

Wednesday, April 9 – Sunday, April 13, 2014
PARC 55 Wyndham San Francisco – Union Square
San Francisco, California

Conference Program

Welcome Conference Attendees!

Welcome to San Francisco and the 2014 American Adoption Congress conference. Our theme “Building Bridges for Change” reflects the beautiful city by the bay and the landscape of adoption in this rapidly changing world. We will explore many of the aspects of these changes during this, our thirty-fifth conference, in film, keynotes, and workshops. You may not share the experiences of some of our presenters, and may not agree with all the diverse opinions shared. We ask only that you treat one another with respect and courtesy. The AAC conferences are places of healing and safety, where we can share feelings and thoughts not readily understood by those untouched by adoption. It is up to all attendees to manage their emotions so we all can feel safe. Thanks for your cooperation.

Friday, April 11, 2014 is Professional Day!

We are offering a full day of programming that presents current thinking on a large range of topics. Join fellow professionals from the Bay Area and from across the country for an exciting day of keynotes, panel presentations, workshops, and luncheon speakers. There will be many opportunities for attendees to network, share materials they may wish to distribute, and begin new and rewarding relationships for the future. Professional Day is open to all conference attendees.

CEUs

Six (6) hours of continuing education credit will be available for all Psychologists as well as California-licensed LCSWs, MFTs, LEPs, LPCs, and Nurses who attend select workshops on Friday, April 11, 2014. CE credit is also available for EAPs, LPCs, and NCCs. 100% attendance will be required to receive a CE certificate. Continuing education credits are provided by Psycho-Legal Associates, Inc. For a list of CE approvals and accreditations please see the CE credit link at www.ceutopia.com. The NASW has approved 17.5 CEU hours for full conference participants.

Art at the Conference

We are proud to present Out of the Fog: A Bridge for Change Art Exhibition. Please join us for the reception 7:30 – 8:30 pm Friday night. We are also offering a Creative Sanctuary where you can find a comfortable place to express yourself and participate in an open expressive arts workshop. Be sure to check out the flyer in your conference bag for more information.

I am the newly elected president of the American Adoption Congress. I have been a member of the AAC since 2009 and have served in multiple positions on the Board including Regional Director and Vice President. I look forward to having a successful conference!
– Pam Kroskie, AAC President



On a personal note I am delighted to be back on the AAC Board of Directors and to serve the AAC community as Conference Chair. I look forward to renewing old relationships and forging new ones in one of my very favorite cities. See you in April.
– Eileen McQuade, Conference Chair

Conference Details

ART & QUIET ROOM – HAIGHT

SUPPORT GROUPS
THURSDAY, FRIDAY & SATURDAY
4:45 PM — 6:15 PM

Female Adoptees – **MARKET STREET**

Male Adoptees – **DAVIDSON**

Birth/First Parents – **POWELL II**

Adoptive Parents – **SUTRO**

Triad – **POWELL I**

Donor Conceived – **BALBOA**

LDA – **ASHBURY (LOMBARD on SATURDAY)**

Professionals – **DIVISADERO**

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LUNCH WITH YOUR REGION – FRIDAY 12:00 — 1:30 PM

CHOOSE TO JOIN THE PROFESSIONAL LUNCH PROGRAM OR HAVE LUNCH WITH YOUR AAC REGION AND MEET YOUR REGIONAL DIRECTOR

REGION	ROOM	REGION	ROOM
New England	SUTRO	West	MARKET STREET
Mid-Atlantic	DIVISADERO	Southwest	BALBOA
South	POWELL II	International	DAVIDSON
Midwest	POWELL I	Professional Lunch	EMBARCADERO

FIND YOUR REGION

New England	Pennsylvania	South Carolina	Wisconsin	Southwest
Connecticut	Virginia	Tennessee		Arizona
Maine	Washington, DC		West	Colorado
Massachusetts	West Virginia	Midwest	Alaska	Kansas
New Hampshire		Illinois	California	Missouri
Rhode Island	South	Indiana	Hawaii	Nebraska
Vermont	Alabama	Iowa	Idaho	New Mexico
	Arkansas	Kentucky	Montana	Oklahoma
Mid Atlantic	Florida	Michigan	Nevada	Texas
Delaware	Georgia	Minnesota	Oregon	
Maryland	Louisiana	North Dakota	Utah	International
New Jersey	Mississippi	Ohio	Washington	Canada
New York	North Carolina	South Dakota	Wyoming	Europe

REGIONS



Are you on Twitter? Join the conversation! @AAC1978 #AACCONF

Keynote Presenters



APRIL 9 – Wednesday – 8:30 PM SUTRO
Beneath My Fathers' Sky
Presented by Zara Phillips

Zara Phillips is an author, singer, songwriter and an adoption advocate. She is best known in the adoption community for her song with DMC, *I'm Legit*. Her memoir, *Mother Me*, has been published in the US and in the UK. In 2008, her film, *Roots Unknown*, was winner of the Best Home Grown Documentary at the Garden State Film Festival. More recently, Zara's one-woman show, *Beneath My Fathers' Sky*, just got accepted into the United Solo festival. She has spoken at many conferences over the years, including AAC and CUB. She also runs workshops yearly, creating music with adopted adolescents who are struggling with addiction or with just being adopted.



APRIL 10 – Thursday – 8:45 AM EMBARCADERO
The Poetics of Transracial Adoption: Adoptee Justice, Writing and Healing
Presented by Lisa Marie Rollins

Lisa Marie Rollins is a writer, performer and lecturer. She is one of many outspoken voices in the current wave of adult adoptee-led critical education and advocacy concerning transracial/international adoption and the politics of race. Her award-winning solo show, *Ungrateful Daughter: One Black Girl's Story of being adopted by a White Family... that aren't Celebrities*, is a comedic, intense look at her experience of being adopted by a white family in the 1970's and is currently touring around the United States. As Founder of AFAAD, Adopted and Fostered Adults of the African Diaspora, Lisa Marie has helped build one of the first organizations to focus on the needs of adult adoptees and foster care alumni of African descent. AFAAD provides space for adoptees and foster care alumni to connect, heal from loss, create support networks and advocate around domestic and international adoption issues. She has been featured as a commentator on CNN and NPR, and was given the honor of one of Colorlines Magazine's "Innovators to Watch" for her social justice work supporting black adoptees. Lisa Marie was the Adoption Education Specialist for Pact, An Adoption Alliance, from 2006-2008 and is a regular workshop consultant for OFC – Our Family Coalition in San Francisco. She was most recently published in the anthology *Other Tongues: Mixed-Race Women Speak Out, As/Us Literary Journal* and *Line/Break Special Issue on Asian American Adoptee Poetry*. She is currently focused on her new manuscript of poems, tentatively titled, "Anchoring the Compass" and is a Lecturer in Ethnic Studies at CSU, East Bay. Please contact her at lisamarierollins.com.



APRIL 10 – Thursday – 1:30 PM EMBARCADERO
Transforming the 'Triple Whammy' of Oppression: TRAs are on the move!
Presented by John Raible

For more than thirty years, Dr. John Raible has worked across the United States and Canada with adoption agencies, social workers, parents, children, and youth to support families formed through transracial adoption. Many people recognize John as one of the adult adoptees featured in the film, *Struggle for Identity: Issues in Transracial Adoption*. John was also featured prominently in the follow-up DVD, *A Conversation Ten Years Later*. Dr. Raible currently works as an Associate Professor of Diversity & Curriculum Studies and Women's & Gender Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. John, who identifies as a multiracial African American, was adopted transracially in the early 1960s in Wisconsin. He grew up there and in Massachusetts with two non-adopted white siblings. Later, as an openly gay single father, Dr. Raible adopted two older African American boys (at ages 6 and 13) from foster care. He blogs about transracial adoption at John Raible Online.



APRIL 11 – Friday – 8:45 AM EMBARCADERO

Bridge Over Troubled Waters: Ordinary People Changing the World
Presented by Leslie Pate Mackinnon

Leslie Pate Mackinnon has maintained a private psychotherapy practice for over 37 years. She resides in Atlanta and presents both nationally and internationally on the issues that impact families conceived through adoption and third-party reproduction. She's been on *Good Morning America* with Robin Roberts, and on CNN discussing the Internet's impact on adoption. She was most recently featured in an investigative report by Dan Rather: *Adopted or Abducted*. Leslie is featured in the book, *The Girls Who Went Away*, and the film documentary, *A Girl Like Her*. Drawn to the field by placing her two first born sons for adoption when she was a teenager, her passion is to educate as many therapists as possible before she drops! She currently serves on the Donaldson Adoption Institute's Board of Directors. For more information about Leslie, please visit www.lesliepatemackinnon.com.



APRIL 12 – Saturday – 8:45 AM EMBARCADERO

Who Qualifies for Motherhood in the United States – and Who Does Not? How Answers Have Changed Over Time
Presented by Rickie Solinger

Rickie Solinger is a historian, writing and editing books about race, class, and motherhood, and about the politics and policies governing reproduction, welfare and incarceration. Her books include *Wake Up Little Susie: Single Pregnancy and Race before Roe v. Wade*; *Beggars and Choosers: How the Politics of Choice Shapes Adoption, Abortion, and Welfare in the U.S.*; and *Pregnancy and Power: A Short History of Reproductive Politics in America*. She is also a curator, organizing photography and installation-based shows that have traveled to over 140 college and university galleries and community venues since 1992, aiming to interrupt the curriculum. Solinger's most recent book is *Reproductive Politics: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Recently she has co-edited *Telling Stories to Change the World: Global Voices on the Power of Narrative to Build Community and Make Social Justice Claims* and *Interrupted Life: Experiences of Incarcerated Women in America*.

Films EMBARCADERO

***Closure* by Bryan Tucker** — Angela, an African-American, was raised by a Caucasian couple in a large, multiracial family in Washington State. She was adopted at the age of one from foster care in the state of Tennessee, under the terms of a closed adoption. As Angela grew older it became apparent that the unanswered questions about her birth story would continue to haunt her if she did not attempt to find some answers. Filmed and edited by her husband Bryan, this documentary follows Angela for two years during the search for her birth family. Several twists and surprising revelations ultimately lead Angela and her family across the country to her place of birth. It is here where Angela comes face to face with her birth mother for the first time, and meets family members who had never known she was even born – including her birth father.

***Father Unknown* by David Quint** — AN UNEXPECTED FILM - When David Quint and his estranged father Urban boarded a plane for Switzerland to confront a mystery that had haunted their family for generations, they had no way of knowing what the next ten days would hold. A series of extraordinary events was captured on David's camera phone, while it happened. This is the gripping and transformative true story of a father-son trip that changed everything.

***Unlocking the Heart of Adoption* by Sheila Ganz** — *Unlocking the Heart of Adoption* chronicles the filmmaker's journey as a birthmother interwoven with diverse personal stories of adoptees, birthparents and adoptive parents in both same race and transracial adoptions. These stories span 70 years, from ALICE, a birthmother whose child was adopted out without her consent in 1922; to RON, an adoptee who uncovered the truth after his parents died when he was 36; to PHYLLIS, a birthmother and ALISON, an adoptive mother in an open adoption with twin boys born in 1991. The film includes interviews with three mixed-race transracially adopted people: DEBBIE, a Japanese American woman; PAUL, a Filipino American man and MARTIN, an African American man with HAL, his Caucasian adoptive father. Their stories provide a window into the lifelong process of adoption following the path of relinquishment, adoption, growing up adopted, raising an adopted child, years of silence and shame, and searching for answers to unasked questions. In the process, they explain what the universal issues of "identity" "loss" and "needing to know the truth" mean to them.

Wednesday, April 9, 2014

Schedule of Events

4:00 – 8:00 PM — REGISTRATION

5:30 – 7:00 PM

Conference 101 – Roberta MacDonald, Pam Hasegawa, Lisa Cooper **EMBARCADERO**

This is an interactive event to help those new to AAC conferences get to know one another, board members and state representatives. It will help attendees develop a deeper awareness of varying points of view shared during the conference. We will discuss ways to help those new to stay grounded and present when emotions are stirred.

8:30 – 10:00 PM *Keynote* **SUTRO**

Beneath My Fathers' Sky — Zara Phillips

After her adoptive mother dies and she's left to care for an adoptive father who was never there for her, Zara takes a dream-like journey that brings her face-to-face with the biological father she's always longed to know and the sister who was never born. Directors: Eliza Roberts and Eric Roberts.

Thursday, April 10, 2014

7:30 – 9:00 AM — REGISTRATION

7:30 – 8:15 AM — YOGA **SUTRO**

7:45 – 8:45 AM — BREAKFAST **MARKET STREET**

8:45 – 10:30 AM *Keynote* **EMBARCADERO**

The Poetics of Transracial Adoption: Adoptee Justice, Writing and Healing — Lisa Marie Rollins

Since the late 1800's racialized discourse around domestic and international transracial adoption has been created and maintained by social welfare workers, adoption agencies and white adoptive parents. In the past 10 years a collective population of artists, scholars, writers, and performers has become visible in the ways they are 'speaking back' to a discourse that so completely informed our realities as 'orphans'. How do the politics of inter-country and domestic transracial adoption impact Black, Asian and multi-racial bodies of color? What does 'speaking back' to a dominant discourse look like for adoptee artists? How are we utilizing our stories to heal ourselves and others? How are we also moving beyond the personal to make direct connections to larger geopolitical realities? This keynote explores these questions and places the role of the adoptee artist of color as pivotal to the changing conversations around adoption as a whole.

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM — REGISTRATION

11:00 AM – 12:15 PM ~ 100 WORKSHOP SERIES

101 Dealing with Being a Late Discovery Adoptee EMBARCADERO

Presenter: Candace Conklin

Finding a way to deal with discovering you aren't who you always thought you were. I will tell my story of losing who I was in my 40's and how I dealt with it. Sharing with others and learning that you're not alone is a great help. I will be bringing my art work that relates to my discovery.

102 Beyond Headlines: the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly POWELL II

Presenter: Etta Lappen Davis

Recent tragic cases in the news – dissolutions, abuse, deaths of children at the hands of their adoptive-foster parents – are more than sensational headlines. We will explore how crisis cases are opportunities to learn from errors, and to make needed improvements to adoption and foster care services.

103 Doubly Blessed: Transformative Recovery Skills for the Adoption Constellation BALBOA

Presenters: Nicole Burton, Sarah Burns, David Campbell, Leslie Pate Mackinnon

Relationships in adoption are made oh-so-more complicated when birth and adoptive family members turn to drugs and alcohol to self-medicate. But help is available through recovery programs for the family and friends of alcoholics and addicts. Come find resources and hear the stories of those who've transformed this extra dose of abandonment into a source of growth and happiness. (This session will not be recorded to protect privacy.)

104 Bad Search Outcomes: Regret, Resentment or Growth Opportunities? POWELL I

Presenters: Matt Potter, Seth Wayman

Searching for family can lead to tragic or disempowering discoveries, such as death or rejection. This workshop seeks to offer comfort and encouragement to those coping with the profound anger and/or grief that resulted from unexpected and painful (yet, tragically, all too common) search outcomes.

105 Donor Conception Issues: Secrecy, Anonymity, Search, Ethics DIVISADERO

Presenters: Alana Newman, Bill Cordray

Learn about issues donor-conceived people share with adopted people. Presenters will describe the impact of secrecy, anonymity, social injustice, lack of access to records, and ethical questions in family dynamics.

106 The Birthmother Experience vs. The Adoptee Experience in Long-Term Reunions MARKET STREET

Presenters: Kate Power, Cathy Heslin

A birthmother and her relinquished daughter who have been in reunion for 25 years recount their reunion in a memoir where they have kept their individual experiences private from each other. The workshop will involve readings from their memoir, exposing their individual experiences in reunion and revealing universal themes in long-term reunion that happen simultaneously for the birthmother and adoptee, followed by Q&A.

12:15 – 1:30 PM — LUNCH ON YOUR OWN

Thursday, April 10, 2014

1:30 – 2:45 PM *Keynote* **EMBARCADERO**

Transforming the ‘Triple Whammy’ of Oppression: TRAs are on the move! — John Raible

Dr. John Raible’s remarks will discuss recent developments among politicized transracial adoptees. The cute and cuddly babies from the early days of transracial adoption have grown up, gone to college, and found their voices. And TRAs are loud and passionate! Drawing from his professional field of multicultural education, Dr. Raible will provide a social justice framework for understanding the oppression of transracial adoptees. As consciousness is raised, the movement grows. TRAs are taking on the ‘triple whammy’ of oppression, namely racism, parentalism, and adoptee oppression. Professor Raible’s lecture promises to connect the dots between adoption history, systems of oppression theory, and adoptee empowerment. Lastly, John will offer practical tips for becoming a better ally in adoption reform and related movements for social change.

200

3:15 – 4:30 PM ~ 200 SERIES WORKSHOPS

201 The Adoption Mandala: A Tool For All EMBARCADERO

Presenters: Beth Jaffe, Martha Gelarden

This hands-on workshop gives participants a beautiful overview of mandalas and the Adoption Mandala creative process. Using a specific form of art therapy centered in self-realization and radiating mature relationship with all in the big picture of life, everyone in the adoption constellation is welcome to watch or create.

202 Oregon Leads the Way to Open Adoption Records POWELL II

Presenter: Robin Pope

Come learn how a diverse group of stakeholders came together to address a hot button issue – Opening up adoption records – and ended up agreeing to change the default in Oregon from severely limited access to open access for stakeholders. Our consensus-backed legislation, SB 623, passed on the first try.

203 Coming Out Again: The Experience of an LGBT Adoptee SUTRO

Presenter: Patrick McMahon

The unique added dimension of being gay in the adoption experience will be explored in this workshop. Being both gay and adopted impacts formation of identity, the search and reunion journey, and the level of sensitivity to alienation, rejection, and abandonment. We will explore the feelings, issues and risks involved in coming out to families of origin, as well as ways to direct unresolved feelings of anger, shame and loss toward positive action and healing.

204 The Healing Work of Forgiveness: A Writing Practice POWELL I

Presenter: Susan Ito

What spaces of unforgiving are we holding onto in our hearts, and why? What is the toxic impact of resentment and blame in our emotional life? What tools do we need to develop to encourage healing and forgiveness in our own hearts as well as supporting our journey toward greater emotional freedom from past hurts? Join Susan Ito for a guided writing and mindfulness workshop to explore the work of forgiveness.

205 Search and Reunion: Ask an Angel DIVISADERO

Presenters: Vanessa Flores Waite, Connie Lynn Gray, Mary Edna Wilson and 2014 Spokeo award winners

A panel of expert search volunteers discuss search and reunion. This is a safe environment to ask questions about beginning a search yourself or working with a search angel. Discussion will also include preparing yourself for the emotional ups and downs of search and reunion as well as reflections and personal experiences.

206 Expectations in Reunion MARKET STREET

Presenters: Roberta MacDonald, Cynthia McGuigan

The workshop will look at all of the following: What is a Reunion? Searching, Why do we Search? What are the rules of the game? What are our fantasy reunions like? What is it we expect to find? Can we search and go into a reunion without fantasies or expectations? Where or who do we turn to when reunion doesn't work out?

207 No More Secrets, No More Lies DAVIDSON

Presenters: Candy Finnigan

Secrets keep us sick and stuck in our lives; this presentation is about how to end the secrets and lies surrounding adoption and addiction and help heal the pain of loss while breaking the destructive patterns of self-medicating.

4:00 – 6:00 PM — REGISTRATION

4:45 – 6:15 PM — SUPPORT GROUPS (see page 3 for locations)

6:30 – 8:30 PM — STATE REP DINNER

8:45 – 10:00 PM — REGISTRATION

8:45 – 10:00 PM *Film Closure* **EMBARCADERO**

10:00 PM – Midnight *Film Unlocking the Heart of Adoption* **EMBARCADERO**

10:00 PM – Midnight — HOSPITALITY Sponsored by *Adoption Museum Project* **SUNSET SUITE**

Friday, April 11, 2014

7:30 – 9:00 AM — REGISTRATION

7:30 – 8:15 AM — YOGA SUTRO

7:45 – 8:45 AM — BREAKFAST MARKET STREET

*AV Services for AAC Conference
provided by:*



Friday, April 11, 2014

8:45 – 10:15 AM *Keynote* **EMBARCADERO**

Professional Day Keynote: Bridge Over Troubled Waters: Ordinary People Changing the World – Leslie Pate Mackinnon

The last 40 years have ushered in huge changes in adoption, primarily ‘post-adoption services.’ Now it is time to reform ‘pre-adoptive services,’ the most controversial and difficult aspect of adoption. While keeping the ‘best interest of the child’ central, Leslie will focus on where it all begins: working with parents experiencing a crisis pregnancy.

10:45 AM – Noon — REGISTRATION

300

10:45 AM – Noon ~ 300 SERIES WORKSHOPS

301 Without Options, It’s not a Choice EMBARCADERO

Presenter: Leslie Mackinnon

How do professionals counsel women with unintended pregnancies? Good practice dictates supplying information and resources that allow choice. It is imperative that counselors use methods that employ a thorough decision-making process and, finally, that they have sufficient information with which to provide informed consent. Is it fair to call it ‘voluntary’ relinquishment if adoption is the only attainable outcome?

302 Complex Mental Health Issues and Treatment in Adoption MARKET STREET

Presenter: Krista McCoy Woods

This workshop will address complex issues in adoption and possible treatment modalities for clinicians working with members of the adoption constellation. We will discuss some of the clinical issues often missed by professionals or misdiagnosed by mental health professionals. This workshop will be interactive and engage participants in professional dialogue.

303 The Challenges of Adult Adoptees and First Parents Raising Children POWELL I

Presenters: Michael Grand, Joyce Maguire Pavao

Does the adoption constellation extend to the children of adult adoptees and the non-adopted children of first parents? Does adoption affect the parenting of adult adoptees and first parents? This workshop will draw on the personal and professional experiences of the presenters to address these challenging questions.

304 The Need for Adoption-Specific Clinical Training for Therapists POWELL II

Presenters: Chester Smith, John Raible, Allison Davis Maxon

This workshop focuses on “who is being trained and why?” and presents the need to modify current agency-based training models to meet the needs of psychotherapists in mental health settings. Panel members will discuss the need for more specific in-depth focus on the key clinical topics in the psychology of adoption.

305 Ethical and Historical Perspectives on Modern Adoption Practices BALBOA

Presenter: Jean Provance

This workshop explores historical adoption practices, modern gray and black market adoption practices and questions of child trafficking. Case studies will lead to a discussion of the role of social workers in adoption practice through the perspective of the NASW Code of Ethics and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

306 Identifying Adoption Trauma DIVISADERO

Presenter: Karl Stenske

Uncovering the psychological, physical and emotional impact of genetic separation and identifying adoption trauma response. Focusing on the separation from birthmother, birthfather, siblings and extended family; discussing how such trauma affects the nervous system resulting in emotional, psychological and relational difficulties and how those show themselves in client therapist relationships.

307 Identity and Integration: Embracing and Integrating a New Family Narrative in a Post-Reunion Life Presenters: Dave Campbell, Sarah Burns **SUTRO**

Our hope is to do a panel on 'An adoptee's challenge post-reunion to integrate the information and awareness about what has unfolded into his-her new life' or 'How to include new information into the adoptee's life post-reunion and how to integrate the information and the entire family into his-her new life-persona.'

12:00 – 1:30 PM — Professional Lunch – Family Systems Theory in Work with Trauma and Loss Chaired by Allison Davis Maxon OR Lunch with your Region. Boxed Lunch Provided for All. (check page 3 for locations)

1:30 – 2:45 PM ~ 400 SERIES WORKSHOPS**401 The Latest and Greatest: What Research Is Teaching Us about Best Practices**

Presenter: Adam Pertman

EMBARCADERO

New research by the Donaldson Adoption Institute provides important insights into critical adoption issues and best practices, including intercountry adoption, access to OBCs, birth-first parents, LGBT families and positive identity formation, among others.

402 How to Choose an Adoption Therapist MARKET STREET

Presenter: Joyce Maguire Pavao

There are many excellent and experienced therapists. Many people think that if they are adoptive parents, adopted persons, birth parents, or have worked with anyone – ever – in the adoption constellation that they are then competent to see all clients with adoption foundational issues. That is not true. This workshop will explore what is needed and will involve the audience in auditing their own experiences as they explore what they need to know in order to find the best possible help for themselves, their children, or their colleagues.

403 The Science of Secrecy POWELL II

Presenters: Kris Probasco, Thomas Rector

Adopted and donor-conceived people face many of the same unanswered questions: 'Who am I and where do I belong?' These questions result in behaviors which affect attachment and/or create trauma, but more importantly are internalized by secrecy. This workshop will present the historical connections and similarities between adoption and donor conception with their common thread of secrecy and anonymity.

404 Three Generations: Relinquishment, Adoption, Reunion and Beyond DAVIDSON

Presenters: Judy Foster, Donna LoBue, Megan LoBue

The dynamics of relinquishment, adoption and reunion profoundly affect all members of the family. A 17-year-old girl's decision not to marry but relinquish her daughter to adoption leads to a search and reunion with her daughter and family thirty-seven years later. Now in reunion fifteen years, the entire family shares a special, evolving relationship. (This workshop does not qualify for CA CEUs.)

Friday, April 11, 2014

400 series continued

405 Groundbreaking Interventions for Working with Foster/Adopted Youth and Their Families

Presenter: Jeanette Yoffe **DIVISADERO**

This training is designed to familiarize participants with new and imaginative ways for working with traumatized children in foster care and adoption and their families. Participants will be provided with a wide variety of play-based methodologies and interventions that have proven successful in working with children over the age of five in foster care and adoption. (This workshop does not qualify for CA CEUs.)

406 The House That Shame Built: How Long Must We Live There? POWELL I

Presenter: Delores Teller

This workshop will explore the persistence of the shaming narrative surrounding women who have relinquished children. A review of systems that shape this ideology will be defined with a challenge to the post-adoption community/relinquishing mothers to stop reinforcing this negative narrative.

2:45 – 3:15 PM — Afternoon Break Sponsored by Spokeo MARKET STREET

500

3:15 – 4:30 PM ~ 500 SERIES WORKSHOPS

501 Exploring Adoptee Identity: Myths, Realities, and Created Fictions EMBARCADERO

Presenter: David Leonard

Adoptees create their own identities throughout life. These include a complex blend of adoptive, birth, adoptee and individual identities. Identity concepts will be presented including how identity can be strengthened throughout life. David and Mary are both adoptees in reunion and will share their individual experiences and how these impacted their identities.

502 Creating Space for Birth Fathers in Adoption Stories DAVIDSON

Presenter: Jeannine Zoppi

Birth fathers, even if unknown, shape the lives of adopted children. All adoptees develop fantasies, which are imaginative stories about their birth fathers. This workshop will discuss the importance of birth father fantasies on attachment and identity development of adoptees and will teach adoptive parents and adoption professionals how to co-create an adoption narrative that includes the birth father.

503 Complex Mental Health Issues and Treatment in Adoption POWELL II

Presenter: Krista McCoy Woods

This workshop will address complex issues in adoption and possible treatment modalities for clinicians working with members of the adoption constellation. We will discuss some of the clinical issues often missed by professionals or misdiagnosed by mental health professionals. This workshop will be interactive and engage participants in professional dialogue.

504 A Lesbian-Feminist View of Adoption DIVISADERO

Presenter: Janine Baer

In the 1970s and 1980s, lesbians and gay men were fighting for the right to become parents and to retain custody of their own children. Concurrently, adoptees and first parents increasingly gave voice to their own experiences. Learn the history about how a newsletter built bridges between two political movements.

500 series continued

505 Recognizing PACER's 35 year Legacy in Northern California POWELL I

Presenters: April Topfer, Jane Calbreath, Malcolm Pearson, Bob Crowe

Former Presidents of PACER will conduct a Q & A session moderated by the current PACER President. Panel members will share their past experiences, the history of PACER, and PACER's past advocacy work to open CA records. What can we glean from PACER's past to help move PACER forward into the future?

506 Accomplishing Emotional Regulation: From Reaction to Response MARKET STREET

Presenter: Nancy Verrier

Early childhood trauma can cause negative behaviors which undermine relationships. Learn how to change reactions to thoughtful responses when faced with perceptions of disappointment, criticism or fear of connection.

4:00 – 8:00 PM — REGISTRATION

4:45 – 6:15 PM — SUPPORT GROUPS (see page 3 for locations)

5:00 – 6:00 PM — OPEN MIC: Patrick McMahon, Penny Callan Partridge EMBARCADERO

All are invited to come share five minutes worth of something they'd like to read or otherwise perform.

6:30 – 8:00 PM — DINNER ON YOUR OWN

7:30 – 8:30 PM — ART RECEPTION HAIGHT

8:45 - 10:30 PM *Film* Father Unknown EMBARCADERO

10:45 PM – Midnight — HOSPITALITY Sponsored by PACER SUNSET SUITE

Saturday, April 12, 2014

7:30 – 9:00 AM — REGISTRATION

7:30 – 8:15 AM — YOGA SUTRO

8:00 – 8:45 AM — BREAKFAST ON YOU OWN

8:45 – 10:15 AM *Keynote* EMBARCADERO

**Who Qualifies for Motherhood in the United States – and Who Does Not?
How Answers Have Changed Over Time — Rickie Solinger**

From slavery time, across periods of mass immigration, during the postwar “adoption mandate,” until today, ideas about class and race – and female vulnerability – have structured public policies defining who is a real and honored mother – and who is denied this status. The birth control pill (1960) and *Roe v. Wade* (1973) gave rise to definitions of some women as poor choicemakers, and to new laws undermining the reproductive dignity of all women. Today the reproductive justice movement embodies womens’ current struggles to claim reproductive autonomy, highlighting the right to be a mother and the right to have access to resources women need to achieve reproductive dignity and full citizenship.

Saturday, April 12, 2014

10:30 AM – Noon — REGISTRATION (Registration will be closed after noon)

600

10:45 – 12:00 PM ~ 600 SERIES WORKSHOPS

601 One Shoe Does Not Fit All – Part 2 POWELL II

Presenter: Pekitta Tynes

A professional comedienne, an adoptee, a foster child, and a foundling uses humor to tell stories about being adopted and the continued search for her biological parents and finding relatives after 30+ years of searching. A brief recap of workshop (Part 1) will bring attendees current. Come and find the inspiration to know one shoe does not fit all! This workshop will open for Q&A.

602 Infertility: Its Impact on Adoptive Families – A Dual Perspective from an Adopted Person and Adoptive Mom/Adoption Professional LOMBARD

Presenters: Phyllis Lowinger, Zara Phillips

Infertility is a complicated loss that affects every aspect of an individual's life. Adoption does not solve the losses of infertility. Adoption is a solution to parenting. This workshop will include a segment of the documentary 'Adoption: We Can Do Better' titled 'Infertility: A Complicated Loss'.

603 Push the On Button: The Importance of Documenting Our Life Stories

Presenter: Jean Strauss MARKET STREET

The 'new literature' of the 21st century is film and the spoken word. This workshop will have two focuses: first, an examination of how film (and audio) are having an impact on legislative reform, and a discussion about the importance of documenting our stories. The second half of the session will be a mini-class on how to get started in documenting your own life stories, whether for film or podcast, and the venues that exist for outreach and impact.

604 Brick Wall Survivors: How Rejection Alters Us POWELL I

Presenter: Jamie Nagy

Let's discuss what happens to us and how we survive when the birth family we find rejects and refuses us. Jamie, perhaps like you, ran into a brick wall in her search and reunion with almost every birth family member – including receiving papers from her birth dad's attorney for an 'ex parte' protection order and then facing him in court. Join her to explore the wounds, the scars, and the healing process together.

605 Divorce and Discovery: A Double Whammy of Loss and Abandonment DIVISADERO

Presenter: Cheryl Tano

The goal is finding healing from sharing our tales of the often unbearable agony that comes from the parallels of one life ending and another beginning when an adoptee experiences divorce (after a long-term marriage) and discovery (of biological information) later in adulthood within a (relatively) short period of time.

606 Privilege and Power in Interracial Adoption SUTRO

Presenters: Marlene Fine, Fern Johnson

This workshop explores the ways that white and middle-class privilege blind adoptive white parents to the issues that will confront their children of color as they negotiate the world of school, social relations, work, and law enforcement and the legal system.

12:15 – 1:30 PM — AWARDS LUNCHEON EMBARCADERO

2:00 – 3:15 PM ~ 700 SERIES WORKSHOPS

701 Male Adoptee Workshop POWELL I

Presenters: Rich Uhrlaub, Brian Stanton, Andrew Tash

Male adoptees have much in common with our female counterparts. But if you ask our spouses, partners, siblings and parents by birth or adoption, we also face some very different challenges and inner dynamics. This year's workshop will be strategically integrated with the evening male adoptee support groups, and provide the opportunity to get to know each other in a safe setting, engage in some new activities, offer loved ones a glimpse into our lives, and still have plenty of "guys only" time on Thursday and Saturday. Friday's support group is open to spouses and family. First timers are welcome!

702 Birthmother/First Mother Rap Session in the City By The Bay POWELL II

Presenter: Dolores Teller

An opportunity to kick back and rap Sixties Style about the hardest issues of being a birthmother/first mother in the city noted for the *Summer of Love* and the *Beat Generation*. Bring a topic, ask a question, and/or share your wisdom or just lay back and feel the groove! Be sure to wear a flower in your hair.

703 Acknowledging and Moving through the 7 Core Issues in Adoption to Empowerment

Presenter: Amy Cheney DAVIDSON

Most members of the Adoption Triad have had real experiences of victimization through one or more of the 7 Core Issues of Adoption as identified by Kaplan and Silverstein in 1986. How does one move beyond this experience and gain a sense of agency, power, acceptance, grace, intimacy, personal control and overall sense of empowerment? This workshop will provide participants with an overview of the 7 Core Issues, and the proven steps to work and engage with them for personal empowerment.

704 Building Bridges in Adoption Reform Legislation DIVISADERO

Presenters: Betsie Norris, Paul Schibbellhute

Adult adoptee access to birth certificate legislation is a hot issue across the country. Many states have finally been successful in getting new laws passed, and many more are still working on it. What are the keys to legislative success? How do you recruit and maintain what may seem to be unlikely allies in our quest? Come, discuss, and learn.

705 Generations within Genes: Do Genes Determine Our Destiny? SUTRO

Presenter: Denise Hoffman

Knowing one's genetic/health history is essential. Yet, knowing ancestral behavioral patterns, often held subconsciously, is even more essential. In this session, we will look at limiting conditioning patterns, and their potential for transformation.

706 Open Adoption: A Parent's Journey MARKET STREET

Presenter: Thomas C. Rector

This workshop explains a father's journey developing a methodology based upon current neuro scientific research and practical application of the Biosocial Cognition Model to open adoption. The model connects elements of a child's behavior, environmental influences that affect the child, and hones a parent's ability to assess the child's needs.

3:30 – 4:45 PM ~ 800 SERIES WORKSHOPS

801 First Families: Relating with Integrity, Creating Opportunities for Connection

Presenter: Susan Dusza Guerra Leksander **EMBARCADERO**

Traditionally, the voice and perspective of first families has been excluded from the discourse on adoption. Adoptive parents may have conscious or unconscious biases, judgments and feelings about their child's first family. By cultivating more familiarity of what it means to be part of a first family, adoptive parents may be able to address their own blocks, which influence what's possible for their child.

802 On the Outside Looking In: Adoptee Perspectives on Reunion Relationships **POWELL II**

Presenter: Eileen Skahill

A presentation of research on the social contexts surrounding adoption with an emphasis on factors that impact the success or failure in reunions between adoptees and their natural siblings who are involved in long-term reunions. Information provides aids in understanding why adoptees choose to remain in reunion when those relationships can be difficult to manage and maintainable to address their own blocks, which influence what's possible for their child.

803 The Orphan and the Crone: Adoptees at Midlife **LOMBARD**

Presenter: Eilean Mackenzie

Midlife is typically a time of loss, reflection, and change. For the adoptee it can highlight issues of being twice born, unfinished business, and complex relationships. This workshop provides opportunity for sharing stories and creating a collage that symbolizes where we are at this stage of the journey.

804 Searching and Finding Family on the Internet **POWELL I**

Presenter: Marilyn Waugh

Reconnecting with family is possible if you utilize accurate, updated, user-friendly Internet sites. Learn how to search reliable sites that are available to the general public free of charge or at a minimal cost. This workshop, led by an experienced professional who has completed several thousand searches, will provide multiple handouts to participants.

805 Search for Self **DIVISADERO**

Presenter: Carol Schaefer

Reunion is as much about the search for oneself as it is about finding the other. We attribute the proverbial "walking on eggshells" at the time of reunion and after to fear of saying the wrong thing and thus losing the relationship all over again. But reunion actually forces us to confront the false self we've created out of necessity in order to survive. Without reclaiming our lost selves, we can never have a real relationship with anyone else, including ourselves. This workshop is about the healing journey to reclaim our true selves, and is for all members of the Triad.

806 The Loss Never Goes Away: the Birthmother Experience Pre and Post Roe vs. Wade **MARKET STREET**

Presenters: Denise Roessle, Sheila Ganz, Barbara Shafer, Kathy Waddill, Jenny Barnes

No matter when or how we came to relinquish our children, even if we were ultimately reunited, the impacts of that initial loss are never-ending. Five birthmothers from the sixties through 2008 share their adoption and reunion experiences, the ways their lives were forever transformed, and how they cope.

Saturday, April 12, 2014

4:45 – 6:15 PM — SUPPORT GROUPS (see page 3 for locations)

7:00 – 8:00 PM — DINNER ON YOUR OWN

8:00 PM – Midnight — Food and Dancing Until Midnight MARKET STREET



Sunday, April 13, 2014

9:00 – 11:00 AM — AAC TOWN HALL MEETING POWELL I & II

This is an opportunity for the membership and conference attendees to meet, ask questions and give feedback to the Board of the Directors. The Board welcomes feedback on the conference, our membership services, mission, and any issue that you want discussed. The Board will also provide a quick update on priorities and plans for the upcoming year.



CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

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Janine M. Baer, MA – Janine M. Baer is an adoptee who published the *Chain of Life* newsletter for people of all sexual orientations to explore new ways to envision adoption and alternative reproduction. She wrote *Growing in the Dark: Adoption Secrecy and Its Consequences* about the history of how California sealed adoptee birth certificates. **504**

Jenny Barnes – Jenny Barnes gave up her child in 2008, in an open adoption that was later closed by the agency. After struggling with alcoholism and suicide, she found the help she needed. Jenny is studying child development, works as a nanny and in newborn care. She and the adoptive family are working to re-establish communication and rebuild their relationship. **806**

Danielle Barnsley-Cervo – Danielle Barnsley-Cervo is a freelance writer who has three children, one of whom was relinquished in a forced adoption a decade ago. She writes about her experience at *Another Version Of Mother* and also contributes to adoption.com's website on a weekly basis. She lives in Canada with her family. **702**

Sarah Burns – Sarah Burns works in public affairs, fundraising, lobbying, and public advocacy, with an emphasis on international women's reproductive rights and policy. She has served as Director of Public Affairs at Planned Parenthood, Director of Strategic Partnerships for the Women's Foundation of California, and currently Development Director with Just Foreign Policy. Previously, she was a representative for the United Nations in Washington, DC, and also worked as a Legislative Assistant and Foreign Policy Advisor in the U.S. Congress, and as a consultant to the State Department. She has covered the major UN conferences on Environment, Development and Population. Ms. Burns serves on the Boards of the National Women's Political Caucus and the National Council of UNA-USA. She holds degrees from Boston College (B.A., Newton College of the Sacred Heart); the University of Madrid (M.A.) and Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government (M.P.A.). She is fluent in Spanish. **103, 307**

Nicole J. Burton – Nicole J. Burton is a playwright and reunited adopted person from England. She is the author of *Swimming Up the Sun: A Memoir of Adoption*, which she has adapted for the stage. **103**

Jane Calbreath – Jane Calbreath is a nonprofit and collaborative solutions consultant and has a Master's degree in Organizational Psychology. She relinquished her daughter in the early '70s and was reunited in 1990 while serving on the board of PACER. She is currently Interim Head of School at the Waldorf-inspired Greenwood School. **505**

Dave Bo Campbell – Dave Campbell is an advertising and marketing communications professional born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. He grew up with two younger sisters--one adopted from another family, and the other, a biological daughter to his adopted parents. He searched for and reunited with his birthmother in 2002 and they remain in a good reunion to this day. He has three teenage children. **103, 307**

Amy Cheney – Amy Cheney, adoptee in reunion for 27 years, has been in private practice for over 20 years. She also works with foster and adopted youth and adults in juvenile halls and jails. She assists in bringing the subconscious (or shadow) into alignment with conscious intention to allow the true and essential self to shine. She is a Senior Associate Life Coach and Counselor through the Hendricks Institute. **703**

Candice Conklin – Who I really am is what I struggle with most. Fourteen years ago I would have told you that my name was Candace Bishton Conklin, but that was all changed in 1999. I found out that I'm not who I always thought I was. So now, I am me. **101**

Kat Cooley – Kat Cooley relinquished her parental rights in 2001. Since that time she has been involved in the adoption community, adoption reform, and adoption research. She has an open adoption and is currently pursuing a PhD in Social Work with a focus on Adoption and Birth Parents. **702**

Lisa Cooper – Lisa Cooper (formally Lisa Vittori) is an adoptee, birth family searcher and the owner of The Triad Search Consultant. She lives in San Luis Obispo, California. She is a genealogist and speaks regularly at adoption conferences throughout the country. She is a member of American Adoption Congress and several other adoption organizations. **Conference 101**

Bill Cordray – Bill Cordray has been an advocate for donor-conceived adults for the last 30 years. He recently identified his genetic father and has met his donor-conceived half-sister. **105**

Bob Crowe – Bob Crowe is an adoptee. He found and reunited with his birth family in 1998 about 2 years after attending his first PACER triad meeting. He served on PACER's board from 1999 to 2005 and was board president from 2000 to 2005. He currently resides and works independently in Oakland. **505**

Etta Lappen Davis – With expertise in regulatory oversight, Etta is a strong advocate for best practices in adoption. Principal of Etsky Consulting, Etta has helped numerous adoption service providers to achieve accreditation and has served as COA's Hague consultant/trainer. She is a 2009 Angel in Adoption. **102**

Susan Dusza Guerra Leksander, LMFT – Susan Dusza Guerra Leksander is a licensed therapist who works with first-birth parents, former foster/adopted youth, adoptive-foster families and adult adoptees in agency and private practice settings. Susan placed her daughter for adoption in 2001 in an "open" adoption, which was subsequently closed by the adoptive parents. She is also a transracial adult adoptee who, with the support of her adoptive parents, reunited with her first-birth families as a teenager. Susan is the author of the *Ask a First (Birth) Mother* column published in the quarterly newsletter for Pact, an Adoption Alliance. She volunteers for On Your Feet Foundation of Northern California as Vice President of the Board, Chair of the Public Education Committee and co-facilitator for their first-birth mother retreats. She is also on the advisory team for the Adoption Museum Project. **801**

Dr. Marlene G. Fine – Dr. Marlene G. Fine is Professor of Communications at Simmons College in Boston, MA, and a facilitator with the YW Boston Dialogues on Race and Ethnicity. Dr. Fine and Dr. Johnson are the adoptive parents of two African American sons and the authors of *The Interracial Adoption Option: Creating a Family Across Race* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2013). **606**

Candy Finnigan – Candy Finnigan was born 18 May 1946, in Kansas City, Missouri. She was adopted at birth. Her adoptive parents and siblings are deceased. Candy is an interventionist who has appeared numerous times in the A&E show *Intervention*. A recovering alcoholic, Candy Finnigan wrote *When Enough is Enough: A comprehensive guide to successful intervention*, a tell-it-like-it-is guide to the process of intervention; a must read if you're interested in conducting an intervention'. She is married to Mike Finnigan, a successful musician and former basketball player and the couple has two children. [207](#)

Vanessa Flores Waite – Vanessa Flores Waite is the Director of Public Relations and Community Initiatives for Spokeo, an online people search service focused on reuniting friends and families. At Spokeo, she manages the Spokeo Search Angel Awards which honor, recognize and support the work of volunteer search angels. [205](#)

Judy Foster – Judy has presented at AAC, NACAC, NASW-NJ, college law classes and venues, including Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute and Adoption Playshops for International Children. She actively lobbies for adoptees' birthright laws and is AAC's Mid-Atlantic Regional Director, NJ State Representative, a member of NJCARE and co-facilitates the Morristown Post-Adoption Support Group. [404](#)

Sheila Ganz, MA – Sheila Ganz is a birth mother and the filmmaker of *Unlocking the Heart of Adoption*, which aired on PBS and Documentary Channel, and is used by adoption agencies and universities worldwide. An advocate for adult adoptee and birthparent rights, she received the Angel in Adoption Award. Her new documentary, *On Life's Terms: Mothers in Recovery*, was recently completed. [806](#)

Martha Gelarden – Marth Gelarden is a first mother and an artist. Since 1987 she has exhibited and performed her work internationally and taught sculpture/installation at Moore College of Art and Design, Columbia College Chicago and Eastern Michigan University. Since reunion 5 years ago, Mother and Son have created the Legacy in Limbo Project which archives the unanswered questions of those separated by closed adoption. She is an active member of the NJCare Legislative Team and the AAC Art Committee. [201](#)

Michael Grand, PhD, C. Psych – Michael Grand is Professor and Director of Child Clinical Psychology, University of Guelph. He is the author of *The Adoption Constellation*, a researcher, psychotherapist in adoption and a member of the coordinating committee of the Coalition to Open Adoption Records, Ontario. [303](#)

Connie Lynn Gray – Connie Lynn Gray was adopted from the Texas state foster care system at age nine. After turning 18, she petitioned the courts for her original birth certificate and, within two years, reunited with her sisters and parents. Connie has been a search volunteer since the late 1970s. Known as “Texas Search Angel,” she believes that every person is entitled to his or her own genetic history. [205](#)

Pam Hasegawa – Pam Hasegawa 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. [Conference 101](#)

Cathy Heslin – Cathy Heslin is a reunited adult adoptee living in Portland, Oregon. She has been in reunion with her birthmother for nearly 25 years, and with her birthfather for 15. She has written about adoption and reunion for the past five years in various publications. Her birthmother, Kate Power, is a singer-songwriter living in Seattle, Washington. She was a “Music2Life” Grand Prize winner for her song, *Travis John*, she was featured on Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion*, and co-authored the bestselling *Ukualiens Songbook*. Together they have co-authored *Kathleen-Cathleen* (working title), a memoir that takes the reader through the parallel experiences of reunion for the adoptee and birthmother over the course of two decades. They also write parallel blogs of the birthmother and the adoptee's contrasting experiences on shared topics on mothertone.wordpress.com and reunioneeyes.blogspot.com. [106](#)

Denise Hoffman – Denise Hoffman is the author of *Hiding No More: Unmasking Adoption and Reunion*, and *Uncoverings: Growing from Adoption and Reunion*. She holds B.S. and M.S. Degrees in Natural Health and Wellness, and also presents on meditation and intuitive healing. [705](#)

Susan Ito – Susan Ito is a biracial Asian adoptee, teacher, and writer. She is on the board of Pact, an Adoption Alliance, and on the advisory team for the Adoption Museum Project. Her book, *Ghost At Heart's Edge*, is one of the few literary anthologies focused on all members of the adoption triad. Her writing has appeared in *Growing Up Asian American*, *CHOICE*, *Making More Waves*, *Hip Mama* and *Literary Mama*, where she is creative nonfiction editor and former columnist. Susan's solo performance piece on adoption, *The Ice Cream Gene*, has been performed nationally. She lives in Oakland with her husband, two daughters and mother. [204](#)

Beth Jaffe – Beth Jaffe has 15 years' experience facilitating art workshops for people with disabilities, illness, and grief. Among other things, she's the AAC Conference Art Committee Chair. Her OBC access efforts in Montana received a 50-0 positive vote in the State Senate, but were unsuccessful in the House. [201](#)

Fern Johnson, PhD – Dr. Fern L. Johnson is Professor of English at Clark University in Worcester, MA, and a member of the Clark University Difficult Dialogues Project. Dr. Fine and Dr. Johnson are the adoptive parents of two African American sons and the authors of *The Interracial Adoption Option: Creating a Family Across Race* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2013). [606](#)

David Leonard, DHSc, MMS, PA-C – David Leonard is the Chairperson of the Department of Physician Assistant Studies at University of the Sciences in Philadelphia. Dr. Leonard's background includes ten years of clinical practice experience in acute care and correctional settings. An adoptee, Dr. Leonard is passionate about creating adoption-informed curricula for medical schools. [501](#)

Donna LoBue – Donna LoBue is an adoptee who has been in reunion with her birth mother for 15 years. She is a single mother to two daughters and a 20+ year veteran of the United States Postal Service. She lives in northeastern Pennsylvania. [404](#)

Megan LoBue – Megan LoBue is the daughter of an adoptee and has been in reunion with her birth grandmother for the past 15 years. She taught English as a Fulbright scholar in Germany and currently works with special needs students at a non-profit private school in northern New Jersey. [404](#)

Phyllis Lowinger – Phyllis Lowinger is an LCSW with a private practice in New York City. Her specialty includes parenting, adoption, infertility and third party reproduction. She is a parent by adoption and birth. **602**

Roberta MacDonald – Roberta MacDonald, an adult adoptee, started an adoption reform group in North Carolina in 2000. NC Coalition for Adoption Reform was instrumental in passing a confidential intermediary program in 2008 that has benefited thousands of North Carolinians in finding birth relatives. She helps co-facilitate two adoption support groups. Roberta joined the AAC in 2000, became an NC state rep in 2006, and joined the AAC board in 2009. Roberta was the recipient of the AAC President's award in 2010. She is the AAC membership chair, webmaster and event registrar. **Conference 101, 206**

Eilean Mackenzie, MA, LPC – Eilean Mackenzie is an adoptee in her fifties who is working to make sense of the complexities of her life. She has been a therapist for over 20 years and is currently working on a PhD in Psychology and Jungian Studies at Saybrook University. **803**

Leslie Pate Mackinnon, LCSW – Leslie Pate Mackinnon was drawn to the field after placing her first born sons for adoption during adolescence. She was featured in the book *The Girls Who Went Away* and in the documentary *A Girl Like Her*. She has been interviewed by Robin Roberts, Dan Rather and CNN. Her practice is located in Atlanta, Ga. She specializes in adoption and third-party reproduction and serves on the board of the Donaldson Adoption Institute. More information can be found at www.lesliepatemackinnon.com. **Friday Keynote, 103, 301**

Allison Davis Maxon, LMFT – Ms. Maxon is the Regional Director for Kinship Center, a member of Seneca Family of Agencies in Orange County, CA. She is a clinician, educator, and advocate for creating systems of care that are strengths-based and that are informed in attachment, trauma, and permanency. **Professional Lunch, 304**

Krista McCoy Woods, MSW, LCSW – Krista McCoy Woods is the founder of Integrity Clinical Consulting and Training as a therapist, coach and trainer for individuals, groups and agencies. She serves on the board of the AAC as the Professional Liaison and is the Illinois state rep. She also served two terms on the Illinois Adoption Advisory Council. Krista is a biracial (African-American-Caucasian), transracial adoptee from foster care. She has met several members of her birth family and continues to make new connections. She also has several family members who joined her family by adoption. She has been speaking, training and writing since 1993 on issues of adoption, foster care, mental health and substance abuse. For the past 15 years, Krista has also been a presenter-trainer for Bridge Communications in Illinois, which trains prospective transracial adoptive parents on multicultural issues. **302, 503**

Cynthia McGuigan – Cynthia McGuigan has been a board member, Treasurer and Massachusetts state representative for AAC since 2006. Cindy is the recipient of the 2013 President's Award. Cindy is a birthmom to her 30-year-old son. She and her son's birth father have been married for 23 years and are raising three daughters. She is a financial associate for Harvard University where she has been employed for 23 years. Cindy is working on her Master's degree in Psychology at Harvard University. **206**

Patrick McMahon – Patrick McMahon is the author of *Becoming Patrick*, a memoir about reconnecting to his family of origin, a facet of which is coming out as gay once again. He is co-creator and facilitator of *Inside Out: The Expressive Arts Adoption Healing Seminar*, advocates for adoption reform, speaks at conferences, seminars and classes, and facilitates an adoption support group in San Diego. **Open Mic, 203**

Jamie Nagy – Jamie, married and mother to five, cares for an adoptive family (their youngest was adopted from Haiti in 2006). After her own few years of reeling from rejection, loss of self-worth, confusion in her identity, and addictions, Jamie wishes to connect with others who have had to take 'No' as an answer from birth family. What does rejection do to us? **604**

Alana Newman – Alana Newman, founder of AnonymousUs.org, writes and gathers first-person insights regarding donor conception and third-party reproduction. **105**

Betsie Norris – Betsie Norris, an adoptee, founded Adoption Network Cleveland in 1988 and serves at its executive director. She has spearheaded adoptee access legislation in Ohio for 25 years. Betsie served on the AAC board from 1997 – 1999 and is the 2004 recipient of the Emma Mae Vilardi Humanitarian Award. She received a Congressional Angels in Adoption Award and was named a Woman of Note in Crain's Cleveland Business in 2005. Betsie received a U.S. HHS Children's Bureau Adoption Excellence Award in 2011. **704**

Penny Callan Partridge – Penny Callan Partridge is an adopted person and a parent by adoption, a co-founder of Adoption Forum (1973 in Philadelphia), President of AAC (1981), and adoption community poet (*The People They Brought Me*). **Open Mic**

Joyce Maguire Pavao, Ed.D, LCSW, LMFT – Joyce Maguire Pavao is an internationally noted consultant and coach on child welfare and adoption. She is the director of Pavao Consulting and Coaching and PACT (Pre/Post Adoption Consulting and Training in Cambridge, MA. She authored *The Family of Adoption*. **303, 402**

Malcolm Pearson – Malcolm Pearson was president of PACER from 2004 to 2010. He has facilitated the East Bay adoptee support group for the past 11 years. Malcolm works as a private investment advisor and is a certified Enneagram teacher. Currently, he is writing the history of the post-war U.S. automobile industry. **505**

Adam Pertman – Adam Pertman is the Executive Director of The Donaldson Adoption Institute, formerly known as the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, a national nonprofit that is the pre-eminent research, policy and education organization in its field. Pertman is also the associate editor of *Adoption Quarterly*, the premier research journal dealing with adoption and foster care. He is the author of the groundbreaking *Adoption Nation: How the Adoption Revolution Is Transforming America*, which has been reviewed as "the most important book ever written on the subject." Pertman was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for his writing about adoption in the *Boston Globe*. **401**

Zara Phillips – Zara Phillips is the author of *Mother Me*, director of *Roots Unknown*, and a singer songwriter known for her collaboration with DMC on *I'm Legit*. She is the writer and performer of her one-woman show, *Beneath My Fathers' Sky*, directed by Eric and Eliza Roberts. Zara is an adopted person in long-time reunion with her birth mother and siblings and is the mother of three children. She lives in Montclair, NJ. **Wednesday Keynote, 602**

Robin Pope – Robin Pope is an attorney in Beaverton, OR, whose practice has focused on adoption and family formation law for more than 25 years. She is a Fellow in the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys. For 20+ years she has co-authored and successfully lobbied for the passage of numerous adoption-related bills at the Oregon legislature. **202**

Matt Potter – Matt Potter is an adult adoptee who searched for his original mother only to discover that she had died. **104**

Kate Power – Kate Power is an award-winning songwriter and musician who has been writing songs and performing for over 40 years. She is the co-author of *Kathleen-Catleen* with her daughter, Cathy Heslin, and writes about the birth mother perspective in her blog, *Mothertone...Kathleen-Catleen*. **106**

Kris A. Probasco – Kris A. Probasco is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and has practiced in the field of infertility, reproduction and adoption since 1972. Kris operates Adoption & Fertility Resources, a licensed child placing agency in Missouri and Kansas. Kris has worked in both the public and private setting providing adoption and fertility services. She provides services for domestic, international and embryo adoptions. Counseling for birth, genetic-donor and adoptive families is provided. Kris also maintains a general psychotherapy practice with Clinical Counseling Associates, a family-owned mental health corporation. **403**

Jean Provance, LCSW – Jean Provance graduated from New York University in 2008. Ms. Provance was reunited in 2005 with her first family. In 2010 she legally changed her name back to her original name. She works in private practice specializing in post-adoption issues with adoptees and first parents. She provides intensive in community mental health services to post-adoptive families and children in foster placements. **305**

John Raible, EdD – John Raible is a professor of Diversity and Curriculum Studies and Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Nebraska. As a multicultural educator, Dr. Raible has worked with teachers, social workers, clinicians, parents, children and youth to support multiracial families formed through transracial adoption. **Thursday Keynote, 304**

Thomas C. Rector – Thomas C. Rector is a national speaker and workshop presenter on the "Bio-Social Cognition" theory. He has studied a wide range of topics over the last 13 years in the fields of neuroscience, language development, philosophy, psychology, biology and genetics. This investigation led him to the conclusion that the neuroplasticity of memory formation is dynamically impacted by the interaction of biology, neurology, genetics and the environment. This brought forth a paradigm shifting theory and methodology for parenting. Based on this theory, he developed the "Bio-Social Cognition Behavioral Model" and practiced it in his role as a parent, adoptive parent, foster parent, foster mentor and trainer, CASA advocate, open adoption panelist and professional. **403, 706**

Denise Roessle – Denise Roessle is the author of *Second-Chance Mother*, a memoir chronicling her reunion with the son she surrendered for adoption in 1970. Active in the post-adoption community since 1998, she facilitated a PACER triad support group for several years, has been widely published on adoption topics, and speaks frequently on adoption reunion and writing memoir. **806**

Paul Schibbelhute – Paul Schibbelhute is a birth father, past AAC president and present New England regional director and legislative chair of the American Adoption Congress. He has received the Angel in Adoption Award and the Vilardi Humanitarian Award. He has also assisted in legislative efforts in New Hampshire, Maine, Rhode Island, Connecticut and other states around the country. **704**

Carol Schaefer – Carol Schaefer is the author of *The Other Mother: A Woman's Love for the Child She Gave Up for Adoption* (Soho Press, 1991), considered a classic in adoption literature. *The Other Mother* is listed in *500 Great Books by Women*, a Penguin Books Reader's Guide, a list that goes back to the eleventh century. Adapted as a television movie in 1995, the movie also aired on the Lifetime Channel for many years. Schaefer has appeared on *Good Morning America*, CNN, MSNBC, and many local television and radio programs around the country and in Canada, including New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Her play, *The Sacred Virgin*, had a three-month run in New York City and may have a production in Australia later this year. She has often been a keynote speaker and given numerous workshops at adoption conferences since 1991. While living in San Francisco, she facilitated support groups for eleven years, and has held a support group in New York City for six years. She is introducing her sequel to *The Other Mother*, entitled *Searching ...*, at this conference. **805**

Barbara Shafer, MFT – Barbara Shafer relinquished her son in Illinois in 1971. She has been a California Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist for 20 years, specializing in adoption-related issues. She reunited with her son in 2005, who coincidentally lives in California. Although their relationship is not perfect, she understands him and is very happy he is in her life. **806**

Eileen Skahill, MA – Eileen Skahill is a professor of sociology at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. She developed and taught the University's first course in sociology of adoption in the fall of 2013. Eileen is also an adoptee who has been in reunion for over a decade. **802**

Chester Smith, M.Ed, LPC – Mr. Smith has been in private practice since 1984 and has worked in the area of adoption for over fifteen years. He participated in the creation of the Psychodynamic Studies in the Adoption and Foster Care Program at the St. Louis Psychoanalytic Institute and serves as the Program Director. **304**

Brian Stanton – Brian Stanton is an adoptee in reunion with mother and currently in search for father. Brian is the playwright of critically acclaimed, award-winning, solo play *BLANK* and still performs across the country. Brian resides with his wife and 2 daughters in Culver City, CA. **701**

Karl Stenske, MA – As a post-adoption specialist, speaker and educator, Karl offers insights into the wounds created when any child is separated from his birth mother. Earning his MA in Adoption Studies focusing on the trauma of separation, Karl educates mental health professionals on adoption trauma and how to work with adoption constellation clientele. **306**

Jean Strauss – Jean Strauss has been writing about and filming post-adoption issues for over a quarter of a century. This year her landmark book, *Birthingright*, celebrates its twentieth birthday in print, and her new feature film, *A Simple Piece of Paper*, will air on public television. **603**

Cheryl Tano – Cheryl Tano is a loyal and loving daughter, sister, aunt, niece, partner, neighbor, friend and teacher, who is also an avid scuba diver, textbook writer, world traveler and polyglot linguist, who happens to be an Adoptee, too. **605**

Andrew Tash, MA, MA, JD – Andrew Tash is a birth dad in an open adoption and father to five more children. Andrew discovered he was adopted at age 35. He's currently in reunion with his mother and father and hoping to get a little better day-by-day. **701**

Delores S. Teller, MSW, LCSW – Delores S. Teller is a therapist and faculty member of the Oregon Health Sciences School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry. She is a past president of the American Adoption Congress. Her social activism for the Oregon Landmark Adoption Law, Measure 58, was recognized in Rolling Stone Magazine. **406, 702**

April E. Topfer, PhD – April E. Topfer is a Psychological Assistant at the Mindful Center and a registered yoga teacher. She integrates interventions such as mindfulness and yoga into her clinical practice for adoption triad clients. April is current president of PACER (Post Adoption Center for Education and Research). **505**

Pekitta Tynes – Pekitta Tynes is a professional comedienne performing for audiences all across the country. As an adoptee, foster child and a foundling, Pekitta uses humor to shed light on her life experiences to motivate and inspire audiences to never give up searching for their biological parents in spite of life's many obstacles. She is one of the 100 Memorable Adoptees in the book, *Finding Our Place*, written by Nikki McCaslin with Richard Uhrlaub and Marilyn Grotzky. Pekitta holds a Master's degree in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix. **601**

Rich Uhrlaub, MEd – Rich Uhrlaub found his birth family in 1995. He serves on the AAC Legislative Committee, is a past Conference Co-Chair and is the Coordinator of AIS-CTC. Rich has presented at numerous conferences and been active in Colorado legislative and legal reform for over 18 years. He is a contributing author to *Finding Our Place* by Nikki McCaslin and *Adoption and Mothering* by Francis Latchford, Ed. **701**

Nancy Verrier – Nancy Verrier is an adoptive mother and psychotherapist specializing in adoption issues. She is the author of *The Primal Wound* and *Coming Home to Self* and an international speaker on the effects of separation trauma and genetic confusion on adoptees. She was the 2003 recipient of the Vilardi Humanitarian Award. **506**

Kathy Waddill – Kathy Waddill relinquished her baby boy in 1979. She married in 1984 and raised two daughters, but always yearned to know her son. He found her in 2003. Their ongoing reunion has been both thrilling and terrifying. Kathy facilitates a support group for birth mothers and joined the PACER board in 2006. **806**

Marilyn Waugh – For over 20 years, Marilyn has worked in the Kansas Department of Children and Family, processing and completing over 500 record and search requests per year. She is a reunited birth mother, Director of Adoption Concerns Triangle of Topeka, a past AAC president and current AAC state representative for Kansas. **804**

Seth Wayman – Seth Wayman is an adult adoptee who searched for his original mother but was notified that she did not desire any contact. **104**

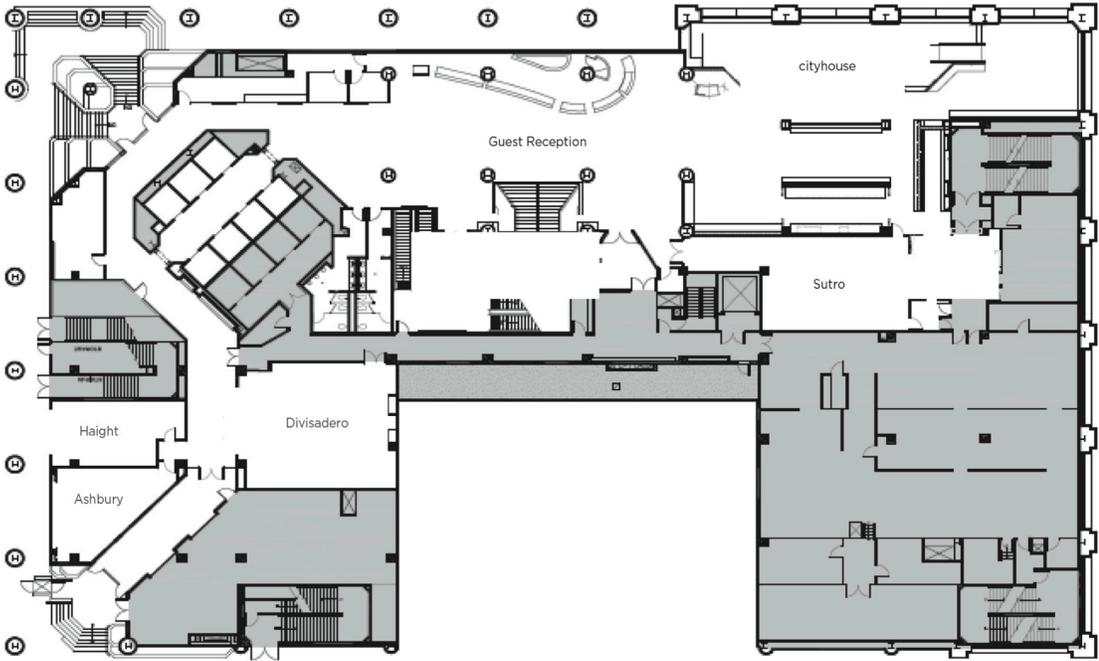
Mary Edna Wilson – Mary Edna Wilson has been a volunteer searcher for more than 16 years and not only dedicates herself to making matches, but also to helping individuals reconnect and begin a healing relationship. Upon finding her own relinquished daughter, Mary realized the great amount of healing that comes from reconnecting. Her passion for doing searching work stems from the healing it affords everyone involved, including herself. **205**

Jeanette Yoffee, MFT – Jeanette Yoffee is founder of Celia Center, a non-profit mental health support center for all those connected by foster care/adoption within the constellation and beyond. She has worked in the field of adoption for over 15 years and performs intervention training for foster and adoptive parents, psychotherapists and social workers, as well as monthly support groups called Adopt Salon. Her passion for her work stems from her own experience growing up in foster care and being adopted at the age of seven and a half. She lives in Los Angeles. **405**

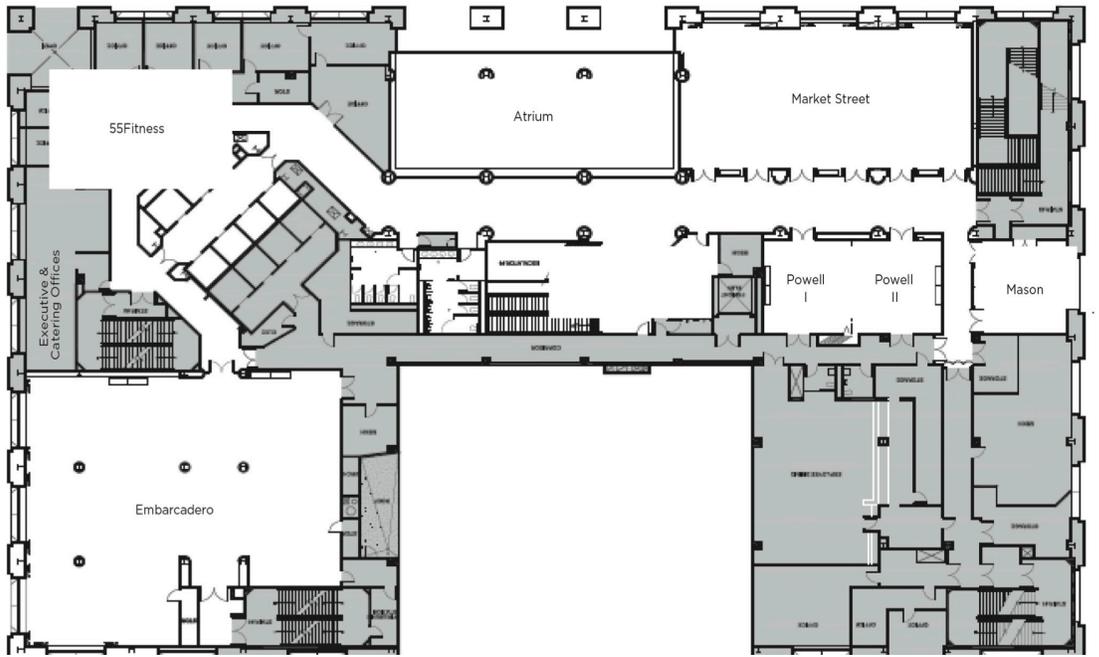
Jeannine Zoppi – Jeannine Zoppi is a clinical psychologist licensed in New Jersey and New York. Dr. Zoppi received her doctorate from Seton Hall University. She has a private practice in Caldwell, NJ, where she specializes in the treatment of adoption issues, adult survivors of childhood abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder. Dr. Zoppi is actively involved in the NJ Psychological Association and serves as 2014 NJPA President-elect. She is a recipient of the 2012 NJPA Member Recognition Award and is a member of the American Psychological Association's Leadership Institute for Women in Psychology Class of 2011. Dr. Zoppi is a member of the American Fertility Association's Adoption Advisory Council and has presented on the topics of adoption and bullying at various local and national conferences. **502**



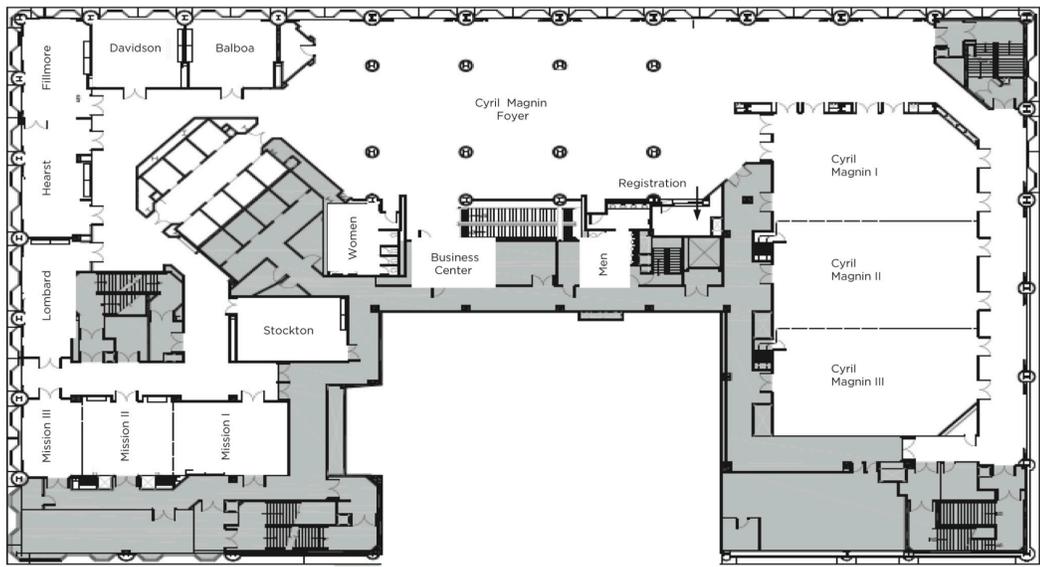
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The American Adoption Congress is comprised of individuals, families and organizations committed to adoption reform. We represent those whose lives are touched by adoption or other loss of family continuity. We promote honesty, openness and respect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