

Gums and Strums Music

by Richard Regent

Eighteen year old Ken Hanner has been playing in various musical styles the soprano, alto, tenor, and baritone saxophones for eight years; and the guitar for five years. Ken lives in Mukwonago with his parents, two sisters and a Pomeranian dog named Archie. He auditioned in the Jazz Unlimited of Greater Milwaukee 2005 Scholarship Competition on saxophone.

Soon to graduate from the Mukwonago High School, Ken is a musician in nearly all of the school musical groups, mostly as a first chair musician. His extensive group listing includes playing for four years with the **Pep Band** on alto and tenor saxophones and guitar; **Jazz II** on alto, tenor, and baritone saxes and guitar; and **Wind Ensemble** on alto saxophone. For three years Ken has been with the **Jazz I** on alto and soprano saxophone and in the **Show Choir Combo** on tenor saxophone. Just a year ago Ken even joined the **Orchestra** on alto and tenor saxophones.

His musical skills and technique have been awarded with six "1" ratings at Wisconsin School Music Association (WSMA) State Solo and Ensemble (saxophones) and eight "1" ratings (saxophones and guitar).

Between his school studies and helping around the home, Ken takes music theory courses and does lots of practicing. He particularly enjoys being in jazz, funk, and rock bands, including the **Park View Middle School Jazz Band**, **Knights of Magellan Big Band**, and has played with **Relic-A-Delic** (a nine-piece funk band) for the 2004 *Mukwonapalooza*. He occasionally sits-in at the *Organ Piper Pizza* to play Dixieland with the **New Rampart Street Paraders**. Ken belongs to the **University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Youth Jazz Ensemble** playing alto saxophone and in their **Youth Wind Ensemble** on alto and baritone saxophones.

For the past two years Ken earns money to buy instruments, reeds and strings by teaching saxophone and guitar to 20 students at *Kashmir Music* in Mukwonago; playing the banjo with the **Dixie Doodlers**, a seven-piece Dixieland band out of New Berlin; and playing in the last two annual **Tribute to Bix Beiderbecke Festivals** in Racine. Ken enjoys finding and buying old electric guitars at a bargain prices. He fills scratches or chips, sands, refinishes and polishes the guitar surfaces. Ken remarks, "They look much nicer but play about the same."

We often hear Ken strumming and tuning up his banjo by playing wonderful renditions of "Led Zeppelin's Stairway To Heaven" or the old standard "Dueling Banjos." Young Mr. Hanner is a seriously minded student and talented musician who is welcomed by professional musicians. He intends to apply for college admission at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee or Whitewater to pursue studies with a music major. Good luck, Ken.