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# **PASS IT ON!**<sup>TM</sup>

The Journal of The Children's Music Network

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ISSUE #34

Winter 2000



## **Jan Lieberman**

photo: Glenn Matsumura

### **Inside...**

- Turning Songs into Books; Turning Books into Songs ■ Songwriter-and-Author Collaborations ■
  - How Singing Opens Doors to Literacy ■ Six Songs to Sing and Read ■
  - Dinosaur Stomp Lesson Plan ■ Songs about Diversity Issues ■
-

# 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.

## THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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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.

Articles in this journal do not necessarily represent the views of The Children's Music Network, nor do the advertisements imply endorsement. Members are invited to send songs and articles for publication directly to the appropriate editors, but we cannot guarantee publication. It is helpful if you let an editor know in advance that you plan to submit an article. Published three times a year; deadlines are May 15 (fall), October 1 (winter), and February 15 (spring).

## PASS IT ON!™

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## THE PIO! VOLUNTEER STAFF:

### EXECUTIVE EDITOR and CURRICULI! CURRICULA!:

Bob Blue  
170 East Hadley Road, #82  
Amherst, MA 01002  
413/256-8784  
bblue@k12.nsm.umass.edu

### DEVELOPMENTAL EDITOR:

Susan Keniston  
1951 Branciforte Drive  
Santa Cruz, CA 95065  
831/454-9454  
B40Drive@aol.com

### INTERVIEW EDITOR:

Phil Hoose  
8 Arlington Street  
Portland, ME 04101  
Hoose@ghi.net

### SONGS EDITOR:

Bonnie Lockhart  
1032 Winsor Avenue  
Oakland, CA 94610  
bonnielockhart@mindspring.com

### RADIO WAVES:

PJ Swift  
305 Dickens Way  
Santa Cruz, CA 95064  
pickle@well.com

### DOWN TO THE HEART:

Ruth Pelham  
P.O. Box 6024  
Albany, NY 12206

### REGIONAL REPORTS EDITOR:

Leslie Zak  
65 West Como Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43202-1025  
614/262-4098  
lesZ11@aol.com

### NEW SOUNDS EDITOR:

Sandy Byer  
26 Bain Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario  
CANADA M4K 1E6

### LETTERS EDITOR:

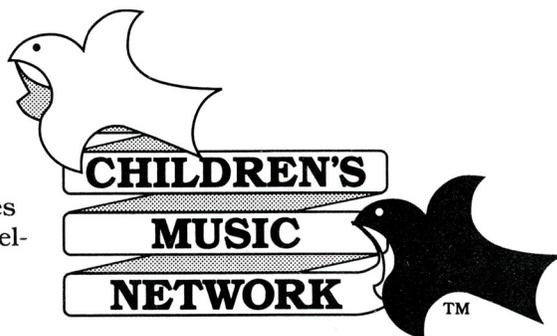
Pete Seeger  
B40Drive@aol.com  
or  
c/o Susan Keniston  
1951 Branciforte Drive  
Santa Cruz, CA 95065

### PRODUCTION EDITOR:

Caroline Presnell

### LAYOUT & DESIGN:

Jan Graves/In Print  
Skokie, Illinois



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#### CMN BUSINESS OFFICE

for membership and  
subscription information:

Caroline Presnell  
National Coordinator  
The Children's Music Network  
P.O. Box 1341  
Evanston, IL 60204-1341  
U.S.A.  
Voice/Fax 847/733-8003  
office@cmnonline.org  
http://www.cmnonline.org

# Editorial Page Introduction

by Susan Keniston

**W**intertime is a great time to spend with a good book, and readers of all ages will find much inspiration in this issue, which focuses on the many connections between songs and books. Some of our members have written songs inspired by children's literature. Some songwriters have envisioned their own lyrics as being ideal text for new children's books. Others have collaborated with poets in the birthing of song-and-book combinations. We asked a few of these people to share their success stories with *PIO!* readers, with the hope that others may feel emboldened to try their own hand at it.

Other contributors to this issue have mined the rich motherlode of connections between music and literacy. Children's natural joy in "singing a book" is the precursor to an equally natural desire to read that book. Our writers offer suggestions for creative use of the developmental links between the sung word and the written word.

Looking ahead, our spring issue of *PIO!* will focus on gender issues—on how we can use children's music to break down the barriers of gender-based oppression and create a world that encourages the free unfolding of each person's true self. Our fall theme will be music in special programs. Do you use music with differently abled populations, such as in special-education classes? Are you a music therapist? Do you use music for healing, in settings such as children's hospitals or rehabilitation programs? Please share your ideas and experiences with us.

Something new in this issue is the publishing of one of our articles in Spanish as well as English. CMN board member Suni Paz has offered to do the translating for us, and we thank her. Although *PIO!* is published primarily in English, we see these translations as another way we can extend a warm welcome to Spanish speakers to join CMN. We hope that members will think of ways they can use this new resource in their outreach work.

A special thank you is due to Leslie Zak, who has taken over as our "Regional Reports" editor and is doing a great job. And now, on to our editorial.

## Editorial: Songs about Diversity Issues

by Mara Sapon-Shevin

**T**his past October, at the national gathering of the Children's Music Network in California, I had the marvelous opportunity to facilitate a workshop on issues related to children's songs about diversity. The discussion was rich and exciting, with input from many people who are concerned with doing "the right thing" around this topic and were eager to talk about their successes, frustrations, and questions. I would like to share here some of the issues we discussed, the guidelines we articulated, and the continuing challenges we face.

I began the workshop with two particular challenges to the group, in the form of questions:

◆ How do we mention differences in songs? If we aren't explicit about

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# "Singing It, Seeing It, Reading It"

An Interview with  
Children's Librarian  
Jan Lieberman

conducted by Phil Hoose

California politicians have become expert at passing dismal propositions that slash school arts funding, but they haven't figured out how to stop Jan Lieberman. At 68, she remains a whirlwind, energized by a zest for life and a love of children, books, and music. Now retired as a head children's librarian, she's still "working as needed" (translated: 25 to 30 hours a week) at the Santa Clara, California, Public Library. On the side, she gives workshops on children's literature for school districts and library systems across the country, and helps direct Santa Clara's Music for Minors program.

When Jan sees an unmet need, she acts. To challenge teachers to use music in the classroom, Jan gave them an incentive: the Jan Lieberman Music-in-the-Classroom Award. To help parents and young readers, she publishes a superb guide to current children's books, entitled "Tips & Titles of Books: Grades K-8" (available from Jan for only the cost of mailing).

After teaching second grade for nine years, Jan got a master's degree in library science and developed a special expertise in children's literature. She lectured at the university level for many years, but her greatest love is the public library, and especially the children's room. There she has developed innovative programs to use music in teaching young children to read. And there, her joyful story hours have become all but legendary. Using rhythm instruments, a piano, or just voices, Jan has found



Jan Lieberman and a puppet friend sing "There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly."

innovative ways to use music to help people read. She lives in Santa Clara with her husband, Don Lieberman, a retired doctor. She spoke with CMN's Phil Hoose by telephone from her home.

\* \* \* \* \*

**PIO!: Was there music in your early life?**

JL: Lots of music. My dad had a very brief career as a song-and-dance man in England, and he sang all the time. My mother loved music, and the Metropolitan Opera would be on the radio every Saturday. When I was four, mother asked what I wanted for my birthday, and I said a piano. This was during the Depression, so she said she didn't think it was possible, but I wanted to play. When the day came, there was my present: a baby grand piano.

**PIO!: How could they afford it?**

JL: It was a used one and probably wasn't the best, but boy, I was thrilled! My dad played Shirley Temple songs and I just loved it. I took lessons and loved to practice and thought that I might have a career as a concert pianist, but I hit my peak at the age of 10. I kept taking lessons, but I never really got that much better. I'm still tak-

ing jazz improvisation classes now. But there was always music in our home. And my parents encouraged me to play piano for them.

**PIO!: Did people read to you a lot, too?**

JL: Yes, I was the baby in the family, and all my older brothers and sisters were always reading to me. We lived in an apartment building in Chicago, and one of our neighbors was always saying, "Come up, Janece, I'm reading *Pinocchio* to my son." Every night we'd hear a chapter, or they would come down to our house and we'd hear *Alice in Wonderland*. There were always stories. I grew up really in a very happy atmosphere where music and reading were just taken for granted.

I was encouraged to perform at home and at school, too. I took elocution lessons as a kid. It was good, because I was a little bit shy. Our grammar-school principal believed that every child had to be able to get up and speak before an audience. We had to develop poise. So in every classroom on Friday, the last half hour was what we called "Amateur Hour." We had to sign up and say what we were going to do.

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# Wonderful Worlds of Children's Books and Music

by Bobbi Bernstein

Children's books and songs "go together like a horse and carriage" (to quote a line from the song "Love and Marriage"), or better yet, like words and music. As a graduate student in library service, I fell in love with children's picture books. I was already in love with popular music. In my first job as an outreach librarian in Albany and Troy, New York, it seemed natural to add songs to my story-times with preschoolers in child-care centers. This was especially fun at one home-based center with a piano in the living room, where the grand finale of the day's program consisted of three- to five-year-old children singing and dancing together, led by their teacher, who had a wonderful voice. When I later became a full-fledged children's librarian, I incorporated several more-portable instruments, including a toy xylophone, a very small chord organ, and a tiny electronic keyboard.

Even though my job description is now reversed—that is, I work as a musician now, not as a children's librarian—it is an unusual program where I don't highlight, plug, or "sing" a children's book.

During my studies in the whole-language approach to education, I was not surprised to learn that the simple act of reading to children is a key factor in early literacy. Among other benefits, it brings about the love of books, which in turn creates the desire to read. Similarly, the simple act of singing with children enhances the ability to hear sounds internally, a most needed ingredient for learning how to read. Musical children's books are a perfect blending of the elements of literature and song.



Bobbi Bernstein assists children in rehearsing the song, "What a Wonderful World," at Columbia (South Carolina) Montessori Elementary School.

## SONGS THAT HAVE BECOME BOOKS

*What a Wonderful World* is a stellar example of a song that has been made into a children's picture book. Illustrated by Ashley Bryan, the book is based on the song by the same name, composed by George David Weiss and Bob Thiele and made famous by Louis Armstrong (who said that it is love that makes the world wonderful). The vibrant, colorful illustrations of this multicultural book celebrate creativity, nature, cooperation, and—of course—love. In the book, a group of children puts on a puppet show that magically illustrates the words of the song.

I find that this is a great activity to do with a group. I begin by reading the book to the children while playing a recording of Louis Armstrong singing "What a Wonderful World." I turn the pages of the book as the song proceeds, keeping the pages turned toward the group. Next the children decide what objects from the story they would like to make, such as a rainbow or stars or the sun. When finished, we attach dowels to the objects, creating stick puppets. I then teach the children to sing this most joyous song, sometimes continuing to use the recording with younger children. I

cue them to hold up their object as the song comes to their part, to shake hands when that phrase comes around, and to sign "I love you." To see, hear, and act out "What a Wonderful World" is a transforming experience.

There are so many directions to go. For example, I have recently added the activity of having the class create motions for the entire song. Other songs can be brought in to this activity, as well, such as Ben Tousley's "Looking for a Rainbow"; spirituals such as "This Little Light of Mine," "Great Big Stars," and "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands"; or even "Zip-A-Dee-Do-Dah (written by Ray Gilbert and Allie Wrubel)." These are just a few of the songs to use in conjunction with the book.

Some more excellent examples of books based on songs are the Raffi series, which includes *Tingalayo* and *Down by the Bay*, and the John Langstaff version of *Oh, A-Hunting We Will Go*, illustrated by Nancy Winslow Parker. The latter is a true crowd pleaser for all ages—a guessing-game book with silly humor. Others include *There's a Hole in the Bucket*, illustrated by Nadine Bernard Westcott; *Mama*

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## Wonderful Worlds

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*Don't Allow*, by Thacher Hurd; the classic *Frog Went A-Courtin'*, illustrated by Feodor Rojankovsky; and *Today Is Monday*, by the innovative author-illustrator Eric Carle. All of these lend themselves to group singing, and most lend themselves to creative dramatics. Somehow, the class is always delighted to see the sheet music that comes at the end of most of these books. They usually ask to sing the song again, because of that last page. This is a perfect time to sing without the book!

## STORY-SONGS

A story in which a repeated song or phrase is an integral part of the tale is called a story-song. There are many good books in this category. Children almost automatically join in to sing, especially if you pause right before the music. *The Foolish Frog*, by Pete Seeger and Charles Seeger, and Pete's *Abiyoyo* are prime examples of this type of picture book. In *The Foolish Frog*, the different types of sounds, such as the "sh-sh-sh" of the grass, are enticing. Kids love it when Abiyoyo's song goes faster and faster, seemingly out of control, causing the giant to fall. The charming *Lizard's Song*, by George Shannon, is about singing and dancing to one's own tune. I once heard a storyteller use a thumb piano to accompany the story's recurring phrase, and I have found it to be very effective. Handing out simple instruments for the purpose of interpreting children's books with musical sounds is a logical next step.

Other outstanding examples of stories with musical subjects are Diane Wolkstein's heartfelt folktale *The Banza*, Rachel Isadora's jazzy *Ben's Trumpet*, and (for the very young child) the delightful *I Make Music*, by poet Eloise Greenfield. Also, try chanting Bruce Degen's luscious and extremely rhythmic *Jamberry*. It is terrific in big-book

format and has many musical references.

## CHILDREN'S SONGBOOKS

There are many excellent children's songbooks that are also picture books. They can be enjoyed for their artwork, as well as for their musical contents. A few years back, I happened upon the revised edition of *Woody's 20 Grow Big Songs*. This wonderful collection of Woody Guthrie's children songs has great possibilities for audience participation. Pete Seeger demonstrated this so well at the 1996 CMN National Gathering in Petaluma, California.

At that same gathering, José-Luis Orozco had us all singing and moving to his music. *Diez Deditos (Ten Little Fingers)* is his most recent compilation of children's songs in Spanish and English. The intricate, luminous illustrations by Elise Kleven reinforce my belief that some of the best artwork of our time is found in children's books. José-Luis does an excellent job of describing motions and activities for each song.

Illustrator Ashley Bryan's compilations of African-American spirituals for children, including his *All Night, All Day*, are also masterpieces full of light and vibrancy. For those who may be concerned about using religious material, I find these songs to be more inspiring than religious. These songs are North American classics and useful with all ages. The arrangements of the spirituals by David Manning Thomas are superb.

**By taking advantage of the joy, humor, diversity, creativity, art, and rich language that exists in outstanding musical children's books, we can help make this world more wonderful for children and for ourselves.**

## MUSIC-AND-MOVEMENT BOOKS

Children's books that incorporate dancing are so musical that I would have a hard time not mentioning a few of them. Music and movement also go together like a horse and carriage, especially for children. In this category are the excellent *Let's Dance*, by photographer George Ancona; *Dance*, by Bill T. Jones and Susan Kuklin; and *Hop Jump*, by Ellen Stohl Walsh. The latter is perfect for musical creative dramatics.

## NONFICTION MUSIC BOOKS

There are numerous nonfiction children's books about music. *The Book of Rhythms*, by Langston Hughes, with a new introduction by Wynton Marsalis, stands out with its universal perspective on rhythms. Hughes covers the gamut, from heartbeats to drums to nature to poetry to machines, and much more. The book leads to great discussions with the children about the rhythms of life found within us and all around us. Most fittingly for me, the last chapter of *The Book of Rhythms* is called "This Wonderful World," which ties in beautifully with the book, *What a Wonderful World*, discussed earlier.

By taking advantage of the joy, humor, diversity, creativity, art, and rich language that exists in outstanding musical children's books, we can help make this world more wonderful for children and for ourselves. These books are accessible to parents, teachers, and librarians, even those who may not consider themselves musical. And for those of us with a music background, they present endless possibilities. Musical children's books are a great place from which to take off and soar. **PI!**

Bobbi Bernstein lives in North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The book, *What a Wonderful World*, inspired the name of her children's programs, "Wonderful Worlds of Music."

# How "Hey, Little Ant" Became a Book

by Phil Hoose

"Hey, Little Ant" was born on a sticky summer afternoon in Portland, Maine. My daughter Hannah, then nine, watched with me from the porch as her two-year-old sister Ruby chased the ants that scurried through the cracks in our driveway and stomped them flat. She didn't look angry. She seemed bored, and squishing ants must have beaten whatever else there was to do that hour. After awhile I went over to her and said, "How would you like to be one of those ants?" She said something like, "I wouldn't care," but the question seemed to have taken the fun out of it. She stopped pretty soon, maybe when she thought I wasn't looking.

That summer Hannah and I were writing songs together for our family band. When I told her I had an idea, we went inside to the dining-room table and grabbed some paper. The idea was to script a conversation—a negotiation—between a child about to squish an ant and the ant about to get squished. The child would raise a foot and the ant would talk back, making its case not to die. I had an old tune rattling around in my head and we started writing. Words came fast. Neither of us can remember who wrote what. We agreed it would be wrong to say whether we thought the child should squish the ant or not, or to write an outcome. This was too important: We figured that everyone should have a chance to decide for themselves, like Ruby.

An early chance to perform "Hey, Little Ant" came at CMN's 1992 national gathering in Griffith Park, Los Angeles. We went on at the beginning of the round robin on Saturday night. I got down on the floor, and Hannah raised her foot

over my head. We began singing. The response was very encouraging. In fact, all weekend long we found ourselves in conversations about ants. Everyone wanted to tell us their personal policy about squishing bugs, and it turned out nearly everyone has one. Some of these conversations took the form of confessionals. With some adults there was a sort of pleading tone, like, "Hey, can you back off—we're infested!"

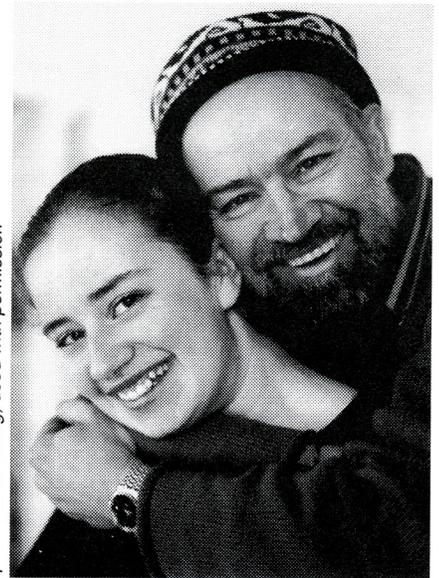
Clearly the song raised questions: Is flattening an ant really an act of murder? Do the things we have in common with tiny living creatures really weigh as much as all the obvious differences? Do we have any obligation not to kill them when we notice them? Do we have a right to kill them when they bother us?

For the next year or two Hannah and I performed "Hey, Little Ant" dozens of times, at schools, festivals, and other venues. We invited discussion after each performance. Children raised their hands and asked, "What if it's a mosquito trying to suck your blood?" "What if it's a bee?" "What if it's a thousand ants going after a glob of honey on the floor?" Hannah and I became amateur shrinks, reflecting the questions back into the audience. "Well," we would beam, "what do you think?"

In those years Hannah and I were hard-core "Calvin and Hobbes" groupies. We admired the way Bill Watterson drew shifting perspectives, with Godzilla-sized Calvin sometimes looming over ankle-high metropolitan areas, and insects sometimes achieving skyscraper height. We began to envision our ant and child as Watterson would draw them, and to form the idea that "Hey, Little Ant" would work as a children's picture book. But none of our sketches came out right: We needed an illustrator.

I wrote a proposal for a children's picture book of "Hey, Little Ant" and asked a literary agent I work with

photo: John Ewing; used with permission



Phil and Hannah Hoose, authors of  
*Hey, Little Ant*

to pitch the idea to editors. I was confident of success; the response to the song showed that we had hit upon a universal theme and convinced me that there was a big audience. Parents, caregivers, and teachers would welcome a tool to help them discuss the ethics of killing with young children. After all, squishing ants is the first chance most people have to recognize their power to kill and their freedom not to. My previous book had been successful.

But the proposal was turned down again and again. Some editors were convinced that *Ant* could never work on a page—it was merely a performance piece. More could not get past the idea that we had ended with a question. Children, they said, need stories resolved. I wrote back to them, "What about *The Cat in the Hat? The Butter Battle Book?* No one replied. My agent gave up after two years of pitching.

This began to take its toll on me. I had never before saved rejection letters, but I found myself angrily building an "Ant" file. I sought help from colleagues, especially CMN colleagues. People came through. Mara Sapon-Shevin wrote a very

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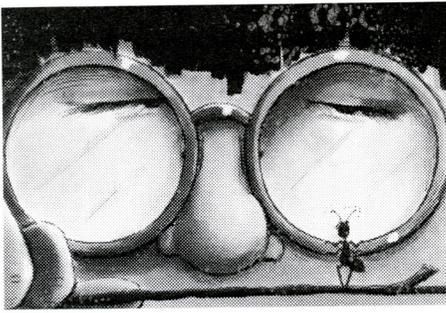


Illustration courtesy of Tricycle Press

### **"Hey, Little Ant"**

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helpful article about it in an educational journal. Charlie King, Jay Mankita, Jackson Gillman, Aileen Vance, and others began to perform "Ant," and they were willing to write me letters about their experiences with young listeners. I stapled their letters to the ever-thickening proposal and tried again with editors who had rejected it, recasting the pitch. Susan Gustafson, an editor at Pfeifer-Hamilton who couldn't quite convince her publisher to buy "Ant," wrote an open letter to all editors encouraging someone else to do so. "I'll be pleased to buy the first copy," she wrote. Then she made 10 copies on her company's letterhead for me to send to others.

In the end, CMN came through once again. Debbie Block, a CMN member and friend, gave me the name of an editor at Tricycle Press who had bought a book by Debbie's husband, Bill Harley. I sent the editor, Nicole Geiger, the proposal. Weeks later she replied with a long, thoughtful rejection letter conceding that "Ant" caused "quite a hot debate" around her office. Once again, the problem seemed to be the unresolved ending. I dashed off a reply: "There is a fine tradition in children's literature," I wrote, "for ending books by asking truly important questions of young readers." I insisted that big questions should be answered by readers rather than authors. I glumly tossed the letter into a mailbox, thinking that at least I'd been true to myself. A month later, Nicole

called. She had sent our proposal to a reader for a second opinion. The reader had loved it. Nicole wondered, Was "Hey, Little Ant" still available?

***I dashed off a reply:  
"There is a fine  
tradition in children's  
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"for ending books by  
asking truly  
important questions  
of young readers."***

Before long we had negotiated a contract with a decent advance. We wrote to Bill Watterson to see if he would illustrate the book, but he didn't respond. Nicole, Hannah, and I started exchanging photocopies of drawings from children's books by illustrators who we thought could do justice to the ant and the child. Tricycle Press hired Debbie Tilley, a Southern-California-based artist whose work we all liked. Soon delightful sketches of ants and kids arrived for our comment. Tricycle did not encourage us to contact Debbie directly (to this day we've never met or spoken to her), but did forward our comments. Our only issue was that in the initial sketches the ant wore a dress and the child was clearly a boy. Hannah and I wrote a letter urging that the gender of the characters not be apparent. In writing the piece, we said, we weren't out to portray a boy brute and a girl victim. The dress came off the ant, but the hair remained short (and reviewers continue to call the child a boy).

One day in the spring of 1998, nearly 6 years after the day Ruby stomped around the driveway, a small box awaited us on the front porch when we got home from a trip. Inside were 10 copies of *Hey, Little Ant*, its shiny pages filled with huge, playful watercolors. The sight

of that book is the most thrilling moment I've had as a writer, probably because Hannah and I did it together. Since then, *Ant* has been commercially successful; it's had 3 hardcover printings, a Scholastic Book Club edition, a magazine reprint, and a French translation. Hannah and I have had fun promoting it together. Best of all, *Ant* lives.

What lessons does the publication of *Hey, Little Ant* offer for those who want to turn children's songs into children's books? I think it got published for several reasons:

- *Ant* worked as a story, and not all songs do. The central idea was simple and universal and is expressed through characters. There is a plot. Time-worn elements of drama—suspense, obstacles, the transformation of central characters—are present. The story lent itself to illustration. The unresolved ending is an asset.
- We used networks to build support for the proposal. CMN really came through for *Hey, Little Ant*.
- We got lucky.
- Hannah and I believed to our souls in *Ant*. I didn't give up. I've long believed that adults who write proposals seeking support for important projects should remember how they asked for things when they were young. Usually when children want something and they are told no, they don't walk away. They ask, Why? and then listen carefully for a weakness in the defense. Then they adjust and try again. *Hey, Little Ant* became a book because those of us who believed in it most were childlike in our approach and antlike in our persistence. **PIO!**

*Phil Hoose is an author, songwriter, and member CMN's board of directors. His sixth book, about young people in U.S. history, will appear this fall.*



# HEY LITTLE ANT

words: Phillip and Hannah Hoose  
music: traditional  
©1992 Precious Pie Music, Inc., BMI

You can contact Phil and Hannah at 8 Arlington St., Portland, ME 04101

Hey, lit-tle ant down in the crack, Can you hear me? Can you talk back?  
See my shoe, can you see that? Well now it's gon - na squish you flat!

1. Kid: Hey, little ant down in the crack,  
Can you hear me? Can you talk back?  
See my shoe, can you see that?  
Well now it's gonna **squish** you flat!

2. Ant: Please, oh please, do not squish me.  
Change your mind and let me be,  
I'm on my way with a crumb of pie  
Please, oh **please**, don't make me die!

3. Kid: Anyone knows that ants can't feel.  
You're so tiny you don't seem real.  
I'm so big and you're so small,  
I don't think it'll hurt at all.

4. Ant: But you are a giant and giants can't  
Know how it feels to be an ant.  
Come down close, I think you'll see  
That you are very much like me.

5. Kid: Are you crazy? **Me** like **you**?  
I have a home and a family, too.  
You're just a speck that runs around,  
No one would care if my foot came down.

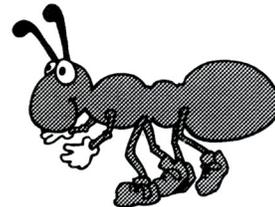
6. Ant: Oh big friend, you are so wrong,  
My nest mates need me 'cause I'm strong.  
I dig our nest and feed baby ants too.  
I must not die beneath your shoe.

7. Kid: But my mom says that ants are rude,  
They carry off our picnic food!  
They steal our chips and bread crumbs too.  
It's **good** if I squish a crook like you.

8. Ant: Hey, I'm not a crook, kid, read my lips!  
Sometimes ants need crumbs and chips.  
One little chip can feed my town,  
So please don't make your shoe come down.

9. Kid: But all my friends squish ants each day.  
Squishing ants is a game we play.  
They're looking at me—they're listening too.  
They all say I **should** squish you.

10. Ant: I can see you're big and strong.  
Decide for yourself what's right and wrong.  
If you were me and I were you,  
What would **you** want **me** to do?



11. Should the ant get squished? Should the ant go free?  
It's up to you not up to me.  
We'll leave the kid with the raised-up shoe.  
What do you think that kid should do?

# Curriculum Links for Music and Literature

by Sally Rogers

The pressure is on in most schools across the nation to justify their art and music programs in the face of budget cuts. It seems a shame that such justification should even be necessary, for the part of our education that makes us human. But, given these difficulties, schools are constantly looking for ways to integrate music and art into the classroom curriculum. Music specialists should be overjoyed, as long as these attempts are not used to replace their programs.

One of the most obvious links between music and the classroom comes through literature. After all, most songs are stories told in rhyme and sung to a rhythmic melody. I have been fortunate to work as a resident artist in many Connecticut schools in the last few years, helping classroom teachers to take advantage of this link and to work with their music teachers to get the most out of it. I'd like to share some ideas for using two books in the classroom. The first is a lesson plan based on *Saturday Night at the Dinosaur Stomp*, one of my favorite music/storybook links. Then I'll give some activity ideas for using *Earthsong*, a picture book that started out as a song, "Over in the Endangered Meadow."

## Dinosaur Stomp: Lesson Plan

*Saturday Night at the Dinosaur Stomp*, written in poetry form by Carol Diggory Shields, is an imaginative, rhythmic visit to a Saturday-night dinosaur dance. Featuring creatively interpreted illustrations by Scott Nash, the book tells the story of a number of dinosaurs with very authentic names. The first two pages of the book are a spread illustrating dance-step diagrams for, presumably, the Dinosaur Stomp. Here is the lesson I prepared for the kinesthetic enjoyment of all.

### SETUP

*Ages or grades:* K-2

*Class size:* one class of up to 30 students

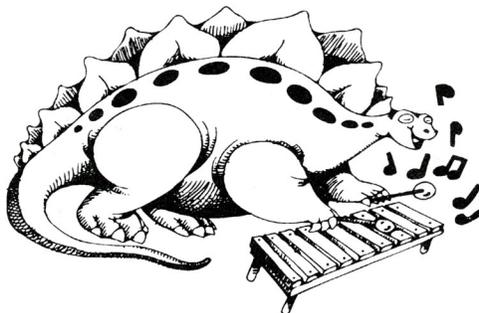
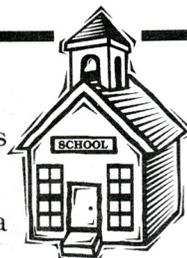
*Space needed:* one classroom, with furniture pushed aside to make room for dancing

*Time needed:* 20-60 minutes, depending on how much time you have and how many activities you want to try

*Materials and equipment:* a copy of the book, *Saturday Night at the Dinosaur Stomp* (Carol Diggory Shields, Scholastic, 1997); tagboard in two colors, a drawing tool, and scissors; a small hand drum or other simple percussion instrument

*Objectives:* Students will

- Learn the names of several dinosaurs
- Explore rhyming words
- Recognize and make patterns to a steady beat
- Explore patterns in dance by making up their own dance "map" for others to try
- Interpret the dance map of others
- Work cooperatively together to make up and dance their dances.



### PROCESS

- Before reading the book, on tagboard draw the outline of a simple dinosaur footprint, about 12 inches long. Use this as a template to cut out six "left paws" from one color of tagboard (e.g., red), and six "right paws" from a second color of tagboard (e.g., yellow).
- Read through the entire book with the class. Use a rhythmic voice in interpreting the story. Encourage students to join in on any repeated lines. See if they can second-guess some of the rhyming words, by pausing just before you say them, giving them the chance to say them first.
- Point out the dance diagrams at the front of the book. Ask the students if they know what the drawings mean. Explain or confirm that they show how to do a dance. Ask some questions: Could you actually do the dance they show? How would you know which is your left foot? Right foot? Front or back foot? How would you make out the order of the dance steps?
- Bring out four sets of your tagboard footprints. Explain that the red ones are left feet and the yellow ones are right feet. Explain that students are going to get to make up their own Dinosaur Stomp by laying the feet out on the floor in a pattern. One student will make up the pattern and then a second student will try to dance it.
- Select two volunteers to try this out. After the first dance is made up and performed, ask, What made it easy to dance? What made it hard? Was there a pattern? Could you dance it to a beat? Have the same two students try it again while you keep a steady beat with a small hand drum.

- Choose a second pair of students to make up a dance pattern and dance it.
- Discuss how a pattern makes it easier to dance. Have the students explore what happens if you use only left or only right feet. Let the students discover all the possibilities. They will all want to try it.

Here are some suggestions for ways to extend this activity:

- Have students work in small groups of up to four students; each group can cooperatively design their dance.
- Have them give their dance a name.
- Can they learn to dance their dance without looking at the pattern?
- What kind of arm or hand motions could they add to their dance?
- Which dinosaurs would only be dancing on two legs? Which on four? Can the students make up a four-legged dance?



Here's another fun dance to try:

- Teach the children to chant the line, "Boom-alacka, boom-alacka, whack, whack, whack!" Have them say it in a rocking rhythm, emphasizing the *booms* and the first and last *whack*.
- Form a "dinosaur conga line," where the students stand one behind the other in a long line, each holding the waist or shoulders of the one in front of her/him. Have them march to a steady beat while chanting:

Boom-a-lack-a, boom-a-lack-a, whack, whack, whack!



- When they seem to have learned this pattern, try this one, adding vocal emphasis to each syllable where a step is taken:

Boom-a-lack-a, boom-a-lack-a, whack, whack, whack!  
L R L R L R L

- When they can do that, ask them to continue their walk to a steady beat, but on each of the three *whacks*, have them jump in the air:

Boom-a-lack-a, boom-a-lack-a, whack, whack, whack!  
L R L R jump jump jump

- Have them take turns coming up with other movements to do on the *whacks*. Finally, have them separate from the conga line and do this Dinosaur Stomp individually, right back into their seats, so you can continue with your sit-down lessons.

## Earthsong: Activity Ideas

Recently my version of the traditional counting song, "Over in the Meadow," was published as a children's picture book, *Earthsong* (Dutton Children's Books, 1998). Illustrated by Melissa Bay Mathis, it substitutes endangered animals for the usual meadow creatures. Each verse holds the following information about the animals:

- The number of offspring they bear
- Something about their habitat
- Something about their behavior

The music, with chords and piano accompaniment, is on the back of the book, and there is an appendix with more information about the animals. Many teachers have written to me to share the activities they have developed around the reading of this book and the singing of the song. I'd like to share the following ones, with the hope that readers will try them out and invent their own.

- Have the students make puppets of the animals in the song, and put on a puppet show while performing the song.
- Make up a dance with the students. Each animal verse can be choreographed by the students to indicate something about the movement of that animal.
- Have students add their own verses to the song by researching other animals, to come up with the three kinds of information needed (see above). They will need to synthesize that information into poetic form, to create their lyrics. If the class is also trying to combine their own verses into a counting song, they will quickly learn that cuddly mammals rarely have more than three or four offspring, leading them also to discover one of the reasons why so many are endangered.

The possible links to the curriculum through the arts, and especially through music and literature, are numerous and need to be tapped if our students are to get the complete education they deserve. We need to teach teachers not to fear music and other arts, but to embrace them for the wonderful humanizing tools they are. Through the arts we learn to be flexible thinkers and creative problem solvers, to work cooperatively, and to hone our skills of concentration. Our work as artists in residence and keepers of cultural tradition is more important now than ever, as we show both teachers and students the tools that will help them to get along in our fast-paced lives, tools that help us to reflect on and make sense of the world around us.



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

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## Honoring the Farmworkers in Poetry and Song

by Suni Paz

**S**ince 1984 I have had the joy and privilege of collaborating with Alma Flor Ada, an internationally known poet and writer of children's stories. She has entrusted me with developing, writing, singing, and recording the musical versions of her poems and stories.

Alma Flor Ada is Professor of Education and Director of Doctoral Studies at the University of San Francisco. I work as a performing artist, so in a different way, I teach people, too, through the songs I sing, many of which are story songs. Both Dr. Ada and I attend conferences of educators, and it was at one of these that we first met. She was familiar with some of my music and mentioned her desire to have me set some of her poems to music. Some months later, she visited New York to show me her work. I was delighted with her poetic language. It seemed to me that her poems carried music within them and it was up to me to bring it out. Thus started our collaboration, which continues to this day.

***I was delighted with her poetic language. It seemed to me that her poems carried music within them and it was up to me to bring it out. Thus started our collaboration, which continues to this day.***

Although some may believe that collaborating with others is a hard thing to do, I have to say that, with Alma Flor Ada, I have found minimal trouble. On the contrary, I have learned intensely and grown professionally in every way, as a person and as a songwriter. I think this is due to the fact that Dr. Ada and I have held great respect for one another. For example, whenever I have suggested any changes or adjustments to her lyrics, she has assured me that I need not consult her in these matters. However, out of respect, I have always asked her opinion and explained to her the reasons for the needed changes. I have come to learn that I can count on her never objecting.

During most of the 15 years of our collaboration, I lived in New York and she in San Francisco. We saw little of each other, but we discussed lyrics over the phone, by fax or letters, or when we got together at conferences and presentations. One of these gatherings was where we began discussing our desire to write about the farmworkers.

As a young woman, I had firsthand experience of the hardships of farming. When I got married and had my first child, we moved from Buenos Aires to the province of Entre Ríos. There, my husband and I ran an Angora rabbit farm, and, to make ends meet, we had to raise our own food. Plowing, planting, tending, and harvesting was very hard labor, and we could not have succeeded in feeding ourselves but for the generosity of an experienced neighbor—a farmworker—who lent us a hand in the fields and gave us very good and sound farming advice. Not only this, but he made a gift to us of part of his own rich harvest. So I give personal thanks to his memory.

Many readers will also remember the height of the farmworkers' struggle in California, led by César Chávez. We held national cam-

paigns to raise consciousness about the plight of the farmworkers and to convince people of the need to boycott grapes until the *campesinos'* needs for just wages and a more humane life were met. I used to open some of these conferences by singing a song about the farmworkers.

Alma Flor Ada and I shared the desire to educate children about the farmworkers, and this resulted in our working together on *Gathering the Sun: An Alphabet in Spanish and English*. It is a book of poems Alma Flor wrote about the farmworkers' lives, and I was delighted to be invited to set her poems to music. I proposed the use of a variety of rhythms from throughout the Americas, as a way of honoring the farmworkers from various latitudes. Thus, I used *rancheras* and *corridos* (Mexico), *sones* (Venezuela), *chacareras* and *gatos* (Argentina), and *guarañas* (Paraguay), as well as other sounds that suggested the ancient cultures of Mesoamerica. We wanted, through poetry and music, to honor the lives of all the *campesinos* who feed us through hard, patient, and badly rewarded labor.

*Gathering the Sun* is an alphabet book that gives, as an example for each letter of the alphabet, a cultural concept that is important to Latino communities throughout the Americas. Each concept is described in poetry and is depicted with an illustration. Thus, the letter M stands for *México*, represented by a two-page illustration of the Aztec calendar. The letter Y stands for *Yucatán*, and the Mayan monuments are depicted on that page.

The illustrations were done by Simón Silva, an artist born of farmworkers. As a child Silva used to help his father with planting and picking the crops, and this accounts for the deep feeling that permeates the colorful illustrations depicting farming, family relations,



photo: Ramiro Fauve, ©1999 Fauve Creations

Suni Paz, songwriter for *Gathering the Sun*, shows the charango to some young friends.

and father-and-son closeness. Throughout the book, we see tender scenes of a father coming home after a hard day's work, embracing his son; a young boy learning from his mother how to cook and how to make tortillas; a father reading to his daughter; a young girl working in the fields. These are all pictures from the daily lives of farmworkers.

If we think about it, we'll realize that the lives of the *campesinos* have gone mostly unsung, though at times their sufferings and sacrifices have been documented. There are few songs that honor them, thank them from the heart for all of their doings on our behalf, or express to them how proud we feel for being part of their human family. *Gathering the Sun* was intended to do just that and more. "Farm Workers" is one of the songs I composed using Alma Flor Ada's poetry from the book. It expresses our feelings and the feelings of those among us who are conscious of and thankful for the farmworkers' gifts, the fruits of their hands. It acknowledges, "I will grow stronger and kinder as I eat what you have grown."

Another song, the one for the letter C, is dedicated to the memory of César Chávez. It speaks of the legacy he left behind by telling how his example and his words "sprout anew in the field rows as seedings of quiet hope." I have often felt very grateful to Alma Flor Ada, for this opportunity to sing to children about César Chávez. Some months ago I was invited to sing in an assembly at an elementary school that carries his name. During the presentation, I discovered that many of the children knew surprisingly little about this remarkable man who had dedicated his life to the farmworkers' struggle and lent his name to their school. I want to believe that singing this song and showing the illustration that so lovingly depicts him, on that day made César Chávez' memory indelible to those children, teachers, and parents.

Many children are made to believe that pride is a negative thing, so, in concerts, when I ask them if they are proud of being who they are (Argentinean, Mexican, and Latinos in general); they invariably answer no. With the song "Orgullo/Pride," we may be able to open a discus-

sion of what pride is all about and how important it is to be proud of getting good grades, speaking more than one language, having grandparents, being born of a foreign family—being proud of who we are. In the song we can express these feelings:

I am proud of my own family,  
I am proud of my own language,  
I am proud of being who I am.

I am proud of my own culture,  
I am proud of my own people,  
I am proud of being who I am.\*

(The song "Orgullo/Pride" is printed on p. 14.)

Many times we take for granted the bounties of the earth and forget to be grateful for them. If we think about it, we may remember that, around the world, not every child has access to them. Then we may want to be thankful for what we have. What better way to say *thank you* than with a song? The letter G stands for *gracias*, or "thanks." It expresses gratitude to the earth and to the elements, such as the sun, wind, and rain, for all the delicious fruits we enjoy.

This project has warmed my heart and made me proud. With it, I have fulfilled a dream I held within me for a long time, to thank the farmworkers in poetry and song for their wonderful labor and to show how honorable is this profession and how deserving of honor are those who dedicate their lives to working in the fields. **PIO!**

Suni Paz lives in Glendale, California, and is on the board of directors of CMN.

\*The translation of Alma Flor's poem, as it appears in the book, is somewhat different from this. When I wrote the song, I modified the original translation, to make it more singable. The poem "Orgullo/Pride" and parts of other poems are reprinted in *PIO!* by permission of Del Sol Books, Inc., publishers of *Gathering the Sun: An Alphabet in Spanish and English*. We thank them for their generosity.

# Honrando a los Campesinos en Poesía y Canción

por Suni Paz

**D**esde 1984, he tenido el placer y el privilegio de colaborar con Alma Flor Ada, poeta y cuentista internacionalmente conocida. Ella me confió el que yo compusiera música para sus poemas y cuentos en verso, y los grabara.

Alma Flor Ada es Profesora de Educación y Directora de Estudios Doctorales en la Universidad de San Francisco. Yo, a mi vez, doy presentaciones y conciertos y enseño a través de las canciones y poemas que canto. Alma Flor y yo asistimos a conferencias de educación y fue en una de ellas que nos conocimos. Ella estaba familiarizada con mis composiciones y mencionó su deseo de que yo le pusiera música a sus poemas. Unos meses más tarde me visitó en Nueva York para enseñarme su poesía. Me encantó su lenguaje poético. Sus poemas llevaban música en su interior y era mi tarea sacarla a la luz. Así comenzó nuestra colaboración que todavía hoy en día continúa.

**Me encantó su  
lenguaje poético. Sus  
poemas llevaban  
música en su interior  
y era mi tarea sacarla  
a la luz. Así comenzó  
nuestra colaboración  
que todavía hoy en  
día continúa.**

Aunque algunos piensan que trabajar con otros en colaboración es algo muy difícil de hacer debo decir que trabajando con Alma Flor Ada encontré en mi camino muy pocos obstáculos. Por el contrario,

a través de estas colaboraciones he aprendido inmensamente y crecido profesionalmente en todo sentido, como persona y como compositor-cantante. Creo que mucho se debe al hecho de tenernos mutuo respeto. Por ejemplo, cuando he sugerido cambios o ajustes a las letras, ella me ha asegurado que no necesito consultarla. De todas maneras, por respeto, siempre he pedido su opinión y le he explicado la necesidad de introducir ciertos cambios. Con el tiempo he aprendido que puedo confiar en que no va a objetar mis decisiones.

Durante estos 15 años de colaboración, yo vivía en Nueva York y ella en San Francisco. Nos veíamos poco pero discutíamos los trabajos por teléfono, por faximil, por carta o cuando nos reuníamos en conferencias y presentaciones. Fue justamente en una de ellas que discutimos sobre nuestro mutuo deseo de escribir sobre los campesinos.

En mi juventud pude por experiencia conocer de primera mano la dura vida del agricultor. Cuando me casé y tuve mi primer niño, nos mudamos de Buenos Aires a la provincia de Entre Ríos. Allí mi marido y yo teníamos una granja de conejos de Angora y para poder comer, debíamos cosechar nuestra propia comida. Arar, plantar, cuidar y cosechar era una dura labor y no hubiéramos podido alimentarnos a no ser por la generosidad de nuestro vecino, un campesino experimentado que nos dio una mano y nos regaló parte de su rica cosecha además de valiosos consejos. Así es como, personalmente, debo un agradecimiento a su memoria.

Muchos lectores recordarán el momento culminante de la lucha por los derechos de los trabajadores campesinos de California, liderada por César Chávez. En ese entonces se realizaban campañas para despertar la conciencia sobre la dura vida de los campesinos y para convencer a la gente de la necesi-

dad de apoyar el boicot a las uvas hasta que se consideraran las necesidades de los campesinos por un salario justo y condiciones de existencia más humanas. Yo solía abrir estas conferencias con canciones sobre los campesinos.

Alma Flor Ada y yo compartimos el deseo de educar a los niños sobre la vida de los campesinos y su resultado ha sido *Cosechando el Sol: Un Alfabeto en Español y en Inglés*. Este es un libro de poemas escritos por Alma Flor Ada sobre la vida de los campesinos a los que se me invitó a ponerles música, lo que hice con el mayor gusto. Yo le propuse a Alma Flor usar una variedad de ritmos de las Américas como una manera de honrar a los campesinos de otras latitudes. Así, usé rancheras, corridos (México), sones (Venezuela), chacareras, gatos (Argentina), guarañas (Paraguay), y sonidos que sugieren las antiguas culturas de Mesoamérica. Quisimos a través de la poesía y la música honrar la vida de todos los campesinos que nos dan de comer a través de dura, paciente y mal pagada labor.

*Cosechando el Sol* es un alfabeto en el cual cada letra del abecedario propone un concepto cultural importante para las comunidades latinas de todas las Américas. Cada concepto está descrito en la poesía y reforzado con la ilustración. Así, la letra M es por México y está representado por el calendario Azteca que ocupa dos páginas centrales. La letra Y es por Yucatán y en su página se muestran los monumentos Mayas.

El libro fue ilustrado por Simón Silva, hijo de campesinos. De niño, Silva solía ayudar a su padre en los campos a plantar y cosechar, de ahí el sentimiento profundo que se desprende de las ilustraciones a color que describen el campo, las relaciones familiares y la cercanía entre el hijo y su padre. A través del libro vemos escenas tiernas de un padre volviendo a casa después



*Diseñado y pintado por Marciano Cruz, este mural que honra a César Chávez y a la Unión de Trabajadores Campesinos Unidos adorna la pared del Centro de Recursos de la No-Violencia en Santa Cruz, California. Usado con su permiso.*

*Designed and painted by Marciano Cruz, this mural honoring César Chávez and the United Farm Workers Union adorns a wall at the Resource Center for Nonviolence in Santa Cruz, California. Used with permission.*

de un arduo día de trabajo y abrazando cariñosamente a su hijo, un padre leyendo a su niña, una jovencita trabajando en los files, todas escenas de la vida diaria de los campesinos.

Si pensamos, nos daremos cuenta de que a los campesinos se les ha cantado muy poco y la mayor parte de las veces sólo se han documentado sus dolores y sufrimientos. Son pocas las canciones que los honran, que les agradecen desde el corazón lo que han hecho por nosotros, o que expresan el orgullo que sentimos de ser parte de su familia humana. *Cosechando el Sol* consigue esto y aún más. La canción "Farm Workers" es una de las canciones que compuse basada en la poesía que Alma Flor Ada escribió para este libro. Expresa los sentimientos de esta gran poeta, Alma Flor Ada, quien a su vez expresa los sentimientos de aquellos que estamos concientes y agradecidos por los regalos que los campesinos han otorgado a nuestras familias con su labor. Expresa reconociendo: "Creeceré en fuerza y bondad, comiendo lo que has sembrado."

Otra canción, la de la letra C, está

dedicada a la memoria de César Chávez. Habla de la herencia que nos ha dejado expresando cómo su ejemplo y su palabra "retoñan en los surcos en brotes de callada esperanza." Le estoy muy agradecida a Alma Flor Ada por esta oportunidad de cantarles a los niños sobre César Chávez. Unos meses atrás fui invitada a cantar en una asamblea escolar de una escuela que lleva su nombre. Durante mi presentación descubrí que algunos de los niños conocían muy poco de este hombre memorable que había dedicado su vida a la lucha por los derechos de los campesinos y que daba nombre a su escuela. Deseo creer que esta canción que canté ese día y la ilustración que tan amorosamente lo describe y que mostré, dejaron la memoria de César Chávez indeleble en la mente de esos niños, maestros y padres.

Muchos niños tienen un concepto negativo de la palabra *orgullo*. Así, cuando en los conciertos les preguntó si se sienten orgullosos de ser quienes son (argentinos, mexicanos, y latinos en general) los niños me contestan que no. La canción "Orgullo/Pride" nos permitirá

tal vez abrir una discusión sobre el orgullo bien entendido, la importancia de sacar buenas notas en la escuela, hablar más de un idioma, tener bisabuelos, haber nacido en una familia extranjera, y estar orgullosos de ser quienes somos. Con la canción, podemos expresar todos estos sentimientos:

Orgullosa de mi familia  
Orgullosa de mi lengua  
Orgullosa de ser quien soy.

Orgullosa de mi cultura,  
Orgullosa de mi raza,  
Orgullosa de ser quien soy.\*

(La canción "Orgullo/Pride" está impresa en la p. 14.)

Muchas veces damos por sentado los regalos de la tierra y olvidamos agradecer. Si pensamos, recordaremos que alrededor del mundo no todos los niños tienen acceso a ellos. Tal vez entonces querramos no olvidar agradecer por lo que tenemos. Y qué mejor manera de hacerlo que cantando una canción. La letra G expresa gracias o agradecimiento. Expresa también nuestra gratitud a la tierra y a los elementos tales como el sol, el viento, y la lluvia, por los deliciosos frutos de los que gozamos.

Este proyecto me ha llenado el corazón de tibieza y orgullo pues con él he cumplido un anhelo que llevaba en mí desde hace mucho tiempo: agradecer a los campesinos en poesía y canción su hermosa labor, mostrar qué honrosa es esta profesión y qué dignos de honor son los que dedican su vida al cultivo de la tierra. **PIO!**

*Suni Paz vive en Glendale, California, y es parte del Board of Directors de CMN.*

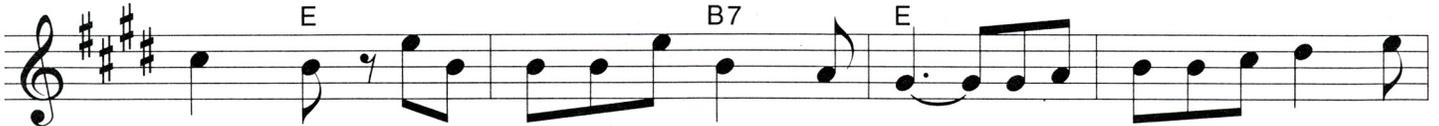
\*La traducción de este poema de Alma Flor es un poco diferente en el libro. Cuando compuse esta canción modifiqué la traducción original para hacerla cantable. Agradecemos a Del Sol Books, Inc., editores de la cinta y del disco compacto, el permiso de publicar la canción "Orgullo/Pride" y trozos de las canciones del alfabeto campesino en la revista *PIO!* como parte de este artículo.

# ORGULLO

words by Alma Flor Ada ©1997 Alma Flor Ada  
music by Suni Paz ©1997 Suni Paz

To learn more about *Gathering the Sun*, in which this song appears, contact Del Sol Books Inc., 29257 Bassett Rd., Westlake, Ohio 44145.


  
 Or - gu - llo - sa de mi fa - mi - lia. Or - gu - llo - sa de mi  
 I am proud of my own fa - m'ly, I am proud of my own


  
 len - gua. Or - gu - llo - sa de ser quien soy. Or - gu - llo - sa de mi cul -  
 lan - guage. I am proud of being who I am. I am proud of my own


  
 tu - ra. Or - gu - llo - sa de mi ra - za. Or - gu -  
 cul - ture, I am proud of my own peo - ple, I am


  
 llo - sa de ser quien soy. Or - gu - llo - sa de ser quien soy.  
 proud of being who I am, I am proud of being who I am.



 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.

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## Passing On a Passion for Reading

by Jenny Heitler-Klevans

One of my greatest pleasures is reading to my children. Ari and Jason, my curly-headed four-year-old twin boys, cuddle up next to me on the floor, and together we take an imaginary trip to the time of the dinosaurs, or to a medieval castle. Every time we go to the library or bring library books home, my sons spend hours poring through them or asking me to read to them.

Books enrich our lives in so many ways, inspiring my children's play and the songwriting my husband and I do. One of the first stories Ari and Jason acted out was *Jack and the Beanstalk*. After they got hooked on that story, we listened to Mary LeFleur's song about it. We've been combining our love for reading and our love for music by reading stories and playing songs related to the stories, or by singing books that have been made out of songs, like "Hey, Little Ant," by Phil and Hannah Hoose, or Thacher Hurd's "Mama Don't Allow." I feel that passing on a passion for reading to children is vitally important. As musicians, my husband David and I have found that we can use music in many ways to contribute to children's excitement about reading.

Songs about reading in general can help motivate children to pick up a book or visit the library. In this category, some of our favorite songs to play and sing together include "Seven Nights to Read," with lyrics by Ted DeMille, "Hangin' Out with Heroes at the Library," by Monty Harper, and "The Library Song," by Tom Chapin and Michael Mark. We have recently been in contact with a Philadelphia-based literacy program called "The 100 Book



*Ari and Jason Heitler-Klevans read with their grandma, Debbie Klevans.*

Challenge." Their curriculum encourages children in the Philadelphia area to read to themselves and aloud to adult volunteers. The founder of this program also believes that reading-related music can help children get excited and motivated about reading. They've even encouraged teachers to use our recorded version of "Seven Nights to Read," in conjunction with the 100-book challenge.

Songs about specific books can introduce children to new books, help them become more excited about familiar books, or bring a new level of understanding to a particular book. There are so many great children's books available today, and it can be a lot of fun to write songs that are inspired by them. Some of the books we have written songs about include *Swimmy*, *Where the Wild Things Are*, and *Harriet the Spy*. We sing them for our children, as well as in concert. A friend of mine told me that her son wanted to read the book, *Harriet the Spy*, after hearing our song. I'm always thrilled to hear such stories.

Of course, songs don't have to be about books to inspire learning and reading. A parent told us after a

concert that her son wanted to learn more about whales after hearing David's song, "Dinosaurs of the Sea." She asked us for suggestions about books on whales. We realized during that interaction that, because of our own children, we had read many books about whales, and we were excited to pass on information about these resources. Our children have certainly inspired us to get more involved in children's literature and making songs out of books.

I recently heard a report on the radio that said that many children entering kindergarten don't even know how to hold a book correctly or in which direction the words should be read on a page. Many children are beginning school with little or no prereading experience. While this news is disturbing, it made me feel that if we, as parents, artists, and teachers, can help inspire children and parents to love reading and books, then we will be providing our communities with a great service. **☆PIO!**

*Jenny Heitler-Klevans and her husband perform full time as the duo Two of a Kind, singing for children in schools, libraries, and other venues.*

## Books That Sing

by Sue Ribaud

Some people collect baseball cards or stamps. I enjoy collecting children's books that are based on songs. I call them "books that sing." I have found them to be very useful in my work with Head Start classes in the Baltimore area. These Head Start residencies are sponsored by Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts, based in Vienna, Virginia. They send me (and many other artists from across the country) into our area schools to work with the students and teachers. Working in their classrooms, we show the teachers how music, dance, and drama can be effective tools for learning; and by the end of the residencies, the teachers are leading similar activities themselves.

I use these "books that sing" as natural links between music and literacy. When I plan a lesson, I pick a book that includes a theme, topic, or concept that I'm looking for. After we first read/sing the book, there are many ways to expand or reinforce the concept from there. We sometimes act out the story, with the children playing the parts themselves or using puppets. Or the whole class might get involved in dancing the story as it is being told or sung. There may be other related songs that we know and will sing together. If not, we sometimes make one up. Modifying a singing game to fit the book's theme can be fun, too.

Here are some of the books that I have enjoyed using:

Aliki. *Go Tell Aunt Rhody*. Macmillan, 1974.

———. *Hush Little Baby*. Prentice-Hall, 1968.

Carle, Eric. *Today Is Monday*. Putnam and Grosset, 1993.

Galdone, Paul. *Cat Goes Fiddle-I-Fee*. Clarion Books, 1985.



Sue Ribaud demonstrates playing the mandolin.

———. *Over in the Meadow*. Simon and Schuster, 1986.

Gershwin, George and Ira. *Summertime*. Simon and Schuster, 1999.

Hoberman, Mary Ann. *Miss Mary Mack*. Little, Brown, 1998.

Kovalski, Maryann. *The Wheels on the Bus*. Little, Brown, 1987.

———. *Take Me Out to the Ballgame*. New York: Scholastic, 1992.

Mallett, David. *Inch By Inch: The Garden Song*. Harper Collins, 1995.

Paxton, Tom. *Going to the Zoo*. Morrow Junior Books, 1996.

Raffi. *Down By the Bay*. Crown Publishers, 1987.

Rogers, Sally. *Over in the Endangered Meadow*. Dutton Children's Books, 1998.

Seeger, Pete. *The Foolish Frog*. Macmillan, 1973.

———. *Abiyoyo*. New York: Macmillan, 1986.

Spier, Peter. *The Fox Went Out on a Chilly Night*. Doubleday, 1961.

Staines, Bill. *All God's Critters Got a Place in the Choir*. Dutton, 1989.

Stanley, Diane. *Fiddle-I-Fee*. Little, Brown, 1979.

Trapani, Iza. *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*. Whispering Coyote Press, 1999.

Westcott, Nadine Bernard. *I Know an Old Woman*. Little, Brown, 1980.

———. *Skip to My Lou*. Little, Brown, 1989.

Zemach, Harve. *Mamma Buy Me a China Doll*. E.P. Dutton, 1976.

———. *Hush Little Baby*. E.P. Dutton, 1976.



Sue Ribaud is on the artist roster for the Maryland State Arts Council and Wolf Trap Institute. She also leads group singing classes for adults.

# Reading, Writing, and Singing

by Sarah Goslee Reed

There are many ways to make connections between books and music, especially for children. Lisa Hill and I have performed and worked together in schools and libraries for over eight years, and our first “songs-about-books” idea started as a performance, but it has evolved into much more.

Our original intent was to find or write songs to go with some of our favorite children’s books, and then to perform them. Several years prior I had written a song about one of my favorite books, *Charlotte’s Web*. I wanted it to have a chorus that was easy to teach to kids and adults, to encourage them to sing along. I called it “Some Pig” and tried to work into the song most of the words that Charlotte wrote in her web. With that one song as the seed, we began to build our performance program. We listed all the songs we knew and all the books we knew (whew! what a list!) and looked for connections. We made quite a few matches. We then collected the books that went with the songs and brought them to our performances, placing them all around us—on the floor, up on the speakers, and on the little table in between us.

Even the youngest children could recognize a favorite book right away; they would point and cry out, “I have that one!” We’d hold up the book, talk about it, ask the children questions, and then sing the song that went with it. We found that discussing the song and the book opened up their interest in both the feel of the song and how the main character might feel.

Besides “Some Pig,” two of the songs we used from the very start were Nancy Schimmel’s “1492,” which is relevant to many books about the history of our country;

and Sally Rogers’ “Over in the Endangered Meadow,” which stems originally from the book *Over in the Meadow* (by John Langstaff) and is now a book in its own right, *Earthsong*.

Often the songs we like the best are the ones that aren’t exactly the same as the books they correspond to, because this encourages the children to explore the similarities and differences between them. It also allows us to leave the children and their teachers with a little food for thought back in the classroom. One of the song/book combinations I like best is Jan Nigro’s song, “Walk a Mile,” used with Sharon Creech’s book, *Walk Two Moons*. Another is one we first encountered at our 1997 CMN National Gathering in Nashville, where we heard Bruce O’Brien sing “Owl Moon.” We couldn’t believe our good fortune at finding a new song and book! Parents and teachers love it, as do the children.

**Songwriting allows spontaneity between the teacher and children, encourages literacy and an interest in books, and fosters creativity in the classroom that spills over into other classes.**

Our performances using the book/song connection have led us to an interesting new direction in our songwriting workshops with children. We had been using two basic approaches: taking children’s poetry or stories and working together with them to write songs based on those texts, or brainstorming a topic and writing a song about that. But this past year we found ourselves at several different schools to which visiting authors or illus-



trators were coming, and the teachers wondered if we could write songs based on these people’s books. Without a second thought, we said yes!

Two schools had an illustrator, Will Hillenbrand, coming to visit. The teachers gave us a list of his books that they were using in their classes, and we read them ahead of time, to be prepared. Working with first and second graders at one school, we wrote three songs based on two of the books. At the other, we worked with the entire school (K–6), and by the end of the school day, with each of the classes contributing, we’d written a song about the book *The Biggest, Best Snowman*. In both instances the children sang the songs for Mr. Hillenbrand. I was able to accompany them at one school, and he told me afterward he had never been so moved by anything anyone had done with one of his books.

The most important thing in our minds when writing with children is empowering them in the ownership of the song. Therefore, with younger children, we avoid making up a melody, instead encouraging them to think of a tune they would like to use. When it comes to writing the words, we stay patient and allow time for them to find their own words to describe the story, letting them think of and choose the rhyming words. In this way the song ends up being something that is truly their own, something we can all be proud of.

Lisa and I particularly like work-

*continued on page 19* ➤



# SOME PIG

words & music by Sarah Goslee Reed  
©1996 Sarah Goslee Reed

You can contact Sarah about her songs and recordings at 1102 New Gambier Rd., Mount Vernon, OH 43050.

**chorus**

D G D A

Some pig, some pig, some pig she said. Some pig she spun in her web. (clap, clap) Some

D G D G A D Fine D verse

pig, some pig, some pig she said. Hum-ble and ter-ri-fic, some pig. (clap, clap) Down on the farm the

G D A D G D

Ar - a-bles were rai-sing up some pigs. They planned to sell them all— ex-cept for

G A D G D A

one who wasn't ve-ry— big.— Young Fern begged to spare— his life,— she gave him a name.—

D G D G A D

— Wil - bur was her pet— and more for good friends they be - came.—

G D G D G

There were goats and lambs a - mong— the crea-tures in the barn.— a goose and gan-der

D E A D G D

and their babes and a spi-der whose— name was Char-lotte. Wil-bur grew quite large— and plump but

A D G D G A D

Char-lotte she was wise. For Wil-bur was her friend and so a plan she did de - vise. Some

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**Reading, Writing, and Singing**

➔ continued from page 17

ing together in these classes because each of us approaches songwriting differently. One of us will think of one idea for a song, and the other will think of another, bouncing ideas off of each other and the children. Putting it all together leads to fun and wonderful songs! Songwriting is a justifiable educational tool that allows spontaneity between the teacher and children. Used in the ways I've described here, it encourages literacy and an interest in books. It fosters creativity in the classroom that spills over into other classes. Many

times teachers have told us that their classes wrote additional verses after we left. It is truly exciting and inspiring to know we have started something that will continue after we are gone. It is our hope that the children will stay curious and interested in learning

more about the world around them by reading, writing, and singing about it! **PI!**

*Sarah Goslee Reed lives in Ohio. She and Lisa Hill perform children's music as the duo Prairie Orchid. They have several children's recordings available.*



Sarah Goslee Reed (bottom) and Lisa Hill.

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**Some Pig**

➔ continued from previous page

Chorus:

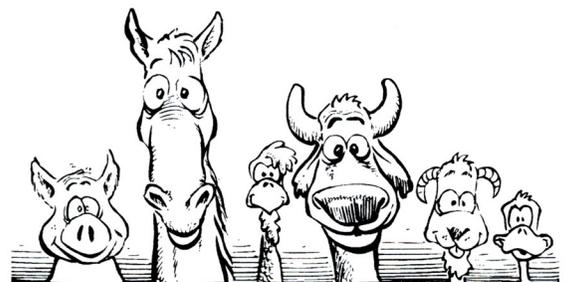
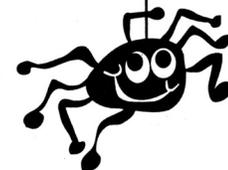
Some pig, some pig, some pig she said.  
Some pig, she spun in her web.  
Some pig, some pig, some pig she said.  
Humble and terrific, some pig.

Down on the farm the Arables were raising up some pigs.  
They planned to sell them all except for one who wasn't very big.  
Young Fern begged to spare his life, she gave him a name.  
Wilbur was her pet and more, for good friends they became.  
There were goats and lambs among the creatures in the barn,  
A goose and gander and their babes and a spider whose name was Charlotte.  
Wilbur grew quite large and plump, but Charlotte she was wise;  
For Wilbur was her friend, and so a plan she did devise.

Chorus

Templeton the rat would do a favor for food scraps.  
From the dump he brought back words and Charlotte spun them so fast.  
Each and every word she spelled brought visitors to see  
The radiance that was in her web—her words set Wilbur free.  
Fern took Wilbur to the fair, she hoped he'd get a prize.  
Wilbur was a winner, for he was humble in the judges' eyes!  
Charlotte laid her sack of eggs before her life came to an end;  
Wilbur cared for it till spring, and from it came a new friend.

Chorus 2X



# A Garden of Verses Becomes "A Garden of Songs"

by Ted Jacobs

It was about three years and five months ago that I received a great gift. I was looking for a new music project to work on, when a friend introduced me to *A Child's Garden of Verses*, by Robert Louis Stevenson, and suggested that these 100-year-old poems could make wonderful lyrics for songs. I was sitting with her at a breakfast meeting and listening as she recited lines from "The Land of Counterpane," lines that she knew by heart. I can still remember the way the words captured my imagination, the same way these poems have been delighting readers for generations. While books and reading were important parts of my growing up, I was always more of a *Green Eggs and Ham* kind of kid and had managed to miss *A Child's Garden of Verses* for 33 years!

I bought a beautifully illustrated version of the book and brought it home to read. Within the pages I found sensations and wonderments I had not experienced since I was a child. Here in this book was the triumph of my realizing, as a child, that the kite was sailing through the air because of the wind; here was the joy of playing with my shadow and the utter fascination at how it always went where I went; here was the adventure of spending hours playing in a shed, imagining it to be a time machine (although the way Stevenson tells the experience, it is a basket on a meadow, imagined to be a great sailing ship on the sea). In many of the poems I saw and remembered the gentle ache I felt at watching my older sisters grow up and leave home to start lives of their own. These poems speak of experiences that are truly uni-

versal. Then and now—and for generations yet to come—*A Child's Garden of Verses* has been, is, and always will be a reflection of our own childhood.

Enchanted, I began setting the poems to music, a process that I found quite enjoyable. I would read each poem three or four times aloud, to discover its meter, mood, and tempo. A majority of them suggested 3/4 time (waltz), some 2/4 (common time). I would then either sit at the piano or pick up a guitar and start to form the music around the words. Since the meter within each poem was perfectly repeated from stanza to stanza, my melodies could be repeated to form verses of songs.



When six or seven songs were completed, I turned to the task of recording them. I had decided that each song would be from a different musical genre, so one was full of African percussion, while another sounded Cajun and swampy. One was in the style of Steely-Dan; another in the style of Sting. "The Land of Counterpane" was fashioned into a Celtic-sounding piece. It was a very eclectic mix, and as I have my own studio, I was able to take the time to tinker the arrangements to perfection. When the collection was all mixed and completed, I unveiled the tape to friends and family. Their comments were kind but hardly enthusiastic. Somehow I had taken a foolproof idea and blown it!

Months later, after working on some other projects, I decided to revisit the poems to see if I could figure out where I had gone wrong. Couldn't be the lyrics. (Check!) The songs were good. (Check!) The ar-

rangements were wonderful—they were clever, each one as different from the next as day from night; they were complex, showpieces, the ear was drawn to every meticulous note—OOPS! *There* was the problem! Every note of every arrangement was taking the listener's ear *away* from the poetry! Yikes! Why had no one warned me?

Having found the problem, I went to work solving it. The Celtic style of "The Land of Counterpane" seemed by far the most natural-sounding arrangement for the poem. In addition, Robert Louis Stevenson was a Scotsman, which made the Celtic style seem even more correct. I went back to the book and wrote six more songs, this time in a simple folk style. When it was time to record them, I went with simple arrangements using instruments indigenous to the book's time and place. There were Uilleann pipes, pennywhistles, wooden flutes, accordions, recorders, and fiddles, all framing the singers and poetry to lovely effect. This time, when the demo was finished, it sounded right. Within six months I had secured a record deal with a company called Music for Little People, and in February of 1999 *A Child's Garden of Songs* was released.

I would like to note that this record was not made in a vacuum. Quite to the contrary, I liken the writing, performing, rewriting and re-performing of *A Child's Garden of Songs* to a three-year-long old-fashioned barnraising! My friends rolled up their sleeves and went to work for free or for embarrassingly reduced rates. This was a family of musicians enjoying making music together and delighting in the poetry, which led each one of us to reexperience parts of our own childhoods. None of us would have missed the ride for the world!



Ted Jacobs is a composer/producer residing in Los Angeles.

## CMN Inaugurates Magic Penny Award

by Sally Rogers

**T**his past October's CMN national gathering showcased the first-time presentation of our Magic Penny Award, given in recognition of lifetime achievement in children's music. Many CMN members are familiar with the award's much-loved namesake song, which contains the line, "Love is something if you give it away—you end up having more." And so it is with our new award.

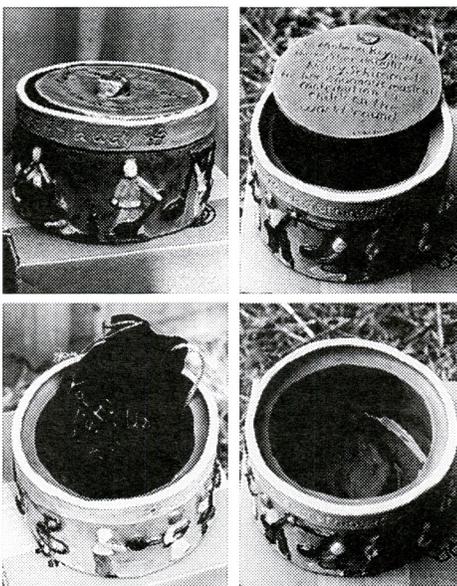
The CMN board of directors wanted to create a way to acknowledge those elders among us who have dedicated their lives to empowering children through music. It seemed fitting that the first award should go to the very woman whose song names it—to Malvina Reynolds. Although Malvina is no longer alive, her daughter, CMN member Nancy Schimmel, was present at the gathering to accept the award and facilitate a warm tribute to her mother. Faith Petric, Marcia Berman, Patty Zeitlin, Nancy Raven, Gary Lapow, and others joined Nancy, singing some of Malvina's songs and sharing memories of how their collaboration with her impacted and enriched their lives and work. (See pictures on p. 25.)

Earlier in the day, Nancy shared a short video about Malvina's life of activism through song. Among other things, we learned that she began writing songs in her late forties and continued until her death at the age of 77. Her songbooks for children include such classics as *Magic Penny*, *Morningtown Ride*, and *You Can't Make a Turtle Come Out*. Many of her songs are sung by children all across the country, in schools, children's clubs, and summer camps. And of course, many CMNers have one or two in their own repertoires.

The designing of the award was a model of collaborative effort via the

internet. Phil Hoose and I solicited ideas from members, to come up with a design. Because time was short, only members with e-mail were asked for their input, for which we apologize. But oh, the ideas! Everything from a plaque to a poster to pottery was suggested. Proposed themes included children's hands, musical notes, images of families, a giant penny, the lyrics of "Magic Penny," and much more. We tried to use as many as possible in the final design.

In the end, we decided on a cylindrical pottery container with a lid, to be decorated on the outer sides with playful designs such as notes, flowers, and children. On the top would be "1999 CMN Magic Penny Award" and the lyric, "Love is something if you give it away." When you opened the container, on the bottom you would see the imprint of a child's palm. Nestled in the hand there would be a purple velvet bag with gold ties and embroidery reading, "You end up having more." The bag would be filled with 100 shiny pennies for the recipient to give away. The inside of the lid would have the inscription, "To Malvina Reynolds, through her daughter, Nancy Schimmel, for her enormous musical contribution to the empowerment of children." And we wanted a penny incorporated somehow.



Photos: Barbara Wright

Next I began searching for a potter to do the job. I called several professional and amateur potters, but none had the time. Several knew Malvina's songs and were as honored to be asked as they were sad to have to say no. In the eleventh hour, Phil suggested calling a friend of his, Eliza Durgan, whom he knew to be a wonderful potter. Eliza is the 14-year-old daughter of Steve Zeitlin and Amanda Durgan, who run City Lore, a nonprofit organization in New York City dedicated to preserving the stories of the many communities in the city. City Lore was also involved with 1998's CMN national gathering in Manhattan, and so Eliza and her family were familiar with CMN when she was called.

She agreed to do it and was commissioned on the spot! With some help from a teacher at her school, Eliza created a most magnificent pot that truly captured the spirit and intent of the award. Tiny sculpted children march around the outside of the lidded clay jar, carrying or sitting on eighth and quarter notes as they go. The handle on the lid is the smiling face of a small child. The inside is equally spectacular. On the bottom is sculpted a child's upturned hand, holding the bag of pennies, which is made of purple velvet and lined in white satin. An actual penny is permanently affixed to the inside of the lid, and the inscription to Malvina is hand lettered in the clay by Eliza. The entire award is glazed in lovely pastel shades of purple, yellow, and pink.

When the award was presented to Nancy Schimmel at the gathering, many *ooohs* and *aaahs* could be heard, and many inquiries were made as to whether we could commission Eliza to do another one for us next year. Eliza would certainly honor CMN by saying yes to such a request. The whimsy and artistry of the design by this gifted young potter deserve many kudos.



# COMPOST CRITTERS

words & music by Nancy Schimmel  
©1997 Nancy Schimmel



Nancy tells about her use of a children's nonfiction book for this piece:  
"When I read *Compost Critters*, by Bianca Lavies (Dutton, 1993), full of up-close and personal color photos of the critters and fascinating information about their hidden activities, I was inspired to write this musical/rap/book-talk. The Plum City Players perform it with guitar for the intro and percussion for the rap part in our garbage assemblies. We invite the kids to join the "Critters! Compost critters!" part. After the song, I hold up the book (ex-librarian that I am)."

For more information about Nancy's songs and recordings, write to her at 1639 Channing Way, Berkeley, CA 94703.

*intro Rubato*

A Bmin

A com-post pile just sits there, it does- n't move or talk, It

A D C# F#7 B7 E E7 A

does- n't wag its tail to say it wants to take a walk. But if you could shrink to

B E A A7 D

thim- ble size then you could take a dive, And find out on the in- side, that

A7 guitar *tacit* chorus lead Rap rhythm echo lead echo

com- post is a - live with. crit- ters (crit- ters) com- post crit- ters, (com- post crit- ters)

**Intro:**

A compost pile just sits there  
It doesn't move or talk,  
It doesn't wag its tail to say  
It wants to take a walk,  
But if you could shrink to thimble size  
Then you could take a dive  
And find that on the inside  
That compost is alive! with . . .

**Rap:**

Critters! Compost critters!



**Compost critters working away**

Chomping on leaves, night and day  
Compost critters crawling around  
What they eat makes a treat to sweeten the ground.

Critters! Compost critters!

**Every earthworm does its share**

The tunnels it digs bring water and air  
Look for the earthworm, smooth and pink,  
Helping other critters breathe and drink.

Critters! Compost critters!

## Compost Critters

➔ continued from previous page



Pillbug, sow bug look about the same,  
You can tell them apart if you think about the name.  
Touch them gently, the pillbug will stay  
And roll in a ball while the sowbug runs away.

Critters! Compost critters!

Springtails can live where life is hard,  
In icy Antarctica and my back yard.  
When they meet up with some nasty stranger,  
Their springy tails bounce them out of danger.

Critters! Compost critters!

The millipede is a beautiful mover,  
It's got a lot o' legs to help it maneuver  
Over bumpy garbage looking for food,  
The hundred-footed millipede is one smooth dude.

Critters! Compost critters!

Mites have eight legs just like spiders,  
Sometimes a beetle has mites for riders.  
The mites get on at the beetle-bus stop  
Then hop off to eat some icky-looking glop.

Critters! Compost critters!

Mites are small, but they're bigger than bacteria,  
The very smallest diners in the compost cafeteria  
Bacteria eat meat and vegetables too,  
There's some inside of me and there's some inside of you.

Critters! Compost critters!

If your garden soil is heavy or sandy  
It's good to have some compost handy,  
To see how your compost helpers look,  
Go to the library, look for the book

That's called . . . Compost critters.

## "Give a Gift" Campaign Launched

**M**agic happened on Sunday morning at the 1999 CMN National Gathering. A great idea was presented for raising much-needed money for our network, and many members agreed that it made great sense to give a person, school, library, or organization in our lives a CMN gift membership as a holiday present. As a result, CMN's total membership increased by 77 people in the space of 20 minutes! The CMN "Give a Gift" Campaign was launched!

There were several things that were appealing about this very successful holiday membership drive. For some it was the realization that giving the gift of a CMN membership is a great alternative to buying the kinds of things we usually give. For some it was knowing that the money we spent for a CMN gift membership was money that we probably would have spent anyway to buy some other gift. For some it was discovering a great way to connect someone new to CMN, someone for whom this gift is very appropriate, even if we might not have given them a holiday gift, otherwise.

For all of us, passing along the many goodies that come with being a CMN member propelled us to give gift memberships, goodies such as

- The inspiration, information, and resources in *Pass It On!*
- Access to each other through CMN's new website
- The opportunity to make friends and refuel our dreams at exciting national and regional gatherings
- The chance to be part of a powerful organization that helps make the world a safer and more just place for the children in our communities and in the world

Membership dues make it possible for CMN to exist. They enable us to publish *Pass It On!*, have a website, hire essential staff, pay our bills, and send out mailings. They also go toward the organizing of our phenomenal national gatherings, which include great workshops and song swaps, inspiring keynote presentations, tributes to those who have devoted their lives to children's music, and creative opportunities for community building.

And at last October's national gathering, there were 77 new CMN members generated in 20 minutes! How totally amazing! Imagine us building on that kind of momentum. Hmmm. Birthday? Graduation? Valentine's Day? Hmmm. The winter holidays aren't the only gift-giving opportunity. You can give the gift of CMN any time of the year. To join the "Give a Gift" Campaign now, contact Caroline Presnell at 847/733-8003 or [office@cmnonline.org](mailto:office@cmnonline.org). 

## News from the CMN Board

by Bonnie Lockhart,  
Board President

It was great to see all of you who made it to Petaluma last fall, for yet another splendid national gathering! It featured a knock-your-socks-off keynote address by Bess Lomax Hawes, the presentation of our first Magic Penny Award, and an array of outstanding workshops and informal jams and exchanges. Ingrid Noyes, the gathering chairperson, as well as a host of imaginative and hardworking CMN volunteers, deserve our heartfelt thanks for all they did to produce a wonderful event. *Bravo!*

Those of you who couldn't make it this year, I hope you'll be able to attend our 2000 gathering. We'll be

on the East Coast next October. Look for dates and location details elsewhere in this and forthcoming issues of *Pass It On!* or contact our national office.

As always, the gathering was preceded by a daylong CMN board meeting. This one was made lively and promising by the attendance of four new board members. Hooray for Barbara Tilsen, Jenny Heitler-Klevans, Scott Bierko, and Susan Keniston for rolling up their sleeves for CMN! You can find the names of all current CMN board members on the inside front cover of this and every issue of *PIO!*

As those of you who attended the gathering plenary session have already heard, we are no longer working with Cyndi Pock, our former executive director. After a great deal of discussion and evaluation, the executive committee of the CMN

board came to the decision to end our working relationship with her.

Despite this setback, we left the board meeting with a good deal of enthusiasm and energy for moving forward. We're working to develop more leadership within the membership of CMN, and you'll be hearing more about that in future issues of *PIO!* As always, I encourage you to contact me or any of your board members, as well as your regional representatives, with your ideas, concerns, and energy to help nourish CMN and the amazing, life-affirming, crucial work we all do.

Keep letting those little lights shine!  
**PIO!**

You can write to Bonnie Lockhart at 1032 Winsor Avenue, Oakland, California 94610 or at [bonnielockhart@mindspring.com](mailto:bonnielockhart@mindspring.com); or you can call her at 510/451-2005.

## CMN Quilt Fit To Be Tied

It's done! The CMN quilt, which was started two years ago at the gathering in Nashville, has been completed and was tied off and bound at this year's gathering in Petaluma. It consists of 36 beautiful and innovative squares and has over 100 names in its borders. The next issue of *PIO!* will include a more in-depth article about the making of the quilt and aspirations for its future. Meanwhile, if any regions are sponsoring gatherings and would like to have the quilt as a backdrop for their event, please contact Caroline Presnell in our Evanston office to arrange shipping and return of the quilt. Enjoy! **PIO!**



At the Petaluma gathering, Sally Rogers puts some finishing touches on the front of the CMN quilt.

### 2000 CMN NATIONAL GATHERING

The Children's Music Network presents its tenth annual national gathering on October 13-15, at Camp Kutz in Warwick, New York. Camp Kutz was the site for the 1993 national gathering, and we are glad to return to this beautiful setting for a rich weekend of singing and song sharing, workshops, networking, and musical jams. If you'd like to get involved in planning the gathering, some of the committees that could use your help are: Outreach (headed by Phil Hoose and Sally Rogers), Publicity (headed by Barbara Tilsen), Workshops (headed by Lisa Atkinson), Child Care (headed by Jenny Heitler-Klevans), and Transportation. For more information, contact the CMN National Gathering Coordinator, Barbara Wright, at 914/764-7613.

## Curriculi! Curricula!

by Bob Blue

Last fall, I had the chance to see Anne White, an excellent music teacher, begin her first week as the Fort River School's music teacher, and she started off with a bang. I've seen many music teachers who have felt confined by what's traditionally expected of them, and I've seen them transfer that feeling of confinement to the children they taught, often with disastrous results.

Anne knows about that kind of feeling, and she was determined to start the year emphasizing the fun music can be. Knowing the children, and having seen some of them disrupt music classes in the past because they wanted to have fun, not learn a bunch of facts and skills, I was worried at first that Anne would be discouraged by their lack of positive participation, and perhaps by their rowdiness.

That didn't happen. There was rowdiness, all right, but it was intentional rowdiness, planned by Anne. One boy who was used to being a center of attention started out by interrupting and getting attention in a few other annoying

ways. He's used to getting on teachers' nerves quickly, and Anne confided to me, after class, that he had succeeded more than I knew. I strongly suspect that the boy didn't know, either; Anne paid little attention to his shenanigans, instead proceeding with shenanigans of her own. And the games and dance that Anne taught them were fun.

***She had won them over by conducting a class that was just the right blend of rowdiness and control, and they were ready to settle down to have a serious discussion.***

At the end of the class time, Anne gathered the children to discuss the fun they'd had. She asked them to explain what one of the games had to do with music, and they gave thoughtful answers. She had won them over by conducting a class that was just the right blend of rowdiness and control, and they were ready to settle down to have a serious discussion.

The classroom teacher came into the room near the end of the class,

as children were dancing, and he was there for the concluding discussion.

He's a believer in fun, himself, and he enjoyed what he saw and heard. I worked in his room a few times during the day, and I think music had gotten the class ready to enjoy the whole day.

I remember reading George Leonard's *Education and Ecstasy* in college. And I remember A. S. Neill's *Summerhill*. I never forgot those books, and I tried, as a teacher, to plan joyful lessons. Sometimes I succeeded, but there were requirements and traditions that often got in the way of joy.

I think that the sixth graders are going to have a year to remember fondly, and I think that Anne's music class is going to be a major source of some of those memories. There will be serious times—times when children are supposed to settle down and think. And I think that they'll be more ready to do that because Anne has shown them what fun music is. **PI!**

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



## Malvina Reynolds Honored at the 1999 National Gathering



Among those leading the tribute by sharing stories and singing Malvina's songs were (l. to r.) Nancy Schimmel, Gary Lapow, Faith Petric, Patty Zeitlin, and Marcia Berman.

Photos: Scott Kepnes

# 10th Annual National Gathering

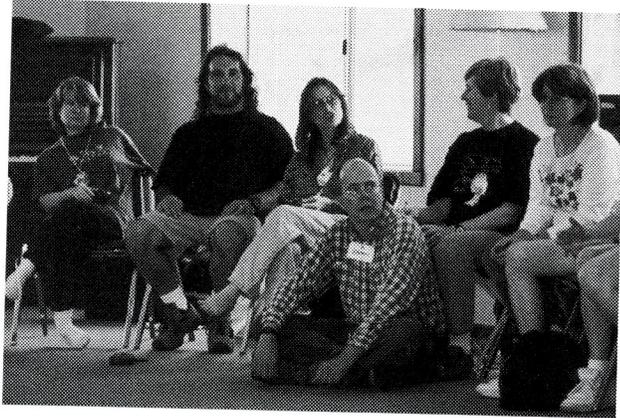


photo: Andy Morse



photo: Barbara Wright



photo: Andy Morse



photo: Scott Kepnes

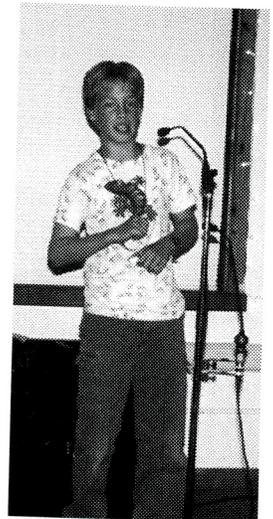


photo: Scott Kepnes

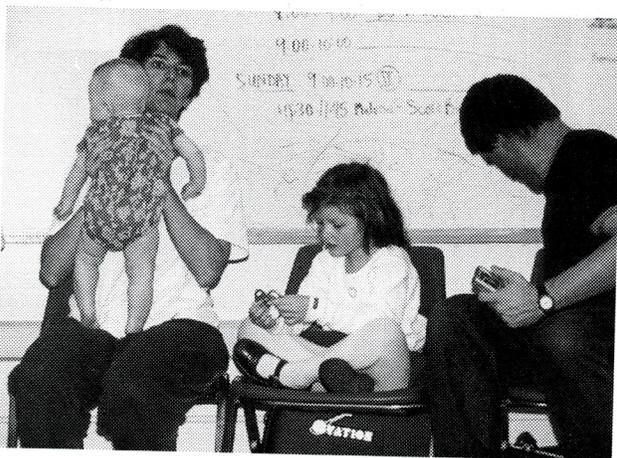


photo: Andy Morse



photo: Scott Kepnes

# October 15-17, 1999 • Petaluma, California



photo: Scott Kepnes



photo: Andy Morse



photo: Scott Kepnes



photo: Andy Morse



photo: Scott Kepnes



photo: Scott Kepnes



photo: Scott Kepnes

## 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!

### CANADA

Sandy Byer  
26 Bain Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario M4K 1E6  
Canada  
416/465-2741

E-mail: [ph.byer@utoronto.ca](mailto:ph.byer@utoronto.ca)

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

### NEW ENGLAND

Scott Kepnes  
71 Brockton Avenue  
Haverhill, MA 01830  
978/469-9406  
[singdog@earthlink.net](mailto:singdog@earthlink.net)

On Saturday, March 25, this region will hold its annual daylong gathering filled with song swaps, a round robin, and workshops. It will be held once again at the Clark Street Developmental Learning School in Worcester, Massachusetts. If you would like to be on the planning committee, facilitate a workshop, help out, or contribute in any way, please contact Scott.

### NEW YORK METRO

Nancy Hershatter  
760 Bronx River Road  
Bronxville, NY 10708  
914/237-4010  
or  
Barbara Wright  
116 Westchester Avenue  
Pound Ridge, NY 10576-1704  
Voice: 914/764-5484  
Fax: 914/764-5453

Our region had a small but enthusiastic gathering in October. We plan to collaborate with the NYS-AEYC in New York City for a song-filled event on Saturday, March 4. Join us for a great evening. For more details contact Barbara. We also have tentative plans for an event in the spring. Call Nancy to contribute ideas or to help with organizing.

### MID-ATLANTIC

Dave Orleans  
999 Sherbrook Circle  
Somerdale, NJ 08083-2221  
Day: 609/768-1598  
Eve: 609/435-4229  
[Orleans@nothinbut.net](mailto:Orleans@nothinbut.net)

We are planning to hold our third "somewhat-annual" Great Groundhog Revival on Saturday, February 5, from noon to 5 or 6 PM, but we haven't nailed down the location yet. This year, along with song swapping, networking, and pot-lucking, the program will feature the following: a workshop/demo about musical instruments homemade from nature or from recyclables; a make-and-take instrument-building session; and a sharing session where folks can bring examples of their own homemade or unlikely instruments, their favorite songs for junk-band accompaniment, and/or tips on when to and when *not* to use these songs and instruments. All CMN members are invited! Bring friends.



### MIDWEST

Bruce O'Brien  
604 Newton Street  
Eau Claire, WI 54701-3862  
Day: 715/833-0874  
Eve: 715/832-0721  
or  
Linda Boyle  
5105 West Deming Place  
Chicago, IL 60639-2419  
773/237-1848  
[haysie@email.msn.com](mailto:haysie@email.msn.com)

Last October's national gathering has us pumped in the heartland! Bruce O'Brien and Lin Boyle will continue to share co-rep duties, while Noah Budin has taken on the job of hosting the Midwest Regional Gathering in Cleveland in 2000. We may be getting closer to forming an Ohio or Midwest sub-region, with new friends in the Columbus area planning a winter song swap. Contact Joanie Calem 614/488-4091 or Leslie Zak 614/262-4098 for time and place.

There's good news for the Chicago area, too. On Sunday, December 13, Lin Boyle hosted a "Festival of Lights" sing-along at her home, for local CMNers and friends. It featured winter songs, including songs of Chanukah, Christmas, Winter Solstice, and Kwanzaa. She plans to have some ongoing song gatherings for families every other month, and a special Spring Sing. She is also working to get local park districts and schools to host CMN workshops for children, families, and educators. Contact her or look for announcements.

## SOUTHEAST

Rachel Sumner  
217 Silo Court  
Nashville, TN 37221-3544  
615/646-3220  
rachel@jackatak.theporch.com

New location! We have a new home for our meetings. Imagination Crossroads has joined The Game Store in a larger space located at the Mall at Green Hills on Hillsboro Road, under the name of The Game Store. This is almost directly across from our old location. As always, we will meet on the first Wednesday of every month at noon. Call Rachel if you need more information.

Our involvement in the local early-childhood conference in August was well-received. Many members led workshops and were featured in a concert each morning. We also had a booth to display our recordings and promotional flyers. We held a potluck Cookout and Jam in October, at Mimi Johnston's home. We made it a point to invite new people to this event.

### Atlanta Metro sub-region contact

Eric Litwin, CMN  
128 Greenwood Place  
Decatur, GA 30030  
Voice: 404/378-1036  
Fax: 404/377-0674  
ericlitwin@mindspring.com

The Atlanta Metro sub-region has not been active recently; however we still remain hopeful and are motivated to create a fun and successful affiliation. All members of the Children's Music Network in the Atlanta metropolitan area who wish to meet as a group, contribute time or leadership, or simply exchange ideas are encouraged to contact Eric.

## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Lisa Atkinson  
317 West 41st Avenue  
San Mateo, CA 94403  
650/574-2709  
scooptunes@earthlink.net

The Northern California region wants to thank all the fine folks who attended the national gathering in Petaluma in October. We were so pleased to host you all!

We will be having a song swap in February in Marin; call Lisa for details or look for a mailing soon.

The CAEYC statewide convention will be held in Sacramento this year, on the weekend of March 11-12. Southern California member Chris Lamm and the wonderful people in the Advocacy Center have invited CMN members to a song swap on Saturday, March 11. There are other ways CMN can interface with the Advocacy Center at this event, so if you would like to be more involved in workshops, song swaps, and discussions, call Lisa.

Last, but not least, we will host a CMN California Statewide Gathering in Nevada City on the weekend of May 6-7. Our keynote presenter will be Bruce "Utah" Phillips, and we will focus on teaching children about the Labor Movement! *Save those dates!!* It's going to be fabulous! For additional information or to find out how you can help, contact Susan Hopkins (530/274-1862 or SDHPeace@aol.com) or Lisa.

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Carrie Higgins  
3331 Daisy Avenue  
Long Beach, CA 90806  
562/426-1460

We are revitalized, recharged, and inspired again from the national gathering. Look for announcements of our annual Spring Sing and Song Swap. For information—and to volunteer—contact Carrie.

## PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Denise Friedl-Johnson  
321 Clay Street #76  
Ashland, OR 97520  
541/482-4610  
songwings7@cs.com  
or  
Bonnie Messinger  
4648 SW 39th Drive  
Portland, OR 97221  
503/768-9065  
steve.mullinax@worldnet.att.net  
or  
Greta Pedersen  
PMB 252  
19363 Willamette Drive  
West Linn, OR 97068  
503/699-0234  
greta@teleport.com

It's official! We have our very own CMN region! It was a pleasure to meet four brand-new CMN members from Washington and Oregon at the national gathering, and we hope to see them at our next regional gathering on January 15, 5:30-8:30 PM. It will be a song swap and potluck at Greta's house, just outside Portland; call her for directions. We'll also be putting song swaps together in the Ashland and (we hope) Tacoma areas during the year. Contact any of the regional reps for ideas and suggestions. **YIP!**

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

## New Sounds

compiled by Sandy Byer

Note: 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.

### GLENN COLTON

#### **Glenn Colton Takes a Look Within**

This new CD has original songs that are happy and rockin' and manage to get a message through without ever sacrificing the joy of the song. Glenn's songs reflect his respect for the intelligence of his audiences, and he draws upon a variety of musical styles, including

folk, blues, country, and rock, to create music that kids, parents, and teachers can enjoy together.

CDs are \$12 (incl. s+h), and are available from Glenn Colton Shows, 6693 Old Beattie Rd., Lockport, NY 14094; phone: 888/GLEN-DAY; e-mail: [info@glenncolton.com](mailto:info@glenncolton.com).

### ELLEN EDSON

#### **Family Fare: Folk Songs for Children and Their Families**

Rooted in North American folk traditions, teacher and singer-songwriter Ellen Edson plays guitar, banjo, autoharp, and dulcimer in this collection of 20 old and new songs geared to families. From the traditional "Shoo-Fly" and "Skip to My Lou," to Woody Guthrie's "Bling Blang" and Jean Ritchie's "Peace Round," this re-

cording naturally encourages singing, dancing, and smiling along. Field tested for the car and the classroom.

Cassettes are \$10, CDs are \$15 (plus \$1.75 s+h), and are available from Elm Hill Music, 121 Old Chesterfield Rd., Hinsdale, NH 03451; phone: 603/336-7796.

### DAVID ALPERT

#### **Sounds Familiar**

This collection of 16 original songs makes you think of being on a porch with a gentle summer breeze. Dave's clear voice; his vignette style of songwriting; and his accompaniment on guitar, banjo, mandolin, harmonica, and dulcimer provide accessible and fun listening for the whole family. These songs explore self-esteem, self-confidence, and much more.



## Announcements

### NEW CMN WEBSITE!

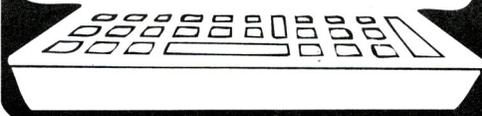
[www.cmnonline.org](http://www.cmnonline.org)

#### NEW E-MAIL ADDRESS:

Caroline Presnell,  
National Coordinator:  
[office@cmnonline.org](mailto:office@cmnonline.org)

E-MAIL LISTSERVE  
FOR MEMBERS ONLY!  
[cmn\\_community@cmnonline.org](mailto:cmn_community@cmnonline.org)

*For full details,  
contact the national office*



## NCEA Conference 2000

**Breaking Barriers:  
Working Together for Justice in Schools**

**July 13-16, 2000**

University of California at Los Angeles

Themes: Telling our stories;  
Developing & acting on a shared vision

Contact:

NCEA, PO Box 679 • Rhinebeck, NY 12572  
[NCEA@aol.com](mailto:NCEA@aol.com) • 914/876-4580

### **Have you noticed?**

**We are accepting  
advertising in  
*Pass It On!***

Contact the CMN national office for prices  
and information on how to submit your ad.

Cassettes are \$12, CDs are \$18, and are available from D & A Records, 800 Village Walk, Guilford, CT 06437; phone: 203/457-0855; e-mail: ALPERT530@aol.com.

#### **BARRY LOUIS POLISAR**

##### ***A Little Different***

Barry's songs for children have always been a little different than most. His lyrics are wry, sly, and witty, and on this album he is joined by Ray Tilkens, who plays a variety of instruments that give this recording the most textured and produced sound of any of Barry's recordings yet. It features 17 songs, including a bluesy "I'm A Slug" and a joyful "Potty Training," the latter to the tune of "Waltzing Matilda."

Cassettes are \$10, CDs are \$15, and are available from Rainbow Morning Music, 2121 Fairland Rd.,

Silver Spring, MD 20904; phone: 301/384-9207.

#### **ELLA JENKINS**

##### ***Ella Jenkins—and a Union of Friends Pulling Together***

Legendary children's performer Ella Jenkins and a group of young and older musical friends introduce children (aged 4–12) to the ideas of unity, cooperation, and labor unions through songs, recitation, and poetry. This CD features harmonica, piano, percussion, banjo, guitar, vocals, and chorus; and it reminds us how unity and strength are part of family ties as well as adult life and work.

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



#### **SUE TRAINOR**

##### ***Under Tables, Out Back Doors***

Sue's first album for kids is a highly interactive and humorous set of songs and spoken-word pieces designed to entertain and creatively inspire young listeners aged 4–7. Produced by Marcy Marxer, with a wonderful array of musicians, these selections tickle imaginations and inspire singing and dancing

*continued on next page* ➤

## **PIO! VOLUNTEERS WANTED**

Our wonderful little magazine is the result of a lot of volunteer effort from our regular staff. There are times when we'd like to have help with some smaller pieces or a one-time project. For example, could you

- Keyboard an article from hard copy and send us the computer file?
- Help to think up themes for *PIO!* and suggest good people to write feature articles about them?
- Solicit children's art to go with an article or theme?
- Keyboard a transcript from a taped interview?
- Research and obtain permission to reprint a copyrighted item?
- Coordinate a special project such as compiling a resource list on a particular topic?

We'd like to have a list of volunteers we could call on for such things, and if you'd be willing to be on that list, get in touch with Susan Keniston (see inside front cover for contact information). Let us know what skills you can contribute. Thanks!

*continued on next page* ➤

### New Sounds

➔ continued from previous page

along with Dixieland, polka, old-time, and other tuneful and rhythmic arrangements.

CDs and cassettes are available on the web at [www.songs.com/hot\\_soup](http://www.songs.com/hot_soup) or at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com); phone: 410/381-2834.

### TWO OF A KIND (DAVID & JENNY HEITLER-KLEVANS)

#### Connections

This album of fun, educational and meaningful songs, particularly for kids ages 7-12, features songs about historical and fictional heroes, endangered species, conflict resolution, and more! There are original songs, as well as songs by Bob Reid, Sarah Pirtle, and a seventh-grade class. Musical styles include rock, folk, reggae, blues, sixties spy music, and disco-ska fusion.

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

### BILL HARLEY

#### Play It Again

This is a collection of Bill's most treasured songs, plus one new story, "You're Not the Boss of Me." Bill's humor, empathy, and brilliant songwriting shine through the 14 tracks on this compilation, including "Monsters in The Bathroom," "You're in Trouble," and "50 Ways to Fool Your Mother."

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



### Announcements

➔ continued from previous page

## Children's Music Songwriting Contest: Lo Zecchino d'Oro (in Italy)

A long-established major event in Italy, broadcast world-wide over 4 days. Sponsored by a nonprofit foundation that funds projects in developing countries. Top 14 songs performed with orchestra and children's chorus and eligible for 3 prizes: best Italian song, best foreign song, and best of contest. Possible paid travel to the event for winner.

Songs must be written in English (to be translated into Italian by music professionals on contest staff), scored for piano.  
Must not have been published previously in any form.

Deadline: February 29, 2000.

Fax material directly to Ms. Milvia Terzaghi in Bologna, Italy, 011-39-051-341-844 with note, "Contact person: Marian Romero."

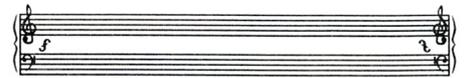
For more information (in English), contact Marian Romero in New York at 718/788-0928 or [marianromero@hotmail.com](mailto:marianromero@hotmail.com).

Contest Web site (in Italian): [www.antoniano.it](http://www.antoniano.it)



## 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 May,  
will go to current  
members only.



## Nationwide Music Composition Contest

Montessori Parents  
Cooperative School (nonprofit),  
Omaha, Nebraska.

Two prize categories:  
Sacred/Inspirational  
and  
Secular/General

First place each category \$1000,  
second place \$500,  
third place \$250

Nationally known judges.

Submission deadline April 1.

For rules and application,  
see contest Web site  
[www.mpcc1.org/kidsing2000.html](http://www.mpcc1.org/kidsing2000.html)

or call

Mary Kay Mueller  
402/558-7764





# OWL MOON

words & music by Bruce O'Brien ©1992 Bruce O'Brien

Inspired by the book *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen

Used by permission of Curtis Brown, Ltd. ©1987 Jane Yolen, all rights reserved

Many CMN members attending National Gatherings have happily lent their voices to the spontaneous harmonies inspired by this tender, powerful song. To contact Bruce about his songs and recordings, write to him at 604 Newton, Eau Claire, WI 54701.

## verse 1.

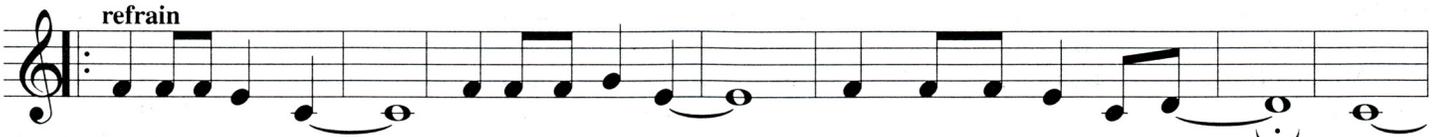


Oh you got - ta be quiet, — un - der a shin - ing owl moon. — You got - ta be quiet, —



un - der a shin - ing owl moon. Oh you got - ta be quiet, yes you got - ta be quiet, —

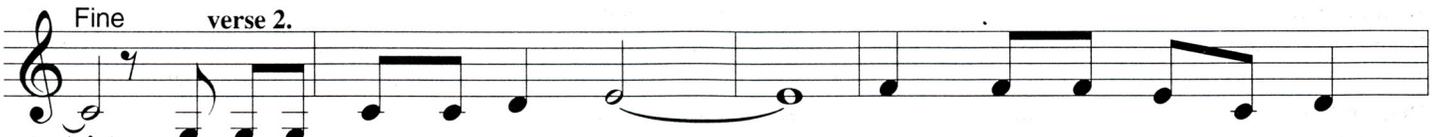
## refrain



Un - der a shin - ing, — un - der a shin - ing, — un - der a shin - ing owl — moon. —

Fine

## verse 2.



You got - ta make your own heat, — un - der a shin - ing owl



moon. You got - ta make your own heat, — un - der a shin - ing owl

*(Add this musical phrase as needed to accomodate accumulating verses )*

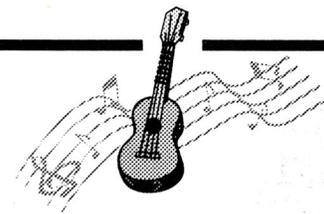


moon. You got - ta make your own heat, and you got - ta be quiet, —

1. Oh you gotta be quiet, under a shining owl moon.  
You gotta be quiet, under a shining owl moon.  
Oh you gotta be quiet, yes you gotta be quiet,  
Under a shining, under a shining,  
Under a shining owl moon.
2. You gotta make your own heat, under a shining owl moon.  
You gotta make your own heat, under a shining owl moon.  
You gotta make your own heat, and you gotta be quiet,  
Under a shining, under a shining,  
Under a shining owl moon.
3. Oh you gotta be brave, under a shining owl moon.  
Oh you gotta be brave, under a shining owl moon.  
Oh you gotta be brave, gotta make your own heat, and you gotta be quiet,  
Under a shining, under a shining,  
Under a shining owl moon.
4. You gotta have hope, under a shining owl moon.  
Oh you gotta have hope, under a shining owl moon.  
Oh you gotta have hope, and you gotta be brave, gotta make your own heat,  
you gotta be quiet, and you gotta have hope,  
Under a shining, under a shining,  
Under a shining owl moon.

# 1999 CMN National Gathering

October 15-17 Petaluma, California



For the third time, the Marin County hills provided a beautiful setting for a dynamic gathering that had several high points. You'll find reports in this issue on two special features, the Malvina Reynolds tribute/Magic Penny Award and working on the CMN quilt. A thoughtful, entertaining keynote presentation by Bess Lomax Hawes, who was interviewed for the winter 1999 issue of *Pass It On!*, warmly touched our CMN hearts. We have obtained permission to print it

later this year so all of our members can absorb its wisdom. A popular networking feature was discussions on a choice of topics at lunch tables on Saturday. And, of course, the traditional round robins offered a comfortable, supportive atmosphere for sharing songs, this time in a room with softly glowing lights. Below are the songs that were sung, listed in their order in the program. If you want more information about them, please contact the presenters directly.

**PRESENTER ..... SONG TITLE ..... COMPOSER**

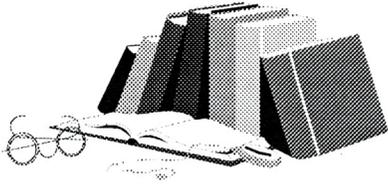
**Friday's Round Robin**

Phil Hoose .....	C'mon, Kansas, Teach Us Evolution .....	Phil Hoose & Carole King
Scott & Beth Bierko .....	The River's Friend .....	Beth & Scott Bierko
Jack Pearson .....	Mi Casa Su Casa .....	Jack Pearson
Maya Rogers-Bursen (on violin) .....	Go Tell Aunt Rhody .....	Trad.
Lou Stratten .....	Tugboat .....	Lou Stratten
Rachel Sumner .....	Bath Time Tango .....	Rachel Sumner
Steve Mullinax & Bonnie Messinger .....	Their Brains Were Small & They Died .....	Mark Graham
David Stokes .....	The Scat Rap .....	Rodd Pemble, Mary Keebler, Andy Bennett, Doug Elliott, Billy Jonas
Ira Levin .....	Sunscreen .....	Ira Levin
Yohann Anderson .....	Creation Do Wah Diddy .....	Rice
Debra Daya Netkin .....	Indian Rap Chant .....	Hara Shiva
Janet Vanderhoof .....	It's Never OK to Hit a Kid .....	Janet Vanderhoof
Meghan Collins .....	The Drum Band .....	Meghan Collins
Jean Schwartz .....	A Very Fine Day .....	Jean Schwartz
Jane Timberlake .....	Deep Down .....	Jane Timberlake
Amy Kirsch .....	Aristishaw .....	Trad.?
Melanie Luedders .....	I Want You to Be My Baby .....	Fats Waller?
Erik Hoffman .....	One in a Billion Man .....	Erik Hoffman
Sally Rogers .....	Epitaph .....	Sally Rogers
Suzi Schuenemann .....	Knickers Twist .....	Suzi Schuenemann
Ingrid Noyes .....	Fire Engine .....	Harmony Grisman
Barbara Wright .....	Watermelon .....	Unknown
Monty Harper .....	Play It on Your Nose .....	Monty Harper
Annie Hershey .....	(Kids) CMN Boogie! .....	Annie Hershey
Tim Cain .....	Brothers of the Wind .....	Tim Cain
Kate Munger .....	My Grandmother's Shawl .....	Kate Munger
Lisa Atkinson .....	Celia Says .....	Dave Carter

**Saturday's Round Robin**

Susan Keniston .....	If You Love a Hippopotamus .....	Connie Caldor
Suzanne Lapidus .....	Yes I Can .....	Suzanne Lapidus
Bonnie Lockhart .....	Old Woman's Memory .....	Bonnie Lockhart
Gayle Schmitt .....	Haircut .....	Gayle Schmitt
Denise Friedl Johnson .....	My Old Jeans .....	Denise Friedl Johnson
Julie Bidou .....	In My Bones .....	Nancy Schimmel
Wiley Rankin .....	The Merry Go Round .....	Wiley Rankin
Karen Johnsen .....	(story) The Trouble with Secrets .....	Karen Johnsen
Bill Rogg, Karen Johnsen, Linda Ronberg, Joanne Hammil, Joe Eding .....	Secrets .....	Joanne Hammil

Pam Davies .....	Your Sweet Life .....	Unkown
Ari & Jason Heitler-Klevans .....	I'm Not Scared .....	Bob Blue
David & Jenny Heitler-Klevans .....	Connection .....	Bob Reid
Judith-Kate Friedman .....	Vamos Ir Afrera .....	Third Graders, Tony Fletcher's Class, Thousand Oaks School, Berkeley, CA, & Judith-Kate Friedman
Jan Dombrower-Permison .....	Feelings, Naturally .....	Jan Dombrower-Permison & David Wurts
Tristan Cole-Falek .....	Scat Rap .....	Doug Elliott, Andy Bennett, Billy Jonas, Mary Keebler, Rodd Pemble
Andy Morse .....	Funky ABCs .....	Andy Morse
Pam Donkin .....	You Are My Friend .....	Pam Donkin
Tyler Dean .....	Somewhere in My Memory .....	Unkown
Patty Zeitlin .....	Angels, Angels .....	Patty Zeitlin
Ruby Hoose & Chloë Ludwig .....	Wide Open Spaces .....	Dixie Chicks?
Ruth Pelham .....	So We Be .....	Ruth Pelham
Sarah Goslee Reed & Lisa Hill .....	Wild, Wild Party in the Loquat Tree .....	Rand Bishop
Jerry Falek .....	(story) Old Man Goes Fishing .....	Ken Feit
Terry Lieberstein .....	Turkey Burps .....	Terry Lieberstein
Tamara Adams & Damema Spragens .....	Things Arr Comin' My Way .....	Unknown
Ed Silberman .....	We're Having a Night Tonight .....	Mekayla Blanck
Sonia Wyman, Joyce Gibrick, Leni Siegel, Betty Schreck .....	Nedo Le Arna Devoika-Pirin .....	Trad. Macedonia
Dave & Grady Kinnoin .....	We Went on a Hike to Turtle Pond .....	Dave & Grady Kinnoin
Sally Rogers .....	Unkown .....	Corinna, Jessica, Kyla, Maya (from the gathering's Kid Songwriting Workshop)
Clif Mackinlay .....	Urban Squirrel .....	Clif Mackinlay
Faith Petric .....	Highway Hunter .....	Marilyn Robertson
Freesia Raine .....	Lily .....	Freesia Raine
Marisa Malvino .....	Pick a Bale of Cotton .....	Trad.?
Bob Fitch .....	Oh My Monster Frankenstein .....	Bob Fitch
Sue Ribaldo .....	Will You Think of Me? .....	Sue Ribaldo
Laura Velásquez .....	Fifty Year Forests .....	Laura Velásquez
Mara Sapon-Shevin .....	What the Children of Jawonio Know .....	Mara Sapon-Shevin
Carrie Higgins .....	Circle of Light .....	Unknown
Terese Pritschet, Ellie Wiener, Jesse Wiener .....	And When I Rise .....	Terese Pritschet
Jackson Gillman .....	Cicada Serenade .....	Jackson Gillman
Sue Bush .....	Reaching Out .....	Tom Hunter
Bernie Griff .....	Full Circle .....	Bernie Griff
Adam Miller .....	Old Bangum .....	Trad.
Joe Eding .....	Someone to Watch Over Me .....	George Gershwin
Eve Decker .....	Every Living Thing Is Vulnerable .....	Eve Decker
Joanne Hammil .....	Sharing the Fire .....	Joanne Hammil
Scott Kepnes .....	I'm a Good Helper .....	Scott Kepnes
Linda Zittel .....	Unknown .....	Unknown
Larry Long .....	I Am the Water .....	Larry Long
Jackie Shonerd .....	We Won't Leave Anyone Out .....	Sarah Pirtle
Ted Warmbrand .....	Room on the Boat .....	Ted Warmbrand
Aileen Vance .....	Skyfishing .....	Aileen Vance
Judy Nee .....	The Potty Song .....	Unknown
Bill Harley .....	It's a Long Ways .....	Bill Harley
James Lamar .....	I Want to Thank You .....	James Lamar
Bruce O'Brien .....	Stuck .....	Bruce O'Brien
Tom Pease .....	Boogie! Boogie! Boogie! .....	Tom Pease
Sandy Byer .....	My Roots Go Down .....	Sarah Pirtle
Barbara Tilsen .....	Little Rabbit and Red Bird .....	Barbara Tilsen
José-Luis Orozco .....	De Colores .....	Trad.



# LIBRARY

words: Marcia Berman  
 music: traditional calypso  
 ©1973 Marcia Berman ASCAP

With its instant sing-along chorus, this song is a natural for library performances. Marcia describes this as the only love song she's ever written. To contact Marcia about her songs and recordings, write to her at 13045 Mindanao Way #1, Marina Del Rey, CA 90292.

*Calypso rhythm*

**verse** C C7 F Fmin

Sat - ur - day morn - ing I run on down to the pub - lic li - brar - y in my town, O

C G7 C C7

Li - brar - y, Li - brar - y - O. So man - y col - ors and so man - y words, I

F Fmin C G7 C

can't pick a book in a mil - lion years, O Li - brar - y, Li - brar - y - O.

**chorus** C C7 F Fmin C G7 C

Li - brar - y, Li - brar - y - O,

C C7 F Fmin C G7 C *Fine*

Li - brar - y, Li - brar - y - O

1. Saturday morning I run on down  
 To the public library in my town,  
 O Library, library-O.  
 So many colors and so many words,  
 I can't pick a book in a million years,  
 O Library, library-O.



chorus:  
 Library, library, library, library, library, library-O.  
 Library, library, library, library, library, library-O.

2. Someone, someone help me please,  
 You look so kind and so friendly,  
 You are the librarian in my library.  
 Someone, someone help me please,  
 You look so kind and so friendly,  
 You are the librarian in my library.  
 chorus

3. I pick a book, hold it to my chest,  
 It is my favorite one, it is the very best  
 At my library, library-O.  
 I check it out I read it every day,  
 Then I take it back where it has to stay  
 At my library, library-O.  
 chorus

# Letters to the Editors

edited by Pete Seeger



## Editorial

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### SANDY'S MAGIC

Dear *PIO!*

I want to thank Sandy Pliskin for his article, "Singing Away Fear, Singing In Hope," in the fall 1999 issue of *Pass It On!*

The instinctive and magical way that he used his singing time with the children to banish the tension in the classroom is to be commended. Through his actions, he offers us all a lesson in what it truly means to "teach in the moment."

*Sydelle Pearl, Brookline, Massachusetts*

### RENAISSANCE SAM

Dear *PIO!*

Thanks so much for the wonderful article on Sam Hinton—one of my all-time favorites of the music world [see fall 1999 *PIO!*]. Years ago, when I was teaching high school in San Diego County, I could always count on Sam to take time to drop in to my classroom and do a program when he was in the neighborhood. The kids were always wowed by his performance. And I'll never forget their astonishment (and my own), whenever he'd get out his Little Lady harmonica, stuff it in his mouth, strap on his guitar, and do "The Arkansas Traveler"—holding the harmonica in his lips, then alternately singing a verse!

He's an amazing renaissance man—artist, musician, calligrapher, and biologist.

Thank you for giving him a spotlight he so well deserves!

*Nancy Raven, Monterey, California*

### TOMORROW'S CLASSICS

Dear *PIO!*

I enjoyed and appreciated Adam Miller's interview of Sam Hinton [see fall 1999 *PIO!*]. Sam does us a great service by keeping track of traditional songs—making sure that they stay with us.

At one point in the interview, however, Sam said, "I don't seem to think much of most of the current lot of singer/songwriters; most of them seem to write things that are very personal and that are not going to have any life after the tape or record that they have produced." I was reminded of Nancy Schimmel's article about "occasional songs" [see winter 1997 *PIO!*—songs made up for specific occasions. I also thought about the many personal songs that both children and adults make up. I'm quite impressed with many of the new songs I hear. Some may become classics, and some may not. Some are quite self-centered, and some deal with issues many people face.

The Children's Music Network includes many people who write songs for many reasons. I hope and believe that Sam's comment was not intended to discourage singer/songwriters from practicing their craft, and will not have that effect. We never know what will become a classic. Today's personal or "occasional" song may be tomorrow's classic.

*Sincerely,*

*Bob Blue, Amherst, Massachusetts*

differences, then listeners might make assumptions regarding who or what is being sung about, assumptions based on their own limited cultural or familial experience—their own monocultural lens. If we sing "Kim lives with her family," the "Kim" and the "family" many listeners in the U.S. may picture is a European-American child living with her biological mother and father. But what if Kim is actually a child adopted from Korea who lives with her two lesbian moms? How do we mention differences (mentioning being a way of calling attention to something notable) without implying that the different people are somehow "other" or are only being mentioned because they aren't regular or typical? If it's really okay to be different, then why do we bring it up? We know that if we don't mention the differences, people will assume "normativity"—some standard of what's typical. But if we say explicitly, "Kim is from Korea and she has two moms," then how do we avoid communicating that our explicit naming of that difference implies that Kim somehow isn't like other children or must be named specially?

- ◆ If we want to communicate to children (and adult listeners) that being "different" is "normal"—that we are all, in fact, different from one another—then how do we do that in ways that don't imply that difference is inevitably linked to isolation, prejudice, rejection, or "otherness"? How do we write and sing about differences in ways that celebrate the myriad ways in which our lives, likes, dislikes, customs, and traditions are divergent, without implying that

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## Editorial

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these discrepancies are a problem? And when differences *are* a source of hurt or rejection, how do we introduce that possibility in a way that doesn't reify that "differences are the problem" or that rejection and unfair treatment are inevitable?

With these questions in mind, the participants in the workshop engaged in the following activity. I paired people randomly (by giving each person a sticker and having them find the person who "matched" them) and asked each pair to take five minutes to answer these two questions: What are three things you have in common? What are three things that are different about you? I encouraged people to reach beyond the superficial or immediately visible (*e.g.*, we're both from California; we're both women), to unpack their lives as fully and richly as possible to find interesting connections and differences. The sharing was exciting: People identified similarities and differences regarding food tastes, hobbies, sexual orientation, religion, job roles, family backgrounds, languages spoken, travel experiences, and on and on. Our debriefing centered on the importance of helping children (and adults) to identify both the ways in which they are the same and the ways in which they are different. If we focus exclusively on one or the other, then our message is at best partial; at worst, misleading and damaging.

If, on the one hand, we say only that we're all the same, then we miss the obvious and subtle distinctions among us. We are not all the same color, the same size, from the same kind of families; we do not all like the same things, celebrate the same holidays, or live the same kinds of lives. Our goal is not to make differences invisible. It's

important to notice and respect the ways in which we are different. On the other hand, if we focus only on differences, then we may end up feeling so separate, so disconnected and unaligned, that we miss our places of connection, friendship, and relationship. If I am a European-American, Jewish woman and mother from the East Coast and you are an African-American, Baptist, unmarried man from the West Coast—and that's all we attend to—then we might miss finding out that we are both avid hikers, and chocolate lovers, are involved in antiracism work, love country and western music, and so on. From this discussion emerged the first "guideline" of our discussion:

**It's important to talk about and sing about differences within a context of commonalities. Differences should never be defined or described in ways that imply that the differences are all there is.**

We then discussed the ways in which differences are and can be introduced to children through song. We identified some pitfalls in children's music and compared them to some of the early children's literature about disabilities and differences, with its overly didactic, preachy tone: "See, even though Karen is in a wheelchair, she can still be friends with other children." We don't want simply to list ways in which children can be different and then add, somewhat glibly, "But it's okay, they are still like us." (Who is *us*?) It would be logical for children to wonder why, if it's okay to be different, we are making statements implying that acceptance of that diversity is an issue. Joanne Hammil raised this issue brilliantly in a previous *Pass It On!* editorial [see winter 1998], expressing her concerns about songs that, "in the spirit of modeling open-minded thinking actually reinforce negative values, . . . reinforcing the very stereotypes they try to correct by naming them. . . . If we state that

something should not be a problem, then we are teaching that it usually is one."

But, came the counterargument from workshop participants, what if there *are* societal problems with acceptance of difference? What about the realities of racism, homophobia, sexism, handicapism? What if children of divorced parents sometimes *do* feel sad or confused? What if skin color *does* make a difference in how a particular child is treated? Shouldn't we name these honestly and squarely as well, helping children to know that, if they've experienced or noticed this, they're not imagining things and, most important, aren't alone? This was clearly the crux of the dilemma: In what sequence, or at what age, or in what context can we accomplish both tasks—the open acceptance of difference as well as the acknowledgment of current societal oppressions that should be addressed? Another guideline emerged:

**Songs for young children should avoid introducing the difference and the oppression at the same time.**

We wouldn't introduce a child to broccoli by saying, "Here, honey, I want you to try this new vegetable. You'll notice that it's got really neat little green bumps and a thick stalk—and you know, a lot of people really hate it and won't eat it, but why don't you try it?" Instead, we would introduce the new or different food with openness and eagerness, anticipating acceptance. Later, if a child noticed—and asked—why some people don't like broccoli, we might talk to her or him about how food tastes get established, how families are different in what they eat, how things that have a strong flavor sometimes take time to get used to, and so on.

Similarly, we wouldn't introduce our child to someone from Mexico by including a statement such as, "Some people don't like people from Mexico and call them names and

won't let them play." To do that would imply that rejection, teasing, or lack of acceptance is possible, likely, or perhaps inevitable. We don't want to do this in the songs we write and sing, either. What are some specific ways that we can best avoid reifying stereotypes and prejudice, in our attempts to counteract them?

Two possibilities were discussed. The first is a song structure that names lots of kinds of difference, but does it in an iterative fashion, not a contrastive one. In other words, rather than writing, "We all eat hot dogs, but Michael doesn't 'cause he's a vegetarian," we write a song about *all* the things that children eat, not implying that there is a "normal" against which we contrast the "special" or different. Sarah Pirtle's song, "Sing about Us," for example, has the following chorus: "Sing about us. Tell me again. You don't have to be just like me to be my friend." This song could easily include verses that cover multiple kinds of diversities. One verse might say, "We eat tacos, we eat tofu, we eat samosas, we eat hamburgers, we eat lo-mein, and so on," while another might say, "We live with our grandparents, we live with our mom and daddy, we have two homes, we have two moms, we have a foster mom."

Ruth Pelham's song, "Under One Sky," has this chorus: "We're all a family under one sky, we're a family under one sky." It, too, has an iterative structure, as it goes on to list many things that could describe the people listening to or singing the song. I've used it with many groups, writing verses that name lots of differences: "We're Catholic, we're Buddhists, we're Jewish, and we're atheists too; we're Lutherans, we're Nation of Islam, we're agnostics and Jehovah's Witnesses."

The second possibility for naming and exploring differences without running the risk of reinforcing

negative messages about them is to use a narrative song structure that tells the story of a particular child or person and her or his life and history. For example, Bob Blue and I wrote a song that tells the story of "Tyler," a child with cerebral palsy, and his experiences at his school. It names both the areas of acceptance and struggle, but it doesn't imply that this is the story of every child with cerebral palsy; it is about one particular child. When singing a song like this, we might, of course, want to extrapolate with children: Has anything like this happened to anyone you know? Why might people act like that? How could you be an ally, if you saw something like this happening? While such a song might name both the difference and the oppression at the same time, the narrative form makes it clear that this is the experience of one person in one specific situation, which doesn't implicate everyone with the same difference.

Our discussion about songs that various performers and teachers have found useful at different times and in different contexts led to the articulation of another guideline:

**It is important to consider the audience and the audience's diversity in choosing a song.**

We all agreed that, for a child experiencing the loss and pain of divorce, for example, a song about how painful divorce can be for kids might be comforting or reassuring. But singing such a song to an assembly of 500 kids without any potential to do follow-up with those children particularly affected by that song, or even to know which children those might be, was thought risky. Such a song could be very appropriate and even life altering when played or shared with a specific child by a caring adult with whom that child had a relationship. But a song that implies that children from divorced families are scared and worried might

be just the wrong song for a child who is adjusting well and happily to divorce, or for children who come to look at their friends from divorced homes in a newly quizzical or skeptical light. Similarly, for both children of color and European-American children who have not yet experienced racial prejudice, we would want to be very thoughtful about how we introduced the idea that racial differences are the source of discrimination, prejudice, and violence. Just as teachers consider children's developmental levels in choosing other curricula, it's critical to take care in deciding on the "right" song for the "right" child or "right" group, given their histories, experiences, and previous exposure to the topic.

Here is one last guideline:

**Avoidance of difference is not the solution.**

Given all the caveats discussed here, there is some temptation to conclude that we should simply write global, cheerful anthems that neither mention difference nor discuss the ways in which our society has yet to become more accepting and embracing of diversity. But I believe that the commitment to children shown by the members of CMN is too important to embrace simplistic solutions to complex challenges.

Acting on this commitment to our children, I believe that we will want them to notice the diversity around them—people who have different skin colors, speak different languages, eat different foods, are good at different things, live in different kinds of houses and families. We will want children to know that they can be closely connected to people who don't look like them, don't talk like them, don't share every characteristic of their own lives or families. I don't believe we can be satisfied with the goal of "tolerat-

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## Editorial

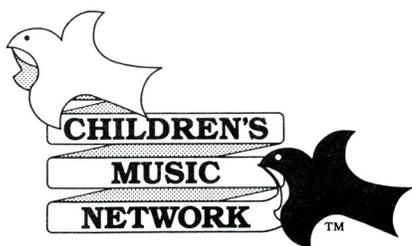
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ing" differences; we don't want to be accepted "despite" our differences. That kind of partial or halfhearted acceptance will never get us where we would like to be.

I also believe that we will want children to know that there are problems in the world and that they aren't powerless. How important it is to communicate to them that racism is unacceptable, that violence against homosexuals is intolerable, that name-calling and teasing and exclusion damage the very fiber of our communities and our society. At the same time, it's essential to teach children to see themselves as powerful players against societal oppression, able to notice when things aren't right, attuned to injustice and unfairness, and willing and skilled in taking a stand.

Let's continue to explore how we can use music to name differences for children in ways that help them to understand and accept diversity while never implying that we will accept or be satisfied by mistreatment or prejudice. Music can be an incredibly powerful tool in our struggle to make the world one in which we all fit—and one that is fit for us all. Music can unite, inspire, heal, and transform. Let's meet that challenge together. **PIO!**

Mara Sapon-Shevin is Professor of Education at Syracuse University. Her latest book is a practical guide for building cooperative, inclusive classroom communities.



## Interview: Lieberman

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Kids would dance; or play violin, guitar, or accordion; or they would recite something. And so we got experience talking or performing on the stage in the auditorium in front of hundreds of people. That really affected the way I approached my life, and it's something that I feel is important to pass on.

**PIO!: Did you have a performance career?**

JL: Well, briefly. I went to the University of Wisconsin. I appeared in a University production of *Girl Crazy*, singing "I Got Rhythm" in the chorus. I loved it so much that I tried out at a little nightclub they had at the student union. Mind you, I had no training as a singer at all. I was kind of a chubby little girl, and I tried out with "My Man," and they said, Yeah, you can do that. I remember one time I invited my mother up to Wisconsin to hear me sing. She was very straightforward, never tactful, and she always told you the truth. And she said, "Honey, you've got more guts than talent."

**PIO!: How did that feel?**

JL: I laughed. I kept right on doing it and figuring, well, if they were willing to have me I was going to sing. And so I had a great time, you know, following my interest. And I got to be concert series manager for the university, booking the shows. I met Isaac Stern that way. He took about five of us on the concert committee out to dinner—the great Isaac Stern. And I met Lotte Lenya.

**PIO!: Were you always going to be a librarian at this point?**

JL: Never, never. I wanted to teach. And at Wisconsin, they only had a program in secondary education, so I got a degree in Spanish. I don't know how I ever got into that. I thought I'd teach high school. And then I did student teaching when I was only 19, and I was too young. I didn't know how to cope with

these big boys who wanted to date me. I said, I can't do this. So I graduated from Wisconsin and went back to Chicago and took classes to get an elementary teacher's degree. And then I got married. I was able to get a job as a teacher in Garden City, Michigan. And then we moved to California, and I took a couple of extra courses to get certified here and started out as a kindergarten teacher. Then I went up to second grade, and I loved second grade.

**PIO!: Why didn't you keep on teaching?**

JL: Well, I did that for about nine years and then took a year off and realized that I was spending all my time in the library. So I got a master's degree in library science at San Jose State, which has a very good program, in 1967. I was thrilled, but I still wanted to teach. I got a job at the Leland Stanford Art Museum, cataloging art materials from museum galleries into special collections. I asked one of the professors at San Jose State if he thought I would ever be able to teach at the university level, and he said sure, if I got enough experience. And because I had been doing this cataloging, I got hired by San Jose State to teach a technical services course in cataloging. It was dull, but I was teaching college. And then I heard about an opportunity to teach children's literature. I said to the head of the department, Do you think I could do that? He said, Jan, you could do anything you want. So I got the job to teach children's lit, and that was the turning point in my life.

**PIO!: What was so great about it?**

JL: When I was teaching children's lit I could sing and play piano. Music was a very important part of my life, but I just hadn't done anything with it. Children's lit offered me that opportunity to use all my little talents and have fun with them, because nobody expects a teacher of children's lit to be able to do any of these things. You have

a built-in audience, and nobody's critiquing you, because you're making the whole program fun. I would pass on my love to my students. My life was very full. I was at San Jose State from 1967 until 1988, and before long I was also teaching part time at Santa Clara University, doing the children's lit there. And I was traveling the country doing workshops in children's literature for teachers, and I also had a little part-time job working at Santa Clara Library.

**PIO!: Sounds fun but exhausting.**

JL: Exactly. Suddenly in 1988 I was really tired and I realized I couldn't keep doing all of those things. I decided that I loved working at the public library the most, and I dropped everything else. And I've never been sorry since.

**PIO!: You have really explored the integration of music and literature, to promote literacy in your library programs. I'd like to know about the connection between songs and literacy. How can singing really help make young singers and listeners better readers and writers? How does this work?**

JL: Well, I'll tell you what I've seen—and I have no scientific proof of any of this. First of all, we're talking about youngsters who are not naturally good readers. I mean, with some kids it doesn't matter what you do, they're reading at the age of three or four. But the average youngster has some problems learning to read. The beautiful thing about music is that, as they're learning the words to songs—not just at the library—they're learning to phrase. Most of the kids can sing any pop song today, and this is the basis for reading.

If you can speak and you can memorize these words, then when you see them on a piece of paper you can read them, because you know them. Well, you're reading, and you're also phrasing. Youngsters who are poor readers read word by word. You the teacher have to get them to see phrases. And the

best way to do that is with the lyrics of a song or poetry. Poetry and music are so closely related because of their rhythms. The kids don't realize it, but they're beginning to speak and read in phrases, because they know the material, they've heard it. And when you hear something and you repeat it, to me it's like the discipline when you have to learn a new piece on the piano. You have to play it over and over and over again, and what I like about using songs and poems to help children is that they are repeating it again and again. At some point it clicks; suddenly it's like, Oh, I know that word, I've been seeing it, I've been saying it, I've been singing it—it's there on the page, and now I recognize the letters.

**PIO!: They see it on the page and they recognize it, there's an association between what they've been singing and what they recognize.**

JL: It's like the light bulb goes on for them. I see this a lot in the Read Aloud Partners program at our library. We do it for about 12 weeks from January til May. I have high-school students reading with third graders. And I chose third grade because that's a transitional grade. They've got to learn how to read by the time they're in third grade. Once they get into fourth grade, that's where we lose all these kids.

**PIO!: How is the course structured?**

JL: I have about 25 to 30 youngsters, and they each have a high-school book buddy. Children meet with their book buddy for about 30 minutes, one night a week for 12 weeks, and we have a big party at the end. The parents are thrilled. Just having a person who's in high school staying with their child for that 30 minutes once a week makes a big difference, and of course the high-school students are the cream of the crop. They're role models, and they're terrific with the youngsters. I tell the children individually, "Now look, at the end we're

going to have to do a little performance for all of our parents." I give them a choice of certain poems, and then I try the week or so before to meet with enough of them so we can practice. Their favorite poem is "Chocolate, chocolate, I love you so, I want to marry you and live forever in the flavor of your brown." And the mayor comes, the city manager comes—they love this program. It's a big event at the library. We have cake, and we give a certificate to everybody, and they get free books paid for by the Friends of the Library.

**PIO!: What a great event!**

JL: We get the rhythm going and snap our fingers to the poems, and these kids who have not been able to focus even for half an hour are reading these poems. It's amazing how they begin to improve in their reading. They're getting used to seeing things that are fun, and they don't even think of it as reading.

**PIO!: So let me just understand the mechanism a little bit better. I'm eight years old and I'm having a little trouble reading. I come into the library—**

JL: And you get paired up with a high-school book buddy. You two go into a separate little area where I've preselected some books for the program. You choose about three of them to take back to this little area where you two are going to read. And the high-school student will often start out reading to you, but it doesn't take long before you say you want to read. And so the two of you take turns. I kind of monitor it, sit in every now and then and make suggestions. I'll tell the high-school student, "I want you to read that sentence again, but read it with expression. And then have the child imitate what you're doing." Or I'll say to the child, "You know that's really good, but here's how I'd read that," and then put some emotion in it. And then I say, "Could you read it that

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**Interview: Lieberman**

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way?" and the child says sure and then maybe I'll say, "Let's read it together."

**PIO!:** *So they're not singing; it's the reading with expression that's like music.*

JL: That's right, but we use music in story hour. We have four or five story hours a week. Whenever I do the story hours, there's always music. I always look for stories that have music attached to them.

**PIO!:** *What are some of your favorite books for using music?*

JL: My favorite is *Mama Don't Allow*, by Thacher Hurd—you know—"Mama don't allow no music playing around here." That's my theme song, and I make a big production of this whenever I do it at the library, and we get out our rhythm instruments. Another thing, when I do *Bearlioz the Bear*, by Tam Brit, at the end of it these musicians are going to a concert, but there's a buzz in the bass fiddle and they can't figure out what it is, and of course it's a bumble bee. They're stopped, they can't get the donkey to move, and this bee suddenly flies out and of course it hits the donkey right in its butt, and it just takes off, and they play their encore, "The Flight of the Bumble Bee." I bring in all of the different versions—I've got Bobbie McFerrin singing it, I have Wynton Marsalis playing it on the trumpet, I have a brass ensemble doing it, a regular orchestra, a violinist—so you can hear all the different instruments doing "The Flight of the Bumble Bee."

**PIO!:** *I understand that you have instituted your own award to encourage teachers to use music more in their classrooms.*

JL: I wanted to do something, because in California we had Proposition 13, which passed in 1978 or 1979 and reduced property taxes. But it's property taxes that support the schools and the libraries. And so from 1978 on, our

schools began to lose everything—no librarians, no music teachers, no school nurses, very few PE programs, no art teachers. I mean, all of the things that make life worth living were gone and actually they haven't really come back. I just felt terrible. When I would go and do story times at schools, the children couldn't sing with me because they hadn't had any experience of singing. They were talking, they were yelling, but they never knew what a singing voice was. And that really bothered me, and the fact that if you mentioned Louie Armstrong, they'd just look at you. I had 21-year-old student teachers who would say, Who's he? It was awful. So in 1993 I read a wonderful biography of Leonard Bernstein, by Humphrey Burton. I love Lennie, and I learned that his videos from the 1960s, when he did the young people's TV series, were still available.

**PIO!:** *I've seen them as an adult. They're terrific.*

JL: Well, I sent for them. There are 10, and it's like, What is a sonata? What is a symphony? And of course Lennie was the greatest teacher of all. He would sit down and play things on the piano, and this is all available on tape. So I got this idea, I said, I'm going to give an award to teachers, and I'll try to get them to use music in the classroom. And I'll call it the Jan Lieberman Music in the Classroom Award, and why not do it while I'm alive instead of waiting til I'm gone? So I wrote to the Leonard Bernstein Society, and they said, Oh sure, we'll give you a little discount, and you can say this is in agreement with the Leonard Bernstein Society. I mean, the fact that Lennie and I are on the same page together is marvelous!

**PIO!:** *I'd say! How does the award work?*

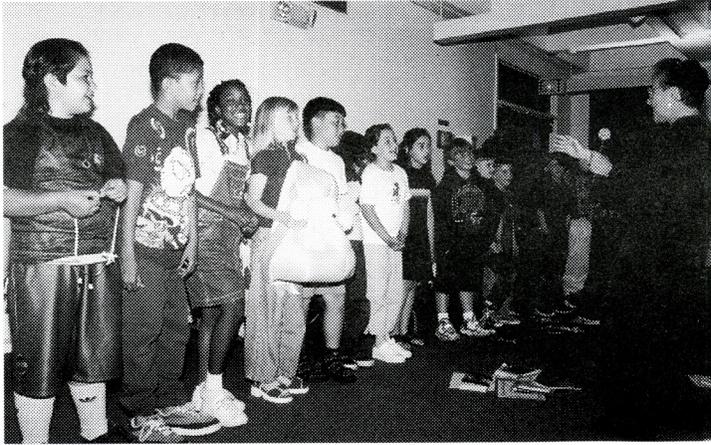
JL: Well, this gave me a way to integrate music and literature legitimately. I could encourage teachers to bring in literature that had musical stories or had music

in the back, or to invent their own ways to use music in class. The first award was given in 1996, to Pat Jenkins. She is a most creative, inventive teacher. She works with Hispanic fifth graders in Alum Rock School District. Pat's from Costa Rica. She doesn't know anything about reading music or playing an instrument, but what a feel she has! From the moment the kids come in the room, they hear classical music; they'll hear a little bit of, say, Mozart every day. They don't speak English well, but within a month they are learning about Mozart's life and studying his music. She has a huge CD collection, which she lets them use.

And then of course Halloween comes around and she'll bring Bach's "Tocatta and Fugue," and they'll recite Halloween poems to the music, and she'll have the children write them out. For Black History Month they may have to research a famous African American and then write a little puppet play, make the puppets, and choose a piece of music that reflects the personality of the character. I went to hear them the first time I met Pat, and I ended up in tears. Somebody had done Martin Luther King, and they played "The Death of Jazz." I'm not sure if Marsalis wrote it, but it's a very somber piece. They told about Martin Luther King's life and played this in the background, and it was haunting. One little girl accompanied the life of Sojourner Truth with "If My Friends Could See Me Now."

**PIO!:** *What a great idea!*

JL: Think how much Sojourner would appreciate that. Pat gets these ideas, and then the kids carry them out. For Valentine's Day, they called me in to see them because they were reading love poetry. They had music by Telemann and Bach, and they did a minuet. These are big kids, and they wanted to do it, and Pat just let them. They didn't know how to do it, but they made it up.



Jan Lieberman conducts third graders in "Chocolate, Chocolate, I Love You So."

**PIO!:** What do you think keeps more teachers from using music in the classroom?

JL: They think they have to know a lot about music. They don't realize that you just put it on, let them listen to it, maybe say something about what it is, and that's all you need. Most classrooms do have CD players, so there really is no excuse. I tell them to bring in their favorite music from home and play it for the kids, and then have them bring in some of theirs, and just start using music every day. It's the hardest sell—I can't believe it!

**PIO!:** Teachers of younger children sometimes seem to feel that they have to be able to play an instrument, and they feel embarrassed when they can't. Do you run into that?

JL: Yes, and I tell them you don't have to play an instrument. First of all, most classrooms no longer have pianos—and that's the only instrument I can play—so it doesn't do me any good to be a pianist. But we've got Raffi songs; we've got Charlotte Diamond; we've got Sharon, Lois, and Bram—I mean, you have all of these people on tape. Bring in the tape, and we'll learn the words and sing along. Most of the kids know the songs anyway. At the library we put the words on a chart so that the parents can sing along.

The hardest thing for teachers right now is they are overwhelmed with activities, because so much has

been pushed on them. Teaching is no longer the way it was when I was teaching. Now there's all this emphasis on computer technology. The music teacher at Los Gatos High School told me that they put computers in the orchestra room. She said, "But where am I going to teach?" and they said, "Gee, we don't know where we're going to put you, Diana, we just don't have room." And she said, "If we lose the program in the middle school, then the high school suffers, because the kids coming in don't have any musical background." She's right: We're in such desperate need.

**PIO!:** I'd like to return to books for a moment, if you don't mind. I and others in the Children's Music Network who have written songs that they think would make terrific children's picture books have encountered editors who seem to feel that songs just don't translate well to the printed page, period. Do you find that that's sort of a widespread prejudice in publishing, or is that just our—

JL: No, no, no—it's real. I wrote an ABC book that had a melody, too, and all these editors very nicely rejected me. They said to make a CD work you'd have to have a well-known singer singing it. They just can't afford to put the money in unless it grabs them or unless you are a famous singer already. If you're Harry Belafonte, you can make "Island in the Sun" into a picture book, as just has happened. But they are reluctant otherwise.

Sometimes the music is printed in the back, but that doesn't mean anything if somebody can't read or play music. I just feel so strongly that it really is something that the publishing field has to look at. They're putting chips in books, with some awful stuff—I mean, when you open the book or get to the end of the book, the chip plays some horrible version of "Jingle Bells" or whatever, and I think, Wait a minute, they could do better than that. We need CDs. The CD is the way to go, because it's flat. It's easier than a tape. We're figuring out ways to catalog them, too. We put them in sacks and keep the CD and the book together.

**PIO!:** What's an example of a book that really needs an accompanying CD?

JL: *Zin, Zin, Zin, It's a Violin*, by Lloyd Moss. He introduces all the instruments of the orchestra; it's marvelous, and it's got a wonderful refrain, but it needs a CD to go with it. It's a great opportunity to teach how the bass sounds, how the flute sounds, how the clarinet sounds. I went crazy trying to find a piece of music that would have each of these instruments, in turn, that was reasonable to share with the book. That book could have been enriched with sound and would have been wonderful to use in a classroom.

Another is *What a Wonderful World*, with great illustrations by Ashley Bryan. When that book came out, I fell in love with it. But there's no music. I got out my Louie Armstrong recording of the song, and I play it in the library with the book. I can't tell you the effect it has on two year olds. They can be screaming their heads off—babies, two year olds, three year olds—and then they'll sit hushed while their mothers hold them on their laps. I turn the big, bright pages of the picture book and have Louie sing the song, and for two minutes that

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**Interview: Lieberman**

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audience is hushed and tears will roll down your cheeks as you see the mothers swaying in time to that music.

Why didn't the publisher put a CD of this song in the back of the book? Without the music, the book sat on our shelf. To move it, I loan a little tape of Louie's song to people who want to use the book, because if they can't get the song, it doesn't mean anything. One editor said that they could not get permission from the estate of Louie Armstrong to release "What a Wonderful World," and that's very possible. But if Louie were alive, he would want it—that's what bothers me the most.

**PIO!:** *You have managed to build a wonderful career based on your own love of music, your love of reading, your experiences as a performer and even as sort of an impresario when you were in college. What advice might you have for someone considering a career as a librarian? Is your experience replicable, or is it just your personality and your—*

JL: Luck! I have to tell you a lot of it is luck, timing. I've kind of fallen into a lot of things. Some of them I pursued and some I didn't. My number-one piece of advice is, if you are asked to do something, don't say no. Over the years, if somebody asked me to do something, like a poetry workshop, I would say yes, even if I'd never done it before. I researched it, and certainly I was panicked, but I followed through and put it on.

You also have to have a focus, a goal of what you want to do, and then you just have to pursue it. When you meet people, you have to be open and friendly and talk to people and say, Gee, this is what I would like to do, do you think you'd ever have use for somebody like this?

**PIO!:** *Is there a particularly good program out there that you'd recommend for training*

**children's librarians?**

JL: I graduated from San Jose State, and I think it's as good a program as any I've come across. The saddest thing, though, is that computer technology has taken over the field. There's very little emphasis on children's literature now. When I was teaching, we taught our students how to put on programs in the library. Those classes have pretty much gone by the wayside. We're finding in all the library schools that the children's field is being dropped. It makes no sense, because you always have young children in a community—two and three year olds coming in for story hours—that's how you develop your readers.

People don't realize the benefit to parents, either. In our area, in Silicon Valley, we have become multiethnic. Now we get people from all these different cultures. One Chinese woman who came from Hong Kong said to me, "You know, when I came here 7 years ago, I was so unhappy I wanted to return. I couldn't speak English very well. The only thing that saved my life was the library. I could come here to story times, and I could bring my children, and they loved it. Soon I began to meet other Chinese women and formed friendships, and now I'm happy."

**PIO!:** *A good library just means so much, doesn't it?*

JL: She said the library saved her life. People don't realize the benefit of story hours and other events at the library. The universities that are producing all these wonderful technologists are neglecting the fact that we're always going to have children and that the computer isn't going to satisfy their needs. They need human beings to hug them and read with them, to recommend a book to their parents and sing "Mama Don't Allow" and "The Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly." These are the loving things that we get from our work. This is

why we love our jobs, because we're constantly being praised and thanked and hugged back, and there's no computer that can do that. But once again, when it comes to funding programs, children are always down at the bottom of the pile.

**PIO!:** *What makes a good children's librarian?*

JL: Oh, you need to love life. You've got to be a smiling person. I love books, I love reading, but it's really people that I like most of all. I want to share with them the joyous experiences that I've had. Our children's librarians are all similar in that we welcome people. We're warm, inviting. And we feel the excitement of sharing. When we do story time, it's not a chore, it's exciting. You know, we've got puppets, we've got bells. In fact, we may have 50 sets of bells, so we say, Let's make a bell orchestra. You have to be willing at times to make a fool of yourself by being the only one who's singing the song, because the little kids are scared and the parents don't know the music or the words. You're the one who goes ahead, and you sing right along. You have to be outgoing—I really feel that you've got to have that to begin with. I don't think you can be taught that, I think it has to be part of your personality.

**PIO!:** *How can the Children's Music Network best support librarians?*

JL: You know, you do such a wonderful service. Certainly that musical component is absolutely vital, because I can't think of anyone who does a story hour for children who doesn't use music. Music is what brings the light to children. I don't care how noisy they are, the minute I start singing, they get quiet. It's not that I have this beautiful voice—it's the music that does it. And CMN just being a network, providing a way to connect these people who work with children and music—it's just wonderful. **PIO!**

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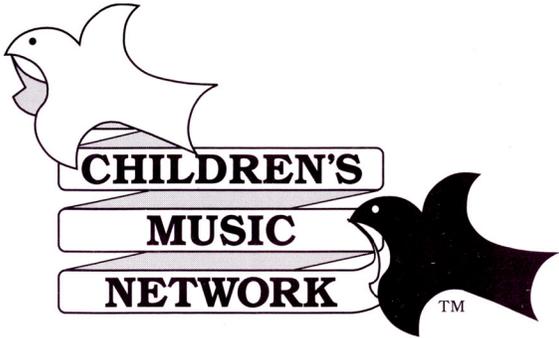
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