

Super Tuesday election highlight for foreign visitors

By Laura Eversz

Fresh from a tour of Washington, D.C., Novita Wund and Yuzo Onohara agree that their visit to the polling place at Third Street Elementary School on Super Tuesday was the highlight of a two-week trip in the U.S.

Wund is a senior information specialist with the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia; Onohara works in the Embassy's press office in Tokyo, Japan.

The pair traveled to Los Angeles after spending a week in Washington as part of a 10-day training program sponsored by the Foreign Service Institute of the U.S. Department of State.

Following their visit to the nation's capital, Wund, Onohara and 23 other foreign nationals came to Los Angeles to examine the U.S. political process firsthand during the

California presidential primaries.

Sandra Kohn of the International Visitors Council of Los Angeles coordinated the visit. She welcomes international leaders to Los Angeles and hosts networking events at her home.

Wund and Onohara expressed their amazement at the openness of the process as they observed voters—declaring aloud their political affiliation—file in and out of the polling place on

Feb. 5.

“As the youngest democratic country, Indonesia has similarities to the U.S., which is the oldest,” said Wund. “But I find it amazing that people are so open here as they vote. In Indonesia, it is very secretive.”



U.S. EMBASSY staff members Novita Wund (left) and Yuzo Onohara watched the voting at Third Street Elementary School on Super Tuesday.

Onohara agrees. “Here today we witness American

politics, and to me this is the highlight of our visit. I, too, am amazed that it is so open, and that even a foreign visitor can come in to the polling place, talk to the media and take pictures.”

The diversity of voters also captured the pair's attention. After being greeted by signs posted in six different languages that denoted the school as a polling place, the pair heard Korean, Japanese and English being spoken.

“I am excited to go home and tell my people what's going on here,” Onohara said.

That's precisely what the program is all about, said the Visitors Council's Helen Paul.

In addition to Election Day

activities, embassy workers met with government officials and community organizations to get a better understanding of key issues facing the U.S.

“Since the most important part of their jobs at the U.S. Embassies is to help people in their countries understand Americans, our way of life, our system of government and our foreign policy, it is essential they gather personal knowledge to understand the diversity and complexity of this country,” said Paul.

Wund feels her visit came at an especially significant time.

“With a black and a woman running, this election is so special,” she said.

If the election were taking place in her homeland, Wund is pretty sure Barack Obama would be the winner.

“The people love him. . . he is all over the Indonesian papers,” she said. “He spent part of his childhood in our country, and it's as if he's one of our own.”

As we parted ways, Wund and Onohara were off to visit the campaign offices of both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. Their day would end in true Hollywood fashion at an after-voting party at Hollywood and Vine.

WILSHIRE ROTARY OF LOS ANGELES

by President Pam Rudy



As the Lion roars into March, so too will Wilshire Rotary “roar” into March with several community and literacy service projects.

First, the dictionary distribution has begun in two local schools and will continue into five additional schools this coming month. Every third grader receives their own dictionary to take home and use to improve their vocabulary and understanding of the English language.



Second, Wilshire Rotary recently conducted a diaper collection that combined with a pot luck luncheon at Alexandria House, a shelter for homeless and abused women with children. The work that Alexandria House does in our community is truly meritorious in preparing these mothers to join the work force and save enough to live independently again.

Third, Wilshire Rotarians will again be serving meals at St. James'

Episcopal Church on Wilshire to homeless and hungry people for the next two months

The \$50,000 donated by Wilshire and Koreatown Rotary Clubs to the new Munger Family YMCA community room will afford a place for area children to congregate for literacy, fellowship and fun events.

The membership decided to again sponsor a Pumpkin Patch in October and a Christmas Tree lot in December for community members to patronize. What a great convenience to the neighborhood while acquiring quality merchandise that additionally funds projects to improve living conditions in our community and world. Definitely win-win projects!

Wilshire Rotary meets at noon on Wednesdays at the Ebell Club of Los Angeles located at 743 S. Lucerne Blvd. Please join us for lunch this month.

Adv.



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