

TU Student to compete in annual fiddling championship



High-ranking fiddler and TU student Emma Jane Pendleton will soon be contending for a fiddling title at Tulsa State Fair.

BEATE HALL
Student Writer

Not everyone could stroll into a room wearing a bright blue sparkly shirt with cowboy boots, a big hat, and a belt buckle bigger than a cell phone, but Emma Jane Pendleton is not just anyone--she is a fiddler.

Currently ranked third in the state of Oklahoma for fiddling, Pendleton is the highest-ranked female fiddler in Oklahoma and has been for the last five years.

This fall, she will be competing in the open category of the 40th annual Oklahoma State Picking & Fiddling Championships hosted by the Tulsa State Fair. This par-

ticular contest is sanctioned by the National Fiddler Hall of Fame and Oklahoma State Fiddlers, Inc., certified by the National Old-time Fiddlers' Contest, and was founded by a pair of TU professors, Glenn Godsey and Guy Logsdon.

Pendleton began playing classical violin at the age of two and picked up fiddling at seven, after Jana Jae, the host of a local fiddling championship in Grove, Okla., heard her and her sister play together and suggested that they begin fiddling. Pendleton followed her advice and has done quite well in the competitive circuit since then and holds several national and state titles.

Pendleton is the first TU student in at least 10 years to compete in this competition and is expected to do well. She is optimistic, but well aware that because the judges change, and the ranking order changes from contest to contest.

"You never know who's going to win; you never know who's going to be there" Pendleton said. This allows the contests to remain exciting and fun for Pendleton even after all this time. "I love doing all of it," she said, "but performing is more relaxing."

The entire Pendleton family band gets in on the act. Pendleton's mother, Virginia

Pendleton, worried that she might stop playing when she got to school, especially as she attempts a double major in Mechanical Engineering and Violin Performance, but Pendleton says she's "not going to walk away from something" she has done her "entire life."

Virginia Pendleton even suggested it might be "fun to find other TU students who play and put (her) own little band together" at TU.

It is important to note that fiddling and classical violin are very different styles with different criteria, a different jargon, and different traditions, Pendleton said. "The style changes at different contests; different fiddle styles. You might hear the exact same song but it won't sound the same," she said.

Pendleton uses one instrument when she plays classical violin and another when she fiddles, producing different tonal qualities. Her fiddle was a prize in a fiddling contest many years ago, as was her belt buckle.

Fiddling may be her primary talent, but it is not her only one. The primary singer for the family's band, Pendleton also yodels, plays some mandolin and guitar, and is helping guide and teach the next generation of musicians as a private teacher.