



Fiddler's Rag



Vol. 53, Number 11
Celebrating 52 years

Santa Clara Valley Fiddlers Association
www.fiddlers.org

November 2025
Next Jam November 2nd



President's Note

By Ray Chen

Hello, SCVFA!!!

We had a great time at the October jam. The weather cooperated – it was a nice day with no rain. Lots of people came and jammed. And on a personal note (pun not intended!), I was able to jam in a key other than A for a few hours for the first time since I came down with tendonitis. (A is easiest on the left hand.) It was nice to play in the main old-time jam again.

This month, we're back at Hoover Middle School. No more Rose Garden until next summer! (except for 3rd Sunday jams, of course)

Robert Cornelius will be back to lead the main bluegrass jam, and is looking forward to seeing you all again!

On the old-time side, we have a special guest fiddler. Back by popular demand, Karen Celia Heil will lead the old-time jam starting at 1:30 pm! There won't be a cross-tune jam this month, but Karen is good about staying in one key for a while, so banjo players and fiddle players who use open (cross) tunings will be fine in the main old-time jam.

The surreal thing is that the jam after that is in December. We've traditionally done a holiday pot luck then. We plan on continuing the tradition this year, but we need some help to do it up right.

SCVFA usually provides drinks, turkey and ham and people bring side dishes and dessert. The Board can handle the drinks, tablecloths, plates, etc. but we need help with the turkey and ham.

SCVFA will, of course, pay for both the turkey and ham, but we need volunteers to cook them and bring it to the jam. The turkey may work better if you carve it at home. A ham could be carved at home or at the jam, especially if it's spiral-sliced.

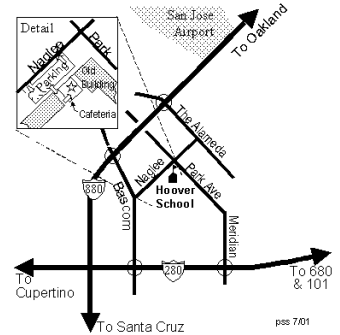
If someone will volunteer to order and bring a half-sheet cake, the Board would also be happy to pay for that, too, for the folks who just want lots of dessert!

I figure one person for each of the above is enough, so we're looking for three volunteers who can help us out this year. Please send me email at *president [at] fiddlers.org* if you can help. Thanks so much!!

The holiday season also brings SCVFA holiday playouts. The requests are starting to come in and Susan Goodis is putting things together. If you're interested in participating, please contact Susan at *vp [at] fiddlers.org* (vp is so much easier to type than vicepresident!). You can play at any or all of them. Susan provides a set list in advance, as well as sheet music for those who read dots. People love it when SCVFA plays. It's a great way to give back to the community and to get performing experience, so I encourage you to give it a try! And thank you, Susan, for putting it all together.

I also want to thank Dovie Wylie for her article on the Puget Sound Guitar Workshop (*page 4*). If you have a music-related experience you'd like to share, please let me know. We'd love to share it via the newsletter. There's a tremendous wealth of experiences and stories in our membership. Sharing them enriches all of our lives.

I hope you had a Happy Halloween, and I look forward to seeing you at the next jam!



Future Playouts / Performances

We have numerous opportunities throughout the year.

For more info visit: <https://www.fiddlers.org/open-band>

Nov 8th – Our City Forest, San Jose, 9:30 – 1:30 pm

Dec 6th – Santa Clara Home Tours, 2 – 6 pm

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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

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Newsletter Submissions & Comments: [newsletter \[at\] fiddlers.org](mailto:newsletter[at]fiddlers.org)

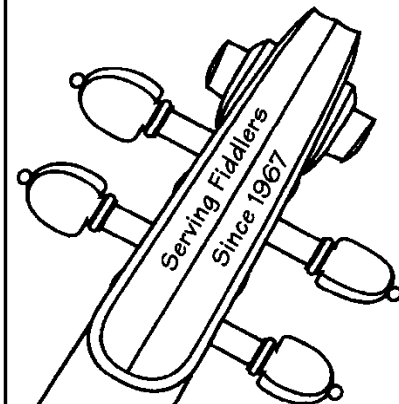
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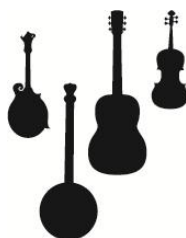
Donations to SCVFA are greatly appreciated and will assist in keeping traditional music alive by passing it on to the next generation.

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 was founded in 1973 to support fiddling but 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.



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: November 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) – 5 pm with special guest fiddler, **Karen Celia Heil**, starting at 1:30 pm!!

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

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

“AFTERS” Join us at [Taqueria Lopez 2](#) 1460 Park Ave, San Jose.

3rd Sunday Jam: November 16th, 1-3 pm
Municipal Rose Garden, 1649 Naglee Ave, San Jose (rain cancels this jam)

[South State 48](#), November 9 – 12. Bluegrass hotel jamming festival featuring [Bay Area Special](#). [Carlsbad by the Sea Hotel](#), Carlsbad, CA.

[Dare To Be Square West](#), November 9 – 12. Square dances, old-time music, jamming & workshops. [Gilman Brewing](#) and [Ashkenaz Music & Dance Community Center](#). Berkeley.

[Great 48](#), January 15 – 18. Bluegrass (and some old-time) hotel jamming festival. [Bakersfield Marriott & Convention Center](#), Bakersfield, CA.

[Portland Old-Time Music Gathering](#), Jan 15-18. Featuring Alice Gerrard, Jeron Paxton, Cookhouse, Bobby Winstead & The Long Goodbyes, Caleb Klauder & Reeb Williams, and more. Portland, OR.

[\(Mostly\) Old-Time Jam](#), Mondays, 7-9 pm.
[Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto](#). Requested donation – \$2 – \$4. Email [banjoclarka \[at\] yahoo.com](mailto:banjoclarka[at]yahoo.com) for more details.



November Old-Time Jam at The Rose Garden (by Susan Goodis)

Puget Sound Guitar Workshop

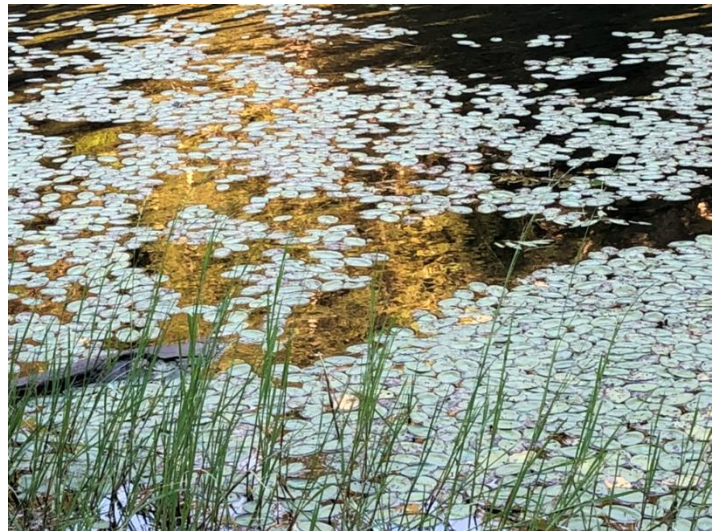
By Dovie Wylie

One winter evening in 2013, I was at Gryphon in Palo Alto, taking a guitar class from Carol McComb. She was telling us about summer music camps, highlighting the Puget Sound Guitar Workshop (PSGW). She mentioned that Wayne Henderson regularly taught there, and that's all I needed to hear. I'd been reading about him, listening to his CDs, and to think I might be able to spend a week around him! Maybe even take his class! So I went that summer, loved camp, and I've been going ever since.

There are currently four separate weeks of camp, with a different set of instructors every week. Each week offers a mix of genres, lots of new things to try out. The emphasis in Week 1 is always on bluegrass, but I've had a good time at other weeks too.

It's an all-acoustic camp, heavy on the guitars but also with classes for bass, mandolin, ukulele. There are always banjos and fiddles in camp, but not many classes focusing on those instruments. There are singing, songwriting, jug band classes... for anyone, including people who don't play any instrument.

This camp, like SCVFA, has been around for just over 50 years. When a camp has been going that



Lily pads on the lake

long, there's a good chance cliques will form, and newcomers might have a hard time finding their spot. But not so at this camp. I felt welcome from the moment I first walked up to the registration table. There are as many as 140 people in camp, including instructors and office staff. Typically, that includes 20 or so first-timers.

PSGW has a "daughter" camp, the California Coast Music Camp, currently held in Monterey County. Many of the same people run it, similar format, some of the same instructors. So why would I go all the way up to Seattle, when I could easily stay close to home?

It's the venue. PSGW is fortunate to have been able to use, for decades now, a beautiful campground on the Kitsap peninsula, on a small lake. I don't actually camp, so I've always stayed in the cabins or lodge rooms. There is plenty of space for tent or trailer camping, and in a typical week, about one-third of the attendees do camp. And how about the food? It's very good – and I don't say that just because someone else does the planning, shopping, cooking, serving, and clean-up for a week.

And it's the collaborative atmosphere at PSGW. Instructors are always available, to answer questions or just hang out. They share cabins, dining tables, jams with us. On the second night, each instructor performs solo for the whole camp. Otherwise, they've come to make music with us.

Many campers come from the Pacific Northwest, including western Canada, with others from the rest of the US as well as some foreign countries. The age skews older; people with children at home can't always arrange to be away for a week, and the



Lakeside practice

minimum age to attend is 18. A healthy number of young adults though.

Any downside? There's so much music, all day and well into the night, that it can be hard to leave it and go to bed. Definitely a fear of missing out (FOMO) issue. But several cabins, and the entire lodge, are designated "quiet," meaning don't be noisy after 11:00 PM. People do respect that. And go elsewhere to jam all night if they want.

There are three class periods every day, five or six options each period, varying skill levels. You're encouraged to take a period off, for napping or practice. But hardly anyone does, again FOMO. You don't sign up for classes in advance. The first day, all instructors briefly introduce their classes, then hang around to talk and answer questions. The next day, you show up at your chosen classes. If what you've picked isn't right for you, you leave and go to your second or even third choice. And everyone understands that.

Late afternoons there's a slow jam, just before dinner. Student concerts – participation optional –



Cabins in the woods



Phil Hubbard (SCVFA) at the student performance

go on one evening, for performing solo or with your hand-picked backups, including the professionals.

Most classes meet outside, possible because it seldom rains. If it does, there are indoor spaces available. Since Covid, the dance night happens outside on the basketball court, music and singing provided by a swing band and a rock band made up of students and instructors. Brass, woodwind, and percussion materialize to help out the Wall of Wood.

I did take Wayne's "beginning" class, for five or six years, before concluding I'd never be able to play like that in this lifetime, despite his patient encouragement. But I always find more than enough to enjoy at camp, and I do get to jam with Wayne.

You can find more photos on the camp website, <https://www.pugetsoundguitarworkshop.org>.

November Jam Pictures

By Ray Chen and Susan Goodis



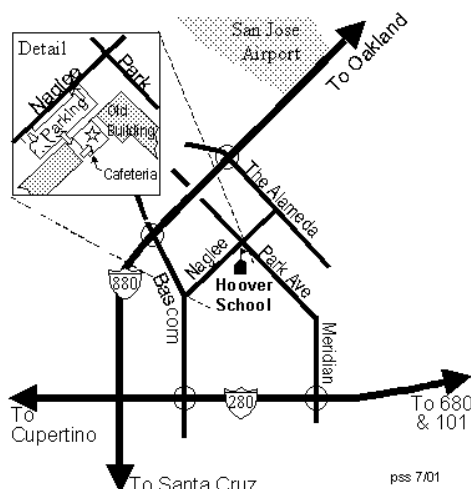


SCVFA
P.O. Box 390235
Mountain View, CA 94039-0235

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

The SCVFA Jam usually on the first Sunday of each month.
 Location: Hoover Middle School, 1450 Naglee 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] fiddlers.org*



Trustee Needed!!

SCVFA is looking for a new Trustee. Duties include representing the views of SCVFA members at bi-monthly Board Meetings, being the First Sunday Jam Manager twice a year, promoting SCVFA as appropriate, assisting with short-term and long-term planning, and helping the Board of Trustees drive new initiatives as needed. Please contact Ray Chen (*president [at] fiddlers.org*), Susan Goodis (*vp [at] fiddlers.org*) or a Board Member if you're interested.

Updated Bluegrass Jamming Rules

- The leader chooses the next soloist and when to end. For songs, that's the person who sings the verses. For instrumentals, it's the person who kicks it off.
- Pick tunes that people know or are easy to learn (easy key, standard chord progressions, simple lyrics).
- Use signals to offer, accept, and pass on solos and to end the tune. Signals are body-language only!
- Listen to the music and watch for the signals. The more advanced the jam, the more this matters.
- Minimize the time spent looking at sheet music or an electronic device. Try not use them at all, if you can.
- The soloist is always right – if the soloist changes tempo or starts late, follow them anyway.
- Support the soloist. Give them room to be heard and to improvise by:
 - Playing quietly with basic, unsyncopated rhythm.
 - Not singing harmony on verses unless asked.
 - Not singing at all during instrumental solos.
- When in doubt, ask questions (but please don't argue with the answers – sessions may have their own rules).