

Taste of Lockport decides to go with a pro

BY BILL WOLCOTT
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Jeannie M. Wolf, a 2000 graduate of the University at Buffalo, is the first event coordinator of the Taste of Lockport.

The 29-year-old native of South Carolina is the owner/event specialist of Event Elements of Franklin Street in Buffalo. Wolf's father was in the Air Force and she has bounced around, but her family is from this area and she calls Buffalo home.

Wolf was a communications major at UB and is a certified meeting professional.

The Taste of Lockport will be

held from noon until 6 p.m., Sunday at Ida Fritz Park on Main Street and Transit Road. Wolf will be at the event, probably at the corner of Hawley and West Avenue, communicating with 10 staffers through headsets.

QUESTION: Is Event Elements your own company?

ANSWER: It's just me, but my mother, Jane Wolf, she is my right-hand person. I wouldn't be able to do it without her. On event days I have a pretty good crew.

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Q: Who contacted you from the Taste of Lockport?

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FILE PHOTO

TASTY TASK: Jeannie Wolf of Event Elements, event planner for the upcoming "Taste of Lockport," enjoys barbecue ribs at one of the restaurants participating at the event, One Eyed Jacks BBQ Restaurant on South Transit Road in Lockport.

QUESTION ANSWER

**Jeannie M. Wolf
Taste of Lockport
event planner**

TASTE ...

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A: Terri McDonald. She works at the Holiday Inn.

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Q: How did she find you?

A: We met a couple of years ago at a conference workshop in Ontario for Meeting Professionals International.

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Q: Where have you worked and how long have you been in business?

A: I've been in the business 10 years and I bounced around. I worked at the Culinary Institute of America and New York City as an event planner for NYU Downtown Hospital.

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Q: Did you work while in college?

A: I was an intern. That's how I found I loved the job. Rosanne Ball, who has retired, was my mentor.

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Q: How's your own business?

A: It's going really good. Each year it gets better.

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Q: Are there many events coordinators?

A: They're are events coordinators all over the place. I just

went to a conference in Montreal where there were 4,000.

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Q: What were the concerns of Taste of Lockport committee?

A: It's a large event for volunteers to handle. They have their own businesses to run. It was asking a lot of the volunteers. They wanted help to alleviate the burden.

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Q: When did you start working on it?

A: March.

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Q: How much time do you have to put into something like this?

A: It will probably be over 300 hours. I do marketing, coordinate the restaurants, the contest, the entertainment, safety stuff.

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Q: Who gave you the heads up on where to start?

A: The committee. They're kind of my guide. They tell me what their thoughts are and help me out. I would not be able to do this without the committee.

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Q: What did the committee want?

A: The wanted to have more sponsorship, increase the visibility of the event, with marketing, and a more solid procedure for restaurants.

WANT TO COOK LIKE THE PROS?

■ Tuesday through Saturday, the Union-Sun will interview cooks, chefs and owners of local restaurants attending the Taste of Lockport to help you improve your cooking. Our articles will feature their tips and pointers to help readers become better chefs at home.

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Q: Did you get more sponsorship?

A: We increased it from \$2,500 last year to \$8,000.

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Q: How much does a sponsor put in?

A: Different amounts from \$2,500 to \$250.

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Q: What do the sponsors get for their buck?

A: All kinds of things. They get radio spots. Cornerstone gets ads in the Union-Sun, a radio remote, posters, e-mails and Web sites.

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Q: Who are the major sponsors?

A: Cornerstone Community Credit Union, the Union-Sun & Journal, WLVL-Radio 1340, Mul-lane Chrysler, Dodge.

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Q: How did you increase visibility?

A: E-mail newsletters, different articles, a new banner across the road on East Avenue. We have new signs and posters. Summit Print and Mail printed the posters. Signs were done by D & T graphics.

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Q: Is participation up or down?

A: It's about the same. There are 18 restaurants and three wineries.

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Q: Are you having any fun?

A: I'm having tons of fun. I'm leaning a lot about Lockport and the community. I'm learning my way around.

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Q: What do you think of Lockport?

A: I think it's great and Lockport has great restaurants. Now I know where I want to go on Saturday nights.

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Q: How much are you making and are you worth it?

A: It's definitely worth it. It's paid for me plus. We made more money this year and it paid my fee.

Contact reporter Bill Wolcott at 439-9222, ext. 6246.