



One former Imperial resident in D.C. gets ticket to attend big event

By Carolyn Lee

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Three former Imperial residents reacted in three different ways to the inauguration of President Barack Obama Tuesday. The inauguration, parade, balls and other festivities lasted throughout the evening.

Alisa Woofter, who works with the indigenous and traditional people's program for Conservation International, is a "really big supporter" of President Obama. She attended his last rally, in Virginia, before the November election. Woofter recalls him saying "People of Virginia, let's change the world!" She also attended a concert for Obama this past Saturday.

Woofter obtained one of perhaps 198 tickets handed out by Third District Congressman Adrian Smith's office. Her mother, Janeece, of Imperial had called to put her on the waiting list.

That ticket allowed her to enter the special area in front of the Capitol to view the inauguration.

Woofter and her roommate left their apartment in Arlington, Va. at 6:30 a.m. Tuesday. They walked to the Metro, or subway, Station nearest them for the ride into D.C.

"Every train was really full," she said, and it took an hour for the normal 30 minute ride in.

Then, because of the crowds, it was hard to find the right gate to enter the sealed-off area. Woofter said there were huge lines, and at 10 a.m. she was still in that line.

She managed to worm her way up to the gate, and made it to the standing room just behind the seating area in front of the Reflecting Pool.

Woofter was able to see just half of the stage, but could view the whole inauguration on a big screen. She was within a block of the action.

She videotaped the ceremony with her cell phone.

"There was lots of cheering, chants, yelling" during and after the ceremony, she said.

Woofter was very tired Tuesday night. She had to walk several miles home due to the traffic congestion. She planned to watch the parade on television, then head to bed early.

"It was pretty neat," she said of the inauguration. "I think that especially with my time in D.C., he speaks to me of our relationship to the world. I think that's the direction we need to go."

Former Imperial resident Beth Bremer, who is employed in Congressman Smith's office, took another direction.

Mother Jan Bremer said she had a four-day weekend, and decided to avoid the big crowds by vacationing out of town.

"It's bad enough on a regular day," Bremer said of the crowds and traffic in D.C.

Bob McGrath, who works for the USDA Farm Service Agency's Budget Performance Management System, stayed away from the action, too.

He watched it all on television.

However, he did drive a carpool buddy and her husband and daughter to the nearest Metro

Station for a ride in to the ceremony.

McGrath then picked them up following the inauguration. "All the Metro sites were completely full, with people parking there," he explained.

McGrath had two days off from work because his office building was closed Friday night and reopened Wednesday morning. It had been used as a staging site, McGrath said, for security such as Secret Service.

The USDA building is near the Capitol, where the inauguration took place.

Michal Swanson of Lincoln, a member of the 192nd Military Police Law and Order Unit within the Nebraska National Guard, was contacted last Wednesday about the possibility that his unit would be deployed to D.C. to assist during the Inauguration.

However, the unit never received its orders to go on Saturday as expected. They evidently weren't needed after all, according to his mother, Claudette Swanson of Imperial.

Michal's wife, Angie, in Lincoln said he was a bit disappointed not getting to take part in the historic event.