



Junior Hoedownner

Volume 2, Issue 2

February 2008

All About Contests (from Amy Booher)

When and where will there be contests?

Gaston Old Time Fiddling Jubilee on Feb. 9th, in Gaston, OR, Columbia Gorge May 2 - 4 in Hood River and the Oregon Old Time Fiddler's Contest on May 16 & 17th, in Salem.

Who can participate?

Anyone can participate in a fiddle contest as long as they can memorize the correct number of tunes required for their division (see below). The Oregon State Contest has two additional requirements, that you have lived in Oregon for 6 months, and that you are a member of the Oregon Old Time Fiddler's Association (\$20/year family membership).

What do I play?

Old time fiddle songs are played in contests, in "rounds" consisting of 3 different types of tunes per round. For each round, you must play a hoedown, then a waltz, and finally, a tune of your choice that is not a hoedown or a waltz (i.e. rag, polka, etc.)

How many songs must I prepare? It depends on how old you are! The division (age group) you enter will determine the number of songs you must prepare....

PeeWee	age 0-8	1 round (3 songs)
Junior-Junior	age 9-12	2 rounds (6 songs)
Junior	age 13-17	2 rounds (6 songs)

There are also rounds for Young Adults, Adults, Seniors, Senior-Seniors, and the Open (Championship) division for those who feel they are qualified beyond their age group.

Do I play by myself?

You are being judged as an individual player, but normally you perform your rounds on stage with one, two or three "back-up" musicians such as guitar & bass players. Your back-up players are not being judged, but they help you to stay on rhythm. It is customary to tip your accompanists approximately 10% of your winnings. If your accompanists won't take money, a simple thank-you is sufficient (even if you don't win!) It will mean a lot to the musicians.

Can I use sheet Music or tablature?

No, all tunes must be memorized.

Who judges the contest? What is the judging based upon?

Fiddle contest judges are accomplished fiddlers, teachers, and experts from around the country. In order to be fair and eliminate bias, judges sit in a back room of the building where the contest is being held. All they hear is the music that comes from the stage. Even the names of the fiddlers are withheld from the judges at large contests, to ensure a fair contest.

Each song is judged separately by each judge for rhythm, danceability, tone quality, and old-time style (different contests may vary). Each

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from
page 1)

judge scores the three songs of your round, and the high & low judge's scores are thrown out. The total of the middle scores make up your score for that round. All contestants participate in the first round of their division. After the scores are tallied, the top five contestants will advance to the second round in random order. The scores from round one and round two are added together for the grand total, and prizes are awarded accordingly. (Except PEE WEE Div. which is one round. In the rare event that you should tie with another contestant, you would each perform a tie song (a hoedown) to break the tie.

How long should I play the fiddle before I participate in a fiddle contest?

Some people are quick to memorize tunes and are eager to perform, and others will take a bit longer to get to that point. If you have a fiddle teacher, talk to your teacher about playing in a contest.

What do the winners get?

This also depends on the contest you are attending, but the most common arrangement is for the top 5 places of each division to get trophies and cash prizes. 6th-10th places may or may not receive ribbons or prizes, depending on the size of the contest.

A Note from Amy.

I hope this outline gives you all a better idea of what contest fiddling involves. Contests are an opportunity to meet other fiddlers and reward yourself for your hard work. If you are considering playing in a contest for the very first time, I can guarantee you that you will not be alone! Fiddling is growing in Oregon and we love to see new people participating.

Turkey in the Straw

This is a well-know folk melody, first published in the 1820s and 30s. One set of words to it goes:

Oh, I had a little chicken
and she wouldn't lay an egg,
So I poured some hot water
on her left-hand leg,
Then I poured some hot water
on her right-hand leg,

Now my little chicken laid a hard-boiled egg!

Turkey in the Straw

Key G