

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

2nd place (\$250) - Tim Bing, Spencer
3rd place (\$150) - Andrew Dunlap, St. Albans
4th place (\$75) - Doug Van Gundy, Marlinton
5th place (\$50) - Paul Gartner, Sod

Lap Dulcimer

1st place (\$400) - Alan Freeman, Renick
2nd place (\$250) - David O'Dell, West Logan
3rd place (\$150) - Timmy Gillenwater, Griffithsville
4th place (\$75) - Peter Snyder, Pigeon
5th place (\$50) - David Gladkosky, South Charleston

Flat-Pick Guitar

1st place (\$400) - Robert Shafer, Elkview
2nd place (\$250) - Robin Kessinger, St. Albans
3rd place (\$150) - Brandon Bentley, Sumerco
4th place (\$75) - Matt Lindsey, Dunbar
5th place (\$50) - Jamie Rhodes, Green Bank

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 winners were:

Biggest Liar (first place): Mike Lantz, Aurora
Bigger Liar (second place): Dorsey Johnson, Hurricane
Big Liar (third place): Mark Howes, French Creek
Youth Award: Rocky Seay, War

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.