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Friday, April 5 2019, 8:36 AM

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April 2, 2019 at 6:00 am | Updated April 2, 2019 at 8:30 am



1 of 3 Regular cast members Carolyn Faye Fox and Murray Horwitz high-five during a round of "Says You!" (Laura Sher)

By [Gemma Alexander](#)
Special to [The Seattle Times](#)

Take one word, add two teams, create three definitions and throw in a live audience. That's the recipe for nationally broadcast public-radio game show "Says You!" The show, recorded live in cities around the country, quizzes regular cast members and local guests on obscure questions of English grammar and American culture.

"Says You!" is the hardest game on American radio — more akin to Jeopardy and often more difficult, but often more playful," says Executive Producer Laura Sher. With the motto, "It's not important to know the answers, it's important to like the answers," an entertaining bluff is valued as much as a correct response. "We call it recreational thinking," Sher says.

On April 5 and 6, "Says You!" will record live performances at the University of Washington's Kane Hall.

"Says You!" has been on the air for 22 years. "That puts us in the longest running of American shows in any form of media. We like being in the company of 'Bonanza,' 'Lassie' and 'The Simpsons,'" says Sher. At times in the show's history, Boston-based "Says You!" has been the No. 1 show on Seattle's local public-radio station KUOW. It is still among the most popular programs that KUOW's nearly half-million listeners tune in to each week.

"Seattle is a unique market. Very, very few cities in the nation can boast that the No. 1 station in the market is a public-radio station. Hats off to KUOW," says Sher. "The cast loves being recognized in public in Seattle simply by their voices."

Seattle's connection to the show goes deeper than high public-radio listenership. Sher's late husband, Richard Sher, who created the show and was the original host, got the idea for "Says You!" when he was in Seattle. He was inspired by an episode of KUOW's live, national performance program "Sandy Bradley's Potluck," which was produced by KUOW announcer [Gregg Porter](#). "He called me the godfather of 'Says You!'" Porter recalls.

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Porter's active participation in the show began after Richard Sher's death from cancer in 2015. TV journalist and longtime cast member Barry Nolan was hosting at the time. A contestant became ill and couldn't perform. "I was on the air at KUOW when I got the call asking if I could fill in on four hours' notice. The show went well, and I became an occasional guest," says Porter. Two years ago, Nolan and Porter switched places. "I think he missed the fun of playing the game as a panelist. That gave me the opportunity to jump in and I was tickled to be the host. Being the host is a little bit easier because I have the answers. But it's scarier because I have no idea where the panelists will go with it."

The upcoming Seattle performances, which will mark Porter's two-year anniversary as the show's host, have already taken a detour. Originally scheduled to take place at Town Hall, ongoing construction at that venue required "Says You!" to relocate to the University of Washington campus. "Having joined forces with UW for this event, we are showcasing some professional talent — well, we certainly hope so. We have pros who are willing to sport with us at our table, eager to play the game, eager to match wits, eager to have fun whether their team wins or loses," says Sher.

On Friday, Brian Reed, Divisional Dean of the Humanities and professor of English, will join Nolan's team with Erin McKean, founder of online dictionary [Wordnik.com](#). On Saturday, Chris Bretherton, professor in the departments of atmospheric science and applied mathematics, will sit in the same seat. They will compete against regular cast members: Tony Award winner Murray Horwitz, culture critic Carolyn Faye Fox, and playwright and actor Deb Hiett. Live music interludes will be provided by the UW jazz program.

"Says You!" is broadcast on KUOW on Saturdays at 6 p.m. and is available on podcast. Broadcast dates have not yet been scheduled for the Seattle shows. "We try to turn them around within weeks, but you just have to listen every week to make sure you don't miss them," says Porter.

"Says You! The Come Back in SeaTac," 7:30 p.m. April 5, \$28-\$40, and "The Battle in Seattle," April 6, \$28-\$50; University of Washington's Kane Hall Roethke Auditorium, 4069 Spokane Lane, Seattle; 781-891-7575, [saysyou.net/get-tickets](#)

There will also be a performance to benefit [The Jefferson Clemente Course for the Humanities: "Says You! Quips on the Quimper,"](#) 4 p.m. April 7, Chimuacum High School, 91 W. Valley Road, Chimuacum; \$25-\$50, 781-891-7575, [saysyou.net/get-tickets](#)

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