



SSSPI Newsletter January 2008

*“Teaching music is not my main purpose.
I want to make good citizens.
If children hear fine music from the day of their birth
and learn to play it, they develop sensitivity,
discipline and endurance. They get a beautiful heart...”*

- Shinichi Suzuki

Director's Message

January 7, 2008

I hope you all had a good Christmas break, and have a wonderful year in 2008. Now is the time to dust off those instruments and those Suzuki CD's, and get back to sluggin' away in the practice room again.

I would like to commend you all for the wonderful playing of the children at the last few performances. Thank you all who came out to the Festival of Trees and the Sundog performances. The playing was gorgeous at the Festival of Trees, and would have been gorgeous at Sundog if it weren't for the unfortunate competition with a Country and Western Band. I extend my apologies to those who attended. Joan Flood, the Sundog organizer, apologized profusely for that debacle. If we go there again, it will be under better circumstances. Finally, the children played a polished and spirited rendition of carols at our Christmas concert in the cafeteria, which was a great way to get into the spirit of the Christmas season.

There are three performances happening this month from our Suzuki program: The first one will be Saturday Jan. 19 in the lobby of TCU Place just before the symphony concert. Mark Fewer, a fabulous violinist and concertmaster of the Vancouver Symphony, will be performing the Shostakovich Violin Concerto. For more details, please keep reading this newsletter. In addition to the aforementioned lobby show, we have a concert of the three Suzuki orchestras on January 20 and our Midwinter Suzuki concert January 27. The Suzuki concert list is included in this newsletter.

On another topic, we the teachers and other SSSPI executive members want you and your children to have best possible experience in Suzuki talent education. To that end, I will be leaving a suggestion box and a simple questionnaire near the easel at the group lessons. We would be grateful for any input you care to submit, both about what you like and what you would like to see improved. We are seeking input at the program level. If you have constructive feedback about an individual, it is best to approach the individual first.

Here is some advice, should you need it: Like anything else worthwhile, learning to play an instrument has its ups and downs. If you are frustrated about practicing with your child (or if you

are a child frustrated about practicing), please talk to your teacher about it. He or she is there to help. Also, other families in the program can provide a goldmine of ideas on making practice more effective and more fun. If you find something that works, please let your teacher and other families know about it!

Finally, I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to the current executive of the Saskatoon Suzuki String Program. As in past years, we are extremely fortunate to have such capable and dedicated people on the executive, who have made this thriving program possible. I would also like to thank past executive members, in particular, Larry and Lorraine Mastromatteo and Alan Tsui, who did a tremendous amount of good volunteer work as Registrar and Treasurer for our Suzuki program.

Thank you for your continuing support of the Saskatoon Suzuki String Program.

John Payzant
SSSPI Director

SUZUKI SOCIAL AND FUNDRAISING EVENT

Pasta Frenzy

You are invited to help raise funds for our program by enjoying an evening out with your family at **CHIANTI** restaurant. The dates to look forward to are Wednesday, **February 20**, 2008 or Thursday, **February 21**, 2008. There will be seating any time between 6:30 and 9:00. Just walk in, state who you are with, and enjoy! Unfortunately, seating is limited to 60 tickets per night, so be sure to purchase your tickets early. **Tickets will be for sale February 7 and 14th at group lessons.**

<u>Menu</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Soup or salad	Adults.... \$16.00.
Any pasta	Children.... \$8.00.
Tiramisu dessert	Price includes taxes and gratuities!

50/50 tickets will also be sold
\$2.00 each or \$5.00 per arms length

Thank you in advance for your support.

Melinda Sweeney
Fundraising coordinator



TAKE NOTE



Notice regarding the Volunteer Duties and Cheques

With the completion of the first half of the 2007-08 program, the Suzuki board of directors has asked me to express its appreciation to everyone who provided volunteer support during our group lessons, special events, and other activities. The volunteer contribution by family members of our Suzuki students is critical to our program. Thanks to everyone who helped set up and take down our rooms, who served as accompanists, who supported our governance and administrative processes, who organized and supported our special concerts and events, and who contributed their time and expertise in many other ways.

As you are aware, when you submitted your registration for this year's program, you were required to provide two cheques -- each for \$50, with one dated for September and the other for January -- to support our volunteer requirements. The purpose of these cheques is outlined in the "2007 - 2008 Fee Schedule and Refund Policy" which was distributed with the registration forms. The following is an excerpt from that Policy document which pertains to the volunteer cheques:

"The SSSPI relies heavily on the assistance and expertise received from parent volunteers for the smooth and successful operation of the program. In addition to those parents who serve on the Board of Directors, we rely on the help and participation of all parents. . . . Two volunteer commitments are required of each family, one in each half of the year. A post-dated deposit of \$50 per commitment must accompany the registration form to ensure your completion of each volunteer duty. Failure to complete one or two required volunteer commitments will result in one or two of your cheques to be cashed. Volunteer deposits will be destroyed by our treasurer at the end of the operating year."

This fall, the board has had several discussions about the purpose and usefulness of continuing to use the volunteer cheques to encourage families to assist the program. The board concluded that the policy continues to be appropriate and that in fairness to everyone, it should be implemented.

Therefore, the board has decided to advise all parents that the volunteer cheque policy will be applied during the second half of the 2007-08 program. Families are encouraged to sign up for volunteer duties for the period between January and June of 2008. You can sign up in January during group lessons. Volunteers should confirm that their activities during this period have been recorded by the volunteer coordinator.

Volunteer cheques will be cashed in June for any families who have not volunteered during the preceding period. Any family who chooses not to volunteer can advise the volunteer coordinator to cash their cheque instead. The funds from cashed cheques will be used for volunteer recognition activities, for acquiring services that would otherwise be done by volunteers, and other program services identified by the board.

With respect to the first half of the 2007-08 program (from September to December), the board has waived the volunteer cheque policy. All cheques provided for that period will be destroyed.

We look forward to everyone's cooperation with this matter.

Ken Pontikes,
Treasurer

A FEW PHOTOS FROM THE SUZUKI CHRISTMAS PARTY



Please visit the Saskatoon Suzuki Strings website for the 2007-08 schedule of events, Board member and Teacher contact information, instruments etc for sale, and more:

<http://www.saskatoonsuzukistrings.ca>