

ELGIN AREA SUZUKI STRINGS  
THE NO-NAME NEWSLETTER

Volume I

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Number 1

Welcome to the readership of our first Elgin Area Suzuki Strings Newsletter. We have titled it "The No-Name Newsletter" simply because we want you, the students, to select the proper title. Please enter our contest to name the newsletter by submitting your proposed title, along with your name, by January 31, 1983. Shoeboxes for your entries will be made available at your lesson times. The winner of the contest will be interviewed in the next issue of the newsletter, and the winning title will make its debut in CAPITAL LETTERS at the top of the page!

And speaking of shoeboxes...

We want this newsletter, which will appear quarterly, to reflect the interests and concerns of all our students, parents and other concerned parties. Use those shoeboxes to drop off your ideas for articles, your questions (or answers) regarding practice problems, any want-ad listings of violin items you wish to buy or sell, etc., etc. Please help our newsletter succeed, not only by reading it, but by contributing items to be printed in it. And if you'd like to help write or type the newsletter, contact Connie Johnson at 742-2319. Volunteers would be great!

Important Announcement!

The December 15 group lesson will be a Christmas Play-In. All students, preschool group students included, should come to the Suzuki room at First Baptist Church, Elgin, at 4 p.m. Parents and friends are invited to attend, and one very special guest will make an appearance too. Ho, ho, ho.

Suzuki Siblings:

Welcome to these new babies (future fiddlers?) whose older brothers or sisters are Suzuki students.

Michael Haefliger, Peter's brother, born June 23.

James Leahy, Amanda's brother, born July 8.

Sean Durbin, Kristie's brother, born October 15.

Tommy Stephano, Elizabeth's and Cara's brother, born November 8.

REPORT FROM LOLLIPOP CONCERTS:

For the third year in a row our Elgin Area Suzuki Strings made its appearance as a part of the Lollipop Concerts, held at Hemmens Auditorium for students in School District U46. Twenty-one of our students participated, and looked super in their new performance outfits. They sounded super, too!

Congratulations to the following students, who have recently completed Volume I of their Suzuki books and received their violin pins:

Tony Bradburn

Sarah Palomaki

Kevin Stephano

Looking for that special Christmas item to make for your Suzuki student? Mrs. Blum has a pattern for a secret stitchery project your student will love. Contact her if you are interested.

Name that Tune:

Can you tell what song this is? If so, you will receive a prize at your next lesson.



Who said this?

Read the quotation, then unscramble the letters of the person's name who said this. Answer on last page of newsletter.

"If a child hears good music from the day of his birth, and learns to play it himself, he develops sensitivity, discipline and endurance.

He gets a beautiful heart."

--hciinSih zuSuik

## REPORTS FROM THE CHICAGOLAND SUZUKI FESTIVAL:

On October 2-3, 1982, the Chicagoland Suzuki Festival welcomed and honored Dr. and Mrs. Shinichi Suzuki. Dr. Suzuki worked diligently and in his uniquely encouraging manner with violinists, cellists and pianists. Some of our Elgin Area Suzuki Strings students participated in the special event. Following are two student recollections and one parent report.

We had to sit for a long time at the Suzuki Festival. I did not like this. Dr. Suzuki taught me to push up my violin and not to put my bow arm back.

I liked being up on the stage with all the children for the afternoon concert. There were a lot of us on the stage and someone kept trying to take my violin. I had to wait a long time to play my violin in the concert. I hated having to wait. I wanted to play my violin the whole time. I liked it when Dr. Suzuki played the piano for us during the concert.

By Kevin Stephano, age 5

On October 3 there was a Suzuki workshop in Chicago. There were 1100 violinists, cellists and pianists; the audience was huge.

The Auditorium Theatre was like a castle. There were paintings on both sides and the ceiling of the auditorium. There were about ten flights of stairs. There were marble fire-places that had never been used.

The most interesting part of all was Dr. Suzuki. He is much shorter than he looks in his pictures.

He had a story that helped you remember how high to hold the scroll of your violin. He said if you had sticky chocolate in your violin hand (holding it where your scroll should be), and you brought it toward your face too high you would get your forehead sticky. If you brought it toward your face too low you would get chocolate on your clothes. He said the chocolate should hit your mouth!

For the afternoon performance there was a very, very long line. There were a lot of people who did not know to keep their violins quiet in the halls -- there was a lot of noodling. I liked my visit a lot!

By Natalie Steinbach

## CHICAGOLAND SUZUKI FESTIVAL (continued):

We were double entries -- violin and cello -- so our experience was doubled. Double rush, double rosin, double hungry, etc. But it was very worthwhile, since it was such a spectacular happening.

The cello group was more detailed and easier to handle since there were only about 150 players plus teachers. There were so many violin students we should have had them spread out in Grant Park! Good show, anyway!

By Mrs. Nancy McNulty

P.S. Did you know that the "Wizard of Oz" movie with Judy Garland opens with the first two lines of "Happy Farmer"?

### SPECIAL STUDENTS:

Each Suzuki newsletter issue will feature an interview with two special Suzuki students -- one from among the private students and one from the preschool group of our Elgin Area Suzuki Strings. These students were selected simply by having their names drawn from an empty Pringles can! Each of your names is in the can as well, and one of these issues you will be the special Suzuki student we feature.

JULIE LANNIN, a sixth grader at Coleman School in Elgin, has been taking violin lessons from Mrs. Blum since first grade. "When I was little I saw an orchestra and thought the violins were so interesting," she says, to explain her initial interest in playing the violin. Julie does her practicing in the afternoons, following a snack and homework. Her practice tip for other students? "You have to really get your mind on what you're doing when you practice. Otherwise what's the sense of going through the motions if you don't concentrate?" Besides her activities with the Elgin Area Suzuki Strings, Julie is involved with the intermediate orchestra at her school, and is looking forward to joining the junior high orchestra next year. Violin playing seems to run in the Lannin family. Julie's twin sister Emily has also been playing the instrument since first grade. Although the sisters practice independently of each other, they do enjoy playing pieces together. They also function as violin teachers to their three year old brother Danny, who began his Suzuki group lessons last spring. "I help him position his bow and and put his finger down for Seesaw," indicates Julie. What other interests has Julie? Baseball and soccer are favorites, and she loves school, too.

JOSEPH CROSBIE, four and a half years old, has studied violin since last April, first with Mrs. Blum and since September of this year with Miss vonBerg. "I want to be a really good violinist," he admits, and it appears his family is all set to help him accomplish that goal. This past summer Joseph's mother took him to Suzuki camp at Stevens Point, Wisconsin. The two of them commuted each day from Mrs. Crosbie's sister's home in Waupaca. They had first learned of the Suzuki method through Joseph's aunt, whose daughter studies Suzuki violin. Joseph's seven year old sister Christina takes Suzuki piano lessons. Joseph practices about fifteen minutes a day, sings the songs he is learning, and listens attentively to his Suzuki tape. In between practicing, he is "a big helper at home," says his mother. Joseph and his family, which includes a mom and dad and five brothers and sisters, live on a farm in McHenry. Joseph enjoyed working in the garden this past summer, cultivating beans, peas and concord grapes. He collects eggs from the henhouse, rides a two-wheeler, and will be glad to see winter come along, since he also downhill skis. Joseph is in a preschool Suzuki group, and his playing partner there is Rebecca Clausen.

## TEACHERS' PAGE:

Those of you who recently attended the Chicagoland Suzuki Festival had a "once in a life-time" experience. You saw and heard Dr. Suzuki teach. We have read about his teachings or heard by word of mouth what Suzuki says, but none of us has had the opportunity to see the 84 year old educator work before now. He worked with up to 200 children at a time, and on this day chose to work with the bow arm and tone. Hopefully, in the future your child will remember that Suzuki himself worked with him. Check the October 18 issue of Time Magazine, with its photo of Suzuki teaching a group in Chicago. Our own Kevin Stephano is near the front of the picture.

Others of you have been able to take your child (and family) to a summer workshop that lasts for five days. There are benefits in being intensely involved for these days, surrounded by people who are chattering about practice ideas, whether to buy or rent instruments, problems of progress or stimulating the students. People come back enthusiastic about putting these ideas to work. A different teacher, a different viewpoint, a new emphasis are all welcome to "practice weary" parents -- and much needed! As weekend workshops are announced this year they will be noted in the newsletter so that you can take advantage of any that you are able to attend.

Perhaps the Wednesday afternoon group lesson could be viewed as a "mini workshop." It is a time to work together on one or more musical points, as well as developing the ensemble ability of even the smallest players. At the present time, I am working intensely on concentration of the children so that as they play they will be musically alert as individuals, thus producing a good group sound. My personal reason for working hard on this at the beginning of the year is because we have playing engagements in the community. I view performing as a natural outgrowth of group and individual playing, as well as a reward to the children for the hard work they do with you parents in their private practice time. And so, just as there is a "concert" at the climax of each workshop, so the concert at the end of a Wednesday group lesson may well be delayed a few days, but is nevertheless there. It is a significant part of your child's musical and social education.

--Lamar Blum

## AND INTRODUCING...

Miss Jean vonBerg is the lady who now spends four hours each Monday afternoon teaching Suzuki violin in the Suzuki room at First Baptist Church. But many more hours than four are represented by Jean's presence in Elgin each Monday. She commutes from Northern Illinois University, where she is a junior majoring in, what else, music. And prior to her residence in DeKalb, she lived with her family in Arlington Heights. It was there that Jean first became acquainted with the Suzuki method. As she remembers, "I was seven years old when a little kindergarten boy came to my school and played Suzuki violin. I thought, 'If he can do it, so can I!'" Jean began her lessons as one of Mrs. Betty Haig's first students. She studied with Mrs. Haig for ten years, and taught in Mrs. Haig's program for six. How did that come about? "Well, since Mrs. Haig's program just kept getting bigger and bigger, and part of the Suzuki philosophy is to encourage older kids to help younger ones, she asked me to teach some of the young children. Each year Jean continues to help Mrs. Haig at her spring Orchestra Hall concert. It was at that concert last year that Mrs. Blum made contact with Jean, and asked her if she'd like to work with the Elgin Area Suzuki Strings. The arrangement is working nicely for everyone. Jean teaches nine students in our program, and is finding it a delightful change from her busy college schedule. At NIU Jean studies with Pierre Menard, who is a part of the internationally known Vermeer Quartet. In addition to her own private studies, she is part of a string quartet, a chamber group, the Philharmonic, and is taking piano and guitar lessons. Then there are the other instruments she enjoys: banjo, harmonica and recorder. Thank you, Jean, for adding your welcome "song" to the Elgin Area Suzuki Strings!

(Answer to quotation from first page: Shinichi Suzuki, of course!)