

RONA

Hello, I'm Rona Lisa Peretti, and I'm pleased to be back for my ninth consecutive year as your host. Unfortunately, our usual word pronouncer, Superintendent Spriggs, has [fallen ill]¹, so please join me in welcoming back Vice Principal Douglas Panch from Lake Hemingway-Dos Passos Junior High. Vice Principal Panch is returning to us after a five-year hiatus – so thank you, Douglas, for stepping in on such short notice.

(Vice Principal Panch enters.)

PANCH

Thank you, Rona, and I would like to say as to the incident five years ago, I'm in a much better place now. It's amazing what a change of diet can do for a man. Thank you.

RONA

Wonderful.

PANCH

(has always been a bit smitten by Rona)

And may I add, Ms. Peretti here is not only one of Putnam County's top realtors, she's also a former spelling champion herself.

RONA

Third annual.

PANCH

“Syzygy.”

RONA

“Syzygy. When the earth aligns with the moon and the sun.”

PANCH

Beautiful. And now for the Pledge of Allegiance led by our comfort counselor,

(checks writing on the palm of his hand)

Mr. Mitchell M. Mahoney.

(Mitch Mahoney, the Comfort Counselor, enters. He looks like he would be a bouncer at a gritty bar.)

RONA

Mr. Mahoney is doing his community service work with us here today.

¹ [Ad lib note: “fallen ill” = occasional ad lib space. Illness is sometimes replaced with a topical or local reference. For example, when Dick Cheney's hunting accident was in the news – “has been injured in a hunting accident”; in an area of heavy traffic – “is stuck in traffic on Route X”; but the default is also fine.]