

Rally brings thousands of Trump supporters to Wildwoods

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“Since I live here, I said, ‘wow, man. He’s coming to Wildwood. I watch every rally he has on TV, all over the place. I’m going,’” he said.

In Dominguez’s opinion, “everything he (Trump) does, to me, is right.”

Dolores Albrecht, of Colts Neck, attended Trump’s inauguration more than three years ago.

Still, Albrecht drove down to Wildwood, and camped out overnight, beginning at 2 p.m. on Jan. 27, to hear him speak again.

With the exception of a two-hour break to warm up, Albrecht said she was outside the whole time.

Despite the long hours in the cold, she felt the crowd was congenial.

“We’re all friendly. Sharing food, water, giving blankets, giving chairs to people,” she said. “People have been good because we’re doing it for our president because we love him.”

Albrecht, who said she has volunteered for Republican organizations for years, said Trump is “the best president.”

She said she liked “what he did for the Catholics, for the unborn,” and said she liked “what he did to make Jerusalem the capital of Israel.”

Albrecht also appreciated that Trump donated his salary as president.

“The economy is wonderful,” she said.

She was also concerned about what she felt would happen if “the Democrats get in.”

“My mother came from a communist country, Ukraine. I don’t want to see it in this country,” she said. “Do not take your freedom for granted and voting is a privilege.”

Nick Conway, of Wildwood, set up camp in the convention center parking lot around 4 p.m. on Jan. 27, about 27 hours before Trump was set to take the stage.

The atmosphere was “pleasant, just cold,” he said.

Conway, who served in the U.S. Navy for 12 years as a hospital corpsman, said he liked that Trump is “trying to help out the veterans.”

He felt that Trump worked on building the military up again after the Obama administration.

“I just want to hear him talk about veterans and what else he’s going to do for the country,” Conway said the morning of Jan. 28.

For other supporters, coming to Wildwood was not about watching Trump speak, but about being around like-minded people and enjoying the at-

mosphere.

Susanne and Bob Deren came from Doylestown, Pa. They own a home in Wildwood Crest and Susanne Deren said she got tickets right after the rally was announced.

They opted not to wait in line overnight to get in, however.

“We’re having more fun people watching, and taking photos and getting involved in everything,” she said.

At the rally, the Derens met Cheryl Reilly and John Sloan, of North Wildwood.

None of them had been to a Trump rally before.

The Derens planned to watch Trump’s remarks on a large screen set up outside of the convention center.

The couple was also near the convention center the night before, and Bob Deren said the line to get into the rally was only about two or three rows deep then.

Susanne Deren said they saw people sleeping on beach chairs, bundled up.

“Now the line is totally through here. It goes down the street all the way through to Taylor Avenue,” Bob Deren said.

Noting the crowds, Deren said that he believed that “a lot of people are afraid to come out and say that they’re for Trump because of the leftist backlash towards them, but I believe that this is how the American people really feel.”

Mary Beth and Marty Caporelli, a married couple from Atco, sat in portable chairs in a nearby park, bundled in winter clothing, several hours before the rally was scheduled to begin.

Mary Beth Caporelli said they came to Wildwood on Monday, ate dinner, and stayed in a hotel.

That night, they met some people who had camped out since Sunday to get into the rally, according to Marty Caporelli.

They came to the area near the convention center at about 10 a.m. on Jan. 28.

They both have tickets for the rally, but Mary Beth Caporelli said they are “not concerned about that.”

“We love President Trump. We want to at least be in the space that he’s at,” she said.

“We’re drawn to it. It’s like being around these people that think the same as you is very rare,” she said.

It was the first time they attended a presidential rally.

“We just wanted to be here, just to be a part of it,” she said.



Kristen Kelleher/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Above, crowds wait in line for the chance to get into a President Donald Trump campaign rally on Tuesday, Jan. 28, at the Wildwoods Convention Center. Below, at left, are Bob Deren, Cheryl Reilly, Susanne Deren, and John Sloan, of Doylestown, Pa., and North Wildwood, and at right, a group of supporters.



Kristen Kelleher/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

People camped out in the Wildwoods Convention Center parking lot for days in advance of President Donald Trump’s campaign rally in Wildwood. Pictured above and below are supporters in costume, people waiting in line for the rally, crowds walking around Wildwood, and a bus covered in pro-Trump signs.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

A protester in Wildwood with her ‘Jail to the Chief’ sign.

Protesters rally against the president

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welcome in Wildwood, we plan to vote against them.”

Cape May County Indivisible formed in 2016 after Trump was elected president, Schenerman said, adding that the organization was just beginning to see three years of work paying off.

Resident Dennis Foster was carrying a double-sided sign reading “I can’t change Donald Trump’s hate but I can make sure it doesn’t change me.” The other side of Foster’s sign read “Partisans protect a president while patriots protect the nation” with a flag background and silhouette of a soldier saluting.

Foster said he had no qualms with the crowd supporting Trump.

“But that’s not me and I’m not changing me for any president,” he said. “I think what he is doing to this country is not what

he promised.”

Foster said he does not hate Trump but he disagrees with him.

“Open your minds,” he said. “We’re not your enemy.”

The nation has split into two camps with much rhetoric, Foster said. He said he could appreciate there are those who like Trump but he would like to see the return of civility into the debate.

“The anger that’s going on in this country right now, the hatred, it’s just uncalled for. It’s not where I want to go, that’s not who I am as a human being or as an American,” Foster

Jack Fichter

STAR AND WAVE

Shayla Woolfort, left, and Cassandra Gatelein under a banner for Cape May County Indivisible, protesting President Trump in Wildwood Tuesday.

