



Inside

FEATURES

3 Introducing
Eileen McQuade,
Treasurer
— McQuade

6 Search Triad's
40th Anniversary
— Tinkham

DEPARTMENTS
& MORE

2 President's Message
— Lubarsky

7 Spotlight on
Karen Tinkham

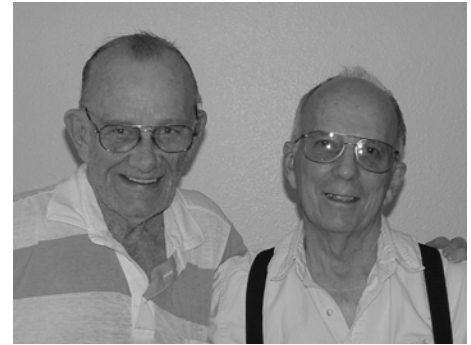
8 Conference
Information

A Tale of Two Brothers

By Kathy Haynie

They are cut from the same cloth. Glenn is the older one at 81. Lester just had his 79th birthday last week. Glenn talks more, and Lester has the craggy face, but they are of the same build: trim, not too tall, thinning hair. Glenn initiates the conversations; Lester listens, and corrects him when he needs to. Glenn Hull and Lester Brown are brothers.

When we first met at a church social, I was drawn to their quiet humor and friendliness.



Lester Brown and Glenn Hull in their apartment today.

When they introduced themselves as brothers who lived together, I could readily see their resemblance. But when they told me they had different last names, my curiosity was immediately piqued.

"Oh," Lester explained, "we were adopted."

Their mother had died at the onset of the Great Depression, in January 1930. Glenn and Lester were children number eight and nine in a family of ten; their baby brother was only a few months old, and the oldest, their only sister, was

fifteen or sixteen. Their father worked as a janitor at the post office in Santa Rosa, California. The young baby was adopted right away by their mother's sister, but the rest of the family stayed together for a few more years, with the older children looking after the younger ones. Their father was plagued with alcoholism after his wife died, and the county threatened to take the four youngest children, but their father didn't want them to leave the family. This was a gradual catastrophe.



The four
oldest of the
ten Hull
siblings,
circa 1922.
Left to right:
Irene, Floyd,
Robert,
Raymond.

continued on page 4

New AAC Mission Statement, June 2006—"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."

**AMERICAN
ADOPTION
CONGRESS**



Families Rooted In Truth

Established 1978

The American Adoption Congress
P.O. Box 42730, Washington, D.C. 20015
202-483-3399
www.americanadoptioncongress.org

Editor: Sharon Pittenger

Communications Chair &

Managing Editor: Pam Hasegawa

Associate Editors: Monica Byrne, Barbara Busharis and
Mary Martin Mason

Circulation Manager: Carolyn Hoard

Staff Photographer: Pam Hasegawa

Website: Melisha Mitchell

Production Consultant: Cameron Boswell

The AAC Decree (ISSN 1092-0730) provides educational information to facilitate changes in attitudes, practices, public awareness and public policies that will open adoption records to adult adoptees and foster open, honest, humane adoptions.

Material for the newsletter may be submitted for consideration to Sharon Pittenger, AAC Decree Editor:

E-mail: sharon.pittenger@gmail.com

Mail: 10031 SE Wichita Ave.

Milwaukie, OR 97222-2669

Phone/Fax: 503-794-0915

*For instructions for contributors, contact the editor.
Advertising is not accepted at this time.*

Portions may be quoted and copied if credit is given to the "AAC Decree, American Adoption Congress," with the exception of copyrighted articles. Permission to reprint copyrighted articles may be obtained directly from the author or by contacting the Editor of the AAC Decree.

The AAC Decree is published by the American Adoption Congress. Opinions expressed in the AAC Decree are not necessarily those of the American Adoption Congress.

From the President



Pat Lubarsky

At the conclusion of AAC's annual board of directors meeting, my term as president began with a fervor that I was unaware I could muster. After participating in team-building efforts at a board retreat in Columbus, your directors left with a greater resolve to build and move AAC forward. My personal focus centers on welcoming back our previously active members as a key point in growing both our membership and our effectiveness.

While some AAC members have just moved on with their busy lives, others may have become disillusioned by the burdens associated with their respective role in adoption. AAC's tag line, 'Families Rooted in Truth,' reminds us that the pursuit of truth is never easy. Our mission to promote honesty, openness and respect for family connections infers that we as an organization not only pursue these goals, but also become a healing agent in adoption.

It is most appropriate then that this issue of the *Decree* examines the importance of siblings in adoption. Sibling connections are a cornerstone of adoptee access. Policy makers and adoption professionals have acknowledged the failure of the adoption community to keep siblings together. The closing of birth certificates assures that siblings will not know of one another, let alone be reconnected. Thus, the possibility of sibling ties have been permanently severed while a growing body of research shows that the strongest, longest lasting and most vital connections for adults are those provided by brothers and sisters.

The severing of family ties is unthinkable in many cultures as I learned when I recently attended The National Tribal Forum sponsored by the National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA), in collaboration with First Nations' Orphans Association. As the AAC representative, I learned how adoption decimated Native people in an attempt to assimilate Native children into the white culture. I also witnessed how First Nations adults victimized by adoption are facilitating their own healing.

Despite the overwhelming generational sadness that has been perpetuated, Native families are being reunited, fulfilling a prophecy that the seventh generation would return to their tribes

Introducing Eileen McQuade, Treasurer



I am delighted to take a leadership position in AAC. Our mission, to provide everyone with access to information about their families and heritage, is increasingly important today as we face the challenges of complex family connections and assisted reproductive technologies.

The Board is pursuing several initiatives to increase the value of the AAC membership:

- Periodic email communication to all members on late breaking news on legislative activity, upcoming conferences, regional activities, and items of interest to our members.
- An additional Members Only web portal with important information on initiating and conducting a legislative reform program in your state.
- A plan for both national and regional conferences across the continent through 2011.

To meet our ambitious goals, we need your support to sustain these efforts. There are multiple ways to support the AAC financially.

Consider a multi-year membership at renewal time.

Donations are always welcome. If you would like to focus your donation to a particular area of education or ad-

vocacy, please let me know and we can work together to make that happen. Donations should be sent to Eileen McQuade, 2155 South Ocean Blvd., Apt. 22, Delray Beach, FL 33483.

AAC is a 501c(3) corporation, and eligible under many employer corporate giving programs for matching gifts. These programs will match every dollar you contribute to the AAC with a dollar from its own corporate giving account, doubling the value of the donation to the AAC. Some corporations will provide compensation to employees for time spent helping eligible organizations—check with your employer.

If a financial contribution is not possible, consider lending your

time and talents to the AAC mission.

Contact your state rep for ways you can help locally.

The AAC needs professionals with experience in locating possible grants and completing grant applications.

Individuals with professional skills—writers, editors, graphic artists, auditors, etc.—are welcome to help our committees get the work done. Please contact your Regional Director who can match your talents to the work that needs to be accomplished.

**To meet our ambitious goals,
we need your support
to sustain these efforts.**

President's Message

and their families. Returning has been difficult for those robbed of their language, culture and connections. Even so, healing was facilitated by everyone who attended this event, from the tribal elder leader to a group of young men from Minnesota who had come to San Diego to sing, drum and tell of their experiences as children in the foster care system.

Our Native American friends display dignity, reverence and honor for all members of our universe. Their spirit was shown in a healing ceremony, and I left even more committed to the tasks we share in addressing wrongs from the past by seeking solutions for the future. Although state adoption

laws differ from those that govern tribal matters, I learned we should all join together with the same politeness and respect as do our tribal compatriots. We need to unite with every inch of our being to work in harmony for adoption reform. Our triad position and ethnic ancestry should not be an impediment to the reconciliation so needed in adoption.

If adoption reform is to occur, the principle of putting aside differences must apply, regardless of what organization we join as our primary affiliation. There is much promise for the future in remedying the past if we are courageous and willing to change adoption for the betterment of all.

One evening my husband went to their small apartment to help Glenn with a computer problem, and I tagged along to ask the brothers more about their story.

Lester doesn't remember his mother at all. Glenn remembers little about her, except that she was always inside the house because she was sick. She had a heart murmur. He does remember falling in the creek one day. He was little, no more than four years old, and couldn't save himself. He thought that the surface of the creek, above him, looked like a ceiling. Then an arm came down through that ceiling and pulled him out of the creek. An older brother had rescued him. On the way back to the house, their oldest brother, Ray, came running toward them. He had been at his

mother's bedside when she said, "Go check on Glenn; something's wrong." Glenn was impressed that his mother had known something was wrong with him even though she was bedridden.

"You know, it's funny," Glenn says. "I don't remember much about her, but I remember just how that house was laid out. I can see where the pear tree stood outside of it." He brings

out a photo, their parents' wedding portrait. The couple stands stiffly together in the formal pose; their mother, a petite brunette, smiles solemnly beside their father.

Glenn was eight when his Uncle Ken and Aunt Jessie Hull adopted him. On the way to his new home in Dunsmuir, they stopped to visit with Aunt Jessie's sister, Aunt Etta, in Chico. Aunt Etta was intrigued by the idea of adopting a little boy, and asked if there were any more children. "Oh yes," they told her, "you can just go there and pick out any one you want."

Aunt Etta adopted Ralph, the brother just older than Glenn. When she asked Ralph the next year what he wanted for his birthday, he replied, "My little brother Lester," and so Aunt Etta also adopted Lester. Five years after their mother's death, the four youngest children were finally set-

tled. The others, Glenn says, were old enough to take care of themselves.

Aunt Etta is the only parent Lester knew. Within a year, Aunt Etta's husband, Uncle Ira, had died in a tractor accident—the exhaust fumes burned his lungs—and by the time Ralph and Lester's adoptions were final, Etta was listed as a widow in the documents.

Lester remembers that trip to the State Department of Social Welfare in Sacramento—he was eight years old, and he and Ralph were dressed up because they were going to court to be Adopted. When he talks about it, his voice capitalizes the word. Even as a child, he knew this was Something Important.

The conversation flows back and forth between these two old men. In some ways their stories are the same. In other ways, they are unique. Glenn's voice shakes a little as he tells me about his grandson. It turns out that Glenn knows about both sides of adoption. One of his daughters, Kelly, was on drugs. He had Kelly and her son Derrick living with him, trying to help straighten things out, but the drugs won. Kelly's older daughter went to live with her father, but Children's Services came to Derrick's school one day, and Kelly lost her parental rights.

"It was better that they took him from school," Glenn says. "I didn't want him to remember being taken from my house."

The room is quiet while he regains his composure.

"I lost my grandson."

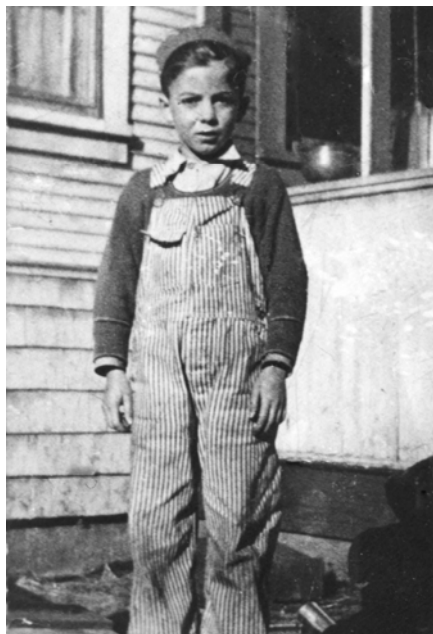
"No," Lester points out, "you probably saved his life."

"I still miss him. I pray for him every day."

I ask how old Derrick would be now. Glenn shakes his head. Seven or eight, he says. Derrick has been



Glenn Hull, 18 years old, circa 1943, as a Private in the Army Air Force.



Glenn Hull, 8 years old, circa 1933, in Dunsmuir.



Hull Parents: Elva and Ralph Hull on their wedding day, circa 1910. They were 18 and 19 years old.

adopted, and the adoption is closed.

“When people adopt a child,” Glenn insists, “they should pay attention to what the child’s needs and wants are. My foster father—my adoptive father—was a fine man,” he continues, “but he never once put his arm around me and said, ‘I’m glad you’re my son.’”

I ask if his adoptive parents had any other children, and he tells me that they had had a boy who died when he was six months old. After that they couldn’t have any more children. Then Glenn says something that surprises even him. “Maybe he was too afraid to become attached,” and then he adds, “I only just thought of that right now. I never saw it quite that way before.”

When Glenn went to live with Ken and Jessie Hull, he attended school for the first time. He was eight years old, in second grade, in Mrs. Bohon’s class. His voice warms as he remembers her and her classroom. She kept him in second grade for two years so he could catch up. Of his first Christmas with the Hulls, he says that he had never seen so many presents under a tree in his life. His favorite gift was a little tin wind-up toy piano with one little mouse on top, another mouse to the side playing a drum, another mouse on the other side dancing, and a mouse seated in front, playing the piano. Lester remembers visiting Glenn and playing with it. It’s still in the family—Glenn gave it to his son, Wade, who gets it out once a year a Christmastime to show it to the kids.

Glenn and Lester and their siblings were able to stay in touch throughout their childhood. Glenn’s adoptive father was a conductor on the railroad, so Glenn could get a pass to take the train from Dunsmuir to Chico to visit Lester and Ralph for a week at a time. The large extended family, living throughout northern California, gathered for summer picnics. Both Lester and Glenn remember big gatherings for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

The advent of World War II changed everything. Seven of the nine brothers enlisted. Lester joined the Navy to see the world. He learned to run a landing craft in San Diego, but never went further than Terminal Island in San Pedro. Glenn joined the Air Force and trained to be a pilot. He passed the pilot test, but washed out because the program had been cut back; the war was almost over. Glenn then trained for OSS, the Office of Strategic Services (similar to today’s CIA) but, instead of receiving covert assignments, he was sent to Montgomery, Alabama, to supervise recreation equipment. Their war was lacking in both adventure

and purpose.

What they did not know was that Glenn’s adoptive father had intervened. Early in the war, the loss of five brothers from the same family—the Sullivan brothers, who had insisted on serving on the same ship—had highlighted the extraordinary losses sustained by families with numerous sons in the service. Hull called his senator—Glenn says he

probably bluffed and made it sound like he was the father of all these brothers—and explained that seven brothers from one family were all in military service at the same time. The five older ones were seeing combat; one eventually would be killed in action. Because of Hull’s intervention, unbeknownst to Glenn and

Lester, they would never receive orders outside of the United States.

Two weeks after his discharge, Glenn bought a service station. He married and eventually had seven children. Lester, in his own words, was kind of wild. Glenn takes it up a notch—says Lester was a drifter. Moving from one job to another, Lester lived and worked in 36 states, married, had two children, divorced. He bounced around for nineteen years, and during that time, he and Glenn lost contact with each other.

There is an edge to Lester’s voice as he remembers that time and the loss of contact with his family. He blames his mother, Aunt Etta, who told Lester that none of his brothers

**Their mother was there,
and then she was gone.**

**Their family was whole,
and then it disintegrated.**

**Sometimes, for some families,
this is the way life is.**

continued on page 6



Glenn Hull being interviewed by Kathy Haynie.

Search Triad's 40th Anniversary

"To forget one's ancestors
is to be a brook without a source,
a tree without root."
- Chinese proverb

By Karen Tinkham

In the spring of 1976, Ginger Gibson placed an ad in a Phoenix, Arizona paper hoping to gather together other members of the adoption community. The *Gazette* then featured Ginger's reunion story, and from that effort Search Triad was born. Our first meeting was held on May 6, 1976. Since that time we have worked to help reunite those separated by adoption, foster care or divorce. Search Triad has been a member of AAC since its inception and has hosted two successful regional conferences.

When a person just beginning to search contacts Search Triad, he or she is linked with a search assistant. Attendance at monthly meetings is critical, particularly for those in the initial stages of contact and reunion. Those who have found or been found share their stories with the group, and listening to the stories becomes a lifeline to those who are experiencing the highs and lows of search and reunion. Members of Search Triad celebrate successful reunions but are also available beyond the "honeymoon" period when the going gets tough between adoptee and birth parent or other family members. Exchanging experiences is an important part of our success as a volunteer non-profit search and support group.

Search Triad hosted three Reg Day sites in 2005 to educate the community about adoption issues. Our library of over 100 books, videos, and AAC conference tapes is available to members at each meeting. More than 1,000 members have completed their search with the assistance of Search Triad. Countless others have been referred to other groups or searchers with equally positive results.

Search Triad believes...

In openness and honesty in adoption
In the right of everyone in adoption to know the truth
In honoring all three positions of the triad
In listening to one another and respecting everyone's views
In protecting the confidence of our fellow members
In searchers doing their own searches, to learn and to grow
In following the guidance of our own search assistants
In the utmost discretion in search, both before and after finding
In respecting the privacy and rights of those who are found
In sharing our concluded search experience with fellow members.

Two Brothers

continued from page 5

except Glenn wanted anything to do with him. "I couldn't take her anymore. I had to leave," he says. By the time he started looking for Glenn, he couldn't find him. He finally heard from Ralph that Glenn was living in Portland, and they found each other there.

"What brought you to look for Glenn?" I asked.

Lester shrugged. "Just family ties, I guess," he answered.

Glenn and Lester—brothers in spite of adoption, different last names, different personalities and years apart after the war—are settling in to their apartment. Of the ten siblings, they are the last two left. Ralph died last year. Their

oldest brothers lived to the age of 89, so Lester and Glenn hope they have several more years together. "But I'm on heaven's time," says Glenn. He is a survivor of four kinds of cancer. He spent a year on hospice care, but they stopped coming around when he didn't die.

"Chemotherapy made an idiot out of him," Lester says.

Glenn nods and says he was cured by lots of prayer.

He seems to be reflecting on the stories—two lifetimes full—that have been swirling through the room.

"What does a name matter when you get to heaven?" he adds.

On the sofa next to his brother, Lester chuckles.

Spotlight on Karen Tinkham

By Elizabeth Hasson and
Carolyn Hoard

Karen Tinkham has held a very special place in the lives of many people over the last 30 years. A Chicago-born adoptee, Karen was reunited with her mother in 1976 with the assistance of Emma Vilardi. She is the only child born to her mother, who is a closet birthmother to this day. She grew up in a wonderful home with her adoptive parents and one older sister, also adopted.



Karen Tinkham

Over the past 30 years, Karen has played a significant role in Search Triad, a Phoenix-based search and support group. Karen has served as a Volunteer Search Assistant Coordinator/Corresponding Secretary for Search Triad since its inception. As one member said, "Karen is the glue that holds Search Triad together." She loves a tough search! Payday for Karen is having someone call to share their reunion story with her. She has touched the lives of thousands of people and assisted in the reunions of countless adoptees and birthparents not only in Arizona but throughout the country and abroad. She is an integral part of Search Triad and the Arizona adoption community. An AAC member who contacted Karen for search help offered this testimonial:

"I owe Karen and her work a huge debt. There was a hole in my heart and I felt like a hidden woman. I don't know how you thank someone who gives so selflessly of themselves as Karen Tinkham has done for so many people for so many years. I guess you just say it – 'thank you Karen'."

Karen has been a member of AAC for over 20 years. At its Board meeting in May 1981, she was elected director of the Southwest Region, formerly the Western Region. In 1982 Karen was chairman of AAC's Nominating Committee. She has been AAC's Arizona representative for many years.

Karen has been married to Charlie Tinkham since 1972. She has one daughter, three step sons and six grandchildren.

AAC Board

Officers

President—Pat Lubarsky • CA
858-513-1841 • PL9706@aol.com
Vice President—Paul Schibbelhute • NH
603-880-7790 • pschibbe@aol.com
Secretary—Nancy Kato • BC
604-777-2920 • katosan@telus.net
Treasurer—Eileen McQuade • FL
561-279-7714 • eileen2155@adelphia.net

Committee Chairs

International Director—Nancy Kato • BC
604-777-2920 • katosan@telus.net
Communications Chair—Pam Hasegawa • NJ
973-292-2440 • pamhasegawa@gmail.com
Conference Co-Chair—Ellen Roseman • CA
415-453-0902 • ellen@coopadopt.com
Conference Co-Chair—Sharon Pittenger • OR
503-794-0915 • sharon.pittenger@gmail.com
Education (Boston)—Amy Winn • MO
816-510-7363 • amyAAC@gmail.com
Legislation—Mary Martin Mason • MN
952-926-2848 • mmason@mnadopt.org
Membership—Susan McDonald • KS
785-845-0339 • lighthouse1957@yahoo.com
Nominations and Elections—Carolyn Pooler • MO
816-505-0328 • gapmother@aol.com
Membership Recognition—Pam Hasegawa • NJ
973-292-2440 • pamhasegawa@gmail.com

Regional Directors

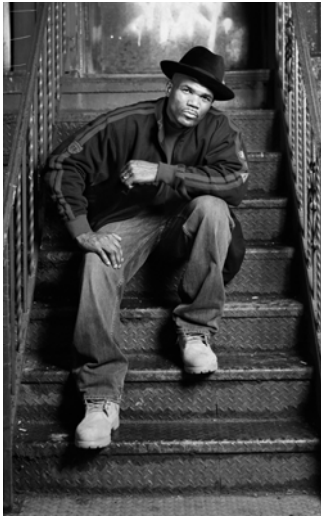
New England—Paul Schibbelhute • NH
603-880-7790 • pschibbe@aol.com
Mid-Atlantic—Vacant
Southern—Eileen McQuade • FL
561-279-7714 • eileen2155@adelphia.net
Mid-West—Melisha Mitchell • IL
312-666-5721 • ICTA97@aol.com
Mid-South—Carolyn Pooler • MO
816-505-0328 • gapmother@aol.com
Southwest—Ellen Roseman • CA
415-453-0902 • ellen@coopadopt.com
Northwest—Sharon Pittenger • OR
503-794-0915 • sharon.pittenger@gmail.com

California passes bill that re-establishes Foster Youth Sibling Connections



On September 22, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed B2488, a bill establishing a process for using a court-appointed confidential intermediary to reconnect siblings that have been separated by adoption. The bill eliminates the need for both siblings to independently file confidentiality waivers in order to reconnect with one another. The bill reduces the age when they may do so from 21 to 18.

Estimates are that as much as 75 percent of children in foster care are separated from siblings. Sealed records and secrecy make it difficult if not impossible to estimate the number of siblings that are separated by adoption. California leads the charge to connect such siblings based on child welfare Best Practices and a growing body of research that supports the importance of sibling connections.



SAVE THESE DATES!

March 7-10, 2007

AAC's 28th International Conference

Take the Freedom Trail to Truth in Adoption

Scheduled Keynote Speakers:

- **Darryl McDaniels** ~ Better known as the rap artist Run-DMC, co-founder of The Felix Organization/Adoptees for Children, 2006 National Angel in Adoption
- **Anne Fessler** ~ Adoptee receiving wide acclaim for her latest book *The Girls Who Went Away*
- **Gerald P. Mallon, DSW** ~ Professor and Director of the National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning
- **Sandra L. White Hawk** ~ Executive Director of the First Nations Orphan Association, offering advocacy to all adoptees and fostered individuals and their families in accordance with the Indian Child Welfare Act

Sheraton Colonial Hotel and Golf Club
Boston North
One Audubon Rd.
Wakefield, MA 01880

www.americanadoptioncongress.org
202-483-3399



American Adoption Congress

P.O. Box 42730
Washington, DC 20015

Address Service Requested

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
SO. MD 207
PERMIT #1368