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## 77th ANNUAL TEXAS FIDDLERS CONTEST & REUNION: You go girl!

Burleson teen wins grand championship Friday

By Rich Flowers

Bubba Hopkins, the runner-up at the Texas Fiddlers Contest and Reunion Friday played a tune called "Lady Be Good." Unfortunately for him, Brook Wallace, a 19-year-old lady from Burleson was good.

Real good.

Wallace won the Grand Champion title and \$700 for her efforts at the 77th annual contest held on the Henderson County Courthouse square. She earned her spot in the finals by winning the 19-30-year-old division. She succeeds Douglas Thompson, who won the 2007 title at age 14.

Wallace's win came 20 years after the first woman grand champion was crowned. Wallace picked up the bow just four years later.

"I made up my mind I was going to learn to play fiddle when I was three," Wallace said. "I just kept at it."

Growing up, Wallace took lessons and entered numerous competitions around the Forth Worth area. In time, she started winning. Now it happens fairly often, Wallace said. This is her sixth trip to the Athens contest and her first win.

In the final, Wallace ripped through a sizzling version of "Sally Goodin" and then drew the biggest cheers of the night on a tune called "Minor Swing," a piece that might have made the Devil dance through Texas on his way to points east.

"It has a lot of jazz sounds. I'm really interested in that style," Wallace said.

Wallace stays sharp playing in a band in the Ft. Worth area. She can be heard often at the Stock Yards, Wallace said.

Wallace attends school in the Tarrant County Community College District and said she is likely to attend Texas A&M after graduating. Wallace said whatever she does after school, she intends to keep playing the fiddle.

Wallace doesn't have to look very far for competition. Her 18-year-old sister Sally finished fourth Friday.

The good weather brought the fiddlers out early and by the 9 a.m. start. Jam sessions were starting to break out around on the courthouse grounds.

The fiddlers contest benefited from a clear sky and a moderate breeze that helped offset the warm temperatures. The smells of turkey legs, hot dogs and French fries wafted into the crowd. The center section of the courthouse lawn, between the grandstand and the courthouse, was filled..

The top 5 2008 finishers were:

2. Bubba Hopkins, 18, Spavinaw, Okla., winner of the 18 and under division;
3. Junior Marriott, 42, Ava, Mo., winner of the under 65 division;
4. Sally Wallace, 18, Burleson, Texas., winner of the ladies special division; and
5. Earl Garner, 75, Elkhart, Texas, winner of the 65 and older division.



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### Photos



Brook Wallace, 19, of Burleson plays her heart out and wins the 2008 Grand Champion title at the 77th Annual Texas Fiddlers Contest and Reunion Friday afternoon on the Henderson County Courthouse square. She placed first in the 19-30 division, as well. **Lauren Ricks/Athens Review/** (Click for larger image)

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