

WORLD WIRE

Major cities' gang leaders pledge truce

WASHINGTON (AP)—Street gang leaders from four major cities pledged a truce on Thursday and said they'll convene a broader gathering this spring so others can take the oath.

Their so-called "summit" was set for April 30-May 2 in Kansas City, Mo., timed to coincide with

the first anniversary of the Los Angeles riots.

Nine representatives from black and Latino gangs in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles and Minneapolis met in Washington to pledge peace, pray together and plan the Kansas City meeting.

Clinton nearing choice of attorney general

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Clinton has narrowed his search for an attorney general to three people and the leading contender is Kimba Wood, the female judge who presided over junk-bond financier Michael Milken's fraud trial, administration officials said Thursday.

A decision is expected within days, they said.

Wood is a Democrat but was appointed to the federal bench in New York by Republican President Reagan nearly five years ago.

Others said to be finalists are Washington attorney Charles F.C. Ruff and former Virginia Gov. Gerald Baliles, according to two administration officials who requested anonymity.

Clinton smoothing edges, getting phones to work

WASHINGTON (AP)—After two weeks in office, President Clinton is working to smooth rough edges and ruffled feathers. He's refocused attention onto less inflammatory issues — from welfare to campaign reform — and even gotten the phones to work.

All but the harshest critics agree Clinton is settling in and learning from his early mistakes.

"It's hard to argue that we did things perfectly in the first week," said White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers. "But a lot of the moving-in pains are easing."

After the early-days turbulence from the withdrawal of his attorney general nominee and an unwanted skirmish with Congress over lifting the ban on military gays, Clinton was navigating in calmer waters.

He held high-profile meetings on

health care, welfare reform and campaign financing and made overtures to organized labor and governors.

After clashing prematurely with Democratic leaders over his plan to lift the ban on gays in the military, Clinton made two goodwill trips to Capitol Hill this week to cement ties with Democrats.

He also announced he'll meet Hill leaders every Tuesday — alternating between just Democrats and bipartisan delegations.

Clinton himself told budget workers Wednesday, "I may not do everything right, and I can't do everything that's just popular in the short run. (But) we're trying to set an example for the people that sent us here."

Clinton and his high command, laden with baby-boomers who grew up in a high-tech age, were revamping the White House's own infrastructure.

Downtown

Continued from Page 1

their customer is.

"Before, it was truly the community of Lincoln," he said. "Now, the core of the market is college students, the people who are down here between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. and the residents of the area."

Lou Shields, president and CEO of the Downtown Lincoln Association, said the era of the major downtown shopping center had passed in cities nationwide, Shields said, and Lincoln's retailers did a good job of adapting to the needs of a changing market.

"They are realizing that they have a crossover market," she said. "They can attract students and older career persons alike."

The slack economy and withdrawal of businesses caused some to doubt a successful future for the downtown area.

The closing of Miller and Paine in the Lincoln Square building, 13th and O streets, caused tremendous worries, Quandt said. But the building has been filling up with commercial office space, he said.

"Now that building is 85 percent occupied," Quandt said.

Shields said much of the vacant office space is filling up with state offices because they have outgrown their facilities.

"While it may not be a permanent solution, because we don't know how long the state offices will be in these spaces, it did get the downtown headed on the road to recovery," Shields said.

Jack Irons, who bought the Centrum Shopping Plaza last April, is optimistic about the future of the center, which once didn't seem so bright. "I think we'll be full by July," he said. "That's our goal."

When Irons bought the center, he said, there were only two stores in business: Braun's, a women's apparel store, and One-Hour Photo. Since then, he said, capacity has reached 60 percent.

Irons, a developer, said his pur-

"We love UNL students. They are great for the city of Lincoln. I wish I could give each and every one of them a big hug."

—Johanns
Lincoln mayor

chase of the center was an opportunity to save a building and downtown Lincoln.

"(The Centrum) is a beautiful building and it's a shame to let it go to waste," he said. "I have the capabilities and know-how to make it work."

"I was born and raised in Lincoln," he said. "It was a really large step, but I believe in risk."

"I have a strong belief in downtown."

Jan Beckwith, owner of in*ka*hootz, a women's apparel store, said she chose to locate her store in the Centrum because she loved downtown Lincoln.

"I'm a downtown diehard," Beckwith said.

Setting up shop in the Centrum has been good for business, she said. The housing market also has grown in the downtown area with the renovation of several buildings.

The Hardy building, 8th and R streets, was renovated into apartments about four years ago, Johanns said.

"It was full the day it opened and has been full ever since," he said.

Other buildings downtown that are being renovated into living space include the Granger and Apothecary buildings, 8th and P streets, and the Clayton House, 10th and O streets, Johanns said.

"People like the feeling of living downtown," he said. "It becomes a neighborhood for them, and they look out for that neighborhood."

Senate rejects proposal to continue ban on gays

WASHINGTON—The Senate on Thursday rejected a Republican attempt to thwart President Clinton's efforts to lift the ban on homosexuals in the military.

By a 62-37 vote, the Senate turned aside a GOP-sponsored measure that would have restored the 50-year-old ban on gays as it existed before Clinton announced his compromise with Democratic congressional leaders last week.

Instead, the Senate adopted a non-binding resolution that left intact Clinton's changes, including temporary suspension of the formal discharge of homosexuals from the military.

Clinton also ordered recruiters to stop asking applicants about their sexual orientation.

The president, who promised during the campaign to lift the ban, was

forced to retreat during the first week of his presidency in the face of widespread Democratic and Republican opposition.

Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole of Kansas had predicted defeat but vowed that Republicans eventually would prevail on the divisive issue.

"I happen to believe that mainstream America recognizes bad policy when they see it," he said.

Led by Sen. Dan Coats of Indiana, Republicans argued that allowing homosexuals in the military would seriously undermine the quality of the armed forces.

But Democratic Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun of Illinois said the GOP arguments against lifting the 50-year-old ban resembled the military complaints in the 1940s against President Truman's plan to integrate the services.

The measure was an amendment to the family and medical leave bill.

Clinton has ordered Defense Secretary Les Aspin to draw up an executive order that would lift the ban by July 15. The Republican legislation would have required Clinton to get congressional approval before any policy change.

Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, D-Maine, reminded his colleagues that change required people to adapt. In every society, Mitchell said, there are those who fear and resist change.

"Let's lift our sights and vote above appeals to divisions, above appeals to the worst that's in our people, above all the discrimination, the prejudice, the anxiety and the fear that is being created in this debate," Mitchell said to a hushed chamber.

Proposed bill would eliminate lobbying loopholes

WASHINGTON — A corporate lawyer seeks a lawmaker's help in a battle against a burdensome regulation. The head of an interest group talks strategy with a Senate aide over lunch. A direct-mail firm solicits hundreds of letters opposing a bill.

These are the typical chores of the modern Washington lobbyist. But under current law, none of them are classified as a lobbyist. The lawyer, the interest group director and the direct-mail company all are exempt from registering as lobbyists and reporting on their activities.

"There's considerable leeway in the current laws," added Robert O'Brien, spokesman for defense giant McDonnell Douglas. The company, which does nearly \$9 billion a year in business with the government,

currently has six staff members who deal with Congress — none of them registered as lobbyists.

"There are thousands that don't register," said John L. Zorack, a lobbyist for small businesses and author of a lobbying handbook.

This year, with the winds of reform blowing, Sen. Carl Levin hopes to change that. The Michigan Democrat on Thursday introduced a bill that would tighten government oversight of lobbying, at the same time consolidating a welter of current rules to make it easier for lobbyists to comply. A similar bill is being sponsored in the House by Rep. John Bryant, D-Texas.

"The public has a right to know who is being lobbied, by whom, and how much they are being paid," Levin said.

Vice President Al Gore appeared with the lawmakers at a Capitol Hill news conference to lend the Clinton administration's support.

"We're committed to reforming the way our government does business," Gore said, standing alongside Sen. William Cohen, R-Maine, and Rep. George Gekas, R-Pa., who also are sponsoring the bill.

The proposed restrictions would broaden the definition of lobbying. Gone would be exemptions for lawyers, for lobbying congressional aides (as opposed to lobbying members of Congress themselves), or for lobbying executive branch officials. Indirect efforts to influence the government, such as ginning up floods of mail, would be included as well.

Sigerson: Money needed quickly for maintenance of UNL buildings

Poor conditions interfere with quality of education, ASUN president says

By Michelle Leary
Senior Reporter

Poor building conditions at UNL, such as asbestos and leaking roofs, are keeping students from receiving a quality education, ASUN President Andrew Sigerson said.

Sigerson, speaking Wednesday at a news conference devoted to the maintenance troubles at the university, said that the time to improve building conditions on campus was now.

"Students at UNL and our sister campuses feel that it is time for the Legislature and governor to act," Sigerson said.

"The university needs about \$50 million to fix all the repairs needed on all university buildings," Sigerson said, "but we'd be happy with less."

When members of the Nebraska Legislature and the governor's office claim UNL can find the money to repair the problems within its existing budget, they are making excuses, Sigerson said.

He said ignoring the problem would only make things worse.

"The dollar that is saved today will

"It's hard to believe that we (students) have to work in rooms that are not fit for rats."

—Thompson
graduate student

cost two dollars in the future," he said.

Jeri Thompson, a psychology graduate student, agreed with Sigerson, saying the quality of education at UNL was being compromised because of building deterioration.

"Temperature and space are big factors," Thompson said.

Most of Thompson's day is spent in Burnett Hall, she said, which is typically hot in the winter and cold in the summer.

"The first thing we do when we walk into a classroom is open the windows," she said. "This helps moderate the temperature."

"I personally keep a thick sweater in my office to wear while working because it's so cold in the summer," Thompson said.

Thompson also conducts psychology experiments in the basement of Burnett Hall, where water seepage, humidity and temperature variations make it impossible to use some of the rooms, she said.

"We used to have research animals in the basement, but an animal health

department informed us that the conditions in Burnett were not fit for rats," Thompson said. "It's hard to believe that we (students) have to work in rooms that are not fit for rats."

"It's so hot in the labs we do have that it's frustrating to know that when you have people coming to participate in research, they may not be able to do well with whatever tasks they've been given," she said.

"When you live in this day after day, it makes you feel as if no one really cares about the quality of our training," Thompson said. "It all adds up to an uncomfortable, unproductive and unsafe place to work."

Sigerson said the cost for repairing Burnett Hall was estimated at \$6.1 million.

Other buildings at UNL in need of maintenance include Richards Hall, which has inadequate restrooms, poor ventilation and no climate control; Love Library, where the archives' ceiling leaks; and the Nebraska Union, which has a broken revolving door.

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