

# Wonder inspires trivia buffs to found a national group

By Jeff Kruse

Have you ever wondered who ran with Wendell Willkie in the 1940 presidential election? Or what the Ricardos' address was in *I Love Lucy*? Or what the halftime score was in the 1955 Orange Bowl game between Duke and Nebraska?

That sense of wonderment has inspired four Lincoln men to form the United States Trivia Association, Ltd., an organization to promote trivia and trivia contests throughout the nation.

"We were looking for some kind of a contest, and found that there was no sanctioned trivia group in the country," said Steve Tamerius, president of the six-month old organization. "This is really the first one of its kind."

The heart of the organization is its monthly publication, "Trivia Unlimited," which has about 2,000 subscribers across the nation, according to Tamerius.

In the magazine, the staff of "experts" expound on trivia in such areas as music, sports, television and radio, movies, and comic books.

"It has all the facts you need," said Ron Hicks, secretary of the organization.

#### Spare time job

Presently the organization is a spare time operation. Hicks said he spends about two hours a night researching trivia, unless "something's bugging" him. Then he might spend up to 4 or 5 hours he said. However, Tamerius, a realtor, sees the organization one day turning into a full-time job.

"The potential out there is enormous," he said.

Plans for the organization include trivia championships in every state, a U.S. Open Trivia Championship (probably held in Lincoln) in the spring, a possible syndicated radio show, a trivia filing system "unmatched in the world," a phone line service that would answer any trivia question free of charge, and a university trivia bowl.

Presently, they do a daily segment on KOIL, an Omaha radio station, and also make occasional appearances on Lincoln's KLMS.

"Radio is an ideal place for trivia," said Tamerius. "There's a wealth of information behind those records."

"When a disc jockey plays Elvis Presley's 'Heartbreak Hotel,' he should be able to tell the listeners that it's Floyd Cramer on piano and Chet Atkins on guitar backing him up."

#### Researching difficult

In his radio appearances, Tamerius has often fielded questions from the listeners, and lately he says he's been hitting about 90 percent correct.

Researching trivia, though, "is not easy, if you want to be good at it," according to Hicks, who said that his research consists mainly of going through libraries, old newspapers, and comparing facts from different trivia books.

The research can, however, become a little more involved. Tamerius had found in his research that the first television com-

mercial was in 1941, and it pictured a Bulova watch.

But then, he said, "I thought to myself, 'What time did the watch read?' After calling several people at NBC and Bulova and having them dig into their archives, Tamerius achieved his goal—the time on the watch was 10:09.

In another endeavor, Tamerius contacted Fred Worth (considered by many to be the best trivia author in the country) by calling the NBC Tomorrow Show, a program on which Worth had appeared, and asked for Worth's phone number.

#### College interest

He got the number, and Worth now is a regular writer for "Trivia Unlimited."

"With a little guts and enough money to back the phone bill, you can get just about anything you want," Tamerius said.

Tamerius traces his interest in trivia back to his college days when he was a UNL student.

"I remember when I lived in Schramm, we had an impromptu contest. Someone asked me a question I couldn't answer, and that bothered me.

Apparently, other members of the organization also have the same type of interest.

Their weekly meetings consist of trivia quizzes "to keep each other in shape" and working on the publication.

Oddly enough, the group is at a loss to define trivia.

"I guess the best way to define it is by example," said Tamerius.

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