I was sitting in the newsroom earlier this week when an odd thought passed over me.
Looking over at our sports writer, I started spitting out what was on my mind.
“If a genie came to me and offered me three wishes, one of my wishes would be to be able to play any musical instrument in the world,” I said.
After saying it, I thought he would look at me like I was crazy. I tend to speak aloud before really thinking how absurd something may sound.
But oddly enough, he took the bait. A lengthy discussion soon unraveled about musical instruments and the ability, or inability, to play them.
I can’t play anything. My fingers turn to noodles any time I come across piano keys, guitar strings or brass knobs. Music is most certainly not my gift.
My husband Jason and brother-in-law Eric can both play the guitar. When we go on vacation together in the summer, those two boys have what I call a “jam session.”
There are no rules, no set songs. But one night during our week at a beach house is spent with Jason and Eric playing an assortment of sounds.
I am usually sitting beside them, wondering why I couldn’t feel comfortable with a guitar. When I get a hold of one, I hit a few strings and begin humming. I can hum just about anything. But let’s face it, hums aren’t what fill up stadiums.
When I was in elementary school, we had music class once a week. I didn’t mind art so much, and the drama hour wasn’t so bad. But I felt extremely uncomfortable in music class.
The first instrument I held in my hand was a plastic recorder. The long, skinny instrument made me nervous. But I was determined to give it a shot.
“This, students, is what we call a recorder,” Mrs. Sherry said, holding one up. “It is similar to a flute, and today we will successfully be able to play Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.
Was she serious, I asked myself. I couldn’t even hold the thing right, and Mrs. Sherry really thinks I will be able to play a whole song by the end of class.
My friend next to me was already in the correct position, with her fingers placed over the different holes on the recorder. I didn’t even know how to hold it.
And to make it worse, Mrs. Sherry would come next to us and see how we were doing. As I saw her coming closer, I quickly tried to make it look like I knew what I was doing.
“OK, Jamie,” Mrs. Sherry said. “Let’s see what you can do.”
Placing my fingers over the recorder holes, I tried to play it. But I kept spitting into the thing, and I found myself humming the notes. I wasn’t really making the notes from the instrument itself.
“Jamie, honey,” she said, pushing my recorder out of my mouth. “You make the notes through

the recorder. You don’t hum them. Now all you have is a recorder full of saliva. Try again.”
Mrs. Sherry was right. I looked down and saw thousands of spit stains on my blue jeans. All I did was make a mess.
“That’s why that sponge thing is in your bag,” a kid behind me said. “You have to keep them clean.”
Using the pipe-cleaner sponge, I cleaned my recorder. For the next half hour, I sat in front of my teacher, spitting into my recorder. She noticed too because she kept looking at me, sighing. A hopeless cause if there ever was one.
Cleaning out my old closet at my Momma’s a few weeks ago, I found that old recorder. It looked the same, but the cleaner was on its last leg.
I ended up putting it in storage, but maybe I should get it out.
Summer is just around the corner, and I might could work on my skills until then.
Who knows? A old recorder with a few spit notes could be the perfect addition to the boys’ jam session.