PASS IT ON!™

The Journal of The Children's Music Network

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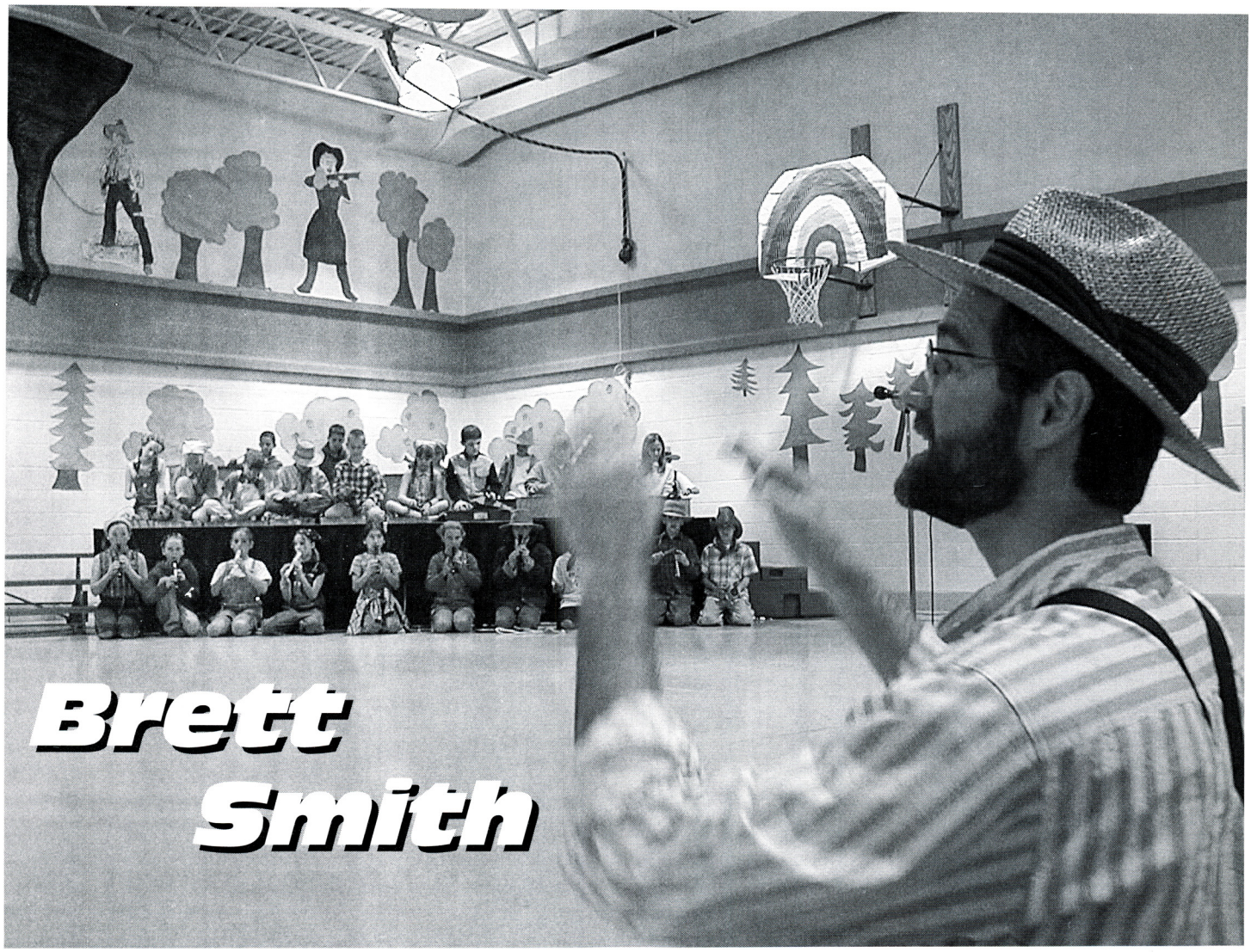
Fall 2000



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Editorial Page

Introduction

by Susan Keniston

I hope this issue of *PIO!* finds you all fit for fall, after a sensational summer. In this issue, our features focus on music and special programs. Our members have taken music into all sorts of settings, and you'll read about some of them here. You'll also find a number of songs that have been inspired by the children our writers have worked with, in places from special-education classrooms to city parks. Next winter's *PIO!* will be on the theme of family, interpreted to include a broad spectrum of ideas about family and how we can address them through children's music. Following that, in the spring, our theme will be singing for justice, taking a look at ways that music can connect children to social-justice movements, past and present. Please keep sharing your ideas and experiences with our readers!

We have a new name for one of our oldest *PIO!* columns. "Radio Waves," by PJ Swift, has been exploring the realm of children's radio for years, with articles about fascinating programs many of us would never have heard about otherwise. As many of you have noticed, however, the internet is rapidly becoming a broadcast medium in its own right, and some even think that it will soon replace radio. While that remains to be seen, PJ wants to extend the reach of her coverage to include other media. We look forward to hearing about cutting-edge children's programs in her column, now called "Media Waves."

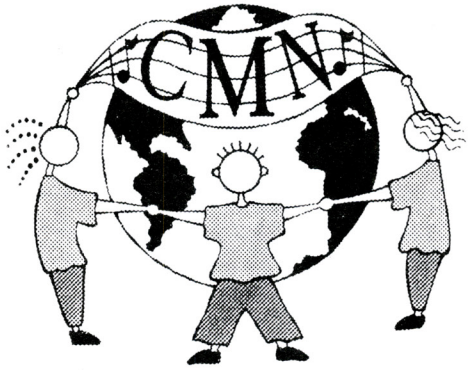
Finally, current CMN members are receiving a special insert in this issue. Bess Lomax Hawes, who gave the keynote address at our 1999 national gathering in Petaluma, California, has graciously allowed us to reprint it. Those of you who were unable to attend the gathering can now read her inspirational words, and all of us can keep them and share them with others who want a deeper understanding of the work we do.

Editorial

This is the space we've reserved especially to print our members' opinions about whatever is on their minds. It's been increasingly challenging to find people to write these pieces, and I doubt it's for lack of strong opinions in our network. We are a thoughtful, hard-working, creative, and powerful group of people. Most of us keep pretty busy; it's no secret in the world of children's music that many of us are overworked and underpaid. So, though there is certainly a wealth of ideas among us, maybe it seems like just too much to put together an editorial for *Pass It On!* I'm not asking anybody to feel badly about that—we have a volunteer staff person whose job it is to get depressed about such things. But, since nobody *did* write us an editorial for this issue, I will use this space to *encourage* you, *strongly*, to allow this to happen as infrequently as possible. We have over 600 memberships, some representing more than one person, so I know there are a lot of you out there who have never even said boo in our pages. It's almost Halloween, so, say *boo!*

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.

PASS IT ON! TM

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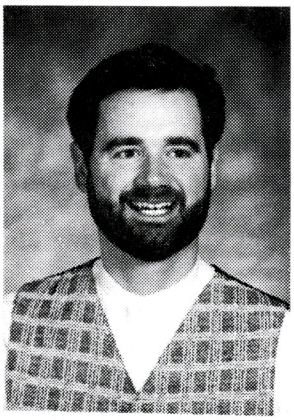
"A Way for Every Kid to Shine"

An Interview with Brett Smith, Minnesota Teacher of the Year

conducted by Phil Hoose



Brett Smith

Early in 2000, 38-year-old Brett Smith became the first music teacher to be named Minnesota Teacher of the Year since the early 1960s. Then he was named one of four finalists for National Teacher of the Year. Had he won, he would have been only the second music teacher to do so in the 50-year history of the award.

Brett is in his first year of teaching music at O. H. Anderson Elementary School, in Mahtomedi, Minnesota, but he's hardly a rookie. Since 1985, Brett has taught music to students in every grade from kindergarten through college. Along the way, he has impressed students, parents, and colleagues not only as a musician and teacher, but also as an activist and communicator. "Education must give all students opportunities to learn skills for resolving conflicts, and to identify and constructively deal with personal feelings," he wrote in his biography for the Teacher of the Year program.

Rather than allowing music to be marginalized at his schools, Brett has developed the Master Musician Program, now in use in 20 Minnesota school districts. The program integrates music into math, English, and social sciences curricula, using musical tools to immerse students in world cultures. Brett also uses music to teach emotional intelligence. In so doing, he draws from his own boyhood experience of being mislabled by standardized tests, which made him feel terrible. His lifeline was a drum kit. "Now I respond to my students' desire to learn, rather than their tested aptitude," he says.

Brett is married to Jodi McCormick, a choir director. He spoke with *PIO!'s* Phil Hoose from his home at Bald Eagle Lake, Minnesota.

• • • • •

PIO!: This is your first year as a Grade 3–5 music teacher. Why did you switch from middle school to grade school?

BS: I was a middle-school band director, and because of tinnitus—a ringing in the ears I probably got from being around loud sounds too long—I've moved up to elementary education. I also have one section of kindergarten and another of first and second grade that is at another building for an hour and a half on a Friday.

PIO!: How do you like teaching younger students?

BS: It's just such a neat group of kids, vulnerable and yet anxious to learn. If I'm showing a new dance, it's not "Oh, ick," but "Wow, show us another one, that was fun." They're playful and interested in learning. They're not at a point where they think it's stupid to sing; everybody loves to sing. It's just a really special age.

PIO!: What were you like at that age?

BS: I suppose I could have been defined as an ADD, hyperactive kind of kid. I had a lot of energy, and I really struggled in the classroom. They used to put me in the corner with my mouth taped shut.

PIO!: Are you kidding?

BS: Oh yeah, that happened. I was not a strong achiever. I have dyslexia and some other learning disabilities. In eighth grade we took a standardized test to determine reading placement. The result came out in a formula that let us figure out our IQ. I was strong at math, so it was easy for me to figure it out. It showed on a graph that the average IQ was 100 and mine was 75. So I came to see myself as severely mentally retarded.

PIO!: That must have been a blow.

BS: It just added to my frustration at that time, since my parents were going through a divorce. My real problems were with reading and written language. When they placed us, they tried to couch the distinction of ability in bird names. The best readers were the Cardinals. Then there were the Bluejays. We Robins knew we were the bottom of the cage. It was confusing: On one hand, my parents had given me the impression that I had great potential and that I was going to achieve. And yet, being a Robin with a 75 IQ and my mouth taped shut in the corner was giving me a different feeling about my potential. I felt pretty bad, and it affected my social interactions, too.

PIO!: How did you pull out of it?

BS: The school psychologist and the counselors and my parents got together and said, This kid's spiraling in a bad direction. They did some testing and concluded that learning disabilities were giving me a hard time. So that put me on the right course. Then having music as an outlet made an enormous

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Let's All Go Where Maria Goes

by Uncle Ruthie Buell

She is sitting in her wheelchair, her head bowed, no indication that she is with us. She isn't. But we keep trying to reach her. "Maria," we say, "Look at us." We lift her head, gently, but she still does not give us eye contact.

She is what we call a "near drowning." When she was 10, something happened in her family pool. She was just learning to swim and was in the pool alone, and she drowned—almost. Rescuers brought her back, but not all of her. She is 15 now, and I sit with her, strumming my guitar, wishing I could travel to the place where she hides. I begin to sing what I am feeling:

Let's all go where Maria goes,
Maria goes,
To the place that no one knows,
no one knows,
Leave behind the noise and din,
the noise and din,
Maria, Maria, let us in, let us in.

Suddenly, she lifts her head, unassisted, and says, "Oh, hi!" I can't believe I heard this, and I sing the lines again. Once more she says, "Hi." People gather close to see this. That night I finish the song:

We're all coming to your secret
land,
To give you hugs and hold your
hand,
Let us in and let us touch,
Because we love you very much.

This song becomes the door to Maria's private world. She begins to communicate more—not much more, but in special education we are thrilled and satisfied with very small triumphs.

Special-education teachers use music the way, perhaps, everyone should use music—to help the children grow, physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially, and to help ourselves to grow in the same ways. We love doing music live, rather than just playing tapes and CDs. We do use some wonderful recordings, too, but we do it in a very participatory manner. Many of our kids are in wheelchairs, so we "motor" them through songs, so they get to enjoy the movement. When we play a song like "Wake Up, Toes," we move Vanessa's toes for and with her, since she cannot move her own body. Carlos doesn't like to be touched. We play "Yo Te Amo," and he allows us to hug him as he sings with us.

Photo by Drake Peters

Uncle Ruthie sings with Room 31 at Alphonso B. Perez Center School, Los Angeles, California, around 1993.

Many of the songs I write come directly from the children—from what they are feeling and often from things they say. They are the real makers of my songs, though they may only plant a verbal or even a silent seed.

For example there's Vanessa, and Edgar, who loves Vanessa. They are both 8 years old, but Vanessa is a tiny little person who cannot move her arms or legs or talk or feed herself. But she can smile like the noonday sun, and her eyes dance about, alighting on the correct answer, word, or number. She is very bright. And Edgar loves her, helps to feed her, pushes her about the schoolyard, and says at least 10 times a day, "I want to sit next to Vanessa! I want to sit next to Vanessa! And he sits next to Vanessa as I say, "You know what, Edgar, I think that sounds like the beginning of a song." That night at home, I can't do anything else until I finish the song. (Songwriting, for me, is a lot like giving birth—you really can't do anything else till the baby is born!)

The next day I sing the song for the class. They love it, especially Edgar and Vanessa, and she wiggles all over and gives us her best toothy smile. I sing it for Vanessa's mom, when she visits the class. She cries and asks for a copy:

Next to Vanessa, That's where
I'll be,
Next to Vanessa; that's where
you'll find me.
Next to Vanessa; I like her a lot!
Next to Vanessa is my favorite
spot.

Next to Vanessa, That's where I
stay,
Next to Vanessa, every school
day.
Next to Vanessa; her smile is so
sweet.
She's in her wheelchair, I'm in
my seat.

Next to Vanessa, out in the air,
Pushing Vanessa around in her
chair.
Eating lunch outside, ice cream
for a treat!
Next to Vanessa, helping her
eat.

Next to Vanessa, that's where I
belong,
Next to Vanessa, singing a song.
Next to Vanessa, we are best
friends.
Next to Vanessa, til the day
ends.

I think special-education teachers should have songs for everything—I know I do, and I couldn't teach without them. I use song to teach academics, such as prepositions (up, down, next to, etc.) or math,

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MARIA

words & music by Uncle Ruthie Buell
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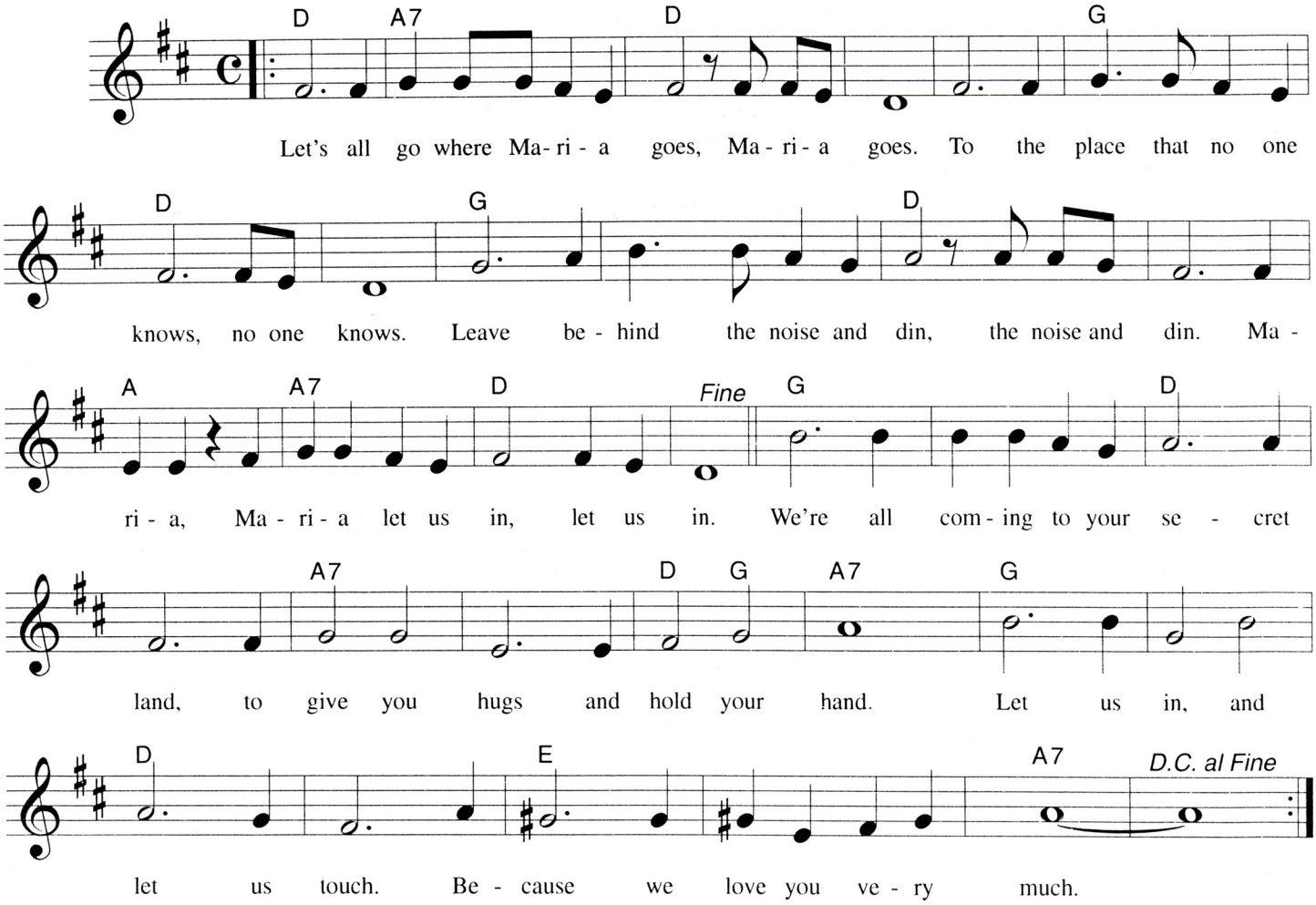
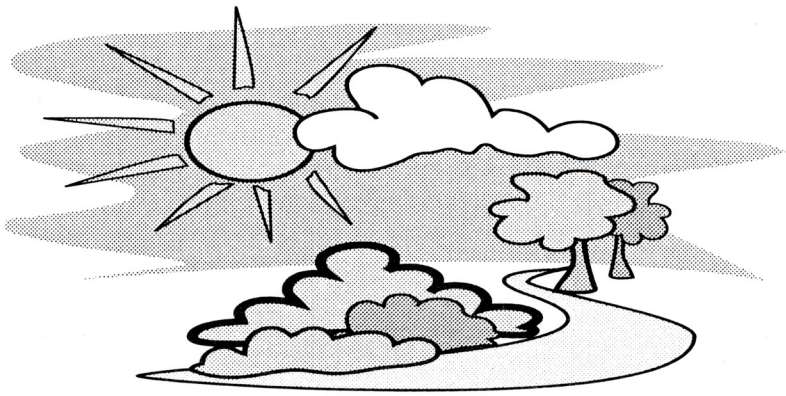
You can write to Uncle Ruthie about her songs and recordings at 1731 Shelbourne Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90035.





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.*

Let's All Go Where Maria Goes
➡ *continued from page 3*

as in "The Gong Song":

> Let me hear "One," Let me hear "One,"
> Let me hear "One" on the gong!
> It sure would be fun if I could hear "One"
> And I'll put your "One" in my song!

We count as high as we want, as we sing additional verses to this song. Children get to take turns striking the gong the appropriate number of times. Some may not know how yet, so I make sure to pull the gong away after the correct number has been struck. The idea is that we learn kinesthetically as well as cognitively. I also "motor" (help) the child to strike the gong in a rhythmic and flowing movement.

I have written songs to help kids let go of toys and songs that teach them how to change places. I also have songs (my own and others')—like silly camp songs—that don't teach a doggone thing, they just help to create what I consider the most essential component in learning music and singing songs—*joy!* Music must be fun, must contain joy, as well as teach or deal with feelings.

I am teaching blind children these days, and I use a lot of props and I change and adapt songs to fit their needs. I do lots of play party games and dances. I encourage touching and moving, because blind kids sit too much. While I am gentle, I am also demanding. Blind kids have a lot to learn. We all do.

I learn from kids, adults, and all of you in CMN. Keep in touch! Pio!

Uncle Ruthie Buell is a radio producer, songwriter, concertizer, and special-ed teacher. She has recorded three albums, for kids and adults. She hates computers.

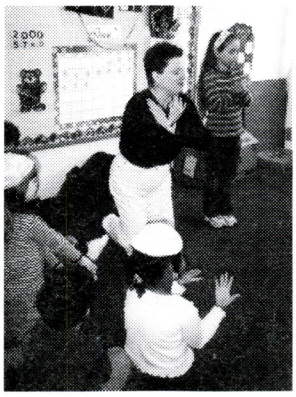
Music Education for All Kinds of Learners

by Beverly Granoff

My philosophy has always been, "Making music is easy and fun, for every age and every one." One needn't have different philosophies for teaching regular education or special education, classroom or private lessons, young or old. Whether I'm teaching private piano or guitar lessons to regular or special-needs students or teaching music at a preschool, the principles are the same—only the method is different. Where there is an atmosphere of love, respect, and freedom to explore, creativity and learning will happen.

Too often music teachers concern themselves only with technique, theory, and the skills needed to perform certain types of music. While this is of course very important, so is understanding that if cognitive and developmental skills are addressed when teaching, then learning will be complete. I recommend focusing on teaching skills to the child while teaching the material, rather than concentrating solely on teaching the material.

It is important to find out how individual students learn and to teach to their learning styles. Some are auditory learners, while others process things better when they can see the material. Some need to do hands-on work to understand and remember. A child with auditory-processing problems may not hear a melodic phrase or lyrics as most people would. A child with dyslexia may not see words or notes as most people do. We can understand and address the weaknesses while emphasizing and building on the strengths. In a group setting we can remember that there are many different learning styles represented. Younger children and those with special needs may need a variety of cues from various modes, before they can achieve success. We can use tactile, kinesthetic, visual, and auditory learning all together.



Beverly Granoff with her daughter Melissa and other children at Temple Beth-El Preschool in Lowell, Massachusetts.

For many years music has been an accepted therapy for emotional problems. But music should no longer be thought of as simply a therapy or peripheral enrichment activity. Music is basic and fundamental. In addition to the widely known enrichment qualities, music also has substantial nonmusical benefits. Scientists are now offering empirical evidence for what many musicians have known all along: that appropriate music education begun early in life contributes to improved intellectual, motor, and social skills and enhances natural musical abilities and appreciation; that through music we can improve skills in learning-disabled children; that through music we can develop the child's cognitive abilities, including receptive and expressive language skills, pre-reading and pre-math skills, body awareness and coordination, and abstract thought and creative thinking.

For over 20 years, in my private piano lessons and my work as a special-needs tutor, I have used music to teach learning-disabled

continued on next page ➡

Music Education

➡ *continued from previous page*

and preschool children to read, do math, and play the piano. It only stands to reason that if music helps to teach special-needs children, then it will help others as well. In selecting my curriculum for private lessons and preschool, I choose songs and activities not only for their musical value but also for their developmental qualities.

It has been shown that there is a transfer effect from music to other cognitive domains of the brain. There are many skills learned through music that are also needed when learning math and reading. Some of these skills are auditory and visual discrimination, auditory and visual patterning and sequencing, receptive and expressive language, one-to-one matching, and a sense of rhythm. Since music uses more stimuli than paper and pencil and other conventional teaching methods, we can use music as a means to develop these skills or remediate problems. It's also more fun! This is accomplished by taking the abstract concept of music and making it more concrete. When you hear music as an active listener—when you feel it, clap it, or sing along—you bring your participation into the concrete realm of your body. And when you make music with your whole body, you experience and understand music in different ways and on a variety of levels.

When we think of teaching a song to a typical class, many of us may not do much planning for how to teach the song. We'll sing a line, and the class sings it back to us. Sometimes we don't realize just how many steps there are or what benefits can come from certain songs. In special education, however, most teachers think of the smallest steps and set realistic goals. Some students will only be able to do a task with 90 percent accuracy, 85 percent of the time.

As an exercise for yourself, you may want to try writing a task analysis for a song that you have been teaching for awhile. You may see that old song in new ways. I was taught about task analysis in my special-education training. Nothing like it was ever mentioned in regular-education methods classes. Essentially, it is a way of thinking about how to go about achieving your goals. You ask, "What does the student need to know or be able to do, to accomplish the task?" This makes you see all the different components there are to doing things. It helps you to look at things from different angles. With preschoolers and special-needs students, this can sometimes mean not only going step by step, but breaking things down into many, many small steps. Some things that we take for granted in regular education must be planned for with special-needs students.

As an example of a task analysis, let's consider a lesson plan where the objective is to have the class learn to sing and dance to a certain song. While the difficulty of the dance can be geared to the level of the class, my goals would remain basically the same. The child will

- Stand in his/her own space
- Not bother others around him/her
- Ignore distractions around the room
- Pay attention to the teacher
- Follow directions to the dance
- Clap while dancing (as able)
- Turn around the correct number of times (as indicated in lyrics)
- Change tempo (as indicated)
- Change feeling (as indicated)

While singing and dancing seems simple, it can be very difficult for certain kids. Besides having fun, the following are some skills they learn, once the goals are accomplished:

- Staying in one spot without wandering around the room
- Respecting the space of others
- Focusing on the teacher, no matter what else is going on in the room
- Following directions
- Feeling the beat of the music
- Changing speed and feel while dancing
- Auditory reception and processing (singing)
- Auditory discrimination (high/low)
- Auditory sequencing (melody and lyrics)
- Body awareness
- Gross motor coordination

Task analysis can be very useful when trying out new material or when thinking about the strengths and weaknesses of a new student or group. If material is geared more specifically to individual students, then they will have greater success more of the time. This helps build a child's (or an adult's) self-confidence and self-esteem.

Special education should not be thought of as greatly different from regular education. Each one of us learns things a little differently from someone else. I believe we need to rethink our methods for teaching regular education. If we remember to teach to the learning style of the child, using a variety of modes, then there will be success. And remember, if you're having fun, so are they! PIO!

Beverly Granoff is a music teacher, special-needs teacher, and songwriter. She lives in Massachusetts with her husband and two children.

Note: There are some great websites with many resources. One in particular that specializes in articles about music and how the brain works is MuSICA (Research Notes at HYPERLINK http://www.musica.uci.edu). MuSICA is short for Music & Science Information Computer Archive. Articles include "Brain Anatomy and Music," "Music and Its Memories," "Music and Cognitive Achievement in Children," and "Musical Building Blocks in the Brain." The MuSICA database is available via Telnet, for computer users who do not have access to the internet.

CMN Gold Discovered in California:

The 2000 California Statewide Gathering

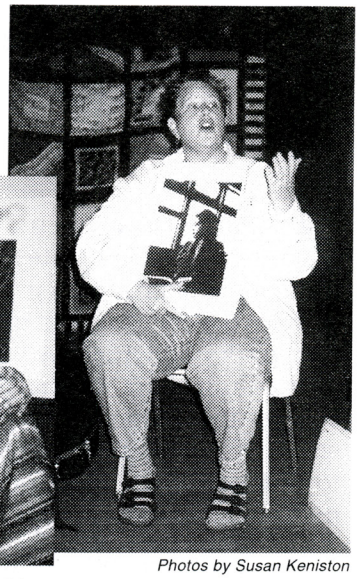
by Susan Keniston

At the height of the spring wildflower bloom in the Sierra Nevada foothills, California CMN members converged on Grass Valley and Nevada City for a statewide gathering. Held on the weekend of May 6th, there were folks attending from both the Northern California and Southern California regions. It was a wonderful weekend of workshops, song swaps, and networking with new and old friends. We coordinated our activities with Day of the Young Child events, held in town that same weekend, and the John Woolman School (see p.13), a Quaker-run secondary school whose students attended our Saturday night keynote presentation.

Daytime programming included a swap of songs of California heritage, facilitated by Lisa Atkinson, and the setting of our gathering in the historical gold-rush country lent extra meaning to this event. Joe McHugh presented his thinking on how to keep folk traditions alive and thriving and truly "folk," and helped facilitate a lunchtime discussion on commodity culture versus gifting culture. Nancy Raven led a lively workshop on teaching kids community through music, drawing participants into singing a number of her favorite songs of that genre. We also held a family sing-along in which the children came up with a number of song selections and hilarious lyrical improvisations. Throughout the weekend, they reminded the adults of the lighter side.

Jacki Breger presented on teaching very young children about the Civil Rights Movement, and her clear thinking about what young children are ready to hear and how to make the material meaningful and memorable to them was much appreciated. A key point was to begin with the idea that we have rules for how we do some things, and sometimes those rules are not good rules, and they need to be changed. Jacki sparked a lively discussion among workshop participants, and we can look forward to an article from her on this subject, in a future issue of *PIO!*

Bruce "Utah" Phillips after his keynote talk at the 2000 California Statewide CMN Gathering in Grass Valley, posing with his friend Faith Petric.



Jacki Breger presenting a workshop on teaching young children about the Civil Rights Movement.

Photos by Susan Keniston

Our featured speaker was Bruce "Utah" Phillips, the "legendary voice of the great Southwest," who now makes Nevada City his home. He is a nationally known singer, storyteller, and poet with a powerful insider's perspective on the Labor Movement and the music that grew out of it. A mix of stories, songs, and opinion, Utah's talk focused on the importance of teaching children about labor history and how to make it accessible to them through songs and stories. He stressed the role that our elders have to play in this, connecting our children to these stories through the people who actually lived them.

Utah Phillips gave his talk at the John Woolman School, and as I looked around the room that night, I was struck by the faces of the teenage students from the school, who were clearly sparked by Utah's presentation. Later, they asked him for his thoughts about the World Trade Organization (WTO) demonstrations in Seattle and elsewhere. Given that he describes himself as an anarchist, they wondered what he thought about the "anarchists" at the WTO demonstrations, who are getting much of the blame for the violent outbreaks and are thus not always welcomed by other demonstrators.

Utah answered by defining a true anarchist as a person who takes the responsibility for making all her/his own decisions and does not assume the right to make decisions for others. This, he pointed out, requires a good deal of maturity and wisdom. It isn't about impulsively doing whatever you want. It's about knowing what's good for you and taking charge of your life. It's also about recognizing when your actions may result in robbing others of the ability to make important choices for themselves. So, for example, Utah is a pacifist, since he believes that to make a decision to kill someone would be to rob them of one of the most important choices they have—to live or to die.

These remarks certainly got me to thinking what it would be like to cultivate that approach to life in our children and to live it as a culture.

Susan Keniston lives in Santa Cruz, California, and is a member of the CMN board.

Peace in the Parks

by Carol Johnson

In 1998, the Grand Rapids Parks Department, in cooperation with the Institute for Global Education, offered a program called "Circles of Peace" as part of its summer parks activities. A wonderful curriculum of art, drama, and noncompetitive games all highlighted seven "principles of nonviolence," to which children and families were invited to subscribe. These were

1. Respect ourselves and others
2. Communicate better
3. Listen
4. Forgive
5. Respect nature
6. Play creatively
7. Be courageous

This program was so successful that it received an award of excellence that summer, from the State of Michigan.

In 1999 I was asked to enhance this program with music. Two visits were scheduled at each of a number of "high-risk" neighborhood parks. On the first visit I did a highly participatory peace concert sing-along with the children, followed by a songwriting session wherein we began writing a peace song for their neighborhood. On a big newsprint pad, we wrote down the children's visions of peace—in their hearts, their homes, their neighborhood. Ideas flew! Everything from the simplest "brush your teeth" and "don't jump on the bed" to such sophisticated concepts as clearing an area of negativity by smudging, to blessing the earth with chants. Not surprisingly, the lists for the various parks were very similar—children wanted them to be drug and violence free, safe, and beautiful, with people showing respect for animals, nature, and other people. I invited musical ideas, too—especially for a chorus that might tie our thoughts together—and I made notes of anything that came up. Musical ideas were scarce, however; time and other limitations prevented much development in this area, so ultimately I pretty much composed the tunes.

That first visit concluded with a ceremony to "anchor peace in this neighborhood." We marched (nonmilitantly, of course!) around the perimeters of the park, the children shaking rattles or playing drums and all of us singing a simple theme song I'd written for the whole occasion, called "We Create a Circle of Peace" (see facing page). I felt a real sense of power and sacredness, and I believe the children did, too.

I took the lists of children's ideas home and created a song for each park, being careful not to reword concepts any more than necessary to make them fit rhythm and/or rhyme. (It's miraculous how lyrics fall into place sometimes!) I often grouped concepts, but took care that each child who had made a suggestion would recognize it in the song. Often the song was call-and-response in nature, making it easy to learn. I composed several simple potential choruses, using any musical ideas I could that the children had come up with. I then returned two days later to teach, practice, and tape-record our song. I let the children choose which chorus they liked best; to give them a greater sense of participation. As you can imagine, the children *loved* hearing their own voices on the tape! A copy of the tape was left with each park, so that children could ask later to hear and sing it again. (There were eight songs written in all, now available in songbook form.)

It was interesting and challenging to me, as the children created their lists, how strongly I had to guide the conversation toward *positive vision* and *affirmative statements*. It seems much easier to list all the "don'ts" and "no more's" (don't do drugs, don't kill, no more war, no pollution, etc.) than to know what life might look like without these negative things. I think I understand why this is so: We have been so far away for so long from anything like a truly peaceful planet that we can't concretely envision what it *is*—we live daily with the obstacles to it, those things that must be changed, chipped away, dissolved, or transmuted before we can see it. These are the things that readily came to mind for many children. So, as best I could, I put their concepts in the affirmative, but this didn't always work, as I didn't want their statements reshaped into something unrecognizable to them.

These sessions were splendid opportunities to talk about how "peace begins with me"; about the importance of our attitudes and the choices we make; about how the peaceful thoughts and visions we hold in our minds are more productive than focusing on all the bad things we don't want anymore. We realized how the spoken or sung word, with the energy of our heartfelt intentions, can help create the world we want in the new millennium. This, of course, was the heart of the program, moreso than the songs themselves.

An exciting follow-up ensued, much to my delight. St. Cecilia Music Society in Grand Rapids is home to several excellent youth choirs. They, along with children from Campus School of Arts and Literature (a cross-cultural school in my inner-city neighborhood) jointly performed all eight of these songs at a public peace concert in February. We also sang, at the invitation of the mayor, at the sesquicentennial celebration of our city in April. The Circle of Peace grows larger in Grand Rapids! PIO!

Carol Johnson has focused on children's and family concerts and sing-alongs for 20 years, using her music to bring joy and healing to the planet.

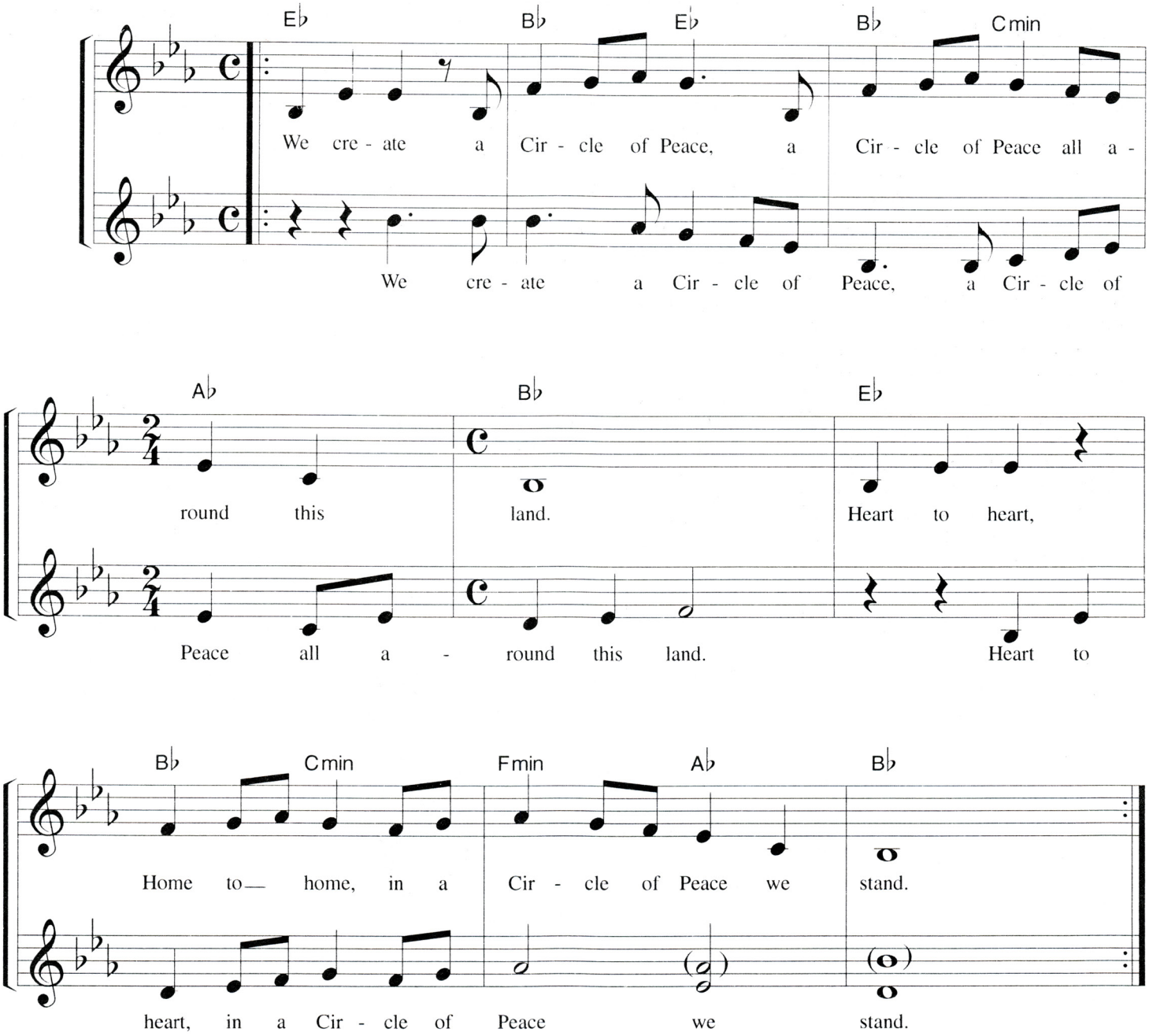
CIRCLE OF PEACE

words & music by Carol A. Johnson
©2000 Carol A. Johnson, Noeldner Music, BMI

To contact Carol about her music, recordings, and work with Circles of Peace, write to her at 900 Calvin SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506.

Photo courtesy of The Grand Rapids Press

Carol Johnson helps children express their visions of peace through music



Media Waves:

Radio Lollipop

by PJ Swift

When I was four years old, I was hospitalized for several weeks. The nature of my illness required that I be admitted to a specialized children's hospital, miles from my home. My mom didn't drive, so she had to take the bus and transfer twice, just to come and see me. Then there was her job and my older sister's child-care needs. Suffice it to say, I didn't see my family much while I was in the hospital.

It was a very unsettling experience. There were the hundreds of needles and constant tests from the doctors. The nurses kept on changing; I hardly knew anyone's name. And somehow, the kids in the beds next to me kept vanishing with no explanation. There were long days and even longer nights. I felt bored and lonesome and very scared.

Nowadays, many hospital workers seem to be more sensitive to the needs of children. There are specialized residences, such as Ronald McDonald houses, so that families can stay near kids while they're hospitalized. Some hospitals have "child-life" or "family-resource" services, bringing toys, books, and tapes to kids. And some hospitals even have a closed-circuit TV system, featuring G-rated movies on a continuous loop.

But surprisingly, there are few organized, national programs that address the loneliness and isolation of kids in hospitals, here in the United States or in other countries. Although there is the "Starwave" internet program, there are few "big brothers in hospitals" or "hospital–parent associations" that can link real volunteers with real kids or bring entertainment during those long afternoons and nights. That is, there were none until Radio Lollipop came along.

Radio Lollipop was started 1978 at Queen Mary's Hospital for Children in Surrey, England, by Mr. Hedley Finn. At the time, Queen Mary's was the largest children's hospital in Europe, with over 36 wards on 92 acres. Yet, like many hospitals, Queen Mary's had no organized entertainment services for children. Radio Lollipop had a simple goal: to bring a steady stream of nightly entertainment directly to kids in their beds. And what better way to do this than through radio? The plan included providing children with special phone lines linking their rooms directly to the hospital's onsite radio studio, so that they could call in requests or tell a joke "on the air." Although the focus of the program would be on the nightly two-hour radio show, Radio Lollipop would also provide other services for kids, such as parties and hands-on play activities. The radio show would provide the catalyst for bringing kids and volunteer radio staff together.

And Radio Lollipop did provide that catalyst, with great success. It took just over a year to raise funds, wire the wards at Queen Mary's for radio and telephone, build the studio, and recruit a team of broadcasters and facilitators. Soon, the Radio Lollipop idea spread throughout Great Britain. There are currently

Photo by Katie Hopkins

At the Radio Lollipop studios at Texas Children's Hospital, José-Luis Orozco presents CMN members' gift package of tapes and CDs, plus his own songbooks, to Sarah Fallon, who coordinates the TCH radio program. The DJs began using them on the very next show.

over eight hospitals in the U.K. that feature such site-specific radio programming, in Southampton, Birmingham, Manchester, Newcastle, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, and two in Bristol. In addition, there are partner programs in Australia and New Zealand and two in the U.S.

One such hospital is Texas Children's Hospital in Houston. The child-life coordinator there is a new CMN member, Katie Hopkins, daughter of longtime CMN member Susan Hopkins. The program started up and, under its own direction, recruited volunteers for the after-hours program. Katie says that the Radio Lollipop program has been a true gift for Texas Children's: "Before Radio Lollipop, every child-life specialist left at 5 PM, and nothing happened for the kids after that. Now, kids can come down [to the studio] and interact with our new volunteers and the radio program. It's been wonderful—we're not just 'the toy ladies,' passing out toys, anymore."

While some hospitals can take the "feed" or entire Radio Lollipop program signal from other hospitals, Texas Children's has built its own closed-circuit station. That way, kids at the hospital can interact with other kids from the same hospital via the radio signal. It doesn't take much in the way of equipment to create such a station, especially if the hospital is already wired for TV. Although the station only had about 100 recordings to rotate into its programming in the beginning, the kids themselves provided a lot of diversity. They told jokes, they said hi to their friends, they made dedications, or they provided commentary. Katie says that the

entire Radio Lollipop program—the station and its outreach activities—allows children to "step away from what their [health] issues are and come and be a kid. It gets kids talking to each other and doing stuff that's fun."

Katie and the staff at Texas Children's have great plans for using their partnership with Radio Lollipop to start parallel activities as well, such as "theme weeks" and a concert series. In fact, their first concert guest was CMN's own José-Luis Orozco, who appeared there in early December 1999. "It was wonderful," notes Katie. "We had 20 families—kids and their parents—and José-Luis did an involving program of English and Spanish songs. He's so great in interacting with the kids. We had one child who was reluctant to come to the concert in his wheelchair, but by the end of the program, this kid was grinning from ear to ear."

At his appearance, José-Luis presented the Texas Children's Radio Lollipop station with what we hope will be the first of many CMN gift packages, filled with over 25 recordings that our members donated at last October's national gathering in Petaluma. Katie reports, "Those recordings were greatly appreciated and are now used frequently in the Radio Lollipop programming. In fact, one of our volunteers told me that the station uses at least one of the cassettes each night the station broadcasts." PIO!

PJ Swift is recovered and busy in Santa Cruz, California, although she still doesn't like shots.

Note: If you'd like to contribute to the next CMN gift package, please send materials to Katie Hopkins, 14706 Long Oak Drive, Houston, TX 77070. You can call her at 281/370-3256 or e-mail her at khopkins@texaschildrenshospital.org. You can also contact Radio Lollipop directly at Flat 4, Orchard Hill, Fountain Drive, Carshalton, Surry, England SM5 4NR; or by e-mail at radio.lollipop@btinternet.com. Their website is at www.btinternet.com/~georgewilliamson/rl/.

Fly Away with Jazz

by Jan Lieberman

In my job as a children's librarian, I get to see lots of great books, and I want to tell you about a fantastic new one, *The Jazz Fly*, by Matthew Gollub (Tortuga Press). This book comes with a CD that brings the text alive through spoken and instrumental jazz.

The main character is a fly who speaks jazz, but can't find his way to the jazz club for his group's gig (he's their drummer). The animals he meets along the way speak their own languages and don't dig his jive. "ZA-baza, BOO-zaba, ZEE-zah RO-ni?" he asks, hoping they'll help him. The frog, pig, donkey, and dog each respond in their unique tongues. Using ingenuity, interpretation, and improvisation, the fly feels the rhythm of the animals' language while they, in turn, pick up his beat. He finds his way to the club, where he knocks the socks off the patrons there by concocting a brew blending all the languages he has heard that day into a spirited, jazzy sound.

What makes this book so successful is the CD, which features author Matthew Gollub telling the story in rhythmic language, backed up by terrific jazz instrumentals he composed. You see and hear the bass, the saxophone, the piano, and the drums in solo and in combo. Karen Hanke's computer-generated illustrations are hip and filled with such groovy insects that you will never want to hurt a cockroach again!

Kids love this book. They leave school jiving, "ZA-baza, BOO-zaba, ZEE-zah RO-ni." They catch on quickly to the concept of scat singing and want to hear more. One eight year old summed it up when she said, "In my whole life, I never heard a book where the music was as important as the story." PIO!

Jan Lieberman is a librarian at the Santa Clara (California) City Library. She was interviewed in the winter 2000 issue of PIO!

Sing Sign

A while back we were sent this photograph, taken by Shoshana Hoose, of a sign that stands in front of the Phippsburg Elementary School, on a peninsula in midcoast Maine. In October last year, driving toward the mainland, one saw the word *SING*. Residents returning home at night saw *SING OFTEN*.

Shoshana spoke with Kathleen Fitzgibbons, who was then the school's new principal and had recently moved to Maine from Connecticut. "Nobody knows me," she said. "Everybody's watching and wondering, Who is this whippersnapper going to be?" So she decided to let her true colors show on the sign. "I think singing's so important," she said. "I think we all should have a song in our hearts—even though I'm scared not knowing anyone."

The next week, the sign had a new message. People driving toward the mainland saw the word *THINK*. On the return trip, they were advised, *THINK GENTLY*.

IT MAKES ME HAPPY (ME HACE ALEGRE)

words & music by Judith-Kate Friedman
and the Third Graders in Terry Fletcher's Class,
Thousand Oaks School, Berkeley, CA
©1998 Songwriting Works

Judith-Kate tells the story of writing "It Makes Me Happy (Me Hace Alegre)" in two classroom visits with Terry Fletcher's 3rd grade bilingual class: "The students came up with the ideas, all the words and most of the music for the chorus. Terry, herself a fine musician, served as translator. After weeding out ideas based on commercial products and television characters, everyone agreed we could write a truly original song about something they all loved: music." Judith-Kate and the third graders worked together in a residency sponsored by Stagebridge, an intergenerational theater organization, and by Songwriting Works, a project that brings elders and youth together to compose original songs. You can contact Judith-Kate through Songwriting Works, at PMB 606, 2625 Alcatraz Av., Berkeley, CA 94705.

verse

A B7 E A
1. When I lis-ten to mu - sic it makes me feel like I could break a

B7 E A B7 E A
rod of steel. I move my feet when I feel that beat. It makes me strong when I

B E *chorus* A B
sing my song. It makes me hap-py, it makes me dance, it makes me

B7/F♯ E A B7
feel like I have a chance. Me ha - ce a - le-gre, me ha-ce bai - lar, me ha-ce mo -

B7/F♯ E A B7 E
ver, me ha - ce can - tar. la la la la la la la la la la la la

Esus4 A B7 E Esus4 E
la la la la la la la la la la la la

It Makes Me Happy
➡ *continued from previous page*

1. When I listen to music it makes me feel
   like I could break a rod of steel.
   I move my feet when I feel that beat.
   It makes me strong when I sing my song.

chorus:
   It makes me happy, it makes me dance,
   It makes me feel like I have a chance.
   Me hace alegre, me hace bailar,
   Me hace mover, me hace cantar.
   la la la . . .

2. When I listen to music it makes me fly
   I'm soaring, I'm soaring like a bird in the sky
   Volando, volando con los pajaritos
   Volando, volando como un angelito.

Social-Change Discussion at John Woolman School

by Susan Hopkins

Among those who attended the California Statewide Gathering in May was Jacki Breger, and she followed this up with a day of teaching at the John Woolman School in Grass Valley. She is a folksinger who visited the school to work with the students and staff on the subject of music and social change, focusing on the Civil Rights Movement. Music was an essential part of that movement, as it has been with many, because it promotes the values of supporting change and community building. Music helps create the solidarity needed for the success of social-change movements. The following are my notes taken on the discussion that day.

Jacki posed the following questions to the students:

- How can we use music to support social change?
- What are you going to do to get your generation to carry on and go forward, and to get songs and singing back into movements?

Justin: Unplug the machine; model for our children. Raise our children to know about and be a part of making changes.

Issac: We need new songs, because we have new issues, but they relate to the old issues. We should incorporate the old songs.

Elijah: Make songs that the younger generation can embrace. Keep the old songs, but new ones are needed, too, that are user friendly.

Summary of thoughts:

- Raise your children to be aware of movements and songs.
- Make up new songs.
- Carry on the old songs.

Jacki then offered the students some things to keep in mind when making up new songs:

- Out of every movement/action come maybe hundreds of songs, yet only a few survive, which is probably as it should be.
- Not every song made up "on the spot" is a "great song." It may fulfill a particular need, but not go beyond that need or that moment, or it may be too hard for people to remember.
- A "great" song—the one that lasts—has three qualities: It must be specific enough to speak to the event/issue at hand, to fulfill the needs of the people in that particular action. At the same time, it must be universal enough to transcend its event of origin, to speak to the broader issues. Finally, it must be singable for ordinary folks. PIO!

Susan Hopkins is a CMN board member, an organizer of children's peace camps, and the editor of a book on creating a better democratic society.

Curriculi! Curricula!

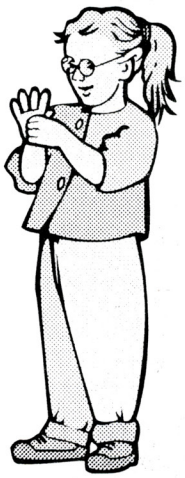
by Bob Blue

Some children learn best through music. Many of us parents and teachers have known that for a long time, and for us, the work of Howard Gardiner,* suggesting that there are several types of intelligence, including musical intelligence, is not really news. But it's nice to have it confirmed by a respected theorist.

I'll describe how Eloise, a composite of several children I've known, used music to learn things she had trouble learning in other ways. Eloise had quite a bit of difficulty in school. First of all, she didn't quite understand how to relate with other children. She wanted them to hurry up and like her, and she sometimes went up to them and hugged them, whether or not they welcomed her hugs. Her favorite song was "Walk a Mile," by Jan Nigro. Its chorus says, "I want to walk a mile in your shoes; I want to know what you're thinking, what you're feeling." Even though I wasn't sure she understood all the ideas presented in that song, I think the song said something important to her. I think it helped her to think about what others might be thinking and feeling.

Eloise did not fully understand the classroom rules. She often did what her inclusion specialist told her to do (*e.g.*, hand in papers, stay in the classroom, be quiet during explanations), but she often didn't. Sometimes I was able to use "Walk a Mile" or other songs to get her to go along with rules. That is, I'd announce to the class that we were going to have a group singing time after a certain task was completed. Eloise—and the other children—were eager to have that singing time, and they were willing to participate in less-appealing activities so that they could have a chance to sing together.

Music was her doorway to what didn't come easily. When learning is a challenge that often leads to frustration, it's nice to have a learning/teaching tool that is so reliably joyful.



Children in Eloise's class were learning to think about mathematics in a way that Eloise was not at all ready for. While they were reading word problems and then figuring out how to solve them, Eloise was learning to count. So she was given different worksheets to complete, though they looked to her like the worksheets other children were doing. And the whole class did a musical play about mathematics. It was called "Everybody Counts." Eloise enjoyed being part of that play and singing as other children sang. It made her and the rest of the class feel more like a community.

It's not that Eloise was an unusually talented singer. In fact, if you used the criteria often used to judge musical talent—pitch, rhythm, and all—you probably would consider her somewhat below average. But if you took into account Eloise's love for music, she was a star. Music was her doorway to what didn't come easily. When learning is a challenge that often leads to frustration, it's nice to have a learning/teaching tool that is so reliably joyful. Pio!

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

*See Howard Gardiner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983) and *Multiple Intelligences: The Theory and Practice* (1993).

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Stitching Hands Raise Funds for CMN

by Sally Rogers

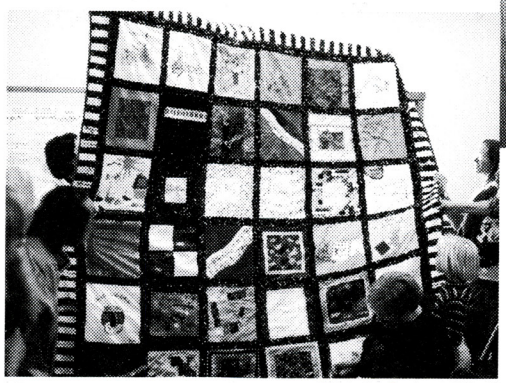


Photo by Barbara Wright

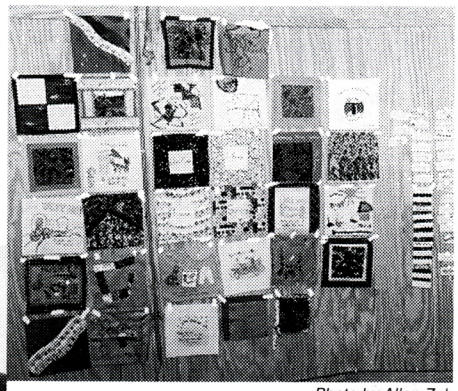


Photo by Allen Zak

Many CMN hands contributed to creating the pieces in 1997. . .

and finishing the symbol in 1999

One of the jobs of CMN board members is to think up as many creative ways as possible to raise money to keep our wonderful organization afloat. At a board meeting prior to our 1997 gathering in Nashville, I suggested we start a community quilt, which could serve both as a fundraiser and a banner of sorts for CMN. I have been a quilter since high school and have worked on many community quilt projects, so the process seemed quite doable to me.

The quilt was designed to be a fundraiser both while being made and after it was finished. First we sold the right to make quilt squares at a price of $25 per square. The only creative limitations on the squares were that they needed to be 12" square and to have images in keeping with CMN's mission. We also sold signature strips (5" by 2"), which one could sign in permanent ink or paint. These precut strips of muslin sold for $1 apiece. Our intention was to make the quilt financially accessible to anyone who wanted to participate. A signature strip was sent to each CMN member, with a letter describing the whole project.

Many of the signature strips and squares were sent in before the Nashville gathering convened. But many more were completed at the gathering, in an atmosphere of crazy, creative cooperation. Blank squares and strips were available to participants, and several sewing machines were brought in. Katherine Dines made sure our little quilting group had an area in which to work. Since it was on the edge of a workshop space, we actually got to hear some of the music being made as we worked amid a whirlwind of sewing, painting and drawing. Several members took on the tasks required to keep our little corner organized and productive (Louise Pease comes to mind particularly, though there were many others).

By the end of the gathering, over 30 squares and many signature strips had been completed, leaving the task of piecing the quilt top for a later time. My intentions were to complete that for the following year's gathering in New York City, but you all know the story about the best-laid plans of mice and men. I was finally able to finish the top for the 1999 gathering in Petaluma. I brought it, plus batting and the backing, with the intention of "tying off" the quilt during the gathering. Thanks to the stitching hands of many (especially Mara Sapon-Shevin and several young people), the quilt was completely finished before the end of the gathering, and we had it as a backdrop for one night of the round robin.

It is gorgeous! The quilt nearly sings, the musical theme permeating every square. The names around the outside edge alternate with black fabric with musical notes, reminding one of a piano keyboard encircling the entire blanket. Since its completion, the quilt has appeared at several CMN events. It is available for any regional gatherings, and we encourage regions to use it as part of a display at any conferences they attend.

Now the question is, What happens with the quilt from this point on? There has been some call to raffle it off. This would have the potential of raising several thousand dollars for CMN. Other ideas have included making picture postcards of the quilt, to be be sold at gatherings and through *PIO!* This way, we could raise money without giving up the actual quilt. We are still soliciting ideas for uses of the quilt. If you have one, or if you are interested in being involved in the quilt fundraising projects, please get in touch with me!

You can contact Sally Rogers at salrog@neca.com or at P.O. Box 98, Abington, CT 06230. To reserve the CMN quilt for your event, call Caroline Presnell in the Evanston office. Regions must pay the postage for shipping and insuring the quilt in both directions.

ALL THE NAMES BELONG

by Caren Leonard
©1997 Caren Leonard

chorus

D G A7 D

I - mag-ine such a song, all the names be - long to this

G A7 G A7

ti - ny but-ter - fly, this flow-er in the sky. Sing these words with

D Bmin G

me. Try it and you'll see: all of us be - long;

A7 D **final chorus to Coda** θ *verse*

'mag - ine such a song. 1. In Am - er - i - ca child - ren say but - ter- fly.

G A7

In Chi- na, they say hi - da - o.. In Tur - key, it's

D

ke - le - bek and in Ja - pan it's cho. If you speak Es - per- an - to, say

G

pa- pi- li. Es - ton - i - an child-ren say li - bli- kas. Flutt - 'ring through Ro-

A7 D

ma- ni - a is the flut- ter - e. Cze- cho - slo - va- ki- an kids say bat- r- flaj. I -

θ A7 D A7 D A7 D *Fine*

All of us be - long. I - ma - gine such a song for a flo - wer in the sky.

All the Names Belong

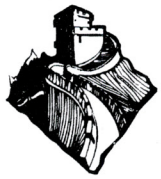
➡ *continued from previous page*

Caren shared this song in the Round Robin at the 1998 National Gathering in New York City. She invites children to echo the various words for butterfly. And she invites all of us to include butterfly names in additional languages. To Contact Caren about her music (or to tell her more names for "butterfly") write to her at 319 Parsons St. Easton, PA 18042-1720.

chorus:

Imagine such a song,
All the names belong to this tiny butterfly,
this flower in the sky.
Sing these words with me.
Try it and you'll see: all of us belong—
'magine such a song.

1. In America, children say butterfly.
   In China, they say hidao.
   In Turkey, it's kelebek,
   and in Japan it's cho.
   If you speak Esperanto, say papili.
   Estonian children say liblikas.
   Fluttering through Romania is the fluttere.
   Czechoslovakian kids say batrflaj.



2. In Indonesia, we have the kupu kupu.
   In Sweden, we say fjaril.
   We fly through Germany with der Schmetterling,
   and in Poland with the motyl.
   In Buda or Pest, say pilango.
   In Portugal, say borboleta.
   If you speak Latin, say papilio.
   But when in Rome, say farfala.

3. In France, there is papillon.
   In Russia, we have bobotchka.
   In Serbia and Croatia, it's leptir,
   and in Spain, mariposa.

Coda:

All of us belong—imagine such a song,
for a flower in the sky.

Caren and *PIO!* thank Ethel Holderith for transcription of "All the Names Belong".

Letters to the Editor

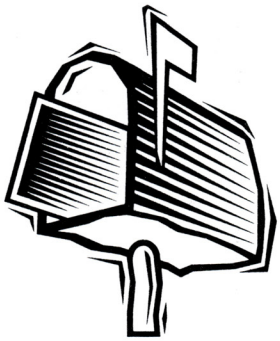
AN IMPORTANT QUESTION

Dear *PIO!*

I see that although I had to resign (lack of time) as "Letters" editor, I've been put on board as an advisor. Don't be surprised if I often send you some unsolicited advice—such as: Let's all scratch our heads to bring more young Latin Americans and African Americans into CMN. How? That is the question.

See you in October.

Pete Seeger
Beacon, New York



Editor's reply: We always welcome advice and suggestions from Pete and from all of our members. The issue he raises here is an important one, which the board and membership have worked hard to address since our beginnings. We continue to search for satisfactory answers and encourage our members to reach out to people who are underrepresented in our ranks. In the meantime, we also focus on being as effective a network as we can be, and we hope that this will be inviting to people of all backgrounds. Readers: What are your thoughts about this? Share them in a letter or article, or contact a board member.

HOORAY FOR BOOKS THAT SING

Dear *PIO!*

Congratulations to all the contributors to the winter 2000 issue of *Pass It On!* for the outstanding collection of books that sing. I found them so engaging for the young children I teach. The issue came just in time for National Reading Month, and the selections captivated the audience. I chose an adult page turner, singing "Ding, ding" when the time came (just like the many fine tapes children can enjoy on their own), and the kids loved it. I have shared the list with older adults who are training to join the child-care field, and they feel so comfortable singing when illustrations validate their efforts. The children's librarian in my town loved the list so much that I think she will be joining us for CMN roundups. Thanks for a great resource!

Margaret Hooton
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The Children's Music Network

Workshops • Networking • Song Swaps • Musical Jams

10th Annual Gathering

October 13th–15th, 2000

Kutz Camp, Warwick, New York

Keynote speaker: **PETE SEEGER** Magic Penny Award: **MARCIA BERMAN**

Musicians, Educators, Parents, Families, Librarians, and All Youth Advocates
CMN gatherings are like a reunion of old friends, an open & welcome meeting ground for new friends, a time to come together to foster cooperation, cultural diversity, self-esteem and empowerment through music for young people!

Registration and information:
CMN, PO Box 1341, Evanston, IL 60204 • (847) 733-8003
http://www.cmnonline.org • office@cmnonline.org
partial scholarships are available

CHILDREN'S MUSIC NETWORK

The Children's Music Network's 10th Annual National Gathering

The tenth annual Children's Music Network National Gathering, set this year in the rustic beauty of Kutz Camp in Warwick, New York, is planned for October 13–15, 2000. This multi-generational event attracts people from all over North America who come together to foster cooperation, cultural diversity, self-esteem, and empowerment through music for young people. The gathering offers fun and interesting workshops and song swaps for children and adults, and provides lots of opportunities for networking and learning within a stimulating and encouraging environment. As always, there will be singing, dancing, networking, celebrating, and, of course, the magic of our traditional Saturday-night round-robin concert.

Our keynote speaker this year will be legendary folk singer and long-time CMN member Pete Seeger. Pete's songs are rooted in the lives, the stories and the struggles of the people all across this land and all around the world. He has been honored and beloved for being a central figure in the modern-day "folk music revival." From the 1930s, when he began playing with Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly, through his almost sixty years of activism in the labor, peace, civil rights, and environmental movements, he has steadfastly held the belief that everyone should be able to participate in making music. People singing together are a hallmark of his performances, and parents and children, in particular, enjoy his wonderful songs for children. His music has touched the hearts and imaginations of both children and adults throughout many generations, across many borders.

At the gathering this year, another CMN member, children's music pioneer Marcia Berman, will be honored with CMN's Magic Penny Lifetime Achievement Award. Based in Los Angeles, Marcia is known throughout the country among parents, educators, professional associations, and fellow children's music artists for her contributions to the field of children's music. Throughout her career, spanning more than forty years, she has recorded over twelve albums of songs for children, ten of which were made in collaboration with songwriters, singers, dancers, storytellers, musicians, and children. Several generations of children have been raised on her albums, and several generations of teachers have benefited from her workshops at their schools, colleges, and conferences.

The CMN National Gathering is one of the best-kept secrets in the world of music, and it's time to spread the word. This event is for anyone and everyone involved with children and/or music. Tell your children's librarian and all the music teachers you know. Tell your friends. This Gathering is an especially wonderful place to bring children of any age. The cost of the weekend includes meals and lodging. Come one, come all, for a weekend of celebration and music-making you'll long remember.

If you haven't already received a pre-registration packet in the mail, please contact our national office.

Interview: Brett Smith

➡ *continued from page 2*

difference—just being able to express myself in a healthy way that didn't disrupt the rest of the class.

PIO!: What was your first instrument?

BS: Piano, and then percussion.

PIO!: What made you start playing?

BS: My mom and dad had always had music in the house. Mom always played the piano, and my brother and sister and I sang with her. I was just so interested in it. And then she got me some lessons that paved the way for my public-school experience.

PIO!: Were you listening to popular music?

BS: Oh yeah, you bet.

PIO!: Who'd you like?

BS: Well, Chicago was big, first of all, and then Earth, Wind and Fire. And then I worked my way into the jazz idioms as I got more involved with jazz band. I loved Buddy Rich, and I actually got to get up on stage with him when I was a kid. It got to a point that whenever I was bummed out or frustrated or angry, instead of hitting the punching bag I would go down in the basement where my bedroom was and put the headset on and play along with Chicago or Earth, Wind and Fire. Before long I felt great. Instead of saying cut out the racket, my parents would say please play more, we love it. I was just lucky.

PIO!: I'd say. Did anyone ever tell you you couldn't sing?

BS: No, and I'm lucky there, too. How often does that happen—you know, somebody's singing out so loud in fourth grade and they're way off key and so a teacher turns and says, "Why don't you just mouth the words?" What a message! Just today a fifth-grade teacher said to me, "You know, that kid is so off key; what if you just put him in the third row and tell

continued on next page ➡

Interview: Brett Smith
➡ *continued from previous page*

him to mouth along—wouldn't that be okay?"

PIO!: What'd you say?

BS: I said, "You know, if we let him sing, that voice is going to find its place sometime, but if I tell him that, it'll never find its place." The bottom line is, process is everything and product is secondary. So often in music education we're too focused on product—who can play the part best, let's put them there—as opposed to how are we teaching.

PIO!: Why did you want to be a teacher in the first place?

BS: Well, I actually started teaching percussion students privately when I was in ninth grade. I had private students all the way through into my public-school teaching. From an early age I got to see how there were times when everything would suddenly make sense for a student, and a light bulb would go off above their head. Seeing that was really cool. It made me love teaching. Also, as a kid, I was a part of some really neat musical experiences in school, times that were just euphoric, where my heart would get pumping and my emotions would take control of what's going on. I felt so good to be part of a group, whether it was with the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphony or our musicals in high school, or singing with the choir, or playing in the band. All those things felt so good and I thought, Wow, why not keep going?

PIO!: In your high school, were the arts an alternative to sports for getting recognition and praise? Was being a good musician cool? Could it get you dates?

BS: You know, the people I wanted to be with were the people I was performing with. They were my circle of friends, and I wasn't real focused on connecting socially outside of that circle. I didn't feel like I

continued on page 26

News from the CMN Board

by Bonnie Lockhart, Board President

Our June meeting was a typical CMN board blend of hard work and good times. The ten volunteer members who attended left with inspiration in our hearts, and long "to-do" lists in our notebooks. Building on our Strategic Planning from last winter, we're focusing on: 1) strengthening membership, 2) improving income, and 3) building leadership within our organization. Below, you'll see brief descriptions of some of our priority tasks at present. You'll also see which board members are heading up the various efforts and how to contact them. A few hours of your volunteer time could be of great use to these hardworking board members, to our Network as a whole, and to our common mission! Get in touch and let us know what you can do.

- THE NATIONAL GATHERING 2000: Barbara Wright 914/764-7613

  Once again, we're putting together a splendid event! (Copy the flyer on page 18 and give it to your friends.) We can use your help on tasks small and large, in the New York area, or not.

- SPOTLIGHT ON A REGION: Jenny Heitler-Klevans 215/248-3364

  The board wants to offer resources to help support energetic, well-attended regional gatherings. We'll be focusing on one region at a time, coordinating with Regional Reps and other interested members.

- THE CMN WEB SITE: Barbara Tilsen 612/823-8169

  Visit it; link to it; let us know what you need and what you have to offer.

- INCOME

  Though many of our expenses are increasing, we try to keep both membership and Gathering fees low in order to include everyone who wants to participate. This means exploring and embracing a number of income strategies.

  Grants:
  Phil Hoose 207/874-4931
  Your ideas about grantors and funding sources are eagerly solicited and warmly welcomed.

  The CMN Product Line:
  Joanne Hammil 617/923-8448
  This year's National Gathering will be your first opportunity to buy CMN T-shirts and tote bags sporting our handsome new logo. Come prepared to enhance your fashion statement while supporting our Network! Why not help out with production and distribution?

  National Concerts?:
  Sally Rogers 860/974-3089
  How can we use the power of our music to help fund our Network as well as to empower our mission? A nationally coordinated day (or season) of concerts? We're at the exploratory stages.

We hope to hear from you and to see you all at the National Gathering in October. And we want to thank you for all the harmony, hope, and happiness you and your music bring to children all over this country and beyond. Your songs keep us strong. PIO!

You can write to Bonnie Lockhart at 1032 Winsor Av., Oakland, CA 94610 or at bonnielockhart@mindspring.com; or call her at 510/451-2005.

Announcements

CMN WEBSITE!
www.cmnonline.org

NATIONAL OFFICE E-MAIL:
office@cmnonline.org

MEMBERS ONLY
E-MAIL GROUP!
cmn_community@cmnonline.org

For full details, contact the national office

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 January, will go to current members only.

Link Your Website to CMN's

We continue to add to and develop the CMN website: cmnonline.org. The newest feature is an article from *Pass it On!* Does your personal website show a link to CMN's? This is another way you can spread the word about our wonderful organization, its activities, and its resources. Help make our network grow!

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

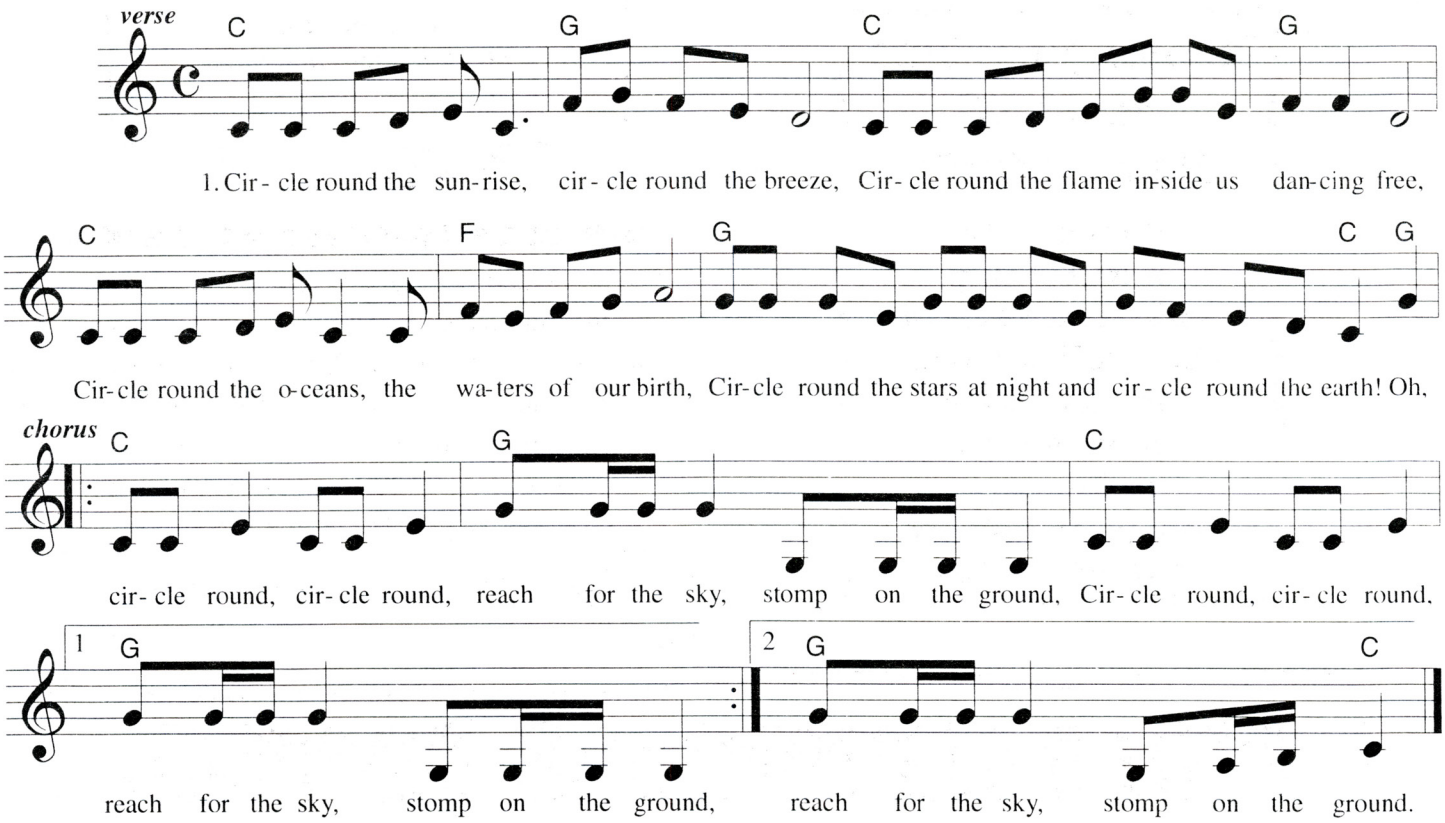
- ✔ Keyboard an article from hard copy and send us the computer file?
- ✔ Help to think up themes for *PIO!* and suggest good people to write feature articles about them?
- ✔ Solicit children's art to go with an article or theme?
- ✔ Keyboard a transcript from a taped interview?
- ✔ Research and obtain 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!

CIRCLE ROUND

words & music by Anne Hill
©1992 Serpentine Music Publishing

This song is part of a collection of chants and singalongs Anne has authored for nature-based family and community celebrations. She tells us this about "Circle Round": "I wanted to write a song that would call in the four elements of life, set a joyful mood, and bring everyone together holding hands and moving around in a circle. The movements for the chorus are obvious, and a lot of fun; it's also fun to make up hand and body movements for each verse!" You can contact Anne through Serpentine Music Productions, P.O. Box 2564 Sebastopol, CA 95473.

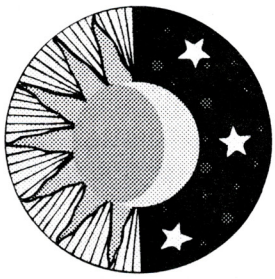


1. Circle round the sunrise, circle round the breeze,
   Circle round the flame inside us dancing free,
   Circle round the oceans, the waters of our birth,
   Circle round the stars at night and circle round the Earth!

chorus:
   Oh, circle round, circle round, reach for the sky, stomp on the ground,
   Circle round, circle round, reach for the sky, stomp on the ground,
   Circle round, circle round, reach for the sky, stomp on the ground,
   Circle round, circle round, reach for the sky, stomp on the ground.

2. Circle round for freedom, all across the world,
   Circle round for happiness for every boy and girl,
   Circle round for love from our head down to our toe,
   Circle round to spread it out wherever it may go!

3. We dance upon the Earth as it circles round the sun.
   This planet we call home is such a special one,
   And so we give our thanks for what this day may bring,
   Giving us another chance to Circle Round and Sing!

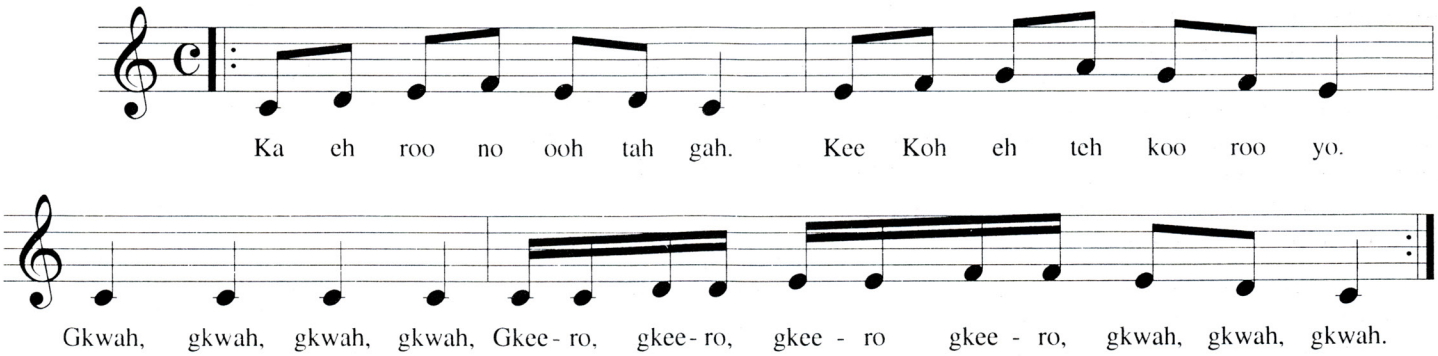


FROG SONG

Japanese traditional

Round swapping is a beloved highlight of National Gatherings for the harmoniously inclined. Pam Donkin delighted fellow round lovers at last year's swap with the "Frog Song," which is as amusing as it is accessible. Pam's story of how she learned it illustrates the kind of magic musical connection we're all devoted to creating: "I went snorkeling on a boat in Maui. There was a Japanese group that included a family that spoke no English, so I started singing a Japanese song that I know and they immediately sang along with me. They were so excited, they sang me another song, in a round. They taught me the 'Frog Song'; then we sang it in a round together."

In order to achieve instant harmony when teaching this song, Pam divides the group in two, instructing one half to repeat line three as an ostinato, and the other half to repeat line four. She then sings the entire song on top of the ostinati of the two groups. To sing as a four part round, each group enters after the previous group completes one measure.



(Under the phonetic Japanese is the English translation)

Ka eh roo no ooh tah gah
Frog's singing

Kee Koh eh teh koo roo yo
I hear

Gkwah gkwah gkwah gkwah
(*the rest of the song is the sound the frog makes)*

Gkeero gkeero gkeero gkeero

gkwah gkwah gkwah

Regional Reports

NEW ENGLAND

Scott Kepnes
71 Brockton Avenue
Haverhill, MA 01830
978/469-9406
singdog@earthlink.net

Eighteen adults and six children enjoyed a wonderful afternoon of singing and song sharing at Sally Rogers' home in beautiful Abington, Connecticut, on July 15. It was nice to see friends and make new ones. the children had a lot of fun playing together and requesting some favorite songs. Folks enjoyed learning lots of new songs from each other, and when we finished with adults and children together singing Ruth Pelham's "Under One Sky," it was a special moment. Afterwards some members went out for homemade ice cream.

There will be a fall song swap at the Fort River Elementary School in Amherst, Massachusetts, on Sunday, September 24th, 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM.

The date and location of next year's New England gathering will be announced in the next issue of *Pass It On!*, and a postcard will go out to New England members.

NEW YORK METRO

Nancy Hershatter
760 Bronx River Road
Bronxville, NY 10708
914/237-4010
J123sing@aol.com
or
Barbara Wright
116 Westchester Avenue
Pound Ridge, NY 10576-1704
914/764-7613
Fax: 914/764-5453

Our Regional Gathering was held May 13 at the Congregational Church of Huntington on Long Island. Thirteen folks had a marvelous song swap and a potluck lunch. Sharing the music, food, and good energies recharged us all.

Jody Prusan was elected to succeed Barbara Wright as Regional Co-rep, beginning immediately after the National Gathering, and Nancy Hershatter was re-elected Co-rep.

Plans for the CMN National Gathering are rolling along well, and the excitement grows. We'll be returning to Kutz Camp, where we gathered in '93—a beautiful spot about 90 minutes from New York City. The autumn colors should be at full glory for us. Make your travel plans and don't miss this one!

MID-ATLANTIC

Dave Orleans
999 Sherbrook Circle
Somerdale, NJ 08083-2221
Day: 856/768-1598
Eve: 856/435-4229
Orleans@nothinbut.net

A Mid-Atlantic Region meeting took place, with short notice, on Wednesday, June 21, at the Garden State Discovery Museum in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. We started with pizza and ended the evening with a song swap. Among the items up for discussion:

- How to make our region more active and cohesive
- How to make better connections between the PennJerDel and BaltWashVa ends of the region
- How to increase membership in our region
- A brainstorming session on other ideas for enhancing the future of our region

Details were announced for our regional Picnic and Family Music Showcase Concert for Camden County Parks scheduled for Friday, August 11. We began planning for a large regional winter event to spotlight our region nationally after the CMN National Gathering in October. Contact Dave with your ideas about what you would like to have offered (e.g., workshops for teachers, make-and-take classes, ideas for parents, a round-robin concert, song swaps) or call to offer your help.

MIDWEST

Bruce O'Brien
604 Newton Street
Eau Claire, WI 54701-3862
Day: 715/833-0874
Eve: 715/832-0721
Banj0B@aol.com
or
Linda Boyle
5105 West Deming Place
Chicago, IL 60639-2419
773/237-1848
haysie@email.msn.com

Our Midwest Gathering was held June 23–25 at the beautiful Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center (CVEEC) natural habitat near Cleveland, Ohio. We had a small registration, but we more than made up for our numbers with our spirit, excitement, voices, and excellent workshops. Our opening program featured the Mexican duo Planeta Azul (Felix Diaz and Rosario Fernandez), who stayed throughout the weekend and shared many Spanish language children's songs. Other workshops included contemporary Native American music by the Shouting Mountain group with attendees invited to join the drumming; Robin Echols Cooper storytelling her family's history and facilitating participants' development of stories from their lives; and movement, music, and drama techniques taught by specialists Leslie Zak and Jonathan Graham. Sharon Budin led the children in their activities. Of course, there was a song swap as well as informal song sharing.

There being so few present, elections for Midwest Co-reps was

postponed, to be held by mail ballot. But, in an exciting development, we discussed the immediate possibility of breaking out a new region from the Midwest to be centered in and around Ohio.

SOUTHEAST

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

We recently had a great round robin which we called a "hootenanny." Twelve joined in, including two young people and a 3-month-old baby.

CANADA

Sandy Byer
26 Bain Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M4K 1E6
Canada
416/465-2741
ph.byer@utoronto.ca

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

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

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

In March we began a series of activities with a fabulous song swap in the North Bay area. Ingrid Noyes has taught us to pull out the talent from the local membership and take advantage of the locality. So, we began the day with a hike around Angel Island and two interactive presentations by CMN members, and ended with a song swap. Quite a few new people attended.

In May we decided to carry on a tradition started before the '89 (Northern California) and '92 (Southern California) earthquakes: we had a statewide gathering in Nevada City. We met on Saturday morning at a local college to help them "sing in" The Day Of The Young Child and followed with four fine workshops. On Saturday night, historian and storyteller Utah Phillips gave an inspiring talk-and-sing about the history of the working class in the United States and an appreciation of the labor movement. This segment was held at the John Woolman School and many of the high school students attended (about 100 folks!). We closed on Sunday with another workshop. It was a terrific weekend even though our picnic plans were thwarted by bad weather. (See a fuller report on page 7.) Thanks to all who made it happen and all who came.

We have no immediate plans for regional activities. Got ideas? Love to hear 'em.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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

We've taken the long, hot summer to create an event at the end of the season and to get charged up for the National Gathering in October.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Denise Friedl-Johnson
321 Clay Street #76
Ashland, OR 97520
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songwings7@cs.com
or
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4648 SW 39th Drive
Portland, OR 97221
503/ 768-9065
steve.mullinax@worldnet.att.net
or
Greta Pedersen
PMB Space 252
19363 Willamette Drive
West Linn, OR 97068
Day: 503/699-1814
Eve: 503 699-0234
greta@teleport.com

We enjoyed a successful Brown Bag Song Swap at the April OAEYC conference in Salem. We are finding that this is an effective way to spread the word about CMN and to pick up a few members, too. We also had a small but enthusiastic gathering at the end of April in Portland.

Lisa Atkinson gave us the idea of combining a meeting with a short workshop. So, at our next gathering—Saturday, September 23—we'll begin at 5:30 PM with a workshop, to be followed by a potluck dinner and song swap. The meeting will be at the Lake Oswego home of Lori Deering-Mohr (call 503/684 2633 for directions). Bob Albano will elaborate on an intriguing topic: how to encourage crossover links between the left and right sides of the brain. He'll discuss why such crossovers are important, and how to encourage their development using music and hand/body movement. It's an interesting topic for early childhood educators and anyone working with children.

We plan to facilitate another Brown Bag Song Swap at the OAEYC conference in October. Contact Greta for more information. A January workshop/songswap is tentatively set for the Salem area. We're looking for more ideas for future workshop topics. Contact Greta, Bonnie, or Denise if you have a topic you would like to present or one you'd like to learn more about.

Welcome to our new members in Alaska and the Spokane/Coeur D'Alene areas! Let us know if you would like to help organize a song swap near you. Pio!

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

Interview: Brett Smith
➡ *continued from page 2*

was missing out on anything when I was with them. We created together, and then we had a lot of fun.

PIO!: If you'll let me, I'd like to fast forward to your Master Musician Program, which has gotten considerable attention. Will you explain it to me?

BS: Sure. It's a middle-school curriculum that integrates music theory, history, and the study of other cultures, into a performance setting. There are nine trimester units, because in our middle school there were three years with three trimesters apiece. Each trimester was connected to the literature they were reading. For instance, in our school, the sixth graders started by studying medieval music, and then they went into Renaissance and Baroque, classical, and so on.

PIO!: Is there written material that comes with it?

BS: The program includes a set of study guides containing all the raw information that goes with each of the units and the tests. I've written two or three tests for every unit. The test material is correlated to information presented in the *JVC Anthology of Music and Dance.* That series was produced by a Japanese company whose producers went around the world videotaping authentic musical performances of indigenous cultures—as opposed to the Vienna Boys' Choir singing Korean folk songs. In the Master Musician Program, the *JVC Anthology* is correlated with the curriculum through a number of CDs, cassettes, and referenced texts. The whole thing is put together on a floppy disk, and it's packaged into a three-ring notebook, so that everything can be photocopied and then used in any school. I've sold it to about 20 schools.

PIO!: How might the students study a particular time or place?

BS: They might play a song at a school concert that reflects a certain time period or a particular culture. As they rehearsed for the performance, they would study the setting from which the music arose. They'd listen to music that was an example of that time and place. Perhaps they'd see representative artifacts or instruments. For example, when we were studying India, we took a van trip in the third trimester of eighth grade, to the Schubert Club's collection of rare instruments. There's a display of instruments of India, so we saw a sitar and tabla and tambora. Before we left we had talked about a raga and a tala and the ways the scales are put together, and how meter is more than 4/4. We discussed the caste system and how music education differs with caste.

In this program we talked a lot about function—how music or instruments had multiple relevances in a particular culture. The shakuhachi was used by Japanese monks for a means of self-expression and entertainment and also for self-defense. When they were walking from village to village they'd use that flute as a club to ward off robbers. The students had a chance to see how composers' life circumstances affected their compositions, and then we would perform their pieces.

PIO!: How does a student get to be a Master Musician?

BS: In our school, every trimester, students were tested on the information from the *JVC Anthology of Music and Dance.* Whoever passed by completing 90 percent of the questions correctly got extra credit that would be banked toward completing all nine of the tests. If they completed all nine after three years, had participated in solo or ensemble playing each of the three years, and had completed a major project such as creating an instrument or studying a musical group or culture, then their name appeared as a Master Musician on a plaque in the band room. They were honored at an awards ceremony, they got a trophy, and their name appeared in the local paper.

PIO!: Is the program for everybody? How do you find your universe of students?

BS: In our school it was for middle-school band kids. But it could have easily been adapted to middle-school choir or other music courses. About half of our sixth graders were in the band.

PIO!: So this program was popular and prestigious. A rising sixth grader at your school knew about the Master Musician Program, looked forward to it, wanted to be in it.

BS: Right. Some kids who weren't great performers did really well with this program. The tests gave them a chance to shine. Many wanted to retake the test, because they hadn't passed it. It was really important to them, so sometimes we'd have a dozen kids after school taking tests.

PIO!: About what percentage of the kids who started in sixth grade became recognized as Master Musicians three years later?

BS: Well to clarify, not everybody that starts in sixth grade stays in band through eighth grade. Some drop out because they want to do something else or band's just not for them. And in our school we lost some students who were forced to make decisions about whether to concentrate on, say, foreign language or band. But of the kids who were still in band in their eighth-grade year, there were 4 Master Musicians in the first year we had the program. By my last year in middle school, I think we had 16, so it really blossomed. The percentage kept increasing.

PIO!: Do you work with other teachers to integrate music into the total curriculum?

BS: Absolutely. There were interdisciplinary connections in every grade. The principles of sound were the theoretical focus in sixth grade.

This involves considerable math and measurement. For instance, in rhythm, quarter notes are twice as fast as half notes. In volume or pitch, if you put a finger down on the clarinet, you're lengthening the tube. When it's longer the pitch goes down, according to a mathematical ratio. We can use water and tubes to let students see the amount of water displaced when the pitch changes. That helped them understand how sound was created. And that's so clear on the mallet instruments, where the shorter bar has a higher pitch.

Brett Smith with Education Secretary Richard Riley (l.) and President Bill Clinton (r.), at a White House ceremony in May honoring the finalists for National Teacher of the Year.

PIO!: What would you do with, say, social studies?

BS: In American History there's so much to be shared. There's a lot of historical music that is relevant to what they were studying in their classes, like the battle music of the Revolutionary War. The geography teachers were anxious to use the *JVC Anthology*, because that connected so strongly with their curriculum. For instance, there was a piece on the postal workers in one African country. As they were seated and canceling stamps, they kept rhythm with their scissors and stamps and sang and whistled as they passed the time. It's just an incredible percussion ensemble. The video really connects function and music.

PIO!: I'm curious, did you ever try to integrate it with athletics, with gym?

BS: Dance.

PIO!: Dance—

BS: You bet. There's a square-dance unit in physical ed, so you can talk about math by taking 16 and dividing it by 4, and you get different moves for each section. And then the pulse of a piece—how fast is it going, what dictates that pulse? Well, a square dance is a certain tempo because your feet can only go at that tempo, so there were some parallels in that unit as well.

PIO!: Did you find students who were skeptical or embarrassed, going in, and ended up loving it?

BS: Well, yeah, there were kids who found a chance to shine. There were kids who were not successful in other ways, but who did well in music. One extreme example was a boy who's severely autistic and really had a hard time with personal interactions. He could make himself vomit when he didn't like what was happening. Once he broke the arm of one of his paraprofessionals because he didn't like the direction in which he was being taken. And yet he had really strong feelings about *Star Wars*. And his singing was incredible. We do a call-and-response thing, just to get kids matching pitch, and I'd say [sings] "Tell me about your weekend," and they'd sing, "Very fine, Mr. Smith," or whatever. This boy had not been very connected in class until one day I sang, "Tell me about the *Star Wars* movie that you saw." He sang an aria. It went on and on, and the other kids—their jaws were on the floor. They applauded when he was finished. For that moment he was really proud and successful.

PIO!: Was he able to build on that moment?

BS: The next time he was in the classroom, things were a little bit better. But he still has his tough days.

PIO!: The governor of Maine, where I live, wants to use tax money to give a laptop computer to every student That's a hot topic here. Someone wrote a letter to our local newspaper suggesting he'd do better by giving every student a musical instrument and teaching them to play it. Do you have a comment?

BS: Well, golly, I think a laptop's a pretty good idea in some ways, but it's not all a student needs. In Minnesota, standardized testing drives the curriculum, but it's very hard to quantify the arts. Math and reading scores are published in June, comparing the performance of schools, district to district, which often drives what they invest in and emphasize. So some schools look through the tight lens of math and reading, rather than considering a student's overall needs for a successful life. Schools sometimes spend a lot of money to increase those test scores, but kids need to know how to deal with their feelings as well as how to balance their checkbooks.

PIO!: And you think music can help kids deal with their feelings?

BS: Oh my goodness, yeah! I think about the anger, the frustration, the grief that kids can experience. As part of our Master Musician

continued on next page ➡

Interview: Brett Smith
➡ *continued from previous page*

Program, I published my CD collection for the kids. I categorize my recordings not by genre or instrumentation, but by emotions.

PIO!: What a great idea—

BS: I told them that my wife died when I was 27, and that the way I dealt with my grief was by listening to Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings*. Even now, whenever I need to cry it still takes me right there. Or if I'm having a hard time cleaning the house and I need to be pumped up, I put on Earth, Wind and Fire or Harry Connick. Or to relax and get to sleep, the Chick Corea and Gary Burton duets put me out right away. Those are my drugs. I tell them there are no right or wrong answers as far as what they should listen to, but that they should be exposed to a broad variety of music, not just what's on the radio.

PIO!: People talk about the whole child a lot in educational literature, but being a music teacher doesn't occur to a lot of people as being a good place to teach to the whole child. You obviously think it is.

BS: Oh, man—kids can choose guns or they can choose the drum, dance, drama, debate, their voice. But we must give them choices and opportunities. Studies show that the reason why kids are in gangs is not for drugs or money, it's to belong. So which gang is it going to be? The one inside the school music room or the one on the street?

PIO!: Have you had to fight cutbacks?

BS: It varies from district to district. I think as arts educators, we have a responsibility to educate not only our students, but also our communities, by speaking to the importance of the arts. This education has to come before a budget comes up for a vote, because by then it's usually too late. After the cuts happen, it's really hard, then it becomes militant and defensive. It's important to get the parents and kids out to the board meetings in advance. There are really two steps, you know, offensive and defensive. From an offensive standpoint, we publish material and distribute it to parents regularly. Even in the programs we hand out at school concerts, we devote one-eighth of the space to advocacy. We offer information on studies that show that kids learn to read better when they're able to sing in kindergarten and first grade. If they sing on a regular basis, they're going to be even better. I urge any arts educator to take those advocacy opportunities when publishing a program or putting out a newsletter. Be visible. Take advantage of community-service opportunities. Play at the nursing homes. Those patients and staff members are voters, too.

PIO!: This year you're a rookie grade-school teacher. Are you doing anything innovative with the younger kids?

BS: Well, I'm mostly learning for myself, sitting in on classes in the core curriculum. I'm lucky to be building on a long history of really good elementary music teachers here. My predecessors have done remarkable things. One thing I bring that's a little different is that it's rare to have a male teaching elementary music. I hope that I'm a role model for kids in a positive way, showing that it's okay to sing and dance. We dance every day. It's good for them to see an adult male singing and dancing and playing instruments. It lets the boys and girls know that self-expression like that is okay, it's cool. And they'll see me sit down at the drum set and do things that put stars in their eyes, too. I think having a male role model is important.

PIO!: It must be especially important to boys to see you sing and dance without embarrassment.

BS: Well, there's something that happens—and I haven't figured out if it's physiological or social—but overnight, singing's no longer cool for guys. It seems to happen toward the middle-school ages. But if somehow they can feel like they're having fun with music and they'll stay in the ranks, I think that'll be good throughout life for those guys.

PIO!: What new things are you thinking of trying next year?

BS: Well, there's a whole set of curriculum with Dalcroze that I find my heart gravitating toward. I hesitate to even comment on it because I'm pretty much an infant in its knowledge, but it takes music and internalizes it through dance and movement. You can learn about, say, rhythmic passage or pitch through movement. It's much more focused on movement than Orff, which is focused on instruments, or Kodály, which is focused on singing with hand movement.

PIO!: Do you have a performance career?

BS: I play drums with the Century College Big Band. We've performed on Minnesota Public Radio, and I'm really proud to be a part of the group. Also, my wife and I are in a group called A Touch of Class. Four singers front the group, and we do some vocal jazz and comedic stuff for conventions and corporate parties. I sing and play in that.

PIO!: Is there anything I haven't asked you that you'd like to say or comment on?

BS: Well, I really believe that every student has strengths, gifts, and talents. We in the arts need to provide opportunities for every kid. It's really easy for us to rank kids in various ways, such as chair placements, or to do things to exclude kids, such as tell someone they can't sing or whatever it is. We do damage that way. I think the arts offer a way for every kid to shine. PIO!

Phil Hoose is a writer, conservationist, musician, father, and utterly proud long-time CMN member. He lives in Portland, Maine.

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