



The Santa Clara Valley Fiddlers Association

MAY 1996

Vol. 39, Number 4

Santa Clara Valley Fiddlers Association

April 2011

Celebrating 38 years

www.scvfa.org or www.fiddlers.org

Next Jam: April 3, 2011



## President's Message

by Richard Brooks

This 1996 banner shows more of the change it has undergone over the years. In 1996, Fritz Buell was into the third of his eight years as SCVFA's president (March 1993 through May 2001). Marge Buell was the newsletter editor. On May 5, 1996, the great Byron Berline, one of my bluegrass heroes, performed.

### The March Jam

Sarah Kirton deserves our gratitude for putting on a fabulous concert and for teaching our KidFiddle workshop on March 6. It was fun to learn the history of the tunes and all about her Norwegian Hardanger fiddle.

Jon Li, owner of Kamimoto Stringed Instruments, drew an enthusiastic audience with his demonstration of how to repair a bow. Please support the businesses of those who support us.

### What Does the Fiddler's Rag Mean to You?

Since August 2010, Pete and Dinah Showman and I have been responsible for putting together every issue of the Fiddler's Rag. The article contributions have been very important in maintaining its really high quality.

But no one has stepped forward to be our editor or help. The responsibility has fallen on the three of us who already devote more than our share of time and energy.

What do I mean? To create our current newsletter, we decide what's in each issue (articles, music, club notes, featured performers, contest, holiday potluck), write the text, do the layout formatting, editing, and proofing.

Collectively, the three of us also maintain our federal and state non-profit status, contract with the school to use the cafeteria and room 80 for KidFiddle workshops, find KidFiddle instructors, design posters for our featured performers, maintain the events page and

**FOUND at March Jam: Music Stand. See Pete**

## Remember

### Our success depends on YOU

Too few people are doing too many things. The current effort of a few folks is unsustainable.

PLEASE HELP! We especially need several officers to help with the association's operation:

- ♪ Newsletter Editor & content contributors
- ♪ Secretary or Treasurer
- ♪ Youth Activity chairperson

generate the music notation for the Rag, update our website, maintain our membership list, generate the mailing labels, organize the contest, notify teachers and parents so we have contestants, keep track of strategic issues for the trustees meetings, create the meeting agenda, take the minutes at the meetings and summarize them for the Rag, and most recently, completed the revision to our bylaws (with Paul Clarke) and filed the paperwork for the reimbursement of stolen equipment. That's not all.

What do you want the Fiddler's Rag to be? What do you find useful and what can you live without? How important are the club notes, the music page, the articles, the photos, or the calendar section?

*(Continued on page 2)*

### In This Issue:

### Page

President's Message .....	1,2
Sound Equipment update, Photos .....	2
SCVFA Happenings: When You Renew; Dues; Musical Campout; 2011 Jam Schedule .....	3
A Bow-Repairing Demonstration by Jon Li .....	4-5
Photos from the March 2011 Jam .....	5-6
Pete Hicks (Tune): The Boys From North Carolina .....	7
Event Calendar.....	8

*President's Message, continued from Page 1*

The NCBS has just changed from a monthly to a quarterly publication. Our bylaws require that we publish a newsletter at least six times a year or at least every two months. We want to continue the Fiddler's Rag as a high-quality monthly newsletter.

**Sound Equipment and Insurance Update**

Let's thank Dave Williams and Pete Showman for setting up the sound equipment again. State Farm Insurance reimbursed us for the covered value of the stolen items - about the two thirds of the market replacement value. We have not decided what to buy, but I hope the speakers are lighter than what we had.

**South County Special to Perform on June 5**

On June 5, the South County Special bluegrass group (all SCVFA members) will be our Featured Performers.

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](http://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 (*P. Showman & R. Brooks act*)
- Newsletter Publisher ..... Charlotte Prater
- Webmaster ..... OPEN (*Pete Showman, acting*)
- Playout Coordinator ..... Paul Clarke
- Youth Activity ..... OPEN (*R. Brooks & P. Showman act*)
- Youth Fiddle Contest ..... Pete Showman & Sarah Kirton
- Publicity ..... Shared
- Calendar ..... Pete Showman
- Jam MC ..... Evelyn McCuiston

**Trustees**

- Paul Clarke
- Pete Showman
- Charlotte Prater
- Norio Kawato
- Dave Williams
- Steve Joynes

**To Contact the SCVFA:**

Mail: P.O. Box 2666, Cupertino, CA 95015-2666  
Email: President at [scvfa.org](http://scvfa.org) Phone: (650) 328-3939

**Newsletter Submissions & Comments:**

Email: [newsletter at scvfa.org](mailto:newsletter@scvfa.org)  
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**Helping at the Check-In Desk**

Please volunteer to help Janet, Dinah, and Charlotte at the check-in desk near the door. They deserve to enjoy a little of the jam and the outdoors too.

- Richard Brooks



Richard Brooks



Richard Brooks

Sarah Kirton plays standard fiddle and shows us her 9 string Norwegian Hardanger fiddle



Richard Brooks

Art Friedman and Paul Clarke

# SCVFA Happenings

## When You Renew

SCVFA memberships are now individual rather than family. That means when you renew or rejoin, we will ask you to fill out our membership application / member information form. That lets us know who else in your household is to be a member, and provides some information about them.

The forms will be available at the Membership Desk at the jams, or can be downloaded from our website: [www.fiddlers.org/join](http://www.fiddlers.org/join). While the key information we need is the names of the other members in your household, we also want any other updates, such as instruments you play, email address changes, and especially ways you can help us out!

We prefer that you use the regular form (with space for full details about you, and all the privacy options). But we'll also be sending out a short form as the reminder inserts in your newsletter: yellow when your dues are due soon; pink if you are overdue (membership has lapsed). You can use this form if you think your information is current and complete.

We will continue to offer a 2-month grace period after memberships expire, during which we'll send the Fiddler's Rag. And that pink form.

## Membership Dues: Due to Increase?

We anticipate that at the March 27 Board meeting, the Trustees will raise membership dues a bit, and set the dues amount for additional members in a household. (Dues haven't changed since 1998). The increase, if any, should not take effect before May 1.

We'll report the outcome in the May issue. (Feel free to renew early, before the rate increase!)

## A Musical Campout Invitation

From Pete Hicks

The second annual **Dabney and Hicks Memorial Day Campout** will be held at **Bolado Park** in **Tres Pinos**, May 27-29. Many bands are playing, including The Del Williams Band, Kitchen Help, Red Rag Andy, Windy Hill, Bean Creek, The California Rodeo Trail Ride Band, Larry Hosford and more. Potluck BBQ Saturday, dogs on leashes allowed. Adult package \$70 for camping and 3-day admission; kids 16 and under free. For more information call or email Lora Hicks ....

## SCVFA's 2011 Schedule

Here's a best guess at the activities for the rest of 2011 – subject to change. How can you help?

- April 3 – Regular jam and open mike.
- May 1 – Jam and open mike, and a KidFiddle workshop (leader TBD). NOTE: we need a youth-programs coordinator to help organize and publicize these!
- June 5 – Jam and open mike, and featured performers South County Special (with SCVFA members Curtis Leslie, Dave Magram, Linda Maki, Mark Wardenburg: [www.southcountyspecial.com](http://www.southcountyspecial.com)).
- July 3 – Jam in the Park (no open mike), at the Rose Garden Park, Naglee Ave. at Garden Dr. (two blocks west of Hoover Middle School).
- August 7 – Jam in the Park? Jam at Hoover? TBD. Let us know what you think.
- September 4 – Another Jam in the Park? TBD (that's Labor Day weekend).
- October 2 – Regular jam and open mike, plus likely a KidFiddle workshop, at Hoover.
- November 6 – 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Fiddle Contest (and a regular jam, no open mike). Can you help?
- December 4 – Jam, open mike and annual Potluck at 3pm. This needs volunteers too!



**From Marin to Monterey, Tracy to Tiburon...  
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**THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA  
BLUEGRASS SOCIETY**

**WWW.NCBS.US**

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 month. Please join us!

# A Bow Re-hairing Demonstration by Jon Li

by Pete Showman

One of the events at our busy March jam was a demonstration of fiddle bow re-hairing given by Jon Li of Kamimoto String Instruments in San Jose. Jon has been known for years as an expert bow-maker and bow repair person, so I was interested to see how he does it.

As it happened, I'd talked to Jon about re-hairing my bow since it was starting to "slip-n-slide," so he suggested that he use my bow for the demonstration. I agreed.

When Jon was ready to begin, he picked up my bow and a pair of scissors – then looked at me. Even though I knew I

was done with the old hair I blanched a little, then nodded to Jon. Snip, snip! The old hair was off (right).



The hair is held in a "box" at each end of the bow under a wooden wedge. Jon used an awl to remove the wedge at the tip, releasing that stub-end of the old hair.



He did the same at the frog, slipping the metal ferrule off the thumb-rest, then removing the wedge and discarding the final bit of old hair. Now the bow was "bald" (see upper right picture).

I was impressed that Jon custom-made a new wedge for the tip end, apparently having decided the old wedge either was damaged or didn't quite fit right. Jon used a chisel to pare the new wedge until it would just slip snugly into the box, testing it several times:



All photos: Pete Showman

Jon Li prepares to add new hair to the "bald" bow

The next step was to tie the tip-end hairs together a little way from the end, using regular button thread – and considerable manual dexterity!

He then heated just the tip of the tied bundle of hair over an alcohol lamp and melted a bit of rosin into the warm hair to form a lump. He explained that the rosin lump helps keep the hair from slipping out from under the wedge.



The hair goes into the box at the tip: with the end of the hair bundle aiming towards the middle of the bow, the wedge is pressed over it, and the hair is then folded back over the wedge and towards the frog. The picture below shows Jon pressing the wedge into the tip-end box to secure the new hair, using a blunt-tipped awl.



For the final steps, Jon secured the bow in his re-hairing jig: This holds the tip-end wedge and hair securely in place during the rest of the process.



Next Jon straightened the new hair along the length of the bow and thoroughly combed it, making sure it lay flat and had no tangles (below).



Once it was combed out, Jon repeated the process of tying, heating and rosinning the frog end of the hair. The trick here is to know how long to make the hair so it will not be too tight or too slack, as heat and humidity change. To me this seemed the part requiring the most experience.

One other important step along here, as Jon combed the hair: he slipped the metal ferrule, removed earlier from the frog, onto the new hair, and up to the tip-end, out of the way. If you forget that, the frog-end hair and wedge will need to come apart again.

The rosined hair is tucked into the frog-end box and the wedge put in place. Then the metal ferrule (which Jon had slipped onto the hair earlier) pushed over the the end of the frog to hold the hair in place.

To finish, Jon separated the hair with a comb and checked for hairs crossing others, or the wrong length,



and cut those out. He noted in passing that the often-seen practice of yanking the end of a broken hair from the bow-tip risks dislodging the tip-end wedge – so he recommends cutting (or biting!) the hair off, instead.

The final step in re-hairing is to rosin the new hair thoroughly. (Talk about slippery – try rosin-free hair sometime!) I did that – and now the bow is working properly again.

I was impressed by Jon's skill, and found it a very interesting demonstration. Thanks, Jon!

---

*Pete is an SCVFA Trustee, Membership Secretary, occasional webmaster and newsletter editor, and past President. He's been fiddling for a third of a century.*



Pete Showman photo

March KidFiddle students Catrina Riordan and Yuki Torrey perform on stage, with instructor Sarah Kirton



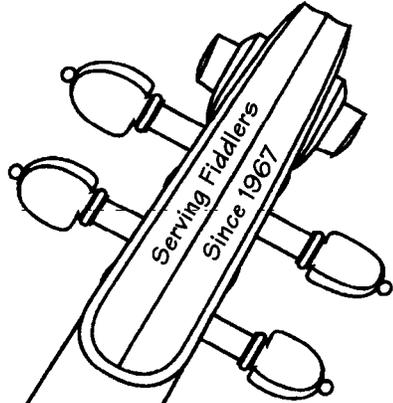
Pete Showman photo

SCVFA member #5 Jack Sadler (left) and Sam Morocco discuss the finer points of – something, at the March jam.

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## Photos from The March, 2011 Jam



Pete Showman photo

Sam Morocco, Bob Palasek, Mike Bell and new member Alison Kline entertain.



Richard Brooks photo

John Durbin, Lee Birch and Paul Clarke play some old-time tunes



Pete Showman photo

Rich Pizzorno and Pete Hicks check out Lee Birch's mandolin

# The Boys from North Carolina

By Pete Hicks

John Hartford was a great fiddler, with his own unique bowing style. He combined long bow passages with rhythmic shuffles and syncopation in a wonderful way.

He would also play each phrase a little differently each time, constantly surprising and delighting the listener.

I transcribed "The Boys From North Carolina" from John's performance on Country's Family Reunion on RFD TV.

I did not attempt to address all of the variations or John's exact bowing. He used very long strokes, punctuated with rhythmic shuffles. I have made a few bowing notations to help get the feel, but I find that this tune "plays itself." You can use whatever bowing works best for you.

This tune has words, but I just use it as an instrumental. It has a nice, bouncy feel to it at about mm=108 on the metronome (108 bpm).



Hartford played it all in first position. You will find that part two is a good workout on the E string for the little finger (B note). The bowing in measure 12 is quite tricky on the move from the high G to the B on the A string.

You can hear and see John playing the tune here: [www.tinyurl.com/BoysFromNorthCarolina-Hartford](http://www.tinyurl.com/BoysFromNorthCarolina-Hartford).

(See Pete's invitation to a music campout on page 3.)



## The Boys From North Carolina

John Hartford  
Transcribed by Pete Hicks

$\text{♩} = 108$  D Major

A

5

9

13

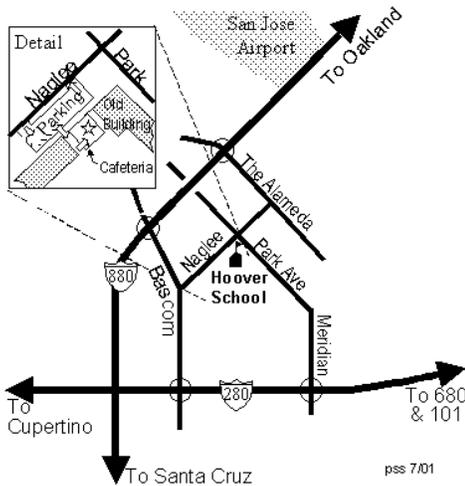
(D.S.)

Typeset by Pete Showman 3/19/11

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

**Next Jam: Sunday Apr. 3, 1-5 pm,  
 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**

## April 2011 Calendar

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

### Weekly & Biweekly Events

- 4/1+ **Bluegrass and Country at Mission Pizza** in Fremont, 7-10. Info: (510) 651-6858, [www.missionpizza.com](http://www.missionpizza.com). Most Fri. & Sat. +4/2, 8,9 15,16, 22,23, 29,30.
- 4/3+ **Irish Session, O'Flaherty's Irish Pub**, 25 N. San Pedro St., San Jose, Sun. 5-8pm. No children. Pub: (408) 947-8007. Moderated session; inquiries to Art Friedman. +4/10, 17; 4/24 (Easter)?
- 4/4+ **Old-Time Jam at Fandango Pizza**, 3163 Middlefield Rd., Palo Alto; Mondays 7-9. Info: [showman.org/jams/oti](http://showman.org/jams/oti). +4/11, 18, 25.
- 4/5+ **Irish Slow Session, Stephen's Green Pub**, 223 Castro St., MV. Tues. 7:30-9pm. [www.sfpipersclub.org](http://www.sfpipersclub.org). (Pub info only: 650-964-9151) +4/12, 19, 26.
- 4/5+ **Bluegrass at Sam's BBQ**, 1110 S. Bascom Ave., Campbell, 6-9pm. [www.samsbbq.com](http://www.samsbbq.com) or (408) 297-9151. Bands every Tues. & Wed. +4/6, 12,13, 19,20, 26,27.
- 4/6+ **Peninsula Banjo Band Wednesdays 7pm. Cabrito's Mexican Bistro**, 685 E. El Camino Real, SV. Info: (408) 993-2263, [www.peninsulabanjoband.org](http://www.peninsulabanjoband.org). +4/13, 20, 27.
- 4/6+ **Bluegrass Jam at Fandango** (see above) every Wed. 7:30-9. Info: [www.fandangopizza.com](http://www.fandangopizza.com) +4/13, 20, 27.
- 4/7+ **South Bay Folks Acoustic Open Mike**, Mission City Coffee Roasting Co., 2221 The Alameda, Santa Clara; 7-10 every Thu.; signups at 6:45. [www.SouthBayFolks.org](http://www.SouthBayFolks.org); café info only: 408-261-2221. +4/14, 21, 28.

### Monthly and Special Events

- 4/3 **SCVFA Jam & Open Mike: Hoover School** (see map), 1st Sun., 1-5pm. [www.scvfa.org](http://www.scvfa.org) or Richard Brooks. \$6 members / \$8 non-members; kids free.
- 4/10 **SF Festival of the Mandolins** at the Croatian American Cultural Center (60 Onondaga Ave., SF). \$15, kids free. Info: [www.croatianamericanweb.org](http://www.croatianamericanweb.org).
- 4/17 **Sunnyvale Bluegrass Jam**, 3rd Sundays 1-5: Heritage Park Building, Sunnyvale Community Center (550 E. Remington). \$5. Info: <http://tinyurl.com/CABluegrassJams>
- 4/24 **CSOTFA Dist. 9 Jam**: 19806 Wisteria Ave., Castro Valley, 1:30 - 5pm, fourth Sun. [www.csotfa9.org](http://www.csotfa9.org).
- 4/24 **Santa Cruz Bluegrass & Old Time Jam**, 4th Sun. 1-5: Oceanview Park, Santa Cruz. Info: [tinyurl.com/SCjam](http://tinyurl.com/SCjam).

### Coming Up

- 5/27-30 **Northwest Folklife Festival, Seattle**: One of the biggest free festivals. [www.nwfolkelifefestival.org](http://www.nwfolkelifefestival.org), (206) 684-7300.
- 6/12-15 **CBA Music Camp**, [www.cbamusiccamp.org](http://www.cbamusiccamp.org).
- 6/16-19 **Grass Valley CBA Fathers' Day Weekend Bluegrass Fest**: Info: [www.fathersdayfestival.com](http://www.fathersdayfestival.com).
- 6/20-25 **Teen Celtic Music Camp**, Boulder Creek. Day or overnight camp. [communitymusicsschool.org](http://communitymusicsschool.org).
- 7/3-10 **Festival of American Fiddle Tunes, Port Townsend, WA**. Sign up early! Info: (360) 385-3102; [www.centrum.org](http://www.centrum.org).
- 7/29-8/6 **Lark Camp**, Mendocino. (Mixed reviews.) Info: [www.larkcamp.com](http://www.larkcamp.com); Lark Camp (707) 964-4826.

Got events? Email us at [calendar@scvfa.org](mailto:calendar@scvfa.org). More at NCBS: [www.scbs.org](http://www.scbs.org) and at South Bay Folks: [www.SouthBayFolks.org](http://www.SouthBayFolks.org)