



Sherry Singer (left) of Bloomfield Township moment with Niki Tsongas, wife of the Democratic presidential hopeful. Gloria Gilbert of Franklin (right) share a moment with Niki Tsongas.

Niki fills in at area party

By Shirlee Rose Iden
staff writer

Approaching the Presidential Primary in Michigan, candidates of every stripe made their pitches to legislators, auto workers, and the faithful at \$1,000 a plate hotel banquets.

But only one Democrat made it to Oakland County — or at least his wife did.

Criscrossing metro-Detroit were Democrats Jerry Brown, Bill Clinton and Paul Tsongas and Republicans Pat Buchanan and George Bush. Some sent surrogates, with vice president Dan Quayle visiting, too.

BROWN'S CAMPAIGN got a boost last week when he picked up support from Michigan Teamsters and the International Union of Electrical Workers. Other labor leaders say they are attracted to Brown because of his record as governor of California but they stopped short of endorsing him.

In a brief press conference last Thursday at Detroit City Airport, Brown criticized Clinton's worker safety record and called for economic justice.

Although he stopped short of making any predictions in Tuesday's race, Brown said he was hoping to hear "a roar from Michigan voters." Tsongas was the only candidate who planned to visit the Republican stronghold of Birmingham-Bloomfield this week, but his plans hit a snag on Wednesday when his plane got stuck in the mud at a Chicago airport.

Tsongas, who has been quoted as

saying "if you don't have charisma, marry it," was represented at a Bloomfield Hills home fund-raiser by his "charismatic" wife of 22 years, Niki.

Many guests said they wanted to learn more about what Tsongas stands for, others have already climbed on his bandwagon.

DOROTHY MAHLIN of Southfield measures Tsongas as honest, straightforward and with integrity. "What's really important is that he understands the issues."

"Why does a conservative support Paul Tsongas?" Mahlin said. "After reviewing the candidates, I find myself not against anybody but for him: He's pro choice, is supportive of Israel and would take the nuclear missiles out of Iraq."

Bloomfield Hills resident Diane Scholnick said she came to the tea "to be exposed and to learn so I can vote with knowledge."

Joyce Blum of Southfield is convinced "it's time for a change. I know the Tsongas are interested in changes in the health care field and my husband is a pediatrician. This is important to us."

Niki and Paul Tsongas live in Lowell, Mass., where his home-state victory was celebrated the previous evening. They are the parents of three young children: 10, 14, and 18. "We try hard to make them feel a part of all this," she said.

An attorney, Niki Tsongas, went back to law school when her husband, stricken with lymphoma, declined to seek re-election to the Sen-

ate in 1986, earning her law degree from Boston College in 1988. "Paul's bone marrow transplant was in 1986 and he's in good health now. He's a better man and better candidate because of what he's been through."

"Paul can build coalitions and lead our country," she said. "We can't get a handle on our economic problems unless we find a way to create national wealth."

She said her husband is pro-choice, pro-environment and pro-civil rights. "And he has no anti-business bias. His national health plan was called viable by Time, Newsweek and other media. It calls for universal coverage including preventive care, with government setting the standards and maybe subsidizing."

"To Paul education is the key to economic recovery and he would invest heavily in vocational training. He believes there should be financial aid for everyone who wants to go to college."

RAE ANN SHARFMAN of West Bloomfield said: "He's the only one who's making sense to me right now. I'm a staunch independent but I believe him when he says if you don't have business, you don't have workers. My husband is a CPA in Farmington Hills and he says if they don't reinstate investment incentives things just can't get better."

"You bet I'm for Tsongas," said Sherry Zematis, a nutritionist who lives in Bloomfield Hills. "He will provide leadership and so will his wife. My husband, Tony, is in Europe on business and he urged me to come today."

Women legislators set fund-raiser

Dudley Dudley, national director of the Women Legislators Lobby, will speak at a fund-raiser for WLL and Women's Action for New Directions at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at the home of Harriet Alperin in Bloomfield Hills.

Dudley, a two-term member of the

New Hampshire House of Representatives, will be joined by state Reps. Barbara Dobb, H-West Bloomfield, and Jan Dolan, H-Farmington Hills.

They will share their experiences as lawmakers in the predominantly male legislature.

WLL, a project of WAND, is the only organization of women state legislators that lobbies Congress to reduce military spending and redirect those resources to human and environmental needs.

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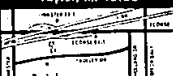
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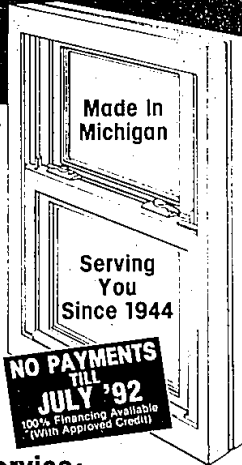
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