The Newsletter of the Saline Fiddlers

Fiddlin' Around

Volume 10, Number 3 | www.salinefiddlers.com | Spring 2004

Time to hit the road...

Fiddlers summer plans include three separate tours

By Brian, sophomore banjoist

With all the mini tours and our big "international" tour, the Fiddlers' summer is jam-packed. The summer fun already kicked off with a mini tour of northern Michigan (again) at the end of April. We spent the first day in Alma where we held a workshop for the Gratiot-Isabella School District String Program, followed by a concert performance at 8:00 at Alma College. The next day we continued on up to Northport for a performance at the Northport Center for the Arts. And on the third and final day, we held another workshop and performance in Traverse City. This was our first try at staying at host homes, and it proved to be a fun and economical way to travel.



Fiddlers favorite bus driver, Jack Martin, at the ready to rock and roll with the Fiddlers!

At the start of July, we will embark on this summer's big "international" tour. We will travel east to Sparta, New Jersey where a workshop and a concert will be given. We will spend the night with host housing families. The next two days will be spent in New York City with a concert in Central Park and time to hang out. We then leave the night of July 3rd and head over to the Boston area. On the 4th, we will bive a concert downtown, followed later by fireworks over the Boston Harbor, with music by the Boston Pops. We will spend a few more days in the Concord area of Boston.

Moving right along, we will drive our way up to Montreal, doing various activities on the way. We will cross the Canadian border into Montreal on the 6th and stay up there till the 8th. Moving in the direction of home, we will end back up in Buffalo, New York for the night of the 9th with a concert in Clarence Center and stay in more host houses. The Fiddlers will visit the magnificent Niagara Falls and will finally head home in the evening.

Our last mini tour will be in Iowa, Wisconsin or Illinois, and Indiana. We depart for Iowa on the 18th of July. We will perform a private gig on the 19th. More information to come on whether we will play in Wisconsin or Illinois. Our final stop will be in Laporte, Indiana, where we will perform at their county fair from 5:00-7:00 (open to the public).

All in all, our summer will be busy and flamboyantly exciting. Though we'll be on the bus for long periods of time, it surely will be one great summer to remember!

* Senior Edition *

We dedicate every Spring newsletter to our graduating Fiddlers and their parents. In this critical tenth year of the Saline Fiddlers' life, our six graduates have shown extraordinary talent, dedication and character to their underclassmen, parents, and audiences alike. Look inside for features on each graduate, their parting words of wisdom, and for our summer schedule!

A CD in the Making

♬ *See related story,* Artistically Speaking, *on page 5.*

By Shelly Banet, Business Director

I am told we still have about 8 hours in the recording studio to complete the first stage in creating the Saline Fiddler's 6th CD. It is hard for me to believe that nearly 20 hours thus far is not enough. My ignorance is proven early on, being the only non-musician in the recording studio. Although involved more than I anticipated in the sound studio proceedings, it occurs to me that I am also the only parent who can observe the entire sound recording process. I am privileged. I do my best to make sense of all the "shop talk" surrounding me as all parties work vehemently to gain a superb track of each tune. I am in awe.

Very familiar with the Saline Fiddlers as teenagers, students and performers, I am even more impressed with them as recording artists. Their commitment, tenacity and patience allow them to survive the process itself. Despite the lunch bags and water bottles strewn throughout the studio lobby, the student Fiddlers transform into recording artists as they obligingly remove shoes and empty pockets of change, keys, and phones to avoid any unwanted sound during studio "takes." Our Saline Fiddlers are recording in the same sound studio as Art Garfunkel, Arlo Guthrie, Emmylou Harris, Joan Osborne, Vanessa Williams, Tori Amos, The Indigo Girls, and more. Wow!

Notes worth sharing:

♬ Efficient are the musicians who lay flat on the floor below their assigned microphones when a brief rest period is called.

♬ The line for the single-use bathroom is often longer than hoped and results in Fiddler gents requesting use of the woods out back.

♬ Many of the rhythm section members recorded a "take" while lying on the floor.

♬ "Isolation" allows the staff to hear who is playing out of tune or has not memorized their parts.

♬ Sally's voice in isolation for "Someday Soon" moved me to goose bumps and tears.

♬ There is a reason for changing the configuration of musicians at the mics after a tune is completed.

♬ It is extremely challenging to prevent unwanted resonance from the guitars following the last note of a tune.

♬ Nathan requires tape to affix percussion spoons and thimbles to his hands for playing the washboard.

♬ Longhaired gents are magnets for lady-fiddler hairstylists during any given break.

♬ Shorts, t-shirts and bare feet are acceptable attire for the stuffy recording studio on the coldest day of March.

♬ Candy is always warmly received at any rest period, especially if it's chocolate.

♬ Don't sit in (sound engineer) Rob's chair or you will regret it.

♬ Technology won't fix what Ben Culver can, when he asks for another "take".

♬ Dedication and very hard work are required to generate a super CD.

With the recording process 75% complete at this writing, I am excited about the future of this unique and talented group of recording artists, the Saline Fiddlers. The studio owner and lead sound engineer Rob Martens comments, "You can tell he is a good teacher," referring to Ben Culver directing his Fiddlers through each step in creating their best CD yet. I am in awe. True art form orchestrated by a true artist. I have observed the process. I feel privileged. I am in awe.

Saline Fiddlers Wish List

1. Indoor space to store sound equipment trailer within 2 miles of the High School.
2. Recent model hand-held video camera
3. Digital camera
4. Copy paper
5. Printer ink: hp inkjet 57 tri-color cartridges and hp inkjet 56 black & white cartridges
6. Wardrobe boxes
7. Matching I.D. tags for luggage
8. Pull-style suitcases for sales merchandise
9. Plastic sturdy medium to large cooler
10. Packaged individual bottles of water (ongoing need)

Contact Shelly Banet: 1-866-257-5333

Fiddlin' Around is the official newsletter of the **Saline Fiddlers.**
We publish four times yearly, or as needed.
Editor: Jen Lahnala
Photos courtesy of loving Fiddler families.
www.salinefiddlers.com
Walt Byers, Executive Director

The Saline Fiddlers Class of 2004



Fiddler #1: I am going to college locally.



Fiddler #2: I am the oldest in the group by ten days!



Fiddler #3: I prefer piano nowadays.

Who are these fine-looking Fiddlers? See if you can figure them out. Their current portraits are on pages 4 and 5. If you are stumped, see page 9 for answers.



Fiddler #4: I wrote a tune for the new Fiddlers CD!



Fiddler #5: I am the only girl! (Freebee question)



Fiddler #6: Just give me a stage!

Let's have a round of applause for...



Sally

Sally

Guitarist and clogger Sally recently expanded her stage presence by singing solo in "Blue Moon of Kentucky" and "Someday Soon." She has developed a well-rounded array of musical ability throughout her life. While starting to play both folk guitar at age seven and classical guitar briefly after that, she also learned piano, violin and the clarinet, which she plays in the marching band. She's also one good clogger.

Her talents don't stop there, though. She's been sharpening her writing skills and would eventually like to write books for both children and parents. It's apparent that family is important to Sally. One of her aspirations is to be Junior Homemaker of the Year at the Saline Fair. She counts sewing, baking and knitting among her favorite hobbies. Keeping in character with this, she will study English and psychology with an emphasis on children at Kalamazoo College next year.

Sally was also a member of the National Honor Society. However, her concerns are for the body, as well as the mind. She was a member of the track team for two years and ran cross-country for four years.

Her most memorable Fiddler experience was spent watching whales on a boat during a tour in Canada. Though Sally worked for Saline Community Education the past five years as a Safety Town Assistant, she's unsure what job she'll hold this summer.



Brandon

Brandon

Always content to play in back of the stage, to let others clamor for the spotlight, just to be playing with the Fiddlers, this four-year veteran deservedly got his day in the spotlight when he debuted "The Rainbow Set" at the Hometown Concerts – a lively fiddle piece in three movements that he wrote himself. The song immediately became an audience favorite.

Brandon started playing violin in the fifth grade because he wanted to be like his big sister Cori, who preceded him into Fiddlers. Since he was always at gigs back then, it was a natural thing to audition for the group. He has played piano since age seven, and has also picked up mandolin and sousaphone. Brandon sings solo parts in "Big Brown Trout," "Blue Moon of Kentucky" and "Uncle Penn" and clogged for two years. His favorite tunes are "Mason's Ape Ron" or "Bowl of Bula."

Reminiscing about all those trips, Brandon says, "I can't specify a 'best trip'… Calgary was awesome because it was new to me. Florida was awesome for the weather (and Hulk Coaster), and Michigan was great because I really got to know everybody a lot better.

"I guess my favorite Fiddler memory would be when Mr. Phillips grabbed the Stanley Cup at the Senate, and the 'guardian' of the cup ran over and shouted at him… Coming in second would be almost any bus ride. I can't sleep on busses well so I usually stay up later than everyone, and it's a strange feeling to be alone when you are completely surrounded by people (It's cool though)."

Brandon plans to attend Michigan State in the fall, for general studies at first. He has not decided on a career, but he may go in the business direction. Here's advice for younger Fiddlers from one content senior who is at ease with himself: "Relax. Just enjoy your youth while you have it."



Mike

Mike

Born right here at St. Joes and raised his whole life in Saline, guitarist Mike has always been comfortable in town and on stage. Mike admired the Fiddlers on stage in seventh grade and when two of his friends auditioned in eighth grade, Mike thought he would, too. He has been in the group for four years.

Mike has been involved in many theatrical productions in high school, the Saline community and the county, and recently had the chance to join the traveling show, Young Americans, based in California.

Please see **Mike**, *page 7*

...the graduates! Class of 2004

By Deanna Searls and Jen Lahnala

Nathan



Nathan

Nathan has shown amazing musical ability and versatility, coming to the Fiddlers during his senior year and picking up the bass when the group had need for one. "I have also had a very delightful time learning the art of spoons and the washboard, although I've been known to bleed all over it occasionally." There's dedication for you. He has been playing violin since age five, and also plays guitar and sings, but the only vocal solo you'll hear on the new CD is "one, two, one!" in the beginning of "Blue Moon of Kentucky." Listen for it! Other musical adventures include leading worship in the youth praise band at church and in Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Nathan the athlete explains, "I used to play football, wrestle, and be on varsity track as a pole vaulter, but had to "retire" because of many concussions." He was in the putt-putt league from age eight to fifteen and was voted "Mr. Putt-Putt." Nathan the cook is Vice President of the Saline High School Culinary Club.

This summer Nathan is very excited to go on tour with the Fiddlers. Then he will be volunteering at the Holy Family Ministries Family Camp. In August, Nathan will be going to college at the Belmont University School of Music to study commercial music voice and guitar. He wants to be a singer/songwriter/guitarist and a high school Spanish teacher.

Advice for younger Fiddlers? "Make the most of the relationships that God has blessed you with. Talk to strangers – you might meet someone new. Stay up reeeeeeeeeally late sometime just looking at the stars. It's never too late to become who you want to be."



Gus

Gus

The thrill of the February Hometown Show fired up seventh-grader Gus to become a Fiddler. After "begging" his parents for a violin he started lessons that May and joined the middle school orchestra in September. He had played piano since the age of six and his fiddling talent was also evident as he successfully auditioned for the group the following February. Gus has faithfully clogged from the beginning until now and chooses Telluride and Big Brown Trout among his favorite tunes.

During high school, Gus has competed in swimming, diving and Quiz Bowl. He also participated with the National Honor Society, Spectrum and SADD. A big Frisbee fan, he encourages the new Fiddlers to "Have fun in life!" Gus also raises orchids.

He enjoyed the Fiddler tour to the Northwest and Calgary the most because of the scenery, which reminded him of his previous home in Oregon. Gus desires a career in music education, teaching piano. He will study at Lawrence University's Conservatory of Music in Appleton, Wisconsin. Rather than trying to select a favorite memory from the four years, he says he has a favorite *lifetime* memory of being a Saline Fiddler. However, he admits being in the Fiddlers has taught him how to lead, as well as how to follow. And, he can now sleep anywhere and set up a large sound system in ten minutes or less!



Lee

Lee

An early childhood love of fiddle and bluegrass music inspired by his father primed Lee to become a Fiddler. Bob Phillips' added encouragement helped Lee choose the violin in fifth grade. He picked up guitar in seventh grade and the mandolin in ninth. He also began playing the tuba in the marching band this past year. While Lee has clogged in the past to the tunes "Vladimir's Steamboat" and "Mason's Ape Ron," he will only sing "if forced."

Hockey played an important role in Lee's life from age 5 to 15, but he decided to give it up to commit fully to the Saline Fiddlers. He still plays soccer and has also run track. After a brief experience working in the fast food industry Lee plans

Please see **Lee**, *page 6*

Let's have another round of applause for the parents!

By Jen Lahnala

It cannot be overstated how much the Fiddler parents count to the organization. Each Fiddler on stage is the product of much love, sweat, and tears, and lesson money, and chauffeuring, and food making, etc, etc, etc. And that is just for the individual Fiddler. The parents also work for the group, without which the group would look like this: !

As a group, our 2004 parents have to be the most dedicated and hard working yet. In fact, many have decided to stay on and help the group stay rolling as a non-profit organization.

Below are **just the highlights** of the assistance that the parents of 2004 provided. Listing all of their contributions would take volumes of this newsletter.

We wholeheartedly say **thank you** to our graduating parents this year and wish you all the very best. And, "happy trails to you!"

Put your hands together for:

Shelly Banet – where can we even start? Shelly picked up the Business Manager (now Business Director) position a year ago and ran with it. She secured the Fiddlers a full gig schedule when there weren't many performances on the calendar. If something needs to be done, Shelly makes sure it gets done.

Jeff Banet pulled the group together when they were temporarily without an Artistic Director and continues to be a team builder for the Fiddler structure.

Jeff Callender served well with public relations and professional marketing. If you asked Jeff to put together an ad, it was done, almost immediately! No lie!

Cynthia Christensen organized the merchandise table, especially during the Hometown Concerts, which operates at every gig.

Joe Christensen was the first "sound dad" and started off the marketing committee. He also arranged a China tour, which was cancelled because of the September 11th events.

Kathy Klages was happy to help out at the parent work nights, assembling newsletters, mailings, and the rest.

Kerry Klages was the smiling dad you saw if you bought candy at our Hometown Concerts this year!

Carl Newton is still the "sound dad", and strove to be at every gig and rehearsal possible. That's 80 to 100 gigs a year, while holding a full-time-plus job! Did he sleep? Carl also served on the transition team, which rolled over the Fiddlers to a non-profit organization. That endeavor took months of meetings and negotiations.

Denise Newton is the backstage mom at the Hometown Concerts and most gigs, striving to attend whenever possible. Her behind-the-scenes dedication has been admirable, attending the parent work nights and chaperoning tours at great financial and time expense.

Doug Smith is the mustached banjo player you saw at most concerts – the rhythm coach of six years or so. Doug also attended every gig possible in that capacity and as a chaperone.

Sherry Smith has served as the ticket lady and provided her home phone number for thousands to call for their Hometown Concert tickets. She was there whenever there was a parent work night and at almost every gig and tour.

Nancy Warner, our Webmaster, has made major improvements to the website and updates information to the private website daily. Nancy is the most reliable when asked for help. She responds immediately.

Will Warner – where can we end? Will served the Fiddlers in so many capacities. With Nancy, he chaperoned many gigs and tours. One of our greatest PR men, he wrote press releases and stories for **The Saline Reporter** and **Fiddlin' Around**. He authored the new Fiddler mission statement and resolution statements, which outline the structure of the new organization. And, probably most importantly, Will is the friendly face you could count on seeing at most Fiddler events and gigs.

Jim and Joan Roth – although they're not parents of Fiddlers, we would like to extend our deepest gratitude to our Tour Managers of several years. They organized the long, sometimes overseas tours, and attended as well. It was great having their enthusiasm and support for so long.

Lee / Class of 2004

- Continued from page 5 -

to teach string lessons this summer and encourages incoming Fiddlers to "Take lessons from me." He will, of course, continue touring with the group until fall when he will be attending U of M and helping out with the Fiddlers, "…if they'll let me."

As far as the group goes, Lee knows his mom will go wherever he does and bring everything he forgets. Not only does she take care of Lee, but all the students, as Lee's mom is Shelly Banet, their business manager!

One of his most favorite things about being a Fiddler is the food! "We eat all the time," he says. Lee can't pick a favorite tune. He says they all are favorites.

A final word of wisdom from Lee is that the Saline Fiddlers can change your life in wonderful ways.

Young Americans return a visit to the Fiddlers

By Will Warner

While on tour last summer, the Saline Fiddlers attended a performance by the Young Americans and were highly entertained and impressed. The show we saw was a musical review of pop songs, dancing, and snippets of classic and current Broadway musicals. The performers ranged in age from 17 to 24.

Recently a new cohort of Young Americans brought their traveling show through Saline. For six hours on March 10th, Saline High School auditorium was rockin'. The Young Americans took the stage following performances by Saline's Varsity Blues show choir and the Saline Fiddlers. The three groups performed for each other and for friends and family. The Young Americans proved once again that not only are they a world-class performing ensemble, but also as the world's best audience, they inspire and motivate younger singers and dancers. A couple of instantiations of the group mount national and international outreach tours in which they bring their show and clinics into any school that will have them. The group's founder and director describes his creation this way:

Since 1993, The Young Americans have toured this nation visiting cities and working with students in every corner of this country. Big schools, small schools, country schools, academies, catholic schools, wealthy private schools, run-down falling-apart inner city schools, every kind of school this nation has to offer...we have been there. We have successfully shown the importance of music to each community and shown the student how to grow in self-esteem and self-worth.

The Saline Fiddlers loved the YA's show. It helped revitalize a love of music and performing even in these committed and accomplished young musicians. To learn more about them, visit their website, youngamericans.org.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

- May 15: **St. Thomas Church Gymnasium,** Ann Arbor, 7:30 pm. Performance on behalf of the Ann Arbor Knights of Columbus fundraiser for St. Thomas School Building Renovation. Tickets: $10 / $6 ages 5-12 / 4 and under free. Contact Gerald Black at 734-741-1874.
- June 10: **City of Port Huron Concert in the Park,** River Street Marina, Port Huron, 7:00 pm. Free admission, open to the public.
- June 12: **Detroit Festival of Arts,** Main stage on the festival grounds 1:00 pm. Free admission. Visit www.detroitfestival.com
- June 16: **Wayne County Parks and Recreation**, Trenton, public performance.
- June 24: **Canton Concert in the Park**, 7:30 pm.
- June 26: **Concert at The Maple Leaf**, Maple City, MI, 8:00 pm.
- June 27: **East Jordan Civic Center,** East Jordan, MI, 1:30 pm. Free public performance.
- June 30 – July 10: **New England Tour.** See page 1 story and our website, salinefiddlers.com, for tour specifics.
- July 17: **Farmington Area Founders Festival**, Main Stage, Farmington, 6:30 pm.
- July 18 – July 21: **Iowa Tour**.
- July 22: **Livonia Music Under the Stars**, Green Meade Historical Park, Livonia, 7:30 pm.
- July 31: **Matthaei's Community Garden Party**, Matthaei Botanical Gardens, Ann Arbor, 12:00 pm. Free admission.
- August 12: **Monroe Concert in the Park,** Monroe, MI, 7:00 pm.
- August 13: **Howell Concert in the Park**, Howell, MI, 7:00 pm.

Direct booking inquiries to Shelly: 1-866-257-5333

www.salinefiddlers.com

Mike / Class of 2004

(Continued from page 4)

Mike started playing violin in the sixth grade and picked up guitar in seventh. He began taking guitar lessons within the year. He also played violin in the high school orchestra.

For the Fiddlers, Mike plays guitar, sings and clogs. His solo song, "Can't Catch Me", with the accompaniment of three seniors, will be featured on the new CD.

Mike's best Fiddler memory is from the Midwest Clinic Conference in Chicago. After a workshop and performance for some school children there, the kids treated the Fiddlers like heroes. **The ChicagoTribune** printed a picture of Mike high-fiving some of the kids. "It makes me happy when I look at that picture," he says. Mike's favorite trip would have to be Florida. "I got the chance to really get to know the class of 2002 and 2003. They're some really awesome people in that group." His favorite song is "Jig Time."

Mike plans to attend Western Michigan in the fall in general studies, but would like to audition for one of the performance groups while there. He is considering joining the Marines like his brother.

Mike's advice to the remaining Fiddlers is, "Don't date another Fiddler."

Welcome aboard, new Fiddlers!

Auditions have been held, and new Fiddlers are gradually working into mainstream fiddledom. As usual, with the large talent pool offered by the Saline school system, choosing Fiddlers is a difficult task. We are very excited to announce that the decision has been made:

Nick - guitar
Emily - violin
Sarah - cello
Casey - violin
Casey - banjo
Gina - viola
David - violin
Kathryn - vioa
Daniel - bass



The pep talk before the show, Milford.

Artistically Speaking

When is a recording 'good enough'?

The Fiddlers have just recorded their first studio CD in four years. Fiddlers ended up in recording sessions two more times than they initially expected to be there. So, makes an obvious question for Artistic Director Ben Culver: When recording a CD, what are your primary objectives? And when is a recording 'good enough'?

Ben: The process of performing in the studio is a major undertaking for any musician, especially for those of us who most often perform for a live audience. We work on several aspects individually and in rehearsal to polish our music for performance - intonation, rhythmic stability, dynamics, even and appropriate tone colors, ensemble blend, bow distribution, consistency, etc. Preparation for a recording takes an even higher degree of attention because, in the studio, there is no audience present to fuel the great intangible which makes the difference between a good recording and a great one: our excitement. Playing for an energized audience is more fun than playing for an inanimate microphone stand and the wall... In the studio, we're playing for our audience of the future, and we want to sound every bit as exciting on the recording as we do on stage.

In the studio, there is no audience present to fuel the great intangible which makes the difference between a good recording and a great one: our excitement.

One of the hardest objectives in the studio is to keep everyone focused and motivated to come across as excited despite the gruelingly long hours. For our latest project, we were in the studio for over 30 hours as a group, spread out over five weekends. After an hour or two playing one arrangement, fatigue often plays a factor in mental errors and mistakes. To help everyone stay sane, we tried to schedule breaks often to move around or to get some food. It's amazing how much everyone's individual attitude is conveyed in the group sound on a recording.

Our goal when making a recording is to make artistically great music in which every portion makes up the sound that our audiences have come to enjoy. This means capturing a best performance from each player all at the same time. Recent advances in digital recording technology have made it much easier to edit different 'takes' together into a compilation 'best performance' for the group, but none-the-less, much effort and attention is paid on individual and group levels to achieve a musical sound that we all will be proud of.

See how to get your copy of the new Fiddler CD, featuring new music by Ben Culver, Jesse Mason, and Brandon, in the Summer edition of Fiddlin' Around, coming out in August.

Reflections from a 'graduating' parent

Four and out

By Will Warner, embedded with the Saline Fiddlers

Will Warner has been contributing news stories and his reflections to Fiddlin' Around *for four years now, and we will sorely miss him upon his Fiddler's graduation. Hopefully his insights will appear in future issues as a special guest writer.*

A Fiddler mom tucks the still-warm travel iron behind the big "Saline Fiddlers" sign on the CD sales table. She chooses the spot without deliberation, almost instinctively—the iron is too hot to pack but must not be so well hidden that we will leave it behind; yet it should not be visible to the audience lest it detract from the impression that the kids materialize on the stage, perfectly formed, like Venus emerging from the clam shell.

With its black cord, white plastic body, and gleaming steel plate, the iron is out of place in a room full of polished, wooden violins, violas, cellos, mandolins and guitars. Better it should stay out of sight.

But I can see it. I recall the hot, steamy smell of cotton costumes as they issue, wrinkle-free, from under the iron. In the hands of Fiddler moms, it is a wonder machine that regularly erases the effects of cavalier treatment of costumes by preoccupied teenagers.

I depart hoping that the whole wonderful miracle will go on, just as I have known it, forever.

The travel iron is not the only instrument helping to ready the Fiddlers for the stage. There is the collection of minivans that carried us to this auditorium/gym/church/tent, including one designated the "homework car" in which Fiddlers with looming tests studied their way to the gig, and one named the "late car" which waited for half-a-dozen Fiddler-athletes to finish cross-country practice before following just in time for the show.

Some cogs are flesh and blood. As the sound crew irons out the last problem in the audio setup, Denise Newton, the unofficial mother of every boy in the crew, delivers to them the sandwiches she has culled from a feast earlier enjoyed by the rest of us. This time they remember to thank her.

Sitting in the slanting rays of late afternoon sunshine, I find these meditations especially absorbing…

...we are the Saline Fiddlers, and it is a pleasure to be here.....come out tonight, come out tonight...this time I wasn't lyin' when I told her one more run...who's gone and left me blue...I call it the Rainbow Set*...on my left, playing viola... 3.5/3.6/3.7 ...without them we sound like this...he loves his darned old rodeo as much as he loves me...by the father of bluegrass...you stuck me like a hog...thank you, would you like to hear another one...till we meet again...*

The audience is on its feet, cheering; the kids are bowing. The show must be over.

Time to tear down, pack up, and head out. As a senior parent, I hang back and let the freshman parents schlep gear from the stage to the trailer. They are so eager to help (it's kind of cute, really) and I don't want to deprive them of the opportunity, but I should do something. I hoist the iron, wrap up its cord, and make a cozy bed for it amid all the junk (scotch tape, magic markers, Band-Aids, hand cream, nail polish) in the CD sales suitcase. There, my work here is done.

Another town, another gig. As we scramble to the minivans I feel again how quick are the months of the earth. My Fiddler graduates this summer and I go with her. The four years have evaporated, leaving, fortunately, a distillate of what I know will be lifelong memories for her and for me.

I must remember to tell my friends, especially the other senior parents, that my association with them and their children has been among the most rewarding experiences of my life. I depart hoping that the whole wonderful miracle will go on, just as I have known it, forever.

To those staying behind I will say: Taste every breath, and don't forget to empty the iron before packing it.

Who are these Fiddlers?
1. Lee
2. Nathan
3. Gus
4. Brandon
5. Sally
6. Mike

outside page - Gus

Inside:

Summer plans - page 1
New CD! - pages 2 and 8
Class of 2004 - page 3
Young Americans - page 7
Upcoming Events - page 7
New Fiddlers! - page 8
Departing words - page 9

SALINE Fiddlers

Walt Byers, Executive Director
Ben Culver, Artistic Director
Shelly Banet, Business Director

Direct booking inquiries to Shelly: 1-866-257-5333

www.salinefiddlers.com

*** Senior Edition ***



The Young Americans (above), Varsity Blues and the Fiddlers performed for each other at Saline High School on March 10th. See story on page 7.



The Saline Fiddlers
PO Box 315
Saline, MI 48176

To:

