



# News and Notes

June 2012

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## From Our President

Hello, all you Music EdVenturers,

Since I last wrote to you I feel as though I've been around the world at least a couple of times. On May 10th I was told that a recent biopsy had revealed stage one breast cancer in my right breast. After much research, many doctor's appointments, and numerous consultations



Judy Fjell  
Helena, MT

with friends who have survived this disease, I moved forward quickly. On May 23rd I had a partial mastectomy and sentinel node biopsy, which revealed no cancer in my lymph nodes. This means that a total cure is the likely outcome! I am so grateful to my partner, family, and friends, and to the medical professionals who continue to work to counteract this breast cancer epidemic. I am benefitting from the great progress that has been made toward early detection and treatment. And I am very relieved that I have kept health insurance as a priority, even as a self-employed musician. It is a major piece of infrastructure that is invaluable when it is needed.

As I turned over in my mind what I would like to say to all of you this month, my first thought was to express gratitude for all the positive musical energy that each one of you brings to the world. We make so much difference in people's lives with our singing, our caring, and our expertise. As music professionals we work diligently to use our gifts for the benefit of the world. Learning, teaching, and sharing music are noble ways to spend one's days. So many of the cards and emails I've received have expressed gratitude for the music I have shared as a performer and teacher.

The deepest purpose of our Music EdVentures organization should be to bring all of us to greater skill as teachers and as musical human beings. When I review the activities of MEI in our workshops, our conferences, our correspondence, and our professional writing, I feel deeply that we are fulfilling that purpose. Having just finished reading the feedback forms from our March conference, I trust the commitment of our members to the larger calling of being generous musicians and teachers.

As individuals and as an organization we will always face challenges. Currently Music EdVentures challenges are centered around creating a leadership structure that works for who we are at this moment, in the year 2012, in this rapidly changing world. Believe me, your officers and leaders are applying a great deal of creativity to find skillful ways to pass the mantle of leadership and to exchange expertise and ideas with newer and younger members. We are finding new ways of looking at an "old game," and we welcome your input at any time. We can all rise to this occasion with every bit of positive energy and spirit that we bring to playing "The Farmer in the Dell."

I look forward to the months ahead as part of the MEI presidential team, along with Past President Marilyn Winter and President-Elect Terolle Turnham. Thanks to all members for the commitment that you make to your teaching and ongoing learning, and to our grand "EdVenture!" I will do everything I possibly can to ensure the ongoing health and vitality of our organization.

*Judy*

## From Our President-Elect

*I suppose leadership at one time meant muscles; but today it means getting along with people.*

*Mahatma Gandhi*

*Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.*

*John F. Kennedy*



Terolle Turnham MN  
President-Elect

Have you been thinking about leadership lately? I have!

These quotes regarding leadership could easily have been the catalysts for our recent discussions about the future of our Music EdVentures organization. Gandhi's idea about getting along with people and Kennedy's idea about learning to lead both encapsulate the core of what we want for our leadership model. Also key is the SongWorks principle that suggests we respect the level of development of each person with whom we work. Simply arriving at a certain age does not necessarily provide anyone with a set of leadership qualities. Leadership is a journey of learning...learning to know one's own strengths, learning to create a vision for the future, and for us in MEI . . . learning about the guiding practices and policies of the organization.

With these thoughts in mind, the Presidential Team proposed to the Board of Directors the new office of President-Elect Apprentice. You should all have received the job description and application. Are you considering applying? I suspect that some of you may think you are "not ready" and maybe even doubt the leadership skills you possess. Please remember that we are a collaborative group, we support one another, we have many avenues of communication through which we can exchange ideas... *we encourage!*

We know that with each successive school year, you are building a stronger set of teaching skills. And similarly, we believe that you will develop the skills to serve in a leadership position, often while you're *in* that position. Are you thinking that this is a busy time in your family life with a 1 year old and a 3 year old but that when the children are 5 and 7, you would be ready to move into a leadership role with Music EdVentures? We'd love to know that. Are you finishing an advanced degree this year, but the following year you would be more available? We'd love to know that. Maybe you are "chomping at the bit" to serve this organization right now! We'd love to know that.

Most of us "old timers" recognize that our teaching lives have been enriched in ways too precious to measure through our connections with Music EdVentures and the gifted colleagues who shared ideas with us. Even though some of us are no longer teaching, we continue to bring our energies to maintain this

organization. The importance of “passing the torch” is clear to us, and we are eager to support other teacher-leaders for whom this way of being with students is so authentic and natural. We want to encourage you (to give you courage!) to offer your own leadership gifts and respond by applying for a role in the future of this fine organization! §

**Music EdVentures, Inc.**  
**Job Description of President-Elect Apprentice (PEA)**  
**May 2012**

1. Serve on the Conference Planning Committee for 2013
2. Participate in Presidential Team communications and decision-making.
3. Serve as a non-voting member of the Presidential Team and the Board of Directors.
4. Act as Secretary during Presidential Team meeting/discussions.
5. Enter into nomination for President-Elect after one-year service as apprentice.

**Music EdVentures, Inc.**  
**2012-2013 President-Elect Apprentice Application Form**  
**Due no later than June 15, 2012**

**Application Statement:**

I \_\_\_\_\_ wish to be considered for the position of 2012-2013 Music EdVentures President-Elect Apprentice. This is the first step in a potential four year leadership commitment to this organization, one year for each of the following:

- President-Elect Apprentice
- President-Elect (which includes planning our annual conference)
- President
- Immediate Past President

In making this application, I wish to be considered for the 2012-2013 PEA position. If appointed to this position, I will be willing to serve according to the Job Description above.

**Please send the application statement above along with the following:**

1. Your most recent **resume**.
2. **Three paragraphs** which describe the following:
  - a. **Your teaching experience(s)** as relevant to leadership with Music EdVentures.
  - b. **Your leadership skills and experience** which qualifies you to be part of the Music EdVentures Presidential Team.
  - c. **Why and how you would like to serve Music EdVentures** in the coming years.

**Send your Application Statement, Resume, and accompanying paragraphs to:**

Marilyn Winter, Nominations Chair, [wintermf@aol.com](mailto:wintermf@aol.com)  
with cc to Judy and Terolle at [judyfjell@mac.com](mailto:judyfjell@mac.com); [t.turnham@gmail.com](mailto:t.turnham@gmail.com)

Please do not hesitate to contact any member of the presidential team with questions.

Judy Fjell (406)930-1650 [judyfjell@mac.com](mailto:judyfjell@mac.com)  
Terolle Turnham (651)452-4474 [t.turnham@gmail.com](mailto:t.turnham@gmail.com)  
Marilyn Winter (406)490-2737 [wintermf@aol.com](mailto:wintermf@aol.com)

Music EdVentures, Inc.  
presents  
Conference 2013  
Minnesota ~ April 4, 5, 6

*SongWorks: Refresh, Rethink, Refine*

*Refresh* - revitalize your passion for teaching through interactive song experiences and engaging discussions.

*Rethink* - consider the components of good teaching and observe them being modeled.

*Refine* - hone musical and pedagogical skills as you learn from masterful teachers:  
Dr. Peggy Bennett, Dr. Fleurette Sweeney, Judy Fjell, Mary Opland Springer,  
Dr. Anna Langness, Tony Williamson, Annette Coffin, and Dr. Doug  
Bartholomew. Other featured presenters will include MEI members from  
Japan, BC, and many states, including Minnesota.



For teachers of children with English as their second language, special sessions are planned just for you! English EdVentures of Japan teachers will masterfully guide song experiences they have designed to teach children how to speak, read, and write English, a model adaptable to any language.



For elementary classroom and music teachers of children in PK-6, strategies to engage students of varied learning styles will be modeled, experienced and analyzed. These activities provide the context for student immersion in social interaction, movement, language, thinking, listening and singing.

*SongWorks I: Singing in the Education of Children* (1997, Wadsworth) and *SongWorks II: Singing from Sound to Symbol* (1999, Wadsworth) by Dr. Peggy D. Bennett and Dr. Douglas R. Bartholomew.

*SongWorks* practices are built on the premise  
that students are at the center of and actively involved with music making and music study.

For further information about Music EdVentures, Inc. [www.musicedventures.org](http://www.musicedventures.org)



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

## Sweet Girls: Swinging on the Pendulum and Facing Our Fears

Peggy D. Bennett and Ruthanne Fisher

Peggy Says:

Maybe it's the sickening feeling in the stomach that bothers me most. When I know that I have "failed," that acidic, fluttery feeling seeps up from my stomach to my chest. This abdominal crawl of unease can happen when I reflect on a conversation "gone wrong," a workshop moment where I misspoke, someone disliking what I said or did, a disparaging comment made by a student, or any number of other rough moments in life. For years, I only knew that I felt it, but it took me a long time to realize that those sickening feelings in my stomach and chest had an emotion behind them. Fear!

As I read Ruthie's essay, I was reminded of all those times that students have made me fearful. I wasn't fearful for my physical safety, although when my inner city children told me that "My daddy's gonna come after you with a shotgun!" it did get my attention. Although it took me years to figure out that my visceral reaction to conflict was fear, I then had to figure out "What was I was afraid of?"

If you know me well, you know I reflect . . . a lot. Some would even call it ruminating. But, I won't forget the day I figured out what was causing my fear; "What was I afraid of?"

For me, the fear was "What if they're right?" What if I really am not a good enough teacher, good enough presenter, good enough colleague, good enough neighbor, good enough scholar, good enough writer, good enough musician?? What would that mean about me?

As you know, fear places us in the throes of the "fight or flight" response that readies us in a primal way to run or fight. Our bodies' reactions to fear are almost beyond our control. But, there is hope. We can rework and reframe what thoughts we have so that our bodies and minds choose alternatives to fear.

"Sweet girls" try to keep everyone happy. "Ogre girls" try to keep everyone in line and compliant, belittling others before they belittle us, pushing others away so they don't hurt us. When we vacillate between "sweet girl" and "ogre girl," we swing on a pendulum, and it's not the fun, freeing, schoolyard kind of swinging! Radical changes from our "swinging" emotions keeps us (and our students and colleagues) off-balance and continually battling the "fight or flight" reactions.

So, what do we do? We find our own, solid, grounded, reasonable footing. We remind ourselves *how* we want to be and *how* we want to feel in the face of conflict. We coach ourselves to "stay us." And, we aim to be, not just ourselves, but the *best* of our selves. Finding this strong, balanced, core takes effort, thought, and intent. It's worth it. Be brave.

Ruthie Says:

"Quadreer, please put that down," I said gently, as my 8<sup>th</sup> grader picked up an unattended violin. "It's OK Ms. Fisher, I know how to play! And I know what this is made out of! Horse hair!" As I watched him rub his hand up and down the bow, I could feel myself becoming frustrated. "Quadreer," I said, this time just a little bit more firmly, "that is not yours, and we don't touch that part of the bow. Please put it down." He did not respond how I had hoped. "Listen to this, Ms. Fisher!" After a few painful screeches, I raised my voice and sternly said "Quadreer, you may not touch that--put it down NOW." He put it down, but not without commenting "Ok, fine, chill out Ms. Fisher, you don't need to get so upset!" before walking away. I thought about his comment later that day. Was I really that upset? Was I out of line to be firm with him? This is just one of many times I have thought.... what happened to that sweet girl?



Ruthanne Fisher  
Glenside, PA

'Sweetness' has always been my best feature, or so I thought. Until I started teaching, my demeanor had always served me well. On my first day of work, I realized very quickly that being sweet all of the time has its downsides, too. "Joey, do you think you could please stop punching Chris in the face?" just wasn't going to cut it. After a few (ok, many) episodes where students took advantage of my easygoing personality, I decided to make a change. So I didn't smile, I just yelled. Students grumbled and groaned when they realized they had music that day, and my reputation was certainly changing from being the teacher that everyone could walk all over to being the teacher that nobody wanted to be with! NEITHER of those was acceptable to me.

A graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Ruthanne teaches general music at a K-8 school in Philadelphia, PA., where she started the music program four years ago. Ruthanne enjoys spending time with her family and friends both in Philadelphia and Oberlin, OH.

So I had to find a balance...a mix of sweet and sour that showed I care about my students, but that caring also means having high expectations, mutual respect, and setting boundaries. It was slow going at first, but I was determined to be consistent. My students needed to know that it was OK to enjoy themselves in music, but not get carried away. I started to introduce fun activities into our classes, and when things started to go in the wrong direction, I would change my facial expression, change my tone, and deliver my message in a way that said 'I mean business.' Eventually, things began to go in the right direction. My students knew when they were crossing the line, but they also knew that I was happy to be with them, and we could have fun together.

Now I don't want anybody to think that this change happened overnight, or that now, after four years of practice, I am a master teacher that students listen to 100% of the time (I think we would actually refer to that as a magician). There are still days when I can feel my face getting red, or I'm straining my voice, and I know that I am becoming angry with a class. And there are also days when I'm feeling especially sugary and suddenly 45 minutes have gone by and all we've done is talk and dance to a Michael Jackson CD. These extremes will always pop up in my teaching, but neither one will ever take over again. So, what did happen to that sweet girl? She's still there, but you know what they say—everything in moderation! §

## IN THE NEWS

Here's a great story about the Oberlin students' experiences and presentations at the 2012 MEI Conference!

<http://new.oberlin.edu/home/news-media/detail.dot?id=3920872>

*from Peggy Bennett on Music EdVentures Facebook:*

So.....have you seen the blog of 2012 EP [Mary Jarrup Kuterbach](#)?

It's <http://singinghound.blogspot.com/> Exploring SongWorks with children.

Mary posts terrific ideas and "reviews" of the activities she uses with her kids.

A terrific story about the Oberlin Children's Concerts hosted by Peggy Bennett for 10 years, attended by over 600 children. [Anna Langness](#) was there this year!

<http://new.oberlin.edu/home/news-media/detail.dot?id=4022674>

## Emerging Pioneers in Education

Sixteen educators were recipients of the 2012 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 2012 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. We hear from three EPs in this issue: Anna Shelow, Jojo Lai, and Brandon Henley.

The thing that struck me the most about the conference this past March was the incredibly supportive and engaged community of teachers that I met. It was clear to me that everyone was passionate about music and about sharing their love of music with children.

What I saw from every presentation is that the SongWorks principles and practices allow teachers to share music with their students in a way that feels true to the music and to themselves. Teachers and students start from the point of enjoying music instead of gradually piecing bits of music together and hoping that enjoyment is the end result. Because, let's be honest, love of music and a desire to share that is why we are in the field of music education. We should be able to share that love in our teaching without having first to wade through notation to get to it.

The focus on movement activities was delightful to me. I loved all of the dances, body warm-ups, and creative movement to music that we did. During my student teaching experience I was always looking for ways to get my students to move to music without the social stigma of "dancing." In my school, no boys older than 8 would be caught dead "dancing." Now I have tons of new movement ideas that will work for nearly any age group that get around the social stigma.

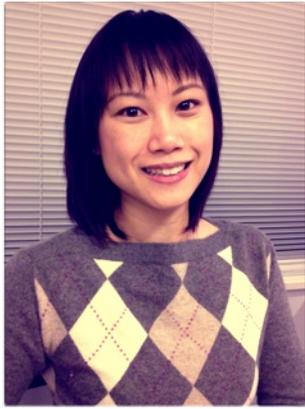
At the conference the sheer diversity of activities and sessions showed me that the principles of SongWorks can be used to teach any kind of music in a variety of ways. We did everything from dancing, moving, acting, singing, playing instruments, and composing to notating, and so much more! No matter what type of musical experience I want to give to my students, I know that I can start from playfulness and experience and then work towards academic understanding.

Of course, not having a classroom to return to myself, I am holding all of these ideas in my mind and notes (thank goodness for handouts) in hopes that I will get to use them soon! §



Anna Shelow  
Oberlin, OH

Anna developed her early love for music in her hometown of Pittsburgh, PA. In May she received a Master of Music Teaching (MMT) degree from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, where she completed an undergraduate degree in French Horn Performance. At Oberlin, Anna has developed interests in folk music and dance, cooking, and sustainable living. She plans to begin her music teaching career this fall.



Jojo Lai  
Richmond, BC

Jojo taught as a Music and English teacher in Hong Kong before joining the Coquitlam School District in BC as a Music Specialist. She teaches K-5 General Music at Seaview Community School and Pinetree Way Elementary. Jojo holds a BA degree majoring in Psychology with a minor in Economics and a Bachelor of Education (Elementary Teacher Education) from the University of British Columbia.

Three days of wonderful workshops and insightful discussion with professionals.  
Three days of meeting dedicated music teachers from Japan, USA and Canada.  
Three days of learning that changes my music teaching.

Music EdVentures conference 2012 really opened up my mind to music teaching. I am amazed to see such a devoted group of music specialists who are committed to make the best music learning experience possible for their students. At the end of the conference, I took away with me not only new teaching ideas and new skills, but also, most importantly, reflections on why I do what I do.

The exercise that really struck me in the workshop was when Dr. Peggy Bennett asked us to sing the song “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” It is a simple song and everyone knows it. I wondered what the point of the activity was; little did I know this simple song made my mind boggle.

We started singing the song and right away we were singing it in two different ways rhythmically. I never knew there were two different ways to sing the song. Apparently, one could guess your age by the way you sing the rhythm to Mary Had a Little Lamb. This simple exercise made me think deep and hard about what had happened to the music teaching over the last few generations. Why is there a difference in the rhythm? Could it be that one rhythm is ‘easier’ to teach and notate than the other, and that’s why the rhythm *has changed* over the generations? I could not believe the effect of the teaching from previous generations made such a huge difference even in a simple song like that. On the same note, this means that the teaching that I do today affects the next generation and the generations to come. I have never thought about the impact of my teaching this way. This is HUGE! Right away, I have the burden to teach what is *right musically*. That workshop by Peggy Bennett and Doug Bartholomew, “Why Do We Do What We Do?” also posed a very important question that still lingers in my mind:

*Why do I do what I do?*

*Why do I teach in this sequence?*

*Why do I choose to teach this song?*

*Why do I teach this concept for this grade level but not that grade level?*

*What do I want my students to learn and why?*

*What is driving my music pedagogy?*

*Could it be curriculum, the expectation of others, or the theory?*

Question after question of *WHY* popped into my head. These questions are the gateway to better my teaching as I challenge myself to really rationalize why I do what I do. I am not sure if I have all the answers yet, but learning about SongWorks principles and approach sure shed lights on how and why I teach music. Some principles are already challenging my current way of teaching. Each principle of SongWorks leads me to re-think and re-focus on my everyday teaching. I look forward to applying the principles, the skills, and the strategies from SongWorks in my classroom in the years to come. §



Brandon Henley  
Montpelier, VA

Brandon earned a Master of Music Teaching (MMT) degree from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music this May. He also completed an undergraduate degree at Oberlin as a French Horn major. In addition to his MMT studies, Brandon was an assistant conductor for the Northern Ohio Youth Orchestras, a teaching assistant for MusicPlay (ages 3-5), and served as choir director at the Brownhelm United Church of Christ in Vermilion, OH.

It can seem very lonely as one of the few music educators in your school, county, or district. Although I am still in the process of music education study and do not yet have a job of my own, I have experienced this “loneliness” through student teaching, conversations with current jobholders, and through participation in a music education program at a highly performance-driven institution. As I reflect back on my experiences at the MEI Conference and in my own teaching situations, I often pose a similar question to what Drs. Bennett and Bartholomew explored in their presentations: “Why do we do what we do?” or more specifically, “Why do I do what I do?” This idea becomes especially potent when I come across the dreaded job application question, “What is your philosophy of music education?” in which I promptly “save and exit” the online application and attempt to find something less mind boggling to complete. Sometimes it feels as though I have to “re-invent the wheel” when these types of questions are posed; however, I know now more than ever that I can rely on the SongWorks principles as well as the support system surrounding these ideas to guide my pedagogical, philosophical, and personal decisions . . . even when it feels as though I am alone in my own teaching environment.

Having studied at Oberlin and being “raised” in the SongWorks approach to music education in methods class, I cannot emphasize enough what a wonderful experience and relief it was to converse and participate in presentations with “real life” music educators who apply the SongWorks principles everyday. Perhaps the most important concept I took away from the MEI Conference was that not only are the SongWorks Principles conducive to the education of students in various types of music classes, but also to the way students, teachers, parents, and administrators treat each other everyday. My comfort level in participating and presenting at the conference highly reflected the notions of respect, support, playfulness, and care that the SongWorks principles so heavily emphasize. In addition, the vastness of ideas, techniques, and activities presented reflect the great flexibility of the SongWorks principles that is so unique to this

approach. I am not sure that an “outsider” would have realized during the Emerging Pioneer presentations that all of the presenters were devoted to a common approach known as SongWorks if the session had not been titled “SongWorks in Action.” As Molly Feigal so aptly pointed out in our Emerging Pioneers meeting (at 7:30 on a Saturday morning!), the principles simply guide us in our approach to teaching, while the techniques we use can vary on a tremendous scale. From elementary general music, to secondary instrumental music, to early childhood development programs, the SongWorks principles serve as a solid foundation for all types of education, music included. §

# 2013 MEI CONFERENCE MINNESOTA April 4, 5, 6

New dates

Plan now to attend!  
Apply for your leave!



MARK your 2013 calendars!  
SCHEDULE your 2013 spring concerts!  
Invite your colleagues and friends!



Anne Mendenhall, MN

Know this!  
2013 Conference will be  
another BEST EVER!



Terolle Turnham, MN  
President-Elect

*Conference Co-Chair*



Holiday Inn Bloomington I-35W  
1201 W. 94th Street  
Bloomington, MN 55431  
Direct Phone: 952-703-7526

Free shuttle to/from MSP airport and Mall of America  
Music EdVentures rooms: \$79+tax



[Check out our new YouTube Video...](#)

**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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NEW DATES

## **2013 MEI CONFERENCE**

April 4, 5, 6

Bloomington, MN

Visit the MEI Website

[www.musicedventures.org](http://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!**

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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 [alangness@comcast.net](mailto:alangness@comcast.net) and may be edited to accommodate space limitations.