

## Will it play in Pawtucket

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Jan Dane of Pawtucket and The GAMM actor Steve Kidd practice commenting.

## By DONNA KENNY KIRWAN

PAWTUCKET — The good people of Pawtucket proved to be a sensible bunch. They would spend \$2.99 for a "Chewgar," a cigar-shaped rawhide chew for canines, but said "no thanks" to the \$99 Toobeez building toy of dubious durability and the \$15 bag of a puzzle-shaped candy/cookie item called "Confuzzled."

The market research, done by patrons and friends of Doherty's East Avenue Irish Pub,\* was all part of a production of CNBC's "The Big Idea with Donny Deutsch." A cast and crew from the show spent Monday afternoon inside the pub, taping three segments featuring local representatives.

According to a CNBC public relations spokesperson, "The Big Idea with Donny Deutsch" showcases how ordinary people can take their product concepts and inventions and find success. A key part of that process is finding out where the market for that product exists, and "The Big idea" goes to the heart of America to get real opinions from real people.

On Monday, "The Big Idea" took its new segment, "Will It Play in Peoria?" on the road to Pawtucket to solicit opinions from local residents on several new products. After scouting out a few locations, the producers chose Doherty's East Avenue Irish Pub for the taping.

One segment was scheduled to air that night, with others on Tuesday, Mar. 25 and Thursday, Mar. 27, at 10 p.m. and 1 a.m. on CNBC.

Jack Doherty, one of the pub's owners, was asked to be one of four on-camera product representatives. He was joined by Steve Kidd, an actor and educator who performs at the Gamm Theatre, Bonnie Carter, a local wedding photographer, and Jan Dane, a writer of travel guides.

The four got a taste of the lights, camera, action, (and in many cases, in-action) that occurs with taping segments for a cable TV broadcast. As producer Shauna Tesser tried to keep the energy level bubbling during repeat takes, Doherty, Kidd, Carter and Dane ad-libbed about their assigned products and how they were received by those they interviewed.

Doherty and his co-owner, Liz Florio, who purchased the pub about a year and a half ago, said they were enjoying all of the hoopla surrounding the filming, although it all happened rather quickly. "There's no such thing as bad publicity" noted Doherty, although Florio admitted that she did think the film crews scared away some of the lunchtime regulars.

Florio said she and Doherty sent and e-mailed ballots to their customers and friends asking people's opinions on a dozen products that will be judged in Pawtucket. Among the selection was the Booty Pop, cushioned panties designed to enhance the derriere; Sticars, magnetic graphics for the car, Toilet Tattoos, a removable decorative applique for a toilet seat, the Joey Jam Pack, a travel holder for water bottles, keys, cell phones, and money.

The four product representatives were allowed to give their own assessment of the products as well as how they fared in the polls. In some cases, the reviews didn't match, such as Jan Dane's dubious feeling about the Booty Pop, which those polled actually said they'd buy.

Doherty pronounced the Confuzzled cookies as "tasty" but, at \$15 a bag, too high priced, while Kidd worried that Toobeez, interlocking tubes and spheres designed for children, were "too complicated" and not sturdy enough.

Bonnie Carter said that while she would certainly buy Chewgars for her pet, she questioned why any woman would want to buy Chic Peeks, an adhesive fabric swatch designed to conceal cleavage in low-cut outfits. "Why wouldn't you just wear something else?" she opined. "For \$16 I'd rather buy a tank top."

The Pawtucket segment was going to be merged with the simultaneous taping of host Donny Deutsch from the CNBC offices in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

Several of Deutsch's fans had come by Doherty's East Avenue Irish Pub hoping to see the maverick CEO, who built a multi-billion advertising and media buisness.

Frank Balkum, a former patent lawyer and frequent viewer of "The Big Idea," had wanted to speak with Deutsch about a couple of his own inventions, a gutter guard, a portable, outdoor water bubbler, and a unique dispensing bottle for ketchup, mustard and other condiments. "I always watch him on TV. I'm disappointed he isn't here," he said.

Likewise, Abby Leavitt and her daughter, Julia, a student at St. Raphael Academy, had also hoped to meet Deutsch. Leavitt said that Julia is "an aspiring actress" and the she also has some "big ideas," such as a cookie/candy concoction that was even tastier that the Confuzzled product.

Herb Weiss, Pawtucket's Economic and Cultural Affairs Officer, was front and center at the taping of the segment and helping the producers to solicit enthusiasm from the pub's audience. Weiss said that he was not surprised that "The Big Idea" chose Pawtucket, saying that he is approached every month by someone from the movie or TV industry who wants to film here. "We always try to be encouraging," he stated.

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