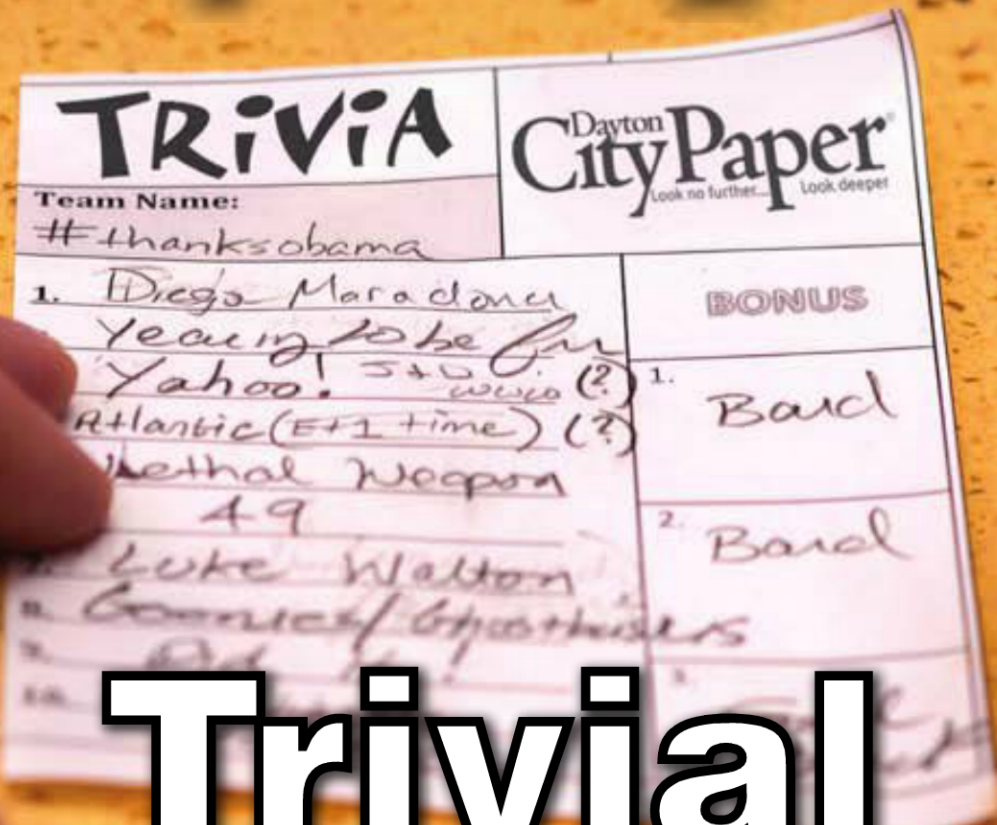


# Dayton City Paper

Miami Valley's Arts, Culture & News Weekly



# Trivial Pursuit

## Trivia culture in the Miami Valley

Jennifer Hanauer Lumpkin // pg 20

Photo: Larry Peck



**DEBATE FORUM 08**  
Monkey see, monkey sue: The macaque copyright



**LITERATI 12**  
'Red Combines': A colorful display of agricultural history



**SOUNDBYTE 17**  
Joseph Airport lands in Dayton for show at Blind Bob's



**FILM 22**  
Remembering David Bowie and Alan Rickman

# Who wants to be SMARTER than a 5<sup>th</sup> grader?

By JENNIFER HANAUER LUMPKIN

## DIVING HEAD FIRST INTO THE DAYTON TRIVIA SCENE

**Trivia Host:** "The answer is Ursa Minor."

**Husband:** "Aw, nuts."

**Trivia Host:** "Which of course is also known as the Little Dipper."

**Husband:** "Oh! Nice!"

**Me:** "Told ya so."

There were several told-ya-sos on the night our *Dayton City Paper* team tramped out to the Buffalo Wild Wings at Town & Country Shopping Center for Trivia with a Twist. There were also a great many ugh-I-knew-its and more than a few sorry-guys-! (the latter mostly from me). Host Matt James, also known as Quizmaster Matt, helped keep us straight, coming around to each table with helpful hints during the first two rounds. The crowd was abuzz with giddy energy, and you could just tell that within each heart bloomed hope from the prospect of emerging victorious in the night. At least, a little bloom.

Any night of the week you can find a bar hosting live trivia, and, more often than not, a bar full of patrons, pens poised, hushing one another to hear the next question. We had our adventure on a Wednesday at a mall in the suburbs, and the place was packed. Every chair was spoken for, and there was some debate as to whether there was actually enough room in the bar area for the tables a team of soccer moms had heaved in from the dining area. Business for B-Dubs looked good, and it's not difficult to understand why. Trivia is fun, beer is fun, put the two together *et voila!* You've got your bar chock-a-block full of thirsty guests ready to be delighted. Not a bad recipe for success.

"I think trivia has such a draw because it's something you can count on to distract from work or any other 'real life problems,'" says Nick Testa who runs Triv Free or Die Hard Tuesday nights at Blind Bob's in the Oregon District. "It happens every week, you can be with your friends and finally use all that knowledge you've soaked up from the Internet or TV. I've always wondered when I would have to know who wrote 'Nothing Compares 2 U' (Prince), and finally I have an outlet for that."

"I've always enjoyed pub trivia, so when Nick approached me about having one I was all for it," says Blind Bob's general manager Nate Mendenhall. "Since there's so many trivia nights in town and the patrons at Bob's tend to be young, Nick thought a pop culture-based trivia would be a good fit and just different enough from other trivia

nights and so far it has been."

Not only is it enjoyable for the patrons who wander into the mix, businesses see a real takeaway from offering a regular hosted trivia night.

"Within just four weeks we've seen a considerable amount of people that have stuck around and started playing trivia, so as far as being able to see what that's done for us so far, we've seen the numbers increase," says Rachel Abrams, Associate Store Team Leader of Whole Foods on Miamisburg-Centerville Road. Whole Foods, which hosts a variety of specials in their bar on every day of the week, added Trivia with a Twist to their Wednesday nights just before the holidays. "The second night we had it, the night before Thanksgiving, I got off early and decided that I was going to stay for one round, and then we ended up staying for the whole thing. It was interesting. It was fun. We've had a really good experience and a lot of good feedback that people love it."

Creating a regularly successful night of trivia is not as casual a process as it may seem. James, a former Sunday school teacher with a business degree and penchant for standup comedy, says that just creating the atmosphere of a great trivia night is one of the most difficult things.

"You've got to have the right host in there," says James. "They've got to have all the equipment set up and it sounds good. Then we've got to get marketing materials out there. We've got to get the people to come into the bar. The questions have got to be great."

James spends 15 hours a week putting together the questions for the 20 venues Trivia with a Twist services. When asked what source material he uses to put together his questions, James said, "I can answer that with two words: the Internet. If it sparks my interest, then we form a question out of it. Sometimes they're just great knowledge-based things. Sometimes they're just amazing things for you to know, but they're not really great questions. Those make for good true/false."

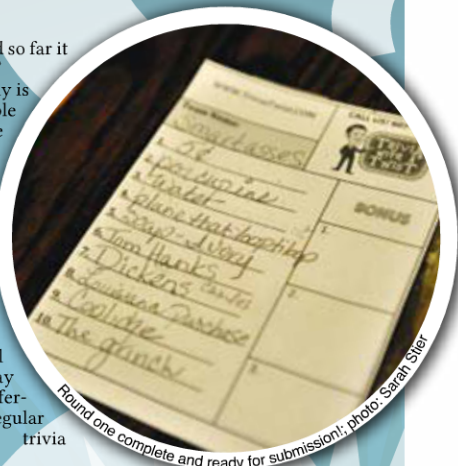
As far as disputes over questions, James says, "There are times where either we're dead wrong or it's a gray area. It's rare. I would say it happens maybe once a month. But any question can be broken down into its derivative. There are people that still think we didn't land on the moon. So I could say, 'In 1969, what amazing thing happened out in space?' Some people would say no to that. 'Who was the Super Bowl XLII winner?' That's a pretty black or white question. But if we were to say 'What's the most popular dating website?' Well, based upon what? Numbers? Page visits? Page views? That's a very gray area question."

But keeping to the black and white questions is limiting.

"There are so few of them, you run out," explains James. "Unless you want to ask who was the president in what year over and over and over again. And we try to make it more interesting, so what helps is if we say 'Per this website' or 'Per a *HuffPost* article.' If we have a reference point, then we can say, 'Well, this is what it said.' And that helps sometimes. But honestly, people are usually just out to have fun."

A charismatic host can help people to have fun and develop devout trivia junkies along the way. A host like James, who glad-hands everyone who comes into the bar and knows most of them by name, builds relationships not only with the bars he hopes to do business with, but also with the people he hopes to entertain.

"He has a very good personality," says Michelle, the matriarch of the table next to



Round one complete and ready for submission! photo: Sarah Siler



Trivia With a Twist leads a rowdy crowd at Buffalo Wild Wings photo: Larry Peck



Players put their heads together at Dayton Beer Co. photo: Sydney Reynolds



Trivia night at Dublin Pub photo: Sarah Siler

DCP's Michelle and her family were so taken with James' hosting style, they actually migrated with him to B-Dubs when he left another Kettering bar that had previously been the family's local spot.

"He's got a good audience presence," says Kevin, the dad. "He keeps everyone engaged instead of just reading questions."

Team DCP could have taken some lessons from this family in terms of diversifying our knowledge base. I was told that in addition to their college-age boy, they usually also have an-



Trivia goes at Dublin Pub; photo: Sarah Stier

other friend with them who "sleeps with the TV on" and was a finalist on *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*. Add to this their two younger girls—Ashley, a One Direction authority, and Emily, who has actually written questions for James—and this family has everything it takes to seek out multiple wins. Lucky for the rest of us trivia-ites, Wednesdays are a school night and the family couldn't stay for all three rounds.

## TIPS TO BE TOPS AT TRIVIA

### 1. Study up at the School of Life.

Sure, it may seem like the PhD in the corner has the intellectual advantage, but do not discount how highly experience plays into the acquisition of one's total library of knowledge. Team DCP got a point during our night at Trivia with a Twist for answering a tough question about Abraham Lincoln, but the factoid didn't come from a history book. Rather it was my husband's total recall of the film "Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure" that saw us through on that particular query.

### 2. Assemble your Dream Team.

"The best trivia groups are the ones that are multi-faceted, very diverse," advises James. "You're going to [need] the 20-year-old female that knows the hip music and all the TV shows that are going to be out there, because we'll throw in a Kardashians question, we'll throw in a question about *American Idol*. I don't even have cable. I'd be like, 'Well, I don't know the answer. No idea.' But she would know the answer like that, right? The 15-year-old kid is going to know the hottest Justin Bieber song, where the 50-year-old guy is going to go, 'Who's Justice Beaver?'"

Everyone knows something about something. "There's a real breakdown," James explains. "About 80 percent of the questions that are known are going to be from the real trivia buff. And 10 percent of those are going to be a conglomerate of everybody at the table deciding on two or three different elements. And then you've got another 5 or 10 percent are going to be things that the girl or the guy that came out just to have a beer and have a good time, and they're going to know that one question or those two questions that nobody else at the table knew. That's kind of a fun element because then they're remembered for that. Like the girl that knew all of the Harry Potter questions."

### 3. Select your spot.

There are some who say, "booze is booze," but I'd venture a guess that even they would agree that venue plays a role in their enjoyment of said booze. Same with trivia. Find the spot you like with a host you like who plays the kind of questions you like.

"I personally write all of my questions from things I know," says Testa. "That's why all I do is pop culture because that's what I've always liked. Luckily there are other 'inside kids' in town that grew up on TV and

video games. Plus, I think it's cool to have another option in the trivia game. Sometimes I want to play general knowledge or sports trivia, it's cool that there are different versions around town."

### 4. Pick a cool name.

Team DCP went pretty straightforward with our team name, and it turned out to be a missed opportunity. When we were finally edged out by "The Donner Party," it was kind of like, well, yeah, of course our little newspaper team is going to lose to The Donner Party. Cannibals are hard-hitting.

The point is, your team name is like your war paint, and it can be used to great effect both in intimidating other players and bolstering your own chutzpah. It's an identity, and it must reflect who you are.

When asked about some of the most memorable team names he's seen, Testa replies, "My favorite team names are Periodic Table Dancers and Rose-anne Barr & Grill." Team DCP would definitely lose to either of those.

### 5. Even if you lose, you win. But it is fun to win.

Of course, as in any competition, there will be a winner, and to the victor go the spoils. Spoils in this case ranging from branded swag to foodstuffs to delightful bits of nostalgia.

"Nick picks fun and amusing prizes to go with the food prizes from the bar," says Mendenhall. I myself have walked away with one of Testa's prizes and have gotten much enjoyment from my VHS copy of "Crocodile Dundee II" ever since.

But if even if you don't win, is a night of cocktails with your friends ever really a loss? And what about all of the trivia facts you pick up along the way?

"We always say, 'You might not win, but you're always going to learn something,'" James observes.

Let's we forget, "knowledge is power" – Thomas Jefferson. ... Or was it Auntie Mame? Schoolhouse Rock! Ugh, sorry, guys! We'll get 'em next time.



Reach DCP freelance writer Jennifer Hanauer Lumpkin at [JenniferHanauerLumpkin@DaytonCityPaper.com](mailto:JenniferHanauerLumpkin@DaytonCityPaper.com). To read more from Jennifer Hanauer Lumpkin, visit her website at [jennerlumpkin.com](http://jennerlumpkin.com).

UNCOMMONLY  
DELICIOUS.  
EXCLUSIVELY  
AT WHOLE FOODS MARKET.



Warm up without artificial flavors, preservatives, or hydrogenated fats! Enjoy a free 24 oz container of our fresh soups, like organic Chicken Noodle, Tomato Bisque, Triple Squash or Black Bean, and a free 16 oz box of our crispy 365 Everyday Value® Saltine Crackers when you spend \$20 at Whole Foods Market.

STORE COUPON - EXPIRES 1/25/16



1 FREE 24 oz  
WHOLE FOODS MARKET  
FRESH SOUP  
& 1 FREE 16 oz BOX  
365 EVERYDAY VALUE® SALTINES  
WITH \$20 PURCHASE.

IN OUR PREPARED FOODS REFRIGERATED SECTION

PLU:301477

Valid at the Whole Foods Market Dayton location only. One coupon per customer. Not valid in conjunction with any other offer. Coupon void if duplicated. Coupon may be used once for one offer only.

Valid 1/12 - 1/25