

Contest alendar



Thomas Massie,
winner of the 1925
Missouri fiddling
championship.

See story
on Pages 4 & 5.

*Photo courtesy
Mrs. G.W. Massie*

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Introduction

For the second year, this Calendar of Missouri old time fiddle contests and events has been produced by the Missouri State Old Time Fiddlers Association (MSOTFA). The purpose of the Calendar is two-fold: first, to offer to contests with limited budgets a low-cost method of advertising their contest; second, to provide Missouri fiddlers with a ready reference source for the year's contests.

We are happy to report that the contest and event listings are up over 50 percent from last year and that the format has been expanded to include a feature article by Charlie Walden on the 1925 Missouri fiddling championship.

As stated last year, we do not claim that all fiddle contests in the state have been listed; however, we have done our best to contact the organizers of all contests which have come to our attention. Moreover, each and every contest that wishes may participate by simply mailing in a letter of request to MSOTFA, P.O. Box 7423, Columbia, Missouri,

65205. Each participating contest is requested to supply information regarding the date, time, place, and prizes for their contest, along with the name and phone number of a person who may be contacted for further information. Each contest is also required to send in their list of competing fiddlers from the previous year's contest, in order that the MSOTFA master list of fiddlers may be kept current. There is also a small participation fee (\$4.00 per contest in 1983).

We have carefully recorded the dates and times of the contests as they have been given to us by the contest sponsors. We have also requested that any contest changing a date, location, or starting time of their contest mail notices of the change to all persons on the mailing list.

Any suggestions regarding next year's Calendar (including advisements of names for the In Memoriam) will be gladly received.

MSOTFA News

By Bill Shull

In its first year of existence, MSOTFA has gained a good number of members and carried on several activities, which were designed generally to promote fiddling in Missouri.

1982 Contest Calendar. The calendar was produced by MSOTFA and was well received by both the contest organizers, fiddlers and fans.

Old Time Dance. MSOTFA sponsored a dance in Columbia, Missouri, in October. Peter Lippincott of the Child Grove Dancers in St. Louis came down to call the dance. Music was provided by Pete McMahan, Taylor McBaine, Spence Galloway and the Little Dixie Hoss Hair Pullers, and by Charlie Walden seconded by John Stewart. Plans are in the works for another dance. Again, suggestions, and help would be appreciated.

Fair Board Convention. A convention of fair board representatives from over 130 Missouri fairs was held in Columbia in January. MSOTFA obtained a table at the "round table" discussion for the purpose of showing the fair board reps how they could easily and profitably sponsor a fiddle contest at their fair. We handed out an information sheet and took names of those reps who wanted a second contact. MSOTFA plans to attend next year's convention also. We expect several new contests to come out of this effort over the next year or so.

Fiddle Archive. MSOTFA has initiated and sponsored the creation of an archive of fiddle music in the Western Manuscripts section of Ellis Library on the campus of the University in Columbia. We are soliciting contributions of fiddle music in every form from those interested in preserving this music. Old records, tapes of fiddlers or fiddle contests, pictures,

books, etc. will be accepted for possible inclusion in the archive. In the near future, audio facilities should be available so that the collected materials can be listened to by anyone right in the library. MSOTFA members are urged to help the collection NOW by collecting whatever recordings exist of Missouri fiddle music.

Activities for 1983: There has been some talk of a fiddler's convention, barbeque, or something of the sort. Any suggestions or ideas would be welcomed. Of course the 1983 calendar is out. As far as other projects or activities go, the officers of MSOTFA (Charlie Walden, Spence Galloway, Bob Hagan, and Bill Shull) are always willing to listen to what you, the members, think the association should be doing.

Dues. Many of you have been signed up as members for over a year now, and the time to pay dues has come. The \$3.00 membership fee will be due by July 31, 1983. We will continue to offer free membership for the first year to all new members to allow them a free opportunity to see if they want to participate. The membership dues will be used to help pay for the calendar (the contest contributions do not cover the expenses), to contribute to the fiddle archive, and for other projects.

Joining MSOTFA. You can join MSOTFA by sending a post card, signed by you and stating your desire to join, to MSOTFA, P.O. Box 7423, Columbia, Mo. 65205. The first year of membership is dues free.

Contests & Events

March

- March 19, Boonville, Cooper Co., Elliot Jr. High 7:30 PM (registration at 7:00 PM), 1st place \$60, 7 places Clinton McClary - 816-882-5197
March 26, Columbia, Boone Co., "The Front Porch," 4 E. Walnut 2:00 PM, \$75 1st prize, 10 places John Stewart - 314-442-0817

June

- June 5, Columbia, Boone Co., Boone County Folk Festival, Nifong Park 12:00 PM, \$150 in prizes plus trophies Cookie Hagan - 314-874-7473
June 10, Warsaw, Benton Co., Warsaw Jubilee Days, Warsaw Community Building 7:30 PM, 4 Divisions, \$500 total prize money E. L. "Bill" Whenry - 816-438-6840

July

- July 1, Palmyra, Marion Co., Land of Mark Twain Festival, Palmyra Fairgrounds 8:30 PM, no information on prizes Delbert Spray - 314-853-4344
July 3, Lee's Summit, Jackson Co., Cole Younger Festival, Lee McKeighan Park, Chipman and North Douglas Road 7:30 PM, 5 places, 1st \$125, & banjo contest Nellie Shaw - 816-483-0825
July 3, Tebbetts, Callaway Co., Community Picnic 5:00 PM, \$200 in prizes Kenneth Burre - 314-295-4591

- July 4, Perry, Ralls Co., Perry City Park 4:00 PM, no information on prizes Geraldine Moss - 314-565-2282
July 9, Leeton, Johnson Co., Leeton Street Fair 6:30 PM, \$350 in cash prizes Bob Brandon - 816-885-8720
July 9, Paris, Monroe Co., Old Thresher's Convention, Paris Fairgrounds 7:00 PM, no information on prizes Charles T. Robinson - 816-327-4419
July 14, Chillicothe, Livingston Co., Family Bluegrass Festival (5 miles north of town on Hwy 65) 7:00 PM (registration at 6:30 PM), \$100 1st prize, 10 places Don McCullough - 816-646-2795 or 0117
July 20, Ava, Douglas Co., Douglas County Fair 7:00 PM, no information on prizes LaVelle Clinkingbeard - 417-683-2592
July 22, Hunnewell, Shelby Co., Hunnewell Homecoming 8:00 PM, \$100 1st prize, 4 places Jay Coonce - 314-983-2294
July 23, El Dorado Springs, Cedar Co., City Park, Downtown 1:30 PM, Prizes \$75, \$50 & \$25 Linda Roseman - 417-876-4154
July 28, Forsyth, Taney Co., Shadow Rock Park 7:00 PM, no information on prizes (campsites available Jim McKillip - 417-546-5046

Contest listings

continued on Page 6

Fiddlers and accompanists gathered in the Capitol Rotunda for a group photograph to commemorate the event. Winner Thomas Massie is standing at far right. Notice the statue of the signing of the Louisiana Purchase in the background which has since been moved outside to the front of the Capitol.

Photo courtesy Taylor McBaine



The 1925 Missouri 'mythical' fiddle championship

By Charlie Walden

Few people who resided in Central Missouri in the mid-1920s are without some recollection of WOS radio. One highlight most frequently remembered is the broadcast the wire services called the "mythical fiddling championship of Missouri," when "the fiddling commenced at 9 o'clock and continued unabated until dawn."

Radio was still in its infancy when WOS went on the air in 1922 from its studio in the Capitol dome in Jefferson City. Owned and operated by the Missouri State Marketing Bureau, its original mission was the dissemination of farm marketing news.

The scope of programming was soon expanded to include general news, educational programs, political speeches and live music. The WOS "Barn Dance" featuring fiddler Louie Barton became a popular feature in 1924.

In 1925 the bureau, under the direction of Col. A.T. Nelson, undertook to present the state fiddling championship live from the Capitol building on New Year's Eve.

The pre-contest entry roster boasted 82 contestants. Twenty-seven counties were represented although the

majority hailed from Cole, Callaway, Boone and Moniteau Counties.

Accounts from the Jefferson City Post-Tribune and the Daily Capitol News described the scene:

"The Capitol was their's. . .Serenading Gov. Baker with 'hits' of a day gone by, they rendered all the old favorites." "The fiddlers did not confine their playing to the broadcasting room. . .at various times a dozen orchestras, all fiddles, were in action." "It was not unusual to hear 'Maggie' played to an obligato of 'Turkey in the Straw'." "The hundreds of persons who went to the Capitol to enjoy the fun were soon dancing and in a short time a dozen dances were in progress."

The contest employed a rather unusual scoring system. The Capitol News described the procedure: "The listening-in public will be the sole judge. A postcard will count as one point, a letter two, a telephone call five points and a telegram ten points. . ."

R.P. Christeson relates a story of one Northwest Missouri tavern owner who offered to provide relatives and patrons the funds needed to send telegrams in his favor. But the scheme came to naught—he lost.

Other procedural rules more closely resembled those of

a modern fiddle competition. The contestants' order of appearance was determined by lottery with each fiddler identified to the listening audience by number only. Five prizes of merchandise were offered in the amounts of \$50 \$40, \$35, \$30, and \$25.

Telephone calls and telegrams were received throughout the evening. The Post reported: "Considerable amusement was caused when a message was received that 250 Ku Kluxers were listening in. In less than 5 minutes another telegram announced that 350 of the Anti-Ku Klux Klan members were enjoying the program."

The radio dial of 1925 was not cluttered with stations as it is today. Consequently, WOS was heard clearly throughout a large part of the United States. A telegram was dispatched to Detroit urging Henry Ford, who was then conducting eliminations for his famous national fiddling championship, to tune in and vote.

It took 13 days to count the more than 5,500 separate communications received—an indication of the broadcast's large audience. When the final tally was completed, 70-year-old Thomas Jasper Massie of

Nevada, Mo. was declared the winner. The runner-up was Daniel Boone Jones of Stephens, followed by Louie Barton of Jefferson City in third place. Jess Burgess of Stoutland and Aaron Oliver of Columbia were fourth and fifth, respectively.

Acknowledgements:

R. P. Christeson
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Bill Natsch — KWOS, Inc.
Nevada Public Library
Virgil Smith
Thomas Jefferson Public Library

The preceding article is the first fruit of an ongoing research project. If you can provide further information or identify any of the musicians in the photo, please contact Charlie Walden, c/o MSOTFA, P.O. Box 7423, Columbia, Mo. 65205. Any assistance will be appreciated.

August

August 3, Fulton, Callaway Co., Callaway County Fair 7:30 PM, \$300 in prizes, plus trophies Location: 3 miles south on Rt. C or Mokane Rd. Kenneth Burre - 314-295-4591

August 5, Monroe City, Monroe Co., Monroe City Festival, Lion's Club Field 8:30 PM, 1st place \$100, 10 places Michael Gingrich - 314-735-4454

August 6, Bucklin, Linn Co., Bucklin Homecoming, Bucklin City Park 8:00 PM, \$100 1st prize, 3 out-of-town judges Mrs. Lowell Brown - 816-695-3310

August 6, Odessa, Lafayette Co., Puddle Jumper Days 7:00 PM (registration 6:45 PM), \$100 1st place Open Division only, 7 places total Mrs. Ed Sanders - 816-633-4714

August 6, Columbia, Boone Co., Boone County Fair 8:00 PM, \$100 1st prize, 5 places Glen Whitesides - 314-442-5503

August 6, Smithville, Clay Co., Smithville Lake Fest 6:00 PM, Courtyard, no information on prizes Bum Williams - 816-873-2120

August 7, Washington, Franklin Co., Town & Country Fair 5:30 PM, 6 places, 1st place \$100 plus trophy, fiddlers free, accompanist must pay Carol Marquart - 314-239-2715

August 12, Lone Jack, Jackson Co., High School 9:00 PM, 1st place \$100, 4 places Dan Coomer - 816-566-2257

August 19-21, St. Louis, St. Louis Co., Frontier Folk Life Festival, under the Arch, NO CONTEST, but numerous fiddlers to perform throughout the weekend Jane Bergey/Barbara Lau - 314-425-6004

August 20, Sedalia, Pettis Co., Missouri State Fair 2:00 PM (registration at 1:00 PM), Prize money not yet determined - all fiddlers and wives reimbursed for gate admission to fair Bill Shull - 816-747-7101 / 429-2260

September

September 3, Columbia, Boone Co., Hickman High School, Business Loop 70, Missouri State Old Time Fiddler's Championship, \$1,000 in prizes and trophies, Registration 6:30 PM Malcolm Duke - 314-874-7230

September 3, Independence, Jackson Co., Santa Caligon Days, Independence Square 7:00 PM, 3 cash prizes and trophies Donna Watkins - 816-252-4745

September 5, Mokane, Callaway Co., Mokane Fall Fest 2:00 PM, \$70 1st place, 8 places Jake Hockemeyer - 314-676-5895

September 16, Elsberry, Lincoln Co., Old Threshers Grounds 7:00 PM, 1st place at least \$50, all fiddlers at least \$10 Ralph Galloway - 314-898-2445

September 18, Marshall, Saline Co., St. Peter's Church 1:30 PM (registration at 12:30 PM), 5 places, \$125 top prize Mike Dillon - 816-886-2107

September 8, Chillicothe, Livingston Co., Family Bluegrass Festival (5 miles north of town on Hwy 65) 7:00 PM (registration at 6:30 PM), \$100 1st prize, 10 places Don McCullough - 816-646-2795 or 0117

September (not yet determined), Nixa, Christian Co., Nixa Middle School 7:30 PM, \$60 1st, 3 places, junior division Holton Powell - 417-725-3615

October

October 8, Joplin, Jasper Co., 2nd Annual North Park Mall Fiddle Contest, Hwy 71 North 1:00 PM (registration 12:00 PM), \$850 total prizes, \$300 1st place, 6 places plus trophies, SPGMA sanctioned Nancy Funderburk - 417-781-0231

October 8, Clarksville, Pike Co., Applefest 1:00 PM, no information on prizes Helaine Mackey - 314-242-3986

October 16, St. James, Phelps Co., Meramec Spring Park 2:00 PM, 1st place \$200, 4 places, cash, trophies & ribbons Ford Hughes - 314-265-7124

November

November 5, Higbee, Randolph Co., Higbee High School 7:00 PM, 1st place \$100, 5 places & banjo contest Jack Holtzclaw - 816-456-7463

November 25 & 26, Hannibal, Marion Co., Tri-State Bluegrass Association Land of Mark Twain Fiddle Championships, Holiday Inn in Hannibal Preliminary Rounds: 1st: 11/25 at 8:00 PM for Open Division: 2nd: 11/26 at 10:30 AM (fiddlers may qualify for semi-finals by competing in either the 1st or 2nd preliminary round) Junior Division: 11/26 at 2:00 PM (3 places) Senior Division: 11/26 at 3:00 PM (3 places) Semi-Finals, Open Division: 11/26 at 3:30 PM (pick top 15 fiddlers) Finals, Open Division: 11/26 at 7:30 PM (pick top 10 fiddlers) Top Cash Prizes in the Open Division Finals Delbert Spray - 314-853-4344

March 1984

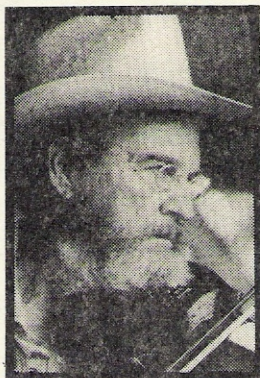
March 24, Boonville, Cooper Co., Elliot Jr. High 7:30 PM (registration at 7:00 PM), 1st place \$60, 7 places Clinton McClary - 816-882-5197

In Memoriam

Forrest Elifrits

1914-1982

Born in Andrew County, he lived in the Filmore area his entire life. He and his wife Roberta had 10 children and 38 grandchildren. Although he didn't play the fiddle himself, he was very active in Missouri fiddling for many years. He organized a fiddle jamboree which was held for several years in Filmore and served as president of a local fiddlers organization. He was a good guitarist, accompanist and judged countless fiddle contests, including the first revival of the State Championship in 1979. On August 15, 1982, he judged his last contest. He collapsed as he stood up to be introduced by the M.C. and died a few hours later.



Woodrow F. Ferguson

1912-1982

A life-long resident of Benton County, he picked up fiddling at 12 years of age. While in high school he played with a group known as the "Melody Boys." He judged and played in fiddle contests around Missouri for over 50 years. His wife Alma was also active in music. She and Woody raised four daughters each of whom played old time music. In the past few years he played and judged the fiddle contest at the Mountain Folk Festival at Silver Dollar City. He is the only Missouri fiddler known to have appeared in motion pictures, having been part of the cast of "The Blue and the Gray."

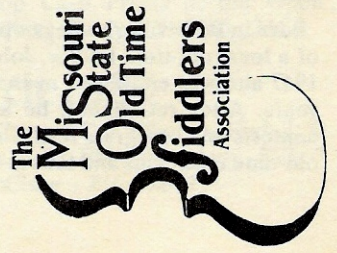
James Elmer Tuttle

1917-1982

Born in Boonville, he began playing the fiddle at an early age under the tutelage of a local old-time fiddler, John Stufflebean. He moved to St. Ann, Missouri in 1947 and was employed in that area by McDonald-Douglas for over thirty-four years. After retirement, he and his wife, Pauline, traveled often to fiddler's contests and bluegrass festivals. Their campsite was a natural gathering place for old-time musicians and fans at these events. He and his music will be missed.



P.O. Box 7423
Columbia, Missouri 65205



Address correction requested