent my soul with you, to take along,  
To be with you,  
    To take care  
    And guide you.  
To help your Mom and Dad,  
And all those around you.  
    To surround you . . .  
    With Love,  
With guidance, understanding, and acceptance.  
To permeate your very being with self esteem.

My Child, my Soul, my Love.  
You were a SECRET. . . I dare not divulge.  
Put you behind: get on . . . with my life!?  
New job. New city. New life. STRIFE !!!

My Child, my Soul, my Love, my Life.  
Would that I could have chosen . . . to live for you.

To be there for you,  
To be there for me.  
Your family tree . . . so full                      so empty

And I can only say, I am now here to try  
To be here as I've never been  
To share with you,  
To do for you what you need done.

My Child, My Growth, My Peace.  
I reclaim my Soul.  
I reclaim my Life.

I love you, my daughter.



By *Theresa Boguslawski*  
(March of 1997 for **Adoption Healing**)

## Ask Dee:

On April 16, Dee received a call from Ju Ju Chang, a reporter for ABC Television. Chang asked Dee for her opinion on an adoption story ABC was planning to air on 20/20. While being very flattered by the request, Dee was curious how the station found her & why they thought she could answer their questions. Chang explained that she had seen The Adoption Counseling's web site & was very impressed by how informative the site was & by the unbiased attitude demonstrated on the site, **especially in the newsletter.**

Chang then related the story. Very briefly, it was a true story of an adoptee who became a birth parent & arranged for her birth mother to adopt her child. It was a lovely story,

presented, as far as Dee could tell, in a very honest & open way. The ending was a happy one.

Dee's concern was that the birth grandmother is being called "Mommy" & the birth mother is being called "Mommy C". The deception goes on. Dee expressed her concerns to Chang who then asked Dee to recite statistics on open adoption reunion results. Dee insisted upon gathering current actual numbers which would take a few days. Chang was willing to wait.

After consulting with her adoption network, Dee called back with the figures. Chang never returned her calls. And, the show has, so far, not been aired.

However, something good

has come out of all this. The American Adoption Congress has asked Dee to continue to gather information & statistics on adoption reunions & report her findings to the AAC. It is a welcomed project. And, as it progresses, will be made available to all **TACH** members. All contributions to this project will be gratefully appreciated.

To submit your questions write:

**Email:** [adopdee@aol.com](mailto:adopdee@aol.com)

**Snail Mail:** Dee Davis

5701 Centre Ave. #1205

Pittsburgh, PA 15206

**Web Site:**

<http://www.geocities.com/>

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

**Phone:** 412-665-1726



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We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.geocities.com/  
adoptionhome](http://www.geocities.com/adoptionhome)

## Search Tip: Speaking with your Adoptive Parents about Searching

Discussing with your adoptive parents about the decision to search may be the single most important step in search, not to mention the most frightening.

Sometimes this experience is the first serious discussion an adoptee has with their adoptive parents,

### Mission Statement..

The Adoption Counseling Home's mission is to provide support to all whose lives have been touched by adoption -- birth parents, adoptees, adoptive parents, extended family members, those considering adoption and adoption professionals.

This goal is accomplished by listening, learning, speaking and supporting each other with kind understanding and

regarding the issue of looking for her birth family.

Some adoptees feel that by searching they would be hurting their adoptive parents' feelings. It is important to let them know you are not looking for their replacement.

You may be surprised to learn that your parents

were just waiting for the "right time" to share information with you.

Suggestion: read (online), "**A Letter to My Adoptive Parents**" to get a sense of what to say when you don't know how to begin.

[http://www.geocities.com/  
musso\\_geo/mom\\_dad.html](http://www.geocities.com/musso_geo/mom_dad.html)

professional guidance in a safe and comfortable environment.

Adoption is a lifelong issue that creates various challenges, which emerge at different times in our lives.

Our clients derive the strength and help required to meet these needs, thoughts and feelings by consistently attending support group meetings, contributing to these sessions and/or engaging

in individual counseling, as needed.

We honor each person's uniqueness and the desire for personal growth and empowerment.

This organization advocates "Open Records" and "Open Adoptions" in order to prevent the perpetration of harmful secrets. In so doing, we promote the pathway to and the preservation of healthy families.

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