

# Tucson Old Time Music Circle

Held on the third Friday of each month at the Oro Valley Public Library, 1305 W Naranja Dr, Oro Valley, Arizona from 7:00PM until after 9:30PM.

## **RULES:**

1. Have a good time
2. Be considerate of others
3. Play nice

## **GUIDELINES:**

1. Allowed acoustic instruments include: Fiddle, Banjo, Guitar, Mandolin, Dulcimer, Autoharp, Ukulele, Harmonica. No electric or amplified instruments are allowed. If you are unsure your instrument is allowed at the session, ask the host.
2. Please keep "noodling" to a minimum between tunes. If you are not playing the current tune, please refrain from talking, tuning or "noodling" so as not to disrupt the music.
3. When it is your turn to call a tune, please announce the name and the key it is to be played in. Play a phrase or two to establish the speed at which you want to play the tune. If the tune is irregular, you might want to inform the group how it should be played, i.e. "AABB" or "AABCB." Lead it off either with a count-in or a lead-in ("potatoes").
4. When ready to end the tune, the caller should alert the group by sticking a foot out to indicate the tune will end at the end of the section (2<sup>nd</sup> time through the B part, for instance), or state loudly, so as to be heard, "Out!" or "Bring It Home," etc.
5. Please keep from trying to speed up the tune if it is too slow! The group has a fair number of beginners and intermediate players who are apt to get lost. Besides being unfair to them, it quickly turns the tune into a cacophony as others flail around trying to catch up. If you want to play it faster, please call it as such when it is your turn to call a tune.
6. If you are unable to keep up with, or don't know a tune, try chording softly or use the time to get up and stretch, get a drink, etc. See guideline #2.
7. To cut down on having to retune, the session is usually done by playing several tunes in one key before changing to tunes requiring that the banjo players, particularly, need to retune for.
8. Tunes requiring exotic or specialized tunings should be kept to a minimum.
9. Please try to keep to Old Time tunes, and the preference is that they be in the Public Domain.
10. Remember, this is not a Bluegrass Jam, hot solo breaks are not a part of most Old Time music.
11. If in doubt about any of these guidelines, please ask the host. If need be, the group will be queried for a consensus.

Thank you for your consideration, enjoy the evening, and remember:

**Have Fun!**

Banjo Brad, [www.PricklyPearMusic.net](http://www.PricklyPearMusic.net)

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## What Is Old-time Music?

"Old-time music was the old-time name for real mountain-type folk music. Old-time music . . . .  
(.) . . . the kind of music . . . most rural people prior to the mid nineteen twenties, were raised with. It is the old unaccompanied English ballads like Barbara Allen, new American songs like Wild Bill Jones, old fiddle tunes like Devil's Dream, and newer banjo tunes like Cumberland Gap. It's a rich and varied heritage of music - as rich as the roots music of any country. It was played throughout rural America but was extra strong and distinctive in the Southeast, especially in the mountains. It is sung and played on a variety of acoustic instruments including the guitar and mandolin which were newcomers to it in the early twentieth century. It used to be played by African Americans as well as Anglo, French & Scotch- Irish, etc Americans. It nearly died out in mid-century but has found new life and is being played, mostly informally, by people all over the country.

Before . . . , folks used the music to entertain themselves; a lot more people played music in those days, before you could push a button and rely on others to make it for you. . . . The music from these earlier, old times endured through the generations because of its rich and varied sounds and lyrics and because it filled the needs of the people, who, after all, created it for themselves."

(Mike Seeger, in a May 1997 issue of Bluegrass Unlimited.)

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### Host's Message and Rationale

I have always been partial to the old songs. As a child in grade school I remember singing "folk songs" on Friday's during English classes. They were actually printed in the textbooks. Summer camps were filled with these tunes around the campfires. In High School, I started trying to play guitar, and gravitated to the current folk revival of the 50's and 60's. When my brother's string band cut a record in the 1970's ("Deadheads and Suckers" The Round Town Boys), I got my first taste of the "Old Time" music that Mike Seeger discussed above. At this time I was busy with making a living and could only long to be involved.

Finally, in 2000, I decided that I really wanted to play this music, and do it on the banjo, so, thanks to my loving wife (now a long-suffering wife!), I received a Deering Goodtime openback banjo and started learning to play in the style known as Clawhammer. I learned from methods by Ken Perlman, Bob Carlin and Dan Levenson, and had nobody to play with. The year I retired, I bought an inexpensive fiddle to supplement my instruments.

After retiring in 2003 and moving to Tucson, I started spending much more time with my instruments, and longed for others to play with. Through the internet, I found several people who were also playing Old Time music, and we talked about a regular get together.

In January of 2007, I located the present space and circulated flyers in several music stores in Tucson and Oro Valley. I also put up notices on several Old Time-oriented forums on the internet. The first meeting far exceeded my expectations, with over 20 musicians coming to play.

Thanks to everybody who has shown up, I firmly believe that the continuation of this music will survive another generation at least. And that is why I wanted to establish this Old Time Music Circle. Thank you for coming, and please return!

Fred Bradbury aka Banjo Brad  
(host and moderator)  
[www.PricklyPearMusic.net](http://www.PricklyPearMusic.net)