



*Registration and Information Book*

# **The 31st Annual American Adoption Congress Conference**

*VOICES OF ADOPTION*

*SPEAKING OUR TRUTH, RESTORING OUR RIGHTS*



**Thursday, March 18 through Sunday, March 21, 2010**

*Sheraton Grand Sacramento  
1230 J Street  
Sacramento, California 95814  
(916) 447-1700*

**In conjunction with PACER  
Post Adoption Center for Education and Research of California**

## Sacramento - Gold Rush Charm in California's Capital City



Peacefully located in a leafy valley of scenic rivers and canopies of trees, today's Sacramento is a cosmopolitan convergence of tall, gleaming buildings, hearty Victorians, splendid restaurants and shops, a vibrant arts scene, and a virtual cornucopia of state of the art meeting facilities. Sacramento has been called a snapshot of Wild West history in a modern, world-class city. With a plethora of first-class hotel rooms and attractions Sacramento offers an affordable and exciting vacation and meeting destination. Its amenities, combined with the rich history of California's Wild West, help visitors once again Discover Gold in California's Capital City.

If you really want to visit the past, step back in time to the California Gold Rush era in Old Sacramento, a 28-acre town of historic buildings, museums and

monuments. With strong preservation efforts, the wooden sidewalks, horse-drawn carriages, Pony Express monuments and Mississippi-style riverboats reflect the nostalgic appeal of early American history. The Sheraton Grand Sacramento is located in the heart of downtown and steps away from the Sacramento Convention Center, the California State Capitol, Old Sacramento, shopping and wonderful restaurants.

The centerpiece of the 503-room Sheraton Grand hotel is the unique restoration of Sacramento's Historic Public Market Building, originally built in 1923.

The Sheraton Grand has all the amenities you would expect from a four-diamond hotel, including a business center, restaurant fitness center and outdoor pool. It is seven miles



from Sacramento International Airport (SMF) and a Super Shuttle to the hotel is available 24 hours a day.



*Families Rooted In Truth*

### **The American Adoption Congress**

The American Adoption Congress comprises individuals, families and organizations committed to adoption reform. We represent those whose lives are touched by adoption or other loss of family continuity.

We promote honesty, openness and respect for family connections in adoption, foster care and assisted reproduction. We provide education for our members and professional communities about the lifelong process of adoption. We advocate legislation that will grant every individual access to information about his or her family and heritage.

## Conference Details

### DATES

**Thursday, March 18, 2010 2:00 PM through Sunday, March 21, 2010 at 12:00 PM**

Full conference and single day registrations are available. The registration form and pricing information can be found at the end of this booklet.

### CONFERENCE CHAIR

Donnie Davis, AAC Western Regional Director – [PDJ27@aol.com](mailto:PDJ27@aol.com)

### CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

Geneva Anderson, PACER, [genevaj@comcast.net](mailto:genevaj@comcast.net)

Sarah Burns, AAC So. CA State representative, [Sarahpburns@aol.com](mailto:Sarahpburns@aol.com)

Eileen McQuade, AAC President, [Eileen2155@gmail.com](mailto:Eileen2155@gmail.com)

Gene Sperring, AAC No. CA State representative, [sperring@vom.com](mailto:sperring@vom.com)

### ACCOMMODATIONS

Sheraton Grand Sacramento, 1230 J Street, Sacramento, California, 95814

(916) 447-1700

### SPECIAL CONFERENCE GROUP RATE

\$119.00 per night Single or Double Occupancy, \$144 Triple Occupancy, \$169 Quad occupancy.

The hotel is non-smoking.

### TO MAKE YOUR RESERVATION

- Online by clicking the link when you complete your registration.
- Call the hotel directly at (916) 447-1700. Be sure to mention you are with the American Adoption Congress to obtain the special rate.

**Please note – Conference registrants are responsible for making their own hotel reservations after completing conference registration. Registering for the conference does not reserve a hotel room for you.**

### PARKING

The parking garage across from the hotel charges \$18 per day.

### CEUs

The AAC is working to provide CEUs for those professionals who require them. We have applied to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the California Board of Behavioral Sciences (CABBS). The total number of credits will be posted on [www.Americanadoptioncongress.org](http://www.Americanadoptioncongress.org) once we have approval. CEU credits are available for \$45, which includes all application processing and filing fees. Please contact Katy Perkins at [kathrynperkings@yahoo.com](mailto:kathrynperkings@yahoo.com) for additional information.

## Keynote Presenters



**JEAN STRAUSS**  
**THURSDAY, 8 PM - 10 PM**  
**FOR THE LIFE OF ME**

Join us for a special keynote address, which kicks off with a screening of the PBS version of *For the Life of Me* (53 minutes). Four years in the making, the film explores the lifelong impact of secrets in adoption. Weaving the stories of a handful of adoptees with the conflicting messages of a culture that purports to value heritage and human rights, the film aims an arrow straight into the heart of anyone whose life has been touched by adoption. Following the film, Jean Strauss will talk about the inspirational positive outcomes of access legislation in other states – and why her home state of California presents some unique challenges.

Jean, a native Californian, has been documenting adoption issues nationwide for over two decades. Her book, *Birthright: the Guide to Search and Reunion*, has been in print from Penguin since 1994, and her memoir, *Beneath a Tall Tree* was honored at the 2002 Writers Digest Book Awards. Her films include the award-winning shorts, *The Triumvirate* and *Breathing*, as well as *Holding Hands* and *Vital Records* which have benefited adoption reform and education. Strauss received the 2009 Emma Vilardi Humanitarian Award from the AAC.



**DEBORAH JIANG STEIN**  
**FRIDAY, 9:00 - 10:30 AM**  
**AGAINST ALL ODDS: RESILIENCE AND SECOND CHANCES**

Deborah Jiang Stein shares her story of overcoming adversities that started with her birth in prison, heroin-addicted. Her journey takes her from a year in prison, into foster care and then transracial adoption, later followed by a reunion with her birth family and the return to visit the prison where she was born. Now, she returns to prisons across the country to share her story of hope.

Deborah, a speaker who presents her story of hope to a variety of audiences, from social services to employee groups, parents and child/youth advocates, foster care and adoption professionals, women's groups, and addiction and recovery networks. She also tours prisons across the country and speaks to communities in the margins to offer herself as evidence of the resilience of the human spirit and the importance of support networks, critical relationships, and speaking one's truth. Deborah is now a writer, speaker, entrepreneur and an adoptive mother of two daughters.



**CATHY LIND HAYES**  
**FRIDAY, 8 PM - 10 PM**  
**ADVENTURES OF A NEW YORK CITY FOUNDLING**

Adopted at three months old by parents Peter Lind Hayes and Mary Healy, who were celebrated entertainers in the 50's and 60's, Cathy Lind Hayes tells the story of her insatiable need to know the truth of where she came from, and why they let her go.

Her decades-long journey to finally find and meet her biological mother takes many twists as she tries to make sense of who she is and how she can be the “daughter” of two very different women. What she found was both enlightening ... and frightening. This is the story of an adopted daughter’s journey to find her place in the world.

Cathy’s television credits include guest starring roles on *Grey’s Anatomy* (recurring), *Las Vegas*, *The O. C.*, *Friends*, *Boston Public*, *Strong Medicine*, *Undeclared*, *Time of Your Life*, *Judging Amy*, *ER*, *Profiler*, *Seinfeld*, *Caroline in the City*, *Days of Our Lives*, and *Passions*. Film credits include *Self-Medicating*, *Caramel*, *Slightly Thicker Than Water*, *Drop Dead Fred*, *Mommie Dearest* and the upcoming *Broken Hart*. She has also been seen on many national commercials.

Cathy’s most recent on stage appearance was as Babet in the Los Angeles Geffen Playhouse production of *He Hunts* for which she received an Ovation Award Nomination.



**CARISTA LUMINARE, Ph.D**  
**SATURDAY, 10:30 AM - NOON**  
**GETTING UNSTUCK: YOU CAN HEAL YOURSELF**

Perhaps we can all acknowledge that “adoption is forever,” but how many of us are really comfortable with how adoption has impacted our sense of self worth, our ability to trust, and to experience healthy love? Many of us subconsciously let our adoption wounding run the show – our “inner child” determines how we feel about ourselves and how we interact with others. We become stuck, acting out patterns of behavior that we can’t seem to change. We may never experience the love and acceptance we need to thrive. Self Love can release us from the trauma and behavioral patterns that have come to define our lives. Self Love is a developed skill—learning to make healthy choices to nurture one’s sense of self worth and choosing relationships where one feels valued. Carista calls this *The True Self Way*.

Carista is the founder of The Center for Creative Parenting, has a successful counseling practice and has taught numerous workshops on preparing for parenthood as well as optimizing True Self Development. Carista has developed a holistic rebirth and health program for both the parents and the future child, which is featured in her book, *Parenting Begins Before Conception: A Guide to Preparing Body, Mind and Spirit*.



**DELORES S. TELLER, LCSW**  
**SUNDAY, 10:30 - 11:45 AM**  
**THE ETHICS OF RELIQUISHMENT AND ADOPTION: HOW CAN WE MAKE IT BETTER?**

Adoption policy and practice has improved over the past 30 years, and the topic of open adoption and adoption reunion is spoken more freely in the media. But there continues to be a plethora of unethical adoption practice operating unchallenged and even accepted by the general public. What can we do?

Delores is a reunited birthmother, post adoption therapist, and the past president of the American Adoption Congress. She has traveled and lectured throughout the U.S. and Canada on post adoption and her life story and work in support of the Landmark Oregon Adoption Law, Measure 58, was featured in *Rolling Stone Magazine*.

## Schedule of Events

Thursday, March 18, 2010

**10:00 AM – REGISTRATION OPENS**

**2:00 PM – 5:00 PM – 100 WORKSHOP SERIES**

**2:00 PM – 3:00 PM**

### **101 CALIFORNIA LEGISLATION**

PRESENTER: FIONA MA

State Assembly Member and Majority Whip Fiona Ma will speak to the conference on prospects for adoptees gaining access to original records in California and explain how and why California is different.

**2:00 PM – 4:00 PM**

### **102 FILM – ADOPTION THEMED FILM – TITLE TO BE ANNOUNCED**

The screening will be followed by a moderated discussion about how adoption is portrayed in mass media.

**3:00 PM – 5:00 PM**

### **103 STAYING CLEAN: PURSUING ACCESS LEGISLATION IN AN IMPERFECT WORLD**

In a perfect world, the passage of “clean bills” that give all adopted adults their original birth certificate with no attached conditions would be the norm. In leading the movement to achieve access, AAC pursues unrestricted access but will accept compromise legislation if, in the opinion of AAC and local supporters, such a compromise is necessary to obtain the greatest access for the greatest number of adopted persons. This panel will discuss the challenges of “staying clean” by veterans in championing access. Moderated by Mary Martin Mason and Rich Uhrlaub of Colorado. Other panelists will be announced.

**4:00 PM – 5:00 PM**

### **104 ROOTS UNKNOWN – HEALING THE ADOPTION EXPERIENCE**

PRESENTER: ZARA PHILLIPS

The presenter will talk about her experience and journey as an adopted woman, her search and reunion, becoming a mother, the death of her adoptive mother and how these life events affected the adoption experience. She will also discuss the history behind her book *Mother Me*, its writing and London publication and how that inspired her to make the film *Roots Unknown*.

**5:00 PM – 7:00 PM – DINNER ON YOUR OWN**

**7:00 PM – 8:00 PM - 200 WORKSHOP SERIES**

**201 AAC 101: PREPARING OURSELVES FOR THE CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE**

PRESENTERS: PAM HASEGAWA AND RACHEL STUMME

An interactive event to help you get to know others and develop a deeper awareness of the varying points of view that will be shared during the conference. We'll discuss ways to stay grounded and present if emotions arise so that you can get the most out of the conference.

**202 LEGISLATION ACCESS TO IDENTIFYING INFORMATION FOR BIRTHPARENTS**

PRESENTERS: MICHAEL GRAND, PhD AND WENDY ROWNEY, MA

In Canada, every access law provides birthparents with identifying information on their adult children. Join in an informal discussion led by legislative activists about the history of the worldwide birthparents rights movement and how including birthparents helped us gain access to identifying information for a vast majority of adoptees.

**8:00 PM – 10:00 PM KEYNOTE: JEAN STRAUSS**

PRESENTS HER FILM – *FOR THE LIFE OF ME*

**10:00 PM – MIDNIGHT – HOSPITALITY – PRESENTED BY PACER**

*Friday, March 19, 2010*

**8:00 AM – REGISTRATION OPENS**

**8:00 AM – 9:00 AM – BREAKFAST**

**8:45 AM – 10:30 AM – WELCOME AND KEYNOTE – DEBORAH JAING STEIN  
*AGAINST ALL ODDS: RESILIENCE AND SECOND CHANCES***

**10:45 AM – NOON – 300 WORKSHOP SERIES**

**301 HOW ADOPTEES RAISE THEIR CHILDREN**

PRESENTER: ZARA PHILLIPS

The presenter will discuss in-depth the primal emotions that came up during her first pregnancy and childbirth and how being an adopted person impacted her parenting. She will discuss how the experience of motherhood helped her understand her relationship with her adoptive mother and her birth-mother in a new and profound way.

**302 UP FOR ADOPTION – THE SURRENDERING MOTHER'S EXPERIENCE OF CHILDBIRTH**

PRESENTER: KATHY ADERHOLD

Childbirth has changed radically since the Childbirth Dark Ages, before the advent of epidurals. The surrendering mother's experience was further distorted as hospital staff sought to prevent the young women from bonding with the infants that were being placed for adoption. This discussion will focus

on the practices of healthcare providers in caring for surrendering mothers during the 1960's and 1970's in an effort to understand mothers who are later found by their searching adopted children.

### **303 ADOPTION IS A FEMINIST ISSUE**

PRESENTERS: DEBRA BAKER AND SARAH BURNS

Using Debra's documentary *Broken Ties*, about her experience being an "unwed mother" in 1967, as a backdrop, we will reframe adoption reform as a feminist issue, and how this directly relates to international adoption. We will discuss ways to forge relationships with organizations outside of the adoption community.

## **12:00 – 1:30 LUNCH ON YOUR OWN WITH OLD AND NEW FRIENDS**

### **1:30 PM – 3:00 PM – 400 WORKSHOP SERIES**

#### **401 SIN BY SILENCE: CYCLES OF LOSS AND THE POWER OF ACTION**

PRESENTER: BRENDA CLUBINE

The stunning award-winning film, *Sin By Silence* provides an introduction to Brenda Clubine, an adoptee, birthmother, legislative activist and survivor of domestic abuse whose story (which appeared in the December, 2009 issue of People's Magazine) will rock you to your core. The film, while documenting the stories of battered women incarcerated for killing their husbands, becomes by the end, a tale of adoption, deception, reunion, and action. After the film, Brenda will speak about the complicated terrain of reunion, and about the successful legislative action she mounted within a prison's walls.

#### **402 FIVE DIFFERENT GENERATIONS OF ADOPTIVE PARENTS**

PRESENTER: RENE HOKSBERGEN

Rene will talk about five different generations of adoptive parents from 1956 to 2010: the traditional-closed generation (before 1970); the open-idealistic generation (1971-1981); the materialistic-realistic generation (1982-1992); the optimistic-demanding generation (1993-2000); and the aware of contradictions generation (since 2000). With statistical data he will make clear the connection between generations of adoptive parents and the numbers of children arriving for adoption in the Netherlands. The same sort of developments are relevant for other countries, as well as changing attitudes of adoptive parents in Northern European countries.

#### **403 TURNING REUNION INTO RECONNECTION: DIFFICULT CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS**

PRESENTERS: MICHAEL GRAND AND MONICA BYRNE

It is one thing to have a reunion with kin. It is another to move from reunion to reconnection. This workshop will focus on the most salient pitfalls and strategies for working towards building relationships with found kin. Workshop participants will be encouraged to offer personal means of responding to their most challenging reconnections.

**3:15 PM – 4:30 PM – 500 WORKSHOP SERIES**

**501 ADOPTION AND THE GLOBAL SURROGACY INDUSTRY, WHAT'S DIFFERENT, WHAT'S THE SAME AND WHY IT MATTERS**

PRESENTER: KARI POINTS

The workshop will trace the explosive growth of the global commercial surrogacy industry. Using case studies from India, the U.S., and other countries, we will explore industry trends, the effectiveness of current regulatory approaches, and implications for the health and human rights of surrogates and other individual stakeholders.

**502 MAKING SENSE: MINDFUL AWARENESS AND THE ADOPTION STORY**

PRESENTERS: APRIL TOPFER

An adoption story that is “coherent” is one of the most important aspects of well-being for an adoptee. Based upon extensive empirical research and Dan Siegel’s mindfulness-attunement theory, an individual can develop a coherent narrative with mindfulness. In this workshop participants will be led on a mindfulness meditation.

**503 SURVIVING A YEAR IN HELL IN REUNION**

PRESENTERS: LISA F. LoRUSSO AND ANDREW MAJKOWICZ

Reunited mother and son will discuss how anger and rage, when it arrived, jeopardized an established six- year relationship.

**4:45 PM – 6:00 PM – ADOPTEE SUPPORT GROUP**

**4:45 PM – 6:00 PM – BIRTHMOTHER SUPPORT GROUP**

**4:45 PM – 6:00 PM – ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP**

**6:00 PM – 8:00 PM – DINNER ON YOUR OWN**

**8:00 PM – 10:00 PM – KEYNOTE CATHY LIND HAYES**  
***ADVENTURES OF A NEW YORK CITY FOUNDLING***

**10:00 PM – MIDNIGHT – HOSPITALITY RECEPTION PRESENTED BY PACER**

*Saturday, March 20, 2010*

**8:00 AM – REGISTRATION OPENS**

**8:00 AM – 9:00 AM – BREAKFAST**

**9:00 AM – 10:30 AM – 600 WORKSHOP SERIES**

**601 REUNION RELATIONSHIPS**

PRESENTER: MARLOU RUSSELL

When adoptees and birthparents reunite, everyone connected to them can be affected. Learn how to embrace, pace, and communicate in reunion relationships – yours or someone you know.

**602 ADOPTION AND ADDICTION: HOW IT AFFECTS ALL MEMBERS OF THE TRIAD**

PRESENTER: CANDY FINNIGAN

This workshop will discuss the ways that addiction affects the lives of adoptees and birthparents in particular; it will address how addiction presents itself (with drugs, alcohol, food, etc.) and what steps can be taken to recognize, understand and treat addiction as it affects members of the triad. It will focus on the approach used by Ms. Finnegan in her role on the television program, *Intervention*.

**603 LOCATING FAMILY VIA THE INTERNET**

PRESENTER: MARILYN M. WAUGH, MA

Reconnecting to kin is possible if you know user-friendly, regularly updated Internet websites. Learn how to search using sites that are available to the general public for free or at a minimal cost. This workshop, led by an experienced professional who has completed several thousand searches, will provide multiple handouts to participants.

**604 FAMILIAL ADOPTIONS – THE ANGST OF IT**

PRESENTERS: ROBERTA MacDONALD AND ROBERT CHASTANG

Roberta will read from “A Peace From My Past”, discussing the confusion around finding out she was adopted. Bob will speak on the emotional pain, and that truth is the only way to break the chain of lies and deceit.

**605 TURNING IN TO THE HEART OF THE RELINQUISHED CHILD**

PRESENTERS: PAM HASEGAWA AND MELISSA HOLUB, Ph.D

Through a variety of experiential exercises, participants will gain insight into the inner worlds of relinquished children’s life experiences and have an opportunity to “get it” in a visceral way. An excellent “training for trainers” as well as a non-textbook approach to helping those who want to understand the heart of the relinquished child more deeply.

**10:30 AM – 12:00 PM– KEYNOTE: CARISTA LUMINARE, Ph.D.**

***GETTING UNSTUCK: YOU CAN HEAL YOURSELF***

**12:00 PM – 1:30 PM – LUNCH ON YOUR OWN WITH OLD AND NEW FRIENDS**

**1: 30 PM – 3:00 PM – AAC TOWN MEETING**

Come meet the AAC board of directors, and share your ideas for the future of the AAC. Hear our plans for 2010, and tell us what is important to you.

**3:15 PM – 4:45 PM – 700 WORKSHOP SERIES**

**701 WHOSE BIRTH CERTIFICATE IS IT? ACCESS BEST PRACTICES**

PRESENTER: MARY MARTIN MASON

Using the benchmark of Best Practices, the presenter will help formulate advocacy measures that provide lifelong, generational benefits in adoption when adult adoptees can access their birth information. Included will be a historical analysis, the latest research and child developmental data.

**702 – “I’M A BIRTH MOTHER!” YA GOTTA PROBLEM WITH THAT?**

PRESENTER: DELORES S. TELLER, LCSW

It takes most birthmothers 20 years to admit they had a child. Even younger birthmothers, in open adoptions, struggle revealing the truth. This workshop will talk about the cycle of shame, doubt, fear, anger, and rebellion that all birthmothers share. Specific ideas on how to manage these reactions and the commentary of others will be discussed in an open format.

**703 CALIFORNIA: WHAT IS HAPPENING IN OPEN ADOPTION VS THE REST OF THE COUNTRY?**

PRESENTER: ELLEN ROSEMAN

California is leading the country with the most open adoptions. Why? What effect do contact agreements have on openness? What does an open vs. semi-open adoption look like? How are problems / disagreements resolved? What about Birthfather rights? Agency vs. Independent? What are “best ethical procedures”? Ellen will moderate a panel discussion.

**704 INSIDE OUT: EXPRESSIVE ARTS FOR THE SOUL**

PRESENTER: PATRICK McMAHON

In the adoption experience, it is often difficult to express our innermost feelings. This process can help us to heal from grief and loss, as well as share our joy. In this participatory session, we will use simple movement, collaging, and creation of greeting cards to produce symbols of what is most poignant for us in the past, present, or future.

**705 ETHICS FOR EVERYONE IN ADOPTION**

PRESENTER: DR. TREVOR JORDAN

Adoption presents us with many ethical opportunities; i.e. opportunities to learn who we are, to whom we are connected, and what matters enough to care about and care for. This workshop will provide tools for charting our responsibilities in familial, professional and political contexts.

**5:00 PM – 6:30 PM**

**706 HELP! SOMEONE IS MESSING UP MY REUNION**

PRESENTER: CARISTA LUMINARE, Ph.D

Navigating reunion can be stressful enough for the main parties involved. What happens when someone close to you is upset by your reunion? What happens when the person you want to connect with is being influenced adversely by someone close to them? Divided loyalties, hurt feelings, missed opportunities—how do we manage to take care of ourselves and still treat those dear to us

with respect and compassion? It is possible!

**6:00 PM – 8:00 PM - DINNER ON YOUR OWN WITH OLD AND NEW FRIENDS**

**8:00 PM – MIDNIGHT – CELEBRATE AND UNWIND WITH SACRAMENTO DJ, WHO WILL GET YOU ON YOUR FEET AND DANCING. CASH BAR AND FINGER FOODS WILL BE SERVED.**

*Sunday, March 21, 2010*

**8:00 AM – 9:00 AM – BREAKFAST**

**9:00 AM – 10:30 AM – 900 WORKSHOP SERIES**

**901 THE LAUGHING WARRIOR**

PRESENTER: TRISH LAY

Fusing self help knowledge with comedy improv skills, this adoptee incorporates her vast background in both areas to deliver a venue of serious matters with a sense of comedy relief. Break down fears created over rejection, abandonment, reunion and searching, etc. - by opening your mind to take risks. Watch the negative thought patterns dissolve, while the discovery of the loving authentic self emerges through laughter and fun. Trish takes life seriously, yet she knows how to find the release of laughter in a moment when life can be incredibly heavy.

**902 SURVIVING REJECTION, MOVING ON**

PRESENTERS: KAREN VEDDER, LINDA OROZCO, MIMI JANES, LORETTA BERG

Birthparents and adopted persons often fantasize about their missing children or parent and they dream of reunion. The fantasy is usually one of perfection. It doesn't always happen that way. Contact may be unanswered. First meetings are last meetings. Good reunions become distant or non-existent. How does one deal with these disappointments and rejections? A panel of birthmothers will show you how.

**903 PRESERVING FAMILY AND CULTURAL TIES**

PRESENTER: CHRIS WINSTON

How does one build connections to their child's ethnic community? Why is it important? What boundaries exist for Caucasian adoptive parents in making those connections? Why does race matter? How is the child's experience of race different from their parent's experience? Learn what support is reasonable to expect from our child's ethnic community and what is happening in Korea for birthparents today.

**10:30 AM – 11:45 AM KEYNOTE AND CLOSING: DELORES S. TELLER, LCSW**

**THE ETHICS OF RELINQUISHMENT AND ADOPTION: HOW CAN WE MAKE IT BETTER?**

Adoption policy and practice has improved over the past 30 years, and the topic of open adoption and adoption reunion is spoken more freely in the media. But there continues to be a plethora of unethical adoption practices operating unchallenged and even accepted by the general public. What can we do?

## **Presenter Biographies** (in alphabetical order by last name)

**Aderhold, Kathy, MA** – Kathy lost her daughter to adoption in 1972 after she was sent to a Booth maternity home in Omaha, Nebraska. Because Kathy was in nursing school at the time she became pregnant, she was asked to work as a nurse in the Booth hospital nursery during her pregnancy, to pay for her room and board during her four-month stay. Kathy has worked in hospitals since 1966, when she started her nursing career as a nurse's aide at the age of 16. Kathy has a bachelor's and master's degree in nursing and is a Certified Nurse Midwife.

**Baker, Debra** – Debra is a reunited birthmother and filmmaker. Her films have aired on PBS and screened at film festivals in the U.S. and U.K. She is a frequent presenter at adoption conferences.

**Berg, Loretta** – Loretta lost her only child to adoption. She thought the first meeting with her son and the birthfather went well. Seventeen years and one card later she still yearns for contact. Loretta is a retired federal employee. She now works at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C.

**Burns, Sarah** – Sarah is a reunited birthmother. She is the Southern California Representative for the AAC and has presented at the AAC and CUB conferences.

**Byrne, Monica** – Monica is a very happily reunited birthmother. The new National Director of Parent Finders of Canada, she has been the Registrar of Parent Finders, in Ottawa, Canada for more than 20 years. She has helped to facilitate many hundreds of reunions and is a resource for those searching for kin. She was the 2005 recipient of the AAC Vilardi Award, and has also been recognized by the Canadian Government with a "Caring Canadian" award.

**Chastang, Robert** – Robert is an adult adoptee, an adoptive parent, and his grandson was placed for adoption.

**Clubine, Brenda** – Brenda was the founder of CWAA, the Convicted Women Against Abuse. Her organization created in 1989, chose to educate the "system" rather than fight it. Through letter writing campaigns, media coverage and senate hearings, a movement was born that would change California laws for battered women. Brenda is an adoptee and birthmother, who lives in Southern California and whose life mission, is to continue her work in reform.

**Finnigan, Candy** – is a drug and alcohol counselor and interventionist best known for her appearances on the reality television series *Intervention*, since 2005. Finnigan has been involved in all areas of recovery for more than 15 years. She received her certification in chemical dependency from UCLA and completed her internship at Cedars-Sinai Hospital, where she worked in addiction services. In April of 2008, she published a new book, *When Enough is Enough: A Comprehensive Guide to Successful Intervention*, which provides advice to family members thinking about an intervention.

**Grand, Michael, Ph.D** – Michael is a reunited adoptee, is a professor of Psychology at the University of Guelph. He has published articles on search and reunion, identity, adoption outcome, legislation, and social policy. He is a member of the coordinating committee of the Coalition for Open Adoption Records in Ontario and has an adoption-oriented, psychotherapy practice.

**Hasegawa, Pam, B.A** – Pam is an adoptee who has been advocating for truth in adoption since joining the adoption reform movement in 1975. She encourages younger members of the constellation to help legislators and citizens understand the issues of access and honesty.

**Hoksbergen, Rene** – is a senior professor at Utrecht University, and a visiting professor at the Institute of Psychology, Pune, India. Rene's main research projects include artificial insemination, history of adoption in Holland, motives of adoptive parents, and attachment issues. He has written about 30 books, and many articles in scientific and other journals, in the U.S., Great Britain, Germany and France. Rene gives lectures in many countries, and appears often for discussions concerning adoption issues on television and radio.

**Holub, Melissa, Ph.D** – Melissa has more than 20 years training and experience providing psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapy and specializes in pre- and post-adoption related education and treatment. She has worked with Northern California Resolve, the Post Adoption Center for Education and Research and is a founder of Adoption Experts Series, providing clinical training in adoption to clinicians throughout the Bay Area. She has been on the clinical faculty of many psychological service and training programs including the Wright Institute in Berkeley, the McAuley Institute at St. Mary's Hospital in San Francisco, and the Boyer House Foundation in San Raphael. Dr. Holub is the president of the Northern California Society for Psychoanalytic Psychology. Her practice is in Berkeley, California.

**Janes, Mimi** – surrendered two daughters. Both reunions went extremely well. One reunion has hit the bricks and there is no longer contact. Mimi is vice president of human resources at a Los Angeles bank. She is past president of CUB.

**Jordan, Trevor, Ph.D** – is a Visiting Fellow in Applied Ethics at the Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia.

**Lay, Trish** – has been coaching and motivating people to make changes in their life for over 20 years. As an adoptee, she spent her life curious to why she is here and always reminded of the question: "Who am I?" As she got older it turned to "What is life's purpose for me?" Trish has survived her life because of her specific talents and gifts; a sense of humor and the ability to truly listen to others and respond with sincere simple intelligence, inner wisdom, a great awareness of compassion and divine guidance by a power greater than anything any one person could ever try to explain.

**LoRusso, Lisa F.** – is a mother of three sons, with three granddaughters and a grandson. She raised two sons and her firstborn son was given up for adoption in 1968, she was reunited in 2003 when he was 34 years old. She the CFO of The Columbus Citizens Foundation, a not-for-profit Corporation in New York City. She has presented workshops with her son and also with other First Mothers in Las Vegas, Boston and Portland and have presented at St. John's University and Oceanside High School.

**Ma, Fiona** – was elected to represent the people of California's 12th Assembly District in 2006. The district includes San Francisco, Daly City, Colma and Broadmoor. In 2008 she was elected to a second term with 83% of the vote. Assemblywoman Ma is the Majority Whip, responsible for ensuring the passage of crucial legislation to improve public education, expand healthcare access and protect our environment. She sits on the Higher Education, Revenue and Taxation, Housing, Agriculture, Labor, and Public Safety committees. Assemblywoman Ma serves as the Chair of the Select Committee on Domestic Violence where she has authored groundbreaking legislation on preventing domestic violence, and she has achieved success with legislation to protect young children from dangerous chemicals, help California's working families pay the bills, increase access to quality healthcare, and provide equal rights for all Californians.

She received her B.S. from the Rochester Institute of Technology (NY), her M.S. in Taxation from Golden Gate University (SF), and an MBA from Pepperdine University. She is a Certified Public Accountant licensed in California.

**MacDonald, Roberta** – is an adult adoptee, chairwoman of the N.C. Coalition for Adoption Reform co-facilitator of the Triangle Adoption Support Group and board member of the AAC.

**Majkovicz, Andrew** – is a late discovery adoptee who has been in reunion with his entire family for almost seven years. He is a Marine Corps veteran and a 20-year member of the Saddle Brook Fire Dept obtaining the rank of Fire Chief. He is married to Dawn and has three amazing daughters Debbie, Brooke and Taylor.

**Mason, Mary Martin** – Mary is the AAC legislative committee chair, grew up in a fully disclosed adoption and has raised a 23-year-old son, Josh, in an open adoption. The author of *Out of the Shadows: Birthfathers' Stories* and *Designing Rituals in Adoption* she is the executive director for Minnesota Adoption Resource Network.

**McMahon, Patrick** – is an adopted person 18 years into reunion. He is the author of a memoir about search and reunion, as well as a photographer, artist, and musician, an activist for adoption reform, and an adoption speaker and workshop presenter.

**Orozco, Linda** – Also known as *Mama O*, Linda found her first son in 1998. Eight years later and after many cards and letters she had one phone conversation with him. She patiently waits for more, now 11 years after finding him.

**Phillips, Zara** – is the author of *Mother Me*, published by BAAF, UK, 2008. She is the filmmaker of *Roots Unknown*, and a songwriter. She recently wrote and recorded the song *I'm Legit* featuring Daryl "DMC" McDaniels. Zara has lead many workshops over the years at adoption conferences.

**Points, Kari** – is a global policy researcher who examines cross-border reproductive commerce using a reproductive justice and human rights lens. Her recent work explores the ethical, legal and economic dimensions of reproductive tourism and intercountry adoption. A reunited adoptee, Kari holds a Master of Public Policy from Duke University.

**Roseman, Ellen** – has been working in adoption placement as a consultant in California for 30 years. She has written and published numerous adoption articles and presented adoption-related workshops across the country. She is passionate about openness in adoption, open records, and children's rights. She has been an active member of the AAC since the 1980's, RESOLVE of N. CA., Ca Open, co-chair and board member of PACER and the Academy of California Adoption Professionals.

**Rowney, Wendy, M.A.** – is the president of Adoption Search and Kinship in Toronto, Ontario, and a board member of the AAC and the Adoption Council of Canada. She is a member of the coordinating committee of the Coalition for Open Adoption Records in Ontario.

**Russell, Marlou, PhD.** – is the author of *Adoption Wisdom: A Guide to the Issues and Feelings of Adoption*, an adoptee in reunion, and a psychologist specializing in adoption issues in private practice in Santa Monica, California.

**Stumme, Rachel** – is a birthmother who attended AAC 101 last year. Rachel is the founder of a support group in Seattle.

**Topfer, April, M.A.** – received her master’s degree at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology and is currently a doctorate candidate in clinical psychology. She is focusing her research on the benefits of mindfulness meditation on adoptees’ adoption story and sense of self. She is an adoptee herself and practices mindful awareness daily.

**Uhrlaub, Rich, M.Ed.** – has served on the Board of AIS/CIC for 15 years, and has been active in Colorado legislative reform for 15 years. He served as a consulting resource for Holland and Hart, the Law firm which won the 2009 Colorado Court of Appeals ruling providing unrestricted access to adoption records for those adopted between 1951 and 1967. Rich is a co-author of the forthcoming book *Finding Our Place: 100 Memorable Adopted, Fostered Persons and Orphanage Alumni*.

**Vedder, Karen** – lost her only daughter to adoption. She raised four sons and yearned for that some-day reunion. It was good at first but progressed to no contact. Karen has her MSW, is a former president of CUB, and a longtime member and presenter of AAC conferences.

**Waugh, Marilyn, M.A.** – is a reunited birthmother, director of Adoption Concerns Triangle of Topeka, past president and now current Kansas representative for American Adoption Congress. For the past 18 years, Marilyn has worked in the Post Adoption Division of Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Services processing and completing 800 to 1000 record and search requests per year.

**Winston, Chris** – is the founder and president of The Korean American Adoptive Family Network (KAAN) a national networking organization. She has spoken in numerous forums and has published several articles as well as a book on building heritage connections. She is the mother of three adult children, two of whom were adopted from Korea.



## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Early registration will run from January 1, 2010 to February 1, 2010.

Regular registration will run from February 2, 2010 to February 28, 2010.

Late registration applies to all registrations received after March 1, 2010.

Refunds are subject to a \$75 processing fee. Written notification must be postmarked no later than March 1, 2010. Refunds will only be made for serious medical emergencies. All refunds will be processed after the conference.

## REGISTRATION RATES

	Member	Member	Member	Non Member	Non Member	Non Member
Full conference	Early*	Regular*	Late *	Early	Regular	Late
Regular	249	295	315	325	360	400
Senior/Student	229	275	295	325	360	400
Thursday Only	75	75	75	75	75	75
Friday Only	100	100	100	100	100	100
Saturday Only	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sunday Only	50	50	50	50	50	50
Friday night Reception (additional ticket)	50	50	50	50	50	50
Saturday night Keynote (additional ticket)	50	50	50	50	50	50

**\*MEMBER RATES APPLY TO FULLY PAID MEMBERS OF AAC, PACER, AND AFAAD (ADOPTED AND FOSTERED ADULTS OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA). JOIN OR RENEW AAC MEMBERSHIP TO RECEIVE DISCOUNTED RATES FOR THE CONFERENCE.**

Type of Membership	One Year - New / Renewal	Two Year - New / Renewal
Individual	\$50 / \$40	\$90 / \$70
Student/Senior (62+)	\$40 / \$30	\$70 / \$50
Household	\$60 / \$50	\$110 / \$90
Search/Support Group	\$60 / \$50	\$110 / \$90
Organization (1-5 attendees)	\$160 / \$130	\$275 / \$255

**REGISTRATION**

NAME	ORGANIZATION
ADDRESS	CITY
STATE/PROVINCE	COUNTRY
DAY PHONE	CELL PHONE
EMAIL	

**Relationship to adoption:** (circle all that apply)

Adoptee    Birthparent    Adoptive Parent  
 Professional    Support/Other  
 First Time Conference Attendee?    Y    N  
 May we include your name in the directory?    Y    N

**REGISTRATION FEES**

(circle one)

Date of Registration:    Early    Regular    Late  
 AAC Member:    Y    N  
 PACER Member:    Y    N  
 AFAAD Member:    Y    N  
 Student/Senior:    Y    N (valid ID required)

**FEE CALCULATION**

Full Conference Registration Amount	\$ _____
Join or renew AAC membership	
Thursday Registration	\$ _____
Friday Registration	\$ _____
Saturday Registration	\$ _____
Sunday Registration	\$ _____
Friday Night Reception extra ticket	\$ _____
Saturday Night Keynote extra ticket	\$ _____
Presenter's Discount (-\$50) Only one discount per presenter and a maximum of 2 discount per workshop	\$ _____
AV Equipment (+\$35 or \$70) \$35 screen rental only, \$70 projector or DVD player and screen	\$ _____
CEUs (+\$45)	\$ _____
Donation to AAC Scholarship Fund	\$ _____
Donation to AAC Legislative Fund	\$ _____
Total	\$ _____

**METHOD OF PAYMENT –**    Check    Money Order    MC    Visa    AmEx

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_    Expiration Date (MMYYYY) \_\_\_\_\_

**CONFERENCE REGISTRAR**

Go to [www.americanadoptioncongress.org](http://www.americanadoptioncongress.org) to register online, or mail completed registrations to: Vicki White, 2121 Peterson Lane, Santa Rosa, CA 95403, or fax completed registrations to: 707-526-1155

Questions? Contact Vicki at [lucillesfirst@comcast.net](mailto:lucillesfirst@comcast.net) or by phone at 707-526-1275 (H) or 707-495-6775 (C)