



Gran-Bee Earns Enthusiastic Community Support

by Dan Ivers

GRANBY - The annual Gran-Bee trivia contest, held to benefit the Granby Education Foundation, has been steadily gaining more and more "buzz," so much so that even the Jonas Brothers came out this year. All right, so maybe it wasn't the real Jonas Brothers—more like Granby natives Steve Migneault, Russ Bombard and Jim Whitten in some Jonas-style wigs and rock star garb, but it was tough to tell the difference with the horde of screaming girls who followed them to the stage.

The trio was just one of the 35 teams who took part in the April 3 event, joining other costumed and themed teams like Team Turducken—who wore chicken, turkey and duck hats, Once Upon a Mime—who came complete with mime makeup and wrote all of their answers on a whiteboard, and the Wise Guys—who dressed as the Biblical three wise men.

Each team pays a \$200 entry fee to participate, and are subjected to questions from emcee Bill Percival. They ranged from the elementary ("How many sides does a triangle have?") to the advanced ("What is the gestation period for a hippopotamus?").

"The teams are parents, teachers, families, friends. It's pretty cool," said Jason Sears, who came to watch the show. Trish Percival, who helped organize the event and also competed on the Wild West themed team Shooting From the Hip, said the event has been an overwhelming success since it first began in 2004. "Every year we've done better than the year before. Everybody's really rallied around it," she said. Percival said that last year's event brought in around \$16,000 for the GEF, and she expected to do just as well this year. The Granby Memorial High School auditorium was filled nearly to capacity at its peak, and the audience responded with loud cheers for correct answers and sympathetic sobs for the fallen teams.

The Granby Education Foundation raises money for a general fund to provide grants for various educational programs in the area. GEF board member Dave Schupp cited a grant that allowed Francis Bok, a Sudanese refugee and former slave to come to the town's high school and speak to students about his experiences. "I've come every year. It's a great event for the community," said audience member Lynn Jaeger. "It's become a great Granby tradition, and it also really helps the kids."

All the teams seemed eager to show their stuff, and many engaged in some light banter before the show. The Worker Bees, made up of Rich McGeary of Avon, Joe Grochmal of Great Barrington, Mass. and Jeff Routledge of West Hartford, said they had spent the whole week on Wikipedia gearing up for the competition. "We think our chances are pretty high," said Routledge. The three work for Goodworks Insurance, an agency that gives money to charities and supports educational causes.

The bee consisted of six rounds called “swarms,” during which six teams are asked questions until two are eliminated, at which point one question is asked to the remaining teams, who answer by writing on a whiteboard. The last team standing at the end of each swarm move on to the championship round.

The last round consisted of the Different Drummers, Belfry Bees, First Timers, Valley Girls, the Bee “S”s, and defending champions the Drones. The competition was fierce as questions ranging in topic from the Terminator movies to Elvis Presley’s younger brother’s name were asked, before a question about the original name of the New York Yankees (the New York Highlanders) finally resulted in the Bee “S”s being crowned new champions.

A panel of judges consisted of Granby High School principal James Bowe, assistant principal Kimberly Calcasola and Superintendent of Schools Alan Addley.

The Jonas Brothers team said the screams in the auditorium would have been even louder if it were not for a sixth grade dance at the middle school that evening, which they said cut directly into the heart of their fan base.

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