



Richard Arnold, right, a history teacher at Taipei American School, receives the individual Community Leadership Award from Community Services Center (CSC) director Steve Parker, center, and CSC steering committee chairman Fred Voightmann, left, at the center's annual auction dinner at the Grand Hyatt Taipei on Friday. PHOTO: DIRK DIESTEL

Taipei American School, 3M take honors at dinner

BY DIANE BAKER
STAFF REPORTER

A Taipei American School (TAS) teacher and 3M Taiwan were honored with Community Leadership Awards by the Community Services Center on Friday night at the start of the center's annual Charity Auction Dinner.

Three-hundred-and-twenty-five people attended the dinner in the Grand Hyatt Taipei ballroom, which featured both a silent and a live auction to raise money for the center's activities.

The center is a Taipei-based non-profit organization that has offered support services to the international community in Taiwan since 1987. Three years ago, the center began a program to honor individuals and companies that have made a significant contribution, either to the international community in Taiwan, society at large or both.

This year's honoree for individual community leadership was Richard Arnold, a history teacher at TAS since 1970, who has been the faculty sponsor of the Orphanage Club.

Under his leadership, club members have raised hundreds of thousands of US dollars over the years through book, rummage, raffle ticket and T-shirt sales to fund its many projects. These projects have included financial help and weekend outings for the Chung-Yi and Cathwel orphanages in Taipei, clothing and food donations to Aboriginal communities around Taiwan, a Christmas party for Pearl S. Buck Foundation children and donations for orphans or disaster victims in other countries.

The club also organizes tutoring groups for the Taipei School for the Visually Impaired in Tienmu and Hunger Days at TAS to raise awareness of global hunger and money for groups such as Oxfam, American Friends Service and World Vision.

Arnold has given up countless weekends and evenings in the past decades to work with thousands of high-school and junior-high club members on the club's projects, providing them with a personal example of social responsibility. He was honored by the Taipei City Government in 2001 for his charitable work.

In his acceptance speech, however, Arnold said the award really belonged to the generations of students, their parents and TAS staff members who worked on Orphanage Club projects.

He also paid tribute to TAS custodial staff who set up the tables and other equipment needed for all the club events.

3M Taiwan received the corporate Community Leadership Award for its efforts to reduce its air emissions and waste, as well as its charitable donations and corporate social responsibility programs around Taiwan and the world.

In announcing the corporate award, Fred Voightmann, chairman of the center's Steering Committee, said that 3M representative Alex Yu could not attend the dinner, but had asked him to say: "3M took this award both as an honor and as a motivation to keep on doing what they have been doing."

DIANE BAKER IS A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES CENTER'S STEERING COMMITTEE.

US election debated in Taiwan

EVERYONE HAS ONE: Despite their sharp difference of opinions, the common mantra of Barack Obama and John McCain supporters alike is to 'get out and vote'

BY JENNY W. HSU
STAFF REPORTER

With 14 days left before the final face-off between Democratic candidate Senator Barack Obama and the Republican candidate Senator John McCain, their respective supporters in Taiwan are sharpening their political rhetoric to make sure their candidate is the one showered with confetti and balloons on Nov. 4.

"Obama is incredibly intelligent. I think the US needs a black president to reverse the racist attitude in many white folks who have to undercut the misconception of African Americans in the country," said Hillary Galland, a teacher at the Hsinchu International School.

Galland, much troubled with the quality of education in the US, applauded Obama's plan to boost teacher's salaries, saying the persistent low wages have resulted in under qualified teachers and a substandard education system.

Galland was one of the more than 100 Obama supporters gathered at a fundraising dinner in Tienmu (天母) last month. The most common complaint among the crowd was not related to McCain, but to McCain's running mate, Alaska Governor Sarah Palin.

One person said that he cannot sleep at night for fear that Palin, often mocked by the Democrats as a "hockey mom," could end up with her finger on the red button.

"McCain is 72 years old and is known to have health problems. If elected, Palin would only be a heartbeat away from the presidency. What if something happens to McCain? Palin is not qualified to run the country. She is just not qualified. Period," said Arizona-native Hal Falls, who has been in Taiwan for 16 years.

Doubts about Palin's competence, however, are a non-issue for the McCain fans, one of which has complimented her as a "quick learner."

"She has proven herself as a pretty quick learner. To me, she won the [vice presidential] debate by a wide margin," said David Mann, a US businessman.

Richard Thurston, vice president of a major tech company based in Hsinchu, pointed out that Palin, as Alaska governor, is the only person in the race that had hands-on experience running a state and believes she will "learn on the job" as US Secretary of State Condeleeza Rice has done since 2005.

Former US president Ronald Reagan, he said, was criticized for being too old and frail to be the

president, "and he turned out to be one of the best US presidents in history."

Both camps also vehemently argued that their candidate has Taiwan's best interest in mind and that if elected, the Oval Office would not bow to Beijing's whims and demands but would actively safeguard Taiwan's democracy against any possible Chinese aggression.

"There is no doubt that Obama and the Democratic Party would be a lot stricter on the US dealings with China than McCain would be. McCain, and especially Palin, would end up kowtowing to China because she has so little experience in foreign policy," Fall said.

"Presidents have come and gone in the last 30 years but the support for Taiwan expressed by Congress through the American voters has always been steadfast. I am confident that Obama will continue to respect the support voiced by the American people," said Christopher Fay, the chief executive officer of Saatchi and Saatchi Taiwan.

In a letter he penned to President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) on his victory in May, Obama advocated maintaining a US military presence in the Asia-Pacific region and wrote, "I will do all I can to support Taiwan's democracy in the years ahead," while continuing to adhere

to the "one China" policy.

Susan Liu (劉善怡), a Taiwanese married to an American entrepreneur, said the Democrats' eagerness to end the war in the Middle East is synonymous with the party's mission of perpetuating world peace without resorting to violence.

"Obama has no choice but to use peaceful means in dealing with the cross-strait issue because the American people will scrutinize his every move and will not hesitate to call him out if he becomes too China-centered," she said.

The Republican scoffed at Obama's commitment to Taiwan, highlighting that McCain, a Vietnam War veteran and a former prisoner of war, has been an ardent advocate of Taiwan and democracy in the region.

"McCain had to stare communism in the eyes for five years during his captivity in Hanoi. He knows full well how cunning and deceptive the communists can be. His experience not only bolstered his patriotism for the US, but a strong support for freedom and democracy," said Dylan Lee, an English teacher from Oregon.

"Republicans in general are just more geared toward democracy," Mann said, making the point that it was during the Regan era that the US showed staunch support for democracy in Central America.

"The Republican platform specifically mentioned that any solutions

“Presidents have come and gone in the last 30 years but the support for Taiwan expressed by Congress through the American voters has always been steadfast.”

— Christopher Fay, chief executive officer of Saatchi and Saatchi Taiwan

on the cross-strait dilemma must involve the agreement of the Taiwan people," Thurston said.

"It didn't say the Taiwan government, it said the Taiwan people. The message is clear that the US is interested in hearing what the people in Taiwan have to say because it is a democracy. One of the best interests of the Taiwan people is the involvement of the World Health Organization (WHO) and that's why his [McCain's] platform says he supports WHO for Taiwan," Thurston said.

McCain's platform stated "As a loyal friend of America, the democracy of Taiwan has merited our strong support, including the timely sale of defensive arms and full participation in the WHO and other multilateral institutions."

Thurston went on to say that the GOP encourages more investment in technology-based companies and is committed to slashing corporate taxes, which would ultimately spur more cooperative efforts with Taiwan.

McCain's support of the immigration reform proposed by the Bush administration to grant citizenship

to legal aliens would also benefit many Taiwanese, he said.

Several Taiwanese-Americans said they were apathetic because they believe no matter who wins, Washington will still favor Beijing over Taipei because China owns so much US debt.

"Washington's hands are tied. Their drive to support Taiwan will be hijacked by its own economic woes," said Karen Yao, a financial analyst from California.

Yao said she does not plan to cast her absentee ballot and will spend the time it would take to vote working.

Howard Yang, who became a US citizen last month, said he is not voting because "politicians will say anything to be elected and I don't trust either of them."

Despite their sharp difference of opinions, the common rally cry of the two camps is "get out and vote."

"Of course, I want people to vote for Obama, but the important thing is people [should] go and make their choices known. Voting is a sacred right and it would be stupid to give that up," English teacher Katherine Johnson said.



American Institute in Taiwan sets things straight on absentee voting

BY RACHEL CHAN
CNA

In the US, an absentee ballot is defined as a ballot marked and mailed by the voter in advance of the election, away from the place where he or she is registered.

American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) spokesman Thomas Hodges said that although AIT is not directly involved in the voting process, it estimates that between 40,000 and 50,000 Americans in Taiwan are watching the run-up to the US presidential election on Nov. 4.

"Indeed, the AIT has received many inquiries recently from [US] citizens in Taiwan and from this communication we can say that interest here in the upcoming election is very high," Hodges said.

Hodges said US elections are organized by the country's 50 states and its territories — in other words,

the federal government does not print ballots or count votes. Therefore, Americans wishing to vote must register with officials in the US jurisdiction — usually a county — where they most recently resided, he said.

Even if overseas Americans are already registered in a particular locality, they still need to periodically let the county know where to mail the absentee ballot. There is no requirement, however, that they go through AIT, Hodges said.

"However, the AIT takes seriously its responsibility to assist," he said.

The overseas voting process involves four steps — registration, request for ballot, reception of ballot and mailing of the marked ballot, AIT said.

It also outlined various options for mailing the completed ballots from Taiwan, directing expatriates

to the Web site www.ait.org.tw/en/uscitizens/MailingOptions.asp. It said Americans in Taiwan can also submit specific questions to the AIT via the e-mail address VoteTaipei@state.gov.

Eligible voters can find information on absentee voting at www.FVAP.GOV, the official Web site of the Federal Voters Assistance Program, a federal organization that is charged with assisting overseas and military US voters, AIT said.

"Mainly because of the Internet, it is now very easy for overseas citizens to get the information they need and to obtain their ballots without the AIT's involvement," Hodges said.

Under US regulations, a voter must request an absentee ballot at least a week before the election. Each state's secretary of state or director of elections is in charge of the election process, including voter registration and absentee

ballot requests.

After completing the registration and absentee ballot request form, the voter is required to return it to the election official in his or her county, who will approve the registration and request and then mail the ballot to the voter.

After completion, the ballot has to be returned to the election official to be counted.

The regulations on absentee voting vary in different states. For example, in Hawaii, the deadline for registration of absentee voters was Oct. 6 and Oct. 28 for ballot requests.

Most states count absentee ballots on election day, although the process can continue for several days after.

In Washington and Florida the counting of absentee ballots must be completed within 10 days after election day.

PIGEON POST

International food fair set for TAS campus



The Taipei American School (TAS) Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) will hold an international food fair on Saturday from 10am to 3pm. The activity, which is open to the public, will feature dishes from Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Asia, North America and South America. The fair will include games and prizes as well, the school said in a statement. The fair will take place on the school campus at 800 Zhongshan N Rd, Sec 6, Taipei City. The entry fee is NT\$10 per person. More information is available from the PTA office at (02) 2873-9900, ext. 363.

Curious minds wanted for 'The Big Question'



People interested in tackling "big questions" and social networking are invited to participate at next month's installment of The Big Question, which will give participants an opportunity to share ideas, engage in debates and cooperate with other people. The Big Question is an annual interactive dialogue inspired by www.ted.com, a platform that recognizes thinkers and individuals who have carved their own paths through passion, ideals and a spirit of social responsibility. Speakers at The Big Question will include two individuals recently highlighted in Community Compass, Robin Winkler, cofounder of Winkler Partners & Wild at Heart Foundation, and Pierre Loisel, former general manager of HIP Asia, farmer and agent for Sanjave. Other speakers will include Chu Ping (朱平), founder of Canmeng (Aveda), Canbran and Canlove, and Ben Tsiang (蔣顯斌), cofounder of Sinanet.com and founder of the CNEX Foundation. The event will be held in Chinese, with English interpretation, on Nov. 15 and Nov. 16 at Taipei City's Huashan Cultural Center, Middle 5 Building. The entry fee is NT\$1,200 for the two days. More information, discounted passes, free online forums and registration are available at www.thebigq.org or by contacting Keli Yen, keli@thebigq.org, 0919-906-810.

STAFF WRITER

Writer from Japan still discovering Taiwan

HOT TOPIC: Meiko Fukuoka's stories about Taiwan have been very popular with local Japanese, and now she has been hired by magazines in Japan to write about Taiwan

STAFF WRITER, WITH CNA

Articles highlighting the beauty of Taiwan by a Japanese graduate student studying at I-Shou University in Kaohsiung County have drawn a great deal of attention among Japanese readers after they were posted on the Web site of an overseas Japanese reporters' club.

Since moving to Taiwan with her husband 10 years ago, Meiko Fukuoka, a freelance writer and a graduate student at the university's Institute of Applied Japanese, has written numerous online articles describing what she has seen and heard in the country.

Her online stories have made a splash in the Japanese community and have also become a main source of information for Japanese journalists reporting on Taiwan.

Because of her popularity, Fukuoka has been hired by several Japanese magazines to write stories about Taiwan.

The Japanese writer said she fell in love with Taiwan when she and her family moved here 10 years ago after her husband, a construction engineer, was dispatched here for work.

Fukuoka said that unlike peo-

“Taiwanese attach great importance to communication among family members and value the virtue of filial piety and the concept of respect for elders.”

— Meiko Fukuoka, Japanese writer

ple in other countries, Taiwanese are very friendly to foreigners and quite conversational. They are not xenophobic, she added, and are happy to help people from other countries.

"Taiwanese attach great importance to communication among family members and value the virtue of filial piety and the concept of respect for elders," she said.

Citing the local blockbuster *Cape No. 7* (海角七號), Fukuoka said it was a rare experience for her to see Taiwan's youngsters and senior citizens jointly stage a performance and share music

as depicted in the film, a scene she said is not common at all in Japanese society.

Covering news events and writing stories based on various topics requested by various Japanese journals, Fukuoka said she has had many chances to get a better understanding of various aspects of Taiwan.

"From the perspective of a Japanese, it is interesting to see many things in Taiwan," Fukuoka said, citing as an example an interview with Aborigines in Santimen (三地門) in Pingtung County during which she was impressed by their passion and easy-going attitude, and fascinated by Aboriginal culture, which is splendid, rich in color, and full of folk style.

Fukuoka said she also enjoys the food, the festivals and Aboriginal dance.

Fukuoka lives in Taipei City and commutes between the city and Kaohsiung County to study every week.

Online stories about Taiwan by Meiko Fukuoka, a Japanese graduate student at the university's Institute of Applied Japanese, have become a key source for Japanese journalists reporting on Taiwan.



PHOTO CREDIT: CNA



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