

CUB Communicator



Excerpts From Past CUB Communicators

Concerned United Birthparents – established nationally since 1976

The low road

by Marge Piercy

What can they do
to you? Whatever they want.
They can set you up, they can
bust you, they can break
your fingers, they can
burn your brain with electricity,
blur you with drugs till you
can't walk, can't remember, they can
take your child, wall up
your lover. They can do anything
you can't stop them
from doing. How can you stop
them? Alone, you can fight,
you can refuse, you can
take what revenge you can
but they roll over you.

But two people fighting
back to back can cut through
a mob, a snake-dancing tile
can break a cordon, an army
can meet an army.

Two people can keep each other
sane, can give support, conviction,
love, massage, hope, sex.

Three people are a delegation,
a committee, a wedge. With four
you can play bridge and start
an organization. With six
you can rent a whole house,
eat pie for dinner with no
seconds, and hold a fund raising party.

A dozen make a demonstration.

A hundred fill a hall.

A thousand have solidarity and your own newsletter;
ten thousand, power and your own paper;
a hundred thousand, your own media;
ten million, your own country.

It goes on one at a time,
it starts when you care
to act, it starts when you do
it again after they said no,
it starts when you say We
and know who you mean, and each
day you mean one more.



Saved From Extinction— CUB Rises to a Bright Future

by Karen Vedder, CUB President

As president I am extremely proud that CUB, a national organization, will continue to be a resource for all those seeking support and education in the world of adoption. CUB will thrive as the energies of the board, existing members and new members bring their talents, ideas, wisdom, and dreams to this vital organization.

The Low Road by Marge Piercy is a reminder that we cannot always do certain things on an individual basis, but in numbers we can be empowered beyond imagination.

We can actually accomplish things in reality we thought only possible in our dreams.

Ideas and projects make an impact on adoption-affected people of today and tomorrow. These projects take funding in order to come to fruition. Eventually we would like to see all members feel good about what CUB is accomplishing.

We are all part of a very exciting time, in the world, in our communities, in the continuing success of Concerned United Birthparents. I welcome you aboard.

Birthparent and Adoptee Reunions: The Initial Contact and Beyond by Reuben Pannor

This study was done with the cooperation of the International Soundex Reunion Registry (ISRR).

A birthmother, when asked to describe her experience, said, "We are strangers to one another with lots of unrealistic expectations and fantasies. How do you relate to a person raised since infancy by another family, and the only memories you have is of a baby you let go thirty-two years ago? How could you people ever have created such a cruel, impersonal, inhumane system?"

A number of adoptees felt the reunion meant more to the birthmother than to them. For many birthmothers, the pain and loss that accompanied their relinquishment was felt for a lifetime, whereas most adoptees grew up in loving, caring homes where adoption issues

did not have a significant impact until later periods in their lives. Adoptees who searched were not looking to replace the families they already had, but to hopefully build new relationships with their birthfamilies.

Some adoptees felt that they could not tell their adoptive parents about the reunion and hoped they would be more understanding at some later time. Others felt that their adoptive parents were already too old and that the knowledge of a reunion would be more than they could handle. Birthparents, with few exceptions, were relieved to find that the children they had relinquished had been raised in a loving, caring home. (Nov/Dec 1998)

Searching for Respect and Understanding by Jeffrey Matthews-Lamb

I grew up knowing I was adopted. My parents decided to tell me about being adopted on the night I returned from a visit to the emergency room where I had stitches put into my forehead. I know now that I got one message that was perhaps unintended but reinforced over the years; adoption was a painful topic for my family.

While away at college I received Peggy's first letter. I was overwhelmed in some ways, but deep inside I had always wondered about my birthmother. I had always loved the person who brought me into the world. Sometimes as a child, I imagined her as a guardian angel that watched over me from afar. These were feelings and thoughts that my parents had never explored with me as a child, and it had now become painfully clear that these were feelings they did not share.

We took reunion slowly, using the months of letters and phone calls to re-bond before she would travel to meet me in person. We went slow because I wanted to do this right and because I was scared. The closer we got, the more disloyal I felt towards my adoptive parents.

Adoptees deserve no less than to be respected as a member of two families, their birth families and their adoptive families. My name is now hyphenated to include both my birth and adoptive family names. For me, both are integrated seamlessly into the adult that I have become. Both families are essential to who we are. Life thrives where there is love, respect and understanding. (Dec '95/Jan '96)

It Still Exists: A 1998 Version of Coercion in Adoption by Heather Lowe

A theory repeated often: "Coercion in adoption doesn't happen anymore." I'm here to tell you that is wrong. I know because it happened to me. I also talk to women every day who experienced it too. Sometimes the coercion is less overt than in the '60s, but often it is just as blatant. Openness in adoption has wrought many important changes in the system, but it has not ended the potential for abuse. It is not a cure-all and it does not automatically ensure the protection of potential relinquishers.

Pressure came from all angles. The internet, work, family, even strangers gave me advice, all telling me adoption would be the best option. When I called a national agency, I was told that because I was a successful, older woman, I was too great a risk to change my mind. They refused to work with me. I turned to the internet. I found a couple who just had a potential birthmother "change her mind on them" after the birth of her baby. Suddenly I felt responsible. I was going to be that birthmother who came through for them.

The adopters were in the delivery room. I did get to hold my baby first and I fell hopelessly, smashing in love.

I was presented with adoption papers nineteen hours after my son's birth, while limp with exhaustion and half-drugged from delivery. Is a hospital bed any place to make an irrevocable, life-altering decision? (Sept/Oct 1999)

For Your Parents (1976) by Mary Anne Cohen

We are the shadows
that cross Michael's face
like wings as he sleeps
We are the song barely heard
when you pass his room
in the liquid hour
before dawn.

When you smooth his fine hair
ours are the other hands you feel,
but cannot see.
We are the lovers...

You may thank us or fear us,
bless us or resent us.
We are unknown, you believe,
yet we are here.
We are in Michael's face, his eyes,
his hands, his music,
his work.
We are in his blood,
as you are in his heart.

We are human - like you.
Do not be afraid.
We are apart in time, in miles,
yet we are together
in eternity, in our son's smile.
The gift of our youth, flower of our love
is your child - He must know.

He was conceived in love
He was born of joy
He was never abandoned
He is not forgotten.

He was lost to us, in our ignorance,
our fear, our youth.
He was found by you
to complete your family
to complete your love.
The guilt is not yours, nor ours.
We are not rivals.
He must know...

Teach him
to be gentle, to seek truth
to respect all life.

Help him
to be strong, to resist
to endure.

Show him
that love is never wasted,
never dies, never ends
only changes
like the river, like the light
at dawn.

Tell him for us...

We are the lovers
who gave him his life.
You are the lovers
who gave him his home.
(November 1993)

BETRAYAL: A Birthmother's View of Adoption

by Diana Selsor Edwards

I am against adoption. I know this is an unpopular point of view. "Family building through adoption" has become a widespread and apparently faultless slogan. No matter how positive it appears on the surface, adoption is destructive. I am opposed to adoption because for every family formed through adoption, another family is broken.

Yet, I share with those who want to adopt that ache for a child. I know, intimately, how that intense need pervades and marks everything else in life. I am not opposed to families. Being a mother has brought more joy and more satisfaction to me than any job or other work possibly could. I would like for everyone to know the pleasures of being a parent. But I am a birthmother. When I see an adoptive mother's joy, I think of another mother's sorrow.

I know that women are still intimidated and still coerced into giving up their children. Every week, I meet or talk to them. There are fewer babies available and more infertile couples. Many of the infertile couples have money, and most of the young pregnant women don't. The law of supply and demand creates an ideal climate for relinquishment pressure.

It is essential that pregnant women be fully informed about their options and that they be an integral part of the decision-making process. They will naturally have different reactions at different stages of pregnancy, and allowances must be made for these inevitable changes.

Women need time after the birth to contemplate their options. They need the opportunity to recover from the physical and emotional duress of childbirth before being required to consent to adoption. If a woman can hold and nurse her child during her recovery and then, with a peaceful heart, hand her child to others, she has made a choice that she can live with. There is time for a less destructive, less wrenching change in family form. (Oct./Nov. 1991)

Thoughts by Marcia Mahoney

I am an adoptee. I remember going to my first meeting and feeling welcomed. These people had empathy and I felt very comfortable. I felt wanted, and I knew these people wanted to help me. I thought the search upon which I was about to embark might change my life. I was right. (Feb 1991)

The Pain of Surrender

by Jean Paton, Orphan Voyage

I took two surrenders during my years in social work. They were as freely entered into as such can ever be, but in their course I realized that the nature of that experience is a social death and I have never forgotten. We are all, from that moment, playing we are dead to each other, when as a matter of fact, we are not. This is simply unethical and unlivable.

I consider this parting between a mother and her child to be something that a woman cannot live with, and the child has a difficult time of it too. Yet they do. How they live is a matter on which I have been informed many hundreds, perhaps thousands of times, through the sometimes highly expressive letters I receive from people who grieve, who despair, who hate, who rage, who try to be at peace. But they are not very successful.

From the beginning of my work I have known of the birthparent and the adopted person equally; I have thought of them both; I have felt for them both, even though I am not a birthmother. There is rage, and those who feel it are not alone. We must face the reality in our world. The individual human cannot be blamed wholly, he is acting out of his human nature. But the professional helpers who make it worse are strange and almost unforgivable creatures. This has been my orientation for many years, and it is where I remain. Put your rage where it belongs, and try to love one another. (August 1980)

Dealing With Grief by Brenda Romanchik

One of the first steps in dealing with grief is knowing how it can affect your life. While grieving is the normal reaction to loss, it hardly feels that way. Grief can cause sleeplessness, nightmares, depression, anxiety, and anger. These phases are distinct, but everyone goes through them in their own way and at their own pace.

Shock is usually the first reaction to loss. You may feel numb, as though you are just going through the motions. As the shock wears off and you begin to comprehend the extent of your loss, you may begin to feel sorrow and depression. Everything seems to be a reminder of the child that is no longer with you. Some of the emotional aspects of depression can be debilitating. You may be unable to concentrate, feel apathetic, or despairing. You may feel isolated, alone in your grief, vulnerable and even worthless.

Understanding the Adult Adoptee

by Nancy Newton Verrier

Many clinicians and adoptive parents have told me that adoptees often are disagreeable before or during their birthday parties. Is it any wonder that many adoptees sabotage their birthday parties? Why would one want to celebrate the day they were given away? The adoptees, of course, have probably never really understood themselves, why they do this. Adoptees' birthdays commemorate an experience, not of joy, but one of loss and sorrow.

If depression and anxiety are twin symptoms for adoptees, the closest diagnosis might best be described as post-traumatic stress disorder. An adoptee may demonstrate the tell-tale signs of anxiety and fear yet the diagnosis is not recognized because he or she is not seen as having suffered trauma. It doesn't seem to matter that the person could not have avoided the separation. Abandonment to any child, is the greatest fear of all.

The fear of rejection sometimes sets up a counterphobic reaction of rejecting others before one is rejected. The constant anxiety caused by the expectation of rejection creates a testing-out behavior. The adoptees' lack of trust in the permanency of relationships brings about a distrust of closeness and a need for distancing. At the same time, there is a yearning for the very thing which is feared. (August 1998)

Anger is a natural part of the grieving experience. You may become angry at God, your parents, the birthfather, the adoptive parents, or even strangers. Anger often creates negative energy. I had several panic attacks before realizing it was anger I was trying to avoid. Talking to others help cope with anger. It can help to be physical: walking, running, working out. Screaming and yelling works also. I spent a number of nights out by the beach with a close friend of mine, screaming into the wind.

Acceptance is being able to integrate the loss of your child into your life. You now have a clear definition of who you are and you feel comfortable with your place in your child's life. Acceptance brings renewed energy and strength. It does not mean the pain of loss is gone, it means you have found a way to make it part of your life. (April/May 1996)



Concerned United Birthparents, Inc. Membership Registration

Date _____
Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State, Zip _____
Country _____
Telephone _____
Email address _____

Adoption Status:

Birthparent
Adoptee
Adoptive Parent
Spouse or Family Member
Professional

(please provide agency name) _____

Other _____

Membership Status:

New/Renewal/Gift (\$40)

If Renewal, ID# from label _____

I wish to receive my CUB Communicator:

Bulk mail (USA only)

1st Class (\$10 additional postage)

1st Class, non-USA (\$15 additional postage)

1st Class, in envelope (\$15 additional postage)

Search/Reunion Status:

Not currently searching

Actively searching

Found, but not contacted

Reunited

Contacted, but not reunited

Searched, but found deceased

Open adoption

Payment Method

New Member, Renewal Fee or Gift (annual) . \$ _____ Credit Card: MC Visa

Additional Mailing Fee (options above) \$ _____ Account # _____

Tax Deductible Contribution \$ _____ Expiration Date _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____ Print Name (as on card) _____

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