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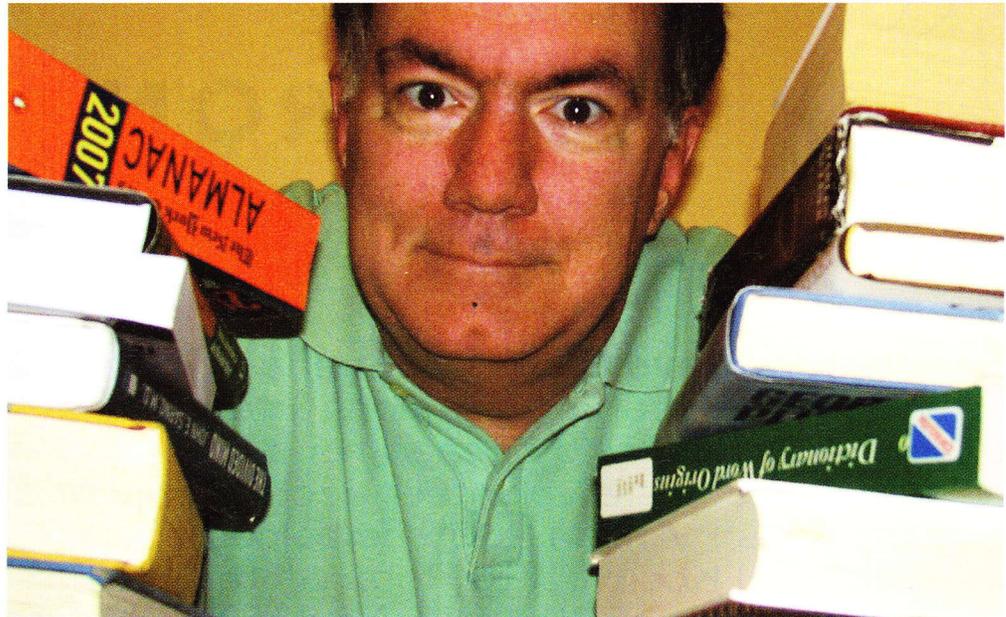
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Simon Brighenti Jr. has found a way to put his encyclopedic trove of knowledge to good use.

GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Trivial pursuits pay off for Massachusetts Rotarian

Question: How many lawyers does it take to write 300 trivia questions?

Answer: One, when it's Simon J. Brighenti Jr., a member of the Rotary Club of West Springfield, Mass., USA.

Brighenti has parlayed a lifelong passion for trivia into an unusual avocation: writing questions and answers for trivia games. He coauthored the electronic version of NBC's popular TV quiz show *1 vs. 100*, writing approximately 300 questions – along with 900 possible answers – for the tabletop game.

Question: What kind of quiz questions come from the pen of this full-time lawyer, active Rotarian, longtime *Jeopardy* fan, avid Connect Four player, sometime poet,

and volunteer coach for his children's baseball teams?

Answer: Brighenti is adept at crafting questions on topics as varied as ancient Rome, contemporary athletics, and pop culture.

"I'm pretty much a generalist, though I have a special interest in sports and history," Brighenti says. "I've also been a movie buff since childhood, and I minored in Latin and classical studies in college."

Question: How does he do it?

Answer: Writing trivia questions is, well, anything but a trivial pursuit.

How does your trivia knowledge stack up against Brighenti's?

1 A Reno loner is one of these. (palindrome, pachyderm, or anagram)

2 This musician played in Traffic for years and never got hurt. (Phil Collins, Peter Gabriel, or Steve Winwood)

3 Julius Caesar tells you to go to Helvetia. Where would you end up? (Switzerland, England, or Holland)

4 Whose Sharona was she? (The Beatles', The Knack's, or The Cars')

Answers below.

It takes a certain skill to turn a nugget of information into an interesting question of 20 words or less. "If a fact is too obscure or has no entertainment value, no one will care about the question, and the answer possibilities have to be crafted to sound reason-

able," Brighenti says.

"Although writing quiz questions is a sideline," he adds, "it's nice to have a use for a lifetime of trivia knowledge."

– MARYA SMITH

ANSWERS: 1. PALINDROME 2. STEVE WINWOOD 3. SWITZERLAND 4. THE KNACK'S