Fiddle, bluegrass banjo, mandolin contest winners named Saturday evening at Vandalia Gathering

Champion fiddle, bluegrass banjo and mandolin players competed for prizes during the 25th annual Vandalia Gathering. Two categories of fiddlers—those 60 years of age and over and those under 60 years of age—were recognized. The other two contests included all ages.

Winners were announced as part of an awards ceremony and concert Saturday evening in the West Virginia State Theater of the Cultural Center.

The winners were:

**Fiddle - 60 years of age and over**
1st place ($400) - Elmer Rich, Morgantown
2nd place ($250) - Harold Burns, Yawkey
3rd place ($150) - Lefty Shafer, Charleston
4th place ($75) - Jim Nichols, Pickaway
5th place ($50) - Jerry Lewis, Nettie

**Fiddle - under 60 years of age**
1st place ($400) - Dan Kessinger, St. Marys
2nd place ($250) - Jake Krack, Orma
3rd place ($150) - Darrell Murray, Charleston
4th place ($75) - David Bing, Harmony
5th place ($50) - Zack Fanok, Morgantown

**Mandolin - all ages**
1st place ($400) - Mike Melton, Charleston
2nd place ($250) - Robert Shafer, Elkview
3rd place ($150) - Robin Kessinger, St. Albans
4th place ($75) - Dorse Sears, Orma
5th place ($50) - Matthew Hiser, Layland

**Bluegrass Banjo - all ages**
1st place ($400) - Butch Osborne, Parkersburg
2nd place ($250) - Ben Harrington, Fairdale
3rd place ($150) - Rad Lewis, Winfield
4th place ($75) - Bobby Maynard, Huntington
5th place ($50) - Virgil Osborne, Lorado

Champion old-time banjo, lap dulcimer and flat pick guitar players competed for prizes Sunday during the 25th annual Vandalia Gathering. Two categories of banjo pickers—those 60 years of age and over and those under 60 years of age—were recognized. The other two contests included all ages. Winners were announced as part of the festival's closing awards ceremony and concert in the West Virginia State Theater of the Cultural Center.

The winners were:

**Senior Old-Time Banjo**
1st place ($400) - Woody Simmons, Mill Creek
2nd place ($250) - Eugene Parsons, Orma
3rd place ($150) - Ben Carr, Wilsie
4th place ($75) - Brooks Smith, Dunbar
5th place ($50) - Charlie Loudermilk, Frankford

**Old-Time Banjo**
1st place ($400) - David O'Dell, West Logan
West Virginia’s best storytellers competed today for prizes in the Liars Contest during the 25th annual Vandalia Gathering with the GOLDENSEAL magazine Golden Shovel award going to the best tall tale. Four-time champion liar Bil Lepp emceed the contest.

The Liars Contest regularly draws standing room-only crowds. GOLDENSEAL, West Virginia’s magazine of traditional life, hosts the event and publishes the winning stories each year.

The lies must be short stories—humorous, dramatic, supernatural, etc.—of two to three minutes in length. Ribbons and cash prizes are awarded in addition to the official Golden Shovel “trophy.”

The annual Vandalia Gathering is a FREE celebration of the traditional arts, music, dance, stories, crafts and foods of West Virginia. The Cultural Center and State Capitol Complex grounds plays host to this expanding family-style gathering each year on Memorial Day weekend. The festival continues tomorrow with old-time banjo, lap dulcimer and flat-pick guitar contests beginning at noon.

The statewide folk festival, named for the proposed 14th colony, creates new memories for the thousands of visitors who flock from across the Mountain State and the entire country to celebrate traditions passed from generation to generation. In addition to offering a sampling of West Virginia’s traditional mountain culture by showcasing craftspeople and performers, the Vandalia Gathering pays tribute to the state’s ethnic heritage through a variety of exhibitions and programs.

The West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History, an agency of the West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History, brings together the state’s past, present and future through programs and services in the areas of archives and history, the arts, historic preservation and museums. The Cultural Center is West Virginia’s official showcase for the arts. Visit the Division’s website at www.wvculture.org for more information about programs of the Division. The Department of Arts, Culture and History is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.