

THE ARIZONA FIDDLER

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](#)

September/October 2026

Contact Noreen Johnston to pay your dues. fiddlerslady@aol.com See Form on p. 8

Upcoming Events

State Fiddle Contest Payson, Arizona. Saturday, October 3 , 2026. Mazatzal Casino Ballroom

[Salome Fiddle Fest](#) Salome, Arizona. November 6-8, 2026.

[Wickenburg Bluegrass Festival](#) Wickenburg, Arizona. November 13-15, 2026. 47th Annual.

[Laveen Folk Festival](#) Laveen, Arizona (south side of Phoenix). November 21-22.

[Yuma Fiddle Contest](#) Yuma, Arizona in January. Date TBA

[AOTFA Events List](#) See Arizona Old Time Fiddle Association Webpage

Arizona State Fiddle Contest (*just one day this year*)

- [Mazatzal Casino](#) Ballroom. Oct. 3, 9:00 AM. The Casino Ballroom is across the highway from the Payson Events Center (rodeo arena) at the south end of Payson.
- **Free to Enter.** Please [register online](#) to help the event planners. Age Divisions plus Trick, Twin, Band, Open Talent. One lucky [pre-registered](#) fiddler will receive free lodging!
- **Register by Sept. 22!**
- **Championship Division. Prizes \$500/300/200/100/50**
- **Fiddle in Band Contest. Prizes \$1000/500/250**
- Camping available at Events Center, but you must [register](#) before the event.
- Other events of the [BUCKLE FESTIVAL](#) are **free** for fiddlers and families. This is put on by Payson Parks and Recreation, [Northern Gila County Fair](#), [Cowboy Lifestyle Network](#), and [Mazatzal Casino](#)
- MC: Roy Sandoval. Staff accompanist: Ben Liabraaten.
- Top two in the championship round will compete in the evening at the Event Center.
- More information at [AOFTA Webpage](#). Links to contest rules, schedule, etc.
- **Questions?** Payson Parks and Recreation 928-472-5110.

Famous Fiddlers—Jana Jae



Jana Jae became known to most of us from her appearances on Hee Haw, and her trademark blue fiddle. The following information is from <https://janajae.com/>

Like most entertainers who have reached stardom, Jana Jae's success is the result of hard work perfecting raw talent. Musical talent runs through the family. Her parents studied at the famed Juilliard School of Music, New York City, and Jana was introduced to the classical study of the violin, on a 1/8 sized instrument, at the age of two. Then, thanks to the direction and inspiration of her grandfather, an accomplished champion fiddler in his own right, Jana also learned to love playing by ear. She virtually grew up jamming with and learning from some of the best in the business while living in western Idaho, not far from Weiser,

the site of the National Oldtime Fiddlers' Contest. Soon she had honed her skill of fiddling into a fine art and won the Ladies National Championship several times.

She also continued her classical training, winning scholarships to Interlochen and the International String Congress. She graduated Magna Cum Laude with a degree in music and studied abroad at the Vienna Academy of Music.

She taught music for several years until she felt inspired to take her unique blend of music on the road. Jana and her trademark blue fiddle soon took the world of country music by storm. She got her big break at a Buck Owens concert in Redding, California, when she was invited to take the stage and play "Orange Blossom Special." Buck was one of the first "big names" to recognize her talents and offered her a job as the first female member of his "Buckaroos" band. She later became part of the regular team of performers on the "Hee Haw" show and has appeared with such country music greats as Chet Atkins, Roy Clark, Ray Stevens, The Oakridge Boys, Mel Tillis, Ricky Skaggs and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band.

Cottonwood Chapter

Cottonwood Chapter of the AOTFA will begin holding monthly jams on the third Sunday of the month from 1 to 4 pm. They will be held at the Senior Center on 6th St in Cottonwood. Everyone is welcome to come and play or just listen.

State Fiddle Contest.....Please [Pre-register](#)

October 3 in Payson.— Schedule, Rules, Prizes at [AOTFA webpage](#).
<https://www.arizonaoldtimefiddlers.org/events.htm>

A G D G arr. Jack Darland

Musical notation for section A, featuring a treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), and time signature of 3/4. The melody consists of eighth notes and quarter notes across two measures.

B

Musical notation for exercise B, featuring a treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), and a common time signature (C). The melody consists of eighth notes and quarter notes across three measures. Above the staff, the letters G, D, and G are placed above the first, second, and third measures respectively.

25 G D G



Musical notation for the second staff, measures 25-32. The staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody continues with eighth and quarter notes, and rests. Chord symbols G, D, and G are placed above the staff at measures 25, 27, and 30 respectively.

[illegible][illegible]

Laura said that Jack told her that he learned the tune from his Mother's piano music. The piano music is in Eb, with a key change to Ab on the B section. Jack Darland made a pretty, danceable, and memorable fiddle waltz out of a piano "parlor piece."

This transcription does not document every last ornament that Jack played. If you learn the piece, you can find places to add your own style.

Arizona Cities and Towns Quiz (Answers on p. 7)

These clues are kind of like those in a crossword puzzle. Put on your thinking cap! A sample: “Same as a Florida City” _____ The answer is **Miami**.

1. _____ Mythical Bird rising from ashes
2. _____ She asked her son “who always looks out for you?”
3. _____ Pole that holds a pennant
4. _____ Water source that weighs 2000 pounds
5. _____ Flavorful red fruit
6. _____ Turn in the river
7. _____ I’m shocked!
8. _____ Municipality of a fish
9. _____ Same as an Illinois city
10. _____ Skeleton head between mountains

Contest Results

Isley Dietrich won 1st place on July 4 in the 12-and-under fiddle division of the [Smithville Fiddlers Jamboree](#) (Tennessee). She netted the title of National Champion Country Musician, plus \$200, and a chance to play the Grand Ole Opry with other winners later this year. This information from [Bluegrass Today](#), an online news source for Bluegrass Music.

Taylor Tudor 1st place and **Danielle Bettencourt** 2nd place in the [RockyGrass](#) Fiddle Contest in Lyons, Colorado.

Dave Brinkman 1st place in the Senior Division at the [Peabody Hale Fiddle Contest](#) in Crawford, Nebraska. July 25, 2026.

Martin Fewkes 4th place in Seniors, **Emily Fewkes** 1st place in Jr-Jr, **Leah Fewkes** 4th placer in Jr-Jr, and **Carla Fewkes** 5th place in Accompanist at the Willamette Valley Contest on August 1.



**Isley Dietrich at
Smithville, TN**

Territorial Chapter

The [Territorial Chapter](#) summer people have been jamming together every Tuesday afternoon. We are learning some new songs/tunes that we hope to play to the winter crowd when they return. We did a July performance at Desert Holiday Rose Senior Living Apts., but they were going to have another event the 3rd Thursday of August, so we opted to cancel rather than reschedule. We are concerned about our folks who are in fire areas, those who are in flood and tornado and hurricane areas, and those who have suffered under smoky skies. We hope all are well. And we hope to see you soon. We look forward to the winter where we have a new venue to play at, instead of the Foothills Library, where we have played for years. The Moose Lodge on the S. Frontage Rd, just east of the library has opened their doors to us and our guest audience on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month. We will begin performing there the 1st Friday of November at the same time 2-4 pm. —Carol O’Brien

AOTFA Donation to National Fiddle Contest (Weiser, ID)

On behalf of the NOTFC, I would like to thank you for your generous donation of \$500.

Sponsoring our [National Fiddle Contest](#) helps ensure that our contest will live on for our future fiddlers. This year we had 207 contestants! The contest is growing.

AOTFA \$500 went to the Junior Division.

Sincerely
Bobbie Pearce, NOTFA Board Member

Mark R. Cohen Obituary Longtime Verde Valley Chapter member.

Mark R. Cohen is now resting in the arms of his beloved Savior on July 15, 2026.

Loving husband of Rosemary Coker; beloved father of Jamie and Sara Cohen; cherished grandfather of Emily (Cameron) Meyer, Leilah Manzanares, Katelyn Widell, Michael Manzanares, Gracie Manzanares, and Gavin Widell; loving brother of Robert (Chelle) Cohen; dear uncle of Emily Cohen; beloved son of the late Arthur and Sylvia (nee Blinder) Cohen. Our dearest nephew, cousin, and friend. Mark's heart also belonged to his precious dogs; he was a proud and tender fur dad to his loyal companions Spirit and Abby, and he is now reunited with his beloved best friend, Gibby.

Mark spent his childhood in University City, Missouri, and later spent time in Flagstaff before finally settling down in Camp Verde, Arizona. A determined free spirit, he loved to ride motorcycles and built something truly special when he opened CV Cycle and Small Engine, pouring his heart into it as a successful business for over 30 years. He met his beloved wife, Rosemary, in Rimrock Arizona, and they began sharing their lives together.

Mark had a wonderful wit about him, and he was always ready with a quick remark that brought laughter to everyone around him. Music was a true passion in his life. He loved playing the guitar and spent 20 years mastering the banjo through private lessons with his good friend, Fred. His love of music and his talent made him a favorite around town. He loved nothing more than getting together to share a "jam" with his dear friends, and some of his happiest moments were spent putting on sweet little concerts for his grandchildren right in his living room. He will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.

A celebration of life will be held in both Camp Verde and St. Louis at a later date. Memorial Donations in Mark's honor can be made to the Beaver Creek Kiwanis, P.O. Box 1012 Rimrock, AZ 86335.

Red Wing, Snow Deer, and Silver Bell

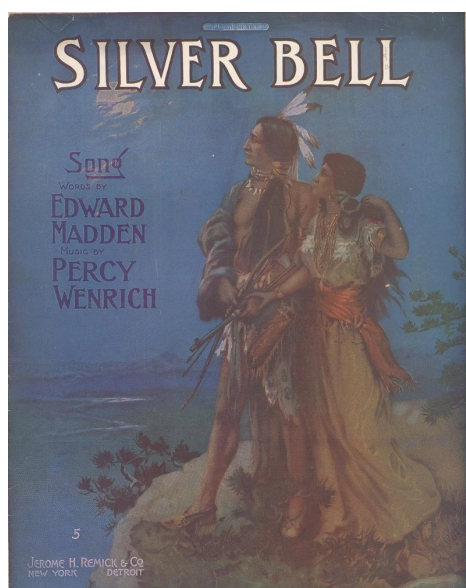
Many times we play tunes that we call “traditional,” usually meaning that the tune is passed on by oral tradition, is old, and the composer is unknown. These three commonly played fiddle tunes may be “traditional” but we can exactly pinpoint their origin.

In the early 1900s there were dozens of songs published that had Native American themes. Examples included *Ottawah* (1909), *By The Waters of Minnetonka* (1917), *Hiawatha's Melody of Love* (1920), and *Song Bird* (1909). All were written by “Tin Pan Alley” composers, were generally love songs, and featured colorful, artistic covers. Tin Pan Alley songwriters were copycats. If a song was a success, there would soon be others along the same line. This was in the era that there was a piano in many homes, and the sale of sheet music was quite a competitive and thriving business.

Red Wing was published in 1907 with music by Kerry Mills and words by Thurland Chattaway. Much of the melody comes from *The Happy Farmer* (1848), a piano piece by classical composer Robert Schumann. The chorus tells the story of Red Wing, an Indian maid:

“Now, the moon shines tonight on pretty Red Wing,
the breeze is sighing, the night bird's crying,
For afar 'neath his star her brave is sleeping,
While Red Wing's weeping her heart away.”

Red Wing was published in the key of Eb, but is almost always played in G by fiddlers.



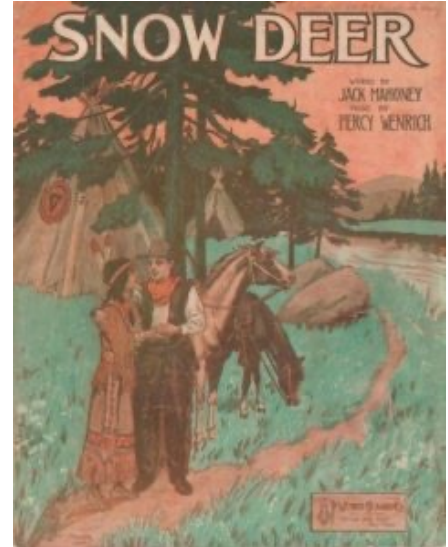
Silver Bell was published in 1910, with words by Edward Madden and music by Percy Wenrich. It tells of an Indian chieftain who falls in love with the Indian maiden named Silver Bell. The chorus:

“Your voice is ringing, my Silver Bell,
Under it's spell
I've come to tell you of the
love I am bringing
O'er hill and dell,
Happy we'll dwell, my Silver Bell.”

The sheet music *Silver Bell* is in F with a modulation to the key of Bb on the chorus. Some fiddlers in Arizona play the verse in G and the chorus in C. It is also commonly played in G for both verse and chorus.

Snow Deer (1913). The tune is by Percy Wenrich and the words by Jack Mahoney. Percy Wenrich followed up the success of *Silver Bell* with the attractive melody of *Snow Deer*. It is a song about a cowboy who fell in love with a Native American woman named Snow Deer. The tune was captivating enough that it soon got picked up by fiddlers all over North America. Here is the chorus:

“My pretty snow deer
Say you will go, dear
From your side I'll never part
Every trail leads to your heart
It's time to marry, no time to tarry
Let me carry you from here, my sweet snow deer”



The original song was in the key of Bb. Fiddlers usually play this in G or D.

Why have these songs survived when other Indian-themed songs did not? The words are nothing special—just the usual Tin Pan Alley rhymes. However the tunes are upbeat, rhythmic, happy, attractive and memorable. A good melody will last!

Sources

Folkworks. <https://folkworks.org/blog/tune-histories-snow-deer-mouth-of-the-tobique/>
Several Wikipedia articles about Percy Wenrich, the tunes titles, and Tin Pan Alley. <https://www.wikipedia.org/>

Levy Sheet Music Collection <https://levysheetmusic.mse.jhu.edu/>

More about **Percy Wenrich** in the next issue of *The Arizona Fiddler*.

Answers to *Arizona Towns and Cities Quiz*

1. Phoenix
2. Yuma (you, ma)
3. Flagstaff
4. Wellton
5. Strawberry
6. Gila Bend
7. Surprise
8. Bullhead City
9. Peoria
10. Skull Valley

AOTFA
14210 W. Kiowa Trail
Surprise AZ 85374

September/October 2026

The Arizona Fiddler

Membership, Renewal or Change of Address

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

Please Print

Name_____

Summer Address_____

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