

Former NFP intern now a top copywriter

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It's kind of like adult summer camp. Despite the circumstances, like being masked and distancing, we all became friends – because everyone's just so excited and so nervous. And also, you don't know anyone; so, you just immediately latch onto each other. I actually walked away with a couple of friends. We keep in touch. One of them's local, so we might hang out.

The players are the audience. So, the cool thing is, is that it is so intimate. You know these people's stories throughout the day just from chatting and being on break. When that player is up there, you're like, "Yeah, Joe. Way to go!" You're excited for him and his family, because you know all about his life, where he lives, etc.

It was different not having a huge studio audience, I'm sure. But there was a little bit of relief that it wasn't so big of a production. Maybe why I seemed so calm!

Q: That, of course, would be the next question. What does it feel like to be on the stage, at the wheel, seeing Pat and Vanna, preparing to solve these puzzles?

OB: It's really surreal. Seeing it in person, seeing the set, is so crazy. I mean, you've pictured it on TV, but it looks so different with the lights and the sound, all the mics and the people. It's very cool and overwhelming, and you realize just how big of a deal it is, when you're standing there waiting.

And the other thing, too, is this is a game show. They can't legally stop the clock. So, you're rolling. You can't say, "Wait, let me say that over again! Hold on, wait, can I do that one more time?" It's like no; they press play, and Pat and Vanna come out, and it's go-time for 22 minutes. They do not stop.

Q: Did you go in with a particular strategy? I saw you calling some vowels – you know, people kind of go back and forth about whether they should buy vowels or not buy vowels. Was there a certain game plan that you wanted to employ?

OB: My strategy was buy vowels, so I'm glad that you noticed (laughs).

Pat's biggest tip is buy vowels. There's only five of them, so you have a one in five chance of at least getting something in the puzzle. And then what happens is it'll help you call smarter consonants, based on the vowels. There's a three-letter word and it starts with an "A," it's probably "And." Then you can call your "N" and your "D," and keep moving your way through the puzzle.

That was definitely my biggest strategy. That and don't pass out.

Q: How cool was it that they had the Disney theme – particularly with you, as you said, coming from a big Disney family?

OB: It was really cool. I mean, everyone there was a big Disney fan. When you fill out your form, there are certain things that you can pick. It's like you have certain shows that you want to be on – like the college show and whatever. I must have picked Disney. I am a Disney fan, but it was even cooler than I thought it would be.

The set was unreal, that they turned this around in a day. It was very, very cool. But it was also cool because the rest of the adults were Disney adults. Everyone was extra excited to be there, because they're winning prizes that had to do with Disney; and the vibes were just fun.

Q: What can you say about Pat and Vanna? I don't know if you had any other opportunity to chat with them beyond what we saw on air. What was your experience with them like?

OB: Oh my god, I honestly think they are two of the most professional and authentic people. They do this so often, and they've been doing it for so long. They were friendly. They really cared. They were out there.

Vanna came out on her way to hair and makeup and said hi to everyone and was like, "Hit the million! I'm so excited." She was so excited – did not need to do that – and just came out and said hi to everyone.

And Pat, I mean, his wit is really that quick.

It's very amazing to watch them work. They're professionals, but also super natural. It's fun to watch them together, and also live in front of you.

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 "Wheel of Fortune's" "Secret Santa Holiday Giveaway" contest continues for another week. The show airs locally at 7 p.m. on CBS (WIVB-TV Channel 4).

For those interested, the game show's publicity team shared, "It's never been easier to audition to become a contestant. 'Wheel of Fortune' fans can submit applications at <https://www.wheeloffortune.com/join/be-a-contestant> for a chance to be invited to a virtual audition. There, potential contestants can show off their puzzle-solving skills and potentially be selected to appear as a contestant on the show from the comfort of their own homes. If selected to be on the show, everyone goes home with a minimum of \$1,000."

Wheatfield in holiday spirit



The corner of Nash Road and Niagara Falls Boulevard in the Town of Wheatfield has been decorated to show the joys of the season. (Photo by Michael DePietro)

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"There was a repair made on that line, and it wasn't repaired quite the way it should have been. And it actually rusted out part of the pipe," he explained. "Now it was fixed properly. We replaced the whole length of pipe."

Donner said Cerrone will take care of the blacktop on the area's road edge that requires refurbishing.

He noted, "We also don't have prices yet from them. We're just getting everything together in order to replace all the parts that we borrowed and have enough stuff on hand in case this happens again."

Officials explained that, because the repair project was a public emergency, the town did not have to comply with competitive bidding requirements pursuant to General Municipal Law. Councilman Larry Helwig explained recently received federal coronavirus funds could be used to cover some of the costs for the repair.

Wheatfield Enhancement Volunteers

The council offered thanks and praise to the Wheatfield Enhancement Volunteers for their work in decorating the corner of Nash Road and Niagara Falls Boulevard for the holiday season as part of the "Boulevard Beautification" event. Councilman Curt Doktor, a member of the volunteer group, implored residents looking for some holiday cheer to stop by for a look.

"If you get a chance, take a peek – because it's all lit up at night," he said. "We've got our Norman Rockwell-esque characters up that were up last year, and a couple of additional embellishments that I think were added this year. So, I think it looks really nice."

Doktor also said the group was encouraging all members of the town, especially businesses and residents along the boulevard, to participate in the event by decorating to the nines through Jan. 2.

Supervisor Don MacSwan applauded the volunteers for their hard work and dedication in braving the cold to help make the corner look beautiful.

"You're a great group, and I truly appreciate what you do for the town. Some people don't notice, but I do," he said.

Doktor replied, "It's such a such a dedicated group of volunteers that are so willing to help out. So, that's what makes it easy."

Public Hearings Scheduled

The board scheduled a pair of upcoming public hearings, with the first pertaining to battery energy storage systems, primarily in their usage with utility-grade solar energy facilities.

In a motion, the town declared itself SEQR lead agency and announced a coordinated review of a proposed revision to the Town Code, Chapter 200 – Zoning. The board authorized its engineering firm, Wendel, to provide assistance in completing the coordinated review process.

The public hearing is scheduled for 6:45 p.m. Monday, Dec. 20, at the Wheatfield Town Hall, 2800 Church Road.

A second public hearing is scheduled for 7 p.m. This one is regarding a petition to create a lighting district for the Woodlands Patio Homes subdivision, the boundaries of the proposed district, lighting improvements proposed, and the estimated cost of the proposed district.

Elsewhere, the board announced a number of potential vacancies in annually appointed positions. Included are: town historian, Assessment Board of Review Planning Board member, grant writer, town attorney, senior citizen's leader, Zoning Board of Appeals member, bingo inspector, town prosecutor and town engineer.

For more information, contact the town clerk's office at 716-694-644.

The next regular Town Board meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. Dec. 20.

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