



Fiddler's Rag



Vol. 47, Number 12
Celebrating 46 years

Santa Clara Valley Fiddlers Association
www.fiddlers.org

December 2019
Next Jam: December 1



President's Note

Oh no... the winter holidays are descending on us faster than a reindeer. Slow down Rudolph! SCVFA will start the season with our annual **holiday potluck** during the December jam. To allow extra time for the holiday potluck, the **Tune Exchange** (formerly Tune Builder) will be **cancelled for the December jam**. The **Slow Jam** will be held as usual from **1:30-2:30**. "**Afters**" is **cancelled** for this month. I'm

positive no one will go away hungry.

December is Annual Giving Month. Put SCVFA on your list of non-profit organizations to which you donate. **Donations** are greatly appreciated and will assist in keeping traditional music alive. **Many local corporations offer matched donations for nonprofits.** Check with your employer... they may offer this benefit. You can easily add SCVFA as a 501(c)(3) organization. Our EIN is 51-0196154. Short on cash? There is always an option to donate time. Donate as you are able and traditional music will reap the benefits.

Calling all Bluegrass Musicians. Change is on the way. The 1st Sunday jams in the New Year will boast a professionally led bluegrass circle. Pete Hicks, fiddler and mandolin musician, will kick up the tempo in January. The best way to 'capture the groove' is by playing with those who have already found it. Tell your friends that this is a new monthly happening.

Outside performances are happening every month and are the main source of fundraising for SCVFA. Our members are kept busy performing at various venues. Payment for our music is how SCVFA keeps our costs down and it's fun. Email me at *Performances [at] fiddlers.org* to join the group of performing musicians or to book our musicians for your event.

Thanks to Gary Breitbard for leading the Tune Exchange and to Jean Avram and Dave Thomas for leading the Slow Jam in November. These two workshops are the

stepping stones for our newer players. SCVFA is all about "passing it on".

Save the date: Jan 25th, 2020, my first oldtime fiddle teacher, **Mark Tamsula**, will be leading a fiddle workshop on Old Time Music of SW Pennsylvania. He will be also be performing a house concert with former Bay Area bass player, **Barb Rosner**. Info at: *SV.houseconcerts [at] gmail.com*

Volunteers are what keeps SCVFA going and it's fun! It takes a village... Let's all do our part.

- Susan

**Holiday Potluck at
the Dec 1 Jam!
See p.3 for details**

SCVFA can always use more volunteers

Everyone has an area of expertise and *that* may be just what we are looking for.

There are big or small jobs.

It's a great way to get connected with other musicians.

Come talk to me or email *president [at] fiddlers.org*.

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The Fiddler's Rag is published monthly by the Santa Clara Valley Fiddlers Association and is provided to members of the Association. The Santa Clara Valley Fiddlers Association (SCVFA), founded in 1973 in San Jose, California, is a nonprofit, volunteer-operated organization dedicated to the preservation, teaching, and enjoyment of traditional music. The first membership in a household includes the Fiddler's Rag; additional members sharing the newsletter are steeply discounted. To join, sign up at the jam or see www.fiddlers.org/join.

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To Contact the SCVFA:

Mail: P.O. Box 2666, Cupertino, CA 95015-2666
 Email to Susan Goodis: [president \[at\] fiddlers.org](mailto:president[at]fiddlers.org)
Newsletter Submissions & Comments: [newsletter \[at\] fiddlers.org](mailto:newsletter[at]fiddlers.org)
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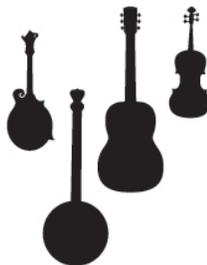
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Donate as you are able and traditional music will reap the benefits.

SCVFA wants musicians to know that we are “not just for fiddlers”. The image to the right side of the Fiddler's Rag name on page 1 includes a mandolin, a banjo, a guitar and a fiddle, to illustrate the diversity of instruments played at our jams and events.



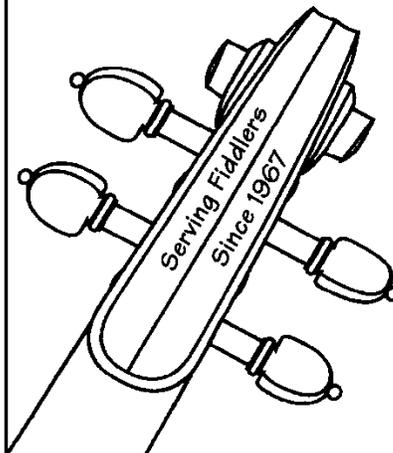
Holiday Quote of the Month

Music is a great gift, one of the greatest anybody can have, because it's something nobody can take away from you. Money can't buy it. It's a very precious thing, I think, very precious."

Ernie Carpenter 1909-1997 Appalachian fiddler

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SCVFA Happenings

SCVFA Slow Jam current tune list

www.fiddlers.org/learning/#slowjam

Angeline The Baker (D)	Red-Haired Boy (A)
Arkansas Traveler (D)	Red Wing (G)
Barlow Knife (G)	Shoo Fly (D)
Girl I Left Behind Me (G)	Soldier's Joy (D)
Jaybird (D)	Squirrel Hunters (A)
June Apple (A)	St. Anne's Reel (D)
Liberty (D)	Swallowtail Jig (E)
Mississippi Sawyer (D)	Whiskey Before Breakfast (D)
Over The Waterfall (D)	Wildwood Flower (C)

Thank you all for participating in the slow jam. The slow jam is for beginners who want to participate in a slow-paced jam (60-90 BPM).

Mark Your Calendar - Upcoming Events

12/1 1:00 - 5:00pm **SCVFA Holiday Potluck and Music Jam and Open Mike** at Hoover School. More info at www.fiddlers.org.

1/5 1:00 - 5:00pm **Music Jam and Open Mike** at Hoover School and a Special Event: special bluegrass Circle with Pete Hicks.



12/13 - 8:00pm Silicon Valley House concerts presents **The Rare Birds**.

Reservations at: sv.houseconcerts@gmail.com.



Nova Devonie (accordion), Ruth Dornfeld (violin), and Cyd Smith (guitar).

Join us for the SCVFA Holiday Potluck Sunday, Dec. 1st



- Jamming and stage performances from 1-3 PM.
- Potluck Dinner starts at 3 PM.

Please bring lots of side dishes and a few desserts.

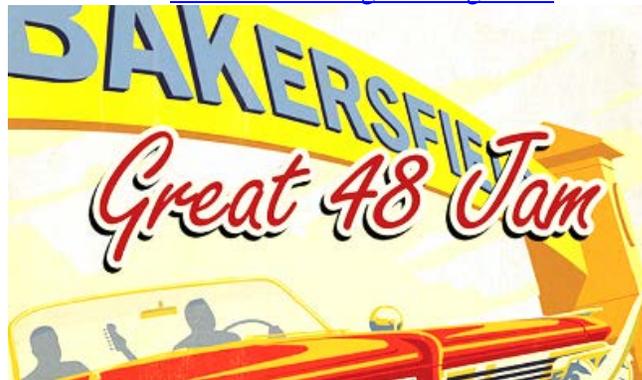
The SCVFA will provide turkey, ham, beverages, eating utensils and decorations.

Bring one dish to feed four times as many as are in your group. So, if you come alone, bring enough for four people. If you come as a couple, bring enough for 8. Please bring your own serving utensils and tape your name on your serving dishes so we know who they belong to.

Can't bring a dish? Come anyway and buy a meal for just \$5.

Note: We do not have permission to use the kitchen facilities (kitchen sinks or electrical outlets). No food warmers or electrical utensils are permitted.

1/11-1/14 - **The Great 48 Jam** in Bakersfield.
More info at: www.cbaweb.org/events/great48.



November Jam Photos

By Pete Showman



Mini-Concert with the Goat Hill Girls



LeeAnne Welch



Sonia Shell



Kim Elking



Lisa Burns



Linda Maki



Hicks' Licks: Becoming a Bluegrass Fiddler

By Pete Hicks

I have been asked to try to describe the “soul” of bluegrass fiddling, and how one thinks while fiddling in a bluegrass band. I think a good way to approach this task is to go through a typical bluegrass song, and discuss how the bluegrass fiddler adds to the music.

The first thing is to remember is that fiddle is the decoration on the cake, not the central focus. The song is the central focus. Almost everything the fiddle does is to support the vocalists or instruments. To accomplish this, you must be listening to everything at once, not just yourself and your playing. Be aware and ready to react as necessary when situations arise, such as the lead singer forgetting the words, or using volume for dynamics.

Let's use “Bury Me Beneath The Willow” to illustrate. We will kick it off with a fiddle break. Be clear and solid on the kickoff, and no count will be necessary. Play the melody pretty straight here. If you can, spice up the melody line with some cute double-stops, but stay with the melody. At or near the end of the melody, play a riff to finish off the break, and back off.

Now the singer starts singing, and the fiddle plays back up. The banjo is going so keep it fairly simple. Longer notes, especially double stops, help support what the banjo is doing and the singer. Little licks are nice between

the vocal phrases, but watch out for the banjo. You can play at the same time as the banjo, but both instruments should not be too busy at the same time. During the banjo solo, the fiddler can chop or play backup/ rhythm to the banjo.

When you get a second break, you can do what you did before, or you can break away from the melody to almost any degree. I usually begin with the melody and play around from there. Finish your solo with a nice hot lick that says, “I'm done now!” At the end of the song, use a standard basic ending lick and finish with a nice long stroke on the fiddle, usually down.

Listen to the Stanley Brothers, Flatt and Scruggs, Bill Monroe and others and focus on what the fiddler is doing and when. Fiddlers like Kenny Baker, Benny Martin, Benny Simms, Chubby Wise, Clarence Tate, and our very own Jack Tuttle and Ed Neff. You will get the idea. Happy Fiddling!

Pete Hicks will be leading a bluegrass jam-group at our January jam. Pete wrote a series of columns for the Fiddler's Rag between 2007 and 2010 about playing bluegrass fiddle. We thought we'd re-run some of them, starting with his introductory column from September 2007, presented here. More to come!

You can watch and hear various versions of “Bury Me Beneath the Willow” on YouTube. Here are two:

In the key of A, from Merlefest 2002 with the Nickel Creek trio, Chris Thile (mandolin and lead vocal), Sean Watkins (guitar and vocal) and Sara Watkins (fiddle and vocal), plus "Doc" Watson (guitar) and Byron House (bass): www.youtube.com/watch?v=ishkstoPiSg

In the key of E, at Rounder Record's 20th anniversary (ca. 1990) with Tony Rice (guitar), J.D. Crowe (banjo), Alison Krauss (fiddle), David Grisman (mandolin) and Mark Schatz (bass): www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzA68Ohwke4

Next month we'll present Pete Hicks's arrangement in the key of B.

Key: G
♩ = 110

Columbus Stockade Blues

By Tom Darby & Jimmie Tarlton (1927)

G

1. Way _____ down _____ in Colum - bus Geor - - gia, _____
2. Last _____ night _____ as I lay sleep - - ing, I
3. Many a night _____ with you I've ramb - - led, _____

5 **D** **G**

wan - - na be back in Tenn - es - - see. _____ Way _____
dreamed _____ I held you in my arms. _____ When I
many _____ an hour with you I've spent. _____ Well I

9 **G**

down _____ in Colum - bus stock - - - ade, my _____
woke _____ I was mis - - tak - - - en, I was
thought I had your heart for - - e - - - ver, _____

13 **D7** **G**

friends _____ have turned their backs on me. _____
peer - - - ing through _____ the _____ bars. _____
now _____ I find it's on - - ly lent. _____

17 **C** **G**

Go and leave me if you wish to,

21 **C** **D7**

Nev - - er let me cross your mind _____ In your

25 **G**

heart _____ you love an - - oth - - - er

29 **D** **G**

Leave _____ me little dar - - lin', I don't mind. _____

Transcribed from a performance by the mostly-bluegrass band Della Mae: www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IA0NKOfXIo. You'll find many performances on the Web, such as this differently-paced one by Willie Nelson: www.youtube.com/watch?v=JARc6XsKbMo.
Transcribed and arranged by Dave Thomas and Pete Showman; typeset in ABC Plus by Pete, 10/23/2019.

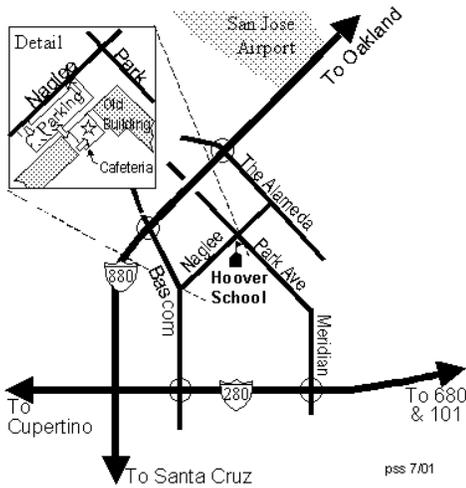
Santa Clara Valley Fiddlers Association
P.O. Box 2666
Cupertino, CA 95015-2666



**Next Jam: Sunday December 1st,
1-5 pm at Hoover Middle School**

SCVFA Jam on the first Sunday of each month.
Location: Hoover Middle School, 1635 Park Ave.,
San Jose. The school is at the corner of Naglee and
Park. Cafeteria parking is on the Naglee side.

**Damaged or Missing Issue? Call us,
or email to: [newsletter \[at\] scvfa.org](mailto:newsletter@scvfa.org)**



Season's Greetings