
PASS IT ON!TM

The Journal of The Children's Music Network

ISSUE #35

Spring 2000



***Patty Zeitlin &
Marcia Berman***

Inside...

- Promoting Gender Equality ■ Where Have All the Fathers Gone? ■
 - Singing to Boys ■ Magic Penny Tribute to Malvina Reynolds ■
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-

Why there is a CMN...

In the 1980s, like-minded teachers, performers, songwriters, radio hosts and parents who cared about the quality and content of children's music found each other...and established a group of dedicated individuals that soon became The Children's Music Network—"CMN"—a nonprofit association that now has members across the United States, Canada, and elsewhere.

Our shared values bring us together. We believe that quality children's music strengthens an understanding of cooperation, of cultural diversity and of self-esteem . . . and that it enhances children's thinking skills and feelings of empowerment.

WHO WE ARE . . .

We are diverse in age, ethnicity and geographic reach. Our membership includes full-time and part-time performers . . . professional and amateur songwriters . . . classroom teachers and music educators . . . record producers and distributors . . . broadcasters . . . parents, grandparents and children.

We believe in the power that songs and stories have to not only entertain, but also to inspire, inform and enlighten.

WHAT WE DO . . .

We meet and stay in touch to share songs and ideas about children's music . . . to inspire each other about the empowering ways adults and young people can communicate through music . . . and to be a positive catalyst for education and community-building through music.

Our members work to support the creation and dissemination of life-affirming, multicultural musical forms for, by, and with young people.

OUR PRINCIPLES . . .

We recognize children's music as a powerful means of encouraging cooperation . . . celebrating diversity . . . building self-esteem . . . promoting respect and responsibility for our environment . . . and cultivating an understanding of nonviolence and social justice.

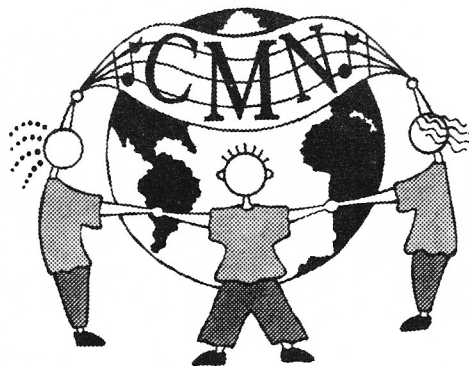
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With deep appreciation, we acknowledge

Sarah Pirtle (1987-89)
Andrea Stone (1990-93)
Joanne Hammil (1994-97)

for their tireless work and dedication to the growth and cohesion of CMN.



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Editorial Page Introduction

by Susan Keniston

Welcome to spring *PIO!* where our writers explore the theme of "gender issues." New in these pages is our annual "Magic Penny Tribute," about the life of CMN's Magic Penny Award recipient. Look to our fall issue for features on "music and special programs." Next winter's *PIO!* will be on the theme of "family," interpreted to include a broad spectrum of ideas about family and how we can address them through children's music. While we do have a theme for each issue, don't hesitate to share your thoughts and experiences on any subject relating to children and music. We all have so much to learn from each other.

The Bob Blue Spirit

As of this issue, Bob Blue is officially relinquishing his title as Executive Editor of *Pass It On!* Although this was a decision forced by health issues, it's hard for CMN to accept the loss of Bob's influence and work. Happily, he will remain "on deck" as an advisor.

Bob has been an extraordinary editor, turning *PIO!* from a journal that solicited "writers" to one that encouraged everyone to contribute their knowledge and experience. He often co-wrote articles after calling members to learn about their work in the field of children's music. He solicited viewpoints from those who felt inarticulate and helped turn their wonderful, sometimes disorganized philosophies into flowing pieces that inspired others' thinking and writing. He gave an enormous amount of time, energy, creative leadership, delightful writing, and upbeat spirit to CMN through his work for *PIO!* as well as his service as a board member during his long and full tenure. His tireless optimism has indeed infused our entire organization with a spirit of "can do" and joyful appreciation of each other.

Even before Bob's health began making it difficult for him to handle all the tasks involved in this job, he had the foresight and generosity to ask Susan Keniston to assist him. He knew that her experience as an editor and her sharp mind, combined with her dedication to the values that CMN was founded upon, would enhance the work he was doing in new and exciting ways. Susan has been doing developmental work and more and more of the editor-in-chief job over the last five years, and now we are delighted to pass to her the title of Editor. Bob's choice of Susan as working partner and his trust in her capabilities over recent years have made this leadership transition happen in the smoothest way. Under their editorial partnership, our great journal has grown into a theme-based, rich exploration of issues in the forefront of children's music today.

The stamp of the Bob Blue Spirit is indelibly printed on every *PIO!* issue that we create. For this and for his ongoing influence on us as children's advocates and as people striving to be the best we can be, we are so very grateful.

With Loving Appreciation,

The CMN Board and the PIO! Editorial Staff

An Enduring Partnership:

An Interview with Patty Zeitlin and Marcia Berman

conducted by Sally Rogers

Patty Zeitlin and Marcia Berman are both long-time members of CMN and mentors for many of us. While they are both known for their magical song-writing (Patty's song, "Spin, Spider, Spin," for example, and Marcia's "I'm Not Small"), many readers may not be aware that they had a performing partnership for many years which resulted in the recording of 12 albums separately and together.*

Both women started their careers in Los Angeles as teachers of young children: Marcia taught kindergarten, and Patty taught preschool. Both have taught courses in music for teachers at various colleges. Marcia had her own radio program on KPFK (public radio in L.A.) and for several years ran the children's concerts at McCabe's, a music store in Santa Monica. Patty has conducted workshops and has been a consultant in music for children for UCLA, USC, Claremont Graduate Schools, Head Start, and more. Both women's songs have appeared on the recordings of many other artists, and children learn them at school from several of the nationally known music-textbook series. The two met in 1962 when Patty shyly sang one of her own songs to Marcia after attending one of Marcia's concerts. Thus Patty's relationship changed from Marcia Berman fan to performing partner, a relationship that lasted over a decade and a half.

*Sadly, only a few are still in print. Patty's albums still in print are *My Mommy Is a Doctor*, and *A Song Is a Rainbow*. Patty's and Marcia's collaborations still in print are *Everybody Cries Sometimes*, *Won't You Be My Friend?* and *Spin, Spider, Spin*. *The Best of Marcia Berman* is available from the Marcia Berman Fund for Music for Young Children.

During their tours together, they traveled as far as to the Hawaiian Islands, where they met traditional hula artist, historian, teacher, composer, and choreographer Nona Beamer, whom they later introduced to CMN at our 1994 gathering (see summer 1994 *PIO!*). Patty has been a puppeteer, playwright, and musical director. She and Marcia also helped to establish a support group for L.A. children's performing artists, CAMAL (Children's Artists Making a Living), which in many ways was a forerunner of CMN.

We thought it would be of interest to members to hear about their careers, both separately and together, at a time when few women were recording and performing nationwide, and when very few people were singing songs for children that dealt with their feelings and real concerns. Growing up in the 1930s and 1940s, Patty and Marcia were part of the Folk Revival Movement and very much affected by its music and politics.

PIO! *Marcia, let me start with you. Why don't you just give us a little bit of background about your growing up and the role that music played in your youth.*

Marcia: Well, music was always very important in my family and for me personally. It's up there real high with learning how to read and tying my shoes. I had a record player and a couple of records—Tchaikovsky and I don't know what all. But being able to make choices, to pick what I wanted to listen to—that was a thrill.

In my family we sang a lot, and we would have lots of celebrations and lots of trips. Even going to the beach was a big trip. It seemed like

it took about an hour to get there, and the parents and aunts and uncles would start songs just to keep us amused and entertained and more cooperative. So I got into the habit of always being around my family and singing a lot.

PIO! *You grew up in California, right?*

Marcia: In California in Los Angeles. I lived on the east side of town in Boyle Heights, which was a very diverse community, but primarily Jewish. That's my background: growing up in a Jewish family.

PIO! *Did you grow up learning many Jewish songs?*

Marcia: There were Jewish songs and songs connected with the holidays. Then when I was about 11 years old I joined a Jewish organization. There I was introduced to folk music from different countries—Hebrew songs and songs from the Spanish Civil War. That was quite an education! It was exciting being able to sing in camp situations in an informal way, not like at school with all the rules. It was just fun, and you learned at the same time. I learned a lot. We sang all the time, and we had many discussions on the role of women in different countries, and that was a big, big influence in my life.

Boys and girls were treated equally. For example camping in the mountains, we organized shifts to guard the camp through the night. Two campers (boys and girls) walked around the campsite for three-hour shifts. I remember taking a shift after midnight and walking around with a flashlight, making sure everyone was safe. It was really important for me to have that responsibility. The things we did were not activities created just to keep us busy. They were real things we were doing. We built a nature trail, and the girls and boys were treated the same way. That was different than at school, very different. In school girls couldn't wear slacks, even when it got cold, because girls



Marcia Berman (l.) and Patty Zeitlin, still friends after all these years.

had to wear dresses. You couldn't swing on the maypoles up real high, because your underpants would show. Imagine, there were rules about that in my elementary school!

But as far as music is concerned, I feel that folk music was the biggest influence in my life and in my song writing. Growing up and going through that whole Folk Revival Movement in the late '40s and '50s and hearing all that music—all that wonderful music—was a solid foundation to build on and to get ideas from.

PIO!: What about you, Patty? What role did music play in your life as you grew up?

Patty: My mother wanted to be a concert pianist, but was single and had to work. After work she practiced and listened to classical records. We went to concerts on weekends, and I got quite restless and bored, but the result was that music poured through and out of me.

At eight, I could play piano by ear, picking out classical pieces like Chopin's "Sonata in C" and, later

on, "Polonaise" and "Moonlight Sonata." At eight or nine I composed classical-sounding pieces, little "sonatas." My mother finally sent me for piano lessons, but after I heard a piece played, I could repeat it, so the teacher didn't know how to teach me note reading. It didn't seem important to me anyway. Playing by ear was easier. I began to play some popular tunes I heard on the radio. But to my mother, classics were the only music worth listening to. Later we had conflicts about it because I liked folk music, jazz, and musicals. But now she appreciates my music.

When I was 15, a family from Arkansas moved into our neighborhood. The grandfather played banjo and told ghost stories. He also played this beautiful piece on the guitar, "The Spanish Fandango," which I loved. I begged him to teach it to me, so he did. He loaned me an old guitar, too, and I practiced until my fingers were sore. I also heard Burl Ives' "Wayfaring Stranger" radio show, and I asked my mother to check out some folk-music books. Since I couldn't read

notes, I made up tunes or tried to repeat what Burl Ives sang on the radio.

PIO!: Who do you consider to be the biggest influence on your music?

Patty: Pete Seeger. When I was 16 he came to L.A. I had never heard of him. He was doing a fundraiser for the American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born. It was to keep people who were born in other countries but were here, working for peace, from being deported. My young Unitarian friends and I went to hear him sing with his banjo in a big tent. We were thrilled to hear him sing about all of the things we believed in—peace, civil rights, public housing, social justice. At the time I think I was the only one in my high school who was against the A-bomb and for integrated housing.

Pete agreed to let us tape his concert, and when my friends and I all went up to a summer camp after that, I learned every song on the tape. It was so exciting to find music that expressed what I believed in and that inspired me so much. Hearing Pete was a major turning point in my life.

PIO!: Patty, what got you to start writing songs?

Patty: After learning to play guitar and hearing lots of folksongs, I started writing. I didn't care for all of the lyrics to some songs, like, "My horses ain't hungry, they won't eat your hay," so I made up other words and added my own verses. Then when I was 16, my boyfriend was drafted in the Korean War. So I wrote a song about how sad it was for us to be apart during Thanksgiving.

PIO!: Marcia and Patty, you both grew up playing music and singing, and it actually sounds like it was very much a part of your being, certainly by the time you finished high school. When did you meet each other? Were you already performing at that point?

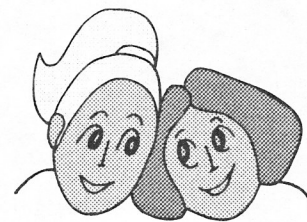
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MY FRIEND'S MOTHER

words & music by Lisa Garrison
©1977 Lisa Garrison



"My Friend's Mother" is part of a song series concerning tolerance and acceptance that Lisa wrote for children. You can write to her at PO Box 745, Peck Slip Station, New York City, NY 10038.



lively

My friend's mo-ther is a les - bi - an and she's a friend of

second time to Coda

mine_____ My friend's mo-ther is a les - bi - an and I think that's just

fine. She can take you fish-ing or star wish-ing. She can be ex - ci - ting or a


bore. She can be tre - men-dous or hor - ren - dous when she's ma-king you do your

slower

chores. Like do-ing the dish-es, pull-ing the weeds. But she asks you of your

D.C. al Coda ⊕ *Coda*

needs. And an-swers with her own, check - ing in to see how you've grown. 'Cause fine.—

 Bonnie Lockhart is the Songs Editor for Pass It On! She solicits, edits, researches, and computer engraves the songs. She is an educator, performer, and songwriter, and is a board member of CMN.

Girls' Voices Rising:

Sending New Messages in Songs

by Sarah Pirtle

I remember vividly being a teenager and hearing lyrics that disparaged women. I was 17. At a dance at summer camp my friend Karen was lip-synching to the Rolling Stones' song, "Stupid Girl." The words said, "I'm not talking about the clothes she wears. / Look at that stupid girl." It went on to say that she was "the sickest thing in this world," and every other line was, "Look at that stupid girl." The lyrics really hurt. I watched Karen internalize the words. She sang along like she thought she was stupid and by saying it out loud she'd be safe from anyone else saying it first. I wanted someone to step in and intervene. I felt frozen. I'd seen movies that summer on the Nazi concentration camps, and *that* was the sickest thing in the world to me. What was going on?

Two years later in 1969 I met people who were talking about the phenomenon I'd experienced but had no words for—that spooky feeling of perceiving that someone is being mistreated while the dominant reality says it's okay. I attended a program entitled "Women and Music" at one of the early meetings of Cleveland Women's Liberation, where I met people—bright, interesting, fun-loving women and men—who were talking about sexism, and talking about it in relation to music, the place of heartbeat and connection. Recordings were played of popular songs like "Under my Thumb," also by the Rolling Stones, only this time we discussed how the words affected us. We said these songs impacted us, and we told how we felt when we heard them. I realized

I wasn't alone. This one experience changed my life; it opened up the world and brought me into the feminist movement at age 19.

This was the time of the explosion of women's music, of Olivia Records and concerts by Cris Williamson, Meg Christian, and Holly Near coming to our city. These songs were lifelines. They invited women everywhere to start to put our own feelings into songs. In the early 1970s, friends and I started a feminist performing group called "Big Mama Poetry Troupe," where I could write and sing my own songs, songs with positive messages for women. The first one I performed said,

We are the tides of morning
dancing in the light.
Raise your head from mourn-
ing, we're taking, taking
flight.

It was at about that time—30 years ago now—that I began teaching elementary school, and I was lucky that I had many such songs ringing in my ears, to remind me of the importance of positive messages for girls. Reflecting upon the intent behind the songs I've collected or written, I see that there are three different ways the songs aim at being supportive for girls growing up. First, they offer messages of encouragement and empowerment; second, they reject abuse and offer antidotes; and third, they teach girls about their long legacy of women's heritage. Let's look at some examples of each of these kinds of songs.

SONGS OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

I want the music I use to convey to girls my encouragement for them to take flight. I look for ways to say, Go for it! You can do it! Child therapist Liz Klock explains that the problem with Barbie dolls is that they imply that what matters most for girls and women is how they look, rather than what they like to

If what a developing human really needs is to be able to contact, hear, and act upon their own unique desires and interests, the culture leads both girls and boys in a false direction.

do and what they decide is important to them. In toys, rock videos, and television, the old prescription for success—to be thought attractive by others, to fit in and not rock the boat, and to focus on having a boyfriend—is still very much alive and well and is as lethal to the development of true self-esteem as ever. In other words, if what a developing human really needs is to be able to contact, hear, and act upon their own unique desires and interests, the culture leads both girls and boys in a false direction. Sexism isn't a problem of men against women; it's a problem of imprisoning standards and patterns of behavior that hurt everybody.

To understand how girls form a sense of self in the midst of sexism, I look by analogy to the writing of Beverly Tatum, a professor at Mount Holyoke College who teaches classes on racism and self-concept. The problem for a girl who is building self-concept is to be able to integrate two realities—to hold in one hand her developing positive sense of self and to hold in the other hand the reality of sexism. How does a girl develop the courage and confidence to acknowledge that there are sources in the world (such as popular music stars), who are held up as trustworthy guides, who are telling her she should do things that aren't really in her best interest? If the presence of sexism is denied for self-survival and its standards accepted without ques-

continued on next page ➤

tion, the self grows around a false understanding of the forces and factors in the world. A young woman needs to develop the ability to say, At my core I am good, powerful, and effective, and I am aware of the presence of sexism in my world.

Malvina Reynolds' song, "No Hole in My Head," written in 1965, is one that helps to place a wedge between unhelpful messages and one's own sense of direction. It says,

Everybody thinks my head's
full of nothin',
Wants to put his special stuff
in.
So please stop shouting in my
ear,
There's something I want to
listen to,
There's a kind of birdsong up
somewhere,
There's feet walking the way I
mean to go,
And there's no hole in my
head, too bad.*

Some songs set forth an example of a woman acting from strength and self-confidence. Sally Rogers' song, "What Can One Little Person Do," does this as she speaks of Rosa Parks (see fall 1999 *PIO!* for a reprint of Sally's song). In a song for upper-elementary-age children, I celebrate my friend Andrea Ayvazian as she trekked up Mt. Denali, the tallest mountain in North America. In another I wrote, "The Treehouse Song" (for ages 3 to 10), I wanted to bring empowerment into daily life. Three girls are spotlighted as they build a treehouse. Here's the middle verse and chorus:

Tina's in the apple tree fitting
boards across.
She yells for another one and I
give it a toss.
Now we've got the boards down
stretching far and wide.

*"No Hole in My Head," by Malvina Reynolds,
© 1965 by Schroder Music Co. Used with
permission.



Girls at Journey Camp (Sarah Pirtle, Director) spontaneously creating a chant,
"We believe in ourselves."

There's room for the three of
us sitting side by side.
Hold that nail and hit it once
again.
Yank it with the cat's paw if it
starts to bend.
Blam! goes the hammer. Work
with all your might.
Don't give up 'til it's just the
way you like.
No, don't give up 'til it's just
the way you like.

SONGS CONTRADICTING ABUSE

A second kind of message that I feel is important for girls to hear through music is that mistreatment is not okay. No one deserves to be hurt. When asked by a local battered-women's shelter to create a song for children to be sung at a take-back-the-night presentation, I used these words:

Like a tree on a mountainside,
I take my strength from the
rain.
Like a tree on a mountainside,
I drink in hope again.

When the day is tough, when
my tears fall down,
I reach my roots down to the
ground.
Like an old tree standing here,
I have the power to heal.
And the rain says, no one
deserves to be hurt.

This year I had a sobering experience at an elementary school. Sixth-grade girls shared the CD they had selected for a dance they were creating. They pushed the button for their selection, and I settled back to discover what popular music is like these days. They'd chosen a song by Britney Spears. As they smiled and danced, the main phrase in the song jumped out incongruously: "Hit me, baby, one more time." I was aghast. After appreciating their dance, I had to share my feelings about the lyrics. We talked about the problem of date violence, and I asked them to go on a search for music that didn't say it was okay to hurt someone. One of the most sobering

aspects of this was that one of the mothers in the school community had just nearly died from domestic abuse. The girls replaced that music with a Back Street Boys song, "The Perfect Fan," which honors mothers.

One of the music presentations I do for grades 6 to 12 is called "The Opposite of Violence Is Connection." Among the songs I use is "Don't Pass It On," which was co-authored by myself and eleventh-grade students at a high school in Springfield, Massachusetts. We began by discussing ways they experienced violence in their lives. Two students said that their parents had been hit as children by their grandparents and had told them explicitly that they would never hit them. Our conversation led to this song:

There are secrets in some
families nobody wants to
say.
A slap in the face, a scream in
the night.
A life of fright, push the
troubles away.
Don't pass it on, don't pass it
on.
But I won't do that to my child,
Even though it was done to
me.
Take my hand and take a
stand.
We won't pass on what should
not be.

In elementary schools there's a particular way that verbal violence can encourage sexism. I saw this at a school in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, while leading a residency on respect for diversity. Teachers said a big problem was that of boys calling other boys "girl." To help address this problem, I used a song with this chorus: "Speak up, we need your voice," and I set up role plays where I pretended to be a person engaged in put-downs. Students could come up in teams of two or three and practice speaking up to me and giving me new infor-



Campers at Journey Camp in Deerfield, Massachusetts, directed by Sarah Pirtle.

mation so that I could understand why I needed to stop the hurtful behavior.

In one role play, I took the part of a boy named Jack who called his friend a girl because the friend wouldn't play baseball with him that particular day. As we unpacked the situation, we addressed it on many levels. To start off, we said that to call someone a girl shouldn't be used as a put-down because it's not true that being a girl is something negative, and it hurts everyone to imply that it is. We agreed that individuals get to decide what they want to do, based on how they feel and not based on their gender. Girls can do carpentry, and boys can take dance classes. You decide what is fun for you to do in the world. Afterward one girl in the front row seemed ignited by the discussion. She said, "Listen to the song I just wrote." She sang, "Whatever you do, you're still you."

SONGS THAT TEACH WOMEN'S HERITAGE

A third key message for girls to hear is contained in songs that teach the long legacy of women's heritage. I want girls to know that they belong to a history of courage and essential contribution. For instance, at

a program I do for Girl Scouts and their mothers, I focus on 12 women in history and share verses to a song I wrote, called "I Want to Know Your Name." One verse says,

Rachel Carson,
You told the truth about
pesticides.
I want to know your name.

Then the participants focus on their own families and female ancestors and write new verses to the song, telling about these women's lives. One daughter wrote about her mother:

June Roberts,
You didn't let not having
parents stop you
From making your mark on
the world.
I want to know your name.

Women's heritage is also contained in archetypes. I've discovered that girls carry favorite positive archetypes and that writing songs can provide a way to express them. At a summer peace-camp program I lead, each participant devises a character that they will represent in our final pageant. One year, 11-year-old Susannah Berard wrote this song to accompany the part she selected:

I am the Goddess of children.
I am the mother of the plants
and the people and the
deer.
I am the Goddess of children.
I am the power of new life born
each year.

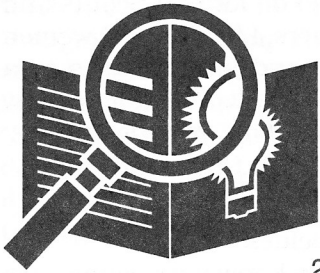
Pat Humphries' song, "Never Turning Back," was used as the central theme song at the 1995 U.N. Conference on Women in Beijing. This song and Ruth Pelham's "I Am a Woman" come from this spirit of heritage and sustained strength. They are staples of concerts that spark a discussion on gender equity and mutual respect.

The folksong "Hard Is the Fortune

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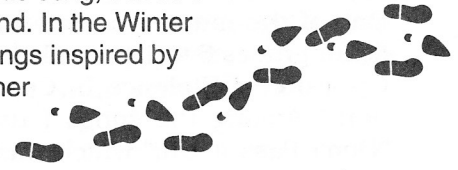
HARRIET THE SPY

words & music by David Heitler-Klevans
©1998 David Heitler-Klevans



Smart and plucky heroines provide an antidote to sexist stereotypes. Harriet the Spy, from the still-popular children's book of the same name, is just such a heroine, and was a childhood favorite of Jenny Heitler-Klevans. David wrote this song, based on the beloved Harriet, for Jenny to sing in their duo, Two of a Kind. In the Winter

2000 *PIO!*, Jenny wrote about how they use this and other songs inspired by books. To contact David and Jenny about their recording of this and other songs, write to Two of a Kind, 130 W. Nippon St., Philadelphia, PA 19119.



Intro Bm (Gtr. riff:) D A Bm D A

Refrain Bm (Gtr. riff continues)

Har - ri - et the Spy _____ Har - ri - et the Spy _____

Verse Em Bm D A

Har - ri - et the Spy is a su - per sleuth. She's al - ways sear - ching for the truth.

Em Bm D F#7

She does - n't knock and she does - n't use keys. She writes down ev - 'ry - thing that she sees. _____

(to Refrain) F Bridge Em G D

Sees what goes on. She's here and gone.

F C G F#7 (to Refrain)

Writes it all down. She's spy - ing all a - round the town. _____

Harriet the Spy

→ continued from previous page



refrain:

Harriet the Spy, Harriet the Spy.

1. Harriet the Spy is a super sleuth.

She's always searching for the truth.

She doesn't knock and she doesn't use keys.

She writes down ev'rything that she sees.

refrain

2. Harriet the Spy is really cool.

She says what she means, and she's nobody's fool.

If you are her friend, she will never forget it.

But if you make her mad, she will make you regret it.

refrain

bridge:

Sees what goes on.

She's here and gone.

Writes it all down.

She's spying all around the town.

refrain

3. She doesn't care what the other kids say.

She's got to live life her own way.

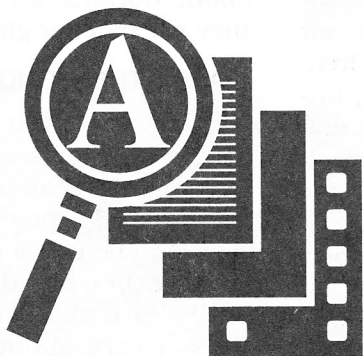
She's smart and she's funny and she knows what to do.

She makes me feel like I could be that way too.

refrain

bridge

refrain



Notes from the Field

by Nancy Hershatter

It's Thursday morning. The three year olds arrive in my music class at Greenville Church Nursery School all in a bunch, breathless and excited, followed closely by their teacher. "Do you have any songs about gerbils having babies?" she inquires. "Cutie the gerbil had a litter last night. We had to separate the mother and babies from the father quickly this morning, but we counted and we think that they're seven in all." This teacher has tremendous faith in my musical talents, but at this moment, as I take a fast mental inventory, nothing leaps to the tip of my tongue that is remotely related to gerbil litters. So, I do what Sandy Pliskin did (see fall 1999 *PIO!*): I appropriate an old spiritual, and we're ready to roll. The tune is "Mary Had a Baby." I replace the refrains "Yes, lord" and "Yes, my lord" with "yesterday mornin'" and "seven in all." The children are satisfied. We sing:

Cutie had some babies, yesterday mornin'


Cutie had some babies, seven in all

Cutie had some babies yesterday mornin'

We counted them, we think that they're seven in all.

For the second verse, we ask, "What shall we name them?"

A few hours later in the Northwest Bronx, a world away from Scarsdale, I am sitting on the floor in a family daycare home, strumming and brum-brumming on Woody Guthrie's "Ridin' in My Car," with children aged one to five. As I often do, I sing out to them "Look out the window, what do you see?" This musical shared decision making about where the song will go often takes us to unexpected places, and today is no exception. Terence, his brown eyes shining, calls out, "A tiger—I'm dancing with the tiger! There's a giraffe—I'm putting the giraffe in my car." His daycare provider smiles at me over Terence's head: "He probably could; they've got a sunroof."

On the way home, I think about how different these children's experiences would have been, if in the first class someone had minded our using a song about the Virgin Mary to hail the arrival of a litter of gerbils; or if in the second class the teacher had said, "Don't be ridiculous, Terence, you don't put a giraffe in your car!" (These kinds of reactions have happened in my classes, too, at other times and in other places.) I think of how much I cherish a sense of the valuing of playfulness and the nurturing of creativity and how, sadly, it often is missing from children's lives. Today was a lovely example of what can happen in the presence of playfulness and creativity. How I wish that all days could be like this one, for all children. 

Nancy Hershatter lives in Bronxville, New York, and is a music consultant to preschool programs.

Singing to Boys (and Girls, Too!)

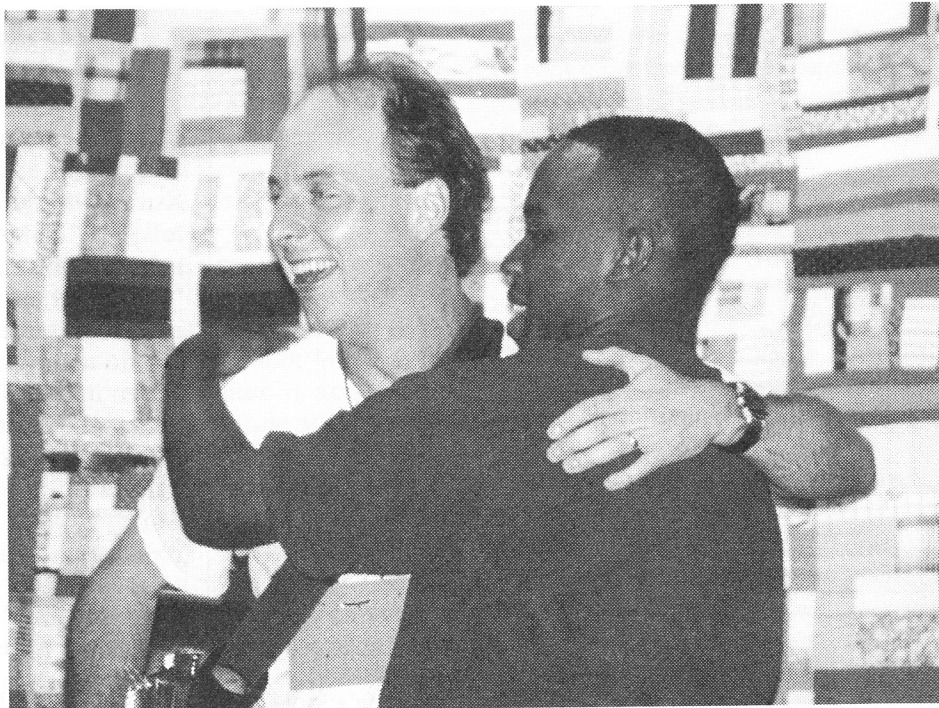
by Bill Harley

I learned early that I couldn't perform for children the way I performed for adults. They wouldn't put up with it. In addition to learning that I needed to develop material that used their bodies as well as their heads, and aimed at their cognitive abilities, I had to drop much of my preaching. Don't get me wrong—I wanted to preach. I wanted to tell them the way the world was, and the way they should be. I tried, and I still do try, especially when I'm getting dirty looks from a second-grade teacher with a strong disciplinarian streak. But I have mostly given up trying, because I kept failing. I didn't get my message across, and I bored the kids. Their antennae are up, looking for the next adult who has something they "need" to know. And when they find you, you're in trouble.

So, I have moved from being prescriptive to being descriptive. This is a long way of saying that when it comes to addressing gender issues, I might model, but I rarely prescribe.

At the risk of walking out onto the thinnest of ices, I think our perception about how we approach gender differences has changed over the past 20 years. What I once took as true—that gender differences were learned—has been replaced with a sense that much is learned, but a lot comes with the territory of being a boy or a girl. An openness to this difference—accepting people first where they're at, rather than deciding where they should be—has an effect on how I work with and perform for children.

There are at least two factors that have influenced my thinking about how I work with girls and boys. First, my wife and I had two boys. Second, I've tried to keep up on the



Bill Harley (left) and an appreciative friend at a concert in Mississippi.

current thinking on gender. In this I've been influenced by a number of very good writers, including Michael Gurian (*A Fine Young Man* and *The Wonder of Boys*); Michael Thompson, Daniel Kindlon, and Teresa Barker (*Raising Cain*); and Mary Pipher (*Reviving Ophelia*). And of course there are Carol Gilligan's studies, including *Making Connections*, which I recommend, and *Meeting at the Crossroads*, which is also supposed to be good.

Paradoxically, the short answer to how I address gender issues with boys and girls is that I try to treat everybody the same. I try to honor the emotional lives of all children. I try to appeal to their slightly anarchist bent (easy for me to do), and I try to show them some of my feelings. In all of this, I cannot divorce myself from who I am and what my experiences have been. This perspective is especially important for all of us to realize—there is not a cookie-cutter approach to how we all should treat the kids we work with. I am forever influenced (dam-

aged? nurtured? blessed? twisted? all of the above?) by the experiences that have made me. I was one of three boys growing up. Both of my children are boys. Augggh! Does this color my world view? How could it not? Do I see things differently from a woman raised with sisters, raising only daughters? How could it not? Will we be different in our approaches to working with kids? How could we not? Will only one of our approaches be right? I hope not.

And so here are my biased, narrow-minded, solipsistic observations about working with boys. I think they are true for girls, too.

HONOR THEIR EMOTIONAL LIVES

Dealing now, in a most intimate way, with adolescent and preadolescent boys, I can tell you that they have a hard time expressing emotion. Maybe it's hormones. Maybe their father failed them. I don't really care about nature or nurture—I care about who they are now. They are not incredibly process-oriented. I cannot make them

Whether they're foreign races or not, there is much that boys and girls share in common, so I do have an inkling about some of the things that girls feel, and boys are well served when they have to acknowledge the experiences of girls.

express themselves. I cannot judge them for their fumbling approach to language and feeling. What I can do is acknowledge that they have feelings, even if unexpressed, and try to show them my feelings and express some vulnerability. Note that, again, this is not prescriptive (how they should act) but descriptive (how they might feel). When we're able to name our own feelings, in song and story, we give them a chance to name theirs.

MODEL A WAY OF BEING

It's my opinion that an adult male expressing emotion, passion, what sensitivity he can muster, and a slightly twisted view of the world is an interesting thing for a child to witness. It may do more for them than anything I can tell them. Men singing songs to children are vulnerable in a way most men aren't. I may just be defending a position I've found myself in, but I do think it's true. So, my rendition of "Five Little Monkeys" is, in the deepest sense, a political act. Hmmm.


BE FAIR IN SHARING PERSPECTIVES

Whether they're foreign races or not, there is much that boys and girls share in common, so I do have an inkling about some of the things that girls feel, and boys are well served when they have to acknowledge the experiences of girls. (This must be true, since six-year-old girls write me letters.) Balancing the participation of girls and boys

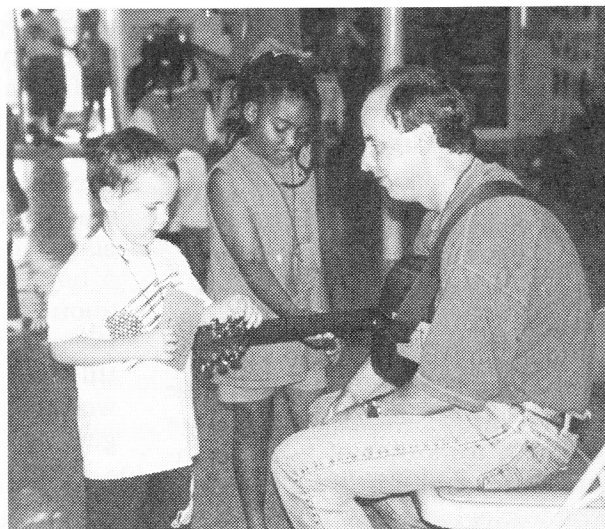
and choosing gender-balanced content doesn't require a lot of thought, it's just a matter of being aware. But I think it's important. When I take verses for a zipper song, I choose boys and I choose girls. When I tell stories or sings songs about people, I tell stories about both genders. Of course, doing this is now second nature to most of us, but it is significantly different from how things used to be. Interestingly, I have never had a boy complain about girls being the protagonists in my stories. They have only complained if the story was boring.

Now, I am conscious that some of my writing is aimed more toward boys, but that is reflective of my perspective. I'm assuming that there are others with a better grasp of the experiences of girls than I out there, working on the other end. After the kids listen to my perspective as a man raising sons, I can only hope the next adult they see is that woman with the sisters, raising the daughters.



I think hard-and-fast rules in approaching gender issues are hard to come by. More important is an openness to children's experiences and an acknowledgment of their feelings. When those feelings are out and on the table, a more genuine sharing can take place. I feel I've done my job when a boy comes up and says, I didn't know someone else felt like that. It doesn't happen everyday, but it does happen. 

Bill Harley is a singer, storyteller, songwriter, and playwright who lives in Seekonk, Massachusetts, with his wife, Debbie Block, and two sons, Noah and Dylan.



Two young friends teach Bill Harley how to play four-hand duets on guitar.

Minutes of national CMN board meetings are available to be read by CMN members upon request.

Is this your last issue of *Pass It On!*?

Check your membership expiration date on the mailing label. The next issue, to be mailed in September, will go to current members only.

Promoting Gender Equality

by Beth Bierko

One day about a year ago, I overheard my then four-year-old daughter, Helen, tell a friend who was admiring the numerous guitars on display in our home, "These are my dad's. My mom doesn't play guitar because she's a girl." I was shocked. As a feminist, a mother of two daughters, and a children's performer who works hard to send messages of equality, I was concerned and disappointed that my daughter had come to this conclusion. But I realized that, based on the information she had, there was a logic to it.

I carefully explained to Helen that the reason I don't play an instrument is because I never learned how, not because I'm a woman. Since then, my husband Scott and I have made a point of showing Helen many women who do play. (Last October's CMN National Gathering was a great source for this!) This experience made me realize how impressionable children are to messages about gender and how they can draw broad-based and often erroneous conclusions from an individual experience or observation. Keeping this idea in mind has served me well in my professional life. I've also learned a great deal from other performers. The following are a few suggestions of simple things we can all do to help promote gender equality.

AIM FOR BALANCE

Make a conscious effort, when selecting volunteers for an in-class or onstage activity, to choose an equal number of boys and girls whenever possible. As simple and obvious as this sounds, it is easy to forget to do. Moreover, it is amazing the conclusions people can come to when things are not "equal." For example, we once had an adult audience

member point out that for our song, "Laundry Mountain," we had selected only one boy to five girls. The adult's response—"What, boys can't do laundry?" I also remember a concert where we asked each teacher to send up one child per class, and 8 of the 10 teachers sent a boy. Having read many articles about girls being overlooked in the classroom, I had to wonder whether this was a coincidence. Even if it was, what might it convey to the girls in that audience?

When you have a classroom or auditorium full of excited children shouting and raising their hands to be picked and you want to keep things moving, it's easy to start selecting people at random. And maybe most times you get a fairly even distribution. But if you do not, you may be sending a negative, unconscious message. Better to take an extra moment, make certain things are equal, and send a positive, conscious one.

CHOOSE THE BEST MATERIAL

If you are a parent, educator, or performer searching for music that illustrates and supports the values of gender equality, there are many wonderful songs to choose from. One of my favorites is Patricia Shih's song, "Why Not?" which asks questions such as, "Can a girl be strong? Boys wear their hair long? Can we all be kind? Can we open our minds?" The answer, in the song as well as in life, is of course, "Why not? We can be anything we want to be!" Another great one is Bob Blue's "The Ballad of Erica Levine," which presents a young woman whose strong sense of self keeps her from succumbing to the illogical requests of the boys and men in her life. Then there's Ruth Pelham's "I Cried," which paints the tender image of a father crying and comforting his child about his divorce from the child's mother, while father and child share muffins after school. This is a powerful scene that plays against gender stereo-

types. As members of CMN we are very lucky to have access to these songs and many more. For me, they provide a wonderful alternative to the banal pop tunes my daughter learns from friends on the bus.

ADAPT EXISTING MATERIAL

As songwriters, Scott and I like to create story songs to communicate important themes or messages, because stories are brilliant at entertaining as well as instructing. They can illustrate a point without being didactic. Furthermore, story songs provide a natural setting to demonstrate people displaying different emotions in diverse situations. But we have to be careful which stories we choose. Some of the stories we find are inappropriate because they promote stereotypes (*e.g.*, the evil stepmother, the brave male hero, the pretty girl in her party dress, the unruly boy who only plays baseball).

Scott and I have encountered these challenges when we have looked for folktales to turn into songs, as many that we at first thought had wonderful messages unfortunately had only male characters. In trying to stay "true" to the traditional story, I would find myself playing the role of a boy or a man. Then I saw a wonderful musical storyteller, Heather Forest, performing an old Yiddish tale about a wise rabbi (Margot Zemach's "It Could Always Be Worse"), which we also do in our concerts. Heather simply changed the rabbi into the "wise old woman of the town." What an eye-opener for me! The story worked just as well with the change, and she presented a very positive female role model as well.

Even simple songs that are "just for fun" can benefit from a "sex change." At the 1998 CMN National Gathering, we performed a song called "Hello, My Name is Joe," the story of a fellow who works in a button factory and deals with a very demanding boss. At the the follow-

Kate simply substituted one word, she, for he, when referring to the boss, and this makes the difference between women being invisible or empowered.

ing year's gathering, Kate Munger told me that she had been using the song with children in California. "And," she revealed, "I've made the boss a woman!" Kate simply substituted one word, *she*, for *he*, when referring to the boss, and this makes the difference between women being invisible or empowered.


PROVIDE GOOD ROLE MODELS

I believe we are all role models, whether we like it or not. Surely, artists, educators, and parents consciously model all the time, but so do children for one another. We all pick up on what others say and do and many of us, particularly children, change our behavior accordingly. This happens when we have positive, gender-friendly models as well as negative, stereotypical ones. This means that those of us who work with children have to work diligently to recognize and direct our efforts to—as the song says—"accentuate the positive."

In our work with elementary-age students, we have seen the positive effect that a role model can have on children. For example, when Scott or a male teacher dances on stage, fifth- and sixth-grade boys are less inhibited about dancing in front of their peers. Leading by example works well in our songwriting workshops, too. When we share our thoughts and feelings we also model a safe environment for children to share their feelings. It also follows that increased participation improves the

song or concert and makes the experience more enjoyable for all.

Once the process begins, sharing becomes natural, even in a group of upper-elementary students in the throes of peer pressure. This leads me to believe that many children (and adults) have the desire to share their feelings, but lack the confidence to initiate the process. And while all of us are familiar with the power that a negative role model can have on children, we all possess the power to direct children to become good leaders for the rest of the students to follow.

It is important for each of us to show our fullest range of ourselves through our music and in our everyday interactions with one another. It is also our special responsibility as children's educators or performers to encourage others to share themselves fully. We all have moments when we are funny, smart, vulnerable, silly, and sensitive. That is why Scott and I believe that all people, but especially children, should see both women and men working, playing, loving, accomplishing, and sharing their feelings. For it is all these things that make us not just a woman or a man, a girl or a boy, but humans sharing the experiences of life. 

Beth Bierko is a singer/songwriter who performs with her husband Scott. They live in Yonkers, New York, with their daughters Helen and Stephanie.


All people, but especially children, should see both women and men working, playing, loving, accomplishing, and sharing their feelings.

Crossroads Music Awards

by Katherine Dines

Here's some exciting news for all of us who produce recordings of children's music. Last year I was really impressed by what I found on the Crossroads Music website (<http://www.xrm.com>). They bill themselves as "the acoustic, folk, roots, and world music resource for radio, retail, labels, and artists." They were in the process of launching an annual awards competition for music in *all* categories, but they had neglected to include ours—children's music! I contacted founder Bruce Franks and brought this oversight to his attention, and children's music is now a bonafide category in this year's awards!

By the time this issue of *PIO!* reaches you, it will already be too late to apply for the 2000 awards, but I encourage you to check out the Crossroads website and consider applying for next year's (submission deadline January 5, 2001). If you're interested in serving on the judges' panel reviewing children's-music entries, you can contact Bruce directly at 520/881-5277 or at cma@xrm.com.


Bruce has told me that the reason the children's-music category was created was largely due to my encouragement. When he asked me who I recommended he contact to spread the word, I told him I'd be happy to pass the information along to my e-mail list and to CMN and some other organizations. This has brought me to realize, once again, that collectively we have much power to share. Like I did, if you visit a website and see that it represents all categories of music except children's, you can let it be known that there's something they're missing. We're all connected here, and together we can bring our work to the world so that it has more visibility! 

VANA VANGU

Traditional Shona singing game, Zimbabwe


Irene Felsman tells about how she learned "Vana Vangu": "I learned this song from my friend Nenite Zhakata, a graduate of the ethnomusicology program and librarian at the Zimbabwe College of Music when I worked there from 1991-95. She and I taught this and other singing games to children at Mashambanzou ('the time before dawn'), a home for families affected by AIDS." To contact Irene about a recording she has made to benefit families living with AIDS in Zimbabwe, write to her at 2935 Friendship Rd., Durham, NC 27705.

part I *sing twice*



Van - a van - gu va - per - a ne - cho shi - ri cha - ri mu go - mo

part II *sing twice*



He - cho, he - cho cha - u - ya, ne - cho shi - ri cha - ri mu go - mo.

Part one:
Vana vangu vapera
necho shiri chari mu gomo (repeat 2 times)

Part Two:
Hecho, hecho chauya,
necho shiri chari mu gomo. (repeat 2 times)

Pronunciation guide:
a = ah as in "hot"
e = a as in "hay"
l = ee as in "pizza"
o = oh as in "so"
u = oo as in "shoe"
ch = hard "k" sound
g = hard, as in gum

Translation:

This song is in the Shona language, spoken by 70 percent of Zimbabwe's population. Translation from the Shona language into English is difficult because the two languages have such different structures. This loose translation was made for Irene Felsman by Fatima Nyamala:

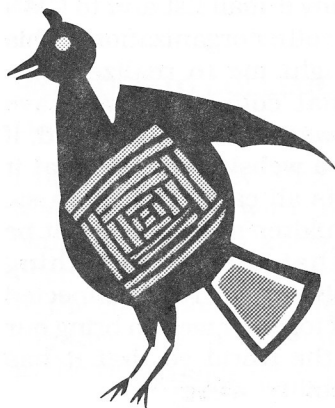


"Take care children, run and hide under my wings or the eagle will take you to his nest in the mountain."

The Game:

Children form lines of five or six. The child at the front is the mama and the others are the chicks. One child, who does not join a line, is the eagle and waits on the side while all sing the first part of the song. When the second part of the song starts, the eagle tries to capture the last chick in one of the lines. When the eagle is successful, s/he takes that chick back to the "nest", or the side. The captured chicks sing, clap, and perhaps play percussion instruments.

The game continues until all the chicks are captured or everyone gets tired.



Zimbabwean Children's Singing Games:

A Reflection of Rural Community Life

by Irene Crabtree Felsman*

This issue of Pass It On! is taking a look at the topic of gender issues. While the subjects of gender roles and inequities have had an important place in the thinking of U.S. and European social reformers, particularly in urban and suburban areas, this is not necessarily the case in many other countries of the world, particularly in rural areas. I'd like to take you on a journey to one such "other" country—Zimbabwe—and look at this and some other issues through the lens of the children's music I learned and taught while I lived there.

GENDER: AN ISSUE IN ZIMBABWE?

Zimbabwe is a small landlocked country in Southern Africa. Slightly larger than Montana, it is a land of diverse beauty, from the high temperate plateau to the lush tropical areas and magnificent Victoria Falls, one of the seven wonders of the world. Despite these enormous natural resources, Zimbabwe currently faces severe social and economic problems, including out-of-control inflation, the burgeoning AIDS pandemic, frequent drought, and foreign debt. Although issues of gender roles are considered important and are discussed and debated in literature and in the media, they are certainly not the top priority in terms of social reform.

Several million Zimbabweans live in urban settings, but most still live in the rural areas in small towns and villages or on commercial farms. There are two major ethnic

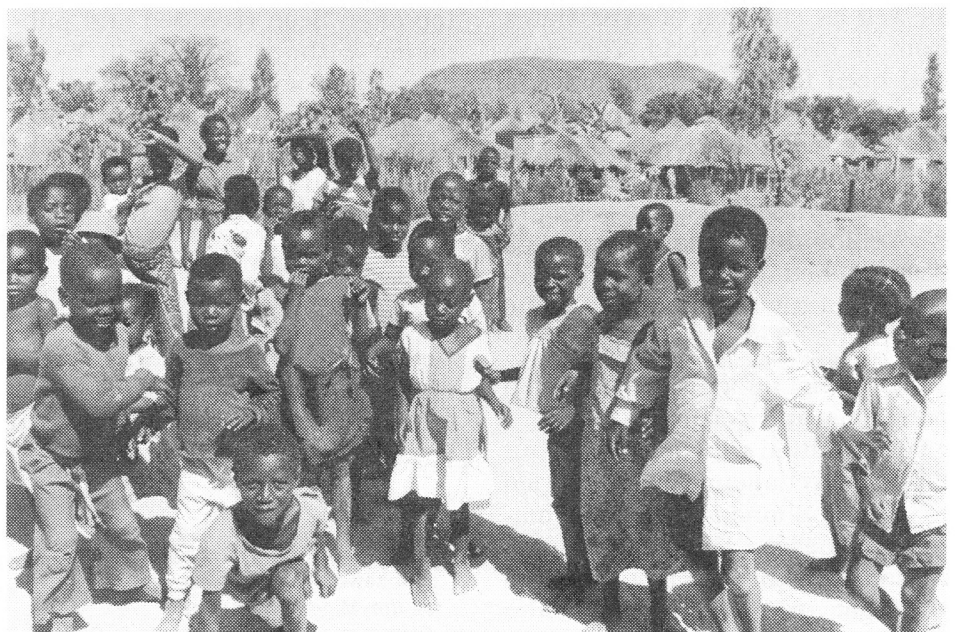
groups in Zimbabwe—the Shona (70 percent of the population) and the Ndebele of the Zulu nation (16 percent). Traditionally in rural Zimbabwean families, as in most agrarian societies in less-developed parts of the world, gender roles are fairly circumscribed. The daily life of a girl centers around the home and is often full of domestic responsibilities, including the care of younger siblings, cooking and cleaning, collecting the water from rivers and streams or village wells, grinding the corn, and washing the clothes. They are kept under the watchful eyes of mothers and "aunties" in the community. Boys collect the firewood, hunt, herd the animals, and work in the fields. While this seems like quite a lot, their day is generally less task filled, and they are allowed to roam much more freely than girls. Although both boys and girls attend school whenever financially pos-

sible, fees for school tuition, uniforms, and books are relatively high, given the income of most families. Boys more often than girls have been given the opportunity to progress in school. When times are hard, older girls tend to be the first to drop out of school and go to work in the informal sector.

Zimbabwean music, including some children's songs, became more politicized as traditional lyrics were altered in subtle ways to spread the message of freedom from colonial rule and oppression.

Zimbabwe was a British colony (Rhodesia) until 1980, when, after a long struggle, independence was finally officially granted by the British government. The role of women outside the home became more important during the liberation struggle of the 1970s. Women left the "hearth" and fought alongside

continued on next page ➤



Children in the eastern part of Zimbabwe.

Photo: Wendy Stagg

*I interviewed a Zimbabwean friend, Fatima Nyamala, for this article, and she helped me get the songs right, on paper. I thank her for her assistance.

Zimbabwean . . . Games

➔ continued from previous page

their male compatriots, thus gaining a new respect. Zimbabwean music, including some children's songs, became more politicized as traditional lyrics were altered in subtle ways to spread the message of freedom from colonial rule and oppression. This was similar to the way that African slaves in the U.S. communicated.

Children's singing games reflect daily life tasks, chores, the shaping of social relationships, joy and celebration, the times of grief and sorrow, love, and confrontation.



Mothers and children at a singing-games workshop, Harare, Zimbabwe.

TEACHING MUSIC IN ZIMBABWE

During the four years that I lived in Zimbabwe with my family, I had the opportunity to co-teach a music program for children three to seven years old at the Zimbabwe College of Music in Harare, the capital city. The children were of many ethnic backgrounds: Shona, Ndebele, and Indian-Zimbabwean, as well as children of expatriates from all over the world. The class had been taught very formally in the past, with materials primarily taken from the British tradition. I and my teaching partner, Shirley Warhurst, a South African woman, were committed to using materials that touched on the cultural experiences of all the children in the group.

This was not difficult when written materials and recordings from a given tradition were available, but it proved a challenge when we tried to include Shona and Ndebele material. I believe there are several reasons why this was true. One was the legacy of colonial rule, under which native languages and cultures were considered heathen,

backward, and in some cases politically inciteful, resulting in their being repressed. Second, traditionally singing games and other songs from these cultures were part of an oral tradition, so there were, and still are, very few written sources. Finally, Zimbabweans are protective of these materials, as they have too often been recorded and published without due credit being given to the source. Such songs are considered "an expression of a whole people's experiences and not an individual's property," according to A. D. Kwaramba.*

In the end, our best resource for Shona and Ndebele children's songs proved to be Nenite Zhakata, the music librarian at the College of Music, who is a graduate of their ethnomusicology program and had a good memory for the songs and

*A. D. Kwaramba, "Traditional Music in Zimbabwe," in A. D. Kwaramba, *The Battle of the Mind: International New Media Elements of the New Religious Political Right in Zimbabwe* (Oslo: University of Oslo, 1997).

games of her childhood. Others I learned from a friend, Fatima Nyamala, whose daughter is a close friend to my children and who now works as a nanny in Connecticut. The songs these two women taught me remain among my favorites.**

SINGING GAMES ABOUT LIFE IN ZIMBABWE

Music is connected to everyday life and experience as much in Zimbabwean society as anywhere in the world. Shona and Ndebele singing games have always been used as a method of instructing children about values and societal expectations. Children's singing games

**I have since become aware of two other resources. One is a collection of songs from singing cultures, *Let Your Voice Be Heard*, by Judith Cook Tucker (with A. K. Adzenyah and D. Maraire), published by World Music Press (1997). The other is the Ventures Rhythm and Song series, edited by Sheila Brown, a senior lecturer in music at Mutare Teachers College. The one problem I have in using this series, however, is that they are not particularly well referenced in terms of the origin and meaning of songs.

reflect daily life tasks, chores, the shaping of social relationships, joy and celebration, the times of grief and sorrow, love, and confrontation. They are about raising crops and farm animals, hunting animals in the bush, herding goats, grinding corn, carrying water, being brave warriors, and taking care of babies. They are about how one should act—being honest, showing respect, not stealing, and finding a mate. And they are sometimes about gender roles—who is supposed to do what in a traditional village.

When I teach these singing games here in the U.S., I like to talk about what everyday life is like for Zimbabwean children in the rural areas—what things are different from life here and what things are very much the same. The following are a few songs to illustrate life in Zimbabwe. With the exception of one, “Vana Vangu,” which is reprinted here (see p.14), I’ve only included the words and the directions for the actions. Readers who would like to know more about these songs and the music for them are welcome to contact me.

“Vana Vangu”

“*Vana vangu*” means “Mama says be careful!” There are all kinds of dangerous creatures in the rural areas—snakes, hyenas, crocodiles, lions, and elephants. This singing game is about a mother hen who says, “Be careful children, run and hide under my wings or the eagle will take you to his nest in the mountain.” In Shona the words are,

*Vana vangu vapera necho shiri
chari mu gomo.
Hecho Hecho chauya! Necho
shiri chari mu gomo.*

Children form lines of five or six, with the one at the front acting as mother and the others as chicks. One child is the eagle and does not join a line, but instead tries to capture the last “chick” on each line and take it back to the nest.

“Ndi Yani Acaba Mamera”

The song title means, “Who stole the millet?” This song is about telling the truth, about integrity in the community. In a small village, people know each other well by their voices and mannerisms, a way of recognizing each other that we have lost in our large society. Amai Muzazazi can’t get away with much in this village! The words are,

*Ndi yani acaba mamera?
(Who stole the millet?)
Nda amai Muzazazi.
(It’s mother Muzazazi.)
Go go yi.
(Knock, knock.)
Pindai.
(Come in.)
Mangwanani.
(Good morning.)
Nda uya khuzozhunza?
(You’ve come to ask a question?)
Kuzo zhunzciko?
(What about?)
Nzwa kuti maba mamera!
(I’ve heard that you’ve stolen the millet!)*

In this singing game, one person is “it” and steps outside the circle, where “It” can’t hear the rest of the group. They then decide who will be Amai Muzazazi, the thief. “It” returns to the circle and has to guess who is the thief.

“Arimo M’kati”

“Those farmers always think they need a wife!” says this Shona singing game, which is much like our traditional “Farmer in the Dell.” The words are,

*Kits’a rima mukadzi.
(The farmer needs a wife.)
Imbwa atora katsi.
(The dog chooses a cat.)
Katsi atora goso.
(The cat chooses a rat.)
Gozo atora nzungu.
(The rat chooses a peanut.)
Vese varimo M’kati.
(And we all dance around.)*

As the children are chosen, they

move to the middle and imitate the animal they are supposed to be. The peanut does a funny dance with a hand overhead and feet together. Fatima tells me she played this as a child. I don’t know if it was taken from the English song, or if it is an original Shona song.

“O Mama Babesithi”


“Everyone has their chores to do,” says this is Ndebele song in which the children imitate the motions of each task. Chores are assigned according to gender and maturity, as noted earlier:

*O Mama babesitha: Bethi guyu
guyu guyu sebe chola
mabele.
(Mother grinds the maize.)
O Baba babesithi: Bethi gamu
gamu sebegamula
amahlahla.
(Father cuts down the trees.)
Lalelalelani: Abafana benkomo
sebevela kwelusa.
(The boys herd the cattle.)*

“Tsuru”

This is a rhythmic jumping game played by young children. Tsuru is a rabbit, and the words mean, “The rabbit jumps over the log—and back again.”

*Tsuru, darika mu tanda
Mberio
Darika mu tanda*

I wonder how children’s songs and games will evolve as Zimbabwean society becomes less burdened by economic and political stress. I imagine the traditional songs will continue to be taught and enjoyed by children for generations; and that new songs will emerge that reflect an awareness of the equality and strengths of all people in Zimbabwe. 

Irene Felsman lives in Durham, North Carolina. She’d like to make a recording of Zimbabwean singing games, with profits to help AIDS orphans there, and would welcome suggestions.

Where Have All the Fathers Gone?

by Jon Gailmor

"I wish you were my father."

It happened again, a few weeks ago, during a songwriting residency in a rural Vermont elementary school. A rather shy, young child said it to me, out of the blue, without hesitation. My gut reaction was not gratitude, but profound sadness. The words weren't a tribute to something found, as much as they were a wrenchingly honest expression of something lost—an emptiness, a fundamental void. So, what's the proper response? Part of me wanted to say, So do I. The rest, the vast majority of me, thought better of it.

Such an excruciating statement from a wide-eyed, loving kid. No doubt many others of my gender and demeanor hear that longing lament from school children. Where are all the dads, anyway, and why me over their own? I never ask, for fear of treading on forbidden, foreboding territory. Often the songwriting process proves a safe environment and a rich palette with which folks can readily paint a vivid portrait of their lives; thus, in that context, I get all the answers I care to hear, and many I wish I hadn't. "Dad's in prison." "He left home when I was born." "He doesn't pay any attention to me." I've heard those statements and more during

brainstorming sessions. Hard listening is at the core of my residencies, and the primal need to be heard is never more evident than in the eyes of a child who's being listened to, perhaps for the first time. What a luxury it would be to have a dad who pays attention, who listens, who gives validity and viability to what his kid thinks and feels.

The more I travel (I try not to be away very much, lest I become one of the subjects of this piece), the more prevalent the dearth of positive males in children's lives appears to be. In some locales, the phenomenon is in epidemic proportions. Often, the socioeconomic condition of families seems to have a lot to do with Dad's presence or absence and with the quality of whatever family time he spends. This is certainly no earthshaking revelation—countless studies have attested to this observation.

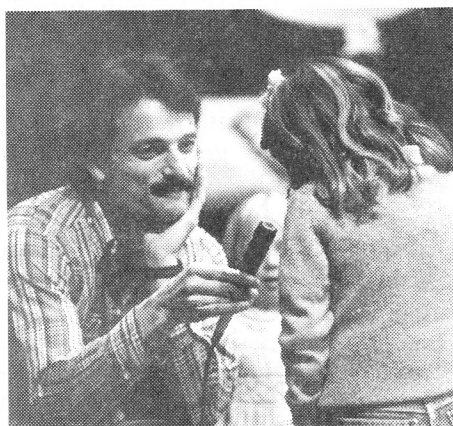
Here's a counterexample, however: Not long ago I was watching my son play in an indoor soccer tournament. I noticed a well-appointed man standing on the parents' side of the glass, having quite the chat on his cell phone, to which he appeared to be surgically attached. It turned out that his son was on the field at the time. I saw the boy actually glance at his dad once or twice. How could the player help but notice the disinterest, the feverish gestures, the father's back turned away from the game and from his son? Some, myself included, would call that emotional neglect, which is a form of child abuse when it's done habitually. It is most definitely fatherhood abuse, and the damage is often irreparable. Sure, Dad came, but he wasn't really there at all. So much for the socioeconomic hypothesis. It seems money doesn't guarantee viable, committed fatherhood.

Children, especially the younger ones, readily talk about their fathers, among other things. When I first enter a class to begin a songwriting journey, I sing them a tune and talk about my family, and then I ask each of them to tell me anything that will help me know them better (parents, siblings, pets, hobbies, and so on). Sure, I've read the reports and statistics, but it's still always shocking to hear it from the mouths of babes. At least half of the kids I work with don't live with their fathers. Many don't even know where he is. What is it about us men?

The words weren't a tribute to something found, as much as they were a wrenchingly honest expression of something lost—an emptiness, a fundamental void.

It's no wonder, then, that when kids compose lyrics about family, the verse about Dad has a lot to do with sofas, TV, and junk food, albeit there are lines about his building things and accompanying them to parks and ball games, as well. I wondered how many had really been to events and playgrounds with their dads, and how many just thought it made a singable stanza. So I polled them, and it turned out half of them used the songwriting setting as a dreamscape for wishful thinking. The predominant perception of the father—real or imagined—among fledgling songwriters I've met is of a man who does neat things for and with his children and then lies around getting fat while watching other, larger men, in heavily padded uniforms, try to hurt each other. He's definitely not the one who does the chores, the daily drudgery, the packing of lunches, the laundry. That's Mom's domain, for sure, according to most kids.

Right from the start, they tell me



Jon Gailmor interviews a performer for his radio show, *Just Kidding*.




Photo courtesy of the Caledonian-Record

Jon Gailmor helps a group of seventh graders record their original song, during a songwriting residency in St. Johnsbury, Vermont.

FACES: A New Organization For Children's Entertainers

Linking up people, ideas, and action as we do in CMN, we're likely to see new, creative developments. Recently, we've seen the birth of the Family and Children's Entertainment Society (FACES), a new organization that evolved out of the networking of our Southeast Region. FACES is a Nashville-based organization for musicians, puppeteers, magicians, jugglers, and all children's entertainers. In addition to promoting many values in common with CMN's, FACES will participate in some commercial performance events.


For more information about FACES, contact Rachel Sumner at 615/646-3220 or rachel@jackatak.theporch.com or faces@grandbob.com. 

in their songs, it's Dad for fun and Mom for comfort. For fooling around, there's nothing quite like good old Dad, but if you get hurt and need some soothing medical attention, only Mom will do. Help me build a snow fort, Dad, and let's have a snowball fight, but if I get nailed in the eye, get away! Mom, could you put some ice on this?

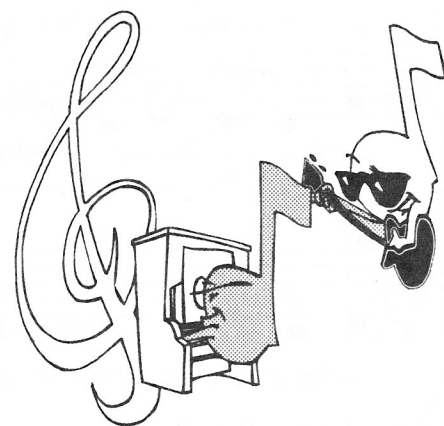
I haven't a clue how this dichotomy began, but I do try to figure it out, along with students. I make sure to sing songs that debunk all the traditional preconceived notions and gender-based misconceptions. Whenever a student says something, either offhandedly or in the course of lyric writing, that betrays a glaring gender bias, I immediately launch into a mini-lesson on men and women in history and in contemporary life, who've contradicted those stereotypes.

I find it both fascinating and frustrating that it's invariably the girls, from kindergarten through high school, who most strenuously and without prompting, object to any blanket characterization of either sex. The boys, for the most part, are satisfied with silence, content to let bogus prejudices slide. They rarely risk the ridicule that might result from making an "uncool" stink about the prevailing image their gender conjures up. Tragically

and ironically, this unwillingness to go out on a limb serves to perpetuate the perception of us males as intellectually slovenly, apathetic creatures who much prefer the smooth sailing of comfortable complacency over the rough seas of wave making and boat rocking.

What can we men (and women, too) do to combat this ignorance? As singers, songwriters, educators, and parents, we can contradict it through the music we choose and write, through the good attention we give to children, and by taking every opportunity to put forward a different philosophy. Everyone knows that the best way to influence kids is not by what we tell them, but by our own behavior. So when we of positive male demeanor hear, "I wish you were my father," it may break our hearts, but it should also spur us on. We can't be everyone's dad, but we can certainly make a difference in young lives by singing our songs of hope, dignity, and diversity, with a healthy dose of humor and passion. We especially owe it to them to make sure they discover their *own* music, croon their *own* tunes, and never stop singing! 

Singer/songwriter Jon Gailmor lives in Elmore, Vermont, with his wife, son, two daughters, a dog, and two cats.





STANDING ON THE SHOULDERS

words & music by Joyce Johnson Rouse
©1995 Rouse House Music (ASCAP)

You can contact Joyce about her songs and recordings at P.O. Box 1284, Brentwood, TN 37024.

I am stand- ing on— the shoul - ders— of the ones who came— be- fore—

— me, I am stronger for— their cour - age— I am wis - er for— their words.—

I am lift - ed by— their long - ings— for a fair and bright - er fu -

ture, I am grate - ful for their vi - sion, for their toil - ing on— this earth.

end. They lift me high - er— than— I could

ev - er fly— Car - ry - ing my bur - dens— a - way.—

— And I i - ma - gine— our world— if they had - n't tri - ed—

— We would - n't be here ce - le - bra - ting to - day. me.

Standing on the Shoulders
 ➔ continued from previous page



"I have been an activist for women's rights and a student of 'herstory' for most of my life." writes Joyce Johnson Rouse. Especially inspired by a visit to the Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, New York, Joyce wrote this song from "a deep need to honor those whom I can never personally thank for making my life and the world better." "Standing on the Shoulders" was the official theme song of the seventy-fifth Anniversary of Women's Suffrage, and was sung at the celebration by Joyce's friend, a great-great-great-niece of Susan B. Anthony.

1. I am standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before me,
 I am stronger for their courage, I am wiser for their words.
 I am lifted by their longing for a fair and brighter future,
 I am grateful for their vision, for their toiling on this Earth.

2. We are standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before us,
 They are saints and they are humans, they are angels, they are friends.
 We can see beyond the struggles and the troubles and the challenge,
 When we know that by our efforts things will be better in the end.

bridge:

They lift me higher than I could ever fly!
 Carrying my burdens away.
 And I imagine our world if they hadn't tried,
 We wouldn't be here celebrating today.

3. I am standing on the shoulders of the ones who came before me,
 I am honored by their passion for our liberty.
 I will stand a little taller, I will work a little longer,
 And my shoulders will be there to hold the ones who follow me.

SQUIRREL TALK

words & music by Fiona Brodie and Kate Beckman
 ©2000 Brodie & Beckman



Kate Beckman

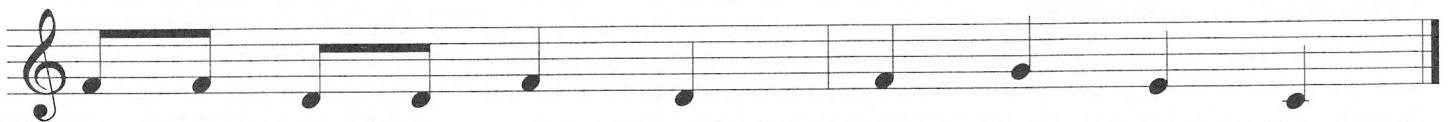


Fiona Brodie

Like many of the songwriters featured in the Winter 2000 issue of *PIO!*, Fiona and Kate found inspiration to write their song after reading a children's book. *Nuts to You* by Lois Ehlert (Harcourt Brace & Co, 1993) moved Kate to suggest to her friend Fiona that they write a song about squirrels. Fiona and Kate are second graders and avid singers in the chorus at their school in Oakland, California.



Squirrel talk, squirrel talk, I wonder how squirrels talk.



Well I guess we'll find out. Crunch, crunch, Yum, yum!

Singing the Girls, and the Women!

by Kristin Lems

When I was a little girl, I loved to read, and my hero was Longstocking—probably because I had similar braids and wildly disheveled clothing. I loved her mischievousness and her adventures. Like other girls, I enjoyed Alice (in *Wonderland*), Dorothy (in *Oz*), and Mary (in *Pet Garden*). But as I got older, I realized literature had fewer people “like me” in the world. I remember the moment, reading *The Red Badge of Courage*, when I said to myself, “I’ll never get to grow up to be a woman.” It didn’t have any resonance to it. It wasn’t half so noble, or courageous, or fun. I certainly never read songs about strong girls either. The closest was “Sweet Betsy from Pike,” which was an adventurer from California.

Since I discovered that it was fun—to grow up feeling like a discovery was not made at turns. It certainly helped back then to have some of the songs and stories now. It’s quite a relief! However, the relief is not necessarily out to the world about the rich offerings of the last 20 years. To that end, I share some of the children’s books that I think present a picture of women as brave, independent, and autonomous. I’ll leave the songs aside for another wonderful article, girls rule!

RESOURCES

Magazine for Girls
(P.O. Box 3857,
3-3587). By far
for girls aged 8
full of inspiring,

powerful, sweet features about girls, including girls’ art and letters, brief biographies, engaging articles with photographs about girls around the world, pen pals, an advice column, and more—all refreshingly without reference to makeup, diets, fashion, or boys. There’s a girls editorial board. My 12 year old can’t wait for her new issue, and neither can I!

National Women’s History Project, *Resources for Honoring and Celebrating Women* (catalog; phone: 707/838-6000). There’s no question that this is the finest catalog of resources for women and girls of all ages. It includes picture books, novels, biographies, posters, curricular materials, and joyful, colorful, multicultural gifts. You will browse through this catalog and enjoy its offerings again and again, while also supporting the best not-for-profit for women’s history to be found.

“Brave, Active and Resourceful Females in Picture Books” (<http://www.infopeople.org/bpl/kids/strwomen.html>). This is a website put together in 1996 by Berkeley (California) Public Library’s children’s librarians. There are several dozen titles, with brief descriptions of the books. A treasure trove!

Odean, Kathleen, *Great Books for Girls* (Ballantine Books). This thorough, pioneering work is an annotated bibliography arranged into categories such as middle readers, picture books, short novels, biographies, and so on. It also has sections on reading aloud, resources for parents, and my favorite—empowering your daughter. The first item on the list suggests that parents let their girls get dirty, for this is how they learn about life! If your school, library, or organization has some extra money to spend, browse through these titles and you’ll find gold. I hope a second edition will be forthcoming soon.

American Library Association, *Book Links: Connecting Books, Libraries,*

and Classrooms (quarterly, published by Booklist). This journal is full of wonderful theme-based articles about girls, multiculturalism, inclusion, and other themes. This magazine honors children in many ways, and it introduces many new children’s book titles to school librarians.

SONGS ABOUT WOMEN AND GIRLS

There is much to be written about the many themes that children’s musicians weave into their repertoires. While the listings in this article are primarily of print media, there is rich material in them for writing songs, and I encourage you to explore them for this potential, as well as read them for the pleasure of the reading. Here I will mention only a few of the many rich musical offerings of songwriters within CMN and beyond. I would have loved to include more, but I’m more familiar with books than songs. Perhaps someone will come forward to work with me on developing a fuller musical bibliography for a future issue of *PIO!* Meanwhile, check out the following songs:

“Ruby B,” on Susan Salidor,* *By Heart*. (Peachhead Productions). This is a “playground chant,” written after Susan heard Ruby Bridges at a Chicago bookstore telling her gripping story of courage. The song is featured on the back page of Ruby Dee Bridges’ own book, *Through My Eyes* (Scholastic Books). Ruby’s story is also featured in the song “Hattie Mae,” which is on my album, *Upbeat!* (Carolsdatter Productions) I was inspired to write this song after hearing child advocate Robert Coles give a talk about how Ruby Bridges changed his life. His book, *The Story of Ruby Bridges* (Scholastic Books), tells of how he was supposed to “fix her,” but discovered instead that she had resources of faith that could help any adult! A television movie has now also been made of her story.

Sing the Girls, Read the Women!

by Kristin Lems

When I was a little girl, I loved to read, and my hero was Pippi Longstocking—probably because I had similar braids and similarly disheveled clothing. I loved her mischievousness and sense of adventure. Like other girls, I also enjoyed Alice (in *Wonderland*), Dorothy (in *Oz*), and Mary (in *The Secret Garden*). But as I got older it seemed literature had fewer and fewer people “like me” in the hero role. I remember the moment, while reading *The Red Badge of Courage*, when I said to myself, But—I’ll never get to grow up to be a man! Growing up to be “a woman” didn’t have any resonance to it. It didn’t sound half so noble, or courageous, or fun. I certainly never heard any songs about strong girls or women, either. The closest was probably “Sweet Betsy from Pike,” who at least was an adventurer en route to California.

I have long since discovered that it is fine—and fun—to grow up female, but that discovery was not without its twists and turns. It certainly would have helped back then to have had some of the songs and books available now. It’s quite a different landscape! However, the word is not necessarily out to the general public about the rich offerings of the past 20 years. To that end, I’d like to share some of the songs and children’s books that I know and love which present a picture of girls or women as brave, accomplished, and autonomous. I’ll leave “adult” books and songs aside for now, despite many wonderful offerings. In this article, girls rule!

A FEW GENERAL RESOURCES

New Moon: The Magazine for Girls and Their Dreams (P.O. Box 3857, Duluth, MN 55803-3587). By far the best magazine for girls aged 8 to 14 or so, it’s full of inspiring,

powerful, sweet features about girls, including girls’ art and letters, brief biographies, engaging articles with photographs about girls around the world, pen pals, an advice column, and more—all refreshingly without reference to makeup, diets, fashion, or boys. There’s a girls editorial board. My 12 year old can’t wait for her new issue, and neither can I!

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Kristin Lems.

"The Daring Young Girl in Her Flying Machine," on Susan Salidor,* *Color Me Singing* (Peachhead Productions). This song charmingly reworks the period piece, "The Daring Young Man on His Flying Trapeze." Susan says it was inspired by reading *Sky Pioneer* by Corrine Szabo (Scholastic Books), a thrilling photo biography of Amelia Earhart. There's another new picture book, *Amelia and Eleanor Go for a Ride* (Scholastic Books), inspired by the true story of Amelia Earhart and Eleanor Roosevelt sneaking out of the White House during a party one evening, driving across town, and taking a nighttime flight over Washington!

"The Treehouse," on Sarah Pirtle,* *The Wind Is Telling Secrets* (A Gentle Wind). This song exuberantly tells, in the first person, the story of girls using carpentry tools to build their own treehouse. It's cheerful and upbeat and could be used with the book, *The Handy Girls* (out of print, but Amazon.com can find it for you), about some girls who have a coop/club that does repairs in the neighborhood.

The Hobbit, and *House at Pooh Corner*, musical plays adapted from children's literature, scripted, composed, and self-published by Bob Blue.* His children's musicals are

*CMN member; see our *Membership Directory* for contact information.

known for giving attention to gender balance. In *The Hobbit*, for example, Bilbo is a female character. In his musical version of *Pooh*, there's a special song sung by Kanga, about the value of her work as a mother. Also on the "Pooh" theme, Nancy Schimmel* has written a song (not yet recorded), "Playing Winnie the Pooh," the lyrics to which are published in *It's Not Fair: A Teacher's Guide to Activism with Young Children* (by Ann Pelo and Fran Davidson, Redleaf Press). This song recounts how a girl is told by other children that she can't play a game of *Winnie the Pooh* because "there are no girls in *Pooh*." The children solve this problem by creating "Pooh's sister," to "get some girls in *Pooh*." This song exemplifies the need for female characters at all stages of reading and literacy.

STRONG FEMALE CENTRAL CHARACTERS

Fiction: Fantasy and Fairy Tales

The following are merely a few of my favorites, and are all in print. Please refer to the resources given at the beginning of this article, for many more titles.

Creeden, Sharon (ed.), *In Full Bloom: Tales of Women in Their Prime* (August House); ages 10 and up. Creeden has chosen the unusual format of pairing folktales with historical anecdotes about great North American women. She classes the 60 tales and anecdotes into "Roses" (the traditional women who achieved greatness somehow) and "Not Roses" (the nontraditional rebels and trail blazers). This is a multipurpose book with many useful and usable aspects!

Grimes, Nikki, *Meet Danitra Brown* (Lothrop, Lee and Shephard); ages 5-10. A poem per page and full-page, grainy, close-up paintings by Floyd Cooper create an intimate picture of Danitra Brown, a spectacted, do-it-her-own-way, African American 10 year old who moves

into the inner-city neighborhood of the storyteller, and of the friendship and mutual aid the two girls provide each other. The book zings with spirit, love, hope, and promise. "She doesn't mind what people say. She always does things her own way," boasts her friend, finally announcing on the last page that Danitra has decided she'll win the Nobel Prize someday and dares anyone to doubt it. Life affirming and a must for even the smallest library.

Jackson, Ellen, *CinderEdna* (Lothrop, Lee and Shephard); ages 6-10. In this fractured version of the timeless fairy tale, there are two prince brothers and two female waifs at the ball, each of whom wins a prince. One, Cinderella, is as we've always known her, but streetwise CinderEdna knows how to provide for herself, and Rupert, the near-sighted second prince who runs a recycling plant in his cottage in the back of the castle, appreciates her joke-telling ability and wild dancing. The story continues past the two couples' marriages and shows the offbeat couple as the greatest of friends with the widest range of interests.

McCully, Emily Arnold, *Beautiful Warrior: The Legend of the Nun's Kung Fu* (Scholastic Books); ages 6-10. Here's a riveting new paperback featuring two Chinese martial-arts champions during the Chi'ing Dynasty in the 1600s. One, a nun, rescues people from time to time, when they least expect a little shaven-headed nun to come to their aid. The other starts out as a silly, egocentric young girl, but hones her art with Wu Mei, eventually defeating a boorish would-be husband in a match. She decides to devote the rest of her life to kung fu. It's a happy, funny, astonishing little book—a must read!

Neuberger, Anne E., *The Girl-Son* (Carolrhoda Books); ages 8-13. This chapter book, told in the first

continued on next page ➤

Sing the Girls

➔ continued from previous page

person, tells the amazing true story of a girl in 19th-century rural Korea who was raised as a boy and later became a national hero. Braving rejection, poverty, and later, prison, she triumphed over all and founded Ewha Women's University (the largest university for women in the world, according to an author's note). The 13-year-old girl who recommended it to me said she's just finished reading it for the fourth time!

Phelps, Ethel Johnston, *Tatterhood* (The Feminist Press); ages 6 and up. These 25 traditional tales from around the world all feature brave and accomplished women or girls. Historical notes at the end authenticate the tales and provide a reader's guide to them. Any of them could serve as great read-alouds to children, in class or in the home, and enrich the platter of traditional tales significantly.

Ragan, Kathleen, and Jane Yolen (eds.), *Fearless Girls, Wise Women, and Beloved Sisters: Heroines in Folktales from Around the World* (Norton); ages 6 and up. Here's a recent international anthology with many very old tales; an excellent resource.

Williams, Jay, *Petronella* (Parent's Magazine Press); ages 5–10. My all-time-favorite fairytale picture book. It has 1970s-style "Sergeant Pepper" drawings by Friso Henstra, of weird high-hatted men and feisty, redheaded Petronella, third child and only daughter of an aging king and queen. Petronella announces on the day her brothers go to seek their fortunes, "If you think that I'm going to sit at home, you are mistaken. I'm going to seek my fortune, too." Her kindness, plain talk, and courage open many doors for her, and she discovers, after valiantly rescuing a vain and reluctant prince, that the dashing enchanter who admires her is a much more fitting match. A classic!

Nonfiction

Hearne, Betsy, *Seven Brave Women* (Greenwillow Books); ages 6–10. The author touchingly recounts the stories of five generations of women in her family, including several generations of antiwar activists, all dynamic women. She seems to have a remarkable lineage—but don't we all? Family stories are wonderful, and reclaiming our lost matriarchs is important. This book can suggest similar projects for the girls you know.

Meltzer, Milton, *Ten Queens: Portraits of Women of Power* (Dutton Books); ages 8 and up. This big, elegant, coffee-table "art" book portrays 10 feisty women from history, in chronological order beginning with Queen Esther, up through Catherine the Great of Russia. Although all the women are from the Near East, Europe, and Russia, the book has a fresh, conversational tone that make these youthful rulers spring to life. The chapter on Queen Isabel, for example, unapologetically details her ugly role in the Spanish Inquisition, and Meltzer asks thoughtful, open-ended questions of the reader. The chapter then follows Isabel's evolution to a higher level of insight, when Columbus begins to enslave the Indians of the New World.


McGill, Alice, *Molly Bannaky* (Houghton Mifflin); ages 8–12. This breathtaking new book is sure to become tomorrow's classroom classic. Molly Bannaky was an indentured servant sent to the New World in 1683 to labor for 7 years. Her rough life is shown in large paintings by Chris K. Soentpiet, showing Molly's solemn and noble face. When manumitted, she homesteaded alone, which was unheard of at that time; and, upon buying a slave to help her, treated him well, freed him, and finally married him. Her triumph over oppression is told exquisitely and movingly in word and illustration. The afterword states that one of the four daugh-

ters of this unusual union later married a freed slave who, having no last name, took his wife's; their son was Benjamin Banneker, the first black scientist and almanac writer in the New World.

Cooney Barbara, *Eleanor* (Scholastic Books); ages 6–12. Famed author/illustrator Cooney has brought us a wonderful new picture book about the difficult early years of Eleanor Roosevelt. This can give hope and encouragement to any girl (or person!) who feels like a permanent outcast. For example, even Eleanor's grandmother called her "Granny" in front of company, to mock her serious and severe ways of dressing and behaving. Going to a boarding school in Europe opened her world and readied her to become the woman many believe was the greatest first lady who ever occupied the White House.

Wetterer, Margaret K., *Kate Shelley and the Midnight Express* (Carolrhoda Books); ages 5–10. This easy reader suspensefully recounts the true story of an Iowa pioneer girl who, in 1865, rescued two men lost in a train wreck and then helped flag down another train to avert a disaster. Lovely colored-pencil drawings by Karen Ritz frame the story effectively. It's a great edge-of-the-chair adventure story.



I hope these titles have whetted your appetite to share the excitement with the girls in your life. Grassroots efforts like ours and like these need support to survive. Otherwise, it's back to the bad old days, when we were expected to turn out like cookie-cut clones. Let's sing, read, publish, and purchase the items that will ensure that diversity and equality for women are here to stay. 

Kristin Lems is a doctoral student in reading; has seven albums, including a children's tape and book; and was Midwest CMN co-rep 1996–97.

I'VE GOT A SONG

words & music by Malvina Reynolds
©1965 Schroder Music Company

Nancy Schimmel tells this story about how her mother wrote "I've Got a Song":



"Malvina and her husband were visiting Lou Gottlieb and his wife one day. He was the humorist of the Limelickers and was a witty but lengthy talker off-stage too. The talk that day was of music, as it often was. Lou's little girl, Judy, was lingering around the outside of the grown-up circle, trying to get a word in. She said, 'I've got a song!' Malvina said 'Would you sing it for us?' Judy hesitated, then said, 'I forgot.' Malvina went home and wrote this song, first published as 'Judy's Song.'"

For more information about Malvina Reynolds' recordings and songbooks, contact Schroder Music at 704 Gilman St., Berkeley, CA 94710.

G Amin D7

I've got a song, It's a - bout so high, It's a - bout this big a -

G Amin D7 G

round, It's got a won - der - ful sound, But I can't sing it.

Amin D7

I've got a song, It's a shade of green em - broi - dered all o - ver with

G Amin D7 G

birds, But I don't know the words, So I can't sing it.

C G

Some day I'll get on a moun - tain - top and o - pen up my

Amin D7

mouth, And this great big song will come rol - ling out and ech - o North and

G Amin D7

South. I've got a song, It's three miles long, It's bit - ter and strong and

Emin Amin D7 G

gay, And I'll sing it some day, And I'll sing it some day.



MAGIC PENNY TRIBUTE

The Magic Penny Award, named after the song by Malvina Reynolds, is a Children's Music Network tribute to people in our community who have dedicated their lives to empowering children through music. It is the intent of CMN to give this award annually, at our national gathering, to honor the lifetime achievement of someone whose work most embodies our mission. In October 1999 the first award was given posthumously to Malvina herself, through her daughter, Nancy Schimmel, who offers us the following insight into the life of our honoree.



Photo: Eleanor M. Lawrence

Malvina Reynolds.

Let's Go Dancing Til the Break of Day:

A Remembrance of Malvina Reynolds

by Nancy Schimmel

My mother, Malvina Reynolds, once told me that when she was young, she would lie in bed and imagine that she was onstage, dancing, with a spotlight following her. She wanted to be a movie star, but she assumed that that would never happen, so she decided she'd be a teacher instead and work a smaller stage. Although she never actually taught except briefly as a student in college, she did reach center stage in her own way—performing the songs she wrote. Malvina recorded 6 albums for adults and 3 for children and kept writing and performing until a few days before her death at the age of 77.

She was born in San Francisco on August 23, 1900. Music was always a part of her life. To wake up his children in the morning, her father would wind up the phonograph and play a record. Her parents didn't have much money, but they saw to it that their children had violin lessons. When Malvina and her brother grew up, they both played violin in dance bands.

Malvina, who dreamt of being onstage and eventually realized that dream, was a shy person. As she herself wrote,

I was a lonely child; I can't remember any friends in grade school except Esther. Why she picked quiet, shy me for a friend, I don't know. She was bold, laughing, quick. She would sit back of me in school and slowly pull one hair out of my braid. Miss Geary would say, "Hit her! With your ruler!" I never would. I liked Miss Geary. I intended to be a teacher, and would be like her—a good sport. . . . I am still shy with people. I can easily face and talk with and sing to a hundred or a thousand. But at a party, next to a stranger, I haven't much to say.

Malvina found friends, but she didn't often find a group she fit into:

The times I have been happiest were the rare times when I was one of a gang. . . . I had a kind of gang when we lived on Buchanan Street [in San Francisco]. I must have been seven or eight. We would sit in the light of the street lamp in the evening on the high wooden flight of stairs, a dozen of us, and while the bigger boys played "One Foot Off the Gutter," I would make up long stories to tell the others. I don't remember what the stories were about, but they must have been interesting; I can remember the young voices in the evening, calling me to come out.

Malvina's world view was strongly shaped by hearing her parents discuss politics with their friends. They were socialists, and she said that that view "always made sense" to her. They were also openly opposed to U.S. participation in the First World War, which they considered an imperialist war. In fact, on the morning of her high-school graduation exercises, Malvina was warned by a friendly teacher that she and her cousin were to be refused their diplomas in front of everybody because of her parents' political views.

I had first come to the attention of the principal's office with a premature women's liberation movement on the school grounds. At noon, the boys could leave the grounds to play around on the streets and to get hot dogs, hamburgers, coffee, and pop at the little store across the street. I circulated a petition that the girls be allowed out of the yard at noon also. The answer was no. It wasn't proper for girls to be on the street. [The girls then asked that the boys be restricted, and were told] if the school tried to restrict the boys they'd just climb the fence. Probably in the same situation now, the girls would climb the fence. Then, nothing happened except that quiet, shy me was fingered as a troublemaker.

It was while she was in high school that Malvina first met William "Bud" Reynolds, at a socialist dance. He

was a merchant seaman, seven years older, handsome, and even more shy than she. He was self-educated, having left school after the eighth grade. They read poetry to each other in Golden Gate Park, but when he proposed, she refused. Encouraged by her mother, she had her sights set on college and a career. She got into the University of California at Berkeley without a high-school diploma, and it was while doing graduate work in English there that she did some student teaching. She used pop songs to teach her high-school students about rhyme scheme and meter, as they were not poetry readers.

Malvina found her "gang"—her compatible, accepting group—in the English Department at UCB and stayed around to get "all the degrees possible," as she says in *Love It Like a Fool*, the film documentary made about her. She married someone else, and so did Bud. He ran for governor of Michigan on the Socialist ticket, with the slogan, "You provide the evictions, we'll provide the riots!" They found each other again after she was divorced, and this time she said yes.

My mother was writing her dissertation when I was little and got her PhD in 1936. But it was the middle of the Depression; she was Jewish, a socialist, and a woman; and she couldn't get a job teaching. But when the Second World War broke out, she got a job on an assembly line in a bomb factory, and Bud went to work as a carpenter in a shipyard.

My mother came from a long line of women who worked outside the home. Her grandmother ran a deli while her husband read Torah. Her own mother and father ran a naval tailor shop. When I was in the fifth grade, my mother's father died, and she and my father and grandmother ran the shop together.

While my father worked as a carpenter and organizer and ran the family business with my mother, he also changed my diapers, and he made breakfast most mornings. He encouraged and helped my mother in her songwriting career, but he made the decisions about money. My mother wasn't always happy with them. He died seven years before she did, and while she missed him terribly, she told me it did give her a certain satisfaction to be making her own business decisions.

Malvina had always written—newspaper articles about her factory days, as well as poems, stories, and the occasional song—but she didn't begin songwriting in earnest until she was about 45. A songwriting group had formed in Los Angeles around Earl Robinson and the People's Songs crowd (the *People's Songs Bulletin* was the forerunner of *Sing Out!* magazine.) Her first songs were for adults. She did write "Magic Penny" early on, but didn't think of it as a song for young children. She was writing the line "Let's go dancing til

There were strong political statements made in many of my mother's songs, but it was often done with humor, gentleness, and poetic images.

the break of day" while I was at one of those awkward junior-high dances. I'm sure she was wishing she was dancing, too (my father didn't dance, and I was my mother's folk-dance partner).



Photo: Claudia Morrow

Nancy Schimmel.

There were strong political statements made in many of my mother's songs, but it was often done with humor, gentleness, and poetic images. Of course the humor and gentleness were basic to her children's songs, but she could make points there, too. For example, her song against drug use, "It's Up To You," starts out whimsical, saying, "You might have been born a ladybug, you might have been born a bat"; but it gets serious eventually, when it says, "You were born a being with a mind and a voice, and the power of choice."

Although she gradually began to write more children's songs, Malvina was careful to point out that she didn't exactly fit the stereotype of the children's performer and songwriter. In a workshop on children's music that she gave at the Pied Piper Music Festival in 1977, she said,

I don't think of myself primarily as a writer of children's songs. In fact, I tend to avoid that title, because the first thought is, you know, this nice old grandma who makes cookies and sings for kids, and that's not my character at all. I have a very acid edge toward many aspects of modern life, and I'm pretty outspoken about it. I don't mind crossing swords with people when I disagree with them, and I'm not your nice old grandma. However, I always make it clear that the reason I have this sharp cutting edge is because I do care for people. I care about children, and I think the world is ripping them off, taking away their natural environment and much more than that—the natural progression of their tradition—and leaving them stripped, uneasy, uncomfortable, and in deep trouble, and it's because of that that I'm so sharp.


Julie Thompson, producer of several of Malvina's albums, interviewed her on the radio in Los Angeles in 1977. In answering a question about children writing their own songs, Malvina said,

Now, the spoken voice has rhythm and a kind of preliminary . . . melody line, and that's why we have national music, because the music takes its rhythms and tunes from the spoken language. That's why it's so hard to translate songs. . . . When children are playing or talking, they're often singing, and you can pick up on something like that and turn it into a song. They love it, but they do it themselves. They'll say, "Ha-ha, look what you did!" and there's a little song, or, "Maaama—I don't want it," and you've got a song.

Anything that's said expressively and with emphasis will work, and if you let it ride on that, you'll find they'll be making up songs in no time at all. If we take a constructive attitude . . . and don't expect them to have perfect rhythm or perfect pitch . . . and don't give them the idea that they can't do it, they will. My husband was told that he couldn't sing. His family all had fine voices, and I guess his wasn't as good. They used to make him shut up, and all of his life he wouldn't sing, except when my daughter was a little bitty girl. He would sing for her, and she thought he had the most beautiful voice in the world!

In answer to a question about using traditional songs with children, Malvina said,

People don't realize that many of these lovely, clever, funny children's songs that have come down to us are not transmitted from parent to child, but from one generation of children to another. The younger ones hear the older ones sing the songs, play the games, and make up the instruments, and then they carry it on to the next generation. And it's a whole world of its own.

A great many songs now are created for children by grown-ups, but I try myself to get into a purer frame of mind when I'm singing for them, in the sense that I'm trying to speak directly and not let a whole lot of overcivilizing, overperfecting, or mechanical influences get between me and the listener. So perhaps some of my songs will someday get to be part of that kind of tradition, which I would love to see happen. 

Nancy Schimmel is a storyteller, author, and award-winning songwriter (a late bloomer in this regard, as her mother was), living in Berkeley, California.

Note: Much of the material quoted in this article is taken from a radio interview and notes from a workshop on children's music given by Malvina at the 1977 Pied Piper Music Festival. These are used with permission from Nancy Schimmel. The entire interview and notes appear in Patty Zeitlin's book, *A Song Is a Rainbow* (Scott, Foresman, 1982). Other quotes are taken from Malvina's unfinished autobiography.

National Coalition of Education Activists

by Mara Sapon-Shevin


Imagine being at a gathering where everyone attending is actively engaged in creating schools, communities, and a world committed to equity and justice. Imagine sharing your ideas and thoughts with other like-minded folks, supporting one another, and coming away with new ideas, fresh inspiration, and growing hope for the future.

That's how many of us think about and experience CMN, but the good news is that another organization meets yearly that shares these characteristics as well. The National Coalition of Education Activists (NCEA) is a membership organization and network. Their yearly conferences are an opportunity for parents, teachers and other school staff, community activists, teacher educators, unionists, and other education activists to

- Share information, materials, and models for school change
- Build greater understanding, trust, and unity in order to work together for better, more equitable schools
- Develop contacts, skills, tactics, and strategies.

I have been involved in this organization since its inception, and I have always found the people to be inspiring, hopeful, and deeply engaged in the struggle to make a better world. As members of CMN, we certainly believe that music can be a prominent part of the skills, tactics, and strategies that can be used to build better schools and communities. Many CMN members are actively engaged in writing and sharing music that holds out a vision of a better present and future for children and the planet.

The NCEA is meeting this summer on the campus of the University of California—Los Angeles from July 13th to 16th. The conference is entitled "Breaking Barriers: Working Together for Justice in Schools." There will be workshops on challenging racism in public schools, parent/teacher relationships, exploring the roots of youth violence, and school reform. I will be presenting a workshop on teaching for social justice. Music is a strong portion of my presentation, and it would be fantastic for other CMN members to attend and be involved. If you can't make it this year, then keep it in mind for the future. The possibilities for building coalitions and connections are endless, and the consequences could deepen the work of both organizations.

For more information, e-mail rfbs@aol.com, call 914/876-4580, or see the conference website at www.conferences.ucla.edu. 

Curricula! Curricula!

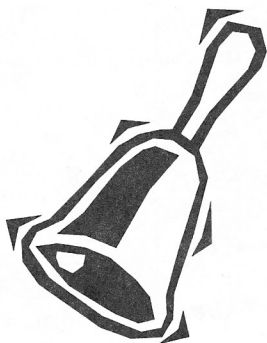
by Bob Blue

When I first started teaching elementary school in 1971, gender equity was a fairly newly revived focus in society and in school. Massachusetts, my new home state, had just passed Chapter 622, which, among many things, required teachers to deal with some of the discrimination and stereotyping abundant in school curriculum. Joining several parents, teachers, administrators, and other community members, I worked on a committee dedicated to finding and eliminating all the stereotyping and discrimination in the curriculum. It was not an easy job, and now, almost three decades later, there's still a long way to go.

As a teacher who tried to use music a lot, I thought about the songs I taught children. I ruled out some, even though they were fun and useful. "I've Got Sixpence" is a song I'd enjoyed singing in Boy Scout camp and on the school bus. I suppose I could have rewritten the lyrics (I still may some day), but I was already busily replacing lyrics in plenty of less-offensive songs. As for the "twopence to send home to my wife, poor wife," that would have to wait.


I was new to teaching and new to thinking about gender equity, but I was eager to do what I could. So were many of us, and even textbook companies had to respond. Giving them the benefit of the doubt, their editors were starting to have their consciousness raised. Not giving them that benefit, maybe they just knew that they would sell us more textbooks if they paid attention to our concerns.

While gender equity is only one of many issues educators face as they design curriculum, I don't think it (or any other important issue) has to be placed on any back burner.

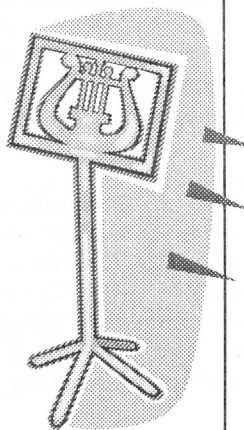


Educators can get involved and get children involved in noticing and pointing out sexism whenever and wherever it shows up in school.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart had a very talented sister, Mariana, who wrote and played great music. Many other girls and women have written great music. But so far, typical school music-appreciation programs emphasize the great music written by men. I'm a man, myself, and so are many of my friends. I don't mean to say anything against Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig von Beethoven, Duke Ellington, Scott Joplin, or any of the other well-known writers of great music. But what about Mariana Mozart, Claire Schumann, and the many other great composers who weren't born male? And what about the girls who hear about great composers and notice that they don't seem to be female?

The wheels of justice, they say, turn slowly. But we who influence children have great opportunities to get them to turn faster. Let's. 

Bob Blue is a father; former elementary-school teacher; volunteer elementary-school teacher; and writer of songs, poems, plays, stories, and articles.



Boys Will Be . . .

by Bonnie Messinger

"It's the boys against the girls, Mom," my son said eagerly, as he described the lunchtime first-grade recess. "But I'm on Madeleine's team, and I'm one of the lookouts."

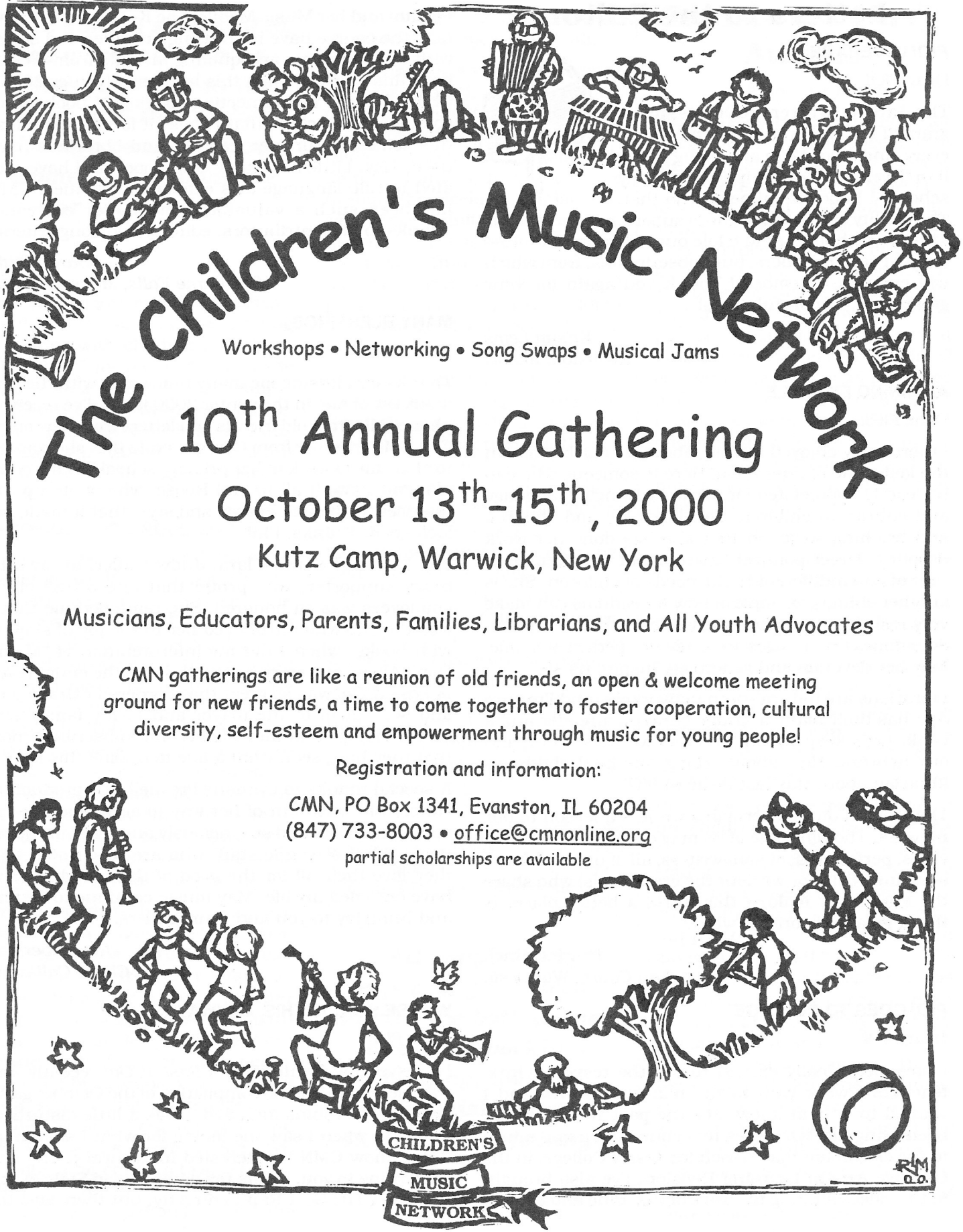
So, here is my now-seven-year-old son Michael discovering the complexities of life. He's teased for playing with girls. He plays with them at school and still wants playdates—but not with the ones who only want to play house or school or dolls. He likes Pokemon, computer games, and being our "woods keeper." He's indifferent to most sports.

The gift of the year 2000: My son has discovered popular radio. Car trips, which were formerly filled with requests to hear favorite tapes by fellow CMN members, are now dominated by requests for Z100 radio—"Portland's number-one station, Mom"—and, "Why don't you sing along with me on this song by the Backstreet Boys?" Michael alternates his stereo listening time at home between Z100 or "The Boar's Head Carol" from the *Christmas Revels*. My husband and I look at each other: We're not sure which one is going to make us crazier. "Turn the stereo down! Off! Now!"

For the moment, the music is about rhythm and melodies, but soon enough the questions will come: "What are these songs about, Mom?" "Dad, why can't I sing those lyrics in school for my sharing time?"

There's much more than gender politics afoot. 

Bonnie Messinger lives in Portland, Oregon and is a Pacific Northwest regional co-representative.



The Children's Music Network

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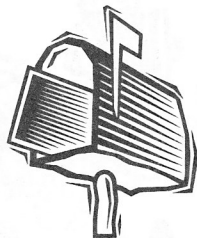
CHILDREN'S
MUSIC
NETWORKS

Letters to the Editor

PIO! LEVERAGE

Dear *PIO!*

The latest (winter 2000) issue is grand!!! I'm gonna read and memorize every single word. I'm also going to use it to "leverage" a subscription out of my school—I hope lots of people do that. The quality of this magazine is superb. I think we should try to triple our subscription rate—not just seek members, but subscriptions, from which will emanate—*members!* Thank you again for your great work. Congratulations!



Kristin Lems
Evanston, Illinois

A SHINING EXAMPLE

Dear *PIO!*

I thoroughly enjoyed reading about Jan Lieberman in the last issue of *Pass It On!* Here is someone who can be readily appreciated for her work bringing language and culture to children. Jan loves life and children and teaching so much that she has done her work despite a larger political environment too often ignorant of and indifferent to the needs of children. She is another shining example of how individuals can make very real changes in how the world treats its children. Sometimes the changes are made one person at a time. May her devotion and generosity inspire us all.

Librarians are natural-born networkers, and I'm sure Jan has built many a bridge between a reader and a book. Let's keep this in mind as we work to expand our network. How about telling our local children's librarian about this last issue of *PIO!*

The story of Jan Lieberman's work is a lesson to our network. Though some of us may or may not be musicians, performers, or songwriters, all of us in CMN are educators (with or without the credentials) who share the mission of making this world a better place. Is this a great network, or what?

Bruce O'Brien
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

PIO! GOES TO COLLEGE

Dear *PIO!*

I have been really excited to see the response from teachers I work with to the material in *PIO!* and I wanted to let you know. For the past two years I've been bringing *PIO!* issues to a course on using music in the classroom that I teach for Lesley College, in the Creative Arts in Learning Division. I've also brought in the videos sharing the work of Bob Blue and of Ruth

Pelham and her Music Mobile. The K-12 teachers who take the course have been using activities and songs with their students and quoting insights from *PIO!* in their final papers. Then this last issue (winter 2000), which focused on connecting songs and books, had so much for teachers that I chose it for our main text this semester. Already teachers and librarians have used "Hey, Little Ant" and "Owl Moon" and have created terrific language-arts extension activities. CMN has been such a valuable resource for everyone. Thanks to all contributors, editors, and songwriters!

Sarah Pirtle
Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts

MANY BLESSINGS

Dear *PIO!*

Thanks for blessing me many times over with the fine interview of me, in the winter 2000 issue. I've received phone calls from old friends and letters from new ones. One CMN member from Georgia wrote that she wanted to clone me to work in her primary school. What a compliment! I owe it all to Phil Hoose, who wrote up the interview with such energy and style that it made me look good. Thanks, Phil.

The Mayor of Santa Clara, Judy Nadler, an avid library supporter, was proud that one of the city's employees was so honored. She reminded me that I was the one who introduced her to the joy of singing with books, when I did my interpretation of "Mama Don't Allow" at a story hour. I thought the entire issue of *Pass It On!* was so great that I ordered extra copies and sent them to the mayor and to my family and friends. I hope that they will become subscribers, now that they have seen what a fine magazine this is.

A special thanks to Caroline Presnell, the production editor, who went out of her way to accommodate my special requests and so graciously answered my questions. What a terrific staff, who are so devoted that they give their all for the good of their readers. You have enriched my life. May music continue to inspire and bring joy to you and your readers.

Jan Lieberman
Santa Clara, California

WHOSE SCAT IS THIS, ANYWAY?

Dear *PIO!*

I received my [winter 2000] *Pass It On!* recently and was pleased to see the compilation of the October gathering round robins included. I was a little disturbed, however, when I saw the listing for what I shared [p. 34]. I know CMN is interested in accuracy, and so I am writing to you. It lists my name (David Stokes) and the title ("The Scat Rap") correctly, but then says the

song was written by Rodd Pemble, Mary Keebler, Andy Bennet, Doug Elliott, and Bill Jonas.

Excuse me, but the version I did—the original—was not written by Doug Elliott and Billy Jonas. If a songwriter writes and publishes a song and then someone adds new verses to that song, they do not then become the composers, I don't think. Doug and Billy should be listed with the phrase, "additional verses by." Tristan Cole-Falek also did a version of "The Scat Rap," and did additional verses. However the composers still remain to be Rodd, Mary, and Andy.

I learned a lot by coming to CMN in California. Thank you for your attention to this detail. If you need more information about "The Scat Rap," it was written by staff members at the Great Smoky Mountain Institute at Tremont, in Townsend, Tennessee (434/448-6709), and the director there, Ken Voorhis, would be more than willing to talk with you.

*David Stokes
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

SING THAT BOOK

Dear *PIO!*

As I read your recent issue dealing with bringing books to life through song, I thought of my experiences working as an outreach children's librarian. It was my pleasure and privilege to visit with children and their families in homes, shelters, playgrounds, and many other settings. I especially loved to share books filled with rhyme and rhythm; to me they were songs waiting to be sung. In my bag of assorted puppets and books, I usually placed a version of "Old MacDonald Had a Farm." Regardless of age or cultural or linguistic background, we all joined in singing a rousing rendition as I turned the pages. Children swayed and clapped freely to the music we made together. They seemed to crave it.

This point was brought home to me powerfully one day while I was sharing stories with children in a park. After singing one book and reading one book, I paused before choosing the next one from my bag. One little boy about three or four years old passionately declared, "Sing it! Sing it!" I opened the book, made up a tune on the spot, and sang as I turned the pages. I will never forget how this little boy nodded fervently and moved his whole body right up until the end of the story/song.

*Sydelle Pearl
Brookline, Massachusetts*



..... **Pete Seeger Is PIO! Advisor**

Our "Letters" editor, Pete Seeger, has regretfully resigned from that post, but we welcome him as an advisor to *PIO!* CMN has been very fortunate to have Pete's good thinking and support through the years, so we are very glad that he will be staying on to help in other ways with our journal.

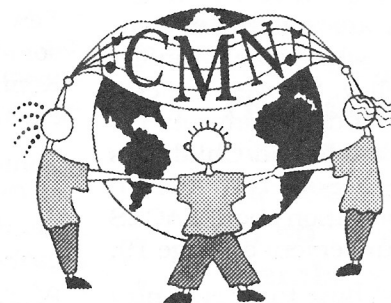
Harmony

- a rainbow of hands joined together
- many voices singing one song
- nations of hearts beating one life
- celebrating differences to learn and grow
- mind, body and spirit working for good
- a union of cultures celebrating peace.

by Johnette Downing, New Orleans, Louisiana

Check Out Our New Logo!

Some months ago, CMN members received a flyer inviting them to submit ideas for a new logo that would symbolize more aspects of CMN than the one we had been using for many years. Several of you sent thoughtful suggestions or drawings. Collectively they primed the process, but they needed further development. Since then the Executive Committee of the CMN Board has been working with graphic designer Ursula Roma, of Cincinnati, Ohio. Board members attending the February board meeting created a rough design from a combination of Ursula's artwork and the ideas sent in. Ursula has worked with the board over the past four months to make further refinements and produce the final version. Now—ta-da! Here it is! Not only is it making its debut with this issue of *Pass It On!* but it will be on the front of the new *CMN Membership Directory*. We're very excited about this new public "face," and we hope you will be, too. Many thanks from the board, to everyone who took the time to share ideas.



Regional Reports

compiled by Leslie Zak

A note for all the regions:

The regional representatives from across the country got together at the 1999 CMN National Gathering in October, and many agreed that we should think beyond the traditional song swap when planning regional events. We'd like to hear ideas from all CMN members, about what you would like to have offered. Some that we came up with were workshops for teachers, make-and-take classes, ideas for parents, and round-robin concerts—as well as song swaps. If you have other ideas or would like to help make any of these happen, contact your nearest rep. We'd love to have your input!

SOUTHEAST

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615/646-3220

rachel@jackatak.theporch.com

The Southeast Region has been meeting on a monthly basis for about ten years in Nashville; we currently meet at noon on the first Wednesday of each month at the Game Store in the Green Hills Mall. We will continue to have song swaps and other CMN regional events here. Please join us if you are in Nashville!

We're presently undergoing some changes. Over the years, we have felt the need to create our own local organization, since we choose to participate in a number of commercial events which would conflict with CMN policy. So, we have created an independent nonprofit organization, Family and Children's Entertainment Society (FACES). For more information about FACES see the announcement on page 19.

Now is a good time to let us know

just what you'd like in the Southeast. What would you like to see, and what can you do to make it happen? Let us know by contacting Rachel Sumner (see above) or Lisa Atkinson, CMN board member and regions coordinator (650/574-2709 or scooptunes@earthlink.net).

NEW ENGLAND

Scott Kepnes
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Many of us are still sailing on the musical energy and warm community feeling generated at our March 25th regional gathering at Clark Street Developmental Elementary School in Worcester, Massachusetts. Thirty-nine adults and fifteen children attended. Thanks to all who worked beforehand via phone and e-mail, early birds who helped set up for the activities, workshop facilitators, those who helped with the opening and closing sessions, lunch organizers, snaggers of wandering children, and doers of the many other tasks.

The day's schedule included workshops, lots of networking, a two-hour round robin that was a small-scale version of those at the national gatherings, and wonderful group singing during the opening and closing times.

During the business session, we discussed changing the venue for next year's regional gathering. We are checking out the possibilities and will announce the date via postcards as soon as it is known. We also talked about setting up a New England region e-mail group sometime in the future. And Scott Kepnes was enthusiastically re-elected regional representative.

Some attendees stayed on, moving to Our Lady of the Rosary Church nearby for dinner and a great post-gathering song swap evening.

Our next get-together will be a song

swap at Sally Rogers' house in Abington, Connecticut, 1-5 PM, July 15th. Further information and directions will be sent out as the date nears.

NEW YORK METRO

Nancy Hershatter
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914/237-4010
or
Barbara Wright
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Pound Ridge, NY 10576-1704
Voice: 914/764-7613
Fax: 914/764-5453

CMN hosted a song swap on April 3 for the Westchester AEYC in Hartsdale, New York. A regional gathering was held all day Saturday, May 6, at the Congregational Church of Huntington, Long Island. Nancy Hershatter was reelected and Jody Prusan was newly elected to be regional co-representatives, with Jody to begin November 1. Barbara Wright will continue to serve until then. Barbara is leading the committees busily preparing for our national gathering in Warwick, New York, October 13-15. Also being planned are "day-after" activities for stayovers. (See the announcement on page 31.)

MID-ATLANTIC

Dave Orleans
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Eve: 609/435-4229
Orleans@nothinbut.net

There was no news to report from this region.

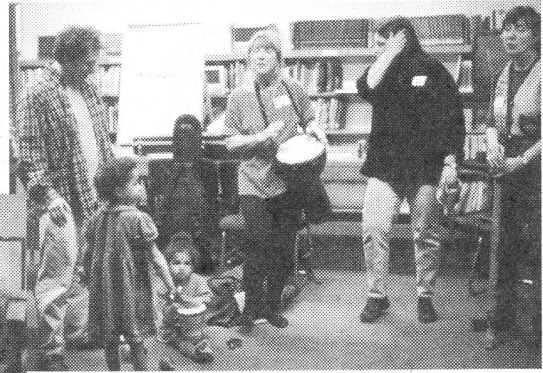
MIDWEST

Bruce O'Brien
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Eve: 715/832-0721
Banj0B@aol.com
or

continued on page 36



New England Regional Gathering March 25, 2000 • Worcester, MA



Regional Reports

➤ continued from page 34

Linda Boyle
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All Midwest CMN members, honorary Midwesterners, and any other interested CMNers are invited to attend the gathering of the Midwest region June 23-25 near Cleveland, Ohio. Organized by Noah Budin, this event will take place in the camp setting of the Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center. This year's Ohio gathering builds on the energy and enthusiasm of the 1999 Midwest Regional Gathering in Columbus.

Plan on being a part of this ever-expanding Midwestern web in summer 2000. Contact the co-reps for more details.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

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At the end of February, CMN teamed up with a local music-docent program for a day of song swaps and conversational workshops. José-Luis Orozco gave a presentation after lunch, and we finished off the day with a screening of *What Matters*, Shoshana Hoose and Ann Morse's film about Bob Blue. Over 30 people watched the video, and afterward CMN members present shared a favorite Bob Blue song. We had the words on an overhead projector, so people could sing along. Everyone was overcome, not just by the video, but by the spirit of the CMN members present. It was a great day! We encourage every region to try it! Call Lisa with any questions.

Other big news is our California CMN Statewide Gathering, held

May 6-7 in gorgeous Grass Valley, in the Sierra foothills. It was a fabulous weekend of workshops, song swaps, dining, and experiencing the quaint, historical towns of Nevada City and Grass Valley. Our featured speaker was the legendary "voice of the great Southwest," Bruce "Utah" Phillips, who presented on the importance of teaching kids about the Labor Movement and on how to make it accessible to them through songs and stories. We coordinated our activities with Day of the Young Child events and the John Woolman School (a Quaker-run secondary school whose students attended Utah's presentation). Look for photos and an expanded report in the fall issue of *PIO!*



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Carrie Higgins
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562/426-1460

The year 2000 is already proving to be fun and exciting for the Southern California region. Our February 5th event at the Culver City Library included a workshop led by Uncle Ruthie Buell on how to integrate music joyfully into the curriculum, as well as a wide range of related topics. The day concluded with a new-song sing-along.

In March a number of CMN members led a song swap in the Advocacy Center at the CAEYC

conference in Sacramento. Thanks to all who participated and helped create a beautiful experience. Please keep looking for more song swaps coming soon.


PACIFIC NORTHWEST

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There was a great turnout for our Portland song swap in February—lots of new faces, too. We had early-childhood educators, children's music performers, parents, and children. Several people came after first learning about CMN through brown-bag gatherings at OAEYC conferences. The group decided to meet again in April and quarterly after that. We'll report on the Ashland area's spring gatherings in the next issue, as well as a hoped-for CMN-led song swap at the Seattle Folklife Festival over Memorial Day weekend.

CANADA

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There are no gatherings planned at the moment. If you have ideas to help our region grow, contact Sandy Byer. 

New Sounds

compiled by Sandy Byer

These descriptions of new releases are sent in by the CMN member(s) mentioned, but they may have been edited by Pass It On! staff for style consistency or length. The materials have not been reviewed.



TWO OF A KIND

Going on an Adventure

This upbeat album of songs by David and Jenny Heitler-Klevans takes kids aged 2-7 on adventures with books, animals, dinosaurs, firefighters, pirates, grandparents, and more! There are original songs, songs by songwriters such as Tom Chapin and Bill Harley, and one traditional song. Musical styles include zydeco, rock, bluegrass, rockabilly, Latin-Caribbean, and folk. There are top-notch musicians and a great kids' chorus.

Cassettes are \$10, CDs are \$15 (plus \$1.75 s+h), and are available from David and Jenny Heitler-Klevans, 130 W. Nippon St., Philadelphia, PA 19119-2427; website: www.twoofakind.com.

BILL HARLEY

The Battle of the Mad Scientists

This collection of stories is filled with images of 4th-grade antics in the boys' bathroom, a very scary substitute teacher, backyard theatrics, a doomed sled race, and the hauntings of a very very small ghost. Probably Bill's funniest and certainly most outrageous collection of stories, this recording features Bill at his most improbable and believable best.

CDs are \$15, cassettes are \$10, and both are available from Round River Records; phone: 800/682-9522; website: www.billharley.com.

ANNE BARLIN

Creative Babies—Movement and Music

This program, which includes a 90-minute cassette tape and instruction booklet, is designed to help parents initiate movement activities with their babies that will contribute to the baby's growth and development. Anne has drawn on her decades of expertise in movement and dance to create this important program with her collaborator, Leah Subar. The accompanying tape includes songs by Marcia Berman, Malvina Reynolds, and Bessie Jones, as well as classical music selections.

Cassette and booklet are \$15 (plus \$5 s+h) and are available from Joanie Calem, 1274 Primrose Pl., Columbus, OH 43212; phone: 614/488-4091.

CATHY FINK & MARCY MARXER

Pillow Full of Wishes

This collection of playful songs and lullabies tickles the imagination and calms the heart of children, whether they are preparing for a nap or bedtime or having a quiet time during the day. Opening with lilting energy and gently progressing to more restful sleepytime songs, Cathy and Marcy deliver finely crafted songs with superb instrumentation covering a wide variety of musical styles and traditions, including Celtic, Hawaiian, swing, old-time folk, and more.

Cassettes and CDs are available from Rounder Records; phone: 617/354-4840; website: www.rounder.com.

JACK PEARSON

7 Stories Tall

This new recording of original and traditional stories from Minneapolis-based Jack, Mr. Song-Strummin' Storyman, features musical touches on guitar, fiddle, mandolin, banjo, and other assorted folk instruments. Titles in-

clude "Orley and the Cricket," "The Freedom Bird," "Boingo," (a hilarious story about a rubber-eating dog), and more.

Cassettes are available from Otter-Tunity Inc., 4544 16th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55407; phone: 800/576-8869; website: www.ottertunity.com.

CHRIS MCKHOOL

Turtle Island

The world's first turtle opera! This astounding musical weaves a compelling story around 10 original songs. Longbottom the turtle discovers that a dam is blocking the river that brings water to his home. Can he, with the help of his new friends Kitchenai the hawk, Pshew the alligator, and Dompata the rabbit, get the water back before it's too late? On his journey Longbottom learns about friendship and bravery.

Cassettes are \$12, CDs are \$15 (plus \$3 s+h), and are available from Chris McKhool; phone: 800MCKHOOL; website: www.interlog.com/~eco.

WAYNE POTASH

Yodel for a Fish

Singer/songwriter Wayne Potash's third children's album is great fun for the whole family. Featuring authentic folk, bluegrass, blues, pop, and world music, it's made for repeated listenings and singing along. Instrumentation includes guitars, banjo, mandolin, didgeridoo, ukelele, piano, bass, percussion, drums, vocals, and chorus.

Cassettes are \$10, CDs are \$15 (inc. s+h), and are available from Music Fun!, 180 N. Main St., North Easton, MA 02356; phone: 508/230-8505; website: waynepotash.com.

THOMASINA

Holding Back the Night

On her new recording, dulcimer player, singer, songwriter Thomasina presents a wide variety of songs, from an updated version of "If I

Were a Carpenter" to the original "Imagination," a song about being afraid of the dark, to the traditional Shaker songs "Love Is Little" and "Simple Gifts." These songs are designed to delight the entire family. Instrumentals are interspersed throughout.

CDs are \$15 (inc. s+h) and are available from Back Seat Boys Music, PO Box 1469, Litchfield, CT 06759; phone: 860/567-1605; website: www.thomasina.net.

ELLA JENKINS

Seasons for Singing

A call-and-response session recorded live at a music workshop, this rerelease features 12 original and traditional songs from around the world, such as "This Train," "On a Holiday," and "You Look So Sweet." Notes include song texts. Designed for ages 6-11.

Cassettes and CDs are available from Smithsonian Folkways Recordings; phone: 800/410-9815; e-mail: folkways@aol.com.

SUNI PAZ

Alerta Sings and Songs for the Playground (Canciones para el Recreo)

Suni Paz has devoted her career to opening children's minds to new languages and new sounds through music. This rerelease combines two recordings of easy-to-learn songs from Latin America (particularly Argentina and Chile) and the Caribbean. Suni is accompanied by a number of musicians playing Latin American instruments, including guitar, charango, bomba, cuatro, and afuche. For ages 4-10; notes include lyrics in Spanish and English.


Cassettes and CDs are available from Smithsonian Folkways Recordings; phone: 800/410-9815; e-mail: folkways@aol.com.

PETE SEEGER

American Folk, Game, & Activity Songs for Children

This rerelease presents many classic songs for children of all ages. Folk classics such as "Jim Crack Corn" and "This Old Man" are accompanied by a valuable subject index for parents and teachers, lyrics, and

recommended activities. Songs including "Ring-Around-the-Rosy" and "Shoo Fly" engage listeners in a game or dance that corresponds to the song narrative. There are 22 songs in all, designed for ages 2-12.

Cassettes and CDs are available from Smithsonian Folkways Recordings; phone: 800/410-9815; e-mail: folkways@aol.com. 

CMN Stock-Gift Fund:

A New Way to Contribute

Last year a CMN member presented our leaders with a brand-new question and challenge: Could we, would we, accept a donation in the form of stock, rather than cash? We had no system in place to accommodate a stock donation, but, not wanting to lose a much-needed gift, we moved as quickly as possible to establish an account with a brokerage firm. Since then we have received two more packages of stock, one of them from the original donor. This initiative from a member has helped us open up another avenue for bringing in financial support for CMN. Many thanks to that family.

It would be great to have CMN's financial future secured with a substantial endowment fund, and these gifts could have formed the seed for one. However, at this point we are more in need of operating cash and funds for new projects that will help us better serve our members and grow. So, for now at least, the stocks are in an accessible holding account, rather than in a long-term, don't-touch-the-capital investment.

The CMN member who got this great idea started describes how it happened:

I hope others can make the CMN stock account grow by finding hidden resources as I did. Two years ago my mother's accoun-

tant warned my siblings and me of a huge estate tax looming. Having grown up in a frugal atmosphere, my mom had been unable to bring herself to spend my father's inheritance after his premature death. Legal trust work had been taken care of, but the stock market had treated my mother very well. With her failing health to think about, she wasn't sympathetic about the impact these assets would have on us, upon her death. She considered the problem ours to solve, not hers.

Through many conversations, we convinced her to give some of her wealth away, since that would change the tax burden for us. My siblings and I would rather see it go to charitable organizations than to the federal government in taxes. For my mother, who lived through young adulthood during the Great Depression, this change in her relationship to wealth has been a major shift. I began to think maybe there are others like her. Take a look at your family's resources. Pass along stock to CMN if you have the opportunity.

This member and the family prefer not to be identified. For information on how to donate stock, please contact the CMN central office.



Interview: Zeitlin/Berman

➔ continued from page 3

Marcia: I was already performing and doing concerts, and Patty came to one of those concerts. I think that was when we met, but she can tell you that story.

Patty: Yes. When I became a preschool teacher I used records by Marcia, Burl Ives, Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Sam Hinton, and Ella Jenkins. Also, I used Malvina Reynolds' songs and some from Ruth Crawford Seeger's book, *American Folk Songs for Children*. And when the children asked me to sing about other things (like worms, for example), I made up songs for them. I was living with a friend, also a teacher, who heard me sing some of these songs. One day she asked where I'd found them, and when I said I'd made them up, she got very excited and said, "Marcia Berman is doing a workshop, and you've got to sing her those songs!"

I didn't think my songs were anything special. But my friend urged me to go, and I went because I really loved Marcia's work. Afterward my friend put her hand on my back and pushed me gently up to Marcia, saying, "You are going to sing for her, you are!" I said, "No!" But she kept pushing until finally there I was, in front of Marcia. I ended up singing "My Little Horse." To my surprise, Marcia said she really liked it and asked if I had more songs!

Marcia: What a song, what a great song! It was just so terrific! I hadn't heard anything that good in such a long time. I mean, the best songs I was hearing at the time were Woody's songs and Malvina's songs and folk music. And this was right up there with the best, it was so good.

PIO!: What attracted you, Marcia? What was so different about it?

Marcia: Oh, it had a certain feel-

ing—the way the lyrics and the music fit together. It was about a horse and being friends with it, and it had a calypso rhythm. [Sings:]

My little horse, my little horse,
Mane and tail a-flying.

My little horse, my little horse,
I love to go riding.

Patty [Sings]:

And while we're riding on our
way,

I sing to her, la la la la lay.

Marcia:

She picks up her ears, she
picks up her feet

We go trot, trot, trotting down
Papana Street.*

It goes on and on about this wonderful horse. It was a strong image. I thought it was a dynamite song.

PIO!: And how long after that did Patty bring you some more songs?

Marcia: She might have shared several more right at that time. I know I was really excited.

Patty: I was stunned. I mean—Marcia was a *star*! I couldn't believe this really happened. I didn't value my songs. They came to me effortlessly, so the thought that someone, especially Marcia, would think they were good was amazing, quite astonishing.

Marcia: I felt these songs were so good, people should hear them, so I said, "You really should make a record. In fact, I'll do it with you!" I was just so happy, I thought, Hey, let's do it! Remember?

Patty: You bet I do!

Marcia: And then, the next thing I suggested was that we should get a man to sing with us, so we'd have some contrast, you know. So I asked my friend, Dave Zeitlin, to come over and listen to the songs and do some arrangements with

us, which he did!

Patty: And not only that, we started dating and we ended up getting married. [Everybody laughs]

Marcia: Years later, Patty and I lived in the same community right across the street from each other, and she would run over and say, "I've got a new song," and she'd sing it. [To Patty:] I remember when you came in and sang "Spin, Spider, Spin." What a terrific song!

PIO!: Now how many years ago was it that you met? What year was that?

Patty: I think around 1960. But it took a long time to get something produced. Marcia did get Folkways to do our first recording, with her, David, and me. These were the first children's songs I had written and that Marcia had heard. The title of the album was to be *A Castle in My City*. But Folkways didn't release it. For years we tried to get them to do so, but they didn't. It came out many years later as a book and then a cassette, but back then Marcia kept calling and sending telegrams. Finally I paid a lawyer to get the rights to it back.

Marcia: Because it was just taking too long, and we didn't know if it would ever be published.

Patty: Then we came up with a different idea. Marcia had been talking with me about how music helps children to accept and express feelings. I knew that was true because of my work with preschoolers. So we did a tape for children called *Won't You Be My Friend?* It was about identifying, accepting, and expressing feelings. I was a preschool teacher with a small salary, so Marcia funded the recording. We made a quality demo and sent it in. After researching who would want it, we picked some companies we thought would be interested. But we had both funny and disappointing experiences with

*"My Little Horse," by Patty Zeitlin, © 1960/1991, used with permission.

continued on next page ➔

them. One of them wanted our songs but wouldn't give us a contract.

Finally we found Educational Activities Records through Children's Book and Music Center. Hap Palmer was with that company, and we liked both the quality of the music he wrote and the production. But when we submitted our songs to them, they didn't want them. Next we asked Hap what to do to get our tape listened to. He said we needed a proposal.

Marcia had funded the demo tape, so, to raise money to live on while I took time off from work to do a good proposal, I bred my Yorkie and sold her pups and did extra music workshops. Between the two of us, we worked and resubmitted our tape, and this time, it was accepted. We got a call from the president of E. A. Records. He was at the airport and asked if we could come out and talk with him. It was so exciting, wasn't it, Marcia?

Marcia: Yes, it was!

Patty: We drove out to this big hotel at the airport. He treated us to lunch and asked if we'd do not just one recording, but a whole series. We weren't paid much. It was 7.5 percent, split between us, on the first one. But we renegotiated and got a little bit more on the albums that followed.

Marcia: It was hard to find out at the time what the going rate was. We didn't know that many people who were making records, and it was kind of difficult to get such information. Malvina Reynolds was very helpful. We could always talk to her and get her input as to how she felt about various publishers and record companies and ask what she was being paid for her songs. So we did have some idea. But it took awhile before we caught on to what's involved in making an

album and the costs. And some of it in the beginning seemed very mysterious, because the company was paying the cost of production. And we were really producing it. We were coming up with the concept of what it was going to be about. We hired the musicians. They paid for it, but we did the organizing. I mean, we really did do everything. We developed the concept, selected the songs, made the arrangements, rehearsed the musicians, wrote the album notes, and so on.

We later found out they were more businesspeople than musicians. We hadn't been aware of that at first. We just assumed that they had more of a connection to music than they did. Sometimes we needed help, and the kind of help we needed—well, they couldn't give it.

Patty: Not with the recording part of it.

Marcia: Right. Later, in the 1980s, a ground-breaking thing happened. Tom Hunter put out an album, and on the back he put exactly how much it cost to make it. Do you remember that? It was so fabulous—it demystified the whole process!

PIO!: When had you started recording, Marcia?

Marcia: I had made two recordings in the '50s. The first one was a recording of my own songs. In 1956 I did one for Folkways, *Activity Songs for Kids*.

Patty: I used and loved those records in my preschool class, before I met Marcia. That's why she was so special to me!

Marcia: Well, you know, although I wrote songs, I more often sang Patty's songs than my own. I mean, I liked the process of creating the songs and writing them. But there were certain songs that she wrote that I used all the time that the children loved. They were so useful and the children seemed to need

them, like "Scary Things," for one, and "Where's Mary," "One Little Bird," "Mr. Tickles," and "Lots of Worms." These were all songs that I was using with kindergartners.

PIO!: And you were teaching kindergarten at the time?

Marcia: No, I was teaching kindergarten in the '50s. By the time I met Patty and was using her songs, I was going into schools more often as a music person, doing music with the kids. I was also leading some music classes for kids at schools and at the Ash Grove, a coffee house and a venue for folksingers.

Patty: Marcia told me that sometimes the children even burst into applause after she sang one of my songs.

Marcia: Ordinarily they didn't applaud after songs. But every once in awhile there would be a song that they would applaud. You know, it just surprised me. It was great to be able to use Patty's songs.

Patty: That was so satisfying to hear, because I'd been told, "That song's in calypso rhythm! That's too hard for children." Or, "The words are so complicated." Or, "The tune is—whatever; children can't learn that." One company wanted me to change the lyrics in a song. They were, "Fuzzy, fuzzy caterpillar, crawling, crawling by. Don't you know that someday you'll be a butterfly?" They wanted the last line to begin, "Do you know," because they didn't want that contraction there! I refused to change that.

PIO!: Were there ever times when you did make changes to your songs?

Patty: Yes, but I did it because of the changing attitudes toward women. I had written the songs for *A Castle in My City* in the '50s. As time wore on, I realized one verse of "Fuzzy Caterpillar" needed changing. One went like this:

Tiny, tiny baby, with your
pretty curl,
Don't you know that someday
you'll grow up to be a girl?

The one about the boy says,

Tiny, tiny baby, tell me if you
can,
Don't you know that someday
you'll grow up to be a man?

So I rewrote the girl's verse:

Tiny, tiny baby, smiling up at
me,
Don't you know that someday
a woman you will be?*

PIO!: What other aspects of your records did you take into consideration, like choosing musicians and material?

Patty: We carefully identified all of the musicians on our recordings, giving them credit. When we used a particular style of music—such as jazz, as we did on *Everybody Cries Sometimes*—we wrote liner notes about its roots, to show the respect we had for that. We also made sure there were children of different ethnic backgrounds on each album.

PIO!: I think you two were at the forefront of multicultural recording and consciousness.

Patty: I guess we were, in that respect.

Marcia: I don't remember consciously thinking about that. We'd been around for such a long time making music, and we had made so many friends who happened to be from many ethnicities. So we wanted to include them in these recordings. We wanted to introduce the children to new instruments, new sounds, new cultures. We wanted them to hear all kinds of people and all kinds of voices—not just one voice, but different textures—men's voices, women's voices, *basso profundos* and sopranos—lots of diversity.

*"Fuzzy Caterpillar," by Patty Zeitlin, © 1967/1995, used with permission.

Patty: On each album we included an instrumental piece, without lyrics, so children could listen and dance to a type of music and instrumentation they might not hear otherwise.

Marcia: Making those records was one of the highlights of my career! It was so exciting, especially working with an arranger like John Bucchino. It was so great to have another ear in the room. John could take a little kernel of a song and make an accompaniment, and all of a sudden it was like it was framed, like he had set some precious little gem, you know! It was just thrilling—the collaboration and the people we got to work with and the friends we made.

PIO!: How many albums did you make together?

Marcia: Patty and I made seven albums together, in the '60s, '70s, and '80s. Anne Barlin also approached us. I knew her from a dance class that I had taken from her. She wanted to work with us, so we did *Rainy Day Dances*, *Rainy Day Songs*. That was the only album we did with the three of us.

Patty: Marcia continued working with Anne while I was writing a book, *A Song Is a Rainbow*, which has unfortunately recently gone out of print. I've made a proposal to the company to reissue it, and I'm waiting to hear from them. When the book went out of print, a large music distributor, Claris Music, was disappointed about that, because they really liked the book and had sold lots of copies. That was wonderful to hear. I spent three years being a hermit to write that book. I worked so hard, and I'm glad I did. Marcia and I had been searching for such a book and couldn't find one, so I wound up writing it!

PIO!: Could you describe the book?

Patty: It's a child-development-based approach to teaching music to preschool and kindergarten chil-

dren. It offers creative ways of encouraging children to make their own music, as well to learn folk and composed songs. It has a section on games for the use of rhythm instruments, and another on dance—both creative and structured movement. It's got songs by and interviews with Pete Seeger, Malvina Reynolds, Ella Jenkins, and Marcia, talking about their musical backgrounds and childhood musical experiences.

The first chapter addresses the fears many people have, such as a fear that keeps them from singing at all, or a fear of reading notes. It's something Marcia and I ran across so often. So I spent a lot of time experimenting and researching how to help people to overcome such fears.

PIO!: That sounds very wise.

Patty: It also has a huge discography and bibliography—I think it was the largest in the field at the time. I listened to every single record on there at the time and reviewed each of them myself. Of course, now I'd have to revise it.

PIO!: Right—and I don't think you could do every single available recording now. There's so much more these days. Now, both of you had worked in classroom situations. I wonder how much you thought about gender issues when you were teaching the little kids. Did they come up? Did you think about what effect the songs would have on how kids thought about themselves as girls and boys and women and men?

Marcia: I think so, but not in a conscious way. It was important to treat the children equally and give them every opportunity to do everything, regardless of gender. It felt very natural to do that. Occasionally I would change a little snippet of a song if I felt that it was leaving something out. For example we used to sing, "Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream." And you know how there's the part where

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the men are signing papers and making all the rules about how the world is going to be? I would slip in “women and men,” and it would sing just as well. So I think I was becoming aware that women weren’t always included. Even something like “Michael Row the Boat Ashore”—maybe there’s a historical reason to say, “Sister, help to trim the sails,” but I always thought, No, why can’t the sister trim the great big sail? Why does she have to be a helper? I think I was reacting to not wanting women to have to be in that role of a helper, rather than being a person doing whatever needs to be done.

I’m not big on changing songs, and I know that sometimes they have historical importance and you don’t want to be watering them down. I would keep as close to the original as I possibly could. But I was aware that something needed to be changed. We needed more input from women, the point of view of a girl. But I don’t think I consciously sat down and planned it out. It just happened.

Patty: I remember an Earl Robinson song, “We’re in the Same Boat, Brother,” which I loved. But I felt left out. So, I changed it to “We’re in the Same Boat, Sister, We’re in the Same Boat, Brother.”

PIO!: So you changed it to sing that way? I hear a lot of people do it that way now.

Patty: Yes, I did it that way. I got my teacher training at the Center for Early Education, a school founded by a group of psychotherapists who were very concerned with gender equality. So we were taught to make sure girls had time to play with blocks if they wanted to and boys had a chance to play in the doll corner.

PIO!: I like that you said that the boys could play with the dolls, too, because I think that’s one end that sometimes gets left out,

that the boys get to have the other side as well.

Patty: By the ’70s, or even before, there were lots of children’s picture books showing women in roles like fire fighters and mail carriers. But there were no songs about roles like that for girls. Educational Activities Records picked up on the need for recordings of such songs. So I put together an album called *My Mommy Is a Doctor*. Marcia sang on several of the songs with Dave and me, including her own song, “Library.” In the end, it didn’t sell well, maybe because the title made it seem to be about doctors. I’ve always wondered about that. Another reason might have been that the company wasn’t really sure of how to market our work.

Marcia: The company didn’t really know what to do with us. Their focus was more on folk and square dancing, and I think they didn’t really get the material out there because they didn’t know what to do with it. I remember when I went to New York to meet them, I took an album for them to consider. While I was talking to them it seemed like their whole area of expertise was different from what we were doing. We didn’t fall into the niche that they were creating in the market. That was too bad—I just never really realized that, did you Patty?

Patty: No, I didn’t. I assumed they knew what they were doing. At the time we were the only recording artists we knew of who were writing songs about feelings and about nature and themes like non-stereotyped roles. The only other person we knew of doing something like that was Mr. Rogers. But of course he had his TV show.

PIO!: So, did *My Mommy Is a Doctor* go out of print?

Patty: I reissued it, but it’s amazing to me that after all these years anything is still in print! But my songs are out in other ways.

They’ve been published in textbooks and are played on Canadian TV on *Mr. Dressup*, *The Elephant Show*, and *The Fred Penner Show*.

PIO!: How long did you end up singing together and performing together?

Marcia: Our performances together were an outgrowth of our recording together. The records were there to get the music out there for people to hear, and then after awhile we started doing performances. Then we were part of a collective, kind of a precursor to CMN, called CAMAL—

PIO!: Is that an acronym for something?

Marcia: Yes—Children’s Artists Making A Living, or as my sons say, Children’s Artists, Mean And Lean. [Laughs]

Patty: The principles we shared for CAMAL were almost identical to those of CMN. We were a small group, though, about eight, all local to the West Coast. We started a newsletter and did a bit more outreach later, bringing in a few more people from Northern California, such as Bob Reid and Nancy Schimmel. We also sang on Uncle Ruthie’s radio show for years and years.

PIO!: Whenever I’ve been to Southern California, I’ve heard her show mentioned. It’s had a great affect on people. Isn’t it still on?

Marcia: Yes, it’s called *Halfway Down the Stairs*, aired on KPFK. You know, we really didn’t have a venue for our music to reach people, at least on the radio. And so it was great to have someone like Uncle Ruthie come along, who was really committed to getting this music out to listeners.

PIO!: So, in your time spent performing, did women support each other well? Was there a camaraderie of sisters in the biz?

Marcia: I think we were earlier than that. Patty, don’t you? It seems like we—men and women together—supported each other, because we were in such a different field.

I was in a women's consciousness group, though, which really made me aware of how women are discriminated against, in a way that I had never really realized it before. It was very powerful, that experience. We met for over a year and became lifelong friends, many of us. We helped each other and were supportive of each other. You know, for a long time I thought that men were musical geniuses—

PIO! *Oh, I'm so glad you are telling this story!*

Marcia: I really believed that they got it through genetics, and I always referred to my men friends as musical geniuses. I did! And I didn't think that I could compete with them. I even remember once when I heard Tracy Newman playing the guitar, and I said to myself, Oh, you know she plays like a man. Can you believe I said that? And then, in a women's consciousness group, I remember all of a sudden the myth was exploded when I realized that Tracy could play well because she practiced all the time! She spent hours and hours playing the guitar. And I thought, Hey, I wonder if that's what Dave Z. and Frank Hamilton have been doing all this time? They must have been sitting up there in their rooms, just playing the guitar, getting good! So I was really brainwashed. The women's consciousness work got me on the path of thinking for myself and learning as much as I could learn. It changed my life.

Patty: I remember going to the first men's consciousness conference. Women were invited but couldn't participate, which was fine with me. I went because I wanted to find out what men felt. I had no idea what life was really like for them. So I sat in a men's circle and saw a film that horrified me, called *The Lives of Boys*. It showed how boys had to beat each other up and compete brutally to prove themselves and be accepted. When the film was over, the leader asked the men for

their reaction to it. Some of them were crying. I'd never seen men cry in a group like that, or talk about how they experienced that brutality in life and weren't close to other men. I was amazed to find out how lonely men were, that they didn't have the same kind of close friendships women had.

I had no brothers, and I had an angry father who was only with us briefly, so I missed out on positive family experiences with men. So hearing this was the first opening of my heart to feel compassion for men and what they were going through. One part of the women's movement I couldn't identify with was the "hating men" part—or that's what it looked like to me. I thought that whatever men did to hurt came out of their distresses and that they were human beings, just like women.

Marcia: I didn't run into that—I mean, as far as women hating men. I think they were hating the institutions—the ways they were being treated and the way the culture passed down the information that made you believe you were a second-class citizen. I was angry at that, not angry at the men specifically, but angry at the whole situation that keeps that oppression going and doesn't ever question it.

Patty: I was definitely in agreement with that part of it. But somehow it got directed at men. For example, when I wanted to get *My Mommy Is a Doctor* recorded by Olivia Records, I found they had a policy that no men could be on any of their recordings. Because I had a man—my husband David—playing on the record, they wouldn't produce it. It had to be all women. I was very annoyed.

Marcia: That sounds silly. But I think sometimes women needed that encouragement, to not have men there so that they could really open up and blossom, have their chance, have their fair shake. I'm

thinking about groups that I was in throughout the '60s, when we were opposing the war in Vietnam. Artists would get together, and we'd have these political meetings, women and men together. If a woman would have an idea to share, she'd talk about it and get no reaction. Then a man would get up with his ideas, say the same thing this woman had said earlier, and all of a sudden everybody was listening to him, saying, Yes, let's do that! Women were invisible. That's why when I went into the women's consciousness group, I learned that *everybody* had something important to say. Everybody was listened to, and that was really earth shattering for women: Somebody was actually listening to you! I felt empowered.

Patty: Yes, I remember that feeling. Suddenly you could be listened to—it was amazing.

PIO! *Now as we near the end of our time, I'd like to ask each of you if you have anything you'd like to say to conclude, particularly about your work with kids and where you see your work going from here.*

Patty: I'd like to say something about the Children's Music Network. Marcia and I were at a CMN gathering in New York, and we just looked at each other in amazement. Here we had gone so many years with just this handful of people we knew about, who had the same values we did and were working with children. And now here were all these people who had the same interest and commitment. It was a very touching moment. Tears came to my eyes. It was very powerful to know that you were all there and doing this work that would be carried on.

Marcia: There's a certain isolation being in your own little community, doing what you do. There's something that's so broadening and exciting about meeting people in different parts of the country and

continued on next page ➤

Interview: Zeitlin/Berman

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finding out what they're doing. There are lots of people out there doing what we do, in their own ways. You find that you are part of a community that is much bigger than you ever thought.

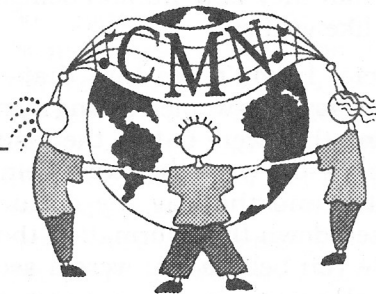
Patty: Yes, very inspiring. It gave me a lot of hope.

Marcia: It's so important that it's noncompetitive, that it's totally supportive. It's so unlike so many other areas of life where people are expected to compete. In CMN we all cooperate. That means a lot to me. The friendships, the music, and the whole idea of being a network and sharing with people makes this organization special to me.

PIO! Patty, what are you looking forward to in your future?

Patty: I'll eventually do more children's recordings. I'd also like to do more musical theater. A play of mine, *Long Ago, Right Here*, has been done in Seattle and in other cities, too. My most recent recording, *Angels and Vegetables*, is for grownups, but older children enjoy it, too. I hope to do more music for adults. Presently I'm writing a fantasy/fiction novel for ages 10 and up. I also want to develop shows that focus on nonviolent communication, as taught by Dr. Marshall Rosenberg, a world-renowned mediator and teacher. He works with puppets and songs, and I've been practicing and teaching his methods.

PIO! Marcia, what about you?



Marcia: I see myself continuing on the same path, being supportive and carrying on in the local CMN chapter, being a resource for people, and reaching out and trying to meet new people who are doing this work. I also will continue to spend time organizing our local peace camp, sponsored by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

PIO! I'd like to thank you both for sharing your lives with PIO! readers. It's been most enjoyable. 

Sally Rogers lives in Abington, Connecticut, and is a member of the CMN board of directors.

Editor's Note: The winter 1993 issue of PIO! included an interview of Marcia Berman, which readers will find interesting to revisit, in light of both this interview and the article on Malvina Reynolds on p.27.

Girls' Voices Rising

➔ continued from page 7

of All Womankind" is one that bothered me a lot as a girl. The original lyrics are,

Hard is the fortune of all womankind.
She's always controlled, she's always confined.
Controlled by her parents until she's a wife.
A slave to her husband the rest of her life.


At that life-changing program I attended at age 19, it was one of the songs we discussed. I like to talk with young people about how my youth was different than theirs is today. I was raised by my parents with the expectation that I would never have a job, but instead would sit in a stationwagon, like my

mother and all the visible mothers of my friends in suburban New Jersey, and wait to pick up my husband arriving home on the train. Young people and I discuss what has changed since then and what has stayed the same. Here are two new verses I've written to go with that old folksong:

Those are the words that I learned as a child.
And those are the words that made me feel wild.
I stood and decided—no,
I won't walk that road.
I will not stay small and do as I'm told.

Hard is the journey as we stay true
To the light that's inside us,

but it pulls us through.
This life is no harder than to live what is false.
And with good friends beside us we can make it across.

●
May the songs we sing and the choices we make in our lives become beacons lighting the path that girls and boys walk today. May they avoid the pitfalls of becoming obedient to the gender roles set for them and learn instead to be true to themselves. 

Sarah Pirtle, of Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts, launched the CMN newsletter and named it "Pass It On!" She has written three peace-education books and made four recordings.

How to Submit Something to *Pass It On!*

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PIO! always needs stories from members about what they're doing and how they're doing it! All the articles in this issue were contributed by your fellow CMN members, who invite you to share *your* stories, too! After all, that's the whole point of CMN. All we ask is that articles...

- ✓ address topics of interest to CMN members, especially the theme for the issue (see Editorial Page)...
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- ✓ and be between 900 and 1800 words long.

Articles should not promote a particular person, performing group, or product.

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Most of the songs published in *PIO!* are contributed by your fellow CMN members. Please—share *your* works with us, too!

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- ✓ a song written by a young person...
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