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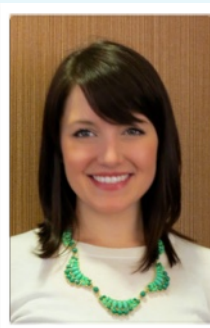
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2016 MEI Conference

April 7-9
Denver, CO



Samantha Smith
Rocky River, OH

From the President

“We’re almost there,” I keep saying to myself as I prepare for my final two concerts. Does anyone else feel this way at the end of the school year? As I began writing my letter this month, I realized that I was drawing a blank. Maybe I’m just too overwhelmed with work to think about anything else, or maybe it’s the lack of air conditioning in a small classroom recently filled with 26 children who just returned from outdoor recess. Either way, it’s been difficult for me to sit down and focus on the big picture – how can I be my best self for the end of this school year, in the classroom, and in my personal life?

Well, I don’t have an answer to that question just yet, but I do know how I can be my best self for students at the beginning of *next* school year. Last summer, I discovered that Past President Leah Steffen and I had similar goals we wished to accomplish over the summer months. Leah planned to go through her lesson book and determine which activities she would continue and which ones she would rethink, and I made a promise to myself that I would enter the school year with a strong curriculum map. I’m sure others planned similar activities as well. In July, I combed through the state standards and reviewed the SongWorks principles and practices. I mapped out the entire year, including assessments for each grade level. I wanted to ensure that students received authentic music experiences while accomplishing the state standards.

Surprisingly, this experience was not as insurmountable as I had originally assumed it would be. My curriculum map is certainly a working document, but it helped me start the school year with confidence. It also kept me on track and gave me ideas when I just didn’t know what to do next. What are your summer plans in regards to teaching? Try to set one goal, even if it is a small one, and stick to it. This year, my summer plans are to attend the SongWorks Certification Course. I can’t wait for those ten days when I will be able to spend time with a truly amazing group of individuals. Last year, I planned for the start of the school year alone, but this year I will have the help of some of my close friends. There are only a couple of spots left in the course, so if you wish to attend, register now!

I hope you all have a wonderful and relaxing summer, and take some time to refresh, rethink, and refine.

Sammí

Going Down the Railroad to Watch Sally Go Round the Sun

by Marilyn Winter



I recently received a letter from my cousin Sally who lives in Darby Town informing me that she was going to take a trip around the sun. Immediately I wrote a letter informing her that I would be going down the Railroad to be there for this wondrous event.



This Old Squirrel hopped up the stairs and did a little Rig-a-Jig-Jig of happiness as I prepared for ADVENTURE. Oh, dear, I realized I didn't have what I needed for the occasion. 'A Hunting I did Go Down Town to find a new pair of shoes for the occasion. I have to tell you they cost me plenty of Re So Dough.

I called my Uncle Joe to let him know that I would be out of town and that he would need to come and feed my Three Blind Mice while I was gone. As I was driving to catch my train I noticed that the local pub, Scotland, was on fire. I quickly dialed 911 and hollered, "Scotland's Burning. Fire! Fire! Come, pour on water!"

Well, I finally reached the train depot and as I boarded the train three ladies in a row hopped up to offer this Old Squirrel a great seat near the first window. As we rode through the countryside I watched the Oats, Peas, Beans and Barley growing in the fields and witnessed a farmer feeding his very fine ram. Yes, SIR! I DID see it!

Suddenly there was an old woman dressed in black, calling, "I need my broomstick, I need my broomstick. Someone pass it around to me." Let me tell you, those three ladies in a row hopped up and passed that broomstick around without question.

Then it started to pour and for miles and miles all we could see was Rain, Rain and yes, the wind DID blow. I thought I was going to die. A feller with a roguish eye approached and declared, "Don't be afraid. Just hold on to the Witches Broomstick to steady your self." This train ride was getting to be more than I bargained for.

Three days later I arrived at Sally's door just as she completed going around the last chimney pot. With her were her husband, Willum and their seven sons and this is what they did. They threw their arms around me and said, "Let's Go Down Town to show our friends around and celebrate while Mom tells us of her escapades going around the sun, the moon and the chimney pot."

Yep, this all indeed DID happen. And if you don't believe me, just you Go Down the Railroad to see the same as I.

Now this Old Squirrel is back home sitting in my old rocker ready to go on line to see the new additions on the Music EdVentures website, Members section. I hear that they have 15 songs, games and activities for our perusal plus some lovely voices to listen to. **Can't wait to get started.**

If some of this story is puzzling to you, most of the answers lie within the **Sturdy Songs** newly posted in our **MEMBERS SECTION** of the Music EdVentures website. This project was such fun and took several of us back a few years to rethink these songs and activities. Thanks to those who helped with compiling and posting these writings, games and MP3's. They are Pam Vellutini, Anna Langness, Mary Springer, Terolle Turnham, Leah Steffen, Sammi Smith, Max Mellman, Marilyn Winter, Doug Bartholomew, and our awesome website manager, Ryan Mallory. Enjoy!



Marilyn Winter
Sun City, AZ



Not a current member of Music EdVentures, Inc.?
JOIN or RENEW
It's quick and easy! Go to www.musicedventures.org



From the Executive Director of *SongWorks* Certification

We are quickly approaching the final days before our first SongWorks Certification Program begins. In many ways, these months of preparation and the excitement we feel as we anticipate our first gathering seem like we are expecting a birth!

- ♪ *We've had the prenatal appointments.*
Monthly newsletter articles have kept the topic alive.
- ♪ *We've checked out the birthing facility.*
Our classroom at St.Catherine University has everything we need. The campus will be decked out with gorgeous flowerbeds, huge leafy trees, a verdant landscape through which we will walk to the music building each day. Our first floor dormitory space offers three or four bed suites complete with bathroom facilities, a sitting area and kitchenette. The campus food service offers healthy breakfast and lunch options at very reasonable prices. And our dinner options are plentiful, many of which we can walk to without a long hike.
- ♪ *We are confident with our birthing coach and midwife.*
Dr. Peggy Bennett and Dr. Anna Langness have been planning and preparing the course work for several months. Knowing the depth of their knowledge and expertise, we are excited to begin our studies with them.
- ♪ *We have planned our route to the hospital.*
Since many participants will fly, we have a fleet of volunteers ready to provide ground transport from the airport to the campus.
- ♪ *We've attended birthing classes so we feel ready.*
The collaboration that will happen in the dormitory setting almost makes the thought of homework exciting! We won't be alone in our thinking, questioning, and writing!
- ♪ *We've seen the hospital nursery and watched other new parents.*
Molly Feigal and Jeanette Potvin have arranged to have children from their schools come to participate in observation classes. Some say these sessions are the most beneficial of all! Anna will work with the older children and Peggy will teach the little ones. Watching an expert gives us a model to use in our own classrooms.



Terolle Turnham
Eagan, MN

So there you have it! All is ready! We wish you were going to be able to join us. We know you wish us well as we anticipate this life-changing experience. §



Still considering a last minute decision to attend the Level I SongWorks Certification courses? Check the information below, email the SWC Executive Director before registering. terolleturnham@icloud.com



Go to www.musicedventures.org



Click
GET INVOLVED > SW Course

Music Ed Ventures
An Association of SongWorks Teachers

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Level I SongWorks Certification Course

July 13-23, 2015

[Read the course information & download a mailable registration form here \(PDF\).](#)

Register Online Using the Form Below

We accept PayPal, credit cards through PayPal, and checks by mail for membership fees. Please complete the form below and click "Next Step" to continue to the payment options.

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Email:
Address:
City:
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What do you teach? (check all that apply)

- Music
- Classroom
- Preschool
- ESL
- Other

Describe if other?

Plan to stay in the dorm? Yes No

Notes:

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For course information

Emerging Pioneers complete four assignments to fulfill their Fleurette Sweeney Fellowship award. 2015 Emerging Pioneer, Alice Nordquist, shares her first assignment.



Alice Nordquist is in her fifth year of teaching elementary general music and chorus in Howard County, Maryland. Before moving to the East Coast, she taught band and strings in California for three years. A flutist with undergraduate degrees from Oberlin College in Music Education and Latin and a graduate degree in Music Education from the Peabody Conservatory, Alice has a particular interest in exploring the interactions between music and language in her teaching.

Reflections on the 2015 Conference

As I reflect upon my introduction to Music EdVentures this year, I realize that “Discover Your Pathway,” the title of our 2015 conference, holds particular significance for me. My path as a music educator began at Oberlin, with a decision to become a band director. My many rich field experiences developed within me a love of teaching beginning instrumentalists, though my introduction to SongWorks through Peggy Bennett’s course, “Teaching Music to Children” left me wistfully watching my colleagues who had decided to follow a path into elementary general music. After three years of teaching beginning and intermediate band and strings, a cross-country move, and a last-minute hire for a long-term substitute position in elementary general music, I happily pulled my SongWorks books from the shelf and reacquainted myself with familiar practices and activities. As that year progressed and I got to know the large community of music teachers in my new school system, I became aware of the wide variety of teaching philosophies and approaches that were thriving around me. The following three years saw me in a new position at two schools, sharing a classroom and students at each with two experienced, effective, and much beloved music teachers. With an interest in supporting the existing musical culture at each of my new schools, the knowledge that I could learn a lot from watching my exemplary colleagues, and the appealing safety of exploring teaching styles that were already familiar to my new students, I found myself closely aligning lesson plans with those of my teaching partners. I have greatly appreciated their many contributions to my growth as a teacher through their feedback, mentorship, and practiced wisdom.

When I started this eighth year of my career as an educator, I experienced a growing sense of uneasiness that my teaching had wandered from the model I had set for myself. Though the core of my teaching philosophy had not changed, I became aware of a disconnect between my philosophy and some of my teaching habits. I felt frustrated, stuck, and overwhelmed by a seemingly endless stream of resources, opportunities, initiatives, and requirements. I longed for a single focal point in my planning and professional development that would complete my transformation into the teacher I wanted

to be and guide me to the pathway I wanted to follow.

My involvement with MEI and the promise of the conference in April provided the guidance I was seeking. Encouraged and inspired to reacquaint myself with the principles and practices of SongWorks, I remembered the deep sense of connection I had originally felt between my love of teaching and the SongWorks approach. I found that my own rich experiences had thoroughly prepared me to fully embrace the practices that so effectively realize principles which continue to resonate with what I have found to be true and valuable in my teaching.

With the 2015 conference forming the most recent turning on my teaching path, I can confidently and joyfully confirm that I have indeed discovered the guidance I sought. The many kindred spirits I met in Denver, along with the vibrant examples of SongWorks principles and practices I experienced produced a resounding affirmation of my teaching goals. Now, as I approach the end of my eighth year of teaching, I am more excited than I can ever recall being at the prospect of squeezing in many musical experiences for my students in our remaining weeks together, spending the summer planning and organizing a wealth of resources and ideas, and embarking upon a new school year, confident in forging my own, purposeful path. §

Emerging Pioneers complete four assignments to fulfill their Fleurette Sweeney Fellowship award. Kristin Harney, a 2015 Emerging Pioneer, shares her first assignment.

Reflections on the 2015 Conference

The SongWorks principles and practices I experienced at the 2015 MEI Conference represent best practices for education. As I mentioned at the conference, I feel extremely optimistic about the future of music education. My perception is that the SongWorks Principles of Teaching and Learning are ubiquitous as educational goals today. Treating students with respect; providing engaging, safe learning environments; and offering accurate, constructive feedback are indicative of good teaching, both in music and in other subject areas.

Many participants experienced the 2015 MEI Conference as an “emotionally charged” event. Additionally, I heard multiple people talk about the “safe, supportive environment” that was promoted. The intimate nature of the conference fostered a sense of belonging and helped generate an “infusion of positive feelings” that came from sharing, learning, and participating in a smaller group. A reoccurring theme was the sentiment that SongWorks gatherings “feed” people in a way that other meetings, conferences, and workshops do not.

I think we can all identify with the need to be valued, to feel like an integral part of a team, and to feel like our teaching has purpose. At the 2015 MEI Conference, those needs were met and there was a sense of “being in this together.” I encourage all participants to seek out those same types of working relationships in their own schools and districts. As elementary music specialists, we sometimes feel isolated, but there are always people around with whom we can collaborate. This idea aligns with a stated purpose of MEI: to focus our work on networks that encourage collaboration between diverse disciplines, professionals, and interest groups. Taryn Raschdorf’s “Hokey Pokey” with shapes (you put your triangle in...), Angelie Timm’s “Rabbit Run” book study, and Jake Harkins’ movement gestures are just three examples of lessons where connections with subjects outside music were highlighted. Fleurette Sweeney also stressed the importance of cross-fertilizing the curriculum.

We all need to reach out to the classroom teachers in our schools. Collaborative lesson planning and delivery will not only help us feel connected and valued, but will also enhance our students’ learning. There are so many ways to celebrate the wonder of music and the power of music. We may feel that the classroom teachers “don’t get it;” however, the more we collaborate with classroom teachers and integrate between disciplines, the more these connections will become apparent for kids and teachers. I believe that the SongWorks principles of teaching and learning can be universally celebrated. §



Dr. Kristin Harney, Assistant Professor of Music Education at Montana State University in Bozeman, teaches undergraduate and graduate level music courses. Kristin received her BA in music education from Luther College, her MA in music education from the University of Minnesota, and her DMA in music education from Boston University. Kristin’s areas of research interest are music integration in the elementary curriculum, student motivation, and undergraduate research in music education.



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The Purpose of Music

EdVentures, Inc. is to search for and practice ways of making music and interacting with people that preserve and celebrate the dignity of both. As a guiding principle, this purpose will focus our work on:

1. Practices that foster interactive, facilitative learning environments.
2. Strategies that empower the learner within the context of music experience and study.
3. Networks that encourage collaboration between diverse disciplines, professionals, and interest groups.

SAVE THE DATE
2nd weekend

2016
MEI CONFERENCE
April 7, 8, 9
Denver, CO

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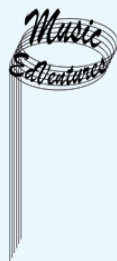
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News and Notes is the monthly communication of Music EdVentures, Inc. (MEI). Regular features will keep members and friends up to date on coming events and the latest teaching techniques, tips and strategies. Submissions are due on the 15th of the month prior to publication and may be submitted months in advance, indicating the month in which they are to be published. The committee reserves the right to select material to be published according to length and appropriateness. Articles should be 200-325 words. Visuals should be scanned and submitted as pdf or jpg files. Submissions may be sent to alangness@gmail.com and may be edited to accommodate space limitations.