

Says You!

A Mensa-worthy Romance

How I fell in love with a radio show ... and what happened when it loved me back

By Linda Ferrazzara

I live my life through a *Says You!* filter.

It started as a curiosity.

If you're like me, it gets harder and harder to find the kind of creative, ingenious puzzles that challenge your imagination and mental agility and produce that ultimate "Aha!" moment once you've solved them. But I'm always looking....

It was probably about 15 years ago that I came across a reference to a radio show called *Says You!*

Says You! is a weekly word game quiz show that airs on public radio stations and PBS. The late Richard Sher, the show's creator and original writer, described it as "a game of bluff and bluster, words and whimsy." So, I listened as six witty and intelligent panelists, obviously great friends, bantered back and forth, ad-libbing groan-worthy but hilarious puns, coming out with the most obscure facts and trivia, having a blast, and generously including the audience. After that first listen, I was hooked.

Sher described his inspiration for *Says You!* as the desire to recreate, on the radio, a comfortable space to just

relax and let loose for an hour or so. No pressure, no stress, no cutthroat competition, no implacable egos. "I've always thought that the brightest, most meaningful conversations take place in parlors," Sher wrote in "*Says Us!*": *Scripts and Quips from "Says You!"*; Volume 1: *The Early Years*.



That simple idea became the guiding premise at the heart of the show: "Friends talking to friends. Families together."

And that's exactly how I feel on Saturday nights when my husband and I listen to *Says You!* – like part of an extended family, sitting around and having a great time, playing an old-fashioned parlor game. We ponder; we discuss; we shout out answers (as if the participants on the radio could hear us!); but most of all, we laugh. It's a chance to recharge our mental and emotional batteries, together.

Although *Says You!* is based in Boston, the production travels during the year, recording live shows at venues all around the country. Ten years ago, I decided to take the plunge and started attending live tapings as often as I could when they were taking place in my resident Boston area, usually around the Christmas and New Year's holidays. My daughter and I braved many midwinter blizzards, ice- and snow-covered highways, and rampant flu outbreaks to see *Says You!* in person, each death-defying trek worth every