

## points of view

Adoption option  
is a good choice  
for the childless

MY FAVORITE gift this season was a letter from a lady that — well, let her speak for herself.

"This marks the second annual Adoption Week recognized by our state Legislature. I thought it a good opportunity to express my thanks to you."

"Almost two years ago at this time of the year, I ran across a newspaper article that impacted my life and continues to do so like no other article has done. That article was written by you and was titled 'Adoption: In their book it's a good word.'"

"I was eight months pregnant and would soon place my child for adoption. I was desperate for a ray of hope and found it by happenstance when I was flipping through the pages of the newspaper and came upon your article. The phone number listed had been something hoped for and prayed for."

"I IMMEDIATELY took advantage of it. Yes, despite the fact Catholic Social Services was handling the adoption, not much was offered to accommodate my needs."

"So I must thank you, Mr. Richard. Unknowingly you have participated in a chain of events that loomed large in my life. Most of all, I'd like to thank you for bringing to light a topic which needs more positive coverage and just plan coverage. To this day, I have an uncanny feeling that article was meant for me."

Here she names the child and says he "is doing well, and I have a gold locket as a token of thanks from him and his parents. As promised to me and my top priority, he will know of his roots and the weight of the decision made for him by two people who wanted the best for him and who love him."

"I don't know if it's due to demand, but it seems I've heard increasing talk about the subject, adoption, by people who have been touched by it within their circle of friends or family (e.g., adoption cards in Hallmark stores)."

THERE ARE other kind words, but that's the bulk of the letter and the gist of our point.

Among social agencies, adoption has become a dirty word, virtually unmentionable.



Tim Richard

The social statistics I've seen indicate that for single mothers, adoption used to be the solution for one-third or more until the last 15 years. Today adoptions are down to the 3 percent level for single mothers.

Social services agencies don't counsel teen girls, in particular, about the adoption option. From what I can gather, the thrust of social workers' and peer group counseling is that a single mother can go it alone because there's lots of governmental help.

NOT LONG ago, I found myself publicly rebuked by a raging feminist for suggesting that adoption counseling was a better — that is, socially cheaper, more beneficial and less bloody — alternative than abortion or single parenting.

In the other camp's view, only an ogre would suggest a female, even a jobless teen dropout, give up her baby for adoption.

During the late campaign, George Bush, the winner, dropped a comment about adoption being preferable to abortion. I'm unsure what he has in mind for a federal policy. Certainly a change in attitude — particularly among those who counsel young women — is in order.

Meanwhile, childless couples who can afford \$20,000 to pay a surrogate mother and an attorney have been cut off at the pass. Michigan law now outlaws such contracts.

"Adoption" is a good word. The Adoption Option's address is P.O. Box 7052, Huntington Woods 48070-7052. The answering service number is 583-8940. The group meets monthly on Thursdays.

Tim Richard, political writer and columnist, is the Oakland County editor of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

New Year's promises  
Finishing projects and developing patience

THIS IS the time of year when everyone toots their horns, pops champagne corks, and makes a lot of noise about the new year.

It's time to shed thoughts about all that was bad and develop a fresh outlook for 1989 — about ourselves and others.

So, what's new for the year?

We can be reasonably sure each of us will age another year. We know that tomorrow will bring opportunities we didn't take time to consider today. We can never be sure we will move forward, because sometimes we take those giant steps back.

In the newspaper business, we can be sure another deadline is just around the corner, that something different will happen next week or month, and that we will continue to expand our horizons — and yours — through interviews with new people.

But the fact is, we don't really



Casey Hans

know what's new, and what the new year will bring.

That's what makes life interesting, and New Year's resolutions so tempting. We have the choice to shape a new year, and make it our own.

Well, at least we can think about it for a couple of weeks; whether we choose to do it is another matter.

On that note, I resolve to:

• Take all those photographs from boxes and put them into photo albums. I've already promised to do

it for my husband's family, so I'd better get hopping. Besides, a trip down Memory Lane wouldn't be all bad.

• Get rid of the putrid yellow bathroom by painting it a softer, lighter green. I've had the paint for five years and just never got around to it.

• Repair the light fixture in the basement which broke when my husband was practicing his golf swing. Oh yes, and to improve my golf game by at least 10 strokes.

• Finish the basement (now we're getting serious.)

• Complete all the crafts projects that were started years ago. Each has its own bag and sits in a corner of just about every room in the house. Anywhere I go in 1989, there will be a craft project on which to work.

• To finish lining the kitchen cup-

boards and closets, which are about half done.

I'm getting tired just thinking about it.

Besides the many projects I hope to complete in 1989, my main hope is to be kinder, more understanding and compassionate. I want to see more of my family and friends. I want to concentrate on the important things.

First and foremost, I need to learn patience.

How about you? Think New Year's resolutions are corny? Take some time to think about the little things, the big things, those that are the most important for you. It may make a difference in your life, and its outcome at this time next year.

May your days be merry and bright, and your 1989 outlook be new and exciting.

Happy New Year!

## Bigotry lives in today's turmoil

IT'S TWO days before Christmas, the sun is shining and it is hard to believe that so many will spend the next few days in a haze of pain instead of the heightened clarity of joy.

December has not been a great month this year: a sister-in-law's young father died unexpectedly, here in Livonia we lost a young, warm and caring school superintendent also without warning and, in Scotland, 280 people are dead, most blown to pieces in a tragedy of unspeakable proportion.

And yet as a white, middle-aged Livonia resident I have spent the last two days dwelling on an incident that in its own small way was just as unexpected and just as evil as that plane crash.

FOR AS I waited to be seated in the small restaurant at the Livonia Mall, I was asked, "Do you mind sitting next to black people?"

Imagine, this is 1988. This is the North. This is Christmas: peace on earth, good will to men. And I am asked, "Do you mind sitting next to black people?"

And my naivete must be showing, because I still can't believe the young woman in her bright blue



Catherine Trainor

blouse spotted with flowers thought she was doing us — the white woman with young daughter — a favor by sparing us the prospect of sitting next to black people.

"Of course not, why would I?"

"Well, a lot of people do."

Stunned, we were led to the table, some 12 inches from a young black couple, college students perhaps, well-dressed and involved with each other.

"And did they ask you?" I wondered, "If you mind sitting next to white people?"

IF THE situation were reversed, would they have been asked? Of course not, we know the answer. And we are left to wonder, would they have been left standing until a more suitable location was found, not so close to the white folk?

How degrading, how demeaning, not only to them, if they knew, but to me. How could this woman think that I was the kind of person who should even be asked such a question?

Well, I ate my favorite shopping meal, which tasted like cardboard, and afterward took the owner outside to discreetly (not to spare his feelings, but so as not to embarrass the many black people in the restaurant) express my deep, deep outrage.

"She's out," he said, protesting that he would never condone such behavior and apologizing profusely.

WELL, MAYBE. I have lived upon

this earth, all over this country, for nearly half a century. I have heard people tell racist jokes, make racist remarks. I know there is evil in the world.

We don't know yet if Flight 103 was blown to bits by terrorists. If it was, it becomes yet the latest clear example of humankind's seemingly limitless capacity for spectacular evil.

And here, in Livonia, a few days before Christmas I was witness to the truth that there is another kind of evil, just as insidious and one for which no effective security device has been found either.

And she wore a bright blue blouse covered in flowers and she thought she was doing me a favor.

Catherine Trainor is a copy editor at the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

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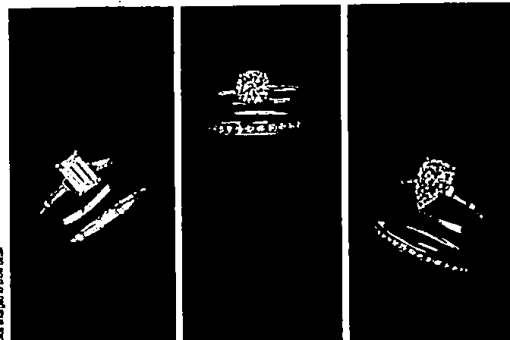
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