



# Fiddler's Rag

Vol. 41, Number 5  
Celebrating 40 years

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

May 2013  
Next Jam: May 5



## President's Note

Our April 7 jam was a great success on a perfect weather day. Pete Hicks led a well attended beginners circle.

Luke Abbott will teach our KidFiddle workshop again. Mary Kennedy, our Youth Activity Coordinator, planned

this with two more KidFiddle workshops to follow. Suggestions for other youth activities are welcome.

What activities would you like to have at our monthly jams? In the past we've had a band scramble, an instrument tuneup session, a silent auction, a featured performer program of local talent, and even major concerts by well known artists.

## Narrowly Averted – a Minimum Sound System

George Bradshaw and I had planned to bring a minimum sound system on April 7 because no one had yet volunteered to help carry our storage locker supplies to the jam, about one mile away. A minimum system means 1-3 mics and mic stands, 1 main speaker, our amplifier/mixer, 1 monitor (if it fits), and our required desk supplies. But thanks to Peter Forrest, we were able to bring everything.

Several people have offered to help but we need a few more. Helping about once a year is all we're asking; if you drive and have a little trunk space, let us know.

## Newsletter Photos

If you enjoy seeing photos in the Rag, help take photos and email them to Pete Showman, our acting newsletter editor: newsletter at fiddlers.org. You will be acknowledged if they are included in the Rag.

## Rose Garden Park jams

The July 7, August 4, and September 1 jams will be in the award-winning San Jose Rose Garden Park. Because there's no rent to pay, there's no charge. It's a great community event, so spread the word and invite your friends and neighbors!

- Richard Brooks

## May KidFiddle

Luke Abbott will return to the May jam to teach the final KidFiddle this spring. KidFiddle workshops are intended for advanced-beginner to intermediate fiddlers 17 and under. Participants should be able to play at least one or two tunes. Tuition is only \$5.



Luke Abbott

Luke plans to teach *Spotted Pony*, and to revisit *Angelina Baker*, which he taught in a previous session. There's a version of each of these tunes on our Beginners' Page at [www.fiddlers.org](http://www.fiddlers.org).

Registration will be at the door but we encourage participants to sign up in advance with youth programs coordinator Mary Kennedy: email KidFiddle at [fiddlers.org](http://fiddlers.org), to help our planning.



Allan French photo

Phil and Ann Pflager entertain at the April jam

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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](http://www.fiddlers.org/join).

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 Youth Fiddle Contest Chair, 2013 ..... OPEN

**Trustees**

Seat 1: Pete Showman      Seat 2: Barbara Rosner  
 Seat 3: George Bradshaw      Seat 4: Charlotte Prater  
 Seat 5: Dave Williams      Seat 6: Tom Clausen

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Website: [www.scvfa.org](http://www.scvfa.org) or [www.fiddlers.org](http://www.fiddlers.org)

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Allan French photo

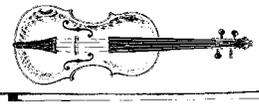
**Peter Tommerup** plays his hammered dulcimer in an old-time circle. (Doesn't he look like he'd make a fine editor?) **Dan Murphy** in the background seems to have traded in his mountain dulcimer for a banjo.

From Marin to Monterey, Tracy to Tiburon...  
...we're in the heart of bluegrass country



THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA  
BLUEGRASS SOCIETY  
[www.ncbs.us](http://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 quarter. Please join us!



Richard Brooks photo

"Identical twins" **Dave Magram** and **Chip Curry** play some of their fine music on stage at the April jam.

## SCVFA Happenings

### Meet Trustee Barbara Rosner

*New trustee George Bradshaw and returning trustee Charlotte Prater were introduced in our January issue. Barbara was appointed shortly afterwards to serve the remaining year of a vacant position. This is abstracted from a longer bio that Barbara provided.*

Though she has only been playing bluegrass and old-time bass for a couple of years, Barbara says her interest in that music goes back to the late '70s, inspired by bands such as David Grisman's and Old and In the Way. But due to various circumstances (such as a car that wouldn't hold an upright base!) she instead started playing electric bass, with various blues, jazz and other bands in Marin County and San Francisco.

Inspired by Redwood Bluegrass Associates' events including the Frank Wakefield show, various local musicians and our own SCVFA jams at Hoover School, Barbara got started on upright bass in 2011.

She agreed to fill out the year-long term because she thinks it's "very important to keep this community-based fiddlers group going – to pass the torch of bluegrass and old time music to the youngsters and younger players who are going to keep the tradition going and add their own originality to it; and for all the other players in the community who have played bluegrass and old time either for a short time or for years, and who need this community of musicians to keep the tunes going and music thriving."

Barbara adds that while on sabbatical from Silicon Valley high-tech she's working with bass teacher Jim Kerwin, "learning how to play 'properly' and to use a bow – great fun!"

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### Learning Tunes from the Web

*Pete Showman*

There are many ways the Web can help those trying to learn tunes. Our own website, [www.scvfa.org](http://www.scvfa.org), has almost 40 tunes on the Beginners' Page, intended for use by participants in our Beginners' Circle slow jam.

I've also posted tunes (66 so far) that we've played at the Fandango Monday night old-time jams: [www.showman.org/Tunes/](http://www.showman.org/Tunes/). (There's also a link to jam info.) On these tune pages each tune has a PDF with sheet music (standard notation and chords) plus one or more MIDI files for those who learn best by ear.

There are also many other useful websites. John Lamancusa's Old Time Fiddle Tunes page is very good; see [www.mne.psu.edu/lamancusa/tunes.html](http://www.mne.psu.edu/lamancusa/tunes.html). For (mostly) Irish tunes "The Session" has many tunes posted by users: [www.thesession.org/tunes](http://www.thesession.org/tunes). Along with standard notation and MIDI or audio files, these usually offer the tunes in an editable format called ABC. See "Technical Notes," below.

Traditional music, having been handed down by aural tradition, has many variations. So keep looking until you find one you like, or that sounds like what you were looking for. Quality varies considerably, especially on the sites where any user can post a tune.

Similarly many traditional tunes are known by multiple titles, and the same title may be used for several unrelated (or only distantly related) tunes.

Even for composed tunes there may be multiple tunes or songs with the same title. Unlike the melody and the lyrics, titles cannot be copyrighted so they're often re-used.

For listening to and sometimes seeing performances, YouTube is a gold mine with both professional and amateur performances of many tunes. Some are just performances, often rather fast, while others are intended to help you learn the tunes. You will also find many old recordings reproduced there that you'd have trouble finding elsewhere.

To look for a particular tune probably the best bet is to start with a search engine such as Google, Bing or Yahoo, searching for the name of the tune you want. As usual when searching, you may find it best to put the title in double quotes (so it only finds those words in that order), and also to add words like tune, song, old-time, bluegrass, jazz or whatever – especially if the words in the title are general and might be used elsewhere. If it's a tune with a known composer, obviously his or her name would be good to add.

#### Technical Notes:

**MIDI** is a type of file that you can listen to via a computer. But unlike audio files, which like LPs or CDs capture some *performer's* sound, a MIDI file tells your *computer* what to play, note by note, using its sound-card or an attached MIDI device such as a keyboard. Sound quality can vary a lot depending on your hardware – and is usually rather robotic.

**ABC notation** has become a standard way of passing tune notation around on the web. I've written a brief introduction at [www.showman.org/ABCnotes/](http://www.showman.org/ABCnotes/) and there are many much more detailed treatises on the web, e.g. at [abcnotation.com](http://abcnotation.com). There are programs, some free, that can turn ABC into sheet music (and MIDI), and also some web services that will do free conversions. See [abcnotation.com/software](http://abcnotation.com/software) for a list.

# Photos from the April 2013 Jam

Thanks to Allan French for these pictures.



Allan French photos

**Left:** Allan notes that only the fiddlers seem to be playing. OK, sure, it's a "fiddlers" association, but we're not sure why **Rex** (banjo) and **George** are just standing there watching. We want everyone to play!

**Right:** We even have a wind section sometimes, in this case **Don Ruffcorn** on clarinet and **Julianna Bozsik** on pennywhistle, playing some old-time tunes with **Paul Barnett** (cap) and **John Gregorin**, among others.



Allan French photo

**Steve Kirtley, Dave Magram, Grace Clark and president Richard Brooks** entertain.

# Fandango Pizza Jam

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1  $\text{F}$   $\text{Am}$   $\text{Dm}$   $\text{Gm/B}\flat$   $\text{Gm/D}$   $\text{C7/B}\flat$

6  $\text{F/A}$   $\text{Am}$   $\text{Dm}$   $\text{C7/B}\flat$  1.  $\text{F/A}$   $\text{C7/E}$  2.  $\text{F/A}$   $\text{Gm7/D}$

11  $\text{C/E}$   $\text{Dm7}$   $\text{Gm7}$   $\text{C7}$   $\text{F}$   $\text{Gm7}$

16  $\text{C}$   $\text{Dm7}$   $\text{Gm7/B}\flat$   $\text{C7/G}$  1.  $\text{F/A}$   $\text{Gm7/D}$  2. to repeat tune  $\text{F/A}$   $\text{C7/D}$  2. final only  $\text{F}$

*D.S.*

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## Don't miss the May Jam at Hoover Middle School

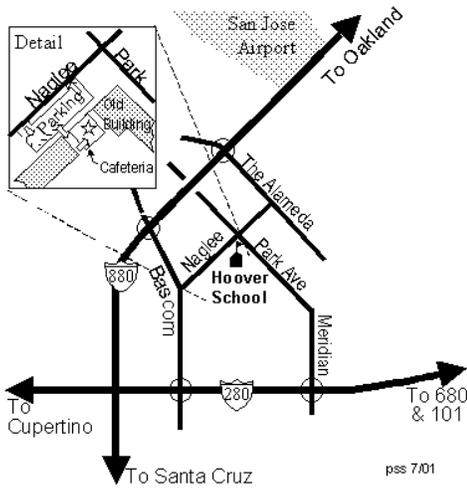
- Performances on stage starting at about 1:30 -- starring you!
- Beginners' Circle slow jam from 2:00 to 3:00.
- KidFiddle with Luke Abbott also from 2:00 to 3:00; then enjoy hearing Luke and the students play what they've worked on, on stage.
- Music all afternoon, inside and out.

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

**Next Jam: Sunday May 5, 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**



**WANTED: NEWS EDITOR**

We still need a newsletter editor! Please consider volunteering – yourself, or even your friends! Aside from a few legal and postal constraints, the design is up to you.

Questions? Email [newsletter@fiddlers.org](mailto:newsletter@fiddlers.org)



Richard Brooks photo

**Pete Hicks** (center, front) led our popular Beginners' Circle at the April jam. Thanks, Pete!