



Melanie Throne, her sister, Beth Skogen, and aunt, Rachel, met many celebrities in January at the Silver Spoon Buffet. Pictured above at the left (L-R) Days Of Our Lives Soap star, Beth Skogen, Melanie Throne, Deidre Hall. In the photo at the right, Melanie, Beth, and Rachel are pictured with Susan Lucci, All my Children. Below, Melanie and Beth are pictured with Olympic Gold Star medalist Tara Lipinski.

~ Submitted photos ~



## *Introducing Iowa to Hollywood*

# Melanie Throne and Beth Skogen meet many celebrities during recent trip to California

BY RACHEL RINGHAM  
~ Star reporter ~

Rural Iowa might lack the thrill and excitement of Hollywood, but a fast paced life could not hold a candle to quiet country roads and brilliant sunsets found in the Midwest.

Melanie Throne, of rural Scarville, along with her dad, Leo Skogen, of Lake Mills, and sister, Beth Skogen, of Ankeny, left the snowy fields of Iowa for awhile in January, destination—Hollywood. Once they arrived, they would meet several television and movie stars, famous singers, super models, comedians, and even an Olympic Gold Medalist ice skater.

Rubbing elbows with the stars at the Silver Spoon Hollywood Buffet was a chance of a lifetime. The buffet was presented as an event for the stars at The Ivar Project in Hollywood, and each celebrity attendee left the event with over \$5,000 of products of their choosing.

Melanie and her husband, Mike, received an invitation to

display their product, SoyLights candles, at this Hollywood event. They decided she should attend, and her dad and sister eagerly volunteered to accompany and help her. Her aunt and uncle, Robert and Rachel Cinader, of Chandler, Ariz. also met them in California. Rachel helped at the two-day buffet while the guys explored.

Melanie prepared over 400 gift bags with candles in each to give away as gifts to the stars at the two-day event. This was an opportunity to introduce her product and to educate those in Hollywood about soy candles.

“They had never heard of soy wax used in candles. I always thought Midwesterners were the last to find out about ‘new’ products,” Melanie said with a smile.

Melanie Throne’s SoyLights candle display was among 48 other sponsor participants included at the event Jan. 23 and 24. Other participants included those like ‘Allure’ magazine, Dragon House Chinese food, L’Oreal

Paris, Laura Gibson jewelry, Mystic Tan, and Jelly Kelly handbags, and many more.

Between 450-500 stopped at the SoyLights display table, and Melanie, with the help of her sister and aunt, passed out all 400 plus gift bags, and carefully explained the process of the soy candle making business. They ran out of everything, even the display candles, two hours before the show was complete on the second day.

“It was really neat. People even came back the second day bringing others with them to see the candles and hear the story,” Melanie said. “They wanted to listen,” she added.

Stars like Tony Danza and his wife waited in line to talk to Melanie about the candles. “It is a whole different world,” Melanie said. “I told them the story, and the celebrities expected to hear that I lived in California, not in rural Iowa,” Melanie said with a grin. “They wanted to hear everything about the candles, and they listened closely to every word.”

Some of the stars Melanie spoke to included Kelly Osbourne, Deidre Hall, Nichole Richey, Rhona Mitra, Tara Lipinski, Hilary Duff, Susan Lucci, and dozens more. “Susan Lucci was really nice and very tiny,” Melanie said. “It was so much fun. It was amazing that so many people still haven’t heard about soy wax.”

This year was the first time the buffet worked to raise funds for the non-profit ‘Race to Erase MS.’ High-end products such as Peace and Love diamond jewelry by Nancy Davis, celebrity autographed shirts, handbags and photos were auctioned on Ebay Charity Works with all proceeds benefiting the cause.

Since the event, Melanie has taken orders for candles, and continues to receive e-mails with interest in SoyLights candles.

Mike and Melanie have donated their product to celebrity events in the past, including the Mansion Soiree—NBA All Star Weekend, and the Outkast

Grammy Party.

The couple are in their fourth year making soy candles. Melanie is a stay-at-home mom, and starting this business was another benefit for her to be able to stay home with her five young children. Mike farms, and when he isn’t in the field, helps pour candles.

Benefits of soy candles:

- Made from soybeans, a renewable resource, grown in Iowa;
- Clean burning wax;
- Burns longer than petroleum wax
- Biodegradable
- Non toxic, safe for children and pets
- Environmentally sensitive

All inquiries are handled by Mike or Melanie, owners and candle pourers.

SoyLights candles can be purchased locally at Visions, located near Scarville, and The Headquarters in Lake Mills.

You can visit their website at: [www.soylights.com](http://www.soylights.com) for more information.