



Fiddler's Rag

Vol. 39, Number 9
Celebrating 38 years

Santa Clara Valley Fiddlers Association
www.scvfa.org or www.fiddlers.org

September 2011
Next Jam: **Sept. 4**



President's Message

by Richard Brooks

August 7 was another picture perfect day for our jam at the San Jose Rose Garden Park. Some jams were pretty big as the photo to the right shows.



(LtoR) Darrell Phelps, Eric Berseth, Arthur Kee, Steve Kirtley, Randy Wiesendanger, Karen, Jonathan Horne, & Richard Brooks

September 4 at the Hoover School

On September 4, we are back at the Hoover Middle School. We will be either using our playout system (that wasn't stolen) with donated speakers or we will borrow equipment. Our replacement sound system will debut at the October 2 jam.

Our equipment replacement committee (Pete Showman, Paul Clarke, Gorden Gibson, and Dave Williams) is finalizing our requirements and looking for the best prices.

Greeting New Arrivals

People who are made to feel welcome are especially likely to want to return. I've heard this first-hand. If you see someone you haven't seen before, make them feel welcome by introducing yourself. It also helps to know how they heard about our organization. The Mercury News article that was printed just before our July 3 jam helped to bring out the local community. As a result, we now have several new members. Help spread the word.

There's No Free Lunch

Wearing your name tag shows us that you have paid the door admission fee. That's important when it costs us \$402.66 each month (room rental, utility, and custodial fees) to use the cafeteria. And that doesn't even include our monthly storage and yearly insurance costs.

Some folks jamming outside may not have paid the door admission fee and may not know that our jams are not free. If someone is not wearing a name tag, please ask them to register at the door to help us pay our rent.

Beginners Circle

No one is scheduled to lead our beginners circle. If you would like to, please let me know by email (see page 2).

No October KidFiddle Workshop

The board has decided not have our usual October KidFiddle workshop this year. Attendance at the last two has been very low with only one or two students. We need someone to volunteer to be our youth activity coordinator. They would maintain the contact list of teachers and students, find instructors, and coordinate the workshops. We're open to new ideas and ways to attract youth. Share them with me.

Last Youth Fiddle Contest?

Our 10th annual Youth Fiddle Contest on November 6 will be our last unless there are some volunteers to help plan and organize next year's event. Ideally they could learn what needs to be done from Pete and Dinah Showman this year so they know what to do next year.

- Richard Brooks

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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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Since 1982 the Northern California Bluegrass Society has promoted bluegrass and old time music in the San Francisco Bay and Monterey Bay areas. This highly active club has nurtured the development of bands and venues. The NCBS hosts the Good Old Fashioned Bluegrass Festival each August, an event that solely features California bands. We sponsor festivals, concerts and jams all over the area. Members receive the Bluegrass By the Bay magazine each quarter. Please join us!

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Free Ads for Members

We are again offering space for personal music-related ads for members (buy/sell, services, etc.), on a space-available basis. Size is limited to 2 to 4 lines (about this wide); we may edit the text to fit. Ads can run up to 3 months. Send your text & dates to [newsletter at scvfa.org](mailto:newsletter@scvfa.org). Our deadline is the 15th.



Richard Brooks photo

Paul Carignan, Sue Maxwell and Colleen Lethridge look relaxed at the July jam at the Rose Garden Park.



Celeste Akin photo

Al Hoffman works up a tune on his fiddle at the August jam

SCVFA Happenings

Back to Hoover School for September

While we've enjoyed our two summer jams in the Rose Garden Park, as shown in the photos on this page, the September jam will return to Hoover School, where we'll also have an open mike stage.



Playout at Saratoga Senior Center

Trustee and performance coordinator Paul Clarke organized a successful playout at the Saratoga Senior Center on Wednesday August 24. Participants included Richard Brooks, Warren Campbell, Paul and Lee Clarke, Tom Mitchell and Anne and Phil Pflager.

These performances help us keep our books balanced, provide some music to the community, and are a fun activity for the musicians who play.

If you'd like to participate, or just learn more, see the Performances page at www.fiddlers.org.

Photos from the August Jam at the Rose Garden Park

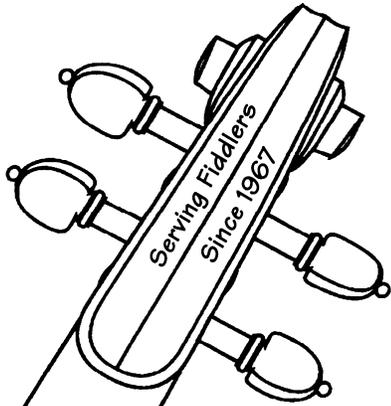


All photos: Celeste Akin

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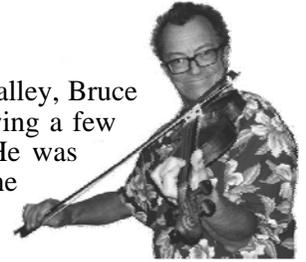
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Old Joe Clark Variations

By Pete Hicks

At the Fathers' Day Bluegrass Festival at Grass Valley, Bruce Johnson, the fiddler for Doyle Lawson, was showing a few of us how he might play Angeline the Baker. He was demonstrating some really nice variations on the melody. He discussed how these variations can turn the old standard into something really special.



Old Joe Clark is a good old standard that everyone learns as a beginner. It is a simple melody, and lends itself very well to variation. Every fiddler I know plays this tune a bit differently, either in the notation or in the bowing. I usually play three or four variations when I perform this one. By selecting and inventing your favorite variations, you can make the tune “your own”.

Here are three ways you can attack this one. First is the melody. Playing the simple melody is just fine. Most of us do not do this enough.

The first variation adds more notes that dance around the melody. Notice how the passing notes always lead back to the melody. You can use this technique for many simple melodies. It also works as backup behind a singer singing a simple melody with long notes.

The second variation is a cross-bowed variation on the melody, where the notes on the E string are down bows, and the notes on the A string are up bows. This variation can be done the easier way (up on the E string, down on A), but it doesn't sound as good. This cross bowing is also very effective in the first part of Ragtime Annie and the part 2 of Devil's Dream, as well.

Variation 3 shows the second part played with more notes. It is very effective with the single shuffle or Georgia bow.

Variation 4 shows the first two measures of the first part using *anticipation* to drive the beat. The fiddle plays the double E just before the beat and holds the bow stroke until the second beat of measure one. Be careful not to speed up when you try this. If you arrive at beat 2 too early, you will be rushing. Try this with a metronome before you spring it on your jamming buddies. The note before the measure bar is almost like a grace note.

I hope you have fun with these ideas and turn your version of Old Joe into a showstopper.



Celeste Akin photo

At the August jam, Jerry Wijnen listens to a group that includes Rudy Posch and sisters Deniz and Derya Akin. Derya took 2nd place in our 2010 Youth Fiddle Contest.

Old Joe Clark Variations

By Pete Hicks

Simple Melody

Variation 1: Shuffle (Alternate measures 1–8)

Variation 2: Rockin' the Bow

Variation 3: Single Shuffle or Georgia Bow (Alternate measures 9–16)

Variation 4: Anticipation (shown for measures 1 & 2)

Typeset 8/24/2011 PSS

Listen to the tune: www.scvfa.org/Tunes/Hicks/OldJoeClark-tune.mid
and the variations: www.scvfa.org/Tunes/Hicks/OldJoeClark-var.mid
(one file with 2-measure gaps between the variations)

Santa Clara Valley Fiddlers Association
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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 Sept 4, 1-5 pm,
Hoover Middle School.**

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or email to: newsletter at scvfa.org**

