



Fiddler's Rag

Vol. 39, Number 10
Celebrating 38 years

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

October 2011
Next Jam: **Oct. 2**



President's Message

by Richard Brooks

Our September 4 jam was well attended considering it was on the Labor Day weekend. We used our playout sound system with two speakers donated by

Tom Olson. The comments were quite favorable. Thank you very much Tom. We also want to thank Lew Yobs for donating a microphone, a stand, and a cable. We will be using all of the donated equipment.

In October, we will be using our newly purchased mixer and microphones. Let me know what you think. Stage performers please let me know whether you think we need to get stage-monitor speakers.

Beginners Circle (Slow Jam)

Nancy Solomon (pictured on the right) deserves our thanks for teaching our beginners circle last month. The participants included Alison Fleming and her daughter Clara and Alison Kline and her daughter Caitlin.

If you would like to lead a beginners circle, please let me know. Choose any of the tunes we have online or any tune suitable for beginners. Handouts are helpful.

Programs of Interest to You

We've done several fun things besides hosting a jam. What should we do in 2012? Should we have another band scramble? Should we continue our featured performer program of local talent?

Parents and kids: should we have another KidFiddle workshop? Should we have a youth contest next year?

November 6 – our 10th Youth Fiddle Contest

Mark your calendars. On November 6 we will have our 10th Youth Fiddle Contest. The age limit is now 17. Tell all your friends, families, and neighbors! Contest rules and an application are at www.fiddlers.org/contest.

If you can help in the preparation before the contest or at the contest, tell Pete Showman, the contest chairman.

- Richard Brooks



Nancy Solomon and Mike Bell

Richard Brooks



Ken Jones and Warren Campbell

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.

Officers and Chairs

President Richard J. Brooks
 Vice President OPEN
 Treasurer Janet Johnston
 Membership Pete Showman
 Recording Secretary Dinah Showman
 Newsletter Editor OPEN (*Pete Showman, acting*)
 Newsletter Publisher Charlotte Prater
 Webmaster OPEN (*Pete Showman, acting*)
 Playout Coordinator Paul Clarke
 Youth Activity OPEN (*P. Showman & R. Brooks, act.*)
 Youth Fiddle Contest Pete Showman & Sarah Kirton
 Publicity Shared
 Calendar Pete Showman
 Jam MC Evelyn McCuiston

Trustees

Seat 1: Pete Showman Seat 2: Gorden Gibson
 Seat 3: Paul Clarke Seat 4: Charlotte Prater
 Seat 5: Dave Williams Seat 6: Steve Joynes

To Contact the SCVFA:

Mail: P.O. Box 2666, Cupertino, CA 95015-2666
 Email: president at fiddlers.org Phone: (650) 328-3939

Newsletter Submissions & Comments:

Email: newsletter at fiddlers.org
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SCVFA Trustee Election

Two of the six Trustees who govern the SCVFA are elected each February at our annual membership meeting. The Trustees are elected to staggered 3-year terms; in 2012 seats 5 and 6, held by Trustees Steve Joynes and Dave Williams, will be open for re-election.

If you would be interested in serving as a Trustee in the future, please let Richard Brooks know.

While the Trustees take on various assignments for the club, we also have a set of officers who have more specific jobs (see the box above). Each year after the election, the new trustees appoint a President and the other officers to serve for the next year.

The trustees and the main officers typically meet six times a year to conduct the Association's business.

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SCVFA Officers: A Cry for Help

We really need help in several areas. If you might be able to help and would like to learn more, please contact any board member (see box to upper left).

Without YOUR help, we will not be able to continue all the activities we've been doing.

We are looking for:

- **Newsletter Editor** – create the Fiddler's Rag each month, for paper and Web publication.
- **Recording Secretary or Treasurer** – The Secretary records and distributes the official minutes of our Trustee meetings. The Treasurer records income and expenses, manages our bank account, disburses payments, and keeps records.
- **Youth Program Coordinator** – helps organize youth activities (e.g. lining up teachers for KidFiddle), maintain the KF email distribution list, be the contact for parents with questions.
- **Vice President** – acts as assistant to the President, substituting when he or she is unable to lead meetings, etc.
- **Youth Fiddle Contest Chairman** for 2012. You'd get lots of help, but we need someone to organize and oversee the event for next year, if it's to continue.

SCVFA Happenings

Calling All Young Fiddlers! Sign Up for the 10th Annual SCVFA Youth Fiddle Contest November 6, 2011

Young fiddlers, parents, teachers —
time to sign up for the contest
and get a couple of tunes ready!
Be sure to register early: time
limits us to 25 contestants.

Everyone — come cheer
on these young fiddlers!



Three age divisions:

8 and under, 11 and under, now 17 and under.

- Cash prizes for 1st through 5th in each division.
- Custom-made fiddle trophies for first place.
- Participant ribbons and certificates for all.

Pre-registration is strongly encouraged.

Full details and the entry form are on our
website: www.fiddlers.org/contest. Questions?
Call Pete Showman: (408) 255-0297.

New PA System for October

We have ordered a new mixer-amplifier and case, and some replacement microphones, replacing key parts of the PA equipment stolen last winter. We expect the new system to be available at the October jam. Please let us know what you think about the setup and sound.

This mixer will also be used for our playouts. It has 12 microphone inputs, which will allow us to use all 8 of our mics when we have a large group, and also has spare inputs for people who bring their own mics.

We may need to add two monitor speakers similar to what we had before. Let us know what you think.

Thanks to member **Tom Olson** for donating a pair of lighter main speakers, lightweight speaker stands, a mic stand and several cables, and to member **Lew Yobs** for donating a multi-pattern microphone with stand and cable. Together with our new and 3 remaining old mics, that returns us to having eight microphones, now on eight independent stands.

And a huge thanks to the many people who donated money to the Association. The donations will help defray the cost of replacing our stolen equipment, and also help us continue our other activities!

Trustee Meeting, Sept. 2011

Dinah Showman, Secretary

The SCVFA Trustees met on September 18 and

- Authorized purchase of a database program for use in keeping membership records
- Reported on status of sound equipment replacement – purchases and donations. [*See accompanying article.*] Additional items may be purchased. Our goals, mostly met, include having one system for both jams and playouts and that no box weigh over 40 pounds. We appreciate the donations of money and of equipment—thanks to our donors.
- Planned details of the Youth Fiddle Contest. Decided to award a one-year household membership to SCVFA to the first place winner in each division, in addition to other prizes. Decided to capture video footage of the event through volunteer participation.
- Authorized funds for the Holiday Potluck (at the December jam).
- Agreed that a shortened newsletter is acceptable since we are producing it with interim editors.
- Heard reports of updates to the SCVFA website (www.scvfa.org or www.fiddlers.org). Acting webmaster Pete Showman (webmaster-at-fiddlers.org) appreciates feedback on the website.
- Viewed a demo CD of SCVFA music made by Richard Brooks to help playout coordinator Paul Clarke line up playouts.
- Made initial plans for the trustee election in February 2012.
- Considered ways of getting additional volunteer help for youth activities and in other areas.
- Heard report of an upcoming SCVFA playout October 1 at Prusch Garden Park.
- Set November 13 as the tentative date for the next trustee meeting.

Trustee meetings are open to all SCVFA members. If you'd like to attend, contact Richard Brooks: president at fiddlers.org.

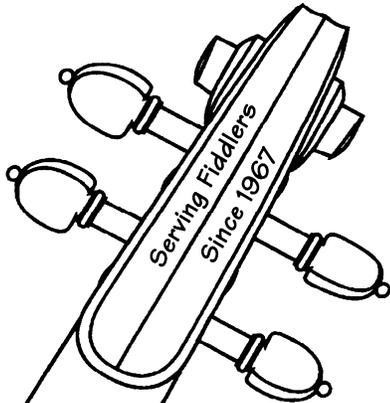
Playout Saturday, October 1

Playout Coordinator Paul Clarke has arranged for us to play at a fun-sounding event: the 18th Annual Harvest Fair and Exposition, at Prusch Farm Park, near the intersections of U.S. 101, I-280 and I-680. SCVFA volunteers will perform for about an hour from 12 to 1 pm. For details see www.fiddlers.org/performances. To sign up to participate, contact Paul Clarke. You can reach Paul by email at performances@fiddlers.org.

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Music from Quebec and the East

Joe Weed: *In the Studio #44*

I've been bicycling in the north-east with my wife Marty Kendall since late August, and thought I'd share some of our adventures and musical finds with you. We flew to Albany, NY, the historic eastern terminus of the Erie Canal, to begin our journey. Guitarist/ mandolinist/ banjo player/ singer Tom Thorpe, of nearby Voorheesville, met us at the airport and provided food, drink, a bed, and a happy crowd of acoustic musicians. Although most of us had never met, we found instant companionship and a sense of community through the fiddle music we all knew and enjoyed playing together.

Marty and I cycled north through the beautiful Hudson River Valley, usually close to the river. One day, not far from Stillwater, NY, we headed up to the Saratoga National Historic Park. As we approached, through the trees we heard the distant sounds of fifes and drums, and within minutes we were off the bikes and listening to an 8-piece ensemble dressed in Revolutionary War uniforms. The three drummers and five fife players are all from Ticonderoga High School, and frequent performers at Fort Ticonderoga, where we were to hear



them again days later. We recognized several tunes they played, because we've played them ourselves for years: The Rakes of Mallow, Yankee Doodle, The Road to Boston, The Flowers of Edinburgh, The Girl I Left Behind Me, and others. The band stood in formation and played period arrangements. Their performance heightened our feelings that we were traveling through historic country

and enjoying music that has endured for over 200 years.

After touring Fort Ticonderoga, we cycled to Lake Champlain and took a tiny cable ferry (fee is \$1 per bike) across the lake. We landed in a beautiful rural section of Vermont. We pedaled north on country roads, using our iPhones and Garmin GPS to navigate out-of-the-way routes to Vergennes, where we spent the night at an historic B&B. North of Burlington we met up with mandolin virtuoso Will Patton and played with him at a wedding. (We travel with our fiddles lashed to our saddlebags, so I just had to duck into a park outhouse, change from biking shorts and top to performance-suitable clothes, and emerge as a "professional" musician, if not a superman.) After the gig, Will took us to his place in the nearby mountains of northern Vermont, where we hid out from Hurricane Irene, playing Brazilian choros, fiddle tunes, jazz, our own compositions, and even some Haydn, with Debbie Patton joining us on recorder. The power outage was only a minor inconvenience, as we had music power on our side!

We soon crossed into Canada, cycling into Old Montreal and then along the beautiful St. Lawrence River and on into Quebec City. On our second day in the walled Old City, just as we were tiring of the grey, rain, and long walks, we stumbled upon Charles, a gifted violinist/fiddler who was busking under one of the stone gates to the old town, playing Bach, Telemann, and fiddle music. At our request, he played La Ronfleuse Gobeil and



other Quebecoise tunes (he knew the Jean Carignan arrangements I'd learned 40 years ago!) and St. Anne's Reel and more. We took pictures and shot video, picked up his CD, and finally left, our new friend still playing brilliantly to the darkening sky. As we passed a nearby tavern called "Foubar," (French for FUBAR) I thought I heard a couple of rogue accordion notes. I glanced in and saw an accordion player, completely enveloped in his music, entertaining a small room full of attentive admirers. We stepped in, got a table, and then listened to an hour and a half of French and French-Canadian tunes played by the talented musician Steve Normandin and his two friends on accordion and washboard. Our waitress waltzed around the tavern as she served, collected, and chatted with the audience and the musicians. The vibe was enchanting, the music incredible, and Marty and I were in musical

heaven. Marty's French is better than mine, so she could sing along with the rest of the audience on the greatest hits of French café music.

We're now following the Erie Canal back to Albany, having taken a long, circuitous route to central New York through sparsely-populated rural areas. East of Malone, NY, still near the Canadian border, we bumped into Joe Walsh, mandolinist for the Gibson Brothers. We chatted with him at Dick's Market, a unique enterprise that sells guns, groceries, gas and guitars. Joe was preparing for a concert with the



band, but we took a few minutes to exchange our news in the parking lot.

Marty and I love our bicycle trips. Traveling by bicycle provides a healthy and original way to see the country, smell the plants and animals, feel the air, and experience the contours of the earth. The trips are especially enhanced by our fiddles, which provide a key to experiences much richer than we would find if we were locked inside a tour bus or rental car.

Joe Weed records acoustic music at his Highland Studios near Los Gatos, California. He has released six albums of his own, produced many projects for independent artists and labels, and does sound tracks for film, TV and museums. He recently produced "Pa's Fiddle," a collection of 19th-century American music played by "Pa" Charles Ingalls. You can reach Joe at (408) 353-3353, by email at joe@highlandpublishing.com or by visiting joeweet.com.

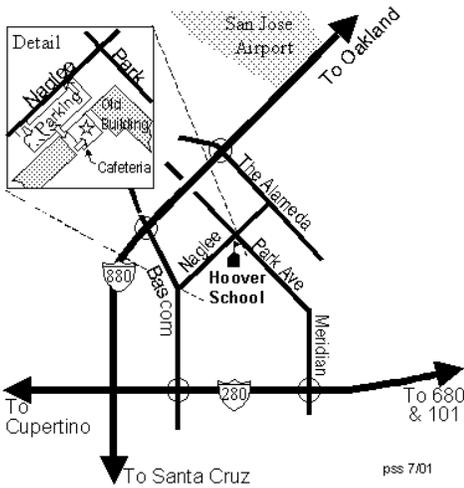
This tune isn't exactly related to Joe's trip, but since Google says Hop Kiln Road is in Bow, New Hampshire, it seems likely that it's an Eastern-U.S. tune. John Gregorin taught us this at the Fandango jam. – Pete Showman

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 Oct. 2, 1-5 pm,
Hoover Middle School.**

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



October 2011 Calendar

👉 **Be sure to verify** performers, times & dates before driving to an event, especially near holidays. 👈