



NCSTA Statewide Play-In Is Coming! *Lisa Randolph, Durham*
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Teachers, save the dates March 17, 18 for the Statewide Play In. Our location is Duke University in Durham. Get ready for a weekend of group class activities, seeing old friends and meeting new ones, and finishing the day with a grand play-in concert. We expect to have violins, pianos, cellos, flutes, violas, and guitars, so there will be something for everyone. If you live close by or plan to come Friday, you're sure to enjoy play-ins and the concert we have planned for Friday night featuring string students from around the Triangle.

This event only happens every other year, so please don't miss it. The more the merrier—we need you and your students to make it as enjoyable and rewarding as possible. Start telling your students now so that they can put it on their calendars and start their review.

If you'd like to volunteer to teach, accompany, or help in any way, please contact any board member.

The violin repertoire is printed in this newsletter. Please note that information, registration forms, etc. will appear on the website beginning in January.

SAA Chapter Affiliation *Karen Moorman, Durham*
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On April 3, 2004 our membership voted to apply for SAA Chapter Affiliation. Working with SAA

representative, Karen Phelan, the present Board of Directors is currently working toward that end. The benefits of Chapter Affiliation are enumerated in a list of services and materials provided by SAA. Most valuable, in my opinion, is the strong link with our parent organization. In a world that continues to grow smaller, yet ever more complex, it will enable us to stay connected. If you would like to know more about SAA Chapter Affiliation please visit the SAA website www.suzukiassociation.org and click on "affiliates."

As part of the process, we will seek to amend our Bylaws to be in compliance with SAA. Since our Constitution and Bylaws mandates a two-thirds majority vote, your ballot will be vitally important. You will receive more information during the coming months.. If you have a change of address, please notify Betsy Hughes, 4 WillowBridge Dr., Durham, NC 27707 or email betsyviolin@yahoo.com.

If you have questions or concerns about our application for SAA Chapter Affiliation, please contact Karen Moorman moorman@mindspring.com

What's in a Name? Karen Moorman, Durham moorman@mindspring.com

Over the summer I corresponded with SAA Representative, Karen Phelan. As a facilitator of the application process, she has been most helpful. After looking at our Bylaws, she suggested that we consider dropping the word *teacher* from our name. My initial



reaction was, *yes, this makes sense*. But the possible paper work involved made me balk. Should the hurdles of red tape prevent us from looking more inclusive?

Chapel Hill colleague and violin teacher, Ingrid Tung made this observation—*by including parents in our organization, we are tapping into a huge source of energy*. The Suzuki method works because we work as a team. As an SAA Chapter Affiliate, North Carolina Suzuki Association will become stronger. With the blessings of our founding mothers, Mrs. Joanne Bath and Dr. Mary Frances Boyce, I bring this to you, our members, to consider. Would you favor changing our association's name to *North Carolina Suzuki Association*?

In addition to voting on amendments, a future ballot will include the name change to North Carolina Suzuki Association. Details are forthcoming.

Graduation Committee Report

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The newly formed committee members are: Frances Duff, Ashville, Terry Patrickis, Chapel Hill, and Wilinda Atchley, Raleigh. A study group, the committee has been formed, and we are sharing ideas about graduation goals and guidelines, and how to implement a worthwhile, working plan. Look for updates in the coming newsletters.

Loving Your Child Suzuki Style

Valerie Cox, Southern Pines
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As a young adult, I had the privilege of hearing the Suzuki kids from Japan on their American tour. I had just completed Optometry school and attended the concert as one of a series sponsored by the arts council in our little town in Oklahoma. Little did I know how that experience would influence my life. The tour director explained the Suzuki philosophy and then the children played. The performances were overwhelming. I thought, "Wow! Why didn't my piano teacher use this method with me?" I was taught to read each note and play the piece over and over until it started to sound something like music. I was not encouraged to listen to recordings of the piece I was learning, but I discovered that if the teacher played even just a snippet of the piece I was learning so that I could get a feel for the style of the piece, I learned it much faster. I knew Suzuki was something that I wanted to share with my children one day. Twenty years and four children later, I realize that Suzuki violin training has taught us more than how to play a musical instrument; it has taught us many lessons for life.

Learning to maintain a positive attitude is one of the key lessons I have learned in my Suzuki journey. How many times have I caught myself thinking, "Let's see, when we get home, I have to prepare dinner, make sure the children finish their homework and, we still **have** to practice violin?" I have to



be careful not to communicate this negativism to my children. I reword this to them as, “We still **get** to practice violin today.” When we view this process as a privilege rather than a chore, they will as well. This positive attitude will carry over into many areas of their lives as they grow, mature and learn new skills.

In addition to a positive attitude, the children develop an appreciation for the sacrifices their parents make to ensure that they practice each day. I am thankful that my parents, though neither of them had had any musical training, made sure that I got those piano lessons and made them a priority in my life. I have been able to use the musical knowledge I gained to help my children attain even higher levels in their playing. This sacrificial love models behavior they likely will exhibit some day with their own children. From everything that I have read, I surmise that this must have been the environment that nurtured J. S. Bach. He came from a long line of musicians and he enjoyed teaching music to and playing music with his own children. One of your own children may not be the next Bach, but who knows what may happen generations down the line once you start this process.

Delayed gratification and discipline are other lessons learned from Suzuki training. Learning to play a musical instrument well takes a long time. In our fast food, instant pleasure society, many children never realize that anything worth doing requires hard work and sacrifice. Faithful, daily, slow,

careful practice will one day produce a successful performance. The beauty of the Suzuki philosophy is that Suzuki realized that the young child does not have the capacity to know how to practice to achieve this success. We the parents, being more mature and having had more life experiences, do and we can guide the child in his or her daily practice. I once had a parent tell me, “Junior* isn’t doing well because he just won’t practice!” Well, five-year-old Junior does not yet have the discipline it takes to practice on his own daily. I’m afraid the mother is the one who won’t practice. The young child doesn’t have to understand this yet, but years of daily violin training by the parent will teach the child the discipline required to learn anything he or she endeavors to learn and the realization that it will take much patience and faithfulness to learn the task or subject well.

One of the greatest gifts that the Suzuki philosophy has given me is the opportunity to show unconditional love to my children. I am a perfectionist at heart and, as all mothers, I want my children to perform well. I try to make sure that my children are always prepared any time they are to perform in front of others. This gives them confidence and helps to eliminate stage fright. However, because of all that I have learned about music through attending my children’s violin and piano lessons, I sometimes have a hard time being completely satisfied with their performances. I have to keep reminding myself, however, that the child is **always** more important than the performance.



The mere fact that she got up on that stage and actually played for people is significant. I have to remember that she wants to perform well as much as I want her to. When my child would make that inevitable “boo-boo” in performance, I realized she would look at me. When she did, she needed to see my countenance, beaming with motherly pride, as if to say, “What boo-boo?!” In doing so I communicate, “You are my child and I love you so much that nothing you can do will compromise that love.” If the performance is less than perfect, I don’t blame her, I blame myself for not making sure she was properly prepared, or we chalk it up as a learning experience. Instead of criticizing the performance, I tuck any lessons to learn in my hat to work on next practice session. Violin training is a process or a journey, not a destination. There never has been, nor will there ever be a “perfect” performance. We can only try to get close. As my children mature, they tell me when they are not happy with their performances. This gives me an opportunity to get them analyze their playing and help them come up with ways to improve next time. If we keep Suzuki’s goal of producing more noble human beings rather than virtuoso violinists in mind, we find it easy to show unconditional love to them on their Suzuki journeys.

As I reflect on my journey as a Suzuki mom, I realize that the Suzuki philosophy has become more than an educational philosophy of teaching music to my family; it has become a

lifestyle. To reiterate, Dr. Suzuki once said that the goal of his method was not to produce a virtuoso violinist, although this may well happen, but to produce a more noble human being. The lessons we have learned from Suzuki violin training have carried over into many other areas of our lives. One of the greatest benefits I have gained from working with my children in their daily practice and nurturing them on their musical journeys is the opportunity to spend time with them and to share in a truly meaningful area of their lives. I would not trade this experience for anything in the world. With their teacher’s help, we as Suzuki parents have the privilege of giving our children many gifts that can never be taken away.

*Junior is a fictitious name.

Send us your news for inclusion in future NCSTA Newsletters.

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