



The purpose of Music Ed Ventures 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.

**Are you interested in hosting a workshop or class in your area? Send requests to the email address shown above, to be routed to the appropriate presenters/coordinators.**

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## *News and Notes*

*May 2009*

### **From Our President** Deb Eikenbary, Indiana

"I've been a'wandering all this night  
and the best part of the day,  
but when I come back home again,  
I'll bring you a branch of May."

"The May Day Carol", an English Folk Song, arranged by Betty Bertaux, published by Boosey & Hawkes . ISM 9790051463589

This music lends itself well to the study of its melody using sol/fege—

M M R D D R M M R D  
D D D L F D R  
R M M F S F M R M D  
D R M S M R M R D

It is simply beautiful and I recommend it for your consideration.

This song has been running through my head for the last couple of weeks. Spring here has been awash with color – not to mention the traditional plethora of activities that seem to appear in our lives just prior to the end of the school year. (Can it really be nearly two months since we were together in Portland??)

I am beginning to think about what to add to my students' studies next year, what to leave out, and what just needs tweaking... I'm certain you are doing the same. While doing your mental spring cleaning, please remember to celebrate your successes- perhaps even make a list. Do take time to remember those who shot you a quick thanks—or just notice those students who left your room with a bit more of a spring in their step than they had before. Perhaps you are an elementary teacher whose students have decided to pursue music in secondary school or beyond. Perhaps you are a seasoned veteran who had an adult come up to you and tell you what they remembered most from the time you spent together when they were young. You do make a difference in people's lives, never doubt it. If you are lucky they may even bring you a branch of May!

-Deb

*News and Notes* is the monthly communication of Music Ed Ventures, 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](mailto:PamBridgehouse@hughes.net) and may be edited to accommodate space limitations.

Is your membership up to date? Regular - \$35 Sustaining - \$50 Patron - \$100 Student - \$10

Send check payable to MEI (US funds) to: Paige Macklin

Please include your name, address, phone and email address.

23021 Woodland Rd.

Lakeville, MN 55044

## Tunings MEI

**Tunings** A Column by Peggy D. Bennett, PhD: Mary Helen Richards Lectureship Recipient 2009-2010, Professor of Music Education at Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, and founding member of Music EdVentures, Inc.

In the 1980s, Mary Helen Richards asked me to write a column for the bi-monthly ETM Newsletter. At that time, I named the column Tunings and wrote on a variety of topics. So, when I received the honor of this year's Mary Helen Richards lectureship, I decided it may be a good time to resurrect Tunings and publish it in the MEI newsletter.

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### Affinity Groups

Recently, I was reading an article about Community Music settings around the world and was struck by a description of these groups. "Affinity group" was the phrase used to describe the spirit that brings folks together for a common intent or value. I, of course, thought about our MEI group.

For 20 years, our Music EdVentures members have gathered annually to sing, play, and learn. *But why?* As I looked around the sessions at the 2009 MEI Conference in Portland, I wondered what causes us to continue making these commitments to each other and to the kind of work we do. Then, I was reminded of the "affinity group" notion. And, I think that has a lot to do with what holds (literally and figuratively) us together.

Whenever I teach my music students about the various methodologies for elementary music education, I often state that very few people know about and use the SongWorks approach. Invariably, someone then asks, "Why?" My response includes listing several "paths not taken." Rather than sensing a list of lost opportunities for how we have developed, I feel affection for the simplicity and authenticity we have maintained for all these years.

Because we no longer offer courses in the SongWorks approach, because we do not have a nationally visible and active organization for recruiting teachers, because we do not have an array of print materials to sell, because we do not have a stable of members who are conference presenters to advertise our work, because we have no commercial materials or structures with pedagogical allure and wide distribution, because we are a population in which many leaders are nearing retirement or just retired, and because we have no specific vision of how our organization will develop or grow in the next five to ten years, we gather because we have *affinity* for each other and what we do.

Our members have such long-term affinity that much of how we think and what choices we make remains unspoken in our conference presentations; explaining and informing seems so unnecessary, because we believe we have a common foundation, a common attitude, a common understanding. Linking this notion to dictionary definitions, we have a community of interest; we feel a kinship, a likeness, with others present; and the force that attracts us causes us to "enter into and remain in chemical [social, emotional, intellectual, pedagogical, musical] combination."

So, as we look at our personal and organizational missions with regard to our "work," whether that is in a classroom or in the greater community, perhaps we can feel a great degree of solace and serenity. We are an *affinity* group, and at this point, I can think of no better way than that to describe *why* we are.

pdb, March 2009

**Philosophy, History, Tradition: The Why, What, and How of MEI**

Featuring wisdom, and history that are foundational to MEI

Visit some of the links on the web page to find out more  
about the philosophy, history and tradition  
of excellent teaching by MEI educators.

Watch this space for future contributions from our founders and mentors.

*Plan now to attend  
Conference 2010*

*March 5 & 6 in Portland, Oregon*