



News and Notes

May 2011

IN THIS ISSUE

From the President

Conference Reflections

Jacie Sites p. 2

A Letter

Fleurette Sweeney p. 3

Scholarship Donations

Anna Langness p. 3

Emerging Pioneers

Kelsey Jacobson p. 4

Meghan Meloy p. 5

Kari Wendroth p. 5

News from Japan

From Yuriko p. 6

Tip of the Month

Judy Fjell p. 6

Announcing

Peggy's new book p. 6

Conference Scenes

Can you . . . ? p. 7

What is this? p. 8

New Board Members

Annette Coffin, BC p. 9

Esther Campbell, WA p. 9

Yuriko Ishikawa, Japan p. 9

MEI Information

Purpose of MEI p. 10

MEI Officers p. 10

Board Members p. 10

Coordinators p. 10

Save the date p. 10

MEI Website p. 10

Submissions p. 10

From Our President



Marilyn Winter
Butte, MT

It's Spring! Are you enjoying happy days outdoors in the warm sunlight? Probably not. For most of us this is the extremely busy time of spring concerts, musicals, programs, or informances. It's often a time of much stress. We worry, "Will this 'production' I had in mind ever come to fruition?" Many times I said to myself, "I wish I could just stay on schedule and teach my classes without all this hassle."

BUT, we must remember that music is something to be shared and appreciated. This can be a time of celebration, a time to review all that has been experienced and learned throughout the year. It's the opportunity WE have to help children acknowledge and value the multitude of musical skills they've acquired -- their

ability to "read" hand signs; easily sing solfa patterns and scales; "read" rhythms; play tonal and rhythmic patterns on instruments; read music and play recorders; move with ease and confidence in dances or passing games; execute the games they have created; sing alone with skill and confidence; sing a repertoire of significant songs that they will want to remember for a lifetime.

End of the year performances are also opportunities to let parents, teachers, and administrators know about the progress individuals and classes have made, as well as the "gift" music brings to their children. My advice is to let folks hear the LOVE and PASSION you have for music and of the pleasure you take in their children's journey of music learning!

So, dear members, hang in there, get lots of rest (physically, mentally, and emotionally.) In reflection I'm sure you will realize that these days are indeed some of the most wonderful, exciting and rewarding of our teaching days.

Happy performing,

Marilyn

Conference Reflections

The 2011 MEI Conference in Portland, OR was truly an inspirational and insightful experience for me. As a violin teacher, I had a few preconceived notions about a "singing" conference. Although the conference had some sessions that focused on singing with children, all of the sessions presented information and new teaching strategies that directly related to the skills and concepts that I currently teach my elementary violin students. The song mapping, phrasing with ribbons and song dotting strategies have truly transformed the way that I teach my beginner through advanced violin students. I am excited to be implementing the concepts and strategies that I learned at the conference so soon after. The SongWorks approach is truly applicable to the private music teacher.



Jacie Sites
Idaho Falls, ID

On another note, the presenters and attendees were delightful! Everyone was so excited about music and teaching. The excitement was contagious. The sessions were informative and creative and very well put together. I came home from the conference with a plethora of information and a packet full of ideas ready to go. I learned something new to try in each session, sometimes several things at a time. However, as a testament to the collaborative nature of the conference, I feel that I learned equally as much from my "roommates" through talking and discussing the SongWorks principles as I did in the sessions. It was great to get to hear about how the SongWorks approach is being used in so many different settings. My students and I thank you, MEI, for the inspiration! §

Jacie teaches violin, fiddle and cello in the award winning nonprofit Strings for Kids program that she and her husband Joe opened at their Violin Shop in Idaho Falls. A champion fiddler (recent winner of the Texas Open national contest) Jacie loves Texas style contest fiddle music, Scott Skinner, Bach, Sarasate and Paganini the most. She has recorded CDs with her band, Celtic Air, arranged for symphonies, recorded performance tracks for others, authored books for teaching cello and fiddle. Jacie also loves photography, scrapbooking and playing with her two miniature poodles (Cocoa and Andy.)



The 2011 MEI Membership List
will be coming to members in May.



A Letter from Fleurette to Danielle Solan



Fleurette Sweeney
Vancouver, BC

Founding member Fleurette Sweeney is a pillar of MEI and a treasure to our members. For her visionary work, pioneering spirit, unwavering support of teachers, and passionate advocacy for children everywhere, MEI honored Fleurette by giving our newest fellowship her name. Here she responds to Emerging Pioneer Danielle Solan's column in the April 2011 newsletter.

Dear Danielle,

What an honour to have my name attached in any way to such thoughtful reflections as you have shared in the April MEI Newsletter. Thank you so much for writing them. Needless to say I am thrilled for your students. It warms my heart to read that you are giving them opportunities to enjoy one another as they engage in their music studies.

I have found over the years that in order for us teachers to nurture and sustain our own enthusiasm for teaching, the trick is to learn to recognize the many and diverse areas of learning offered the children even as they engage in the deceptively simple song material of folk song-games. Once we learn

to recognize those areas, our life-long 'game' as teachers becomes one of acquiring the skill to hold that 'second reflective look' of an astute observer of the children's learning, while we participate in their play with genuine pleasure. This wonderfully intriguing challenge has sustained my enthusiasm for teaching all these years. Many blessings, Danielle, and thanks once again for your thoughtful response.

Much love,
Fleurette



Scholarship Donations reach \$1000

Last summer the MEI Board approved the creation of the Fleurette Sweeney Fellowship for Emerging Pioneers in Education and budgeted financial support for it. With no requests from the organization, MEI members came forth in support of this endeavor, donating a total of \$1000 towards the MEI Scholarship Fund from January until March 2011. We thank each of you for your generosity and your support of the MEI Mission!

We want all of you to know of the impetus taking place to support teachers new to the SongWorks approach and to attract and interest more folks. In future issues of the MEI Newsletter, look for a complete report of the Scholarship awards given this year. You have been reading in the writings of our Emerging Pioneers and other conference attendees how the MEI Conference has benefited their teaching. Watch future issues to hear from more of them. In the coming months, consider how you might also contribute to our work.

Thank you,
Anna Langness, Treas.



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.



Kelsey Jacobson
St. Paul, MN

Kelsey graduated from St. Catherine's University with a BA in Music Education in December 2010. While her focus was secondary education instrumental, she has been fortunate to work with many brilliant minds of elementary music leaders, these include Paige Macklin, her undergraduate professor, and Anne Mendenhall, her student teaching cooperating teacher.

During my time at the MEI Conference in Oregon this February I was able to learn about a multitude of songs, activities and exercises. Although I fell ill the moment I arrived, I tried to make the best of it and was able to take many new ideas back home with me. I really enjoyed Betty Phillip's presentation on "I Love The Mountains." What a way to get the students thinking creatively and musically at the same time! My favorite aspect with teaching elementary music is that each song or game that is done can pretty much be turned into a unit. While watching "I Love The Mountains" lesson play out I knew that this song could be used multiple times: the kids wouldn't get tired of it because we were always doing something new with the song. Another memorable presentation was Doug Bartholomew's ideas on how a class can come up with their own two-part composition just by singing solfege led by two leaders. This exercise allows students to be leaders in a creative way when they think of multiple things at once and encourages them to think like a musician. Thinking about time and thinking ahead of what syllable to bring their group to next really pushes students to stay focused and gives students a chance to shine! I love that SongWorks presentations include movement with singing along with critical thinking, all the while keeping students involved through play.

I truly cannot wait for next year's conference. I enjoy getting new ideas and learning more about the importance of vocal health. I'm beginning my job search and have interviews left and right! They all want full days of observed teaching, and I can't wait to use what I have learned and even use new song games that I learned from the conference to try and successfully land a job! §



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Click on this address alangness@comcast.net write "Yes" in the subject and send.



The SongWorks practice that made the greatest impression on me during the conference was antiphonning. I had forgotten about the value of this tool until I watched Vicky Suarez give her presentation during the conference. Antiphonning helps kids develop their ability to think in music. I think this ability to think in music—that is, the ability to listen to and analyze music with one's inner ear—is a critical aspect of music learning in students. It seems to me that kids cannot think about a piece of music apart from its performance until they have accessed this ability to listen with their inner ear.

I also thought that the sense of playfulness that pervaded the presentations at the conference was marvelous! It made me think about the importance of playfulness in music teaching. It seems to me that teaching with playfulness is really the key to making music learning engaging for kids. I have tried to infuse my teaching in MusicPlay with more playfulness since the conference, and I have noticed that the kids have responded positively. Thanks so much for making those few days in Portland a wonderful experience for me! §



Meghan Meloy
Oberlin, OH

Meghan is a senior at Oberlin College and Conservatory where her majors are Environmental Studies and Music Education with a concentration in piano. Last spring, she had a very successful semester teaching with the Strongsville High School (OH) choir, and for several semesters, she assisted Dr. Peggy Bennett in teaching preschool MusicPlay classes. Originally from Swarthmore, PA, Meghan aspires to teach vocal or general music in her own classroom next year.



Kari Wendroth
Grove City, MN

Kari earned her Master's of Music Education degree from the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN. During her twelve-year career she has taught in Litchfield, MN and Budapest, Hungary. She is married to Justin, has a year old son, William, expects child #2 in June, and has a golden-doodle dog named Clyde.

I have been incorporating the principles and practices of SongWorks for the past twelve years of my teaching career since student teaching with Paige Macklin. I also recently taught a college music methods course which focused on the principles and practices. I have always felt a connection to this way of teaching as the "right" and most respectful way to teach music to children. I love to see their eyes light up as they experience the playfulness and unlock mysteries within song material; I enjoy guiding them through a journey to "make up" a song game or dance. §

News from English EdVentures of Japan

Today I went to the Tokyo Study Meeting from my new place in Odawara. We of the staff were very happy to have a successful meeting.

Yuki Kawakami shared "Swinging on a Swing," and "I Love the Mountains" from the MEI

Conference. Setsuko Ito presented "Sally Go Round the Sun" and Yoshie Kaneko "Hot Cross Buns." These were for the very young children. We enjoyed ourselves very much and we were deep in the song games study.

Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster has made no good progress. Last night we had a big aftershock. Under these situations we teachers are needed to keep things safe for the children's emotional stability. The song games are very useful, I think.

Last Sunday, my husband and I moved to Odawara in Kanagawa Prefecture. Odawara is also in the Kanto Area, but it is located in the southwest. For these five days I only felt one aftershock. I could sleep better than before. Our home is on the 10th floor of the condominium. We can have a fine view of the Pacific Ocean and a mountain view from another room. This area is not so cold and not so hot. I hope it's good to preserve my husband's health.

Thank you for your kind care.
With much love,
Yuriko Ishikawa



TIP of the Month

Sometimes I forget to frame students' behaviors in the best light and question how it is that I'm presenting material. If I can take a breath and step back, I almost always see a way I can change the way I'm presenting the material or the learning experience.
Judy Fjell, MEI President-Elect

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.

CAN YOU . . .

Name all who are in the photos?

Tell what they are doing?



Through the collective effort of our MEI Facebook group, we have identified the activity and most of the people in the photos. Did we miss you? Was that your hand or partial body? Let us know.

1. Daisy Cochran, Kari Wendroth, Nancy Schimmel, Kate Smith, Vicky Suarez; in the group behind: Marilyn Winter, Danielle Koplinka-Loehr, Sooney Vianni and Angelie Timm 2. The back of their heads -- Betty Phillips, Vicky Suarez, Paige Macklin, all watching Doug Bartholomew 3. What were they doing? Mary Springer suggests, "Prep for Peer Gynt; moving through space at a high level. Either that or the Fiddlers three are robbing the bank ." We see Sooney Vianni, Pamelini Vellutini, Nancy Schimmel, Peggy Bennett, Fleurette Sweeney and parts of many others. 4. Janice Crawley says that she must have been demonstrating the perfect barbershop "ooh" vowel; following her are Danielle Solan, Betty Phillips, Bea Castillo and Melissa Castaneda



WHAT WAS THIS?

1. Portland Mounted Police 2. What kind of horse is this? It's just a horse with its hair trimmed to keep cool during rigorous physical conditioning exercises. 3. After answering our questions, the officer continued on his beat. 4. Pam Vellutini, "Say what?" 5. "I can draw a map while I sing Mozart!" Pam Bridgehouse 6. "All righty then, let's hear it!" Tia Turner 7. "That's all, folks" Annette Coffin

Meet the new Music EdVentures Board Members



Annette Coffin, Port Moody, BC joins the MEI Board of Directors as the Canadian representative.

Annette says, "As I approach my final days in SD43, I have mixed feelings about the next phase of my career -- joy and happiness! I look forward to giving more time to my MEI family and friends, I also look forward to the precious gift of time to pursue my creative projects, sing every day, laugh lots and travel east to oversee the building of our Cape Breton cabin on the Bras d'Or Lakes! I'm looking forward to welcoming you all to Canada next March for our 2012 Conference!"

Esther Campbell, Olympia, WA begins her term on the MEI Board of Directors as Member-at-Large.

Esther's study of Education Through Music and the SongWorks approach began in 1984 with Dr. Marty Stover in South Texas. She taught 7.5 years in Texas followed by 5.5 years in Malaysia. Since her marriage in 2000, she has been teaching 8 years in Washington. Esther says that being a part of MEI has been a boost to her teaching, and that she enjoys sharing what she learns with new teachers.



Yuriko Ishikawa is MEI's Board Member representing our sister affiliate, English EdVentures of Japan.

Yuriko has been known as "the magnet lady" for her warm, engaging personality that has attracted many people to study teaching English through singing with members of English EdVentures. At their monthly meetings members share songs, materials, and study activities that continue to enrich their treasure store of teaching ideas.

In 2012 Yuriko will begin teaching as a part time lecturer at Risscho University in Kumagaya city in Saitama. She and her husband have moved to their retirement home in Odawara, southwest of Yokohama near Hakone.



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.

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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
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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.