
PASS IT ON!TM

The Journal of The Children's Music Network

ISSUE #38

Spring 2001

Bob Blue



Inside...

- Make Your Toaster Sing ■ Direct Action to End Racism ■ CMN Institute for Educators ■
 - Songs as Springboards to Reading ■ Songs to Help Kids Stand Up for Fairness ■
 - NEW! "CMN Connections" Column ■ Great Ways to Use CMN's List Serve ■
-

Why there is a CMN...

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

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

WHO WE ARE . . .

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

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

WHAT WE DO . . .

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

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

OUR PRINCIPLES . . .

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

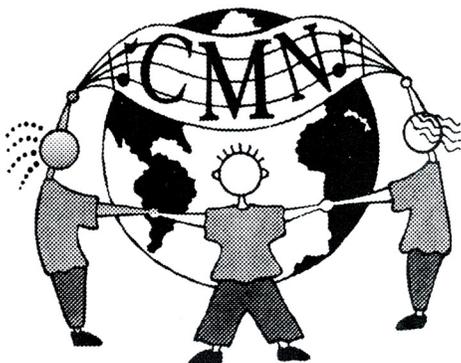
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With deep appreciation, we acknowledge

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

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



PASS IT ON!™

is the journal of

THE CHILDREN'S MUSIC NETWORK

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

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Editorial Page

Introduction

by Susan Keniston

We're serving you up a smorgasbord this time—everything from how songs can be springboards for reading activities, to using the CMN list serve to discuss a controversy and get helpful feedback; from how a schoolwide community-service program might be an inspiration for songwriting, to receiving webcast children's music via your toaster. It's all here, and more.

Some exciting changes are afoot at our magazine. First, we have a new column, called "CMN Connections," which we are launching in this issue! This is a place for your stories about how this network has enriched your life. What connections have you made through CMN? Is there a person in the network who has greatly influenced you, personally or professionally? Is there a song you heard at a CMN event that has been especially helpful or meaningful to you, that you've incorporated into your shows or your classroom? Was there some special nugget of information or a technique you gained from a workshop or an article in *PIO!* that has made a difference in your work, your attitude, your life? Have you used the *CMN Membership Directory* and made a connection? If so, we want to know about it. Contact Beth Bierko with your stories.

Another change is that winter 2002 *PIO!* (two issues hence) will be a special all-songs issue! Our usual feature articles will be replaced by a much-larger-than-usual collection of songs written by you, our members. These will also be available to you on a CD. So, songwriters, look for more details inside this issue, to see how you can be part of this.

In between the *PIO!* you're reading now and the all-songs one will be our fall issue, which will be on the theme of "music with older children," focusing on how to keep young people aged 11 and up involved in making music. Now, on to our spring editorial, on the topic of "singing about justice."

Taking Direct Action to End Racism

by Terry Leonino and Greg Artzner

In an interview in 1999, the year before he died, the great Civil Rights leader James Farmer said, "Through the movement we ended legal segregation, but we have not ended racism." Indeed, racism remains one of the major problems in American society. Studies have shown that racist attitudes begin early in life, and like so many problems that begin with individuals and families and then collectively become social issues, racism is passed on from one generation to the next. As the struggle to end racism continues, many of us in CMN strive to take direct action through music to break the cycle of racial intolerance and build communities that go beyond "tolerance" to acceptance, welcoming, and celebration.

We have heard it said time and time again that a laudable goal would be a society that is "color blind." We respectfully disagree with that opinion. "Color blindness" in society is rather like "tolerance," in that it allows for the diversity without acknowledging it, and certainly without celebrating

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Playfulness, Courage, and Luck:

An Interview with Bob Blue

conducted by Phil Hoose

Bob Blue has been near the heart of CMN, and many of its members, for many years. As a parent, teacher, activist, songwriter, and performer, he has long used music to make life more fun and meaningful for children—and for himself. Though the “progressive” effects of multiple sclerosis have made it impossible for him to perform his music anymore, an award-winning video documentary (*What Matters*, by Shoshana Hoose and Ann B. Morse), several recordings, and a host of performances by top-flight musicians are steadily moving Bob’s work into a national spotlight. He is widely admired for a distinctive ability to craft songs that make universal, often ethical, statements through small, personal episodes. In one song, “Courage,” for example, a schoolgirl’s hesitation to invite an unpopular classmate to a party is likened to the courage historically required of citizens to stand up to brutal regimes.

For 24 years Bob was a classroom teacher. He formed loving and respectful relationships with most students, but the sailing was not always so smooth with administrators. He was strongly encouraged to leave his first four jobs before hitting his stride as a teacher of second- and third-grade students in New York and Massachusetts. There was always a piano in Mr. Blue’s classroom (“It would have been like teaching without a chalkboard for some”). During the school year he made up songs to help his students explore all sorts of things, from spelling rules to how they dealt with their feelings. In the summers Bob wrote them musicals, arranging scripts so that as many children as wanted to could play the lead. Though he retired from teaching in 1994, he still loves the classroom, and volunteers 3 to

5 days a week in the Amherst, Massachusetts, public schools.

Bob was present at CMN’s organizing meeting, in Hartford, Connecticut. A year or so later, when 12 women announced that they were ready to form CMN’s first board of directors, Bob turned to a friend and said, “Well, it isn’t *only* women who work with children is it?” and volunteered to serve. Later he also became the editor of *Pass it On!* Though traveling has become increasingly exhausting, Bob still sometimes manages to attend CMN gatherings. Upon arrival he is surrounded by children who want a scooter ride. Once settled delicately onto his lap, a child looks back and asks Bob if (s)he can drive. Usually, he nods. Away they lurch, sometimes with an adult sprinting in pursuit and an open-mouthed crowd watching through fingers.

Several of Bob’s songs have become classics. “The Ballad of Erica Levine” has been performed by Peter, Paul and Mary, among many others. “Their Way,” a satisfying treatment of academic bullying, was sung on “A Prairie Home Companion.” Last year, “My Landlord” was one of six winners of The Great American Song Contest, sponsored by Songwriter’s Resource Network. In the same contest his Halloween song, “I’m Not Scared,” received an honorable mention award.

Bob Blue, 53, lives in a small home in Amherst, Massachusetts, where he is frequently in the company of one or more of his five personal-care attendants, his many friends, and, sometimes, by his daughters Katie and Lara.

This conversation took place throughout the winter of 2001. In grand CMN tradition, it is a quilt of 11 e-mail segments and a telephone conversation.

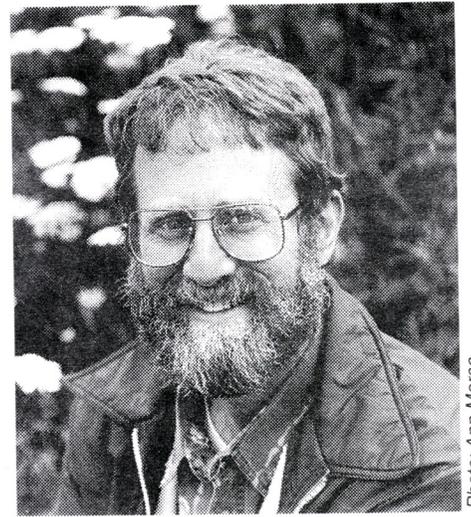


Photo: Ann Morse

Bob Blue

PIO! You’re in all sorts of families, but tell us about the one you grew up with.

Bob: I grew up in Huntington, New York, with my parents and brothers Howie and Richie. We lived in a suburban housing development, but we had just enough wooded land to make us think we were out in the country. Our development was called Audubon Woods, because it had been built on what was once a bird sanctuary. My mother gave us a rotating schedule of chores—things like feeding and walking Chipper (our dog), cutting the lawn, raking leaves, weeding the garden, feeding the animals and collecting eggs.

PIO! What animals were there besides Chipper?

Bob: We had ponies, a lamb, a goat, and 21 chickens. My father bought the ponies so we could earn our way through college by selling rides or renting out the ponies for birthday parties. Howie rented out the ponies a lot, and brought some of them to fairs and other gatherings. I preferred driving a pony and cart into a neighborhood, shouting out “Pony rides!” and gathering children to buy rides at 25 cents a ride. I wore a cowboy hat, a cowboy-looking shirt, and cowboy boots. I spoke with what I thought was a Western drawl. I fancied that I was more popular than the ice cream man.

PIO!: So was your dad a farmer?

Bob: I think my father wanted to be a farmer, a history professor, or something else, but instead he owned three clothing stores: Blue's Boys' Shop, Blue's Boys' and Men's Department Store, and Rick's Roost. The first two were in Richmond Hill, New York, and Rick's Roost was in Huntington. I didn't spend much time in any of the stores. I was allergic to formaldehyde—which I think was used to make permanent-press clothes—and besides, I didn't like clothes. I still don't, but I realize that they're helpful. But the stores were a big part of my childhood. Partly because all my clothes were chosen for me, but mostly because it made me not have my father at home much.

PIO!: You must know a million songs. Did someone sing to you a lot when you were little?

Bob: My mother tells me that when I was born, she immediately sang a Yiddish lullaby: "Shayn Videelah Vunah." She sang a lot as I was growing up. She told me her favorite songs were "Cheek to Cheek," "The Isle of Capri," and "It's June in January." And I learned to play them on the piano. She requested them a lot.

PIO!: When did you start playing piano?

Bob: I was three. Actually, I was playing the organ of our next door neighbor, Mrs. Gural. My mother walked by their house and heard someone playing the organ. She asked Mrs. Gural, "Who is that?" She answered, "That's your son, Bobby." So they got me a piano. She encouraged me to practice, too. I liked playing piano; I loved it. But I did not like taking lessons—practicing Clementi sonatinas or scales. So as I practiced, she listened, probably as impatient as I was. The piano was in the living room, right near the kitchen, and when I drifted from practicing to playing my fa-

vorites (and hers) by ear, she'd say, "Bob-by—" with a mock-disciplinary tone of voice. But I don't think she really wanted me to go back to playing scales.

PIO!: What are some of the earliest songs you remember?

Bob: "My Little Gray Pony," the camp song of the Pineview Camp (my grandfather's camp in Loch Sheldrake, New York), "A Hundred Bottles of Beer on the Wall," "No Two People Have Ever Been So In Love" (Danny Kaye), "How Much Is That Doggie in the Window?" (Doris Day), and "When Santa Claus Gets Your Letter" (Gene Autry). I listened to records a lot—Broadway Musicals, mostly. My parents never took us to musicals; they bought original cast recordings: Burton, Andrews, and Goulet in *Camelot*; Robert Preston in *Music Man*; Rex Harrison and Julie Andrews in *My Fair Lady*; Theodore Bikel and Mary Martin in *The Sound of Music*; Richard Kiley in *Man of La Mancha*. I listened to the soundtracks a lot. I was crazy about Danny Kaye. And I loved the people who made little 78-rpm records for kids—Rosemary Clooney, Doris Day, Gene Autry, Burl Ives, and later, Walt Disney Productions.

PIO!: When did you start writing songs?

Bob: This is embarrassing. The first song I wrote was called "The Great Society." It was a satire on Lyndon Johnson's Great Society idea, but it was written from the point of view of a Young American for Freedom who wanted Barry Goldwater to be president.

PIO!: Were you for Goldwater? I know all sorts of people who were fired up by Barry



Marcia Berman shows her Magic Penny Award to Bob at the 2000 national gathering.

Goldwater. Most of them became lefties.

Bob: Well—I was an adolescent. I had the feeling something was very wrong with our government. Then I read a book called "Conscience of a Conservative," by Barry Goldwater. It seemed so logical and right to me! Besides (and maybe more to the point), my parents were shocked! What better endorsement? I could work for what I thought was "power to the people" and against my parents, at the same time! For about a year, I was a young conservative.

PIO!: There's a part in the video you where you say you knew you wanted to be a second-grade teacher in second grade. That really amazed me—what a precocious sense of vocation. Why'd you want to be a teacher? Why not an astronaut?

Bob: It's true. I had a second-grade teacher named Mrs. Keedle. I loved her, and for about a year, I wanted to be a second-grade teacher. But if Mrs. Keedle had been a banker, I probably would have wanted to be a banker. Anyway I soon realized that my destiny was to be a doctor. That's what my father hoped, and I dutifully hoped so, too. I thought it would be my way to help people. But I later learned that science was important for doctors, and I didn't like science. And in seventh-grade

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MISTAKES

words & music by Bob Blue

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You can contact Bob about his music and recordings at 170 E. Hadley Rd. #82, Amherst, MA 01002.



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Peo - ple make mis - takes. In fact, they make 'em all the time. They
 Ev - 'ry - bo - dy mess - es up, in - tend - ing to do right. They
 make 'em in their ten - der years. They make 'em in their prime. They
 mess up in the morn - ing, and they mess up in the night. The
 make 'em with - out rea - son, and they make 'em with - out the rhyme. Mis -
 strong - est and the big - gest, and the bright - est of the bright. They
 take are made by peo - ple all the time. So
 mess things up, in - tend - ing to do right.
 may - be lay - ing blame is not the thing to do. Re -
 mem - ber when you made your - self a roy - al mess or two.
 Lend a help - ing hand, and try to help them make it through,

Mistakes

→ continued from previous page

E A
Help - ing hands may some day come to you.

D Bmin Emin A
Ev - 'ry - bo - dy in this goof - y world is try - ing hard.

Emin A D
Straight - en - ing their in - side stuff, or clean - ing up their yard, So

G Gmin6 D C B
wheth - er you're the Queen of Hearts, or just a num - ber card, Re -

G A D
mem - ber that we all are try - ing hard.

People make mistakes. In fact, they make 'em all the time.
They make 'em in their tender years. They make 'em in their prime.
They make 'em without reason, and they make 'em without rhyme.
Mistakes are made by people all the time.



Ev'rybody messes up, intending to do right.
They mess up in the morning, and they mess up in the night.
The strongest, and the biggest, and the brightest of the bright.
They mess things up, intending to do right.

So maybe laying blame is not the thing to do.
Remember when you made yourself a royal mess or two.
Lend a helping hand, and try to help them make it through,
Helping hands may some day come to you.

Ev'rybody in this goofy world is trying hard.
Straightening their inside stuff, or cleaning up their yard,
So whether you're the Queen of Hearts, or just a number card,
Remember that we all are trying hard.

Winter Wishland:

Walking the Talk and Singing the Walk

by Patricia Shih

How does one instill a sense of responsibility for community in young children? This was one of my main objectives when first starting out as a singer and songwriter in the schools 15 years ago. As a short-term visitor, however, I came to realize that this was next to impossible for me to achieve singlehandedly. So now I see my work as merely a spark that might inspire discussion, and maybe action. Sometimes my concerts are a kickoff or culminating event at a school that has a project that fits with one of my themes, such as substance-abuse prevention, ecology, disabilities, nonviolence, and so forth. I'd like to introduce you to an extraordinary project that I recently had the privilege of being a tiny part of, in a public elementary school in Scarsdale, New York. An event like this could, conversely, be the spark for much music making in the school and in the community as a whole. It seems to me to be a natural inspiration for a residency.

At Quaker Ridge Elementary School there has been an event occurring over the winter holidays since 1997. It is called "Winter Wishland" and was conceived by a remarkable mother of three, Deena Wolff. She started the project to get the students and their families involved in their community in the easiest way possible. Scarsdale is a generally wealthy community in Westchester County, north of New York City. To get the children to recognize how privileged they are, and to teach them about those less fortunate, the event was designed to underscore the true meaning of the year-end holidays, which is giving.

Long before the holidays, Deena and her PTA community-service committee contact various agencies around the area to see what needs

they have that can be met by volunteers. These agencies range from animal shelters and nursing homes to rehabilitation centers and food banks. Needs might range from material things (leashes and collars for animals, cans of food or warm coats for the homeless) to time and energy (reading stories to children in hospitals or singing to the elderly in senior centers). In addition, the heads of these agencies give the committee contact names, phone numbers, addresses, and operating days and times—any information that makes it easy for volunteers to fulfill their "wish list." The committee then enters this information into a computer, along with the wishes, for printing out, cutting, and pasting onto "snowflakes"—small paper doilies. Each year, fifth graders are chosen to paint one or two winter murals, where these snowflakes will get posted. All students are invited to decorate the snowflakes with glitter and paint.

During the first week of December, just before parent/teacher conferences begin, the snowflakes get put up on a main wall. Together, the students and their families are encouraged to pick one or more wishes that they feel they would like—and are able—to fulfill. Deena is careful to have a range of ideas, so that everyone could do something, no matter what their circumstances. The families have six weeks, until mid-January, to carry out their wishes. Deena expressly times this so that those who are home for the holidays can give their wish fulfillments as part of their holiday festivities, yet those who go away still have the time to do their bit.

After the wish is fulfilled, the student writes her or his name and grade on the snowflake and brings it back to school, where it gets



Photo by Martin Stone

Patricia Shih and friends

posted on a mural of Frosty the Snowman. Deena explains that she chose to have a line drawing of Frosty, purposely empty of snow at first, so that the legend is that Frosty is sad about missing the snow. The children's task, in addition to fulfilling the wishes and contributing to their community, is to cheer up Frosty by filling the mural with their snowflakes. In this way, they are also getting public recognition for their deed.

At the end of the six weeks, as a thank you to all volunteers, the PTA organizes a "pat-on-the-back" event. In years past they had classroom discussions, so the children could share what they did with each other and vote on how any money that was raised during the project should best be spent. This year my concert, "Big Ideas about Kindness," was the conclusion. I included songs about helping the homeless, being kind to other kids and understanding the difference between making fun of someone as opposed to making fun with others, understanding hunger, learning to listen, and others.

Both before and after the concert, the principal, Jerri Farren, made sure I fully understood what the project was about. She briefed me well in advance about the student involvement and also introduced me to Deena. Afterward, Jerri took me through the halls to see the murals and snowflakes and gave me school literature, sample snowflakes, and a copy of a news article about the event. One of the finest

results of Winter Wishland at Quaker Ridge is that some of the families have maintained ongoing relationships with the agencies they first gifted years ago. The children see quite concretely the results of their actions and develop a real hands-on sense of what it means to contribute to their community.

I was so impressed by the concept and how well it worked that I started thinking about spreading the idea to others. This idea, it seemed to me, was a beautiful flower that should grow out into the world to become a bountiful garden. Like Johnny Appleseeds, people could take the seed of this flower and plant it in and adapt it to their own communities. Indeed, all five of the elementary schools in Scarsdale have since done similar projects; one school actually changed the winter snowflake theme into a springtime-flower "Giving Garden." This adaptation enabled the agencies in their community to have their wishes fulfilled past the holidays, into another season. Deena has also told me that she has gotten calls from folks in Massachusetts and South Carolina who heard of her idea and wanted to replicate it. I want to share it with other CMN members, who could suggest it to schools and communities where they work as performers, teachers, librarians, parents, and so on.

I also wondered how musicians—especially the singer/songwriters among us—could be involved further. Besides doing a kick-off or concluding concert, an artist could develop a songwriting residency by going into the classrooms and teaching the children how to write songs about their gifts and/or what they learned, witnessed, or felt while fulfilling the wishes. There are many ways to approach songwriting with children. In my workshops, we really concentrate on the group process. I think learning how to get to the end product is, in some ways, more important than the finished song.

We start by laying down two simple ground rules. When working collaboratively, I stress how important it is that everyone's voice be heard, and everyone respect each other's contribution. So Rule Number One is Respect. That means respecting me by raising their hands and waiting to be called on (very important as the children tend to get extremely excited and all talk at once). It also means respecting each other. Not everyone's ideas may get chosen for the song, but no one may make fun of or "dis" another's suggestion. All suggestions, within a limit, go up on the board.

Rule Number Two: We choose what goes in by a blind vote (everyone closes their eyes and/or puts their heads down on the desks when voting), so that no one can be influenced by anyone else and no one's feelings get hurt. Voting rules are that everyone *must* vote, and each person can *only* vote for *one* choice.

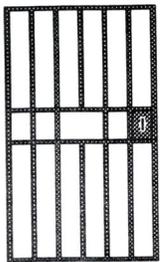
Then the work begins. Each class writes one song, with everyone contributing ideas for style of music, melody, tempo, lyrics, and so on. Once a style has been chosen (older kids seem to always favor rock-and-roll) we search for a melody. During residencies, when I get to see the same kids repeatedly over a period of time, we can write an original melody. During workshops, where I see the group only once for one hour, there is no time, so I will supply one—a simple format (couplets) for the K-3 kids, and a more sophisticated format (verses, chorus, maybe a bridge) for grades 4-6. We talk about rhyme scheme, rhythm, scanning, meter, and so forth. Then we simply brainstorm for the rest of the time, with me facilitating and them suggesting and voting. By the end of the workshop (or residency), we have our song. I will then record the children singing their new song onto cassette, which goes to the classroom teacher as a souvenir. At the end of a residency, I compile all the children's songs into one spiral-

bound book, which I send to the PTA or school for everyone to share. An additional follow-up exercise that I often recommend is for the classroom teachers to have each class write and illustrate a separate book, based on their song.

In the case of the Winter Wishland project, this would create a permanent record, in songs, tapes, and books, of that year's efforts. This would get the children thinking more intensively and extensively about what they did and why, and how they impacted their community. The songs could be archived in the library and built upon year by year, to be brought out for a holiday or graduation ceremony. The children would have the pride of accomplishment beyond their deeds, because they would all be artists and songwriters. I have seen this sense of pride over and over in the many schools where they have written their own songs. This could even mushroom out into the community, with the students going back to the agencies and offering to write songs with those people with whom they have built a relationship. A wonderful thing happens when a project like this grows: intergenerational and multicultural bridges are built, and this common bond—their creativity in making an original song—cements friendships.

I am reminded of what Deena told me in our phone interview for this article: One day, when talking to her son, she was amazed at the truism he arrived at through accomplishing community service. He said, "Every small action makes a big difference." This is what she teaches her children, the children of Quaker Ridge, and her community. This is what I think we in CMN try to teach, every day, in the work we do. 

Patricia Shih, one of the original members of CMN, lives in Huntington, Long Island, with her accompanist/husband Stephen Fricker and daughter Jennifer.



HAVE YOU BEEN TO JAIL FOR JUSTICE?

words & music Anne Feeney
©2000 Anne Feeney (BMI)

CMN member Beverly Granoff reports an enthusiastic response from the school-aged children with whom she has sung this song by Anne Feeney. With elementary school students in mind, Beverly offers these revisions to the first verse: *Was it Nelson Mandela, Maybe it was Rosa Parks. Some will say Martin Luther King brought them out of the dark. No matter who you look up to, it's pretty plain. . .* She sings the third line in the final verse: *We have to keep on trying for justice to prevail. . .* To contact Beverly about her use of this and other songs, write to her at tunefultots@hotmail.com.

Musical score for the song "Have You Been to Jail for Justice?". The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are as follows:

Was it Ce - sar Cha - vez? — May - be it was Dor - o - thy Day?

Some will say Doc - tor King or Ghan - di set them on their way. No

mat - ter who — your men - tors are — it's pret - ty plain — to see, That if you've

been to jail — for jus - tice, you're in good com - pan - y. Have you

been to jail — for jus - tice? I want to shake your hand. 'Cause

sit - ting in — and ly - ing down — are ways to take a stand. — Have you

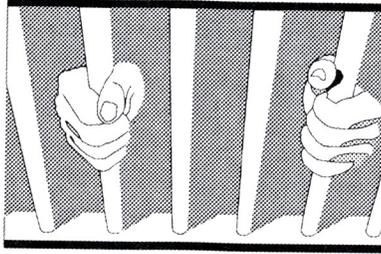
sung a song — for free - dom? — Or marched that pic - ket line? — Have you

been to jail — for jus - tice? Then you're a friend — of mine.

Chords indicated above the staff: A, D, A, B, E, D, A, C#, F#min, B, E, E7, A, D, A, A, F#7, B7, E, D, A, C#, F#min D, A, D, A, E7, A.

Have You Been to Jail for Justice

➔ continued from previous page



1. Was it Cesar Chavez? Maybe it was Dorothy Day,
Some will say Doctor King or Gandhi set them on their way.
No matter who your mentors are it's pretty plain to see,
That if you've been to jail for justice, you're in good company.

chorus:

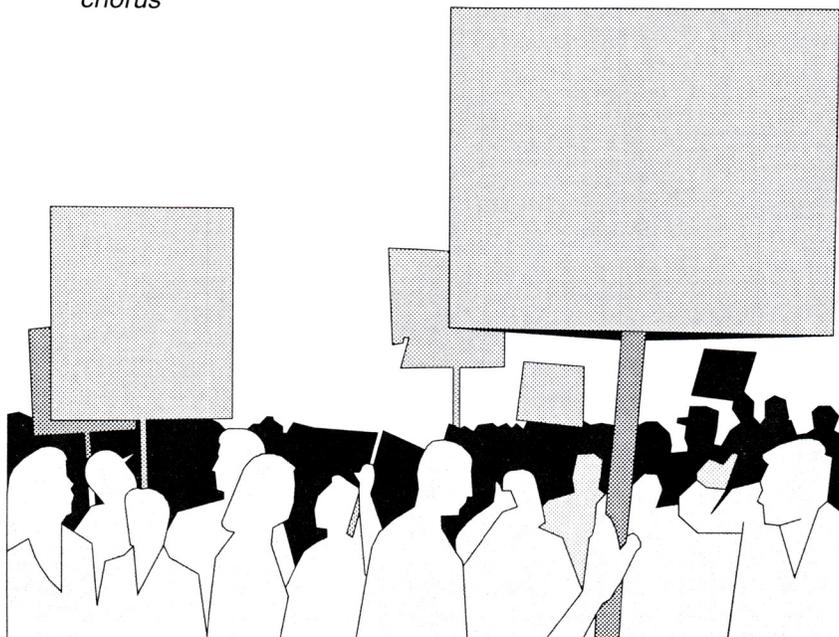
Have you been to jail for justice? I want to shake your hand.
'Cause sitting in and lying down are ways to take a stand.
Have you sung a song for freedom? Or marched that picket line?
Have you been to jail for justice? Then you're a friend of mine.

2. You law abiding citizens, come listen to this song.
'Cause laws were made by people, and people can be wrong.
Once unions were against the law, but slavery was fine.
Women were denied the vote and children worked the mine.
*(repeat the final 8 bars of the verse music
in order to accommodate these extra words in verse 2)*
The more you study history, the less you can deny it.
A rotten law stays on the books 'til folks with guts defy it.

chorus

3. The law's supposed to serve us, and so are the police,
And when the system fails, it's up to us to speak our peace.
We must be ever-vigilant for justice to prevail,
So get courage from your convictions. Let them haul you off to jail!

chorus



Shared Writing and Reading:

Songs as Springboards

by Cathy Winter

Over the last few years, I have made a transition from concert touring and working as a visiting artist in schools to working in schools as a reading teacher. Through the process of graduate school and now through teaching, concepts I had referred to as “buzz words” have taken on more meaning to me, not only in my new role as a reading teacher, but as I try to think of the best ways to bring more music into my school. I thought explaining the concepts of shared reading and writing might be helpful to musicians who are trying to understand more of the teacher’s angle.

SHARED WRITING

When teachers talk about *shared writing*, what do they mean? Shared writing is when the teacher (or you) and the students write in collaboration with a whole group, with an expert acting as scribe. It is what we do when we write a song in front of a class. A big part of what makes shared writing valuable to teachers is exposing the process, not just the result. It makes visible what goes into writing—why we decide to cross something out, or come back later to look for a better choice of words. It is a way for students to see and hear how people think when they write. This is not a self-evident process for most children—or for most people, for that matter.

However, when we come in to write songs with a class, there is often a lot of pressure to end up with a *good* song. We want the song to come out right (not to mention that there is something about being judged by the quality of the work we leave behind). To make the experience valuable to the students—besides ending up with a good song—it is tremendously helpful if you explain why you write down one sugges-

tion and not another.

The more you discuss the choices about content and language, the better. Help the students to stretch for more expressive vocabulary, explaining why *leap* is better than *go*. What is the right sequence of events? What are the most important ideas and information to include? Are there gaps in what you’ve said that you need to go back and fill in, for the story or information to make sense?

As songwriters, we edit and revise all the time, making decisions at many levels—content, phrasing, poetic details that create imagery, rhythmic flow. Children learning to write have to learn it’s okay to cross things out and make a better copy later. Leave your mistakes on the board or the chart paper for them to see. If you can cross things out, then maybe they can too!

To think in teachers’ terms, discussing the process of writing brings out many things they are trying to teach—choosing a main idea and important details, expanding vocabulary, constructing a sequence in writing, editing and revising, and so on. As a writer, you probably do almost all the things they try to teach, but rarely notice what it is you are doing. Think about it as you do it, and verbalize that process for the students. Most teachers have a few concepts they consider particularly important for their students to understand and use. Ask them ahead of time, and you can bring to life something that may have been a struggle for them with their students.

It is satisfying to give them a good



Cathy Winter

also convey a deeper understanding of how they, too, can be writers, you have left a much larger legacy behind.

SHARED READING

When teachers talk about *shared reading*, what do they mean? There is a tremendous value in children being read to at home, snugly tucked into laps or beds. You know how it goes—you read, they interrupt and ask you why something happened; they read along because they have memorized it; they tell you what they think happens next or tell you a story somehow connected to the one you’re reading; and so on. You point out interesting things in the illustrations, ask them questions, make jokes, talk about other books you’ve read that this one reminds you of, and so on. The conversations are as valuable as the book.

Sharing a book helps children learn to read. Not all children get to do enough of it at home. Shared reading is a way of doing something similar in the classroom. Teachers often use extra-large books with print and illustrations big enough for all students to see. (This specific educational tool, called a “big

book," is very popular with teachers in the early grades.) Teachers also make up their own texts, using poems they like. The "morning message"—a letter to the class written by the teacher on chart paper before they come in—is shared reading, too. They read it together, with the teacher using the event of reading it to teach some points about print, letters, words, sight words, and the like.

Shared reading helps beginning readers learn to read, when the texts are reread often and are not too complex. It helps if they have repeating, predictable patterns or are not too long. Young readers build confidence and become familiar with the way words and letters combine to make meaningful messages in print. We forget how mysterious and strange all those squiggles used to look on a page before we figured out how to use the system ourselves.

When you bring songs into the classroom, if you leave a copy of the printed text behind so that students can continue to sing it and read it, then the teacher can use that song for shared reading activities. It's extra work to supply a tape of songs to every classroom you work with, but it makes a huge difference to teachers. If you do a songwriting project and use something they can sing on their own (yet another song set to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," for instance), they can sing it without you or a tape. If the kids loved the songs and can continue to sing them after you leave, your visit becomes part of the classroom literature and culture. The teacher can use the songs to build the classroom community and to work with sight words, sound or spelling patterns, and ways language fits together.

Kids memorize songs they love. If they do this via repeated singing with the printed text in front of them, this reinforces reading.

Memorizing print is a developmental stage in learning to read that teachers can build on. We all know that kids memorize songs better than they memorize anything else.

Memorizing print is a developmental stage in learning to read that teachers can build on. We all know that kids memorize songs better than they memorize anything else.

Let's say you wrote a pithy little six-line song with first graders, and they want to sing it 10 times a day. The teacher can take the six lines, print them out on regular-size paper, cut them into strips, and have the students paste them up on their own sheets of paper in the right order. It is a challenging task for emergent readers, something they can only do with a memorized text. They have to draw on the things they know about the song and about print: What's the first sound in that line? What letter do you think that might be? The class might also create their own "big book" of the song, with illustrations to read together or independently.

Maybe the class was more advanced, and you wrote a song with more complex concepts or information. If the song reflects a unit of something they have been study-

ing, it can serve as a center for extending the students' learning in other ways. If you wrote a song about the rainforest or the desert together, they could make drawings or displays that illustrate elements of the song or some of the information that did not get into the lyrics. Leave room for the teacher to step in where you left off and extend the project to places s/he thinks are important.



Songs are music, but they are also literature and highly valued words. Teachers of young children try to create experiences with words, especially printed words, that excite their students and give them a sense of ownership. By considering what you leave behind, the songs you bring into the classroom can be a wonderful resource for teachers and children. 

After years of touring, Cathy Winter is enjoying working as an elementary reading teacher and is conducting teacher trainings on using music in the classroom.

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"The Cat" Controversy Chat: CMN's Online Community

by Ingrid Noyes

Sometime last year, I got an e-mail inviting me to join CMN's member e-mail list, which had been newly created to give us all one more way to be in touch with each other. I don't usually do e-mail lists, but this one I thought might be useful. So I put my name on the list, and sure enough, pretty soon something came up that I wanted to discuss with other CMN members, so I posted the following message:



It was Halloween and we were singing songs for each kid in class, related to what they were going to be on Halloween. Reuben was going to be a fire fighter, so we sang "The Fire Engine." Two girls were going to be black cats—and the first song that I thought of was "The Cat Came Back." We sang it, they loved it. They asked for it again the next week. After class Reuben's mother told me she heard we were singing a song about a man loading up his shotgun with nails and dynamite. I said, "Oh, yes, 'The Cat Came Back,' here, let me show you the lyrics." She replied that no, she didn't want to see the lyrics, she just didn't want her kid singing about shotguns, no way. End of non-discussion. I said, "Okay, we won't sing about shotguns anymore."

Now, I understand this person's position, and I respect it though I don't altogether agree with it. But what's hard for me is that when this kind of thing happens, the disapproving parent will never even listen to the whole song or give me a chance to explain why I think it's okay to sing that song, or what the real message of the song might be. They just hear shotgun (or, last time this happened, witch) and react to that one isolated word.

So I'm wondering if I should just let this go (probably!) or if there's any point trying to have any further discussion about it. I'd like to be listened to; I feel judged, and unfairly so, and hurt that she has so little faith in my judgment. Her kid loves music class, and I have to say he's one of the sweetest kids on earth, and also that his mother is known as the most overprotective and controlling mom in town. I know the kids will ask for the song again, and I'm thinking I will sing it with them with the less-offensive verses only, and they will ask why, and we will discuss it. And that discussion will probably make it back to Reuben's mom, and that may open it up again with her, and then I don't know what will happen after that. It may all work out just fine on its own without me pushing the issue, but I won-

dered if any of you have any comments. I know this happens to all of us from time to time, and I'd be interested to hear how other people handle it.

I have no idea who's on this list, so now you have a chance to identify yourselves. Maybe some of you agree with Reuben's mom, and I'd be interested to hear that, too. We could have our own little discussion. I guess that's what this e-mail list is for. So anyway, hope to hear from somebody out there.

Before going any further, I should mention that I assumed many people would know the song, so I didn't quote its lyrics. But for those *PIO!* readers who may not be familiar with it, it was written in the 1890s by Harry S. Miller* and tells the story of a man, Mr. Johnson, who had an old yellow cat he wanted to get rid of. In each verse, Mr. Johnson tries a different method of getting rid of the cat, most of which involve giving it to somebody who will take it far away and some of which also involve that person doing the cat in. The agent of removal and/or destruction always fails and in the process is often done in himself, while the cat inevitably survives and returns to Mr. Johnson. In the verse that offended Reuben's mom, a man swears to shoot the cat with a gun loaded with nails and dynamite, but in the end, the would-be assassin is blown to bits by his own weapon and the cat comes back.

A few weeks went by after I posted that first message on our e-mail list, and I heard nothing back. This seemed unlike our supportive CMN crowd, so I sent the message again, this time directly to 25 or so CMN friends whose e-mail addresses I had. The response was instant and interesting. Almost everyone responded, some with advice, some with thoughts to share, and some with similar stories of their own. Following are some of the responses, edited for brevity and clarity:

- *Interesting can of cats and guns you opened there.*
- *I don't know. I once sang "Dear Mr. President" for my fourth-grade class, and a parent complained about the discussion we had afterward. I think discussions about violence are important. Children need to be part of such discussions. But they also need to feel safe.*
- *I believe there are occasions when it is important to move people out of their comfort zones, but not just for the sake of making them uncomfortable. I used to sing "The Cat Came Back." I, too, found that it was one of the kids' favorite songs. . . . [But] I found that I became less comfortable with the song, even though I put bubble gum and dynamite in the shotgun. I found the spirit of the song violent, even without the shotgun.*

*A six-verse version of "The Cat Came Back," including some later folk additions, can be found in the songbook, *Rise Up Singing*, edited by Peter Blood-Patterson (a *Sing Out!* publication).

- *I have mixed feelings about forced PC. Certain words/ subjects trigger some people and not others. In our area, Halloween is a controversy. I know some parents who have never read the Harry Potter books, but are against it because it has magic. (In my family's opinion, they—and their kids—are really missing out!) Some of these same parents would have no trouble with the mentioning of guns in songs, but some of the other, pro-Potter parents would disapprove of guns. So what do we do? Revise everything into worthless pabulum? Please, no!*
- *I played my song "Blood"—which all the kids really love—at a large concert, and the woman who hired me came up in the middle of the song and (quietly) asked me to stop singing! After the concert, I tried to talk with her about it, and was surprised at her objection. She was very offended by the last line—"But blood, sweet blood, without it we'd be dead"—especially the word dead. Well, apparently one of the children she had brought to the concert had just lost her mother, and the woman was trying to protect her! I really wasn't sure what to do, other than to honor her wishes, since she had hired me, but I . . . [agree] that we can't protect children from the truth about life and death and all the realities like loaded guns in-between that people are inspired to write about. It's how we communicate about it to the children that is important."*
- *I bet the woman would still object to the song after she heard it, but it was rude of her not to listen. . . . Presumably she would also object to a song that went "I loaded up my shotgun with nails and dynamite and got into a mess of trouble and won't do that again," because she wouldn't stop to listen to what it said.*
- *PC can be really, really helpful, but there can be a police aspect of it that sets your teeth on edge and rocks your confidence. It's a real minefield. My most troubling experience came with the song "Christmas Day Deadlock," from our family's first album. It's a laptop conversation between a child and a department-store Santa. "You big slob, why don't you get a job, you're phony as a goblin, I WANT MY STUFF!" screams the child. That and other lines provoked a special meeting of the Falmouth, Maine, Public Library to discuss whether our tape was fit for their children. They decided it wasn't. It also cost us a deal with Lieb Ostrow's company. . . . We wouldn't remove it from the album. If I had it to do over I probably would. But it pretty much represented Hannah's attitude toward Santa at the time, and we were in our Calvin and Hobbes phase.*
- *Sing the song without the offending lyrics, and tell them that we're trying to keep the moms happy. They know that their moms don't like shotguns.*

- *What do you think of mailing the complete song to mom? Ask her what she thinks of it. She won't like it, I'm sure, but it is a communication.*

After a number of these replies had circulated, there finally came this one:

- *The "Cat Came Back" controversy is a great topic for discussion! The replies coming back are marvelous! Sounds like PIO! material, or national-gathering-workshop material, to me. I can see it now—"Songs of Controversy: Share Your Stories and Strategies." Could be wonderful to be sharing all this face to face! Thank you so much for bringing it up!*

It was great for me to get all this feedback. All of it was good to hear, but I especially liked the stories of similar situations that others had been in—for some reason, hearing those stories was even more helpful to me than straight-across advice. And I really liked the ones that made me laugh (one of which I decided I better not reprint here). In the end, I found a way to talk to Reuben's mother. She thanked me several times for bringing it up, and she went on to explain her views, which were much easier to listen to and sympathize with than they had been in that first emotionally charged confrontation. It was a relief to finally talk about it—calmly.

We have since sung the song again, leaving out the "bad" verse, as Reuben now calls it. And of course, some of the other kids want to sing that verse, and I'm currently trying to decide if I should give them the opportunity to, someday when Reuben's absent. I actually do agree that Reuben's mom has a perfectly valid point, but there's also a part of me that likes the song just fine exactly the way it was written.

The main point of this article, though, is to say that a CMN e-mail list could certainly serve a great purpose. Obviously it wasn't working when I first tried it out. But the problem's been fixed since then, thanks to Caroline Presnell, Barb Tilsen, and a few other hard-working online elves. There are about 50 people currently signed up and room for many more. Some of the first online exchanges included ideas for using drums with preschoolers, suggestions for songs and music to use for teaching about Greek mythology or the French and Indian War, and the advantages of joining BMI or ASCAP. As one list user wrote, "It's great to see all these ideas popping up from all around our network, like flowers in the spring!"

To subscribe, contact Caroline at the national office (office@cmnonline.org). And if anyone wants to lead a workshop on "Disgruntled Parents and Teachers and How We Deal With Them" at our next national gathering, let me know! 

Ingrid Noyes lives in Tomales, California, and teaches music and performs for audiences of all ages.





SPEAKING UP

words & music by Nancy Schimmel with bridge by Bonnie Lockhart
©1999 Nancy Schimmel

Nancy wrote "Speaking Up" for *That's Not Fair: A Teacher's Guide to Activism with Young Children* by Ann Pelo and Fran Davidson. This remarkable book, featuring songs by several CMN members, also includes more songs by Nancy, based on the stories Ann and Fran relate from their own experience and observation of anti-bias activism with preschool children. For more information about *That's Not Fair*, and to hear this song and others by Nancy, visit her website at www.sisterschoice.com.

lively rock & roll

verse

When I think I'm gon - na get left out, — I say, "I need a turn!"
 think you're gon - na get left out, — I say, "Come take a turn."

chorus

Speak - ing up for my own self — is some - thing that I learn, — 'Cause we're
 Speak - ing up for o - ther kids — is some - thing that I learn, —

all part of the par - ty, We're all part of the school, —

We all get a slice — of the ap - ple, that's the rule. — (When I)

2. bridge

Speak - ing up for my own self, — speak - ing up for you. —

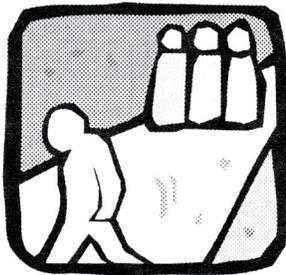
Speak - ing up takes cou - rage, — but you can do it and

I can do it. I feel proud when I do! — When the

to verse 3.

Speaking Up

➔ continued from previous page



1. When I think I'm gonna get left out
I say, "I need a turn!"
Speaking up for my own self
Is something that I learn

chorus:

'Cause we're all part of the party,
We're all part of the school,
We all get a slice of the apple,
That's the rule.

2. When I think you're gonna get left out,
I say, "Come take a turn."
Speaking up for other kids
Is something that I learn

chorus

(bridge)

Speaking up for my own self,
Speaking up for you.
Speaking up takes courage,
But you can do it and
I can do it.
I feel proud when I do!

3. When the kid who's standing all alone
Is someone I don't know,
I can say, "Do you wanna play?"
And they can say "yes" or "no".

chorus



The Children's Music Web Gets a Remix

by Fred Koch

If you haven't visited the newly reorganized Children's Music Web (www.childrensmusic.org), be sure to take the time to do so! Founded by PJ Swift and Monty Harper, the nonprofit CMW is dedicated to bringing independent children's music into the public eye. The site has been restructured and is now directed, maintained, and promoted by a family of like-minded, independently owned websites called "partner sites."

CMW now has its first four partner sites solidly in place—Swift, with her Radio Refrigerator site, Harper with Kids' Music Planet, Fred Koch with BestChildrensMusic.com, and Deborah Pratt with Music Education for Young Children—and it is poised to enter a whole new phase of growth and achievement.

Stop by to learn more about

- **Children's Music Web Awards.**

This is CMW's yearly award program, "guided by adults and decided by kids." Entries are taken in the spring, and winners are announced in the fall.

- **The Children's Musicians' Database / KidsMusicPlanet.com.**

List yourself in this detailed directory of children's musicians from around the world.

- **Concert Calendar / KidsMusicPlanet.com.**

Once you have registered in the Children's Musicians' Database, you'll be able to enter your concert dates directly into the calendar. Promoters can send in concert dates, too.

- **BestChildrensMusic.com.**

Submit your CD to Fred Koch for review consideration. Fred writes the children's music review column for *Chicago Parent*, contributes to *Parents Magazine*, and features his picks at Best

ChildrensMusic.com. Teachers and parents will find a wealth of age-appropriate music reviewed, in the categories of infants and toddlers, early childhood, older kids, folk music, holiday, world/jazz, and poetry.

- **Music Education for Young Children.**

There is information about music for children aged birth through eight years at the Music Education for Young Children website, arranged in the following categories: books, periodicals, and catalogs; music curriculum; songs and music games; teaching ideas; musical development; music and the brain; and professional organizations. The site also hosts a discussion list for parents and teachers.

- **Radio Refrigerator.** Grab a snack for your ears! These short programs, served to your computer by RealAudio, offer a fun way to find out what great music is available for your children.



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to be mailed
in September,
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MAGIC PENNY TRIBUTE

The Magic Penny Award, named after the song by Malvina Reynolds, is a Children's Music Network tribute to people in our community who have dedicated their lives to empowering children through music. It is the intent of CMN to give this award annually, at our national gathering, to honor the lifetime achievement of someone whose work most embodies our mission. In October 2000, we were pleased to give the award in celebration of Marcia Berman. She was interviewed for *PIO!* by Sally Rogers in our winter 2000 issue; in addition, Marcia's longtime friend, Sarah Pirtle, offers the following insights into the life of our honoree.



Photo: Hella Hammid

Marcia Berman.

We Can Carry the World:

Honoring Marcia Berman

by Sarah Pirtle

In the 1950s Marcia Berman had the insight and courage to create songs with messages that spoke deeply to children. She wrote:

I'm not small, I'm so tall,
I can carry a house on my back.
And when I laugh, it will shake,
If I drop it, it might break.
I'm not small, I'm so tall,
I can carry a house on my back.*

From verse to verse, the song grows. The child starts by carrying a house, then a kangaroo, a whale, a horse, a turtle, and finally the world:

I'm not small, I'm so tall,
I can carry the world on my back.
And when it turns, I'll turn, too.
That's not very hard to do.
I'm not small, I'm so tall,
I can carry the world on my back.*

I like to picture Marcia during that decade as song after song came pouring out of her, rhythmic songs that drew children right up into the melody and the words: "If you clap when you sing, then clap with me," or, "I move piles of dirt, I move piles of sand / I am a bulldozer, that's what I am." When she sang, "I had a mouse in my house last night," she invited the children to make up new verses with their own words. Although many people used traditional songs that spoke to children's real interests, at that time she was one of a handful of people creating new songs that connected deeply with children. In presenting Marcia with the Magic Penny Award, CMN is saying, "Thank you for being a pioneer in creating meaningful music for young people."

*© Marcia Berman, reprinted with permission.

In presenting Marcia with the Magic Penny Award, CMN is saying, "Thank you for being a pioneer in creating meaningful music for young people."

Marcia told Phil Hoose, in an interview for *PIO!* in 1993,

The songs for children we learned about in college were boring. I had been listening to folk music since I was a girl, and in college I was listening to the Library of Congress recordings. The stuff being given to children paled by comparison. It had no guts. It had no content. It was somebody's idea of what a child would like to hear. It was just terrible stuff. They would take a perfectly good folk song and water it down. They would take the "drunken" part out of "What Shall We Do with the Drunken Sailor?" . . . When I started being with children as a young teacher I just started making up songs. I felt really comfortable with melodies and changing things around. I played guitar. Words came from the experiences I was having with children.

"The Angry Song," written in 1972, shows how Marcia validated children's real upset feelings. This song was a forerunner for the body of conflict-resolution songs that have been written since. The words are sung strongly, with a jazzy beat:

Sometimes people get bossy,
They yell at you,
Tell you what to do.
Some people even hit
And try to make you do things
You don't want to do.

You may be angry,
and you may be mad.
You may be feeling mean and bad.

You want to hit and bite and hurt,
Knock me down in the rocks and dirt,
But I hold up my hand,
And I say, "Stop!"
You can't hurt me,
But you can yell a lot.

I don't like you, I don't like you,
I don't like you today.
I don't like you, I don't like you,
Just get out of my way.*

All those who know Marcia's generosity of spirit know that the Magic Penny Award goes to her not only for her songs, but for who she is and how she has lived her life from a place of devotion to what she believes in. She helps carry the world on her back, and she shows us how to help shoulder the changes needed in

***She's been a catalyst, and
her words have told
children and adult
listeners alike that we can
all help carry the world.***

the world. Her open heart and her songs have rippled out and affected numerous children, parents, teachers, and singer/educators. When Jacki Breger founded the Marcia Berman Fund for Music and Young Children in 1997, she honored Marcia's 40 years of work "as a singer, songwriter, performer, educator, and teacher of teachers. . . . Several generations of children have been raised on her albums, and several generations of teachers have benefited from her workshops at their schools and colleges, and at local, regional, and national conferences." Another writer said in the 1980s, "It would be hard to imagine a nursery school that didn't have several of Marcia Berman's albums in frequent use." She's been a catalyst, and her words have told children and adult listeners alike that we can all help carry the world.

Marcia is a collaborator, and this has been true at every stage of her life. As Phil Hoose has said, "Marcia is a renowned provider of chances." Many performers of music for children got their start through the concerts she promoted at McCabe's Guitar Shop in Santa Monica or her children's radio program on KPFK. She is a cofounder of Children's Peace Camp, a producer of house concerts, and a central organizer of CMN's largest chapter. Among her 12 albums of songs for children, 10 involved songwriters, singers, dancers, storytellers, musicians, and children. She created 7 of these albums, including *Won't You Be My Friend*, with Patty Zeitlin. Together Patty and Marcia wrote "Room in the Boat," an important song of inclusion.



Marcia Berman (center) and the other members of CAMAL in the 1980s.

One of Marcia's major goals has been to help children enjoy music from many cultures. Her spirit of collaboration comes through in the recording *Cloud Journeys*, which she made with dancer Anne Barlin. She brought into this album the work of Nona Beamer singing songs from Hawaii, Ernest Siva performing music from his Serrano and Cahuilla heritage, and the Quimby family singing Georgia Sea Islands songs. Her whole life she lived a multicultural reality. When she was 11 she started spending summers at a Jewish camp that formed the basis of her values. She said, "We were encouraged to express our feelings and talk about what was going on in our lives. It has made me think that children should be doing things that are meaningful and useful." When an African American woman who worked at the camp was told by local people that she couldn't swim in the lake, "we boycotted the lake, none of us swam in it."

In the early 1950s, with friends including Odetta, Jo Mapes, and Dave Zeitlin, Marcia formed the New World Folksingers. The group sang hootenannies in living rooms and sometimes opened concerts for Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, or Cisco Houston. She met Malvina Reynolds in 1955, and they became friends. In 1985, 8 years after Malvina's death, Marcia put out an album, *Marcia Berman Sings Malvina Reynolds' "Rabbits Dance" and Other Songs for Children*,

continued on next page ➤

Maagic Penny Tribute

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containing "Magic Penny" and 14 more of Malvina's songs. Gene Bluestein commented in the liner notes:

Most important to [Malvina] was the idea of equality and opportunity for all. And she felt that the best way to accomplish that was to give young people a repertoire of songs that would make them proud to be members of the human race. Because Marcia Berman takes the same approach, Malvina delighted in supplying her with songs and information. There is, for my money, no better combination than Malvina Reynolds and Marcia Berman. And no one would have been happier about this record than Malvina herself.

Nor would anyone have been happier that Marcia was the second recipient of the CMN Magic Penny Award. In 1999 Marcia helped present the award posthumously to Malvina at the CMN National Gathering. Upon learning that she was the 2000 honoree, she said, "It never occurred to me that I might be getting the award. I don't feel special. I feel part of something bigger." Because she's lived like that so consistently, looking toward promoting community values rather than promoting herself, she's just the right person to get this award.

Lorraine Bayes, founding member of Tickle Tune Typhoon, put it this way in an interview with Phil Hoose (PIO! #13),

[Marcia] has this incredible knack for empowering people. It is quite rare. She is able to support people no matter where they are in their growth, whether they're singing in front of others for the first time or whether they need answers to difficult business questions. Her support is very grounding. My guess is that anyone who has been around Marcia a little or a lot knows that they're loved and cared for. She helps them understand that they have something good to bring into the world. It's her gift, and I think everyone feels it. I can only describe it as a quality of grace.

The reason that CMN is a national organization is largely due to Marcia Berman—her openness to collaboration, the deliberate decisions she has made, her hard work, and most of all because of who she is—an inclusive person who lives her core values. In the first months of CMN, I contacted everyone I could find who was interested in children's music, and one of the first letters was to Marcia and the group she was part of, called CAMAL (Children's Artists Making a Living). CAMAL stood out because its members held values that were the closest to those held by CMN's founders. As Marcia described it, "We [CAMAL] were a group of six to eight people, all performing artists. One of the

things I loved about CMN was that it wasn't all performers, so more could be accomplished. I like to be a part of a group. CMN felt like a good fit. It was thrilling to see the big world out there of children's music. CMN enriched my life."

Marcia put careful attention to making the CMN meetings inclusive. She chose the locations so that many people would feel welcome, and she focused on keeping it fun. During the meetings that she organized, she made sure that people received appreciation for their music and other contributions, so that a feeling of community developed. When her CMN region took on the organization of the national gathering in Los Angeles, Marcia, because she was widely known and respected, was the ideal bridging person between LA musicians new to CMN, California teachers, and CMN members from all over the country.

"CMN feels like family," says Marcia. At the Magic Penny Award ceremony last fall, that spirit of family came across. We saw a video of Marcia that included footage of her as a girl, and we met her twin sons Peter and James, and her daughter Hally. We also heard from important people in her life like Jacki Breger and Patty Zeitlin. And these words were said:

Marcia, you embody the spirit of welcome in your heart. Your songs say to children, you belong. Your whole life reflects the heart of CMN. You follow the words of the "Magic Penny" song, that "love is something if you give it away, you end up having more." We honor you today because of the way you put your heart into everything you do. Thank you for what you have given to us personally and to the world. 

Sarah Pirtle is a songwriter, author, ecologist, and peace educator in Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts. She was the founding editor of Pass It On!



The Magic Penny Award itself is a beautiful piece of pottery created by Eliza Durgan and designed by Phil Hoose and Sally Rogers, drawing upon the ideas of many CMN members. You can meet 15-year-old Eliza and see a picture of her and the award on the CMN website. The colorful cylindrical pottery container she created is decorated on the outside with musical notes and children. The lid has the lyrics to "Magic Penny," and a penny. On the inside Eliza has sculpted a child's hand holding a purple velvet bag of pennies. Eliza lives in New York City with her parents, Steve Zeitlin and Amanda Durgan.



CMN Connections

Introduction

by Beth Bierko

One of the wonderful things about CMN is the opportunity to be with one another. For those of us who have attended regional and national gatherings, we can speak with great feeling about the people, the ideas, and the music we have shared during these magical weekends. But how do connections among us continue after the warm vibe of a gathering has dissipated? How do you connect if you're not able to make it to a gathering? The answers to these questions may be different for each of us, but I think we all share the desire to improve our connections with each other. Hearing about different ways people have done this can be helpful. This, then, is the purpose of this new *PIO!* column, "CMN Connections."

At the 2000 CMN National Gathering closing celebration, Ruth Pelham spoke of our ability to touch one another's lives. To illustrate, Ruth asked us to hold hands and sing David and Jenny Heitler-Klevans' song, "Connection." I loved that idea and the closing, but for me a closing celebration is also a sad moment. It means I have to let go of something I cherish and break the connection that I look forward to all year. Most of us would agree that "the real world" is not like a CMN gathering.

I think that this problem with reentry into our regular lives is why I agreed to be part of a post-gathering program called "shadowing," which gave out-of-towners an opportunity to meet and spend some time with host-region members, before traveling home. My post-gathering Monday was spent with Bruce O'Brien, a long-time CMNer from Wisconsin. The laughter, songs, and time shared with Bruce were a real gift because his joyful spirit extended the energy and inspiration that the weekend created for my husband, Scott, and me. In addition, with Bruce's help we developed a great program that Scott and I then shared with 300 children the next day at a school performance. As we sat around our kitchen table working that afternoon, Bruce said, "I bet this is what Ruth [Pelham] and Sarah [Pirtle] and the others envisioned when they started CMN." He graciously agreed to describe his experience of this encounter, in this first "CMN Connections" column. Whether you are a new member or a long-timer, I hope many of you will take some time, as Bruce did, to pass your spirit on—and on and on and on.

A Shadowing Experience

by Bruce O'Brien

I enjoy every national gathering I go to. The trouble is, it's all over too soon. There's always some song I didn't get to share or one I never learned, someone I wanted to speak to and never got around to, some question I didn't get to ask. So when an opportunity was offered to extend the experience of the fall 2000 gathering in New York, I jumped for it like a dog on a bone.

I called the after-gathering coordinator, Nancy Hershatter, and told her of my interest in the idea, before I booked my return flight. She had in mind to link local CMN members with out-of-town members, who would accompany, or "shadow" the locals in their typical working day. Scott and Beth Bierko had offered to participate in the shadow plan, so I e-mailed them. I did not know Scott, Beth, or Nancy well, nor did I know the area, so I had some anxiety about incomplete details and spending time with relative strangers. Trusting them in the spirit of CMN, I decided to try it.

When I spoke with Nancy and the Bierkos at the gathering, I was reassured by their welcoming personalities and began to feel excited about this new adventure. At the close of the gathering, Nancy waited patiently for me to say my many and lengthy goodbyes, and then we were off for the long commute from Warwick back to Bronxville and the rest of The World.



Nancy Hershatter, CMN New York regional rep., sings with two year olds at the Riverdale Y (NYC).

The trip gave us time to find out about each other's lives, families, and work; to share our impressions of the gathering; to talk about favorite songs and books; and to have a discussion of the effects of popular culture and TV. At Nancy's house, I met her family, shared meals, talked some more, and even had a brief song swap.

In the morning, Nancy took me to one of the preschools she works at, where I observed and participated in three music classes for two to four year olds. I was introduced to students and staff and joined their circle, saying our names with a specific rhythm, moving and marching, playing and singing. As someone who uses music with this age group, I found myself getting many ideas about songs and techniques that I could make

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Connections

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use of right away. Afterward, we took some time to discuss the sessions, including what worked and what didn't with these children on this day, as well as other techniques to be tried as the children became more accustomed to the fun and the format.

We had a long and lively discussion of songs, stories, personal experiences, and theories about preventing violence and promoting nonviolence.

From there I went to Beth and Scott Bierko's for lunch and more conversation about the gathering, songs, CMN, and—once again—the topic of children, popular culture, and TV. Then we went to work brainstorming ideas, messages, and songs on the theme of "bullying," for a concert for K-2 children the next day.

We had a long and lively discussion of songs, stories, personal experiences, and theories about preventing violence and promoting nonviolence. The discussion was often punctuated by singing songs, such as Woody Guthrie's "Don't You Push Me Down," Sarah Pirtle's "Quiet Place" and "There's Always Something You Can Do," Barb Tilsen's "Bunny and Red Bird" (an antidote for the annoying and popular, boppin'-on-the-head "Bunny Foo-Foo"). I was impressed by the process the Bierkos used to develop their program, their thoughtfulness and sensitivity to the topic, and their attention to detail in searching for the right words to say to the children.

After a full day of seeing these three CMNers in action, I had several new ways to think about and improve the work I do and the work we all do. The national gathering is a wonderful time, and this deeper, one-on-one networking experience may work very well for others. I challenge members to consider shadowing another member, and to volunteer to be shadowed. In this way, we strengthen our network. Hooray for CMN! 

Bruce O'Brien has been singing a world of songs for over 20 years in a variety of settings for all ages.

Beth Bierko is the coordinator of the "CMN Connections" column. If you are interested in contributing a story of connection, see the inside cover of PIO! for Beth's contact information.



Bruce O'Brien

National Gathering News

by Joanne Tuller

Get out your calendars and mark the weekend of October 12-14 with a big star! That's when CMN returns to bucolic Walker Creek Ranch in Petaluma, California, for our 11th annual national gathering. Set in rolling hills 50 miles north of San Francisco, Walker Creek is a nature center and conference facility offering beautiful scenery, comfortable indoor and outdoor spaces, and great food.

The program, as always, will feature stimulating workshops, lots of opportunities to swap songs and network, and of course, the traditional Saturday-night round robin. We're delighted to announce that legendary singer Ella Jenkins will be there to accept CMN's annual Magic Penny Award for lifetime achievement. In her 40 years as a children's musician (and on her 30 albums), Ella Jenkins has shared music of many cultures and languages, using methods such as call-and-response to encourage active participation and learning. Her classic *You'll Sing a Song and I'll Sing a Song* is Smithsonian Folkways' all-time best-selling record.

Some workshops are already lined up, many of them new this year (see the flyer facing page). We are looking for facilitators for some workshops we'd like to offer. If you or someone you know could lead a workshop on hip-hop, Asian songs, rap music, clogging or other dance forms, instrument making, or anything else we haven't thought of, please contact Beth Bierko by phone at 914/423-9767 or by e-mail at bierkos@optonline.net.

There are plenty of other ways to help with the gathering, and you don't have to live in California to get involved. For example, we need help with publicity, and each and every one of you can do a piece of this, right where you live. To learn how, read "News from the Board" (see p. 24), and then distribute our press release (see p. 29) and gathering flyer to journals, newsletters, radio stations, schools, your friends, and anyone else who might be interested. We also need your help with programming and logistics, so if you can lend a hand, please contact Joanne Tuller at 617/265-7479 or jotuller@netscape.net.

Gathering registration forms will be mailed out in July. Send yours in, and we'll see you in Petaluma! 

Joanne Tuller lives in Dorchester, Massachusetts. Along with Ingrid Noyes, she is coordinating this year's national gathering.



Workshops • Networking • Song Swaps • Musical Jams

11th ANNUAL GATHERING October 12-14, 2001

Walker Creek Ranch, Petaluma, California

Magic Penny Award presentation to
ELLA JENKINS

Musicians, Educators, Librarians, Children, Parents, Families, & All Youth Advocates

CMN gatherings are a reunion of old friends, an open & welcoming meeting ground for new friends. We come together to foster cooperation, cultural diversity, self-esteem, & empowerment through music for & by young people!

A Special Presentation by
Austin Willacy & 'TIL DAWN—teen vocal group

Showing what young people can accomplish on their own

Workshops include:

Songwriting with Children

Playparty Games & Dances

Surviving As a Children's Musician

Playing the Saw

Songs about Difficult Issues

Homemade Percussion

& Many More!

Lots of Song Swaps:

Zipper Songs

International Songs

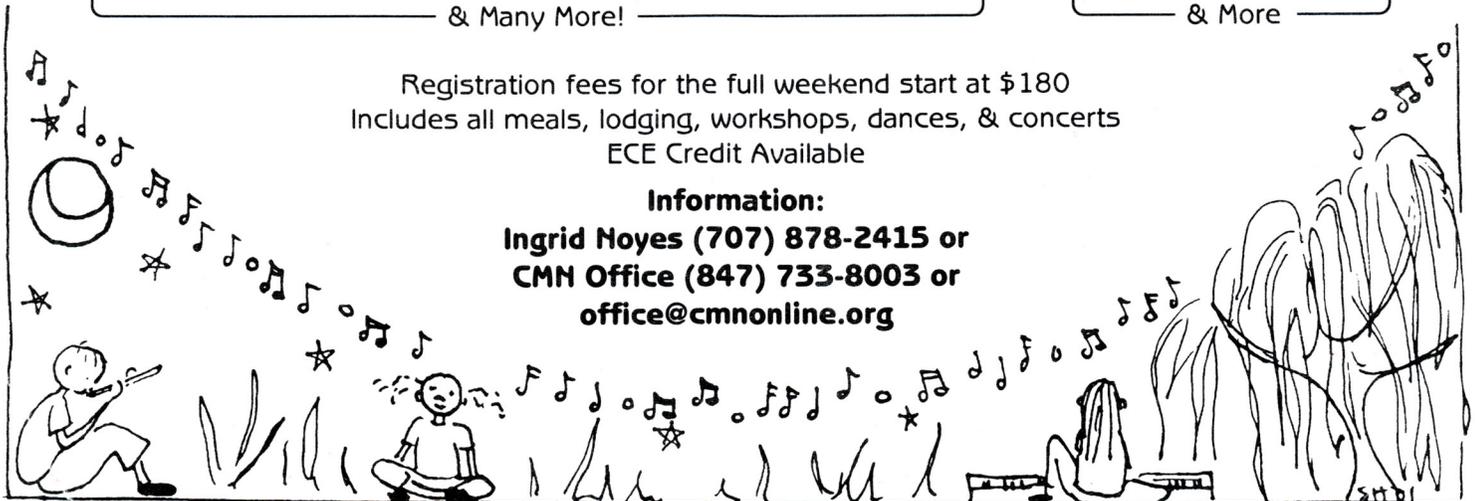
Playground Games

& More

Registration fees for the full weekend start at \$180
Includes all meals, lodging, workshops, dances, & concerts
ECE Credit Available

Information:

**Ingrid Noyes (707) 878-2415 or
CMN Office (847) 733-8003 or
office@cmnonline.org**



DON'T BULLY ME

words & music by Glenn Colton
© 2000 Glenn Colton



Glenn wrote this song both to support children to speak up for themselves in the face of bullying, and to suggest that children who bully need help finding better ways to deal with their feelings. He sings the eight-bar introduction as an interlude after the chorus as well, and as an ending to the song. Parts I and II of the chorus create a tasty duet when sung simultaneously. To learn more about Glenn's songs and recordings, visit his website at www.glenncolton.com.

intro E F#min B E

Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo. — Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo. —

C# F#min B E

Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo — doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo.

verse E F#min B E

There's a bul - ly on my street, — Al - ways step - pin' on my feet. —

C# F#min B E

These three words I will re - peat: — Don't bul - ly me! —

chorus I B E F#min

Don't bul - ly me! — Bul - ly how can I help you? —

B E C#min F#min

It's not right the things you do. — You hurt in - side, I know it's true, —

B E B E

Don't bul - ly me! — Don't bul - ly me! —

II E F#min B E

Peace and har - mon - y, — Sounds so good to me. —

Don't Bully Me

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The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The lyrics are: Kind - ness, that's the key. — Don't bul - ly me! — Don't bul - ly me! — Bul - lies are like ba - bies in dis - guise, — A - fraid to pick on some - one their own size. — These three words are no sur - prise: — Don't bul - ly me! — Don't bul - ly me! —

Chords indicated above the staff: C#min, F#min, B, E, B, E, verse E, F#min, B, E, C#, F#min, B, E, B, E.

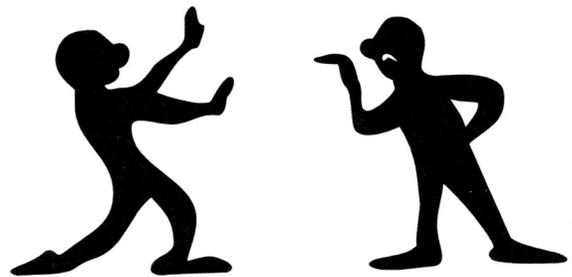
1. There's a bully on my street,
Always steppin' on my feet.
These three words I will repeat:
Don't bully me!
Don't bully me!

chorus:

I. Bully, how can I help you?
It's not right the things you do.
You hurt inside, I know it's true.
Don't bully me!
Don't bully me!

II. Peace and harmony,
Sounds so good to me.
Kindness, that's the key.
Don't bully me!
Don't bully me!

2. Bullies are like babies in disguise,
Afraid to pick on someone their own size.
These three words are no surprise:
Don't bully me!
Don't bully me!



chorus (sing parts I & II of the chorus simultaneously as a partner song)

News from the CMN Board

by Bonnie Lockhart

Our February board meeting built on the good work and good feeling that typifies our network. We want to share a few highlights of that meeting, and, as always, we invite you to share in the work that keeps CMN connected and thriving.

WHAT IS THE WORK WE DO?

"May the work we do, make the world we live in, a little more worthy of our children." Most of us who have attended a CMN gathering have sung this refrain from a Tom Hunter song, gladly joining in the couple-hundred-voice harmony. Resonant with all the dedication and sense of purpose common to our members, these lines are often sung in our board meetings. But what, you might ask, is the work of the CMN board? Glad you asked! Here's my best in-a-nutshell answer to that:

1. *Keep our programs going.* The CMN National Gathering, *Pass It On!*, our website, and our regional organizations require both big and little chunks of volunteer work. We on the board make sure that volunteers and staff are in place and provided with guidance to keep these projects flourishing.
2. *Keep our programs funded.* The board oversees our annual budget (about \$70,000). We're responsible for raising the money to maintain our national office and keep our programs and services going.
3. *Realize our mission.* How do we best embody our values? How do we empower our music and ideas, making them available to more children, teachers, and parents? What projects best accomplish our goals, and what are the action steps we need to take to implement such projects? How

do we nurture an organization true to its roots, continually able to bear fruit season after season? These are some of the questions we ask ourselves, as we plan CMN events and make choices about where to focus our resources.

HOW YOU CAN JOIN IN

Many of you have already been very energetic and generous in helping us shoulder the responsibilities I've just mentioned. Nearly 100 of you contributed your ideas about these matters, at the CMN Annual Meeting at the national gathering last October. I've synthesized some of your often-voiced concerns into two areas of action: publicizing the national gathering and keeping CMN funded. We hope you'll join us in doing tasks, small or large, that will really help CMN.

Publicize the National Gathering

We have a press release that's ready and raring to go, for October's gathering in Petaluma, California. You can find it here (see p.29) or on our website, where you can copy and paste or otherwise manipulate it electronically, in order to get it out to the public. You can also request a more detailed version of the gathering press release from Joanne Tuller, our gathering co-chair (along with Ingrid Noyes). You can contact Joanne at 617/265-7479 or Jotuller@netscape.net.

We're a fine collection of activists, networkers, and community builders. Every one of us knows teachers, families, performers, choral directors, songwriters, and youth workers who would love to be at the CMN National Gathering. Now is the time to take 20 minutes, copy this press release, and send it to those folks and to any relevant journals, newsletters, professional publications, radio stations, or

electronic lists. When you've sent your press releases out, contact Joanne Tuller and let her know where you've sent materials, so we don't duplicate effort.

Have a little more time? Write a short article about your national-gathering experience and extend a personal invitation to your community of folksingers, parents, progressive educators, songwriters, and so on. Your imagination is full of ways to get the information about the gathering to the people who need it!

Also in this issue of *Pass It On!* is this year's national-gathering flyer (see p. 21). Copy this one, or request a stack from me. We may be updating the flyer as more specifics of workshops and program offerings solidify. I urge all of our West Coast members to keep a packet of these in your car, your guitar case, your classroom—wherever they're handy to share with folks who'd benefit from attending the gathering this fall. You're the best person to reach out to the constituencies you care about!

Keep Us Funded

The feedback you've given us about fundraising for CMN might be characterized by two seemingly contradictory statements:

- "Get over it and stop apologizing! CMN is worthy of the budget it needs, and members need to take responsibility for funding the organization."
- "We're really tired of fund appeals. Can't you just raise fees, or meet the budget some other way?"

Trying to make sense of both such comments, we agree that frank talk about our budget is a necessity in CMN. We also agree that fewer fundraising pitches, especially those that use valuable national-gathering time (we'd all rather be singing) is a good and possible goal. The best way we see to minimize

funding pitches is to shift the responsibility away from the central, national board and utilize the powerful resources we have in every region. The following are some ways that regional committees or individual members can get involved in keeping CMN funded:

- *Singathons*. A “singathon” type of event—which loosely knits together concerts, presentations, and workshops that take place all over the country to benefit CMN—seems like a natural for our network. Sally Rogers is working to help us realize such a project. Contact her (860/974-3089) if you have time, energy, or ideas to offer about this exciting way to raise funds while also amplifying our message!
- *CMN Benefit Concerts*. These are also appealing alternatives to fundraising pitches. While we continue to honor the egalitarian principles that have inhibited us from showcasing individual members in the past, we believe CMN benefit concerts can be cre-

ated in a way that is inclusive, fun, and profitable. The board recently approved some guidelines that should aid any of you interested in initiating such a concert. Your regional representative will have a copy of those guidelines, and you are welcome to contact me or other board members if you'd like to discuss such a project with us.

- *The Rowe Conference Center Weekend*. CMN is going to sponsor a weekend conference for educators in March 2002. This exciting public-outreach program is described in more detail in an article elsewhere in this issue of *PIO!* (see p. 30). Contributing your energies to the success of this event is yet another way to embody CMN's values while bringing in revenue to the organization.



All of the foregoing actions can be done in forms ranging from modest to ambitious. We're very grate-

ful for the smallest contribution of your time. Reading this article about how CMN works and how you can relate to that is a great first (or 400th) step!

Let us know how you're spreading the word about CMN. Write a letter to *PIO!* with your opinions on how best to fund this glorious network. I'd love to fill this column in the next issue with news from you about how we can keep our programs healthy, our budget funded, and our network vital. All of us on the board would really love to hear from you! 

Bonnie Lockhart is a member of the CMN board; you can contact her at 510/451-2005 or bonnielockhart@mindspring.com.

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

Farewell to Sandy

by Susan Keniston

Whenever I think of our national gatherings, among my fondest memories is singing a *capella* rock-and-roll golden oldies at the party that goes on til the wee hours after the Saturday-night round robin. One of the ringleaders for this blast into the past is Sandy Byer, who has a wonderful voice and ear for harmony and seems to have a taproot directly into the cultural archives of popular songs recorded from the 1950s on up.

Sandy has been the editor of the *PIO!* “New Sounds” column since 1991, graciously accepting pages of announcements from our members who have new releases and skillfully editing them into the concentrated clips that make up the

column. After 31 issues, she's ready to pass the baton to another, and it is with tremendous appreciation that we bid her farewell and wish her all the best, for we know she'll give her heart and soul to whatever she does. *Thank you, Sandy!*

Now, as luck would have it, our “Volunteers Wanted” ad in *PIO!* has turned up some new faces, and one of them is Nancy Silber. She's agreed to take on the job of “New Sounds” editor, starting with this fall's issue. A music teacher, performer, and songwriter from Port Washington, New York, Nancy has been learning the ropes from Sandy and is now eager to hear from you. Check the inside front or back covers of *PIO!* for how to contact her. *Welcome, Nancy!* 



Sandy Byer dancing with Tom Pease at the 2000 national gathering.

Photo by Susan Keniston

Curriculi! Curricula!

by Bob Blue

As children start learning about different kinds of injustice around the world, it comes as no surprise to them. Whether they hear about colonists who were angry hundreds of years ago about taxation without representation, or some modern national leader who won't listen to the people, they already know about injustice. They have siblings, other peers, parents, and plenty of other people to remind them that life just ain't fair.

So when we start to teach children about justice and injustice, we ought to remember that they already know a lot. However, they may not respond to it the way we hope they will. For example, if the teacher hits them with a ruler, as the teacher does in the time-honored children's parody of "Battle Hymn of the Republic," we hope they won't respond by hitting the teacher "on the bean with a rotten tangerine." We hope their response will be more intelligent and ultimately effective.

Unlike many of my peers—and unlike Mohandas Gandhi, Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Sojourner Truth, and many other people, both dead and alive, whom I admire—I haven't spent much time in jail for protesting injustice. I've used my time in other ways, for one thing; and for another, the prospect of protesting and going to jail is frightening. Once, though, I did do a night of jail time, for protesting the support the United States was giving to the Contra rebels in Nicaragua. And I was afraid—afraid of tear gas, of losing my job, and even of being killed, as some of the protesters at Kent State, Tiananmen Square, and other places were. But I chose to protest U.S. intervention in Nicaragua, and, along with about 500 other people, I was arrested.



When the other protesters started singing, I was confused at first. *This is not a time to sing*, I thought; *This is serious business!* But I sang along. The singing gave me courage. I think it gave other people courage, too. There was some safety in numbers, but we were afraid, and we needed whatever courage was available. We sang "Down by the Riverside," and Holly Near's "Gentle, Angry People," to mention just a couple that meant a lot to me.

These days I work as a volunteer with Anne White, a music teacher I admire. She works to integrate the classroom curriculum and the music curriculum. She was working with a class that was studying the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. She had them learn the song, "If You Miss Me from the Back of the Bus," as well as "Ain't Gonna

Anne talked to the children about the dangers people faced as they worked for equal rights, and about the courage they gained by singing together.

Let Nobody," which goes like this:

Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around,
Turn me around, turn me around,
Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around,
I'm gonna keep on a-walkin',
keep on a-talkin',
Marchin' down to freedom's land.

It's a zipper song, and in subsequent verses, the word *nobody* is replaced with words such as *segregation* (Ain't gonna let segregation turn me around), *no police*, and *no jailhouse*.

Anne talked to the children about the dangers people faced as they worked for equal rights, and about the courage they gained by singing together. She made it clear that music has been and still is a powerful tool, not a distraction.

As Anne taught, I watched the children's faces. I saw that they were thinking about what happened, and probably some were relating it to the lives they're living now. At the end of music class, their classroom teacher came to get them. Anne asked the children to sing what they'd learned, giving the teacher the opportunity to appreciate the way Anne had used music to complement the Civil Rights curriculum. Music is not just a frill; it's part of the school curriculum.

Our culture doesn't value music the way many other cultures do. I was surprised to hear people (including myself) singing while we were in jail that night. But it was important. It made us more aware of our own power to work for justice. And we, the people of the Children's Music Network, are committed to helping children discover that power.



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

MI CUERPO

Traditional, Puerto Rico

Several different versions of this popular song, suggesting lots of playful movement, are echoing about in CMN circles. Barb Tilsen recently recorded this version, including this singable (but not literal) translation by Sarah Pirtle. Sarah, who has both recorded and published the song, remembers a version of it being sung by Gil Rodriguez at one of the People's Music Network children's song swaps that led to the creation of CMN. To contact Barb, you can call her at 612/823-8169. You can reach Sarah at 413/625-2355.

A D
Mi cuer - po, mi cuer - po, ha - ce mú - si -
ca. Mi cuer - po, mi cuer - po, ha - ce mú - si -
ca. Mis ma - nos ha - cen (clap, clap, clap). Mis pi - es ha - cen ta, ta, ta. Mi
bo - ca ha - ce la, la, la. Mi cin - tu - ra ha - ce cha, cha, cha! Cha cha cha!



Mi cuerpo, mi cuerpo, hace música,
Mi cuerpo, mi cuerpo, hace música.
Mis manos hacen (clap, clap, clap).
Mis pies hacen ta, ta, ta.
Mi boca hace la, la, la.
Mi cintura hace cha, cha, cha.

There's music, there's music, there's music inside me. (2X)
My hands say (clap, clap, clap).
My feet say ta, ta, ta.
My mouth says la, la, la.
My waist and hips say cha, cha, cha.

 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.

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.

MARIA SANGIOLO

Hello Moon

Singer/songwriter Maria Sangiolo's first children's album is great fun for the whole family! Featuring traditional and contemporary folksongs, as well as jazz and swing tunes, it's designed for repeated listening and singing along. The first six songs are playtime tunes, and the second six are nighttime songs and lullabies. Instrumentation includes guitars, banjo, mandolin, dobro, acoustic and electric violin, and acoustic bass.

CDs are \$15 (plus \$1.50 s+h) and are available from Long Night Moon Music, PO Box 285, Pomfret, CT 06258; phone: 860/974-1691; website: www.sangiolo.com.

HOLLEY HOWARD

Sunnytime Soup

This album was made with grandparents, parents, and children in mind and includes songs that reflect each of these points of view. It appeals to the musical tastes of all ages. There are 9 different genres of music covered, from songs you can rock out on to sleepy songs suited to the beat of a slow rocking

chair. There are several songs that are just for fun, including Melanie Safka's "Brand New Key."

CDs are available from Kiddycat Records, 2133 Kodiak Dr., Atlanta, GA 30345; phone: 404/320-9999; website: www.kiddycat.com; e-mail: holleyrivers@mindspring.com.

JACK PEARSON

To All Purple Tree Trunks

This new recording by "Mr. Song-Strummin' Man," Jack Pearson, is a collection of 12 old and new songs. The title song is all about being yourself. Others include the old tale, "The Blind Men and the Elephant," "Otter in the Water," "Mi Casa, Su Casa," "What Color Are You?" and "Owl Moon." Musicians include old friend Bruce Kurnow and a host of others.

Cassettes are \$11, CDs are \$16 (plus \$2 s+h), and are available from OtterTunity, Inc., 4533 16th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55407-3603; phone: 800/576-8869; website: www.ottertunity.com.

ERROL O'MEALLY

Sing-'n'-Learn

Based in Jamaica, *Sing 'n' Learn* is a television program designed to entertain as well as educate children. Songs and stories from the series have been compiled on audio and video cassettes and an interactive CD-ROM. These recordings have an international appeal, in addition to reflecting the rich Jamaican culture.

Recordings are available from Sing 'n' Learn; e-mail: mailto:mili@colis.com; website: www.sing-n-learn.com.

STEPHEN CUMMINGS

Imagine the World Could Be Like This

Composer, teacher, and performer Stephen Cummings has collaborated with Massachusetts school children ages 8 to 11 to create this recording of 14 songs with original

lyrics written by kids. This special collaboration encompasses a broad range of American musical styles, from blues to r&b to Native American chant, from rap and gospel to big-band jazz. It features the O'Kays Kids Chorus and some of Boston's finest singers and instrumentalists.

CDs and learning kits are available from OpporKnockity Tunes, PO Box 750047, Arlington Hts., MA 02475-0047; phone: 781/646-9398; website: www.opporknockitytunes.org.

VINCENT

Just One Step

These 15 original songs from Vincent help children build skills such as counting and sequencing, as well as deal with the recognition of opposites, basic geometric shapes, the elements of early literacy, and cultural diversity. These songs invite children to make good decisions and encourage them to have patience, to persevere, and to treat others fairly.

Cassettes are \$9.98, CDs are \$14.98 (plus \$2.00 s+h), and are available from Lighthouse Records, 30 Fourth Ave., Fairport, NY 14450; phone: 800/897-4595; website: www.LighthouseRecords.com.

JUDY STOCK

To Be a Child

This recording contains 16 delightful songs that will entertain the entire family. Songs include tongue twisters, animal songs, traditional songs, chants, and the "New Birthday Song." There are 4 original songs: "Tell Me a story," "Read, Read, Read," "Living on the Moon," and "Wisconsin Rap" (a must for all 4th graders studying Wisconsin history).

Cassettes are \$11, CDs are \$17, and are available from Judy at PO Box 1332, Sheboygan, WI 53082-1332; phone: 920/208-8695; e-mail: Jkstock@aol.com.



KIM MILAI

Dinobone, Dinobone, Have You Heard?

This is a collection of traditional and multicultural folksongs done with a quirky, fun edge. Kim draws on her experience as a music educator and producer of music for educational software to create this CD. She credits her unorthodox approach to her experience performing alternative music. Songs include "All Around the Kitchen," "Leather-Winged Bat," and "She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain."

Order CDs and listen to samples at www.dinobone.com; e-mail: kmilai@dinobone.com; phone: 415/643-3992.

CHARLOTTE DIAMOND

Charlotte Diamond's World

Charlotte's 11th recording promises to be a favorite of children, families, and teachers. The music, as well as being fun and singable, inspires children to care for each other and to celebrate the diversity of our cultural mosaic. Featured songs include "Singing in the Rain," Pete Seeger's "All Mixed Up," Si Kahn's "Two Good Reasons," Harry Chapin's "All My Life's a Circle," as well as 7 new songs by Charlotte and 4 new songs cowritten with Paul Gitlitz.

Cassettes and CDs are available from Hug Bug Music, 6251 Chatsworth Rd., Richmond, BC, Canada V7C 3S4; phone: 604/931-7375; website: www.charlottediamond.com.

SALLY JAEGER

Mr. Bear Says Hello

This is Sally's second video recording designed to instruct parents of children from 12 months to 4 years in the use of songs, fingerplays, rhymes, and little stories—traditional and new—to help their children develop language and listening skills while expanding their

awareness of the world around them. Accompanied by her lovable puppet, Mr. Bear, Sally delights young children and parents alike.

Videocassettes are \$14.95 and are available from Big Kids Productions; phone: 800/477-7811; website: www.bigkidsvideo.com; e-mail: north49@istar.ca.

LESLIE ZAK

If an Ostrich Can Yodel

Love of animals and the planet we all share is the thread connecting these 17 songs and stories from around the world in English, Spanish, Japanese, Yiddish, and animal talk. Designed to engage kids of all ages, this recording is a participatory/interactive experience providing a variety of activity levels. The music ranges from quietly spiritual to hip-hop, from silly to serious and back again.

Cassettes are \$11, CDs are \$16 (inc. s+h), and are available from ZaxTrax, PO Box 82615, Columbus, OH 43202-1025; e-mail: Zax_Trax@excite.com; website: www.columbusart.com.



Letter to the Editor

A STORYTELLERS' CMN?

Dear PIO!

I'm a storyteller, and each year after attending CMN's national gathering I find myself wishing there was a storytelling version of CMN—not another organization, but a community of people who use storytelling with children toward the same ends that CMN uses songs: peace, social justice, tolerance, and simple living. Finding good stories for telling is difficult, because whereas songs are already written to be performed, not all stories are. I'd like to develop and share stories, resources, and so on, so that we might all enrich what we do. Any takers? You can contact me at 831/454-9454 or B40Drive@aol.com.



Jerry Falek
Santa Cruz, California

PRESS RELEASE

The Children's Music Network to Hold National Gathering, October 12-14, 2001

The 11th annual Children's Music Network National Gathering will be held at Walker Creek Ranch in Petaluma, California (50 miles north of San Francisco), the weekend of October 12 through 14, 2001.

This multigenerational event brings children and adults together to foster cooperation, cultural diversity, self-esteem, and empowerment through music for young people. There will be workshops, singing, and dancing.

The cost of the weekend includes all workshops, concerts, and meals. The dorms and cabins are heated. Child care is provided.

For more information, please contact the Children's Music Network, by mail at P.O. Box 1341, Evanston, IL 60204; by phone at 847/733-8003, and by e-mail at office@cmnonline.org. You can also visit our website at www.cmnonline.org.

CMN Institute at Rowe Conference Center

by Sarah Pirtle

Here's a new method of sharing the work of CMN. A Children's Music Network Institute will be held at the Rowe Conference Center nearly a year from now, during the weekend of March 8-10, 2002. Teachers, families, and interested others will come to Rowe, which is high in the Berkshires in Western Massachusetts. The group will stay both nights in a farmhouse or winterized cabin and sing to their hearts' content from Friday night to Sunday afternoon, led by members of CMN. Workshops and large-group sessions will give a feel for the range of music alive in CMN; dancing, song swaps, and general laughter and gaiety will illustrate the community-building at CMN's heart. Late-night rock-and-roll will undoubtedly be a part of the action. Rowe is known for its excellent food and camaraderie.

A special emphasis of this gathering will be upon music that helps young people learn about all the ways people create a sustainable planet. We will feature songs about ecological awareness and nonviolence, as well as multicultural music. Usually Rowe winter events don't include children, but for this weekend, young people will be welcome.

This idea developed as a new method of outreach for CMN. Rowe sends out a catalog of its programs to several thousand people each year. This large audience will hear about CMN and hear about our website through the catalog, whether or not they are able to register for the weekend. We hope a group of at least 30 people will attend. Half the income Rowe receives from the weekend will go to CMN, to fund our national office and other projects.

Our intention is that the organizing for this event will model for other regions a way to sponsor a CMN event aimed at educators. At an institute like this, teachers can partake of the music, methods, and values of our CMN members. We will reach out to new people who have not yet heard of our network and the partnership practices we stand for.

What is Rowe Conference Center, and why would we choose them to cosponsor our CMN Institute? Directed by Unitarian Universalist minister Doug Wilson since the 1970s, Rowe brings outstanding workshop leaders each year, such as Malidoma Some, Grace Paley, Ram Dass, and Brooke Medicine Eagle. Rowe is located about 2.5 hours from Boston and 4.5 hours from New York City. It's in between Albany and Amherst, right on the Vermont border, in a rustic country location that is near Bradley International Airport (Hartford-Springfield) and is accessible by car or bus. Rowe sets their fees on a sliding scale, depending upon income and accommodations chosen (farmhouse bunk, winterized cabin, or private room). Rowe also has barter options.*

We are pulling together a 10-person leadership team of CMN members for the March 2002 weekend, and we anticipate that there may be *PIO!* readers who would like to become involved. There will be three levels of team participation for CMN members:

- *Institute Coordinators.* Three people will be in charge of planning the schedule and will act as the central coordinators of the event.

*If you want to find out more about Rowe, e-mail them to request a flyer at Retreat@RoweCenter.org, or call 413/339-4954.

- *Program Leaders.* Three people will lead songs and workshops, working closely with the coordinators and taking on the bulk of the program activities.
- *Workshop Assistants.* Four more people can take part as assistants, offering songs and activities during the weekend and helping with the leadership, but with less overall responsibility.

The six institute coordinators and program leaders will receive a small stipend of about \$100 each. Their names will be on the flyer as the leaders of the weekend. The four assistants won't be receiving a stipend. Each person on the leadership team of 10 will need to pay their own transportation to Rowe, but they will have all their food and lodging covered for the weekend. The entire team will meet during Friday before the workshop, to solidify planning.

If you are interested in being any one of these leaders for the CMN Institute at Rowe, contact me as soon as possible, and no later than July 1st. (I won't be able to respond, however, while I'm away June 1-21.) You can e-mail me at discover@mtdata.com, phone me at 413/625-2355, or send mail to 63 Main Street, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370. Send a short description of what you can give, your experiences in leading workshops for teachers, and your intentions in being part of this team. An effort will be made for the leadership to be balanced within many dimensions of diversity: gender, ethnicity, and skills to offer. We hope this model will provide yet another way to extend the joy and values of CMN. 



PEACE

words by the Peacemakers
music traditional ("I've Been Workin' on the Railroad")

While doing a songwriting residency at Cedar Grove Elementary School in Cedar Grove, Wisconsin, Judy Stock had the pleasure of working with the second grade class of Mrs. Guy. The subject, "peace," inspired these rousing lyrics.

D G D
 Peace on earth is great for peo - ple, car - ing, shar - ing too. Peace is hon - est in our
 E7 A7 D
 hearts— it feels good for me and you. Lov - ing our bro - thers and our sis - ters,
 G D G D A7
 and all the crea - tures too. Re - spect our el - ders all a - round us and they will re - spect us
 D D G A7
 too. Peace a - round the world, peace a - round the world, peace a - round the world all the
 D G A7
 time. — Peace a - round the world, peace a - round the world, peace a - round the world all the
 D D A7
 time. Peace is all a - round me, be - cause we are one big fa - mi - ly.
 D G A7 D D
 Peace is all a - round me with free - dom and u - ni - ty. And we're sing - in' P - E - A - C - E,
 A7 D G A7 D
 P - E - A - C - E — P - E - A - C - E, Peace for you and me!

Media Waves: Music in Your Toaster

by PJ Swift



Imagine a radio inside your computer that can “tune in” to stations around the world with a click of your mouse. That’s webcasting in a nutshell—or rather, a sound card. We say “sound card” because, in order to hear this material, you’ll need a sound card in your computer and some kind of dial-up connection through a modem. If your computer can play music—CDs, CD-ROMs, or just .wav (“wave”) files—and if you can get on the worldwide web (the internet), then you currently have what it takes to hear what is webcast from around the planet.

There is also video webcasting (TV on your computer), but the technology and software to compress, decode, and view video is much more complex than just audio. Most home computers in current use can only present a chopped-

up, jerky video picture. So, although quality video webcasting is possible, for our purposes here, we’ll stick to audio.

Most sound-based material these days is webcast in RealAudio, which is a kind of software that compresses sound, sends it through the phone lines (or other sources), and then decompresses it for your listening pleasure. This is not to be confused with MP3 files, which have attracted large numbers of fans, especially among college students (see sidebar on facing page, “The Rap on the Nap”). RealAudio files are more “out of focus” than MP3 files, although they sound good enough to listen to over your computer.

In order to get this free RealAudio software, which you simply download through the phone lines, go to the RealAudio website at www.real.com and follow the installation instructions. You may have to do a little hunting to find the free RealAudio player to download. They put their stuff for sale out front; but keep looking, and you’ll find it. You’ll only need to do this once, and you’ll be able to listen to hours of

material while you do your other computer-based chores. That’s right—it can be simultaneous. There is other software that does sound conversion that’s similar to RealAudio (e.g., LiquidAudio), but most webcast stations use RealAudio.

Now, there are currently two kinds of RealAudio material available on the web. When people talk

about streaming, they usually mean live streaming, that is, webcasting whatever their station is broadcasting at the moment. You can tune in during the middle of a song or a commercial or at the end of a story. There are about 3,000 radio stations who currently webcast this way, sending material out via computer as well as through transmitters perched on some lonesome hilltop. There are about 100 internet-only “stations” that also stream, some of whom webcast for kids. (You can find a list at www.childrensmusic.org.) Near where I live, there is a radio station (KPIG) that has *more* listeners who tune in to its streamed signal over the internet than it has listeners within the range of its radio signal. That’s the power of streaming on the internet.

There is another form of webcasting, which I’ll call “archived streaming,” for lack of a better term. This is the kind of streaming we have at the Radio Refrigerator, a free service of the Children’s Music Web (see announcement, p. 15). In this form of streaming, the program starts when you click on it, and it is played directly for you via your phone lines. Contrary to popular opinion, this material is *not* downloaded into your computer, but is sent out in “packets” for your computer to decompress while you listen. The advantage of this archived streaming is that the listener can listen to songs, stories, or whatever, *whenever* they want to hear them. This “stored” method also fits with the needs of a targeted audience, such as people who want to hear specific types of kids’ songs or stories for a specific reason, at their own convenience.

I encourage people who want to get into webcasting for—or preferably *with*—kids to choose the archived streaming method. It’s cheaper in terms of equipment, easier to do, and makes a more convenient bridge to international understanding. If you’re in Connecticut or Hong Kong, for instance, you don’t



We can hear kids from Soweto sing, or catch a radio drama from Siberia. The technology is so simple and accessible that almost any group of kids can create a program and webcast it.

have to get up at two in the morning to hear a live stream of an afternoon kids' program on the other side of the world.

With either of these methods of webcasting, there are two current problems. The first is bandwidth. Simply put, this is the amount of space to accommodate people who want to listen to a stream at any given time. If you have problems listening to a webcast program, it's probably because there are many others who are also listening. You will see such notes as "traffic problems" or "buffering" on your RealAudio player, when you have such problems. Take heart, fellow tech buffs, because little by little, this bandwidth problem will be solved.

The second problem is the umbilical cord. Who wants to be tied to a computer, to listen to a radio program? That's where those toasters come in. There are currently several small appliances on the market that can take a signal from your computer's internet connection, or even make an internet connection via satellite reception on their own, and play webcast material for you anywhere in your house. Soon, these appliances will become smaller and smaller, and you will be able to listen to your favorite webcast on a wristwatch, a cell phone, or in your car.

Okay, so you can get a sound from around the world out of your

toaster. But what is that sound? Unfortunately, much of what is webcast today, even for kids, is the "same old same old" of pop-music divas and boy groups. But to me, although it may not be that way yet, the internet holds the possibility of bringing the people of the world together, person to person, minus the slick packaging and marketing that currently distort the message. We can hear kids from Soweto sing, or catch a radio drama from Siberia. The technology is so simple and accessible that almost any group of kids can create a program and webcast it.

In fact, they can webcast it *without* a computer. That's what kids in Cameroon did. They contacted Traci Doyle of Kids Internet Radio (www.kir.org) and told her about their recordings of traditional songs. They mailed her their material on microcassette, along with photos. Traci created a whole page on her website, devoted to their

work. Kids from Meeteese, Wyoming, and San Francisco have also sent material to other sites in a similar manner.

To me, such stories make all of the growing pains of bandwidth worthwhile. So teachers, I call on you to get your kids mobilized and fill the internet with real kids' voices. Make those toasters *really* sing. 

PJ Swift admits that her toaster only pops out bagels in Santa Cruz, California, but she is working on training it to do much more.

Note: The following is contact information for two RealAudio webcasters for children. Both accept songs, albums, and children's audio productions; if submitted in a language other than English, a written translation must be provided. (1) Kids Internet Radio: You can download a release form at the website (www.kir.org) or write for it from Traci Doyle, P.O. Box 1801, Idyllwild, CA 92549, USA. (2) The Children's Music Web—Radio Refrigerator: You can download a release form at the website (www.childrensmusic.org) or write for it from PJ Swift, 305 Dickens Way, Santa Cruz CA 95064, USA; e-mail: pickle@well.com.

THE RAP ON THE NAP

MP3 files use high-end compression and, given a nifty little player or sound-ready computer, provide a high-quality sound almost indistinguishable from what you hear on CDs. This makes them very ripe for pirating or trading back and forth. That's what the furor over Napster is all about. Basically, Napster and other trading software is a way for people to acquire individual songs over the web without paying for them. Millions of people currently use this software and consider it their "right" to have access to the wealth of music. There are some artists who support this concept and some who have even released whole albums freely on the web. The large music companies are against the whole premise, of course, but have done very little to embrace this technology. They simply want Napster and similar sites shut down. The problem is, the cat is long out of the bag.

It's also possible to sell individual songs over the internet in MP3 format. Several sites offer music in this manner, and several children's artists have utilized the service. But remember that once sound is converted to MP3, it can be sent over Napster or wherever—and thus becomes another disappearing cat.

WANTED: YOUR SONG!

Taped or Live!

For the first-ever
ALL-SONGS issue of *Pass It On!*
with accompanying CD!*

Send your CDs or tapes (no singing parrots, please) to
Scott Bierko
1085 Warburton Avenue, Apt. 105
Yonkers, N.Y. 10701

Entries must be postmarked by July 15, 2001.

Include in your submission:

- Lyrics (and a lead sheet if you've got it)
- Contact name, phone number, and an e-mail address

Recordings will be returned if you include an SASE.

See the article on facing page for more information.

If you have questions, contact Scott Bierko:
bierkos@optonline.net or (914) 423-9767.

GOOD LUCK TO ALL!



*CDs will be available at a nominal cost, to members only.

PIO! Breaks the Sound Barrier

by Scott Bierko

At last year's national gathering, I volunteered to tape record the keynote address and Magic Penny ceremony for our CMN archives. Just for fun, I decided to record Saturday night's round robin, too. (For those of you who don't know, the round robin is the part of a gathering when each attendee can volunteer to sing one song for all of us.) When I returned home, I played the tapes and sat back as they filled our home with the music and the memories of that wonderful weekend. What a gift! And that's when an idea was born that has now become a reality for CMN—an all-songs issue of *Pass It On!* scheduled for publication in the winter of 2002.

Normally *PIO!* is made up mainly of feature articles written by members, plus columns and reports such as *Media Waves* and *New Sounds* and a half-dozen or so lead sheets for songs you've written. The *PIO!* all-songs issue (for which I will be the guest editor) will turn things around and be made up mainly of lead sheets of members' original songs. Not only that, but for a nominal cost, a CD of these same songs will be available to all CMN members. The songs issue will make more of our music available to all of us, and the CD will be particularly useful to those who don't read music notation. Now every member can have that same thrill I did, of listening to a high-quality recording, at home or in the car, and experiencing the magical music of CMN. Interested? Read on and find out how you can become involved in this new chapter of our history.

We need your songs to make this dream come true. By the time you read this article, you should have received a mailing about the process for submitting songs for this special issue. That letter gives detailed information about the

selection process and criteria for selection, and you can also find this information on our website (cmnonline.org). In order for a submission to be considered, it must be postmarked no later than July 15th, 2001. A committee of CMN members and children will then work together to select 15 to 20 diverse songs. We'll seek music that serves teachers, musicians, and parents. We'll look for material members can use on stage, in the classroom, or at home with their children. Songs can be serious, or they can be funny; they can be for preschoolers, high schoolers, or anyone in between.

We know it won't be easy for some folks to pick just one song to send to us, so please feel free to submit a maximum of two tunes per member. We'll need an audiotape of each submission, which can come directly off of one of your recordings or can be "home grown." Although we will require a fidelity standard for the final tracks, the clarity, emotion, and relevance to children are substantially more important than production quality for your initial entries.

If you believe you have a great song to share, but you think that you might have trouble recording it, call me or another member to help you (the *CMN Membership Directory* was designed for such needs). Alternatively, please contact me if you'd be willing to "host" a recording session, sing another member's song, or volunteer for any other part of this project. Your ideas, like your songs, are welcome.

When we're finished, every member will receive winter *PIO!* as usual, and it will include information about ordering a copy of the CD. We hope you'll join us by submitting your song, so that we may *Pass It On!* 

Interview: Bob Blue

➔ continued from page 3

biology we dissected frogs. Being allergic to formaldehyde, I couldn't do that. So I gave up on being a doctor.

***PIO!*: Looking back, how would you describe the 15-year-old high-school student, Bobby Blue?**

Bob: I spent lots of time alone in the woods, wishing I were someone else. I thought I was unpopular, and I tried to believe it was because I was "smart" and into music. There were lots of other kids who felt unpopular, and we often hung out together, not realizing that we had the power to redefine "popular" so that the word would include us. It wasn't until my senior year, when I was the lead in the senior play, *Annie, Get Your Gun*, that I started to feel popular. Songwriting didn't help because I didn't write my second song, "TV Child," until 1972.

***PIO!*: There are plenty of other service professions that don't use formaldehyde. Why did you finally return to teaching?**

Bob: In college I decided that I wanted to be a teacher, partly because I really did, and partly because my wife was going to have a baby, and I heard that teachers earned some money.

***PIO!*: So did you turn out to be a natural teacher?**

Bob: Hardly. I got a job at Turner High School, in Beloit, Wisconsin. I taught 12th-grade English. I was 21, and many of the kids I taught were taller and tougher than I was. Many things set them off laughing and giggling. Every time I used the word *come*, the kids would start giggling. One kid named Dan decided to put the liberal college-educated hippie (me) in his place. He did no classwork or homework. I gave him an F, but that didn't stop him from graduating; the principal

continued on page 39

Regional Reports

compiled by Leslie Zak

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



NEW ENGLAND

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

The New England Region held a wonderful gathering on Saturday, March 24th, at the Fort River Elementary School in Amherst, Massachusetts. At the annual business meeting, Scott Kepnes was re-elected to serve as regional representative for another year. A full report will be in the next issue of *Pass It On!* Sally Rogers, of Abington, Connecticut, will host a song swap on Sunday, May 20th.

NEW YORK METRO

Nancy Hershatter
760 Bronx River Road
Bronxville, NY 10708
914/237-4010
J123sing@aol.com

New York Metro had a wonderful gathering at the Bronxville Montessori School on Saturday, February 11th, which included persons whose special talents provided rich musical resources and a number who were newcomers to CMN. We began with Tom Hunter's song "May the Work We Do" and a traditional Zulu call to meeting. Then Dave Orleans led an earthsongs workshop to which nearly everyone contributed an environmental song.

After lively conversation over a pot-luck lunch, an afternoon song swap alternated songs by CMN founders with songs chosen by anyone in the circle. This gave newcomers a stronger musical perspective on CMN's heritage and was great fun.

The next workshop, "Songwriting in the Life of a School," included participation by a talented and vibrant group of middle-schoolers, the Madrigal Singers, directed by CMN member Frank Squillante. Two of the singers stayed on for the afternoon. A brief song swap ended a great day.

New York Metro CMN has planned a CMN benefit concert to be held at P.S. #198 at 2 PM on May 12th. Two children's choruses will participate, as well as other individuals. Proceeds will be earmarked for regional diversity outreach.

MID-ATLANTIC

Jenny Heitler-Klevans
130 West Nippon St.
Philadelphia, PA 19119-2427
215/248-3364
Jenny2kind@aol.com

The Mid-Atlantic Region held its most successful gathering to date on Saturday, March 24th, graciously hosted by the Project Learn School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Approximately 45 people from California, Virginia, Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania attended, as well as a strong contingent of New York Metro CMN folks. Thanks so much for the support!

The day started strong, opening with a wonderful group of middle-school students who performed excerpts from a musical called *Home Room*, written by Andrea Feigenbaum (one of our panelists). They were excellent singers and had a wonderful stage presence. The songs really spoke to the challenges of kids in middle school, who are trying to find themselves and

fit in. By the end, there was not a dry eye in the house.

Some wonderful panelists brought up a lot of issues about the joys and challenges of using music and other arts to build a diverse community. This led to a stimulating discussion about how to make CMN more diverse—an ongoing challenge. After a delicious buffet lunch, we enjoyed a full afternoon of workshops, song swaps, and hands-on, child-centered activities. The day ended with a pizza dinner and a round robin. On Sunday those who were able to stay overnight joined Mid-Atlantic members for brunch and, in the afternoon, 14 great performers put on a children's concert at the Folk Factory Coffeeshouse.

Thanks to everyone who participated during the weekend, and kudos to the Mid-Atlantic Regional Committee, whose planning efforts made the whole weekend such a success.

Prior to the gathering, this committee also discussed the future leadership of the region. Jenny Heitler-Klevans has courageously accepted the challenge of becoming the new Mid-Atlantic regional representative, knowing that the region now has a strong core of active members willing to help in planning future regional activities.

SOUTHEAST

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

We had a great evening chili party and round robin on March 23rd, with 11 people in attendance. We shared a wide variety of songs, and 2 attendees enlivened things with a buck dancing demonstration. We are talking about scheduling more such events, perhaps on weekend evenings. Monthly meetings continue on the first Tuesday at 12:30 at the Games Store in Green Hills.

CANADA

Kathy Reid-Naiman
109 Crawford Rose Drive
Aurora, ON L4G 4S1
Canada
905/841-1879
ragged@interlog.com

After many years as Canada's regional representative, Sandy Byer has resigned to devote more time to other interests. We appreciate her many years as leader, motivator, and anchor for the region. Kathy Reid-Naiman has agreed to be the acting rep. until a by-mail election can be completed. We hope to hold a song swap this summer. If you have ideas to help our region grow, contact Kathy, or call just to get acquainted.

MIDWEST

Bruce O'Brien
604 Newton Street
Eau Claire, WI 54701-3862
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Eve: 715/832-0721
OBrienb612@aol.com
(Note e-mail address change.)

or
Linda Boyle
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The Midwest Region held a gathering on the weekend of June 1-3 at Camp Anokijig on Little Elkhart Lake in the Kettle Moraine region near Sheboygan, Wisconsin. It included two overnights (helping to facilitate travel time for non-local attenders), as well as all of the usual CMN fare of workshops, song swaps, a Friday-night welcome program, and a Saturday-night round robin. There was also time to enjoy the many camp activities. Look for a full report on this in the next issue of *PIO!*

GREAT LAKES

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or
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Plans for our First Great Lakes Regional Gathering scheduled for June 2-3 were put on hold as we reconsidered people's busy summer schedules. An alternate weekend at the end of August has been suggested. A song swap in Columbus, Ohio in February was decimated by a flu epidemic, so local CMNers held a spontaneous "business" meeting where ideas emerged for future get-togethers. Contact Noah or Leslie and check the CMN website for updated information.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

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

Northern California is excited to be hosting the national gathering again this year. We are relying on you to volunteer in whatever capacity your talents allow. We encourage those who've never worked on the gathering before to bring in new ideas and fresh energy—especially ideas for new creative workshops. Contact Lisa to be a part of this year's organizing committee. We're counting on you.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Carrie Higgins
3331 Daisy Avenue
Long Beach, CA 90806
562/426-1460
carrieh@charter.net

CMN members participated in the California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC) conference that was held March 15-17 in San Diego. On Friday the 16th we presented the workshop, "Songs of Cooperation, Cultural

Diversity, Self-esteem, Peace, and Justice" in the Advocacy Center, followed by a songfest cohosted by CMN members.

A tribute to Marcia Berman was held at McCabe's in Santa Monica on April 1st, giving CMN members and others who did not attend the 2000 national gathering a great opportunity to hear Marcia's songs and learn more about her life. Reports of these events will be shared in the next *PIO!*

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

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or
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Our meeting in Salem, Oregon, in January was well attended. It was hosted by Darnel Collingwood, who had been introduced to CMN at an OAEYC conference brown-bag song swap. Such conferences are a gold mine of prospective members. We also shared ideas for making simple percussion instruments.

Two spring meetings were held. One was on the evening of Saturday, April 21st, at Bonnie Messinger's house in Portland. There was a potluck meal and swaps of "favorite movement songs" and activity songs for very-young and not-so-young children. Then on Saturday, May 12th, Ashland-area members gathered for an evening potluck and a round robin.



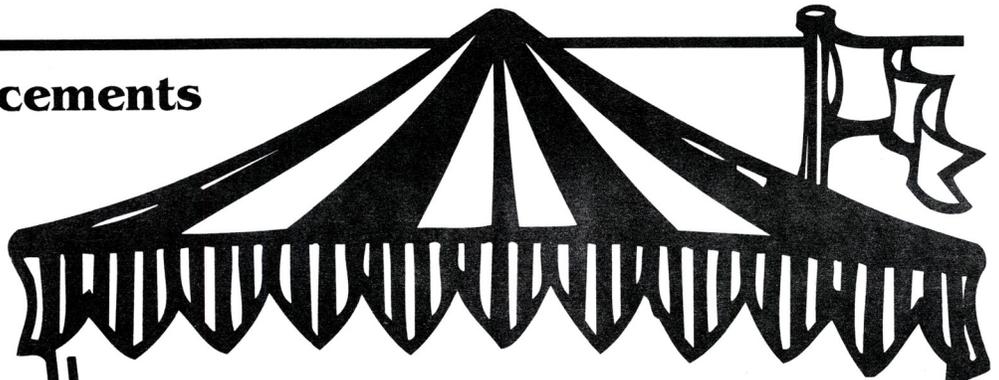


Announcements

SEEKING CMN PERFORMERS IN MANHATTAN SCHOOLS

You & Me on Kids' TV, a new show broadcast on Manhattan's public-access youth channel, is looking to film 30-minute episodes of music workshops, assemblies, and other performing-arts events in Manhattan schools, grades K-6.

For more information, contact CMN member Alan Seeley at 212/362-6636 or by e-mail at seeley@songsforkids.com.



BE A PIO! VOLUNTEER

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

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

Come one,
come all!



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

CMN Internet Services



CMN WEBSITE

Check out the new features—
www.cmnonline.org

MEMBERS-ONLY E-MAIL GROUP

To join the lively discussions,
contact the National Office
office@cmnonline.org

Does your personal website show a link to CMN's? This is a way you can spread the word about our wonderful organization. And now we're offering an **exciting new feature**: we can link to your site from CMN's site in a listing of CMN member resources. You must be a current CMN member, and your site must jibe with CMN's mission and purpose. This is a great new way to network through the web.

For full details on any of these features, contact the national office (see above). If you'd like to get involved in working on the CMN website itself, contact Barb Tilsen at btilsen@qwest.net.



Link Your Website to CMN's

Interview: Bob Blue

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changed it to a D, to get rid of him. Dan is about to be 50, if he's still alive.

PIO! *What do you think the chances are he'll read this and get back in touch?*

Bob: Not good. Two years later I started teaching elementary school. I loved it, but classroom management still did *not* come easily. My classroom was a zoo—a real zoo. I had no idea how to establish order, let alone maintain it. When I said, “May I have your attention, please?” and they wouldn't give it to me, I was crushed! Do I have to be authoritarian? I wondered. Then one day a volunteer came into my zoo to get the children to go to gym class. And she said, “Would you all please line up here?” and I saw all the different creatures in my zoo line up in a straight, single-file line. I was humiliated. I could never get them to do that, and all she had to do was say those few words.

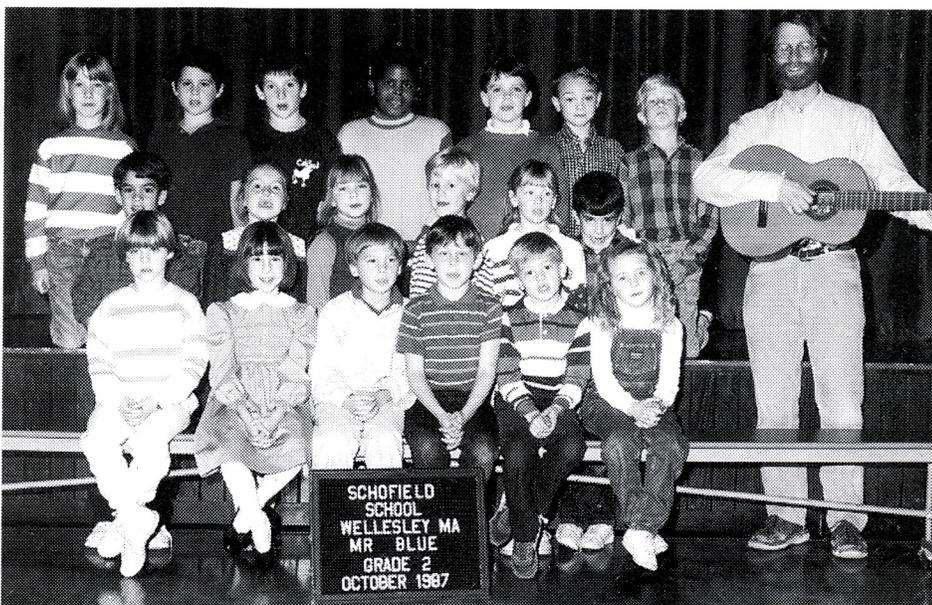
PIO! *So what did you learn from that episode?*

Bob: The lesson at that time was: I just don't have it; she does, I don't. I give up. I want to be as good as her someday. I was extremely discouraged.

PIO! *What made it get better?*

Bob: I guess I got older and I learned a few tricks. One was, “Put your hand up if the person next to you is paying attention,” and, “Now put your hand down if *you* are also paying attention.” After awhile it got so I could just say, “Could I have your attention please?” They knew that if they paid attention I might do some interesting stuff, or I might give them some interesting stuff to do. They're more likely to pay attention if something good is about to happen.

PIO! *What grades did you teach?*



Bob Blue shown in 1987 with his second-grade class at Schofield School in Wellesley, Massachusetts.

Bob: Every one but sixth, but mostly second and third graders. They were a perfect match for me. They were too old for the stuff that I didn't want to teach. They already knew when to use the bathroom, and that people are not for biting. They could tie their shoes. And they were too young to learn some other stuff I didn't want to teach, like calculus and sex education. They loved to sing. My first year teaching second grade I was on the piano one day and they were singing “High Hopes,” and I really liked the sound of children singing. So I said to myself, Why don't you write a song? It was almost Halloween, and they were all asking each other, “Are you scared about Halloween?” and answering, “I'm not scared.” So I wrote them a song called “I'm Not Scared.” They liked it, and they learned it really fast. They performed it for their school, and a few other teachers learned it. By the time my daughter was old enough to sing it, she thought it was a standard. Years later, as an adult, she said, “You wrote that?” I said, “Yeah.” “You couldn't have written it,” she said, “I learned it in school.”

PIO! *How important to your students was the chance to perform the songs they had learned?*

Bob: Children love performing. I wrote several plays for children, too. Sometimes a child says, “I don't want to perform. I don't want to be in front of other people.” And I say, “Okay, you don't have to.” Then they watch the rest of the class being in front of people and later they say, “Can I do it, too?” And I say, “Sure, but I thought you didn't want to.” And they say, “Well, it looks like fun.” The children who performed in those plays were dear to me. I can't imagine thinking anything could have been better than having Emily Ball play the good witch of the north, or having Abigail Joseph play Alice, in *Alice in Wonderland*.

PIO! *So Abigail was one-sixteenth of the Alices?*

Bob: Yeah, I guess you know that story. When we did *Alice in Wonderland*, I asked who wanted to play Alice, and 16 children raised their hands. So I scripted it so that each

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Interview: Bob Blue

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one got a chance. If figured if 16 kids want to play Alice, then 16 kids will play Alice—or Dorothy, Winnie the Pooh, Charlotte, or whoever. Lots of kids want to be stars. I did, didn't you? And for one scene, at least, every child who wanted to be Alice got to be a star. Some people say that is pandering to egos. Maybe it is, but egos get crushed enough.

PIO!: You seem to have used music a lot as a teaching tool, even though you weren't a music teacher. Why?

Bob: Music is a powerful way to learn. Some children who have a lot of trouble learning in other ways can do it through music. And children who learn well in other ways nevertheless love learning through music, or just making music. We should help teachers feel more comfortable using music in their classrooms. We support teachers who have other difficulties. No elementary-school classroom teacher could get away with not including reading or math in the curriculum. You don't hear a teacher say, "I'm just not a reader," or, "I don't do math," but so far, "I'm not musical" is acceptable in our culture. If a teacher decides to take lessons or something, that's considered extracurricular, and there's no time or money donated by the school system. It's like an impossible dream, and if King George W. gets his tax cut, it'll be even impossibler.

PIO!: How did you get from Barry Goldwater to "Erica Levine?" Here we get to see a girl develop a sense of independence during several encounters with boys and men in her early life. We're there for her first kiss, with her at the prom, meet a couple of guys who try and fail to possess her, and finally overhear her calmly discussing the terms of her upcoming marriage with Lou, someone she loves. Why'd you write this song? Was there a real Erica Levine?

Bob: I wrote it for the wedding of two friends—Bob McCorkle and

Meri Cayem. It was very autobiographical—all about my personal growth in relating to women. When I first taught second grade, there was a girl in my class named Diana McKearney. I wanted to use her name but it didn't fit the meter, so I used her sister's name, Erica. And shortly after that I met a girl named Jessica Levine. They were both spunky kids and Erica Levine was based partly on them, partly on lots of wise women I've known, including my ex-wife Sandy. Incidentally, a teacher at Fort River went to a folk concert and the performer's name was Jessica Levine. I asked her to try to find out whether it was the same Jessica Levine I'm referring to. If so, her parents were Joan and Jim. Sure enough, it was the same Jessica. I found out her address and mailed her a tape. We'll see what comes of that.

PIO!: The first time I ever saw you, at a People's Music Network gathering in the mid-1980s, you were singing with a band. I think it was The Nice Jewish Boys.

Bob: Yup. In 1982 I wanted to perform my song, "You Can't Grow a Beard If You Shave." It was my attempt to do a country song, and I thought it would be neat to have a fiddler, a banjo player, and all. I happened to know them. They were Matthew Weiss (who later died in a car crash), Sandy Pliskin, Russell Aminzade, and Aram Hollman. They were all nice, all Jewish, and all male, although technically we were men, not boys. We had a lot of fun. When we were done performing that song, I thought we'd break up, but we stayed together for a few years. Matthew thought we should call ourselves "The Kosher Nostra," Russell thought we should be "The Boys of the Lox," but we stuck with "The Nice Jewish Boys." Our motto was, "Musical Chicken Soup for Sick Times." We broke up in 1985, because my second wife thought I should stay home more. Some of the "boys" referred to her as our Yoko Ono.

PIO!: Did you ever really go for a career as a performer?

Bob: I never aspired to a career as a performer, but I would have loved having audiences all over wish I would be one. Anonymity is fun if enough people know about it. Actually, now that I can't sing or play instruments, it seems as if people wish I would!

PIO!: Which brings us to MS, the reason you can't sing or play anymore. When did you first know you had it?

Bob: I was diagnosed with "some demyelinating disease—possibly MS" in February of 1978. I spent about eight years without symptoms. In 1986, I started having trouble walking long distances, and by 1994, I had to retire; I didn't have the energy to teach.

PIO!: I often wonder what it's like for you to experience MS, and I really don't know how to ask. Is there anything you'd like to say about it?

Bob: I was once interviewed by a reporter for the *Boston Globe*. He asked, "Could you make a comment about your MS?" and I said, "I want to go on record as being opposed to it." . . . Well, let's see. It's something that I have to keep learning to live with, because every time I learn to live with some stuff, I get more stuff. Like first I had to get used to the idea of walking with a cane. And so I did. It was fun for awhile having a cane. Once in the hall in school a parent was trying to reach a hat high up on a shelf, and I speared it with my cane. But my last year of teaching I started using a wheelchair that I had found in the trash. I did a little work on it, and it sort of worked. Kids enjoyed rolling me around in the school. Then I got an electric scooter, and then I found I couldn't walk without one except for a few steps and then the few steps went away, and so on. I love joking about it. People think, "Wow, he's brave, he can joke about it," but they don't know I have to joke about it. Am I supposed to be de-

pressed about it? I don't want to.

PIO!: So you've really chosen not to be depressed about this . . .

Bob: Well, it's not really a choice. It's the way my life has gone. When people are depressed, it's not because they've said, "Oh, I think I'll be depressed." I was depressed for awhile, but not about MS. I find that with each passing year I can do less and less, but I can do it better than ever. By the end of my life I'll be able to do nothing perfectly. I have to keep making adjustments—in my diet, my lifestyle, my medications, and my home, as MS "progresses." It was important for me to have my own house, so that I can have a live-in PCA (personal-care assistant) when I need one—actually, when I *admit* that I need one. Right now I have five PCAs, and I hire more as insurance allows me to. So far, I've been very lucky (Catharine Haver, Wendy Robinson, Amy Mohr, Reuven Goldstein, and Kathy Spence, I hope you're reading this). And friends and relatives have helped me a lot, too. And when I started to be unable to mail tapes, books, and videos, Catharine Haver volunteered to do it. She thinks my stuff should reach more people, and she works hard to make it happen.

PIO!: MS has eliminated piano, reduced singing, and made song-writing much slower. And yet you're still Bob Blue, a fundamentally creative person. What are your creative outlets now?

Bob: I compose on the computer, with one finger. I write parodies, and sometimes I collaborate. Mostly, I write prose. In November of 1994 I started writing articles about teaching and children for the *Wellesley Townsman* newspaper. So far I've written 1,034. I distribute the articles on the internet. (PIO! readers can contact me if

they'd like to be on my distribution list.) Since I can't travel to concerts much any more, I now have concerts travel to me. In December of 1999 I started a monthly concert series in my living room, called "Stone Soup." I can seat about 25 people. It's very cozy, but cool in the summer. Performers volunteer, and we pass a cup around for them.* It's friendly and homey. I'm booked until December of 2002. It's just another way I'm lucky.

PIO!: You have a CD of your children's songs coming out, right?

Bob: There will actually be two CDs—one intended for children and one for adults. They will be available when they're done—probably May. My friends Catharine Haver, Joanne (Olshansky) Hammil, Verne McArthur, Anne White, Eric Kilburn, and many more have helped make it.



Bob Blue leads a conga line at the 1977 national gathering; behind him are Elise Witt, Lin Boyle, Jackson Gillman, and Bruce O'Brien.

PIO!: One of your songs that I really admire is "Courage." It discusses the moral responsibility of nations and individuals through the story of one young person who

*"Stone Soup" is not the minor leagues. Scheduled performers include Jay Mankita, Susie Burke and David Surette, Anne Feeney, David Roth, Mike Agranoff, Tom Hunter, Pat Humphries, Willie Sordillo, Anne White, Patricia Shih, Sally Rogers and Howie Bursen, Cyd Slotoroff, Rona Leventhal, Kate Mannyng, Catie Curtis, and Lui Collins.

struggles to decide whether to invite an unpopular classmate to a party. How'd you come up with the idea?

Bob: The mother of one of my former students proudly told me the story. Her daughter was invited to some big social event and her unpopular friend wasn't. Risking ridicule, she invited her friend. At the time she was in fourth grade, and her teacher had been using the curriculum, "Facing History and Ourselves." I'd also recently read *While Six Million Died*, by Arthur D. Morse. It all came together into a song.

PIO!: I understand you've changed the ending a bit.

Bob: I changed a line "no one cried out in shame" (referring to the My Lai Massacre and the Holocaust) because many people *did* cry out, and their courage should not go unsung.

PIO!: You've been part of CMN from the very start. How'd you find out about it?

Bob: Sarah Pirtle and Ruth Pelham told me about it at a People's Music Network gathering in the mid 1980s. They said that a bunch of people were going to get together and start a network about children's music. I liked the idea right away. I was isolated. I was thinking, "I'm such a strange guy: I like to make music with children, and I don't think it's mere entertainment, or a distraction for them. I think

that it helps me teach. It's an educational thing to do." I could sense that people thought about me, "He's neat, he sings with the children. He doesn't really teach them anything, but at least they have fun with him. He really oughta be a music teacher." Or, "Why doesn't he quit his day job and go entertain at birthday parties?" I

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Interview: Bob Blue

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thought I was weird to think of music as a tool for teaching. A lot of other people were thinking that way too, but I didn't know it. It felt so liberating to have a network of people who felt the same way.

PIO!: Were you still growing and learning as a teacher when you had to retire?

Bob: Yeah! [laughs]. For the first 24 years I had a reputation for being really fun and a nice guy. Finally in my last year I started to get a reputation for knowing what I was doing. I was learning a lot about how to deal with parents. I sent a newsletter home every Friday, telling what had happened in class during the week and telling what I planned to do next week. Parents really appreciated it. Before the newsletter I had been calling up parents and talking with them about what was going on. But I'm much better at explaining things in writing than talking. Even when I used to be able to talk, I was better in writing.

PIO!: Are you still in contact with many of your former students?

Bob: Some of the kids I've taught do e-mail me—Rachel Libon and Kat (formerly Katie) Geha in particular. They make me proud. They're doing important work and/or will. And shortly after I retired in 1994, I "adopted" about 80 children at Fort River School in Amherst, when they were in first grade. I quickly got very attached to them, and when they were ready for second grade, so was I. And so on. I've stayed with them ever since. Now they're in seventh grade. And so am I. I visit the middle school on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and the elementary school on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. I play a role I haven't seen anyone play before. Once in awhile someone says to me, "What do you do in school?" My standard answer is, "Could I get back to you on that?" I do what kids,



Photo: Allen Zak

Bob with Sarah Pirtle at the 1997 national gathering.

parents, and teachers ask me to do (within reason). And I do what I think ought to be done. It fills my life.

PIO!: What's it been like for you to work with middle-school students, after all those years with younger children?

Bob: It was hard at first. Some of the kids stay close to me, but to many, I am a reminder that they were recently children—and they don't want to be reminded. I am about 40 years older than "my" seventh graders, but being with them brings back many memories, and the memories help a lot.

PIO!: You have such a great way of respecting children and being honest with them.

Bob: I think they know I respect and love them. And I remember what it was like to grow up. It's really hard to be a child. The world is not set up to let children have power, to let them be heard. People say, "Children are so cute," and they write them off. Or they say, "We gotta whip these children into shape, or they'll have no self-discipline." Not enough people are looking at children as human beings. Children are not "future human beings," but already human beings with things to say. 

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

Editorial

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it. We believe that the different colors and the different cultures of human beings are things that ought to be seen, acknowledged, and celebrated. Certainly this is something we can do through the music we share with our children, thereby helping to break the cycle of hatred. Children should be encouraged to learn at an early age to respect, honor, and celebrate themselves, their families, and the global family.

Part of the process of defeating racism is learning about its history—its origins and the struggle to defeat it. For many people, black and non-black, some of the most stirring and inspirational stories they've ever heard have been from the fight to defeat slavery in the United States and the subsequent struggle by African-Americans to achieve true freedom, justice, and equality in this society. We believe that children of all races and backgrounds should learn these stories, and that the fact that we are not ourselves African-American should not keep us from telling about this part of our history. Children actually benefit from knowing that people of different races care about these issues.

Our experience is that children's ability to understand such stories begins relatively young; consequently, we don't shy away from teaching some of this history to preschool children. Since the early 1980s we have worked in many preschool classrooms, teaching history to young children through the magic of music, and also showing preschool teachers how to use music effectively as a teaching tool. Many of these residencies have been in inner-city preschool centers in Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, where the majority of the student population is African-American. With our repertoire already deeply indebted to and

influenced by African-American musical traditions, it was a natural progression for us to arrange, adapt, and develop musical activities for these children that celebrate the culture and history of their forebears. As master artists with the Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts, we have developed workshops for teachers demonstrating for them the methods we use to bring these musical, cultural, and historical lessons to life for young children.

Two key concepts that guide us in doing this kind of work with children of all ages are *celebration* and *respect*. In our work with preschool children, we have developed activities based upon songs and stories that celebrate African-American women and men and their struggles and culture. We find that 3, 4, and 5 year olds have a surprisingly good grasp of the concepts of slavery and freedom. We tell them the story of the stealing of people from their homes in Africa and their being brought against their will to this continent in ships, to be sold like one might sell an animal. They understand.

We often sing "Follow the Drinking Gourd" with them and read the excellent book by the same title by Jeanette Winter, telling the story of the Underground Railroad. We also sing songs celebrating those who fought to bring down slavery and secure freedom, such as our own "Goin' to Freedom Land," which celebrates Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Rosa Parks, and Fanny Lou Hamer. With our preschool classes we will often sing adaptations of freedom songs such as "I Love Everybody," "Get On Board, Children," and "This Little Light of Mine," sharing the stories of those who sang these songs during the modern Civil Rights Movement.

As with "Follow the Drinking Gourd," we utilize children's books as a jumping-off place for musical ac-

tivities and dramatic play. We will sometimes write songs to accompany a book that tells a good story of struggle or cultural celebration, such as *The Colors of Us*, by Karen Katz, or "Ayele and the Flowers," from *Singing Tales from Africa*, by Adjai Robinson. There are many other excellent books, both new and old, available for young children. We also like to use songs to celebrate eminent figures, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., and those perhaps not so well known, such as Ella Baker.

In our work in elementary and secondary schools, we are able to delve into more details of the complex issues of segregation and the struggle for justice. We like to sing songs that illustrate those stories, such as Marshall Jones' "In the Mississippi River," Matthew Jones' "I Won't Turn Back," and Phil Ochs' "Too Many Martyrs." (Matt and Marshall are two members of the SNCC Freedom Singers, from whom we have learned a great deal.) We follow our performances with discussions of this history, and the conversations can be pretty lively.

One principle to which we adhere is that of respecting those who have lived, created, and still live this history and culture. In any case where such an elder or other respected cultural worker is present, we feel it's always important to defer to them and what they have to share. Then, whenever we present our own music and words, we do it as well as we can, and do it in a way that is respectful without being patronizing. There are plenty of folks around who would be happy to share their stories, if only they were asked. They are among us. It's always a good idea to search out and gain inspiration from the literature, poetry, and music of cultures other than your own. In respectfully sharing this inspiration, we celebrate diversity.

This hasn't always been easy, and there have been times when we

nervously entered a teacher training facing a large group of African-American teachers, being the only white faces in the room. How could we presume to teach these teachers how to utilize music from their own culture to teach children? There have been times when teachers began our workshops with skepticism and even hostility, but ended up pleased and surprised that they actually learned something from us. We always begin the workshop with self-deprecating humor addressing that very issue. The key for us is to make sure we've done our "homework" and to bring our own life experiences into the equation. We'd be naïve to think it will be easy, but we find that when the work is well prepared and presented thoughtfully and respectfully, the benefits are worth taking the risk. Many times over the years we have been told by black teachers and administrators how much they appreciated the fact that two white people took the time to address seriously the issues we took on.

We continue to grow with the teachers and children with whom we work, learning from each other how to celebrate all the beauty and incredible diversity of our lives. We encourage our students to continue to study and learn, not only about the history of racism and the struggles to end it, but also about the responsibility that is incumbent upon us as members of a racist society to take personal direct action.

It was this interest in history and particularly in the history of personal direct action that led us to the story of radical abolitionist John Brown and his wife Mary. Their story, and the many fascinating stories within that story, have been a matter of almost consuming passion for us for the past few years. Our interest began, of

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Editorial

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course, with lots of research and culminated in a one-act musical play, with songs we composed and collected to tell the story. We have performed both the play and the songs for students as young as middle school, and the performances have been an excellent genesis for discussion of the legacy of slavery, the roots of racism, and taking direct action to solve problems in society.

Many people don't realize that the entire Brown family was dedicated to the struggle, that Mary and their three older sons all swore the same oath to bring down the evil of slavery. John Brown, even today, 140 years after his death, is an historical character shrouded in myth and controversy. Our aim has been to try to cut through the shroud of myth and to generate discussion on the controversy. We attempt to tell the personal story, the story of John Brown, the human being, his relationship to his wife and hers to him, as well as his relationships to his family, his followers, and his supporters. We portray them both primarily in their own words, as people, but people totally dedicated to abolition. Dismissing the pertinacious claims of his madness, we look upon Brown as a man governed by religious zeal, a radical obsessed with the goal of bringing down what he called "the sum of all villainies," a goal for which he was willing to give his life.

Because the story of John Brown usually brings up concerns about violence, we have also tried to address some of those questions, especially in view of acts of random violence perpetrated in recent years, indeed in recent days, by young people. These acts seem to have no purpose, no reason, and make no sense. Our nation's history is so steeped in violence, violence that many of us deplore, and

so, even though Brown's actions took place nearly a century and a half ago, they still trouble many people. So we encourage dialogue with older children about violence, asking them questions we each have to ask ourselves:

- For what purpose might violence—and further, violent civil disobedience—actually be appropriate?
- When is a law or a government so wrong and so intransigent that a person might decide it was appropriate to resort to such actions?
- For what purpose or principle are we as individuals willing to give our own lives?
- Which is a greater "immorality" or a greater "evil"—proactive violence aimed at redress of injustice, or silent complicity in the injustice?
- Which is more "violent" and which, if either, more justified: the use of guns to bring an end to slavery, or slavery itself?
- How do we as a racist society deal with this story and with the legacy of slavery?

These are just a few of the many questions raised by this chapter in history.

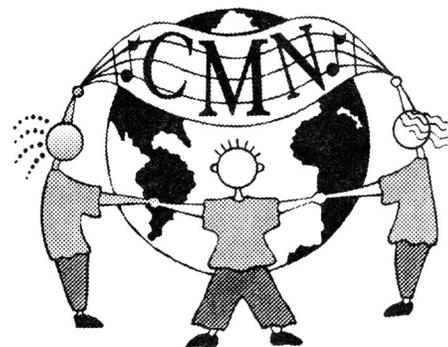
To us, the most compelling legacy of the Brown story is not that of violence, but rather that of direct action. The Browns could not wait for the slow processes of government or the vicissitudes of public opinion to end slavery. They believed it was their responsibility to do their part to end what they considered a great wrong done against fellow human beings. This raises for each of us the question of our place in a racist society. As individuals we must determine how we see ourselves in this world community. As "white" people, we believe it is not possible for us to be silent and yet call ourselves "nonracist." If we don't actively reject racism,

we are silently complicit in the maintenance of racist institutions that we are privileged by our race to enjoy.

Through the use of songs, we can support our beliefs in social justice, peace, and environmental healing; we can honor those who came before us; we can reflect on what we have lost, what we hope to change, and what we can celebrate each and every day. Knowing our past and the stories of those who made it possible for us to attain the rights we now enjoy can help to guide us toward our goal of true justice and equality. As Lucretia Mott, famed abolitionist and women's rights activist, once said, "There can be no true peace that is not founded in justice and right." Each of us has a voice, and each one of us must make the choice to act once we have the gift of knowledge and history, and through our music we can work to heal the wounds of the past and pass on that tradition to future generations.



Greg Artzner and Terry Leonino have played music together professionally as the duo Magpie for 28 years. They live in Takoma Park, Maryland, and on the road.



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

- ✓ address topics of interest to CMN members, especially the theme for the issue (see Editorial Page)...
- ✓ in some way relate to CMN's mission...
- ✓ be clear, concise, and reasonably well written...
- ✓ and be between 900 and 1800 words long.

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

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

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

Deadline for text materials for Winter 2002 issue:

Except for regional reports, all materials must be submitted by **October 1st, 2001;**

**for submission of songs:
July 15th, 2001**

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

Susan Keniston

PIO! Editor
1951 Branciforte Drive
Santa Cruz, CA 95065
B40Drive@aol.com
831/454-9454

Submission via e-mail or disk is preferred.

CALL FOR SONGS!

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

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In every issue of *PIO!* we try to include...

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

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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.

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Send songs to:

Bonnie Lockhart

Songs Editor
1032 Winsor Avenue
Oakland, CA 94610
bonnielockhart@mindspring.com

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Submission via e-mail is preferred.



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