

Daily News

DailyNews.com

Martha Stewart charms Valley

APPEARANCE: Fans thrilled during book signing in Northridge.

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NORTHRIDGE

For Genevieve Clavreul, Martha Stewart's visit to the San Fernando Valley on Sunday was more than just "a good thing."

"It's a great thing," said Clavreul, a registered nurse accompanied by her daughter Patricia.

"I've loved her since ... forever." Clavreul's sentiment was repeated among hundreds of old and new fans of Stewart, who made her first visit to the Valley in more than two decades.

Flashing her trademark smile, Stewart was received by more than 300 people at the Border's Bookstore in Northridge, where she thanked her fans, some who had waited more than six hours to catch a glimpse of the celebrity.

Stewart used special color-coded pens to sign copies of her new book "Encyclopedia of Crafts" and her current best seller, "Cooking School."



Stewart signed copies of her current best seller, "Cooking School," as well as her new book, "Encyclopedia of Crafts."

"You have to have the perfect pen," Stewart said as she inscribed her books.

Ruben Lopez, a school clerk, said his intrigue with Stewart also started years ago when he was just a teen. His love of Stewart motivated him to make the

hour drive into Northridge from Ontario just to shake her hand.

"She hasn't been in this area for a while," he said. "I am so excited to finally meet her."

A household name for years, Stewart's visit definitely helped boost business for the local bookstore, which buzzed with scores of Stewart's fans — some of whom purchased up to 18 copies each.

"This is a very big and special event for us," said Michelle Sucillon, a Borders marketing manager.

Stewart's arrival in the Valley also gave a new generation of fans the chance to meet the New Jersey housewife-turned-media mogul.

Only six months ago, Shawna McCray didn't even know who Stewart was. But after catching Stewart on a late-night talk show, McCray said she too was placed under a spell by Stewart.

On Sunday, McCray trembled with excitement after shaking Stewart's hand.

"She's so beautiful, so witty and funny," she said.

"I can't believe she came here ... she's something special."

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