

Kids Korner

A Kid Who Just Fiddles Around

GAY BROWNLEE

Somerset Co. Correspondent

GARRETT (Somerset Co.) — Emily Engleka (Engle-ka) is 13 years old. She gets away with more fiddling around than most kids do, and nobody scolds her for it.

That's because when Emily fiddles around, she isn't fooling around or wasting time. She is playing bluegrass or gospel music on her fiddle.

She enjoys bluegrass fiddle contests and has won a trophy or prize money at quite a few of them.

For instance, on November 9, she won a third place in the Mid-Atlantic Grand Fiddle Contest held in Cumberland, Md. Earlier, she had won honors at the Pennsylvania State Fiddle Competition, and had won her school's talent contest at Rockwood.

Emily was eight years old when she decided she wanted a fiddle of her own. She had seen and heard bluegrass music played on television and really liked it.

Her parents, Nathan C. and Sharon Engleka agreed to buy the fiddle and bow. They are very glad now that Emily knew what she wanted.

Ellenor Benedict who lives near Grantsville, Md. is Emily's instructor. Mrs. Benedict absolutely loves music and plays more than one instrument.

The funny part is Mrs. Benedict, at one time, played classical music in a big city orchestra. Because the instrument she played was a cello, Mrs. Benedict was a

professional cellist. But the fiddle? No indeed, she didn't play it.

The violin and the fiddle have the same shape.

"Physically, there's no difference in a fiddle and a violin," explained Mrs. Benedict. "If you are playing the Beethoven Violin Concerto, it's a violin. If you are playing 'Turkey In the Straw,' it's a fiddle," she said, laughing because it sounded confusing.

When she moved to Garrett County, Md., and no longer played in an orchestra, Mrs. Benedict became interested in learning to play the fiddle. Soon she began teaching it to pupils.

Emily and her mother saw the advertisement and arranged for her lessons to begin.

Low and behold, when they first arrived Mrs. Benedict wasn't even home. She had forgotten about the date. The next week, though, she remembered.

The teacher and pupil got along really well. Soon they were entering the same bluegrass fiddle contests. They played in different age divisions.

Emily, who earns high grades, and completes her homework in school, admits her tummy still flutters before she goes on stage.

"I'm nervous before I get up," she says, "but once I'm up, I'm fine."

It also helps her when people clap, she said, and when they say nice things to her.

"I like to pick out my relation in the audience," she says. It's really nice to have them come out."

It may be small, but a fiddle has some amazing parts. A frog, for instance, and a bow made with long hairs from a horse. These can be torn. There's a scroll, peg box, sound holes, tail piece, strings, finger boards, a bridge where the strings pass over, and those aren't all of them.

"You have to get the bow over the middle and stay away from the finger board," Mrs. Benedict tells Emily who is preparing for the next contest in two days.

They play a waltz. Mrs. Benedict is at the piano.

Holding the fiddle between her chin and shoulder, Emily crosses the strings with her bow. It's a new sound.

Her teacher likes what she hears.

"That's very, very good," she says to Emily.

"Emily is working out her own style which is very good," she told Emily's mom.

"She is already doing things with her fiddle that she wasn't taught by her teacher."

For the contest Emily must be ready to play seven tunes, like a hoedown, a waltz, and several others.

She, her mom, and her grandma play in a group with three other people.

Her mom plays the banjo. Grandma plays the guitar.

Someday, Emily will play a violin. She will learn how to play classical music. She would like that, she says.

Emily has other interests besides playing the fiddle.

"I like basketball and drawing Disney cartoons," she says. "I like school, too."

Even her chores, she doesn't mind doing. Sometimes, instead of watching television, she finds other interesting things to do.

After school she gives food and water to the dogs.

She helps to clean the house. During the summer, she mows the grass and pulls weeds in the garden.

Emily has one brother who is age five. His name is Aaron.



Emily Engleka, 13, began taking fiddle lessons five years ago and loves going to contests.



Emily Engleka concentrates on playing her fiddle as instructor Ellenor Benedict plays the piano.

Smart Stuff

WITH TWIG WALKINGSTICK

Why do people call a football a pigskin?

As the story goes, the very first footballs were made out of pigskin. That might be true, but the people at Wilson Sporting Goods — the company that makes all the footballs used in pro games — say their footballs have always been made out of cow leather.

Either way, the pigskin nickname highlights pigs' versatility. Juicy pork chops or sizzling bacon might be the first things that come to mind when someone mentions pork, but there are thousands of other uses for the snout-nosed fellows. (And all their other barnyard friends, too.)

People with diabetes depend on insulin made from animals. Doctors can use hog heart valves to replace damaged human heart valves. Pigs' hair makes great artists' brushes, and their leather (pigskin) can be made into beautiful clothes, shoes and gloves.

But wait — there's more. Floor waxes, weed killers, cement, oil polishes, rubber, crayons, cosmetics, chalk, matches and linoleum are just a few things that use the fats and acids found in hogs.

And have you ever used good china at a special meal? If it was bone china, it was made from dried pig bones!

So the next time you hear someone talk about the pigskin picks of the day, you'll know the football might not be made out of pigskin, but a lot of other things are.

Scientifically yours,

Twig

