Fiddler's Rag

Vol. 50, Number 3 | Santa Clara Valley Fiddlers Association | March 2022
Celebrating 48 years | www.fiddlers.org | Next Jam March 6th

President's Note

The indoor mask mandate remains for Santa Clara County and Herbert Hoover Middle School. Please continue to follow the rules. We all hope that COVID numbers keep dropping and these mandates will soon be a thing of the past.

I was overwhelmed and quite pleased by the attendance and participation at the Annual Member Meeting in February. Welcome Leslie and Caleb as our two new trustees! I believe I speak for the membership when I say that these two individuals have impressive backgrounds and a passion for traditional music. I look forward to working together. After elections and my "state of the association" address, we took many thoughtful comments about the proposal to hold more jams in the park. The board will address this issue at their next meeting. Thank you everyone for your input concerning this important decision. The annual meeting was recorded and is available to any member, upon request, who would like to view it.

What is the very best way to connect with others at SCVFA? Give yourself a big pat on the back if you guessed volunteering. When we work together, strong bonds and relationships are formed. There are plenty of opportunities here. I am most pleased to say that set-up and tear-down at Hoover School has become faster and more fun with the many who are volunteering. At times, there have been so many busy hands that I only have time to direct the fast action. We can use help with website issues. Would you like to assist with sound equipment set-up and take-down for each jam? Volunteer to play on stage for the open mic. Share a tune with others as a Tune Exchange leader. Take a seat beside Dinah and lend a hand at the admission desk. Write an article for the Fiddler's Rag. Opportunities abound. Don't be shy, just join in or email me to find the SCVFA need that fits your skill.

SCVFA has two scheduled performances next month, posted under the events tab on our SCVFA website. Join us as part of the open band or come to listen at any event to show your support. On March 5th, we feature Gaelic tunes in the spirit of St Patrick's Day for the Wagon Wheel neighborhood gathering in Mountain View's Devonshire Park. In mid-March, SCVFA members will be performing music from various genres for a private fundraising event. We expect an audience of 100-150, thus we have been holding rehearsals to guarantee an excellent show. Email *performances [at] fiddlers.org* to request a performance or to join in the fun of being a performer.

As I have been hoping, admission by donation went extremely well in February. With your continued support at every jam, we can keep the low suggested donation of $5.00, (more or less as you are able). Please remember to stop at the admission desk at every jam to show your support of SCVFA and traditional music.

Thank you for being part of SCVFA, a community of people who love to make music together. Your continuing support of SCVFA is keeping traditional music alive.

-- Susan

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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-the-scvfa/ .

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Seat 2: Doug Judd	Seat 4: Caleb Gum	Seat 6: Bill Boiko

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Newsletter Submissions & Comments: *newsletter [at] fiddlers.org*
Address changes: *membership [at] fiddlers.org*
Website: **www.fiddlers.org**
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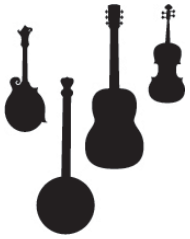
The Santa Clara Valley Fiddlers Association is a non-profit member-supported organization.

Donations to SCVFA are greatly appreciated and will assist in keeping traditional music alive by passing it on to the next generation.

Many local corporations offer matched donations for non-profits. 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

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.



Quote of the Month

"*We can make any event a toe-tapping deal!*"
Susan Goodis inspired by Ann Whitesell
(Referring to playouts during her address at the Feb 6, 2022 SCVFA Annual Membership Meeting)

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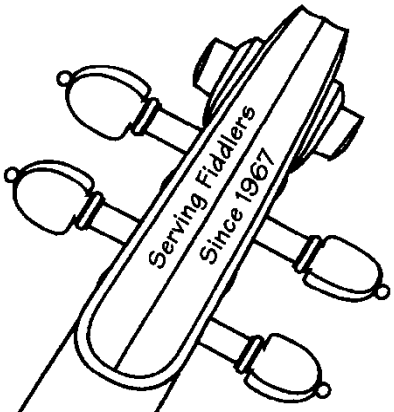

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SCVFA Happenings

SCVFA music jam at Hoover

March 6th, 2022 1:00-5:00pm.
Check for updates at www.fiddlers.org
The **slow jam starts at 1:30**: learning by ear is encouraged since old time music is an oral tradition. Developing your ear does take time, but it is a worthwhile skill. If you need a little help, tunes are available on our SCVFA website.

Hoover School has very strict requirements that we all must follow:

- Everyone must wear masks while inside.
- DO NOT Attend This Gathering If You Feel Sick.
- Anyone who develops COVID-19 within 7 days after attending should notify me (*president [at] fiddlers.org*) as soon as possible.

NEW! SCVFA Monthly Wordle

https://mywordle.strivemath.com/?word=ncjly

February 6th SCVFA Special Board Meeting Highlights

Immediately after the annual meeting at Hoover School, the trustees met to appoint a president and other officers.

Susan Goodis will continue as president.

Vice president: none currently
Recording secretary: Jessica Ollmann
Treasurer: Dinah Showman
Membership secretary: Pete Showman
Newsletter editor: Patrice Tanti (not in attendance but confirmed by email)
Publicity: Susan Goodis and Caleb Gum
Performances: Susan Goodis and Caleb Gum
Publisher: Doug Judd
Webmaster: Matt Mathis

Next meeting date: Tuesday March 15, 2022

Jessica Ollman – Recording Secretary

SCVFA Mission Statement

Santa Clara Valley Fiddlers Association (SCVFA) preserves "fiddle" music and other traditional genres that feature the fiddle and other acoustic instruments. SCVFA takes pride in 'passing it on' to musicians and listeners of all ages, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds.

February 6th SCVFA Annual Membership Meeting Highlights

President Susan Goodis spoke to the assembled membership quorum at Hoover Middle School.

Leslie Wu and Caleb Gum were unanimously elected to seat 3 and 4 respectively. Special thanks were given to retiring trustees Dave Thomas and Sam Schillace.

SCVFA is a 501c3 all-volunteer non-profit organization funded in 1973 (see mission statement above) with currently 171 members.

We keep working hard on promotions and initiatives to increase membership and jam attendance. Promotion examples include publicity, newsletter, passing out business cards (at jam groups in the park), playouts (anyone is welcome to join as a musician in these public performances). Playouts also earn money for SCVFA which allows to keep cost down and admission by donation.

The open mic is a great way to grow as a musician. Jam participants are encouraged to "show their stuff" on stage.

There are numerous volunteer opportunities as outlined in Susan Goodis' monthly newsletter column. Thank you to the volunteers who help set up the jam and clean up afterward; they are a great help. Special thanks to Sharon McCorkell and Ann Whitesell for leading the Slow Jam, and Pete and Dinah Showman for handling the membership and admission desk.

Good financial situation despite the loss of our sound equipment during a storage locker burglary last year. Thanks to Bill Boiko, Doug Judd, Matt Mathis and Pete Showman for their work on the replacement committee.

Attendees provided feedback about the idea of increasing the number of jams in the park. Some concerns were voiced about the weather and the possible impact to the current agreement with Hoover. The board will further discuss and decide in due time.

Jessica Ollman – Recording Secretary

February Photos

More photos at www.facebook.com/Fiddlers.org/

Cowboy Waltz? Cattle Call? Pawel Walc?.....

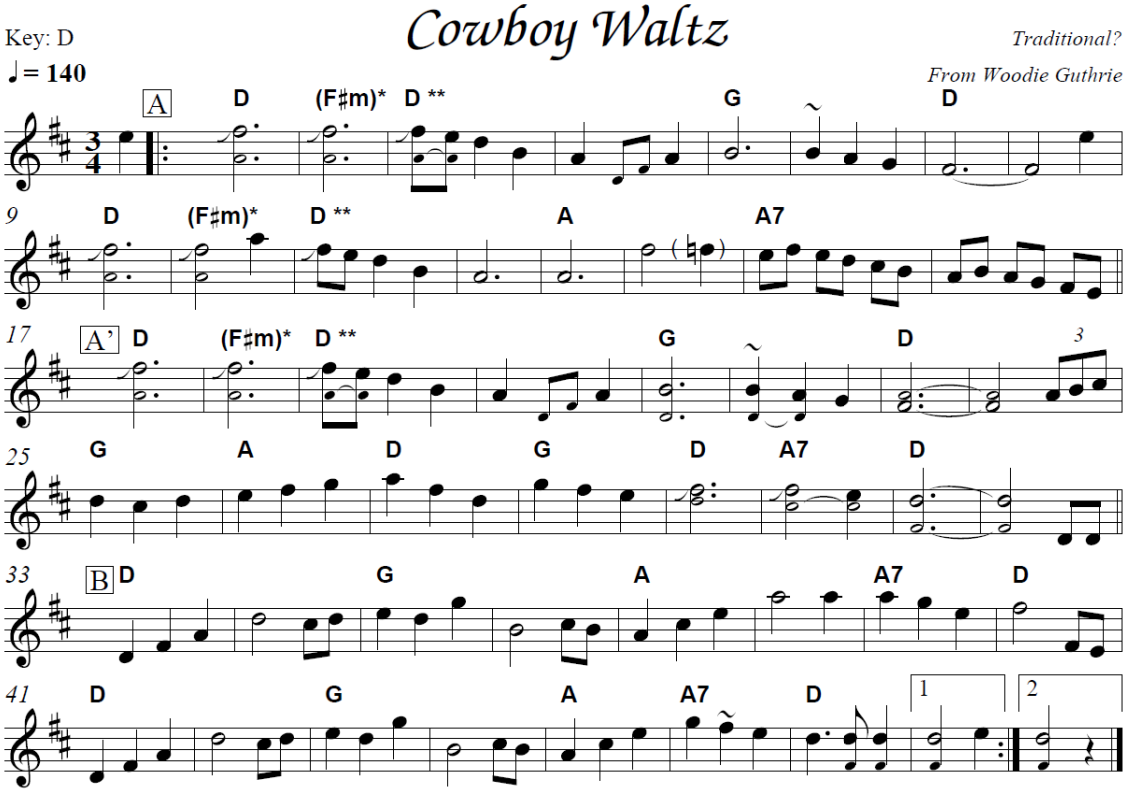
By Vicki Parrish

While we were playing Woodie Guthrie's "Cowboy Waltz" a couple of months ago, I kept thinking that I knew that tune from my childhood, but the chorus was sung in a cowboy falsetto, almost a yodel. I called my 90 something parents and they both immediately recognized the tune but couldn't remember who sang it…. maybe Roy Rogers?

My husband, Michael, knows all the more obscure singers from the late forties and early fifties and came across Slim Whitman's "Cattle Call". I immediately remembered the name.

Then we found Eddie Arnold's version which was all over mainstream radio in 1955 and was one of his signature songs. I was seven years old but remembered it very well from my parents listening to the radio.

"Cattle Call" was written by Tex Owens in 1934 and Woodie Guthrie wrote "Cowboy Waltz" in 1933! They are close enough that one could have sued the other for plagiarism. However, it turns out they both got it from Bruno Rudzinski, a concertina player who did a bunch of Polish American dance music records in the 1920's and 30's. He recorded it as the "Pawel Walc" in 1928. There are some Folkways recordings of them, but I couldn't find it on YouTube. There are other tunes that are also very close. Looking a little deeper into it, it is thought to be a tune brought by German immigrants to Texas after the Civil War. Goes to show you can't keep a good tune down!



Notes: * Chord players should agree whether to do the optional F#m's. The melody chord is OK either way.
** You could play a 1-measure Bm here -- but then the low note in the melody chord must be a more-awkward 'B'.

Typeset and transcribed 3/21/2012 by Pete Showman, from a Dave Fox and Will Branch video on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=BiDzsZpz-YE which in turn was based on a recording by the New Lost City Ramblers. Woodie Guthrie also recorded it, playing fiddle(!) on his Buffalo Skinners album; see www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJ9wexPhUAI . Revised (r4) 1/22/13.

Hicks' Licks

by Pete Hicks

This month and next month, we will explore the use of third and second positions with a selection of licks and excerpts from songs.

Let's start with five examples of third position playing. In this position, we are in the center of the fingerboard. If you play with a "broken" wrist, the heel of your left hand may be resting on the heel of the fiddle neck. This can help you find your position. In all of our examples this month, you can use an open drone to help you stay in tune. You can also play these licks an octave lower and they will sound fine (except example 5). The charts on this page are fingerboard maps to help you follow the fingering in the music.

In example 1 in G, we have a bluegrass fill lick. You first finger will play the D note on the A string, the A note on the E string, and the G note on the D string. The fourth finger will play the high D note on the E string and the G note on the A string. Between your first and fourth fingers, you have a "box" pattern. All the notes we need are in the box, right under our fingers. If you like, play the open D with the first finger D note. This helps lock in your intonation and gives a powerful sound.

Examples 2 and 3 are hot licks in D which could be used almost anywhere in swing or hot bluegrass. Number 2 is an all-purpose lick employing the flatted seventh, a C note. The F# is played with the 3rd finger.

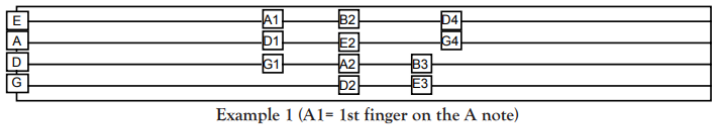
Example 3 is a classic riff attributed to Joe Venuti. I have heard this lick used in swing, blues, bluegrass, country and rock. You basically hold an octave with your first and fourth fingers, and double shuffle while the high note moves down. Follow the fingering and it is not so difficult. The 2nd finger plays B and the Bb on the E string. This riff is moveable to any position once you have it. If you play it on the middle strings, you are in G; on the low strings, C.

Example 4 is a Cajun style motif that works as a solo or as back up behind the singer when played quietly. You can transpose it to the first position as well. The 3rd finger plays the F#.

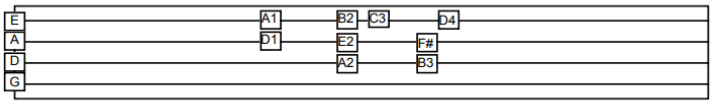
Example 5 is a chorus of Keep My Skillet Good and Greasy All the Time, a rowdy hillbilly tune. This version is mostly in third position to enable the constant open G drone throughout the solo. This solo is very close to the vocal melody and can be played in 1st position, too.

You can have fun sliding into and out of the B note with the 3rd finger. Make it as hokey as possible.

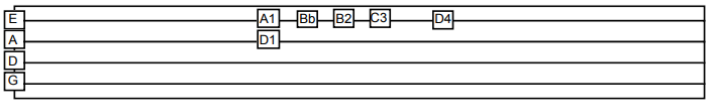
I hope you have fun with these examples. Next Month we will look at some 2nd position gems.



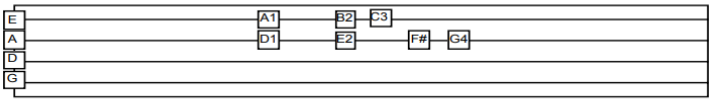
Example 1 (A1= 1st finger on the A note)



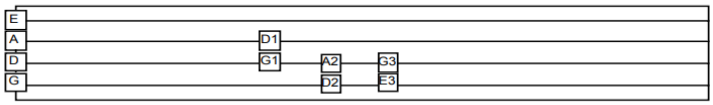
Example 2



Example 3



Example 4



Example 5

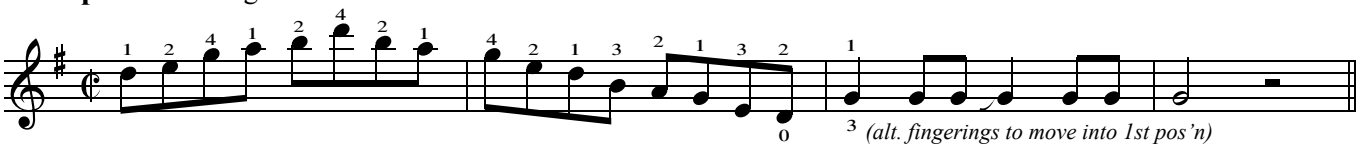
This column was first run in the Dec 2009 Fiddler's Rag.

Pete performs with *Bean Creek*, a smooth, solid traditional bluegrass band. With his rough-hewn fiddle strokes, honky-tonk voice and edgy mandolin he conjures up a great old time spirit.

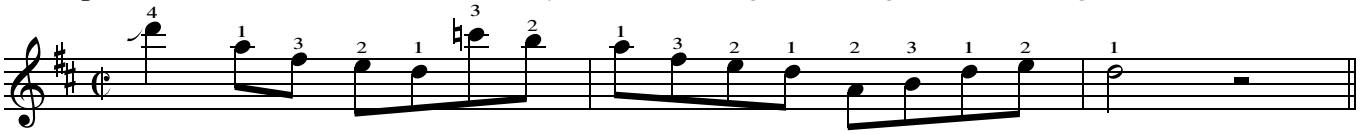
Third Position Licks

Pete Hicks

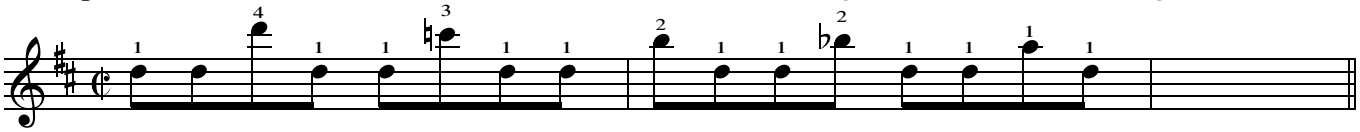
Example 1 A bluegrass fill–lick in G.



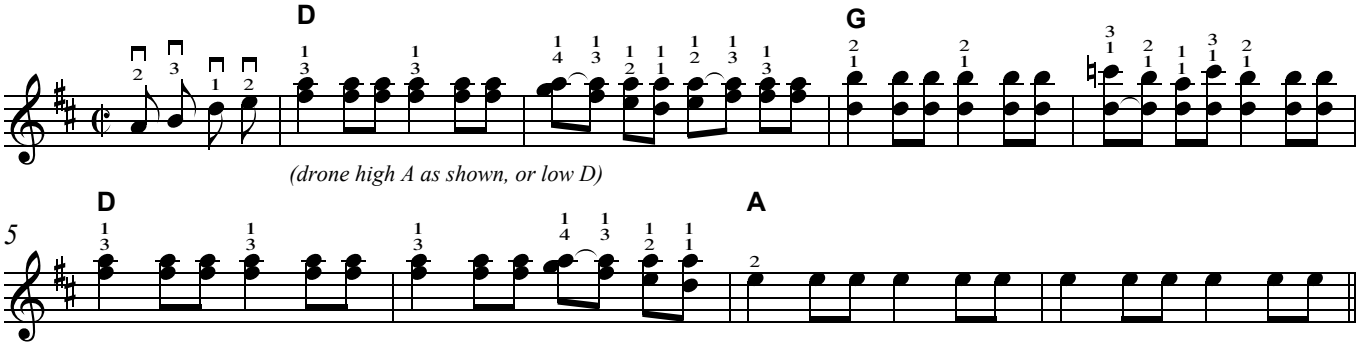
Example 2 A lick in D with a flatted 7th. Try different bowings; this is a good lick for long bow.



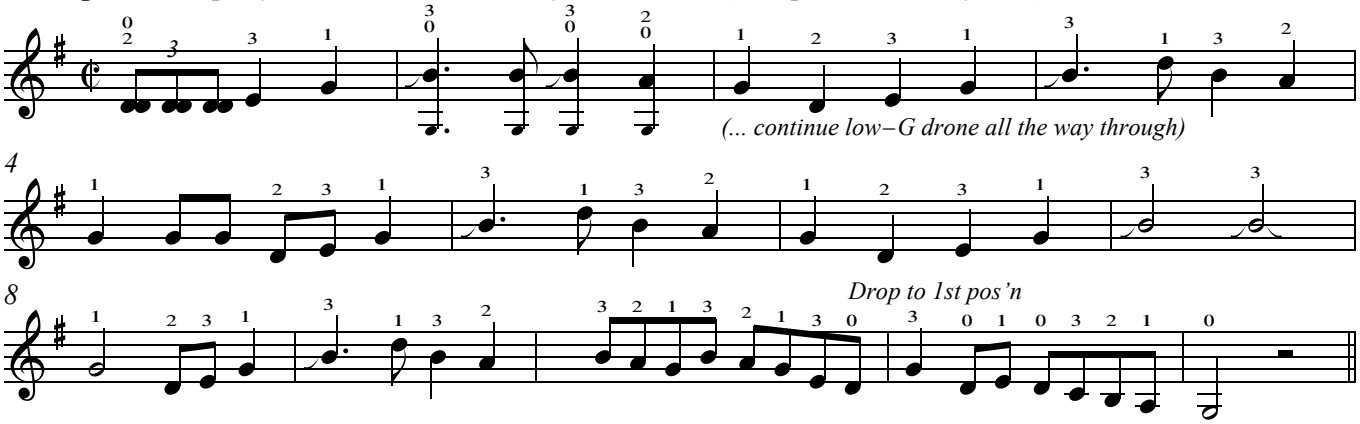
Example 3 A classic Joe Venuti lick in D. Move it to the middle strings for G, or to the low strings for C.



Example 4 A Cajun–style motif in D, good for backup or solo. Also nice an octave down, in first position.



Example 5 Keep My Skillet Good and Greasy All the Time (3rd–position melody solo)

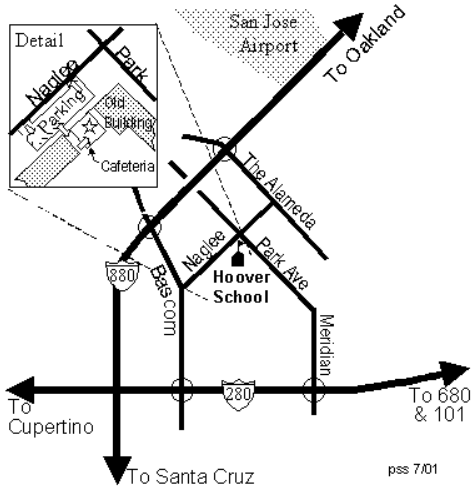


Listen: www.fiddlers.org/Tunes/Hicks/ThirdPosn_Ex1.mid
to hear other licks, substitute Ex2, Ex3, Ex4, Ex5

Typeset by Pete Showman

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

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.



Next Jam: Sunday March 6th, 1-5 pm at Hoover Middle School

Damaged or Missing Issue? Call us, or email to: *newsletter [at] fiddlers.org*

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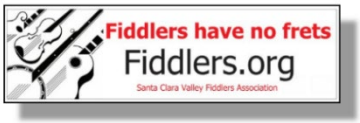
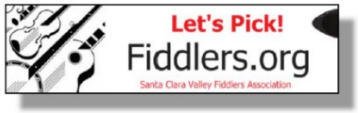
SCVFA To-Do List for March

- Have experience with WordPress or want to learn it to help manage our website? Email *president [at] fiddlers.org.*
- Shop at *smile.amazon.com* to benefit SCFVA.
- Attend the **SCVFA Jam** on March 6th, 1:00pm at Hoover.
- Invite a friend to join SCVFA at: www.fiddlers.org/join-the-scvfa/
- Email selfies (or unselfies) to *newsletter [at] fiddlers.org*, no later than March 20th to be published in the April Rag.
- While at it, wear your SCVFA tee-shirt (see right column to get yours).
- If you are not a member yet and would like to support traditional acoustic music, join today at https://www.fiddlers.org/join-the-scvfa/

Join Today!

Show your pride in SCVFA

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