

Fiddle Beat

Brought
to you by

**FIDDLERS
RESTRUNG**

Saline Area Schools
Saline Community Education
Vol 4. No. 3 — Spring 2008



SUNSHINE AND STARS ABOUND AT DETROIT'S DOWNTOWN HOEDOWN



Country music fans from around the state welcomed Fiddlers ReStrung at this year's Downtown Hoedown May 9th. Appearing alongside some of the biggest stars in country music, Fiddlers ReStrung proudly represented its hometown Saline roots on the opening day of the 26th anniversary of this three-day music festival. Held annually in Detroit's Hart Plaza since 1983, and billed as the "World's



Photo courtesy Detroit Free Press
Cloggers Asheema S. and Lisa S. dance to "Big John McNeil"

Largest Free Country Music Concert", musicians and audience members alike enjoyed a perfect opening-day spring afternoon filled with sunshine and great music.

other fiddler classic, "Bowl of Bula" showcased Courtney's violin virtuosity. "Calypso Jam" included a mandolin solo by Tommy H. and highlighted Kari's skillful versatility on violin and tin whistle. A mandolin passage led into the final song, "Little Crow", ending the afternoon's performance with warm applause from the filled lower stadium in Hart Plaza.

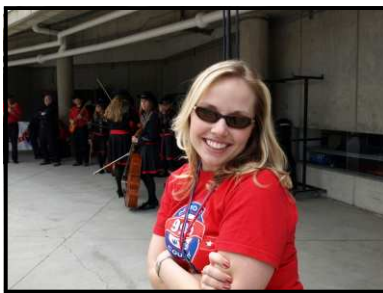
Over 30 acts took the stage this year; featuring local artists alongside some of country music's brightest stars. This year's headliners included Jewel, Trisha Yearwood, Lonestar, Gretchen Wilson and Josh Gracin of "American Idol" fame. Over the years, the Downtown Hoedown has

Senior violinists Courtney T. and Kari F.

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(Continued on page 2)

Radio station WYCD's on-air personality Michelle Metcalf introduced Fiddlers ReStrung, noting with amusement the rhythm section's percussive washboard. Appearing simultaneously live on-stage and on the Plaza's big screen for festival participants, Fiddlers ReStrung performers opened its set with the upbeat instrumental "Deadwood", featuring solos by senior violinists Kari F. and Courtney T.



WYCD's Michelle Metcalf waits backstage along with FRS

With the crowd appreciatively following along, a light-hearted version of "Big Matthew", in homage to FRS senior bassist, Matthew D., was next. The upbeat pace continued with Lisa S. and Asheema S. dancing to everyone's favorite clogging song, "Big John McNeil". An-

Senior violinists Courtney T. and Kari F.



**Fiddlers ReStrung's new CD
"Roads Well Traveled"
to be released Summer 2008!**

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Tommy's mandolin solo

helped launch the careers of music artists like Rascal Flatts, Garth Brooks, Reba McEntire and Montgomery Gentry

Downtown Hoedown, sponsored by Detroit radio station 99.5 WYCD, attracts a crowd of more than 800,000 each year to Detroit's riverfront downtown. The Hoedown is regarded by the Country Music Industry as a premier show-

case opportunity for new and established artists. Since its inception, the Downtown Hoedown has featured artists including Hank Williams, Jr., Tanya Tucker, Mel Tillis, Reba McEntire, Lee Greenwood, Toby Keith, the Dixie Chicks, LeAnn Rimes and Gretchen Wilson.



Simultaneous big-screen broadcast

WINTER RETREAT AT GREAT WOLF

It's good to get away with friends to beat the winter blues. Fiddlers ReStrung packed up and was on the road once again to Great Wolf Lodge in Sandusky, Ohio for their winter camp. The musicians had a weekend full of rehearsals, gigs and, of course, enough time for fun—swimming, karaoke, and midnight jam sessions. FRS' sophomore guitarist, Mickey S (striped sweater) shares his perspective of a busy camp schedule.

"Once upon a dark and stormy night, the Fiddlers ReStrung braved the elements and embarked on a journey that would change their lives. Or at least their weekend. We went down to Ohio for two days for winter camp. We stopped to play for veterans before arriving at the Great Wolf Lodge in Sandusky. After the gig, we toured the veterans home and played in small groups for those who could not make it to the room we played in. Following that, we arrived at the hotel and were briefed by Mrs. Morrison on what was going down. That night, we played in the lobby for about 75 people, and the (little) kids especially loved it (or at least our dance boards). The next morning we got money to eat at a restaurant located inside the Great Wolf Lodge, and again, were back to the groovy little room on the first floor to receive orders from Mrs. Morrison. We had plenty of time to play in the water park/arcade/jam room. We wrote our own improvised songs in small groups and they were performed that night, again, in the same little room we grew



so fond of. Then we did yoga!!! The following morning, we unfortunately had to pack up and leave the Great Wolf Lodge, but we will always remember the times we had there."



Editors Note: An FRS chaperone made this remark about the Ohio Veterans Home gig: "The audience appreciated the kids and their talent so much. I think we may have even made a Buckeye fan love Michigan. One veteran wearing his Ohio Buckeye shirt yelled "GO BLUE" from the audience after hearing ReStrung perform a few songs. Music can inspire."

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



Adventurous, energetic, courageous, enthusiastic, confident and dynamic

April 6 — Matt ~ April 13 — Sabine



Adaptable, versatile, communicative, eloquent, witty, youthful and lively

June 1—Mickey



Emotional, intuitive, imaginative, cautious, protective and sympathetic

June 26—Catherine



Generous, warmhearted, creative, broad-minded, faithful and idealistic

July 29—Jeremy

“ROADS WELL TRAVELED” A JOURNEY IN MUSIC

Fiddlers ReStrung has traveled by caravan, bus, plane, train and boat to destinations near and far, but this title also represents the incredible educational journey that has led to the creation of this unique recording. “Roads Well Traveled” could also describe the musical odyssey through influences and genres explored on this CD. From traditional bluegrass to Celtic airs, through country ballads and even Caribbean whimsy, Fiddlers ReStrung members demonstrate their peripatetic talents in delightfully diverse musical destinations.

Combining her years as student and Artistic Director, Cori Smith has been “traveling” with Fiddlers ReStrung for nearly a decade. Under her guidance, these young musicians have gained significant musical maturity. “I’m proud to say I’ve actually done *less* work on this project than on any other of the group’s previous recordings,” says Miss Smith. “The students themselves have had the passion, dedication, energy and talent to craft a CD that is truly their own.”

These hard-working high school musicians have indeed been driven. They wrote their own arrangements, taught each other fiddle tunes, improvised live in the studio and were even involved in the creative process of mixing and editing.

Newer members of the group, who may have expected a stressful atmosphere in the studio due to the precision that comes with recording, were pleasantly surprised. “The thought of playing music that will be recorded permanently was nagging in the back of my mind and was a bit nerve racking,” admits Senior bassist Matt D. “Once I got past that, sticking to the excitement of playing with a group of talented musicians helped me relax.” Freshman cellist Adriane R. agrees, “I expected the recording studio to be a lot more tense, but it was really great and I didn’t feel as pressured as I thought I would. I was also terrified to play “Fantasy Reel” which features an amazing cello section, but it wasn’t that bad.” Junior violinist Stephen F. was also new to the recording experience and described it as both “exciting and exhilarating.” “I had no clue what to expect, but once we had started to record, it was a lot of fun. It was like an intense rehearsal with some free time intermixed. When we finished a day early, it was like a reward for all our hard work,” he explains. Improvisation has been a key element in this recording. It’s also lots of fun. As Adriane notes, “The

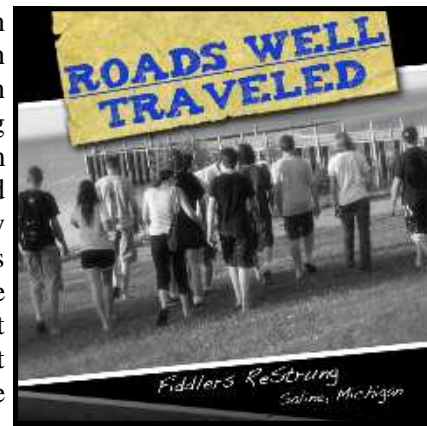


best part was when the cello section played percussion instruments during “Orange Blossom Special”. I played tambourine, Jeremy played the spoons and Lisa played the triangle. It was a lot of fun figuring out what to play on the spot.”

Listening to the rough edits and assisting in the editing process was reward in itself for Matt D., who will continue his music education at Columbia College for Music Performance in Chicago. “Knowing that I helped make a song and that other people would have the opportunity to hear it was most rewarding. I really admire the approach Cori took on this CD, and although I’m sure this won’t be the last one I record, it is one that I will always remember. I had a blast.”

The CD features new arrangements as well as some fiddler classics. A quartet arrangement of the melancholy “Lighthouse’s Tale” highlights the vocal and instrumental talents of upperclassman Kari F. (violin), Tommy H. (mandolin), Catherine M. (cello) and Matt D. (bass guitar). A duet by Courtney T. (violin) and Matt D. entitled “Minnie and Alex” adds to the musical diversity. An unprecedented solo performance of “The Vision” by Matt D. illustrates his ability to master the technical challenges of this piece. The song was written by great bass-guitar player Victor Wooten who conducts a prestigious camp Matt attended last summer. Offering a sentimental ballad, Kari F. lends her solo soprano voice to Allison Krauss’s, “Baby, Now That I’ve Found You”.

Fiddlers ReStrung worked diligently spending long hours in the studio over the course of two full weekends, one of which was a holiday. Their camaraderie served to ensure there were plenty of laughs along the way. As Miss Smith notes, “Watching them is a constant reminder that fiddle music performed by teenagers is full of personality and surprise! My journey with these delightful young artists has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.” No doubt all that fun and perseverance will come shining through on “Roads Well Traveled”, to be released this summer.



MSU'S PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA INVITES FRS TO PERFORM ON CAMPUS

In an evening celebrating American folk music culture, Fiddlers ReStrung was recently invited to perform with Michigan State University's Philharmonic Orchestra. The Fairchild Theatre on campus in East Lansing was the stage for the Jan. 31st performance as part of the MSU College of Music's *The Year of the Arts* performance series.

The program of music featured the Philharmonic Orchestra, directed by Dr. Raphael Jimenez, Associate Director of Orchestras at MSU. Fiddlers ReStrung has previously collaborated with Dr. Jimenez when he led a private workshop for the group.

The concert began with an opening performance of Aaron Copland's Suite from the Ballet "Billy the Kid." The suite evoked the life, times and tragic death of the famous American outlaw with a delightful variety of orchestral special effects. Continuing in the concert's Americana theme, two medley arrangements by Richard Hayman were also featured. "Pop's Hoe-Down" and "Hullabaloo" entertained as well as challenged audience members to identify the many references to American folk favorites.

Dr. Jimenez then introduced Fiddlers ReStrung as the evening's guest artists. Fulfilling her dual role that evening as concertmistress for the Philharmonic Orchestra and Artistic Director for Fiddlers ReStrung, Cori Smith led ReStrung members on stage. The group launched into the energetic instrumental "Deadwood", followed by the mesmerizing improvisational number, "Josefin's Waltz." Audience members joined in rhythmic clapping as fiddler cloggers Audrey G., Asheema S. and Kevin W. finished the group's set with "Big John McNeil"

The evening's fun, light-hearted spirit was evident as Conductor Jimenez donned a ReStrung cowboy hat to lead the combined orchestras in a rousing rendition of "Orange Blossom Special". The Philharmonic Orchestra embellished the railroading theme of the piece with snip-pets from "Chattanooga Choo-Choo" and "I've Been Working on the Railroad."

Michigan State University is proud of its vibrant cultural community and is celebrating 2007-08 as *MSU's Year of Arts and Culture*. This initiative comprises a year of activities wrapping around all arts and culture units and academic programs. These arts and culture offerings educate and engage audiences by exploring the diversity of human expression, while contributing to the creative and economic vitality of the region.

The MSU Philharmonic Orchestra was organized in 1998 to provide yet a further orchestral experience for



Artistic Director Cori Smith smiles as Dr. Jimenez dons an FRS cowboy hat for the evening's finale.

the growing music student population in the College of Music at Michigan State. This ensemble presents six concerts annually, collaborates with the Opera Theatre, and performs a challenging repertoire with outstanding graduate students selected as featured soloists.

"Year of Arts and Culture" MSU's Website Excerpts from Article Written by Caitlin Kelly

MSU Philharmonic Orchestra director Raphael Jimenez usually doesn't conduct in a cowboy hat. But for one night, the orchestra embraced a country twang for a joint concert with the Fiddlers ReStrung...The Fiddlers ReStrung, a group of string players from Saline High School, was founded by string educator and composer, Bob Phillips when he was a music teacher at Saline. As a teacher, Phillips included "alternative styles," of music, meaning anything-non classical, into his teaching repertoire. ... "Fiddlers ReStrung grew organically out of the fact that I was teaching and kids thought it would be cool to start a group. They wanted to play, perform and explore improvisation." MSU music education senior Cori Smith serves as the artistic director for Fiddlers ReStrung..."The students have respect for all

walks of life," Smith said. "We played at a school for children with autism and (my students) got a chance to see what life is like for their peers in different situations. It is really important for (my students) to see what they do for other people's lives. They are very mature kids." ... Earlier in the year, Jimenez instructed the Fiddlers in a workshop and then suggested that the two groups perform together. He said the contrast between two such different musical styles creates an opportunity to promote and cultivate folk music, which is traditionally American. "The world is a tapestry made out of many different colors," Jimenez said. "It is through music that those colors can be preserved."...With this kind of inclusion in mind, Jimenez invited Smith to perform together and "unite two things in once concert."... "To me, heritage is extremely important. ... What makes us different is what makes this world wonderful."

WINTER FESTIVAL IN DETROIT IS A "BLAST"

It's not an easy task to coax people away from hibernating in their homes, especially during the bitter cold month of February. Producers of the 2008 Detroit Winter Blast have enjoyed great success in doing just that. The event, first premiering in 2005, offers plenty of attractions for everyone.

Attendees enjoyed free ice skating, professional ice skating demonstrations, a 200 foot snow slide, watched dog sledding exhibitions, snowshoeing, and enjoyed food from over twenty restaurants. Kids kept busy in the Meijer Family Fun Zone where they watched puppet shows, magic shows, juggling performers, clowns, and ventriloquists. The constant through all these activities is the music. Over 75 entertainment acts performed on three different stages.

Fiddlers ReStrung was pleased to be invited back for their second appearance at the Detroit Winter Blast. The performance was held in the Compuware Building on Saturday evening, February 9th. It has been the site of the "Pure Michigan" exhibit, featuring performances from statewide talent as well as Michigan tourism exhibits. A sizeable and appreciative crowd enjoyed Fiddlers ReStrung's blend of American Bluegrass and Celtic fiddle as well as the step dancing.



Photo courtesy www.clwphotography.com

The winter event expected to draw over 450,000 guests during its three day run from February 8-10.

FRIENDSHIP CONTINUES TO BLOSSOM AT BURGER SCHOOL

Just about every kid enjoys a school assembly, if for no other reason than to break up an otherwise routine day of school. When it's live entertainment, that's the icing on the cake. If smiles are any indication of just how enjoyable the performance is, the students at Burger School in Garden City were having a really good time.

Fiddlers ReStrung visited the school for the fifth consecutive year. Although the fiddle music was enough to get everyone clapping, it was the fiddler cloggers



Students at Burger School for Students with Autism love the beat of fiddle music!

and their fancy footwork that was really exciting. Students just couldn't sit still a moment longer and happily joined in the dancing. It's a friendship between schools and students that will, no doubt, continue to thrive for years to come.

Burger School for Students with Autism in the largest public school program in the United States specializing

in the education of students with autism. With more than 300 students enrolled, each student receives an individualized program based on the goals and objectives established by a team annually. Students range in age from three to twenty-six and are typically in a classroom of no more than five students. For more information on Burger School, visit www.gardencityschools.com/schools/burger.

Fiddlers ReStrung continued their commitment to community service. During the month of April alone, the group performed free, private concerts for residents at Lurie Terrace Senior Complex in Ann Arbor, Saline Senior Center and Frenchtown Senior Center in Monroe.

The Westland Observer (article excerpt)

Fiddlers ReStrung may be an unknown to many people, but not to students at the Burger Center for Students with Autism. They are the beloved friends of Burger staff and students alike.

Fiddlers ReStrung has performed at the school every year for the last five years, for no more than a small donation.

"We were told they would come for nothing if we wanted them to, they love it that much," said Sharon Hegwood, teaching assistant at Burger School.

The Saline High School students take the time on a non-school day to go to Burger Center in Garden City to bring a little excitement into the lives of its staff and students. Their enthusiasm and pure joy of music is infectious and the students catch it. They cannot stay in their seats when the music begins to play. They're up dancing, spinning and jumping.

At any other concert, someone would be telling them to go back to their seats and just listen, but not with Fiddlers ReStrung. The group encourages the dancing because they enjoy seeing it.

Salute To Seniors



Matt D. ~ Bass Guitar ~ 3 Years in FRS

Other Instruments: Bass, Violin, Guitar **Other Activities:** Photography Club, Conflict Management, University of Michigan Sailing Club, Fiddle Club Assistant
Best Summer Tour Memory: Playing for an amazing crowd in Escanaba and touring the town/beach. **College Plans:** Columbia College for Music Performance

Valuable Lesson: "I learned so many things in FRS, it is hard to narrow down the most important one. Before I joined this group, I was hardly a musician. Stage presence was definitely a big one as well as building bass lines and changing styles and expanding my musical horizons."



Kari J. ~ Violin ~ 4 Years in FRS ~ 4 Years Clogging

Other Instruments: Violin, Vocals, Tin Whistle **Other Activities:** Cross Country, Track and Field, National Honor Society, St. Andrew Catholic Church, Recycling Club, Fiddle Club Assistant
Best Summer Tour Memory: One of my favorite tours was this past summer. We were in Escanaba and during some of our free time, some of us headed to a vintage shop downtown. We were trying on all sorts of ridiculous outfits and Catherine and I actually found some chic wedding dresses. It was a really good time. **College Plans:** University of Michigan **Valuable Lesson:** "I learned how to talk to new people and to be sociable with all sorts of audiences. It will definitely come in handy in a future career."



Audrey G. ~ Guitar ~ 4 Years in FRS ~ 4 Years Clogging

Other Instruments: Cello **Other Activities:** Crew, Tennis, Saline Youth Council, National Honor Society, Link Crew, Recycling Club. **Best Summer Tour Memory:** Hanging out with friends on the bus. **College Plans:** Denison University **Valuable Lesson:** "I learned the importance of music and the ways in which it can change people who are listening to it. It was nice to be able to spread music and bring joy to people."



Catherine N. ~ Cello ~ 4 Years in FRS ~ 2 Years Clogging

Other Instruments: Viola, Violin & Shakers **Other Activities:** Scuba Diving, Volleyball, Cross Country, Link Crew, Aviation, FUMC Youth Group, ASTA Elementary Music Camp Counselor, Indoor Soccer, Fiddle Club Assistant. **Best Summer Tour Memory:** Playing in Dollywood and riding the roller coasters between sets. **College Plans:** University of Michigan—Go Blue! **Valuable Lesson:** "The thing that I will take away from fiddlers is the feeling of being part of such a tight-knit community. My best friends are in this group, and I believe that is because of how much time I spend with them and share so much of my life with. Fiddlers is not just a group, but a family to me, and I will sincerely miss the group."



Lisa S. ~ Cello ~ 3 Years in FRS ~ 3 Years Clogging

Other Activities: National Honor Society, Link Crew, Travel Soccer, Volleyball

Best Summer Tour Memory: Spending time with fiddlers on the bus.

College Plans: Hope College **Valuable Lesson:** "Fiddlers ReStrung has taught me that there are other ways of playing music than just sitting down and reading a sheet of music. I have learned how to groove and move to the beat while playing a song. This helps a song have style and rhythm. I am more comfortable playing in front of large crowds. When I first joined the group, I was terrified to go on stage even in front of a little audience. Now, the more people at a performance, the more excited I get. It is such a reward to know what we're giving others. Looking out in the audience and seeing people smile is the best thing ever."



Tomas S. ~ Violin ~ 3 Years in FRS ~ 3 Years Clogging

Other Instruments: Piano

Other Activities: Boy Scouts, job as a waiter

Best Summer Tour Memory: KP kicking her shoe off the edge of the deck at the gig on Mackinac Island this past summer.

College Plans: Michigan Tech University



Courtney C. ~ Violin ~ 4 Years in FRS ~ 4 Years Clogging

Other Instruments: Piano **Other Activities:** Michigan Youth Orchestra, Cross Country

Best Summer Tour Memory: Tennessee/Kentucky Tour. Marion, Hannah, Jessie and I all climbed into one queen-size bed at about 1:00 am and harmonized to "Calypso Jam."

College Plans: Michigan State University— Pre-Nursing **Valuable Lesson:** "The most valuable thing I learned being a part of FRS was how to work together and play with a band. I also became much more confident performing solos in front of large crowds."



Kevin W. ~ Violin ~ 3 Years in FRS ~ 3 Years Clogging

Other Instruments: Mandolin

Best Summer Tour Memory: Walking around Escanaba. Visiting the tiny coffee shop where I got a fantastic spiced chai and we met the man who randomly knew everything about backgammon.

College Plans: Michigan Tech University—Computer Science Major/English Literature

Valuable Lesson: "The most valuable thing I've learned by being a member of FRS is that on occasion, musicians might get a free meal if they show up in large enough numbers and play long enough.(!) I've also learned that even when you're extremely nervous and frightened about a solo or an announcement that you've been instructed to make to the audience or any other action requiring independent action from a group, that if you have rehearsed your material well enough and if you take your time and think it through beforehand, then you'll have no trouble and the moment will pass without incident."

Upcoming Calendar of Events

JUNE

20 *Detroit River Days, Detroit Int'l Riverfront, 2:00p*

23 *Private Event—Kiwanas Club of Saline*

MIDWEST SUMMER TOUR (6/26—7/6)

27 *IDS Crystal Center, 80 South St., Minneapolis MN, 12:00p*

29 *Prairie Lutheran Church, 11000 Blossom Rd., Eden Prairie, MN, 7:00p (performing w/ Eden Prairie String Academy)*

30 *First Lutheran Church, 10680 Main St., Hayward, WI, 7:00p (performing with Northwoods Strings)*

JULY

1 *Private Event with Indian Boys & Girls Club*

2 *Thunder Valley Inn Dinner Show, W15344 Waubeek Rd., Wisconsin Dells, WI 5:00p*

3 *Noah's Ark Water Park, 1410 Wisconsin Dells Pkwy., Wisconsin Dells, WI, 11:00a*

3 *"Concert on the Square", Baraboo Chamber of Commerce, Courthouse Sq. on Oak St., Baraboo, WI, 7:00-9:00p*

4 *Faith Lutheran Church, 1400 8th St., Reedsburg, WI, 7:30p*

11 *"Saline Summer Music Series", Saline Chamber of Commerce, South Ann Arbor St. at Mich. Ave., 6:30p*

12 *Saline Celtic Parade, starts at Liberty School, 10:00a*

12 *Saline Celtic Festival, Mill Pond Park, Saline, 12:30p*

12 *Blissfield River Raisin Festival, Blissfield, 6:00p*

19 *Antique Tractor Show, Nike Park, Monroe, MI, 8:00p*

21 *Tuscola County Fair, 362 Green St., Caro, MI, 7:00p*

24 *Lenawae County Fair, 602 N. Dean St., Adrian, MI, 7:00p*

MICHIGAN SUMMER MINI TOUR (7/25-26)

25 *Rudyard Festival, Rudyard, MI*

26 *Cheboygan Opera House, 403 N. Huron St., Cheboygan, 7:30p*

30 *Wyandotte Waterside Concert Series, Bishop Park, Wyandotte, 7:00p*

AUGUST

4 *Jackson County Fair, 200 W. Ganson St., Jackson, 11:00am and 7:30 pm*

6 *"Music in the Park", City of Eastpointe Parks & Recreation, Spindler Park, Eastpointe, MI 7:00p & 8:00p*

7 *Branch County 4-H Fair, Branch County Fairgrounds, Coldwater, MI, 4:30p*

8 *Private Event—Saline Summer Latchkey*

14 *Milan's "Concert In The Park", Wilson Park, 7:00p*

16 *Private Event—8th Annual Country Hoedown, Monaghan Fundraiser Event, Ann Arbor*

SEPTEMBER

6 *Saline Community Fair, Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds, Saline, MI, 7:30p*

Cori Smith, Artistic Director

For booking information contact:

Danette Morrison at 734-429-8000 ext 4576

Or e-mail us at bookings@fiddlersrestrung.com

FIDDLERS RESTRUNG

Saline Community Education

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Saline, MI 48176

Your **tax-deductible donation** in support of the activities of these talented musicians would be greatly appreciated.

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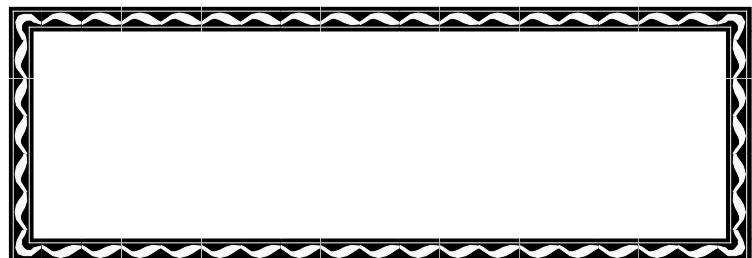
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