

~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

Moraga mom crosses item off bucket list



Photos provided

Tiffany Seitler on the Feb. 10 episode of "Jeopardy."

By Diane Claytor

It will likely be some time before Tiffany Seitler will forget that the Hindenburg was named after the second president of the Weimar Republic. Why should the Moraga mom of two care about the naming of the German passenger ship destroyed in a fire back in 1937? Because that was the final question on the Feb. 10 episode of "Jeopardy" – and the question that took her from second place to third on the popular TV game show. Seitler acknowledges that she had no idea the answer to that question. "As friends pointed out, I went down like the Hindenburg," she laughingly reports.

Apparently, there's a whole mathematical strategy to betting in final "Jeopardy." Seitler admits that her final bet was perhaps not as carefully thought out as it should have been. With \$8,000 she bet \$7,900. "At that point, it really didn't matter," she notes. "The third place contestant and I were so far behind the champion, there was no way we were going to beat

him. I probably should have bet a little less so I could have at least come in second. Having no idea what the question was, I still had confidence that there was a chance I'd get it right and at least get something." She did get something – \$1,000 instead of the second place prize of \$2,000.

What she absolutely did get was the opportunity to achieve a long-standing goal. In fact, while Seitler says she's taken the written test numerous times, this was the third time she actually moved on to the next level. Her first time was in 2004 and her second attempt was about 10 years later. Both times she got through to the second round of auditions but never got the call to be on the show. The third time – spring 2020 – was apparently the charm.

According to a 2019 champion who wrote on social media, she was told that about 80,000 people took the online "Jeopardy" test, which is the first step in qualifying. Approximately 2,500 people are invited to audition and 250 will actually appear on the show.

The process to apply has changed because of COVID-19. In 2004 and again in 2015, Seitler was invited to the second round game play audition at a San Francisco hotel months after completing the 50-question, timed online test. "Both times, I sat there with hundreds of other potential contestants," Seitler recalls. They are divided up into small groups, given another written test and then stand at a podium with two others, with a buzzer, to play a pretend game. "The producers chatted with us, much like they do on the show, for about a minute and that's it. Our application sits in their file for 12 to 18 months."

Last spring, Seitler took the online anytime test and received a call in November, inviting her to the second round audition via Zoom. The process was the same, she reports, only virtual. But this time, her application didn't just sit in a file somewhere. She got the call. She'd made it. The taping was scheduled for two weeks later.

"Jeopardy," like everything else, has been changed by the pandemic. The day before the taping, Seitler went to the LA studio for a COVID test. On her scheduled day, she sat in a theater-style waiting area several seats away from her neighbors, all wearing masks. The makeup person couldn't touch her so she was given powder, a brush and instructions on what to do. The sound technician couldn't place the microphone on her so, again, she was handed the equipment and told what to do. The podiums are placed further apart than pre-COVID and the host, in Seitler's case, Ken Jennings, never gets closer than six feet from the contestants.

With travel restrictions in place, most recent contestants are California residents. But,



Tiffany Seitler's very proud family, husband Mike and children Jake and Jessica, watch her on "Jeopardy."

Seitler says, in an attempt to perhaps sound more global, she was not introduced as being from Moraga but, instead, "originally from Garfield, New Jersey."

While some "Jeopardy" contestants admit to preparing by watching previous shows and studying a myriad of topics, Seitler states that she crammed on basic facts but "you can study all day. There's just no way you can possibly know the answers to all the questions."

She did determine – after

the fact – that "if I could have buzzed in for every question I knew, I could have done a lot better." There's definitely an art to buzzing in, Seitler says. "If you buzz in too early, you're locked out for a second. Too late and, well, it's too late." One of the things the producers rehearse with the contestants prior to the actual taping is working the buzzer.

Seitler may not have been a big winner, but she had a once-in-a-lifetime experience and she got to cross off one bucket list item.

Looking Good in Lamorinda Easy Elegance



Photo Debra Szidon

Crossbody bag by Cass Clutch.

By Moya Stone

Word has it in the fashion world that the trend for spring 2021 is Easy Elegance. A full year into the pandemic, many of us have a desire to step away from the sweats and into something more presentable. Designers are on it and this season they are showing longer, fuller silhouettes that provide a sense of protection, comfort, and a touch of elegance.

Harper Greer in Lafayette is our local expert boutique in offering comfortable yet chic clothing. Shop owner Terry Kiskaddon says that customers right now are not buying dresses or pants. "There aren't many special occasions to wear dresses." And since we're attending meetings and socializing on Zoom, "it's all about tops of all kinds but mostly casual," says Kiskaddon.

The brands that Harper Greer carries, such as Eleven Stitch and Tulip, have shifted



Photo Harper Greer

Harper Greer model wears a plaid shirt by Eleven Stitch and hat by FH Clothing.

their designs to casual, relaxed silhouettes, like A-line blouses and boxy sweaters. Kiskaddon tells me that customers are looking for something different to add to their wardrobes, something to "cheer them up." For spring Harper Greer is stocking lots of color and patterns but currently flannel shirts are flying out the door. Customers can shop in person (with a mask) or online, curbside pickup is available. Visit online harpergreer.com.

I have noticed that when I do venture out into the world I'm reaching for my crossbody purses, which allow for hands-free, quick and easy access to the new essentials – mask and hand sanitizer. Local handbag designer Debra Szidon from Cass Clutch has been busy this past year expanding her line to include new shapes and sizes and fun patterned straps that make any bag in the collection into a crossbody bag. "All Cass Clutch handbags can be carried multiple ways and have accessories to coordinate with," Szidon explains. "Flat Pouches with side tabs allow a strap to be attached for crossbody, over the shoulder

or on the hip wear." Check out the new styles at the-classclutch.com.

It was a happy surprise when I recently ran into Eliza Jamkochian from Glamorous Boutique. I reported last year that Jamkochian closed her Lafayette shop but she's selling online and there's more news – she's offering personal stylist services. Jamkochian puts together outfits for her clients and she will hand deliver or pop a package in the mail. Anything that doesn't work is returnable. Follow on Facebook: glamorouslafayette.

At press time, the de Young Museum was still closed to in-person visits, but we can view online the museum's current costume exhibit, "Frida Kahlo: Appearances Can Be Deceiving." When the renowned Mexican artist died in 1954, her husband, artist Diego Rivera, sealed off her room and many of her possessions in their "Blue House" located outside Mexico City. Fifty years later the room was opened and now on exhibit are the personal possessions of Kahlo including letters, photos, art works, cosmetics, jewelry and clothing. Known as much for her unique fashion style as she was for her self-reflecting art, Kahlo used fashion as a means to express her identity often wearing Tehuana. She was drawn to the bright colors used in the traditional Mexican dress as well as the full skirts, which covered her polio afflicted right leg. Learn more at deyoung.famsf.org.

Stay safe out there and ... go forth in style.

Moya Stone is a fashion blogger at www.overdressed-forlife.com.



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