



News and Notes

July 2011

IN THIS ISSUE

MEI Celebrates 20 Years

Emerging Pioneers

Keeping a Lid On It
Angelie Timm p. 2

Sharing SongWorks
Jeanette Potvin p. 3

Annette Coffin Retires

Fleurette Sweeney p. 4

Quote

Judy Fjell p. 4

Minnesota MEI

Summer Social p.5

Announcing New Book

Peggy Bennett p. 5

Summer exercises

For teaching skills p. 6-8

MEI Information

Purpose of MEI p. 9

MEI Officers p. 9

Board Members p. 9

Coordinators p. 9

Save the date p. 9

MEI Website p. 9

Submissions p. 9

2012 Marks the 20th Year of Music EdVentures, Inc.

A salute to MEI Presidents
Past and Present

Thank you for 20 years of leadership.

1992-1994 Sandy Verschoot (MT)

1994-1996 Judy Suvak (MT)

1996-1998 Anna Langness (CO)

1998-2000 Terolle Turnham (MN)

2000-2002 Marty Stover (MN)

2002-2004 Sandy Murray (BC)

2004-2006 Tony Williamson (OR)

2006-2008 Mary Springer (WA)

2008-2010 Deb Eikenbary (IN)

2010-2012 Marilyn Winter (MT)

Happy 20th Anniversary
Music EdVentures, Inc.
1992-2012

Emerging Pioneers in Education

Eight young educators were recipients of the Fleurette Sweeney Fellowship for Emerging Pioneers in Education. In return for this recognition and financial assistance we requested feedback from our Emerging Pioneers about the 2011 Conference. In this issue and future issues, EPs will tell of the insights they gained from experiencing the principles and practices of the SongWorks approach at the conference and in their classrooms.

“Keeping a Lid on It”

Since returning from the Music EdVentures conference as a recipient of the Fleurette Sweeney Fellowship for Emerging Pioneers in Education Grant, my students have been reaping the benefits of a happier and more joyous music making environment. This is my first year teaching in a full time general music position, and I am experiencing the joys, along with the trials, of being a new teacher. Every day is an adventure into mostly uncharted territory. As the students become familiar with me and my teaching style, I find myself wanting to set clear boundaries and develop a rapport of mutual respect. Lately, I've been increasingly aware of my tendency to try to maintain “control” over the group as we explore a new singing game or work in partners and small groups. Sometimes, I find myself attempting to manage every little squeak, giggle, and wiggle, until the joy has been taken out of the activity.

A month before arriving at the conference, I was lucky enough to be visited on separate occasions by Judy Fjell and Anna Langness, two veteran teachers who live and breathe the SongWorks principles. I watched as they effortlessly taught singing games to my kids. They giggled, chased, explored, and were even a bit silly while I watched on the sidelines, resisting my urge to intervene and tell certain children to “behave.” All I could think was, “I want to teach like them!”

At the conference in February, the tables were turned and I had a chance to be the student as colleagues shared their ideas. During one particular game, I was being chased by the person who was “it,” and I let out a very loud, high-pitched scream. I was overcome with excitement, and even a little embarrassed after I realized I had just screamed out loud at a professional conference. It was at this moment that it occurred to me what my students are feeling the first time they experience the thrill of a chase game in the music room. If their 28 year-old teacher could not contain her shrieks of joy and excitement, how could they at the ages of five, six and seven?

After the conference, I returned home with a new idea on how to “keep a lid on things.” If we keep the lid too tight, we run the risk of stifling the sense of joy and spontaneity that is at the very heart of these singing games. If we let the lid come off entirely, the result is no better. After seeing so many masterful teachers in action at the conference, I find myself striving to achieve that delicate balance where my students feel safe to explore their musical and human potential to the fullest. §



Angelie Timm
Boulder, CO

Angelie graduated from Saint Cloud State University in MN as a voice major, married and moved to Colorado where she received her MM plus teaching certification from the University of Colorado at Boulder. She teaches general music and choir at Eisenhower Elementary in Boulder. Angelie pursues her love of singing as a featured soloist with the First Presbyterian choir and as a private voice teacher. She also conducts summer music theater workshops for children.

Sharing SongWorks with Colleagues

Jeanette shares what transpired when pursuing grant assignment #2. "Within two months after returning from the MEI Conference, visit with at least one colleague about the SongWorks approach and its benefits for children."

Since the MEI Conference, I have visited with several colleagues in several settings about the SongWorks approach and its benefits for children. On March 11, 2011, I presented to my K-5 district vocal music department a (very brief) summary of some of the highlights of the 2011 conference. I had a chance to share about the Fleurette Sweeney Fellowship I received and what an honor it is. I also shared specific strategies from two sessions: Kari Wendroth's presentation of "Turn the Glasses Over" from *Come, Jump, Turn and Read* and Dr. Peggy Bennett's presentation of "Also Sprach Zarathustra" from *Playing with the Classics*. I also led our department in a brief vocal and breathing warmup based on some of the techniques demonstrated by Kathi Smith and Judy Fjell.

Based on the feedback I have received, both in person and via e-mail, my colleagues were highly impressed – not only with the literature, but also with the principles and practices of SongWorks that were embedded in the sharing. I have found it ironic that even though this department is full of creative, musical individuals, we have often seemed to begin our meetings and gatherings in the gruff ways that Anna Langness and Angelie Timm demonstrated in their session, "Incorporating Vocal Health for All." We walk in, plop down, grunt a little bit (maybe even complain some) and then get down to the agenda at hand...no singing, no musicality, and no playfulness! Not fun.

I approached our department coordinator and asked if I could begin our meeting with the brief warmup, followed by a song and game. She was completely enthusiastic and encouraging, a good sign! Later on, we had reached a point when we had been sitting for a while and needed to move. I suggested sharing one more activity (Also Sprach Zarathustra) and "the crowd went wild!" Five minutes, few words, complete engagement. Success!

Several have thanked me since then for sharing, and some have asked for more information about the conference, SongWorks, or MEI. §



Jeanette Kinney Potvin
North St. Paul, MN

Jeanette received her BA from the University of Minnesota, Morris with majors in Music and Education. She is in the final stages of completing her MAEd from Hamline University with a focus on Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum Development. Jeanette has been teaching for 17 years and has taught K-5 Vocal Music and Choirs at Royal Oaks Elementary in Woodbury, MN since 2002. She is married with two daughters, ages 4 and 2.



A Fitting Celebration for Annette Coffin's Retirement

by Fleurette Sweeney

Annette Coffin
Port Moody, BC

Sandy (Murray), Heather (Hicks), Kate (Smith) and I had the privilege of representing the MEI community at Annette's retirement celebration on May 27. She had invited friends from the school and music communities of her entire teaching career---in Nova Scotia from the 1970's, Vancouver Island, and finally Coquitlam School District where since 1981, she taught first at Nestor Elementary, then Maple Ridge Middle School and finally served as District Music Coordinator. Annette MC'd the event herself.

That was particularly special because her inimitable humour bubbled up at every turn of phrase. She had asked me to speak. It was such fun sharing old stories of her apprenticeship days as the stories were new to many of the folks that were there. I told of the adventures that she, Mary Helen, Peggy and I had while traveling the continent by car and plane, of border crossings and suspicious bogus nuns, of practicing so-fa and rhythms in the back seat of the car and in airport waiting rooms, of playing games at rest stops.

Perhaps the most significant tribute to Annette that evening was the one she gave to herself! She performed two of her songs from her newly released CD. Imagine, after singing with children every day these many years, she sang as lyrically and beautifully as ever---at her retirement party! To me that was tribute par excellence to a music educator who has respected, and consistently cared for the gift of voice---a model to us all. §

"*SongWorks* is all about having a playful, positive learning partnership with children. As we play and adapt games to teach concepts, we do so with love and respect for children as they enter our classrooms each day."

Judy Fjell

Minnesota MEI

Members of MN MEI gathered for their Summer Social on June 27th at Beka Butter Gathwol's home. They especially enjoyed their younger generation (with two more on the way in this photo.)



photograph by Christine Butter

Top row left to right (only adults named): Beka Butter Grathwol, Dr. Marty Stover, Molly Feigal, Terolle Turnham, Anne Mendenhall.

Front row: Kari Wendroth, Jeanette Kinney Potvin, Karalyn Koskela, Lisa Schoen

Announcing New Book

Peggy Bennett's newest book, *Playing with the Classics: Music Masterworks for Children*, will be published as two books, Volume 1 and Volume 2. Alfred Music Publishing (publisher of Peggy's RhymePlay book) plans to release Volume 1 in late 2011 and Volume 2 in 2012. Each book will contain 12-15 "classics" with accompanying activities, composer backgrounds, music terminology, scores for reading, and a CD containing each work plus "study snippets" for focus and study. You will all be notified when the book is out, and Peggy will have purchase information at her website at www.peggydbennett.com.

SUMMER EXERCISES

Remember to keep exercising these special teaching skills during your summer vacation.



Synchronized clapping



Storytelling



Walking squats



Listening and waiting for a response



Neck and tongue stretches



Conditioning for arm strength and coordination, focused listening and concentration



Precision clapping, brushing, tapping for secret songs



Expressive feet, legs, arms, hands, and face for sneaking and chasing

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

President

Marilyn Winter, MT

President Elect

Judy Fjell, MT

Past President

Deb Eikenbary, IN

Secretary

Pam Bridgehouse, OR

Treasurer

Anna Langness, CO

Board of Directors

Esther Campbell, WA

Yuriko Ishikawa, Japan

Gina Adoff, MT

Janice Crawley, MT

Annette Coffin, Canada

Membership Coordinator

Kari Wendroth, MN

Academic Coordinators

Tony Williamson, US

Fleurette Sweeney, Canada

Yuriko Ishikawa, Japan

SAVE THE DATE
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 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 PamBridgehouse@hughes.net and may be edited to accommodate space limitations.