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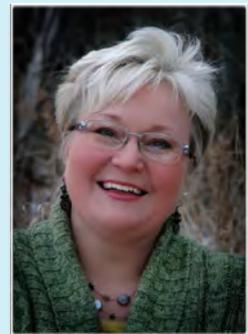
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From the President

Greetings MEI members,

The warm August days in Minnesota have not yet produced the cicada's hypnotic song, therefore I will not yet begin thinking about the 2014-15 school year. Possibly, like me, your "off button" in thinking about your teaching is really only a "pause button." Relating everyday or extraordinary experiences to teaching is so often in my thoughts and conversations.



Leah Steffen
Shafer, MN

My summer has not turned out the way I thought it was going to go. I found myself spending many weeks with my mother as I helped her recover from injuries she received after a serious fall. She has been unable to use either of her arms and will not be using them for at least 3 more weeks. While tending to my mother's needs, I began to think about how I would accommodate students who temporarily could not use their arms in my classroom. Would I smile at them and say "Do the best you can, I understand" or would I figure out adaptations for how they could hold a marker to touch the paper and song dot or create a song map? Maybe I would ask the student to be the ears and eyes for the group and notice something we might not see or hear? Maybe I would quickly adapt a game relating to a song that would allow the student to participate without pain or further injury. No matter what the adaptation, I would welcome it as an inspiring challenge.

So often we are faced with situations that require us to think quickly on our feet and provide an engaging learning experience for a variety of needs in our classroom. Such situations naturally provide various pathways to choose in hopes of bringing the learner to a satisfying destination.

Have you had an experience requiring adaptations you would like to share with a group of joyful and eager learners? If so, August 1 is the deadline date for submitting a Presentation Proposal for the 2015 Conference "**SongWorks: Discover Your Pathway.**" Don't delay a second longer in filling it out and sending it to President-Elect Samantha

Smith, 2015 Conference Coordinator. Find Presentation Proposal forms in emails sent from Anna Langness to the 2014 MEI Members most recently on July 16th. Or, access forms on page 3 of this newsletter.

I marvel each month at the creative and energetic ideas submitted to the Music EdVentures newsletters. Keep sharing your knowledge with all of us. We gain so much from your experience and expertise!

Leah

MEI President

from the Website Committee

Call for 2014 Conference Handouts

The Presidential team along with the Website Committee have been in conversation about posting conference handouts in the Members Only section of our website. Our ultimate goal is to work toward categorizing handouts as we've begun to do with the Articles for easy access and future reference. We are beginning with the handouts from the 2014 conference. If you received a notice from Leah Steffen requesting your 2014 MEI Conference Handout, please reread your handout and make any necessary edits. If it's possible to consolidate your handout to fewer pages, that would be helpful. Lastly, convert your handout to a PDF and send it to me, Pam Vellutini pamelini@mind.net no later than August 18, 2014.



Pam Vellutini
Ashland, OR
Chair, Website
Committee

Planning Underway for SongWorks Certification

Achieving Certification in SongWorks will soon become a possibility! Judy Fjell and Marilyn Winter, co-chairs of the Certification Planning Committee, have been eagerly working to lay the groundwork for creating the Certification Program. They, along with Sammi Smith, Ruthie Fisher, Leah Steffen, Terolle Turnham, Peggy Bennett, Betty Phillips and Anna Langness, are meeting August 3-5th in Bozeman, MT for three intensive days to work out details for Certification. July 2015 is the target date for the first SongWorks Certification course to be held in Minnesota.

Watch for details to appear in the newsletter and on the MEI website. If you are interested in this program, let us know now. Contact either Judy Fjell at judyfjell@mac.com or Marilyn Winter at mfw406@gmail.com.



MEI
Denver, CO
April 9-11, 2015



SongWorks

Discover Your Pathway



Conference Chair
Samantha Smith (OH)
MEI President-Elect



SongWorks: Discover Your Pathway

Our 2015 conference theme will focus on ways in which the SongWorks principles and practices can be applied in different instructional settings. With this information, conference attendees will be able to connect these strategies to their own teaching and learning in a way that specifically fits their needs. In essence, the sessions will inspire you to create your own SongWorks pathway.

Presentation applications were sent to MEI members in mid-May and June so get your ideas ready now! Submit your proposal asap! Please feel free to contact me with any questions you have regarding the theme. I am more than happy to brainstorm with you!

Submission deadline: August 1st

Email or call me: samantha.meese@gmail.com 412-691-0660



2015 Music EdVentures Conference April 9-11 REGISTRATION FORM

Registration at 9 a.m. Thursday, April 9
Conference ends at 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 11

CONFERENCE LOCATION HOLIDAY INN AT DIA

6900 TOWER ROAD
Free Shuttle to/from Denver International Airport

REGISTER EARLY

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____

State/Prov _____ Zip/Postal Code _____ Email _____

I teach Music Classroom Preschool ELL Other

1. **CONFERENCE FEES:** (Luncheons included in this fee) (All fees payable in US Dollars)

- _____ \$175 2015 Members (choose membership below)
- _____ \$225 Nonmembers
- _____ \$100 Retirees (choose membership below)
- _____ \$75 Students (choose membership below)
- _____ \$110 One Day Only (Includes sessions, luncheon, 1 year complimentary membership)

2. **2015 MEMBERSHIP DUES:**

_____ \$45 Regular _____ \$75 Sustaining _____ \$100 Patron _____ \$20 Student

3. **FRIDAY NIGHT BANQUET & ENTERTAINMENT:** Dine and share ideas with your professional colleagues!

_____ \$40 (includes gratuity and tax)

* **My diet requires:** No restrictions Vegetarian Vegan Dairy Free Gluten Free

? **TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION:** I am including \$_____ (for the MEI Scholarship/Travel Grant Fund)

Register ONLINE at www.musicedventures.org/conferences.html with payment via PayPal or

Mail this registration form and check in US Dollars by March 1 to:

Anna Langness, 1179 Lilac St., Broomfield, CO 80020 Questions? alangness@gmail.com

TOTAL PAID: \$_____ **CHECK NUMBER** _____ (Checks payable to Music EdVentures, Inc)

SCHOLARSHIP AND TRAVEL GRANTS: Inquires about a scholarship or travel grant to the 2015 Conference?
Contact Leah Steffen, MEI President, at leahrsteffen@gmail.com for information and the application process.

RESERVE HOTEL ROOMS directly through the Holiday Inn at DIA link for MEI: <http://www.holidayinn.com/redirect?path=hd&brandCode=hi&localeCode=en®ionCode=1&hotelCode=DENMF&PMID=99801505&GPC=MEV>



Kate Smith
Port Coquitlam, BC
Guest Presenter
Simon Fraser University

GO JIGGETY JIGGETY JOG

by Kate Smith

On July 12th I was invited to give a workshop to a group of young education students who are studying at Simon Fraser University in British Columbia. The course is called Early Childhood Education – Curriculum and Instruction and the session I was invited to give was entitled Music, Movement and Literacy. Right up our alley, I thought!

I debated long and hard about how to approach this session. I was given just two hours. How could I best involve and assist these young student teachers? An old and well-known proverb came to mind:

**Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day.
Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.**

I decided to attempt in the short time I had with the students, to take one of our songs and show how it could be developed in many ways to enrich the learning of children. Using “High Stepping Horses” as the study piece, we explored ways of engagement

in the following areas:

- 1 social emotional engagement
- 2 sensory motor engagement
- 3 cognitive engagement
- 4 music: oral and written
- 5 language: oral and written

We started with a story I created for the class!

THE ROYAL RIDEABOUT

Once upon a time not so very long ago, there lived a king and a queen. Now the king and queen were wise and kind rulers and the people of the kingdom loved them dearly.

Every year, the king and queen planned a very special event for the good people of their kingdom. The event became known as “The Royal Rideabout.” On one day in early summer, just about at this time of year, the king and queen would set off in their royal carriage as the sun came up and ride through their kingdom. They rode through every city and every town, every village and every hamlet. They travelled through busy city centres and down quiet country lanes. They wanted to be sure to see every one of their loyal subjects.

Now on the day of “The Royal Rideabout,” the queen would rise early and get dressed in her finest royal attire. [Can you picture the queen? What is she wearing?] The king also would get up early and put on his finest clothes. [What do you think the king chooses to wear?]

The chief groom of the stables would have the royal carriage ready. Weeks before the rideabout, he would have his stable boys and girls polish the carriage until it sparkled in the sun. [Has anyone here seen a royal carriage? Tell us what it looks like.] And as the sun rose in the sky, the royal couple would head out through the long tree-lined driveway for their royal visit.

People would start lining the streets and lanes early in hopes of catching a good glimpse of the royal couple. Always one sharp-eyed lad or lassie would hear or spy the royal carriage in the distance and call out. [Everyone started calling, “Oh, I see them! Here they come!” and so on.] And as the carriage got closer and closer, the good people of the kingdom would cheer and applaud. [Cheers and applause and comments.]

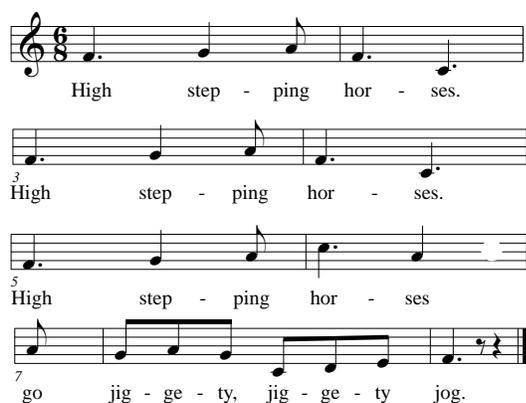
As they passed their subjects, the queen would wave. [Queenly wave.] And the king would wave. [Kingly wave.] And long after the royal carriage had faded into the distance, the people of the kingdom would still be talking



among themselves about the wonder of their monarchs. [Comments.]

Throughout the day, the royal couple continued on their journey. As night fell, many would have thought that the excitement was over but the queen and king had prepared yet another treat for their subjects. In every city and town, in every village and hamlet, a huge feast was brought forth. There was food and drink for all. [Can you imagine what food the monarchs had prepared for the feast?] And after the feast, the villagers sang and danced. They told stories and amidst much merriment, extolled the generosity of their monarchs.

Now there is one part of “The Royal Rideabout” that we have not yet heard about. Can you imagine what it might be? [Ask for ideas.] Many weeks before the actual event, the queen went down to the royal stables to speak with her head groom. Looking directly at her groom, the queen instructed him that she needed,



Did you hear what kind of horses Her Royal Highness wished to pull the carriage? Listen again and check that you heard her request correctly. How many times did she tell the groom of her wishes? Here comes the song. Why do you think she told him three times that she wished for “high stepping horses?” What other requirement did the Queen have for the royal horses? Listen as you hear her request again. Why do you think she also needed horses that could go “jiggety jiggety jog?” Let’s sing the song together and as you do, try to imagine that you are the queen or the king giving your order to the groom. Now let’s try singing the song taking turns. I’ll start and you continue the song when I indicate that it is your turn. [Several times using antiphonning.]

It is time for the royal horses to start training. Horses, let’s enter the riding ring. Please, make a circle. What words do you hear? Listen carefully! [Tap rhythm of “go jiggety jiggety jog.”] Let’s tap that rhythm gently in

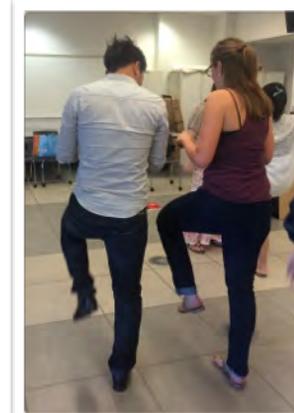
the palm of our hand and sing the melody chunk that matches it. Where else might we tap this little rhythmic phrase? [Try many different places. Sing entire song each time, tapping the rhythm in different places on body.] Let’s also high step in place the rest of the song.

How else might we show this rhythm? [Students might suggest that the rhythm be put **on the hips** within the context of the song.] Let’s add another. [Keep adding in an accumulative fashion different ways of showing “go jiggety jiggety jog.”]

Horses, you are now ready to move into pasture and practise moving forward. Do you remember how the queen wished her horses to look? [High stepping.] Why do you think this was important to her? Here comes the song. Let’s practise. [Horses move freely in the room, stepping proudly and then moving forward quickly to the rhythm of “go jiggety jiggety jog.”]



Now as your trainer, it is important to know that the queen wishes a team of horses to pull the carriage so let’s practise first in paired teams. [Students team up and talk about how they are going to move together as a team to pull the carriage.] Teams ready? Here comes the song! Let’s now try in teams of four! [Students practise in bigger groups.]



I think we are almost ready for the queen and king but first – a special surprise! This morning, I received a visit from the royal messenger with a gift from the queen. She sent along some spare parts of the royal carriage for us to use. [Show jewelled hula hoops and brightly coloured reins!] Everyone is invited to get into groups of 7 or 8 and create “The Royal Rideabout.” You may each have two royal hoops and two sets of reins. You have ten minutes to create the entire scene for us! [Students quickly discovered an interesting way to use the rolling chairs in the classroom!]

It is now time for “The Royal Rideabout.” Which group is ready? As each group presents, let's form a corridor of villagers on either side of the road so that the royal party can pass through. [Students who are not part of the royal party become the villagers, cheering, waving and calling out to the royal procession. Many commented that it felt quite wonderful to be so encouraged by “the crowd” as they filed past.]



At the end of the day, the queen and king returned to the palace. They were very tired and eager to have dinner and rest. Can you imagine how the horses were feeling after their busy day? [Ideas and discussion.]

The head groom unhitched the team, brushed down the horses and gave them a special meal and a long drink of cool, fresh water. He then released them into the pasture. What kind of horses do you think the groom saw as he watched the horses in the field? [Students make suggestions, fit the new words into the song and move in the room.] Can you imagine how the horses must have felt once their “fancy” pulling was over and they were free to cavort and play in the fields?



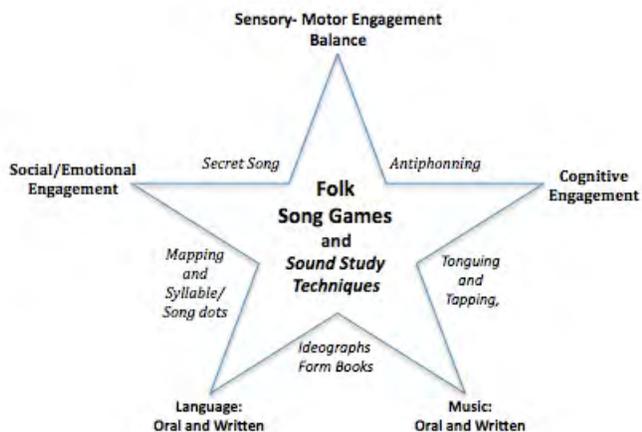
Students then were given opportunities to make song maps, do song dotting and play "Go Hunting for Words."



A follow up discussion took place the next week after students had had time to digest and think about their experience. I had secretly asked the professor to count how many times we sang the song. Not including all the times the song was sung while practising for “The Royal Rideabout” nor the times sung when song mapping or song dotting, students sang the song together 67 times!

To guide the follow-up discussion, students used the From Sound to Symbol Praxis: A Curricular Summary developed by Dr. Fleurette Sweeney. You will notice that the five levels of engagement match the points of the star. The sound study techniques are located in the angles of the star:

- 1 secret song
- 2 antiphonning
- 3 tonguing and tapping
- 4 ideographs and form books
- 5 mapping and syllable/song dots



I ended the workshop by giving students a form book which I had created for them. They were intrigued and delighted as they read through a song map, a phrase map (short/short/long), ideographs, a beat score, song dots, a lyric score in phrase form and a puzzle page.

The highlight of the workshop for me was seeing the full engagement of the students. Many were shy and previously had sometimes felt uncomfortable or uncertain in settings where they were called upon to “perform” or “present,” to act out or imagine. Within the context of the story and the song game, students appeared relaxed and confident. In addition to the levels of engagement of The Star Praxis, the CQ (Cultural Intelligence) Factor was also strongly present – creativity, critical thinking, communication and collaboration. These are highly valued and important skills among today’s young educators and students.

Many attending the workshop commented that they “were playing the whole time, but always learning!” §



Credits: Photos by Melaine Gibson, student in the Early Childhood Education Programme at Simon Fraser University; The Star Praxis shared with the permission of Dr. Fleurette Sweeney.

Peggy Bennett Retires from Oberlin Conservatory

Congratulations on your outstanding career! Thank you for sharing the wealth of your joy, knowledge, insight, and wisdom. You have inspired, encouraged, and transformed us as individuals and as teachers.



Peggy is featured in the Oberlin Conservatory Magazine 2014 article "Play's the Thing" written by Erich Burnett, Associate Director of Oberlin Conservatory Communications, with photos by Dale Preston, MusicPlay dad and Oberlin free-lance photographer. Erich and Dale capture the essence of Peggy's work and her vibrant love for teaching, children, her husband Harley, and Cairn terrier Cooper. We thank Erich and the Oberlin Conservatory for granting permission to reprint the article following on pages 11-13.



Play's the Thing

Peggy Bennett built her career on making music fun and meaningful for children. She'll spend her retirement doing the same.

By Erich Burnett | Photos by Dale Preston '83

FORTY MINUTES INTO A CONVERSATION about her life and career, Peggy Bennett has settled into a groove. She is talking about her approach to teaching music to small children, and she proudly notes that her classroom style is marked more by the things she does *not* do rather than the things she does.

She does not tell kids what to do. She doesn't bribe them. Doesn't yell. She doesn't even *praise* them—observational commentary can be far more valuable, she reckons.

And then Bennett leans in with a sly smile, as if she were about to divulge a grand secret.

"I don't *have* children," she says, the ever-present gleam in her eye beaming perfectly on cue. "I have a dog."

Bennett, contrary to her words, has *hundreds* of children—hearts and minds she has molded over the years in MusicPlay, the preschool classroom and learning lab she has run as part of the conservatory's music education program. The professor of music education has won the unyielding admiration of those children's parents, many of whom surrender their fleeting moments of free time to write letters of thanks to Bennett for the indelible mark she has made on their families.

She has dozens upon dozens of former students she has coached to the precipice of fruitful careers in music education, and whom she delights in mentoring along their continuing paths.

She has legions of devoted followers who come far and wide to hear her speak at conferences and seminars around the country—some 13,000 such admirers since 2001, according to her math.

And she has a dog, a Cairn Terrier named Cooper, who may soon be the beneficiary of Bennett's free time. Though there isn't likely to be all that much of it.

Bennett's May retirement after 13 years at Oberlin has been greeted with a series of parade laps, mostly to satisfy the children and others who crave just one more chance to be with her. In late April, there was Bennett's final Children's Concert at Finney Chapel, an annual event that draws hundreds of rapt schoolchildren from across Lorain County to experience an exuberant cross section of sounds from conservatory and college students.

There was Bennett's final MusicPlay class, where tears were shed by parents and children—though not by Bennett, who tried mightily to keep the mood sunny.

There was a May 3 reception in her honor, where faculty and staff, students and families, and even lifelong friends from her hometown gathered to celebrate.

And so on this day, as the bookshelves of Bennett's Robertson Hall office are gradually

clearing, every available surface is filling up with flowers—flowers everywhere. An orchid perched atop a file cabinet in the corner. Bouquets of daisies and roses and lilies and carnations soaking up every last inch of free space. It's as if a garden has bloomed amid the practice rooms.

"The sadness is in that I am leaving the people I care about," says Bennett, who otherwise yields no hint of melancholy. She talks of her kinship with fellow music education faculty members Jody Kerchner and Joanne Erwin, of her love for her students and her MusicPlay families. And of course, the children, who lined up one after enough to shower her with those flowers and hugs the night before.

Bennett loves them all, but she doesn't waste a moment in mourning the end of anything. For her, it's more about new opportunities. Across a career that has spanned four decades, she has deftly avoided the trap of idle hands.

As she puts it: "I don't know how I'll know when I'm too old to do this!"

"I'm only saying that I'm retiring from Oberlin," Bennett says. "I see it as freeing me up to focus on the things that I'm so passionate about."

RAISED IN PERU, INDIANA—THE BIRTHPLACE OF Cole Porter and home of the International Circus Hall of Fame—Bennett was just beginning her student teaching at Ball State University when everything she thought she wanted in a career changed. Up till then she had been intent on being a high school band teacher. Then she sat in on a classroom full of youngsters and found her calling on the very first day.

"It was the way the kids were treated by their teacher. The way the teacher behaved in playful, respectful ways," she says. "When I saw music education happening in this way, I said *that is me*. And that was it. I absolutely fell in love with the notion of teaching music to elementary school students, because I realized at that time that only in elementary education does *everybody* take music. And what they learn at that time is all the music education many of them will have for their lifetime."

So she took it upon herself to ensure that

experience would be meaningful for each child in the room.

She taught music to grade-school children in Fort Wayne for two years, then served as an apprentice to Mary Helen Richards, whose research in the 1970s led to a groundbreaking approach called Education Through Music. They ended up working together for 20 years.

Bennett taught part time while earning her master's degree from Ball State, then her PhD from the University of North Texas. She had been living for a year in Bozeman, Montana, with her husband Harley when the call came in from Oberlin: The conservatory needed a new faculty member in its music education department. Bennett, an active presence on the lecture circuit since the earliest days of her career, was the one they wanted.

In recent years, she had coauthored two books with colleague Doug Bartholomew called *SongWorks: Singing in the Education of Children* (Wadsworth, 1997) and *SongWorks 2: Singing from Sound to Symbol* (Wadsworth, 1999). Basically, they were bound versions of the teachers' innovative lesson plans.

"Those books say everything that at the time we could think of to say," says Bennett. (Since then, she has thought of plenty more to say—enough to fill four additional books and counting.)

Happy with her life in Montana, she agreed to take on the Oberlin assignment only as visiting faculty. After three weeks on campus, she realized she belonged in Ohio. And each year since, she has spent the school year on campus, then traversed 1,700 miles back to Bozeman for the summer.

MusicPlay—the name is a twist on the *SongWorks* title that perfectly encapsulated Bennett's mission—quickly became a place where the conservatory's music education students and children both thrived, and where appreciative young parents sprouted in numbers.

"I am forever grateful to Peggy Bennett for helping to foster a love of—and understanding of—music in the lives of the youngest of music students," says Lili Sandler, whose three young children all experienced MusicPlay.

"I could never sing enough praise for Ms. Bennett," says Liz Overstreet, who saw her children's passion for music blossom through the program. "Her firm but gentle approach is endearing and her enthusiasm infectious. I am so thankful that my children and I were given the opportunity of meeting her and experiencing MusicPlay under her direction."

In the summer of 2013, Bennett debuted *SongWorks for Children: A Video Library of Children Making Music*, an online database of videos created while teaching in the MusicPlay program. Parents had granted Bennett permission



to videotape the classes as they were taught, offering an unrehearsed and naturalistic view of what happens each day. Over the course of several years, Bennett realized that the videos could be an incredible resource for music educators and parents everywhere. Within weeks of the website's launch, kind words began pouring in from teachers around the country and beyond.

Professor Jody Kerchner, director of the music education program at Oberlin, praises her friend and colleague for the effect she's had on students, as well as her unfailingly compassionate manner of mentoring future and current music teachers.

"Peggy represents those professional and personal qualities that we hope to instill in all those who interact with music student learners: a keen eye for observation, an inquisitive mind, persistent advocacy for music education for all students, and the highest expectations for professional behavior and collegiality," says Kerchner.

"We will miss her dearly and wish her well in the next phase of her life!"

WELL BEFORE HER FINAL MUSICPLAY CLASS, Bennett had her next phase in sight.

"I'm only saying that I'm retiring *from Oberlin*," she says. "I see it as freeing me up to focus on the things that I'm so passionate about."

Mostly those are the same things that have sparked her sense of wonder for years:

continuing to share her approach to teaching through scholarly articles and books and lectures and seminars.

A typical slice of Bennett life: In a three-week span during winter's bleakest days, she hopped from Colorado to Columbus, then from Minnesota to Texas, delivering 10 presentations to rooms packed with young teachers. In Texas alone, she addressed 350 of them in one session.

"I love doing it because I love going in with ideas and activities that I think will make the days of these teachers and their students better, because I have that *passion* about it. I don't come in with the idea of 'I have something to tell you that will make you a better teacher.' It's 'I have something to share with you that has made *me* a better teacher and that I think will work for you.'"

"I love doing it," she says. "I won't *stop* doing it!"

As the final days of her final semester fly by, Bennett is multitasking as always: finishing a short piece called "Questioning the Unmusical Ways We Teach Children Music." It will be a chapter in a book due out this fall on Oxford University Press.

"The things I do in mentoring other students are very important to me. I love doing *bits* of things," she happily admits, sighing at the notion of authoring exhaustive volumes. Chapters are more her speed.

In fact, Bennett is a consummate dabbler. An educator, a lecturer, an author. She's also a life coach and a mediator, in the municipal court

With only 12 spots available for each session, MusicPlay boasts a notoriously long waiting list. Some parents have added their infant children's names to the list, hoping their number will come up by the time the child is old enough to attend.

back in Bozeman. *Bits* of all the things that bring her happiness.

"I can be at my home in Montana, and I can be in a conference call or on a webinar," she says, revealing hints of the post-retirement business model she's been formulating for some time. One such web engagement this year featured 45 rapt attendees who logged on from every time zone in America and from locales around the world. And Bennett barely lifted a finger to do it.

"It's all about the quality of life, frankly. And it was so much fun!"

Back in Oberlin, the curtain has fallen on the Peggy Bennett era. But she delights in knowing that MusicPlay will go on without her. "It will be *better*," she says, repeating the words several times with the gentle intent of a yoga instructor.

Samantha Meese Smith '10, a graduate of Oberlin's master of music teaching program, will take over the reins beginning this fall. A familiar face to MusicPlay families, Smith taught the class in spring 2013 while Bennett was on sabbatical.

"She will be wonderful," Bennett says of her protégé. "And she will find her way, just as I did." ■

Emerging Pioneers complete four assignments to fulfill their Fellowship award. This essay describes their experiences of the SongWorks principles and practices during the conference. Lisa Schoen and Jacquie Udem share their responses to the 2014 Conference.



Lisa Schoen is the music specialist at Deerwood Elementary in Eagan, MN. She holds a Bachelor's degree from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, MN with a major in music, emphasis on piano and voice, and licensure in education. She earned her Master's degree in General Education from Concordia University in St. Paul, MN, and she studied SongWorks at the University of St. Catherine. Lisa is a mother of three children. She is a 2014 MEI Emerging Pioneer.

What an inspirational 2014 MEI conference! I am in awe of the quality of the presentations and the amazing people who were a part of this special weekend. These few paragraphs will never adequately explain the effect the conference has had on me, but here are a few highlights:

Peggy Bennett's session, *Feedback That Feeds: Connecting What We Think and Say*, has caused me to consciously *reframe* behaviors I see in my students, my coworkers, my husband, and my own children. After all, according to SongWorks I, Principle 5, my *attitudes*, behaviors, and methodologies should be compatible! So rather than get upset when my 16-month old is throwing his food all over the floor, I am trying to aim for understanding instead of agreement. (Ha! Seriously, though, it has helped!) Instead of automatically reacting to a group of students that seem to be goofing around during a lesson, I have been trying to respond with curiosity. And I have to say, I've smiled on more than one occasion during my drive to work thinking about Peggy's story in which she imagined the driver behind her was driving erratically because he was rushing his pregnant wife to the hospital! What a difference in my own attitude and outlook on life to deliberately approach others with compassion.

Because of the conference, I have been excited to revisit mapping. I have often enjoyed using teacher-made lead maps, but I have had little success with my students creating their own. However, I felt like a light switch was flipped for me as I watched Marilyn Winter demonstrate the mapping process. When I think about the many moving experiences we had and the extensive modeling that went on prior to the group removing the caps from our markers to draw, I can understand where I have gone wrong in the past and what has been missing. If I wasn't already convinced that I should map with my students, Molly Feigal's video of her sweet student with special needs successfully making his own map of "We Sail and We Sail" sure did the trick. And to top it off, I was so inspired listening to Fleurette Sweeney as she beautifully shared with us how mapping came to be a part of our history. She reminded me that even though mapping sometimes seems mysterious and confusing to adults, it makes perfect sense to children. Mapping is a way for students to notate a song in real time while also producing the sound themselves. How powerful! I have been able to go back to my classroom and try mapping with my children with much more success in these past weeks. I am so thankful to Fleurette, Marilyn, Molly and others for providing the modeling, the language, the experiences, and the scaffolding for me to help my students experience music through mapping.

I left the conference with a folder full of treasures that I will be referring back to again and again over the course of the next weeks, months and years. Not just a stack of handouts, but paper representing real experiences, ideas, games, actual teaching words and phrases that can be transplanted right into my classroom. Thank you to the conference planners and the incredible presenters for your influence and inspiration! I feel fortunate to be a part of such an amazing group of professionals, and I'm excited for the future of MEI and where and how I might be able to contribute. §

Let me begin by saying that I love being part of MEI and feel like the SongWorks principles, strategies and techniques have breathed new life into my teaching. However, the 2014 MEI Conference was a bit of a bittersweet experience for me.

The “bitter” part was that I knew I wouldn't be teaching at my K-2 school in the fall and wouldn't have the opportunity to share all of the great ideas I gathered from the conference. There were so many fabulous lessons presented, lessons that I would have wanted to add to my plan book. I could just imagine my classes cooking up some Pumpkin Stew or quickly passing those pickled peppers! I was also leaving something that I have completely grown to love: the storytelling, the drama, the song games, the playfulness, the song mapping, the ideographs.....SongWorks!

The “sweet” part was knowing that it didn't all necessarily have to end. I was just going to have to adjust my sails. As I look ahead to my new position teaching middle school choir I look forward to exploring ways of using SongWorks to build engaging, meaningful, and musical rehearsals.

During the conference I found myself filtering through each presentation looking for ideas that could accompany me into my new role. One presentation that stood out was *Rhythm and Solfa Practice: Is it a Thrill or a Drill?* by Dr. Anna Langness and Angelie Timm. A comment that Dr. Anna made during the solfa practice was, “Notice I am not singing along.” Ah! One of my worst habits! Why would I ever think that I could sing along with my classes for six hours a day and still maintain my vocal health?! I was also shocked at what a different experience it was to sing the rhythm patterns on a pitch rather than speak them. No longer will my students sound like robots during rhythm practice. Why didn't I ever think of that?

Another presentation that caught my attention was *Hey, I Heard That On the Radio!* by Jake Harkins and Vicky Suarez. This is something my middle school choirs would definitely get fired up over. What a fabulous way to expand rhythm and solfa study AND relate to your students.

Karalyn's presentation on programs got me thinking about my concerts. Who says choir concerts have to be done a particular way? What if I want to try something different? If anyone has any interesting ways of putting together a middle school choir concert and you would like to share, I'd be interested in hearing your ideas.

Pam's drumming sessions and Judy's ukulele session were inspiring and so accessible. I noticed how little time was spent on technique and how quickly we were able to make music together. I would sure like to investigate the idea of adding drums and ukulele's on some choral pieces!

Two last experiences from the conference that I look forward to sharing with my middle school choirs are *Three Camp Songs in a Dustpan* presented by Marilyn Winter and the sound experience Erika led us through at the banquet.

As I look toward the fall and think about planning I am reminded that it is the music that drives the education. Now, to choose some repertoire! §



Starting Fall 2014, **Jacquie Udem** will be the Choir Director at Chisago Lakes Middle School in Lindstrom, MN. She most recently served as the elementary (K-2) Music Specialist at Chisago Lakes Primary School in Chisago City, MN. Jacquie graduated from the University of Minnesota Duluth where she received a Bachelor of Music Degree in Music Education with vocal emphasis. During her twelve-year career Jacquie has experienced a wide variety of teaching assignments including: elementary music, guitar, and choirs (6-8th grade, 9th grade men's & women's, 10th grade mixed, swing choir). Jacquie is a 2014 Emerging Pioneer.

. . . from What's on the MEI Website!



Marilyn Winter
Sun City, AZ

Give Me One Little Word: Effective Teacher Talk

By Marilyn Winter

As August approaches I know many of us are turning our attentions to beginning a new school year. With this, something that may be of help is Peggy Bennett's article, *The Power of Brevity: Two-Word Cues* about teacher talk in the classroom. This article can be found in the Articles section on the MEI website.

<http://musicedventures.org/articles/the-power-of-brevity.pdf>

Recently, with my little seven-year-old voice student, I found that touching her arm and saying, "Listen" or "Think" pops her right into accurate singing. Let's consider what happens in the child's mind after such a cue. "What does the teacher want?" "Oh, yes, we need to sound alike." "I know how to do that." Then there are all the brain connections telling the voice what to do. Whew! And all of this in a split second! How much time would it take if I told her every step to take to get there?

Could it be with a one-word cue we honor our students by trusting them to think for themselves and fill in the spaces around our cues? Could it be that giving very detailed instruction shuts down the student thinking and problem-solving process? Could that cause them to become disengaged? Could they be feeling, "She doesn't trust me to think for myself."?

As you immerse yourself into this new school year, I'm wondering if it might be of benefit to keep a record of one- and two-word cues you use that totally work. We may want to share those words on our Facebook site. Many times I have said to a mentor or colleague, "Oh, just give me the words to say." Those words can be "seeds" for us. We can plant those seeds and then spin off from them, tweak them, and make them our own.

HAVE THE VERY BEST OF TEACHING EXPERIENCES THIS YEAR

Editor's Note: If you discover something on the website that you think would be helpful or interesting to others, let us know! We'd love to share it! Or, if you would like information on a particular topic, please ask! Email Marilyn Winter, mfw406@gmail.com

Music EdVentures Conference

April 9, 10, 11, 2015

Denver, Colorado

SongWorks: Discover Your Pathway Presentation Proposal Invitation

Proposal Deadline: August 1st

Contact: Samantha Smith at samantha.meese@gmail.com or 412-691-0660

Dear MEI Newsletter Readers

Become a new member or renew your 2014 membership

Consider making a donation to MEI

As newsletter readers, you have undoubtedly noticed the expanding activities of MEI over the past five years. Besides seeing the transformation of the website and the additions of videos, you've learned about the dynamic teachers recognized and supported through the Fleurette Sweeney Fellowship for Emerging Pioneers in Education. Reported more discreetly are the numbers who receive Lukas travel grants and scholarships. Grants are awarded on a need basis, which changes for people from year to year. We also recognize that travel expense to the conference varies greatly. Given all the variables, we see how dedicated our members are to make their attendance and support of MEI a high priority in their lives.

MEI's goal each year is to fund the Sweeney Fellowships, and Lukas Travel Grants and Scholarships through Donations. **Our Donations come from Members of MEI!** Each year many members have made tax deductible donations in a variety of amounts: \$5 \$15 \$25 \$35 \$50 \$100 \$1,000. You may consider contributing in this way to help fund our efforts.

MEI MEMBERSHIP DUES support the ongoing work and outreach of Music EdVentures. Please enjoy the newsletter and support us! The 2014 user/password for the "Members" site will be sent with the confirmation of your payment! A wealth of resources are there for you! www.musicedventures.org

The image shows a screenshot of the Music EdVentures website. At the top, the logo reads "Music EdVentures An Association of SongWorks Teachers". A navigation bar includes links for HOME, GET INVOLVED, ABOUT US, RESOURCES, and CONTACTS. A yellow callout menu is positioned over the "GET INVOLVED" link, listing "Memberships", "Conferences", "Subscriptions", and "Donations". Two yellow arrows point from the callout menu to the "GET INVOLVED" link in the navigation bar. The main content area features a "SongWorks becomes the catalyst through which LEARNING happens" banner, a photo of a teacher with children, and three promotional boxes: "MEMBERS ONLY CLICK HERE!" with a "JOIN TODAY" button, "Featured Videos" with a "VIEW MORE" button, and "Newsletters" with a "MEI NEWS" button. The footer contains copyright information for 2012 Music EdVentures, Inc. and IOR Consulting.

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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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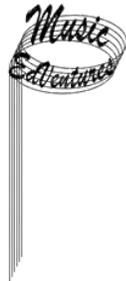
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SAVE THE DATE
2nd weekend

2015 MEI CONFERENCE

**April 9, 10, 11
Denver, CO**



Any member of Music EdVentures, Inc. can receive a copy of the **MEI Policies and Procedures Manual** by contacting MEI Past President Terolle at t.turnham@gmail.com.

Support the Mission of MEI with your membership dues!

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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 jpg files. Submissions may be sent to alangness@gmail.com and may be edited to accommodate space limitations.