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Mind games, anyone?

Traveling Game Show tests mental acuity.

BY MARC BENJAMIN

THE FRESNO BEE

Ernie Guderjahn is a one-man game show, a regular Alex Trebek on wheels.

Guderjahn strolls the grounds of The Big Fresno Fair as the walking centerpiece of a shiny and strange-looking four-wheel vehicle he calls the Traveling Game Show.

The Travelin'g Game Show, free with fair admission, consists of four tape decks, a 650-watt amplifier, a music machine with 500song capacity, a sound-effects machine, compact disc player and 12-volt batteries.

And when Guderjahn stops, the trivia starts.

He asks questions, and the audience answers. When someone answers correctly, Guderjahn tosses the audience member a string of Mardi Gras beads.

The game moves fast, and top prize winners — those who answer bonus questions or trade in their three strands of beads — left Wednesday with pens or a toy figure that rappels down a wall when tossed against it.

Question topics range from the basic to the somewhat obscure – from "Last of the Mohicans" characters and the Marx Brothers' real names to birthstones and the solar system.

"It gets them to think," said Gud-



DARRELL WONG - THE FRESNO BEE

Ernie Guderjahn gives Mardi Gras beads to people who answer trivia questions correctly during his performances at The Big Fresno Fair.

erjahn, who lives in Murrietta and wrote old West and other performance shows for Knott's Berry Farm and Magic Mountain amusement parks before taking his show on the road.

"It's a game built for people who like to think; it's not like most games at the fair that require hand-eye coordination."

Often, he said, astute players are confined to a wheelchair. "I also find a lot of bashful kids will come out of their shell because they can shout something out and have anonymity," Guderjahn said.

The key to answering Guderjahn's queries is listening to the questions. "The question itself is the key to the answer," he said. "This is a very out-of-the-box form of entertainment for a fair. The bottom line is that you learn."

Seated in the Country Corral with three strands of beads around his neck, Brad Evans and his friend, Jamey Thompson, said they were impressed by Guderjahn's quiz show.

"We have kids who would get some of those questions, too," Evans said.

Added Thompson: "It's a nice, relaxing form of entertainment."

The reporter can be reached at mbenjamin@fresnobee.com or 441-6166.