

# THE ARIZONA FIDDLER

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Official Publication of the Arizona Old Time Fiddle Association Inc. Published bi-monthly

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Webpage: <http://www.arizonaoldtimefiddlers.org/> Facebook: Arizona Old Time Fiddlers Association

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November/December 2025

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Contact Noreen Johnston to pay your dues. [fiddlerslady@aol.com](mailto:fiddlerslady@aol.com)

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## Upcoming Events

**Salome FiddleFest. November 7-9, 2025.** Salome, AZ. Linda Darland 928-671-0474 for info. Salome Lions Club - Fiddle shows and lots of jamming - Dry RV Parking (Donations appreciated) Friday Lunch - Saturday Breakfast and Dinner.

**Wickenburg Contest and Bluegrass Festival November 14-16, 2025.** Bowman Arena Fiddle Contest on Sunday

**Laveen Folk Festival.** November 22, 2025. 2800 W Dobbins Road. Laveen, AZ

**Worthen Memorial Contest.** January 9-11, 2026. Yuma, AZ. 2577 E. County 14th

**Salome FiddleFest.** January 16-18, 2026. Salome, AZ. Linda Darland 928-671-0474 for info.

**Grande Fiddle Championship. *No contest for 2026.*** Tiffany [my7gems@cox.net](mailto:my7gems@cox.net)

**Bluegrass Roundup.** January 30-February 1, 2026. Rodeo Grounds. Apache Junction, AZ.

**Ajo Contest.** February 6-8, 2026. Ajo, AZ. Ajo Country Club

**Matheson Music Festival.** February 12-16, 2026. Graham County Fairgrounds. Safford, AZ

**Tucson Contest** February 21, 2026. Southern AZ Dance Center 4801 E 29th St. Tucson, AZ.

**Glendale Folk Festival** February 28-March 1, 2026. Sahuaro Ranch Park in Glendale AZ.

**Lake Havasu Bluegrass** March 6-8. Lake Havasu City, AZ. Lake Havasu State Park.

**Desert Bluegrass Festival.** March 13-15, 2026 Gladden Farms Comm Park. Marana, AZ

**Salome FiddleFest** March 20-22, 2026. Salome, AZ. Linda Darland 928-671-0474 for info.

**AOTFA Events List** See Arizona Old Time Fiddle Association Webpage

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## Chapter News

### Tucson Chapter

Greetings from Baja Arizona,

The annual Monsoon arrived a little late in our part of the state. September has been the most beautiful I can remember with gorgeous cloud formations and striking sunsets. Fall is nearly upon us and that means music to Arizona fiddlers.

**The 84<sup>th</sup> annual Tucson Fiddle Contest is scheduled to happen on Saturday, February 21, 2026** and I am busy making preparations for it. I am looking forward to another great fiddle contest. I am also happy to announce that Jess and Amy Barry have agreed to take over the reins for 2027. Jess and Amy are old hands at running a contest and have been a tremendous help to me the past 3 years.

The Tucson Fiddle Contest is now almost entirely funded by the AOTFA, AOTFA Chapters, and private donations and sponsors. Most of the businesses, government agencies, and cultural organizations who sponsored us in the past have not responded for the last two years. For this reason, I am again asking for donations from our membership with the hope that community support will improve in the future. If you are interested in being a sponsor of one of our divisions it will be of great help in assuring the future of this contest. A donation of any size large or small will be accepted and greatly appreciated. If you are interested in volunteering to help on the day of the contest, we have many jobs to offer. Darwin Long  
[tucsonfiddlecontest.org](http://tucsonfiddlecontest.org)

### Territorial Chapter

Frances Lyons has moved to a senior home here in Yuma, Arizona.

She is one of the original members, and the only remaining original member of the Territorial Chapter of AOTFA.

Her address is:

2600 S. 4th Avenue Apt # 144  
Yuma, AZ 85364

### Cottonwood Chapter

The Cottonwood Chapter will be meeting at Fran Judd's house on the 3rd Sunday from 1-5. Address is 1495 Abbey Rd Cottonwood AZ Call Fran Judd 928-634-1963 for information.

**From Darwin Long.** I have obtained the music collection of the late Bob Amalong and would like to donate it to our members before giving away to someone else. The collection contains music lyrics, song books and historic music magazines it is quite a large collection of items and covers Western, Cowboy, Country, Pop, and Barbershop music. The commercial songbooks are in fair shape and the rest is typed and in folders. Very well done and organized and contains thousands of songs. If you are interested please let me know.

Darwin F. Long [darwinlong47@gmail.com](mailto:darwinlong47@gmail.com) 520-240-3306

## Granddad's Old Fiddle

It belonged to his granddad who he didn't know.  
And where he found it, was lost long ago.

It sat in a closet, in a case old and tattered.  
And only came out when the family all gathered.

No one knew how to play that old thing.  
They could hold and admire it but not make it sing.

When finally, one day a young fellow riddled,  
"Can I learn to play granddad's old fiddle?"

The noise that he made was a terrible sound.  
Which we thought could be heard all over town.

But play it he did and each note that he played.  
Got better and better till it was music he made.

He practiced each morning before going to school.  
And his friends all thought his music was cool.

Soon he was playing all over town.  
And everyone loved his wonderful sound.

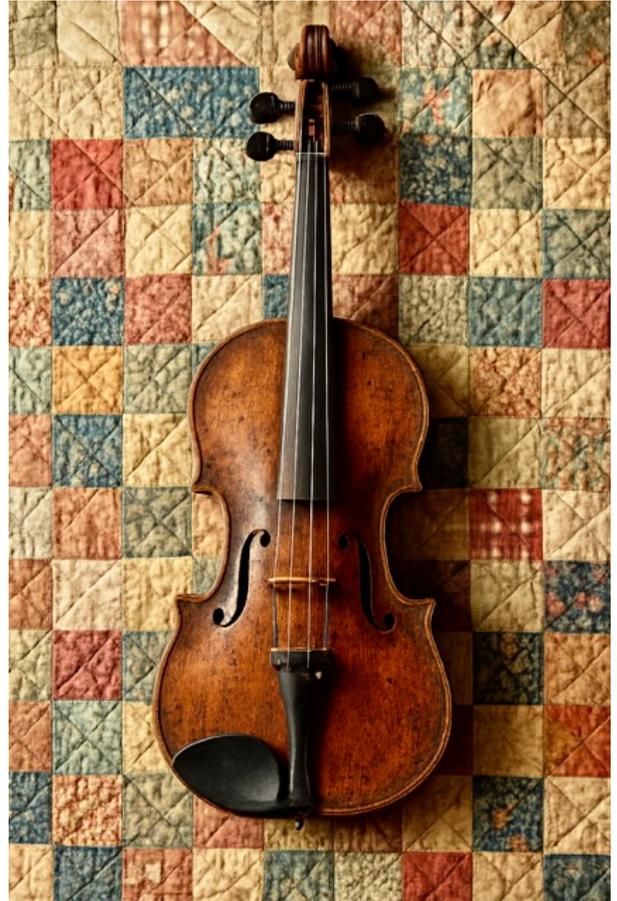
He played for dances and would take no money.  
And his favorite tune was I Don't Love Nobody.

He played all his life, clear to the end.  
Until that beat up old fiddle was lonely again.

Now it sits in the closet out of the way.  
It's waiting for someone with a desire to play.

Until finally one day a young one will riddle.  
Can I learn to play great granddad's old fiddle?

By Martin Fewkes



## Annual Meeting

**AOTFA Annual Meeting will be held at the Salome Fiddlefest  
Saturday, November 8, 2025 at 11:00 am.  
Election of Officers and club business.**

## Contest Results

**Montana State Championship.** August 22-23, 2025. Lolo, Montana.

Janet Shelby 2nd in Senior  
Isley Dietrich 2nd in Junior-Junior  
Ranelle Dietrich 1st in Junior

**Arizona State Championship.** September 5-6 Payson, Arizona.

**Small Fry** 1. Amelia Hornecki  
**Junior Junior** 1. Isley Dietrich, 2. Sawyer Dietrich, 3. Ruth Augustin  
**Junior** 1. Ranelle Dietrich, 2. Brie Dietrich, 3. Lily Malone  
**Young Adult** 1. Michael Rolland  
**Adult** 1. Beth Youngblood, 2. Corrine Garey  
**Senior** 1. Suzette Sommerer, 2. Karen Dismachek, 3. Victoria McArdle  
**Twin.** 1. Ranelle and Isley Dietrich, 2. Beth Youngblood and Lily Malone  
**Championship** 1. Ranelle Dietrich, 2. Michael Rolland, 3. Beth Youngblood,  
4. Isley Dietrich, 5. Sawyer Dietrich

Your 2026 dues are due January 1, 2026.

We want to keep sending you the newsletter!

Pay at Salome or mail to Noreen Johnston

Membership form on p. 8

## Famous Fiddlers



**Patti Kusturok** is a Canadian dance fiddler and teacher. She is known throughout the fiddle world for her rhythmic playing and her excellent versions of fiddle tunes. In 2015, 2019, and 2024 she played a “tune a day” for the entire year. Those tunes are still available on YouTube. Patti is from Winnipeg, Manitoba, and started fiddling at age four. Some of her first recordings as a youngster were with the legendary Reg Bouvette. She has won many contests, including the Canadian Grand Masters, and is well known as a teacher and mentor.

<https://www.pattikusturok.com>.



**Bob Wills** (1905-1975) was an old time fiddler and bandleader whose music was popular in the 1930s through the 1960s. He was noted for his lively, rhythmic, engaging “western swing” dance music that incorporated old time fiddle, dixieland, blues, country, and jazz to form a new genre. The soloists in the the Texas Playboys were encouraged to improvise. Many of his tunes his band played are still popular with fiddlers and country singers including *Faded Love*, *San Antonio Rose*, *Milk Cow Blues*, *Roly Poly*, *Steel Guitar Rag*, *Take Me Back to Tulsa*, *Right or Wrong*, *Stay a Little Longer*, *Panhandle Rag*, and *I Don't Love Nobody*.

<https://www.bobwills.com/>

## Safford Contest

**Keep the Safford Fiddle Contest Alive!** The Matheson Music Foundation is recruiting volunteers (registration, judging support, sponsorships, stage crew, setup/breakdown). Help us grow the contest alongside the Matheson Music Festival and inspire the next generation of pickers. Contact Brianna or Joe at **928-651-1648** or [mathesonmusicfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:mathesonmusicfoundation@gmail.com).



**NEWSLETTER ITEMS DEADLINE is 20th of the Month.**

**December 20th for the January Newsletter.**

## Jam Pak

If you have attended festivals in Arizona, you have probably seen Jam Pak. They will be performing at several events in the coming months including Wickenburg, Laveen, Bluegrass Roundup, Matheson Festival, and Desert Bluegrass. Information on these events can be found in the Upcoming Events section above. Anni Beach is an amazing person, and she and others have built a wonderful musical group! Here is a short history from the Jam Pak website. <https://www.jampak.org/>



In 1994, Anni Beach serving as a substitute teacher in Chandler, Arizona, took her mandolin and new-found passion for bluegrass music to every classroom in which she taught. Following a day of teaching at Galveston Elementary a block from her home, two little boys knocked on her door asking if she would play and sing some more with them. She wanted to do something good for her bread and butter, immigrant-filled neighborhood and with the support of her husband Vincent, Jam Pak was born the very next week with six little kids in the front yard.

It quickly grew to numbers up to thirty children each week. They made their own instruments, learned to sing lots of bluegrass and old-time songs and took their happy show to nursing homes, the Chandler library, and eventually attracted the attention of the Arizona bluegrass community. After four years of playing canjos and harmonicas and singing their hearts out, donations of bluegrass instruments began arriving. Coaches came, and soon after the name expanded to Jam Pak Blues 'N' Grass Neighborhood Band.

The band was invited to their first bluegrass festival in 1998 and became a hit. The band has evolved over the years into a music community. Enfolded in the love of music, community, food, travel, and love itself, this unique band of all ages, races, and walks of life makes bluegrass music. In the home of Anni Beach (Vincent, the Father of Jam Pak, passed away in 2010) they teach each other, gather twice a week, practice, dance, entertain, and at the center maintain the singular goal to make themselves and others happy with their music.

Jam Pak has small bands within this big band and young people hone their band skills, make their own arrangements, and also perform. These small bands include Cabin John, Morning Fire, Fair Black Rose, and The Would Bees. Professional level bands have emerged from Jam Pak including Cisco & the Racecars and Greenwood Sidee.

Jam Pak is hosting a free "Home Grown Bluegrass Festival" December 6-7 at the Beach House in Chandler, AZ. <http://www.jampak.org>

## Sugar in the Coffee

As played by Jack Darland  
Transcribed by Dave Brinkman

G D G

5 G C G D G

9 G C G D G

13 G C G D G

I have two CD recordings of **Jack Darland** playing this tune. *Jamming With My Friends* (2005) and *Songs My Grandfather Used To Play* (2008). He was accompanied the Linda Darland (guitar), Ross Riggs (guitar) and Fran Riggs (bass) on both recordings.

Jack did not usually repeat the sections, but most fiddlers on YouTube do observe the repeats in standard hoedown fashion. Jack (or any other fiddler) doesn't play the tune exactly the same way every time! The CDs are available at AOFTA events and are worth our study and appreciation.

Jack Darland (1926-2022) was a strong old time fiddler, fiddle judge, and supporter of fiddle music. He was a long-time member of the Arizona Old Time Fiddle Association.



**Jack and Linda at Salome 2021**

# The Arizona Fiddler

Membership, Renewal or Change of Address

Annual Dues \$15 Family. Over 80 \$10 Includes Partner

**Please Print**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

SummerAddress \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**If Different**

Winter Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**(Optional)** Man's Birthday \_\_\_\_\_ Lady's Birthday \_\_\_\_\_

Anniversary \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Children Under 18 Living at Home \_\_\_\_\_

Chapters

- Rim Country                      Payson Area
- SAOTF                                Tucson Area
- Territorial                         Yuma Area
- Verde Valley                      Cottonwood Area
- Independent                        Anywhere

Members may join one Principal chapter and one associate chapter.

Send dues to Noreen Johnston, Membership Secretary  
696 S Maricopa Street  
Chino Valley, AZ 86323

**AOTFA**  
**14210 W. Kiowa Trail**  
**Surprise AZ 85374**

November-December 2025