

Corporation galas note Clinton's inaugural

Congress members and administration officials attend festivities for business and mingling.

By CONNIE CASS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — From omelette-and-bloody Mary brunches to postmidnight dancing, Congress members and administration officials had their choice of nonstop parties Sunday served up by corporations and other special interests.

The weekend fests sponsored by Philip Morris, Anheuser-Busch, MCI and others were a prelude to countless other parties and receptions planned by corporations to mark President Clinton's swearing-in today.

True, Clinton's inaugural team broke with tradition by barring corporate financing of today's "official" events. But the "unofficial" parties drew big crowds.

For corporations keenly aware of Washington's power to affect their bottom lines, the buffet line remains a favorite tool.

The Chicago Board of Trade and Chicago Mercantile Exchange laid out bagels, French toast, fresh fruit and made-to-order omelettes Sunday at a restaurant near the White House.

Guests included Illinois Congress members and their aides as well as Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and his brother, William Daley, Clinton's nominee for commerce secretary.

"We invited people we work with regularly, and this is the beginning of a new Congress, so we thought it was a good way to be friendly with them," said Celesta Jurkovich, senior vice president of government relations for the Chicago Board of Trade.

Issues important to the two giant Chicago-based exchanges include a recurring proposal to tax futures trades and pending reform of the Commodities Exchange Act. Jurkovich said there was little time at the brunch to discuss specific legislation.

Such parties are among the few options left for lobbyists who want to entertain senators and House members. Under rules that took effect last year, most gifts and dinners are banned. But

Party excludes black suburb

WASHINGTON (AP) — What if President Clinton held his second inaugural in the other Washington: the one of vacant lots and crushing poverty?

"It would be wonderful," said activist Rahim Jenkins. "All the streets cleaned. All the new trees that would be planted. It would give people here some hope."

But then reality intrudes: "We don't have any hotels here. And I can't think of anywhere I could rent a tuxedo if I needed to. We do have one good caterer, and plenty of liquor stores, but we know that party isn't for us."

"Their party could be on another planet for all it means down here."

Down here is Anacostia, in the capital's southeast quadrant, across the narrow river from the Capitol where President Clinton takes the oath of office today.

"That river might as well be the Great Wall of China. We are totally forgotten here," said Lamont Mitchell, whose Imani Cafe is the only sit-down restaurant in Anacostia.

Anacostia's hilly bluffs offer dazzling views of the monuments of Washington. The White House is just two miles away, a distance residents say might as well be light years.

Inaugural festivities ending tonight, bathed in opulence and grandeur, sharpen the contrast.

"He's president now, and he's going to be president when it's all over," said James Daws, a construction worker. "Maybe he could have a nice little party or something, but three days is too much."

there's a broad exception for "widely attended events," like the Illinois buffet.

Rep. Jerry Weller, R-Ill., defended the event and other corporate parties as an important chance for Republicans such as himself to get to know the Daleys and Democrats in Congress.

"Sometimes the self-proclaimed reformers are so extreme they want us to operate in a vacuum," Weller said. "These so-called reforms have a detrimental impact — the breakdown of relationships and socializing between Republicans and Democrats that we need to work together."

"It's like we don't exist..."

LAMONT MITCHELL
restaurant owner

Fireworks, galas, parades, balls (one honoring first cat Socks): None of the events is being held in Anacostia.

"At the very least, they could have had a prayer breakfast here or something," Mitchell said. "With all these black folks here, they know we got some churches. But we aren't even an afterthought."

"It's like we don't exist, and this inaugural is a perfect example," he said.

There is, he said, a "systematic exclusion of Anacostia from official Washington because it's 92 to 94 percent black."

None of the inaugural revelry comes cheaply. Ticket sales for the parade and balls are supposed to cover most of the events, but taxpayers will still pay \$12.4 million for costs associated with official events.

"Hell, I'd rather see that money go to the Boys Club or something," said Felix Carter, selling T-shirts from a van on Martin Luther King Avenue, Anacostia's main drag. "They need to spend money and get these young boys off the street."

But Ed Rothschild, a spokesman for the consumer group, Public Citizen, argues that corporations use the inauguration as "just another reason to have another bash and gain access to influence Congress."

Philip Morris Cos., maker of cigarettes and parent of Kraft Foods, invited foreign diplomats to a brunch featuring donkey-shaped macaroni and cheese.

"We do business in well over 150 countries, so it's only fitting we honor the diplomatic corps," said spokeswoman Darienne Dennis.

Bombs strike abortion clinic

TULSA, Okla. (AP) — An abortion clinic that was firebombed on New Year's Day was struck by two bombs Sunday that caused minor damage. No injuries were reported.

The Reproductive Services clinic was closed at the time of the afternoon blasts, said police Sgt. Wayne Allen. Technicians and bomb-sniffing dogs searched the single-story building and found no more explosives.

The blasts went off at the back of the clinic and caused only minor damage to the building, except for heavy damage to glass panels.

Police did not know what kind of explosives caused the blast or whether the bombs exploded on the outside or inside of the building, which Allen said "had been rendered safe both inside and out."

Police had no suspects and no one has claimed responsibility, Allen said. He said it was too early to speculate if the bomber may have been the same person who firebombed the clinic on Jan. 1.

The FBI will take over the investigation Monday because of last week's bombings at an Atlanta clinic and the Jan. 22 anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court ruling that legalized abortion, Allen said.

"I hope this doesn't mean that violence is going to flare up around the nation," said Sherri Finik, the clinic's executive director. "If a fanatic can do this to our clinic or any other family planning service that puts all of our citizens in jeopardy."

Tulsa police Officer Michelle Markey heard and felt the blasts from her patrol car across the street. She called it in on her radio, then rushed to the building but saw nobody fleeing.

A woman who said she was a 14-year employee learned of the blast from TV reports and went to the clinic. The woman, who gave her name only as Terry, said she was outraged.

"Certain groups would consider this a victory, but what it is is an outright attack on women's rights," she said.

The clinic employs about 15 to 20 people who provide family planning, abortions and adoption services, she said.

On New Year's Day, two firebombs thrown at the clinic caused minor smoke and fire damage. No one was inside the building, which was closed for the holiday.

Bomb kills many after massacre

ALGIERS, Algeria (AP) — A car bomb exploded Sunday outside a downtown cafe, killing at least 20 people and wounding dozens just hours after attackers massacred 36 villagers, decapitating some, south of the capital.

A second explosion was reported Sunday near Reghaia, about 20 miles east of Algiers, residents said. There were reports of injuries but no details.

Government security forces, speaking on condition of anonymity, said they dismantled at least six car bombs in the Algiers area.

The violence was the worst in what has been a bloody 1997 in this North African country, where a five-year Islamic insurgency has killed at least 60,000.

The car bomb exploded shortly after 8 p.m. Sunday in downtown Algiers and was powerful enough to be heard across the capital. The government said 10 people were killed, but hospitals receiving the victims said there were at least 20 dead and 60 or more wounded, 10 seriously.

Witnesses said the bomb exploded in front of a cafe next to a cinema in the popular Belcourt quarter while residents were breaking their daily fast for the holy month of Ramadan.

The street was littered with bodies, many covered by sheets borrowed from nearby homes. Authorities sealed off the area.

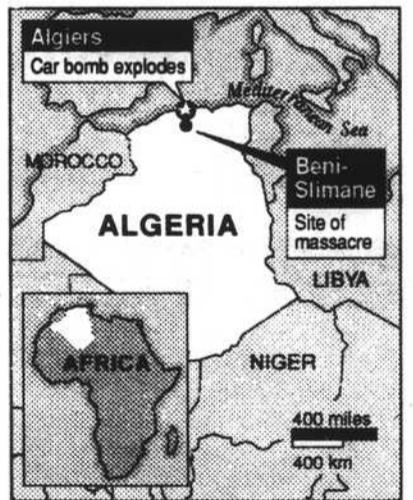
The force of the blast heavily damaged shops and nearby buildings.

In Beni-Slimane, a village 45 miles south of Algiers, attackers killed 36 people in bloodshed that lasted hours, security forces said. The official APS news agency said some of the victims were decapitated.

It was not clear whether the massacre was late Saturday or early Sunday.

No one claimed responsibility for either attack, but suspicion fell on Islamic radicals fighting to overthrow the government and install a strict Islamic regime.

Algeria's insurgency began in January 1992, when the army-backed government canceled legislative elections that candidates of the Islamic Salva-



tion Front were poised to win.

On Saturday, the Algerian government said the first parliamentary elections since 1992 would be held in May and June. A recent constitutional change bans political parties based on religion, and some groups say the upcoming elections are a farce since they cannot field candidates.

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