

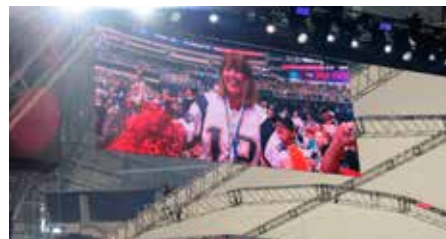


Last year, while my hubby and I were watching the NFL Draft on TV, an announcement was made that next draft would be in Arlington Texas, home of the Dallas Cowboys. I immediately added "Attending the NFL Draft" to my bucket list.

My other half replied, "Your bucket list has become a wash tub!" Towards the end of February this year, there was an announcement during the local news, that volunteers were needed to work the NFL draft in April. By the end of the night I had talked my cousin Sherry as well as friend Melissa into signing up with me. One week later, our background checks were completed.

"Customer Service and Security Training" was the week of the draft. Seated on the front row, I was distracted by a backpack between the stage and us. Mental note: "Don't trip over it when class is over!"

The bag turned out to be needed for the security portion to see if the class noticed its presence and let someone know. Melissa did and won a prize! Three days later we reported to the volunteer tent and were issued our NFL volunteer red t-shirt, windbreaker and cap. What are the odds of meeting someone in line from the town next to one's hometown over 1700 miles away? I did. Next were our assignments. Sherry was sent to the Red Carpet. Melissa and I headed to the fan interaction area with our lead, Joe.



"I need two people who can throw a football," he said. Not us. "I need two people to run alongside the fans doing the dash." Not us. We finally found

our home at the Super Bowl Trophies display. Six and a half hours after arrival, our shift was over with no break—the entire time on our feet and in the hot sun. Most volunteers elected to go home and rest up their feet for Day 2. I couldn't. Remember – attending the NFL Draft was on my bucket list.



I had free tickets for the 1st round of the draft six rows from the top of the nosebleed section. I was in envy of the fans in the VIP sections that were just a few feet away from the stage and players being drafted who were specks for me. But I was there!

It seemed like I had just fallen asleep when the alarm went off for Day Two. My feet were reminding me they were not the same feet that worked to Germany eight hours in heels over twenty years ago. Melissa and I worked an event coaching fans on how to use the special goggles which made them feel like they were on the sidelines of an NFL game. Sounded easy and was inside with A/C – a relief to my sunburned arms.

Of course the goggles would over-heat or I couldn't find my laser point – Melissa was always close by to rescue me. I met hundreds of fans representing all thirty-two teams. The shift went by quickly and I was once again ready to be a fan the rest of the afternoon and night. Melissa's common sense took over and she headed home. I found my cousin and I soon had passes for later that night back in the nosebleed section.

Short crisis – I forgot my jersey to change into – \$14.99 later, I was in a Gronkowski T-shirt. To kill time until the draft, we visited the displays of locker rooms, uni-



Carlotta with NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell

forms and helmets. While posing in front of a Patriots helmet, a gal in New England garb approached me. She offered us tickets for the draft and unlike ours; these were in the Patriots fan section a few feet from the stage!

Soon we were looking up at the poor souls in the nosebleed section – and not only night two but day three as well! We received foil pom poms and inflated cheer sticks, got to meet a couple of retired players and Commissioner Goodell, be on the big screen TV several times and even trash-talked with fans of other teams! Life couldn't have been any better for this sports fan! Check! What's next on my bucket list... err..... wash tub?

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