

Song Organizers Connect Online!

Shared Weight Hosts New Discussion Group

By Amanda Witman

Song sessions are a time-honored tradition at CDSS events and beyond. When organizers connect with others to share their experiences, everyone benefits. CDSS has been working hard to strengthen the resources available to singers, songleaders, and song session organizers. As part of that effort, CDSS and Shared Weight have teamed up to connect song session organizers through a new email discussion list.

Shared Weight is an accessible non-corporate online platform that hosts communities of traditional dance, music, and song with the goal of supporting one another across geographical boundaries. Anyone is welcome to join discussions about traditional dance, music sound engineering, and now, song!

Questions You Might Want to Ask

- What are some of the challenges of organizing and leading, and how have others met those challenges?
- How can you make your session as welcoming, accessible, and inclusive as possible?
- What are some ways to help ensure that those with a wide range of experience levels can get their needs met within a single event?
- What are the pros and cons of different types of facilitation, and how heavily or lightly do other organizers facilitate their sings?
- How can you address the challenges of finding a long-term venue, growing a community of regulars, or getting attendees on the same page with the norms and expectations at your song session?
- Are you curious about how social singing is evolving as a tradition? Do you want to chat with others about its history and how we are consciously and unconsciously shaping its future?

The Song Organizers discussion list is the place to ask these questions. The group is open to anyone who is interested or experienced in organizing any form of participatory song session or event. All you need is an email address—and the archives are public and searchable, so you can find answers to your questions easily.



Above: *Greenfield Pub Sing. Photo by Amanda Witman.*

The Song Organizers list is moderated by Amanda Witman, assisted by list champions Lynn Finegold, Suzanne Mrozak, and Lynn Noel. All four have extensive experience producing and participating in folk music events across New England.

Amanda Witman founded the Brattleboro Pub Sing with Tony Barrand, recently established the Brattleboro Ballad Sing, and helps run the Northern Roots Festival.

Lynn Finegold is a frequent attendee at folk gatherings, organizes ballad swaps, trad swaps, and the occasional “Ballads Around the Firepit,” and co-hosts an annual Traditional Ballad Singing Competition for students.

Suzanne Mrozak has attended The Pinewoods Camp every summer since 1983 and is actively involved in organizing events with the Folk Song Society of Greater Boston and other groups.

Lynn Noel started a successful chantey sing and pub session in the Boston area years ago, both of which continue monthly. She has many years’ experience successfully connecting music events and performers, both online and offline.

For more information on the Song Organizers list, visit sharedweight.net/lists/song-organizers/.