We know you’ve forgotten almost everything you crammed into your brain for that Organic Chemistry exam. But let’s see how much of the really useful stuff you’ve retained from your NC State adventure, from your knowledge of campus landmarks to your repertoire of university songs.

We enlisted Emmy-winning writer Greg Volk ’03 to help (see p. 47 for more about Volk). His day job involves coming up with the trivia questions for the popular Discovery Channel show Cash Cab, in which unsuspecting passengers find themselves in a New York City cab with a driver who will give them cash if they can correctly answer a few trivia questions. If they do well, passengers can earn a few hundred dollars as they are driven to their destination. Miss too many questions, though, and they may find themselves dropped off in an unfamiliar part of town.

We’re not going to give you any cash for correct answers, but we’re not going to give you a bum ride if you don’t do well. You’re playing for Wolfpack bragging rights. Challenge your family and friends. But even if you miss a few (or a lot), you’re likely to learn a few things about your favorite university.

For answers and key to scoring, flip to page 58.
The replacement for the "N.C. College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts," what former name for NC State is "bricked" into the Yarborough Plant's smokestack?

Better known than the college's official fight song, what athletics anthem tells the "Devils and Deacs" to "stand in line"?

In his bronzed "ambulatory" form, Professor Emeritus of Chemistry William R. Johnston is more commonly known by what name?

Hanging out on campus with other future politicians known as the "Wolfpack Mafia," what record four-term North Carolina governor was a two-term NC State student body president?

seen most recently at a 2011 NC State basketball game renewing his vows with the missus, what NC State mascot’s name was chosen in 1981 by Scott Joseph ’84?
We can forgive which NC State chancellor for earning his Ph.D. at Duke because he also was the last chancellor who earned an NC State undergraduate degree?

What compound, abbreviated as UO₂, fuels NC State's PULSTAR nuclear reactor, the only active one of its kind on a U.S. college campus?

What temporary housing sites on West Campus were jokingly compared to barracks when they were used by students who fought in World War II?
Then serving as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, what future U.S. president delivered the commencement speech for the class of 1913?

More Than a Trivial Pursuit

Greg Volk ‘03 writes 20 questions a day for a game show.

Greg Volk ‘03 came to NC State as an engineering major. But as he was hitting a wall with his classes, he says, he got involved with Technician and eventually became its opinion editor. “I thought, ‘I’m already doing this extracurricular thing that I’m good at and I’m struggling in this other arena. I should listen to the circumstances and go in a new direction,’” the former Caldwell Fellow says. The new direction led to an internship with the Late Show with David Letterman, which inspired him to try television writing. Since then, as a self-employed TV and comedy writer in Brooklyn, N.Y., his credits have included writing monologue jokes for the Late Show and satire pieces for The Onion News Network. Last summer, he won his second Emmy as part of the trivia writing team for Discovery Channel’s game show Cash Cab.

How did you get into writing trivia questions? I didn’t necessarily pick Cash Cab. I was getting very down writing about pop culture [for VH1’s Best Week Ever], and a friend who was [there] said, “I’d recommend you to Cash Cab. I think you would like it.” Cash Cab intrigued me, because everything is a trivia question or could be. Every ad you see, article or book you read, something someone tells you that you’ve never heard before—everything is fodder for trivia.

You have to come up with 20 trivia questions a day for Cash Cab. How do you do that? I have two goals. One is to write what may even be a bad trivia question. The fact is that not everything is going to be good. Just get something on paper, because at least you’re doing something. The other goal is to take breaks. It’s difficult to tell yourself to do that because you’re thinking, “It’s five o’clock and I have to write 10 more questions,” but just take a mental break and something will pop into your head that will prompt the next question.

What’s your favorite trivia question? That’s really difficult to answer because I have written thousands and thousands. But probably it is, “What grammatical no-no is featured in the iconic song lyric ‘We don’t need no education’?”

The answer is, “a double negative.” That’s an easy question. The easy questions are more difficult to write generally, because you don’t want to make them too obvious. As soon as you say “famous physicist,” everyone thinks Einstein, and as soon as you say “famous playwright” everyone thinks Shakespeare. It’s very tricky, striking that balance of being relatable without giving it away. The pressure is highest to be clever.

What’s one way your NC State experience has helped you? The [Caldwell] program pushed me to be self-reliant and self-reflective. That’s incredibly important for someone who works in a creative field. There’s not a defined hierarchy in television, so every new show you work on is essentially like a new small business. There’s no well-established chain of command and no workflow; sometimes they can’t even tell you, “This is what we want.” I found myself sometimes having to help my boss lead or manage. That’s what I learned from the leadership training we had through the Caldwell program.

—Anna Norris

No 13

What is the significance of 44, a perfect score in our trivia test, in NC State athletics history?
Built in 1901 to replicate a state-of-the-art textile mill, what building once required more electricity than the campus could provide?

Striking fear into the hearts of weeds, what famous nickname was given to N.C. Agriculture Commissioner Jim Graham '42?

Distantly related to a North Carolina-born president, what farmer and political leader helped propose a $1 tax on dogs to pay for NC State's founding?

"The fundamental law of the College is this: Always and everywhere, be a ______________."
No 18

Designated as the first female dorm in 1965, what campus building shares its name with a Native American word often translated as “the land beyond”?

No 19

What futurist architect and inventor of the geodesic dome once taught at NC State, helping design students think outside the box?

No 20

Which U.S. president vetoed the Morrill Land Grant Act, nearly nipping NC State in the bud, before it was later enacted by President Abraham Lincoln?

No 21

To represent unknown soldiers and correct a clerical error, the Memorial Bell Tower inscription “G.L. Jeffers” was modified to what?