

PASS IT ON![®]

The Journal of the **Children's Music Network**[®]

ISSUE #63

Fall 2009

Linda and Dennis Ronberg



Linden Tree Founders Retire after 25 Years

Inside...

- A Walk to the 2009 Conference ■ The Power of Song ■
- Music to Develop Language Skills ■ Provoking Thought Through Song ■
- Making a Children's CD ■ 2009 Conference Report and Photos ■

About The Children's Music Network

Who We Are

CMN is an international organization with members and regional chapters in the United States and Canada, and connections with people throughout the world.

Our membership, diverse in age and ethnicity, includes

- music and classroom teachers • full-time and part-time performers • songwriters • youth advocates • librarians
- day care providers • song leaders and choral directors
- music therapists • educational consultants and trainers
- radio and TV program staff • therapists and social workers
- clergy • medical care providers • families

CMN was founded in the late 1980s by a small group of educators, performers, social workers, librarians, parents, and others who believed in the transformative power of music in children's lives—in their homes, schools, and communities.

What We Do

We seek to be a positive catalyst for education and community-building through music. We inspire and re-energize each other for our work supporting the creation and circulation of life-affirming, multicultural musical forms by, for and with young people. We meet and stay in touch to share songs, skills, resources, and ideas about empowering ways adults and young people can communicate through music. And we have fun in the process.

Our Principles

We recognize children's music as a powerful means of encouraging cooperation, celebrating diversity, enhancing self-esteem, teaching peace and promoting nonviolence, growing environmental awareness and responsibility, and advocating for social justice.

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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!

is the journal of

THE CHILDREN'S MUSIC NETWORK®

A Not-for-Profit 501(c)(3) Corporation

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Articles in this journal do not necessarily represent the views of The Children's Music Network, nor do the advertisements imply endorsement. Members are invited to send songs and articles for publication directly to the appropriate editors, but we cannot guarantee publication. It is helpful if you let an editor know in advance that you plan to submit an article. See inside back cover for guidelines.

IN THIS ISSUE

Features

Labors of Love:	
Interview with Dennis and Linda Ronberg.....	2
Times Are a-Changin'	10
A Walk to the 2009 Conference.....	12
The Power of Song	14
Using Music to Develop Second Language Skills..	18
Remembering Bess Lomax Hawes	35

Columns

Music with Older Kids:	
Provoking Thought Through Song.....	19
Music in Bloom: Making a Children's CD	20

Reports

Come to the 2010 Children's Network	
National Conference	21
The 2009 National Conference	
A Tapestry of Songs.....	22
Member Reflections.....	23
Playful Champion:	
The 2009 Magic Penny Award Presentation	24
2009 Silent Auction Contributors.....	25
Photos.....	26
News and Notes from the CMN Board	30

Songs

"Vegetable Soup"	6
"Isle of Mann"	13
"Begin as We Began It".....	16
"Hello Mr. Pigeon"	28
"Chart Your Course".....	32
"Just Don't Kick the Cat"	36

Departments

From the Editor	1
New Sounds.....	33
In Memoriam	35
Regional Reports.....	38
Announcements.....	throughout
How to Submit	inside back cover

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"Lift Every Voice and Sing"


By Hassaun Ali Jones-Bey

"Lift Every Voice and Sing," also known as the "Negro National Anthem" and the theme song of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was first publicly performed as a poem by elementary school students on February 12, 1900, at the then-segregated Stanton School in Jacksonville, Florida. School Principal James Weldon Johnson wrote it for his students to recite during Booker T. Washington's visit on the 91st anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth. Considering the time of year and the mission of CMN, the title of this song—so dear to me that I wrote my own arrangement and taught my children all three verses—seemed to offer both a timely and timeless greeting for my first issue as *PIO!* editor.

And who am I? Well, in just a few words, I was christened at birth with a Muslim name in a Nazarene Church and grew up in a West Indian household in a Jewish neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York. I celebrated my twentieth birthday as a Catholic engineering student, my thirtieth as a Sufi-dancing, U.S. Navy pilot and my fortieth as a Muslim science and technology journalist. A decade later, as an aspiring musical storyteller embracing the nature- and ancestor-based traditions of indigenous people, I celebrated my first half-century on an open mic stage in Berkeley, California, performing an original composition, "Mama Earth Just Poked a Mountain Out at Daddy Sky."

I used to tell musical stories for my children. But as my children grew up and started leaving home, I started leaving home also, with homespun "musical storytelling" for anyone who would listen. During such forays, which began toward the end of 1999, I finally started to figure out what I might want to do when I grow up. In 2006, I achieved the pinnacle of my musical storytelling exploits, by writing and arranging several pieces of music, and hiring other musicians to play them with me at my oldest son's wedding. My current job responsibilities include leading elementary school students in another original composition, "East Oakland Pride Touch the Sky."

During twenty-plus years as a full-time science and technology journalist, I also wrote a few pieces on topics such as music and social justice, which might be of interest to CMNers. A couple of those can be found online at www.acguitar.com/issues/ag93/handinjury.shtml and www.forusa.org/fellowship/july-aug_05/hajbmadpoet.html. I hope to spend my sixtieth birthday serving the Muse and teaching mathematics, which brings me to CMN. What journal serves the Muse more faithfully than *Pass It On!*? And what network links musical play to educational work more closely than the Children's Music Network?

"Lift every voice and sing, 'til earth and heaven ring, ring with the harmonies of liberty. Let our rejoicing rise high as the listening skies. Let it resound loud as the rolling sea." Four words in this issue of *PIO!* reminded me of Johnson's 110-year-old lines: The Power of Song. 

Labors of Love

Interview with Dennis and Linda Ronberg

conducted by Hassaun Ali Jones-Bey

Dennis and Linda Ronberg opened their first Linden Tree store for children's music in Los Altos, California, in 1984. A few years later, the Ronbergs discovered what Dennis described as a "wonderful match" for their recently launched labor of love in the newly founded Children's Music Network. As Linda put it, "This was the way the world was meant to be." Twenty-five devoted and loving years later, Dennis and Linda are retiring (Linden is a combination of their first names) and hoping—along with many others in their Los Altos community and far beyond—that their store will not close, that as yet unidentified lovers of music for children will purchase the Linden Tree and help it continue to grow.



PIO!: What moved you to get involved in children's music? Did you know it was going to be a life's work at the time?

Dennis: We were living in Tacoma, Washington, where I had gotten a Masters in Business Administration at Pacific Lutheran University and was working for a plant that made laminated panels. There wasn't much future in it, so we were looking around for something else to do. Linda is a preschool teacher and our two daughters, Katherine and Angela were about four and two years old. Friends who lived across the border in Vancouver told us about a Canadian phenomenon in children's music, a folksinger by the name of Raffi.

Of course we wondered, "Raffi? What is that? Is that a first name?" It's not a very common name in the United States. Our friends said, "Come on up to the Vancouver Children's Festival and see him. He's going to be playing in May." This was in 1980. So we went to see him, and he was great. He sang old favorites. Everyone was singing along. He didn't have the best voice in the world, but he had everyone in the palm of his hand, even the parents. He had a rapport. We thought, "Wow!" Linda especially.

There were still folksingers out there of course like Ella Jenkins, Hap Palmer and Marcia Berman.

But at the time, almost all of the commercially popular children's music was on two major labels: Disney and Sesame Street. That was fine. But the music on those labels tended to be sung by cartoon characters rather than real people. So Raffi's first album, *Singable Songs for the Very Young*, said it all.

Linda: His songs were accessible. They were slow enough that children could actually learn to sing along. I was a nursery school teacher, and I took the recordings to my daughter's teacher who had been a music major and asked, "What do you think of these?" She said, "Oh I think they're great." So I had her opinion also that these were worth pursuing.

It was very hard to find recordings for children at that time. There was one store near us, Standard Record and Hi-Fi in Seattle, and they had a few of the old Young People's Records and Children's Record Guild things that were music on one side and story songs on the other side. They did musical versions of all kinds of things like *The Carrot Seed*, for instance, and they had a rainy day record that you could listen to and do all kinds of indoor activities for a rainy day. They had *My Playful Scarf*, a wonderful story where the scarf could turn you into a pirate or a princess or a queen or a butterfly. So there were a few of those, but they were get-

ting more difficult to find. We could find Marcia Berman, Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Hap Palmer and Ella Jenkins. And that was about it for quality stuff.

Dennis: For folk music. We felt that the value of Raffi's music was in continuing the folk tradition. Some of his original songs have now almost become folk music, songs like "Baby Beluga," "Rise & Shine," "All I Really Need," and others. His voice was not spectacular. But it was wonderful because when you heard him, you thought, "I can do that." And that's especially important for a teacher in a preschool class, for instance, who thinks, "I don't have any music. I can't sing."

So Raffi's approachability and ability to get everybody to sing along initiated the whole thing. As I mentioned, we were trying to think of what we could do for a living beyond laminated panels. And I thought, "No one in the United States really knows about Raffi's product. Maybe we could sponsor him in Tacoma." The following year, we called up the distributor and asked if we could distribute some of Raffi's product here and maybe have him in concert? The distributor said, "Well yeah, sure." So we got in touch with his manager and were the first to sponsor Raffi in concert in the Seattle, Puget Sound and Tacoma area. We held one concert at a high school in Tacoma and had about 550 people show up. Then we had two sellouts at a smaller venue in Seattle, The Museum of History and Industry. So we thought, "Wow! We're onto something here."

PIO!: How did you go about the marketing side, finding people to attend concerts and buy recordings?

Linda: When we went to the Children's Festival in Vancouver, we were also introduced to Sharon, Lois & Bram, a trio from Toronto, Fred Penner, and Eric Nagler. So we also had Sharon, Lois & Bram in concert in Seattle, and maybe Fred the following year. At the time we were

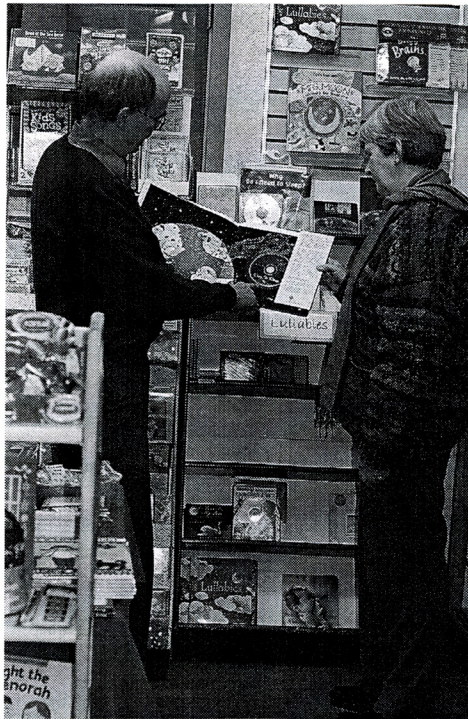
Cover and interview photos: Hassaun Ali Jones-Bey

working from our home. We'd take boxes of records in the back of our car to parent participation meetings for preschools with a parent education component. The teachers would ask us to do a presentation on children's music. I did a lot of research and had a talk which involved the parents in thinking about the importance of music in child development—in all the different areas—social, emotional, creative, physical and intellectual. We would play examples as we gave the talk. So the parents had an opportunity to hear different recordings and they could purchase records. We didn't have a store, so people would come and sit in our living room and listen to records and buy them. We would also go to the early childhood teacher conferences, and I did presentations at those about children's music. We did that for two years.

PIO! What brought you to Northern California?

Dennis: Linda grew up in Los Altos, so we both wanted to move back down here. We felt, for one thing, there'd be a better market, and Linda's parents were still here and lived in a lovely house. So when the market was kind of slow back in 1983, we moved down here to Menlo Park, and we still live in the same house. We continued with Raffi down here and worked with the Early Childhood Education Department at Cañada College in Redwood City. We sponsored an evening performance with Raffi, in their very nice theater that seats 550. We probably had 350 people show up and pay money to attend the performance and Raffi was happy. It was just Raffi and his guitar on stage. We had him for dinner at our house during that visit, and he said, "I'd like to come back next year."

Linda: Even though Raffi was a real person and not a cartoon character, our youngest daughter, Angela, had evidently decided that he lived in the speakers of our stereo [laughter]. So



when he actually came to dinner at our house, he was bigger than life for her. She was overwhelmed.

Dennis: A couple of key things happened in 1984, which was the next year. We opened a 950-square-foot store on First Street, not far from our current location, and we sponsored Raffi again, for two performances this time, both of which were sellouts. We also brought Sharon, Lois & Bram to the Bay area. And I'm not sure if it was that year or the next year, but we had Fred Penner, Rosenshontz, and Eric Nagler, also.

Linda: So we had sort of a concert series.

Dennis: And that is what really got us going—sponsoring Raffi. There was a buzz about Raffi. He was sort of the "in" artist.

PIO! So Raffi's success essentially kick-started your business?

Dennis: It kicked the whole industry, including the major labels. Raffi's first label was RCA and then he went over to Polygram. But before he did, he got a number of the labels thinking about children's artists. Not just cartoon characters, but

real people. He, I think, is still the most popular, his sales are probably the biggest of any, even though he's been around a long time and hasn't recorded a children's album for some time. Still, he did inspire both other artists and the industry to think about real artists doing real performances for children—in a folk song sort of way.

After the two sellout performances at Cañada, we said, "Well, gee, next year we'll have four performances: Two on Saturday and two on Sunday." But Raffi said, "No, I don't want to do that; I want a bigger venue." So then we went to De Anza College Flint Center in Cupertino, California, which was designed for the San Francisco Symphony with seating in two balconies and on a main floor: a very formal setting that seats 2500. As I was shown around the hall, the fella said, "Well, you'll probably fill the first 20 rows on the main, and it makes for a nice little setting even though it's a big venue." Of course, our name was signed on the dotted line for everything. So if no one showed up at Flint Center, we were out the thousands of dollars for the hall and that sort of thing.

We sold reserved seating for all 2500, and Linda was the one who assigned the seating. When the tickets went out, we probably sold 70% within two and a half to three weeks. It was a phenomenon, and here's poor Linda assigning every one of those seats [laughter].

Linda: And this time of year too, right over the Christmas holidays. It was really awful.

Dennis: But it was a success. This was the largest venue up to that time, I believe, in which Raffi had performed in the United States.

Linda: And we sold it out.

Dennis: It blew the minds of the people at the Flint Center. "Oh my gosh! Are there that many kids in the world?" So that was great. The

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Interview:

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following year we had two more Raffi performances at the Flint Center. And we essentially sold those out.

Linda: Then I think Raffi was ready to get a little more mainstream...

Dennis: in terms of exposure, production, and so on.

PIO!: Was that a blow for you?

Linda: It was about the right time for me. Assigning 5000 seats was laborious.

Dennis: We were continuing to sponsor other performers: Sharon, Lois & Bram, Fred Penner, Red Grammer and others. And our business also began to evolve. The music was what got us into this business. And about that time, especially after [the 1978 passage of] Proposition 13 in California when all of the frills, such as art and so on, had been hacked from the budget, we felt that music was absolutely important. Unless children get it at an early age and feel comfortable singing and so on, when they get to 4th or 5th grade, they feel self-conscious about it. They become stifled about music and creativity, even about knowing how to sing or wanting to sing. Not that they don't like music, but they don't feel they can be a part of it. But that's what folk music is. It's people music, and we wanted kids to feel they were a part of the music: providing the rhythms or whatever they wanted do. So that has always been our real emphasis. But as time went on in our little store, which was originally mostly records and then cassettes, we started getting books as well. And that has slowly evolved over time so now 60-70% of our business is books, 10-15% at the most is recordings, CDs, and the rest are sidelines, like cards and puppets. But we still feel that music is so important, so valuable, and if children don't get it when they're young, the rest of their lives will be somehow lacking.

PIO!: Could you talk about your experience with Music for Minors?

Linda: After proposition 13 passed, a woman in Los Altos named Grace Johnston started an organization called Music for Minors. Because music was no longer part of the curriculum, she arranged with Foothill College, the local community college in Los Altos Hills, to have an instructor train volunteers to teach music in the schools. During 1984, our second year in California, I read in the school newsletter about an upcoming luncheon for people who were interested in children's music and said, "Oh I should find out about this." The purpose of this luncheon, which took place during the spring semester, was to recruit volunteers to teach music in the schools. I thought, "Ooh that sounds like fun." So I signed up to be a Music-for-Minors docent. I took the training in the fall and started teaching in my daughter's classroom and in other classrooms as well. I did that for about five years, even after Angela had moved on to the next school. I also joined a Music-for-Minors fundraising committee that was considering a walkathon to raise money. During one of the meetings, I said, "A walkathon is fine, but wouldn't a concert make more sense?"

So, we decided to hold a concert and we knew that the fees for big performers such as Raffi or Sharon, Lois & Bram would probably not leave enough profit to help Music for Minors. But our friends in Vancouver had given us another recording made by Charlotte Diamond, and Music for Minors started sponsoring concerts with Charlotte Diamond. This year (2009) will be the first year they haven't had her because that committee has moved in a new direction. They separated from Music for Minors and are still doing concerts, but not in the same way. Linden Tree sponsored the concerts for the last three years, but I just can't do it by myself anymore. Charlotte came every year for almost 25 years, and the commit-

tee also brought Tom Chapin to do concerts. They'd have 2 concerts a year, raise money to support Music for Minors, and offer families in this community the chance to come and sing with these great artists.

Dennis: For the last three years, we have actually done the sponsoring, and any profits have gone to Music for Minors. So as in the early days with our Raffi sponsorships, if no one showed up we were responsible for paying for the theater and the sound and Charlotte & Tom and that sort of thing. We're not as active in Music for Minors as we used to be, but over the years, both of us have been president of the organization, helped spearhead the direction and so on. It's been sort of a natural fit, because we've helped them and they've helped promote some of the things we've done.

We've also tried over the years to bring artists to Music for Minors. When Joanne Hammil has come out from the Boston area, we've had her do workshops with Music for Minors. And we've also had workshops, many years ago, with Marcy Marxer, Cathy Fink, Tom Hunter and Ruth Pelham.

Linda: The workshops always inspired the docents to try new things. It was wonderful. But the Music for Minors budget has been cut and they're not doing that sort of thing anymore.

PIO!: How about your connection with the Children's Music Network?

Dennis: I don't know how we found out about Children's Music Network. But, it was just a wonderful match. What they're doing is so wonderful. Anybody can be a member and it's very inclusive age-range-wise, from three and four year olds to 90-somethings.

Linda: It was probably Marcia Ber- man and Anne Lief Barlin who told us about it.

Dennis: Marcia lived in the Los Angeles area and did music in the



schools for many years. We helped bring her up here for several conference presentations that she did for early childhood education. I don't remember when it was, but she probably invited us to our first CMN national conference. It was in Griffith Park [Los Angeles, California].

Linda: Our friend Chauni Haslet also came down from Seattle. She had opened a children's book and music store [All for Kids Books & Music, which closed in 2008], and taken over what we had started in that area. We all went to the conference and were just hooked. This was the way the world was meant to be. People getting together and singing in gazillion part harmony...

Dennis: Being very supportive

Linda: The children were encouraged to present their songs. Everyone was supported. You sat through the round robin even if it took half the night. And everyone stayed and encouraged each performer.

And people worked together. At Griffith Park, we used one room for everything. So the chairs had to be moved around for meals, and then moved around for big meetings, and everyone just pitched in and helped and we did it. I just thought, "Huh, this is how the world is supposed

to be." And we've felt that way ever since. We've felt welcomed and included.

Dennis: Even though we don't have an album, and we don't write songs or whatever, we try to support it in whatever way we can.

Linda: I teach music in nursery school, so it's helpful to me. But mostly it's just that we've felt so honored to be in this group of amazing people.

PIO!: Could you talk about your support of local independent artists?

Dennis: At the current store location, which we moved to in 1989, we have a forty- by seventy-five- foot or so courtyard that is two stories high and a lovely space for events. So every summer since we've moved here, we've had what we call Wednesday in the Courtyard. At 10:00 AM we line up an artist, usually a folk singer and often a CMN member, to sing for a half an hour. Anyone is welcome in our audience, but it tends to be mostly moms and their children aged from about eighteen months to five years.

It's a very simple sing along, participative songs for children to stand up, wave their hands to, to clap, and so on. Artists can always bring

their CDs, recordings, whatever they have, and sell them directly to augment the hundred dollars, which is not much, that we pay them. Most love to come for several reasons. For one thing, it's a good, appreciative audience. Beyond that some people have gotten great gigs out of it. We have daycare providers come and line up some of the artists to go to their schools week after week for the following school year. Or the artists might get gigs at house parties or birthday parties as well. So that's how we've continued to support independent musicians.

PIO!: Didn't you book CMN artists to help launch the children's stage at the annual Art & Wine Festival?

Dennis: Los Altos has one of the most successful Art & Wine Festivals in the Bay area. It's always the second weekend in July, and as many as 100,000 people attend. We came up with the bright idea of sponsoring a children's stage on Third Street right outside our current store location. And in 1989, the first year that we were here, we drew heavily from Children's Music Network, because we were so excited about what we had heard and seen. We had CMN artists on the stage every hour on the hour for about six sets, our six slots each day. Our mistress of ceremonies started out as Lisa Atkinson, and she continued until 2008. Her husband George joined us as the soundman, so it became a tradition for Lisa to be the mistress of ceremonies and George to be the sound for the Art & Wine Festival. We've continued to sponsor that, well we still do partially sponsor it. It's gotten kind of expensive, and it's moved locations. But I'm still the one who lines up all of the artists, and keeps the focus mostly on music, as opposed to puppets or whatever. Even if we sell the store, we may continue. I don't know yet how that will evolve, but I hope it will continue. It has been another way for us to sponsor artists who sing.

continued on page 7 ➔

VEGETABLE SOUP

words and music by Joni AvRutick © 1981

Joni says, "I wrote 'Vegetable Soup' while working at a summer camp in 1981. The children enjoyed it so much that many were inspired to write their own soup recipes to fit in the chorus. I am now a classroom teacher, and the song has become a favorite! The children love when I surprise someone by describing their clothing in the second verse and like to sneeze, 'Ah-choo!' on the word flu."



with a bounce!

Verse C G Am

What's the mat-ter? You're not feel-ing well? Your eyes look sad and your

D7 C G

feet they smell. Be-fore you slip down a hole, well let me fill up a bowl, of my

C D7 G *Chorus* C

ve-ry own spec-ial home - made vege-ta - ble soup. It's got a red, red, red, a

D7 G G G7 C D7

big-ger than your head to - ma - to. Tur-nip greens, li - ma beans and a

G C C7

pea. It's got a cel - e - ry stalk who would just love to talk with an

Bm G C D7 G

I - da - ho po - ta - to, and if I'm good to them, well then they are bound to be good to me.

Vegetable Soup

➔ continued from previous page

Verse 1

What's the matter? You're not feeling well?
Your eyes look sad and your feet they smell.
Before you slip down a hole, well let me fill up a bowl
Of my very own special homemade vegetable soup.

Chorus

It's got a red, red, red, a bigger than your head tomato.
Turnip greens, lima beans and a pea.
It's got a celery stalk who would just love to talk
With an Idaho potato,
And if I'm good to them, well then they're bound to be good to me.

Verse 2

You over there with a tee shirt on
Tell me where has your smile gone.
Let me cheer you up and fill up a cup
Of my very own special homemade vegetable soup.

Chorus

Verse 3

I don't know what to do.
It seems like everyone has come up with the flu (ah-choo!)
So I'll make a big pot, and keep it hot
Of my very own special homemade vegetable soup.

Last Chorus

It's got a red, red, red, a bigger than your head tomato.
Turnip greens, lima beans and a pea.
It's got a celery stalk who would just love to talk
With an Idaho potato,
And if I'm good to them, well then they're bound to be good to me. (3x)



Interview:

➔ continued from page 5

PIO!: So Lisa did it for almost 20 years right until she passed away earlier this year?

Dennis: Yeah, we asked George if he'd like to do the sound again this year. But it was understandably too hard for him. So we had two different local artists. Lori & RJ were the emcees and sound for one day. And the next day was Andy Z. So it's continuing, but without Lisa.

PIO!: It sounds as if your whole business career and Linden Tree wasn't so much planned as something that you pursued for the love of it?

Linda: Yeah, it was exactly that. We felt so good about it that it seemed like the thing to keep doing.

Dennis: And there's a question there: What made those concert series successful? We became known for it, and once you get known for something, people look to you for what's next. My suggestion to stores, cafés and communities who want to have an ongoing concert series of children's music is this: You know the young audience community is out there, and CMN's probably one of the first places to approach and ask for names of artists. This already established artist network offers a wonderful vehicle for getting started with a concert series.

Linda: And based on the crowds we've gotten on those summer Wednesday mornings, I think it helps to be consistent, to have a day, either the same day of the week, or...

Dennis: ... the first Saturday of the month, ...

Linda: Weekly or monthly, *make it consistent* would be my biggest advice. Then it's so much easier for people to tell their friends about it, because it's always going to be at the same time and place. We sent notices for each event out to our email list, which isn't very big, and

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Interview:

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before that we must have sent out notices listing our summer events. We posted them on the door of the store and we had a little flyer with the schedule. It grew pretty quickly. People need music, and I think if we give them the opportunity to have a place where they can come and sing together they'll do it.

PIO!: You've mentioned the small size of your e-mail list, and Dennis you've said that you don't do e-mail, but I'm impressed by all of the events and other things that you do to establish a strong community connection. Do you feel that face-to-face marketing is more important?

Linda: Not face-to-face, person-to-person.

Dennis: That is very true. You can market through e-mails and your sites, whatever you use, Facebook or whatever, because it's not a face-to-face, but person-to-person marketing and that makes a big difference. I was just reading an article in *Budget Travel* about a woman who went to Turkey. She said, "I'm going to Turkey without a guidebook or anything. All I'm going to do is make use of my network of friends on Twitter and Facebook." She did and she found key people who said you should contact this person and you should contact person, and through that she had a wonderful time. That would be one way, which isn't going to cost a lot, of growing any market and any concert series you have.

Linda: We have 500 people on our e-mail list which is not very many for a bookstore as old as we are. We should have thousands of people, but our staff is not composed of e-mailers either. They don't remember to push people to sign up, but even so, maybe 200 people of the 500 people on our list even open the e-mail when I send it out. You have a choice with e-mail. Usually if postal mail comes, you're likely to open it at least to see what it is. But on e-mail, people are just so inundated with stuff that unless it's very clear in the

subject line that it's something they absolutely don't want to miss, a lot of them don't even bother to click on it. So e-mail has a place, but I think you're right that it's face-to-face. And actually, we could have done better with the community. One of the things we did do with Music for Minors for two summers was put on a miniature children's festival. A lot of people attended, but we didn't get the wildly successful response that we had hoped for. Getting the word out is always the hardest part, particularly to schools. They're so protective that it's very hard to get a notice of something into their newsletters.

PIO!: Is that something that you've found has changed over the years?

Linda: It's gotten harder.

Dennis: Yes, it's gotten much harder because people who are trying to market to schools get more and more sophisticated. They're trying to sell a "nutritious" fortified sugar drink [laughter] or something and claim that it's good for you. So schools have naturally become much more wary of all commercial enterprises.

PIO!: What are some of the things that have enabled your independent store to survive and do well in an era of big chains?

Linda: Mostly I think it's having a knowledgeable staff that will take the time to help customers find what they're looking for and offer to play music samples for them. Also if a staff person doesn't know the answer, they'll find someone else who can help, and if no one is available that day they'll take a customer's name and get back to them. I would say it's customer service, big time.

Dennis: We also focus on and have a broad diversity of early childhood recordings, not preteen or teenager or anything of that nature. It's also a primarily folkie focus, although we have pop as well. We have complemented that focus with something that is surprisingly hard to find, simple rhythm instruments, such

as triangles, and tambourines. We also have puppets, primarily Folkmanis. They have wonderful hand puppets and almost life-sized animals at times too, chickens, foxes and things that can work well in front of a classroom for teaching and music stories, like *Fox Went Out On A Chilly Night*. A number of teachers have found that the puppets we sell them have become prime props for the kids. They love to handle, work and do things with them. We also pick up unique items from gift shows. Sometimes they complement, sometimes they're just a pop phenomenon. A classic example of that is Beanie Babies. About ten years ago, we picked those up and did well with them. Of course, we don't have them anymore.

Linda: Also, both of us have had the opportunity to live abroad, and we have tried to find things when we go to the gift shows, to bring the world into the store...

Dennis: Coin purses and baskets from South America, rhythm instruments from Africa.

PIO!: Books are 60-70% of your sales. How do your books differ from the chains?

Dennis: We offer not just books that sell, but books that meet the needs of an issue. So we have a pretty good selection of attention deficit-books, which is a big thing now. We have grief and loss. We have a number of books just on children's music. We have a book of folk songs for children. We have books that sing, such as *Baby Beluga*, put out by Random House, *Fox Went Out on a Chilly Night*, Phil Hoose's *Hey Little Ant*, and so on.

Linda: As with the music, a lot of stores really try to keep up with what's new and hot. Those things sell well for a while, then disappear from the face of the earth. We try to keep the "backlists," the books that are tried and true, have stood the test of time, that parents ask for again and again, and children ask to have read to them again and

again and again and again and again. That separates us, certainly from the chains, and even from a lot of the independent bookstores that just don't have as much space for children's things. And then we have a lot of books, like the music and the sidelines, from around the world. We have a big section of folktales from all over the world, a big selection of non-fiction books about different countries and parts of the world, and a big selection of books that show many different cultures in the same book. Those things have always been really important to us. Preschools, or at least day care programs, to be accredited have to have a certain number of multicultural books. We found this out much later than we were doing it, and have always been pleased that those books sold so well at conferences. We were probably the only vendor that brought them.

Dennis: Another reason why we've succeeded and continue to do so, is that we're not making a lot of money. We do make money, which is good for an independent store, especially an independent bookstore. But essentially at all of the out-of-store events, we, Linda and I, are the ones who decide what to take, who pack the boxes, who load the van, who unload the van, who set up the display, who sell the books, who take down the display, who load the van, and who unload the van. The one thing our staff does do is put the books back on the shelf once they come back. But we have transferred those books, what? One, two, three, four, five times before our staff gets involved for that one time putting them back on the shelves. If we'd had to pay people to do all of that, we would never have made any money. We do make money at conferences, but if we consider how many hours and how much money, we're probably paying ourselves about \$4.50 an hour.

We've had a wonderful time. I can't tell you how many times people have come up and said, "Oh! I was looking for you at the conference

this year", California Association for the Education of Young Children is a classic example. We hear things like, "You're the first display or the first exhibit, I go to because I know that you're going to have a nice selection of the..." recordings, books, science books, issue books or whatever it happens to be. It's a lot of work. And if you're just in it for the money, it just doesn't pay.

PIO!: What did the enormous commitment that you have put into Linden Tree prevent you from doing that you'll now get a chance to do?

[laughter]

Linda: Everything! [more laughter]

Dennis: Well, we'd really like to do more traveling and stay in some different locations. We definitely want to continue with The Children's Music Network in some way, supporting them, especially this year. We don't know what we'll be doing: signing people in at the registration desk, or transporting people or whatever. But we want to be involved in Los Gatos for the CMN National Conference.

Linda: I'm doing sales.

Dennis: We have two daughters, Katherine is living in New York, and Angie is living in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with her fiancé

PIO!: She was about two when you guys started

Dennis: Yes.

Linda: The one who thought Raffi lived in the speakers.

Dennis: And then I have a sister, and mother and family who live in Seattle, and Linda has a sister who's living in Seattle. So we'd like to spend weeks on end in these various locations among other things.

Linda: Exercise!

Dennis: Exercise, yes, we need to exercise.

Linda: Being at the store from the time it opens until late at night often, we have let that part of our life go a little bit. Planting a garden and cooking. Simple things, but I think they're hard to find the time for.

Dennis: And we really do like to travel: On a budget. [laughter]

PIO!: Is there anything that you'd like to add or emphasize, or something that I didn't ask you that you would like to talk about or bring out?

Dennis: We'd like to see the tradition of Linden Tree continue. We have three or four potential buyers, and hope to know soon. We would continue for six months or so as advisors if someone purchases the store. But if not, then so be it. We'll have a going out of business sale, but then we will continue to do things with children's music.


Linda: Yes.

Dennis: We don't know what, perhaps helping to sponsor concerts, but definitely continuing with CMN.

Linda: One of the things I've thought about is to try to encourage, maybe through the ABC, the Association of Booksellers for Children, other stores to have their local children's musicians come and do things ...

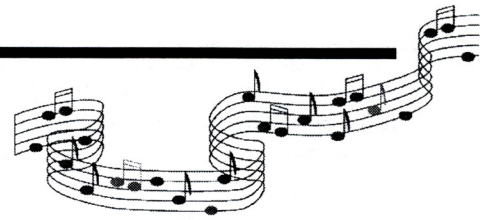
Dennis: It's a win-win situation, I think. A wonderful program for the bookstores to have, using music. And it's wonderful exposure for members of CMN.

Linda: And then, I guess, I would just like to emphasize how much CMN has meant to us. It really has been a highlight of each year when we go to that gathering. And for those three days, we can forget the store. We know that we're in this wonderful community of people who care about each other, who are making the world better through their songs. And I think just how welcomed we've always felt. It's been amazing.

This interview was transcribed by Anna Stange. 

Times Are a-Changin'

In addition to talking with the Ronbergs about their experiences, we also discussed trends they've seen over the last 25 years in children's music.



PIO! What are the major trends that you've seen, ones you would pick out over time, in terms of things like support for children's music, trends in the music itself such as folk or commercial orientation, and trends in the attitudes of parents and schools toward children's music?

Dennis: When Raffi came along there were two primary commercial labels, Sesame Street and Disney. After Raffi was taken on by a major label, RCA and then Polygram, a number of other major labels came in and sponsored artists for two or three years. For instance, Sony had six or seven people, including Tom Chapin, Linda Arnold, Dan Crow and Joanie Bartels.

Then the labels realized they didn't really know exactly how to market children's artists. Raffi was flying on his own easily enough because major record stores just requested a restock of his material. The major record stores didn't stock other artists and had never been interested in children's music to begin with. So that whole trend has backed off and most of those artists have gone back to their own labels. Even Raffi is on a secondary folk label, Rounder Records. Troubadour is his personal label, but then that's Rounder in the United States.

A lot of the independent folk artists seem to achieve their best sales immediately after performances, concerts, workshops, or presentations to teachers. If you're an artist doing a workshop for early childhood music or whatever and you're using your own material, it seems to work best if you can subtly lay out your wares in the back of the workshop with no sales pressure; otherwise you get a response from people saying, "This is too commercial." It often works to make some low-key announcement like, "I have albums available back there, and if you'd like to pick one up, I'd be happy to sell it to you."

Another trend is that pop and rock artists are venturing into children's music. A classic example of that is Dan Zanes. He's not on a big label, but he is getting a fair draw because parents know of him. Bob Marley's son Ziggy has also done a family album. Other adult artists have also taken a "flash in the pan," approach where they put out a single children's Christmas album, for instance. But there is no major label doing now what they did in children's music fifteen years ago.

Linda: We now have a generation of parents who may or may not have had music in school and did not grow up learning and singing traditional songs, which will certainly be the case with the upcoming generation. And adults are often drawn to the types of music they heard when they were children.

Dennis: That is the value of playing the music and singing together when you're younger. You'll probably come back to it. Even if you like pop music for a while, you'll probably come back to some of your musical roots.

Linda: So you have some that grew up hearing more of the folk music kinds of things and they're probably going to buy that. Others have heard more rock & roll kinds of things and they probably want that for their children. It pretty much depends on a mixture of what kids hear in nursery school, whether or not they get any music in elementary school, and sometimes whether or what they sing along with their friends. We don't seem to have common musical roots anymore. You used to be able to go on the bus to camp with kids that might not have gone to school with you, and you'd all know the same songs. It's just not that way anymore, not to mention that camp is computer camp or soccer camp [laughter] instead of simply going out into the wilderness.

I don't see trends exactly, but the one thing I have seen, which seems so unfair, is that artists who get some TV time tend to do a whole lot better. We see The Wiggles charge way more for their concerts than we've been charging and they sell out. But they get a lot of media coverage. Dan Zanes is another one. Ralph's World is another. The TV tie-in is a really big deal, unfortunately because people are watching so much TV. But it does reach many more people than anything else.

PIO! Somehow it seems that children's music on TV is not likely to be folk music

Linda: No

Dennis: No, folk music is not spectacular enough. It doesn't grip you enough to watch it, to hang in there.

Linda: Some of the music on TV can be hard to sing along with. The songs are often long and ballad-like with too many words too close together, not like the folk songs that have lasted through the ages. But the sad part is that the kids may not be getting exposed to traditional songs. That is one thing Music for Minors tried to do.

Dennis: Continue a common heritage of music

PIO! What was the role of Canadian Arts Support in bringing exposure to early children's music artists?

Linda: Ah! It was huge.

Dennis: At that time.

Linda: The government subsidized these artists be-

cause Canada is so big and so spread out and has remote areas where people live. The government would pay these artists to go and do concerts in these areas.

Dennis: Northern Saskatchewan

Linda: So government support really helped in Canada. I think it gave them a leg up over artists here who had none of that.

Dennis: The intent was to have a common heritage, and if you're 2,000 miles north in a barren wasteland and there are, say, 250 people living there, no business is going to spend \$5,000 to fly in an artist. So the government would send them and say have a sing-along or whatever. As Linda said, that really helped a number of artists have the reasonable income flows that they needed to make it.

PIO! But you said that's no more?

Dennis: It's really backed up. I have no idea how much...

Linda: I've heard there's still some though, because Charlotte still goes.

Dennis: There's some support, but nowhere near what it was before.

PIO! You've also seen trends with stores, long time vendors, educational conferences, particularly the California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC). What did all those years of attending and selling at those conferences leave you thinking or wondering? How'd the music at those conferences change over the years?

Dennis: I think that's remained fairly steady. Most of the teachers can see the value of music. But over the last year or two, there seem to be less music workshops.

Linda: No, actually,

Dennis: You don't think so?

Linda: There are lots of music workshops. There are fewer with people who have product to sell.

Dennis: Okay, okay, yes.

Linda: And I think that's okay. For us, the rush comes right after the workshop. And some people are now quietly selling at their workshops, so we don't see that rush as much. Still, if the artist is good, and the teacher says, "I can take that and use it next week in my class," the teacher will buy the recording to bring home for next week in class. Such recordings sell, but

not only based on artistic performances. Sometimes presenters who talk about books or curriculum highlight a particular artist or several artists. So we still see a lot of interest in those recordings.

Dennis: The good thing and the bad thing about CAEYC is that it's generally outside of the state-sponsored funding for schools. So, they've had to fund themselves through parent participation, and whatever. CAEYC teachers have never been paid nearly as well as regular school teachers, and when they wanted something, it tended to come out of their budgets. So we haven't seen the precipitous drop-off that people have seen who market to the California Reading Association, for example. The California Reading Association cancelled their state-wide conference this year. That conference used to be so big that one year we tried to get in six months in advance as an exhibitor and couldn't because all of the slots were full. And this year, they didn't even have it.


PIO! Because of budget cuts?

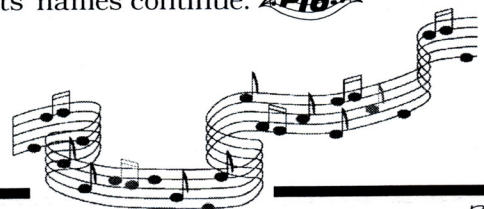
Dennis: Because of budget cuts in the schools, and...

Linda: Because if the school's not going to pay to send the teachers, the teachers may not want to pay their own money to do it.

Dennis: In fact, probably won't pay their own money. There's a whole different attitude from early childhood education.

Linda: I think a lot of preschools and daycares do have some budget for helping teachers go to those things

Dennis: If you do a presentation at one of these conferences, whatever your music, and if you make it relevant for the teacher, as Linda said, then they can go in on Monday and use that song in the classroom. And the teacher is going to be much more excited about it. If it's simple enough, and yet, catchy enough that it would help them with a concept or just a general sing-along song, they're much more apt to buy or use your product. And that continues, whether it's Raffi or Charlotte Diamond or Hap Palmer. Those are three classic examples, I think, of artists whose recordings have continued year after year after year. They're singable. Teachers can easily use them in the classroom. So they do, and those artists' names continue. 



A Walk to the 2009 National Conference

By Anna Stange

It took forty days to get to Black Mountain, North Carolina: I hopped the Amtrak from Chicago to Harpers Ferry, West Virginia; walked 456 miles through the woods to Roan Mountain, Tennessee; gave seven performances; and caught a ride for the last few miles to Black Mountain. Was I crazy? (Well, maybe.)

To understand this crazy plan requires going back about two years to the 2007 CMN national conference. I was thinking about how to make my trip to the annual conference more “rewarding” for me and for CMN. When I found out that the 2009 conference was going to be held near Asheville, an idea almost instantly sprung to mind: I would take the Appalachian Trail (AT) and walk to the conference. I started section-hiking the AT in 1998. It’s more than 2100 miles long, and I hadn’t walked this part of the trail yet. The plan was hatched. Then at the 2008 conference, I joined the “Fundraising” group during the annual meeting and blurted out my idea: collect pledges for walking to the conference. I was committed.

January 2009, I’m in South Africa, and using Skype. I start contacting libraries in communities along the trail. I place an ad in the journal of the Appalachian Trail Conference, and the work begins. Turns out using the trail as a fundraising tool is not permitted under US Park Service rules, but the Appalachian Trail Conference (ATC) thinks that CMN is a good organization and shares common values with the ATC. They help write the notice and clarify what I can and cannot do. I can talk about CMN and my walk on the trail, but I can’t ask people for donations on the trail. Good enough.

Most small communities in the Southern Appalachians are struggling during these times, but the

people are still incredibly generous and welcoming to hikers and visitors. Just like CMNers! My trek to the conference last fall enabled me to “give back” to CMN and to the trail communities for the years of enjoyment and sustenance I’ve received from both. With the help of many people, including Candy Heitner and Liz Buchanan, I ended up giving seven performances at libraries and senior centers along the trail in Virginia and Tennessee.

From August 30th until October 8th, I hiked anywhere from zero to twenty-eight miles in a day. I’d guess I averaged about eight hours of walking on the days I hiked. Yes, it rained. Yes, I walked in the rain. Yes, I got tired, sore and cranky sometimes. And yes, I kept going. I was able to raise more than \$1500 in pledges and donations with significant help from my husband Bob. Musician friends, CMN members, family, and friends all donated generously and gave of their time to help out. There was no way I could quit.

I generally hiked alone, staying at the three-sided shelters (huts) along the trail. Sometimes I stayed at a hostel, motel or campground. I was really happy to see Candy Heitner in Damascus, Virginia. For the last several days of the hike, she drove me to the starting point in the morning, picked me up at the meeting point in the evening, drove me to the concerts, and got me back to the lodge (with real beds, electricity, showers and kitchen privileges)



each night. And joy of joys! I didn’t have to carry the backpack!

I saw a bear, lots of deer, owls, rabbits, snakes, mice, and other woodland critters. I stopped in towns about once a week to give a concert, pick up my mail drop (mostly containing food), replace or restock gear, get a shower, do laundry, check email, update my trail blog, and eat heartily. The trail literally goes over the hills and through the woods. I walked over many mountains, through cow, donkey, horse, and even an emu pasture. Sometimes, I’d walk along the road, just for a change of pace, particularly through Shenandoah National Park.

I did carry CMN brochures and my little travel guitar strapped to the back of my pack. People’s curiosity about my guitar was my usual “in” to talk about CMN. I sent the performance materials and “town” clothes from stop to stop through the mail. My pack usually weighed between fifteen and twenty-five pounds, and I wore hiking gym shoes to keep my step light. Even so, I did end up with blisters—I wore out my socks!

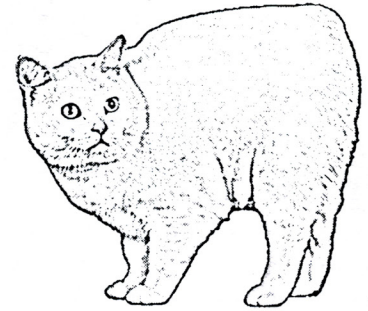
Would I do this again? Definitely! I’ve learned a bit about how to raise funds more effectively for a project like this in the future. My bike is getting a tune-up tomorrow afternoon...hmm.

Special thanks to Caroline Presnell, Wiley Rankin & the Fundraising Committee, Candy Heitner, Liz Buchanan, Bob Gronko, my mom and dad, and all the CMNers and others (known as Trail Angels on the AT) who pledged, donated, helped out with logistics and sent encouraging notes, e-mails and phone calls. You can read more online at www.trailjournals.com/annastange.

Chicago-based folksinger Anna Stange has made 5 recordings for children and families. 

ISLE OF MANN

Two-Part Round version by Sol Weber ©2009
(original words anonymous)



Sol says, "This is my two-part round arrangement of a cute, anonymous (non-round) cat song. Use a lively tempo. Enjoy it, and do send me any good rounds you might come across!" Sol Weber, 25-14 37th St, Astoria, NY 11103; solweber@juno.com.

lively tempo

1.

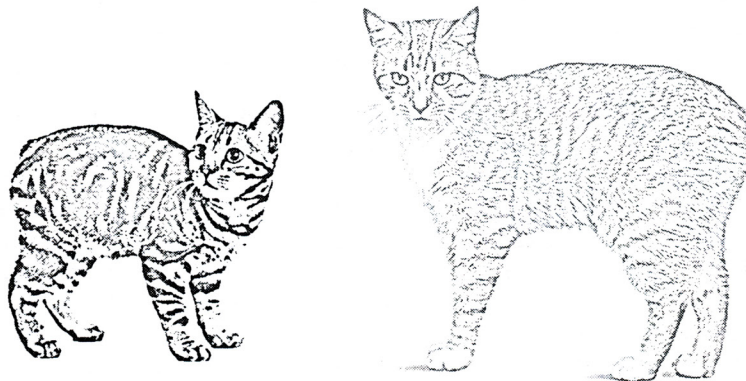
Are you a-ware that the cats have got no tails on the Isle of Mann?

All the o - ther cats have tails; Eng - land, Ire - land, Scot - land Wales.

2.

Seems a great in - jus - tice that there is no o - ther plan.

Are you a-ware that the cats have got no tails on the Isle of Mann?



Joanie Calem is the Songs Editor for Pass It On! She solicits, edits, engraves, and researches the songs.



The Power of Song

By Scott Bierko

Most commuters passing through the Beacon, NY train depot probably pay little attention to the weather-beaten boathouse sitting alongside the majestic Hudson River. On one misty Saturday last November, however, a small group of Children's Music Network members walked right up to the boathouse door where "Beacon Sloop Club" had been carved over the entrance. In less than an hour, this seemingly quiet and unremarkable shack would be the venue for one of CMN's most memorable regional gatherings. Families and friends were about to celebrate the multi-faceted power of song: to communicate, to educate and, in this case, to pass the torch of social justice from generation to generation. But I'm getting ahead of the story.

The boathouse door was locked when we arrived, so we walked onto an adjacent pier jutting into the eastern shore of the river. Perhaps we were hoping to catch a glimpse of the *Clearwater*, a 106-foot replica of ships that traveled the Hudson hundreds of years ago. Staffed by sailor-musician-educators who invite school children onboard to learn about the environment, the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater is also a 501c3 non-profit corporation on a mission to preserve and protect the river that it has sailed upon for nearly forty years (www.clearwater.org).

New Yorkers who recall the 1969 christening of *Clearwater* also remember when the Hudson was a chemical dumping ground unsuitable for fishing or swimming. During our lifetimes, however, the river is slowly returning to its former glory thanks to the dedicated efforts of many groups and individuals. No group is as famous as *Clearwater*, which has raised cleanup funds for over forty years, and no individual continues to raise more awareness than folk legend and longtime CMN member, Pete Seeger.

Clearwater's efforts aren't limited to events that take place on the water. Their dry land programs include a songwriting residency for twenty or so fourth graders at the J.V. Forestall Elementary School in Beacon. The residency has been dubbed, "The Power of Song", and veteran *Clearwater* musician, Dan Einbender, together with the children's teacher, Tery Udell, have fostered an awareness of folk music and social issues that has resulted in thirty songs over two years. The students call themselves "The Kids from Room 12" and have performed many of their folk songs with Seeger at the Clearwater Music Festival and other local events.

In 2009, one of those events was a Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday observance. "Pete spent the first part of the

Martin Luther King weekend on a stage on the National Mall, singing for Barack Obama at the inaugural concert. Then he quietly hopped on the night train back to Beacon so that he could perform on Monday afternoon at a second MLK tribute concert with The Kids from Room 12," said Nancy Hershatter, a CMN member who attended the Beacon MLK event. "After all, singing for presidents is important to Pete—but so is playing backup banjo for fourth graders." After seeing Pete, Dan and the Kids perform together, Nancy recommended them as ideal presenters for the New York Metro CMN Gathering in November.

Finally, the front door of the Sloop Club was opened and our small team of gathering preparers saw and smelled what was inside. It was like stepping back into history. The first thing we noticed was the scent of the sea that permeated the large community room. Above us on the rafters hung dozens of life preservers. In front of us, there was a tree growing straight through the roof. To our right, there was a huge stone fireplace and in the back of the room sat a wood stove and a door that led directly to the Hudson. With only thirty minutes to spare, we quickly divided up the work necessary to turn the boathouse into a place where folk music, fellowship and a delicious potluck could be enjoyed by all.

Some of us set up tables and chairs while others organized a greeting area for newcomers with CMN brochures. Another group hauled wood from behind the boathouse and began feeding the fireplace and the wood stove. Amidst this hubbub, Pete arrived unceremoniously and immediately began working alongside us. As the work was coming to an end, we gathered around Nancy Hershatter to learn Frank Hernandez's song, "Open the Circle," a beautiful round meant to welcome all of our attendees.

Pete, stopping to listen and learn, must have noticed our tentative delivery. So he quickly commandeered a tablet of poster paper, a two by four for drawing ledger lines, and a few volunteers to help him notate Frank's song. With only seconds to spare before the first guests arrived, this ad hoc team created a perfect visual aide to help everyone join in song. While Pete may be hard of hearing these days, he never lets that stop him from getting a community to sing.

As if on cue, the front door opened and CMN members, friends and families began arriving with guitars, platters of food, smiles and lots of hugs. The Kids from Room 12 bustled in, some with their parents and siblings, and began to eat alongside CMNers from

New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut and Wisconsin. Laughter and conversation filled the air right up until our (thanks to Pete) smoothly delivered song opened the meeting. After officially welcoming our guests, we introduced CMN to the newcomers, and described our new "Keys to Success" fundraiser. All in attendance were encouraged to help keep the great work of CMN moving forward. Thankfully, many heard the call and donated.

As the preliminaries drew to a close, all attention focused on Dan, Tery and the Kids from Room 12. One of the themes of the residency is to provide children with an ongoing opportunity to develop their artistic self-expression by combining research and songwriting in collaboration with experienced folk musicians. So the students write most of the song lyrics themselves to melodies of traditional folk songs, taught to them by Dan and oftentimes by Pete, who visits their classroom frequently. Unsurprisingly, the students have also demonstrated a dramatic and measurable rise in test scores compared to students in other classrooms.

The only scores that anyone cared about today, however, were the musical ones provided by the Kids. The smartly-written and tunefully-delivered songs expressed sincere feelings and solid opinions on friendship, the environment, equality and other aspects of social justice—one of CMN's founding principles. Prior to their final song, the students entertained questions from the floor.

"Why," asked one of our members, "do you think singing about important issues is better than talking about them?"

A girl in the front row raised her hand and replied, "Because when we sing, people listen." A hush fell as this simple yet powerful response penetrated our timeless gathering space and everyone in it.

Lydia Adams Davis broke the silence: "And we all want to sing with you!" We all joined in on "We Sing So Our Voices Can Be Heard", a lyric written by the students after being admonished for singing in the school hallway. As with all of the songs that day, the Kids and Dan sang in front of the stone fireplace. Pete stood off to the side, plucking his banjo, smiling broadly and singing along with the rest of us.

"Anyone coming to see 'Pete Seeger, the Legend', got to see and hear something else instead," mused CNM member Beth Bierko, "his legacy."

We closed the meeting with the Lorre Wyatt and Pete Seeger song, "Wonderful Friends," which the Kids from Room 12 sing to one another every morning, *a capella*.

When I think of the ways that I've grown
I know I couldn't a' made it alone
I owe a lot to the sharing, caring, daring
Wonderful friends that I've known.
I owe a lot to the sharing, caring, daring
Wonderful friends that I've known

Here we are all in one place, all gathered together,
We've helped each other down this road whatever
the weather.

We have no need for pots of gold, for friends are a
treasure.

So hold hands, and sing it again


With the rafters still ringing in harmony, the time came to say our goodbyes. Many spoke of purchasing copies of *The Kids From Room 12* when it's released by Appleseed Records or exchanging photos of the day's events. Still more took their leave inspired to continue their work with children and attend the next NY Metro gathering on January 18th in New York City.

Outside of the Sloop Club door, a member came up to one of us and told us what Pete Seeger said before he went home to be with his wife, Toshi:

"I've never felt as hopeful as I do today," remarked Pete.

The same goes for us, my friend.

New York-based Scott Bierko plays guitar and sings with Beth Bierko, his wife and partner of seventeen years. 



Epilogue

After the gathering, CMN's list serve buzzed with letters from Dylan Glanzer, Frank Squillante, Fran McKinney, Patricia Shih and others, many of which inspired this article. Of special note is a thank you letter received by Nancy Hershatter after the event:

Hi Nancy,

Thanks so much for yesterday. The kids had a great time—everyone was so nice to them. It may seem odd, but most of the adults who "hang around" the Kids ignore them... I've spoken with most of [the Kids] and they felt understood for their work and most definitely "seen". I'm so proud of them, and they deserve to have their community singing time be about them—you made that happen yesterday. "Thanks" doesn't seem quite enough.

Tery

BEGIN AS WE BEGAN IT

words by Lisa Atkinson, music by Dave Kinnoin
©2009 Lisa Atkinson and Dave Kinnoin



Dave says, "Lisa Atkinson, one of the finest human beings and most gifted songwriters I've ever known, wrote down these words shortly before she passed away, and her husband, George Kincheloe, sent them to me. I gathered up all my courage and wrote the melody through my tears, hoping to honor my friend. Joanne Hammil held my hand over the phone."

F F/E F/D

1. We should be - gin as we be - gan ___ it, by step - ping light - ly on our plan -
talk and short on know - ing. We just might end up where we're go -

F/C B \flat C B \flat

- et. We are all im - por - tant all ___ in need, and there are ma - ny hun - gry
- ing. Eve - ry sin - gle clue we'll ev - er need is in the deepest breath and

G m7 C 2 C Bridge 1 A m

hearts to feed. 2. We're tall on With gen - tle deeds and
smal - lest _____ seed.

B \flat F F/E G m7 C

words soft - spoken, we mend the hearts that might be bro - ken. ___ 3. We've got to

F F/E F/D F/C

slow it down these days ___ and lis - ten to the wise old ways. ___ Eve - ry

B \flat C B \flat G m7

liv - ing thing can touch ___ and feel, and there is still a chance for us to heal.

Begin As We Began It

➔continued from previous page

The musical score consists of four staves of music in 4/4 time, written in a key with one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are written below the notes. Chord markings are placed above the staff lines. The sections are labeled as Bridge 2, Coda, and Verse 3.

Chord markings: C, A m, F, F/E, G m7, C, F, F/E, F/D, F/C, B^b, C, G m7, C, F.

Lyrics:
— The source of love and sense of worth are found here on our
Plan - et Earth. If we be - gin as we be - gan — it by step-ping
light - ly on our plan - et. Yes, we're all im - por - tant, all —
— in need, And there are man-y hun - gry hearts to feed. —

Verse 1

We should begin as we began it
By stepping lightly on our planet.
We are all important, all in need,
And there are many hungry hearts to feed.

Verse 2

We're tall on talk and short on knowing.
We just might end up where we're going.
Every single clue we'll ever need
Is in the deepest breath and smallest seed.

Bridge 1

With gentle deeds and words soft spoken,
We mend the hearts that might be broken.

Verse 3

We've got to slow it down these days
And listen to the wise old ways.
Every living thing can touch and feel,
And there is still a chance for us to heal.

Bridge 2

The source of love and sense of worth
Are found here on our Planet Earth.

Coda

If we begin as we began it
By stepping lightly on our planet.
Yes, we're all important, all in need,
And there are many hungry hearts to feed.

Using Music to Develop Second Language Skills

by Anarella Cellitti and Barbara J. Wright

Music offers a natural vehicle for teaching language to children, particularly a second language. Rhythm, visual imagery and hand movements, along with vocabulary words woven into song lyrics can assist learning and comprehension. Teachers can also adapt musical language lessons for children of different ages by choosing age-appropriate songs.

Lyrical Imagery

A simple yet effective tool for teaching vocabulary involves translating words in well known children's songs. For instance, "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" would be "*Cabeza, Hombres, Rodillas y Dedos*" in Spanish or "*La Tete, les Epaulles, les Genous, les Orteilles*" in French. While singing such songs, flashcards with pictures and names of each body part can facilitate recognition of vocabulary words. If the cards are spread out around the floor, children can jump around to the music until they arrive at the card for a particular body part. Very young children might touch their body parts as they sing, to reinforce learning.

Similarly, when using English language songs to teach English as a second language it helps to have a visual image for every vocabulary word. You can take turns with children pointing to images while singing a song. Allow children to learn the song by listening to and observing you until they feel comfortable enough to sing and point for themselves. Children can learn many concepts this way. For example, colors can be taught with rainbow songs such as: "Sing a Rainbow" by Judy Henske or "Rainbow Round Me" by Ruth Pelham.

Zipper Songs

Zipper songs, in which you "zip" in a new word or phrase to replace the last one used, can also help teach vocabulary. You can teach multiple words with one song simply by changing the word each time the song is used. "The Rooster Song," "Mary Wore her Red Dress," and "The Farmer in the Dell," are all great zipper songs for teaching language. Nursery rhymes such as: "The Muffin Man," "Jack & Jill," "Humpty Dumpty" and "Hickory Dickory Dock" can be used as well.

Zipper songs can also be used to teach verb recognition to English language learners. With children's songs such as "Skip to My Lou," "Circle Left," "The Ants Go Marching," "Clap Your Hands" and "So Early in the Morning," instructors can substitute different verbs into the same song each time they sing it. Once students have learned and become comfortable with the songs, they can act out the substituted verbs as

realistically as possible while singing. Visual imagery on flashcards can help with verbs also.

Building Confidence

Music and dance can help create low anxiety environments for ELL children that facilitate social integration in group activities and provide more language practice and feedback opportunities than individual classroom work (Johnson, 1988). Fun, participatory and group-oriented activities can essentially become "error-free" activities that naturally boost the confidence levels of ELL students (Abril, 2003). This is equally important for younger children and older children.

Music can also increase bi-lingual skills. Since music sheets and whole songs can be written in English and in the child's primary language, the students can sing along while reading the words (Medina, 1993). English language learners can also lip sync lyrics or perform karaoke-style with songs that are written for them or that they write for themselves. In addition, musical drama can build vocabulary skills through movement. Movement can also further language development using pantomime or charades based on words written by the ELL students, by other children or by the teacher to help with comprehension, building vocabulary, and promoting phoneme and graphical awareness of the English language.

Beyond the Basics

In more complex music/language activities, students can "fill in the blanks" where words of familiar songs are missing. They can also explain selected words based on the context of a song, discuss grammar, identify word types (such as adjectives or adverbs) and subtypes (such as prefixes or suffixes), and provide word definitions. Teachers can pose questions about overall song meanings, or students can be asked to explain a song by summarizing key elements. In addition, children can discuss underlying meanings (implications) of song lyrics.


With all children, whether English language learners or English speakers learning another language, music can also provide a vehicle for practicing pronunciation. Repetition of song lyrics can help with intonation, articulation, and pitch. Good songs to use in this regard include: "Apples & Bananas" and "The Vowel Song."

Songs can also help children identify emotions and feelings. Students can draw pictures to describe how a particular song or type of music (such as jazz or

classical) makes them feel. The feelings can then be translated into words or even into movements or pantomime, as long as the songs are selected to match the maturity level of the students. Songs such as "Happy & You Know It" with zipped in phrases such as "sad and you know it" or "angry and you know it" can work particularly well with younger students.

Music offers one of the best available methods for teaching any of a broad range of concepts to children. Even if

teaching a new language musically happens to be your specific purpose, the most important underlying goal is always to teach children the love and appreciation of music: ultimately giving them lifelong access to a universal language that will require no translation.

Early childhood teacher-educator Dr. Anarella Cellitti works extensively with immigrant children and families. Early childhood educator Barbara J. Wright provides special childhood education that incorporates music in every session. 



Music with Older Kids

Provoking Thought Through Song

By Joanie Calem

I grew up singing, always loved singing, and I wouldn't stop singing even when people told me to! Somehow, I don't remember going through the adolescent stage of "It's not cool to sing!" And as a teacher and performer, I especially want to help kids keep singing when they get to the upper elementary grades and middle school. The sense of community created by a group of people singing a song together is incomparable, and children need that sense of belonging as much now as ever. This is my fourth year as a general music teacher and assembly leader in a small, (120 kids, K-6) bi-lingual (English/Hebrew) school. As a teacher, I have a unique and wonderful opportunity to work with the same kids year after year and to establish a repertoire of familiar and fun songs with them.

Wherever I have taught or performed for the younger (K-3) students, I have always structured my lessons or performances to follow the seasons of the year and cycles of holidays. So as we move through our school year, we are moving through familiar musical material. A song that we learn for the fall in kindergarten will be revisited in first, second and third grades, always with some new and challenging musical accompaniment that the kids can provide as they get older and as their talents and abilities broaden. Watching their eyes brighten as they say, "Oh I remember this!" and launch into lusty singing, brings a sense of deep satisfaction. I am starting each of them on their unique roads as life-long singers.

But Kindergarten through third graders have not yet hit the "groan and roll your eyes at something deemed babyish" stage. So, again, how do I keep the upper elementary kids singing? Our late friend Tom Hunter once wrote into the list-serve: "I've found that songs of history work well with this age [group], particularly when you take time to talk about them. They [these kids] love songs with adventure, death, mystery."

So last year I decided to take Tom's suggestion and was

very direct about it. Along with our general music curriculum, I told them, we would start each lesson with a *thought-provoking* song. These might be songs about actual history as Tom had suggested. The songs might also pose questions or tell folk-stories. They might explore the nitty-gritty of growing up, how to handle conflicts, the true nature of heroism, and so on. I explained to my students that they may not like all of the song styles; that not all of the songs would be "cool," but that all of the songs would somehow relate to learning, taking responsibility and making intelligent decisions.

Needless to say, in addition to my own and other singer/songwriters songs, many of the songs that I have chosen have been written by CMNers. For example, we started the year in fourth, fifth and sixth grades singing "Stripes," by Wayne Potash. In October, as Columbus Day rolls around, we sing Nancy Schimmel's "1492," and Bill Harley's "It's A Long Way." The entire school sang Stuart Stott's "Singing Is Good for Your Brain" at last year's final concert. During election week I always sing Bob Blue's "Dear Mr. President." In January and February, we play African American play-party games, while singing Sally Roger's "What Can One Little Person Do?" and Nancy Schimmel's "A Child Like Me." And this is an abridged list! We take the time to discuss these songs, and from year to year the kids discover new meanings as they grow and mature.

I am happy to say, my fourth, fifth and sixth grade classes are singing. So, these songs have become staples in my performances as well, where I often see the kids only once. I cannot know if they will continue to sing, but I can invite them into a larger community of creatively thoughtful people, by singing songs that make them think.

Musician, singer/songwriter and teacher Joanie Calem teaches privately and in schools, performs folk music in a variety of local settings, and leads programs for audiences of all ages.



Music in Bloom

Making a Children's CD: Where to Begin?

by Kathy Reid-Naiman



If the doom and gloom that has been swirling around the recording business has discouraged you to the point of never wanting to consider taking the risk of making a CD, here are my two cents, for what they are worth. It can be overwhelming just thinking about doing this, but, as the owner of a record company that specializes in early childhood music, I might be able to answer some of your questions and perhaps get you started on the road to pursuing your goal. Some of this advice might be discouraging, but it could make your choices clearer and hopefully give you a place to begin.

There are several ways to approach making a CD: quick and cheap; big, bright, and expensive; and somewhere in between. I will try to address them all here. There are many reasons why people want to record their music—and most of them are good and valid. However, if you want to get rich, you probably should pursue another dream! One of the good things about the way that the recording industry has changed is that you no longer need to have a record company contract

to make a CD. Anyone can do it. All it takes is a bit of money, a recording studio, and an engineer. You don't even have to have talent...but that's another article.

The first thing to consider is whether you have a market for your CD. It is very important to be realistic. Maybe the parents in your classes will buy it, but then what? Getting your CD into a store that will sell it for you is very hard. There are so many good musicians out there trying to sell their music, and the stores can't take everything. Generally a store will not even consider your CD if you don't have a distributor or a known label. If you only have one CD and no distribution, retailers don't want to bother, because it is too difficult to keep track of small independent labels. So the first CD is the hardest. On the other hand, the music marketplace is changing very rapidly and online sales through your website or an online store can be a very good way to sell CDs. Here is a financing tip to consider. One way to finance your project is to pre-sell your CD at your classes for a discount (e.g., one for \$20.00 or

two for \$30.00). People love deals! Consider including a CD in the cost of your programs. But remember: the longer you put off doing so, the more parents who would have bought CDs in your classes will have moved on. So—lost sales!

Here are some frequently asked questions and answers.

Should you use a producer?

Yes, if at all possible! It is very hard to be objective about your own voice. A good producer can make the simplest song sound great. He can suggest musicians that will enhance your work without cluttering it up. Even on a very simple recording this can make a huge difference.

Should you use a home studio or rent a studio with a professional engineer?

An engineer can take the stress out of the recording process. He knows how to grab a note or a word from a different verse to correct it digitally instead of re-recording it. He knows how to use the auto-tuner! That's a device that can take a slightly flat note and bring it up to pitch. The other huge advantage is that the phone won't ring and the dog won't bark just as you are finishing recording the longest, hardest track on the recording.

Should you play all the instruments yourself or should you hire a sideman or two?

This is totally up to you, but my strongest advice here is never, never, never use a synthesizer! Children need to hear real instruments. Parents need to be able to listen to the songs over and over and over, and, in my humble opinion, real instruments and real musicians are the only way to achieve this goal. If you can vary the instrumentation and keys from track to track, it can

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make a big difference. If you only play guitar, use different guitars—nylon, steel, or twelve string—and intersperse a few a cappella songs or rhymes.

Cover art? Does it matter?

Yes, absolutely! It doesn't need to be an expensive piece of art to make it good though. I like to use original paintings on mine, but you can use a photograph, a quilted square, or a child's drawing. It just has to be a good, clear image that will entice the potential buyer to look a little closer and perhaps to buy it.

Should you include the lyrics?

Yes, if possible. It will cost a bit more to print a small booklet, but it is very helpful for those who are trying to learn the songs. Alternately, you could have the lyrics embedded on the CD to be accessed via computer.

Digipak or Jewel Case?

Digipaks are twice as expensive to make, but they are more environ-

mentally friendly since they are made of cardboard and they cost half as much to ship. However, if you hope to sell to libraries, go with a jewel case. Some librarians do not like digipaks and won't buy them, because they fall apart too easily.

What will it cost?

Each recording is unique, so I can't give you a real estimate without knowing what your approach will be. Things to consider include: studio rental time (including an engineer, producer's fees, sidemen), cover art, royalties (i.e., fees to record other people's songs), typesetting (putting the title and text on the cover and inside the booklet), mastering (which ensures that everything is at the same level on the final copy), and manufacturing the CDs. So, start with a budget and decide how much you will need to spend to make the type of recording that you want. Get estimates from producers, studios, and manufacturers. Then estimate what you think you can sell in the first few months, and consider how

much you are willing and able to finance. Don't forget to plan a CD release party to give your recording a big send off!

Finally, one of the most important things to remember when you are recording is that whatever you decide to do, make it something that you will be proud of. You will be living with it for a long, long time. I hope that this article is helpful. I am happy to answer any other questions that you may have, including advice on producers, studios, and costs.


Merriweather Records began in 1994 as a small record label, with Kathy Reid-Naiman as the sole owner, and has produced numerous quality recordings for young children. Merriweather Records Ltd. is now a thriving incorporated company. For more detailed information, or to contact Kathy Reid-Naiman, visit <http://www.merriweather.ca> or send an e-mail to info@merriweather.ca 

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Come to the 2010 Children's Network National Conference

October 8–10 in Los Gatos, California

Come to the beautifully landscaped Presentation Center with its mission-style buildings (www.presentationcenter.org). Between workshops, stroll around the pond, follow the hiking trail, relax in the amphitheater or find a quiet spot of your own under the trees. On campus, you might not realize that you're only twenty minutes from the San Jose airport and forty-five minutes from the San Francisco airport. If you want to explore other nearby spots before or after the conference, in about half an hour you can get to Big Basin Redwoods State Park or the Santa Cruz beach on the Pacific Ocean.

Liz Hannan, the conference chair, is putting together committees that could include you: contact her at 650/342-1759 or lizhannan3@yahoo.com to see how you can help with one of the tasks that go into making our conference weekend such a wonderful experience. 



CMN Gift Memberships are always available

Think of giving one to a friend or teacher for a birthday, a holiday, or in appreciation. To start off their year's experience of CMN, the recipient will get a new-member packet that includes a copy of *Pass It On!*, a welcome letter naming you as the giver, and other items.

Just send the recipient's name and address with \$35.00 to CMN, P.O. Box 1341, Evanston, IL 60204-1341.

A Tapestry of Songs

The Children's Music Network National Conference

October 9-11th 2009

Black Mountain, North Carolina

by Barb Tilsen

Beautiful harmonies drifted up the mountainside like wisps of smoke soaring upward, carried away on the breeze. Warmth, laughter, the hugs of old friends reuniting, open arms welcoming newcomers into the circle—CMN has come together again for our yearly conference swimming in a sea of song, smiling faces and the occasional tears too, that heartfelt moments bring when profound things are shared. We gathered this year at the Blue Ridge Assembly in Black Mountain in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. This wonderful facility had all the comforts needed for a weekend of workshops, musical jams, song swaps, and meetings both large and small. Folks at the conference also enjoyed its other features as well including incredible hiking trails, creeks, waterfalls, and the wide range of wildlife calling the mountains home.


"A Tapestry of Songs" was the theme—the musical weaving started early with a pre-conference fundraising concert Thursday evening at the Jubilee Church in Asheville, North Carolina. This year's CMN 'tapestry' had the common threads that have made all of our conferences so memorable and unique. The Friday and Saturday evening round robins are some of the most magical parts of the weekend and this year was no exception. On stage yet informal, the round robin is a sharing of songs in a non-pressured, supportive atmosphere, in a truly democratic format so that anyone who wishes to sing a song can do just that. And often no sooner is a

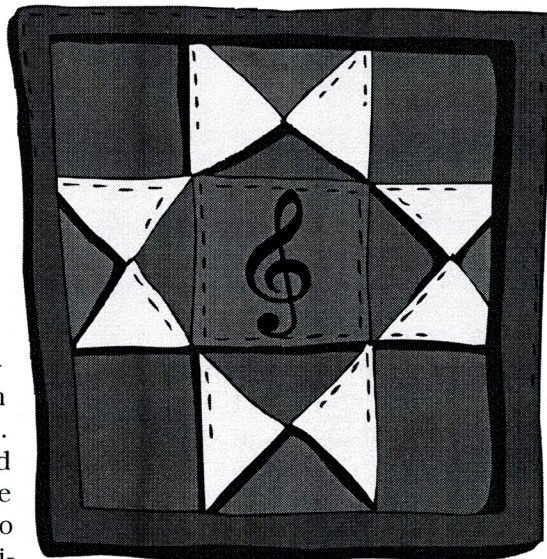
song begun, than the harmonies swell over, under, and around the space with a musical vibration that fills the heart. There were hilarious moments in the round robins that had us all laughing in the aisles, and deeply moving moments, both there and in the separate tributes to members who have passed away this past year that held us all in the same breath with tears in our eyes. Of the many touching moments at these weekends, the ones that move me most deeply are often when one of the children gets up to sing. This year it was third grader Evalyn H. singing in the round robin Saturday night. Evalyn has been coming to CMN conferences with

sing, I felt I was watching and listening to the very heart of CMN.

There are many common threads in our national conference—our workshops, our keynote, our Magic Penny ceremony. The dynamic workshops—song swaps, panel discussions, lectures, master classes—included a wonderful and interesting array of choices. Both our keynote speaker and Magic Penny recipient this year epitomized the values and principals at the center of CMN. Billy Jonas was our keynote speaker, a highlight for many of those attending. Many commented throughout the weekend about his moving words on the importance of the music we bring and the substance of what we share in our work with children. The incredible Tom Chapin was honored at our conference this year as our 2009 Magic Penny recipient. The Magic Penny Award recognizes lifetime contributions in the field of children's music. Our tribute to Tom Chapin featured many of his wonderful songs sung by CMN members and by Tom himself along with the poignant memories, stories and insights he shared with us.

Of the common threads in this musical tapestry of The Children's Music Network, perhaps the most important of all is the thread of community that we create when we come together—it is one to which we bring our best selves and one that brings out the best in each of us.

An award-winning singer, songwriter, teaching artist, and teacher trainer, Barb Tilsen performs for audiences of all ages, works with preschool and elementary age children, and served on the CMN board from 1998 to 2008. 



her parents since she was born. As she sang, I thought about how we have watched her grow over the years from a baby on stage in her father's arms to a shy preschooler softly singing traditional songs—and later CMN members' songs—to this moment when she sang a very beautiful, heartfelt song that she had written herself. Hearing her

Reflections from CMN Members on the 2009 National Conference

What a great gathering—my first too! Some of you may remember something of what I said at the closing when I stood up and confessed I'd never been around so many peaceful, warm, caring, dedicated, heartfelt, SOULful folks at the same time in the same place in my entire life. I mentioned I was convinced that the peaceful world we all write, sing about, and hope for, had most certainly taken shape and made camp squarely at the Blue Ridge Assembly Center in Black Mountain, North Carolina on the weekend of October 9, 10 & 11...

...You may remember I said something like that—but what I didn't mention was how very, very groovy the jams were on Friday night and Saturday night! I was so refreshed by that experience, so moved by the high musicianship and sensitivity with which everyone played! To sit in with all of you and collectively reach deeply into the center of one tune after another was as satisfying and soul-nourishing as being the piano player in a really grooving jazz trio, which to me has always been the pinnacle of making live music.

Although I can't wait for 10/10/10 and all the great swaps, round robins, classes, etc., I especially can't wait for the late night jams on Friday and Saturday night!

Peace to you all and Love.
Frank Squillante, New York

Billy Jonas's keynote address Saturday was a big, big highlight for me. He is one of my favorite artists; his speech was thoughtful, moving, inspiring and funny. The songs he shared with us blew the roof off that conference center and I think everyone felt the same way. He got us all rocking and rolling, laughing and

thinking, "singing and banging" as he puts it! The workshops were all together (pretty much) in the area of the building we stayed in, and so were very easy to get to. All the ones I attended were beautifully prepared and run, including the song swaps. As usual, these conferences are a gold mine for performers to share their material with each other and with teachers, librarians and more. We heard from many new very talented attendees and hope they had fun and will join CMN... But one of the best parts of the weekend (other than of course re-connecting with old friends and making new ones) was all the music that spontaneously popped up all around, especially on Saturday night in the lobby in the wee hours. It was so much fun that Tom Chapin, who just happened to be strolling by (probably trying to go to bed!) joined us, singing and playing a ukulele and telling stories about his family. It was one of those magical memories that one treasures throughout one's life.

Patricia Shih, New York

It was an amazing weekend, from the Friday evening Marimba Band concert by Asheville middle-schoolers to Tom Chapin's magical Magic Penny presentation and the moving closing circle. CMN weekends always have moments that make me laugh hysterically (Tom & Liz H. – dogs 4-ever) and others that bring tears, as did the memorials for Paul Strausman, Sam Hinton and Lisa Atkinson. I didn't know any of them, and was left feeling profoundly sad that I had missed the opportunity. And of course there were the wonderful musical moments, such as during the closing, when yet another Liz, a newcomer from Iowa, led us in a simple farewell song and dance. During the dance, groups of us took

turns standing in the middle, eyes closed, arm-in-arm, while others circled us singing in harmony. The feeling was very powerful.

It was great to see many new faces (lots of southerners—good to have y'all) as well as the faces of many longtime CMN members. The mixing of old and new provided sweet chemistry.... I also TOTALLY agree with Patricia's review of Billy Jonas, our keynote. Billy Jonas rocks! He is one heck of a performer, and also had profound things to say to us about the purpose of what we do. We bring hope into the world through our music, as we strive to create a better world for every child.

Liz Buchanan, Massachusetts

Iwas thinking back on the conference today and attempting to describe it, in my head, to someone who wasn't there and doesn't know us. The first thing I realized is that we are an "us"... I haven't been to many conferences, but I get the feeling that that isn't usually the case. Imagine walking into an accounting conference and hearing someone at the microphone sing out "Hug the person next to you!" Imagine the looks you'd get.

Our conferences really are "gatherings," cleverly disguised. They're part conference, part family reunion, part retreat, and occasionally part therapy... We get a lot out of them professionally, but speaking for myself I walk away more personally enriched than anything else. The biggest benefit I get out of being part of CMN, career-wise, is that I become a more compassionate, connected teacher once I've spent a weekend with all of you.

Laura DeCesare, Massachusetts





Playful Champion: Honoring Tom Chapin at the CMN 2009 Magic Penny Award Ceremony

by Leslie Zak

Tom Chapin's career achievements are impressive, but not as impressive as his warm, insightful and courageous character. His work for more than 30 years earned him four Grammy Awards for Best Spoken Word Album and five Grammy nominations for Best Musical Album for Children. In 2008, he won the prestigious American Eagle Award of the National Music Council for his "great contribution to music and music education in our nation," and in 2009 CMN awarded him the Magic Penny. His career has spanned recordings, TV, and Broadway. But over and above his commanding talent and achievements, his human self—the gentle jokester, insightful observer, solid family man, playful champion of children of justice and of life on Earth—sealed the deal for the CMN members who met him at the national conference.

Tom generously arrived in the North Carolina mountains a day early, joined in workshops and the round robin, broke bread, rescued singers with equipment failure, swapped late night stories, and became, well, one with us. Everyone—women, men and "itty bitty children"—had fallen in love with Tom Chapin by the time of the award presentation on Sunday morning.

Bonnie Lockhart, Alvin McGovern, and Nancy Schimmel led the annual singing of Malvina Reynolds' "Magic Penny" to begin the presentation ceremony, then events coordinator Jenny Heitler-Klevans opened the program. "For over thirty years ... Tom Chapin has entertained, amused and enlightened audiences with his life-affirming original songs conveyed across a sophisticated array of musical styles ... appealing to all genera-

tions," she said. "Tom's remarkable musicianship ... songwriting and personal warmth shine through, whether he's performing with an orchestra or at an intimate coffeehouse."

The tribute that followed was, appropriately, a flat-out celebratory concert of Chapin songs and—true to CMN—a most satisfying multi-harmony sing along. Patricia Shih and Nancy Hershatter offered the marvelous "Family Tree" and led the singing, illustrated with graceful signing—which Chapin revealed he had learned from Shih and now uses with every performance.

Deeply personal testimonials followed, ranging from Patricia's heartfelt love and gratitude for Chapin, whose selfless support and encouragement were instrumental in Shih's career in children's music to Carole Peterson's hilarious story of the many hours she spent in labor and giving birth to the same Chapin CD playing over and over. Laudatory messages were sent by Sally Rogers, and Sol Weber, as well as delivered in person by Pam Donkin and Mara Sapon-Shevin.

The inimitable Jackson Gillman performed "The Library Song," complete with props—an amazing collection of each of the original children's books, many quite old, mentioned in the song. He gave a shingly entertaining performance, displaying thought and caring as one mentor honored another. Erin Lee Kelly and Marci Bernstein rocked out on "Long Way Home" joined by CMNers' kids, and Two Of A Kind presented Chapin's funny and insightful, "Not on the Test." The current hit on the internet dissects how the ubiquitous "teaching for testing" education model has

teachers and students locked into uncreative, anti-thinking modes. David Heitler-Klevans, one-half of Two Of A Kind, took time to praise Chapin's work as consistently "Smart: So very smart."

More music filled the hall as Pam Donkin, Mara Sapon-Shevin, and Leslie Zak led the lovely lullaby round, "This Pretty Planet.. And, although it was we who were honored to participate in the event, each and every performer and presenter was thanked with a warm bear hug from Tom Chapin. When Tom took the stage, telling stories of his family and career, and acknowledging his frequent collaborators Michael Mark, John Cobert, and John Forster ("All good family men," said Chapin), he explained that "It takes four guys to write Tom Chapin."

Complimenting the CMNers as his "peers, Tom treated us to some of his totally singable songs and his mastery of several instruments, including an exquisite and revelatory autoharp accompaniment. His manner was relaxed, assured, and welcoming. Audience favorites included "Alphabet Soup" (...read 'em while you eat 'em") and "Don't Play With Bruno"... (" 'cause Bruno is a Dweeb!"), a paean to intellectual curiosity and the acceptance of human differences, and also a slam on snobbery and cliques. Then Brigid Finucane and Susan Salidor led the enfolding "Together Tomorrow Again." And, although we might have wished to stay in the glow all afternoon, the final notes of the repeat "Magic Penny" ended the program.

Mention must be made here of the impressive capper—the presentation of the unique Magic Penny Award. Once again, Arizona ceramicist Harriet Morton created

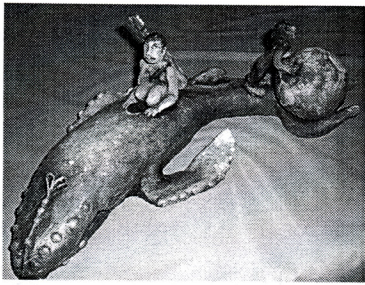


Photo by Allen Zak

a singular sculpture for the presentation, inspired by the music and life works of the honoree. The 2009 award depicts a mustachioed man, guitar on his back, perfectly balanced while crouching atop a behemoth Blue Whale—itself a mythic symbol of our planet and the mysterious magnificence of nature. This Whale Rider is naked, bare and open to the infinite world of wonder and experience, carrying his music making—his gift and his protection—with him. At the whale's tail a young boy tends a small globe, while imbedded in the giant mammal's belly is a prismatic quartz crystal—a gift of light, clarity, and energy from the heart of the earth to an artist whose music is a true gift to children. Tom Chapin's whale carries them all with grace.


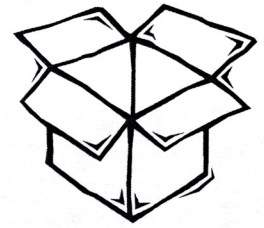
Leslie Zak is a Greater Columbus Arts Council Artist-in-Schools, specializing in music, drama, and writing. Her work is widely published, and her CDs of family music can be heard on more than 70 stations nationally. 



Photo by Frank Squillante

2009 CMN Silent Auction Contributors



The silent auction fundraiser held at the October 2009 Annual National Conference in Black Mountain, North Carolina, was a success due to many generous contributors. We are grateful for their support.

BUSINESSES/ORGANIZATIONS

Peter Alsop/Moose School Productions (*CDs and DVDs*) www.peteralsop.com

Bob Blue's Family (*thirty Best of Bob Blue CDs*) www.bobblue.org

Woody Guthrie Foundation/Nora Guthrie (*basket of Woody: books, CDs*) www.woodyguthriepublications.com

INDIVIDUALS

Allison Ashley (*fun fur scarves*)

Debbie Block (*peace flags, two people pins, two quilt cards*)

Liz Buchanan (*green fleece scarf, jewelry*)

Jackson Gillman (*performance coaching*)

Judy Caplan Ginsburgh (*handknit scarves, CD*)

Marie Hopper (*CMN 2009 Conference color poster*)

Dave Kinnoin (*100 CDs of children's music, For Every Child books, dozens of Dave's cookies*)

Louise M. Pascale (*Book Children's Songs from Afghanistan*)

Tom Pease (*CDs, Pease pie, Pease pesto*)

Carole Peterson (*Miss Carole's bag of music fun, CDs*)

Linda and Dennis Ronberg (*limberjack*)

Susan Salidor (*Peter Yarrow CDs/books, Sure-Fire Hits CD/booklet, hand drum, Momma Bunny and babies basket*)

Jean Schwartz (*custom handmade CMN dress*)

Margot Stiassni-Sieracki (*knitting bag, children's music bag, winter fun bag*)

Mara Sapon-Shevin (*colorful socks, shoes, wooden puzzles*)

Mike Sauber (*body decals, cash donation*)


Leslie Zak (*handpainted washboard*)

Unknown (*Cherokee flute, green ocarina*)

Unknown (*recycled tote bag, messenger bag*)

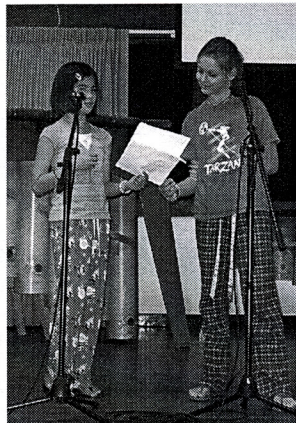
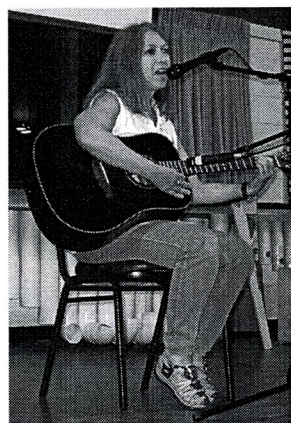
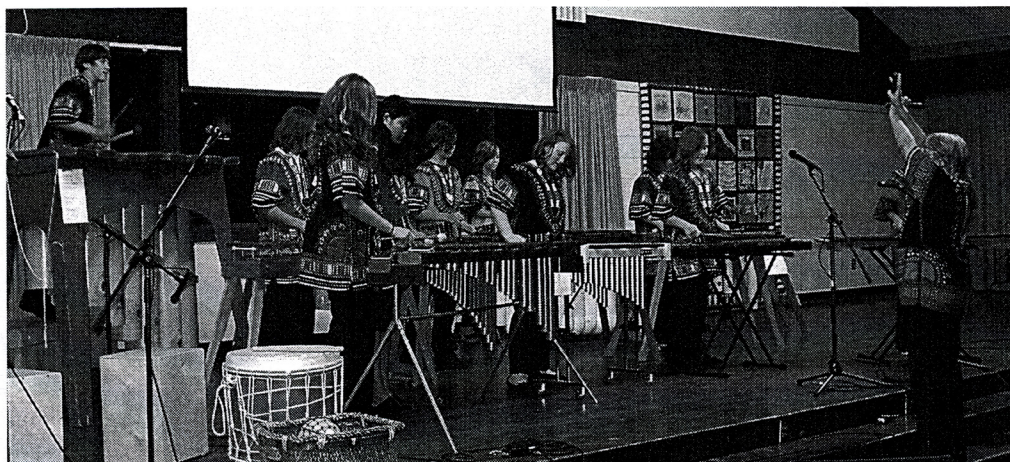
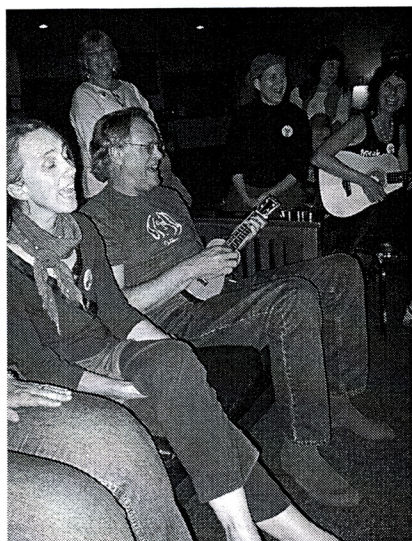
Unknown (*minidisc recorder and discs*)

And the many generous members who donated CDs for the "Taste of CMN" baskets, which raised quite a bit of money. We're not listing names for fear of overlooking someone, but you know who you are.

Thank you, all! 

The 2009 National Conference

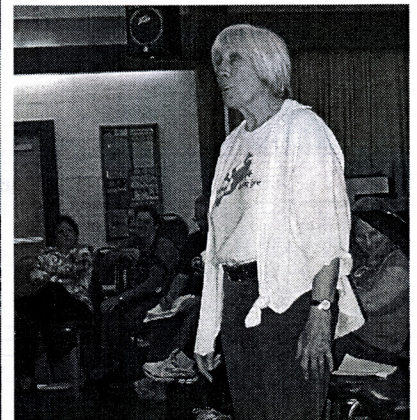
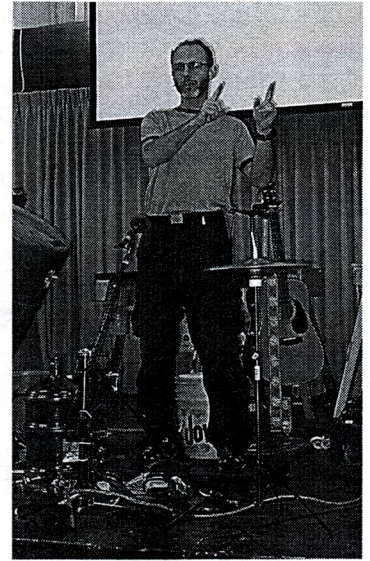
Black Mountain, North Carolina



All photos: Patricia Shih

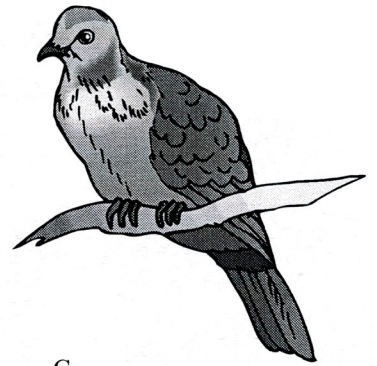
The 2009 National Conference

Black Mountain, North Carolina



HELLO, MR. PIGEON

words and music by Shana Harvey ©2009



Shana says she dreamed this song up for Ella, her friend's baby girl, while strolling through Millennium Park in Chicago. Ella was stuck with Shana while her Mommy taught a class, and she was none too happy about it. To distract Ella from her woe, Shana started pointing out animals in the park and asking Ella how she might greet them. Her tears soon gave way to pigeon coos and bird whistles, and they wrote this little song together. Since then, Shana has sung the song with groups of children who, for whatever reason, don't have the opportunity to get to a zoo, farm, or circus.

Verse

C G C

Hel - lo, Mis - ter Pi - geon, it's so nice to meet you. I'd

F G Am

like to say "Hel - lo" but I'm not sure how to greet you. I'll do the on - ly

G F C Am

thing I know__ to say. "Hel - lo," I'll say coo_____ coo_____

F G C Am F G C *after verse 4 jump to coda*

That's just how I'll go! I'll say coo_____ coo_____ That's just how I'll go!

Bridge

Am G F C

So man - y an - i - mals__ right in our back - yard. And

Am G D7 G *D.C. al Coda*

we can meet and greet them, it's real - ly not__ that hard.

Spoken:

A skunk! Hel - lo lit - tle skunk, how might your day be? I'd like to say "Hel -

F G Am G

lo" but I don't know if you'll spray me! I'll do the on - ly thing I know__ to

Hello, Mr Pigeon

continued from previous page

F C Am F G C
say. "Hel - lo." Ac-tual - ly, on sec-ond thought, I'll just let you go!

A m Last Bridge G F C A m
So ma - ny an - i - mals — share the place we live. The more we un - der-

G D7 G G
stand them, the more love we can give. Just say "Hel -

C A m F repeat 3 times G C
lo." Just say "Hel - lo!"

Verse 1

Hello, Mr. Pigeon, it's so nice to meet you.
I'd like to say "Hello" but I'm not sure how to greet you.
I'll do the only thing I know to say, "Hello,"
I'll say (make pigeon sound 2x).
That's just how I'll go!
I'll say (make pigeon sound 2x).
That's just how I'll go!

Verse 2

Hello Mrs. Squirrel, it's so nice to meet you.
I'd like to say "Hello" but I'm not sure how to greet you.
I'll do the only thing I know to say, "Hello,"
I'll say (make squirrel sound 2x).
That's just how I'll go!
I'll say (make squirrel sound 2x).
That's just how I'll go!

Bridge

So many animals right in our backyard,
And we can meet and greet them, it's really not that hard.

Verse 3

Hello Garter Snake, it's so nice to meet you.
I'd like to say "Hello" but I'm not sure how to greet you.
I'll do the only thing I know to say, "Hello,"
I'll say (make snake sound 2x).
That's just how I'll go!
I'll say (make snake sound 2x).
That's just how I'll go!

Verse 4

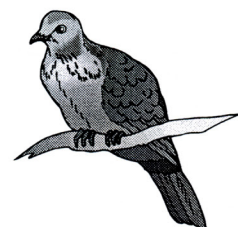
Hello Mrs. Cardinal, it's so nice to meet you.
I'd like to say "Hello" but I'm not sure how to greet you.
I'll do the only thing I know to say, "Hello,"
I'll say (make cardinal sound 2x).
That's just how I'll go!
I'll say (make cardinal sound 2x).
That's just how I'll go!

Verse 5

Hello little skunk, how might your day be?
I'd like to say "Hello" but I don't know if you'll spray me!
I'll do the only thing I know to say, "Hello."
Actually, on second thought, I'll just let you go!

Last Bridge:

So many animals, share the place we live.
The more we understand them, the more love we can give.
Just say "Hello."
Just say "Hello."
Just say "Hello."
Just say "Hello!"



News and Notes from the CMN Board

By Liz Buchanan



What a year 2009 has been! The economic downturn has impacted many of us personally and professionally, and CMN has also felt the effects. The good news is that in many respects, CMN is doing remarkably well. We're happy to report several news items which are not just good but truly great.

We had an excellent conference in October in Black Mountain, North Carolina, attended by more than ninety CMN members, friends and newcomers despite concerns that economic difficulties would keep many people away. We can't thank Marie Hopper enough for her hard work as conference chair. There were so many inspiring moments, including our time with Magic Penny recipient Tom Chapin, the terrific keynote by Billy Jonas, many great workshops and jamming galore.

We had great regional events in various parts of the country. Last spring, West Coast members and friends enjoyed a celebration of Spanish songs with CMN president Frank Hernandez, while in November in the New York Metro area, Pete Seeger and a group of elementary school children led a remarkable afternoon of musical sharing and discussion. In New England, CMN partnered with Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to put on a March regional conference that drew a diverse group of close to 90 teachers, performers and students for a wonderful day of workshops, round-robin song sharing, and a keynote discussion led by Sarah Pirtle and Louise Pascale, both of whom have ties to Lesley and CMN. The Lesley community loved it, and we'll be back again on March 13, 2010. These are just a few of the regional gatherings and song swaps that our members held over

the course of the year. Thanks to all who planned and attended these events.

To keep us connected when we weren't able to see each other in person, our online services team put out a new newsletter to keep members better informed about what's happening. Our e-mail list serve featured many discussions on topics as diverse as songs about the Civil Rights Movement, oceans and dinosaurs, along with practical info on battery operated speakers, microphones, scarves and egg shakers. Meanwhile, several of us continued working hard to prepare our Environmental Resources web pages to go live. It's taken much longer than we ever thought, but we're excited that this project is moving forward.

But along with the good news, there are signs that the times have been as tough for CMN as elsewhere. While budget figures for fiscal year 2009 are not final, it's likely that our expenses will exceed our income by between \$7,000 and \$10,000 for the year. With a budget of \$71,000, a deficit this size is of considerable concern. It's lower than our original estimate, but still too high. While we can cover the deficit temporarily through our savings, we need to bring our budget into balance.

Why are we facing this deficit? First, because our membership has dipped under 400, lower than at any time in the past decade. This means we are not collecting as much in dues as in previous years. Second, our fundraising is down. Many people simply don't have as much to give right now as they would in better times.

What are we as a Board doing about it? Everyone on the Board is tasked

with being on one of two committees: Membership and Fundraising. Non-board members can also serve on these committees. If you'd like to join, we'd be delighted to have you! The Fundraising Committee has many great ideas, including planning more fundraising concerts and seeking new corporate sponsors and advertising. Our Membership Committee is working on various outreach efforts that will let more prospective members know about what CMN does and how they can be part of it.

We have also convened an Advisory Board of longtime CMN members and other experienced players in the children's music field who can help us in these areas and many others (see sidebar). Everyone can have a role in helping CMN in both good times and bad. Our Action Core is a way for any member to get more involved in the organization, including those of you who are brand new.

Along with our efforts to generate new fundraising and membership, the board has needed to make some tough cost-cutting decisions. One is our decision, for the time-being, to take *Pass It On!* out of print form and make it available to our members electronically instead. We hope and trust that our members will support this move. We fully intend for the twice-yearly *PIO!* to be as important a member benefit as it has ever been, but we simply cannot presently afford the high costs of printing and postage.

Some people will be fine with having *PIO!* just on their computers, but if you love having a paper journal, simply load the paper into your printer and print out the

whole thing. It will look almost the same as any other copy of *PIO!* Either way, we feel this is a small way to limit CMN's environmental footprint, and in the coming years we'll consider whether the move to an electronic *PIO!* makes sense as a permanent step. As we've said before, our few members who do not have easy access to the Internet can receive a print copy of the journal on request.

Speaking of *PIO!* we are very excited that Hassaun Ali Jones-Bey from Oakland, California, has joined our team as the new editor, effective this issue. Welcome, Hassaun! We're confident that, as an editor with many years of experience, Hassaun will do a terrific job in delivering to us a journal that is filled with new insights, inspiration, ideas and songs! He can't do it alone, though, so please let Hassaun know if you have an idea for a story or would like to write a

This fall, the CMN Board named an Advisory Board to advise and assist us on various tasks, including fundraising and building our membership. The Advisory Board includes longtime CMN members and other experienced players in the children's music field who can help us in these areas and many others.

Beth Bierko
Debbie Block
Pam Donkin
Cathy Fink
Ruth Harris
Jenny Heitler-Klevans
Susan Hopkins
Dave Kinnoin
Tom Paxton
Ruth Pelham
Sarah Pirtle
Sally Rogers
Dennis Ronberg
Linda Ronberg
Barb Tilsen
Barbara Wright

column or article. His contact information is P.O. Box 1002, Alameda, CA 94501, 510/931-7646, music@boundlessgratitude.com.

On a final note, we must make special mention of two particular items that have added to CMN's bottom line! First is our "Keys to Success" fundraising campaign, which replaces the "Give A Gig" campaign from years past. We felt "Keys to Success" could help broaden our appeal—any member can give any amount. You don't have to do regular "gigs" and you can contribute any amount to purchase a key—one dollar up to ... the sky's the limit. You don't even need to be a CMN member to give. An unlimited number of keys are available! So please contribute by "buying a key!"

Finally, we wish to acknowledge Anna Stange, who gave generously of her time by taking a thirty-nine-day, 456-mile hike along the Appalachian Trail to the North Carolina conference. The financial pledges Anna gathered for CMN were considerable, but even more impressive was the inspiration she provided by taking those many steps for our organization. We're pleased to welcome Anna to our Board, along with our other new members, David


For information
on placing a paid
advertisement, contact
the CMN central office.

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

The most recent ones
are also posted in
the Board Members
Tool Kit on the
CMN Web site.

Heitler-Klevans, Janet Sclaroff, Susan Salidor and Scott Bierko. Many thanks to all of you for being willing to serve CMN in this way. And thanks as well to our outgoing board members for their service, especially to Pam Donkin for her very capable leadership on our Executive Committee, and to "Mr. Billy" Grisack, Monty Harper, Terri Roben, Steven Zelin and Erin Lee Kelly.

As always, if you'd like to contact the Board about any of these matters or any other concern, we want to hear from you. My email address is lizwin@rcn.com. You can find an email address for anyone else on the board by clicking on our names on the CMN web page.

Liz Buchanan is a singer, songwriter and children's music specialist in the Boston area. She is in her third year on the CMN Board and also serves on the Board's Executive Committee. 

Spread the Word About CMN

Do you mention CMN at your gigs, workshops, teacher trainings, or ??? We have materials to add to your testimonials.

To order a supply of membership brochures to distribute, contact Ellen Greist at 203/248-4727 or vger42@aol.com

Recent changes to the membership fees and categories made the brochure membership form insert obsolete. If you already have a supply of brochures, please contact the CMN office about updated inserts: 847/673-2243 or office@cmnonline.org

For a Braille version of the brochure, contact the CMN central office

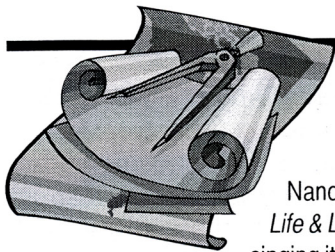


CHART YOUR COURSE

words and music by Nancy Silber ©2009

Nancy says, "The song 'Chart Your Course' was inspired by the book *First You Have to Row a Little Boat: Reflections on Life & Living* by Richard Bode. I wrote the song for the children at my school, the Green Vale School. This year we have been singing it at the end of our Friday morning assembly (for grades 1-5) every week. In October, I announced to my students that I would be singing "Chart Your Course" during the Round Robin at the 2009 CMN National Conference; and if they would like me to sing an original verse written by them, they would have to hand it in to me before I left. Within a week I received two original verses! Luckily for me, I won the beautiful CMN poster at the conference's silent auction, and I brought it back with me and posted it on the wall outside my classroom with the lead sheet and the two new verses hanging next to it. I am now receiving new verses each week, and the posting on the wall is growing. So far the additional verses have been about Chief Seattle, Rosa Parks, John Davis, Helen Keller, Barack Obama, and Christopher Columbus. Each new verse is sung during the following weekly assembly, keeping the song interesting, informative, and meaningful to the kids." "Chart Your Course" should be sung with children in the key of C, but the chords work best (especially the suspension Esus4) in the key of A with a capo on the 3rd fret.

With energy ♩ = 120

Chorus C (A) F (D) G sus4 (Esus4) G (E) C (A) A m (F#m)

Chart your course, ___ know ___ which way you're go-ing, does - n't ev - en mat - ter if you

F (D) G sus4 (Esus) G (E) C (A) F (D) G sus4 (Esus) G (E) A m (F#m)

change your mind. ___ Just chart your course, ___ steer ___ the boat you're row-ing. Keep

F (D) C/G(A/E) G (E) *Fine* C A m F G

— your eyes a - head who knows what you'll find.

C (A) A m (F#m) F (D) G sus4 (Esus) G7 (E7)

1. Lew - is and ___ Clark ___ ex - plored the West, ___ in

C (A) A m (F#m) F (D) G (E)

eight - een - o - four they start - ed on ___ their quest. ___ O - ver

A m (F#m) F (D) G sus4 (Esus) C (A)

sev - en thou - sand miles ___ there and back; ___ with

A m (F#m) F (D) G (E) G sus4 (Esus) G (E) *D.C. al Fine*

cour - age and pur - pose ___ they kept on track.

Chart Your Course

➤ continued from previous page

Chorus

Chart your course, know which way
you're going,
Doesn't even matter if you change
your mind.
Just chart your course, steer the boat
you're rowing.
Keep your eyes ahead who knows
what you'll find.

Verse 1

Lewis and Clark explored the West,
In eighteen-o-four they started on
their quest.
Over seven thousand miles there and
back;
With courage and purpose they kept
on track.

Chorus

Verse 2

J. K. Rowling was on a train
When the name Harry Potter popped
into her brain.
She planned and she planned and
thought her best
'Til seven books were sketched out;
you know the rest.

Chorus

Verse 3

Martin Luther King was a man so
wise;
He never gave up, kept his eyes on
the prize.
We are where we are today,
'Cause he and his followers led the
way.

Chorus

Verse 4

Sonia Sotomayor was born in the
Bronx.
She worked hard in school like the
rest of the "wonks."
In law school she studied every case
and tort.
She's the first Hispanic justice on the
Supreme Court.

Chorus

New Sounds

compiled by Joanie Calem

Note: These descriptions of new releases are sent in by the CMN members mentioned, but they may have been edited by

Pass It On! staff for style consistency or length. The materials have not been reviewed. In addition to the sources listed, many recordings are available at local independent children's book and record stores.



ELISE WITT

Valise

Recorded in Atlanta, Elise's new CD *Valise*, is a suitcase full of her trademark "Global, Local & Homemade Songs." Known for her eclectic taste in music, her community activism, and her travels around the world, Elise's original songs include "Clothes Swap" (a funky ode to the virtues of re-cycling and girl gatherings), "Set Us Free" (inspired by the words of Reverend Timothy MacDonald at Martin Luther King Jr.'s 80th birthday celebration at the National Historic Site in Atlanta), "Venus Between Us" (a tribute to Soul Music), "Ma Roulotte" (a French, Gypsy jazz waltz, co-written with partner Mick Kinney), "Butterfly's Mysteries" (a scientific boogie, written at the Callaway Gardens Butterfly House), "Verkehrte Welt" (Crazy Mixed Up World, a German paradox poem à la Oh Suzanna), and "Blessed Nation" (original music by Elise Witt to a poem by Pete Seeger). Songs on the CD contributed by other writers include the dreamy "Singing in My Sleep" (composed for Elise by harpist Susan Ottzen), "Jackie" (a brief history of Bebop by Lambert, Hendrix & Ross), Maria Elena Walsh's "Como La Cigarra" (Like the Cicada - an Argentine anthem to the power of music for survival), Marlene Dietrich's "I Still Have a Suitcase in Berlin," and a couple of

wonderful duets with the inimitable Mick Kinney.

CDs are available through Elise's website: <http://www.elisewitt.com>, and at www.cdbaby.com/cd/elisewitt4 (costs vary from site to site)

CHERYL MELODY

Friends Forever

Come join Cheryl Melody and all the wonderful characters in the *Friends Forever* story as we dream of a world where we can live together happily ...with just a "Smile of Friendship!" The CD is approximately 56 minutes long, with bonus tracks, and a FREE download of the complete story upon CD purchase. This is a story that Cheryl worked on for about two years, writing the story and the songs, doing the voice-overs, and singing on the CD as well, with the help of a few children friends. This is a heartwarming, original musical story, with themes for children that center around inclusion, meaningful friendships, effective verbal and nonverbal communication, self-esteem, teamwork, transformation, diversity celebration, respect, caring, manners, sharing, creative writing and reading, and love...all within a child's world. The story is geared for Pre-K through Grade 2.

CDs are \$15 (plus S+H) and are available through Cheryl's website: www.cherylmelody.com, and at <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/cmelody7>

JONI AVRUTICK AND GIGI WEISMAN

In A Tree

Gigi and Joni's debut CD *In A Tree* has 15 original songs that will make you want to sing along! The songs playfully cover themes of friendship, community, science and nature. With a special recipe for a healing "Vegetable Soup," a 5-part "Human Body Symphony," a waltz about the many gifts trees give us and a catchy call-and-response clean-up song, this CD can be

continued on next page ➤

New Sounds

➔continued from previous page

enjoyed at home or in Pre-K–4th grade classrooms. Gigi and Joni's warm harmonies, along with Gigi's soaring violin and Joni's six-string strumming complement the smart songs on this album for kids!

CDs are \$15 (plus \$3 s+h) and are available from Joni AvRutick, 3 Pavilion Ave., So. Burlington, VT 05403, tel: 802/355-0043; or from www.cdbaby.com; Javrutick@yahoo.com, or gigiweisman@gmail.com

PATRICIA SHIH

Your ImaginEngine

Take a train ride through your imagination with Patricia and friends! A unique concept album, *Your ImaginEngine* winds through 23 tracks: 12 songs and 11 spoken scenes. These include favorite cover songs from other award-winning songwriter friends, plus some brand new ones Patricia has written just for the CD. Together with her listeners and a rocking group of kids, Patricia boards the "ImaginEngine" to explore different places and situations, like whether growing up is good or bad, who wins arguments between parents and children, how to practice and persevere, all while travelling to different places. Patricia is joined by some wonderful musician friends: Bill Harley, Gregg Karukas, Heather Forest, Toby Walker, Brady Rymer, and Robbi K along with many other local treasures!

CDs are \$15 and can be purchased at <http://www.patriciashih.com/recordings.html>; www.cdbaby.com and www.Amazon.com.

SARAH PIRTLE

Pocketful of Wonder

Pocketful of Wonder is Sarah's sixth CD for children with songs that help young children ages 2 to 10 years old feel connected with the earth. Sarah received the 2007 Magic Penny Award from CMN for lifetime achievement in children's music. These sixteen new songs

include "Let's Go Outside," the humorous "A Seed Knows What to Do," and "Kooka Million." She also has songs that result from directing a farm school: "The Chicken Song," "Meadow Waltz," and "Snow on the Farm." As in her previous CD's, she includes a traditional song in Spanish. A free forty-page activity guide for the songs can be downloaded at her website: www.sarahpirtle.com.

CDs are \$15 (plus \$3 s+h) and are available from A Gentle Wind at www.gentlewind.com, or from Sarah at pirtle22@hotmail.com.

JOANIE CALEM

Shanah Tovah, Shanah M'tukah

A Cycle of Songs for the Jewish Year

The title of Joanie's second CD is Hebrew for "Have a good, sweet year!" It is a 32-track treasure trove of songs for every holiday of the Jewish Year, starting at *Rosh HaShanah*, the Jewish New Year in the autumn. There are twelve favorite Israeli holiday songs that Joanie sings in English and Hebrew, telling the stories of the holidays and the customs that accompany them, twelve of Joanie's fun originals, and eight traditional folk songs. A full lesson guide and lyric sheet is available at Joanie's website with suggestions for how to use the songs for home, classrooms, and performances. Joanie is joined on the CD by her daughter Tenara on vocals and violin. With this new CD, the whole family will be singing and dancing throughout the year.

CDs are \$15 (plus s+h) and are available by emailing Joanie at jcalem@columbus.rr.com; on Joanie's website, www.joaniecalem.com; and at www.cdbaby.com.

MAR HARMAN

unFROGettable

This is Mar's thirty-first CD. On this CD she has recorded 12 traditional songs that she loved to


sing as a child growing up in New Jersey, as well as six originals. *unFROGettable* is geared for children ages 3–10, features many different instruments and children helping Mar with the singing. The songs are all games that can be played with groups of happy kids!

CDs are \$15 and are available at Mar's website: www.musicwithmar.com; at www.cdbaby.com; and at www.apple.com/itunes.

GINA AMODEO/HARMONIC CONVERSION

Soaring High


Gina teaches elementary school at Monte Vista St. Elementary School, in an urban, immigrant neighborhood in Los Angeles. She and the school piano teacher taught a songwriting workshop to all 511 kids at the school, with the kids writing the lyrics to the songs, and the teachers writing the music. The neighborhood is in an area saddled with gang problems, and during the writing and recording process, there were several shootings near school and a dozen lockdowns. It's tough for these kids, so creating this album was very important for their morale. The CD has 12 original songs, with themes including peace, animals, science, imagination, dreams, graduation and others. The children are all singing on the recording.

CDs are \$14.00, and are available from www.cdbaby.com and at www.itunes.com. 



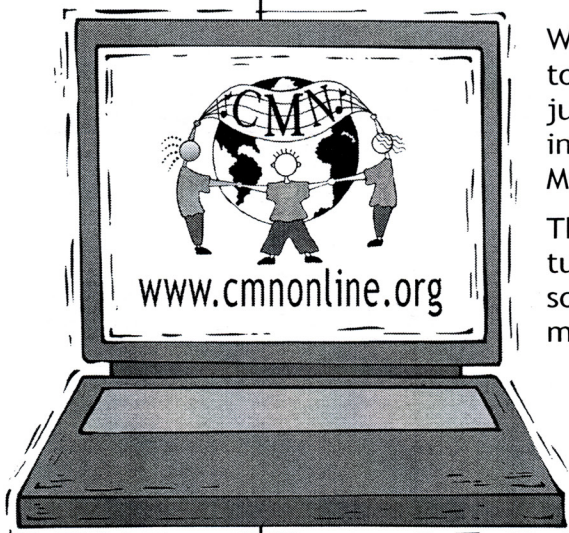
Remembering Bess Lomax Hawes

After having spent her life working to preserve and encourage folk arts, Bess Hawes died November 27, 2009, in Portland, Oregon. A well-known folklorist, her career also included being a teacher, author, songwriter, and performing musician. In the 1970s and '80s she established and directed the Folk and Traditional Arts Program at the National Endowment for the Arts, designed to encourage and promote the traditional arts identified with the multicultural heritage of the United States. During her tenure at the NEA, the widely celebrated National Heritage Fellowships were established to honor master traditional artists. In 1993, she received the National Medal of Arts from President Bill Clinton.

Members of the Children's Music Network were privileged to experience Bess Lomax Hawes in person when she shared her wisdom and humor in an enthusiastically received keynote address at our 1999 National Conference in Petaluma, California. For many, her talk beautifully expressed the mission and spirit of CMN and honored the work of its members. She was featured in an interview in *Pass It On!* #31, Winter 1999. We are all beneficiaries of her legacy. 



Check out the CMN Web site's new look!



				
Sing Our Online Library has Peace Resources, Toolkits and Links and more...	Read <i>Pass It On!</i> has in-depth articles, songs to sing, and more...	Connect Participate in Events that celebrate music, our children, and the work in our lives	Honor The CMN Magic Penny Award honors those who empower children through music	Join Join Us and open your door to children's music at its best

We've redesigned the entire site, and it's easier than ever to get around on on it. Use the peace resources songs jukebox. Print a form to submit a song for the developing environmental resources page. See photos of all past Magic Penny Awards.

The Web site team is continually expanding existing features and developing new ones. We update once a month, so look in often for the latest events information and new material.

Don't have Internet access at home?
Free or low-cost services are often available at libraries, Internet cafés, universities & colleges, copy centers such as Kinko's, airports and hotels.



JUST DON'T KICK THE CAT

words and music by Jack Pearson
©2004 OtterTunity, Inc. BMI

Jack says, "I wrote the song for my program on bullying that encourages kids to honor and express their feelings without taking license to hurt others. I have the kids jump in on the choruses at 'just don't kick the cat!' I teach them to sing it but I find it often becomes more of a shout, which is fine. Letting them own it by shouting drives the message home in a way they'll remember."

G C G

I woke up Mon-day morn - ing ___ Feel-in' kind of mean and mad. ___ The

D Em A D

hon - est truth is I did - n't know ___ what was mak-in' me ___ feel bad. I

C G B7 C

stomped off a-cross the floor. I heard a voice from the kit-chen door. *Spoken* "It's

G D7 G *Chorus* C

o - kay to be ___ angry, but just don't kick the cat!" It's o - kay to be ___ an - gry,

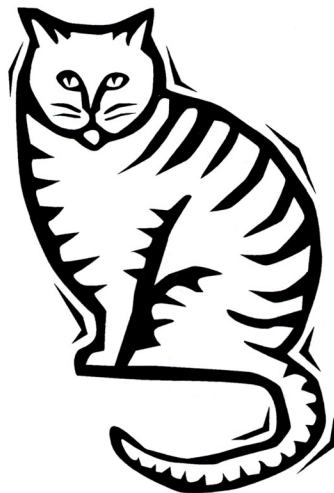
G A D D7

just don't kick the cat. No need to keep the things ___ you feel all stuffed in-side your hat. We

G C G D7 G

all have prob - lems some - times, there's no shame in that. It's o - kay to be an - gry, just don't kick the cat!

Just Don't Kick the Cat
→ continued from previous page



Verse 1

I woke up Monday morning feelin' kind of mean and mad.
The honest truth is I didn't know what was makin' me feel bad.
I stomped off across the floor. I heard a voice from the kitchen door
(Spoken: Mom said,)
"It's okay to be angry, but just don't kick the cat!"

Chorus

It's okay to be angry, just don't kick the cat.
No need to keep the things you feel all stuffed inside your hat.
We all have problems sometimes, there's no shame in that.
It's okay to be angry, just don't kick the cat.

Verse 2

I hated to admit it, but I knew that my mom was right.
Feeling sad and small inside doesn't make it okay to fight.
She said, "Words are the thing to use if you wake up with the blues.
It's okay to be angry, just don't kick the cat!"

Chorus

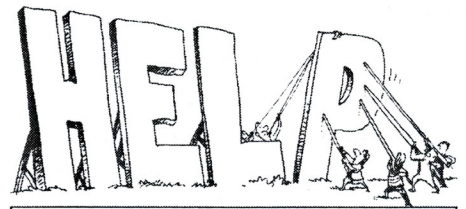
Musical Interlude

Verse 3

The fact is cats are people too, 'cause the cats are you and me,
And the truth about us cats all boils down to this, you see,
My right to swing my foot ends right where the next cat begins,
(Spoken: You see,)
It's okay to be angry, just don't kick the cat.

Last Chorus

It's okay to be angry, just don't kick the cat.
No need to keep the things you feel all stuffed inside your hat.
We all have problems sometimes, there's no shame in that.
It's okay to be angry, just don't kick the cat.
It's okay to be angry, just don't kick the cat.



BE A PIO! VOLUNTEER

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?
- ◆ 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 the CMN office (see inside front cover for contact information). Let us know what skills you can contribute. Thanks!

Regional Reports

compiled by Leslie Zak

In addition to the reports found here, you may find more recently updated information about regional activities on the CMN Web site (www.cmnonline.org).

CANADA

There is no news to report from this region.

GREAT LAKES

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C) 513/478-3750
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and

Leslie Zak
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We have just elected Lisa Heintz to represent us along with Leslie Zak. Lisa, who is genuinely organized and full of positive energy, replaces the dedicated and attentive Joanie Calem, who is super busy on the CMN Board these days. The CMN national conference, in addition to being a great experience for all involved, also brought our regional members together for face-to-face meetings, which are relatively rare occurrences within the far-flung geography of our region. As we got reacquainted in North Carolina last October, we also discussed (and are still considering) the possibility of hosting our next regional conference in Columbus, Ohio. So watch for announcements and check the CMN website for further news.



MID-ATLANTIC

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Our region was well represented in October at the CMN National Conference, and we headed home from North Carolina, feeling revitalized by the good spirits, company, and music. We are currently planning several events for the winter and spring seasons of 2010, including a joint songwriting session with the Philadelphia Area Songwriters Alliance (PASA) and a fundraising concert. And we're certainly looking for input—and volunteers—from members in our region.

MIDWEST

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Settling back in after the exciting National Conference in North Carolina, as bright leaves fell, mellow lights faded and winter brought a string of holidays, we decided to be kind to our region's members by not overloading them during the holiday crunch. We waited until the first days of January to hold a festive Chocolate Song Swap at Brigid (active chocoholic with no plans for recovery) Finucane's lovely home in Skokie, Illinois. The theme was Winter Songs.

NEW ENGLAND

Janet Beatrice
200 Main Street
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978/897-5444
heartbeatmusic@comcast.net
and
Sammie Haynes
PO Box 464
South Berwick, ME 03908-0464
207/384-3234
sammiekids@aol.com

CMN New England has been hopping! Recently Sammie Haynes and Janet Beatrice were elected new co-reps for the region, replacing the hard-working and talented crew of Amy Conley, Sandy Pliskin, and Jessamyn Stylos-Allan. Our thanks go out to them for their years of good work. New England was well-represented at the memorable CMN National Conference in North Carolina. It was so heartwarming to sing and visit with one another! We're especially excited that CMN's 2011 conference will be held in New England. Sammie Haynes and Fran Friedman are co-chairing the event. Our first job is to find a suitable venue, so if you know of a site that will support 100-plus CMNers—or more, we hope—please let us know right away! In late October, Janet hosted a delightful Autumn Song Swap in Maynard, Massachusetts. CMNers and non-CMNers shared fun and sometimes—it was one week before Halloween—spooky children's songs. We learned lots of great songs and really enjoyed a performance by three-year-old Filip, who also offered a charming performance at our New England Gathering last year! Speaking of which, our next New England Spring Gathering is set for Saturday, March 13, at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. We found this to be a fantastic location last year and are delighted to be able to return there in 2010. We're looking forward to welcoming several new members, and to welcoming our long-time members and attending non-

members as well. Soon after that, some of us will be participating in the New England Folk Festival Association's annual family festival, where we'll present a CMN round robin, "Songs to Heal Our Planet." The festival runs from April 23-25th in Mansfield, Massachusetts. Please check the New England Folk Festival Association's website for actual dates and times: www.neffa.org. We thank Laura DeCesare and Amy Conley for working on this event. Please watch for monthly e-letters and check the website for updates!



The group joins in a song
NYM photos by Gerry Hinson

NEW YORK METRO

Beth Bierko
999 Cliff Road
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598
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bbierko@optonline.net

The NY Metro region held a wonderful—even amazing—event in November at the Beacon Sloop Club, on the shore of the majestic Hudson River, organized by Nancy Hershatter and a dedicated crew



Local schoolchildren were special guests at the New York Regional Gathering



Kids and adults share their experiences with song writing

of CMNers. Our special guests included: legendary performer and CMN founding member Pete Seeger; Clearwater's Director of the Beacon Tideline Discovery Program Dan Einbender; and The Kids from Room 12 with their amazing teacher Tery Udell. After a delicious potluck lunch, the Kids shared songs they had learned from Dan and Pete, many with original lyrics written by the children about their studies and the environment. The Kids also fielded questions from the 30-plus attendees from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania and even Wisconsin. They offered insights into their songwriting process and what they'd learned by working together musically with Dan, Pete and Tery. Afterwards, there was a song swap. It was a magical day for all that set the CMN members' e-group buzzing. Frank Squillante wrote, "Pete Seeger has steadfastly shown the world that Great Goodness can be brought about simply through 'the power of song!'" And there we CMNers were, with Pete, sharing a simple potluck and great music in a little old boathouse with a tree growing right up through its roof! See the article (on page 14) in this issue of *PIO!* for more details. We also elected Beth Bierko as our new regional rep. Beth hopes to reinvigorate this region by creating more frequent events, increasing local membership and creating

opportunities for more member involvement. Call or email her for ways to get involved, or with ideas for an event in your area. On January 18th in New York City we celebrated Martin Luther King Day by sharing songs that honored Dr. King and celebrated his legacy of civil rights and non-violence.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Judy Bayse
886 Nantucket Court
Sunnyvale, CA 94087-1744
408/720-8338
judybayse@sbcglobal.net

We are planning next year's national conference at Presentation Center in the beautiful redwoods of the Santa Cruz Mountains. And Liz Hannan is heading up an enormous volunteer effort with much support from local and national members. We need all the helping hands and hearts we can enlist. So please, if you haven't already, let Liz know what job you'd like to help with. Patricia Shih will grace us with a rare visit in February of 2010, and the delightful opportunity to host a workshop with her on Friday, February 19 at the Lantern in San Francisco. Check the CMN website for details. September brought a very special gathering to memorialize and remember our past Regional Rep, the much beloved (and gone too soon) Lisa Atkinson. We had a great song swap at Bing Nursery School followed by Lisa's family sharing songs and stories with us. We could feel Lisa's spirit in the room as we sang her songs and remembered her strength and humor. Beth Wise from Bing Nursery School (who has also offered to co-chair the next Northern California regional conference. YEA, BETH!) secured the fantastic and newly restored Bing Tower House for our afternoon event, which concluded in an intimate gathering for pizza and more songs at Dennis & Linda Ronberg's Linden Tree book and music store.

continued on next page ➤

Regional Reports

➔continued from previous page

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

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 and
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 C) 971/533-5548
 DOrleansNJ@comcast.net
 and
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 PMB 252
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 West Linn, OR 97068
 D) 503/699-1814
 E) 503/699-0234
 greta@greta.net

We had a fantastic Pacific Northwest Regional gathering at the


Portland Children's Museum. First Fridays of each month are "Free Fridays" at the museum. The place was jumping! CMN members and friends met for a potluck, and at 6:30 PM led a sing-along in the theatre. After museum hours, we launched our own song circle, ate, and chatted about business and whatever else came to mind. Some stayed for a sleep-over; others left and came back the next morning. In the morning we ate and made plans for future events. We had new folks, returning folks, and even a new member sign-up. Ellen Johnson, who drove 300 miles to attend, received the prize for traveling the greatest distance. Expect more events at the museum and informal workshops and meetings at local (Portland) homes. We also hope to organize meetings in Washington State and are looking for additional venues for sing-along outreach, such as kid-friendly clubs, coffee houses, and summer festivals.

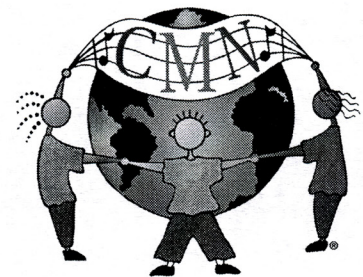
SOUTHEAST

There is no news to report from this region other than having hosted a very well-received national conference in October. Please see the conference report page for more details.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Linda Kay Johnson
 11830 Juniette Street
 Culver City, CA 90230
 310/827-3589
 Kylerkay@aol.com


There is no news to report from this region. 

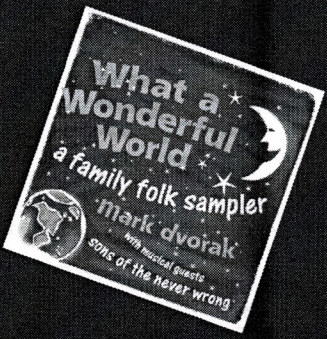



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How to Submit Something to ***Pass It On!***

CALL FOR ARTICLES!

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

- ✓ address topics of interest to CMN members...
- ✓ in some way relate to CMN's mission...
- ✓ be clear, concise, and reasonably well written...

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

Please tell us if your article has been submitted for publication elsewhere, or if it is a reprint.

We welcome photos and graphics, which will be published as space permits.

Deadline for Winter/Spring 2010 issue:

Except for regional reports, all materials must be submitted by **March 15, 2010**

Deadline for Fall 2010 issue: June 15, 2010

Send lesson-plan ideas and all articles, photographs, artwork, and captions to:

Hassaun Ali Jones-Bey
P.O. Box 1002
Alameda, CA 94501
music@boundless
gratitude.com

Submission via e-mail or disk is preferred.

CALL FOR SONGS!

Most of the songs published in *PIO!* are contributed by your fellow CMN members. Please—share *your* works with us, too!
In every issue of *PIO!* we try to include...

- ✓ a song written by a young person...
- ✓ a song representative of cultural diversity...
- ✓ a song written by people from various parts of the country, or the world...
- ✓ a song on a topic that is in some way representative of CMN's mission.

Songs should be submitted in lead sheet format if possible; also send an MP3 file or a recording (a home-grown cassette tape is fine).

Each submission should include a title, and should properly credit the author(s).

Copyright dates and owners should be noted; copyright ownership remains with the author.

Submission implies that permission to print has been obtained from all authors (although you will be contacted should your song be selected for publication).

Send songs to:

Joanie Calem
Songs Editor
4890 Sharon Avenue
Columbus, OH 43214
jcalem@columbus.rr.com

CALL FOR MEDIA INFORMATION! Children's electronic media news and information should be sent to:

PJ Swift
Media Editor
305 Dickens Way
Santa Cruz, CA 95064
pjswift@sbcglobal.net

CALL FOR NEW RELEASES!

Send notification of items released in the last NINE months to:

Mara Beckerman
P.O. Box 1092
Cupertino, CA 95015-1092
408/736-3580
mara@storysong.com

Please include date of release in description.

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CALL FOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR!

Letters to the Editor may be sent to:

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P.O. Box 1002
Alameda, CA 94501
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gratitude.com

Submission via e-mail is preferred.



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- Northern California Pacific Northwest Southern California
- Southeast

If you're new, we will send you a CMN welcome packet with information about accessing the Members Directory and other member services.

MAIL THIS APPLICATION with payment
 (sorry, no purchase orders) to:

The Children's Music Network
P.O. Box 1341 • Evanston, IL 60204-1341

MAIN NAME(S) to head *Members Directory* listing

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For institutional (library, school), business, or corporate membership, NAME of CONTACT PERSON to include

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