



News and Notes

January 2012

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From Our President

Happy 2012 to you all!



Marilyn Winter
Sun City, AZ

I hope this will be a year in which all your dreams come true both professionally and personally.

As the year closes and I begin anew I have spent some time reflecting on the leadership of Music Ed Ventures, Inc. and how fortunate we are to have these "worker bees" among us. In that light, I would like to present to you our grand register of awesome leaders who keep our organization ticking. They are:

Officers

President – Marilyn Winter AZ
President-Elect – Judy Fjell MT
Past President – Deb Eikenbary IN
Treasurer – Anna Langness CO
Secretary – Pam Bridgehouse OR

Board Members

Annette Coffin CANADA
Gina Adoff USA
Yuriko Ishikawa JAPAN
Janice Crawley MT
Esther Campbell OR

Networking chair – Kari Wendroth MN
Website chair – Pam Velluntini OR
Newsletter chair – Anna Langness CO

So as 2012 evolves, please keep these people in mind. You may have concerns for our organization that you think need attention. OR you may want to send a thank you for a job well done to one or more of the individuals on this list. Please feel free to contact any one of us at any time about ANY concerns.

My Best to You All,

Marilyn

Valuing the Volley: What Dogs and Tennis Can Teach Us About Teaching and Living



Peggy D. Bennett
Professor of Music
Education,
Oberlin College
Conservatory of Music

I sat and watched Doug Bartholomew toss Calvin's favorite toy. Doug threw it as hard and as far as he could, then his yellow lab Calvin ran full speed to swipe it off the ground, and trotted back to Doug, dropping the toy at his feet. I marveled at how different playing "fetch" was with Calvin than with my dog Cooper. When I throw the ball for my cairn terrier Cooper, his little legs run out to get it, but then he runs around the yard with the ball in his teeth. I have to walk out to get the ball to throw it again. Obviously, Cooper doesn't "get" the value of the volley. With Cooper, there is no volley, just the toss.

Thinking about the dogs playing the "fetch game" made me ponder the value of someone "returning" our "tosses," and our "tossing" for the purpose of inviting the "return." Whether it is in teaching or in conversations, I believe that participating with the intention of volley can make a huge difference in the quality of our interactions.

Consider the idea of "sport." In tennis, for example, it is the volley *that comes back to us*, that challenges us, that gives us a degree of unpredictability, that actually makes us better. Imagine *only* playing tennis with a ball machine: although the machine may help us improve our "return," too much predictability in the toss or the return diminishes the challenge . . . and the growth.

Perhaps you have already made the cognitive leap from "valuing the volley" with dogs and tennis to your style in teaching. So, I'd like to suggest that "volley teaching" is key terrain for real satisfaction, real learning, and real growth in teaching and learning.

Plenty of legitimate factors can cause us to avoid volley teaching:

- We don't trust that we'll know what to do with the answers we'll get.
- Listening to students' answers can take valuable lesson time.
- Some students take an inordinate amount of time to express themselves.
- We feel the pressure to "get through" our lessons rather than find out what our students are thinking and learning.
- We are not confident in knowing just how to *inquire* about learning and thinking.

Valuing the volley also has possibilities for your relationships. Have you had the experience in a phone or live conversation, when the other person talks on and on about the details of her or his life without inquiring about yours? Sometimes during, but sometimes after, we realize that to share anything about our selves, we would need to interrupt. I am convinced that, for many, the art of conversation needs to be revived. To me, real conversation is a volley, and we pace and time our responsiveness to match what we see and hear from the other person.

"Valuing the volley" in teaching and living requires a bit of letting go: being willing to suspend our "talking/teaching turn," at least momentarily, in order to include others in the discourse.

My very least favorite "faux volley" in workshops or speeches is: "Are there any questions?" Students in my classes may not use that one in their presentations, *especially* not as a conclusion. Here are some alternative volleys. As you'll see, not all volleys are questions. You can decide where these may best be used.

- What connections are you making with this topic?
- Say more about what you mean, please.
- I had no idea you were thinking that. Tell me more.
- I remember when you were so uncomfortable with that. What has changed?
- My goodness, I find myself sitting (standing) here having exactly the same reaction you did.
- Tell us (me) what reactions you are having right now.
- What would you rather be doing?
- Let me describe this to you. Then I'll be eager to know what you think.
- I got such a strong image as I was listening just now. Do you want to hear my thoughts on it?

Just as with dogs and tennis, using a volley approach to teaching and living has its benefits,

- We are highly interactive with others.
- We see the interchange as playfulness, a dance of communication.
- We accept that returning some volleys brings risks, yet those risks help us gain strength and agility.

And, maybe best of all, we feel the satisfaction from responding to the challenges, the empathy, and the playfulness of "volley" as one of our most important ways to *learn and grow* in teaching and living.

So, playing toss and fetch with Calvin *can* be equally as entertaining as it is with Cooper. It's just that Calvin seems to know that it's a game for two. Cooper seems to believe that he is the only one who needs to get a turn. §

Book signing in Oberlin, OH



photograph by Dale Preston

(L to R) Angel, Destiny, and Kyra help celebrate Peggy Bennett's latest book, *Playing with the Classics 1: Music Masterworks for Children*, at the Oberlin Bookstore in December 2011.

Playing with the Classics 1: Music Masterworks for Children is available now through bookstores and online.
Playing with Classics 2 is due out in May 2012.

TIPS for January

Each month several MEI members will offer Tips for a selected topic.

Making Song Study Authentic: Historical Context, Text Meaning, Performance Style

A Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration



Angelie Timm
Boulder, Colorado

Naming the Emotions Behind the Songs

Since the earliest traces of mankind, music has proved to be an inextricable element of the human race. Every culture utilizes music. If we look around us, we see music everywhere—in our celebrations, ceremonies, religions, entertainment, and often times, at the heart of society's struggle for change. The act of people coming together to make music is extremely powerful, which is why song is often used as a conduit for social change. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and 1960's in the United States is a relevant and relatively recent example of music's power. As an elementary music teacher, I use the African American Spirituals and Freedom Songs from this era to teach my students about an important time in American history. Through weeks of study, discussion, and singing, we create a "time capsule" of sorts where we travel back to when change took courage and solidarity that would not have been possible without song.

Embracing Civil Rights, Songs, and Community

When I began my student teaching several years ago with Anna Langness at Bear Creek Elementary in Boulder, Colorado, I was able to be a part of the preparations for the school's annual Martin Luther King, Jr. all school assembly/celebration. I watched Anna teach the songs, talk about their purpose and power, and discuss with the children (Kindergarten through 5th Grade) what effect and meaning the music had for them. On the day of the assembly, the students, staff, honorary guests, and some parents gathered in the gym. Every grade level shared musical selections with the school. Fifth grade students shared quotes from Civil Rights heroes, like Rosa Parks, Ruby Bridges and Martin Luther King, Jr. A guest speaker addressed the students about issues of civil rights and personal responsibility in today's world. The event culminated with everyone in the gymnasium clapping and singing together.

Connecting Words, Songs, and History

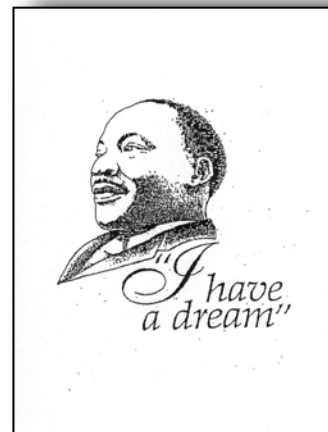
Students benefit from understanding the background of these songs. However, I like them to create their own background by asking questions. For example, after becoming familiar with the song, "This Little Light of Mine," I like to ask my Kindergarteners and 1st graders, "What does it mean to let your light shine? Are we shining an actual light? Could you describe what this might have meant to the people singing this song at the protests?" I often get wonderful responses, such as, "It's your heart shining out with love." or "It is your heart shining out with the nice things you do for other people."

When students are singing the traditional songs, I ask them questions like, "Do you think they meant these words when they sang them? Can you sing it like you mean it? How might you look if you meant what you were singing? What did they feel when they held hands and sang? Can you imagine the feeling of singing 'we are not afraid' when you were maybe fearing for your safety? Why and where might you sing a song like this in today's world?"

I find more often than not that the children engage passionately in these discussions because they feel very strongly about the injustice inflicted on African Americans. They often take the discussion further into the past by asking how these laws existed in the first place. We are then able to make the connections to colonialism and slavery and create a more comprehensive understanding of the origin and impetus behind the music.

Making Authenticity and Enrichment Priorities

I knew after seeing and experiencing this assembly that I would do my best to recreate this music with my future students. I am now preparing 450 children for our second annual MLK, Jr. Assembly. As I talk to the kids, the goal is always truth and authenticity. By the time the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day arrives, the songs should feel "real" to the student, and we achieve this by using a variety of resources for study. We look at pictures from the segregated South, watch videos of peaceful protests driven by song, listen to the Martin Luther King, Jr. speech, and most importantly we discuss what this time was like for all involved and why social norms needed to change.



In order to maintain authenticity, I choose not to use prerecorded vocals when the students perform. The accompaniment tracks that are instrumental only and maintain the style of the musical genre include "Free at Last," "We Shall Overcome," and "The Power of One." For the rest of the songs, I rehearse with guitar or piano accompaniment. Because I am not a skilled pianist, I choose to hire an accompanist who is familiar with the Gospel style of playing for the assembly.

Creating the Program

Listed below are the songs I currently use for studying this time period. These songs were compiled by Anna Langness over 18 years of teaching at Bear Creek Elementary. Some songs were sung during protests, and others were written later to remember and educate students. The songs are listed in the order they are sung at the assembly. The dialogue and other segments of the assembly are not included. (Contact me if you might use this program.)

Songs with an asterisk were sung during the marches and gatherings of the Civil Rights Movement. The rankings refer to the Top Ten Civil Rights Songs (Song of Empowerment and Hope).

4 th Grade	* Woke up This Morning Music Connection Gr. 5 Silver Burdett, Pearson Publishing -Traditional Freedom Song
K & 1 st	* This Little Light of Mine -Traditional Spiritual, Ranked #6
5 th Grade	* Keep Your Eyes on the Prize Music Connection Gr. 3 Silver Burdett, Pearson Publishing -Traditional Freedom Song, Ranked #10
5 th Grade	The Dream of Martin Luther King Music and You Gr. 5 Macmillan Publishing -by Merle Gartrell and students of Cummings Elementary School in Memphis, TN
2 nd & 3 rd	* Oh Freedom Music Connection Gr. 2 Silver Burdett, Pearson Publishing -Traditional Freedom Song, Ranked #3
3 rd and 4 th	Free at Last Music K-8, Vol. 9, No. 3 (song, accompaniment track) Plank Road Publishing -by Teresa Jennings
All Grades	* We Shall Overcome accompaniment track, Music Connection Gr. 4 Silver Burdett, Pearson Publishing -The #1 Freedom Song sung for Civil Rights, Ranked #1
All Grades	The Power of One choral score, 2 part, CD accompaniment, Shawnee Press -by Greg Gilpin
All Grades & Audience	He Had a Dream Music & You Gr. K, Macmillan Publishing -by Ruth Manier and William Simon

You can read a book about the Civil Rights Movement and you can watch Martin Luther King, Jr. give his famous speeches on You Tube, but singing together can be the most powerful learning tool of all. When you sing these songs with your students, you awaken the same energy that fueled the brave people of the past to persevere with courage and hope. I encourage you to embark on this wonderful trip into our past so that you can see how it affects the present!

Amidst all the singing and the dialogue, something happened. When the students sang, they knew what they were singing about and why. This showed in their eyes, in their posture and in the power and beauty of their voices. Most people in that room never marched and sang during the fight for Civil Rights, but this was the closest they would ever come. Teachers, parents, and guests were moved to tears as students held hands and sang "We Shall Overcome" with determination and purpose. By the end of the assembly, there seemed to be a deeper bond between everyone in the room after having traveled back in time with music as our guide.

If you have further questions about this article, wish more specifics about the program or wish to use the narration, please feel free to contact Angelie at angelie.timm@bvsd.org or Anna Langness at alangness@comcast.net. §



Vicky Suarez, TX



Kelsey Jacobson, MN



Danielle Koplinka-Loehr, VT



Jeanette Potvin, MN

**CONGRATULATIONS
2011
recipients of the
Fleurette Sweeney
Fellowship
for Emerging Pioneers
in Education**

Thank you for contributing your insights to the Newsletter. We look forward to your future with MEI and your continuing work with the principles and practices of SongWorks.



Angelie Timm, CO



Danielle Solan, TX



Kari Wendroth, MN



Meghan Meloy, PA

Why attend MEI Conferences?

Music EdVentures is 20 years old! What a cause for celebration. This year, our Canadian colleagues are hosting our annual Music EdVentures Conference. For me, this will be my 18th conference interrupted briefly by the arrival of a baby and motherhood!



Kate Smith
Port Coquitlam, BC

I would not miss this conference for the world. My fellow Music EdVenturers are an extended family with whom I only get to visit once a year. What a grand reunion of heart and art it is. Why do I attend year after year? I greatly enjoy the excellent sessions given at the conference, however, it is the people who share my passion for working with children who draw me year after year back to the conference.

This conference puts my life and my teaching back in perspective. It reminds me what drew me to teaching and what keeps me there as a retired TOC (Teacher on Call). It helps me return to the teacher I truly wish to be every minute I spend with the children in my care. It helps me become both a better person and a better teacher. It is about laughter, thoughtful reflection and the shared repertoire of our precious song games. I return to my profession refreshed, invigorated and bursting at the seams with new ideas and a renewed commitment to children, song, singing and play.



Sandy Murray
Abbotsford, BC

I come to the conference every year because I know that I will be inspired by all who attend, participants and workshop presenters alike. I love hearing what people are doing in their neck of the woods. I love the energy of enthusiasm present in every session. I love watching master teachers (i.e., all of the presenters!) at work. I say to myself, I want to teach like her or him!



Daisy Cochran
Oro Valley, AZ

I LOVE catching up with folks who celebrate children as I do, learning new song games and making music with musicians!

The Conferences are also like a family reunion for me. Many members are treasured, lifelong friends.

My first conference was last year in Portland, and I went away with songs and extensions that I was comfortable with to step in and do in a classroom. Shortly after, I was hired for a special music time with two kindergarten classes and to present to families after six sessions. It was SongWorks all the way, right from the conference. When I substitute in public schools in elementary music, I feel more confident and I have materials to draw from. It is getting easier to take another song and look at it through SongWork's eyes and see the possible layers of teaching and learning. I expect this coming conference to be every bit as meaningful, challenging, and useful, as well as a wonderful opportunity to meet others as we sing, move, dance and have a grand time together.



Sooney Viani
Ashland, OR

I recall Mary Helen Richards referred to us teachers as needing to 'fill our bucket' with love, care, and a desire to keep our minds open. So, here I go again, to another conference. See you in Vancouver!



Gina Adoff, Butte, MT playing "Oats and Beans and Barley Grow" with 4 year olds and their teacher.

It's January 2012 Register now for the Conference!

Your pre-registration is greatly appreciated by the conference planners and MEI Treasurer. Your conference booklet and badge will be ready for you! Send your Conference Registration to Anna Langness (USA in US \$) or Kate Smith (CANADA in CAD) (see form on p. 10)

DID YOU NOTICE?

- * The 2012 Registration Fee includes 3 days and 3 luncheons?
- * US residents will need their PASSPORTS to enter Canada!
- * The hotel provides free shuttle service to/from Vancouver Int'l Airport (just 5 minutes.)
- * One-Day Registration Fee is now available. Welcome BC teachers!
- * Sessions begin on **Thursday** at **10:00 a.m.** and conclude Saturday at 3:15!



Now in our 20th year, Music EdVentures proudly presents

Celebrate LEARNING

A Conference for
Music Teachers, Classroom Teachers,
and Early Childhood Educators

... it's what the excitement is all about!

MARCH 1-3, 2012 RICHMOND, BC

THREE FULL DAYS YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS!

Thursday 10 AM - Saturday 3 PM

Save the dates!

Book your flights!

at Executive Airport Plaza, Richmond BC (5 minutes from Vancouver International Airport)

Registration for Members: \$170 Banquet: \$40

Forms will be available at www.musicedventures.org

Sample workshops in the conference program

SongWorks - What We Do, How We Do It & Why It Works

Song Games for Stimulating Learning

Modeling Vocal Health in the Classroom

Playing with the Classics & Children

Songs That Children Love to Learn

Dances to Inspire Voice & Movement

Bringing Children into Music Literacy

Presenters include Music EdVentures master teachers and emerging pioneer teachers from Canada, the United States, and Japan.

Dr. Peggy Bennett, Dr. Douglas Bartholomew, Dr. Fleurette Sweeney,

Dr. Anna Langness, Tony Williamson, English EdVentures of Japan

LEARNING *... it's what the excitement is all about!*

SONGWORKS provides a foundation for general literacy, academic skills in language, and music literacy. SONGWORKS workshops demonstrate how to partner effectively with children, helping them release their singing voices AND their imaginations.

More information and registration forms available at www.musicedventures.org



EXECUTIVE AIRPORT HOTEL PLAZA AND CONFERENCE CENTRE

RICHMOND, BC

(5 min. free Shuttle ride from Vancouver International Airport!)

MARCH 1-3, 2012

Thursday 10 AM - Saturday 3 PM

REGISTRATION FORM 2012 Music EdVentures Conference

SIGN ME UP! NAME _____ PHONE _____
ADDRESS _____ CITY _____
STATE/PROVINCE _____ ZIP/POSTAL CODE _____ EMAIL _____

What is your profession? (Music teacher, Classroom teacher, etc.) _____

How did you hear about the conference? _____

CONFERENCE FEES: *(Luncheons included in this fee) (\$ amounts are the same whether paying in CAD or USD)*

- _____ Members \$170
- _____ Non-Members \$210 *(See below: Become a member for only\$35!)*
- _____ Retirees \$ 90
- _____ Students \$ 60 *(Covers luncheons, gratuity, and tax)*

FRIDAY NIGHT BANQUET: *Great opportunities to dine and share ideas with your professional colleagues*

_____ \$40 *(includes gratuity and tax)*

MEMBERSHIP DUES:

- _____ Regular \$35
- _____ Sustaining \$50
- _____ Patron \$100
- _____ Student \$10

TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION:

_____ I am enclosing \$_____ *(for scholarships to the Music EdVentures Conference)*

SCHOLARSHIP AND TRAVEL GRANTS:

See www.musicedventures.org for application forms for conference travel grants and scholarships.

OTHER:

_____ I'd like contact information for others interested in sharing hotel rooms.

Please help the conference committee plan ahead. Mail your registration form and cheque/check by Jan. 14.

All amounts above are the same for CAD or USD unless further notice is given.

Canadian residents, send form and cheque/check to: Kate Smith #38 758 Riverside Dr. Port Coquitlam, BC V3B 7V8

US residents, send form and check to: Anna Langness 1179 Lilac St. Broomfield, CO 80020

TOTAL PAID \$ _____ CHEQUE/CHECK NUMBER _____

Registration and store sales at the conference will be by cash or check only.

For hotel reservations, contact: Executive Airport Plaza Hotel and Conference Centre

Tel 1(604)278-5555 Toll free 1-800-663-2878 or E-mail reservationsr@executivehotels.net

Mention Music EdVentures when making reservations. Daily room cost - \$99 Single or Double plus 15% tax

LEARNING . . . *it's what the excitement is all about!*

The Purpose of Music EdVentures, Inc. is to search for and practice ways of making music and interacting with people that preserve and celebrate the dignity of both. As a guiding principle, this purpose will focus our work on:

1. Practices that foster interactive, facilitative learning environments.
2. Strategies that empower the learner within the context of music experience and study.
3. Networks that encourage collaboration between diverse disciplines, professionals, and interest groups.

MEI Officers

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Judy Fjell, MT

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Fleurette Sweeney, Canada

Yuriko Ishikawa, Japan

they are to be published. The committee reserves the right to select material to be published according to length and appropriateness. Articles should be 200-325 words. Visuals should be scanned and submitted as PDF or jpeg files. Submissions may be sent to alangness@comcast.net and may be edited to accommodate space limitations.

Register now!

2012 MEI CONFERENCE
March 1-3 (Th-Sat)
Vancouver, BC

Visit the MEI Website
www.musicedventures.org

Read articles, get ideas, and learn more about Music EdVentures, Inc. -- a great way to teach and a fun way to learn!

Support the Mission of MEI
with your membership dues!

\$35 Regular \$50 Sustaining \$100 Patron \$10 Student

Make checks payable to MEI (USD)
Include your name, address, phone and email.

Send to Anna Langness, Treas.
1179 Lilac St.
Broomfield, CO 80020

News and Notes is the monthly communication of Music EdVentures, Inc. (MEI). Regular features will keep members and friends up to date on coming events and the latest teaching techniques, tips and strategies. Submissions are due on the 15th of the month prior to publication and may be submitted months in advance, indicating the month in which