



The Enquirer/ Joseph Fuqua II

**Local band** My Sister Sarah performs – with the lead singer clad in a tiara and one of the guitar players sporting a beanie topped with a propeller – during the hat contest at Turfway Park.

## Turfway: It's all about the party

From Page B1

more coyly, all hoping for louder cheers. The simplicity of Boyers' entry captivated the crowd.

"I'm actually a bit embarrassed," Boyers whispered as her photo was taken afterward.

It was a true party in Turfway's fourth-level foyer late Saturday afternoon and evening during the event the track billed as the second annual "Biggest Derby Party in Town." The local event has become so popular it's the racetrack's second biggest revenue day – even without any live racing – behind only its Vinery Racing Spiral Stakes, said Jack Gordon, Turfway's director of sales and marketing.

For years, Turfway had piggy-backed on the Derby. But two years ago it added a band at the last

minute, Gordon said.

"We started doing the band two years ago, and people loved the party aspect of it," Gordon said. The track last year billed the day as a party. A party band, My Sister Sarah, played sets of fun, punk-edged rock, dressed as a truly nerdy collection of goobers, complete with broken eyeglasses, geeky plaid outfits, a tutu and even a beanie topped with a propeller.

The party drew a good number of people from Louisville, home to the Derby itself.

"This is my second time here – I'm from Louisville," said Jeff Johnson, 37. "I'm here to see my girlfriend (Kim Johnson, 42, of Florence)." The Derby itself "is fun, but there's too many people there," he added.

And Turfway's event is less wild, he said.

It was an especially nice day in Florence because Kentucky Derby winner Animal Kingdom had qualified for the derby at Turfway's late-March Vinery Racing Spiral Stakes, Gordon said. Derby entrants Decisive Moment and Twin-spined also qualified here.

Turfway's Derby party is an effort to grow horseracing interest among casual fans – those who might show up for the party, or the 50 percent of the crowd who attend with serious fans. "This is our Super Bowl," Gordon said.

Chantell Fetter, 36, originally of Hartwell but now living in Wapakoneta, said she was glad she and her boyfriend visited Turfway this year, instead of tracks in Columbus, Indianapolis or Pennsylvania.

"I love it. I love the band," she said. "It's nice. Plus, I was able to see family."