



Fiddler's Rag



Vol. 52, Number 06
Celebrating 51 years

Santa Clara Valley Fiddlers Association
www.fiddlers.org

June 2024
Next Jam June 2nd



President's Note

By Susan Goodis

I am pleased to announce that several members are stepping up to fill a few positions. Bennett Amodio is currently in training with Dinah Showman for

treasurer. Cliff Riggs is learning the ropes for membership secretary. Ann Whitesell, Minema Clark and Vicki Parrish are welcome additions to the newsletter editing and reviewing team, but we still need more volunteers for the newsletter. Ray says one more person who knows Word that can help format the newsletter (no writing required!) would be great and we really need people to tell us what they want to hear about.

At our recent board meeting, we discussed reducing the distribution schedule of the newsletter to just 4-6 times a year to reduce the burden on our volunteers. We feel the newsletter is vitally important to the organization and will only do this as a last resort.

This is our organization and we need participation to keep it running smoothly. We are currently looking for a member to join our board as a trustee. Please say 'Yes' if a board member asks for your volunteerism. Email me with questions or your particular areas of expertise that may be helpful to our organization: *president [at] fiddlers.org*. "Many hands make small work." Volunteer to minimize the work and increase the fun for all.

June 2nd will be our final 2024 springtime jam at Hoover School. Ray Chen will be hosting a **Special Workshop from 3:45 - 4:45** for all to learn the tune "Chinquapin Hunting." This is a wonderful tune that everyone will want to play.

Possibly Cinco de Mayo celebrations were the reason for a smaller jam in May than usual. With no open mic on that day, it allowed a large group of musicians to come into the warmth of the cafeteria. Those at the admission desk were happy for the music. We had a large group of Slow Jammers led by Sharon McCorkell. Many thanks to Sharon.

The third Sunday jams are more laid back. Music is whatever the leader chooses. We have some singing, old-time and whatever you bring to the mix. This is a wonderful way to lessen some of the barriers and try different musical styles. Each jam is at a different park where folks in different communities hear our music, sometimes play with us and may even become SCVFA members.

The best way to promote our monthly jam is word of mouth and sharing on social media. Let your friends, coworkers and family know what a treasure this group is. This is where people play music together and build lasting friendships. Many beginners have become higher level musicians and leaders in our community. New friends have connected to form bands. We continue to gather to share the music and help others grow. Invite your non-musician friends to come and listen.

I hope you will all be at the jam in June. As always, 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

Future Playouts / Performances

We have numerous opportunities throughout the year. For more info visit: <https://www.fiddlers.org/open-band>

- June 15th** – Morgan Hill Farmers Market, 9-1 pm
- June 21st** – Make Music San Jose, 1-3 pm, San Jose Airport
- July 9th** – Mid-Peninsula Widows & Widowers Association, Los Altos Lutheran Church

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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. Membership includes electronic delivery of the Fiddler's Rag.

To join, sign up at the jam or see www.fiddlers.org/join-the-scvfa/.

Officers and Chairs

President-Trustee	Susan Goodis	News Editor	Ray Chen
Vice President	Ray Chen	Newsletter Publisher	Ray Chen
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Trustees

Seat 1: Zakkai Melamed	Seat 3: open	Seat 5: Ray Chen
Seat 2: Michelle Tan	Seat 4: Danny Clark	Seat 6: Cliff Riggs

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 Reviewers: Pete Showman, Dinah Showman, Vicki Parrish, Susan Goodis

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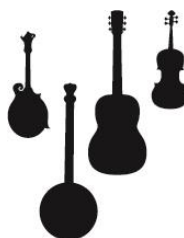
Donations to SCVFA are greatly appreciated and will assist in keeping traditional music alive by passing it on to the next generation.

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

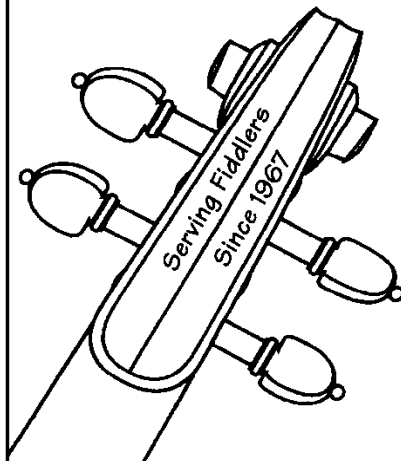
Donate as you are able and traditional music will reap the benefits.

SCVFA supports and welcomes musicians other than fiddlers. The image to the right side of the Fiddler's Rag name on the first page includes a mandolin, a banjo, a guitar and a fiddle, to illustrate the diversity of instruments played at our jams and events.



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SCVFA Happenings

SCVFA Mission Statement

Santa Clara Valley Fiddlers Association (SCVFA) preserves traditional music genres that feature fiddle and other acoustic instruments. SCVFA takes pride in “passing it on” to musicians and listeners of all ages and abilities.

Diversity Statement

SCVFA believes that our mission is fundamentally improved by diversity and inclusion. SCVFA is at all times committed to providing an open, safe, and welcoming environment for all our members and guests. We celebrate the varied abilities, ethnicities, sexualities, ages, gender identities, religions and cultural backgrounds of our community, and do not tolerate discrimination based upon these differences.

First Sunday Jam: June 2nd 1:00 to 5:00 pm at Hoover Middle School. Suggested donation: \$5.00 – more or less as you are able. [Click here to donate online.](#)

Old-Time Jam: 1(ish)

Intermediate Bluegrass Jam: 1:30 – 5:00 pm led by Robert Cornelius.

Slow jam: 1:30-2:30 pm – Tunes are available on our [SCVFA website](#).

Special Workshop – Chinquapin Hunting: 3:45 pm by Ray Chen

“AFTERS” Join us at Chipotle Mexican Grill, 5:30 pm, 975 The Alameda

3rd Sunday Jam: June 16th, 1-3 pm
Municipal Rose Garden, 1649 Naglee Avenue at Garden Drive, San Jose

[CBA Music Camp \(Grass Valley\):](#) June 9 – 12. Nevada County Fairgrounds, Grass Valley

[CBA Father’s Day Festival \(Grass Valley\):](#) June 13-16. The Big Festival!! Nevada County Fairgrounds, Grass Valley, CA

[SF Bluegrass & Old-Time Festival:](#) Jun 22, 11-6. Salesforce Park, SF. **FREE Event !!**

[Fiddle Tunes,](#) July 1-8. *The* camp to explore the full spectrum of American traditional music and fiddling. Port Townsend, WA.

[Old-Time Week at The Swannanoa](#)
[Gathering:](#) July 21-27. *The* old-time music camp. Warren Wilson College, Swannanoa, NC

[Augusta Blues & Old-Time Week:](#)
July 21-26. Davis & Elkins College, WV.

[88th Annual Old Fiddlers Convention:](#)
Aug 5-10, Felts Park, Galax, VA

March Board Meeting Highlights:

By Jessica Ollmann, Secretary

Bennett has agreed to take over as treasurer from Dinah. The board still plans to have a Zoom meeting with Dinah so that the board can be better informed about the job of treasurer and the details of the role will be documented.

The Board discussed and approved by-laws changes that will let SCVFA use online banking. Besides being more efficient, online banking supports true dual approval, which paper checks no longer support. The changes are the first step in a two-part change that will allow SCVFA to use PayPal and Venmo and other single-approval methods to make payments.

We have an open trustee position. Susan and Ray have
(continued on last page)

Notes from Walker Creek Music Camp

Collected by Susan Goodis

I’ve been going to Walker Creek Music Camp in the relaxing countryside in Marin since 2013, with this April being my 14th camp. There are 2 camps every year, fall and spring. Each year, I meet new people and connect with the friends I have made over the years. I get to meet and learn from professional musicians from across the continent.

This year, I was in the class taught by Liz Knowles. We learned a half dozen Irish tunes, but the best part was learning how to make the tunes have the Irish lilt.

The teaching staff perform concerts and campers have the opportunity to perform for the open mic or the student concert. Patti, Sharon and I played for both. Every year, our musical skills grow, leading to more fun playing. I can’t imagine a year without this musical pilgrimage.

Read on to hear the experiences of other SCVFA members. I hope more of you will join us in the fall.
– Susan Goodis

(continued on next page)



SCVFA at Walker Creek (l-r): Kelly O'Neill, Judy Rock, Susan Goodis, Rob Clark, Patti Bossert, Sharon McCorkell, Francesca Civoli

Walker Creek is a very special experience - stepping out of the concerns and tasks of normal day-to-day life and into 4 days of musical immersion with like-minded folks. It's an opportunity for small group classes with artists who are not only extraordinary professional performers but also passionate teachers.

Our old-time fiddle class bonded with each other and our sweet and wonderful teacher Natalie Padilla, who led us in alternate fiddle tunings, soulful old-time tunes, bluegrass licks and fills and challenging technical adventures. It was an opportunity to explore unfamiliar musical territory as well - for me the fiddle player it was ukelele, hiking local trails while harmony singing, exotic supporting guitar chords, set dancing...plus of course the jam sessions of all kinds and speeds and skill levels late into each night.

And the best: the community, joyful and friendly and supportive musicians from all over! (not to mention that delicious daily dose of Strauss ice cream...) - *Judy Rock*

Walker Creek might be my favorite music camp. The quality of musicianship is high but folks are incredibly friendly and welcoming. It's a gorgeous setting out in the hills of Marin, no distractions just music music music. Lots to do - electives, classes and late night jams. Walk up to the duck pond or out to the ridge, sit by the fire and jam...something for everyone, Celtic, Old Time, Bluegrass, Swing and more! - *Sam Schillace*

Camp was a LOT OF FUN. I got to play in the band for the barn dance, learned four new fiddle tunes, and met lots of great people. Got the chance to jam, jam & jam some more. - *Kelly O'Neill*

Walker Creek Music Camp was a great experience, again! The teachers were outstanding, and also very kind and humble. The whole camp atmosphere is of camaraderie and support. So many choices for classes and electives! The only problem is that you would like to be in many places at once... Taking the vocal/harmony class from Kathy Kallick and

Greg Blake was a dream! I feel musically richer now :-)) - *Francesca Civoli*

I've attended the summer and fall Walker Creek Music Camp for the past several years and I always come away pumped up and inspired with new things to work on. The setting is lovely, located at the Walker Creek Ranch and Conference Center in Marin County about 13 miles NW of Novato and about 5 miles E of Tomales Bay. The camp focuses on bluegrass and old-time music.

I've always taken guitar, but they also have mandolin, banjo, fiddle, bass, and vocal classes. The overall format consists of "core" classes in the morning, elective classes in the afternoon, concerts and dances in the early evening, and then various jams.

While most of the 150 attendees are from the North Bay (SF and Berkeley on up), about 10 of us were from the "South." It was great to renew old connections and to make new friends. The camp has programs for all generations, and it was great to see some kids up there learning to play. - *Rob Clark*

Ah.... The beauty and wonder of Walker Creek Ranch in April with green hills, cows, deer, birds, fresh air and music all around. The camp is such a supportive environment for all with first class teachers. It is also wonderful to see the kids growing up over the years and becoming excellent musicians!

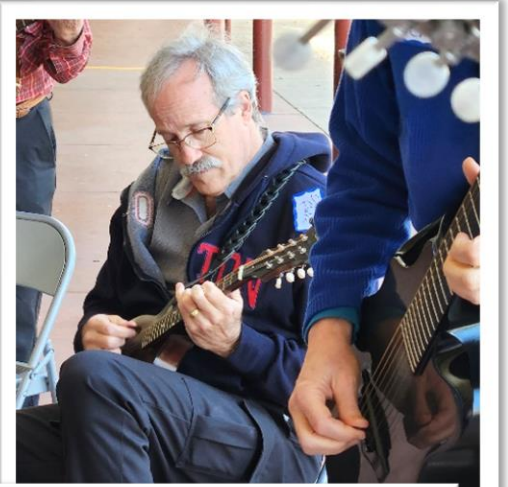
Sharon and Susan encouraged me to participate with them in the Open Mic. The three of us provided beautiful 3-part harmony and ours was the only instrumental. We just had to do something different!

For the student concert we again challenged ourselves with another instrumental with harmony and played Bonny Portmore, an Irish Air, since Susan and I took the Irish fiddle and Sharon the Irish guitar classes. Hope to see you at the next camp! - *Patti Bossert*



May Pictures

By Clark Akatiff and Susan Goodis



Chinquapin Hunting

*Traditional - arranged by Ray Chen
(based on the playing of Bruce Moslky
at the 2012 Pickathon)*

Transcription copyrighted by Ray Chen. Permission is granted for personal and private instructional use only.

Chinquapin Hunting – Part 2

By Ray Chen

Part 1 introduced the tune. Now let's look at a more complex transcription that has as much as I know how to communicate using classical music notation.

This transcription is so dense that I don't know that I'd want to learn the tune from the transcription alone but hopefully it will be useful when combined with [the video](#) or as a memory aid if you learn the tune by ear. Even if you don't want to learn the entire tune at this level of detail, I hope you can add a technique or idea to your version and playing.

Bowing, Drones, Chords and Tuning

This version has much more detail about bowing and drone notes although none of the bowing here contradicts what's in the basic version. The drone notes are smaller to make it easier to distinguish the melody notes from the drones.

When you see a chord with a melody note and drone in it, try to make the melody note stand out by playing the melody note louder and the drone note quieter. You can do this by adjusting the angle of the bow so that the bow has less "weight" on the drone string. If the bow is resting evenly on the two strings, the weight of the bow on the strings is the same so the strings will sound equally loud. As you adjust the bow angle away from the drone string, the drone note will get quieter relative to the melody until the bow isn't touching the drone string at all and you're only playing on the melody string.

When a tune has a lot of drones, it can be useful to practice with the bow angles adjusted so you don't play any drones at all. Doing this helps me remember where the melody notes are so that I can highlight the melody when I add the drones back in.

A chord notated "A (E)" means that the A is the correct chord but the E is worth trying. The E in measures 4 and 8 works if the fiddler doesn't drone, and my band prefers the sound of the A in measures
(continued on next page)

5 and 9, even though the E is technically correct.

The last big difference is the tuning. For this tune, the fiddle is tuned to the A chord. To tune a fiddle to A, the two low strings are tuned up one full pitch. G and D move up to A and E. That puts every open string on the fiddle into the A chord.

Old-time musicians call these non-standard tunings “cross” tunings. Cross tunings allow for easier drones and make the fiddle ring more because it’s more resonant. Many tunes from North Carolina, West Virginia and Kentucky were typically played in a cross tuning. Other common cross tunings include ADAE (D), AEAC# (Calico) and DDAD.

[On the video](#), Bruce and Tatiana take full advantage of the drones available in AEAE. They basically play this tune on two strings at a time instead of one. With two fiddlers playing on two strings each, you almost always have four strings going and the cross tuning means their fiddles are ringing like crazy. That results in a really rich, powerful sound.

Bow Rocking

Most old-time fiddlers rock the bow at least a little bit, but in this tune, Bruce and Tatiana rock the bow a *lot*. A bow rock is when the bow comes down into the string or lifts up from the string while the bow is moving. This can be done even if you don’t completely lose contact with the string.

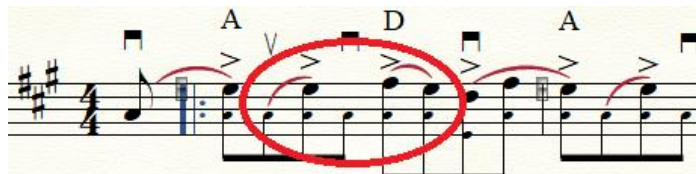
A bow rock changes volume and tone which adds texture and complexity to the sound. And if the bow lifts completely off the string, the string keeps ringing, then fades away.

This is a different sound than what you get using classical technique. With classical technique, the bow usually stops while it’s on the string, then lifts. You control and you have to control how the note fades and stops by how you manage the bow. With a bow rock, the sound fades away on its own.

If you see notes that require you to play on two strings followed by a single note, you can rock the bow up (off) the unused string so you can start the single note on one string and let the “off” string ring. On the first note of the measure 1, for example, if you rock the bow, rock up off the E before the downbow ends so your bow is only on the A string for the start of the next note (an A).

Bowing Patterns, Rocking, and Polyrhythm

This tune is a groove tune. The melody helps but the rhythm and rhythm changes really drive the tune. The tune is filled with changes between even rhythms and very syncopated rhythms.



One of the syncopated rhythms is a 2-1-2 (long-short-long) bowing pattern that appears all over. The pattern starts on an upbow and appeared a lot in Tommy Jarrell’s playing. It’s often preceded by either a three-note downbow slur or three saw strokes to “fill out” four beats. The pattern is bowed as a long upbow, quick short downbow, followed by another long upbow that is strongly accented. You can see this pattern (*circled in figure above*) in measure 1 of the A part.

Each bow direction change creates at least a weak accent (and sometimes a strong one) but the first upbow of the 2-1-2 is unusual in that there’s an accent on the *second* note of the two-note slur. The second note of the slur falls on the beat which makes the rhythm more dance-friendly. The accent is created by bringing the bow down firmly on the E string as you continue the upbow on the A string.

This bowing is very syncopated and polyrhythmic or at least, polyrhythmic-inspired. The 2-1-2 pattern creates a weak accent, strong accent, weak accent, strong accent, then no accent where the strong accents land on an off-beat and on-beat and the weak accents don’t land on beat boundaries at all.

A 3-note slur is tacked onto to the beginning of the 2-1-2’s, resulting in a 3-2-1-2 pattern that takes up four beats so it fits well with old-time phrasing.

Musical Tension

In music, the first phrases often create tension which following phrases then resolve / release. The A part slowly builds to the high A in measure 4, then releases it. The B part starts out with an even almost march-like rhythm and melody in the first two measures that are incredibly tense, then releases the tension. The C part slowly builds to the high A in measure 14 (in the second repeat), then relaxes. Try playing the start of the B part a bit louder and try to bring out those “peak tension” high A’s. Those are the high points of the tune.

Conclusion

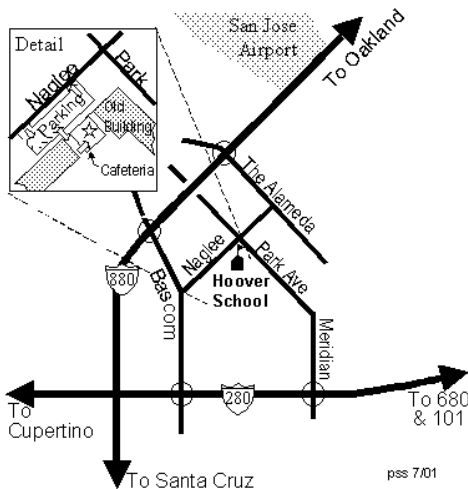
For me, the way the tune mixes things up, has driving, complex, and changing rhythms and combined with a solid melody line makes for a compelling tune that’s really fun to play.

If you all aren’t tired of reading about this tune, I can look at a few variations in a future article. In the meantime, I hope you have as much fun with this tune as I am!



SCVFA
P.O.Box 2666
Cupertino, CA 95015-2666

The SCVFA Jam usually on the first Sunday of each month. Location: Hoover Middle School, 1474 Naglee Ave., San Jose. The school is at the corner of Naglee and Park. Cafeteria parking is on the Naglee side.



**Next Jam:
Sunday June 2nd
1-5 pm at Hoover Middle School**

**Damaged or Missing Issue? Call us,
or email to: [newsletter \[at\] fiddlers.org](mailto:newsletter@fiddlers.org)**

March Board Meeting Highlights (continued)

reached out to potential candidates but haven't heard anything definitive.

The board received feedback that jam attendees were not always aware of what was happening at the jam. After some discussion, the board approved the purchase of a whiteboard or easel that will be set up near the sign-in desk to communicate what's happening at the jam as well as other important information.

The board discussed whether to hold June and October jams at the Rose Garden Park instead of at Hoover. After some discussion, the board decided to keep the locations unchanged.

Currently Ray is doing most of the presidential work. Susan is spending a lot of time on publicity and organizing playouts. She considers that being president adds little to her workload. Ray is not in a position to deal with unforeseen, potentially time critical issues that may land on the president's desk. Ray would be willing to assume the role of president if someone else took over the newsletter and Susan stayed on as vice president to handle unexpected demands.

Follow-ups from the last meeting: Zakkai volunteered to look into how a Venmo account for a non-profit can be set up. Matt has recovered the SCVFA Google account and the board now has access to it. Danny Clark will be given access to the SCVFA Facebook page and will take over the Instagram channel if he can get access to it.