

Anchorage Folk Festival and Dick Sanchis
(Celebrating Arctic Roadrunner's Many Years)
Present
- The Third Ever Anchorage Folk Festival -

BANJO CONTEST

This is the third time around for our fun contest at the Anchorage Folk Festival, and we hope to attract all sorts of banjo players and new fans to celebrate the talents of Alaska's banjo virtuosos. Time to dust off that banjo in the corner! Seriously, the modern-day banjo is a uniquely versatile and truly American traditional instrument, and we want to celebrate the many banjo players (and especially banjo students) out there who rarely get the credit and encouragement they deserve.

Audience members and fans are very welcome, just please respect the need to be quiet when contestants are actually playing. We want this to really be a fun and positive experience, and a genuine showcase for banjo music.

When: Saturday January 28, 2012

Where: UAA Room PSB 166 Amphitheater (note NEW LOCATION)

Time: Sign-in starts 11:00 a.m.; Contest starts at 11:30 a.m.

Fee: None – It's free!!

Eligibility: Anyone can enter, any age

Style: Any style of 4 or 5 string acoustic banjo; contestants each declare their style
Also includes BANJO JOKE category, because, let's face it, banjo jokes are as traditional as banjo music and so they should get recognition as well!

Emcee: The champion of the First Ever AFF Banjo Contest, Cheri Spink!!

Judging: All contestants will be judged by our panel of 3 returning Alaskan judges.

Prizes: A winner will be chosen for each musical style, and prizes awarded. Prizes include cash (yes, cash!), concert tickets and gift certificates.

All contestants receive a Certificate of Participation.

Grand Prize: An overall champion will be determined by the judges and will receive even more good stuff! Wow!!

Here's how it works:

Contestants need to be at UAA Room PSB 166 Amphitheater (not the Wendy Williamson theatre) at 11:00 a.m. Saturday January 28 to sign up to play, and to warm up. Contestants can enter one musical style category, which they identify (for example, bluegrass, Dixieland, etc.).

The contest will start at 11:30 a.m. on the Amphitheater stage. Order of appearance will be determined before the start of the contest, by drawing numbers. The emcee will introduce each contestant and the song titles.

Each contestant will have up to 5 minutes to play and ideally should plan to perform two instrumental numbers within that 5 minutes total (eek, no singing, please!). This will be on the Amphitheater stage.

NEW RULE: players can have one accompanist, to play basically a rhythm part, such as guitar or string bass (not another banjo, please!). The accompanist is there for musical support, but not to play solo or duet parts or in any way overshadow the banjo contestant.

Judging Criteria:

We modeled our judging methods based on established performance criteria used in banjo contests all over the country.

For the musical categories:

1. Execution (40 points): Timing, clarity, tone quality, being in tune, dynamics and finesse, degree of difficulty. (No, we are not going to execute any banjo players, even if tempted!)
2. Arrangement (40 points): Musical appeal of songs played, sense of melody, originality, subtlety, and taste (or what passes for taste, in banjo music).
3. Spirit (10 points): The music should have life and feeling; not be listless or dragging.
4. Overall impression (10 points): The general effect of the performance, including factors not otherwise mentioned above. Is the audience thrilled, or chilled?

In the Banjo Joke category, similar criteria will be applied. Additionally, all jokes must be rated G, like the movies, with a one-minute time limit, and one-joke maximum. Jokes will be screened by a designated AFF staffer to ensure the G rating. Contestants can enter the joke category, regardless of whether they also enter to compete in a musical category.

NOTE: All contestants should stay at the stage area until the final results are tabulated, because there might be TIES in one or more categories that need to be resolved by a play-off. That means that those players would need to each play one more song for the judges to determine the winner.

Judges will confer to determine the winners and overall champion. During that time, ALL contestants are requested to gather together on stage to play a traditional tune determined by the judges (something really easy) – trust us, this will be fun! At the conclusion, winners will be announced, prizes awarded, and Certificates of Performance provided. Of course, all participants are also encouraged to become members of the Anchorage Folk Festival, and to consider volunteering too. Special thanks are due to Dick Sanchis (Local Burger Man) for helping us start this contest three years ago, and donating prize money each year. He is a true Champion of Banjo Music. Thanks also to businesses providing gift certificates, to the judges, our wonderful emcee, and other dedicated volunteers helping run this contest.