



Concerned United Birthparents, Inc.

# CUB COMMUNICATOR

THE LOVE ISSUE 2014

Established nationally since 1976

## Giving The Gift Of Love To Self...

By Karen Vedder

Love grows when cherished  
When care is given  
Periods of growth  
Deserve celebration  
In mind, body, spirituality.

Life presents many tests  
Of strength, loss  
Honesty, love.

One can sit back  
Curse fate, gods  
The stars, parents  
The PAST  
Or decide to ask for guidance  
To seek love and forgiveness  
Of self.

With timid reluctance  
Steps are taken  
Down unexplored paths  
Clearing out the overgrowth  
Cluttering the mind  
Anger, regret, intolerance  
Of imagined imperfections.

Old scripts  
Can be rewritten  
Players changing roles  
Humor, love, adventure  
Radiating from brand new  
Solitary script.

You are the author of  
your story  
You can write the  
script



## My Longest Love Affair

By Anthony Brandt

Sunday, February 9, 2014

Yesterday was the 33rd anniversary of the day I met Lorraine. It was a sunny day, as I remember, at a Sunday brunch in a ground floor apartment in Manhattan on February 8, 1981. I had just gotten back from California a few days before, having spent a month there researching magazine pieces. I was single at the time, my girl friend having left me six or seven months earlier; she was there at the brunch, but without her new boyfriend, who had set her loose already. I'm not good on my own and had dated people in the meantime, but not successfully. Most of them were ten or fifteen

*...continued on page 6 ...*

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You supply the characters.  
You are the highlight  
You are the main event.  
You deserve to be forgiven.  
You deserve to be loved.  
You are.

\*\*\*\*

*Karen lives in Carlsbad, California. She has served as president of CUB, editor of the CUB Communicator, retreat organizer, and facilitator of a local CUB support group. She stays busy taking care of four grandchildren, reliving her favorite time of life, raising her four sons.*

## Online Support!

The CUB Message Board is a support group that meets online in the form of messages. We presented this information last month, but here is again, just in case you missed it the first time. CUB is excited to announce that we are now hosting a brand-new message board via our website, to gradually replace the old CUB-all list. To use the Message Board, you will need to login on the CUB website. To sign up, use the link under Join Us or send an email to [editor@cubirthparents.org](mailto:editor@cubirthparents.org)

CUB's message board is a way for all members of the adoption triad to engage in online discussion. We hope that birthparents, adoptees and adoptive parents will be able to get support and feedback from other members of the triad on issues surrounding adoption.

Those who post comments on CUB's message board are asked to be respectful of others who have differing opinions, and in the spirit of the supportive environment for which CUB is known, we expect there will be no name-calling or put-downs.

Our message board will be moderated by Denise Schnelle, Vice-President of CUB in charge of membership.

Happy posting!

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**The CUB Communicator**

## The Communicator Needs You!

Do you have an idea, a book review, a movie review, a reunion story, an interview, a CUB memory, a thank you note, a relevant letter or email, a Haiku, a poem, a picture, a photo... wow the list goes on and on... If you have anything to contribute to *The Communicator*, don't hesitate or make excuses. Send it in today.

Use the online form at...

<http://cubirthparents.submittable.com/submit>

OR good old fashioned US Mail...

1225 S. 2nd W., Missoula, MT 59801

OR if you'd like, you could get more involved in producing this sweet newsletter. You could be in charge or you could work up to being in charge by starting off as an assistant because our editor is dyslexic and can't spell well. She'd love a helping hand. So use this email address and send her a note right now. Don't wait for the right moment because it probably won't come.

[editor@cubirthparents.org](mailto:editor@cubirthparents.org)

### Mission Statement

**Concerned United  
Birthparents, Inc.  
provides support for all  
family members separated by  
adoption and resources to  
help prevent unnecessary  
family separations; educates  
the public about the life-long  
impact on all touched by  
adoption; and advocates for fair  
and ethical adoption laws,  
policies, and practices.**

# CUB's Annual Retreat: A Time to Connect, Heal, Laugh, and Cry

By Sally Macke

Every year Concerned United Birthparents sponsors a retreat held in a beautiful setting where birthparents, adoptees and adoptive parents alike gather to feel accepted, bond with one another, have fun, and grow. CUB retreats are usually held in mid-October near a body of water such as a lake or the ocean because being around water has such a healing aspect to it.

My own first retreat was in 2007, near Chicago, Illinois, and I'll never forget what it was like to meet other people who had shared experiences similar to mine. For over 20 years, I had thought I was the only person on the planet who had suffered the pain of relinquishing a child, but lo and behold! Here were many other women and men who not only knew where I was coming from, but who allowed me to be myself in ways I never had before. Beth Jaffe, editor of CUB's Communicator, says this about our annual CUB retreats: "I love the freedom to laugh and cry and be accepted on a deeper level than my regular life affords."

CUB's retreats have guest speakers-many of whom are published authors in the field of adoption-talk about various aspects of the adoption experience. CUB retreats also consist of opportunities to encounter other members of the adoption triad, sometimes for the first time. As Mary Ann Cohen, Secretary of CUB, puts it, "There is something about meeting in person that cannot be duplicated by the best online media or phone connections."

Many of us have very fond memories of our first CUB retreat. Karen Vedder, former CUB president and past editor of the CUB Communicator and retreat organizer, says, "One of the first retreats I attended was held in a very woodsy area, a rustic setting . . . It was on the east coast, in October. Coming from California I was enjoying the beautiful changing colors of the leaves on the hundreds of trees that surrounded us. I was feeling a bit awkward until some captivating moments when

we gathered in a sunlit room to listen to Jean Patton, the matron adoptee who wrote many articles about adoption, an adoptee who honored birthmothers. I fell in love with her as I listened to her soft voice talk about adoption and the need to reform it. I knew I would be coming back to the annual gatherings. I had found a home where I was totally accepted, without guilt, shame or blame."



*Photo of Safety Harbor Spa and Resort, FL*

Mary Anne Cohen says, "For me, the retreat as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and hard to describe to one who has not experienced it. There is the lovely setting, the water, the speakers, the laughter and tears, but most of all the people, old friends and new."

Musing about her first CUB retreat experience, Beth Jaffe says, "My favorite memory. . . was meeting someone who was just stepping out of the birthmother closet and seeing her relief that she was in a safe place grow into gratitude for finding those who understood her in a way she had never felt before. That was wonderful."

Leslie Pat Mackinnon, Vice President in charge of media relations, says about her first retreat, "Within a couple of hours of arriving at my first

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*...continued from page 3...* retreat, I realized not only could I finally acknowledge publicly that I was a birthmother, but that I'd better practice telling anyone I met that I had relinquished two children. There was never a time that I hadn't choked on those words. I still feared judgment, but decided since I was acknowledging who I was, I ought to experiment with doing so completely. WOW! All I received in return was compassion."

Linda Clausen, Director of Region 1 for CUB, says this about her first CUB retreat, "I had just read *The Adoption Triangle* by Arthur D. Dorosky, Annette Baran and Reuben Pannor, and Reuben sat down next to me at the dinner table. I was so overwhelmed. He was so much a healing person. Just soft words coming from his mouth made me feel that I was 'home.' He and Annette had so much to do with where we are now. The first few retreats it was like going to the Academy Awards. There was always someone speaking who imparted incredible information about adoption. I gave away two children without reading a book about adoption."

All of us – birthparents, adoptees and adoptive parents – have been shaped by adoption, and CUB's retreat gives us a safe place to share our stories with others who understand our experiences completely and accept us unconditionally. As CUB's Region 5 Director Coco Bush says, "A CUB retreat affects all triad members. It brings to a vortex our one, sense of worth, two, sense of religious-spiritual balance with the world, and three, a measurement of love in our lives. We may or may not have all 3 items at all times in our personal relationships." Karen Vedder adds, "Yet another important story to share is when an adoptee asked if

the annual retreat was just for birthparents. I assured her they were not, that many adoptees and occasionally adoptive parents attend. She came that year. She got so much out of it, felt so welcomed, that she vowed she would give up other conferences but never another CUB Retreat. That meant a lot to me and reminded me how important it is to have the retreat each year. We need that time together, to share our stories, to laugh, and to cry...to be understood." Denise Schnelle, Vice President in charge of CUB membership, says this about CUB retreats, "I particularly love spending time with the adoptees and hearing their point of view, it helps me immensely in my own reunion with my adoptee son." Mary Anne Cohen adds, "I have especially enjoyed meeting younger birthmothers and hearing their stories, where they are different and where they are similar to us older moms."

There are many different elements that make a CUB retreat memorable. Karen Vedder says this about her favorite retreat memory: "A birthmother came up to me, introduced herself as a first time attendee, and shared her immediate reaction of walking into a room filled with birthmothers. She had the sweetest smile, the calmest face, as she told me about the safe place she felt she was in as soon as she entered the rather large room. She had never been in the presence of so many birthmoms before. She felt she had walked into a room of women who embraced her before they even had a chance to give her that accepting knowing hug. Her happiness was worth all the hard work of planning the weekend."

Denise Schnelle adds: "What I love most about the CUB retreat is the camaraderie. It is wonderful to spend a weekend with people who get what you're going through and understand what happened to you. It really gives us time to get to know people and I've formed deep bonds and friendships there." Coco Bush says, "I liked the CUB retreat because it was not so 'busy'. There was time to sit and visit, or reflect. There was an element of 'calmness'." Mary Anne agrees. "If you have not tried the relaxed *...continued on the next page...*



*Photo of Safety Harbor Spa and Resort, FL*

...continued from previous page... and accepting atmosphere of a CUB retreat, consider it. There is something for all. If you reach out, other arms are reaching to support you."

Linda Clausen concurs by saying, "I, of course, love the camaraderie and following up with those I would not get to see during the year." Linda continues, "I do not feel that I go to a retreat now for 'help.' But one never knows when a word of wisdom appears from someone who has been through the same thing as you have. However, I always hope that I can just meet one new person, who needs help – either search or emotional, and I can be part of helping them."

Leslie Pate MacKinnon sums it all up: "I continue to attend because I feel a warmth and love coming from other mothers towards me. That tenderness and empathy reminds me to focus on giving it to myself. I wish it came automatically, but it still does not."

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*Sally Macke is Region 4 Director for Concerned United Birthparents and happily attended her first CUB retreat in 2007. She lives in St. Louis, Mo.*

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## Save the Date! CUB Retreat 2014

October 17-19, 2014

Safety Harbor Resort and Spa,  
Safety Harbor, FL

Check the CUB website for more information soon!

<http://www.cubirthparents.org/>



## Love in Bleak Midwinter

*For my son  
By: Mary Anne Cohen  
Jan 2014*

Sun sinks, pink winter light  
I used to love before the fall  
Trees turned to crystal, deadly ice  
sparkles splendid in its danger  
limbs can fall

You send me crystal, glass, many-colored  
globes of light, an owl  
to guard my night, to know you think of me

I send you stones, I keep a stone  
from your yard, stone cats, geodes,  
surprise split  
magic crystal world  
within rough stone  
Your lady wears one I have sent  
refraction  
of all endless love

This glacial season, you summon me, I summon you,  
with ordinary phrases, family concern:  
"Are you and pets Ok?" "Do you have power?"  
"How cold and deep your snow?"

Unspoken love in common words, Blessings hard as ice,  
as rock, as prayers  
Care that warms our kindred hearts.

\*\*\*\*

*When Mary Anne Cohen isn't writing or drawing, she is spoiling her fuzzy feline friends and diligently chipping away at the corrupt foundations of the adoption industry. Mary Anne is a reunited birthmother and member of CUB since it began in 1976.*

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years younger than me and hadn't had children. For me, an uh-oh. I already had two children, both in their teens. I didn't want any more. I was broke in any case and couldn't possibly have afforded more children--so broke, in fact, that two-thirds of the way through my time in California I had to get from Carmel, where I was staying, to Los Angeles and didn't have enough money for gas to make the trip. I was only able to leave because I won \$25 in a poker game. Overall, it was not a good time in my life. My ex-wife hated me. I was being sued for libel and invasion of privacy, to the tune of \$3.75 million. Stress levels were, shall we say, high.

But not so high that I didn't notice the unfamiliar blonde woman who was *not* ten or fifteen years younger than me standing by a couch talking to some guy I also didn't know. I figured they were together. Then an acquaintance, Gael McCarthy, took her by the arm, dragged her over to me, and introduced us. I remember I was standing by the kitchen. We started to talk, about what I have little idea. She was easy to talk to, bright, friendly, attractive. We talked for an hour and a half, until I had to leave to go pick up my daughter at college at SUNY Purchase and take her to dinner. At one point my ex-girl friend walked over and tried to interrupt us, but I think I was rude to her, as in, can't you see I'm busy? Or I just ignored her. But what I do remember clearly, talking with Lorraine, was her telling me she had been seeing some guy for four years, and was going to give him another year. At that I broke into a cold sweat--oh damn, somebody who might be suitable, and she's taken. Just my luck. What she remembers about the conversation is that I didn't react when she told me she had given up a child for adoption and had recently published a book about her experience. I didn't react because I had a cousin who had lived with us when I was eleven and she was seventeen and pregnant and my mother and father had arranged a private adoption for her child.

Shit happens. I had, vicariously to be sure, seen how devastating that experience was, I had already walked a mile in her shoes. You learn, if you have any compassion at all, and after looking long and hard at your own mistakes, not to make snap judgments about other people.

Besides, I'm cool. So I got her phone number and called her Monday or Tuesday and suggested lunch. I didn't expect anything; I just liked her, I wanted a friend, I've always liked having women friends. She hesitated when I called, but agreed finally to lunch in Manhattan (I was living in Ossining) on Thursday. We met, found a quiet place to eat, a gay bar, in fact, on the East Side, and had a wonderful time. Talked for two hours. She told me all about her boyfriend. I thought she was nuts to give him another year (after four? are you serious?), and I told her more about myself: my current poverty, my work, my first marriage, the whole nine yards. After lunch I walked around the East Side with her while she did some errands. When we parted she reached up and pecked me on the lips. I thought, well, that was strange, but the truth is, I didn't think it meant anything. I never expected to hear from her again.

Friday, a week later, she called me in Ossining. At the moment she called I was trying to work up the courage to call a woman I had had one date with, a double date, that had been, oh, kind of nothing. I was deeply lonely. Ultimately I don't think I would have made that call, but I didn't have to. The phone rang, it was Lorraine, and before she could say anything, I said, "Hi, do you want to have dinner tomorrow night?"

She did. At dinner she told me she had ditched the boyfriend. Mr. No-I-Can't-Commit. This time I was speechless--uh oh, this is not just dinner with a new friend, this is a DATE. But after a couple of cognacs at One Fifth Avenue afterwards I loosened up, and we have not been apart since. Within a few days we were living together; within two weeks we were engaged, and on September 20, 1981, we got married.

Is this not a sweet story? I think it is. Not that it's been sweetness ever since. We have different styles, different, deeply ingrained habits, and we're both

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strong personalities and have fought often over silly things and sometimes serious things. But happiness isn't the absence of conflict. Two people are happy together when they understand each other and accept each other for who they are, not who they want the other to be. Conflict is inevitable, and you have to accept it and face it and get through it. You do that by making the fundamental commitment to listen, to admit your own faults and weaknesses and fears (even if only to yourself sometimes), and to understand--most of all, to understand. We had each lived full lives when we met, we each knew something about pain. There was an emotional depth we sensed in each other. And it is in those depths that we love each other, and believe in each other, and share the essence of our lives. It is in those depths that we're happy.



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*Anthony Brandt is the author of "The Man Who Ate His Boots" and the blog described as "idiosyncratic personal intellectual diary for like-minded types" and called "Completely Out of My Mind." He is also married to one of our favorite birthmother bloggers, Lorraine Dusky who co-authors "[Birth Mother] First Mother Forum" with Jane Edwards.*

<http://anthonybrandtcompletelyoutofmymind.blogspot.com/>

## The Eleventh Hour

By Kim Wutz

She comes screaming into the world.  
Covered in blood and cold and flailing.  
Watching her cry is making you cry.  
You try so hard to hold it back,  
to swallow down the knot in your throat,  
but you can't.

Everything over the past nine months  
has been for this moment.  
This is the moment you have been waiting for  
and yet, in this moment  
she is no longer yours.

You have two days  
and two nights with her;  
48 hours, if that.  
As if that is supposed to make up  
for the rest of your life without her.  
You frantically try to memorize her,  
but you can't.

You can undress her  
and count her fingers and toes  
and see the way her hair lies  
and try and measure her like this.  
Her head is the size of your hand.  
Her foot is the length of your index finger.  
Her eye is the size of your thumbnail.  
But it's not enough.

Every day she is changing,  
every hour it seems.  
Even as you're holding her,  
she is morphing into someone new.  
It is getting closer to the eleventh hour.

She is that much closer  
to being given a new name,  
new parents, a new home.  
And you, that much closer  
to everything being ripped away from you.

Everything in you screams  
that something is not right.  
That you are enough,  
would be enough, will be enough.

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But there is a louder part that screams  
you cannot change your mind.  
You cannot do that to these people  
although she is yours  
and they are strangers  
and can take someone else's baby.  
Not yours.

You don't know how to put into words  
everything that is swirling inside of you,  
rising up and ripping through your brain.  
You don't know how to say  
one simple word that could change everything.  
You don't know how to say

**no.**

And so you don't say  
anything, don't speak up, don't tell anyone.

Your daughter's bracelet gets cut off  
and handed to you.  
She gets branded a new name.  
The pathetic piece of plastic you hold  
is the one thing that tells you she was ever yours.  
Her new mother smiles at you-*smiles*-  
as she takes her away.  
I'm so glad one of us can be happy.

You leave the hospital  
without your daughter.  
Your arms are empty,  
your womb is empty,  
your entire being.  
Empty.

There is no turning back now.  
You have done this great,  
terrible thing.  
Nothing is swirling inside your brain anymore.  
You are numb.

You see your baby's face in your mind  
and it haunts you.  
Her big black eyes keep asking you  
why she wasn't good enough for you to keep.  
You keep hearing her cry  
but she isn't there.

Everything inside you  
that ever got together  
to form something

that you called happiness  
has emerged from you in the form of your baby  
and been taken away,  
never to be seen again.  
Devastation does not begin to cover it.

This will last a lifetime,  
and this is just beginning.  
You have lost something so big  
and so important to you,  
and there is no getting it back.

Be proud,  
be brave,  
be broken,  
be lost,  
oh but never be allowed to be sad.

\*\*\*\*\*

*I am a 24-year-old birth-mother/natural mother/real mother, whatever term you prefer to use. My daughter was born June 2nd, 2012, which is the day I also met the adoptive parents. I watched them leave with my daughter on June 8th, and have not seen any of them since. Post-placement, they went back on their word, closed the adoption, and the agency all b u t a b a n d o n e d m e .*



*Once that happened, I sought out other birthmothers and realized that this sort of thing happens all too often. I have since been blogging about the things I've learned about adoption, and am trying to expose the truth of how adoption can be and my own truth about it.*

*If I can make even one girl rethink placing, or offer comfort to other birthmothers, or educate one person about adoption beyond what the majority of society thinks it is about, then I'll feel like maybe there was some small purpose to all of this.*

<http://www.sunshineandseaglass.blogspot.com/>

# My Sunshine

By Darci Levy

## My Sunshine

My little angel,  
so innocent and pure,  
You deserved the world,  
and so much more  
But my world was dark,  
and so full of hurt,  
So I tried in vain,  
to save you from suffering and pain.  
To spare you from my darkness,  
I broke my heart even more.  
I wish I had known  
what we'd all have to endure.  
I turned to another  
to be your mother.  
Never did I think  
she'd cut all ties.  
The day she did  
a part of me died.  
My days grew darker,  
the hole grew in my heart.  
My baby and me  
were even further apart.  
Through all the sorrow  
I kept hope alive.  
I never gave up,  
despite the countless tears I cried.  
I knew someday I would find you  
and my days would get brighter.  
I knew I'd be able to tell you "I love you"  
and my heart would get lighter.  
And now that I have found you,  
I will never again let go.  
Above all else,  
this I want you to know  
You are my sunshine  
and forever a part of my life.

Darci K Levy

8/30/2013

*Darci is a birthmother who has been lucky enough to reopen a closed adoption with the help of her daughter's father. Both parents are now in the early stages of reunion with their teenager.*

# Love and Loss

By Karen Whitaker

I started a new job recently and I've met a lot of great new people which is always fun and interesting, especially after working for my previous employer for fifteen years where my co-workers knew much about me and my family, including me being a birthmother. At my new job, they knew nothing about me and frankly, I was planning on keeping it that way.

After a month of training, I sat with a woman named Beverly to learn some of her processes. It's amazing how much you can get to know a person after sitting with them for an eight hour day. You listen to them, learn, and often times you share personal information. Such was the case on this day.

After training and talking with Beverly for a good part of the morning, later our conversation rotated towards us and our families. I asked Beverly if she has any children. It seemed like she stopped breathing for a moment. She gave me a somber look and said, "I did." Carefully, I looked in her eyes and saw the deepness she felt. I was hesitant and unsure where the conversation was leading. Was she a birthmother like me? Did she lose her children to CPS or an ex-husband? Or was it a greater loss? Long before this time I had noticed something different about Beverly-her body language, her smile, her reserved disposition. She had this faraway look, like something was missing.

My face must have looked like it needed more answers. Beverly expressed, "I can't say it. I have to write it down. Otherwise, I will get emotional and cry." She reached for a sticky note pad and wrote, "My son died." I suddenly felt a rush of feelings come over me. Her son died two years earlier at eight years of age from an asthma attack. She went on to tell me about the last moments of his life here on earth, holding him in her arms, listening as her son tells her that he loves her and that he was going to heaven to be with God. She confessed that she

was surprised she even shared all of this with me because she usually doesn't share it. I was honored she felt safe to share something so personal, so tender and so heartbreaking.

I then recognized her grieving and feel an immediate connection. My eyes teared as I strained to maintain my emotions. I told her how sorry I was. I hesitated to tell her my story of loss because I wasn't sure how she would feel or respond, since I had heard about the

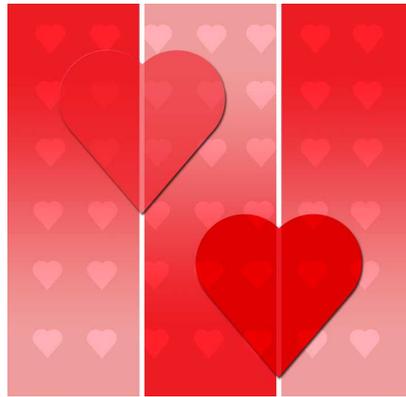
negative responses birthmothers have gotten in these situations. But I felt like she needed support and encouragement from another mother who could understand her pain and sorrow. And I believed that for some reason, we were having that moment. I told her that I am a birthmother and that I understand the feeling of loss. I saw empathy in her eyes. I said, "Difference is, mine was my choice and yours wasn't." As we talked and beheld each other, we knew that each mother understood the grief, the loneliness and the loss.

On the outside, people could see many differences between Beverly and me. But on the inside, in our hearts, Beverly and I shared a common bond. I was humbled by Beverly's spiritual generosity to share something so personal and even more inspired by her lack of judgment but rather exceptional compassion towards me. At that moment, we were not co-workers, we were not women on opposite sides of a grief debate, we were merely two mothers who had loved and lost.

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*Karen Whitaker, an author and a blogger, grew up in a small town on the northeastern coast of the United States. She has worked in banking for the past twenty-five years and was a member of the banks Community Involvement Team. Whitaker has always had the passion for philanthropy, and has volunteered at numerous local and national non-profits. She now focuses on inspiring women with the publication of One Woman's Choice.*

<http://onewomanschoice.wordpress.com/>





*Drawing by Deborah Mach*

## From CUB's History Channel

*By Lee Campbell*

*As a CUB member, you are aware I hope, of a great perk of membership. You can view over 4,000 pages of digitized newsletters, educational materials, completed questionnaires, and published studies. These materials go as far back as 1976, the year I founded CUB. Just click on the "History Channel" of our website. I know you will appreciate viewing the hard work CUB has done over the decades to support and advocate for birthparents.*

*Here's one article that was printed in the **February 1978** issue of the Communicator. In your opinion, how have things changed or stayed the same since then? Submit your answer to CUB's Communicator editor to be considered for publication in our next issue. We'd like to know what YOU think!*

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## Haiku for My Baby

*By Deborah Mach*

your petal-soft skin  
sweet-scented, feather light breath  
resting in my arms

a goodbye too soon  
lost to me, in your new world  
severed, incomplete

rising on a waft  
lighter than a spring-fresh breeze  
from new hopes, new life

eyes of blue, so dear  
steady gaze that fills my sight  
love, seems very near

giddy, light, most free  
shallow breaths one, two, three  
cool skin, the last beat

reflections circling  
alighting in brief respite  
hover as I sigh

\*\*\*\*\*

*I gave birth to my daughter in 1982, and 3 days later, at 18 years old signed relinquishment papers for her adoption. My life has been profoundly effected by the loss of parenting and knowing my daughter. We were reunited in 2000, when my daughter was 18. Our reunion is casual, with less interaction than I would love to have.*





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## Adopted Teen Appreciates Pen Pal

"My story began 14 ½ years ago when I was born into this world a little different from others. I was born into the dark, frustrating world of adoption. I've grown up crying useless tears all my life.

"A few months ago I wrote to CUB and received the address of Joanne McDonald, a birthmother. I wrote my story and sent it off.

"Since that time, many letters have passed between us. I feel more at ease about being adopted. Joanne has answered many questions I've been asking. I hope I've helped her as much as she's helped me.

"I'd like to take this chance now to publicly say:

"Joanne, thanks for making my life so beautiful! Also, thank you, CUB, all of you, for helping me."

--Karen

**Update:** Joanne McDonald was one of CUB's earliest members. At the time of her correspondence with Karen, Joanne had not yet reunited with her daughter, Robin. Recently, Karen contacted me

through Facebook to inquire about Joanne. I had the sad duty to let Karen know that Joanne died in 2012 of a heart condition.

**To update Karen's story:** A sympathetic judge opened her records in 1991, no questions asked. Forty-eight hours later she found her "birthmother, grandmother, three aunts, four uncles, and a zillion cousins." Karen learned that when her birthmother was 14 years old, she was raped by her mother's stepfather and Karen was the result. Karen's birthmother was able to keep her for eight months until the state found out and took Karen away. The birthmother "banged on DHS' door for months until they told her Karen had been adopted, caught pneumonia and died." According to Karen, her birthmother became a sad and broken woman, someone who lies for no reason and who in some ways remains a 14 year old, crushed and secretive, untrusting and emotionally dead. Karen's birthmother had five other children, with the state taking four of them. Karen concludes: "I have met all my siblings, even moving near the one I am closest to." While Karen's reunion story is no Hallmark card, it shows that adoptees can tolerate the truth, no matter what.

I tried to make the colorful Joanne -- along with some other early CUB members -- come alive in my book, [Stow Away](#). (Available as an ebook at Amazon/Kindle or in print at Amazon or through [www.createspace.com/4147943](http://www.createspace.com/4147943)).

## Another update from the History Channel:

Expect to see a list of materials that are available in our History Channel along with a list of non-CUB materials recommended by other adoption reformists in the upcoming March issue of "Adoption and Culture," an interdisciplinary scholarly journal published by the Alliance for the Study of Adoption and Culture, which is affiliated with the Ohio State University at Mansfield.

If you know of a writer, researcher or historian who might make good use our archived materials, please email me at [cub.curator@gmail.com](mailto:cub.curator@gmail.com).

-- Lee Campbell, Ph.D. is CUB's founder and first president and currently serves CUB as our Curator.

## CUB on Facebook



- [Check out Music Mondays, Thank You Thursdays, and so much more!](#)
- Please, “like” us and “share” our posts and make comments.
- Our influence is growing and more people are getting to know us.
- We are making a positive impact and educating people.
- Thank our Facebook leader, Sylvie Makara, for all of her amazing work!

## A New Frontier in Peer Support



- First we started meeting together in person in groups, at people’s homes...
- Then we began to have retreats...
- And email lists and online message boards...
- Now, this month...
- CUB began testing the waters with peer support via video conferencing. This is free technology for use by anyone with almost any “smart” device or fairly recent computer.
- What’s specifically needed? A camera, a microphone, speakers, and internet or mobile data phone service. An account with Google+. The Google Hangouts app downloaded and ready.
- What happens? CUB members talk and listen and see each other from the comfort of their own homes or wherever they may happen to be.
- Really? Yes! It works and we are pretty excited about it. We’ll report back more soon. We are not “real computer geeks,” but we are confident we can help connect more CUB members with needed support.



*Drawing by Beth Jaffe*

## Philomena



- So much to say! So little space! Please take the time to read the review and commentary by Lee Campbell. It is on the [“Where We Stand—Position Papers & Statements”](#) page of the CUB Website.
- Philomena met the Pope! We are wondering what he thought of the movie.
- Adoption law reform groups have used the movie’s popularity to stage educational media moments.
- Leslie Pate MacKinnon and her son, Pete, with Philomena Lee and her daughter, Jane, interviewed on the [Katie Couric Show](#).

# Justice: Better Than Love!

by Beth Jaffe

This little article begs you to go to the CUB website and check out the updates, (more coming soon!) but definitely click on the "Where We Stand" list and then pick "Position Papers & Statements" and then... look under the "From Others" column and finally, read the "National Apology on Forced Adoptions." Go and do it now before you read what I have to say. If you don't have internet access handy at your fingertips, remember this article and don't forget to read that really important document. ["National Apology on Forced Adoptions."](#) It came from Prime Minister of Australia. I also recommend the article listed under the apology as it gives some good context.

Sorry goes a long way with me. What's even better? When I see that someone has actually followed through with the apology and taken steps to right the wrong, then I really feel better. A truly successful "sorry" isn't just about acknowledgement of a bad thing, it's about justice. My favorite bumper sticker is "Want peace? Work for Justice!" because justice matters more than feeling good on a nice sunny day with a rainbow sprinkled on top.

In fact, injustice is at the root of almost all pain. And the worst pain multiplier is lack of hope for justice or hope destroyed by additional injustice. Sometimes the pain multiplier is greater than the original pain. For example, a loving mother who was essentially forced

through social norms to relinquish parental rights gets through the ordeal with the hope of reunion only to find that the child has been abused and is so traumatized that all love for the birthmother has been totally extinguished and replaced with horrible drug abuse and prison incarceration after an attempt to kill the birthmother. That is grim. So grim I shake typing it and I hope that dumb example is just an imagined nightmare.

Anyway, we all saw real live justice over the ocean and far away last March with the amazing government issued apology. I'm not so sure they've taken enough steps to really right the wrongs, but that statement and all that led up to it was a fantastic giant step in the right direction. I finally managed to get it uploaded to the CUB website in honor of its one year anniversary. Please read it and feel the hope for justice here in America. Well, we'll probably never see something so cool and obvious like what those wild Aussies gave us, but I'm pretty sure something is happening here. Soon.

\*\*\*\*

*Beth Jaffe is the mother of... oh, three or four. She lives with her husband of 18 years in Missoula, MT where she likes to sit on her favorite hill outside of town and stare at the world spinning round.*





## Concerned United Birthparents, Inc. Membership Registration

This form is available online at  
<http://www.cubirthparents.org/docs/member.pdf>

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address, line 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Address, line 2 \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP code \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Adoption Status:** please check all that apply.

- Birthparent       Spouse or Family member  
 Adoptee           Adoption Professional  
 Adoptive Parent    Open Adoption  
 Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### MAIL OR FAX FORM WITH PAYMENT TO:

Concerned United Birthparents, Inc. Fax: 858-712-3317  
P.O. Box 341442                                      Need help or have  
Los Angeles, CA 90034-9442                      questions? Call Denise at  
www.CUBirthparents.org                              800-822-2777 ext. 82.

### Join or renew your membership in CUB

- \$40  New Membership  
\$40  Membership Renewal.

### How do you want to receive mailings?

- Electronic Documents: Newsletters and other communications will be sent by email or accessible through our web site. Valid email address required.
- \$15  Mail newsletters to me by U.S. Mail. Other communications will utilize email where possible.
- \$15  International Postage, required for addresses outside USA, add \$15.

\_\_\_\_\_ Subtotal:  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Optional) Donation to support CUB  
\_\_\_\_\_ Total

### Payment Method

- Check or Money Order payable to CUB, Inc. enclosed  
 Visa  
 MasterCard      \_\_\_\_\_  
 Discover              Credit Card #

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ REV082013

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"OVERCOME THE DEMONS  
WITH A THING CALLED LOVE."

-BOB MARLEY