
PASS IT ON!TM

The Journal of The Children's Music Network

ISSUE #32

Spring 1999

Jennifer Fletcher: Saving the arts in Oregon



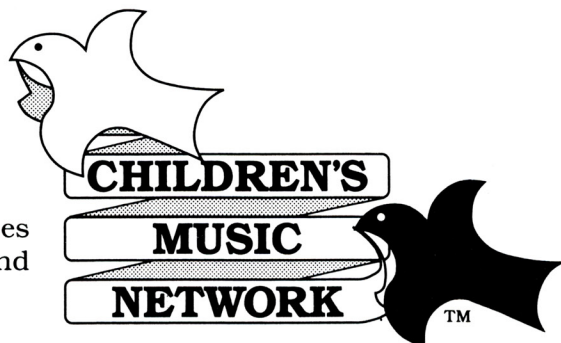
Inside...

- Mr. Holland's Opus: The Sequel ■ Living and Singing in the Key of Fun ■
 - Meet CMN's New Executive Director ■ A Gig in Death Valley ■ CAEYC Advocacy Center
 - Seeing through the Eyes of a Child ■ Six Songs to Dance, Play, and Sing ■
-

Why there is a CMN...

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

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



WHO WE ARE...

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

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

WHAT WE DO...

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

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

OUR PRINCIPLES...

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

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Lisa Atkinson, Lisa Garrison, Joanne Hammil, Phil Hoose, Susan Hopkins, Bonnie Lockhart, José-Luis Orozco, Suni Paz, Ruth Pelham, Daphne Petri, Sarah Pirtle, Sally Rogers, Barbara Wright.

With deep appreciation, we acknowledge

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

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

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

PASS IT ON! TM

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Editorial Page

Introduction

by Susan Keniston

We hope that you'll have fun exploring the pages of this issue, at least as much fun as the editors and contributors have had in writing about its theme, "the importance of fun." As our writers suggest, fun is elemental, as essential to us as the air we breathe.

Upcoming themes are "war and peace" for fall and, to start us off in the year 2000, a winter issue on "songs-into-books and books-into-songs." Keep in mind the due dates for each issue, printed at the bottom of our inside cover, if you're thinking of writing on these topics.

There was a lot of positive response to Sandy Byer's article on the Midwest gathering in the last issue. We continue to encourage members to write about CMN events, particularly when they involve joining our energies with other groups in the work of community building. So check out Susan Hopkins' piece on the Advocacy Center, and let us know about things you or your region are doing that fit this niche. Also in this issue is an introduction to Cyndi Pock, CMN's new executive director, who has begun work on several exciting projects that promote CMN's mission in the wider world.

You'll find the Letters to the Editors column is satisfyingly plump this time. *PIO!* presents a great opportunity for dialogue among our members on various topics of interest to us. As did the letter writers for this issue, if you have thoughts about something that you've read in our pages, or if you have a question or problem you'd like other CMN members to think about with you, write to *PIO!*

And now, on to our editorial, a collaboration among the editors and several of the fun-loving suspects we rounded up to write features for this issue. Enjoy!

Editorial: The Importance of Fun

by Bob Blue, Jackson Gillman, Susan Keniston,
Tom Pease, and Nancy Tucker

We, the people of The Children's Music Network, in order to do some of the important work that has to be done, sometimes have to remind each other to have fun. This spring issue is dedicated to the importance of fun. And in the spirit of playfulness, we're writing this editorial together. We're not the Children's Writing Network, but we're lucky to have many talented writers among us.

Bob: Our CMN national gatherings attract people from all over the world. We come partly to find ways to enhance our work with children, and we do find much of what we're looking for. But that's not all we do. We also have a lot of fun. Many people stay up much later than they ordinarily do, and much later than they plan to. And while some may stay up to talk about ways to use music to help children, more stay up to sing songs that don't have anything to do with today's young children. While our children sleep, we sing songs that take us back to our own youth—songs that are fun to sing.

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"When Someone Said No, I Just Tried Harder"

An Interview with
Jennifer Fletcher

Conducted by Phil Hoose

Life imitates art big time at Grant High. Grant High is the Portland, Oregon, school where the movie "Mr. Holland's Opus" was filmed. The film told the story of a public high school teacher whose energy and passion saved a music program in a school district in which funds for the arts had been slashed. True to life, in 1994, Portland voters passed "Measure Five," reducing property taxes and thereby gutting language and arts programs. By 1998 there was only one music, art, or drama teacher for every 377 high school students in the Portland public school system. The ratio was even worse for middle school students.

And, just like the movies, Grant High has a savior, too, though she is not a teacher. Jennifer Fletcher is a sixteen-year-old Grant High sophomore who loves drama and hates narrow-mindedness. Frustrated by cuts in soul-nourishing classes and activities, Jennifer set out to restore arts funding not just at Grant High, but for all of Portland's 60,000 students. In just four months, she organized a benefit concert featuring singer Jackson Browne that sold 2,700 tickets and netted over \$100,000 for school arts programs. Rising before dawn to begin days of faxing and phoning, Jennifer nailed down hundreds of details—from booking a concert hall to printing programs to securing limo service to making sure that chilled mineral water was waiting in Browne's dressing room. She sought the advice of mentors and charted her course as she went along. And then after the concert she set up a fund managed by stu-

dents from each of Portland's public schools to distribute the money.

Jennifer Fletcher lives in a house in Portland with her mother and her nine-year-old sister, Sarah Henderson. She spoke by telephone with *PIO!*'s Phil Hoose in December of 1998.

* * * * *

PIO! How did the arts cuts affect you personally?

JF: I'm into drama. My favorite drama teacher retired because she couldn't deal with all the cuts; it was too frustrating for her. She felt she couldn't do the job she needed to do with so little money. So I'm not taking drama this year. My freshman drama teacher left, too. They're cutting everything; it's just ridiculous. I wanted to get into an art history class, but there were 80 kids who signed up and only one teacher, so I didn't take it. There are only two full-time music teachers in all of the district of Portland. Our school has one of the only bands in Portland, and they have to raise money to pay for field trips. My sister goes to an elementary school, and two years ago they just cut all the music from the elementary schools. That's so important. If students want to continue music in high school, they won't have any background.

PIO! Was there any one straw that broke the camel's back for you?

JF: Yes. Our school does a huge drama production every year—like 600 people in it—and we get the whole community involved. My teacher said we couldn't do it this year because we still hadn't paid off last year's debts. Well, these productions are supposed to make money, not lose it. Students were paying money out of their own pockets, like fifty dollars, to pay off the debt so we could have the production this year. This is when I thought, "Oh my goodness, we really are suffering from these budget cuts." I started speaking with stu-



Jennifer's 1998
Grant High school
picture.

dents from other schools. Jefferson High School is a magnet school for the arts in Portland. If you want to do dance or music or art, you go to that school. But now they don't have a music program, and it took a corporate grant to save their dance program.

PIO! How did you come up with the idea of a benefit concert?

JF: My action came out of my sophomore thesis paper, called an I-Search. You write, like, a thirty-page report on a topic. I wanted to do a hands-on topic. And after my teacher told me we couldn't do the drama production this year, I thought, "I'll raise money for the arts. I'll figure out how to do a benefit concert to raise money for the arts." My paper was on how to create a foundation and how to do a benefit concert for the arts.

PIO! Had you tried other things first, like appearing before the school board to appeal for public funds?

JF: No. The concert was all that I tried.

PIO! Had you ever organized anything before?

JF: I organized my Amnesty International group to go to San Francisco. I joined my school chapter freshman year. The next year all the seniors graduated and we didn't have much leadership. I read in the newspaper that there was to be an annual general meeting in San Francisco, and I thought it would be good if our group went. I proposed that we go, and everyone said yes, and then I helped set up a lot of fundraisers. We all flew down there and stayed four days.

March 9 1998

Dear Jackson Browne,

Hi. My name is Jennifer Fletcher. I met you
concert at Sokol Blosser Winery. We got
was great talking

We learned a lot about the organization and their campaigns. In the end, we all had to pay about \$75.

PIO!: Why did you pick Jackson Browne as your concert headliner?

JF: I used to live in Hawaii and he did a lot of benefit concerts there. We went to a couple of those when I was real young. I knew he was a man who was aware of what was going on. I felt like he would review my cause, that he would listen. And I grew up on his music. I've been to a lot of his concerts. I met him once in 1995 at a concert. I just had this feeling about him. He's a strong advocate for Amnesty International, and I'm really into that.

PIO!: When they found out, did any of your friends ask you why you didn't pick somebody more your own age?

JF: Yeah, a couple of them did. But I explained that it's the adults who need to be aware of this problem, and they have the money. We can initiate what we want to happen, but adults have the power and money. I thought about someone younger, like maybe a local band, but it's the parents who need to be educated. I'm not sure their kids tell them, "Hey, I'm paying my lunch money for drama."

PIO!: How'd you get in touch with Jackson Browne?

JF: I looked on his CDs and found three different addresses, so I wrote a letter to each address. While I was waiting for him to answer, I did my research on organizing benefit concerts. I couldn't find many books

to help me. They all said, "Don't do this." "This is a bad idea." "This'll make you lose money, not gain it." Then I handed in the paper, and three days later he called.

PIO!: He called your home?

JF: Yeah, he called my home while I was at school. I came home, and my best friend was with me. My mom was at work. I pressed *play* on the answering machine and walked into another room. This voice said, "Hello, this is Jackson Browne. This is a message for Jennifer." At first I thought it was a big joke, because I had just made this presentation to my class about how I wanted him to come. And I figured one of my classmates was doing this. But the message went on, like, "I read your letter and I've been carrying it around with me for a couple of months now..." I just stood there and thought, "Oh, my goodness." I sprinted back into the room and pressed *replay* about ten more times and started screaming and jumping. My friend was going, "Yes, Yes!" Then I called my mom at work and told her and she thought I was joking. So I played it for her on the phone and she started going [Jennifer makes an unusual sound here].

PIO!: Did you have a backup singer in mind if Jackson hadn't worked out?

JF: No.

PIO!: It was all or nothing? If he hadn't said yes you wouldn't have done the concert?

JF: Probably not. I would have gone around it some other way. I never really considered it because I just kind of knew it would happen. I just

had a feeling he would call. I just kept thinking, "He hasn't gotten my letter yet. It's gonna happen."

PIO!: So when you went to school the next day and told everyone, what did they say?

JF: I didn't really tell anyone at first. But the paper did an article. And I'd be walking around the halls and I'd hear people whispering, "Is that girl from the newspaper?" All my friends were pretty supportive, except at the beginning, when I told people what I was going to try, some said, "Hah! You're not gonna get him." It stung at first, but it motivated me more to go out there and, well, not to prove 'em wrong, but...well, yeah, to prove 'em wrong. Then when I told them, they said, like, "Oh, we're really sorry," you know.

PIO!: Was there a villain? Did anyone oppose your plan?

JF: No. Not a villain, but people didn't really start to support it until they realized it was really gonna happen. That was fine.

PIO!: When you wrote your I-Search plan, what were some of the things you learned that really helped you?

JF: It's funny. If I were to rewrite it, there are so many things I'd change. I interviewed a lot of philanthropists, but not many who had supported benefit concerts. But they did help me with getting the venue and outlining the steps I had to go through.

PIO!: How did you pick a venue?

JF: I really wanted the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. It's one of the nicest concert halls in Portland. It's old, and it's gorgeous. It's about medium-sized, and it's well known. Jackson's played there before. I wanted it to be nice, and intimate. But big enough to make some money. I called them up and spoke with them. They didn't take me seriously at first. It was like, "Yeah, sure, whatever." Jackson Browne's management had asked for dates

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Interview: Fletcher

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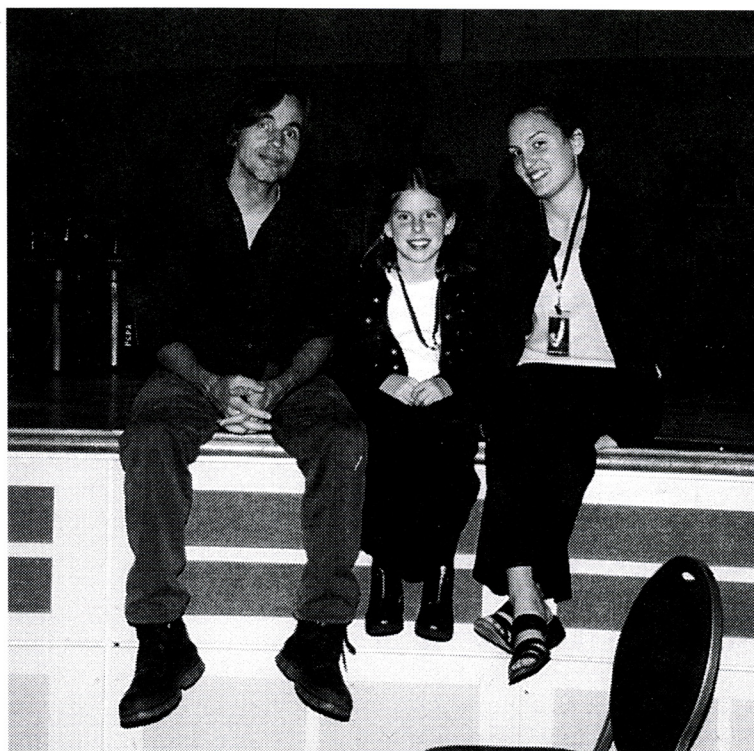
in October and November, but the Hall people wouldn't give me specific dates. So a woman who schedules authors and poets there made calls for me, and told me some free dates, and then I called back and asked them to hold those dates for me. But they didn't pencil it in until September, and the concert was in October. It was so frustrating.

PIO!: Did Jackson's people have to call the concert hall staff so they would believe you?

JF: No, I told them what I wanted and they said okay, so I went about my business thinking this was a confirmed date. And then I found out in September that it wasn't. I was so incredibly upset. The venue was the hardest thing for me to do. It was so expensive. I wanted everything to be donated. I wanted to get the community involved. And it would maximize the amount of money that would come in. But they wouldn't donate the hall. It was a big learning step for me. I had to be firm. I had to grow up. I had to act a lot more mature with them. I couldn't back down or be intimidated by them. So I pushed them and pushed them and they kept dropping the price until it hit rock bottom. It started at \$20,000 to rent the hall, including insurance and union fees. And it ended up at \$13,000. And then I worked a deal with the insurance company where I paid them and they gave me the money back. The union did the same thing.

PIO!: Did you assemble a core team of helpers?

JF: Not really. I was in Seattle during much of the time I was negotiating for the venue. Then when I got back I did it by myself. My friend Ian Shaughnessy was my "personal chauffeur." I don't have my license, so he drove me around. He helped the most. He did a lot of the mailings with me and he was



Jennifer relaxes after the show with her sister, Sarah Henderson, and Jackson Browne.

there for the concert. He was wonderful. He spent the 48 hours before the concert with me. The program wasn't printed. We had to pick people up from the airport and run to the printers. It was crazy.

PIO!: How much did your mom help you?

JF: A lot. She was incredibly supportive. My mom's like the Brownie mom, the soccer mom; she organizes all these things. Each night I'd make a list of what I had to do the next day and she'd type it up for me in checklist form. She kept me on track, and pushed me a lot. Like, when I had to argue for the venue she really pushed me to do that. She didn't do it for me, but she gave me the confidence and support and the structure.

PIO!: Were there others who were especially helpful?

JF: I had a lot of help from a man named Dave Lieken who co-owns a concert promotion company here. He mentored me through a lot. He donated printing charges. Jackson Browne's management company

set me up with him. He helped me a lot. I never talked to Jackson at all as I was organizing, but I got a lot of help from his personal assistant, Cree Clover.

PIO!: What was a typical day like for you at the peak?

JF: At the peak I'd get up at 5:30 AM and fax for an hour. Then I'd get ready for school. Then, at school, I'd spend my lunch period making phone calls from my counselor's office. I didn't enroll for drama because my teacher left, so I used that period working for my counselor, and he let me use sixth period to call more people and set up interviews. The amount of hours I spent on the phone was crazy. Calling people back. You call them back, you call them back, you call them back. People leave messages open-ended on purpose, so you won't call back. They say, "We'd love to help you," but it's vague, or a little discouraging. They don't

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SPRINGTIME

words by Eli Berger & Ilana Cohen
music by Ilana Cohen
© 1999 Berger & Cohen

Fourth graders Eli and Ilana wrote this song spontaneously by themselves. Delighted by the girls' performance of this original composition, their music teacher, Nancy Silber, transcribed the piece and added chords to accompany the rock and roll style of the music. She describes the girls' singing of this number as "exuberant, with lots of joy!"

Joyfully w/ Rock & Roll Feel



Spring-time's com-in', sound the hap-py bells, Now ev'-ry one's re-joic-in' oh!



Spring-time's com-in', sound the hap-py bells, Now ev'-ry one's re-joic-in' oh!



The grass is green-er and the sun is shin-ing down on



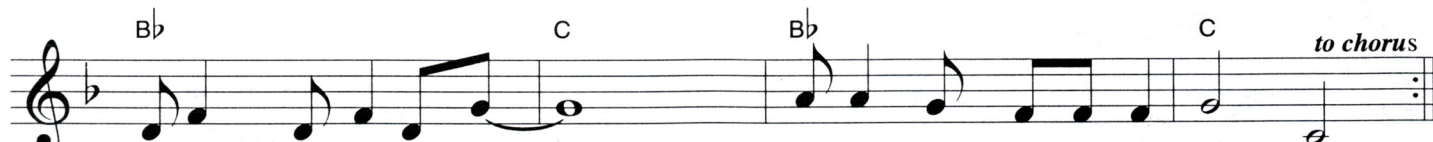
us; The flow'rs are a-grow-in' ev'-ry-where the eye can see;



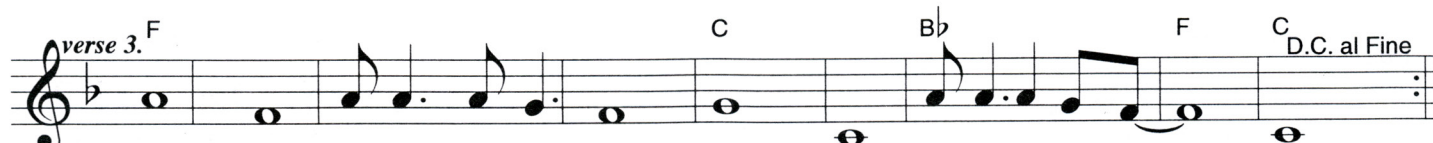
Ev'-ry-thing is such a beaut-i-ful sight to me; 'cause...



Bul-ly 'cross the street dis-a-grees that A-pril show-ers bring the May flow-ers,



And if you don't a-gree look out the win-dow and see; 'cause...



Clear skies shin-in' down on me; Blue-birds sing-in' in the tree; 'cause...

Playfulness

by Nancy Tucker

Is playfulness important in a performance? Absolutely! As an audience member and as a performer, I find it next to impossible to participate in a performance without a built-in lightness I like to call the "dolphin factor." Otherwise, it loses my interest. I need the lows and highs, the playful moments as well as the serious. As a performer, if there is an important message I want to get across, I like to do a wild, fun, uproarious song before it. Children's ears and hearts seem more open after a good laugh.

In the dictionary, one definition of *play* is "the natural activity of children." Playfulness was one of the main avenues of learning for me as a child, and so I use it as often as I can. I remember my sixth-grade teachers trying to tell us, with punishment, with reprimand, with exasperation, over and over, that we were behaving inappropriately and that we were not ready for junior high school. It all went in one ear and out the other. It was not until May of that year that the teachers decided to put on a play to show us, in a humorous way, how we were behaving. We all laughed together, teachers and students alike, at our antics and how ridiculous we looked. Through playfulness, we got it.



photo: Marlow Shami

Nancy Tucker (as the sun) at a downright "clowntagious" moment (a condition with, luckily, no known cure), at Metacomet Elementary School, Bloomfield, Connecticut.

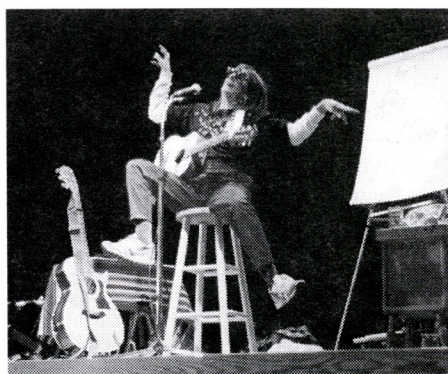


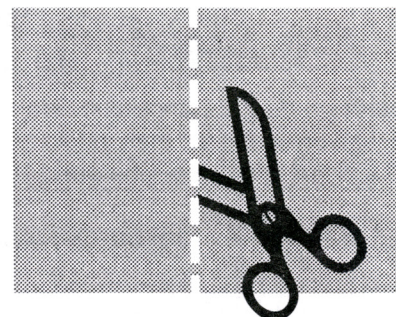
photo: Marlow Shami

Nancy Tucker shown animating her musical cartoon, "Cat and Mouse," without a safety net!

We all laughed together, teachers and students alike, at our antics and how ridiculous we looked. Through playfulness, we got it.

I'm still applying that lesson in my own life, to this day. Though play is planned within each performance I do, there is also a spontaneous element that is essential to keeping the interest of an audience. Children especially need to know the performer is right there in the moment. I always try to look for ways to react playfully to a sneeze, for example, by leaping up or falling backwards. There is no way to plan a spontaneous reaction, so I try to listen and watch carefully for what the audience is doing, and that helps me stay connected and spontaneous.

Of course, none of us could incorporate play and spontaneity into a performance without keeping our own inner children alive. I try, always, to look at the world from a different angle—sort of warped and tilted. For example, while driving long hours in my car, I try to use my imagination. I like to imagine



that one day I'll see a giant pair of scissors cutting along the dotted line on the highway. I like to imagine what it would be like to pull up at a stop sign and watch it magically turn green. And my favorite is to drive through a snowstorm at night and pretend I am Captain Picard on the Starship Enterprise, and the snowflakes are stars whizzing by. I try to see everything as if I am seeing it for the first time. That helps me keep one foot in the grown-up world and one foot in a child's world (where I really belong).

For me, the whole point of performing is connecting to an audience, and in turn connecting them to each other. I like to invite the audience into my world, and they invite me into theirs. When people are laughing and singing together, the barriers between them crumble. There is nothing more rewarding. Playfulness is one of the finest catalysts I know. **YIP!**

Nancy Tucker is a singer, songwriter, comedienne, and guitarist. In other words, a sing-song-mediennist. She lives in a house with barkers, meowers, and a furless babblor.

.....
 • The
 • National Gathering
 • returns to
 • Petaluma, California!
 • Mark your calendar now
 • October 15-17, 1999
 •

Laughter, Music, and Kids

by Tom Pease

As it is with many other children's performers, music and laughter are my jobs (along with driving). At one time in my life, however, I would've said music was my job. But 15 years ago a very-tuned-into-children principal, Joyce Caprata, approached me after the first of two assemblies I was doing for her elementary school in Iowa. She asked whether I'd mind if she sat up in front during the next program, so she'd be able to see the children better. This request confused me because I hadn't noticed any discipline or other problems in the first assembly. I thought we'd had a great time. But I said okay and then asked why the request. She said she'd seen some kids laughing whom she'd never even seen smile, and she just wanted a better view. After my ego calmed down, I realized she had taught me a great lesson. Laughter, in and of itself, may be the most important thing I do. To this day I watch for those faces with pain to brighten even a little.

While music and humor are almost inseparable for me, this doesn't mean I avoid singing serious songs or telling serious stories. But when I do, they're usually framed by humor. It's what I'm most comfortable with. I blame this on my upbringing. Though we loved music, my family wasn't musical. But we cherished a good laugh or a practical joke. I suppose it follows that my brother and I ended up working full time in environmental-education camps, where we participated in campfire storytelling and singing, drama, dancing, and all forms of camp frivolity. This is where I first encountered the combination of music, humor, and kids. Though I stopped working full time in camps 20 years ago, music and humor have continued to be my reliable

vehicles for carrying messages to children and for developing that "community" so many of us cherish in our work.

One does not have to have seen "Patch Adams" to know the power of humor. Not many of us in CMN need convincing about the power of music. The two, mixed with the wonders of childhood, have some awesome possibilities. We can help build communities where healing can begin. For example, Stuart Stotts and I often sing at Camp H.O.P.E., a camp for grieving children, located in central Wisconsin. It's recognized at Camp H.O.P.E. that playing, singing, and celebrating are all integral parts of grief work. The children don't avoid the pain of their experiences, but they joyfully celebrate their lives and their empathy with one another.

***Humor and music,
mixed with the
wonders of childhood,
have some awesome
possibilities. We can
help build
communities where
healing can begin.***

I've heard that children smile or laugh an average of 300 times per day, while adults manage only an average of 17 times. On the one hand, this is frightening; on the other, it's a great tribute to childhood. Perhaps our desire to be closer to the 300 range is why so many of us love working with kids. They like to laugh, and they like to sing. And if indeed children find the laughter realm so easily, perhaps more adults need to consider humor as a serious educational tool. Having fun doesn't mean a program is less valid. As Mimi Brodsky Chenfeld reminded us at the Nashville national gathering, the most important part of the word *fundamental* is *FUN*. And Mimi sure lives up to it!

Tom Pease in a classic pose with his salsa-dance teacher.

photo:
John Maniaci



Over the years at my shows, I've many times been asked by children, "Are you drunk?" I think kids ask me this because they haven't seen adults let loose and have fun without alcohol. I'm careful to let kids know that if they know adults who only loosen up by drinking, it doesn't mean those adults are bad people. It also doesn't mean the kids have to make the same choice. I'm not trying to oversimplify a complex problem; I'm trying to help kids find a way to understand it. And I think that we, as adults, need to show kids that we can have fun without alcohol and other drugs. It might be the best lesson we give them, as well as the best encouragement for them to maintain their childhood average of 300 laughs a day.

I'm very aware that my experiences with humor and song are not unique. I'm also not saying that laughter and song are the only ways to reach children. I'm simply saying that humor is very healthy stuff, not just for children, but for everyone. Perhaps we, as adults, have to learn from children to smile or laugh a little closer to 300 times a day. Maybe it will open our brains to what they need us to learn.

Nelson Mandela, a very wise man who was once a child, said, "Walk gently, breathe peacefully, and laugh hysterically." I'll keep trying.



Tom Pease has been performing for and with children since 1980. He lives in rural Wisconsin with his wife, Louise, and their sons, Morgan and Broegy.

HEAD FIRST AND BELLY DOWN

words & music by Candace Forest
© 1990 Mordush Music CAPAC/ASCAP

This song was inspired by an article in *Smithsonian* magazine about river otters and the scientists who study them. While the researcher was reluctant to use the word "fun" to describe animal behavior, in the case of otters, she could hardly avoid it. Candy Forest's children's vocal group, The Singing Rainbow, performs the simple but effective harmony arrangement on their recording named for this song. You can contact Candy about her songs and recordings at 1026 Diamond St., San Francisco, CA 94114.



D F#7 B B7 Emin
 I work in a lab - or - a - to - ry — I stu - dy the ot - ters each

A Emin7 A A7 Emin A7
 day. — I'm stuck when I come to one sto - ry — the mys - t'ry of why ot - ters

D F#7 B B7 Emin
 play. — As a sci - en - tist I look for rea - sons — for cer - tain be - hav - io - ral

Emin7 E7 A Bmin Cmin
 traits. — Could it be just for fun that you play in the sun? I've e - ven seen you

A A chorus D
 race. — You go Head First and Bel - ly Down — and then you slide

A D
 in - to the wa - ter. You go Head First and Bel - ly Down — and then you slide

Head First and Belly Down

➡ continued from previous page



Verse B7

'cuz you're an ot-ter 1. You don't have to go to school each day,— you

Emin B7 Emin E7 A

stay at home and play.— And you look so cute— when you're co-vered with

D A *special chorus*
Slide, and then you

clay, and you go In - to the wa - ter, 'cuz you're an ot-ter,

D slide, and then you A slide, and then you

in-to the wa-ter, 'cuz you're an ot-ter, In - to the wa-ter, 'cuz you're an ot-ter,

D slide to verse 5. Coda A

in - to the wa-ter, You're 'cuz you're an ot-ter You go Head First and

D

Bel - ly Down and then slide!

continued on page next page ➡

Death Valley

by Jackson Gillman

An article about fun, huh? Okay. This is the first time I've been asked to write an article for *Pass It On!* and I'd like to think that the reason is that the editors have observed that I have a lot of fun when I perform. And so I should. And so I think should anyone who does this for a living. To me, if someone performs for kids and doesn't truly enjoy it, they put out an obviously stilted performance and ought to consider another profession. Children can tell when a performer isn't really into it or goes on automatic pilot. Even on those days when you're not

in the pink, but still have to perform for that teeming mass of expectant energy, an energy flow can be created—a feedback loop propelling you with a fuel that was not there when you started. And what, pray tell, is that fuel? Why, *fun*, of course!

Does it sound like I enjoy my work? I have teacher friends who admit feeling somewhat guilty for getting paid for doing what they want to be doing anyhow. I can relate. When things are going right, performing hardly feels like "work." But a lot of what we do to make our presentations happen is work—hard work—and we deserve our hard-earned pay for our fun/

work. Ideally, I like to think that I'm really being paid for all my promotional hustle, office work, commitment to being there, travel, and cumulative experience, while the actual performance is the fun reward, for everyone.

Now I must go back to the word *ideally*. Everyone knows that many performing situations are far from ideal. Take my experience just the other day, for example: for big kids, lots of them, 900, an entire high school. I was leery of the gig from the start and knew to ask some important questions of the student-council president who contacted me:

- Will it be in the auditorium or gym? (*The gym.*)
- But can they all fit on one side? (*No, but we can put extra chairs in front of the bleachers so they'll all be on one side.*)
- Is there a good sound system in the gym that I can plug into? (*Yes.*)

There were more questions, we negotiated a price, and the student agreed, after obtaining confirmation from the council, to send a contract back to me.

The show was to be last period on a Monday, the first day of "Spirit Week" and the beginning of the new semester. Wouldn't those big cherubs be looking forward to this! As much as I needed the gig, I wasn't sure I really wanted it, but it was now in their hands and if it didn't come through, I'd probably feel relieved. When weeks passed and there was no word back, I thought, Good—let it go. Then, just before the weekend, there was a phone message from the student: She thought the teacher sent me the contract; the teacher thought the student had; but the contract is in the mail and they are expecting me. That's okay, I decide. I've got material that will work even in this tough situation. It'll be a challenge, but it'll be—*fun*.

Head First and Belly Down

➡ continued from previous page



I work in a laboratory. I study the otters each day.
I'm stuck when I come to one story, the myst'ry of why otters play.
As a scientist, I look for reasons for certain behavioral traits.
Could it be just for fun that you play in the sun? I've even seen you race.

chorus

You go Head First and Belly Down and then you slide—into the water.
You go Head First and Belly Down and then you slide—'cuz you're an otter.

1. You don't have to go to school each day, you stay at home and play.
And you look so cute when you're covered with clay. (*chorus*)
2. You're Mother Nature's acrobat, the Queen of Rock and Roll.
You make me laugh so hard, I feel it deep in my soul. (*chorus*)
3. Your antics are amazing and your whiskers mesmerize.
As a Big Top clown, you should get the first prize. (*chorus*)
4. Do do do do do do do do etc.

special chorus

group 1

And then you slide—
and then you slide—
and then you slide—
and then you slide—

group 2

Into the water, 'cuz you're an otter
into the water, 'cuz you're an otter
into the water, 'cuz you're an otter
into the water.

5. You're otterly adorable, I love to watch you play.
Would you be so kind as to show me the way. The way you go... (*chorus*)

Fellow performers, do you want to hear how fun it was, or do you want to hear one of those squirmy battle-pay stories with which you can so identify and commiserate?

Fellow performers, do you want to hear how fun it was, or do you want to hear one of those squirmy battle-pay stories with which you can so identify and commiserate? (*Duh.*) So anyhow, I arrive with a healthy hour to set up. The sound system checks out okay. The massive bleachers are pulled out and will soon hold a mountainside of adolescent energy to fuel this magical energy loop.

But what is this? The bleachers on the *other* side are also pulled out a couple of rows. No, this can't be! "Where's the principal?" I ask.

"I am the principal," comes the reply. "There's nothing else we can do."

"Is there a bell at two, when the last period ends?"

"No," says the principal, "it's over when you're done."

Personal pep-rally time. You can do it. (*If you can pull this one off, Jackson, you're a magician.*) Set up on one end, and play to both sides. (*This is a shipwreck waiting to happen.*) Remember to go slowly enough and play each moment. You can do it. (*Fat chance.*) The material is proven and strong. (*This, too, shall pass.*) The mountainside is full; a smaller hillside of seniors opposes. A basketball-court chasm is in between—my playpen. (*And you thought Some Sound was the largest fjord in North America.*)

I fortify myself under the bleachers, out of sight. I prep myself with a Thich Nhat Hanh mantra, inhaling and exhaling:

Breathing in, I calm my body.
Breathing out, I smile.
Dwelling in the present moment,
I know this is a wonderful moment.

(Of course it is, there's still a snowball's chance in hell you can be a sort of reverse Moses and create a sea of fun to sail on and bring together these two distant shores on either side of this Death Valley in 40 minutes of brilliant magicanship and usher in the collective zeal of Spirit Week.)

Enjoy this moment now. It is full of potential. (*And who knows how you're going to feel at 2 PM!*)

**I am ON. I'm out there,
I'm playing both
mountainsides. I'm
drawing on all my
twenty years of
performing to pull
this one out. (Are we
having fun yet?)**

I am ON. I'm out there, I'm playing both mountainsides. I'm drawing on all my twenty years of performing to pull this one out. (*Are we having fun yet?*) Shut up! I'm doing all right. Survival itself is sort of fun in its own simple way. They're listening, and responding appropriately for the most part. Jaxon, the performing Warrior Prince. It's three minutes before two. The hills are alive with a growing restlessness. But I'll close with my fail-safe, rowdy sing/sign-along, for a strong, uproarious ending. The piece is five minutes long, and as two o'clock approaches, a time warp starts. I am going faster and faster, and the minutes are going slower and s-l-o-w-e-r as the tides turn. An unforgivable

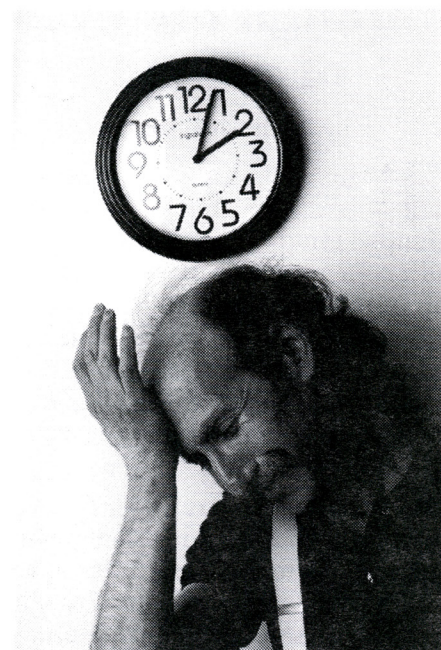


photo: Bob Noonan

Jackson Gillman reflects on the glories of his Death Valley performance.

trespass has occurred as I step into two minutes of interminable school-day overtime. Please forgive me as I spare myself from describing the remaining gory details of my Exodus.

(*I told you so.*)

So, you thought you were going to hear about fun, did you? Well, this is part of it. It is exactly this kind of time in the tidal trenches that enables *most* of the performing part of this job to be fun. We ride out the storms, we craft stronger vessels, we learn how to read the winds better—how to jibe, tack, throw out ballast, and bail when needed. And we draw on all of our collective experience to enjoy riding whatever waves we have the privilege to sail on. It may not always be for the weak of heart. But fun? You're darn right, it is! (*Pass me the Dramamine.*) **YIP!**

As the "Stand-Up Chameleon," Jackson Gillman disguises himself in many ways, but he can't hide the fact that he simply has fun performing.

Through the Eyes of a Child

by Katherine Dines

This is a story of remembering the first conscious glimpse I had, as an adult, of "fun" as a concept. I was at a small cabin up in the mountains in the middle of winter. With me were Alan, my partner at the time, and our best friends, Christy and Bill. We were celebrating their daughter Anna's third birthday.

The day included a number of deep, involved, and at times heavy conversations among the adults. When the four of us finally decided to take a walk outside and enjoy the day, little Anna was bundled up, and we ambled down a path to a clearing by the South Platte River. The willows were bare, except for a light dusting with the kind of frost that looks like powdered sugar and sparkles like glitter. The late-afternoon light tinted the whole world, and all of us stared at it, transfixed.

Suddenly, two big black crows

swooped down in front of us and began to caw, breaking the silence. Anna, riding on her mother's back, giggled and stretched her little arms out toward the birds. Her father unstrapped her, lifted her out of her seat, and stood her up among the milkweed pods and magical willows. She ran toward the birds, screaming with joy. Then Alan ran after her.

For a split second, I saw the child in him—this often-serious person I loved so much—and then the most amazing thing happened. Alan pulled a harmonica out of his down vest and began to play! He had never played a harmonica before in my presence. And then he started to dance a little jig-like step, kicking up chunks of snow. At his knee, Anna squealed in glee and bounced up and down with him, and—I swear—the crows cawed right along in time to his tune. Completely spontaneously, for at least a half an hour, we all danced and sang songs, together and separately, out there on the frozen ground in the middle of winter and weeds.

***We saw the world
through the eyes of a
little child. We all
sang and danced as if
it were for the first
time, and it was
liberating,
exhilarating, and so
very powerful.***

The whole way back to the cabin, we played along with Anna. We crouched down and waddled like ducks, chattered away in unknown languages, flailed our arms about, hid in the willows, made snow angels, gobbled icicles off the bushes, rolled in the weeds, threw sticks, and shouted at the fading light. For awhile, we were not attorneys, exhibit designers, mothers, and city planners. We were 3 years old and playing hard. We were having so much fun—more fun than I had had in many years.

After Anna was tucked in tight and the men were long asleep, Christy and I took another walk outside together. Under the moon and between the hootings of an owl, I told my best friend that the one thing I missed, more than anything in my adult life, was having fun. I realized, with great sadness, that I had spent the past 10 years forgetting about my spontaneous musical self, so that I might fit better into this world of serious-minded adults I had chosen.

I had been enlightened that afternoon. I clearly experienced how essential fun and spontaneity are to my whole being, how music and children are a direct link to that special place so many adults forget—the Land of Fun. We saw the world through the eyes of a little child. We sang and danced as if it were for the first time, and it was liberating, exhilarating, and so very powerful.



photo: Kay Williams

Katherine Dines poses with her favorite hatrack.

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to the cabin, we
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sticks, and shouted at
the fading light.**

Now, more than 15 years later, I have reclaimed music, spontaneity, and fun. Today I continue to create and perform children's music because children constantly remind me *how* to have fun. It is their reactions, imaginations, observations, and conversations that feed my musical being. That one winter afternoon spent playing with three-year-old Anna gave me one of the greatest gifts I have ever received. Thanks to her and the music of crows and the sound of Alan's harmonica and to all of our songs and singing, I now choose to make play a part of my life and to keep it there—just for fun. **PIO!**

Katherine Dines is a songwriter and recording and teaching artist who performs concerts and workshops throughout the U.S. and has created five albums for children.

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

Musical Reflections on a Good Book

by Liz Benjamin

(with thanks to Marg Stubington for a great conversation)

Since this issue of *PIO!* is focusing on the topic of fun, I want to share my thoughts about a book entitled *Learning to Play, Playing to Learn*, by Charlie Steffens and Spencer Gorin (Lowell House, 1997). Subtitled *Games and Activities to Teach Sharing, Caring, and Compromise*, this book is full of games designed to help children learn more about living in the world. The main goals are (1) to play to have fun and (2) to remember that people are the most important part of the game. Children need to learn to play in a way that restores spirit, hope, and fun. They need the freedom to be creative and to be able to take risks in their play. Play can foster self-esteem and compassion for others, but children need guidance in learning to pay attention to the actions and words that will do this.

**Children need to learn
to play in a way that
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creative and
to be able to take
risks in their play.**

How does all of this apply to making music with children? Singing, in itself, is a self-esteem booster, a healthy, noncompetitive social activity that can build confidence. Kids who have physical, social, or emotional problems can shine in a musical setting. People of different abilities, experience, and talent can success-

fully make vocal and instrumental music together, building respect for differences in the process. Each is contributing, each feels a part of the whole, and each is part of creating something wonderful.

A sense of equality can be encouraged by shifting the responsibility for carrying the melody from one group to another. For example, if the children are singing in parts, the higher voices do not always have to have the melody.

Cooperation is a big part of music making, and it is often a closer sort of cooperation than that attained in playing a team sport such as basketball. Keeping a beat together, blending your voices, listening to what is going on around you and how your sound fits in—these take a lot of attention and caring. Singing together with your eyes closed gives an intense feeling of connectedness. Small groups can work together to create hand motions or choreography for different parts of a song. Everyone rises to the highest common denominator.

It's really hard *not* to want to sing or play music with others. Making music together is a living, breathing, continuous, creative process. It's inherently fun. Caring, sharing, and self-esteem arise from it, along with the very sounds of the music.

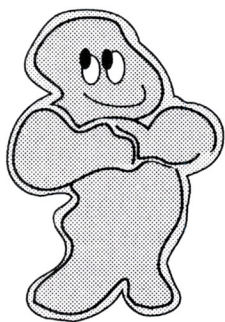
PIO!

Liz Benjamin has fun singing and dancing with friends of all ages. She especially likes singing rounds outside and calling easy dances. She's a grandma and a Unitarian minister.



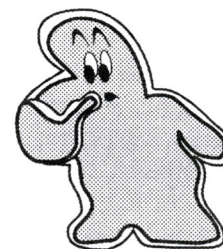
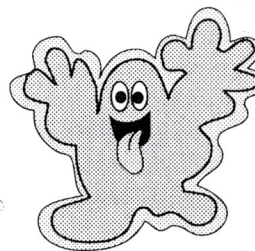
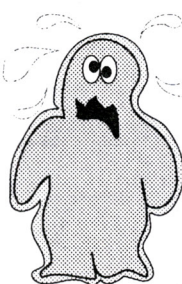
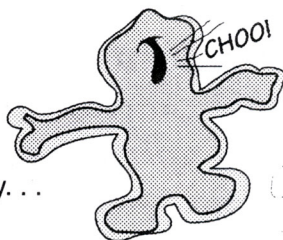
GOOEY CHOOEY

words & music by Jeannie Rogers
© 1999 Jeannie Rogers



Jeannie Rogers shared this word play for young children at the CMN-led song circle at the National Association for the Education of Young Children conference last November. Phonics experts may see a pre-reading exercise here; three-year-olds will probably find a giggling good time. To contact Jeannie about this song and her work with music and young children, write to her at 8900 Rollingwood Rd., Chapel Hill, NC 27516.

1. Ging gang gooey, gooey, gooey. . .
(rub hands together as if gooey)
2. Ching chang ah-chooey, chooey, chooey. . .
(Pretend to sneeze)
3. Bing bang boohooey, hooey, hooey. . .
(Pretend to cry)
4. King kang kooky, kooky, kooky. . .
(circling one finger close to an ear, do the "crazy" sign)
5. Sming smang (blow kisses for 4 beats) Watch Out! Sming smang smoochy, sming smang smoochy (repeat)
6. Bing bang ooey, ooey, ooey. . . Watch out! Bing bang booeey! Bing bang booeey (repeat)
(On "ooey", move hands in front of face to make it look "eerie". Hide your face with hands and peek out on "Booeey".)
7. Ping pang pewey, pewey, pewey. . .
(Wave hands in front of face as if something smells bad. Hold nose)



Editor's note: CMN is becoming an increasingly audible voice at NAEYC and other educational organization conferences. To find out more about how to hook up with and create similar activities at conferences in your area, see Susan Hopkins's article "A Glimpse of the Advocacy Center" on the next page.

A Glimpse of the Advocacy Center

by Susan Hopkins

Just imagine going to an educators' conference with 6,000 attendees and finding a room there filled with colorful and thought-provoking displays, staffed by enthusiastic, energetic people discussing new and progressive ideas. The Advocacy Center offered all this and lots of music, too, at the statewide conference of the California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC) in Long Beach last February.

Upon first entering the Advocacy Center, one was almost overwhelmed with all the "gifts" the area had to offer. There were displays everywhere of books for children and adults, videos, posters, persona dolls, educational materials, and children's work. There was music playing, as well as videos at four different monitors. There were small round tables for intimate discussion groups and interactive opportunities such as folding origami cranes or writing postcards to legislators. There was a larger area set aside for workshops on topics such as "How to Share Social Justice Songs with Young Children," "Weaving the Themes of Peace Camp," and "Come and Listen to My Story and Break Out of the Box."



Peace Campers Caitlin Fountain (l.) and Rosalie Tetreault (ctr.) teach CAEYC conference participant how to fold origami cranes.

Dave Kinnoin shares at the CMN-led song swap at the Advocacy Center. Behind him (l. to r.) are California CMN members Grady and Oliver Kinnoin, Marcia Berman, Nancy Schimmel (behind Dave), Suni Paz, Betsy Rose, and Carrie Higgins.

photos:
Susan Hopkins



This is the Advocacy Center, the highlight of the CAEYC conference for those of us who work as advocates for creating a better world for our children and families. This is one of the most stimulating ways we gain the inspiration and knowledge needed to continue our work.

The CAEYC Advocacy Center is a true collaborative effort, coordinated by a team of advocates from various groups within the CAEYC. The groups include the Leadership in Diversity Project, NonViolence in the Lives of Children, Peace Camp Coordinators, Public Policy, Stand for Children, and the Children's Music Network, to mention a few. Participants are provided with information about: antibias education, equity, peace and environmental education, public policy, diversity, social justice, nonviolence, and human rights. There are opportunities for dialogue, networking, and support in both informal and more formal settings. Last but not least, there are times to celebrate with music, through the Community Building Songfest.

Not surprisingly, CMN had a strong presence this year at the Advocacy Center, making musical contributions that were both varied and numerous. There was a display of music tapes by CMN artists, with one or more always playing, plus opportunities for members to share live music. A song swap was organized by the Southern California region, in which everyone had opportunities to share songs or

simply to add verses to songs led by others. The audience at this event was large and enthusiastic. Both evenings of the conference there were also musical celebrations focusing on music connected to various social-justice movements. CMN songleaders took responsibility for leading groups in singing songs on specific topics, such as Civil Rights Movement songs as they evolved from the spirituals. The role of music in movements for social change was clearly demonstrated as we all joined in the singing and felt, through the music, a sense of shared community with each other.

✶10!

As an early childhood educator focusing on peace and justice issues, Susan Hopkins is passionate about helping CMN promote the values she cares about most deeply.

Note: For more detailed information about setting up an advocacy center at your conferences, resource fairs, or other community events, please feel free to call California CMN members Chris Lamm (714/792-1029) and Susan Hopkins (530/274-1862).



Advocacy Center display on diversity of skin colors.

CMN Hires Its First Executive Director

An Introduction to Cyndi Pock

by Bonnie Lockhart
(for the CMN Board of Directors)

Good news for the Children's Music Network! After a far-flung and careful search, the CMN board has hired Cyndi Pock to be our executive director. She met with us this January and described her first meeting as "fruitful, busy, and joyous"—a description that we all echo. It was a delight to have Cyndi join us, and an enormous relief to have her energy and expertise lift a good deal of weight from our volunteer shoulders.

In addition to helping us nurture all of CMN's present activities, Cyndi is working with us to develop some new projects to make us more visible, to amplify our voices, and to embody the values that unite us. You'll be hearing more about some of those proposed projects in the pages of *Pass It On!* and at events and gatherings in your region. We really want to know what you, the members, feel about these proposals. What makes you feel energized? What inspires you to contribute to our growth? Please contact your board members and regional reps with your responses. And we invite you to give your feedback to Cyndi as well.

I want to tell you a little about our new executive director. Cyndi comes to us with years of experience in arts management in the Seattle area. She is Executive Director of the Theatre of Puget Sound, a membership organization for communication, support, and resource sharing among theater artists and administrators in her area. She has organized a number of performing-arts festivals and has produced publicity including brochures, posters, and websites. She has a history of increasing organizational membership, of securing corporate underwriting and sponsorship for arts events, and of

fostering consensus-based decision making. In addition to her quick mind and patient listening ear, Cyndi brought her ready laugh to our first meeting. We feel really lucky to have her join us! I encourage you to get to know her, too.

The story of our new executive director would not be complete without a hearty *thank you* to all of you who contributed to our CMN Growth Fund. Hooray for all who gave! And hooray to Ruth Pelham, who coordinated this huge effort! Your generous donations of more than \$15,000 are an amazing testament to our collective love for CMN. You've made it possible for us to hire Cyndi and to prepare for some exciting new growth.

AND NOW, A FEW WORDS FROM CYNDI...

Greetings!

It's truly been a pleasure and joy working with the board the past few months, and I look forward to becoming better acquainted with the talented and diverse membership of CMN in the year ahead.

At the forefront of all my activities as your new executive director is ensuring that the core values of the CMN mission are carried through in all our programming, as it is the common thread that binds us all together. The mission of CMN is what attracted me most about the organization. Having worked in children's programming for 15 years and seen firsthand how the arts can inspire young people and affect them positively on many levels, CMN seemed a good fit with my background and personal ethos. My efforts will focus on helping to ensure that the values embraced by CMN are carried with a stronger collective voice.



Increasing communication among members and strengthening the good work of the regions are among our primary goals for the coming year. We are now in the process of creating a stronger online presence and have acquired a domain name for CMN. Monty Harper has kindly been donating some space on his website devoted to CMN, and we will continue seeking his input and services as we develop CMN online. An e-mail listserve exclusively for CMN members and a message board are two elements we plan to establish in the coming months. Our hope is that the new website will become a valuable communication tool and resource for all members.

Another primary goal of the board is establishing greater financial stability, which is needed in order for CMN to continue its work. We hope to do this through increased fundraising efforts and growth in membership. Developing a new membership brochure in conjunction with a targeted marketing plan is among the projects we are currently working on.

During the course of the year I hope to be in contact with the board and regional representatives frequently. I am also interested in hearing from other members, and I encourage you to feel welcome in contacting me either by e-mail or phone (spelvin@spelvin.com or 206/624-3570). In particular, I look forward to meeting many of you personally at the national gathering in October! **PIO!**

Children Speak Out on Fun

PIO! asked children to write to us with their ideas about the theme of our issue—fun. We encouraged them to write about any kind of fun at all, though of course we especially like to hear about fun children have with music. We received the following insightful replies. If any other young PIO! readers would like to add their own ideas, we'd love to hear from them!



Fun is extremely important. Without fun, everything would be dull and boring. Why bother going to an amusement park or having a friend over if it isn't fun? There would be no point in living if you couldn't have fun. I have fun when I dance. And it's a challenge. At my recital, I have fun because I'm with my friends, and I know I'm entertaining a whole auditorium full of people.

Hilary Piech
Amherst, Massachusetts

Music is fun. I like playing drums. At home, sometimes I play CDs and bang on pots and pans. My mom doesn't mind. It's lots of fun. You should try it.

Luke Aldrich
Lexington, Kentucky

Music is only fun if it's the right kind of music. I don't like it when we have to do music that isn't any fun. But some of it is really good. Like some of the music I hear on the radio.

Samantha Derderian
Lexington, Kentucky

I like having fun. Of course, my favorite thing is basketball, but I like music, too. I guess my favorite thing would be to play basketball while music was playing over the PA. They should play really loud and fast music if you get a basket. I'd like that.

Jessica Pratt, Los Angeles, California

I am crazy about music! I wish I could have music all day! And my friends like it, too. Our music teacher is really cool! She lets us try out her electric guitar, and she sometimes plays it while we sing. Sometimes at recess me and my friends pretend we're a rock group. We call ourselves The Live Wires. We're pretty good, but not that good.

Jamie Kellum
Los Angeles, California

Different people think of fun in different ways. Some people like getting scared half to death on roller coasters and dark rides. That's what they think of as fun. Some like extreme sports, like skydiving. Some like running, some, music, some, TV, some, computers, and others, reading. Fun varies, depending on the person. A few like writing, some, swimming, some, drawing and painting.

Me, myself, personally, I like roller coasters, but not ones that go upside-down. I like TV, computers, reading, writing, swimming, and drawing. That's me.

What do you like?

Laura Hardegree, Amherst, Massachusetts

I was at my friend's house one time, and her mom is Cuban. Well, she's Cuban because she was born there, but now she's American, too. Anyway, they were singing this funny song to my friend's little brother. The words are Spanish, and I think it's fun to sing songs in different languages, so I learned it. It starts out with "¡Pío, pío, pío!" You say it "PEE-oh, PEE-oh, PEE-oh," and you sing it kind of in a high, baby voice. It's supposed to sound just like baby chickens, and it sort of does. And that's what the song is about—chicks! They're looking for their mom because a hawk is flying over. They want to hide underneath her. You do things while you sing it, like you cover your eyes when the hawk flies over. I like songs like that.

Cassie Dobkin, Orange, New Jersey

Fun is something kids know about. I wish teachers knew about it, too. Well, some of them do. Teachers make you work, and they don't let you have fun. If you have fun, you get in trouble.

Elizabeth Ware, Lansing, Michigan

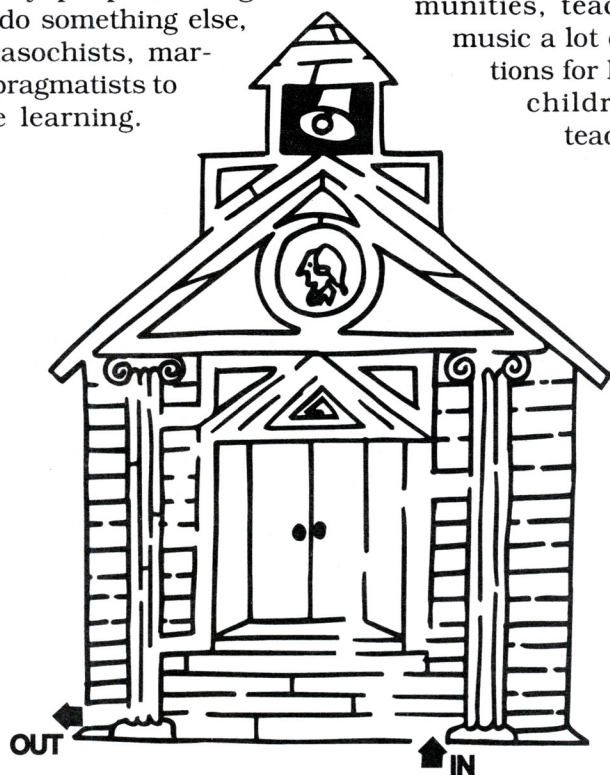
Curriculi! Curricula!



by Bob Blue

Fun is a little word. It's nowhere near as big as *responsibility* or *accountability*. But I think it's a very important little word, though I've noticed that some people don't seem to agree. My definition of *fun* is broad enough that I can make the statement, "Learning is fun," without reservation. In my mind, ignorance is not bliss; in fact, the less ignorant we are, the better off we are, and the more fun we can have.

It's always bothered me a little when people have praised teachers for "making learning fun." To me, that's like praising someone for making water wet. Learning already is fun. Not every little bit of it is fun, but if the whole thing were a drag, people wouldn't do it so much. Some masochists might stay with it. Maybe some martyrs would heroically keep up the good fight. And pragmatists would learn so that they could accomplish their goals. Many people, though, would go do something else, leaving masochists, martyrs, and pragmatists to do all the learning.



But that's not what happens. Even the strictest of hedonists learn. It's fun.

Some teachers sing with their classes. They sit down at the piano or pick up a guitar, and children gather 'round. Once in awhile, a child or two doesn't want to come over and sing. Some teachers try to have other activities ready for them—activities that will neither be a punishment for not wanting to sing nor be so attractive that they will lure children who would otherwise sing. It's a delicate balancing or juggling act. But most teachers and children know that learning songs and learning to sing together is fun.

Sometimes teachers use music to teach specific skills or content. Children sing songs that reinforce what they hear, read, or otherwise experience in their reading, writing, spelling, math, science, and social studies lessons. Music is being used as a teaching tool, but some parents, teachers, or administrators, when they hear singing, think that teachers and children are "just" having fun. In many communities, teachers who use music a lot develop reputations for having fun with children instead of teaching.



I believe that school, where most children spend much of their awake time, has a responsibility to make sure that children learn that living is fun.

And that's when the songs teachers choose are obviously curriculum-related! What about the times when teachers and children *do* sing "just" for fun? I think that ought to happen in school, too. There are adults who don't seem to know how to enjoy life, and I think it's at least partly because they didn't receive proper life-enjoyment instruction in school. And I believe that school, where most children spend much of their awake time, has a responsibility to make sure that children learn that living is fun. Singing is one way to learn that. **YIP!**

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



MY FAMOUS CANNONBALL

words & music by Dave Preston
©1998 Dave Preston

A self-described "78-year-old great-grampa," Dave Preston found the writing of this song evoked "memories of many happy summers when diving off the homemade springboard at the end of our dock was everyone's favorite activity." To contact Dave about his songs and recordings, write to him at 845 Arroyo Cir., Prescott, AZ 86303.

C F C Amin F C

1. Eve - ry - one squeals and swims like mad, dog pad - dle, side - stroke,
2. That might - y wave that towers so high, Turns to a wa - ter -

G7 C F C Amin

crawl. fall. What has the kids so ter - ri - fied? Why my
On - ly a whale can match the splash of my

verse 1. Dmin G **verses 2. & 3. Dmin G7 C**

fa - mous can - non - ball! fa - mous can - non - ball

bridge G Emin Amin C/G G E7 Amin C/G

Can't do a back - ward som - er - sault. My swan dive's not real fine.

G C G C Amin Dmin7/G *go to verse 3.*

Can't do a jack - knife worth a darn, but there's one dive where I shine!

1. Everyone squeals and swims like mad,
Dog paddle, sidestroke, crawl.
What has the kids so terrified?
Why MY FAMOUS CANNONBALL!

2. That mighty wave that towers so high
Turns to a waterfall.
Only a whale can match the splash
Of MY FAMOUS CANNONBALL.

bridge
Can't do a backward somersault.
My swan dive's not real fine.
Can't do a jackknife worth a darn,
But there's one place where I shine!

3. Why do the teams all still ignore
The best event of all?
I long to win Olympic Gold
With MY FAMOUS CANNONBALL.



Radio Waves

Knock on Wood

by PJ Swift

When I think of my favorite radio programs for children, one thing stands out: They are all laced with laughter. Whether it be Kathy O'Connell's enthusiastic ribbing, Uncle Ruthie's gleeful lyrics, or Gary Nosacek's wacky situations, humor plays a large part in the programming. Although these programs don't shy away from serious subjects (Gary once broadcasted from Bosnia, and Kathy has devoted whole programs to AIDS), they also use humor to provide fun, balance, and—sometimes—resolution.

But when it comes to fun in broadcasting, in my book Steve Charney has to take the prize. Steve and his alter ego, Harry, a self-described "Wooden American," have been on the airwaves for about 15 years, mostly in New York and Connecticut. The program, *Knock on Wood*, is a mixture of wacky recorded music, live music, invited guests, and comedy sketches. It's supposed to be a kids' program, but really, it's for the inner kid in all of us.



Now, you might think ventriloquism is a ridiculous candidate for radio-programming content, as ridiculous as juggling or costume changes. But Steve makes radio ventriloquism work; in fact, he makes it victorious. Steve provides the voice for Harry, but that voice is so recognizable, his personality so distinct, that in about two seconds you forget you're listening to only one person. And even on the radio, Steve notes, "I still don't move my lips. We have an honor system around here."

***And even on the radio,
Steve notes, "I still
don't move my lips.
We have an honor
system around here."***

Like the old-time comedy writers who inspired him, Steve is a master at setting up funny situations. One of my favorite comedy bits from *Knock on Wood* centers around the old proverb, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away." Harry loses his apple out of his lunch bag, and he immediately becomes sick. A parade of five doctors trudges through the house, each doctor giving Harry a checkup and each claiming a different malady has overtaken Harry. While the doctors argue amongst themselves, Harry finds his apple and immediately recovers. This bit requires seven voices, and Steve does them all himself—live. How he keeps track of who says what, in which voice, I'll never know.

Steve admits that choosing the subjects for his humor is easy: "I'm in arrested development at about age eight—what I find is funny is what kids think is funny." He loves "anything silly, anything irreverent, anything that questions authority." Many of his comedy bits with Harry, he says, "peel back the veneer of life, to see what makes things tick. I like creating an illu-

sion and popping it, bringing it back, and popping it." The fun for Steve comes, he says, "from seeing how crazy I can make it. I like to find that muscle in my mind that makes it happen."

Steve believes that adults' senses of humor vary: "What's funny to one person is sometimes offensive to another. But kids' humor is pretty much universal." Last year, Steve went to Ghana to perform in an international children's festival. He found that the kids in Ghana laughed at the same jokes that the kids in North America loved. The only exceptions were the jokes that were based on conventions or cultural context, such as "knock-knock" jokes.

Despite its universality, humor doesn't work well in a vacuum—it's of a time and of a culture. It's often culture—the world as it's perceived by adults—that becomes the source of comedy material for a humorist for kids. This poses certain dangers, however, and that's doubly true for a wacky nonconformist like Steve. Although he's mindful of what he calls the "sliding line of public sensitivity," he tries hard to avoid playing down to kids or patronizing them. His comedy bits have touched on political, cultural, and social situations that many others would have passed over as too risky or too cerebral. For instance, he created a send-up, "Avenging Librarian," for a show at a library, and an enemy of radio named (what else?) "Dr. Video." But kids get it, and they love it. Maybe they love it even more because they know Steve loves it, too. **XPIO!**

Note: You can laugh with Steve and Harry on the following stations: WNYE, 91.5 FM, New York City, Mondays at 3:30 PM; WKZE, 98.1 FM, Sharon, Connecticut, Wednesdays at 4:30 PM, Saturdays at 10 AM; WRPI, 91.5 FM, Troy, New York, Mondays at noon.

PJ Swift lightens up, on the radio and off, in Santa Cruz, California.

Down to the Heart

by Ruth Pelham

I talked to myself every day this winter to convince myself to sit down at the piano and play. Doodling melodies and mesmerizing myself with sound is like candy for my spirit, and I have a sweet tooth.

But candy has to be eaten with moderation, and only after the vegetables are finished. On my plate, there were many important things to do this winter. Phone calls to return. Contracts to send. Friends to see. Papers to file. Dishes to wash. Errands to run. Books to read on time management. When the tasks were done, I could play the piano.

Similar stories with different details frame the lives of many CMNers. We juggle our time, trying to balance meaningful work with carefree play. We juggle our need to be with friends and family with our craving to be alone. We juggle our emotions, trying to maintain an attitude of patience and optimism in the face of frustration and hopelessness. We also try to eat well, exercise hard, keep up with the news, sort through junk mail, go to our high school reunion, care for our aging parents, and work to make the world a better place to live in. It's no wonder that so many of us are pooped.

But we don't have to be pooped alone. Nor do we have to live our lives based on the belief that we must finish every vegetable on our plate.

That is as true now as it was when CMN was founded in the early 1980s. One of our purposes then was to be a source of encouragement and affirmation to each other regarding the projects that we were engaged in as parents, songwriters, performers, and teachers. Another purpose was to help reduce the

isolation that many of us were experiencing through our involvement in the world of children's music.

I remember a CMN national gathering in Connecticut where a workshop about balancing our lives, managing stress, and setting priorities was packed with people who were eager to help each other cope and change. We talked about the importance of asking others for help, of setting clear time boundaries between work and play, and of sharing information and resources with each other so we weren't wasting our energy "reinventing the wheel." We learned that our seemingly individual problems and obstacles were widespread and common among us, and that offering each other understanding, compassion, and concrete suggestions were potent antidotes to our anxieties and troubles.

A result of workshops like that one is that some of us get motivated to make dramatic changes in our lives. Through conversations with friends at CMN gatherings, some of us are propelled to take the next forward steps. By reading articles in *Pass It On!*, some of us find the information or viewpoints that we need to help us make critical decisions.

What got me back to the piano was none of these, although the catalyst could have been any one of them. Instead, it was a telephone conversation with a CMN friend about the ways that each of us was feeling stuck about taking the next steps in our creative lives. We talked about having too much to do in our lives and how hard it was to make the time to do the things that we most yearned to do, when there were so many other responsibilities. We also talked about the pain and embarrassment we felt about being stuck, the disappointment and frustration we felt at not being able to make changes in spite of knowing in our heads what to



do, and how those intense feelings chipped away at our confidence and courage to move forward. Then, with compassion and warmth, we told each other how much we valued and appreciated the other one's work, and we encouraged each other to make the leap to do what our hearts were beckoning us to do. By acknowledging the common problem that we and other friends have, and by sharing our fears and vulnerabilities rather than hiding them out of shame, change seemed so much closer. The conversation ended on a high note, with a surge of hope and possibility and the sense that the lights had just gone on.

When I hung up the phone, I practically ran to the piano rather than going back to finish the piles of paperwork that had to be done for the next day. What propelled me to the piano was the exhilaration and the relief of realizing that the conversation had gotten me unstuck. Like WD-40, which works wonders to open stuck doors, the conversation had oiled my confidence and opened my heart to the place in me that could feel joy rather than fear about moving forward with my project.

What I realized as I sat doodling melodies at the piano was that nothing had changed other than my attitude about the vegetables on my plate. How liberating it was to know that I didn't have to finish them! **PIO!**

Ruth Pelham is a founding member of CMN and sits on its board. Based in Albany, New York, she is a performer, educator, songwriter, and speaker.

1999 National Gathering News

by Adam Miller

Mark your calendars now for the ninth annual Children's Music Network National Gathering at Walker Creek Ranch in Petaluma, California, to be held the weekend of October 15th through 17th.

This multigenerational event attracts people from all over North America, who come together to foster cooperation, cultural diversity, self-esteem, and empowerment through music for young people. Come and join children, parents, musicians, educators, radio broadcasters, songwriters, and storytellers who are involved in singing, teaching, recording, promoting, distributing, and enjoying children's music.

The gathering offers fun and interesting workshops and song swaps for children and adults, and it provides lots of opportunities for networking and learning within a stimulating and encouraging envi-

ronment. As always, there will be singing, dancing, and celebrating and, of course, the traditional Saturday-night round robin concert.

Our keynote speaker will be the renowned folklorist, Bess Lomax Hawes, who for many years directed the NEA's Folk and Traditional Arts Program, designed to encourage and promote the multicultural heritage of our country as expressed in its traditional arts. She co-authored *Step It Down*, a collection of African-American children's games, and is a recipient of the National Medal of Arts. (See the winter 1999 issue of *Pass It On!* for an interview with Bess Lomax Hawes.)

This year at the gathering, we will inaugurate CMN's Magic Penny Lifetime Achievement Award, which will be posthumously presented to Malvina Reynolds. The ceremony will feature a musical tribute to Malvina, including a concert of her songs performed by singers who worked with her.

Just 60 miles north of San Francisco in the golden rolling hills of Marin County, Walker Creek Ranch

is an idyllic setting for our national gathering. The often-sunny days of October should make it possible to hold some activities and workshops outdoors. Because the ranch is in a rural area far from roads, kids can run and play in a traffic-free environment. Only six miles from the Pacific Ocean, the coastal hills surrounding Walker Creek Ranch are dotted with native oak and bay laurel trees. There are ample opportunities to see deer and red-tailed hawks, take hikes, or just contemplate the natural surroundings. The keen observer may even see the elusive red fox.

The cost of the weekend includes breakfast, lunch, and dinner served in the dining hall, and attenders at previous Walker Creek gatherings will recall that the food is delicious. The dormitories and cabins are heated and have bunk beds with comfortable mattresses. There's plenty of parking, and child care is provided. Participants can arrange to receive one unit of Early Childhood Education (ECE) credit through Sonoma State University, in Santa Rosa, California.

The CMN National Gathering is one of the best-kept secrets in the world of folk music, and it's time to spread the word. This event is for anyone and everyone involved with children and/or music. Tell your

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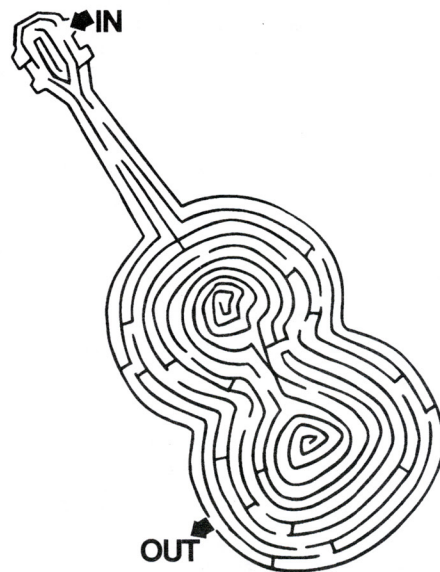


The **ONLY** children's entertainment awards chosen by kids!

This year's competition will be expanded to include specific awards for lullabies, bilingual recordings, stories, and many other categories.

ENTRY DEADLINE: JUNE 1, 1999

For information, see www.childrensmusic.org or send a SASE to 305 Dickens Way, Santa Cruz, CA 95064, USA

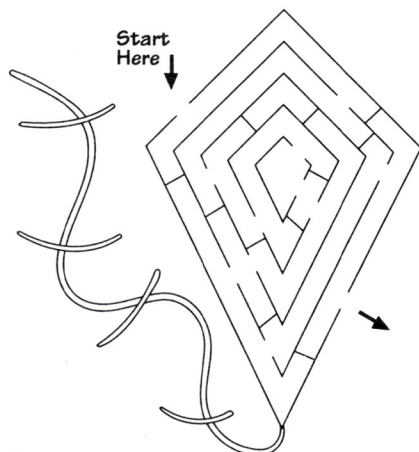


children's librarian and all the music teachers you know. Tell your friends. This gathering is an especially wonderful place to bring children of any age. Come one, come all, for a weekend of celebration and music making you'll long remember.

For more information please contact The Children's Music Network, P.O. Box 1341, Evanston, IL 60204; phone: 847/ 733-8003; e-mail: cmn.cp@worldnet.att.net.



Adam Miller is on the publicity committee for the Petaluma gathering. He lives in Woodside, California.



Wanted!

Folk Music Director

Interlocken International Summer Camp

Qualifications: traditional folk music orientation and excellent song leader for children and young teenagers.

Contact Interlocken at:
RR 2, Box 165, Hillsboro, NH 03244

Phone: 603/478-3166
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judi@interlocken.org

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Children, Parents, Families, Musicians,
Educators, Songwriters & Performers:

The Children's Music Network

9th Annual National Gathering

Friday, October 15 through
Sunday, October 17, 1999

Walker Creek Ranch,
Petaluma, California

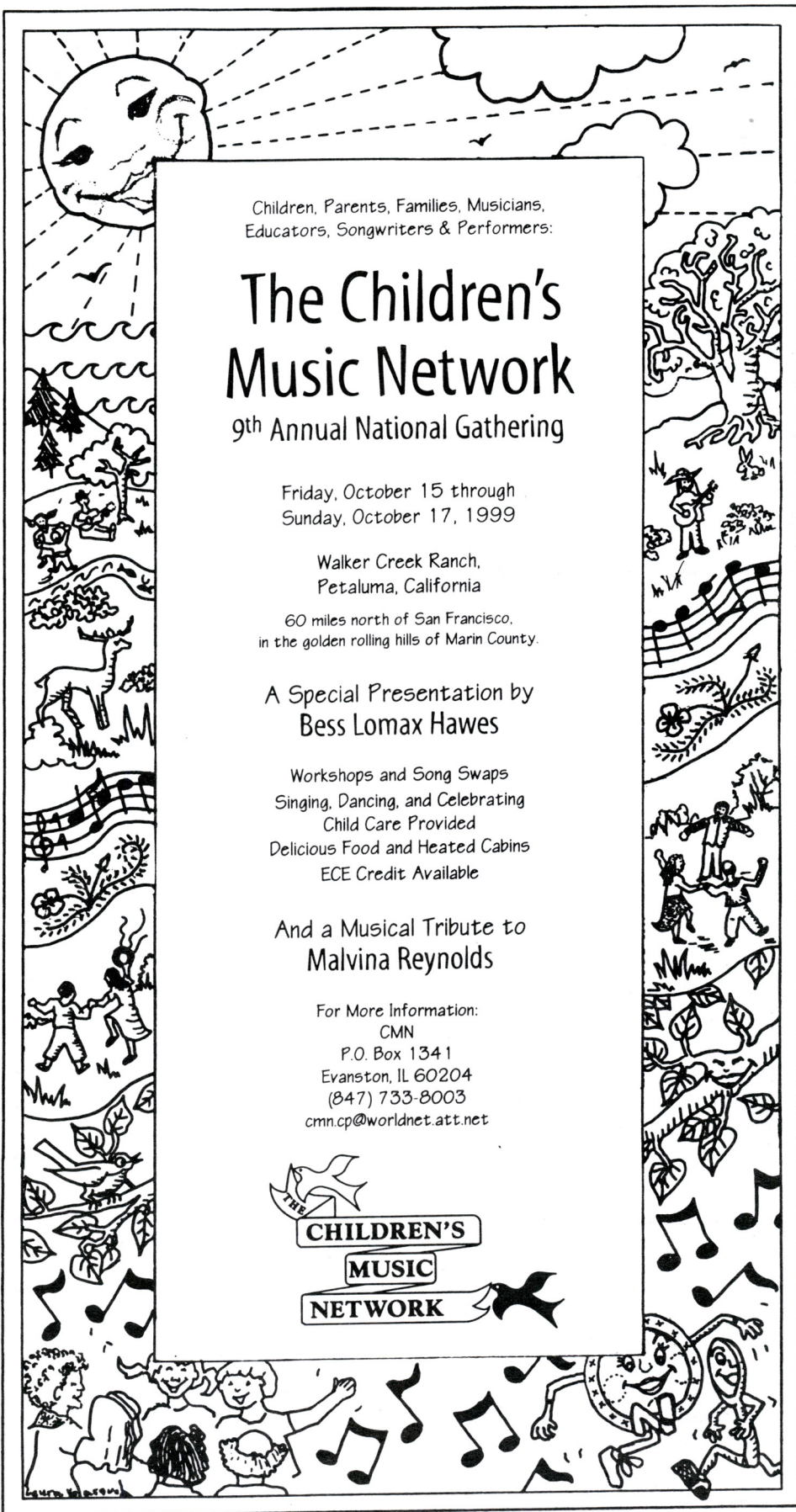
60 miles north of San Francisco,
in the golden rolling hills of Marin County.

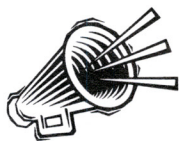
A Special Presentation by
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Workshops and Song Swaps
Singing, Dancing, and Celebrating
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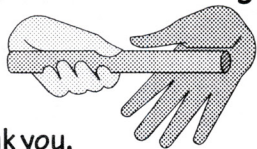
For More Information:
CMN
P.O. Box 1341
Evanston, IL 60204
(847) 733-8003
cmn.cp@worldnet.att.net





Announcements

Hand to Hand Program



Thank you,

all who have requested and distributed Hand to Hand Kits to try to recruit new members. Your efforts are greatly appreciated! **Funds from foundation grants have run out, and we are terminating the program.** You are encouraged to request outreach flyers from our national office.

Fourth Annual Latin American and Caribbean Children's Music Conference June 20-26, 1999 Córdoba, Argentina

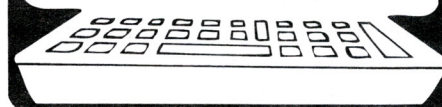
For information, please contact
takiancay@artlover.com

"REGIONAL REPORTS" EDITOR WANTED

There's a job opening at *Pass It On!* We need a volunteer to take over putting together our "Regional Reports" column. Three times a year, our CMN regional reps send in summaries of recent and upcoming regional activities, which the editor then compiles into the column that appears in *PIO!* These reports are very important to CMN, as they provide a place for members far and wide to hear about one another's activities, they generate energy and enthusiasm within the existing CMN community, and they entice new members to join. Here's a chance to help out with *PIO!* If you're interested in this job, please e-mail Katherine Dines at kdines@mindspring.com or phone her at 303/298-7122.

CMN has a Website, thanks to Monty Harper and PJ Swift. The address is: <http://www.cowboy.net/~mharper/CMN.html>

If you are a CMN member and would like to link your site to ours, please contact PJ Swift (pickle@well.com) to find out how.



Tree House Records

is launching an on-line catalog of children's music. The catalog will provide on-line distribution on a consignment basis.

For information on submitting your release, contact them at mail@treehouserecords.com

or

[http://](http://www.treehouserecords.com)

www.treehouserecords.com

PIO! VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Would you be willing to help out sometimes with *PIO!*? As you know, this wonderful little magazine is the result of a lot of volunteer effort. Most of the time, we have it covered, but once in awhile it would be really nice to have an extra hand available to get a *PIO!* project done. We'd like to have a list of volunteers we could call on at such times, and if you'd like to be on that list, get in touch with one of our editors, Bob Blue or Susan Keniston (see inside front cover for contact information). Thanks!

Oops! We've learned that there is a typo at the bottom of page 1 of our 1999 *Children's Radio List*. If you haven't been able to e-mail Kids Power Hour/Karl Keleman, try this corrected address:

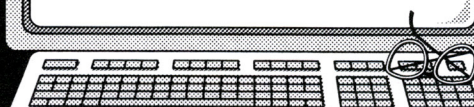
kidtalker@aol.com

NEW! Have you noticed?
We are now accepting
advertising in
Pass It On!

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

PMN Website

Our ancestral organization, the People's Music Network, has just created a dandy new web page. Gone are the days of desperate, last-minute phone calls around the U.S. to figure out when and where the next gathering will be. The PMN web page gives us this information and much more, including news articles, discussion forums, news of upcoming events, and a fine article on PMN's history. Visit them at <http://www.timbury.com/pmnn>. Congratulations, PMN!



TOOTSIE IN THE MOONLIGHT

traditional, Trinidad



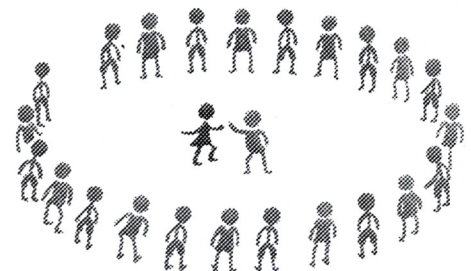
The singing games of the Eastern Caribbean are treasure troves of musical fun. The anthology *Brown Girl in the Ring* provides an extensive collection of these game songs, including a slightly different version of this one. Along with the game song collection, Alan Lomax, J. D. Elder, and Bess Lomax Hawes, the editors of *Brown Girl*, offer a wealth of information about the music and its place in the lives of children and communities. We're delighted to announce that Bess Lomax Hawes, who was interviewed in the last issue of *PIO!*, will be a featured presenter at the CMN National Gathering in October.



1. Tootsie in the moonlight, Tootsie in the dew,
Tootsie never comes in until the clock strikes two.
2. Walk in Tootsie, walk in walk right in I say,
Walk into my parlor, hear my banjo play.
3. I don't want no coffee, I don't want no tea.
All I want is (child's name) to come and dance with me.
4. Tra la la la la etc.



This is a ring game. "Tootsie" walks around the outside of the ring of children while they sing the first verse (Tootsie in the moonlight...). Children clap and gesture as they sing. At "Walk in Tootsie" (verse 2), "Tootsie" walks into the circle, and mimes "hear my banjo play". In verse 3, "Tootsie" mimes pushing away the coffee and tea, and then names a child in the outside ring to join him or her in the center. During Tra la la . . . children in the ring dance around the inside couple. Repeat the tra la la verse and children in the ring reverse direction. The old "Tootsie" then joins the ring and the new "Tootsie" walks to the outside to start over again. Sometimes the child's name is sung rather than "Tootsie."



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

Regional Reports

compiled by Katherine Dines

CANADA

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

We held an evening gathering on January 19th, enthusiastically received by those attending. However, it looks like the needs of our region are not being met by evening meetings. Therefore, we are looking to arrange a Saturday gathering to be held in the fall of 1999 or the spring of 2000. Regional members are encouraged to contact Sandy Byer with ideas as to what would work best for them, as well as to offer help in organizing this gathering. Both would be greatly appreciated.

NEW ENGLAND

Scott Kepnes
14 Benham Street
Groveland, MA 01834
978/469-9406
E-mail: singdog@earthlink.net

We had an enjoyable Winter Song Swap at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Milford, New Hampshire on February 7th.

Then our 1999 New England Regional Gathering was held on April 10th at the Clark Street Developmental Learning School in Worcester, Massachusetts. Fifty-five people attended. The 47 adults present included 17 graduate students from Lesley College, who are studying music with children, and 3 Clark Street School teachers. We welcomed 8 CMN children, and a number of Clark Street School children came in to do a presentation of singing games. Other activities were a round robin, workshops, song swaps, and lots of sharing throughout the day. Several people continued the fun over dinner, with informal singing afterward at a nearby hall.

NEW YORK METRO

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

On February 27th, in conjunction with the Kidz to Kids Chorus (a delightfully high-energy, urban children's chorus that performed at the 1998 national gathering), we had a song swap and potluck at P.S. 198 in Manhattan. The Kids performed a number of the songs they have been working on, and they readily learned and joined in on "Under One Sky," our opening song of the day, as well as a wonderful original tune in English and Spanish by our own Scott and Beth Bierko. The food was delicious. We raised the roof with song and laughter, and we're talking about making this joint event an annual tradition. In the meantime, we are planning a regional daylong event for the fall.

MID-ATLANTIC

Dave Orleans
999 Sherbrook Circle
Somerdale, NJ 08083-2221
Day: 609/768-1598
Eve: 609/435-4229
E-mail: Orleans@nothinbut.net

We celebrated our second annual gathering, called the Great Groundhog Revival, outside of Philadelphia on the Saturday following Ground Hog's Day. A few new people were there, and we and shared lots of songs as well as ideas and fellowship. Plans are being made to host the third Sporadically Annual Regional Sleepover at the Garden State Discovery Museum in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. However, the storm on Martin Luther King Day this year, which included high winds and mini-tornados, caused some damage to the museum. So the sleepover, previously advertised

and planned for April, has been postponed until May. All regional CMN members will be receiving flyers and are invited to come to the museum (with children, of course), do a round robin that includes any other museum visitors, and then spend the night!

Baltimore-Washington sub-region

Sue Ribaudo
7925 Ellenham Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21204
Day & eve: 410/321-9745
E-mail: SueRib@aol.com

Our news is included in the Mid-Atlantic regional report.

MIDWEST

Bruce O'Brien
604 Newton Street
Eau Claire, WI 54701
Day: 715/833-0874
Eve: 715/832-0721
E-mail: Banj0B@aol.com
0 = number 0
or
Linda Boyle
5105 West Deming Place
Chicago, IL 60639-2419
773/237-1848

Plans are well under way for the 1999 Midwest Regional Gathering, to be held June 25th to 27th in Columbus, Ohio! With the participation of the local community, this will be a great, diverse gathering. Leslie Zak has done a fantastic job getting the word out, asking for help, and developing an Ohio organizing committee. For more info or to offer to give a workshop or participate in some other way, call Leslie at 614/262-4098 or Bruce O'Brien.

SOUTHEAST

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

This region is beginning to grow again. We have had about 8 to 10 people attending our monthly brown-bag lunch meetings, several



of them new faces, which is always exciting. Regular meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month at noon, at Imagination Crossroads toy store, which provides the space free of charge. It's located behind the Donut Den at 3900 Hillsboro Road in Nashville's Green Hills area. Everyone is invited—especially any CMN members traveling through town. In early February, 10 of us met at a local restaurant for some social time and then went to Katherine Dines' house for a song swap and more conversation. We had such a good time that we held another swap in April. Please contact Rachel or Katherine for more information about future events.

A form was sent in February to all members in our region, soliciting nominations for new reps or co-reps for the region. Although the ballots were due the first week of March, only two were received, and both were from the Nashville area. We're always trying to reach out to the whole region, to encourage more involvement from CMN members outside of Nashville, and we're open to any and all ideas. The two (and only) individuals nominated as co-reps for the region are Rachel Sumner and Katherine Dines. So both people have agreed to continue in this role.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Lisa Atkinson
317 West 41st Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403
650/574-2709

Our region is mobilizing to make the 1999 CMN National Gathering in Petaluma an incredible event for everyone. Ingrid Noyes is doing an awesome of coordinating, and we are beginning to gather an active team of volunteers. We definitely plan to make this year's gathering one of the best ones yet, so contact Lisa to volunteer.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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

On January 10th we hosted a workshop entitled "Sing a Song of Anti-Bias," which was presented by Bonnie Lockhart. It was held at the Universal Studios Childcare Center in Universal City. We had a great turnout of teachers, caregivers, and parents from all areas of Los Angeles County and some from Orange County, too. Many people new to CMN came, as well as our longstanding members. Bonnie encouraged participation, and the response was marvelous. She engaged us all in singing and movement and provided valuable information. It was a great success.

On February 27th our region presented a song swap and round robin in the Advocacy Center at the CAEYC Conference in Long Beach. (See Susan Hopkins' article about the Advocacy Center, in this issue.) Chris Lamm, CMN member and Professor of Child Development at Fullerton College, was instrumental in getting us involved, and we can't thank her enough for her efforts. It felt wonderful to be a part of this family of child advocates. On April 18th we returned to the Isabel Patterson Child Development Center at CSU in Long Beach for another song swap. We are pleased with the relationship that grew from last year's event and happy to be branching out to so many new areas in our region.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST (Forming)

Bonnie Messinger
4648 SW 39th Drive
Portland, OR 97221
503/768-9065
E-mail:
steve.mullinax@worldnet.att.net
or
Greta Pedersen
19363 Willamette Drive #252
West Linn, OR 97068

Day & eve: 503/699-1814

Fax: 503/699-1813

E-mail: accentm@teleport.com

We hosted a song swap at the OAEYC conference on Saturday, April 17th, at the Linn-Benton Community College in Albany. It was a great time to network with teachers from around the state and to share songs. We may also have a song swap at Folklife in Seattle, over Memorial Day Weekend, so if you're coming, look for us in the program.

Southern Oregon sub-region

Denise Friedl Johnson
321 Clay Street #76
Ashland, OR 97520
541/482-4610

Our sub-region will host a family picnic and singalong at Lithia Park in Ashland on May 22nd.

On September 18th, evening potlucks will be held in Ashland and in Portland. Members at both sub-regional gatherings will vote on becoming a CMN region on our own—Pacific Northwest. Voting information will be mailed in August.

GEORGIA (Forming)

Eric Litwin, CMN
128 Greenwood Place
Decatur, GA 30030
Day & eve: 404/378-1036
Beeper: 404/280-7446
Fax: 404/377-0674

About five people are now meeting regularly to share songs, ideas, and different areas of expertise. Meetings are on the third Tuesday of each month, from 7:30 to 9:30 PM, at the Atlanta School, 1015 Edgewood Avenue NE, Atlanta (just behind DeKalb Avenue, behind the Inman Park MARTA Station). The school is pleased to host us, and in exchange for meeting space, several CMNers donate some time singing with the students at the school.

New Sounds

compiled by Sandy Byer

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

BONNIE RIDEOUT

Gi'me Elbow Room

On this award-winning recording, Bonnie and friends introduce children to Scottish music and culture. Bonnie explores the music, poetry, nursery rhymes, and street rhymes of Scotland. A rousing children's chorus chimes in on the songs and singalongs. A rich variety of dance tunes includes reels, jigs, and strathspeys played on Scottish fiddle, Highland pipes, Celtic harp, pennywhistle, guitar, piano, and hammered dulcimer.

Cassettes and CDs are available from Maggie's Music, PO Box 4144, Annapolis, MD 21403; e-mail: mail@maggiesmusic.com.

TIMMY ABELL

Stories to Grow On

This recording mixes a collection of folktales, mountain stories, poetry, and music. It features Carl Sandburg's mesmerizing story,

"The White Horse Girl and the Blue Wind Boy." Each tale comes alive with popular storyteller Timmy Abell's inviting voice, accompanied by the music of award-winning producer Steven Heller, as well as Timmy's own hammered-dulcimer and banjo playing.

Cassettes are \$10 and CDs are \$16 and are available from Upstream Records, PO Box 8843, Asheville, NC 28814; phone: 828/258-9713; e-mail: Upstream@upcom.com.

MARCIA BERMAN

The Best of Marcia Berman

This collection of 17 of Marcia Berman's well-loved songs was produced by Jacki Breger for the Marcia Berman Fund for Music and Young Children. Marcia is joined by a host of musical friends presenting the songs that she has lovingly crafted over 40 years, which reflect her work as a singer, songwriter, performer, educator, and teacher of young children.

Cassettes are \$10.98 and CDs are \$14.98 (plus \$4.75 s+h; sales tax in CA). Both are available from the Marcia Berman Fund, 918 18th St., Santa Monica, CA 90403.

NANCY RAVEN

Sings Her Favorites

This CD compilation contains 24 songs previously recorded by Nancy on her cassettes, "Singing, Dancing, and Prancing," "You Gotta Juba," "Jambalaya," and "Friends and Family." Award-

winning, warm-voiced Nancy sings children's folk songs as well as child-centered songs that promote positive values and multiculturalism. Accompaniment includes a variety of instruments, sound effects, and spirit-enhancing vocals by children and adults.

This CD and the original cassettes are available from Lizard's Rock Music, 142 Spray Ave., Monterey, CA 93940-3412.

SUSAN SALIDOR

Color Me Singing

This is a delightful mix of both original and traditional songs, designed to entertain and empower young children and their families. It features Susan's irresistible soprano voice and impressive instrumental arrangements, many suitable for dancing. Presenting a variety of musical styles, original tunes include "At the Resale Shop," complete with mariachi band, and "A Little Help Is All I Need."

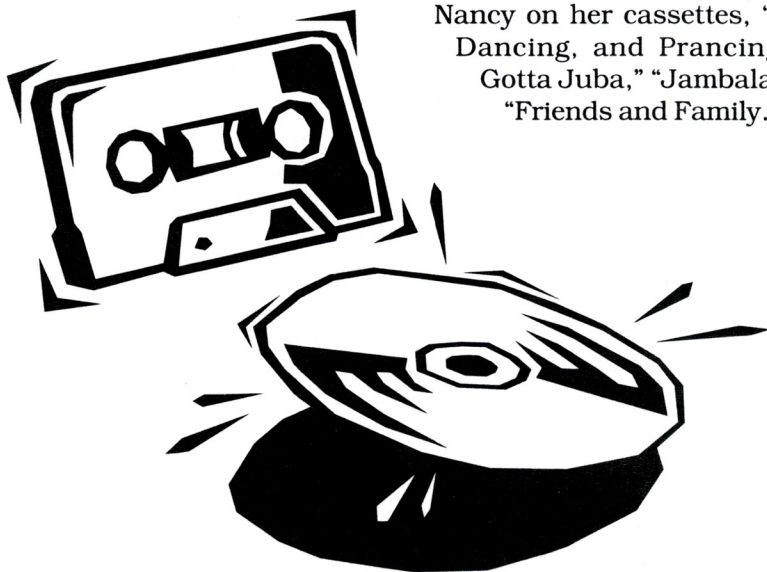
Cassettes are \$10 and CDs are \$14. (plus \$2 s+h) and are available from Susan Salidor, 2225 W. Berwyn, Chicago, IL 60625; e-mail: ssalidor@aol.com.

FRAN AVNI & NANCY SCHIMMEL

I'm All Ears: Sing into Reading

Written by Fran and Nancy, these 23 irresistible songs to develop phonological awareness are designed to help children learn phoneme segmentation and how to recognize the sounds (alliteration, syllables, rhyme) that will make learning to read easier—and they do it playfully. They are designed for kindergarteners through third graders, but younger and older children enjoy them, too. These are great toe-tapping, foot-stomping songs.

Cassettes are \$10 and CDs are \$15 (plus \$2 s+h; sales tax in CA) and are available from StarFish Music, 704 Gilman St., Berkeley, CA 94710; phone: 510/524-5804.



ALISA PERES

En el Lejano Bosque (In the Faraway Forest)

This latest release from the duo Colibri contains songs for children from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, and Venezuela, plus a few originals. Songs are played on traditional instruments including zampoñas (panpipes), charango (10-stringed Andean instrument), cuatro (ukelele-sized 4-stringed Venezuelan guitar), chekere (beaded gourd), bongos, and congas. Songs are sung in Spanish; lyrics and English translations are enclosed.

Cassettes are \$11 and CDs are \$15 (plus \$2 s+h) and are available from Colibri, PO Box 12065, Berkeley, CA 94712; phone: 510/548-4099.

SARAH PIRTLE

Discovery Time for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution

Published by the Children's Creative Response to Conflict program, this book contains over 100 activities for teachers of children grades K-8. The emphasis is on using many expressive arts—music, creative writing, storytelling, dramatics, movement, and drawing—to create a peaceable classroom and to explore and teach social skills (e.g., cooperation, communication, problem solving, giving affirmations, and expressing feelings).

Books are \$2 (plus \$4 s+h; sales tax in MA), and are available from the Discovery Center, 63 Main St., Shelburne Falls, MA 01370; phone: 413/625-2355.

SALLY ROGERS

Earthsong

This is a new picture book that introduces children to 11 endangered animals from around the world, based on Sally's song, "Over in the Endangered Meadow." Strikingly illustrated by Melissa Bay Mathis, there is an inviting blend of a sing-

ing text and dramatically hued illustrations that combine an appreciation for endangered species with counting.

This Penguin Putnam book is available at bookstores across the country, or you can check Sally's website: www.SallyRogers.com.

CHARLOTTE DIAMOND

Musical Treasures

A compilation of 22 favorite songs from her award-winning recordings, this songbook is filled with activities for teachers and families and innovative ideas for fun with music. There are lyrics in English, French, and Spanish; piano, guitar, and vocal arrangements; actions and sign language; a thematic sheet and list of companion books for young readers; and the P.R.I.Z.E. method of introducing songs.

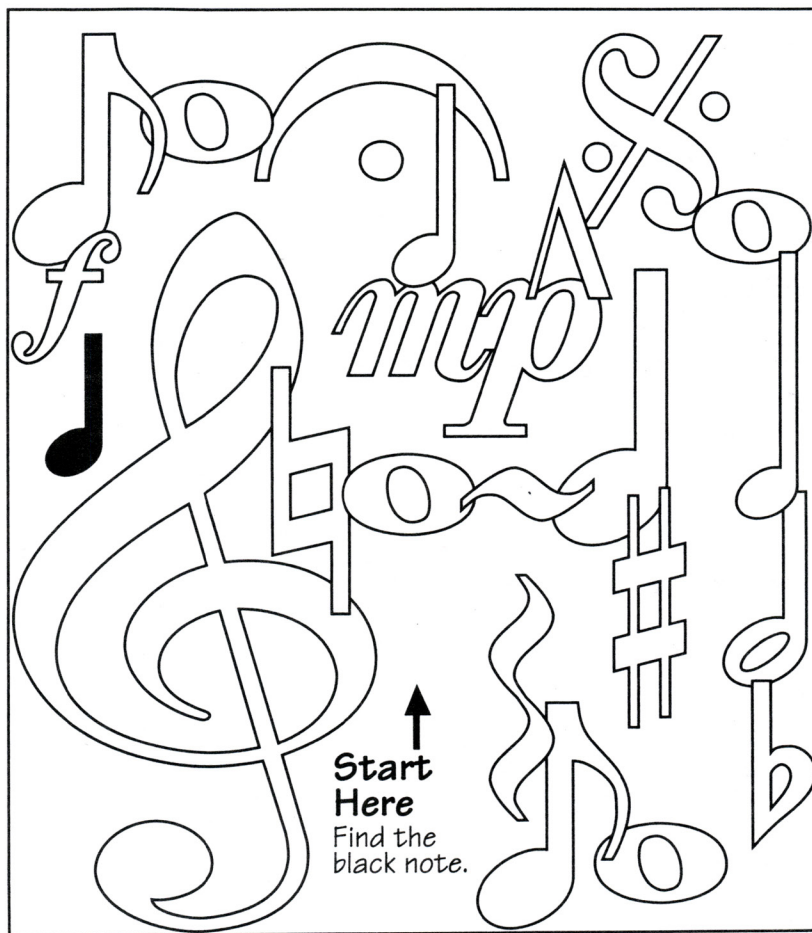
Books are \$20 (plus \$4 s+h) and are available from Hug Bug Music, 650 Garrow Dr., Port Moody, British Columbia V3H 1H7, Canada; phone: 604/931-7375.

BOB BLUE

What Matters: The Music and Teaching of Bob Blue

This 45-minute video documentary focuses on the ways that Bob Blue has used music in his work with children. It includes excerpts from the May 1997 concert, "Bob Blue: A Singing Tribute"; interviews with Bob; footage of him interacting with children at the Fort River School in Amherst, Massachusetts; archival footage of his musicals and performances; and interviews with others familiar with his work, including Pete Seeger.

Videocassettes are \$25 (plus \$1.50 s+h; sales tax in ME) and are available from Bob Blue Video, 8 Arlington St., Portland, ME 04101.



BEE BOP

(Jive from the Hive)



words by Nancy Silber
music by Tony Soll
©1985 Silber & Soll

This pun-filled tune may evoke memories of Nancy Silber's and Anna Marie Spallina's playful rendition at the National Gathering in New York last October.

Jazz Blues

verse

1. I was walk - ing one day — down the “Great White Way” — and I heard a buzz in my ear —

— Right in front of me — was a bum - ble - bee, I said “What you do - ing here?” —

chorus

— I’m a Queens — bee — look - ing for cul - ture, no coun - try life — for me —

— Get a - way coun - try cous - in ’cause this town is buz - zin’, it’s the cit - y life — for me.

bridge

— But don’t you miss your co - zy hive? — I’d ra - ther buzz down Ri - ver - side Drive. —

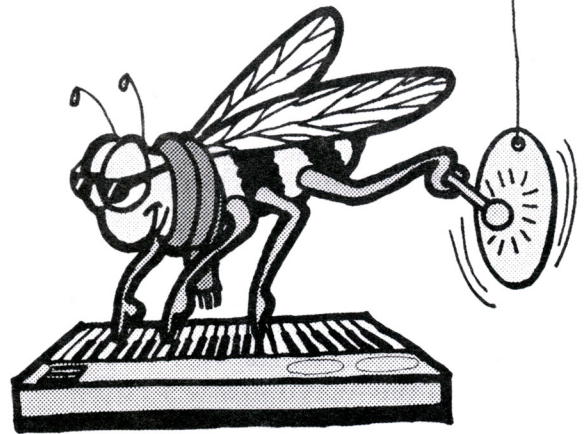
Don’t you miss your farm — at all? — I’d ra - ther go to Carn - e - gie Hall. — I’m a

Queens — bee — look - ing for cul - ture. It’s the ci - ty life — for me. —

continued on page next page ➡

Bee Bop

➡ continued from previous page



verse:

1. I was walking one day down the "Great White Way"* and I heard a buzz in my ear.
Right in front of me was a bumblebee, I said, "What you doing here?"

chorus

I'm a Queens bee looking for culture, no country life for me.
Get away country cousin, 'cause this town is buzzin',
It's the city life for me.

bridge 1.

But don't you miss your cozy hive? I'd rather buzz down Riverside Drive.
Don't you miss your farm at all? I'd rather go to Carnegie Hall.
I'm a Queens bee looking for culture, it's the city life for me.

verse

2. I thought I was crazy, my mind getting hazy, list'ning to a buzzing bee.
But my feet wouldn't move, I was stuck in the groove, as she said once more to me:

chorus

bridge 2.

Where do you get your honey from? At 51st and Lexington.
How do you get to your honeycomb? I take the "B" train all the way home.
I'm a Queens bee looking for culture, it's the city life for me.

3. It was getting late and she had a date, so she said as she took out her fare:
"Well I got to hop to my 'buzz' stop, I'm a bee'tnik—later, square!"

chorus

*This term for Broadway comes from the bright white lights that illuminated New York's theater district in pre-neon times.

Letters to the Editors

GENERATIONS UNDER PEER PRESSURE

Dear *PIO!*

Hey, how good are you at counseling? We could use some help from our CMN family!

Here's our problem: My daughter, Holly, a seventh grader and my partner in the duo Generations, has suddenly become terribly sensitive about the teasing she's started getting from her peers, about performing and about the songs we sing. She has expressed her concern and some resistance to singing for kids her own age and those slightly older. I've not yet refused any school gigs, but I do feel for her because she is being ridiculed by a rowdy few. She has actually never been unprofessional or self-conscious during a performance. But following a recent school show she pointed out how several unruly seventh-grade kids in the back of the gym were making fun of her during the "Tobacco" song and how much it hurt her feelings. I hadn't even noticed this, myself, during our show. But the power of these kids seems overwhelming to her.

Holly says, "It's not just the people at the shows who tease me, it's also the people at my school. This happens every day. I try to use some good comebacks, but they don't do much. It really intimidates me when I hear their nasty comments and then go try to do a show, wondering what to expect."

I suppose most of our music is not cool enough for that group—or should I say not *hot* enough? While we try to introduce new material all the time, I can't help but think that Holly is at an awkward stage for performing age-appropriate tunes. Between the ages of 12 and 14, when kids grow in mind and body so rapidly, finding the right

music to perform is just as difficult as finding appropriate clothes that fit! Holly, now 13, relishes Jewel love songs, but even though she might sound terrific singing them, they aren't totally appropriate for her yet. We might have even pushed it a bit with the Lennon/McCartney tune, "I Will," on our last album. While Holly has music tastes that run wide and deep, the "coolest" kids at school seem a bit more limited.

Yikes! What's a mother to do?! I don't want to force her to perform, or see her perform out of guilt. But I also hate it when this sort of pressure can cause her to buckle under and stifle her talent. Considering that Holly happens to be one of the most confident kids around, if she suffers this much turmoil, I wonder—what does a not-so-confident kid do?

In a few years she'll look back at this and laugh—or cry, depending upon how she plays it out. My husband told her, "Be professional. Stand up for yourself. When those criticizing you can say that they've sold thousands of dollars in CDs, then they will have a right to criticize!" She actually managed a smile at that last comment.

If you have any advice, send it our way! Thanks for listening!

Candy Kreitlow

TRADITIONAL? ANONYMOUS? UNKNOWN?

Dear *PIO!*

A question of song-authorship credit comes up often for me, and I'd love to hear opinions and dialog via *PIO!* about how it should be handled.

In my work as choral director of several community choruses, I use a variety of songs, both "composed" and "traditional," and I create printed programs for our concerts which list the pieces and authorship. In the way I've worded my last sentence, though, I've already dem-

onstrated the dilemma: Of course all songs have been "composed" by someone. Crediting a song as "traditional" seems offensive to me, on behalf of whoever the composer was/is. I often choose to say "anonymous," just to be more honest, meaning that I recognize this song had an author, but I just don't know who it was. But that doesn't feel very respectful either, and it takes away the information implied in "traditional," which says that this song has been around awhile and is known by a fairly large number of people.

I tend to feel better when I can at least describe what kind of song it is (e.g., "four-part round" or "singing game") and even more virtuous when I can list its place of origin, as in "Czechoslovakian round" or "traditional dance tune from Afghanistan" or "Appalachian singing game." But without authorship credit, or at least saying "composer unknown," aren't we implying that the song just generally evolved somehow, perhaps magically by a whole group of people together, without having an author who created it and who might even have put a lot into crafting it just right? I wonder if whoever wrote the wonderful and now well-known "Siyahamba," for example, might be more offended at seeing "traditional, South African" (as I credited it in *PIO!* once, for lack of knowledge of authorship) than "composer unknown, South African."

What do others do about this, whether announcing credit verbally within a performance or listing it in print in a concert program? I'd love to hear some of your "solutions."

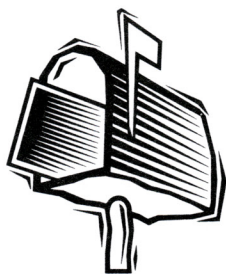
Thanks, Joanne Hammil

ARE WE TRYING TOO HARD?

Dear *PIO!*

I read Caroline Presnell's article/editorial ["Diversity in CMN," winter '99 *PIO!*] with interest. I was present at the beginnings of CMN,

but, although I've been singing for over 50 years and had a very active career, I'm living in Maine now and singing in other venues.



I'm not taking issue with her ideas about racism and how to learn and grow out of it. But I *will* question her focus.

Special-interest groups such as CMN should, I hope, be able to reach out based on what they offer, not to whom. I wish I had an answer as to why whites of various social and cultural background identities feel so uneasy and apologetic and exposed when dealing with most-of-the-rest-of-the-world. It's not a sense of "trying to explain ourselves" we need, so much as joy in being ourselves, in singing our selves.

Here in Maine there is virtually no population of color. But are there differences? Oh yes!! Yet there is a sense of sharing and community carefulness unlike anything I've ever seen. Children in the schools I'm singing with *still* have the "my dad's bigger than your dad" syndrome, because they are children. But across all religious, cultural, and economic lines, they pull together when necessary; and as a folksinger and conflict-management facilitator, I trust them.

The message? Maybe it's: Don't try too hard or too self-consciously. Build on what has gone before, from deeply personal perspectives. Let a grin do what too many words may dilute. Let the songs do it. I've worked many years in schools where up to 15 languages were spoken. Joy and delight were the best options, low-key acceptance was the modality. Hugs helped; so did shared silence.

Peace, Vicki Diamond

Interview: Fletcher

➤ *continued from page 4*

expect you to call them back. And then you do. Then after school I'd go to meetings. I'd get home around seven, do my homework and go to bed.

PIO!: *Could you feel your confidence building as you went through this?*

JF: Oh, definitely. It's not hard for me to talk to adults, but it's hard for me to be firm with them. I feel really inferior. Like, the first interview I had I was just answering yes and no. It was horrible. We have it on tape. My mother and I still laugh at it. So, the whole thing just gave me a huge amount of confidence. It was a big step for me to take.

PIO!: *Did Jackson Browne set any conditions on the performance?*

JF: No, except for picking the date. The only fees were for his crew and his management. It came to about \$2,000 in all.

PIO!: *How long was it between the day you got Jackson's call and the day of the concert?*

JF: I got the call in mid-June, and the concert was October 29.

PIO!: *What was the night of the concert like for you?*

JF: Oh, I was in a dream the whole night. I had to write a speech before the concert. I waited until the last minute and my friend and I just madly jotted down notes, and I went up there and read it. It was like this dream. I couldn't believe it happened. The whole night was so wonderful. It was like everything I'd been stressed out about and tight about just left me in a rush. It was one of the best feelings I've ever had.

PIO!: *What did Jackson Browne turn out to be like?*

JF: When I first met him I was limited to, like, three-word sentences. I was really shy. He came to the hotel. He just said hi, that he had been flying from Arizona. He said

he wanted to go take a shower. After the concert, we just sat and talked. It's like you talk to your neighbor. We talked about what I was doing and where the money was going. He said he had a son that was my age. He asked me about school, and about what sports I play. He's awesome. He's like a normal person.

PIO!: *So the concert ends and you have all this money. How much was there?*

JF: About \$100,000. The ticket sales made ninety, and donations made about another ten.

PIO!: *How did you decide what to do with it?*

JF: I had a mentor on this part. His name is Bob Pinson, a philanthropist I interviewed during my I-Search. He helped me find people to interview who ran—or who had started—different foundations. At first I looked into creating my own foundation. I spoke with a lawyer, but I found out it could take eight months to set up a 501(c)3 foundation. And I didn't have eight months. So I looked at other foundations already set up that would let me manage a separate fund that I could control. We made a list and went through it all, and I ruled them out one by one. Then the Portland Public School Foundation came to me and asked, "Hey, do you want to be a part of our fund?" I chose them.

PIO!: *How does that fund work?*

JF: It is completely separate from the city, and is run by a board. They have a fund called "First Octave," which is just devoted to music in schools.

PIO!: *What guarantee do you have that the money will be spent the way you want it?*

JF: I talked to them a lot about what I wanted to do. It works out well. I'm right now in the process of creating a board, consisting 90% of students, to manage this money.

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Interview: Fletcher

➡ continued from previous page

The concert money is being managed as a separate fund. The students will decide where the money is going. I pay the general Portland Public Foundation a small fee, but we control the money. There will be about fifteen members on our youth board. I'm trying to get one from each school in the Portland Public School District.

PIO!: Are you the President?

JF: I'm veering away from presidents and stuff. I'll have a leadership role, but not because of my title. I'll be leaving in two years and I'll have to pass it on to someone anyway. I don't think we'll have presidents and vice-presidents. Just someone to start the meeting and then everyone will have something to say.

PIO!: Because you don't like hierarchies? You prefer cooperative structures?

JF: I don't want someone to feel like they can't say something because it's not their turn or their issue is not important. I think that everything is important. I've been in clubs where the president takes over and it goes straight to their head. It's frustrating.

PIO!: How will you decide how to spend the money?

JF: Through a grant-making process. The board will meet quarterly to distribute money. Anyone can apply—private organizations or public schools—but the grant must benefit the arts in Portland's public schools.

PIO!: And the students will decide how that money is spent?

JF: Yeah.

PIO!: Do you ever worry that the politicians and school board members will come to rely on your fund as a substitute for the commitment of public funds they should be making?

JF: Actually I never thought of that. I hope not. I hope that this is more



Jennifer introduces the performers at the fundraising concert.

of a wake-up call that makes people realize that students do need the arts. Arts are so much more than just an extracurricular activity. That's what many people think, "Oh, art—that's just an easy A." But arts are like sports. You meet new people. It keeps you in school.

PIO!: Do you challenge the funders to provide matching grants?

JF: Yes, I've done that. I've written to businesses, asking for matching grants. Not many responses have come in yet.

PIO!: I mean, using matching grants as a way to stimulate public funds, so that they don't take you for granted and shirk their responsibility. Like, say X public school says we want \$5,000 for band uniforms and instruments, could you challenge them to apply for \$2,500 worth of public funds—tax money—and then say, "We'll kick in our \$2,500 then."

JF: The schools actually get some money from donations on tax returns. But it's so funny, this measure that happened. The money in the account just decreases constantly. Arts are almost completely cut now. Now it's starting to go into other programs.

PIO!: Why do you think it's happening?

JF: You know, it's kind of confusing. I don't know. I know that taxpayers aren't paying for it. I was amazed by the support from busi-

nesses when I started asking. It was overwhelming. I don't see why it is that people don't just see that the arts are so important. Or that the schools are so important, for that matter. I mean, take classical arts. If you want to continue the symphony and the ballet, it has to start somewhere. The sort of "higher society" here in Portland, they send their kids to private schools so they're not into funding public schools. But if they want to keep going to these high society events, the artists have to come from somewhere, and they won't all come from private schools.

PIO!: What'd you get on your I-Search paper?

JF: An A. But I got a B in the course. I got pneumonia and missed the final. The grade made me mad.

PIO!: Save the arts for your school system and you get a B...Do you ever think about publishing the paper or writing a manual for others? I'm interested in whether you think what you did can be replicated elsewhere.

JF: (laughs) Well, the I-Search paper is kind of boring. And there are so many typos. But doing what I did is really not that hard when you think about it. I definitely think what I did will succeed elsewhere. If anyone had this motive, they could do it. You need to talk to a promotion company in your area; I'm sure they'd talk you through it. You need to arrange food, transportation, the venue, and catering. A benefit concert will succeed if you get most things donated. The hard part is pressuring people. You have to keep asking, and pushing. It just takes a lot of time and commitment. It can be stressful at times, but in the end it's so wonderful.

PIO!: What went wrong?

JF: Whenever a business executive would say, "No, I can't donate," it would get me so down. It was so frustrating. I took it very personally at first. At first I'd come home in tears. My mom would say, "Don't

worry about this. Just ask someone else and prove to them that you can get this."

PIO!: *Fundraising seems like anything else: it's hard not to take rejection personally, isn't it?*

JF: It's true. When you get down on yourself, it brings everything down. You gotta keep yourself up. You gotta keep the whole thing up. As the project went along I got stronger. When people said no, I just tried harder.

PIO!: *What would you do differently if you had it to do over?*

JF: When this happens again next year, I'm definitely gonna delegate this out to the whole board. It's really difficult to do by yourself. I did most of it during the summer, which was okay for me, but when school hit in, it was extremely difficult to do.

PIO!: *"When this happens again next year?" Does that mean you're going to do it again?*

JF: Oh yeah. There'll be an arts auction in the spring, with a whole

bunch of local bands. Then we'll have a big concert in fall. We're talking about getting a younger, female artist next year to spread awareness. Some the names mentioned are Fiona Apple or Natalie Imbruglia, or Paula Cole, or even Pearl Jam. To be honest, I haven't heard of all of them.

PIO!: *What do you want to do after Grant High?*

JF: I want to go to Stanford. Then I want to go to the East Coast. I want to major or minor in horticulture. Or maybe journalism. Or marketing. If I spread majors and minors out over all those things I could do about anything.

PIO!: *Do you think of yourself as a leader now?*

JF: Not really. I think that people wanted to help but they didn't know where to start or what to do. So they needed someone to initiate it or direct them to it. That's how I saw my role.

PIO!: *Congratulations, Jennifer.*

JF: Thank you. **PIO!**

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



**Is this your last
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Editorial

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Susan: There are so many ways that we have fun at our national gatherings, and the roots of that fun are in the trust we build and the spontaneity and creativity we encourage. Do you remember the post-round-robin celebration that went on til all hours in Petaluma a few years ago? We made our own music, our own dances, our own games; and we made them out of our joy and our appreciation for each other and our trust in the support we give each other. Who will ever forget those 16-part harmonies, or that outrageous jump-rope game, or people learning to fly again? We grown-ups played our hearts out.

Jackson: For something to be fun, it has to have an element of fresh-

ness in it. This appeals to the children in all of us. I think all children have some measure of attention difficulty. Some of us, like myself, have come to acknowledge and retain more of this than others. I question the "deficit disorder" tag it has been given, and might hazard to say that creative artist types might fall under that label more than the national average. But this restlessness, if you will, is a key to keeping things fresh, and potentially fun. And...what was I saying? Tom, you take it.

Tom: Got it! When we are in the midst of a fun moment in a program with children, the energy flows freely back and forth. I like to think I've learned to soak up their joy and throw it back to them.

When this mirror thing is working, community building happens. And even if it's on a small scale it's a good thing. Who's next?

Bob: I am. Children come to our national gatherings expecting to join in the fun we have, and we plan for ways that they can participate. Our gatherings—at least during reasonable hours—are intergenerational celebrations. Children enjoy the gatherings; they enjoy being among so many adults who care about, like, and listen to them; and they enjoy being with other children who come. Adults and children learn from what we do at these gatherings, of course; the gatherings aren't only big parties. But fun

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Editorial

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is an important reason for the gatherings.

Susan: Fun and celebration are essential for us to support each other in the work we do. I leave the gatherings feeling filled up with the joy of who we are as a network, and we all have the opportunity to take that sense of fun back to our work in our communities. It's great for children to see that the world of work can include being connected with a big international family of fun-loving people.

Tom: Yes! Yes! When we come home, we can spread this sense of renewed energy. It's one situation where the "trickle-down" theory works. It's healthy for children to see adults doing something for a living which these adults so obviously love and enjoy.

Nancy: Almost any time is a good time for fun. Next time you are really bored at a gathering (wedding, barbecue), look up at the sky and pretend the jet flying above you is a boat, and the exhaust behind the jet is the rippling water, and you are in the sky looking down. Or next time you have to attend a boring seminar in a hotel ballroom, look up at the chandelier and notice how it looks like a bunch of drinking glasses stuck together. Maybe that's what they do instead of hiring someone to wash the dishes...Hey, this tag-team editorializing is fun! Whose turn is it now?

Susan: Mine! What I get from what Jackson was saying is that a big part of having fun is being open to what's new and unusual—having your antennae out for what's quirky or different—and being willing to respond to it spontaneously, in the moment. And from Nancy I get that it's also fun to take ordinary or familiar things and intentionally put them together in new ways, just to see what happens. Both these ways of being are es-

sential to creativity. And yet they're often misunderstood, especially by the adult world. Whether done by adults or children, these ways of having fun are seen as signs of distractibility. We adults are supposed to be "focused" on the important work that needs to be done. And we're supposed to teach children how to do that, too. It's not a bad skill to have, but it so often happens that fun gets devalued and forgotten along the way.

Bob: Many of us who are teachers try, as we teach children, to stay in touch with the fun that helped make us who we are. Of course, some teaching and learning experiences are more fun than others; we all remember lessons that just didn't work because they were too out of touch with fun. And we also remember learning/teaching experiences that were too much fun for us to forget.

As grown-ups, I think most of us believe that growing up has been a positive thing to do. Peter Pan may have some good things to teach us—like, not to forget about the enchantment that we've known as children. But if we believed that growing up was counterproductive, we wouldn't try to help children do it. We're not trying to teach them not to have fun; rather, we're trying to help them enjoy growing.

Susan: Growing is really a lifelong process, and children are so good at reminding us adults to be ready to have fun at any moment. As Nancy says, any time is a good time. I sing in an adult choir in my community, and besides the pleasure of joining my voice with 60 others in singing songs that we love, we have the added blessing of a director who adores comedy and believes that life should be fun. Every rehearsal is filled with laughter, because we know that we can make jokes and the director will laugh along with us, and we know we can feed him lines and he won't be able to resist making the rejoinder.


Do we also make beautiful music? You bet we do!

Bob: Fun sometimes gets bad press; it's sometimes treated as if it's a substitute for important work that needs to be done. But your story illustrates something that many of us believe—that fun can be a way to make sure that important work does get done, and that music can be a way to make fun happen. Anyone else have something to add?

Tom: Yeah, I do. Just the other day, Stuart Stotts and I were talking about the comment, "This is just too much fun." Then this evening, after I'd finished the last of three programs for a school, the principal used that very line: "This has been too much fun!" Though it's just an expression, somehow the concept of "too much fun" entered the world of everyday sayings. Why? Work ethic, maybe. There's at least one old song and one new country song with a variation on the theme—something like, I can never have too much fun. We shouldn't have to defend having fun as being educational. Most of us know the power of humor in teaching anything. But fun just for fun's sake is entirely justifiable without any "educational-value" content. It's simply healthy stuff!

Susan: Yes! Fun is food for the spirit, the body, the mind. It says, "Laugh! Smile! Life is good!"

Jackson: Well, there's one thing that fun isn't—it's not boring. If we've collectively prattled on too much here, please forgive us. We've had a lot of fun putting in our two cents' and five voices' worth, if it's worth anything. If not, well, you can imagine this all falling out of a skyboat and crashing through the dirty glasses of a ballroom chandelier and back onto the editorial column of *Pass It On!* Enough tag-team editorializing—let the fun begin!

Tag—you're it! 

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All we ask is that articles...

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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.

Submission via e-mail or disk is preferred.

Deadline for Fall '99 issue:

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Send articles (except lesson plans) to:

Bob Blue

Executive Editor
170 E. Hadley Road, #82
Amherst, MA 01002
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Send lesson plan ideas, all photographs, artwork, and captions to:

Susan Keniston

Developmental Editor
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Santa Cruz, CA 95065
B40Drive@aol.com

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Most of the songs published in *PIO!* are contributed by your fellow CMN members.

Please—share *your* works with us, too!

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- ✓ a song written by a young person...
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- ✓ a song on a topic that is in some way representative of CMN's mission.

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

Copyright dates 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).

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Bonnie Lockhart

Songs Editor
1032 Winsor Avenue
Oakland, CA 94610

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Children's radio news and information should be sent to:

PJ Swift

Radio Editor
305 Dickens Way
Santa Cruz, CA 95064
pickle@well.com

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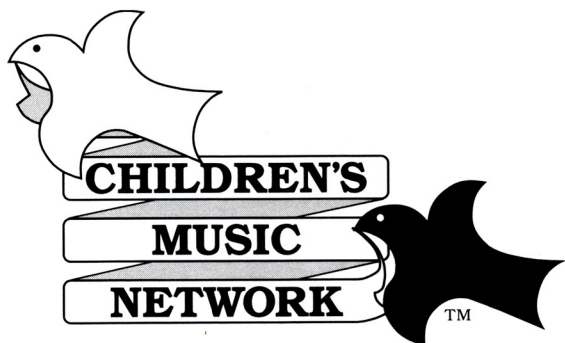
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