

# 11th Annual Washington Open Fiddle Contest

Mira, Craig and Barbara traveled to the town of Republic over the weekend of August 13 & 14 for the 11th Annual Washington Open Fiddle Contest. Republic is a little town (about as big as Langley) in the northeast corner of the state. Fiddlers of all ages showed up to jam, compete and meet with friends. They came from all over the western states: Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana and Colorado were represented.

On Friday evening, all the fiddlers met at Ester's Mexican Restaurant. After dinner, all the instruments came out and an energetic jam began.

The next day, the competition began. There were 9 age-graded divisions. Mira's division, "Small Fry," was for kids under 9. When we heard the other Small Fry warming up in the practice room on Saturday morning, we couldn't believe our ears. They were fantastic!!

For each round of competition, every competitor plays a reel, a waltz and a tune of choice - (something other than a reel or waltz). They have to play the complete set in under 4 minutes.

The competitors played on the stage in the school auditorium. The hall was packed with local folks who came to enjoy the music. The judges, however, were sequestered in the school library and listened to competitors on speakers. They couldn't see the fiddlers and they didn't know their names or gender.

All the competitors in each division play their tunes and then the judges eliminated all but the top 5 contestants for each division. In Round 2, the remaining fiddlers played through another set of tunes (no repetition is allowed) and the judges awarded 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place prizes. Mira made it into round 2 and ended up placing 3rd in her division. She won \$20 and a beautiful trophy.



*At the pre-contest jam on Friday evening.*