



Fiddle contest returns to county fair

By Amanda Roach

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— Hands were clapping and toes were tapping Sunday at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds as the popular fiddle contest made its comeback.

The contest, held on opening day of the fair, pitted fiddlers of all ages against each other as they competed for monetary prizes.

Vicki Griffith, a 4-H volunteer and avid music lover, said there once was a fiddle competition at the fair, but it was discontinued for some reason. It wasn't until this year that fair board officials decided to bring it back. Jim Moyer, vice president of the fair board, said watching fiddle players and listening to fiddle music is something he has always enjoyed.

"I thought it would be a crowd pleaser," he said.

And he was right. Two minutes prior to the start of the competition, all of the seats inside the tent were full and several people were standing outside.

Griffith said several youth who are involved in the 4-H program participated in the competition.

"I admire the fair for doing this competition," she said. "It gives the children an avenue for them to play."

Fiddlers were placed in divisions, depending on their ages. The competition was divided into peewee, junior, adult, and senior classes. The fiddlers were judged on four techniques — rhythm and timing, expression, execution, and tone pitch — of fiddle playing as they performed a hoedown, a waltz, and a song of their choice.

Each technique carried a possibility of 25 points, so fiddlers could receive up to 100 points for each song. Monetary prizes for first through fourth place were awarded in each class.

For the peewee class, first place was worth \$50, second place was \$40, third place was \$25, and fourth place was \$20.

For the junior class, \$125 was awarded for first place, \$100 for second, \$75 for third, and \$50 for fourth.

Under the adult and senior classes, first place was worth \$200, second place was \$150, third place was \$100, and fourth place was \$50.

Fiddlers could also compete in the outlaw class for an extra \$50 in prize money. The outlaw class is for fiddle songs that every fiddle player knows, but has been banned from several competitions. One such outlawed song is "Orange Blossom Special."

Throughout the competition, fiddlers had the choice of either playing alone or having accompaniment.

The audience even got a little extra entertainment from the band Vicki & Crew — Vicki Griffith on dobro, her son Tyler Griffith on bass, Ed Biehle on guitar, and Bruce Anderson on banjo. Vicki & Crew performed while the judges tabulated scores.

In the peewee class, Ethan Batan came in first place, Jacob Spence was second, and Brooklyn Moore was third. Margaret Danaher came in first in the junior class, while Scott Conley was second, and Sam Withers was third.

In the adult class, David Smith came in first, Steve Hedges was second, and Roger Fisk was third. Ed Cosner came in first in the senior class while Harold Klosterkemper came in second. Smith also won \$50 for the outlaw song.

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