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Young yodeler following star's footsteps

By Don Diehl 07/02/2008

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A•DEAD•RINGER – 14-year-old Emma Jane Pendleton, left, a favorite performer in the Jenks community, has won the Patsy Montana National Yodeling Championship. Montana, right, had a similar start in the business.

JENKS - America's newest yodeling champion is 14-year-old

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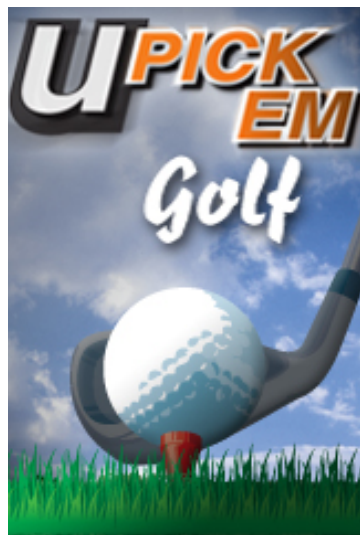
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Emma Jane Pendleton of Tulsa.

She and her sister, 13-year-old Marina, along with Mom and Dad as the Pendleton Family Fiddlers, performs regularly in and around Jenks.

Emma Jane has won this year's Patsy Montana National Yodeling Championship, in which contestants sang and yodeled "I Want To Be A Cowboy's Sweetheart," the Montana-penned classic.

Emma Jane is no stranger to musical performance and competition. She is the reigning Oklahoma Junior Fiddle Champion, and recently captured the **2008 National Junior Fiddle Championship at the American Heritage Music Festival** in Grove, Okla.

Marina continued the Pendleton family tradition by winning the Silver Medal at the Yodeling Championship. In addition to playing violin/fiddle and guitar, as does Emma Jane, Marina is accomplished on mandolin. Emma Jane and Marina have performed in concert with Lyle Lovett and were finalists in a national talent contest broadcast on CBS's "The Early Show."

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The home-schooled sisters regularly guest-star on a local children's TV show. Last fall The Pendleton Family Fiddlers entertained Garth Brooks and guests at a gala in his honor.

The yodel competition takes place after Memorial Day in the Ozark Mountains a few miles from Montana's home state of Arkansas.

In the 1930s Montana gained a national following from appearances on the "National Barn Dance" program on Chicago radio station WLS. "I Want To Be A Cowboy's Sweetheart" made her the first female country/western artist to sell one million records, says Frost,

Montana's biographer. Patsy Montana performed actively until passing away in 1996. Contestants had to wear cowgirl attire, perform to live music and possess a cowgirl flair.

"We look for the total package," says Jane Frost, co-director of the 10-year-old event. She says that Montana understood the value of being a self-contained act ready to take the stage at a moment's notice. Contemporary stars like LeAnn Rimes continue to record

Specifically, Emma Jane won the fiddle junior division championship at the 2008 Grand Lake National Fiddle Fest, which is part of the American Heritage Music Festival.





the classic.

Who was Patsy Montana?

From Wikipedia

Ruby(e) Blevins (she added the "e" herself later in life) aka Patsy Montana (October 30, 1908-May 3, 1996) was an American country music singer-songwriter and the first female country music performer to sell one million records.

Rubye Blevins was born in Beaudry, Arkansas and grew up near Hope, Arkansas. Beaudry no longer exists, but its current successor, Jessieville, has a street dedicated to the once sighing town.

"Ruby" always ran barefoot all through Beaudry, with its small twining streams and mysterious mountain hills and woods, playing with neighbors, cousins and brothers. Blevins had ten siblings, all of them boys, However, two died before puberty, from a fire accident.

In 1929, Blevins went to California to study violin at the University of the West. She won a local talent contest with her singing, yodelling, and playing the guitar and first prize was an opportunity to play on the "Hollywood Breakfast Club" radio program.

In the summer of 1933, Blevins went with two of her brothers to the Chicago World's Fair. The trip's mission was to enter a large prize watermelon the Blevins' had raised, and Rubye was invited to go, mainly to meet up with two pen pals, Millie and Dolly Good aka The Girls of the Golden West.

While in Chicago, Rubye auditioned for a crooner's role. However, she began laughing hysterically halfway through the song. The producer on hand fell in love with her "giggle" and set her up for a different role. Blevins instead auditioned at WLS radio for a group called the Prairie Ramblers. Blevins and the Ramblers became regulars on WLS's "National Barn Dance" program.

The Prairie Ramblers would also back Blevins on most of her hits with ARC Records, Decca Records, and RCA Records. Blevins performed on the National Barn Dance until the 1950s and worked with the likes of Gene Autry, Pat Buttram, Red Foley, the Girls of the Golden West and George Gobel.

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